



Claims Department

Welcome to the second Coffee issue.

The gimmick - every article is written while drinking a single cup (or in a few cases gigantic tankard) of coffee. This time, it's mostly done while drinking a delightful Kona Macadamia blend, because we are less than a week away from going to Hawaii!!!

I plan on sleeping and hot-tubbing and ghost-walking and Costco shopping and easy cooking and ziplining and on and on and on.

We're also visiting Vanessa's family. And my Mom will be there. You know, free childcare!





The Jeffs Koons & Epstein

The arts were hit...kinda.

It came out in a *Wall Street Journal* that Jeffrey Epstein had arranged a visit to the studio of artist Jeff Koons in 2013. A visit that would be accompanied by Woody Allen, another now-infamous figure for his improprieties with his own family.

In other words, a couple of monsters wanted to go and visit Jeff Koons' studio.

Now, if you know the art practice of Jeff Koons, this isn't too surprising. He burst on to the scene in the 1980s doing things like statues of balloon dogs, a massive porcelain of Michael Jackson and Bubbles. His really impressive work, as far as I'm concerned, was *Pup-*

py, a giant topiary in front of the Getty Museum in Bilbao, Spain.

Now, he's not the guy who does his own making. He's a designer, a conceptualizer, and that makes sense as he's a leading conceptual artist. He says his entire art practice, so far as he sees it, is making money. His museum is the art market, and there's no question that he's the master of it.

He says that his work has no intellectual meaning beyond the financial meaning of the pieces. He's wrong, of course. There's a lot of messaging that he tries to deny, particularly in the way he handles commodity objects and imagery. His work actually plays with the idea of the museum as the arbiter of what art's value.

He uses one meaning of value in his concepts, but there are multiple actually there.

I met Jeff years and years ago, and he's actually a pretty fun guy to know.

And thus, it makes sense that Koons might have met with Epstein, even if he had known his background.

Koons is not known for his ethical backbone. He's all about the money, and there's an anything goes sort of attitude that he exudes. He's deeply connected within the New York social scene, but he's also connected to the New York financial scene. His collectors include almost every major collector out of Wall Street. Epstein comes out of that bunch, having made his money, allegedly, in the market.

It might have been actually earned through things like blackmail, but we'll never really know.

His art collection was pretty solid, and while collectors like Benedikt Taschen tend away from Koons in favor of artists like Christopher Wool, Koons was always a major artist for collectors like Allen and Epstein.

The fact is, while Koons ain't the kind of guy to give a damn about where the money comes from, but also it's not likely that Koons was one of Epstein's clients/friends. There's no evidence that he went to Epstein's island, and while there have been whispers

about Koons not being the best guy in the world, Cicciolina divorced him claiming mental and physical abuse, but no one as far as I've ever heard has claimed he was a monster, and I don't believe he was included in the flight logs.

Still, Koons being associated with Epstein, the modern day monster whose crimes are still not fully known and far less understood, shouldn't be a shock, they're different kinds of sharks in the same sea, but it's also unlikely to be anything more than an interest in making money that they shared.





WrestleMania Week

Part Two

I was full of Yoshinoya.

That alone made me happy, but the really important thing, the thing I was most excited for (other than the various food places I was hitting all week) was Bloodsport 9!

You've got an idea of what pro wrestling is. Bloodsport, founded by mixed martial art legend and



incredible amateur wrestling John Barnett, is not that. Well, it is and it isn't. There are no ring ropes. The matches aren't high-flying affairs, they are presented as more legitimate contests. Thus, they're stiff, hard-hitting, and often fairly short. This is a good thing for those of us who remember UWF or BattleArts in the 1990s. I was excited, since most of the matches had at least one person I was excited to get to see.

The matches included folks I knew I would love to see in this sort of setting. Jeff Cobb, a massive agile former Olympian who won in the opener. There was only one women's match, Killer Kelly vs. Mirina Shafir. Shafir used to do UFC fighting, and was in NXT wrestling, where she just wasn't right for the company. Here, working a snug style with Killer Kelly, she was so damn good. I did get a chance to say hello to her after the show when she was hanging out in front of the UCC between shows.

The one that drew a lot of interest was Kota Ibushi, his first match back after the end of his contract with New Japan and a nine-month layoff, against Mr. Mania Weekend, Speedball Mike Bailey. Most people

were super-excited for Ibushi. I was hyped for Speedball.

And the match was awesome. They certainly worked the Bloodsport style, but Bailey actually did a Moonsault kneedrop that was a flying move that somehow still felt legitimate in the context! This one put everything else on the show to shame...except the main event. While John Moxley and Johnny Bloodsport (aka Johnny Mundo, Johnny Impact, Johnny Nitro, etc., etc.) were big names on the show, the main event was founder Josh Barnett against Timothy Thatcher.

My favorite wrestler in the world is Timothy Thatcher.

I first saw him the last time I went to shows on WrestleMania weekend in 2015, and have seen him several times since he's somewhat local, being headquartered in Sacramento. He works every match as a legitimate battle, far more intricate on the mat than almost anything. He's so good, and he was great in NXT working a style you almost never see in the US.

The two did not disappoint.



It was the kind of match that you need to watch carefully. They spent a lot of the match on their feet, so that every time there was a throw, it really meant something. Every submission hold felt like it could be the finish, but they did 12 minutes of incredible stuff, and Thatcher got the win! I was so happy. Between shows, I ne to my car, charged my phone, and called



Vanessa and the kids. I was tired, but there was another show, though it would be in a couple of hours. I got in line early and talked with some of the folks in line, and when we got in, I noticed they were selling tacos. I bought two. They were wonderful!

The next show was the Japanese promotion DDT. This is one of the most interesting company in the world. They have some of the most talented wrestlers anywhere, Kota Ibushi having been there for years, and also have weird matches, such as the ladder match that was won by the ladder.

The opener was a bizarre, but wonderful, match. It was a tag team match, but the Heavymetalweight championship was also on the line. It's a title you can win at any time, night or day, anywhere.



The Champion, Yoskiahiko, was pinned, and the title changed hands.

Oh...did I mention that Yoshihiko wa a doll?

At times, she's controlled by a black-bedecked puppeteer, but mostly it's the opponent who is doing stuff. It's crazy silly, but she was so over with the crowd it was insane.

There was a match that I just didn't cotton to with the Pheromones, who are a team who is entirely defined by assplay. It's slightly less weird than it sounds, but it just wasn't for me.

The biggest match on this one featured Eddie Kingston, an amazing AEW wrestler I had seen in the San Jose New Japan show a few weeks before, and Jun Akiyama, for years my favorite All Japan wrestler who has very rarely worked in the US. Their match was fantastic, even though I have no idea who their opponents were.

The match that closed out the show wa one of the best of the entire weekend. Takeshita, one of the best workers in the world, and after Kota Ibushi probably the best worker on all the shows, took on Yuki Ueno. The pair worked so well together, and it was high-flying and incredibly smart, and Takeshita won.



After that, I needed to get back to Derek's, but I stopped at Zankou, the original location in Little Armenia, and ordered a Chicken Tarna. I went home happy.

The next morning I headed to Bob's again, this time for steak and eggs. I saw John Slattery, of Mad Men fame, walking out as I was walking in. I love when I run into stars and they nod at

me. I drank my coffee, and then headed off to the first show, again at the UCC.

The first show was another small local promotion, Jimmy Lloyd's D-Generation F. It was a really fun show that had a much smaller time feel than anything else up to this point. The show opened with a crazy, dive-filled seven person scramble match. It was fun, and the second match was really good too.

But none of them had a talent like Jack Cartwheel.

Jack Cartwheel had been on AEW a few weeks before, but basically, he's a guy whose offense is largely based around cartwheel-type moves. He's super-charismatic, athletic, but most of all, he has amazing timing. He won his match, and he stuck out as a much bigger deal than anyone else on the show.

Sawyer Wreck was another big discovery for me. She's a six-two brawler and while she's not particularly fluid, she manages to connect with the crowd really well. She did a match that was almost entirely brawling, and included the first table spot on the shows.

It wasn't a real table shot, but a cheap door placed between two chairs.

The show was fun, but I had plans for lunch, again a flashback to my older days in LA - The House of Pies on Vermont.

I had a steak. My new required diet meant no pie, but the steak was actually pretty good, cooked medium as hell, which I enjoyed. I got corn with it. It was really a reason to flashback on the days with Forry, where you might see Kenneth Anger sitting at a booth. I drank coffee. A lot of coffee. It was going to be a long day.

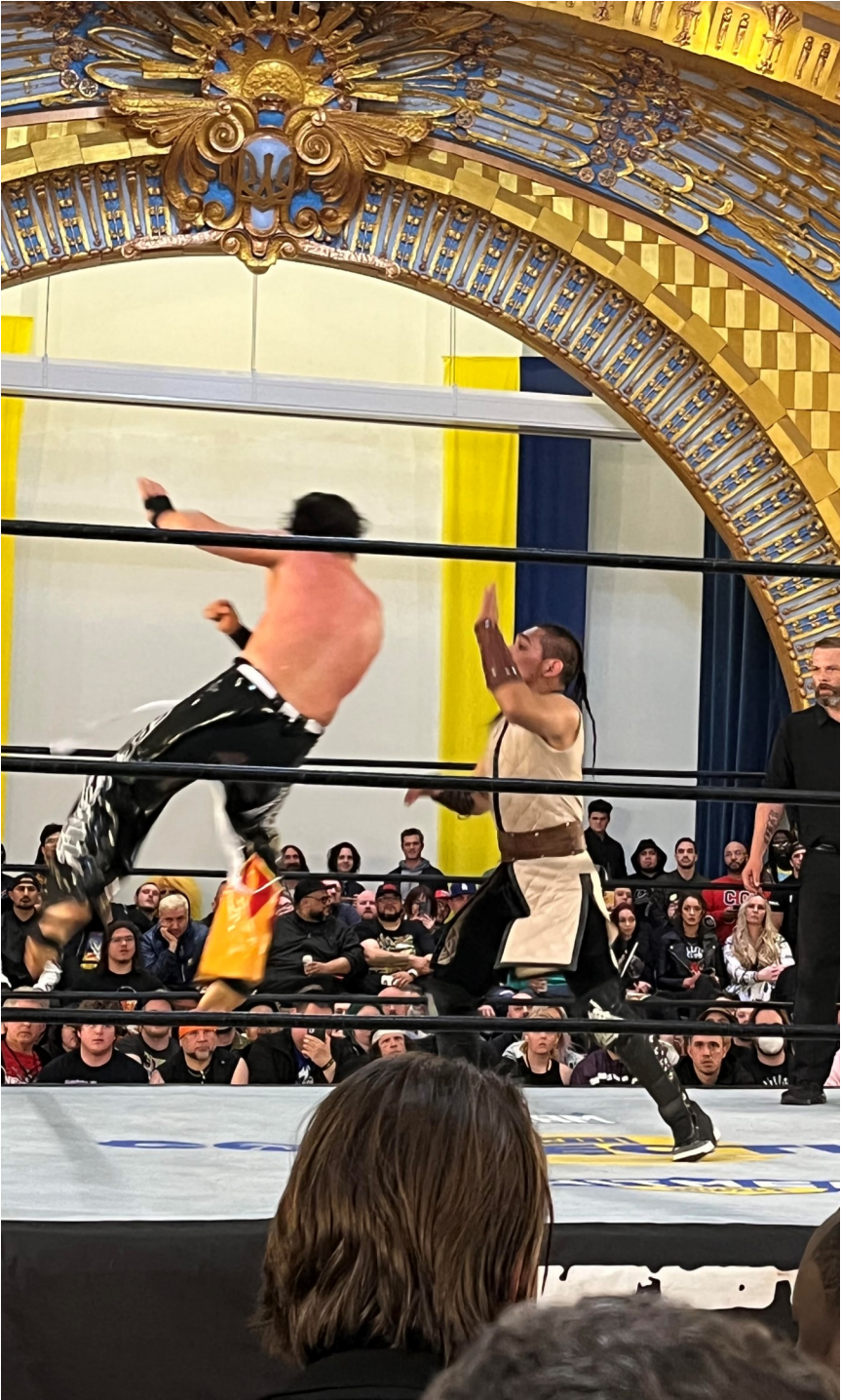
I got back just in time for the DDT vs GCW (Game Changer Wrestling) which was US vs. Japan. The show was good, another great Jun Akiyama match, and a great 8-man match that featured Jack Cartwheel. There was a good tag team match with Speedball Bailey, but overall, it was only an OK show. The last show I did that day, though, was the big one - Joey Janela's Spring Break. I was so tired, it started late, at about 9pm, but I was determined to see one match. The opener was good, a big scramble match with ladders, but

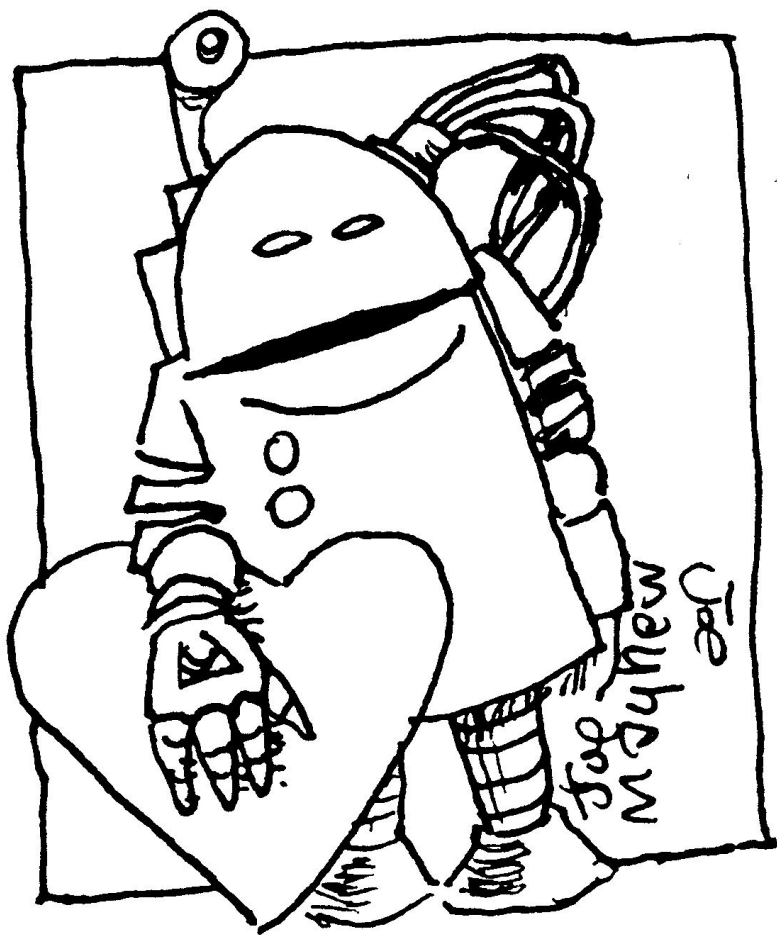
and a really good tag match, but the one match I had to see, even with Kota Ibushi vs. Joey Janela in the main event, was El Hijo del Vikingo vs. Speedball Mike Bailey.

This match delivered on every level. Vikingo is the greatest flyer in the world right now. He works the US a fair bit, and had been in AEW recently. His biggest move is a 630 splash which makes you wonder how someone can do that without a diving board. They went fifteen minutes, and it was incredible. Spulexes, great flying, and amazing precision. Vikingo won with that 630, and after that, I hit the road for my Mom's, 90 minutes down the road.

Along the way, I grabbed Zankou.









The Murder of Brian Wells

***Evil Genius*, a great three-part Netflix doc, details the insane case of the Erie, Pennsylvania bank robbery by, and later murder of Brian Wells. You might know it as the Collarbomb robbery, but I think the robbery was somewhat secondary.**

I truly believe it was meant to kill Brian Wells.

Let's look at a few facts, or at least as close as we can get to any facts in this case, is that there was a meeting at the home of Kenneth Barnes, who would do some time for the crime, where Albert Rothstein and Marge Diehl-Armstrong.

Diehl-Armstrong was a piece of work. People had a nasty habit of turning up murdered when they were associated with her, especially if they were married. Rothstein, an ex-boyfriend of hers, found a body in their freezer and that kinda set the end-game for the crime in

motion. The story goes like this – Diehl-Armstrong wanted to kill her father so that she could inherit his money. This plot, which she was going to use Barnes to carry out, would cost her two hundred and fifty grand. She didn't have that kind of scratch, so they hatched the bomb plot to rob a bank.

So, the group came up with a plan. Rothstein, who was some sort of super-genius, designed a bomb that they would build into a collar that they'd get Wells to wear. Wells would wear the collar and then he'd rob a bank, getting the 250K that they needed to get Barnes to kill Diehl-Armstrong's dad.

Jessica Hoopsick, a friend of Wells who happened to be a sex worker, apparently provided his name to the crew. He'd be set-up to take the fall, the big fall as it were, and he would be unaware of the plot, but he was pliable and would just go along.

Wells went in to the bank and ended up only coming out with 8K. He left twirling a cane, which was actually a shotgun that had been provided by the team that collared him.

Now, here's where I differ with this idea – if she's telling the truth and he had no real role in the crime, then why did he leave the bank so happy? He had asked for 250K, but only got 8K. It's almost as if he was HAPPY to have that 8K, as if he would be getting a cut of that money.

Hoopsick's got issues as a witness, noticeably that she was a drug addict and claims to have been paid for her information in drugs. That's not to say that all addicts are untrustworthy, but it does give pause. Now, there could be more steps that ended up with Wells being brought in, and not told everything, such as he could have been told that the collar was a convincing fake. They could have said that they wanted the money and would cut him in, and with the fake collar, that was actually a real bomb collar, it would be easy to eliminate another cut of the cane, as it were.

I think he was fully in on it, and Hoopsick may have given them his name, but I can't see how it would work without him being a player.





The (Other) Haldeman Stories – The Thrill of Victory

Jay Haldeman goes Vonnegut!

OK, that's weird, and seems a bit dismissive, but honestly, it's the highest honor I can pay an author, and since it's the author I love more than any other being compared to an author I love more than all but one other, I think it's OK...I hope.

The Thrill of Victory is a take on Vonnegut's legendary short story "Harrison Bergeron." It plays that field, and it does it in a way that is a lot more fun, especially if you know a thing or two the NFL in the 1970s and 80s. The basic premise is this: the NFL has been deemed to too violent and dangerous to be played by actual humans, thus robots are put to the task. Like the Indy 500 (or maybe NASCAR) they strive to have the teams be as even as possible, striving for 6-and-6 sea-

sons. Quarterback Bronco has led his Daytona Beach Armadillos (Go 'Dillos!) have gone 10-and-2, and Bronco is one of those incredible quarterbacks. The brief bit of gameplay we're treated to by Jay shows that Bronco is a bit like Fran Tarkenton or Kenny Stabler. The entire game is ruled by the Rozelle Rule.

That's really funny. Pete Rozelle was the comish for the NFL from 1960 to 1989. He was a major force and it was under his watch that America become a Football country. Things he innovated? Well, bringing the AFL into the NFL, the Super Bowl, and in my eyes the biggest innovation, *Monday Night Football*. He was an incredibly important figure, and when they recite the Rozelle Rule, it is as much a chant as the Liturgy Against Fear. This is hilarious as Rozelle was seen as something of a straight man compared to the bombastic comedian that was Al Davis, former AFL commissioner and owner of the Oakland Raiders.

Turns out that Bronco's programming had been corrupted, as it were, by the addition of a competitor's heart and drive to win. That single addition has taken a team that almost certainly would have been good and made them into 10-and-2 world-beaters.

We'd already seen the best year in the history of the NFL with the Dolphins going 14-0 in 1972. The Patriots came close in 2007, but they lost the Super Bowl, and if you don't win the Big One, it don't count!

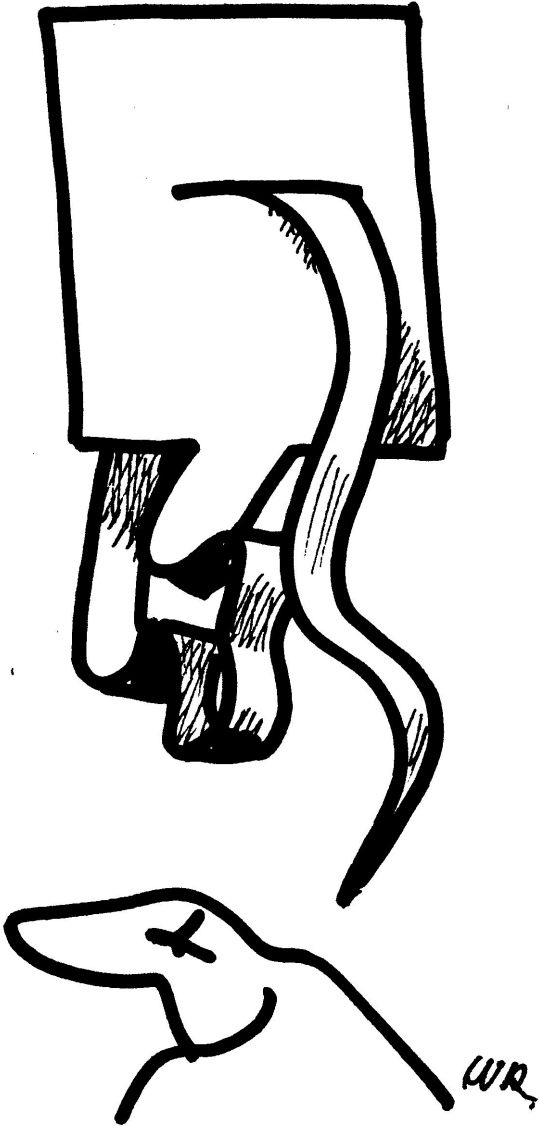
In many ways, the Armadillos of *The Thrill of Victory* are a lot like the 1976 Oakland Raiders, led by the legendary Kenny Stabler. He was great, and he played with an excess of heart, partly due to the influence of another former Raider QB, the great and incredibly old George Blanda. The team sure feels like it, and the Daytona Beach market would be about the same size as Oakland!

The idea of the level playing field being a downer is the main theme of Vonnegut's story, but it's basis was far more cynical, being a commentary on the accommodation doctrine that had begun popping up around the US at the time of its writing. In *The Thrill of Victory*, it's Haldeman playing with the idea of the leveled playing field in the field that invented the level playing field. The Salary Cap concept helped to enshrine

that into rules (that happened after Rozelle's time, but was already being talked about due to anti-trust suits and conflicts with owners that kept being discussed). He mentions the 'Any Given Sunday' concept that says any team can win any game, but he kinda turns it on its head by using it to justify the winning of 10 games in the season. It's a fun flip!

Now, I have to say something about the very last line of the story. The way it reads to anyone who recognizes the reference might lead you to believe that the whole thing was a shaggy-dog story, a Feghoot, or worse, an excuse to sell a story that ends with a movie reference that nearly everyone 1978 reader would have recognized. To me, that's a bit too loose a reading. It's a story that says something that ends with a good 'un.





SLIPPERY

One Cup of Prompt—Coffee, Fanzines, True Crime

An AI Art Sampler by MidJourney









The Second Band I Ever Saw Live

Cardinal Cox

because the first was support act Ludus fronted by Linder Sterling and I'm 14 (March 1979) (1) and older punks – guys on the scene for three years – swagger round spitting and I'm in front of the left-hand speaker stack in the sports hall more usually frequented for roller skating – not that I went more than a couple of times as it weren't my scene – and four skinny guys come out to make the most wonderful noise – my eyeballs shake in my head and rainbows fill the edges of my vision and I

pogo

pogo

pogo

pogo

pogo

pogo

pogo

pogo

and it don't matter that I'm fat or ginger or spotty or anything else that's wrong with me (2)

yeah about now you might be hoping for some revelation or turn around or twist in the tail but it ain't coming – I didn't have any revelation or discover anything about myself and at the end of the evening (3) I avoided the skinheads looking for a fight and my Dad picked me up and drove me home (4)

- 1—My older brother gave me a copy of Another Music in a Different Kitchen, so I'd perhaps know some of the tunes – later I inherited many of his singles including the first half dozen Buzzcocks – including an original Spiral Scratch**
- 2—Anthropologists note in tribal cultures the adolescent male going into the wilderness to confront some noisy terror as a rite of passage**
- 3—Plain clothes cops sipping plastic pints make mental lists of everything going on**
- 4—Who reads footnotes anyway?**



Me and The Buzzcocks

By Chris

I discovered The Buzzcocks twice.

I was maybe 7. I had a record collection that featured dozens of records from all over. I had *Ramona and Her Father*, an audio book based on the work of Beverly Cleary. I had all the Beatles albums. Jim Croce. Gordon Lightfoot. Disco Duck. Michael Jackson's *Off the*

Wall. Sesame Street records. Steve Martin's *Wild and Crazy Guy*.

And, of course, *Never Mind The Bullocks*.

There were Clash records, and at least one Television record. I remember listening to *I Wanna Be Your Dog* on a 45.

And thus, I was 7 or so and there was a record that my Dad had bought and left it in my room with my record player. I used me record player more often than he used the one in the living room (he used his trucks 8-track player most often) so this made sense. One day, I put it on, no idea what I was about to listen to.

It was a driving, peppy, and joyous song. Even then I knew this was like the music that Dad loved from the 50s—Richy Valens, Buddy Holly, Jerry Lee Lewis. It was a song that was guitar and 'harmonies and joy. I adored the song, and I'm pretty sure I listened to it nearly as often as I did *Rubber Ducky* from Sesame Street.

That 45 was *Love You More* by The Buzzcocks.

I basically stopped listening to The Buzzcocks for a long time. It wasn't until the late 1990s that I started listening to much 70s and 80s punk other than Dead Kennedys or Bad Religion (and a little stuff that kinda skirted the edges of punk) but I was viewing films for Cinequest one year and a strange piece that sounded like something familiar came across my desk. It was a short film directed by Sam Taylor-Wood.

Now, Wood's work I knew because she was one of the YBA, the Young British Artists who came out of Goldsmiths and featured a rakish combination of hucksters and geniuses. You had the first tier, folks like Tracey Emin and Damien Hirst and Marcus Harvey and Gillian Wearing, and you had the others, like Fiona Rae and Gary Hume. Sam was on that later list, but that's

still a good list to be on in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Anyhoo, the story is of a kid who meets a girl in a record store, and they go back to her place to listen to the new record. They put it on and...

...wait for it...

...it's *Love You More!*

Now, the short is called *Love You More*, and it's basically what got her the director chair for films like *Nowhere Man* and *Fifty Shades of Grey*. It's a sexy short, and a smart one, and a kinda youth-affirming one.

But it's also a musical one, and it brought me all the way back!

Since that point, I've been listening to a lot of The Buzzcocks. *24 Hour Party People* also helped on that front. They really were as close to The Ramones as the UK ever produced.



OK, that's that!

There'll be more of these, who knows for how long, or if they'll change, or if I just like doin' 'em and I'll keep 'em coming! It does kinda remind me of the 2007 era of *The Drink Tank* more than anything, though back then I didn't drink coffee.

Page 15 art was by Joe Mayhew, may he rest in peace, and Page 22 by Bill Rotsler, and may he also rest in peace!

The photo on page 26 was by Luiz Alberto Fiebig Junior. The till on page 30 was from Sam Taylor-Johnson's *Love You More*.

I did the rest using MidJourney.



