

STOREREPRESENT



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inside: anarchy from the ground up - nc double paid - drunk detective starkness - salacious vegan crumbs - pedal pushing - cult of ignorance - you were bright - bars & other places - novels by musicians - let go - mueller time(d) out - record reviews - concert calendar



**979represent is a local magazine
for the discerning dirtbag.**

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NC-DOUBLE-PAID

March Madness is the one time of year that I really pay much attention to college basketball. The games are all excellent, the degree of play is outstanding, the stories have more drama and emotion and intensity, and one can never predict the outcome of the tournament. There's only one 1-seed left and a 5-seed wrecked both a 1- and a 2-seed! But there is one thing that you can predict about the NCAA Basketball tournament: there is always a lot of talk about the state of college athletics and whether or not student athletes should enjoy some of the financial benefits the schools enjoy from the big show.

It is a trendy opinion these days to think that student athletes should be paid. I tend to agree. There should be at the very least a profit share in the college's very large dividends from donors, fans, and endorsements with student athletes. After all, it is the athletes' performances that draw the attention that ultimately yields all that cash from endorsements and apparel sales. Why should all this money orbit around the athletes but never make it to their pockets? Many would say that the students benefit from Division 1 play as it hones athletic skill, teaches discipline and maturity, and displays their prowess to the world (or most importantly to professional sporting scouts). Yet not every student athlete becomes a professional athlete. There are a finite number of spots available and many athletes injure themselves before they can turn pro or their degree of athleticism creates injury complications later in their professional careers.

Some would argue that these students receive an education in exchange for their play. The average cost for an in-state education at Auburn is \$32,000; \$50,000 for out-of-state. That is a substantial exchange of goods for services. Yet the NBA league minimum for a rookie is \$838,464 and in the NFL it's \$480,000. Most players receive endorsements of some type and many star players do not touch their salaries at all, preferring to bank it while living off the money from endorsements. Not to mention the sheer amount of dollars the NCAA earns in ad revenue. We're talking Super Bowl levels, well over a billion dollars in 2018. Those dollars are then spread back out across the entire NCAA divisions, but divisions such as the SEC who perform better see a larger percentage of dollars (a whopping 10% in 2018 that translated into \$100,000,000!!!) split 14 ways. That easily offsets most head coach salaries. Yet the average SEC squad fields 12 players. Even if the players split that with the university the students would still see a seven figure payout for a season. Of course, that's for big money SEC. The other divisions see less dollars, though the cost of a scholarship at those schools is also less.

It's hard to look at these dollar figures and not feel like the student athletes should see *some* of this money, even if it's in a trust that the students can't touch until after they graduate. But of course, good things do come for those who keep their noses clean and patiently wait until they turn pro. Most college athletes never play for a living though. Most will never see a real monetary payout for the thousands of hours of effort. It just doesn't feel right to me. I suppose it's a problem to be solved by folks far smarter than me. — KELLY MENACE

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**HISTORIC
DOWNTOWN BRYAN, TEXAS**

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ANARCHY FROM THE GROUND UP



I left off with a perfectly constructed TAAS essay that would have passed any fourth grade student into the next year back in 1998, minus all the fucks and bastards, of course. Did y'all get inspired to plant shit? Were your hands caked in rich, black soil during all these beautiful spring weekends? It's been kinda hard to resist the glorious sunny days. I have to admit that things are so busy here on the farm that I almost forgot to write my contribution for this current issue of *979Represent*. Alas, March has roared in like a lion and slapped us all in the face with another round of 40 degree days. What better way to spend it than by encouraging my fellows to spark more anarchy from their own backyards?

Now that y'all are good and fired up (because I totally lit a fire under your ass, right?) and you bought all the seeds and all the plants or maybe you filled your old bass drum with bulbs and berries. Are you ready to watch your hard work slowly shrivel up and DIE from the intense summer heat that Texas is about to unleash on your ass? *evil maniacal laughter* Because that's the truth of it. Maybe some of you don't live in Texas anymore and you have the joy of consistent sunshine and moderate temps of 86 (*cough cough Emily cough*). That's cool. Texas misses you. This article can still help anyone who likes to get their thumbs green because I am going to give a few radical tips on water recycling.

WATER IS LIFE, Y'ALL. That is not just a catchy slogan from a mass movement of indigenous peoples to reclaim their rights to water on their land. Water sustains every life force on this planet. Without it we wouldn't exist at all. I know that most of you don't live on off-grid homesteads and haul water in buckets every day. Probably all of you can turn on the nearest tap and watch this life force energy flow freely down the drain. (And if you can't, pay your water bill, yo.) But the fact of the matter is, you are living in a place of privilege. Some of those same indigenous justice warriors, who are literally throwing their bodies in front of corporate bulldozers, have never had reliable water access other than a river or lake nearby. And yet they are having it stripped away from their communities through greed and pollution. They aren't alone. Sixty seven percent of the world's households must fetch water from outside of their homes. Turn on that water again and see if you appreciate it a little more. Our place of privilege also puts us in a place of action, if we choose it. If you want to make some radical choices that challenge our current social construct around municipal water use, consider recycling your water.

Recycling water can be as easy as putting a bucket under a dripping air conditioner or as complicated as re-plumbing your grey water to filter through mulched garden beds. If your city does not have a Greywater Law (or absolute restrictions against it) **RESIST THOSE GUYS!!** Start a petition that supports the cessation of water waste. Talk to your city council members about the benefits of recycling water and research how other towns have made it possible. Or you know, just like put

a cistern under your rain gutter and scoop some water out for your bomb ass tomatoes! I'm not even joking about that Texas heat, y'all. Literally, everything is about to burn alive.

One great way to practice water conservation in your garden is by mulching. **MULCH EVERYTHING!!** Mulch helps prevent water evaporation (lame), water run off (lamer) or erosion (lamest). You can use leaves, newspaper, tree bark, pecan shells or even straw hay. Make sure you cover every inch of your garden with a thick layer of mulch. Water at night, to soak the ground more thoroughly and allow maximum absorption. Make row covers and place shade cloth over your tender plants to avoid an absolute hell fire from cooking them on the vine. Or plant a drought tolerant garden bed with agave, artemisia, milkweed or cactus. (The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center is a great resource for a large variety of drought resistant plants.) Not everything you plant has to be edible. Maybe you are trying to win that Best Yard of the Year award. I mean, that's punk af. You do you, dude, and by practicing water conservation and safe water recycling along the way, you may encourage your community to radically change too.

Another great tool in a water conscious garden is Ollas (pronounced oyas). Traditionally, it was a handcrafted, unglazed clay pot that many different cultures used around the world for food and water storage. Spanish settlers introduced them in colonial times as an efficient irrigation technique to prevent water evaporation and run off. Today they are widely used in gardens as a great conservation method, especially here in the South. You can buy handcrafted ollas from a potter (support small business, y'all) or you can make them yourself. Grab two clay pots of the same size. Use silicone caulk to plug the bottom hole with a penny or last night's beer cap. Stack the second clay pot, upside down, on top of the first clay pot and seal with silicone. Once your olla is dry, dig a hole in your garden and bury it, leaving the unplugged hole in your top pot exposed. Now you can fill your olla with water and it will slowly release over a course of a few hours or days (depending on your size) and deliver water deep down where your roots love to mingle the most. Does your garden need a little boost? Add a touch of organic fertilizer to your olla before you water and watch your kick ass, water conscious garden **GROW!!**

Ok. So maybe water recycling isn't the most liberating anarchist experience but it will certainly help those peppers stay happy! Every time you see water wasting out onto the ground, consider a way to recycle it. The choices we make now are shaping the future for ourselves and the children that inherit it. Let's make it a sustainable one. And be sure to check back in on the next issue where I hope to discuss building your own dirt and maybe even humanure composting. I mean literal shit, y'all. It's pure gold. — **HALEY RICHARDSON**

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SALACIOUS VEGAN CRUMBS

I've been on this ride for almost three years now, but this isn't my first spin on the vegan merry-go-round. Eight years ago, in 2011, I moved back to Bryan to split my time between slinging cake pops and coding C++, into my own apartment behind the old Village Foods. I didn't have any labels on my diet, but I had mostly stopped eating meat because it was expensive and creepy to cook, and I was already vegan-curious — I had a couple of Post Punk Kitchen cookie and cupcake books in my almost non-existent cookbook collection. One day, I stumbled upon a book about veganism, devoured the whole thing in an afternoon at Barnes and Noble, and made the switch. It stuck for about six months, until I caved and went back to being vegetarian because I was a big fat baby and couldn't live without feta (what a jerk).

Living a mere five minute walk to Village, I had what I thought back then was a wealth of cool vegan things at my immediate disposal — tofu, fancy organic brands of hummus, Daiya, Vegenaise, Earth Balance, a couple of types of plant-based milk and ice creams. I remember when they first started carrying Field Roast. Half my income was cupcake money, which is crappy money, so I'd buy this stuff sparingly — half of the foods were misses back then anyway. If I wanted to eat out, I'd walk across the street to Subway and get a Veggie Delite, and this was back when guacamole wasn't a permanent fixture on the menu! Is that even a sandwich?!

This year, over spring break, my house turned into a hotel for wayward dirtbags, coming back to the homeland for a visit. I didn't have the energy to cook a greasy, carby hangover remedy for a house full of people each morning, so instead, we went to places. To eat. To eat brunch. Vegan brunch. Here. In our little burgh. A decade ago — NAY!! A mere year ago! You couldn't get much more than toast, fruit, and potatoes for breakfast. Now, you can visit **Mess** for some got-dang delicious vegan waffles with huge syrup cavities to boot (of course I brought a tiny tupperware of Earth Balance!). I haven't had a good waffle in YEARS. I ate the whole damn thing. TWICE. Crepes? So fancy I'd never even had one back when I ate eggs and dairy? **Sweet Paris** has TWO vegan crepe offerings! And a great, hearty, proper salad with nuts, seeds, and quinoa, but c'mon! CREPES! DHANG GOOD CREPES! That I didn't have to make! Or clean up after! Someone is cooking something

delicious FOR me for once!

To round out the weekend and sop up some day-drinking, a group of us went and got burgers at **Hop Daddy** — I was able to order a burger, tell them to make it vegan, and be done with it. No crazy orders, minus the bun, no this, add that, is there dairy in that sauce? Three words. Make it vegan. Things are so different now. It's a no-personality yuppie hellhole, but Century Square is a one-stop vegan-friendly food destination. For brunch, there are waffles at Mess and crepes at Sweet Paris. You can pack in the plant-based protein at **Zoe's**, make a DIY Italian burrito at **Piada**, toss back a couple of slices at **Blaze**, or grab a burger at Hopdoddy. Top it all off with a scoop of futuristic ice cream from **Sub-Zero**, and you got yourself an improving social perception of veganism (ok, now please give me free parking for life, Century Square). All we're missing is a vegan bakery (psst...any investors?! Let's put it downtown!).

When I first started getting into all of this nearly a decade ago, vegan was weird. No one WANTED to be vegan as a trend or to be cool or to get followers on a non-existent Instagram, they were compelled by their compassion and respect for other living beings. There wasn't a whole lot that was easy about it - eating out around here was hard or boring, finding good substitutes for old favorites in the grocery store was hit or miss or expensive, and people were the WORST. A lot of the people are still the worst (I'm looking at you, every friend who has ever diminished me or patted me on the head about this decision). But there's been a big shift in peoples' attitudes of the past few years, and most of the people I come across are interested, very curious, and either just had something last week that was vegan and really really good, or have a vegan friend that they think is really cool (is it me?!). Nowadays, you can grab the Impossible burger in the middle of Wyoming. You can get fantastic melting, savory, salty plant-based cheeses at the store down the road. You don't have to give up peanut butter cups or enchiladas or your fancy Lush bath bombs, or anything, except animal cruelty!

Hungry for more crumbs?

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—KATIE KILLER



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CULT OF IGNORANCE

"There is a cult of ignorance in the United States, and there always has been. The strain of anti-intellectualism has been a constant thread winding its way through our political and cultural life, nurtured by the false notion that democracy means that 'my ignorance is just as good as your knowledge.'" — Issac Asimov

The late great science fiction writer Issac Asimov said this about America decades ago, but it has never been so true as in today's political climate. We have a president who denies climate change and is too ignorant to know the difference between climate and weather. He prides himself on his witlessness and brags about being illiterate and never reading anything, something apparent from his fractured speech patterns and his clueless social media postings. It could explain his constant lying since he can't read well enough to fact-check himself.

The country is filled with people who believe that the Sandy Hook massacre is a hoax, that the Holocaust never happened, that the moon landing never took place, that the earth is flat (well, maybe not as many as there used to be). Like our dense president, millions of Americans rely on F(ake)ox News for all their information. Of course, for most Americans, depending on that television network just means they only get a deliberately-distorted view of the world. For the president though, it means he's getting national policy directions, an appallingly-sick version of the blind leading the blind.

Once, people were embarrassed by their ignorance; now they revel in it, possibly because the leader of the country stupidly disregards the findings of trained professionals in practically every field. The nation's intelligence community — loyal Americans with hundreds of years of combined experience — tell the president the results of thousands of hours of research. He carelessly says they are wrong because he knows better: his ignorance is just as good as your knowledge. Of course, this is a person who couldn't even condemn the Nazis and the KKK in Charlottesville in 2017. That should have been a no-brainer, but one has to have a brain first, it seems.

The president's loony "national emergency" on the border that calls for building a medieval wall — all of the facts from government studies (our government and his government he "leads") show there is no emergency on the border, but the Clueless in Chief says it's an emergency because he says so. Facts do not deter the oblivious. Remember when he said in 2016 Mexico would pay for the wall? Now he says he never said that despite countless television spots — including F(ake)ox News — of him spouting that very thing.

The two-year investigation by special prosecutor Robert Mueller about Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election was just completed as this was being written. It's a foregone conclusion that whatever facts Mueller and his dedicated team found — 199 criminal charges, 37 indictments or guilty pleas, five prison sentences (all the president's men) — that the president will discount the facts to distort the truth just like he has always done.

One can only hope that those who are actually intelligent that value the truth and facts will take the Mueller report and begin to assert themselves against the lying ignoramus in the White House. One can only hope. — **MIKE L. DOWNEY**

YOU WERE BRIGHT

you were bright

like the flame
that kissed each
cigarette

You were broken

like the glass
that lingered behind
after the gate at
Rev had been closed

You fought

every damn demon
that lay waiting
in your path
and there were
so many to behold

Then you laughed

and we all
laughed with you

Now you are gone

somewhere
out there
with her
counting stars

In memoriam of Steven Garrett



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DRUNK DETECTIVE STARKNESS

ALCOHOLISM AND I GET ALONG

I open my eyes this morning, hung over as shit and shaking like a motherfucker, with puke in my hair but none on the sheets? (Don't know how that happened, but meh, not the first time, probably won't be the last) and I'm all like, "So, Alcoholism, just tell me what we're doing today. I got no plans, am off work and clearly you run this shit show we call life."

Alcoholism: Ahhh, excellent. You've accepted your fate. Ok, here's what we're doing (I mean, shower, obvi but then): Go grab that back pack you've been hanging onto for a decade years because of sentimental reasons, throw it on, walk down to the gas station, get a sixer of tall boys, then we walk down to work. I know you're a little behind at work, but nobody is gonna be at the office today and you can catch up while we drink all day. We're rarely able to actually get something done at the house when there is beer and whiskey around, so we'll just go in on a Sunday.

Me: I..., what? Are you sick? Did you just ask me to do something productive? The fuck? Am I dying? Is this what cirrhosis feels like? What's going on here?

Alcoholism: No, everything is fine. I just think we should get some shit done today. What's wrong with that?

Me: Look, I've lived with you for a long time and you have never, NEVER, thought the right answer was to go to work on our off day. Sure, I've made you get up and go drunkenly to work before, but never the other way round. Are you sure you're ok? Something is off. What's your game here?

Alcoholism: Ok, I'll level with you. I know that you're so behind at work that you're about to have some of those "Oh fuck we need to sober up and actually get shit done" weeks, and I just can't abide that. So I'm trynna get us both drunk and get the work done so we can get even more drunk next week. My bad. I shoulda come clean sooner.

Me: Well, Jesus, Alcoholism, why didn't you just say that in the first place? Ya, "self-preservation," I totes get that. This is actually a genius idea. We do need to catch up, and we do our best form filling out tipsy, anyways. This is the best idea you've had in a long time. Why would you try to game me about it?

Alcoholism: I dunno, man, it's just that you normally get twitchy about work, which is totally acceptable, cause that paycheck keeps booze coming down our throat, but

I was just a little afraid you wouldn't go for it.

Me: Dear Gods. What shocks me the most is just how good at this you are? I mean, you know exactly just how far to push the envelope before we're busted.

Alcoholism: God Damn right I'm good at this. I'm a fucking professional. I've been destroying people's livers since the dawn of man, and I'll be honest with you, you were not the hardest egg to crack.

Me: Fair, I am a pretty easy lay. Aiight, let's get to walking.

So we do. We strap that backpack on, roll on down to 7-11, buy a case of beer and head up to the office. But there is just this one small problem, we had to pass a bar on our way to work, and Alcoholism thought it would be a genius idea to stop in for a cold beer and a shot of whiskey, but we had this backpack on with an 18 in it, which you clearly can't walk into a bar with, even at 11:20AM. So we decide, "Hey, we'll just leave this backpack in the woods real quick, while we re-jump start our morning. Which sounded smart, until when I came out of the bar and there is some homeless dude trynna pick up my bag. He had his hand on the strap, when I rolled up and was all like, "Hey, that's mine, buddy."

And luckily, he was cool about it. Just asked me for a smoke and a light, which I gave him, and I was all like, "Oh, it's cool man. Thanks for not making a thing of it. You want a couple beers?"

Which he took, and I kept walking on down to work. Cranked out some paperwork, drunk as shit, when a couple hours later, while I'm drinking my ass off at work, I hear my boss's key in the door, and I'm scrambling to get all these empties under my desk, which, thank the God's, I manage to do. And I play it off much better than any 8AM drunk should have been able to, and she gets what she needs and bounces.

And I kept my job, cause who the fuck gets fired from their job on their day off? But Jesus Butt Fucking Christ, people, I used to think that those who wore suits to work were somehow more responsible than the rest of us, until I became one. So just remember that lawyer or tax guy or anyone with a "real" job may or may not have had it out with a homeless person over a back pack full of beer in the woods before they got to the office. —
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STILL DRINKING

In celebration of Drunk Detective Starkness creating a "Commandments of Drunkenness" living document (see March 2019 Vol. 11 Issue 3), I have examined my own heart and pale wisdom to add eight commandments to the 979 Repscriptures. This was a grand idea provided by Brother Starkness. I hope to see this document grow. For now, go forth and be blessed in thy revelry, dear lambs.

1. Thou shalt not disparage thy drunk-mate's brew choice. Pumpkinator? Rejoice! Lone Star? Rejoice! Mad Dog 20/20? Rejoice—and auditioneth new drunk-mates!

2. Thou shalt not becometh bougie, forgetting the brew of thy youth. Miller Lite ever was and is and will be a solid brew.

3. If thou inviteth thine drunk-mates to thine dwelling for debauchery and cheer, thou shalt provideth salty, crunchy (and "Salacious!") treats. Hey, ye called together this congregation. Loveth thy drunk-mates as thyself.

4. Thou shalt not blameth thine jackassery upon thy drunk-sauce. That shit resideth within ye. Own it. Repent. Drinketh anew!

5. If thy drunk-mate groweth nostalgic in his drunkenness for "guilty pleasures", thou shalt joineth him in such revelry, even if it meaneth singing along enthusiastically to the Eagles' *The Long Run* album all the dam-neth way through. Doeth it! Thy embarrassments have — and shall again — exceedeth the eleventh volume.

6. If thy drunk-mate — while drunk — layeth his hand upon thy loving lady's bosom, thou hast permission to turneth his cheek with thine fist. If your loving lady welcometh his hand upon her bosom a second time, thou hast permission to banish her to the wilderness and pronounceth their shame to the nations. After such displays of thine anger, thou mightest begin the process of forgiveness — but don't be a fool. Once a bosom hath been so caressed, neither the hand nor the bosom shall rest in their parting.

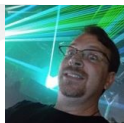
7. If whilst drunk thy toucheth any bosom not committed to thee, thou shalt keep that shit to thyself — or putteth it a song real sly-like. Thine intimacies, whilst so sloppy, doth not deserve a boast — as surely, thy manhood mayeth be crushed to heareth her report.

8. If whilst drunk thy find thine drunk-sauce maketh thee sadder or madder than gladder, thou shalt ghost the premises. Thy congregation needeth not thine tears and jeers souring their cheers. Amen and Selah.

—KEVIN STILL

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THE GOYCO FAMILY FART CHALLENGES REASONS



The Goyco Family Fart Challenges Reasons:

1. Because I can.
2. Because they are willing.
3. Developing sphincter control for the ability to hold 'em in at weddings, libraries, future dates and dentist appointments (or let them out with flair when appropriate).
4. Agility and situational awareness.

Look, we're homeschooling. We can do whatever we want. We can even make it a credit. Farting Mastery 101. This will fit in nicely with the rest of the curriculum: Music Appreciation 1 and 2, Friendship 101, YouTube Psychology, Rock Band 101, NPC Interactional Research, Transient Interpersonal Communications 102, Introduction to Fallacious Arguments, Tanked Monologue Dissection, and the dreaded Intro to Boredom (which we haven't started yet).

The fart challenges ramp in difficulty. This is not a complete list, and there will be more added as we think of them, including Public Releasing Dares, Team Discharging, No Interruption While Speaking, and No Acknowledgement Delivery.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

The presenter must announce the expulsion before it happens. This can be a word or phrase like, "Kung Fu!" or "It's happening!" or "Vegans Rule!" This can also be combined with flailing of the arms, a finger gun, a dab, or even a bodybuilding stance. Anything goes here, and extra credit for creativity.

THE TONE CHANGE

The presenter must change the tone mid-release, changing the tone either up or down. Extra credit for 3x or 4x tonality arpeggiation stair-stepping.

THE PAUSE

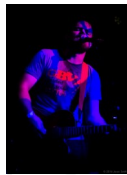
The presenter must make a distinct pause in the discharge. Extra credit for multiple pauses, patterns, and combining the tone changes.

THE OTHER ROOM

The presenter must excuse themselves to an adjoining room, but then evict the flatus forcefully, as to make it audible to the people in the other room.

Let me know if you have any suggestions to help bring up these well rounded kids. — JORGE GOYCO

G-TONE
SPEAKER CABINETS



BARS AND OTHER PLACES

Over Chinese New Year weekend my girlfriend suggested that we visit a speakeasy in Downtown Austin she'd been to once in college. We both have an affinity for such bars after having a lovely night at Volstead's Emporium in Minneapolis last summer. In undergrad I did not care much for cocktails due to both my ignorance as to what to order as well as my wallet, and there wasn't a speakeasy-type bar in College Station (or perhaps I wasn't cool enough to know where it was located). The first one of the sort I ever went to was the Scat Jazz Lounge in Fort Worth. Some friends of friends knew of the place and led us around the corner from Sundance Square to an empty alley with an inapposite neon "SCAT" sign and an arrow pointing downward to a single door, which was actually to an elevator instead a room. Once we were downstairs in the basement we passed the dress code and were allowed in. I enjoyed the band despite being only a little jazz boy, and I didn't look at the bill until the next morning.

For this occasion we made a reservation at Midnight Cowboy and hailed a shared-ride Lyft for downtown. Neither of us had seen the movie, but best we could tell there was not going to be a quiz on it for admittance. In all my previous times requesting a shared TNC ride I had had the fortune of having the car all to myself for a couple bucks cheaper. Naturally this was the time that my luck had run out. The sedan was small and I squeezed into the backseat with the two passengers already seated. The driver was nice but chose not to have the radio on — perfectly fine by me given it's their car — while the two other passengers said not a word the entire time and just played block breaker games on their phones. Their stop was first, and it turned out they were going to Rain over on 5th Street. We were perplexed and guessed that they had decided to save all of their energy for the club.

Our Lyft then took us as close as they could get to the blocked off area of 6th Street. Our reservation was at 11:30, so naturally the corridor was bustling on a Saturday night. 6th did not seem like the natural area for a cocktail bar to be located, but we followed the directions and GPS to make sure we wouldn't miss it. At last we found a single door with no sign or visible windows and a small red light illuminated above. Next to the door is an apartment-style buzzer with a list of silly names by each button. Per our directions we rang for "Harry Craddock" and a few seconds latter the door opened with a host inviting us in once they check our name.

The inside of Midnight Cowboy is a long narrow room with a range of décor styles included to make the place feel like it was thrown together out of necessity. One wall has exposed light-shaded brick while two other

walls have different floral wallpapers and old rusted ceiling tiles. The center aisle goes between a few two-person booths or four-person booths with tall leather backs and long mirrors above them. The small bar is in the back so that the server can go back and forth to retrieve your drinks. Like any good speakeasy the ambience is dark enough to feel cozy but aided by enough lighting fixtures to see the whole space. Fortunately the walls are thick enough that you could barely make out some type of thumping club music adjacent to the far end of the bar through the Cowboy's own playlist, which interestingly enough seemed to be the Radiohead Pandora channel on the night of our visit. There were some good '90s and early '00s rock tunes for the most part, and we got to argue about the proper pronunciation of the word "pulp" when "Disco 2000" came on. I recall getting really excited later in the evening when "Rebel Rebel" played.

At each booth there is a menu stylized like a passport, and each house drink has its own page, country of origin, travel illustration, and list of ingredients. Some of the passport pages have a special sticker on them which indicate that they will be made table-side on a drink cart. Naturally the first round of drinks we ordered were from stickered pages. When you do so the server brings back the cart and explains each ingredient that goes into the drink as he's doing it, a nice history lesson that you won't remember the next morning. All the liquors that went into our drinks were labels that I had never heard of, which of course makes you feel even more fancy. The first cocktail I ordered was England-inspired containing both gin and whiskey, poured into a small decanter that you then used to pour in small wide cup that would seemingly be more appropriate for an Americano. Whatever it was called it did the job and then some. Later on I got more adventurous and ordered a South American drink that included crushed ants on the rim of the glass and was delivered in a glass box filled with smoke. The ants were strange but the drink was quite tasty, and reaching my hand into the smoky cube to retrieve it was quite satisfactory.

We hit 1:30 and headed back outside, enjoying our stay to point that we forgot the chaotic riff-raff that awaited. It had been at least a few years, maybe several since I'd been outside on 6th when it's at its peak level of revelry. The music blasting from the bars and clubs lining both sides created a cacophony that seemed to be five times louder from when we arrived a couple hours ago. I felt very old and we made a beeline south away from clubgoers and a man wearing a yellow python. We got an unshared Lyft that arrived in less than two minutes, and on the journey back our driver told us about our spirit animals. — **TODD HANSEN**

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PEDAL PUSHING: IPOD RESURRECTION

I love iPods. I like having a selection of songs available to my earbuds, car stereo, and office speakers without the necessity to download or stream anything. Imagine my woe when my ten year old 160GB iPod Classic started to ail. I knew though, thanks to the interwebs, that not only could I get a fresh battery loaded up but I had read about folks that hot rodded their iPods with solid state drives and increased memory. I had decided when my iPod's time had come that I would send the mighty Hydrogen Jukebox (my loving sobriquet for my iPod) to get the super soldier serum as well as a new battery. And that's just what I did last month.

I grew up in the Walkman Era. Wherever I went I had to make sure that a.) I had my Walkman with me, b.) had fresh batteries and backups, c.) my headphones actually worked, and d.) I packed a selection of fresh tunes, depending upon how long I was going to be out. It was section d.) that was often the toughest choice. I'd often have to have a backup with me to ensure that I had enough cassettes, or later, CD's and/or minidisks. Often times if I was going to be gone for a long time it made more sense to have mix tapes/CD's/MD's with me rather than full cassettes to save space. Oh, the important shit that Gen X and Y peoples had to figure out.

The iPod era meant that people like me who loved to carry a Walkman around just hit the jackpot. We could now carry around several dozen backpacks full of tunes in one cigarette pack-sized box. Imagine our delight when the iPods became smaller than packs of gum! But then Apple decided that they didn't want you to own your own files. They wanted you to pay them continuously for access to the music. The tech industry got onboard and streaming music rather than having it on your device became the norm. This is meant that listeners could have access to any music, provided it was licensed by their preferred music streaming service AND one had access to the internet AND one had not run out of data for the month AND one had paid their subscription that month. I do not stream. I like having a device that stands alone for music. A hard backup to the stream. I have thousands of records, tapes, and CD's that stand as the true backup to those electronic files. People like me are shit out of luck in the streaming age.

But there are more people like me out there who want to salvage the iPod. They are way smarter than me about technology and figured out ways to bring the lowly iPod, not really improved upon since the late 2000's, into the modern age of cheap solid state memory. It is to these folks I went to as a resource for how to soup up my iPod. The method involves replacing the old school spinning magnetic hard drive that was at the heart of the iPod Classic and Mini line with solid state memory. The hard drive is removed and replaced by a small harness that allows for 1-4 connections to SD cards via the iFlash Adapter, depending on which harness you buy. I bought the Duo which, as you may guess, can take two cards.

SD cards come now in capacity all the way up to 1TB of memory. Of course, you pay \$\$\$\$\$\$ for the larger memory sizes. I decided to run two 256GB cards in series. That was less expensive than purchasing one 512GB card. I could've gone whole-hog and loaded up my iPod with enough memory to choke a horse but there is a catch to hot rodding the iPod. If one uses iTunes for iPod maintenance and loading (and I do) then, depending upon model of iPod, iTunes will limit your iPod to recognizing a certain number of files.

For the old school 80GB and older iPods that limit is 25,000 files; for my 7th gen 160GB it is 50,000 files. That means that even if I have a terabyte of memory in my iPod I could only load 50,000 mp3's in it. Even if that took up only half my available memory I would still be brickwalled to 50,000 songs. That definitely factored into my decision, as did my budget.

I also upgraded the backpiece to my iPod to allow for increased space inside the iPod itself. Not only does this allow for a larger battery and the space taken up by the harness and SD cards but it also gave me an opportunity to "customize" my back panel. Mine says it is a 512GB iPod model with a new serial number. There's also a lot more room for the tiny DJ inside my iPod to

move around. I also upgraded the battery which was the initial reason I embarked on this journey.

There are lots of tutorials for how to crack open an iPod to upgrade parts DIY style. At Christmas time I attempted to replace a battery on a 30GB iPod for my son. I gouged myself, broke the tool provided with the battery, and wound up using guitar picks to break into the damn thing...and it still didn't work because I bought the wrong battery. iPods have delicate, tiny insides and unless one is super confident in their Operation skills perhaps performing iSurgery is not your best bet. I knew when I went this route with my beloved Hydrogen Jukebox I would need to have someone do it for me. And I did. There are services online that will do all of this for you. You tell them how much storage you want, send them the iPod, pay them, and then they hot rod it and send it back. That runs anywhere from \$200 to \$350 depending on storage. I bought all the parts myself and had a friend with iSurgery experience to do it for me and saved about \$100 that way.

In action the Hot Rodded iPod (now dubbed Hydrogen Jukebox Deluxe) works pretty much the way it did before. It took me HOURS to load up 340GB of tunes to the SD cards. It acts as usual but I noticed right away an incredible improvement in battery response. Turns out that not only do I have a nice fresh battery to use but also spinning hard drives use a lot more power than randomly accessing solid state memory. I've listened to mine about 20 hours in the last few days and I'm still at about 80% power. I'd say it's a success and I highly recommend the process to those of you, like myself, who still love they iPods and want to upgrade them and keep them rolling into the 2020's. — KELLY MENACE



TRIGGER WARNING – SELF HARM

Locked in my bathroom, I pull at the stitching, the color of old blood, grooving over my wrist bone, wincing as the thread moves, chiffon-soft. I pull until I don't wince anymore, until I don't feel anything, and tonight I go too far, because I'm feeling too much.

My stitching comes loose. I exhale as my mottled left hand falls off, tumbling onto the tile. Bone juts out, the color of murky seashell.

For just a moment, my whole body feels high.

In the locker room, I change into a sweater with bell sleeves to hide last night's pulling, even though we're running the mile today.

"There's a loose stitch on your sweater," a girl says. I look up to find her staring at me as I finish the last lace of my sneakers.

Jameson Lee. We had history together, freshman year. She has liquid black eyes that I find myself drowning in. It can't be a coincidence that her hair is the same color as the liquor cap.

"So?" I say, because the stitching is from my clavicle, not my sweatshirt, because I have stitches all over my body, keeping me together.

"It looks like mine," says Jameson, and then she shows me her arm.

What once was a huge, vertical gash has now been sewn up. The stitches are almost ready to come out. But she'll always have a scar. "They put me in a place for a while but I'm doing better now. I'm not crazy."

The saliva in my throat gets thicker. Everyone's gone to class and we're alone. She showed me hers, so I decide to show her mine.

I lift up my sweater and pull down my shirt, so that just my bra is showing. My normally sluggish heart is beating so fast the skin on top of it pulses in and out, in and out.

I let her see the deep v across my chest. The stitching goes all the way up to my neck.

Jameson stares, bewildered. She's the first person I show who doesn't run.

We meet up after school that day, under the oak tree.

"Did you have an accident?" she asks me.

I tell her about my parents. All about how they tried IVF. How it didn't work and they couldn't afford any more treatments and so my mom decided to build me from spare parts in the hospital fridge and fresh corpses waiting for the morgue.

PULLING

"Badass," says Jameson.

I never thought of it like that, before Jameson.

"My dad left. He thought she was crazy."

"You mean fucking awesome," says Jameson, flicking the ash from her cigarette.

Before I can talk myself down from it, I unroll my sleeve. I unwrap the parchment from my stump, still tender. I show her the bone and I tell her what I've never told anyone before.

"I pull my stitches. The other night I pulled too much."

I quickly wrap it back up, already feeling the urge again.

"How long since you last pulled?" Jameson asks softly.

"Three days."

"Tomorrow will be four."

The way she says it, so sure, so confident, shocks me. I look up at her.

"How long since you last cut?" I ask.

"Twenty-seven days," says Jameson.

After that, we meet under the oak tree every day after school. Sometimes we read poetry, like Anne Sexton, or listen to music. Jameson likes Julien Baker. I'm never sure what to suggest.

But we always start with the question.

"How long, Yaz?"

"Sixty-one days," I say, but today my voice falters.

"Okay," says Jameson. "Tell me."

She always knows. I tell her about the feeling, how I had to sit on my good hand to keep from doing it. "Tomorrow will be sixty-two," she reminds me. It's been eighty-eight for her.

"When you get to one hundred we should throw a party, or something," I say.

"A party?" she laughs. "Who would we invite?"

I crack up.

"A small party. A two-person party."

"Rumple Minze in cocoa. It's the best," says Jameson. "Trust me."

I do. I trust her more than anyone.

It's the second day of November, the day of the first frost, when Jameson ditches me.

I check my phone again. It's been thirty-eight minutes since the last bell rang. I'm starting to feel bad, how I feel when I want to pull.

I call her when my stomach is in my throat. When she doesn't pick up, I get sick behind our tree.

"Ninety-seven," I answer for her, my whole body shaking, scared.

I go to the hospital before it's dark, the bile still sticky in my mouth. I get stares as I walk down the hall, because of my mismatched features, my mottled skin.

My fingers itch. Without Jameson, the bad feelings curl around my thoughts.

You can't do this. You can't do it without her.

I want to scream down the hallway so that she'll hear me, so that she'll know how much I need her, but the words unravel before they can come out.

I turn back, my fingers burning. I look for a bathroom to begin my pulling. I want to yank the stitching loose from my collarbone until I come undone, completely, all at once, and then I smell something warm and sweet and familiar, and it sends salt tears rushing down my face.

When I finally get to Room 214, there is a waifish girl on the bed, her wrists restrained.

"It's a little much," says Jameson. Her voice is hoarse.

I pull up a chair and hold up the cup of hot cocoa from the hospital cafeteria.

"It doesn't have any schnapps," I say.

"Can I please have it anyway?"

I give her a sip. "I fucked up, Yaz."

"It's okay. How long?"

Jameson shakes her head, overcome by sobs. "Tomorrow will be two," I remind her, confident because she can't be, and I reach for her hand under the restraints and squeeze her, hard, because right now it's all I have to give her, and I can only hope it's enough. —
STARKNESS

MUELLER TIMED OUT

At last the Special Counsel Investigation into whether or not the Donald Trump campaign colluded with the Russian government to interfere with the 2016 presidential election and whether or not the President and/or his people conspired to obstruct the investigation has concluded. And the verdict is? Well, we kinda don't really know. Special Counsel Robert Mueller delivered a 400+ page document to the Department of Justice, dropped it on Attorney General William Barr's mahogany desk with a decided thud, bowed, and walked out there to crawl into a bottle to celebrate. Mueller has been mum ever since and has decided to let the report do his talking for him. And as to whether or not anyone but Barr will ever hear Mueller's words, well, that's anybody's guess.

Mueller decided to duck back into the shadows very quietly without making any sort of public judgment or interpretation of his findings. He decided to leave that to the DOJ. Barr responded in kind by taking 48 hours to come back with a four page summary of the report. In this summary Barr interpreted Mueller's findings as to have found no evidence that the President or his campaign actively colluded with the Russian government. On the issue of whether or not there was obstruction of justice Mueller remained ominously silent. The President and his staff took this four page report and sang hallelujah over it, spinning the narrative that the report was a bust and Trump was completely exonerated of wrong doing. End of the story. When Trump tweeted a thousand times "NO COLLUSION" he was right and the lying Democrats were all wrong.

Except they weren't exactly. No one but a select few have seen the full Mueller report. Even in Atty Gen Barr's precis he says that the report does not exonerate Trump of wrong-doing. And we need only look at how many people Mueller indicted and ultimately convicted or pled out that were connected to Trump's campaign. While there may not have been proof of the sort that stands up in a criminal court it's clear that Mueller thought something bad happened. But as it turns out, where there's smoke sometimes there is no clear fire.

That anyone thought Trump was dumb enough not to cover his tracks again shows just how underestimated Trump is as a business person. He has been performing morally corrupt and shady deals and activities for longer than I've been alive and no one has been able to take him down yet. We ALL know Trump and his people are crooks. But we knew that three years ago and enough people looked the other way and pulled the lever to vote for him. And if Democrats don't get past running morally against Trump they will lose again in 2020. The entire world knows Trump is a trash human. Even supporters will quietly acknowledge that fact. But if getting in bed with the Devil gains you the judiciary (which is perhaps the strongest of the three branches of our government) for a generation of solid right wing court decisions then you very happily climb in. I am sure that upon a full reading of the Mueller report one will find more damning nuggets. But at this point they really add it up to bupkus. It tells us nothing we don't already know. It's time that Democrats focus on being a better choice for voters than trying to tell people that Trump is awful. Health care, debt relief, economic stimulus, jobs packages, immigration reform...that's what matters. Let's let Mueller time elapse. — *KELLY MENACE*

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THE SHOOBIEDOOBIES FIRST ALBUM

If you've been following The Shoobiedoobies, you've seen quite an evolution. It was around three years ago at a LoudFest that Livie first screamed her heart out on stage at the Stafford, which ended up being the impetus for starting something. (Thanks firstly to the Loudfest crew for putting together the best thing ever, and thanks to David Lynch for suggesting Livie get up on stage with me.)

Long story short, we recorded our first album at Wonko's studio (in his house) in January (2019). Amazing experience. I was a bit concerned with how it was all gonna go and if the girls were gonna be able to keep their energy and interest up, but yeah, they totally did.

Maybe it was Wonko's know-how and expertise, maybe it was the Asian snacks we brought, maybe it was Katie's Salacious cookies she made for us, maybe it was Zoot's encouraging barks, maybe it was Bret's nervous energy, maybe it was my insistence that we NOT try to be "perfect".

Whatever it was, it went great. Wonko walked us through it all with ease, making sure we got everything he needed and more. He's somehow achieved a "live" sounding recording that's loud, warm and really stimulating. We are super happy and super impressed, and we hope you will be too.

One night at the Sugar Shack, Katie, Wonko and I were running along some rabbit trails and the trouble of picking album cover art came up. I'm a designer, and I can come up with designs all day long, and I love doing that, and in fact, I had already started and had a handful of potential covers. Wonko challenged my thought by saying, "Why do you need to choose just one cover?"

Thus started the undertaking to come up with 50 designs for the album. I started asking the kids for designs (several are artists) and was coming up with a few on my own. One of them I came up with is my attempt at a "terrible" design. It's terrible, but it turned into a well thought-out parody of a bad design (Comic Sans, Emojis, etc.), and that became cool (but still terrible).

Then I started asking artist friends to submit art,

promising to reciprocate in any way then needed in the future. This turned into a really cool endeavor. I got one from Katie Killer, one from thatdudebrothgar (Dakota), Beast Syndicate (Jeremy), and my friend Bret even made us into X-COM Avatars.

I've created a "Lucha Libre" version, a Houston "Pen & Pixel" Gangster Rap version (with guns and bills), and even a version featuring Colin and Turtle! We are way

past 50 covers and will need to weed some out, but our goal is to make it difficult for you guys to pick which one you want to buy, you know, because we're assholes.

We called the album *Counting the Sun*, which came about while playing a Family Feud board game. The question was: Things you can do to pass the time while stuck in traffic. Sofie slammed the buzzer and yelled out, "Count the sun!"

Epic.

The hope is to have the CDs done by April (hopefully by the time you are reading this), and we are really

excited for you to hear it and see the covers and keep coming to our shows and keep watching us evolve.

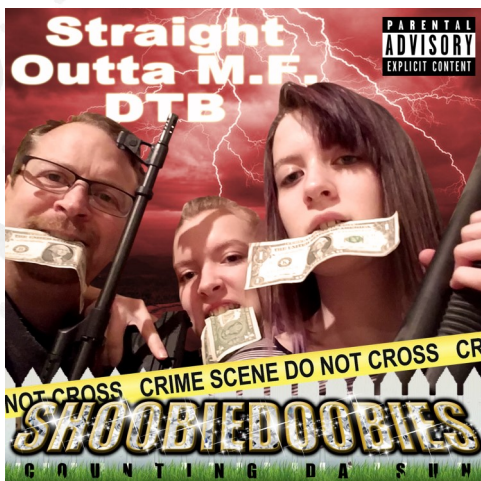
We're pretty stoked that we have an audience. I mean, it helps that we don't TOTALLY suck.

We're doing the best we can...well, a little less than that.

So, again, a super extra big thanks to Wonko. He's captured our sound incredibly and really polished the shit out of our less than impeccable attempts. We LOVED recording with him.

A little bit of a smaller thanks (but still a BIG thanks nonetheless) to all of you who have encouraged us to keep going. If you've come to one of our shows, sat outside in the courtyard at Revs and wondered who was playing but couldn't be bothered to peek inside, really, really wanted to come to a show but something kept coming up, or even just saw a poster and considered coming to a Shoobiedoobies show, you rock!

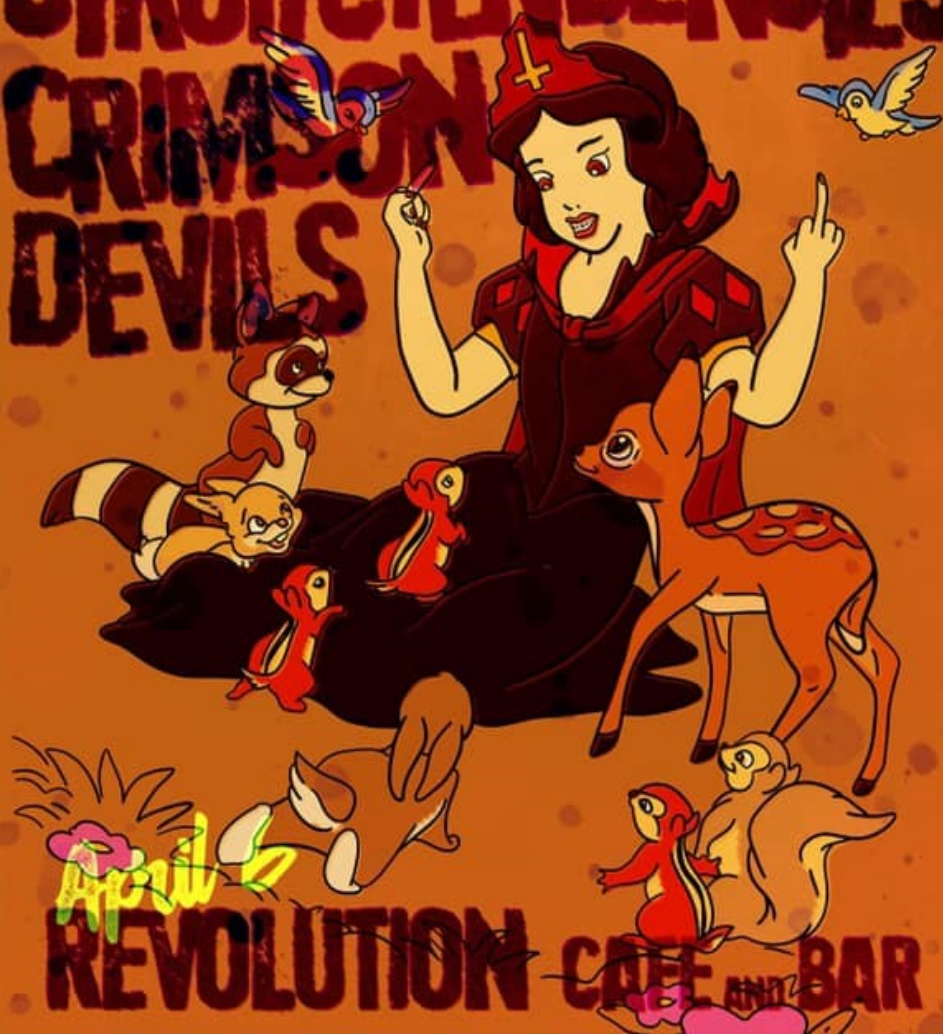
Also, buy our album. It will keep us supplied with Skittles and pre-show tacos. — JORGE GOYCO



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Cindy's Birthday Bash

SHOUBIE DOUBIES
ELECTRIC ASTRONAUT
SYKOTICTENDENCIES
CRIMSON
DEVILS



April 6
REVOLUTION CAFE AND BAR

Musicians being creators, there are excellent autobiographies that aren't (entirely) ghostwritten. I'm not going to talk about those. Songwriters trying their hand at poetry is no surprise: **Bob Dylan's** *Tarantula* (written 1966, delayed by motorcycle accident until 1971) and parts of **Patti Smith's** *Babel* (1978) are prose-pohéème fiction, and many — figures as diverse as **Jewel**, **Tom Waits** and **Henry Rollins** — have published chapbooks of voiiiise. Not writing about those either.

I'm also going to leave aside most one-offs: **Leonard Cohen's** amphetamine-stoked *Beautiful Losers* (1966); **Gil Scott-Heron's** lower-Manhattan crime novel *The Vulture* (written when he was 19, published 1970); **Steve Earle's** Hank Williams-haunted *I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive* (2011); **Roseanne Cash's** short story collection *Bodies of Water* (1996) and children's book *Penelope Jane: A Fairy's Tale* (2000); and **Woody Guthrie's** *House of Earth* (written in 1947, published posthumously by a Johnny Depp imprint 2013).

Finally, I'm not the right person to tackle the constellation of publications around *The Umbrella Academy* comic book series, whose driving force has been **Gerard Way of My Chemical Romance**.

This is a subjective survey of established musicians who have turned to writing novels as a sustained parallel activity.

Nick Cave, *And the Ass Saw the Angel* (1989); *The Death of Bunny Munro* (2009). The debut novel, with its title borrowed from the Book of Numbers, confirms that Cave writes as you might expect. In the Prologue, couched in internal rhymes and alliteration, his writing literally takes wing: the setting is described in cinematic style, from the perspective of two flying crows looking down upon the valley town of Ukulore. As the story proper begins, Cave, spinning Faulkner by way of Colorado's **16-Horsepower** and **Slim Cessna's Auto Club**, switches to a biblical, apocalyptic Southern Gothic atmosphere, one reminiscent of his **Bad Seeds** "Swampland" (*Mutiny!* 1983). The high and the low, the ornate and the foul, are wed together to impose upon us the drama and the absurdity of life indissoluble. In a Chevy-strewn junkyard, twins are torn from the belly of their drunken mother by an animal-torturecontraption-trapper father. Euclid, using a code the boys developed in the womb, raps out a message to his brother on the side of their crib-crates...and in the silence of no-response learns of sibling's passing at birth. "The Firstborn is Dead" indeed. Cave's flamboyant, elegiac vocabulary contrasts with the mute, uneducated Euclid Eucrow whose interior monologue recounts his traumatized, violent existence.

Peter Farris, *Last Call for the Living* (2012): Farris took over as frontman (2003-9) for a sludgemetal band in Connecticut called **CABLE**. CABLE's final album was the

dreaded "Concept Album" effort, a **Driveby-Truckers**-gone-stoner-rock-opera called *Failed Convict* (2009). That growing literary urge led Farris out of the band and into novel writing — the transition is quite concrete, since lyrics from that last record are placed at the head of each novel chapter. To date, he has just this one novel, but given that it has already been translated abroad, others are likely to follow. Farris is hard to pin down. He knows rural Georgia and booze-soaked deadends, has researched the Aryan Brotherhood and prison culture, is an avowed gun aficionado, has worked menial jobs but also was educated at Yale and toured as lead singer of his band. One of the strengths of this novel is that he doesn't give away his views on the social questions that arise. It's the reader's task to make those decisions. The most famous scene from *Last Call for the Living* takes place in a Pentecostal country church with snake handlers and all that folderol. I won't spoil it, especially since it's one of the few that didn't totally convince me. The one that got my attention is the opening. Farris worked as a bankteller and was victim of an armed robbery early in his job. The novel walks us coldly, methodically through a fictional version of that experience, like a witness reconstitution recited in court. Equally impressive and unsettling are the scenes in the mountain cabin where the gunman has sequestered a hostage — and his meth-smoking gf named Hummingbird really cannot keep her shit together...it's *Deliverance* illustrated by Ralph Steadman and I'll say no more than that.

Kinky Friedman, *A Case of Lone Star* (1987), *Elvis, Jesus & Coca Cola* (1993), *The Love Song of J. Edgar Hoover* (1996), etc., as paper & ebooks. In addition to Friedman's memoirs, travelogues, collected articles (*Drinker with a Writing Problem*, 2011), political musings, the songwriter of "They Ain't Makin' Jews Like Jesus Any More" has penned a dozen+ crime novels, most of which feature his cigar-munching fictional twin & backing band **The Texas Jewboys** as crimesolvers. Some of the humor hasn't dated well — what tried to be non-PC a couple decades ago just looks lazy and dumb now — but other raunchy, willfully absurd sex-drugs-rocknroll scenes still click. The Kinkster is forced to combat everyone from Nazis to Martians in these tales, but the Man-Who-Ran-for-Texas-Guv ultimately shows us much more of Greenwich Village than Austin.

Willy Vlautin, *The Motel Life* (2006); *Northline* (2008); *Lean on Pete* (2010); *The Free* (2014); *Don't Skip out on Me* (2018). **Richmond Fontaine**, who regularly trekked down from Portland to perform at SXSW in the early 2000s, were one of the good versions of the bounty-become-plague that was **alt-co**. Likeable people, clever writing, good whiskey tunes. And with song titles like "\$87 Dollars and a Guilty Conscience that Gets Worse the Longer I Go" and "We Used to Think the Freeway

Sounded Like a River," it was easy to imagine the band might be hiding a writer. Vlautin now sings with the **Delines**, but the balance has shifted over to his career as a novelist. *The Motel Life* was made into a major movie (Emile Hirsch, Dakota Fanning and **Kris Kristofferson**) and he now enjoys an international reputation. His approach dips into the long great tradition of American regional realism, with the settings anchored in the Western states.

Wesley Stace, *Misfortune* (2005), *By George* (2007), *Charles Jessold, Considered as a Murderer* (2010), and *Wonderkid* (2014). Cambridge English lit grad, curator of Wesley Stace's Cabinet of Wonders museum and singer-songwriter, **John Wesley Harding** has reverted to his given name for his novels, all of which have garnered international acclaim. His themes cover a lot of ground, ranging from Victorian cross-dressing (*Misfortune*) and a traveling ventriloquism show (*By George*) to an opera composer-cum-murderer...who commits suicide (*Charles Jessold*).

Sven Regener, *Berlin Blues* (transl. from German, *Herr Lehmann*, 2001). Bremen-born Regener was the lead singer of the German band **Element of Crime**, whose 1980s-90s LPs swirled German music hall traditions into raspy **Dylanesque** Americana (see, for example, "Mach das Licht aus wenn du gehst" [Turn the light off when you go]). Given that the band's name is borrowed from a 1984 Lars von Trier film, artistic if not literary ambitions were evident from the outset. But Regener's work is nowhere near as tortured or arcane as von Trier's; *Berlin Blues* sold a million copies in Germany and brought to the big screen (unreleased in the US). American readers should enjoy his local's knowledge of after-hours Kreuzberg, the formerly isolated corner of West Berlin which became Berlin's "Brooklyn" after the Wall came down. Early on is one of the novel's best scenes, where an extremely drunk Mr. Lehmann finds his staggering path home blocked by a growling bulldog, who refuses to give an inch. Doggo merriment ensues. Later chapters veer off into the political subcultures that varied from bar to bar in the days before gentrification hit. Regener has published other similarly semi-autobiographical novels but they haven't been translated into English.

Richard Fariña, *Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up to Me* (1966). Fariña's famed '60s cult novel is a one-offer solely because he one-offed himself by falling off the back of a motorcycle after a publication party in NYC. A decade after Kerouac's major books, contemporary with Tom Wolfe's koolaidacidtests and Ken Kesey's two biggest novels, Fariña was to be the next hipster headliner. He had the credentials for it: his wife **Mimi** was **Joan Baez's** little sister, he was very tight with **Bob Dylan** in their folk explosion Greenwich Village days, and

famous recluse Thomas Pynchon was the best man at his wedding (Fariña & Pynchon were at Cornell together). In addition to

Fariña's famous contacts and elite education, he could claim working class roots (born in Flatbush), activist exploits (he went to N. Ireland and was attributed shadowy contacts with the IRA, was later arrested in the US protesting for women's rights), and was a virtuoso on the dulcimer, a full-fledged musician in his own right accompanying **Mimi Baez**.

How has *Been Down So Long...* held up? Its real value is as an eyewitness account of the '60s, written in the middle of the muddle, without the benefit of knowing any of history's judgments on their choices. It's all here: rampant drug experimentation, orgies, university authorities chased from their offices, a Hunter S./Bill Murray-esque disruption of a fraternity dinner, fringe shamanic art scenes, VW vans, work-allergic youth sponging off wealthy parents, black civil rights movements and social life still segregated to the college town's fringes, and an impressively sketchy, wildly dangerous trek to revolutionary Cuba (which, given Fariña's strongly anti-ideology bent, consists of opportunistic drug-runners and heavily-armed killers and not saviors of the Caribbean's downtrodden). Coming off as a leftwing anarcho-libertarian totally dismissive of the student protest movement and Third World liberation politics, Fariña cannot be accused of tidying up the portrait.

Unless one has a real investment in '60s subculture history, however, most readers will find it tiresome and badly dated. Style: it's an easily-recognizable mishmash typical of the era's Beat-inspired literary magazines, rife with references to Greek mythology and alternative paths to knowledge (the main character is nicknamed *Gnossos*), lots of slang in prose-poem density, high and low registers jumbled irreverently, hipster pretentiousness coupled with the collegiate (sophomoric) humor of Pynchon's early *The Crying of Lot 49* (1965). Content: *Much* more problematic are the novel's dreadful sexual politics. To be clear, this was a significant blindspot plaguing virtually every '60s leftwing movement throughout the West: male Marxists in the UK, male student activists in Paris, and the male leaders of US protest and artistic subcultures were often obliviously, openly misogynistic, when not simply indifferent to women's issues. (Feminism's mainstreaming took more courage than most of us recall.) To be more specific, Fariña's protagonist — the character we are directed to identify with — engages in undisguisedly rape-y behavior on several occasions. These violent, nonconsensual scenes were no doubt intended to appear edgy and ribald but now are merely flat-out disqualifying actions from our novel's "hero." And they aren't isolated "lapses" in judgment — the entire *dénouement* of the book hinges on a truly misguided quest to exact sexual revenge on a woman.

Matthew Shiskapeu is an admirer of the 60s but not at the price of silencing missteps of this significance.

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ASK CREEPY HORSE

LET GO

I'm nearing ten months of sobriety. I've gone through a lot of work on myself with a therapist and a psychiatrist. I'm properly medicated. As my mind undergoes an amazing transformation I can admit, I've changed quite a bit. I feel for the better. Honestly, I feel for the best.

Change is important. As Muhammad Ali once said, "The man who views the world at 50 the same as he did at 20 has wasted 30 years of his life."

We should change. Grow. Evolve. If not we become stagnant, repressed and downright hostile to change. In making personal growth, much like the first fish that crawled out of the ocean and saw land for the first time, you sometimes see things differently than you had ever before.

In making the changes that were pertinent to my growth, I began to notice some of my relationships were incredibly toxic. Now I've been ghosted by people before and that really sucks and can be hurtful. I may not have known then, but years later it did help me as a person and moved me forward despite not realizing it at the time or admitting it years later.

I'm not saying to drop people like a bag of potatoes but sometimes letting go of someone may be the very best thing for you and for them.

For years I'd hang on to "friends" I was friends with simply because they were friends with me. I held on to romantic relationships I had no interest in simply because the other person loved me. I held on to very toxic people and very toxic relationships because I was a toxic person and was "accepted" the way I was.

I recently hung out with a version of who I was just a year ago. The experience was wholly eye-opening. I didn't like what I saw and I am more than grateful to have had many amazing and positive people that did step in my life and knew I was worth far more than what I was giving.

Part of a program that I'm working is I have to make amends. Making an amends doesn't mean making an apology so much as it's more accepting the responsibility for your past actions and letting a person know that you've changed. This did not go very well for me and I actually had a lot of doors slammed in my face. Even after I clearly and honestly laid everything out, more folks than I'd care to admit really didn't want to hear it and closed me out of their lives. I'm talking family members and former close friends. It hurt but for once I didn't feel the need to escape and hide. I took it. Yeah it hurt like hell, but I was also able to grow and move forward with

my life. I'll continue to do this. I'll continue to keep my heart open to those folks. But I have to move on. In the process, I too decided to let go so that I could grow. I had relationships with people, that I allowed, that were very one sided and selfish. I couldn't let go. One was a troubled friendship of 20 years. Another was a person I at one time loved and cared a great deal about as a friend. Neither has had anything to do with my recovery, events in my life or life in general for some time. I held on because I was afraid to let go. I was afraid I'd be alone and that I'd be lonely. It was selfish on both sides to be honest.

I'm tired of being selfish. I'm exhausted with self deprecation. I don't like being angry, mad or sad anymore. That's gone and that person is someone I never ever want to be ever again. I am happy now. Truly happy. I want those around me to be happy and always know I love them. I love everyone in my life and can share that now.

I am just as responsible for my relationship with Rented Mule ending if not mostly responsible. I was a different person then and I was no where near a saint in the relationship. I loved him very much and I still do but I was very sick. I struggled with a lot of issues, some incredibly serious. That wasn't fair to him and I made him the bad guy. That's just not true. It was very difficult to repair our relationship into a very deep, loving friendship but with time and perseverance we have done just that. I love this man very much and I did take him for granted. I treated him poorly and then acted the victim. I don't care to share our mess and that's pretty personal but I do want to address the fact that I would not be where I am now, in the best mind frame I've ever had without him.

I love my friends. I mean I truly and deeply love my closest friends and I cannot convey how much they have done for me. I am incredibly lucky to have each and everyone of them in my life.

None of this came easy. This was incredibly difficult actually, and I'm more astounded I've made it this far than anyone else. But god damnit here I am. I'm fucking proud of myself. I no longer hate on and speak ill of others. I used to love to "talk shit" about people. I thought it was fucking hilarious. It wasn't. It was really shitty and judgmental. I was so insecure and felt so bad about myself I had to demean those around me and I truly now feel horrible for all of those affected by my "jokes" and commentary. It was wrong and I'm sorry. I tried to validate my behavior as speaking truth or that I'd say it to your face. That wasn't always true but that was incredibly heartless and rude. I don't like that. I don't

like acting like that. I want to be better and there's no place for this behavior. To all of those affected by my behavior, from the bottom of my heart I am truly sorry. To every one of you. I am working very hard to be better.

When I wrote last year that I hoped to evolve, I was talking out my ass. I didn't want to evolve. I wanted to die. I can finally share that now. I'm sorry. I was barely hanging on at times. The last couple years I wanted to die every single day. I prayed I'd die from a drug overdose or alcohol poisoning. I even attempted suicide. I'm so sorry. I have felt horrible about this for sometime. It was my friends, Rented Mule and my dad that kept me from going all the way. Then it got to the point where there was nothing keeping me from taking my life. The last time I was drunk, I got blackout drunk and tried to take my life. It is a very dark moment I have held inside and lived with.

I knew right then and there I was in serious trouble. I was veering to a point of no return and had finally gone too far. Even for myself. This is why I got clean and sober. I lied because I was afraid. I was afraid of being too crazy. Of losing the ones I loved. I was afraid to continue on like this.

It would take me five months in a program to actually realize I was truly an addict and an alcoholic. Then something absolutely horrible happened only a few months after that. Maybe I had self medicated since I was 12 and was oblivious. Had I really done so many drugs and drank so much I truly didn't know? I was suffering with debilitating depression. I have never in my entire life felt so sad, so worthless, so broken. It was fucking dark shit. I spent weeks, literal weeks, crying for hours at a time hidden from all of my friends and family in my bed. I have not been suicidal once in sobriety. I just felt so much pain and was so very sad. I reached out and finally started opening up. It took a great deal of work with a therapist and months for me to finally get in to see a psychiatrist and be properly medicated. My life has been night and day. I'm not perfect. The medication did not "fix" me. It took weeks before it even started working but I stayed steadfast to my recovery. I'm balanced now. Everything is a lot less amplified. I'm calmer and far more rational than ever before.

If you are struggling with issues like these, please I beg you to get help. This was hard. I am not going to lie and tell you this will be easy. I wanted to give up so many times. I wanted to runaway and hide. I was going to quit the program I'm in at least three times. I was 100%. It's all a miracle. I have never felt or been as I am now. I am in my best headspace ever. I accomplished this myself and I accomplished this because of others in my life. As I go forward in life, I truly wish the same for you. Truly be great. Be better and never be afraid to love. — CREEPY HORSE

STILL POETRY

A Verbally Hushed ASMR Wishlist

That you all would fall dumb at dinnertime
So I may more clearly perceive
The sweater-armed slither of pasta
Spooling through the fork's tines.

That I might legally change my name
To "Toasted Coconut" - even "Fork's Tines" -
And you would enunciate each consonant
Of my new name as precisely as lugs clutching
Tires to automobiles.

Mmmm, say "tires to automobiles" again, but
This time draw it out beneath me like a bear skin rug.

That I could peel and wear your visage
To your appointments with the dentist / optometrist /
Allergist / Hell, the beautician with all those
Phalanges fluttering the corners of my periphery.

That if you insist on slaughtering your liver
You'd have the decency to take even your beer
On the rocks - for God created glaciers to hear
Them tinkle the highball edges of the earth.

Speaking of, that we all might agree against religion
And worship the cat - amplifying her purring,
Inspiring yawning tugs of her claws on curtains.

And that you would shush the rutting animal moans
Of your lovemaking so I may tune myself
To the squeaks and squeals of the springs:
The only pieces of this puzzle that fit anymore.

So that, oh, the world would end - not
With a bang or a whimper - but, rather,
An inaudible whisper.
— KEVIN STILL

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RECORD REVIEWS



Wretched Fate *Fleshletting*

Sweden and death metal go together like peanut butter and jelly. Since the early days of Entombed, Dismember, Grave, and Unleashed, metalheads have come to expect top quality death metal from Sweden, and Wretched Fate is certainly definitional of that sentiment. The band's debut album, *Fleshletting*, is one which celebrates Sweden's buzzsaw-laden brand of death metal, while giving it a more updated sound that is sure to draw new school and old school fans alike.

The first thing to note about this record is the art: impaled skeletons getting picked clean by ravens amidst the ruins of what appears to be a castle on a parchment-colored background. This may sound rather bland, but it's really not. The images look as if they had been hand-drawn with a pencil or a quill, giving it a personal, "homemade" feel; combine that with the parchment color, and it feels like something which was drawn centuries ago. What can I say? It's simple, and it really works!

As for the sound, Wretched Fate has crafted something special here. While listeners are greeted with what is expected of Swedish death metal, the buzzsaw guitars and guttural vocals, what truly stands out in *Fleshletting* is the song structure, sampling, and instrumentation. What I liked is that the band gave each song a personality that truly makes each one unique; and they all have definitive choruses and bridges that are as catchy as a cold in an overcrowded office space. Another nice touch is the band's use of sampling from various horror movies, which isn't all that surprising. But how about the use of a choir in songs like "Fear Expulsion" and an acoustic guitar in the titular track? It's a very interesting choice of instrumentation for a death metal record, and as out of place as it may seem, it works extremely well. What is only a bonus is that Adrian Selmani's vocals are quite amazing. As

guttural and raw as they are, they are very intelligible, and allow listeners to fully grasp what he is belting out.

Where this album suffers is the length. *Fleshletting* maxes out at a little over 52 minutes, which is long for a death metal record. If done well, the length is hardly noticeable, but it has to be done VERY well. I feel that Wretched Fate may have pushed the length too far and would have been better off ending the record at 8 or 10 tracks, which would have considerably trimmed down the time, and therefore increased the digestibility of the music.

Overall, Wretched Fate has put out a record that is both nostalgic and fresh. The death metal formula resonates easily with old schoolers, yet the care taken in production brings it up-to-date for those who prefer a little more modernity. *Fleshletting* also drips with creativity, making it a remarkable debut release, despite that I feel like was far too lengthy. For that, it gets a 4.2:5 from me. —CALEB MULLINS



Townes Van Zandt *Sky Blue*

The late Townes Van Zandt is a highly-revered songwriter in Texas and across the country among those who craft songs, so the discovery of some old recordings is cause for celebration in many quarters.

However, while the quality of the recordings is fine, many of the original tunes seem to lack the final touches that likely would have come before these were released to the listening public. I just don't think we would be listening to this album if Van Zandt hadn't died young living his hard and fast life...or hadn't written the modern classic "Pancho and Lefty," which is on this album.

The three covers are intriguing in the sense that they tell us something about the songwriters and songs that appealed to Van Zandt: Tom Paxton's "Last Thing on My Mind," Richard Dobson's "Forever, For Certain," and "The Hills of

Roane County," a traditional murder ballad from the 19th century.

Of the tunes not previously released, the title cut shows the most promise and rings the truest of the quality of tunes Van Zandt was capable of. He recounts that I "always sing the same sad song" even as he has to "wish I was a setting sun... til the darkness falls." The acoustic fingerpicking accents the tune well. "All I Need" has some of the best workplay of the new tunes: "breath turns to melody," and "Girls I see/they see me/ then we say goodbye/All I need is a bed to call my own."

"Pancho and Lefty" is still the best thing on the album, even in this unadorned acoustic and voice version, with its haunting melody and its melancholy tale of outlaws, betrayal, and regret.

Hearing "Rex's Blue" again is a treat with its great workplay, a solid melody, and ine picking, but in the end, it's just another version of a tune we've already heard. The same is true of the old-time country rendition of "Blue Ridge Mountains (smoky version)," the stuttering chords of "Snake Song," and the odd "Dream Spider." We've already heard the better renderings. Also, "Silver Ships of Andlar" wasn't that good the first time around, so its inclusion is for the Van Zandt zealots, which could be said about the release of this album.

It's commendable that Van Zandt's wife and son are trying to reshape Van Zandt's recording history that has been handled so shabbily by the artist's label. However, *Sky Blue* is really just for the completists and those hoping to discern the songwriting magic that Van Zandt had for themselves. —MIKE L. DOWNEY



Ex Hex *It's Real*

Ex Hex came on like a revelation four years ago when their debut album *Rips* erupted in the vacuum left by indie woman supergroup Wild Flag left when two of its members reformed

Sleater Kinney. Ex Hex frontwoman Mary Timony took her Wild Flag experience to move forward with the more straightforward rock sound the group championed to the hard rocking guitar hero power trio approach that Ex Hex handles so skillfully. With *It's Real*, the band's sophomore effort, Ex Hex slows down the hard-charging good times and digs into a darker emotional vibe and an interesting side trip into a different '80s guitar rock area than before.

Album lead-off "Good Enough" will sound familiar to Ex Hex fans. It has that late '70s Cars guitar pop thing down pat. But rather than sing songs of victory or scorn Timony sings from the victim point of view of the person left rather than the one scorning the victimizer. Timony sings "Acting tough ain't good enough/when it's time to roll gonna let it go." This could be Timony singing to herself as much as it is to a former beau. The rest of Timony's songs on the album coast along in a more major label power pop turn of the '80s territory, like Ex Hex has had a steady diet of 20/20, Shoes, Donnie Iris, and the like.

Marrying mid-temp power chord hard rock to heartache is nothing new, but bass player Betsy Wright's songs take the band's evolution that much farther towards early '80s power metal pop crossover. "Rainbow Shiner" combines the turgid 8th note gallop of Dio with the polished pop smarts of early '80s Def Leppard. "Another Dimension" goes even farther into that Def Leppard direction. This is an interesting touch for a band of women who made their mark in '90s indie guitar rock when spandex hair rock was anathema. The tough AOR guitar sound looks good on Ex Hex and I wish the album had gone a little farther in that direction.

All told, there is much to recommend *It's Real* but at the same time it's a rather curious album that doesn't really immediately connect the same way the band's debut did. I also find it odd that the band used extra musicians to augment guitar and drums to, in the band's words, "play what we heard for the songs but couldn't play." None of this detracts from the overall effect but it certainly shows that *It's Real* is a transitional album. Which way will the band go? Double down on the hard rock or follow the polished power pop heart-break? I guess we'll have to stay tuned to find out. —KELLY MENACE

CONCERT CALENDAR

4/5—Comedy with Max “The Hammer” Taylor @ Olly iConix, Bryan. 6pm

4/5—Corusco @ Murphy’s Law, Bryan. 9pm

4/5—Cosmic Chaos, Mutant Love, Chilbill, Rickshaw Billy’s Burger Patrol @ Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm

4/6—Cindys Birthday Show with Crimson Devils, Electric Astronaut, Shoobiedoobies, Sykotic Tendendies @ Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm

4/7—Punk Rock Matinee with Some Kind of Nightmare, Mutant Love @ Revolution, Bryan. 4pm

4/12—Shoobiedoobies (cd release), Ride the Panda, Charm Bomb @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

4/13—KANM Benefit Show feat. Cactus PFlowers, The Couch People, Pseudo Desnudo, James & Benji @ Revolution, Bryan. 8pm

4/18—deCasa, Windows95, HYAH! @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

4/19—Tongue Punch @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

4/20—Shane Walker & Gabe Wooten @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

4/25—Antique Gardens, Corusco, Ottoman Turks @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

4/26—The Manic Raze, Mad Rant, Lady Starbeast @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

4/27—Honest Men, Vacation Manor, Night Traveler @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 8pm

4/27—The Soap Boxers @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

5/3—Jess’s Birthday Show feat. Woorms, Black Catholics, Mountains of Smoke @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

5/4—The Ramblin’ Boys, Kalijah @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

5/7—Otonana Trio, Mutant Love @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

5/10—Hammer Party, Mutant Love @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

5/11—Magic Girl (cd release) @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

5/16-5/18—LOUDFEST XII @ Grand Stafford & Revolution, Bryan. 7pm



REVOLUTION BOMB



9PM
APRIL
12TH

CHARM BOMB
SHOOBIE DOOBIES
RIDE THE PANDA

SHOOBIES CD RELEASE