



Claims Department

A fast visit to the hospital, but I'm back at it!

I'm working on various things, mostly *Journey Planet* stuff, but there's always drama. This year, it's the Hugo admins, AGAIN. This always seems to happen.

Upside, that hospital trip, which I write up later, showed I've lost a few pounds!

The kidses are monsters, but they're still cute.

Had a lovely visit to the Winchester House for the Dark-Fae Prom! I love that place, and the company was grand!

OK, up and at them!





True Crime News

The French art world was rocked.

Claude Lévêque has been charged with rape and the assault of multiple minors in France.

This is a case that is hard to believe, largely because the French Art World has been so protective of its own over the years. There are stories of Picasso and Braque being shielded, and rumors of others in more recent times. There's a sad tradition of young people being taken advantage of that seldom seem far away from famous artists.

Lévêque is largely an installation artist. In many ways, his work treads in the same world as Dan Flavin, Bruce Nauman, or Mary Wetherford. I think I first became aware of his work in 2008 or so when he did a piece that installed neon tracers on L'Pyramid of the Louvre. That piece, my fave I.M. Pei designed work, was fascinating, and rarely do Isa

These are not the first allegations against him, nor are they surprising to many. He was accused of assaulting one of his students long-term in the 1980s, and then again by a pair of brothers who said that in the 1990s they had been abused by Lévêque over the course of several years.

We are seeing waves of these sorts of things. We had the #MeToo movement, that did nothing but good in exposing a huge number of abusers and the depth of rape culture, even as we've tried to sweep it under the rug. Wrestling had a similar moment, Speaking Out, which led to several prominent figures, like Joey Ryan and Gentleman Jack Gallaher, basically being run out of the sport. We saw so many figures in Hollywood finally come to justice, but the art world has been fairly quiet.

Though there have always been whispers.

The most important aspect, and as I mentioned with the Dusty Button issue, is that artists can make a lot of money teaching, and that means access to mostly young people. That's a recipe for disaster, and that's a part of what happened with Lévêque.

Hopefully, he goes down for a long, long time.







I Love Bob's Big Boy.

When I was a kid, a typical Saturday afternoon was my family going to a matinee at the Century 21 or 22 in San Jose. We'd swing by the Winchester House to play games in the arcade or to walk around the gardens, but before all of that, we'd go get breakfast at Bob's Big Boy. That represents three of the things that would go on to define much of my life—movies, the paranormal, and Family Restaurants.

I covered a bit of my love for the place in the coverage of my trip to LA, but I don't think I mentioned that I've been collecting Bob's Big Boy stuff lately and a big part of it has been TikTok.

Yes, I know I'm too old for TikTok.

Anyhoo, it started when I went to an event and ran into the Ephem-

era Society of America. I started going through various things they had, and there were a lot of collectors and dealers in old menus.

I love menus.

I used to, in my younger, more vulnerable years, take the occasional menu from a restaurant, but only if they were those booklet type, not the flimsy paper ones. I used to have a huge number of old pamphlets and a few menus I'd keep in a old clear storage bin. They've been lost for a couple of decades, but I loved them so. This is what moving does!

So, I started reading posts and articles about menus, and I saw a sale for a 1985 Bob's Big Boy menu. I instantly looked to see if the Fisherman's Platter was there, and by Jove it was! It's my all-time favorite meal (fried pollock, shrimp, and scallops, with French fries) and I did not know that back then, it was ten bucks, a significant amount of money to spend on a 9 year old's dinner!

I bought it. It was ten bucks.

The next night, I posted a TikTok of me doing a reading of the menu. When I post me doing a reading, it's just me sitting and silently reading. Menus are perfect for that kind of performance art. They're colorful, easily recognizable, and people will talk about food. I posted it and it went over pretty well. My friend Living Dead Delilah posted saying that she had a Bob's Big Boy shirt and would I want it?

Now, let me say three things about Delilah—she's incredibly funny, she loves horror films, and is stunningly gorgeous. She also really likes chainsaw, though I think that might be an after-effect of her fond admiration for *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and it's 'hero', Leatherface.

Now, I comment on some of her posts, and here she was, asking if I'd like a Bob's Big Boy shirt! I said yes, she mailed it, and while it's in that awkward size between being too big for the kids and too small for me, it's got a place of honor in my shirt collection!

I bought a couple of more menus, a late 1970s and another from the 1980s, though not the same menu. It was one I remembered because it had the most perfect looking burger plate on the cover. I used to order the burger, but it was only OK, and what I really loved were the fries that came with it,

and especially the ketchup.

A few weeks later, my dear friend Chuck Serface, many time co-editor for *Journey Planet* and the King of Men, sent me a FuncoPOP figure of the Big Boy! It was perfect, and while Vanessa opens her's up when she gets them, I have mine in the box, displayed for me and kept dust free!

It's also harder for cats/kidses to known over if they're in the box.

So, a few weeks later, my TikTok friend Oslove recommends a friend to the world—Girl Henry Rollins. She's another GenX-Toker who happens to lead tours in Salem, Massachusetts. She's hilarious, and about a week after I added her, she mentioned that she had been given a Bob's Big Boy piggy bank! I always wanted one of those, but my family wouldn't buy me one when I was a kid, and when I was grown up, as collectibles they were out of my price range. This one was clearly from the late 1960s or early 70s. I asked her what she wanted for it, and she gave me a really low price, roughly half what I'd seen it for on eBay in comparable condition. She mailed it a few days later and now it lives on top of the TV stand with the boxed FuncoPop, staring out across the living room at the bookshelf with the Menus.

It ain't a huge collection, but I love it.

And I love TikTok!







The (Other) Haldeman Story

South of Eden, Somewhere Near Salinas

This is another sports story, but it's more.

The anthology *By Any Other Fame*, is another AltHist collection by Resnick and Greenberg. It's a fun one, mostly light, and each story in it posits a different kind of fame for the iconic targets of their pieces. In this case, Haldeman uses the story of James Dean, but takes him from the world of Hollywood and turns him into a race car driver.

And Natalie Wood is his love interest, a reporter, and Sal Mineo plays his mechanic.

It's a cut story, very much a telling of almost every race car driver story (both fictional and real) that focuses on the need for speed as well as living fast in every area. Dean is presented as a speed-junky, well a goin'-fast junky, and Natalie is the woman who loves him, but sees that he's going to end up dead if he keeps pushing the envelop.

The story plays in a field that I can completely see—that James Dean was going to die, and likely in a fiery crash.

That's an interesting take, and there's a lot behind it. In the time, there was no question that he wasn't going to live long. There are stories of Dean's proclivities in Hollywood, some saying he was a human ashtray (I first heard that from Kenneth Anger, but then heard about a discussion with Vampirica that confirmed that) and he clearly liked driving fast. He was a complicated guy, and the way he was presented on-screen wasn't completely different from who he was off-screen.

So, he kinda had to die.

The story is solid, and says as much about American mythmaking. No matter the field, there are archetypes, and the James Dean type is indelible.







God's curse upon you, John Russell, may the great queen Victoria rot in Hell.

This is my favorite lyric from a group that has flown under the radar for far too long—Black 47.

I've heard them referred to as the Pinnacle of Pub Rock. I don't quite agree, though watching the videos of their New York bar performances might prove me wrong. They had incredible energy, and the Irish Rock they played tread the lanes walked by Thin Lizzy far more than those by U2. I first heard of them in 1993 from an article in *Entertainment Weekly*, which I read religiously. I picked up their CD, *Fire of Freedom*, and put it in my CD player, then at-

tached with a tape-shaped adaptor to my 1974 Krylon Red Volvo.

It was amazing.

The album features three songs that are pretty fantastic, though the entire album is great.

Funky Ceili (Bridie's Song) is, in fact, a funky tune that details the story of a guy who knocks up his girlfriend, and is given the choice between castration or a one-way ticket to New York. It's a great song, a danceable song, and it's the first one I go back to ever time I re-visit Black 47.

Maria's Wedding, a story of a guy who was desperate to get the woman he loves back and decided to wreck her wedding to another fella.

Oh Maria, I'm so sorry I wrecked your wedding
You've just gotta believe me
But just the thought of you takin' your clothes off
for that jerk
Oh, it got me drinkin' and then suddenly I'm stag-
gerin' into church
And I'm dancin' like Baryshnikov all across the high
altar
Oh I bet that you're still mortified
But just think, girl
No one's ever gonna be forgetting
The day I wrecked your wedding

Isn't that great!

The song is a bit more upbeat than *Funky Ceili*, and it's a a classic. This one is pretty much what I think of when I think of Pub Rock. It's also one of the best uses of Uilleann pipes I've ever heard

in a rock song!

The best of them, though, is *James Connelly*.

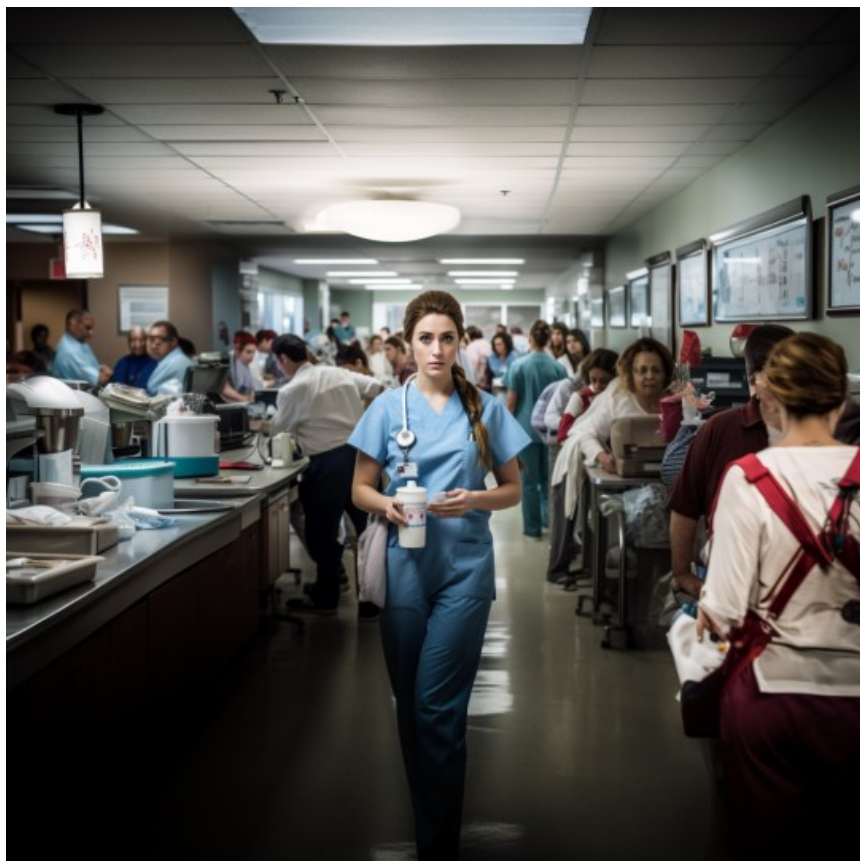
The story of James Connelly, and particularly his unjust execution for his role in the Easter Uprising, is covered beautifully in this song. There's a bit of Dylan's *The Story of Hurricane* in it, but it's so much more impressive because of the use of the pipes.

And Ric Ocasek's production.

Ric was one of the all-time great producers. I'd argue the Cars, with Ocasek, was one of the all-time great bands, but they were made entirely by brilliant producers like Roy Thomas Baker, and Ocasek himself at the end. His credits include Weezer's best albums, and this might be the smallest band he ever produced. I have found their other stuff, and there's nothing that hits this level.







So, I went to the hospital.

I felt weird, had arm pains, chest tightness, and just generally felt like I did in October when I went in and ended up having to stay for three days.

So, I went to the emergency room at Dominican Hospital in Santa Cruz. On 4th of July.

The waiting room was empty, and so I got an EKG, bloodwork, and chest x-ray in about an hour. I've waited as long as four hours to even be checked in no less in and done! They all came back looking good, save for a minor strangeness on my chest x-ray.

It turns out there was a gas bubble high-up in my stomach, pressing against everything. That's never happened to me before, that I know of. The prescription: Gas-X and drinking lots of water. I laughed because I drink a ton

of water.

Other strange coincidence. The next morning, I took my pills— Techtronix (I think that’s a stomach thing) Lipitor, and my blood pressure meds, Norvasc. I keep them in a container that has a section for day and a section for night meds. I forgot my night meds, my diabetes meds, a couple of times, but I’ve been religious about taking my morning meds. I leave the section where I’ve taken the pills from the morning open so I can tell if I still need to take my night pills. Highly effective.

So, I tipped the bottom portion of the container into my mouth, less than 7 hours after I got back from a cardiac workup, and failed to notice that my blood pressure pill had been caught in the lid. I didn’t find out until the next morning.

Luckily, I feel fine and dandy, but still, weird.





That's enough for this time!

Today, which is before you're reading this, *Journey Planet* was nominated for the Hugo award! It's our tenth, I think, and it's for a set of issues that I'm really glad we managed. There were times it did not seem likely.

There's a minor issue with how many people exactly were actually finalists, and I still can't answer that, and we're working on getting something at the business meeting to settle that hash.

This issue was pretty much all Kauai Coffee Vanilla Macadamia Nut blend, except for the last article. I cheated: it was Ginger Tea that one.

Next Time—The 2021 Video Registry, The (Other) Haldeman Story, UFO thoughts, and probably a bunch about True Crime (Paul Bernardo, Alison Mack, and more)



