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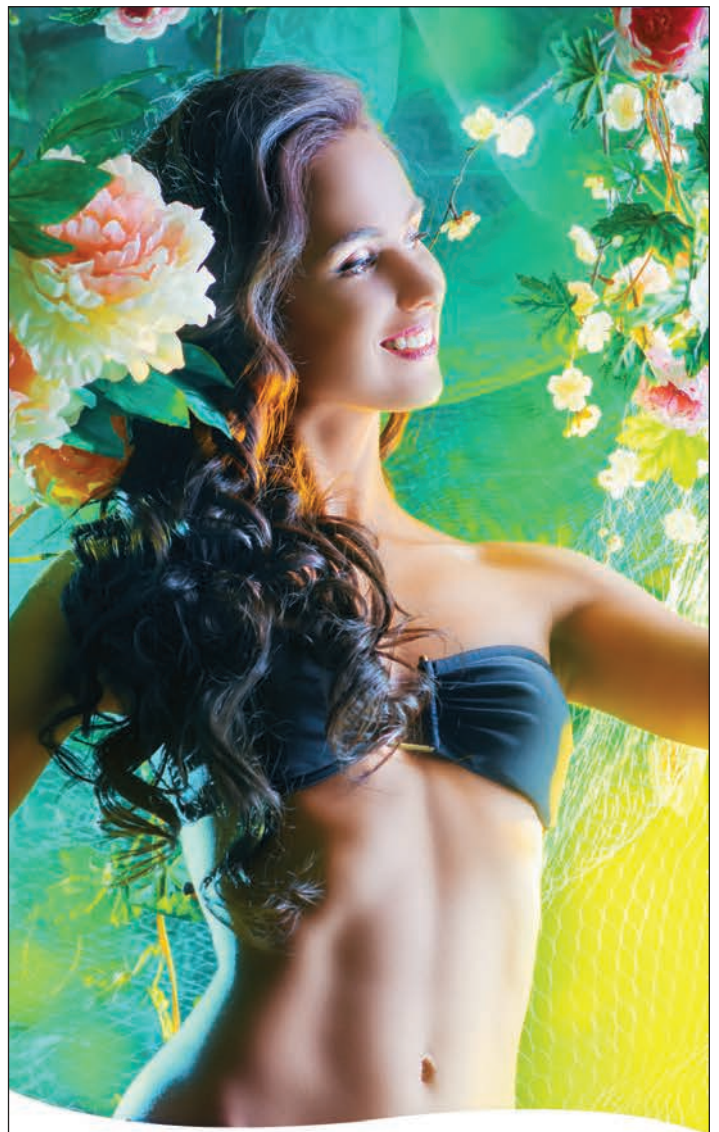
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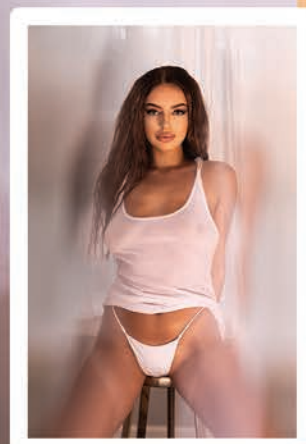
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Sorry folks—no drolly lead-ins or riveting factoids this month. We've got a lot to cover and very little space to do it. Fret not, *Erotic City* zealots; I'll catch up with a double dose of witticism and buffoonery next issue!

At the turn of the century, downtown Portland's nightlife was much more bustling and distinct than today's. Not surprisingly, the pandemic played reaper for many of these clubs, but even before then, the overall scene had fizzled substantially from its grandeur of two decades ago.

One downtown strip club promises to bring some of the luster back to the city centre, with the re-emergence of Xotica-Go-Go—a homegrown recipe of all-star DJs and exotic go-go dancers that once ruled Thursday nights in the heart of Bridgetown. It all kicks off on Thursday, April 6, at X Exotic Lounge. Check out all the details on the page to your left...

Lots more industry events happening this month, starting with The Return of Tana the Tattooed Lady, appearing both Friday, April 7, and Saturday, April 8, at Kit Kat Club. And it wouldn't be Easter without the industry's own Easter Egg Hunt...Stars Cabaret (Bridgeport) has you covered—join them on Saturday, April 15! Make sure to finish your taxes on time, so you can attend Club Rouge Portland's 9th-anniversary celebration on Wednesday, April 19. Congratulations, Club Rouge! Can't believe it's almost been a decade! That's not our only anniversary this month...Guilty Pleasures will celebrate its 5th anniversary on Friday, April 21, and Saturday, April 22! Congratulations, Scott and Julie!

Save some steam (or smoke, we should say...) for the very next evening. It's The Lounge's 4/20 party! If you haven't been to The Lounge lately, you need to check out their remodel and new offerings. They've also got some exciting new things in the works that I can't write about quite yet but make sure to stop by yourself for full disclosure! Moving along, Stars Cabaret (Salem) will throw their Wet 'n' Wild April Showers Celebration on Saturday, April 22. Not much ranks higher on our list than wet entertainers, so we advise you to attend. Wrapping up industry events that aren't related to a birthday, on Saturday, April 29, Lucky Devil is the spot for the One Motorcycle Show—after party!

It's time for industry birthdays! On Saturday, April 1, Daria is celebrating her birthday at Hawthorne Strip, and Scott is celebrating his birthday on Saturday, April 8, at Guilty Pleasures! Then right back to Guilty Pleasures for Dahlia and Ophelia's birthday celebration on Saturday, April 15. How about a birthday party with a feature performance by the birthday girl?! Oh, fuck yeah! Check out Brodie's "The Mask" feature sets on Saturday, April 22, at Devils Point at 10:30 p.m. and 1 a.m. Trust me; you definitely don't want to miss this performance! You'll have to plan your night efficiently because Tyler and Azra's birthday party is also on Saturday, April 22, at Lucky Devil. Happy birthday, everyone!

POLEROTICA 2023

The largest and most established pole performance and dance competition in the nation kicks off on April 7 at Guilty Pleasures and runs through every Friday—and one Thursday—until the end of May. We've got all the dates listed for you on pages 16-17!

Don't miss out on one of our industry's premier events. Support your local entertainers on their quest for the title! See you there!



**SAT 01 — HAWTHORNE STRIP
DARIA'S BIRTHDAY PARTY**

**THU 06 — X EXOTIC LOUNGE
XOTICA-GO-GO WITH DONALD GLAUDE**

**FRI 07 — GUILTY PLEASURES
POLEROTICA 2023 QUALIFIER ROUND I**

**FRI 07 — KIT KAT CLUB
THE RETURN OF TANA THE TATTOOED LADY**

**SAT 08 — KIT KAT CLUB
THE RETURN OF TANA THE TATTOOED LADY**

**THU 13 — X EXOTIC LOUNGE
XOTICA-GO-GO WITH DJ P**

**FRI 14 — STARS CABARET (SALEM)
POLEROTICA 2023 QUALIFIER ROUND II**

**SAT 15 — STARS CABARET (BRIDGEPORT)
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**WED 19 — CLUB ROUGE (PORTLAND)
9TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

**THU 20 — THE LOUNGE
4/20 PARTY**

**THU 20 — X EXOTIC LOUNGE
XOTICA-GO-GO WITH CARTER CRUISE**

**FRI 21 — KIT KAT CLUB
POLEROTICA 2023 QUALIFIER ROUND III**

**SAT 22 — DEVILS POINT
THE MASK (FEATURE PERFORMANCE)**

**SAT 22 — LUCKY DEVIL
TYLER & AZRA'S BIRTHDAY PARTY**

**SAT 22 — STARS CABARET (SALEM)
WET & WILD APRIL SHOWERS PARTY**

**SUN 23 — DANTE'S
SINFERNO CABARET**

**FRI 28 — THE LOUNGE
POLEROTICA 2023 QUALIFIER ROUND IV**

**SAT 29 — LUCKY DEVIL
THE ONE MOTORCYCLE SHOW AFTER PARTY**

**SUN 30 — DANTE'S
SINFERNO CABARET**

HOW TO GET AHEAD IN A COMPETITIVE MUSIC MARKET

By Blazer Sparrow

Let's face it. If you're reading this, you are probably a struggling musician. Guaranteed, you're poor and failing in whatever artistic endeavor you do instead of therapy. I know this because if you're rollin' in the Benjamins at a strip club, you certainly aren't wasting your time there reading the comedy pieces in the free nudie mag by the door. You're likely trying to convince the dancers with enough of said Benjamins to touch your wiener in the champagne room.

Now that we've dispelled any misconceptions about you, dear reader, what if I told you there was a way that you, too, could be that rich creep? And I don't mean giving up your dreams, switching gears, and taking part in some soul-sucking, capitalist rat race. That's right; I'm talking about giving you three solid-gold bullet points to help turn your money-sucking hobby into a money-pumping hustle!

You see, I'm gonna guess that you, dear reader, have been going about this art thing in an honest and humble manner. There's your fucking problem, you chump! No one ever got rich playing by the rules! You gotta learn to lie, cheat and steal since that is literally the only way to be successful in America.

I've been noticing a bit of a trend in the news lately. Most recently with Sam Bankman-Fried, everyone's favorite baby-faced, curly-haired little con artist, but as far back as Elizabeth Holmes and that obnoxious WeWork dipshit. The Hollywood-afied mini-series that inevitably followed their respective downfall (don't worry, Crypto Bros one is coming soon) show that America is obsessed with a fall-from-grace tale, especially if we can shoehorn in some half-assed morality tale about how dishonesty leads to disaster. However, upon studying these neat, packageable narratives and comparing them to the stories of successful robber barons

from the gilded age and tech bros of the present, I've come to realize that they're all the same! The ones that crashed and burned were just dumbasses that got caught.

The takeaway here is to definitely learn from these con artists' mistakes and simply not get caught. If you wanna be successful, definitely pay close attention to how they lie, deflect, manipulate, bully, gaslight, and also think ridiculously highly of themselves. Why is this sure-fire recipe for success only used by entrepreneurs and other dumb things that spoiled, unimaginative brats want to be when they grow up?

Let's take a page out of the playbook of the ultrawealthy! We're not competing. We're literally just using their inhumane tactics to get a bigger slice of the music market pie. The money is there. Headliners at Coachella and Lollapalooza are raking in massive paychecks for what is essentially a constant rehashing of Woodstock. Thanks to Ticketmaster's surprisingly legal "dynamic pricing," the big names are making sweaty fistfuls of money at the expense of millennials desperately trying to claw back something resembling happiness. The money is there. You just gotta learn how to literally take it, like the "successful" types that get asked low-ball questions from capitalist propaganda rags like "What's the secret to your success?" Spoiler alert, it's not a cold shower or a 4 a.m. wake-up time.

Already Have Money

Everyone knows the best way to get rich is to already be rich! Duh! Jeff Bezos started his humble little bookselling shop out of his modest little garage with a measly little *three hundred fucking grand* from his parents. And this alien pretending to be a human has the gall to only offer coffee and bananas in the breakroom at his



headquarters. Don't wanna be too generous, right? Handouts never got anyone anywhere. Anyway, you better get on this neat little lifehack because most up-and-coming artists are already trying out this helpful trick. Look up your favorite new indie singer-songwriter and scroll through to find their parents. Notice how the links are always blue. Yep. The reason you're still a pathetic, broke musician is you're paying for things like recording and rehearsal space and instruments and travel and lodging. Idiot. Get someone *else* to pay for that. That's literally how capitalism works! They even say so in anti-communist propaganda cartoons from the '40s. They don't even sugarcoat that the only way for an average dolt to start a successful small business is to borrow money from rich relatives. Seriously, look it up! It's wild. "Make Mine Freedom," 1948, directed by George Gordon.



Overcharge for Items That Don't Exist

What do you think the stock market even is? A sick amalgamation of gambling and fortune-telling. One of the most successful traits of the yacht owners is to simply

take money from folks and promise to give them something in return. You don't even really need to give them anything, just say you will. Use bullshit word salad phrases like "return on your investment" and "dividends." The whole concept of venture capital, in a nutshell, is people with too much money giving it to slick hucksters who put on the best song and dance. Translate this to your failing business model for your dumb band by putting out a merch table with nothing on it! Sell the *idea* of merch. The gullible marks will think they're "investing" in your band. Tell them they're "speculating on market trends" and other made-up horseshit. This kinda already exists with Patreon, so why not just cut out the middleman? Instead of a merch table, just sit there with a tablet already loaded up with colorful "options." Invite them to buy a share of your upcoming album, which will be a huge hit once your band breaks. Not only will the poor sap receive a free copy of the album, but also a percentage of the royalties since they invested early in this golden opportunity! If the album doesn't take off or never even gets made, that's not your problem, but it is now your money!



If You Do Have Items, Sell Them in Bulk to Rubes to Sell to Others

What you may call a pyramid scheme, people who get away with it call it multi-level marketing (MLM)! See how much more professional that sounds? You're not just selling merchandise—you're selling opportunities! You're selling the freedom to be your own boss and make your own schedule! So much more exciting than a boring T-shirt or cassette tape. You will literally get nowhere sitting at that merch booth selling cheap items with your dumb band name on them, one at a time. But! You can charge fools to be part of the "street team" and then sell them "discounted" bulk merchandise that they can then go and sell to their fool friends for whatever price they see fit. If anything, they're ripping *you* off—you tell them. You'll literally be making money hand over fist. Especially if you told the poor sap who made you the T-shirts that you'll totally pay for them once the first batch sells out—keep reminding them it's an investment!

You're welcome, loser!

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PART ONE

BY ESMERALDA RUPP-SPANGLE

So frequently in our lives, there are those occasions where the idea of “blending in seamlessly with the wall so the embarrassment over your drunken texts from last night” will be obscured. But sadly, humans are not great at blending in with one another. In fact, we typically prefer to make individualistic idiocy a competitive sport, at least here in the Western world. There are, however, a vast number of species that excel at making themselves nigh on invisible. Insects, amphibians, mammals, reptiles, fish, that weird rotting leaf over there? No, wait, that’s a...



Dead Leaf Butterfly

The Dead Leaf Butterfly is truly a unique creature. When viewed from above with wings spread, these lovely insects look very much like your typical butterfly, as flashy as a cheap pair of sparkly platform heels and just as likely to fall into pieces the minute you try, in vain, to waddle precariously in them. Once they (the butterflies, not the shoes) come to rest and fold their wings into a position of repose, their appearance shifts. Not to prolong the shoe analogy too far, but how nice a pair of fancy sneakers can look on the top; however, if you’ve walked through any Walmart parking lot and then seen the underside of your new footwear, you’ll get where I’m going here. The dead leaf butterfly, once it comes to rest and closes its wings, looks exactly like what it’s named after. Not just being a continuous dull brown but having shades of mock decay, veins, and even smears of faux bird shit to bring it all together. You’d have to be a confident or desperate predator to chomp down on a bird poop-covered leaf on the off chance it might be a yummy butterfly treat. Still better looking (and tasting) than the sole of a sneaker after a Walmart visit, though, no matter what.

Leaf Litter Toad

Much in the style of the dead leaf butterflies,

these ribbit bros do their very best to look like dead and fallen organic debris. Unlike the aforementioned insects, these guys would be much more of a tripping hazard. Less flappy, more squishy underfoot, but just as impressive at masquerading at rotting detritus. #Goals.



Sexy Cephalopods

If you bothered to finish grade school (fuckin’ nerd), you’d know that octopuses are wicked smart and damn good at the whole camouflage game. Far superior, though, are cuttlefish. A member of the same aquatic association, cuttlefish really steal the spotlight as far as the variety of colors, textures, and patterns they are able to produce. What really brings them to the top of the incognito game, however, are their mating habits. In an evolutionary angle that would infuriate Andrew Tate, cuttlefish really do illustrate the effectiveness of the so-called beta male. Some cuttlefish are what you might call Chad. The chicks love Chad. Big, dumb, and strong. Chad gets the girl, mates, and hangs out—guarding her after the deed to make sure her babies will be his. He’s looking for some stranger while simultaneously trying to prevent her from wandering off, though, and does get distracted. Another cute Cephachick comes along to join his harem, and Chad is too busy to notice that Cephachick is actually ye olde “Beta Male” in disguise. “Cephachick” (who’s just conducting an elaborate drag by hiding a couple of tentacles and low-key camouflaging his coloration) mates surreptitiously with Chad’s kept woman and then splits in a major hurry. This cross-dressing may seem simple because essentially all it requires is advanced tucking of gonads, but ultimately it means beta dude has as much chance of passing on his genes as Chad-o-pod. Brains or brawn? How about both?

Stonefish

Let’s make this clear. We left the ocean for a reason. Sure, in many ways, it (the sea, that is) is super amenable to life, but the competition is fierce. Like buying beachfront property in an up-and-coming hipster neighborhood, real estate is never easy. The tougher the city, the more the basic bitches migrate to the



suburbs. Stonefish live downtown and have for as long as they can remember. Rent control. They’re in the same family as scorpionfish—all poisonous, toxic, and largely deadly to humans. Their venom consists of a proteinaceous toxin called verrucotoxin, which causes intense pain, respiratory weakness, damage to the cardiovascular system, convulsions, and paralysis, sometimes leading to death. Also, they look exactly like something that would feel great if you just took your flip-flops off and...oh dear god, I can’t feel my feet (wheezing)! You should probably just put up your house as an Airbnb or get a timeshare or whatever. This beach is fucking dangerous.



Plants

Fritillaria delavayi happens to be a plant that’s lived amongst some mighty adverse conditions. Sometimes adversity breeds strength, sometimes PTSD, and occasionally both. This one is like us in so, so many ways. At first young and green, it blends in with almost nothing. In its youth, it’s independent, prominent, and bright; but the older it gets, the more it looks like nothing. Seamlessly, it blends in with the dull gray and brown hues of the rocks it grows amongst. Eventually, one can hardly tell the difference between rock and plant, all youthful uniqueness crushed in the wheels of an adherence to mediocrity. Just like how modern society forms us all into automatons following structural norms like paying taxes, getting jobs, wearing pants and adding your mom on Facebook.

Please be aware that this is part one of a series because wacky physical subterfuge in the animal kingdom is a subject that absolutely cannot even be addressed in one puny article. Two or three, maybe, but for sure, not one.

Esmeralda Marina is anti-pants. She can be found on Facebook as Esmeralda Marina or Instagram as @esmeraldasilentcitadel if you feel the need to hurl fan letters at her.

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HOW I STOPPED WORRYING AND BECAME ONE WITH THE END OF THE WORLD

BY HANNAH ONE CUP

It should be no surprise to anyone that over here on the west side of the globe (that sentence makes perfect sense and is called a scientific fact...don't argue with me), we, as a people, enjoy watching the world burn. For someone with high anxiety and panic attacks, this is absolutely awful. I do not like surprises, and having today be the last day I'm able to use my car due to someone potentially carjacking it, brings me no comfort and only bleak despair.

I've realized, however, that there is no stopping what is to come and that our society is what it is. I think that we have become accustomed to considering ourselves as a whole, a big melting pot of crap. And now that this has been brought out to the open and we are all accepting of our fate (which has been predetermined by our multiple failed attempts at bettering ourselves), let's come up with some ways to stop worrying about any of it. Accept where you are today, and be one with the downfall of western society. Much like a flan in a cupboard, it was destined to come down sometime, so let's go along with it.

How to Zen Yourself Down With the Rest of Society

Stop Caring Where Your Products Came From – Give Jeff Bezos all your money by buying straight from Amazon, like you already do. Good for you; keep it up. You're already halfway there if you do this. Better yet, get a job from Jeff Bezos and work as one of his Amazon drivers. You know, the big vans that can't seem to fit in a normal parking spot, so they just take up an entire

lane in the street? I hear the benefits of working for this company are *amazing*.



I started off somewhere and you can too!

Get a Job You Always Wanted – I'm thinking of applying to Powell's Books again like I tried when I was 16, and money didn't matter. I always wanted to work around a bunch of books and not talk to people all day. If the job doesn't pay enough, I'll just use GoFundMe for supplemental income. Also, depending on what groups you are in on Facebook, there is a particular "Buy Nothing" group that has a "cash request" day, where people post their various needs and hope that others who are in the group will be able to assist with their money issues. I've used it before, unsuccessfully, but the idea is sound, so long as you appreciate that you are basically begging/asking for money, albeit virtually.

Stop Doing Yoga So Seriously – Stop pretending like you'll ever go to an actual yoga class outside of your home, and all your poses must be exactly how they look on the TV screen you're watching it on. I'm barely able to do yoga without my dog tripping me or my partner spitting in my face while laughing at a pose we are doing. Just go with it, take what you can from it, and in the end, the corpse pose is always available if you can't get your downward dog right.

The corpse pose is our friend. Stay in the corpse pose as long as you like, until you eventually become one with the floor and fall asleep for the rest of the day. You earned that nap.



Get Yourself That Weird Thing from the Sexy Shop – You know what I'm talking about. That one thing you question if it's worth it or not to spend your money on. Whether anyone would enjoy it with you or if you're just being "weird." Stop being an uptight Karen, who only drinks Chardonnay when the kids are asleep, and buy the damn tail. It's cute and fluffy, and even if no one enjoys it *with you*, you can figure out how to enjoy this yourself. One of my favorite stores for "sexy time" stuff is Taboo. Lots of locations...look them up; they are great.

Take Your Shoes Off and Walk Outside – My partner gave me a lot of crap for doing this a couple of years back. My heels were hurting my feet, I was drunk, and I wanted to just walk on my bare feet up the sidewalk and to my apartment—sue me (joke would be on you, though, I have no money...maybe I need to get on the GoFundMe wagon). Anyway, the ground feels nice on your feet, in all honesty. And it's springtime, which means that you won't have to

walk around in the mud when you do this unless you're a pig farmer, in which case, maybe do number two...haha, I mean the second point above...and get that job you always wanted. Just watch out for needles and rocks that might stub your toes, and maybe wash your feet afterward.

Don't Act Surprised When You See Things – The key to having less anxiety is apathy. Now I'm no doctor, but this advice sounds about right. So long as you are not constantly surprised when someone is pooping on the side of the road in broad daylight or watching someone buy or use their drug of choice in the alley (why are you staring at them in the alley anyways...nosey much?), and so long as you recognize that you live in a culture where "what's yours is mine" and wake up to your car stolen one day without completely throwing a BF (*White Chicks* reference—if you know, you know), you have come close to becoming one with the end of the world. Apathy is the winner's choice. Kids in school today know this as fact, which is why many of them have such great deadpan humor nowadays. Appreciate it, go along with it, and enjoy sitting back in your La-Z-Boy Recliner you got for free on Buy Nothing, as you slowly sink into the crack of the chair, further into the black abyss that is the downfall of Western civilization, and the end of the world, as we know it.



Hannah One Cup still refuses to buy products from Amazon, is still taking yoga far too seriously, and still has panic attacks and fits of anxiety, but at least she has the sidewalk to put her bare feet on when she needs to feel more at one with cement. You can see her periodically walking an ill-behaved black puppy while simultaneously trying to control their life and having no control of her own. You might also see her having a panic attack on the side of the street because the dog doesn't do what she wants it to do. Which is walk. Hannah One Cup also wanted to say, "I have given you many lists of things to do to better yourself; why haven't you followed any of them?" Find her on Facebook under Hannah One Cup or TikTok @thursdaynight_depression.

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PORTLAND'S PORN PALACES OF PAST AND PRESENT

By Atticus Rexx

Adult Theaters, Adult Cinemas, Porn Theaters, Blue Moon Theaters, Dark Rooms, Suckitoriums, and Masterbatorias. What magical places for the sexually adventurous. Never having dipped a toe myself, I have witnessed just about everything that goes on in adult theaters. In fact, it takes quite a bit to shock me now.

The first time I ever stepped foot into one was on my very first interview with the company I still work for today. After the standard interview questions with one of the managers, I was given a tour of the facilities. I have no doubt this would be a very important part of an adult store's interviewing process. It was quite an experience for a first-timer, and unlike any other job experience I had ever had before—and I've had quite the collection of weird jobs.



She led me through the arcades, and sales floor, saving the best and most shocking for last. As we were let in by one of the staff members, it took me a minute for my eyes to adjust to the sudden dark lighting. Once my vision adjusted, I realized I was standing in a

large, dimly lit room with comfortable sofas and lounge chairs placed strategically around the floor so that they were accessible from all angles. There were numerous large-sized, modern TV screens playing various scenes of porn. People of all shapes, sizes, ethnicity, and gender lounged around, mostly naked, as fair play to each other. It looked like what I would expect an ancient Greek *bacchanal* to look like. Everyone looked comfortable and content; boundaries were respected—it looked...dare I say, *fun*?

As I took it all in, pondering what it would be like to encounter this every day and for it to become a normal daily thing, right in front of me, I saw a younger man completely in the nude, bending down on all fours. Directly behind him was a man well into his 80s, with a strapon harness and a dildo stationed at the front. I had a lot of questions, but I didn't feel it was appropriate to walk up to this individual, mid-hump, and ask something. But I still couldn't look away from the scene. It was so unlike anything I had ever witnessed before.

We exited the theater, and I was told they would be in touch. I walked out into the cold night; my interview time had been at 9 p.m., and the position was for the graveyard shift. The fresh air felt good after being in that stuffy and sweaty, dark room.

Portland has a very rich history of sexual liberation. The now-closed Oregon Theater was the first of its kind. It was 6,000 square feet of kinky fun, built in the 1920s by the founder of the Aladdin Theater, Isaac Geller, which is now a venue. Last I heard, ever since Geller passed, there is a new owner, and the Oregon Theater will remain a theater—but not for porn. There were several adult the-

aters located in downtown Portland, and until recently, the last one, Paris Theater, closed its doors, and I haven't heard even so much of a rumor about its fate. Many of our local adult stores were casualties of the Covid pandemic.

Not long after that night of the interview, I received a call requesting I come in for a second interview and to bring documentation for filling out the new-hire paperwork. I was thrilled. The second interview was quite a letdown compared to the first one. No shocking revelations, just the standard procedure that I've been through so many times with many other new jobs. But I didn't care! I got a job working at a porn store! How wild is that to say?



My dad always told me that no matter what job you do, it's always worth doing it well. I've always taken pride in what I do, even if it's as minuscule as dishwashing (which I've done) or as complicated as taking care of exotic reptiles (which I've also done). Every job is worth your best effort, and I take that to heart everywhere I go—even applying this to porn customers.

There is no typical theater customer. Just like the arcade, customers come from various backgrounds—many opposites, with that being the only thing in common. Like the glory hole fantasy, many expect a completely different setting for a porn theater. Prominent among

swinger couples, gay men, and the sexually adventurous, the most common question I get from my customers is, "Where are the women?" I can't answer that question completely. But as I have mentioned before, I have witnessed a lone curious woman who enters the theater by herself for the first time and is completely taken aback by the scene. A very accurate portrayal would be the Finding Nemo scene with the aggressive seagulls. That is the partial answer to that repetitive question.

One of my weirder theater stories happened a few years ago, on a graveyard shift with my friend and coworker. He had been with the company far longer than I had, and his crazy stories outmatch my own. We were closing the theater after a standard uneventful night. Going through the standard procedure of having someone walk through the room with a flashlight, searching every nook and cranny for someone trying to hide. As he exited the door, I saw him wordlessly shaking his head. When I questioned him, he replied, "there is a carrot."

"A what?" I asked.



"A carrot. In the theater," he said, "go look for yourself," he told me as I stared at him, confused and speechless.

I walked into the theater with all the overhead lights on, which was quite jarring from the usual dark and dimness. Sitting on top of a single brown paper towel was a very large, unpeeled carrot. It was so big that I thought it was a yam at first. I stared, perplexed, at this otherwise normal object that was so out of place. I had questions, but I decided I didn't want any answers. I walked back out of the large room, and my coworker was standing at the counter with his arms crossed and shaking his head.

"People are freaks," I said with a shrug and a chuckle.

To this day, we still laugh at the memory of the porn theater carrot, and it has become an infamous story between us. Other odd finds have been a whole uncut pizza, homemade paddles, dentures, dildos stuck to walls (one had a suction cup that was so strong, nobody could pull it off), and a hammer, to name a few.

But this is—by far—the tamest story I have of the much-eluded porn theaters, but those are stories for another time.

Atticus Rexx is a Portland native, wanna-be graphic artist, and a gutter punk at heart who never left the '90s. When she isn't writing, she can be found bouncing from one unfinished project to another or running a porn store. Find Atticus Rexx on Instagram @quinzelaple.



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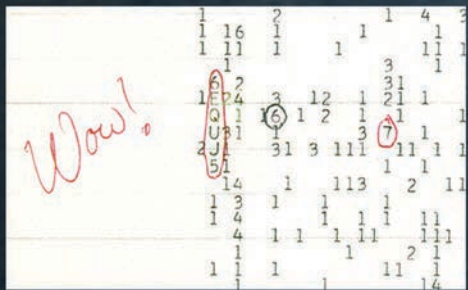
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UNEXPLAINED MYSTERIES OF EXISTENCE

Existence is a funny thing. How did we come to be, and where are we going? What's out there? How can we know so much and yet, so little? How can there be endless breadsticks?

Well, I've compiled a short list of some very interesting things that we, as a species, cannot find conclusive answers for. From things in the ethereal realm of outer space to those found on our humble Earth, I'm going to rattle off some of the more curious and compelling phenomena we humans have encountered, but for which we have no solid explanation.

Listed in no particular order, here we go.



The Wow! Signal

In the '70s, the University of Ohio was on the hunt for aliens. Not in the sense of your drunken cousin running around with a baseball bat in the woods, who swears he was abducted and probed after he passed out behind the bar and woke up in a truck with a sore ass—no. They'd constructed a giant radio telescope and decided to scan the heavens for possible contact. Dubbed the "Big Ear," it was used for their efforts to search for extraterrestrial life, which were met with a lot of nothing in terms of results. That is, until August 15th of 1977. That

day, they received a very strong signal from roughly the Sagittarius constellation, which lasted for a solid 72 seconds and had all the hallmarks of being a deliberately sent signal. It's called the "Wow! signal" because the researcher, Jerry Ehrman, wrote "Wow!" next to the recorded paper transcript of the signal.

Many believe this was an effort by aliens to contact us, perhaps deliberately, or perhaps we just got the equivalent of accidentally getting an interstellar trucker CB call about needing to use the toilet. Suffice it to say this signal, and its purported origin and purpose, have been the source of much debate over the years. They searched the same area of space to find a similar broadcast over and over and over again, but to no avail. Skeptics claim that it lacked modulation, which most all deliberately transmitted signals have, with even Mr. Ehrman, who discovered it, suggesting it could have been an Earth signal which bounced off some space junk. However, he redacted that statement some years later, stating that it's the most likely candidate anyone has ever seen for an extraterrestrial transmission. I guess he was a little depressed the first time around. Many other radio telescopes have since tried to locate the signal again in the years since, with no luck. In 2012, I guess we got annoyed, so the famous Arecibo Observatory beamed out an excessively powerful signal back to that location, consisting of 10,000 Twitter messages. If you've ever been on Twitter, you'll know that this was probably an attempt to really piss off any space aliens who might be out there.



The Voynich Manuscript

The Voynich Manuscript is a large, 240-page tome, written on parchment, which contains strange glyphs or letters, as well as an abundance of confusing diagrams and drawings. It was first discovered in the 17th century by a Czech alchemist, who'd had it in his library... though he did not know where it'd come from, he couldn't make any sense of it and sold it as soon as he could. It has since gone on to become one of the most enduring mysteries of the modern age. In the time since its discovery, the manuscript has been analyzed by scholars, linguists, and historians over the centuries. Science has carbon-dated the manuscript to the early 1500s, and analysis shows that the ink and paints are consistent with that time, but that's where the facts end. Thousands of linguists and cryptographers have tried to figure out if perhaps it's a code to be

cracked, but without success. Given the fact that, at the time, you couldn't just go to Ye Olde Depot of Office and get a 500-page pack of parchment for a couple of ducats, it would have been extraordinarily expensive to put together, which limits its authorship to someone with wealth and time...or perhaps the backing of someone like that. But still, its purpose remains unknown. Is it a lost language? Maybe a created language made just for the book? Is it a joke? A hoax? Secret knowledge? A cookbook? A journal? Those are all hypotheses that have been put forth over the ages, and thus far, nobody knows for sure.



The Taos Hum

In central New Mexico lies the sleepy, artistic community known as Taos. A certain percentage of the residents of Taos can hear a distinctive hum in their ears at all times, which has no known source. It's been described as a "low, throbbing background noise" and seems not to coincide with any man-made or natural phenomena. Unlike the hum in your ears after you drink too much and wake up on the floor of a Denny's bathroom, it's got a constant, rhythmic characteristic, apparently like cicadas in your brain. Those who can hear it, some 2% of the local population, describe it as nearly akin to tinnitus, but it is not a permanent condition. You can travel away from Taos and no longer be plagued by The Hum™, which makes me wonder why afflicted people don't simply do that. The causes have been speculated as related to the power grid, resonances of lightning-induced electromagnetic radiation trapped between the ionosphere and Earth, the US Navy's ELF Project (Extremely Low Frequency, used to communicate with submarines), and

plain-old auditory hallucinations. However, after decades of study, nobody has been able to reach a solid conclusion. Similar hum effects have been observed in other places, such as Auckland, New Zealand, Windsor, Ontario, and St. Louis, Missouri. It continues to make people question their sanity to this very day.



BC's Foot Fetish

In Vancouver, British Columbia, there exist a number of wonderful sights and attractions. Among the places to go is the lovely Salish Sea; however, it has a small problem. Feet, bereft of legs, though sometimes having shoes, wash up along the beaches with alarming frequency. Imagine walking along the coast, enjoying life, and then eating sand after being tripped by a disembodied foot. This happens. By and large, people attribute it to organized crime, shipwrecks, or the simple decomposition of drowning victims. That said, there's no real, conclusive proof, and even after scientific study, the verdict seems to be "feet happen, eh." It is of note that none of the feet have been wearing Crocs; whether that speaks for or against their value as footwear, I cannot say.

Time

Okay, this is a weird one, but from a technical perspective, we don't actually know that time exists. Sure, any of you



are gonna read that and say, "The fuck it doesn't. I gotta get up at 7 a.m. every day," or some shit, and yes, you might, and Isaac Newton would agree with you. His vision of the universe held time as a "universally ticking clock," which just goes on and on in a linear fashion, like your uncle at a barbecue once he's had a few. However, Einstein (Albert, of course, not his brother Steve) proposed that time is elastic and can shrink or expand, depending on circumstance, much as your old pair of Hanes does after a cold or hot day. Some modern physicists even suggest that time doesn't exist but is instead a series of events which are the projected occurrences of past, present, and future, colliding with our perspective in a way that we can understand, driven by something called "quantum gravity." Heavy. Time itself might be a complete lie, but sadly, that doesn't get us out of having to get up for work in the morning, so set your alarm.

So, there are some of the mysteries of existence. Kinda weird to think you could hear an internal hum in your head while stumbling over a foot on a beach and perceiving time in a non-linear fashion, but here we are.

Stay mystified,

-Wombstretcha

Wombstretcha the Magnificent is a cryptic manuscript enthusiast, space alien detractor, watch owner, writer, and retired rapper from Portland, OR. He can be found at his website, wombstretcha.com, on Twitter as @wombstretcha503, and on MeWe (yay!) and Facebook (boo!) as "Wombstretcha the Magnificent."

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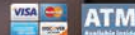
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