

AUGUST 2024

#366 32/02

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FROM  
KIT KAT CLUB



# FEATURES

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Published monthly by XMAG LLC.  
Circulation: 75,000 per month at 200+ sites  
Mailing Address:  
818 SW 3rd Avenue, Suite 1324  
Portland, Oregon 97204  
Telephone: (503) 241-4317  
Fax: (503) 914-0439  
Email: info@xmag.com  
Exotic Online: www.xmag.com

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XMAG LLC.

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## STRANGE CELEBRITY PRODUCTS

some very peculiar brandings and endorsements  
page 20 | by wombstretcha the magnificent



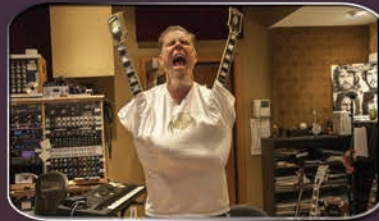
## ARTISTS OF THE INDUSTRY

showcasing talent and creativity in strip city  
page 22 | by nate hazen



## A BOUNCER'S CRASH COURSE IN PHILOSOPHY

volume two of this series focuses on plato  
page 36 | by nate hazen



## THREE STUDIO HORROR STORIES

totally true tales of terrible and eccentric behavior  
page 38 | by blazer sparrow

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## INSIDE STUFF

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August brings plenty of things to do in the industry, which is a godsend since it's been hot as balls this summer. Why sweat ass at home when you can enjoy the company of sexy ladies, a nice cold PBR, and free A/C? No-brainer, right?

As customary, we'll start with birthdays. Shayla will celebrate her 21st birthday at Guilty Pleasures on Saturday, August 3. Later in the month, on Saturday, August 17, Eris' Birthday Party will be held right back at Guilty Pleasures. Make sure to stop by and buy these lovely ladies a birthday shot! Happy Birthday from *Exotic!*

On to other industry events... Mz. Jordan's Ex-Stripper-Ganza will be held for two nights, starting at Dream On on Friday, August 2, and moving on to The Lounge on Saturday, August 3. Check out all the deets in their ad on page 6—it promises to be quite the shindig!

On Wednesday, August 7, it's the Kit Kat Club Clown Cabaret—a very unique night that you won't want to miss! Been too hot to wash your car? We've got two very special car washes, starting with Stars Cabaret (Bridgeport) on Saturday, August 10, for their Car & Bike Bubble Bath from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Then, on the very next day, Devils Point and Lucky Devil Lounge are holding their 18th Annual Bikini Car & Dog Wash on Sunday, August 11, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., outside of Lucky Devil Lounge at 633 SE Powell Blvd. And remember, it's a benefit for Family Dogs New Life Shelter (@fdnewlife)—a no-kill shelter, so come support a great cause while watching the sexiest dog washers you've ever seen!

How about a car show and stripper boxing? Checks all the boxes for us! Stars Cabaret in Salem will hold their Hot August Fights & Car Show on Saturday, August 17, with Foxy Boxing. Lastly, we have Girls Next Door Espresso's 1st Annual Block Party on Saturday, August 31, complete with a dunk tank, wet T-shirt contest, BBQ, and more! Stop by at 6102 NE Lombard St. and check it out!

**INDUSTRY EVENTS**

DJ Dick Hennessy's 6th Annual Motorbooty Twerking Contest concluded at the end of June, and we'd like to congratulate Mezzli from Firehouse Cabaret for placing 1st! Her performance was dedicated to Mack McFadden, the late manager of Firehouse Cabaret, and it was very touching and selfless that she donated all her prize money to the McFadden family.



We'd also like to mention the amazing performances by Peaches from Club Rouge Beaverton, placing 2nd, and Eris from Guilty Pleasures, placing 3rd! Check out page 40 to see photos of all the entertainers in action during their performances!

Next month, we'll have full coverage of the 13th Annual Vagina Beauty Pageant—stay tuned!

Support your local businesses, including every industry business within these pages.

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## eroticcity spotlight

**FRI 02 – DREAM ON  
MZ. JORDAN'S EX-STRIPPER-GANZA**

**SAT 03 – GUILTY PLEASURES  
SHAYLA'S 21ST BIRTHDAY BASH**

**SAT 03 – THE LOUNGE  
MZ. JORDAN'S EX-STRIPPER-GANZA**

**WED 07 – KIT KAT CLUB  
KIT KAT CLUB CLOWN CABARET**

**SAT 10 – STARS CABARET (BRIDGEPORT)  
CAR & BIKE BUBBLE BATH**

**SUN 11 – LUCKY DEVIL  
18TH ANNUAL BIKINI CAR & DOG WASH**

**SAT 17 – GUILTY PLEASURES  
ERIS' BIRTHDAY PARTY**

**SAT 17 – STARS CABARET (SALEM)  
HOT AUGUST FIGHTS & CAR SHOW**

**SAT 31 – GIRLS NEXT DOOR ESPRESSO  
1ST ANNUAL BLOCK PARTY**

**SEPTEMBER**

**SUN 1 – DEVILS POINT  
PHOENIX'S WILD WEST BIRTHDAY  
PARTY!**

**HAPPY HOURS**

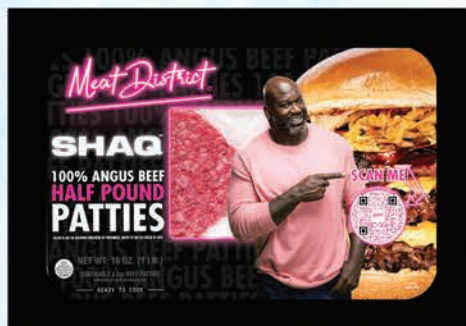
**CABARET – 2PM-6PM  
CLUB 205 – 10:30AM-6:30PM  
DEVILS POINT – 3PM-6PM  
DESIRE – 6PM-9PM  
DV8 – NOON-3PM  
THE LOUNGE - 11AM-4PM  
LUCKY DEVIL – 3PM-6PM  
SPYCE – 7PM-9PM  
UNION JACKS – 6PM-8PM**

# THE MONTHLY COLUMN

BY WOMBSTRETCHA THE MAGNIFICENT

## STRANGE CELEBRITY PRODUCTS

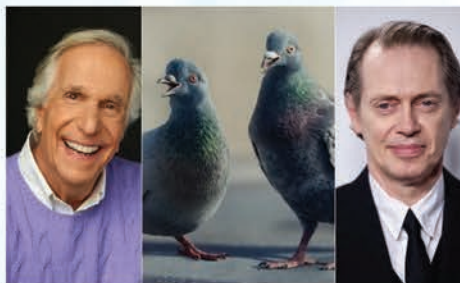
This month, I'm focusing on celebrity-branded products. While one might be quick to think of Martha Stewart, Gordon Ramsay, or possibly even Rachael Ray, those do not count. They are cooks by trade, so it only makes sense for them to have their own food brands for humans and animals. I'm talking about celebrities who have no business endorsing certain things. Why is Lynda Carter's face on a fire extinguisher? That sort of thing. This was inspired by a recent trip to the supermarket, wherein I saw one of the oddest product/celebrity endorsements I've seen in recent history. On with the list!



### Shaq Burgers

Yes, this was what brought me here. I went to the meat department in my local grocery market and saw Shaq's big, bald head peeking out from a package of two half-pound Angus beef burgers. But why? Shaq is a very large man, yes, and I assume he can demolish a huge burger in no time, but what brought him there? Did his big ol' ass wake up one morning and say, "I know! I need to put my face on a bunch of burgers!"—I have no idea, but nevertheless, they were there. Of note, I did indeed buy them, as they

were priced well, and stuck them in my smoker and cooked them. They were actually pretty damn good, so I can forgive Shaq for that one. I will not forgive him for his egg cooker, though. Also, it is obvious he is pointing at a pulled pork sandwich, but I'll let him slide on that one, as I don't think he knew what his photo would be pointing at.



### Henry Winkler

Yeah, the Fonz. He did some weird voiceover commercials—*very recently*, I might add—where he played the voice of CGI pigeons so as to sell DirecTV. This was more odd than the Shaq burgers in that not only the Fonz but Steve-fucking-Buscemi voiced these birds, worried about how they couldn't shit on a satellite dish because the users did not have DirecTV. Is...that an incentive? Obviously, the TV giant was like "naw." But why have pigeons talking about shitting when you're trying to sell a TV service?!

### Amy Schumer

Yes, yes, say what you will about the lady and the nature of her comedy, but she most assuredly endorsed Tampax—yes, the tampon company. She very vehemently stated that



they were the best for stopping up your flow. Er, for someone not owning and operating a vagina and uterus, I'd assume she knows what's up, but the delivery was sorta "Hey! Own a pussy? Cram this in there!" Is that what sells tampons? I am absolutely confounded, but I guess why not just go for "Yes, uterus blast!"



### Michael Jordan

The GOAT. The legend and the possibly most amazing athlete of all time. His Airness, Michael Jordan. However, he endorsed a series of hot dogs, specifically Ball Park Franks. Now, Ball Park Franks are not exactly what you'd think when you think of Michael Jordan, but he stuck his face on them. Has Mr. Jordan ever actually eaten a Ball Park Frank? I should hope so. Otherwise, he'd be a *goddamn*

liar. But I'm fairly sure Mr. Jordan has snuffled up many a Ball Park Frank. I mean, yes, money is a motivator, but you have to enjoy the product. And to be somewhat fair, they're pretty good, so I hope #23 enjoyed them before slapping his face on there.



### Paul Newman

This is sort of a sad one. We know the late Mr. Newman as having his company donate profits to charity. Great, yes? Well, it is, but a challenge in the tax code led to the foundation being pursued by the government, and an odd provision in the tax code could cause them to have to sell the company. Who could possibly hate the Paul Newman Foundation? Oh, the US government. Okay. Weird one, but damn. The foundation has delivered over 30 million dollars to 600 charities. Are you really gonna fuck with this? The answer is, "Yes, we are." While the initial report was from 2018, it seems the company is still mired in what pundits call "some fuckin' ass bullshit."



### Rap Snacks

I can't really hate on this too much. They are small bags of chips that carry the faces of various rappers. I recall eating ones in 2003 that had Ol' Dirty Bastard's face on them. To their credit, the chips were, and are (as they still

make them), pretty tasty. Probably better if you're high or something, but still, as chips go...well, I thought they were great. All manner of rappers had their faces on these, from Ol' Dirty to Master P, Meek Mill, Mack 10, and even Pastor Troy. Also, Bell Biv DeVoe gets on there, but while I love the group, fuck DeVoe.



### Snoop Dogg

You know he was gonna end up here at some point, but I am specifically talking about when he was endorsing Hot Pockets...the casual microwave snack we likely all grew up with—two minutes and cool, let's play SNES (or whatever console is appropriate to your timeline). However, Mr. Snoop was, in 2012, presumably tempted by a dump truck full of money to do the weirdest thing. Yes, he endorsed Hot Pockets. Did they really need this? I mean, everyone knows what they are and what they consist of. Nevertheless, Mr. Dogg remade his "Drop It Like It's Hot" song into "Pocket Like It's Hot" for the commercial. The video is utterly bizarre and can still be found online...if you're bold enough. Also, it has Andy Milonakis spitting a verse for reasons I cannot comprehend.



### Keanu Reeves

This was well before he was a star in Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure,

and his panoply of films since, eventually ending up as badass John Wick in his most recent movies, wherein he divested from his character as a stoned surfer and proceeds to murder a series of gangsters by sticking his finger up their buttocks. Well, in 1987, he was arranging Kellogg's Corn Flakes into a series of bowls for some sort of fictional cavalcade of breakfast cereal enthusiasts. He does take a bite and rocks his head back in pure cornflake enjoyment. Essentially, in his first feature role with major screen time, he introduced us to the wonders of flaked corn, and we thank him for it.

These are some of the oddest things I could find in the nature of weird celebrity endorsements. There are certainly more, and I must apologize for the fact that most are fairly recent, but these are some of the most bizarre products I could either remember or find. And before anyone says it, the George Foreman grill is not included, as that man would put his name on anything. Swear to god, I could write an entire article just on stuff that man has stuck his face on. It's innumerable. My underpants probably have George Foreman's face on 'em somewhere.

*Wombstretcha the Magnificent is a product endorser, not really a celebrity in any sense, writer, and retired rapper from Portland, OR. He can be found at his website, wombstretcha.com, on Twitter/X/whatever as @wombstretcha503, and on MeWe and (begrudgingly) Facebook as "Wombstretcha the Magnificent."*

# ARTISTS OF THE INDUSTRY

Richie Stratton  
BY NATE HAZEN

If you make your way around Portland's strip club scene, Richie Stratton is sure to be a familiar face. You can find him hosting Sinferno Cabaret at Dante's on Sunday nights, Kit Kat Showclub on Wednesdays and Fridays, and co-hosting alongside the lovely Axel at the *Polerotica* and *Miss Exotic Oregon* finals. Beyond his gift for hosting events with a fun and entertaining stage presence, Richie is a creative multi-hyphenate with talents that include screenwriting, a 20-year-and-running career in stand-up comedy, and most recently, creating and self-publishing a comic book alongside co-writer Aaron Wagner and illustrator Marcus Lake.



From left to right: Stratton, Wagner, and Lake

Richie once hit an elk with his car on the way to a comedy gig in Idaho. If he hadn't, there's a chance I might not be writing this piece about him today. Then again, a crash like that could very well have *guaranteed* I wouldn't.

His comic book series, *Night of the Were-Elk*, found its inspiration in that very crash. Such an up close and personal encounter with an elk—one that could easily have killed him, gave Richie a glimpse of just how terrifyingly massive these animals are...monstrous, one might even say, and he and Wagner began envisioning the beast in a horror setting, as a species of killer, shapeshifting creatures—a fitting response to so close a brush with the grim

reaper. The result is a truly unique and wonderfully weird offering to the world of comics.



Set in a small town in the Pacific Northwest, *Night of the Were-Elk* centers around Tiffany, a trailer park dweller who staves off loneliness in the company of bar flies and truckers who are just passing through. Following one such encounter, Tiffany unwittingly finds herself caught in the sights of a menacing secret society. Equal parts mur-



der mystery and supernatural thriller, *Night of the Were-Elk* is a fun and exciting read. Richie was gracious enough to grant me access to a script that lays out the comic's

full story arc, and I'm pretty excited for the release of future issues.

On that subject, the first two issues are already available, with #3 set to release sometime in August or September, and subsequent books releasing every two months or so after that (there's no definite release schedule in place; Richie assures me it's best to give Lake the space he needs to work his visual magic). If you're interested in picking up a copy, head to [crawlinkcomics.com](http://crawlinkcomics.com), where you can directly purchase physical or digital copies, or find a map of comic book stores throughout Portland that carry the book (of which there were nine last I checked), and a couple of which have sold out and re-upped on their stock.

So, what's in Richie's future beyond *Night of the Were-Elk*? Remember when I mentioned that one of Richie's talents includes screenwriting? Well, he has two short films being shown at this year's Guignolfest, a film contest and festival of short horror films, in Portland. He and Wagner also recently collaborated on a screenplay for a buddy comedy, mashing up two of exactly nobody's favorite movies, resulting in the once-again-wonderfully-weird *Paul Blart: Timecop*. No word on whether they've successfully attached Kevin James and Jean-Claude Van Damme to reprise their respective roles, but I've got my fingers crossed!



If you have an artist working in Portland's strip club industry who you'd like to see featured here, email Nate Hazen at [nate@xmag.com](mailto:nate@xmag.com) with your suggestions.



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Model: Gi Mary Jane Photographer: @saintsashaphotography

**EXOTIC**  
PINUP AUGUST  
**2024**

*Abigail Rhys*  
FROM  
**KIT KAT CLUB**









*Abigail Rhys*  
FROM  
KIT KAT CLUB



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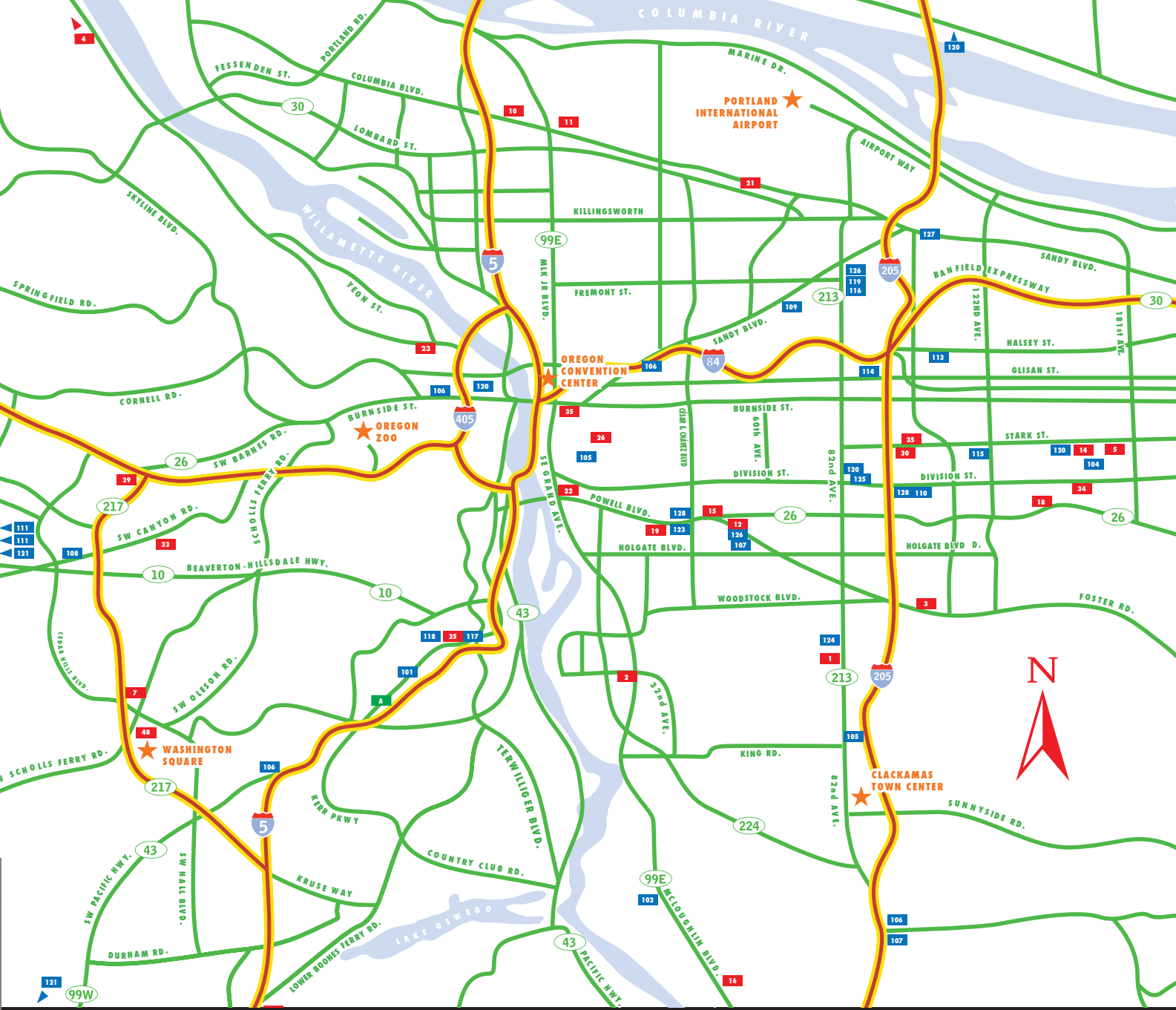
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# HOW PEOPLE STAYED COOL IN THE "OLD DAYS"

BY HANNAH ONE CUP

It's that time of year again. The time when the sun says, "I'm just gonna stretch my arms out a bit and kiss all my lovely human worshipers on the cheek. Just a lil' peck." And we all look at the sun in disgust, screaming, "No, we did not ask for any show of affection. In fact, absence and distance make the heart grow fonder. So, go away, and we will see you next year!"

It's also the time of year I decide to write an article about keeping your significant other chilled during these months. It's especially hard on us winter babes who were born in the dark warmth of winter comforts and are being thrown into climate conditions we were not born for. I decided this article would be about how people stayed cool in the "good old days." (Place laugh track here.) I also decided to test some of these out just to see how well they worked. I'll let you know on a scale of 1-5, 1 being "did not work at all" and 5 being "I barely noticed the sun's gaze that day."

On with the show...

## People Changed Their Clothing and Became Hobbits

Back before AC was everywhere or anywhere, talking about the 17th to 18th century specifically, people changed their clothes to suit the change in weather. This isn't anything out of the ordinary. However, if you were wealthy, you were lucky enough to hang out in your cellar, wearing something that looked a lot like a cotton slip (a "shift" is what it was called). That's called being fancy! I do this every day anyway, usually wearing nothing but underwear and a T-shirt or bathing suit if I have to open the door to get the mail. I'm pretty ok with it since my poor AC works its hardest to keep just my bedroom at a cool 84 degrees. Rating: 3/5. It works, but only if you have some cool air blowing on you. You can also pretend you are one of the elite, hanging out in your un-

derwear with cool air blowing on you. Living the life.



## Slept Outside Your House With the Bugs

I'm not saying there are always bugs, but there are always bugs. When it would get ridiculously hot outside, it was probably even worse inside. So, folks would sleep outdoors on their porches (one of the main uses of porches other than to sit out and judge people from a rocking chair). Apparently, there have been a couple of presidents who used to sleep in tents outside or on the roof of the White House just to keep cool. "Woe is me," indeed. I've done this before, and other than hearing the buzzing of insects unknown and known, it was always quite pleasant. Camping on your own property like a school kid. Rating: 5/5. It works, so long as you wear insect repellent. Also gives you a warm feeling of nostalgia, of days long past, back when the heat was manageable, and paying for an AC was something adults concerned themselves with.

## Delayed Cooking... for an Undetermined Amount of Time

Unless you lived in the south and had an outdoor kitchen, your kitchen co-exists with the rest of your home. Just looking at that oven or stovetop is said to make the devil come out of his hiding place inside your dirty broiler. People would wait until night or early morning to cook any meals—sound decision. I currently am living off of Cup O' Noodles. (They *finally* made a microwavable

cup, although I'm not going to lie, I've been sticking those Styrofoam cups in the microwave for years, and I'm still alive. I also didn't realize Styrofoam was trademarked...) I actually had someone ask me in the most concerned manner, "Do you have spaghetti in the freezer? I hope you have spaghetti..." as if that is a normal thing people have in their freezers...let alone eat during hot summers. But it reminded me fondly of my family growing up, my dad making way too much spaghetti, freezing it, and then us having leftovers for hot summer days. It is easily accessible, and no heat from the stove is required, keeping Satan at bay for another day. I hope you all have something similar to frozen spaghetti at home. Rating: 4/5. It does help keep



the heat from getting any hotter, but it absolutely doesn't cool me down, nor does it quench my thirst for a cheeseburger or noodles. Since my kitchen is in my house, I can't have either. So, Cup O' Noodles and Cap'n Crunch it is.

## Licked Blocks of Ice on the Street

I don't know about you, but I don't know if I've ever been hot enough to want to share frozen saliva with a group of random neighborhood folks while we all lick a huge, melting block of ice. But this was done apparently, and there is photographic evidence. I did not try this one out, but I do eat ice cubes, which isn't the same *at all*. I don't know, man;

my rating is just by sheer second-hand opinion on viewing the photos and knowing what I do about germs. Rating: 1/5. I don't want your swimming, soupy, ice cube germs, thank you very much. I think I'd rather take chances in the Willamette River.



Back in the “good old days,” it was all about how to make nature’s hatred towards human existence work with the very thing it hated. Building houses and placing windows in specific directions to get the breeze, throwing cold sheets in water and then going to bed wet, eating nearly-melted ice cream, and sleeping with bugs. To be honest, my younger self would probably not mind any of these things. But being the spoiled, domestic trash panda I am and born in the wondrous winter, I *need* to be kept cool. Here are some things I am accepting as donations to the “Keep One Cup Alive Fund”:

Cold fish, sushi, ice, ice water, more ice water, soup (I eat cold soup or noodles), ice tea, ice cream, slushies, a more powerful AC unit, a private river area so I can be away from people (they only make the air hotter, anyway), dog-cooling vest for Bob the Dog, spray bottle fan, Korean shaved ice, and more sushi. Always sushi. Cold chicken and spaghetti are good as well—I’m not picky. A cave I can hide and sleep in, a ticket to anywhere colder than 90+ degrees, and alcohol for my nerves, as well as yours. No one can handle me in the heat, sober. That includes myself.

*Hannah One Cup can be found peaking out her window, pondering how hard it would be to procure a boat and sail away somewhere in a storm. She’s also considering buying a cow, so this heat is really putting her brain all over the map—just nowhere cool. You can also find her on Facebook by her name.*

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# A Bouncer's Crash Course in Philosophy Vol. 2: Plato



All right, kids, class is back in session. Last month, I began this philosophy crash course with a selection of teachings from Socrates. Among the students who sat and learned from Socrates, aside from Bill and Ted, was Plato, whose name has become synonymous with republics and friends who don't fuck. But I'm not here to teach you about republics or platonic friendships—I'm sure you can figure that stuff out on your own. I'm teaching you about philosophy, which it just so happens is another thing Plato is known for. Let's dig in, shall we?

**"Human behavior flows from three main sources: desire, emotion, and knowledge."** Understanding the motivations behind somebody's behavior is a handy tool in the bouncer's toolbox. I recently read a really good academic paper on the subject, titled "Behavioral Indicators of Motives for Barroom Aggression: Implications for Preventing Bar Violence." The paper is available to read for free on the *National Library of Medicine's PubMed Central* website, and I'd recommend that anyone working in nightlife give it a read. The authors of the study sent observation teams into 118 large-capacity bars in Toronto between midnight and 3 a.m. to document instances of aggression in a barroom setting. They identified four main causes of aggression: compliance, grievance/justice, social identity, and fun/excitement, all of which—one could argue—have their roots in Plato's list of desire, emotion, and knowledge. The study offers strategies for dealing with aggressive acts based on each of the four motives they list in the paper, and that's the point I'm getting at. If you're able to deduce what's driving someone's problematic behavior, you'll have a better idea of how to address those actions.

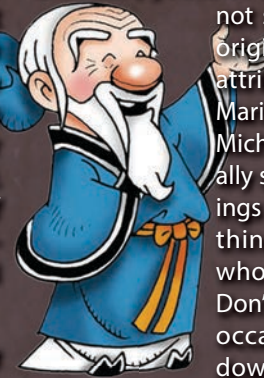
**"For a man to conquer himself is the first**

**and noblest of all victories."** Having some level of control over oneself is important in bouncer work; control over things like vices and emotions. The more you lack control over your emotions, the more easily an unruly patron can provoke you into an unnecessary, violent confrontation that makes you look like the aggressor. The more you lack control over your vices, the more those vices will distract you from your job, whether it be drinking, drugs, or video crack—ahem—I mean video lottery. In both cases, failure to conquer yourself erodes your ability to perform good security work effectively and has the potential to get you fired—or worse.

**"The empty vessel makes the loudest sound."** This one is true both philosophically and scientifically. I won't get too deep into a science lesson save to say the contents of a full vessel dampen the vessel's ability to propagate resonant vibrations. Philosophically, it's like this: if someone at work comes to me with a security issue, that's a good thing. It's what I'm there for. If someone comes to me with multiple issues every single shift I work, at some point, I start to wonder if they were a feral child who just never learned how to play nice with others...or they're just bored. Perhaps they don't know how to function without drama and will manufacture it if it doesn't come about organically. Similarly, someone who gets disproportionately angry about a relatively minor situation and seems a little too eager to fight you in the process is, more often than not, doing something called "posturing"—puffing themselves up and acting overly aggressive in the hopes you'll back down. Both cases are examples of empty vessels making loud sounds. Take these people with a grain of salt.

**"People are like dirt. They can either nourish you and help you grow as a person or**

**they can stunt your growth and make you wilt and die."** My roommate Jack is constantly reminding me that "you're judged by the company you keep." I've also heard it said that if you're the smartest person in the room, you're in the wrong room. I'm not sure where that one originated, but it's been attributed to Confucius, Marissa Mayer, and Lorne Michaels. Whoever actually said it first, these sayings all mean the same thing: be selective of who you keep around. Don't give shitty people occasion to drag you down with them.



**"When men speak ill of thee, live so nobody may believe them."** Deprive your haters of ammunition against you. Deny them a leg to stand on when they try to undermine you. Mind you, Plato is talking about reality here, not appearance. Be an upstanding person; don't just make an effort to *appear* that way. You'll eventually be discovered if you're fake. Conversely, if you put in the effort to be genuinely righteous, then neither falsehoods nor truth will hold the power to hurt you, and a singular failure of character on your part won't be your downfall if it's a clear statistical outlier. (Every person who's ever lived has failed once or twice.)

**"He who is not a good servant will not be a good master."** I'm gonna rewind really quickly to November 2003. I was a young private first class in the Marine Corps, and I had just reported to my first duty station in Okinawa, Japan, less than a month prior. My tour of duty there was for a full year, longer than I'd ever been away from home, further from home than I'd ever been, and I was homesick as fuck when Thanksgiving rolled around. I planned on doing what I

could to make the best of it, but I was feeling pretty miserable. On the day of, I was summoned to the rec room of the barracks, along with the rest of my work section, and was shocked to find our section head and his wife there, along with a full Thanksgiving spread. Corporal Zamora was married, so he lived in base housing, not the barracks, and it was a holiday. He should have been home with his wife. Instead, they came and served Thanksgiving dinner to a bunch of lonely, homesick kids spending the holidays on the opposite side of the planet from their families. After that day, I would have followed that dude into hell. He served us and, in the process, earned our loyalty—or at least he earned mine. Be a servant to your people, and see how far that gets you with them. And on that note...

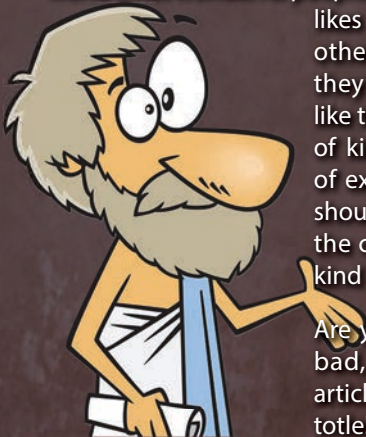
**“The measure of a man is what he does with power.”** This one doesn't need much elaboration. If you find yourself in a position of power, don't be self-serving with that power. Use it to do right by the people under your charge. Period.

**“The wisest have the most authority.”** I've written before about being a recovering preacher's kid and how I haven't thrown out the baby with the bath water. I was always captivated by the story of King Solomon, who, when God offered to grant him whatever he asked, asked for wisdom. He didn't ask for long life or wealth or the downfall of his enemies...you know, the kind of shit most of us would ask for in that position, and God granted him not only the wisdom he asked for but all those other things he didn't. Wisdom will take you places. Just don't count on the Judeo-Christian imaginary friend to give it to you. Earn it for yourself by learning from your mistakes and always looking for the lessons that life is trying to teach you.

**“The most virtuous are those who content themselves with being virtuous without seeking to appear so.”** Want to know something I really hate? Videos I see on social media of content creators like Mr. Beast, who do incredibly kind things for other people, but they do these things while sticking cameras in the faces of the victims of their kindness so they can show the world what wonderful people they are, in hopes of generating

likes or shares or clicks or whatever other stupid social media metrics they're trying to pump up—stunts like that ring hollow to me. A real act of kindness doesn't need that kind of exposure. Doing the right thing should be its own reward. If that isn't the case for you, you might just be kind of a piece of shit.

Are you sick of philosophy yet? Too bad, fuckers, 'cause next month's article is about Plato's student, Aristotle!



Nate Hazen is a bouncer, writer, occasional poet and artist, and fledgling philosophy student. Come talk with him about your favorite philosopher at X Exotic Lounge Wed-Sat from 8 p.m. to 2:30 a.m.

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# THREE STUDIO HORROR STORIES

By Blazer Sparrow

Gather 'round the campfire, younglings, and let Ole Blazer recount some of the most horrifying, blood-curdling, bone-chilling stories that I've been told of that most dreadful slice of the musician's pie—the recording studio! What follows are completely true, one-hundred-percent accurate anecdotes that are un-sourced and unverified. While the events that transpired in these tales did happen, I will not name names. Not to protect the privacy of badly behaved musicians but to protect the engineers and producers who told me these stories in confidence so they'll keep giving me the goods. Just know that these stories involve more-than-a-little-famous pop stars. Don't believe me? I couldn't care less! I don't even know who you are! You probably think the stripper in front of you actually likes you, so your bullshit detector is clearly broken.

Now, throw some dollars at the nice lady, sit down, shut up, and listen to the incredibly true tales of the lawless wasteland that is the recording studio.



## The White Out

Rock stars making outlandish and entitled demands is nothing new. Everyone is well aware of Van Halen's no brown M&M's request. No matter how much David Lee Roth insists that it was a safety precaution to make sure that stagehands were reading their contracts thoroughly, I call bullshit. Still, I get the importance of stagehands carefully reading the details in a contract for a show involving multiple pyrotechnics. However, for a studio session that involves only vocals, I can't imagine why it would be important for the engineers to read the fine print. The "talent" shows up, whines into a microphone with headphones on, then leaves. The walls are often padded, too, for soundproofing, so I'm not sure what injuries are even possible. Still, this unnamed diva demanded *not only* a bowl of white M&M's but also vases full of white roses in every room, white curtains hung on every surface she'd have to look at,

and all the furniture would have to be white. The label would pay for everything, so it's not like it cost the studio anything other than the hassle of going out and buying an absurd amount of M&M's and white roses. The engineer who told me this story was luckily able to borrow some white leather chairs from a friend and threw a white sheet over the couch in the sound room (fortunately, the diva didn't notice). As stated before, the session lasted only an hour, and the singer left with only part of a vocal take. The engineer didn't remember the pop star even touching the bowl of all-white M&M's. If you think I'm making this up, look up the ultrawealthy's obsession with white interior design. It checks out. Ultimately, the only downside to this demand was that a *bunch* of white roses were just thrown in the trash. They kept the M&M's (the non-white ones, too), which will likely last the studio staff till the end of time.



## The Party Bus(es)

Different studio, different engineer, same awful city. If you haven't guessed, all these stories take place in Los Angeles. This one involves a band in the mid-'80s. The band in question was signed and well-known in the underground circuit but not the worldwide sensation they'd become in the early '90s. They hit up the studio to set up a week of blackout time. So far, nothing out of the ordinary. On the start date, naturally, there was no band in sight at the agreed-upon start time. Finally, several hours later, a tour bus arrives with the band, some equipment, and a slew of groupies and hangers-on. The band and their entourage poured into the studio and, from what I heard, didn't seem too worried about the late start. The first item of business was to break out the multiple cases of beer they brought with them and pour out lines of blow on the control room's coffee table. Some folks in the band did plug in and start jamming away, but it seemed to be more for

the entertainment of the entourage than for laying anything to tape. The studio's time was already paid for, so the engineer who told me this story didn't care too much, except that he wasn't sure what he was supposed to do. Then he saw *another* tour bus pull into the parking lot. The engineer assumed that maybe this was going to be the studio musicians who would actually play everything, along with the rest of the equipment. No such luck. This second bus was just more groupies and drug dealers coming to join the party. Apparently, some stuff was recorded at this session that made it on the album.

If there's any lesson to be learned from these stories thus far, it's to get signed immediately since record labels seem to have endless money to throw at emotionally stunted artists.

## The Missed Connection

By far, my favorite story I've heard, once again, takes place in Los Angeles. This time, the artist in question wasn't making ridiculous demands or acting a fool in the studio, not taking the time seriously. From everything I heard, the sessions themselves were productive enough. The artist was laying her parts down, treated the staff well, and was doing the normal amount of cocaine while listening to takes in the control room. The only thing that the engineer noticed was amiss was that the artist always seemed to nervously check her phone, and when she took calls, she did them in private. The session ended, and the artist left. The engineer, as they're often expected to, stayed after hours to do some rough mixes to send to the label. He heard the studio door ring and buzzed whoever it was in, figuring it was either the artist or someone affiliated. Turns out it was two Russian gangsters with Glocks drawn and pointed straight at him. Although the artist was doing the normal amount of cocaine, it turns out she wasn't paying for it. The engineer who told me this story is still alive, so clearly, the Russians believed him when he said they just missed her. Famous people don't exactly give out their number, so he couldn't help the gentlemen get in touch anyway. I never heard if those poor Russian gangsters got the drug money that the pop star owed them. I hope they did. Stealing is wrong, kids.

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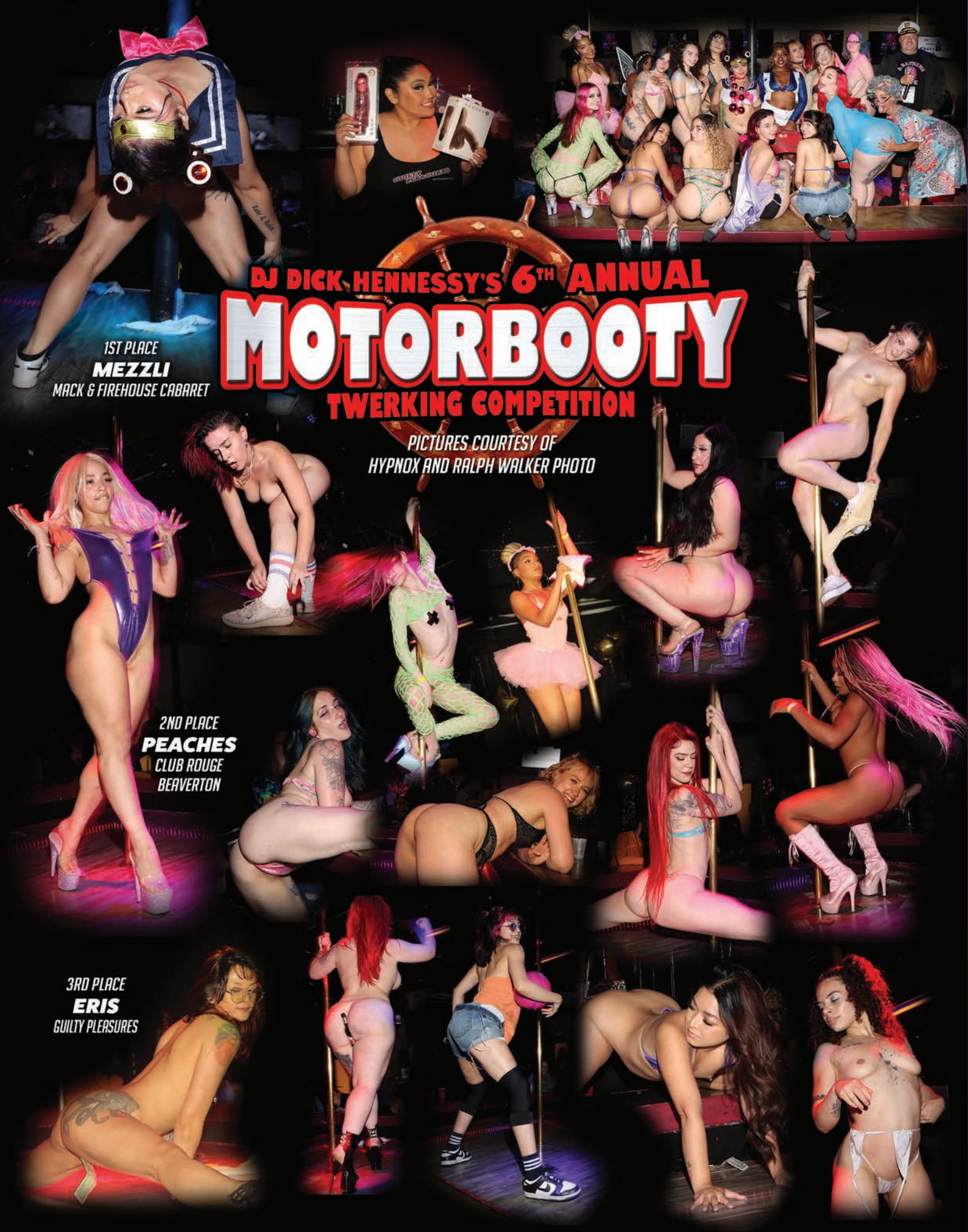
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