
YOUR NEW ORLEANS
ANTIGRAVITY
ALTERNATIVE TO CULTURE
VOL. 24.11 NOV 2026 #265

In the

Supreme Court of the United States

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and restore our right to vote.



ANTIGRAVITY

YOUR NEW ORLEANS ALTERNATIVE TO CULTURE

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I don't know about you, Dear Reader, but for me, October felt like every single molecule in existence was in retrograde. Maybe it's the political tension of the midterms, maybe it's the break in weather which makes New Orleanians awaken as if from some fever dream and start running around like fire ants, or maybe it really is the stars and heavenly bodies pushing and pulling us in every direction. Whatever it is, can we slow this ride down just a tad? I'm getting a little carsick.

Speaking of the midterms, I'd like to thank everyone who reached out to us about our latest Voter Education Guide, whether that was through your generous and 100% voluntary donations (**cough** @antigravitymag for Venmo and PayPal **cough**), sharing it around online, or telling us in person how much it means to you. The actual election results are always—at best—a mixed bag, but the enthusiasm and passion of our local electorate is forever a source of great inspiration to me and the *ANTIGRAVITY* crew. For that we thank you with the utmost humility and gratitude.

Full disclosure—after publishing a 22,000 word Voter Guide, your AG crew is stumbling towards this finish line like Winona Ryder at the end of *Heathers*, a little blasted but not broken! So I'm going to keep this month's intro short because we have a lot to get to in this issue, whether it's repairing the world one radio or pant leg at a time, welcoming back the mighty Fringe Fest, digging into the plot behind forcing the Ten Commandments into public schools, or getting jerked around by Twisted Teens. Ah New Orleans, you never fail to disappoint, even when you do.

I like to think that every issue of *ANTIGRAVITY* is one hell of a potluck, and this month—especially this month—is no different. Thanksgiving is such a complicated holiday, kind of like a Passover Seder held by the Egyptians, but our beautifully diverse society has reinvented this conqueror's banquet as a time to come together and celebrate our loved ones, both those we share DNA with and those we've chosen as our family. This country is at its best when we are able to make traditions like Thanksgiving our own, serving whatever dishes bring us comfort and a sense of home while sitting alongside people we care about and who hopefully care about us.

Here's to hoping the stars and molecules settle down a bit in November, and—because I write to you still in the last gasps of October—that Halloween is scarier than the election results. Be safe out there. *—Dan Fox*



ABOUT THE COVER

I have always felt that November was one of the most magical months of the year, so it was very exciting to make a cover illustration in its honor. For this illustration, I wanted to play with the idea of the veil growing thin and a cavalcade of spirits waiting eagerly on the other side. The swamp with all its flora and fauna is my favorite thing to draw these days, so of course I had to set the story there. In this scene, swampy little familiars await the spirits with candles and marigolds, which are frequently used in Día de los Muertos ofrendas. My drawings tend to be like pages from an *I Spy* book: The longer you look, the more you find. My drawing method is simple but notoriously time intensive. I start with a pencil sketch and then go over that outline with Faber-Castell pens. Next, I build in shadows using pencil and COPIC markers, followed by a final layer of stippling in ink. One day, I hope to figure out my DPM (dots per minute). White ink is then used to add highlights. Lastly, I fill in the background with black acrylic paint, meticulously going between every blade of grass and heron feather. From there, I scan the illustration and clean it up using Lightroom and Photopea to polish any rough spots. *—Laura Frizzell*

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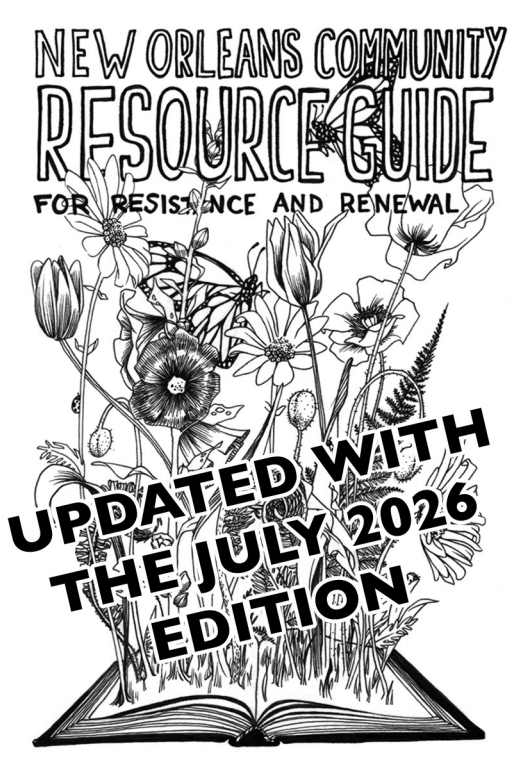
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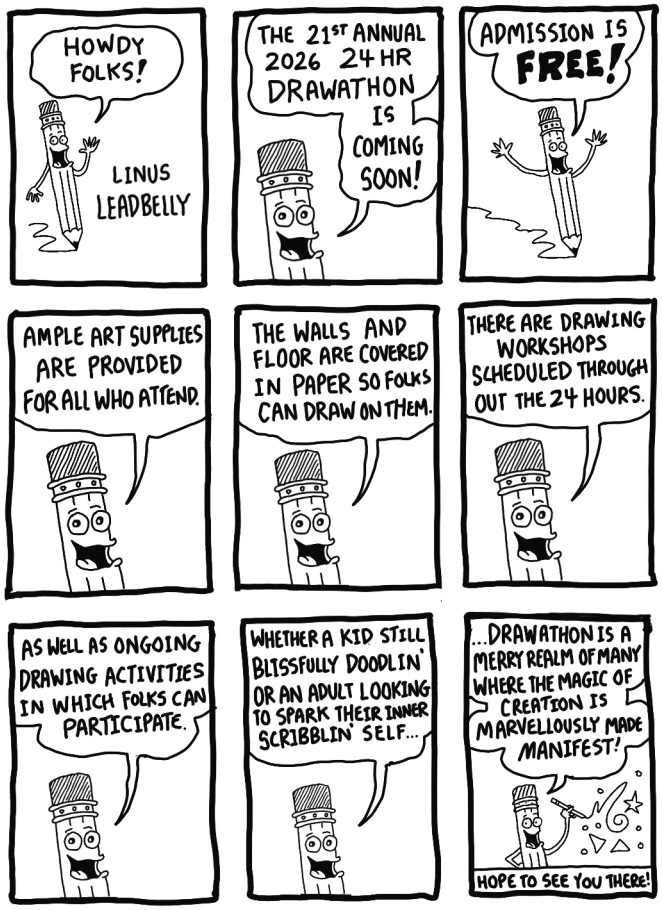
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WILD WAVES

by Taylor Balkissoon

Scorpio season is arriving with intense, beautiful sincerity. Last month's transits focused on the balances cultivated by a lifetime of beauty and grief, and this month furthers our quest for regulation. Most notably, the sun and Mercury's conjunction in Scorpio on the 4th will coincide with midterm elections on the 3rd, and as our empire continues to fall into chaos, the world is watching. During last month's Libra season, Venus was retrograde in Scorpio, Pluto in Aquarius went direct, and Mars entered Leo, giving birth to a significant revolutionary moment—as evidenced in Europe and West Asia—led by Gen Z, and many Americans have found themselves dumbfounded by our lack of hands-on participation. We have found ourselves at an impasse—our rights are so deeply threatened, and yet many of our daily lives hinge on a lie that claims we will not be directly impacted by the unyielding threat of the most militarized colonial force on planet Earth. In addition, Venus and Mercury will both end their retrogrades on the 13th, concluding a biblical 40 days and 40 nights of introspection that have forged bonds and cut ties with Scorpionic precision. The sun will enter fiery Sagittarius on the 22nd, and precision will become less important as Sagittarius' passionate nature gains ground. The full moon in Gemini on the 24th offers playful reprieve to those who have braved our volatile circumstances with both precision and joy. If we are still finding ourselves with visions of endless possibilities, it is because we know who we are, and what sacrifices we are willing to make.

ARIES

Your ruling planet Mars' transit through Leo for the majority of last month and this month has been hitting your 5th house, and lessons around ego, control, and power have likely been dominant. These lessons are forging you into something stronger, and the sun's transit through your 8th house will unearth some shadows and trauma. Let Mars in Leo inspire the strength to face them.

TAURUS

Taurus is known for having a bullheaded nature, and this stubbornness might be a point of pride for you. It can be an incredible thing to stick to your guns despite the pressure, and your sister sign Scorpio carries this awareness as well. Often, Scorpio's stubbornness manifests more subtly, and the sun's transit through your 7th house of relationships this month might encourage a similar approach.

GEMINI

Pluto is currently transiting your 9th house—a section of your chart associated with your highest potential as a philosopher, a visionary, a poet. Aquarius' rulership of this house offers a humanistic approach. Now is the time to stretch, run, and attend to your longevity, which will help you facilitate your role in making the planet a better place for everyone.

CANCER

Scorpio's rulership of your 5th house is a bit like giving a power tool to a baby. Is it the safest idea? Absolutely not. And yet, the sun's transit here this month might have you feeling strangely empowered, without an indication as to what ends are meant to come from these means. If you feel afraid, put it down. If you feel curious, perhaps give it a swing. With the right boundaries we can exceed our own expectations without sacrificing our safety.

LEO

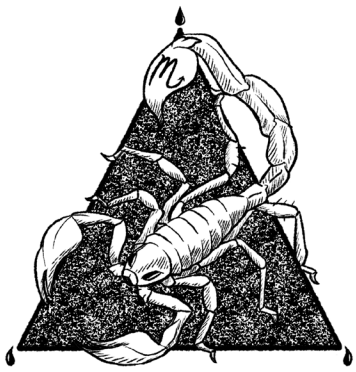
Last month might have felt invigorating relationally, as new friends and comrades entered your sphere. This month, the sun's transit through your 4th house will bring your focus back to self and family. Leos tend to prioritize family, much like a lion prioritizes its pride, and it can be both a gift and a curse. This month your inner child will be doing *a lot* of processing—perhaps pick up a coloring book or something sweet to heal some potential triggers throughout the month.

VIRGO

As a Virgo, you have a broad capacity for language, and this might shine most brightly during Scorpio season. Scorpio doesn't generally mince words, and its rulership of your 3rd house can inspire some of your most scathing moments. You might find this season brings opportunities for reconciliation or destruction. Scorpio is here to guide you to what is right for *you*. Be sure to heed that guidance.

LIBRA

The 2nd house is associated with stability and wealth, and the sun's transit through yours could be a bit of a rollercoaster this month. Last month's Venus and Mercury retrogrades may have impacted your finances and sense of security, but this month the sun will help you start fresh. You may have taken a few hits this year—make it through the month and the full moon in Gemini on the 24th will reward you with life-affirming stability and joy.



SCORPIO

Happy You season, Scorpio! These retrogrades have likely had you feeling discombobulated, in the way that a machine in need of maintenance must be taken apart before getting put back together. Your ruling planet Pluto ended its retrograde last month, and Venus and Mercury also turn direct on Friday the 13th. On a day often associated with bad luck, you might find that it coincides with very positive shifts in your self-image and self-worth.

SAGITTARIUS

Your cycle around the sun is coming to a close, and with the sun's illumination of your 12th house you might feel a bit deflated and uncharacteristically introverted. Scorpio's rulership of this house points to some pretty significant shadow aspects of our personalities and lives, and the shadows can become strengths when properly wielded. Spend some time alone with your inner freak and next month the self-love will be rewarded.

CAPRICORN

Every year, this chapter is tied to friendship, comradery, and humanistic pursuits. As a Capricorn, your work-hard-play-hard mentality can be a blessing, but your cardinal earth nature can lead you to choose leadership positions even when it's unnecessary. Perhaps let Scorpio soften you in this moment, and let your friends guide you toward fulfilments found outside of your responsibilities.

AQUARIUS

Your reputation can be a sore spot, as many Aquarius children often struggle with needing to "fit in." As you've grown, you might have noticed that this matters less and less to you, and the sun's transit through your 10th house of purpose and image will challenge you to stand your ground. Stay authentic, and career opportunities will arise that are suited to your unique blueprint.

PISCES

These Venus and Mercury retrogrades have primarily fallen in your 8th and 9th houses, and their end on the 13th will mark the beginning of a new approach to commitment, love, and freedom. The sun's movement into fellow mutable sign Sagittarius on the 22nd and the full moon in Gemini on the 24th will impact your home life and career. Perhaps use the full moon to set intentions for how you plan to balance these two aspects of your life.



illustrations by Anneliese DePano
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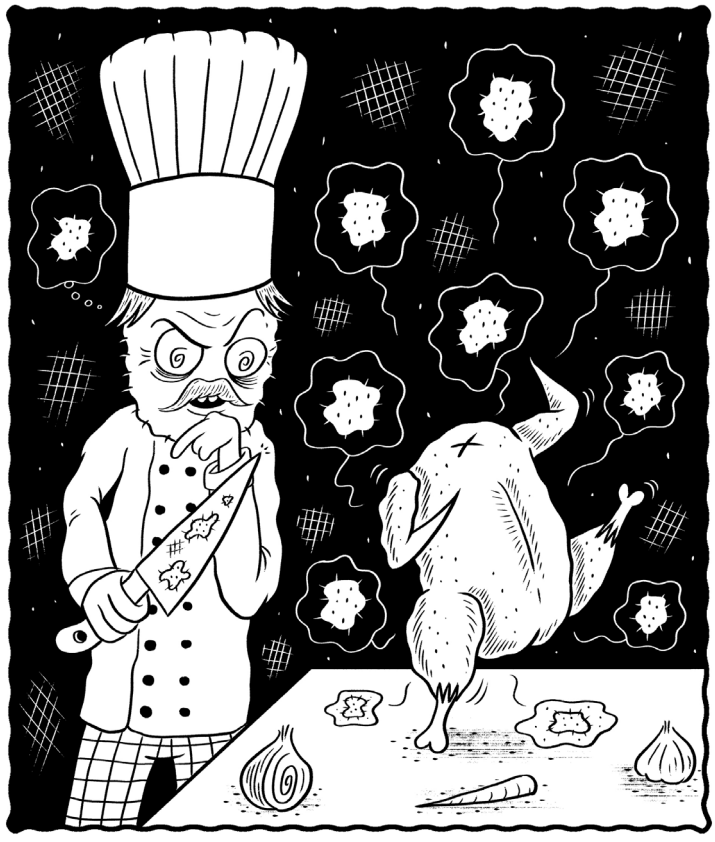
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TIPS FROM THERIOT

by Isabel Ryan Theriot

Knock knock! Who's there? Dead turkey and lies. Dead turkey and lies who? HAPPY THANKSGIVING! Well, well, well, are you planning a family feast fit for some thieving pilgrims? Or perhaps you are going to have a drunken Friendsgiving? Either way, you'll certainly want to have your home in tip-top shape to host your peeps! This November, I'm doing you a solid and sharing my cleaning and freshening potion recipes with you, to aid in your pre- and post-party disinfection, beautification, and aromatization! Lil Izzy's favorite concoctions for all your cleaning adventures await you below!



I'm doing you a solid and sharing my cleaning and freshening potion recipes with you, to aid in your pre- and post-party disinfection, beautification, and aromatization!



Lil Izzy's Wham Bam Thank You San!
So you prepped a raw, dead turkey on your counter for cookin' and now a veritable microbiome of filth is percolating? Lil Izzy's Wham Bam Thank You San sanitizer spray has got you! Grab a spray bottle and fill it with 1/3 70% isopropyl alcohol and 2/3 white vinegar. Dribble 20 drops of 100% pure lemon essential oil into the mixture (lemon essential oil has been shown to kill food-born pathogens). I suggest sopping-up the turkey juice with a rag—and don't wipe any other part of the counter with it. There will be no cross-contamination on my watch! After using the rag, rinse it with warm water, then soak it in white vinegar. Now thoroughly spray the area with Lil Izzy's Wham Bam Thank You San, and let it sit for 10 minutes, then wipe up the spray. Give 'er one more spray and wipe and you're nice and tight! P.S. Don't use this magical liquid on marble. Vinegar will etch the delicate stone. On marble, I suggest squirting a dollop of Dawn (best dish detergent for my money—it's used to bathe birds impacted by oil spills, for Christ's sake) into a spray bottle, filling it with water, then let 'er rip!

Lil Izzy's Touch Of Glass!
Got pesky handprints on glass surfaces in your home? Have no fear, Lil Izzy's Touch of Glass cleaner is here! It galls me when people touch glass doors instead of using the genius inventions which are meant for opening them: handles, knobs, or a push bar. Fill a bottle with half white vinegar (my forever partner in grime) and half H_2O. Add three or four drops of lemon essential oil. Don't go buck with the oil. Too much essential oil will leave streaks on glass surfaces. Shake, spray, and wipe.

Lil Izzy's Nose Gift!
Is your house stanky? I gotchu. Fill a hair-misting spray bottle 3/4 of the way with distilled water (I prefer misting bottles, because they produce an ultra-foine fog that hangs in the air longer than the spray from a traditional spray bottle). Fill the rest of the bottle with isopropyl alcohol, and add a tablespoon of baking soda. Squirt about 30 drops of your favorite essential oil into the bottle. Shake, spritz, and smell!

Lil Izzy's Handy Dandy Hand Sani!
Did you just accidentally touch your dog's poo and aren't near a sink? I suggest making some of my fragrant hand sanitizer to have for situations such as this. I seriously always have a bottle in my bag (or close at *hand*—zing!) and use it often. Pour a tablespoon of aloe vera juice into a 2 oz spray bottle (this will keep your hands baby soft), fill the rest of the bottle with 70% isopropyl alcohol. Add 15 drops of rose essential oil and 15 drops of lemon essential oil. Shake the bottle, and spray your hands. Rub your hands together in order to get the liquid into all of your lines and folds. The first whiff will be a little overwhelmingly alcohol-y, but give it a sec because the scent is about to blow your damn mind.

Lil Izzy's Rug Stank Remover!
Remember how you walk all over your rugs every day with your dirty-ass feet and sometimes shoes (with shoes, if you like bringing lead dust and New Orleans foul street residue onto your floors), and how your dog's paws carry cornchip-smell onto your rug, and how your cat's butthole touches your rug every time it sits on it? Well, this is why your rug (and perhaps even your house) smells like the funk of 40,000 years. It's OK, I forgive you, and I'm here to help. Grab some baking soda (a must have for all homes), a bowl, that old, cleaned parmesan cheese container that has the sprinkle holes in the top, or a sieve (if you are a fancy baker and have one). Add a cup of baking soda to the bowl, squirt about forty drops of your favorite essential oil, and whisk or stir the oil and powder together vigorously. Cover the bowl, and let it sit overnight. In the morning, give the concoction one more vigorous stir, then add it to the shaker bottle, and shake it all over your rug. Don't be stingy, really coat the rug. Grab a broom and sweep the powder deeper into the rug pile. Let the powder sit for an hour or two, then vacuum the rug. Put your nose next to the rug and enjoy the sweet, sweet smell of odor-banishing victory!



illustrations by Ben Claassen III @dirtfarm

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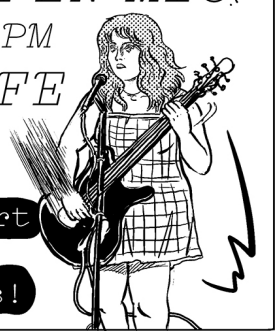
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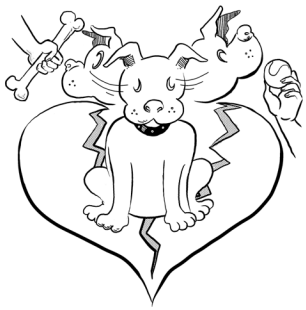
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OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

by Danielle Nelson, LCSW

Danielle Nelson is a practicing therapist and Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) who focuses on sexual health and wellness, trauma and recovery, self-esteem and resilience building, and general mental health concerns. Though Danielle is a trained professional, this column is not a substitute for advice or care provided by your licensed medical or healthcare professional.



As we prepare for the upcoming holidays and all of the emotional baggage they can bring, November is a good time to take stock. This month's questions are both about caring deeply for someone while trying to figure out where your responsibility ends... and where letting go might be the kinder thing to do.

My ex and I are fighting over the dog. We got him together, and now that we're split up, neither of us wants to give him up. I've done more of the vet appointments, food, medication, etc., but my ex has more space and swears the dog is happier there. We've tried splitting his time, but every pickup and drop-off turns into an argument. At this point I'm starting to wonder if we're actually doing this for the dog or just using him as a reason to keep fighting with each other. How do you figure out who gets the pet when both people genuinely love him? And how do you know when "shared custody" is actually making things worse?

Pet custody is not a breakup problem that anyone prepares you for. There isn't a breakup checklist that says, "Return the hoodie, cancel the Netflix account, determine which of you gets custody of the family member you both consider your child."

I'll be honest: The hardest but most important distinction here is that what feels fair to the two of you and what's best for your dog might not be the same thing. It sounds like a lot of the tension lies in both of you trying to prove you love him by proving that you're the better home for him. I completely get it. Losing your dog when you're already grieving a relationship is devastating. It's a tangible loss of one of the pieces of your old life. You mention wondering if you're using him as a reason to keep fighting with each other, which is incredibly insightful. Losing the dog, for either one of you, will be another loss of connection to someone you loved, even if you don't want the person or the relationship back.

Oh, my dear. You've accidentally become the group parent.

So, before we start keeping score, like who has been buying food, going to the vet, has the bigger yard, etc., I'd like to propose a question. Less emotionally satisfying, but ultimately the most important: Where does your dog seem happiest, safest, and most settled?

If the answer is genuinely "both," maybe shared custody can work. However, if every drop-off and pick-up creates an opportunity for the two of you to re-open the wounds of the breakup, I'd advise you to reflect on that. Dogs are amazingly intuitive and pick up on tension. With that in mind, "50/50" may not be the healthiest arrangement even if it sounds the most fair.

I say this with complete compassion for your situation: You might have to accept that there isn't going to be a solution where no one hurts. That's the really shitty part. One person may have to let go of something they want because the emotional warfare and fighting is worse for everyone—including the dog.

And if you're the one who ends up without him, that doesn't mean you loved him any less. It means you made a decision based on his needs instead of using him to stay connected to a relationship that has already ended, which is very mature and emotionally healthy. It's also hard as hell and I hate it for you.

***

I'm tired of being the responsible friend. I'm the one everyone calls when they're having a meltdown, need a favor, or have made yet another questionable life choice. I love my friends, but sometimes I wish someone would check on me for a change. The thing is, I'm not great at asking for help, and I think people have gotten used to me being fine. How do I stop being everyone's go-to person?

Oh, my dear. You've accidentally become the group parent. I suspect the problem probably isn't that you're too helpful, it's that you're so good at being capable that everyone—including you—has started confusing capable with available.

Being the "responsible friend" can be a trap. People begin to hand you things because you're good at holding them, but eventually you're left standing there with everyone's emotional baggage wondering why your arms are so tired.

Now for the therapist-y part: Being needed can become an identity. Being the "reliable" friend might feel safer to you than acknowledging your own needs. If you're solving everyone else's problems, then you don't have to risk being vulnerable, disappointed, or told no. So, let's talk about changing the pattern. It doesn't require a dramatic resignation from the position of Friend Who Has Their Shit Together. Let's start much smaller.

Stop answering immediately. Try letting someone else drive. "I can't tonight, but I can talk tomorrow" is a good start. And when tomorrow comes and your friend brings you the same problem for the 47th time, you're allowed to ask, "Do you want advice, or do you just want me to listen?" You'll be shocked at how often people don't actually need you to fix anything.

A few takeaways:

A boundary isn't a punishment. You're not abandoning anyone because you aren't available to them at all times.

It's possible to love and support someone meaningfully and resist picking up the phone every time they set their lives on fire.

Being the friend who has their shit together does not mean you have to have everyone else's shit together too. You're allowed to be a mess. You're allowed to need help, say no, and let people figure out their own problems. If your friendships only survive when you're holding things together, that's worth paying attention to. You're a friend, not a 24-hour crisis hotline.



If you need to speak to someone right away, call 504-269-COPE (2673). The COPE crisis line provides free, confidential crisis counseling, suicide prevention and information, and mental health referral services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Submit your questions to ***goodcounsel@antigravitymagazine.com*** *(email and sender info will remain confidential), or use the QR code below for our anonymous Google form.*

illustrations by Romey Petite @romeypetite

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RAISING LOUISIANA

by Sara Pic

Sara Pic was born and raised in Uptown New Orleans (McMain '96!) and is a mom to a college-aged son (Geaux Tigers!) and twin elementary schoolers. She lives in River Ridge with her kids and her spouse in a (sob) newly petless home.

GENETICS (AND SO MUCH MORE)



Long before my children were born, when they were but a twinkle in my eye, we made a decision that I can only hope one day they will agree with. We chose to bring them into the world using donated genetic material.

Like most people who use donated genetic material to conceive, this was a choice born of necessity—neither myself nor my spouse produces sperm. It is a decision that I knew could have profound implications for my future children. They would be connected genetically to strangers: strangers who are also a form of family. Creating a "family tree" could potentially be a more complicated question for them, involving choices about who to signify. Or it could mean nothing to them.

Queer people are deeply familiar with the idea of "chosen family." There is something disquieting about the idea that "blood" is what makes a family when for so many of us, our blood has rejected or even abused or assaulted us based on who we love. We have long found new "parents" in our queer communities, people who affirm and respect us unconditionally, the way family should.

And yet, for our children who are donor-conceived, there is often a deep desire to connect to their genetic relatives. Some donor-conceived people describe a desire for "genetic mirroring"—the joy of seeing yourself in someone else's face. This desire to connect to so-called "blood" relatives can feel uncomfortable for any family, queer or not, who has used a donor to help make their children. Parents may feel "less than." But it is undeniable that it is a part of who they are. It is their story—our children get to decide what kind of meaning that one part of their story holds for them.

From the jump, I removed the struggle about when to tell my kids they were donor-conceived—my children have always known. We have told them often and repeatedly since before they could talk. For my younger children, I have described what a donor is in age-appropriate ways using books like *What Makes a Baby* by Cory Silverberg. And I made a decision that we would always do everything we could to let them know their genetic donor siblings, as much as was within my power. We are connected to many of their genetic siblings through social media (using it in a way that it is actually intended—to connect people!). We exchange holiday cards and "first day of school" pictures. Their donor siblings are mostly far-flung, all over the country and even in Europe. But their families all know that if we are visiting their area, I will be hitting them up for a playdate.

We have now met up with four of their donor siblings, one of whom is local and we are able to see with some frequency. I was not prepared the first time I met one of my kids' donor siblings for the surge of warmth and, well, love I would feel towards this stranger child, a child who is not "mine" at all, and yet looks so much like mine. There are, of course, also so many differences, particularly in personality. Even among genetic siblings raised by the same parents, there can be hugely significant differences. But the connection among them is so very clear—in their eyes, or nose, or ears, or smile. My daughter and one of her genetic sisters laugh in the exact same way.

But genetic connection has very little meaning to little kids. They are only focused on playing and having fun. My younger kids are twins and can (to my dismay) sometimes shut out other kids and just play in their own twin world if they are so inclined. And so my heart utterly melted right out of my body the day my son went dashing over to his local donor sibling, joyously hugging him and screaming his name. Their connection was real—and though it began with genetics, it became so much more than that.

My older son, who is now a young adult, had never expressed much interest in his donor or his potential donor siblings when he was younger.

This desire to connect to so-called "blood" relatives can feel uncomfortable for any family, queer or not, who has used a donor to help make their children. Parents may feel "less than." But it is undeniable that it is a part of who they are. It is their story—our children get to decide what kind of meaning that one part of their story holds for them.

He was conceived before social media and from a much smaller sperm bank than my younger kids, and so we were never able to find any connections for him online. Every so often, maybe once a year or so, we would ask if he had any desire to try to connect through a DNA test—and were a little surprised when, as an older teen, he said he would be interested. As the Black Friday sales commenced last year, the year he turned 18, I let him know I would purchase him a kit as a gift, but only if he wanted one. He thought about it a moment and agreed.

When the Ancestry kit arrived, he was prompted by the app to create a "family tree." This immediately caused a bit of chaos and consternation for him—Ancestry does not consider me, his adoptive stepmother, to be his default "family." I gently, trying to hold back my own frustration with this mild homophobia, explained to him that Ancestry is primarily interested in genetics—his sperm donor would be in the default place of his other parent, not me (though there is a way to add additional parent branches). Confronting this stark reality made me momentarily question if I had, out of a desire to make sure all parts of my child were seen and known, actually placed too much emphasis on this genetic connection. Seeing me cut out of his family tree reduced the complexity and intricacy of his own lived experience. But also, I gave myself that perennial reminder all decent parents give themselves weekly if not daily: This is not about me.

After receiving his DNA results about six weeks later, he immediately connected with several donor siblings, but not his donor or any of his donor's family. Only one donor sibling reciprocated his desire to connect—they began texting frequently, talking about all the highs and lows of their lives, from the mundane to the serious. Within just a few very emotional months, they developed their relationship to the point that he now refers to her as his "half-sister." It may only be one connection, but that one has been extraordinarily meaningful to him. A relationship of a lifetime built in less than a year.

My goal in vigorously pursuing and supporting these relationships for my children is to hopefully build them a bridge. One day, they can decide if they want to walk over it, leap across it, go halfway and back again, or even just look over to the other side once in a while. I can only hope, as all parents do, that the decisions I make today on their behalf will one day bring them contentment and peace.

illustration by Victoria Allen
@vs_illustration



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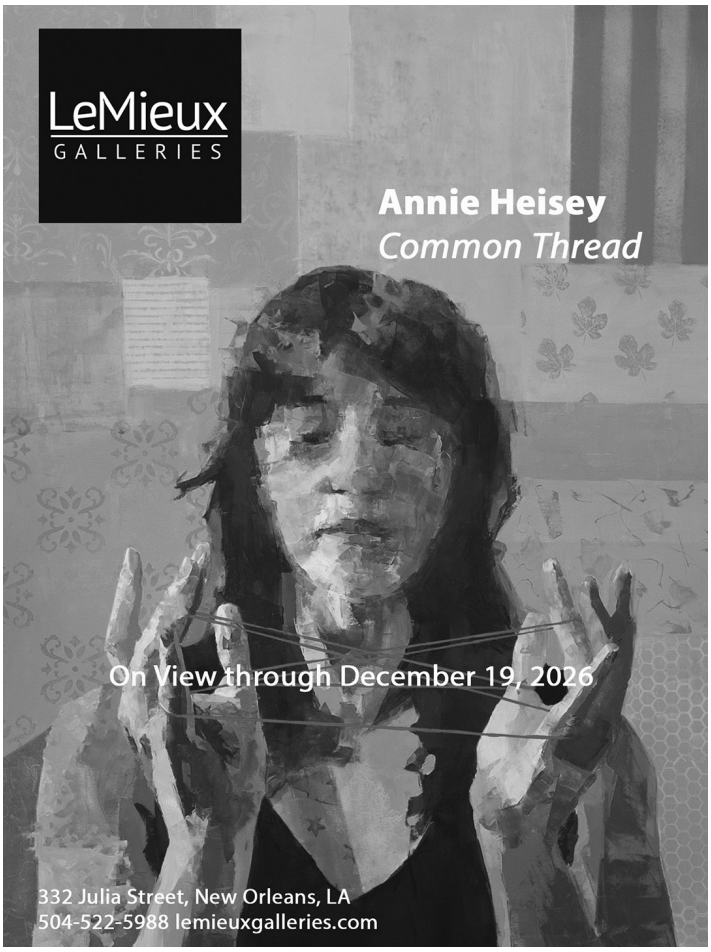
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ART BRINE

by Emily Farranto

Putting a Label on It
Louisiana Contemporary at Ogden

The 15th iteration of *Louisiana Contemporary* is on view at Ogden. In a show of 50 works, painting is the dominant medium represented. Of the 20 figurative paintings in the show—there is one abstract acrylic on canvas—several depict realistically painted subjects in scenes that are uncanny or "surreal." A campfire burns in a room where two women pose on a ladder (Kathryn Citrin, *Sisters)*. An inexplicable crimson red stain overtakes the grass in a park (Pamela Skehan, *Tipping Point*). Lilies grow in a young girl's hair (Brandon Felix, *Blooming Lily Braids*). A Magritte-like man wearing a suit and hat, back to the viewer, stands in an unfurnished space facing four strangely-dressed children (Alexander Stolin, *Father Dear*). It's a lot of surreal for one room. I don't know if that had to do with the juror's taste or a regional tendency I haven't noticed. These and many paintings throughout the show display a high level of rendering skill and storytelling, but few—I counted three—show virtuosity or exuberance about the actual paint or the act of painting. The surface of a painting is where this shows up and I wondered what (if any) effect selection by digital image had on the outcome of the show.

Photography is also ample, with 14 modest-sized photographs by 14 different artists. Sydney Walker's *The Way We Mask* feels complete as a stand-alone artwork that goes beyond "the decisive moment." The artist has created a surprisingly rich image within its small 14" x 16" dimensions. The vertically-formatted portrait is cropped a little closer than tradition dictates and the head in the photograph is a little larger than life-sized.

The information in the image seems to reach us slowly, one impression or revision at a time. At first I saw a balaclava, but this head covering is distinctly DIY. The subject's head and face is wrapped in dark blue tulle fabric, an opening left just around his teeth—no, gold grillz. From the little bit visible at the sides of the mouth I see he is brown-skinned and bearded. In New Orleans, "mask" can be a verb and it's used this way in the title, *The Way We Mask*. It's a strong work, though a little hard to see because the frame glass is so reflective.

The stand-out in the show was Nathalia Toledo Barcia for her porcelain sculpture *Ekeko in Custody*. The sculpture is displayed on a free-standing pedestal under a vitrine which allows a 360º view. The figure, whose round face reminded me of a Botero painting, stands about 16 inches tall with its elbows out, hands up, laden with sculpted and found objects. This is Ekeko, a pre-Columbian Andean god who, according to the object label, oversees "abundance and prosperity, represents the dreams of those who ask for what they need and are willing to offer something in return." The geography of the backstory meets the moment in the title of the work and the god figure's gesture of surrender. This piece was awarded the Helis Foundation Award for Best in Show.

The bad news is, throughout the exhibition, the object labels are a hot mess. I can't possibly be the only one who cringes at the large red ribbon graphic printed on labels indicating 1st, 2nd, 3rd Place winners, as well as Best in Show. To be clear, my objection is not about giving artists cash and praise. It's the display that positions artworks like livestock at a state fair. What's wrong with a little rustic flair? "This is LA *not* L.A.," you might say. No, but it's not middle school either. I take art seriously and the display of placement ribbons as well as the numeric hierarchy feels unserious. If organizers must put a ribbon on the recipient's labels, I suggest a tiny red ribbon icon in the corner.



OGDENMUSEUM.ORG

Nathalia Toledo Barcia, Ekeko in Custody, *2026, Hand built porcelain sculpture, glazes, underglazes, plastic, rubber, wood, metal, paper, currency, straw, cotton and strings*

Standards in the way museums label art works help viewers easily understand who made what, how, and when. A casual art viewer may not ask, "What's up with inconsistency in the way medium is listed for the photographs in this show?" But I will. Here is a sample of the gamut: "Fine art print," "Gelatin silver print from 110 negative," "Photography," and so on. The standard is to note the photographic process used and the surface it's printed on, especially if not typical, for example, "Chromogenic print on canvas." In a perfect world, artists submit work labeled this way. In the second-best world, exhibition organizers circle back if this information is lacking.

A third grievance: Some include artist statements. Hold my coffee while I bang my head on the wall. Aside from my conviction that artist statements are a scourge in general, a museum wall label is absolutely not the place for one. I am A-OK with a little "didactic text" explaining things—preferably facts not feelings—but this labor is on the curators or museum staff to provide or leave out. Didactic labels may be informed by the artists—especially if key words like Ekeko in the artwork described above are not right there in the title—but an artist's thoughts or feelings about their art is irrelevant to the viewer's experience of it. And only some of the labels include these artist statements; this inconsistency feels sloppy.

Last grievance: The wall label next to one painting has placeholder text at the base of it. "Collection/Credit Line/Object ID." This is not on the artist. Quick story: When I was young and careless, I submitted some poems to a magazine. I don't remember what detail I got wrong, but the editor's comment wasn't about my work. My submission was denied with the words "A little attention would show some respect." Ouch. But I've never forgotten it.

Louisiana Contemporary *runs through February 14, 2027. For more info, check out ogdenmuseum.org.*

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COURTESY JANE PLACE

We hope you had a fun, festive, and spooky Halloween! The City is in the throes of a budget crisis so let's chat about what's going on and how you can join the fight!

Updates on the City Budget: Areas You Should Care About

As of late October, the City of New Orleans' various departments are continuing to present their budget requests to City Council. On October 8, members from Jane Place, the New Orleans Renters Rights Assembly, the Right to Counsel Coalition, and the Big Easy Budget Coalition hosted a successful rally and press conference that spoke truth to power! Afterwards, we all went into City Council chambers and spoke out against cuts to Right to Counsel and the low-barrier shelter. We received public promises from various City Council members that the budget cuts will be reversed. We're waiting until the end of all budget hearings to see how the chips fall, but you can help ensure these critical areas are funded by sending emails and calling your City Council members (council.nola.gov) to ensure that they fund Right to Counsel. See Jane Place's Instagram stories (@janeplace communitylandtrust) over the next few weeks to learn more about how to do this!

by Y. Frank Southall

The Alphabet Soup of Organizations: Who Makes Affordable Housing Happen in our City?

Despite public opinion, affordable housing creation and maintenance in our city is much simpler than other places. The following departments, independent organizations, and non-profit groups handle various areas. See below to learn more!

The Office of Community Development
Right to Counsel funding.
nola.gov/next/community-development

The Office of Healthy Homes
Manages our city's renters' habitability standards.
nola.gov/next/healthy-homes

The Office of Code Enforcement
Manages the inspectors for the Healthy Homes habitability standards.
nola.gov/next/code-enforcement

There are other departments that are technically government entities but are also independent agencies that quasi operate outside of the *full scope and purview* of the mayor and City Council. Those are:

The New Orleans Redevelopment Authority
NORA Housing Trust Fund.
noraworks.org

Finance New Orleans
An agency specializing in new and renovating affordable home ownership and large scale apartment buildings.
financenola.org

Housing Authority of New Orleans
HANO: our public/social housing authority that operates large scale and scattered sites of affordable housing that's collectively owned by the City. HANO outside operates the Housing Choice Voucher program, a.k.a. Section 8.
hano.org

There are numerous non-profit and mutual-aid organizations that handle services normally managed by government entities in other cities and other developed nations. Those organizations include:

The Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center
LAFHAC: a non-profit that handles our state's fair housing issues. Fights against discrimination in housing based upon our city's, state's, and federal government protections.
lafairhousing.org

Jane Place
US! We provide tenant rights education, advocacy, tenant union training in apartment complexes, renters' rights hotlines in English and Spanish, and more.
jpnsi.org

NOLA Renters Rights Assembly
Your city and region-wide tenant union. Organizing, advocating, and mobilizing folks across our city.
nolarra.org

There are more organizations, but we only have so much space. In the future, we'll talk about the organizations who uplift, advocate, and support our unhoused/homeless individuals, families, and elders.



Upcoming Fun Events, Workshops, and How to Connect

Wanna get involved? Get informed? Join us at these events!

New Orleans Renters Rights Assembly (and Renters' Rights Legal Clinic) Thursday 11/5
6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
First Grace UMC (entrance through back parking lot)
3401 Canal St.

Weekly Tenant Rights Clinic (every Tuesday and Wednesday)
3 p.m. to 7 p.m.
200 S. Broad St. Ste. 204
(parking lot behind the building, enter from Cleveland Ave.)

New: 7th Annual "Let Us Not Forget" Vigil Sunday 11/8
3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Meet at 700 Elysian Fields Ave.
(Washington Square)

For more information, go to jpnsi.org or @janeplace_communitylandtrust on Instagram, visit linktr.ee/JanePlaceCLT, email frank@jpnsi.org, or text UPDATES to (504) 517-5470 with your name and the event you have interest in.

This space is provided to Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative as a community service and does not necessarily reflect the opinions or editorial policies of ANTIGRAVITY.



ANGELA CALONDER

Making Santa Dance Again with

The Repair Café

by Angela Calonder

If you're unfamiliar with the concept of a "Repair Café," it's almost exactly what it sounds like: a friendly, communal space where you can bring your damaged goods and receive free tutelage on how to bring them back to life. The first Repair Café was established in Amsterdam in 2009, and upwards of 2,500 now exist worldwide. In August, New Orleans' own Repair Café celebrated its fourth birthday at its home in the Broadmoor Improvement Association's Arts & Wellness Center, as indicated by the cake featured prominently on the table of donated snacks found at each gathering. The room buzzed as one after the other, people entered laden with items they intended to salvage—an iron, a pair of pants, a metronome. At various stations around the room sat a dream team of "coaches"—volunteers with various handy skill sets—preparing to do their best to save the parade of faulty gadgets from the landfill. A cheerful "Fixed It!" sign waited patiently on a table for its photo op following each successful repair. Billie Golan became acquainted with Repair Cafés while studying at SUNY New Paltz and brought the movement to New Orleans back in 2022. I had the chance to chat with her at the Rook Cafe to discuss Repair Café's origins, and where she hopes to take it in years to come.

Repair Café—I know it's a worldwide thing. How did you learn about it, and how did you decide to bring it to New Orleans?
I went to school in upstate New York, and Repair Café was starting to get very popular up there because of a man named John Wackman, who was involved in some of the same environmental groups as I was. We hosted a Repair Café at my school, and it was in churches and community centers. There was one in every town, so it was just normal up there. And then when I moved down here in 2020, I looked on the map—there's an interactive map on the website, and you can search for Repair Cafés all over the world. So I saw that there were no Repair Cafés. There were fix-it clinics and things like that, but Repair Cafés, the real difference is that it's branded that way, so that it could be connected to a base.

Who provides different resources, stuff like that?
When you start a Repair Café, you download a toolkit. They give you templates for flyers, the logos, the coloring, so it's the same everywhere. So that's what I did when I started in 2022, in July.

Are you something of a tinkerer yourself? Has that always been something that you've enjoyed? Fixing the things that might otherwise get thrown away?
Yeah, I think it combined a lot of my skills and interests. I was doing a lot of advocacy and policy stuff in college, so I knew that I was good at networking... My mom's an immigrant. And so the idea of saving things—everything I have is old and not new. So I thought I would use my skills and resources to make the effort to start it. I started calling around to coffee shops, libraries. No one really took to it until I met Natori [Green] at the Broadmoor Improvement Association. She said yes right away. She was really excited. And so for the last four years she's helped us host it there. It's a community space, and I started with physical flyers in coffee shops and places, and also on the "Buy Nothing" groups on Facebook, reaching out to like-minded people looking for repair, but also coaches, people that can tinker, because I know how to find them. And so once we brought them all together, then the magic started.

How many coaches have there been here in New Orleans?
Over the years we've had several people in and out. They'll come for a few sessions but then they move away or something. But what's special to me is that the coaches that you saw Tuesday—Cassie [Tarr], Steve [Singerman], David [Meza], Andreas [Nikodem], Ryan [Walsh]—that core group has been with me for the last four years. So I feel so grateful that they believe in it as much as I do, that they've stayed. But that's the thing, if we're going to expand and it becomes more popular, then I also need to continue to try to get more repair coaches so that it balances out. And maybe a bigger space.

In terms of space, you also have the Bywater location as well, right?
Yeah, we used to host Repair Café at the New Orleans ToolBank. The idea is doing collabs, like with Saturn Bar. They would have their clothing swap and I would have Repair Café there, and people would bring their broken blenders and also go get new clothes. So it's stuff like that. The idea is that different people in different neighborhoods would start their own so that I'm not managing all of them. I'm managing maybe a few. And then if someone wants to start one up in the Ninth Ward, if someone wants to start one up on the Westbank, then that would serve those individual communities. Your neighbors are your repair coaches. It's really a hyper-local thing.

Is it all volunteer-based?
It is. It's quite a bit of work. It's a labor of love. So Repair Café International, they don't offer money. It's not a nonprofit. It's hard to get it incorporated like that. So it really is just volunteers. But I mean, we have

This page: Repair Coach Steve Singerman investigates a broken radio. Opposite page: Repair Coach Cassie Tarr mends a pair of pants

a lot of fun too. We interact with the community. We see people walk away happy. Sometimes coaches get referrals for their handyman business or something. I think it's those people that are committed, and they continue to contribute their time.

Are you still doing those collaborations, like with Saturn Bar?
Yeah. And [New Orleans] ToolBank, it's basically like a tool library for nonprofits. That's a really cool organization, it's nationwide. David Melancon runs the one here. And so that seemed like a natural collaboration. He doesn't have AC in his building, so it hasn't been [there] during the summer. We're always battling that. But yeah, more collaborations. I want to get bigger and have more resources. And I want to research grants and get it funded and make it a bigger thing because we see how well received it is and how happy it makes people and how much it helps.

And what did the trajectory look like? Did it take off right away as you publicized it in the ways that you mentioned? Or did it take a little while for it to catch on?
I remember in the early days when it would be quiet at times. But word of mouth spreads. You have your pile of broken things that you meant to take last month, but you're like, "No, I'm gonna take it this month." And then people show up with five things. So I try to keep up with having enough repair coaches to match that. And it could be anyone. You know how to sew a button, you could be a repair coach. It's for any experience level. And we can even use volunteers for the welcome table, or to take pictures and videos, because we're in an expansion zone.

Does everybody have their expertise in terms of what they help with? Do you have an expertise?
I do a little bit of a little bit! I could do watches, jewelry, sewing... lamps? It's so great to learn from other repair coaches. It's really a learning experience. And you learn that a lot of these things that we are fearful to approach are really very basic. Like, we can do it.



ANGELA CALONDER

We can change the cable on a lamp, we could change the wire, we could [do] these things that used to be common knowledge and we've lost. There's a lot of simple things that everyday people can do. Everyone knows that Cassie does the sewing and the textiles. Her partner Rob [Rice], he's a computer tech guy. David came to us for bicycle repair, but he's also been learning a lot from Steve and Andreas and doing electrical repair or woodworking. Andreas was an engineer, so we refer to him whenever any of us needs help. He's the one that can do it all. And Steve, too, is also kind of a triple-edged sword with all that. I saw him repair a '90s TV set, and this girl actually brought in a VHS of like, *Rugrats*. And at the end of the Repair Café, it was playing. And Steve did that because he was just cleaning some sort of contact in there. So that was pretty cool. They make magic happen. With any skill, really, you can go quite far.

Like you said, there's a lot of simple things that we can do, and that's getting lost over time. When I was looking at the "About" section of the website, it mentioned the "generational knowledge" that's getting lost as the convenience of life happens to the rest of us. You mentioned your mother is an immigrant—where is she from?
We were born in Israel. And my grandma is Romanian, so she had to be really smart in order to escape. She was doing bookkeeping and seamstressing, so she would fix all our clothes whenever we would go visit. Just growing up in that mindset, you know, saving everything. My mom still saves everything. And so repair is just a part of that.

"Mostly, things are really a lot simpler than we think to fix. And Repair Café fills that void, that whole dark cloud of, 'I'm scared. What's behind the veil? What is inside?'"

It's also an act of revolution in this day and age. [There's a book] I call the "Repair Café Bible." It was co-written by John Wackman, who I talked about, and Elizabeth Knight. It's called *Repair Revolution* [*How Fixers Are Transforming Our Throwaway Culture*]. And it walks you through starting a Repair Café, the community aspects of it, but also the legislation and the policy behind it. Every time we repair something, it's an act of revolution. Because these items are made to be broken. They're made to be cheaper to replace than to repair. But we don't have room in our landfills. We don't have the privilege of tossing everything. And we shouldn't! You might mend someone's sweater or fix someone's ottoman, but you're helping to mend the world, because it's a breaking world.

Another thing from the "About" section that I thought was interesting—it sounds like occasionally people will say, "Oh, but are you interfering with anybody's business? Is this somehow taking business from professional repair people?" And the answer is, "Not really!" Is there anything that you want to expand on there?
Well actually it does the opposite. I mean, there are so few businesses that do repair. So we might take something apart and say, "OK, you need to go to this store and get this part in order to finish the repair." Or we say, "We can't really repair this shoe the way you want it to be repaired, but there's a shoe repair on Magazine." So, in fact, it helps empower and strengthen the repair businesses because we're all in it. We all want the same things. If we can't do it, they can. And we can help each other in that way.



COURTESY REPAIR CAFE NOLA

This summer, Repair Café NOLA celebrated four years since Billie Golan (center, hat and glasses) teamed up with Natori Green (executive director of the Broadmoor Improvement Association, not pictured) to bring the organization to New Orleans.

I'm glad you're reminding people cobblers are still a thing.
And now we have to choose between paying for the quality versus paying something cheaper for a new item. And that's why it's part of a bigger conversation of policy. In the EU there's a lot of repair legislation coming out. In France especially, they made it easier to access the products that you might need. If they come out with a product, they have to provide customer service. If you need to replace a part, that has to be open source because even if we wanted to—like the whole John Deere conversation in America, the farmers weren't able to fix their own items anymore because there's a freaking computer inside?! So actually, this year, the FTC required John Deere to give [the farmers] access to the equipment, to the updates, to the models, and stuff. So the EU is ahead of us in terms of policy, but we should fight for the same things because we all use the same sort of items.

Are there any standout stories, like the craziest things that people have brought in?
Yeah, I definitely remember one of my friends bringing in a dancing Santa Claus toy. I don't celebrate Christmas, but I imagine—because we had to undress the Santa, open it up, see the cause and the parts in there—someone who has looked up to a Santa figure might have been a little distressed, because he was naked and all his organs were out. But we had to make him dance again! I think it turns out there was a rubber band that had broken inside to connect two of the cogs so that he actually made the movement. I think we were able to fix that.

Mostly, things are really a lot simpler than we think to fix. And Repair Café fills that void, that whole dark cloud of, "I'm scared. What's behind the veil? What is inside? I don't know what this means." Once you step into that and you see, "Oh, OK. There's just many plastic parts in here," or the vacuum just had to be really cleaned really well. It's not broken! And once you bring that stuff to light, you're less scared of approaching repair. And that's sort of what the whole idea is, to make us more comfortable with our items that we use and not be afraid of exploring them, and learning to be wrong. And that's the art of repair! Sometimes you lose and win.

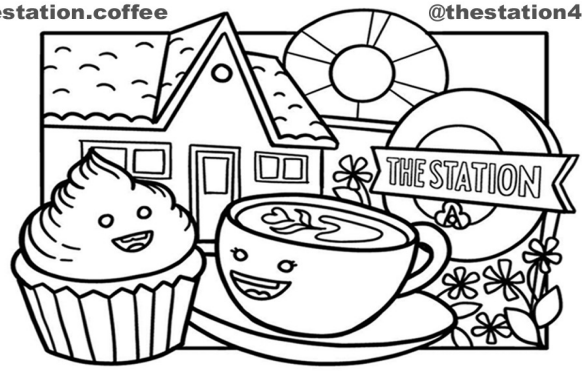
And it sounds like people get to learn about maintenance as well, like what you said about the vacuum, "Oh, you just have to clean this more," and maybe they'll do that going forward.
Yeah, a lot of it is just cleaning. I mean, robot vacuums, fans, air filters. When they stop working, it's because they can't receive the intake. It's blocked. Just a little cleaning and it works like new. So if we can do that together and experience that together, that's what it's all about. And then hopefully that empowers you to help engage and teach your friend or your family. If they're going through the same thing, you can be like, "Oh, I can help fix this." And so we can all just be more engaged consumers and less afraid.



COURTESY REPAIR CAFE NOLA

The next Repair Café events at the Broadmoor Improvement Association will be November 16 and December 18. Follow @repaircafe_nola on Instagram to learn about upcoming events, and visit repaircafe.org for more information on the parent organization.

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STEPHANIE TARRANT

More than a Dream: The Return of

The New Orleans Fringe Festival

by Terra Durio

If you're a fan of performing arts, you've heard of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, one of the world's greatest (and largest) performing arts festivals. Every August, performers and creatives of every variety from all corners of the globe descend upon the Scottish city, staging shows at hundreds of venues—"from existing theatres and concert halls to repurposed spaces like bars, parks, buses and shipping containers," according to their website. For three weeks, famous entertainers and established production companies rub elbows with lesser and unknown up-and-comers to perform live shows that blur genre lines and enthrall audiences. Nothing is off limits, and all the city's a stage. Other cities across the world have followed suit, exciting audiences regionally through their own Fringe Festivals.

Over a decade ago, New Orleans had its own Fringe Festival: a citywide coalescence of theatrical arts, featuring original acts from creatives and performers of every artistic predilection. Combining New Orleans' signature *je ne sais quoi* and a global flair for the dramatic, this theatrical celebration thrived for many years, bringing together audiences and performers in unconventional ways that only Fringe could dream up. It ended in 2014, reorganized into a new format (Faux/Real) under Executive Producer Ben Mintz—but for over a decade, the memory of the original Fringe Festival has persisted.

"For years we've been watching the Fringe community create magic in other festivals and spaces," says Riley Elise, co-producer of the 2026 New Orleans Fringe Festival. "We wanted to bring Fringe back to celebrate that community." Since 2014, there have been several attempts to revive Fringe, including Faux/Real in 2015 and InFringe in 2017, but this year marks the festival's long-awaited rebirth. Bringing together "hundreds of avant-garde performers from circus, burlesque, dance, music, spoken word, and more," according to the website, Fringe will entertain "thousands of audience members over four days."

"It's been a lot of dreaming and building," Elise says. "Personally, I kept hearing people in the theatre community wish for the Fringe back... I wanted to join the project so it could be more than a magical myth I kept hearing about." That sentiment was echoed by members across the organizing force behind this year's Fringe Festival rebirth, including (but not limited to) Elise, Grace Batz, J. Roberts, Gia Vaughna, and Monica R. Harris. "New Orleans is such a theatre city, and such a festival city... but there's no theatre festival?" Batz adds.

"It's interesting to try to fit Fringe artists into a rubric... That was comical of us."

Over email and in person, we spoke about how they put the

Top: Butter Woman, *"a decolonial, life-sized puppet performance reimagining an African folktale" by Tuere T. S. Ganges and Samille Ganges, to be performed at New Marigny Theatre*

proverbial band back together. About a year ago, co-producers led the charge to bring Fringe back to life. Surveys, community meetings, and planning began in earnest. From there, co-producer Batz signed on to support their vision, then tapped co-producer and grant writer Vaughna to join the revival efforts.

There's plenty of creative spark in the city these days. Between beloved local theatre companies and the expansive clown, puppet, and burlesque communities, there's a bit of a theatrical renaissance underway. You can see it everywhere: in theatres, clubs, and on the streets themselves. But it's expensive to frequent the arts, especially in the traditional sense. With most tickets falling around the $20 to $45 price point, supporting local theatre is no small investment. From the producing artist's perspective, it's risky to stage a work without having dedicated financial backing. Ticket pricing is what makes it possible. And obviously, artists, performers, and producers have to be able to afford to live to keep creating. This frustrating economic balancing act is what makes sustaining original art such a challenge. "Like everyone these days, our main challenge has been money," Roberts says. "Coming back after so long, we've been rebuilding our finances from scratch... even with that weighing on us, we've had the constant warming support from our community." What Fringe seeks to do is eliminate barriers between audiences and performers, producers, and venues—a dream that everyone can get behind. "Just because you haven't had access to a stage doesn't mean your art isn't important," Batz says. So after hosting fundraising events across the city, a grant from the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation [an *ANTIGRAVITY* advertiser], and many devoted community efforts to bring the vision to life, the 2026 New Orleans Fringe Festival is slated for November 12 through 15.

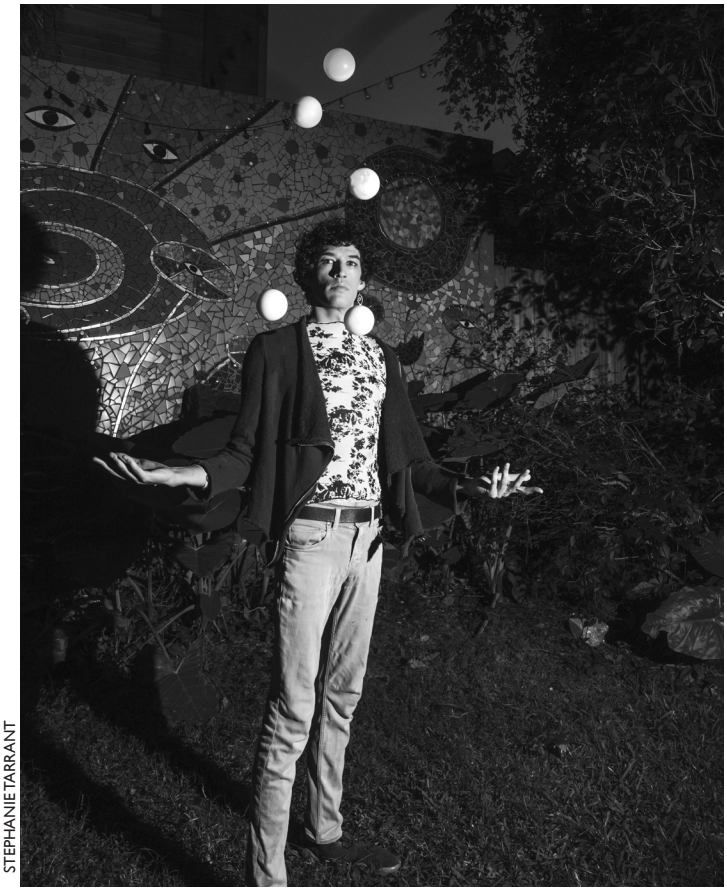
This renewed version of Fringe promises to be as unique as the place it was born from. The focus is on showcasing original and authentic productions, "something [we] haven't seen before," says Vaughna. But how do you coordinate a festival like Fringe, famously unbound by geography, genre, and convention? With a little advice from Pandora Gastelum of The Mudlark Public Theatre, whose experience putting on The New Orleans Giant Puppet Festival was vital to planning efforts, as well as the support of the rest of the advisory board and participants of the original Fringe.

Selecting the acts themselves also proved challenging, especially when the goal is to blur genre lines, promote artistic cross-pollination, and indulge in experimental play. To that end, this year's process included a selection panel of nine local artists who evaluated 41 submissions and eventually began whittling down acts using a list of criteria. "It's interesting to try to fit Fringe artists into a rubric," Vaughna says. "That was comical of us."

But putting some guidelines in place ultimately proved helpful: All submissions had to be original, and local and experimental acts (as well as those with completed scripts) were prioritized. "Getting to discover each of the artists and their passion pieces was, in a way, very philosophical," Roberts says. "It really opened each of our eyes to how we want to reintroduce Fringe to the public."

A crucial aspect of Fringe 2026 is highlighting artists of and for New Orleans. "A big part of my selection process was about the person creating the art and their connection to the community," Batz says. "Who do I see doing good for our community? It's a group decision, of course, but I want to see those people get paid and have a platform." The finalized lineup includes seven FMV (Fringe Managed Venue) shows, 35 BYOV (Bring Your Own Venue) shows, 24 venues, and upwards of 13 genres submitted from New Orleans, New York, Appalachia, Portland, Mexico, and beyond.

During the selection process, some of the less developed acts were able to further flesh out their ideas or evolve into



STEPHANIE TARRANT

Juggler David Chervony will perform DAM, "a play with water," at New Marigny Theatre



PETER PHILLIPS / MADBOMB MEDIA

Trombone Squirty performs at Mini Fringe at New Marigny Theatre

new forms entirely. "I plucked some of those experiences for the After Dark show," Vaughna says. "Pole, drag, burlesque—even puppet burlesque artist Miss Aubrey—acts that aren't full length, but work together well." In addition to the adult productions, there are kid-friendly shows like "Goat In The Schools" with Goat in the Road Productions, or "RIPERION: Piano Creatures" by Playdoh Puppet Productions. There will be all-ages programming at New Marigny Theatre, including kids' karaoke with Rockabye Karaoke, an abbreviated version of "Gumbo Cypher" with a raffle for a class with Artivism Dance Theatre, and family yoga with Clown Yoga Nola. The fest also includes a vendor market, health screenings, sober and ADA-friendly venues, even acts that share food with audiences, feeding more than their hunger for the arts. Some shows, such as "Conditional Love" by Jakki Kalogridis, "SHEEP" by Joey Z, and "The Bacchae" by queer influencer and writer Quinn Bishop feature a bespoke pre- or post-show experience.



PETER PHILLIPS / MADBOMB MEDIA

Left to Right: Grace Batz, Riley Elise, J. Roberts, and Rayshaughn Armant at Mini Fringe at New Marigny Theatre, December 2025

One of the main evolutions of Fringe 2026 from previous iterations is the intentional accessibility. "The old slogan was 'Fearless audiences, fearless theatre,'" says Elise. "Our board president, Monica Harris, suggested 'Theatre for all,' and that fits us better. We now have a lot of language and ways to accommodate people who are differently abled, neurodivergent, immunocompromised, sober, etc. If everyone leaves riding the high of original, experimental art and community *and* feeling safe, we'll have done our job right."

Beyond the three Fringe Managed Venues (The New Marigny Theatre, Siberia, and AllWays Lounge), there's the "Bring Your Own Venue" (BYOV) program, which allows artists to stage shows in their own unique setting in the city and be included in the Fringe program and map. The potential for unconventional BYOV locations is endless—some of this year's locations include ArtEgg Studios, McDonogh 35, The End of The World, and Peaches Records.

"Most shows start at odd hours, so there's an hour between shows to either venue hop, grab food, or dance with your friends in the street," says Elise. Some acts, like "Life with Yia Yia" by George Trahanis, are full analog—door sales and cash only. Generally, BYOVs will follow the same $10 to $20 sliding scale as FMVs, and most uphold NOTAFLOF (No One Turned Away For Lack of Funds) or Pay-What-You-Can policy.

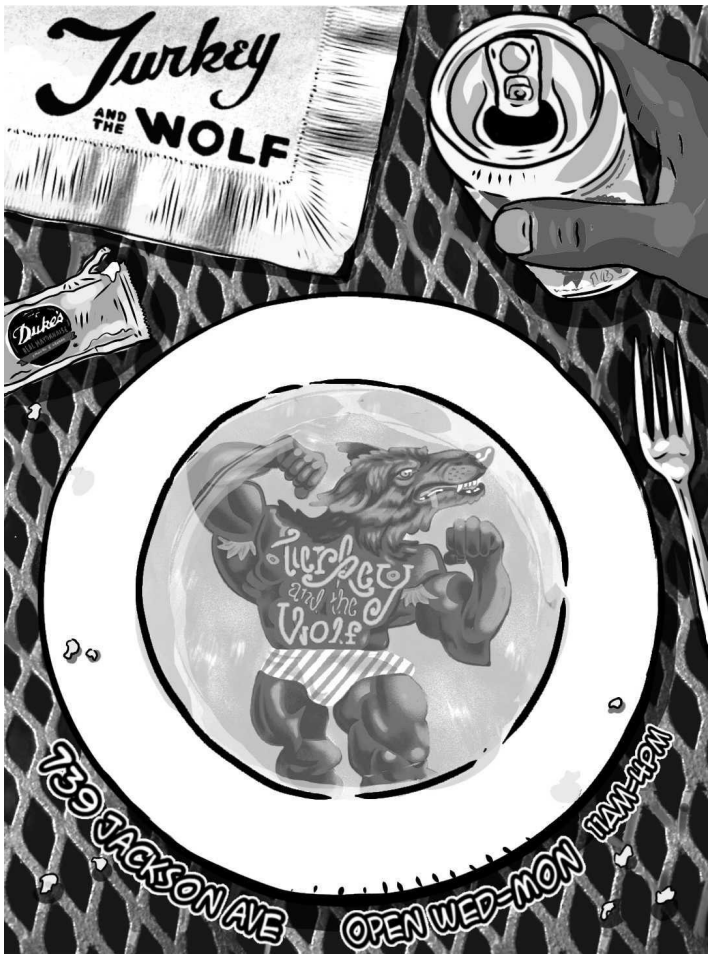
My approach? Nail down your must-sees and map out your day hopping to venues across the city. "I imagine it like a girls' night out where you and your friends take a bus, streetcar, or rideshare all over the city to hit all the shows on your list, like a scavenger hunt," Roberts says. I can attest that the unique BYOV venues are what really Fringes up the city and make it feel different than any other parade or theatre performance. Every time you pass the random building where you saw that one weird show, you'll recall that spark. Years later, long after the details of the show have faded from memory, that's what you'll remember.

Some shows outlast Fringe, but others you can only catch during the November weekend. There's no wrong way to Fringe, but know what you want to get out of your festival experience. And if you can't make it this year, don't despair. This time, Fringe Festival isn't planning on going anywhere. "We still have so many more people in the community we want involved in shaping Fringe, and we hope this first fest back attracts them," Elise says.

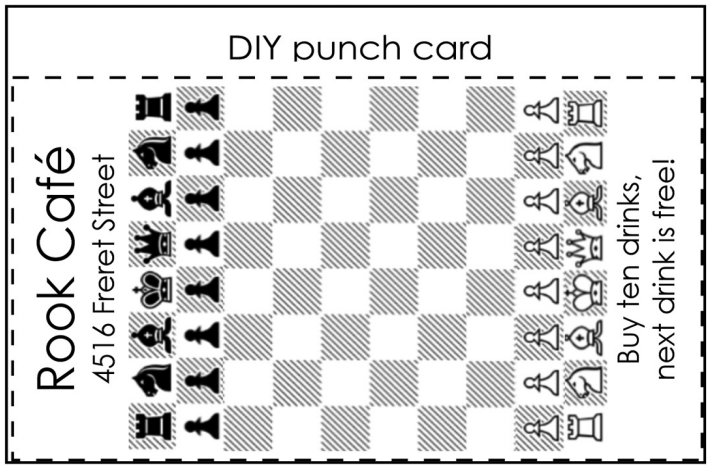
"Everyone always says, 'Remember when Fringe…?'" Vaughna says, and that's not at all hard to believe. I find myself repeating that sentiment often these days—about the restaurants, venues, hidden gems, neighborhood landmarks past. After a frustrating summer of NDAs, data centers, spaceports, and yet another heartbreaking wave of "Ain't dere no more," so much of what makes our city unique is at risk of disappearing forever. So when a legend like Fringe Festival triumphantly returns, transmuting the city itself into art for the people, by the people, it's something special. "Lately I've been kept afloat by our collective art and power of community in these rising tides of the world," Elise says. "This Fringe will give us a chance to celebrate that and keep coming together."

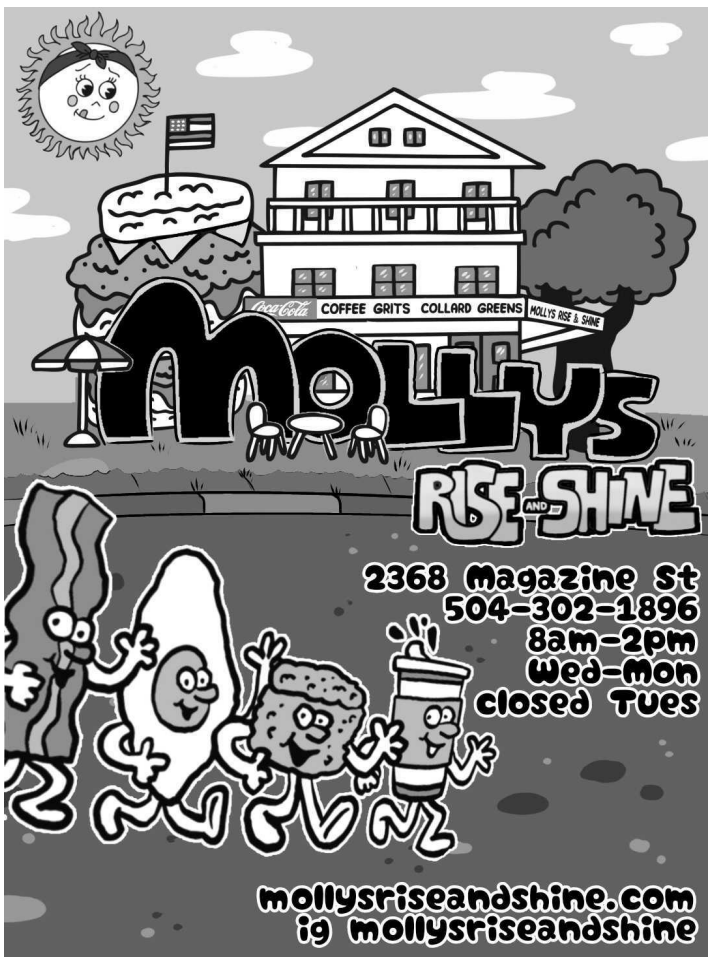


The 2026 New Orleans Fringe Festival will take place November 12 to 15. For more info, check out nolafringe.org and @fringefestneworleans on Instagram.


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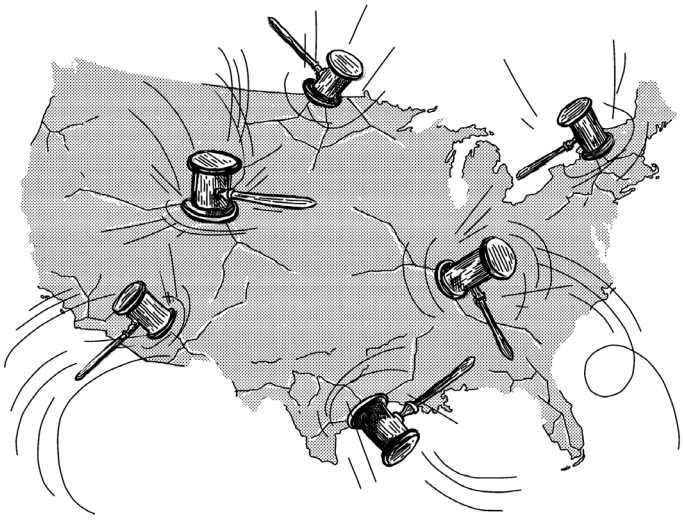

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Ministry of Untruth
the Origins of Louisiana's Ten Commandments Law

by Danny Cherry Jr.

In the minds of Christian nationalists, America is God's anointed land, a place right outside of Heaven's pristine pearly gates, where our prosperity is the consequence of God's light. In their minds, public life should be inundated with reminders that our founding fathers created our country in His image. Louisiana has now forced one of those reminders into every public K-12 classroom and higher learning institution in the state through the Ten Commandments law, deemed necessary to teach kids morals and Christian virtues. Naturally, a hate group has helped in spreading this message.

The Louisiana Family Forum, founded in 1998 by Gene Mills and Pastor Tony Perkins and designated as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, has been assisting with the legally mandated inundation of Ten Commandments displays. Mills told me that 60 of the 64 parishes "have been delivered adequate numbers of posters to fill each K-12 classroom."

The rollout has faced legal hurdles over the past two years, with two lawsuits filed in the wake of its signing—one of them by Chris Dier, a history teacher at Benjamin Franklin High School in New Orleans and the Louisiana 2020 Teacher of the Year. Earlier this year, Dier's lawsuit was dismissed, with a federal judge stating his lawsuit had been "premature." But in August 2026, Dier petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to block the law, garnering support—and some haters.

Dier told me the day after he filed the petition, "I was just looking at somebody on Facebook who wrote a comment under an article, and he said something like, 'Why does this guy have so much hate?' [in reference] to me." Disturbingly, the commenter had an AR-15 in his profile photo.

In speaking with teachers across various parishes, there was an overwhelming feeling of frustration and surprise with the requirement to hang up the Ten Commandments posters. One teacher in Ascension Parish stated, "We didn't understand how it was possible we were being told to hang up anything religious!" Another told me that state troopers delivered donated displays to their school. Some schools are wary of adhering to this law. But one teacher told me that their school "couldn't wait to violate the Constitution."

When supporters are pressed on why the Ten Commandments are necessary to education, their answer is often underpinned with one perceived incontrovertible truth: America was founded as a Christian nation.

For Mills, the Ten Commandments "were foundational to Western civilization and history." Governor Jeff Landry has stated that America's laws were shaped by the Ten Commandments, and that Moses was the original "law giver." Supporters also often quote the founding fathers as evidence. Subparagraph 4 of Paragraph A of HB71 (introduced by State Rep. Dodie Horton), the law requiring the Ten Commandments in classrooms, states: "History records that James Madison, the fourth President of the United States of America, stated that '(w)e have staked the whole future of our new nation . . . upon the capacity of each of ourselves to govern ourselves according to the moral principles of the Ten Commandments.'"

The problem with that quote? It never happened. It was popularized by a 1988 book titled *The Myth of Separation: What Is the Correct Relationship Between Church and State?*, written by David Barton, a self-taught pseudo-historian and religious activist who has spent decades promoting the idea that America was founded as a Christian nation. James Madison scholars have never verified it. Barton would later say in 1996 that the quote was likely "false," and WallBuilders, the multimillion dollar organization Barton founded, even acknowledges that quote was never found in any of Madison's writings, though they believe it is "reflective of Madison's expressed beliefs."

Those who use the quote appear unconcerned with its veracity. When it was pointed out to Louisiana lawmakers that the quote was false, Rep. Horton brushed it off, saying it was "insignificant in the big picture of things."

But despite the falsehoods fueling the Ten Commandments laws throughout the country, since 2021 there have been 82 Ten Commandments bills introduced across 26 states. Within the past two years, five states have passed such bills: Alabama, Tennessee, Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas. If the history these laws are predicated on is false and similar laws have even been ruled unconstitutional, why do they keep popping up across the country?

The federal judge that blocked Arkansas' Ten Commandments law in 2025 stated in his ruling: "Why would Arkansas pass an obviously unconstitutional law? Most likely because the state is part of a coordinated strategy among several states to inject Christian religious doctrine into public-school classrooms."

Debunking Myths

When it comes to inserting religion into schools, conservative states are embroiled in what GOP state legislators view as a holy war. A Texas state lawmaker proclaimed during a legislative meeting on his state's version of the Ten Commandments bill that the nation was in the midst of a "spiritual battle." This battle is largely being played out within the education system, with conservatives' main weapon being historical revisionism.

Though the Declaration of Independence does somewhat vaguely mention a "creator," the U.S. Constitution does not mention Jesus or Christianity. Religion is only mentioned twice: once in the First Amendment, which bars laws "respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" in the Establishment Clause, and again in Article VI, which blocks "religious tests" for public office.

The founding fathers were not necessarily secular. Most came from a variety of religious backgrounds rooted in Christianity. Others practiced Deism or Theistic Rationalism. But their approaches to their various faiths differed on a spectrum of orthodoxy. Take President John Adams, who

once told his wife in a letter that his Christianity "is not exactly conformable to that of the greatest part of the Christian World."

But several founding fathers said in various ways that the country was not founded as a Christian nation and that a "wall of separation"—a term attributed to Thomas Jefferson—needed to be kept between the government and the church. One of the most explicit examples is in the 1797 Treaty of Tripoli, when the United States declared that the government was not "in any sense founded on the Christian religion" in Article 11 of the treaty. Pirates from North African Muslim nations began attacking American merchant ships crossing the Barbary corsairs. The treaty was meant to be an assurance to the Muslim state of Tripoli (now Libya) that America was not governed by Christian orthodoxy, and that there wouldn't be any conflict or warfare on the basis of religious differences. "Christian nation" advocates will point to the fact that Article 11 was not in the Arabic version of the treaty, for reasons lost to time, but the English version that the Senate read and agreed with did have Article 11. The treaty was ratified unanimously by the Senate and signed by President John Adams.

Despite all evidence to the contrary, six in 10 Americans believe that America was founded as a Christian nation.

So why did this contemporary belief that America was founded as a Christian nation gain steam within the American right? You can thank the nefarious machinations of corporate America.

The Creation of a Christian Nation, and the Origins of Louisiana's Ten Commandments Law

In the early 1940s, in the aftermath of the Great Depression, wealthy individuals and corporations faced backlash from the public for their role in the economic crash. President Franklin Roosevelt was also lambasting big business, once likening bankers and men of industry to criminal organizations, and boasting



ADRIENNE BATTISTELLA

Chris Dier, history teacher at Benjamin Franklin High School and 2020 Louisiana Teacher of the Year, at the Lakefront in October.

during his second term that they had "met their master." FDR's New Deal had expanded social aid programs but also reined in big business, bringing anti-trust lawsuits and expanding regulatory infrastructure.

Incensed by these new controls, industry organizations like the National Association of Manufacturers and the ultra-wealthy portrayed FDR as a "socialist" tyrant who exacerbated the hate they received from the public. These groups spent vast amounts of money on public relations campaigns to win back citizens, without much success. The Depression years had permanently eroded public trust. But finally, they saw an avenue: Sway the general public through faith leaders.

Business leaders from General Motors, General Electric, Standard Oil, Mutual Life, Sears, Roebuck, and more joined forces with a Los Angeles pastor named Reverend James W. Fifield Jr., who was called the "Apostle to Millionaires" due to the wealthy congregants who visited his church. According to the *New York Times*, the rich flocked to Fifield's church because he believed that, in his words, "The blessings of capitalism come from God." He emphasized rugged individualism and believed that FDR's welfare state violated most of the Ten Commandments. He felt the New Deal encouraged Americans to covet their neighbors' possessions, steal from the wealthy, and made a "false idol" of the federal government. Fifield became the face of the movement, leading a group called Spiritual Mobilization in the 1940s. From there, a years-long propaganda campaign was waged to infiltrate public consciousness through faith leaders, which a 1948 article in the *Nation* likened to "A major battle for the minds of the clergy." The article speculated that there was big money behind the movement.

Why did this contemporary belief that America was founded as a Christian nation gain steam within the American right? You can thank the nefarious machinations of corporate America.

The movement, referred to by Princeton professor Kevin M. Kruse as "Christian Libertarianism," aimed to get members of the clergy to adopt and promote their anti-big government, pro-free enterprise views by portraying the threat of big government as a threat to the nation's historical Christian values. By February 1947, the Spiritual Mobilization's clergy membership grew from 400 to 10,000. In their newsletter, they advertised pro-capitalism and libertarian books—like Friedrich A. Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*—to clergymen, who then preached pro-capitalism sermons to their congregation. This led to a huge nationalistic Christian religious revival throughout the 1950s, and everyone, including large advertising firms, Hollywood, and celebrities, connected American prosperity to the nation's Christian tradition.

This new religious revival intensified during the Cold War, as religion was waved as a national banner in the rallying cry against the Russians. The country's relationship to religion shaped the decade and led to the election of Dwight Eisenhower, who made faith a centerpiece of his campaign and time in office. Eisenhower made popular anti-New Deal, anti-union televangelist Billy Graham his spiritual advisor. And Graham, who was being given a big nationwide push by businessmen (just like Fifield), pivoted his sermons away from the homegrown threat of "socialism," "communism," or labor unions, to warning his plethora of listeners about the threat of the Russians.

The National Prayer Breakfast was created in 1953. "Under God" was added to the pledge of allegiance in 1954. And in 1955, a law was signed by Eisenhower that added "In God we trust" to all paper and coin currency. In 1956, the film *The Ten Commandments*—directed by Cecil B. DeMille, who was a congregant of Rev. Fifield's church—came out as thinly veiled anti-communist propaganda. It grossed over $65 million domestically upon its release (or nearly $800 million in today's dollars). Church attendance in America rose by 20% from 1940 to 1960, and millions of Americans were now trying to bring their religious worldview with them into the education system.

But the Supreme Court stepped in and made several rulings throughout the late 1950s to 1980s that hindered the way some white Evangelicals felt they should be able to run public schools and universities, and educate their children. This included the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling in 1954, which desegregated public schools; rulings that blocked school prayer and mandated Bible reading in the 1960s; and rulings in the 1980s that sustained a 1970 IRS decision to strip Bob Jones University (a fundamentalist Christian university) of their tax exempt status for refusal to desegregate, as well as one that blocked a Kentucky law mandating the Ten Commandments in a school district.

In the 1970s and '80s, socially conservative evangelicals came to dominate the Christian right, and morphed into the religious right due to backlash from these rulings—*especially* desegregation and constitutional abortion. The religious right harbored the libertarian ideals of the Christian libertarians, but moved historical revisionism to the forefront as the lynchpin of their movement to remake America in every way possible, focusing especially on the education system. Christian nationalist thinkers, in opposition to secular education, started to write revisionist history books, built their own private schools and universities, and created homeschooling curriculum where their ideas were disseminated. These books introduced new generations to the idea of America as a Christian nation, tying symbols like the Ten Commandments to the founding ideals of the nation. The narratives they told weaved Christianity into the fabric of American identity, with the effect that a whole new generation of believers in the Christian-founding myth was created. One of the most popular writers of this genre was David Barton, the source of the Louisiana Ten Commandments bill.

David Barton built a multimillion-dollar empire off of spreading the myth that America was founded as a Christian nation. His books have been criticized for their historical inaccuracies, like referring to Thomas Jefferson as a "conventional Christian," when he was in fact a theist who rejected Jesus' divinity and the Trinity. But for 40 years, Barton's ideas have dominated a large segment of American discourse. He has shaped history education in Texas, acting as an education advisor in the state government, and has had a role in various capacities in national Republican politics, influencing modern Christian nationalists like U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson.

As learned through a 2018 investigation by *Religion Dispatches*, Barton and WallBuilders were the central figures of a then-secret initiative known as Project Blitz: a cross-country alliance that had the aim of injecting Christianity into every inch of American life, bombarding targeted states' legislative chambers with so many copycat bills that opposition would get worn out trying to stop the onslaught. They wanted to start small, with easy-to-pass bills, then work their way up to those that are harder to pass. One of those "easy-to-pass" bills was putting the Ten Commandments in public schools.

After Barton and WallBuilders were exposed by *Religion Dispatches*, they changed names, resurfacing from the background years later. According to the news outlet *The 74*, in 2025 there were 28 Ten Commandments bills introduced in 18 states, all with language pulled from Project Blitz's model legislation. In dozens of instances, the bills shared the same exact language, often using David Barton's exact wording. When *The 74* did their analysis, they noted that the Louisiana bill had the same language as the copycat bills that originated from Project Blitz.

Reporting from NOLA.com further highlights the origins of the bill, where Rep. Horton stated that an email from a lobbying group directly linked to WallBuilders inspired her to introduce the law. In fact, Barton's son, the president of WallBuilders, spoke in support of the bill in a 2024 committee hearing.

What Happens Next?

Mills expressed that opponents—even those who share his faith—may join "the chorus of other protestors," but he and Louisiana Family Forum will remain focused on "decision makers," adding that "[u]ltimately the U.S. Supreme Court will serve as the final arbiter in this dispute."

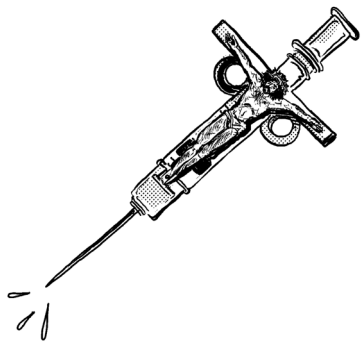
In 2022's *Kennedy v. Bremerton*, the Supreme Court—using misrepresented facts—ruled in favor of a football coach who was fired for continuously pressuring his players to pray with him after games. Louisiana State Attorney General Liz Murrill has stated that the *Kennedy* ruling made it constitutionally permissible to implement the Ten Commandment law in public schools. If Chris Dier's petition is accepted by the U.S. Supreme Court, we may find out that she's right.

It's of note that a petition to the U.S. Supreme Court doesn't guarantee a case will get a ruling. The Supreme Court receives about 10,000 petitions a year and currently only issues signed decisions on about 60. But Dier isn't the only one who has asked the Supreme Court to make a decision. Several families in Texas earlier in August 2026 also petitioned the Supreme Court, since Texas passed its own version of a Ten Commandments mandate.

If the Supreme Court doesn't weigh in on the constitutionality of these laws, the rulings of the lower courts will stand as the binding law for their respective geographic regions, leaving the country legally fragmented. For example, since the Fifth Circuit Court upheld the law, and the Fifth Circuit covers Mississippi, Texas, and Louisiana, the Ten Commandments laws will be allowed to stand in those states. Arkansas, on the other hand, which had its Ten Commandments law blocked by a different federal court, would be constitutionally prohibited from mandating such laws. Different judicial geographical regions could have competing precedents, leading to confusion.

If the Supreme Court does weigh in and finds the mandate constitutional, their ruling will be a green light for other conservative states to pass similar measures.

For Chris Dier, this petition is not an anti-Christianity crusade but is about trying to uphold religious freedom, noting that his issue isn't with Christianity, but instead, Christian nationalism. Dier is concerned about potentially getting national attention if the Supreme Court accepts his petition. But he is unwavering in his convictions: "Any time you put yourself out there to fight for what is right and fight against injustice, you inevitably kind of [make] yourself a target... But I know that what I'm doing is the right thing to do, and I would feel bad if I stood idly by while this was happening. What better cause than to fight for your students and students around the country?"



illustrations by Romey Petite

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take-out
bar seat
first date
break up
date night
family dinner
good times
bad times
end times
party time
any time

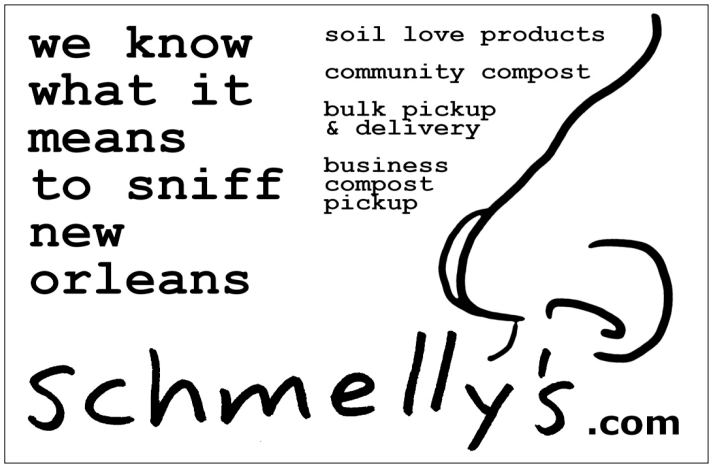
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WEEKDAY HAPPY HOUR 3 - 5PM



Members of Tulane Workers United and their supporters wait for their union announcement and voluntary recognition letter to be delivered to Tulane University President Michael A. Fitts on September 30. The letter notified the university administration that a supermajority of staff members in the proposed bargaining unit had signed authorization cards stating their desire to be represented by the Workers United labor union. (photo by Hayden Legg)



On October 17, as part of a national week of action, pro-Palestine organization Palestinian Youth Movement, along with local groups like New Orleans Stop Helping Israel's Ports (NOSHIP), Jewish Voice for Peace New Orleans, and New Orleans Democratic Socialists of America, lead a march through downtown New Orleans, stopping on Canal Street for over an hour to disrupt "business as usual" while calling attention to the ongoing occupation, settler violence, and genocide in Gaza. (photo by Temple Blacksnake)



"New Orleans Chamber Metal" seven-piece string quartet Anareta performs at Holy Diver on October 16. (photo by Stephanie Tarrant)

On-Stage Stands®



Little Freddie King, accompanied by guitarist R. Scully of Morning 40 Federation, performs at the Crescent City Blues & BBQ Festival in Lafayette Square on October 11. (photo by Tamara Grayson)



Samantha Fish closes out the first day of the Crescent City Blues & BBQ Festival in Lafayette Square on October 10. (photo by Tamara Grayson)



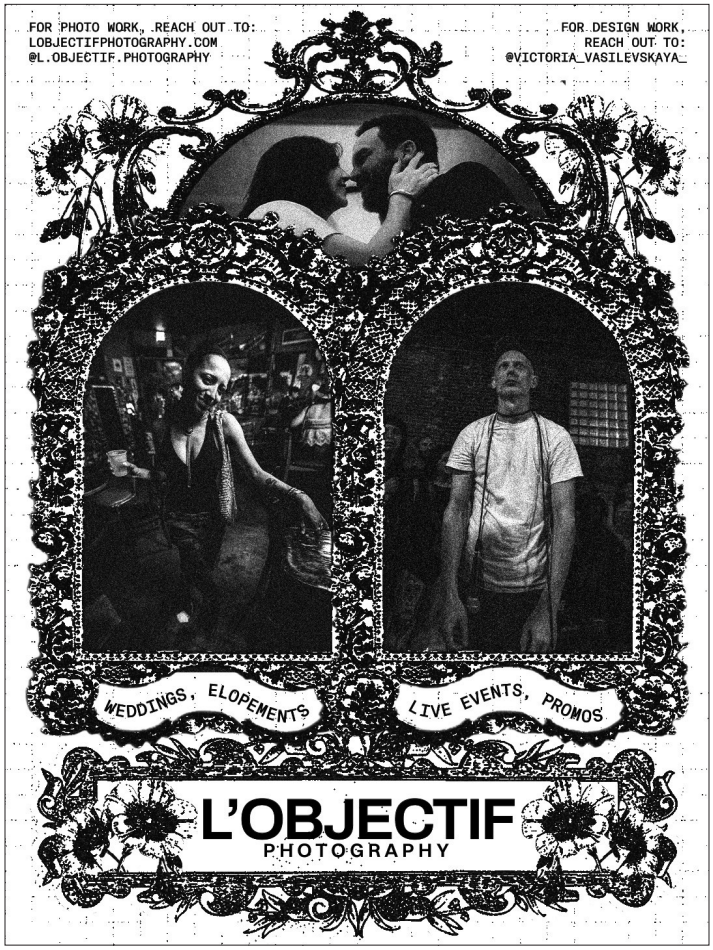
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SUEDO YOUTH ULTIMATE DISASTER DRACULA AND MORE
NEW UPSTAIRS COCKTAIL BAR "SECOND STORY" OPEN WED - SUN 5PM

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SECOND STORY OPEN	BLACK MASS KARAOKE W EMMA	SWB NOT WORKING	SECOND STORY COCKTAILS OPEN UPSTAIRS	PACO EAT THE RICH	MAIN ROOM RESURRECTION	TBA
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
SECOND STORY OPEN	BLACK MASS KARAOKE W EMMA		CHAMBER NOIR W PACO	DETHWISH BOBBY BRUISER MORE OCTOBER BOG BAT	SECRET BAND TBA THE QUADROHOLICS SECRET STACHE	SUBDIVISION (JOY DIVISION TRIBUTE) WSG TBA
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
SECOND STORY OPEN	BLACK MASS KARAOKE W EMMA	FREE JUKEBOX	CHAMBER NOIR W PACO	PACO EAT THE RICH	GREAT NOLA TRIBUTAL AFTERPARTY THE PALLBEARERS NEST SECOND STORY THE CHORE BOYS	GREAT NOLA TRIBUTAL AFTERPARTY SPIRIT IN THE ROOM THE UNNATURALS MORE TBA
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
DEFEND DECATUR 2 ROCK THE BLOCK PARTY	BLACK MASS KARAOKE W EMMA		CHAMBER NOIR W PACO	PACO EAT THE RICH	BOTH FLOORS RAVE SPACE DISCO LOCAL RIFFS	VACLATOR WSG TBA
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
SECOND STORY OPEN	BLACK MASS KARAOKE W EMMA	HOLY DIVER	CHAMBER NOIR W PACO	PACO EAT THE RICH	PUNK WEEKEND LE CHAT SEUDO YOUTH ULTIMATE DISASTER AND MORE	SH666 LATE NIGHT BILLY STRINGS AFTERPARTY

HOLY DIVER

11.2 INTERNATIONAL + IRRATIONAL W DJ CHRISCHARGE
11.4 NGLY (LIVE/ARGENTINA) MAX ROLLINS LEISURE MUFFIN INTERESTING RESULTS
11.5 FD504 PRESENTS SKINMAN (MS) FIEND DAYS OF GRIEF
11.6 BADZY HEY THANKS VALLOTON
11.7 FD504 PRESENTS DEVIL MASTER (PHILLY) NINTH CIRCLE (ATX) PALE MISERY DRACULA
11.8 FOUR ON THE FLOR DANCE PARTY
11.9 UP THE HAMMERS! W KONRAD
11.12 BIPOLAROID KNIVES IN THE CHAMPION (LAFAYETTE) & MORE
11.13 JOHN Q. PUBLIC (FL) KILLED BY FLORIDA (FL) THE SAWED OFFS (GA) DONKEY PUNCHER
11.14 THE LOWLIEST ONE (NY) THE DEAD SPIES BIG RED S.W.A.R.M.
11.15 WEIRD LOVE CHARMS W STATIC STATIC + DJ DRUGSTORE ELVIS
11.18 HSP666 PRESENTS COMMANDER AGARES (FINLAND) AVERNAL MOON (COLOMBIA) UTUK XUL (COLOMBIA) SERPENT SHRINE (NC)
11.21 FILTH ABYSS W DJS MANGE + SCYTHE
11.24 FAT KIDS ART PRESENTS VHS NIGHT
11.27 DREW FRANK NETHERMEAD & FRIENDS
11.30 THE REVEREND ROBERT SINEWAVED

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Twisted Teens
Will Never Know How to Grow

words & photos Dalton Spangler

Twisted Teens don't sit still for very long. They've learned they're better in motion. The local band released their debut in April 2024 and hit the road later that year, doing a few runs around the United States before touring the summer of 2025 in Europe and recording an EP there. They then returned to the States to play Gonerfest in Memphis and record what would become their three 2026 releases, Blame the Clown, Florida Water Blues, *and* The Holy Cross Tigers. *This year, they've continued touring the U.S. and achieved some major milestones, like signing with Sub Pop and opening for The Breeders. And they're not slowing down. On November 6, Sub Pop will release* The Holy Cross Tigers. *Then on November 18, Twisted Teens opens for Kurt Vile at the Joy Theater as part of a three-week tour together.*

To understand this New Orleans band—who seemingly sprung up overnight—I wanted to meet with the core duo and get to know their unique background as artists. Prior to Twisted Teens' ascension, Caspian Hollywell (vocals and guitar) was perhaps best known for being in Santa Cruz folk punk band Blackbird Raum but has also performed in many other projects, including Cinder Well, Scissorbills, Chardonnay, Bellringer, and with Sonya Badigian and Nick Shoulders. The other half of the band, "Razor" Ramon Joseph Santos (steel guitar), began gigging in New Orleans in the late 2010s, performing with various country and Cajun bar bands such as NBD and The Big Deals, Noah Trahan, and the Sister Street Aces. Each year, he'd live about six months in New Orleans playing music before returning to Canada (due to his immigration status) to paint for the rest of the year. He'd make a living there as a sign painter in Dawson City, Yukon.

We meet at Caspian's home in Holy Cross, which is especially restless. The front yard is overgrown, chickens are running around, and I hear cats yelping and neighbors hollering in the distance. Adding to the noise is the muffled sound of Atlanta punk band Sir & Sol recording in the front room of the home. I enter through a side gate to meet them in the backyard, past an old school bus. It's a huge yard. There's a shed full of bikes, a cookshack, a campfire, and an old delivery truck—and the lot extends further beyond that. I find Ramon (who goes by "RJ") and the band's live guitarist, Melrose "Mel" Billiard, out back. They pull up some chairs and offer me a drink. I sit down with Mel and RJ as Caspian dips in and out of the scene.

Caspian himself is equally as restless as his environment. He was absent at the start of the interview and would leave the conversation multiple times throughout the hour and a half I spent recording, while Mel and RJ, who felt they were unable to answer some questions without Caspian, sat with me. I assumed Caspian was attending to his guests up front but learned he was also taking care of t-shirt designs and press inquiries, so much so that he was doing a second interview on the phone with Mojo *magazine. The band had just announced* The Holy Cross Tigers *a couple of days prior, and today was Monday, so the few remaining music publications in existence all seemed to want the scoop as they entered their work week—a testament to how hot this group's brand of transplanted-New Orleanian rock'n'roll is at the moment.*

Thanks again for meeting with me. What have y'all been up to today so far?
RJ Santos: What did I get up to today? I literally was just throwing a guy out of my house. He was squatting in my place and I didn't want him there, and he kept refusing, so I just spent all morning throwing his shit out onto the curb.

Oh, that fucking sucks.
RS: No, it's great. Can you put that in the magazine, that I spent my day throwing some guy out?

I can leave that out if you want.
RS: No, I want it in there. [*laughs*]

I want to ask about the new album, *Holy Cross Tigers*, and the name coming from an old high school team. Being in the Holy Cross neighborhood, does this place have some sort of influence on y'all musically?
RS: A lot of the content of the songs are [influenced by Holy Cross], and then even a lot of the sound is really coming from the Holy Cross. A lot of the homies that live in the neighboring areas, they play all types of different music, and Twisted Teens is an amalgamation of all that sound that is being produced. Even some of the steel licks in *Florida Water Blues* are just Cajun licks that I was stealing from playing in Cajun bands. I was playing in Cajun bands a year or two ago.

Where would you play?
RS: Saint Roch, BJ's, Saturn.
Melrose "Mel" Billiard: The Tigermen Den, [for] Cajun brunch.

Going back a little bit, what was it about New Orleans that drew you?
RS: It was just by happenstance that I ended up here. I met some folks in Canada at a festival, and they were living in New Orleans, and they told me I could visit any time, so I did one year. And I just stayed, and I kept coming back every year. Because as a Canadian, I'm only allowed six months down in the States, so I have to keep coming back. So I would paint signs and pictures for six months and then come down here and practice music and try to play music with people for six months.

[*Caspian drops in.*]

Caspian, how did you end up finding this place and moving to Holy Cross?
Caspian Hollywell: I was walking past it and the dog ran in the house.

Was it abandoned or something?
CH: No, there was this old Polish guy that owned the whole neighborhood. He was the weed dealer, and he fixed Volkswagens. He had this circus woman in the house, and she refused to pay rent or anything. And eventually, the only way he could think to get rid of her, because he's not the type to call the cops or anything, was to sell the house from under her. But then he hired this sheisty pseudo real estate agent woman and [she] fucked off to Mexico.

"The fact that this town is already doomed is the only thing keeping it alive."

She put the listing on. There was no sign outside saying the house was for sale, and then the pictures online were almost designed to where you wouldn't even want to sell the house. Like one of the main photos was the bathtub with a bunch of skateboards in it. And the house was totally fucked up looking from the outside. Apparently some people came by trying to look at the house anyway. And that circus lady, she was just throwing them out, and she wouldn't let the real estate agent show it. So there was nothing happening with the house. But then I was running past it one day and the dog ran in the house. And so I had to go in there. I ended up talking to the [circus] lady and she was like, "Yeah, they're trying to sell the house." And I was like, "Well, fuck it, I'm gonna buy it." She's like, "Well, I want you to buy it because you're friends of friends." She knew all those like Krewe du Poux people and all that shit. So we were the only ones allowed to look at the house. I ended up getting it for really cheap. [Pitchfork *had a very different account of what happened in their interview published later in October.*] That would've been a little over 10 years ago when I came back. But I lived here [before]. I was squatting in the Bywater on Rosalie Alley, which, at that point, was called Murder Alley. And I was squatting there in a house before Katrina, and I left a few months before Katrina. So I've been in and out of this place for a long time.

You are originally from California though, right?
CH: Yeah, I'm from the East Bay, and my dad's from West Virginia, mom's from Kansas. So like half the time I'm talking totally crazy different. That's why when you listen to the records, I have like nine different accents—I've been moving around my whole life. I can't keep one in my head.
RS: Yeah, when we were in Ireland, I started developing the Irish accent.
CH: After a whole summer of that—where you're hanging out with Canadian punks and then you're in Eastern Europe, and then you're in fucking Ireland, and then you're in the South—our accent at the end of it... especially me, I'm just like this crazy smattering of redneck-Euro-trash-East-Bay-bro. It doesn't make any sense.

I feel like I read this somewhere, that y'all used to train hop?
RS: No comment. No comment.
CH: We're not allowed to talk about that shit. There's a lot of shit we used to do and some stuff we still do. But that's really not everyone's business, you know? Look, what are we gonna be like, "Oh yo, we used to train hop." Then we look like poseurs to all the people that still train hop. You gotta talk to us about the songs, man. The lore should be implied from the vibes.

Being in New Orleans, and also *ANTIGRAVITY* being a New Orleans magazine, I wanted to know why you ended up here?
CH: Well, it's a hub for busker culture, traveler culture, punk subculture, folk music, and also rap music. It's a cultural hub for a lot of different things that we've shared interest in.

I've seen y'all post on social media that people accuse y'all of being industry plants or not real teenagers—
CH: [The industry plant claim] was two different people with little comments online that are clearly obviously haters. It was two bad reviews and two shitty comments. But the funny thing is I just amplified it because this is what people do on the internet. They're like, "People are attacking me in the comments," and try to act like there's some controversy... I did some cyber-sleuthing on all the people that were talking mad shit, and it was always just some dude with skinny jeans who's in some mad wack garage punk band that gets no clout. So I was like, "I don't know. I'm gonna wait till someone who isn't in a failed garage rock band wants to say something bad about us." But really, the support we've received is amazing.

When y'all are touring, do you get a lot of questions about New Orleans?
CH: Yeah, it's like people wear New Orleans shirts. I guess I could have predicted that people would, really. Our album [*Florida Water Blues*] is very much about this city. [*The Holy Cross Tigers*] not so much so. A lot of the songs relate to New Orleans. There's a song about the desert. We mix it up, but there's a lot of songs about New Orleans on there. I'm not from here. I mean, I've been here longer than lots of people that are from here. For example, people that are 11 years old, you know? So in a way, I'm actually more from here than they are, because they're too young for that shit.
RS: We were getting criticism for not actually being [from] New Orleans. I heard some things.
CH: But we've gotten a ton of support from people, literally every day, messages like, "I'm from Louisiana. Fuck yeah. You guys are representing." And

Opposite page, left to right: RJ Santos, Caspian Hollywell, Mel Billiard

there's hella locals that are just down as fuck.
RS: We got asked to play somebody's wedding.
CH: Because we're fucking chill. We chill in this neighborhood. We're not only talking to transplants. Our next music video is the next-door neighbor, and he's just gutting fish. And we chill with him. We know our neighbors. I've made beats for rappers [such as Eclaire and Auto32] in this neighborhood. A lot of people move here and then they live in the Pacific Northwest again or something. I don't feel like that's what we do, but I'm not gonna sit here and pretend that I was born here, and I also don't care about that at all. I've lived here for long enough. I sing songs about the town I live in. When I lived in Santa Cruz, I sang songs about Santa Cruz. When I lived in Oakland, I sang songs about Oakland.


Performing at BJ's Lounge on April 29

It makes sense. It's like being here is going to inspire you in some way.
CH: If it didn't, it'd be questionable—like why are you not absorbing the vibe? Then it's kinda weird. Music comes from a place. That's why when these people write like, "Oh, I wanna start a post-shoegaze band," and you're like, "OK, well, you know My Bloody Valentine lived in Dublin in a squat? Are you gonna go live in Dublin in a squat?" All the best music comes from some raw-ass situation like that, whether it's rap music from the hood, punk music from some squat or abandoned building, or something like that. I mean, old-time music from the mountain holler, Cajun music from the swamps, it all has a setting to it. Have you ever played *Magic: The Gathering*? You have to have your land mana, or else you can't make music. If you don't have the support of your land, your music is trash. So that's what it is.
RS: We also never pretended that we're from New Orleans, you know? We never repped it super hard.

I asked Mel and Ramon this already, but when y'all were writing *Florida Water Blues* and *Holy Cross Tigers*, was there something about this side of the canal that inspired you?
CH: I mean, there's people that are being referenced in those songs. Hopefully they never find that out. But it's all New Orleans history because it's right down Old Good Children. That's the old name of St. Claude. That's why there's a Good Children Gallery. Our next album's called *The Holy Cross Tigers*, so yeah, obviously it's inspired by this bridge.

I assume the high school doesn't know, right?
CH: Well, they don't exist no more. Now it's a fucking development, like housing investment fucked up shit. But actually, some old head texted me. He's from the neighborhood. Some old man was like, "Yo, I'm from Holy Cross. I went to Holy Cross High School in the '80s, and you guys are my favorite fucking band." He's like, "I'm a Holy Cross Tiger too." We used to break into that place and get the T-shirts, so we'd all be walking around with Holy Cross Tigers shirts, because it was abandoned after Katrina.
RS: There was dozens of shirts floating around the neighborhood, people ransacked it.
CH: It got utterly murked by Katrina, that building. The roof just caved in and it was rotten. One time I was crawling around in there, and my fucking leg went through the floor, bro. Literally, like *ba-boom*. And it was like, the first floor of that place is 14 to 16 feet tall because the gymnasium was down there. So I was like *gah-goo*, and I literally almost went right through a bunch of jagged wood, like down into a pile of rusty trash and shit. Utterly insane.

I'm glad you didn't get seriously hurt.
CH: That's the last time I explored a bando. I've explored so many abandoned buildings in my life, and I was like, "Damn, I really don't have health insurance like that." It was one of those adulting moments where I was like, "Why the fuck? I'm a grown man. Why am I in this building like that?" And then the funny thing is, someone bought it out and did try to do demolition by neglect. It didn't work. Eventually they were like, "Well, we're gonna put all this money into revitalizing 'this building.'" We're going to build luxury apartments, which is definitely what the Holy Cross neighborhood needs. But the problem is it's so much money to renovate one of these old buildings that they actually made the rooms the smallest legally allowable size. So they're luxury apartments in there, but they're the smallest legally allowable space for you.

Like how they're trying to turn the abandoned Navy base into apartments and Checkpoint Charlie's into a luxury hotel.
CH: The people that do this stuff are the least creative people in the world. That's why their buildings are ugly. They think thinking about beauty is what idiots do. Then they make this shit, and they're living in a city where people actually care about that, and it doesn't work. No one moves into their fucking lame-ass buildings. Fuck them. I actually hollered at these developers. They had their clipboards out. There was 30 of them. I was like, "I know you guys. You guys are the fucking investors. You're the developers." And they're like, "Oh, yeah." And I was like, "Just to be clear, everyone around here hates you, and we would literally prefer tweakers who steal our shit than you as a neighbor." The people that'll rob you with a fountain pen are way scarier than the people that'll rob you with a six-inch

"I'm just like this crazy smattering of redneck-Euro-trash-East-Bay-bro. It doesn't make any sense."

knife, man... If this town wasn't an ecocidal mess, then all of this development would've happened 10 years ago, and all of this community would be over by now.

Say more about that. I'm curious.
CH: Well, look, the only thing keeping these people from destroying our fucking town, obviously it's not us. We're not resisting them. So why are they not? People don't want to move into their fucking buildings, and second of all, this town is a fucking disaster and you can't insure anything. So the fact that this town is already doomed is the only thing keeping it alive. They said that in *Zhuangzi*, in the Taoist text. They state the crooked tree, that's the tree that doesn't get cut down, because it's not useful. Like Zhuangzi's sitting on the side of the road, and he's talking to a woodcutter and the woodcutter's complaining. He's like, "Look at this gnarled, old tree. I can't use it for anything." And Zhuangzi's like, "That's the smartest tree in your whole field, because the other trees try to grow up straight and good, and you cut them all down. And this tree tried to grow up ugly and fucked up, and you left it alone." So actually, the smartest thing that tree ever did was never know how to grow.

That kind of reminds me of your music and how it can be a little imperfect. It can be mangled.
CH: But we're perfectionists about mangling it. That's the duality of Twisted Teens.

How do you play loose with the steel guitar? It seems so precise and technical. Can you even "mangle" it?
RS: It's both ways. You really still have to be precise, obviously, to be in tune and play really nice melodies. But also, it's sometimes a chore to even be loose.

It sounded like y'all were playing with electronic effects on it too on the *Holy Cross Tigers* album, is that true?
RS: Yeah. It's kind of funny now in the 2020s to see a steel guitar in a punk band or in a rock'n'roll band. I think that part of Teens' success is people hearing that and they're like, "Whoa." But really in the past 50 to 100 years, the steel guitar was a main instrument in American pop music. Like from its inception in Hawaii, it was a main thing up to like the mid-'50s to late '50s.

[*Caspian has left us at this point.*]

And even then it was still in country music.
RS: Well, it was in country music, but then country music got taken over by rock'n'roll. That was the start of the elimination of steel guitar in popular music.

Y'all have been really blowing up, like you're on Sub Pop now. How has it been getting all this extra attention?
RS: We were doing pretty well in the underground, but it wasn't like what it is now. It hasn't really changed me much and my circumstances. But I feel that it's happening so quickly that it's even hard to think about it, and I don't really spend my days busying myself thinking about it. Otherwise, I might go crazy. And probably the same for Mel here. I think the healthiest thing is just keep on keeping on. It's kind of like the whole thing with the artist's life. If you think about it, then you'll crumble into existential dread. But if you just keep doing it, then those questions aren't really certain. The point of your life as an artist is to just keep living the artist life. I spent so many years here in New Orleans waking up in the morning being like, "What the fuck am I doing with my life?" Maybe that had a positive impact on me.

Why do y'all think Twisted Teens blew up versus some of the other bands that y'all have been in?
MB: It was the bumper stickers. We got more bumper stickers than anybody.
RS: Yeah, we do. We have dozens of them. But that's probably why we blew up. No, but to answer your question in an honest way, I think it's just that we worked on it super fucking hard. I don't think I've ever worked that hard in my life. Well, maybe I have.

Sometimes it doesn't pay off, you know?
RS: Well, the only way you can succeed is if you work hard. And I knew that because I came from a painting background, and I worked super hard on painting signs to the point where I could just make a living, and I started a business and made a living doing that. I was busy every summer, maybe too busy. So I just applied that theory into the Twisted Teens and so did Caspian and Mel here, and it seemed bulletproof. But you also have to believe in what you're doing. People see if you believe in what you're doing.

I think that people do see that Twisted Teens feels real in a way that sets y'all apart from a band like Geese, for example. Especially all the shit Caspian does with Instagram. The other day he posted something like, "Journalists, don't ask me about indie rock bands. Ask me about Xaviersobased and Dead Moon."
RS: Yeah, me and Mel don't really listen to indie rock or even contemporary music that much. And I think that's part of the strength of Twisted Teens is that we're really divorced from modern sound. And we listen to really old music, and a lot of that is applied in the music of Twisted Teens.

What have you mostly been listening to this year?
RS: Lately, I've been listening to Greek music from the '30s. A guy who adopted the steel guitar because the Hawaiian craze reached Greece. And he


ANGELA CALONDER

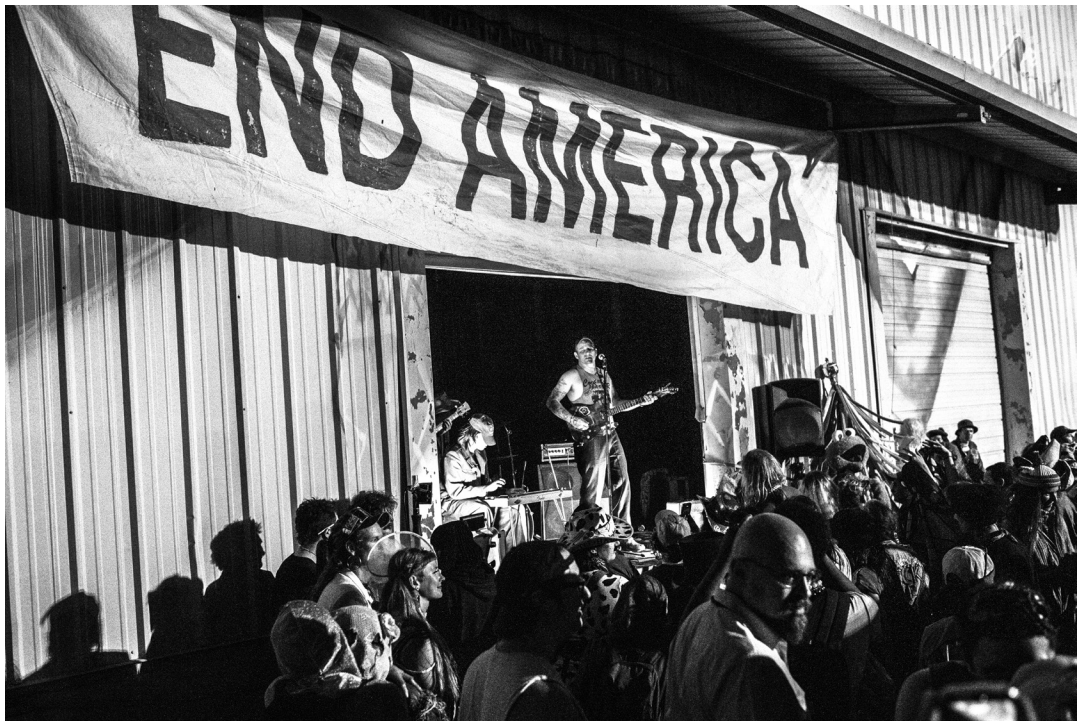
Performing for a "Rock Out for Gaza" benefit at Okay Bar, April 2024

applied it into Rebetiko music and formed a band. His name is Kostas Bezos and his band's called The White Birds. It's super fucking weird, and I highly recommend everybody listen to this because it's really strange but also really beautiful. I certainly haven't heard anything like that before.

I've been seeing a lot of people, myself included, compare y'all to Guided by Voices in terms of output. Do y'all feel like that's a fair point of comparison?
RS: I don't even know who that is. And I'll be honest with you: Once this thing gets published, I'm not even gonna read it. I never read them. That's why I get texts from random people being like, "Hey, you should not have said that." Or like, "Hey, that's not real." I'm like, "I don't read them, man." Like, I just say things when I'm being asked in these interviews.

That's cool. Sorry this has been such an informal interview.
RS: This is generally how our interviews go. We had an interview with the BBC a few weeks ago, and we just made fun. They hung up on us. They weren't expecting us to completely make fun of them in front of their faces. Me and Caspian are supposed to fly to New York City to do a *New York Times* interview. I said, "Why do we gotta fly for that? Why can't they just call us?"

I think that y'all might be the biggest new punk or rock band to come out of New Orleans in a while. Was there a turning point where y'all started to notice that? I guess I'm just asking, "Why do you think you blew up?" again.
RS: It's hard to say. A lot of it is like beating the shit out of the road. We were in Europe for three months, four months, you know? And we just kept releasing records. So look, I think if you're super active like that, people respond to it. While we were recording the two albums, I was also gigging out, having to learn a bunch of new material, and then using that material immediately in the recordings. It was coming from practicing in the bus, just all this new material with this other band, and then coming into the house and having to write and record with the Twisted Teens. So it's like all of the stuff that I was learning, whether it was Cajun music or R&B music, it was just being funneled back into the recording studio. And same thing with the melody.



Performing on Mardi Gras night at BMike's StudioBE

[*Caspian walks by on the phone listing various bands, pacing around their backyard. He's been doing another interview for* Mojo.]

I'm picturing what your days must have been like living in the bus. Did you just get up, go make eggs in the kitchen, and start playing? Or what was that like?
RS: Yeah, sometimes. Or come back after a gig and then just do some recording. It was weird because my life was literally that bus and this house for six months. And there were days that went by where I didn't leave Holy Cross. I find that, especially now after all these tours, I don't want to leave my house so much anymore right now. I'm not a very extroverted person, so it takes a lot out of me, and you could tell with Mel here, it takes a lot out of us to see a lot of people.

Yeah, I feel bad having to pester y'all.
RS: No, man. You're only one guy. You're not like 15 people asking questions. I hope you don't make us look like assholes.

I'm trying not to. Y'all opened for The Breeders last month. Were you into The Breeders at all?
RS: Oh, I love The Breeders. I've had such a crush on Kim Deal since I was probably 11, when I first heard the Pixies and then hearing The Breeders shortly after that. She's one of my heroes. And then to play with The Breeders was something else.

How'd you feel when you found out y'all were signed to Sub Pop?
RS: I don't even know. I mean, we kind of just signed the contract and went on our merry way.

Did you have a lot of labels trying to sign y'all?
RS: Yeah, there was Third Man who was scratching on us, and there was a few smaller labels. Sub Pop seemed to be the best one. They seemed up our alley. Like, the largest "independent" one.

I know y'all have worked with a few labels in the past but your debut was completely self-released right?
RS: Yeah, so Sunny War, she lives in Chattanooga but out of the goodness of her heart because she believes in us, funded us $2,000 to print out the vinyl for the first record. Shout out to her. That's how the enterprise really got started.

And your EP, y'all recorded when you were in Europe released through Jazz Life, right? What's his name again?
RS: Yeah. Steven from Blood Red Shoes. I guess they were pretty famous. But again, really supported us. From the goodness of his heart, he just believed in us, set up three shows in England for us, and we recorded in a studio.

Why did y'all go to Europe so early? Touring Europe is super cool, but it seems harder than touring the United States for the same three or four months.
RS: Because touring the United States sucks. That's basically the reason. And you're taken care of in Europe. You got a bed most of the time. You got a free meal, and you got endless amounts of beverages. They really take care of people over there. As opposed to the United States. I mean, we've done some dumpy-ass tours here. It's not bad, but, you know, it's definitely rougher. Europe seems to have more of a respect for artists.
MB: They get government money over there.

I talk to a lot of New Orleans bands, and the bands who really seem to "do well," sell

a lot of records or whatever, are usually out touring all the time.
RS: You know, I noticed this thing in New Orleans that's kinda strange. It's like if you are big in New Orleans, like you're popular, you gig out all the time in New Orleans as a band—you kinda only remain in New Orleans. But it's the ones who blow up elsewhere, they're not really gigging out so much and playing in New Orleans. I don't think we, as Twisted Teens, really have that big of a following down here. Like I said, I don't think anybody really gives a fuck.

I think some people care. Y'all were able to get a decent chunk of people at your BJ's show in April, and you're opening for Kurt Vile at the Joy Theater later this year.
RS: Well, we're trying to implement that in our tours now. Every once in a while, we just want to actually [spend] one or two days of the tour playing a punk show. Whether it be a secret punk show or some smaller venue in the city. Like we did that in Olympia at a house show, and then we did that in New York too. It was like a secret show.

Like the Mardi Gras Day show, which was a hotline show, so I remember having to call to find it.
RS: Yeah, that was probably one of the most fun shows I've ever played. I remember my amp almost exploding. Like it felt like it was going to explode. I was using that as a seat and I could feel the rumble, and it was just getting so hot. It was so cranked.

Do you remember all the costumes and stuff?
RS: A little bit. I remember looking out into the crowd and seeing an ocean of glitter.

[*Caspian comes back and I ask if he has time for a few questions. He tells me I've got 5 to 10 minutes and they have to go get lunch and play at 4 p.m. (It's almost 3 p.m.). He says* Pitchfork *is flying in a writer from Chicago to interview the band tonight.*]

It's crazy y'all are doing so many interviews.
CH: Bro, you do not even understand. I'm so used to having a camera pointed in my face after the last three months of my life. We were literally playing basements in Germany this time last year. I had a broken foot and we were literally playing squats in Germany. And now we're talking to *Pitchfork* and *Guitar World* and shit like that.

I wanted to ask you specifically about the three-album thing, they seem like they represent different moods or seasons. Is that true?
CH: There is kind of a seasonal thing with it but then the problem is I couldn't release it at that schedule. *Florida Water Blues* is more like Mardi Gras season, *Blame the Clown*'s springtime. And then this [*The Holy Cross Tigers*] is like fall. And then the first one, [Twisted Teens' self-titled] was like summer. So it's the four seasons. But I couldn't drop it in that schedule. It would've slowed our drop schedule down by like a year and a half. But they actually are seasons. *Florida Water Blues* is winter, but it's Louisiana winter. It's not snow. *Blame the Clown* really—there's that song "Little Seed." That's why it's neon green. It's for the new shoots of spring. But I don't care. I don't need people to know that. You don't have to tell people this shit. You can just know in your head, and then the vibe changes. It's the colors. It's literally orange for the summer, brown for the fall, blue for the winter, and green for the spring. It's obvious.



Did you have that idea before you started recording everything?
CH: I don't know. It's hard to say if you notice things happening or if you think of them happening. For me, it's more about noticing what's happening rather than pretending that I thought of it all. I did think of it all, but that's not me that's— you have a lover named the white goddess, the muse, you know? So you have to have fun with her and not just treat her like an old pony that does the dishes and does all your work and puts the baby to sleep when you want to watch the fucking game. You gotta have fun with her. But I wouldn't claim, "Oh, yeah, I invented all this." It's just more of a receptive process.

RJ and I were talking about the Mardi Gras Day show, the one at BMike's studio on Royal outside. You remember that show?
CH: Oh yeah. You're talking about the genny show. We knew the cats that were doing all that. The problem is not that we can't do this stuff now, it's just that how much time is there to do it? The other reality is that we just spent all our time and energy and all our resources and all our money for the last two years getting this band out the gate. So now we kind of have to go take some gigs. But we'll always play generator shows and shit like that. I mean, I've been doing that shit since literally the '90s. Why would I stop now? Just because we're playing Coachella? I don't care.

You're playing Coachella?
CH: Yeah, we're playing all that shit. Primavera [Sound], Coachella, like all that shit. We're doing it all. Mosswood [Meltdown].

Coachella's a good paycheck too.
CH: But the thing is when you start getting these bigger paychecks, then you cut in your employees. Your own pay doesn't go way through the roof because now you have management, now you have a booking agent. You see what I'm saying? You have to pay taxes on this shit. So if you look at it in the abstract, like our actual money that we're making has improved, but it's not by the margins that you would think. Maybe once we keep the energy up, because we literally charted. We're on the Indie Top 40 right now, as of yesterday. Absolutely insane. Bro, I gotta eat lunch. I'm starving.



Twisted Teens' fourth full-length The Holy Cross Tigers *will be available November 6 and they will be performing at the Joy Theater opening for Kurt Vile on November 18. For more info, check out twistedteens.bandcamp.com and @twistedteensneworleans on Instagram.*



ALABAMA SHAKES
I MUST BE DREAMING
(ISLAND)

It's been 11 years since Alabama Shakes released an album as a band, as lead singer Brittany Howard has spent the past decade pursuing solo work. So when the group announced the release of a new record, *I Must Be Dreaming*, fans indeed thought they may wake to find it was all gossamer and stardust. Thankfully, the dream has substance after all. The band leans deep into the groove for this album, not only through Howard's soulful vocals, but with augmentation from stunning bass, spacey psychedelic synth, and crunchy guitar. Ultimately, this is a record about love—lost, found, and yearned for—on both personal and societal levels. On opener "Tea Time," Howard speaks of building a kingdom in her soul where fires once burned, but flowers now grow. "Another Life" slices open old wounds and ponders the question of whether lost love can live again. On "Garden," she warns a romantic rival that "If you don't water your garden, I will." This pattern continues as the Shakes plumb the depths of contentment in genuine love ("Time" and "Easy") and yearning for reciprocal love ("How Love's Supposed To Go" and "Tied To You"). The yearning for societal love and repair is also present, alongside the tension of wondering how things got so bad. "I Feel Hope Coming" tries to keep the flame of love lit. On "American Dream," Howard more explicitly takes the current administration to task with lyrics like "Out of reach, doublespeak / Got the White House pretty and pimped out / Gun reform, my body, my choice / Got the big TV to show you what you didn't even know you wanted / Got the EPA, sure is hot today / Low-grade fever, lower-wage people / How many folks got shot this week? / Mm, it's enough to make you wanna go back to sleep." And yet, the last 90 seconds of the song consist of plodding instrumentation with steady bass and a distant, ghostly chorus of "keep dreaming." It suggests that love is the ultimate underpinning of our lives individually and collectively, and without it, we'll never wake fully from the nightmare of this existence. *—Erin Hall*



BELLRINGER
IS THIS THE AFTERLIFE
(HOLY CROSS TIGERS)

With a cursory glance at the cover art, you can glimpse the core struggle of *is this the afterlife*. Appearing like a gateway to Hades, the album is "for all the buddies that didn't make it," with every song feeling like an episode of life either in an uphill trudge or a tailspinning descent. Bellringer is Summer Newman's side project—Newman's better known as the guitarist and vocalist of New Orleans folk punk band Holy Locust. This LP also features songwriting help from Twisted Teens member Caspian Hollywell (who recorded, produced, mixed, and plays guitar on the LP). It's a folk-punk-adjacent record influenced by traditional Americana and Irish folk music (notably featuring Ian Lynch of Lankum on "Attention"), but with more pop and indie-rock songwriting. Opener "Ride" seems to sample the quiet rhythm of windshield wipers at full blast in a downpour before launching into a twangy guitar melody, joyous synths, and steady drums like a roller coaster crawling upward to the big drop. Static crackles in the dead air all around the album, along with other little so-called imperfections like doors creaking open and dogs barking, adding to its rootsy vibe. Newman is a powerful vocalist with a penchant for melodies experimenting beyond her influences. "You Leave" is surprising, feeling more in line with bedroom pop à la early Clairo, and about as far away from crusty folk punk as you can get. Overall, this second album from Bellringer is more world-weary than the 2024 debut *The Field*, but persists in blissful defiance. *—Dalton Spangler*



THE DEWDROPS
DEW SUM'!
(DEWDROP)

I first saw the Dewdrops live during my first week in New Orleans. I felt young, lonely, and out of place. Now, over two years later, I've settled into my skin here, and so, it seems, has this band of Loyola grads. This is most obvious on the track "It's A Matter Of Fact," a rerecording of a single released in October 2024. The instrumentalists work in conversation with the band's vocalist, Alicia Ynez, passing the melody between them, building up and up until the song culminates in a solo section where trombonist Eli Fisher and trumpeter Andy Dufrene engage in a lively call-and-response until they all trip back down to a baseline groove. The tempo here is slightly faster than on the original release, allowing Ynez to really impress with her staccato, rapid-fire delivery. Her voice and where she can push it remains the key ingredient of the emotional core of the record throughout, especially with "GLORY," a gospel-style love song that involves some substantial vocal acrobatics, and her sudden dynamic changes on the playful, jaunty "What I'm Not." The grooves get a little repetitive at times, but that's the worst I can say. *Dew Sum'!* is a good example of what this city does best: making jazz feel *alive*. *—Robyn Kopeny*



MIKE DILLON
MIKE & BEIGNET GO TO THE ZOO
(ROYAL POTATO FAMILY)

Grieving loved ones is never an easy process, regardless of whether they are people or pets. On *Mike & Beignet Go to the Zoo*, percussionist Mike Dillon—known for his work with everyone from local jazz group Nolatet to the eccentric Les Claypool—navigates both the loss of friends and the deteriorating health of his beloved dog Beignet. Dillon works through the pain by crafting instrumentals that reimagine his late friends as animals that he and Beignet encounter on a joyful trip to the zoo. Jazz icon Ellis Marsalis is given new life as "Ellis the Penguin" and local underground legend Hollise Murphy becomes "Hollise the Meerkat." Dillon, credited with 17 different percussive instruments on this album, plays like a kid in a candy store on richly layered compositions with charming titles like "Gibby Plays Possum" and "Gorilla and Zebra Birthday Party." Longtime collaborators Brian Haas (Nolatet) and Earl Harvin (Billy Goat) appear sporadically throughout the album, but *Mike & Beignet*

Go to the Zoo is primarily an intimate affair built on layer after layer of Dillon bashing away at instruments such as the vibraphone, tubular bells, and a MIDI instrument called a MalletKAT to glorious result. Sprawling nine-minute-long closer "Beignet Greets the Owl," a pulsating ambient piece built on distortion and tabla, imagines an owl taking Beignet to what Dillon describes as "the ultimate 'zoo in the sky.'" Just weeks after completing these sessions, Dillon's dear companion Beignet passed away, but his memory and those of so many more continue to live on through this heartwarming collection of tributes. —*William Archambeault*



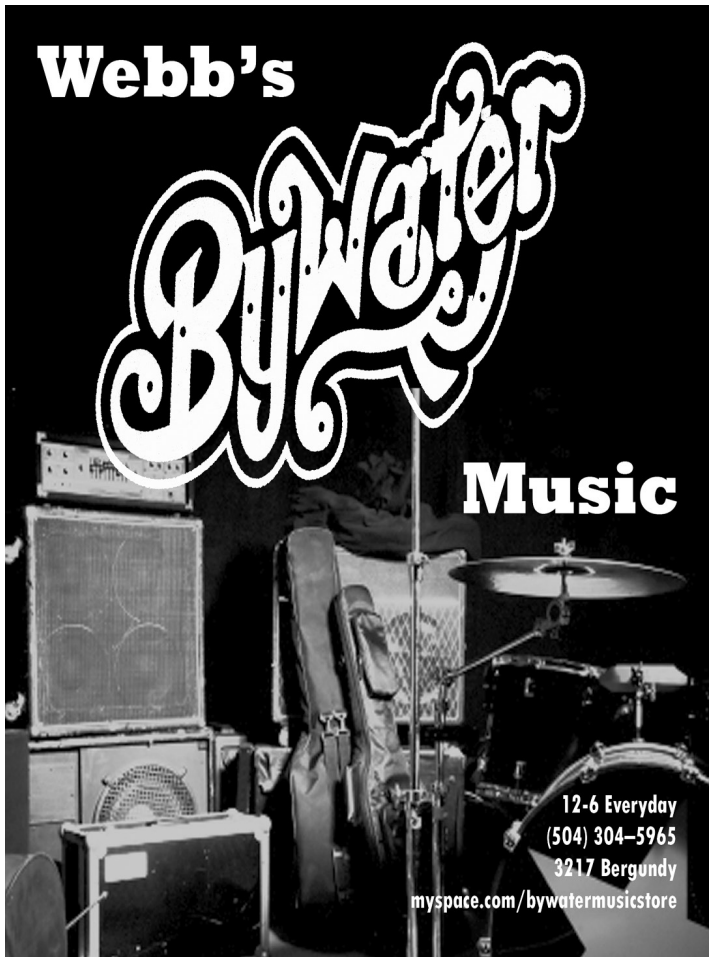
FONTAINES D.C.
DOPAMINE CHAMBER
(XL RECORDINGS)

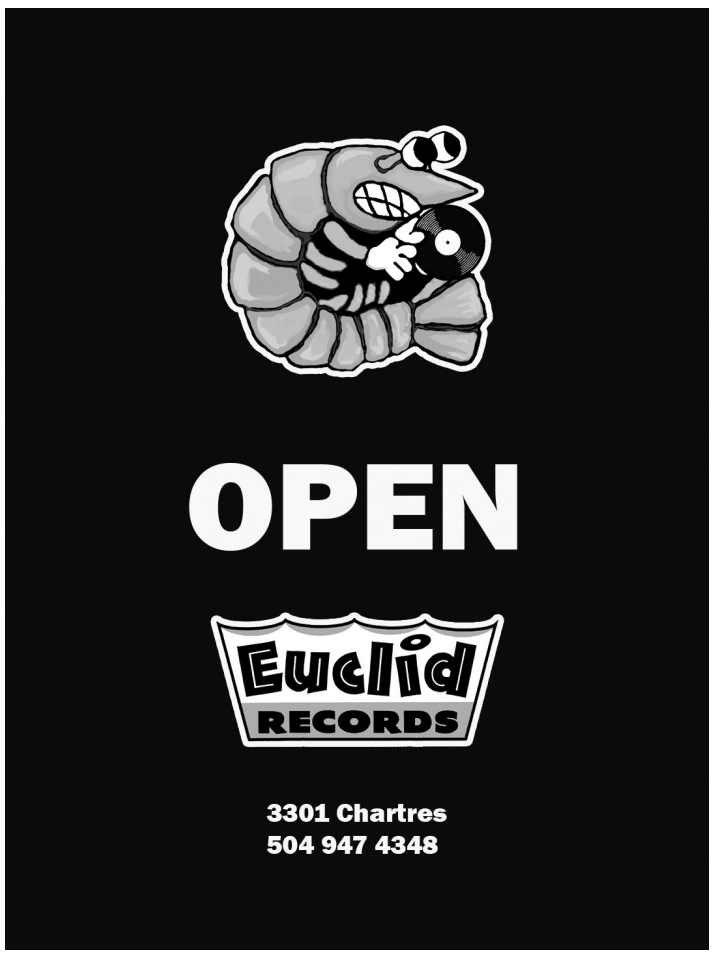
It has been seven years since their debut, and Fontaines D.C. now sell out large venues instead of small clubs, their original post-punk sound having evolved into something grander. It would be tempting to label them as "sellouts," but that would be lazy. Their social consciousness and analysis of the modern world remain sharp, and their musical evolution reveals a band unwilling to rely on the same old tricks. *Dopamine Chamber*, their fifth and latest album, is a concept album built around our willing surrender to the seductive and destructive forces of modern technology. Taking cues from bands like The Cure and New Order, the songs are gorgeous and expansive, a glittery musical package that belies the foreboding question just beneath the surface: What do our lives, and our loves, amount to as we allow our world to become more dominated by social media and A.I.? On "Marianne," lead singer Grian Chatten, in character and accompanied by moody strings and synths, makes the offer, "You can follow my lead / I can help you disappear," words that feel more like a threat than salvation. "Where Is Gone?" sounds like it could be the theme for a Bond film and features Rosalía on guest vocals and is a stunning and heartbreaking tale of modern love spiritually reminiscent of Nick Cave and PJ Harvey's "Henry Lee." "Mimesis," with its shiny, New Order-esque synths and guitars, wrestles with the need for true human connection in a world where external validation has become currency. With *Dopamine Chamber,* Fontaines D.C. challenges us to face the unsettling truths of our reality and to remember what it is to be human, pain and all, before we all fully succumb to the hollowing forces of modern tech. —*Mary Beth Campbell*



TOM MORELLO
EVERYONE GETS EVERYTHING THEY WANT
(MOM+POP)

Living legend, rock icon, and one of the greatest guitarists of all time, Tom Morello has spent most of his life developing his musical prowess as a revolutionary weapon against fascism, colonialism, and militarism. Morello's dizzyingly long resume includes acts like Rage Against the Machine, Street Sweeper Social Club (with rapper/director Boots Riley), his solo project The Nightwatchman, and supergroups Prophets of Rage and Audioslave, plus collaborations with the likes of Bruce Springsteen, Pussy Riot, Run-D.M.C., X Ambassadors, and more. His history of political activism is as famous as his musical resume—he is an ACLU Smart Justice Ambassador and founding member of nonprofit Axis of Justice. In this vein,

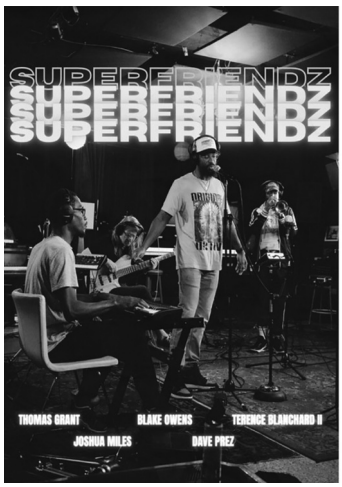




Morello takes every opportunity to disparage and speak out against racism, immigration raids, corrupt politicians, capitalistic overreach, and more in *Everyone Gets Everything They Want*. Featuring an iconic list of guest features, this nostalgic album also highlights the best of Morello's signature sound. Though some lyrics are reminiscent of a rock opera, a bit on the nose (perhaps even melodramatic), the album finds itself by track three, "Adjourn It," (featuring Serj Tankian of System of a Down) and gains momentum from there. "Unconquered," featuring Irish rap group and activists Kneecap, is a tour de force, a standout track with lyrics performed in both Irish and English. It's a legendary team-up emblematic of the entire album's revolutionary spirit: "Let the rich go / Colonize Mars / I prefer the gutter / Looking up at the stars." Co-written with his son Roman Morello, the song "Date Night" has a melody that's so Tom, it's hard to believe Roman wrote it—but he is clearly his father's son, playing an inspirational role for the album as well as contributing original riffs for five tracks. In *Everyone Gets Everything They Want*, Morello's pen and sword are equally mighty. —*Terra Durio*

OG BLAKE OWENS
THE SUPERFRIENDZ
(UNPLUGGED)
(NOMW)

One of the most important albums I ever listened to as a child was legendary R&B band Mint Condition's 1996 album *Definition of a Band*. Much like their previous albums, it was difficult to place their sound; it wasn't just a funk album, or a hip-hop album, or even a neo-soul album. Thirty years later, a New Orleans-based band known simply as The SuperFriendz—featuring Terence Blanchard II (Terence Blanchard's son), Dave Prez, Thomas Grant,



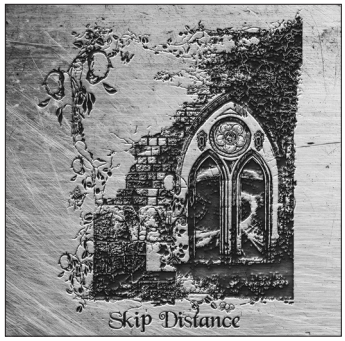
Joshua Miles and rapper Blake Owens—has combined elements of neo-soul, hip-hop, and jazz to create their first EP, *Unplugged*. The opener, which uses Kool & The Gang's "Summer Madness" and carries the same name, showcases Owens' sterling storytelling skills on the mic where he talks about the post-Katrina gentrification of New Orleans with lyrics such as, "They kicked us out / But wanna keep all the culture." On the second track "Trust In Me," The SuperFriendz are joined by Chicagoan-turned-New Orleanian vocalist Jaime Woods, and the track hearkens back to the spirit of The Roots' classic "You Got Me." Woods is showcased again on the track "Me and You," which tells the story of a relationship going through the traditional ups and downs. On the closer "Culture," Owens raps once again about post-Katrina gentrification, discussing the myth of affordable housing in the city with the line "Because this affordable housing I can't afford." Despite the EP clocking in under 15 minutes, *Unplugged* is without question worth a listen due to the outstanding musicianship on each of the four tracks—the scant runtime leaves the listener wanting more. —*Ryne Hancock*



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SKIP DISTANCE
S/T
(STUDIO DUDIO)

The youths yearn for post-hardcore. And not the club-dragging beatdown kind. No, the good stuff—the melodramatic, sassy kind full of bad poetry, which Baton Rouge quintet Skip Distance delivers on their self-titled debut EP. Utilizing harmonies and clashing vocals between two or three voices, with Claire Use' often leading the way, Skip Distance reminds me of other indie-tinged emo bands, like if Tigers Jaw had more bite. For a brief EP, they demonstrate the range of a seasoned touring band, not a scrappy DIY project. Take the track "Gravity Well," which starts almost like a slowcore song with lumbering bass and hushed vocals before palpitating into gnashing guitars and rabid drums as the emotions ramp up. They're clearly a virtuosic bunch of musicians, made all the more impressive by the crisp, professional studio-level recording that avoids feeling overproduced. The lyrics often deal with the anxieties of young adult life: fearing the future, missing the past, and fumbling through relationships and emotions, using phrases like "clipped to the back rooms" to explain social isolation or "cosplaying" to hide the hurt. *Skip Distance* is timeless angst in modern terms. —*Dalton Spangler*

SUNSET JAZZ BAND
L'ÂME DES POÈTES
(FAIRGROUND)

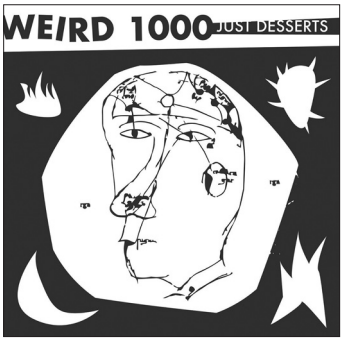
During the pandemic, a group of Francophile musicians started meeting at sunset to play the music of celebrated French singer Georges Brassens—thus The Sunset Jazz Band was formed. Eventually, they moved from the park to gigs in



downtown bars, and this month they are releasing *L'âme Des Poètes* (*The Soul of the Poets*) as a short and sweet homage to the master of the *chanson*. Historically, *chansonniers* played beautiful music, but they were also storytellers and social commentators. In the same vein, Brassens wrote prolifically on subjects from the refined to the lowbrow, combining a poet's delicate sensibilities with the disdain for authority that has always characterized France's populist musical tradition. The Sunset Jazz Band's Brassens selections are a great introduction to Brassens. "La Marine" is a cheeky ode to brief and passionate encounters, and "Les Copains D'abord" pays tribute to the importance of friendship. On the final track "Mourir Pour Des Idées," his contrarianism and lyrical precision are on full display. With a wink and a smirk, Brassens feints and parries with the worldview of ideological extremists who endorse martyrdom, and so forget to fight for life. The album also peppers in non-Brassens material from some of his contemporaries. Musically, the songs fit nicely with the band's New Orleans *manouche* sound, though the deep dive into Brassens is what really shines. All told, *L'âme Des Poètes* is an absolute French pastry of an album, with an adorable cover illustration by *ANTIGRAVITY*'s own Laura Frizzell as the cherry on top. —*Holly Devon*

WEIRD 1000
JUST DESSERTS
(TOUGH GUM)

The last thing on my mind as fire ants chewed me up on an Audubon Park bench was how "wild and precious" life was. But that's what vocalist Una Wagner, of New Orleans post-punk band Weird 1000, mused about in my headphones as



I rolled up my pant legs and banged my Converse on the pavement. On "Grass," the jangly, fuzzy opener about a lovely day outdoors, she describes a grasshopper and the awe-inspiring weirdness of the world as a chugging bassline thumps frantically. Picking fire ants off made me realize what Weird 1000's debut EP *Just Desserts* is: overstimulation. The song "Input" is lyrically about being inundated with information, while the band, a lifeguard whistle, and what sounds like an opera singer get progressively louder and surround the listener. Later, "Kaiju Colossus," a song about taking up space in a way only a colossal monster like Godzilla could, follows a similar trajectory structure-wise, with bouncing bass and drums driving the song off a cliff as Wagner alternates between talk-singing, screaming, and more operatic vocals. As unpleasant as this may all sound, post-punk has a history of being its best when it's totally wired, wound up, and springy. Weird 1000 continues that tradition and then some.
—Dalton Spangler

DAVISITO NAVARRO / HORACIO "EL NEGRO" HERNÁNDEZ
DAVISITO + EL NEGRO LIVE FROM NEW ORLEANS
(DAVISITO PRODUCTIONS)

In recent years, a wave of Cuban musicians has been flooding the New Orleans music scene, thanks in no small part to the sustained efforts of CubaNOLA Arts Collective, an organization devoted to strengthening ties between New Orleans and Cuba. *Davisito + El Negro Live from New Orleans* is proof positive of this miraculous phenomenon. Even if you've grown accustomed to regular encounters with Cuban



musical wizardry, the Snug Harbor album release party was something special. At such an intimate venue, the sparks flying from trumpeter Davisito Navarro and his assembled A Team (featuring the impossibly cool guest percussionist Yissy Garcia) practically constituted a fire hazard. Jazz is a genre that requires a certain level of virtuosity to play, but it takes more than skill to make the music really come alive. Whatever that X factor is, Navarro has it in spades. Those who missed the show can take heart: Listening to the live album gives you the same contact high that you get up close and personal. Upbeat tracks like "Hollygrove Groove" and "La Conga" bring some heavy Cuban polyrhythms—the percussionist on the album is Navarro's collaborator and master drummer Horacio "El Negro" Hernández. A strident trumpet elevates these dance numbers, though his horn makes just as much impact when Navarro cools it down. On "Gazing At The Moon," Navarro's trumpet is all tenderness, with Oscar Rossignoli delicately circling his plaintive notes on piano. On "Davisito Blues," Rossignoli gives his keys the New Orleans treatment, and Navarro follows suit on trumpet. The result is a kind of reversal of Dizzy Gillespie's incorporation of Afro-Cuban rhythms into American jazz, a sign that the Cuban presence in New Orleans music will continue to be as fruitful as it is fateful.
—Holly Devon



NOVEMBER 2026

2ND CHORUS CONNECTION 6PM
4TH LINE DANCING W/ MISS HONEY SPARKLES 730PM
5TH BELLA BLUE'S GRADUATES SHOWCASE 7PM
6TH DAVIS ROGAN 5PM / WHISKEY & RHINESTONES 7PM / LADIES FIRST OPEN MIC COMEDY 10PM
7TH RAMONA ROSE: DIAMONDS&PEARLS 7PM
9TH NERD NITE: DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 6PM
10TH BARTENDER JEOPARDY 630PM
11TH LINE DANCING W/ MISS HONEY SPARKLES 730PM
12TH CARLOTTA COQUETTE: HUZZAH BAWDY REN-FAIRE 6PM
13TH DAVIS ROGAN 5PM / BELLA'S STUDENT SHOWCASE! 7PM
14TH MADARTZ'S P*SSY 5PM / BLUE VELVET REVUE 7PM / BUGLESQUE 10PM
16TH CHORUS CONNECTION 6PM
17TH MASON HOWARD TRIO 7PM
18TH CRAFT NIGHT WITH AIMEE 5PM / LINE DANCING W/ MISS HONEY SPARKLES 730PM
19TH HER HAUS MIXER 5PM / EARLY TIMES 80S NITE 8PM
20TH DAVIS ROGAN 5PM / WHISKEY & RHINESTONES 7PM / AFTERGLOW WITH KULTURE 10PM
21ST DIAMONDS&PEARLS 7PM / PIERRE WEST 10PM
23RD NERD NITE: DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 6PM
25TH LINE DANCING W/ MISS HONEY SPARKLES 730PM
26TH CLOSED FOR TURKEY
27TH DAVIS ROGAN 5PM / BELLA'S STUDENT SHOWCASE! 7PM
28TH BLUE VELVET REVUE 7PM
30TH CHORUS CONNECTION 6PM

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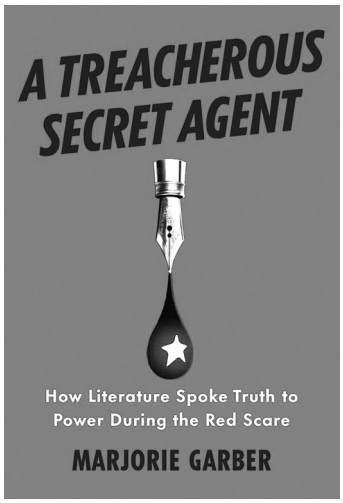
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DAILY HAPPY HOUR 4-8PM AT BREEZY'S!

11/1 ALASH ENSEMBLE
11/2 THE OPEN MIC: A FREE COMEDY SHOW (EVERY MONDAY)
11/3 THE BROOK & THE BLUFF W/ RYMAN
11/4 LANEY JONES, FELIX RABITO, AND TASCHE DE LA ROCHA
11/5 LOUISIANA DEATH WHISTLE
11/6 DAIKAIJU, THE NANCIES, AND STGMA
NITE SESH (EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT)
11/7 THEM OL GHOSTS W/ WAR BUNNIES
11/9 MIKE BAGGETTA + ELI WINTER
11/10 RADIATOR HOSPITAL W/ NOUN + LYLA GEORGE
11/11 DARING GREATLY, DELTAPHONIC + THE CICADAS
11/13 NITE SESH (EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT)
11/14 ANARETA, FAUNS + FIEND
11/15 AARON BURNS + KAYE THE BEAST
11/16 THE OPEN MIC: A FREE COMEDY SHOW (EVERY MONDAY)
11/17 THE MISS B. HAVEN KARAOKE SHOW
11/18 LOYOLA MUSIC NIGHT
11/20 COREY HENRY'S TREME FUNKTET
NITE SESH
11/21 THE BOTTOMS + DJ FONDA
11/22 LOYOLA MUSIC NIGHT
11/23 THE OPEN MIC: A FREE COMEDY SHOW
11/24 SIR WOMAN + UNCLE ROY & SPICE
11/25 SUNDAY CRUISE, DINO GALA, FRIEND + LATCHKEY KIDS
PURE INTENTIONS – LATE NIGHT
11/27 COURTLAND FILLMAN
NITE SESH
11/28 HUNKS OF COAL + SHARK ATTACK
11/29 KYPERPOP
11/30 THE OPEN MIC: A FREE COMEDY SHOW

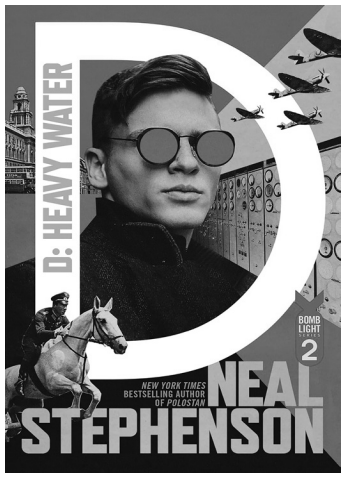
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SCAN FOR TICKETS
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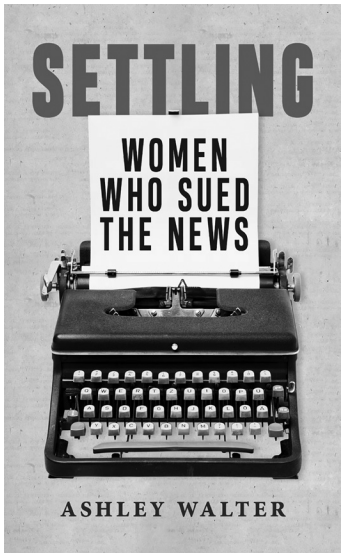
MARJORIE GARBER
A TREACHEROUS SECRET AGENT: HOW LITERATURE SPOKE TRUTH TO POWER DURING THE RED SCARE
(YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS)

In Chris Bachelder's satirical 2006 novel *U.S.!*, an immortal version of socialist author Upton Sinclair symbolizes the American left, repeatedly resurrected to write earnest muckraking material with virtually no effect on the powerful tycoons who inevitably assassinate him once more. "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world," he insists at one low point, making the quote from Percy Bysshe Shelley sound heartbreakingly naive. That quote appears here too, in a book ostensibly documenting how figures like performer and activist Paul Robeson, physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, and Shakespeare in the Park creator Joe Papp slyly invoked literature to resist Joe McCarthy, Roy Cohn, and other villains of the postwar Red Scare. The premise is flimsy: *A Treacherous Secret Agent* is better understood as a series of literary essays by Harvard English professor Marjorie Garber exploring Red Scare madness, tying in related bits of writing from classic authors like Shakespeare and John Donne, and even a surprisingly subtle poem by a young Oppenheimer. As with the work of Bachelder's Sinclair (or Woody Guthrie's fascist-killing guitar), there's little evidence here that well-crafted literary analysis or allusion directly halts tyranny, but plenty of signs the world would be bleaker still in its absence. —*Steven Melendez*



NEAL STEPHENSON
D: HEAVY WATER
(WILLIAM MORROW)

Neal Stephenson will likely always be most associated with 1990s cyberpunk-adjacent science fiction, especially *Snow Crash* (with its virtual reality "metaverse") and *Cryptonomicon* (an adventure involving digital currencies and offshore data centers). Those books were big among young men at the time, so it's only natural that, three decades later, Stephenson has firmly entered the realm of dad lit, writing historical fiction set around World War II. The second in a series that began with *Polostan*, *D: Heavy Water* follows fictional British playboy journalist Owen Crisp-Upjohn into the Spanish Civil War and the real historic missions to smuggle a supply of heavy water—which includes the hydrogen isotope deuterium (D) and can be used in nuclear weapons—out of reach of the Nazis. It's an engaging tale with many interesting takes on scientific history, but it feels less assured than its predecessor, which followed Owen's more-interesting wife Aurora. Stephenson understandably avoids depicting too much of the carnage of the Spanish Civil War, but he also struggles to capture his protagonist's wartime maturation and appears most comfortable depicting the lost world of gentlemanly science and swashbuckling that his novel makes clear was a casualty of fascism and the war. —*Steven Melendez*



ASHLEY WALTER
SETTLING: WOMEN WHO SUED THE NEWS
(UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS PRESS)

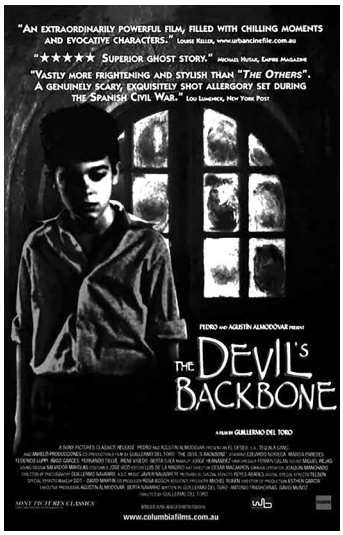
For most of the 20th century, female journalists faced blatant sexism in newsrooms across the United States. As Ashley Walter, a professor at Saint Louis University, documents here, they were largely limited to covering so-called women's issues and society topics at newspapers, while restricted to "researcher" positions rather than bylined reporting roles at major magazines. On top of that came low pay, sexual harassment, and the sorts of bizarre humiliations that always accompany bigotry and bias. To name just one: being squeezed onto a tiny balcony, straining to hear as male members of the gender-segregated National Press Club chatted below with dignitaries. Change began with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and, critically, the work and sacrifices of women willing to sue their employers for discrimination. Walter profiles women who took on outlets from *The Washington Post* to *Reader's Digest* despite significant risks to their own careers. Since these cases were only minimally covered by the male-dominated media the women sought to reform, she tells some stories in detail for the first time, documenting what it took to challenge misogynistic policies that controlled purportedly objective newsrooms, in some cases well into the 1980s. —*Steven Melendez*



NOAH FELPS
STILL HERE, SINCERE: LOUISIANA HARDCORE IN THE 2010S
(POMONA DRIVE PUBLISHING)

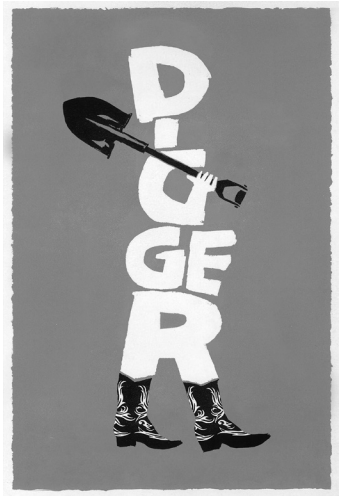
In the age of Facebook band pages and *King of the Hill* memes, hardcore didn't get the same attention it does today. I wasn't around for this era, but the whole premise of this zine-compilation album is that the new scene has a lot of young, new faces, and Noah Felps felt inspired to pass these deep cuts down to the uninitiated like me. Making a compilation for a decade like this is a bit of a fool's errand because there's always a line you have to draw regarding what does and doesn't make the cut. Felps doesn't claim to show the full picture (even going as far as to say some of the show dates in the book can be as far off as an entire year). And as with most compilations, it's kind of a mixed bag. It has tinges of sludge, doom, death, thrash, straight edge, and pop punk. Some of the bands come off a little too meathead tough guy for my tastes, but it still has some exciting discoveries in the tracklist. I knew local legends like Thou, Holeopener, and Fat Stupid Ugly People (featuring the late Hollise Murphy); but there were some surprises like No Youth, Martyr of Men, Colonies, and Forged By Hate. In the zine, you can also find some significant touring bands who stopped off into the scene, usually passing through to bigger places (bands like Knocked Loose, Power Trip, Turnstile, and Title Fight). In addition to all this, the zine has short "local reflections" from various people giving firsthand accounts. Overall, this is a solid pickup for anyone wanting to do their homework on Louisiana hardcore history. —*Dalton Spangler*

definitely counts it for their monthly horror screenings (at the Prytania Theatre Uptown on November 22 and 23).
—*Carlos A. Molina*



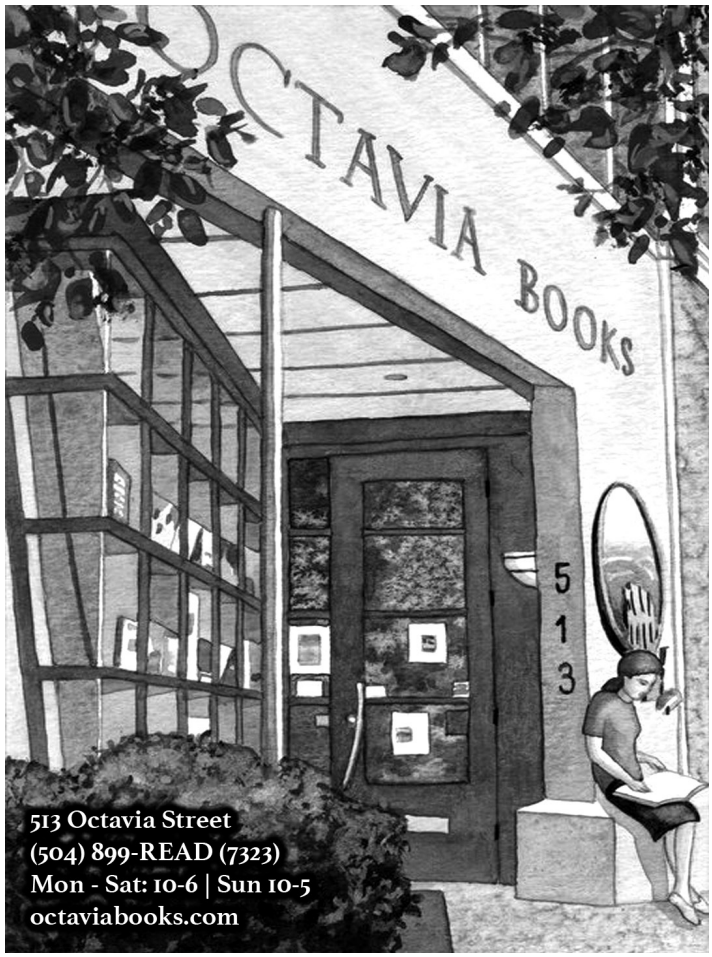
THE DEVIL'S BACKBONE
DIR: GUILLERMO DEL TORO
(WARNER SOGEFILMS)

Set during the Spanish Civil War, 2001's *The Devil's Backbone* feels almost like Oscar winner Guillermo del Toro's proof of concept for his later film *Pan's Labyrinth*. A Republican Loyalist soldier leaves Carlos (good name) at an orphanage run by Red sympathizers, with a giant unexploded ordnance sticking out of the ground in the middle of the courtyard. With a satchel full of comics and marbles, Carlos ingratiates himself to the bullies that already live there by not ratting on them. He soon encounters Santi, the ghost of a boy with a pretty hefty head wound who haunts the orphanage. Santi died recently under mysterious circumstances, and the staff have their own wartime concerns as death lingers around them. Affairs, dead siblings, and gold seem far more important to adults than the concerns about ghosts from some parentless kids. The CGI, especially around the ghost, whet del Toro's appetite for more of what would come in his horror-laden career. Depending on how you define horror movies, *The Devil's Backbone* may not fall into that category for you. My partner described it as "a thriller with a ghost in it" when we watched it recently. But Overlook Film Festival



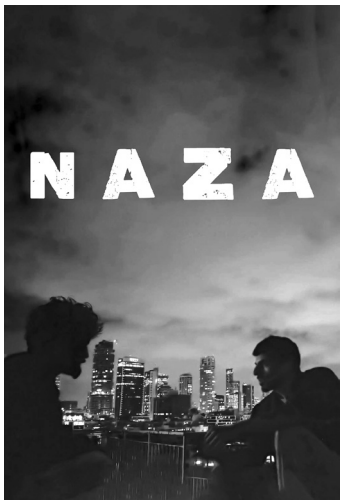
DIGGER
DIR: ALEJANDRO G. IÑÁRRITU
(WARNER BROTHERS)

I think Alejandro G. Iñárritu is one of, if not *the* greatest living filmmaker; I also think most people are stupid, myself included. In *Digger*, a natural disaster is going to destroy a lot of stupid people in Europe and only the stupid person Digger can save us. If you want more plot, go somewhere else. This movie will have been out for a while by the time you read this, so there's a good chance you'll already know the twists, reveals, and conceits. *Digger* is another example of Iñárritu trying to make something you haven't seen before, with a clear satirical message, being intentionally marketed in a way that hurts the product financially. That marketing ultimately proves its point. It's not saying anything we don't know about climate change, powerful men, and government bureaucrats—that's what makes our experience so infuriating. This futuristic, meta-*Come From Away* channels the strangest of *Strangeloves*, telling us the whole world is a stage, and our confabulation of financial wealth with success has ruined our world in every sense of the word *world*. The physical planet, society, our minds—whatever you want—are all fucked because we've been told money can't buy happiness, and yet we fail to comprehend how the need for perpetual growth is untenable given such limited resources





as time and space. Movies like this should continue to be made. This is a Left-Turn movie where Tom Cruise spends 30 years Saving the Cat and remains unlikeable. If it wasn't Tom Cruise grotesqueing his exterior visage to his appropriate age and matching his perceived interior persona, would we be having a different conversation about this movie? Possibly. Unfortunately, the people who most need to see this film probably won't, and on the off chance that they do, they won't care about what it has to say. *—Carlos A. Molina*



NAZA
DIR: YUVAL ABRAHAM AND RACHEL SZOR
(THE GUARDIAN / JW FILMS)

When discussing state-directed evil, it is tempting to focus solely on heads of state. While they bear so much of the blame, what of the so-called ordinary people who carry out their orders, the people who are "just doing their jobs?" This is one of the central questions of *NAZA,* the latest documentary from Israeli filmmakers and investigative journalists Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor who, alongside their Palestinian colleagues Basel Adra and Hamdan Ballal, won the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature for their film *No Other Land*. Like *No Other Land, NAZA* has been met with the full fury of the Israeli government. In just the past few weeks, Netanyahu has called for a new law to strip the citizenship of journalists like Abraham and Szor, who have also received death threats, and he has ordered the identification and prosecution of the people interviewed. The film title is an acronym for "nezek agavi," which means "collateral damage," and is used by Israeli forces to denote the number of Palestinian civilians murdered in attacks on Gaza. Between 2023 and 2025, Abraham interviewed roughly 24 Israeli intelligence officers and soldiers in person to gain insight into such topics as the Israeli surveillance state's technology for tracking Palestinians and "Lavender," an A.I.-driven database and targeting system used to carry out mass killings in Gaza. The information gathered in these interviews has also been published in a series of articles by Abraham and Szor in collaboration with *The Guardian*, *+972,* and *Local Call*. The interviews were filmed at night on rooftops across Tel Aviv, against the glittering modern skyline that is a stark contrast to the devastation in Gaza, just 31 miles down the coast. All 24 interview subjects remained anonymous, cloaked in the darkness of night with their faces, voices, and handwriting distorted—only Abraham is illuminated, a choice that is both practical and could also be seen as a metaphor. Some of the subjects seem to wrestle with their complicity—one even begins to draw parallels between his actions and those of the Nazis, falling short of facing the uncomfortable truth—and all undergo elaborate mental gymnastics to justify their roles. Others describe themselves as being educated liberal elites. Several times, the strikes on Palestinians, made from the comfort of Tel Aviv, are compared to video games. The interviewees' motivations for participating are never discussed, revealing the facts without engendering sympathy for those who are involved. The only time we hear or see Palestinian voices is at the very end, during footage of one of the countless attacks in Gaza. While the decision to focus on the interviewees makes complete sense, and the ending is a powerful choice, we also can't ignore the fact that we have been faced with footage and reporting on Gaza for years, not only by Abraham and Szor but also countless Palestinian journalists and civilians. *NAZA*, as it should, leaves us with many questions, including: Why do we choose to listen to certain voices over others, especially in the context of genocide? And how do we, the ordinary people, turn our own eyes to evil when faced with the choice to defy orders or maintain our own comfort and position? *—Mary Beth Campbell*



SUGAR & SPICE
DIR: FRANCINE MCDOUGALL
(NEWLINE CINEMA)

This little ditty about Jack and Diane follows a group of cheerleaders who, after learning one of them is pregnant, decide to rob a supermarket bank branch in what should be iconic doll masks. Francine McDougall's directorial debut satirizes high school and heist movies, homaging its references as the girls watch the big ones (*Heat, Reservoir Dogs, Point Break*) for research. It's *veeeery* loosely based on a series of robberies committed in the Houston area in 1999, but Lona Williams, the writer, wanted her name removed from the script after so many changes were made to the final product. Marley Shelton stars as Diane, whose budding baby bump launches the entire caper. Mena Suvari plays Kansas, the bad girl of the bunch, and James Marsden serves as the baby-daddy-jock Jack, both of whom carry a lot of the film's weight with their line deliveries and facial contortions. The soundtrack is perfectly *of the time,* giving it a quintessential turn-of-the-century sound, featuring such songs as The Nutley Brass' surfy ska cover of "Blitzkrieg Bop." Released a few months after the far more popular *Bring It On*, *Sugar & Spice* is often overlooked as a cheap knockoff, but it deserves its own recognition as a funny and dark teen comedy with some truly strident one-liners like "He was a bar of chocolate and the whole school was on the rag—everyone wanted a piece." (*Gap Tooth Cinema, along with local filmmaker and Tulane faculty member Robie Flores, are presenting* Sugar & Spice *at The Broad Theater on November 18.*) *—Carlos A. Molina*



YOU CAN SEE EVERYTHING
DIR: NATHAN FIELDER / LANCE OPPENHEIM
(A24)

This review contains spoilers.

In 2023, Theranos founder Elizabeth Holmes and her partner Billy Evans invited a documentary film crew, led by directors Nathan Fielder and Lance Oppenheim, to capture Holmes' final 34 days before going to prison. Two decades earlier, Holmes founded Theranos, whose claims of revolutionizing blood testing later proved fraudulent; she was convicted of defrauding investors and sentenced to 11 years in federal prison. But unlike previous exposés that have brought her international notoriety, *You Can See Everything* is not actually about Elizabeth Holmes.

Nathan Fielder stepped into mainstream American media in 2013 with his comedy show *Nathan for You*, a show where he "helps" struggling businesses with outlandish, loophole-laden premises. It was of its era, with contemporaries including *The Eric Andre Show* and *Nirvanna the Band the Show*, where the people involved maybe should, but often don't, know exactly what it is they're engaging in, and the viewer is constantly wondering what's real. *Nathan*

for You received its share of criticism, with skeptics arguing it was borderline mean-spirited and cruel. But in the show's final, 84-minute episode, "Finding Frances," we see Fielder opening the door to work yet-to-come as he begins going deeper instead of wider. These days, his work increasingly implicates himself as a foundational element of the project. Fielder's show *The Rehearsal*—where he attempts to game the unexpected by rehearsing everything ahead of time—illustrates his obsession over getting things right.

In the other co-director corner, Lance Oppenheim is a more traditional documentary filmmaker (*Some Kind of Heaven*, *SPERMWORLD*) though he recently made his narrative debut with *Primetime*—based on Chris Hansen's NBC show *To Catch a Predator*.

In *You Can See Everything*, Fielder shifts away from his previous characters. His typical interview persona dances around his subjects, always giving them just enough rope to hang themselves with. Here, he dials it down, and we see him employing a slightly more standard documentary style, with Oppenheim's expertise providing a grounding presence. Fielder's questions are straightforward: He tries to get Holmes to explain her technology—that she swears to this day was not fraudulent—but the questions slide right off of her as if she can't even understand why he's confused.

In a brilliant analogy, Fielder shows Holmes the famous Abbott and Costello "Who's On First?" sketch, the gold standard for comic misunderstanding. Holmes watches the clip and laughs along, but ultimately admits that she doesn't know what makes it funny. Whether Holmes doesn't understand the joke or does understand the joke and is lying, *You Can See Everything* suggests that it doesn't really matter. This film is far more interested in the minutiae of communication: Every word we use is a decision with its own rippling effects. That language builds its own version of reality, a kind of multiverse we enact each time we speak, and we are left wading through these constructed realities to get at a semblance of truth.

After Holmes goes to prison, the film jumps forward in time. No longer able to directly interact with her, the film transforms into a hall of mirrors. Fielder meets with Amanda Seyfried, who played Elizabeth Holmes in the dramatization *The Dropout*, and shows Seyfried footage of Holmes watching *The Dropout*—footage pulled from the first half of the film. Seyfried, understandably overwhelmed, offers her own opinion about Holmes as a person, saying that she doesn't believe Holmes is as clueless as she purports. She then goes down the rabbit hole with Fielder, offering her likeness in recreating scenes during which Elizabeth Holmes was either not being recorded or was in prison. In these recreations, Fielder is attempting to better understand what was true, and Seyfried weighs in as an actor, as a woman, and as a sort of stand-in for the audience, giving commentary and asking questions as both an outsider to the project and as someone directly implicated in Holmes' cultural image—commentary which oscillates with each step further into this story.

You Can See Everything repeatedly presents a theory and then immediately undermines that same theory. It credits and discredits all involved at various points, offering no reliable point of view. In a scene Fielder and Seyfried recreate from Fielder's visit to Holmes in prison, he changes a word in his original script—unsure that he heard it correctly and not wanting to accidentally implicate Holmes. It's a familiar fear when tasked with representing the truth of another person: *Did I get it right? Am I being fair? Have I appropriately contextualized everything around the visible moments?* The film proactively asks these questions with its own construction, calling into question the accuracy of both its subjects and its creators. Skepticism abounds. *You Can See Everything* offers no answers about who is lying, who is telling the truth, or how much of what we've just seen is genuine—a maddening and thrilling conclusion that implicates everything we know. —*Marisa Clogher*



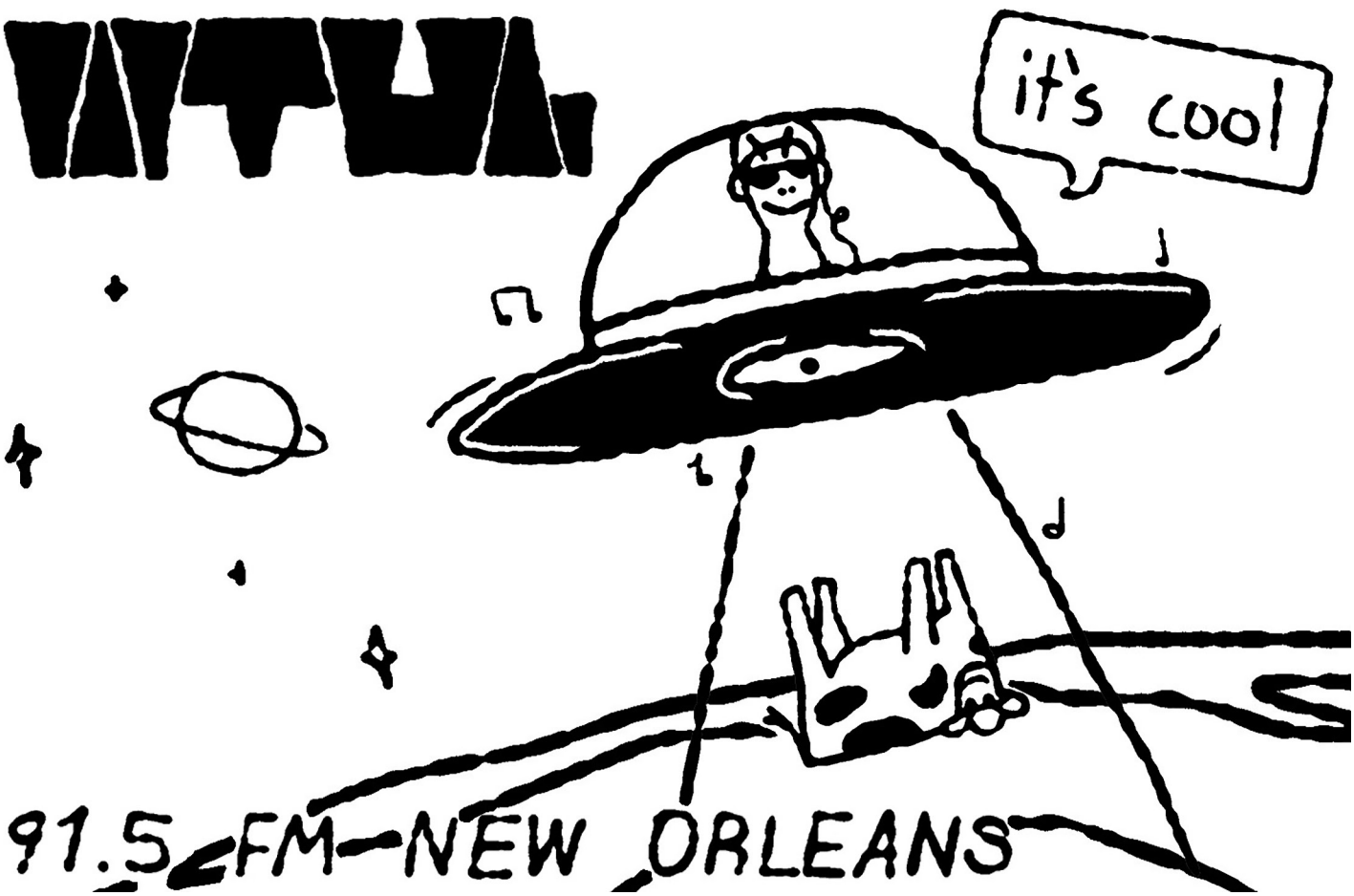


FLAMBOYANTS!
DIR. FLORIENT JOUSSE (COLLECTIF TILAWCIS)

"Neither Europeans, nor Africans, nor Asians, we proclaim ourselves Creoles." So begins the 1989 Martinican manifesto, "In Praise of Creoleness," a declaration of independence from Eurocentric cultural categories in favor of an identity that is more difficult to pin down. Creolization is understood to be a process that is continually unfolding; to embrace a Creole identity means honoring its many complexities and contradictions. "Creolité is an open specificity," write its authors. "Our history is a braid of histories." In late September at Tulane's Dixon Hall, the Creole banner was flying high thanks to *Flamboyants!*, a touring theatrical production which brought this inimitable braid to life with a musical and historical exploration of the Creole ties that bind. Written and directed by Florient Jousse, and produced by the Collectif Tilawcis, the project was created in Réunion (an island located a few hundred miles off the coast of Madagascar) in partnership with collaborators such as Black Masking Indian Big Chief Juan Pardo and Puerto Rican *bomberos*. It tells the story of an amnesiac Frenchman who washes ashore on Réunion, where he meets a disparate group of creative Creoles who together sift through the intricacies of their shared past. There are plenty of hard truths to be faced there, and the performance doesn't shy away from them. We may not be to blame for our ancestors' choices, but we are responsible for the world that was shaped by them, and the full power of what they refer to as the "passport" of Creolité can only be used by those who can look back without flinching. The sentiment of *Flamboyants!* is perhaps easier to explain than the performance itself—the story is primarily a vehicle to plunge the audience into Creole cultural connections and the brutal power structures that engendered them.
The theatrical ethos seems educational in nature, though the vibrance of its assembled cultural powerhouses puts it into a category all its own. As New Orleanians, we are accustomed to the difference between culture as it is expressed by individuals such as Big Chief Juan Pardo and the rest of the United States. It was refreshing, therefore, to see how comfortably it fits into the Creole continuum, where each form of cultural expression is unique, but mutually intelligible. Hopefully, *Flamboyants!* is the first of many such experiments in Creole co-creation and Transatlantic cross-pollination. —*Holly Devon*


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WHEN DAT?
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WHY DAT?!
HOW DAT?!!
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it's cool
91.5 FM - NEW ORLEANS

ALT SCENE NEW ORLEANS

Release Sly Watts

by Elisa Gomez

Sly Watts: A performer and visual artist whose name carries weight in the New Orleans underground hip-hop, hardcore, and punk scenes. His musical curiosity has been explored in trip-hop, drum&bass, acid jazz, and hip-hop in his solo project. His erratic performances and raw vocals snap audience attention right to him, creating an undeniable charge in the atmosphere that radiates from his body and is released through both his physical movements and confrontational vocals.

Sly earned his reputation by word of mouth through his presence and music, but has become something of an enigma. Despite performing since high school, there is no publicly available archive of his solo work, making his live shows addictive. You never know when the next hit of this particular contemporary rhythm will reemerge.

While the mystique is seductive and almost seems like an intentional stroke of genius, the very real reason behind his ephemeral presence is that the bills still need to be paid. Entergy doesn't know that Sly Watts needs time to write his next songs; the public doesn't know he is writing his newest lyrics on the back of eviction notices. His landlord doesn't care that the money he has could be used to press vinyl to document his existence as an artist. His grantors who gave him money to create music don't know that he actually needs the money to cover the bare bones essentials.

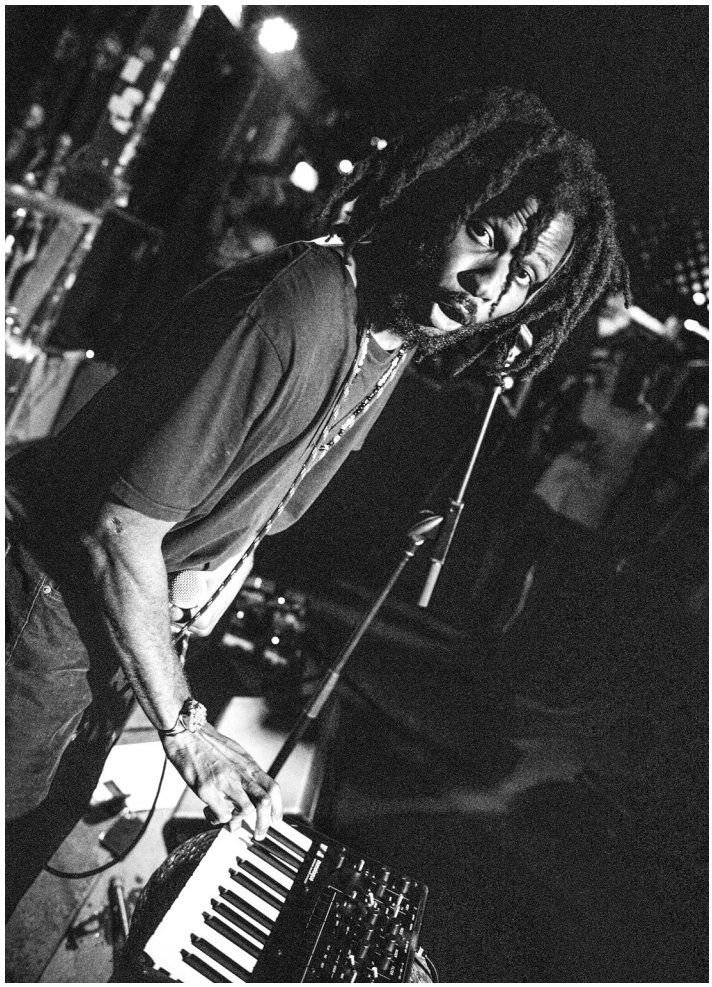
Raised by a percussionist father and his early connection to rap, Sly knew by the age of 10 he wanted to be a musician as an adult. It's a blessing and a curse to know exactly what you want out of life, especially when your passions aren't lucrative and you're outside the mainstream industry. Throughout his teenage years, he would perform at school events, which eventually led Sly to open mic nights at the Contemporary Arts Center, where he could cast a wider net for an audience. He describes his younger music-making as being in his room, making beats, and layering lyrics of activism, social work, and poetry—being angry at the world.

By the time Sly turned 22, he started using an artist studio and community space, 912 Julia, to rehearse performances (often at midnight) and begin his work on visual arts. 912 Julia offered a landing pad for artists like Benry Fauna, Tyla A. Maiden, Taylor Balkissoon [*ANTIGRAVITY*'s astrologer], and travelers. His reputation began to spread further through offline interaction. During the COVID-19 lockdowns, he would upload his newest creations, and the people stuck at home on their phones began to get curious about who he was. It was then that he noticed a visible pop in audience interest.

In 2023, Sly found himself somehow immersed in the hardcore scene after friend and long-time fan Eli Luchak of Panama Papers booked Sly for a DIY show at El Cucuy with _thesmoothcat and The 9th Life. People from the hardcore scene came out to support Eli, and Sly eventually became friends with people like Soumya Ramineni (of Panama Papers), who later became his bassist in his solo project and whose music was nothing like his, leading to Sly getting booked on mixed bills, further expanding his audience.

While his visibility was increasing, behind closed doors he spent the better part of a year without water or electricity. While he was aware he could have spent time becoming more financially secure, he chose to use it to write songs and work on conceptual art, sometimes sleeping in his studio space at ArtEgg Studios.

In October of 2023, Sly played his first show at Tipitina's with ÌFÉ and Big Freedia. "I vividly remember the day of that Tipitina's show, knowing



DALTON SPANGLER

Sly Watts performing with Twin Sugar at Saturn Bar on May 29

I'm about to share a bill with a Grammy Award-winning artist [Big Freedia], even though I just came from eviction court. People were giving me praise and shit. None of it really landed. It really changed the way I looked at my relationship to art-making, like, 'why do I do this?' I had to make a choice: Do I really want it that bad? Is it going to become my livelihood?" After receiving grants from the National Performance Network (NPN) and the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation [an *ANTIGRAVITY* advertiser] for studio time, Sly decided to use that money to stabilize his life.

Taking some time to recover, Sly joined the psychedelic soul-punk band Twin Sugar with FreeTrial and HU$HPUPPY. He was able to relax into a supporting bandmember position while still bringing his specific contemporary edge to the music. After taking a bit of a pause to regroup, he's finally ready to release old material in order to make way for the new. After the stormy period, he's finding his previous material—created by a manic artist who was barely getting by—just isn't who he is anymore. But to be able to write music from this new place, he feels the need to clear and release the old by putting out songs that never got to see the light of day, finally creating an archive of his work.

"For the longest time, it felt like a weapon—the fact that word of mouth is strong enough to give me opportunities in a digital age. But I got to a point where I'd like for the work to exist because people are looking for it." And he's right. I wanted to listen to his music while I wrote this piece, and he had to send me demos from his Google Drive. After years of pouring himself into his art, it was time to see some returns in other areas to keep life sustainable. I'm glad to see a shift in stability, and also impressed by his devotion to what his soul yearned for. Somewhere is a balance, and some new songs.

For more info, you can follow Sly Watts on Instagram at @sly.watts.



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Liz Selfish of BRAT performs at the New Orleans Jazz Museum for the release of their second studio album, Manslayer, *on October 16. (photo by Dalton Spangler)*



Providence-based band XBongX performs in New Orleans for the first time at Neutral Ground Coffee House on September 24. (photo by Rodrigo Delgado Jr.)

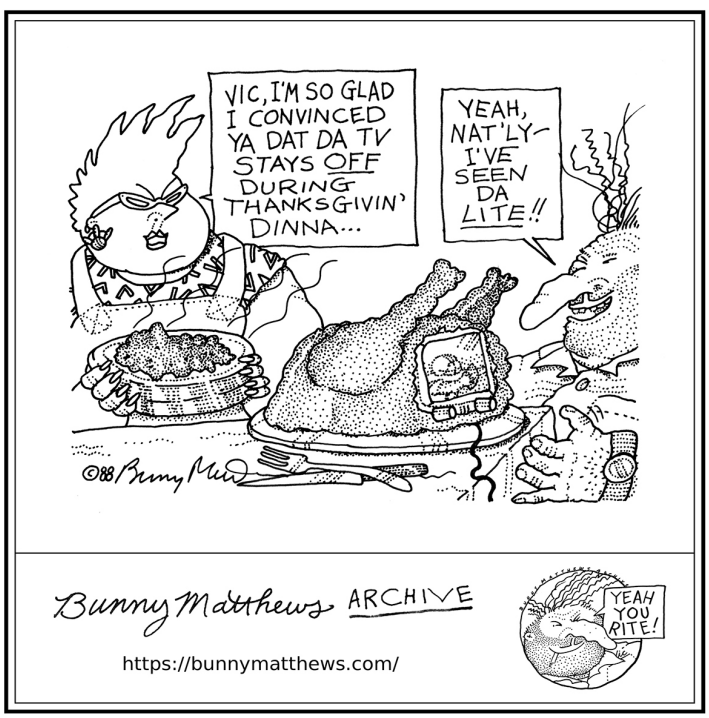


Tomorrow Today

Congruency sits through the flickering light,
as I tell you I love you as a woman, unchanged.
As I tell you in ways that I'd rather deny,
or speak them in silence at the end of the night,
where I sit and I question if that's really so wrong
if I had, once, been amendable too.
For I had once been a man in what mattered.
For I had once been a mirror at best,
who reflected the light seeping in through your window,
in hopes it would still trace your legs the right way.
For I had once been a man in the flesh,
through a longing to fit you, or maybe to fill.

—Alondra Marisol







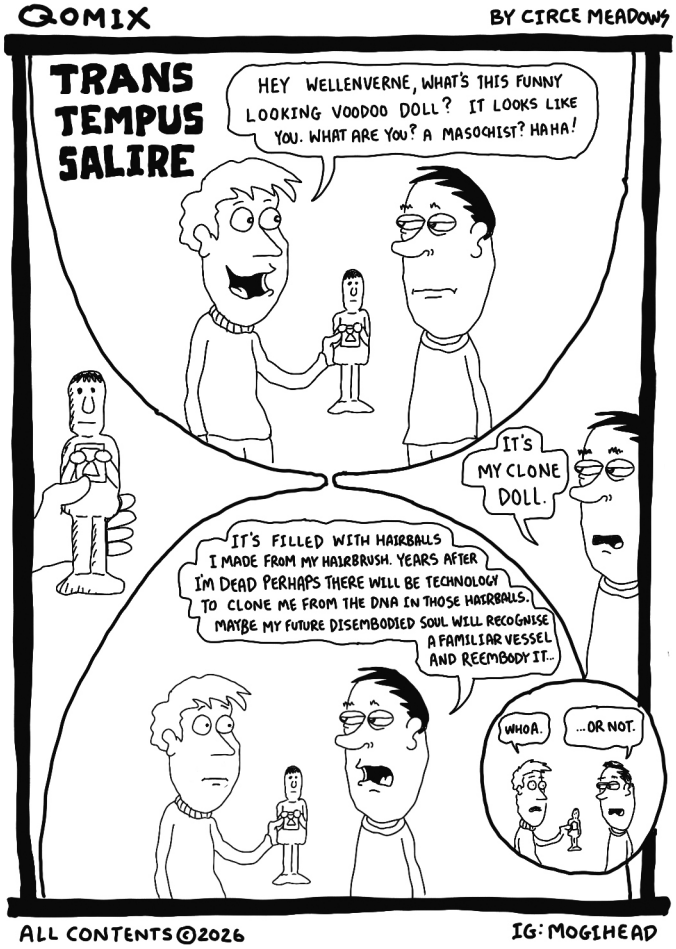
PHASE FOR RADIO: Interviews with real local characters!



Host: DJ MORT 'He's got a face for radio!' by Romey Petite



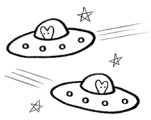
QOMIX BY CIRCE MEADOWS



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IG: MOGIHEAD





CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

compiled by ANTIGRAVITY staff

Aren't you tired of swiping in the hopes of running into a specific someone you have an existing, lingering curiosity about? Here's your chance to be brave—to take the active route instead of the passive one. Let's connect again. (Entries may be minimally edited for clarity.)



Five Months Post-Jazz Fest
I met you during Jazz Fest while we were all leaving the fairgrounds for the day. I noticed you when you stopped to help an older lady who had dropped something. Your name was Nicolette. We had both come to see David Byrne. I don't remember what we talked about but I remember your smile, bright eyes, and curly blonde hair. You asked me if my friend and I were going to the block parties, the ones right outside the fairgrounds and near Bayou St. John. I said no, I had to go home and do some work. You said OK, maybe you'd catch us later in the weekend. I didn't have the heart to tell you that I was in the middle of law school final exams and that this was my one fun break for the week. I had to smile as I watched you walk away into the crowd of joyful people, bubbles, and music filling the street and front yards. Five months later I'm in the bathroom at Stein's Deli and see a QR code to submit missed connections and for some reason I think of you. So, Nicolette, how was the party? Maybe you can tell me next time at Jazz Fest? —JD

Discussing St. Petersburg at Trader Joe's
We spoke about my time living in St. Petersburg when you checked me out at the new Trader Joe's. I'd like to try and be your friend.

Best Friend in this Lifetime
You are my best friend, and I am in love with you. I don't think I can continue this much longer. It's not your fault; I'm sorry. I wish we could be serious for one minute and have honest conversations. You were my best friend in this lifetime; maybe I can be what you need in the next?

Friendly Ginger at Stein's
Friendly guy behind the counter at Stein's with the shaved head and ginger beard. I just wanted to let you know that your friendly energy and smile lights up the place.

Creeper-Repellant Hero
Thank you for saving me from that creepy greaser guy at Pal's. I wish I had stayed to talk to you longer, but you said you live in the neighborhood. Want to take a go-cup to the bayou sometime?

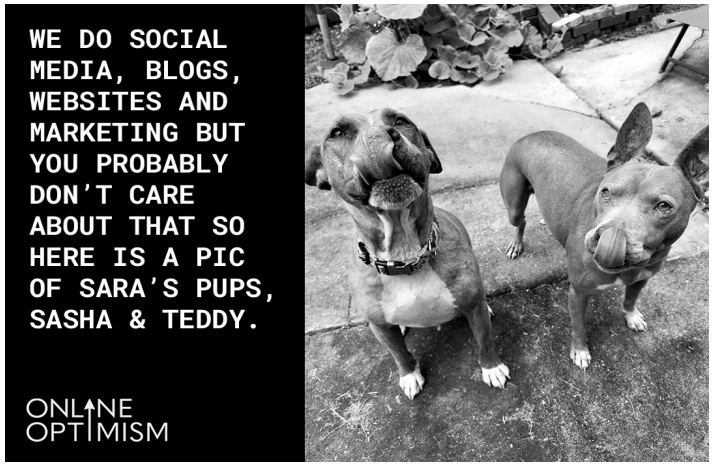
Dancing at Machine Girl
You were at the Machine Girl concert and we danced adjacent from each other throughout the concert. You had a white shirt and side swept bangs. And I was wearing a turquoise blue shirt with gold lettering. You kind of looked like the girl from the "Clarity" music video. Anyways, you look really cool and we should get drinks sometime, I don't know...

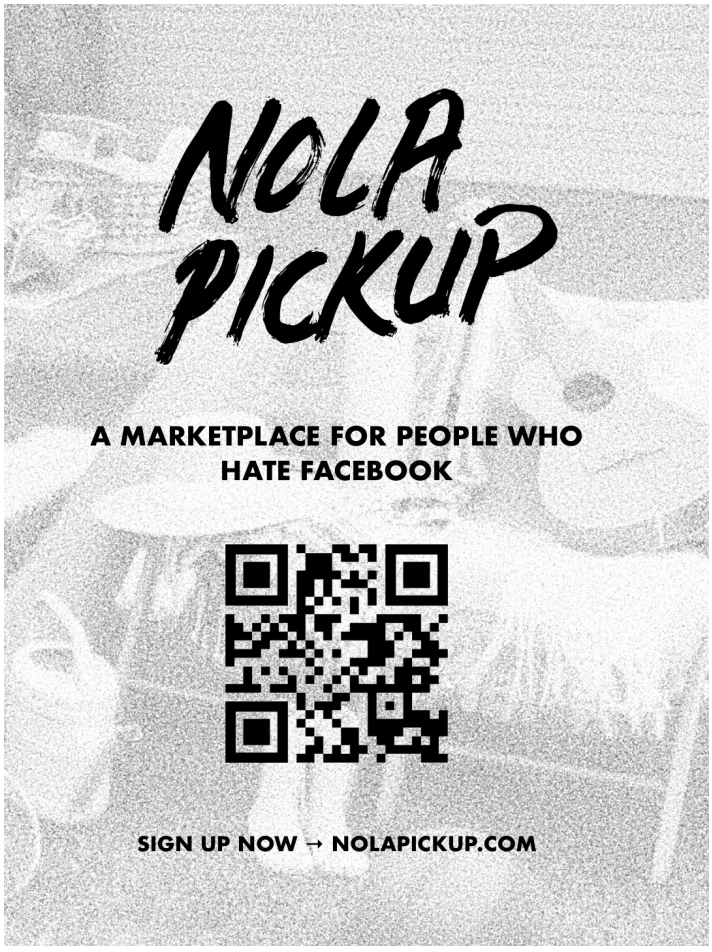


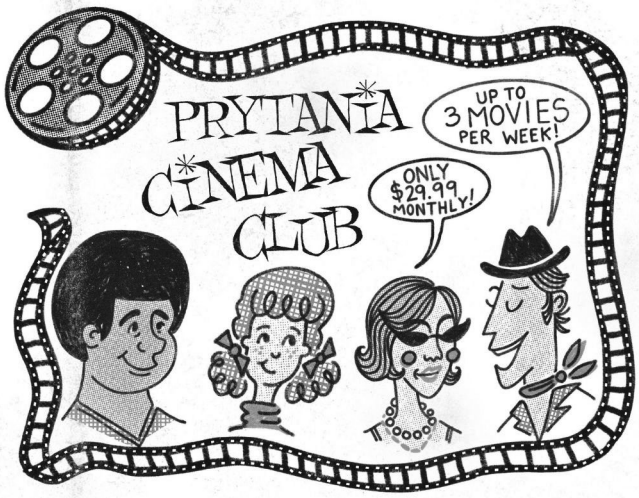
Submit your own close encounter to ***closeencounters@antigravitymagazine.com*** *or through our new ANONYMOUS Google form (via QR code below). All email addresses will remain confidential. Don't be a creep.*

illustrations by Maegen Guidroz @maegen_arts









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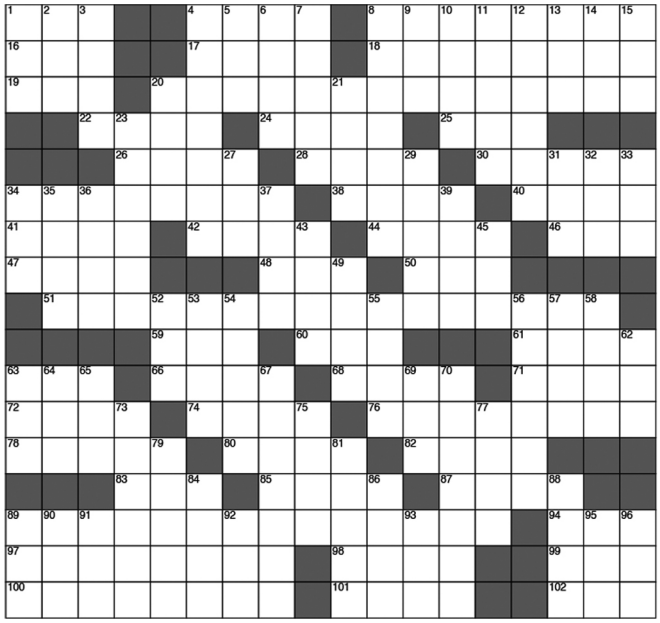
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by LEO RAUF



ACROSS

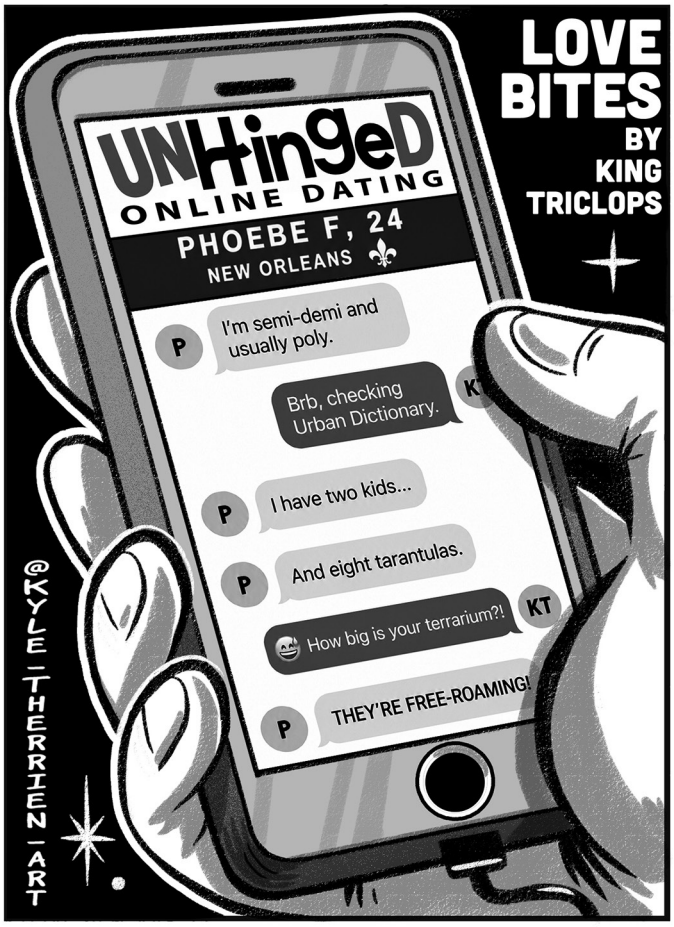
1 One who has a life?
4 Baby on a plate
8 Meatloaf?
16 16th POTUS
17 Musical Nick
18 Brave
19 Chill
20 Planks from Alberta?
22 With 30A, this puzzle
24 Selector
25 Sugarcubes track
26 "None for me"
28 Word with gun or up
30 With 22A, this puzzle
34 "Cheese" brand
38 Someone special?
40 Eye-window interior
41 Agnès Varda character (5-7)
42 Famous mustache owner
44 Date part
46 Rock hard maybe?
47 Iranian currency
48 Earthy front
50 Purple shirt letters
51 A zoo?
59 Singer Winehouse
60 You a___
61 Tide word
63 MJ track
66 Droppings
68 Famous Stone
71 Computer key
72 Radar ping
74 Piece of info
76 Circular window
78 Vape ___
80 2010's track
82 Sad Simpsons bartender?
83 Special period
85 Receipt type
87 Nazi Radio?? (sorry)
89 Young Beatles appreciators?
94 Feel poorly
97 86 steaks, perhaps
98 Soap kind
99 Local 10K org.
100 To swindle???
101 Infamous seven
102 One shoe

DOWN

1 Director Luhrmann
2 Purple potato
3 One born in 1970
4 Acted smug
5 Old ___d (coffee shop)
6 Bitch on a plate?
7 Spread disease at a party, say
8 School subject
9 T____old
10 Write deeply
11 Like Mitch McConnell
12 Former Lithuanian currency
13 U.S. psychology org.
14 Joke around with
15 Author LeShan
20 Scots hillside
21 Cake boxer Lee
23 Town near Bard College
27 GPS info
29 Get Out director
31 Singing Stewart
32 Belly
33 Cold weather factory worker?
34 Tape player
35 Dir. Kazan
36 Purple drink
37 Blasting Baldwin
39 Alternative to femme
43 A folder on a computer
45 Career standstill
49 Word on a shop in the historic district
52 Alfred E. Neuman magazine
53 In the center of
54 "Help You Anne" band
55 Flaccid
56 Creeps
57 Cancel
58 Noble title
62 __ase!
63 Media org.
64 Complete set
65 Holy Diver owner?
67 Like some speeches
69 V.U. drummer
70 Bag-less amounts
73 Musician Tito
75 _____ knot
77 Skeleton house
79 Tea
81 Gets to JFK
84 ____an Sea
86 602 in Roman numerals
88 Nut container
89 Talk type
90 One in a cartoon trio
91 Old MacDonald lyrics
92 ____ightened
93 Local internet
95 American cowards
96 Soundsystem band



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in the chilly wind
nothing warms the heart

like a handwritten letter

wringing hands feel
the lilting hearts

anticipate the
gentle caress
of a quill

on a thin white leaf

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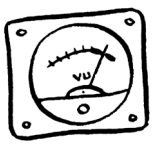
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Consider the investment: a tried-and-true **distribution network** where your message is paired with increasingly rare **quality content** and broadcast to a **devoted audience** near and far. Currently that's about **150 spots from Metairie to New Orleans East**, about **250 subscribers coast to coast** (and growing!), about **2,600+ newsletter subscribers** (who get a PDF of each month's issue); and in the case of web ads, we average about **14,000 monthly page views**. Our **Advertiser Directory** (look left!) is a curated list of community-minded businesses for locals and tourists alike. And for any venue with live entertainment or special events, we have launched an **online listings page**, which is available to any current advertiser, included with an ad buy. To find out more, please email us at **advertising@antigravitymagazine.com**.

2. SUBSCRIPTION/MERCH

You can go two different ways on our Big Cartel site (**antigravitymagazine.bigcartel.com)**, either by signing up for 12 issues or using the "subscribe" option, where anything over $6 gets you a monthly copy mailed automatically until you cancel or we stop publishing. The "subscribe" option is also good for those of you who have asked to donate to the mag but want to skip the mailed issue—just please specify that when you sign up. And of course we have t-shirts, totes, hats, and other fun stuff to rep your favorite rag.

3. DONATE TO OUR VOTER GUIDE

This is the only area we officially ask for donations, because this helps avoid having to commercialize or monetize this beloved and trusted resource. You can donate your idea of pocket change, a door price for a local show, or a cheap lunch via our Venmo or Paypal (both **@antigravitymag**). Just mention "VG" or "voter guide" in the comments.

THREE THINGS THAT DON'T COST MONEY

1. SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER

We send out a newsletter on the 1st of every month that includes a synopsis and PDF of the new issue. You get early access and a central hub for all things *ANTIGRAVITY*, and of course we get to promote a bigger subscriber number to our advertisers (and number only—we do not share our mailing list with outside parties). You can sign up right on our homepage: **antigravitymagazine.com**.



2. PATRONIZE & SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS

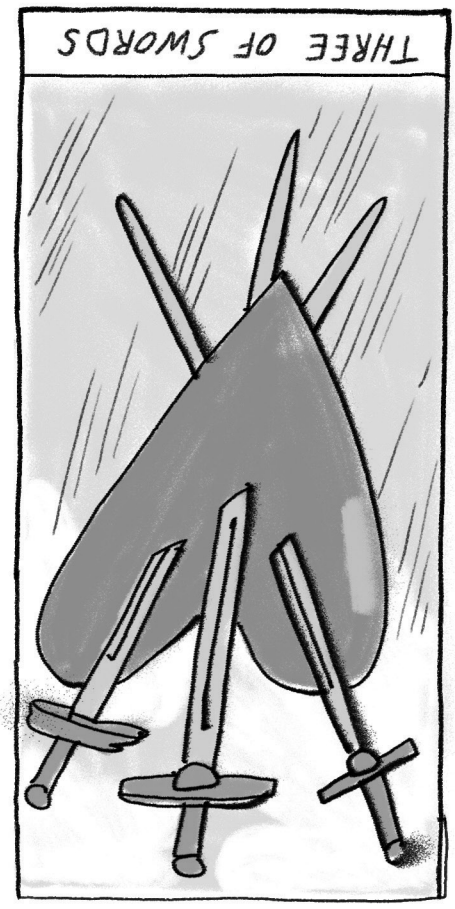
We made this easy. Look left to our Advertiser Directory, a distinguished list comprised mostly of small businesses that could use your dollar as much as we could. Engage with these businesses—spend your buck there, of course, but follow them on social media and such, and let them know you appreciate their investment in community-funded media.

3. LIKE, FOLLOW, SHARE AND ALL THAT SHIT

We are on the following social media sites, and bigger numbers means a higher profile and more value for our advertisers. So as the kids love to say these days, "like, follow, and share!" We have active social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and Bluesky, all at **@antigravitymag**.

Anything and everything helps. We appreciate you, and we look forward to sticking around a little bit longer.









The Three of Swords depicts a classic triangulation. If you have been struggling with a love triangle or a lopsided friendship group, you won't be for much longer. The Three of Swords in reverse is a triangle set on its point: It will fall to the left or to the right, recreating a pyramid shape but shifting the points that make the foundation. The secret third option, however, is complete collapse. The suit of Swords represents the mind and how we navigate the human world, which is a place built entirely from our capacity to conceptualize. Play a game with yourself—find all the triangulated relationships in your life. The third piece does not have to be a person. You might form a triangle with a person and, maybe, a house or money or health insurance or fear. If you spend any amount of time trying to avoid someone's *bad side*, you have a triangular problem. Be objective about where and how you fit into the triangles of your life. You may have options, but you don't hold all the cards. The Three of Swords reversed reminds us that people are not going to change just because we want them to. If you leave the triangle, it collapses.

The Six of Wands is victory. Look for a small, even petty win that has happened recently and call it for yourself. Name and claim every fortunate turn and serendipitous accident you can remember and feel the spirits it puts you in. There is a great deal of willingness from people to assist you, to see you in the light that makes you feel the most like yourself. This might be a big moment for you, or maybe it is more subtle. Maybe it's just you seeing yourself for the first time. Carnival operators used to hang brass rings in the canopy of the carousel where riders would do their best to grab one when their horses rose up toward the top. If you wanted a brass ring you had to reach, you had to try, you had to pay attention to when and where your best chances would come. Sometimes it is a matter of growing enough to reach it, but showing up and trying is always required. Keep your focus on the people supporting your success. Think carefully about who you allow in your circle. The era of the frenemy is over. You are seen by the people who will expand your life and help you to level up. Accept compliments like you deserve them, because you do.

Think carefully about who you allow in your circle. The era of the frenemy is over.

The Two of Wands is the signal to stop gaslighting yourself, because you have the information you need in order to choose and to choose well. Visions are meant to be understood through the process of actualizing them. Inspired ideas that become real look different than they appeared in your initial imagining. Guard your right to not know something. Shut down the voices in your mind that criticize your every move, because those words are all lies. Bringing anything to life requires a tolerance for the possibility of failure and a temperament nuanced enough to grow through the unknown. The figure in the Two of Wands is ready to mull over what they do in fact know and commit to the road they will travel next. Don't let the critic's voice in your head or in your life cause you to panic. It's not your role in the cosmos to find the path on which nothing fails.

reading by Michelle Embree | michelleembree.com
illustration by Gurleen Rai | zimteemo.com

The New Orleans Public Library Spotlights

Ocean Vuong

AT THE LIBRARY:

Memory and Tenderness:
A Workshop Inspired by Ocean Vuong's Poetic Vulnerability

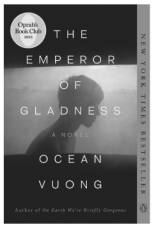
Karisma Price leads this poetry workshop grounded in the work of Ocean Vuong. Read examples of Vuong's poetry and engage in generative exercises to develop your own poems.

Saturday, November 7, 1:30pm–3:30pm
Norman Mayer Library
3001 Gentilly Blvd.

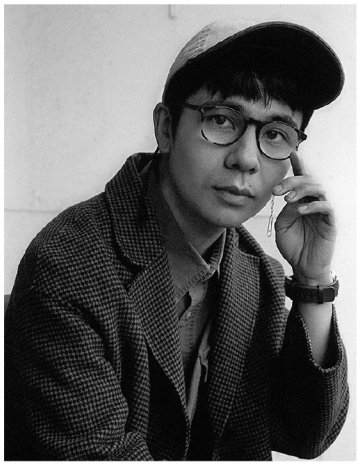
Building a Community Timeline *with Professor and Journalist Daniella Zalcman*

Learn about Việt Nam in New Orleans for inspiration, and then learn how to build our own community timelines based on your favorite memories and triumphs. Memorialize your own histories with us.

Thursday, November 12, 5pm–6pm
East New Orleans Regional Library
5641 Read Blvd.







AT TULANE UNIVERSITY:

A Conversation with Ocean Vuong

A conversation with MacArthur Fellow and renowned novelist and poet Ocean Vuong.

Thursday, November 19, 6-8pm
Lavin-Bernick Center
20 McAlister Drive

nolalibrary.co/ocean-vuong

TULANE School *of* Liberal Arts

NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC LIBRARY

