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Published monthly by XMAG LLC.
Circulation: 75,000 per month at 200+ sites
Mailing Address:
818 SW 3rd Avenue, Suite 1324
Portland, Oregon 97204
Telephone: 503.241.4317
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Email: info@xmag.com
Exotic Online: www.xmag.com

Publisher
XMAG LLC.

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FEATURES



MAKING IT RAIN BILLIONS

exotic's guide on how to invest irresponsibly
page 22
by wombstretcha the magnificent



LOCKED UP & LEFT OUT

advocating for the disenfranchised and incarcerated
page 36
by ericka rachelle mendoza



ORGASMIC RACISM

is redtube the last refuge of acceptable racism?
page 54
by matt rose



INAUGURATION NIGHTMARES

another type of journalism
page 56
by christian ricketts

INSIDE STUFF

SAYING THANK YOU	PG. 18
GREEN ROOM DIARIES	PG. 24
EROTIC CITY/SPOTLIGHT OF EVENTS	PG. 28
PINUP CALENDAR	PG. 32
PINK & BLACK THOUGHT	PG. 41
TYPICAL SLUT	PG. 42
TALES FROM THE DJ BOOTH	PG. 44
TOP 5	PG. 46
SO, YOU WANT TO BE A ROAD COMIC?	PG. 48
STRIPPED IN PORNLAND	PG. 50
CLASSIFIEDS	PG. 52
HARDCORE INAUGURATION	PG. 58



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Kreature

LEARN TO SAY THANK YOU, BUT IN A WAY THAT WILL LET HIM KNOW THAT HE'LL NEVER BE GOOD ENOUGH

BY TIFFANY GREYSEN

Valentine's Day is almost here and as we all prepare to be given boxes of waxy, half-melted chocolate in heart shaped boxes and possibly even a piece of shitty jewelry, that we will wear once and then let it sit in a box with other gifts from people whose name you no longer can remember—much like the discontinued Taco Bell food items that you once loved so much—we get ready to put on a gracious smile and say thank you, but silently we let them know that they blew it.

My very first Valentine's Day fuck-up that I experienced was in the fifth grade. My best friend and I both had boyfriends who were also best friends and, because of this, everything that one boy did, the other boy did as well.

For example, when my friend went to the movies with her boyfriend and they held hands, my boyfriend, not wanting to be outdone, took me skiing and held my hand and kissed me*. On the morning of Valentine's Day, my friend and I were met first thing in the morning, as we got off the school bus at the school by two rosy-faced boys standing in the snow, with wet noses, wearing moon boots, ski hats and their winter jackets. Each boy was very proudly holding a large, red, heart-shaped box of chocolates. I remember being so excited as we accepted our gifts, I briefly noticed

phane wrapper was still intact, while mine had been removed. Slowly, I realized what had happened. As soon as I was alone, I opened the box and I could see the beautiful chocolates that were once a perfect fit were now slightly loose. My boyfriend had opened my box of candy and took at least one chocolate. My moment had been taken from me. My first box of chocolates had been tainted, as well as my first Valentine's Day. It was then and there when I decided that I would never marry my fifth grade boyfriend. I gave it a few days and broke up with him. I'm still friends with him on Facebook. If you want his name, I'll give it to you.

That first Valentine's Day has set the tone for many, many more Valentine's Days, along with birthdays and Christmases, where I have been completely shafted. Sometimes things were easy and I was single or there would be a simple breakup before Christmas that carried through Valentine's Day, but when I was seeing someone, I found it very stressful. I don't think men are aware of what women go through for the holidays and gift giving. Do they have

any idea how much pressure it is to get a gift for someone who may or may not have gotten you something?

Then, for Valentine's Day, there's the whole thing about what to wear. So, you go and buy yourself an outfit, preferably red, then you have to buy a new red lipstick, which can and will take hours. Then do you buy special new sex underwear, when you don't even know if you are going to end up having sex? After all, it's just Valentine's

Day, you are not obligated to have sex. This is the worst one of all—how do Valentine's dates end? Sex seems like it might be on the agenda. But, what if they completely blow it by showing up with a dirty car, in



jean shorts and high top Reeboks?

I also once had a boyfriend who asked me over for dinner for Valentine's Day, but his "gift" to me included me participating in BDSM, which really isn't my thing, but I went along with it for the experience. I "ruined it" by laughing. Do you have any idea how hard it is to call your boyfriend "Master" without laughing, when his name is Stu and he has a lazy eye? It's very hard and I must say it's actually impossible.

So, how do you say "thank you" to someone when you don't really mean it? You just say it. Thank you. They knew they blew it when they opened your box of chocolates, when they were late without calling or when they did something for themselves that was under the guise of a gift. You just say it, you don't need to tell them they wronged you. They know.

**without tongue*

Tiffany Greysen is a comedian and writer from Portland-ish, Oregon. She is a freelance writer for several humor publications. Her comedy is part advice columnist and part parenting guide... neither of which should be followed. You can find her on Twitter as @TiffanyGreysen or on Facebook by name.



that the two identical boxes were not identical—my box wasn't as shiny as my best friend's—and then, I saw that her cello-

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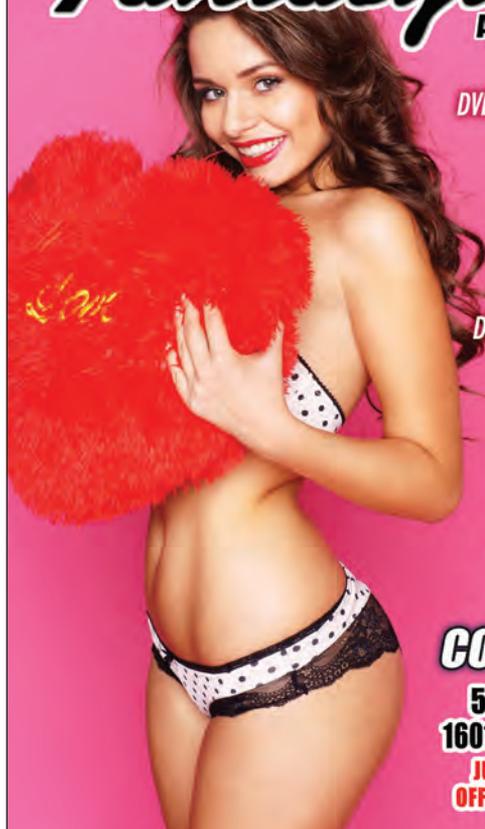
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THINGS BILLIONAIRES SHOULD BE DOING WITH THEIR MONEY, BUT AREN'T

BY WOMBSTRETCHA THE MAGNIFICENT



The super rich—the so-called wealthiest 1% of society—Sorosés, Rothschilds, Rockefellers, Buffetts and that IKEA guy...they all have so much money, that their money has its own money. What do they do with it all?

Oh, buy big boats, meddle in global politics, blah, blah, blah.

Boooooooriiiiing!

Let's face it, while lounging around on a yacht all day (or setting up some kind of new world order is all fine and dandy), they should be having WAY more fun with that money. What's the point of having money, if you don't spend it on truly awesome shit, right?

So, listen up, 1%ers who read *Exotic*. Here's what you should be doing with all that dough.

1. Paying ex-presidents' speaking fees and making them do dumb shit.

All living ex-presidents have speaking fees you can pay to have them come out to whatever event you have and talk for a bit. It usually costs several-hundred-thousand-dollars, but if you're super rich, that's nothing. Call up Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, pay their speaking fees and then have them re-enact scenes from *Star Wars*, while you sit on your couch in your underpants. Now THAT is money well spent.

2. Buy a used car lot...and a monster truck.

You know that shady used car lot, that's well-known for ripping people off? Well, what if someone bought it for the sole purpose of running over all the stock with a goddamned monster truck? Wear your best top hat, monocle and smoking jacket as you drive your monster truck, affectionately named the "Big Money Hustler," over all sorts of dubious-quality cars from the mid-90s.

3. Install ziplines everywhere.

Getting from point A to point B is an affair of tedium most times. It's routine. It's functional, but bland. However, if you pay to install ziplines all over, the world will be a way more fun place to move around in.

4. Beer fountains.

In the year 1887, beer magnate Henry Weinhard

offered to make Portland, Oregon's historic Skidmore Fountain run with beer, for an unspecified amount of time, in celebration of its grand opening. City officials did not let him do this, citing Irish-related concerns, but at least he tried. Now, it's the current year and anyone with enough money should be able to pay for the beer—as well as the necessary payoffs to city officials—no matter where you live. Make this happen! Also, pay for guards, so bums don't pee in it.

5. Find sasquatch.

Come on. You've got billions of dollars and you're not trying to find sasquatch? Once you found him, you could give him a talk show. It could be called *The Daily Hruurrghhh!* If you can't find him, or if he doesn't exist, have someone genetically engineer us up some sasquatch. This is just common sense.

6. Force dreams on people.

Not their dreams. Not even your dreams, but some kinda dreams.

For example, you could go up to the next retail clerk you interact with and say, "I will give you \$500,000 if you quit your job and start a band called Buttsteak."

7. Pay celebrities to change their names.

People in the public eye usually have their price and their price usually isn't even all that much. Toss a couple mil at your average talk show host, politician or professional athlete and have them legally change their name to something ridiculous.

We all know basketball star Ron Artest changed his name to "Metta World Peace" on his own and that's pretty silly. Imagine if you bribed Shaq to legally change his name to "Kazaam Q. Genie," Brock Lesnar to "Big McLargeHuge" or John Oliver to "Smugsley B. Whinypants." It would be a sensation!

ED: Do not confuse John Oliver with Wes Anderson.

8. Manipulating fictional characters.

Let's say you throw some cash at, oh, DC Comics, to get them to have Superman thumb someone's buttohole in the next issue of his comic. They've got their price—like everyone else. They'll write it in. Also, it should be Brainiac who gets it. Oh, you're a super-smart alien and shit? Well, you still got a big, green buttohole. Let's see how it likes a thumb!

Additionally, you could hurl cash at studios to un-fuck TV shows that took a nose dive. Didn't like the last season of *Dexter* or the last 3 of *True Blood*? Make them film better ones and say the bad shit was just a dream or something.

9. World records.

With enough moolah, you can set pretty much any world record that's not contingent on personal skill. I say go for ridiculous things which don't really need to be world records at all, but only stand out because of their strangeness. World's largest floating ball pit. Most rats simultaneously catapulted at a K-Mart. Most random people paid to pee on Rosie O'Donnell. Stuff like that.

10. New national anthems.

Oh, hi there, Mozambique. I see your GDP is less than my annual income. How about I slide you a few million dollars and you change your national anthem to "Baby Got Back?" No, no, trust me, it'll be a real winner at the next Olympics.

You see? That's how you spend megabucks. Take a tip from me and put your money to an actually GOOD use for once. You could do all of those and still be one of the richest people in the world, so get on the stick, willya?

-WStM

Wombstretcha the Magnificent is a writer, as-seen-on-TV inventor, Portugal skeptic, secret aardvark, monkey inspector and retired rapper from Portland, Oregon. He can be found at Wombstretcha.com, on Twitter as @Wombstretcha503 and on Facebook by name.

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GREEN ROOM

DIARIES

BY STONED COLD SATIVA AWESOME



(Note: The final chapter in the previous month's columns regarding murder and marijuana in Humboldt County will resume in March).

This month's *Exotic* theme deals with Valentine's Day and Black History Month. Stereotypes suggest that *some*, but not all, black men *tend* to enjoy marijuana. I know. It sounds racist as fuck. But, alas, I was taught to smoke weed by brothers. Being a white dude, my main background with weed involved simply trying to find it with other white dudes. From seedy dirt weed from the local park, to blazing up entire weed leafs because they looked exactly like the stuff on Cypress Hill albums, it wasn't until I was taught how to roll a blunt, by a black dude, that I actually broke my weed cherry. It was middle school, in Salem, OR, which is a rare place to find racial harmony, let alone good weed. I'd like to give a shout out to Eric and his family for moving up here from Watts—otherwise, I'd still be smoking seeds.

I'm not a fan of noting racial differences, because they are, for the most part, mostly bunk and usually based more on socioeconomic trends than they are skin color. However, the fact that white dudes can learn a little something about weed from black dudes is undeniable. And, surprisingly, the same is true in reverse—I have surprised many of my black friends with what they call "crazy white people shit," when it comes to paraphernalia and edibles. And, as far as Valentine's Day goes, well, let's just say that a body high is essential for good stoned sex, so there's a good way to enhance your 4:20 sex sessions...otherwise, I'm avoiding that topic until the end of the column.

WHITE DUDES, LEARN HOW TO ROLL A BLUNT

White guys, here is something I learned from black dudes: blunts are your friend, but they're not as simple as joints. Blunts last longer than joints, are more portable/durable,

taste better and burn slower. With joints, you have paper and glue. Blunts, on the other hand, are entirely made of plant material; using a tobacco leaf, instead of whatever chemicals are put into Zig Zag papers, makes for a more natural smoke. And, before you suggest going all vegan and shit, the "all natural" rolling papers they sell at head shops are garbage—you have to re-light the joint six or seven times, so you're not cutting down on chemicals, unless you're using a hemp wick (in which case, you probably don't have black friends).

As far as the blunt-rolling process, you can't go full-length-roll, loop, twist, like you would with a joint. Instead, open the tobacco leaf (you're gonna get this by splitting open a Swisher Sweet, from top to bottom, emptying out the inner tobacco), get it moist, lay it on a flat surface and insert freshly-ground weed. Then, piece together the blunt, from bottom to top, using sections of the tobacco leaf, with saliva, or better yet, honey, in place of glue. Once the blunt is rolled, you will need to dry it, either with a lighter (be careful not to scorch or burn the blunt by keeping the lighter moving from front to back), or by placing it perpendicular to the vents from your vehicle's defrost (this, however, may require white privilege, especially if done in Lake Oswego or The Pearl District).

BROTHERS, DON'T FEAR THE REEFER

Black dudes, here are a few tips that white people tend to keep secret: Sour Diesel is shit. Utter garbage. It may taste better, but the THC content is much lower than most weed, it's cheaper to produce, stanky as hell and not nearly as long-lasting as OG Kush. I'm not *totally* a fan of conspiracy theories, but the idea that New York City is being supplied with overpriced, easy-to-manufacture-outwest, pungent, quick-acting weed is reminiscent of what Reagan did to the inner cities with crack. Now, if you're a black dude who grew up on the west coast and already knows

that Sour Diesel is crap, what you might not know is that dabs, BHO, wax and all the concentrates come in different levels.

When I first introduced vape pens to a buddy of mine, a fifty-five year-old black dude, he looked right at me and said, "I don't trust that white people shit...last time I took a hit of that stuff, I passed out for a week and woke up with an art degree." Sure, dabs are pretty Caucasian in style, but that's because us white boys like to do things to the extreme. What we're hiding, is the fact that lower-level THC (somewhere above a typical bag of weed, but well below feeling like you're on PCP) concentrates are all over the place. CBD-dominant mixtures are a great alternative to the headfuck-dominant strains and dabs are also much easier to conceal during a stop-and-frisk, which is something that us white folks don't usually have to worry about (and, hence, allows us to be ten times higher than the normal person should get in public). Plus, they can be mixed into edibles. Since white people can't cook for shit, all we do is make weed butter and spread it on bagels. I'm reaching out to the black community here, asking if anyone can come up with a way to make medicated Cajun food. Weed grits. Jambalaya with southern spices and Alaskan Thunderfuck...anything besides brownies and cookies. Because, if left to our own devices, white people are gonna fuck this up, like we've done everything else.

SORRY LADIES, BUT I'VE GOT PLANS

Now, I've spent this whole column talking about building bridges made of weed between white and black dudes, but what about Valentine's Day? Well, here's the thing: I'm single. And, because of this, I'm saving a shitload of money on gifts this year. So, I'm inviting people of all races, whether white or black or Latin or Asian (or anything but Russian, because Russian dudes always start fights whenever someone makes fun of their shitty 10" rims) or Native or anyone else, straight, gay, lesbian or other, to cancel their Valentine's Day date and join me for a racially-inclusive smoke-out somewhere far away from Hallmark stores and overpriced vegan restaurants.

Straight women, you're invited too...you've just got to share the chocolate.

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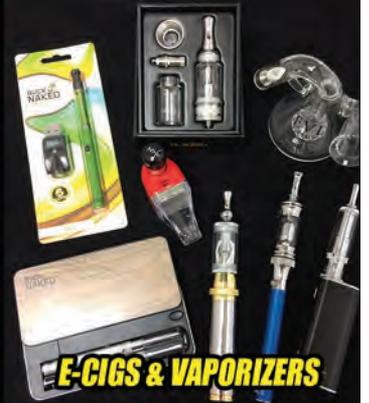
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Trump: 47 Months To Go **BY RAY McMILLIN**

I've been a video gamer for longer than I can remember, with a preference toward RPG and open-world action games. If there's one thing I've learned, it's that you can't go into a boss battle wearing only leather armor and wielding a broken dagger. This applies to the easier bosses, as much as it does the dragons you encounter towards the end of the game. If, at some point, you repeatedly lose a battle against a powerful foe, you have the option of either starting the game over or chucking your Xbox controller at the screen. The logical, reasonable solution would be to restart the game with a better focus on racking up armor and weapons or reevaluate your current strategy to see if it could use any improvements. Chucking the controller at the screen seems to be juvenile and violent.

In other words, as a die-hard video gamer, it is damn near impossible for me to understand my fellow leftist's reaction Trump's presidential win.

We tried to fight fire with a pile of matches. The same people who were livid about another person with the last name Bush in office are, for whatever reason, totally fine with *Clinton 2: The Clintoning*. Grabbing pussies is, most definitely, not something men should do...even while using cigars. As far as "first female _____" goes, Ronda Rousey and Oprah are self-made women who have risen up against the patriarchy. Hillary Clinton works for it on the

weekends—making hats for all the women her husband fondled. Is Hillary a better politician than Trump? Sure. But, she's not a better *candidate*, in terms of grabbing votes from her own team.

This is the problem of idealism versus reality; in an *ideal* world, strippers could show up to work whenever they wanted, wearing yesterday's street clothes, asking the DJ to play their boyfriend's latest album, making thousands of dollars off of their personality alone and not having to deal with Foot Freak. So, if Idealia shows up a few hours late, after Trumponia has taken to stage in a bad wig, orange tan and yelling at Latino customers for no reason, it doesn't seem fair that the owner would let Trumponia work, when Idealia is so much nicer (and never grabs her pussy on stage).

What would Idealia's next, best move be? A protest against the club? Digging up dirt on the owner?

Or, perhaps, she could set her alarm, shower, invest in some dancer heels, learn to deal with Foot Fetish, show up to work on time and dance circles around Trumponia.

I'm just gonna go out on a limb and assume that the most avid readers of our pro-feminist, racially-progressive, sex-worker-funded magazine are Democrats (and, you Republicans understand that, while welcome to join in the discussion, you may not be the primary demographic

of this column). I like to think of myself as a Libertarian, until I have to call the cops or go to the doctor, at which point I'm a card-carrying SJW. So, what are we going to do in order to win the battle?

Here is my five-step solution to jump-starting the broken Democratic party, in hopes of never having to watch a reality television star take office again:

1. End Identity Politics

Lived experience is circumstantial evidence at best. At worst, it can lead to a complete dissolving of the group who has been yelling "unity" this whole time; how ironic is it that the party of inclusion has become wrapped up in labels? I'm not talking about yelling "All Lives Matter" in the face of an undeniably racist police state, but rather, discussing the ways in which citizens can interact with local police forces to provide solutions to the problem of racial profiling. This is not the same thing as screaming "RACISM!!!" whenever someone mentions the idea of having a police department. It means that, if discussing Planned Parenthood funding, we include the fact that zero percent of abortions provided by the company are performed using funds provided by the federal government, mention the idea of men who need STI testing, bring up the fact that one company shouldn't be the sole source of reproductive healthcare for women, etc. But, if we simply scream "RAPE CULTURE!" into

the faces of old people who don't know how to use the internet, they're gonna vote for the candidate we aren't supporting. By focusing so much on identity, we actually give specific, easily-identifiable reasons for the opposition to hate us.

"Why is that pink-haired lady screaming at me for relaxing my legs on the bus?" "Oh, don't you know, Jeb? All (*insert identity here*) are like that these days."

"Huh, I didn't know that. Better watch out for (*insert identity here*)."

This is just one problem. The other is that of exclusion, as in, MLK didn't add "except people from the Midwest, especially Juggalos" at the end of his speech. Straight, white, Christian men can be pro-choice, just like vegan lesbians can be anti-abortion. Trust me, it happens.

Therefore, the solution is to do a 180 from name tag politics. Even the most bigoted, backwoods, Jeff Foxworthy fan would agree with you, if you said that people who need health services should have safe access to doctors, police officers need to be trained so that they can physically restrain a teenager without lethal force, people who hold public office should not condone sexual violence and, according to our laws, if a person of another faith or race enters this country legally, their culture should be considered to be part of ours. Boom, you've just replaced your Tumblr identity with facts and logic—results will follow.

I know, it sucks. It requires restraint and patience, which brings us to...

2. Acknowledge The Other Side's Point Of View

I'm not advocating for agreeing with your racist neighbor's stance on BET, nor am I suggesting that you give the idea of pussy-grabbing a second thought. What I am suggesting, is that the average Trump supporter was not, in fact, born in the wild as a feral MRA and raised entirely on Mountain Dew, hatred and tattoos of accidentally-backwards swastikas. In fact, many of them are exactly like us, up until the point where we started using words like "us" and "them."

Let's look at our own demands—those which we have made of the right wing. With LGBTQ acceptance and rights, the world went from 2,000 or so years of "men and women," then spent about six months introducing the concept of same-sex, normal-as-you, yadda yadda. You'd think we could put the brakes on for a few minutes, at least long enough for Ellen to get her first divorce. But, we fucked that up sooner than you can say "Anderson Cooper... wasn't he on *Channel One*, the Pepsi-sponsored faux news broadcast that we all had to watch in middle school?" Now, it's "I'm a pan-demi-pseudo-genderfluid-queer-racial-ex-KMFDM-DIY-uber-over-under-double-plus-ungood-jackelope-kin who needs you to refer to this manifesto whenever you address me or I will sue you for committing a hate crime."

For the record, 99% of the people who pull that shit are just straight, white people who haven't found a way to play victim-lympics yet and are simply looking to soak up attention rays, in hopes of getting a tan—allowing them to become head of a Spokane-area NAACP chapter...but, I digress.

Aside from being neck-deep in sand, the problem with refusing to accept that half of our country voted for Trump is that, well, we're refusing to accept half of our country as having an opinion that doesn't align with ours. And, we're gonna have a hard time explaining to them that "All Muslims aren't terrorists," if our premise is "All Trump supporters are racist." In fact, that's a pretty spot-on reference point to use, when referring to any group of people; if you said X, Y and Z about, say, Jews or the handicapped, would you make it out of your Intersectional Social Studies classroom alive? Doubtful. Then, why say it about old white guys from Ohio? Oh, yeah, because we need to...

3. Abandon The Use Of Buzzwords

Buzzwords are the clickbait of critical discourse and they are usually used by people who rely on them to maintain the illusion of intelligence.

For one, it's elitist nonsense to use buzzwords in casual conversation—it's literally no different than name-dropping an un-

derground band for credibility or claiming to have read anything by Nietzsche (because *no one* who reads Nietzsche and understands him will want to have anything to do with collaborative effort on behalf of a larger good). Trump won by speaking to his supporters in *their* language, not his; even coming from a world of stock options, tax deductions and interest rates, Trump used words like "jobs" and "middle class." Meanwhile, Hillary spoke the language of a pissed-off fortune cookie, with the all the charm, soulfulness and character of the paper it was written on. 91% of her campaign ads opted for attacks on the opposition, while the remainder addressed policy, platforms, plans, goals, ideas, etc. Trump may want to build a wall, end abortion and deport kittens, but can you name *one* of Hillary's policies? In fact, new rule—if the average left-leaning voter can name more 4 Non Blondes songs than they can your campaign goals, you're not allowed to run for president.

Second, buzzwords are counterproductive. Go to any bar not frequented by customers who drive Teslas. Try telling the guy in the "Make America Great Again" hat that his mansplaining causes his privilege to allow microaggressions toward your post-racial, non-binary choice of gender identity. See if he spits out his Bud Light or just goes back to talking about mechanical bulls and sports night. Now, pick a different Trump supporter. Ask him how he'd feel if his daughter came out as gay, or possibly, how he would react if she was impregnated by a morally-upstanding, but undocumented, Mexican dude. Go from there. Most "ignorant" conservatives have a surprisingly decent grasp on things like common decency and manners. Once you find out that, where abortion is an issue of personal choice to you, it is an issue of faith and tax dollars to them, you two may find some common ground. Bring up marijuana...it was once stigmatized, is still federally illegal, but is accepted as better than being illegal. Then, wedge in the issue of abortion. Ask about his daughter, then wedge in a question about women's rights. Baby steps come first, before first-trimester fetus steps. However, you won't win any debates by screaming "MISOGYNIST!" at a person who doesn't know what that word means.

Buzzwords are not suitable replacements for logic, statistics, tangible concepts and facts. But, we still have one problem where this is concerned...

4. Emotional Reasoning Doesn't Work, So Let's Start Using Logic

If the fact that some twerp can copyright the HIV pill—before jacking the price up and flipping a profit—pisses you off, blame the system, not the parts. Oh, are you implying that capitalism has a moral and ethical responsibility? Hm...where have we heard that before? Abortion? Gay rights? Yep, you're probably seeing where I'm going with this—if the left wants to be the party of "progress," "acceptance" and "open-mindedness," we need to swallow our own medicine—the right is anti-abortion for the same reasons that the left is anti-capitalism. Taking an ethical (read: emotional) stance against systematic, mechanical, *logical* issues, is erroneous. You can't scream, cry and yell your way through an argument. It didn't work for the religious right and it won't work for the regressive left. And, yet, if you watch any of the debates between Liberal Lisa and Alt-Right Adam floating around on YouTube, you will notice that it is the progressives who use personal attacks, verbal interruptions and other histrionic displays of outrage, when faced against a stone-faced, calm conservative opponent. I long for the days of outraged Republicans and debate-ready Democrats. "Well, actually..." used to be a sign of facts and logic to come—now it just results in accusations of "mansplaining" or whatnot. You can't argue that two plus two doesn't equal five by pointing out that the number two is triggering to your non-binary view of the world; you point out facts with a calculator, pen and/or pencil.

By using facts in place of emotion, we can start to win again. Did you know that the ending of slavery, women's suffrage and same-sex marriage share one, very specific thing in common? Tax dollars, which involve...math. No law has ever been passed on the basis that it will cost money and make people happy. Women didn't get the

vote because they were people—women got the vote because they were beginning to account for the majority of consumer spending and the men, in power, had a financial stake in the liberation of the female vote. Same-sex partnerships, whether in marriage or under some weird, Idaho-type definition like "union," are seen as taxable entities, the same way that marijuana has ended up (with a dissolving focus on the supposed, ethical aspect, in favor of revenue generation). Single, childless men and women are a total threat to the status quo's pocketbook, as our disposable income often lends itself to shady write-offs and under-the-table work. If the government can get the two guys who are having sex on the down low to shape up, buy a house, adopt a child and become mainstream, they're more likely to end up farming tax dollars for Uncle Sam from a cubicle. And, let us not forget that black people were viewed as property—even while anti-slavery laws were being drafted. Even good decisions, with positive moral outcomes, are made on the basis of amoral reasoning (and, more often than not, because said decisions are profitable).

Capitalism is a sick, immoral system, but it's the one we operate under. Thus, we need to phrase arguments from a perspective of bottom line. *Roe v. Wade's* biggest victory relied on the assumption that an underground black market would profit from illegal abortions. Medical marijuana is the way it is, because states found a way to tax patients. Nothing of importance depends on mere ethics, at least where the government is concerned. Therefore, "You're a piece of shit" is no longer a valid argument against those who propose harsh immigration laws. Instead, try "Allocating resources toward the prevention of illegal immigration, when that same time and those exact resources could be going toward building a better Michigan, doesn't make sense." That will appeal to Detroit Dan far more than "Eat shit and die, red-neck scum." And, don't forget to...

5. Admit Fault Where Applicable

Returning to the beginning of this rant,

Hillary was a shitty, establishment-backed, past-her-prime, fake-as-fuck candidate. Do I think she's a better person than Trump? For sure. But, to say she's a better fit to her fans, well, that's like saying that *Toby Keith's Greatest Hits* is worse than that Metallica album where Lou Reed mumbled over backing tracks that were cut from *Load*—ask the fans of each group and you will find an honest response (as well as at least one "Why the hell is Toby Keith outselling Metallica?"). Ask any Democrat who, like myself, would go down on Obama in a heartbeat, why we don't think Hillary suits our tastes. And, before anyone says "misogyny, misogyny, blah, blah, sexism," keep in mind that Jill Stein took, like, four percent of Texas (and my vote). An old woman, who believes crystals can cure autism, brought *thousands* of Texans to the polls. Imagine what Bernetta Sanders would have done. Or, better yet, fucking Oprah. Oprah is the shit! I'd vote for Oprah. But, it's time to own up...let's admit it. We can do better than Bill's ride-or-die side chick. 2016 was the year of "...so you better like this shitty re-hash of the 80s and 90s, because it stars women, otherwise you're a sexist." Slimmer and Bill were original gangstas. We need strong, independent women to lead our country—not hacks who live in the shadows of expired men. Hopefully, we won't recognize the last name of the woman who runs in 2020 and wins (and if we do, it better be Obama).

We can also do better than crass, smug, talentless, over-indulgent, pop culture figureheads. The most "powerful" (don't you dare cut those quotes out, Adam) speech we've seen so far has come from a weeping Meryl Streep. Where the fuck is the new Malcolm X? What happened to Gilda Radner? Janis Joplin? Hell, Tom Fucking Green??? We need lefties with guts, *intelligent*, foul mouths and examples of dissident protest, that encourage thoughtful reactions (and, no, Lena Dunham's selfies taken while eating cake on the shitter do not count). But, if we're tired of this mess, we need to clean it out. The amount of steps between re-legalizing the right for women to own their own bodies and black-guys-like-my-butt skits from Amy



eroticcity spotlight

Schumer are too numerous. The Young Turks aren't going to grow up any time soon. Hell, our party is so open to bottom-feeding, lowest-common-denominator slime, that we've taken in Glenn Beck. And, if you disagree with me, consider the fact that you're on the third page of an article written in a porn magazine—looking for answers. This is how fucked we are.

Back To The Topic Of Exotic

With that being said, it's Black History Month! Why not put away those Macklemore CDs and go eat somewhere besides the vegan food cart for a change? Did you know that literally everything worth enjoying was, at least partially, inspired by black culture? But, you're gonna have to venture outside of your bubble to find it—especially in Portland. Also, it's Valentine's Day...soon! Did you know that the concept of gift giving was formed by the patriarchy and that giving a woman a present is anti-feminist? No? Well, it's true! At least, it will be, in print, by the time I explain myself to this chick I've been seeing for a few months. What better gift, than the blatant rejection of a male-dominated system of needless consumerism?

Speaking of watching too much porn because the gender of your liking refuses to speak to you, we've got a column this month that proves RedTube to be the last outlet for acceptable racism. We have flash fiction and we have fiction about flashing. We've got an article on V-Day, coverage of BlackAndPink.org, black ink penned by black thought, video game strip clubs and tales from the road. We have a ten on the cover, a *Top 5* in the pages and a shitload of freshness for your February. I'd like to give a big thanks to our writers, layout wizard and editorial staff for pulling off some last-minute favors, ninja tactics and generally making sure that we're the only publication in Portland to make it onto the racks by the first of the month, regardless of two inches of frozen white liquid that caused our mayor to declare a state of emergency.

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3-YEAR ANNIVERSARY PARTY
W/ JESSA RHODES

SAT 11 – SCARLET LOUNGE
ANTI-VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY

SAT 11 – SUNSET STRIP – VALENTINE'S PJ PARTY

TUE 14 – CLUB ROUGE
VALENTINE'S DAY PINK PARTY

TUE 14 – STARS CABARET (BRIDGEPORT)
VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY

THU 16 – THE RUNWAY GENTLEMEN'S CLUB
DUELING DUOS QUALIFIER ROUND

THU 23 – THE RUNWAY GENTLEMEN'S CLUB
DUELING DUOS FINALS

THU 23 – CHEETAHS
LIONS' DEN ROMANCE EDITION
MALE & FEMALE DANCERS

THU 23 – STARS CABARET (BRIDGEPORT)
CASINO NIGHT

SAT 25 – SAFARI SHOWCLUB
PAJAMA PARTY

SAT 25 – SPEARMINT RHINO
DICK HENNESSY'S MARDI GRASS PARTY

SAT 25 – STARS CABARET (SALEM)
WILD, WILD WEST 18-YEAR ANNIVERSARY PARTY

TUE 28 – CABARET– MARDI GRAS FAT TUESDAY



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WORKING FOR LGBTQ'S PRISONERS' RIGHTS BLACK & PINK'S ART ON THE INSIDE MOVEMENT

BY ERICKA RACHELLE MENDOZA



Discrimination comes in many forms, impacting all genres and categories of people, from strippers and sex workers, to the LGBTQ community. Even growing up a Latina in a city as diverse as Los Angeles, I was faced with discrimination—for my ethnicity, gender, tattoos, glasses, big boobs...whatever. But, in a time and age when, every day, the lines of what separate us blur more and more (and, with the discriminatory views of the new presidential administration), now is the time, more than ever, for people to come together to squash racism and prejudice wherever we find it (and, in whatever forms we can fight with).

BlackAndPink.org is an organization and newspaper devoted to the rights of LGBTQ prisoners incarcerated all over the country. The organization was started as an answer to the fact that, in a national poll, 73% of all LGBT people have had face-to-face contact with police during the past five years (according to a report published by the Center For American Progress and Columbia University). According to the report, five percent of these respondents also reported having spent time in jail or prison—a rate that is “markedly higher than the nearly three percent of the U.S. adult population who are under some form of correctional supervision (jail, prison, probation or parole) at any point in time.”

Self-described as an “open family of LGBTQ prisoners and free world allies,” that exists to fight those statistics, this organization has not only reached its targeted audience of thousands of incarcerated LGBTQ community members, but also national media outlets and most recently the art and fashion communities—putting the seven-year-old organization in the position to

reach the eyes and ears of a world it hopes hasn't forgotten this community exists.

The main purpose of the organization is to “work toward the abolition of the prison industrial complex, that is rooted in the experience of currently and formerly incarcerated people. [We] are outraged by the specific violence of the prison industrial complex against LGBTQ people and respond through advocacy, education, direct service and organizing.”

And, while stats on LGBTQ prisoners continue to remain frightening—especially for friends and family members of prisoners—the group has found an increasingly positive outlet through art. A chance encounter with filmmaker Tatiana Von Furstenberg, daughter of fashion icon and designer Diane Von Furstenberg, brought about a collaboration with the filmmaker, who facilitated an art show at New York City's popular Abrons Art Center. The show, called *Art On The Inside*, featured art created by inmates with their limited art supplies which included, “mostly letter-sized paper, dull pencils, ballpoint pen ink tubes (the hard shell is deemed too dangerous) and unlikely innovations, such as using an asthma inhaler with Kool-Aid to create an airbrushed painting.” All artists were paid for their work, but the artwork was not for sale.

“Four and a half years ago, I made a pledge to do an act of love every day for 30 days,” Furstenberg told *Vanity Fair Magazine*. “I thought about doing something with our incarcerated population, and when I looked online, I found Black And Pink. It was sprinkled with art and that inspired me. All this talent, all of this poetry behind bars and we as a society don't have access

to these people! And, then one thing led to another.”

“Through the lens of art, we on the outside have the opportunity to bear witness to the suffering and also celebrate the resilience of the artists who are locked up,” says the organization. “The art on these walls demonstrates the ability of those who are suffering to still create beauty. Each of these pieces tells a story and these are stories we must listen to.”

The show took four years to come together, since organizers and inmates had to rely on snail mail to receive information on the show and to submit artwork (there is no internet or cell phone access for many LGBTQ prisoners).

Furstenberg said her hope for those who viewed the artwork was “to realize that there is an enormous amount of humanity, talent and complexity behind bars.”

The organization, which has eight chapters throughout the United States, also promotes campaigns to abolish solitary confinement, features a pen pal program, support and court advocacy in Massachusetts, workshops and trainings, a queer, member-written erotica zine, blog and monthly e-newsletter and print newspaper devoted to incarcerated LGBTQ prisoners nationwide.

According to reported statistics and surveys, in the United States, the number of incarcerated individuals who identify as LGBTQ is almost twice that of their general population and transgender women are more likely to be incarcerated than any others.

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Daily 12pm-2:30am

CABARET 7 **FOOD LOTTERY**
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Daily 2pm-2:30am

CASA DIABLO 46 **FOOD LOTTERY**
2839 NW St. Helens Rd | (503) 222-6600
Daily 11am-2:30am

CLUB 205 56 **FOOD LOTTERY**
9939 SE Stark St | (503) 256-0527
Daily 11am-2:30am

CLUB FLAYPEN 30 **FOOD LOTTERY**
6210 NE Columbia Blvd | (503) 281-3212
Mon-Sat 11am-2am, Sun 2pm-2am

CLUB ROUGE 48 **FOOD LOTTERY**
403 SW Stark St | (503) 227-3936
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CLUB SINROCK 23 **FOOD LOTTERY**
12035 NE Glisan St | (503) 889-0332
Daily 2pm-2:30am

DANCIN' BARE 11 **FOOD LOTTERY**
8440 N Interstate Ave | (503) 285-9073
Daily 11:30am-2:30am

DEVILS POINT 12 **FOOD LOTTERY**
5305 SE Foster Rd | (503) 774-4513
Daily 11am-2:30am

DREAM ON SALOON 16 **FOOD LOTTERY**
15920 SE Stark St | (503) 253-8765
Daily 11:30am-2am

DUSK 'TIL DAWN: CASA DIABLO II 80 **FOOD**
8845 SE McLoughlin Blvd | (503) 222-6610
Daily 2pm-2:30am

DVB 17 **FOOD LOTTERY**
5021 SE Powell Blvd | (503) 788-7178
Daily 2pm-2:15am

THE GOLD CLUB 72 **FOOD**
17180 SE McLoughlin Blvd | (503) 908-1177
Mon-Sat 11am-2:30am, Sun 4pm-12am

THE NEW HAWTHORNE STRIP 19 **FOOD**
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HEAT GENTLEMEN'S CLUB 57 **FOOD LOTTERY**
12131 SE Holgate Blvd | (503) 762-2857
Daily 10:30am-2:30am

KING'S 15 **FOOD LOTTERY**
13550 SE Powell Blvd | (971) 703-4248
Daily 1pm-2:30am

KIT KAT CLUB 69 **FOOD LOTTERY**
231 SW Ankeny St | (503) 208-3229
Daily 5pm-2:30am

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MARY'S CLUB 25 **FOOD LOTTERY**
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NICOLAI ST. CLUBHOUSE 27 **FOOD**
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RIVERSIDE CORRAL 31 **FOOD**
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Daily 3pm-2:30am

THE RUNWAY GENTLEMEN'S CLUB 55 **FOOD LOTTERY**
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SAFARI SHOWCLUB 33 **FOOD LOTTERY**
3000 SE Powell Blvd | (503) 231-9199
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SCARLET LOUNGE 60 **FOOD**
12646 SE Division St | (503) 954-1019
Daily 10am-2:30am

SHIMMERS GENTLEMEN'S CLUB 40 **FOOD LOTTERY**
8000 SE Foster Rd | (971) 230-0047
Mon-Sat 9:30am-2:30am, Sun 10am-2:30am

SKINN GENTLEMEN'S CLUB 21 **FOOD**
4523 NE 60th Ave | (503) 288-9771
Sun-Thu 10am-2am, Fri-Sat 10am-1am

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SPYCE GENTLEMEN'S CLUB 49 **FOOD LOTTERY**
33 NW 2nd Ave | (503) 243-4646
Sun-Thu 6pm-2:30am, Fri-Sat 3pm-2:30am

STARS CABARET BRIDGEPORT 50 **FOOD**
17939 SW McEwan Rd | (503) 726-2403
Mon-Sat 11am-2am, Sun 4pm-2am

THE SUNSET STRIP 37 **FOOD**
10205 SW Park Way | (503) 297-8466
Mon-Fri 11:30am-2:30am, Sat 4pm-2:30am, Sun 5pm-2:30am

UNION JACKS 43 **FOOD**
938 E Burnside St | (503) 236-1125
Mon-Thu 4pm-2:30am, Fri-Sun 3pm-2:30am

TOMMY'S TOO 39 **FOOD**
10335 SE Foster Rd | (503) 432-8238
Daily 10am-2:30am

WHISPERS 67
8102 NE Killingsworth St | (971) 255-1039
Daily 11am-3am

XPOSE 70 **FOOD LOTTERY**
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EVERYTHING ELSE

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9220 SW Barbur Blvd | (503) 224-1604
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ADULT VIDEO ONLY 102
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7964 SE Foster Rd | (503) 477-5446
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ALL ADULT VIDEO 103
14555 SE McLoughlin Blvd | (503) 652-2004
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3205 SE Milwaukie Ave | (503) 477-5446
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B.A. VIDEO 122
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Mon-Fri 11am-7pm, Sat 11am-5pm

CATALYST: A SEX POSITIVE PLACE 171
5224 SE Foster Rd | (503) 726-9930
Hours vary by events

CINDIE'S 109
8201 SE Powell Blvd #H | (503) 771-9979
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CLUB FANTASY 158
1232 NE Columbia Blvd | (503) 445-6688
Daily 24 hours

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5620 NE MLK Blvd | (503) 493-3944
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5228 SE Foster Rd | (503) 775-0094
Daily 24 hours

FAT COBRA VIDEO 118
5940 N Interstate Ave | (503) 247-DICK (3425)
Mon-Fri 6am-3am, Sat-Sun 24 hours

FROGGS 120
8845 NE Sandy Blvd | (503) 408-0958
Daily 24 hours

HEAD EAST 164
13250 SE Division St | (503) 761-3777
Sun-Thu 10am-9pm, Fri-Sat 10am-10pm

HOT BOX 157
4589 SW Watson Ave | (503) 574-4057
Mon-Sat 11am-10pm, Sun 11am-9pm

HUNNIES 148
3520 NE 82nd Ave | (503) 254-4226
Daily 24 hours

LIBERATED WORLD 123
10660 SE Division St | (503) 257-6881
Daily 24 hours

MR. PEEP'S / MR. PEEP'S TOO (2) 162
13355 SW Henry St | (503) 643-6645
20625 SW TV Hwy, Aloha OR | (503) 356-5624
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3530 SE Division St | (503) 232-7469
Daily from 12pm

PARADISE VIDEO 128
14712 SE Stark St | (503) 255-9414
Daily 24 hours

PASSIONATE DREAMS 130
6644 SE 82nd Ave | (503) 775-6665
Daily 10am-4am

PEEP HOLE 131
709 SE 122nd Ave | (503) 257-8617
Daily 24 hours

PUSSYCATS 134
3414 NE 82nd Ave | (503) 384-2794
5226 SE Foster Rd | (971) 255-0133
10813 SW Barbur Blvd | (503) 206-5874
Daily 24 hours

ROCK HARD PDX 28 **FOOD LOTTERY**
13639 SE Powell Blvd | (503) 760-8128
Mon-Sat 11:30am-2:30am, Sun 1pm-2:30am

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5321 SE Foster Rd | (503) 719-5046
Daily 24 hours

SHEENA'S G SPOT 137
8315 SW Barbur Blvd | (503) 972-1111
Daily 24 hours

SILVER SPOON 139
8521 SW Barbur Blvd | (503) 245-0489
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300 SW 12th Ave | (503) 224-2604
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Vancouver: 4811 NE 94th Ave | (360) 254-1126
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TORCHED ILLUSIONS 149
17935 SW Tualatin Valley Hwy | (503) 259-2310
Daily 6am-2am

TORCHED ILLUSIONS II 169
12963 SW Pacific Hwy | (503) 430-5140
Daily 10am-12am

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Daily 24 hours

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3533 SE César E Chávez Ave | (971) 271-7064
Thu 8pm-2am, Fri-Sat 8:30pm-4am, Sun 8pm-2am

K-OTIC TAN 147
8431 SE Division St | (503) 257-0622
Daily 24 hours

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69
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10
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70
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55
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46
CASA DIABLO

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50
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BRIDGEPORT - 17939 SW MCEWAN RD
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24 Hours / 7 Days
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Fri 11am-2:30am, Sat-Sun 12pm-2:30am
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Sun 12pm-8pm

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321 N Callow Ave / (360) 479-0111
Videos, Magazines, Books
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Novelties & Toys
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Sun 12pm-8pm

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15329 Highway 99 / (425) 742-7747
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PINK & BLACK

BY BARAK NOEL

"I tell a black man, good to see him;

not b/c I know him, but because he survived."

Pink/Black

My mother didn't trust herself with a gun in the house. She'd already made it clear where she stood with the knives.

I believe she might be happiest under house arrest; knowing that nobody expected her to leave—for any reason. I was raised behind a wall of books high enough to keep the whole world out—straining for a view into the life I wanted, through paperbacks and movie posters, wondering what went on backstage, after audiences left. I never thought I would live long, treating each project as my final opportunity to approach the infinite. Truthfully, I'm tired of living.

Or, tired of living for capital, with a target on my back—arguing with walls, defending this carbon footprint from the shadows. How will you hold yourself up to the light in '17? What stories have you hidden from the world?

I knew I was worth nothing—no money, not tall enough or employable.

Killing me wouldn't be a crime, often as not. My friend died and I felt like it should have

been me—I was as reckless and as tired. Not enough decisions and the wrong ones. Too many mistakes—too many to count.

I'm not sure what lessons I can take from yesterday, except to do things differently. I'm fascinated with obscenity—maybe, because society has made it clear I am obscene. I walk the streets of Central California, Northern New York, Oregon, Texas, Massachusetts and passersby communicate—in subtle and unsubtle ways—that my presence is not needed or desired. Invitations to perform around the country leave me cold, ill-fed and exhausted—seeking value in five minutes onstage, in a meme or a dick pic—clinging to my circle, begging to be left alone. I'm tired, guys. Sick of being an expense. Dress me in a three-piece suit of receipts, invoices, IOUs and let me scatter to the wind. Black Love is whispering sweet nothings to Grim Death and waking tomorrow, still half-hoping to win the race of evolution.

We adapt, survive and wonder why.

Bumping Biggie's "Ten Crack Command-



ments" like "Give Me Robbery Or Give Me Death." I've considered winning the lottery, tried taking a square job and I forget how to give up.

Dreams of releasing the flesh and transmitting myself as an idea, conduit of resource and obstacle without the ego. Hoping to speak only truth—perhaps, even believe it.

As artists replace our faces with clickbait, we give up shelter for exposure, clothing ourselves in promises of a better tomorrow.

"I'm older than Jimi Hendrix and I still can't play guitar."

Black/Pink

Over time, comics forget to laugh. The homeless can't remember how to eat. We learn to sleep standing up. Like bonsai kittens, we grow to fill the space available. This nation, a grave...beneath the tombstone of our bill of rights. I won't stop fighting, but I'm less and less convinced I care.

So, maybe, if there's something to believe in...you could remind me sometime. I know you're tired too. Or, maybe that's too dim. After a lifetime of sci fantasies of dystopic rebellion, we're looking at the real thing. Factually, three dozen people have been working hard to make my life possible. The world is your Blue Oyster—fear not The Reaper.

So, what's your nuclear strategy? How do we revive Habeus Corpus? I get lost in anecdotes and backstage stories, because I never wanted much more than creativity and travel. I've given myself over to this work, because it's all I have.

And, I'm not alone.

I keep seeing these heartfelt posthumous testimonies—another comic died this week. But, who do you appreciate while they're alive? As the numbness takes hold, who are the folks that you can't live without? Joe Moore told me he was dying and I made a joke.

Cuz, we're comics, and that's it—that's what we do. I made a joke and now he's gone. So, what lasts? Who's next, as social media ticks off the death toll. I participated in a project called Laments For The Dead, honoring victims of police violence. Now the website is a dead link to an empty page. And, here we are—between skin pics—clinging stubbornly to whatever's left.

TRUE BLUE: A



game. It made them feel powerful and it made us stacks.

As if we were show ponies, we pranced into position, as they gestured for us to disrobe and back away from their laps. We happily complied, giving them a full view. Like marble sculptures, we stood still and slowly turned on command. We were rated on display. Our shoes lifted us like pedestals and held us upright. Heels, like stilts, pedestals—holding our bodies taut, while we secretly laughed inside.

—She has great tits!

—Well, she has a great ass!

—Well...yeah. Hers is kinda flat...but she has a six-pack!

—You're right! Damn! That's nice...

We listened, eyes rolling, trying not to laugh, standing six feet away. Every curve, sag, pucker, scar, bulge, corner, ripple, stretch mark, bruise, angle and asymmetry of our bodies was eviscerated and extolled upon with their boorish commentary (*like these guys were the authority of anything!*). We listened, quietly. We heard compliments too and disagreeing opinions about whether it was better to be tiny or tall, or to have huge tits or "cute tits" (whatever that means).

Mercedes did her fake giggle and I soaked it all up—the absurdity of it all—and the fun, too. It is perverse fun to make money like this.

To have a friend in the club "in" on the game is the best. These guys were the worst and I loved Mercedes. She was

a sad, sad girl, but her dark streak was fun. We were making thousands of dollars to stand there nude and have random numbers thrown at us.

—She is an 8.5, but she...she is a 10!

—You're right! She is a 10! She has a perfect body!

—A 10! A 10! A perfect 10!!!

Mercedes beamed. She liked winning the game. Her hair glistened black and the tiny swoop of her young ass twerked excitedly. I laughed, a thick stack of Benjamins on my inner thigh.

We knew we were making money tonight.

They asked us a string of ever-increasingly boring questions and Mercedes quickly changed the topic. She laughed, pausing devilishly to take a sip of her Jack and Coke. With her tiny, pale hand on the thigh of the better-natured of the two, she said, smiling wide in her most fake-y of Southern-est accents, "Yeah, this morning I woke up early and made my boyfriend and all his friends loads of fried chicken and biscuits! I fed everyone! I brought fried chicken to my boyfriend in bed, then we ate it and then we had sex *all day long*...and, *then* I came to work!" She looked so accomplished, productive and girly. She bounced up and down, stirring her drink.

I stifled my laughter and downed another cocktail. Mercedes did not have a boyfriend and she did not know how to cook. For her, food meant nachos or pizza—takeout Chinese on a fancy day. I knew this because we met most afternoons before our night shifts for nachos and margaritas at our favorite place—where it was always happy

"Cupid is a sadist—don't tell me otherwise..."

The Cheetah Club
Atlanta, Georgia
"The Dirty Dirty"
(2002-2004)

Mercedes told the best lies and men rated her a ten. They liked her slim hips and crystal-blue anime eyes, shellacked ringlets—like a doll. She spoke in baby talk to customers, with a fake squealy voice, but they never caught on. Her game fascinated me. It was ripe. It was sick. She was dark. She was good.

And, she played it...

Once we were in VIP, dancing for some filthy bozos who were competing with each other about who was the richest, the manliest, the most virile. They were rude, all braggadocio, with no manners towards each other. We were bored and dancing while, they shouted at each other about yachts and penthouses. Then, they decided that rather than paying us to dance, they wanted to rate our bodies. It was their Top Ten Game! Would we play???

Mercedes and I did not even have to think twice. *This would be so much easier than dancing.* For thousands of dollars, we played their dumb rich-man

VALENTINE FOR MERCEDES

hour for us. Back then, we struggled to wake up before 4PM, yet the drive to party and experience and fuck up and feel was there, too. We fed our hungry nihilism with endless platters of corn chips and toppings. Talk of leaving Atlanta, cute punk boys and escape—our dreams. Endless talk.

Tequila and heartache.

Lonely hearts. Pepperoni pizza.

In real life, Mercedes was sad, lonely and surrounded by horny shitheads with stringy hair and soulless dealers with obvious beepers. She did too much cocaine and I suspected that she rarely slept. We hung out at parties in squats together, with methed-out painters shaking spray paint cans. We partied all night in sky-level high-rises, where the glowing skyline of the city was endlessly lit. We were hurting. We were young. Barely twenty and our lives had once been hard; now they were charmed. We had the keys to the kingdom—youth, beauty and endless privilege—and, yet, we were missing the point.

No matter what she did, Mercedes was a sweet girl in a bad way—like she was half-gone already. Like, her soul had given up long ago on her heart, so now the shell of her life wandered around in a body of beauty and pounds and flesh. She tumbled through the universe like a bruised bumblebee, endlessly buzzing. Flowerless, like she'd given up on the pollen and the softness of petals.

Mercedes lived alone, in an epic loft in Little 5 Points, that had once been a classroom in a elementary school and it had a swimming pool. One day, after a particularly sweet night at the club, we decided to have a pool party.

We bought chips, OJ and liquor and invited friends from work to come. We all swam in our cutest "outfits" from the club. We wore pink bikinis and black g-strings—accessorized with glitter, sequins and sunscreen. Thigh-highs with swimsuits. We went topless with booty shorts. We wore our cut-off T-shirts, paired with bikini bottoms and cheeky garters. Mercedes wore her favorite Misfits tank. I wore a sheer negligee and swam, feeling like a mermaid.

We did cannonballs, dives and underwater handstands. We held our breath and played sharks and minnows. Swimming and colorful, warm and drunk. Girl laughter, wet bodies...wet and free...wet.

Our tan lines were the evidence of our other lives beyond the pink—our civilian lives outside the stage's rose light. As the sun intensified, I drank the sharp OJ. The sugary liquor spun me in the sunshine and my cheeks blushed pink.

The sun passed its hot path through the sky and we reached that point of intoxication where the afternoon made us sleepy in its intense heat. Mercedes made the call and a dealer showed up with a brown vinyl '80s Samsonite suitcase. He popped it open on a lounge chair. Rainbow pills and capsules glistened from inside the full case. Pink and yellow pills. Blue and white. Green and orange. Party favors. We crowded around, wanting to try everything, our bodies shiny with coconut tanning oil, sugary sweat and temptation...

That day was beautiful. We swam in the pool—the water as aqua as the sky.

As Mercedes' eyes...as the sky.

As the sky...

The water suspends us completely, holds us completely and the sensuous warmth of the sky reflects the sun on the backs of our closed eyelids, as we float on the surface of the water. As the night creeps up on every Peachtree Street in Atlanta—the dark night and all the activity of the city—people blasting their systems, cruising towards Buckhead, honking horns, hollering out the window and wearing their finest, wanting to party, to dance, to fuck, to live...

We're faded, warm and thick in the slowly-cooling night. The scent of gardenias drifts in the summer air. Chlorine dries in our hair and our orangey-tequila breath tastes like comfort. Salty mouths. Cooling skin from swimming and laughing for hours, but the air's still warm. And, we're still warm, because this is Atlanta and even the dark night is endless sunshine. Her dark hair reflects darkness and her bright eyes spell darkness.

And, her eyes are never more blue than now.

No one back in Georgia knows what happened for sure. Maybe it was finally heartbreak. Maybe the dark dragon did get to her. Maybe she is someplace safe and they are all wrong. Maybe she left Atlanta and I can keep my dream. Maybe she picked up a guitar or really learned to cook or had a baby or had an abortion or moved to Montana or became a Baptist and got married. There are many endings to this story—as deep as the water is deep. The South was hot and I eventually had to leave it. But, that doesn't mean my heart left without rambling...



TALES FROM THE DJ BOOTH BY DJ HAZMATT

TO ALL THE ALBUMS I'VE LOVED

I've been engaged. Twice.

I've dated someone for half a decade, only to find out that they're looking to do something else with their womb, besides use it for pleasure.

I've been out with dancers, college students, feminists, Republicans, black girls, white girls, light girls, heavy girls, girls who may not have been girls...I've even had sex inside a Dutch Bros. coffee stand.

Twice.

But, I have never loved, outside of music.

Every feeling that one describes as that of being in love, I've experienced while watching a live band—but, never while watching Netflix. If I fall in love—for a three-minute period—with the stripper hanging from the pole, it's because she had her DJ play David Bowie.

I can't really play many instruments, nor can I consider my four-year stint as a joke rapper to be something that mused the types of women that I would consider settling down with (no offense to the Statutory Ray groupies, but you've gotta be, like, 25 years old by now). But, I can mix and blend like a black barber, when it comes to playing DJ. And, yet, I quit doing that, because the crowd—not my own taste—is what determines a successful DJ's playlist.

When I return to my studio apartment after a long day of canceled plans and rescheduled business meetings, thinking about how I need to charge all my Portland clients twice what I would clients who live outside of the dreams-and-ideas bubble, my stereo tells me, "Hi, Honey," before asking me how work went. I quote Michelle Pfeiffer from *Batman Returns*, at which point my MP3 player drains my negativity by serenading me with romantic tales of dopemen and dead cops or Christmas cards from hookers in Minneapolis.

So, as I reflect on albums I've loved before, here are the ones guiding my most current

nostalgia-driven fantasies—wishing I could once again de-Virgin-ize them by tearing open their plastic, removing their discs and sneaking past security.

Ween - *Chocolate & Cheese*

You ruined my innocence in middle school, like a priest who is about to move to the Vatican. Calming my anxiety, before waking up my internal desires for drugs, substances and drug substances, well before I was able to comprehend their methods of delivery, potency or street value—you were the older, biker girlfriend that I met through my aunt.

N.W.A. - *Straight Outta Compton*

I never knew passion, until we spent the summer together—bashing white girls at the mall and getting high from cheap weed. My parents didn't like you at first, but they're from a different time. The school principal caught us together once, then he made you stay at the office, while I was sent home. Yet, you never gave up, offering me remastered versions of your soulful, energetic love throughout the years. I swear to god, *To The Extreme* was just my side bitch and I will never see her again.

Ministry - *Psalms 69*

You made me wear makeup, before putting handcuffs on, feeding me whiskey and acting out rape fantasies, by holding a gun to my head while I pulled your hair. When my parents walked in on us, they just shut the door, after telling me to turn it down. Eventually, you would go on to quit doing heroin, which was great for your health, but it just wasn't the same after that.

Patti Smith - *Horses*

My mom liked you, my dad seemed to remember you, but I don't think anyone knew exactly what you did to my adolescent brain. We'd stay up for hours drinking coffee, while you'd babble on about the system, women's issues, anarchist political nonsense and black guys, meanwhile I'd

just relax and trust that you knew what you were doing. We see each other once a year at least these days and you just get better with age.

Operation Ivy - *Energy*

It took me forever to figure out your name, but goddamn was that some good, quick, enthusiastic lovin', if I've ever had any. I can't think of a single note you forgot to hit, even though my friends just thought you were screaming, yelling in my ear and trying to control me. You taught me that I don't know nothing, that unity was crucial and you encouraged me to move away from a bad town. But, you hated puns, so I doubt you'll be gracing my sound system anytime soon.

Faith No More - *The Real Thing*

I don't care if Anthony and you used to fight all the time—you're clearly the better person. When I met you in grade school, I didn't really get you, because I was kind of experimenting with this guy named Kurt, who lived up in Aberdeen. But, once I gave you an honest chance, after learning to listen to you all the way through, I can't really think of a single aspect of you that didn't bring me some sort of joy. You're basically the one that got away, but I don't know if you'd stand the test of time, so it's better that way.

Insane Clown Posse - *Riddlebox*

Dearest *Riddlebox*, I have no shame in proclaiming my love for you, even though I'm embarrassed to be seen with you in public. Our hot, sticky, nasty, white trash, unapologetic, laugh-out-loud lovin' had some actual rhythm to it now and then. Looking back now, I can see how you influenced the mainstream beauty standards (or at least wore that size 34 like it was meant to be busting at the seams). Don't tell anyone, but I still look you up all the time, especially when I'm hungry for fried chicken and soda pop.

Find the complete list at TalesFromTheDJ-Booth.com

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TOP

WAYS I KNEW I HAD ENTERED THE MIDDLE CLASS

BY BRAD COX

There are road signs along the highway of life. As we drift along the dusty road, we encounter certain landmarks that tell us where we are. Okay, I promise that was the last lonesome highway reference, but that was fun, wasn't it? Or, was it? Anyway, for the last five years of my life, I have lived below the poverty line. The problem is, I'm bat shit crazy, so holding a job isn't ever going to be a thing. My sister once told me to think outside the box...I remember telling her I couldn't even survive outside the box—I had to make my own. That shit turned out to be pretty fucking hard. Who would have thought that? But, here I am, with one leg out of poverty, reporting back to my past self in the porn shop.



Went To Costco!

Holy fucking shit, balls on fire. Not only could I afford to buy the goddamned membership, but I actually went shopping there. Ladies and gents, that place is like Mecca. Not so much in that I wanted to walk around it in circles, but more so in that it felt like a religious experience. Not only could I afford to buy 15 rolls of sturdy paper towels, but since I use them for my work, it would be irrespon-

sible to continue to pay retail, given this sudden access to the hookup.

Late Fees, Reconnection Fees

I'm new to this, so excuse me for not knowing that once you have the money to pay the bills, the amount you pay goes down considerably. I was always on the hustle, trying to keep shit connecting and working. When you don't have a lot, losing one thing—phone service, electricity, internet connectivity—any of those things will crush that last bit it takes for a guy to call a girl. Now I just pay stuff when I get the bill. So, I'm saving literally hundreds of dollars that my broke self just didn't have a choice but to cough up.



Went Black Friday Shopping

You know what's great about being poor? It's easy to say, "No way; I don't do Black Friday. I'm not buying into that shit." No one actually believes you when you say that shit either because everyone knows that the only reason your hipster ass won't get in line is because you're as broke as our educational system. Not me. No. I went and I bought a fuckin' 4K TV. With cash. No longer do I have to pretend my poverty is a lifestyle choice.



Fixed My Car

We all know that a huge part of keeping life going is maintaining decent transportation. But, car maintenance doesn't usually care that you're counting pennies for cigarettes. We have two vehicles at my house and the

fuel pump went out on one of them this week. Now, this repair was north of a thousand bucks. A year ago, I'd have sold the car for a couple hundred bucks, because there would be no fucking way I could come up with that kind of money. Fortunately, now, it's a pain in the ass and I certainly wasn't comfortable or happy to fix my car, but I had the money to fork over.



Booked A Hotel Room

I had a one-year anniversary with one of the ladies this month (right before the car broke down, actually). Knowing that the date was coming up, I did what every TV husband does—I went on my laptop and booked a room for us while making sure to tell the hotel that it was our anniversary. I decided to get us a room at Overlook Hotel...wait, I mean Timberline Lodge. Being aware of the weather, I had the four wheel drive on the truck checked and bought tire chains for the trip. So, let's recap: I bought the room, fixed the four-wheel drive and bought snow chains. In addition, I was able to get us a fancy-ass dinner next to a fireplace, with a window overlooking the snow-capped trees on the mountain. I have never, not one fucking time, been able to do something like that for someone I love. She felt like a princess, and I felt like a decent man for once.

The struggle bus is a place that most of us find ourselves in life. I didn't write this article to brag (okay, maybe a little bit...wink wink, haters). But, if I can get my mentally ill, felony-convicted, shit together, then so can you. Don't ever listen to the people who tell you the only way to do it is how they did it. Fuck that shit, right up its clown-shoe-wearing ass. You do you, as hard as it's ever been done. Make a new fucking box, then fill it with people you love and carry them in it. This year, my New Year's resolution is to never, ever, be poor again and to never have to pretend I oppose the holidays morally because I'm too embarrassed to admit I can't afford to participate.

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SO, YOU THINK YOU WANT TO BE A ROAD COMIC?

BY C.D. MARONE

Congratulations! You've finally made it. You are a comedian. Night after night, you toiled mercilessly to perfect your craft, performing at various scarcely-attended open mics in the lounge areas of obscure Chinese restaurants in the weird parts of town. You and your comedian friends put on "comedy showcases," which were basically just like the open mics, in that they're held in back rooms of barely-open businesses and attended by no one other than the performers, except unlike open mics, on showcases, you can choose to only let your friends perform. Eventually, you got funny enough or popular enough or unlucky enough, that your name made its way to the entertainment industry's equivalent of a used car salesman—the "professional" "comedy" booker and now you've got an opportunity to perform for the first time outside of your local comedy scene—in exchange for your soul.

You've often heard of comics talk woefully of the road, causing you to heed caution. Should you take the gig? Yes and here's why:

1. The soul probably does not exist.

That's right, the current consensus of the scientific community regarding the inner workings of human physiology currently does not involve the existence of a soul. Does this mean the soul does not exist? Not necessarily. It's quite possible that science is merely too new to know how to detect something as ethereal and apparently non-tangible as a soul, however, the bottom line is this: it would be nice if we had souls, but life is not nice, so we probably don't have them. Thus, why worry about losing something that you never had to begin with? The whole concept of road comedy being "soul crushing" really loses its weight, when you stop to consider the fact that you probably don't have a soul at all anyways.

2. The worst thing that happens is you die.

I'm not talking metaphorically, like "dying" on stage or anything like that. The worst thing happens is you literally die. Maybe your car crashes on the way to or from the gig. Maybe the hotel you're staying in catches fire while you sleep



and you either suffocate from the smoke or get trapped and burn alive. Or, maybe something cute happens like you slip in the shower, bonk your head and bleed out in the newly re-tiled bathroom of the Motel Sux. Regardless of how it happens, who cares? You're dead! Pain is temporary and reserved for the living; dead is forever. Death is peace.

3. Anything shy of death is probably something you can either recover from after sufficient therapy or, if not, you'll most likely it block out altogether, because of shock.

The nice thing about the human mind is that a lot traumatic events that we are not strong enough to deal with end up getting blocked out anyways! Like that

time your older cousin did that thing at Thanksgiving to you that one year when you were four. You don't remember that? Of course you don't! And, aren't you glad?

4. Broaden your horizons.

You will learn a lot about how Trump got elected, when you realize that your material—which kills in the city—completely goes over the heads of audience members in rural, red state America, who would clearly rather be sitting at home watching *Everybody Loves Raymond* reruns.

5. Gain an appreciation for history through a cross-cultural experience.

What better way to learn about how far comedy has come than by opening for a bitter, burnt out, retirement-age comedian from the 80s, whose act consists of ripped off street jokes and song parodies, hasn't written a new joke in over a decade and who thinks that anybody doing comedy different than him isn't doing comedy at all?

6. Look at it as a vacation!

At the end of the day, you choose how you're going to react. You can either get upset that you're marooned in the middle of nowhere because the booking agent failed to mention how you won't be getting paid until three weeks after the show date, via a check in the mail (and, you only had enough gas money to drive to the gig), or you can choose to enjoy an extended vacation twelve hours from home, in a town that you would have never vacationed in, let alone knew it even existed.

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Excerpts From Stripped In Pornland

(Flash fiction inspired by real and rumored events in the Portland strip club industry)

Artemis

Artemis shoots cocaine and heroin in the crevices of her fingers, which are now ballooned and swollen like over-cooked hotdogs. Each finger bulges with brown scabs. They touch the pole, the rail, every piece of furniture in the club, including the ones made of bald heads and oily flesh.

We're in the dressing room's bathroom. I squat in a blue and green bikini. My white, eight-inch heels hold me up like stilts, as I balance my weight. I pass Artemis the joint, but she waves it off with a needle in her hand. She sticks the metal in between her index and middle fingers. She exhales and her body shrinks into the toilet. My stomach turns. I jolt upright, turn on the vent and blow weed smoke into it.

"You should trade it in. Quit the hard stuff and just get stoned," I say, but she laughs. I shut the door behind me.

"Put your hands together for Artemis," the DJ says over the PA. He calls her name two more times and she finally stumbles out of the bathroom. Her dope-pricked finger drizzles a tiny speck of blood onto the doorknob, the couch she holds onto as she passes through the dressing room, the railing up the basement stairs and the pole in the center of the stage.

She's Hep-C positive. She told me. Hep-C can live for several days in encrusted blood.

After months of her blatant disregard, I beg the owner and the manager to fire her, even though I like her. And, so do other strippers. But, the club won't.

We scrub the rails, the pole and the stage floor ourselves with ripped bar rags and bleach because management doesn't, even though we pay a stage fee.

But, this is glamour and we're empowered.

1. Foot Freak

Foot Freak's cabana hat and Jesus sandals epitomize his laissez faire attitude.

He leans back at the rack, with a five-dollar bill in front of him. I see him prop his 70-year-old feet on the edge of the small, secondary stage.

He slips his left foot from the two worn leather straps that separate his hardened hooves from the Plexiglas.

He rubs his hammer toe on the edge, thinking I can't see it. I hold back the urge to gag. His eyes flutter and he takes a deep breath. Upon exhale, he shutters.

I continue to dance at the opposite side of the stage. I laugh to myself.

The lone sandal rests on the stage. A sour odor hits my nostrils when I dance a foot too close. I gag.

He dangles the sandal from his right foot, with less reservation this time. He lets it plop onto the stage, next to its crusty counterpart. Black stains dip where the toes and heel fit.

He sips his drink and rubs both feet on the stage. Stares me right in the eye.

"Take off your shoes," he says as he slaps down a twenty-dollar bill in front of him.

I hesitate in disgust.

I walk over, hold my breath and pick up the twenty.

I dance to the opposite corner and debate myself in my mind, calculating how long I have left on stage. By now, the song is almost over and there's only one more left. That's about three to three-and-a-half minutes of fantasy-made flesh for Foot Freak.

A kid with helmet hair stands at the edge of the stage opposite of Foot Freak's side. He tips me five dollars, so I give him a little show. It buys me 30 more seconds to decide. The song ends.

Foot Freak sighs, stirs and taps his toes on the stage again and again.

My ass feels cold against the Plexiglas. My hand reaches for the ankle straps on my black stripper shoes.

"Here we go," Foot Freak says as he kicks back in his chair with arms crossed behind his floppy hat.

I shake my head. I can't help it.

The musky stench of his rotten sandals is too strong for me to get too close. I opt out for floor work. In the middle of the stage, I lie on my back, spread my legs and twirl them one at a time in sync with the music, barefoot.

Foot Freak lays another Jackson on the stage. I turn around, lie on my back and go into the *hala-sana*—or plough—pose.

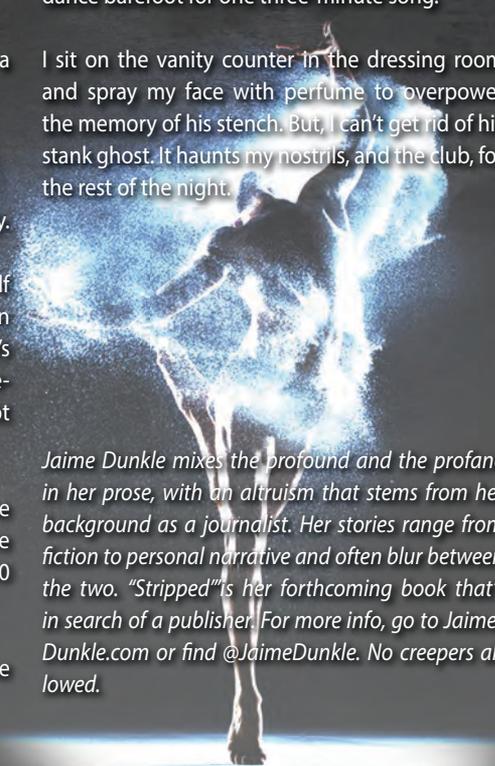
This sends Foot Freak into a frenzy. His eyes widen. He trembles. He reaches for his wallet and throws down a ten-dollar bill.

I flip over into a kneel, I hold my breath and crawl to the cash. Smile.

The song ends. I grab my clothes, shoes and purse and walk down the stage stairs. I stop at a barstool, throw on my dress and put my shoes on—satisfied that Foot Freak gave me a total of \$55 to dance barefoot for one three-minute song.

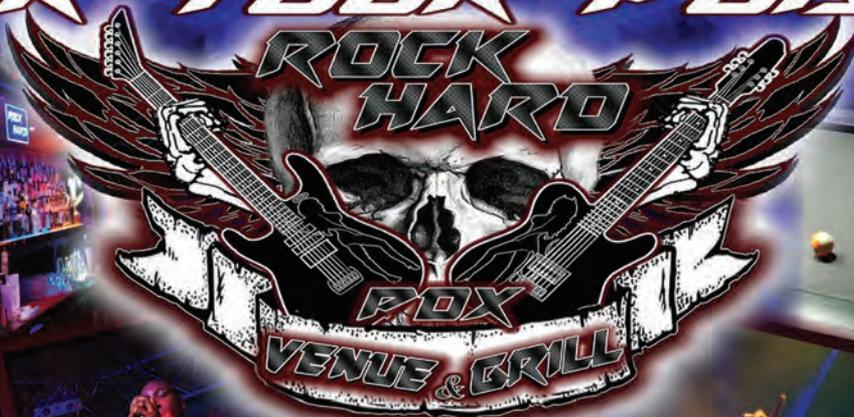
I sit on the vanity counter in the dressing room and spray my face with perfume to overpower the memory of his stench. But, I can't get rid of his stank ghost. It haunts my nostrils, and the club, for the rest of the night.

Jaime Dunkle mixes the profound and the profane in her prose, with an altruism that stems from her background as a journalist. Her stories range from fiction to personal narrative and often blur between the two. "Stripped" is her forthcoming book that's in search of a publisher. For more info, go to JaimeDunkle.com or find [@JaimeDunkle](https://twitter.com/JaimeDunkle). No creepers allowed.



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INTERNET PORN: THE LAST (AND BEST) FORM OF ACCEPTABLE RACISM by matt rose

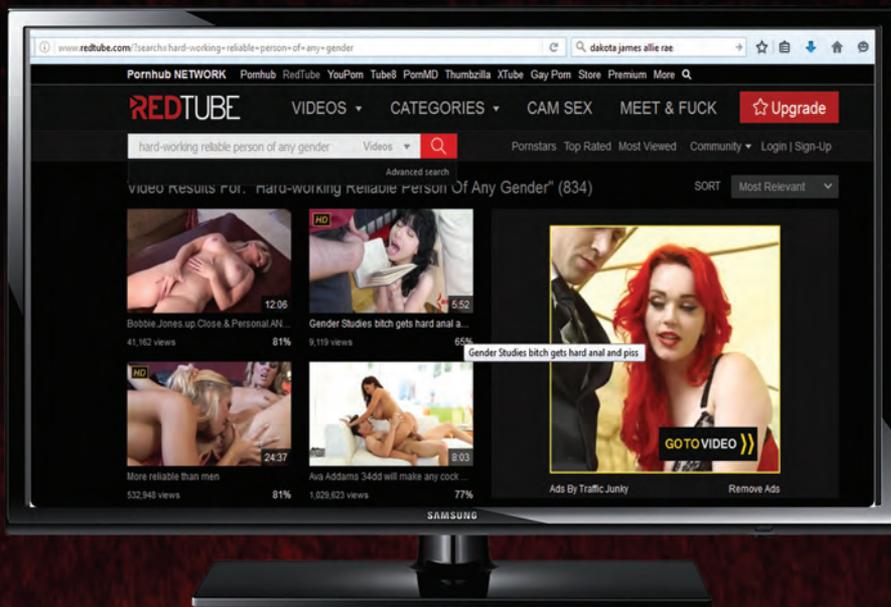
Let's say you were looking to hire a lawyer, consultant, personal assistant or just someone to make you a sandwich. If you were to include "...must be black and lesbian, with huge tits and fake lips..." in the Craigslist ad, you would get a thousand hate-filled emails from people accusing you of racist, homophobic sexism (before finally receiving a reply from a qualified applicant—I may or may not be speaking from experience).

However, internet porn searches are the exact opposite, at least in terms of finding what you're looking for using the search bar. If you head over to RedTube and type "hard-working, reliable person of any gender," you get "Gender Studies Student Gets Hard Anal And Piss," as well as many similarly-themed titles, for the top results. Now, I found said video to include an eye-opening portrayal of the ways in which patriarchal mechanisms are used to position people who identify as female, as a function of the male gaze—but, I highly doubt that the sentiment is shared by anyone else searching for free porn on the interwebs.

If you *are* looking for a specific body type, racial preference or, hell, pretty much any fetish, taste or aesthetic, internet porn is already your friend. But, if you're one of those guilt-shamed Portland State University students who thinks that gender identity is a made-up concept designed to keep 23-year-old women from passing their biology courses, you're gonna have a bad time rubbing one out.

This concept of racial, gender-based and otherwise categorically-driven preference for porn begs a larger question: is there such a thing as acceptable racism? Is it body-shaming to prefer that one's fap material is engaged in by physically fit (or morbidly obese, or dwarfs or any fill-in-the-blank body size) actors? If I'm by myself, in the company of literally no one, looking to lessen the load of bad decisions contained in my nut sack, am I hurting anyone by de-selecting "white" in the result filters? Isn't my extensive knowledge of digital sex technology vastly more disturbing than anything I could possibly search for without entering the deep web?

What I'm saying here is that, although completely inappropriate in a Gender Studies course, the phrase "I'm looking for a Latina bitch with a big fat ass, daddy issues and pink hair" is a clear, specific and appropriate request to ask of a porn site's search engine, whereas "girl with nice personality just wants to chat before she consents to anal and possibly more" results in...let's see here..."Just A Meme Likes Big Things Up Her Ass." Yup. No mention of her hobbies, aside from the obvious.



With race, things get stickier, literally and figuratively. RedTube operates, at least in part, somewhat like a slave auction. "Get this one, she's really black, has a great build..." which is fucking horrible and makes watching *Roots* even more awkward. Yet, there aren't a lot of punishment/forced/intense videos of white men going to town on black women; instead of the anticipated racism and white dominance that one would expect to encounter in uncensored corners of the internet, woke porn enthusiasts will be happy to discover a huge trend of strong, black men and women dominating weak, submissive white women and men.

Footage of teenage girls named Becca getting dug out by black guys twice their dad's size may resemble MLK's wet dream, sure, but on a much deeper level (pun accidental), it shows that porn is practically post-racial. If you've got your privates in one hand and a mouse (the kind that they sell at Best Buy) in the other, a big fat ass is a big fat ass. The fact that it's black or white just means it appeals to the same part of your brain that hair color does and you're not gonna jack yourself off into enough of a frenzy to start engaging in hate crimes.

Internet porn is also enigmatic when considering the idea of stereotypes. Let's say that you want to see a video of a girl with a thick, natural booty get down on webcam. Typing "black" in the search engine may be racist, but it works. Does it hurt anyone? No more than driving from Orange County to Compton, if you're looking for decent BBQ. Perhaps you're a quiet, non-confrontational black dude who works in an office full of abrasive, loud white women. "Brother Runs Train On Becky And Her Friends" may be your cup of tea. Why

beat around the bush? In fact, you can do that too. Just type "shaved."

1337 pr0n and n00ds (translation: naked things on computers) may be explicit, but at no point in the game does a chat window pop up, reminding you that race is a social construct, that you only find thin women attractive because of media standards, yadda yadda, buzzword oppression. Quite the contrary; if you watch enough videos of Latina girls eating each other out, suggested videos start popping up and you get into the really meta stuff, where shitty actors in Trump wigs get bent over and dildo'd by Mexican chicks with fake eyebrows and real tits. This, my friends, is technology at work.

No cure for cancer. Five hundred videos of bisexual cougars missing their left breast. Perhaps we've betrayed god in the name of art, but the current year is amazing.

So, tonight, after logging off of Facebook because you got into it with Whole Foods Kyle and his army of feminist blogger roommates about the unintentional racial implications contained within your latest post regarding Harambe (even though you still stand by the fact that they would have shot the baby, if it was a black male teen), set aside the identity politics and rub one out to your favorite race, gender, physical handicap, body size and hair color. Vote with your genitals.

Watching a white girl in dreadlocks get face-fucked by a Jamaican, in 1080p, is one of the last remaining artifacts of Americana. It's a tragedy that Norman Rockwell died when he did.

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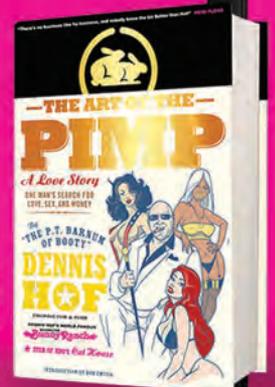
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Journal Entry: 02/14/2021

by Christian Ricketts

3:43 PM

This always happens. Seems like whenever I have an article due for *Exotic*, I convince myself that I will get it finished early. Then, I spend the next ten days congratulating myself for being proactive, instead of just writing the damn thing.

Fuck, this apartment is disgusting. Maybe this is my process, though; surround myself with food wrappers, acid roaches and old man ball smell, like the cavernous vagina of some long extinct reptile, with its face wincing at the other end in order to squeeze out its latest filth egg. I seem to recall, in 2017, a certain resolution to stop living this way. I'm also a full blown alcoholic now.

Today is Valentine's Day. If I were in a relationship with any of my previous girlfriends, I would probably be in shambles right now, thinking A) Did I do enough? or B) How can I get this person out of my life without causing serious trauma? Thankfully, I am with someone who also hates Valentine's Day, so we decided a couple years ago that, on V-Day, we would both get twelve hours of completely autonomous time to ourselves—anything goes. For all I know, she could be riding some biker's face right now and I couldn't do anything about it (who'd want to?).

It sucks, but when I have time to myself, all I want to do is eat queso dip with my fingers and play old Nintendo games in the dark. Squalor, you are my first, last and only love.

But, seriously, I need to get out of here if I'm not getting anything done. Gonna drive to the strip arcade and write there. Hopefully, the Tesla still has enough juice, otherwise I'll have to take the Max-Loop with the other scrubs.

5:01 PM

Ok, let's try this again.

I have relocated to Club Phaedra, Portland's only strip club/retro arcade. I remember when Phaedra first opened, the owners had to put up a sign urging customers to not tip with quarters. But, seeing as how most gamers turn into orcs when naked women are around, the owners had the wisdom to put in coin slots at the foot of the stage. I must admit, inserting coins in exchange for viewing live flesh is surprisingly coital. For the aging virgins who frequent this place, it may as well be the real thing.

For me, the major appeal of this place always has been and always will be the Thai Nachos, which have just arrived next to my laptop at the end of the bar. The theme for this month's *Exotic* is March Madness or something. Not sure how much it

matters. Ever since *Exotic* became *Exotic Monthly Industries International*, the editor has been busy riding his yacht and getting upside-down blow-jobs. Jealous? Maybe, but at least...

...had to stop writing for a second, because the holo-screen TV above my head just shattered after a shoe was thrown at it. There is a bunch of commotion in here. The music was just turned off, the house lights are up, one of the bouncers and a line cook from the back is trying to calm the bartender down. I guess he threw it. Gonna see what the hell is...

5:54 PM

A half hour just went by and I don't know if I can write an article anymore...

Here's what happened:

Fox-X, the infamously pro-Trump/Pence news outlet was on (why??). President Pence, speaking from the deck of the SSX Trump—a new rail-gun equipped battleship—announced that February is no longer "Black History Month," but instead, "History Month." Not surprising, given all the other crazy shit that's happened over the past four years. Turns out the bartender, Mike, who is of color, recently lost a brother to police homicide. They shot him for taking a cell phone out of his pocket. Mike shouted "It was a damn cell phone!" a couple times, before breaking into sobs. At this point, I, and everyone else, walked over to offer any support we could. I felt so lame and white. A part of it. Then, we all looked up at the other TV, which we could now hear as the house music had been cut off. The camera is close in on Pence's face, showing, in detail, the gruesome vertical scar from scalp to lip, leaving his right eye a milky white (while it was cool that the Maoli rebel who opened Trump's throat used a Japanese steel-whip to do it, just slashing Pence in the face so he looks more evil was, to me, counterproductive).

Behind Pence are two former UFC fighters now serving as X-Guards, who apparently have been ordered to applaud along with the various Trump and Pence family advisers whenever he ends a sentence. Pence raises his hands, "Now we have decided to make February 'History Month' instead of 'Black History Month'...because Black History IS History." More applause on the TV, as I and the other people in the club look at each other in amazement.

"Hey—wanna see this fucker in action!?" Pence yelled, gesturing at the rail gun behind him as his supporters stomped their feet on the deck of the battleship. "Effective immediately, the cease fire with North Korea is OVER!"

At this, there was a great whirring sound behind Pence, as the massive rail-gun swiveled to port and began charging. Members of the press started to panic, shouting questions as Pence let out a shrill, tittering laugh—the laugh of a shut-in, a loser drunk on leverage. While the X-Guards began violently pushing reporters, Pence elbowed a dazed and ever-twitchy looking Barron Trump out of his way, so he could grab Ivanka Trump by the waist and make out with her.

Then, one of the dancers walked over and took the remote, said, "Ugh, this is fuckin' boring," and changed the channel. Mike said "gimme that" and put on MSNPR, where we learned that Kim Jong Un, Jr. has just ordered his military to fire an ICBM at the Pacific Northwest and that the White House has ordered martial law in all 52 states.

Outside, there is the sound of a car accident, shouting and a long droning siren that I don't recognize.

5:86 PM

Now, I am alone in the bar. Employees and customers alike all scrambled to get back to their homes. I don't care if it's World War 4—I'm finishing my Thai Nachos.

Just spent a few minutes behind the bar so I could charge my phone, dig around in my pockets for a joint and pour myself a drink.

Probably not gonna write the article now. That air raid siren has now been joined by gunshots, breaking glass, marching feet, a chainsaw...

Still, as far as Valentine's Day is concerned...I've had worse.



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[Statue of Liberty is smoking while laying in bed, looking dissatisfied. Next to her, a limp-dicked Obama is visibly ashamed.]

Lady Liberty: "Look, I like you, okay? You were my first black guy and I was, well, just expecting a little more."

Obama: "What do you mean? You've been getting fucked by white dudes for so many years, I figured I'd let you have it easy for a bit. You don't even have to pay for the Plan B pill. At least, you didn't up until a few weeks ago..."

Lady Liberty: "I know, you're a sweetheart. But, I just want to get wrecked. I need to get fucked from every direction, for four years in a row."

[Heavy metal guitar begins to play as Donald Trump kicks the motel door in.]

Donald: "Hide your kids, we're gonna make a few more!"

Lady Liberty: "Now, that's what I'm talking about!"

Obama: "But, it's not a joke, I seriously...I...I turned the economy around. I reduced military spending. My wife...my lovely wife, she helped the fat kids."

Donald: "Shut it, Kenyan. It's time for Daddy Trump to fuck this bitch back to Europe."

[Melania enters the shot, dressed in a gimp outfit from the waist up, naked below. Donald clenches fist into a plum-sized rock.]

Donald: "Here comes THE FIST LADY!"

[Melania bends over and begins browsing Instagram on her phone. Donald begins fisting Melania.]

Lady Liberty: "Okay, let's do this! Fuck me as hard as you can, Daddy!"

Donald: "Huh? Ivanka?"

Lady Liberty: "Um...no, I'm a big green bitch and she's your daughter."

Donald: "Fuck, I just came!"

[A swarm of dead wasps falls to the ground.]

Obama: "See? That's the shit I'm talking about."

Trump: "No way, brother man—this is the shit I'm talking about..."

[Donald takes a giant dump on Lady Liberty's chest.]

Lady Liberty: "Oh, fuck yes! FUCK YES! Rub that all over my tits, while I wonder how I will be able to afford mammograms!!!"

[Melania's phone rings.]

Melania: "Ivanka?"

[More wasps fall to the floor.]

Donald: "Fuck, I could do this all day. Quick, get me a group of transnics, dykes and homos...I wanna fuck them too. And, Mexicans! Even the kind from Alaska—put 'em up against the wall, while I..."

[Fade to black]

Hillary Clinton: "I'm Hillary Clinton and I endorse this message."

Campaign Manager: "Um...with all due respect, Hill..."

Hillary Clinton: "Shut it. There's no way we're losing this election."

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