

READER

PHOTOS OF BLACK FATHERHOOD
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Albert Williams 15

LUCY STOOLE:

a good look for Chicago

The city's best drag mom uses a favorite vintage store to make a point about showing up for your community.

By THE TRIBE 27



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PHOTO BY DARIUS GRIFFIN



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THIS WEEK ON CHICAGOREADER.COM



Movie Tuesday: Masterful melodramas

Ben Sachs on five films that show the underrated genre at its best



'It's a park, not a nature preserve'

A judge has dismissed the lawsuit that sought to stop the Obama Presidential Center, Deanna Isaacs reports.



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SIGHTSEEING

Think you know your Chicago underworld slang?

A quiz on some of the less obvious entries in a 1967 police-training dictionary

By **JEFF NICHOLS**

In looking at the James Stukel Towers, the spiffy University of Illinois at Chicago dorms near the corner of Halsted and Rochford, it is hard to imagine that it used to be the site of the dilapidated training academy of the Chicago Police Department. From 1960 to 1976, police recruits trained in a decrepit school building built in 1857, a stone's throw from the Maxwell Street Market. One of the manuals from the academy, *Penitentiary & Underworld Argot*, captures the spirit of Maxwell Street. The 1967 dictionary is questionable, weird, hilarious, infuriating, and enlightening.

Robert M. McCann, then-director of training for the Chicago Police Department, prefaced the dictionary with an explanation that it was not “a complete dictionary of underworld slang.” Its definitions were “obtained from inmates of prisons, ex-convicts, thieves or of that ilk,” with contributions from instructors who had “enjoyed various assignments that brought them into ‘conversational or arrest’ contact with thieves or members of the

underworld.” With nearly 1,600 entries, the mimeographed dictionary has a few awkward definitions, and while it is filled with remarkably crude expressions, “vulgarity in the most distasteful and objectionable passages” was omitted “for the sake of propriety.”

With entries such as *jail house*, *mob*, *gangster*, *ex-con*, *hooker*, *bum*, *goofy*, and *nifty*, much of the *Penitentiary & Underworld Argot* seems patronizingly obvious. (Didn't everyone who passed the police exam know that a *cop* is another word for a police officer?) The dictionary is also filled with patter we associate with film noir: *gin mill*, *shut your yap*, *gumshoe*, *on the lam*, *trigger man*, and *fall guy*. Though a section of the dictionary included “terms commonly used by narcotic addicts or traffickers,” the dictionary feels remarkably light on 60s slang.

Yet alongside easy-peasy entries such as *beat the rap*, *big shot*, *side kick*, *double cross*, and *nut house* are expressions of the criminal tradecraft and colorful, nearly extinct turns of phrase. *Dead bang* means *caught in the act*,

while a *dead one* was a *reformed criminal*. *Bright eyes* are a *lookout man* or woman. A *phoneman* is a *peddler of cheap jewelry*. A *pickpocket*—also known as a *buzz*, a *whizzy*, a *dip*, or a *wire*—might *roust* a target (*push into a crowd to permit the picking of a pocket in the confusion*) or try *reefing* (*working up the lining of the pocket between the fingers until the desired article is easily reached*).

Why a Chicago cop would need to know that a *rod*, a *gat*, a *biscuit*, a *torch*, a *stick*, a *cannon*, a *roscoe*, and a *heater* were all slang words for handguns is clear. Why a Chicago cop would need to know that *beagles*, *cackleberries*,

snails, *stinkers*, and *red lead* were synonyms for *sausages*, *eggs*, *cinnamon rolls*, *onions*, and *catsup* is something of a mystery. It is easy to see how other entries could confuse outsiders. *Barbering* is to have a *conversation*. *Cheaters* could mean *eyeglasses* or *marked cards or dice*. The word *clout* as a noun means *influence*, but the verb *to clout* means *to steal or to strike*.

Think you know your Chicago underworld? Here's a quiz of some of the less obvious entries in *Penitentiary & Underworld Argot*. The correct answer is lifted word-for-word from the dictionary itself.

1) Clink

- A) Highest-ranking officer at a police station
- B) A jail
- C) A successful robbery

2) Unmugged

- A) Not listed on police records; a criminal not as yet identified as “wanted” by the police
- B) “Hungover” after a long night of drinking
- C) Someone who is unaware he has been pickpocketed

3) Glom

- A) To snatch; seize; grab; steal.
- B) To inspect a house or store before robbing
- C) To arrest; to apprehend

4) Hoosier

- A) A locksmith
- B) A man who sells firearms to criminals
- C) An inefficient worker

5) Jit

- A) A car used for bank robberies
- B) A nickel
- C) Any strong drink

6) Yegg

- A) Marijuana
- B) A percentage paid to a corrupt policeman for “protection”
- C) A thief

7) Pigeon joint

- A) A store where burglars' tools may be purchased
- B) The section of the prison where informers are held
- C) A graveyard

8) Pineapple

- A) Money
- B) A decoy for a confidence game
- C) A bomb

9) Badger game

- A) A gambling wheel controlled by the foot of the operator
- B) A blackmailing scheme in which the victim is taken to a room or apartment by the woman accomplice and there discovered by the “husband.”
- C) The hustling and shoving about by a pickpocket mob

10) The School

- A) The Pontiac, Illinois, Penitentiary, formerly a reformatory, as referred to by prisoners in the Joliet penitentiaries
- B) United States Penitentiary, Marion, as referred to by prisoners in Illinois state penitentiaries
- C) Gallery at the Cook County Jail where newly arrived prisoners are housed or celled.

9-10 correct: A-1! You're prepared for undercover work in the Chicago underworld.

7-8 correct: Bang-up job! You're ready to walk a beat, maybe even around Maxwell Street.

6-4 correct: Bad break. Let's start you off on the far northwest side, rookie.

3-0 correct: Complete flop. There might be a filing job for you somewhere, hayseed. If you want to make it, you'll have to brush up on your pulp crime novels. **❌**

Answers:
1. B 2. A 3. A 4. C 5. B 6. C 7. A 8. C 9. B
10. A
called rowdy dowdy.) 10. A
and shoving about by a pickpocket mob is
the operator is a gaff wheel. The hustling
(A gambling wheel controlled by the foot of

NEWS & POLITICS



The new mayor has at least temporarily slammed the brakes on moves toward an elected school board. © ERNO HANNINK/FICKR

POLITICS

School board politics

Don't give up on an elected school board, Mayor Lightfoot.

By BEN JORAVSKY

Now that Mayor Lightfoot has named her school board appointees, the time has come for me to evaluate the previous mayor's appointees.

Ugh, what's lower than one star?

In contrast, Lightfoot's appointees seem better, and they seem to come with some backbone that the previous board rubber-stampers clearly lacked.

There's a community activist who spoke out against Mayor Rahm's school closings, a former CPS teacher, a specialist in child development, and Miguel del Valle, the reform-minded former state senator from Humboldt Park. He'll be the board's chair.

I've known del Valle for decades. I happened to be there the night in 1986 when del Valle, then a community organizer, upset state senator Edward Nedza, a key cog in former alderman Tom Keane's legendary 31st Ward Democratic machine.

Let me tell you something, kiddies—beating Keane's machine was no joke. Keane was Ed Burke before Ed Burke—a tough old coot who

chaired the council's Finance Committee and wound up serving time for corruption. We'll see if Burke avoids that fate.

I still remember del Valle's election-night smile as he giddily proclaimed to his cheering supporters: "We beat Nedza!" Obviously, he was as surprised as the rest of us.

Anyway, Lightfoot and del Valle said all the right things at their press conference. She said she wanted a collaborative relationship with the board, "not a dictatorship."

And he said that neither he nor the mayor wanted a "rubber-stamp" board.

So that's all good, except...

Mayor Lightfoot's at least temporarily slammed the brakes on the movement toward an elected school board, just as it seemed that long-awaited progressive pipe dream might become a reality.

The most recent bill, sponsored by state rep Robert Martwick, had passed the house. It seemed poised to pass the senate when Lightfoot, like the great Mutombo, rose from nowhere to swat it away. →



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For what it's worth, Martwick supported Toni Preckwinkle in last month's election. More egregiously, he made the suberb decision to show up uninvited to a Lightfoot campaign press conference and, essentially, heckle her.

Thus, there are three theories as to why Lightfoot opposed the elected school board bill: (1) She really did think it was unwieldy having so many districts; (2) It was her way of letting Martwick know just what she thought of him; (3) A little of both.

I'm going with (3). Apparently, I'm not the only person in town who has a hard time getting over grudges.

In any event, Lightfoot got senate president John Cullerton to put the bill on hold and, just like that, we're back to square one, still the only municipality in the state that doesn't elect its school board, still relying on the kindness of mayors to pick the right appointees.

As for the previous appointees—the ones put there by Mayors Rahm and Daley—the best you can say is they didn't make things too much worse than they already were.

In my opinion, not a whole lot has changed with Chicago Public Schools since I moved here in 1981.

It's still largely a top-down, overly bureaucratic, almost-always-broke system in which teachers by and large do the best they can under difficult circumstances frequently made worse by the boneheaded decisions of the people in charge.

In Chicago—as anywhere—the single greatest predictor of academic performance is, more often than not, income. That is, the more money a student's family has, the better those students tend to do in school. I mean, duh, people—we all know this.

If the Chicago mayors and their board appointees truly wanted to bridge the gap between the lowest and highest achievers, they'd move heaven and earth to find the money to make it happen.

That means hiring tutors, counselors, nurses, therapists, and art, music, and drama teachers, as well as expanding pre- and after-school activities and vocational education.

Whatever it takes to help keep kids focused, motivated, and learning.

But this costs money. And there never seems to be enough of that around, at least when it comes to educating the poorest of the poor.

Making things even worse, the last few boards didn't exactly have the best track records when it came to managing the money they had. Especially during the Daley years, when they signed on to risky loans that wound up costing taxpayers millions in financing costs.

This is particularly frustrating, given that the appointees included university presidents, corporate lawyers, bankers, retired CEOs, and even an economics professor.

Moreover, board members have seemed incapable of standing up to the mayor who had appointed them, even as the mayor diverted hundreds of millions of dollars away from CPS and into the TIF slush funds.


In its final act of subservience to Mayor Rahm, the last board silently watched as the mayor and City Council tag teamed to dedicate \$2.4 billion in property tax dollars for the Lincoln Yards and 78 deals. At best, these will reap more property tax dollars for CPS when the TIF districts end in 23 years. But that won't help today's, or tomorrow's, students. So much for putting kids first.

Presumably the new board, with del Valle at the helm, will be more likely to protest if this mayor proposes new mega-TIF deals.

Of course, presumably, Mayor Lightfoot, who ran against such boondoggles, will have enough sense not to propose one in the first place. We shall see.

In the meantime, here's hoping Lightfoot finds a way to forgive Martwick for his transgressions and sign on to his bill—once it's been modified so everyone saves face.

I realize there are pros and cons to electing a school board. Lord knows, Chicago's voters don't exactly have the best track record when it comes to elections.

But as a general principle, I'll take democracy over autocracy anytime. After all, if del Valle can beat Nedza, anything's possible. 

 @joravben



State legislators recently approved a Chicago-based casino.  MARK MAUNO / FLICKR

ON CULTURE

Games people play

Despite Mayor Lightfoot's campaign promise, Chicago's casino will be owned by a private investor after all.

By DEANNA ISAACS

A funny thing happened on the way to state legislative approval for Chicago's very own casino last week.

For decades political leaders, lusting after the easy money a casino in the nation's third-largest city would bring, have proposed a vision of a very special kind of gambling place, one that would override qualms about sucker traps that transfer cash from some of the poorest and most vulnerable members of the populace to the pockets of fat-cat investors.

The vision those leaders floated took the predatory investors out of the picture, replacing them with something much more beneficent: a casino that would be city owned, with profits entirely dedicated to civic causes.

This kinder, gentler casino concept, with all the money siphoned from the poor-sap customers coming right back to them in city services or a better-balanced city budget, has been around at least since the state legalized riverboat gambling back in 1990. Richard M. Daley was a proponent. So was Rahm Emanuel, although, oddly, neither of these powerful mayors was able to successfully propel it through the governmental obstacle course in Springfield. And reformer Lori Lightfoot campaigned on the idea, telling *Crain's Chicago Business* (and anyone else who asked) that "if people in Chicago want to gamble, then they should be able to gamble in Chicago at a city-owned, land-based casino."

That's what she'd be seeking in Springfield: a casino of, by, and for the people.



please recycle this paper

NEWS & POLITICS

So it came as a surprise when, in the orgiastic last hours of the spring session of the Illinois General Assembly on June 2, legislators approved an 800-page omnibus bill that massively expanded gambling and finally gave Chicago its own casino—and it turned out that the heart of the Chicago casino concept had somehow been gutted.

Like every other casino in Illinois, the huge new Chicago facility, with as many as 4,000 gaming positions, will be owned by private investors.

As explained by the bill's sponsors, the casino profits will be shared equally by the city, the state, and the investor who buys the license. Governor J.B. Pritzker, who's invested in the gaming industry himself, is expected to sign off on it in the next few weeks. So much for civic ownership, dispensable as chips on a roulette wheel.

It was a bait and switch that didn't get much notice.

Mayor Lightfoot told the *Sun-Times* that a city-owned casino "wasn't going to make its way through the General Assembly," and that the "legislative process is about compromise." And then the public discussion moved on to speculation about which of a half-dozen possible locations would be the chosen casino site, with the odds in favor of the old Michael Reese Hospital site in Bronzeville—never mind the objections of local residents.

In the city that's home to the world's most notorious parking meter deal, the question of how this happened was pretty much left hanging. WTTW, which did ask Governor Pritzker, reported that he said the casino will be privately owned "at the city's request."

So I called Lightfoot's office to ask for an explanation. Deputy communications director

Lauren Huffman responded with a written statement that ducked the question but made the point that a casino "will create a new revenue stream and will allow us to shore up underfunded police and fire pensions." She thought maybe I should ask the bill's sponsors.

In the Illinois House, that would be 28th District rep Robert Rita. His answer came from spokesman Ryan Keith, who told me Rita himself had proposed a city- or state-owned casino in the past, but, in this instance, "I think they just decided it was cleanest and simplest to do it the way they do all the other casinos"—that is, with private owners.

Who decided? "The negotiators," Keith said, "representatives from all the different legislative caucuses, the governor's office. The city obviously was involved."

Northeastern Illinois University economics professor Michael Wenz, who studies gambling as an economic development strategy, says that, compared to past Illinois casino deals, the city did well. "A third of AGR [adjusted gross revenue] is a good deal," Wenz told me. "They can do that without having to worry about the costs, without having to worry about anything. And it'll be wildly profitable."

Casino revenue has been flat or even down recently, cannibalized by the spread of video gambling, but Wenz says it's reasonable to expect that a well-located city casino could do three times what Rivers Casino in Des Plaines does in volume. Figures from the Illinois Gaming Board show that Rivers's AGR in 2018 was \$441 million.

Someone in Springfield no doubt did the math on that. 

 @Deannalsaacs



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BY SARAH WATTS & LUCIUS WISNIEWSKI

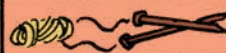
HOW CHICAGO ACTIVISTS MADE ABORTION POSSIBLE BEFORE ROE V. WADE

IN THE DECADES BEFORE ABORTION BECAME LEGAL IN THE UNITED STATES, WOMEN—PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO WERE NON-WHITE AND POOR—WERE DYING AT AN ALARMING RATE.

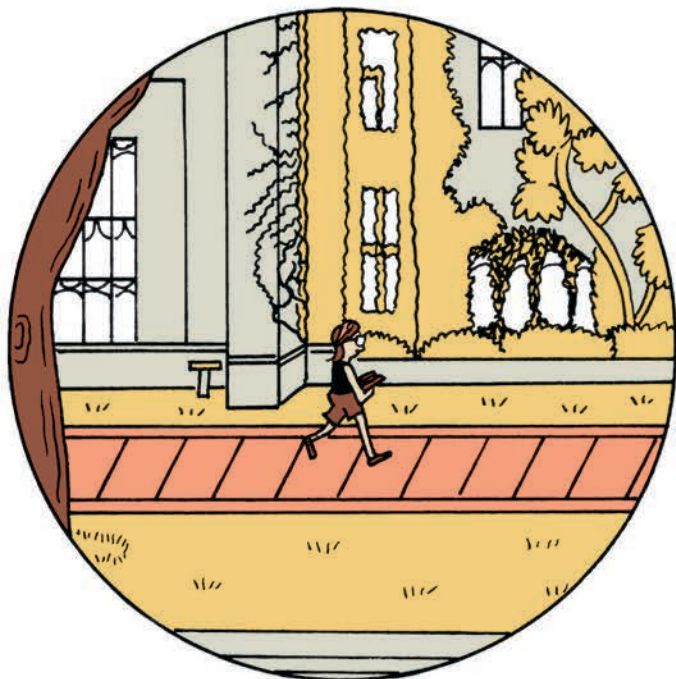
ABORTION WAS ILLEGAL IN MOST CASES IN 1965—BUT IT WASN'T UNPRACTICED. DESPERATE TO END A PREGNANCY, WOMEN SOUGHT OUT ABORTION PROVIDERS IN ISOLATION, MANY OF WHOM WERE UNSKILLED OR USED UNSTERILE EQUIPMENT.



IF THEY COULDN'T FIND OR AFFORD A PHYSICIAN, WOMEN TRIED TO EXPEL THE FETUS THEMSELVES IN HORRIFYING WAYS.



IN NEARLY EVERY PUBLIC HOSPITAL, YOU COULD FIND ENTIRE WARDS FILLED WITH WOMEN WHO HAD BEEN MAIMED DURING AN UNSAFE ABORTION.



HEATHER BOOTH WAS A 19-YEAR-OLD STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO IN 1965 WHEN SHE GOT A PHONE CALL FROM A FRIEND. THE FRIEND'S SISTER WAS PREGNANT, HEATHER LEARNED, AND NEARLY SUICIDAL BECAUSE OF IT.

WORRIED FOR HER SAFETY, HEATHER DECIDED TO HELP.

SOON AFTER, HEATHER STARTED GETTING MORE PHONE CALLS. GETTING AN UNLAWFUL ABORTION WAS PUNISHABLE BY JAIL TIME IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, SO THE WOMEN WHO CALLED IN SEEKING ABORTIONS USED A CODE NAME.



BY 1969, HEATHER WAS OVERWHELMED BY DEMAND.



STILL DETERMINED TO HELP WOMEN, SHE REACHED OUT TO LOCAL ACTIVISTS AND FOUNDED THE ABORTION COUNSELING SERVICE OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION, INFORMALLY KNOWN AS THE JANE COLLECTIVE.

A SMALL ARMY OF VOLUNTEERS TOOK OVER, SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT THE MISSION, HELPING WOMEN SCHEDULE THEIR ABORTIONS, AND DRIVING THEM TO THE PROCEDURE.



FOR SAFETY AND SUPPORT, THE JANES STARTED STAYING IN THE ROOM WITH WOMEN DURING PROCEDURES. AFTER WATCHING SEVERAL PROCEDURES, JANE MEMBERS STARTED PERFORMING ABORTIONS THEMSELVES.



IN THIS WAY, THEY WERE ABLE TO LOWER THE PRICE AND MAKE ABORTION MORE ACCESSIBLE TO THE POOREST GROUPS.

IN FOUR YEARS OF OPERATION, THE JANE COLLECTIVE PERFORMED NEARLY 11,000 ABORTIONS WITH NOT ONE FATALITY.



IN 1973, THE SUPREME COURT RULED ON ROE V. WADE, WHICH LEGALIZED ABORTION. WITH PHYSICIANS ABLE TO PERFORM ABORTIONS SAFELY, THE JANE COLLECTIVE DISBANDED.



FIFTY YEARS SINCE THE JANE COLLECTIVE STARTED, ABORTION IS TECHNICALLY LEGAL—BUT IT'S FAR FROM ACCESSIBLE.

ACROSS THE NATION, WOMEN HAVE STARTED TO FORM THEIR OWN COLLECTIVES.

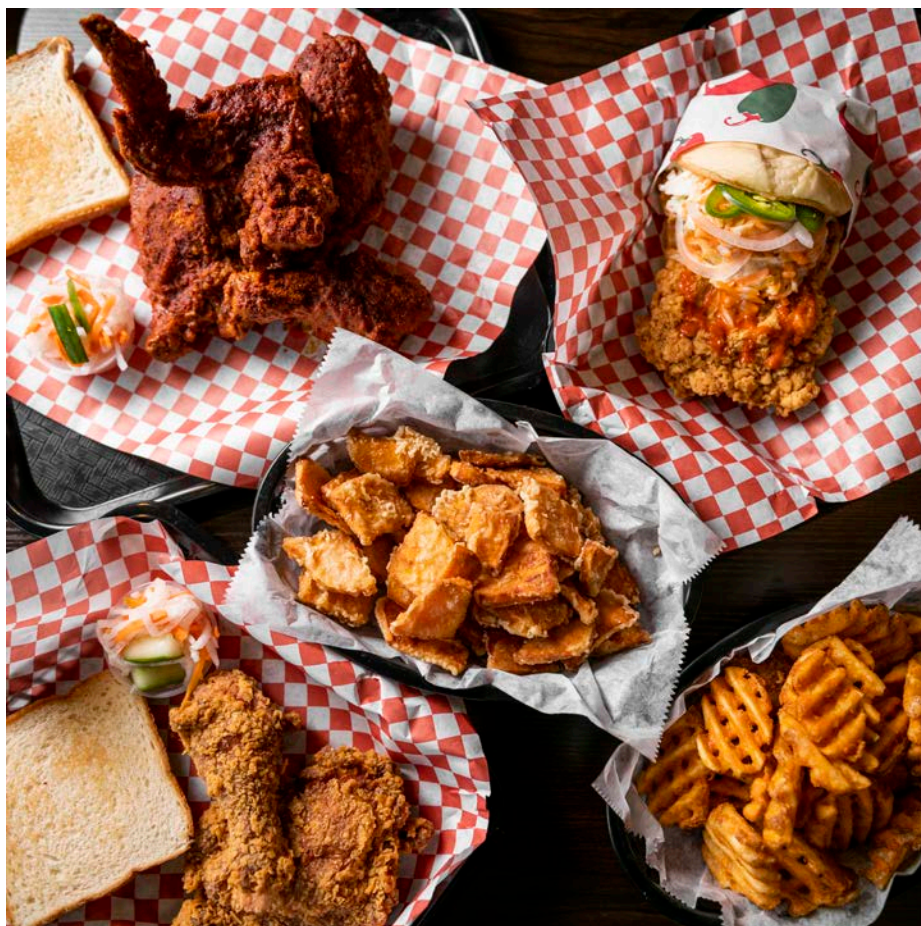


WORKING OUT OF MOTELS AND CLIENTS' HOMES, THEY PERFORM MAKESHIFT ABORTIONS FOR THE WOMEN WHO CAN'T AFFORD OR ACCESS THEM OTHERWISE.

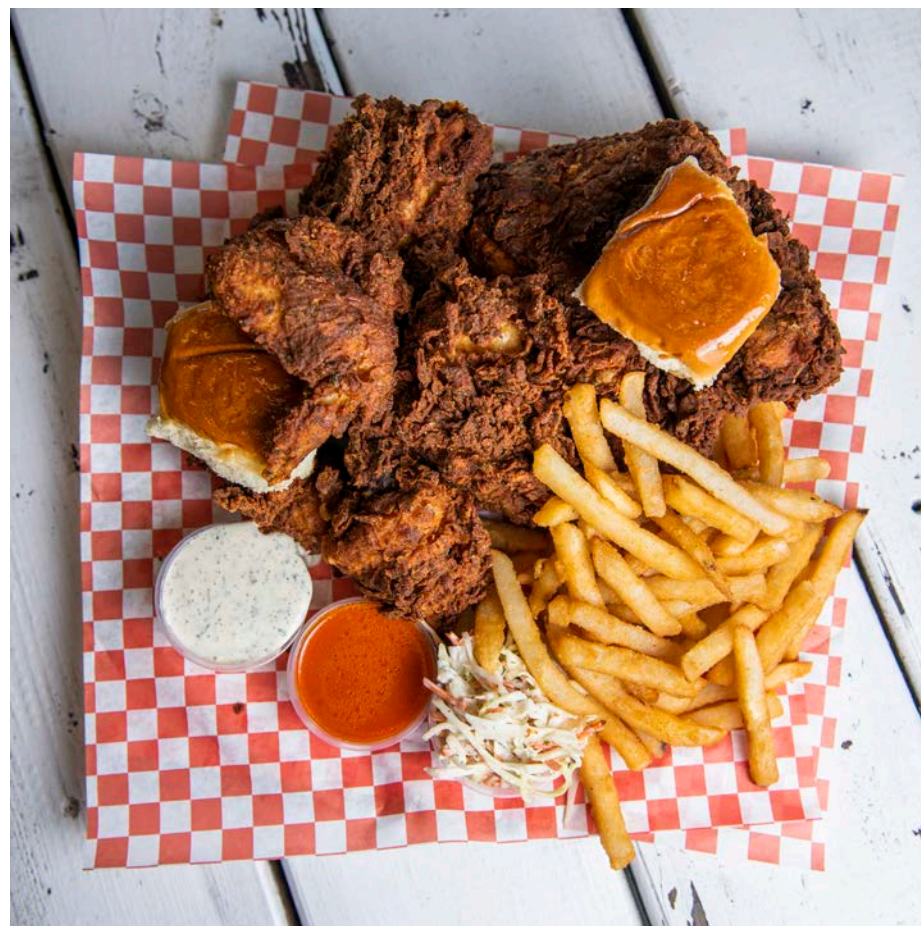


SOME-TIMES, THEY CALL THEMSELVES JANE.





A big spread at Big Boss Spicy Fried Chicken. © ELISHA KNIGHT



The options are loco at Chicken Pollo Shack. © ELISHA KNIGHT

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Meet spring chickens Big Boss and Chicken Pollo Shack

Chicago has two powerful new contenders on the hot-fried-chicken front.

By **MIKE SULA**

Chef Jassy Lee is a living embodiment of an international fried chicken triangulation, a case study in the global affinity for spicy, battered, and crispy poultry. Born in Taishan, Guangdong, she emigrated to the U.S. in 1991 with her parents, but also visited relatives in Belize, members of that country's Chinese immigrant community, which is largely responsible for another beloved expression of deep-fried poultry. Lee's Belizean family owned restau-

rants and served fried chicken—uhhh, BFC?—marinated in a multichile blend, battered and fried, and draped with sweet ketchup.

Back in Chicago, the family went on to open two western-suburban Chinese restaurants they sourced from a common commissary in Bridgeport. A few years ago Lee left them behind for a packaging business in Los Angeles. She remained a dedicated cook, though—the photos she sent to me of dozens of bacchanalian feasts she's cooked for family and friends

over the years are jaw-dropping. Belizean fried chicken was one formative influence on the recipe she later developed. But it was also inspired by the Nashville hot-chicken craze that's swept the country, emanating from the legendary Prince's Hot Chicken in Nashville, where chicken is battered and fried, then mopped in a magma of oil, chile, spices, and sugar.

Lee returned to Chicago last year to help care for her father, who was recovering from

cancer. It's he who's behind the name “Big Boss”—growing up poor, that's how he described a friend's father who could afford to feed his family a full meal of rice each day.

When Lee returned to Chicago, her family still owned the Halsted Street kitchen that serviced their suburban restaurants. It was there that she decided to focus, opening **BIG BOSS SPICY FRIED CHICKEN** to specialize in her particular mash-up of Belizean marinated chicken—not sauced with ketchup, but with a molten Nashville-style chile mop.

The fresh birds Lee sources for Big Boss are enormous, and conjure an image of the impressive quantities of chile powder she must go through each night when she packs and seals them tight with a blend of ghost, habanero, serrano, and four other chiles before the battering and frying and the final application of heat and sweetness. Lee scouted notable Nashville hot-chicken locations to research the last step, and offers hers in five spice levels, the middle of which is loaded



with a respectable but by no means excruciating amount of capsicum and encrusted in a shatteringly crispy crust. Though most of her business is carryout, her product is best appreciated immediately on one of the stools at the counter looking out onto Halsted, where one's enveloped in a kind of graffiti-art womb that mimics the fireworks in the mouth. Whole, half, and quarter birds, wings, and tenders are available as well, though it's Lee's chicken sandwich that's become something of an Instagram celebrity: an enormous boneless, brick-red fried thigh that dwarfs the bun it comes on, the cooling coleslaw crown and raw jalapeño effectively canceling each other out over the fury of the chicken.

Lee offers a few other options: chicken curry, chicken teriyaki, chicken soup, and chicken salad, plus an assortment of sauces and fried sides. But her Belizean-Nashville hybrid (BFC/NFC?) needs nothing more than perhaps a side of ranch to tame the higher spice levels.

As it turns out, this was a very good spring for fried chicken. Shortly before Lee opened Big Boss, across the city another chef in another once-private commercial kitchen was bouncing back from a restaurant closing.

For years, David Rodriguez labored in relative obscurity in kitchens such as Gibsons, GT Fish & Oyster, and the Kennison. Then last year, he and his mother opened Xocome Antojeria in southwest-side Archer Heights, which for a time became a Chicago food media darling for its house-made tortillas, quesadillas, and tlacoyos.

Xocome was a bit of a shooting star. After just six months the family rented out the space to an employee when Rodriguez's mom had to go to Mexico for extended visit,* and he put his attention into a small Humboldt Park counter-service-only fast-food joint with a kitchen and register protected by bulletproof glass. Rodriguez was considering removing the protector, covering up the windows, and using the space to entertain potential clients for his catering business.

Instead he tapped his extensive experience frying chicken for staff meals and opened **CHICKEN POLLO SHACK**. Like Lee, Rodriguez offers a world-beating spicy chicken sandwich, this one a double stack of fried chicken thighs served buffalo style. He also offers a double cheeseburger modeled on the south side's endemic Big Baby. But prompted by the kind of media attention Xocome received, Ro-

driguez has been selling ridiculous amounts of fried chicken, burning through 5,000 takeout menus in a just a few months.

He isn't tied to any particular kind of regional variant, though there is a nod to K[orean] FC with the addition of gochujang to his overnight buttermilk-brine marinade, along with sriracha, mustard, garlic, onion, and black pepper. And that's only after an overnight brine with salt and bay leaf that renders the birds explosively juicy beneath a craggy crust resulting from a double dredge through flour seasoned with black pepper and cardamom, among other seasonings.

CPS is mostly carryout too, though Rodriguez provides a picnic table where, if you're playing it right, you'll attend to this chicken right away—particularly if you're pairing it with one of his house-made sauces and dips, familiar but significantly boosted by his downtown training. He purees both fermented and grilled habaneros for his West Side Fire sauce, sweetened and brightened with honey and orange juice, while he whips his own aioli into the buttermilk and herbs for the ranch, and sweetens his buffalo sauce with some of the West Side Fire sauce and Hawaiian Punch.

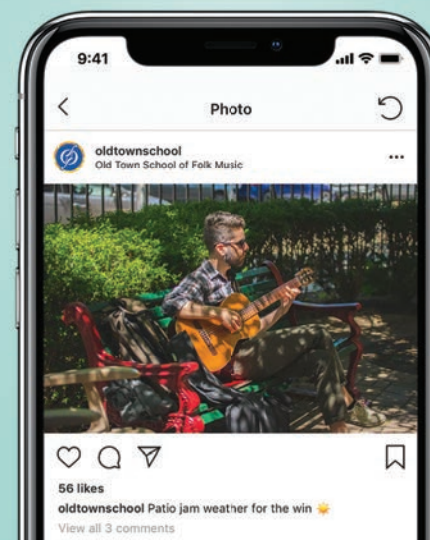
Another sauce is critical to the sleeper at Chicken Pollo Shack. I was dazed enough by the fried chicken that I was prepared to ignore Rodriguez's grilled option until a colleague told me he was so devoted to it he orders it at least once a week. Like the fried chicken, Rodriguez follows a two-step brine-marinade process, the latter part employing a tart adobo-style medium with cilantro, bay leaf, cinnamon, cayenne, paprika, onion, and lemon. Once the meat hits the grill it takes on a delectable char, which Rodriguez mitigates with splashes of the marinade, and finishes with a mop of what he calls a "simple modified chimichurri"—cilantro, oregano, parsley, lemon, black pepper, and roasted garlic—that puts this bird into a category by itself. Rodriguez humbly says it puts him in mind of summer. For me it's the best chicken I've eaten all year.

And I don't say that lightly during a season when there's so much good commissary-fried chicken to be had. One more decent CFC joint and it's a trend. **FI**

**More good news: Rodriguez and his mother have reopened Xocome Antojeria at its original location, 5200 S. Archer, 773-498-6679, xocome-antojeria.business.site.*

@MikeSula

Less scrolling.



More strumming.



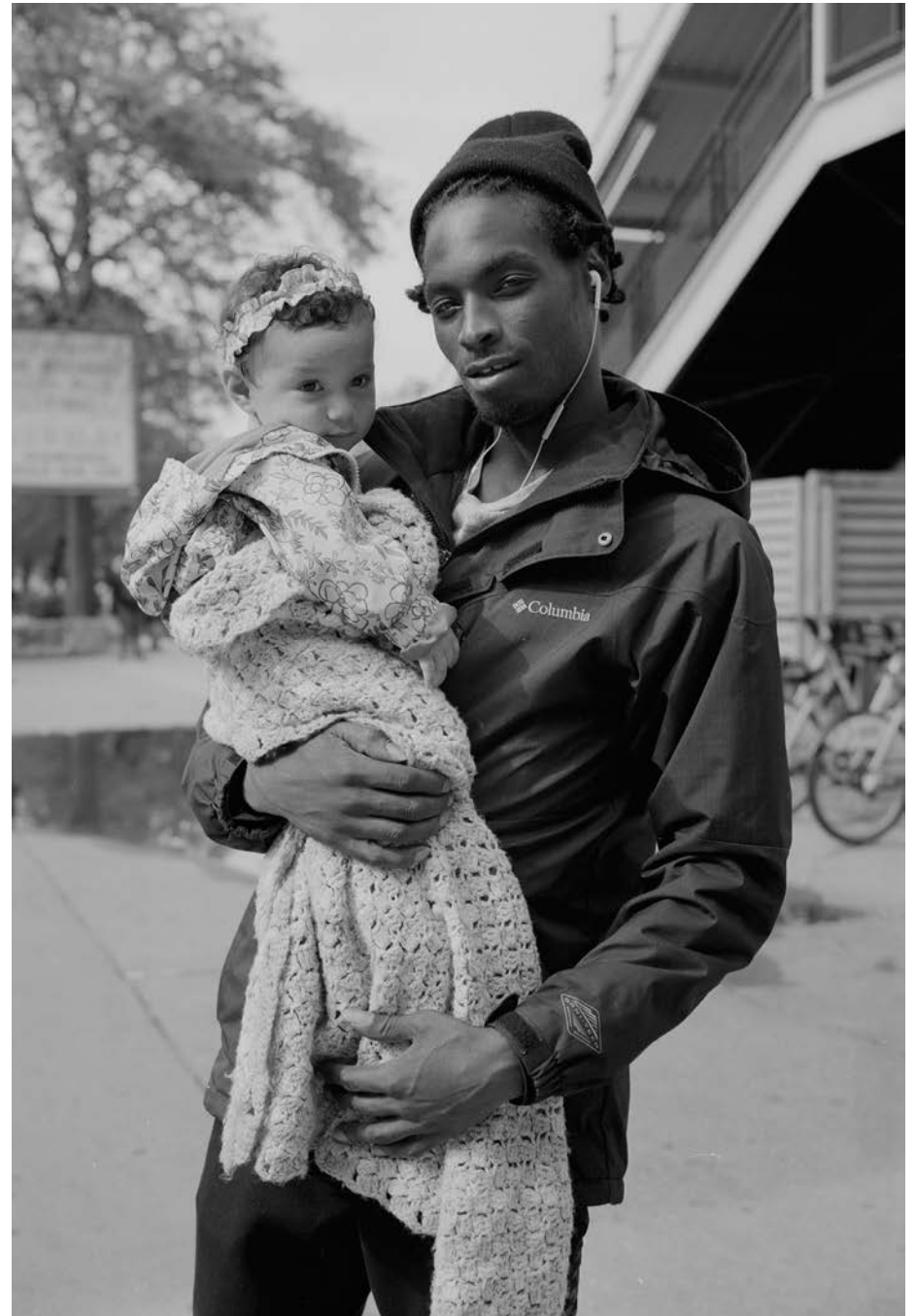
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Old Town School



Maxwell and Maxwell Jr. enjoying some quality time in a park across from their home in Woodlawn



Edward and Julissa out for a stroll, also in Woodlawn

Black Fatherhood

Black men are rarely afforded the luxury of being seen as nurturers and caregivers.

Story and photos by W.D. FLOYD

One day during my daily Green Line commute, I noticed a young brother with a little girl slumped in his arms wearing a “Daddy’s Girl” beanie. He removed her pacifier and placed her in a pink stroller. For what seemed like the rest of their ride he stared at the little girl as she slept. One could only imagine what he was thinking. Was he reflecting on his life? Thinking about his hopes and dreams for the baby girl lying in the

stroller? Or he could’ve just been contemplating what was for dinner that evening. As the train slowed at their stop, he snatched up the diaper bag on the seat next to him, unlocked the stroller, and exited the train. It was a beautiful and tender moment. Thankfully I have the pleasure of witnessing these moments often.

Within our society there is an underlying belief that fatherhood is a role Black males struggle to fill. The lack of Black fathers in homes has become the knee-jerk explanation

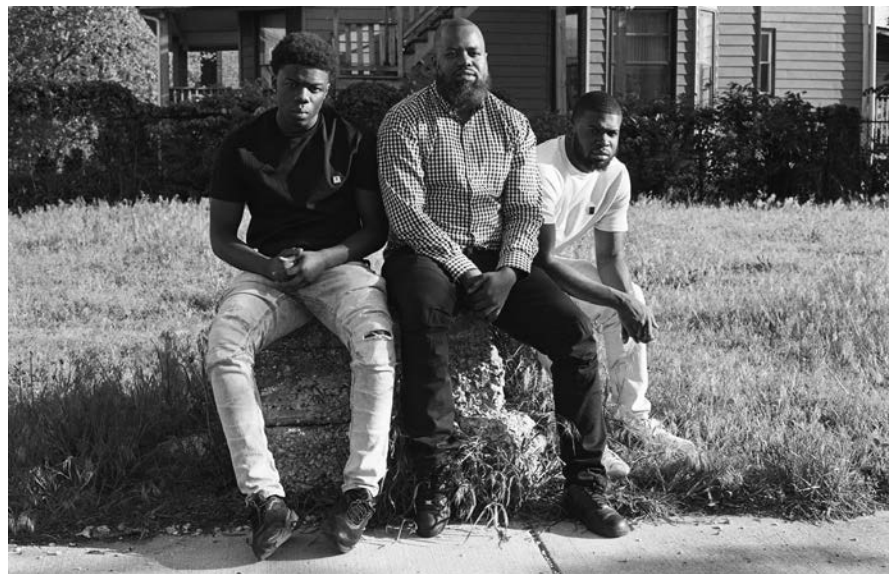
for the ills of Black America. Even former President Obama has expressed this idea. At a Father's Day speech in 2008, Obama claimed that there are too many Black fathers missing from too many homes and that it threatens the foundation of Black communities. But every day I see Black men engaging in acts of care. Most are not making a political statement but fulfilling their basic human instinct. Picking up and dropping children off at school, changing diapers, and smothering babies with kisses are all signs of a loving and attentive parent, and Black men are doing all these things and more. According to a 2013 study published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Black men are more involved with their children than other demographics. For example, at 70 percent, Black fathers are more involved than their white and Latino counterparts in bathing, diapering, or dressing their children daily.

Due to hundreds of years of pervasive dehumanizing images of Black males and publications like the Moynihan Report, which outlined the "deep roots of Black poverty →

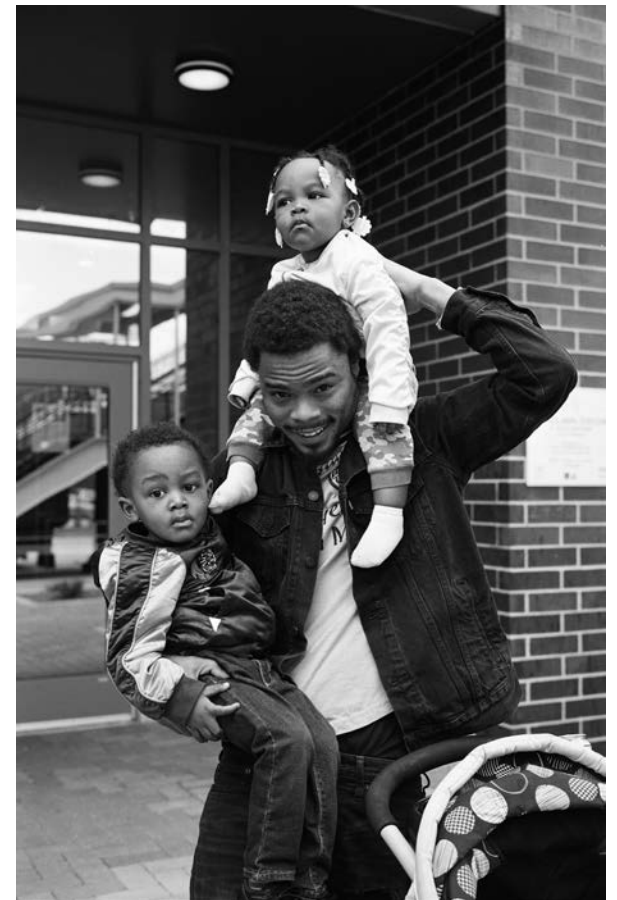


Kelvin Woodard taking Kelvin Jr. for a bike ride

Datreion and Datreion Jr. in West Garfield Park



Emanuel with sons Emanuel and Lavar in Woodlawn



Antonio with Toniya and Ra'Shon in Woodlawn



Darvel and Darvel Jr.

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in the United States,” Black men have not been afforded the luxury of being collectively seen as nurturers and caregivers. The stereotype that Black men are not fathers is interwoven into our collective consciousness. In spite of high unemployment rates, mass incarceration, and gun violence, so many Black men are determined to be fathers. It’s unfortunate that even as a Black man, I find it difficult to speak to the intrinsic nature of fatherhood without it being grounded in the pain and struggle of the Black experience.

I, like many Black boys, grew up with a father in my life. I know firsthand the physical, spiritual, and mental stress so many Black men go through just to be supporting fathers. I know fathers often go unrecognized and are not fully valued for the work they put in every day. This is not a declaration that all Black men, or all men for that matter, are perfect fathers, but there are a hell of a lot of Black men striving to figure out manhood and fatherhood. ■

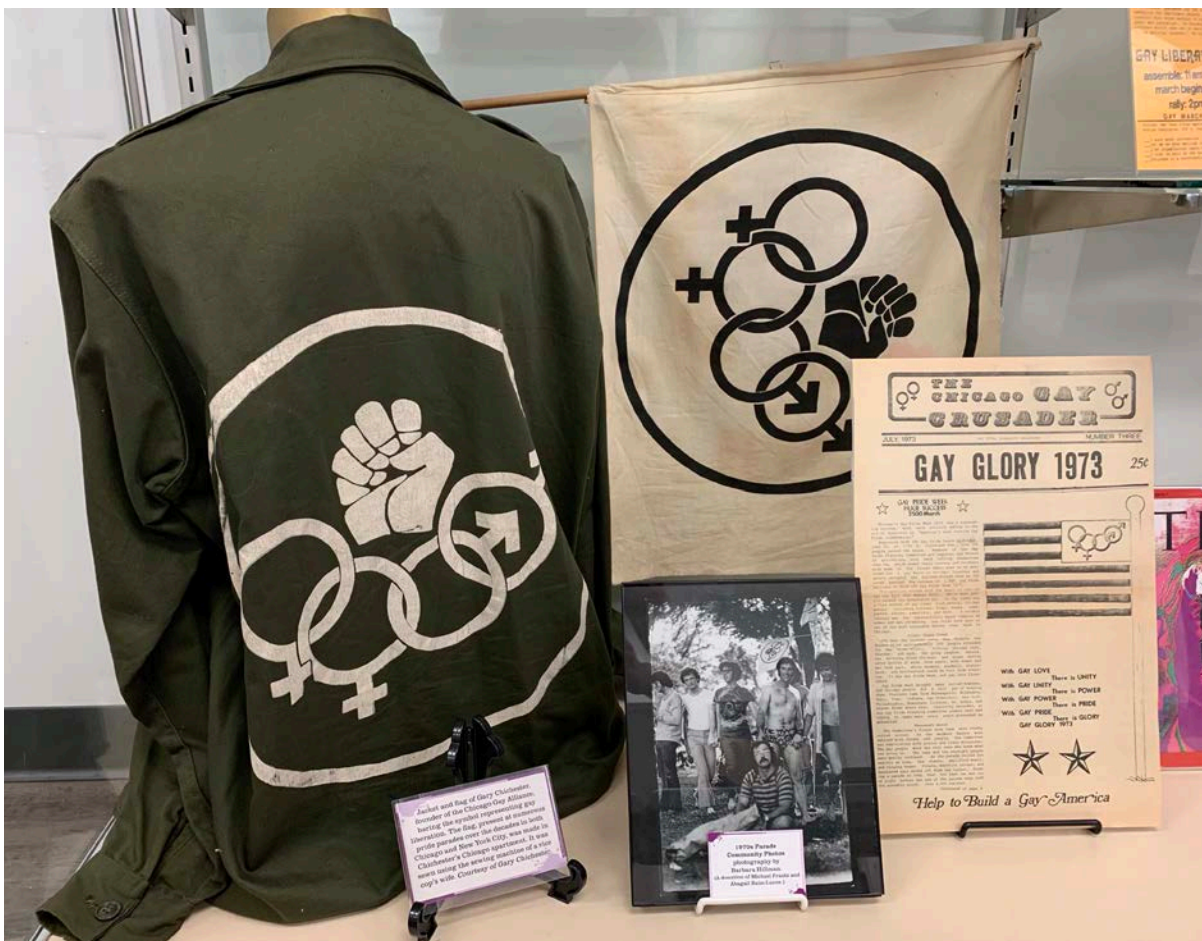
Editor’s note: Some subjects preferred not to give their names.



"OUT OF THE CLOSETS & INTO THE STREETS: POWER, PRIDE & RESISTANCE IN CHICAGO'S GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT"

Through 9/30: Wed-Thu 6-9 PM, Fri noon-4 PM, Sat 10 AM-4 PM, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, 6500 N. Clark, 773-381-8030, gerberhart.org. **FREE**

ARTS & CULTURE



Memorabilia from the early days of the Chicago Gay Alliance on display at Gerber/Hart. CHASE OLLIS

Michigan and Chicago Avenues. Then, instead of dispersing as we had originally planned, we impulsively headed south on Michigan into the Loop, chanting “Out of the closets and into the streets!” as we wended our way through throngs of Mag Mile shoppers. The march ended with another rally in Civic Center Plaza (now Daley Plaza), where the event culminated in a joyous circle dance around the Picasso statue.

Between 150 and 300 people (depending on which account you read) showed up to celebrate what our flyer promoting the event declared (in all capital letters) was: “THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF GAY PEOPLE TELLING THE WARPED, SICK, MALADJUSTED, PURITAN AMERICAN SOCIETY THAT THEY HAVE HAD ENOUGH SHIT.”

That flyer is on display as part of “Out of the Closets & Into the Streets: Power, Pride & Resistance in Chicago’s Gay Liberation Movement,” a new exhibit at Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, the midwest’s largest LGBTQ library and research center. Conceived by the library’s director, Wil Brant, and curated by a team of young volunteers including professional librarians Chase Ollis and James Conley and designer Kurt Conley, the display is drawn from Gerber/Hart’s extensive archival collection.

The march marked the first anniversary of a riot in New York City on June 28, 1969, when patrons of the Stonewall Inn, a gay nightclub in Greenwich Village owned by the Genovese crime family, reacted violently to what had begun as a routine police raid. That event, and the events leading up to and following it, are well covered in a new book, *The Stonewall Riots: A Documentary History* by Marc Stein (NYU Press).

But that first Stonewall anniversary march wasn’t the first activity of Chicago Gay Liberation, which started up in fall 1970 after University of Chicago grad student Henry Wiemhoff placed an ad in the *Chicago Maroon* student newspaper seeking a gay roommate. Not only did he get a roommate—a female taxicab driver named Michal Brody—he got a discussion group. We met in Wiemhoff and Brody’s Hyde Park apartment and then, as our numbers grew, began to gather at the Blue Gargoyle, a community center and coffeehouse in the multicultural, nondenominational University Church on the University of Chicago campus.

Talking soon led to action. The first ➔

PRIDE

‘Out of the closets and into the streets’

A ‘freaking fag revolutionary’ remembers the early years of gay liberation in Chicago

By **ALBERT WILLIAMS**

When the annual Pride Parade steps off from the intersection of Broadway and Montrose at noon on Sunday, June 30—with Lori Lightfoot, Chicago’s first openly gay mayor, serving as honorary grand marshal—it will represent a very different mind-set from the event that launched the pride parade tradition. This year’s parade is expected to draw more than a million participants and onlookers to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion of June 28 and 29, 1969. Thus the theme Stonewall 50: Millions of Moments of Pride.

I was a teenaged member of Chicago Gay Liberation, the loose-knit, short-lived group that organized the first pride parade on Saturday, June 27, 1970. Most of our group thought of ourselves, proudly if irreverently, as members of the “freaking fag revolution”—to borrow the phrase used by Thomas Aquinas Foran, the U.S. attorney who had prosecuted the so-called “Chicago Seven” anti-war activists charged with conspiracy and incitement to riot as a result of their protests at the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

The first parade wasn’t even a parade. It was a march, which meant we were allowed

to walk on the sidewalks but not in the streets. There were no floats, no cars, no politicians, no crowds, no corporate sponsors pitching their brands to onlookers. The last thing on our minds was the possibility of any mayor, let alone an openly gay one, leading the way; we were happy the city’s then-mayor, “Boss” Richard J. Daley, didn’t set his cops on us.

The day began at noon with a rally in Washington Square Park across the street from the Newberry Library—known as “Bughouse Square” because of its storied history as a free-speech forum. From there we walked to the historic Water Tower at the intersection of

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public Gay Lib event I participated in was a protest four months before the Stonewall march, on the snowy afternoon of Wednesday, February 25, 1970, outside the Loop headquarters of the Women's Bar Association of Illinois. The group was hosting a program on "Youthful Offenders" with a Chicago police officer, Sergeant John Manley, as guest speaker. But for us, the offender was Manley himself. The blond, muscular cop was notorious for entrapping gay men in Lincoln Park restrooms; wearing street clothes, he would pretend to solicit guys for sex and then arrest them if they responded to his invitation. Mattachine Midwest, an established "homophile" organization in town, published Manley's picture in its mimeographed monthly newsletter and mockingly suggested Manley himself was a closet case: "If I were gay and I didn't want anybody to know, and I felt very, very guilty, I think I might get a job where I could cruise in the public interest," wrote David Stienecker, the newsletter's editor. On February 7, 1970, Manley made an early morning appearance at Stienecker's third-floor apartment to arrest him for criminal defamation.

"After I unsuccessfully attempted to make a phone call, Manley called for a police van and I was escorted from my apartment in handcuffs," Stienecker now recalls. "Upon arriving at the precinct house, Manley suggested that if I just pleaded guilty the judge would only give me a slap on the wrist." But Stienecker, represented by the diligent and fierce lesbian attorney Renee Hanover, fought the charges. After several court appearances, most of which Manley missed, the case was thrown out of court, but Stienecker lost his job as an editor at World Book Encyclopedia due to the ensuing publicity—there then being no legal protection against employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Manley later rose to the rank of captain in the police force, but his career crashed and burned in the mid-1990s when he was fired for sexually harassing female officers under his supervision. Some 20 years later, his name popped up in the news again when he was ticketed for, of all things, impersonating a government official after he posed as a U.S. Maritime Service "special agent" to avoid a parking ticket. Stienecker, who went on to a successful career writing educational books for children, is credited as a program supporter of Gerber/Hart's "Out of the Closets" exhibit.

In March 1970, we responded to the release of *The Boys in the Band*, the film version of the

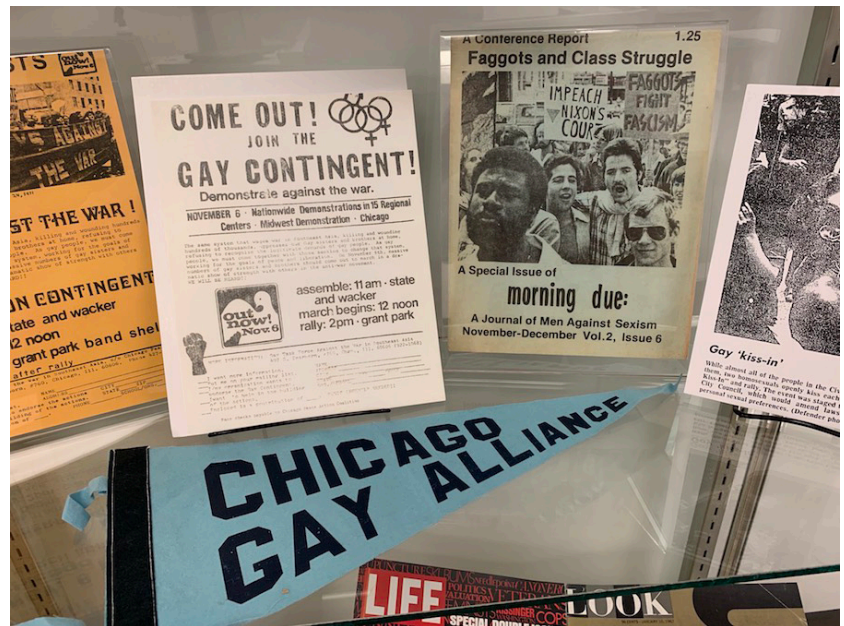
1968 off-Broadway stage hit. Our aim was not to boycott the movie—which used waspish humor to illustrate the pathological, self-hating behavior of a group of gay New York men—but to use it as a teaching opportunity. We handed out flyers on the street outside the Carnegie Theatre on Rush Street (where Gibsons Bar & Steakhouse is now), which read in part: "The pain and cruelty typified by *The Boys in the Band* should be understood as the expression of human lives damaged by an environment of condemnation, suspicion, job discrimination, and legal harassment [sic]."

Gay Liberation also organized dances, which drew large crowds from around the city. Though same-sex dancing wasn't illegal, it was forbidden in the mob-owned gay bars in Boss Daley's Chicago, where periodic police raids were a given. The first two Gay Lib dances were held in the protected environs of the University of Chicago campus, where music was provided by the Siegel-Schwall Band, then one of Chicago's hottest blues-rock bands. (It inspired other LGBTQ student groups to hold their own dances at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle—now UIC—and Northwestern University.)

When the university demanded that CGL move its dances off campus because the crowds were getting too big, we booked the Coliseum, located on South Wabash between 14th and 16th Streets, a huge venue that had hosted several Republican presidential conventions, sports events, rock concerts, and, a few weeks previously, a congress of Black Muslims. As historian Timothy Stewart-Winter, author of *Queer Clout: Chicago and the Rise of Gay Politics* (University of Pennsylvania Press), recounts in a 2016 Slate article titled "Beyond Stonewall: How Gay History Looks Different From Chicago":

"[T]here was a problem: The venue required an insurance policy, and every insurance agent the organizers approached said the risk was too great that the police would raid the dance, cart the attendees off to jail, and levy fines. Only on the day before the dance did the activists find a broker who'd sell them a policy—a black man whose company had insured the Nation of Islam's annual convention at the same venue."

About 2,000 people showed up at the Coliseum to dance for liberation on April 18, 1970. So did the police. But when the cops entered the hall and came face to face with a phalanx of attorneys—including the formidable Renee Hanover—primed to document any civil liberties violations, they shrugged and went away.



© CHASE OLLIS

The Gerber/Hart exhibit includes copies of the mimeographed newsletters that Gay Lib used to spread its message in those long-ago pre-Internet days. Also on display is a copy of the *Chicago Seed*, the city's hippie/radical underground paper, which published an eight-page Gay Liberation supplement in one issue. There's also a well-deserved tribute to the late Frank Robinson, who gave Chicago's LGBTQ community the first professional-quality publications we could call our own. Robinson was a closeted middle-aged editor for *Playboy* magazine; unable to come out for our demonstrations, he devoted himself to behind-the-scenes messaging. After publishing a one time "Gay Pride" paper to promote the 1971 Pride Parade (which by then had been relocated to the Lincoln Park/Lakeview area on the north side), Robinson put out two editions of *The Paper*, a 1972 tabloid that covered local LGBTQ arts and politics. *The Paper* ran interviews with local counterculture celebrities such as painter Ed Paschke, lesbian singer-songwriter Linda Shear, female impersonators Roby Landers and Wanda Lust, and stage director Gary Tucker, aka "Eleven," whose gender-bending *Godzilla Rainbow Troupe* was then running its hit production of Charles Ludlam and Bill Vehr's outrageous *Turds in Hell*. A copy of *The Paper* on display at Gerber/Hart shows a photo from another landmark of Chicago's fledgling off-Loop theater movement, the Organic Theater's sci-fi epic *Warp!*, featuring André De Shields (who just won a Tony for his performance in the Broadway hit *Hadestown*) as Xander the Un-

conquerable. In 1973, Robinson had relocated to San Francisco, where he became the speechwriter for a camera store owner and activist with aspirations to a political career—Harvey Milk. But by then the city had its first (more or less) regularly published newspaper, the *Chicago Gay Crusader*, edited by activist Michael Bergeron with copy editing supervision by his lover Bill Kelley.

The success of the June 1970 Stonewall anniversary march (no one got arrested!) encouraged members of Gay Liberation to start developing a larger agenda. Inevitably, there were conflicts. Some wanted to merge Gay Lib into a broader leftist coalition; others preferred to keep the focus on LGBTQ issues. GL's women's and Black caucuses went off in their own directions; the Black caucus turned into Third World Gay Revolutionaries, led by Ortez Alderson, who went to prison for destroying draft records in downstate Pontiac. And in September 1970, as reported in a CGL newsletter displayed in the Gerber/Hart exhibit, "Tensions that had been brewing for some weeks finally came to a head . . . with the result that the group suffered a schism and a large number of members announced they were forming a new group—not a new caucus—to be called 'The Chicago Gay Alliance.' . . . Though there . . . were moments of acrimony, the parting was amicable. . . . All present expressed a desire to avoid the infighting of competitive groups in other cities"—a reference to the internecine turf wars that tore at the fabric of New York's gay community around

A dart board bearing the image of Anita Bryant's face, sold in response to her anti-gay campaign © CHASE OLLIS

the same time.

The debut issue of the CGA newsletter in November 1970 explained: "The Chicago Gay Alliance is actively interested in alleviating the ghetto (whether spiritual or physical) conditions of homosexuals, in dispelling the psychological and sociological mythology that has grown up about the subject of homosexuality, in providing referral services to homosexuals, in helping homosexuals 'coming out' develop a sense of pride in who they are and courage in facing the generally hostile outside world, to provide additional social outlets so that homosexuals can meet each other as human beings, to change repressive laws and end police and political harassment, and to improve communications between the homosexual and the heterosexual communities."

In 1971 CGA gave Chicago its first LGBTQ community center, a ramshackle red-brick two-story rented house on an Old Town side street at 171 W. Elm. By 1973 the center had closed for lack of financial support, and CGA ceased operations. But the activism continued. A July 1973 issue of the *Chicago Gay Crusader*

reported that 20th Ward alderman Cliff Kelley, working with a group called Illinois Gays for Legislative Action, had introduced legislation in the Chicago City Council to prohibit discrimination in jobs, housing, and public accommodations based on sexual orientation. It took 15 years for the City Council to finally vote an LGBTQ-inclusive Chicago Human Rights Ordinance into law on December 21, 1988.

The Old Town community center paved the way for today's gleaming Center on Halsted. The *Gay Crusader* was succeeded by the weekly newspaper *GayLife*, founded in 1975 by the late Grant Ford, and then by *Windy City Times*, cofounded in 1985 by Tracy Baim, now publisher of the *Reader*, and still publishing in print and online 34 years later. (I served as editor of both *GayLife* and *WCT* in the '80s.)

The Gerber/Hart exhibit's narrative arc climaxes with a major event from 1977, chronicled in an issue of *GayLife* on display. On June 14 of that year, singer, orange-juice industry spokeswoman . . . and former Miss America Anita Bryant arrived in Chicago for a concert



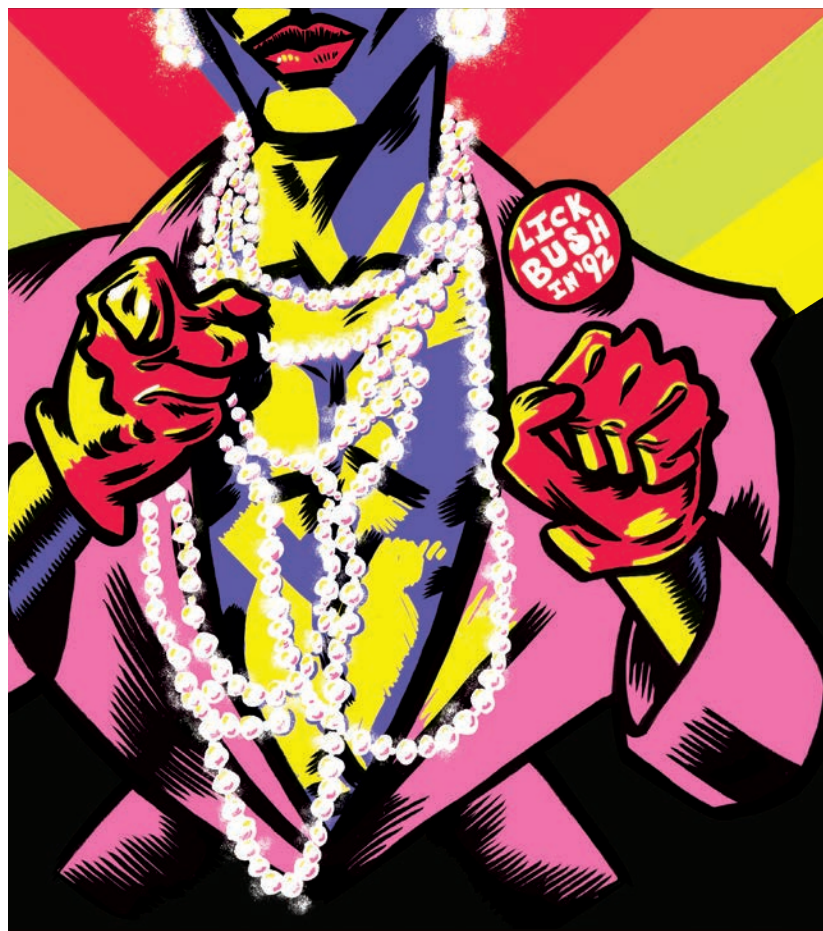
at the historic Medinah Temple at Wabash and Ohio (it's now a Bloomingdale's home furniture store). The concert had been booked before Bryant achieved national notoriety as leader of an anti-LGBTQ initiative in Dade County, Florida. LGBTQ activists, including me, picketed the Bryant concert in Chicago, despite being cautioned by gay establishment leaders that our action would be an embar-

ARTS & CULTURE

assing failure. By then, it was thought, the activist energy of the early 1970s had waned, and the only time queers turned out en masse was for the Pride Parade. But a spontaneous, unexpected turnout of 3,000 to 5,000 (depending on whom you ask) proved the naysayers wrong.

Chicago Gay Liberation, the Chicago Gay Alliance, and the other groups that sprang up in the wake of Stonewall ran out of steam by the end of the decade, but the sense of empowerment they gave the community—and the lessons we learned from their successes and setbacks—guided us into the 1980s, when the AIDS epidemic and the struggle for civil rights at the city, county, and state level drove a new activist spirit. "The flame that burns twice as bright burns half as long," notes Gerber/Hart's James Conley. "As transformative as those groups were, they were temporary. But the impact they had in their short span of existence was monumental and lasting." ■

Special thanks to Amber Lewis at Columbia College Chicago



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Gay sex panic!

Indecent Advances tells the secret history of a time when propositioning another man was acceptable grounds for murder.

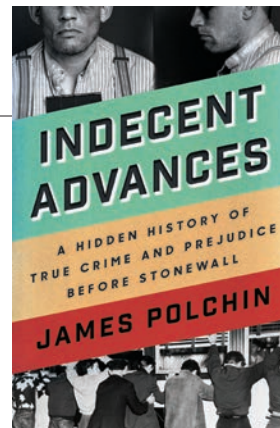
By **DEVLYN CAMP**

T rue-crime storytelling began in Victorian America. Newspapers eager to captivate their audiences relied on the same tools TV shows and podcasts still use today: sex, suggestion, and fright. By the 1920s, true-crime narratives

had begun to incorporate gay panic as well. James Polchin's new book *Indecent Advances: A Hidden History of True Crime and Prejudice Before Stonewall* (Counterpoint Press) explores some of these early writings and the paranoia they inspired—which continues today.

Polchin begins with the 1920 murder of a man named Leeds Vaughn Waters, who was found in his Manhattan hotel room. The case played out on the front pages of the *New York Daily News* for nearly six months. After another man was seen fleeing the crime scene, the press initially speculated about Waters's character. What business would two men have together in a hotel room?

The *Daily News* reported every detail of Waters's life, drawing salacious conclusions from details about his family, college, hobbies, and haunts. A hotel clerk noted that the dead man



RR INDECENT ADVANCES: A HIDDEN HISTORY OF TRUE CRIME AND PREJUDICE BEFORE STONEWALL
By James Polchin (Counterpoint Press)

was “expensively dressed,” while the killer “wore shabby clothes.” After reporting that there were valuables left at the scene of the crime, the paper concluded, “riches and idleness are shown as powerful influences toward his tragic end.” A similar murder just three weeks later barely made the papers, as neither the murderer nor the victim was wealthy. Interclass crime drew an audience.

The Waters case was still selling papers when a witness came forward to report that the victim was seen getting into a cab with a “swarthy,” “dark-skinned man.” Suddenly, a twist. If the valuables were left behind, the paper and police speculated, then perhaps robbery was not the intent. Perhaps the murder was the act of a crazed immigrant. This was the year of Warren G. Harding's presidential campaign on a platform promising a “Return to Normalcy” after World War I. Harding's promise of an America that barred immigrants and denied aid to foreign countries pandered to the nostalgia of voters who longed for a leader who, as the *Daily News* reported, put “America first and Europe afterward.”

Describing the suspect's social class and race incited the same brazen xenophobia as Harding's unexpectedly successful presidential campaign that had included rhetoric against working-class immigrants, criminality, and sexual vice. The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported, “This was clearly the work of a person with an abnormal mind.” When a white sailor from Milwaukee finally came forward as Waters's killer, the media concluded the tale with a final twist: he'd only killed Waters after the wealthy man insulted him. The insult, too ghastly for the paper to print, left their audience to speculate what one man might've said to another in the privacy of a hotel room. The sailor was found not guilty.

Polchin's exploration of 20th-century cases cites detective work based on criminologist Cesare Lombroso's 1876 book *Criminal Man*, which proposed that criminals were born, not made. Polchin argues that sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld's findings in the late 19th century that homosexuals and transgender

people were born queer and not made caused investigators to conflate criminals and queers. As Harding crusaded for social purity, the mainstream press reported what conveniently seemed to be both true and easy to sell. Both the tabloids and the mainstream press sold many papers by featuring stories based on the terrifying suspicion that anyone could be homosexual, and that involvement in this vice would surely get you killed.

Polchin recounts the cases as a series of short thrillers organized by decade through the 20th century. These true stories remain suspenseful episodes of surprising brutality and sensationalized press. Polchin pays scholarly attention to the politics of each era, and tales that were once grisly exploitation of murder victims become tense examinations of journalism and detective work.

Many of the cases Polchin describes have a common thread: defendants justifying their attacks because of “indecent advances.” This, like the details omitted from the newspapers, implied that some queer behavior was too disgusting to define and so vile that some journalists called violent reactions to them “honor slaying.” These reports were how most people learned about homosexuals. The press described certain men as “refined” and “slender,” casting doubts on their masculinity—and implying homosexuality. Journalists noted one man's “young face,” in order to draw contrast between his innocence and the sexual deviance of the man who made those indecent advances. Who is the real victim, they asked: The preyed-upon twentysomething or the dead homosexual? The press, the new Federal Bureau of Investigation, and juries all declared “indecent advances” acceptable justification for murder.

Polchin's book ends with the Stonewall riots and a new era of gay politics in which activists campaigned against flawed journalism and police work, but the “gay panic” defense, as it has come to be called, still exists, used as recently as 2018, in a case in Texas. While fewer gay men are killed in hate crimes today, approximately 28 trans women were murdered in 2018—and all but one were women of color. Under the current presidential administration, which promised its own “return to normalcy,” there are still victims of rhetoric that is less of a dog whistle and more of a call to action against the “indecent.” Polchin's book reminds us that this piece of history, like so many others, repeats itself. **✎**

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THEATER



Jeanette Andrews spent nine months handcrafting impossible bottles for her show.

SAVERIO TRUGLIA

MAGIC

Magic wands for the scientifically minded

Jeanette Andrews has mastered the art of "Bottling the Impossible."

By PAUL DAILING

The envelope arrived about a week after the online request was made. It contained a smaller envelope sealed with black wax stamped "J." Inside were a mirrored coin and a card which, when scratched, gave off a faint whiff of password.

And that's just how you register for tickets for "Bottling the Impossible," the latest show from Chicago magician Jeanette Andrews. Small groups will watch Andrews's performance in an undisclosed location in an intimate, conversational space that the magician designed based on influences ranging from cognition theory to the Rothko Chapel in Houston.

Sending the Eventbrite registration password via scratch-and-sniff (the name of the smell was also printed under a scratch-off section of the card for the olfactorily challenged) was a strategy to create a sense of "mystery, wonder, and anticipation" weeks before the show, Andrews explains, but it was also a wax-sealed pushback against impersonal mailers and evites. You're Andrews's guest, and she wants you there.

"Personally, something very important to me in the work that I do is that every single person feels important and their physically being there really matters," the 29-year-old magician says.

At the center of the performance are four impossible bottles modeled after the works of magician and teacher Harry Eng. But where Eng would somehow fit blocks of wood, packs of cards, locks, and scissors inside small-necked bottles, Andrews, whose work often explores the magical possibilities of smell, fit perfume bottles inside instead.

It took Andrews a year to build them, as Eng's methods died with him in 1996. A research librarian at the Conjuring Arts Research Center, an appointment-only magic archive in New York, found Andrews a line in an old article that gave a clue—just one clue—to Eng's technique. From there it took nine months to puzzle out the rest of how to hand-build four impossible bottles of her own.

"There were times where I was not leaving my house for days," she says. "It was hundreds of hours."

She cracked the case without cracking the glass. Her four impossible bottles—"magic wands for the scientifically minded," to paraphrase one of her magical mentors, Simon Aronson—serve as centerpiece, sculpture, transition between acts, and glass-in-glass symbolism.

It's the same reason Andrews works with her sleeves rolled up, and why she uses clear plastic tables, chairs, and music stands. It's about transparency in magic—not in terms of revealing tricks of the trade, but in terms of the collaboration between amazed and amazer: "It's trying to be a little bit more open about the process in terms of 'You do this and you do this and I'll do this and then something incredible happens at the end.'"

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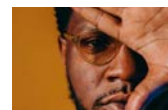
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THEATER

OPENING

RR Ignore the hype
Desire in a Tinier House is a poetic queer love story—despite the shirtless-boy marketing.

I was hesitant as I walked into Pride Films and Plays on Friday night. Though the theater's shows themselves offer powerfully human takes on queer identities, PFP's work is often overshadowed by a shirtless-boy marketing shtick. In terms of queer representation, the image of sweaty, hairless white men is so pervasive and so limiting, a visual language favoring a singular type of transgressive sex and body.

Ryan Oliveira's *Desire in a Tinier House* is another gorgeous example of this dissonance at work. This new show manages to address both the mundane and the sensational embedded in queer love stories. It's a two-man piece on a simple set, a poetic drama that closely follows the long-term relationship between Argentine American Trevin (Rolando Serrano) and Brazilian American Carlos (Carlos Wagener-Sobrero), using magical realism and dystopian tropes to explore the tender risks of falling in love at the end of the world. Its sensibilities defy the typical "Homos! They're just like us!" plotlines and instead embed questions of urgency, violence, and isolation, creating a truly queer domestic space.

This isn't typically something we see onstage, but this play does an excellent job of balancing the intimate—and occasionally claustrophobic—tedium of cohabitation and the visible spectacle of gay affection, beginning with a casual encounter and then unraveling into total surrealism. The show's remaining question is a hell of a lot truer than PFP's marketing strategy: How can something be so instinctual and so fragile all at once? —**KT HAWBAKER** *DESIRE IN A TINIER HOUSE* Through 6/29: Wed-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 3:30 PM, *Pride Arts Center, 4139 N. Broadway, 866-811-4111, pride-filmsandplays.com, \$30-\$40, \$25 students, seniors, and military (not valid Sat).*

RR Handsome, clever, and rich
Lifeline's *Emma* takes some liberties but remains true to the playful spirit of the original.

Phil Timberlake's new dramatization of Jane Austen's 1816 masterpiece, written especially for Lifeline Theatre, is neither a word-for-word transposition from page to stage nor a modernization (à la Amy Heckerling's 1995 movie *Clueless*). Instead, Timberlake and director Elise Kauzlaric (both members of Lifeline's ensemble) find a middle ground that both playfully theatricalizes Austen's tale of "handsome, clever, and rich" Emma Woodhouse and her misguided but comic attempts to find a suitable husband for her likable but considerably less well-connected friend Harriet Smith, yet also remains firmly rooted in the original novel's setting (the fictional English village of Highbury and surrounding estates) and tone (witty, understated, highly literate).

The most interesting element of this production is the decision to have all of the parts in Austen's character-rich novel played by only five actors. Throughout the play performers must transform themselves from one character to another in full view of the audience, often with just a quick change in posture or tone of voice. (Only Emma Sipora Tyler, delightful as the title character, plays a single role throughout.) This has been done before (see Charles Ludlam's two-person multiple-character 1984 tour de farce *The Mystery of Irma Vep*). But Timberlake and Kauzlaric do Ludlam one better by

asking actors to share roles; Mr. Weston, for example, is played over the course of the evening by four different actors. This choice adds a childlike playfulness to the production that in no way takes away from an adaptation that remains true to the spirit, if not the letter, of the original. —**JACK HELBIG** *EMMA* Through 7/14: Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 4 and 8 PM, Sun 4 PM, *Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood, 773-761-4477, lifelinetheatre.com, \$40, \$30 seniors and military, \$20 students.*

RR Firmly anchored
Grace, or the Art of Climbing re-creates the tension and power of rock climbing.

LM Feldman's *Grace, or the Art of Climbing* is a character-driven exploration of the world of competitive rock climbing that seeks to apply a vital rule of the sport to life: there is no shame in falling so long as you never let go.

Alex Molnar stars in the show's midwest premiere, presented by Brown Paper Box Co., as Emm, a young woman who decides to train as a rock climber in the face of her struggle with depression and the deterioration of important relationships in her life. Through her direct address to the audience and both real and imagined interactions with her father, her former partner, her friends, and her trainer, Emm's interiority drives the play forward. Her struggle with heartbreak and disconnection is as poignant as her mission to advance as a climber. But thanks to Molnar's careful approach to delineating Emm's strengths and vulnerabilities and the nuances in her interactions with the highly skilled supporting cast, the script's analogies never feel too overt. When the significance behind her physical and emotional journey becomes fully realized in the play's final moments, the catharsis is stunning and well earned.

Evan Frank's set design represents the climbing gym where Emm trains with enough realism to present a physical challenge for the actors but enough imagination to support the show's whimsical nature. Despite the limitations of a black-box theater, there is authentic tension and power behind Emm's triumphs and failures as a climber thanks to director Erin Shea Brady's staging and the company's meticulous interactions with the space. —**KATIE POWERS** *GRACE, OR THE ART OF CLIMBING* Through 7/7: Fri-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 2:30 PM; also Mon 6/17 and Thu 6/20 and 6/27, 7:30 PM; and Sat 6/22, 2:30 PM, *Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont, 773-327-5252, brownpaperbox.org, \$25.*

Thou art dungeon master
The D&D-Shakespeare mash-up *Love's & Labour's* is raw, messy—and endearing.

Dungeons & Dragons' 45-year history has had its volatile moments. Remember the 1980s moral panic when the role-playing game was widely criticized for encouraging suicide (not to mention witchcraft, murder, rape, homosexuality, insanity, and cannibalism, at least according to the international activist group Bothered About Dungeons and Dragons)? Through all the turmoil, one stereotype has remained constant: D&D players are oddballs and misfits holed up in their parents' basements letting their nerd flags fly free and proud.

Odd's Bodkins, in this original mash-up of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* and D&D, embraces the stereotype unapologetically. Two dungeon masters set two teams in motion, acting out Shakespeare's tale of forestalled love as though stuck in the cellar. With an unabashedly slapdash design—a couple of hand-painted screens, strung-up see-through curtains, and costumes



Desire in a Tinier House © ELIAS RIOS

that most likely came from the performers' closets—this loose, bumpy, self-conscious affair feels very much like a haphazard afterthought following too many hours rolling dice and racking up experience points. It's easy to dismiss the whole thing as a scattershot muddle enacted by a small mob of enthusiastic amateurs who mostly lack the chops to make sense of Elizabethan verse.

Or you could enjoy the unique experience of watching a highly idiosyncratic production steeped in quirky earnestness. The show is raw, candid, and endearing in ways that no amount of professionalism can match. While it well overstays its two-hour running time, the genuinely oddball evening is true to the spirit that has inspired gamers for decades. —**JUSTIN HAYFORD** *LOVE'S & LABOUR'S* Through 6/23: Fri-Sat 7 PM, Sun 2 PM, *Otherworld Theatre, 3914 N. Clark, 773-857-2116, otherworldtheatre.org, suggested donation \$10.*

Home to mama
A great performance from Molly Lyons can't save *Sweet Texas Reckoning*.

Traci Godfrey's dramedy, now in its midwest premiere at Artemisia Theatre directed by Julie Proudfoot, begins with Ellie (Molly Lyons) pulling her secret stash of booze out of a cowboy boot. That perfect snapshot of a gesture hints at the comedy and drama to come, though neither prove integrated enough in the proceedings to enhance each other's impact. Ellie is the small-town, bigoted, and generally drunk mother of Kate (Scottie Caldwell), who has grudgingly returned home to Texas from New York City for a visit. While Ellie hopes this is a chance for Kate to reconnect with childhood flame Alan John (John Wehrman), she gets the shock of her life when she meets Kate's African American wife, Samantha (Anita Kavuu-Ng'ang'a). Framing the first act around these revelations leads to moments of slapstick and camp that mitigate the effects of the emotional arcs to follow in the second act.

As Ellie, Lyons shows off the chops of a veteran actress comfortable sitting in a fallible character with self-defeating habits and a limited worldview. She draws hatred and sympathy from the audience in one breath, punctuating the heaviest moments with dry wit. However, while all four characters evolve in the second act, there aren't enough grounding details for us to invest in them as complex, multifaceted personalities. As the catalyst for the conflict and eventual catharsis,

Samantha deserves more attention to her own story and complicated relationship with her deceased parents and the environment around her. As she says, "parents aren't disposable," whether they are still around or gone too soon. —**MARISSA OBERLANDER** *SWEET TEXAS RECKONING* Through 6/30: Wed-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM, *Den Theatre, 1331 N. Milwaukee, 773-697-3830, artemisiatheatre.org, \$25.*

RR Holy fools
We Are Pussy Riot (or) Everything Is P.R. questions the role of spectators in protest art.

The YouTube video of Pussy Riot's brief provocation—about 48 seconds—at Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior on February 21, 2012, makes their actions seem almost anodyne by comparison to, say, Act Up's protests at Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York City 30 years ago. Yet the price paid by the women arrested that day, two of whom served 21 months in prison for "hooliganism," resonates through Barbara Hammond's kaleidoscopic and chaotic *We Are Pussy Riot (or) Everything Is P.R.*, now in a thrashing, unapologetically messy production at Red Tape under Kate Hendrickson's direction.

Though Hammond's script uses actual trial transcripts (revealing that kangaroos had the run of the court) and other original sources for some of the dialogue, this decidedly isn't a docudrama. It's a pastiche of satirical interludes, historical tidbits about Russian autocrats past and present, and performance art aiming to turn the performers into an updated Orthodox troupe of *yurodivy*, or holy fools, who challenged norms in the name of a higher religious calling.

More is more in Hammond's telling, so we veer from Casey Chapman's oily Vladimir Putin to William Rose II's Sergei, a professor imprisoned for protesting Putin who goes on a life-threatening hunger strike—without the benefit of the international attention Pussy Riot received. (The "P.R." in the title carries a double meaning here.) It's sometimes overwhelming and occasionally hard to track, but this bold scattershot approach ultimately asks us to choose between passive reception of protest-art-as-entertainment and being our own agents of acting up for justice. —**KERRY REID** *WE ARE PUSSY RIOT (OR) EVERYTHING IS P.R.* Through July 6: Fri-Sat 8 PM, Sun 7 PM, Mon 8 PM, *Red Tape Theatre, 4546 N. Western, redtapetheatre.org, free, but reservations suggested.*



Darlin'

FESTIVAL

Scary stories to watch in the dark

Cinepocalypse returns to the Music Box with a fresh crop of horror films and cult classics.

By **CODY CORRALL**

Who said that October was the only month of the year for watching scary movies? Cinepocalypse, now in its third year at the Music Box Theatre, proves that Chicago's biggest horror fans want blood, guts, and terror in June too.

Since 2017, Cinepocalypse has been the city's premier horror and genre film festival. Over the course of eight days, the Music Box will run 40 screenings, including world premieres of feature-length films, short film programs, and special 35-mm and 70-mm screenings of genre staples and forgotten treasures.

"I think there's a punk-rock ethos to genre film," says festival programmer Josh Goldbloom. "The beauty of genre films is that there are no rules."

Goldbloom, a Philadelphia native, started his career programming Awesome Fest, a now-suspended outdoor independent cinema festival, and Bruce Campbell's Horror Film Festival, which evolved into Cinepocalypse. While searching for new festival venues, Goldbloom fell in love with both Chicago and the

Music Box.

"The beauty of the space at the Music Box Theatre is that it's kind of like a cinematic church," says Goldbloom. "It's such a fun playground for a programmer to come into and design a festival. From a format standpoint, 35 mm, 70 mm . . . there's really nothing you can't do."

Goldbloom took the seemingly unlimited screening possibilities at the Music Box and ran with them. What makes a genre fest so exciting, he says, is that there's a breadth of great material out there—you just have to find it and show it to the world.

"Every independent project, if it's put in front of you on paper, looks impossible," says Goldbloom. "I love that filmmakers are able to push those boundaries. Artistically, that's where I kind of connect to genre film. The beauty in it for me is it's the one medium [where] we're able to hear voices from everybody."

As long as it has that DIY spirit and a little bit of grime, a film can find a home at Cinepocalypse—and with this philosophy, Goldbloom was able to fill the festival program with films

CINEPOCALYPSE 2019

Thu 6/13–Thu 6/20, Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport, 773-871-6604, musicboxtheatre.com, \$175 full festival pass, \$125 four-day pass, \$12–\$25 individual screenings.

FILM

from marginalized and first-time directors and lesser-known cult classics.

One of those first-time directors is Glenn Danzig, the horror-punk legend who founded the Misfits and Danzig. The fest opens with *Verotika*, an anthology film that combines Danzig's fascination with the occult and his career in comic book publishing.

"I grew up listening to Danzig and the Misfits," says Goldbloom. "The fact that he's trusting us with his world premiere is pretty goddamn great."

The festival also includes six feature films directed by women—each speaking to different elements of the genre.

Chelsea Stardust's *Satanic Panic* is a dark comedy about a pizza delivery driver who encounters a group of Satanists who want to use her as a virgin sacrifice. Pollyanna McIntosh's *Darlin'* is a bloody coming-of-age film, a sequel of sorts to Lucky McKee's *The Woman*.

Veronika Franz and Severin Fiala's psychological slow burn *The Lodge* features Alicia Silverstone as a woman who is snowed in at a remote cabin with her future stepchildren. Sara Summa's *The Last to See Them* follows an isolated family on the last day of their lives.

In order for horror to maintain relevance beyond demographics, though, filmmakers have to adapt to the times we are living in.

"Horror has always been ahead of the game, going back to George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*," says Goldbloom. "Whether it's political fears, technological fears—horror films often are not what they seem. There's an underlying theme, there's a commentary."

Several films in this year's fest characterize the universal fears that come with living in the modern world—from politics to social media. In *Culture Shock*, Gigi Saul Guerrero's contribution to Blumhouse's *Into the Dark* modern horror anthology series, a young Mexican woman crosses the border to seek the American dream with dire consequences. Caryn Waechter's *Deadcon* is an Internet ghost story told through the eyes of YouTube stars and Instagram influencers.

"I think there is this deep-rooted fear in everybody of what they don't know," says Goldbloom. "Things that are tangible are no longer tangible, they live in the cloud."

While there are truly terrifying socially conscious features, that doesn't mean there isn't fun to be had at Cinepocalypse.

In addition to some of the more lighthearted or comedic horror films, the real showstoppers are the restorations of several cult classics.

Paul Verhoeven's violent sci-fi masterpiece *Total Recall* will be shown in 70 mm with actor Michael Ironside in attendance. Joel Schumacher's *Flatliners*, starring an incredibly 90s-looking Kiefer Sutherland, Kevin Bacon, and Julia Roberts, will also be shown in 70 mm. The festival will premiere a new 4K restoration of Peter Markle's *Hot Dog* . . . *The Movie* for the film's 35th anniversary.

Tammy and the T-Rex, the unconventionally campy sci-fi flick about a girl whose boyfriend gets his brain implanted into a dinosaur, will be shown in its original R-rated gore cut on 35 mm. Michael Lehmann's *Airheads* will close the festival, celebrating its 25th anniversary in a rare 35-mm screening.

"When I look at the festival first and foremost, I look at it as how can we create a good time for everyone?" says Goldbloom. "[At] a lot of film festivals . . . there's pretension, and [pressure] to be this prestigious festival—we can't touch movies like *Airheads*."


For Goldbloom and the rest of the programming team, searching for these rare prints was the most exciting part of the job.

"If you go on Google and type in 'Airheads 35 mm screening,' nothing comes up," says Goldbloom. "You have to move away from the Internet and you go back into reality and track these things down. . . . That's exciting for us because we get to put on these private detective hats and go, 'OK—how the fuck do we go out and find these movies?'"

Putting together this year's fest let Goldbloom and the rest of the team explore real-life film communities and societies across the country. The rare prints of *Airheads* and *Tammy and the T-Rex* were found at the Academy Film Archive, the film preservation and restoration division of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in LA.

"Analog is kind of long forgotten, and so there's a treasure trove of material that's out there waiting to be discovered," says Goldbloom.

Goldbloom advises going to the fest with open eyes (but maybe not an empty stomach). He hopes that there's something for everyone at Cinepocalypse. If nothing else, it fosters a space for Chicago's biggest genre film fans to both look back and look forward—and find some new things to be scared of along the way.

"The beauty in a horror movie is that it taps into a fear that every single person has," says Goldbloom. "Everybody is afraid of something." 

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FILM

PRIDE

Queers behaving badly

The case for accurate LGBTQ representation in the movies

By CODY CORRALL

We are living in a golden age of queer cinema. Now more than ever, films about, starring, and made by queer people are taking up space in Hollywood. But sometimes the discourse surrounding queer representation in media is exhausting—especially since the media play such a powerful role in shaping how marginalized groups are perceived by society.

For much of film history, queer and trans characters have been depicted as villainous. If we overcorrect and show only queer characters who are perfect and polished, they are no longer interesting. True representation is a reflection of our flawed reality. Queer people are messy, we make mistakes, we're problematic, and we do things we regret. Here's a collection of films that feature dynamic queer characters who are anything but squeaky-clean.



Bound



Bad Education

Bound (1996) directed by Lana and Lilly Wachowski

Step aside, *Ocean's 8*—the Wachowski sisters beat you to the punch by more than 20 years with this decadent lesbian heist flick. *Bound* is a masterful debut that's both a thrilling crime film and a sensual tale of queer desire. Violet (Jennifer Tilly) and Corky (Gina Gershon) manipulate everyone around them in order to get what they want—and *Bound* flips the script on tired stereotypes in femme-butch relationships. It's a film that champions the submissive, feminine underdog and introduces a queer femme fatale.

Bad Education (2004) directed by Pedro Almodóvar

It's hard to talk about *Bad Education* without spoiling it—but the film is more rewarding the less you know going into it. After decades of estrangement, first loves Ignacio (a captivating Gael García Bernal) and Enrique (Fele Martínez) reconnect and make a film about the abuse Ignacio experienced in the Catholic Church. But some things just aren't adding up and not everyone is who they say they are. This film is a technical marvel in nearly every aspect—and its nonnarrative style will keep you guessing until the very end.

The Talented Mr. Ripley (1999) directed by Anthony Minghella

When I die, scatter my ashes over Anthony Minghella's idyllic, homoerotic interpretation of Italy. Based on the novel by Patricia Highsmith, *The Talented Mr. Ripley* is fueled by lust, obsession, and fantasy. Tom Ripley (Matt Damon) wants to be with Dickie Greenleaf (Jude Law), but he also wants to be Dickie because Dickie is everything Tom is not: wealthy, carefree, and straight-passing. It's about the toxicity of adoration, the struggle for power in queer relationships, and the ways marginalization can alter both one's sense of reality and one's relationship to one's queer identity.

Can You Ever Forgive Me? (2018) directed by Marielle Heller

A recent addition to the "Be Gay, Do Crime!" canon, *Can You Ever Forgive Me?* was one of the most overlooked films of last year. Lee Israel (Melissa McCarthy) is a broke and lonely lesbian writer who takes better care of her cat than she does of herself. In a desperate attempt for cash, Israel forges letters from famous authors—later with the help of an equally disastrous gay friend (Richard E. Grant). On the surface the film is about petty crime, but underneath is a gut-wrenching portrayal of self-induced isolation.

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16 Shots COURTESY OF SHOWTIME

REVIEW

Code of silence

16 Shots focuses too much on the Laquan McDonald shooting at the expense of McDonald himself.

By ANDREA GRONVALL

Many Americans are extremely reluctant to talk publicly about race, a topic made all the more inflammatory by the lack of honest conversation. Race is the elephant in the room we wish would disappear, even when—or sometimes, perhaps, because—the media are saturated with harrowing stories about hate crimes, civil rights violations, education inequities, voter disenfranchisement, redlining, gentrification, and racial profiling by law enforcement. In addressing the last of these issues in the new Showtime documentary *16 Shots*, about the October 2014 murder of Chicago west-side Black teenager Laquan McDonald and the trial of his killer, white Chicago Police Department officer and Hinsdale native Jason Van Dyke, writer-director Rick Rowley pulls back the curtain on an institution noted for closing ranks. But by focusing primarily on the crime and its explosive aftermath and very little on McDonald himself, the filmmaker doesn't go far enough in his indictment of the CPD's so-

termed “code of silence” because the problem doesn't stop with cover-ups.

16 Shots is not without merit; in its chronicle of justice served it's on the right side of history, getting the word out about events that may not be as familiar to the rest of the country as they are to Chicagoans. Rowley is a director committed to serious issues whose credits include two *Frontline* documentaries for PBS, *Documenting Hate: Charlottesville* (2018) and *Terror in Little Saigon* (2015), and the Oscar-nominated feature *Dirty Wars* (2013), in which he followed the investigative journalist and award-winning author Jeremy Scahill as he reported an exposé of covert U.S. military operations.

Dirty Wars, shot in a gritty, man-on-the-street style, was cowritten, produced, and narrated by Scahill, who is on camera much of the time; that film perforce has a very different dynamic than *16 Shots*, which relies on archival footage and well-lit, artful compositions of various interview subjects to unravel a tangle of malfeasance and tragedy and the

swift responses from several quarters that followed. Chief among the talking heads is local independent journalist Jamie Kalven (also one of the film's producers), who obtained McDonald's autopsy report through the Freedom of Information Act and revealed in a February 2015 article for *Slate* that the actual cause of death was 16 bullets discharged into McDonald, riddling his body from his head to his upper legs, front and back—news that contradicted the official CPD report that the teen was felled by a shot to the chest. Kalven, a soulful eminence grise with a natural screen presence, gives *16 Shots* much of its authority, as well as its (for the most part) measured tone; this is a film that opts for eloquence over stridency.

Which is not to say that it is completely balanced. Although Rowley gives sufficient camera time to community organizers Charlene Carruthers and William Calloway, he gives an inordinate amount to former Fraternal Order of Police spokesman Pat Camden, who right at the top says he's very loyal to the CPD and, although retired, still feels as if he's part of the force; for the rest of the film, he keeps toeing that party line. He's a flack—what else would anyone really expect him to say?

Some of his screen time would have been better spent fleshing out a picture of who Laquan McDonald, the man, not just the murder victim, was. In *16 Shots* there's very little of McDonald's personal history on offer: a few childhood photos of him early in the film, and later on some brief mentions of his troubles with drugs. A stronger sense of who he was can be found in Christy Gutowski and Jeremy Gerner's lengthy December 11, 2015, article for the *Chicago Tribune*, which details his troubled family life, abuse as a ward of the state, problems in school, psychiatric hospitalizations, drug use, and drug dealing. Were the filmmakers concerned that inclusion of this information would disrupt their narrative? To me, this background only makes him more human, more than another shooting statistic.

The fact that the circumstances of his upbringing match those of so many other young Black men in Chicago adds to, not detracts from, a forthright conversation about race. Having some knowledge of McDonald's life makes it all the more horrific when the film

shows former Fraternal Order of Police president Dean Angelo complaining, “I don't see anyone willing to admit that what we have to do is go after that monster, the guy that doesn't belong on the street with you, with my wife, with my daughter. This is not an Ivy League college kid we're talking; we're not talking to an Oxford scholar.” I hate to break it to Mr. Angelo, but I've known several educated, well-heeled drug addicts, most of them white, at least one with a \$50,000-a-year coke habit, and none of them ever got murdered for using. McDonald may have been a drug user and dealer, but might not the greater crime be the cultural and institutional racism that boxes young Black men in, and then sets them up for target practice?

Another problem the film has is its suggestion as if it were fact that Rahm Emanuel decided not to run for reelection due to mounting pressure from outraged community activists. He made his announcement one day before Officer Van Dyke's trial was to start, which was almost three years after the dashcam video showing Van Dyke killing McDonald was released. But let's not forget Rahm's earlier less-than-stellar performance during his two terms in office, as Ben Joravsky has written in these pages. Emanuel is made of Teflon; it's more likely he jumped, rather than was pushed out. Like many a politician he has spent his career yo-yoing between public service and the lucrative corporate private sector, and he already has landed new gigs as a pundit for ABC News and the *Atlantic* and will open a Chicago office for the Wall Street investment firm Centerview Partners LLC.

One last quibble I have is a missing statistic: the number of upstanding, heroic Chicago policemen who lose their lives each year protecting others. That would have helped explain Van Dyke's purported fear of being bodily harmed by the knife-wielding McDonald. It would have put the loyalty that cops have for each other in the context not just of corruption (although corruption certainly does exist), but in the deeper, wider context of men who have one of the most dangerous jobs imaginable and so watch each other's backs. A measure of justice has been served by Van Dyke's conviction for second-degree murder. But no amount of posthumous justice will bring his victim back. Laquan McDonald deserved a better life, and he deserved a better memorial than a dashcam video, or, for that matter, *16 Shots*. **A**

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The Last Black Man in San Francisco

NOW PLAYING

N Being Frank

In some ways, the 90s are the best decade in which to set a complex family tale: many of its conveniences and cultural touchstones remain, and there's no need to navigate the impact of social media and smartphones on domestic life. That's even more convenient when plotlines center around secrets, and *Being Frank* has a big one: Frank (Jim Gaffigan) is balancing two families, neither of which knows the other exists until he's busted by his flannel-wearing musician son—again, it's the 90s—Philip (Logan Miller). Gaffigan works to humanize Frank, but because he never plays it superdark, the character comes across even worse: he rationalizes and conspires rather than coming clean and making amends. For his part, Philip channels his feelings of bitterness and rejection into an attempt to blackmail Frank for out-of-state tuition. But his need for dad's approval is so strong that he goes to great lengths to help keep up the charade—at the expense of his mother, sister, and half family. Sure, there are some laughs in this dark comedy, but frankly it's a story about an ordinary man who lies to the people he loves and teaches his son to do the same. —**JAMIE LUDWIG** 109 min. At *Century Centre*. Visit landmarktheatres.com for showtimes.

RR **N** The Dead Don't Die

Jim Jarmusch's most mainstream effort to date is also his most topical, directing satirical barbs at Trump-era American racism and pending environmental catastrophe. It's also a loving tribute to the work of George A. Romero, another trailblazing American independent filmmaker who mixed affectionate portraits of blue-collar types with angry social critique. Clearly inspired by Romero's "Living Dead" cycle, this horror comedy takes place in a small Pennsylvania town called Centerville (named after the setting of Frank Zappa's 200 *Motels*), where the dead rise from their graves to prey on the living after the earth gets thrown off its rotational axis as a result of American energy companies fracking the polar ice caps. For all his talents, Jarmusch has never excelled at suspense, which is why this never

works as a horror film, yet his laid-back humor remains a charming alternative to the bombast of most American movie comedy. The star-studded ensemble cast—which features numerous Jarmusch veterans, among them Bill Murray, Adam Driver, Chloë Sevigny, Tilda Swinton, Steve Buscemi, and Tom Waits—seems to be having loads of fun, which adds to the ingratiating vibe. —**BEN SACHS** R, 103 min. At *ArcLight*, *Century Centre*, *Century 12* and *CineArts 6*, *River East 21*

N Diamantino

The title character of this Portuguese comedy is a dim-witted soccer star who likes to imagine his opponents on the field are giant puppies. After he fails to make a penalty kick and loses the World Cup for Portugal, he decides to redeem himself by adopting an African refugee, unaware that the "boy" is actually an undercover female government agent investigating his family's ties to a money-laundering operation. Meanwhile, Diamantino's twin sisters sell out the hero to a far-right organization with designs of getting Portugal to leave the EU. There are also developments involving cloning, experimental psychotherapy, and a motorcycle-riding nun. The plot may suggest an early Pedro Almodóvar farce, but directors Gabriel Abrantes and Daniel Schmidt (who previously made the underground feature *Palaces of Pity*) avoid big laughs, underplaying everything with the aim of making viewers marvel at how weird it all is. The strategy smacks of false modesty, since the film isn't really all that weird—it's too cannily plotted and self-aware to achieve the sort of gonzo energy one associates with genuine cult items. In Portuguese with subtitles. —**BEN SACHS** 92 min. *Fri 6/14, 6 PM; Sat 6/15, 7:45 PM; Sun 6/16, 3 PM; Mon 6/17, 8:15 PM; Tue 6/18, 8:15 PM; Wed 6/19, 7:45 PM; and Thu 6/20, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

Eight Men Out

This 1988 feature recounts the 1919 "Black Sox" scandal, in which eight members of the Chicago White Sox were persuaded by gamblers to throw the World Series to the Cincinnati Reds. Baseball fans might find this marginally absorbing; for anyone else it's as conscientious

and stylistically pedestrian as director John Sayles's other films, and a mite overlong to boot. Sayles seems more comfortable with the ballplayers than with the gangsters; his handling of the narrative is more dutiful than inspired. On the whole this is well-intentioned to the point of tedium. Sayles adapted Eliot Asinof's 1963 book of the same title; the competent cast includes John Cusack, Clifton James, Michael Lerner, Christopher Lloyd, John Mahoney, Charlie Sheen, David Strathairn, D.B. Sweeney, Richard Edson, Kevin Tighe, Barbara Garrick, Studs Terkel enjoying himself as journalist Hugh Fullerton, and Sayles himself playing Fullerton's pal Ring Lardner. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** PG, 119 min. *Wed 6/19, 7:30 PM. Beverly Arts Center*

N 5B

Not all heroes wear capes—some, in fact, wear scrubs. This straightforward documentary illuminates the history of the nation's first AIDS ward, which opened at San Francisco General Hospital in 1983, when the AIDS crisis was in the beginning stages. Its heroes are the medical workers—specifically several nurses and a few dedicated volunteers—who championed standards of care that prioritized compassion toward the patients. Through interviews with staff, patients, and activists, as well as visceral film and photographic documentation, viewers, especially those who may not remember or may not have even been alive at the time, will get a sense of the heartbreak and tenacity that defined a generation. Helmed by *Crash* director Paul Haggis and documentary filmmaker Dan Krauss, its simplicity is in service of its effectiveness. —**KATHLEEN SACHS** 82 min. *Block 37, Century 12 and CineArts 6*

RR High Life

One reason why every Claire Denis film requires multiple viewings to reveal its true nature is that the French writer-director refuses to repeat herself—her movies may share certain ideas and stylistic tendencies, but each one is elusive in its own way. This English-language sci-fi drama is no exception. The plot moves freely between sequences of an astronaut (Robert Pattinson) caring for a baby girl on an empty space station, flashbacks depicting the astronaut's relationships with his crewmates (who are seen dead at the beginning of the film), and flashes of the characters' lives on earth. As usual Denis circles around her themes (in this case, imprisonment, sexuality, and parenthood) without connecting them in a readily legible manner, forcing viewers to sculpt the poetic associations into a coherent narrative shape. Yet those associations are exciting, beguiling, and sometimes quite moving. Not surprisingly, Denis cites Andrei Tarkovsky's *Solaris* (1972) as one of the science-fiction films that inspired her. With Juliette Binoche, Mia Goth, and André Benjamin. —**BEN SACHS** R, 110 min. *Fri 6/14, 2 and 6 PM; Sat 6/15, 8 PM; Sun 6/16, 3 PM; Mon 6/17, 6 PM; Wed 6/19, 8:15 PM; Thu 6/20, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

RR **N** The Last Black Man in San Francisco

Lifelong San Francisco resident Jimmie Fails plays a fictionalized version of himself in Joe Talbot's ambitious debut feature, which takes a poetic view of gentrification, underemployment, and other issues facing the city's Black population. The episodic story centers on Fails's efforts to rehabilitate an old mansion that once belonged to his grandfather. When the home's most recent owners move out, Fails breaks in with his best friend (an aspiring playwright who works in a fish

market), and the two begin squatting there, symbolically reclaiming a neighborhood that once was predominantly Black but has long since priced out most of its Black residents. Talbot structures the film like a piece of music; this proceeds gracefully from one observation to the next, emphasizing the characters' way of life over narrative development. (The diverse soundtrack, which ranges from contemporary classical to Joni Mitchell, adds greatly to the film's affecting impact.) It sometimes feels as if Talbot is overplaying his hand—his use of slow-motion, for instance, feels needlessly arty—but one can't deny the seriousness of his concerns or his emotional investment in the material. With Jonathan Majors, Mike Epps, and Danny Glover. —**BEN SACHS** R, 120 min. *Century Centre, Century 12 and CineArts 6*

RR **N** Late Night

Emma Thompson and Mindy Kaling shine in this comedy about Katherine Newbury (Thompson)—the first and only woman, in this fictional world, to helm a long-running late-night network talk show—and her unlikely protege, Molly Patel (Kaling), a former chemical-plant employee who's yearned to work in comedy. When Katherine is set to be replaced by a young male comedian, she and her team, among them Molly (hired to fill a quota) and several white male writers who resent her presence, set out to shake things up. Kaling wrote the script, and Nisha Ganatra (*Chutney Popcorn*) directed. Kaling's biggest flaw as a creator is a wild unevenness that mars even her best work, but her undeniable charisma and tenacious vulnerability, combined with her prodigious sense of humor, compensate for that. Heightened by an impressive performance from Thompson, it's a fun movie that tackles a variety of issues, including sexism in the workplace, with panache. With John Lithgow, Hugh Dancy, and Amy Ryan. —**KATHLEEN SACHS** R, 102 min. *Century 12 and CineArts 6, City North 14, Lake Theatre, River East 21*

Love, Simon

This beguiling romantic comedy offers a fresh take on the familiar premise of a high-schooler trying to fit in. Nick Robinson (*Jurassic World*) plays the title character, a well-adjusted senior with a great family and wonderful friends, none of who suspect that he's gay. After his online courtship of another closeted student is discovered by the class loudmouth (Logan Miller), Simon hopes to avoid being outed by welcoming this character into his social circle and even fixing him up with a lovely but vulnerable pal (Alexandra Shipp). Greg Berlanti directed, adapting Becky Albertalli's young adult novel *Simon vs. The Homo Sapiens Agenda*. —**ANDREA GRONVALL** PG-13, 110 min. *Outdoor screening. Tue 6/18, 6:30 PM. Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park* **FREE**

RR Loving Vincent

In 2011, Gregory White Smith and Steven Naifeh published *Van Gogh: The Life*, an acclaimed biography arguing, among other things, that the Dutch painter's gunshot death in July 1890, in the French town of Auvers-sur-Oise, was no suicide, as scholars had agreed for years, but homicide at the hands of a local bully. *Loving Vincent*, the first Van Gogh biopic since the homicide theory surfaced, dives into the mystery surrounding the painter's death. This extraordinary animation, created by a team of 115 artists who hand-painted every one of its 65,000 frames, brings to life many of the people Van Gogh painted during his last years in France—foremost among them young Armand Roulin, whose family befriended Van Gogh during his yearlong stay in Arles. One year after the artist's death, Armand is recruited by

FILM



The Dead Don't Die

his father, Joseph, to track down Van Gogh's brother, Theo, and place in his hands an unsent letter from Vincent that has just turned up. Armand's journey leads him to Paris, where he learns that Theo has died too, and then to nearby Auvers, where he questions the townspeople about Vincent and, from their various colored memories, tries to reconstruct how and why the artist died. —**J.R. JONES** *PG-13, 95 min. Showing as a double feature with Loving Vincent: The Impossible Dream (see separate listing). Fri 6/14, 2 PM; Sat 6/15, 2 PM; and Tue 6/18, 6:30 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

Old School

"I probably laughed harder at this collection of college slapstick sketches than I ever have at a film I didn't really like," Dave Kehr once wrote in this paper about *Animal House*, and that's pretty much my reaction to *Old School* (2003). Directed, cowritten, and coproduced by Todd Phillips, this cheerfully vulgar low-comedy tale of three out-of-sorts 30ish blowhards (Luke Wilson, Will Ferrell, Vince Vaughn) trying to rekindle the spark of their college days by setting up a frat house starts out silly, gets sillier by the minute, and frequently had me and most of the people around me in stitches. Don't expect clever plotting or witty dialogue, but credit Phillips's easy way with actors and his sharp sense of how to use or avoid pathos. (The film also shows the paw prints of *Animal House* producer Ivan Reitman.) With Ellen Pompeo, Juliette Lewis, Leah Remini, and Jeremy Piven. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** *R, 91 min. Tue 6/18-Thu 6/20, 10:30 PM. Logan*

The Proposal

Questions of who can own and access another person's artwork, literally and figuratively, as well as whether art can be owned in any sense, drive conceptual artist and writer Jill Magid's dreamlike account of artistic possession and obsession. She wants to access the professional archives of the late Mexican architect Luis Barragán for an exhibition she's mounting, but another woman, whose husband bought the massive collection and the rights to Barragán's work purportedly as an engagement gift for her, declines Magid's repeated requests through honeyed letters they exchange over three years. The film itself is lush and lovingly photographed, and the premise of two women fighting for the heart of an unknowable man stirs an emotional minefield. "I imagine the archive is her lover, held tightly, to the point of being smothered," Magid says of her rival in a measured voice-over that controls the narrative. Meanwhile, Magid sleeps in a room at Barragán's home in Mexico that she is assured all of his girlfriends used; she finds out which cookies he liked best and consumes them. Ultimately, she makes an offer to the other woman that is, in my mind and to many

others who reported on the act, insincere, self-serving, and odious. Yet this work also is a fine example of how one can dislike the filmmaker and like the film. Magid, similar to the architect she reveres, knows the power of a good story and how to poetically construct one. —**LEAH PICKETT** *86 min. Fri 6/14, 4:15 and 8:15 PM; Sat 6/15, 5:15 PM; Sun 6/16, 5 PM; Mon 6/17, 6 PM; and Wed 6/19, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

RR Rosetta

From its opening seconds, this feature from Belgian brothers Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne (*La Promesse*), winner of the Palme d'Or at the 1999 Cannes film festival, has to be the most visceral filmgoing experience of the 90s, including all of Hollywood's explosions and special-effects extravaganzas. It concerns the desperate efforts of the 18-year-old title heroine (played by Émilie Dequenne, a remarkable nonprofessional), who lives in a trailer park with her alcoholic mother and suffers from stomach cramps, to find a steady job; she particularly hopes to work at a waffle stand whose current employee has romantic designs on her. This may sound like the grimmest sort of neorealism, but the Dardennes keep the story so ruthlessly unsentimental and physical it would be a disservice to describe it as neo anything. You feel it in your nervous system before you get a chance to reflect on its meaning—it's almost as if the Dardennes were intent on converting an immediate experience of the contemporary world into a breathless theme-park ride—and it makes just about every other form of movie "realism" look like trivial escapism. It's certainly not devoid of psychological nuance either, and it's had such an impact in Belgium that a wage law for teenagers, which passed in November 1999, is known as "the Rosetta plan." In French with subtitles. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** *R, 95 min. Screening in conjunction with the publication of Luc Dardenne's journals. University of Chicago professor Robert B. Pippin leads a postscreening discussion. Sun 6/16, 2 PM. Facets Cinematheque* [FREE](#)

N Shaft

The franchise that began with Gordon Parks's groundbreaking 1971 blaxploitation hit starring Richard Roundtree as ultracool private detective John Shaft gets an appealing reboot in this lively action comedy that unites three generations of NYC crime fighters out to bust some murderous drug dealers and settle some personal scores. Roundtree, now perhaps one of the hippest graybeards ever, resurfaces in the last third of the film, after his son, the louche but street-smart John Shaft II (Samuel L. Jackson, who starred in John Singleton's 2000 version), links up with his own estranged offspring, JJ, a tight-assed FBI data analyst (Jessie T. Usher), to solve the murder of JJ's best friend and permanently ➔

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FILM

➔ retire the narcotics kingpin (Isaach De Bankolé) who decades ago put out a contract on Shaft II. All the actors are game for the tongue-in-cheek screenplay by Kenya Barris (*Girls Trip*, TV's *Black-ish*) and Alex Barnow (TV's *Family Guy*, *The Goldbergs*), with Jackson and Usher notably riffing on mismatched-cop-buddies tropes. Nobody milks laughs from profanity and innuendo as knowingly as Jackson, and the frequently not-PC ethnic, filmic, and pop culture references pile up so quickly that one joke often steps on another—which is fine, because the sketchy plot is really just a coat peg on which to hang all the rest. But for a breezy summer movie, this one's hard to beat; hopefully director Tim Story (the *Ride Along* and *Think Like a Man* franchises) will be back for the next installment. With Regina Hall, Alexandra Shipp, Matt Lauria, and Luna Lauren Velez. —**ANDREA GRONVALL R**, 111 min. *Arclight*, *Century 12* and *CineArts 6*, *Chatham 14*, *Cicero Showplace 14*, *City North 14*, *Ford City*, *River East 21*, *Showplace 14* *Galewood Crossings*, *Showplace ICON*, *Webster Place 11*

The Spanish Prisoner

As in *House of Games*, David Mamet tries his hand at a Hitchcockian thriller, this time exploring the chase film rather than obsessive behavior. The effect is altogether lighter—a soufflé that periodically threatens to float away. Campbell Scott plays the inventor of something called the “Process” (Mamet’s MacGuffin), a top-secret formula his company expects to clean up on. About the time that he’s befriended by a mysterious businessman (Steve Martin), he starts to worry that he might be cheated out of a share of the profits. The conspiracies come fast and thick, but because Mamet’s interest—male gamesmanship and competition—is pretty distant from Hitchcock’s usual turf, the spectator winds up feeling less invested in the plot and characters. But this 1998 feature is fun if you’re looking mainly for light entertainment. With Ben Gazzara, Rebecca Pidgeon, and Ricky Jay. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM PG**, 110 min. 35 mm. *Sat 6/15, 3 PM* and *Tue 6/18, 6 PM*. *Gene Siskel Film Center*

RR **N** Worlds of Ursula K. Le Guin

This 2018 American documentary by Arwen Curry offers a pensive reflection on the life, work, and philosophy of American novelist Ursula K. Le Guin. Intertwining interviews with notable fantasy, science fiction, and fiction writers such as Neil Gaiman, David Mitchell, and Michael Chabon, the film exhibits an orchestral quality: it’s less interested in a clear narrative arc than in providing an impression of a lifetime, accented by original footage of Le Guin before her death in 2018. It becomes rapidly clear just how universal Le Guin’s work was as the film explores its incredible ideological breadth, ranging from her writing inspired by anarchist utopias to her reckoning with the atrocities committed against Native peoples by white folks to the eventual emergence of feminism in the Earthsea series she is perhaps best known for. In the documentary, Le Guin describes her work as one of “holding doors or windows open” for people; this film does just that, opening an intimate window onto the tender interiority and expansive curiosity of Le Guin’s mind. —**NINA LI COOMES 69 min.** *Science-fiction author and UIC professor Mary Anne Mohanraj participates in a panel discussion at the Saturday screening and leads an audience discussion at the Wednesday screening. Sat 6/15, 5:15 PM* and *Wed 6/19, 6 PM*. *Gene Siskel Film Center*

ALSO PLAYING

Dear Fredy

Rubi Gat directed this 2017 Israeli documentary about Fredy Hirsch, a gay Jewish POW who was placed in charge of the children in the concentration camps he was held in during World War II. In English and subtitled Hebrew and Czech. 74 min. *Free with museum admission, but RSVP required at ilholocaustmuseum.org. Thu 6/20, 6:30 PM*. *Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center*

The Forcing

Lydia Moyer directed this experimental work about the “turbulence of contemporary American life.” 46 min. *Showing with Latham Zearfoss’s short video White Balance. Moyer and Zearfoss attend the screening. Sat 6/15, 7 PM*. *Nightingale*

Free Fall

Stephan Lacant directed this 2013 German drama about a straight married police officer who falls for his gay colleague. In German with subtitles. 100 min. *Fri 6/14, 7 PM*. *Chicago Filmmakers*

Golden Sting

Radim Spacek directed this Czech Republic/Slovak drama about the intersection of a Czech basketball team and post-World War II eastern-European history. In Czech with subtitles. 106 min. *Sun 6/16, 5:15 PM* and *Mon 6/17, 7:45 PM*. *Gene Siskel Film Center*

Films by Laura Harrison and Benjamin Capps

A program of dark-themed animated shorts (2013-’18) by Benjamin Capps and Laura Harrison. 62 min. *Capps and Harrison attend the screening. Fri 6/14, 7:30 PM*. *Nightingale*

Heavy Water

A 2015 surfing documentary directed by Michael Oblowitz. 84 min. *City North 14* and *River East 21*

Jan Palach

A dramatization of the final months of a young philosophy student who became a national hero when he immolated himself in protest of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Robert Sedláček directed. In Czech with subtitles. 124 min. *Fri 6/14, 8 PM*, and *Thu 6/20, 7:45 PM*. *Gene Siskel Film Center*

The Lavender Scare

Josh Howard directed this 2017 documentary about President Eisenhower’s directive to fire all gay and lesbian individuals in government employ, and the lasting ramifications of that order. 77 min. *Followed by a discussion. Sat 6/15, 2 PM*. *Chicago Cultural Center FREE*

Loving Vincent: The Impossible Dream

Miki Wecl directed this documentary about the making of the 2017 animated film *Loving Vincent*. 60 min. *Showing as a double feature with Loving Vincent (see separate listing). Fri 6/14, 2 PM; Sat 6/15, 2 PM; and Tue 6/18, 6:30 PM*. *Gene Siskel Film Center*

N Men in Black: International

Chris Hemsworth and Tessa Thompson star as two Men in Black agents who must find a spy in the organization of unwanted extraterrestrial hunters. F. Gary Gray

Worlds of Ursula K. Le Guin



directed this entry in the sci-fi franchise. *PG-13*, *Block 37*, *Arclight*, *Century 12* and *CineArts 6*, *Chatham 14*, *City North 14*, *Ford City*, *Lake Theatre*, *Navy Pier IMAX*, *River East 21*, *Showplace 14* *Galewood Crossings*, *Showplace ICON*, 600 N. Michigan, *Webster Place 11*

The Monster

Lon Chaney stars in this 1925 silent comedy-horror film about odd happenings at a mental sanitarium. Roland West directed. 86 min. *Outdoor screening. Echo Haus provides live accompaniment. Wed 6/19, 8:30 PM*. *Comfort Station FREE*

N Murder Mystery

An American police officer and his wife (Adam Sandler and Jennifer Aniston) become suspects in the murder of a billionaire while on vacation in Europe. Kyle Newachek directed this comedy-mystery film. *PG-13*

N No Small Matter

A documentary that explores the benefits of early childhood education. Daniel Alpert, Greg Jacobs, and Jon Siskel directed. 74 min. *The filmmakers attend the screening. Thu 6/20, 8:15 PM*. *Gene Siskel Film Center*

N NU Docs Program 3: Structures

A screening of documentary shorts by students in Northwestern’s MFA program, with work by Will Klein, Jiayu Yang, Ziyi Yang, and Jessica Scott. 65 min. *The filmmakers attend the screening. Preceded by a reception at 6:15 PM. Fri 6/14, 7 PM*. *Northwestern University Block Museum of Art FREE*

One of Our Aircraft Is Missing

One of Michael Powell’s highly individualist wartime propaganda films (*The Lion Has Wings*, *The Invaders*, *The Volunteer*). A British bomber crashes behind enemy lines, and the crew tries to make it back to England with the help of the Dutch resistance (1942). With Godfrey Tearle, Eric Portman, and Hugh Williams. —**DAVE KEHR 102 min.** 35 mm archival print. *Preceded by Owen Crump’s 1952 short They Fly Through the Air (35 mm). Wed 6/19, 7:30 PM*. *Northeastern Illinois University*

N Passing Summer

Sungkyu Cho directed this South Korean film about the romances of four people staying at a guesthouse. In Korean with subtitles. 93 min. *Wed 6/19, 6:30 PM*. *Chicago Cultural Center FREE*

Pose

A screening of episodes of the recent FX television series *Pose* will be followed by a discussion and a vogue workshop. *Fri 6/14, 6 PM*. *Stony Island Arts Bank FREE*

The Sandlot

A comedy set in 1962, about a new boy in town (Tom Guiry) who joins a baseball team. The team’s leader (Mike Vitar) becomes a legend after facing down a “beast” that lurks in a yard behind left field. The grown-ups in this picture include Karen Allen and James Earl Jones; David Mickey Evans directed this 1993 feature from a script he coauthored with Robert Gunter. *PG, 101 min. Fri 6/14-Mon 6/17, 11 PM*. *Logan*

N Say My Name

Jay Stern directed this UK comedy about a couple’s attempts to regain their belongings after they are robbed during a one-night stand. 83 min. *Facets Cinematheque*

A Singing Stream: A Black Family Chronicle

A documentary (1986) about a family of gospel singers from North Carolina and their cross-generational adjustments to success and change; Tom Davenport directed. 57 min. *Sat 6/15, 2 PM*. *DuSable Museum of African American History*

Films by JP Somersaulter, Lillian Somersaulter Moats, and Michael Moats

A program of animated shorts (1973-’89) by JP Somersaulter, Lillian Somersaulter Moats, and Michael Moats. 71 min. 16 mm. *The filmmakers attend the screening. Sat 6/15, 7 PM*. *Chicago Filmmakers*

Tongues Untied

Marlon Riggs’s 1989 documentary/essay film about gay Black male identity features a mixture of rap, poetry, song, dance, humor, and personal testimony. 55 min. *Sun 6/16, 2 PM*. *Stony Island Arts Bank FREE*

The Unicorn

A documentary about musician Peter Grudzien, who recorded the first openly gay country album. Isabelle Dupuis and Tim Geraghty directed. 92 min. *Dupuis and Geraghty attend the Friday and Saturday screenings. Fri 6/14, 7 and 9 PM; Sat 6/15, 3, 5, 7, and 9 PM; Sun 6/16, 7 PM; and Mon 6/17-Thu 6/20, 7 and 9 PM*. *Facets Cinematheque*



Lucy Stoole: a good look for Chicago

The city's beloved drag mom uses a favorite vintage store to make a point about showing up for your community.

Written BY ARTHUR E. HAYNES II

Photography BY DARIUS GRIFFIN

Shot AT SEEK VINTAGE, 1433 W. CHICAGO

the
TRIBE



Gliding down the sidewalk in a neon-green wig, gold ball gown, and heels, Lucy Stoole cuts through the gray and gloom of a rainy May afternoon like a knife. As she gets closer, you can see what's perhaps the most notable piece of her ensemble—the one on her face. She wears a robust, immaculately trimmed black beard.

Lucy isn't the first drag queen to do so, of course—in the 1970s, for instance, a flamboyant performer known as the Bearded Lady regularly appeared at a River North club called Dugan's Bistro—but bearded queens have never been more than a small minority. Lucy has had to overcome a great deal of resistance, because many drag fans and performers are reluctant to accept what they see as a departure from female impersonation. RuPaul famously doesn't allow bearded queens on *RuPaul's Drag Race*.

Lucy is no stranger to resistance, though. "A lot of my drag persona has come from feeling somewhat discarded, or being on the outside," she says. Despite the obstacles and naysayers, she's amassed a devoted following. Born Tyrell Huey in Kansas City, Kansas, in 1985, she's now one of Chicago's best-known queens.

As she speaks, Lucy is in a vintage shop, surrounded by clothes, jewelry, and furniture that were once cast aside and have been given new life. The symbolism isn't lost on her.

"I took what was left for me in the drag community and turned it into something beautiful," she says. "And that's kind of what you can do with a lot of the items in this store—take it and turn it into something completely different."

The store is Seek Vintage in Noble Square, and Lucy has been shopping there since it opened in 2010. Owner Chris Hunt is an old friend of hers, and for a couple years he ➔

THE SECOND CITY'S SALUTE TO PRIDE (NOT SAFE FOR WERK)

A new all-queer variety show hosted by Lucy Stoole. Through 6/26: Tue-Wed 8 PM, Up Comedy Club at Second City, 230 W. North, \$26-\$36, 18+

READER PRIDE BLOCK PARTY

Live music, DJ sets, and more—including Lucy Stoole and an intergenerational cast of queens and kings teaching a drag history lesson. Sun 6/23, 1-9 PM, Marz Community Brewing, 3630 S. Iron, \$10, all ages

CHICAGO IS A DRAG FESTIVAL

With Lucy Stoole, Raja, Candis Cayne, Spikey Van Dykey, and others. Fri 6/28, 4-11 PM, Cheetah Gym parking lot, 5238 N. Clark, \$25, 21+

continued from 27

was even her boss. In 2016 and '17, before drag paid her bills, Lucy picked up shifts at Seek—and she isn't the only one who's knocked on the shop's door in times of need.

"Not only just being, like, one of the best clothing shops in the city, it has also helped a lot of the girls through various sorts of whatever is happening in their life," Lucy says. "If it was an outfit or if it was being able to work a shift, Seek is that little spot in the community."

Lucy's face still lights up when she walks in the door. It's hard to say what excites her more—the inventory on the wall or the sight of Hunt, who's already pouring celebratory shots of whiskey. As Lucy tours the store, inspecting his newest additions, the two of them crack jokes and occasionally stop to examine a piece.

Lucy moved here from Pella, a town of about 10,000 people in Iowa, a year after her first trip to Chicago. On that initial visit, back in 2006, she stayed with one of her former fraternity brothers, who was performing as a drag queen named Sophia Sapphire. That experience set Tyrell Huey on the path to becoming Lucy Stoodle.

"He was doing drag up here and living his fabulous gay life, and I just remember seeing that community and seeing something I had never seen before in it," Lucy recalls.

Though Lucy began performing not long after she arrived here, her drag persona wasn't yet fully formed. Her time with Hunt at Seek, both as a customer and as an employee, would eventually mold her into the queen that fans recognize today, but in 2007, she began with a different persona—Estuary Palomino. Looking back, Lucy sees those early efforts as uninspired; she was going through the motions, just starting out, doing what she thought she was supposed to do. Back then she didn't wear her beard, and her persona didn't capture her unique style and personality—which she describes as "filthy glamour."

"It goes from having those very glamorous moments to, you know, sometimes just wearing bondage looks and stuff," she says. "But that's all a part of what encompasses what Lucy Stoodle is in drag."

Lucy refined that style at Seek—and found the space necessary to rediscover herself. The community nurtured by the shop gave her

the support she needed to grow after years of being shut out and torn down by people unable or unwilling to see her beauty. "Chris pushed me to be even more creative in my drag and to sometimes see things that I might not go for—looks that I might not think would resonate with Lucy that, um, ended up turning into her."

Tyrell Huey's journey to the filthy glam of Lucy Stoodle has helped others reconnect with the beauty in themselves—especially Black and Brown queer folks in Chicago. To many of them, Lucy is an icon, a role model, and a maternal figure—a "drag mom." She also uses the platform she's built in drag to address issues that matter to her community. Lucy has gotten loud about the legalization of cannabis, about the steep ticket prices and straight headliners at the new Pride in the Park event, and about the persistent problem of racism in Boystown—she's been a public part of the backlash against Progress Bar's recent attempt to ban rap.

As a very visible Black, bearded queen, Lucy has helped normalize queens who might otherwise have been confined to the margins.



DARIUS GRIFFIN

She's one of several regular hosts at Smart Bar's weekly Queen! parties, which since 2012 have been celebrating house music and drag—and bringing in crowds that span all sorts of demographics.

"That's been the dopest thing, to see that this entire drag community and some of the queer community has been changed by some of the stuff that I've done," Lucy says.

She knows she owes a lot to Seek, where some of Lucy's first looks originated. She still plucks from the racks from time to time, looking for something to breathe new life into. "I just bought a beautiful Christian Dior jacket from here that's part of my drag persona now," she says. "I love being able to bring vintage stuff into the looks that I do. So this is like the perfect place for it."

Lucy is a full-time drag queen these days, and she's always on the move, whether DJing, bartending, hosting, or performing. Her schedule never seems to let up, and for Pride Month she's even busier than usual. On top of the three remaining installments of Queen! in June, she has several big events lined up. On Friday, June 28, she'll appear at the Chicago Is a Drag Festival, and every Tuesday and Wednesday night she'll host the new all-queer variety show *The Second City's Salute to Pride (Not Safe for WERK)*. Last but not least, on Sunday, June 23, she'll emcee a variety show about the history of Chicago drag as part of the Reader's first-ever Pride Block Party. 🏳️‍🌈



Lucy Stoodle and Seek Vintage owner Chris Hunt. DARIUS GRIFFIN

 @TheTRiibe

The Block Beat multimedia series is a collaboration with the TRiibe (thetriibe.com) that roots Chicago musicians in places and neighborhoods that matter to them. Video accompanies this story at chicagoreader.com.

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IN ROTATION



Jennifer Williams drew this T-shirt of defunct Swiss postpunk band Kleenex. @JENNIFER WILLIAMS

SALEM COLLO-JULIN Reader listings coordinator

Footage of Judas Priest smacking the south side around on their 1981 World Wide Blitz Tour I often pass the former site of the International Amphitheatre at 42nd and Halsted. I was too young to see Judas Priest rocking the arena in 1981, but a wonderful YouTuber uploaded digitized eight-millimeter footage of this show, and though it's a little VHS shaky, it's still a treat. I love the great version of "Victim of Changes," which ends with an absolutely inspired Halford high-note scream.

Jennifer Williams's hand-drawn T-shirts and totes Jennifer Williams is a Philadelphia artist who loves musicians. She's done drawings of bands she's imagined, like the all-girl Raven Call ("the greatest rock & roll band in the tri-state area"), and her newest pieces are hand-drawn shirts and bags with loving portraits of bands we know. She imagines Van Halen happily hanging out on roller skates or Waylon Jennings with a cigarette and a rose. Even FKA Twigs and Swiss postpunks Kleenex get the Jennifer Williams treatment.

WZRD's playlist tweets Our local free-form radio station, WZRD 88.3 FM, is a reliable way to discover music both weirdo and profound. It has a Twitter account devoted to tweeting out playlists, and it sometimes just posts names of songs and acts, with no links, hashtags, or emoji, making for concrete tweet poetry. This feed ensures that I'll get the occasional nudge to pull out that Amon Duul II record or research Amadou Balaké. It's like getting suggestions from a gentle friend with a better record collection than you.

A Reader staffer shares three musical obsessions, then asks someone (who asks someone else) to take a turn.

MIKE MCPADDEN Author of *Teen Movie Hell* and *Heavy Metal Movies*

The ungodly live overwhelm of Metz I'm late to Canadian noise lords Metz. That shame is mine, as is the danger to my eardrums going forward. Last month, I got caught up when they opened for Mudhoney. In four decades of concert consumption, I've experienced some pantheon-great power trios at peak potency—Rush in '84, Hüsker Dü in '85, Big Black in '87, Nirvana in '91. Alas, they all sounded puny next to the sense-annihilating sonic bombast I just barely survived at Lincoln Hall.



Toronto noise-rock band Metz @NICHOLAS SAYERS

Pussy Galore, *Exile on Main St.* (1986) The scales fell from my brain in early 1987 when I pressed play on a cassette copy of a cassette copy of Pussy Galore's cassette-only cover of the Rolling Stones' masterwork. I was still in my first year of college, but Julia Cafritz's introductory snarl alone—"Hello, I hate your fucking guts! I hate this fucking machine! I'm gonna make my own fucking music!"—hit me like an instant graduation to beautiful new realms of ugly possibilities.

The Pirate Movie: *The Original Soundtrack From the Motion Picture* (1982) Among early-80s movie-musical soundtracks, you already know the biggest (*Xanadu*, *Streets of Fire*), and you should know the best (*Forbidden Zone*, *Shock Treatment*). Launch a cannonball too for *The Pirate Movie*, an affably botched MTV-style attempt to cash in on the Broadway success of *The Pirates of Penzance*. While the show featured Linda Ronstadt belting Gilbert and Sullivan, the movie boasts Kristy McNichol warbling "Pumpin' and Blowin'." Pick whichever seems more fun and set sail, ye mateys!

CORINNE HALBERT Chicago painter and comics artist

Oderus Urungus from Gwar In the late 90s and early aughts, I was an angst-ridden teen-

age maniac. So naturally I went to a million concerts with my friends, who were all older. We'd wait by the tour buses afterward, hoping to meet our favorite musicians. My crowning moment was meeting Dave Brockie, aka Oderus Urungus of Gwar, outside the Palladium in Worcester, Massachusetts. He still had makeup smeared on his face and was so incredibly nice to me, I'll never forget it. RIP, you wonderful maggot-filled monster, you.

Big Business About four months after my husband and I started dating in 2015, we took a trip to the Wisconsin Dells. He reintroduced me to Big Business and what would become my absolute favorite album, 2007's *Here Come the Waterworks*. We probably listened to it ten-plus times while driving up and back. Their new release, *The Beast You Are*, maintains their heavy low-end sound but is much mellower in long stretches. I guess we're all getting older, and hopefully more chilled out.

King Crimson At the top of my must-listen list, forever, has been legendary band King Crimson. Snippets of their psychedelic, progressive weirdness have surely slithered between my temples without me knowing, and the artist in me has been dying to learn what secrets hide behind the iconic screaming red face on their 1969 debut. This hole in my music knowledge is my secret shame, so it feels good to get it off my chest. For the next few weeks, I'll be held in contempt *In the Court of the Crimson King!*



Rest in peace, Oderus Urungus.
@RYAN POLLACK

PICK OF THE WEEK

Japanese experimental rockers Mono conjure spirits on *Nowhere Now Here*



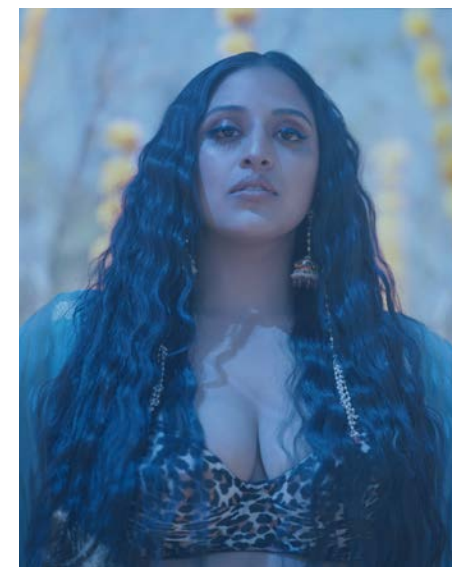
CHIGI KANBE

MONO, EMMA RUTH RUNDLE, DIM

Sat 6/15, 6 PM, Bohemian National Cemetery, 5255 N. Pulaski, \$25, all ages

MONO HAVE BEEN MAKING dramatic, orchestral, largely instrumental experimental rock for 20 years, and in that time they've played in nearly 60 countries and released ten full-length albums. Their latest, January's *Nowhere Now Here* (Temporary Residence), is arguably their best yet. It almost feels like a reunion record: Mono took a break in 2017 after founding drummer Yasunori Takada left the band, their first lineup change since forming in 1999. Mono returned to the stage and studio in August 2018 with new drummer Dahm Majuri Cipolla, and taking a year to find him proved to be a good move. Cipolla's drumming is insistent but respectful; he makes room for himself at the table but mostly lets the OGs have the spotlight. The album's second track, "After You Comes the Flood," gradually announces its presence with a mounting trickle of foggy synth

and glassy guitar; once Cipolla enters, his grandiose beat follows the main riff steadily until the song abruptly vanishes into a haze of guitar distortion and keyboard noises. On the title track, which runs more than ten minutes, guitarists Takaakira "Taka" Goto and Hideki "Yoda" Suematsu do the heavy lifting, pushing into your brain with fuzzy orchestral maneuvers. *Nowhere Now Here* is also the first Mono album with vocals. Bass and synth player Tamaki Kunishi complements the band's stark sound with her gentle and pleasantly airy singing on the aptly titled "Breathe"—which sounds like a sigh of relief after two decades of hard work. Live and loud is the best way to experience Mono, and the venue for this show, Bohemian National Cemetery, offers them the perfect chance to see whether it's actually possible to wake the dead. —**SALEM COLLO-JULIN**



Raja Kumari SASHA SAMSONOVA

THURSDAY 13

DEAD MEADOW *Dommengang and Tombstone Eyes open. 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$15. 21+*

This heavy-psych band from Washington, D.C., caused a stir when they released their self-titled debut album in 2000: they seemed to have tapped a vein of blues-based trippy rock from the early 70s that had lingered underground in its purest form while the genre was mined and embellished by innovators such as Deep Purple, Hawkwind, and Uriah Heep. Dead Meadow had a successful stint on Matador Records, releasing pitch-perfect instant museum pieces *Old Growth* and *Shivering King and Others* (and others), before founding their own label, Xemu, in 2010. Since rock trends are so cyclical, sometimes retro is prescient—and throughout every change in label or lineup, Dead Meadow have rammed on through the waves like a very stubborn ghost ship out of the past sailing a straight line through a sea of bongwater. Last year's *The Nothing They Need* (Xemu) was a reunion of sorts, bringing back all the former members (at various times, they've had three or four) to orbit the core duo of guitarist Jason Simon and bassist Steve Kille. Dead Meadow's streamlined riffy shuffle has a melancholy bite throughout all the album's leisurely tracks—but in their hash den, some of the pillows have spikes, and in their space-truckin' travels, sometimes rogue black holes go on the prowl to devour the unwary. —**MONICA KENDRICK**

RAJA KUMARI 8 PM, *Schubas, 3159 N. Southport, \$12.*

Hip-hop has drawn from Bollywood and bhangra beats for years: Erik Sermon sampled Asha Bhosle back in 2002, and M.I.A. has spent much of her ➔

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MUSIC

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career finding different ways to make South Asian music and Western rap go together. In that context, *Bloodline* (Epic), the new EP by Indian-American songwriter and rapper Raja Kumari, sounds less like a merging of two disparate traditions than a natural extension of a conversation that's already in progress. Her rasta-ranting rhyme of the words "Hanuman" and "Ramadan" on the track "Karma" closes the distance between Kingston and Mumbai, and the chanting that winds through "Shook" echoes sinuous Timbaland beats as Kumari challenges the listener: "Fucker test your luck," she raps, "When's the last time you seen a Hindustani stunt?" The floating, transcendent Bollywood sample on "Robin Hood" contrasts with its materialist lyrics ("We need the money, money money on the dot") in a dynamic that's reminiscent of Truth Hurts's 2002 single "Addictive" (though Truth Hurts didn't pay for her Lata Mangeshkar sample till she got sued). Kumari points to a more aboveboard global bash, in which East and West bang and grind and spit together, just like they were meant to do. —NOAH BERLATSKY

FRIDAY 14

DEAD & COMPANY See also Saturday, 6:30 PM, Wrigley Field, 1060 W. Addison, \$52-\$177.

And now for a statement I never thought that I, a grown adult man, would ever put on the record: John Mayer rips. I know, I know, but bear with me here. For the past four years, three of the four surviving founding members of the Grateful Dead—drummer Bill Kreutzmann, drummer and percussionist Mickey Hart, and rhythm guitarist and singer Bob Weir—have been touring the world as Dead & Company and playing from the greatest songbook in American history. And they've brought along Mayer, of all people, to fill in for the late Jerry Garcia, one of the most cosmically skilled guitarists of all time. Even the most forgiving Deadhead might have questioned the decision. After all, what could the east-coast pretty-boy pop star possi-

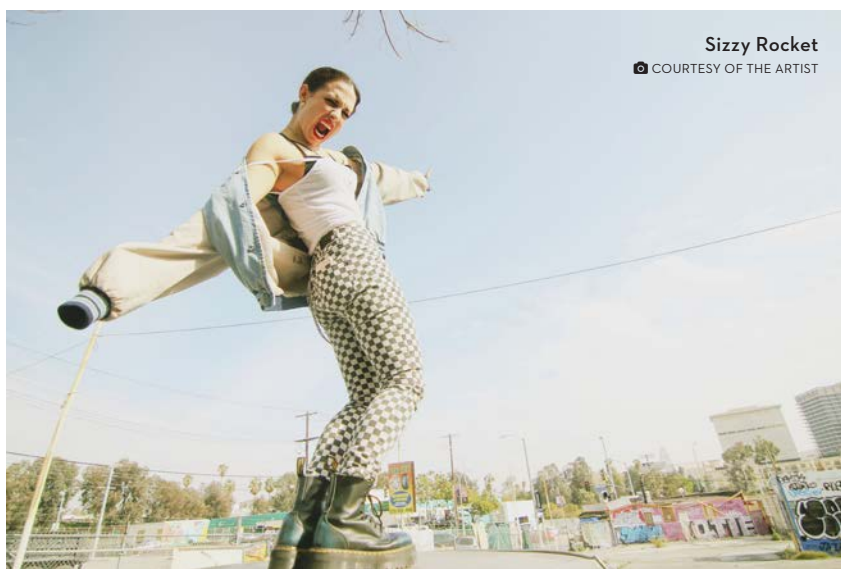
bly know about the starry-eyed shredding of San Francisco's most beloved quasi-homeless acid casualty? Sure, the Dead's music is bubbly on the surface, but Garcia was a dark dude, and that energy flowed strongly beneath the band's four-part harmonies and dueling solos for piano and guitar. All skepticism aside, though, Mayer has proved himself a worthy stand-in. His soulful voice beautifully complements the Dead's classics and deep cuts, and while his bouncy, lyrical, buttery-smooth guitar playing doesn't exactly replicate Garcia's, it feels like it comes from a place of love and respect for the source material. Most important—much like in the Dead's best 70s live performances—no one in Dead & Company steps on anyone else's toes. Though Mayer is the lead guitarist, he never hogs the spotlight, which gives the band's elders plenty of space to demonstrate over and over what makes them living legends. Dead & Company shows are always the party of the year. Whether you love the Dead or have never listened to them (no one who gives them an honest-to-goodness chance ever ends up disliking them), these two concerts are not to be missed. —LUCA CIMARUSTI

POWDER Kiddo & Sassmouth and Taylor Bratches open. 10 PM, Smartbar, 3730 N. Clark, \$15-\$20. 21+

In fall 1999, NYU freshman Tim Sweeney launched a late-night dance show called *Beats in Space* on the college's radio station. The show attracted fans from throughout the city's dance community, and Sweeney became enmeshed in the scene, interning for DFA and occasionally DJing the city's infamously wild Motherfucker party. He still hosts *Beats in Space* on WNYU today, and since 2011 he's run a label with the same name. In February the Beats in Space label ushered in its new mix series with *Powder in Space* by Japanese DJ Momoko Goto, who produces and performs as Powder. Her immersive mix plucks from the serene parts of house and techno, even bordering on ambient in its gauzy version of "Release" by Berlin producer Acid Pauli. Goto also contributes a couple of her



Iris Temple COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



Sizzy Rocket
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

own tracks: the outre, uptempo “New Tribe” and the gleaming “Gift,” which is built on dainty, cycling bell-like loops and a gently humming synth line. And though Goto can draw listeners in with calm sounds, she’s also prone to nudging them toward extremes. The same mix includes “Ton 10” by European duo Karamika, which borders on aggressive—it combines dronelike synth wash with severe, militant percussion that seems to dictate a more regimented form of movement than dancing. But Goto shows that it can blend with looser tracks—it comes right after the funky, downtempo “Roy Brooks” by Tiago, for instance. Considering the reputation of Beats in Space, you’d expect its mix series to make a big entrance, and *Powder in Space* delivers in spades. —LEOR GALIL

SATURDAY 15

DEAD & COMPANY See *Friday*. 6:30 PM, Wrigley Field, 1060 W. Addison, \$52-\$177. **ALB**

IRIS TEMPLE *Elton Aura* opens. 7:30 PM, Subterranean, 2011 W. North, \$15. **ALB**

Producer Quinn Cochran and singer Quinn Barlow, who make evanescent indie-pop songs as Iris Temple, met at Lincoln College Preparatory Academy in Kansas City, Missouri. They became friends in band class—Cochran played guitar, Barlow trombone—and after graduating in 2014, they came to Chicago for college. Barlow almost immediately returned to Kansas City, but in 2015 they began collaborating long-distance, with Barlow rapping over beats Cochran sent him. By August of that year, Iris Temple had grown legs, and Barlow moved back to Chicago. The duo quickly became ensconced in the city’s hip-hop scene, collaborating with local rappers such as Banks the Genius and Appleby. Iris Temple’s music fits into that gray area where hip-hop shades into R&B and soul. Any track picked at random from the duo’s new self-released EP, *The Ones We Love*, could serve as glue for a radically

diverse playlist that swings from DaBaby’s hard-edged raps to Kehlani’s swooning R&B ballads. And the minimalist, seductive “Real,” with its nimble funk bass line and lightly clattering percussion, might inspire you to put it on repeat as a one-song playlist of its own. —LEOR GALIL

MONO See *Pick of the Week*, page 31. *Emma Ruth Rundle* and *Dim* open. 6 PM, *Bohemian National Cemetery*, 5255 N. Pulaski, \$25. **ALB**

MUQATAA *Jeff Host* and *Jordan Zawideh* open. 11:59 PM, *Hideout*, 1354 W. Wabansia, \$10. 21+

Palestinian producer and rapper Muqata’a is the godfather of Ramallah’s underground hip-hop scene. In 2007, while recording under the name Boikutt, he cofounded hip-hop collective Ramallah Underground, which lasted just two years but toured internationally and collaborated with the Kronos Quartet (“Tashweesh” on Kronos’s 2009 album *Floodplain*). Since then, he’s been pushing hip-hop to its transgressive fringes as Muqata’a, which roughly translates to “disrupt.” His November instrumental album, *Inkanakuntu* (Souk/Discrepant), shares as much with outre dance music and rhythm-focused experimental compositions as it does with oddball beat-scene productions. As he told the *Guardian* last year, he makes his tracks from samples of Arabic classical music and field recordings he captures walking around Ramallah (occasionally at Israeli military checkpoints). This process allows him to honor his Palestinian heritage while building a modern artistic language that confronts the injustices endured by his people. The effect is empowering and aggressive, as befits someone trying to make himself heard above the din of oppression; it’s also reflective and hopeful. But on *Inkanakuntu*, any one sound is a tiny fragment in a larger kaleidoscope. On the triumphant “Taqamus Muqawim,” which feels like it could surprise you at any moment, Muqata’a intercuts an aggressive field-recorded vocal with rocket-powered bass drops, hard-as-nails drums, a ➔

THALIA HALL

JUN 22 KARL DENSON'S TINY UNIVERSE	JUN 25 LEELA JAMES	JUL 19 PITCHFORK AFTERSHOW STEREO LAB
JUL 20 PITCHFORK AFTERSHOW SNAIL MAIL	AUG 01 LOLLAPALOOZA AFTERSHOW SIGRID	AUG 03 LOLLAPALOOZA AFTERSHOW DEAN LEWIS
JUN 13 KILL TONY SUMMER TOUR	JUN 15 IF I WERE YOU WITH JAKE & AMIR	JUN 21 THE FANTASY FOOTBALLERS PODCAST: LIVE
JUN 14 NOT ANOTHER D&D PODCAST	JUN 16 THE MUSIC OF GRATEFUL DEAD FOR KIDS	JUN 23 CELESTE BARBER IS BACK
JUN 14 DOUGHBOYS	JUN 16 JUST A TIP WITH MEGAN BATOON	JUN 28 TH/CINEMA PRESENTS HARRY POTTER WEEKEND
JUN 15 HIGH & MIGHTY	JUN 16 WE HATE MOVIES	JUL 5-6 BUILT TO SPILL
JUN 15 WHY WON'T YOU DATE ME? WITH NICOLE BYER	JUN 20 RON FUNCHES	JUL 7 BILL CALLAHAN

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JUN 19 DANNY LERMAN EXPERIENCE FREE WITH READER MEMBERSHIP	JUN 20 SUMMER SOUL FEAT. TWEET, SAMOHT, AND DANTE HALL	JUN 21 LISA E. HARRIS: SUN, MOON & STARS
JUN 21 SILENT PARTY CHICAGO "R&B VS TRAP"	JUN 22 SPORT VIBES DE PARK • CHICAGO, IL • JUNE 22ND, 2 Special guests: TYN MAN • BONDU • DEF MONEY • KO • LYRICS MATRIX • GORBO • NISHA VIBE • JAKE THE KID • TOR DONI • COMMANDER • ELBORN • ZOHIF • KEMIST • ON • HYPERMAN • DREA • PHILAME • ARRANTIS • BAZ CHARDONWAY • WOLSKI	JUN 27 Red Bull PRESENTS RENAISSANCE ONE
JUN 10 THE CORNER	JUN 12 LIQUID SOUL	JUN 16 HYDE PARK HANDMADE
JUN 11 GREG MURPHY TRIO	JUN 14 RED CUP KARAOKE	JUN 16 SAMMIE
JUN 12 URBAN LYRICS - SUMMER BREEZE OPENING NIGHT	JUN 15 YOU GO GIRL III	JUN 17 MAMBO MAYHEM: SOUTH SIDE SALSA
JUN 12 WAYBACK WEDNESDAYS	JUN 15 A DIFFERENT VIBE	JUN 18 SOUND STAGE PRESENTED BY NEXT SHOWCASE CHICAGO

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JUNE 15	THE ACOUSTIC PUNKS
JUNE 16	TONY DO ROSARIO GROUP 9PM
JUNE 17	PROSPECT FOUR 9PM
JUNE 19	MORSE & WAGNER 5:30PM EMBASSIES THE PURCELLS
JUNE 20	CHICKEN DOLPHIN MORSE & WAGNER
JUNE 21	PORTMANTEAUZONE PARALLELICOPTER
JUNE 22	FIRST WARD PROBLEMS
JUNE 23	WHOLESOMERADIO DJ NIGHT
JUNE 24	RC BIG BAND 7PM RICK SHANDLING DUO 9:30PM
JUNE 26	NUCLEAR JAZZ QUARTET
JUNE 27	DJ SKID LICIOUS
JUNE 28	GUNNELPUMPERS BAD FORUM
JUNE 29	OBLIQUE STRATEGIES
JUNE 30	OFF THE VINE 4PM ANDREW D HUBER

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SAT 22 John Fullbright Band
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MUSIC

continued from 33

woozily distended synth loop, and animated shards of samples. *Inkanakuntu* came out shortly after international party promoters Boiler Room released *Palestine Underground*, a mini documentary about the company's first Ramallah event, which took place in June 2018. Muqata'a performed there along with Palestinian dance DJs from Haifa, Israel, and in the documentary they speak about how music has helped foster a community among Palestinians even as the Israeli government has separated them with a wall. The beat collages on *Inkanakuntu* capture that collective euphoria, allowing a world that may only have heard the Palestinian story to feel it too. —LEOR GALIL

SUNDAY 16

SIZZY ROCKET 3:30 PM, Rattleback Records,
5405 N. Clark. **FREE**

Sizzy Rocket—the self-proclaimed “royalty of the punks and the letdowns”—is a perpetual motion machine. The LA pop star is a near constant presence on social media, tours frequently, and has released a steady stream of singles and EPs since dropping her debut full-length, *Thrills*, in 2016. This month, she's embarking on her first headlining tour to celebrate the release of her second album, *Grrrl*. The title track is a shimmering neon-drenched love letter to the 80s, complete with massive choruses and a music video loaded with faux VHS effects. Discovering mutual queer lust with a close friend never sounded better than on the single “Bestie,” an urgently horny ode to crossing into sexual territory with a platonic friend that's anchored by dance-floor-filling synths and finger snaps. Rocket has expanded her musical palette since those days; on 2017's *Hot Summer* mixtape she incorporates the brashness of early Kesha along with the rock 'n' roll attitude of Joan Jett and the Runaways (referenced on the title track), and on this spring's “Dang” she deftly croons over a trap beat. While Rocket's music is a mix of pop strains, her inspirations are pure punk: she makes cut-and-paste zines, the title of *Grrrl* is an obvious nod to the riot-grrrl movement, and lead single “Sid Vicious” is a piano-heavy paean to falling for military-jacket-wearing bad boys (e.g., the bass player of the Sex Pistols). Rocket manages to blend the urgency and nihilism of 70s punk into modern pop without seeming like a tourist, and her shows are still small enough that the stage is barely a divider between performer and audience—they're communal experiences, just masses of kids all screaming along with the songs. —ED BLAIR

MONDAY 17

WENDY EISENBERG 7:30 PM, Experimental
Sound Studio, 5925 N. Ravenswood, \$10. **FREE**

Massachusetts guitarist Wendy Eisenberg has only been releasing music under their own name for two years, but they have already amassed a discography so diverse that no genre can claim them. On their debut, *Time Machine* (HEC Tapes, reissued

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SECRET HISTORY OF CHICAGO MUSIC

PIVOTAL CHICAGO MUSICIANS THAT SOMEHOW HAVE NOT
GOTTEN THEIR JUST DUES by PLASTIC CRIMEWAVE



LOLEATTA HOLLOWAY

BORN IN CHICAGO ON NOVEMBER 25, 1946, LOLEATTA HOLLOWAY WAS REARED ON GOSPEL—AS A TEEN-AGER SHE JOINED THE CARAVANS, WITH ALBERTINA WALKER—BUT SHE'S BEST KNOWN AS A DANCE DIVA. IN THE EARLY 70S HOLLOWAY JOINED THE CAST OF “DON'T BOTHER ME, I CAN'T COPE,” AND AROUND THE SAME TIME SHE MET HER FUTURE HUSBAND FLOYD SMITH, WHO ALSO BECAME HER PRODUCER AND MANAGER. FOR SMITH'S APACHE IMPRINT, HOLLOWAY COVERED A CURTIS MAYFIELD TUNE (THE SINGLE “RAIN-BOW '72”) AND FOR ATLANTA SOUL LABEL AWARE SHE CUT 2 ALBUMS WITH SMITH PRODUCING. 1973'S “LOLEATTA” AND 1975'S “CRY TO ME” IN 1976 NORMAN HARRIS OF SAL-SOUL RECORDS SIGNED HOLLOWAY TO HIS NEW IMPRINT, GOLD MIND, AND THE B SIDE OF HER FIRST SINGLE FOR THE LABEL, “DREAMING,” REACHED #72 ON THE POP CHARTS. SHE WAS ESTABLISHED AS A RISING DISCO QUEEN, AND HER 1ST GOLD MIND LP, ALSO CALLED “LOLEATTA,” INCLUDED THE HIGH-ENERGY DANCE-FLOOR SMASH “HIT & RUN” IN THE LATE 70S

HOLLOWAY'S CAREER EXPLODED: SHE CHARTED WITH “RUNAWAY,” A 1977 RELEASE WITH THE SALSOUL ORCHESTRA, AND WITH SONGS FROM HER 2ND SALSOUL ALBUM, 1978'S “QUEEN OF THE NIGHT” (INCLUDING “CATCH ME ON THE REBOUND”). IN 1979 SHE COLLABORATED WITH DAN HARTMAN (OF “I CAN DREAM ABOUT YOU” FAME) FOR “BRIGHT MY FIRE” AND IN TURN HARTMAN PRODUCED HOLLOWAY'S SIGNATURE SONG, THE 1980 MEGA-HIT “LOVE SENSATION.” AFTER SMITH PASSED AWAY IN '82, HOLLOWAY HOPPED FROM LABEL TO LABEL, INCLUDING STREETWISE RECORDS AND PIONEERING HOUSE IMPRINT DJ INTERNATIONAL. AROUND THEN HER VOICE STARTED BEING SAMPLED WIDELY—HOLLOWAY HAD TO GO AFTER (ITALIAN GROUP BLACK BOX FOR UNAUTHORIZED USE OF HER VOCALS ON 1989'S “RIDE ON TIME,” LUCKILY, MARKY MARK & THE FUNKY BUNCH PAID FOR THE SAMPLES ON THEIR 1991 #1 “GOOD VIBRATIONS,” THAT HIT GAVE HOLLOWAY A BOOST, AND SHE CONTINUED TO CHART UNTIL 2006. SHE DIED OF HEART FAILURE IN CHICAGO ON MARCH 21, 2011, AFTER A BRIEF ILLNESS.

TUNE INTO THE RADIO VERSION OF “THE SECRET HISTORY OF CHICAGO MUSIC” ON “OUTSIDE THE LOOP” ON WGN RADIO 720 AM, SATURDAY AT 6AM WITH HOST MIKE STEPHEN. [COMMENTS, IDEAS TO ARCHIVED @ OUTSIDETHELOOPRADIO.COM](http://plasticcw@hotmail.com)

on LP by Feeding Tube), they sound like a bedroom-based singer-songwriter who honed their vocal chops singing along with Robert Wyatt and Caetano Veloso records. And on the instrumental power-trio recording *The Machinic Unconscious* (Tzadik), where they're joined by drummer Ches Smith and bassist Trevor Dunn, they sound like Nels Cline mashing up the Melvins and harmolodic jazz. Late last year Eisenberg released a solo acoustic album called *Its Shape Is Your Touch* (VDSQ), where they play winding, melodic compositions, but their newest LP, *Nervous Systems* (Versus), made with Ahleuchtastias guitarist Shane Parish, is full of jagged improvisations that expand and contract like animated fractals. Eisenberg has played Chicago with various bands, most recently the Flying Luttenbachers, but this concert is their local solo

debut. They plan to play some solo compositions and songs as well as some narrative, text-based pieces that reflect their interest in poetry. —BILL MEYER

TUESDAY 18

ROSANNE CASH & RY COODER 8 PM,
Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State, \$35-\$125. **FREE**

From the mid-80s till the mid-90s, country music went through what Robbie Fulks calls an “integrity explosion.” As if to make up for the middle-of-the-road *Urban Cowboy* era directly preceding those years, a bunch of traditionalists and iconoclasts



Rosanne Cash
 © COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

suddenly began coming through the door, including Marty Stuart, Steve Earle, and Dwight Yoakam. Even better, these artists got legit airplay, massively expanding their reach rather than remaining cult heroes left out in the cold. Rosanne Cash's first recordings came out smack in the middle of the pop-country period that the Yoakams and the Earles were reacting against. Even so, albums such as 1979's *Right or Wrong* and 1981's *Seven-Year Ache* let the world know that this wasn't another cross-over singer trying to steal Crystal Gayle's crown. And by the time country music decided to reclaim its "integrity" for a minute, Cash was right in the thick of it. She's steeped in the old traditions, but she knows how to deftly blend in other genres when it's called for: she's one of a tiny group of country acts to record for the jazz-oriented Blue Note label, and the R&B flavor of "The Way We Make a Broken Heart," from 1987's *King's Record Shop*, makes her sound as if she's singing lead for the Drifters. Cash has spent the past few decades forging her own musical identity, but this Chicago Theatre show, where she's playing in a duo with guitarist and roots maven Ry Cooder, spotlights material by her father, the legendary Johnny Cash. She previously touched on his legacy on her 2009 album, *The List*, a collection of covers drawn from a list of 100 essential country songs her dad made for her when she was 18, and here she'll work from another list devoted solely to Johnny's music. —JAMES PORTER

DAVID NANCE *Long Hots and Axis: Sovo open.*
 9:30 PM, *Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, \$10, 21+*

I can almost remember the days when "jam" and "band" weren't poison together. Back then, the term "jam band" was so vague that it was equally likely to be used to describe a hippie drum circle, a funk outfit, or even a noisy experimental act such

as Sonic Youth. Somewhere down the line it began referring to a "genre" led by snoozy lite rockers such as Dave Matthews Band, few of whom get truly expansive with their song structures. But I'm happy to say that it seems "jams" are coming back around—to name just two, Garcia Peoples are channeling the heavier side of the Dead, while Chris Forsyth's Solar Motel Band are heavily amplifying the dual-guitar excursions of Television. Another excellent example is Nebraska native David Nance, who started off as a singer-songwriter peddling lo-fi cassettes around Omaha. In 2013 he headed for Los Angeles, where he cut his first album (*Actor's Diary*, for Grapefruit Record Club) and began attracting attention by recording covers of whole classic LPs, including *Beatles for Sale*, Lou Reed's *Berlin*, and the Stones' *Goats Head Soup* (with Simon Joyner). Nance then jumped to Ba Da Bing, where he released *More Than Enough* and *Negative Boogie* before signing to Chicago's Trouble in Mind. Last year he put out the gloriously overdriven *Peaced and Slightly Pulverized* with the David Nance Group, aka his live band: guitarist Jim Schroeder, bassist Tom May, and drummer Kevin Donahue. Most recently, the DNG dropped the seven-inch "Meanwhile" b/w "Credit Line" on Jack White's Third Man label, and its uncharacteristically short tunes touch on the dual-lead guitargams of the Allman Brothers as well as phased lo-fi art damage a la Chrome or Pere Ubu. But no matter how many releases he has under his belt, Nance's music is arguably best experienced live, as demonstrated by the digital-only DNG album *Catharsis Lottery: Live 2018-2019*. Backed by a rotating group of musicians, Nance gets loose on tracks that often come across like the best Velvet Underground songs you've never heard. Surely some of Nance's spontaneous extended explorations at this Hideout show will renew our faith in jammin'—no devil sticks required. —STEVE KRAKOW

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<p>ON SALE FRIDAY</p> <p>TIGER ARMY SADGIRL KATE CLOVER SUN OCT 13</p>		<p>ON SALE FRIDAY</p> <p>KISHI BASHI TUE OCT 29</p>	

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BAD BOOKS
 BROTHER BIRD

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BONELANG
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 Neverland presents
NEVERLUCHADOR
 FEATURING DANNY VERDE
 DJ ALEX CABOT / LIGHTS BY JOE GILLAN

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Ciara
 © COURTESY THE ARTIST

NEW

Adult Mom, Sidekicks 7/7, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Alma Afrobeat Ensemble, Ezzo, Seres de Luz 7/26, 9 PM, Martyrs'
Marsha Ambrosius 8/2, 7 and 10 PM, City Winery
Kishi Bashi 10/29, 8 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 6/14, 10 AM, 18+
Belvederes, Jay O'Rourke 8/17, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 6/14, 11 AM
Black Madonna, Turtle Bugg, Humboldt Arboreal Soundsystem 6/21, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Black Pride/Black Party featuring Mya 7/6, 11 PM, Metro
Mal Blum 8/14, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+
Bones of J.R. Jones, Goodnight Texas 7/31, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Bottle Rockets 9/27, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 6/14, 11 AM
Holly Bowling 9/8, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 6/14, 10 AM
Boy & Bear 9/23, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Boy Harsher (DJ set) 7/4, 11 PM, Empty Bottle FREE
Broke Royals, Molehill, King of Mars 8/10, 9 PM, Martyrs'
Chris Brown, Tory Lanez, Ty Dolla Sign, Joyner Lucas, Yella Beezy 9/26, 6:30 PM, United Center, on sale Fri 6/14, noon
Bushoong 6/21, 9 PM, Gallery Cabaret FREE
Califone 9/28, 9 PM, Schubas
Cat Clyde 12/4, 8 PM, Schubas, on sale Fri 6/14, 10 AM, 18+
Greyson Chance 11/29, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge
Chastity Belt 11/21, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Choir! Choir! 9/8,

7:30 PM, Thalia Hall
Ciara 10/4, 7:30 PM, Park West, on sale Fri 6/14, 10 AM
Billy Cobham Crosswinds Project featuring Randy Brecker 9/29, 5 and 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 6/14, noon
Coin, Dayglow 11/1, 7:30 PM, the Vic, on sale Fri 6/14, 10 AM
Conan, Witchkiss, Inebrium 7/3, 8 PM, Reggies' Rock Club, 17+
Crash Test Dummies, Port Cities 9/22, 7 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 6/14, 9 AM
Crumb, Divino Niño, Shormey 11/6, 7 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 6/14, 10 AM
Dehd, Deeper, Patio, Fran 8/30, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Mykele Deville, Absolutely Not, Avantist 8/10, 9 PM, Thalia Hall, 18+
Dune Rats 11/15, 8 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+
Eliane Elias 9/14, 7 and 9:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 6/14, 10 AM
Fat Babies 8/30, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 6/14, 10 AM
Feets Don't Fail 7 with Kuh Lida 6/22, 10 PM, Sleeping Village FREE
Fit Siegel, Doc Sleep, Sassmouth 7/3, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Radney Foster, Kim Richey 10/2, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 6/14, noon
Future Thieves 9/7, 7 PM, Beat Kitchen, on sale Fri 6/14, 10 AM
Great Peacock 7/18, 8:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 6/14, 11 AM
Groove Witness, Jack Butler's Jones, Paul Amandes 8/23, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn,

on sale Fri 6/14, 11 AM
Hepcat, Deals Gone Bad 7/27, 10 PM, Subterranean
John Hiatt 10/30-11/1, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 6/14, noon
Hide, Hogg, Grun Wasser, Good Fuck 8/24, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Hoyle Brothers, Zach Lancaster & the Wayward Travellers, Bono Bros Band 6/28, 7:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
HoZac Sadistic Sound System (DJ set) 7/25, 9 PM, Sleeping Village FREE
Impact 8/11, 6:30 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Fri 6/14, 10 AM, 17+
Judah & the Lion, Band Camino 8/2, 11 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Mat Kearney 10/16, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 6/14, 10 AM
King Princess, Cautious Clay 7/31, 9 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Dean Lewis with James TW 8/3, 11 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Mattson 2 7/3, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Metal Threat Fest day one with Deceased, Druid Lord, Mausoleum, Witch Vomit 7/6, 5 PM, Reggies' Music Joint
Metal Threat Fest day one with Chasm, Convulse, Mortuary, Cruciamentum, Necrovation, Infernal Conjuraton 7/6, 5 PM, Reggies' Rock Club, 17+
Metal Threat Fest day two with Cardiac Arrest, Pissgrave, Fetid, Pig's Blood, Impure 7/7, 5 PM, Reggies' Music Joint
Metal Threat Fest day two with Dead Congregation, Ruins of Beverast, Embrace of Thorns, Ares Kingdom, Dispirit, Ectovoid 7/7, 5 PM, Reggies' Rock Club, 17+

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ALL AGES FREE

Corky Siegel, Tracy Nelson 10/12, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 6/14, 10 AM
Sigrid, Houses 8/1, 11 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Slaughter Beach Dog 9/13, 8:30 PM, Lincoln Hall
Sleater-Kinney 10/18, 8 PM, Riviera Theatre, on sale Fri 6/14, 10 AM
Soul Spectacular Presents: Motown Revue 8/9, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 6/14, 11 AM
Spouse, Pseudo Slang, Sage the 64th Wonder 7/10, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Steel Woods 8/16, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 6/14, 11 AM
Strung Out, Casualties 10/10, 8 PM, Cobra Lounge, on sale Fri 6/14, 10 AM, 17+
Temple of Angels 7/24, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Temples 10/31, 8 PM, Metro, 18+
Terrapin Flyer 7/20, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
3Lau (DJ set), Autograf (DJ set), Align 7/20, 9 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+
Tiger Army, Sadgirl, Kate Clover 10/13, 7 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 6/14, 10 AM
Tortured Soul 7/24, 8 PM, City Winery
Town Mountain 9/26, 8 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 6/14, 8 AM
Oliver Tree 11/2, 10 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Fri 6/14, 10 AM
Umphrey's McGee 8/10, 4 PM, Theater on the Lake, on sale Fri 6/14, 11 AM
Grace Vanderwaal 9/7, 7:30 PM, Park West, on sale Fri 6/14, 10 AM
Vinyl Village Record Fair 6/30, noon, Sleeping Village FREE
Winona Forever, Kachi 9/15, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Wildlife 11/7, 6 PM, Cobra Lounge
Chely Wright, Alice Peacock 9/11, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 6/14, noon
UPDATED
Cody Jinks, Sunny Sweeney 8/22, 7 PM, Concord Music Hall, new on sale date: Fri 6/14, 10 AM, 17+
UPCOMING
Joshua Abrams's Natural Information Society 6/28, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Bill Callahan 7/7, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Earth, Helms Alee 6/23, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Herbie Hancock, Kamasi Washington 8/10, 6:30 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion
Glen Hansard 9/6, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre



GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

HEDRA ROWAN and **Ari Korotkin** started Chicago experimental imprint **Bodymilk Tapes** in summer 2017. Their motto? "No more synth bros / Bait the straights / Aspire to shred." As Rowan says, "Genre labels aren't as important to us as putting out absolute bangers by queers." Bodymilk's catalog has lots of bangers—the digital detritus on Rowan's **19th Century Girl** includes pained robot voices, scathing noise, and delightfully out-of-place Eurotrance samples. Bodymilk's current focus is less on releasing music and more on booking a monthly DIY series in Pilsen and the annual Noise Prom. "With very few exceptions, all performers on Bodymilk concerts are trans and/or queer," says Rowan. **Noise Prom II** is Saturday, June 15, at a Wicker Park DIY venue; the bill includes New York's **Dreamcrusher**, Toronto artist **Annacetaaminophen**, and **Middle School Crush**, Rowan's trio with **Natalie Braginsky** and **Vermikulture**. For details e-mail bodymilkttapes@gmail.com.

Last week Abrams Books published **Soulless: The Case Against R. Kelly, Jim DeRogatis's** exhaustively reported account of the infamous R&B star, which begins with his childhood and extends through some of the latest accusations of criminal sexual abuse against him. On Thursday, June 13, the **Chicago Humanities Festival** hosts a discussion with DeRogatis, writer **Kyra Kyles**, and the cofounders of the #MuteRKelly campaign, **Kenyette Tisha Barnes** and **Oronike Odeleye**. It's at **Chop Shop** at 6 PM, and some tickets include a copy of *Soulless*.

Chicago rapper-producer **Pete Sayke** last released a full-length in 2017, when he collaborated with producer Lonegevity on *Heaven Can Wait*. On Tuesday, June 18, Sayke drops **Gold & Rue**, with production by **Roy Kinsey** collaborator **Mike Jones** and several others. Kinsey makes an appearance too, as do R&B singer **Jus-Sol**, fiery rap duo **Mother Nature**, and multidisciplinary scene mainstay **Phoelix**. —J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL

Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip_Wolf or e-mail gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com.

SAVAGE LOVE

Where to go when you need a pro

Advice for a gal in need of a safe, skilled male sex worker, and more

By **DAN SAVAGE**

Q: I'm a straight cis woman in my early 40s and a single mother. I have not dated or hooked up with anyone in years. While I miss dating, the biggest issue right now is that my sex drive is off the charts. While watching porn and masturbating once my child goes to sleep helps, I really want to get well and truly fucked by a guy who knows what he's doing. I could likely go to a bar or on Tinder and find a man for a one-night stand, but I'm hesitant to do that. To add to my complicated backstory, I have a history of childhood sexual abuse and have had only two partners in my whole life, one of whom was abusive. My past sexual forays have not been particularly satisfying, in part due to my lack of experience and comfort indicating what I do/do not like, as well as some dissociation during the actual act. I keep thinking it would be easier to find a sex worker to "scratch the itch," as presumably a male sex worker would be more open, sex positive, and skilled. But I have no idea how I might go about it or what the procedure or etiquette is. And I am fearful that I could get arrested given the illegality of soliciting in my conservative southern state. Getting in trouble could have devastating effects on my life, and I would definitely lose my job. I am trying to weigh the pros and cons, but I feel out of my depth. Any

advice for a gal who wants to get fucked but is not sure how to make that happen in a safe-ish space? —**SINGLE MOM ABSOLUTELY STUPID HORNY**

A: "In the recent past, the answer would have been 'Google,'" said John Oh, a Sydney-based male sex worker for women. "But in a post-SESTA/FOSTA world, that route is now unreliable—especially in the United States, where advertising on the Web is far more difficult." SESTA/FOSTA—the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act/Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act—is a 2018 law that was crafted, backers said (backers lied), to fight sex traf-

ficking. It made it a crime for Web platforms to knowingly or unknowingly allow someone to post a sex ad. The law is so vague that platforms like Craigslist, Tumblr, and Facebook purged sexually explicit content in an effort to prevent sex workers from basically being online at all. SESTA/FOSTA's backers claim they want to protect women—and only women—but in reality, pushing sex workers out of online spaces (where they could more effectively screen clients, share safety tips with each other, and organize politically) made sex work more dangerous, not less, and has led to more sex trafficking, not less. →

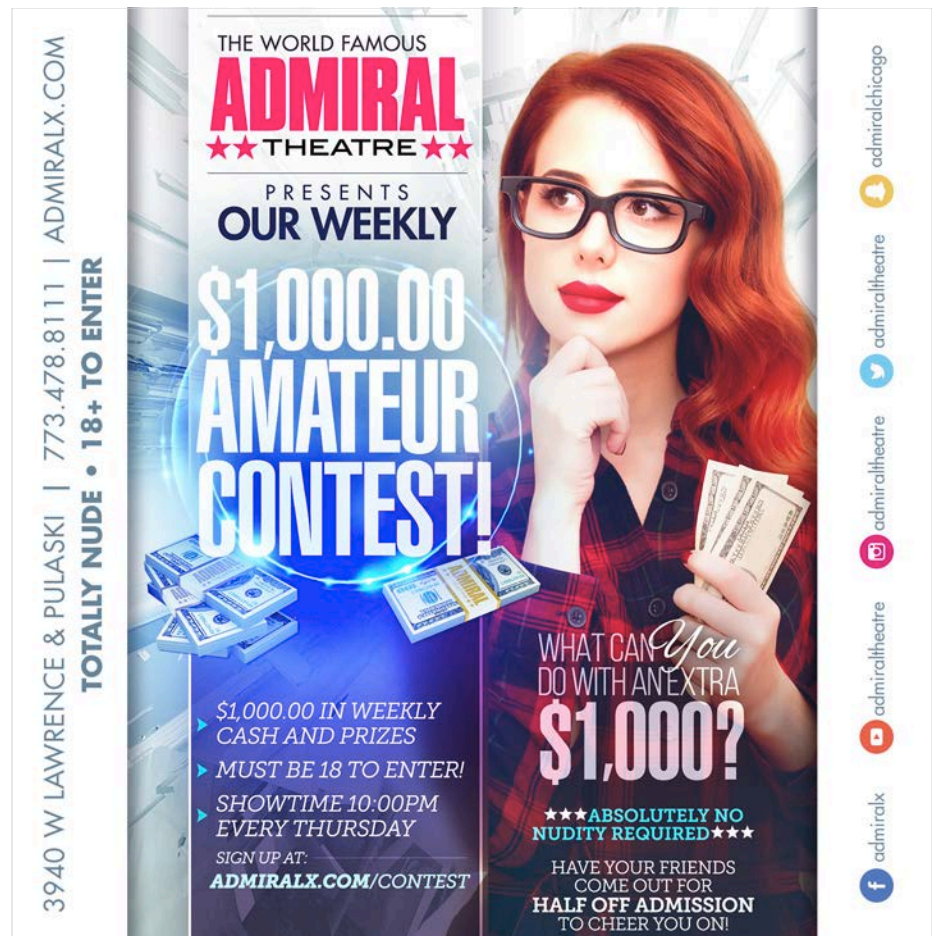


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REAL LOCAL SINGLES

OPINION

continued from 37

But one platform—one much-pilloried but still-popular platform—is bucking the anti-sex-worker/anti-sexuality-explicit-content trend.

“Twitter is still a (mostly) safe place for sex workers, and I have not heard of law enforcement using it to entrap potential clients,” said John. “So I believe that it is a reasonably safe place to anonymously research male sex workers. Many of us advertise there.”

Since no one knows how long Twitter will allow sex workers to use its platform, you might want to get started on that search now, SMASH. And while sex work is work, and it’s work many people freely choose to do, not everyone is good at their job. Since your experiences with unpaid sex weren’t that great, I asked John for some tips on increasing your odds of finding a skilled male sex worker.

“Sadly, in places where sex work is criminalized, it’s harder to find a suitable male sex worker,” said John, “especially for someone who needs extra-special care due to trauma. I expect that for SMASH, traveling to a place where sex work is not criminalized would not be practical, but that might be an option for others.”

“Her best option may be to talk to female sex workers on Twitter and ask them for a recommendation,” said John. “This has two benefits—the first is that female workers in her general area will have local knowledge. The second is that female workers are generally very careful about endorsing male workers. So if a few female workers suggest a male sex worker, there is a high likelihood that he will be safe, capable, and professional. But if SMASH goes this route, tipping the female workers who help her out would be polite—otherwise this would amount to asking for unpaid labor.”

Q: An older guy at my gym tentatively inquired if he could ask me an “inappropriate question.” I told him he could. I’m straight, he’s pretty obviously gay, and I figured he was going to hit on me. Then he said the question was “sexual in nature” and was I sure it was OK? I said yes. He asked if he could buy the shoes I wear to the gym once they’re worn out. I know why someone would want my old shoes—he’s obviously masturbating with them—and that’s fine, everyone’s got their weird thing (myself included). Two quick questions: Isn’t what he did risky? (I could easily see some other guy reacting badly.) And how much should I charge? —**SMELLING NIKES ENTERTAINS A KINKY SENIOR**

A: It was definitely a risky ask, SNEAKS, but you’re probably not the first guy he’s approached. I imagine he has a hard-earned feel for who’s likely to react positively and who’s not (and a few canceled gym memberships along the way to show for it). And I’d say \$20 would be fair. It’s not the full cost of replacing the shoes—he’s a shoe perv, not a fin sub—but it’s enough to be worth your while and it reflects the value of your old shoes. Not on the open market, but to him.

Q: A straight couple I know that “dabbles” in kink recently visited a famous leather/fetish/bondage store with deep ties to San Francisco’s gay community (Mr. S Leather, not that it’s important). They purchased some simple bondage implements that they could just as easily ordered online from any number of stores that aren’t institutions in the gay BDSM subculture. I don’t think straight people should be barging into spaces that aren’t theirs to

purchase items that weren’t created for them. I’m not gay myself, but I try to be a good ally, and part of being a good ally is holding other straight people accountable. —**RESPECT QUEER SPACE**

A: You’ve got to be kidding me with this shit, RQS. Donald Trump banned trans people from the military, the Trump administration has made it legal for doctors and EMTs to refuse to treat queer people, they’re allowing federally funded adoption agencies to discriminate against same-sex couples, and they just shut down promising research into a cure for HIV (much to the delight of religious conservatives, who have always and still want us dead). And heaping insult on injury, RQS, Donald fucking Trump “celebrated” Pride Month with a tweet—and you’re not only worried about a straight couple buying a little gear in a gay leather/fetish/bondage shop but you’re coming to me with this shit expecting praise? If a couple of straight people wandering into a gay-owned business that’s legally obligated not to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation—a law that protects queer people too—is what you’re wasting your time on right now, RQS, with everything that’s going on, you’re a shit ally and a worse human being. Just to make sure it was OK with Mr. S, I shared your letter with general manager Jonathan Schroder, who said: “We are owned by gay men and very explicitly market to gay men. But everyone is welcome here. We’re happy there are straight people who feel comfortable shopping here.” **FI**

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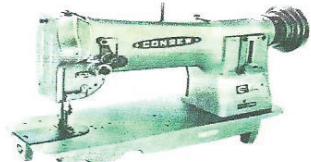
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