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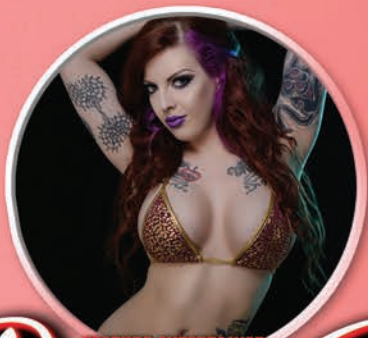
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Tips For Being A Portland Musician

By Blazer Sparrow

Dear single dudes in Portland, I'm glad I'm not one of you.

That being said, I'm here to help. I was you, once, and it sure is awful—especially in this city. The struggle is real. I see you thirsty bastards at Jones and Goodfoot, spinning lie after lie about yourself and trying your absolute damndest to make that overly practiced body language come off as genuine charisma. It's pathetic. Especially if you don't really...do anything.

Now, if you happen to be a musician, you definitely have a leg up, but that's simply not enough—it never has been. Casually bringing up that you have band practice isn't enough. You must look the part, walk the walk and talk the talk—with these five tips. Just like spandex, leather jackets and mile-high hair worked in the eighties. Just like gold chains and track suits worked in the nineties. You gotta fly your "I'm an artist" flag as loudly and obnoxiously as possible. Those get-ups aren't gonna be the pussy magnets they used to be, so you gotta stay with the times. Follow these easy steps and you could even be portly with horn-rimmed glasses and still get that phone number. If you embrace this handy-dandy list, you just might not have such a lonesome, masturbation-filled Valentine's Day.

Winter Clothing, Even In Summer

Nothing says "I'm a damaged soul, who doesn't know how to connect to people (or respect them or even demonstrate basic awareness of them), but I'm very deep and you wouldn't know, unless you checked out my SoundCloud and read my obscure, vaguely poetic lyrics atop amateur fruity loops production that I'll pretend to not take seriously (but, am secretly convinced it's the most prolific movement in pop music since The Beatles, like wearing a

pea coat in July). Beanies and scarves are also essential. An argyle sweater vest or cardigan is also appropriate. During the winter, you'll find this much more comfortable (and, practical), but you gotta keep the look up all year long—even in those sweltering dog days. It shows how complex you are and how music is your only emotional outlet. You'll be a puzzle to be solved.

mean something that hints you are covered in some colorful, highly detailed art that takes up your entire torso and arms. It should look like this body-wide masterpiece is merely peaking out of your sleeves and up your collar. You don't actually have to get the full body art, though. Hell, your neck and wrist tattoos can end at the collar and sleeve. It's all about looking



Neck And Wrist Tattoos

To be clear, tattoos ONLY on the neck and wrist—nowhere else. And, by tattoos, I don't mean a rose, an upside-down cross on your neck or some dumb Celtic rune on your wrist—I

like you can take as much pain as you can dish out, by being emotionally unavailable. Catnip to the womenfolk!

Cheap Equipment In Disrepair

Nothing is hotter than a broke artist. No-

an-If You Wanna Attract A Lady Person

thing spells “dedication and passion,” like pretending to buy the only guitar you can afford, until you can save up to buy something better. Gearheads are a thing of the past and bragging about the equipment you’ve invested in will do nothing to help your game. Rather, feign disinterest in the off-brand guitar you bought “just cause it looked cool,” cover it in stickers and bang it around



to make it look like you got it from a pawn shop. Lots of cheap pedals that just muck up your guitar tone are really key to the Portland Tortured Artist Look, too. Think the “just got out of bed” hairstyle of the early 2000s (that took forever to get right), but with

your instruments. You’re almost there.

A Bookshelf Full Of Only Female Authors

Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Sylvia Plath, Edith Wharton, at least one of the Brontes, some Agatha Christie, Margaret Atwood (make sure you have *Handmaid’s Tale*), Anaïs Nin, etc. You get the idea. Now that you’ve established that you’re distant, damaged and deep, you need to let your victim *cough* date know that you’re also very woke. You don’t actually have to read any of these books or know anything about the authors—just have the books lying around in plain view. Be sure to have one on you at all times, peaking precariously out of your pea coat pocket. Hold it open in front of you, like you’re reading it, in sight of a pretty woman you want to attract. You don’t actually have to be reading, just make sure they see the cover as you hold it up in front of your face (‘cause that’s how people read). You need to know just enough about these authors to give vague and non-specific reasons why they are your “favorite.” Eye on the prize, fuckboys *cough* sensitive, musician types.

Claim Your Favorite Albums Are All Hip Hop

Not just your favorite albums, but also the biggest “inspiration” for your guitar-based music, that sounds like a less-authentic Modest Mouse. Swear up and down that your favorite album is not only a rap album, but a rap album that a pasty, winter-clad lad such as yourself would not appear to be a fan of. Anything by Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg won’t be obscure enough. You also can’t go too weird, with Tribe Called Quest or CunninLynguists. The key is to catch them off guard. Talk about the genius of 2 Chainz and the intricacies of Chief Keef’s lyrics. Speak at length about the strong influence of Lil Wayne on your rock band, that

sounds exactly like yet another mix of Elliott Smith and Joy Division. Ladies, form a queue.

Lads, with these five tips, you’ll be attracting a bevy of pretty women, just lining up to be the one to “fix you.” Soon, you’ll be emotionally abusing all of them, while refusing to commit to a relationship—keeping them hanging on by a thread, while you balance the others with your dark, complicated



ways. Remember to always talk about how you need your space!

Ladies, I wish I had similar advice for you to attract a mate this Valentine’s Day. Instead, might I suggest using the above list as a guide for exactly what to avoid?

Lads, ignore the above line.

Happy Valentine’s Day!!!



THE MONTHLY

COLUMN

BY WOMBSTRETCHA THE MAGNIFICENT

NEW DIETARY LIFESTYLES FOR 2019

We're long past the age of trendy vegetarianism and sanctimonious veganism. We're neck deep into the voluntarily gluten-free and locally sourced era—the ketosis and paleo epoch—but, there's always room for a new lifestyle that involves bizarre dietary limitations.

Behold, some of the hottest, new eating habits for the current year! Presented for you to evaluate and choose, so that you might bring them up assertively when ordering at a restaurant—to flummox and chagrin the already-too-patient waitstaff serving your ass.

The Earwigger

This diet requires you to eat insect protein as a replacement for vegetables and meat.

Earwig flour, cricket meal, tube grubs and other crawly critter products are your friends, as you avoid disgusting chicken, beans or wheat.

There are already commercially-marketed snacks made of bugs out there, so it won't be long before the Earwigger finds itself at boutique cafes and on special menus at conventional restaurants.

Candyman

Eschewing the low-carb mentality that has dominated the 21st century, the Candyman diet focuses on deriving nutrition from sweet confections.

The food pyramid starts with a solid foundation of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, then a plateau of delicious gummy, with chocolate-covered fruits coming next, marshmallow and nougat topping that and crowned with a subtle amount of licorice. The movement's mascot is actor Tony Todd, who played the titular "Candyman" in the 1992 film of the same name. That said, Todd himself wants nothing to do with them, and they are notably discounting that the character was responsible mostly for hooks to the face (and not dietary advice).

those crazy Japanese watermelons. In are oranges, lollipops, meatballs, regular hamburgers and those spherical personal watermelons. There is heated debate in the Round-Up diet community as to whether toric foods like doughnuts and bagels should be permitted, with the two camps bitterly opposed, going so far as to call one another "spheroids" and "torusheads," respectively.

Pestivore

These bold individuals are taking eco-conscious, locally-sourced diets to the extreme—eating nothing but invasive species or pests found in their area. Rats, mice, squirrels, Asian carp, cane toads and kudzu are in with a vengeance. Don't get fat—eat that rat!

Barr-nivore

This diet is fairly flexible, as alternative diets go—it allows you to eat anything Roseanne Barr would. Naturally, this includes a large spectrum of plants, animals, minerals and a healthy dose of Ambien. Side effects of this diet include



The Round-Up

In this lifestyle diet, only round foods are permitted. Gone are such abrasively angular foods as candy bars, eclairs, dinner rolls, waffles, Wendy's hamburgers and

alleged racism and a shrieky singing voice.

Captain Caveman

Now, don't confuse this with the already popular Paleo diet, which simulates the

eating habits of pre-agrarian early man. This diet is different from that, in a few key ways—notably, you can't eat anything that doesn't grow in a cave. Mushrooms are in, as are albino suckerfish filets and bat fritters. Side effects include your children being born without eyes.

Of Course, Of Course

Of Coursicans subsist entirely on horse, horse byproducts and horse-flavored things. They recently petitioned chewing gum manufacturer Hubba Bubba to make horse gum, with modest success. Also, the Fiji water company has recently introduced Horse2O—action horse-water, to appeal to this ever-growing crowd. They are known to eat glue and consume large amounts of gelatin.

Raw Is War

This diet upends the trend of the popular "Raw Food" lifestyle and turns it into Monday's most-electrifying dieting entertainment: you eat foods based on popular professional wrestling figures. There's the High-In-Iron Sheik Week, the Andre The Giant "Anybody Want A Peanut" Legumes-Only Week, the Cold Stone Steve Austin Week (that's all ice cream), the Latino Heat Week of spicy Mexican food, the "Mean Greens" Okerlund Raw Vegetable Week, and naturally, the Macho Ham Randy Savage Week of pork products.

Clear Conscience

The Clear Conscience diet forbids the eating of anything you can't see through, at least a little. Water, Crystal Pepsi, Jell-O, rice paper, skinned grapes, jellyfish, raw egg whites and vodka are the most popular foods for people embracing this lifestyle, which claims to have "transparent motives," be "crystal clear" and other puns pertaining to a lack of opaqueness.

The Starving Child

Starvers, as they're known, don't starve themselves—quite the opposite, in fact. You see, the core of this dietary group's

motivations is in helping others, rather than themselves. Based on the popular admonishment that there are "starving children in Africa," issued to youth who don't consume all the food on their plates, the Starvers deliberately help themselves to *too much* when they're eating, but for a reason; believing in direct action, anything they cannot consume is bagged, vacuum sealed and sent directly to Africa, where it will sure-



I expect that the menu at all your favorite places will change to accommodate these, just like the "lose the roll, get a bowl" and the "I'm loudly vegan" eras. If you're not sure which one of these new, first-world luxury diet plans is for you, contact someone who shares a name with some kind of fruit.

Here's to your health!

ly feed all those kids from the TV commercials with the big eyes.

Serious String

Stringers cap off their empty stomachs with cans of non-toxic Silly String. From what they claim, a mere six cans a day can provide all the nutritional requirements for most adults without spray-product allergies.

Ampington

Ampingtons believe that a slender figure and keen mental insights can come with a diet of no food, no sleep and this one weird chemical that you can make in your garage. Side effects include risks of explosion, conversations with inanimate objects and a powerful lust for collecting copper wire.

So, there we have it—the new lifestyle dietary movements we're sure to see more of in this and forthcoming years.

-WSTM

Wombstretcha The Magnificent is an occult pool cleaner, incredibly poor Abraham Lincoln impersonator, Leprechaun movie truther, writer and retired rapper from Portland, Oregon. He can be found at Wombstretcha.com, on Twitter as @Wombstretcha503 and on MeWe by name.



BILLY JOEL'S STORM FRONT

THE EXOTIC MAGAZINE LISTENING GUIDE

BY HOIGHT HUFURNUHUR



Few artists have captured the raw animus of the revolution like Billy Joel (1949-2013). Ask anyone in AntiFa, who has adopted the Joel as somewhat of a figurehead—an icon...a saint. But, aside from his contributions to the body politik through his bombastic public speaking engagements, the litany of revered social commentary plays he's penned have been produced by the world's top theater companies or even the sit-ins he's held for various humanitarian causes, he also enjoyed—as a footnote to his long, full life—a brief stint as a pop musician. *Exotic* is proud to present this listening guide to what many consider to be his “Moby Dick” (a reference to a song by Led Zeppelin, which was about a giant, white drum solo), 1989's Grammy-winning album, *Storm Front*.

“That’s Not Her Style”

“The drummer shits himself at 1:15,” says sound engineer, Stevo “Shitsniffer” Bertini. “You couldn’t hear it, obviously, because they were playing. But, I could tell...I could tell.”

“We Didn’t Start The Fire”

Zack De La Rocha is quoted as saying, “If there was no Billy Joel, there would be no Rage,” and what better song to showcase Joel’s own primal rage than this blistering jam?

“The Downeaster Alexa”

This song is a thinly veiled reference to going down on someone named Alexa, but don’t write it off as a simple, smutty song. In this case, Alexa represents the oil industry and the person performing cunnilingus is Congress, according to Joel.

“I Go To Extremes”

This song is named after Joel’s famous re-tort to Martin Luther King, Jr., who once told a young Joel that he should reconsider his methods and adopt a nonviolent approach.

“Shameless”

While, obviously, the strongest image that the title of this song invokes is the iconic black-and-white photograph of a shirtless Joel, on a rooftop in the barrio, holding a knife in one hand and a live chicken in the other, with the word “Shameless” written across his chest in what the world later learned was menstrual blood (rather than chicken blood, which many assumed), it’s interesting to note that this song was actually penned not during a time of duress, but rather, “on a sunny Tuesday morning between coffee and yoga,” which Joel describes as his “morning bowel ritual.” “I’m stopped up ‘til I have my mocha and my yoga. I call it my ‘myogocha,’” Joel told *Teen People* in 1997. “I slurp down my coffee, get in a pose and then I hold it ‘til I start farting. If my butthole were a tea kettle, that’d be how it whistles when the tea is ready. But, one morning as I was getting into downward dog, I heard this melody in my head and I knew I wasn’t going to be able to get anything else out of me, until I sat down and got this song out of me. So, I sat down at the piano and squeezed out another hit.”

“Storm Front”

Joel often used references to the Third Reich in the titles of his songs, as is the case with this album’s title track. “We can never forget what the Nazis did, so the best way to do that is to keep using the word and to continue to accuse people of being Nazis

today,” Joel said. But, he said it *decades* ago.

“Leningrad”

It wasn’t until his death, that Billy Joel’s long-term, on-again, off-again lover and muse, Carrie Brownstein, noticed that “Leningrad” backwards was Dargninel, which was not only the password to all of Billy Joel’s devices, but is also the name of Billy Joel’s 220-year-old pet giant Galapagos turtle, which was given to Joel by a stranger at the age of two and continues to reside as the sole inhabitant in Joel’s Long Island mansion—the heir to Joel’s entire estate. When Joel sat down to write “Leningrad,” he simply wrote his pet turtle’s name backward and then wrote an entire store about this mythical place called Leningrad, as if it were a place that actually exists.

“State Of Grace”

Not unlike the story of Moses, who led the Israelites through the wilderness and died before reaching the Promised Land, the same is tragically true for Billy Joel, whose lifelong campaign to have Long Island be given independent statehood from New York and become the State Of Grace never came to pass...until two years after the singer’s untimely demise in a bulldozer accident.

“When In Rome”

Did Billy Joel predict his own death? That’s what many people suspect, considering that Joel died in a bulldozer accident, when in Rome in 2013. One mysterious line from the song that people often cite is a line in the bridge which goes, “Shouldn’t have gotten in that cab / Crushed by a concrete slab.”



OCCAM'S DISPOSABLE RAZOR

(Or, How Gillette Tricked Feminists Into Supporting The Pink Tax)

by Matt Rose

If you're not already familiar with the razor blade manufacturer's stance on woke values, Gillette is a brand whose parent company, Procter & Gamble, tests products on animals and produces a pink, female-marketed version of a razor blade that costs three times the price of the male-marketed version. And, thanks to a new advertisement, "We Believe: The Best Men Can Be," which uses a bizarre jambalaya of audio clips about bullying and sexual assault, juxtaposed against men in various situations who are being asked to re-evaluate if they are "the best a man can get," the company has won the hearts of feminists and the scorn of men's rights activists (MRAs) almost overnight.

The summary, for those who don't want to watch the video, is as follows: bullying and sexism are bad, so buy expensive razor blades, unless you support violence and misogyny.

After the video went viral, people reacted—some men appeared to take issue with the "if you don't buy our razor blade, you're probably a rapist" approach on Gillette's part. On the other hand, several social media posts by ultra-feminist bloggers and their allies rejoiced, as Gillette had "pissed off the MRAs and neckbeards." Sure, neckbeards boycotting shaving products is akin to vegans refusing to support a steakhouse, but that doesn't matter... what matters is that the pink tax—a phenomenon in which women (the primary spenders in our economy) are charged exponentially more than a man for the same product—is now being fully supported by the same demographic that typically takes issue with

capitalism and socioeconomic inequality. And the only "risk" Gillette had to take, was alienating neckbeards—the only other demographic (aside from radical feminists) that is known for not shaving (and even has a group title to prove it).

Well done, Gillette. Capitalism wins again.

Am I, as a male who is comfortable in his own skin, offended in any way by the ad? Well, yes and no. No, I'm not in any way offended that Gillette is (and, I emphasize the quotes here) "attacking men." I'm actually surprised that the ad was so tame—there's a flower company in my town that advertises using a cartoon of a man in a doghouse and it sits under a billboard for a plastic surgeon that offers "vaginal tightening" services for "aging women." Casual sexism (of all varieties) and commercialism are old buddies. Who cares? But, what does offend me, is that we're reaching the most disgusting and vile phase of a social movement, which is what I will call "moral capitulation"—the era when brands begin cashing out all invested stock their company may have in an otherwise noble—and often vital—social movement.

For the duration of this article, put aside any doubt you may have about the #MeToo or anti-bullying movements, supporters of said movements or tangential issues affecting men. For once, left and right, SJW and MRA, capitalist and socialist, we will all agree on the bottom line: a company is trying to use an emotional response to this phenomenon, in order to sell a product—this is what should offend people. I'm guessing we're only a few months away

from a Marlboro "tobacco won't assume your gender" advertisement or a McDonald's "hands up, buy a grape soda" campaign.

Let me make one thing clear: Gillette does not care about bullying or assault. Gillette is not attempting to "attack men." Gillette is not promoting a "feminist agenda." Occam's razor—a principle that states that "one should not make more assumptions than the minimum needed"—can answer why the company is doing this: to make money. And, in my opinion, money made by exploiting trauma, tragedy or social struggle is the lowest form of capitalism. Profiting from a rape-related hashtag is just that. Much like how REI used the bodies of dead teenagers to sell sleeping bags (if you don't recall, the company took a "brave" stance against assault rifles, but simply stopped carrying backpacks by a supplier that was associated with an assault rifle company—as REI has always carried the same amount of AR-15s as Bed Bath & Beyond), Gillette is now using the presence of rape and bullying to sell razor blades.

Gillette will forever be known as the company that convinced feminists to shave their legs using a razor that costs three times what a man pays, at the risk of losing a demographic known as "neckbeards." That's the equivalent of selling Swastika-shaped ice cubes to a family of Jewish Eskimos.

Please sign up for my Dollar Shave Club affiliate link.



FOUR REASONS WHY WEED SHOULD BE ILLEGAL AGAIN

GREEN ROOM DIARIES BY STONED GOLD SATIVA AWESOME

Okay, so you were expecting a column about love and weed this month, or perhaps, a list of ways to spice up your sex life, using cannabis. Well, I have some bad news for you... for February's *Green Room Diaries*, I'm going to attempt to do something that people in Oregon *hate* partaking in: seeing things from the other side. Has legalization been a good thing? Do cancer patients really have easier access to treatment? Is sitting inside all day long really "recreation" or is that all a...smoke-screen?

I'm really sorry about that last pun.

Anyhow, here are few reasons why—if, forced to come up with some—I think pot could benefit from going back to the black market.

The Price Of Cannabis Is Too Damn Cheap

Forty bucks a bag. That's what an eighth was when I went to middle school—the same year that *Doggystyle* came out and well before the days of six-dollar cigarette packs. The same bag, at the same quality, is five fucking dollars at the dispensary. How the hell are the moms and pops supposed to make money? Aside from the nugs, the processors (aka "trimmers") are now making fifty dollars a pound to clip weed, which can work out to about twenty-five dollars a day for first-timers and non-experts. This is stupid, but it's not illogical—this is simply what happens when you let corporations take over any industry. We're all libertarians at heart, so we have to keep in mind that over-regulating everything related to cannabis has forced the little guys out and brought in some pretty big players to reap our harvests. If you've seen *Murder Mountain*, you know what I'm talking about (R.I.P. Humboldt County).

We're Safer Drivers With A Felony In The Trunk

"Marijuana doesn't impact your ability to drive." Sure, but when it's illegal, we drive much, much safer. As it stands, I could take

blunt rips up and down the interstate, and unless I'm red-eyed and listening to the Grateful Dead upon being pulled over, the arresting officer is going to have a next-to-impossible time pinning a D.U.I. on me—especially with my medical card and insane metabolism. However, where it's illegal (or, if I'm in one of those don't-care-what-the-big-city-does small towns, such as the ironically named Independence, OR), I vacuum and Ozium the car up before even thinking about getting on the road. Idaho? Utah? If I have even a seed in my pocket, I'm operating my car like a driving instructor at a Christian school. But, once I hit Colorado? Freeway dabs, my dude.

Weed Culture Sucks Now

Remember when we bought our drugs from gangbangers and bikers? Do you recall sitting in the parking lot of some shady-ass apartment complex (with one of those "nice" names, like Crestwood Terrace or Briarwood Manor), waiting on pot? That's what we wanted to fix with legalization—but, never did we imagine that you could walk into a



dispensary and be told to watch your mouth, take off your shoes and pet the pug. Cannabis dispensaries that have attempted to "normalize" cannabis (and, I hate that word...it's pot) come across like pretentious art galleries and expensive coffee shops. And, much like the art and coffee subcultures of yesteryear, cannabis is becoming watered-down and ready

for the mainstream. With this, "harmful stereotypes" are being removed from the scene, and while blacklight Bob Marley posters aren't exactly high art, we're not gonna see any more Jack Herers or Timothy Learys, as long as Karen's Cruelty-Free Cannabis Cookbook is selling for \$59.99 plus tax. Weed culture is the new punk rock—slowly dying at the hands of mainstream latecomers.



If Adults Think It's Cool, Teenagers Will Move On To Harder Stuff

Why do we have a heroin crisis in America? Because cool dads everywhere started smoking the reefer. Okay, *maybe* it has to do with over-prescription of painkillers and the subsequent addictions that arise after being on them for years, but I still feel like blaming Gen X for something. Teens rebel. And, if mom owns Lake Oswego Holistic Remedy Solutions Center For Green Love And Progress Dispensary Collective, daughter is probably going to skip the green stuff and go with, say, white drugs. Parents, the best way to ensure that your child prefers cannabis over heroin, is to stick to boxed wine and cigars. Be as anti-pot as possible, so that your kid smokes it, instead of crack. But, alas, there are already multiple cannabis cooking shows on daytime television. So, Karen, it's probably time to check Becky's drawer for needles.

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Well, it's February again. Let's do this...

Poundland Under Fire For Controversial Valentine's Day Product

Apparently, there's a place in the U.K. called Poundland, which, to someone not familiar with British Dollar Tree knockoffs, sounds like a male brothel (or, at the very least, the world's most fabulous theme park geared toward adult men). So, when I heard that "Poundland is being protested for an adult V-Day product," I figured it was by some conservative, right-wing church, or perhaps a group of anti-gay bigots, angry over a pink double dong or something targeted towards non-traditional relationships. Boy, was I wrong—as I implied earlier, this is simply a dollar store, but it is currently under fire for selling "The Gift Of Nothing." Advertised as "Exactly what you asked for," this gift is simply an empty, heart-shaped package attached to a piece of cardboard—i.e., the epitome of traditional relationships.



Why are people losing their shit? Well, apparently this is damaging to the environment—i.e., it's plastic that serves no purpose, other than to be "wasteful." I'm sorry, but if someone I was pretending to love until springtime decided to give me this for V-Day, I'd keep it forever! Don't blame the makers of this gift—blame the ungrateful recipients of it, for throwing away such an hon-

est and genuine gesture. Look at it this way; Valentine's Day *thrives* off of insecure, materialistic people, who spend thousands on blood diamonds and dinners—the former of which involve dead African kids, while the latter ends up in the toilet or going "straight to [insert fatty body part that women get insecure about here]." Plastic gag gifts aren't hurting the world—The Shane Company is. Fight me, Tom.

Spending Valentine's Day With An Unknown X

What's X? Well, it's not what DMX is planning on giving to you, nor are we talking about anything you have to solve for—rather, X is a new club coming to downtown Portland this February. I'm not sure how much I'm allowed to reveal about it in this column, but I will back up the team behind this new club. And, once the local industry staff finds out about the new spot, I anticipate a big buzz. Dancers, this is officially your chance to jump on board, before the secret is out. Text (503) 444-1787 for scheduling information.

Sexy Sword Swallowing. From Sunset To Downtown

Portland is known for consistently bringing in internationally known and legit-famous performers from the adult industry, but this time, The Sunset Strip and Kit Kat Club are bringing in a fetish model who is known for swallowing swords—and, she's a brunette. HOLY SHIT. Yes, please! Not only is feature fetish entertainer and sword swallower, Penny Poison, appearing in person at The Sunset Strip, but she's doing so for two nights, with two shows per night—Thursday, February 14 and Friday, February 15. Then, on Saturday, February 16, Penny Poison will appear downtown Portland at Kit Kat Club.



What a *perfect* way to spend your Valentine's Day weekend. Long-term relationship? Spice it up. First date? Test the waters to see how cool your new love interest is. Single? Duh...it's The Sunset Strip and Kit Kat Club. I can't see anything wrong with making this your Valentine's Day evening(s), no matter who you are.

Happy Hours With Attitude

Ad slogan of the month goes to Rockwood Tavern—whose “Straight Outta Rockwood” motto is a great way to embrace neighborhood pride—is a brand-new, industry-friendly hangout (a full bar, with a full menu and lottery) that offers baby back rib specials on Friday and is located near the MAX line. This bar speaks to everything I love—ribs, risk-free, drunk-friendly transit and bartenders who won’t give you dirty looks, if you show up with a woman in fishnet tights before the sun goes down.

Single On Valentine’s Day? Good!

According to a new study, Facebook data is able to predict when you’re most likely to break up with your no-longer-significant other. While Spring Break takes the cake, Valentine’s Day is a close second and the time in-between these two dates is just as risky. So, why the hell are you worried about being single on V-Day? Oregon is the Strip Club Mecca of the world and Portland is the heart of it. Those of us not tied down to the wife, husband and/or kids can enjoy a variety of February fun, right here at home. Starting on Super Bowl Sunday (Club 205, Club Sinrock, Guilty Pleasures and The Venue will host parties for the game), and continuing all month, you can club hop from one fantastic event to the next. For instance, every Saturday night in February, Guilty Pleasures will be giving away prizes. Both Miss Exotic Oregon 2019, Taeya, and Miss Exotic Oregon 2018, Annie, are regular performers at the club, which now features a new menu and a three-and-a-half-hour-long happy hour. Did you happen to book multiple dates for Valentine’s Day? Take them to Stars Cabaret, whose locations are both hosting multi-day Valentine’s events. Got some cash burning in your pocket, but nothing burning

in your bedroom? Swing by a Taboo location (spend \$40 and get a free DVD), bounce over to Paradise Video and hit Adult Shop on the way back—porn shopping spree! Treat yo’ self.

Xposing Your Whiskey Dick Is A Good Thing

Fridays in February, The Whiskey Club—one of downtown Portland’s newest, swankiest and most upscale clubs—will feature DJ Pussyfoot, DJ Dick Hennessy, Nik Sin and MaryJane as part of the “Goldmember” show. On Saturdays in February, Xpose will be hosting the same crew and theme, as part of the sequel, “Pussyfoot Powers: The Robot Who Shagged Me.” Aside from being branded with the sure-to-satisfy DJ Dick Hennessy brand, these events feature Nik Sin as Mini Dick Hennessy in their ads. That’s why they get a write-up here—if you want your ads to get mentioned in this column, put Nik Sin in a costume. It’s literally free ad space—all you need to do is put a little person in a costume. Portland rules (take that in any context you wish)!

Tennessee Strip Club Offers Jobs To Furloughed Government Employees

While I like to keep politics out of these pages, Comcast refuses to fund my firewall, so sometimes, some undesirable headlines slip through. However, this is one rare exception—government-related news that actually has a spark of happiness to it. Ladies, gents and whatever non-binary demographics are allowed in the south, the good people at Déjà Vu in Tennessee are offering jobs for those government employees affected by the shutdown. And, no, it’s not just a reader-board joke meme, i.e. “Now Hiring Class Of 2019.” This shit made the actual news.

According to *Newsweek*, “Déjà Vu Showgirls of Nashville said that there were

jobs for workers who have been without a paycheck for weeks in hosting, security staff and waiting positions. ‘Déjà Vu offers a decent hourly wage—plus tips—for our host, security, and wait-staff positions. If you’re an employee who is temporarily out of work, don’t go without any longer!’ the club said in a statement.”

Hey, Amazon—I don’t see your company offering up jobs to furloughed government employees! This is why I love the strip club industry; we take care of ourselves *and* others. While our government is arguing over building a wall, we’re busy building bridges, installing stripper poles on them and inviting in the recently disenfranchised, so that they may pay rent and feed their family. Tell me, again, how is our industry shady?

Burlesque Goes Goth For A Good Cause

Speaking of good deeds done by performers, spooky staple and all-around fantastic dude, Jody Rose, reached out to Exotic regarding Gothic Burlesque 2, an event which features a *ton* of beautiful, talented and professional burlesque performers, while also serving to benefit a good charity. This goes down Sunday, February 10 at Star Theater. From the press release:

“Join (Jody Rose and others) for a night of Gothic Burlesque 2, at Star Theater on Sunday, February 10 at 8pm. All proceeds go toward creating a class that educates others in the community about trans healthcare education.

Jody Rose changed his gender in the 1990s, while he was writing letters to others in San Francisco, asking about doctor referrals and hormone therapy. Times have definitely changed since then, but more education is needed in this area of

healthcare. This cause is close to his heart and he appreciates your support."

For the extremely low cover charge (\$8 presale, \$12 door), attendees not only support a great cause, but they get to see SassHole PDX, Megz Madrone, Screampvina, Izabelle Starling, Kiki LeMiau, Jupiter Sky, Hazel Greene, Miles Wilder, Belle and, of course, Jody Rose. I recognize at least a few of these names from Kit Kat Club, Sinferno and other well-respected venues for burlesque and stage performance, so I can vouch—this is going to be an excellent show. Plus, it's goth-themed on a Sunday, so I'm going to assume it may be followed by a legendary dance night, but you'll just have to show up to find out.

Rose Presents



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SAT 9 - HAWTHORNE STRIP - NAOMI'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

SUN 10 - STAR THEATER - GOTHIC BURLESQUE 2

THU 14 - DREAM ON SALOON - VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY

THU 14-FRI 15 - THE SUNSET STRIP
FEATURE FETISH GIRL PENNY POISON

THU 14-SAT 16 - STARS CABARET (BRIDGEPORT)
VALENTINE'S FANTASY WEEKEND

FRI 15 - REVEAL LOUNGE
1-YEAR ANNIVERSARY PARTY

FRI 15 - SCARLET LOUNGE - ANTI-VALENTINE'S
7 DEADLY SINS TOGA PARTY

SAT 16 - KIT KAT CLUB - FEATURE PERFORMER
PENNY POISON

SAT 16 - STARS CABARET (SALEM)
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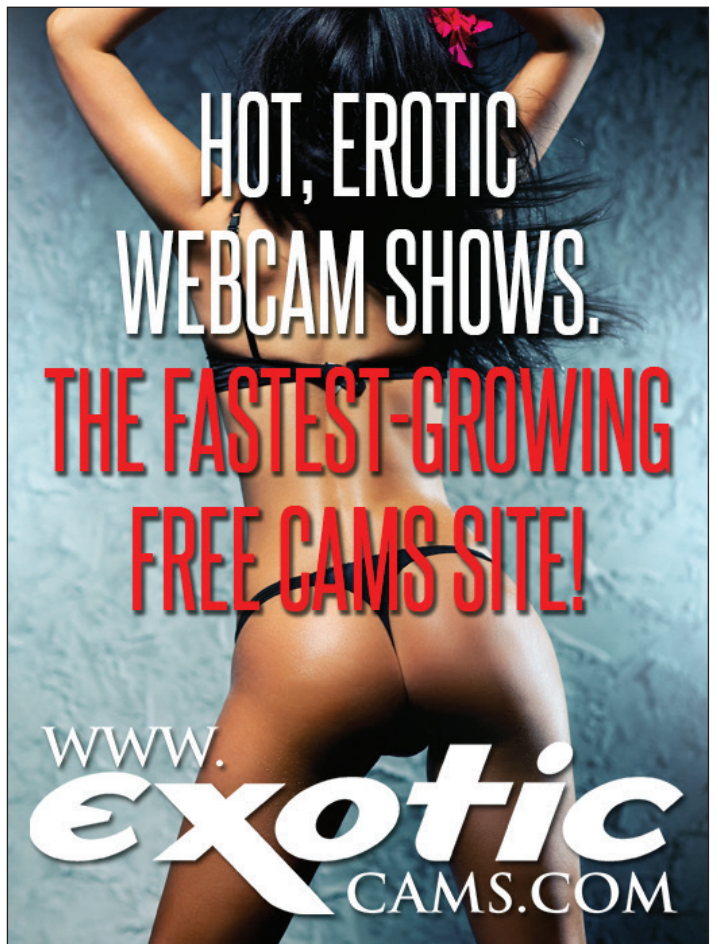
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TALES FROM THE DJ BOOTH

BY DJ HAZMATT



TIPS ON DATING A STRIP CLUB DJ

Much like the bartending realm (see this month's article by Miss Tini), the strip club industry is its own world—while mostly invisible to the rest of society, we operate within it on a daily basis. It is perfectly normal for us (stripper, DJ or otherwise) to pay our rent in one-dollar bills. We come home from work when the rest of you are clocking in and we've seen many of our best friends naked—this is far from a 9-to-5 lifestyle. From this, one can safely assume that, should you decide to get involved with someone who works in strip clubs, you may not be prepared for what awaits you.

There's no shortage of "How To Date A Stripper" articles floating around out there and even though most are garbage (no, Chad, you're not gonna get her real number by bribing the door guy), very few address the subject of dating the men who work in the strip club industry. I'm not a stripper (at least, not in public—my exercise regimen is none of your business), but I have been a strip club DJ, on and off, for over ten years. So, with that said, I'll specifically address what it's like to date a piece of trash like me. Of note, this column applies to burnt-out straight dudes approaching forty, so if I've excluded anyone, feel free to write your own column and send it over (Editor@Xmag.com). With that said, here's what you need to know about dating a strip club DJ (and, to some extent, a strip club bouncer, male club owner or bartender).

Personality Is More Important Than Looks

Strip club DJs are guilty of being the one thing that many women on the modern dating market fear: a guy who doesn't care that much about looks, but who needs a genuinely decent personality in order to

get turned on. I know, right? It's terrifying, because Covergirl doesn't make a product that can cover up a shitty attitude. We're surrounded by "tens" all day long, and more often than not, most of our co-workers (and, a majority of our female friends from the industry) are drop-dead gorgeous. Strip club DJs get as excited over a hot girl as, say, a cannabis dispensary owner gets over a bong hit of some top-shelf weed—yes, we appreciate the quality, but it's a requirement, not a perk. The worst part? Most of us are mildly unattractive, at best. We don't go to work to show off our sexy faces—we go there to play dubstep remixes of Scorpion songs and pretend to know what an A\$AP is.

I'm a sold five, extra medium, with zero redeeming physical qualities...outside of being a below-average white dude approaching forty. Still, last month, I canceled a date with a nineteen-year-old fashion model because she was boring and I decided I'd rather stay inside and play *Red Dead Redemption 2*. My teenage self is already kicking me for doing this, but they make new nineteen-year-olds every year and Rockstar only releases new, detailed, open-world games twice a decade or so. Besides, being immune to a big butt and a smile is, according to the Bel Biv Devoe school of thought, a reflection of one's ability to trust others and properly evaluate the characteristics of a mate. In a strange twist of irony, being surrounded by gorgeous women who are treated like objects, only makes a guy appreciate what's on the inside, that much more.

...And, While Looks Are Still Important, Don't Bother Putting On A Show

Although the requirement of a great per-

sonality is a must, being attractive is still a factor. But, by "attractive," we don't mean in the fake sense. Strip club DJs are used to seeing dancers before and after their shift, so we won't fall for visual smoke and mirrors. We see dozens of women pull a Clark Kent in the phone booth, excuse me... dressing room, every night, so we know all the tricks and how to spot them. We also have the ability to mentally remove mascara, fake lashes and the whole nine—allowing us to properly predict what a woman will look like the next morning. Fake boobs? That's cool—I actually dig 'em. But, you're not gonna convince a strip club DJ that they're real. Nine pounds of fake-up? Again, do you, girl. Go nuts. But, understand that you're about as convincing as a first-time drag queen from Estacada.

Now, on the other hand, if you can rock a hoodie, some sweatpants, a tank top and a pair of Converse, with no makeup—and look halfway decent—you're a shoo-in for a date with a strip club DJ. We want to know what we're going to be waking up next to, both physically and emotionally. Every night, we see the mask fall off of our beautiful co-workers, as soon as the club closes and the customers leave. "You're such a sweetheart, Steve..." turns into "God, I hate that fucking guy" the second the door closes. So, we like to keep things simple, and unlike most dudes, we actually don't require you to be dripping in Versace and soaked in expensive makeup. Just look cute in your ex-boyfriend's band's shirt, be honest about how you feel around/about us and we're good.

We Won't Put You On A Pedestal Or Show You Off

Stemming from the previous point, we're

not out to obtain arm candy or make our guy friends (or exes) jealous (this shit falls into the realms of “games and drama,” which I will address soon). Sure, when I date strippers, we both keep it a secret—it’s good for business. But, even if the secret gets out, strip club DJs don’t need arm candy. We’re overly validated on a nightly basis and compensated for it in cash. Our job title alone invokes jealousy, rage and disdain from the majority of other men (and women), as “strip club DJ” falls somewhere between “pit boss” and “pimp,” in terms of appropriate vocations for quality dudes. We know that society thinks we’re sleazy, so if anything, we’ll put in extra effort to *not* treat the women we date like objects on display. And, unlike “real” (quotes emphasized) DJs, we don’t thrive on being liked—we thrive on making money. Social validation and Instagram followers are for festival DJs, not dance commanders who play Rob Zombie from behind a wooden half-wall in the corner. Finally, we don’t show off women we date, because that’s literally our fucking job—to show off women. I have as much interest in flaunting my date as a piece of arm candy, as she does in being outed as a girl who dates strip club DJs.

Jealousy, Games And Drama, In General, Are Out

The best thing about dating a strip club DJ? He won’t get jealous or play games. The worst thing about dating a strip club DJ? He won’t get jealous or play games. We’ve seen it all, heard it all, have done it all and really don’t care at this point. But, we also won’t play into it. An example—I was dating someone recently who assumed that, since I “work with naked women,” I wouldn’t be bothered that she still sleeps over at her ex’s place. Well, it didn’t bother me, but I politely stopped calling her. Flash forward a week, and the rumor mill is churning out the usual drama, i.e. “He dumped me because I was friends with a guy, but, meanwhile, he works with naked girls, blah blah blah, etc.” To me, I just decided to casually walk away from a situation involving a woman who doesn’t like my job and can’t get over her ex. To her, I’m probably a “poly-shaming, anti-feminist, misogynist pig.” Cool. Why would you want to date me? Point is, we won’t get heated about anything, until it affects our income or Playstation Plus subscription.

Of note, I fucking love watching stereotypes dissolve when I compare my dating experiences with dancers to those with

women who have “real” (quotes emphasized) jobs—because strippers are just like DJs in this area, in that they know the games inside and out, can spot every line from a dude (well before he says it) and they can see through bullshit. They’re almost entirely zero-drama and easily the most honest women I’ve had the pleasure of dating. Take that one to your dating coach.

We’re Sick Of The Party Scene

If you’re planning on dating a strip club DJ, don’t bother trying to get him into your friend’s nightclub or impressing him with drugs. Most DJs can drink, smoke, dose, snort or trip on anything they want, at work, with little consequence. We play our favorite music (more on that in a second), at full volume, until the wee hours of the morning, surrounded by screaming people and a party atmosphere—sometimes, on a



Tuesday. So, for the average DJ (strip club or otherwise), the idea of getting high on shitty Portland coke and attending a rave, local show or even a karaoke night sounds about as fun as, well, going to work—I can’t even go to festivals anymore, because it’s equivalent to hanging around my job on my day off (plus, the drunk, topless women at festivals don’t tip).

Wanna lock down a strip club DJ boyfriend? Invite him over to your apartment, make him basic dinner (pasta or bacon—nothing extreme) and put on *The Office*, while you smoke a joint and relax. Blowjob is boring, but a back rub is fucking orgasmic—I’ll go down on a woman like Comcast service during a storm, if she suggests staying in on a weekend night and catching up on video games or Netflix. Sex, nudity, drugs

and mayhem come around often, but relaxation and silence are fucking golden.

We Hate Everything In Your iPod

This is usually the deal breaker. I call it, “the aux cord discussion.” Most couples worry about when to say “I love you” or if children are a possibility. Me? It’s a four-hour lecture on the importance of talk radio, obscure Tom Waits records and a particular YouTube video titled “Six Hours Of Relaxing Alpha Waves For Studying.” Yes, I know every... single...word...to the latest song by Nikki B feat. Lil’ A\$AP. Yes, I enjoyed (insert semi-hipsterish, but still good artist, i.e. M.I.A. here) the first eleventy-thousand times I was forced to play (insert played-out single here). But, strip clubs have ruined their music for me. Do you like Snoop Dogg? Ever seen a group of dudes in MAGA hats drop hard-R N-bombs while rapping along to

him? I have. How about Lana Del Ray? Isn’t she the right balance of aesthetic and pop? Well, how about six hours of her, in a row, while trying to stay awake? I’m pretty sure that Tool is a good band, but I wouldn’t be able to tell you after working as a strip club DJ, for the same reason as Lana, but add to that forced discussions with out-of-money patrons, who hang around by the DJ booth and argue the band’s merit. Every DJ has war stories like this. Please don’t make us re-live them by flipping through your Skrillex-filled iPod. Let us enjoy our talk radio on long drives and, wait...where you going?

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#365DaysOfLove



LOVE IN A PLAIN BROWN ENVELOPE: BY JAIME DUNKLE

All you need is love. Love is like oxygen. Love is a slug. Love is the drug.

So, let's celebrate the star of emotions all year, instead of just for one day. I want #365DaysOfLove to counteract the divisive, dismissive and depraved realities we all face on some level. You heard of "kill 'em with kindness," and now, "lull 'em with love." Calling *out* versus calling *in*. Stepping in front of yourself, to redirect anything but love. Spread your love. Love is the answer.

Love restores the body/mind/soul complex. It heals and sustains life. Research shows that love lowers blood pressure and extends longevity. People live for it and they die without it.

Love hurts. Love cuts. I hope to love with a whole heart, and without expectation, beyond mutual respect and trust, instead of screaming expletives and highjacking relationships. My love needs work.

Be warned: love is dynamic.

"Nor let the fools mistake love; for there are Love and love. There is the dove and there is the serpent. Choose ye well!" says Aleister Crowley in *The Book Of The Law*.

I'm no Crowleyan or Thelemite, but the above quote sums up my overall concept of love. At the heart of the many forms of love, it's essentially split in two: transcendent love and transgressive love. The dove is unconditional love and the serpent conditions love under its inane and base restrictions. Both have their place.

Philosophically speaking, there are about eight main variations of love. The following list of loves comes from the ancient Greeks and modern psychology. Eros through Stor-

age appeared in the article, "These Are The 7 Types Of Love," in *Psychology Today* (2016). Other internet lists add "mania"—my guess is *Psychology Today* didn't want to include the flipside of love beyond Ludas. I'm a realist, so I've included it and added an extra, "tough" love, which (hopefully) impels one toward resiliency and exaltation.

Love In A Plain Numbered List

1. Eros: Carnal delight. The s-e-x. Pleasure.
2. Philia: Unwavering kinship. Your fam who are actually just your close friends.
3. Ludus: Meaningless play. All the flirts live here.
4. Pragma: Unbreakable commitment and matrimony. That old couple you see everywhere who make you fear dying empty and alone.
5. Philatuaia: Self-compassion and self-preservation. Not to be confused with selfish jerks.
6. Agápe: Spiritual love and compassion, for all sentient beings. A whole lotta love.
7. Storage: Inner circle and community. Your literal family.
8. Mania: Fatal attraction and obsessiveness. Inbox creepers.
- 9: Tough: Absence for the sake of growth. Over it.

My spin: These variations of love fall under the two categories of dove-serpent: unconditional-conditional.

Eros, Ludas, Mania and maybe even some of Tough loves lean toward conditional. The ab-

sence of physical attraction won't result in Eros or Ludas, unless intoxication takes control. Mania wouldn't care if certain conditions weren't being met—otherwise, we'd have no cyberstalking. Tough love first had to fumble through codependency.

Philia, Pragma, Philatuaia, Agápe and Storage manifest unconditionally. Loyal, lasting bonds, self-preservation and deep love for all life break free from conditions—either due to time and history or an innate rejection of expectation and return. Here, love has no trans-actuality. Love is a free-for-all.

I'm not making any sweeping judgments about the nuances of unconditional versus conditional loves. I'm merely pointing out the evident paradigm. I want to do away with higher/lower concepts and prefer to look at these love nuances as cycles that intertwine our lives. The unification of opposites alchemizes the internal and external. Therefore, know your love variants and how to transform them for a single end goal: unity for the sake of #365DaysOfLove.

I challenge you to meditate on love every day. Love for the freedom to access this adult magazine. Love for dead rockstars. Love for your third baby mama, your synth years and your parole. Love daily. Love above will.

Love appeared in this article 56 times, if you count this sentence.

Jaime Dunkle mixes the profound and the profane in her prose, with an altruism that stems from her background as a journalist. Her stories range from fiction to personal narrative and often blur between the two. Stripped will also be available in book form, eventually. For more info, go to JaimeDunkle.com or [@JaimeDunkle](https://twitter.com/JaimeDunkle). No creepers allowed.

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12963 SW Pacific Hwy | (503) 430-5140
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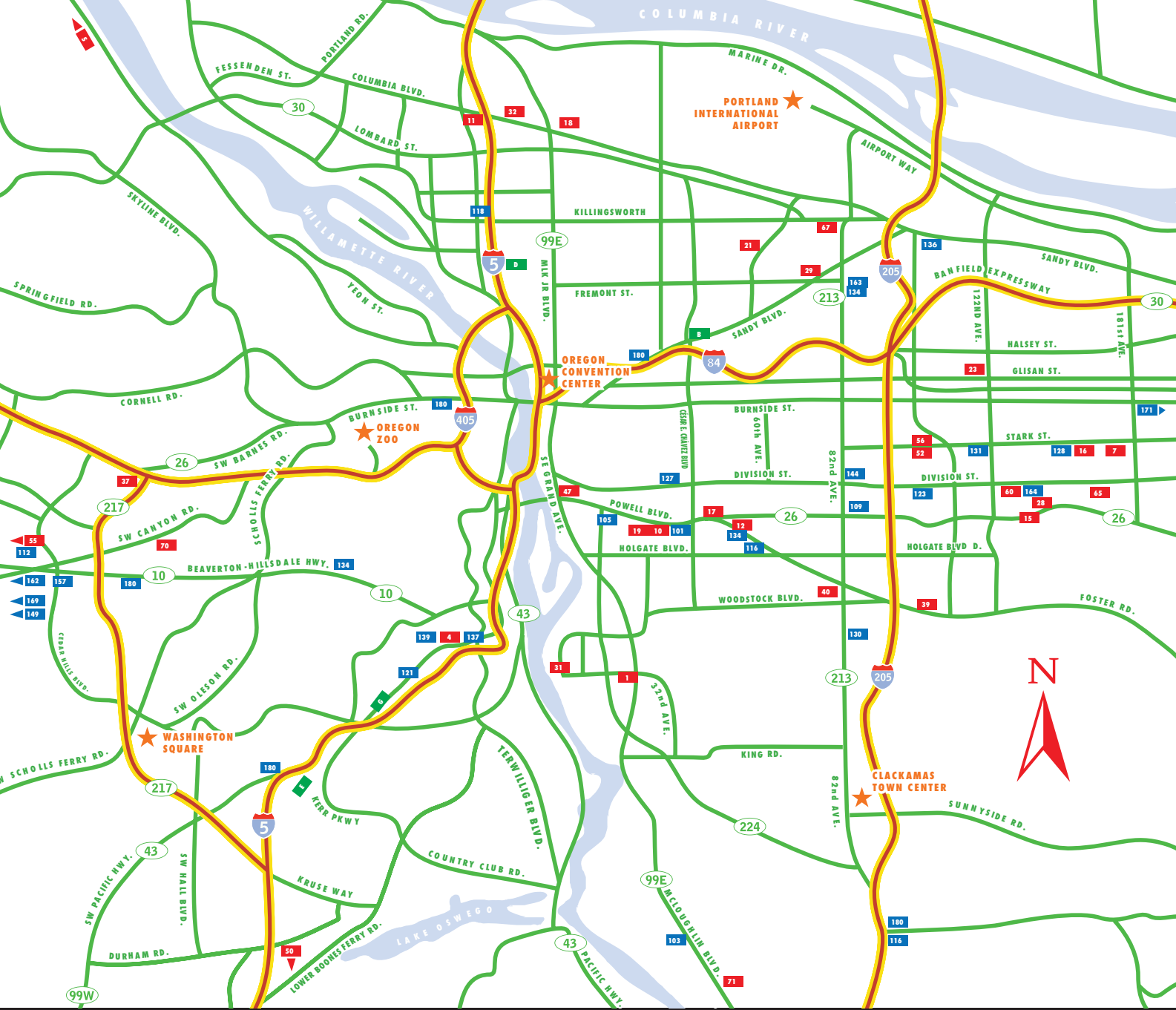
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ROMANTIC GIFTS FOR THE MODERN DAY

BY ESMERALDA RUPP-SPANGLE

Valentine's Day leaves us all in a clamor to please our intentions—it's an endless heap of stressful questions. Do you go classic, with heart-shaped boxes of chocolate and red roses? Do you go sexy, with unicorn horn dildos, edible underwear and pheromone snorting dust? The choices are limitless, and, yet, so easy to get wrong. Getting the wrong girl a fancy set of handcuffs could net you a prison sentence and a restraining order in this climate. Walking the line between socially aware and naughty is the key, these days, to charming your heart's desire. Knowing your partner's kinks and preferences is key, so, if you've only just met, keep it to a bottle of vodka and a glow-in-the-dark dong [ED: I recommend the fine folks at GlowFuckYourself.com for this very thing]. Things happen. If a date isn't super solicitous about their proclivities, sometimes some nefarious habits can slip through. Things like being a junkie, believing in God or being vegan can really wilt an initial boner and dampen romantic fervor to a limp approximation of a phallus. Nevertheless, everyone deserves a gift and there's a gift for everyone—especially if you want to bone them.

For the red state lady—the woman who has Paul Ryan's shirtless calendar in her dining room—you need something truly special. Why not indulge her with a Donald Trump-brand dental dam? Do you want a wall between you and the puss? We've got the wall for you! Novelty brick printed—for irony and extra sensation (made in Mexico).

For the dreadlocked, vegan manchild? Nothing. Why do you insist on seeing him? We know you're really set on David, but good lord...he smells like weed and farts...and won't stop talking about how much the suffering of other animals affects his sleep. If you really want to get him something he'll treasure, buy him a poncho made entirely from

recycled bus tickets and never call him again. The most efficient experimental green electricity is powered by human sorrow, and if you message him again, you'll just make him stronger. Your libido can be indulged by almost anyone else. So, back up, friend.

Does your gender-fluid partner leave you perplexed? They can seem so innocent, and somehow, so dirty! Sure, you can do your best by getting a dual Fleshlight-dildo combination, if the occasion calls for it. But, why not go where the river flows and buy them an *It's Pat!* Awkward Erotica Kit? We've never been totally clear on what's actually in these, but we found one on eBay, so they definitely exist and we know you'll get just as much fun from it—whether or not you're Jack or Jill. It will almost certainly cause some level of offense, but that's half the fun. And, if Pat doesn't make you laugh, you're a cold, dead monster inside.

For your comedian boyfriend: give yourself a stack of cash. The fun thing about this one is that comedians already kind of hate capitalism, acquisition, themselves and pretty much everything else in the universe. So, finding a nihilistic, self-absorbed funny man is no big thing. Once you've nailed one down, just feed and abuse it now and then—it'll work out great. Every Valentine's Day, pay yourself a stipend from your stack of cash for tolerating their disposition. The great thing is they won't even begrudge you for it.

If you're looking to woo a single parent (or, are a single parent on the lookout for yourself), why not get something for the kids? Something like three months at a lower-middle-tier summer camp or enrollment to boarding school? There's nothing like temporarily ridding yourself of parental obligations to make fucking your way through February a plausible scenario.

For the socially aware proselytizer that you are mysteriously interested in, there's nothing that says, "I tolerate your opinions," better than ethically sourced, organic, fair-trade chocolates—infused with just enough drugs to dull the need to constantly talk about politics.

It's important to remember that there are some serious problems with any erotic gift. How can you guarantee that she'll actually use it? How can you be sure he won't report you? Just because someone consented to a conversation, doesn't mean they want an erotic subscription box mailed to their work every month. Beyond a general recommendation to tread and plow cautiously in this climate, we have a good "gift for yourself" this year—it's a treacherous landscape recently, so consider wearing a Go Pro 24/7. No one can accuse you of anything if you film every moment of your life, and it's certainly a conversation starter! Having a camera strapped to your head at all times can make it weird and occasionally experimental—but, never worse. At least you can prove that wasn't you puking up Valentine's Day wine everywhere.

The best romantic gift has always been—and, remains—a good, solid trip to Pound Town. Aside from whatever else happens on Valentine's Day, that's top priority. We're 98% sure that there was an ancient Mesopotamian god, who spent time punishing people that didn't debauch enough around this time of year. So, think positive and keep at it.

Esmeralda Rupp-Spangle cannot be found on social media, because she's actually just a pseudonym for three small dogs stacked on top of each other, wearing human clothes (and dogs don't understand how to use the internet).

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see how the hot dogs are made, you won't want them. Same with available sex. Take away the thrill of the hunt and the predator becomes bored.

Your Relationship Looks Awful

You come into the bar. You ply yourselves with booze. You then hash out all your relationship problems—in public. I do not want to hear this crap, but the acoustics of the bar shove it right into my ear hole. You do this most times when you come in. Can you think of fewer things more uncomfortable, than hearing what should be the private problems of two people in an intimate relationship? I hear about jealousy, self-esteem problems, sex issues, control—all of it makes me cringe. It makes me never want to be in a standard or traditional relationship again. Those of us trapped in service are the

forced third wheel. If you've ever been stuck in that sort of situation, you know how awkward it is...now, throw alcohol on top of it. I really don't want to have a window into your bedroom and its particular issues. Because you're making me, I can say that it looks really fucking unattractive. Why would I sign up for that? To hang my happiness on the mood or choices of another person? Why would I want to deal with someone else's issues, when I do it full-time for work? Every night when you take your difficult, drunk partner home for the evening, I sigh with relief that it's not me.

People Can't Deal With What We Do

A lot of insecure people can't deal with the reality that is the service industry. We are not superheroes or celebrities, but we are in our own right. All eyes

are on us. The attention is focused and narrowed on our faces. We have something someone desperately wants and we are the gatekeepers. We say if you get it or not (and when). That power, and that elusive edge over others naturally makes us wanted. Sexy. Desired. When you date the gatekeeper, you will feel small. You will sit, bar-side and feel intimidated by how many names and people your sweetie knows. You will feel intimidated by the looks of the thirsty people—thirsty in every sense of the word. Your beloved is associated with an addiction. Therefore, they are addicting by psychology. It's hard for most to watch.

partner to take on. No, you can't go to that concert on Friday night. That costs you \$300, if you take the night off. Going on that weekend trip means you have to go without making money those days as well as saving up for it. Double saving. Most people have sick pay. Vacation time. 401k. Health insurance. Anyone in service has none of those. Who would want that as a partner? Very fucking few, it turns out.

Being Around People All The Time Sucks

Too much of anything is bad. If you work in a pizza restaurant full time, the last thing you want on your day off is another pizza—even though pizza is delicious. People are the same way. I

bathroom floor and leave it for the next person to discover. Sometimes, they drink too much and pee their pants. Sometimes, they get drunk and slap their boyfriends—everyone looks the other way, because a girl did it to a guy and that makes it okay somehow. People are the worst, and being around it full-time will hammer it home. When I clock out, I want to go home alone and smell my lavender Plug-In. The last thing I want to do is take one of these people home and fuck them.

One Is The Loneliest Number

Working in service, you experience a lot of things that are out of your control. You cannot control when you have to 86 someone. You cannot control

SERVICE INDUSTRY ARE SINGLE

BY MISS TINI

The Simple Logistics

Bar hours are tough. If you're in service and with your significant other, you will have shitty hours that the average person won't want to hang with. This means nights, weekends, working until the very early mornings. You'll drink and eat at strange times. You'll have insomnia. You'll drink more than most people are comfortable with and you will probably have an unhealthy lifestyle. You won't have a clear idea of what your cash flow will be. You will probably be a workaholic. Working in service is almost like gambling. It's a rush. You work a shift and walk with cash in hand. A lot of it if you're good at what you do. You have a weird comradeship with your co-workers that outsiders looking in may see as strange. All of this makes you a difficult

have regulars that complain that they work from home and can't get out as much as they want. That's why they online date and come to the bar. I have the opposite problem. I see as many people in my work week as a toll booth operator. Exaggeration, but it's pretty close. People are gross. They smell bad. They don't bathe or wear too much perfume—to the point that I can taste it. They spit when they talk. They fart openly, next to unsuspecting people and don't wash their hands. They have dirty fingernails and hair. They say things that make you cringe. They treat others around them poorly and you are a unwilling witness. They squeeze a lime into their drink and throw it on the bar for you to clean. They stick a wad of gum inside their glass that you have to pick off. They throw up on the

when someone gets in a fight or spews their bodily fluids all over your bathroom. You cannot control a co-worker who decides to be lazy or be drunk on the job. You can't control if you'll be dead or slammed. You can't control if you come in to open the bar and your owner is passed out in a booth. You can control what you come home to. You decide what your life looks like outside of work. In service, you may over-control the aspects you can. You may work out too much, have an eating disorder or be hiding a secret drug habit no one knows about. You could gamble, shop too much or have internet obsessions. The one thing. The ONE fucking thing you CAN control is being in any sort of relationship. Most of us are single and this is why.

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TOP REASONS VALENTINE'S DAY IS STUPID



BY BRAD COX

Every year, corporations use commercials, billboards, Facebook ads and any other method available, in order to sell you guilt about being a shitty partner to your significant other. Everything from overpriced jewelry, to candy and stuffed animals, price-surged to maximize guilt and profits. Add that to the fact that Valentine's Day is my son's birthday, and what you get, is a really good math problem that results in "fuck this day to death." So, here we go...

1) I Don't Like Remembering That I'm Not Romantic

I'm fucking terrible at romance. I'm not good at buying gifts, I haven't bought a card in fucking years, and I honestly don't know when the last time I bought one was. Sure,

I tell the people I love that I love them, and of course I buy people I'm contractually obligated to gifts, but when it comes down to the come down, it's hard as fuck to figure out what to get. My wife just likes preserved dead stuff and human teeth and my girlfriend just likes Skyrim and Zelda. Literally, none of the things that stores have during this "holiday" are useful or fitting for what the women I love want to receive as gifts. Add to that the fact that I just spent more money than I have on presents a month ago and...well...I'm very, very fucked.

2) I Really, Really Hate Being Advertised To

I spend extra money so that I don't see ads on YouTube, I avoid over-the-air, regular television and I (mostly) don't look at Facebook anymore—all because I fucking hate ads. The easiest way to say why, is I'm very aware the influence mind control has over people and how they feel. I have a bipolar disorder and my mind can't take being told it isn't good enough, just because my TV doesn't have enough Ps or Ks. Or, maybe I'm a piece of shit, because I either can't afford fancy jewelry or I just lack the desire to burn good money on rocks from the ground that don't explode (I'm not talking about you, Uranium). The only purpose for advertising is to give you an inferiority complex through subtle and effective mind control. So, of course this time of year has more ads for heart-shaped candy than antidepressants. Fuck this shit, am I right?

3) Why In God's Name Did My Wife Have My Son On This Day?

As anyone with a kid knows, Christmas is like a giant buttfuck at a prison orgy. Literally everything a 13-year-old kid wants opens up at around \$100—which is a lot of damn money when you make \$14 an hour. I just recently had to fill up the bottom of a tree and some weird, oversized socks with stuff, and now, I have to get this ungrateful brat more shit? You can sometimes get around Valentine's Day with the ladies, by pretending to be on some moral high ground about manufactured holidays—but, that shit doesn't fly with your kids on their birthday...it just doesn't. At least, this year, I was smart and knew I should avoid buying at least a couple things at Christmas, so that I'd have some shit on deck for my kid's birthday. By the way, if you

ever grow up and want to read dad's writing, I love you, son—even though you're a greedy, ungrateful, little fuck.

4) I Hate Leaving The House (Except To Get Pizza)

I really hate people, which is a common affliction for folks to have these days. I do not like going shopping and I really do not like doing it at busy stores. Dealing with mental illness, for me, means that I go to work—and that's about it. Just doing that every day drains me physically and emotionally, to the extent that coming home to a family who wants to talk to me is too much, let alone going shopping for gifts. I don't even go out much to pursue my own hobbies or other interests. I just want to spend every minute I'm not at work emotionally preparing myself to go back to work.

Nothing says
"You're special"
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sentiment written by
someone else.

Like, er, this one.

5) I'm Not Convinced People Actually Care Anymore

Anymore, most people in my age range are pretty indifferent to corporate holidays. But, I think when you're in a romantic relationship, all parties involved put on a show to pretend like this shit is important to them—I'm not even really sure why. It's probably tradition. Culturally, we as a people need tradition; we don't want it—we need it. So, I think a lot of things we do are just subconsciously done to retain tradition. It's also probably the reason all these fucking racists are so emboldened by our current president. We want things to stay the same, and we want to be able to mark the passage of time by how the same things stay. Well, things are always changing and maybe it's time we get rid of racists, sexism, bigots and Valentine's Day.

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DATE NIGHT AT THE STRIP CLUB



Thirteenth-century Romans celebrated the holiday known as Valentine's Day by literally hitting each other with animal skin carcasses. During this "celebration," an animal was sacrificed and women who wanted to be "blessed" with fertility were hit by the carcass. These days, Valentine's Day is a lot simpler, with lovers reveling in cards, candy, flowers, romantic dinners and...couples' strip club nights?

According to sex counselor Sari Cooper, for couples who hit up strip clubs together, it can be a very positive experience. Some clubs have even added couples-only features to their menu of services, as well as private, couples-only rooms.

"Here's the thing, as long as a role play or fantasy or sex adventure is a fully consensual experience and one partner isn't feeling emotionally coerced or threatened, it can be really fun," said Cooper on BravoTV.com. "Some people have fantasies and they just want to talk about or think about it...then, there are people who like to act them out."

One of the perks of being a couple means the opportunity to explore sexuality in a safe space. Typically, strip clubs aren't places where you find couples getting to know one another. But, we live in an age where hardcore adult content can be accessed with a swipe. So, the strip club in comparison is a relatively tame move.

"Because it's a professional experience and there are boundaries associated with

it, the couple can say 'this person doesn't have anything to do with our lives outside these four walls,'" said Cooper. "If you trust one another to say we're going to keep this agreement and trust in a non-monogamous activity, it can be wonderful adding a new adventure to your coupledness. The foundation to any sort of healthy sex life is trust."

Here are some of the benefits...

1. Instant threesome—it's a chance to improve your sex life with the presence of a third person. Even if the third person is only a lingering memory in bed later, you still have the experience and your imagination.

2. Instant foreplay—you are watching beautiful, naked dancing women—together. Naked. Beautiful. Women. Together.

3. Great food—okay, not every club is ideal for a cozy meal together, but you must take advantage of the fact that we have a ton of clubs in the Pacific Northwest. And, more than ten of those clubs have caught the eye of *Bon Appetite* magazine. If you are in the mood for steak, noodles, prime rib or Mexican—there's a club with a good menu for whatever is on your palate.

4. The taboo factors—for some reason, nothing seems to spice up the mundane as much as something forbidden. While strippers and sex work continue to push towards mainstream acceptance, it is still

seen as something beyond the pale.

5. Freeing your inhibitions—the general atmosphere of most strip clubs is all about fantasy. Lighting, music, alcohol and scantily clad, lovely ladies are all elements of that fantasy. Date night at the strip club can be a way to free routine inhibitions that you just can't do at the movies.

6. Breaking out of your routine—familiarity often breeds contempt and strip clubs are far from mundane. One memorable date night at the club could keep your relationship coasting on good vibes for months.

7. You might be inspired—whether it's a by a dance move, sexy attire or the shape of someone's legs or ass, the experience can motivate you for the better. Being a stripper isn't just about physical attributes. It involves physical prowess, endurance and enough self-confidence to work a stage and deal with the public—it's hard not to be inspired!

If you do decide to make the club a couples' thing, be prepared with lots of cash for the dancers, always be respectful and have fun!



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Stripped IN PORNLAND

FLASH FICTION INSPIRED BY REAL AND RUMORED EVENTS IN THE PORTLAND STRIP CLUB INDUSTRY

By Jaime Dunkle

Drug Of Choice

Lance gangles down Burnside. He vandalizes a building with a pentagram in Sharpie, on the way to work. A passerby mean-mugs him and his sunken eyes. Lance keeps on, flicks his cigarette into the street and lights another one. He puffs on the second ciggie and throws it at a car, when he yanks the club door open.

Lance picks up bottles and vacuums the floors. He wipes down the rack that wraps around the stage.

A patron enters the dim bar. A 20-something in a pink, button-down shirt with disheveled hair.

"We open in 30 minutes," says the bartender from behind the mirror-walled bar. He polishes glasses with a towel that glows in the blacklight.

"But, the door wasn't locked," says the early bird.

The bartender points to the door. The guy grumbles outside, as a dancer in a sun hat swings a flower-covered suitcase through the door, simultaneously. In the narrow entryway, she removes her sunglasses with opera-gloved hands.

"Watch it," she says.

All the chairs stand on tabletops, so Misha sits at the bar.

"You're early today," says the bartender. "That's a first. I didn't think you'd get here until an hour after your shift started."

"Skip my stage fee as a reward," she says and plucks olives from the fruit tray between the brass well rails.

"No one skips the stage fee," says the bartender, as he flips the tray lid on her fingers.

"A girl's gotta try."

Misha floats to the dressing room. She plunks down her suitcase at a vanity station. A frame of bulbs shine around the vanity mirror. She disrobes, but leaves on the sun hat. She changes into a halter top and mini-skirt—no panties. She's already wearing go-go boots.

She heads to the bathroom, clutching a small pouch. She sits on the closed toilet. Black mold smears across the shower doors. She opens the pouch on her lap and rolls down one of the satin gloves. A constellation of bruised scabs. She presses to find an entrance—nothing's left. She taps along blown-out veins. She finds a spot between spots. She fidgets a needle, half full with a light-brown liquid and stabs it in.

Connie knocks on the bathroom door that has notes to/from strippers pinned all over it. "Time's up," Connie says. "My turn." She knocks again. "Girl, I'm telling you—I got to take a piss."

Misha opens the door and shoulders Connie in a stumble. She slaps on her sunglasses and applies more lipstick at the station.

Misha drifts across the checkered stage. She glides around the pole. The early bird, having returned, gawks, while he eats bacon on the rack. He smacks and chews the salted gristle. Misha slow-motion twirls to post-punk on the opposite side of the stage, with her back to him. She scales the wall of mirrors, instead of paying mind to him and waves her torso to the reflection of herself.

Lance DJs the next song without getting on the mic using a corny voice to say trite garbage to a room who ignores it. His reluctance to broadcast to the club makes him popular among the dancers. Connie grabs his ass in the DJ booth that faces the stage.

Misha, Connie and Lance smoke cigarettes outside the back door, just after closing. They agree to party at Connie and Lance's. Connie eyeballs Misha during the stroll over to the apartment, but Misha misses it.

The three of them sit on the floor near a coffee table and an entertainment center. No seating exists in the whole apartment. No chairs. No couch. Not even a cushion.

They take turns flipping through a CD book. Lance picks Metallica's *Ride The Lightning*, Connie picks *Exit Planet Dust* by Chemical Brothers and Misha picks Leonard Cohen's *Songs Of Love And Hate*. They squabble over who goes first. Lance demands he does.

"It's my CD changer and my CDs," he says.

"Just throw them in a shuffle on random," Misha says.

Lance complies. They play cards cross-legged on a stained carpet. Two tracks into their Metallica, Chemical Brothers and Leonard Cohen mega mix, Lance smokes from a glass pipe. A plume of sweet burnt-hair smoke invades the seatless living room, filled with empty beer bottles and food wrappers. The medicine cabinet, charred-sugar cloud wafts to Misha.

"Meth? You people are nasty." She snatches her bag off the coffee table. A capped used needle rolls out. Connie points it at Misha.

"You're one to talk," Connie says. Waves it at Lance.

Misha tears the needle from Connie's thin fingers.

"At least it's not meth," Misha says.

"Is there really a difference?" Lance asks.

Misha surveys the seatless apartment full of trash and mildewed dishes. She stomps to the hall outside.

"Meth heads!" she shouts in the doorway of the apartment.

Connie pops out and decks Misha across the jaw. Misha's hat droops in her face. Lance jumps between them. Misha swings at Connie and strikes Lance, instead. Lance cocks back his hand. Misha flinches. Lance laughs, then grabs Connie's shirt, tosses her in the apartment, follows her and slams the door. Misha crouches in the hall, dry heaves in the corner and leaves.

Jaime Dunkle mixes the profound and the profane in her prose, with an altruism that stems from her background as a journalist. Her stories range from fiction to personal narrative and often blur between the two. Stripped will also be available in book form, eventually. For more info, go to: JaimeDunkle.com or @JaimeDunkle. No creepers allowed.

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notes from the rap game

by Wombstretcha the magnificent

For a time—beginning in the mid-2000s and ending in the early 2010s—I was a rapper.

I'm a white guy from Portland, with about as much rhythm and flow as one could reasonably expect from that pedigree. My ridiculous and bombastic pen name, Wombstretcha The Magnificent, was originally my "rap name," as I—and my associate—set out to more-or-less lampoon rap music. And, for a few years, our act was met with modest notoriety at home and abroad. Our diligent *Exotic* editor, Ray (then "Statutory" Ray), was my cohort in this endeavor and has asked me to reflect on it in order to fill space this month. What follows, is some of what I remember most about the ins-and-outs of being an active "musician," during the time in which Wombstretcha The Magnificent put out seven albums, wrote 120-some-odd tracks, played hundreds of shows and did a handful of regional tours.

1. Writing songs—or, at least rap songs— isn't terribly difficult

Ray and I would just spend time sitting around at diners and greasy bars, writing down titles, with no additional context. Later, independently, we'd write the rest of the song around those titles. If you don't care that you have a song called "Gravy, Without The Lumps," that ends up having less to do with gravy and more to do with Sergeant Slaughter, well...there ya go.

2. Music people are generally shiftless imbeciles

It could be said that this applies to most people, but it seems like it's over-represented in musicians. My best guess as to why, is that it has something to do with the old notion that you can be catapulted to stardom overnight with very little effort. Here's a mini-quiz:

Can you show up on time, after promising to do so on many occasions, with the time and date set well in advance? No? One point.

Can you competently execute simple tasks, like moving an object from a vehicle to the inside of a building and not leaving that object on the street? No? One point.

Can you remember to bring everything you need for you, personally, to play your role in the act you're performing? No? One point.

Will you fuss over petty details every time something doesn't line up to perfectly meet

your needs? Yes? One point.

Will you help clean up and load out? No? One point.

Will you drink (or steal) all the beer in the green room, while everyone else is doing sound check? Yes? Five points.

Are you completely incapable of doing anything useful, yet have a diva attitude? Ten points!

If you scored more than two points, then I think, perhaps, the music scene is for you.

I don't generally fold venue hosts or sound staff into the "music people" label, but it's also my observation that they're more apt to have unpleasant attitudes for no discernible reason—even when you're pleasant and accommodating. This is possibly just a consequence of interacting with so many musicians, but, sorry I asked you to do your job, Scotty. Damn.

3. Rappers don't have enough songs wherein they introduce new dances anymore

This seems like a damn shame, if you ask me.

4. Drugs: a lot or a bunch?

People equate drug use with creativity, given that so many great acts have either done, endorsed or straight-up written entire songs about them. Truth be told, you're probably fine without all that, but then you don't get to say you have a "cocaine album" (or, better yet, a "cocaine era").

5. Having fans is weird

There are people who like your output so much, that not only do they pay to have it, but they also will remember things about it that you, yourself, have forgotten. I was always amazed that anyone actually listened to our stuff at all, let alone obsessively memorized it. "Hey, I love your rhymes. Are you gonna play the track 'Ass-Kicking Genie,' from your limited-release album, *B-Sides & Miscariages*, tonight?" My response was usually, "I had a limited-release B-side album? Oh, shit, I did."

6. Gaining exposure means going apeshit

Everyone who actually wants to "make it," hustles like Larry Flynt on bath salts—get-

ting their product out there for people to see, while fighting every last other person doing the same thing. This leads to wild ways to try and get your stuff in people's faces.

One time, Ray and I went to a mall in Portland, during the Xmas season, with gift-wrapped and gift-bagged copies of our CD. We'd just leave them places where it seemed like they could have been accidentally forgotten by a shopper. We'd watch, as people would pick them up and pocket them, assuming they'd been recently purchased. These were certainly people who would have likely turned down a free CD, had it been offered. I suppose there's a lesson here: if people think they're getting something that costs money, but for free, they're more likely to want it more than something offered *as* free. Assign your own value to your product.

7. Don't be a rip-off

Being outliers in the rap world—with our gimmick being that we were intentionally ridiculous, over-the-top sleazeballs who rap about barbecuing children and abusing Dimetapp cough syrup—we were often lumped in with people like the Juggalos—you know, Insane Clown Posse followers. This never bothered me much, since I don't really care one way or the other about ICP, but the ground-level people who do "horrorcore rap" are, with few (but, notable) exceptions, all just the tepid orange drink to ICP & Company's fresh-squeezed O.J. Why would anyone want a diluted, derivative version of the same thing, that is less good?

Even if your ideas are stupid (like mine), at least they're yours. Do we need another band that's pretentious like Tool, but has worse music? Or, another rap track from someone shoutin' out Tupac, even though he died before they were born? DO WE, REALLY??? You don't have to be yourself, but at least be interesting on your own merit.

That's really all I can fit here, though there's much more. Maybe next time.

Good luck out there.

I remain, retired.

Wombstretcha The Magnificent is a writer, general all-around jerk, ointment critic, and, of course, a retired rapper from Portland, OR. He can be found on Twitter as @Wombstretcha503, at Wombstretcha.com, and on Facebook and MeWe by name.



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