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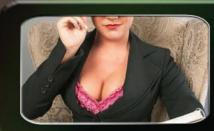
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# POLEROTICA IN ACTION

photos from the the first three rounds page 19 photos by hypnox



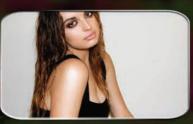
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**BARTENDER OR** 



# THE GREATEST BITS

top 5 presents the best video games ever page 36 by brad cox



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by blazer sparrow

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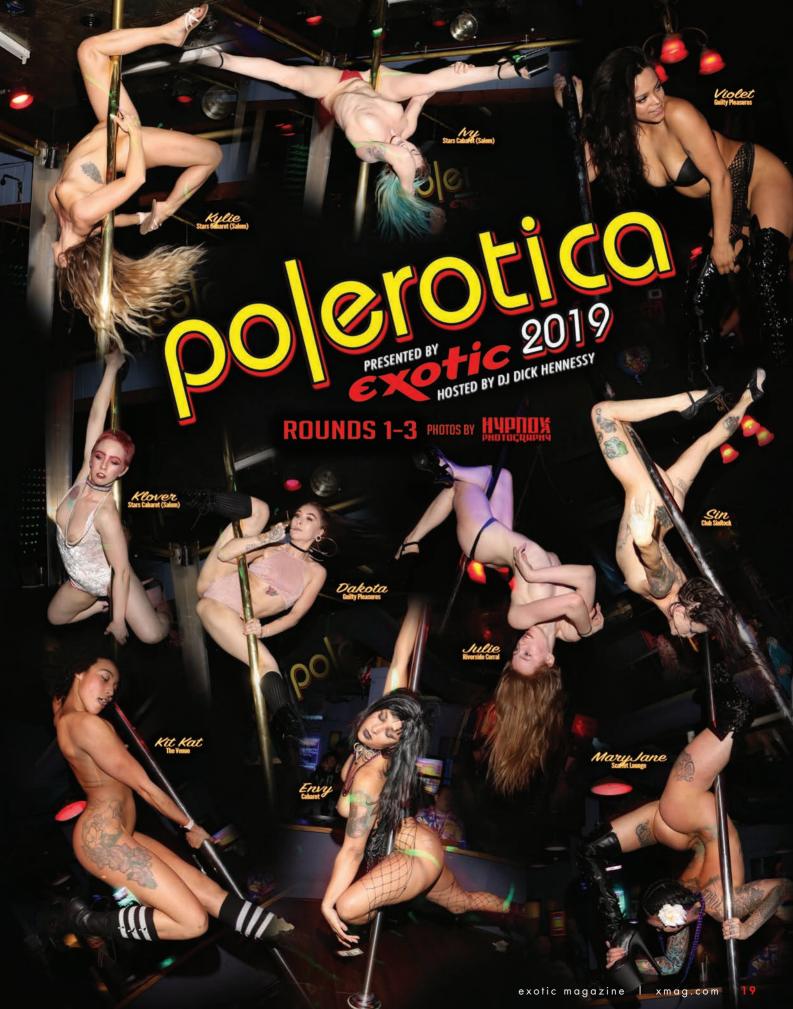
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### **Domestic Dispute**

### Dear DiscountTherapist,

My partner of 27 years puts the toilet paper roll on the holder, with the top facing the wall. I put it on with the top facing outward. We DO NOT have cats, which is the only credible reason I have ever heard for doing it his way, since cats will turn and turn and turn with the T.P. faced outwards, the way I do it. But, again, we don't have cats. Who is right?

Thank you,

John

### Dear John,

This is a timeless debate, one that has been the source of many a domestic dispute, long before the internet and advice columns were invented—a polarizing issue. First of all, I would like to point out that you are lucky to have a partner who is willing to put the toilet paper roll on the holder at all. In my years of experience, most seem to find this task challenging. It's the easiest thing in the world, to press the little tension rod in, put it through the middle of the roll, press it again and pop it in. It seems so simple for some of us. Yet, others can't seem to grasp it and they plop the new roll unceremoniously on the old roll or on the back of the toilet

tank. Kudos to your partner, for removing the old roll and replacing it. They are clearly in the top percentile of dexterity and household engineering. I envy you, John. This person is a rare find.

Now, to brass tacks: how to hang the toilet paper roll. Which way is the correct way? There are entire internet forums dedicated to this, as well as countless memes. Can you believe this is what humans spend their time and brain power on? In order to settle the debate once and for all, I'll direct you to the original 1871 U.S. Patent, filed by the Albany Perforated Wrapping Paper Company, who introduced the very first toilet paper roll. As the original diagram shows, the paper is to be hung away from the wall, hanging down in the front. Of course, there is an element of personal preference here—but, the roll was intended to hang as such.

I do not intend to cause any relationship

unrest, unnecessary gloating or loarding over anyone in your household, John. But, in this instance, I deem you *to be right*.

Love,

### DiscountTherapist

### **Family Separation**

I have a question. So, my husband, our daughter and I are moving out of state next month and he has three other kids that are staying here (and will come to visit on holidays, as well as during summer break). They are young, but he wants a better life for us and our ten-month-old daughter.

He knows that we'll never be better off than we are now, where we currently live. Basically, I see it as him makina a sacrifice to ensure a better future for all his kids. He and their mother don't have any kind of relationship—he only communicates with her when it involves the kids. This is good, because she has caused so many problems for us in the past—some legal—and, we don't need the stress of it.

The kids know that we are leaving. I talked to them about it a couple of weeks ago and they were excited to come visit for the summer and holidays. I think knowing that they are happy makes it easier for

my husband. It is an amazing opportunity for us and we would both hate to pass it up. Even though he says he has taken a lot of time to think about it—and he's totally okay with moving—I can't help but feel that, at the last minute, he's going to realize that maybe he doesn't want to move. Every time I talk to him about it, he says the same thing—that he is okay with it. Should I just let it go and trust that this is what he wants too, or should I continue to talk to him about it? I feel like I'm bothering him with all these questions. I'm the type to over-analyze things and it's annoying, but I feel like I can't be too careful with this situation. It is completely life-changing, after all.

### -MovingMom

Being a parent is the biggest and most difficult job we as humans take on. There is no manual, no magic formula, no rule book. Some rare few manage to do it very well, while others do a terrible job, with life-long consequences—most fall somewhere in between. Most parents make mistakes, look back and wish they had done something differently. None of us are perfect and very few of us make perfect parents. I think the very best things we can give a child are love, kindness, unarrangement and agreed on the move amongst themselves, then that's what's best for them and how they want to parent. Just remember to be careful in how much children are put upon to weigh in on adult decisions. Kids are very resilient, but also very perceptive. They shouldn't be made to feel like they get to "decide" whether or not their dad moves. Children should never have a job, be used as pawns or be put in the middle of any two adults. They want to be loved and approved by all loving figures in their lives. Don't make them feel obligated to choose among any of them.

On to your real question: you wrote about



derstanding, guidance and availability. That's sort of where your dilemma comes in. It is a conflicting situation, to take away easy access of a parent to the child—or children—by moving to another state. I don't know all the details of your exact situation, MovingMom. But, it sounds like this move is something that will be more of a positive for you and your new family—perhaps financially, maybe even location-wise—whatever the reason, I'm sure this decision wasn't made on a whim. I'm sure there were a lot of co-parenting factors that came into consideration with the children's mother. If they came to an

how you are concerned about how your husband may regret the decisionhe very well may. It's quite possible that he will want to move back. As his partner, you should be prepared to support this. If you feel strongly about something you wanted for your daughter, you should expect (and demand) he support you in your decision. Even when kids aren't involved, moving to a brand new place can turn out to not be the best decision. It's commendable to try it, but don't be surprised if it maybe doesn't work out. On the other hand, it may be the best thing you've done. Either way, it won't be easy. This leads me to your other question-the one about asking him to explain his headspace and motivators

for doing this. As your partner, he should be open to honest dialogue. Do not feel guilty for wanting to talk about it. This is your partner, your best friend and the father of your child—no conversation should be off limits. Ask your questions. Ask, until you are satisfied. You need to feel good about this move as much as he does—trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, don't do it. I hope your move is successful. I hope you achieve the improvement in your quality of life that you are seeking. Just remember, MovingMom, you can always move back.

# HAVE BUD? DON'T TRAVEL

### **GREEN ROOM DIARIES BY STONED COLD SATIVA AWESOME**

Hove the northwest region of our fine country. So much, that I often forget where the borders are, when roaming about the forested regions of California, Oregon, Washington and OH FUCK, WE'RE IN IDAHO, DITCH THE WEED. No, really, ditch the bag, bruh.

Weed being legal in every state surrounding Utah and Idaho means that two of the most beautiful regions in this quadrant of the map are infested not only with scenic drives and great hiking, but also with cops named Jim Bob and Earl, who treat cannabis users like northbound slaves. How the hell do you think Utah is staying afloat, if Mormons have to panhandle on bikes and Salt Lake City doesn't have a liquor tax? And, as far as Idaho is concerned, they're famous for producing the same food item that is associated with Irish starvation and mentally challenged toy characters with leprosy. Do you think they care if CBD isn't the same as THC? LMFAO, you're going to jail for a roach.

Trust me. If, like me, you enjoy traveling to Colorado to enjoy the Rockies and women, just take an airplane or, god forbid, drive sober for sixteen hours. Don't believe things are as bad as I'm claiming in this column? Well, here's a few of the new, anti-stoner tactics being used by cops in our neighboring states.

### They Will Trick You With Cop Magic

Imagine driving down a lonely, rural highway in Utah, with nothing in sight for miles and miles. You're enjoying some Miles Davis and a bluntlike any true American—soaking in the scenery and the lack of other cars on the road. All of a sudden, a flashing construction sign appears: "K-9 Drug Checkpoint, Two Miles Ahead, All Vehicles Subject To Search." Up ahead, a few hundred feet or less, appears a lonely, uninhabited exit. The sign says "no services," so you think it's a perfect place to pull over, toss out your contraband and return to the freeway for the anticipated, upcoming drug checkpoint. However, there is no drug checkpoint up ahead. Upon coming to a stop sign, however, your vehicle is surrounded by cops and you are asked why you took the exit. Bam. You have just handed them two ounces of probable cause and a felony's worth of blunt ash in the cupholder.

Listen up: if you see a sign that says "K-9 Drug Checkpoint Ahead," just keep driving. End of story. Of course, this doesn't apply to international border crossings or places where you'd expect drug dogs to be roaming around. But, no, that rural highway in Utah that you've been on for hours without seeing another car is not being used as a bottleneck by the Drug Enforcement Agency. It is, however, being used by a few podunk, small-town cops, whose budget is just big enough for a construction sign with an LED screen.

### They Will Use Your License Plate As A Reason To Stop You

If there's one thing that out-of-state drivers from weed-legal places are known for, it's the fact that their license plates scream "PULL ME OVER" to cops in every surrounding state. One such Colorado man is now suing the feds over being profiled, which is an expense that not many stoners can afford. But, the case itself is worth noting, due to the bullshit reason that the cop gave, which boiled down to "no one would ever consider using a rest stop."

### According to Denver Post,

"Darien Roseen filed (a) federal lawsuit Wednesday in the District of Idaho, after he said he was unlawfully detained and searched for marijuana on the basis of his Colorado license plates. The (arresting) trooper rejected Roseen's reason for getting off the highway—that he had to use the bathroom—and insisted that Roseen was attempting to avoid the state police."

And, yes, you guessed it—Roseen had no weed. The only reason he was pulled over, was due to his Colorado plates. If you're wondering whether or not Roseen was a young black teen or possibly a hippie, driving a painted-up bus, you're wrong. Not that such cases of profiling would be acceptable, but they're at least common enough that readers wouldn't be surprised. I'm not advocating for old white dudes to get a free pass, but let's be real...when cops start profiling old, white dudes, no one is safe.

### Even When Transporting Legal Goods You Risk Facing Arrest

The head shop in downtown Salem sells these CBD cigarette packs, which look and feel exactly like a regular pack of squares, but they contain no tobacco, no nicotine and no THC—just hemp and a ton of CBD. "Yeah, I'm not addicted...I just smoke for my health." Goddamn, progress just keeps getting better. According to the guy at the store, these things are "technically legal," which is a phrase that is greatly admired by the cannabis industry

(and the strip club industry, for that matter). But, before you go loading up on bath bombs, natural cigarettes and whatever else the fine people at CBD Industries, Inc. are churning out this week, know that, in the eyes of police who don't reside in weed-legal states, cannabis is the same as hemp is the same as CBD is the same as narcotics.

Just this year, someone was popped by Idaho cops for transporting hemp. According to *CNN*,

"Idaho State Police says it seized 6,701 pounds of illicit marijuana from a truck passing through the state last month. The Colorado company that bought the plants in Oregon says it's legal hemp. But, the truck driver caught in the middle is now facing felony marijuana trafficking charges."

So, even though the Idaho panhandle seems like a quick jaunt from one weed-legal state to another, it's also Ku Klux Klan territory, so I don't expect the local deputy "sharf" and his buddies take too kindly to the devil's lettuce, in any form.

### Coming Soon X-Ray Technology To Scan Your Vehicle

Thank god for small towns with no budget, otherwise it would be impossible to travel with any amount of anything, ever. According to *High Times*, the American Science & Engineering Company has devised a miniature version of the X-Ray gadgets used by the gropers at the airport and cancer doctors. No longer will Officer Boredom need a reason to "call the dog in" or peek around with his flashlight, because he has fucking superhero vision, right there in his pocket. Thankfully, this gadget is in its infancy, which translates as "very expensive," meaning that most departments won't have this for a while. Sadly, "a while" in this day and age is usually around, oh, three weeks.

The only solution to this, of course, is wrapping your entire car in tin foil, which is reasonable in certain circumstances, but only if you've got "Burning Man Or Bust" written on the sides—which is an entirely different (but, equally dangerous) can of worms. In fact, you're better off scribbling something about fluoride in the water, flat earth or anti-vaxer nonsense on your tin foil car, because some cops may be assholes, but no cop wants to deal with some Q-Anon, free inhabitant, Infowars-listening nutcase and they might just let you keep on driving, to avoid having a conversation with you.





Ahhh, it's almost summertime and I'm not even beach body ready yet. Thankfully, the Oregon coast usually requires a hoodie and sweatpants, so let's do this.

### **Polerotica Continues**

The saga continues and "May The 4th" is not the only date you need marked in your calendar (even though Devils Point and Kit Kat Club will be having their Star Wars theme parties that evening). Polerotica, the best pole-oriented, fully nude contest in the world (yeah, I said it) is wrapping up mid-month. You have no more than two qualifier rounds (see dates and venues in the Spotlight section at the end of this column), before the finals on Friday, May 24 at Dante's. A cover shot for Exotic? Check. A shitload of cash and prizes? Check. Being able to return to your hometown with bragging rights that put everyone you grew up with to shame? Check. Also, if you're equally as good at shaking your booty as you are at defying gravity on the pole, why not compete in DJ Dick Hennessy's Motorbooty competition, happening this month as well (with a comparable amount of cash, prizes and bragging rights)? Imagine winning both contests! How would your high school friends feel about that??? Speaking of which...

### Exxxotica Expo & Our Interview With "Library Girl," Kendra Sunderland

Now, on to an event that is happening next month (as opposed to last month), the Exxxotica Expo is coming to Portland for its first year in our city! With over a decade under their belt, the people behind Exxxotica are bringing tons of pornstars and adult celebs to the Portland Expo Center, with an anticipated attendance in the tens of thousands. To help promote the event, I was given my choice of attending stars to interview, and thanks to my hometown pride, I was able to have a chat with none other than Salem's own "library girl," Kendra Sunderland! Not only is Kendra a smart, humble and sexy lady, she'll be repping Bad Dragon at the Exxxotica Expo. I was lucky enough to record our interview for the magazine, enjoy...

Unlike the typical adult stars or celebrities in general, you broke onto the scene <u>under your</u> real name, which you continued to use as your stage name. Has it been easy, for instance, returning to visit your hometown, shopping at WinCo or otherwise being recognized by name and face, working as an adult star?

I just feel like I had to go with it, since people already knew me by my real name, but as far as going home, it's not too bad—it's like any other place. I'm sure people notice me and don't say anything, but I've never really had a problem with anyone.

### So, you can go shopping in Oregon and not get mobbed by autograph-seekers?

I definitely don't get mobbed. I was recently visiting home, getting myself a new phone and also getting one for my little brother, who was there with me. The guy at the counter didn't say anything at first, but when we were done, he asked if he could take a picture with me. As far as my little brother, well...my family is used to it. They don't really care.

### How has it been, returning to Oregon for feature performances?

The first time I came around, a few years ago, that was the first time I'd been to a club in Salem and the whole front row was made up of people I went to high school with. And, then, the second time, I had a bunch of people say that they were gonna come see me, but no one really did (*laughs*). Either way, I still have a good time being home.

### And, you will be back here on June 6, 7 and 8 for Exxxotica Expo, yes?

Yes. I don't really do a lot of those type of events these days, but I'm looking forward to the Portland Exxxotica Expo, because it's my home state. Plus, Saturday night, I'm having my birthday party in Oregon. I'll be at the Bad Dragon booth all weekend for the Exxxotica Expo, though, so folks can come get an autograph and picture.

Tell us about the benefits of working as an independent performer in the modern adult entertainment industry, as opposed to back in the day, when you had to be explicitly contracted with one company

I mean, it's the same for pretty much any-

one. You can make more money if you put out your own videos on a website—especially your own website—because, you can monetize every time someone watches, downloads or buys a video. When you shoot for a company, you usually only get paid once. I think that's the same for a lot of people. When I was shooting, I also didn't have an agent, so I didn't have to deal with them getting a cut or any drama related to that. But, for the most part, a lot of us can make a lot more money doing our own thing using Snapchat, selling used items, selling merch and stuff like that.

### The recent FOSTA/SESTA debacle, in addition to other unfriendly attitudes toward adult entertainers on social media, has generated some legitimate complaints from performers. What is your approach to social media?

I've had my Snapchat deleted before—I had no idea as to why. As far as Instagram goes, there's a whole bunch of rules that you have to follow, in order to not get deleted. It's unfair that some people get away with not following those rules, but I always tell people that you can't just ignore the rules and then complain when you get deleted. That's how it goes. Some people can post way worse things and not get deleted—and, I don't understand it—but, I try to follow all the rules.

### What are some ways to monetize your social media accounts?

You can add a link to a Snapchat Premium on your Instagram account. I'm also in the process of building my own website up, so when I have that, I'll have the domain name and everyone will be able to get everything in one place. It will have multiple parts, with a section to purchase used items of clothing, a section for merchandise, a clip store where you can buy individual clips and a section that is membership-based, with a monthly fee that allows you to see everything I upload and get exclusive content, as well.

### Have you embraced the "library girl" title or are you sick of it by now?

I've definitely embraced it. A lot of people, they tell me all the time that I've built something more than just that, but I accept that



I'll always be known as "library girl." I've definitely trademarked my own name, as well.

### How, if at all, has your sex life changed or improved since becoming an adult star?

I don't really know if it's the fact that I've been in the industry for a while, or maybe that I've just grown up, but I definitely like it more rough than before. It could be a factor of things, but I feel I've evolved as I've gotten older, changed and explored my sexuality to try different things.

### Do you have any tips for other entertainers, looking to follow in your footsteps?

I don't think anyone's perfect and I definitely don't have my own shit together whatsoever (*laughs*), but a lot of girls need to realize that they have a lot more power in themselves and that they can do all these things (Snapchat, videos, websites) to be the boss of their own content and own it. Maybe, they're feeling like they're a slave to an agent, or that, if they can't find a company, they can't land a shoot. But, people need to realize that you can own everything and make it a huge success story that way. You've got to just try and put yourself out there.

### As far as being Oregon local, how do clubs vary from area-to-area, outside of ours?

Every club is different. I've been in clubs

where there really aren't any rules and I've been to clubs where I'm not allowed to do basically anything—I'll be up on a stage, away from customers, not allowed to be naked. But, I make the most of everything, because I'm getting paid to be there regardless, so I really don't care if I go up and no one is there. So, I just go with the flow. There really isn't much to my show (laughs), I just bounce around and shake my titties, so I just go with the flow.

### How has it been, becoming famous almost overnight, with small town roots?

I feel that I've gotten to meet a lot of really influential people. There's music that I would listen to or movies that I would watch when I was younger, not even thinking that one day I might meet these people. And, then, here they are. It's crazy to me, how awesome life is.

### Why hasn't Oregon State given you a bench or a plaque in your honor yet?

Uptight students would probably complain about it, so they wouldn't be able to do it.

So, nothing's new on the college front. Back to the industry stuff—you've done a lot of interviews, but folks, myself included, seem to always ask about the same topics. Is there anything that you're not usually asked about, that you'd like to address? There's not a lot that I haven't been asked, but there is something that I'm sick of getting asked about: I feel like it's ridiculous, but people always ask me "how my family feels" and the reality is that my family is super awesome. I'm lucky and fortunate to have such a big family that supports me. It's kind of irritating when people ask about my family like that, because it's kind of implying that they should feel some type of way, because of what I do with my body and with my life. It's crazy to me. If I met someone and they were telling me about how shitty their work is, how much they hate their boss, how they don't have enough money to go on vacations or do what they want, I wouldn't be like, "Oh, how does your family feel about it?" I'm just sitting here enjoying my life. Plus, I think I'm a really awesome person and that's why my family loves me, ya know (laughs). But, they're just really cool and they don't see a reason to stop me from my job. Like, folks expect my family to make me feel like crap about what I do. When, in reality, I feel it should be the opposite. If you hate your work, never have any money for extra things and are exhausted from working all the time, then don't you think you should change something about that? How does your family feel, that you're basically slaving away for nothing, ya know?

### Meanwhile, you're buying your little brother a new phone with money you made doing something you enjoy.

I tell my brother all the time—because he's at that age where kids can be tease-y and think that it's funny—that we wouldn't be able to do all these awesome things, like having him come visit me, going to Disneyland, getting him new shoes...it's crazy to me, that people would make fun of him for that. How can they say anything about what I do, when I'm able to do all these awesome things for him? I wish I had a sibling like me, when I was younger. He's spoiled (laughs). It's just the way that people think things are supposed to go-like, we're supposed to go to school and get a degree—but, all my family is super supportive and I can't complain.

I can guarantee you that you're making more money than anyone else who's been in the Oregon State University library. Do you think that adult enter-

# tainment is becoming more accepted, as a legitimate form of employment and a respectable lifestyle?

Shit, I should hope that it's going that way! But, sometimes I worry, with the way that people troll on the internet and the things they say. I sure hope, though, that it's going toward society being more accepting. Hopefully, one day, people won't see what we do as such a bad thing and I'll be able to branch out and do other things without people hating. But, to be honest, I'm not sure where the world is going sometimes.

### So, who has the better weed, Oregon or Cali?

Hard to say. I definitely like going to dispensaries in Oregon more. Last time I went to Homegrown Oregon, there was a puppy kissing booth. I love that place.

They were also giving away free pizza last week.

Puppies and pizza...stoners love it. I love BBQ chicken pizza with pineapple.

Now, that may be the most controversial thing you've said in this interview...the pineapple on pizza.

Yeah? I stand by it!

### Now, I *would* ask how your family feels about THAT.

We're half-and-half. I think my sisters like it, but my brothers don't. We're a divided family on the pine-apple pizza issue.

So, there you have it. The real controversy in the Sunderland household has nothing to do with Kendra's choice of career. A family that, while supportive of their daughter's work in the industry, is divided over the pineapple-on-pizza debate.

Catch Kendra Sunderland at Exxxotica Expo, June 7, 8 and 9, happening at the Portland Expo Center. In addition to Kendra, there will be *dozens and dozens* of top-tier adult performers, booths, speakers, DJs, clown strippers (B.J. McNaughty) and all sorts of awesome shit. *Exotic* will have a booth, so you can meet the fine folks behind this publication. Plus, yours truly will be doing panels that relate to being a strip club DJ, so come heckle me. Tickets and info are online at ExxxoticaExpo.com.

# **Xeroliccity** spotlight

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SAT 4 - DEVILS POINT 6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL STAR WARS PARTY

SAT 4 - KIT KAT CLUB MAY THE 4TH BE WITH YOU' REVUE

SAT 4 - GUILTY PLEASURES DJ DICK HENNESSY'S MOTORBOOTY ROUND 1

SUN 5 - CABARET, GUILTY PLEASURES CINCO DE MAYO PARTY

FRI, SAT, SUN 7, 8, 9 - PORTLAND EXPO CENTER EXXXOTICA EXPO

FRI 10 - XPOSE DJ DICK HENNESSY'S MOTORBOOTY ROUND 2

> SAT 11 - GUILTY PLEASURES POLEROTICA QUALFIER ROUND 6

FRI 17 - REVEAL LOUNGE XXX FEATURE PORNSTAR LEIGH RAVEN

FRI 17 - THE VENUE DJ DICK HENNESSY'S MOTORBOOTY ROUND 3

SAT 18 - STARS CABARET (SALEM) DJ DICK HENNESSY'S MOTORBOOTY ROUND 4

SAT 18 - XPOSE XXX FEATURE PORNSTAR LEIGH RAVEN

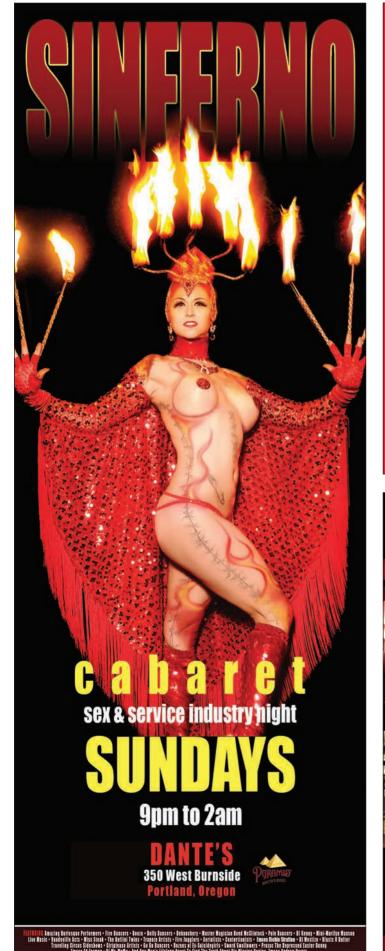
THU 23 - CLUB SINROCK DJ DICK HENNESSY'S MOTORBOOTY FINALS

SAT 25 - DREAM ON SALOON - STAR WARS PARTY

### FRI 24 - DANTE'S POLEROTICA FINALS

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# HOUSE SHOWS VS. BAR GIGS

When I was young, stupid and literally emailing venues (*cough* bars), asking if my shitty band could play their fine establishment, I was struck by a hard dose of truth by a certain venue, which shall remain unnamed. On top of being short—damn near rude—to my inquiry, the lynchpin question was if anyone one in the band was under the age of twenty-one. As it were, all of the members of my dumb band at the time were under twenty-one. Boy, did that upset the booker of the venue (*cough* bar).

I was told to not waste the time of the bar (*cough* venue)'s booker, that we can't get X's drawn on our hands, how we can't "hang out in the kitchen until it's time to play" and we should probably just play our "mom's basement," where we can invite all our "high school friends." Only the drummer was in high school, by the way—the rest of us were in college.

Really, I should have taken this booker's advice. These classy venues are actually bars in disguise and bars mainly make money one way—by selling booze. The term "bar band" exists for a reason. These dad-rock aficionados play to other alcoholic dads, who

### BY BLAZER SPARROW

enjoy listening to music that reminds them of a time when they weren't fat and had a chance of getting laid. The point of this music is to inspire the clientele to keep ordering pitchers and pitchers of Coors Light—trying their damndest to pretend it's the '70s again.

At the time, I was mad as hell and tried even harder to break into the Pacific Northwest rock scene, relentlessly networking and trying to get gigs at what I considered "real" venues, to work my way up from the bottom to a successful music career. Good Christ, if I had a time machine, I would go back just to bitch slap my younger self.

The booker was right. We should have just played house shows. Had I put more effort into convincing high schoolers to let me play in their basement, while they drank beer their older siblings bought them and smoked oregano pretending it was cannabis, I wouldn't be stuck bitching about the music scene in a local nudie mag (just kidding, please don't fire me).

All kidding aside, the booker *was* right and house shows *are* really the only way to cultivate a following from the ground up. But, for the sake of comedy and filling a page or two of this fine publication, I shall lay out the pros and cons of playing house shows, versus established musical venues (*cough* bars), amongst these three factors.

### Stage & Sound

So, as much as I like to hate on the local music scene, this is one area where playing a show in a brick-andmortar building that sells alcohol will offer a distinct advantage. A stage is important and I'm not just saying this as a narcissistic musician who thinks they're better than the audience members. A stage literally provides safety—it keeps the pedal board out of harms way, safe from drunken stompers and spilled beer. Also, from a populist stance, a stage helps you see the goddamned band. Playing in the corner of a living room might make for a fun, borderless experience between the producer and consumer of the art of live music, but if you're wandering in late and just wanna hang back to catch a few tunes, you'll see fuck all and hear less.

That's another advantage that playing bars have over house shows. Unless they're just cheap inconsiderate pricks, they'll have a working P.A. system. There is NO such guarantee at a house show. I've seen people sing through a widdle bass amp.

All that technical hogwash aside, there is something to be said for getting to see a band giving it their all in the corner of a basement floor. There is something magical about that fever pitch of energy as the band and the audience melt into one amalgamous, sweaty monster devoid of any individual ego, id or superego. Sometimes you have far more vivid memories of the show where the singer had to sing through a megaphone (and accidentally headbutted you) than the ones where they

sounded perfect and you could see them, but after you spent \$40 on drinks alone.

And, on that note...

### Booze

Here is where house shows have a distinct advantage over gigs in bars. There is usually a keg and often you just have to pay a flat rate to drink all night. Or, you can be an asshole and just bring your own cup (and drink all

night). More likely than not, people have brought their own cubes of PBR or racks of Rolling Rock and you can either ask politely for one or just swipe one from an unattended box sitting in the corner. If you're especially wily, you can just raid the liquor cabinet. That's only if this is one of those house shows in some loser's rich parent's house, while they're on vacation trying to save their marriage. Much better than racking up a \$40 tab on drinks alone.

Now, if you're performing at a bar (cough venue), the host is usually nice enough to provide TWO WHOLE DRINK TICKETS per band member. But, unless you're performing at a particularly persnickety house show, it should be a rule of thumb that you can just drink for free all night.

### Money

This one's pretty telling about how douchey the people running the show are. All and all, for the audience, a house show is always going to be better for the wallet. Usually, there isn't a cover, and if there is, don't go to that house party—who the fuck do they think they are? It's usually B.Y.O.B., or as described above, there are ways to drink for free. I've even been to some house shows that put out snacks. Better than over-priced pub food.

For the band, this could go either way. You're not going to get paid dick



at a bar for reasons I've covered over the last year, BUT depending on their greedy system, there is a chance you can get a cut of the bar sales or the door, and you are guaranteed those coveted two free drinks

There is a chance you play one of those house shows where there is a cover and you'll probably get a bigger cut of that. Plus, a tip jar at a house show is more likely to get filled up than one at the end of a stage or by a merch booth.

If it's a packed house and you put on a good show, there is money to be made—and, if the person running the show isn't some greedy, Machiavellian, trust-fund dicksmear, you can make a good percentage of that money. Merch sales are always going to be better at a house show, because people are more likely going to want a memento from the time they got headbutted by megaphone guy than the time they maxed out their credit card.

If it sounds like I'm being biased here, it's 'cause I am. Until the Portland music scene gets its shit together, starts paying musicians and promoting shows, fuck 'em. House shows get a bad rap for being seedy and dangerous. I've heard from multiple musicians that they prefer to play bars and other "legit" venues, because they think their equipment will be safer there. So, this is anecdotal, but still legitimate—still,

> the only time I've personally experienced instrument theft is at legit "venues." One of the first shows I played, at a very established bar in Eugene, ended on a somber note, when the other band got *all* of their equipment stolen out of their van, when it was sitting in the bar's parking lot (which the venue said was "safe").

> Also, J. Mascis got his signature Fender Jazzmaster STO-LEN at a show at Wow Hall

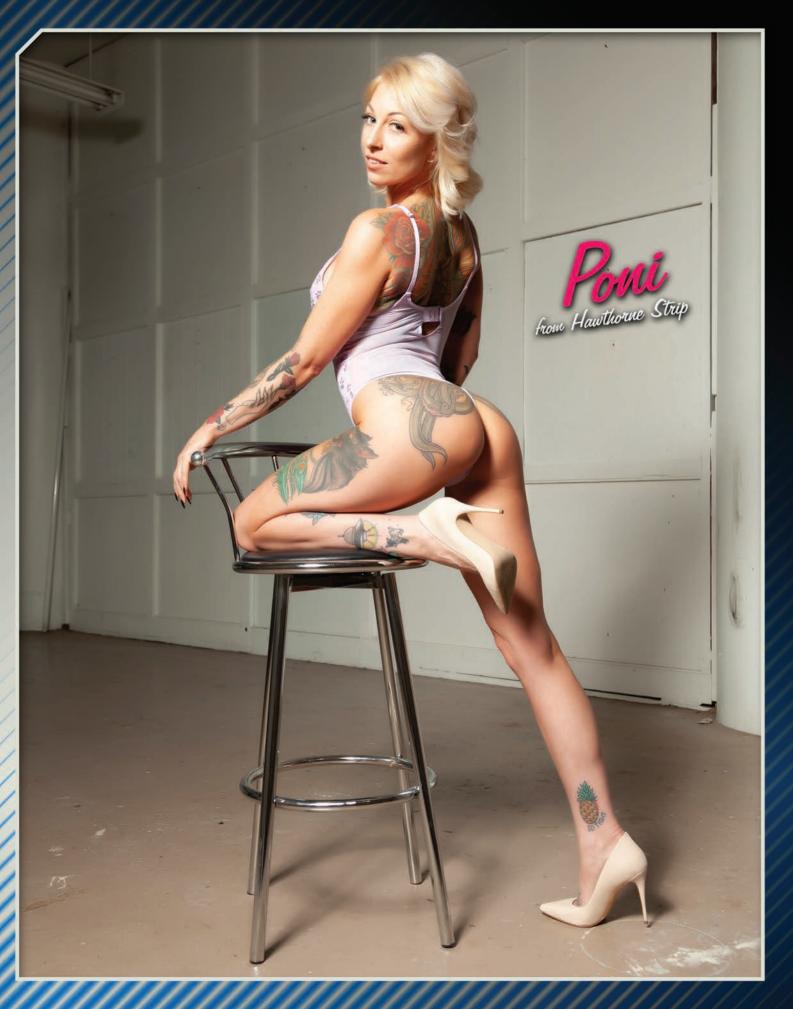
(also Eugene.) Look up Wow Hall—it's as "legit" as they come in Eugene.

Your pedal board is in danger of getting some beer spilled on it at a house show, but all in all, people at a house party are just looking to get drunk and laid, not make off with a guitar they don't even know how to sell.

To those who have houses or live in houses where there is a space to throw shows, I encourage you to do so at your own risk. You have to want to do it and you have to not see it as a money generator, because it isn't. But, if you're willing to put in the time and money, this is the arena where a local music scene can be cultivated.

Make house shows, not war.







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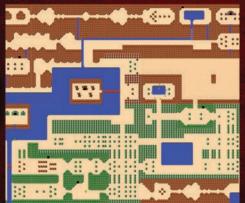
Portland, Oregon

GAMES

BY BRAD COX

**OF ALL TIME** 

I have always been a nerdy stoner kid-now, I'm a nerdy stoner adult. When I was a kid, we were pretty poor and I didn't have many friends, but my Mom always had two jobs and there were two times a year that she would make sure I got a special present. Every birthday and Christmas, she would go out of her way to get me what I really wanted: Air Jordans and video games. The Air Jordans were to help me get friends and the video games were for when the Air Jordans didn't work. I am exactly the right age to have watched the video game industry go from an indistinct vague novelty market to a juggernaut of financial power. Video games are now a huge, multi-billion dollar industry and "nerd" is now the new "cool." I have played thousands of games over my life and currently have several hundred in my collection. So, here is my list of the best games ever made. It's probably different from yours, but you don't have a monthly article, so you don't get to tell us what you think. If you'd have made better choices, you'd have a list too, sucka.



### 1) The Legend Of Zelda (NES, 1986)

The Zelda franchise has touched millions of lives and several generations of gamers. My connection with Zelda goes all the way back to when I was four years old-it was the first game I ever beat, and also, it was the first and last game I ever played with my father. My dad was a drunk and shitty father-he was abusive and when he wasn't abusing us, he was ignoring us. But, there was one week during the mid-eighties, where we both had the flu. During that week, we sat in matching '80s Lazy Boys, ate soup, threw up and played Zelda. The Legend Of Zelda was a real adventure, where you could explore and discover the world of the game. It taught you how to be successful-subtly and beautifully. It was the very first game where the choices you made early in the game affected

how hard the end was. It is still the best memory I have with a game and one of the very few good memories I have with my dad.



2) Castlevania 2: Simon's Quest (NES, 1987)

This game was fucking harder than a titty in winter. One of the reasons depressed people like video games, is that they give a sense of accomplishment. And, it turns out that your brain doesn't care what makes the chemicals release, just that they do. In the eighties, Nintendo couldn't make games that were hundreds of hours long, so they made them "Nintendo hard." If you can't make em' long, make them impossible. This was how you got value out of a game back then. It took me the better part of a year to beat this game. It is solely responsible for me learning that Nintendo controllers were indestructible. Imagine being my Mom and hearing "FUCK!" come out of a five-year-old, followed by SLAM as the controller contacts with the wall. The thing that kept me going back to that game was that it was really good. The controls did what they should, and when you died, you didn't feel like it was the game's fault. You just had to get good. [ED: And buy a copy of Nintendo Power to figure out how to squat next to that wall during the storm, in order to progress to the next level.]



3) Super Mario World (SNES, 1990)

It was June 2, 1990, when I turned eight years old and got a Super Nintendo for my birthday. I will never forget how it felt, to put Super Mario World in and turn it on the first time. These days when a console generation upgrades its graphics horsepower, it looks like a small improvement—it's all about resolution and frame rate. Back in the day, though, it was about how the machine drew the graphics and how much data it had access to. A cartridge could only hold so much and the console could only draw what it could draw. The O.G. Nintendo was fucking awesome compared to the Atari 2600 and the Super Nintendo was exactly what it said. A super fucking Nintendo. Mario was brighter, more colorful and smoother than we had ever seen him. And, of course, he was brought to us in obsessive Nintendo perfection. I have probably beaten Super Mario World a hundred times in my life. It will always be familiar and fun.

### 4) GoldenEye 007 (N64, 1997)

I was 15 years old when *GoldenEye* came out and I tasted my first real first-person shooter—now, we could really step into the perspective of our character in the game.

I know that FPS games existed before this one, but those games were either on the PC or terrible console ports of them. And, to be completely honest, we were too poor for a computer in our house back then. *GoldenEye* brought



me and my friends together in a basement, every single day, for a long time. We would just smoke weed and murder each other for hours. We'd stay up all night laughing and talking shit. It was the first time in my life that I had a real set of friends. Video games had grown and matured, and instead of simply being a way to heal from loneliness, they became how we related to each other. We were gamers and while we were in that basement, we weren't gangsters or criminals in the streets. We could still be kids.



### 5) Halo 3 (XBOX, 2007)

I didn't play a lot of games between 1997 and 2001. During that time, I was basically doing criminal shit. I ended up going to prison for a while when I was 19 and I got out late 2001. Sometime

around 2002, I got my first apartment that wasn't provided by the state and got my very own XBOX. The only game I bought was Halo: Combat Evolved, or what most people call Halo 1. This was the next time my fucking mind was blown by how beautiful a game was. I played Halo and only Halo for five years, during which time I was on house arrest, so I played a lot. I played the first one until Halo 2 came out. When Halo 2 came out, I made my next big step in life. I got high-speed internet at my house. Then, I played Halo online multi-player. About that time, I met my next group of friends. We played Halo together, just like my friends and I played GoldenEye together. The difference was, we were adults now. Then, Halo 3 was released. By the time Halo 3 came out, I was really really fucking good at Halo—with this most perfectly made game ever, I became competitive. We would drive around to play in tournaments and we'd play in tournaments online. We created a clan and were ranked in the top 100 teams in the world. We were, for a brief time, nerd royalty. People would tell their friends when they got matched with us online. The internet had shown us, that you can get really popular if you're a giant fucking nerd on house arrest. I sti-Il have old videos of me playing saved on YouTube. Halo 3 is the best game from the best franchise ever made.

Do you love games too? Do you have your own top-five-games-ofall-time list? I love hearing from all my gaming brothers and sisters on my Twitter, where I tell jokes and talk about shit including video games and game collecting. Feel free to hit me up there (@NextGenRetro1) or via electronic mail at NextGenerationRetro@Gmail.com.

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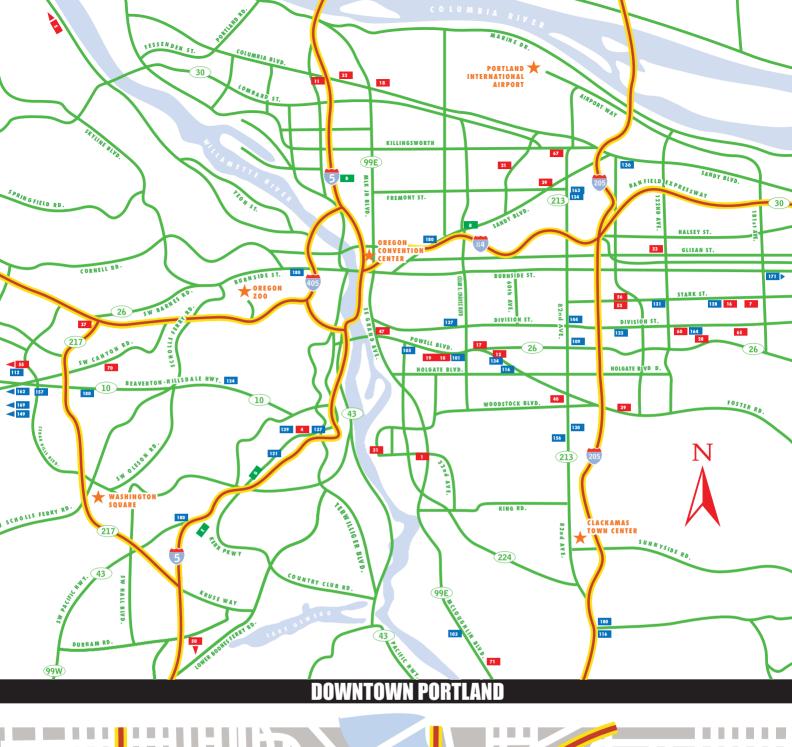
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# ESSENTIAL FAMILY BARBECUE RECIPES

Spring is upon us and summer is fast approaching. It's time again for our annual family barbecue.

Every year, it's the same—your cousin Joey ends up passed out in the bathroom, Grandpa finds someone to rant about Millennials to and your uncle Steve tries (again) to hit on your girlfriend. Why go back? Because, your family don't fuck around when it comes to food. Here's my best interpretation of what we're pretty sure are the most delectable summer barbecue recipes from my own family's summer gathering.

### **Famous Fried Chicken**

1 absolute shit ton of dirt-cheap chicken breasts from Sav'n Big Mart. Tell everyone you got them from Whole Foods or a local, free-range poultry purveyor. They have absolutely no idea and there's no reason they need the ugly truth.

Gluten-free flour for Julia's portion, regular flour for everyone else. You can cook hers first, to avoid cross-contamination, but to be completely honest, we're pretty sure it's all bullshit and have never bothered. She seems fine.

Whatever spices you have that are red. That's the only necessary unifying theme. Plus salt, pepper and a good portion of passive-aggressive sniping, as Grandma Pearl reminds you that you still haven't gotten married (and, you remind her that she's done it four times).

Grab Steve for this one. He'll only be touching chicken breasts, but for him, that's enough (and he's got a way with them).

Flour, egg wash, flour again.

Now, chuck'em into the fryer that you use only on this one single occasion every year and otherwise just sits in your garage gathering dust. Last year, a small family of mice had babies in it. You can still taste the Hantavirus (that's the secret ingredient).

### Southern Cheesy Grits

### A buncha grits.

### Some other stuff.

Grandpa brings this and he won't tell us what he adds to it, to give it that certain something. We're torn between that "something" being either PTSD, poorly veiled racism, sharp cheddar or some combination of the three.

### **Julia's Collard Greens**

The most expensive, organic, collard greens mo-

### ney can buy.

Organic shallots, locally sourced farm fresh butter, black truffle shavings and some truly exotic spices.

She may be in serious financial trouble after investing in that essential oils pyramid scheme, but Julia still insists on buying the best. We're reasonably sure she's putting cannabis in these somehow, as well.

Sauté the shallots in the "special butter" and lower the temperature when you add the collard greens. As you stir them, cry bitter tears of regret, for the life choices that brought you to the point where you have to ask your mom to borrow money. She agreed, but gave you that look. The despair gives a good, steady stirring pace—and, the tears add all the salt you need.

### **Ben's Baked Beans**

### Baked beans.

Cheese.

Some chopped up chives to make it look homemade.

God, Ben is weird. He's been dating Julia for a while, and this year he brought these baked beans. We're on the fence about whether he made them or just took them out of a can and said he made them. Better than the beans was when he got drunk enough to propose we all start a big family commune. Everyone laughed and he looked crushed. That was a good time.

### Grandma's Apple Pie

2 heaping cups of disappointment in every single member of your family.

2 large eggs.

1 tablespoon of irritation, that your current husband, Ronald, gave you a hard time when you told him he needed to come to the family barbecue. "They're not my fuckin' family!" he'd said, and you would immediately considered divorcing him.

### 1 cup margarine.

5 apples, chopped slowly, as if you'd contemplated whether killing him would be better than divorcing a fourth husband. You could make it look like an accident and you'd get all that life insurance money. Hell, you're getting older—you've got nothing to lose. Cook apples down, say you made a crust but use a store bought one, because it's much, much easier and no one can tell, anyway. Bake. Serve with vanilla ice cream and a simmering sense of resentment.

### Dad's Nachos

### Tortilla chips

Cheese, green onions, chopped tomatoes, fresh cilantro, micro-chopped red onions, hot sauce and a roguish sense of humor.

Dad's Nachos are just normal nachos, but all have a modest quantity of normal grade hot sauce on top. On one helping of them (you'll never know which) appear the "worlds spiciest hot sauce." One year, Pearl got them and almost had an actual heart attack—there was an ambulance and everything. Dad's got a great sense of humor, even if he insists on Hawaiian shirts and socks with sandals.

### **Uncle Joey's Boozy Slushies**

### Shaved ice.

Colorful liquor, in as many varieties and shades as possible.

### Fruit juice.

### Possibly a little meth thrown in, just for fun.

Joey's unpredictable and the ingredients of his boozy slushies are always changing, much like his rotating stable of slag-heap girlfriends. These drinks truly make these events bearable, though, so we must include them. He doesn't really have a lot of extra money to throw around, considering his ex-wife and kids, but he really goes all out on these and it shows! There's nothing else in the whole world that can turn a conversation about the weather into a fist fight on the lawn, like these bad boys.

Joey does like his own medicine a bit much, though, so make sure to take his keys from him before he starts serving them, or he'll end up putting his car through the fence again.

If there's only one takeaway from this, let it be that, no matter what dish you end up bringing to a family barbecue, you'll always be the most popular if you bring the booze.

Esmeralda Rupp-Spangle is a writer, artist and founding member of the Anti-Llama League. She can be found on various social media platforms, but prefers communicating via pager.



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BONE MASTER BONEMASTERX.COM The short answer is a resounding "NO."

But, that doesn't mean we can't live in a world where Rebecca Black can have a successful music career, where old school fans, such as myself, can revel in her novelty pop tunes. It's hard to be taken seriously as a child star (and even harder to be taken seriously as a former child star). Some have managed and it involves careful social maneuvering. As a child star, you must embrace their cute, innocent and ultimately empty public persona, then ride it to the edge of puberty, before exploding into an inappropriately young sex symbol—seemingly overnightto keep people looking at you. Should you survive the media storm that accompanies this transformation, you can usually mellow out into someone with enough material under their belt-and enough of an audience-that you can finally start putting out serious material, for those who have stuck around from the beginning (and, therefore, stand by you). Plus, you might get some new fans, who know nothing of your sordid past.

It's a tough path and not all have survived. As a rule of thumb, don't a favor and go down the YouTube rabbit hole to see all the disturbingly young victims (*cough* clients) of this strange child sex trafficking ring (*cough* music production company).

If you are unlike me and NOT a true Rebecca Black fan, you probably would say something silly, like "There cannot be a song as ridiculous and pointless as the 2011 lyrical masterpiece about a certain day in the week." Naysayers, like you, will be very surprised to see a slew of videos featuring disturbingly young girls singing about Thanksgiving, Chinese food and other such subject matter.

I am not joking.

If "Friday" offended you in any way, go listen to Alison Gold's "Chinese Food." You won't even have time to be offended by the cultural appropriation, before you are sucked into a narrative involving an 11-year-old girl looking to drown the hangover from clubbing (I think?) in greasy Chinese food, before befriending a grown man in a Panda costume, only to take said grown man to her slumber party with other 11-year-old girls. Hilarity ensues.

# CAN WE LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE REBECCA BLACK WANTS TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY???

By A True Rebecca Black Fan

diddle kids, 'cause they will dig up your corpse and rebury you as a monster, after giving you a lovely funeral. All this aside, as a child pop star, you can't just go from novelty act to serious diva overnight—even if "overnight" is a period of roughly eight years. I'm referring to Rebecca Black's performance with hipster idols Man Man, last month at the Hawthorne Theater. Eight years since the sensational debut of her genre-and-logic-defying single, "Friday," Rebecca Black finally graced Portland with her presence, only to befuddle true fans, such as myself, with a subdued performance consisting mostly of covers. For shame, Miss Black!

Besides not having enough of your own material, that show is the kind of thing you do in your '30s, after running the rebellious, over-sexualized, energetic pop show into the ground, when you want to remind people that you actually know how to sing. Miss Black is just living in a fantasy version of her career, where she skipped the hard part!

As a true Rebecca Black fan, I—like everyone one else in the audience—was expecting

a rousing rendition of this eight-year-old pop song, hoping that maybe Patrice Wilson would make an appearance for his reason-defying rap. No such luck. Instead, we got a slowed-down version, accompanied by an un-enthused electric guitarist. Plus, she only played half the fucking song and still had the gall to expect us to shout "yeah!" after her somber delivery of "partyin', partyin'..."

Of course, we complied.

And, that wasn't even her last song. She closed with a No Doubt cover.

She had opened with an Ariana Grande cover.

What is the world coming to?!

And, yet, it is not her fault. She was dealt a bad hand at the beginning of her career. Her only sin is being human. We all want to be taken seriously. It's hard enough being exploited as a child for profit. Poor Miss Black didn't get Usher to pimp her, like Mr. Bieber. Instead, she was stuck with Nigerian Usher lookalike, Patrice Wilson and his unsettling ARK Music Factory. If you don't know about ARK, do yourself At least in the "Friday" music video, the grown man is in a car MILES away from the party full of preteens, spouting his age-appropriate rap. Switching lanes, yo.

I will take this moment to again express extreme disappointment in the lack of Patrice Wilson's rap in Miss Black's lackluster performance at the Hawthorne Theater.

All this aside, ARK is basically a place where rich L.A. parents can spend four grand to put their precious little princess in her very own music video.

Rebecca got thrown to the meat grinder early and luckily her video garnered millions of views giving her some clout. Good on her, for taking this early opportunity of exposure to try to build a career. However, in order to do that, she cannot just ignore her past. She must embrace it. Hone it. And, then, gradually graduate to the somber cover artist she is apparently rushing to be. If you want us to kick it in the front seat, you have to sit in the front seat with us Miss Black.





BY WOMBSTRETCHA THE MAGNIFICENT

### LESSER-KNOWN CELEBRITY PRODUCTS

We're all familiar with such celebrity-branded products as the George Foreman Grill, Dr. Dre's "Beats" headphones, Kanye West's clothing line and pretty much everything Paul Newman ever ate. It's not a new thing, nor is it necessarily a bad or good thing. Big George's grill works pretty darn well and Kanye's shirts are the epitome of conspicuous consumption, as intended. There are a lot of celebrities out there, though—ranging from the ultra-famous to the Z-list—and, corporate partnerships always need someone to capture the public eye. I intend to explore some of the lesser-known, celebrity-affiliated products out there, so let's get started.

### **Gilbert Gottfried's Voice Magic**

Notable for absolutely profane stand-up, kid-friendly Disney voice acting (and, being the host of the USA Network's "Up All Night" program), Gilbert Gottfried has a very distinct voice that sounds like someone doing an impression of a Jewish grandma, while getting fucked in the ass with a cactus. He lent his prodigious vocal range to a children's toy, which lets kids record things they say and have it play them back in ol' Gilbert's voice. It was pulled off the market after only a single Christmas of sales, citing numerous complaints from parents who "just couldn't take it anymore."

### Jennifer Lawrence's Passable Pickles

Popular, but ultimately disposable, actress Jennifer Lawrence has lent her name to this line of unspectacular—but, certainly not awful—pickles. They retail for about \$8 a jar and are available at Whole Foods or similar boutique-style specialty grocers.

### **Nicolas Cage Body Gel**

Sold at both housewares and garden supply outlets for some reason, do-anything actor and Coppola family phenomena Nic Cage lent his name and likeness to a line of hygiene products, which featured his mostly nude body on the front of the bottle, with key areas obscured by soap suds. It sold poorly—for unknown reasons—and, has become relegated to the shelves of dollar stores everywhere.

### Eats By Dre

Attempting to cash in on his name yet again, the fat Doctor Dre, known mostly for hosting *Yo! MTV Raps* with Ed Lover and being in that movie *Who's The Man*, has teamed up with Nabisco to produce a competing product to Oscar Meyer's Lunchables. They're salty, disassembled meals for lunchtime, which the user puts together. They claim a superior quality to that of their competitor and prominently feature 1990s hip-hop art and references, which appeal to a Millennial demographic, that is both saturated in nostalgia and unable to feed itself.

### Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Load

Hot on the heels of the book and subsequent movie about secret codes in Renaissance artwork, this bathroom scale shows the user's weight in a secret code, which must be decrypted by referencing a fictitious, but entertaining, account of secret religious societies in medieval Europe (sold separately).

### **Ron Perlman's Chicken Tenders**

Tough-guy actor and surprisingly whiny public personality Ron Perlman has teamed up with Perdue Farms to produce a line of frozen chicken nuggets, which are molded to resemble his face and are bundled with a series of bold-seeming (but rather bland) dipping sauces.

### **David Schwimwear**

Notable *Friend* and buffoonish actor David Schwimmer has partnered with Speedo International, to develop swimwear which, unlike Speedo's traditionally skimpy offerings, cover most of the body and some of the head. They also feature an embroidered picture of David's face on the groin and nipples, which signify the brand.

### Danny DeVito's Getalong Musk

Working with the famous Guy Laroche Company to create what he calls a "friendly, sociable, yet somehow mysteriously erotic" fragrance for men, Danny DeVito is attempting to re-define not only the nature of what kind of man wears perfume, but what they smell like when they do. The tagline is "the sweat of forever."

### **Danny Trejo's Lawn And Garden Tools**

A series of carefully branded tools for yard care, which appeal to the market of those who want to tend to their gardens, but also wish to be able to murder folks with them, if the need arises. The selling point is that everything holds a wickedly keen edge... even the rake and snow shovel. The flagship product is, of course, the machete.

### Sinbad's Genie Socks

Despite never actually having played a genie in the movie *Shazam*—which itself doesn't exist and is basically a hallucination of the collective consciousness\*—actor and comedian, Sinbad, has nevertheless chosen to market a line of socks, which feature him as a genie and have a pointed toe which curls up. They are available at Walmart for a humble \$4.99 and come in a variety of bright, genie-like colors.

There's my top ten picks of lesser-known celebrity-branded products. Notable runners-up included Henry Winkler's "Sit On It" series of playground toys, the Ray Romano Playstation game, *Let's Make Omelettes* and the six gorillion perfumes from every woman who has ever picked up a microphone in the last 30 years. Do I want to smell like Mariah Carey? Does anyone? *Should* anyone? I don't have answers to questions like that, but I certainly don't think anyone would want to smell like Sarah Jessica Parker and even *she* has a perfume! I'll leave you to reflect on that for a minute, before you flip to the next page.

If any of you get the opportunity to be part of a product branding, I say take it!

\*You might remember this movie. People swear up and down that they do. But, it does not exist, unless you want to believe that at some point, two universes in the multiverse, which exist simultaneously but separately (you have to believe in that, too) underwent some kind of conjunction in the mid-to-late '90s, causing a rift in which some things which existed prior ceased to—but, our memories of them did not. See "Berenstein vs. Berenstain" for a similar curiosity, also known as "The Mandela Effect."

Wombstretcha The Magnificent is a grey-market pharmaceutical retailer, beef taunter, toilet seat warmth uneasiness expert, writer and retired rapper from Portland, OR. He can be found at Wombstretcha.com, on Twitter as @Wombstretcha503 and on Facebook and MeWe by name.



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### "Carthago delenda est."

### -Cato the Elder

Sometimes, people like Bob will say to me, "Hey, how you doing?" And, sometimes I reply, as other people have no doubt replied, "Well, I'm still here." Occasionally, I change it up and say, "Well, I still have my trousers." And, the reply doesn't matter, because the original question didn't matter. It's just two people making pleasantries, making words come out of their mouths. Bob and I just stand there, half-perplexed, wondering what to say next. He probably wants to talk about his latest fucking tractor and I want to bitch about how much the latest Star Wars movie pissed me off.

Bob is a widower, freshly dating. I am in the thrall of brutal divorce settlement and practically undateable. We could talk about women. This topic, we have in common.

"How you doing, Bill?" Bob says. Some fucking football team bested another fucking football team, last night, as happens in fucking football. I'm sure Bob would love to talk about that. Maybe it was hockey. I have no idea, nor shit to give.

"Well, I'm still here," I tell him. *HBO finally* filmed a conclusion to Deadwood, but Bob doesn't watch Deadwood, so we're not going to talk about that. Ian McShane is God!

Having anticipated my other standard reply, Bob points in the vicinity of my

crotch and says, "Well, you've still got your pants," and he snorts out a moist chuckle. *But, why was he pointing at my unemployed cock?* 

I could tell Bob that I took a handful of pharmaceuticals, last night at bedtime, and then another handful once in bed, in the hope that these items—in this quantity—might stop my heart while I sleep. I do this a couple times every month.

I'm not suicidal. I have what's called a "death wish." It's why I don't wear my seat belt. If you watch Rick and Morty, you might have noticed that Rick also rarely wears his seat belt. I don't have the cojones to determinedly open a vein or artery, nor fasten the noose and drop. I am a pussy at heart, and that final leap into darkness requires balls of steel. (Note: in using ordinary, "vulgar" English, I can see that the genitals mentioned in that sentence once again conform to patriarchal prejudice; the female orifice represents weakness and the male nuts convey strength. I apologize for perpetuating this awfulness. I love pussies. I AM a pussy, as I stated.)

Bob tried his hand at actual suicide, a time or three, back when his late wife spiralled into her tragedy. Bob was a cutter. Man, that's hardcore! He slit both of his wrists and ran around his neighborhood in his underwear, bleeding all over the cotton and tarmac. Obviously, he survived this incident, or he wouldn't presently be pointing at my junk. "Life is hard," I tell Bob. This is true. Divorce is brutal. However you feel about that other person—love them, hate them or wish they get pancreatic cancer—the process of matrimonial decimation feels like a shard of glass lodged in your sternum, just a little to the left. It's a heart attack that's biding its time—it teases you, tells you it's going to break every time it shoots out a tentacle of agony, but it never actually does. And so, you feed yourself two handfuls of this-and-that to help it along.

"Fuck you, heart!" you say. And you gobble. And you tell God that he's just a tease, too, because he never seems to show up and fix shit for you. (But God is lan McShane, after all, and He's usually in angry dad mode, too cool to get involved in this petty horseshit. If anything, He would likely offer advice along the lines of, "What's the big deal? Go get some trim! You should fuck her sister that would show her! And her sister has a fine little ass, too—you must have noticed. I'd put my whole face in that.")

Bob knows I have a death wish. We have talked about it in our more intimate sessions—usually at the Rocket Cafe, when he's ordering a Denver sandwich and I'm trying to explain to the waitress how I prefer my latte—three shots of espresso, COLD milk and no steam—it never works out properly. And, I have told Bob, "The woman has bipolar disorder. This is our seventh separation. It never makes sense to me. I suppose I would like for it all to make sense." Bob's late wife also had a mind disease—much more severe than bipolar disorder. He told me, "It's never going to make sense. You either let their insanity eat you alive or you swim away from it." I can see the white scars on both of his wrists—he doesn't try to hide them. "I almost got eaten, but then I learned to swim. Dog paddle, maybe. Nothing fancy—just enough to get to shore."

It's so fucking easy to hand out stupid fucking analogies, like so many bad

be I want to talk about *Deadwood*, or Star Wars, or how I need to score more drugs, because I swallowed two fucking week's worth of my meds for the month.

I seem to have built up a tolerance.

I always wake up in the morning. That's the real fucker of it all.

I'm not suicidal. I have a death wish.

I light a cigarette. I have upped my to-

While I am savoring this delicious death that I am pulling into my lungs (and after pointing out that I still have pants), Bob suggests we go to The Rocket for breakfast and coffee. He's building a contraption—some kind of ridiculous art installation that involves hubcaps and wrought iron, and he wants to tell me all about it. He has pics on his iPhone, too—twenty-five or so—and, I'm going to have to scroll through every one of them, then offer some praise and validation, assuring him that this project is



memes that clutter up your Facebook page. Bob learned to swim. *Whoop-dee-doo*.

But, today, he's pointing at my crotch and he's telling me that I've still got my trousers.

Maybe he wants to talk about football... or hockey...or tractors. He's not a farmer, but he loves to restore these rusted, nasty old machines from Minneapolis. Maybacco intake this last year. I'm really going for it. I have sarcoidosis in my lungs and esophagus, from back when I was a miner and cigarettes are a sure-fire path to converting sarcoids to cancer. That's fucked up. Would Ian McShane respect my cavalier attitude about cancer? Or, would He confirm that I am an utter vulva for not just ripping the band-aid off with a bullet? (Hey, remember the episode where He had gleets in his peehole? That was brutal!) definitely worth finishing, because the end product will be beautiful.

And it will.

And at least it's not fucking tractors.

If you or someone you know is contemplating suicide, please call (800) 273-8255. But, don't call them on my behalf—I swear to lan McShane, I'm going to win this fucker.

# TALES FROM THE DJ BOOTH BY DJ HAZMATT

# WISE WORDS

There are lots of cute little phrases and rules of thumb (don't look up the origins of that phrase, by the way) that apply to daily life. Little tidbits of usefulness, passed down via literature, folk wisdom and memes. However, certain mantras have actually manifested during my time as a strip club DJ, in literal form. Forget metaphors, this shit really happened...here are three such real-life, literal examples of folk-wisdom-turned-real.

### "Don't Shoot Yourself In The Foot"

When I was still in my career infancy as a DJ, I applied at a club that was (and, still is) very by-the-book, when it comes to professionalism. The head DJ explained to me, "Be on time, don't fuck the dancers, don't hound for tips, play a variety of music and get to know the bartender on each shift."

After acknowledging all of this, I asked, "What did the last DJ do to get fired? This seems like a pretty sweet gig."

The head DJ replied, "Oh, well, he kind of shot himself in the foot."

I attempted to clarify, asking, "Oh, did he sleep with a dancer or cop an attitude with an off-duty bartender?"

"No," the head DJ replied. "He literally shot himself in the foot. He was buying a gun from a customer, then he went to dry fire it for whatever reason and forgot to check the chamber. In fact, he and the bartender didn't get along and he only played buttrock...pretty sure he was also dating Diamond. But, still, it was firing the gun off—in the DJ booth—into his own foot that got him fired."

I worked at this club for about a year and never once brought a firearm to work. But, I was eventually let go, because I was fucking a dancer who the head DJ had a crush on.

I have actually worked at no less than *three* clubs where I replaced a DJ that had used a loaded firearm inside the club. Aside from the first incident mentioned already, the second involved a DJ who was not able to control the crowd or the dancers. Instead of lowering his music volume and raising his microphone levels, this guy just pulled out a piece and shot it into the air. Apparently, this didn't work, either—only a few customers noticed and the management waited until after the club had closed to ask him, "Hey, what was up with the whole 'waiving around a Glock' thing we heard about?" I'm pretty sure he worked there for a week before I replaced him. The third incident isn't as cool—a DJ simply dropped his gun while loading equipment into his car, the gun fired, cops were called, the club was roped off for hours and no one was hurt. Sure, this is a much better alternative than, say, someone actually getting capped on accident. But, in terms of stories involving strip clubs and guns, this one is pretty flaccid and softcore.

### "Don't Shit Where You Eat"

One of the clubs I worked at toward the end of my DJ run, had some of the best goddamn food in town. And, at the time, I was also working at the Acropolis, so I wasn't exactly out-of-reach from a guality dinner. But, unlike the Acropolis, the other club I worked at ran two-to-three minute songs and wanted DJ announcements between each one. This means, that it was next to impossible to grab a bathroom break, should nature call for a deuce. So, the choice had to be made between eating a great dinner and holding it in, or starving all night (but being able to sit comfortably). Another night shift DJ taught me a good trick, though, which is pretty simple but also quite genius: "Just play Ted Nugent's 'Stranglehold,' if you have to use the restroom, because if you cut the song off before the guitar solo, at least two regulars will get pissed off and complain." Not only is "Stranglehold" a more-than-three-minute song, but it actually clocks in at around eight minutes. Thus, the term "taking a Stranglehold" was born and the DJs at this particular club all kept that song on the house computer desktop. It was, for a time, a great place to work and poop.

However, leave it to DJs to take a good thing for granted. You see, normally, like strippers, we tend to poop before work. But, when you're lazy and stoned, you think, "Fuck it, I'll just play 'Stranglehold' when I get to the club." Oh, and those half-sized entrees that we used to save for last call? Forget it—we were eating full plates within an hour of our shift starting. I mean, why not, right? There's always that Ted Nugent song...or, is there? Wait a minute. Who deleted every song over the length of four minutes from the house computer?! "Oh, I did that while working the day shift. Dancers were complaining that longer songs kept getting mixed in," said...the cook.

Not the bartender. Not the bouncer. Not the manager. Not the head DJ...but the guy whose tips had nearly tripled, once DJs found out they were safe to eat bacon and cheesy mac at the club, safely, thanks to The Nuge and his fantastic riffs being impossible to skip. Because of this asshat, we were back to holding it in and snacking on cigarettes all shift.

### "Sticks And Stones Will Break My Bones But Words Will Never Hurt Me"

Okay, this is more of a story about dancers and less about being a DJ. The current narrative in our oh-so-progressive culture is that men hate women. But, if you've worked in this industry (or, really, anywhere) for long enough, you learn that there is one group of people who hate women more than men do: other women. So, whenever a fight at a particular, now-closed downtown club broke out in the dressing room, the bouncers—all of whom were either off-duty MMA fighters or security for local motorcycle clubs—would play "paper, rock, scissors" to see who had to interrupt the chaos downstairs. "Gang fight? No problem. Crystal and Destiny are going at it again? Hmmm...I don't know if this gig pays enough." That was the security's point of view and I don't blame them, considering the club.

One particular night, I was actually asked to help out, due to the sheer amount of damage surveyed, after "this one bitch" upset Keysha. I would have asked about it, but said "one bitch" was laying on the ground, unconscious, thanks to Keysha attacking her. What was the tool used to inflict such a harrow punishment, you ask? Literal sticks and stones. One Bitch had said something to Keysha about her *hair*. This, of course, caused Keysha to walk outside, obtain a rock and a large stick, then return to the dressing room to approach One Bitch with a branch and a chunk of granite, before using them to knock her out cold.

"So, what did she say to you?" I asked Keysha.

"I don't remember," Keysha responded. "I don't really like to get caught up in all the drama."







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