

# *The* AMERICAN BYSTANDER

The Comedy Magazine



Kayleigh W.





**"THIS IS AN EVENT...a sheer delight...these plays are absolutely the Holy Grail of Firesigniana" - RICHARD METZGER, DANGEROUSMINDS.NET**

In psychedelic 1967, after recording their first album, comedy legends The Firesign Theatre (2005 Library of Congress Recording Registry inductees, three-time Grammy nominees) wrote a dozen original half-hour radio plays in full *Goon Show* mode, with puns on overdrive. They performed them in front of a live audience at the Magic Mushroom club on Ventura Blvd. in Los Angeles, while being simulcast on Peter Bergman's *Radio Free Oz* on 50,000-watt KRLA. Considered lost for half a century, these freewheeling plays are finally being officially released from the best available recordings, fully remastered and with historical appreciations from the Firesigns themselves. So break off a hunk of the old 'shroom! It's like having the Sixties in the palm of your mind...

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- Data DVD includes audio of 11 surviving Magic Mushroom plays, alternate version of "The Sword and the Stoned", show promos & more

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**in  
Search  
of**

**Hollywood  
Sex Rumors**

*Originally broadcast  
Sept. 19, 1977*

**in  
Search  
of**

**Earl Campbell's Thighs**

*Originally broadcast  
Nov. 24, 1979*

# Our Favorite Episodes

**in  
Search  
of**

**Ideas that seemed great  
when you were on coke**

*Originally broadcast  
May 2, 1981*

**in  
Search  
of**

**Praying to Satan  
to Win at D&D**

*Originally broadcast  
August 30, 1978*



BY MICHAEL GERBER



# SUPER SEVENTIES QUIZ

*What we live in now, started when Donald Trump walked into Studio 54*

**I**t was about two years ago when I stumbled on Ricky Cobb's wonderful Twitter feed, @super70ssports, and frankly my brain hasn't been the same since. Nobody tell the DEA, but @super70ssports has roughly the same effect as microdosing: it banishes depression, creates well-being, and after about five minutes, plain old things you haven't thought of in years—Kent Tekulve, Loni Anderson, Jarts—start to “sparkle.”

The master chemist is a sports-loving professor living outside of Chicago, who first concocted this mixture in 2013. What started out as pleasure turned into a side-hustle, and now seems on the verge of becoming a full-time business. Read the feed and you'll understand why.

Is @super70ssports comedy? Definitely yes. Memoir? Also yes. What it's not is “nostalgia,” any more than *The National Lampoon High School Yearbook* was. Nostalgia is fundamentally inert—uncritical, unsurprising, sentimental, weirdly impersonal—the past as narcotic. True nostalgia cannot be funny, because there's no judgment in it. @super70ssports, on the other hand, is nothing but judgment, keen offhanded and sweet. It is fundamentally modern; @super70ssports would be impossible to create or consume without the internet. @super70ssports without Twitter would be somewhat like Bystander, which is why I was moved to do this experiment/issue.

Each tweet is a little piece of pop culture, sports or politics from 1970-85, presented shard by shard; then Ricky's mordant-but-never-mean POV turns it

all into a glittering whole. If you were a kid then, as I was, the laughs come with a sense of “being seen”—quite delicious for those of us bookended by the Boomers and their Millennial progeny. As you read down the feed, and Ricky's pantheon (see the illustration at right) begins to repopulate your brain, a peculiar additive effect takes hold. Slowly, @super70ssports becomes a worldview, and you don't look at the past—or the present—in quite the same way. Richard Littler's eerie and beautiful Scarfolk (*he contributes a lovely piece on page 26-7*) acts in much the same way, though with a very different effect.

Given Ricky and Richard's work, I think this collage approach may be the best way to capture an era where famously “nothing happened.” Today we can see that the foundation of our current reality—the paranoia and disorientation; the hunger for religion and tradition; the celebrity; the money, all the money—was laid in the Seventies. Just as it's now clear that 1960-1973 was a final, frenzied denouement, the Seventies and early Eighties were something new being born. It only looked like Roger Staubach and Muhammad Ali, *JAWS* and *Star Wars*, “Happy Days” and “Dallas”—it was really the future.

Ricky says that he's “remixing people's childhoods,” which is exactly right. This issue is my remix of his remix. I've prepared a small quiz to orient you. As they said in the Seventies, that last mostly undigital era “You may pick up your pencils.” Enjoy.—MG

**“Stickum” was...**

- a. What Baretta's bird used to say
- b. The best way to put up your Farrah poster
- c. Fred Biletnikoff's best friend

**The average TV set weighs...**

- a. Ten pounds

- b. Twenty pounds
- c. Ever had a blown-out disc?

**The biggest threat to human life is...**

- a. Great White Sharks
- b. CFCs
- c. “The coming Ice age”
- d. Whatever the hell *The Late Great Planet Earth* was about

**How many times did we almost have a nuclear war?**

- a. Once, in 1962
- b. Twice, in 1962 and 1983
- c. Every Tuesday while Reagan was in office

**Turtlenecks.**

- \_\_\_ No
- \_\_\_ I'm wearing one right now

**My greatest athletic triumph was...**

- a. Catching boocoo air on a Big Wheel
- b. Being so good at NERF basketball I was scouted by Jim Valvano (R.I.P.)
- c. Going to college on a Jarts scholarship

**Speaking of, should there be a professional NERF football league?**

- \_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_ I'd like to see Mike's business plan

**Who was the greatest might've been?**

- a. Len Bias
- b. Marcus Dupree
- c. Gary Hart

**To class a place up, you...**

- a. Hang a few God's eyes
- b. Paint it all avocado and harvest gold
- c. Shag carpet, fondue pot, Maui Wowee

**What is Macramé?**

- a. Bruce Lee's “Way of the Intercepting Fist”
- b. The Ethiopian joint next to Plato's Retreat
- c. The only way to hang a fern



**MICHAEL GERBER**

(@mgerber937) is Editor & Publisher of *The American Bystander*.



**Who was the coolest?**

- a. Don Cornelius
- b. Don Corleone
- c. Don Kirshner
- d. Don Knotts

**"Weebles wobble, but they don't..."**

- a. Fall down
- b. quite fit into the cat's mouth
- c. Say what Ken and Barbie get up to every time you have a sleepover

**What's your favorite TV battle?**

- a. Steve Austin versus Bigfoot
- b. Fonzie versus the shark
- c. Evel versus Snake River

**Who later claimed to be in the CIA?**

- a. Chuck Barris
- b. Jaye P. Morgan
- c. The Unknown Comic
- d. Gene Gene the Dancing Machine

**My favorite comedy memory is...**

- a. "King Tut" on SNL
- b. Seeing "Life of Brian" in the theaters
- c. Belushi carrying more states than Carter in 1980

**If money was no object, I'd get an...**

- a. ATARI 5600
- b. Intellivision
- c. WOPR

**It's not really a mall unless it has...**

- a. Orange Julius
- b. Sam Goody
- c. A place for the burners to hang out

**I remember when Mom's new boyfriend and I watched...**

- a. The ABC Sunday Night Movie...JAWS
- b. John Dean's testimony
- c. Last Tango In Paris

**My first crush was...**

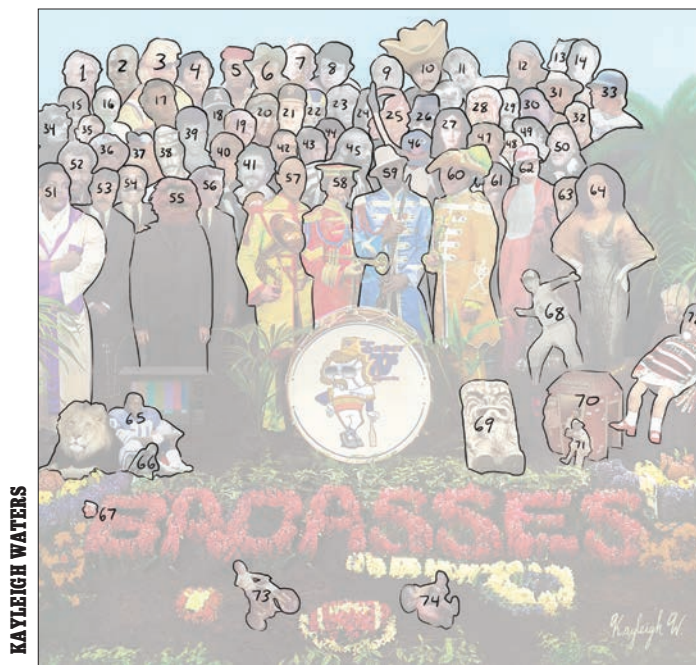
- a. Daisy Duke
- b. "The Bandit"
- c. Charles Nelson Reilly
- Herbie the Love Bug

**B**

# "Who are all those people?"

If you lived then, you *know*. But if not, here's a key to the jocks, celebrities and cultural flotsam beloved by @super70ssports (...and *The American Bystander*, too!)

- 1. Paul Newman
- 2. Michael Jordan
- 3. Ric Flair
- 4. Jack Soo as Nick Yemana
- 5. Fred Allen Berry as Rerun
- 6. Chuck Mitchell as Porky
- 7. Kenny Rogers
- 8. Walter Matthau as Coach Buttermaker
- 9. Ted Knight
- 10. Norm MacDonald as Burt Reynolds
- 11. Larry Bird
- 12. Rory Cochrane as Slater
- 13. Paul Reubens as Pee-wee Herman
- 14. Michael Myers
- 15. Isaac Hayes
- 16. Howard Cosell
- 17. Patrick Swayze as John Dalton
- 18. Reggie Jackson
- 19. Member of The Lollipop Guild
- 20. Bill Walton
- 21. Johnnie LeMaster
- 22. Fred Dryer
- 23. Heather Locklear as Officer Sheridan
- 24. Phil Hartman as Keyrock
- 25. Bucco Bruce
- 26. Dan Aykroyd as Elwood Blues
- 27. Lynda Carter as Wonder Woman
- 28. Illustration of Alice Nelson
- 29. Ox Baker
- 30. John Candy as Gus Polinski



KAYLEIGH WATERS

- 31. Jackie Gleason as Sheriff Justice
- 32. Dolph Lundgren as Ivan Drago
- 33. Bob Horner
- 34. Bob Dylan
- 35. Bill Murray as John Winger
- 36. Natalie Schafer as Lovey Howell
- 37. Youppi!
- 38. Waffle House Guy

- 39. Muhammad Ali
- 40. Daryl Hall
- 41. Gabe Kaplan as David Greene
- 42. Jack Nicholson as Jack Torrance
- 43. James Garner as Jim Rockford
- 44. John Oates
- 45. Mr. T
- 46. Grover from Sesame Street

- 47. Evel Knievel
- 48. Colonel Sanders
- 49. Jack Tripper
- 50. Howard Hesseman/Dr. Johnny Fever
- 51. Prince
- 52. Whitman Mayo as Grady Wilson
- 53. Tom Selleck as Thomas Magnum
- 54. The Iron Sheik
- 55. Animal from The Muppets
- 56. Bobby Knight
- 57. Telly Savalas
- 58. Ken Stabler
- 59. Dave Parker
- 60. Judge Reinhold as Brad Hamilton
- 61. Ted Lange as Isaac Washington
- 62. Pete Rose
- 63. Earl Campbell
- 64. Andre the Giant
- 65. Barry Sanders and Josef the Lion
- 66. Bigfoot
- 67. Kool-Aid Man
- 68. Earl Weaver
- 69. Bad luck tiki idol (from Brady Bunch)
- 70. Burger King Kettering Toys ad
- 71. Tatum O'Neal as Amanda Whurlitzer
- 72. Andre Dawson
- 73. BMX kid
- 74. Big Wheel kid



# TABLE OF CONTENTS



## DEPARTMENTS

Frontispiece: Our Favorite Episodes <i>by Staff</i> .....	1
Publisher's Letter <i>by Michael Gerber</i> .....	2
"Drive In Dunces" <i>by E.R. Flynn</i> .....	8
Photo Essay: Give Life Unto the Image of the Beast <i>by Michael Pershan</i> .....	10
Crossword #7: Super 70s Sports! <i>by Matt Matera</i> .....	76

## GALLIMAUFRY

*Mike Reiss, Ian Baker, Jennifer Boylan, Jim Siergey, Ritch Duncan, Paul Lander, Melissa Balmain, Rich Sparks, Scott Dikkers, Dennis Perrin, Marc Rosenthal, David Etkin, Lars Kenseth, Neil Mitchell, David Gomberg.*

## SHORT STUFF

Up-Fronts, 1978 <i>by Josh Karp</i> .....	25
The Finishing Line <i>by Richard Littler</i> .....	26
30-For-30: Winner's Mindset <i>by Michael Pershan</i> .....	28

## FEATURES

School's Out <i>by Anonymous</i> .....	30
May 1974: Hemingway's Last Meal <i>by Jason Bentsman</i> .....	32
Disco Dancing <i>by Tom Chitty</i> .....	36

## The AMERICAN BYSTANDER

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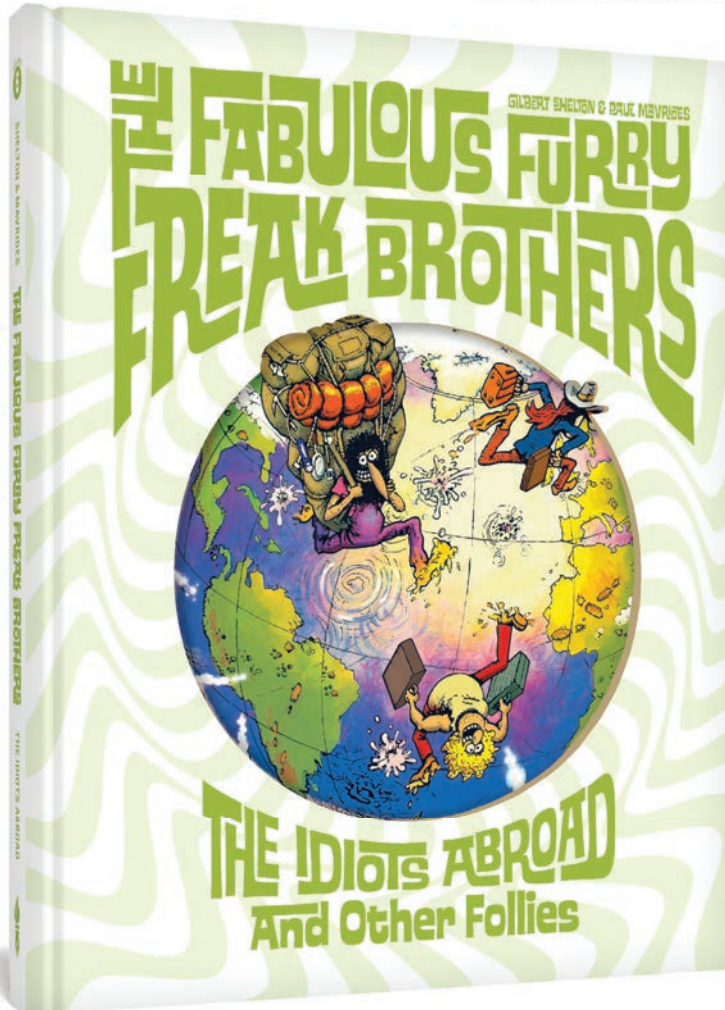
BOOTH

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# A Fantastic, Frantic, Frenetic, Farcical Frolic of Full-on Foolishness Featuring the Fabled Foibles of the **FABULOUS FURRY FREAK BROTHERS!\***

\* From **FANTAGRAPHICS**



**Phineas, Freewheelin' Franklin,** and **Fat Freddy** head out with high hopes for Colombia, but (as always!) their plans go awry in the most hilariously self-destructive way possible. Scattered around the world — to Scotland, Russia, Africa, South America, and the Middle East — they manage to antagonize, offend, and otherwise annoy various groups of nuclear terrorists, human traffickers, pirates, and religious fanatics.

Meanwhile, **Fat Freddy's Cat**, abandoned at home, not only has his own adventure, he even sells the story to Hollywood!

Created in 1968 by Gilbert Shelton, The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers are the world's most iconic underground comix characters, having sold over 45 million comics in 16 languages. The Freak Brothers' rollicking laugh-out-loud hijinks are comedic masterpieces overflowing with non-stop farce and satire.

✱ **COMING SOON** ✱

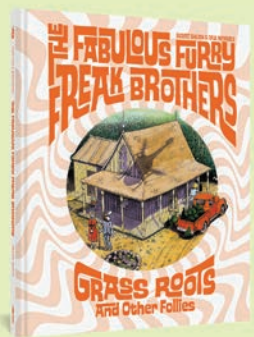


## **The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers in the 21st Century**

Freewheelin' Franklin, Phineas, and Fat Freddy form a band; bring home a stray container of plutonium; try to make it through a whole day without getting stoned; and help Phineas through his pregnancy.

## **The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers: Grass Roots and Other Follies**

The Brothers score some sinsemilla from a country cousin, start a softball league to score free drinks, adopt a possessed parakeet that outwits the D.E.A., and more!



✱ [www.fantagraphics.com/freakbros](http://www.fantagraphics.com/freakbros) ✱





Trichinosis <i>by K.A. Polzin</i> .....	38
Wonder Women <i>by Isabel Samaras</i> .....	39
An Evening With A Male Liberationist <i>by Stan Mack</i> .....	46
1970s Sketchbook <i>by D. Watson</i> .....	48
Free To Be You and Me: The Oral History <i>by Mike Shear</i> .....	51
David Chelsea's Bicentennial Diary <i>by David Chelsea</i> .....	54
Manhattan, 1977 <i>by Elizabeth Albrecht</i> .....	56
Welcome to Burtworld! <i>by Josh Karp</i> .....	60
The Storyboards of Nick Rambold <i>by John Holmes</i> .....	62
La Vie Boheme on Grand Street <i>by Ron Barrett</i> .....	66

## OUR BACK PAGES

Notes From a Small Planet <i>by Rick Geary</i> .....	69
Big Hair and Plastic Grass <i>by Dan Epstein</i> .....	71
Chunk-Style Nuggets <i>by Steve Young</i> .....	73
P.S. Mueller Thinks Like This <i>by P.S. Mueller</i> .....	75

## CARTOONS & ILLUSTRATIONS BY

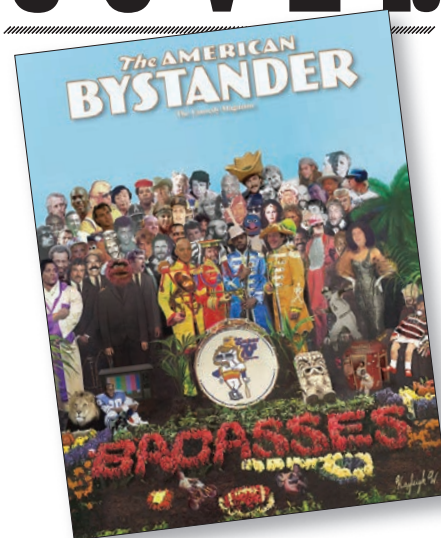
Kayleigh Waters, Nick Spooner, E.R. Flynn, Jim Siergey, Rich Sparks, Marc Rosenthal, Lars Kenseth, David Gomborg, Lance Hansen, Richard Littler, Marques Duggans, Bob Eckstein, R.O. Blechman, Cerise Zelenetz, Tracey Berglund, Brandon Hicks, Dalton Vaughn, Ron Barrett, Scott Marshall, P.S. Mueller.

## Sam's Spot



"Henry, you have to see this! It's Stuart Little going around trick-or-treating in an incredible shrinking man costume."

# COVER



A primo badass herself, **KAYLEIGH WATERS** labored long and hard assembling this collection of badasses frequently featured on @Super70ssports. Since Mike runs the most popular Beatles fan site on the internet, a *Sgt. Pepper* parody cover was inevitable. Kayleigh knocked it out of the park.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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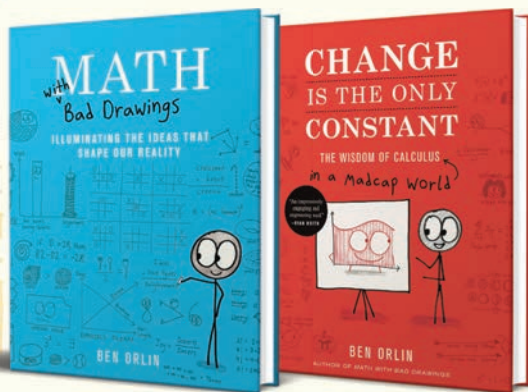
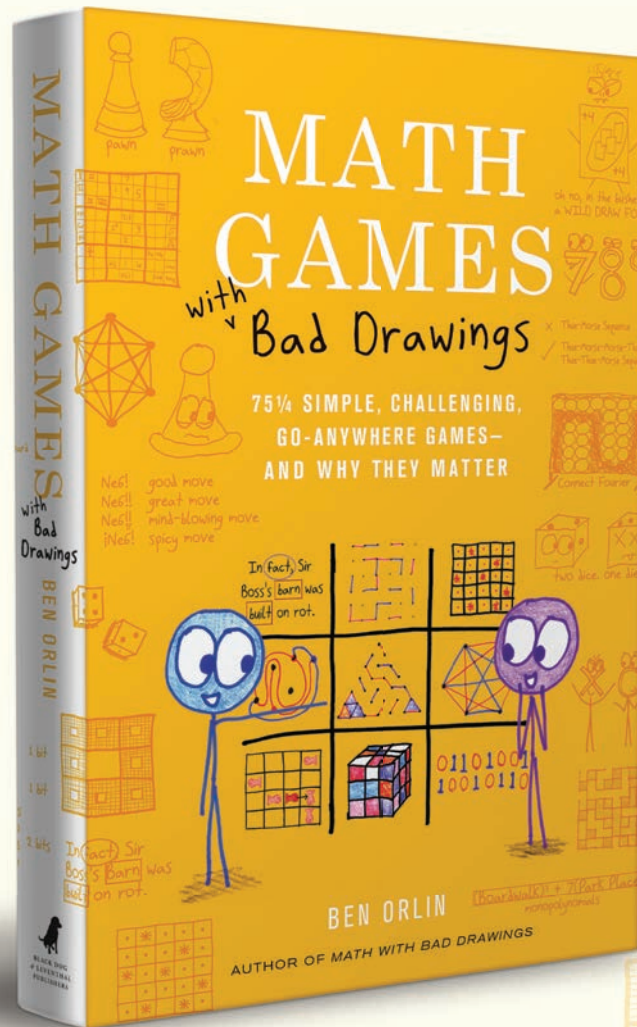
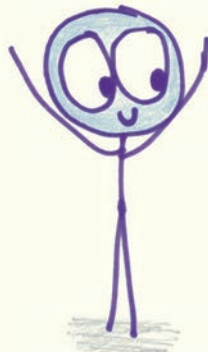
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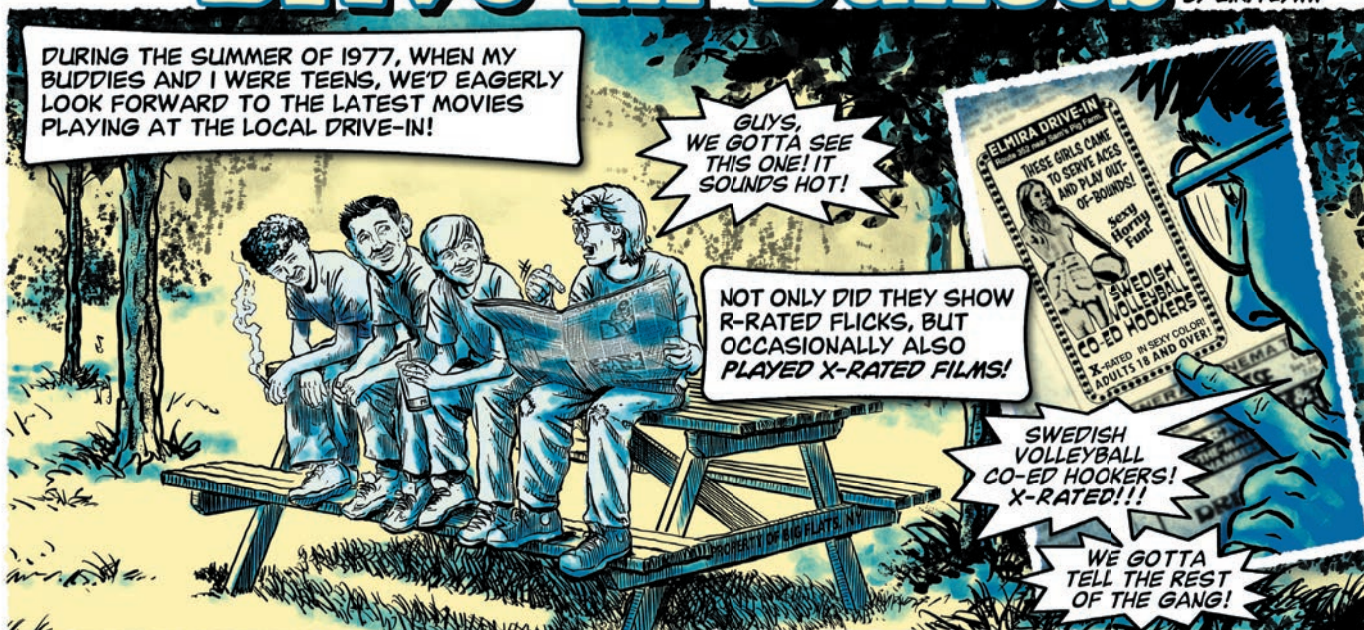
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# Drive-In Dunces

ART & STORY  
BY E.R. FLYNN

FOR X-RATED FILMS, WE WOULD SNEAK INTO THE DRIVE-IN BY USING A TWO-PRONG ATTACK.

FIRST, WE'D GET A PAL'S OLDER BROTHER TO DRIVE, THEN SOME OF US WOULD HIDE IN THE TRUNK...



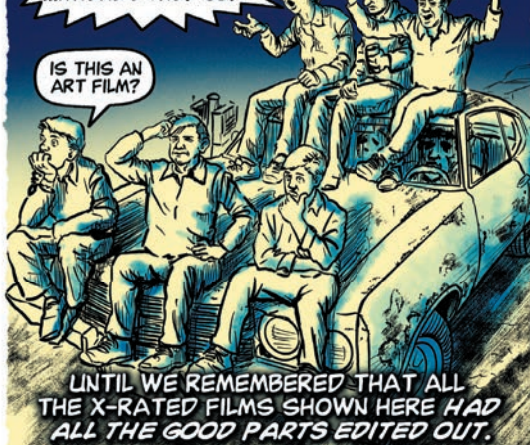
AND THE REST WOULD STRUGGLE THEIR WAY THROUGH WOODS TO A SECRET HOLE IN THE FENCE THAT CIRCLED THE PLACE.

THIS KIND OF SUCKED SINCE THE WOODS WERE THICK, DARK AND FILLED WITH BRAMBLES.



BUT ONCE WE WERE IN IT WAS A REAL SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT,

OH BOY, HERE COMES THE BOOBIES... WAIT! ...WHERE'D THEY GO?



EVEN WORSE WAS THE FACT THAT THE DRIVE-IN WAS NEXT TO A RIVER...



...WHOEVER RAN THIS DRIVE-IN WAS AN EVIL BASTARD WHO TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OUR RAGING TEENAGE HORMONES!







“★★★★★Extraordinary.”

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— School Library Journal

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Astra Books for Young Readers



BY MICHAEL PERSHAN

# PHOTO ESSAY: "GIVE LIFE UNTO THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST"

Based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the magazine and its work, in late 1975 the Ford Administration contracted *The American Bystander* to create "a patriotic photo essay" as part of America's upcoming bicentennial. *The Bystander* was to feature "real Americans in real America—everybody from working stiffs to small town gals, from miners to waiters and waitresses... People who aren't afraid to get their hands dirty; folks who love beer and football, and whose strength will inspire the nation to Whip Inflation Now."

Sensing the gift of a lifetime, *Bystander* photographer Phyllis "Flip" Jones (1943-1976) and writer Nachum Bialistock (1945-1976) crisscrossed the country interviewing thousands of Americans, often posing as law enforcement. Traveling wildly, irresponsibly, they laid bare the seamy side of every state and hamlet, in the process racking up what historian Robert Caro later called "the largest hotel bills since Eisenhower expensed D-Day."

Unfortunately, what Jones and Bialistock produced—a 3,000-image, 230,000-word Van Dyke Parks-esque ramble entitled "Give Life Unto the Image of the Beast"—was not a hit. Vice-President Nelson Rockefeller suffered a fatal heart attack on the spot, forcing an elaborate cover story involving his mistress to protect his reputation. After a brief armed standoff between Brian McConnachie and the ATF, the manuscript was locked in the National Archives for 45 years, in exchange for Jones' and Bialistock's room service being hidden in an appropriations bill.

The authors were not around to celebrate; mentally sound at the beginning of their journey, they had each acquired tens of interlocking addictions and phobias, "our price," Bialistock wrote, "for gazing upon the True Face of America." He and Jones became the first mortalities acknowledged by the Betty Ford Clinic.

"Give Life Unto the Image of the Beast" is printed here for the first—and last—time.



"Fifty cents a lick, but you can touch it for a nickel." **DAVEY WALKER**, Little Falls, NY, beginning ventriloquist

"Booze, Jerry Garcia, Go Fish, and making sweet love to Tina Walsh in a parked van." **LARISSA MCDONALD**, Utica, NY, on her Tuesdays







"You get so sore that you'd have to rest and recover, like an athlete." **"TERRY G."** Elgin, IL, on his drug use

"I keep asking when he's gonna come back, but mommy won't say. I just miss him so much."

**TOM REDDING**, Sappy Basin, MT, on former President Nixon



"It was convenient, I'll say that much."

**LISA CHATTAM**, Rome, GA, on her drive-thru colonoscopy



"Sure, I suffer, but I make people laugh, and that counts for something." **DERRICK ISAAC**  
Kenosha, WI, on using leaded makeup







"I see you. You think I don't because you're little, but I don't fall for that trick no more." **JAMES BEAL**, Ramapo, NJ, to Bystander Photographer Flip Jones

"Without a doubt, the very best oral sex I have ever received." **WILLARD JACKSON**, Beaver, KY, on Christian's "services"

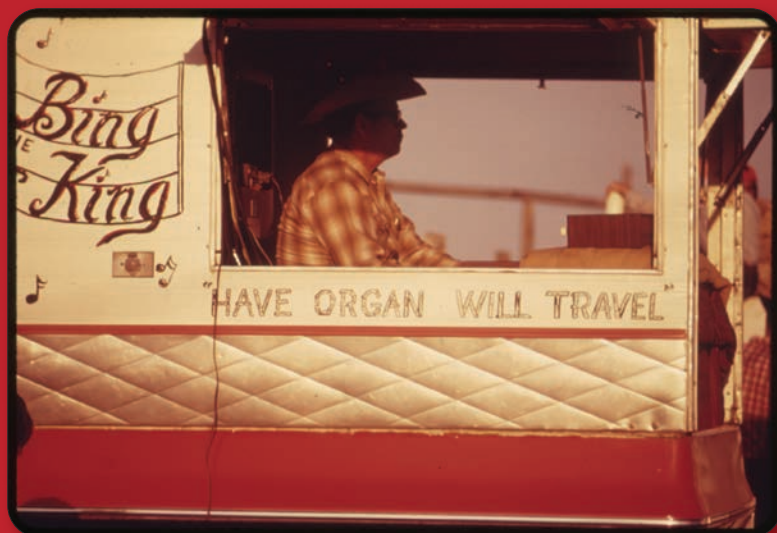


"Aliens are real. God is present. Go visit it yourself if you're so damn curious." **ALABASTER JONES**, Boyd, CA, on "The Hole"





"I'll tell you what, everything that I did, I did for my family. As if you're so perfect."  
**JEREMY SALVO**, New Ulm, NM, on forging medical credentials



"Well they don't call me the king for nothing, so I'm gonna need that dollar if you want to get any closer." **BING WILLUMS**, Moreno, CA, on his organ



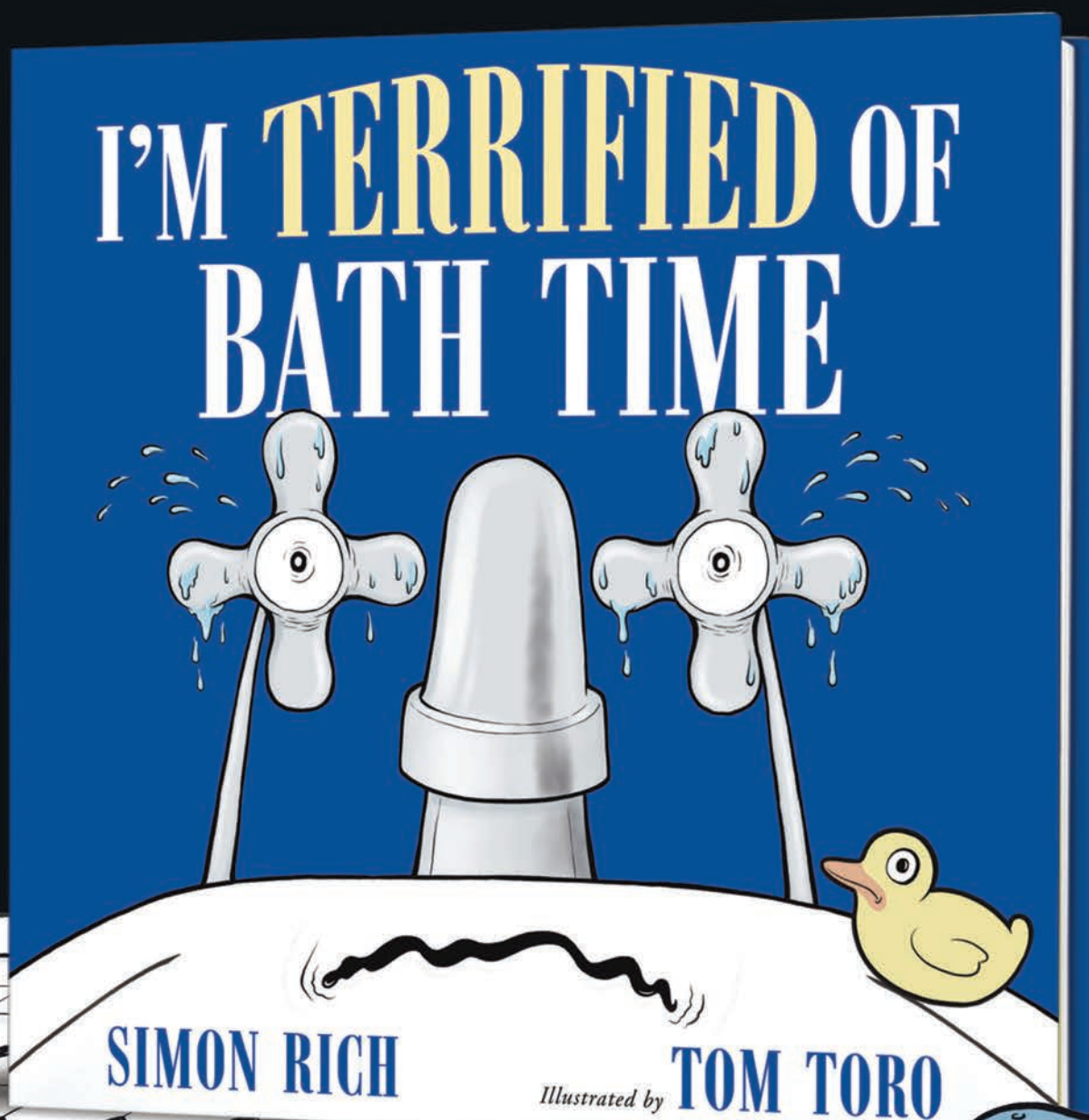
"You're right, at first it hurt a bunch. But he's all I've got and he's gonna be the healthiest little baby in the whole wide world."  
**SUSY LITTLE**, Hoster, CT, on breastfeeding **B**

**MICHAEL PERSHAN** lays low in Brooklyn, NY.



# YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT BATH PROBLEMS? IMAGINE HOW YOUR BATHTUB FEELS...

Filled with soapsuds, rubber duckies, and existential angst, this splashy picture book from humorist Simon Rich and *New Yorker* cartoonist Tom Toro is the ultimate survival tale.



#ImTerrifiedofBathTime | LBYR.com



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BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS



# Gallimaufry

*Sucking in the Seventies  
(and early Eighties).*

## 1970: THE YEAR TV CHANGED (ME).

I spent all of the '70s as a kid in Connecticut watching TV. My decade wasn't coke and Studio 54. It was Coke commercials and *Room 222*. I spent eight hours a day in front of the tube, with my father hollering, "What's all this TV watching going to get you?"

Today I am a successful TV writer. I make more than Dad. And he's a doctor.

1970 was a pivotal year for TV, when great, popular shows like *All in the Family* replaced bad, popular shows like *The Beverly Hillbillies*. *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* came in, *The Red Skelton Show* went out. But it was Red who changed my life.

In those days, families really did gather around the TV to watch shows together. And from 1951 to 1970, Tuesday night meant *The Red Skelton Show*. Each episode began with Red's "Silent Spot," a five-minute piece of mime on some topic like "A Fat Lady Putting on a Girdle." Now mime, even when it's done well, is awful, and Red Skelton was not a good mime. He mugged and capered, and his Silent Spot was really quite noisy, filled with sound effects to help you figure out what the hell was going on.

The mime was followed by sketches, featuring Red's repertoire of characters like Freddie the Freeloader (he's funny because he's homeless) and Clem Kaddiddlehopper, who was cross-eyed and brain-damaged. I'd tell you to check these shows out, but you can't—there are nearly seven-hundred episodes, but they're not rerun

anywhere. Not even the most fringe streaming services will show them: not Tubi or Crackle or GloBox or Teev. I just made up those last two.

Despite a long career—and some truly funny movies in the forties—Red Skelton is mostly remembered for the nasty gossip that sticks to him. That he paid his writers by dumping cash off a balcony and watching them scramble for it below. Or that he shot his second wife and made it look like a suicide. While I don't believe these stories, people rarely spread mean stories about nice guys.

Still, tens of millions of American families—mine included—watched Red Skelton every week. And one night in 1970, it hit me: "I'm funnier than this guy. And I'm ten."

And that's when I decided to become a comedy writer.

This story would not be worth telling,

except for this: it wasn't just me. Across the country, in Tucson, Arizona, a young boy named George was thinking the same thing.

And years later, when George Meyer and I were writing for *The Simpsons*, we discovered we both were inspired to write comedy by Red Skelton's essential suckiness. He set the bar so low—if that guy could work in TV, so could we. Who knows how many other working writers owe their careers to him?

We all know you can be motivated by the genius of others. Einstein, Elvis, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning make us want to do great things. But we forget that we can be just as motivated by non-geniuses—the talentless, the half-baked, the Red Skeltons of this world. Two cheers for mediocrity.

—Mike Reiss



**IAN BAKER** "I loved growing up in '70s England, not having developed embarrassment at having to wear appalling trousers. (Me, brother Ed, Dad and grandparents, 1975.)

## DUMB.

My college years coincided almost exactly with the Carter Presidency—1976 to 80.

What I remember is that, at the time, the feeling was that the '70s were the dumbest decade ever. I remember thinking, "Nothing could be dumber than this." Instead, every decade since then has been considerably dumber than the 1970s. And the things that people get all sentimental about—disco? punk? Mr. Coffee machines?—are the very things that at the time were most embarrassing. If you had told me that forty-some years later people would wax rhapsodic about the Bee Gees, or the Sex Pistols, or *Star Wars*, I would have thought, "Well jeez, the future must really suck." And I would have been right.


—Jennifer Boylan



# The BOGARTER


©2022 SIERGEY

"DON'T BOGART THAT JOINT, PASS IT OVER TO ME..."



WAS A MUCH REPEATED LINE IN THE 1970's.


THE TERM CAME FROM 1940-50's FILM STAR HUMPHREY BOGART WHO ALWAYS HAD A CIGARETTE DANGLING FROM HIS LIPS.



HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, KID! WHA?


THUS "BOGART" MEANT TO HOG A JOINT (A MARIJUANA CIGARETTE)

BACK IN THE DAY, IMBIBERS OF POT WOULD FORM A CIRCLE AND PASS A JOINT AROUND...



HEH, A TEA FORMATION!

THE CHOREOGRAPHY WAS SIMPLE



TOKE PASS TOKE PASS ETC.

BUT, SOMETIMES WITHIN THE CIRCLE LURKED A BOGARTER WHO WOULD...

ACCEPT... TOKE... PASS (TO HIS OTHER HAND)



TOKE AGAIN... GESTICULATE AND ARTICULATE... TOKE AGAIN



TAKE ONE MORE QUICK TOKE BEFORE FINALLY... PASSING IT ON!



REACHED AGAIN!

THUS TURNING THE COMMUNAL EXPERIENCE INTO A CAPITALISTIC ONE OF GETTING-ALL-YOU-CAN-GET-FOR-YOURSELF OCCURRENCE.

AND SOCIETY HAS BEEN CRUMBLING EVER SINCE!



TAKE IT FROM ME! IF YOU CAN!

## TWO TVs, 1978.

When my brothers and I were little, in the late '70s, our suburban Massachusetts home had two televisions. One of them, the good one, was a color TV, in the room off the living room we called the sunporch. Three of the room's four walls had waist-to-ceiling windows, allowing for bright natural sunlight from the north, south, and west, a feature our family naturally kept blocked at all times with heavy curtains, so we could watch TV.

On weekend afternoons, my dad would nap on the couch in the sunporch, the sleep of a lion with one eye open, always with the TV tuned to the most boring live sporting event available, usually golf, car racing, or maybe NFL football—which, in the 1970s, was not the blockbuster ratings champion it is today. One time on Halloween, Todd DeRosa went trick-or-treating as a member of the New England Patriots, and the zinger we hit him with was "It's Halloween, Todd, you're supposed to dress as something scary!"

And so we'd sit and watch not what was on the screen, but how deep of a sleep Dad was in. If he was really out, you might be able to risk changing the channel, to something, *anything* better. The time to try was in the commercial transitions. But it was a risk, because Half-Asleep Dad was way better than Angry Dad, and if you changed the channel on the former, there was a good chance you'd get the latter. Usually, we didn't risk it, and go to the black-and-white TV.

The black-and-white sat in the corner of our living room, on a rolling tray table at an odd angle that was not conducive to watching it. Furthermore, the set had a thick crack across the upper left corner of the screen, and an antenna we called "rabbit ears"—two extendable rotatable metal sensors that only cleared up the staticky picture when one of us was gripping one of them tight in our little fists. It's hard to imagine now, but back then watching TV wasn't as much about finding something you wanted to watch as it was seeing if you could actually get the goddamn television to work. If what you found was worth watching at all, that was icing on the cake.

In the 1970s, TVs had two dials. The networks and PBS were on the top dial, which only went from 1 through 13, but if you turned the top dial to "U," which is where zero would be, you'd switch to the second dial below, the UHF dial, where there were three more channels that actually worked, a couple more that kind of worked, and upwards of 90 more channels of hissing, dead static.

Usually, the best weekend afternoon option on the black-and-white TV was the "Creature Double Feature" on UHF channel 56. If you were especially fortunate, you'd get a classic Universal horror picture, like *The Wolf Man* or *The Mummy*, but most Saturday afternoons, you'd be lucky to get a town full of well-coiffed 1950s white people being menaced by radioactive moths.

But what the hell—it beat watching golf.

—Ritch Duncan

## TRUE HAIKU: WORKING FOR GERALDO RIVERA, 1979.

Line one: John Lennon  
"Is Geraldo there? It's John."  
"Guess you'll have to do."

—Paul Lander

## BUBBLE RAP.

(Inspired by real events in 1977.)

Jeannie and Jill had shiny hair—  
Parted, down-to-their-heinie hair,  
And perfect clogs and bell-bottom cords  
And abdomens as flat as boards,  
And dangly earrings and endless supplies  
Of friends to go out with for Burger King  
fries.

And on her birthday—I was struck  
dumb!—

Jill got a house made of Bubble Yum.

A Bubble Yum house. A Bubble Yum house.

A stacks-of-packs-of-Bubble-Yum house.

Jeannie had built it; it was 12 inches high:  
Jill brought it to school so we all could sigh.  
Even our teacher, Mrs. Zabel,



Admired each Grape and Original gable.  
 Later that day on the playground grass  
 Jill divvied up the house with half our  
 class  
 While the rest of us stood there, feeling  
 glum  
 'Cause we didn't rate a pack of Bubble  
 Yum.

*A Bubble Yum house. A Bubble Yum  
 house.  
 Jill flaunted, I wanted, a Bubble Yum  
 house.*

My hair was too short and my pants too  
 long;  
 No clogs for me (Mom's aversion was  
 strong—  
 Same deal with earrings) and I wasn't  
 blessed  
 With abs even half as flat as my chest.  
 Burger King fries? They were allowed,  
 But I wasn't part of the popular crowd.  
 So I saved my allowance, every crumb,  
 To buy me a heap of Bubble Yum.

*A Bubble Yum house. A Bubble Yum  
 house.  
 I'd be cool as a pool with a Bubble Yum  
 house.*

The weeks crept by; at the corner store  
 I bought 10 packs, then 10 packs more:  
 I was getting close, despite '70s inflation,  
 To tasty walls and a sweet foundation.  
 When I bragged to a buddy, she stared  
 at her shoes:  
 Hadn't I heard the latest news?  
 Nobody cool still chewed that gum—  
 There were spider eggs in Bubble Yum.

*A Bubble Yum house. A Bubble Yum  
 house.  
 No preteen could be seen with a Bubble  
 Yum house.*

O cruel fate! Though riddled with doubt,  
 I threw every pack of my Bubble Yum  
 out—  
 Just before the claims of spider eggs  
 Were proven to have zero legs.  
 The decades flew. Can't chew gum today  
 If I don't want to aggravate my TMJ,  
 And yet... now and then, I still succumb  
 To visions of a house of Bubble Yum.

*A Bubble Yum house. A Bubble Yum  
 house.*

## HAIRCUTS



SPARKS

*A double-yum, no-trouble-yum, Bubble  
 Yum house.*

*When I die, I expect my kids and spouse  
 To bury me in a Bubble Yum house.*

—Melissa Balmain

## THE ROLLER RINK.

The annual school trip to the roller rink was Friday night. The event loomed over my middle-school life with a strange mixture of excitement and terror. Like a dance, it offered a rare chance to socialize, move to music, and possibly partake in some close physical contact with a crush. Unlike a dance, it introduced the likelihood of a humiliating fall on the hard skating floor.

Anyone could dance—all you had to do was move. But to skate you had to have some skill.

Ellsworth Junior High was a rural

farm school. We weren't roller skaters. The rink was an hour from the school, nearly within the city limits of St. Paul, which many of my classmates had never visited. (You might get mugged.) A lot of the kids worked on their parents' farms. They showed up at school in the morning after doing chores, smelling like a barn and trailing straw and cow manure from their boots as they trudged through the halls.

One of those kids was Erwin. Not only did he smell like a pig pen, he never bothered to put on clean clothes, comb his hair, or cast off the stench and drudgery of the farmyard in any way. He was a nerd, like me. We weren't popular, and we didn't have a love life, but at least I had Dungeons & Dragons, Pac Man, and Band. Erwin, as far as I could tell, had no hobbies or interests. He had no known friends. He rarely spoke. His popularity rating was



zero, last in the class.

The night of the roller skating trip, we seventh graders donned our best silk shirts and gathered outside after school to board the bus to the skating rink. A general sense of nervous energy pervaded, even among the popular kids. Some paired up in the back of the bus, holding hands. Would there be magic tonight, perhaps a kiss in the back of the bus on the way home?

The last person I expected to see boarding the bus was Erwin. I had to look twice to make sure it was him. What was he doing here? Didn't he realize he didn't belong with us?

He wore his raggedy farm clothes. He sat alone on the bus. No one spoke to him.

When we got to the roller rink, everyone put on their skates and teetered gingerly onto the skating floor, trying to get the hang of it.

Erwin put on his skates too. The rest of us tried to keep our distance. Some pointed at him and snickered.

While we stumbled, holding onto the side wall to keep our balance, Erwin stood up, slid onto the skate floor, and

spun. He transformed into a ballerina. He floated around the rink, playfully weaving around the rest of us, smoothly moving from one foot to the other. At one point he effortlessly turned around and skated backwards.

No one could skate backwards!

To the heartbreaking melody of Abba's "Dancing Queen," Erwin dazzled in the light of the disco ball, his ratty bed-head morphing from the speed wind into a perfectly feathered mane, like a parting of golden waves of wheat, like the golden locks of Andy Gibb.

The rest of us watched in amazement as he bobbed and danced the night away, leaving us in the dust.

Monday at school, Erwin still didn't comb his hair. He still didn't put on clean clothes. But he walked the halls with his head held a little higher. Crowds parted for him. A few days later, he walked hand-in-hand with Dawn Wynter, one of the prettiest girls in school.

All silently hailed Erwin, who was now cool. Behold the great Erwin, we thought, who can do a thing well.

—Scott Dikkers

## TRUE HAIKU: 3-ON-3 PICKUP GAME WITH MARVIN GAYE, TEMPE, AZ, 1981.

Ready for B-ball?

Me, on shirts; Marvin Gaye, skins.

So, let's get it on!

—Paul Lander

## DRIVE-IN INTERMISSION.

*10 minutes till showtime!*

"Visit our snack bar and escape your annoying family for a few peaceful minutes."

*9 minutes till showtime!*

"We serve piping hot pizza, or whatever you call this thin red paste on burnt dough."

*8 minutes till showtime!*

"The local Baptist church welcomes you this Sunday. Well, not *all* of you."

*7 minutes till showtime!*

"The snack bar is still open! There are still plenty of places to hide!"

## PLATO'S RETREAT, A NORMAL TUESDAY, 1978





6 minutes till showtime!

"Does your car need repair? Then please get it off our lot. We don't need the hassle."

5 minutes till showtime!

"Saturday is Soiled Linen Night. Donate a pile and get half-price admission!"

4 minutes till showtime!

"Look at the family parked next to you. Aren't you glad you're not them?"

3 minutes till showtime!

"Some kid came to the snack bar looking for you. We denied everything."

2 minutes till showtime!

"The next movie is godawful, even by our degraded standards."

1 minute till showtime!

"Sorry, you'll have to return to your car. Unless you want to stay and help others escape."

IT'S SHOWTIME!

—Dennis Perrin

## THE ADOLESCENT DECADE.

I was the kid who grew up without a TV. I never knew exactly which parent to thank or blame, as they always presented a united front when I attempted to understand why our home lacked the fulcrum around which every other family revolved.

By the time my parents met in a graduate student dining hall at Yale, the Sixties were nearly over. The most gripping thing on TV, the Vietnam war, was too close to home for them to watch; my mom's older brother fought over there, coming back physically sound, but stricken with a spectrum of mental and emotional wounds, what we'd now call "PTSD."

Instead of watching television, I played with the Morrison kids two doors down. They would all babysit for me in the years to come, and when they traveled I would care for their dog and on occasion I would travel with them and I would cry like a child at their father's funeral twenty-three years later. They had a TV, but rarely used it, and never treated me as odd for not having one in my home. When they would babysit, it was hide-and-go-seek, tag, stories, and board games; most vividly, a board game built around the sinking of the *Titanic*.



Released in 1976, "The Sinking of the *Titanic*" offered a radical departure from the standard rectangular playspace; the upper part of it was the ship itself, displayed in cross section. With each round of play the *Titanic* would rotate on a gimbal so that more of the unsinkable ship plunged below the waterline. The first half of the game was all about rescuing your assigned passengers from their state rooms and getting them on lifeboats. Once there, the second half played out in the lifeboats as players struggled to get them to dry land (in this world, the *Carpathia* never answered the distress call). Today, a copy of this game in good condition will net you around a hundred dollars on eBay, as it was discontinued shortly after its initial release due to complaints from *Titanic* survivors.

When I was five, my mother went back to school for her second master's, and so after school I went to the Byrnes. The Byrnes were not a large family by Irish Catholic standards, but throw in the five

other children Mrs. B. had been hired to watch over, and the home hummed with a nine-child urgency. As I got older, the pull of the TV was undeniable: The Adam West *Batman* series, *Scooby-Doo*, *The Electric Company*, *Gilligan's Island* and, most alien and fascinating of all, *General Hospital*.

In addition to two young boys, Mrs. Byrne (and, in theory, her rarely seen husband) was bringing up two teenaged girls. Every day at 3 p.m. sharp, they came into the TV room, so focused on feeding their *GH* addiction they ignored five-year-old me also taking it all in. Ahead lay the early '80s, the freezing of Port Charles, the introduction of John Stamos as a character named—inexplicably—"Blackie" and, most critically, the marriage of Luke and Laura.

The cultural impact of this last event cannot be overstated. Thirty million viewers tuned in. Elizabeth Taylor guest-starred. The actors received fan mail from Princess Diana. But two years prior, in the final October of the '70s,

MARC ROSENTHAL



# 70s TV Detectives using Social Media

by E.R. Flynn



Luke raped Laura—that's how they got together. Faced with flagging ratings, the show's writers decided to throw something sordid, ugly, and darkly mesmerizing into the American living room. And it worked. The show survived, and the rape was quickly blotted out by the phenomenon which followed.

So. A war broadcast to Americans safe at home becomes a hit. 1,504 deaths at sea turned into a game for children. Rape on afternoon TV to gin up ratings leads to a fairy-tale wedding between victim and her attacker. These narrative twists are not unique to the 1970s. But now we can see it: the media was becoming aware of strengths previously only hinted at, flexing its muscles, leaving its childhood behind for something glossier and more powerful, but also much darker, more dangerous, more capable of deception. In other words, it was growing up...and there, sitting in the corner watching *General Hospital*, I started growing up too.

—David Etkin

## SEVENTIES DAD SLANG.

One December in 1978, I was standing in line to see Santa Claus. My dad was with me. Outdoors. Central Park.

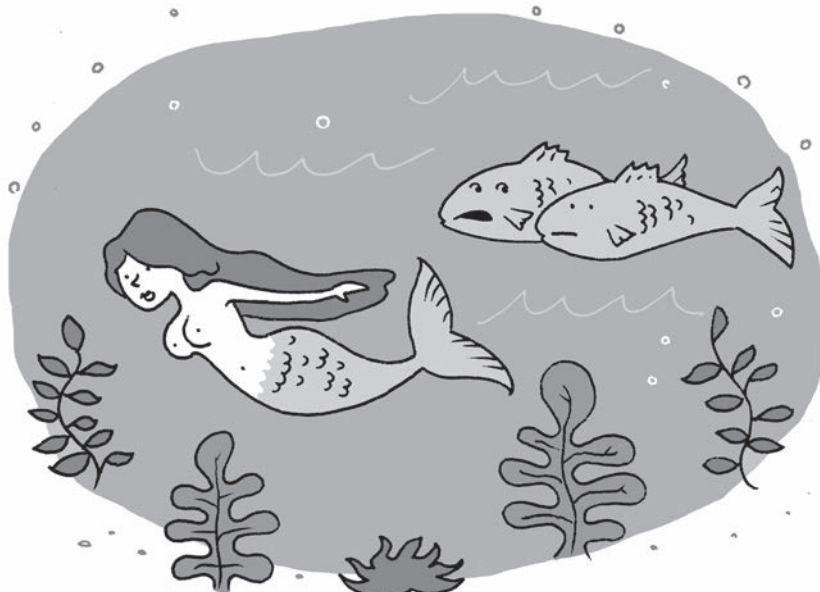
Central Park in Henry, Illinois, that is—35 miles and countless cornfields north of Peoria. Back in the day,

showbiz people used to use Peoria as the ultimate example of a small town market ("Will it play in Peoria?") but as a New Yorker now, it feels like no one's ever heard of the place. Instead of Illinois, my fellow New Yorkers think I am from—depending on the day—Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, sometimes Wisconsin, and at least once Minnesota.

Henry, ILLINOIS, remains a town whose population is smaller than my kids' New York City high school. Central Park is one square block in the center of town; it couldn't look more kitschy-quaint now, but at the time it was *where things happened*. Every year the Boy Scouts set up shop there, selling Christmas trees. My father was the town Scoutmaster, so this tree-selling really felt like the family business; the Friday after Thanksgiving, we'd line a corner of the park with dozens of trees and wait for the money to roll in.

Our orgy of commerce coincided with a visit from Santa (a/k/a the volunteer fire department chief in yuletide drag). Santa's throne was on the stage in the middle of the park, where he could hoist children upon his abundant lap. It must have been strange being Santa in a small town where everyone knew who you really were.

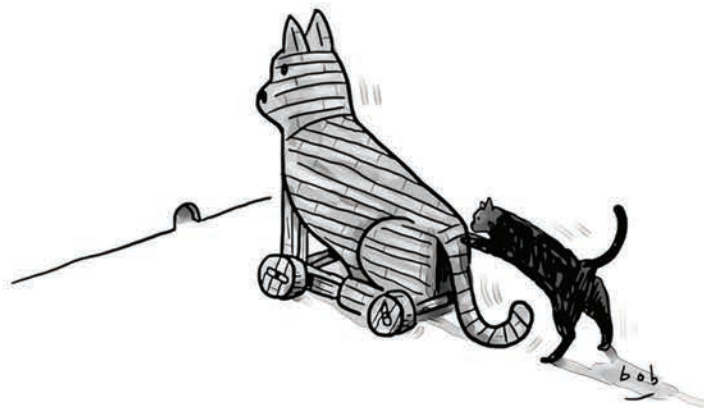
As we approached the stage where I'd soon confess all of my darkest consumerist desires to somebody else's dad, two teen-ish boys, older than me, jumped



LARS KENSETH

"Butterface."

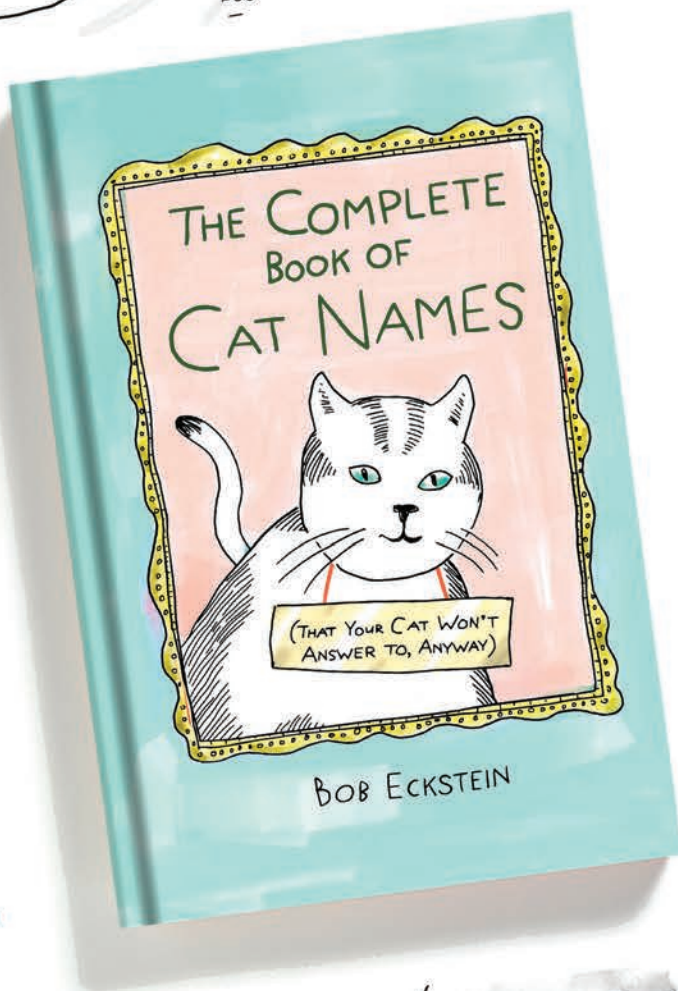




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— *Neuters*



Countryman  
Press





"My only complaint is that I wanted more, which is a good complaint to have. It made me laugh and cry and then laugh again and then pee and then cry. Lots of fluids lost. But in a good way. A book to make you appreciate the tragically funny and beautiful horror of family."

-- Jenny Lawson



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"Dylan Brody is funny in ways that don't remind me of anyone" - David Sedaris

the line. These kids were too old to sit on the Santa's lap; they were in it for the white paper bag full of candy given to each supplicant. I'm sure they were typical non-threatening kids, possibly even nerdy—a trait semi-celebrated today, but one that was total reputation death then. My dad knew them from Scouts, and he was having none of it. He squashed their efforts immediately with a surly, "Take a hike."

I can't imagine a parent saying that today. It's as distant as film noir. "Ske-daddle, you mugs!" But in the Seventies, "Take a hike!" worked.

I've been thinking a lot lately about another common Seventies phrase that feels to be from an earlier time: "Respect your elders." I won't lament that it's lost to the Ages; it's not a phrase I'm nostalgic for. During a time when people were so concerned about elders being respected, it was kids I'd observe being dismissed and discounted far more often. Adults, we always pretend we know so much better, that it should be *our* way. Back in 1978, those kids knew my dad was going to dismiss them. Because they were jumping the line, yeah, but more specifically because that's how Seventies adults interacted with kids. "Take a hike!"

I felt slightly giddy about it at the time. Justice was served and it was fun

to see my dad be low-key mean in a humorous way. Those kids would have to "beat it," another phrase so loved by Seventies parents that a Seventies kid had a monster pop hit with it in the Eighties. While I've never quite fully understood if he was singing about dancing or masturbation or (as the video indicates) cute gang wars, I possess a certainty that the song processes the curt slang used by '70s fathers.

My dad dissed young people with phrases like that frequently, but I only remember one other time specifically. It was the Nineties. In a new home with his new wife, he awoke to find a man dozing on his screened-in back porch. Interrupting the young man's attempt to sleep off a night of intoxication, my dad gave him a terse combination of hello and goodbye. "Hey. Beat it."

The man quickly bolted. And the spirit of the Seventies lived on.

—Neil Mitchell

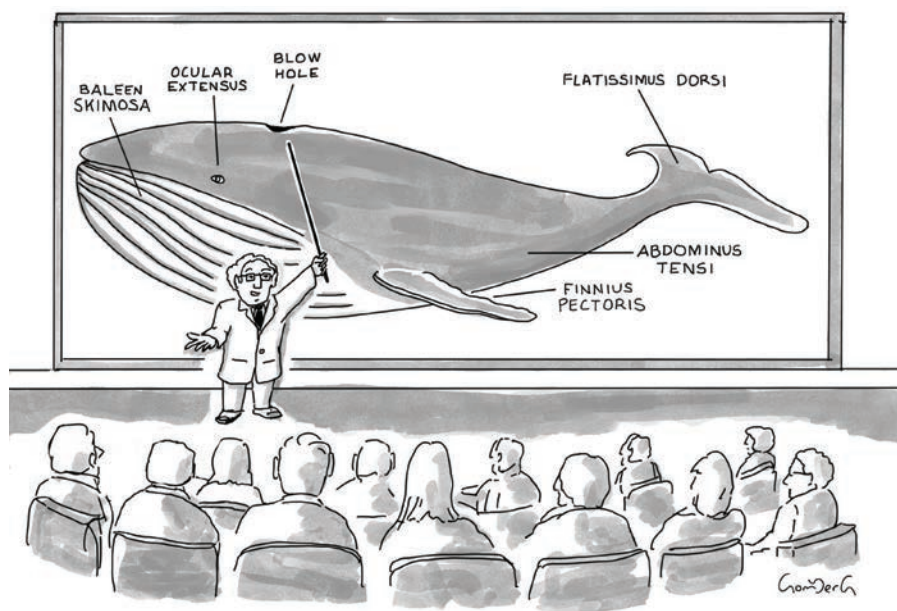
## TRUE HAIKU: PENN STATION, 1984.

JFK Jr.

Alive you say? Remind him:

He owes me five bucks.

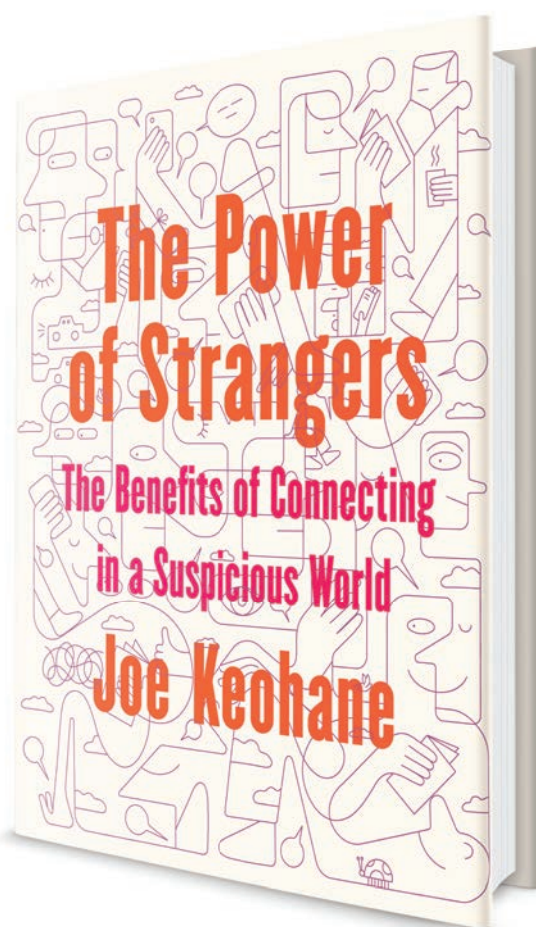
—Paul Lander **B**



"...and here's where we ran out of Latin."



**Contrary to what you might think,  
NOT ALL STRANGERS ARE MURDERERS.**



"This lively, searching work makes the case that welcoming 'others' isn't just the bedrock of civilization, it's the surest path to the best of what life has to offer."

—**Ayad Akhtar**, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Homeland Elegies*

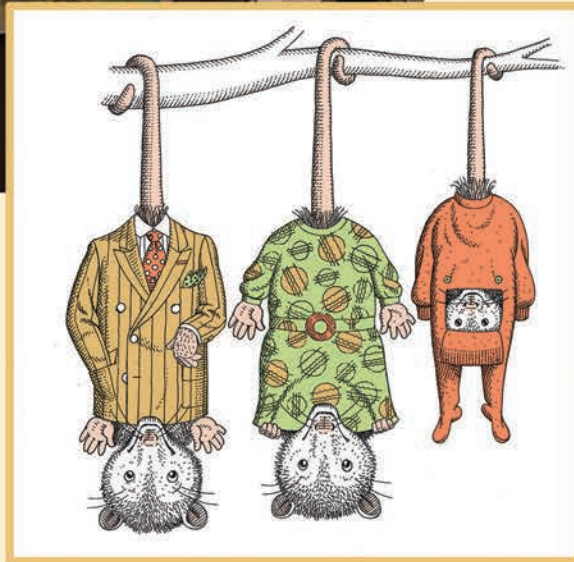
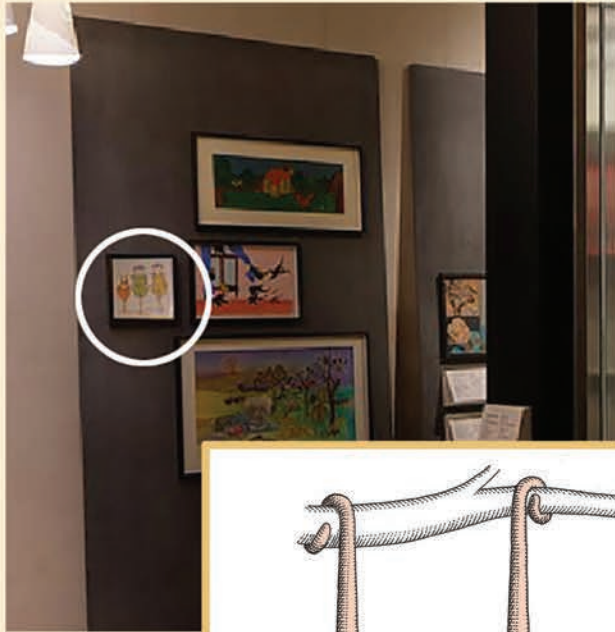
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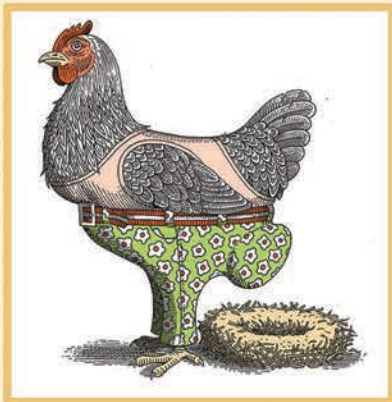
# They hung my possums upside down in The Louvre.



From the beloved children's book, *Animals should definitely not wear clothing*

## You can hang them right side up in your home.

Or choose from any of these other attired animals



Nice prints \$250 each, signed to a person of your choice.  
Direct from Ron Barrett [barrettuws@gmail.com](mailto:barrettuws@gmail.com) to your walls.



BY JOSH KARP

# UP-FRONTs, 1978

Coming this fall from ABC!

LANCE HANSEN

Good to see everybody here tonight. Coke people up from Atlanta, Ford from Detroit, the L'Eggs people, OJ is here representing Hertz...It's a schlep but it'll be worth it. It had better be worth it, or I'll be fired, right?...I've only been on the job for four months, after Fred Silverman left for NBC, and—there was a lot to fix. For every gem like *Carter Country* or *Holmes and Yoyo*, there's a lot of losers. But I think we've done it. For my money, and hopefully yours, we've created the greatest fall lineup in the history of television. Darlene, could you hit the lights?

At ABC, we believe in hiring the best talent, then getting out of the way. That's why my first call was to Tennessee Williams. I said, “Tenn, we need ‘jiggle.’” And he delivered. This is one of those paint-mixer things at the hardware store.

In *Bachelor's Three*, all hell breaks loose and no woman's virtue is safe, when two ex-Army buddies (Charles Nelson Reilly and Paul Lynde) are forced to move into a Castro Street bachelor pad with their swinging pal (ventriloquist Wayland Flowers) and his disapproving mother (Eve Arden).

...Don't judge it right away. Let it work on you. We've got high, high hopes for *Bachelor's Three*. We're going to promo the hell out of it during *Monday Night Football*.

You want talk shows? *Mustache Rides* is a unique take, courtesy of producers Sid and Marty Krofft. Set in a prehistoric future, Cave King Gene Shalit and his purple shag factotum David Crosby interview whiskered celebrities, people like Avery Schreiber, Luis Tiant—all while Leroy Neiman paints their portraits! Music by the Jerry Colonna Orchestra.

...Glad you asked: we'll paint mustaches on 'em. If breakouts are a problem, we'll drop in a little 'stache via chyron. Farrah: hot. Suzanne Pleschette: practically there already.

...Who just booed?

I'm really in love with this one: *Hey Dummy!* America's melting pot comes to hysterical life when a deaf Mexican UN interpreter named Consuela (Charo) moves into a Brooklyn apartment building owned by the dyspeptic widow Mrs. Washington (LaWanda Page) and falls in love with Mick (David Soul), the blind Irish tenor who lives across the hall.

She can't hear, he can't see, and the other can't digest anything stronger than Cream of Wheat. Very high concept.



Any of you multinationals with a sideline in medical devices, this is the buy for you. Lockheed-Martin, I know you've got a hearing aid spinoff, to hide the surveillance contracts.

...Who are you booing, the show, or the CIA?

This next is our crown jewel—*lemme finish!*

Loosely based on Raymond Carver's short story “The Many Deaths of Cesar Romero,” *Rich Man, Dead Man* is a miniseries about two junior execs (Lance Kerwin and Willie Aames) who visit their boss Arnie (Peter Strauss) at home only to discover that he's dead. To keep from being accused of his murder they

have to spend a madcap weekend pretending that Arnie's alive—and find out he's ordered their assassination to hide his embezzlement!

...No, I'm not going to explain it again. Look at the handout.

Some of you are saying, “You got comedy, you got a deaf lady, you got mustaches—that's all four quadrants. But where's the heart in all this? Where's GOD?” *Moishe Meets Helga*, that's where. A Talmudic scholar (Donny Most) falls for and marries Helga (Susan Anton) a beautiful exchange student from Berlin. But hijinks ensue when passport issues force her deeply patriotic German father (Curd Jurgens) to move in. Co-starring Nancy Walker as Moishe's Aunt Bernice.

...Yes, there's a lot of Nazi subtext. Pure funny.

...Well, you know watercoolers, we know comedy.

...Yes, of course they “learn something.” Every goddamn episode! Do you think we've never done this before?

In *Hollinger, That Girl's* Ted Bessell reprises his role as Marlo Thomas's long-suffering boyfriend—only now he's a hard-boiled private eye, out to prove that his cousin (Charlene Tilton) was murdered by her husband (Robert Blake). Also starring Whitman Mayo as Tupelo Jones.

...Come on! Whitman Mayo has been money in the bank since *Sanford and Son*. That man sold a lot of cereal, Kellogg. Don't deny Whitman Mayo, not after all he's done for you!

You boo this one, swear to God, I'll quit. I'll walk right now.

...Don't chant at me.

*Larry Storch Presents*. Each week other classics of the American stage will be—WHO THREW THAT?

...Listen, you bastards: That's the ABC fall lineup and you'll like it! Where else are you going to advertise? *Cable?* **B**

**JOSH KARP'S** grandfather took him to see *Dog Day Afternoon* when he was nine years old.



BY RICHARD LITTLER

# THE FINISHING LINE

*Six-year-old me pondered my fate: Would it be rabies, a rug, or death-by-train?*

Sometime in the autumn of 1977, when I was six, I was ushered, along with 300 of my fellow pupils, into the school's main hall for assembly. Cross-legged on the parquet floor, we typically listened to announcements from teachers and endured admonishments about running in corridors, bullying, and eating the delirium-inducing, deadly nightshade belladonna plants which bordered the school grounds, and, for some reason, no one had thought to remove. We also had to mumble turgid hymns, such as "Kum-ba-yah" and "Morning has Broken," which made absolutely no sense to a group of northern English kids, firstly because nobody had ever thought to inform us about African-American dialect, and secondly because, in the north of England, the morning never broke as such; it just shuffled unwillingly into the day, dragging with it a reluctant, pallid sun that retreated as soon as it could after lunch.

A streak of excited anticipation passed through us when we saw the chunky 16mm film projector; anything to break the monotony of news about jumble sales, dreaded parent-teacher evenings, and visiting guest speakers. In fairness, many of the show-and-tell guests had been memorable. One time, an old woman brought in several bird-eating spiders, as large as her hand—or an average six-year-old's head. When she insisted that the spiders were no different from guinea pigs, and tried to place them in children's laps, one kid burst into tears, one had a panic attack, and another started self-harming with a Snoopy pencil case.

Another time, the school arranged for the local fire brigade to present a slide show warning against the dangers of fireworks. You might expect or hope that such information would be delivered by a smiling cartoon rocket, but this was Britain in the 1970s. The hall's immense curtains were drawn, the lights switched off and a middle-aged fireman, with a look of Al Capone about him, sat beside a humming slide projector eating bacon sandwiches and describing gruesome photographs. For an hour, the fireman added his own impassive narration to each slide, lending the presentation an air of a forensic pathologist's report into a Dictaphone. *Click*. "Third degree burns to neck and lower portion of face." *Click*. "Boy's hand with partial thumb remaining." *Click*. "Girl missing nose and eye." *Click*. "Girl... Or is it boy? I'm not sure. Either way, they will have to keep mirrors away from this child." *Click*.

When the lights came back on, every child's face was grey; the hall echoed with the snuffles of shocked sobbing. A group of teachers, who had taken the presentation as an opportunity to huddle outside and smoke, hurried back inside, exhaling the remaining wisps of smoke from their lungs into the faces of the most distressed children as they consoled them.

But young children's memories are short. As my schoolmates and I took our places in the hall before the large white screen, all the traumas of previous presentations were forgotten, or at least sublimated. No doubt, there was the risk that they might manifest decades later in the form of devastating, seemingly inexplicable psychological breakdowns at the sight of burnt sausages rolling around a plate; but, for the time being, there would be many more opportunities to add fuel to the fire.

A chief contributor to the general unease of British children in the 1970s was the public information film. We had all seen these short government-funded advertisements which were frequently inserted between children's TV programmes. The most infamous examples warned of rabies and how one died in horrifying agony if unlucky enough to contract the disease; catastrophic electrocutions in electricity substations so violent that smouldering shoes were all that remained; drowning in junk-littered wasteland pools haunted by hooded, faceless spectres voiced by horror-film regular Donald Pleasance; and even the risk of injury caused by unsecured rugs. The crushing last line of the rug safety film is a supreme example of inadvertent black humor: As the victim slips to his broken-boned fate, the dour narrator says, almost as if tutting "... and to think he'd only just got home from the hospital."

Then there were films that cautioned children about the dangers of lurking paedophiles. The films' comprehensive explanations of "how to spot the signs" became bleakly ironic given that one of Britain's most notorious paedophiles, Jimmy Savile, also starred in public information films. His dealt with road safety, but, incredibly, he also introduced two books outlining the paedophile threat: *Other People's Children: A Handbook for Child Minders* (1976) and *Stranger Danger: What a Child Needs to Know about Strangers* (1985).

The film we were about to see wasn't one of the TV spots, a mere 30 seconds of dread swiftly expunged from one's mind; it was a 21-minute opus called "The Finishing Line." Designed to discourage children from trespassing on railway lines, here's the plot: For reasons unknown, a boy imagines that a school sports day is taking place on a railway line. Along the embankment are white marquees you might see at a circus or fairground. Colourful bunting is draped between loudspeakers that announce the upcoming games. A table displays glinting trophies. Adults, presumably parents and teachers, as well as uniformed nurses, gather to watch the games. The first event sees the children clamber over a fence in their white gym clothes and rush to the railway lines. From there, they play "chicken" with passing trains. Some of this group of under nine-year old children are injured and require medical treat-



ment, as are the bloodied, traumatised train passengers and train drivers who are wounded during the next event: The throwing of coloured rocks through the windows of trains. Did I mention that while all this is occurring, a brass band is playing happy, encouraging tunes on the embankment?

The events increase in severity until the final game—The Great Tunnel Walk—which involves a hundred or more children speed-walking along the centre of the train tracks into the depths of a pitch-black tunnel and into the path of a speeding train. There's the clatter of heavy steel wheels crunching metal, then silence. Agonising moments later, dirtied, bloodied children begin hobbling out of the darkness. Some collapse and are hoisted roughly onto stretchers; others are as mentally tormented as they are physically injured. Gradually, many more children appear in the arms of nurses and other helpers, as limp as rag dolls, their heads lolling lifelessly. The broken bodies of these dead children

slicing his feet clean off. His two friends are so traumatised that they slip into catatonic fugues, and the remainder of the film focuses on Robbie's distraught mother who sobs at the sight of the football boots that her wheelchair-bound, facially scarred son will never wear again. She even hangs them where he can see them, but out of reach, high on his bedroom door, just in case his obvious lack of feet ever slips his mind.

Thankfully, I was spared a screening of "Robbie." "The Finishing Line," however, made a significant impression. The filmmakers had certainly fulfilled their brief, and more: I avoided railway tracks and trains in general; I even stopped playing with my toy trains. And like well-intended antibiotics that destroy bacteria, bad and good indiscriminately, the film left me anxious about a wider, unintended range of stimuli, all of which the film had unwittingly transformed into threats by association: tunnels, the dark, abstract parallel lines, and



are stacked along the tracks in neat rows, their white gym shorts, vests, and shoes now stained with blood and filth.

Eventually, the harrowing film was over; the end of the reel flapped in the spool. When light once again flooded the hall, it revealed a tortured pack of children. Someone had fainted. If any of my schoolmates weren't in floods of tears, it was only because they were too stunned.

Following an outcry, this film was withdrawn. Its replacement appeared in 1979; "Robbie" is the story of a boy who stumbles while playing on railway lines. Before he can remove his legs from the tracks, a train ploughs at great speed over his ankles,

all adults but especially nurses, teachers and parents. How deep could the psychological damage go? Would I go on to develop subconscious anxieties about gym clothes and sports in general? What about tubas, other brass instruments, and, by extension, oompah bands and Herb Alpert? If I heard unexpected train horns, even in the distance, would I instinctively leap aside then nervously pat my body all over to ensure it was still intact? I promised myself that, should I grow up to work in government, one of the first things I would do is commission a public information film warning about the dangers of public information films. **B**

**RICHARD LITTLE** (@richard\_little) is the creator of *Scarfolk*, a satirical British dystopia. He was once described by Edward Snowden as "This guy who apparently saw the future."



BY MICHAEL PERSHAN

# 30 FOR 30: WINNER'S MINDSET

"There's one thing you can't measure, and that's desire."

**Voiceover:** It is fall, 1978. Davis Ball tries out for the Cal-Poly Christian basketball team as a freshman. Nobody knew just how hard he'd work to make the cut.

**Pip (teammate):** One thing about Davis Ball, he was short. Like, *really* short.

**Jerome (teammate):** I think he was 5 foot 2, but he walked in with this mindset of, hey, I'm here to play.

**Duncan (coach):** It's tryouts, and he's outworking everybody. I mean *everybody*. And I have to say, I'm impressed. But "impressed" isn't enough.

**Surr (assistant coach):** Davis was slow. Very slow. And he had trouble recognizing faces. But he *wanted* it, you know? He had something.

**Keith (assistant coach):** When did I realize Davis was special? When he got stepped on. Total accident, but we had to stop to make sure he was all right.

**Duncan (coach):** He wasn't all right.

**Scotch (teammate):** His knee was backwards. Pip took one look and threw up.

**Pip (teammate):** I think it was Scotch that threw up. Because of the sound. Wet, kinda tearing sound.

**Duncan (coach):** To give you a sense of Davis Ball, this kid just got stepped on by our starting center and his knee is twisted absolutely beyond recognition. The leg part opens the other way now—the knee just goes *in*. Not right, not any kind of right. And you know what Davis says to me?

**Keith (assistant coach):** "Pass me the damn ball." [laughs]

**Pip (teammate):** "Pass me the damn ball," that was one for the ages. Even then, you could see the beginnings of his greatness. And I think myself and the other guys, we really responded to that. Someone passed him the ball.

**Jerome (teammate):** It was me, I passed him the ball. [Shakes head] Shouldn't have done that.

**Surr (assistant coach):** He couldn't really catch it because of the injury. The immense pain, the totality of the destruction—also, Davis wasn't great at catching.

**Duncan (coach):** Broke my heart, but I had to tell him straight. "Son, it's over for you this year."

**Keith (assistant coach):** I think I made some suggestions.

Like, "Hey, work on your jumper," things of that nature. But inside I was thinking, *this kid doesn't have a chance*. Like, "Maybe try the chess team." [laughs]

**Voiceover:** Davis Ball is heartbroken but continues to practice intensely throughout his freshman year. And when next year's tryouts came around, Ball was ready to play.

**Duncan (coach):** I'm looking at my list and I see his name. And I'm rooting for this kid, because I remember just how tough he was last time out. Then a deep voice from the corner of the gym says, "Good afternoon, Coach Duncan." And there he is. And oh my god, it was like a totally different player.

**Jerry Nagler (sports writer):** Between his freshman and sophomore year, Davis "Basketball" Ball grew roughly twenty-seven inches and put on 150 pounds.

**Duncan (coach):** Now, there are all these things he can *do*. He can dunk without jumping. He blocks shots with his neck. Who taught him to do that? He taught himself. Still couldn't catch, but one thing was clear: this kid had put in the effort.

**Mugley (teammate):** Hall of Fame work ethic.

**Scotch (teammate):** "Davis Ball works so hard." Yeah, true, but am I the only one that noticed his *entirely different body*? That he was now over 7 feet tall and built like a tank? That his *face* was different? Explain how hard work did that!

I think it was the magic beans he kept in his locker.

**Duncan (coach):** His game was rough. But he was ready to learn. Most important, to work.

**Scotch (teammate):** Coaches all say the same bullshit.

**Keith (assistant coach):** The effort. The grind. The will to win.

**Scotch (teammate):** Okay, I'll tell you straight up: One night after a game where he scored like, sixty-five, it's just me and Ball in the locker room. I asked him, "Dude, how'd you get so big?" He just smiled and walked away. Then he walked back in, leaned down real low and whispered: "Magic beans, but they'll never believe you."

I quit basketball that night.

**Duncan (coach):** Scotch, he just didn't have that winner's mindset. But if you're a winner and you work hard, there's no limit. Just look at Davis Ball.

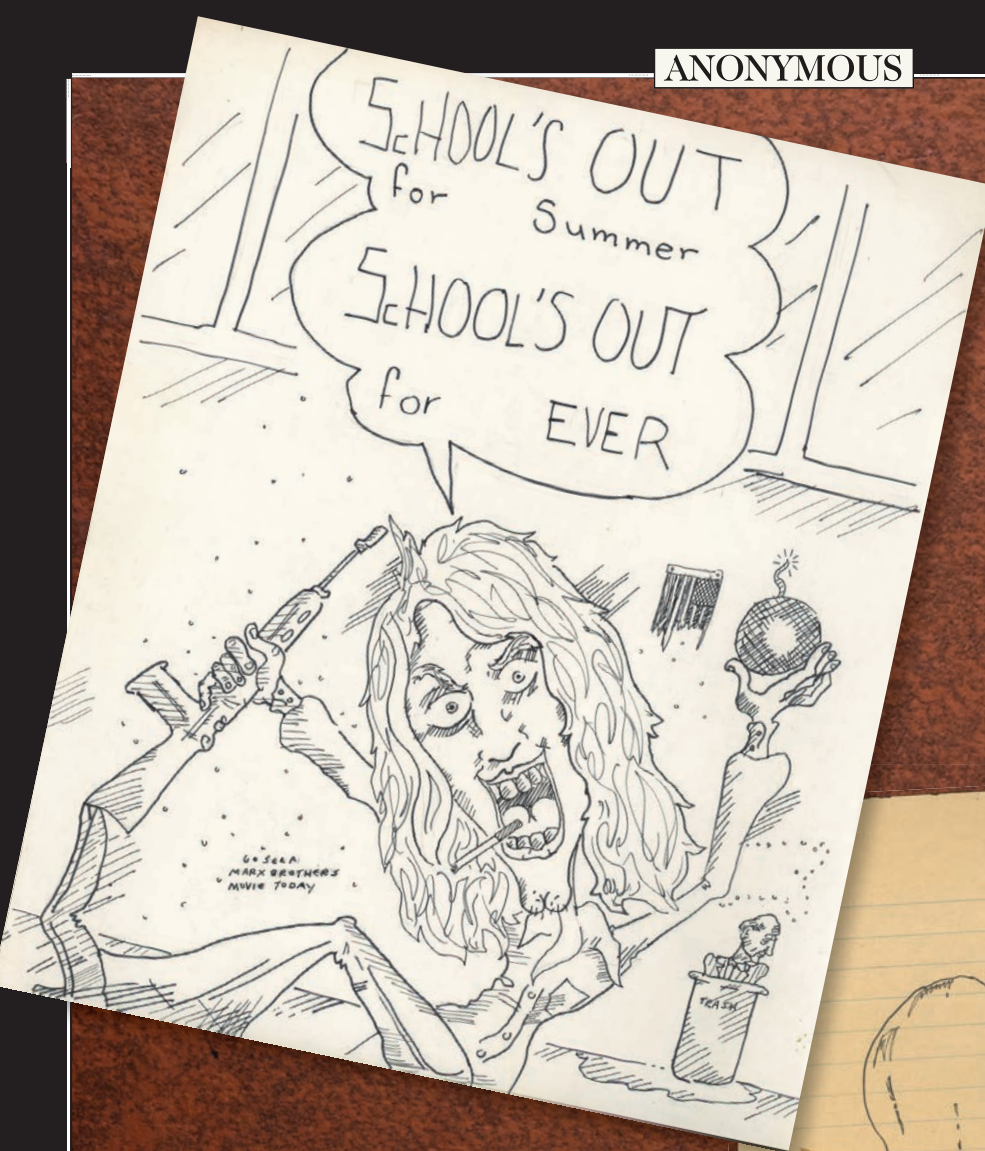
**MICHAEL PERSHAN** (@mpershan) teaches mathematics to middle and high schoolers in Brooklyn. He has little to no will to win.



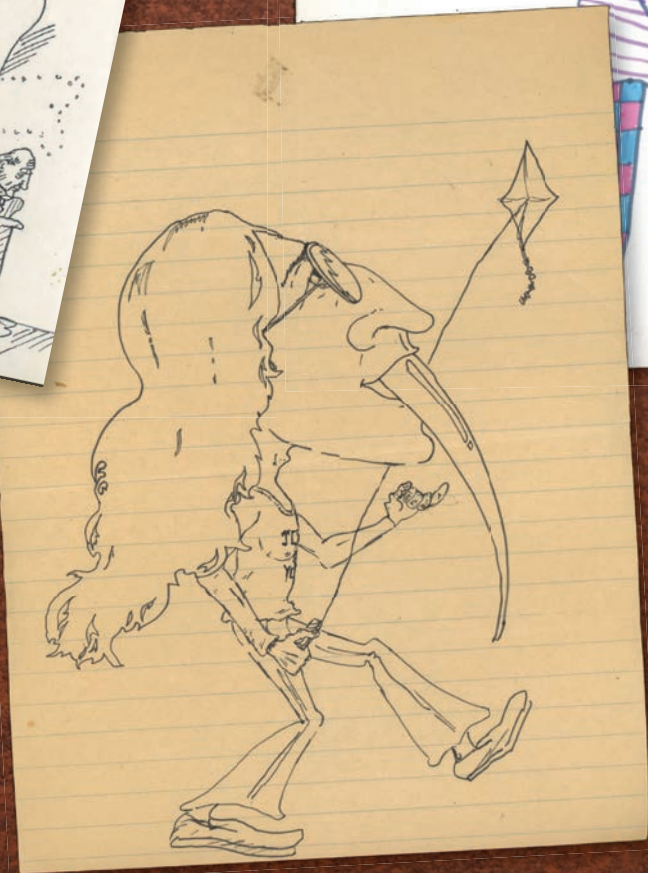


**DUNCAN GILBERT, COACH:** *"When I first saw Davis, he couldn't even reach the basket."*





Yes, this is John Lennon with a walrus' tusk.



## School's Out

When I sent out a call for “stuff about the 70s,” a very accomplished artist sent me these items from their high school notebooks. It’s a pleasure to know that from such acorns, mighty oaks doth grow.



I CAUGHT SIX MORE OF THOSE  
ROTTEN KIDS SMOKING IN THE LAV!





# May 1974: Hemingway's Last Meal

**E**ditor's Note: Following the success of the posthumous *A Moveable Feast*, in 1972 Ernest Hemingway's estate announced an international search for more undiscovered work. In addition to innumerable frauds, one authentic manuscript emerged: *Hemingway's Guide to Cookery*. Found buried beneath the uneven bars of the Montparnasse Athletic Club, the long-rumored book had been written during Hemingway's two-month convalescence in Key West in 1932, after he almost drowned while drunkenly trying to pummel his own reflection.

The manuscript caused a *furor* even before publication. On Cavett, Fred "The Hammer" Williamson casually remarked that he looked forward to trying Hem's rib recipe. A visibly drunk Truman Capote snorted, "Oh, Hammer, everybody knows that's a fake." Capote later recanted, blaming Yoo-hoo spiked with Darvon, but the damage was done; upon hitting stores in May 1974 the high-priced, LeRoy Neiman-illustrated edition sold poorly. By Christmas, *Hemingway's Guide to Cookery* sat on remainder tables, of interest only to completists and fans of late-stage alcoholism. It did, however, spawn the annual "Taste of Papa" BBQ competition held in Oak Park, Illinois, at which I personally suffered food poisoning in August 1989. This is not the book's fault, and the excerpts below are presented without prejudice.—M.G.

## INGREDIENTS

### XV. Tomatoes

Some sandwich aficionados say tomatoes are dispensable. I say unequivocally that such men are cowards, and deserve a good sock in the jaw. Employ the right tomatoes, and your sandwich will be invincible, an eternal glory to the gizzards.

You must pick your tomatoes with courage. And if they are true and good tomatoes, they will last a long time.

Never refrigerate your tomatoes. Only weak, irresolute men and traitorous women refrigerate their tomatoes.

Once when I was fishing by the Irati, Krebs and I spied some wild tomatoes by the riverside. They were green, and ripe, and their stems hung long in the summer wind. They were good tomatoes.

"Let's pick them," I said to Krebs.

"Yes, let's."

"Okay. Let's."

"Yes. Then let's."

"Yes. We will."

"Yes. Let's go."

"Yes."

"Yes."


That evening we feasted on the skins and inner juices of the tomatoes. Later Bridgette and I made love. But I did not feel devout.

### LXII. Grapefruit

One must ask the following questions when picking out a grapefruit. Is it a good grapefruit? Is it a pure grapefruit? Is it a grapefruit worth its own weight? If not, one must leave it behind. Such is the way of things.

Do not halve your grapefruit and eat it with a spoon. Only Portuguese prostitutes and child molesters do this. Cut its skin in segments and peel it like a man.

It is said that in Rimini the old men chase their vermouth with a slice of grapefruit. I have it on good account this is so. I myself have seen it done only with Pernod. With Pernod grapefruit is crisp and refreshing.

I remember when Pedro Romero was gored by the bull. It was the year of the long drought. It was dry three months and then the rains came. They carried Pedro Romero on a great stretcher for miles through the dust and lay his mangled body in the hammock by Papi Yolando's window. They fed him grapefruit slices, pink as the blood of the bull, for three days and three nights. Pedro Romero could eat only grapefruit slices. He recovered. Later, in the year of the carnival, he took his vengeance on the bull. Later still he met his end at the running of the bulls in Pamplona. But it was no matter. He had been angling for something fierce and drastic. Brett Ashley was no longer in love with him, and all those things had passed. He felt he had nothing more to live for. 

**Jason Bentsman** ([www.linktr.ee/Jason\\_Bentsman](http://www.linktr.ee/Jason_Bentsman)) spent 1,000 years in secret contemplation of the universe, and all he got was this lousy Bystander T-shirt.







## UTENSILS

### The Grill

Life was easy in those heady days of the late 1920s on the French Riviera, before the market collapse and depression. And there was no fonder pastime than barbecuing.

We were all gathered on the big terrace of the Divers' villa, overlooking the beach. The weather was sunny and keen, with shoals of white clouds amid a powder sky. Picasso was there. And Gertrude Stein.

I was in the parlor with Scott Fitzgerald, who had confided in me about his junk. He was worried he could not please Zelda, who had a great deal more experience. I took a good hard look, apprising it cubistically from this direction and that.

It was neither good junk, nor bad junk, but I could not let on. Scotty, I suggested, have you tried using a pillow? When you smother them, they cannot see your junk. He seemed pleased, and downed an entire bottle of champagne in a single gulp. Then he was very fine. Not to be outdone, I downed a bottle of whisky and a bottle of absinthe in less than a gulp. But I became bitter.

Robert Cohn was flipping burgers on the terrace. Cohn, that Jew. No one had invited him. Every man worth their mettle knows you do not meddle with another man's grill. Cohn, I said: get that shit out of my grill. He did not grok. He flashed a shit-eating grin, through those Jew teeth. Cohn had been Golden Gloves champion at Princeton, and fancied himself a pugilist. I decided to make a Picasso of his mug, and socked him in

the mouth. His legs buckled, and he sank to the ground. He was chastened. Then we laughed, and hugged, and drank.

When he was really fine, I socked him in the mouth again, and sent him home to his momma. No one liked Cohn.

Then I socked Picasso in the mouth. He liked the effect. Then Gertrude Stein. Man Ray. Ford Madox Ford. TS Eliot. Sock everyone.

I did not sock Jean Genet, because he was a little fluff, and one does not want to sock fellows like that. They are practically defenseless. What the hell, I socked him anyway. Right in the mouth.

Some time later, I knew not a day or a week, I awoke in one of those French dumpsters so in vogue at the time, at the foot of the Grand Budapest Hotel, covered in the offscourings of my barbecuing. I extracted a hamburger from my chest, picked out the hairs, and took a long hard bite. Not bad. I still had it.

What was I supposed to write about?

## SURF

### Papa's Legendary Grilled Marlin

My sixth wife Hadrian—whom I sportively cheated on, and would gleefully take every opportunity to gaslight—invented this wonderful recipe, using a marlin I'd exploded throwing grenades from my fishing boat *Pilar* as practice for catching Nazi subs.

I remember the evening like this.

"I'm sick of all of it, Devil. Sick all the way through me," I blurted out.

"Don't let's start," she said.

"That marlin dish sounds delicious, though," I said. "Let's have it for supper. Cook it up for me, woman."

"Yes," she obliged.

Straightway I dubbed it "Papa's Legendary Grilled Marlin," and it has proven one of my prized. Those I haven't fallen out with, amounting to my editor Max, my sixth and present biographer A.E. Hotchkiss, and that little Cuban halfwit by the bodega who waxes my flip-flops, whose name I still don't know after all these years and simply call Son, as he affectionately calls me Papa, are delighted beyond words whenever I concoct it.

Here are the goddamn **Ingredients**

**Serves 4 (for 2 reduce by half)**

• 4 large marlin steaks—Preferably wrestled painstakingly from the turbulent sea over a sleepless grueling three days and three nights, circled by sharks. But the local Stop 'n' Shop will do.

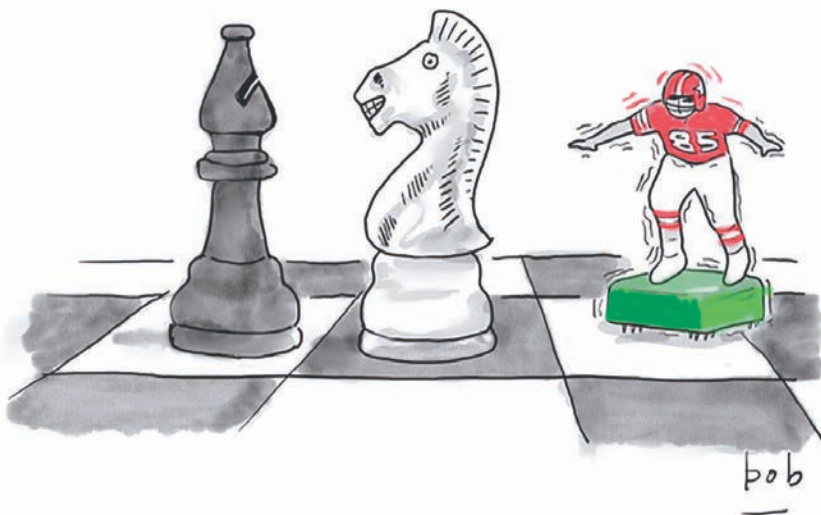
- 6 *tblsp* melted butter
- 2 *tsp* minced garlic
- 2 *cups* bona fide genius
- 1 *cup* stylistic innovation
- 1/2 *cup* megalomania
- 1/2 *cup* buried inferiority
- 1/2 *cup* portentous omission
- 2 *tblsp* machismo
- 2 *tblsp* emotional repression
- 1 *oz.* stilted dialogue
- 1 big dollop of mental disturbance
- several sprigs of prejudice

If you do not possess or cannot obtain all the ingredients, do not give into cowardice or fear. If a cook knows enough about each ingredient and what he is cooking he may omit ingredients and the diner, if the cook is cooking truly enough, will have a taste of those ingredients as vividly as though the cook had used them, maybe even more.

Once I made ratatouille using only carrots and water, and the impact was incredible. People talked of it for years.

However, using ingredients one does not truly understand is reckless and dangerous. Faulkner was a great chef, his gumbo was unparalleled, but when he was too soused he got sloppy and in his dotage he made the fatal mistake of using chili peppers he did not understand and suffered the ultimate price.

**Instructions...** Take one steak, and turn it over in your palm. Give it a good clean sniff. Does it smell of tragedy or of triumph? Tragedy makes for a bitter



"What's with the new guy?"



meal, not fit even for the mastiffs. If so throw them against the wall and resign yourself to a cold peanut butter and onion sandwich. Or a skillet of baked beans and spaghetti, topped up with bread.

Once more turn it over in your palm. Glare at it, as the hunter glares from the bush at the lion. The two combatants' eyes locked in a primitive dance, the lion dimly aware it has been outwitted by some otherworldly power. Now without thinking slap the steak on the heated skillet and call it Sally. There, you little Sally boy, there is your new home! Quickly repeat with the other steaks until you feel splendid and then are spent. As the steaks sizzle in the oil, reflect on the light of the world and *nada nada nada*. How it all turns to dust and in the end we haven't even our underpants. (Speaking of which, where *are* my underpants?) Write of this only indirectly.

Turn one palm over, then the other. Both palms at once. If a comrade is nearby, turn his palms over too, for good measure. If there are wild palms in the room, feel at liberty to knock them over. What is it with the palms? That is not a thing for a man to question.

Now using your ski poles, or in a pinch your Gatling gun, flip the steaks on the other side, no better and no worse. As you wait, down a bottle of prosecco to quash the pain of being a man. At first light, as the cock crows, you are done. Garnish to taste with the hard-won sweat of your man-brow, and serve over raw bacon.

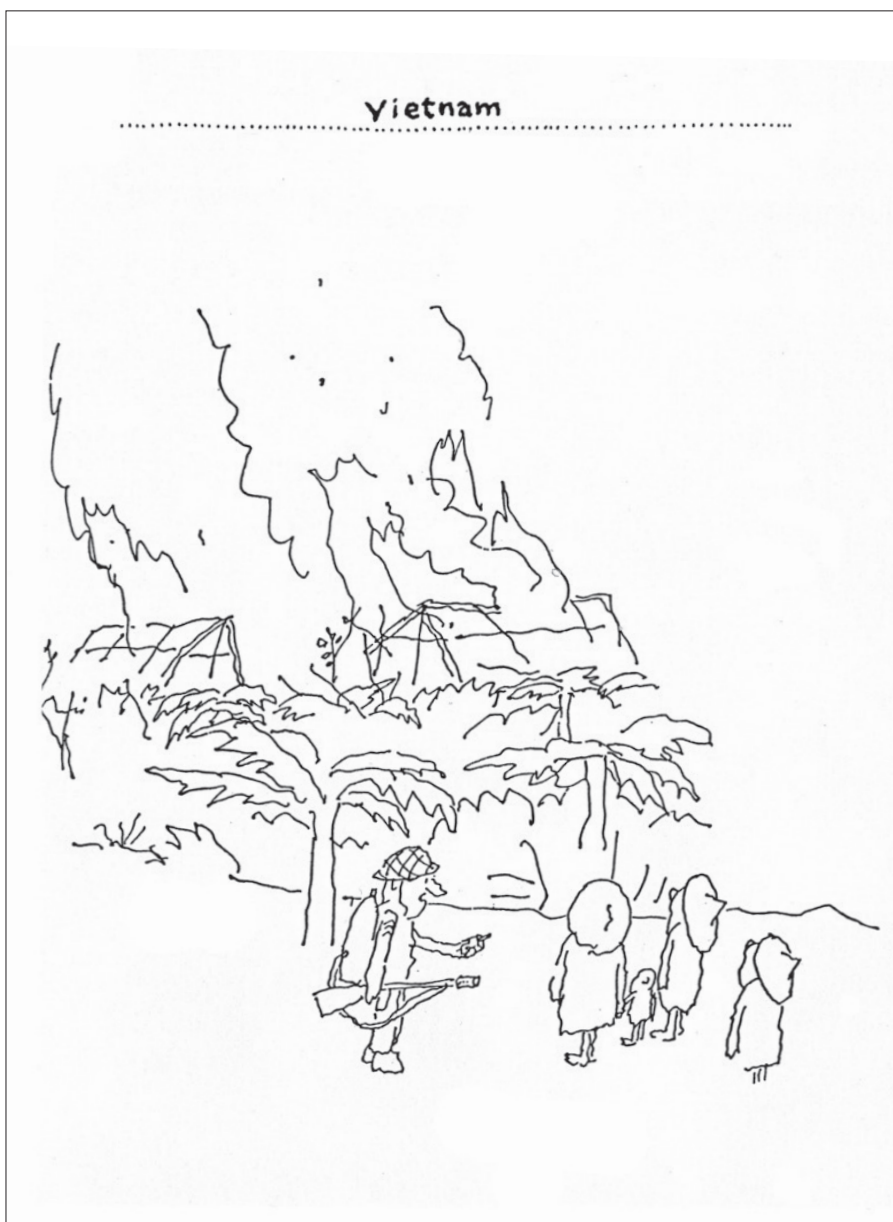
If there is anything better the writer has yet to taste it in a lifetime devoted largely and studiously to voracity.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Now the main thing in cooking is to cook when there is something you can cook and not before. And not too damned much after, which as I have come to understand it is called "overcooking" in the private argot of the chef.

If I feel stuck, I say to myself, *Ernie, Ernesto, Ernst, Ern, Papa*, remember how the cooking was in the early days, and how it is and has always been and always will be. All you must do is pick one true ingredient. Pick the truest ingredient before you. Then the cooking will come.

Often it does not. For instance, as last night, when I was making pizza and chose to put the sauce in the oven before



the dough. It must not have been true sauce.

Max quipped I may have been too tight. I don't accept that. Liquor is the great palliative to the mechanical oppression of modern life, and enhances all activities save when you write or when you fight. These you must do on Ritalin and painkillers.

Besides, I had only a fourth of whisky, a third of rum, a half of gin, three dry martinis, two Papa Dobles, and a dram of drambuie. Infant's stuff. Jokingly I defenestrated Max from the third floor, and we seem to have had a falling-out.

How simple cookery would be if it were only necessary to prepare in the same or another way what has already been prepared well. A true cook tries again and again for a flavor that is

beyond attainment.

Quality may not be immediately discernible in what a man cooks, and in this sometimes he is fortunate. But eventually it is quite clear and by this and the degree of culinary alchemy he possesses, his guests will remain happy or, more often than not, hole themselves up in the bathroom for several days.

At its best, cooking is a lonely, ascetic, punishing practice. Though not without its rewards, such as wearing an apron inscribed "Big Papa's Kitchen." I love it when they call me Big Papa.

Ultimately each man must cook alone, in nothing but an apron, and if he is a good enough cook he must face eternity, or the lack of it, in each dish.

If you disagree, I'll sock you one good in the jaw. **B**



TOM CHITTY

# Disco Dancing

The Seventies may be gone, but disco lives on...at every wedding, bar mitzvah or retirement party. Here's how to do a few iconic steps, to keep you cool in the middle of the hottest Disco Inferno.





WAH!

Kung  
fu  
fightin'

HEE-  
YAH!

KA-CHA!

ELECTRIC  
SLIDE

HELLO  
MR.  
BENDY

HEEL

THE  
ROBOT

TWITCH

ZZZ

CLANK

INFERNO

DISCO  
VERBODEN

FUNKY  
CHICKEN

FLIPPITY  
DIPPITY

ZANGO!

EK-EK-  
EK\*

THE  
DOLPHIN

\* BEAUTIFUL DOLPHIN SOUNDS

OOH YEAH  
WIGGLIN'  
'N' JIGGLIN'

BOOGIE!



# TRICHINOSIS

AN EPISODE FROM AMERICAN HISTORY  
BY K. A. POLZIN

IN THE 1970s, AMONG THE MANY THINGS FOR KIDS TO BE AFRAID OF – PIRANHAS, TAINTED HALLOWEEN CANDY, NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST – WE HAD TO FEAR EATING UNDERCOOKED PORK, AS THIS, WE WERE TOLD, WOULD GIVE US TRICHINOSIS, AND THEN HUNGRY LITTLE WORMS WOULD SLOWLY DEVOUR US FROM THE INSIDE.



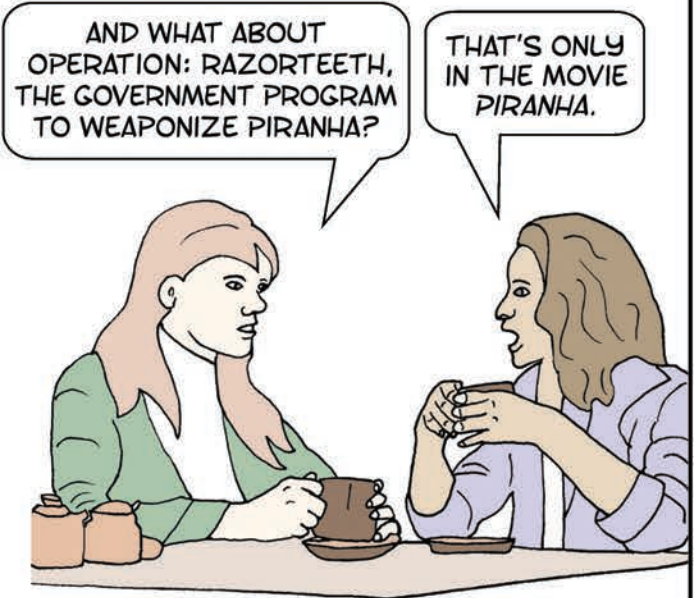
TODAY, THERE'D BE A HANDY ARTICLE ONLINE ("10 THINGS YOU WERE TAUGHT TO BE AFRAID OF THAT ARE INSANELY FAKE") TO DISPEL ALL OUR WORRIES, BUT ALL WE HAD THEN WERE THE UNCONVINCING REASSURANCES OF ADULTS.



WE HAD TO TRUST THAT GROWNUPS, PER THE USDA, WERE COOKING ALL OUR PORK TO A MINIMUM OF 160°F (OR FREEZING IT FOR 20 DAYS) TO KILL THE *TRICHINELLA* AND PREVENT ITS LARVAE FROM PENETRATING OUR INTESTINAL WALL, ENTERING OUR BLOODSTREAM, AND BURROWING INTO OUR MUSCLES.



THIS AUTHOR NEVER LOST HIS FEAR OF "THE TERRIBLE T" UNTIL THE EARLY AUGHTS, WHEN SCIENCE REVEALED THAT THE INCIDENCE OF TRICHINOSIS IN THE U.S. IS AWFULLY CLOSE TO ZERO (AS IS THE INCIDENCE OF TAINTED HALLOWEEN CANDY).



@k.a.polzin

polzintoons@gmail.com

AND I WAS A WITNESS



ISABEL SAMARAS

# Wonder Women



**SPERO MELIOR**  
(I WISH FOR BETTER THINGS)





BEHOLD MY HEART

W. M. ALBES '82









*Samrao*



HOME SWEET HOME



I. SAMARAS



MARCIA TAMAHINE







SONG OF THE GOLDFINCH

.....◆.....

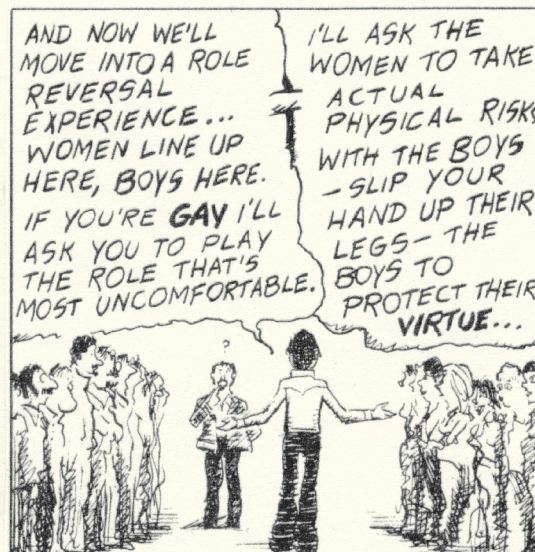
**Isabel Samaras'**  
*meticulous riffs  
on the Old  
Masters reflect  
an idea that  
"everyone, even  
monsters or dis-  
embodied hands,  
can find  
someone to love  
them." Find  
more work at  
[isabelsamaras.  
com](http://isabelsamaras.com).*

**B**

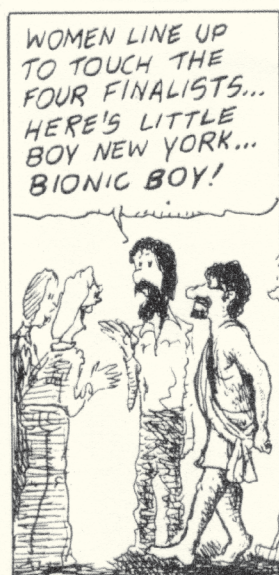


# An Evening with a Male Liberationist

DEC '76  
CENTRAL PARK WEST  
UNIVERSALIST CHURCH  
8 PM SIDE DOOR







.....◆.....

*This just in!*

A much-anticipated collection of  
**Stan Mack's** classic strips  
 from The Village Voice,  
 Stan Mack's Real Life Funnies 1974-1994,  
 will be published by Fantagraphics  
 in 2023.

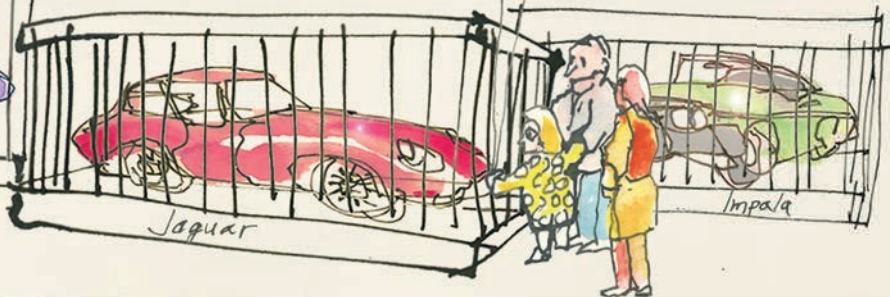
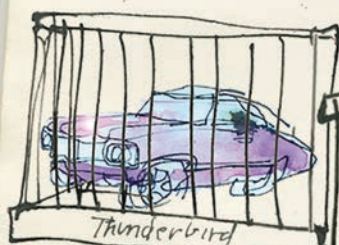
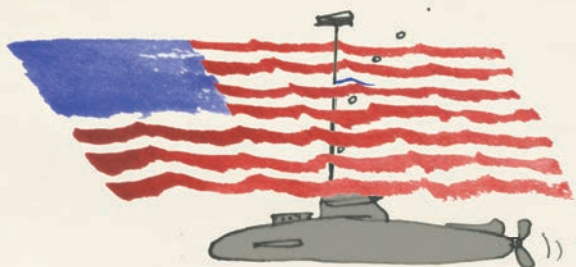
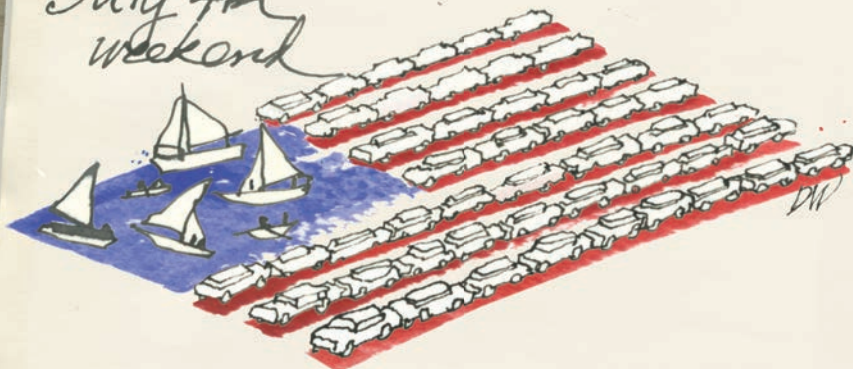
Stan Mack



# Sketchbook, 1970s

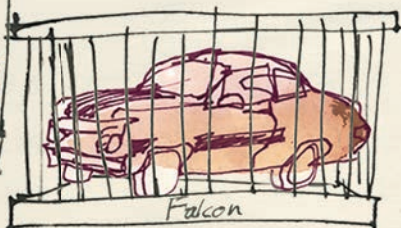


July 4th weekend





theater  
of war





NEW FROM FANTAGRAPHICS UNDERGROUND

# Coping Skills

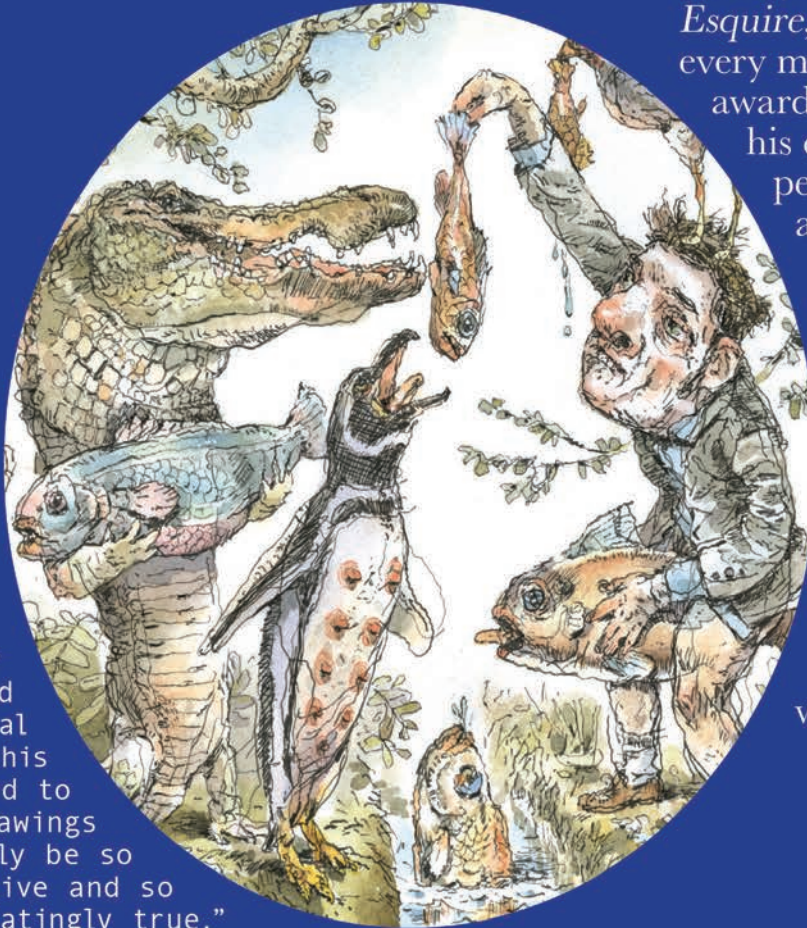
HELPFUL DRAWINGS

JOHN CUNEO

has drawn *The New Yorker* covers, been featured in *Esquire*, and has won nearly every major illustration award. But many of his drawings are too perverse, neurotic, and untethered for mainstream publication. *Coping Skills* collects a treasure trove of these outré sketches — scenes of domesticated manatees, climate change, and plenty of sex — by one of the finest illustrators working today.

“Complex and hilarious, fearless and shocking, there’s no one like Cuneo in the field of illustration today. Perhaps there never was. I laughed out loud several times reading this book. It’s hard to understand how drawings can simultaneously be so wildly imaginative and so excruciatingly true.”

— David Apatoff, *Illustration Art*



AVAILABLE NOW AT [FANTAGRAPHICS.COM](http://FANTAGRAPHICS.COM)



# Free to Be You and Me: The Oral History

**I**n 1972, entertainer Marlo Thomas teamed with Gloria Steinem to form the Ms. Foundation for Women, a non-profit dedicated to lifting women's voices across racial and class lines. To support this effort and to introduce children to the concepts of female empowerment and gender equality, Thomas began a musical project called *Free to Be You and Me*. The all-star LP became the biggest-selling children's record of all time, a spot it occupied until 2005, when it was knocked off by *The Wiggles' Back that Tush Up (Explicit Version)*.



**Marlo Thomas:** My friend Jane [Fonda] had brought back this record put out by the Women's Chorus of the North Vietnamese Army, a huge hit over there, and I just could not stop listening to it. Then I thought, "Why not do something like that for America?"

Art Garfunkel had booked several months of studio time at Soundbath on 57th Street to record his first solo album. The 'bath was where Mungo Jerry recorded "In the Summertime," so the place had real history. Unfortunately, Paul Simon was also recording there, so Art decided to push back his start a few weeks, you know, out of respect.



**Art Garfunkel:** I believe my exact words were, "Fuck that midget, I'm going to the Vineyard."

**Thomas:** We had 21 days to write and record an entire album that was supposed to dismantle thousands of years of traditional gender roles. No big deal, right? Fortunately, I was friends with some of the biggest music stars in the world. I told my producer Bernie to call everybody: John Lennon, Bob Dylan, Barbra Streisand. And I told him, "Don't take 'no' for an answer."

**Bernard "Bernie" Bernstein, legendary music producer:** They all hung up on me. I take that back: John and Yoko actually spoke to me. They demanded all of side two be entirely "Woman is the N\*gger of the World." When I explained the record was for kids, John started ranting that "Marlo better not try to change it to Children is the N\*gger of the World or I'll send Phil Spector after her!" Eventually the drugs kicked in and he fell asleep.

Dylan was better. He just said, "I'd rather become a born-again Christian than work on this."

I didn't expect him to go through with it, though.

**Thomas:** Bernie explained to me that a lot of big musical acts tour in the summer so they're busy, and maybe we should get more creative with finding collaborators. That's why I asked Phil for help.



**Phil Donahue, Thomas's sometimes boyfriend and future husband:** Marlo can do anything she sets her mind to. Bernie kept saying that you need musicians to record an album, but I disagreed.

**Bernstein:** Phil Donahue is one of History's greatest monsters. I wish him nothing but pain.

**Thomas:** My first call was to Jill St. John. I'd met her a few months earlier in London, while we were both waiting to have sex with Sean Connery.

**Jill St. John:** That's also how I got to know Britt Ekland.



**Thomas:** Jill couldn't work on the album herself, but her "boyfriend" Henry Kissinger was interested. And let me tell you, Henry's first attempt at writing a children's song landed as well as thousands of tons of bombs on a small Vietnamese village. Which is to say that he killed.



**Henry Kissinger, Nixon's National Security Advisor:** How could I say no? It was an opportunity to work in the studio where Mungo Jerry recorded "In the Summertime." Also, strategically speaking, my goal that summer was to grind the Paris peace talks to a halt. Well, that and punch Sean Connery.



**Mike Shear** (@mikeshear) is a writer living in Los Angeles. His parents weren't hippies, but they owned some of the same children's records.



**K**issinger immediately set to work on the album's title track. After minutes, he had laid down the basis of what was sure to be a hit.

**Kissinger (singing):** "There's a land that I see, just south of the CCP/ It's too bad that they are, cozy with the USSR..."

**Thomas:** Hank was just the shot of energy we needed to get our juices flowing. Pretty soon, I wasn't calling people to help. People were calling me.

**Bernstein:** When people heard Kissinger was involved, they assumed it was a sex thing.

**Donahue:** Trust me, it was *not* a sex thing. Marlo made that clear to me. Repeatedly.

**Thomas:** One of those calls was Rosey Grier. I knew he needed to be part of this from the moment I first heard his deep, baritone voice.



**Rosey Grier, former NFL defensive tackle:** I wanted to show men that it's okay to cry. For example, let's say that you sign up to be Bobby Kennedy's bodyguard, but he gets shot and killed anyway, which leads to Nixon, eight more years in Vietnam, and the end of the dream that this country could be moved in a more tolerant, loving direction. Maybe something like that would make you cry. In theory.

**R**osey Grier's appearance on "It's Alright to Cry" inspired more professional athletes to come by the recording studio to try their hand at singing.

**Bernstein:** It was a mess. Gordie Howe wanted to record a song called "Canadians are People, Too" and Bob Griese couldn't shut up about why it's not racist to say quarterbacks should be white. The only person who hated the jocks more than me was Phil.

**Donahue:** All these big guys, coming in all tough, pretending to be beta males. That's not how this works, buddy, you gotta earn it. I'm the biggest beta male in the room. That includes you, Alda.



**Alan Alda:** When I learned about the album, I couldn't wait to get involved. Marlo is just the best, isn't she?

**Donahue:** Don't let Alda's nice guy act fool you. I once asked him a question: "Do you not not NOT torture animals?" and he said YES.

**Thomas:** Alan showed me this wonderful story about a boy who wanted a doll. As we adapted it, I realized that this was personal to him. Not only did Alan always want a doll when he was younger, but he collected dolls as an adult. And not just nice, fancy dolls. Dirty, damaged dolls rescued from dumpsters. He would cut the eyes out himself, and he told me one day he named all of them Marlo. What a sweet man.

**Bernstein:** I'm 98% sure the guy's a serial killer, but we didn't have DNA evidence back then so the cops would look the other way.

**Alda:** Phil sat by Marlo's side the entire time, talking, making stupid suggestions, trying to sing loud enough for the mics to pick him up. If you listen closely to "William's Doll" you can still hear him ranting about McGovern.

**S**ure enough, at 2:31 of "William's Doll," a voice can be heard faintly screaming, "He's already got South Dakota's four electoral votes. The rest is downhill from there."

*Meanwhile, news spread of the groundbreaking recording session, and with it, a slew of new collaborators.*



**Kris Kristofferson:** I was in LA doing cocaine with Bob Evans. He asked me, "Did you see that billboard on Sunset?" "Marlo Thomas is a C\*\*T. Signed, John and Yoko." We laughed like shit at that. Then Bob buzzed his secretary for more blow. No answer. We walked outside. It was deserted. The whole Paramount lot was empty. Word had gotten out about this "great new thing" being recorded in New York, and everyone was flocking there to be part of it. So I packed up my cocaine and flew East.

**Thomas:** Kris sure had a lot of energy in those days. He recorded his part in 15 minutes, then slept on the studio floor for the rest of the project.

**Ed McMahon:** Johnny would go to Wimbledon every year, to drink and start fights, so the show would be dark for a

few weeks. Thing is, back then I didn't get paid on weeks we didn't record, so I needed a gig. So I showed up, with my accordion and a bottle of cheap Scotch. When I found out it was all volunteer, I stole Kristofferson's duffel bag of coke and high-tailed it back to Burbank.

**Bernstein:** We had so many people who wanted to be on this record, that we started pairing them up. Cass Elliot and Iceberg Slim, for example—dynamite. But not every pairing worked. Miles Davis wanted to do a cover of "(Sittin' On) the Dock of the Bay" with Spiro Agnew, but that blew up after Phil started taunting Spiro.

**Donahue:** I told Spiro, "McGovern will fuck your shit up." The man was a war hero!



**Spiro Agnew:** I immediately called Dick Helms at the CIA, and he ordered the Watergate break-in that night.



**Zero Mostel:** I'm not sure if it was my idea to sing "Sunrise, Sunset" with Charlton Heston or his. I



don't know why it got cut from the album.

**Charlton Heston:** Of course it was Zero's idea. I wanted to sing it with Topol.

**O**ne pairing that did work was Joe Namath and Squeaky Fromme. The two became fast friends and, briefly, lovers.



**Joe Namath:** We had a lot in common. We were both scheduled to be at Sharon Tate's house the same night, but, you know, for different reasons.

**Squeaky Fromme:** I told Joe he could be the new head of the Manson family and lead us to victory in the upcoming race war.



**Namath:** Not every day you get an offer like that! [chuckles] But I just wasn't ready to move to LA.

**W**ith their studio time running out, Thomas made one last attempt at



*capturing a huge star.*

**Thomas:** I called up Barbra and told her, in no uncertain terms, "This project is DEAD unless you save it." I begged, pleaded, even complimented her performance in *What's Up, Doc?*



**Barbra Streisand:** Oh, there was no way. For one thing, John and Yoko had sent \$50,000 to every member of ASCAP in return for them not getting involved. But Marlo was relentless; I forget what I said to get her off the phone. In the end, I called my lawyers and they arranged for Elliot Gould to go instead of me as part of our divorce settlement.

**Elliot Gould:** Of course, by the time I showed up, Art Garfunkel was there, too. He had come back from the Vineyard a few days early, with his new lovers Miriam Makeba, Capucine, and George C. Scott. He was livid.



**Garfunkel:** The place was chaos. The Manson girl was drawing all over the walls, Agnew had stolen \$5,000 worth of equipment, and the cherry on top was Phil Donahue still refusing to shut up about George McGovern.

**Donahue:** Nixon was dead in the water. I just knew it.



**Paul Simon:** I hear this high-pitched screaming from down the hall, and—I knew that scream! I ran to check out what was going on. It was the most amazing thing I could ever imagine.

**Garfunkel:** I went to punch Donahue in the face because I knew this was all his fault, it had to be, it always was, the man's an agent of pure chaos—

**Alda:** Preach, brother—

**Garfunkel:** —but before I could get to him, I tripped over Kristofferson. Kris jumps up to kick my ass, but he's so out of it on Yoohoo mixed with Darvon that he starts wailing on Eliot Gould instead. Gould's defending himself with a cymbal, so every time Kris hits him, it's like "PSSSSH!"

I couldn't stop laughing, which really pissed Marlo off. I told her to shut up and

called her something I shouldn't have—

**John & Yoko:** Quoting us with permission!

**Garfunkel:** —so I braced myself for Donahue to bull-rush me. But that dude is so beta, he does nothing. Alan fucking Alda was the one who stepped up to defend Marlo, and I was like, fine, bring it. I took down that twig with two Krav Maga moves, then stared down Rosey Grier. He didn't want any part of this. He just cried and crawled away. I was pretty hyped up by this point and was about to wail on Bernie when Kissinger talked me down.

**Bernstein:** And that's actually what got Kissinger the Nobel Peace Prize. Little-known fact.

**Simon:** People always thought that Art was just a pretty voice. But his hands are lethal weapons. I mean, they're actually

registered in the State of California. By the time I got there, Artie's shirt was covered with blood. He just kept pointing at Elliot Gould and Alan Alda's limp bodies writhing on the ground. "Now that's a work of Art, bitch! That's a work of Art!"

**Kissinger:** I had to agree. The tableau was sickening, yet beautiful.

**Thomas:** I was just so happy to have all my friends together in the same room.

**The album *Free to Be You and Me* was released later that fall. It received stunning critical praise and became the soundtrack for multiple generations. In the liner notes for the 25th anniversary edition, Jann Wenner summed it up thusly: "This album—really, our generation—solved the problem of sexism once and for all."**

**Donahue:** '72 was fixed.

**B**



CERISE ZELENETZ



# David Chelsea's BICENTENNIAL DREAMS

freely adapted from my 1976 dream diary

I go to see SILENT MOVIE, and am disappointed that it's full of dialogue.



Goldie Hawn is in it.



Mel Brooks goes off with Candice Bergen, and isn't seen again.



Then, a musical number:



Then, Dom DeLuise comes out:



This is all happening at my school auditorium:



A kid from school gets up and sings:





Paul Revere And The Raiders come on, but refuse to play unless they're paid.



Up next:



Bob and Emily attend a group therapy session.



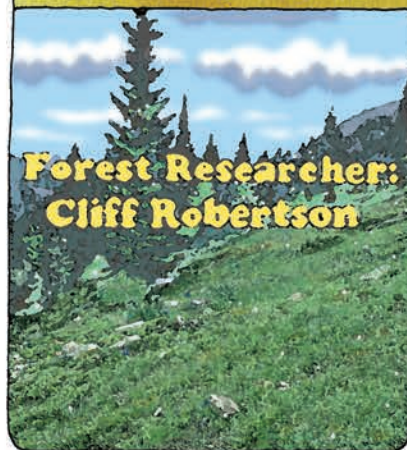
It's led by a spiritualist guru played by Rudolf Nureyev in his TV debut.



The show ends with Nureyev conjuring up dazzling visions:



Followed by credits:



Then, a First Tuesday report about Nureyev's TV debut





# Manhattan, 1977

*In the dirt, and the rats, and the polyester,  
you could sense the danger mounting.*

In the '70s there was still that '60s grunge, but without the *weltanschauung*. The dirt wasn't holy anymore. It wasn't from nature. From the earth. It wasn't *soil*. It was a very indoors type of dirt, although you could see it outside, the signs of it spilling forth, in the teeming rats outside the Manhattan clubs and in the streets, and around especially, in the pre-dawn, places like Studio 54. Nor that there was anything really *like* Studio 54—it was *sui generis*, unless you counted Roman times. But its decay stood out. Its decay—not just its so-called decadence—which latter was aspirational and ordinary and effortful and somehow naïve; it was nothing new, and drearily predictable.

But that predictability had nothing on me, the quintessence of the tried and true post-grad flameout! Five years out of college, nothing to show for it, dead-end job, 9-5, still trying to write, banging away at the Selectric, diligent by day, debauched by night, got to keep that Byron thing going. Sometimes I'd get invited to the Studio by my old college chum, brilliant playwright, handsome, now a hustler (A-list only), partying with famous mentors-turned-clients.

And outside the rats, as I said, those millions of rats, that *Dracula*-teeming of rats, while inside Liza and Truman and Andy and even Jackie, they said, their souls rendered immortal by celebrity—the Undead!—caroused as morning approached, peaked, waned, the dance floor still open. And the ordinary folk too, briefly blessed with their onetime entry, kept it up, relentless.

In the morning they all came out blinking and disheveled and stained. I'd see them, outside, the people from New Jersey, Queens, delusional and hopeful, *Day of the Locust* people, *Night of the Living Dead* people, huddled masses yearning to get in, all tricked out in polyester pants and polyester shirts unbuttoned, displaying impressive tufts of chest hair, often sadly mixed with gray, and that huge gold medallion on a chain nestled within its furry confines, and peeking out from the polyester bellbottoms, sometimes, a little white plastic boot. The girls in halters and lowriding bellbottoms, an exposed and too-often cadaverous midriff, their huge hair, their straining bodies, violently perfumed, and flavored.

But why was there so much polyester, dead, and synthetic? Even their *skin color* was synthetic—as if the '60s nature people had all gone indoors, and stayed indoors, and never saw the sun and had weird tans from tanning beds, those coffins of UV light turning them a strange unnatural color, that gilded pallor. The music, too, disco, synthetic, created by—a synthesizer. And why was the hit song, the anthem to the drugged-out dance, the constant numbing dance, shrieked by the famous inside, the *hoi polloi* out in the streets, “I Will Survive?” Why proclaim the fact? Why was there even any question about it? *Why was it on the table?*

Well. You could sense the danger mounting.



**Elizabeth Albrecht's** plays, including *Jazz*, have been performed in the Ensemble Studio Theatre's One Act Play Marathon. She's also appeared at Cornelia Street Café's "Monologues and Madness" and the "Funny How Show" at the Peoples Improv Theatre.





Tracey



In July we had the blackout, as if the gods of electricity had seen just about enough and had to shut the lights on us. The city erupted in looting and arson. Six weeks before that, a helicopter crashed on the top of the Pan Am Building, its blades slicing four people on the roof, plus one on the sidewalk below. That same month my hustler friend barely escaped a fire at the gay Everard Baths, the exits locked.

Me drinking on the 10th Avenue bus, working a while at the theatre, then no longer working at the theatre, then back to secretarial job, then to somewhere in a taxi, then in the car with my date on the BQE; a Coney Island swim, then late-night park in the de facto "Lovers Lane" under the Brooklyn Bridge, to further our acquaintance—too bad Son of Sam was on the loose, targeting couples like us, but hey, you have to live your life....

And more adventures! I lacked the skillset of my hustler friend, but h'm, maybe the *production* side? A porno script? When the skin director told me my idea wasn't "doable," I barreled out of his office relieved, into that dirty sunshine that Manhattan was covered

with at this time.

But why couldn't I get my skin to clear up? Why did I feel like shit all the time? And why were so many friends junkies? Or drunks? Why, going to work on the subway, did it now seem the graffiti, formerly festive, was violent sharp signs, the sharp chicken scratches on the walls of prisons, or insane asylums?

Sex with weirdos. Weirder jobs. Something had to give.

I got invited to a party for a film, on Water Street, near Wall Street, and saw the people I went to college with in suits.

One asked me, hey, still writing? and I said yup and got this patronizing little headshake. "You don't *change*." Like that was a bad thing!

Strange tales from Vermont: Another guy who'd been a blues musician had to give it up—"it's hopeless, everyone wanted disco now"—then was miraculously transformed into a tech whiz, rescued by an old chum from MIT.

And a girl I'd gone to school with was in a suspense movie, playing in Times Square; her huge billboard face, looking down on the throng, in horror.

So it began, this tidal shift.

Mine occurred when my friends and I found out a former boyfriend of mine had died, had fallen off a roof at a party, and the thing is, I was too hungover to even make it to his funeral.

So I saw things had reached a certain pass, and I had a little talk with myself, and decided to regroup. I decided to purify myself with a trip to the ocean. So right before Labor Day I was swimming in Martha's Vineyard, and then hitchhiking on the road back to the town, and a car stopped—it was an old-style coupé, a magnificent refurbished ancient antique, and inside it were four kids, 19, 20, two young men, two girls, all dressed up in party frocks and black tie.

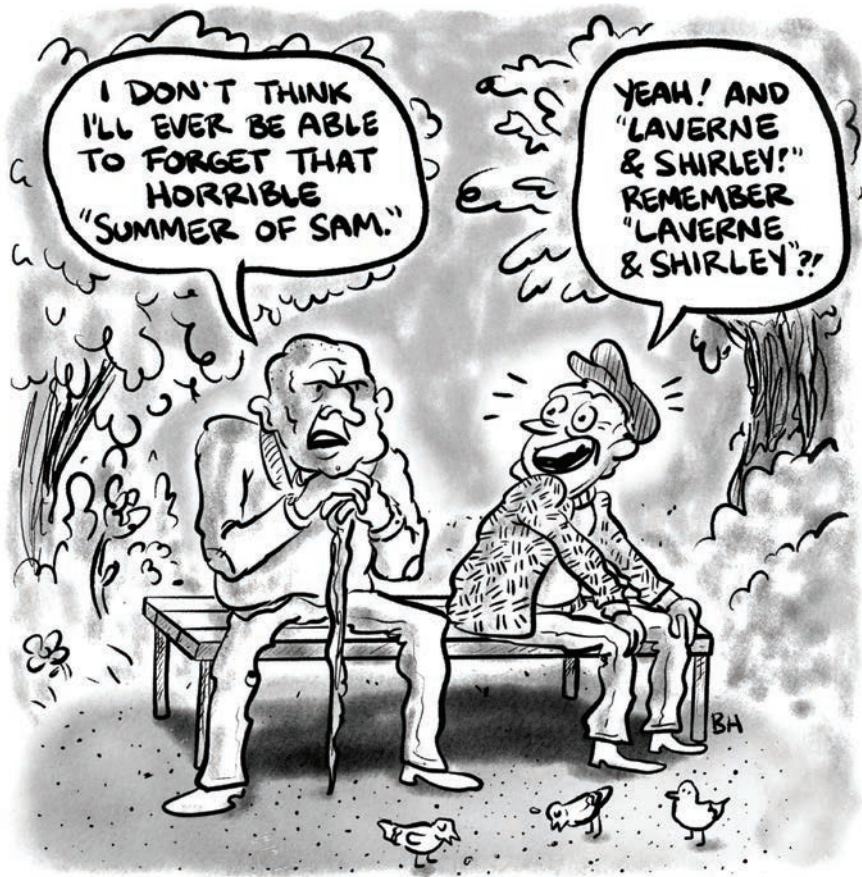
One of the young men opened the door for me. I got in.

"Hullo Nick," I said. I nodded at the other. "Tom."

They beamed. They were thrilled, the Daisy and Jordan girls too, that I'd identified their style. "That's what we were aiming for!" they said. They were happy, too, I gathered, maybe even a little smug, that they had seen the writing on the '70s wall as to what happened to their older siblings, and wanted none of it. They were happy with their silver cocktail shaker, and bucket of ice, and fancy glasses, sipping away on their martinis, facing each other in the jump seats, offering me their cool gin and vermouth.

So we went on our gracious way to Edgartown, them inviting me along to their party—but of course I wasn't dressed for it. Plus I had the idea I maybe ought to cool it on parties for a while. And as we continued in the stately carriage, I sensed the '80s had begun. We toasted it. And, to myself, I toasted my departed boyfriend Al.

I was still feeling disgust and sadness and anger that I'd thrown him over when he tried to warn me about how I was living, and now it was *he* who'd died. I thought, there must be something I can do. Something that can make it better. It's not too late! But I felt like garbage. And I envied these kids with their merry schemes, and their delighted discovery of their retro style, which the silly little things were under the delusion would keep them safe. They thought it would keep them *clean*.

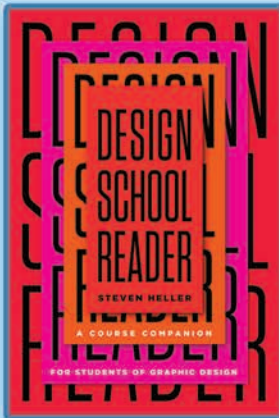


BRANDON HICKS



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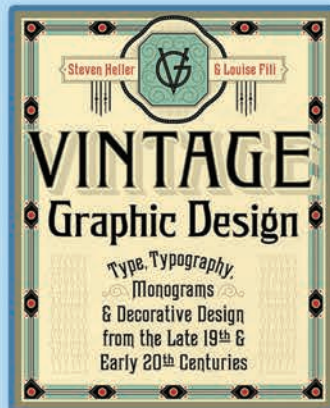
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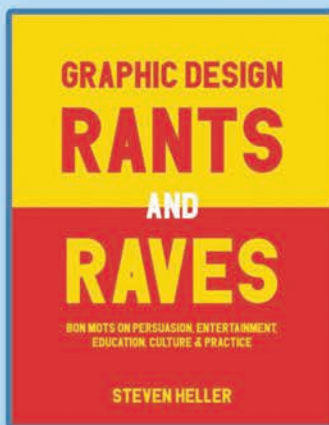
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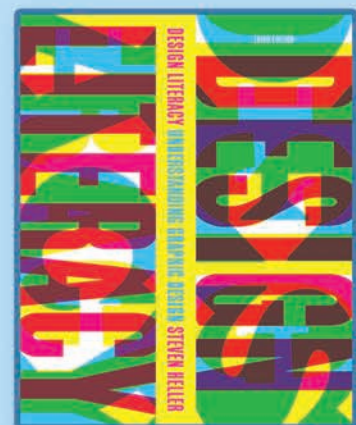
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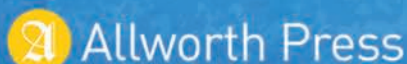


**Design Literacy**

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# Welcome to Burtworld

*At the height of Burt Reynolds' fame, plans were announced for a theme park based in Jupiter, Florida. After the casual racism of Cannonball Run, the Japanese investors pulled out in 1981. But ah! What might have been!*

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Marvel at Burt's 15,000-piece belt buckle collection, the largest one since Chaucerian times! Everything from Jimi Hendrix being struck by lightning, to "I'M HIS" briefly worn by Sally Field.

## DELIVERANCE DIPSY-DOO

Defend your honor while racing down the river! Watch out for the toothless mountain men that pop up from beneath the rapids! (*Boat-and-arrow sets will be provided.*)

## KISSING BURTH

For just \$1, you can kiss a genuine Burt Reynolds lookalike. (*BurtWorld is not legally responsible for any spontaneous conception initiated in BurtWorld.*)

## MUSTACHE MOUNTAIN

Thrill to the twists and turns of the South's first—and best—hair-based rollercoaster!

## CLYDE'S STEAKHOUSE

Burt may have turned down the lead in *Every Which Way But Loose*, but thanks to a translation mistake in the Japanese version of our stock offering, you can enjoy Florida's best prime rib, all served by orangutans wearing tuxedos!

## CHEW BETCHA!

Do you like to chew gum...FAST? Match your wits—and your jaw-muscles—

against our NASA-developed Reynolds Chewing Simulator! (*Waivers must be signed before activating the RCS.*)

## CONVY CONFESSIONAL

After a day around Burt, you've got sins to confess. And we've got TV's Burt Convy here to hear them! (*Tuesdays and Saturdays only; penance not recognized by the Vatican.*)

## WIN, LOSE, OR GET PUNCHED BY JERRY REED

You heard us—enjoy the party game played by your favorite BurtWorld celebs! Thrills, excitement, and broken incisors await you at the lightning-quick hands of the "Guitar Man"!

## THE BANDIT'S DINNER THEATRE

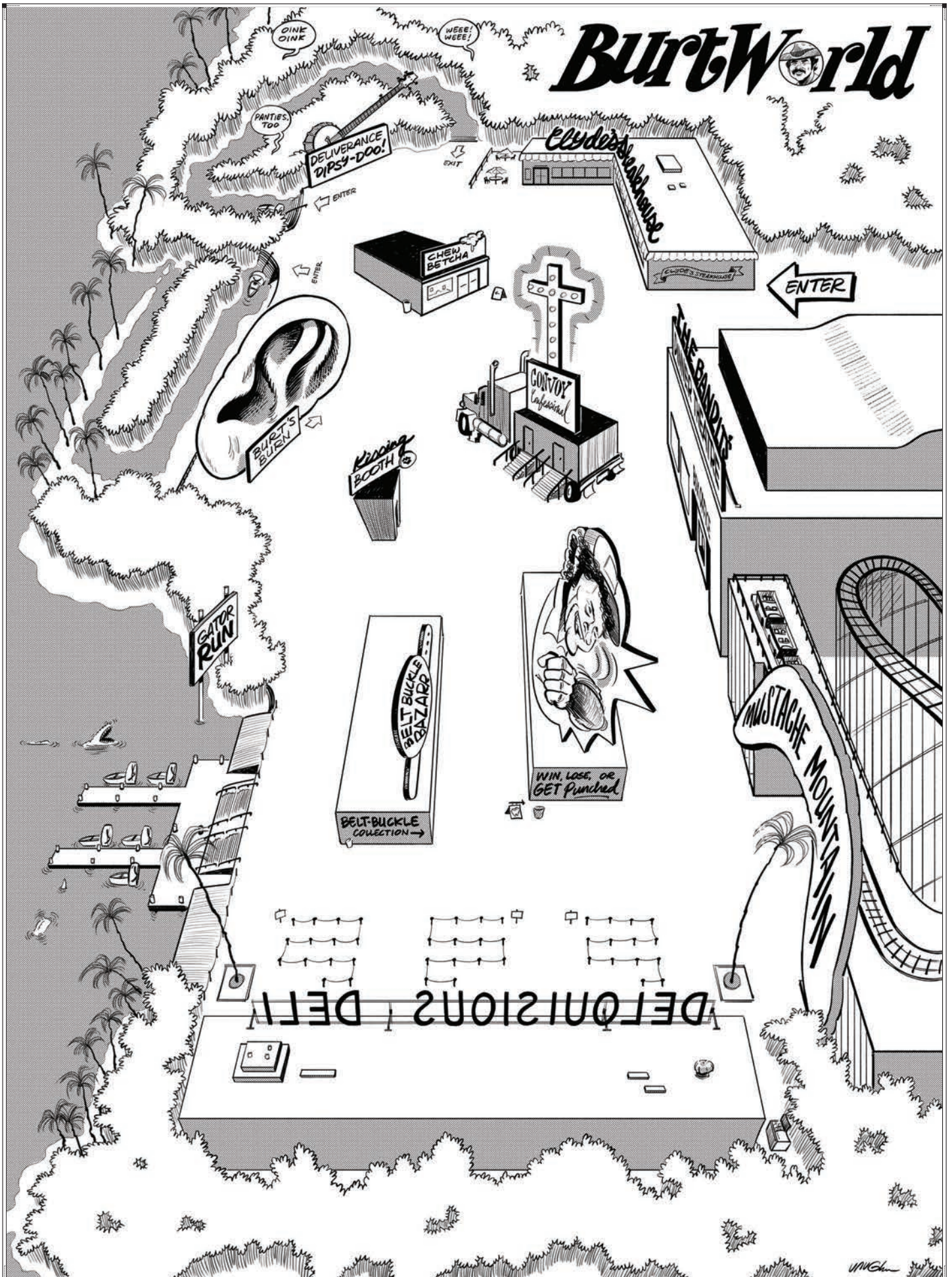
Currently showing *Godspell*, starring Jim Nabors, Morgan Fairchild, Jamie Farr, and Alice Ghostley! With a special appearance by David Doyle, TV's "Bosley" from *Charlie's Angels*! Coming November: *Come Back Little Sheba*, starring Vic Tayback, Eva Gabor, and Glynnis O'Connor!

**B**

**Josh Karp** (@hannafordjake) is a writer and once told his friends that he had an identical cousin in St. Louis who lived next door to Bake McBride. **George Katsoudas** is one of the job creators who fuel the economy of this great nation.



# BurtWorld





# The Storyboards

*In the 1970s, there were Easy Riders, Raging*

THE EXORCIST

DIR: W. FREIDKIN

SCENE 46: FINALE



INTERIOR SHOT BEDROOM. LOW ANGLE KARRAS opens the door and finds MERRIN dead on the floor with REGAN giggling next to him. KARRAS rushes toward them.



CLOSE UP of KARRAS foot stepping on a banana peel on the floor.



KARRAS slides across room on the banana peel, arms flailing for balance. He's careening towards the window.

*A bit too slapstick, no?  
You're fired. — Billy*



EXTREME CLOSE UP on KARRAS's face.



EXTERIOR SHOT of BEDROOM WINDOW. LOW ANGLE KARRAS bursts through the window



EXTERIOR HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF OUTDOOR STAIRCASE. KARRAS bounces all the way down, arms still flailing.

SCENE 14

LOCATION: WOLTZ MANSION

THE GODFATHER DIR: F. COPPOLA



EXTERIOR SHOT OF MANSION  
Dawn. Sun peeks through trees.



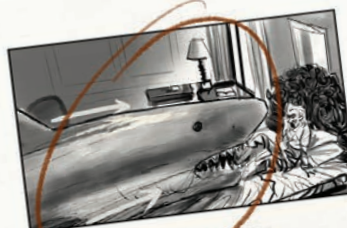
INTERIOR of BEDROOM. Wide shot of WOLTZ sleeping in bed.



CLOSE UP.  
WOLTZ stirs awake.



SHOT cont.  
WOLTZ starts to sit up in puzzlement.



WIDER SHOT of BEDROOM.  
A GREAT WHITE SHARK leaps onto bed to eat WOLTZ  
WOLTZ screams.



WIDE EXTERIOR of MANSION  
Audio: Woltz's screams echo.

*SHARK?! SHARK?! No.  
— F*



# of Nick Rambold

*Bulls, and Hollywood's worst storyboard artist.*

THE GODFATHER PART 2 SCENE 83



Exterior Wide Shot of Lake

FREDO and AL NERI ride their boat across the lake.



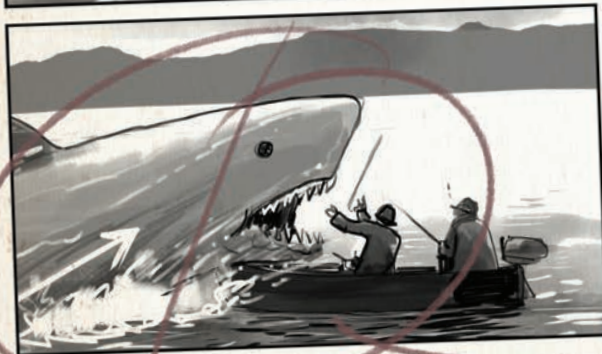
Exterior Wide Shot of Cabana

MICHAEL stares out the window onto the lake.



Wide Shot of Lake

FREDO starts saying his hail marys as both cast their fishing lines into the water.



Shot cont.

GREAT WHITE SHARK leaps out of water and eats FREDO.

*What is it with you and sharks?!*  
— F





EXTERIOR. WIDE SHOT of Beach shore full of beach goers. SWIMMER is speaking at BRODY, who hears a kid screaming.



CLOSE UP  
BRODY peers over man's shoulder to find the source of scream.



BRODY POV  
KID on a float getting pulled under as the water gets red around him.



MEDIUM SHOT.  
BRODY face drains in horror. Camera starts to move in.



SHOT Cont.  
Camera tracks in and at the same time zooms out for Hitchcock effect.



WIDE SHOT of Beach Shore  
A GREAT WHITE SHARK leaps onto the beach and eats BRODY.

*Why did Francis recommend you so much? Come see me.*  
— Steven



EXTERIOR WIDE SHOT of PARK RALLY

Crowd of people in a public square listens to PALANTINE making his campaign speech offcamera.



MEDIUM SHOT.

CAMERA DOLLIES RIGHT to show the torso of a man wearing a military coat.



SHOT cont.

CAMERA DOLLIES UP to reveal TRAVIS, who's sporting a new look.

*Where's the mohawk we discussed about???*

— Marty





TIGHT CLOSE UP.  
Kurtz extemporizes in  
the darkness. His face  
just peaking into the  
light.

DIALOGUE: TBD.



TIGHT CLOSE UP.  
Willard listens silently  
near the doorway.



TIGHT CLOSE UP.  
Kurtz continues  
monologue.



MEDIUM SHOT.  
Kurtz continues clipping  
toenails.

WHY DO I  
KEEP HIRING  
YOU!!

B

**John Holmes** ([johnrholmes.com](http://johnrholmes.com)) is a New York artist,  
changing the world entire with some crosshatching here and there.



# La Vie Boheme on Grand Street

**I**t was 1973. I left my high-paying job art directing in an ad agency. **1** I left my comfortable brownstone home in Brooklyn. **2** I left it all to live in a primitive loft on the edge of Little Italy, 125A Grand Street, ten years before Basquiat moved in around the corner. **3**

I left it all because I had never lived alone. I left it all because my father died, too young, too beaten.

On his deathbed, he said, “You are me,” and I wanted to make the “youme” strong. I had to prove I could exist in the most difficult conditions in New York City.

The loft had no heat and no kitchen. Plaster dust sifted down from between the boards in the ceiling. **4** Fleas hatched from between the boards in the floor. My legs were covered with bites. **5** An exterminator set off a pesticide bomb that fogged the loft for a day. Rats came in under the door.

The exhaust pipe of trucks making deliveries were right at my windowsill. **6** A driver catching up on sleep would leave his motor running and fill my loft with fumes. I’d complain. He’d go back to sleep.

A wannabee rock band moved in above me. They couldn’t put two notes together. They made groaning and screeching noises. I’d complain. They’d continue.

They climbed down the fire escape and stole money from me. I heard that if you pin a \$20 bill to a wall burglars will just take that and nothing else. **7** Since there was nothing left to take, my neighbors came often.

It was dark, even in the daytime the industrial buildings shadowed the streets. It was empty, especially at night. The sound of a crack was either someone breaking up wooden pallets or a Mafia shooting. A man was shot in a car parked outside the downstairs door. **8** He fell on the sidewalk, I stepped over his chalk outline for months, until it was finally washed away by the rain.

With all the challenges, there was charm.

On Broome Street there was a used refrigerator store. Behemoth fridges stood all over the sidewalk. I bought the Moby Dick of refrigerators, white whale size with rounded

corners. **9** Home improvements went forward: I installed a heater that hung from the ceiling. It switched on with a loud *FOOP!* and the giant fan sent a strong gust of hot wind down the length of the loft. **10**

Godfred, a creative carpenter from St Lucia, built a swinging bed. It was a mattress on a frame suspended from the ceiling. **11** I could rock myself to sleep by pulling on a rope attached to a nearby shelf.

The basil I planted on the windowsill was the nearest I got to that green thing called Nature. I’d wonder about the distance to the nearest tree. Half mile? A mile? Did I see one beside the basketball court on Rivington Street? **12**

I’d catch mice alive and climb out the window, walking the roofs until I reached the top of a cafeteria on Broadway; then I released the mice, thinking they’d find more food there than in my loft. **13**

But good food was never far away. There was smoked mozzarella **14** in Little Italy’s cheese store, Alleva, fresh fish in Chinatown and cannoli at the Cafe Roma **15** on the way to the laundromat. I might even meet Rick Meyerowitz there, who lived on Mulberry Street.

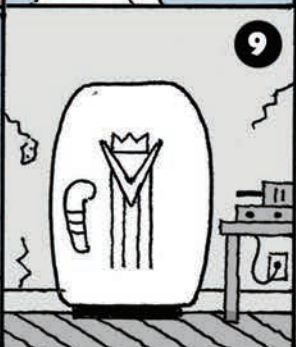
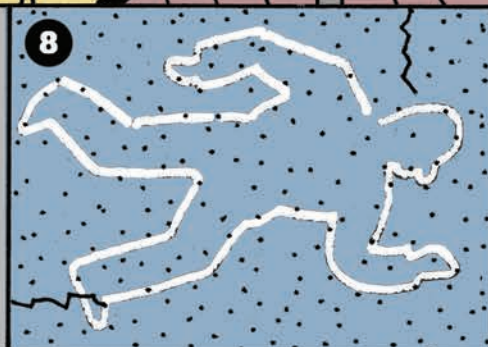
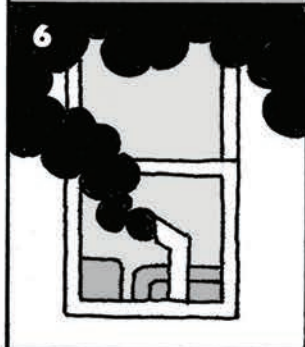
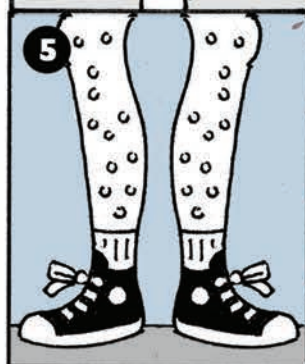
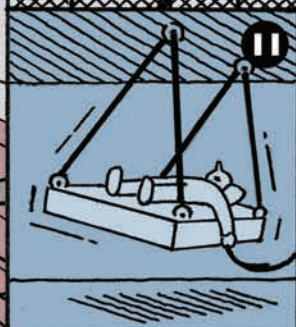
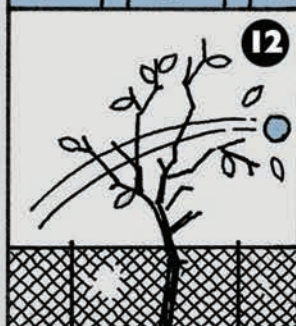
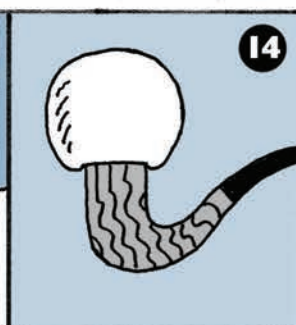
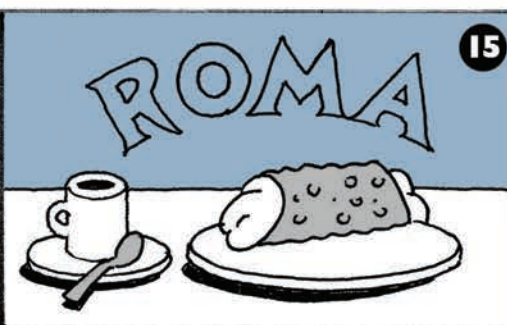
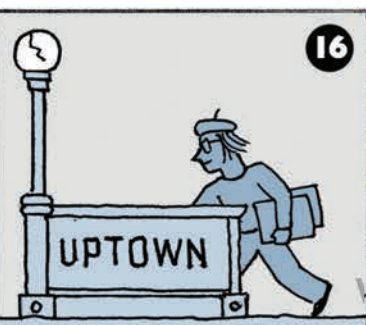
**F**or three years I lived in that loft and I proved it—I survived! And “youme” flourished. At my tiny drawing board I illustrated children’s books that are still with us today, *Animals should definitely not wear clothing* and *Benjamin’s 365 Birthdays*.

In 1976 for some reason I went uptown to the Upper West Side. I saw people—old people, children, parents pushing strollers. There were more people at 72nd Street and Broadway than I’d see in a week on Grand. There were shops, movies. There was life on the streets, parks, the river. I wanted that.

I got on the subway with a smoked mozzarella, **16** and came up out of the darkness and into the light. Did I ever look back? It was over but it was Grand. **B**

**Ron Barrett** left the Grand Street loft with only one regret, he will never pay \$135 a month in rent again.







"This collection  
carries whimsy  
To an appalling  
extreme."

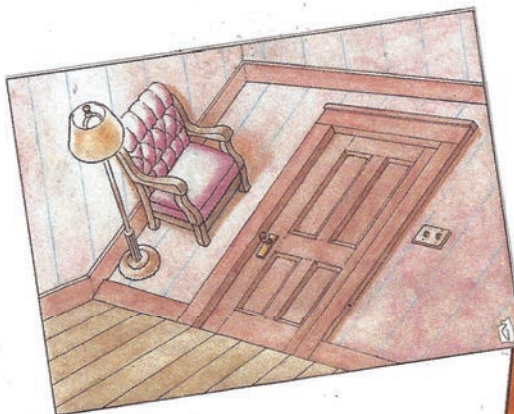
The Equivocator

"No words! All  
pictures!"

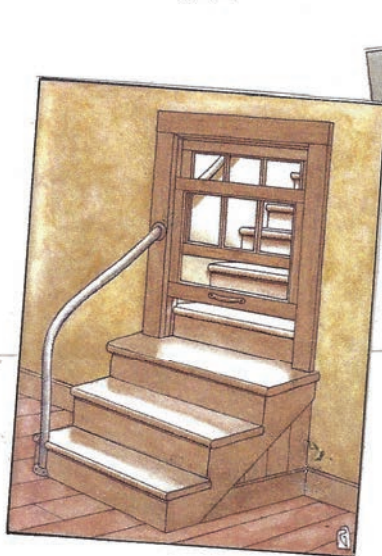
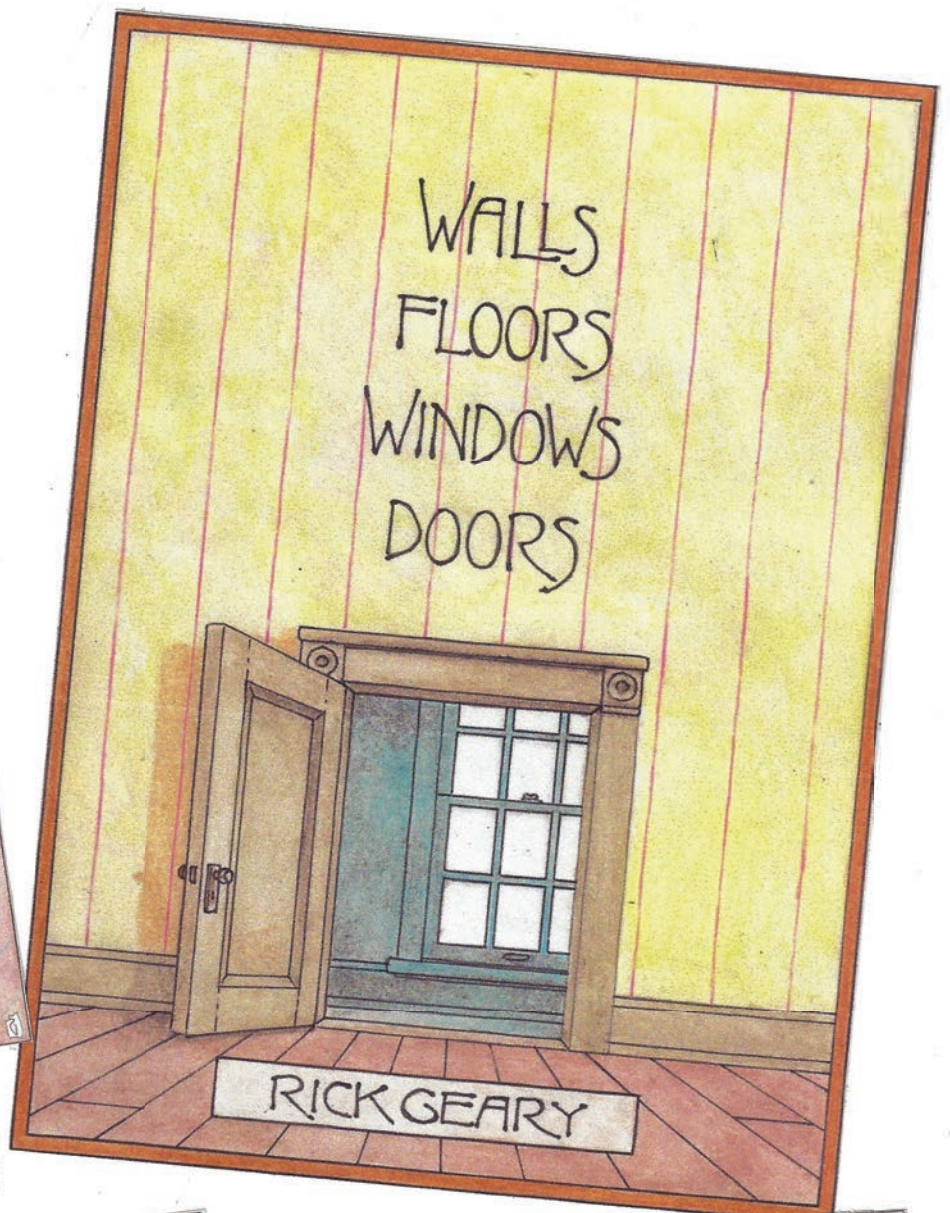
Daily Pleasantries

"A book like  
no other."

Anonymous



72pp, Hardbound



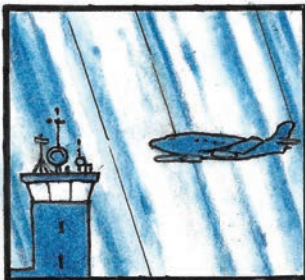
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# NOTES FROM A SMALL PLANET

*Rick, in the rain, at the head of a road not taken • By Rick Geary*

NOVEMBER 6  
**1972**  
THE DAY BEFORE  
THE ELECTION  
RICK GEARY © 22



THE PLANE CARRYING  
GEORGE MCGOVERN  
MADE A BRIEF  
REFUELING STOP IN  
WICHITA, KANSAS.



I WAS AMONG THE  
SMALL CROWD WAITING  
IN A DRENCHING  
RAIN ON THE TARMAC.



BY THAT TIME, OF  
COURSE, WE ALL  
KNEW HE WAS GOING  
TO LOSE.



STILL, A LAST-MINUTE MIRACLE  
WAS ALWAYS POSSIBLE ...

AS THE CANDIDATE EXCORIATED THE  
NIXON ADMINISTRATION FOR ITS  
WIDESPREAD AND SHAMELESS CORRUPTION ...



WHICH, IN THE MONTHS TO COME, WOULD  
BE EXPOSED TO ALL THE WORLD.

TOO LATE, ALAS, FOR GEORGE MCGOVERN.



# Champagne, Popsicles, LSD and Pringles? Yes please, it's party time!



Things invented by accident are particularly fun and exciting. But shared skills and experiences, plus digital technology equal no surprises. Because computers don't make mistakes. Mistakes like Velcro, Dynamite and Coca Cola.

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Too Late to Die Young Now



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## Because Trying to be Creative Works About as Well as Trying to be Charming



# BIG HAIR AND PLASTIC GRASS

Like HELL you'll beat Robert Conrad! • By Dan Epstein

## The Battle of the Network Stars

**1**976 was one of my favorite years to be alive. From the Bicentennial to the CB radio fad, *The Bad News Bears* to the spectacular flight of Mark “The Bird” Fidrych, a veritable bounty of awesomeness had been bestowed upon the American public, and my impressionable 10-year-old self enthusiastically absorbed every bit of it.

'76 was the year that launched my twin obsessions, music and sports; and while baseball would eventually win my heart and mind at the expense of all other games, I was so sports-mad that I'd happily watch any athletic competition I could tune into. (We picked up Canadian broadcasts in Michigan, which meant I even watched curling.) So when ABC started running ads for an upcoming special called *The Battle of the Network Stars*, they had my full attention.

Debating at 9 p.m. Eastern on the evening of Saturday, November 13—fall “sweeps week”—and hosted by the ubiquitous Howard Cosell, the inaugural *Battle of the Network Stars* pitted 10 actors and actresses from the three major networks against each other. Filmed at Pepperdine University in Malibu, the events included swimming and running relays, golf, volleyball, a baseball dunk tank, an obstacle course race and a tug of war.

Conceived by sports management company Trans World International,

*The Battle of the Network Stars* was inspired by the ratings bonanza of the Montreal Olympics. As TWI executive producer Rudy Tellez explained, “We thought, wouldn't it be a great idea to have a network Olympics, using the networks instead of China, the USA, etc.?”

Comedian Gabe Kaplan, then riding high on *Welcome Back, Kotter*, served as the captain of ABC's team, while the NBC squad was led by TV veteran Robert Conrad (then currently starring as WWII ace Pappy Boyington in *Baa Baa Black Sheep*), and CBS by the inimitable Telly “Kojak” Savalas. *BOTNS* was promoted as a chance for viewers to get to know their favorite stars on a more personal level—though of course, the prospect of seeing cathode babes like *Wonder Woman*'s Lynda Carter, *Charlie's Angels*' Farrah Fawcett-Majors, and *Maude*'s Adrienne Barbeau (not to mention hunks like *The Quest*'s Tim Matheson, *The Streets of San Francisco*'s Richard Hatch and Ben Murphy from *Alias Smith and Jones*) was really the primary attraction.

As a prepubescent fifth grader, I was less excited by the promise of two hours of “jiggle television” than by the idea of watching famous actors and actresses engaged in athletic competition. *The Battle of the Network Stars*, I was certain, would be even better than making my GI Joes play each other in three-on-three football. And indeed, from Lynda Carter's impressive opening dive in the swimming relay, it was clear that, goofy as the original concept may have seemed, these people were playing to win. Each member of the winning team was going to take home \$20,000—a little over a hundred grand in today's money—a very nice chunk of change in the days when Johnny Carson's \$4 million annual salary made him the world's highest paid entertainer.

**H**owever absurd as it was to hear Howard Cosell doing play-by-play on an obstacle course race, his avuncular presence lent a certain legitimacy to *BOTNS*. Ditto for guest appearances by famous athletes like Mark Spitz, Bruce Jenner, Reggie Jackson and Cathy Rigby, all of whom offered straight-faced commentary. (“No one could ever convince me that he hasn't been playing baseball all his life,” Jackson marveled, as *Kojak*'s Kevin “Crocker” Dobson whipped a vicious fastball at the dunk tank target.)

The glitz factor was upped by interstitials with gossip columnist Rona Barrett, who provided “personal” details about some of the more prominent stars involved. And Cosell himself provided the *eww* factor by taking every opportunity to drool over the female participants (“Luscious Lynda Carter!”) and drape his pastrami-scented fingers over their bare shoulders during close-talking interviews. Throw in some big AM radio hits of the day (including KC and the Sunshine Band's “That's the Way” and George Benson's “Breezin'”) during the replays, and it all added up to tremendously fun viewing—as well as a pretty apt time capsule of American pop culture circa late 1976.

**W**hile it was no big surprise to see super-fit stars like the aforementioned Ms. Carter and Mr. Dobson excel in the contests, the first *BOTNS* did contain some surprises. Who could've guessed that Farrah had a pro-quality golf swing? Or that *Laverne & Shirley*'s Penny Marshall had legit track and field chops? Or that the diminutive Robert Hegyes—better known as “Epstein” from *Welcome Back, Kotter*—would become the ultimate hero of the games, leading ABC to victory in the climactic tug of war against the beefier, heavily favored CBS squad?



**DAN EPSTEIN**  
(@bighairplastic-grass) contributes to Rolling Stone, and The Forward.



(The latter point was a huge source of pride for me. When *Kotter* debuted in September 1975, my initial excitement about there being a network TV character with my last name quickly turned to abject mortification when said character was revealed to be a complete moron. Hegyes' gutsy *BOTNS* heroics almost made up for the years of "Hey Epstein, you got a note from your mother?" jibes I would have to endure. Almost...)

Indeed, it was the two *Kotter* representatives who ultimately made the difference in ABC's come-from-behind *BOTNS* victory. Not only did Gabe Kaplan display impressive low-key leadership of the ABC team, earning multiple smooches from teammate Lynda Carter along the way (*Right on, Mr. Kot-taire!*), he also delivered what may have been the greatest sports upset of the 1970s. NC State's defeat of UCLA in the 1974 Final Four, or Ali beating Foreman had nothing on 1976's impromptu Kaplan-Conrad *BOTNS* footrace.

The stage for this showdown was set when, after NBC appeared to win the 880-yard relay run, CBS captain

Telly Savalas—calmly explaining the situation to Cosell between drags on a cigarette—lodged a complaint with the judges. Telly alleged that Joanna Pettet (from the NBC mini-series *Captains and the Kings*) had made an illegal early baton transfer to Ben Murphy, thus giving Murphy the head start that helped him narrowly beat ABC's Richard Hatch in the final stretch. When the judges agreed, handing ABC the win, NBC captain Robert Conrad ensured his first-ballot induction into the Red-Ass Hall of Fame by completely losing his shit. "Like Hell!" Conrad raged, as director Howard Katz attempted to explain that the NBC baton had not been properly passed. "Like Hell. Like Hell. Like Hell. LIKE HELL."

After first threatening to withdraw his team from the rest of the competition in protest, Conrad ranted that his team's infraction was the result of the starting rules being changed right before the race, then insisted that his team and ABC should re-run the whole thing. "If you're better than we are," he glowered at Hatch, "you'll prove it on the field!" When that idea failed to gain traction,

probably because of the show's tight shooting schedule, Conrad pivoted to another idea. "You and I want to run the hundred, to see who the fastest is?" he asked, in a manner that left no room for refusal. Kaplan, who'd been observing Conrad's meltdown with visible amusement, simply grinned and answered, "Yes!"

It was clear from Conrad's challenge that he thought he could beat Kaplan handily. And on paper, the square-jawed, lean-muscled action star certainly seemed like the sure favorite over a Jewfro'd standup comic. But while Conrad exploded off the starting block, Kaplan caught up with him around the turn—and then blew by him in a fluid burst of speed to win the race by several yards, smiling all the while. Though Conrad didn't let Kaplan get a word in edgewise during the post-race interview with Cosell, it was pretty clear from the twinkle in Mr. Kotter's eye that he'd accepted the challenge knowing damn well that he could out-fly Pappy Boyington any day of the week.

The Battle of the Network Stars proved so popular that ABC would bring it back on a twice-yearly basis through 1984. The formula remained more or less the same, with competition and eye-candy emphasized in fairly equal measure. (By the time I was 13, the news that Victoria Principal would be joining the CBS team for May 1979 broadcast was definitely, uh, relevant to my interests.) Conrad would get his revenge in the February 1977 installment, ultimately racking up three wins for NBC, while Kaplan would guide ABC to another victory in November 1977, and then take the winning reins for NBC in November 1981.

Most of the *BOTNS* episodes can still be found on YouTube, and they're all at least mildly entertaining opportunities to take the pop cultural temperature of that particular spring or fall. But 46 years later, watching that dramatic Conrad-Kaplan race still gives me a genuine, blood-pumping thrill. In retrospect, I'm a little surprised that Kaplan didn't cap his surprise victory with "Up your nose with a rubber hose," but I guess he didn't need to. The beating he'd just handed the bullying Conrad on national TV was humiliation enough. **B**

## Super 70s Sports

Don't look until you've tried the puzzle on p. 76!

A	W	E	S			C	O	K	E		O	D	D	S
M	I	X	E	D		O	B	I	T		C	R	E	W
P	R	I	C	E	G	U	I	D	E		L	A	N	E
S	E	T		E	O	S				R	O	O	M	I
				T	R	A	I	N	I	N	G	C	A	M
S	I	R	E			N	E	W	A	R	K			
U	S	E	R			S	T	O	L	E		B	I	T
C	L	I	M	B							S	C	A	R
K	E	N		A	P	A	R	T			A	S	A	P
				A	D	A	G	I	O		R	E	N	O
D	A	M	N	G	L	A	D	O	F	I	T			
A	P	O	G	E	E				D	O	N		S	O
B	A	A	L		T	A	B	L	E	C	L	O	T	H
A	C	N	E		T	I	R	E		A	U	D	I	O
T	E	A	S		E	R	A	S			G	A	S	P



# CHUNK-STYLE NUGGETS

Seventies Industrial • By Steve Young

I collect souvenir records of shows created for company sales meetings and conventions. These private-pressing albums were only distributed to company insiders, making them very hard to find decades later. The 70's were the final years of the golden age of industrial musicals, and I've rounded up some choice corporate vinyl from that mythic decade for your befuddled enjoyment.—SY



## '79 Fever

"The world's first disco sales meeting!" boasts this souvenir of the January 1979 Westinghouse ASD meeting in San Diego. The ASD division, as every child knows, made office furniture and partitions. The eight-minute side 1 track reviews the three days of meeting events while the '79 Fever disco theme plays throughout; side 2 has the song without the recaps of executive speeches, outings, and special guests. Oddly satisfying and hypnotic overall, and an amazing audio snapshot of corporate America at the end of the '70s trying to be hip—and maybe accidentally succeeding.



**STEVE YOUNG**  
(@pantsteve)  
is Oracle for *The American By-stander*.

## Got to Investigate Silicones

GE Silicones' 1973 show, staged to convince representatives of other companies to use General Electric silicones in their manufacturing, is peak industrial show awesomeness. The Lennon and McCartney of industrials, Hank Beebe and Bill Heyer, wrote the head-spinning yet catchy songs about the industrial uses of silicones, and the small cast somehow makes it work. Did the show help GE capture a bigger share of the silicones market? Don't know, don't care. What matters to industrial show collectors is that nearly fifty years later we can enjoy this craziness we were never meant to hear.



## The Sound of B&W

This 1978 album is so far the only industrial show to have turned up from the secretive tobacco industry. B&W was



Brown & Williamson, makers of cigarette brands like Kool, Viceroy and Pall Mall. Like many late '70s industrials, there's some Star Wars music and laser zaps pumping up the excitement surrounding the great new marketing plans and product cheerleading. One of the tracks is titled "This Is A Great Company." By the mid '90s, leaked confidential documents and testimony proved otherwise. Fun record, though, and that cover provides a mild nicotine rush.

## Lucite You and '72

Ohh yeahhhh—the avocado green and harvest gold that's in your subconscious whenever the '70s is discussed. Appropriate then, since we're talking about color, that the company is Lucite paint, a former division of Dupont. As an industrial show listening experience it's decidedly mediocre, consisting of murky live recordings of so-so paint-



# "YA CAN'T PUT A PRICE ON MONEY."

The sawdust-n-tinsel ghetto of Top Town ain't a Sunday School show, pally. Danger hangs in the air like the smell of popcorn, whiskey and fear. When the heat comes down on this mob of circus has-beens, there's only one joey you can trust:

## REX KOKO PRIVATE CLOWN



## PULSE-POUNDING CLOWN NOIR ACTION!



VISIT [REXKOKO.COM!](http://REXKOKO.COM!)

themed song parodies, but the cover is super groovy, and there are pages of convention photos of executives and salesmen with long sideburns. Only one copy known to exist!



### The K-76A Call Announcing Key System

This one could almost get by on the cover alone: the 1974 wardrobe and hair, the title, and that numbing expanse of homey wallpaper. Luckily this ITT telephone promo album has one worthwhile track to seal the deal: an absurd yet catchy and professional country



song about the benefits of the K76A call announcing key system. The fellas also run through pleasant covers of country hits, and the inside gatefold has all the tech info you need to be convinced. I'm convinced, though I still don't quite understand it.

### Pearls-a-Poppin'!

I'd never heard of San Antonio-based Pearl Beer until I added this ultra-rare



record to my collection. The 1973-alicious cover gives you a nice pregaming buzz before you've even put the record on the turntable, and several of the songs are mildly intoxicating brews that tunelessly review the challenges of the changing beer market. But you don't have to worry about those fifty-years-ago challenges. You can just enjoy the cover, with or without a beer.



### Follow the Road

Hovering somewhere between a peaceful 70's back-to-nature vibe and a bleak '70s apocalyptic sci-fi vibe, the cover of this 1975 Dominion Road Machinery sales meeting intrigues but leaves you unprepared for the startling delights within. It's a barrage of wonderfully cockeyed songs about road-grader features and selling, ricocheting from funk to mystical Asian to country to Scottish to faux Middle Eastern. A great highlight of '70s industrial show loopiness—with no credits. Who were the twisted geniuses who created it? I'll keep following the road and hope to find out someday... **B**



# P.S. MUELLER THINKS LIKE THIS

The cartoonist/broadcaster/writer is always walking around, looking at stuff • By P.S. Mueller

## Lava Lamp: A Memoir

**M**y name is Lobe. I used to be kinda cool in 1970. I glowed on a bookcase owned by Phil Brennan, who smoked a lot of righteous weed. I warmed a glob of wax until it softened and changed. Phil and his friends sat around in a dark dorm room, watching me and listening to Pink Floyd, Jefferson Airplane, and The Mothers of Invention. They said “Wow” a lot and watched me.

Sometime along the way, Phil’s friends graduated and moved out into a world of finance, cocaine, Reagan, and Reagan. They got rich and switched from weed to expensive whiskeys. Phil moved me to a basement apartment with shag carpet and a cat named Sutter. Years passed. The stacks of pizza boxes and odor of cat piss didn’t particularly bother me. After all, I was a more or less an inanimate object on a bookcase. But at some point, Phil put me into a box, along with his hookah and Grateful Dead records, and shoved



**P.S. MUELLER**  
is Staff Liar of  
*The American Bystander*.



me into a closet somewhere in Akron, Ohio. Oh yeah, and he put his black light posters in the box, too.

**M**y name is Lobe. Phil thought it would be cool to have a lava lamp named Lobe. My lump of hardened wax keeps me company in this dark place, but we’re still both good to go, like we were when Phil got on with an Internet startup in 1996 and made two hundred million dollars in three weeks. Then he got bored, cashed out, and quit.

He bought the whole building then, but left me in that box in the basement for ten years or so, while he completely remodeled and expanded the upstairs and put in a fifty-thousand-dollar stereo.

He bought the entire Stereolab catalogue and a bunch of CDs to fill out his Cocteau Twins collection. The black light and I waited in darkness. Then he got bored when all the chicks wanted house music and Molly. Phil didn’t care for going out, but the chicks still did, preferring to take in REO and Kansas reunions at Indian casinos instead.

Time passed and before long the pizza started catching up with Phil. His hair fell out and so did a lot of his teeth. But by then most of the chicks were either menopausal or dead. He got bored again. Alice Cooper was in a wheelchair, croaking out the oldies.

It was time to go downstairs and find that bag of weed he stashed in a drainpipe back when it was illegal.

The black light and I were waiting in our box—waiting to provide that really slow and mellow hallucination of yore.

**T**hen Phil Brennan went downstairs to the closet, took down the box and dropped into an old beanbag chair in front of the old Onkyo stereo and receiver, the one with “quartz-locked-looping.” And Dolby. He dusted off the turntable, cleaned the cover, and plugged in the phones. Then he sat back with a bottle of Michelob and a fat doobie.

Soon after, that, his head finally, finally exploded. **B**



BY MATT MATERA

# SUPER 70s SPORTS!

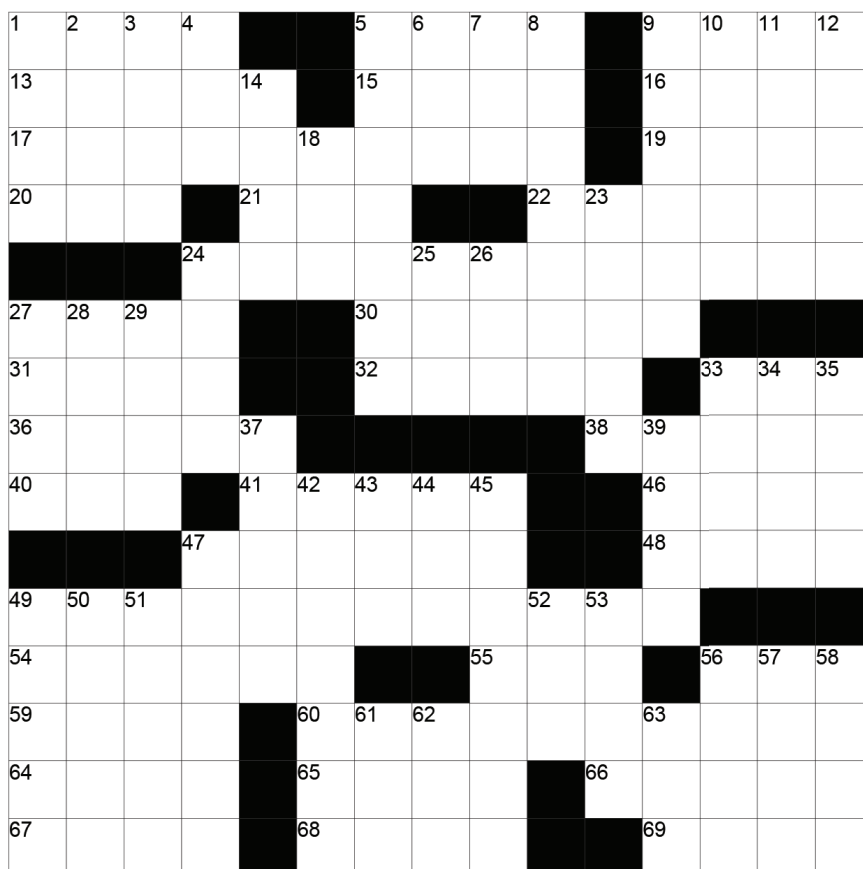
The solution is on page 72

## ACROSS

1. Wows, as on *Battle of the Network Stars*
5. Drink advertised by Mean Joe Greene
9. Something of interest to Pete Rose
13. \_\_\_ doubles
15. Article that may evoke memories of a favorite player
16. Brew \_\_\_
17. Overstreet's, for comic books
19. Diane, Nathan, or Penny
20. Word OED says has 430 meanings
21. Canon camera promoted by Agassi
22. Tommy Lee Jones, to Al Gore
24. "Hard Knocks" setting
27. Bold Ruler, for Secretariat
30. New Jersey's Brick City
31. Super 70s Sports fan on Twitter
32. Took, as Lou Brock might
33. What a comedian oughta be committed to
36. Ascend, as in record books
38. Spice you almost certainly won't find at Whole Foods
40. Boxer Norton who once beat Ali
41. "You are tearing me \_\_\_, Lisa!"
46. It can precede Rocky but not Rocky II
47. "\_\_\_ for Strings" (Barber tune called "America's semi-official music for mourning")
48. City where it's illegal to shoot a man just to watch him die
49. Pleased with how things stand
54. Highest point
55. Hall of Famer Sutton, 4x 70s all-star
56. Best ABBA song title to spell out in coconuts on a desert island
59. One with idol hands, presumably?
60. Italian joints have checkered ones
64. Teen challenge
65. Bad vehicle for burning rubber?
66. Horrible feature of some pop-ups
67. Yerba mate and oolong
68. Stats for Mark Fidrych, Dock Ellis, and Bill "Spaceman" Lee
69. Respond to shocking news

## DOWN

1. Equipment for Joan Jett
2. Philippe Petit walked on one between the WTC towers in 1974
3. Word in lights at a theater
4. Mo or jiff



2022

5. Brandy and Snoop Dogg, for ex.
6. Closer in "The Mikado"
7. One who might play with Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots
8. The \_\_\_ City (Rome)
9. It can follow 5 or 8 but not 58
10. *Charlie's Angels* or *Emergency!*
11. Material for flared jeans or a wrangler jacket
12. The NBA Finals in '71 and '75, e.g.
13. One might go for a buck
14. India's smallest and richest state
15. Fairy-tale giants
16. Spiro Agnew's ended early in 1973
17. Memento cut down by UCLA men's basketball squad 5x in the '70s
18. \_\_\_ Jima (where 2,200 B-29 bombers made emergency landings)
19. Blow
20. Aruba or Jamaica
21. Symbol of control
22. One of four touched after a dinger
23. Country led by Mohammed Reza Pahlavi until 1979
24. "Thou shalt commit adultery" (in a 1631 King James Bible), for example
25. Stinkin' symbol of authority?
26. It goes after the horse
27. Tool for Frida Kahlo
28. Turkish honorific
29. Free (of)
30. "I'm off—ciao!"
31. POV and birds-eye view, for two
32. Lightly touch
33. Quickly, archaically
34. Disney heroine seeking the Heart of Te Fiti
35. Bobby Riggs, to Billie Jean King
36. One who worshipped Apu Illapu, the rain god
37. Nehi, for one
38. Town drunk in Mayberry
39. Radio Shack, for example
40. Where you might find Dr. J?
41. It may be strapless
42. Palooka



"Had me laughing so hard I snorted Pepsi out my nostrils (and I was drinking milk at the time)." —Barry Blitt



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