



**Claims Department**

This time, it's personal.

Well, actually, far less personal, maybe.

I've been spending a lot of time researching stuff for issues of *Journey Planet* and *The Drink Tank*. And I think I've just found too many rabbit holes to avoid stepping into a few of them.

And that's what I'm gonna do now!!!





There's a fight going on in the UFO community...sorta.

There was a fairly substantial sighting in Newfoundland in 2010, and it made world-wide press because it could have been something much more dangerous. Recently, the topic has returned to UFO research groups questioning the validity of the sightings, or at least the idea of who might be covering it up.

Canada is something of a UFO hot spot. Their first sighting of the modern UFO era was in 1951, but it was a decade later when one of the truly important sightings, the Shag Harbor Incident, brought eyes to our neighbor to the north.

The Newfoundland incident took place in January when several people saw missile-sharpened things come up out of the water. They sure looked like missiles, they even had the thrust-exhaust tails. The thing is they completely looked like they were ocean-launched missiles, and there's a military presence in the area, but they also would have shown up on local monitoring stations, and at least have a signature that would pop up on air traffic control systems.

None of that happened.

The grainy pics were pretty clearly of a ballistic missile, but at the same time, nothing seems to fit known versions of missiles. The body was too thick, the trail not in a single form, but seemingly a triple stream. These are very odd, and that's where some of the issues that people are bringing up lives.



The thought that keeps being brought up is that these are earth-made missiles, and the launches were tests. These same thoughts were brought up at the time, but the twist is that these are supposedly Russian or Chinese missiles,

Now, the idea that either Russia or China any weapons systems we don't know about isn't super-far-fetched. We've got spies all over those programs (and they have their spies in ours) but it does seem that these would be of little concern. They were reported to be moving quickly, but also steering, and flying low to the water. That's a strange thing for a missile to do unless it's being controlled from a ship or the ground. No one reported a ship in the area, though the government has been cagey about the locations of submarines.

There was a French missile test, but it was two days later, and the images show major differences in the kinds of missiles.

Now, could it be a large model rocket?

Probably not. It was a large thing, and unless it was someone with a lot of money and a more powerful engine that you'd likely be able to fly under the radar, it's not a model rocket.

One thought, and one that I think may be a good one, is that it might be an older missile, perhaps even a modification of one from the 1960s or 70s. There is some resemblance to the models used by the US, particularly an early Polaris missile. If someone, somehow, acquired a few of those, modified them, they could be the culprit.

People, largely those with a fond eye towards MUFON, say that it's clearly not a missile, but a craft of undeterminate

origin, and thus should be investigated not as a military question, but a UAP/UFO-type matter. For once, I'm not on their side.

I think this is clearly a re-purposed missile of the past, with Polaris being the most likely type, and while people are calling cover-up (and at least one person saying this is evidence that Elon Musk is amassing a war machine) I think it's likely something that someone jimmied up and took on a launch without notifying anyone. Why? How much red tape must there be to launch a re-purposed 1960s missile, and what's the likelihood of them coming and taking me away for having built one???







## **Melbourne Mushroom Murders...Maybe**

Australia does True Crime a bit different.

The big case right now, and it's so huge over there that it's bled into the US and world-wide True Crime attention, is the case of the Death Cap Mushroom poisonings that took place early in August in Leongatha. Now, the Australians are all about the questionable crimes, the ones that could go either way. If you think of one of the most famous cases they ever had, the Lindy Chamberlain case, you can see that they like to take a side and run with it, but mostly when the facts are endlessly debatable (and it's been more-or-less proven that, in fact, a dingo ate her baby.)



So, on July 29th, Erin Patterson had her ex-husband's family and a local pastor and his wife over for a delightful lunch of Beef Wellington. Her ex, Simon, was supposed to come along, but ended up not being able to.

Anyone who knows me well will be aware that there is almost nothing I Love more than beef and mushrooms, and thus Beef Wellington is a dish that I consider to be one of my top ten.

So, Patterson made the Beef Wellington, which everyone seemed to enjoy, but not too long after, the two visiting couples started having serious distress. By the next morning, three of them were dead, one was in critical condition, and Erin had been treated as well.

The source was ingestion of Death Cap Mushrooms.

Now, as a guy who loves mushrooms, and a guy who is frequently broke, there is a reason I will NEVER go mushroom foraging on my own. Death Cap Mushrooms pretty much look like my favorite of all mushrooms—the Shiitake. Most folks say they look a lot like Straw mushrooms, but I've seen picks and they are a gill-ier version of my beloved shiitakes. They are the deadliest mushroom by number of fatalities annually, largely because they look like regular mushrooms and grow just about everywhere now. Only about 1 in 3 people die from eating Death Caps, and it's often fatal over a longer period of time, with a period of improvement followed by a steep decline. There's no antidote to the Death Cap, though there are treatments, one of which is liver and kidney transplant.

So, a lunch with just the five of them saw them all get sick, right?

Wrong.

Patterson's kids were there, too. They also ate teh Wellington, though Patterson said that she'd scraped the mushrooms off.

As a dad, I get that.

Now, the thing here is that the kids didn't get sick, and Erin only got a bit sick. Sick, yes, but not nearly at the same level. Now, she was much younger, but if she ate teh same dish, the effects would have been at least in the same neighborhood. It turns out that there were quite a few Death Cap mushrooms in the batch, but they weren't the only mushroom she'd used in



the cooking.

And that's a BIG part of why folks are so ga-ga over this one.

Erin has claimed that she used some fresh mushrooms and reconstituted a bag of mushrooms she bought at an Asian market. Mushrooms that had a hand-written label. Mushrooms she had purchased a year or more before.

This should stand as a giant red flag.

SO, if you're going to try and get away with murder, one of the best ways is to admit you did the killing, but it was an honest mistake. In this case, she has never denied that she made and served the Beef Wellington, but she has claimed that the bag of dried mushrooms were from an Asian market, and she couldn't read the writing.

She also couldn't remember where the market was.

And it turns out that there are no Asian Markets that sell bags of dried mushrooms with hand-written labels.

And there is no way that a commercial grower would grow a Death Cap as they are only found in the wild, not to mention if they had, there'd be more than one isolated case of poisoning.

Folks also say that Erin is a master forager. Any forager alive, who actually eats mushrooms, would know the difference, though I believe in dried form it would be difficult. Once they were rehydrated, the difference would be more apparent.

She was such a big time forager that she even owned a dehydrator for drying her own mushrooms, which she had thrown away almost immediately after the incident. She even-

tually told her ex that she got rid of it because it would make her look guilty. She later told police about it and they've recovered it. Simon thought this was a terrible idea, and spoke to her being guilty.

And he totally seems to think she's guilty, and asked her flat-out if she was.

There is another incident may play into this already



complicated mess.

Back in May 2022, Simon had collapsed at home. He ended up in the hospital for three weeks, nearly dying.

Now, they were together at that point, but have since separated, and apparently the lunch was to be some sort of intervention, with the pastor as a moderator. It's not entirely clear what was going on, but it's clear that the meal didn't go as planned.

Unless, of course, it went exactly to plan.

The idea that she would try and murder her ex and his parents isn't a novel one, but to put her kids in danger would be. Perhaps, knowing that it took a fair bit of Death Cap to be fatal, she'd planned on making it for the kids and that the scraping off of the mushrooms would be enough to protect her kids, and that she'd eat around the mushrooms, taking only a small amount, just enough to get her sick. That would be a gamble, but if she really didn't care if she made it, it might be worth it to have her 'revenge'

And there's the sticky part.

She may or may not have a motive, and I think that's why she hasn't been arrested yet. Love will make a person do crazy things, and the seemingly unknown status between Simon and Erin might be enough to drive her to do something rash, particularly if she knew that this was a sort of intervention.

We're gonna be hearing about this case a lot, and I'm betting she's going to get charged at some point. Did she do it? People have been convicted on less.





## Hugo Short Story Reading— Rabbit Test

I'm reading the Hugo nominees.

This was the first, published by the good people at *Uncanny* (where I've got a piece coming out this month!) and it's a fantastic, and timey piece. It looks at a world where reproductive rights are severely limited, and also bounces back-and-forth throughout the history of pregnancy-related science, research, and social issues. The way author Samantha Mills digs into each of the time-sectors beautifully, but most importantly, she plays with the connections between past and present with a kind of deft wisdom. She deals with not only with the evolution of reproductive rights, but with the idea that even in the light

of a century+ of progress, it only takes those that want a different world gaining enough influence to make all the technical and scientific advances mean little to nothing.

You realise that this is where we are, right?

There's also a massive theme of security intrusion and how it can be used as a way of controlling a populace. This is always something that I can not buy into, because honestly, I NEED the world to be monitored. The benefits for someone with massive memory issues (I can not tell you how many times I've gotten lost trying to drive home from work, and the possibility of me driving off the road down a cliff is high) not to mention things like solving (and quite like preventing, if the way that serial killings have declined in the shadow of things like DNA and database creations) murders and other crimes. Yes, there are dangers, but so that is also true of every other technology. That said, here it's played intelligently and with the kind of delicacy that a story like requires.

There's a climate change aspect, which I think is important to speak on when we talk about the future of just about everything. One of the final sections of the story tells us of the connectivity of all these issues, and the reality that it's not only all connected, but could well be a single issue—the issue of control, both internal and external.

I find it to be such a powerful story, one that is human, and humane, and as the first story of the set of nominees I've read, it's gonna take something super special to knock it off the top of my ballot.







Food is happening!

SO, Vanessa went to Costco the other day. We do about 1/3 of our shopping there, and she noticed that Pork Shoulder Butt was only \$1.49 a pound. Those of you with long memories of my writing about my cooking when I was a single guy with a crockpot will remember that for a period, I would cook one of these and live off of it for a week or so. Now that I have a loving/maddening family, it seems time to start again.

So, we got roughly 13 pounds of meat, and once I pop it into the Crockpot along with a sliced onion, salted and peppered and granulated garlic and basiled, that'll cook down to somewhere in the 9 to 10 pound range.

And what exactly will I do with so much pork?

My wife and oldest kid LOVE carnitas, and once you've got some pork cooked, making it into something carnitas-like ain't too difficult. Just pull a couple of handfuls out of the mass, chop 'em and shred 'em up a bit, toss 'em in a pan with some Mexican oregano, Italian seasoning, lemon juice and pepper and cook 'em in a bit of olive oil. It turns out real good.

At the same Costco trip, Vanessa found a delightful bottle of Thai Sweet Chili sauce. This makes for an easy trio of dishes. The first, with the addition of my favorite gluten-free pizza crust and a can of pineapple chunks, is a version of Thai Pizza. Toss the pork in a little of the sauce, put a little more sauce on the crust, then add red onions and the pineapple to the pizza with a layer of Cheese for Bella, fake Cheese for Vanessa, no cheese for JP, and fake ricotta and real Moz for me.

We are not an easy or unified eating family.





The more I look into Museums, the more I wanna visit.

I haven't gone to an art museum in a couple of months. The last one, The Cantor Art Center, was a brief visit. We've been to non-art museums, as I've written about, but I'm kinda missing the paintings and sculptures that I love so dearly.

Lately, I've been digging into Museum websites and trying to get an idea about what a museum online can actually be.

This is actually a big question.

There's an idea in museum called 'experientiality' and it's a doozy. The idea is that the true value of an object is partly dependent on the way in which it is experienced. Thus, see-



ing an image of a work on your computer screen is different than seeing it in person. There is some argument about the validity of this concept, largely from the cyber-first crowd, but there was a thing I can point to in my time at the Computer History Museum that certainly speaks to it. In the old warehouse, you would walk in and immediately get hit with the smell of old electronics. This was lost when we moved into the main museum where the collection now lives (and it's probably a good thing because that smell is a part of the decay process) because it could never deliver that experience. There's a distance that forms when you experience these things behind glass, and that distance grows when you're experiencing it through a screen.

Now, that's not to say there is no value in viewing on a screen, but it's different, and there are certainly benefits that screen-viewing adds. Zoom functions, the ability to recommend movement between exhibits, and perhaps most importantly, to get eyes on all, or at least more, of their collections. The removal of physical limitations is the biggest plus.

But no one can seem to agree if this helps or hurts museums.

A lot of folks tend to think it helps in the same way that a social media account helps drive traffic to a restaurant, though this has been countered by those who point to many museums after they have robust websites staying steady on attendance, and in a few cases, rolling back somewhat. There are those who say the two are separate things and don't actually interact with one another except for those who are already inclined to attend the museum. These are called the 'time-checkers' because typically the area of a museum's About Us

section is operating hours. That I think is closer to where I fall most of the time, but often I see it as neither and both at the same time and the two views annihilate each other on contact.

One museum that I think does it right is The Met in New York.

They have a HUGE amount of their collection online, and more importantly to me, they have a free use area where you can download thousands of images. Doing so makes it possible to get not only an idea of what the museum does, but it gives an idea of what the museum values. Clearly, The Met values access, and that's a good thing.

And not just so I can illustrate my zines.

I think I'll get to SFMoMA, or one of the museums at Stanford, in the coming weeks. Since the weather seems to be going towards the cool side, maybe I'll even convince the kids to come!





## Musique à Grand Vitesse

Michael Nyman is awesome.

I like film soundtracks, but even moreso, I love film scores. I used to pick up Film Score magazine and really dig into the various musical nattering that surround Hollywood. Nyman is a legend in the world of modern orchestral music. He's writing some amazing pieces, often heard in films such as *The Piano* and the films of Peter Greenaway, and his arrangements often reinvigorate the pieces in new ways, such as interpreting them as if they were piece performed by Jerry Lee Lewis.

And yes, I'm serious about that.

He came up about the time Minimalist composition was gaining serious trac-



tion, with the works of Steve Reich, and especially Terry Riley, making the world take notice. In C really changed how music was viewed as far as construction was concerned. Yes, many of the ideas that Riley, Reich, Philip Glass and others were working with had passed through the mind and work of John Cage, they were the ones codifying it and taking it into the mainstream by creating real world works out of them instead of the high-falutin' thought experiments that seemed to be Cage's domain.

Of course, it's a single piece of Nyman's that really hammers me, and it's built both like and unlike a minimalist composition.

The year is 1993. And a new line of the French intercity TGV is opening between Paris and Lille. The Festival de Lille commissioned a piece of music to commemorate the event, and Nyman was chosen. It debuted at the Festival, and was later recorded by the Michael Nyman Band. The piece, *Musique à Grand Vitesse*, MGV, or 'High Velocity Music', turned out to be one of the most evocative pieces ever recorded.

The piece begins with simple bass notes, I believe played on either a bass clarinet or perhaps a bassoon. The signature is simple, just two alternating notes, for a few measures. Then another piece comes in as a sort of fugue, but eventually it devolves into a single unified driving piece, with a staccato feel that reminds one of the chug-chug of a train. This is the journey's beginning, the first region, and it's not until the end of the entire piece is it that we experience what each region has meant to the entire work.

And that is magical.

It's a 5 movement structure, similar to a Shakespeare play but with some of the traditions of the symphony maintained. At the same time, it is telling a story of a journey, though not as if it were musically narrating a train trip, but as if it were experiencing a journey and trying to recall it through a musical medium.

Some journeys are beautiful, sweet, perhaps even languid. And moments later, it's back to the sped-up rhythms of the drive shaft. It's sometimes jarring, but never so much that it throws someone along for the ride down.

The elements are simplified, and there's some of In C in there, but there's also some Debussy in there, and more than a touch of Stravinsky. It's the elements that are put into play on repeat that give the piece an amazing sense of move-

ment. It is a piece rooted in contemporary times, but it plays with timeless elements.

This is my drive to work music. It's perfect because it lasts almost exactly from the time I leave my house to the stoplight at the bottom of the mountain as I enter Saratoga. It is a lively traveling companion, for sure, but more importantly, it's just great listening.

There's only one official recording of the piece out there, and it's incredible. There's a lot of Michael Nyman, but *MGV* is easily the best of 'em.





That's all for this one!

Next swing through, there'll be more of the Hugo reading, possibly a look at the films of Wes Anderson (I'm catching up!) and more random stuff.

This is a mostly random zine, you know!

There MIGHT be a *Journey Planet* coming out in the next couple of weeks, and a special *Drink Tank* for sure. I'm far from a one-trick pony!



Coffee this time—

Introduction—Tully’s Hawaiian Blend

UFOs—Kauai Garden Isle Blend

Mushrom Murders—Something Light Roast from Starbucks

Hugo Short Story: Rabbit Test—Kauai Garden Isle blend

Roast cooking—Tully’s Hawaiian Blend

Museums—Yogi Ginger Tea (I cheated!!!)

MGV—Sumatra Light Roast from Jenna Sue’s of Boulder Creek

This—Ciro Bru Roast Cacao



