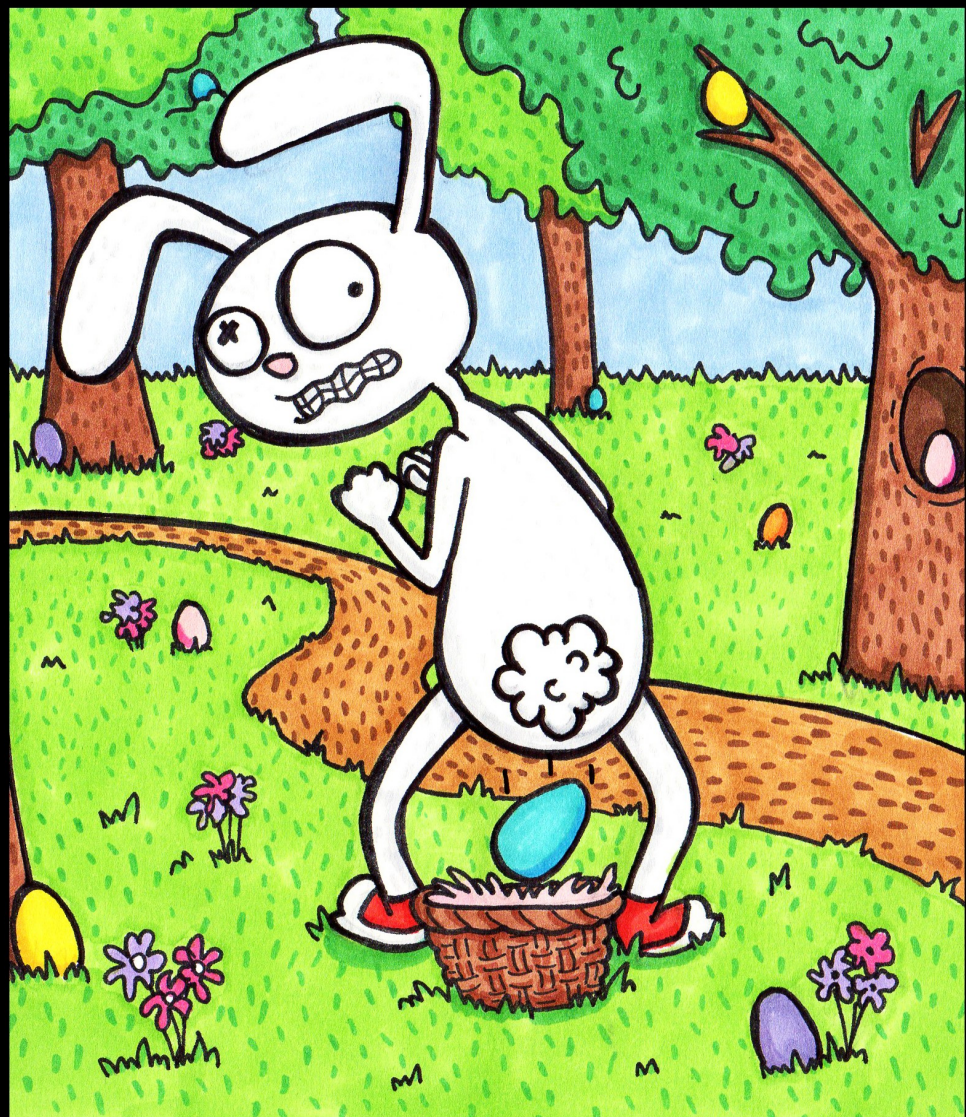


STOREREPRESENT



april 2021
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*inside: handjob dissonance - dear future employer - salacious crumbs -
evergreen marine - gop lost at sea - good movies for bad guys - little lies -
reading rocks - record reviews*



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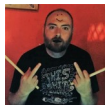
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HANDJOB DISSONANCE

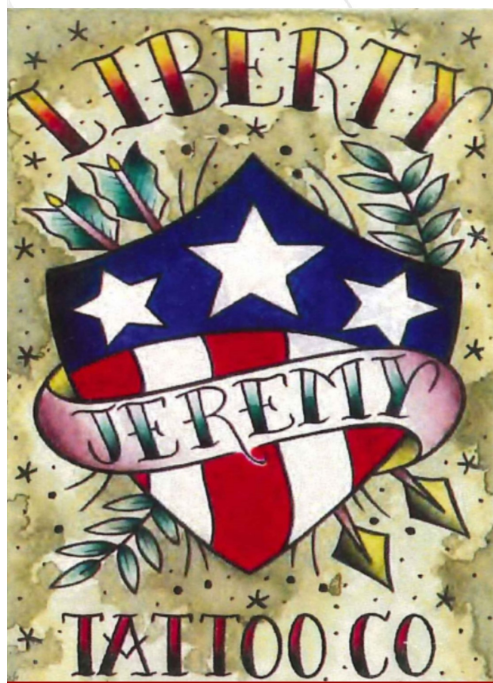
Last month a 21 year old white man killed eight Asian people in a shooting rampage of massage spas around Atlanta. When police caught up with Robert Long, the accused murderer, he was beating a hasty trail south to Florida in order to murder more Asians at massage parlors. He told authorities that he "has a sexual addiction". Apparently Long had received numerous handies at such spas and those parlors were "a temptation for him that he wanted to eliminate." Long has denied that his murdering spree was racially motivated.

Yet somehow the accused murderer's denial rings false. Asian Americans around the country have already been on edge for the past few years, facing ramped up racism and violence whipped up by a climate of anti-China rhetoric from former president Donald Trump and his rabid followers. At first that negativity was reserved solely for the trade battle the United States government waged against China as American business leaders attempted to bring China to the bargaining table over protection of intellectual rights and defense against Chinese hackers. Those are not exactly hot culture war topics, as China does have issues in these arenas that need to be addressed. Yet Trump wanted to make those very boring business problems sexy for the culture war by claiming that China was stealing American jobs. Then the Fates handed Trump the Penthouse letter his political fleshlight was begging for: the COVID-19 virus.

Trump spent the majority of his last year in office stoking the culture war fires, hoping that the flames would create a smokescreen to distract Americans from his disastrous track record as president. Rather than help Americans deal quickly and decisively with the pandemic Trump stoked anti-Chinese rhetoric by calling Covid-19 "the China virus" and jokingly as the "kung-flu". Ultimately Trump's smokescreen proved ineffective. A majority of Americans laid the Covid crisis squarely at Trump's feet and sent him packing for Mar a Lago. But not before the months of constant anti-Chinese rhetoric entered the pop culture tennis match, ultimately causing some of Trump's more unhinged followers to begin both verbally and physically harassing Asian-Americans in their frustrations over the Covid quarantine and all its ensuing complications. It didn't matter if their victims weren't Chinese in the least bit. Japanese, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, same difference. It was a wave of anti-Asian hate that hadn't been seen in a generation.

And now many Asian-Americans see Long's alleged murder spree as the ultimate conclusion to this season of hatred. Law enforcement, government officials, and the media have been very carefully stepping around the potential racial motivations of the accused, but it is not hard for the average person to connect the dots. White dude associates his sex addiction to handjobs he got from Asian masseuses, decides he has to remove that temptation, and then shoots up Asian spas, killing Asians. He didn't seek professional help or shoot his television or computer (arguably a more effective deterrent). He deliberately targeted Asians in a stereotypically Asian setting. If that doesn't read as racially motivated and warrant hate crime prosecution then I'm not entirely sure what such a law exists for in the first place.

— KELLY MENACE



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LITTLE WHITE LIES

When they first lay her in your arms, you will relearn what it means to fear. The softness of her skin, the fluttering delicacy of her breaths, the clarity of her guileless gaze. She will grasp your finger in her infant hand, and with that tiny, tenacious grip, she will break you. Every fear you've ever had, every worry about the engines, the navigation program, the damn air recycling system, will come back to you. You will know, as you've always known, that you are sailing into forever. That you will not touch Earth again. That she will never breathe fresh air or feel the sun warm her skin.

Will you long for me, then? Will you wish I could sit beside you, to chase away regrets, to tell you that you made the right decision? Perhaps not. It's been so long since you turned to me for guidance. This choice you made, to board that hastily built ship, you made it alone. And I? I could only watch you go. You and all the rest of them. Humanity's great, precarious hope.

I hope your husband understands. That the man you choose stands beside you in the dark of your fear. But if he's anything like your father, he'll see what he wants to see. When he recalls your daughter's birth, he'll speak fondly of the way you cried. Tears of joy, he'll say. And you will not correct him.

On that first night, when you are still learning to hold her, when you can't seem to put your hands right and she screams against your chest, starving and refusing to eat, you will be too busy, too exhausted, and too desperate to say much of anything. But as the night cycles into day, the lights brightening and warming to gold, she will sleep.

And you? You will brush the fine hair from her forehead and trace your fingers over the softness of her cheeks. You will lean in close to the perfect shell of her ear, and you will whisper to her, soft as a breath. You will tell her that you love her. And then, you will promise to keep her safe.

There will be so many other lies, over the years. Little ones, like "mama's cookie is yucky" or "I'll only be a moment." Those you'll hardly notice. But others, will mark the both of you. "Of course the other kids like you," you'll say. "If you try your hardest, that's all that matters," you'll promise her. You will tell her that Earth was nothing special, and you don't miss it. You will say the engines are running fine.

But that comes later. The first lie told, the first promise broken, is the one you whisper as she sleeps. You will mean it, in the moment. You'll be so sure that you could never let her come to harm.

And then, a month later, you'll doze off with her in your arms, and she will roll free of you, fall from the bed to the floor. You'll wake to the sound of it. The dull, reverberating thud of her head hitting the ground. A moment of inattention. A simple mistake.

The sound of her screaming at this sudden betrayal will cut you as no other cry has. You will hear it in your dreams. You will remember it each time you read a new

report from the bridge.

It will haunt you as she grows, and in so doing, inevitably grows away from you. I wish I could pretend otherwise, that I could imagine warmth and ease between the two of you. But what have I taught you of warmth, of simple affection?

Here's a truth, come much too late. One more fear laid on the pile. I feared you would blame me. That you would look out at this wreck of a world and wonder how I dared to offer so little. It made it difficult, to be soft with you, when I was always looking for the hate in your eyes. Forgive yourself your decisions, daughter. We all do what we must.

I must wait here, as it all winds down; you must search the stars, in your rushed and improbable lifeboat.

And we must both forgive.

When, at last, the air grows thin (and it will grow thin), and you remember again, that first, inevitable betrayal, forgive that too. Let her pull you into her arms. Remember what it is to give, and take, comfort.

"It's fine, Mom," she'll say. "We're figuring it out."

It will be a lie, of course. But so too, will be your pretense at believing her.

Maybe then, at last, you will finally understand each other, forgiving all the small betrayals. Maybe, too, you'll understand me. How I couldn't meet your gaze, when we said our goodbyes. The break in my voice, when I said I'd be fine here, alone on this dying planet where the air grows thin. When I said I was sure that you'd be safe.

We tell these lies with love. They are all that keeps us going. — STARKNESS



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GOP LOST AT SEA



What a month March has been. The Biden administration passed the most comprehensive economic package in recent memory to help Americans and American companies survive the pandemic that's claimed more than half a million lives, the most in the world.

"Where're the eyes, the eyes/With the will to see/Where're the hearts that run over with mercy" – "We Take Care of Our Own" – Bruce Springsteen

This economic aid was passed completely without the support of any of the Republican party Congressional members in either house despite widespread support throughout the country. The Republicans were howling about Dr. Suess and Mr. Potato Head. Guess we know what their priorities are – Americans can die on my watch, but don't touch the children's books I've never read or the children's toy I never played with.

Still, the good news is the country is no longer led by a pansy bully; it's led by an adult who talks in complete sentences without insulting others and bragging about his hand size. Biden is doing just fine as president. Like all presidents, things outside of his control will impact his administration like the migrant issue has come to do. Time – it will take time to correct four years of aberrant immigration policy on our borders.

Leadership is not something that people can pretend to have. I love Beto's assessment of Texas Senator Cruz and his laughable trip to the Texas border to pose in camo gear. Beto says Cruz is looking for opportunities to cosplay as a senator rather than actually serving as one.

Service as a member of Congress – that is the real nub of the problem for Republicans. They are lost at sea. They have completely forgotten how to actually legislate as a political party. Republicans spent eight years of the Obama administration with the sole purpose to oppose supporting anything that might be construed as an Obama policy. The oft-repeated goal of the Senate during Obama's first term was to ensure he didn't have a second, something they failed miserably at.

The Republican view of leadership has become so skewed. Even though no Republican supported the Affordable Care Act a decade ago – they campaigned against it as if it were the end of the world – when they controlled both houses of Congress and the Presidency,

they were too inept to replace it because they forgot how to legislate. All they knew how to do was attack and condemn, not how to build, not how to serve the country.

"Where's the promise from/Sea to shining sea/Wherever this flag is flown"

It's not too surprising that the Republican party is a party in decline. Look at some of the long-serving members like the dolt Cruz and the bootlicker Lindsey Graham. It's hard to believe that Graham was once friends with such an American hero like John McCain. There is no way McCain would believe his friend Graham would become such a suck-up to a pitiful excuse for a human being who was defeated by Biden in the last presidential election.

Look at some of the newest Republican members of Congress. They are bigots who believe in every conspiracy theory out there – Flatearthers of the Globe Unite is their motto. Almost none of them seem to have a shred of decency in them. Of course they are reflected in the conservative media that touts them. Look at the faces of those as seen on Fox (Fact-Free) News. Gutfeld, Hannity, Carlson – these yahoos can't talk about fellow Americans without sneering. They seem to have permanent snarls on their faces. You think they talk to their mothers like that?

One hopes the Republican Party will find its way again. There are some good ideals in the Republican policies; however, the current strain of the party is ignoring the positives and accenting the negatives. George Bush served as president for two terms. Why aren't Republicans talking about his abilities to couch bipartisan legislation? Why can't they get past the last four years of that dysfunctional addled misfit that managed to get elected in 2016?

Finally, Americans have the capacity to rise above their poor choices. They have the ability to find the right direction. We can only hope that the Republican Party is capable of following the good hearts of those in the country.

"Wherever this flag's flown/We take care of our own." – MIKE L. DOWNEY

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GOOD MOVIES FOR BAD GUYS

Justice League — The Snyder Cut

Where to begin with the Snyder Cut? By now you know the story ... Snyder stepped down from the *Justice League* movie in 2017 after the death of his daughter and Joss Whedon was hired in post-production to finish it as an uncredited director. The movie was changed and made brighter than Snyder's original darker tone. The 2017 version bombed at the box office and got mixed reviews.

Fans always wondered what Snyder's cut would have been like, and while execs told us not to hold our breath, 2021 gave us the Snyder cut ... a four-hour-plus superhero team movie filled with slow motion, an army of winged drones and a couple of unstoppable villains. And when you consider that the movie took years to finish and a budget of \$70 million (on top of a preexisting film) you know you are looking at a whole other piece altogether.

There's a lot that's different. You hear a lot of talk about Snyder's use of slow motion, and while that is present in the film, I like the way it is used, particularly as The Flash is using the speed force or Wonder Woman is quickly dispersing bad guys and dodging bullets.

The new cameos of Martian Manhunter, Lex Luthor, the Joker and others are fun. The added scenes of Green Lantern's fighting along medieval men and Amazons are also fun. But the backdrop on fully realized character development is probably the best thing. Darkseid, Steppenwolf, The Flash and Cyborg all get amounts of screen time to fully explain their motivation.

With all the added scenes, the movie plot stays the same. The heroes are gathered to beat Steppenwolf, preventing Darkseid from coming to Earth. After the battle everyone starts the process of going back to normal, a 40 minute epilogue ensues, with amazing story lines of things that will probably never happen, but holy smokes, wouldn't it be great if they did.

Warner Brothers has already told fans not to bank on a Snyderverse slew of movies. Sad as it is, they probably don't realize the goldmine they could be sitting on. The Snyder cut is far from being a perfect movie, but it is superior to the 2017 version.

7 out of 10 reshoots



MOXIE 2021

When I first saw the trailer for *Moxie*, I was intrigued. The premise of a "shy 16 year old publishes an anonymous zine calling out sexism at her school" got me. As a punk rocker cutting his teeth in the 90s, zines were a big part of punk's media disbursement. The internet was still a bunch of message boards with text based role playing games, and photocopies were easily commandeered for a clever youngster with some scissors, words, and a little anger in the tank.

The movie opens with Vivian, a nice rule-following student who despite being raised by her mother, a former riot grrl who mellowed out, has never felt the need to embrace her mom's former lifestyle That is until she heads back to Rockport High for her junior year.

In typical movie teen movie fashion, Rockport High School is a battleground of cliques, and social classes. Vivian and her friend Claudia don't really fit in anywhere. There is an unspoken feeling that both girls would LIKE to, but just are too nice, bookish and conformable to belong anywhere. Vivian's new outlook on life changes when she meets Lucy who on her first day in school challenges the school's reading list and stands up to the local misogynist jock villain. Shortly after the infamous "school list" appears which some boys put out ranks girls with titles such as "best rack" or "most bang-able".

Inspired by a Bikini Kill song her mom used to sing to her (and if you never heard "Rebel Girl" fear not you will several times throughout the movie) Vivian digs through her mom's memory boxes finding zines, clothes and

pictures from an era she never really paid attention to.

After becoming ticked off, Vivian does what any self respecting kid in the with a suitcase full of punk paraphernalia from the 90s would do ... she starts a zine, and calls it Moxie. Moxie makes waves, more than even Vivian thought and before she knows it, things start blowing up quickly. This movie spoke to me in a very weird way....

First, if you take out the feminism and replace it with raw angst, it is eerily the premise of my junior year via 1992. As a youngster taking journalism, I found myself kicked off the newspaper staff for an editorial I wrote, and quietly shuffled onto the photography team. I made my first zine called "Road to Nowhere" and quietly worked to match the school's production schedule. Part of my "staff duties" since I couldn't write for them anymore, involved picking up the newest print of the paper from the printer to distribute in various places. In transit, I would randomly fold my zine into every third or fifth newspaper. The zine revolution had begun.

Like Vivian's Moxie, it made some waves. Anonymity was my friend. I didn't make the kind of revolution that Moxie did, and in truth very few zines do, real life isn't a movie after all. But the movie isn't about a zine. The zine is the vehicle.

It's tough to pinpoint what the movie is actually trying to serve. Is it a commentary on how society still has to change? Is it trying to introduce a new breed of women to the riot grrl movement? Is it a 90 minute nostalgia trip for Bikini Kill fans? I dunno actually. It's a lot toned down.

And it should be living in that time was a weird one. I saw many bands come through, and many movements in the 90's. I saw the crossover era comeback, third wave ska, Cali punk, the rise and fall of Epitaph, Victoria, Sub Pop and Moon Records, Saw the Oi! Revival and Riot Grrls. They were fun times, but every one of those waves

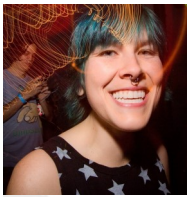
and subcultures had stuff wrong with them. Things that I am glad to see *Moxie* address... Lisa (Amy Poehler's mom character) is quick to point out that her and her friends made a lot of mistakes when they did the things they did. I will say that as a first hand witness, the punk and underground scenes (Riot Grrls included) were not the most inclusive. The point is also made in a scene when Vivian, who is angry that one of her movement's organizational goals were not met, is so angry she goes on a patriarchal rant to her mom, her mom's new boyfriend, and her own boyfriend in a totally unjustified rage of misplaced anger Highlighting a problem with young "punk" ... a lot of misplaced anger. A lot of comments from casual viewers complained that Vivian, a white Cis girl should not have been the main character, that perhaps Lucy, a strong POC, would have been a better choice but I disagree. a coming of age movie is best learned through the eyes of someone who needs to actually learn, making Vivian the obvious choice, plus her mom, Lisa, is kind of like the girl I know from a dozen or so females I would know from high school. A little older, a little wiser, and still rocking a cool band shirt every now and then.

All in all, the movie teaches a little something about accountability, when Vivian comes clean as the person who creates Moxie (something as a zine publisher in the 90s I would have never done). The film has some great performances, the chauvinistic villain played by Patrick Schwarzenegger is obvious and predictable, but nonetheless believable. The other young stars do well, even if the film moves in a predictable pattern (Spoiler alert: you can stop halfway through and imagine how it will end and you'll probably be right) but it doesn't make it an enjoyable movie. It's good for a has been like me to remember what it's like to be angry and young, and maybe it will inspire some kid to do something creative with their hands (probably not).

6 out of 10 detention slips. — TIM DANGER



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\$ALACIOUS CRUMBS

I like to make stuff, especially food stuff. I have a well stocked kitchen full of tools that help me do the things I like without being unnecessarily hindered, but they're not all just objects. Some of them are my friends. My dad (who is a very Dad's Dad) has a calculator he actually calls Friend. These are my friends and why I love them.

When I moved into one of my first apartments, I yinked this little spatula from my mom's kitchen. It's an old 4" Ateco offset spatula with a wood handle, and I finally bought another, just in case something horrible happened to the first. No matter what I'm frosting, even if it's a 12 inch cake or a full sheet pan of thick blondie batter, I grab him to help me. He fits perfectly in my hand, has a super thin metal blade that's flexible enough to not feel restrictive, and moves quickly. I even have the same spatula with a plastic handle, and I hate it. I have a big flat spatula, a massive cranked spatula that you would think would be way better at bigger jobs, and one that's made from a single piece of steel so it can never break. I hate them all, and writing this, I don't know why I allow them to take up space in my tiny drawer. Take them! Claire Saffitz calls her favorite spatula Count Spatula, and I want to name mine something just as endearing. This is the best fucking spatula in the world.

One year for Christmas, Michael got me this Japanese blue steel chef's knife. It's immense, incredibly thin, and super sharp. I can move so fast with this knife. It'll cut through your finger and your nail before you realize what happened. I had been using a set of Shun knives, and I stopped using them completely because this one is so stupidly good. It's not in the best shape now because I've cut a few things that I realize I shouldn't have been cutting with something so thin, and I've dropped it many times (I drop EVERYTHING), and I feel bad about that I've sort of abused it. I feel like I've let it down. It's incredible, and so light and comfortable and I swear it makes the whippy sword-through-the-air noise when I'm chopping. Friends are not allowed to use this knife...for

their own protection. I'm sorry I haven't treated you right, very big fancy knife. I am legitimately afraid of you and will stop using you to chop chocolate. I have three Kitchenaid mixers, all in matching colors (duh) — a hand mixer, a classic stand mixer, and a big pro stand mixer with the bowl lift that you crank up and down like a relic (the original 1930s KA mixer looked just like the ones we have today, but it had this cool art deco streamline bar on top like a train or a luxury car, and I'm disappointed there hasn't been a reissue of this). My most favorite is the classic — it's the perfect size for anything normal everyday Katie and even mostly Crumbs Katie could possibly want to do at home and the lifting head is an easier to use design than the crank lift. Going from the hand mixer to the stand mixer is like going from using your oldest, crappiest knife to using my big scary knife. She'll do the job better and quicker, but if you put too much bread dough in her, she might jump off the counter in revolt or gnash her head at you! She's the best. Once Crumbs started picking up, I got the big mammoth pro mixer. It's bigger and more powerful, and makes two whole batches of my big mondo quarter pound cookies — six pounds of dough! It cuts my dough prep time in half, which is a big deal. I don't have an emotional connection to this one yet, we'll see what disasters we go through to forge one. The hand mixer is cute, but under-powered, and I don't know that we'll ever see eye to eye.

Lately, I've had some bad luck in the kitchen. I broke one of my favorite mixing bowls while washing them in the sink. I was treating them like the sweet baby they were, and giving them a nice, warm, gentle bath, and WHOOSH! they slipped from my grip and shattered. And that's not the first time I've broken this same exact bowl. I dropped my old one a few years ago and shattered it, but loved the bowl so much that I rushed out and bought a new set (it's part of a set of vintage Pyrex reissues). I don't know what it is about these bowls, but they're the perfect sizes and shape, and I just don't get the same cozy, comfortable feeling when I'm using a generic glass bowl. Michael surprised me with a replacement REAL vintage Pyrex bowl of the same design, so now I have to be super duper pooper careful when using it, because it's literally a piece of history. I don't know how some bowls have a feeling

in them and others are just bowls, but that's just the way the world works.

I also have these little small black, white, and orange Halloween bowls that I bought for some Crumbs product photos. One has a bat inside, and the other has a spider, and I take every chance to use them because I love them so much that I don't need to justify it to you.

One of my best friends gifted me her old whisk many years ago when she got married and got a whole load of new kitchen tools. She also gave me a couple of my other favorite tools, and I think of her when I use them. It's a classic balloon style whisk with a wooden handle imprinted with the word BEST in typewriter style letters. For YEARS I thought it was just a hilariously labeled novelty whisk (hur hur, yeah, I'm the best whisk!), but Best is a real brand made in Portland, and they for real made the best whisk ever made on this planet. It fits perfectly in my hand, the wood is extremely comfortable, and the size is perfect. I don't know how to explain how superior this whisk is to every other one in existence. When I die, I want to inherit this whisk from me.

I don't know why some things elicit a friendly emotional response and others don't. I really like my spoonula because it's strong, but flexible, and gets batter out of bowls when spatulas are too rigid. But I think we're just like one step above acquaintances. If I had to describe my measuring cups and spoons, I'd say I get along fine with most of them, but hope to one day really have a set that I connect with. My Rickenbacker and the Bass-woman and my sparkly orange G&L guitar are my friends, and I have a different friendship with each of them, but the rest are just things.

I have a mortal enemy, too. Years ago, I bought a starter set of about 6 different colors of Fiestaware. Over time, I've developed an unexplainable contempt for all of the dark blue plates and bowls. I won't use them. I recoil when I open the cabinet to grab a dish and it's a dark blue one on top. I think they're haunted by something malicious, so I let Michael use them. They're cursed. — KATIE KILLER

DEAR FUTURE EMPLOYER

Dear Future Employer.

I quit.

Every time you pay me a poverty wage.

Every time I don't get a paid holiday.

Every time I can't afford groceries this week.

Every time I clock in under 30 hours so I don't qualify for insurance.

Every time I make a request for personal boundaries and they are ignored.

Every time I hear that a customer's experience is more important than the employee.

Every time my manager refuses to communicate like an adult.

Every time I finally pee at 5 pm.

Dear Future Employer.

I quit every time I am treated like a punch card commodity and not a human.

Dear Future Employer.

I thrive.

Every time I am living in abundance.

Every time I can take a vacation and not worry about how my bills will be paid.

Every time I can treat myself to dinner at my favorite restaurant.

Every time I can go to the dentist and pay for therapy and afford medication.

Every time you listen and allow my personal space.

Every time you place my Self before profit.

Every time I can communicate calmly and with compassion, understanding and compromise.

Every time I allow my body time to exist naturally.

Dear Future Employer.

I thrive every time I am exalted as a human and I amplify the value of everything around me.
— HALEY RICHARDSON

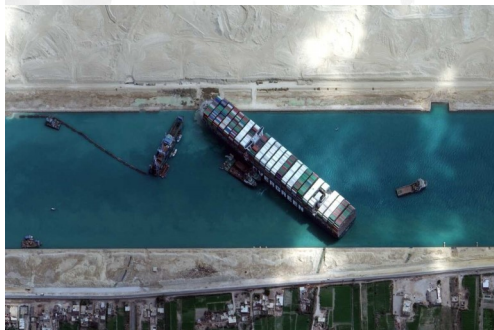
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EVERGREEN MARINE

The Evergreen Marine ship has been freed from the Suez canal as of a couple hours ago from press time. While this is overall a good thing, I have loved the news cycle following the vessel. Seriously, there are so many things going on in the world that are inexplicably annoying and difficult to follow, but this has been a phenomenal breath of fresh air.



The boat was stuck. It no go. Stuff is stuck. You can't have it. Boat needs to not be stuck. That's it.

The long and short of it. Boat needs to not be stuck.

Fuck your global trade. I am a stuck boat.

The fact that it drew a crude dick in its path right before getting stuck is one of the best ways the world itself has told humanity to just eat a cock in a very long time. I mean really, global pandemic, dumpster fire of an election, vaccine rollouts, stimmy checks, GameStop stock, but when it comes down to it, the Evergreen Marine perfectly showed the world once again how fucking stupid we as a collective species really are.

The fact that one boat can put a stop to 10% of global trade is amazing. During an immensely exhausting and completely divisive period in history it has been real nice to simply sit at the computer and smile at the sight of a behemoth ship, just stubbornly refusing to budge; I was rooting for the thing the whole time.

It is a serious disaster that will impact global trade for weeks and months, causing another dose of economic anxiety for giant corporations who will in turn lay off their peons during an already turbulent time because of a strong gust of wind. I could watch hedge funds go bankrupt all day, and at least until it starts affecting us, we have the memes. — STARKNESS

READING ROCKS

This memoir by Texas-born Domingo Martinez is not for the faint-hearted. It's not an easy read, especially at 440 pages, but it's the content that is hard to come to grips with at times. Martinez details with often-agonizing accuracy the harsh reality of his life growing up Mexican in Brownsville, Texas.

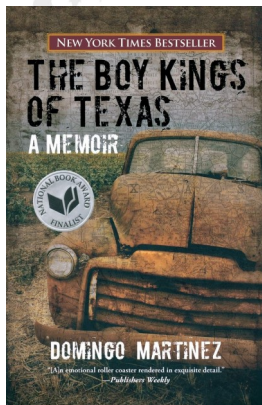
However, most of the pain doesn't come from outside prejudice: it's his own family that tears him to shreds emotionally and sometimes physically — one favorite uncle beats him mercilessly at one point. Yet, it's Martinez' father whose dysfunctional machismo makes everyone's life miserable beyond belief.

Martinez is unsparingly graphic in his depiction of poverty as well as the harshness of existence growing up with his three brothers and two sisters, his mother, and a perennially-unfaithful father. And of course, the powerful matriarch, his grandmother, whose toughness was legendary throughout the barrio — as a teen, she berates an adult who stepped out of line at gunpoint in front of his entire family.

The memoir is composed of some 37 chapters focused on particular aspects of Martinez' life although there are a number of beginning and ending sections as well. The writer's tendency to rocket back and forth in time is occasionally disconcerting. In one passage, he's writing about his two sisters pretending to be Valley girls when forced to work in the California produce fields, and in the next, they are adults with good jobs and a family.

The majority of the time, Martinez stream-of-consciousness way of writing is compelling, particularly when describing his relationship with his older brother Dan or even his drug trips. Yet, the Pushcart-Prize-nominated book might have done better with stronger editing.

Still, this is one person's story, and it is in his or her hands to tell it the best way possible since it is a story only that person knows. Martinez is unflinching in writing about what he calls his failures in relationships and his own personal weaknesses. He doesn't have to be so honest, but that honesty makes the harsher parts ring more true. After all, this is a life where the shooting of dogs in the head can be the proudest a son has ever felt about his father. — MIKE L. DOWNEY



RECORD REVIEWS

time or two after it's over. To me that's a really good sign.—
KELLY MENACE



All Wasted
Burn With Me

After getting an add "suggestion" from Facebook to check out a band's page, I was perfectly annoyed, but then seeing the band was from Sweden, I quickly became intrigued. From buzzsaw-laden death metal, Gothenburg melodic death metal, to the unique sound of the country's metalcore scene, Sweden has long been known as a hotbed for heavy metal music; but I knew that with a band name like All Wasted, I was getting something different. Labeling their sound as death 'n' roll, and describing their mission as, "Just have a damn good time," the band is definitely not what I expected.

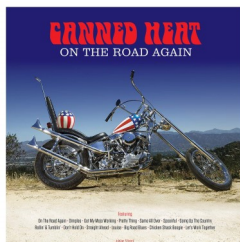
Metal subgenres are an interesting study in and of themselves, and death metal is sometimes mistaken as being straightforward, brutish, and perhaps even simplistic. However, it is actually one of the most diverse of the metal subgenres, as it has spawned numerous subgenres within the subgenre—perhaps "microgenre" is the right word—which have become stable niches of fandom in the metal community. Death 'n' roll is one of those rarer microgenres that one either loves or hates; All Wasted's interpretation of the microgenre for their debut album, *Burn With Me*, sounds something like early In Flames melodies, a little Entombed groove, and the early 2000's emo rock rhythms thrown in for good measure. It's definitely a unique approach, but does it work?

Upon spinning this record, one thing that is clear is that the melodies drive the songs. While some of the melodies are reminiscent of Dark Tranquillity and early In Flames, there are other sounds where the melodies and rhythms feel like a heavier version of Red Jumpsuit Apparatus or Panic! At the Disco. What All Wasted does right is most demonstrated in "Crime," "Towards the End," and songs like "The Passion of the

"This Means War." These songs are not only melodic, but they have the necessary hooks and memorable choruses that keep the listener engaged with the song. The hard rock ethos is not only present in the instruments, but also in the lyrics, which have a rebellious, young adult angst throughout. The formula of these songs, and most of the others on the record, is the traditional format which consists of a verse, chorus, second verse, repeated chorus, guitar solo, bridge, and the chorus repeated again. It's simple, but effective enough that even those who are new to extreme music will be able to comprehend it.

The biggest problems I have with *Burn With Me* are threefold: (1) the presentation, (2) the delivery, and (3) song writing. I'm sort of "whole package" kind of guy when it comes to albums, and to say the least, I was not impressed with All Wasted's artwork. It's very bland and uninspired, but I am willing to forgive that particular issue if the music is good, but it is must be VERY good...but this is not the case. The delivery of All Wasted's brand of death 'n' roll lacks that overall "punch" which should be present in any microgenre of death metal. The eminent bass and the needed "crunch" of the guitars are simply not there. The high-pitched vocals, while appropriate for death metal, are monophonic and show little diversity in skill. The song-writing is also problematic because it feels like the tracks were written without any attention given to the death metal side of death 'n' roll. If a band is going to embark into such a specific hybrid microgenre, there needs to be a balance between hard rock and death metal. Simply altering the guitars and using death metal screams for songs that were better suited for clean vocals does not qualify the band for its self-proclaimed niche.

To be fair, death 'n' roll is not a very common microgenre in metal, and it is not a style that is easily mastered. However, when a band consciously decides to pursue such an exclusive niche, it should not be half-baked. If the guitars were given a little less distortion and the vocals were clean, *Burn With Me* could have easily been a decent hard rock record, however, it must be judged as what the band intended it to be, which is a death 'n' roll record. Fans of Swedish metalcore, and those who are new to extreme music, may find *Burn With Me* to be exactly what they are looking for, but for me, the album's overall sound is mediocre, and one which I will have to pass up. A 2.5: from me. —
CALEB MULLINS



Canned Heat
On the Road Again

This 2020 vinyl compilation album by blues-boogie band Canned Heat is such a disappointment. When I first discovered online the existence of this album from Not Now Records, I was taken in as it featured three of my personal favorites by the band that appeared at the original Woodstock Music Festival. Most collections, all CDs, didn't seem to have all three tunes, and I wanted vinyl anyway, and I wanted to help out the local record store — Curious Collections — by buying through it during these pandemic times.

The first clue that this is a con job is the lame record cover picture of a motorcycle, no band members, nothing. The shabby artist treatment continues on the back of the album cover: no pictures of the band, no information about who plays on the songs, no information about the genesis of the songs like what albums they are from, zilch. There is only a perfunctory history of the band to fill in the space on the album cover back. At least there is data about who wrote the songs, but that is sparse, last names only.

Speaking of the songs, the title cut is the lone tune that I am confident is by the original Canned Heat. There are four other tunes that were written by the band members, but there is no way of telling who actually sang and performed on the tunes. While the blues-boogie songs sound like the original band, and they aren't that bad, there is no way to be certain who is playing on what.

Oh, the three favorite songs that I was looking for? The title cut is one, of course, and the other two are "Going Up the Country" and "Let's Work Together" that the band did the definitive covers of. The other two tunes that I wanted on this disc are live versions by who knows who, maybe the world's worst Canned Heat cover band. They sound rushed and dashed off by whoever is playing though.

What a disappointment. My only consolation is that the local record store got something out of this. So, beware of deals that sound too good to be true. Not Now Records — Never Again Records for this buyer. —
MIKE L. DOWNEY



James Hoelscher & The Thousands
Some Kind of Museum

Long time BCS music fans will remember Bachelor Police, the supergroup that initially debuted the talents of Todd Hansen and Grant Nunnally, both alumni of more successful local bands like Golden Sombrero, Mike The Engineer, and The Appeals. The third part of that supergroup axis was James Hoelscher. After graduation Hoelscher beat a hasty retreat for San Antonio where he assembled a new band dubbed The Thousands, *For Some Kind of Museum*. Hoelscher called in a favor of his old bandmate Todd and coopted Hansen's band Yaupon to augment his San Antonio Thousands.

The result is a short, 4-song EP that sounds almost like a time capsule from 1994 buried away beneath a layer of kudzu and red clay somewhere in the Deep South. This album reminds me so hard of the bands I used to share stages with around the Southeast in the late '80s and early '90s that were R.E.M., Let's Active, and Guadalcanal Diary informed. Smart, collegiate individuals making smart, collegiate alternative rock that embraced twang and clean lines rather than the roar of punk or the nascent grunge. Lead-off track "Ashes" has a touch of early Band of Horses in the strummy clean guitars but this sounds very much like a college band holed up in somebody's ADAT-equipped garage. "We belong in some kind of museum /because we're young, yeah, we're virile, yeah we're beautiful/we're symmetrical", Hoelscher sings over deep tomtoms in waltz time. "The Great Divide" adds a touch of electric piano and alt-country lead guitar. "Weak" doubles down on the Byrds-ian Peter Buck jingle jangle while Hoelscher claims "I can barely stand up on my own two feet/but I'm so weak". It's hyperbole, since the band plays this one so buoyantly. The 000's close out the album with a cover of Jackson Keating's "Heartbreak City" but it doesn't sound like a cover.

Some Kind of Museum is a great entry point to what Hoelscher and The 000's do very well: make heart-on-the-sleeve college radio rock & roll. It's so short and so catchy it will have you putting it back on a

ARSENAL

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