



# Claims Department

The Kids had an eye appointment.

I don't always take them to their doctor's, in fact I rarely do, but this time I did and they wanted to go to the Library and that's where we've been for the last two hours. We're having a good time, and there are literally three towers of books they want to check out on the table we've taken over.

My kids, they love books.

They read and read, and though Bella does do the flashlight under the cover thing, they both a lot like me as readers. I love reference books, and Bella will read everything from weapons manuals to photobooks on 9-11. JP HATES non-fiction, and will read fiction non-stop, like me in my 30s when I was reviewing and writing about books almost constantly for *The Drink Tank*.

Go figure.





## **Conor fuckin' McGregor.**

Fuck that guy. I mean, seriously. He's a talented fighter, no doubt, but his out-of-cage antics are reprehensible. He has started fights before, but in the last couple of weeks, he's been accused of sexual assault, and the NBA may have aided and abetted.

So, game four of the NBA finals and McGregor, one of the most famous MMA fighters ever, was going to do a bit for a pain relief spray by punching the Miami Heat mascot, who ended up at the hospital. After that, things get darker.

Apparently, Security corral the woman into a bathroom

where McGregor was waiting. In there, she claims that McGregor assaulted her while security kept anyone else from entering.

In 2019 and 2020, he had three sets of allegations in 2018, 2019, and 2020. He's also been accused of theft, robbery, and battery. He's seen as a hot head. McGregor's people have been fighting these accusations by claiming he's the victim of a shakedown. There are various videos, some of which show the woman going in, and there is a TMZ video that apparently shows McGregor and the woman together after the bathroom incident.

The woman claims the NBA made her an offer to drop any suit. The NBA denies that. There's been no arrest yet, though that could still happen as they're still investigating the scenario. Still, with McGregor's history, this doesn't seem like an isolated incident.







## **UFOs are fascinating.**

I have no idea what they are, alien or Earth-made, but I do know that there's a bunch of really fascinating sightings. I've been looking through a bunch of ones I missed, and I found one that I think encapsulates why I'm so interested.

Back in 1987, a local contractor named Ed Walters sent the *Gulf Breeze Sentinel* a bunch of photos. The photos showed an incredible ship, looking huge and very much like the ship from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. So much so, that people balked at the legitimacy of the photos.

But Walters' story was incredible.

Walters claimed that he first saw the craft, looking like something straight out of Spielberg, and that he'd been immobilized by a blue blue beam. He managed to take a few Polaroids of the craft, and ended up getting visited and communicating with the aliens.

Now, these are interesting, one because Polaroids are difficult, though not impossible to fake. He also claimed to have video footage, which in the late 1980s would have taken significant skill to fake. There are people who have examined them and declared them fakes, including the mayor of Gulf Breeze and a JPL image expert, but others have said that they appear legitimate. The leading fake hypothesis is that they're small painted models with well-done lighting. Another, is that he painted a glass plate and shot through it. The edges of the craft are kinda fuzzy, which is soethign people who go both ways focus on.

He'd claimed to have had other high strangeness encounters, included three bouts of missing time. He did pass a polygraph, which isn't exactly proof of anything other than he believed that what we was being asked was true, but more telling is that he agreed to take one.

The thing is there are others who reported seeing things, though these started to come out after the *Sentinel* had published the photos. A lot of skeptics point to this saying they're just chasing clout and hoping on the bandwagon, though I'd argue that it was basically the thing that made it OK to step forward and say you saw something.

Of course, things got weird in 1990.

The Walters moved out of Gulf Breeze in 1988, and the

house was sold. The new residents found a model underneath the insulation in the attic. The model was quite similar to the ship shown in the photos, and there were blue gels which could explain the fuzzed nature. This is usually used to show that these are fakes, though it might not be that simple.

Walters claims that someone set him up, planted the model to discredit him. Could it happen? Yes. Others were able to recreate the photos convincingly.

But that hasn't slowed the sightings in and around Gulf Breeze.

The area remains a hotspot for sightings all these years later, and part of that might be another reason—there's a MASSIVE military base not too far away. It's possible these were photos of military craft, and it's possible that the government might want to keep these things secret. In which case, they may have had reason to discredit Walters.

It's less likely than them being fakes, but you never know.

The Gulf Breeze Sightings continued. There were sightings through about 2000, and then again in 2012. There are a lot of sightings in that area, in Pensacola, especially of orange lights traveling at high speeds.









**I've been working on another book .**

This time, it's ghost stories.

Anyone who knows me knows I love ghost stories, and I think they're an interesting view of what we consider to be important in our society. Again, I have no idea what they are, but I really believe there's something we don't understand going on.

And thus, *Ghosts & Crime*.

Now, there are a lot of ghost stories connected to crimes and criminals. So many crimes have ghost stories that have grown around them. From Jack the Ripper (the ghost of Mary Kelly and

Annie Chapman have been seen near the sites of their murders and rippings) and to the application of real estate law to haunted houses, there's an overlap of the law and crime with the supernatural.

Or at least the assumed supernatural.

The thing is there are some great examples of hoaxes, like the Amityville Horror (though there's a LOT more to that story!), and some where the ghost plays a part in an otherwise normal crime, like the Hammersmith murders. There's even crimes supposedly done by ghosts!

So, I'm pitching it to my publisher now, and if they don't want it, I'll take my time, write it, and then release it on my own. It's not a difficult thing in this day and age, and though it wouldn't likely make much money, it'd at least be out there.







### **I'm going over pieces I've never used.**

If you think I publish everything I write, you'd be largely correct. I do go straight to print with at least 90 percent of my writing. My computer, though, does crash, and when that happens, often the pieces I was working on getting throw into a Recovery folder, and usually I don't go through them more than once or twice an ever.

I did the second pass through last week, and I found a piece I had gone about 500 words into and never published. It was on the wrestler Joey Ryan and his accusations by a number of women about him being, at absolute best a sex pest, and far ore likely, a sexual abuser and potentially a rapist. The piece (which I'm gonna finish and probably run next issue!) wasn't bad, though it got into some areas that I wouldn't expect to have gone into back in early

2022.

There was also a piece, fairly short, that I completely remember working on for an issue of *Journey Planet* that we never actually did on the author Tim Powers. I love Tim, one of my all-time favorite authors, and I wrote a piece on offering him some Pumpkin Pie.

It was a thing.

We're gonna do a Powers issue sometime, along with a Bryan Talbot issue that I've also been working on off-and-on for the last couple of years, pretty much since we shared an escalator at Dublin. These are gonna be seen eventually. Remember—I wrote the first piece for the King Arthur issue that happened in 2021 back in 2010.







**I was in college in the 90s, so I love Weezer.**

There was a time when metal and alternative music were very separate things. There were bleed-overs, bands like Sugar and The Afghan Whigs, but it was seldom as thoroughly embraced as the legends—Kenosha, Wisconsin's own—Weezer.

There also may never have been a more hit-or-miss band.

Weezer's fanbase is fairly rabid. There are some incredibly dedicated fans with more podcasts, blogs and YouTube channels than most bands. It's incredible to see how powerful a voice can become in the WeezerVerse these days. I even appeared on one, *We*



*Are Weezer*, in the dim-dark past.

When Weezer hits, they hit hard, and a big part of why they've been relevant for 30 years is that they started off hitting so incredibly hard. The first Weezer album had three of the best, most revelatory songs of the 1990s—*Buddy Holly*, *Undone (The Sweater Song)* and *Say It Ain't So*. They had this incredible sound, hard and at the same time, there was the jangle. This combination was new, as you were seeing Punk becoming the mainstream of alternative (or Modern Rock as we called it in these parts) but this was far less The Ramones than it was AC/DC. The guitars were heavy and alternated between sweet and heavily-fuzzed. That combination was something that we had kinda heard before if you liked the aforementioned (and in a later issue they'll be much-more mentioned) Whigs, or even to a degree The Smithereens or Smoking Popes. The sound bounced through radio at the same time as Green Day and The Offspring becoming big deals. That was especially fun because they were both bands you'd see in San Jose at tiny clubs only an year or so before.

A big part of its success was the role played by producer Ric Ocasek

They also perfectly played the MTV game. Their videos were incredible for the time. *Buddy Holly*, directed by the amazing Spike Jonze, was made in the vein of *Happy Days*. It cuts in footage from the actual show, and has the great Al Molinaro (Al from the show) in it introducing the band and doing an outro bit. It's perfect. Retro while the song itself is as cutting edge as you can get.

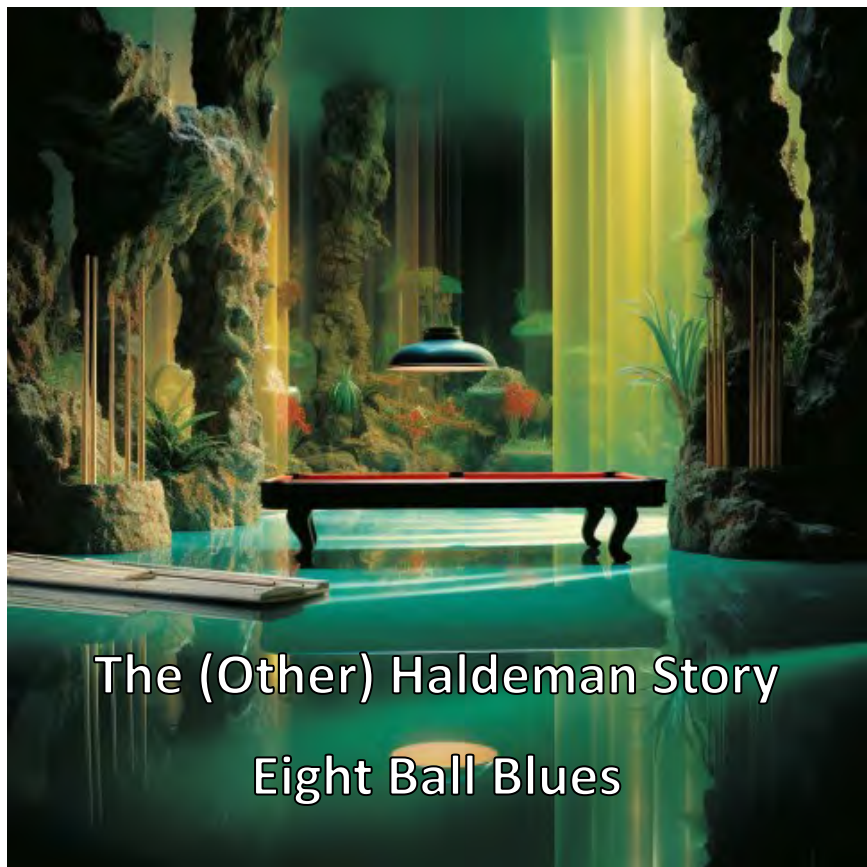
Their second album, *Pinkerton*, wasn't as mind-bending, in fact parts of it feel like simply a rehash, but there are some good tracks. *El Scorcho* has to be one of the better tracks. It's really what we'd call an Emo album these days, and I think it's OK as that.

Their 2001 album (called *The Green Album*) is much more a return to form, while still feeling fresh. *Hashpipe*, my least favorite Weezer song, is there, but *Island in the Sun* is there, as is what is now one of my fave songs overall—*Simple Pages*. It's the song I talked with *We Are Weezer* about and it's just about the best Weezer could ever be. Bob Mould of Sugar even praised it!

I sorta tuned out Weezer's newer stuff until 2019, when they released *The Teal Album*. It's an album of covers. It opens with *Africa* by Toto. It gives it a Weezer circa 1994 treatment which really works beautifully with one of the more atmospheric set of lyrics of the 1980s. It also has a music video that kinda shows that the band gets where they are. It has Weird Al playing guitar on the same set they used for *Undone (The Sweater Song)* and I can't help but see it as a reference to both their place in music history, and poking fun at the idea that they've made it to the point where they're bringing back these songs in a mode that some lampoon, with teh king of the lampoon at the front of thing. The fact that lead singer and songwriter Rivers Cuomo isn't up there is telling as well, because he's not writing the songs, and by putting Weird Al up there, he's making it clear. It was a smart way to do things.

I have never seen Weezer. I've seen members of Weezer I other groups, but never Weezer





## The (Other) Haldeman Story

### Eight Ball Blues

**This one's more fun than most.**

This is a stand-alone, time-travel, race-against-the-clock story, and it's a really good one. The concept is fairly simple: a stranger comes to town...no, wait...a man walks into a bar. The man, or stranger, doesn't seem to know what's what, and he comes up to a pool shark: Tucker Moore. He's good, the best in the bar, and when he gets whipped by the visitor, well, there's something goin' on.

And what's going on is time-travel.

There's been a disaster, and in a true Jay fashion, he's using something that's in the news. The downfall has been made possible by scientists developing a petroleum-eating bacteria, that will go on

to eat all the plankton and thus starve the Earth of oxygen.

That's a bad thing.

This was very much a known concept, but it hadn't been used at scale yet. In fact, bioremediation, as using the wee beasties is technically known, wasn't used for a big thing until the Exxon Valdez in 1989. It's not as if they hadn't been known though dating back to the 1960s, but developing a way to deploy them was still a ways off when this story appeared in 1980.

The pieces is so smart, and it plays with the idea of memory, and leaves us with a potentially unhappy ending.

Or maybe an ultimately happy ending where everyone is satisfied.

Or maybe not.

That's one of the reason why this story is one of my faves from the stuff that Asimov published. It's ambiguous, but not in a way where there is no resolution, but where there are two distinct, equally plausible endings, and if either one happens, we can only blame our present selves for messing things up for the future.

Well, that and the booze.



That's enough for this one.

I'm going to SFMoMA tomorrow for the first time in about 6 months. There's a great exhibition of architecture models that opens in a few weeks, but I don't know that I'll be able to make it. I got me a membership to the place, so I'm making the most of it!

Other than that, this is the last June issue, so I'll be releasing a compilation on Scribd (yes, I still post there after all these years!) and on Kofi and Patreon. It's the least I can do!

All the art was MidJourney, and all the coffee this time was Kauai Vanilla Macadamia blend. It's a REALLY good coffee. Since I've had to cut back on coffee, I get one a day, so I'm gonna make it good!

See y'all in July!



