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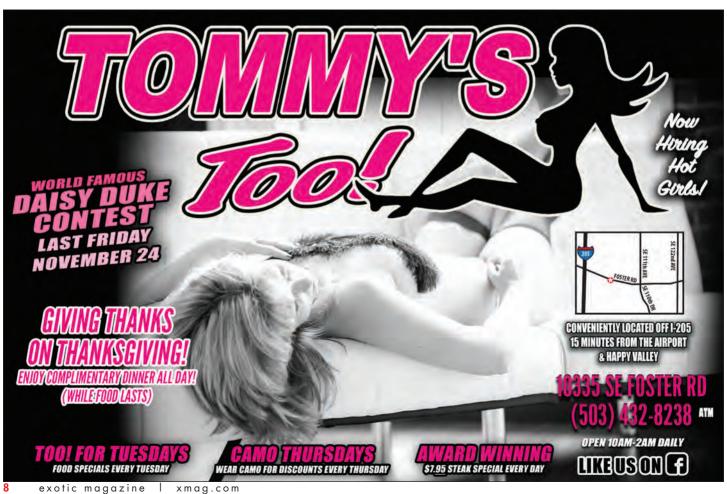
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Issue #293 • Volume 25 • Number 5 November 2017

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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

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#### DICK KNOWS BREASTS

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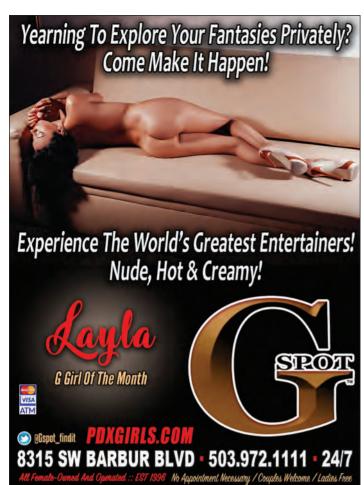
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## INSIDE"STUFF

MOMMY KNOWS WORST
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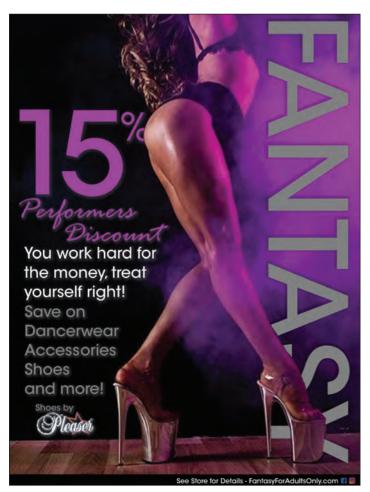
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## A GUIDE TO BREAKING UP

I still think that if Annie Wilkes would have played her cards right, she could have at least been able to remain Facebook friends with Paul Sheldon (may her mistakes send a message to all of us, on how not to behave during a break-up). Break-ups happen to everyone—at some point in their life—and keeping your dignity during a time of such duress is a skill that doesn't come naturally to all.

One day, everything is great. Then, the next day, you come home to find out that your penguin just isn't facing due south anymore—you will feel it and you will know that your partner is wanting out. It can happen quickly; everything will feel right with the world and then, all of a sudden, you're faced with the realization that your partner isn't happy and they want to bail.

It is going to sting and it will hurt your ego, because you know you've done pretty much all that you can, to make them happy. Maybe you pay the bills, maybe you act as their nurse-maid or maybe even you feed their Mr. Man ego by buying them the expensive typing paper. But, they will give you the signs that they are ready to go, even when it doesn't make sense. When they want out, they are done.

Do you want someone who doesn't want you? It's normal to have hurt feelings and it's natural to want to lash out, but don't. Even if your now-ex partner realizes they've made a terrible mistake, they certainly won't think this way, if you behave like a fucking asshole and hobble them. If you act like an asshole, it's hard to undig yourself from the asshole hole—just don't do it. If they want to go, don't try to convince them. Look them in the eye and wish them well.

Avoid lashing out physically (like breaking into an ex's house and peeing on their floors, which is a true, disturbing story for another time). While I hope that no one reading this would lash out physically against an ex, it's not

to downplay the times when someone lashes out emotionally by bullying or holding another emotionally hostage, with threats of ending their life, crying, begging, exploiting dependence to guilt the other, etc. All these acts are a form of bullying and will only confirm that the partner who is leaving made the right decision. None of these behaviors are acceptable.

Don't drag the break-up out by making it longer than necessary—both of you deserve space

Don't try to seduce them that one last time. I know this might feel like a good idea at the time, because you are both grieving and it's a way to connect without a lot of words, but it's a hack way to feel close to another and it's only prolonging you from moving on.

Moving on doesn't mean hooking up with someone new right away. I mean, do what feels good, but maybe take a break from romantic encounters.



to peacefully grieve and to adjust to your new beginning at being single.

Only consider a friendship if you think you can be friends without issues. Maybe ask, "Do we have a mutual friend?" or "Would we be friends, if you had not been sleeping with them?"

Give them back their things. You're a goddamn grown up, you know what things are theirs. Don't keep stuff so you have to make multiple trips. Know that this will be a two-part process—the things you know you have and the things you find. You will have your exchange, then you'll both find things, then there will be another exchange. Done.

Don't ask for more information about "why." Most likely, you got a recycled speech about what a lovely person you are, but they no longer want to be with you because of some reason or another. It doesn't matter. If they thought they could fix whatever reason they gave you, they would have talked to you about it and tried to fix it. They don't want to fix it. They want out. Let them go. You will never know the truth (and it doesn't matter).

Don't communicate for ridiculous reasons. Do you really need to ask them what that one movie was, that you watched together on Labor Day—the one with that actor you know they like? No, and just don't.

Do consider a no-contact phase.

Don't maintain or reach out to their friends for information. This will only hurt your feelings because, eventually, they probably will meet another.

Put away your sledgehammer and go for a walk.

Tiffany Greysen is a stand-up 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.



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## JONAS DOES PORTLAND:

#### **BY JONAS BARNES**

## IT'S TIME TO END THE "SEXP" HALLOWEEN COSTUMES

Okay, before you string me up by my dick, hear me out: I am not, under any circumstances, saying that people should stop being sexy during Halloween. I'm not even in the vicinity of that thought, actually. I'm a straight, red-blooded man, who loves the female form (and also loves Halloween). All your other holidays don't mean shit, in fact—Halloween is the king. So, now that we've gotten that out of the way, let me tell you what I mean.

Think about this scenario and see if it fits your life...you're going through the store, looking for costume inspiration. Maybe you've got your idea, but you need some makeup or fake blood that looks like watery raspberry jam, because you don't give a shit about quality, you pig. I'm sorry, let me reel that back in. So, you're looking and looking and you can't seem to find what you need. But, what do you see? Well, you see the Jason Voorhees, Freddy and Michael Myers masks, of course. Perhaps you run across a troll or a goblin and some witches hats, yeah? But, then, you look and you see them...the "sexy" costumes. Sexy nuns, nurses, firefighters, zombies, demons, slashers, construction workers, teletubbies, care bears and...wait, what? Okay, maybe a couple of those were bullshit. But, you know what isn't bullshit? They have "sexy" Disney and Nickelodeon costumes. I'm not kidding, even in the slightest; you can search for it yourself. And, therein lies my issue, everyone.

I'm a very sexually liberal person. I've got my kinks and I'm not afraid to show them. I'll go to a BDSM party and participate fully. I'll hit up the local orgy and we'll have a hole-filling fun time. Sex is NOT taboo to me and, if I'm being honest with myself, I love a good, appropriately sexy costume on Halloween. But, with great tits and dicks comes great responsibility. Halloween is a holiday I hold dear to my cold, black heart. The darkness and mystique of a holiday based around the occult has always interested me. But, All Hallows' Eve has a sugary side, that involves the whole family. To me, these are two separate hol-

idays. You have the real, adult Halloween and you have the fun-for-the-family Trick Or Treat holiday that we all grew up on. The issue comes when the lines bleed together and form this weird, over-sexualized grey area that we've wandered into. You can call it "When Being Woke Attacks," if you'd like.

As a society, we need to scale back the holiday and separate the two sides. As adults, I want your sexy costume. I want your Brassiere-Busting Dominatrix calling me a worm. I want your Bride Of Frankenstein making my knees weak. I want that sexy-as-fuck Morticia Adams to sweep me off my feet. I want all that and more. But, here's the thing: I'm a 34-year-old adult man. That's my lane. That's my crew. Those are my people. We don't have kids around. We don't have families around at our parties. We'll rock that shit at our parties under our roof or at our strip clubs. That's the line I'm talking about. There is a clear separation of where that stuff should go. Unfortunately, we've hit a point in sexual openness, where all that shit I talked about above, is flaunted without regard to any message we may be sending to both our daughters and the companies that make these costumes.

So, you may ask yourself what the answer is. What do we do, to reel this back and let both families and adults enjoy the most taboo of holidays? To me, it's simple: if you're making a sexy costume, don't make one that kids could wear. If you are thinking "maybe," then err on the side of caution and call it a "no." And, keep the sexy costumes out of the stores where they sell kids costumes or, at the very least, put them behind the closed doors of a room that only adults can go into. Like, the old, porn-filled back rooms of video stores you tried to sneak into as a kid. Those were the days! Fuck me, I'm old.

The point is, quit making these costumes so accessible to kids. They don't need to dress as a Sexy Snow White or a Sexy Belle. You can, because you're an adult and your

Sexy Cinderella is probably hot as fuck. But, you should be getting that at Taboo, not Party City, you feel me? And, while I'm on my nipple-tasseled high horse, let me say that maybe we shouldn't be making a sexy version of everything. You wanna be a sexy nurse or librarian, so be it. Those are pretty run-of-the-mill roleplaying costumes. But, maybe we should just steer clear of making a sexy version of any literal children's character or a character that's marketed to kids. We have a lot of sexy to go around. Let's not make a holiday that revolves around occultism creepy, okay?









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There are rumors that Oregon is considering the decriminalization of hard drugs. On one hand, this makes sense in theory, the same way a Libertarian utopia makes sense in theory. On the other hand, scabs. Tons and tons of scabs, which is what happens to your skin after you do hard drugs. Here are five reasons why we can't use the "it worked for weed" model, at least when applying legal boundaries to non-organic substances.

#### MARIJUANA IS NON-ADDICTIVE

I know what you're thinking...I'm clearly not looking in the mirror if I try to suggest that marijuana is not "habit-forming." But, much like video games, porn or social media (and unlike heroin or meth), weed withdrawals won't lead to hospital visits. I had my car broken into by tweakers—who were looking for scap metal—and they stole just that, some metal (worth about seven bucks). Yet, they left behind a pre-packaged dispensary ounce of OG Kush. So, not only is weed nonaddictive, but to people stealing shit to fuel a real addiction, it's not even worth the resale value.

No one who visits (or moves to) Oregon, in hopes of living the weed life, will end up a pot junkie, strung out at Country Fair and looking for their next dab fix. Again, I know there are exceptions, but they're not real junkies—just assholes. The sixty-year-old lady who decides to give pot a shot will not end up broke, in the gutter and panhandling for brownies. If you run out of weed, the worst you're going to do in order to fund your habit, is ask your dealer to front you a bag.

#### **MARIJUANA IS NON-LETHAL**

Again noting exceptions for DUII and dubstep, there is very little room to argue that pot sales lead to societal harm. If you eat too many weed brownies or smoke too much shatter, you will only end up in a hospital bed if you happen to already live in a hospital. Compare this to heroin. In fact, many times, heroin addicts are given their first fix in the form of painkiller opiates—straight from the doctor at the hospital.

Hard drugs are not only lethal on their own, but the administration methods are just as dangerous. You can't get HIV from sharing a bong, nor is there any chance that your locally sourced BHO contains fecal matter. A noob can purchase their first dab, slab, blunt or brownie and be pretty safe, unless we're talking spilled bong water or improper use of a torch. There is no need to find a vein when getting high on weed, nor will ingesting the wrong stuff lead to a heart attack or blood clot.

#### MARIJUANA IS SUPPLEMENTAL TO CULTURE

If you've ever enjoyed a white blues band or any public art in Portland, chances are, it was cannabis-inspired. On the same token, if you've ever enjoyed grunge music, chances are, it was heroin-inspired (heroinspired?). The difference is that whoever created that cool Bob Marley sculpture is probably still alive. If your society has too much weed (i.e. San Francisco), it rebels from laziness by becoming a booming tech industry. If your society has too much cocaine, it collapses the housing market.

Further, weed commerce isn't nearly as ugly as hard drug culture. Head shops are full of colorful toys, much like the types of porn stores that advertise with this publication. Heroin stores, should they ever exist, would be full of needles, Lou Reed albums and ashtrays. Right now, I'm wearing potleaf-patterned socks, because I'm a goofy stoner. If I was into shooting up, I'd be barefoot. The '60s were inspired by weed and the '80s were inspired by cocaine...go ahead, show me one history book that notes the importance of Nagel paintings and synth pop. I know I'm over-generalizing here, but Easy Rider and Scarface are, like, two different films, man.

#### TAXPAYER-FUNDED REHAB FACILITIES DON'T WORK

When it comes to methadone, it isn't exactly birth control, in terms of ease-of-use and consequences of withdrawal. The addict is still addicted—just to a safer substance. It's basically an e-cigarette or nicotine patch, but the state-funded facilities seem to enjoy keeping people hooked on it for years (if not decades). To think that a few buildings full of psych majors with bachelor's degrees will be able to curb the side effects of legal smack

is beyond stupid. Basically, the only rehab facilities that work are the privatized ones, full of celebrities and rich people.

I haven't seen a single Serenity Lane billboard that features a white dude with dreadlocks and a tie dye shirt, simply because "weed rehab" involves sleeping it off for a day or two and maybe hitting an N.A. meeting. Legalizing (or decriminalizing) smack will only lead to more people receiving crappy treatment from unqualified "professionals," who are lining the their pockets with taxpayer funds, at best, and a bunch of un-treated junkies at worst. In short, to state-funded rehab facilities, a sober patient is no longer a profitable one. Whereas private rehab can use quick and effective recovery statistics to draw new patients, a speedy recovery in a state-funded program just reduces tax revenue. Decriminalizing hard drugs would result in the mere changing of environment from state prison to state rehab facility, but neither provides actual rehabilitation.

#### THERE ARE MINIMAL (IF ANY) BENEFITS TO DECRIMINALIZATION OF HARD DRUGS

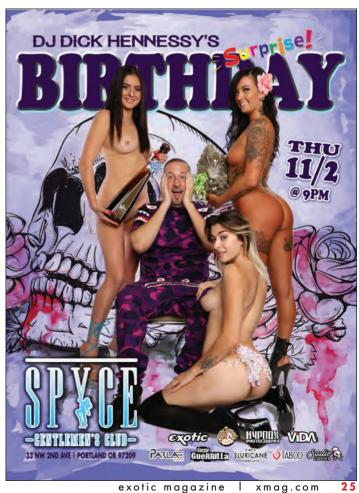
Broken leg with severe, actual ADHD? Fine. Here's a painkiller and some uppers. But, what else can be said about the benefits of heroin? Who will benefit from lower sentencing for cocaine? Fun fact: the disparity in sentencing between crack and powdered cocaine exists, for reasons related to race, but get this...it was championed by black politicians for the black community. As it turns out, crack is bad for the neighborhood. So, why is the white (yes, hate to break it to ya, but heroin is a Becky drug these days) community so open to self-destruction? Are we just that bored? I can think of no greater example of "privilege," than when a community openly invites lethal, addictive drugs into their homes, for reasons such as "compassion."

Anyone advocating for the decriminalization of hard drugs has never been addicted to them. The gun argument angle—that being "outlaws will get guns even if they're illegal"—may be legit, but no one on either side of the spectrum is advocating that we decriminalize mass murder. You're not gonna solve suicide bombings by decriminalizing the ingredients used to make bombs.











BY RAY MCMILLIN

Yes, it's that time of year again. No, I'm not talking about the holidays, the snow or the fact that my birthday is a week after Christmas (I get the console in December and a game in January). I'm talking about the one day of the year that we can trample complete strangers in hopes of saving six bucks on a TV that's approximately two inches larger than the one we bought last year. Black mothafuckin' FRIDAY is here! Celebrate capitalism by waiting in a line for twelve hours, punching an old lady to squeeze in front of her, stomping a few toddlers and grabbing a copy of *Grown Ups 2* on 4K HD!!!

Wait...you're not into that? What's that? The election is over, violence isn't the answer and you just want to chill out for the month of November? Fuck. I guess that means you better hit the strip clubs. Naked women—five to six one-dollar bills per song. Line—minimal. Staff members asking to help—none. Boom Boom over Best Buy, any day of the year.

#### Unsung Heroes Of The Portland Strip Glubs: Security Staff

Last month, I made my rounds and touched base with the downtown-area clubs, just to see what's good with the skin city nightlife (this is what happens when I finally decide to take my job seriously, so be warned...I may be hitting your club next). There are too many new dancers, talented DJs and kick-ass bartenders to discuss, so I'll just say to go out and have fun—there is literally too much to fit into one column, from haunted strip clubs to porn star guest appearances.

But, much to my surprise, security guards at the clubs I visited (Kit Kat, Dante's, Spyce, Union Jack's...all the greats) all shared a similar sentiment; when I asked them about any as-of-late incidents, surprises or cool stories, each answered with something along the lines of, "Actually, it's been pretty relaxed inside the club, but we're getting sick of cleaning up after the city."

As it turns out, the Portland Police Department is mostly there for looks (until you get out into the suburbs, at which point they're taking down the real villains, like pot-smoking teenagers and cellphone drivers). The majority of a strip club security guard's time, in downtown Portland, seems to be dedicated to gang fights, aggressive panhandlers and public urination—but, none of this goes down inside the clubs. Kit Kat, Dante's and Spyce are all located within a few blocks of

the blocked-off Chinatown zone dedicated to weekend party kids—if you park your car in this zone, cops show up and tow it (within seconds). On the other hand, if you decide to vomit in the doorway of a club, piss in the ashtray and grab a stripper's ass, the cops are "too busy" to help.

Please explain where our tax money is going.

For the naked women inside busy downtown clubs, it must, feel weird to tip out a security guard who they haven't seen all shift, but dancers need to remember that the majority of the door person's job is to keep the riff-raff out of the club (and, Riff Raff himself, if he shows up). Attending to the commotion outside of the club will keep it from getting in. Security guards don't seem to enjoy policing the streets any more than they would working as an actual police officer, but they're also doing it for "minimum wage plus tips" and no benefits. And, the story I heard began to echo after a while: "We ask the cops to do something, but they just say they don't want to waste the time on (writing a ticket, asking the person to move along, cleaning the dead body out of the gutter so that women in heels can safely pass, etc.), so we do it ourselves."

I'm not trying to bash the homeless population, the drug dealers, the crackheads or anyone else who could kick my ass. We're good. Please don't break into my car. But, with that being said, what exactly do downtown police officers do? I'd love to know. In fact, why is it that I feel more safe selling "vegetables" in the hood, than I do ordering a gyro at a downtown food cart? Probably because that food cart is located around the corner from the strip club, far away from the only person who has any interest in preventing a stabbing from happening. Strip club security staff is doing the job of Portland cops, simple as that.

I'd like to suggest, to any security staff (or club owners, managers, etc.) reading this, please evaluate the potential costs (lost work and extra labor) that have arisen from dealing with the fallout of downtown Portland, total it all up and send the city a bill. Police officers are paid with tax revenue, also known as "money that's supposed to keep our streets safe." If the door guy at Kit Kat is doing more for the safety of downtown than, oh, the cops located in the Chinatown police station, shouldn't we allocate taxpayer funds toward strip club security guards, instead of Keystone cops?

We express thanks for our friends, family and

physical things, but this year, I'm giving all my thanks to the security guards who keep the streets of Portland safe. Here's a toast to you, in hopes that, one day, you will be able to spend a few minutes inside the club you work at, enjoying the job you signed up for (and not cleaning piss off of an "open" sign). In fact, you're basically the cops that the city deserves. I've never heard of a security guard killing an unarmed black teen. I've never been followed by a security guard when leaving a weed dispensary. And, most importantly, I've never had a cop offer to walk my DJ gear out to the car after a gig in Chinatown.

#### California Takes Two Steps Back One Step Forward

Okay, I'm gonna try my best to not involve politics here. But, in recent months, Cali bruh, Jerry Brown, has signed two laws that made a few folks rightfully unhappy. The first, a bill that will reduce knowingly giving someone HIV (not by accident, but by intent) a misdemeanor. That's right. Forget to pay child support? Jail. Give someone a life-threatening disease for the lulz? Ticket. The goal was to "reduce stigma" around gay men with HIV (fair), but the implicit assumption is that gay men are heartless murderers, who would intentionally infect a partner (unfair). However, many not-so-nice people (of all orientations, including sexless heroin addicts) are now free to do whatever the voices in their head tells them to. Oops? Besides, last time I checked, gay men are still stigmatized, regardless of HIV status.

So, that's one strike down for California. The second, was a loophole-filled gender pronoun law—one that was designed to protect the rights of transgender men and women (to be treated, referred to and otherwise addressed as, their presented or identified gender). This law, while excellent in theory (and, in my opinion, a no-brainer...it takes no energy to add an "S" to the word "he," if requested), has since been exploited by trolls, to the extent that biological, presenting-as males are now able to sue their employers if they see fit—thanks to fifteen dollars and a visit to the DMV to register as "she," simply for the chuckle. You've got that correct—within seconds of being validated as humans, the rights of (actual) trans people are being taken advantage of for humor, by internet trolls and the far-right (biological female, Lauren Southern, a Canadian conservative, recently registered as "he" and continues to look/present identical to your average blonde chick from Starbucks). Thank you, California judicial system... you've outdone yourselves by being rushed and sloppy—now the trolls are co-opting you like a cartoon frog.

So, with California's "Great Idea, Poor Execution" model, what can we expect with their latest effort in becoming more progressive than Oregon? Prostitution.

As I type this, courts are cutting red tape that has been preventing California's prostitution laws from being challenged. Much like the efforts of reducing HIV stigma and honoring transgender pronouns (great ideas) have mutated into death pranks and trolls (poor execution), it is with great hope (but, little optimism) that I wish California the best in promoting safe, legal prostitution. The emphasis is on "safe." Human trafficking on the west coast is a problem. So is outlawing the world's (supposed) oldest profession. Dearest California, please, please do not fuck this up. You "legalized" weed, but the cartels are still setting up shop in the forests. You "legalized" same-sex marriage, but forgot to fix the family court systems (now couples of all orientations and genders are getting fucked out of child support for kids they aren't even related to). What good is being progressive, if you only end up screwing the people you tried to protect in the first place?

I hear very, very little negativity regarding the Nevada brothels. Same goes for Amsterdam. So, from one west coast sex work enthusiast to another, be patient, look to your neighbors and do it right this time. The optimist in me, as small as it is, can't wait to see what dueling Tahoe whorehouses will look like. I'm hoping competition leads to quality.

#### A Semi-Serious Note About Seasonal Depression

This industry isn't about stripping, dancing, playing music, drinking or serving drinks—it's about acting. Every one of us (especially dancers) plays a part in a fantasy that is meant to be enjoyed by someone else. Dancers (at least the majority of you), you are "fantasy girl" to the lonely dude at the rack. Bartenders, you are "therapist lady" for the girl at your bar. DJs, well, we're all pieces of shit, but there's only so many memes on Facebook, thus, even we have to play the part of "sure, I have that awful song for you" now and then.

What I'm getting at, is that we are all wearing a mask of one sort or another. But, un-

like drama geeks or celebrity actors, many of us got into this gig because of a fucked-up past, emotional baggage or something else of a not-that-pretty variety. Yes, much of our industry is populated by emotionally and mentally healthy adults who skirt the stigma of "sex worker" and live "normal" lifestyles. However, some of us have a not-so-bright past (or current situation). So, combine this with a career of making others forget about their shitty situations, and you have a recipe for...how should I put this...less-than-optimal mental well-being?

Our job is to entertain, but as cheesy as it sounds, you need to take care of yourself first, before you can go out and do the booty cash dance for others. This is especially true during the holidays, plus, the current social media and political climate doesn't help. Take some time off. Slow down on the substances (this includes booze). Make sure that you're not a walking time bomb of emotion, but allow yourself to unload when you need to (adding to the previous section, security guards are great shoulders for weeping dancers). Breathe.

I don't mean to go all *Tales From The Secret* on our non-industry readers, but goddamnit, strippers are people, too. Naked people—the ones you throw pieces of paper at while drinking PBR on Christmas. This section is for them.

So, back to the dancers, managers, bartenders, DJs, bouncers, waitstaff and whatever it is Yanis does, remember that, for the next few months, we are entering a dark, rainy, depressing phase of Oregon weather. Not only do we need to take care of ourselves, but we have to be there for the customers who will undoubtedly fill up our clubs, once they cash grandma's check and ditch the family gathering for a few rounds of lapdances.

#### And Miss Exotic Oregon 2018 Will Be..?

For most people, the holidays are a time to relax, enjoy the company of family members and unwind from the chaos (that, or maul each other for the last remaining cheap HDTV at Best Buy). In Portland, however, we don't have time for grandma's holiday dinner, as we're knee-deep in *Miss Exotic Oregon*—the premiere strip club competition that lasts for over eight weeks. We will eventually be crowning the most talented—after selecting among dozens and dozens of nude entertainers—with the title of "Miss Exotic Oregon"

2018." You still have time to make "alternate holiday plans" and let the wife and kids know that you'll be headed out for an "employee-only office holiday party" this year, as the final qualifier rounds are approaching. By the time January arrives, the winner will be a bit richer (as well as the cover model for the January 2018 issue of *Exotic*), but for now, be sure to catch the qualifier rounds and support your pick for *Miss Exotic Oregon* (check Xmag.com for the schedule or just peep dates below).

If you've never attended a Miss Exotic Oregon event, you're missing out. What makes our contest a bit different than others, is the nature of the N.W. Even though L.A., S.F. and Seattle have some amazing clubs, the sheer number of Portland-area strip joints results in a genuinely diverse roster of dancers. Chances are, the finalists for this year's Miss Exotic Oregon will be as unique as they come—last year's winner took the crown with a horror theme, while the previous year's winner won a round while wearing roller skates. We don't discriminate against the swimsuit model, pornstar or more "traditional" dancer types, but you're not going to see them competing against fully tattooed, rollerblading lizard women outside of Portland. Trust me, these gigs (especially the finals) are much more entertaining than watching Christmas Story with the kids. In fact, as I'm wrapping up this issue of Exotic, I'm headed to Stars Cabaret (Salem) to check out this round's roster.

#### **Local Music Spotlight: Sleep Bandz**

I stopped covering local music years ago, not because I don't enjoy it, but due to the high turnover rate among Portland-area artists. What's the point in giving an act a write-up, if the act won't be around by the time the magazine goes to press? Longevity is not exactly common in the NW. So, when I bumped into my homie Sleep Bandz, who I last DJ'd for in 2009, it was refreshing to find out that Sleep Bandz (a.k.a. Sleep Bandana The Chief) is still doing music, to this day.

A rapper located somewhere between hyphie and trap, Sleep Bandz has a style that is accessible, but not boring. Lyricism is not absent here, but the music is also far from backpack hip-hop. Think newer rap for the beats, Mac Dre or Mistah F.A.B. for the lyrics and a mix of both styles when it comes to presentation. Aside from being able to keep up with (or ahead of) the trends, Sleep Bandz is semi-cursed by not one, but two acts that share his name (Oldominion MC Sleep,

## **Ecoliccity**

and doom metal band Sleep), but this has not stopped him from continuing to perform shows all over the NW. I enjoy it when a rapper (or stripper) refuses to change their name, just because a more established act shares it ("No, I was 'Isis' first! They should change *their* name!!!"), this shows commitment.

Last time I DJ'd for Sleep Bandz, it was in a yuppie dive bar (these exist) in SW Portland. When one old couple wasn't feeling the performance, Sleep jumped on top of the table next to them and rapped, directly at the couple, for five minutes straight, until they gave in and enjoyed the show. I've seen the dude rock shows at a variety of venue types, even killing it for punk rock crowds that usually avoid rap like soap. Sleep Bandz gets a mention in this column, because he's been absolutely killing it and doesn't change up every year or so, nor did he ever back down from his MC name (an old nickname). This gets my respect.

Look up Sleep Bandz (and his company, Rated Perfect) online and catch Sleep Bands on tour right now. I'll be on the 1's and 2's for the Oregon stops (Friday, November 3rd at The Garages in Beaverton and Saturday, November 4th at Local Celebrity in Portland).

#### A Quick Apology To Vince Neil

Last month, I put Mötley Crüe's Vince Neil through the cheese grater in this column after seeing him perform at the Oregon State Fair. It has since been brought to my attention that Vince is a huge supporter of our industry and not the most deserving target for a rant. This is fair. I want to make clear that my review was coming from the place of a fan, as I'm a long time supporter of anything even related to Mötley Crüe. I wanted to give the show a good write-up, but when the act listed on the ticket leaves his own stage for about an hour, it leaves a bad taste in a reviewer's mouth. I paid money, brought a date and arrived early, just like I will the next time Vince rolls through. So, it is as a fan, not as a hater, that I laid down that minute-by-minute review of said show. It was a train wreck and probably not representative of the Vince Neil that folks usually get. I gave the same treatment to Ministry (my favorite act of all time), but Al isn't out there, supporting strip clubs and pornstars, so to Vince, sorry for giving you shit. Us industry folk need to stick together, even during off-nights (trust me, I've had a few).

With that, please enjoy this issue of *Exotic*, in which I let our writers run wild with whatever they wanted. What we ended up with was a buffet of break-ups, boobs and the bizarre...enjoy

## Zeroliccity spotlight

THU 2 – SPYCE GENTLEMEN'S CLUB
DJ DICK HENNESSY'S BIRTHDAY BASH

FRI 3 - XPOSE - MISS EXOTIC OREGON ROUND V

WED 8 – SPYCE GENTLEMEN'S CLUB
MISS EXOTIC OREGON ROUND VI

FRI 10 – STARS CABARET (SALEM)
MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY

FRI 10 & SAT 11 – GOLD CLUB ADULT FILM STAR MADDY O'REILLY

SAT 11 – STARS CABARET (BRIDGEPORT & SALEM)
VETERANS DAY PARTY

SAT 11 – SPEARMINT RHINO
MISS EXOTIC OREGON ROUND VII (FINAL QUALIFIER)

WED 15 – LUCKY DEVIL LOUNGE

1<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL STRIPPER BAKE OFF

THU 16 – SUNSET STRIP
13-YEAR ANNIVERSARY PARTY

FRI 17 – STARS CABARET (BRIDGEPORT)
PIRATE PARTY

SAT 18 – FIREHOUSE (SALEM) 16-YEAR ANNIVERSARY PARTY

WED 22 – SPYCE GENTLEMEN'S CLUB GOBBLE-HER PARTY

THU 23 – STARS CABARET (BRIDGPORT & SALEM)
& TOMMY'S TOO! – FREE TURKEY DINNERS

THU 23 - CLUB ROUGE - THANKSGIVING PARTY

FRI 24 – DANTE'S MISS EXOTIC OREGON FINALS



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### STRIP CLUB IN PORTLAND BY STRIP CITY MAGAZINE



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# SIUTSCAPADES By Dr. Helen Shepard

**Slut (noun)** — a person who likes sex for its own sake and doesn't give a fuck what you think about it.

**Slut it up (verb)** — to share the pleasure of your body with whomever you please.

I am a queer, genderqueer (genderfuck), disabled, polyamorous atheist. I'm also fat, which I don't normally have to tell people, because it's pretty obvious. But, you can't see me! I want you to know it's a part of who I am, which affects how I inhabit this world. I've struggled with some of these labels more than others, but they've all required me to come out of the closet at some point or another (often times repeatedly).

This article will come to you a month late, but I'm writing it on National Coming Out Day—a celebration, as well as a day of political activism, to bring visibility to homosexuality (and other stigmatized minorities), in order to minimize homophobia and bigotry.

Growing up Mormon, I was taught to believe that homosexuality was a choice; some people would be given the temptation, by God, to engage romantically or sexually with somebody of the same sex. This temptation was not a sin, but acting on it was. So, when boobs became the number one image in my masturbation fantasies and I lusted after my brother's cheerleader girlfriend, I wasn't necessarily surprised (and, I didn't have an identity crisis). Because, even though I thought dicks were gross, my desire to be married in the Mormon Temple was strong enough—and, my lust for David Duchovny was guivering enough—to know that I was going to have no problem with growing up to marry a man. All I had to do, was avoid having sex with women!

I left the LDS church around age 21, by which point I had subliminally accepted the idea that homosexuality was—at least for some—a choice. Despite making out with women (and, eventually having sex with a woman), I still didn't see myself as gay (or even bisexual). The truth is, I've always been pansexual—the shape of some-

body's genitals influenced my attraction less than their personality and their overall gender expression. But, it took me so many years to realize this—I had to have somebody else tell me.

"Everybody always thinks I'm gay," I told my friend. In retrospect, I was looking for acceptance. But, at the time, I just thought it was weird.

"But, Helen, you're bisexual...aren't you?" she stated, more than asked.

And, for some reason, in the surgery prep room of the veterinary clinic where I worked, it dawned on me. I liked kissing women, I was sexually attracted to women, I was more attracted to cross-dressing men than I was to masculine-presenting men, I'd had sex with women, I wanted to have sex with more women...oh yeah, I was super gay—what took me so long to realize it?

Throughout my whole life, people "accused" me of being gay, which I now interpret as pointing out I was genderqueer. I never liked shaving my legs or wearing makeup, I have a masculine voice, I carry myself in a strong/imposing way and I have an outgoing personality type. There was a time, in middle school, where I tried, on purpose, to act demure; I wore makeup, I wore feminine clothes and I shaved my legs. But, it never really felt like me and that sort of female presentation simply didn't make sense. It was so many years later, long after behaving the way I always was, that I even learned the term "genderqueer." I embrace the term for myself now, but, I still haven't exactly come out to my family. Because, it's how I've always been (and, somehow they've always known), but I also know they wouldn't accept the term if I tried to show it to them.

For my Mormon family, what you are isn't just how you feel—it's what you do. They

would deny that I'm gay, because I'm not with a woman right now. They would deny that I'm genderqueer because, despite how I identify, I have boobs and I menstruate, THEREFORE I AM A WOMAN. I don't believe this. Arguably, I'm just a "different sort" of woman. But, I've spent a lot of time considering what makes a woman a woman and one thing I know for sure, is that it isn't the presence or absence of breasts (or, the presence or absence of menstruation). I don't identify as female; I identify as non-binary—somewhere in the middle—neither one extreme, nor the other.

In a way, I don't have to verbally come out to my family as genderqueer, because even if they wouldn't use the word, they know that I am—they were among the first to tell me. The latest thing that drives them crazy, is that I've grown out my facial hair. Both of my parents wrote me lengthy emails about how unattractive I am for wearing a beard and how "unless I don't care about anybody anymore," I should shave my beard. But, my beard is as much a part of me as my boobs and my menstruation—except, growing a beard is even more beautiful, because it's a reflection of self-confidence, of defying social expectations, of finding comfort and beauty in my own body—for my own sake and not for the sake of conforming to others' demands on me. Not that it matters, but plenty of people find my beard extremely attractive and those are the types of people—people who know how hard it is to be visibly challenging gender expectations and love me for it—that I want in my

So, while my family has always known that I'm genderqueer, one thing I did have to come out about was my atheism. My parents always forced me to go to church and I started questioning it when I was about eight years old. But, to be fair, there was a time—particularly in college—where I

firmly believed the LDS church was true and that I would be eternally punished for doing some of the things I did or had done (like, having sex with men and smoking pot).

Leaving the church was a long and painful experience. For years, I lived with literal nightmares, that the second coming was happening and that I had failed to repent on time. For years, my behavior, philosophy and desire strayed from the church. But, I lived in a cycle of sin and repentance, so terrified that the church was actually true that I couldn't realistically question it. After all, the worst sin possible is to deny The Holy Ghost after you've been given a testimony of the church's truth. Most religions count on this terror to manipulate and abuse their members into a lifetime of submission.

When I took part in a religious panel to educate my university about Mormon beliefs, somebody raised their hand and asked me why Mormons weren't allowed to read anti-Mormon literature. I was taken aback, because, first of all, I didn't think I was expressly not allowed, I just felt that it wasn't recommended. I was operating on faith—something that couldn't be proven and could easily be weakened by too many questions. Here's a hint for religious people: if learning more about your religion could destroy your religious beliefs, your religion isn't true! And, that's exactly what happened to me (albeit years later).

I'd had enough of the heart-palpitating terror from trying to obey the church, which made increasingly less sense. I had just broken up with a shitty fiancé and was questioning everything I believed. And, it was with this mindset, that I sat in front of the computer and Googled "anti-Mormon literature" for the first time. Within 45 minutes, I went from believing that the Church was true—that I was just a sinner who needed to repent—to believing that everything I'd been taught was a lie and there really is no God. Shout out to MormonNoMore.org for helping me get there!

But, how could I tell my family? Mormons believe that families existed before the Earth existed, that we had chosen to be together (since before we had been born) and that sacred covenants made in the Mormon temple meant we could live together for eternity; to leave the church was to turn my back on my eternal family.

For months, I lied. I tuned in to big Mormon events, like the semi-annual General Conference Broadcast from Salt Lake City, by the general leadership of the Church. When I returned home for Christmas, I hid my marijuana and went to church...until one day, it was no longer possible to lie.

My brother sat my parents and myself down, to tell us he was going to propose to his girlfriend of three months. My mom started crying, because, for my brother to marry a non-Mormon, it meant that she would keep him out of the temple, thus preventing him from making those same eternal promises my mother and father had made. My brother had left the church years earlier, but Mormons have a term for this: "inactive



members." The general perception is that my brother and others like him were still Mormon—they were just going through a phase of inactivity and the hope remained, that they would repent and come back to the church. For my brother to make a life promise to a non-Mormon woman, meant that he was more seriously turning his back on the church.

I lost my shit.

"Mom, he doesn't want to go to church again...he's never going to be Mormon again. He doesn't believe the church is true, with the same conviction—or more—that you believe the church is true. He's changed his life, Mom, he's not coming back. And, I understand his perspective, because I'm not Mormon anymore either. I don't believe the church is true, I don't like the church and I don't believe in God!"

I walked out on both of my parents crying and my brother's mouth, agape with shock and annoyance, that I had co-opted his big moment, in order to make an announcement of my own—louder and with more defiance and pain.

Coming out doesn't mean a person is free from people trying to persuade them. Many gay couples have to face questions from family or strangers, like, "Couldn't you ever change your mind?" or "How can you do something so unnatural?" Similarly, my own family sometimes sends missionaries after me, guilt trips me, shames me and annoyingly insists that I'm just going through a phase.

But, I will never go back to the church. I know this with as much clarity as I know I am sexually attracted to women or that I'm

fat. There's no way to pretend these things aren't true. It's taken half a lifetime of reconciliation with myself and I'm still not fully healed. But, I'm comfortable and confident with my queerness, my body and my atheism.

Coming out means different things to different people. Thankfully, because of international movements like Coming Out Day, homosexuality is increasingly less stigmatized around the world and people often shrug at friends who come out—or, people don't feel a need to hide their true selves in the first place—there-

fore never really having to come out. But, life isn't always so easy, either. So, many of us have to come out as something that is a disappointment to society, our parents or our "friends."

Maybe you want to come out as a sex worker, maybe you want to come out as a lover of furry erotica or maybe you need to come out as a victim of relationship abuse and finally leave your shitty partner. Whatever it is, I hope for you that you will find a supportive community. You deserve to be yourself!

Dr. Helen Shepard is a Doctor Of Human Sexuality and Sexological Bodyworker, with a private practice in Eugene. Helen would be glad to talk to you about difficulty coming out or questions about gender (email EugeneSexology@Gmail.com).

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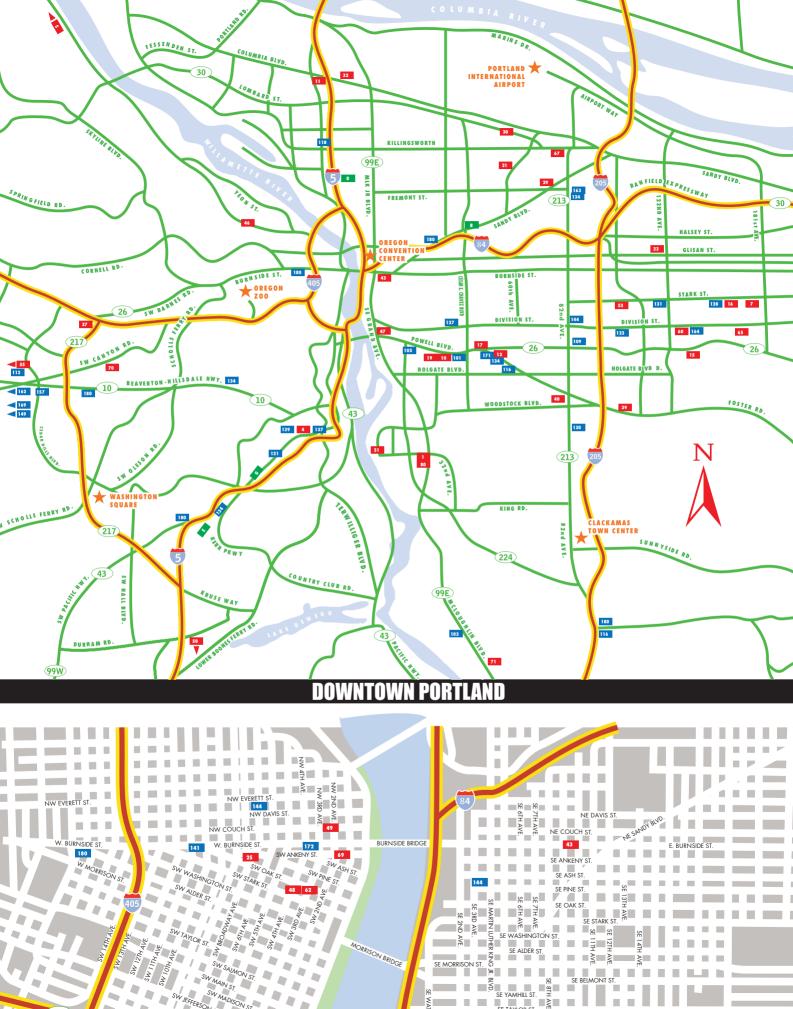
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# TALES FROM THE THE BEST TYPES OF

# THE BEST & WORST TYPES OF STRIPPERS

[ED: we are excluding male dancers from this column, because they're too busy getting their private parts yanked on by drunken bachelorette parties.]

I spent ten years of my life working as a strip club DJ, getting to know dancers and earning my dressing room pass. Unlike most people, I can say "stripper" with a hard 'R' and even know a few pole tricks. Years ago, I penned a similar column, but times have changed and the awards have new nominees. Thus, I'm not just another douchebag who thinks he can put women into categories. I'm an established douchebag who thinks he can put women into categories, which are as follows:

#### THE BEST TYPES OF STRIPPERS

#### **The Good Tipper**

This is a no-brainer to most readers (and dancers), but it's worth mentioning, simply because most strippers don't understand exactly how little effort and expense it takes to be a "good tipper," from a DJ's point of view. For dancers, most customers are only able to level-up from "a few bucks per song and a private dance" to "sugar daddy" after dropping a few grand. On the other hand, as a dancer, you only have to tip your DJ a few dollars more than the average, in order to end up on the list of Best Strippers Ever. And, if your club employs fifty dancers per shift, understand that even a five-dollar-per-girl increase will make your DJ the easiest person to work with (one who listens to your requests, reminds your stage dwellers to tip every song, etc.). Strippers who don't tip are a lost cause, but the ones who tip well are a rare breed. Dancers, it's simple math: the extra ten percent you add to tipping out a DJ will end up yielding at least twice that from the services he or she provides.

Traits: Reserved, dances to whatever the crowd likes, always shows up early.

#### **Barbie Doll Fantasy Girl**

Sometimes, a cigar is just a cigar. On the

same token sometimes, strip club customers just want to stare at a good of fashioned. sexy-ass, no-tattoo-having, natural hair color, girl-next-door type. Look, I love my alt-strippers and inked goddesses. In fact, I prefer a woman who is covered in body art and dances to Ministry. Still, the "steak and potatoes" dinner has a frequent place on my dinner table, regardless of my typically exotic tastes. Every single straight or bi dude (and most lesbian women) that I know, has a deeply ingrained fantasy about the basic bitch from Ikea. Yes, even the title of this publication suggests that there is something sexy about mystique and exotica, but we've all rubbed one out while thinking of a former babysitter or the girl from church. When a stripper



can pull off the hoodie-and-gym-shorts look without appearing homeless (or, just lazy), she's a contender for Barbie Doll Fantasy Girl. This dancer won't bother discussing politics with her stage customers, orders a strict regiment of flavored-vodka-and-soda drinks, tips big bills and wears expensive perfume that smells cheap enough to pass in working-class clubs. On the downside, her definition of "heavy metal" includes The Rolling Stones, so be careful with the music selections.

Traits: Natural blonde hair (regardless of

race), red lipstick and blue sweatpants that say "pink" on the backside.

#### The Also-A Stripper

This is the dancer who also has a bartending shift, works as a DJ, schedules the dancers and/or otherwise micromanages a certain aspect of the club, in addition to dancing. Another variety of this type is the parent, college student (stem field and/or business degree) and/or small business owner. The Also-A Stripper is respectful to her DJ, bartender and other dancers, because she's worked in their shoes. Plus, she tips well and tends to know how to work customers. Better yet, when the shift is over, she's calling a taxi because of her real-life priorities, as opposed to hanging around and chatting up drunk hipsters for free. Also-A Stripper may spend her downtime working through calculus homework or checking in on her Facebook business page, but she's never caught up in dancer drama because she's got tuition to pay, kids to feed and/or a business loan. While often referred to, this variety is rarely seen in the wild, because she's either on stage, in the dressing room or in transit.

Traits: Cheap purse, expensive outfits, amazing with customers, knows the owner and can make shit happen.

#### The Acrobat

This dancer is cute, humble and pretty nondescript, until she pulls some Jackie Chan stage jumps, lands on the pole using only her toes, triple flips in the air and lands on a piece of paper that the owner just set down, which outlines the legalities of being an "independent contractor." From handstands to swords, I've seen The Acrobat incorporate it all. Folks forget that "stripper" is a derogatory term, because it implies that the mere removal of clothing qualifies someone as an exotic entertainer. The Acrobat is the reason that "dancer" is the preferred term, as she gives it meaning. Also, for bored DJs scrolling through Myron Danus' Facebook posts just to pass time, The Acrobat provides a much-needed break from monotony. She'll never ask for slow music, always gets the crowd hyped up and honestly earns her tips (which are more "use this to pay for your broken neck when it happens" dollars, than mere gratuity).

Traits: Athletic, up-beat, ankle brace, arm cast.

#### THE WORST TYPES OF STRIPPERS

#### Miss Other Contest, 1992

So, it's no secret that Miss Exotic Oregon is a title that requires several weeks of blood, sweat and self-promotion, in a competition that produces more controversy and accusations of vote-fixing than anything a group of Russian hackers could ever hope for. Miss Beautiful Vagina is another title that deserves clout, having run for nearly a decade and becoming a nationwide meme. However, there are some...how shall I put this...less than reputable crowns floating around, as a result of half-assed, now-defunct knockoff contests? And, sadly, a few of the winners are still working—and, they're not afraid to boast about it. Things were much better when DJs had to use CDs, did you know that? Miss Other Contest, 1992 will remind you of that era. Also, Rick doesn't book here anymore, but he's doing well now that he's in Vegas. Did you know Rick moved to Vegas? Oh, that was before your time. Bartender, I'll have an RC and whiskey. So, DJ, did you know that I'm personal friends with the original guitarist of .38 Special? We shared a trailer in Reno. My daughter just had her second kid. Here's a six-dollar tip—I assume it will cover the next few shifts.

Traits: Gray roots, Led Zeppelin tattoo, tickets to the .38 Special show next week at Clark County Fairgrounds.

#### The Fifth-Wave Feminis

If you thought female anatomy was confusing, wait until you get a load of her arbitrary list of conflicting beliefs and incompatible world views. Do not treat her like an object or a piece of food, unless she's on stage dancing to "Cherry Pie." Don't ever let anyone know her real name, but make sure you like the photo of her son on Instagram. During busy shifts, validate her success as a strong, talented woman, but during slow shifts, agree that her lack of income is the fault of toxic masculinity, the patriarchy and song lyrics. Honor her requests for the latest Yeah Yeah Yeahs song, but don't suggest that the customers leaving the rack are doing so because it's another Yeah Yeah Yeahs song. Anticipate a 76% pay rate from The Fifth-Wave Feminist when she tips out, but be sure to thank her with twice the gusto typically reserved for The Good Tipper, otherwise you will face a potential sexual harassment claim. Of note, never, ever allow yourself to be alone (dressing room, patio, parking lot or otherwise) with this dancer, lest you risk a series of rumors, lawsuits and/or accusations of verbal "abuse."



On the plus side, The Fifth-Wave Feminist doesn't need security and reminds her own customers to tip, every song.

Traits: Weekly haircuts (above the neck only), hatred of Barbie Doll Fantasy Girl, avoids black dancers, has a blog.

#### The First-Year Veterar

This stripper is willing to show all the other dancers the ropes of the industry, using all the knowledge and connections she's acquired over the span of six or seven months. First-Year Veteran is the stripper equivalent of the iPad DJ or celebrity politician; no one takes them seriously, but we all still smile and nod when they pretend to be experts because it's cute. Strippers in this category include (but, are not limited to) ex-baller nas, minor dancers who present themselves as house moms, newly divorced real moms whose kids just became dancers, cam girls who are "giving this stripper thing a shot" and anyone using their stage earnings to pay for a degree in Gender Studies.

Traits: Caucasian, dances to new rap and bad indie pop, becomes The Fifth-Wave Feminist after five years.

#### **The Natural Disaster**

Up until this point, I can see how certain types of dancers could be taking offense to this column, thinking "What the fuck, Ray? You can go ahead and call me out like that, but you don't take a look at your burnt-out, over-the-hill, patronizing ass for one second?

What the fuck, dude, I thought we were on the same team?!" Well, slow your roll, Destiny, because there is one type of dancer that we can *all* agree needs to be removed from the scene entirely: The Natural Disaster. This dancer takes one look at a functional club—one with a staff that gets along, quality customers and drama-free dancers—and thinks, "How can I cover this in gas and set it on fire?"

This type of stripper is like the definition of obscenity, even beyond being obscene—she's hard to define using words, but you will know her when you see her. Perhaps you're a club owner who has had a hot dog thrown at them. Maybe you're a dancer who had her lipstick stolen, used and then replaced. Or, you're possibly a security guard who has broken up a

fight between The Natural Disaster and a broken cigarette machine. This is the dancer who actually brings staff members together, as it's hard to fight over DJ tip-outs and song choices, when the cops are interviewing everyone about how the buttplug got stuffed into the deep fryer to begin with and how this ended up leading to a stabbing in the parking lot.



# Naughty In November

BY ANNA SUAREZ

I tell him my favorite seasons are fall and spring. The transitions. The death and the rebirth. The radiant *petit mort*.

I am naughtiest in November and ablaze in April. My eroticism is infinite—burning brightly before the slow slumber of December and finally setting fire to the Earth in April, with my Lilium stargazers. In his mouth, I find death. In his mouth, he awakens my vulva with spring's honey.

Dripping with honey, I awake to his soft voice explaining to a debt collector that he cannot make his monthly payment. He is uneasy and formal. Still entrenched in the remnants of dreams, I run my nose along his shoulder and bite his ear. He surpasses me with his weight, his scent and the forthcoming of autumnal sap between my legs.

With the taste of sweat on my lips, the pleasurable weight and the array of mouths spreading themselves circular on hot skin, I am arriving and fleeting simultaneously.

I arrive with his fingers calling forth the Gods to stir the currents—splashing my love all over his flesh. He says I taste delicious. I tell him to drink me. He sips my waters, before filling my mouth with pomegranate seeds to dress my insides before I fall.

His cock enters me slowly. This is the moment when I die.

Teeth biting against the bitterness, my vulva drowning in the sweetness, the morning sun gains its strength and strikes us with its hot rays. All that is visible behind the blinds are the burgundies, the oranges, and the golds burning brightly with us. Dying with us. Radiant with us.

I have visions of walking against the transient earth—in the woods, near our peach stained bed. I watched the sun fade away, as the woods darken, leading me into the interiors of my desire that exist in between life and death. The late September flowers burst like full scarlet mouths, drawing their final course in the space between desire and climax.

He wraps his hands around my neck, sticking his fingers in my pomegranate-stained mouth, pulsating with *more, more, more, harder, harder, faster.* The sweep of burgundy dogwoods in the wind summon the peak. The golden peak. *Oh fuck, baby.* 

A peony unfolding in the heat and wilting at the first rush of cold air, I release my honey as his sap soaks the sheets. Soaks the Earth. The lace curtains sway with the gentle rhythm of our bodies unifying after orgasm. I clasp my hands with his. Sleep takes me. I die.

Pomegranate in my belly, I am taken to the underworld. The air smells like its full of shadows. The trees stand regally in their stillness, as I am swept far beyond the realm of golden warmth. I run my hands along the foliage. The ferns are silky in the moonlight and I am stepping upon fallen chestnuts. The trees act as high-standing protectors in the darkness. I grip the bark and find his body in the density of the bark, a remanence of his hands...his cock...his thighs. A gentle moss rests against the bark and I run my hands through the hairy softness. As I caress the tree, I am reenacting our caresses—my hands embracing the head of his cock, as he runs his fingers through the hair on my pussy. I crave our bed. I crave our interactions with the natural world the moments when the sun illuminates the weight of our single climax. The way the breeze amplifies our cries of agonizing pleasure. But, the life has fallen from the trees now. There is a lack of light. A lack of life.

Deep within the darkness, I find his embrace among the moonlit ferns. His hands generate a warmth through my body, as I realize I am not alone in this darkness. I do not rise from these depths without the gift of pleasure. He takes my hand. I follow.

He guides me to a dark room with our large bed. The lights out. The shades drawn. Just the bed. Just us. The cold air surrounds the exterior of our love and rain pours aggressively with its loud droplets; eventually, the snow arrives with its all-immersive grayness, the space outside begins to chill, stripping the Earth of its life, the woodland animals fall asleep, the icicles form and melt all around us—but, none of it matters. Inside, in our bed, as the world freezes upon us, we heat our pocket of space in between realms with the pleasure steaming off our bodies. Making love and caressing all day, we hide deep from the darkness. His cock, my vulva, mouths and crevices—all building blocks against the wind.

And, when that first bud begins to bloom with the April light, I find another reason to be. The evergreens extending themselves past all of my senses, in a world where kisses scar my abdomen with its gold light...I find another reason to be. In your arms, in every realm, in every season, I find a reason to be.

And, a reason to die.



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# A closed break-up letter To My Soon-To-be ex

What you are reading is not an article, short story, think piece or listicle. This is a break-up letter, from one anonymous person to another. What I can tell the casual reader, is that I am a man, breaking up with a woman. We both live in Portland and share the same pool of friends. We both consider ourselves "socially progressive," though during the process of writing this letter, I realized in all likelihood neither of us are progressive (though only one of us is willing to admit that). Enjoy.

Dear soon-to-be-ex partner,

This is me, \_\_\_\_, telling you that I do not want to be with you anymore. It's over. While it may be my fault, it's DEFINITELY your fault. In polite company, I would describe you as "difficult," but let me say it the way I say it to my friends, you are a psycho. Such a psycho, in fact, that I am too afraid to break up with you in person, by phone, text or even regular ol' mail. The best option I have is to break up through this magazine. But, given the middle school nature of this town, this is likely to circulate among the right people and find its way to you in about one or two months, by which time I will have hopefully found a job in another city

Okay, so, how do you know I am talking about you? Well, that can be deduced from the reasons I have for leaving and from why I savor using the word "psycho," while chatting with bartenders for the past year.

The way you present yourself to others, both in person and on social media, is as someone who is artistically active, honorable, honest and, above all else, passionate about social justice. The reality that I have experienced, is a vampiric egotist who would rather let the world burn down around them, rather than question themselves.

At least once a week, for the past year and a half, I have had an emotionally and physically draining argument over total horseshit. Things like arguing over use of the word "tribal" to describe the political divide in the country. It's a generic term—not something specific about Native Americans. Once, you got mad at me for saying "tribal tattoo," and then, at another time, defended tribal tattoos when I said they look douchey—the ac-

cusation being that I am "racist" for not liking tribal tattoos. And, when I pointed out to you how we have had wildly different arguments over the same word, you curled up into a ball and said you "don't feel safe."

The issues you post about ten times a day on Facebook are not issues that I necessarily disagree with. Yes, there is lots of sexism in the workplace. Yes, institutional racism has not gone away. The only problem is, that while you really do believe in these causes, all of your good intentions are bankrupted by their service to your massive, very real addiction to drama. Despite how miserable you appear, it must be nice, being unable to reflect on things.

But, when an opportunity for some attention comes up, you act like the world's biggest victim—willfully forgetting that most people grovel or pander when you enter the room. Not once have I heard a convincing enough victim story from you. Maybe some ex-boyfriends (not ex-partner—I am done saying "partner"—it's so clunky, forced and doomed to go out of style, so I may as well quit now) lied to you or blatantly didn't care about you.

I cared about you. I still do, but the same way I care about flood victims on the other side of the country—I wish you well.

Now, if I cared about you, then why don't I just break-up with you in person? Well, it's because, in Portland, if a woman is dumped, she has the option of convincing those around her that she has been "emotionally abused" or "gaslit." And, of course, I mean women who are social justice warriors, which has become another way of saying "fundamentalist."

I can see it all now: I tell you I want out, you think about recent history, where I didn't show signs of breaking up (you know, like being affectionate and saying "I love you"). And, the dissonance between these two memories is contrasted with the ugly feeling of rejection, which is then followed by the notion that this is all intentionally hurtful—as if breaking up with someone was ever a fun thing to do. This train of thought leads one to look for ways to describe what has happened—to "make sense of it all" and

that is where your social justice fundamentalist friends step in to grind their axes on the whole situation, weaponize your pain and fight the revolution.

Of course, you may be wondering (and, this will help you realize whether or not I am talking about YOU), if I have so many problems with you, then why did I stay? Well, it's because of the way you laugh, your taste in music and the way you turn the spoon upside down when you eat sherbet...

Just kidding—it's the blowjobs.

And, this brings me to another point I feel obligated to make: I am responsible for this situation. This all sounds like I am blaming you for my misery, which I can't, in good conscience, do, since you were probably a fucking mess before I met you. This break-up wouldn't be complete without me saying that, 'cause otherwise, I would hook up with someone just like you later and repeat this very distracting cliché.

I am responsible for how gratuitously stupid our relationship has become, because I am the type of person who will pretend to admire someone just to have sex. And, maybe you can sense that. Maybe your higher self intuits that I routinely lie—or, omit my real feelings—so I don't piss you off and prevent us from fooling around later. A year and a half is too long to keep that up. I feel ragged, dirty and tired. And, sorry. I really am sorry, for not just telling you to shut the fuck up the first time I met you, for not keeping my options open in the off-chance I might meet someone I am comfortable being honest with.

The hidden player in all of this, is my self-hatred. I don't think I can do better than histrionic, maladapted cock toys. That self-hatred hasn't gone away, obviously, 'cause here I am, breaking up with you, anonymously, in a porn magazine.

You know what? Come to think of it, maybe let's hold off on the whole thing. This feels rushed. I'm sorry...I take it all back. If you find out who I am and who you are, I'll never forgive myself.





This essay is the second of a series based on the suggested writing assignments in Antero Alli's The Eight-Circuit Brain.

Timothy Leary's Eight-Circuit Theory maps intelligence and experiential knowledge. Robert Anton Wilson expanded the model and Alli developed it into an exploratory practice. The eight circuits are (C1) physical survival, (C2) emotions and boundaries, (C3) logos and communication, (C4) community, (C5) pleasure, (C6) intuition and the auric body, (C7) spirituality and synchronicity and (C8) the void and the astral.

Each of the essays in this series will explore a specific circuit.

Last month, I delved into the First Circuit of Physical Security. When exploring the circuits, according to the exercises in Alli's book, they are coupled. Survival/Security (C1) goes with Rapture (C5). This essay tracks Fifth-Circuit ecstasy in its most extreme form I've ever expressed and experienced.

DMT initiated me into the deepest state of elation I've ever known. It gave me a psychospiritual, multidimensional, full-body orgasm I'll never forget.

My DMT trip was a quaquaversal reality, with no real definable end or beginning. Instead, it was a whirling dervish of layered experience that unveiled my personal arcana from the depths of my unconscious mind.

Thoughts emerged and divided into multifaceted forms. I saw the words swirl into typography that morphed into shapes, patterns and colors—all of which transformed at the orchestration of the faceless Light-Side Guardian before me.

I've always heard about the DMT entities. Terence McKenna called them "machine elves." My friends refer to them as aliens, mantis people and angels (sometimes, even demons). I prefer to see them as our allies of the unconscious mind. They're autonomous, but universal—simultaneously—in my opinion.

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My personal arcana from my unconscious mind, as disclosed to me during the one and only time I've ever tried DMT, were like an odd, familiar circus family. They even had their own song, that I've always known and now remember. Early on, they presented themselves to me in something I can only describe as a family portrait. They just stood there long enough for me to assess who they were: the Dark Mother (she was actually invisible until the end), Shaitan/Azazel/The Veil Of Malkuth (i.e. the Earth) with a thousand eyes, Ganesha (who held up the eye-covered veil that covered the ceiling of the dome-world I was in), the Light-Side Guardian (a faceless, elongated white being), the shadow-side guardian (a faceless, elongated black being) and a cunning trickster who held a wooden wind instrument that looked like a recorder swallowed an egg.

Although I've seen them here and there in dreams—waking and sleeping—on mush-rooms, LSD, mescaline, peyote and hallucinogenic plants such as datura and belladonna, they had never appeared so vivid and comprehensible before. This time, I was aware of the shifts that took place between them. The unconscious allies also taught me how to manipulate the holographic dome-world I perceived.

They showed me that my spine was a magical rod, which I already understood from my hermetic and vedic studies. They showed me it surged with invisible energy, which I saw as a gold light, that I could control and direct. My spine transformed into a golden rod of electricity as the light-side guardian communicated to me that I could change the world around me with it. I understood the inter-dimensional initiator meant that I could manipulate the world at large, but also the kaleidoscopic dome-world I witnessed through my DMT lens—a world that peeled more in layers and less like the tunnels I had heard about, from other people's trips.

The Light-Side Guardian showed me that I was able to manipulate the onion-like dome's

colors and patterns with my voice and movements. It instructed me to whimper and moan, and these luminous, prismatic mandalas transmuted shape and saturation. I thought of the sephiroth on the Tree Of Life and how each sphere embodies four realms, all of which have their own colors. Could it be my vibrational sound and motion moved me through these ancient worlds of esoteric and exoteric qualities, distilled into the mosaic dome-world around me? That would make sense, if I was traveling though my own unconsciousness.

Once I graduated beyond the neophyte level and understood the magic lesson, rather quickly—the whole trip only lasted about 10 minutes—the Light-Side Guardian showed me how to take myself to the most blissful ecstasis I've ever experienced.

The method was simple. Innate. Biological and spiritual. I simply gyrated my hips, spread my legs with knees bent, arched my back, mouth agape and the most liberating tone I've ever moaned spilled from my lips like the sweetest amrita.

Every cell in my body orgasmed.

One of the most memorable parts of the whole thing was that I discovered I could sustain the all-over cellular pleasure.

I also recognized the ecstasy I felt as being a microcosmic reflection of the macrocosmic world. The combination of sound, movement, absolute freedom, and total surrender was the magical formula for me to unite and ignite an occult orgasmatron superpower.

Now I'm trying to take that hidden superpower and apply it to everyday life, the spiritual liberation that results in physical comfort and confidence to navigate the biases of trust and distrust shaping my emotional boundaries... which shifts us into the next pair of circuits for the next two essays: (C2) Emotions and (C6) Intuition.



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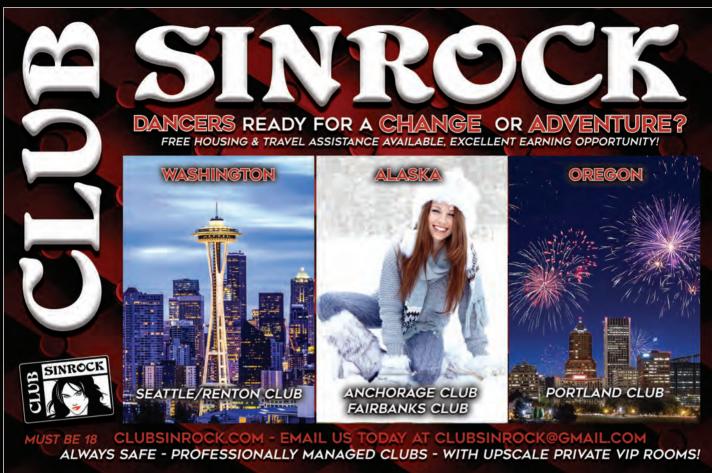
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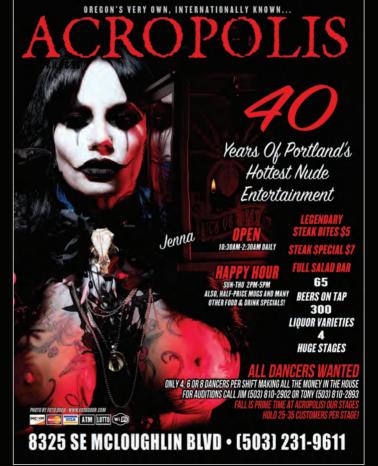
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Hugh Hefner died. Who gives a shit—right? He was 91. An age at where, if I hear someone died, I think, "Yay! You won!"

In recent weeks, he's either been lauded a genius who revolutionized publishing, women's sexuality and freedom, or vilified as a 1950s dinosaur who profited off of and abused women's bodies. You know, depending on who you ask.

To a degree, I understand the ethos of Hugh being "the man." A man, who balanced maleness, gettin' the ladies and being a trailblazing champion for so much that has been considered taboo and misunderstood. For instance, female sexuality, homosexuality and abortion (for example, he was a friend of the court for *Roe v. Wade*). Plus, his jackets were super sweet, he had piles of money and threw killer parties.

Hell, I'd admire the guy...if he actually respected the women he worked with, lived with and loved. But in reality, he walked on backs of the women he published to create his "legacy."

In 1953, when Hef published the famed Marilyn Monroe issue Playboy, feminism was gaining momentum as a national movement. Hugh appropriated the new freedoms that women were beginning to embrace, used them to his advantage and continued to treat and create women as objects for men (I searched for the Marilyn issue and, good news, a copy is available on eBay for a mere \$74,000...the free shipping really cinched the deal for me!). He said, outright, to *Vanity Fair*, in response to being asked if he minded people thinking he treated women like objects, "...but, they ARE objects!"

And, I know, you want to hold onto the ethos. You're reading *Exotic* right now and I'm writ-

ing for them. I'm a huge fan of free press and an even bigger fan of women's sexuality. I've read *Playboy* since I was exactly 18 and not a day before (this is a lie). I'm a lesbian and, once, I was a queer teen with a weird neighbor—we've all been there. Plus, they really did have a few good articles.

But, listen—beyond how you feel about adult magazines, how you feel about porn, how you feel about sexuality...the stories that have been released detailing how the Hef' treated his "girlfriends" and "bunnies" have been absolutely, 100% horrifying. Read them—they aren't new. Stories have been around since the 1960s. Don't discount the women. It's easy to say, "Oh, they are 'just models' or 'just sex workers' or 'they chose that life." But, imagine your wife, your girlfriend or your daughter in the same place as one of Hef's girlfriends—enduring things like 9pm curfews, lack of friends and forced, mandatory, group sex.

Hef's day-to-day reality did not reflect a man who respected women on any level. And, the



position (pardon the pun) of "girlfriend" was considered a prize—a thing to attain—by remarkably beautiful women. This was because of the fantasy surrounding what it meant to live in the mansion, be a girlfriend and what it could mean to your life.

Until the disastrous idea that was *The Girls Next Door*, a show that aired on VH1 from 2005 to 2010, a lot of the things that went on in the mansion were undisclosed—or swept under the rug—with complaints being taken as simply a bunch of party girls whining about their charmed life.

Full disclosure: I have not seen one episode. You look it up. This job doesn't pay well enough for me to sit through it.

It's easy to do. We both revere these types of women as ideal beauty, and yet, dismiss them because they "care too much" about their looks or that they took the "easy way" out (although, I would argue that living that life is not "easy"). They are trading on beauty, therefore they can't be thinking beings or believing they are "luckier than us."

We, as a society, conversely criticize women who care more about their intelligence than their appearance as being "too serious," a "bitch" or a "stick in the mud." It's a line all women walk, and woe betide the woman that falls on either side of that fine line of acceptance.

The most frustrating thing, I think, to people who are pro-Hef ™ or pro-Playboy, is the good that they've seen come out of the magazine since its inception in 1953.

Hefner did create one of the first platforms to exhibit and celebrate women's sexuality. *Playboy* has brought many issues to the forefront [*ED*: was this pun intended?] and forced us to talk about them. The pictures are real good. A lot of people learned about sex from *Playboy* and you never forget your first (centerfold).

*Playboy* has, in fact, helped with things such as raising awareness around both gender and sexuality. For example, *Playboy* put a trans woman, Caroline Cossey, in the magazine in 1991, years before trans people were fully in the public's awareness.

Now, the founder is dead and *Playboy* is being run by Hef's son, Cooper Hefner. And, while we can acknowledge Hugh's accomplishments—we can recognize that Playboy has been defining to a lot of us—we can't discount Hefner's behavior and years of abusing women for his own gain.

It was just the guy's personality. As a final "fuck you," he's being buried next to Marilyn Monroe, thus taking away one more woman's right to not spend her afterlife buried next to a misogynist asshole. Because, no matter what it takes, even in death, Hugh Hefner will always have an unwilling girlfriend.

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