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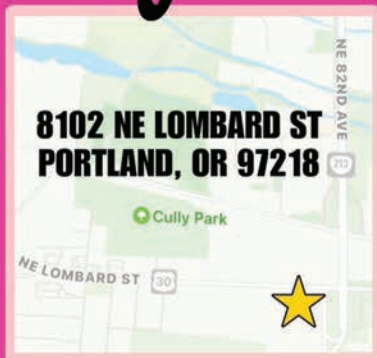
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

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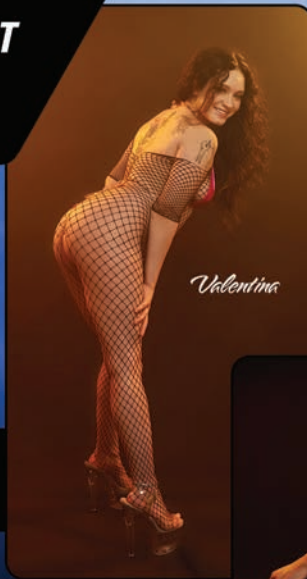
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Polerotica 2024 Champion
From Devils Point &
Lucky Devil Lounge

FEATURES



FOUR ALBUMS IN ANOTHER TIMELINE

manifesting records that are now impossible
page 24 | by blazer sparrow



SOMEONE CLOSE HAS GONE TO THE VOID

a lighthearted guide for a somber situation
page 36 | by hannah one cup



A BOUNCER'S CRASH COURSE IN PHILOSOPHY

outlining the significance of brains before brawn
page 38 | by nate hazen



HOT DOGS IN AMERICA: A HISTORY

a deeper look into an american street food staple
page 40 | by wombstretcha the magnificent

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INSIDE STUFF

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WALK 4 CHANGE



polerotica 2023 CHAMPION PIXIE

Interview by Bryan A. Bybee | Photos by HYPNOX



Before we start...congratulations! Your performance was absolutely amazing, and the theme was super unique! What led to your decision for the theme you chose?

Thank you! (•̀•́)~

The excuse to strip out of a full wedding dress and veil was too good to let go of! I was unsure how it would work out, so I had a friend sing me 'White Wedding' at Stripparoke so that I could try it in front of an audience—nerves and all. It was so much fun that I decided to run with it. I was struggling with the details, so I asked another friend for help with my music. After a bit of back and forth, she excitedly mentioned having it be Corpse Bride-inspired, and I immediately latched on. It just felt so much more authentic to me to have it be a bit goth and a little spooky! My set couldn't have come together without my community!

Describe your first experience competing in an Exotic event (Miss Exotic Oregon 2024—placing third) and how it shaped your preparations for Polerotica 2024.

Well, I had been putting off competing for years because I get such bad nerves when it comes to competing. I was so nervous when doing the finals for *Miss Exotic* that I almost cried before going on stage! My friend got me to calm down by reciting music trivia to me.

My goal for *Polerotica* was to be more prepared than I was for *Miss Exotic*. I really loved making 3' light-up mushrooms for my Alice in Wonderland set, and I wanted reasons to perform for an audience like that and to make more props! It made me excited to work on props and costumes for the next contest I would do.

Placing third the first time you competed in one of our events and then winning the second time is fucking incredible—seriously! What advice would you give to other performers who are looking to win it all at an Exotic event?

Aww, thank you! ♡

My advice would be, do something that is exciting and fun *for you*. There's probably not many opportunities to perform in front of so many people who are curious and excited about what you're about to do, so take it and run. Make sure your props, costumes, and music are cohesive and people will love you.

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

You're more capable than you know. Life is so precious and so short—take those opportunities, trips, and adventures while you can! ♡

This issue marks your second Exotic cover in just nine months and your third cover overall. The list of performers that have been featured on three covers is short and even more exclusive, that close in succession. Did you ever imagine you'd be a three-time Exotic covergirl?

It's such an honor that I never expected! I'm really grateful to have something physical that's part of my community, to represent my time and energy in the industry. I feel really blessed!

And what if our readers are interested in seeing you perform? Where and when can they catch you on shift?

Normally, you can catch me on Thursdays and Saturdays at Lucky Devil Lounge and Friday nights at Devils Point for Stripparoke. My shifts are 9 p.m. until close. Occasionally, you

can catch me as one of the go-gos on Sunday for Dante's Sinferno, unless it's the last Sunday of the month, in which case I'll be at Stag for Doe Night.

Lastly, what consumes your time when you're not killing it on stage or striking a pose for the next cover of Exotic? Drop your socials, too!

I love reading and watching horror, playing video games (mostly *Animal Crossing*), hiking, and hanging out with my dog, Ghostie. My Instagram is @kelpieheart!

XoXo
Pixie



THE P-TOWN HAPS

Guess who just turned 31? Yessir—*Exotic*. I guess that means we'll have to stop calling ourselves the "dirty thirty" because "dirty thirty-one" just doesn't hit the same. Ah, well...all good things come to an end, much like your waistline, libido, and \$2 PBRs. (Edit: Actually, scratch that last one—I've just been informed by my staff that *Desire* still has PBRs for \$2. I'm doubling down on your waistline and libido, though, and it's irrefutable...)

We're not the only ones celebrating an anniversary this month. Two of my favorite strip clubs are now officially legal! Happy 18th Anniversary to Cabaret and Hawthorne Strip! You won't see any mention of it in their ads, though. We're pretty sure they forgot but we sure the hell didn't! Make sure you stop by and help them both celebrate 18 years of excellence!

Can you believe we're still not done with birthdays?! It's industry birthday time, and we're starting at Union Jacks on Friday, July 5, for Freyja's Birthday Party! Then, on Saturday, July 13, it's Jocelyn and Patrick's Birthday Party at Guilty Pleasures! Moving on to Friday, July 26, it's time to head to Cheetahs in Salem for Waffle's Birthday. For our last birthday, we need to look back to June, which was a very important birthday that I missed in *Exotic City*...Mac from Guilty Pleasures! We love you, buddy. Sorry, it got missed! With that, a very happy birthday, ladies and gentlemen, from all of us at *Exotic*!

Now, on to other events this month. If you're down with circuses and fire (like...who-the-fuck isn't, right?), head to Stars Cabaret in Salem on Saturday, July 20 for their *Fire & Flames* show featuring Xena! Play it safe and wear polyester to this show, folks.

Wrapping up events for July, Dick Hennessy's 13th Annual Vagina Beauty Pageant starts this month! We have all the important dates listed to the right, and make sure you check out the event spread on page 16.

POLEROTICA 2024

The Pacific Northwest's original & largest pole competition came to a close last month over Memorial Day weekend. The night was filled with countless outstanding performances, and was truly a memorable evening! A very special congratulations goes to *Polerotica 2024* Champion Pixie, representing Devils Point & Lucky Devil Lounge!

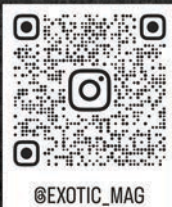
We'd also like to recognize the amazing performances by Kit Kat from Kit Kat Club, placing 2nd, and Marlie Mae from Club SinRock, placing 3rd! We are truly blessed to see all of your outstanding and unique performances, and we deeply respect all the hard work that goes into the entire process!

Check out the following two pages to see photos of all the entertainers in action during their performances at *Polerotica 2024* Finals.

What's next, you ask? We'll see you this fall for *Miss Exotic Oregon 2025*!

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FRI 05 – UNION JACKS – FREYJA'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

SAT 06 – THE VENUE – VAGINA BEAUTY PAGEANT 2024 ROUND 1

FRI 12 – GUILTY PLEASURES
VAGINA BEAUTY PAGEANT 2024 ROUND 2

SAT 13 – GUILTY PLEASURES
JOCELYN & PATRICK'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

SAT 13 – STARS CABARET (SALEM)
VAGINA BEAUTY PAGEANT 2024 ROUND 3

THU 18 – CLUB DETOUR
VAGINA BEAUTY PAGEANT 2024 ROUND 4

FRI 19 – X EXOTIC LOUNGE
VAGINA BEAUTY PAGEANT 2024 ROUND 5

SAT 20 – STARS CABARET (SALEM)
FIRE & FLAMES FEATURING XENA

SAT 20 – DOMINIQUE STELLA
VAGINA BEAUTY PAGEANT 2024 ROUND 6

SUN 21 – NORTH PARK BLOCKS
PORTLAND PRIDE PARADE

FRI 26 – CHEETAHS (SALEM) – WAFFLE'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

SAT 27 – GUILTY PLEASURES
VAGINA BEAUTY PAGEANT 2024 FINALS

AUGUST

FRI 02 – DREAM ON – MZ. JORDAN'S EX-STRIPPER-GANZA

SAT 03 – GUILTY PLEASURES
SHAYLA'S 21ST BIRTHDAY BASH

SAT 03 – THE LOUNGE
MZ. JORDAN'S EX-STRIPPER-GANZA

SUN 11 – LUCKY DEVIL
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FOUR ALBUMS THAT EXIST IN ANOTHER TIMELINE THAT I WISH WE COULD HEAR

By Blazer Sparrow

At the beginning of the year, I made a list of albums from artists who say they're going to put something out. Although still mostly unfulfilled (Beak actually put a record out this year, so with Beth Gibbon's solo album, that's two-thirds of the way to a Portishead album), I stand by my petulant demands. However, this is a slightly different list. These are albums that can't possibly happen, mostly due to death and the logistical issues that creates. While I'm close to manifesting a fourth Portishead album and consistently badgering The Cure and Dresden Dolls to deliver on those albums I know are near completion, I figured I'd waste my time—and yours—pontificating on albums that no amount of badgering surviving members of these groups is going to do anything. Still, it's fun to imagine. Clearly, we are in the shit timeline that results in a failed reality TV star winning the presidency twice (calling it now) and ends in a nuclear exchange between Russia and America. Who knows what went wrong in the past, and at what point we got knocked onto this horrifying *Back to the Future Part II*-esque alternate timeline? Who knows what these alternate timelines are, where, at the very least, these albums exist?



Joy Division III

To be fair, I'm riffing off *Hard Times* here with their stellar piece "We Rank the Top 14 Joy Division Albums Because We're From a Cooler Timeline," which is equally hilarious and heartbreaking. Still, it got me thinking...what if? What if Ian Curtis just decided *not* to listen to *The Idiot* that night or *not* to watch Stroszek? Granted, we might need to go earlier and have him *not* cheat on his wife or millions of years back and step on that butterfly so that his brain chemistry doesn't result in epilepsy. Whatever tweak in the fabric of spacetime it would take to make him not unalive himself. Now granted, we wouldn't

have New Order, which I suppose I should be grateful for in this timeline, but I can't help but wonder if we would still get those songs largely unchanged but instead have Ian's tortured croon on top of it. What would "Blue Monday" sound like with Ian singing? Or would he nix the song altogether? We'll never know. But really, all I want is one more album. The third album that likely would've had "Ceremony" on it and most of the songs on "Movement." It likely wouldn't have had "Dead Souls" or "Atmosphere" on it, but a bratty music columnist can dream. There's also a third, even worse timeline, where the remaining members allow Bono to fill Ian's position as lead singer (I'm not making this up—Google it) and continue on. But hell, maybe that timeline wouldn't be so bad either 'cause at least U2 wouldn't exist.



Nirvana IV

Even if Kurt didn't try to scratch that itch in the back of his throat with a loaded shotgun barrel, I'm not entirely certain we'd ever get this album. His relationship with Dave and Krist had practically disintegrated, and he'd been outspoken, privately and publicly, about how he didn't want to work with them anymore. Some major spacetime finagling would have to occur to ensure that Kurt would remain intact and on good terms with the rest of the band for a fourth album to happen. I think it's there. Even in its mostly unfinished form, I would argue

that "You Know You're Right" is Nirvana's best song, and I wish I could hear what the rest of that album sounds like. I've read interviews where Dave regrets never getting to make Nirvana's double album. It may not have been this fourth one, but a fourth one was there somewhere. Knowing Dave's damn near inexhaustible music battery, this timeline might *still* include Foo Fighters, which may be a good or bad thing, depending on which album you stopped giving a shit. The correct answer is the fifth one, by the way.



**The Jimi Hendrix Experience IV
(or His Fusion Album With Miles)**

At least six different versions of this album exist, and practically all the songs are available in various stages of completion, so it's not like we don't have an idea of what this album would sound like, but we certainly don't have this album proper. Honestly, this album may not have been any good at all, listening to the songs that remain. Who's to say Hendrix's booze and pill-raddled ass would've congealed it, and studio tricked it into anything holding a candle to Electric Ladyland? He might have, and it upsets me that we'll never know. At the very least, I wish we could have the finished version of "Hey Baby (New Rising Sun)." Also, if Jimi hadn't overdosed on vomit, there's a chance that the third or fourth electric fusion era Miles Davis album features him blazing away (again, Google it). I'm honestly more depressed that we'll never hear the versions of "Jack Johnson" or "On the Cor-

ner" with Hendrix on guitar, rather than that unfinished fourth album.

On the other hand, maybe Doug Stanhope is right. Maybe this timeline is better because it's the one where a 70-ish-year-old Hendrix is *not* playing with Elton John at the Super Bowl or some horseshit. The multiverse giveth and taketh away.



Led Zeppelin IX

There are many of you—perhaps a vast majority—that would not only prefer not to live in the timeline where this album exists but possibly another timeline where one of the hedonistic bastards died sometime after the sixth album (if not earlier), thus cementing an even more legendary and mysterious oeuvre. 1979's "In Through The Out Door" doesn't really have a lot of cheerleaders, and no one in their right mind is going to fly a flag for the '80s output of The Rolling Stones and The Who. Still, I'm curious. I'm not sure if I want to live in this timeline, but I definitely wanna just take a peak and snag the ninth album from these rock juggernauts. Again, practically every Zeppelin Album Ranked List puts their last one last. Personally, I'm fascinated by Jones and Plant's creative dominance on the last record since Page and Bonham were drowning in booze and heroin for most of the production. Every dinosaur rock band in the '70s made the same misstep in the '80s by trying to add some gratuitous synthesizer and pretend to be new wave to stay relevant. Only Paul McCartney succeeded with the peerless classic "Temporary Secretary." The rest failed. Maybe Led Zeppelin could've weathered the '80s synthesizer storm because they had a master mariner at the helm with John Paul Jones, who was not only a world-class pianist and composer but also an early adopter of all the fun innovations in technology. Also, rather than outright rejecting it or feeling insecure and feigning disinterest, Zeppelin tried their hand at punk with the leftover track "Wearing and Tearing" from those sessions. Maybe something cool was left in the tank before Bonzo choked on a swimming pool's worth of vodka. Or, it would've been cringier than Neil Young's Trans.

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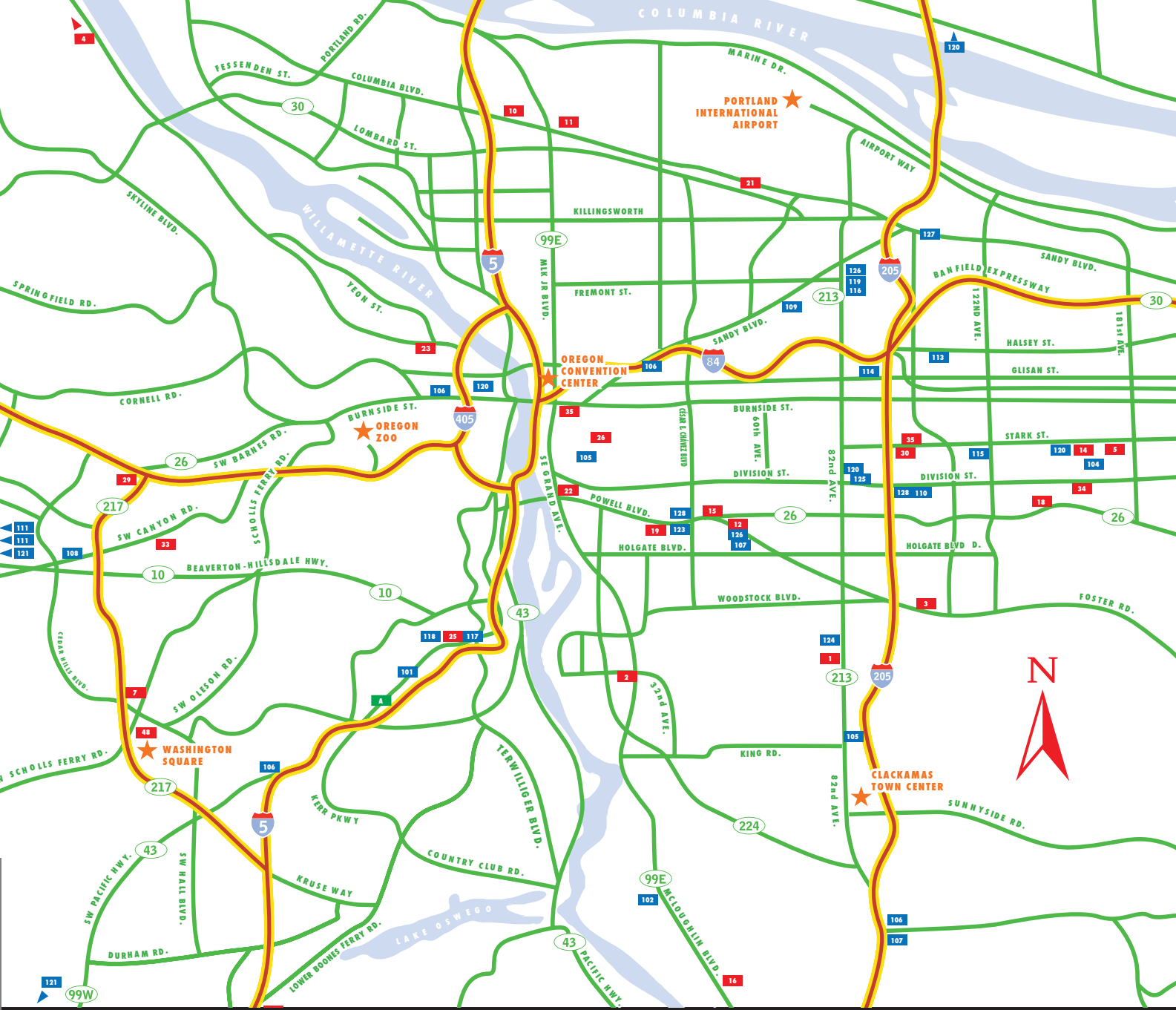
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SOMEONE CLOSE HAS GONE TO THE VOID

(AND YOU'RE YELLING OUT YOUR WINDOW AT SQUIRRELS)

WHAT TO DO WHEN THIS HAPPENS

BY HANNAH ONE CUP

So, someone close to you has decided to go to the Great Void. They said bon voyage to the hellish landscape that is our world today and quietly whispered, "Peace out, it's cool, it's all cool," while they drifted off somewhere unknown.

Now what? Great, it's all cool for them, but now what about you? What about their stuff? What about their unnecessary human body that they have no use for any longer? People that need to be contacted? It's all cool beans and roses for them, but now others are left to ponder what happens next. Well, if you're lucky, your friend/loved one and you will have others close by who will be able to shoulder some of this process. But if not, or if the others are doing their necessary due process of grieving, you may be left doing the majority of these things on your own. But fear not because those close friends/family members will still be there when the time comes for you to enjoy your piece of the grief cake.



For now, let's pretend you are the one managing this situation and doing it in the best way you humanly can, given these circumstances. Below, I will provide you with a useful, step-by-step process on how to attempt to be your loved one's

manager when their time comes. All of these can also be found online, of course, on various cremation and funeral home websites. But they all list out the same things to everyone who visits the site. My steps are a bit more realistic, with a few jabs at jokes along the way to lighten the mood.

At the end of the day, remember that your loved one has already peaced-out, and most of these steps do not have a time constraint on them. They can be done in due time, at a manageable pace suited for a grieving human. No one expects you to be a robot. Without further ado, let's get down to the business of aftercare for the recently released...

You're loved one has passed away, and you happened to be the first one to find their human meat skin – If this is the scenario you are in, calling 911 is always the first step. They will send the necessary individuals to come and handle the situation accordingly. There may seem to be more people than necessary there, but don't worry. Everyone that is there has been there and done that and won't bug you much. They may ask you a few questions as they go through the house to make sure there wasn't any unknown cause of their passing (like a wild bear hiding in the closet), and then gently take them away to their human meat skin's next home.

Calling their loved ones and work – As grim as this sounds, your next step is not easy, but it must be done. At this point in time, you are not going to be functioning well, if at all. Get a swig of alcohol in you to help dull this a bit. It may have been several hours or a day before you get to this. But the sooner, the better. If the police took their phone, you may have to wait a few days to get ahold of some of these individuals, but do what you can on your end. If necessary, a post on social media will at least get the word out to those who followed them, so that takes a few phone calls out of the rotation.

Deciding what to do with their meat skin once it's time for this – Depending on how everything occurred, you may have a week or so to figure this out. Hopefully, your friend made it known to you at some point how they wanted to be handled in this scenario. If not, and if money is a concern, remember that their meat skin is no longer necessary for them and that cremation is an acceptable option—especially if you would like to take them to Oaks Park with you in the future. Cremation will require their next of kin to be involved. So, this may get a bit messy if you're trying to do most of this on your own or if their next of kin is not quite stable enough to handle this.

Find their will – If your loved one was smart enough to consider future death matters and they made a will, hopefully, they let you or someone close to them know where this is. If not, good luck going through all of their books, belongings, and rooms in their house/apartment with a fine-tooth comb—like searching for lice. Do what you can to find it. It may also be at a bank, so if you have that information, bring their next of kin along and get that situated.

Finances – So your loved one had some debt and maybe a house. If you can, try to find other close individuals to them, who can help you with managing some of this debt. Especially if there are kids involved, do what you can to make this easy for when they grow up.



Have a memorial or something – I say "or something" because when this occurred

with me, I was left to do a good majority of the planning. I am not, nor have I ever been, a party planner. Planning is one of my Achilles heels. But we did it. Our friends came through wonderfully, Dolly Parton was involved, and it was a fine get-together. It was more like a “send-off party” that I am pretty sure my friend would have wanted to come to. I could almost hear them snort-laughing in the kitchen when I set fire to something I was cooking, I swear.

Aftercare – So, you have your friend in their handy container, you’ve put the googly eyes on them, which turn out to be glow in the dark and somewhat creepy at night, found the will, had the party, didn’t set yourself on fire, handled finances, now what? Self-care. That’s right. Probably the most challenging part of all of this after losing your loved one involves your own care. Here are a few things I recommend doing when you get to this step: get a massage (I haven’t done this yet, but I think I plan on it?), binge a TV show (old anime, Bob’s Burgers, Parks and Rec, anything you can zone out to), write a physical letter to your friend, start a journal, hang out with a close friend who’s a trash-sister from another mister that won’t judge, dye your hair, yell out the window at a fat squirrel eating your bird seed, reorganize the kitchen and yell at all your spoons, see a movie even if you won’t like it, sit down for five minutes in silence and stare at your living room.

At the end of it all, this process is complex, and there are dozens of smaller steps involved. Remember to take deep breaths like a Zen master sometimes and get a good night’s sleep here and there. Chances are you’ll probably be up wondering a bunch of what-ifs, but it’s pointless, so turning the whole thing into a macabre joke is how I personally have been handling this. It’s working alright so far. Even the squirrel is still getting fed—stupid, fat jerk.



My friend would have said something like this to us all, “Shut up bitch, I love you.”—meaning, chill out, it’s cool beans, go eat something other than chips. And with that, I wish you the best of luck. Save this article for future needs. And feel free not to reach out to me about how to handle this sort of thing because we’re all flying by the seat of our pants here.

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A Bouncer's Crash Course in Philosophy

Vol. 1: Socrates



I've rather emphatically established that I love the movie *Road House*, and one of the things I find admirable about Swayze's OG incarnation of the Dalton character is his degree in philosophy. On its surface, that aspect of the character seems idiosyncratic—one might not initially see much use for philosophy to a rough-and-tumble bar bouncer, but it becomes a little clearer through the words of ancient Greek historian Thucydides: "The society that separates its scholars from its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting done by fools." Well, I can't offer you a degree in philosophy, but I can offer a crash course in it. For starters, I've gathered a selection of teachings from the grandpappy of Western philosophy, Socrates.



"The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing." Even if you do know stuff, things change. When I was in grade school, Pluto was still a planet, and all the globes and world maps still had the U.S.S.R. on them. When Pluto was reclassified as a dwarf planet, just as when the Berlin Wall came down, things I knew suddenly became wrong, and to accept those changes in my own mind was to employ (unknowingly at the time) this nugget of wisdom from ol' Socrates. Once, when I was on the job, a bartender asked me to cut off a customer who was showing signs of intoxication. I spoke to the customer, and as it turned out, what looked like drunkenness

was, in reality, caused by a disability. I ended the conversation, the customer carried on having fun, and the bartender presumably made more money (meaning, I made more on my tip out) pouring drinks for the customer that she wouldn't have poured if I'd charged ahead and performed the cut off believing I had the full picture from the get-go.

"Once made equal to man, woman becomes his superior." Listen up, sport. If my inclusion of this quote gets your undies in a bunch, maybe take a chill pill and listen up 'cuz there's a good chance I included it for your benefit. No good comes from being a misogynist douchebag. Like Danny Trejo's character says in *Anchorman*: "You know, times are changing. Ladies can do stuff now, and you're going to have to learn how to deal with it." The only men that work at my club are bouncers and DJs. The bartender is the manager on duty there, which means I work in a place where men (except for the owners of the club, of course) are subordinate to women, period. It's the women who tip me out, so ultimately, where do you think my loyalties lie? Have some goddamn humility, and stop feeling the need to convince everyone you're an "alpha." Seriously, nobody cares, bro.

"A system of morality which is based on relative emotional values is a mere illusion, a thoroughly vulgar conception which has nothing sound in it and nothing true." Swayze himself illustrates Socrates's point beautifully in the original *Road House* when explaining his rules to the bouncers of the Double Deuce: "I want you to remember that it's a job. It's nothing personal." One of the bouncers takes issue and asks, "Being called a cocksucker isn't personal?" to which Dalton responds, "No. It's two nouns combined to elicit a prescribed response." Another bouncer (who ends up getting fired soon after) still can't

wrap his head around the concept of leaving emotion out of it and poses a hypothetical while wearing a smug grin: "Well, I wonder if somebody calls my mama a whore." That grin disappears quickly when Dalton answers with a hypothetical of his own: "Is she?"

"Employ your time in improving yourself by other men's writings so that you shall gain easily what others have labored hard for." Socrates himself is encouraging you to go the easy route here—there's no need to start from scratch. The cool thing about books is that really smart people have dedicated a lot of time and effort to doing the mental heavy lifting on your behalf. Take advantage of that by reading their work and learning from it. If you're reading this article, you're off to a good start, but you should go read some stuff written by someone smarter than me. Grab a how-to book about that new hobby you're trying to learn. Brush up on some world history. Get lost in a collection of poetry. Peruse some classic fiction. And while you're at it, flip through a book on philosophy. Use your library card for something more than chopping lines at the after-party.

"Let him that would move the world first move himself." Want to see things change? What's stopping you from changing them? Lead by example. If you want to make more tips, start by not being a shitty tipper. If you want respect, start by being respectful. If you don't—if you don't believe in your ideas enough to embody them yourself, why should anyone else?

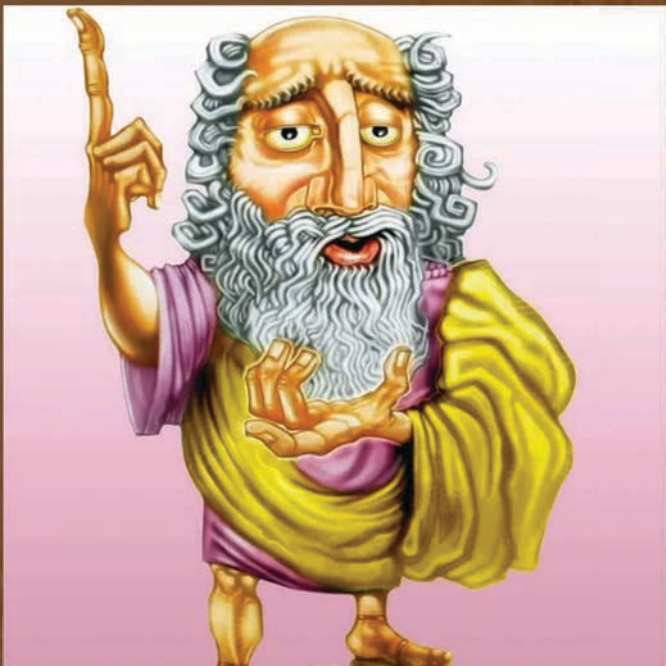
"The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear." If you want to be seen as trustworthy, your best bet is to be...that's right, you guessed it, trustworthy. If you want to be seen as an artist, make some art. If you want to be seen as an athlete, start training. Be the thing you want people to perceive you

to be. If you're full of shit, someone is going to sniff you out eventually, and your reputation will take a hit. On the flip side, people respond well to genuineness. As my roommate Jack puts it, "Be the same person you always are, even when nobody's looking."

"If a man is proud of his wealth, he should not be praised until it is known how he employs it." There's a particularly obnoxious genre of customer that I'm sure we've all dealt with. I've heard him called a few different names; *Splenda Daddy*, *Daddy No Bucks*, *Pimpostor*...but they're all essentially the same guy. He comes in dressed all sharp and shit and struts around with a fistful of dollar bills, taking great care to make sure everyone sees how rich he is. He then proceeds to get a glass of water at the water station, which he sips while leering at the stage without ever tipping once. If you press this zero-dollar "baller" about tipping, he gets all huffy about it, and after a couple of reminders, he'll storm out, probably to go give your club a bad review on Yelp. If you encounter this species in the wild, get rid of "it" quickly, as they are a known invasive species that should not be left unchecked. If you *are* this guy, not only is nobody impressed, we're also making fun of you every time we encounter you.



Well, folks, that's all I have for this month. If you were *really* hoping for more philosophy, never fear—next month, I'll be moving on to Plato!



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BY WOMBSTRETCHA THE MAGNIFICENT

HOT DOGS IN AMERICA: A HISTORY

The great American hot dog; staple of barbecues, beach parties, baseball games, and feeding the kids on a budget. They are cheap, delicious, and have an infinite variety of configurations in which one can assemble them.



But where did they come from, and how? They didn't just fall off the hot dog tree one day. Yes, *sausage* has been around for thousands of years, first being mentioned as far back as Homer's "The Odyssey" in the 9th century BC, but as anyone who has ever had one knows, a hot dog is *not* a true sausage, outside of its form factor as a tube made of meat. I am going to do some research to see if I can discover the origins of the mysterious meat rods we know and love.



First, we have to define what we mean by "hot dog"—I will be sticking with the more-

or-less standard industry definition of skinless cured meat formed into a sausage-like shape and pre-cooked. The USDA, of note, calls them "frankfurters" but acknowledges that they are also known as hot dogs, wieners, or even bologna. I wouldn't ever call a hot dog bologna, but I digress. Also, according to them, "the finished products may not contain more than 30% fat or no more than 10% water, or a combination of 40% fat and added water." Good looking out for us hot dog consumers, I guess? Anyway, now we know what we're talking about here.



Why are hot dogs called hot dogs, though? It seems, as mentioned above, that they were initially named either frankfurters or wieners. This has led to some lively discussion about just where the modern hot dog originated, as people from Vienna, Austria (Wien is what they call Vienna in German; thus, a Wiener is a person from Wien) claim to have invented it. Likewise, Frankfurt is a city in Germany, and Frankfurter is a term for people from that city who also claim to have invented it. Having been to both of these places, I can tell you that, for the most part, the people are not long, skinny tubes. They are made of meat, though.



That said, where did "hot dog" come from? The matter is not conclusively settled, but one hypothesis is that during the mid-19th

century, when Germans started pouring into the USA in droves, they called them "dachshund" sausages due to their love of those little dogs, and it eventually got bastardized into "dog," and eventually "hot dog," as German immigrants picked up more English and tried harder to appeal to Americans. Seems reasonable. Another hypothesis is that in the early 1900s, vendors of these little devils would shout, "Red hot! Get 'em while they're red hot!" and then people started calling them "red hot dogs" and eventually just "hot dogs." Makes sense. A third hypothesis is related to a popular newspaper cartoonist, who drew a picture of a vendor selling dachshunds at a park in 1906 but didn't know how to spell "dachshund," and so just filled in "hot dog." It... could happen. There are many more, but those are the three dominant stories. Even the National Hot Dog and Sausage Council is not sure, and if they don't know, we just may never find out. Also, I should like to get a seat on that council, even though they will never grant me the rank of master.



Now, for the real question: what is *in* them? To get this out of the way, there is not, nor was there ever, any dog meat in hot dogs. Your typical hot dog is made of "meat trimmings," which consists of bits of the animal's head, feet, liver, fatty tissue, lower-grade muscle, and various odds and ends—people who say "lips and assholes" aren't that far off. The typical animals used for hot dogs are pork (of course), beef (oy vey! Kosher), and if you get something truly bottom-of-the-barrel, like Bar S brand, it will likely be a smattering of pork and poultry wads,

swept off the floor, then duly processed and squeezed into shape. Beef hot dogs tend to have better quality to them, and they must pay to Kosher-certify them because why miss out on the market? Thus, they usually cost a bit more.

As for buns, it's hard to believe that those weren't always part of the hot dog experience, but indeed they came later. Naturally, there are competing tales ascribing their creation to different people in different places. The most popular story is that a fellow named Harry Stevens was selling dogs at the Polo Grounds when the Giants played there (it was their stadium at the time) and used to just hand them to people in a thick piece of wax paper. Ostensibly, one day, he ran out of wax paper and, in a panic, started putting them in French rolls, and it caught on from there. The other story is that around 1893, a street vendor in St. Louis named Antoine Feuchtwanger (another German immigrant—surprise!) would provide the treats with a white glove to hold them, expecting the glove returned after the dog was consumed. However, he kept losing the gloves, so he had to improvise. He discussed his problem with his wife, who suggested he serve them in bread so that he didn't have to worry about having a glove budget. The third most popular story states that in 1867, a guy named Charles Feltman just said to himself, "I'm gonna serve these in split rolls with toppings." No struggle to overcome...he just saw the internal logic of meat and bread and ran with it.



Charles Feltman, by the way, was the very first hot dog vendor on Coney Island, which is now famous for its hot dogs. He allegedly sold over 3,600 hot dogs in a year. He is also responsible for creating another New York hot dog institution. In the early 1900s, he hired a Polish immigrant with the unfortunate name of Nathan Handwerker. In 1916, Handwerker started his own hot dog shop with blackjack and hookers. Well, not really, but he did start his own shop. It stands to this day: the famous Nathan's Hot Dogs. I think it was a good business decision that he did not call it "Handwerker's." By 1920,

most of the country knew of Nathan's, and his shops were everywhere.



Feltman's on Coney Island still exists but did not expand like Nathan's did. To their credit, though, they did receive a Guinness record for making the world's largest hot dog.



After Nathan's, hot dog stands and joints were pretty much everywhere, and the modern concept of a hot dog and what to expect from one was established in the collective consciousness. They even made it all the way to the White House. In 1939, the Roosevelts were hosting King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. Eleanor, in her practical wisdom, decided to serve up hot dogs. The Queen, somewhat flummoxed, took her aside and asked, "How...do you eat these?" with our common American backyard food being foreign to those from across the pond. The king ate two. Sadly, there are no photos of this royal hot dog chompin' that I could find.

To this day, the Brits still aren't keen on hot dogs. They simply never took off. However, you can buy American hot dogs over there. Not subscribing to the "plastic pack of 8" logic, their take is to sell them *in a can*—a can full of hot dog water. I'll just opt for the curry at that point, no matter how nostalgic I might feel.

That is as concise as I could make hot dog history, and what a ride the research was! Given that it's July, I imagine many of you will be making hot dogs. Remember their

humble beginnings as you bite into yours.

Fun facts:

- Americans spent \$8.3 billion dollars on hot dogs in 2022 (No data yet on 2023)
- That \$8.3 billion buys around 20 billion hot dogs
- During peak hot dog season (Memorial Day to Labor Day), Americans eat 7 billion hot dogs
- Los Angeles is the #1 city for hot dog consumption, with Dodger fans alone eating about 2.7 million per year, based on data since 2019



- On Independence Day alone, Americans eat 150 million hot dogs
- 150 million hot dogs of average length would stretch from Washington DC to LA and back *five times*
- Hot dogs were one of the first foods to be eaten on the moon
- According to the National Hot Dog and Sausage Council, "A hot dog without meat or poultry cannot be called a hot dog"—sorry vegans
- If you are over age 18, it is *illegal* to put ketchup on a hot dog

Unanswered question:

- Why do the kids call a hot dog a "glizzy?"

Eat in good health,

-Wombstretcha

Wombstretcha the Magnificent is a hot dog enthusiast, furter of franks, schnitzel of wieners, writer, and retired rapper from Portland, OR. He can be found at his website, wombstretcha.com, on Twitter/X/whatever as @wombstretcha503, and on MeWe and (begrudgingly) Facebook as "Wombstretcha the Magnificent."



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