

STOREREPRESENT



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*inside: why todays candy ass world needs barbarians - kevin! - downtown
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danger flicks - the trump terrorists - reading rocks*



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

editorial bored

kelly menace

art splendiddness

**katie killer & wonko zuckerberg with maren
farmer, jorge goyco, & william daniel t
hompson**

print jockey

craig wheel werker

folks that did the other shit for us

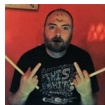
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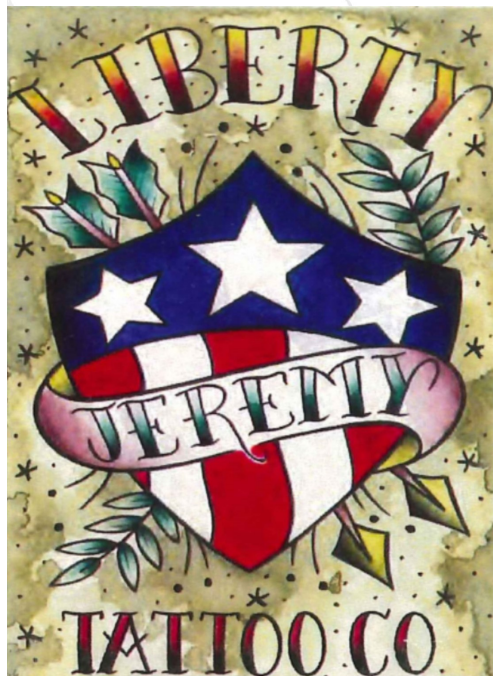
DOWNTOWN AGGIELAND

Bryan and College Station have always had a very peculiar codependency. Bryan is the older sibling, first established in 1871, and is a true city. College Station, named purely for its function, was never meant to be its own town and existed purely as an extension of Texas A&M University. College Station was only able to exist per its connections to the college and the train route into Bryan. This relationship really did not change much until that little land grant college blew up in the wake of the post-World War II GI Bill boom that sent millions of veterans to college. As the college grew so did College Station.

By the time I moved to towns in the summer of 2006 the relationship between Bryan and College Station had grown to favor the younger of the two. All the growth had occurred south and east of town. Other than Traditions most of the higher dollar real estate developments were always built south of University Dr. A drive up S. College or N. Texas Ave. would show a clear farmer's tan line between the newer, "nicer" College Station and the run-down, ramshackle, and more ethnic Bryan. Students rarely strayed north of Northgate. Downtown Bryan had a restaurant or two, a coterie of bail bonds offices, some older 9-to-5 businesses, a weird place in the alley that had drum circles and stuff, and a place that had drag shows.

Then a funny thing happened. Texas A&M's athletic programs joined the Southeastern Conference and found national attention with division championship winning women's basketball, track & field, and baseball programs as well as the Johnny Manziel football of the '10s capped by a #5 national finish for the Jimbo Fisher/Kellen Mond 2020 team. College Station began to *overdevelop*. Ag Shacks, Tower Point, Kyle Field, the new University Drive, and the forthcoming Motor Speedway suburb has turned the area into a sprawling boomtown. The adjacent Bryan has also begun to benefit from this growth, with the Stella, the continued sprawl of Traditions, RELIS, and the renewal of downtown Bryan. While downtown isn't all it should be yet still it has come very far in the past 15 years. Dining, nightlife, and residences have made DTB habitable for urbanites. And the more that downtown Bryan grows, the more College Station's jealousy will fester. With a jewel like TAMU on its crown why would College Station ever be jealous of Bryan?

Because College Station covets a town center. It does not have one, nor will it ever truly be able to develop one. This is because the de facto town center of College Station is Texas A&M and everyone knows it. The city government has tried on several occasions to create a town center, at first with Wolf Pen Creek then next with Cherry Hill. Both failed. Rather than understand it has a feather in its cap College Station will never have, the Downtown Bryan Association has begun to post signage around downtown supporting the idea that DTB is really "Downtown AggIELand", as if Bryan will be College Station's surrogate town center since it can't really have its own. Is it a way to ride the coattails of College Station's TAMU-tied success? Or is it a way to hit College Station right where it is most sensitive? You may be AggIELand, but we are *Downtown AggIELand*. It is likely just someone's idea of a neat marketing campaign. However, it does portend of something deeper, of the continued push and pull of the psychological codependency of the fraternal twin towns, so alike and yet so not alike. —
KELLY MENACE



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THE CONSEQUENCE OF NO CONSEQUENCES AT ALL



For the sake of complete and total transparency, I did not vote for Trump in 2016 or 2020. Among the reasons in 2016, I did not *think* that he had the experience, background, nor temperament to be an effective president. After enduring four years of his insidious brand of leadership, I *knew* that he didn't and was more convinced than ever that he represented a danger to our country, to our democracy, and to anyone who might oppose him. Which is why I didn't vote for him in 2020 either.

Our government... teaches the whole people by its example. If the government becomes the lawbreaker, it breeds contempt for law; it invites every man [sic] to become a law unto himself [sic]; it invites anarchy. — Louis D. Brandeis

Anyway, no drug, not even alcohol, causes the fundamental ills of society. If we're looking for the source of our troubles, we shouldn't test people for drugs, we should test them for stupidity, ignorance, greed and love of power. — P. J. O'Rourke

and from the body cams off police officers who were beaten, injured, or killed in the attack, is violent, disturbing, and shows that these people were not just putting on a show...they came prepared to take over the Capitol, overturn the election, and keep their president, just as he had told them to do.

The party of "law and order" ignored law enforcement officers, attacked law enforcement officers and killed law enforcement officers—and now suggests that Democrats can't make a call for unity

Another disclaimer, I renewed my passport towards the end of 2020 because Trump would never promise a peaceful transfer of power...mostly because he wouldn't acknowledge that there could be a transfer of power, saying over and over that if he were to lose the presidential election, it would be because it was rigged. I had a general feeling of unease, bordering on fear, but then my common sense self would try to convince me that I was overreacting, that there was no way Trump could stop the transition, that if he tried to invoke martial law, the military would say, um, nope. Besides, where in the hell could I go with my newly valid passport, what with travel restrictions, a global pandemic, and the fact that both my French and Italian are good enough to find a bathroom, possibly a bank, and, realistically, nothing else?

After the general election and the subsequent run-off in Georgia, I had laid most of my apprehension aside. The majority of the country had realized that we couldn't have four more years of Trump, Georgia had shown that they didn't cotton to Trump's accusations against their state, their Republican governor, nor their Republican-led elections department in the Secretary of State's office (both Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger [R] and Gabriel Sterling [R], COO of the Secretary of State's office, were attacked by Trump following the general election and the run-off and then pressured by Trump to find his "missing votes"), and all seemed right with the world...or, at least, as right as it was gonna be with a global pandemic raging and an economy that was in the worst place it had been since the end of WWII.

Even as January 6 approached, and there were reports that Trump was pressuring Vice President Mike Pence to overturn the results of the election on the Senate floor, I wasn't particularly concerned because constitutional scholars, reputable journalists, and even other Republicans all said that such a thing was impossible.

Then the Stop the Steal Really and subsequent insurrection of Jan 6 occurred and I was shaken to my core. Thankfully, the live news footage of that day caught only what could be seen from outside the Capitol from where news teams could film...but even that looked like a feed coming from a foreign country and not from the Capitol of the United States of America. The subsequent footage that has been released from security cams inside the Capitol, from the insurrectionists' posts on social media,

unless they are willing to let bygones be bygones, forget about Trump's (and some members of Congress') incitement of the insurrection, and move forward.

Now, I don't like division either. Those who know me know that I'm the kind of far-left-leaning liberal who wants us all to love each other, love the animals, love our planet, and to live in peace and harmony as one big happy family. However, I'm also the kind of left-leaning-liberal who knows that words and actions have consequences and that when folks aren't held accountable for their words, actions, and their consequences, the result is a society in which humanity's more base and malicious tendencies take hold. And so to those who suggest we should just move on, I say, thanks, but no, because there can be no real unity without accountability. (To those who vociferously helped to incite the insurrection and are now wondering why those unreasonable Democrats can't just let it go and move forward, I say a hearty, eff you, you can't possibly be serious).

Do I honestly believe that the Senate will convict Trump? I believe they could and should, but I also know that they probably won't. Do I ultimately believe that it's up to voters to decide whether Sens. Cruz and Hawley remain in the Senate or if Reps. Broebert and Greene remain in the House? Yes, but I also believe that they too should be held accountable for the parts they've played in creating an environment where groups like QAnon, The Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, *et al.*, would consider trying to take the U.S. Capitol.

Words and actions matter, folks. And, ultimately, Republicans know and believe this. It's all they can talk about whenever there are demonstrations or protests with which they don't agree. It's time for Republicans who are true conservatives and who believe in the long-standing morals espoused by their party to get their heads out of their respective asses, stand up and be counted, and reclaim the civility, integrity, and honor that were once the hallmarks of the majority of lawmakers of all parties on Capitol Hill.

If we truly want America to be a shining beacon, to be the land of the free, to stand for truth and justice throughout the world, then we must hold those who threaten our very democracy accountable...whether they be an unemployed conspiracy theorist from the rust belt, a veteran of military service, or a president/former president of the United States. — PAMALYN ROSE-BEELER

After ten years of writing and editing for 979Represent, Kevin Still has decided to hang up his laptop keyboard and devote his attention to writing a book among other things. Many a 979Rep collaborator found their way to these pages thanks to having been enrolled in one of Professor Still's classes at Blinn. We mark this occasion with a celebration of Little Big Beard Kevin. —ed.

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I can't tell you how many hours I've spent, how many college-ruled sheets of paper, how many megabytes of emails and text messages I've devoted since 2010 in my great correspondence with Prof. Kevin Still, who just showed up one day at LOUDFEST 2. At first, we thought he was a friend of Marty Durlam's, as I noticed Kevin for the first time holed up in conversation with Marty after a performance by God's Favorite Creature, one of Marty's many noise projects with religious imagery and overtones. Remember that time he beat a fake blood stuffed lamb hung up over the Eric era Stafford's stage like a piñata, leaving a red stain on the stage that never came out? Marty liked to do shit like that. Come to find out later Kevin was just interested and wanted to know more. You could probably say that is the man's central theme. *I am interested and I want to know more.*

For many years Kevin and I have been very close friends in an odd sort of way. Like, if he's having problems at work or at home or such I'm not likely to know much about that. Our friendship and correspondence is in some ways a lot like the sort that fellow writers struck up with one another in the 19th century. Like reading Oscar Wilde's letters to Brendan Beehan or something like that. I know I'm mixing centuries here but I care not. We would talk at large about the world, politics, art, music, literature, society, and what sort of thing we were trying to accomplish in Bryan/College Station. At first much of this correspondence was loosely business related as we hashed out *979Rep* ideas. Eventually it became just stuff we tended to talk about when we were together or, as in recent years, when we wrote to each other. Like old school pen to paper, tongue to envelope, flipping the red flag up on the mailbox writing to each other. I have had many sorts of friendships in my life. Many of my best friendships were formed because we were involved in the pursuit of a common goal. Some because we played in bands together, some because we did community things together, some because we survived traumatic experiences together. My friendship with Kevin has become a way to translate the world into a language that I can comprehend more fully, make sense of the senseless, and notice patterns in chaos that I never knew existed. I'm betting we will see a byline or three more out of Kevin before we lay this enterprise down to rest some year and this paper and our community have been and will be all the better for it. — KELLY MENACE

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Before I sing Kevin's praise like the gospels, I want to take the reader back to when I first met him.

It was the Fall semester of 2012 where I was waiting to visit with Chumchal when his noticed your door. The thing was decorated with stickers and bands that I liked and some I didn't know; there were poems and little comic strips all over. A true Picasso in a dismal hall of terrifying teachers seemingly ready to sink their claws into me. I even posted a picture about it on Facebook. I laugh at the idea of Facebook in 2012. I managed to weasel my way into his class the very next semester because I knew it was a place I belonged. I brought a book with me every class mostly to keep from talking to anyone. I didn't want to be noticed, but there he was all up in my business asking what I was reading and what bands I liked on account of all my band shirts I'd wear. When the semester ended he insisted, we get coffee and

keep in touch. I was so incredibly flattered because I loved that class and I loved talking about horror movies, books, and bands with him. I walked back to my car and sobbed alone for a while. I didn't think we'd actually hangout. Never in my life have I ever been so happy to be wrong. One coffee day, Kevin told me about some friends you had that were in a band, and that Kelly, the editor for the zine he wanted me to write for, was the singer of said band. Kevin thought I'd like the things they made and that I should go see them play at a place called Revolution in downtown.

Ten years have flown by and because of him I have had the most amazing friends that became my family. Kevin, you are one of those blatant domino effects that I am most happy to boast about. If it weren't for you reaching out to me, that (still) awkward, shy, weird kid in the back of the class, I wouldn't have the life I have now. I have met the most beautiful people and have witnessed just how creative human beings can be. The love that surrounds our little community isn't something everyone finds in their lifetime, and because of you I found it in mine. So, thank you Kevin Still, for loving me. Thank you for all the coffee and chicken strips over hours and hours of conversation and encouragement. Thank you for keeping my secrets and sharing yours. Thank you for pushing me out of my comfort zone and making me do things I didn't think I was capable of. Thank you for all the emails on music recommendations, book reviews, poems, check-ins, movie reviews, and SO MUCH MORE. I am/we are so gosh damn lucky to have a person like you in this place we call home. I, my friend, am happy to stand down wind of you any day of the week. Please, keep sending me emails. I'll meet you for coffee and chicken strips soon. I love you, dude. So very much.

XoXo — JESSICA LITTLE

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When I heard the news about Kevin leaving the paper, I had just hugged his neck the previous day. I kinda wanted to go back and sock him hard in the arm and ask him why he didn't say anything but I knew that answer already. Unnecessary violence, no matter how playful, wouldn't change the response. Change IS the answer. I know the process of transition and transformation all too well and I salute him for having the courage to welcome it. Instead of punching Kevin, I decided to (possibly) make him cry instead. I need him to know: how often his words have guided me. I need him to know: how many times I needed a friend and he was there. I need him to know: when he said, what did you write today? This is what I wrote:

Nov 2019
Dear Kevin,
I'm here to help in any way that keeps me busy because living in solitude might drive me crazy.

KEVIN!!



to proof my article?

March 2020
Dear Kevin,
I was thinking about writing a bit in the paper this month about staying sober during the apocalypse. Kelly said you might have some advice. Would you like to proof my article?

April 2020
Dear Kevin,
You caught me on a fucked up day that has challenged me in significant ways. I am well in some moments and then sinking in others. As, I am sure, we all are. One thing I learned while falling in love with a guru is: this world is a direct reflection of our inner lives. As each wave peaks in turmoil inside our head or hearts, so does the world peak. And as we learn to calm the storm (or even hang on tight through it) we reflect that strength back out into the world for others to see. Be well and don't forget to make something beautiful today.

May 2020
Dear Kevin,
Your alley cat is profoundly beautiful.

June 2020
Dear Kevin,
You mentioned once before that if I ever needed to reach out over sobriety, that you were available and it's been on my mind. I have been having a helluva a time. I've been thinking about doing the whole AA thing just to be in a different crowd. Would it be within your social distancing limits to attend a meeting with me? I kinda don't want to go alone.

-I had two panic attacks. I have to cancel.
-Word of the day: ob-fus-cate-verb; to render obscure or unclear, bewilder. Daddy drank so much moonshine it would obfuscate his mind,
-Yesterday I came home determined to get wasted and fuck the day away. I got obfuscated.

July 2020
Dear Kevin,
It's been a fortnight since I have had a drink. I hate it but it's not that bad. Anything can be an addiction. It's just the matter of healthy vs. toxic. Sobriety has challenged me to find healthier additions. It's not that bad. I ride my bike every evening instead of slamming six beers. It's not that bad. I read a book until I fall asleep instead of whiskey chugs. It's not that bad. When I wake, in a night terror, haunted by the shadows of my past, I cry and scream and rage all the feelings I never got the chance to rebuke from my soul. And sometimes, I write it all down in moments like this. It's not that bad.

-I came across this beautiful poem:
"I lean into Life.
My tongue is fire; my breath is wind.
The spirit spits from my mouth
I speak of a chain of events where
making leads to making,
action to action,
love to love,
where the beginning began so long ago
We find ourselves
always in the midst of it."

August 2020
Dear Kevin,
Thanks for listening and accepting me in all my truths. It means a lot to be able to say 'I drank today'. I keep expecting stones to be thrown but you never have. That's radical love dude.

-Yesterday dragged my ass down the banks of the whiskey river. It took my cares away. I completely and totally numbed out. I wrote down this Frida Khalo poem:
"You loved with more hands than a parade of beggars, and here you stand Heart like a four-postered bed. Heart like a canvas.
Heart leaking something so strong they can smell it in the streets."
I'll try again when the sun rises.
-I tried again and succeeded today.

September 2020
Dear Kevin,
Today was Patsy Cline's birthday. Thank you for texting me. I played my cassette tape, alone in the van, as I sat crying in the driveway. Today was hard. But not impossible. I keep showing up. Again. And again. And again.

-Happy Birthday Mary Oliver:
"That time
I thought I could not
Go any closer to grief
Without dying
I went closer,
And I did not die."
-Heavy. I woke up drinking. I am not sleeping. In the throws of mental illness. Rolling over. Rotting. Sleep. Awake. Drinking. Tomorrow is a new day. This one sucks. I like to empty little Maker's Mark bottles and save them for potions. I collect my alcoholism like tiny prizes for the fae. If I make them more beautiful, will it erase the shame?
-"Every storm runs out of rain." -Maya Angelou

October 2020
Dear Kevin,
It's my day off. I am caught up in the storm again. I was deeply triggered by an emotional wound yesterday and ordered a beer delivery. Then I sobbed uncontrollably while it sat on the porch. It is still there, sitting warm in the morning light. I am still here. Eyes swollen and heart tender. I was sitting with suicide last night and your message came through. I made a promise to send a reply in the morning. This is me, trying again, on a new day. Thank you for existing.

-I am still here. Chipping away at the old, building up the new.

November 2020
Dear Kevin,
Today I heard the word of the day in a song by the Asylum Street Spankers: Swage (noun)—giving a desired form by hammering or pressure.

"This heart is a foolish one it's, never worked right
It beats so loudly it keeps me awake in the night and it
Forces me out of bed, pacing my floor instead
Longing for things to which it has no right
And no whiskey or wine, can it swage."
I am this heart holding human. The one that lies awake pulsing, beating against darkness. The heart that bleeds, rushing, gushing, out onto the pavement. Soaking the cracks. Drenching the roots of the dandelion blossom that refuses to grow unseen.

December 2020
Dear Kevin,
I read Ellen Bass today and it made me think of you:
"You have no stomach for it
and everything you've held dear
crumbles, like burnt paper in your hands...
...you think, How can a body
withstand this?
Then you hold life like a face
between your palms, a plain face,

CONT. ->

and you say, yes, I will take you I will love you, again.” Here’s to another year of showing up to love again. And again. And again.

February 2021

Dear Kevin. I wrote that 126 times in my journal last year. And every single time, it saved my life. I know our friendship has only been one year barely sober but I need you to know the significance you held while I struggled through it. I need you to know how impossible it felt to continue. I need you to know how many times I tried. I need you to know, every time I saw your name flash across my screen, it was a flame, alight with encouragement, along a path that sometimes gets suddenly very, very dark. I need you to know. I followed that flame. — **HALEY RICHARDSON**

Kevin has been my favorite writer at 979Represent ever since I started reading the publication. His *Still Drinking* series (and subsequent iterations) was a consistent stable of entertainment and meditations on discovered beverages. These entries were not just mere reviews; they put the reader in the setting of the story, detailing the place and state of mind at the time. Kevin is a storyteller regardless of the subject matter; be it beers, books, or poetry, he'll tell you about it with plenty of thoughtfulness and wit in supply. I've picked up multiple books based on his enthusiasm for him, most notably Larry McMurtry's *Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen* on art of storytelling. When I still lived in Bryan/College Station we'd have long conversations about the latest movies we'd seen, curious about each other's tastes without slipping into pretention or snobbery. In 2019, we bumped into each other at an appearance by Jia Tolentino at Brazos Bookstore in Houston, a welcome opportunity to catch up and reminder of old friends I don't see often enough.

He has also been a source of encouragement to other writers to contribute to the zine. A couple years ago I submitted a semi-travelogue essay for one of the issues,

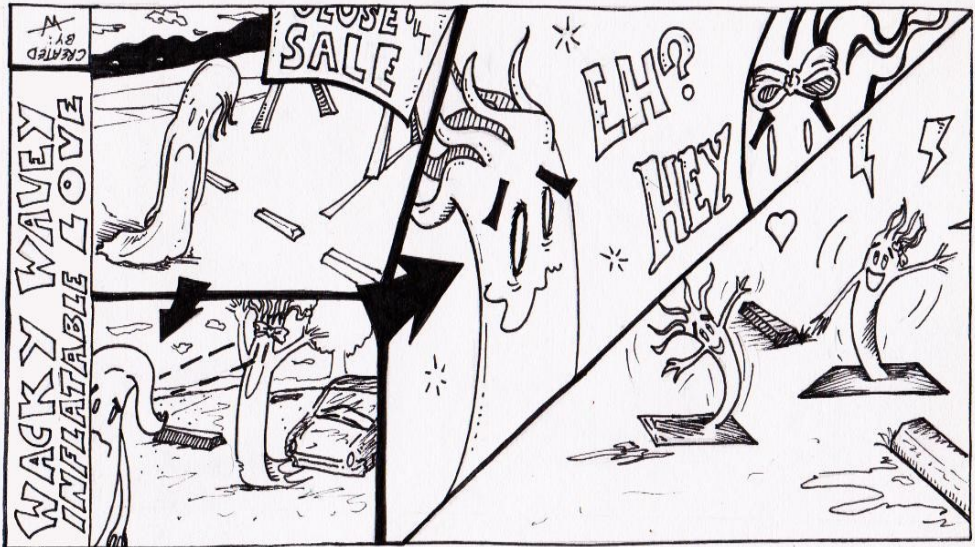
straying from my usual movie discussion piece and trying for something different. He emailed me out of the blue and told me how much he liked the piece, as well as how much he enjoyed the voice in my writing. I was floored to hear such praise from the best writer I knew. We had an email pen-pal back-and-forth going for a bit, catching up on all media that we were watching, listening, or reading. I'll pick that back up with him soon—hopefully he won't be dismayed about the lack of metal and punk in my current diet. The zine will miss his steady presence, but whatever he focuses his energy and creative mind towards next will most certainly be something worthy of attention. — **TODD HANSEN**

I don't know Kevin that well. Over the years, we ran into each other a few times at Revolution, Curious Collections, Sam's parking lot. His wife was always gracious. Kevin was smart and kind, a fan of so many of the same things I was: music and literature.

The thing I will miss the most about not having Kevin writing for 979 is his writing itself. The man clearly has a way with words, and the news that he's going to be writing a book is just plain wonderful. I read somewhere there are five million books on Amazon alone, but you know so many of those are by folks who don't really write that well. Kevin does and will. I will look forward to his prose.

The other thing I will miss with Kevin absent from the pages of 979 is his revelations. Just one example—I would have never discovered the incredible writing of Joe Lansdale until I read Kevin's review of one of his books. Lansdale is an American treasure: he's written for comics; he's done mysteries, sci-fi, westerns, and tv shows. What a talent, and Kevin showed me the way. I'm eternally grateful.

Good luck with the blank page, Kevin. Bless you. — **MIKE L. DOWNEY**





DANGER FLICKS

When I first selected *Below Zero* to stream, I honestly didn't think I was going to review it. I just wanted something to halfway watch while I multi-tasked onto something else. The first few minutes, I wasn't really wrong. On first glance this movie looks like your standard "filler thriller" that hits the DVD or movie theaters. A guy put in an impossible situation and he has to finagle his way out....

Then they started talking and I realized this wasn't an American movie. (Shows what I know I did zero homework when I decided to stream it....) I noticed the same English overbub actors voices I have heard on hundreds of other movies. Sooooo, foreign thrillers can either be really good or really bad.... *Below Zero* is a Netflix thriller from Spain. It has some rough spots, but honestly is worth a watch if you are looking for something, especially if you are into crime movies.

The opening scenes are typical of a movie of this caliber. You got the main protagonist, Martin, who has always been a rule following cop. (Also is predictable of what kind of transformation he goes through by the time the movie is done.) You have his new partner, who is not a rule follower, and a colorful cast of prisoners who are going to be transferred via prison bus. Of course the prison bus is practically a tank with individual cells for the prisoners and the transfer is happening in the middle of the night in the worst fog anyone has seen since *The Mist* and the cops are not allowed to have cell phones with them, but hey.... keep up.

In true American Thriller fashion, the prisoner van is attacked. Martin's partner is attacked and presumed dead and Martin who is hurt locks himself in the van with the prisoners. Outside, the van's attacker is a man who is trying to get inside no matter what it takes. He is willing to kill anyone in the way to get his hands on one prisoner, Nano.

The plot thickens when the prisoners wonder why the Van attacker wants Nano, who explains that the person trying to get in is a crazy killer cop who has been trying to tie up loose ends and has even threatened him in jail. Nano swallows the only key that will let the killer cop in, and the prisoners put Martin and Nano in a cell while they ponder what to do next. The plot lurches forward as prisoners die here and there, the van starts to move again (driven by Miguel the killer cop) and your typical thriller hijinks ensue.

And truth be told, the movie is kind of lackluster until the last half hour when things come to a head. Nano and Martin make it out of the van after a daring ice water escape as the van sinks in the bottom of a frozen lake. Martin confronts Miguel and you learn the real reason Miguel wants Nano face to face.

I'm not going to spoil it, although a smart person who watches can put it together, but it does turn the tone of the movie. As a person who does reviews in defense of the villain, let me say that Miguel (even though no sane person would do what he does) is a man driven to extremes and after watching a bunch of people die horrible deaths, his reasons are... well... reasonable. I mean if I was a lawyer for hire by villains, I would take his case. It's also a story I don't feel any American movie houses are willing to tackle, because sometimes monsters in real life are worse than monsters who rob banks or other movie driven tasks. So I appreciated it. In the end, Martin turns into what he preaches against, taking the law into his hands and making some moral choices.

Is it gonna win awards>? nah. Is it worth a watch... absolutely. 7 out of 10 conjugal— **TIM DANGER**

TRUMP TERRORISTS



The Trump terrorists attack on the U.S. Capitol January 6th resulted in seven deaths ... and shone a roach-scattering light on the ugly delusions of a fraction of our country.

The majority of Americans have known for years the dangerous fascist efforts of the former president, but the depth to which his boot-licking followers would sink was largely unknown until January 6th. The traitors who broke into the Capitol had no regard for patriotism and the values that founded this nation. They, and their defeated lying mouthpiece, are guilty of treason and should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Some have shied away from labeling the Capitol traitors wearing MAGA hats while waving flags of a defeated candidate and a defeated Confederate nation as terrorists. However, if the main goal of a terrorist is to destroy the public's sense of security, then the Capitol "rioters" were terrorists, however cartoonish they may appear.

And it's hard to reconcile the buffoonish behavior of those terrorists with the dire fact their actions caused others to die included their own. One was trampled by her fellow terrorists, brutally callous to any who fell, in their aberrant actions. Shame on them all.

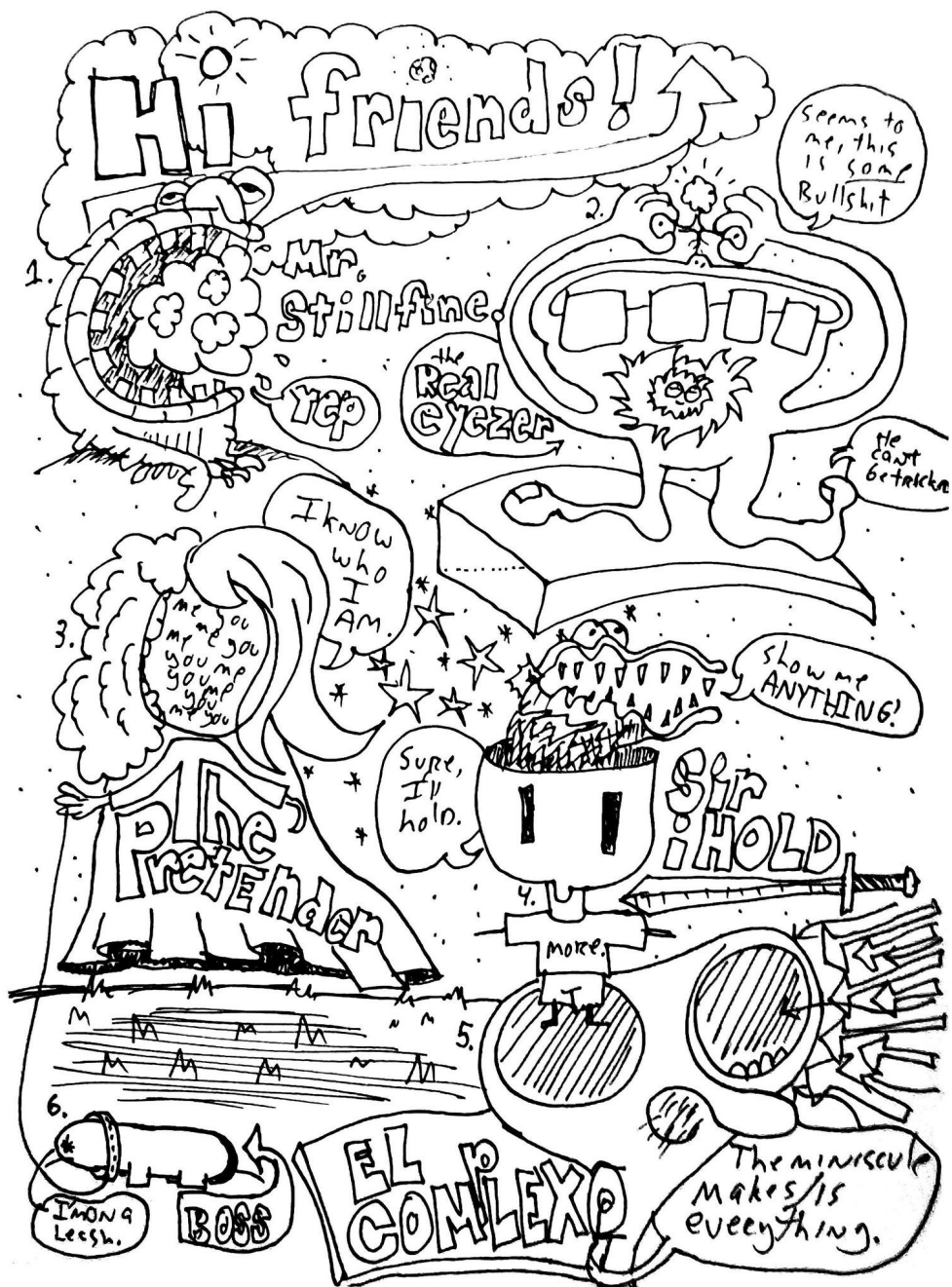
The Justice Department is hard at work identifying the Capitol terrorists, largely due to the narcissist flaw they all share with their defeated leader: it's not real if it's not on social media, on TV. What were they thinking? The answer, of course, is they weren't thinking, and that's central to their delusion. How did they ever think trying to prevent their elected representatives from performing their legislative duties in the main seat of American democracy was a patriotic act? No, they didn't think.

So, where does that leave us in the month after such a loathsome act by fellow countrymen? Apprehensive is the least emotion; shaken and scared is likely as well. Those who follow history can't help but notice the rapid dismissal now by many "patriots" of the event after their initial appalled reactions. Those "patriots" who decried the Capitol attack now view it as just a harmless happenstance, not worthy of attention, just something else to whitewash. This parallels the early actions of the Nazi party in Germany in the 1930s.

Germany built a strong democracy in the decades following its defeat in World War 1, but it allowed the Nazi attacks on the media, science, literature, immigrants, and the law to go unchallenged. History shows us what happened to that democracy.

That can't happen here, you say? Does anyone believe if any of the people vilified by conservative conspiracy whackos had gotten in the hands of the Capitol terrorists that he or she would not have been killed? History sadly repeats itself.

The rejection of the past administration is just one step on the road to America recovering its true self. For the Capitol terrorist attack to become a singular aberrant event in history—like the past administration—is up to all of us to work toward preventing. — **MIKE L. DOWNEY**



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WAYNE WHY TODAY'S CANDY-ASS WORLD NEEDS BARBARIANS

Anyone who knows me knows that sword n' sorcery is my thing. Be it books, movies, or music, I'm likely going to partake. Last Christmas, a friend of mine recommended a show to me housed on Amazon Prime Video simply titled, *Wayne*. He followed up this awfully vague recommendation of show title with, "If you like *Conan the Barbarian*, you will love it!" After zipping over to YouTube to watch the trailer, I was both intrigued and skeptical. Reviews hailed it as a phenomenal black comedy with plenty of gratuitous violence, excessive F-bombs, and altogether vulgar humor. Given the creators of the show were the same who created *Deadpool*, which is really not my thing, what else should I expect?

So, at the behest of my friend's recommendation, and having virtually nothing better to do, I punched up Prime Video and began watching *Wayne*. The episode was about what I expected; the reviews certainly did not lie about the explicit violence, language, and altogether off-color humor. Nonetheless, I found myself unable to stop watching. If I had the time, I went straight on to the next episode. I was hooked, but what became more obvious as I got further into the season was that for all of *Wayne's* juvenile trappings that are sure to please any millennial with a sick sense of humor, the show is incredibly intelligent. By the time I finished the season, my mind was busy contemplating the underlying, and deeply philosophical, implications of the show. Unlike many shows whose offensive sense of humor exists merely to offend, *Wayne* is a brilliant reminder of why the world, especially now in our post-modern culture, needs barbarians, and this idea is communicated perfectly in the titular character who stands as an archetype of justice and truth.

Enter Wayne: a stoic, skinny, sixteen-year-old kid with little emotion from Brockton, Massachusetts. In terms of a hero, Wayne is not what one would expect. He lives in a run-down house with his cancer-ridden father, he goes to high school that is fraught with bullies and struggling to stay afloat in a less-than-reputable town, he has no big ambitions nor hopeful aspirations for his future, and his only real comforts are hard rock music, his girlfriend Del...and dishing out some good old-fashioned, white-knuckled justice to anyone who wrongs himself, his friends, or even total strangers. Most violent altercations that Wayne finds himself in are settled with fists, but if things get really bad, he whips out his dad's ballpeen hammer with his name carved into the handle. The viewer learns very quickly that Wayne feels, virtually, no pain. No matter how many times he is hit, stabbed, or shot, he rarely, if ever, shows anything beyond discomfort, and he keeps on going. To compliment his already strange personality, Wayne always tells the truth, even if it results in causing him harm; the guy simply cannot tell a lie. Aside from his dying father, his only real hero and inspiration is *Conan the Barbarian*, the comics of which Wayne can be seen reading throughout the show.

As should be obvious by now, the overall theme of *Wayne* is justice, so it should not surprise the audience that Wayne's chosen weapon, when he needs one, is a hammer; it is literally his gavel of retribution that brings the verdict down on his foes. Wayne is the type of person who implicitly realizes the state of injustice of the

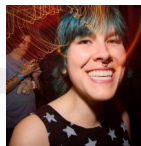
world, and does something about it. Whereas

most would rather not get involved with unjust, and potentially dangerous, situations, Wayne's conviction is that expecting another to handle it only prolongs the problem, and even inhibits true, natural justice. Because of his convictions, Wayne rights a wrong swiftly and immediately, bringing shame to those whose responsibility it is to uphold justice. Even though the burden of justice does not fall to Wayne, he voluntarily accepts this burden as if it were his responsibility. Wayne's near immunity to pain makes him almost godlike, and his penchant for violence is tempered only with his stoic personality; his justice is cool, calculated, and brutal; never driven by passion nor emotion, making his retribution balanced and retrained. It is as if his character is a modern archetype resonating with many ancient figures of divine justice and retribution like Zeus of the ancient Greeks, Týr of the Nordic pantheon, and even the Hebrew god, Yahweh, in the Old Testament.

What is yet more fascinating is that Wayne's propensity for truth-telling makes him a philosopher in addition to being a warrior. In one particular scene, after getting bandaged up after a fight, Wayne's family nurse notices Wayne's eyes wondering, and she asks him, "Are you looking at my breasts?" to which our hero replies without hesitation, "Yes ma'am, I'm sorry." The nurse laughs it off and suggests that Wayne learn to lie every once in a while, as it might save him from getting his ass kicked. However, this piece of advice goes mostly unheeded, and though Wayne does learn to embellish the truth, he never communicates in such a way that deviates from the heart of it. This is reminiscent what ancient Greek philosophers understood as the *Logos*, which is the divine, universal, principle of Truth. This concept is not merely a set of facts, but the very essence of what it means to be true; the Truth by which all other truths are held together and justified. One important aspect of attempting to live and abide by the *Logos* is to speak the truth, regardless as to whom it offends, and as to if brings harm to those who speak it. In relation to the show, Wayne models this idea not only in what he says, but also in what he does. This is likely why the audience discovers that Wayne avoids taking any sort of mind-altering substances, as it keeps him from speaking truth and doing what it is true. He is truly a person committed to the *Logos*.

Wayne is a thinking-man's show. There is plenty of violence and vulgarity to make it fun, but when one digs beneath the somewhat misleading surface, it becomes apparent how brilliant the show actually is, and how important the philosophy it portrays is to a 21st Century audience. As one of the show's posters portrays, Wayne is a monumental middle finger to the bullshit of a post-truth era that has made people soft and weak physically, mentally, and morally. As Conan says quite plainly to Wayne—yup, Conan the Barbarian is actually in the show—"Civilization is unnatural, a whim of circumstance. We are barbarians, and barbarism must always triumph...Your quest for civilization is a quest for illusion. Reject. It." Wayne is a modern-day barbarian whose more primal ways are counter-cultural to that which has become popular and accepted in mainstream society. — CALEB MULLINS

SALACIOUS CRUMBS



Oh sweet Crumbums, February is where we break the fast of a healthy, no sugar, no spending money, no booze, no fun, no nothin' January with a full day bonanza of chocolate, champagne, breakfast in bed, and touchin' butts! **Happy Valentines!**

I already gave you a big ol' guide to where you can find vegan chocolate back in the February 2018 issue, but there's always something new coming out in the vegan world! Village Foods is still a great place to find responsibly sourced vegan chocolates, and HEB has added a TON of accidentally vegan chocolate bars, packed with stuff like pistachios, coconut, and orange (just keep an eye out in some of the stuff for confectioner's glaze. Bugs! AH!) Kroger has a whole buncha chocolate too, especially if you want something other than a bar, but the thing you wanna get for your Valentine is the Alter-Eco dark chocolate truffles—aka vegan Lindt truffles. If they have the Cocomel chocolate covered caramel balls, it's a good day! (You can also visit salaciouscrumbs.com to order a Valentine's treat box. I have no shame and no problem admitting I have the best vegan sweets in town.)

If you like to keep a sandwich under your pillow for some mid-snuggle sustenance a la George Costanza, consider sharing some with your sweet sweet cocoa puff. A breakfast, brunch, or midnight snack in bed is a perfect way to get the bed all sticky and crumbly! My offering to this bedsheet banquet is lazy vegan chicken and waffles! Enough effort to make you feel like you accomplished something worthwhile, but not so much that you're out of energy for touchin' butts or sad crying with your dog.

Lazy Chicken and Waffles

You probably had these waffles at Loud! Feast a couple of years ago when the waffle iron was womanned by real life Snow White, Danielle of Only Beast. They're super light and airy and crispy if you make them with gluten-free flour, but they're fine just fine with regular flour, too. Grab your favorite vegan chicken (I use those Boca spicy patties) and your favorite vegan butter (Country Crock or Flora if things are going good, Earth Balance if you kinda just want your bed to yourself. Because it sucks. You guys, Earth Balance sucks. Feed it only to your enemies.).

Waffles

These make 8 of those little square waffles, or 2 of the big circle waffles. If you're one of those people that uses measuring cups and spoons and has to wash a million things whenever they bake, get you a kitchen scale! It's infinitely easier!

Dry Ingredients

- 2 c or 10 oz gluten-free or all purpose flour
- 3 Tbsp cornstarch, tapioca, or arrowroot
- 2 Tbsp sugar
- 1 Tbsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt

Wet Ingredients

- 2 c unsweetened plant milk (pea, oat, and soy are best here)
- 1/4 c veg/canola/any neutral oil
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice or 2 tsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

1. Preheat your waffle iron before you start measuring and mixing.

2. In a big bowl, mix all of the dry ingredients

together. 3. In a smaller bowl or a glass liquid measure (because spout!), stir together all of the wet ingredients until they're nice and smooth and emulsified. You don't want drops of oil still separated on the top of the liquid.

4. Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients, and add the wet ingredients. Whisk until everything is just incorporated—some lumps are okay and expected, over-mixing will make these and everything else you bake suck.

5. Lube up your waffle iron with some Pam or fat of your choice, and spoon some batter in. You probably know your waffle iron better than I do, but keep baking these guys until they stop steaming and turn a nice crisp looking golden. Give them a whack with a fork, and if it sounds crisp and hollow, they're done!

Spiced Maple Syrup

This is probably more of a template or idea than anything else, start here and spice it up as much as you want! If you're using a bland-o-la chicken patty, you might want to increase the spices. Makes enough for two people to have a stomachache.

Ingredients

- 1/2 c maple syrup
- 1/2 tsp chili powder
- 1/2 tsp paprika (sweet, smoked, or hot depending on how your V-Day is going)
- 1/2 tsp fresh cracker ground pepper
- 1/2 tsp apple cider vinegar
- Hefty pinch of cayenne
- Hefty pinch of kosher salt

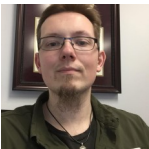
1. Mix everything together, taste it, and adjust it to your own taste. Pop it in the microwave to warm it up if your syrup is straight from the fridge, and if you wanna be a true chunky monkey, throw a knob of butter in there while it's warm.

The easiest way to throw all of this together is to turn on your oven and waffle iron, measure your wet and dry ingredients for the waffles, throw the chick'n in the oven, mix + pour your waffles, and during the lull, make the maple syrup. Pull your butter out right when you start so it gets nice and soft for spreading if you're into that.

Valentine's Day can be pretty dumb, but it IS fun to have an excuse to draw a shitty card for your cat, the love of your life, and pop an extra sweet treat in your pie-hole/cake-hole/cookie-hole/chocolate-hole (whoops, wrong hole!).

Extra Special Girl Scout Cookie Edition!

Alright, I only believe in homemade cookies that you made with your stupid little hands, even if they suck, over something made in a factory, BUT Girl Scouts got their hooks in me! This year, there are FIVE different accidentally vegan flavors: **S'mores, Lemonades, Peanut Butter Patties, Thin Mints**, and the newest flavor, **Toasty-Yay** — a cinnamon french toast flavored cookie with a sort of white chocolate-y bottom. They're having a harder time finding places to sell cookies out in the open the year because of the pandemic, so visit gsctx.com to see all the different ways you can order if you don't see them on your next trip out. — KATIE KILLER



CALEB'S FAVORITE 20 OF 2020

To say the least, 2020 has been a real drag in many ways, but not so much when it comes to music; this year, artists have been beacons of relief for many people. As per usual, this list disregards any rating I gave the albums I reviewed, and goes purely on what I enjoyed most...

10. The White Buffalo—*On the Widow's Walk*: You know that girl in high school who was a total tease, but when it came down to it, her interests were in another guy? That about sums up this release from Jake Smith. It's not until the last four songs that the listener gets the dark, brooding side of Jake that was promised. However, some of the lighthearted songs are enjoyable, and the darker songs are incredibly good. Despite being a tease, she's still beautiful, and for that, she makes it in my Top 10.

9. Havok—*V*: Being one of the leading bands in the new wave of thrash metal, most know what to expect from Havok; however, this is not the masterpiece that was *Time Is Up*, nor is it the creative wildcard that was *Comformicide*. Though there are good songs, and they are by no means lazy in their construction nor execution, they simply lack the heart and originality I'm used to hearing from a band like Havok. A professionally executed album, but not very memorable. It does, however, make for some good head-banging!

8. Exhumed/Gruesome—*Twisted Horror*: I'm usually not one for splits, but considering it's Exhumed and Gruesome, I couldn't resist. I was none too thrilled with Exhumed's last two releases, nor with Gruesome's previous release, but this short split was something special. This was the Exhumed and Gruesome I missed I so much! I only hope this split means future

albums for Exhumed and Gruesome will continue in this direction. Sometimes newer is not always better. Keep it up, Matt Harvey!

7. Voidceremony—*Entropic Reflections Continuum: Dimensional Unravel*: This album was a Christmas gift to me by my good buddy Kevin Still, and I must say, that I was pleasantly surprised! I'm normally not one for progressive death metal, but this band's sound is something special. It's raw, slightly doomy, and those progressive bass licks give the listener something "more" to chew on other than straightforward death metal. Absolutely delicious!

6. Skeletal Remains—*The Entombment of Chaos*: With the last album being a real drag, this release was major improvement for Skeletal Remains. Not only is the band back on track, they are also moving forward in a direction that fans have been craving. Experimentation with brutal death metal, new vocal techniques, and a variety

of tempo changes leaves nothing lacking for this crush-er. Great job, dudes!

5. Warbringer—*Weapons of Tomorrow*: Talk about upping the ante! Some reviews have called this Warbringer's *Rust in Piece*, and I honestly have to agree. These guys have always been leaders in the new wave of thrash metal, but this record showcases the band's masterful musicianship and makes it clear that they are certainly not a one-trick pony. Though it is a longer album than I would have liked, I cannot deny the level creativity and expertise the band has brought in. Incredibly well-done!

4. Stormkeep—*Galdrum*:

Boasting members from Blood Incantation and Wayfarer, Stormkeep is an exceptional black metal band. The debut features the minimalist production, shrieked vocals, and the tremolo picking common to the genre, but there is also an atmosphere created in *Galdrum* that transports the listener back to the Medieval days of yore, giving this record an epic ethos which is solidified by the use of an acoustic guitar, lute, and flute. Did I not also mention that the artwork was created by the massively talented Ian Miller? Fans of Bathory and epic heavy metal will love this!



3. Tom MacDonald—*Gravestones*: "A rap album at third place on Caleb's list? It cannot be so!" Oh, but it is! I've spun this album more times than I can count through hours of grading papers and working overtime; any non-metal album that can get me to do that, especially a rap album, deserves a high spot on my list. Tom's penchant for catchiness, calling a spade a "spade", and attacking corrupt establishments makes this record a must-have for someone like myself. Perhaps not the most "intelligent" album, but one that's instantly likable.

2. Traveler—*Termination Shock*: With riffs and speed akin to Judas Priest, heroic power chorus, masterful vocals, and guitar solos for days on end, this album is an altogether fun throwback to the days when heavy metal and rock n' roll had a much closer relationship. It's the kind of heavy metal that makes me happy. The sci-fi ethos of the band's lyrics and image is also a welcome change to the typical sword n' sorcery and biker gang themes. Though it's one notch below the debut, it's an amazing record, and Traveler is a master of their craft.

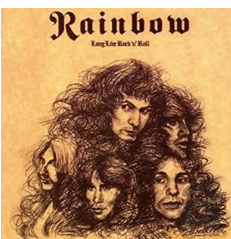
1. Eternal Champion—*Ravening Iron*: As I had mentioned in my review of this record, the more I spin it, the more it grows on me. At this point, I can honestly say I went from liking it to loving it. Compared to the band's debut, this album took some getting used to; but just like a good wine, if it has time to breathe, the flavors that weren't present on the first sip come out. Jason Tarpey's signature vocals, soaring melodies, heavy riffs, sword n'

sorcery lyrics, and obvious odes to Manowar and Manilla Road...There's nothing more I need when it comes to Eternal Champion, nor metal in general. Keep it true!

Non-2020 Noteworthyies

Non-Metal:

5. Rainbow—*Long Live Rock n' Roll* (1978): Though this is not the unparalleled masterpiece that is *Rising* nor the stunning debut that was *Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow*, *Long Live Rock n' Roll* features some of Dio's best vocal work, and it is undeniably great old school rock n' roll. Dio fans definitely need this in their lives!



4. Tom MacDonald—*Ghost Stories* (2018): As one of Tom's older releases, this one is much darker than anything he has released since, and with a title like *Ghost Stories*, it should be expected. This one has some interesting experimentation going on for a rap album, including some well-placed rock and metal elements. Very good!

3. Skid Row—*Slave to the Grind* (1991): I remember jamming Skid Row on the radio back in the day when I was high school. I knew the popular songs that everyone else knew, but after happening by this record in the bargain bin, I decided to give it a shot, and I'm glad I did. Skid Row is one of the last truly great rock bands, and this is one banger of record!

2. Tracy Lawrence—*Alibis* (1993): Damn, how I missed this album! I remember listening to this on tape repeatedly when I was a kid running errands with my mom. It got to the point when I could sing every song, and all these years later, I still can. What's more is that this album still bears the same significance it had for me. More so! My very first concert was Tracy Lawrence, and I have to thank my lovely wife for putting this gem in my Christmas stocking. The nostalgia is real; 90's country at its best!

1. Shooter Jennings—*Family Man* (2011): What can I say about Shooter? Well, for one, he is definitely not living in his daddy's legendary shadow; he has come into his own as an accomplished outlaw country artist. His voice is not phenomenal, but this is what makes his music so good; he conforms the music to his voice, and doesn't try to be someone he's not. From pretty love songs, to songs about everyday hardships, broken families, death, and addiction, *Family Man* has it all. This is true country music!

Metal:

5. Massacre—*From Beyond* (1991): If you're into old school death metal, and you have a taste for the underground, this album is a must-have. The guitars absolutely crush, Kam Lee's vocals are simply monstrous, and the

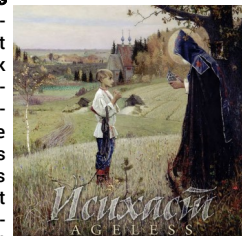
Lovecraftian lyrical only make it better. Very glad to have this album in my collection, and even more glad the band is reforming after all these years to give us some new material.

4. Overkill—*White Devil Armory* (2014): It's a very rare thing when a veteran thrash metal band's latest material is actually on par with their earlier, classic material, and Overkill is one of those rarities. This release is one ripper of a record. Overkill's songwriting and combined with their masterful riffs and memorable hooks proves that after all these years, they still got it. Step back, youngins, Overkill gonna show you how it's done!

3. Manilla Road—*Crystal Logic* (1983): When it comes to traditional heavy metal, my go-to's are Manowar, Iron Maiden, and Dio but after hearing numerous bands whom I love cite Manilla Road as a prominent influence, I had to give them a try, and my goodness, was I glad that I did! *Crystal Logic* has a minimalist production approach that might be a turn-off for many people, but definitely not for traditional heavy metal fans. With triumphant sing-along choruses, sword n' sorcery lyrics, nasally vocals, and a sound that is truly unique, what's not to love?

2. Hesychast—*Ageless*

(2018): This album is absolutely refreshing when it comes to atmospheric black metal. The band is composed of two Eastern Orthodox Christians who have created something that is quite unique. Hesychast has created an album that is not simply music, but something that is a transcendent mystical experience. It has what one would expect from the genre, but combining it with Eastern Orthodox chants gives the record a definite atmosphere of darkness (perhaps what St. Gregory of Nyssa, would have called "divine darkness") that impenetrates every song. Musical mysticism one can feel, as well as hear.

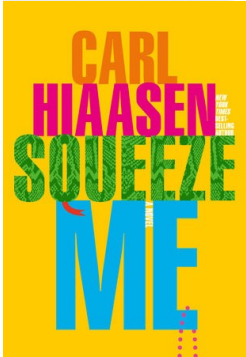


1. Iron Maiden—*Seventh Son of a Seventh Son* (1988): I've loved Iron Maiden ever since I was in high school, and I have spun my 30-track anthology more times than I can count, but it never dawned on me until recently that I never gave Iron Maiden's discography an honest spin. Over the pandemic, I listened to much of the band's catalogue, but the one record that truly stuck with me was *Seventh Son of a Seventh Son*. From beginning to end, every track is well-constructed and well-placed, and boasts unforgettable songs like "Can I Play with Madness", "The Evil that Men Do", and "The Clairvoyant." Sometimes, we truly don't know what a good thing we have. Flawless record from Maiden!

Here's to 2021! — CALEB MULLINS

READING ROCKS

To be completely transparent, I have to begin with the admission that I am a huge fan of Carl Hiaasen and his writing. I own about 10 of his novels and have read a number of his other works including his hilarious non-fiction book about golf (*The Downhill Lie*). I have re-read his novel *Basket Case* about a half-dozen times (a book about writing and music—what's not to like?). So, the fact I thoroughly enjoyed his latest novel should not be a big surprise.



What was a revelation about *Squeeze Me* was, that given its subject matter, Hiaasen didn't veer out of control in his story to just hammer at the obvious and overdo his disdain with one character in particular. To maintain such restraint must have been challenging. Making a narcissist a minor character is a brilliant device.

In brief, the story involves the odd disappearance of an elderly socialite in ultra-

rich Palm Beach, Florida, a riotous story that sprawls to include the then-current president (code name Mastodon), a cheating First Lady, the put-upon Secret Service, a female game warden (sort of), giant pythons, a one-handed stalker, and a few strange things as well.

As wild as the story gets, it never rings false, especially after the past few absurd years. Hiaasen has always done strong and entertaining female characters, and Angie Armstrong is another great depiction. As would happen in real life, she and the President, always referred to by his Secret Service nickname of Mastodon (which he believes is a compliment), never meet even though his actions and very presence impact her life in numerous ways. The First Lady comes across in a near-sympathetic (almost) manner while in a love-less marriage with a serial cheater as she indulges in an affair with her Secret Service protection, something I'm sure the real Secret Service went bug-eyed over.

Squeeze Me is filled with outrageous happenings and colorful characters as well as great lines. Who could resist this: "Looking back, Uric would admit they should have dealt with the dead python *before* getting trashed at the titty bar." You have to read on. Or this: "He told her to prepare for a difficult experience. Fay Alex said 'I sat in on my first husband's vasectomy. How could this possibly be worse?' 'Why would you want to watch that kind of surgery?' 'To make sure the horny bastard went through with it. By then he'd already knocked up our Lamaze teacher.'"

There are better gems embedded in this great yarn that never takes itself too seriously. Hiaasen manages to ensure that those who deserve to suffer do so, and those who need compassion and reward get what they deserve as well. After all, this is fiction he is writing, and one can tell the story that you would want to read. — MIKE L. DOWNEY

WHAT I SHOULDN'T SAY AT MY DAD'S FUNERAL



Every time I got a call from my mom in the last year, or a text to the group chat that included my brothers, I got this tinge. Then it finally happened. He lasted about as long as we all thought he would...maybe a little longer. Well, sooner than my mom wanted anyway. He contracted COVID-19 and it messed him up, speeding up his already degenerating body.

He had some sort of dementia. Probably Alzheimer's, but at the end, probably also Parkinson's and maybe even Louis-body or FrontoTemporal. Either way, he was gone years ago. He started asking the same questions minutes apart about eight years ago.

There really wasn't a goodbye, although on a grocery trip one night when he was still in the phase where he had lucid moments, I took the opportunity to tell him what was going on. He understood me. You know how I know? He said, "I know Georgie." That's when I said goodbye and hugged him so hard. By the end of that hug. He was back to his current delusion that he didn't have enough money to get back home. His lucidity was gone. I wiped my tears and we returned home with dish washing liquid or whatever the fuck we were on errand to get. But my tears weren't really for him. I mean, they kinda were. They were probably more for my mom. She dealt with a lot with him...we all did. I mean, it was pretty sad to see his degeneration for sure. But just being honest here, my dad wasn't amazing. Of course, I still loved him for all he had taught me.

That's when I began mulling and planning what I would say at his funeral: I would explain how much of a dick he was and how justified I was to be the only person at his memorial NOT pretending to fawn over what an amazing dad and husband and human he had been. But as much as that seemed like an exciting moment of drama, I knew I wouldn't (couldn't/shouldn't) do that. It would disrespect my mom. But I had in fact learned lessons from him, just maybe not in the way you might think.

The following are a few things I learned from my dad along the way. Please understand, these are situations that happened before I went to college and then got married. After that, we were actually pretty good friends. Did I forgive him for all of this? Oh, most definitely yes. I was the terrible one...he was just reacting. Poorly, mind you, but still...I was pretty terrible.

Be a good student. Basically, if we didn't have to talk for very long, he wouldn't think of something that I did incorrectly or something I should get yelled at for, so, I made sure to always do my homework, and after a while, he stopped asking. I made sure to do my best (well, solid B-anyway) so we would have the least amount of interaction. This also spilled into doing chores, cleaning up after myself in the kitchen and keeping my room tidy.

Be a master at hiding stuff. After he found my home-made pipe for smoking weed (made out of my little brother's old Asthma Inhaler and a half-inch socket), I had to find the best place to hide my stash. Seriously, I thought that inside the box spring through a small cut in the dust liner was pretty damn good. He must have been using his "Inspector" knowledge (that was one of his jobs in the Air Force). Here's a tip that I learned: keep moving it, and wherever you put it, make it uncomfortable to reach.

You can't always know what people are thinking. Flipping off the military police on the Air Force Base in Spain, stealing a blank cassette tape while having enough money to pay for it, throwing an explosive into a crowd of

kids, burning a whole side of a mountain. Those are things that he couldn't understand the reasoning behind. The takeaway here is to ask, and then listen to the answer...no matter how dumb the reason might be. He never asked, just assumed I was stupid. My kids haven't gotten into much trouble yet, but I'm pretty sure I'll be able to figure out why they might have done something. (Fun. Showing off. Thought I'd get away with it.)

Keep going, even if you break a pinky. He slipped on a rock while exploring with us in a creek at Colonia Tovar, a town in Venezuela. He didn't cry or faint or freak out, he kept going. Just like when his "friends" told their Doberman to "sick" him while he was swimming in the ocean. He kept going. Oh, except for that time he fell off a ladder while he was volunteering with Habitat for Humanity and dislocated his other pinky, but stopped doing physical therapy. But I mean, who needs full mobility in a pinky anyway. That's a different lesson.

One step forward, two steps back. This is not so much a lesson, but a statement that echoes in my head. He pretty much made me believe that everything was unattainable, and I was a screw up. I still feel that way. So the lesson here is not to say mean and destructive shit to your kids. On the other hand, getting praise from him was amazing. I believe one of the reasons I am an artist is because of something he said about some art I did after we watched *Herbie the Love Bug*. I may have also endeavored to be better than what he thought of me, so that's a positive too.

Don't bleed in my Saab. The lesson here is that if you backhand someone with a college ring on, something might break and start bleeding. Always something to keep in mind. Of course, the events that led up to this were so messed up, I understand how upset he was. I did some very upsetting things. If you don't want your stuff soiled, don't do things that might make other people soil them.

The wrong wrench. This is when I started second guessing my decisions. All he said was "Get me the wrench." I didn't know what wrench, but I did in fact get him a wrench. So, instead of shooin' your wife or kids away after you invite them to help you with something because they didn't know what you meant, be specific about what wrench you mean. Or what chore you don't have time for. Or what feeling you might be having.

Learn to drive. Learning to drive with him was stressful to say the least, but the truth is, he did in fact teach me. I hated being in the car with him. Usually it was quiet and if I said anything, it would inevitably be wrong. But...he did find my first car at a used car place on his way home from work. 1979 Datsun B-210. That thing was so great. Cost me \$1500.

No tiren la puerta. Translation, don't slam the door. If you are sensitive to loud noises, put little felt pads on all the cabinet doors...especially if it pisses you off every time. Cabinet doors make noise even if let go from two inches away. That man must have had some really good hearing. Maybe it was PTSD from Vietnam. Either way, installing little felt pads is not a difficult thing to do, and it's cheap. You can even put them on the toilet seat, you know, in case one day you accidentally drop it a couple inches and it just happens to sound like you are "horse-playing". Another lesson here is that toilet seat removal and replacement is an easy repair. Oh, also, you don't necessarily need a seat on the toilet to poop.

How do you think this makes me look? I heard this so many times, and to be honest, it didn't make any sense to me until I had kids. At that point, I realized that it's too stressful (and unhealthy) to always be performing for people and be raising your kids so that they behave well. Kids do weird shit...embarrassing shit. So what! On the other hand, it has instilled in me a fascination...a perversion or sorts...for when a kid is giving a tantrum at a store, and the parent ultimately gives in. Oh, the joy of watching that happen. Ask my kids how many times they have to pull me away from some kid having a tantrum. Ask them how many things I've dared them to do that would have been pretty embarrassing if they had done it.

Creative punishment. My dad was pretty creative in his punishment...well, other than when his belt came out...that was just terrible...then I'd get in trouble for peeing myself too. Anyway, my favorite punishment was when I started a fire right in front of the fireplace. I loved fire. Yes, I burned myself often and a couple fields as well. I tried to hide my fire play time mistake by putting the gerbil cage over the large burnt mark. "Why is the gerbil cage in the wrong place?" ... "Georgie! Come here!" (of course he knew it was me). He had me copy every word under "fire" from the encyclopedia. It took forever, but I learned quite a bit about fire and its destructive properties. I think I learned a respect for it, although I've burned our back yard twice in the past 15 or so years. Fire gets away from you pretty quick. It's kind of a rush.

I know you were involved. The lesson here is that you might actually be right about your kids intentions, and maybe your wife and friends and strangers, if you pay attention. So, in my case, yes, my dad knew when I was lying...for the most part. He knew that if I was close enough to get hurt, then I was probably involved in some way. In fact, if I was close enough to almost anything illegal or dangerous, I was probably involved.

It's probably poop. If your grandkids' parents are telling you the little splooge in the hallway is probably poop because your granddaughter Sofie just filled her diaper...her gappy, cloth diaper...you probably shouldn't pick it up with your fingers and then smell it to see what it is. He might have been a little OCD, so I'm not sure he could have stopped himself.

There are other lessons, but just know that I turned out pretty responsible, fairly well-rounded, and mostly mentally stable. How my kids turn out is a different story, but I am NOT raising them like I was raised.

I realize I've presented him in a fairly terrible light. It definitely wasn't all bad. He was a laugher, which made things pretty great. Even in his last version (shuffling, mumbling), I could make him laugh by saying terribly vulgar statements in Spanish.

I miss him. Parts of him anyway.

Titles I would also give him are as follows: military man, party host, travel partner, not a great joke teller, enjoyer of music, payer of restaurant bills, family provider, college payer, organizer of strings, finder of crumbs, pre trip stress dry heaver, toenail collector, cool children maker, arm pincher during church, double lung collapse survivor, monkey bite survivor, stinky burp maker.

RIP my dad. — JORGE GOYCO

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