



# Claims Department

All Art Generated using MidJourney

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Coffee Drink—Kona Coffee French Roast

Other coffees drank while creating the art

Jenna Sue’s Costa Rica Light Blend

Peet’s Major Dickinson’s Blend

Kona Coffee French Roast

Whatever the hell they served me at the Airport...







## WELCOME BACK!

As I work on this, I am in Hawaii. I hadn't been to Hawaii since I was 5 or so, and it is nice to be back.

This issue won't be any different than the last three; they do have coffee in Maui, though there's likely to be a little more Hawaiian content, no?

My packing for the trip has been fairly different. We've got a Condo in Maui, on the other side of the island from Vanessa's dad and brother, and my Mom came with us, so we could cook. First night we went out and got food from Safeway, We ended up having burgers for lunch that held us over 'til bedtime, when we simply had some pre-roasted chicken and mushrooms. Then tonight, steak...







# 2020 National Video Registry

## Part 2

## **PART TWO IS HERE!**

Last time, it was the Rodney King video, The 700 Club, Roots, Sesame Street, The ANTA Show, and Bones Brigade Video.

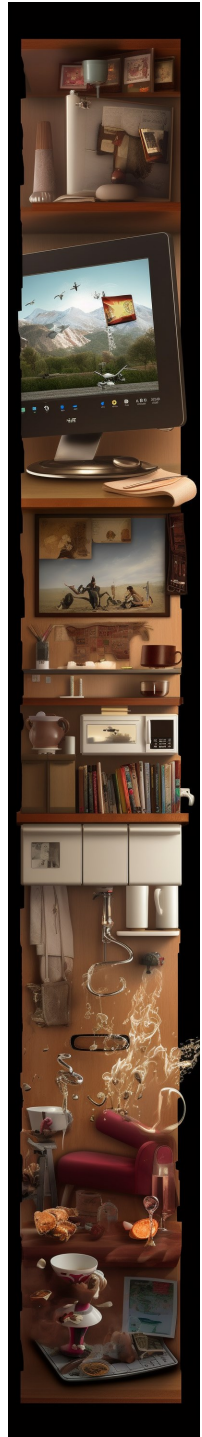
This rouns features more crime, news, a bit of the best drama ever shot for TV, a big ol' dollop of Game Show, and one of the iconic characters in the history of television.

### **OJ Simpson Chase**

There's no question that the footage of the White Bronco driving on the LA Freeways was a defining image of the 1990s, as much as the Rodney King video, but also defining the new kind of news that was being pushed. LA news is now chock full of car chase reports, and this one shows an important moment where the world was watching, either shaking their head, or cheering OJ on.

### **CBS Nightly News**

This news program has had some of the most iconic anchors of all-time, and really helped to define what network news was. Edward R. Murrow, Walter Cronkite, and Dan Rather all played a massive part in the way Americans stayed up to date, and even helped to inform American opinions on everything from Vietnam to Bill Clinton's scandals.







## The Sopranos

Remember when I said that TV's gotten crazy good? This is a large part of why. Not the origin of TV working for a more adult audience, the kind that played with themes and techniques that were more often seen in films, but certainly the one that broke the biggest. Tony Soprano has become one of the greatest characters in American dramatic history, and James Gandolfini's performance is the stuff of legend. It's run was one of the best long-form stories ever told up to that point, and *The Sopranos* was the driver behind so many shows that will end up on this list, including *Mad Men* and *The Wire*.

## The 1960 Presidential Debate

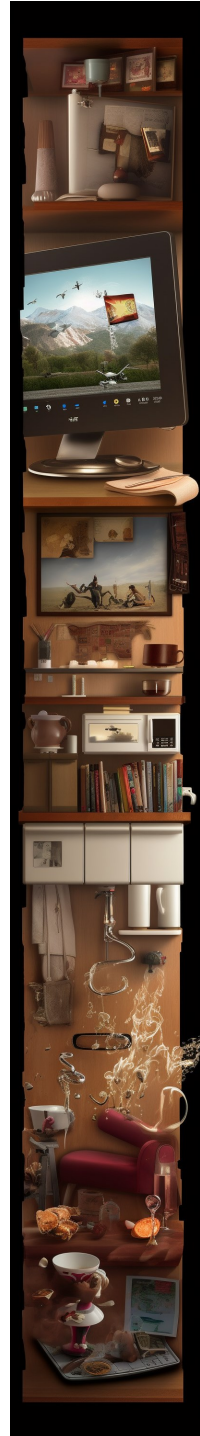
Kennedy. Nixon. This was the debate that determined the role television would play in election cycles. The two of them were so different, and Kennedy was so much better coached, and wearing the darker suit made him pop. When people who know things watched the debate years later, and saw poll numbers, they realized that Nixon won that debate on the policy front, but the confidence projected by Kennedy, and especially that suit, won the country over. Well, and Joe's connections in Texas...

## The Wire (Jenna Sue's Light Sumatra roast, May 13, My Bedroom)

Hey, I just mentioned *The Wire* up there! Many consider this to be the finest cop drama ever created, and it's influence can be seen in everything cop show today, up to and including *Brooklyn 99*. The show was brilliantly written, and the way it presented Baltimore was brutal, but honest. Some of the finest acting in the history of television.

### Jeopardy

There were earlier game shows, there've been longer-running game shows, but it's incredible exactly how good *Jeopardy* has been, and how its infused the culture. Look at the reaction to long-time host Alex Trabeek's death to see how important it is beyond simply being a very good game show. The show has run for more than 40 years, has inspired board games, video games, and one of the best SNL parody segments ever.







## **Twitter & Tik Tok and The Search for Another...**

**THERE ARE NOW ENDANGERED SOCIAL MEDIAS.**

Two of my favorite places on the web are having issues, one internal, the other external. Twitter, which I've been on for more than a decade, was bought by some dude who nearly hit me with his car once and he's not doing much better driving Twitter. TikTok, a company owned by a Chinese concern, is under threat from the Government of being banned. Neither are dead yet, but the fear is there. A lot of folks are talking about where they're gonna go.

Me? I just stake my claims early.

Twitter is the easier for finding a replacement, frankly. A bunch of new Twitter-like sites have popped up, starting ages ago, actually. The first that became known widely was Gab, but then there was Truth. These are geared towards the Right, but really, I wouldn't go there. The recent big one with fandom appears to be Mastodon. It's a part of the Federation or something. I don't know, I haven't been able to get on it because it makes less than zero sense to me. It might be where a strong number of fans end up.

Post.social is news-based, and a lot of journalists have migrated there. It's OK. I'm no journalist, but there are some regular folk. I post there once in a while.

CounterSocial was the first that I tried, was OK, an interesting community, but the lack of viral stuff really hurt it. As much as people complain, I want memes and weird viral stuff.

Spoutible has turned out to be my favorite so far. It's got a good community, there's a news focus, but when I've posted about wrestling it's gotten noticed. It's a nice blend and the community is growing.





BlueSky is out there, apparently from the found of Twitter, but I've not got my invite yet and I'M FREAKING OUT!!!

WT.social is out there, I'm not on it, largely because I feel like that name could be read as 'white social' and I'm not sure I like that connotation. They also put themselves out there based on their no data sales, no ads, and such, none of which matter to me.

Ello.co is a pretty site, but really, it's more Instagram than Twitter.

I tried HIVE, but they ended up having technical issues and it never really started working for me again, which is a shame as I rather liked it.

MeWe? I know folks who have fled there, but I've not found it very good. It's a lot of the things I don't like about Twitter, the people who complain about the app for performance reasons and the like, and a few of the features I like, which are mostly the people.

Other than those, and I know there are many, I'm not interested. If Twitter goes all the way away, I'll almost certainly keep Spoutible going.

TikTok is a lot harder.

I joined TikTok last year, I needed a place to post my short videos, and while it was first portrayed as a place for kids to post dance videos, I found it to be a solid community of folks who had a massive variety of interests. Somehow, I fell in with the Horror community there, and that ended up being one of the best online decisions I've ever made. Kind, funny, thoughtful, and engaging. When we heard that the government was thinking of raising a bill that would give them the right to shut the place down, well we all freaked. Some of the folks I met had TikTok as their primary, and in a couple of cases their only, social media home. We started looking and found...well, stuff.

Clapper was the first I tried, and as far as look, feel, and ease of use, it was all right there. The site doesn't have as many sounds available for videos, which is OK as I use a lot of natural sound for mine, so that's fine. They only allow five hashtags per



video, which is fine with me. Engagement was higher than TikTok for me on most of my videos, which I appreciated, but there was one problem –

-the community.

There's a strong anti-LGBT streak running through it, and a Christian Nationalist set of voices that seem to pop up all over the place. It didn't shock me when I heard that they're strongest in the South. You really have to ride the dislike button and I block a lot. Anyone who says you shouldn't live in a bubble and entertain all points of view on your social media is full of bullshit. I still post to Clapper, but it'll never be my forever home.

Lomotif is a different horse. They allow up to 30 second videos, which is fine for a lot of the stuff I post, though my book/zine/story reviews tend to be longer. This means this is where I post my readings and my silly videos of my kids. Some get a lot of views, more than Clapper at times, but few comments. That's sad, but it happens. Their sound library is great, and I think it's faster than any of the others.

Faster except for YouTube Shorts. YouTube launched Shorts not too long ago, and it's a really smart service. I like the integrated concept, where you can see a users long and short form videos, and that alone makes it a force. The community? I haven't found one yet. The views for some things, like the wrestling shorts I've posted, can be higher than any of the others I've used. The maximum length for a video is one minute, which is a little shorter than I'd prefer. Overall, I will certainly be sticking around, but I doubt it will make a full-timer.

Instagram has Reels, and I use Insta a lot, and I like it quite a bit. Reels are more integrated into the service than I thought they were at first, and there's not as much engagement



for me there, though I can get a lot of views (wrestling content, especially) and it shows in the Instagram timeline, so it will likely be the one that I stick with the longest.

Of them all, I really want TikTok to stick around, because I've got friends there that I love. My favorite person on TikTok, LisaStarchild, is on one other Social Network... Twitter. Sigh.

All in all, I hope things turn around for both. I really can't pay for Twitter, but it seems like that's the way they're looking at going. Throttle me as much as you like, but give me a free version and I'll use the hell out of it! TikTok is all about political will, and it does kinda seem like they're not gonna ban it as of now, but there's always the worry about it. We'll see. Still, I'm having fun trying things out, and having Spoutible and Lomotif and YouTube Shorts isn't a bad add-on.







## Flying to Hawaii

### **I don't like flying.**

A lot of people don't, but I love what a long flight allows me – unincumbered media content binging. I always pack a ton of stuff – I download audio books, make sure I have a lot of music on Spotify, a few books, and I spend ages with the in-flight magazine. I do often watch stuff on the In-Flight Entertainment system, but this time, I did not.

This was the first long flight with the wife and the kids since they were 6 months old. They had their iPads, I had my phone, USB cables, and a bag of books. The kids were excellent, they just played their games and listened to us when we reminded them to go to the bathroom. The flight wasn't very full – I had a row all to myself until Bella decided to come over to sit by the window as we got closer to the islands, and we were the first to see us as we passed over land. This meant I could plug into the USB on one seat, and lounge across two seats.

It was the life.

I started by reading Padraig O'Mealoid's brilliant *Poisoned Chalice*. The story of Marvelman, aka MiracleMan, is a great one for showing all the crazy stuff that happened. I am INCREDIBLY

fond of Pádraig as a dude, but it's moments like reading this that tell me how incredibly lucky we all are to have his brain.

I read about 30 pages, but I needed to go on to another book, because I needed to move on to an audiobook, which meant that I could read a less rigorous book. I put on *A Killer Collection* by Ellery Adams, a fun cozy-type mystery that I had been ear-reading for a few days. It's a decent mystery set among the world of pottery collections in North Carolina. With that on, I couldn't read something like *Poisoned Chalice*, so I switched to 33 1/3's *Twin Peaks* soundtrack.

33 1/3 is a series of books that each deal with an individual album, from *OK Computer* to *Sex Packets*. It's an incredible series, and it deals with things in a way that no other book series I've ever seen does.

It deals with them like *Gen-Xers* deal with albums; it deals with them like friends.

That's not to say it's all sunshine and lemonade, even for *Lemonade*, but it's really an in-depth look by the people who have the deepest personal connections with the works. I can not say enough good things, and the two hours I lost myself in it, listen-



ing to the end of the mystery, it was wonderful.

We didn't get a meal. Sigh. All they had was Breakfast Sammiches, and they weren't gluten-free.

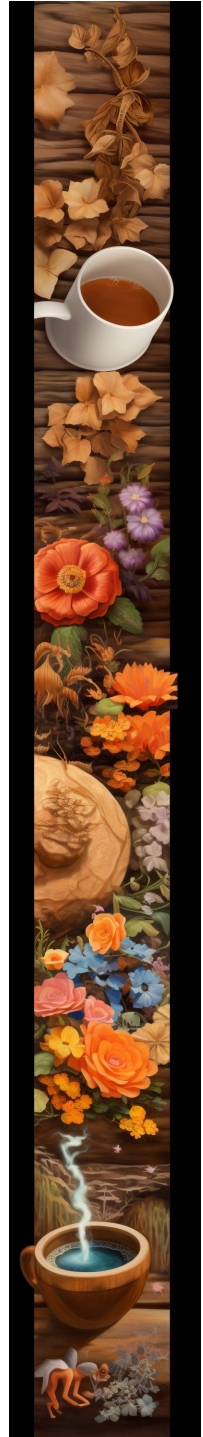
I then transitioned to my required reading for this very issue: *The Agony of Defeat* by Jack Haldeman. More on that later.

I moved on from audiobooks to music, focusing on John Adams (also in this issue) and a bit on Richard Cheese and a little bit of The Smiths. Good set of stuff to listen to. Mostly, it was there to block out any of the plane noises. I hate plane noises. They scare me. A lot. I almost can not deal with how much they bring me to a place where I realise exactly how many things can go wrong when I'm up there, and exactly how catastrophic each and every one of them is, and how few actually have to happen for the worst case scenario.

The headphones I brought were Bluetooth, so I was wireless! So much so that I got up and went to the bathroom, forgetting that I had them on. Noise-cancelling and over the ear since I don't like things in my ear canals.

While listening to Arcade Fire's *We*, I started reading the zines I brought – *Atomic Elbow*.

I discovered *Atomic Elbow* through Twitter. The editor is on there and has some great wrestling takes. The zine covers wrestling, but





not what you'd expect. There's a long, detailed report on a wrestling show from 1993 and the Smokey Mountain promotion. It was one of those legendary shows that tape traders raved about back in the day. I haven't seen it in a while, but I sure as hell remember the day Dave Lagana brought the tape into the common room and we watched it for the first time. I ordered Chinese. It was awesome.

The two issues I had, 37 and 38, were really good reading, with everything from game content, to a comic, to long video reports, to opinion pieces, to a look at Chinese wrestling! It was all really good, and the editor is also a fan of science fiction and there's a picture of a stack of books, one of which is a K.W. Jeter novel from the Laser Books series. These are my kind of people.

I did use the official Hawaiian Airlines in-flight entertainment, briefly. As the islands were coming into view, I turned on the *Island Cooking* which is a cooking show where an island celebrity (a pro surfer in the first episode, a cast member of the new *Magnum P.I.* series in the second) cooks while the host does an interview and provides a bit of play-by-play. It's a simple format, and the Durham Chili Slaw Dogs looked really good!

It was an easy flight, and now that I type this, drinking Kona coffee after a long sleep following a long day that saw me hot tub, touched

the Pacific, watched the sunset with the wife and kids, enjoyed a Hawaiian meal, and spent the first significant amount of time with me Father-in-Law, I can say for sure I had a damn good flight!





## My John Adams

### **I love Minimalism**

It's not that sanctimonious design aesthetic, but the art movement, and especially the music. The music style I knew from the soundtracks to documentaries, but it was the podcast *No Sounds are Forbidden* that gave me the context I needed to really understand what the term meant. I fell hard for Philip Glass, and to a lot of the Richter and Nyman stuff, but it was John Adams, and his unique brand of composition that got me, and it was a tale of two ditties that got me going.

OK, the first ain't exactly a ditty, but a series, an album, if you will. OK, it's a piece made up of pieces. *John's Book of Alleged*





*Dances*. The idea is simple: it's a series of "dance" pieces to which no steps have been created. Makes sense, huh?

OK, so here's the thing. I'm used to Minimalism, and honestly most contemporary composition, being one of two things – intellectually absurdist or Intellectually dour. Terry Riley's *In C* is a great example of something that is damn intellectual, but really, it's absurdist. I mean the pianist plays C over and over and over and over. Most stuff, including Philip Glass's major works, feels dour, too deep to allow any emotion to escape. Humor, usually, is hard to find. John's *Alleged Book of Dance* is full of light, and laughter, and very smart music. It's got the signs of repetition, and the strange, often contradictory changes, but it's so much lighter than most of John's other works. The dances are clearly demarked – there's a beautiful waltz, a clear tango, and what I believe is a foxtrot. These aren't quite ballets, though they've been adapted into such, but they feel like ballroom dances as interpreted by one of the leaders of art music today.

I listened to it most recently on this flight over to Hawaii (about which, you'll read more elsewhere) and I was reminded about exactly how much fun this was. It's never crazy, but it isn't exactly the kind of thing that's got a lot of gravitas. It's light and smart and funny, and yeah. The piece was written for four strings, and prepared piano. I love that, and the sound of the piano

comes across as humorous, maybe, but overall, it's just such a great joyous piece.

Having listened to it, I would love to see something like *Tango Argentina* where a group of Ghod-Level dancers give us ballroom interpretations of the piece. It would be amazing!

The second one is *Century Rolls*.

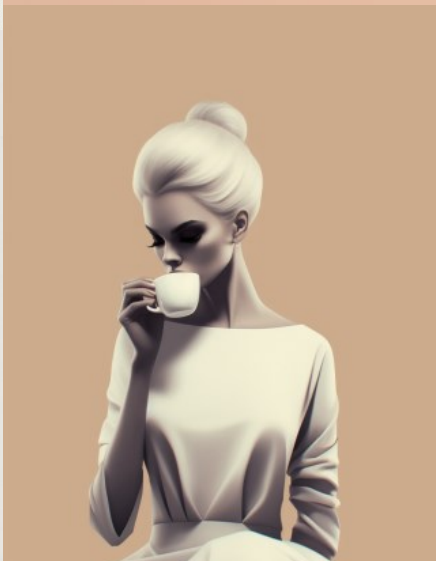
It's a piece in three parts, and Adams had a simple idea' to capture the sound of early 20<sup>th</sup> century player piano rolls. It's a piece that isn't quite strident, though the piano is a bit hammering, but everything else is a staccato phasing of repetitive strings, horns, and winds. It's something I listen to as a way to come into a sort of distanced focus. It's jazz, and *The Rite of Spring*, and Gershwin and on and on and on. It's amazing, and I love it so much. The Second movement is what I think of when I think of Gershwin if he'd lived into the late 1960s. It's the gentler, the softer, the more meandering.

I love John Adams, but these two pieces are my two pieces.

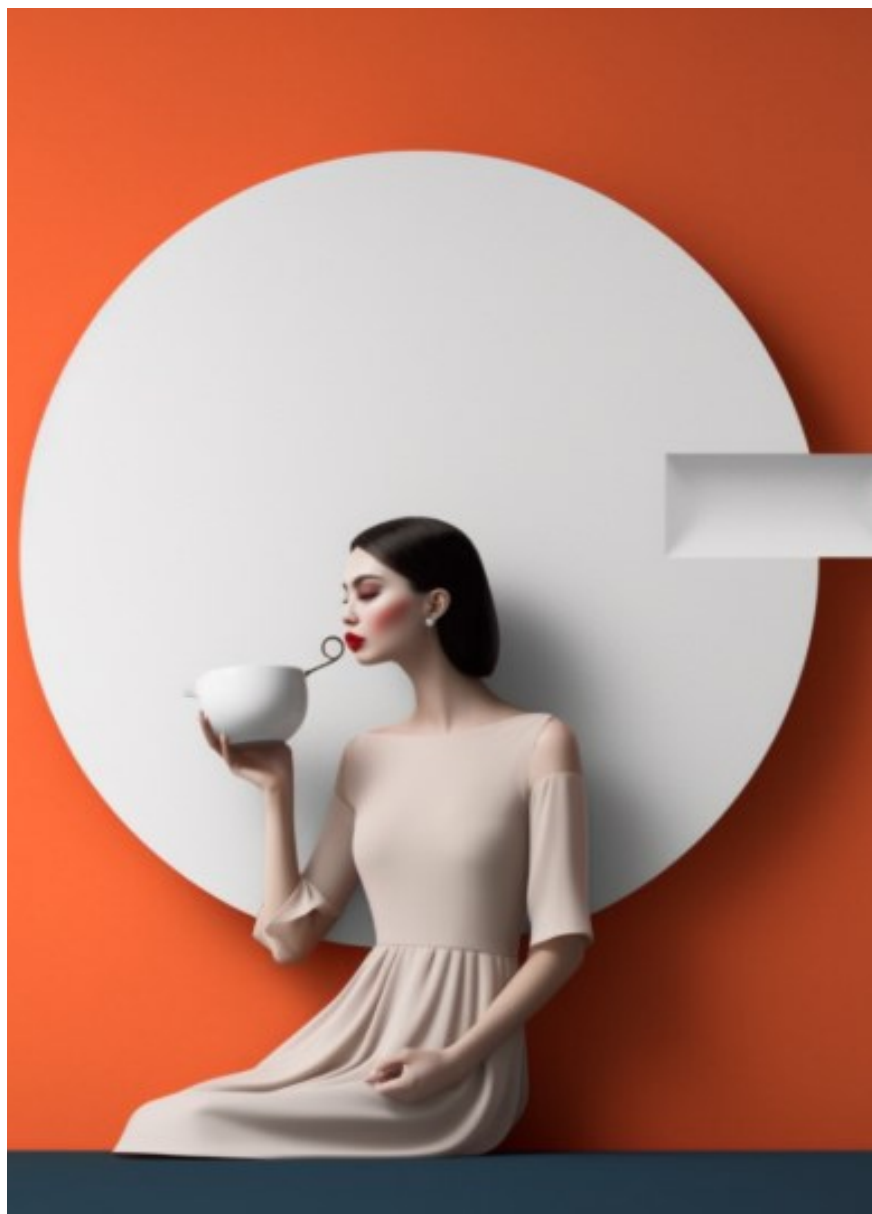




**Prompt: Minimalism Coffee**









**Follow-on to *The Thrill of Victory*, is less a story, more a sketch.**

The idea is the same—Football (real football, not what the Europeans falsely call Football) is deemed too violent for actual humans to play, so you've got robots and genetically-modified people/pigs/others who play the game. The two teams this go: the familiar Daytona Beach Armdillos (Go 'dillos!) and the Castroville Arti-chokes (Let's Go 'chokes!)

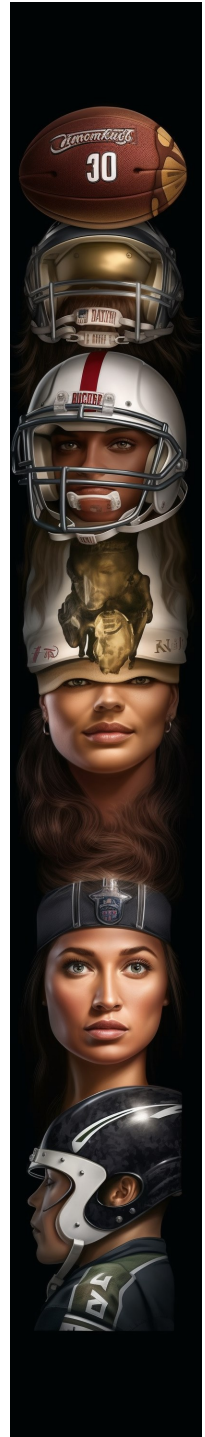
These two towns are hilarious as choices to be important enough in the future that they deserve professional sports teams. First, Daytona Beach ain't huge, it's about 75,000 people, though that's ten-times the size of Castroville, about an hour south of me on California Highway 9, roughly 7,500, and it's not actually an incorporated city! It's claim to fame?

You guessed it: artichokes. It's the world's largest grower of them. It's the city's top crop, and it also features heavily in my book *Food & Crime*, coing from Pen & Sword Books, UK, July 29th, 2023!

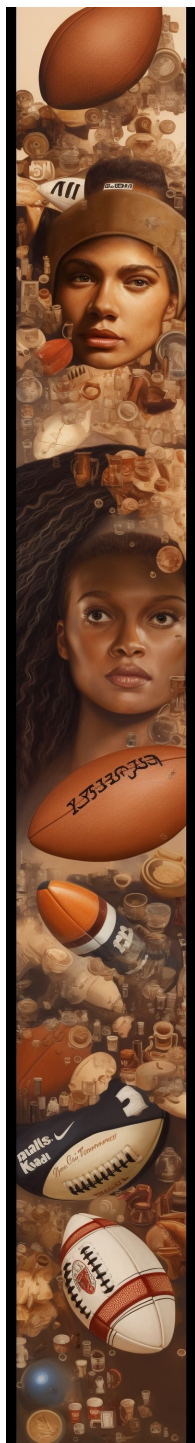
Anyhoo, it's easy to see that anyone who knew these cities would have thought them unlikely, but Castroville getting a team would be completely surreal, but we are way in the future, so you never know. The 'Dillos are robots; the Chokes are mutants. It's a match made in Heaven.

The story, whay slim bit there is of it, is that Daytona Beach takes a beating, but comes roaring back to win it all. It's done ina fashion that feels quick as sudden. It's still the classic football, feel good story.

The key to this piece, and why Jay Halde-man is one of my favourite short story writers of all-time, is that there's way more commentary going on here than you'd think. The first is on what football meant as a television product. The two announcers we're introduced to are clearly,







perhaps even OVERTLY based on the *Monday Night Football* duo of Howard Cosell (complete with slightly excessive descriptions of his nose) and Dandy Don Meredith. The Hawk, the character based on Cosell spends much of the game talking about things that aren't football, letting his ego play out across the game. It's a rather brutal indictment of the man, though having watched this era of MNF, it's not too far off. The other announcer calls it straight down the middle like a sporting event. There were serious questions about *Monday Night Football* at first, saying that it was an entertainment show instead of a football show. It worked, though, and while it's swung back towards being treated like a sporting even again, during the 70s and 80s, there were questions.

The second is the players themselves. The game has become only more violent with the removal of human players. The league leaned into that instead of what actually happened, which was the pulling back from the greater violence. Part of that was *MNF*, and the general growth in football viewership. Part of the reason for the impressive growth of college football was the view, particularly in the South (and extra-specially particularly in Texas) that the NFL had gotten too soft and that College Ball was the only true remaining football.

They, of course, had yet to experience the XFL...

This is a great story, and one that really makes me smile. This is one that Haldeman was less pulling out his crystal ball and more making comments on the day in question. He talks, briefly, about the half-time spectacle (a bigger than ever spectacle after last year's bigger than ever spectacle) and it all feels of the moment. *The Thrill of Victory* felt a lot more like a projection, a prediction in the form of a science fiction story, and it worked too. The ability to look ahead is great, but sometimes it means just as much to get folks to take a look at where they are.





## **JP Loves Steak**

### **I promised I would make him steak in Hawaii.**

Mom bought some Denver steaks, about an inch thick. I thought they were a good choice, so I started from good roots.

The condo we got was bare, or so we thought. I looked into the cupboards and there were a bunch of spices and herbs.

Well, there was garlic and onion powder. Montreal Steak Seasoning, and salt and pepper. There was a huge thing of Italian Seasoning. Oregano. A tiny thing of curry powder. Soy sauce and Sriracha and Worcestershire sauce. It was a start.

I poured the remaining Worcestershire Sauce in a ZipLok, then sook in a bunch of pepper, a strong amount of Italian seasoning, garlic powder, garlic pepper, and a hint of lemon pepper.

I tossed the steaks in the bag, shook 'em up and put 'em in the fridge for a couple of hours.

When it was time, we fired up 2 of the 3 burners, and placed a large piece of foil on the portion without the burners. There, they sat for half an hour, absorbing heat, cooking slowly.

After that, we slapped 'em on the hot part of the grill and just a couple of minutes a side. I had boiled some potatoes, mashed 'em up with a ton of butter, a little coconut milk, some Italian seasoning and a large pinch of red pepper flake. Spicy good!

JP loved it! He loves steak, thus proving that he's my kid, and he ate abot 1 1/2 all by himself. Sometimes, the apple falls right at the foot of the tree!



## Enough of that!

Hawaii has been good stuff! Only here for a day so far, but we've been visiting with my in-laws. My Father-In-Law, Pat, lived on The Farm, that Tennessee commune where one Mr. Robert Lichtman lived! He knew Bob, and while they weren't close, he was sad when he heard he had passed away.

They live in the middle of a jungle on Maui. They've got chickens and a cow named Peaches. It's gorgeous, but really the fact that there's no running water would be a turn-off from the place!

Vanessa and my anniversary is tomorrow, as I write this. 9 years. The next day, the kids turn 8. Wow.

Next issue will be more from Maui, including a bunch of pics, and a lot more writing!



