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SHORT FACTS**

**POLEROTICA  
2026  
ROUNDS 4-7**

*Gemma*  
FROM DV8





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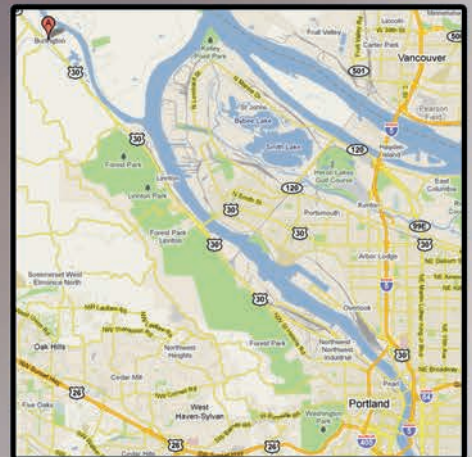
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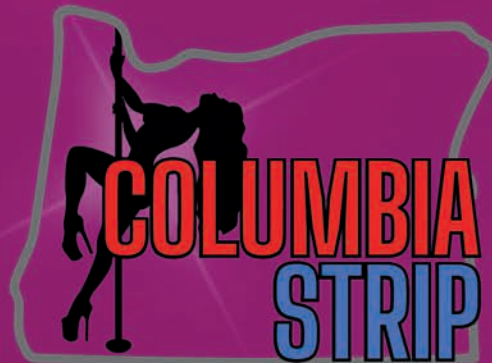
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*Gemma*  
FROM DV8

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owned by XMAG LLC. All rights reserved.  
Published monthly by XMAG LLC.  
Circulation: 75,000 per month at 200+ sites  
Mailing Address:  
Post Office Box 20273  
Portland, Oregon 97294-0273  
Telephone: (503) 241-4317  
Email: info@xmag.com  
www.xmag.com

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XMAG LLC.

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## TALES FROM THE DJ BOOTH

part six of the 12 rules of stripping series  
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## DON'T LET THEM EAT CAKE

why you should care about the afroman trial  
page 22 | by ray mcmillin



## SAKE SHORT FACTS

exploring some of the exotic flavors of rice  
alcohol  
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## NINJA ATTACK

the history of ninjas in real life and video  
games

page 44 | by wombstretcha the magnificent

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# 12 Rules FOR STRIPPING

TALES FROM THE  
DJ BOOTH  
BY DJ HAZMATT



As opposed to drag queens, DJs, writers, or anyone else who uses a funny name in place of their government title, strippers have stage names for reasons that extend beyond playing a part or acting a character—mainly anonymity and personal safety. While you're never going to meet a drag queen whose real name is John and just goes by "Jane" at work (it's gonna be something more glamorous or showy, like "Statutory Rachel" or "Sharon Needles"), it is common to meet strippers who introduce themselves as "Jenna" or "Crystal" like it's a normal name. It's okay for one's onstage persona to simply be "cute girl, naked variety, fake alias," and you don't even need a costume (although it doesn't hurt). The real reason you, the Google-able, real-life woman who posts ten IG stories an hour with GPS turned on, need a fake name is to separate your at-work life from the one you live when you're fully clothed. The rule of "Use a Fake Name to Keep Creepy Dudes From Stalking You" does not appear in my list of rules, because it's common fucking sense. That said, it's not just your identity and address that you, the stripper who sells a fantasy, need to protect. The rest of your personal life needs to be treated with the same degree of separation as your name.



## Rule 6:

### Leave Your Personal Life at the Door

As a stripper with money on her mind, you should be selling a fantasy, not just in the "This girl wouldn't normally talk to me outside the club" sense, but in the "This isn't real and I didn't just go back to the ATM for the tenth time" sense. Strip clubs don't lack windows for privacy; they lack windows for

the same reason casinos lack windows—if people don't know what time it is, or that the outside world even exists, they are much more likely to spend like it. This is why, even if you had the worst day imaginable, you don't tell your customer about it. If you get into a wreck on the way to work and end up in a neck brace, make up a story about how it happened (something silly, like how you fell out of the bunk bed when having a pillow fight with your sorority sisters), and ask your customers if it makes you look cute.

Leaving your personal life at home includes (but is not limited to) relationship status, relationship drama, roommate drama, roommate status, political opinions that do not appear on bumper stickers, political opinions that do appear on bumper stickers, attitudes on divisive topics, attitudes on boring topics, attitudes in general (including, but not limited to, financial, emotional or personal inconveniences, whether minor or major), favorite sports teams, favorite cereals, opinions on Israel, Palestine, Sydney Sweeney, or Sydney Sweeney's supposed ties to Israel.

Unless you hate money, your opinion on [insert issue] is two giggles and an "I don't really watch the news, wanna get a dance and take your mind off of things?"

Now, I am not, by any means, telling strippers not to kiss ass while showing it. If the literal Trail Blazers walk in, yes, say you're a Blazers fan (unless the Lakers also walk in, in which case go back to being clueless about sports). But if table one is MAGA hats and table two is brown-yellow beanie hats, you can make both of them happy over the course of the evening by being an escape from (not a confirmation of) real life. You can still play to the crowd without breaking the fantasy-versus-actual-Tuesday-in-Gresham barrier. Tell the contractor guys that you like their boots, and tell the food cart workers' union that you like their tattoos. Then. Sell. A. Dance. Oregon is a politically purple state, so if someone asks if you're a Republican or Democrat, ask them if they like Prince, and which Prince song they'd pick for a dance. The last thing you, the escape-from-real-life, want to do is cost yourself time (money) by reminding customers

that a world exists outside of the Bedazzled Capybara Lounge.

Aside from divisive topics like politics or sports, you are also in charge of not being a real person outside of the club. Don't whine about bills. Don't sell your art at the stage. Don't add customers on your personal social media pages. If asked what you're doing after the club, you're doing "...something naughty, I'll tell you about it next time we meet." If asked what you did before the club, you showered with three other girls and ate a salad for dinner. If asked what you're into, you really like "fun." Be as boring as you can, while still being extremely flirtatious. Go full Dutch Bros and keep the anarchist coffee shop talk for outside of work.

Don't worry about your actual interests, just make some up. At least where straight dudes are concerned, there are two types of men: men who say they care about your interests, and men who aren't fucking liars. The last successful relationship I had was with a woman whose biggest interests at the time were Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and outdoor festivals where people didn't fight. I'm Irish. Again, we dated for several years and are still friends. If you're cute, half-naked, and showing a dude attention, he will pretend to like whatever bullshit you say you're into, so don't tell him about the bullshit you're *actually* into. Hell, make it a game. Pretend to like things you don't, just to see how far horny men will take the Agree-A-Train into Titieland. I've gone so far as pretending to like Coldplay in order to get laid. I even looked up the name of that song, "Mellow," just to look like I was being honest.

Honesty is only a factor when turning in your ones to the bartender, tipping out the staff, and letting security know if you've had too much to drink and need a cab. Otherwise, it has absolutely no place in the strip club. So, take it a few steps further. Adopt a persona, whether that's an exaggerated version of an alter ego (shout out to the BJ McNaughty types who go full character), or just a complete bullshit backstory that helps you sell more tips (you never learned to read and were raised by a pack of horny wolves, before escaping to Portland to start a unicorn farm). The dude telling you he owns a startup doesn't own a startup. It's okay to take his "startup" money without doxing yourself or reminding him that SwagCoin isn't a real startup.

TalesFromTheDJBooth.com

@RainmanMcMillin on IG

I don't check Facebook.



## THE P-TOWN HAPS

Summer's nearly upon us, and the uptick of parties and events this month is prima facie evidence! There's lots to cover, so we'll skip the fancy introduction and get cracking...directly to birthdays! We've got two this month, starting with Moxie's Birthday Party on Friday, June 12, at Devils Point. Next, it's Alex and Violet's Birthday Party on Saturday, June 27, at AJ's Gentlemen's Club. Happy birthday, ladies, from all of us at *Exotic!*

*Exotic* would like to give a warm welcome to Las Cariñosas Cabaret—Beaverton's newest gentlemen's club. Make sure to drop by on Wednesday, June 3, for their Grand Opening with Latin vibes and amazing food! Then, on Thursday, June 4, it's *Miss Nude Oregon '26* at Club Rouge (downtown), with \$5,000 in cash and prizes. It's sure to be a memorable industry evening! Head over to Flesh and Bones Lounge on Friday, June 19, for their Summer Set-Off Circus. And on Saturday, June 20, there are two more parties to welcome summer... Kit Kat Club with their Summer Solstice Roller Skating Party, and Pretty in Pink Summer Kick-Off at Stars Cabaret in Salem. They're welcoming summer up north as well, with The Playground Cabaret's Summer Kick-Off Bash in Seattle. Everyone's excited for Summer!

Wrapping up events for June, we have DJ Dick Hennessy's *8th Annual Motorbooty Twerking Competition!* Check all the event dates on the right, as well as the promotional spread on page 20!

We'd also like to congratulate the G Spot for their 30th Anniversary! That's simply amazing for any adult entertainment business, let alone a private lingerie modeling studio. You are officially one of the oldest businesses in our industry!

## POLEROTICA 2026

There will be full coverage of *Polerotica 2026 Finals* in our 33rd Anniversary Issue—next month! Until then, we'd like to congratulate all of the qualifying finalists from rounds four through seven:

**Round 4:** Eris from Guilty Pleasures, Brandy from Stars Cabaret (Salem), and Belladonna from Desire

**Round 5:** Remedy from The Lounge, River from The Lounge, Trixxie from The Lounge, and Sapphire from The Lounge

**Round 6:** Lexi from Club 205, Victoria from Pandora's Adult Cabaret, Penelope from Flesh and Bones Lounge, and Akai from Las Gatas (PDX)

**Round 7:** Maylani from Desire, Rue from Desire, and Aurelia (independent)

(Check out page 37 to see photos of all the abovementioned finalists in action during their qualifying set.)

*Hadi mwezi ujaol!*

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EXOTIC\_MAG

## eroticcity spotlight

**WED 03** – LAS CARIÑOSAS CABARET – GRAND OPENING PARTY

**THU 04** – CLUB ROUGE (PORTLAND) – MISS NUDE OREGON '26

**FRI 05** – FLESH AND BONES – MOTORBOOTY ROUND 1

**SAT 06** – SECRET LOUNGE (SPRINGFIELD)  
MOTORBOOTY ROUND 2

**SUN 07** – DANTE'S – SINFERNO CABARET

**FRI 12** – DEVILS POINT – MOXIE'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

**SAT 13** – JO'S SALOON & EATERY – MOTORBOOTY ROUND 3

**SUN 14** – DANTE'S – SINFERNO CABARET

**FRI 19** – FLESH AND BONES – SUMMER SET-OFF CIRCUS

**FRI 19** – THE PLAYGROUND CABARET (SEATTLE)  
SUMMER KICK-OFF BASH

**SAT 20** – FLESH AND BONES – MOTORBOOTY ROUND 4

**SAT 20** – KIT KAT CLUB  
SUMMER SOLSTICE ROLLER SKATING PARTY!

**SAT 20** – STARS CABARET (SALEM)  
PRETTY IN PINK SUMMER KICK-OFF

**SUN 21** – DANTE'S – SINFERNO CABARET

**SAT 27** – AJ'S – ALEX & VIOLET'S BIRTHDAY PARTY!

**SAT 27** – LAS GATAS (PDX) – MOTORBOOTY FINALS

**SAT 27** – STARS CABARET (BRIDGEPORT)  
WILD, WILD WEST PARTY

**SUN 28** – DANTE'S – SINFERNO CABARET

## HAPPY HOURS

**AJ'S** – 10AM-5PM • **CABARET** – 2PM-6PM

**CLUB 205** – 10:30AM-8PM • **DEVILS POINT** – 3PM-6PM

**DESIRE** – 6PM-9PM • **DV8** – 12PM-3PM

**FLESH AND BONES** – 4PM-8PM (TUE-FRI)

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ROUND 2  
SATURDAY  
**JUNE 6**



ROUND 3  
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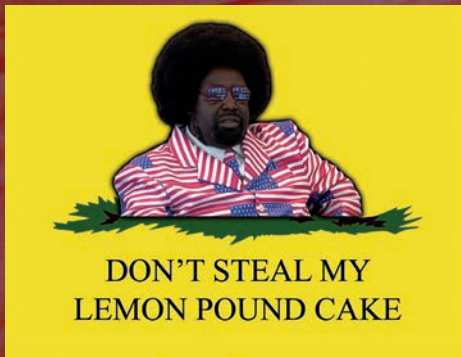
VIDA 

# DON'T LET THEM EAT CAKE

BY RAY MCNILEN

# WHY YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT THE AFROMAN TRIAL

Depending on what exact type of rock you may or may not have been living under this year, you might not know that Joseph Edgar Foreman, aka Afroman, just won the “Lemon Pound Cake” defamation case brought against him by the Adams County Sheriff’s Department. If that statement means nothing to you, I will summarize for brevity and expect that if your interest is piqued, you will do the necessary rabbit-hole diving required to catch up on all the details.



Sticker from [KeepSalemLame.com](http://KeepSalemLame.com)

Three years ago, a rapper named Afroman (D.I.Y.-famous for “Because I Got High,” arguably the first-ever viral hit song, as it was literally only available on the virus-laden platform LimeWire, before being featured in a Kevin Smith movie) had his house raided by Adams County, Ohio, sheriff’s deputies. The raid was due to an anonymous report that Afroman had “kidnapping victims and narcotics” on his property (the latter, a given; the former, completely fabricated). While the rapper was not at home during the raid, his security camera was running, and caught one of the officers involved eating a piece of lemon pound cake found on Afroman’s kitchen table. In addition to the stolen dessert, the rapper also suffered damages, including a broken gate and door. His response was to use footage of the raid (that he legally owned) in various music videos posted to his YouTube channel (@ogafrican), in which he raps about how the sheriffs stole his lemon pound cake (“Lemon Pound

Cake”) and broke his door (“Will You Help Me Repair My Door”). Reaction, equal and opposite reaction. Seems like a closed case.

Fast-forward to earlier this year, and the Adams County sheriff is suing Afroman for defamation of character, citing the distress caused by the release of the “Lemon Pound Cake” music video. Let’s repeat that. In an age of “Fuck the Police” remixes in mainstream movies, ACAB tattoos on teachers, “I Brake For Dead Pigs” bumper stickers, “The only good cop is a dead cop” Cocomelon episodes, etc., posting footage of a fat sheriff eating yellow cake with his bare hands is where we draw the line, open up the legal system, and force a stoned rapper in an American flag suit to defend his dope rhymes. Somehow, this is an actual scenario. In real life. As in, even for the offline and sober.



Afroman was not going down without a fight. Before, during, and after the trial, Afroman continued to upload absolute bangers onto his YouTube channel, including (officer)

“Shawn Grooming Grooms,” (officer) “BRIAN NEWLAND IS A FLAG,” and (officer) “RANDY WALTERS IS A SON OF A BITCH,” among others. While not exactly the O.J. spectacle, as the Afroman trial went on, the courtroom footage alone was worth every second spent avoiding real-world responsibilities to watch it. From (officer) “Licc’em Low Lisa” breaking down in tears as the prosecution played a song about her performing oral sex on Afroman (in its 13:45 entirety), to Officer Lemon Pound Cake himself telling the court that he is not entirely sure whether or not his wife is cheating on him with Afroman, had someone taken even a slight amount of mushrooms before watching the trial, they would be convinced that they were seeing the best hallucinations ever experienced by anyone. But, it was one-hundred-fucking-percent real. And it was glorious, up to and including the verdict, delivered to a judge by a group of Afroman’s most-likely-lowkey-racist-but-this-case-is-really-dumb-and-even-they-get-it peers, that read “not guilty.” The man, the ‘fro, the pound-cake-deficient legend, was once again a free man. Afreeman, if you will. Yet, aside from a few minor burps on CNN (between a video of a squirrel on waterskis and an ad for Chili’s), the mainstream media response to the Afroman trial was basically crickets.mp3.



This is bizarre, as the Afroman trial saga has everything that a mainstream news story could ask for: police infringing on the free speech rights of a popular black artist, meme-able moments (including a photo of a fat sheriff using his bare hands to stuff his face with cake), and the always-popular

David-versus-Goliath narrative of an everyman fighting an oppressive system. Why is it, then, that the trial (and verdict) seemed to be mostly ignored outside of social media shit-post feeds and a brief mention on *The Daily Show*? Sure, every teenager and weed smoker I know has been riding the Afroman 2028 train since the Lemon Pound Cake story (re) surfaced earlier this year, but the vast majority of my politically-in-tune friends seemed to fall somewhere between “in the dark entirely” and “slightly irritated that I keep sending them updates about Afroman.”



My theory is that, since Afroman's politics cannot be pigeonholed to fit a neat narrative, neither side of the aisle is willing to weigh in. The inability to use Afroman as an all-issues-aligned mascot for either major political party is the only reason that I can think of as to why the media basically ignored a story about an extremely popular rapper fighting the law and winning, in an age where police brutality and free speech are among the most talked-about issues in the newsfeeds.

Take, for instance, the George Floyd death or the Charlie Kirk shooting. Each of these stories got heavy press from both left-leaning and right-leaning media outlets, but they were each given unique spins, in which a politically aligned narrative could be safely promoted. With Floyd, one side would argue that he was killed directly as a result of police brutality, while the other side would argue that drugs were to blame. With the Kirk shooting, the ultra-left take is that he deserved to be killed for spewing his problematic opinions, while the ultra-right take is that he should not have been assassinated for exercising his free speech rights. However, the underlying arguments (“police brutality to blame, assassination justified” on the left, “drug overdose to blame, assassination not justified” on the right) are just afterthoughts. If George Floyd were a white nationalist who was killed during an altercation with a black police officer, or if Charlie Kirk were a black podcaster known for spewing anti-white rhetoric,

I am convinced that the narratives used by left-leaning and right-leaning news outlets would swap. Suddenly, the far right would be calling for police accountability, while the far left would be calling out violence. In other words, the underlying moral principles that are supposedly being promoted by either side (in their interpretation of any particular news event) are actually just excuses to present whichever narrative best fits their respective political angles.

Enter Afroman, who, in an interview with Channel 5 on YouTube, shared several interesting sentiments regarding his own personal politics, which, if put into a blender, would make the average hard-line conservative or progressive vomit. Afroman likes some things that Trump has done, while he takes huge offense to other Trumpisms (specifically the treatment of BLM and anyone who says “all lives matter”). He wants to own a vast amount of property where dropping N-bombs would be illegal, but at the same time, he feels that openly racist people also deserve their own space, saying, “they can have their space, and I can have mine.” The ‘fro’d crusader hates corrupt cops and appreciates good ones, he believes in fighting systemic oppression while being opposed to violence, he believes in treating people with respect, but also endorses the use of mock-



ery and personal attacks against those who cross him.

In short, Afroman is basically the ideal Libertarian, which is a surefire way to make sure the media (and most people) will disregard everything that comes out of someone's mouth. Libertarians are basically just grown-up autistic children who point out the obvious and get punished for it—not because they're wrong, but because society likes to bullshit itself. While the left is saying “spend,

spend,” and the right is saying “invest, invest,” Rand Paul is out here saying “...so, here's how we can cut spending and better invest,” only to have his mic cut and bloodline mocked. Libertarians, when let out of their mom's basement, pose a serious (but benign-seeming) threat to the status quo, so the status quo just pretends we don't exist, and occasionally mocks us for being single at 46. No one wants to claim us. Case in point, small town sheriffs are out here suing a dude over a joke about stolen cake, and we're somehow not hearing Jimmy Kimmel call Afroman a civil rights hero, or a Tucker Carlson rant about how the police deserve treats.

Afroman is to politics what Insane Clown Posse is to rap: the indigestible outsider, who somehow lasts the test of time and ends up having the last laugh—with zero support, aside from a dedicated following of stoners and weirdos. But when ICP marched on Washington for the Juggalos to be removed from gang lists, everyone seemed to celebrate it. I feel that Afroman deserves the same shine for using art to defend his home from cake-stealing government intruders.

Of course, there could be another narrative-breaker at work. Sticks and stones may break bones, but to some people, words are literally violence.

If we roll back our algorithms to the mid-2010s and bring up any random Tumblr page or Facebook rant (bonus points if there's a trigger warning attached, but absolutely zero mention of assault or actual trauma), we will find paragraphs upon paragraphs about “shaming language.” Slut shaming (mostly valid to oppose this one), body shaming (getting a bit weak), time blindness shaming (oh, come on), kink shaming (sorry, if you wear a diaper, we're gonna laugh at you), shame shaming (for those with shame kinks), the

list is endless. Younger Millennials and older Gen Z introduced the concept of disregarding the legal system while, at the same time, treating problematic statements made on social media as literal violence—or in other words, they became anarchists who are easily defeated by words. Burn down the system, just don't call it "retarded." And this, in my opinion, is why Millennials and Gen Z will glorify serial killers, while at the same time, attempting to cancel comedians (Afroman being one) for jokes. Comedy, when used as a weapon, is not only highly effective, but there's a lot less cleanup, and you don't have to hide the bodies.

Although Millennials and Gen Z may have weaponized the concept, the idea of shame being a bigger deterrent than laws is not new. For example, it's totally legal to scream racial slurs at toddlers (as long as the slur doesn't match the ethnicity of the child), but it's entirely illegal to jaywalk. Yet, if you poll 100 people and ask them if they'd rather be caught jaywalking or screaming racial slurs at a toddler, 99 would choose to jaywalk (and one would just be a homeless dude, who's sick of being hit by cars). I'm not condoning the act of screaming racial slurs at toddlers (or anyone), it's just that we often forget how much more effective shame is compared to legal action. You can take the time to sue someone, drag them to court, lose thousands in lawyers' fees, and waste years of your life trying to get them to make things right. Or, you can find their old wedding photos on Facebook and comment, "It's so nice seeing a photo of you back when you were happy and healthy." Emotional bruises, while invisible, can be permanent.

To the chagrin of Millennials and Gen Z pearl-clutchers alike, Afroman used the ultimate toolbox when fighting the Adams County Sheriff's Office: utter humiliation, shame, and mockery. From "Licc 'Em Low Lisa" licking him low, to Randy Walters being a son of a bitch, to musical accusations of the entire department covering for pedophiles, Afroman (a former Crip) opted against violence and chose to use the power of the First Amendment, releasing song after song on his YouTube channel, cooking his oppressors with shame, like an unhinged Weird Al from the hood.

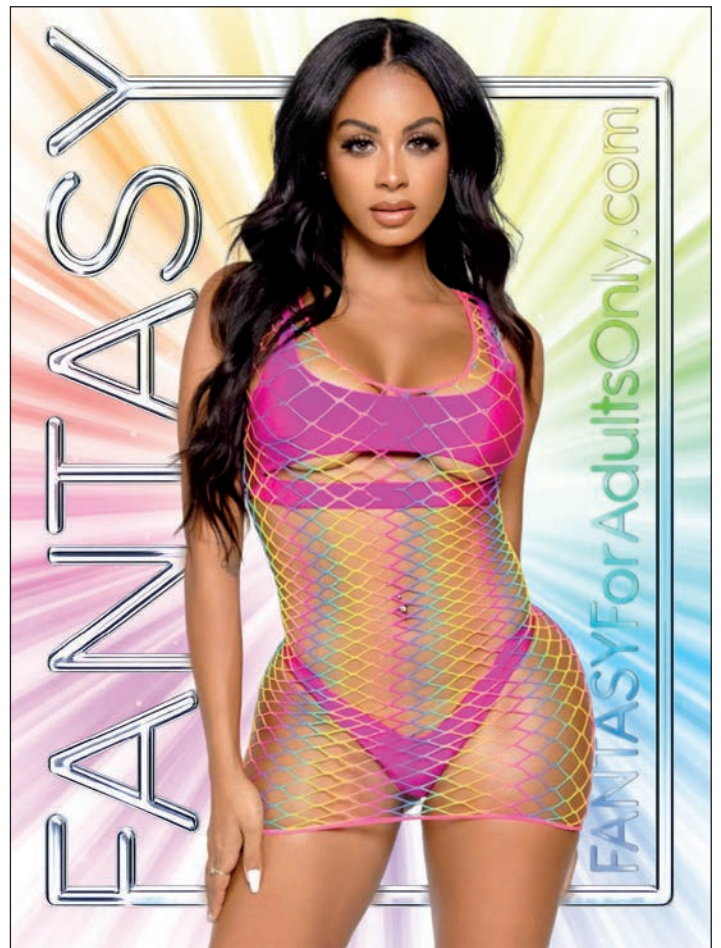
Shame and mockery proved, for Afroman, to be the appropriate response to a pound cake-stealing sheriff and his merry band of corrupt law enforcement pals. There was no protest, no smashing of windows, no storming of government buildings, no hashtag, no social media campaign, and most notably, no one besides Afroman to help Afroman. David was handed a blunt by God, given some studio time, and he took down Goliath. A guy named "Afroman" winning any trial in a rural, podunk courtroom is news on its own, but the idea that a jury of this man's peers (many of whom were likely friends with the good ol' boys network) found him innocent is, by all definitions, a bipartisan win for free speech.



Sticker from [KeepSalemLame.com](http://KeepSalemLame.com)

And it got absolute crickets from most three-or-four-letter news stations outside of Adams County, Ohio. Perhaps the sheriff's deputies lost the defamation case because of this very reason: no one seems to care what Afroman is up to. I'm just here to say, if you value free speech, you should.

@RainmanMcmillin on IG – I don't check Facebook



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Jenny Odell

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ISMAEL RODRIGUEZ

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HIGH TIDE

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**ANGELS 4** **FOOD LOTTERY**  
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**DESIRE 11** **FOOD LOTTERY**  
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**FLESH AND BONES LOUNGE 25** **FOOD LOTTERY**  
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**HAWTHORNE STRIP 18** **FOOD LOTTERY**  
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**SASSY'S 26** **FOOD LOTTERY**  
927 SE Morrison St | (503) 231-1606  
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**STAG PDX 29** **FOOD**  
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SECRET LOUNGE  
FLESH AND BONES  
LAS CARIÑOSAS  
LAS GATAS



# SAKE SHORT FACTS!

BY HANNAH ONE CUP

As some of you may know, my pen name pays homage to a somewhat famous, very accessible, easily transported brand of sake. One Cup (*wan-kappu*) sakes have a special place in my dark little heart, for their adorable cups and usually decent alcohol. It was also my first introduction to this Japanese drink. After having been drinking sake for quite some time, I started to become interested in the finer details of how it was made and stories about some of the breweries. After reading this article, I hope to—at the least—give you some new, unnecessary facts about a drink you'll never have or perhaps open your mind to the exotic flavors of alcoholic rice. As they say on *Most Extreme Elimination Challenge*: "Geettiit on!"



**Ozeki (One Cup)** – The OG One Cup and first sake brewery to start production in the United States back in 1979, thanks to California having wonderful rice (you'll probably be surprised how much good rice is in the US at various locations). The actual One Cup started in 1964, when Japan hosted the Olympics. Japan's also cool with having this stuff served in vending machines, both hot and cold.

Easy access, and drinking in public is generally acceptable, so long as you follow some basic etiquette and local laws. This drink can be found in almost every Asian grocery store, although I will say, I think 99 Ranch does *not* have Ozeki (sad face). Also, we're still not cool enough to stop hiding our alcoholism indoors, so finding a vending machine with this here in the US is also not going to happen. We get what we get.

Like most things, I base a lot of what I buy on the look of a thing. So, generally speaking, I get my one cups based on how cute I think the picture on the glass is. This means I have a lot of One Cups in my house, each with very cute designs. At this point, I am pretty sure almost all my drinkware consists of One Cup sake glasses and old-school red, bubble, Pizza Hut cups. So, the next couple of facts are about specific cups that I bought based on my desire for cute sake.

**Chiyomusubi "Oyaji"** – This is one of my favorite cups of sake. The glass features an eyeball bathing in a bowl of ramen, and is a throwback to an old Japanese cartoon/manga about an old one-eyed man. It's Junmai, meaning nothing to you other than it's what most people have the first time they try sake. Easy to drink, and one you can pretend to sip, but you probably won't. You should buy two. I'm pretty sure H-Mart (the over-priced, tiny, neighborhood Asian grocer) has this in its stores.

**Sake One** – A local brewer in Forest Grove, Oregon, they brew excellent higher-end sake, with Momokawa, G-Sake, and Moonstone among them. Moonstone is one you can find in grocery stores, which is usually flavored with something like Asian Pear or some other delicious fruit. Sake One also has a club you can be a part of, which gives you a bunch of cool stuff...for a very cheap membership price. Like...unlimited sake tastings with a guest. You just can't go more than once a day (boooo). Obviously, my partner gifted me this membership for my birthday, and I've been drinking in its benefits ever

since. I mean, a drive to Forest Grove also allows me the trip to the best burger place in Oregon (or probably the West Coast). So it's a win-win.

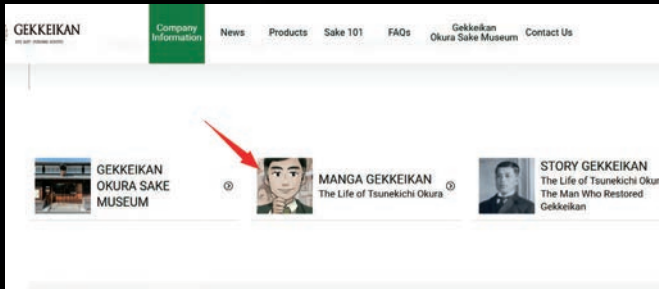


**Sunflower Sake** – Speaking of clubs, there is a local sake shop here in Portland, and I can't say enough about the level of knowledge that the nerdy folks behind the counter have under their belt. It's pretty insane, and they are more than able to find you *something* you will enjoy. I almost guarantee it. Tell them you like a specific whiskey or tequila, and they'll tell you a sake you'd probably enjoy just as much. Inside the shop, they also have all these cute little cat figurines that they rearrange every so often to create various cinematic scenes. They also have a club...which I have joined as well. Never have I ever been disappointed in a recommendation they have given.

Alright, so I've talked about a few higher-end sakes, including the one cups. Those babies are about 4-6 bucks a piece at a grocery store. If you get higher-quality ones from a shop, the price will also start reflecting it, remind-

ing you that you may need to dial down your drinking tastes. That, or just change how often you eat. So, I wanted to give a quick little diddy about a big ol' bottle I buy from Fred Meyer's fairly often when I'm wanting to drink, but not wanting to waste good alcohol on a drunken night of slothfulness.

**Gekkeikan Sake** (the big ol' green bottle) – I feel like this sake gets a bad rep just because it's a big bottle and it's really cheap, but honestly, it's not bad. I wouldn't even compare it to any of those big "Barefoot" wine bottles, because it doesn't give me a hangover, nor does it break the bank. At a typical price range of \$7.99-\$9.99, depending on the sale, I can get this big bottle of sake from Fred Meyer and walk out feeling like a well-traveled, less-trashy connoisseur of cheap alcohols. I was introduced to this big ol' bottle from a dearly departed friend. She and I used to share a bottle and talk about trash TV and various fun physics facts from Neil deGrasse Tyson. Also, if you visit the Gekkeikan website, you'll find this comic strip they've created in sections, which I *think* goes into the facts about how the 11th-generation head of the family took over the family business and made the sake brand a huge success. I say "I think" because it also really, really, really looks like it might be propaganda trying to cover up a murder of a brother, and the fact that the boy who was the new head was only 13 years old, with a mother who may or may not have actually been the one running things behind the scenes... but because she was a woman, well, you know, you gotta' be a man to run a business—or a thirteen-year-old boy. Potato tomato. (Please note that my actual beliefs are that anyone can run a company if they put their mind to it. Whether you run it into the ground is up to you, not your gender.)



One more shortened fun fact...

**Arkansas** – Chris Isbell started growing one of the most prized rice varieties for sake in Arkansas, after he was pretty much told by everyone at this conference he attended, that it wasn't possible to grow anywhere outside Japan. Chris pretty much did the equivalent of saying "hold my hat," while he set aside a large amount of acreage to growing this rice. Successfully. The conference he went to was also not meant for farmers, but for PhDs and researchers. He ended up being the most popular person at this conference because of his "unicorn status." He also said "howdy" to just the right person by accident, and now grows rice for one of the largest brewers out there. He doesn't particularly like sake, but likes growing rice.

There you have it. Some very shortened, random facts about a drink I very much enjoy having at any time of the day. I would really recommend visiting Sunflower, as well as just picking a One Cup you think looks cute, and seeing what it tastes like. You won't lose anything but 6 bucks...and end up gaining an experience, a collectible, adorable, new cup.

*Hannah One Cup can be found drinking sake at home, while playing video games in her air-conditioned room. With the dogs who act way too interested in her drink to not have been humans or samurai in their previous lives. Kanpai!*

# HOW TO MAKE MONEY IN THE

# GOLD RUSH

by Blazer Sparrow



Wish I could think of something funny for this month, but I'm about to get on a plane for my first proper vacation in over a decade and am also six days behind deadline, so this is what you get, reader (and editor-in-chief...sorry).

I touched on this analogy in a previous piece, but I'm also in the middle of packing and don't have time to find it. Trust me—it exists. Basically, something to the effect of how the only people who made money during the gold rush (any gold rush, there are multiple) were the folks selling shovels.

Stay with me.

The lesson here is that while, yes, there was gold in them there mountains, and if you knew where to find it, you would be rich, the chances of your expensive, desperate efforts paying off, and you striking it rich, were next to none. There were a lot more people looking for gold than there were actual gold nuggets to be found.

Sounding familiar?

Hang tight.

I have ancestors who were around during the California and Klondike Gold Rushes, and the anecdotes about them are always the same. They made pretty good money. *Not* from getting a pan and a mule and sitting by a river, but by selling shit to the poor saps looking for gold. Not just shovels, but sometimes just opening up a bar or a general store in a high-traffic area. I have not one single story of someone who struck gold, but an abundance of stories of folks who saw the influx of rubes and made bank on their hopes and dreams.

Switch gold for the dream of making it in music. See who the rubes are now? It's the many sad, delusional dudes that have flocked to Portland (or any major coastal city in America, for that matter) to strike it rich with their totally awesome and original songs.

I'm not here to dash your hopes and dreams, if you are one of these deluded—(cough)—determined prospectors. Some people *did* find gold in them

there mountains. No one I knew or was related to, but it did happen. However, before you sell all you own and strike out to those cold and wet, dismal Pacific Northwest environs, maybe take a breath and think for a second of the sheer number of super special, talented musician types who have the exact same idea as you. What is the real likelihood that you'll be the one who happens to play the show where that A&R rep just happens to be hanging out? What is the actual percentage of non-nepo babies that strike gold with a TikTok viral hit?

Why not sell shovels instead?

'Cause you know what numbers *are* good? The number of idiots like you who will spend *every last dime they have* at a chance to be the next Cameron Winter.

On the real, that costs two thousand dollars a month, just ask Chaotic Good.

The thing is, there *is* money to be made in the music industry. Just like there *was* money to be made during the gold rush. By selling stuff to the people looking to make it in music/gold. Here are some things you can sell to the stary-eyed prospectors who're convinced they're going to strike it rich

## Photography/Videography

I need it to be clear, I am not here to complain about folks charging for their services that do indeed provide value. To those of you charging \$100 or \$200 for a set of photos or some videography for a shitty bar band—*get yours, fam!* Sell them shovels to these damn rubes. Because here's the thing, *no one* is more narcissistic than a broke-ass musician trying to make it—especially in Portland. They will *gladly* pay your jacked-up—(cough)—fair prices. I kid, I kid. Unlike music, your art is valuable.

Seriously, think about it. Even with rent climbing to about \$2K for a one-bedroom in Portland, you only need to film ten to twenty bands in a month to make rent. I hope you did a spit take after reading that, 'cause when you put it in perspective, it really is shooting fish in a bucket. There are more bands than there are microbreweries and weed stores combined in this town. While there *may* be gold in the mountain, there's *definitely* a million idiots on the mountain looking for it.

## Engineering/Mixing/Mastering

Despite what these unwashed hopefuls try to convince themselves of, home recordings sound like ass. For every Kevin Parker, there are ten thousand assholes who think their home recordings sound like Tame Impala, but really they sound like Daniel Johnston, minus the talent. Studios definitely still have value. After these sad saps realize no one is buying their dogshit home recordings, they'll shell out money to get a proper recording. Start interning at a studio now, learn the shit, and you'll be rolling in these wannabe rock stars' saved tips in no time.

## Merchandise

This one has perhaps the lowest barrier to entry of anything listed here—the cheapest shovel you can sell. All you need to do is invest in some infrastructure. A heat press, a button maker, a screen printer. This is all stuff these lazy musicians could do themselves, but believe me, they often don't. They're too busy arguing with their bandmates about the order of the setlist or sending their shitty home-recorded demo to Sub Pop or Kill Rock Stars. It's *easy* money. All these poor saps need wares to peddle at their shows. They're gonna buy it from someone. Might as well be you!

## Tits & Ass

One thing I've noticed in the ghost towns I've visited in Oregon and Washington is that there is always, always—without exception—a brothel. If there's one thing these gold-seeking fools need more than a shovel, it's some hairy frontier snatch. It's been documented, and I've mentioned in some pieces before, that Portland has more strip clubs per capita than any other city in America. Even fucking *Las Vegas*. I think I understand why now. Who is lonelier and more pathetic than a young musician trying to make it? And one that moves to Portland to make it, since they couldn't afford to live in Seattle?! No wonder the flesh peddler scene exploded in this city. I mean...if you're reading this, you're more than likely a young musician who just spent what few dollars you have on a photo set, studio time, and a run of t-shirts. And where are you now spending the last of your dollars? Put down the guitar and put on some pleasers!

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# NINJA ATTACK

THE MONTHLY  
**COLUMN**  
BY WOMBSTRETCHA THE MAGNIFICENT

Ninjas! Anyone who lived through...well, the last 50 years, knows that the ninja has been a powerful pop culture fixture. Usually, they are the bad guys in old martial arts movies, then heroes in later ones, then just generic character tropes. We are going to explore what a historical ninja actually was, and then we're gonna talk about ninjas in video games. I probably can't fit them all in, but I will touch on as many as I can, so put on your black pajamas, grab your throwing stars, and let's go!

What is a ninja, historically speaking? Essentially, they were trained in the arts of ninjutsu, but not to be assassins, as is a popularly held notion. They were spies. Infiltrators. People to get dirt on your political enemies. Sure, some of them did kill people, but that was not their primary purpose. They were not typically called "ninja," but instead "shinobi," and even "nokizaru," which means "the monkey on the roof." They had all sorts of crazy contraptions to help them do ninja shit, from grappling hooks to chain whips, to weird shoes that resembled a bellows they'd use to walk over water. Ninjas had the gear. They have taken on a cultural impact, which is far from what they actually were. Brave fighters, sneaky assassins, masters of stealth and intrigue. They are painted like that all over pop culture, and we love it.

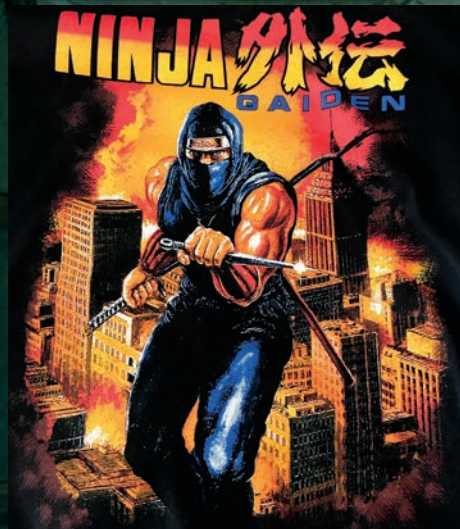
Video games with ninjas. That's the primary point here, so let's talk about a few. Ranked in no particular order.

Since we started with the language of the ninja, we shall analyze "Shinobi," which was a 1987 arcade game later ported to the Sega Genesis.

The basic concept is that you apparently are carrying around a giant burlap sack full of throwing stars, and you huck limit-



less amounts of them unto your enemies. Thought you were bad, ass-butt? Have a blade to the face from 30 paces, bitch. You can also punch and kick people if you close the distance...but me? I'm opting for just more metal stars. A classic game.



Ninja Gaiden. Yeah, that one, on the NES. If you're old enough to remember it, you will remember a lot of swearing and throwing the controller. Thankfully, Nintendo thought to make their controllers out of adamantium or some shit. Classic NES "let's make this hard, but not have too many levels" bullshit. Respawning enemies who did not relent, bitch-ass bosses, and not enough power-ups. Still a classic. I'd play it any day, but likely still end up throwing my controller just like I did 40 years ago. They have continued to make Ninja Gaiden games into the modern day, and gamers seem to regard the 2005 Ninja Gaiden Black as one of the best, with 3D hack-em-up action, and that wonderful element of having the player get angry at the game.

TMNT. Who could write about ninja games without writing about Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles? There are well over 50 TMNT games across various platforms, and the series continues to this day. I'm not exactly sure

now how, er, "ninja-y" they really are, but we loved them, all the same. The original comics were actually not silly, but bloody and dark. Shredder was only in one issue, and when defeated, they invited him to commit seppuku (which is ritual suicide by cutting your guts out and having someone cut off your head), but he opted to pull a pin on a grenade, and try to take them all out. That said, the TMNT NES game (which your humble author is currently trying to beat on a dare, and is, as a result, swearing a lot) was written by a sadist who makes you want to blow yourself up with a grenade as well. The arcade-style beat-'em-up games are fun, though not an exercise in futility, and the modern ones are more immersive.



Strider. I certainly hope nobody is going to say Strider is not a great ninja game. You bounce all around like you were made of Laffy Taffy, have a killer wall jump, which is better than the one in Ninja Gaiden, and a sword that just keeps getting bigger when you get power-ups. Is that a metaphor for something? I don't know, but this game is awesome. You beat the fuck out of robots in a cyberpunk dystopia, using your futuristic ninja sword and ability to climb on the scenery.

Wrath of the Black Manta. It was on the NES and was rather frustrating. I know I'm talking a lot about old-ass games, but



this was indeed a game about a ninja. In fact, the plot is that he is rescuing kidnapped children from some kind of drug gang, but this is actually not important to gameplay. You *can*, but it provides no bonus, except possibly to your sense of digital morality. He rescues kids, or not, and uses the subtle arts of murdering people to progress through the game and defeat the final boss, whose name is "El Toro," and is neither a bull nor a lawnmower.



Tenchu: Stealth Assassins. Moving on from the early era, we have 1998's Tenchu. This game was very much stealth-oriented, like a ninja should be. You don't go around just whacking people with a sword and hope for the best. You gotta be sneaky. Classic PlayStation 1 graphics, so, as good as it gets for the time it was made, but 3D graphics were really not there quite yet. Graphics or not, it was a fun game, with grappling hooks, ropewalking, and murdering people from behind before they see you.



Ninja Baseball Bat Man.

This is a side-scrolling arcade beat-'em-up game from around 1993. The gimmick is that Japan apparently wanted to combine its love of baseball with ninjas. Robot baseball ninjas, to be exact. You

go around fighting various baseball enemies in a standard brawler game format. Every single thing is baseball-related. Everything. The power-ups, the boss fights, the casual enemies. Baseball. Period. They gave us sushi, we gave them baseball, and they ran off a cliff with it on this one. There is an arcade in Portland that has this rather rare game, so I have played it. How could I not? It's actually more tedious than fun, but if you ever see it, play it, so you can say you played Ninja Baseball Bat Man.



Ghost of Tsushima. A very colorful and surprisingly picturesque background for a 2020 game about a ninja slaying Mongols during the first Mongolian invasion of Japan, because they were being fuckbuckets. Yeah, they tried a couple of times in history, but clearly did not conquer Japan. Possibly because of ninjas. High accolades in the gaming community led to this game doing very well. It's the 21st century, and we still can't get enough of ninja games, but this is a long way from the NES.



Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice. This contemporary game, set in the Sengoku period, when there was a lot of fighting and political dick-sucking to unite Japan, features a ninja (because duh) and is set in a

historical setting. However, the game also has rocket launchers and flamethrowers, which I am fairly sure were not around back then. The plot is to fight a warlord to accomplish this unity, and your character is sorta-kinda immortal, yet can absolutely be killed. Lots of weird Japanese magic comes into play, but hey, video games don't give a fuck about making sense; as long as it's fun, let's do it.

That's about as many as come to mind, but there are a zillion ninja games out there, so this was an interesting topic. I could write for years and not cover them all.



Practice your stealth, achieve your goals, and throw motherfucking shuriken at anyone who gets up in your face!

Peace and swords,

-Wombstretcha

*Wombstretcha the Magnificent is not dexterous enough to be a ninja, wrote the word "ninja" 33 times in this article, is a wall-jumping enthusiast, writer, and retired rapper from Portland, Oregon. He can be found at his website, wombstretcha.com, on X as @wombstretcha503, and on MeWe (yay!) and Facebook (boo!), as "Wombstretcha the Magnificent."*

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