

inside: drunk detective starkness - still drinking hijacked - loudfest redux salacious vegan crumbs - of butterflies, rainbows & unicorns - game of life - shit im supposed to like but dont - good movies for bad guys - anarchy from the ground up - hail satan - record reviews - concert calendar



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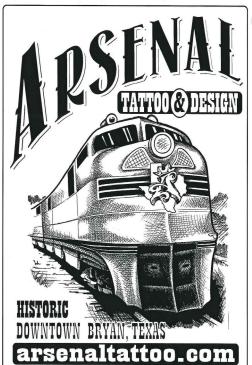
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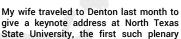
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## TEXECSTASY



talk she's given as a tenure track professor. It is also the first time she has entered the state since she moved away from Texas last summer. Upon asking her how her visit was she answered, "the talk was good, Texas is ugly". I snickered at that. My wife has never liked anywhere we've lived excepting the Pacific Northwest and now the Smoky Mountain Carolinas. I too was in the state at the same time as her except I was attending LOUD!FEST. But she's not entirely wrong. Breezing into central Texas for a few days in late May is the wrong way to experience Texas, especially if one's usual ambient view is of mountains. forests. and winding streams.

Central Texas is ugly. There's not much going on. Eeking out a living in the Brazos Valley has never been a business for the aesthete. A simple drive-by through this area will not reveal its poignancy. It does not give up its goods to the car windshield. You have to live here for awhile to find the beauty. You have to experience the technicolor yawn of a spring sunrise and sunset, when the sky erupts in a violent mélange of purples and oranges. You have to experience the utter stillness of the prairie at 3AM. You have to go out past Millican or on OSR late at night to get away from the light pollution and dig on the starry sky on a clear night. You have to enjoy the breezy shade under a grove of old growth post oaks on a hot July afternoon. You have to appreciate the destructive beauty of the fracking well pilot lights flickering in the nighttime darkness.

Of course, compare this to the Hill Country greenery, the lazy summer dips in Barton Springs, the long drunken floats down the tree-lined Guadalupe near San Marcos, the immensity of the pine cover outside Tyler, the vast existential mesas past Alpine, or the rugged crags of Big Bend and Bryan/College Station just has nothing to compare. This area isn't necessarily about outer displays of beauty. I was reminded of BCS's most precious resource last month during LOUD!FEST. It's the people that call the place home that is the real attraction.

For the most part Texans are easy to talk to, easy to bullshit with, will hold your hair while you puke, get your back in a fight, and will do the basic things good humans are supposed to do for one another but often just don't do. There's a "don't give a fuck" attitude, a comfort in one's own skin, an insouciance to the Texas underclass. Texas the state is not necessarily Texas the state of It's a myth but there is often a truth or two stretched to capacity at the heart of a myth. It is also the state of James Byrd, of George W. Bush and Rick Perry, the state of LBJ and the backslap deal made in smoke-filled rooms, the boom and bust of the oil field, and the backwards fundamentalist bullshit of the arenasized megachurch. Don't mess with Texas because Texas is already a mess. Yet somehow most folks get on with it because that's just what you do. And if that's what you gotta do you might as well have whimsy about it. I was reminded of this with every handshake, hug, clinking of a drink, and sloppy kiss over the three days of LOUD!FEST. That is the true beauty of Texas. - KELLY **MENACE** 

### PEOPLE I HUNG OUT WITH AT LOUDFEST

I spoke with so many interesting people at LOUD!FEST this year. It never fails that my love for interesting people is rekindled every year. Here is a smattering:

In the Rev courtyard, right after Charm Bomb, I spoke with a dude who had lived in Detroit for a while and knew someone who partook in wheat pasting and Street Art. He explained that although artists want recognition for their work, paste-ups and graffiti are considered vandalism, and that can get expensive. This person regaled me some super interesting (not personal) stories of trespassing, dangerous buildings, sketchy locations and ingenious sneakiness and distraction techniques.

Hanging out between The Stafford and Downtown Elixir after either Ghost Bones or Boy Wonder. I can't remember which, but they were both super impressive. Me and a bunch of (mostly shorter than me) peeps with black shirts were loitering, when a pregnant lady walked up to us and became our focus. She is one of the funniest people I know. She is convinced that her baby is the source of her humor, and when it comes out, she's gonna be grumpy and shit herself often. She told us a story about when she was in 8th grade, she was in charge of the "team yell". You know, where everyone puts their hands in the middle of the huddle and yells something? Well, apparently she was a bit excited or anxious or something and instead of what she meant to say, she yelled, "WHAT TIME IT IS?". We went ahead and made that a thing and did a few cheers, ultimately ending in "BEDTIME!". Then she left.

During The Shoobiedoobies show I picked a long haired hearthrob/ladykiller to run the Toilet Paper Gun. He did an amazing job, spraying it everywhere. The ceiling fan, the bar, the audience, even the Shoobs. It was amazing. And since we were filming a music video, his handiwork is a feature in the craziness. He told us about some very positive changes he's making in his life, and we are super proud of him (even if it means he's moving...sigh). The Skittles all over the floor during the ShoobShow was probably terrible to clean up (sorry about that), but I've been assured by Frank and Justin that the toilet paper is actually a good thing, as it cleans up the spilled beer. I saw Charles with a broom sweeping up before Benghazi Osborne, and that made me smile. I will never forget that image. Broom in one hand, drink in the other.

I do this thing at LoudFest (and other events) where I print out some of my TheHiddenOctopus art and randomly give it to people, explaining that they are sort of like fortune cookies. The art might mean something deep and heavy, it might be exactly what they needed, it might be something they need to hand to a friend or coworker, or it might just be something silly. More often than not, the art means something to the recipient. Saturday night, I handed one to a dude and he analyzed

it right in front of me. Turns out, it was a perfect one for him. It had a bird with an eye in his beak with a statement saying, "I

don't remember you being that way.", which he took to meaning that he can see when people lie to him. And in his job, he deals with prisoners that try to change their story or attempt to modify what they actually said. Pretty cool. Some of you have told me these little arts are on your refrigerators or phone lock screens. That's awesome. I am honored.

I spoke to a dude who bought The Shoobiedoobies album Counting the Sun (and actually listened to it). It took me by surprise (in a good way) that he was kinda analyzing it in a really cool way. He was telling me that he's never heard anyone meld genres like we did. He was explaining how our voices and harmonies were juxtaposed to the heaviness of the instrumentation and made the experience unique and pleasing. He said our lyrics were cryptic and interesting. I let him talk to Livie (our drummer) a little about it and she told him she was unhappy with the fact that we had gotten way tighter and better since recording (which is something Justin, Colin, Wonko and Charles told us was gonna happen). His response was that everyone always has issues with stuff they've recorded. It was so interesting hearing him talk about out album like that. Stuff that we had been purposeful about, but is undoubtedly overlooked my most. Makes me wanna write more music.

During ASS, a man caught my eye. He was flailing around for most of the set, only briefly looking in my direction every once in a while. He was a little guy, and very light, and I became concerned for his safety out there in the middle of the pit. Everyone seemed hell bent on grabbing him and throwing him back in. I was beginning to get angry as I couldn't tell if he was enjoying himself or not. I could barely make out a sort of smirk under his dreamy Burt Reynolds mustache. His clothes had apparently been ripped off at the beginning of the show, but my concern for his safety became an enthusiastic high five as I was amazed by his acrobatic agility, twisting in the air, flipping above everyone's heads, and swinging past the string of lights. At one point, his aerial antics sent him across The Stafford, almost close enough for me to barely touch his manly tuft of chest hair, when a raft of some sort (carrying someone) smashed me to the ground. I lost sight of him until the band finished playing their last song...the final ASS song that would ever be played (sigh). The lights came up, and his tired, spent, deflated body hung lifeless on the string of lights like a rag left out to dry. I snatched him up and paid no attention to the scoffs and judging eyes of the street folk. I took him home. He doesn't speak much. I don't even know his name. Thanks ASS.

Thanks LoudFest! - JORGE GOYCO

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### Salacious vegan crumbs

When I was 2 years old, my Granny took me to the McDonald's by her house, filled up a couple of those little paper ketchup cups, and taught

me how to dip a french fry in ketchup. By the time I was 8, I knew exactly how many of the little paper ketchup cups I could hold in one hand and how much they could be topped up before the ketchup started tumbling. I learned early on at places like Chili's, that had the glass Heinz ketchup bottles, that it was easier to just stick a knife in to get the ketchup moving than use the little strength I had to get the tomato concrete out. My brother and I could go through one of those bottles on our own in a single meal. I remember hoarding Whataburger ketchups, not knowing enough about food and flavors to know what made it so magical. I remember green and purple ketchups, which by FDA standards, are not technically ketchup because ketchup must be red. I remember accidentally getting served bacon ketchup at a now-defunct slider place and wondering who would create such an abomination. I love ketchup and ketchup loves me, and if you cut me open. I bleed red because I bleed ketchup.

By the way, also by FDA regulations, ketchup must not contain any animal products, so buy all the damn Whataburger ketchup you want!

I'm not here to tell you what condiments are and aren't vegan. You're obviously literate. You can read the back of a jar of BBQ sauce and keep an eye out for honey, fat drippings, and Worcestershire (BTW Lord Sandy's and Annie's make vegan Worcestershire that you can get at HEB or Village Foods). You're smart enough to know that buttermilk ranch isn't safe for your friend who doesn't do dairy. You know that mayonnaise is made from egg yolks, right, RIGHT?! Mostly, you'll stick to all of your same favorite condiments, minus things like ranch, honey mustard, and mayonnaise. And that's where I come in!

Vegan mayo exists, and it's very VERY good. Vegenaise is easy to find in the refrigerated dairy section (yep, mayo and cows totally go together) at HEB, Kroger, Village, or BVNF, and "I think I like it better than real mayonnaise", quoteth Tim Horn. It's a great all purpose mayo - not too tangy, and not so stiff that it's too thick for making dressings. It's a great sub in for sour cream in recipes for dips, and I use it below in the TOP SECRET KATIE RECIPES. The other easy to find mayo is Hellman's, right next to regular Hellman's on the shelf. Let me tell you a little something about Hellman's. They tried to take down Just Foods (formerly Hampton Creek), which makes killer vegan mayo and dressings by claiming that they can't use the word mayo because their product doesn't contain eggs, and therefore isn't mayonnaise by FDA standards. But Just Foods never called it mayonnaise, and the whole thing was just a big load of Big Egg bullshit to try and tear down the extremely successful vegan mayo company while Hellman's developed their own product (which came out almost immediately after the mayo-mayonnaise case was dropped). So I don't buy Hellman's if I can help it. It's extremely thick, and VERY Hellman's-y - it's got that signature tang and sticks out well in a sandwich. It's also cheap. There are other brands with things like aquafaba mayo and olive oil mayo, but they're all expensive and I've never had one that's as good as Vegenaise.

Ok, so remember Just Foods who I just talked about? They're a vegan food company that specializes in mayo and

dressings. Their mayo rules, and comes in a handful of different flavor varieties, including truffle and sriracha, and they make killer dressings. Their ranch is cooler and more refreshing AND better than dairy ranch. Their Caesar is indistinguishable from regular fishy Caesar. And their "honey" mustard was my favorite thing to dip my pizza into (they no longer make it). You could find it at HEB, Wal-Mart, Kroger - it was extremely accessible. Then they got hit with another lawsuit about their company name, experienced extremely high demand for their product, and were also rolling out Just Egg (a really convincing and super easy to use egg replacement that you can get at HEB now) and it all just dried up their supply. No one in the country has been able to find their products reliably since Christmastime. Rumor has it that they're opening their new production facilities, and mayo and dressing will be back on shelves at the end of June. Until then, I've been making my own ranch and "honey" mustard, both of which are better than anything you can find at the store, and take five minutes to make, from measuring to mixing to popping in the fridge.

#### Vegan Ranch

This vegan ranch is awesome and maybe it's mostly basically stolen from a book I have from the Chicago Diner that you should buy because it's great, but I have lazed it up a teeny bit so that you don't have to cut and squeeze a lemon. Don't yell at me for dried herbs, they mean that this ranch will keep into next week because there are no fresh herbs in it to go bad. Takes five minutes to measure and mix!

- 1 cup vegan mayo (I like Vegenaise the best for this)
- 2-3 Tbsp plant-based milk
- 2 tsp apple cider vinegar1 Tbsp dried parsley
- 1 tsp dried dill
- 1 tsp granulated garlic
- 1 tsp onion powder
- Salt and pepper to taste

Combine everything and mix it all up. S&P to taste — I usually only need pepper. Keeps for up to 2 weeks — make sure you give it a good shake and don't use any spoons you already licked to spoon it out because it'll cause the ranch to separate.

#### Vegan "Honey" Mustard

I was heartbroken when I heard Just was going to stop making their sweet mustard. It was my favorite thing to drizzle on pizza in lieu of cheese. A soft pretzel or veggie sausage was right at home getting a quick bath in it. I decided to make my own, and immediately realized what crap every honey/sweet mustard sauce at the store is. This is SUPER easy, and SUPER scalable. This portion is for a single serving for your veggie nuggs and waffle fries, but I scale it up to fit in 12 oz jars at home because we eat LOT "honey" mustard at my house o' - 2 Tbsp (28g) brown mustard (I use French's spicy brown, it's cheap and decent)

- 2 Tbsp (28g) vegan mayo (Vegenaise works well here, too)
- 1 Tbsp (14g) maple syrup or agave
- Pinch sweet or smoked paprika
- Pinch garlic powder
- 1/8 1/4 tsp or a tiny splash of apple cider vinegar Combine everything and mix it all up. The paprika, garlic, and ACV are to taste, so if you like it tangier, add more vinegar, or if you like it more unctuous, add more garlic powder. Keeps forever. KATIE KILLER



#### OF BUTTERFLIES, RAIN-BOWS & UNICORNS

I was 4 when the Stonewall riots happened, 5 for the very first Pride Parades, 18 when I lost my first person to AIDS, and 50 when same sex marriage was legal in every state in the U.S. We've come so far and I want to celebrate that with every fiber of by being, but we have so far to go ... and so I attend Pride ... both as an act of celebration and as an act of resistance, rebellion, revolt.

I celebrate that I can complain that Pride has become accepted, corporate, policed ... because there was a day and time when none of that could have been imagined. And, yet, I resist, rebell, revolt ... because, let's face it, friends, there are so many places where we are not accepted, there are people in our tribe who corporations would never accept, and too many of us face discrimination, violence, scorn at the hands of law enforcement.

I celebrate that it's been a very long time since anyone I knew died of AIDS, that the people I know who are HIV+ are healthy and taking their medication regularly. But I mourn the fact that my gay brothers (gendered language used purposefully) are still banned from donating blood ... even though medical science has determined that their blood is no more or less dangerous than that of the general population.

I celebrate that our Pride Parades are safe and relatively free from those who would harass us. This is a very good thing and makes Pride a wonderful place to be. However, I mourn the fact that my trans siblings do not see a police presence as a sign of safety. I am saddened by the fact that my trans sisters (gendered language used purposefully) and excluded from or made to feel unwelcome within the LGBTQ+ community. I resent the fact that there are those who would tell my wife that she is not a "real" woman ... as though our womanhood were defined only by our genitalia.

So, yeah, PRIDE is somewhat of a conflicted time for me. I remember how things were and I'm so happy that they are better. I remember when we hid in closets out of shame and that we can now march with PRIDE thanks to our siblings who blazed trails before us. I feel a special connection with Harvey Milk and Marsha Johnson in June. A Il of that is something to celebrate in rainbow, neon, and pastel colors, with butterflies and unicorns, on the streets and in our homes, in the marketplace, and in our workplaces.

But I also know how things are and how much better they could be. I hate that, per capita, trans women are murdered at a much higher rate than the rest of the population. I don't like that the president of the, arguably, greatest country in the free world can keep LGBTQ+ youth from getting healthcare that they need. I'm pissed off that I could get fired for whomever I choose to fuck.

So, let's celebrate. Let us don rainbow tutus, and wave sparkly wands, and ride unicorns and butterflies into a brightly colored dawn of LGBTQ+ fabulousness.

But, then, once the hangovers and glitter have faded, let us begin with new vigor to work towards that time when we are all truly free ... when love has truly won ... and when no one among us is denied or made less because of whom they love or who they are! — PAMALYN ROSE-BEELER

### ANARCHY FROM THE GROUND UP



I apologize for my absence in the last issue. Things get pretty crazy here on Granny Moon Farm and right before the deadline my anarchist pigs escaped. That's right. You heard me correct. Anarchist pigs. No rules. No masters. And definitely NO FENCE. I spent two days tracking and hunting them down until finally on day three I woke up to both girls sleeping outside their gate, happy and content and most likely pregnant (again).

That is a typical day. Some form of bastardly chaos erupts after breakfast and my well-constructed linear timeline of events gets thrown in the trash and by noon I am having a beer. Do me a solid: buy more beer for your farmer. If you know them, support them. If you see them at LOUD!FEST pick up their tab. You never know what kind of (literal) bullshit it took to get those tomatoes on your table. Or how many chicken pecks they endured to collect that carton of eggs. Unless, of course, you have the delight of reading about it in your local dirtbag paper.

We had a blast at L!F this year! We always do. Since we moved outta B/CS to start the homestead our social life has become non-existent. On any given day you can hear me holler and yell across the county, "YOU BETTER NOT BE TRYING TO GET OUTTA THAT FENCE AGAIN!" or "STOP THAT RIGHT NOW! YOU ARE NOT THE ALPHA! I AM!" or "I SWEAR TO JESUS IF YOU TRY TO SWOOP DOWN HERE AND KILL MY CHICKENS AGAIN, I'M GOING TO SHOOT YOUR ASS RIGHT OUTTA OF THE SKY!" (I could never really do that, y'all. But the hawks don't know.) My point is, I don't talk to humans anymore. I'm usually locked behind a gate, going about my business in my underwear (or none at all) and cussing, cursing or fighting with some stubborn animal. So events like L!F are a real treat. I get to see people again. And not just any people but MY people. The friends and family that built a community around me and my kids when we first moved into Brazos Valley. The dirtbags and misfits that hosted garage nights, roller derby practice and kickball tournaments with a side of beer. I LOVE Y'ALL!

Being able to contribute as a sponsor this year was a goal I have wanted to reach since I sat in the Shea garage and drunkenly joked about the Punk Rock Commune. Seeing our logo on the banner and the back of every shirt, made me beam with pride. I am doing it, y'all! We made a LOT of sacrifices to make this dream a reality but its worth it! Every time you stop by and give me a hug, it's worth it. Every jar of pickles sold is worth it. Every laugh I hear after I tell some hilarious farm blunder story is worth it. And I just want to thank you all for being so rad.

It takes a village, y'all. For me, the DTB community is that village. To pick up where the last issue left off, love and support each other. Check in. Reach out. Catch the random Tuesday night show of your friend's new band. Buy the strawberry jam, the merch, the new album. Contribute to each other's lives in meaningful ways and make good memories. And most importantly, show up. (Like, seriously, someone please show up the next time I'm bitching about these damn pigs on fb because they are making me lose my mind.) — HALEY RICHARD-

"The thing about Heisenball," Alan tells me with a grin on their face, "is that you can't win. But you can't

## **GAME OF LIFE**

arm around me. Only I've never seen the guy in my life. There are others, too. Things I've never done mixed

lose, either. Not really. It's not about the game."

"Yeah," I say. "I know." You've said it a million fucking times since we started dating last year, I add in the privacy of my own head. I haven't played yet, but I fucking pay attention.

The court's smaller than I'd thought it would be: a square about ten feet across set inside a hexagon twice as large. The walls are on the hexagon, shimmering purple that changes slightly every time I look away and back again.

"You don't have to do this, you know," Alan says as they set the ball in the center of the square. "I don't blame you for anything."

I shrug, looking away. This is why I'm ending it, I want to tell them. I'm sick of your measured disinterest, your magnanimous bullshit justifications. Why can't you admit it when things hurt you? Why can't you just fucking CARE? Instead, I ask: "What's up with the walls?"

"Let's just start the game," they say. "You'll get it pretty quickly."

It sounds like a dismissal, which would sting if I wasn't so done with everything already. I want to get this over with so we can both move on. I'm packing my things tonight. "Okay fine."

"Here we go," they said.

They walk over to the wall near the door and flip a switch. The lights in the room dim, and the shapes on the floor flicker into three dimensions. The walls glimmer briefly, then fade to black. From the corner of my eye I can see the ball glowing, but I'm too busy entranced by the walls to do anything about it.

"Cool, huh?" Alan says. "But that's not the best part. Where's the ball?"

"Right where you put it, in the center of the square. Are we going to play or are you just going to talk down to..." I trail off. The ball, of course, is not where they put it. "What did you do?"

"Me? Nothing." I can practically hear the grin on their obtuse fucking face. "You're the one who observed it and changed its momentum."

"What does that even--?" There's a whack and now I've got a stinging shoulder. The ball falls to a stop at my feet.

"Ah," Alan says. "Your first conundrum." Laughter barely restrained from their voice. "Now watch...." I'm about to demand an explanation, when the walls suddenly light up with silent, flickering images. There's our first date on one wall, Alan grinning at the look of concentration on my face while I try to fish a rubber duck out of a pond at the state fair. Another shows me, alone, and a third shows me with some blonde guy in sunglasses and a popped collar, looking utterly miserable as he puts one

in with things I remember quite clearly.

"Why am I--" I start, but Alan cuts in before I can finish the question.

"Ah ah ah," they say. "No talking about your observations. It's bad luck."

"You mean you can't see them?"

"Only the player who gets hit--that's what we call a conundrum--gets the observations. They look like they're on the walls, but it's just a trick of the light."

"Weird." I'm quiet for a minute. "Too weird. At least the ball stopped." But as soon as I say that it vanishes with a quiet little pop and appears right under Alan's feet. They slip and land on their butt on the ground with an oomph, and the ball ricochets around the room like mad, popping in and out of existence as it goes. It gives me a headache and I close my eyes just in time to hear the hollow, echoing whack as it hits Alan straight in the arm.

It's dim in the room, but I can still see Alan's eyes go unfocused for a moment, before they shake off whatever they've seen and grin at me. Then I find the ball, set it moving with a glance, and the game is on.

We play for what seems like hours. Neither one of us is really able to control the ball, but it doesn't really matter. I see scenes I'd forgotten from our shared past together; scenes of things that never happened. Scenes from what I guess might be the future. One time I see my own funeral — that I shake off immediately, looking at the ball so it moves away. Alan, even with more experience, takes just as many hits as I do from the glowing ball. It's not exactly even, but we're also not exactly keeping any sort of score. I don't ask what they see.

The lights come on again just after Alan gets a conundrum, and they're sitting on the floor as the ball loses its glow and rolls to a stop against one wall. For a while, neither of us speak. We just stay where we are, panting. After I catch my breath, I clear my throat. "I'm sorry," I say. "For whatever it's worth. For everything."

"Thanks," Alan says. They look up at me from where they're sitting, eyes moist but not crying. "And it's okay. Some of it was my fault, too, and some of it was nobody's. Sometimes things just don't work out."

I think about everything I've seen just in the past few minutes — choices I've never questioned before, playing out before me on the walls — and understand, suddenly, what Alan's meant all this time about there being no winning or losing. And why they never seem to get mad, no matter what I do.

I'm sad, then, for what I've had with Alan. What we both lost. There's no anger in me anymore. The sadness is overwhelming, but peaceful. Life is not about the game. What matters more is why you're playing at all. What it is you see on the walls. What you can't understand about them. The only thing that matters is who you're playing with. — STARKNESS



# TOO WEARY TO RANT

Finding the energy to coherently dissect the bad getting worse is becoming harder and harder as the year goes on. Month after month, the current Republican administration lurches from one catastrophe to another while the leader of the free world snivels about his press coverage.

Mainstream media pinballs from one jaw-dropping White House gaffe to another with little time to digest the impact or the import. Right-wing conservative media continues to whine about the government taking over the government. Correct me if I'm wrong, but don't the conservative Republicans control the executive branch, half the legislative branch, and are packing the judicial branch with knee-jerk right-wing fundamentalists?

Another shooting? More reason to not try to do anything about it. More children ripped from their parents on the borders? More reason to wait while more die in the name of America. Declining infrastructure? Delayed disaster relief? Conservative Republicans refuse to do anything but blame the Democrats.

The constitutional right for women to have the ability to choose has been law for nearly half a century, but sneering disregard for the law has resulted in more legislative restrictions on women by anti-choice zealots who don't shy away from murdering those who disagree.

The constant lying by the White House shows there are no adults on the playground any longer. The fact that the president continues to insult our international allies while groveling under dictators and our enemies reveals that he is a traitor to our country.

Why is it that our international friends recognize what he is (the president's approval ranking in the United Kingdom stood at 21% at the time of his state visit there) while so many in America are still blind to his criminal dismantlement of our democracy?

Whew, 2020 can't get here soon enough. Register to vote and register all you know. It's becoming time to reclaim America. — MIKE L. DOWNEY



# **GOOD MOVIES**FOR BAD GUYS



Hey look, when I first saw the trailer for *Brightburn*, I was kind of excited. I mean, I am a guy who reviews movies strictly from the antagonist's angle, so I thought "Hey this is right up my alley" And it could have been.

The first thing I wanna say, is that *Brightburn* has all the promise of what a GREAT villain movie can be. It was literally marketed as a "What if Superman was not a good guy" type of movie. And that "What If" should have put butts in seats. It's a brilliant premise, they had no shame in copying the origin at all: Childless couple finds a spaceship crashlanding on their property with a baby inside. But around puberty is when the road forks and things go way left field.

And I am fine with left field, really I am. I love weird movies, but at a measly 90 minutes, I have to ask Yarovesky where the damn fire was ... because it's not even ten minutes in and the kid is sticking his hand in a lawn mower and doing absurd feats of strength.

Once Brandon realizes his power, he becomes, well, a bit of a pissant really. Not really much development of the character, he just starts throwing preteen temper tantrums, only this time with godlike powers. It becomes really hard to root for him ... not because he is a villain, I love that he is, it becomes hard to root for him because he is a self-loathing, pubescent piece of shit that you just can't get behind ... unless you are his parent.

The real piece of work is Brandon's mom, who even with mounting evidence of her shitty son refuses to believe her lil' baby could ever do anything wrong. So the story continues, the parents go on refusing to have any sort of moral talk with their kid, etc.

Which is funny because as a sort of Villain fanatic, I would have written a master mind who molds Brandon into a tool for his own use. If you are gonna make the kid unlikable, then make him a means to an end for the real Big Bad.

You would think James Gunn and friends would know a thing or two about bad guys after all the movies he has done, but apparently not. Superman, even though he is all powerful isn't the brains. He's the big gun.

There are a few cool things about this movie. Brandon's home made costume is awesome and I can't wait to see weird ten year old's in comic conventions cosplay with that creepy cowl.

Also the gory death scenes are probably the one thing that save this movie and at least make it watchable for a short time. The gore and no holds barred way this kid kills and maims is like a love letter to my dark heart. Even I squirmed a little at the eyeball glass scene.

The movie ends up living up to it's horror title and less of it's superhero one, but that's ok. I found it less about horror and more about warning parents their kids are actually terrible people when they leave the house.

4 out of 10 detention slips. - TIM DANGER

This year's LOUD! FEST was a damn fine production, and there were some

## LOUDFEST REDUX

stage left.

beers and worship some sweet Satan while getting down to the spooky heavy metal played with violas. Nice touch having their absent

there were some great shows. ASS' last hurrah was some unbelievable energy and just downright insanity in The Stafford. I don't really know what to say about The Shut-Ups' drummer destroying his own equipment then wearing it on his head in the middle of their set. The Gloryholes coming back from Tennessee as a two-piece hit all the right notes and really make you want to fly away and ride a Unicorndog. I was a dick and missed out on The Ex-Optimists and A Sundae Drive because I napped too hard, but I'm sure they were phenomenal as usual, but what I really wanted to talk about was Thursday's series at Rev.

Seems wrong to say this was the last show for ASS.
 They are supposed to play last every Saturday and keep topping each previous year with crazy antics and new thrash metal riffs. But they went out as hard and zany as anyone could have hoped for. BCS gone miss some James.
 It was pretty special to watch so many people

crowdsurf around Revolution during Mutant Love's set,

bass player attend the show via a gigantic banner on

Arm\$trong opened up the weekend with a killer set and didn't miss a beat with his dirty south hip hop. The beats were strong and a very cool way to open up what is traditionally a bunch of punk and metal. The set hit you hard, hit you fast, and had you wondering where this dude from Beaumont learned to spit like that. Then soon after Mali Razae out of ATL came on stage with her high boots, leotard, and goofy backpack and had the whole crowd of studded jackets and Doc Martins jumping and dancing like fools. PLXTX had the room going crazy, whatever the hell that weird bunny rabbit DJ thing was, the whole hip hop/electronic night at Revolution was a sight to be seen. It was a different sort of side of LOUD!FEST and one that this dirtbag really, really enjoyed. — STARKNESS

especially to see Ian Myers floated above the crowd only to realize that dude is long 25 feet long when he crowdsurfs.

My only complaint was that the threat of rain took us from three stages to two for Saturday (happens at least every other year) and missing the faces that should've

been there that have passed on. Another fine LOUD! FEST in the books. Can you believe we will begin plan-

ning Lucky #13 soon?!?! - KELLY MENACE

A brief list of personal standout moments at LOUD!FEST

 - Jay Satellite covering some GBV and making me pause my gear set-up

- Watching a little kid dance around in front of me as I strummed and sang
- Those pineapple spear things from the food truck
- Having the best seat in the room for a fantastic **Ex-Optimists** set
- Head-banging to old school metal from **Night Cobra** over at Stafford
- Local hip-hop having a strong presence at the fest on Thursday night
- The Gary just playing some straight up great songs
- Delicious feasting over at Echo Base
- Remembering who **The Shut-Ups** were and then them delivering once again
- Singing along to Sabbath tunes during **Benghazi Osbourne**

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- Charm Bomb's heartfelt send-off to that Tim guy
- TODD HANSEN

I spent 17 hours on the road rolling hard to make it by Thursday night's final performance of **Electric Astronaut**. Bran is moving to Florida this summer and I wanted to make sure I got to see them rock the box one last night. There have been many incarnations of that band but the final one was indeed the best. Taco on drums, Charles on bass, and Brammer on guitar made for the heaviest, most solid, and loudest version of EA ever. What a way to see Brandon out in style. Other highlights for me:

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 Omotai drummer Daniel rocked the surgical mask for their set since he had a communicable disease and didn't wanna give anyone the cooties but still couldn't miss out on making LOUD!FEST. That's commitment, y'all.

- The Gary is easily one of the most unique bands Texas has produced in the last 20 years and their performance outside Friday night proved it.

- Friendship Commanders singer/guitarist Buick rocked so hard during their performance Friday night inside Revolution that she fell ass over tea kettle backwards over the top of her guitar amp but never missed a single strum and not only managed to protect a set-neck guitar from breaking but the darned thing stayed completely in tune.

 - Austin biker rock brothers Amplified Heat had the most righteous bass guitar tone I heard the entire weekend.
 And that's saying something, given the company they kept.

 Even stripped down to two peoples The Gloryholes still have that winning combination of melody, humor, and punk rock riffage. Sibling band Hormonal Imbalance was just as fun.

- Fiddle Witch & The Demons of Doom got errbody wanting to draw pentagrams in the Revs courtyard with they

LOUD!FEST Thursday and Saturday night had some great performances (Charm Bomb, Cool Moon, Shoobiedoobies, Rats, Hormonal Imbalance), noting I gave out at 11p both nights, but the cream of the crop was the lineup Friday IMHO. From the echoes of the brains in The Gary to the reliable Jay Satellite through the rocking Ex-Optimists and the always-stunning A Sundae Drive, it was one great set after the other. Gentleman Rogues had great tunes; From Parts Unknown still pounded the upright bass; and Prof Fuzz 63 tickled the funny bone singing in that telephone microphone. The cherry on top was Yaupon as the new band rocked out on a great original and then finished their set with the perfect cover: Thin Lizzy's "The Boys are Back in Town." Tasty. — MIKEL. DOWNEY

### THE EROSION OF ABORTION RIGHTS

It finally appears that the Supreme Court will rule to overturn the Roe Vs. Wade decision that made access to abortion mandated in all 50 states of this country. It took 43 years of careful planning to finally put all the pieces into place to come to this point. The evangelical movement may have been founded in the movement to protect racial segregation in private religious schools but it found its feet in the late '70s when the so-called "Right To Life" movement co-opted evangelical Christianity and ultimately the Republican party. Protecting unborn babies is far more marketable than protecting private schools from blacks and Mexicans. The evangelicals used their tremendous clout (ie. money) to infiltrate what had been to that point largely a political party that championed big business and finance and gave it a moral center it so desperately needed after Pres. Richard Nixon crippled the party. Fundamentalists immediately made their presence known by providing key primary support to California governor Ronald Reagan for the presidential nomination. And the Republican party never looked back.

This process has culminated with the evangelical support crucial to protect the nomination of Donald Trump and immediately his election to president, a man who failed every one of their usual litmus test check marks except for the most important one: he could be bought, and Trump came cheap. His price was flattery, support, and a willingness to avoid looking too closely at his obvious earthliness. Many wondered how so many spiritual advisors and men and women of God could support a man that was largely areligious, a womanizer, a racist, and a man about as far from the teachings of Jesus as a person could be. It was because the evangelical movement and been aimed like a missile towards defeating Roe Vs. Wade and knew that the key to its overturning would come through the Supreme Court. The 47th presidency had the potential to replace several court positions, assuredly enough to stack the court with conservative judges appointed specifically to overturn the abortion mandate. With a Republican president, congress, and judiciary there would be no way that abortion law could stand. And nearly every good Republican foot soldier at the state level has prepared the way for the court to make that ruling by passing egregious and illegal statutes, begging for their state to be the one that prompts the Supreme Court to ctrl-alt-del abortion riahts.

Meanwhile, America has changed since 1973. My entire life I have taken for granted that my partners would, if necessary, have access to a legal abortion. It was my parents that knew the stories of the coathanger, of pennyroyal, of the "back alley" procedure that killed many women and left many others scarred for life. It is hard for younger Americans to connect with that reality in any meaningful way in much the same way we have mistakenly believed that because white people don't lynch black people any more that racism has been cured. Out of sight, out of mind. Access to birth control, while not perfect, has never been easier for the

predominance of Americans. Teen pregnancy rates have steadily decreased. Technology has allowed 3D ultrasound imaging that will at 18-20 weeks show a picture of a baby's face that is strikingly accurate (all of my sons had the procedure done and all three came out looking like their 3D ultrasound photos). Fetuses have been medically viable as early as 21 weeks. Fetal genome mapping can now determine mutations, defects, and other challenges well before a baby is at term. Combine the technology with a generational ignorance of the dark days before *Roe Vs. Wade* and the immense disinformation campaign of the Right To Life movement and one has the perfect combination to erode the public's outcry over losing fundamental health care rights for women.

I have been a supporter of abortion rights since I understood what the laws mean. But at times I have questioned myself over that stance, especially once my wife and I began having and losing children. Our first child was stillborn due to genetic complications. It was the most heartbreaking thing that I or my wife have ever had to go through. It tested my belief and my grief chipped away at my support of abortion rights. This is largely due to how the Right has dominated the messaging around legal abortion. I wanted to believe that the baby we had just lost was more than a medical procedure, a seed planted in the ground that ultimately couldn't bear fruit. I wanted to believe that the soul of my baby went somewhere, that some cosmic force protected my baby when ultimately neither one of us could. My grief wanted this to be true. Ultimately, I snapped back to reality. If you believed the Right's propaganda machine then you'd think that women could abort a child post-birth (????), that Planned Parenthood sells aborted baby parts, and that only sluts get abortions. I did not believe this, but I was shaken a bit by grief and medical technology's ability to help a child born way premature still find a way to survive.

The Right To Life movement has subverted the discussion about what abortion is and what it isn't. I am hoping the pro-choice campaign will retake the messaging and learn how to properly market itself in the 21st century. I think the first move would be to redefine the narrative, to dispel the fake news the Right has used to advance their cause. Third trimester abortions do not happen unless they are to protect the life of the mother. 30% of women who obtain abortions self-identify as devote Christians. Abortion in the second trimester rarely happens and most doctors will not perform them as elective. The truth is easily verifiable. And one would hope that the lengths these trial statutes go to may be ultimately what does them in at the Supreme Court as well as the court of opinion. That a woman must be forced to endure a pregnancy from a rapist or incest or for medical reasons that would either render the infant unable to live or possibly kill the mother should horrify every woman and her partner. This would be the law of the land. It seems that the rebranding would sell itself. I am hoping that it will scare every one straight, as it should. - KELLY MENACE



## STILL DRINKING...HIJACKED

It occurs to me that I've been drinking beer for close to 30 years now. At first I hated it and did not understand the appeal to it. I have never been one to drink to get drunk and in the early 90s finding anything other than big American "pilsner" took real effort. I remember well the night that I discovered there was an entirely other beer world out there ready for me to explore. It was 1992 and I was at my band's practice space. We rented a room in a maze of office spaces located above a fire safety equipment rental store. During a break I walked down the hall to another band's room. These guys were big partiers and much of my little town's weirdo scene would post up on the band's shitty 3rd hand couches and drink and smoke. I asked if anyone had anything else but beer to drink and the answer was no, duh. I shook my hand and prepared to walk out. Billy Hardesty stopped me and said something to the effect of "dude, I got the right thing for you" and led me next door to his band's room. He fished me out a bottle of Guiness Export Stout from his dorm fridge. I popped the cap and took a swig and my eyes opened wide. This did not taste like what I thought piss must taste like. My mind was blown. I had to find more.

There was a single liquor store in town that sold Guinness and its sibling beer, Bass. Other semi-adventurous beers could be found an hour away in the closest college town where one could drink Dos Equis Amber and Negro Modelo at the local Mexican food joint or Sam Adams at the one fancy eatery downtown. Several years later I traveled to the Northwest for the first time and I was shocked at how many different kinds of beer there seemed to be out there and they were everywhere. Most places we ate at or drank at had the same tap handles: Sierra Nevada Pale Ale, Alaska Amber, Pyramid or Widmer Hefeweizen, Black Butte Porter, Red Hook ESB, and either Guinness or Deschutes Obsidian Stout. It was like going from having the 8 crayon pack to coloring with the 128 crayon box with the sharpener.

The only problem was that I had to return to western Kentucky and muddle through the mid '90s beer wasteland. A year later I moved to Oregon. I enjoyed beer from Ashland Brewing, Rogue, McMennamins, Henry Weinhards, New Belgium, Anchor, Deschutes, and Widmer. I began my life's love affair with "motor oil" beers. The darker the better. Stouts and porters are still my favorite beer style, with Deschutes Black Butte Porter still winning out as "my beer". I've certainly had more distinct beers and have been gobsmacked dozens of times by other beers, but that faintly charred slightly chocolatey black ale is like my house brew. I have visited the brewery in Bend, OR and drank Black Butter on nitrogen a few dozen feet from where it was brewed.

My time spent in Seattle in the late '90s and '00s developed my love for the cream ale style, first tasted from big British brands Caffreys (made by Guinness) and Boddingtons. Seattle microbrewery Hales still makes the hallmark of that style, Hales Cream Ale, with the distinct citrus nose of Cascade hops smoothed out by a nitrogen tap. I have never been a hop head and balked at the then burgeoning trend of the American pale ale, yet I enjoyed the Cascades bouquet in Grants Scottish Ale, perhaps my favorite example of that style. In 1980

Bert Grant converted an old opera house in Yakima, WA on the eastern side of the Cascades into Washington's first brewpub. It is fabled that he would walk up the hill behind his place into the foothills and handpick wild Cascade hops and brew with them same day. Even his Stout was overhopped but somehow not as skunky or pinesol'ish as much of the double and triple IPA's popular amongst modern beer bros.

I began to hit the import sections and learn my away around excellent beers from central and northern Europe. Monk-made beers like dubels and trippels, cloudy thirstquenching weisse beers, salty and tangy Berliner Weisses served properly mixed with raspberry or woodruff syrup. American hefeweizen was delicious but the true European styles from Franziskaner and the like were so much more interesting. Same goes for the first time I had a Pilsner Urquell and discovered just how much American breweries had fucked up the massmarket pilsner. I had my first beer float at Elysian Brewing, an espresso stout with big scoops of Tillamook ice cream. I began to read the work of noted beer critic Michael Jackson and sought out krieks and frambozens and began to more fully appreciate the taste of even shitty beer like perennial regional blue collar fare like Rainier, Hamms, and Olympia.

And then a dozen years ago, fleeing bankruptcy, I landed in Texas. I enjoyed the secondary styles from Shiner (I still love Shiner Black), Real Ale (their brown ale is still a winner), and St. Arnolds (nearly everything they made was enjoyable but of course my beloved Pumpkinator stands out). I watched proudly as Bryan/College Station developed three viable breweries and a brewing co-op. Regional Texas brewing exploded during my time there. So many amazing beers from all over, tapping into the state's Bohemian roots as well as big hops West Coast styles. Sour beers and barrel aging became a trend. It seemed like there was a microbrewery every other block in Austin. I still hold up Lobo Negro as my favorite black ale style beer I've ever had. Buffalo Bayou makes some amazing one-off stouts and I've put away more pints of 512 Pecan Porter and 8th Wonder Rocket Fuel than I care to remember. I am amused by craft beer's take on amber Mexican lagers and I go out of my way to try

Along the way microbrew beer became craft beer and it was no longer the province of beer nerds. Brewers made beers to put down for aging, to collect, to appreciate in the way that wines and other liquors have been treated for centuries. Beer somalier courses are catching on. I am shocked that even after 25 years of beer chasing that I can still find new varieties and flavors that surprise and delight me. I am also astounded by the sheer amount of overhopped bullshit that continues to pass as craft beer. I keep a beer cellar now with a couple dozen bombers at any time held back for aging. My taste still runs to the motor oil variety and I collect pretty much every affordable barrel-aged imperial stout and Baltic porter I come across. I don't know what interesting flavors haven't yet been used and blended but I am looking forward to see what my next 25 years of beer drinking will introduce to me. (And 25 years later I still love a draught pour of ol' Guinness.) - KELLY MENACE

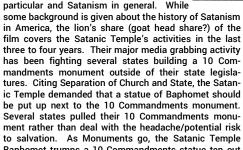


As is the norm with these stories, I'm waking up with a crick in mv neck and

## Drunk Detective Starkness

thing You're prolly about to get iacked riaht

Hail Satan is a documentary chronicling the recent history of the Satanic Temple in



Hail Satan is even handed in its treatment of the Satanic

formity. Fair enough. Why then, call it the "Satanic Temple"? Why not the "Non-Conformist Temple" or "The White Kids who really like Rob Zombie" temple? The

Overall all Hail Satan is an excellent film that covers the RENTED MULE

HAIL SATAN

not beat up and robbed. I mean, I still have the cash in in America, the lion's share (goat head share?) of the my wallet and we're not bruised or battered or nothing. film covers the Satanic Temple's activities in the last BO Me: Motherfucker, you called me in here. Let me tell three to four years. Their major media grabbing activity my damn story! So I'm thinking to myself... think... has been fighting several states building a 10 Comthink... thinkthinkthink Waaaaaait. Didn't Starkness mandments monument outside of their state legislarandomly help some dude at the park get a ride to the tures. Citing Separation of Church and State, the Satancourthouse last week, cause his girlfriend locked him ic Temple demanded that a statue of Baphomet should out and he didn't have a ride and life's problems are be put up next to the 10 Commandments monument. terrible and he's a sucker? Didn't that dude say he Several states pulled their 10 Commandments monuworked at Sonic? He totally did, cause this is Bryan ment rather than deal with the headache/potential risk fucking Texas and my dude, this is a real small fucking to salvation. As Monuments go, the Satanic Temple town sometimes. So I'm all "Hev man, all I gots are Baphomet trumps a 10 Commandments statue ten out twenties, but do ya'll know my boy Ray? Did he get of ten times.

> Temple: neither mocking their beliefs nor giving them a blank check. It handles the topic with a sufficiently light touch to allow the underlying humor of their protest to come through. The documentary doesn't whitewash (blackwash?) a member expelled from the temple for advocating violence toward President Trump. Most of the members of the Satanic Temple appeared to be articulate, intelligent and reasonable; though my more snarky side couldn't help but notice that most of the members of the Temple were white and looked like Rob Zombie fans and/or folks who had spent too many hours playing Dungeons and Dragons. Not that there is anything wrong with that, but it does touch upon my only criticism of the film (really more a criticism of the Satanic Temple than the film itself).

> According to Hail Satan, the Satanic Temple's belief in "Satan" is not a belief in an evil being per se, but a belief in rebellion to oppression, unscientific beliefs and conquestion is put before members at one point in the film and is never really adequately answered. Reading between the lines, "Satanic Temple" gets much greater internet and media interest than "Non-Conformist" temple. Resorting to such media manipulation may be necessary to get their message across but undercuts the high ground they attempt to take as the rational counterpart to religious zealots.

> strange and ironic places that religious fanaticism and the response to such fanaticism takes people. Desperate times call for desperate measures. Hail Satan. -

probably still a little drunk from the night before, but for some reason have a reasonably full belly and actually feel pretty good about life.

Me: Hey Drunk Detective Starkness. Where are you? It's a weekday morning and we got unreasonably drunk last night, what happened? Why do I feel OK and don't have the normal existential dread of being up at 5 AM and wanting to avoid the whole day?

Drunk Detective Starkness: Well you certainly sound different than when I usually talk to you. I mean, shit my dude, what's the last bit that you remember?

Me: Well there I was, minding my own business, having a whiskey, watching something stupid on TV and posting stupid bullshit on Facebook, you know, trynna have a quiet night in, when all of a sudden a friend showed up at the door. So I invited him in for a cocktail.

DDS: Yeah, checks out, nothing weird here. So he grabbed a cocktail and I'm sure you guys proceeded to get shit housed beyond any point of reason because, I mean, why not right?

Me: Yeah, I mean that happened, and I remember he decided that he needed to back to work for a bit, and then he was going to try and fuck this guy from the kitchen at one of those restaurants downtown, but that's

DDS: Well, I don't see any clues in your pocket. You've got your keys, your wallet, your reasoning, I mean, everything is intact. Why am I even here? Everything seems to be OK."

Me: Sometimes I like talking to you, and it's good to get a clearer picture, ya know? I guess I gotta call up Blacked Out Me. Dammit. This is probably going to ruin any semblance of a good morning we were about to have.

DDS: You don't have to wake him up. You could just go on with your day blissfully unaware of anything stupid that you did yesterday and wait until someone calls you on it.

Me: I know, Drunk Detective Starkness, but every time we do that it's a horrible surprise for me, and that really kills the vibe when some rando is all shitty or judgy or all actin' like they know me cause of some stupid thing Blacked Out Me did or said. We gotta get him involved. Yo. Blacked Out Me, you there?

Blacked Out Me: What up my dudes? Ya heard and now ya here to thank me for saving everyone's ass again? Because I'm the greatest mental construct of all time?

Me: Doubtful. But I'm at a loss after homeboy left the house last night. The TV was on, I was drinking, and that's all I got. We got no roommates, we got this house all by our lonesome, no girlfriend over, nada. It's weird. The fuck happened?



BO Me: Aiight, so you and (((redacted))) were drinking. So of course, you guys get slammed. Well, this joker, he grabs your keys on accident when he was leaving to try and fuck that dude from the kitchen. You were too dumb to notice, but look at ya boy here. I saw that you had his keys and he musta had your keys so we went walking to our boy's work.

Me: Ok, so just walking downtown trading some keys.

DDS: Remember, this is BO you, and there's still more story to happen.

Me: Dammit, DDS, you right.

BO Me: So I'm walking all the way to where this dude works to trade keys with my friend, wish him luck on fucking that dude, have a cigarette and head home. So I mean, I did that long walk back home, because I'm so fucking good at walking but when I get there I decide that we needed some Sonic in our lives. (Cause I realized, "Hey Starkness, you haven't eaten, like anything today. Should prolly fix that.") So I drive on over to Sonic and pull into a spot and proceed to try and order on this turned screen that no one would turn on for me

Me: Dammit BO Me. You're not supposed to drive dude. You know this.

BO Me: Yeah, I know, I fucked up there. I'm sorry, but you're interrupting. Well, lo and behold a bunch of Sonic employees were hanging out smoking a blunt in the parking lot after their shift. They notice my drunk antics, and the one dude says: "Hey man, we're closed, but I got an extra chicken sandwich I'll give ya for 3 bucks." And I'm all like, "Divine Providence! Yes, yes I want that chicken sandwich!" And I stumble out of my truck and reach into my pocket, 'cause you usually have a few bucks, and accidentally pull out a fist full of \$20 bills I forgot I had taken out of the ATM for this thing you had to do tomorrow. Well, fuck. Flashing cash in the parking lot of a closed Sonic at 2 AM, while you're obviously 80 billion sheets to the wind, prolly wasn't the smartest

Him: Ohh shit, Ray, ya man! We been worryin' about him. Think he must have cause he ain't showed up for his shifts all week." So ok, cool, diffused that situation and now we're sitting around shooting the shit smoking cigarettes. But my mind gears are turning and I can't stop them. Could I just go to wait way too long in the Whataburger drive thru line for something to eat? Sure. The problem though is I want this particular chicken sandwich that this particular guy offered me. I must

locked up last week or what? Last I saw him was right

before he went to court?"

Me: Yeah, but I mean, we're safe and healthy and clearly

Me: Alright man, let me level with you, I'm fucking hungry and I gotta work in the morning so here's what we're gonna do. Let's walk to the gas station and I'll buy a pack of smokes for me and a pack of smokes for you and we'll trade straight up for that chicken sandwich. Ya dig? And he of course agrees, cause it's a great deal for him. Dude only wanted three bucks, but I mean I'm being kind of a pain in the dick here so let's do the right thing and not try to get jacked again. And now me and this guy who was prolly about to jump me 20 minutes ago are standing in a gas station in the wee hours of the morning, and he's all like, "Man, you better get yourself some relish packs and some mustard and shit. That's a plain ass chicken sandwich right there."

Me: Don't I have to buy food here to partake of their fine condiments?

Him: Naw, dog, if you buy anything, you can grab condiments. I do that shit all the damn time.

Me: Hey random gas station clerk, is he right?

Random gas station clerk: He's right, he does come in here all the time to use our condiments.

And so fellow dirtbags, I learned a lesson that day from Blacked Out Me. This is why you gotta help out your fellow man when you can. Sometimes it's a waste of time. Other times though, it gets you out of a jam, home safe, and eating the banginest chilli-cheese-mayo-relishcovered-microwave-heated-up chicken sandwich you've ever had and you wake up feeling pretty dang good about yourself. - DRUNK DETECTIVE STARKNESS

FIND 979REPRESENT ON FACEBOOK AND 979REPRESENT.COM The premise of this month's 979Represent staff round robin is the piece of literature, music, film, art, etc. that by all accounts. based on the

## SHIT I'M SUPPOSED TO LIKE

other things one likes or people think you would like, you should have taken into your heart with lots of love, but in your hearts of hearts you just don't get it. Perhaps it's beyond "I just don't get it" and straight to "MOTHERFUCKER, BURN IT WITH FIRE!" hatred. We present to you the shit we are supposed to like but just can't get into.

I have to be honest, I didn't even have to think of my answer for this as I've always known. The band I'm supposed to like but just can't is **GG Allin/Murder Junkies**. I've had so many friends over the years that love 'em. I know musicians that I appreciate their taste in music that live for them. For the life of me, I seriously can't ever begin to understand the appeal. So he threw his shit at people. Meh. Yeah but he was the first! Whoopee. Wonderful. Have a cookie. But he once fucked a dead cat during a performance! Yeah. Doesn't appeal. Songs about violence, specifically sexual and homocide don't exactly toot my horrn, but even then the music just doesn't go anywhere for me. — CREEPY HORSE

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Notwithstanding its anti-authoritarian, populist rhetoric, you would be hard pressed to find a musical genre with more rules than punk rock. Fair enough; complaints about this are easily old enough to drive. Any subculture movement that doesn't descend into self-parody isn't a subculture movement at all. However, with these rules come sacred cows, credos, dress codes, and a long list of required "likes". The band I'm supposed to "like" that doesn't work for me is the **Dead Boys**. The reasons for the worship of this band elude me. It would be too strong a statement to say I DISLIKE the Dead Boys -"Sonic Reducer" is a pretty good punk anthem. But one good song does not a legendary band make. Fair enough, they were an adequate band but if you like your punk fun loud and dumb there are plenty of bands who do it better: Ramones, Dictators...... Dead Boys vocalist Stiv Bators got the memo as all of his post Dead Boys albums are superior to the Dead Boys albums. Give the first two Lords of the New Church (superlative goth rock), the Wanderers album "Only Lovers Left Alive" (pretty good new wave) or his two solo albums (well done power pop) a listen if you need further proof. Or not; if the band is stupid then their fans probably are too.

Honorable Mention — **The Germs**. Same as above but with about 1/4 the talent. — *RENTED MULE* 

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I have never understood the worship that seemingly everyone gives to **Radiohead**. Don't get me wrong, it's not that I wholeheartedly dislike them. I'm not Kid Rock with his Radiohead toilet paper (why do I remember that music video?). I just don't understand why I don't like them at the same level that most people seem to. Such a seminal band should be something that, as an appreciator of 70s prog and 90s alternative, I would think I'd be able to sink my teeth into. Yes, *OK Computer* is a great album. I have a copy on CD in one of my binders (a real one, not burned). "Karma Police" is a classic, "Airbag" is

an exciting opener, etc. I like the album, but I can't remember the last time I listened to it all the way through — the notion to do so hasn't crossed my mind in several years. I'll also give a shout out to *Hail To the Thief*. I liked its bleakness enough at one point that I bought it on vinyl, which still sits on my shelf.

I feel that Radiohead is the one band non-music nerds listen to and get excited about any related breaking news in order to have a group serving the role of their "music of importance" that they can have serious conversations about. I vividly remember some bros sitting outside of Rusty Taco (R.I.P.) discussing the merits of The King of Limbs. I gave it a listen a couple days later and nothing stuck with me. There were about two songs that I liked on Radiohead's latest album. A Moon Shaped Pool. "The Numbers" was one of them and the other one I don't remember I'm just giving them as a freebie. I have gleaned that Pool was not as universally acclaimed as most of their previous work, but there were at least a couple friends who told me, "On second listen it's actually quite good." I take that as evidence it is not supposed to be a blackspot in the discography. And folks always heap mounds of praise for In Rainbows, perhaps now be the most beloved album by the band. I downloaded it when it came out (I don't recall whether I put any change in tip iar), gave it a virtual spin and didn't get into it. Additionally, I've revisited In Rainbows probably five or four times in the years since and it still hasn't clicked.

However, there is an exception: give me Radiohead doing *The Bends*. That is the Radiohead that I want, playing some damn rock songs. You can have your thought-provoking, high-concept, guitar-less, bruised and sullen Radiohead albums. I'll take the head-bobbing groove of "Bones", the lovely chorus of "High and Dry", the heavy jams in "My Iron Lung", and the all-around gorgeous "Black Star". I don't care if they did more challenging, creative work afterwards; *The Bends* actually strikes my fancy. If you want to try and change my mind I'll be in my corner probably listening to *Animals*. — *TODD HANSEN* 

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I have never liked Michael Jackson. I think the closest I have to ever owning a Jackson recording is a compilation Christmas CD with a Jackson 5 tune. I never understood the appeal of Rush: I've never owned a single eight-track. cassette, vinyl, cd, or digital recording. I've never understood the appeal of Lou Reed. Sure, he wrote some great tunes, but his voice - and I love guirky voices - is a nonstarter. Again, no Reed in the library. Soundgarden, Pearl Jam, Metallica - I've tried over the years, but I've heard nothing that has ever made me want to buy any of these (and I admire Eddie Vedder) ... well, I do have a live EP of Pearl Jam. I liked the album covers that Yes had over the years, but I couldn't get into the music enough to part with my money. Beyonce, Taylor Swift, Kanve West, Ariana Grande, Drake, Katy Perry ... ah, no. - MIKE L. DOWNEY

Like a good indie rock boy I make it a point to drop by *Pitchfork* every day to catch up on my indie rock news. Been doing that for 15 or more years now. I may not know the bands but I use it as a good excuse to try to keep up with new artists and at least by somewhat up to date. About five years ago I noticed that Pitchfork began to cover indie rock bands less and less and started paying more attention to new hip-hop and R&B. It seems like more and more I am supposed to care as much about **Cardi B** and **Frank Ocean** and **The Weeknd** and every other obscure Soundcloud rapper as I am for the indie rock bands still out there doing that rock and roll thing. Except that I really don't care about Cardi B as much as I care about Tame Impala.

I'm no Neanderthal. My record collection is full of old school hip-hop, soul, 80s-90s R&B, and even more modern left-field artists like Janelle Monae, Esperanza Spalding, and Run the Jewels. But how I'm supposed to equate this more esoteric music with the money grubbing, soulless commercial pop and hip-hop that Pitchfork champions these days makes me question my fuddy -duddy status. Does it make old now that I could care less about Arianna Grande? Is this where all the new interesting music is being created? I usually give whatever band du jour a quick Youtube glance to see what's going on but I am certainly feeling my age these days. Am I out of step for wanting to hear guitar-based rock & roll rather than European EDM-influenced pop and third rate trap-pop? If so, then I suppose I'm a duck out and be out of step.

Don't get me started about Lizard Wizards and King Tuffy's and Ty Seagalls and the '10s garage rock movement. That shit makes me feel old too. — KELLY MEN-ACE

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**Spoon**. It's not bad music, but I have no desire to listen to most of it again. In theory, I should like this band: they sound like a cross between Bowie, Prince, and Jon Brion. But something's missing. Their music always sounds so flat to me. It's not lo-fi, but it sounds like a well-made album then dubbed onto a bad Maxell or TDK cassette. Reminds me of old tapes that I would record on a boombox off the radio, copies of a copy of a copy.

There's something else, though. Something unfinished about this music in an unappealing way. It's like they have hooks, but no melodies. They don't seem to do anything intangible, there's no chance in their albums, no spontaneity. Everything is precise, orderly, and ultimately dull. It's clear, unfussy, and good production, but there's just something that never quite gets there for me. Anyway, they're not evil and I don't hate their fans. I'm just happy with them passing me by. — STARKNESS

When you're a metal-head, it is assumed that you will like certain bands, but then others believe there's no way in hell you could possibly not like "this" band, and they make it their business to harass you for not conforming.

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Tool is one such band. Oh, I can see you lighting your torches and grabbing your pitchforks already! Believe me, I've tried to listen to Tool. I have attempted to

understand the appeal, and I have even tried to find at least one song I like. But I just can't. I wouldn't go so far as to label Tool "metal". Hard rock with cerebral, atmospheric, and industrial influences, perhaps? Maynard James Keenan's vocals really rub me the wrong way, too; better suited for alternative or post-grunge rock, in my onlinion

The only non-metal band that has ever come close to the status of Tool among the metal community, in my book, is **Ghost**. The difference between the two is that I understand Ghost's appeal and there are some songs I actually like. Whatever the reason metal-heads like Tool, good for them. Listen away! But please, don't try to convert me to the fandom. It ain't gonna happen! — CALEB MULLINS

A band people have consistently expressed dismay that I don't enjoy is **Coldplay**. Thank God their moment, for the most part, has passed. At their height, I was frequently accused of "just being difficult" because I would not attest to their brilliance. I believe Todd Hanson's assessment of Radiohead being safe for "non-music nerds" applies here, as Coldplay always struck me as a band for people who want to attend concerts on blankets in white pants and sandals while sipping Stella Artois because that's "edgy". Recently, **Maroon 5** assumed that marshmallow-y space in rock-n-roll that Coldplay stole from U2, but no one has expressed contempt for my contempt of Maroon 5. Maybe because I've never been in a sorority and don't post on a mommy blog.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, I've never liked **Wilco** simply because their fan-base seems too pleased with themselves. The pretentiousness of many Wilco fans exceeds even the pretentiousness of Jeff Tweedy — who cut some solo records I genuinely enjoyed. But Jeff Tweedy, in my opinion, possesses an Alec Baldwin "the world just falls into my lap *voila!*" flavor of pretentiousness I find rather adorable from a distance. That said, if I could revisit *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot* without the halitosis of self-inflated Wilco extremists fan-splaining its importance to human evolution, I might actually enjoy it.

In closing, the two things on this planet that make me feel truly old are hemorrhoids and hip-hop. Specifically modern hip-hop. Friends attempt indoctrinate me. Students email loads of recommendations. Every other SNL musical guest is a hip-hopper. But it's all lost on me. Kendrick Lamar, Drake, J Cole, Chance the Rapper, Childish Gambino, Travis Scott, anyone with the word "Lil" in their name — please enjoy their dope rhymes over there. Like my dairy intolerance inflaming my hind end, modern hip-hop burns my audibles with a cantankerous displeasure. I take great comfort knowing when Wiz Khalifa enters the studio, he does not see my face on the other end of his mic. — KEVIN STILL

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## RECORD REVIEWS



Sunn O))) Life Metal

Confession: Life Metal is the first Sunn O))) album I've attempted to digest fully. Previously, Sunn O))) for me has remained situated in the background, blurring quietly through desk speakers or earbuds while attention resides elsewhere, operating like an essential oil diffuser that you forget but notice again occasionally and, perhaps, pleasantly. *Life Metal*, however, entered the cultural landscape with a heightened and frazzled anticipation. also entered my life at the beginning of summer, a season in which I like to slow down, close my shire door, and feel the hair grow on my hobbit feet.

Life Metal seemed the perfect soundtrack for such a season. So, for the first time, I pulled Sunn O))) from the background towards the front and enjoyed every drone-y, long-gasmic chord . . . until the damn thing creeped me out.

Anyone familiar with Sunn O))) will traverse little new territory on Life Metal. We've got four tracks weighing in anywhere from 10 to 25 minutes. Each of those four tracks feels like four solid amp strums, though I'm sure it rounds out tighter to five. Opener "Between Sleipnir's Breath" ignites with horse's nays before the first chord bursts. About half-way through the opener, Hildar Gudnodittar (a name I do not have adequate accent marks to type correctly) enters with vocals that feel far too subtle, angelic even, for a Sunn O))) track. Her lyrics — "Not forever on earth; only a little while here" - are translations from 15th century pre-Mexican poetry. (That's what Google told me.) There's some pipe organ hidden around the edges of the track's back end that is freaking lovely, validat-ing Sunn O)))'s insistence on playing in fogged out churches and cathedrals.

By the end of track one, nearly 13 minutes into a 68 minute record, the trance has been set, the hypnosis has pulled listeners into place, and Sunn 0))'s largest hurdle is won. We are here. We are locked in. The music can do to us what Sunn O))) wants. And what does Sunn O))) want? In a recent YouTube interview, Stephen O'Malley said the goal of Sunn O)))'s music is to "change the atmosphere". There's that diffuser image again: adding new elements into the air. The goal, too, is to create music that is more physical than aural, more material than ethereal. The fog in concerts makes that tangibility happen, but how does the band create a sense of physical dimensions to their studio sound? That's a good question. And somewhere in the answer to that question is what creeped my shit out on a recent listen to Life Metal.

The element most unique on Life Metal, one that is almost totally void on previous Sunn O))) albums, is a twiny note of hopefulness. Both O'Malley and Greg Anderson claim to have arrived at a beautiful stage in life. They have families. dren. Budding careers. Meaningful, long-term friendships that have weathered true adversities. The challenge for O'Malley and Anderson on Life Metal was how to convey that beauty dire through the Sunn O))) sound, how to arrive at a titular emotional effect - the essence of life. (Sunn O))) has claimed in interviews that their current title stems from an inside joke among band friends about creating the opposite of "death metal". Anything remotely cheesy or banally nourishing is immediately labeled "life metal".) Chimes and bells ring, even minimally, in the second track "Troubled Air", and by track three, "Aurora", the boys are feeling frisky enough to pump a little high-pitched moog into the background. But it's on the closing track "Novae" where the themes seem to coalesce - and perhaps implode a bit. Electric cellos drown out the guitars about fifteen minutes in, creating a totally different drone, a more gutted draw of doom. Is this what it sounds like to be disemboweled? The long stretch of inner lining over hot strings?
The battered echo of bent light? I was pleasantly tripping on the tingles of an ASMR high, even in the depths of Sunn O)))'s whispered despairs, until this final track. That's when I had to turn the damn thing off.

Well, I should say this first: I have sat with this album a good dozen and plus times. I've sat with it in full meditation as well as in the background. I've played it primarily on head-phones and in my office on desk speakers. I've listened on Bandcamp and Spotify, and I heaped my allowance into a little stash to take to Waterloo Records this weekend that I

might procure a copy of Life Metal on vinyl. It was in my run for ATOY. Then I played the sucker via YouTube on my home stereo speakers, diffusing it fully into the house like three drops of lavender at bedtime. The first three tracks were par for the desperate course, and then "Novae" kicked in, and that's when something something suddenly opposite of hopeful - dropped into the atmosphere. It entered quiet and harrowing at first, slipping in on its belly like that bow over strings, but, when the guitar bursts afresh at the 22 minute mark, whatever had been down there low and incognito finally stood-up and unfolded itself. As a fellow horror-hound says of some films that send your soul to the shower, "That thing can't live in my house." Yep. The same can be said of this new album by Sunn O))). And it's that final note I realize that will send some readers to complete their order of Life Metal post-haste. If so, feel free to call me when the creep sets in. We'll exorcise it together. - KEVIN STILL



Shoobiedoobies Counting the Sun

The problem with writing about fun punk music like Shoobiedoobies is once you start peering too closely at it, you risk diminishing the simple excitement. Many over-analyzed the Ramones and missed the joy.

Hopefully, this won't jinx Shoobiedoobies, a pop-punk trio composed of drummer Livie Goyco, bassist Sofie Goyco, and their guitarist dad Jorge Goyco. Counting the Sun is their first EP – six short songs in the vein of the best punk bands including Bryan's own late-lamented The Hangouts.

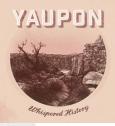
Picking a favorite tune is challenging since they're all sort of the same, which is part of the charm. However, "You're Scared We Know" is propulsive rock out of the gate before gearing down for the lyrics: "you're scared we know/All the things you've done" and then slamming back into high. All three in the band shine on this

one, which doesn't mean they don't on the other five tunes.

It is Sofie's bass that kicks off the EP finale "Do Something Crazy," and she has nice solo moments in "Hold on Me" and "I Like You." Jorge's dirty guitar opens "Don't Compare Yourself" and "Just for You" while providing the squalling rock sheen on all the proceedings.

Yet, it's Livie's rhythmic drumming that anchors the tunes, whether tearing into the cymbal -crazed closer, revving up the opening song, or just thundering along. She's got the beat.

Also, if you see them live (or in your car or living room), don't forget to join in the "nah-nahs" that open "Hold on Me." You won't regret it. — MIKE L.



Yaupon Whispered History

This EP is from a Houston quintet that contains familiar faces to LOUD!FEST and Rev's patrons — two members of the punkish bar band Golden Sombero: Todd Hansen and Cody Franklin. However, those expecting careening rock will discover a shift in sound.

Hansen continues his lead vocals and lyrical roles while Franklin has traded his guitar for keyboards and synthesizers. Where Hansen often howled along with his bandmates' raucous play before, now his vocals, still emotive, are more melodic as they match the less-frenetic music in these four times

This doesn't mean Yaupon (a tree Native Americans made tea from) should be shelved in the easy listening section with Michael Bolton and Perry Como. The best of the EP — "Take Notes" — is a great band rock song that allows bassist Travis Huchlefeld and guitarist Victor Powell to shine alongside Franklin's keyboards and Toffer Bartonico's drums. Hansen takes aim at pontificating blowhards — "You think you're American in your spangled-star cloak" — who need to come down from their "gold-coated

## CONCERT CALENDAR

<u>6/1</u>—The Reploids, Murasaki Effect, Mortales @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

6/6-DJ Bear Dance Party @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

<u>6/7</u>—Daikaiju, Mockingbird Brother, Unicorndog, The Ex-Optimists @ Revolution, Bryan. 9pm

<u>6/8</u>—Charles Wesley Goodwin, Colton French @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

6/10—Giger, Mutant Love, Iron Slut @ Revolution, Bryan. 8pm

6/14—Pride Party with Alok @ Halo, Bryan. 7pm 6/14—Jay Satellite Solo, Guys Called Todd, Ian Myers @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

6/15—Corusco, The Fox In the Ground, Jasper, Pardon Our Mess @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 8pm 6/15—Colton French @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

6/21—Parachute, Billy Raffoul @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 8pm

6/21-Grifters & Shills @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

<u>6/22</u>—**Punk Rock Flea Market** @ Revolution, Bryan. 2pm

soapboxes" to "talk to me with your hands at your side" while warning they are "going to get a whopper right where it hurts. "Charleston Rose" is an unabashed love song - "you might have me wrapped up." The languid folk-rock tune features more tasty guitar from Powell as well as a nice backing chorus to close out the song. There's more appealing guitar on "Imaginary Binds" as well as a beguiling Franklin synth line underlying the song about letting go: "Pick me up and let me glide tonight/Forget all the weight I drag behind." The opening tune "Life of the Party" indicates the direction the EP is going, a course hinted at on the last of Golden Sombrero's Indifference," Defensive Hansen's clear vocals follow tasty guitar and keyboard fills. The song paints an unflattering picture of someone who craves the center of attention – "weasel your way into every frame" - even as the music coddles the listener's ear.

Most of these tunes rocked more live at Loud!Fest, so it will be interesting to see the direction the band goes in the future. Whispered History is short, but sweet, and worth the listen. — MIKE L. DOWNEY



#### Devin Townsend Empath

Devin, Devin, Devin...I wish I knew what was going on inside that shining bald head of yours. I suppose I should be more careful about what I wish for because I'm pretty sure I got it. Devin is no stranger to the metal scene; his devil-may-care creativity has captivated fans for years. It is not a stretch to say he is a musical wizard because his method is totally unorthodox, yet it draws in the most hardened metal fans like moths to flames. True to his formula, Empath is a yet another example of how Devin's "it's so crazy, it just might work" approach to music shatters the norms which metal-heads have imposed upon themselves.

After taking a break from the Devin Townsend Project (DTP from here on out) in early 2018, Heavy Devy began working on a solo album titled *Empath*. To

6/22—Avenue Rockers, Hoping All Theories Exist, Aphotic Contrivance, Sykotic Tendencies, American Psychos, Holy Fear @ Revolution, Bryan. 8pm

6/24-BCS School of Rock Seniors, Ride the Panda @ Revolution, Bryan. 5:30pm

<u>6/27</u>—Space Dingus, Mad Rant @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

6/28—Ben Morris & The Great American Boxcar Chorus @ Palace Theater, Bryan. 8pm 6/28—Snakeskin Prison, Wellborn Road @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

6/29-Half Man @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

<u>7/5</u>—Cruel Summer, Charm Bomb, A Sundae Drive @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

7/6-Smashed Idols, Mutant Love, Sykotic Tendencies, The Shoobiedoobies @ Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm

7/11-Kirsty Kruger @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

whet the appetite of fans, a music video for the single debuted "Genesis" а few months before the release date. Remember when I said, "Be careful what you wish for" in regards to knowing what's in Devin's head? This is exactly what the music video seems portray. Viewers are subjected to a seven-minute, audio and visual assault of images ranging from tropical islands, exotic animals, religious imagery, street food, sea creatures, planetary systems, 8-bit video games, and kittens...yes, I said kittens. It's chaos, but a controlled chaos like an explosive demolition. The arrangement of the visuals pairs strangely well with the music. It's one of those moments when you ask yourself, "What in the hell was that?!" This is exactly what sound describes the 'Genesis", and that's only the first song on Empath.

To say it is difficult to pin the genre of Empath is the understatement of the year. The music contains reverb, sampling, blast beats, riveting guitar and solos, classical stringed instruments, breakdowns, upbeat poppy overtones, operatic clean singing, acoustic guitars, brutal death metal growls, choirs, and guest appearances from Steve Vai, Samus Paulicelli (Decrepit Birth), and of all people, Chad Kroeger of Nickelback. This album is all over the place! I suppose the right answer to the question of the genre is simply, Yes." Though it is chaotic

and just plain odd, I like it! The and rapid genre-bending change of sound and pace is like opening a present only to find another present with different wrapping paper and a different sized box; you're somewhat surprised and confused at first, but then you find yourself smiling. In addition, the song arrangement is perfect with just the right rise, fall, struggle, and climax.

One thing that puzzles me is why Devin did not release this record under the DTP because, in all honestly, the sound feels like it would have fit perfectly in the discography. Perhaps I'm being too picky, but I felt Perhaps that stepping away from DTP to make this record was sort of unnecessary. The other prob-lem I find with Empath, though minor, is the length of some songs. It feels that many of them play on needlessly with ongoing background noise, instrumentation, and sampling when Devin could have produced shorter, and more succinct songs with egual I mean, a 23 minute effect. song? Really?

Overall, this record was either created by a madman or a genius. I say, "Why not both?" This record is not without its flaws, but Heavy Devy is the only man who could throw everything that metal-heads are supposed to hate into a record and make them love it. How he does it, I don't know. A 4.5:5 from me. - CALEB MULLINS



