

# Claims Department



## **Well. well. well**

It's been a week of wonder!

I had a job interview. This one literally fell into my lap, like so many things have. It's for the Directorship of a museum.

That's right; I'm trying to move into the Boardroom!

I got paid, and that's meant things are a little less cramped, though we're still living fairly limited. Such is the way of the world. Luckily, we're likely going through a phase where things might end up with more coming in. Sumer is fairly flush for us, usually, and we've still got taxes waiting to come in.







**I should have gotten to this earlier.**

This is the start of the series, because it leads directly into the stories *The Thrill of Victory* and *The Agony of Defeat*. In fact, I mentioned that in my discussion of *Agony of Defeat*.

The story is about the loss of a baseball game between the Arcturians and Earthers, and the stakes were high: winners eat the losers.

And we humans didn't measure up!

So, Haldeman did something amazing in this one: he completely left out from experiencing the loss. We get Hawk, the Howard Cossel stand-in, interviewing Slugger about what it was like to lose the life of every single human who would be eaten by



the Arcturians.

Now, denying us the actual loss is only smart if we're given something better.

And we are!

They start by trying to eat Hawk's nose, can't stand it and they call off the eating. No, that's not a spoiler; arguably the fact that I told you this was the first part of a series that I already talked about the later stories in probably did that for me.

This is a silly little vignette, and at the same time, it's smart. It's not saying anything like some of the other stories did about the state of sports at the time. Instead, it simply shows the outcome, and how sports stars tend to deaden both failures and accomplishments. There's a Buckner in this story, but Slugger, when Hawk interviews him, refuses to pin it on him. He simply says that the Arcturians played better baseball.

And in the end, isn't that what matters...well, that and everybody not getting eaten.







## **I love AbEx. but you know that.**

There are some names that are on the top of my list for AbExers I really appreciate, though one I don't much talk about is Cy Twombly. This is largely because I think he was a fairly cheeky painter whose works like those at SFMoMA have little impact, save for a kinda cool wooden sculpture, though that was never Cy's bread and butter.

The thing is, they're mostly just squiggles, but they're too orderly, and while they're certainly a painter certainly proving he's painting by leaving obvious evidence via paint marks, they're just too controlled.

Or at least they feel too controlled. Even when the paint drips from his spiraling brushstrokes, it just feels like it's stiff, which is exactly what I don't want from my Abstract Expressionist paintings.

Then again, what I have come to think of as the greatest

AbEx canvas ever was also painted by Cy Twombly—*Leda & The Swan*.

A key element of Abstract Expressionism is rejection of context. I always argue that it's content that they rejected, relying entirely on the context of a painting being the work of a painter and that makes it valid as opposed to any sort of contained meaning or stylization. There's another argument that all that AbEx is happens to be the style of the painter, but I think that speaks to the content-freeness of the movement.

But what do I know?

*Leda & The Swan* is as chaotic a canvas as you'll ever find from an Abstract Expressionist painter. Unlike Pollock's all-over action paintings, or Rothko's color fields, Twombly has created something remarkably controlled while still feeling as if there was nothing at the controls of the paintbrush.

The story of Leda and the Swan is one of those Greek stories of fuckboi Zeus. He turns himself into a swan and either seduces or rapes Leda, who was the wife of the King of Sparta. There's a few different ways to read the story, and of course there are multiple versions. The fact that Zeus impregnates Leda is a key component.

Now, the painting.

It's a combination of oils, pencil and crayon, and if you know Twombly's other work, you can see it all right there. The pencil scribbles and loops that he is known for are all right there, but there's also smudged crayon that gives a sort of sfumato look, and where the thinned-out oils drip across it, it seems as if the colors were being blotted out. The oils are mostly white, though there are some pinks, reds, and blues in there too.



The thing is, with the exception of what I clearly think was supposed to be a window in pencil at the top center of the canvas, I don't sense anything as being represented in the painting. Now, I'm told there are things that are supposed to be interpreted as representations, including swan dick, which maybe I can see in pink towards the center, but I don't really feel like any of them are representational.

I do, however, 100% get the feeling that the most of marks adds up to the idea of Leda and the Swan.

The chaos of the swan, the unnatural, controlled uncontrollableness of the strokes, the way that the painting is centered on the chaos that comes to a pair of forms that, when you try to define them as such, slip away as if you're trying to both clock the speed and the location of a quark. It's gonna happen.

Yet, at the same, the sensation is what I always associate with that story.

It's not been on display for a long time. I saw it on two of my MoMA visits, though I don't think on the one where Vanessa and I got married in the Sculpture Garden. It's a shame, because this is a painting I would love to share with her, largely because I know she would hate it as much as I love it.







# True Crime News

## **The Moscow Murders. Wow.**

I've been hearing about these for a couple of months, meaning I'm well behind most of the True Crime community. On November 13, 2022, someone wandered in to the house near the University of Idaho and stabbed four of the six people in the house. There was no screaming, apparently, but also no tying up, no drugging, most showed few signs of struggle, though one of the victims had defensive wounds.

Now, you'll notice that it was only 4 of the 6 people in the house were murdered. One of them slept through the whole thing. One of them saw the killer.

Now, this wasn't the kind of house where you wouldn't expect to find a stranger wandering around late at night from time to time. It was something of a party house, being an off-campus house that was close to campus. There would be people filing in and out, and that made the place a hub.

The victims were residents of the house Madison Mogen, Kaylee Goncalves, and Xana Kernodle, and Kernodle's ex-boyfriend, Ethan Chapman. They were all either 20 or 21. The other two who lived there, Bethany Funke and Dylan Mortensen, were unharmed. That may have been because one of them saw the killer and then they fled. The other theory, which looks to not be accurate, is that they were targeting specific people and had accomplished their goal.

I think it may have more to do with the Double Event from Jack the Ripper.

My theory of the Double Event, and particularly the Goulston Street Graffito, which even legendary Ripperologist Martin Fido thought had some validity, is that as he had failed at his first attempt to rip on the night, and moved on to the next murder, did his ghoulish business, and then as he was running through the streets of Whitechapel, stopped and saw a graffito reading "The Juwes are the Men Who Will Not Be Blamed for Nothing" and realized that it hadn't been there earlier, and that maybe he didn't have Whitechapel as wired as he thought, that there were variables he hadn't seen. And, since the adrenaline was wearing off, he dropped the cloth he had wiped the knife with and headed off. The next killing was in-doors, he took his time, and it was the end.

I think being seen, as the adrenaline was wearing off and

his more-or-less right mind was coming back, he knew he couldn't do the whole business. What if she told someone? He may not have been able to connect the dots that if he killed her too she wouldn't be able to describe him. She was on the same floor as two of the victims, so it would have made sense, but at the same time, he clearly either met his goal or changed his plan.

And as far as has come out, this was at least somewhat targeted.

Now, it's uncertain if this was targeted against the individuals or the house itself. If he was a guy who simply wanted to kill some folks to prove he could, and the fact that he surveilled the house prior would speak to that, then it probably wouldn't have mattered that he killed everyone in there, just that he had killed some of the folks in there. That's a fairly Leopold & Loeb reading, I know. The cops think he ran out of energy, which does make sense. Some killers enter a sort of tunnel-vision. Most spree shooters, for example, won't shoot anything that's not moving, so if you even just stand still, they'll ignore you. There are exceptions to that, Ander Brevik for example, but by and large, it's true.

The thing that's most concerning is the guy that got for it.

Bryan Kohberger is 28. He was let go from his teaching assistant job. His car had been seen around the neighborhood. He fled out of the state and ended up captured in Pennsylvania. His dad had helped him on his run. As far as I can find, he's clamed up, and there's no word on if he's at all cooperated, or if he's going with a 'I DIDN'T DO IT!' defense. They enpaneled a secret grand jury, and they never gave the defense the chance to present exculpatory evidence, though that's not always necessary.

There have been several rulings, but they also put a gag



order on, so we don't know anything more than we did on the day of the arrest.

Kohberger hired Mark Geragos. He's defended a lot of big name folks, notably Roger Clinton, Scott Peterson, and Chris Brown. He's the guy who can get the big names off, including Michael Jackson for at least part of the trial. This is going to get crazy, because while what the journalists had dug up before the arrest had indicated that this was going to be a crushing case, it's only amped up the interest because of the gag order. The case doesn't start until October, though there've been filing to challenge the Grand Jury and that could cause delays. It's pretty clear that they're trying to delay at least a little, especially as they've not even entered a plea.







As far as food goes, I'm fairly simple.

I like the simple things—steak, mushrooms, garlic, onions, burgers, pizza. I've got to be careful these days, but I've learned that a bit of a cheat is OK once in a while. It's really carbs and sugars I have to be careful with, and that means very little pizza.

It does not mean no pizza.

There is a line of pizza crusts that use cornmeal, and they've got a really good gluten-free one. We buy a two-pack and one gets fake cheese, since Vanessa can't do the dairy anymore, and one with a olive oil brush and a little cheese. I like to sauté up a lean pork with diced mushrooms, onions, and garlic in basil, Italian seasoning, and a touch of . Then, I add that on top, top with a little fake ricotta (which is better than regular ricotta oddly) and I cook in the air fryer.

I have no idea why it's so good.

Not being able to do gluten, and having to hold down fats as much as I can, does mean I don't get as much variety as I'd like, but my numbers are solid, which is the thing I consider to be really important.

Of course, the kids have their own difficulties: no cheese on one, no sauce on teh other. Why we gotta be so difficult???







## **It has begun.**

Cinequest viewing season has begun. With a December deadline, and this year's festival not even taken place yet, we're seeing a lot of submissions, almost 400 already. Last year, we ended up with about 2K short submissions. I watched 1600 or so of them. It was tough, but I did it.

Short films are something I really believe in. There's not a lot I actually believe in, so that's a thing. I think that so many of the filmmakers I have met are at their peak with shorts, and some who have gotten big shots started out with shorts for us, includ-



ing Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck, who directed *Captain Marvel*.

Submissions come in waves. The first one, maybe 15 percent, tends to be older shorts at the end of their run, films that are always there, trying over and over with every fest to hope one finally gives them the call-up, and films from distributors. These account for up to half of the films we select because they tend to be better films. They've been complete for a while, and that helps a lot. Even the ones who are just trying to catch a break tend to be better than others submitted later making the same play.

The second batch, about 1/2 the total films we'll watch for the fest, is the everything coming at ya phase. There's little to define this group as anything more than a sampling, though there are some trends. A lot of time it's filmmakers who have been bounced from other exclusive fests and are now feeling out the rest of the scene. There's a lot of folks who made movies in the early winter and edited it until Spring who are ready to submit (I call them the Christmas Break films, and there's a lot of 'em) and there's the capstone project crowd who finish their films for May and then start submitting them around. But overall, it's jus the main mass of films.

The final group, about a 1/3 of all submission, will come in during the last 2 weeks of the submission window. These tend to be filmmakers who polish off their works specifically to get them to us, works that were shot over the summer and are just finishing their edits, or the most fun of them, the ones who get FilmFreeway notifications that announce the closing of Cinequest's submission window. Those three account for why I spend so much of October and November watching short films, because we get several hundred dumped on us in two weeks. These films do OK overall, but that first group tends to be where

most of the films come from.

This year, we're seeing the fruits of previous years coming to market. The last few years, I've made it a personal goal to promote Irish, Israeli, Iranian, and German shorts, as well as French and Chinese animations. We'd been so strong on British, Danish, Swedish, Chinese, Canadian, and Japanese live-action films, but we'd seen a general increase in the numbers from Iran (specifically the Tehran Film School) and Israel, and the Irish film council started sending us stuff. France has a couple of top-notch animation programmes, and they appear to be promoting female and non-binary-led animation projects. Chinese animation has always been great, but we didn't see much of it for years, and we're finally seeing a stronger push.

Israeli film is a personal passion. I wasn't very aware of what was going on in Israeli film under two things—the feature *Apples from the Desert* (See it!) and the music video *Her Morning Elegance*, which was a masterpiece of animation. We've had as many as five shorts from Israel in, I think that's how many we had last year, and they've started sending more. I'm glad because what they send tends to be top-notch!

The interesting thing is we're seeing some themes stay the same. We've always had a strong LGBTQ+ thread from our films, and we're unusually strong on Documentaries, especially animated Docs. We've not always been great about showing Chicano filmmakers, which is strange us being in San Jose and my ethnic background. We get a few fantastic ones every year, but most just miss the mark, usually running too long. I'm seeing a couple of more this year that look great, though.

Overall, I love film programming.





**Wow. I see the dumb.**

Pacificon is a gaming expo I used to attend in the dark dim past. It's where I met my first gamer friends WAY back in the 1980s. Sadly, they just released their COVID policies and man, are they dumb.

Basically, they say that there's no mask or vax requirements, but they recommend them for all attendees. The part I think is just stupid is that GMs can't even require that their players wear masks at their tables!

They say that masking is a choice for each individual attendee. As we've seen recently, most vividly with this year's

Eastercon, that idea just doesn't work. When you compare the policies of Eastercon vs. those of CostumeCOon, both at about the same time, both in areas with roughly the same COVID rates, and about the same size (I think CostumeCon was a little bigger) we saw the one with the strong code not be a super-spreader and the one without seeing a lot of infections.

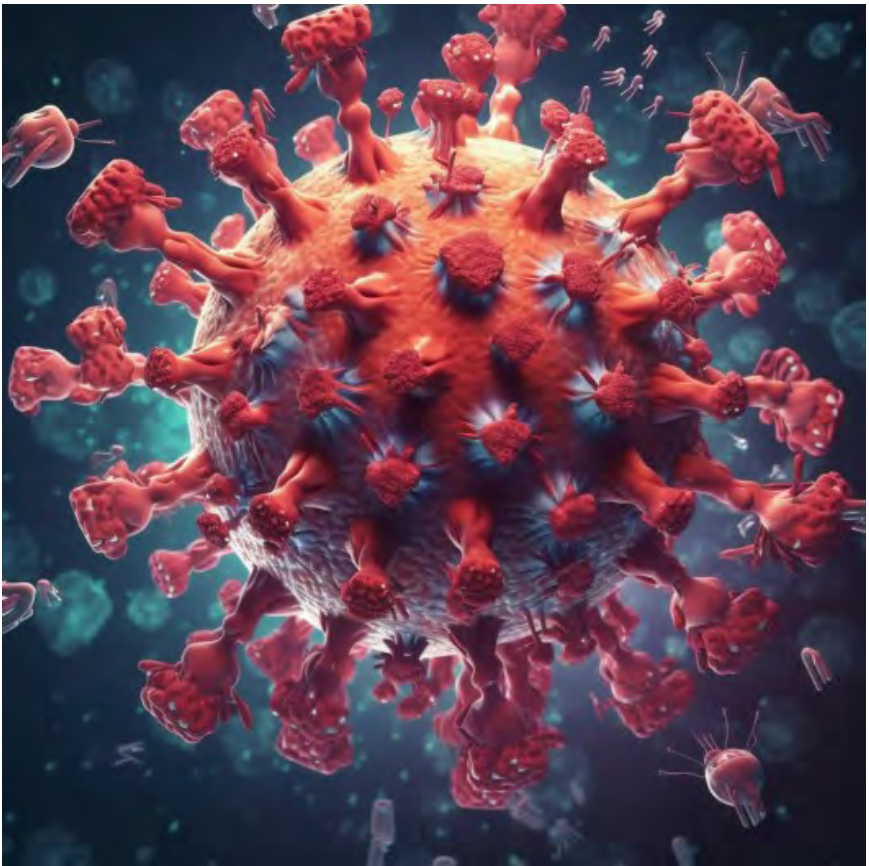
The thing is we are failing at caring about attendees. I went back and forth with the Pacificon Facebook team asking about what steps they're taking to protect attendees, ie. Airflow and purification. No response, and I'm pretty sure it's because they just won't do any. The idea is that COVID is done (and we're down to about .3% of the population being infected here in Silicon Valley, and Santa Clara, where Pacificon will take place, has been hovering around 1-in-1500 or so the last month. But that's still enough that a single infected individual could become a strong vector. While most of the COVID trackers were stopped when Federal support ended (and the Biden administration has a lot to answer for there!) the data I managed to find show that there are pockets of California that still have .5%+ infection rates (the Central Valley, including Patterson) and parts of Nevada and Arizona had .75% counties as late as early May.

0 COVID is a hard line to hold, and COVID deaths are now rare (last I checked it was about .1% of all infections locally) but we're still not in the range to fully understand long-term infection effects. My doctor thinks my heart issues were likely worsened by my incredibly mild COVID case in August 2022. Looking at before and after numbers shows marked differences. We've heard anecdotes of mental impairments, long-term, that seem to be related. To become reckless now is a terrible idea, and one I am fairly certain will bite us hard when some variant arises that



is as bad as those first waves and we've loosened so much that we can only watch as it ravages us. That's a possibility, and while most of the ones we've seen gain strength the last few months have been like a bad cold, they're still knocking some folks out.

Yes, I will hold a con responsible for not having a robust COVID policy and won't attend any that don't. If #ChrisCon50 happens, there will be required masking unless we're at 0 COVID. This is exactly like when you're taking anti-biotics and stop because it looks like it's cleared up, only to come roaring back.







## **My Father's Day ruled!**

Now, I know that there are visions of what makes a great Father's Day, and somehow they usually include kid-made macaroni art. None of that for me, instead we had the type of day I would call busy-quiet.

We started by waking up early. Well, I actually woke up about 6, which for me is sleeping in. I got the rest of the family up and medicated and then we headed over the hill to San Jose for BrickFest.



Brickfest is a Lego festival, and it was much smaller than we had thought, but I have to say that it's a lot of fun. The kids really wanted to go, and I like Lego well enough. There were statues made of Lego, and about a dozen large tables full of Legos, including a Blacklight area where we spent about an hour building. I liked the Build-a-Racer area. Bella and I built racers on the basic premise that the chassis they provided wouldn't be as good as the ones we would build ourselves. We both came in second on our races, so maybe it wasn't a perfect theory!

The thing was, the kids were happy, and running around, and engaged, and that's always fun for me. I also got to play with Legos.

I got my picture taken with one of the participants on the first season of *Lego Masters*, Nestor Garcia. He was the oldest guy on the show and all us Garcias gotta stick together!



After that, and the kids having no-food meltdown, we headed out for a special late-lunch/early-dinner: Applebee's.

Let me say this once and for all; Applebee's is a good place for steak.

I know, I hear you screaming, Applebee's ain't good eatin' and you're wrong. They get steak (and riblets!) and comparing to the best steakhouses I've been to, no one hits my idea of medium rare better. JP and I both ordered the 12oz. Rib Eye, with fries and mash. They were great, and while the kids read or played with their crayon and placemat, Vanessa and I just zoned on our phones, a lovely period of not needing to do anything! That's always a plus.

We headed home, and ended up just playing on tablets and phones while Vanessa took a nap. It was low-impact, and it was exactly what I needed. Bella wanted two quesadillas for dinner, and JP only wanted some Pediasure. Easily done.

At bedtime, the kids wanted us all to sleep in the same bedroom. Since the kids share a single bed in their room, that meant our bedroom. Another way I've won the kid lottery is that JP literally would rather sleep on the floor than on a bed. I have no idea why that is, but he's said it many times. Bella wanted to sleep on the bed between Vanessa and I, but instead we punted and their sleeping area was at bottom of the bed.

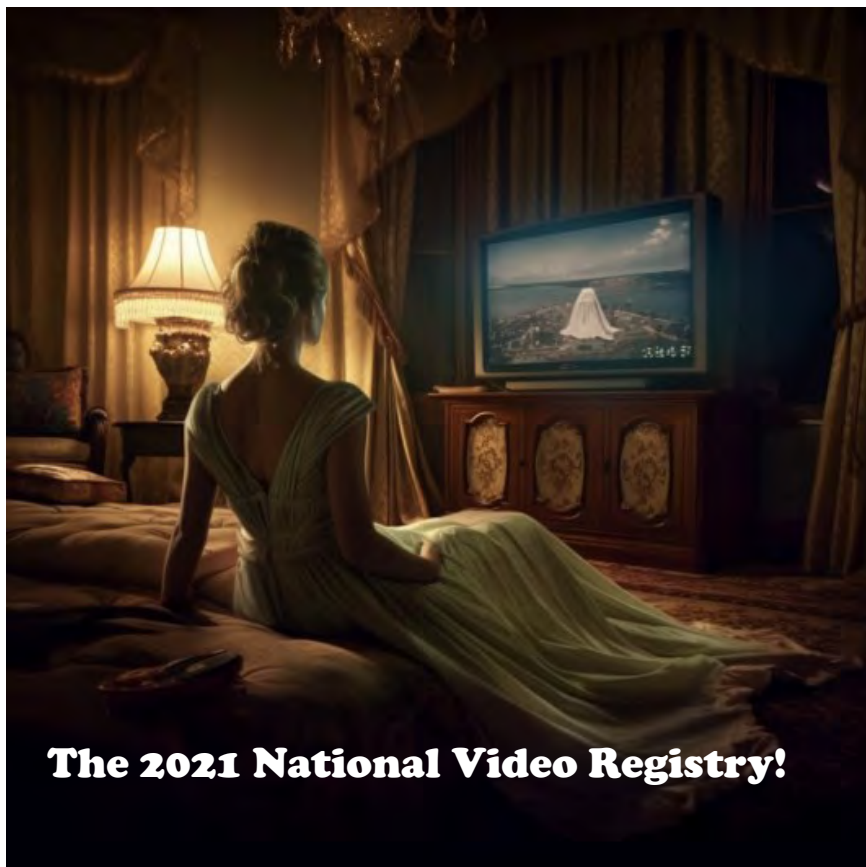
It was actually a lovely way to end the day; the entire family together...well, after Vanessa crawled back into bed around 11 since she'd napped and decided to get herself some dinner.

It was a simple day, but one in which there wasn't much more than to do the stuff we wanted to do at the moment, and there's little better than that!









## **The 2021 National Video Registry!**

*East Side/West Side.*

*East Side, West Side* was as socially conscious as you could find in the early 1960s, and it was given a major push with George C. Scott and Cicely Tyson. The show only ran for one season, but it was the 7th episode that really showed the entire reason a series like it could work.

The show centered on social workers. The episode *Who Do You Kill* centered on a Harlem couple, the father was played by James Earl Jones, in Harlem. Now, some of the Southern CBS affiliates didn't like this, and they wouldn't carry the episode. Other episodes were written by the likes of Ossie Davis. The

guest stars like Howard DaSilva and Jones also added a level of importance. Some consider it to be one of the finest one-season wonders, and I certainly agree.

### *The Beverly Hillbillies*

One of the all-time top-rated shows in American TV history. It was a part of a wave of rural shows that drew big ratings. The show would become one of the most successful shows ever in syndication, and more importantly, it would lead to a wave of imitators.

Often lost was the fact that Buddy Ebsen was a huge star prior to doing the show, and Irene Ryan was a well-known Stage and film actress (who would later go on to actually have a stroke while in *Pippin*) and Max Baer Jr. would become a famed director and producer.

### *Friends*

You can not deny the social impact of *Friends*. Today, nearly twenty years after the finale, it's still exceptionally popular. The show led to imitators, a couple of which did very well, but it also led to a backlash because of the all-white nature of the show.

### The Final Episode of *The Fugitive*

No question that this one belongs. A popular show, it was the finale (an early 2-parter) that set the world on fire. It was a massive ratings hit, and more than anything, it's what led to the film with Harrison Ford in the 1990s. It was a series that felt important and ended just about perfectly.

### *Scooby-Doo*

This was my fave as a kid, and one of the longest-running cartoon franchises ever. It's also had a long history of being more or less on the cutting edge of the zeitgeist. It's spun off comics and films and so much more. It's even been lauded as a stalwart of Skepticism! Most of the series are considered continuations of one-another, which is why it seems like one of the longest running series ever.

### *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*

I'll be honest; I liked it. It was, though, a ratings giant, was the first in many areas, and the absolutely incredible episode where Chuckles the Clown is shelled to death. That episode is seen as one of the best-written of all-time, and the show overall is noted for being the basis for most office comedies of the late 1970s through the 2000s.

### *DRAGNET*

We're talking 1950s/60s versions, not the re-boots, though it's partly because of those that you can see the impact the show had. It's a very typical cop show of the time, a bit stiff, but straight ahead. It did rarely take on social justice topics, but at times it did, and that made it seem more forward-thinking than it really was. The Jack Webb versions, which spawned from the radio show, were foundational, and the 1960s version with Harry Morgan were particularly important.

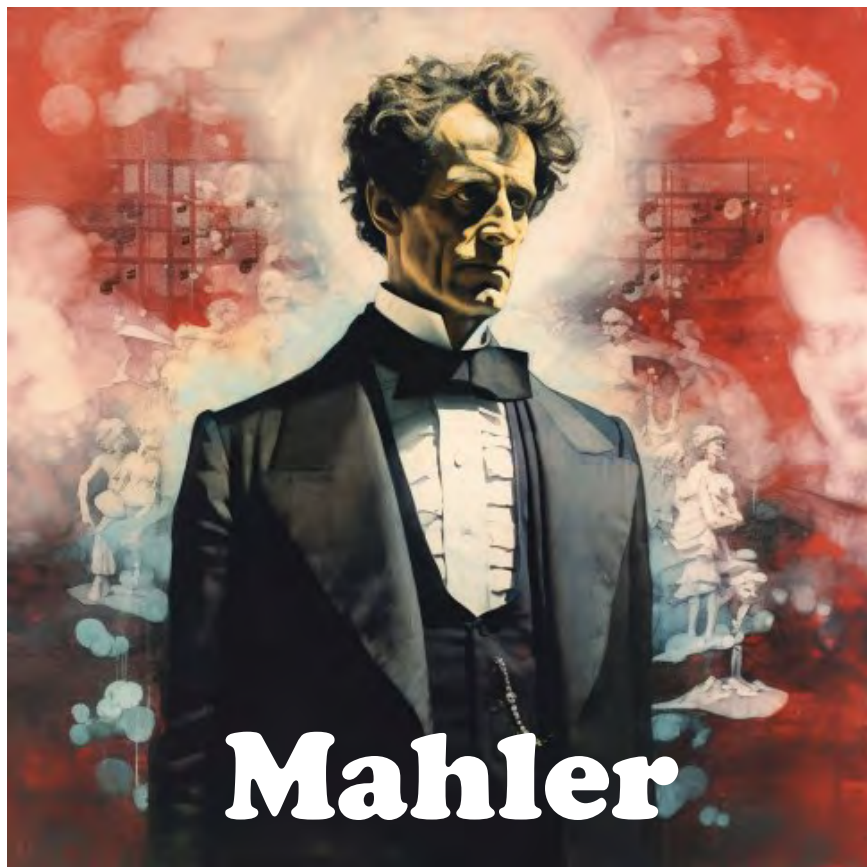


## DALLAS

If you wanna see what the 1980s ideals were, you can't ignore *Dallas*' role in the definition of the period. Who Shot JR was a massively important part of the popular culture, and the dream where Bobby ended up alive again was incredibly innovative television storytelling. The show lasted through the entire 1980s, and I am pretty sure that it is the only series with more than 300 episodes to spawn a spin-off with more than 300 episodes.







Mahler was High School.

I started listening to some classical in High School. I had three or four CDs, having been given a CD player Christmas 1988 or 89, and first ones I know of were Stravinski's *Rite of Spring*, *The Best of Beethoven*, and the one I played the absolute hell out of, *Titan*.

Now, I am aware that *Titan*, as the incredibly cheap CD called it, is actually Mahler's first symphony, but that doesn't matter, because it was eye-opening.

The piece opened hot, and it instantly brought to mind a storm in a way I can only attribute to having watched a lot of Disney movies as a kid.

The whole piece feels like a Wings song, and I always thought that it was kinda cobbled together, much like *Live and Let Die*, but somehow they're

all there, all right, all moving you through something. It's not exactly right, but it all feels right when you experience it.

I discovered *Das Lied von der Erde* because of Tom Lehrer, and I have to say that it was what got me interested in Opera more than *Madama Butterfly*. Before I heard it, I thought Pucini's masterpiece was the only Opera worth hearing. I was proven wrong, and now that I am aware it wasn't actually an opera (I really knew, and now know, next to nothing about the intricacies of classical musical stuff) I still say that it's in that universe! It's just gorgeous, though I can't understand a single word of it. It's the use of the voice as an instrument that I love about Opera, and that apparently isn't the right way to do it.

The way he wrote music was in conversation with both sides of his time. There was a movement towards a modernist perspective, and some of it has a lot of Mahler to it. It's as if all of early 20th century music passed through Mahler and his contemporary Jean Sibelius. You can hear his influence on Schoenberg and Webern, but you can add Aaron Copland, Kurt Weill, and Shostakovich to that list. These, oddly, are some of my other favorites, especially Copland.

Mahler had a revival, partly due to Copland, but largely due to Leonard Bernstein. In the 1960s, with LPs of his work becoming popular with Classical music listeners, he became much more popular with the Orchestral world again, and even ended up mentioned in one of the greatest songs in the history of Musical Theatre—*Ladies Who Lunch* from *Company*.

I still go to Mahler a fair bit when I need classical for the drive home. In fact, I have a playlist; it's called *Drive-9 closed*. Starts with *Das Lied von der Erde* then it's The Smiths, Big Audio Dynamite, and Daft Punk.

Gustav would be proud.











## **On the Matter of Coffee**

**As should be obvious. I like coffee.**

It wasn't always this way. I used to basically only drink it late at night at Denny's or Coco's or Lyon's. After I got out of college, I basically avoided it, my sleep patterns never having been very good. The idea of coffee is a great one—it's kinda tasty, but not so tasty that you want to mainline it. It provides a waking boost, making it ideal for morning drinking. It mixes well with all sorts of things, and it has a widely-varied flavor, and most importantly, it smells awesome!

How do I take my coffee? Good question!

First off, black coffee is not my thing. It's just too pronounced. I usually add a nut milk, since dairy isn't widely available (or recommended!) in our house. My fave is probably coconut milk, but Almond, Macadamia, Cashew, and rice milk all make appearances. It's less about the flavor of the nut milk, more about the cooling/smoothing factor. Coffee with cream added becomes much softer, and that's something I certainly need.

Which is not to say I don't like strong coffee.

My favorite coffees are Kona coffees. They're not easy to come by on the mainland for a good price. A nice light roast Kona, like the stuff we drank in Maui, is the thing that'll change you



forever.

While not exactly Kona coffee, there's Lion coffee. It's the most popular brand on the islands and it's what I mostly drank when we were out there. The best part about it is that it stands up to just about anything you add to it. Tiramisu is a great dessert, and when you use the Lion Toasted Coconut roast, you've got it nailed.

Kauai Coffee is another great one, and one of the few flavored coffees that I enjoy. The Macadamia-Coconut blend is full of flavor, but there's still some subtlety. I like it, and since I have a K-Cup machine here in the office, I went out and bought the re-



usable K-cups to use specifically because it's about 1/3 the price of the K-cup Kauai coffee to buy by the bag. I guess it's better for the Earth too...

The thing I don't use in my coffee anymore: sugar. Diabetics CAN have some sugar, but in my case, it ain't gonna happen every day. I've gone to a tiny amount daily and 0 added sugar, if I can manage it. Removing sugar from the coffee equation is an interesting one, as I used to like mine thick with the stuff. I will admit, I miss it. Like a lot. I REALLY MISS SUGAR. I guess I more miss the ability to not worry about my blood sugar levels. My new mantra is "Coffee is not Dessert."





So, the reason this is a coffeazine, more or less, is that I need to limit my time writing it to a single cup, as it's easy to disguise that time as being unproductively productful.

Still, I miss desserts, and I wish I could eat even a few bites of really good Coffee Cheesecake, or a slice of really good banana cream pie, or a nice slice of really good San Francisco Silk to enjoy with a cup of Lion coffee.

Some things, though, are always just out of reach.









**OK. so this submersible.**

I am terrified of the sea. It's just not smart to go messing with it! When my Mom pointed out that we could go on a submarine voyage in Maui, I was terrified until I looked it up and saw that it was really just a deep-hulled boat and didn't really go out too far. I enjoyed that trip, but I will admit to a bit of rising terror most of the time.

The Submersible that went down to look at the Titanic and it ended up in disaster.

While I'm writing this, there are signs that the submersible didn't just implode; metallic banging has been heard. Now, this

could be a number of things, but it would appear that as of about 72 hours after they lost contact, at least one of the passengers are alive.

The problems are several, and terrifying.

The countdown to running out of oxygen is only one problem, because people absorb oxygen and put CO<sub>2</sub> out at different rates. If one of those aboard had expired, you'd expect that the others would have longer, though that's not exactly the case. When someone dies, it doesn't take too long for it to start off-gassing, which will not only stink, but could certainly start to bond with O<sub>2</sub> in the submersible and that would shorten the time they have as well. There's no way of knowing if CO<sub>2</sub> scrubber systems are working, though since it lost comms, it's highly unlikely.

There's also the fact that any survivor will be starving, and though we're not sure what provisions they brought with them, cannibalism is not unheard of in these sorts of situations.

A lot of focus is on the fact that this is an attempted rescue that focuses around a billionaire's folly.

Now, I'm all for deep sea exploration, both public and private. I don't mind James Cameron going down there every six weeks or so to take a look. Bob Ballard, the dude who re-discovered the Titanic in the 1980s, has said that there's been irreversible damage to the wreck by submersible visitation, and there's no question of that. I really think that allowing visitation by NGOs is a bad idea, though I'm guessing the fact it's in International Waters would make it hard to control. It's a gravesite, even if most (and likely all) human remains have been consumed, and while you can certainly visit the area without doing damage, who would pay a quarter-million and not get up-close-and-personal with the disintegrating mass of metal and artifacts?

Still, it is a tragedy, and as I write this, it turns out they've found a debris field that belonged to the submersible. It's sad for the people on-board and they're family, but if any good comes from this, maybe it'll be respect for the dead of both the Titanic and the Titan.





