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**MISS
exotic
OREGON**
2024

**Q&A WITH
THE CROWN**

**HOW TO GET
FAT AS FUCK,
FAST AS FUCK**

**MAKING A
CONNECTION**

MISS EXOTIC OREGON
2025

Kit Kat

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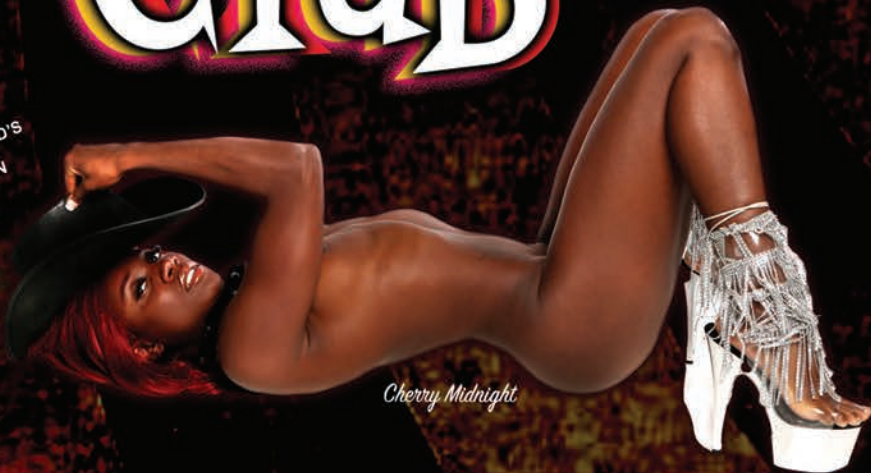
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MISS EXOTIC OREGON
2025

Kit Kat

FROM
KIT KAT CLUB

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Kit Kat Club



INTERVIEW WITH THE CROWN

up close and personal with miss exotic 2025
page 14 | by bryan a. bybee



HOW TO GET FAT AS FUCK FAST AS FUCK

your expedited guide to a reverse diet
page 22 | by wombstretcha the magnificent



4 WAYS MUSICIANS CAN MAKE A LIVING

creative schemes for starving artists
page 38 | by blazer sparrow



MAKING A CONNECTION

applying social science to security scenarios
page 40 | by nate hazen

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INSIDE STUFF

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An Interview With the Crown

MISS EXOTIC OREGON 2025

INTERVIEW BY BRYAN A. BYBEE - PHOTOS BY HYPNOX

Kit Kat

Congratulations, Kit Kat! You absolutely killed it! Your theme was quite unique! Tell us why you chose the theme you did, and was it a difficult decision compared to the other themes you considered?

I actually came across the idea while brainstorming with my friend (shout out to Nikki Diesel). We were trying to determine which sets we hadn't seen in past competitions. We both agreed we had seen vampire sets before, but we had never seen anyone attempt *Queen of the Damned*. It was highly considered and became my point of focus when we both agreed it was an act the audience could understand and relate to. That, and my love for Aaliyah, of course! I felt very attracted to the set from the start.

Thinking of the time during your actual performance, what do you remember thinking about or feeling while on stage? (You know damn well I couldn't get more

than two questions in before I indirectly ask about the on-stage surprise...) ☺

I was so excited, and I felt very ready to perform! My dancers and I worked through rehearsals, and I studied the music closely. Every move felt intentional, including my surprise! I included the bit to show a side of vulnerability and incorporated it into the theme itself. My mom even helped me create the jelly heart. It was brilliant and bloody! I felt so empowered!

This is your first Exotic cover! We're excited and can't believe it hasn't happened well before now. Was being featured on the cover something you thought about in the past? Were you nervous before and during the photoshoot?

I've been happily featured in the magazine for years now in competition and Kit Kat Club ads. It's never been do-or-die that I got the cover, but once I realized *Miss Exotic Ore-*





gon was a direct line, I was happy to take it! I loved modeling for the camera! I felt very comfortable with HYPNOX, the photographer; we have shot a couple of times before. It was very cold in the jeweled top for the outside shots, but I know we got everything we needed!

Describe your other experiences competing in our events—including *Polerotica 2024*, where you placed second—and how they shaped your preparations for *Miss Exotic Oregon 2025*.

I've competed in so many competitions over the last five years...I lost count! *Polerotica 2024* was a huge accomplishment for me! I learned a lot about set design with the robot theme and how different incorporating dancers and larger props can make the process. I also took notes on marketing and created my own advertisements this year! Word of mouth and involving friends for support really helped me the most! I noticed the more the set meant to me and the more details I applied, the better the results!

We never miss the chance to ask these next two questions! What advice would you offer to other performers who are looking to win it all at an *Exotic* event?

My advice to other performers would be to focus on the relativity of your theme in terms of how it makes you feel, what it means to you, and how it will reach others. Be original! This is art! It has to be real and meaningful! Mistakes will be made, but confidence and organization were the keys that unlocked my fate. Have fun and love what you're doing—that's really all that matters.

If you could travel back in time and talk to baby stripper Kit Kat, what advice would you offer?

I would tell her to keep following your dreams, honey; everything you deserve comes to you! Stay focused on that money and get that business started! You're strong and resilient, and you'll meet lots of amazing people who unlock new opportunities

in love, life, and business very soon! All that hard work and those restless nights will pay off.

What if our readers are interested in seeing you perform? Where can they catch you on shift? Drop your socials, too!

You can find me at Kit Kat Club every weekend and Dante's Sinferno on Sundays, where you can see my feature performances and go-go dancing! Look for me in Kit Kat Club's ads in *Exotic* for club event information. My Instagram is where you can find my personal promotion and deeper insight into the featured events I'm involved with!

@the_official_kitkat

Switching gears for a moment, tell us all about some of your future aspirations, industry-related or otherwise...

The dreams I see myself pursuing include helping others. Affordability, accessibility, and comfortability are my points of action. Charity and expanding my brand are at the top of my list of things to do. I also love making music, so I aspire to incorporate some of my own into my performances and make them available to others!

Lastly, what consumes your time when you're not slaying it on the pole or otherwise kicking on stage?

I work in freelance modeling, acting, and background singing and dancing with Thunder Snatch, the band! I perform burlesque features at Jack London Revue when I can find the time. I also work at Portland Pot Shop, and I am rebranding my pole dance classes, which will be available soon! These are just my jobs! I love sleeping with my cat and hanging out with my friends and family, too! Working, smoking, and relaxing are my vibes!

XOXO
Kit Kat

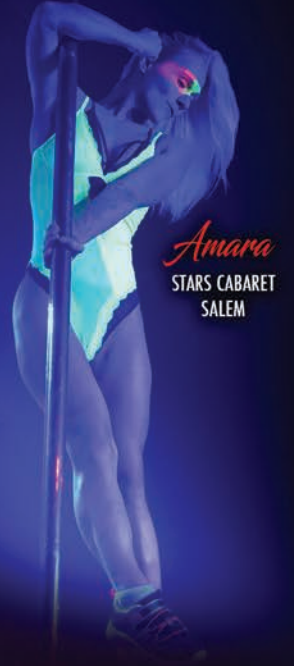


1st PLACE
Kit Kat
KIT KAT CLUB

MISS EXOTIC OREGON 2025

FINALS!

PHOTOS BY **HYPOX PHOTOGRAPHY** & RALPH WALKER



Amara
STARS CABARET
SALEM



2nd PLACE
Onyx
MISS NUDE CANADA
2019



Ariel
DEVILS POINT



Jess
CABARET



3rd PLACE
Eric
GUILTY PLEASURES



Benzi
CASA DIABLO



Daphne
HAWTHORNE STRIP



Apple
SHADY LADY TAVERN



Carmelita
LUCKY DEVIL LOUNGE



Karmen
SCARLET LOUNGE



Belladonna
CASA DIABLO



Banshee
MISS BEAUTIFUL VAGINA
2024



Chevella
STARS CABARET
SALEM



Marlie Mae
SKIN & GAMES



Andy
LUCKY DEVIL LOUNGE



Mini
ACROPOLIS



Penelope
FIREHOUSE CABARET



Shimmer
CLUB ROUGE
BEAVERTON

Suki
ACROPOLIS

Sky
REVEAL LOUNGE



Violet
CHEETAHS CABARET



River
THE LOUNGE



Venus
STEP DOWN
PERFORMANCE





Happy New Year, my truly beloveds! I'd normally start off with some forced wittiness and a dash of snarkiness, but hey...new year, new me, right? Actually, not really. Truth be told, I'm still enlivened by the epic finale of *Miss Exotic Oregon 2025*! So naturally, this lead-in must be curtailed—it's time to reflect on that amazing and memorable evening!

MISS EXOTIC 2025

This year's *Miss Exotic Oregon* was the largest in the 15-year history of the pageant. We had a record 24 finalists and the largest audience attendance ever. Statistics aside, it was also the most incredibly diverse show that I've ever witnessed—leaving me with a very surreal feeling by the end of the evening. Before this takes an emotional turn, let's revisit what the pageant is all about.

Miss Exotic was created for *one* purpose: to showcase the wide-ranging talent, skills, and creativity of exotic entertainers in the Pacific Northwest, especially to those who are not consistently visiting industry establishments and may have skewed views of what our industry represents. This year's pageant lived up to that goal in a way that I hadn't dreamed possible.



Kit Kat and Onyx celebrate their 1st & 2nd place domination of the pageant

So, without further ado, all hail the new crown in P-town! A special congratulations goes to *Miss Exotic Oregon 2025*, Kit Kat, representing Kit Kat Club!

I'd also like to recognize the incredible performances by Onyx (*Miss Nude Canada 2019*), placing 2nd, and Eris from *Guilty Pleasures*, placing 3rd!

Be sure to check out the exclusive interview with *Miss Exotic Oregon 2025*, Kit Kat, on page 14, and full coverage of *The Finals* starting on page 16 to see photos of all the finalists in action during their performances.

Here's to a prodigious 2025!

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eroticcity spotlight

FRI 03 – GUILTY PLEASURES – ROYAL'S 21ST BIRTHDAY

SUN 05 – DANTE'S – SINFERNO CABARET

**FRI 10 – GUILTY PLEASURES
PIRATES OF THE CARIBOOTY (ROUND 1)**

**FRI 10 – STARS CABARET (SALEM)
PIRATES OF THE CARIBOOTY (ROUND 2)**

SAT 11 – LUCKY DEVIL LOUNGE – VENDETTA'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

SUN 12 – DANTE'S – SINFERNO CABARET

THU 16 – CLUB DETOUR – PIRATES OF THE CARIBOOTY (ROUND 3)

FRI 17 – DESIRE – PIRATES OF THE CARIBOOTY (ROUND 4)

**SAT 18 – DOMINIQUE STELLA
PIRATES OF THE CARIBOOTY (ROUND 5)**

**SAT 18 – HAWTHORNE STRIP
PRIESTESS' FELINE FRENZY FIESTA BIRTHDAY PARTY**

SUN 19 – DANTE'S – SINFERNO CABARET

**SAT 25 – GUILTY PLEASURES
PIRATES OF THE CARIBOOTY (FINALS)**

**SAT 25 – STARS CABARET (SALEM)
WINTER WONDERLAND PARTY**

SUN 26 – DANTE'S – SINFERNO CABARET

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SUN 09 – SKIN & GAMES – SUPER BOWL SUNDAY PARTY

**SUN 09 – STARS CABARET (SALEM)
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ROUND 1 - FRI, JAN 10



ROUND 2 - SAT, JAN 11



ROUND 3 - THU, JAN 16



ROUND 4 - FRI, JAN 17

DOMINIQUE Stella

ROUND 5 - SAT, JAN 18

GUILTY PLEASURES

FINALS - SAT, JAN 25

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COLUMN

BY WOMBSTRETCHA THE MAGNIFICENT

HOW TO GET FAT AS FUCK, FAST AS FUCK

It's a commonly held belief that people do not want to be fat.

After all, people go to terrible trouble to *not* be fat. We go to gyms, try all manner of absurd diets, get surgeries, take drugs that someone sells on late-night TV, and pretty much any goofball thing some celebrity recommends.

But we don't often talk about how to *get* fat, you know, in case you need to do so in a relative hurry. I'm sure everyone has some notion of how to do this, like eating McDonald's all day or some such, but I have done diligent research, and I'll get you fuckers fat as fast as possible.



Diet

Now, you knew the first thing I was going to cover was food, so let's get to the meat of this. I found the most fattening and unhealthy foods *on the planet*. I know that something being just fatty doesn't mean you *get* fat from it. We dismissed that societal concept some time ago, and in the age

of keto and paleo diets, which are mostly meats and fats, we know that fats are not the enemy, unlike the "everything must have a low-fat version" mantra of the '80s and '90s. Here are some things that will really help you lay on the blubber.



Store-Bought Cakes

Yep, those ones you get at the grocery store with the really terrible icing. They have everything you want: processed sugars, palm oil, corn syrup, and nothing but pure carbs.



Smoothies

These things just pretend to be healthy and trick you into thinking so, but Jamba Juice is a house of lies. One of their medium-sized peanut butter smoothies, for example, is 120 grams of carbs and 102 grams of sugar.

Jalebi

Here's where we start getting weird. This is a pastry made in India, so you might have trouble sourcing it unless you have a really kick-ass Indian joint near you. It is a dough made



of super-refined flour and sugar, deep fried in oil, and then drenched in a hyper-sweet sauce made of sugar, honey, and rose water. Move aside, glazed doughnuts! Jalebi comin' through!



Aligot

Why are French cooks regarded as the best? Because they invent shit like this. Aligot is a dish of mashed potatoes. I know what you must be thinking: "Mashed potatoes? That's not that fattening." Trust me, they found a way. Mashed potatoes, finely blended with Tomme de Laguiole (which is dense cheese curds) and cantal (a hard cheese), sometimes mozzarella, and a fuckpile of butter and garlic, traditionally served in a bread bowl. Often, they will dip sausages in it, too. Needless to say, this will help you pack it on.

Khachapuri

This one hails from Georgia. Not our Georgia, but the one that's in Slav land. It's a sort-sandwich, being a long bread roll similar to



a baguette. It is then stuffed with butter and a special cheese they make just for this thing, then topped with a fried egg. This is so popular in Georgia that it is not only their national dish, but it has its own fucking holiday, February 27th, National Khachapuri Day. Often served with tea or vodka. Skip the tea.



Poutine

Canada's sole contribution to world cuisine, but if you know, you know how good it is. Fried cheese curds on a bed of fries, smothered in rich gravy. It is so popular up North that McDonald's even sells it. According to McD's, the **REGULAR** size is 870 calories, the large is 1730 calories, and that's just the fast food version. They have whole restaurants dedicated to poutine, so imagine how fattening the *good* stuff is!



Chocolate Salo

The Slavs once again come into play, but this time, it's the Ukrainians who are up to mischief. Salo is a popular food there; in fact, it is so popular that there is a museum dedicated to it. It is cubes of salt-cured pork fat, which is already pushing it, and then some

brain genius decided to dip them in chocolate after the end of the Cold War when Slavs could more readily obtain chocolate. Upon discovering this foodstuff, BBC reporter Helen Fawkes dubbed it "one of the unhealthiest snacks in the world." It is traditionally served with pickles, garlic, and, yep, you guessed it, vodka.



Churros

I'm not leaving out our Spanish and Mexican pals. They throw the heat with the humble churro. Most of us have probably had one before. Fried dough covered in sugar and cinnamon. In Spain, it is common to dip it in liquid chocolate, and while we largely think of them as a dessert here, they are a breakfast item over there.



Deep-Fried Mars Bar

Most popular in Scotland. Ach, laddie, it's a deep-fried Mars bar. Not much more to say there, save that they are a whole pile of calories.

Tiramisu

Italy, you made me have to pick, out of all the dishes you make, the one that is the

least healthy. This was quite the chore, but I settled on tiramisu. For those perhaps not in the know, it's a dessert comprised of ladyfinger pastries soaked in coffee and covered in a creamy meringue made of egg whites, sugar, and mascarpone. It is then dusted in cocoa powder and usually served cold or at room temperature with some coffee or sweet liquor like limoncello or sambuca.



Drugs

There are a lot of drugs out there to help you *not* be fat. There's a kajillion-dollar industry built around this alone in the world of Big Pharma. That said, let's talk about some that will *make* you fat.

Antipsychotics

Antipsychotics like Zyprexa, Abilify, and Seroquel are known to cause massive weight gain with constant use and will bloat you way up, really fast. They typically cause a gain of anywhere between 7% and 25% of total body mass, according to reports, so you can be not crazy *and* be fat.

Beta-Blockers

Beta-blockers like Altace or Lotensin help your body be more resistant to exercise and make it harder to burn calories. Athletes take these because they increase response time in fine motor skills, slow your heart rate, and decrease blood pressure. You aren't an athlete, ten-to-one, so just take them and eat Hot Pockets.

Antidepressants

Most antidepressants are selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, more commonly known as SSRIs. Paxil, Zoloft, and Luvox are the most common ones. They have been known to cause brief weight loss before the balloon factor starts.

The other popular kind is tricyclic antidepressants, such as Endep, Tofranil, and Remeron. These can potentially cause a gain of nearly

44 lbs in 2-6 months! Wellbutrin seems to cause weight *loss*, so avoid that.

Diabetes Medicine

Diabetes meds like thiazolidinediones (commonly called TZDs, because fuck trying to pronounce that in one breath) and insulin shots like Humalog can cause weight gain, but it is typically not severe. You're probably going to need it eventually, anyhow, if you're trying to get fat fast.

Behavior

- Eat huge meals 3 hours after waking and right before sleeping.
- Don't eat whole grain anything.
- Avoid fruits and vegetables unless they are fried or soaked in butter.
- Punch someone in the face.

Surgical Procedures

Ass Implants

Since most doctors will not do stomach implants (if that's even a thing), you can get ass implants, just like Nicki Minaj!

Breast Implants

If you're a lady, this does not have to be explained. If you're a fella, and you want the sweaty moobs you crave, you can get breast implants, too. Just don't get the silicone ones, they look too fake.

Reverse Liposuction

Just do a handshake deal with a plastic surgeon to "take the left-overs off [their] hands" and get pumped full of fat that some ingrate didn't want.

Exercise Tips

- Don't.



There you have it. My tips on how to get fat as fuck, fast as fuck. If Brendan Fraser can win an Oscar for being a great, big fatass, then you, too, can achieve glory.

Gorge well,

-Wombstretcha

Wombstretcha the Magnificent is a regrettably skinny bastard, carb enthusiast, deep-fryer owner, writer, and retired rapper from Portland, OR. He can be found at his website, wombstretcha.com, on Twitter/X/whatever as @wombstretcha503, and on MeWe and (begudgingly) Facebook as "Wombstretcha the Magnificent."

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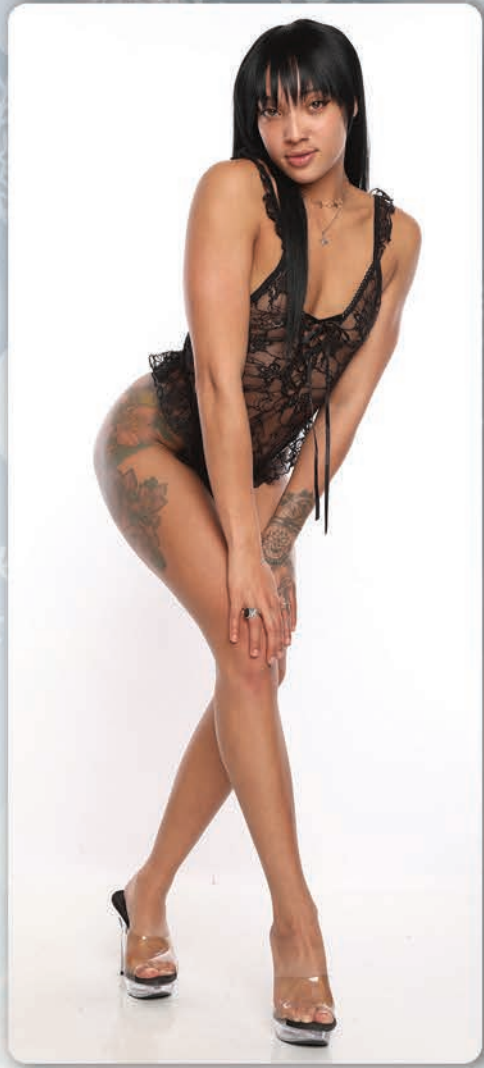


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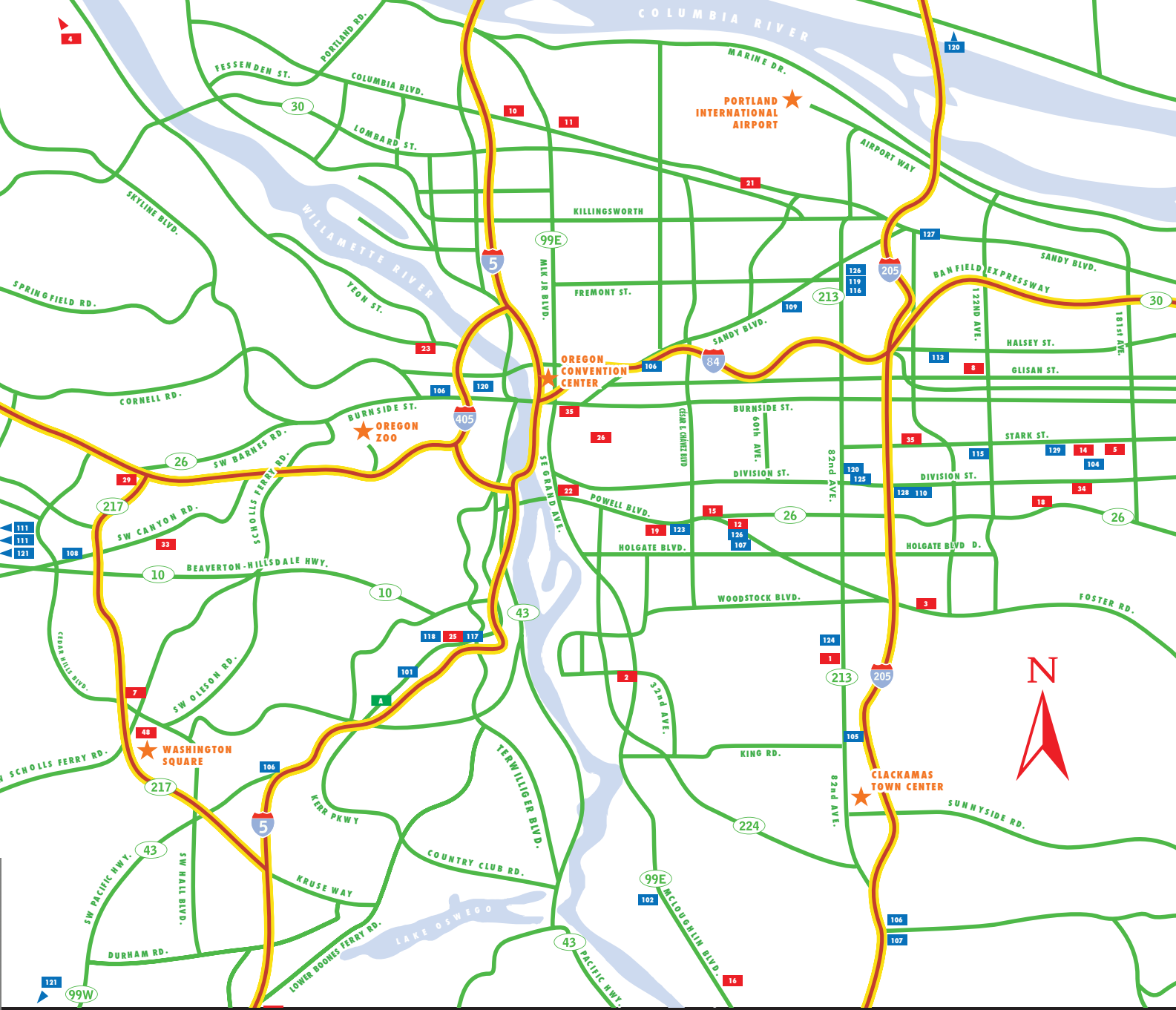
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STREAMING EDITION: SUBSERVIENCE

By Ian Sellwood



Christmas came and went, and I have to say the theatrical offerings were woefully unerotic. I assumed *Gladiator II* would have at least one wankable orgy scene. Am I unreasonable for expecting Robert Egger's turn at remaking *Nosferatu* would have more gratuitous nudity? Gone are the days of *Caligula* or even Francis Ford Coppola's concerningly horny rendition of *Dracula*. What a terrible time to be a theater masturbator. Has the whole world gone prude? Nudity and fuck scenes are becoming rarer and rarer in normie films. At this rate, I may have to start reviewing only French and Italian films to have anything resembling usable content for this magazine.

Then, I had a theory. Maybe, what with the high cost of making movies and the lack of theater attendance these days, every film with an official release has to make its money back. There's no more room to roll the dice with even an R or—God forbid—NC-17 rating. Everything has to appeal to everyone, and this new generation is pretty averse to anything sexual.

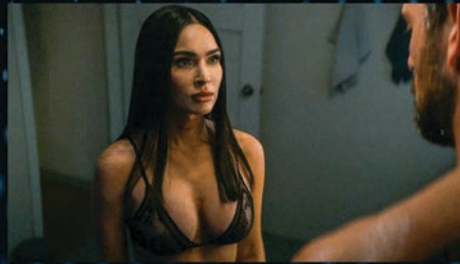
But what about streaming? See, with streaming, you have privacy, and everyone, in the privacy of their own home, loves to jerk off to naked celebrities. It seems like the perfect new avenue to deliver "artsy" movies with way more nudity and unsimulated sex scenes. I thought maybe Netflix and Hulu were the new havens for Mr. Skin content. It makes sense. No theatergoers to judge you or interrupt your wanking.

You can imagine how high my expectations were when I stumbled across one of Netflix's top films of that week featuring Megan Fox as a sex robot—cough—sorry, robot maid, and it's called *Subservience*! After many a disappointing nudity-less trash in the theater, I thought I'd treat myself to finally getting to see Megan Fox naked!

SPOILERS AHEAD

She doesn't get naked. Well. Sort of. You get to see some side-ass, but no crack. Yet another disappointing tease, just like that criminally mistitled Jennifer's *Body*, where at no point in the film do you actually get to see Jennifer's

Body!



I was *certain* that this would finally be Miss Fox's nude debut that we've all so patiently waited for. Just like ScarJo, they all eventually crack for some good, "artsy" script. I still remember it like it was yesterday when I heard the news on various forums. ScarJo finally gets naked! I grabbed my favorite brand of lube and my special handkerchief engraved with my initials before running traffic lights to the theater. What a glorious day that was. Worth the wait. And the citation.

Now, I suppose I had no reason to expect Machine Gun Kelly's on-and-off-again girlfriend would finally bare all as I hit play without so much as glancing at the IMDB parental guide. This was wishful thinking on my part, but sometimes it's good to be surprised.

And to be fair, this wasn't a complete waste of time because the concept is definitely boner-inducing, and the entire plot is just loaded with sexual tension. I mean, it's basically the classic caper of the husband fucking the help while the wife is away. Only this time, the help is a robot—with a working vagina for some reason.

Although the PG-13 fuck scene was still pretty hot, I kept getting distracted thinking about why the hell a nanny robot would come with a fully functioning, lubricated hoo-hah. I mean, I guess it makes sense. If you're going to make a personal assistant android that is supposed to meet your every need and also make it look like Megan Fucking Fox, your clearly going to give it a fuckable cunt. I would honestly ask for a refund if I wasn't able to fuck my Megan Fox Maid Robot.

That one bathroom bang scene aside, there

isn't much else to jerk it to in this film besides the idea of it. Such a wasted opportunity. The Transformer breakout star does have two lingerie outfits that definitely got my motor running and one pretty gratuitous panty-clad crotch shot that I was grateful for. Still, nothing but side ass and your imagination to go on.



There was one more bang scene with the other actress who wasn't Megan Fox, and I want someone else to watch this film and confirm it for me, but *I swear to god* they airbrushed out her nipples! There are definitely some tits that flop in and out of the shot, and while the lighting is pretty dark, I know that there should be some nipple with that much of the boob showing. Either a combo of the dark lighting and the most transparent ghost nipples made them invisible, or Netflix is now a victim of modern cinema's prudification! Does anyone else remember nipples on the Navi girl's fuck scene in *Avatar*? I do, and I swear to shit, they airbrushed those out on the version on Disney+.

How much longer will we endure this oppression by the horny police?!

2/5 eggplants



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

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ITEMS THAT MAKE ME NOSTALGIC

BY HANNAH ONE CUP

Nostalgia, for me, is generally a feeling mixed between fondness and curiosity. Fondness for something no longer there, for an experience I can no longer achieve with 100% accuracy, and curiosity for why I am nostalgic for this experience and what the hell my elders were thinking when they gave me the item or took me to this place.

I thought I might go through some items that bring me a bit of nostalgia and perhaps do for you, as well. Many of these are experiences we have all shared growing up, some more than others. The rest may very well only be memories I share with those growing up with me or as a family unit. Without further ado, let's get into some old-timey things that will make you feel even more aged, er, seasoned...



grandma (church), my feet were coming off of my body, screaming at me, as a 5-year-old, for causing so much pain on them. 2 weeks later, I was still popping blisters. But for some reason, that PVC had such an attractive berry smell...

Dining Tables – Something so few own or even use any longer. The dining table was where our meals were eaten unless it was a special occasion when something pulled our family to the TV, and we were allowed to eat on our TV trays. We had semi-assigned seats, where it was just silently acknowledged that we all didn't change our spot, ever. Otherwise, a huge sibling fight might occur. I even marked mine with a fork, placing my initials on the wood—very small—and what I believed to be unnoticeable until my mom called me out on it. Honestly, I liked my seat because I was able to peek over at the TV if it was on, and I didn't want to talk about homework I was absolutely not going to do. Having a designated spot in the house for all of your activities is something I miss, and at one point, I regretfully chose to stop making it part of my life. Which brings me to...

TV Dinners – Not just any TV dinner. Those really crappy ones with the penguin on the front that had the little "mystic brownie" for dessert. These were a *real treat* in my household, where my dad cooked all our dinners homemade after working all day (my mom could not cook to save her own life). Sometimes, as a child, all I wanted was something really awful and filled with poison to fill my belly with, and probably cause my dad some sort of feeling of failure. I remember my dad guiltily putting them

in the oven for my brother and me, and both of us waiting for them to be ready. Peeling off that plastic and smelling that delicious, yellow-tinted macaroni and "cheese," as well as the freezer-burnt single serving of sweet corn, made my mouth water. I feel like buying one now, just to see if I have the same reaction. What a wild idea...if my taste buds really have not changed that much, even with science claiming the opposite.



Chocolate Cigarettes and Big League Chew – Chocolate cigs are available in some states, but it's hard recreating what it felt like to pretend to smoke a cigarette for a 6-year-old and then eat that cigarette, which, to me, was an experience I can only define as "practice at being a degenerate adult." The chocolate was not great; it was usually some form of milk chocolate that seemed like it was probably 10 years old and very stale. Pale, whitish, dusty, chalk-like substance on the chocolate after you unwrapped that thin, white paper. Big League Chew is "the only gum in the form of strips," and I never really got into this, but I remember the boys in school having pockets of it and just shoving their mouths full of this stuff, to the point of looking like a squirrel hoarding saliva, a pink or purple tumor (depending on flavor) the size of their mouth, chewing so loud you could hear them in the back of the class. Unable to blow a bubble, let alone try to swallow the gum they weren't supposed to have on them. Just like the pros.

Projection Big Screens – The ultimate sign of luxury and telling your friends,



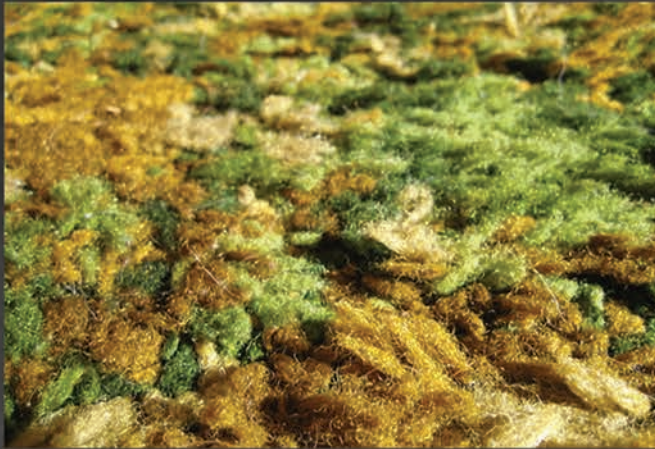
Kenwood All-Wool Blanket – This thing brings back memories of going to grandma's and sleeping in the spare bedroom, where she kept all of her porcelain 1980s clown sculptures. I can see and feel it now. I drape the baby blue blanket over myself and bundle up like a burrito. The wool is harsh and kind of prickly, and if one thing caught fire near it, I would most likely have burst into flames. But I felt safe not thinking about this and instead thinking about how the blanket hid the clowns from my view.

Jelly Shoes – Whoever the inventor of this godforsaken nightmare of a blister-providing shoe should have their feet cut off and jelly shoes as replacements. I saw jelly shoes in Fred Meyer the other day and almost cried for my 5-year-old self and every other 5-year-old forced into thinking the shoes were cute. 30 minutes after wearing these to another thing I was forced to go to with my

just with an object, that your family is now eating Kid Cuisines for the next two months and using the Kenwood wool blankets if they're cold because it's...fancy and not at all because you now can't afford groceries or heat. We were the only family with one of these bad boys. BIG bad boys. So big it took three of my dad's friends and some other contraption just to get it into our house. Projection TVs were awesome because a lightbulb never "went out" on it; you just replaced or fixed the tubes, and if your brother accidentally threw a Wii remote at the screen, it would just put a slight hole in the screen. Only noticeable when looked at in just the right light.

My dad still does not know this ever occurred. And this is why those Wii remotes had wrist ties on them.

Last but not least...



Carpet – There are some colors of carpet that just bring back such specific memories. A faded, blue-nearly-grey carpet, heavily used with a couple of stains. It reminds me of our own carpet at home and all the Elmer's Glue that was stuck to it, which my mom was never able to get out. The green shag carpet with a little orange tint reminds me of the smell of my grandma's house. Musty and old. Just like her personality. Lids for all the expensive Tupperware sets. Spaghetti on the floor, which you tried to pick up and eat but ended up with a handful of dog hair and shag carpet instead. Ah, memories.

Honorable mentions that I did not feel the need to write about, and instead will allow your own nostalgia to fill in the blanks: handshake buzzer, Squeezetts, Green Apple Bath & Body Works body spray and cigarette smell, secret paper notes, Nickelodeon VHS tapes, Lite-Brite, cars with multi-CD changers, awful boxed art sets for kids, Giga Pet, Yak Pak, Flubber, fake cellphones.

Hannah One Cup can be found at carpet stores, feeling the textures and staring at the colors like fine works of art. Wishing for these simpler times, but glad she is now able to choose her own frozen dinner and drink whiskey. Simultaneously, if she wanted. Sometimes, she likes being a passenger in the back seat of a car, to feel like it did when she had less to worry about and only had to think about what the next stop was going to be.

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FOUR WAYS TO MAKE SURE WORKING MUSICIANS CAN MAKE A LIVING THAT DON'T INVOLVE ASSASSINATING SPOTIFY'S CEO

By Blazer Sparrow

Happy New Year! 2025 is upon us, and *a lot* has happened since we last spoke. And by spoke, I mean me speaking and you listening. As I write this, they just caught the e-bike riding, bullet-engraving, sweet-smiling, beautiful bastard that took out the CEO of one of the biggest health insurance companies in America. Things will probably change by the time this comes out, but my money is on Luigi Mangione being a patsy (his cousin is an active Republican party member). If he does turn out to be the guy, don't expect me to write a correction. We don't do that here at *Exotic*.

As you can imagine, the Editor is probably not gonna be okay with me condoning a targeted assassination in response to unethical business practices that have inarguably caused countless financial ruin and deaths, so this article isn't gonna be about that.

However, Luigi's manhunt did get me thinking about whether or not a single, specific act of violence would do anything to solve the absolutely hopeless dumpster fire that is the music business, especially for folks on the bottom. Spotify is directly responsible for working musicians not being able to carve out even a meager living unless they're massive superstars. Viking Marauder Daniel Ek makes more money than any musician on the planet, including Taylor Swift and Paul McCartney. He has been on the record saying that the "cost of creating content" is "close to zero." On top of the unforgivable sin of referring to music as fucking *content*, the vapid Swede clearly has never been in a recording studio. Or bought an instrument, for that matter.



All these facts aside, I'm still not going to condone someone seeking out and hunting Mr. Ek for sport...mostly because the last thing I want is a printed paper trail that leads right to me.

Instead, I figured this would be a good brainstorming opportunity to find other ways to wrestle the market in some creative way, to make sure all working musicians are at least given a living wage. Besides, while the long-term effects of a health insurance CEO's no-scope headshot aren't apparent yet, it's not a slam-dunk guarantee that United Healthcare, or any of these other predatory companies, are finally going to act with anything resembling ethics.

Also, as a full disclosure, I use Spotify. Mostly for podcasts. I listen to music on it, too, but I spend far more monthly on records, band shirts, local shows, not-so-local shows, and even CDs so I can sleep at night. I am also a sucker for convenience. I get it. But that doesn't change the fact that Spotify is a giant, monstrous problem that keeps musicians who aren't Ariana Grande from paying rent.

This may be my six years of shitty office job lingo talking, but instead of trying to eliminate the giant, monstrous problem by cutting off its head, let's synergize and solutionize.

Get an OnlyFans

Granted, this only goes for you femme-presenting readers, of which there are maybe two or three of this magazine. *Do not* create an OnlyFans if you're just some average dude. You need at least an 8-inch cock and a heavy rotation of paramours, or you will literally make zero dollars. If you are, however, assigned female at birth and at least conventionally attractive, you'd be surprised how much you can net with a minimal amount of hustle. It's not ideal if you don't want to cross-contaminate your music audience and your sex work audience, but if that doesn't bother you, it's a hell of a lot better way to pay rent than to work at a bar where you'll be sexually harassed anyway. You'll also make more money than other bullshit "flexible" gig economy scams, like Uber or DoorDash



Sell Drugs

This one works for any gender. Plus, you will be greatly contributing to your local musician community and providing an essential service. Not only does every musician in your local scene need

drugs, but also every music enjoyer—and hell, the bartenders that keep them drunk and the strippers that keep them happy. Demand is infinite, and you can always find supply. Similar to having an OnlyFans, you can make your own schedule, and as long as you're not an addict yourself, you'll be able to stack cash fast and save up for going on tour. Now, this line of work can be dangerous, so just be sure to always pay up and re-up on time, and never short your connection. Or you'll die.

Exploit Other Musicians

Something I've noticed over the decades I've spent in local music scenes is that the folks who are making the most money are the ones selling their products *to* musicians. It's like in the Gold Rush of 18-whatever—any gold rush for that matter. It's the people that sold shovels, whiskey, and pussy that made the *real* money. Sure, one or two prospectors struck it rich, but really, it was the savvy business folks who sold the items to the prospectors who made out like bandits. Does this all sound familiar? Well, prospector, rather than dig away for gold that isn't there, start selling shovels to the poor saps who haven't figured it out yet! People who are most likely to spend money in the music scene are the ones trying to make it. Learn how to run a soundboard. Intern in a studio. Become a photographer. Become a graphic designer. Hell, say you're a social media marketing specialist or some made-up horseshit. Start funding *your* music dream but charging others for theirs. Day job eliminated.

Have Rich Parents

This is really the only way you're going to make it in the industry. The thing you need more than anything is time. And since time is money, you basically need free money. The only way you're gonna get free money that doesn't involve a massive settlement from getting hit by an Amazon truck or whatnot is to have a white-collar criminal as a father. I'm pretty sure I told this story before, but Lady Gaga's dad paid her rent in Manhattan for a full year (possibly more, but I haven't researched or confirmed) while she was making connections, taking opportunities, and building her brand. You can't do this unless you have all your time to yourself to jump on that opening slot for a major artist's international tour or fly to LA for that meeting with some record executive that you can only hope isn't a casting couch rapist. Your parents don't necessarily have to be rich if you can convince them to let you live with them rent-free, but arrangements might be hard to maintain—especially if you're selling drugs and snatch from your bedroom.

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MAKING A CONNECTION

I'm sure we've all heard the old saying: "You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar." I always wondered if the character Renfield in Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* was aware of that particular proverb. But I digress. The meaning of this adage is that you're much more likely to get what you want by *not* being a huge gaping asshole. Through the course of my security career, I've found this to be true. The times I've approached a security situation by attempting to connect with somebody and caring about where they're coming from have almost universally brought about the most satisfying and satisfactory outcomes possible. Let me tell you about a few of those times.



Encounter 1

I had to remove a customer from the club one night after his behavior and overall vibe made a couple of dancers uncomfortable. For the next several hours, the guy walked by numerous times, his eyes glaring poison-tipped daggers into me each time he passed. Eventually, I decided to talk to him. I told him I didn't think he was actually angry with me, and I guessed that there was something bigger going on with him. I asked if he wanted to talk about it. Like magic, all the tension between us evaporated, and the guy opened up to me. Hearing about the troubles he was having in his personal life, it occurred to me that I'd probably be pretty angry, too, had I been in his shoes. He remarked that I was the only person who had bothered to find out why he was upset. In doing so, I became someone to him other than the recipient of his anger. By the end of our conversation, he asked me for a hug, which I was more than

happy to give him. What can I say? I'm a hugger.

Encounter 2

Another incident involved a dancer I had previously worked with. She came to the club for drinks, and after an hour or so, she ended up in a verbal altercation with a male customer. My bartender informed me that the woman was going through some shit and that mental health was a variable in the equation. The woman left the club immediately but remained on the block, where she became confrontational towards random men walking by. As she became increasingly agitated, I did my best to discourage these men from letting their fragile male egos take the bait, a prospect certain to make things worse. I spoke with her. Encouraged her to focus on me instead of the men walking by. Although she and I didn't know each other all that well, we had worked together before, establishing at least some baseline level of rapport between us. I was a protector, and I was trying to help. I was the only man in sight that she wasn't trying to fight; she trusted me.

Unfortunately, later in the night, she had become convinced that my bartender, who had been trying to help her earlier, was now her mortal enemy. She left the area, and when she returned sometime after closing, she had weapons, which she was determined to use on said bartender. I was left with no choice but to place myself between the woman and the friend/coworker she was attempting to harm. The trust she had in me still held, and she made no attempt to use the weapons on me. I managed to remain a human demilitarized zone long enough that a police vehicle happened to pass by, which we were able to flag down for help. The cops stepped in, giving us the chance to leave the area safely. I hope things get better for her. Mental health is a real motherfucker.

Encounter 3

More recently, my friend Anya and I were in

my car after closing up X Exotic Lounge for the night, and while we sat there shooting the shit, we noticed a commotion on the street near where we were parked. A woman was trying to pull her car out from her parking spot, which she was unable to do because a slightly crazed-looking barefoot man was standing in front of her car, refusing to move, as she yelled at him to get out of her way. This went on long enough that I decided to step in. Okay, truth be told, it's *entirely* possible that I'm understating a bit when I say I "stepped in." This dude seemed a bit crazed, so I decided to act a bit crazed my damn self. I drew my trusty Ka-Bar knife, which I've nicknamed the "people opener," and strode in the guy's direction with some fuckin' purpose in my steps while shouting at him to get the fuck out of the woman's way.

At this point, the woman called out to me to back down. She told me the situation wasn't that serious and that she was simply arguing with her boyfriend (the shoeless lunatic who had been blocking her vehicular egress). After she assured me she was safe and would be okay, I apologized for coming out sideways the way I did and started walking back to my car. Unfortunately, my approach to the situation had understandably rubbed the boyfriend the wrong way and had him in a bit of a fighting mood. I indicated that I wasn't interested in fighting, and I got back into my car, locked the doors, and went back to the conversation with Anya, who had been put on hold to deal with the situation we were witnessing. The dude stood outside my car for a couple of minutes to berate me while I repeated my assertion that I wasn't interested in engaging any further. He finally walked away and entered the front door of his apartment complex.

A few minutes later, though, he returned. I repeated that I wasn't interested. He persisted, but he was less confrontational this time. I finally agreed to hear him out, and he told me that after he went inside, our exchange didn't sit right with him, and he felt like he needed to apologize. I got out of my car and told him

that the way I saw it, he had just done some real man shit; that he was putting off some real big dick energy. I asked to shake his hand, and he requested we hug instead. Like I said, I'm a hugger.



What all three of these stories have in common is that all three situations were brought to a safe and peaceful conclusion through a willingness to make a genuine human connection. The way I see it, such a connection is empathy put into action. It is also a powerful and effective catalyst for de-escalation, and if you're working security without prioritizing de-escalation, you're wrong. Hell, if you're a human and you're not prioritizing de-escalation in life, you're wrong.



We live in a world that isolates us from each other more and more every day. Social media has caused our interactions with friends to shift entirely to the Internet. Amazon Prime, DoorDash, Zoom, Netflix. Modern convenience has robbed us of our reasons for leaving the house. Especially now, fresh off the heels of a global pandemic that brought with it several years in which "social distancing" was the mandate, I think we're all feeling that isolation to some extent, without really knowing what to do about it. Here's something we can all do about it: make the effort to connect.

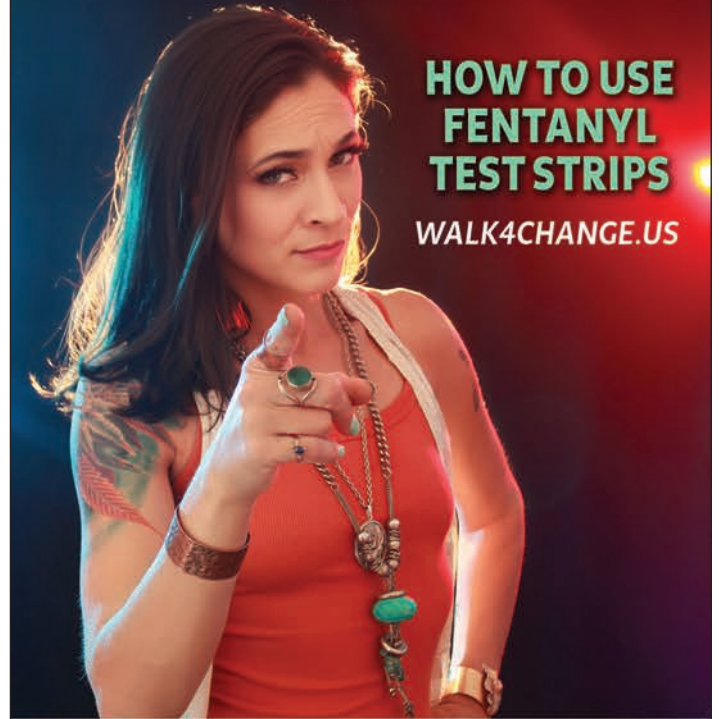
Nate Hazen is a bouncer, writer, and hugger. If you're needing a hug, come get one from him at Dixie Tavern and X Exotic Lounge.



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