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# WHAT NOT TO



THE MONTHLY

## COLUMN

BY WOMBSTRETCHA THE MAGNIFICENT

It's November—the month where pretty much anyone who got knocked up on Valentine's Day is going to be birthing their larvae. So, since it's child havin' season, everyone should be aware of the consequences of their actions. No, I don't mean drinking moonshine and smoking meth during pregnancy—though, that carries its own set of issues. I mean, what to name your child. This is one of the the first and most important decisions a parent can make and so many people do it absolutely wrong. Yes, you might deem that, for reasons formulated in your hazy cloud of late-pregnancy whimsy, it's time to give your new child a completely unique name—one that violates all the unwritten (and, many of the written) laws of human decency. Read this guide, before you curse your child with a name that makes them wince when strangers try to pronounce it (or, makes it seem like you really wanted a dog, not a baby).

I'll break it down into sections—categories, if you will—in which I cover the don'ts and, uh...the other don'ts of child naming. It should be noted, that

any of the names I've mentioned are names I've looked up in a database and not just shit I'm making up, that nobody would ever use. This is shit that, unfortunately, people do use. If you wish to call my bluff, there are many such databases, and if you want to search how popular the name Cobra is for a child, it's easy to do (BTW, I am not opposed to naming a child Cobra).

### White Trash Names

"Oh, no you didn't," I hear you say, bemoaning the breakdown of these names as somehow racially-motivated. Well, I did. But, in 2019, we live in a world of opportunity, where people of all races, creeds or colors can be white trash. Don't agree? I'm sorry you're a bigot. Anyhow, avoid the influence of the trailer park, when picking a name



for your offspring. What do I mean by this? Well, first on the list are double

names: Jimmy-Ray, Carla-Sue and Peggy-Lynn...that sort of thing. Further points are deducted if the double name is a truncation of a proper first name—or, even TWO truncated first names, like Bobby-Jim or Roxy-Jo. Also, for girls, try to avoid names that end in "-lene," such as Lurlene, Jolene or Durlene. Names which sound like a cruel-hearted woman in a country song generally reflect more on you as parents than on the kid (until they grow up). Seriously, you never hear a country song about a woman named Penelope. For boys, perhaps eschew things that sound like hunting dogs, such as Trigger or Montana, unless you really need them running through underbrush to get that duck you shot.

### Hippie Bullshit

We get it. You're in touch with nature, milk your own almonds and do rails of essential oils instead of cocaine. Just because you feel like the freest of spirits, doesn't mean you need to brand your young one as the product of your lifestyle. Bad names include those that ape some distant culture you fetishize as epitomizing your beliefs, like American Indians, regular Indians or Tibetan monks. Little Tenzin will thank you to not be named that. Worse, are names that are just natural phenomena or animals, like Rainbow, Waterfall, Gazelle(!) or Canyon. Also, try not to name your kids after the fact that you smoke weed. Mary Jane might be a perfectly fine name, but think of the twins, Dab and Shatter, who won't fare so well.

# NAME YOUR CHILD

## Urban Silliness

This is like the opposite of hippie bullshit. A lot of names are just seemingly created by an arrangement of flowery syllables, put in one of those lottery ball blower devices and inked onto a birth certificate. Just throw a bunch of "De," "Da," "Le," "La," "Tre" and "Tay" in there, then cram some Roman-sounding suffixes at the end, like "-ius," "-cus," "-tia" and "-via." Also, toss a "Q" in there, for good measure. Can we ever have enough Qs in a name? I actually worked with a guy named De'Troit once. He was a tall redhead, somehow, and wasn't from Detroit. I don't know if he hated his name or not, but I think he'd probably rather have been named Fred or something.

## Deliberate Misspellings

We get it, you want to set your child apart from the crowd, but you're too lazy to apply the above-mentioned trash, hippie or urban bullshit to your newborn. That's when you take it upon yourself to start swapping vowels, substituting consonants and adding a "Y" where an "I" used to be (or vice versa). So, you could have just named your kid Allison, like a normal person, but no, behold the adorable little Alyssyn, who will spend a statistically significant portion of her life spelling her name out to clerks and registration or admissions people. Also, it's no longer the mid-1990s, so please don't thrust an unwanted "X" into a conventional name. Wee Jaxon will appreciate not sounding like the bad guy from a two-season television show titled *Xtreme Something*.

## Complete Confusion

You know, they make baby name books for a reason. Giving a kid a popular name doesn't mean they won't stick out or be taken notice of in their lives. It just means that it won't be because they have a goofy fucking name. Don't name them for famous



philosophers or authors. Don't name them after characters from popular movies from your childhood (with an exception made for Falcor). The basic rule is, don't otherwise give them something they'll never live up to, because then the alternative is being a junkie (and nobody ever says they want to be a junkie when they grow up).

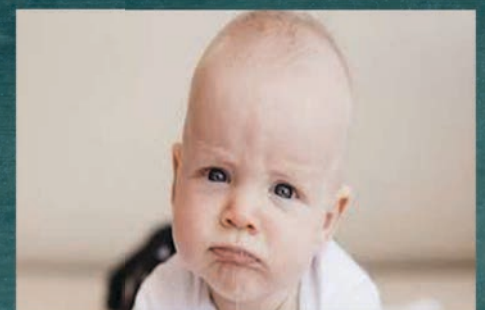
An anecdote: I was in a grocery store a while ago and heard that plaintive cry of a mother attempting to rein in a disobedient child, but something was just off. "Archimedes! Get OVER here!" that lady shouted. I turned to look, and the hipsterest hipster woman I'd ever seen was scolding a typical-looking (but, oddly named) toddler, dressed all in white, running roughshod through the store. I let out the quietest snicker I possibly could and immediately got a death glare from this woman, who then nudged her husband to follow suit...giving me the most depressed, weary look of modest hostility I think I've ever seen in an adult. See, it's not just the kids who pay the cost of your misguided narcissism.

I apologize if your name is any of my examples. Blame your parents.

Name responsibly.

Signed, a guy named "Wombstretcha."

*Wombstretcha The Magnificent is a novelty breakfast cereal antiquarian sitting on an unopened case of Urkel-Os, writer and retired rapper from Portland, OR. He can be found at Wombstretcha.com, on Twitter as @Wombstretcha503 and on Facebook (or MeWe) by name.*





# La Petite Mort

BY CLEMENTINE DARLING

Mortuary Transport Specialist was generally not the line of work passers-by suspected Charlotte to be engaged in. Though, to be fair, most people probably didn't often think of (or even know that) such a job title existed. Certainly, in some dusty and disparaged dark corner of each person's mind, is the recognition that someone took care of the remains of their loved ones. Mostly, Charlotte understood that human beings preferred their cognition of the recently deceased to linger in the philosophical plane of the existence of an afterlife, and liked to think of the dead as frolicking through fields of wildflowers and kittens, not tucked betwixt stiff, white sheets, nor benighted by a body bag.

If they did happen to consider that there might be a person charged with the care and transport of their dearly departed, the images conjured were probably along the lines of Mary Shelley's monster—ghoulish and lum-

bering about, hunchbacked, sallowskinned and half-dead himself, having never seen daylight, cleverly collecting the dead in the Devil's hour, so as not to foul the pure and undisturbed psyches of the living.

It was exactly this line of thinking that left the widow mildly taken aback—but, mostly bemused by the appearance of the slight and nymphish blonde through the screen door on her late husband's doorstep. The seasons had just begun to turn from summer to autumn and a cool breeze blew a few crisp leaves into tiny, crackling tornadoes on the street. Though the widow was a modern woman—she held onto a few old-world superstitions. The mirrors had been covered, clocks stopped at the time of departure, with windows and front door left agape—a tradition she'd learned from her grandmother, meant to guide a spirit more rapidly into the afterworld, lest they become stranded in the con-

finer of their mortal dwelling for eternity.

The widow sat at a tall table—long-legged and feline-like. Appropriately draped head to toe in black, one red-bottomed pump dangled from her foot, a lipstick-stained cigarette swayed at her lacquered fingertips. Scotch in hand, dress left loose at the collar, she took a long pull on her cigarette and drew a finger to rest on her temple, smoky ribbons slid from between her lips, as she looked Charlotte slowly up and down—quietly commanding. She motioned Charlotte in with a wave of her honeyed hand.

Charlotte's appearance was that of a coquettish Tomboy in a black dress and Chuck Taylors—light curls played angelically around her pale, boyish face, framing her large, shy eyes. She stepped inside.

"I assume you're here from the funeral home? I would have expected some-

one with a little more stature."The widow chuckled softly, Charlotte blushed deeply and cast her gaze briefly downward. She'd only been working with the funeral home for six months, but in that time, she had witnessed a many-hued range of human emotion and response to grief—but, this...this was slightly different. The widow was flirtatious and it threw Charlotte off.

The widow adjusted herself on the stool, exposing a lace-topped stocking and a length of smooth, supple, caramel thigh. Charlotte tried to avert her eyes, but felt a heat quicken between her legs.

"He's in there. I haven't gone in since they called. The doctor called me to tell me he'd passed...I'd rather remember him as he was. You must think I'm awful."

Charlotte glanced up to give a smile and assure her it was fine.

"We've been estranged. I guess his mistress couldn't take the reality. So, they called me, I am still his wife, after all. At least the bar is stocked." She gave a sad, sideways smile and patted the seat next to her. "Come, have a drink with a widow, won't you? I won't tell—and he's not going anywhere, I promise you that."

Charlotte started to object—the widow raised her brow and straddled the stool, leaning towards her.

"Come now, there's nobody here to judge. I see that look, don't you worry—there'll be no trouble. Life's too short to follow the rules."

Charlotte exhaled and hoisted herself up onto the chair. The widow reached over, between her legs and pulled her closer in, without so much as looking over, pouring her a drink and gesturing towards the room, where the man that was supposed to be her cargo lay.

"It's funny, isn't it? One day, you're living life and the next it's just over with. Kinda makes you want to just say, 'fuck it' and go where the wind takes you."

Charlotte sipped her Scotch. It tasted smooth, earthy and expensive. The widow lifted another cigarette to her lips, her matchbook slipped from her hand and fluttered to the mahogany floor. Charlotte slid down from the stool to retrieve it and found herself on her knees, looking up the long expanse of the widow's silk-stockinged legs. She felt a smooth hand on her head—the widow ran her fingers through her hair and tickled the nape of her neck. She felt her skin quiver and flush—her nipples hardened and her petite breasts peered stiffly through her thin black dress. Goosebumps traveled the length of her body.

She licked her lips softly, without thinking and bit down slightly. The widow's finger traveled lightly along her temple, down her neck. "You sure

Without thinking, Charlotte closed her eyes and pulled the widow's finger into her mouth. She sucked long, hard, hungrily. She ran her tongue along the length and took the widow's hand in hers—she licked between each finger, suddenly wild with wanting.

The widow let her head fall back and moaned softly, her legs splayed open to reveal her smooth, bare pussy—wet and wanting and waiting...sweet and forbidden fruit. Charlotte pressed her lips lightly to the inside of her thigh and delicately made her way between the widow's legs. Each little kiss, more of a mouthful. She grazed her teeth softly along the plump round flesh and gave a small bite. The widow's moans grew louder and more wild, as she began to buck and rock her hips. Hot, luminous fluid dripped heavily from between



are a cute one, aren't you? Does this bother you?" Charlotte shook her head, the heat now burning between her legs begged her to go on. The widow sighed knowingly—hungrily, even. Her fingers continued down and made little circles around Charlotte's hardened nipples. Charlotte sucked in her breath—she was trying not to shake, from both nerves and arousal. The widow smiled again. "Don't be nervous—such a pretty little mouth..." She traced her finger back up and lightly grazed Charlotte's small, rosebud lips.

Charlotte's legs—she slid her panties aside and grazed her swollen clit, just as her tongue met with the widow's tumescent cunt. Charlotte thrust her fingers into her opening while she entered herself with her other hand, and all at once—and together—a flood rushed from between their legs, their frenzied moans became one deep gasp, and for one eternal moment, the world disappeared into a velvety, unknown darkness.

IG: @WriteNakedPDX/ @DarlingHasClaws



# Vape Fear

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

Normally, I don't like to bring up politics in this column. But, for this particular issue, it is only fair that I state my bias—Oregon Govern-mommy, Kate Brown, is a soulless, power-hungry, poor-people-hating, Zima-drinking, gay-bashing, closeted racist who probably still uses her ex-boyfriend's Netflix password, so she can watch documentaries about Hitler, while she drinks the blood of kidnapped children.

Are we clear? Good, because “clear” are the only type of vape cartridges (and nicotine liquid) that Oregonians will be able to *possibly* access, over the course of the next six months. Why? If you haven't heard, at least THIRTEEN people in the U.S. have died after using cheap, illegal, Chinese vape products infused with Vitamin E oil (which is bad to inhale, especially if you already suffer from a lung disease). Now, when a dozen people die because they can't R.T.F.M. (talk about “sick clouds,” *\*buh dum chh\**), that's enough for a national emergency. But, a baker's dozen? We're talking AIDS, mixed with climate change and some positive news coverage of a Republican-leaning politician—that level of national crisis.

Basically, Kate Brown took a long look at the piles of human beings, rats, needles and feces located under literally every raised, horizontal piece of cement in Portland, and then, she decided that the best way to solve this problem would be to immediately ban flavored vape cartridges for a minimum of six months, putting small businesses at risk for a fine and thus saving Portland from abject poverty, weekly civil wars, gang violence and gridlock traffic (among other things). While a temporary stay was granted to non-cannabis vape products, chances are high that retailers will be unable to remain open and solvent, until after federal rules are laid down.

Considering that I am no less than an up-standing, lowercase-L libertarian, here's my suggestion on how to get around the vape ban—as with any black market, one must consider the legal gray area that is dem-

onstrated by our friends in the adult store industry. Think of Whip-It products, and to some extent, “tobacco pipes.” No one—I repeat, not a single living soul—makes their own whip cream after purchasing it from a porn store (nor does anyone want a bong rip of tobacco smoke). Lovers who want to involve whipped cream tend to just invest the \$1.99 at Winco for the pre-made stuff. But, the front is kept up, and every porn store with ethics and morals provides its customers with the option of “making whip cream” using the cracker, containers and balloons sold at the counter.

On the same token, what if I wanted to purchase some flavor-free nicotine or THC cartridges, and during the same trip to the vape shop or weed store, I purchase some food-grade flavoring for the hypothetical weed treats I plan on making later? Even the crap with Vitamin E in it is safe to eat—just not vape. So, friendly vape store guy and/or budtender, completely UNRELATED TO MY PURCHASE OF DRUGS, I would also like a vial of Cotton Candy Strawberry Choco-Spice...ya know, for the cake frosting. After all, I could just pick up some food coloring and flavoring when I buy my whipped cream from Winco later, but I'd rather give my business to you.

It's almost 2020 and we're still letting politicians tell us what we can own, consume and sell. Guns? Gone. Flavored vape? Gone. What's next? Pornography? Violent video games? Movies? Well, considering that I was the only person in the theater for my local *Joker* screening, hysteria is working (aside from myself, there was not a single white dude in a hoodie with a gun in attendance). Plus, even if the vape stores and weed shops were selling liquid death with toxic, peach-flavored additives, *no one is forcing us to consume it*.

Why aren't we banning alcohol, cigarettes, cars, social media, unhealthy food or outdoor music festivals, in which rich, college-aged Beckys pretend to be Native American

for a weekend? Oh, that's right—because people are addicted to that shit. In the *time it took me to write this column*, more people have died from texting while driving, than the *entire history* of vaping deaths. And, will I ever call for a ban on cars, beer or phones? Fuck no. Why? Because we're adults—that's why. I could go on for days about how the inevitable push back against patriarchal traditionalism has allowed for a motherhood instinct on steroids to thrive, but that belongs in another column. Instead, I'll just say to Kate Brown, “You're not my real mom.” And, if I'm really true to my vape pen, I will pack up my shit, move out of her basement and start a company that derives amazing flavors from cannabis terpenes and tobacco plants.

However, for the rest of you vape shop owners, budtenders and black market dealers of plant-based vapor, I say, just go for it. Sell what you sell. Refuse to pay the fines. Fight back. If *all of you* do this (not just Willy Wallace's Wacky Weed Warehouse), it would be like that movie, *300*. We could call it *710*.

Civil disobedience is necessary in order to maintain a free society—but, all we seem to hear about are small protests and schoolyard clashes between the far left and far right, due to a Trump rally or a college booking a problematic guest speaker. When this happens, the so-called “political extreme” can make national news by banging a few drums in the middle of an intersection. Yet, here we are, a nation of ex-smokers who have found a way to enjoy combustion-free, much-healthier-than-a-joint-or-cigarette, cheaper-than-Marlboro, more-effective-than-flower, space-age chemical enjoyment...and, we're not going to fight back?

Get your head out of the clouds and turn over a dumpster for fuck's sake. Fuck Kate Brown. Fuck vape bans. And, most importantly, fuck like there's no tomorrow, because our society is burning to the ground, while our leaders are focusing on Mango Punch Coconut Burst.



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It's harvest season, everyone. And, that means that it's time to...fuck...where did I put my pipe? Well, I was going to say something about weed, but I forgot. Anyhow, let's start off with some national strip club news...

### Always Be Disrobing

You never know who's going to show up at the strip club. In the last couple years, I've bumped into Katt Williams (comedian), Krizz Kaliko (Strange Music), Paul Barker (Ministry) and god knows who else, just by being in an upscale strip club after midnight. Most (if not all) of the time, these folks tend to chill in the back, acting as if they're just another customer. But, of course, they tend to have money (and, they spend it, but they often don't make a big show out of the ordeal—after all, they usually want to remain anonymous). I always encourage dancers to act as if the club is full (dance for the crowd you want, not the crowd you have), because you never know who will be eyeballing the stage and how much money they're ready to toss down.

If you need an example, look no further than Los Angeles. Last month, TMZ released a video of rappers Saweetie and Migos dropping \$45,000 on stage at L.A. club VLive, sometime around 1:20am. That's right—closing time, on a Sunday, in L.A. (a place that doesn't go full nude with alcohol). This wasn't scheduled, but rather, is just what happens when rappers are bored and hit the strip club on a Sunday night.

So, let's do the math. Let's say that you, as a dancer, have your happy face on and your moves ready for a lame-ass, weeknight crowd. And, let's just say that you only make a few hundred bucks on a good week. You work, oh, 100 weeks and you've made, say, \$25,000 (in two years). Ouch, right? Well, if Migos appears at your club for even *one* night during that two-year period, that becomes \$70,000. *One night* of these guys

at your club will raise you to the next tax bracket. Now, the chances that you're only making a few hundred bucks a week are slim (if you're a good dancer). But, my point is, you never know who will bring the money into your club (and when that will be). Migos showed up in the club on a Sunday night, not a Friday. If you're a stripper in a town like Portland—one with an airport and nothing else to do on a weeknight—you don't just have a job, you have a lottery ticket. Keep this in mind, when the club is "dead" and there's "literally no one" there. At that moment, Moneybag\$ Rapperguy may just stroll in and pay off your student loans.

Of course, the quickest way to use your dancing skills to earn a pile of cash is to hit the competition circuit. On that note...

### Miss Exotic Oregon Takes Over November

Continuing from last month, contestants all around the local area will continue to compete for a cover of *Exotic* and the title of *Miss Exotic Oregon*. If you don't already know, our iconic northwest-area competition features multiple qualifier rounds, in which the most talented and sexiest dancers in the area show off their moves, in front of audience and expert judges alike—all for a chance to win a heap of cash and prizes (as well as some damn fine bragging rights). For November, we still have three remaining preliminary rounds before the finals. So, if you're interested in competing or attending *Miss Exotic Oregon*, keep your schedule open. Qualifier rounds for this month will be Saturday, November 2 at Xpose, Thursday, November 7 at Spyce and Friday, November 15 at Guilty Pleasures. Once the best-of-the-best are selected, they will move on for the final rounds of *Miss Exotic Oregon*, which goes down Friday, November 29 at Dante's in downtown Portland.

Of note—and, I say this every other month—*Exotic* contests are constantly being improved upon and updated to

reflect both audience and performer feedback. For instance, we have recently nixed the "buy a pile of beads" method of voting, with more emphasis being placed on judge's scores. We have expanded the events to different and newer clubs, with a wider rotation of neighborhoods. Hell...we even left DJ Pussyfoot on the charger overnight, so he is on full battery. What I'm saying is, if you haven't been to an *Exotic* event in a while, you have no idea what you're missing. Plus, I'll be co-hosting the finals, alongside DJ Dick Hennessy's pants and a roster of the best dancers in Oregon. Swing by, enjoy the show and say "hi" to anyone who looks like they work for our magazine (bags under their empty eyes, stoned expression and a general aura of hungover-but-ready-to-do-it-again swagger).

### Daylight Savings Time To Mostly Affect Fire Dancers

Speaking of Dante's, Sinferno—the west coast's longest-running burlesque and variety show, recurring every Sunday night at Dante's—will be moving to a 10pm start time this month. If you don't know, daylight savings time means that we will have approximately two hours of sunlight every week, for at least the next six months. So, it only makes sense to start a little earlier. I host a few nights, Jon Dutch hosts on the other nights (and, he also performs) and Portland staple, Aaron Ross, returns for the last Sunday of this month. Check the Spotlight Of Events at the end of this column for exact dates.

If you have yet to visit Sinferno, you're missing out on fire performers, aerialists, go-go dancers and a ton of awesomeness that beats anything else going down on a Sunday night in Portland. Do you want to come check out the event? Say you're on my list (hi, my name is Ray) and *tip the door person* to get in (the part about tipping the door person is important). But, if you're reading this magazine in the corner after having already paid cover, well, hit me up for a drink (but, tip

your bartender).

For anyone who makes a regular habit of attending our town's best alternative to evening church service, just keep in mind that things will be starting a tad earlier in upcoming weeks, to account for the fact that Portland gets dark around noon in the winter months. However, this just means more time for the amateur hour sessions, which happen after the main performers wrap up (usually around 1:30am). Also, amateur hour is a great way to make your office holiday party special (ya know, by inviting your coworkers out to Sinferno and then getting half naked in front of your boss—easily the best way to get a holiday raise). Who knows? Maybe Migos will show up.

#### **Turkey Time With Titties**

In a world where holidays involving any sort of historical or patriotic tone are seen as off limits, it's nice to know that some folks are still rocking the free world. Tommy's Too, Stars Cabaret, Cheetahs Cabaret and "Cabaret" Cabaret are all open for Thanksgiving, with Stars and Tommy's offering free turkey dinner to all customers (with paid admission, where applicable). Cabaret will be offering a Thanksgiving dinner, as well. So, after the family starts arguing and your creepy uncle opens his second bottle of dollar store whiskey, why not bail from the dinner table and head to the strip club? Plus, inside sources tell me that no location will be forcing anyone to eat Karen's nasty-ass yam salad. Instead, they have hot turkey and strippers! Now, that's something to be thankful for!!! Speaking of Stars Cabaret, both the Salem and Bridgeport locations will be hosting Military Night to honor Veterans Day (see the dates on the calendar to your right). Oh, and Dream On Saloon also has a Veterans Day Party on November 9, so head that way to spice up your Saturday night. Also, if you can't wait for Thanksgiving, but want to chow down on some stripper-made turkey (for a good cause, too), swing by Lucky Devil Lounge on Wednesday, November 13 for the Stripper Bake Off Benefit. All proceeds donated for the food will go to Portland Rescue Mission. God bless America, meat and naked women.

## **eroticcity** spotlight

**SAT 2 - XPOSE**

**MISS EXOTIC OREGON QUALIFIER ROUND V**

**SUN 3 - DANTE'S - SINFERNO**

**W/ HOST RAY MCMILLIN**

**THU 7 - SPYCE**

**MISS EXOTIC OREGON QUALIFIER ROUND VI**

**SAT 9 - DREAM ON SALOON - VETERANS DAY PARTY**

**SAT 9 - STARS CABARET (SALEM)**

**MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHT**

**SUN 10 - DANTE'S - SINFERNO W/ HOST JON DUTCH**

**MON 11 - STARS CABARET (BRIDGEPORT)**

**MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHT**

**WED 13 - LUCKY DEVIL LOUNGE**

**STRIPPER BAKE-OFF BENEFIT**

**FRI 15 - GUILTY PLEASURES**

**MISS EXOTIC OREGON QUALIFIER ROUND VII**

**SAT 16 - CLUB 205 - LEATHER & LACE**

**(CASH PRIZES - OPEN TO CUSTOMERS)**

**SUN 17 - DANTE'S - SINFERNO**

**W/ HOST RAY MCMILLIN.**

**FRI 22 - EYE CANDY FASHIONS**

**BIGGEST SALE OF THE YEAR**

**SUN 24 - DANTE'S - SINFERNO**

**W/ HOST AARON ROSS**

**THU 28 - STARS CABARET (ALL LOCATIONS)**

**FREE TURKEY DINNER W/ ADMISSION**

**THU 28 - TOMMY'S TOO**

**FREE THANKSGIVING DINNER W/ PUMPKIN PIE**

**FRI 29 - DANTE'S**

**MISS EXOTIC OREGON FINALS**



# Stripped IN PORNLAND

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

By Jaime Dunkle

## The Coffin

An oversized coffin stands erect, next to the stage, near the dressing room door. A skeleton rests inside, upright with crossed arms. Cobwebs cover the tableau. The coffin floats in fog and strobe lights. The DJ is a little too generous with the fog, as DJs often are.

A hipster customer sits at the rack with a hard-line part, pint of IPA and a hard-on protruding from skinny jeans. A sexy nurse approaches. She unzips her uniform.

"That coffin is pretty cool," he says.

She says nothing—only smiles with ruby lips and winged eyes.

A bald guy in a grey XXXL t-shirt at the rack debates him.

"It's creepy," he says. "Reminds

me I'm closer to death." He chugs a stout and leans forward on the rack.

The chipmunk-faced owner chats with Bux at a corner table, in the back of the club.

"You probably love the coffin as much as I do," he says.

"I think you should keep it up year-round," she says. "Chicken-foot the broke jerks to stay out."

"I knew you'd like it. It stays until New Year's."

Chipmunk's girlfriend struts over, with her perfect rhinoplasty stuck up high. Everyone calls her "Princess," but she calls herself "Rio."

Bux takes the intrusion as a cue to go on stage, since the club is empty and nobody's paying attention to the rotation of strippers. It's late enough to where

everyone is so drunk, no one remembers who is supposed to go on stage—not even the DJ.

Bux twirls her devil tail and circles the pole, kicks her leg and twists her hips—a lusty Lucifer. The two-person audience is as horny as her headband. She dances to Siouxsie and the Banshees' "Halloween" and Bauhaus's "Bela Lugosi's Dead." The sexy nurse follows. She dances to Alice Cooper's "Feed My Frankenstein" and Bobby Boris Pickett's "Monster Mash." Then, it's the sexy cat, the sexy cheerleader, the sexy nun, the sexy cop, et. al.—all clanking heels to the music on the checkered tile.

Bux returns to the stage, climbs the pole and catches a glimpse of the owner arguing with Princess. He slides her an envelope. She ignores it and purses her lips. They're fighting in a quiet tone.

"I'm going back to L.A. tomorrow," Princess says.

"Fine, go," the owner says. "You'll be back, just like the last two times."

A frat party howls to the bar. Button-down shirts glow in the blacklight. Princess tracks them to calculate who's paying the tab, so she knows who to hustle next.

"I'm going back to Keanu and there's nothing you can do to stop me," Princess says, then advances to mingle with the frat party.

The owner slams a shot of vodka and sips a coke back. He storms over to the frat party.

"Princess, you're needed in the office," the owner says. "Now."

She apologizes to the party and follows the owner. They move the squabble to the office.



Moments later, Princess runs out of the club. The owner crosses his arms next to the skeleton in the coffin. Then, he throws coins into its rib cage.

"This thing is cursed! Someone take it out of here," he says.

The local metalhead who's filling in as a DJ hops to the owner.

"Did I hear you correctly, boss?"

"Get this accursed garbage out of my club!"

Bux stumbles down the stairs of the stage. The sexy nun tumbles over and falls on her face. Blood streams from her nose. She screams. Bux fetches a towel from the bar. The sexy nurse helps the sexy nun scramble to her feet. The frat boys cheer them on, assuming it's a catfight. The owner shakes his head. "See? Cursed!"

It's last call, anyway, so the bar closes. The frat boys scatter. The owner slams a couple of shots of vodka at the bar, while the bartender cleans up. The sexy nun leaves first, in full costume. The sexy cat, the sexy cop, the sexy cheerleader, the sexy nurse, et al. change into their street clothes before leaving the club. The last two to go—while the owner sulks and the bartender closes out—are the local metalhead DJ and Bux. They're neighbors, so they lug the over-sized coffin down the barren street to the apartment building two blocks away.



The coffin fits against the wall, where the bed should be. Metal DJ tosses a sleeping bag and pillow out of the way and sets down the wooden box. Bux cracks open a beer with a lighter for Metal DJ and another for herself. They blast Manowar and Slayer in the tiny apartment. They trash talk their coworkers. They decide they're long lost siblings and make a pact to look out for each other, before Platonically passing out, together, in the coffin.

*Jaime Dunkle mixes the profound and the profane in her prose, with an altruism that stems from her tenure as an award-winning journalist. Her stories range from fiction to personal narrative and often blur between the two. 'Stripped' is her forthcoming book that was chosen as a semifinalist on the YesYes Books Open Reading For Fiction contest in 2019. For more info, go to [JaimeDunkle.com](http://JaimeDunkle.com). No creepers allowed.*

# IT DOES WHAT?

A SALUTE TO THE WORST, STUPIDEST AND MOST POINTLESS APPS EVER CREATED.

BY ESMERALDA RUPP-SPANGLE

While elegance and good design can be appreciated by all of mankind, the refined of taste among us also shares an appreciation for the truly terrible. Think about the popularity of *The Room* or Wesley Willis. Our hunger for the hilariously awful is at least as acute as our delight in the well-crafted. I don't know about you, but to me, this ability to love the poorly made for its own sake truly stands as a hallmark of our development as a species. In this spirit, I bring you a wildly incomplete list of my favorite worst phone apps of all time. Please note, these are (or, at one time were), all absolutely real apps, available through various mobile marketplaces.

## Hangtime

Amazingly, there are more than one of these types of apps, with Send Me To Heaven being the other. While I'm normally of a mind to save the best for last, on this occasion, I really just can't help it. These were/are apps that gather data from your phone's accelerometer and make it fun. It encourages users to get more "hangtime," by hurling their phones skyward. The longer one's phone remains airborne, the more points one receives. These apps range from between free and \$0.99, which is a steal for the excitement and hilarity the game will bring, for the three minutes it'll take before your \$800 iPhone shatters dramatically on the ground. I'm pretty sure Apple has stock in this one.

## Hold On

In this thrilling, edge-of-your-seat adrenaline-fest, the user is presented with a button. You must hold the button for as long as you can. That's it—that's the whole game.

## I Am Rich

Sadly available for only one day, this app promised to bling out your phone with a shitty graphic of a glowing red jewel and do absolutely nothing else. It cost the discerning mobile user a mere \$999.99, and clearly marked the purchaser as a person of taste, substance and wealth. A mere eight people bought this VIP app during its run. At least one of them claimed that their purchase was accidental, but they were still proud to show off the glowing red sigil of wealth to all you peasants.

## Pocket Heat

At its release, Pocket Heat was marketed as an essential survival tool. When activated, this app had the power to reroute power from other functions, turning your phone into a red-hot hand warmer. It was meant for all those times you're lost in the wilderness and want something like five minutes of explosive heat, before your battery dies. Of course, this does mean that you have no chance of getting a signal and calling for help, but those glorious moments of warmth will be totally worth the toes you lose to frostbite 15 minutes later.

## Beef War

This one hardly made it onto this list, because I actually love this game. The full description reads, "Defend your cattle from the Panzer Blitz!" The user is instructed to hurl cuts of meat at Nazis, via a butcher chart of potential options. I'm told that all the proceeds of this game go to support beef farmers of America, and in turn, I support your passion for throwing meat at National Socialists.

## Floating Miley Cyrus

Who doesn't want an infinitely dancing Miley on top of their screen, suggestively gyrating, as they play Words With Friends or text their mom about her cancer screening? No one, that's who. The best part is, it's free, so there's really no excuse not to have this one.

## Die With Me

This curious app will remain locked and unavailable, brimming with possibility and mystery, until your phone drops to or below 5% battery. Once that momentous occasion happens, a magical and mind-whirling world opens up before the user. No, actually, it's just a chat room for people whose phones are also dying. I imagine, "Where the fuck is my cord, WESLEY?" is asked a lot.

## Pet Baby

You have to give it to the makers of this application—they have a truly unique vision. If you want to get an idea of what this particular one does, think Snapchat, but with only one filter. Pet Baby superimposes your dog's features on top of ran-

dom babies and allows you to morph and manipulate them, until they're perfect. Not cartoony, but more nightmarishly fetishistic, this absolutely one-of-a-kind app offers you the chance to see what your beloved Snowy would look like, if he was simultaneously a dog and a human baby. The answer will likely tear a hole in your fragile sanity, exposing the writhing morass of darkness and oblivion within. Being that it's free means it's worth every penny—highly recommended.

## iFrenchKiss

You've read studies about how many bacteria and viruses thrive spectacularly on our phones. You use them in the bathroom for a ponderous #2 at work, in your kitchen, on public transport, in the hospital when your cousin Jen got admitted for some deeply embarrassing personal problem no one would come clean about. You know it, sure, but let's put it to the test and find out if you really can get tuberculosis from licking your phone. In this battle royale of tongue acrobatics, the user tries their best to show that, yes, in fact, they know how to French kiss. That, or alternately, to illustrate their profound immunity to infection.

## iAmAMan

This app allows guys to monitor the menstrual cycles of their girlfriends—"girlfriends" plural! Yep, simultaneously track all your moody broads. Ostensibly, it "helps to avoid misunderstandings and preserve your relationship" (as the company puts it). Mystifyingly castigated as "sleazy and shameless," I'm a huge fan of this one, because we can now reliably tell when it's safe to take a call from our sister Barb (or when it will just be an hour and a half of half-drunk, weepy confessionals and audible eating noises).

These are just a few of my favorite gems of awfulness. It's not a complete accounting, to be sure, and I'm always looking forward to what tomorrow may bring. But, until then, lick your screens, turn your dog into nightmare fuel and hurl your phones into the air in celebration of what human achievement hath wrought.

*Esmeralda Rupp-Spangle is a writer, artist and Fortnite enthusiast. She can be found on Instagram at @EsmeraldaSilentCitadel, MeWe by name or Facebook (if you absolutely must).*

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# ASK A BARTENDER

BY DISCOUNTTHERAPIST

*They say a bartender acts as a therapist. I decided to make it official. My only credentials involve listening to hundreds upon hundreds of people's problems, over more years than I can admit. Let me wipe the bar down for you, put down a fresh coaster, then pour you a drink. Pull up your stool and tell me all about it. Remember, I've heard it all. If you have a question, please write [DiscountTherapist@Yahoo.com](mailto:DiscountTherapist@Yahoo.com). You will remain anonymous. Also, you get what you pay for.*

## Baggage Check

Here it goes. I had a relationship with a man who I loved for over two years. In the beginning (and probably now, as well), he was secretive. He lives with an ex, one he had gone to financial bed with years ago. I have not been invited to his home, except for sitting on the patio when she is not home. The story I was told, is that he arrived home and she was having sex with his friend on their couch. So, because they have a cute house in the

Beaumont neighborhood, he just stayed (because of the financial entanglement). To be honest, the house is too small to ignore an adulterer in. So, over the years, the woman he lives with has done major property damage to his car tires, bike tires and inflatable kayak...she is knife-happy. Being that he practically lived with me for two years (but, would not chip in on bills, while I struggled on my own), I have made him go home. I now live alone for the first time in my life and do not want cohabitation with a man who lives with another woman. Sounds crazy, right?

I have been told I am the love of his life and he has been waiting for me for too long. Unfortunately, he is financially bound to responsibility. I went to his house one day to meet this lady, and for goodness sake, I was shocked. Not what I was expecting at all, with a dark, dark aura. I wonder if she looked different when they were together...I imagined that she has been terminally depressed. It shows—it does. So, it is really not that complicated,

is it? I am going to be 49 this month—my mother says that her 50s were really amazing and I should stay single. So, my beau is 64 years old. I am younger, and if I stay in this Katherine Hepburn-Spencer Tracey situation, I may not find a mate for the rest of my life. I am not certain I want one. I have a dog and am unsure of what to do. I have pushed him away—repeatedly—and made him go home. The thing is, I usually go through a man's CD collection, book collection and medicine cabinet to get answers. I have never once been in his home—not once.

He says that if he hadn't met me, he would have been out of there a year ago. Why? Good question. I admit, he has spent a shit ton of money wining and dining me. I just do not think I am the upheaval in his escape plan. I do not have a garage or a yard. He does. I live between Bedlam and Squalor. How can a knife-wielding adulterer have a beautiful home with the man I love? I feel like a mistress who is unpaid and un-cared-for. What to do? Well, I do

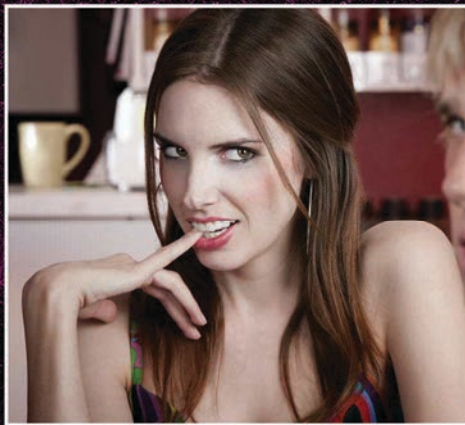
not want to see other men, because they are mostly idiots who are adolescent in nature. I once gave my beau a drawer and some room in my closet. Not anymore. He does not take up space here. He rarely spends the night anymore. I feel it will end soon, because it is not going forward. Advice?

Dear Girlfriend,

I feel for this situation—more than you can know. For the last three years, I have been with a man who would never come to my house. Still married, legitimately separated, but still with a lot of baggage there. He felt like he couldn't divorce, because he had so much to lose. So, he did what he could to not piss her off, at the expense of our relationship and my feelings. He wouldn't let me meet his adult children (nor his parents) and wouldn't dream of letting me live in his house, yet he watched me clean it for him and also watched me struggle financially with my own place. I did his laundry, scrubbed his kitchen...yet, I wasn't good enough to be fully invited there. He only went into my bedroom twice—in three years. My house was "gross." Instead of helping to fix my living situation with me (so it could be something better or something he would want to share), he just mocked it. Does any of that sound normal? Oh, did I mention he was an actual millionaire and had all the resources in the world to share, but refused to do so with his partner, who he claimed to love? He "had so many dependents" he made me go Dutch (or even pay for him), even though I'm just a bartender. He didn't want his wife to know about me and take him to court, so I was swept under the rug and was expected to accept that it was okay. It's amazing what we're willing to do for love, isn't it? If reading what I just wrote sounds crazy to you or if you asked yourself, "Why would she put up with that?" that's exactly how I felt reading your story. Obviously, I'm not criticizing you—I've clearly done it in my life. We all will fall in love and make excuses for their flaws. You are not at fault for finding yourself here. I applaud you for taking a critical eye to the situation. So many people just pull the wool over their eyes and sink down into the sand trap of

a bad relationship, which becomes the story of their lives. Something within you woke up and realized that things don't feel right. Something is making you feel dissatisfied. You would not have wrote in, if you didn't feel those things. I've not regretted many things in my life, except the times I've ignored my instincts (and, I've been so upset with myself when I have). Your instincts are going off. I know, because you took the time to write them down. Let's not ignore this moment

You mentioned your age and hinted that your options are dwindling. FUCK THAT. You have SO many options. At any age. What's worse than being alone? Being in a shitty relationship. You being in a relationship is not an indication of your success (or happiness). A relationship should only enhance your life. If it does not, then you have to ask yourself why you're bringing it on. Love is blind, of course, but does it rob? If it does, you have to wonder why you're allowing it to. Is it really making your life better?



Just like anything, a bad job, shitty living situation...we always have the power to change what is dragging us down, if we have the courage to do so. I promise you, if you want a relationship, you will be able to find one, if you are a good person and put it out there.

Now, as far as your particular situation, I don't walk in your shoes, so I can't say definitively, but it sounds like what I dealt with. Someone who wants to "have his cake and eat it too." He wants to please the ex-wife (due to financial reasons) and have you as well. I can say from firsthand,

this is so incredibly selfish on his part. You are offering 100 percent of yourself and he's offering you a fraction. That isn't fair. He has so much baggage, the plane couldn't even take off. We all come with some baggage, but that is ridiculous. I challenge you to look at yourself and be honest. Does your love story look like a man who still lives with his ex and doesn't have the balls to go all in with you? I would imagine the answer is "no." Love is hard to find. I know how hard it is and how much we are willing to turn a blind eye or make excuses for someone you are trying to make a relationship work with. I am not criticizing you for finding yourself here. I'm merely challenging you, to evaluate your time and what it's worth. You said you feel like you're getting older. That being said, do you think the time you have is worth seeing a man who won't even let you in his house? One that won't allow you into his life? One that still has ties? I sure as fuck know how it made me feel. In regards to his "cute house," why wouldn't he move in with you and make your house a home, with you, the person he says is the love of his life? Why would he want to stay one more day with a toxic person, in a horrible situation, than be with you? I'm sorry, but no house is that great. Home is so many more things than the walls.

After I left my relationship (which was similar to yours), I never looked back. I was only upset that I wasted my time with someone who wouldn't be available to me. It was like throwing my love and effort down a well. Frankly, what he's making you accept is emotional abuse. You could be working on yourself, away from this. You could be with someone who's all about you. Why be okay with this? We all deserve better, including you.

-DiscountTherapist

### Ethical Erections

My boyfriend and I have a long-distance relationship, in the respect that he works out of town most of the time and he's only home sporadically. He struggles with some erectile dysfunction issues and has a prescription for it. Our sex drives aren't

really matching up. He's about to come home for about 40 hours, then leaving for another three months right after that. I want our time together when he's home to be amazing. I also want him to have confidence. I feel like a lot of his problems are in his head. I need to bond with him and have intimacy, as well as meet my physical needs. It is really hard for me to go long stretches of time without sex. I would never cheat on him, but when I'm with him, I want to be with him. I'm thinking about crushing up his pills and putting them in his drink, to make sure we can be together and it will satisfy us both.

-Pharma-girlfriend

Dear Pharma-girlfriend,

One of the hardest relationship dynamics is the long-distance one, which it sounds like you're in. How difficult. I can understand how frustrating that can be. I, personally, haven't tried it. The closest I've come was dating a firefighter. He was home a few days a week, then gone for the rest. During the summer, in brush-fire season, he could be gone until further notice—it was awful. I'm not sure what he does for a living, but I can understand somewhat how hard it can be and the divide it can drive between two people who want to be together more often, but can't. I mean, to be honest, sometimes it was nice to have my independent time. Hanging out with friends, pursuing hobbies, etc. There are positives. But, at the end of the day, not coming home to the person you love is extremely difficult. Also, in a way, it's unnatural. If you enter into a relationship with someone, you expect them to be there—to build a life with you. If they are gone for months, days or weeks, it is a strange feeling. I mean, even if it's for work. Even if they're putting out forest fires. Nobility is all well and good, but at the end of the day, we want to go to bed with our partners.

I feel for your situation and the loneliness you must endure. No relationship is perfect—none. They all have things about them, that we would wish were different. No man is an island. No woman is, either. I'm truly sorry that your partner is gone



so long from you. Absence makes the heart grow fonder? Maybe this dynamic works. If it does, fucking awesome.

On to the real question. Is it okay to crush up your partner's pills and dose him without him knowing?

No.

Absolutely not.

You may NOT do that. Taking on a partner requires us to give someone a lot of access to our bodies, access to our selves and begs for a lot of trust. If you love and care about this person—which I'm sure you do—you cannot violate that line of trust by doing something like that. You are not authorized to give him anything he doesn't agree to, including medication prescribed to him. That's his choice (if he wants to take it), not yours. Sex isn't owed to you. He gives it to you when he wants to. Imagine if you two were at a bar and he tipped the bartender extra, to give you a double (instead of your normal drink), so you could go home and "be more fun." Sure, you're already drinking, but you're choosing the amount yourself. How would you feel if someone decided you needed more, without asking you? I suspect you'd feel pretty fucking weird about that. As a woman, you should know exactly how important that boundary is. Just because he's a guy, does not mean his body and his sexuality are open-season. This would only be okay if you

talked about it beforehand and he said you could do that—but, I'm guessing you didn't (or, you wouldn't be asking).

If you feel as if intimacy is an issue in your relationship, I suggest focusing on the cerebral, rather than the physical. Do you have an open dialogue about sex and each others needs? Are you discussing how difficult it is to be apart? When you are together, is it satisfying for you? For both of you? You mentioned his confidence, have you tried expressing enthusiasm for other sexual acts you can engage in, that don't involve an erection? There's a myriad of things that you can do together sexually, that doesn't require a penis. If you feel like he's too in his head about this subject, try taking him out of it by not making it an issue. I know that's easier said than done, but if you love this person and want to invest in this, it takes work—all relationships do. If it wasn't on this subject, chances are it would be something else. The cards are stacked against you, with a dynamic like that. It's going to be hard. If you both put in the effort, it can work. You cannot force it. You are not allowed to dupe your partner into anything—at all. I'm pretty sure we, as women, fought long and hard (and still do) to have the concept of consent understood and respected. We need to do the same.

-DiscountTherapist

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9939 SE STARK ST  
503-256-0527

**48**  
  
403 SW HARVEY MILK ST  
503-227-3936

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12035 NE GLISAN ST  
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535 NE COLUMBIA BLVD  
971-339-2198

**16**  
  
15920 SE STARK ST  
503-253-8765

**19**  
  
3532 SE POWELL BLVD  
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**69**  
  
231 SW ANKENY ST  
503-208-3229

**4**  
  
8345 SW BARBUR BLVD  
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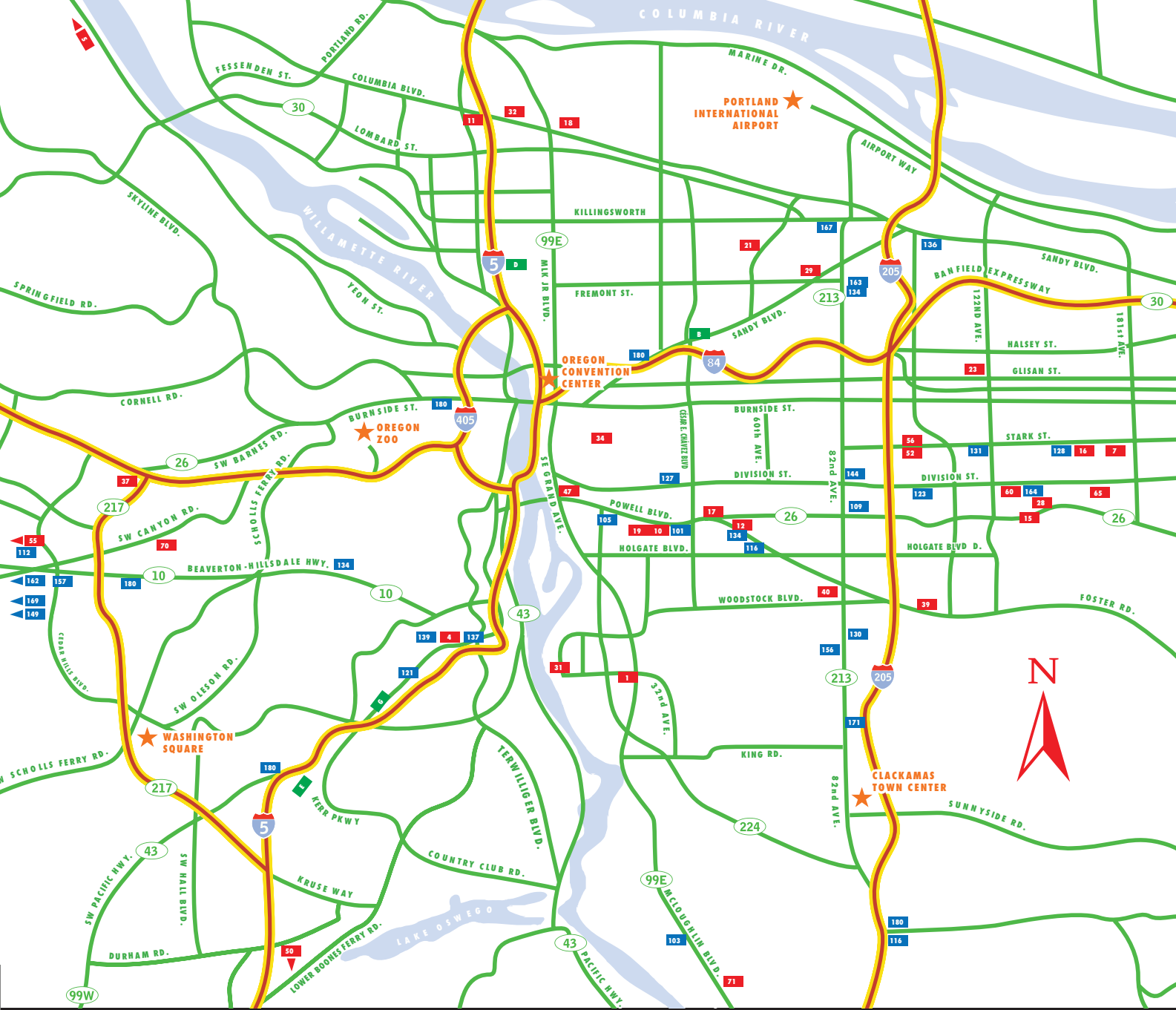
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210 NW COUCH ST  
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17939 SW MCEWAN RD  
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# CAN NICOLE WESTBROOK SHOW US THE TRUE MEANING OF THANKSGIVING?

by a Confused Nicole Westbrook fan

Forgive the gap in my ongoing, hard-hitting investigative journalism of the mysterious and vaguely pedophilic “music” company known as Ark Music Factory. I decided to save this piece for the November issue of *Exotic*, since it deals with one the month’s most notorious and misunderstood holidays—Veterans Day!

I jest, surely.

I am, of course, talking about the other holiday in the winter, where our parents guilt us into spending a lot of money to visit them and sit and listen to them beg for grandchildren, asking why we aren’t exactly the same as we were as kids, while they talk about the merits of whatever cult leader—be they religious or political—has brainwashed them this month.

Christmas and Thanksgiving are sort of interchangeable at this point, when referencing painful holidays that demand familial reunion, even under uncomfortable or abusive circumstances. It seems that Thanksgiving is the one where you eat a lot more and Christmas is the one where you buy each other’s love.

But, I digress, surely.

In the spirit of the *Charlie Brown Christmas Special*, it is important every holiday season to interrogate the true meaning of these paid days off, for those lucky enough to work in some bullshit office job (side note: good on you few restaurants and bars that are actually closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas, for those who like to spend time with their families).

One could argue that Thanksgiving actually has some very questionable—even problematic—origins. Nothing makes Americans feel better about the calculated and systematic genocide of countless unique tribes of humans in the name of colonialism and manifest destiny, than pretending one fourth Thursday of November sometime in the 17th century, the “pilgrims and the injuns” put aside their differences and had a feast of sorts. This narrative (\*cough\* lie) is what I was told as a kid, because I’m a Millennial and in the ‘90s, the Baby Boomers were really good at telling everyone that everything is okay and we’re at the end of history.

At the end of the day, it’s a goddamn harvest celebration, which is pretty universal, with seasons and agriculture dominating the majority of human civilization’s history.

But...

Perhaps, Nicole Westbrook wants to remind us of what the true-true meaning of this troublesome holiday really is, with her not-quite-hit single, “It’s Thanksgiving.”

By her telling, most intensely expressed by her...rap, it seems Thanksgiving is about nothing. It is a day off on Thursday for most Americans, where synonyms for gratitude, some vaguely consistent food items and an annoying bird are fetishized.



And, what an accurate reading! Nicole Westbrook is a modern poet, because what the fuck else is this corporate-mandated, four-day holiday? They celebrate it in goddamn October in Canada.

What Nicole Westbrook also gives us, is the true meaning of the Ark Music Factory. Again, the lack of legal action taken against this company is astounding. Considering the video begins with a 12-year old sitting on the edge of a bed suggestively, while the camera leers from the doorway, as she thanks “you” for all you’ve done for her.

Nigerian Usher (a.k.a. Patrice Wilson) isn’t even trying to hide his child sex trafficking ring at this point. Where are the pitchforks?!

You probably think I’m reading too much into this “scandal,” as I’ve already wasted three columns of *Exotic*’s precious page space on this issue. But, as long as we’re canceling celebrities left and right (and putting people up against

the wall for tweets posted a decade ago), why has Patrice Wilson evaded scrutiny? I want justice, damnit! Or, at least an explanation for why this song and video exist. Besides mocking a rather outdated and ultimately pointless holiday, this song a simple re-imagining of Rebecca Black’s era-defining masterpiece, “Friday” (but, subbing Friday for Thursday). Is the phrase “we we we” something Nigerian Usher says in conversation and that’s why he insists on using it in his victims’ songs?

Also, just as Miss Black’s song recounts previous and future days in the week for no apparent reason, so too does this song—not once, but twice reminds of us the other well-known American holidays that are not Thanksgiving, basically in the same melodic sense.

I should also bring up that the Ark “trope” of Mr. Wilson showing up to a gathering for children, dressed as an animal (as seen in Alison Gold’s “Chinese Food”) is repeated here. Is anyone else worried that this is the only way Nigerian Usher can get off? Do the rich Los Angeles parents trying to make their kid famous just turn a blind eye while he hosts parties with preteen girls, dressed up as a panda or a turkey? Like, after a third video where this happens, isn’t someone going to call the cops?

But, returning to the theme of Thanksgiving, which it indeed will be this month, I guess young Miss Westbrook is pleading with us to be grateful...for nothing in particular. This sounds exactly like the kind of rhetoric a victim is forced to repeat by their abuser. Just as the holiday about gratitude insists we (and, I guess the indigenous peoples we slaughtered) be grateful rather than inquisitive, concerned and downright angry at the rampant injustice around the situation, a plantation owner tells their slave to be grateful for the food and housing the enslaved person receives. Mr. Wilson tells Miss Westbrook to be “grateful” for the slim chance at stardom, that he provided her with this unfortunate attempt at a music video, which cost her parents \$4,000.

And, I guess that is the true meaning of Thanksgiving, folks.

DJ Kenoy

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# TALES FROM THE DJ BOOTH BY DJ HAZMATT



## LIFE SKILLS I'VE LEARNED AS A STRIP CLUB DJ

Whether I like it or not, I'm about to turn...umm...let's say 29. Sooner or later, I'm going to have to get my first real job, settle down with a woman who doesn't have a stage name and act my age. But, since I don't have any experience outside of a few small achievements (I can cook steak, I know some basic guitar chords and I have a master's degree from Portland State University...so, nothing really useful), I've been trying to find ways in which I can apply the skills I've learned as a strip club DJ, to other areas in my life. Thus far, I've wrangled up six life hacks that I've learned while working as a dance commander. Hopefully, you can make use of this knowledge without throwing a decade of your life away on free drugs and sexy women.

### Play For The Crowd

The difference between a standard nightclub DJ and a strip club DJ is that, in the strip club, most customers aren't there to listen to the DJ—rather, customers want the DJ to play music that complements the dancers on stage. However, a *bad* strip club DJ will get more attention from the crowd,

staff and dancers, than a good strip club DJ will—if you're fucking up the announcements and playing "Old Town Road" for a tattooed, punk rock stripper, folks will notice. In order to stand out as a good strip club DJ, you've got to play to both the crowd and the staff (which includes dancers, bartenders and security).

During one of the first shifts I had as a strip club DJ (after years of being a radio DJ), my then-boss and mentor, Zoth, asked me, hypothetically, what I would do if someone asked for shitty music, like Limp Bizquick or Crazy Pants (I intentionally avoid calling these bands by name, because I don't want them getting hits on our website). I replied, "I'd tell them to fuck off and that I'd play good music if they wanted."

"Wrong," Zoth said. "If the customer is tipping, Limp Bizquick is your favorite band for the duration of their stay. Nod your head, act like you enjoy the music and sell the fantasy.

This made more sense than any advice I'd received up until that point in my career. A strip club DJ

is a living jukebox, who answers to the requests, themes and expectations thrown at them by various players. It is their/our job to find happy mediums in certain cases (a rack full of bikers, teenage stripper who wants rap music... this is when you dig for that Nelly song with the AC/DC sample), and in more rare circumstances, set the tone of the room (if a fight is about to pop off, it's a perfect time to play some fun, upbeat music that is impossible to beat someone's ass to, such as Hansen). But, more often than not, the strip club DJ is working for the room, not the other way around. In fact, most clubs actually prohibit dancing from customers, so the better you are as a nightclub DJ, the more likely you're going to suck as a strip club DJ.

How has this translated elsewhere in my life? Well, for the few years that I worked as a comedian on the road, I was able to remember that I'm not there to preach, but, to some extent, pander. A room full of old ladies in Idaho don't want to hear jokes about gluten-free vegan girls, and on the same token, gluten-free vegan girls don't want to hear anything posi-

tive about Idaho. In the hookup scene, this knowledge has been extremely useful—I realized that women need special catering-to and that they require specific things that may or may not be obvious, so I decided to buy a Playstation 4 and stop dating altogether. Basically, life is all about pandering to people, but without being obvious. There's a subtle difference between the obvious "D.A.R.E." bumper sticker and the ability to speak to a cop without letting them know you're high. Speaking of which...

### Learn To Be High In Public

If you're planning to DJ strip clubs, you *will* do drugs at some point in your career. And, yes, weed is a drug. So, keep in mind, that even though the strip club may look appealing to people on substances (hot girls, good music, low lighting, good company, etc.), the job of a strip club DJ involves keeping track of dozens of dancers, on multiple stages, while juggling requests, special announcements and keeping an eye on the floor—all while on a two-to-three-minute leash, as an announcement (or at least some vocal presence) is usually required between songs (thank you to the clubs that allow for the DJ to take a break, by the way). Basically, this is really, really hard to do while high as hell. But, since you're going to be high as hell at some point or another, it's a great exercise in hiding your high.

While on shift, you will discover all sorts of ways to get around the legality (and ethics) of doing drugs at work. Vape pens? We had those rigged up, on our own, years ago. Key bumps? That's kiddie play—

before work, just cut a few straws down to two inches, fill them with coke and burn the edges shut to seal them. Crack? Well, I've never smoked it (actually, that's a lie, but I've never smoked it on purpose), but if you work downtown, I believe it's actually permitted in most alleys. So, get high, prepare for public interaction, and as soon as the owner (actually, scratch that—it's usually the assistant manager that kills the buzz) approaches you with a question, demand or other conversation, flex your poker...er, smoker face. After all, you're surrounded by women who have learned to be naked around their customers—putting

I, for example, may or may not have taken a trip to Vancouver, B.C. while tripping balls, with my mom. This was like playing *Dark Souls*—it was hard, but it made me feel extremely accomplished when I finally made it past the skeletons at the gate. Even if you only smoke weed once, in college, alone in your dorm room, at least make the trek to a convenience store and see what it feels like to talk to the person at the counter. The ability to hide one's intoxicated state is a skill that can be applied to a limitless amount of situations in sober life—similar to how being in shape is useful outside of the gym.



on a front is commonplace in strip clubs.

There are many, many times in your life that, regardless of chemical intake or level of sobriety, you're going to have to put on a fake smile and bullshit your way through your day—whether this involves law enforcement, parental figures or romantic partners. To learn how to handle this, at least once in your adult life, try some acid or 'shrooms and do something that constitutes as "normal."

### Only Say What Is Necessary

Speaking of being high in public, I have an extremely big mouth and no filter. Thus, my first few years as a strip club DJ were a total shit show, for better or worse. Eventually, I learned that microphones are more of a garnish and less of a main course. By the time the crowd sitting at the stages knows what the dancer's name is and how many more songs she has left, they're already sick of the DJ's voice. But, if the customers are

not reminded to tip, the girl on stage may as well be volunteering at a human zoo. So, it's up to the DJ to find a nice middle ground between a constant barrage of irritating panhandling and total silence. Add to this, the fact that strip club DJs have a small window of time in which they need to squeeze in a ton of information, so the issue of verbal vomit (speaking too fast and not making any sense) comes up—this is why some strip club DJs sound like they're auctioning off cocaine with a gun to their head.



Obviously, this skill is great outside the club, especially when it comes to authority figures (such as police officers or girlfriends). Learning to only say what is necessary, in a short amount of time, has kept me out of jail and/or having to sleep on the couch—many times. If a talkative person, say, a Dutch Bros barista, gets pulled over by the cops, they're gonna spill their guts and incriminate everyone within a ten mile radius. But, if a seasoned strip club DJ gets pulled over, they know that "I'm on my way home from my work, I don't drink and I was going the speed limit. How can I help you?" is the beginning and end of the conversation. As far as how you can use this skill on the ones you love, well, I'm not going to self-incriminate. Just know that I love you, baby. There's no one else and that girl you saw me with is just a friend...what do you want for dinner?

### Look Hot Women In The Eye

Everyone—and, I mean gay dudes, monks and old folks

alike—loves staring at a nice pair of tits. I'm sorry to put folks on Front Street, but it's true. After all, you're not reading this magazine for the articles, are you? Naturally, it takes some time to get used to seeing dozens and dozens of naked boobs at your place of employment (let alone talk to the people who possess them, without staring directly at their nipples like they were the most beautiful pair of eyes you've ever seen). But, after a decade of working in the clubs, I don't see tits—well, I *do*, but I "don't see tits" the same way that white liberals "don't see color." Basically, eye contact is something that folks take for granted, until there's a giant pair of breasts competing for their attention. I, on the other hand, know how to keep my chin up while talking to a topless goddess.

How does this skill apply to daily life? Well, let's just say that when a tight shirt and a huge pair of tits no longer hold power over you, your ability to maintain frame in any situation improves. I don't find myself buying random

women at the bar drinks, I tip the same amount regardless of how hot my waitress is, and to further echo how everything here mostly applies to women and police, I no longer get immediate tickets when the hot cop in Salem pulls me over (the "I was just staring at your badge" excuse stopped working a few red lights ago). Of note, some (not all, but some) women take equal offense to you *not* noticing their rack, as they do when you're caught staring. To solve this problem, maintain eye contact, never look down, but always remember to end every conversation with, "Oh, by the way, nice tits" (I'm kidding, by the way... don't do this unless you have a shitload of money and/or work in public office).

### Realize There Is No Such Thing As A Free Drink

Oh, red raffle tickets...how you've ruined my liver. As a general rule, DJs are allotted a certain amount of "free" drinks throughout their shift. However, most of us forget that sitting on your ass, while soaking up calories and alcohol,



is not the best way to make it through an eight-hour shift—particularly when you have to speak with proper English and share close spaces with people who can smell your breath. Plus, after a night of shots and energy drinks, playing nothing but Bananarama always sounds like a good idea (plot twist: it's never a good idea). Basically, just because you can, doesn't mean you should. And, nothing teaches this lesson quicker than an open tab and/or a pile of drink tickets.

Outside of the club, this is also a useful skill to remember. If I had a dollar for every time I said "sure" to "one drink" on a Monday night, I'd have, well, how many dollars is the majority of one's week spent in bed with a hangover headache worth? There is no such thing as a free drink—ever. In fact, I find that, when I'm paying for my own drinks, I am much, much more responsible with my liver, vehicle and wallet, than I am when I rally around the strip club with a pocket full of drink tickets. When drinks are on the house, it becomes an issue of self-restraint, which is something that doesn't let the bartender know it's "declined" if she tries to run it past the limit. Plus, when you know how to tip your coworkers, you learn about special drinks, such as "Pint Of Vodka" or "Just Take This Box Of Wine."

Clearly, learning how to not be a drunk piece of shit is a useful life skill, but it's one that I'm still working on to this day. But, after years of working in strip clubs, I have actually learned how to say "no," when offered a free drink.

Sure, this happens maybe twice a year, during full moons, when it's snowing, in June. Still, I try. And, realizing that being sober after the bars close is always a good idea (when it comes to transportation, at least), I've made much better decisions when it comes to dietary decisions (Denny's is impossible to eat while sober) and women.

### Get To Know A Coke Dealer (Even If You Don't Do Coke)

Every single club has the coke dealer, who insists they're not a coke dealer (but, clearly are). If you find someone hanging around, after close, who does not work for (or have a partial ownership in) the club you're at (or at least a sister club), that's the coke dealer. Get to know this person, even if you don't do cocaine.

Now, why would you want to befriend a drug dealer? Well, to put it bluntly, if this person has manipulated their way into being able to kick it after the club kicks everyone else out, with a pocket full of felonies, they've probably got other life skills to share. For

instance, one of my coke-dealer-customer-turned-friends hooked me up with Blazers tickets and offered to loan me his boat. That's right—I was given permission to borrow this guy's boat, so I could see our team lose. I didn't take him up on this offer, but it's nice to know that if, for whatever reason, I needed access to a boat, I know a guy.

These dudes are similar to characters in the *Grand Theft Auto* series, in that they all give you access to super cool, high society type shit, as long as you keep their "secret" under wraps. Sure, everyone with two brain cells knows that dude-with-the-gator-shoes-in-Portland is a blow salesman. But, it's really all about respect—you know, just *act* like the guy isn't a drug dealer and he will invite you to a Rolling Stones show and loan you the keys to his beach house. Of course, you don't have to be a strip club DJ to meet a coke dealer. Everyone probably knows at least a few. The transferable life skills in this section should be obvious, but if it needs repeating, a stranger offered to *loan me his boat*. Thank you, sweet, white powder.



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