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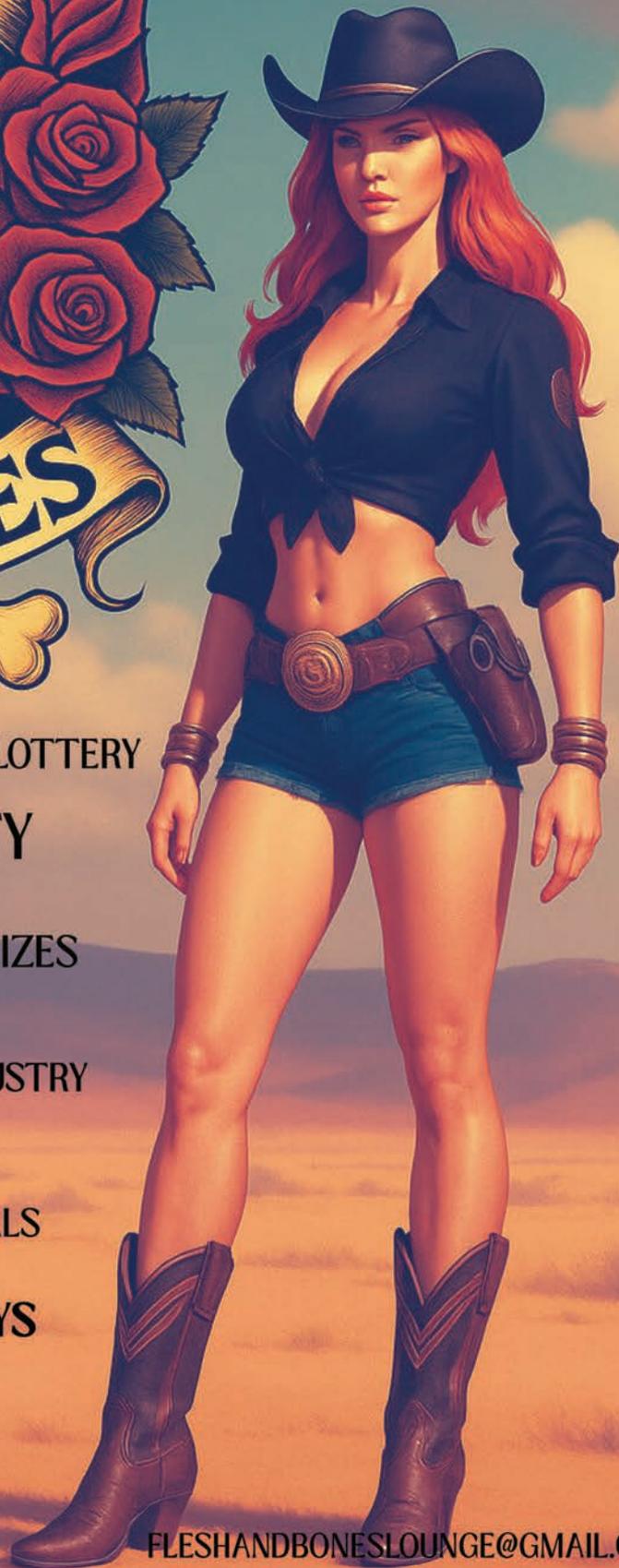
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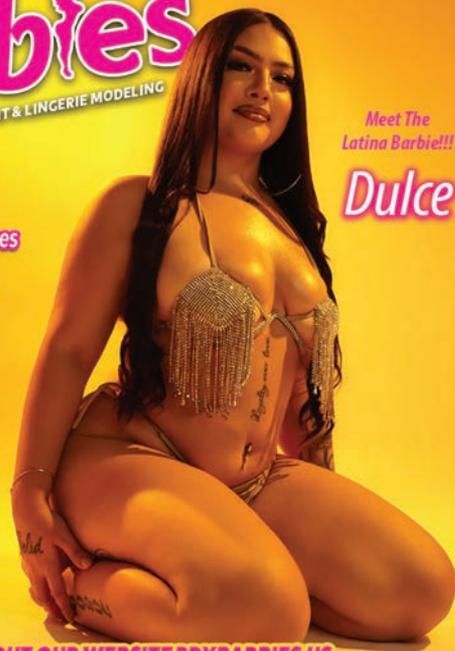
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the history behind the pacific northwest's premier adult industry pageant
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SPOOKY SITUATIONS & WHAT TO DO WITH THEM

increase your chances of survival this halloween season
page 34 | by hannah one cup



FUNNY BUSINESS

confucius say humor more effective than brawn
page 36 | by nate hazen



FAST FOOD MASCOTS: A HISTORY

a look into the biggest stars of junk food
page 40 | by wombstretcha the magnificent

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QUALIFIER ROUND II
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STARS
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QUALIFIER ROUND V
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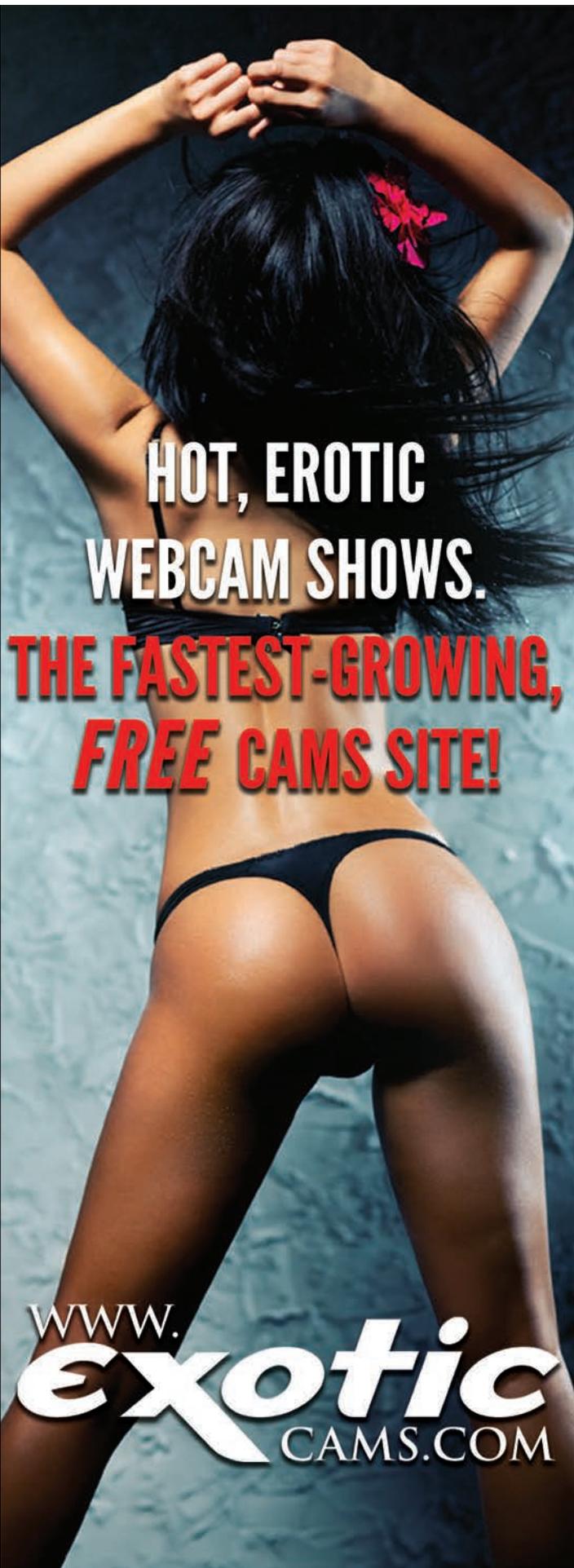
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Summer's officially over, but it'll be easy to keep your spirits up with all that's happening in the industry this month. In fact, even when the weather finally changes and it's cold and mushy outside, you won't be bothered in the slightest. That's because you know when fall arrives, it's time for the industry's biggest celebration of talent and creativity. The pageant that showcases the adult industry in a way that no others can—on the biggest stage, with the largest audience. More on that later, though!

Let's get to task on this month's industry offerings, starting with birthdays! On Friday, October 3, it's Jasmine's Birthday Party at AJ's Gentlemen's Club. Then, on Friday, October 10, we have Sara's Birthday at Stars Cabaret (Bridgeport). The following week, on Friday, October 17, it's Chyna's Birthday Celebration at AJ's Gentlemen's Club. Next, on Sunday, October 26, it's Lux's Unholy Birthday Party at Devils Point. Last, but *absolutely* not least, on Friday, October 31, it's Rhea's Birthday Party at Kit Kat Club. Happy Birthday from all of us at *Exotic*, ladies!

And now, it's on to other industry events and parties! I bet you can guess that they're all scary and spooky... First up is the Terrifier Halloween Party on Saturday, October 18, at Desire. Then, on Thursday, October 23, head to Lucky Devil for their 16th Annual Zombie Stripper Night! This is a long-standing Halloween tradition, so you don't want to miss out! What's next? Yeah, you guessed it...a whole slough of Halloween Parties on Halloween proper! On Friday, October 31, your mission is to make it to all of these Halloween Parties: AJ's Gentlemen's Club, Cheetahs (Salem), Kit Kat Club, The Lounge, and Stars Cabaret (both Bridgeport and Salem locations). In the case of Kit Kat Club, they're having a very special Halloween Cabaret, with scary group feature acts, prizes, and giveaways. Let the ghouls roll!

Time to wrap up events for October...any guesses on what's left to announce? After an introduction like the first paragraph, everyone should know! If you seriously just flunked this one-question quiz, head over to page 20 with your head hanging low—it's detention time! In fact, even if you guessed it right, still head over to page 20. We think you'll enjoy the walk down *Miss Exotic Lane*.

Arrivederci, miei cari!

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eroticcity spotlight

FRI 03 – AJ'S GENTLEMEN'S CLUB – JASMINE'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

FRI 03 – KIT KAT CLUB – MISS EXOTIC OREGON 2026
QUALIFIER ROUND I

FRI 10 – DESIRE – MISS EXOTIC OREGON 2026 QUALIFIER ROUND II

FRI 10 – STARS CABARET (BRIDGEPORT) – SARA'S BIRTHDAY

FRI 17 – AJ'S GENTLEMEN'S CLUB – CHYNA'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

FRI 17 – STARS CABARET (SALEM)

MISS EXOTIC OREGON 2026 QUALIFIER ROUND III

SAT 18 – DESIRE – TERRIFIER HALLOWEEN PARTY

THU 23 – LUCKY DEVIL – 16TH ANNUAL ZOMBIE STRIPPER NIGHT

FRI 24 – THE LOUNGE – MISS EXOTIC OREGON 2026
QUALIFIER ROUND IV

SUN 26 – DEVILS POINT – LUX'S UNHOLY BIRTHDAY PARTY

FRI 31 – AJ'S GENTLEMEN'S CLUB – HALLOWEEN PARTY

FRI 31 – CABARET – HALLOWEEN PARTY & COSTUME CONTEST

FRI 31 – CHEETAHS (SALEM) – HALLOWEEN PARTY

FRI 31 – KIT KAT CLUB – HALLOWEEN CABARET
& RHEIA'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

FRI 31 – THE LOUNGE – HALLOWEEN PARTY

FRI 31 – STARS CABARET (BRIDGEPORT) – HALLOWEEN PARTY

FRI 31 – STARS CABARET (SALEM) – FRIGHT NIGHT

NOVEMBER

SAT 01 – AJ'S GENTLEMEN'S CLUB – MISS EXOTIC OREGON 2026
QUALIFIER ROUND V

FRI 07 – GUILTY PLEASURES – MISS EXOTIC OREGON 2026
QUALIFIER ROUND VI

THU 13 – CABARET – MISS EXOTIC OREGON 2026
QUALIFIER ROUND VII

FRI 28 – DANTE'S – MISS EXOTIC OREGON 2026 FINALS

HAPPY HOURS

AJ'S – 10AM-5PM

CABARET – 2PM-6PM

CLUB 205 – 10:30AM-6:30PM

DEVILS POINT – 3PM-6PM

DESIRE – 6PM-9PM

DV8 – 12PM-3PM

GUILTY PLEASURES – 12PM-8PM (SU-TH)

THE LOUNGE – 11AM-4PM

LUCKY DEVIL – 3PM-6PM

THE LEGACY OF MISS EXOTIC OREGON

By Bryan. A. Bybee

Fall is officially here, and anyone who's been part of our local industry for even a short time knows what's around the corner. That magical time of year, where the industry's top performers grace us with their immense talent, and show us how truly special and diverse our industry and its many art forms really are! (Full disclosure: *small portions of the following text were published last year, but on the whole, it's not the same, so please continue reading...*)

We are incredibly excited to announce *Miss Exotic Oregon 2026* this year, but before we get into all the details of this year's pageant, I'd like to spend some time reminiscing about how we got here. In the not-so-distant past, we here at *Exotic* embraced the mayhem of bringing three major events to the industry each and every year. Perhaps few will remember the name of all three—two are easy, but one has been retired for over six years. Yes, it's really been over six years since the last *Ink 'n' Pink* competition, which is really hard to believe.

It might surprise many of you to learn that *Miss Exotic Oregon* is not *Exotic's* oldest competition—*Ink 'n' Pink* wears that medal (pun intended), and it's not even close. The very first *Ink 'n' Pink* competition, happened in the fall of 2000, and there was actually live tattooing taking place during the competition. It was quite the spectacle indeed, and even though *Exotic* itself had barely turned seven at the time, we still threw a party that even Hefner would have approved of (and even if he wouldn't, we know Ron Jeremy would!)

Fast forward a decade, and *Exotic* would announce its next recurring, mainstream event. Any guesses? It's gotta be *Miss Exotic Oregon*, right? Well, you'd be wrong. *Polerotica* was announced in January 2010, and the competition has been held annually ever since (except, of course, 2020 and 2021, which the pandemic so cruelly robbed us of...). And that brings us to what's "technically" *Exotic's* youngest competition—*Miss Exotic Oregon*. Wait...WTF? Don't all the *Miss Exotic* promotional ads say, "The indus-

try's largest and longest-running pageant?" They do, and please let me explain, before everyone riots in the streets, screaming for our cancellation.

The format and structure of the *Miss Exotic Oregon* pageant you know today was actually first created and operated in 2009 under a different, but very similar name—industry oldheads would easily recall. That said, the details of its demise were quite juicy, but we will—as they say—let sleeping dogs lie and not poke any bears. Anyway...the point is, while it may boil down to semantics, *Miss Exotic Oregon's* format and structure make it *technically* the industry's longest-running pageant, albeit the lawyers forced us to rework the name. Why is all this important? Read on, my truly beloveds.



Miss Exotic Oregon was created for **one purpose**: to showcase the wide-ranging talent, skills, and creativity of exotic entertainers in the Pacific Northwest—especially to those that are not consistently visiting industry establishments, and may have skewed views of what our industry represents. The comments, remarks, and reactions I've heard and seen from the average, non-industry patron at the Finals of *Miss Exotic Oregon* have been overwhelmingly positive. Utter amazement, shock, and awe, to name just a few. You see, the average person who doesn't spend much (or any) time at strip clubs has an entirely different perception of what this amazing art form truly encompasses. When they see the sheer magnitude of physical talent, beautifully interwoven with the immense level of creativity, it completely blows their mind.

After the pageant was reborn through the scenario described above, it was created with the utmost integrity in mind to provide

all contestants with a completely level playing field and an entirely equitable chance to win or place. Such integrity cannot exist when a competition or pageant is owned and operated by a gentlemen's club, and history has proven that. It takes a third-party operator with no vested interest in the final outcome for the pageant to truly have validity and illustriousness.

Have we made some mistakes over the years? Yes, we have. And with every mistake that was made, we've personally taken the challenge to improve the pageant and ensure that it was never repeated. As with all things in life, there's a learning curve, and it's not a perfect process, but it's how you respond to the challenges that is key. (We're always open to constructive criticism and feedback regarding *Miss Exotic Oregon* and *Polerotica*. Send an email with your thoughts to events@xmag.com.)

As promised, let's discuss some of the specifics of the contest. Only the elite of the top entertainers who join move on to the Finals of *Miss Exotic*. How do they qualify, you may ask? Well, let's break it down...it's dependent on their ranking in the following categories: *Theme, Stage Presence & Interaction, Body/Figure, Grace, Agility & Skill, Outfit/Costume, Originality, Beauty, and Class/Style*.

The final component to their overall ranking and chance to compete in the Finals is customer votes. They need *your support* through your attendance, voting, and, of course, tipping! We hope that everyone will come and celebrate the wide range of diversity and talent that makes our industry thrive, as it's showcased throughout this October and November. Let's also take a moment to appreciate all *Miss Exotic Oregon* pageant winners to date! That's right, we have all thirteen of them, along with their official *Exotic* covers, to the right.

Please visit page 16 for all the dates and locations of this year's pageant, and let's make sure it's a truly memorable one! See you at Kit Kat Club on Friday, October 3, to kick it all off!



WHO WILL WEAR THE CROWN FOR 2026?

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Brooke

FROM
LUCKY DEVIL LOUNGE

EXOTIC
PINUP **OCTOBER**
2025



Brooke
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Sun-Thu 12pm-1:30am, Fri-Sat 12pm-2:30am

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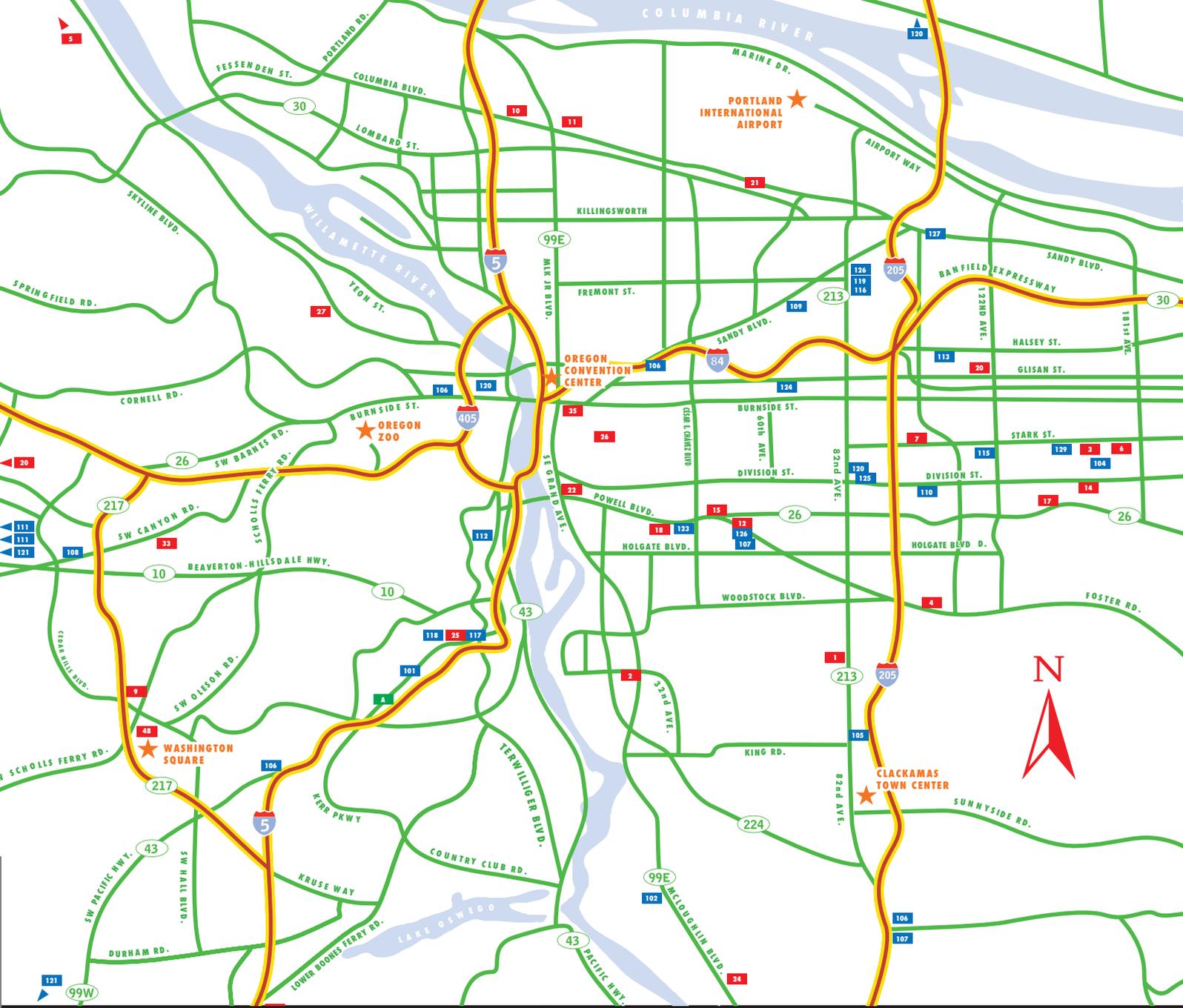
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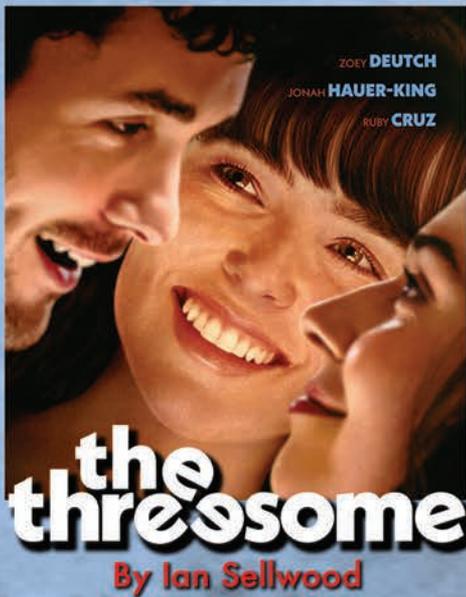
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WHAT. THE. FUCK.

Sorry, the above might be slight spoilers, but I just have to vent my frustration from the get-go on this *woefully* mistitled movie. Apologies for giving away the goods so early, but that is literally how enraged I am, after walking out of this falsely advertised snoozefest. I suppose I should start by explaining the obvious: why I even bothered writing this review in the first place. As you know, I've aborted some unforgivably skinless flicks before (see the Companion piece that unfortunately made it to layout, before I scrapped the copy). This time around, I felt it was important to get this out there and warn the public.

If you're anything like me, you were probably immediately enticed by the trailer to this movie that, for reasons that are beyond me, found its way onto my social media feed. The movie is called...*The Threesome*. The trailer literally shows what they can show of a dude and two gals getting excited about...a threesome. Then some other stuff happens in the trailer, but, like, come on! Clearly, this was going to be my first five-out-of-five eggplant review. On top of that, they even have a promo where if you buy two tickets to the movie, you get a free third one. This movie was going to be so hot, they were expecting actual threesomes to erupt in the theater. Naturally, I had no one interested in going with me, let alone a third, so I couldn't take advantage of this third-wheel freebie. I did, however, bring an extra bottle of lube. Expectations were high.

Spoilers Ahead!

Once again, and I can't stress this enough:

WHAT.

THE.

FUCK.

Not only do you not get to see the titular threesome, you don't get to see...*ANYTHING*. This movie has zero nudity. None. Not one tit. Not one glance of pubic hair. Not one bare ass. Not even one thonged ass.

No "tasteful" silhouette of one of the actresses naked.

Not even one of those bullshit *clothed* sex scenes.

Not even an off-screen sex scene, where you hear the grunts and the moans, or any kind of audio stimulation.

Literally *nothing*.

The entire beginning of the movie builds up to this "threesome" we've been hearing so much about in the ads. As the tension builds, and you do get to see some making out, it cuts straight to the next morning! Sheets over the tits!

I was pissed, but I figured I'd keep watching, thinking maybe they'll do some flashbacks to the threesome, or something. The movie is, after all, called *The Threesome*, so you assume at some point we will be seeing a threesome on screen.

Instead, we get teased into seeing a shower sex scene. Once again, just as the tension builds and dude takes his shirt off, we jump right past the good stuff, and it's the next scene.

The third time, two characters indicated that they wanted to mash their genitals together, as soon as they moved on each other, cut to someone breaking on a pool table.



At this point, I wondered if I had time-traveled to the past. Was I having a nightmare? Did I die, and get astral projected into someone watching a movie in the fucking '50s? Did the fucking Hays Code get reinstated behind all our backs? What the fuck was going on?!

There's not even a graphic cunt shot of the

two gals who got knocked up when they were giving birth at the end. No such luck. Not even any shots of their preggo bellies with the distended belly button, if that's your thing. This movie is rated R. I'm going to write the MPAA a letter in red ink, demanding that this film be re-rated G, because at least future theater masturbators won't be fooled.

I can't wait to see the Reddit cucks talk about how "sexual" this movie was, and how it was bringing sex into rom-coms. They'll probably argue that the characters talk about sex throughout the entire film, so in that sense, it's very sexual.



Uh, no, it's not. Haven't you dipshits ever heard the golden rule of storytelling?

SHOW. DON'T TELL.

Like, sure, there's a scene where one of the gals—the one with the bangs—talks about her and the other girl "co-sucking" the dude's dick. What are we supposed to do, just *imagine* Bangs McGee and Big Eyes both slobbering over central casting white guy's cock? Don't tell us about the double blowjob, show us! With the two actresses doing it! Or at least some real convincing body doubles.

If there was some deeper meaning or some kind of social commentary in making a movie about sex, depicting none of it, it was lost on me. Clearly, I am not the target audience for this film, and by extension, neither is anyone else.



0/5 eggplants

Ian Sellwood is a voice actor, comedian, and certified Sigma Male from Lake Oswego. He frequently contributes content to Mr. Skin and is highly active on 4chan. He can be reached at iancel@xmag.com.

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SPOOKY SITUATIONS AND WHAT TO DO WITH THEM

BY HANNAH ONE CUP

It's October at the point you'll be reading this. That is, unless the earth has finally said "I've had enough of your crap" and decided to start getting itself sucked into a blackhole for real. It's another month filled with insane and improbable scenarios you wouldn't have tried to dream as possible 10 years ago. Halloween is supposed to ring in the "spooky" season, but at this current point in time, it's no spookier than any other time of year. If anything, everything starts mellowing out because the weather is cooling down and the rain is weighing down all the craziness.

But spooky situations do happen, and now is as good a time as any to go over some of those situations you might find yourself in, and what you should do if you encounter them.* For added effect, picture these situations with you being in a costume of some sort, like a cow costume with udders or something, I don't know.

(*Heavy emphasis on the fact that all of this is based on my own opinion, and that my brain thinks about these sorts of things on a daily basis, so do with that as you will.)



Someone is threatening you with some sort of scary-looking, sharp object and starts walking towards you...

First off, I take no chances with this sort of thing. If it's dark outside, all bets are off. If you are trying to scare your friend at that time of day, may the gods be with you, be-

cause the movie I play out in my head is not going to play out how you want it, at least if your friend is doing it right. If someone appears to threaten you with an object and comes towards you, run at them screaming and waving your arms all around, like a crazy person. Maybe yell something intimidating like "I peed my pants!" and keep running at them until you get close enough to kick them in the groin. I'm imagining that the "perpetrator" (friend...you, too, are a perpetrator if you started this situation) may be stunned at what's unfolding and also probably won't want your pee on them, no matter what they were after: money, something to stab, a friend to scare. No one wants a crazy person's pee on them all willy-nilly. So, we hope they run away from you if you don't get to the groin first. That's when you either call 911 or discover it's your "friend." In which case, you may have a tough choice to make.



You are being followed by someone who is keeping their distance...

Stop where you are, so long as you're in public and around people. If not, turn around and perform the first stunt we talked

about above. Stop, notice the person who is following you, and then walk towards them. They'll feel somewhat awkward but probably still intrigued enough to follow you around. So, reverse the situation, and start following them around. Whispering something around them just so they can hear it, "My infection just cleared up, and I've got a bottle of Malört in the back of my van down the street, if you don't mind dealing with my collection of spiders and hair." Keep following them until they start walking speedily. When they get to a run, that's when you can quit. But not before continuing to send them off with an obvious, intent stare, and a friendly wave goodbye. So long, creep.

Your car is parked or at a stop light, and someone you don't know tries hopping inside...

The thing you need to realize first is that you should always have your doors locked. I keep all but my driver's door locked (in case my car ever goes into the water and I need a door to be unlocked). But if your doors are not locked because you feel this undeserved sense of safety wherever you are, immediately unbuckle and go for the eyeballs. I mean it, poke those suckers out. Whether it's with your fingers, a sharp object, or a cigarette, get those eyes, then bite some fingers off. You do not need to talk to this stranger who came into your car uninvited. You're trying to quickly incapacitate a person enough to kick them back out of your car and make them heavily regret their life decisions up to that point. If your car is parked and this happens, and you have a remote start car or push-button, the safest option would be to unbuckle, turn the car off, and get out of the car with your keys. But when that's not available, violence is always there, deep inside you.

If the person who hopped in your car had mistaken your car for their Uber, well, that's on them for not being aware of their own damn surroundings. Can't blame yourself for their stupidity.

Someone is in your house that shouldn't be...



As much security as we have now with doorbell cams, special locks, and actual security systems, home invasions are still a thing. Sometimes they happen when you least expect, like at a party you're hosting. If someone you don't know and/or don't want is in your home, get them out. It doesn't need to be complicated or awkward. Just ask them to leave. And if they don't, whip out the kitchen cutlery or frying pan. No one wants a confrontation with a frying pan.

If you're alone, and you know someone is in your house that you aren't expecting, but you can't see them, don't be one of the dumbasses from a horror movie and say, "Hello?" Just get out, and then set your house on fire. Or at least make it look like you're about to, with a gas can (you can get it for cheap from the gas hotdog store) and a long lighter. Fill the can with water (but remember it's filled with water. You'll regret trying to fill your car with water by accident.). Start going around your home (only works for homes and duplexes; apartments should use smoke bombs) and make the home invader think you're a crazed lunatic who's gonna set the whole place ablaze. Mumble things like, "Oh, you're gonna get it. Tony told me this day would come...well, here it is." You don't know a Tony, but if you mumble it loud enough, the intruder will definitely think you mean business when he sees the lighter. Make sure you watch your exits to confirm if the intruder has left. If he has (or even if he hasn't), you call 911 and very loudly say the situation that is occurring. I suppose 911 should be the first step, but sometimes rationality goes out the window, and all you think about is results, and you've watched enough crime shows to know it can sometimes take 30 minutes for responders to arrive on the scene, and by then...well, you know.



To sum it all up, these were just a few creepy scenarios you might find yourself in, along with some possible solutions for how to best get out of them. Again, these are all just my opinions on the matter, and I am by no means saying anything about being a self-defense expert. I'm definitely a "results matter most" kind of gal. So, it leaves me in a bit of a moral gray area with my tactics, at times. I'll justify any of these solutions to best suit the situation, so don't try me. And don't try to scare your friend at night. They might have just read my article.

Hannah One Cup can be found listening to music in her parked car, with the doors locked and seatbelt undone, just in case. All of these situations are spoken from first-hand experience, unfortunately/fortunately, so she would also like to point out, from more first-hand experience, that at this time of year, a carved pumpkin could also be utilized as a deterrent in some manner. Let your imagination go crazy.

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Funny Business



Well, shit, folks, where *does* the time go? I've been keeping myself busy of late with the whole stand-up comedy thing; *Tits & Giggles* at X is now happening every Thursday, and we've started up an open mic at Dixie Tavern on Tuesdays. I've also been writing jokes and performing once in a while. It might come as a shock, but I have comedy pretty much always on my mind these days. That's nothing new, though; although I've only been performing stand-up for a few months, I've been delivering comedic bits IRL the entire eight years I've worked as a bouncer.

The other day, I was talking with a comic I've recently gotten to know, and we started discussing the feeling of magic you feel when you make your audience laugh. It occurred to me that, beyond a mere feeling, comedy could be described as a powerful form of magic, in a literal sense. Jokes, bits, and sets are incantations, spells, and rituals, and a skilled comedic practitioner can cause the audience to lose control over their own bodies; doubled over with laughter, spasming involuntarily, robbed of breath, rivers of tears flowing down red faces, all by speaking some magic words. Magic like that would be a pretty useful tool in the bouncer's toolbox.

If you think about it, jokes are inherently disarming; a good joke sets up an expectation in the minds of the audience, and an effective punch line undermines that expectation — or clobbers the ever-loving shit out of it with a brick. If you zoom out a little bit on that concept, the fractal holds its shape: as a bouncer, a lot of people walk up to you at the front door, already bracing themselves for you to act like an asshole towards them. In all likelihood, it's nothing personal. Our profession, in general, has a reputation for being assholes—deserved or not—but that's the expectation that's been set up for them. The punchline in this case, is that far from being the asshole they expected, you made them laugh on their way in the door, and in so doing, you've placed them at ease and established a new tone for the rest of their night; you've just pumped up their Reeboks on their way inside to spend some dollars (Now your spells are manifesting money as well!).

Pre-pandemic, my friend Joel and I worked the front door at Dixie together, and we made

an absolutely classic comedic duo. Joel loved telling really dumb dad jokes any time we had to hold the line; it kept us engaged with the customers waiting to get in, and it made the wait a bit more fun. I naturally assumed the role of comedic straight man, pretending to be annoyed or disgusted any time Joel started a joke, as though I'd heard that same joke so many times that having to hear it again caused me actual physical pain. I was like Bert, enduring with annoyance, Ernie's silly ass bullshit. It was, of course, all a show for the benefit of the customers in line, and it never failed to keep the atmosphere light and fun.

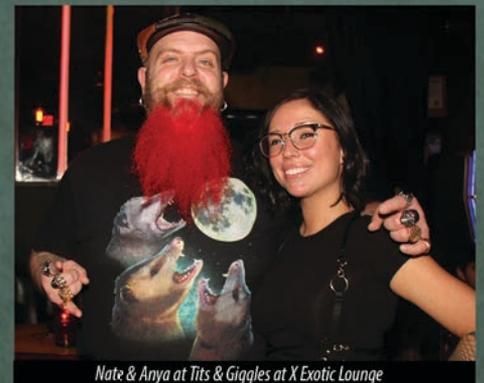
Over the years, I've added several bits to my front door repertoire. When circumstances don't call for a pat down, I'll still get customers who turn around and hold their arms out, as a function of muscle memory more than conscious thought. I handle these encounters by telling the dude that if he wants me to put my hands on him like that, it'll cost him extra. Gets a good laugh 99 times out of a hundred. On the flip side of that equation, sometimes I'll pat a guy down, and the girl walking in with him will jokingly bat her lashes at me and ask if I'm going to pat her down, too (I realize how made up that sounds, but I swear to God it happens all the time). In that scenario, I'll turn around, put my hands against the wall, assume the position, and suggest instead that I'm going to need her to pat *me* down before I can let her in. Another reliable laugh, plus I get myself groped for free!

I had a front door bit go viral recently on Instagram, scoring me 5 million views and nearly a half-million likes, in which I fire a confetti gun, and as the glimmering scraps of mylar flutter down around the head of the kid standing in front of me, I drop the bomb that I'm confiscating his fake ID. When we filmed that video, the kid looked for a second like he might swing, but as he began to process the joke of the whole thing, he shook the fists out of his hands, nodded in a grudging acknowledgement that what just went down is pretty fucking hilarious, and walked away. Checking IDs is an abundant source of material for bits. Even my fake ID collection is a bit; I keep them in a binder, organized in card pages, with the cover adorned with Pokémon imagery and the message "Gotta catch 'em all!" My favorite game to stave off boredom is to target the last person

in a group, and scrutinize their ID way harder than I did their friends'. I'll look back and forth between the person and the photo on their ID, again and again, furrow my eyebrows, and really sell them my skepticism to the point it makes them nervous, before I laugh and tell them, "I'm just fucking with you. Have fun!" That joke always gets the whole group laughing. I once knew a guy who thought it was hilarious to smell everyone's ID while checking it, as if the sniff test was just a normal part of the ID-check process.

A well-timed joke can effectively de-escalate those dick measuring contests that seem to thrive when the sun goes down and B.A.C. goes up. Interpersonal tension dissipates pretty quickly when everyone involved unexpectedly laughs together. A coworker once told me a story about a customer giving off some body language, hinting that he was ready to get physically belligerent, prompting said coworker to yell at him: "Hey! You do not want to hit me!" This piqued the guy's interest, prompting him to ask, "Oh? Why not?" The coworker responded, "Because that would make me cry, and then you'd feel *bad* about it!" Once the guy was able to stop laughing and catch his breath, they had a friendly and productive encounter.

Bouncer work is fun for me. It doesn't have to be that serious all the time. Feel free to try some of my bits at whatever door you happen to be working, or come up with a few of your own—either way, look for ways to work a joke or two into your work routine!



Nate Hazen is a writer, bouncer, stand-up comic, and living proof that bald is beautiful. Come talk comedy with him at the Dixie open mic on Tuesdays, or at *Tits & Giggles* at X on Thursdays.

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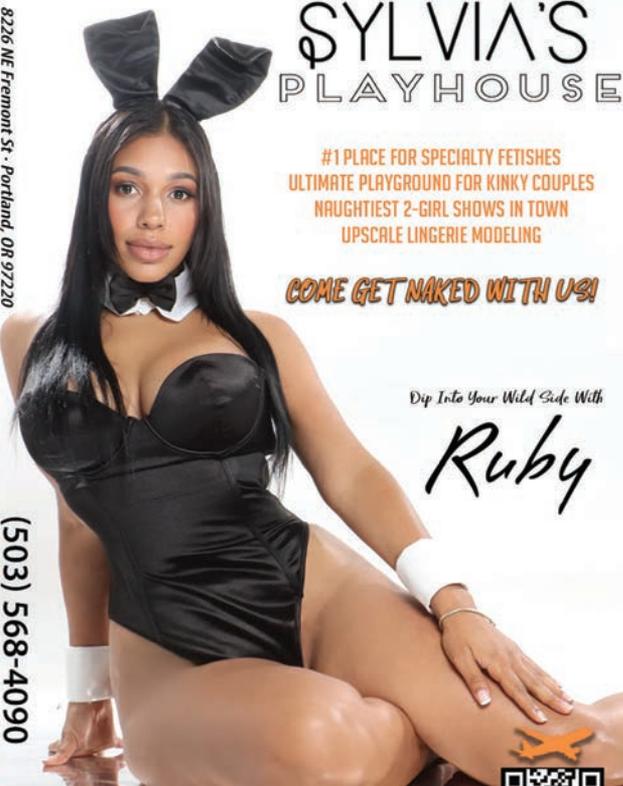
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What's the Next Vinyl?

By Blazer Sparrow

CD sales overtook vinyl sales around 1988, according to a graph I vaguely recall seeing a while ago. Twenty years later, in 2008, vinyl sales overtook CD sales, in another article I sorta remember reading. Vinyl sales have significantly climbed since, and account for the majority of sales for physical media in music. Sadly, this still pales in comparison to money spent on music writ large. That slice of the pie still goes to Spotify. Even more sadly, if you go look at that pie chart, physical music sales in general are a tiny little sliver. That sliver is divided up even further, between CDs, vinyl records, and (against all reason and the natural order of things) cassette tapes.

I doubt anyone could've predicted that comeback. There was definitely a period there in the late '90s and early '00s, where vinyl nearly died. I know this because albums that came out around that time are *really* hard to find on vinyl. Likely because either very few were pressed, or simply none at all. CDs were at their absolute dominance at this point, and the Napster revolution was just around the corner.

Even though the tech oligarchs assumed that physical media in general would die, and it would just be invisible data downloaded (later streamed) directly into our brains for a price (later a monthly service fee), the people rose up and said otherwise with their dollar.

Vinyl (with a download card) came out on top, after the clash of titans in the late 2000s, as the victor in the short-lived media wars for no other reason than a bunch of obnoxious hipsters said it sounded better. Suspiciously, this vinyl resurgence coincided with the insufferable stomp-clap-hey era of indie rock. That shit sounds like it was made for vinyl and the unwashed assholes who brag about owning it.

But eras come and go. Just like in the late '90s, they thought *nothing* would replace CDs, and like how we now believe *nothing* will replace capitalism, time makes fools of us all. Empires rise and fall.

So what's the next cool, quirky, obnoxious music snob medium that'll overtake vinyl? The twenty-year cycle is nearly upon us. Come 2028, it'll be time for one medium to eclipse the current champion. What will it be? The hipsters tried (and thank fucking God

failed) to make cassette tapes the next thing, so luckily it won't be that.

CDs

The beaten contender rises again to snatch back its title. You think I'm being funny, but this is a very real possibility. Calling it now that in 2028, CD sales will surpass vinyl sales. Then, the pendulum will swing back to vinyl in 2048. And so on. On the real, look at eBay and Discogs. Certain CDs, from the late '80s through the '90s, are stupidly expensive. They are becoming collector's items—especially golden age hip-hop. I've seen some going for over \$200. Insane right? Plus, they are literally starting to advertise Bluetooth CD players...as like a cool new compact thing to play all those CDs you aren't able to play, 'cause nothing has a disc drive anymore. I mean, it's just a CD player. We already have those, but they're just rebranding and reselling them to us. Look it up. Calling it now. 2028.



Flash Drives

Look this up, too. The White Stripes did a short run of their last album, *Icky Thump*, as little Jack and Meg Lego-ish figure flash drives. As far as I know, absolutely no one bought them. I see some insufferable hipster indie rockers trying to make this a thing again. Just like that foul-smelling fuckwit in dirty overalls, asking you if you'll buy their shitty acoustic songs on a cassette tape, at the sweaty basement show you just suffered through. I think that same dipshit is going to be trying to hawk his one-sided breakup songs on flash drives come next year.

Eight-Tracks

Who knows. Where the cassette tape resurgence failed, maybe the eight-track resurgence will succeed. They do have some obvious benefits, such as not being able to be rewound, and also playing in a continuous loop. These bulky, unruly cartridges could appeal to the same assholes who brag about

what medium they own an album on, to folks at a party who didn't ask. There's already a hardcore eight-track label called "Hate Track." I'm not making this up.

The Radio:

This might be the left turn that no one expects. Downloading music was not defeated by a cooler, slicker medium, but by simply *streaming* music. An even more frictionless way to consume music. Still, both of these things cost money. The only way to make the consumption even frictionless...er? Make it free, but not in an illegal way. Free with ads! I could see those same unbearable hipsters brag about how they don't even buy music anymore. They just listen to the radio. But like, not in a mainstream way, in a nostalgic/ironic way.



iPods:

It's coming. Don't pretend it's not. We are one TikTok away from some stoned zoomer doing that annoying thing where they talk with the words going across the screen about how there used to be iPhones that your helicopter parents couldn't call you on, and they were just for music. The little wheel selector, the blue and white screen. The whole process of "loading one up." It's all gonna come around as a cool, nostalgic blast from the past. Kids will have them dangling next to their fucking labubus, and pay top dollar for the older, bulky ones for cool points. Hopefully, you still have your old iPod so you can gouge some insecure, clout-chasing zoomer for it. Follow me for more free financial advice.

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FAST FOOD MASCOTS: A HISTORY

We are all familiar with the characters selected to sell us junk food. There are so many of them. I'm going to examine some of the interesting beings in fast food land, and hope to goodness that they do not try to find me and murder me. You stay away from my house, Ronald! This is a selection of popular fast food mascots, and some fun facts about them all. There are a lot of interesting details about how we got to where we are today, in terms of these entities that try to sell us fast food, the creations of marketing people who all sort of collectively said at one point, "Yes, this is the way to sell burgers."

Ranked in no particular order.



McDonald's

Also known as Mickey D's, McBullshit, or in Australia as "maccas"—not sure what that's about. However, the landscape they painted, in terms of their marketing characters, is immense. Ronald McDonald is, of course, one of the most well-known clowns in the universe. He was first played by Willard Scott, known best for being Bozo the Clown, and was snatched up to play Ronald by Mickey D's in

the early '60s, but he only did so for two years. He was followed by a series of successors, and the one that our generation probably knows best is Squire Fridell, who was Ronald from 1985 to 1991, or Jack Doepke, who was Ronald from 1991 to 1999. The current Ronald is a fellow named Brad Lennon, and he's been the hamburger-selling clown since 2014.

Now, let's talk about fucking McDonaldland. This is a place where all reality is about fast food. We have characters like Birdie, Grimace, the Hamburglar, Mayor McCheese, and the fucking fry kids. This is just background to paint McDonald's as a place where existence is hamburger-based, which I suppose it is, if you go there.

McPlayland was a series of playground features at McD's, and the overarching message was, "Okay, the kids can play around, while I can just sit here and wonder why I'm alive." In addition, Grimace used to be a four-armed creature who stole milkshakes, somewhat similar to the Hamburglar, but his character was later changed to have two arms, be a giant, retarded gumdrop, and not be an enemy to the good people of McDonaldland. Glad he hit his head, had two arms sawed off, and changed his criminal milkshake-theft behavior. It may or may not have made a difference that the milkshake machines are always broken.



Jack in the Box

Jack. He has a big white head and tries his best to sell fast food to stoned people. He does a fine job at it. His character is a little more interesting, though. Yes, he is a mascot, and yes, he will try to get you to patronize Jack in the Box. However, I do not ever recall another fast food mascot nonplussed at the question: "How do I know if I'm a lesbian?" Yes, this happened in a 1999 TV commercial. It is readily available to watch, should you think I am making this one up. Jack dodges the question and talks about hamburgers instead. I think that might be a firm strategy. "Your performance levels are down over the last quarter." "Er, but have you thought lately about hamburgers?" This could possibly work out in your favor.

KFC

The Colonel. Iconic mascot. Colonel

Sanders basically says KFC, without saying KFC. You just see the Colonel and his bearded face, and you know there's chicken around here somewhere.



He was a real person, and not a creation of a marketing group. Harland Sanders, who lived from 1890 to 1980. Not a bad run. But he came up with those 11 herbs and spices used in KFC's fried chicken. He was also known to whip his cock out in public and slap people around with it. He's been dead for 45 years, but remains the brand ambassador and mascot. Also, he actually did briefly serve in the military in 1906, but was only at the rank of private during the occupation of Cuba. He later became what is known as a "Kentucky Colonel," which is a title granted to people who do a "great service" to the state of Kentucky. Apparently, that service was making good-ass chicken. Imagine getting a title for frying chicken. Well, he did, and is the only known real person who has won a government accolade for making chicken to date. Beat him out. Get them birds fryin', and perhaps, one day, you, too, can get a medal from the state of Kentucky.



Burger King

I am sorry, but the character of the Burger King creeps me the fuck out.

I don't give a damn if you wake me up with a croissan'wich. If I see that face leering at me with my bleary eyes when I get up, buddy, your day is going to take a different direction than you imagined, sandwich or not. I wonder if they'd have had different results if they called the place Hamburger Monarch? Additionally, am I alone in that whenever I have occasion to eat a Whopper, I can taste it for like a freakin' week after I do so? What do they do to those things? It's like someone strapped a burger to a bench and started torturing it with a soldering iron.



Jollibee

This is an odd one. Jollibee is very popular throughout the Philippines, but also a favorite among Hawaiians and Californians. It's a Filipino fast food chain, and their mascot is a weird giant bee that wears a red jacket and a chef's hat. This one is astoundingly both fun, but also looks like something which would hide in the trunk of your car and wait until you get home, then stab you in your sleep and eat all your snack foods. It's very popular, but stay away from that bee. That fool is not to be trusted.

Domino's Pizza

We all knew we'd get here—the Noid. One must avoid yonder Noid. A lovely claymation character from



the late '80s and early '90s, he existed with one purpose in his life. Clad in a weird red bodysuit with rabbit-like ears, his intent was always to smash pizzas. An odd calling, but good work if you can get it. He aggressively tried to stop Domino's from delivering their pizzas to hungry customers, with various gadgets and gizmos to try and thwart them. He even got a video game called "Yo! Noid," which I've played and is actually pretty fun. It's a standard, side-scrolling platform, jumping game, but not as awful as one might think. The Noid has come and gone over the decades, but they bring him back now and then, most recently in 2021.

Those are the fast food mascots that I can think of. Chuck E. Cheese doesn't count because that rat fuck doesn't sell fast food, just bad food.

Take care, enjoy life, and don't let the Burger King sneak up on you.

-Wombstretcha

Wombstretcha the Magnificent is a jolly bee, fried chicken enthusiast, enemy of Grimace, 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."

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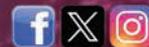
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