

READER

On house arrest with Mohawk Johnson

CPD has tried to turn the rapper and comedian into a cautionary example to social justice protesters. He has other plans.

By LEOR GALIL | 32



FROM **PRISONER TO PRESIDENT**



ILLINOIS HUMAN RIGHTS APARTHEID MUSEUM

MANDELA
Struggle for Freedom
Feb 20 - Sept 12

3/27-4/11
KIDS VISIT
FREE

ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM



Money Smart Week

Special Section in this issue
Turn to page 18

IN THIS ISSUE



13 Isaacs | Culture A new exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Photography raises questions about the future of reproductive rights.



14 Rhodes | Housing Ten years after the last Cabrini-Green high-rise came down, former residents look back at the community that shaped them.

ARTS & CULTURE

20 Lit An excerpt from *Old Style*, an illustrated book set in Chicago bars
22 Untold Stories The Chicago Women's History Center educates from a distance.

THEATER

24 Review *Trap Door Theatre* offers a fragmented journey through Matei Vișniec's imagination.
25 Reid | Time Capsule Into the Mist's virtual speakeasy brings 1927 to life.



FILM

28 Documentation *Soft Cage* Films aims to capture social justice movements.
30 Review Sit in the anxiety of Emma Seligman's *Shiva Baby*.
31 Movies of Note *Godzilla vs. Kong* is an excellent monster smash-a-thon, Tina captures the iconic singer's triumph and pain, and Netflix's *Christian* musical *A Week Away* is astonishingly bad.



MUSIC & NIGHTLIFE

32 Galil | Feature CPD has tried to turn rapper and comedian Mohawk Johnson into a cautionary example to social justice protesters. He has other plans.

37 Records of Note This week the Reader reviews current releases by Joanna Connor, Genghis Tron, Julien Baker, Ryler Walker, Sunny War, and more.
40 Early Warnings Rescheduled concerts and other updated listings
40 Gossip Wolf *The Empty Bottle* has an important cat update, Dan Whitaker & the Shinebenders return to the (patio) stage, and Lume drop album three via new label and collective Ohmstead.
41 Chicagoans of Note Monique Golding, vocalist for *Mosaic Soul* and the *Black Monument Ensemble*

OPINION

44 Savage Love Dan Savage offers advice on snooping on a loved one's browser history.

CLASSIFIEDS

45 Jobs
45 Apartments & Spaces
45 Marketplace

ON THE COVER: PHOTO BY ISIAH THOUGHTPOET VENEY AND JADE LONDON. FOR MORE OF THOUGHTPOET'S WORK GO TO THOUGHTPOETSOPINION.COM, AND FOR MORE OF LONDON'S WORK GO TO @MARYJADE_773 ON INSTAGRAM.

CITY LIFE

04 Learn Local Master bespoke tailor Eric W. Stiles shares the tricks of his trade.



FOOD & DRINK

06 Sula | Review *Giong Giong* means the flavors of Vietnam and Guatemala are kinda "same-same."

NEWS & POLITICS

08 Joravsky | Politics Republicans are waging a phony "fight" against cancel culture.
10 Dukmasova | Explainer A deep dive into Illinois's sweeping new criminal justice reform law

THIS WEEK ON CHICAGOREADER.COM



Thommy's Toddy Shop

A Superkhana International line cook's side hustle has your Malayali condiment fix.



How a theater survives

On the resilience of Rogers Park's New 400 Theater



The solidarity economy

How mutual aid organizations are picking up the government's slack this pandemic.



TO CONTACT ANY READER EMPLOYEE, E-MAIL: (FIRST INITIAL)(LAST NAME) @CHICAGOREADER.COM

PUBLISHER AND PRESIDENT TRACY BAIM
PUBLISHER AND EDITOR IN CHIEF KAREN HAWKINS
EDITOR IN CHIEF SUJAY KUMAR
PRODUCTION MANAGER KIRK WILLIAMSON
GRAPHIC DESIGNER AMBER HUFF
MUSIC EDITOR PHILIP MONTORO
THEATER AND DANCE EDITOR KERRY REID
CULTURE EDITOR BRIANNA WELLEN
ASSOCIATE EDITOR JAMIE LUDWIG
SENIOR WRITERS MAYA DUKMASOVA, LEOR GALIL, DEANNA ISAACS, BEN JORAVSKY, MIKE SULA
LISTINGS COORDINATOR SALEM COLLO-JULIN
SOCIAL JUSTICE REPORTING FELLOW ADAM M. RHODES

DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL JOHN DUNLEVY
SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR JANAYA GREENE
EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATE TARYN ALLEN

STRATEGIC INNOVATION DIRECTOR MARIAH NEUROTH
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR COLETTE WILLARD
MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS COORDINATOR YAZMIN DOMINGUEZ
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT SANDRA L. KLEIN
MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS AND DEVELOPMENT ADVISOR ABHIMANYU CHANDRA
SPECIAL EVENTS CONSULTANT KRISTEN KAZA

ADVERTISING

312-392-2970, ADS@CHICAGOREADER.COM
 CLASSIFIEDS:
 CLASSIFIED-ADS@CHICAGOREADER.COM

VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES AMY MATHENY
SALES DIRECTOR AMBER NETTLES
SENIOR ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVES LENI MANAA-HOPPENWORTH, TED PIEKARZ, WILL ROGERS, LISA SOLOMON

NATIONAL ADVERTISING

VOICE MEDIA GROUP 1-888-278-9866
 VMGADVERTISING.COM
 JOE LARKIN AND SUE BELAIR

DISTRIBUTION CONCERNS

distributionissues@chicagoreader.com
 312-392-2970

CHICAGO READER L3C

BOARD PRESIDENT DOROTHY R. LEAVELL
TREASURER EILEEN RHODES
AT-LARGE SLADJANA VUCKOVIC

READER INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY JOURNALISM, INC.

CHAIRWOMAN EILEEN RHODES
TREASURER CAROL BELL
DIRECTORS ALISON CUDDY, VANESSA FERNANDEZ, KIM L. HUNT, JACKIE KAPLAN-PERKINS, DOROTHY R. LEAVELL, SLADJANA VUCKOVIC

READER (ISSN 1096-6919) IS PUBLISHED BIWEEKLY BY CHICAGO READER L3C
 2930 S. MICHIGAN, SUITE 102 CHICAGO, IL 60616
 312-392-2934, CHICAGOREADER.COM

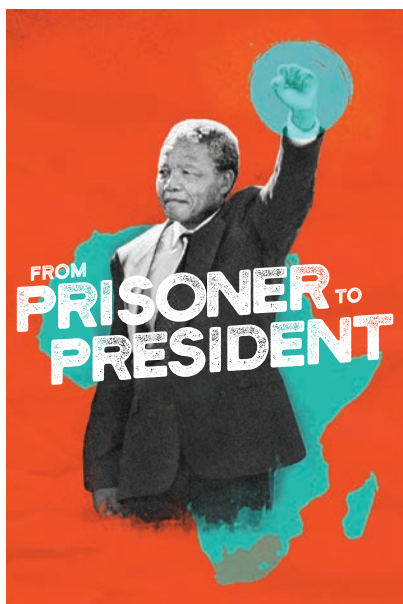
COPYRIGHT © 2021 CHICAGO READER
 PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID AT CHICAGO, IL

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. CHICAGO READER, READER, AND REVERSED R: REGISTERED TRADEMARKS®

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

AT ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

SPRING BREAK
3/27-4/11
KIDS VISIT
FREE



MANDELA

Struggle for Freedom

He changed the world from a jail cell.

Presenting Sponsors:



Mandela: Struggle for Freedom was developed by the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (Winnipeg, Canada) in partnership with the Apartheid Museum (Johannesburg, South Africa). Tour management services provided by Lord Cultural Resources.

Developed by:



International Tour Supporters:



ABE & IDA COOPER SURVIVOR STORIES EXPERIENCE

Interactive 3D Survivor holograms.

Abe & Ida Cooper Survivor Stories Experience features Dimensions in Testimony, developed by USC Shoah Foundation in partnership with Illinois Holocaust Museum.



ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM
& EDUCATION CENTER

TOGETHER, WE CAN POWER THROUGH ANYTHING.



If you could use help with your energy bill, there's a way. To learn about financial assistance call 800-EDISON1 or visit ComEd.com/Support today.

© Commonwealth Edison Company, 2021



DON'T STOP THE PRESSES

LAGER

NOW AVAILABLE AT
HAYMARKET BREWING,
737 W. RANDOLPH ST.!

PROCEEDS FROM THIS BEER GO TO SUPPORT:

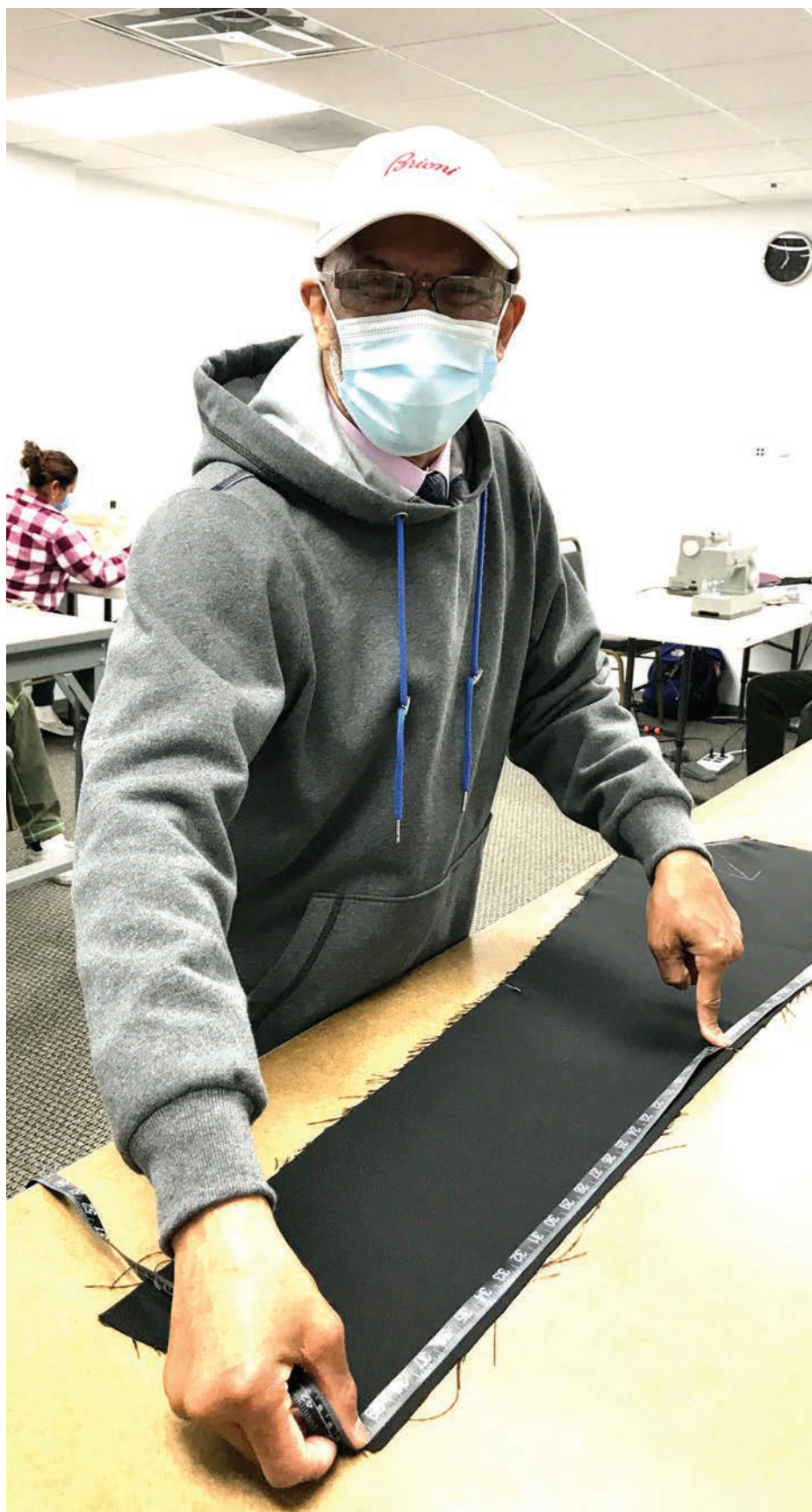
READER



The Daily Line



PICK IT UP
UNTIL IT'S GONE!



LEARN LOCAL

The many styles of Mr. Stiles

Master bespoke tailor Eric W. Stiles shares the tricks of his trade.

By ISA GIALLORENZO

“I know too much stuff not to pass it on to people who would love to learn it,” says Eric W. Stiles, a 66-year-old master bespoke tailor who’s always had a penchant for education. After working in tailoring for more than 50 years—many of those dedicated to teaching—Stiles decided to make his knowledge freely available on his YouTube channel.

“I put out usually two videos a week—all of them from intermediate to advanced work,” he says. Themes range from “Create the perfect jean pant pattern” to “Draping a skirt” to “Create a shirt pattern from an old shirt.” Stiles says beginners should take his classes, either online or in his Oak Park studio, EWS Sewing Academy, which he opened two years ago. In his courses, Stiles teaches the basics of sewing and pattern drafting, and students learn to create their own patterns from scratch by using formulas I myself tried to master more than a decade ago. Yes, I used to be Mr. Stiles’s student back when his school was in Evergreen Park. I did master the formulas, and I also learned how to sew some kind of pocket. But what I’ll always remember from those classes was the fun banter provided by Mr. Stiles. He conducts his lessons in an orderly way, going from student to student to support them with their tasks, but at the same time he drops the most entertaining stories at the slightest hint of a subject. When I last saw him, to take photos for this article, he was reminiscing about how hot one of his first classrooms used to be. His take on the subject

was that by controlling his mind he wouldn’t allow himself to sweat. And then he moved on. He’s always moving on, in class and in life too.

Stiles seemed predestined to work in fashion—and not just because of his name. His interest in the field started when he was 11 after seeing a tailor making alterations at his uncle’s cleaners. At the time, despite being so young, Stiles found a way of watching a sewing class at a local high school. After learning more of the trade, he started making alterations himself. His big break came in 1975, when he got hired by a company called Brittany, Ltd., “an Italian tailor,” Stiles says. “And I ended up progressing from there and becoming the head tailor later for Polo/Ralph Lauren, Giorgio Armani and then Brioni.” At Brioni—a luxury menswear boutique—Stiles was responsible for the alterations that were sent to him from all over the country. When working 50- to 60-hour weeks became too strenuous, Stiles turned back to a passion of his: teaching. He started teaching in 1989 at Kennedy-King College, and from there took jobs at 12 additional colleges. Later on he expanded his clientele by offering courses online, which ended up at 60 colleges in the U.S. and two in Canada. But, as Stiles puts it, it was “a heck of a lot of administrative work,” and he decided to move on.

Now an empty nester (he has five grown children and eight grandchildren), he turned one of his bedrooms into a YouTube studio: “I’ve been pumping those videos out very well,” he says. “I get to edit everything here, put it together, put it online, and have fun.” He does value his time a lot more, and therefore won’t overcommit. He also teaches two classes a week in his Oak Park studio (socially distanced with seven students per group max). And that seems to be more than enough.

Stiles picked Oak Park as a new location for his studio because he’d enjoyed a school he’d opened there in the early 90s, but closed it “for a particular reason.” That reason? The building had no AC and everyone was melting in there—even though he personally refused to sweat. **■**

¡Viva la Libertad!

An exhibition and series of public programs



BULL HORN



PHOTO COURTESY WON KIM

Thinking outside the box

I'm getting tired of giving Corona so much credit this past year. I get that this virus has been the cause of much sadness, death, turmoil, disagreement, and civil unrest. We've had many social media scientists and experts weighing in on solutions and theories as they sit in their underwear and fluffy slippers getting ready for a zoom meeting like a full body mullet—business up top, party down below.

Our government at the time had no backup plan, no solutions, no answers, and this is how we went into this plague: with relief in the form of \$1800 dollars in aid to pay for a year's worth of rent, food, goods, utilities, toiletries, gas—you get it. In times of uncertainty, the last place you would look for life aid is your local artist or creative. Rightfully so, too. I mean artists were always seen as flighty, oftentimes pretentious, attention-seeking egomaniacs.

Looking at a global disaster through the lens of a creative has been one great experiment after another. When charity and philanthropy are the backbone of your strategy in surviving the pandemic, it wasn't too hard to devise a plan that would help us help others. We started small at the beginning and made sure our immediate family would be helped. Starting an art fundraiser, selling small pieces to raise money and donating money directly to my employees, seemed like a no-brainer to me. Why not use a talent to raise money and at the same time give something tangible back to people willing to donate to the cause?

Next was the free farmers market where we (Ed Marzweski and I) would convert the Marz Brewing lot into a local market, free of charge to vendors, and help them make money directly from consumers. We converted the tiny front Kimski patio into a free local vendor market for during service; helped raise over \$30,000 in Go Fund Me campaigns; set up free markets in Englewood; curated a section of The Quarantine Times where all walks of life got a stipend to contribute an article; re-imagined a soup event 100 percent for charity; among other implemented ideas. All of this would

turn into: How do we reach more people and help our immediate community in need?

This is how Community Kitchen was born. Marzweski came up with the idea of helping the elderly in Bridgeport and funding it through his nonprofit PMI. The idea was simple: hire out-of-work industry workers and give them a lot of money to actually care about making food to feed the elderly and immediate neighbors. This all went swimmingly well and as winter was fast approaching—with more closings and still no solutions or answers from our government—we had no choice but to shutter. Again. Trying to forecast survival in the winter was tough enough, but now with a deadly virus floating around?

The only for-sure thing we enjoyed doing was helping out our community and peers alike. Every restaurant that we hired to help loved the program and would have done it pro bono. We thought, is there a way to do this five days a week, and would anyone even give a shit? We weren't the first to implement a program like this, nor are we the only restaurant that loves to help others. We were one of many who discovered and felt the need to do what we could to help. With private grants, partnerships and amazing generosity of the public, Community Canteen was born!

Through this program, we were able to get Moms on Marz, Donermen, Wherewithal, Whiner Beer Company, and Iyanze Bar and Cafe on board with setting up similar models of delivering food to those in need, and handing meals to all walks of life. No judgment or questions, just trying to restore dignity and a sense of community in such strange times. We weren't part of some secret meeting, nor did we ask for outside help. We just literally asked ourselves what we wanted to do with the intent to help others and went for it. It has been the best long-term art experiment that I have ever been a part of and I'm looking forward to keeping it going. COVID got a lot of credit for destroying a lot of lives this year, but I can proudly say that it wasn't enough to stop us from thinking outside the box—again.

Won Kim is chef/partner of Kimski and Pizza Fried Chicken Ice Cream in Bridgeport. Both places can be found on the corner of 31st and Morgan. Check out what we are up to on [@pizzachickenicecream](https://www.instagram.com/pizzachickenicecream) and [@kimskichicago](https://www.instagram.com/kimskichicago)

Bull Horn is an avenue to give wings to the stories that matter most. This series, from Red Bull in partnership with the Chicago Reader, invites guest writers, artists, activists, and community members to share their ideas and amplify timely, crucial topics they feel are important now.



THE NEWBERRY



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES



ILLINOIS
HUMANITIES



INSTITUTO JUSTICE AND
LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
MEXICAN ART



thoma
FOUNDATION



UNAM
CHICAGO



The steamed dumpling banh bao is the showstopper on Giong Giong's eight-item menu.  JEFF MARINI FOR CHICAGO READER

POP-UP REVIEW

Giong Giong means the flavors of Vietnam and Guatemala are kinda 'same-same'

Two chefs join forces for an unlikely but fitting fusion.

By **MIKE SULA**

Living in Vancouver in her mid-20s, Jeanette Tran-Dean was struck by the similarities between the food she grew up with and the food her Guatemalan friends ate. "I'd go over for their grandfather's birthday party or something and they'd have, like, a tamale wrapped in a banana leaf," she says. "I was like, 'Vietnamese people wrap everything in banana leaves.'" Another friend's mom regularly made the Central American-style

quesadilla, which is a lot like a sweet, cheesy, rice-flour pound cake—and a lot like the Vietnamese cassava-coconut cake called banh khoai mi nuong.

"The Vietnamese love corn," she says. "We have avocados. The countries have the same ingredients. They're just so far apart that they don't use them the same way. But I think if they were ever introduced it would make so much sense."

It would take a pandemic to do it, but the two cuisines were finally introduced in November when Tran-Dean, who's worked in fine dining kitchens all over the city (among them Grace, Oriole, and Smyth) put her head together with her friend David Hollinger, a pastry chef who works at Aya Pastry.

Hollinger grew up Guatemalan in Wausau, Wisconsin, before he moved to Chicago and started cooking in a broad array of Asian

restaurants. The two first crossed paths at Kai Zan in 2014 and bonded over their love for Asian pastries and early exposure to the food of each other's cultures. Over the years they'd spitball ideas from different kitchens, always intending to collaborate on a pop-up, but never getting around to it.

Tran-Dean was on leave from her executive sous chef job at Smyth, honeymooning in Vietnam for a month when the country began shutting down in January 2020. Once home she returned to Smyth until shutdown, then worked takeout from the Loyalist for a while. But she didn't feel safe after learning she was pregnant. She and her husband decamped for his parents' place in Minooka to ride it out and recharge her creative batteries.

For Hollinger the situation was the opposite. When he worked at the Bakery at Fat Rice, he'd make maybe 20 egg tarts for the day. During the pandemic, Aya Pastry's business exploded, and he found himself sometimes making 1,000 dinner rolls in a day. He found the overwork in a booming wholesale business gave him the itch to do his own thing.

Last Saturday they officially launched Giong Giong, a three-weekend stand at the South Loop sandwich shop the *Ruin Daily*. Conveniently pronounced "yum yum," with a finishing upward lilt, the expression is Vietnamese for "same-same," as in sorta the same latitude, same climate, same ingredients, same flavors.

The showstopper on the focused eight-item menu is the banh bao, a sweet, puffy steamed dumpling "as big as a toddler's head," according to Tran-Dean, stuffed with Vietnamese pork-mushroom filling, herbaceous Guatemalan longanisa sausage, and a pickled quail egg. "It's like several different experiences all in the same big package," says Hollinger.

The chojin salad riffs on the citrusy, minty Guatemalan staple. "There's tons of these cold radish-pork-based salads in Guatemala that you serve with crunchy things like tostadas," says Hollinger. From its Vietnamese papaya salad analogue goi du du, they've taken fish sauce, shredded papaya, shrimp paste, and shrimp chips.

Tran-Dean and Hollinger, who frequently finish each other's sentences, say it took them about five minutes to conceive their bruleed fusion of the Guatemalan quesadilla and banh khoai mi nuong, with a side of ice cream.

FOOD & DRINK

“That was our last-minute addition,” says Tran-Dean. “I kept looking for them in Chicago and I hadn’t been able to find them. I was like ‘Yo, what’s that heavy thing?’ And I showed you a picture.”

“And then it was, ‘Duh, corn ice cream,’” says Hollinger.

“It’s a natural pairing.”

Tran-Dean thinks the Vietnamese version is too heavy and sweet to finish, so they added dry, crumbly queso duro. “The salty cheese cuts through sweetness and richness,” says Hollinger. “It’s very chewy. The textures are strangely the same.”

Giong Giong also opened with a pair of banh mi, including one coddling a mushroom-stuffed chile relleno; and a pair of conchas, one filled with a jackfruit-pineapple compote and the other with a coconut-chocolate crémeux, but they plan to mix those up in the remaining weeks with pandan-coconut cream, and lotus root-tres leches versions.


One thing that stays in its lane is the Hanoi-style pho, less herbaceous and less

dependent on warm spices than its southern counterpart. It’s served with a deep-fried Chinese-style cruller for dipping into Tran-Dean’s bottomlessly beefy 36-hour stock infused with lip sticky-collagen.

“When there’s a classic, I don’t like to fuck with a good thing,” she says. “In the north they say the south can’t make good soup because of all the herbs and spices—”

“It muddles it,” says Hollinger.

The two remaining weekends—which benefit the west-side mutual aid group Earth’s Remedies—are but a preview of what the pair hope to introduce on a permanent basis after Tran-Dean’s maternity break. In the meantime she’ll be helping out with private dining and menu development at Oriole, while Hollinger continues to work at Aya, but the goal is to have a permanent place all their own.

“The whole point of this project is to just push and see how far we can go; just to create something new,” says Hollinger. 

 @MikeSula



CONVERSATIONS
for Chicago's
LGBTQA+
community

CHICAGO
QUEER
& **NOW**

The Podcast Love-Child of
Chicago Reader and Windy City Times

Subscribe & Listen at
chicagoreader.com/cqn

with support from our sponsor **SHURE**
SOUND EXTRAORDINARY



BEST OF CHICAGO 2020
CHICAGO ROOTS
BEST HOME GROW SUPPLY
SHOP/SERVICE

Chicago
Roots
Hydroponics ★ Organics

Sweet home
Chicago grown.

A deep, heartfelt thanks to all of
our customers for your support.

For over 10 years Chicago Roots
has been the spot for Chicago
area growers to find experienced
service & quality equipment,
nutrients and supplies.

Be part of the growing revolution.
Let's grow together.

4020 W. Irving Park Rd.
Chicago, Illinois
chicagoroots.com
773.545.4020





POLITICS

Endless culture wars

Republicans are waging a phony “fight” against cancel culture.

By **BEN JORAVSKY**

For the last few years, Republicans have puffed themselves up as defenders of free speech and opponents of cancel culture.

They’ve been bellowing about their so-called principles for so long that some liberals are foolish enough to echo them.

Think President Obama denouncing weakness or Bill Maher making fun of Asian Americans who are offended by offensive illustrations in books by Dr. Seuss.

Well, by chance in one week, we have more proof that this Republican posturing is a fraud—like almost everything else the party supposedly stands for in the age of MAGA.

That is—they reserved the right to cancel your culture while defending their right to say whatever they want.

Consider the recent cases of Sidney Powell, President Trump’s election lawyer, and Professor Alan Dershowitz, one of Trump’s most vigorous defenders. Let’s flip a coin to see which hypocrite we examine first. Looks like you win, Professor Dershowitz . . .

Celebrity criminal defense lawyer, best-selling author, Fox News talking head, and Harvard Law School professor Dershowitz invoked the sacred fight against McCarthyism to

defend Trump’s First Amendment-protected right to fire up insurrectionists at his infamous January 6 call to MAGA arms.

Free speech being a treasured underlying principle of our democracy—as established by the founders. A theme Dershowitz also articulates in his latest book, *Cancel Culture: The Latest Attack on Free Speech and Due Process*.

Oh, if Dershowitz only practiced what he preached—a lesson being learned by Dr. Bandy X. Lee, formerly a psychiatrist at Yale. *Formerly* being the key word in that sentence.

In 2019, Dr. Lee opined in a tweet that Trump and Dershowitz had a “shared psychosis” of “grandiosity and delusional-level impunity.”

Instead of looking the other way or tweeting a response, Dershowitz took the matter to Dr. Lee’s employer. He wrote an e-mail to officials at Yale, contending that Dr. Lee had violated “rules of ethics” by diagnosing him without actually meeting him.

Let’s pause to consider the irony. There are rules of ethics for relatively low-level shrinks at Yale. But nothing but unbridled free expression for the president, the most powerful man in America.

As I read an article about this case, I hoped

Don’t get how cancel culture could possibly hurt the richest and most powerful? MAGA Republican cultists are happy to spell it out for you. MARKUS WINKLER / UNSPLASH

Yale officials would have responded to Dershowitz’s e-mail by invoking the University of Chicago principle. That’s the one stipulated by Robert Zimmer, former president of the University of Chicago, which states that it’s “not the proper role of the university to attempt to shield individuals from ideas or opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable or even deeply offensive.”

You know, so snowflakey undergrads wouldn’t whine about someone making fun of their ideas, ethnicity, gender or looks, religion, or whatever.

But you know how it goes. When you’re, say, a gay student protesting homophobia, you’re a snowflake. But when you’re one of America’s most influential lawyers complaining about a signal tweet—oh, my god, we need rules of ethics!

Lee claims Dershowitz’s e-mail played a role in the fact that Yale did not reappoint her. So she recently filed a suit against Yale, contending that the tweet was not a formal diagnosis, and that Yale violated her “First Amendment rights and impinged on her academic freedom,” as the *New York Times* put it.

Meanwhile, there’s the case of Sidney Powell. In the days after November’s presidential election, Powell and her sidekick, Rudy Giuliani, were all over TV contending that the election was stolen. And that Trump had actually won, even though Biden beat him by more than seven million votes.

Powell unleashed an elaborate theory that election fraud existed even if you couldn’t see evidence of it because Dominion Voting Systems, a company that manufactures vote-counting machines, had devised a way to change votes cast for Trump into votes for Biden.

Dominion has filed billion-dollar defamation lawsuits against Powell and Giuliani.

In a response last week, Powell’s lawyers issued the ultimate statement of free expression. They argued Powell shouldn’t be held accountable for the accusations she made because “no reasonable person would conclude that the statements were truly statements of fact.”

Or as her lawyer put it: “Reasonable people

understand that the ‘language of the political arena, like the language used in labor disputes . . . is often vituperative, abusive, and inexact’ . . . It is likewise a well recognized principle that political statements are inherently prone to exaggeration and hyperbole.”

Oh, if only people were so reasonable. Roughly 67 percent of Republicans believe the election was invalid, according to a recent poll.

Trump’s January 6 rally was dedicated to “stopping the steal.” That “stop the steal” cry that was echoed by MAGA followers as they stormed the Capitol to pressure Vice President Pence and Congress to take the victory from Biden and give it to Trump.

Moreover, guarding against future election “steals” is one reason Georgia Republicans passed a bill (signed into law by Governor Brian Kemp) to essentially make it harder for Democrats to vote. Especially Black Democrats.

And good luck finding more than a handful of Republicans right here in Illinois who have the guts to challenge the central premise that the presidential election was stolen. Even as lawyers for Powell, looking to save her neck, essentially argue that no reasonable person would believe it.

I can’t say it enough: the current batch of Trump cultists who’ve seized control of the Republican Party are the biggest bunch of frauds I’ve seen in 40 years of covering politics.

And I covered Mayor Rahm.

They have no principles—only tactics. They will say whatever they need to say to win a political battle, even if it contradicts what they said the day before.

All their prattle about “cancel culture” (by us) and “free speech” (for them) is fuel for the endless culture wars they’ve been waging so they won’t have to present legitimate proposals to any of the real problems our country faces. Including COVID-19, climate change, racial tensions, and so on.

The sooner Dems stop pandering to these frauds, the better we’ll all be.

@bennyjshow

EXPLAINER

Bail abolition is just the tip of the iceberg

A deep dive into Illinois's sweeping new criminal justice reform law

By MAYA DUKMASOVA

On February 22, Governor J.B. Pritzker signed HB3653 (also known as the Safety, Accountability, Fairness and Equity – Today or SAFE-T Act) into law. The massive criminal justice reform bill sprawls across 764 pages and makes changes to some three dozen existing Illinois laws as well as introduces new ones. It's been decried as an "anti-police" bill by law enforcement groups, and the president of Chicago's police union called it "nightmare legislation" that was intended as an "attack on law enforcement in this state." But the Black Caucus-backed measure had input from hundreds of community organizations, researchers, advocates, and law enforcement groups in Illinois over several years. It amounts to the most significant course correction on criminal justice policies and practices that exacerbate racial and economic inequality in the state.

You may have heard that the bill abolished cash bail, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. Here is a digest of the important changes to state law that are included in HB3653, which focused on reforming elements of policing, pretrial procedures, sentencing, and incarceration as well as prison gerrymandering and crime victims' rights. Most of the provisions in the bill take effect on July 1, 2021, unless otherwise noted.

POLICING

USE OF FORCE

The law paves the way for the creation of statewide **use-of-force** standards for all law enforcement agencies.

- The legal standards to justify use of force are tightened; officers are required to consider the "totality of the circumstances" before using force, including not just the behavior of the person they are targeting, but what's happening around them.
- Officers also have to identify themselves before using force and warn that they are about to use deadly force.
- Officers cannot use deadly force against a fleeing person. Deadly force against a person trying to escape can only be used if that person is likely to cause great bodily harm to someone else. Additional requirements to justify use of deadly force (such as shooting) against a fleeing person can be found on page 283 of the act.
- Officers cannot use deadly force against anyone suspected of committing a property offense unless it's terrorism or the suspect poses an imminent threat of death to someone.

- Any above-the-shoulder restraints (like chokeholds) that might cause asphyxiation are banned unless deadly force is justified.
- Use of pepper spray and other chemical agents without adequate dispersal orders and time to disperse is banned.
- Officers cannot use force as punishment or retaliation.
- Rubber bullets and other nonlethal projectiles cannot be fired at anyone's head, pelvis, or back, and cannot be discharged randomly into a crowd.
- Officers will now be required to render aid to those they injure and (though the law isn't very explicit on this point) possibly also injured people they encounter while on duty.
- Officers will also now have a duty to intervene to prevent a colleague from using unauthorized force and will be protected from retaliation or discipline for such intervention.

WARRANTS

The rules around the use of **no-knock search warrants** are tightened, including requiring the wearing of body cameras, and the development of plans to protect children and other vulnerable people during the search.

BODY CAMS

All law enforcement agencies statewide are **required to equip officers with body cameras** by 2025.

- The state will give funding preference for purchasing body cams and training officers in their use to agencies in compliance with the body camera implementation schedule.

QUALIFIED IMMUNITY

The state has created the "**Task Force on Constitutional Rights and Remedies**" which has until May 1, 2021, to research and generate a report on qualified immunity for law enforcement officers in the state. The state's qualified immunity standards currently shield officers from lawsuits and financial liability for misconduct on the job.

OFFICER TRAINING

There will now be **minimum standards for law enforcement training** curricula for mental health screenings, crisis intervention, implicit bias, the Fourth Amendment (protecting people from unreasonable search and seizure), use of force, de-escalation, and racial/ethnic sensitivity.

OFFICER DECERTIFICATION

The **Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board** will now have the power to suspend and limit (in addition to revoking) any officer's certification.

A new **Illinois Law Enforcement Certification Review Panel** will be created to make recommendations on the decertification of officers. Databases to track officer certification status and investigations will be created. Law enforcement agencies will be obligated to check the existing (and now expanded) Officer Professional Conduct Database before hiring an officer.

The list of **misdemeanor offenses for which a law enforcement officer can be decertified is expanded** to include 20 new offenses (like domestic battery, transmission of obscene messages, and solicitation to meet a child). The types of conduct that can lead to both automatic and discretionary officer decertification is expanded.

The **criminal offense of "law enforcement misconduct"** is created and includes:

- knowingly failing to turn on a body camera, or turning it off when it should be on
- knowingly misrepresenting facts when writing a police report or investigating another employee's conduct

The Freedom of Information Act will not apply to officer misconduct records in the Officer Professional Conduct Database. Officer misconduct records about state police officers and all other law

enforcement officers in the state (held by the Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board) will **not be subject to FOIA**. However, the records will still be open to FOIA from the local law enforcement agencies that supply them to these bodies.

Deliberations for decisions by the state's Certification Review Panel, State Police Merit Board, and Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (which decide on decertifying law enforcement officers) will **not be subject to the Open Meetings Act** when these bodies go into private session. All votes on decertification by these bodies have to be conducted during the public portion of the meeting.

STATE POLICE

The Illinois State Police will now be required to:

- annually publish law enforcement agencies' monthly crime statistics
- regularly submit use-of-force information to the FBI's National Use-of-Force Database
- submit reports on incidents involving people experiencing a mental health crisis
- submit use-of-force incident reports, including discharging guns even if no one is killed as a result
- make annual reports to the governor and state legislature about officer termination and discipline

There are new grounds for automatic and discretionary termination of state police officers that mirror the standards set for other law enforcement. The State Police Merit Board is required to report to the Officer Professional Conduct Database. This will help eliminate loopholes that used to allow former state police officers to get jobs at other state law enforcement agencies without being tracked.

POLICE MISCONDUCT COMPLAINTS

No one will be required to submit an affidavit when filing a complaint against any officer in the state. State law no longer requires law enforcement agencies to inform officers of the names of the people accusing them of misconduct before an administrative hearing begins. The state Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board—which considers officer decertification—is required to create an anonymous complaint process. The requirements to inform officers of the identity of those assigned to investigate them is removed.

Retaliation against whistleblowers for reporting improper law enforcement officer conduct is prohibited.

All police misconduct records (both public and

nonpublic) have to be permanently retained by law enforcement agencies.

DEFLECTION

State funding will now be available for the development of **deflection co-responder programs**, allowing nonpolice responses (including by EMS and community-based behavioral health providers) to crisis and noncrisis situations involving mental health and substance abuse. Deflection programs are designed to steer people with drug or mental health issues away from the criminal justice system. Funding for communities disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs or disproportionately impacted by the lack of behavioral health services will be prioritized.

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) can now fund more **non-law enforcement first responder programs** that use behavioral health professionals as alternatives to police responders.

CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

The Attorney General's office will now be able to investigate and bring lawsuits in state court based on police departments' pattern and practice of violations of the Illinois Civil Rights Act. Previously the AG's office could only investigate patterns and practices of discrimination under the Illinois Human Rights Act, which narrowly defines the types of discrimination public officials aren't allowed to engage in.

MILITARY EQUIPMENT

The Illinois State Police, county sheriff's departments, and local police departments will now be banned from requesting or receiving certain military equipment, such as armored vehicles, weaponized aircraft, high-caliber firearms, grenade launchers, and bayonets decommissioned by the armed forces. Requests for allowable weapons have to be announced on agencies' websites within 14 days of being made.

PRETRIAL

An exhaustive explainer of the Pretrial Fairness Act has been compiled by the Coalition to End Money Bond and can be found on their website endmoneybond.org.

ARREST

Arrested people must be able to make three phone calls within three hours of arriving at a law enforcement facility. People also have the right to retrieve phone numbers saved on their phones.

DIVERSION

Instead of arrest, law enforcement officers will now have the ability to issue citations and

release people charged with Class B and C misdemeanors (which include common offenses like criminal trespass to land and disorderly conduct) unless the person is a threat to public safety or has "obvious medical or mental health needs."

DETENTION

Cash bail is abolished beginning January 1, 2023.

- Defendants will now be released to await trial (with possible conditions such as curfew or house arrest).
- Pretrial incarceration is allowed for defendants charged with certain qualifying offenses or are found to be a real and present threat to others or a serious flight risk. People will not be able to pay their way out of mandated pretrial detention.
- Algorithmic risk assessment tools cannot be the sole basis for detaining a defendant pretrial or setting conditions for pretrial release. Defendants also have the right to challenge the validity of the scores.
- Judges must review pretrial detention conditions every 60 days.

The state will now collect and publish data on the outcomes of bond hearings and defendants' bond statuses in every county jail.

People will receive custodial credit (or **time served**) for the days they spent on electronic monitoring pretrial.

Any person ordered to pretrial detention at home (with or without an electronic ankle bracelet) must have freedom of movement spread out over no fewer than two days per week. This will allow people to take care of basic needs such as grocery shopping, work, education, health care, and attending religious services. To be considered guilty of violating the terms of electronic monitoring (i.e. escape), a person has to be in violation for at least 48 hours and not based on the technical malfunction of the monitoring device. Approving changes to a person's residence also can't be unreasonably withheld.

Judges will now have discretion about whether to issue an arrest warrant **when a defendant misses a court date.** The process of determining violations of pretrial release conditions will be standardized. Until now, people on electronic monitoring or other forms of court supervision could be thrown in jail to await trial for violations as varied as being late to court, having a positive drug test, or being arrested for another crime. These determinations were subject to individual judges' whims without a chance for defendants to contest them or due process.

SENTENCING

HABITUAL CRIMINALS

Convictions that occur when a person is between the ages of 18 and 21 will no longer count toward defining someone as a "**habitual criminal**" during sentencing. This makes the law more deferential to established science on brain and cognitive development. Until now, people experienced severe escalations in their sentences due to convictions that might have happened decades earlier in their lives.

MANDATORY MINIMUMS

Judges regain discretion over sentencing in some cases—they'll be able to ignore mandatory minimum sentences in favor of probation, or other lesser terms if:

- the conviction is for drug offenses, shoplifting, or driving on a license revoked due to unpaid fines
- the judge decides that the defendant doesn't pose a risk to public safety
- it's in the interest of justice to impose a lesser sentence than the mandatory minimum in prison; judges must justify their reasoning on the record

The state's **three-strikes law is narrowed:** The types of convictions that will count toward a person's "three strikes" under Illinois's mandatory sentencing rules (which require judges to impose a life sentence upon the third conviction for one of a broad array of offenses) will no longer include drug crimes. Only so-called forcible felonies will be tallied as "strikes."

SENTENCING CREDITS (WHEN CONVICTED PEOPLE RECEIVE TIME OFF OF THEIR SENTENCE)

What counts toward "time served" will be expanded beyond days in jail pretrial and electronic monitoring to include home detention and curfew that restrict movement for 12 or more hours per day.

Judges will now have guidance about how to factor in risk assessment scores.

The law will now specify which forcible felony convictions can include sentencing credits, and demonstrated commitment to rehabilitation will be taken into account.

People serving longer sentences will be able to earn proportionally higher credit. Those serving less than five years can earn 180 days off their sentence; those serving five or more years can earn up to 365 days.

There will now be a clearer, more transparent structure around credit revocation, and behavior-

al incentives will be in place for people who have lost credit to get it restored.

There will be more uniform access to sentencing credits for everyone in the Illinois Department of Corrections. It will allow people to earn credit for self-improvement programs, volunteering, and work outside of correctional industries. People who start but are unable to complete programs due to illness, injury, or transfer will be eligible for partial credit. Those who are on waiting lists for programs when they're transferred to a different facility won't lose their spot in line.

FELONY MURDER

The scope of Illinois's felony murder law is narrowed. Felony murder is a type of first-degree murder conviction that results when someone dies while a defendant was committing any forcible felony. Until now Illinois used a sweeping theory of accountability for felony murder cases. As a result people were getting convicted for murder even in situations when the police killed someone while trying to stop a suspect for a much lesser crime. Now, a person can no longer be convicted of felony murder if a third party does something to cause someone's death (e.g. if a cop runs someone over with their car while chasing a suspect, if a store owner tries to shoot a robber and kills a bystander). This brings Illinois closer in line with the majority of states' understanding of felony murder.

RESISTING ARREST

To be found guilty of resisting arrest a person must be shown to have been committing an underlying offense that was the initial reason for arrest.

DRIVERS LICENSE SUSPENSIONS

The Secretary of State will **restore driving privileges to people whose licenses were suspended or revoked due to failure to pay fines.** This affects more than 10,000 people in Chicago alone. The provision will eliminate a significant trigger for personal bankruptcy.

INCARCERATION

DECARCERATION

Expanding decarceration program eligibility: People with prior felony convictions for possession of small amounts of drugs, who were previously barred from some diversion and probation programs (such as the Offender Initiative Program and the Second Chance Program) will now be eligible to participate. Thousands with prior low-level felony drug convictions will now have access to alternatives to prosecution and incarceration for new nonviolent offenses.

POETRY CORNER

Undoing

By Kimberly Jáuregui

Tio left this place for a new one when night
crawled into morning, but I sat heavy
hips glued to a bed in a dawn that never came.
A Facebook message alert and
he was It is not difficult
to feel the world has lost its magic without him.
It's easy to tie him to everything. To
make his dead body an anchor of yourself. To
spell his name into a chant of asks. A prayer.
A poem. A xanax pill. A therapy session.
A plane's take-off and safe landing.

Let me return my ticket, full refund.
My questions crawl back
into my throat and I stay silent.
I unmeet my therapist. Unclick her 8 a.m. slot.
I put the pill back in the coffee-aged napkin, keep
my promise to save it for when I really need it.
I throw the poem draft away. I make him alive, still, and
unworthy of a story worth telling. I undo my sign
of the cross. Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit
do their usual nothingness.
I stand up off my knees. I swallow his name.
Tio is just Tio.
I call him back just to say hi. I reply to
his memes on WhatsApp. We
belly throat body laugh at my broken language.
And he stays frozen in laughter
And I remember the last time we touched.
And his hands are warm.
And his hands are warm.

Kimberly Jáuregui is a Chicago-born writer and poet, and daughter of Mexican and Filipino immigrants. Her work explores her placement and experience and serves as an offering to her lineage.

Poem curated by José Olivarez: José Olivarez is the son of Mexican immigrants. His debut book of poems, *Citizen Illegal*, was a finalist for the PEN/ Jean Stein Award and a winner of the 2018 Chicago Review of Books Poetry Prize.

A biweekly series curated by the *Chicago Reader* and sponsored by the Poetry Foundation.

Celebrate Poetry Month with the Poetry Foundation!

Open Door Reading Series: Mairead Case, Kenyatta Rogers, Erika Hodges & Israel Solis Jr.

Highlighting Chicago's outstanding writers and poetic partnerships
Tuesday, April 6, 2021, 7:00 PM

Celebrating the Poets of Forms & Features

Featuring poets honing their craft in this long-running workshop series
Thursday, April 22, 2021, 6:00 PM

Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowships

Applications are open for the \$25,800 fellowships open to all US poets between 21 and 31 years of age
Deadline: April 30, 2021

Learn more about **FREE** resources and opportunities at [PoetryFoundation.org](https://www.poetryfoundation.org)



continued from 11

PAROLE

Illinois has not had parole that incarcerated people can apply for since the 1980s, but most prison sentences are accompanied by a period of “**mandatory supervised release**,” which in practice functions similarly to parole for the convicted person. The law will be changed to:

- Create more nuanced MSR terms for people convicted before December 12, 2005: 18 months for most Class X felonies (such as armed robbery, aggravated battery, and aggravated rape), 12 months (instead of 24 months) for most Class 1 and 2 felonies (such as second degree murder, vehicular hijacking, burglary, and kidnapping), and no set MSR for Class 3 and 4 felonies (such as forgery, perjury, involuntary manslaughter, small-quantity drug possession, and stalking) unless the Prisoner Review Board determines otherwise (and then the maximum is 12 months).
- For those convicted after January 1, 2009, or serving 85 percent of their sentence the MSR terms will be three years for Class X felonies, two years for Class 1 and 2 felonies, and one year for Class 3 and 4 felonies.

PLACES OF CONFINEMENT

The IDOC will be able to offer more people **electronic home detention**, Adult Transition Center placement, and other options for people who have less than four months of their sentence to finish for Class 3 and 4 felonies (not including violent crimes).

- The definition of “home detention” is changed so that confinement doesn't have to be 24 hours per day and doesn't necessarily have to include electronic monitoring.

PREGNANT PRISONER RIGHTS (APPLIES TO ALL SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENTS AND IDOC, WHICH MEANS BOTH JAILS AND PRISONS STATEWIDE)

Corrections officials have to receive **medical and mental health care training related to treatment of pregnant women**. Facilities have to offer pregnant women education on prenatal care, parenting skills, and postpartum recovery. Postpartum recovery time is required for 72 hours after birth and women can no longer be placed in solitary confinement for 30 days after birth or be placed in a bed that's more than three feet above the floor.

DEATHS IN CUSTODY

Information on **deaths in custody** will now be collected and reported by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) within 30 days. It will be unlawful for law enforcement

agencies not to report to ICJIA. This rule applies to deaths as a result of officers' use of force. Detained people's relatives must now be notified about deaths and IDOC will create a dedicated family liaison to communicate with them.

PRISON GERRYMANDERING

The law includes the “No Representation Without Population Act” to **stop prison gerrymandering**. Currently prison populations count toward the electoral districts that host the prisons, but incarcerated people don't get to vote and aren't represented by the officials elected there. The law requires the State Board of Elections to make reports for redistricting that reflect incarcerated people at their last residential address before they went to prison, leading to better access to elected representation in communities most heavily impacted by mass incarceration (most of the state's prison population comes from Cook County). Incarcerated people who were homeless before going to prison, or who came from outside Illinois, will not be counted toward the prison's district either. This change to the law will not affect the current redistricting cycle; it's set to take effect in 2025, and would be implemented in the 2031 redistricting process.

CRIME VICTIMS COMPENSATION

The **Crime Victims Compensation Act** (which applies to victims of violent crimes, be it misdemeanor or felony) was amended to improve upon existing policies and practices:

- Victims can apply for compensation through the Attorney General's office through a more streamlined process that doesn't involve lengthy coordination with the Court of Claims.
- Anyone “in a relationship that is substantially similar to that of a parent, spouse, or child” and living in the same household as a person who is killed or injured is defined as a victim and is eligible to receive compensation.
- Maximum compensation to victims for funeral and burial expenses is increased to \$10,000 and cash benefits for victims are increased to \$2,400 per month.
- A felony conviction or other criminal history will not disqualify a victim from compensation, but the person still cannot receive compensation while incarcerated.
- People now have five years instead of two to apply for victim compensation funds after an incident.
- The requirement for victims' “cooperation” is changed so that it is sufficient to report the incident when seeking medical care for any injuries within seven days of the incident.

@mdoukmas



Laia Abril's *On Abortion: And the Repercussions of a Lack of Access* at the Museum of Contemporary Photography © DEANNA ISAACS

CULTURE

The last days of *Roe v. Wade*

It may take awhile, but the prognosis is grim.

By DEANNA ISAACS

In startling news today, doctors in Missouri are reporting another confirmed pregnancy in a genetically male human—the latest in a small but growing cluster.

The expectant dad, 42, says he was completely taken by surprise. He doesn't know how he and his wife, already struggling to raise four children, will manage another. A cesarean delivery is anticipated in early fall.

You know an April Fool's lead when you see one, right?

As far as I know, cisgender males aren't getting pregnant (yet). But if they were, here's what I do know: abortion would be legal, safe, and easily accessible. The guys would be picking up their abortion pills along with their six-packs at the grocery store, and surgical termination would be no more of a hassle than a visit to the dentist.

In other words, as I've said here before, if men had to go through nine months of pregnancy, an excruciating and sometimes deadly birth, and then be responsible for another person 24/7 for the foreseeable future, there'd be no question about their right to opt out. And no qualms about it either.

What brings this to mind? Thanks to Moderna, I finally made my way to “Reproductive,” an exhibition at Columbia College's Museum of Contemporary Photography, curated by MoCP deputy director Karen Irvine and collections curator Kristin Taylor. On a weekday morning in our empty new world, I was the only visitor there.

“Reproductive” presents eight international artists, all women, all dealing with issues of reproductive “health, fertility, and agency” in the context of an entrenched, often racist, patriarchy. (Like so much else during the pandemic, it's also had an online presence: five webinars, a few still available at the mocup.org website.) With the exception of some impressively visceral sculptures by Doreen Garner (think glistening hunks of gut-like plastic), it's mainly photos, text, and video, with each artist displayed in her own space.

The work ranges from Joanne Leonard's witty 1970s miscarriage collages and Krista Franklin's bitter reflections on the uterine fibroids that can mimic pregnancy while rendering infertility, to Elinor Carucci's portrait of her own severed, liver-red uterus. It ends

with Candice Breitz's *Labour*—her vision of a “Utopian Matriarchat” with the power to reverse the birthing process and reabsorb any rogue offspring prone to “eruptions of testosterone” (like Pmurt and Nitup—everything's backwards here). The “de-birthing” is illustrated in four curtained-off booths running childbirth videos backwards.

Breitz's piece, with its illusion of newborns backing up into the birth canal, is a head-spinner, but it was the work in the first gallery, Laia Abril's *On Abortion: And the Repercussions of a Lack of Access*, that I came away thinking about—in part because she includes a vintage antiabortion poster calling for the murder of Dr. George Tiller, whom I met while covering protests at his clinic in Wichita 30 years ago. Tiller was fatally shot in 2009.

Abril displays images of ad hoc abortion tools (knitting needles, coat hangers) along with photos and text that tell the stories of women who needed abortions in places where getting one was illegal. Meanwhile, a television set on a table in the center of her space plays the soundtrack: a continuous loop of men in power justifying the illegality.


Donald Trump is there, advocating “some form of punishment” for the aborting woman, along with former Republican Congressman Todd Akin defending a “no exceptions” policy because, “if it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down.”

So, given that Trump's gone but we're left with his staunchly conservative Supreme Court, where do things now stand? I put the question to Terry Cosgrove, longtime head of the Chicago-based pro-choice political action committee, Personal PAC.

“I think there is no doubt that the U.S. Supreme Court is going to eviscerate *Roe v. Wade*,” Cosgrove says. “That leaves us, in Illinois, one election away from losing everything.”

What we need to do right now, Cosgrove says, is repeal the Illinois parental notice law, “which terrorizes young women who come from homes where there's violence and abuse.” But beyond that, “It's going to be fought out in all 50 state capitols. At least 27 states have already passed laws that will automatically make abortion illegal once *Roe* is overturned. And there's going to be more.” Illinois is likely to be the lone legal abortion state left standing in the midwest, Cosgrove says, and even here, “it can all be taken away in the next election. Twenty-two anti-abortion bills were filed in the general assembly in the last few weeks. If it happens that Republicans gain control of the Illinois house and senate, and they also have a [right-wing] governor, they're going to make abortion illegal here.”

No argument from the other side on that. Antiabortion activist Eric Scheidler (executive director of the Pro-Life Action League founded by his parents) recently told Kaiser Health News that, while this Supreme Court might overturn *Roe v. Wade* outright, he thinks we're more likely to see a cumulative series of restrictions.

“I think five years from now we'll realize that *Roe v. Wade* was slowly overturned without it ever making a big headline,” Scheidler said. 

“Reproductive” continues at MoCP through May 23; it's free, but reservations are required.

 @Deannaisaacs



The Cabrini-Green high-rises were home to thousands of people and generations of families.

UIC LIBRARY DIGITAL COLLECTION / FLICKR

PUBLIC HOUSING

‘A city within a city’

Ten years after the last Cabrini-Green high-rise came down, former residents look back at the community that shaped them.

By **ADAM M. RHODES**

The Whites and the Reds. The Projects. Cabrini-Green. The notorious public housing development whose near total demolition was finalized ten years ago had many names. But to the thousands of people who lived there, they were home.

When the Frances Cabrini Rowhouses opened in 1942, followed years later by the Cabrini Homes Extension and the William Green Homes, they were billed as affordable, safe housing for low-income earners. But at

the end of their lives, the high-rises named after Mother Cabrini, the patron saint of immigrants and the first U.S. citizen canonized by the Roman Catholic Church, and William Green, a longtime president of the American Federation of Labor, had become known for violent crime, deadly gang activity, and inhumane conditions.

And while stories of Cabrini-Green’s dangerous history are indeed true, a lesser recognized or outright ignored narrative is one of community, activism, and resilience.

And to know Cabrini is to understand that those can both be possible at once.

In 2000, Chicago launched the Plan for Transformation, a sweeping project to demolish 18,000 units of high-rise public housing across the city. Through demolition, the city said in its plan that it would then be able to rehab roughly 25,000 units of public housing. The plan was met with fierce opposition from residents who claimed that the project left them in the lurch while the city redeveloped the sites of their homes. Lawsuits,

consent decrees, and federal oversight also hampered the wide-ranging redevelopment project.

Critics say the Plan for Transformation became a land grab, with developers and landlords gunning for the prized real estate where public housing buildings sat, including the 70 acres occupied by Cabrini-Green. Texas-based Hunt Development was tapped to lead the site’s redevelopment in 2017 with the promise of a mixed-use, mixed-income community.

The CHA reports that as of September 2020, 48 families were still waiting to move back into Cabrini-Green, and that the agency had additionally lost contact with another 293 families. Of the more than 1,700 families moved out of the development to make way for the Plan for Transformation, very few were able to eventually live in the mixed-income housing built on the old Cabrini-Green site.

The last of the Cabrini-Green high-rises came down in late March 2011. And while stories about the community are less common a decade later, many of its onetime residents—20,000 at the development’s peak—say their lives will always be impacted by their time in the infamous high-rises—for better or worse.

The history

The neighborhood that would eventually house Cabrini-Green was once known as Little Hell. Before the public housing developments were built, the area was home to Italian, Puerto Rican, and Irish immigrants, and in the early days of the development, its demographics reflected that fact.

The complex was once known as Little Sicily and anchored the local Italian-American community. And according to Lisa Yun Lee, executive director of the National Public Housing Museum, Japanese Americans freed from internment camps also found home in Cabrini-Green.

But decades after it was built, the complex’s residents were almost entirely Black; and the high-rises became yet another symbol of stark racial segregation—in Chicago, in public housing, and in America.

“It just has so many stereotypes of what



Demolition of the Cabrini-Green high-rises took years, and the final building came down in late March 2011. APARTMENT THERAPY / FLICKR

it means to be poor and Black in the United States,” Lee says. “And because of the long-term effects of racism, the legacy of slavery, and also our racialized history, there’s this general prevailing, ahistorical narrative about what Cabrini-Green is that has also come to represent public housing as a failed social policy.”

Despite the pomp and circumstance in unveiling the buildings, a poorly equipped Chicago Housing Authority failed miserably

to meaningfully maintain the high-rises. And many say it’s not a coincidence that the mostly Black residents were ignored by the city. As my colleague Maya Dukmasova wrote in 2018, “if we’re ever to understand that the fate of Cabrini-Green and public housing as a whole wasn’t fated, that the ultimate results weren’t inevitable but rather designed, then it’s necessary to denaturalize what has so long been presented as unavoidable.”

Residents of the government-owned

towers often had to climb several flights of stairs if the elevator was broken or turned off. Trash piled up in garbage chutes, at one point to the 15th floor. Cockroaches infested the buildings. Apartments went without repairs or updates. CHA was effectively a landlord in rent collection and eviction only, abdicating its responsibility to maintain the buildings and ensure residents’ safety.

The CHA “politely declined” to make any-one available for this article.

This disinvestment also helped petty and organized crime thrive. Entire buildings, and the drug trade within, were the territory of one gang or another. Women recall rampant sexual assault in the buildings—in unlit hallways, elevators, and stairwells. In October 1992, seven-year-old Dantrell Davis was shot and killed while he was walking to nearby Jenner Elementary School with his mother. Davis’s death contributed significantly to plans to demolish the high-rises and led to a gang truce that lasted for more than three years. His death was thrust into the spotlight again this past August when nine-year-old Janari Ricks was shot to death in a courtyard at the Cabrini rowhouses. In January 1997, a nine-year-old Black girl later given the moniker “Girl X” was raped, poisoned, and strangled in a Cabrini-Green stairwell. Her attacker left her for dead, blinded and brain damaged from the attack.

Those are the commonly published anecdotes of Cabrini-Green—examples of death, decay, and danger. A place unsafe for men, women, and children alike. But the public has largely ignored the good that took place at the complex. “One of the most important stories of public housing is the story of the solidarity economies that emerged, of people really bonding together to help one another,” Lee says. “And that’s a story which all of us could learn from.”

Amid the decay and danger, and some say because of it, the complex became a tight-knit community. All of the former residents I spoke with said everyone knew everyone. In Cabrini, sometimes your family was your neighbor; and other times, your neighbor became your family.

Cabrini-Green was also the site of historic activism. Legendary tenant activist Marion Stamps led a voting drive at the complex in 1983 that helped elect Harold Washington, the city’s first African-American mayor. And Cabrini-Green tenants successfully sued the city to ensure they wouldn’t be left homeless while the Plan for Transformation redevelop-

ment project took place.

To this day, ten years after its last tower was demolished, many former residents remember the complex—their onetime home—fondly.

The Residents

SG Ali

SG Ali was in fifth grade when the city tore down her Cabrini-Green apartment. The 22-year-old rapper remembers watching the city demolish the complex from the playground of nearby Jenner Elementary School. Born and raised in the projects, Ali says she and her mother moved in and out of the high-rises, at one point staying with family in the same building where she was born and raised.

Ali, born Aujahnee Wright, says the complex felt like the safest place in the city, even after she “watched it change from good to bad.” And despite the “bad,” Ali is quick to say she had a happy, exciting childhood “full of one big-ass family,” surrounded by friends, neighbors, and a litany of people doing outreach in the community. As part of what she calls the “Last Generation of Cabrini,” she’s still fiercely loyal to the community.

“That’s probably what we’re stuck on,” Ali says. “They want us to leave it alone but it’s all we know. It wasn’t, for us, something easy to let go. Our parents let that shit go easy.”

Jenner Elementary was also where Ali first discovered her love for music, rap in particular. She later attended Carl Schurz High School, and her love for music flourished. She began pursuing music as a career in 2018. And as a rapper, Ali always makes sure Cabrini-Green is front and center, symbolically and literally: “I shoot every fucking video there because I can’t go anywhere else and just shoot a video and be safe without watching my back.”

In a recent music video for her single “Drank on the Block,” Ali and friends meander around the Frances Cabrini Rowhouses, all that remain of the once massive Cabrini-Green complex. Ali’s 2019 video for “All the Smoke” was also shot in the complex. But to Ali, the site isn’t just a backdrop, and she hopes her music helps people remember Cabrini-Green as the haven it was for so many.

“That’s what I want people to remember about Cabrini,” Ali says. “We had a heart. We was family. It was safe.”

“There was a place for us, that was home to us. It don’t get no better than that.”



“There was a place for us, that was home to us. It don’t get no better than that,” says rapper SG Ali, part of the “Last Generation of Cabrini.”

TOP: UIC LIBRARY DIGITAL COLLECTION; BOTTOM: JULIE A. SEGRAVES / FLICKR

continued from 15

Alderman Walter Burnett Jr.

When Walter Burnett Jr. agreed that the Cabrini-Green towers should come down, the longtime 27th Ward alderman was agreeing to demolish a community he had once called home.

Burnett moved into the Cabrini-Green complex when he was two years old. His parents separated when he was young, but because his father had relatives in the neighborhood, Burnett says he was always surrounded by family. His father was a local precinct captain, and he credits his father’s work for inspiring his interest in public service.

When he was 17 years old, Burnett left Cabrini to serve time in prison for armed robbery. And when he returned after a two-year stint, he says the complex was dramatically different. The safe, secure, well-maintained community he left was gone, and in its place was a dangerous, dilapidated complex where violence and crime ran rampant.

Burnett was first elected alderman of the 27th Ward in 1995 when he was 31 years old, and he’s currently serving his seventh term on the City Council. He says he had to campaign for alderman in the community with off-duty officers when he was targeted by the Gangster Disciples after he refused to agree that the high-rises would stay standing.

His experience with the stark conditions in Cabrini-Green motivated his support for tearing down the high-rises. “It was in bad shape, man,” Burnett says. “So I saw that as an opportunity to make it better.” But he recognizes people’s love for Cabrini despite the conditions. When he tried to move his mother to Humboldt Park, she refused because she didn’t feel safe outside of Cabrini-Green.

Now, a decade after the high-rises were demolished, Burnett is particularly proud of the improved conditions in the city’s public housing. “It’s a very different culture in those buildings now, and I think it’s better,” he says. “It has become better for residents and really gives folks a different sense of living. Just like we adapt to the bad things, we adapt to the good things.”

J.R. Fleming

For J.R. Fleming, executive director of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, love for Cabrini-Green runs deep.



How deep, you ask? Well, for starters, his Twitter handle is @iamcabrini. And given his personal and professional ties to the high-rises, that's not surprising. Born in Cabrini, Fleming is a father of 12, nine of whom were also born in the complex. And in his youth, he was recruited by legendary Cabrini-Green activist Carol Steele to join the Chicago Coalition to Protect Public Housing. He credits his decades-long career in organizing to the Cabrini-Green community. "Just that type of community and love in Cabrini-Green, is what really pushed me, I think, as an organizer and activist today."

Fleming started the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign in 2009 during an important era in Cabrini-Green's history, one he calls an era of displacement. During this time, he says, the city was forcing residents out through eviction or de facto demolition, or refusing to upkeep apartment units until they became unlivable. And despite Cabrini-Green residents' unprecedented activism, Fleming says the eventual demolition took its toll.

"When the last tower came down, that's when reality sat in, like, we fucking lost," Fleming says. "Yeah, we lost."

Since then, Fleming and the CAEC had a hand in planning the Cook County Land Bank Authority, which promotes redevelopment and reuse of abandoned properties and buildings. As for his thoughts on Cabrini-Green now, though he says the city should regret its decision to tear down the high-rises, he's optimistic about how redevelopment is progressing in the community.

"Ten years later, I'm liking the progress, more than anything the inclusiveness that has happened among developers, and the communities, and contractors," Fleming says. "The collective work of the developers who exist over there, the resident association. Yeah, I'm very pleased. You couldn't have told me this ten years ago now, I'd be like 'fuck outta here.'"

Pete Keller

If you have to live somewhere ten years to be a local, then Pete Keller is a Cabrini-Green local almost three times over, having lived in the community nearly 30 years. Keller is a two-time author and longtime community activist. And as of early March 2021, he also runs an Avalon Park resource center for formerly incarcerated people. The ULON Resource Center—which stands for United Legion, One Nation—was a 20-year dream of Keller's and builds off of his own experience in prison and

his years as a gang member and selling drugs in Cabrini-Green. He also credits his time in Cabrini for his love for activism.

"I think it made me appreciate the hustle and grind of being an active citizen," Keller says. "It's crazy to say that, but it helped me become a better citizen. It molded me to understand the struggles of life, the real struggle of eating, sleeping."

While most people call Cabrini-Green a community, Keller calls it "a city within a city." He marveled at how gossip seemingly spread faster by word of mouth than the telephone; and he admitted that shoot-outs or fights were common, but like many, he blamed them on conditions and neglect rather than those pulling the trigger. And for all its struggles, Keller says the community had its advantages. "You still knew that there was something better than Cabrini, but we had things that outsiders didn't have," Keller says. "And that was a sense of community, a sense of family. I mean, it was just completely different."

And like others, Keller says it was hard to feel safe outside of the projects, particularly in light of their notorious reputation the public often extended to its residents. "We felt more safe in Cabrini than anywhere else," Keller says. "We could go to the west side or the south side, even up north, and there was a sense of not knowing how people were going to receive us or act."

And for all of its notoriety, and the violence that did indeed occur, Keller says there was never and will never be a community like Cabrini-Green.

Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx

Most people have picture frames, pen holders, or tchotchkes on their desk. Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx has a piece of brick; a fist-sized, jagged chunk, with "Cabrini Green 4/4/11" scribbled on it in black letters. The date refers to the day Foxx's mother scaled a fence to retrieve the piece from the final Cabrini-Green high-rise.

Foxx was born and lived in Cabrini-Green until her family left when she was in the third grade so she and her brother could attend an Old Town magnet school.

But the brick isn't just a paperweight or a memory of days past. For Foxx, the first Black woman to lead the second-largest prosecutor's office in the country, it's a constant and important reminder. "It's not just that I do this work with a memory of Cabrini, I have a visual representation of the community that I

come from, such that every decision I make is informed by that."

But Foxx is also quick to admit that the memories of her years living in Cabrini-Green are not always happy ones. While she has "some incredibly fond memories" of her time there, including jumping rope on a fresh blacktop and racing down ramps in front of the towers, she's also haunted by having to hide in the bathtub to avoid gunfire and climbing seemingly unending flights of stairs when elevators were disabled or when someone had been assaulted in an elevator.

Foxx also spoke of a lack of control—if it wasn't CHA's willful neglect adding barriers to daily life, it was gang members whose reign was allowed to run rampant at the complexes. And she says the harsh realities of growing up in the complex have had a lasting impact. But as a prosecutor, it's helped her have a more well-rounded view of the people passing through her custody.

She remembers one man in particular who was a significant source of help for her grandmother. In addition to providing food, the man also let children from the floor play his new Atari 5200 game system. He later died in a gang-related shooting. "If you read about him, all you would know is that, you know, he died because of his gang activity," Foxx says. "But I knew a fuller version of who he was. And it doesn't negate what he did. But I knew that there was more complexity to who this person was than his last act."

And Foxx, like so many others, is quick to point out the racist dissonance in holding public housing residents accountable for the condition of the government-run housing. "It was emblematic of the failings of public housing," Foxx says. "It was emblematic of all of these social structures just being neglected. It was easier to demonize people than to call out institutional and structural racism."

Foxx is commonly held up as a success story of Cabrini-Green: a powerful Black woman who was once just a little Black girl in public housing. And she readily acknowledges that people with her background don't often end up in her position. But she is equally ready to challenge the idea that she is an anomaly among former Cabrini residents, that she alone was capable of ascending to her current height. "I know I wasn't the smartest of the kids in Cabrini," Foxx says. "I know I wasn't the most articulate or creative. And yet, here I am."

"And what I like to tell people who live in those circumstances that are beyond their

creation, the agency is knowing that you don't allow someone to define you by these failed circumstances, that your greatness should not be determined by your zip code. But we know that so often happens."

Tara Stamps


Many Cabrini-Green residents say the projects forced them to be activists. For Tara Stamps, she was, quite literally, born into it.

Stamps is the daughter of Marion Stamps, the legendary housing activist who helped found the Chicago Housing Tenants Organization, organized with the Black Panthers, and helped elect Harold Washington. And, unsurprisingly, Stamps says her upbringing impacted her "in every way that I can imagine."

"It just shaped my belief system, about poor and oppressed people, public housing, public accommodations, welfare, and the human rights that people are due and deserve," Stamps says.

A longtime Chicago Public Schools teacher, Stamps taught at Jenner Elementary for 14 years. She unsuccessfully ran twice for alderwoman of the west-side ward where she now lives: in 2015, she earned national attention for her campaign against incumbent Emma Mitts, losing by just 600 votes. She ran again in 2019, though Mitts again won reelection.

While many have said the CHA has improved in the years since Cabrini-Green was demolished, Stamps has a differing opinion. And like her mother, Stamps didn't mince words. "The Chicago Housing Authority is as bad as it's ever been," she says. "At least back then, you had projects and you had scattered-site housing. You had people who at least were able to house their families as a result of the Chicago Housing Authority. And now, you don't have that," referring to continuing gentrification in the city and a dearth of affordable housing.

And though Stamps calls out gentrification, she says capitalism and its focus on profits over people are ultimately to blame for the state of housing equity in the city. "The monster that is capitalism has an insatiable appetite, and it will eat you up," Stamps says. "It will devour anything in its way. And that's why they just continue to move on communities where people might be poor or oppressed, and they just steamroll over them." 

 @byadamrhodes

Special Section

Money Smart Week

April 10-17, 2021

Make your money work for you with this special section devoted to financial literacy.

Money Smart Week began in 2002 as a coordinated effort of more than 40 Chicago-area organizations working together to promote financial literacy. The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago convened these members to share resources and ideas to achieve greater public awareness of the programs and services available in the city of Chicago.



Specializing In The Universe of
Income Generating Strategies

Better Prepare & Protect Your Finances Webinar

April 6, 2021 6:00 PM CT | <https://bit.ly/3tiOmT3>

Victor F. Green Sr.
Investment Advisor Representative

GoodmanGreen.com
312-586-7373

Investment Advisory Services offered through Sound Income Strategies, LLC, an SEC Registered Investment Advisory Firm. Goodman Green Wealth Management and Sound Income Strategies, LLC are not associated entities.

PAID SPONSORED CONTENT

Longer life spans demand income generating strategies

Paid sponsored content from Goodman Green Wealth Management

When it comes to today's market environment, informed investors are employing the concept of a sustainable income portfolio.

If you're an American born in or before 1966—"The Income Generation"—you can establish renewable income solutions that won't require you to cannibalize the principal balance of your nest egg. Instead, you can place your hard-earned savings in investment strategies that generate consistent streams of income, while helping to ensure the return of your original principal.

For many people who are in or near retirement, retirement savings are not enough. That is why a strong retirement income planning strategy is so important for people who want to make the most out of their retirement.

The trickiest challenge of our generation is the fact that we're living so long. Today the average life expectancy in the United States is over 78 years, compared to a life expectancy of 68 years in 1950. Advances in healthcare have made it possible for people to remain active and to remain productive well past the age of 65. This can sometimes lead to financial problems. Statistically, if you're a couple in your 60s, there is a 50 percent chance that at least one of you will live into your 90s. This means that you're going to need a strategy designed to help provide security in retirement for up to 30 years. Not 20 years, not 25 years, but income for a full 30 years. Unfortunately, even the average financial advisor that specializes in growth-based strategies can't see much further than 5 to 10 years. This, however, is where the income model comes in. Why? Because an income specialist does see 30 years ahead and helps you to prepare for many of the possible contingencies during that time.

Goodman Green Wealth Management specializes in the Universe of Income Generating Strategies.

We Love **CHICAGO**

Our Readers Love **YOU**

Advertising in the *Chicago Reader* not only helps your business succeed, but also helps support the *Reader* in its ongoing mission to provide local, community journalism to the Chicago community and beyond.

Our readers are **LOCAL** and **LOYAL**, and they should know about your business!

Ad options include:

Print
Online
Email
Social
Podcasts
and more!

Find out more at
chicagoreader.com/ads
or contact us at
ads@chicagoreader.com

YOUR AD HERE



PHOTO COURTESY SCOTT GRAHAM

Basic financial terms everyone should know

This article is published in partnership with the Branded Content Project, as part of its series on financial literacy. Sponsor content like this! E-mail us at ads@chicagoreader.com for information.

Listening to financial professionals can often feel like hearing a foreign language. The terms used and their perceived complexity keep many interested people standing on the sidelines—but these terms are usually a lot more straightforward than you think. Below, we've compiled a list of financial terms everyone should know. You'll probably be vaguely familiar with most of them but don't know what they truly mean and how they can impact your personal financial decisions.

Net Worth: We've all heard this phrase referring to athletes or celebrities, but few know how it's calculated and how to use it for their own financial benefit. Net worth is calculated by subtracting your liabilities from your assets. Include all bank accounts, investments, home values, and even vehicle values when calculating assets. All debt, including remaining mortgage balances, credit cards, or student loans, factor into your liabilities. By figuring out your net worth, you'll get an overall picture of your financial health and can make changes to your goals accordingly.

Rebalancing: As personal investing continues to grow in popularity, more and more people manage their own portfolios without the help of professionals, and amateur investors can easily overlook asset allocation principles like diversification. Professional traders and amateurs alike should familiarize themselves with the rebalancing process to maintain their desired strategy. Rebalancing keeps asset allocation at your predetermined levels by buying or selling different investment vehicles. As markets swing, your allocation can quickly go haywire, so look to rebalance your portfolio at least twice a year.

Bonds: We've all heard the word, and have probably been gifted one at some point, but few know the details behind the transaction that takes place when purchasing a bond. When you buy a bond, you essentially become a lender, typically to the government, and there are corporate bonds, as well. You'll receive periodic interest payments, and the full amount of the bond will be returned to you at maturity. Bonds continue to be viewed as one of the safest ways to invest, although the returns are typically smaller than other investment options.

Compound Interest: Another term we've all heard but probably don't fully understand is compound interest. The simplest way to view this is interest stacked on top of interest. When saving or investing, compound interest will help your money pile up faster. For example, you may receive interest for any deposits into an account that's already accruing interest on the balance. Compound interest should also be looked at closely when dealing with debt. You may be paying interest at the outset of a loan, plus any added to the balance through the course of your loan. It truly is a double-edged sword.

Capital Gains: One of the most popular financial terms around tax season, capital gains, refers to the increase in an asset's value compared to its original purchase price. Capital gains are not realized until you sell an investment, and the tax rate varies depending on how long you've been holding that asset. Long term capital gains refer to assets held for more than one year. These gains are taxed more favorably than regular income and short term gains. Any capital gains increase your tax liability, and capital losses lower them, so be sure to keep a detailed log of your trading if you're going at it alone.

By increasing your understanding of the language of finance, you'll be better equipped to put your money to work and start reaching your financial goals. Whether you're trying to maximize your gains using compound interest or looking to lower your tax liability by holding onto an asset long term, expanding your knowledge will only help you make sound financial decisions. The further you dig, the more resources you'll discover to enable your money to grow.

Copyright © 2021 Distributed Media Lab



Eric K. Williams
www.ERI.global



(312) 212-4466

ELIMINATE ALL DEBT INCLUDING YOUR MORTGAGE(S) IN 9 YEARS OR LESS!

BECOME YOUR OWN BANK NOW!

- EARN INTEREST VS PAYING IT
- GET UNINTERRUPTED GROWTH & DIVIDENDS
- INCREASE CASH FLOW
- BUILD & STORE WEALTH
- IMPROVE LIFESTYLE
- REDUCE TAXATION

IN PERSON & ZOOM MEETINGS AVAILABLE

TAKE ACTION NOW!

(312) 212-4466



REGISTER ZOOM INFORMATIONAL

Empowerment Resources International • 30 S. Wacker Drive, Ste 2200 • Chicago, IL 60606
 Office: 312-212-4466 | Fax: 312-212-4467 | eric@ERI.global | www.ERI.global



A Capital Funding Consulting Firm



DO YOU NEED CAPITAL TO
START OR GROW YOUR BUSINESS?
WE WILL PREPARE, POSITION, AND
PRESENT YOUR COMPANY TO
OUR FUNDING PARTNERS
FOR CAPITAL FUNDING.

CALL NOW 312-268-5842 OR VISIT DBMATTERHORN.COM

ARTIST, WRITER, performer?

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR
CREATIVE PEOPLE

Supportive, Affirming, and Goal-Directed Psychotherapy and Hypnotherapy for Adults

MAX K. SHAPEY, LCSW
Located in Downtown Evanston

847-877-1940

www.maxshapey.com
maxshapey@aol.com

Blue Cross Blue Shield Preferred Provider
Cigna Preferred Provider

ARTS & CULTURE



Illustration from *Old Style* by DMITRY SAMAROV

I tell Riley all this as we watch Brandy's boyfriend tuck his napkin like a bib into his shirt collar like a senior citizen before wolfing down an Italian Beef. Meanwhile, our problem customer is firing questions at a woman sitting by herself and obviously not looking for company. She politely answers him when he asks what she does for a living (cosmetics rep) and even asks what he does (used to sell suits, now works some office job.) But she barely makes eye contact, doesn't swivel her barstool his way, and keeps scrolling her cellphone. He talks and talks, forgetting the round of drinks he ordered and was supposed to bring back to his table. The couple back there is practically making babies now, so I don't entirely blame him for staying away.

He wobbles his way to the bathroom and the girl he'd been talking to immediately bolts out the door. Then he's back with his friends, with his shirt off. I ask Eber to tell him to put it back on. Apparently he is showing off a new tattoo. Eber reminds him our bar is not clothing-optional.

Next time he comes up for a round he's having some trouble focusing. I pour the two beers, then instantly regret it. He takes a sip, then spends fifteen minutes close-talking a guy at the bar with the same persistence he did with the girl. His target humors him the best he can, though he's obviously uncomfortable. Then Casanova wanders away, forgetting his beers. I empty them in the sink.

He's back half an hour later to order more, but I tell him he's had enough. He's confused but stumbles away without a fight. He sits back down and watches his friends make out. Then returns to ask for beer again, forgetting he's been cut off. It's last call now and I make the first of three trips back to where he's sitting to ask him and his friends to go home. On one of my visits, after I thank them for coming in, he shoots back, —Thanks for what? I hesitate a second but walk away. When they finally leave, the whole area where they'd been is covered in shredded coasters, M & M's lodged in the seat cushions, as if they were squirrels or birds scattering materials around a nest.

On my walk home after closing the bar, I see him sitting on the sidewalk by an underpass. His phone is by his side, lit up, blaring dance music. His head lolls back and forth. I almost stop to see if he's okay, but keep walking. ■

Old Style is available for purchase at shop.dmitrysamarov.com.

LIT

Casanova at the Corner Bar

An excerpt from Dmitry Samarov's recent book, *Old Style*, an illustrated book set in Chicago bars

BY DMITRY SAMAROV

I pay the guy no mind the first couple times he comes up. Young, kind of conceited-sounding, typical. He sits toward the back of the bar with a couple acting like they are on a date. But as the night wears on, he becomes a problem. He begins to linger at the bar, chatting up whoever is nearest. He acts in a way that forces us to watch him. But he isn't the only distraction this night.

Riley always has stories about people who come in. She knows everyone. Who's with who; who they used to be with; which one is stepping out on their significant other; which ones are trying out an open arrangement. I like hearing her stories. Tonight I have one for her for a change.

Brandy comes in with her boyfriend and takes a booth as usual. She doesn't acknowledge my presence. That's been her way the last few years, but it wasn't always.

When I moved back to the neighborhood, Brandy and I had a fling. She was a grad student and interviewed me for a class. That's how it started. She was half my age, it was as

clichéd as all get out. The troubles began when I told Shiv about it. It never crossed my mind it would be a problem. It was a big problem. Shiv took my being with Brandy as a personal affront, like I was doing it to hurt her. The truth was much worse: I didn't think of her at all when I went home with Brandy.

I broke it off after a month because Brandy wanted a boyfriend and I wasn't boyfriend material. It was just nice to be wanted for a change. She didn't take the breakup well. She started taking Tinder dates to the bar on nights I worked and making a show of making out with them. It was a different guy every time. I was amused and wondered how much of it was for my benefit. If any of it was, she didn't know me very well. We live in the same neighborhood so we'd run into each other occasionally. It was usually cordial but awkward. Then, a year or two ago, she started showing up with the same guy—a dorky mustachioed fellow, much younger than the ones she used to go with. He looked to be her age. I was happy she found someone.



SHOP SMALL

SHOP LUXURY

SHOP HANDMADE

Shop Pistachios

pistachiosonline.com



GET THE
POWER OF **X** YOUR PRIZE
MULTIPLIED



ILLINOIS IS FULL OF WINNERS

BUY IN-STORE TODAY!

Learn more at www.IllinoisLottery.com



Be Smart. Play Smart. Must be 18 or older to play. Game odds available at IllinoisLottery.com

You've got the goal. WGU can help you achieve it.

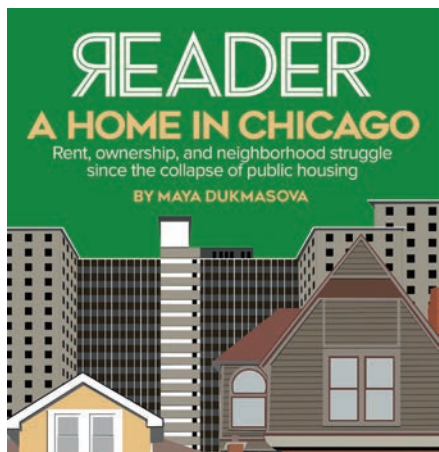
Don't let financial barriers or lack of reliable internet access stop you from reaching your dreams.

With the Resiliency Grant, Opportunity Grant, and Online Access Scholarship, we're committed to making sure that everyone with the desire to get a degree in business, IT, healthcare (including nursing), or education has the opportunity. Call or visit the link below to get started.

Learn more.
wgu.edu/access | 866.225.5948



Nicolette S.
MBA Healthcare Management



A HOME IN CHICAGO:

Rent, ownership, and neighborhood struggle
since the collapse of public housing

The new book from *Chicago Reader's* own
Maya Dukmasova

Available in paperback and PDF download

chicagoreader.com/mayabook



An image from the upcoming project “Documenting Women’s Activism and Leadership in the Chicago Area, 1945-2000” © COURTESY CWHC

FEMALE HISTORIANS

Chicago Women’s History Center educates from a distance

In its 50th year the center continues telling women’s untold stories.

By **EMMA OXNEVAD**

From the outside, 2109 N. Humbolt looks like a typical Logan Square home, with a handsome red brick exterior and a small patch of greenery to the side. While the address may seem ordinary, inside is a wealth of information—like manuscripts and serials—pertaining to women’s history. It is home to the Chicago Women’s History Center (CWHC), a nonprofit volunteer organization committed to educating the city on the women who came before them.

First known as the Chicago Area Women’s History Conference Center, CWHC was founded in 1971—amid the second wave of the feminist movement—by a group of women historians led by Jean Hunt, who later went on to be the center’s first president. It was designed to promote women’s history, as well as provide opportunities to female historians.

“The entire field of women’s history which

now has blossomed in so many ways, was really just beginning at that time,” says Mary Ann Johnson, current president of the center. “[Hunt] was very concerned about women who were professional historians and the fact that they weren’t being promoted and recognized in the same way that men were and, certainly, they weren’t getting the same kinds of salaries. So there was that kind of element of discrimination against women historians, but also she was very interested in the burgeoning field of women’s history, and trying to support this and trying to support scholarship and publishing in this area.”

She continues, “As we went on, we became more and more focused not just on women’s history generally because people were beginning to do this nationally, but we focused more on Chicago women and we realized, ‘Oh my gosh there’s just this incredible history here

in Chicago, of women who’ve been active in so many different areas.”

CWHC’s research on women’s history in Chicago eventually led to the Telling Women’s Lives Project, a research effort that eventually produced the book *Women Building Chicago 1790-1990, A Biographical Dictionary*, published in 2001.

“It took us over ten years [to] do the research and writing. We ended up writing the biographies of 423 women from Chicago history,” Johnson says. “We were trying to get women from various races and cultural groups and classes and ethnic groups and so on. And in many instances, it was a real struggle because there wasn’t that much available during the time that we were writing. Now there is much more.”

While CWHC has steadily maintained its commitment to research and education regarding women’s history, it has had to adapt amid the COVID-19 pandemic. While traditionally home to in-person events, the center has adopted a virtual model, hosting educational seminars on subjects like women’s health and the suffrage movement via Zoom.

Beth Loch is an archival specialist at Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection at the Carter G. Woodson Regional Library, who also serves as a member of CWHC’s Board of Directors. Loch, who recently hosted an event for the center focused on inequalities in women’s health, says that the virtual model allows access to a wider audience than in-person.

“Because of Zoom doing online programming, you can really have anybody globally attend, it doesn’t have to be somebody who’s in the room with you,” she says. “Because often, things like, you know, the weather, travel time, busy schedules get in the way of having somebody at an in-person program. Parking in Chicago—like all those little things play a part.”

Loch says that “Zoom fatigue” and technical difficulties sometimes pose a challenge for participants who are more comfortable using an in-person format. She says that those who are unfamiliar with Zoom or newer technology might find the prospect intimidating.

While CWHC serves as an educational voice for women’s history, vice president Maureen

Hellwig says that the issues taught by the center need better implementation in schools.

“I believe that we don’t understand things nearly as well if we don’t understand the background,” she says. “It took years before [schools] included African American History and Latino history and women’s [history]. There’s just a lot of those pieces that aren’t taught in early enough age [groups] as far as I’m concerned.”

Hellwig says that this lack of a robust education on the history of oppressed groups worsens the public’s understanding of discrimination and prejudice against said groups, referencing the recent killings of Asian women in Atlanta as an example of historical prejudices in practice.

CWHC will celebrate its 50th anniversary in September, with plans for a revamped website in the coming months. Currently, the center is embarking on “Documenting Women’s Activism and Leadership in the Chicago Area, 1945-2000,” a research initiative focused on “women’s participation in the labor movement, community organizing, neighborhood initiatives, the peace movement and religious groups agitating for change,” among other topics.

According to Johnson, CWHC is setting their sights on highlighting the work done by Black activists.

“We feel like a lot of the work that Black women have done in their local communities hasn’t been recognized,” she says.

Whether connecting in-person or across separate computer screens, CWHC is maintaining their commitment to education and preservation of women’s history—and hopefully a deeper understanding of women’s experiences.

“When you look back and see what was sacrificed and what women had to go through to be, you know, in the boardrooms, talking up front to really get to their position, maybe as vice president, that really took a long time and that was a struggle,” Loch says, “and people won’t realize that unless they learned women’s history.”

Twitter @emmaoxnevad



canine life center

WE 
YOUR POOCH
LIKE FAMILY!



When you arrive, you & your Pooch
immediately feel the LOVE!

Experience a carefully curated variety of
nutritious & yummy foods, treats, chews, FUN
toys, accessories and the comfiest of beds.

FUN!

Our team is our greatest asset
& are experts in all they do.

We have the BEST services in all of Chicago:
Grooming & Bathing Spa, Daycare,
Cageless-Boarding, Massage, Training &
Puppy Enrichment at our sister facility.

www.UrbanPooch.com

SHOP.UrbanPooch.com

for delivery or in-store pickup too!
We've created the Happiest, Cleanest & Safest
place in Chicago for Pooches!



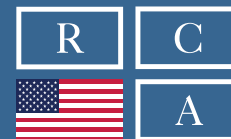
4501 N Ravenswood Ave | 773.942.6445

“You deserve
recovery.”

KAT C. / RCA ALUMNA



Proven Addiction Treatment

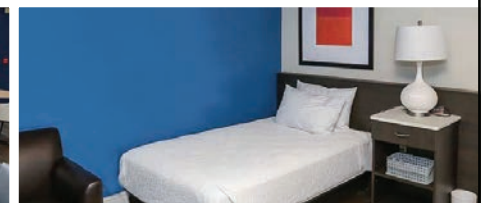


Recovery Centers of America
AT ST. CHARLES

Open & Admitting Patients 24/7/365

In-Network with Major Insurance Providers

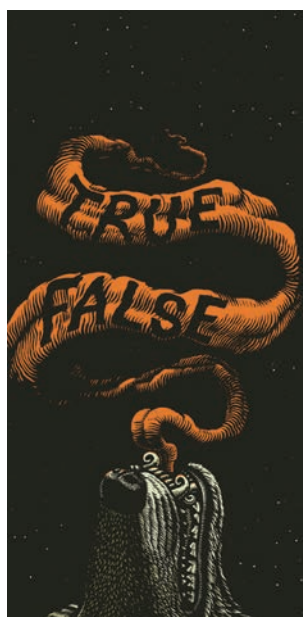
All Patients & RCA Staff Routinely
Tested for COVID-19



Recovery Centers of America (RCA) provides individualized, evidence-based addiction treatment. RCA has eight inpatient facilities located in Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and now St. Charles, Illinois. RCA treatment centers have been named by *Newsweek Magazine* as the Best Addiction Treatment Centers of 2020 in their states.

To learn more visit RecoveryCentersOfAmerica.com

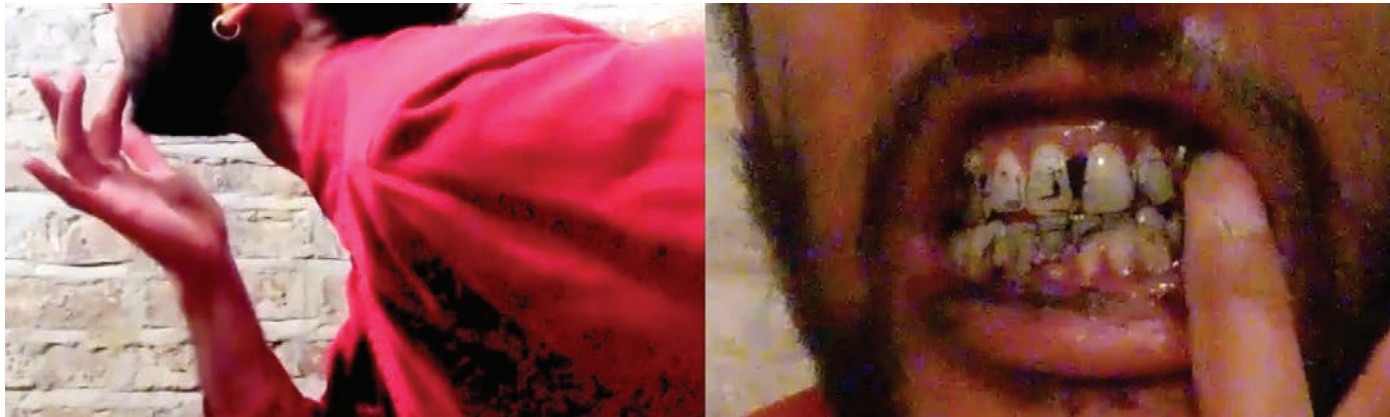
866-407-1399



True/False Film Fest
MAY 5-9, 2021 | COLUMBIA, MO

PASSES
ON SALE!

truefalse.org



The Meat Eater from Trap Door's *Decomposed Theatre* COURTESY TRAP DOOR THEATRE

REVIEW

Stages of decomposition

Trap Door Theatre offers a fragmented journey through Matei Vişniec's imagination.

By CATEY SULLIVAN

With nearly 40 actors, eight directors, and an overall roster of artists spanning five countries, Trap Door Theatre's sprawling, eight-episode streaming production of playwright Matei Vişniec's *Decomposed Theatre* offers a deep dive into the drama, absurdity, tragedy, and undeniably relevant work of the contemporary Romanian-French dramatist.

Vişniec's personal history bears mentioning: With all of his work censored during the brutal lengthy regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu, the playwright eventually fled to France and asked for political asylum. After the dictatorship's fall with the collapse of communism in 1989, Vişniec subsequently became one of the most produced playwrights in the eastern European nation.

The genre-spanning content is alternately confounding, frustrating, intriguing, thought-provoking, and often absurdly hilarious. Some of the segments within each episode (all translated by Jozefina Kompornaly) share the same title, or very similar titles, each version a fun-house mirror reflection of the other. There are hedgehogs involved. In other words, the epic online presentation is classic Trap Door: a raucous, politically astute exploration of humanity by an eastern European artist, filtered through an often absurdist lens. Most of the episodes (originally presented as

weekly live Zoom productions between December 3, 2020, and February 4, 2021) include a talkback with the artists—which can be invaluable when unpacking the myriad ideas Vişniec plants throughout.

Weirdness and wonder abound, starting with the first episode, *The Runner & Illusionist*, which takes viewers on a virtual run while we also see—via split screen—a cruise ship magician who sometimes levitates between water and sky. Directed by Katarzyna Wińska and featuring John Kahara and Michael Mejia, the piece evokes the journey of Apollo as a marathoner follows the sun, footsteps providing a percussive, relentless undercurrent toward a glowing orb getting closer and closer until it seems to fit in the runner's palm.

The key question in the tale—what happens to a runner who literally cannot stop running, no matter how hard they try—will be relatable to anyone who has ever felt trapped on a metaphorical hamster wheel as they go about the mandatory routine of daily life.

The second episode, *The Meat Eater*, has an almost lascivious feel, a carnal celebration of consumed flesh. Zachary Nicol—who designed, directed, and stars in the piece—is a phantom in a red prisonlike jumpsuit, red-gloved hands twisting a pepper grinder as if it were an archenemy's neck, a voice-over ominously reciting a litany about meat that ends

with “We’re basically flesh that devours flesh.” The creepiness of the whole thing might well give you gooseflesh.

Brainwashing is a recurring theme, arising in both episodes three, directed by Mejia and featuring four segments—*The Man in the Circle*, *Brainwasher 1*, *The Man with a Cockroach*, and *The Beggar*—and six, directed by Cristina Pronzati and featuring *The Brainwasher (i) (ii)*, *The Man in the Circle*, *The Runner*, *The Voice in the Darkness*, *The Animal Trainer*, *The*

Illusionist, and *The Man with a Cockroach*.

Over a year into a pandemic, the queries posed at the top of episode six's infomercial for brainwashing are on point: “Are you plagued with existential doubt? Are you stressed? Alienated? Do you fear old age and death?” If you don't answer yes, you're fooling yourself.

Brainwashing as presented here is a solution on par with Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, which satirically advocates eating children as a means of ending hunger and poverty. Brainwashing, so we're told, can transform your brain from a frightening labyrinth

to a streamlined hall of mirrors. Imagination and reason will remain intact, we're assured, but your soul will be emptied and purified.

In both episodes six and seven, Vişniec looks at the walls—or circles—we all create to keep ourselves safe and sane. The trick for worldwide serenity? Each person must draw a magic circle around themselves, and never allow anyone else inside. The inference—that trouble never starts until more than one person steps into the same circle—is hard to argue with.

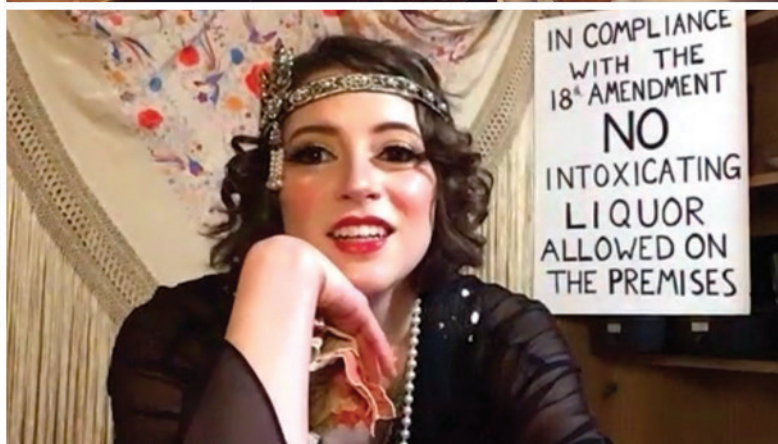
With episode seven (Neema Lahon directs *The Man in the Circle*, *The Man in the Mirror*, and *The Runner*), we get a full, nine-square Zoom show, with every square occupied by a person going about their daily business—from brushing their teeth, to driving to work, to cleaning their homes. The common themes are both a bit depressing (truly, most of our lives are occupied with mundanities) and uplifting (we're all kind of doing the same stuff, no matter how different we are).

Self-reflection is also crucial to episode four, directed by Marian Masoliver. *The Human Rubbish Bin* shows people at bathroom mirrors, ruminating on whether they are, in fact, human rubbish bins. It's both a commentary on consumerism and the way a bad day (or week, or month) can feel like being pelted with the world's garbage. In the same episode, *The Animal Trainer* follows a soup-slurping gent who keeps a menagerie (scorpions included) in his padded room, meticulously caring for them while waiting for the grand day when he'll be devoured by universal love and perhaps literally devoured by his pets.

The final episode includes a moving message from playwright Vişniec, who praises Trap Door for being part of a “cultural resistance,” artists creating safely in the midst of a global pandemic, against great odds. The production, he says, gave him “a huge feeling of hope.”

Given the breadth and the creativity on display with *Decomposed Theatre*, it's hard to argue with that. **F**

@CateySullivan



Clockwise from left: Jay Lee, Stephen Ruffin as Langston Hughes, Jasmin Tomlins © COURTESY STUDIOS5

IMMERSIVE TIME CAPSULE

Into the Mist's virtual speakeasy brings 1927 to life

Choose your own adventure in this real-time performance experiment.

By **KERRY REID**

The temptation to time travel during the past year has been strong. What if we could just go “Back to Before,” as the song from *Ragtime* puts it?

For Steve Rashid of Evanston’s Studio5, that nostalgic impulse has turned into a cunning online performance experiment called *Into the Mist*, which takes audiences all the way back to 1927 for an interactive choose-your-own-adventure live immersive experience. Magicians, comedians, dancers, and musicians (plus card dealers, trivia contest purveyors, and others) occupy various “halls” in the virtual speak-

easy, which audiences are free to enter and leave as they please. By the end of the evening, we’re all back together for a live performance from Studio5 featuring the jazz ensemble the Chicago Cellar Boys and phenomenal sultry singer Roya Naldi.

Rashid, who runs Studio5 with his wife, choreographer-director-educator Béa Rashid, had been doing livestreamed concerts from the venue during the pandemic. But he realized that the competition online was getting fierce. “We were competing, not just against the other venues doing shows on a particular

night in Chicago, but against the Internet. It was a very unsustainable thing for us to be able to pay the musicians and technicians and make it work.”

The Rashid family, including sons Daniel and Robert, decided, as Daniel puts it, “to use the platform of the Internet and say, ‘What could we create within this? What are the possibilities we want to create so that people could actually engage and not just sit passively and watch?’”

The degree to which audiences engage with the performers is up to the nature of the

various pieces and to the individual audience members. You can certainly keep your camera off if you’d rather be in your pajamas (as opposed to looking like the cat’s pajamas), but it’s fun to cast your peepers at the other Zoom participants and the period costumes some have donned for the occasion.

Why 1927, in particular? Daniel Rashid notes that his dad is a fan of Bill Bryson’s 2013 popular history, *One Summer: America, 1927*, which looks at the major events that changed the trajectory of the nation (the Lindbergh transatlantic flight, the advent of talking pictures, and the Great Mississippi Flood among them). “He was texting me some excerpts along the way.” Andy Schumm of the Chicago Cellar Boys, who specialize in 1920s jazz, was also obviously a champion for the era.

Says Steve Rashid, “Since it’s all virtual anyway, we just wanted to give audiences an imaginative world that they could play in and get a sense of what it was like to be alive in the 20s.” And of course, during a year when a lot of nightspots have been closed due to COVID, the idea of a speakeasy, with its illicit connotations, seems fitting in a way.

The first night I attended, actor and magician Jay Lee (a friend of Daniel Rashid’s from undergrad days at University of Southern California) provided up-close magic tricks along with a story predating the 1920s. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Chinese magician Ching Ling Foo (born in Beijing as Zhū Liánkuí) was wowing American audiences with illusions such as pulling a small boy out of a bowl of water and “beheading” another assistant, who would then turn and walk offstage.

Ching Ling Foo’s act was stolen by white magician William Robinson, who adopted “yellowface” costuming and makeup and renamed himself Chung Ling Soo, taking the



Howard Brown
Health

Howard Brown Health invites the LGBTQ community and allies to support services for lesbians, bisexual women, and trans and nonbinary folks.

ChiQ

SATURDAY, APRIL 24 7-9 P.M.
VIRTUAL

This year's ChiQ will tell the story of the lesbians, bisexual women, and trans and nonbinary community through the history and memories of LGBTQ bars. It will connect the history of the lesbian community to the modern realities of upcoming generations of lesbians and queer folks who celebrate their identities in new and exciting ways.

Tickets and information:
howardbrown.org/ChiQ

THEATER

stolen tricks to Europe.

Lee's segment also includes a story about American author Bret Harte, whose attempts to satirize anti-Chinese sentiment in northern California in the poem "The Heathen Chineese" (in which a Chinese man playing cards is revealed to be cheating, but only *after* one of the white men at the table has also been unmasked as a cheat) backfired. The subtlety of the point Harte was trying to make—white people's misdeeds belong to themselves, whereas they'll blame an entire race for what one person of color might do—got lost in the anti-Asian prejudices of the era (which of course are sadly still too present). Harte later called it "the worst poem I ever wrote, possibly the worst poem anyone ever wrote."

Lee says that his *Into the Mist* segment (which I found so absorbing I spent most of my first time at the show in his room) is his debut as a magician in a "semiprofessional" capacity. But focusing on the story of Ching Ling Foo gave him a narrative hook. When I saw Lee perform, it was three days after the murders of six Asian women in Atlanta. He noted during his segment that Foo was able to achieve great things, "despite the fact that in 1904, there was anti-Chinese sentiment. And how lucky are we today?" he added with a slight hint of acid in his tone. "I wrestled a little bit with whether I wanted to include that, if it felt too on the nose and I decided, no, I think it's one of those unfortunate things that needs to be included in particular," says Lee.

What else can you find? Well, if you're a silent film buff, you can enjoy shorts by Buster Keaton, with live piano accompaniment from Larry Schanker. If you think you know the era, compete in the trivia game "Know Your Onions," hosted by Mia Weinberger, and win a chance to snag some show swag. (One of the tempting pieces of merch is a flask with the word MILK in Art Deco typeface.) Daniel Rashid and his partner, Reilly Anspaugh, impersonate a comedic duo of struggling actors, "Dusty and June," while his brother Robert works as "the Dealer" in an interactive blackjack room. (What's a speakeasy without a little pretend gambling on the side?) Mardra and Reggie Thomas perform charming ragtime and jazz numbers from their living room.


If you want to move along to the music, you can learn period dance steps from none other than Miss Josephine Baker (Kim Davis). Or if you're in the mood to play with time a bit yourself, you can check in on an increasingly sozzled F. Scott Fitzgerald (Dana Olsen) as he reads from *The Great Gatsby*. (The book was

actually published in 1925 and the Fitzgerald we meet here is a bit older than the real novelist ever got to be, but too much "milk" can take its toll on time and memory, after all.)

Steve Rashid, who serves as the show's host, is an Emmy-winning composer and producer with long roots in the Chicago entertainment world, which proved handy when it came time to recruit performers for *Into the Mist*, many of whom are checking in from around the country. "They came up with their own thing and they had to come up with an hour's worth of stuff," he says. But on the upside, he notes, "They could be anywhere in the country and do this, and it's a one-hour commitment a week; plus, you know, they didn't have to travel." The show provides a stipend for performers as well as the people helping out behind the scenes.

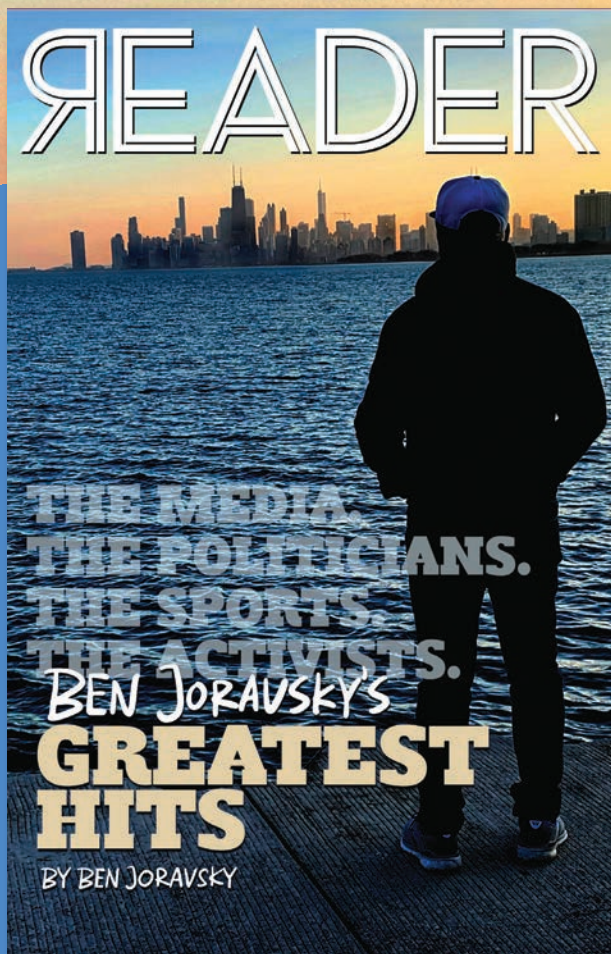
If you suffer from FOMO, then it's worth planning more than one trip yourself with this show. Daniel Rashid says, "There are a lot of clues in the hallways of where certain rooms are. If you click on posters and things like that in the hallway, you'll be able to find out where to find a certain kind of experience. And if you find you're enjoying a room, I'd suggest staying there as long as you can."

The set by the Cellar Boys and Naldi that concludes the evening feels like a Zoom party across time zones, with audience members checking in from places as far afield as Australia and keeping up running commentary. (The second time I attended, Schumm went old school with a DIY comb-and-tissue-paper instrument, leading one wag in the comments to write: "It's 1927. Kazoos are very expensive!") Naldi's voice is a honey-and-whiskey mix of vulnerability and confidence, moving from wry to wistful on songs like "One More Time," as she seemingly channels the groundbreaking lady-crooner style of Annette Hanshaw.

Into the Mist offers escapism if you want it, but as Lee's segment reminds us, history may not repeat, but it sure rhymes. As Steve Rashid puts it, "Music reflects a time and a culture. So we thought, wouldn't it be cool to kind of reverse engineer an event and experience where people got to hear the music, but before they heard the music, they would be given some sort of entertaining historical context and cultural context that would then make the music resonate more?" The echoes and resonances are just up the stairs and behind the next door in this imaginative and warmhearted experience. 

 @kerryreid

BEN JORAVSKY'S GREATEST HITS



Ben Joravsky's Greatest Hits is a collection of profiles and features hand-picked by Ben from his 40 years of writing for the Reader. Each article offers a distinctive portrait of an activist, politician, writer, or sports personality who has left an indelible imprint on Chicago.

chicagoreader.com/store

235 pages / perfect bound / 5.5" x 8.5" size

Available in paperback and PDF download



Filmmakers Lily Qi and Sarabi Woods covering events in downtown Chicago for *Activism Now*.

DAVID A. HOLCOMBE

FILMMAKING

Documenting the front lines of social change

Capturing social justice movements and amplifying voices of change are at the core of Soft Cage Films.

By **ARIEL PARRELLA-AURELI**

When the Black Lives Matter and other social justice uprisings hit Chicago last year, the creators at Soft Cage Films were ready. The nonprofit film production company has been documenting social change, combating oppressive systems, and amplifying underrepresented voices of color in film through experimental techniques, artistic collaboration, and engaging storylines since its founding in 2012.

Before 2020, the team worked in person all over the city and produced a wide array of films—including a musical inspired by real events of police torture at Homan Square and the community work to stop it, a drama about a revolutionary street artist’s fight against capitalism, and a supernatural horror film

that was the group’s first feature—inspired by Chicago’s storefront theater model of a young, scrappy team eager to create a community focused on growth in independent arts.

But 2020 opened up new doors for the organization to reach broader audiences and hold space for uncomfortable but necessary conversations happening on—and off—the streets. Its ongoing docuseries *Activism Now*, which started in 2015 to uplift voices for progressive change by documenting the front lines of local activism, captured historic actions this past summer, including the march against police brutality after George Floyd’s killing and the Columbus statue solidarity rally (and the statue’s subsequent removal). *Activism Now* lives online and is available

to watch anytime, but compilations of the episodes were shown at in-person screenings pre-pandemic tied to other film releases.

“We went to work right away [in] finding people who were willing and capable to cover social justice uprisings and created a system to bolster safety from police during protests and safety from COVID while also gathering materials,” says Spence Warren, filmmaker and Soft Cage board president. It was also important to showcase the actions from the ground and not let traditional mainstream media distort the truth, he adds.

Building off that collective energy, Soft Cage ramped up full speed, launching two new film initiatives that created needed virtual spaces to challenge oppressive systems, like gender

and racial discrimination, police brutality, and health-care access for people of color, which could not have been more fitting in a year where everything got turned upside down. The exposure of the roots of systemic racism in a new light presented Soft Cage the opportunity to work to untangle them in public.

In June, Soft Cage launched its first initiative, a filmmaker Q&A series that showcases work from local filmmakers like Reshmi Hazra Rustebakke, Zanah Thirus, JC Farris, and Pegah Pasalar, and is intended to spark vital conversations around activism, immigration, racial justice, and sexual assault. Five virtual events were held in 2020 and the team is planning six more events this year with a new title that represents the goal of providing a space to discuss difficult matters—the group planning the series calls themselves the Committee of Uncomfortable Conversations.

“The Q&As have really impacted me,” says Troi Valles, who moderates the series and is on the planning committee. “We have had such interesting conversations and they have been so honest, direct, forthcoming about topics that are super serious.”

She points out the film *Unlearning Sex* by Thirus, which documented the filmmaker’s experience through sexual trauma therapy and reclaiming her body, as an example of work and talkback that was impactful and visceral to Valles and the audience.

She says the audience craved these conversations that were at times challenging, thought-provoking, and, for some people, uncomfortable. And the virtual nature of the events allows for broader audience reach.

“Connecting these conversations with the audience who needs to see them is a lot of the work we are doing now, but even judging the conversations for myself—there is a huge need to be vulnerable about some of these topics,” she says.

In August, Soft Cage launched *Convergence*, an interdisciplinary video series in which artistically bold directors examine the relationship between art and activism. Episodes are interviews or testimonials interlaced with various visual and performing arts to craft a mixed-media experience designed to express a holistic vision of activism.

David A. Holcombe, cofounder of Soft Cage, says the series is a way to more deeply engage

FILM

with issues critical to the local community while paying artists to work remotely. One film explored birth justice by documenting the experiences of a local doula who works with Black women, and another hit on the public health crisis that has been exacerbated by COVID.

“*Convergence* is taking a deeper dive into some of these issues while also hiring artists such as dancers and poets and to put these artists in conversation with issues like systematic racism, immigration,” Holcombe says. “They may not seem on the surface to lend themselves to expression through dance so it’s a fun experiment for people to create from home and engage.”

The film organization, which has nine board members and 21 company members, was able to pay 127 artists in 2020 with money from grants and fundraisers. This year, the organization plans to commission 250 artists. For *Convergence*, 90 percent of the budget for each episode was paid as artist stipends to directors, editors, camera operators, composers, poets, and dancers. Virtual interviews and small, masked, socially distanced shoots brought the two episodes of the series to life, and more are brewing.

Holcombe says the pandemic provided unexpected benefits to creating this type of work and exposed the desire to highlight long-standing community issues, similar to the Q&A series. “I am excited that we created it, but the fact that we didn’t have it before shows there is a need for it that’s ongoing, even after this is all over,” he says. “We are getting to work with people we would otherwise not get to work with.”

While juggling these projects and teaching virtual filmmaking classes to children, the company completed postproduction on three films. One of them, *Human Capital: A Tragedie in 3 Parts*, premiered virtually March 28. It is an anthology of three short pieces: *Pilgrim* (2015), *Breaking* (2016), and *Mandala* (2017) that follows three unlikely heroes whose livelihoods are being eroded by labor technology. The anthology brings these films together as the unified vision they were originally intended to be for the first time. It also marks “an end of an era” for the production company, as Holcombe put it. The guerilla-style filmmaking the company was built on—independent filmmaking characterized by low budgets, skeleton crews, and simple props—is over.

Soft Cage plans to expand paid partnerships with not only emerging women artists of color,

but also work with other production companies, social justice organizations, and college students. “Now, as we release more films, we want to show the progression of our values toward something more community-based, that uplifts other voices, challenges ourselves and to try to create an environment that feels collaborative,” he says.

The company’s work indicates that they are on the road to fulfilling this goal, which also seeks to challenge the typical film industry model and pay artists upfront what they are worth. Holcombe says this notion can be surprising for filmmakers but that kind of nurturing is important to create impactful work.

Like other arts organizations forced to rethink their work due to the pandemic and get creative, Soft Cage didn’t let the chaos stop them. Its artist fees increased by 82 percent during 2020, and engagement with virtual content increased by about 200 percent. Holcombe says Soft Cage was able to make a real impact in the lives of the artists who were commissioned, many of whom would have otherwise been unable to pay rent or bills. For now, all the money comes from grants and fundraising but he says the nonprofit is interested in exploring subscription models like Patreon in the future and hopes to own a studio and event space to hold regular programming, shoots, and events based on a “pay what you can” model.

Nandy Barajas lost her job at the beginning of the pandemic but joined the team as a graphic designer last spring. Thanks to Soft Cage, she has been able to keep working while engaging in the fight for social justice and use her visual talents to design protest flyers, logos for the company’s projects, and social media flyers for its virtual events. “I like having the opportunity of bringing the spotlight in amplifying voices that would otherwise go ignored, as they have been for so much,” Barajas says.

As Soft Cage looks to the future and extends its arms further into the community, the company hopes to keep growing and challenge the way we think, behave, and interact to move toward better understanding and equity. To do this, fresh perspectives and abundance are everything, says Warren. “We don’t want to dictate what matters,” he says. “We want to discover what matters by creating an ever-growing and more diverse group of artists and filmmakers so that we can find out.” 

 @ArielParrella

Find inspiration... and learn online!



Online group classes for all skill levels
are forming now. Sign up today at

oldtownschool.org

 **Old Town School
of Folk Music**

MUSIC AND DANCE
CLASSES FOR ALL AGES



Shiva Baby

REVIEW

Sit in the anxiety of *Shiva Baby*

Rachel Sennott shines in Emma Seligman's artful cringe comedy.

By **CODY CORRALL**

Don't be fooled by this film's quirky title and robust comedic cast—Emma Seligman's debut feature *Shiva Baby* is in the running for the most anxiety-inducing, claustrophobic film experience of the year.

Shiva Baby follows Danielle (Rachel Sennott), a young, bisexual Jewish college student who goes to a shiva with her parents after spending the morning with her sugar daddy, Max (Danny Deferrari). What she doesn't know is that this shiva will be where her life will dramatically collapse around her.

Danielle has to play a lot of mental gymnastics in her life. She tells her parents (Fred Melamed and Polly Draper) she's babysitting

when, in reality, she's visiting Max. She pretends to have job interviews lined up to satiate the judgmental people around her—even though she's a gender studies major with no real plans for her future. She fields questions about her sexuality and when she'll finally find a nice Jewish boyfriend, even though she still has feelings for her ex-girlfriend Maya (Molly Gordon).

These lies come to a head at the shiva, where she unexpectedly runs into Max, his wife (Dianna Agron, who is both sinister and completely magnetic here), and their newborn baby. Danielle is forced to add onto her already complicated web of lies to keep her

and Max's arrangement under wraps. As if the walls weren't closing in enough, Danielle is also desperately trying to ignore Maya, whose prestigious law school plans are the apple of every attendee's eyes.

Shiva Baby is adapted from Seligman's thesis film from NYU, which premiered at SXSW in 2018. The seven-minute short also features Sennott as the lead—along with the formidable sense of tension at the film's core—but Seligman is able to develop ideas planted in the initial short and explore new territory in the feature-length version.

Shiva Baby is a case study in the most underrated elements of horror at its most

painful: cringe. The events of the film essentially play out in real time, which leaves the audience with no choice but to sit in Danielle's turmoil and feel her anxiety with her—albeit probably through gritted teeth. Each minute adds a new complication, a new question Danielle doesn't want to answer, a new person she doesn't want to talk to, but she can't escape. Paired with Ariel Marx's staccato-heavy score, slightly distorted cinematography, and a largely handheld film style, *Shiva Baby* pushes the limit on how much bad luck Danielle (and the audience) can handle in such a short amount of time.

The film is filled to the brim with eclectic performances, but Sennott's commanding and layered mental breakdown is at the center of it all. Sennott is most known as a comedian on social media and her popular Comedy Central webseries *Ayo and Rachel Are Single*, but her much deserved moment in the spotlight is only getting started. In addition to *Shiva Baby*, Sennott appears in Olivia Peace's *Tahara*, another queer Jewish festival darling.

Seligman, who was remarkably only 24 years old during the film's production, has already made a name for herself in the indie film circuit. In an interview with *The Playlist*, Seligman cited John Cassavetes, Joey Soloway, and the Coen Brothers as major influences on her work—but it's only a matter of time before emerging filmmakers are influenced by the sharp, tense, and irrefutably human style of Emma Seligman. **FI**

@CodyCorrall



NOW PLAYING

Genius: Aretha

When someone is an immortal talent, there will always be vultures. This anthology series could have been much more than the sounds of scraping a carcass. Instead, it is Aretha Franklin as embalmed by her record label. All that's left of Franklin's genius, which is what this National Geographic series purports to showcase after all, is a set of postures. Cynthia Erivo spends her performance as Franklin mouthing tepid slogans into news cameras, changing her outfit to signal a series of political awakenings that don't stick, sassing producers and other gatekeeping white guys before largely doing a version of what they told her to do, and gliding through soulless reenactments of the big hits. The hokeyness of the dialogue hammers home how no one involved with this project must have known what either a musician or an activist does or sounds like. Watching the news with her sister in 1970 moves Erivo to proclaim, "Mass incarceration, racial injustice, it just makes me wanna holler!" Her sister warns her not to get too radical, to which Erivo answers, "I am going to record a protest album." This is how people talk when they need to keep the plot moving because there are eight hours of it to get through. Each hour-long episode is a hash of stardom-era Franklin quoting her Wikipedia page and disordered black-and-white glimpses back to the singer's childhood—Shaian Jordan plays "Little Re," whose singing is presented as a divine blessing so profound that, in one ill-conceived scene, it floods the monochrome auditorium of her father Rev. C.L. Franklin's church with sudden washes of color. Courtney B. Vance lends the C.L. character a lot of depth; his scenes with Erivo are high points of the series, as so much passes unsaid between the erring pastor and his child. But he does such a great deal of erring and lying and bad-guying that there's only so much pathos to be wrung out of the relationship.

Because the world can never have enough biopics, there will be another Aretha Franklin movie later this year, *Respect*, starring Jennifer Hudson and Forest

Whitaker. MGM is producing it, who unlike Ron Howard's Imagine Entertainment venture don't appear to have signed a \$100 million deal with Warner Music Group to juice the label's legacy intellectual properties on screen for the rest of eternity. This dud of a show is the first fruit of that partnership. Whether who gets to tell the story should be the same people that own everything or not, this particular outing adds nothing to either our understanding or our appreciation of the genius it portrays, which has to be the point of making such things at all. Unless the point is to chase streams for the Warner vault for a month, which it might very well be. —MAX MALLER *Eight 60-min. episodes, Hulu*

RR *Godzilla vs. Kong*

Godzilla vs. Kong delivers, wrecking cities, airplanes, and each other WWF style. This excellent monster smash-a-thon gloriously showcases top-notch motion-capture and CGI rendering, and truly epic fight sequences. Time will tell if this big-screen-worthy flick packs enough punch to herd audiences back to theaters—despite the lack of herd immunity. The fight scenes rival the best live-action flick. When Godzilla slices a battleship in half with his radioactive fin and shoots a blue sky-beam of laser breath into the sky and the entire crew sinks to the ocean (we assume they have life vests), it's the COOLEST. When Kong smashes a plane in his bare fist it's TOTES RAD. The one-dimensional humans barely merit notice, and the thin plot begs questions like: "How can a sun exist in the center of the earth?" Or "Why is Kong really into gothic architecture?" Adhering to its ultimate message of unity, the film tries (and fails) to avoid making political statements. Decoupling Godzilla from his legacy as a metaphor for nuclear radiation represents a missed opportunity to speak on the environment—but saving the earth doesn't sell movie tickets, unfortunately. Brian Tyree Henry (*Atlanta*), Millie Bobby Brown (*Stranger Things*), and Julian Dennison (*Hunt For The Wilderpeople* #SkuxLife) play a loveable trio of conspiracy truthers, disturbingly uncritically presented in the era of QAnon. Newcomer Jia (child actor Kaylee Hottle) soothes the savage beast Kong,

Godzilla vs. Kong

inadvertently creating a "mystical disability" dynamic, while setting up potential for a robust sequel role for her character. I digress. Choose your fighter. #TeamGodzilla.

—SHERI FLANDERS *113 min. HBO Max, AMC theaters, Landmark's Century Centre Cinema, Music Box Theatre, Pickwick Theatre*

RR *The Last Cruise*

Because of the severity and significance of COVID-19—and the growing accessibility of camera phones and social media—it's safe to say that this moment in time will be documented in a way that no other event has been before. Using a mix of cell phone footage, photos, and talking head interviews, Hannah Olson's bite-sized documentary provides personal, first hand accounts of the COVID-19 outbreak on the Diamond Princess cruise ship. For the first time, people are able to see the ins and outs of what really happened on the Diamond Princess, how people reacted on and off the ship, and just how little we knew about COVID-19 in those early weeks. *The Last Cruise* is most crucial, though, when it focuses on the perspectives from the staff, who are often underpaid and almost exclusively people of color. Unlike many of the passengers who get considerable airtime, they don't have the luxury of quarantining in suites or being rescued from the ship. Intentionally or not, *The Last Cruise* fulfills a prophecy that we continue to learn throughout the pandemic: that the people who are most vulnerable will often be the last ones to get help. —CODY CORRALL *40 min. HBO*

Operation Varsity Blues: The College Admissions Scandal

Operation Varsity Blues: The College Admissions Scandal has a little too much in common with its subjects. That is, the documentary is sure to get what it wants—tons of gapers' views—even if it's undeserving. Relying on talking heads and cheesy reenactments to detail Rick Singer's orchestration of the 2019 college admissions scandal, the documentary fails to offer new insight into the "mastermind." Instead, it adds Lifetime-like visuals to the already well-documented story about Singer using "side doors," better known as bribes and cheats, to get the children of rich families admitted to top-tier universities. But for many viewers, this additional vehicle for dunking on those involved will be enough, especially given the damning wiretapped conversations that are included. And while it's cathartic to confirm that these power-hungry parents are as bad as expected, the sobering reality remains that they faced little consequence and that even with all the Singer side doors closed, higher education still loves a bigger backdoor bribe. —BECCA JAMES *99 min. Netflix*

RR *Tina*

Hair flying, feet moving, the phenomenal Tina Turner has her triumph as well as her pain captured in

HBO's documentary, *Tina*. Over a half-century of dazzling performance footage from the superstar's career works in tandem with Tina Turner and those close to her telling the story of how she rose to fame—twice—alongside the abuse she endured in her life at the hands of her ex-husband, the late Ike Turner. It's not the first time Tina Turner has told her own story: She wrote a book, *I, Tina*, with journalist Kurt Loder and was also heavily involved in *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical* which she executive produced with her husband, Erwin Bach, and was first performed in 2018. But this documentary is another, and possibly final, way for the legend to close the hurtful chapters in her life. Tina Turner talks about the times she felt alone, ashamed, and afraid while sharing how she worked tirelessly to rebuild and reclaim her life, so that she doesn't have to tell us again. It's fitting closure for a woman who gave so much of her talent, and then her story, to the world. —ARIONNE NETTLES *118 min. HBO*

A Week Away

Take a strange Zac Efron look-alike, give him a bad haircut, add a splash of *Princess Diaries*-era Erik von Detten, and you'll get *A Week Away*'s lead actor, Kevin Quinn. He plays Will Hawkins, a "troubled" teenage boy in the hands of Children and Family Services whose worsening criminal record has landed him an ultimatum: go to juvie, or spend a week at Christian summer camp. Naturally, he heads to Camp Aweegaway with a foster mom (Sherri Shepherd) and her son (Jahbril Cook) for a series of adventures that consist of bad musical numbers, little plot, no character development, and a cliché storyline entirely shown in the movie's two-minute trailer.

I wasn't expecting the next *High School Musical* or anything—I thought maybe *A Week Away* would offer some camp nostalgia, a few rom-com tropes, maybe even a *Teen Beach Movie*-style guilty pleasure bop. But this movie is truly, astonishingly bad. At every turn, I was predicting with rolled eyes the next thing to happen, only to end up laughing/screaming when it was even more nonsensical than I could have guessed. *A Week Away* thinks it's taking on big topics like trauma and spirituality and community, but there's so little development and audience investment that nothing lands at all. And the music only brought the story down further. A mix of original music (from Adam Watts, who shockingly also worked on *High School Musical* and other Disney feats) and contemporary Christian standards combine to make a confusing and forgettable soundtrack so far away from Broadway conventions that it's often unpleasant to the ear. The one fine song worth listening to is "Baby, Baby"—but only up to the 1:20 mark, when it devolves back to the quality of the others.

Look, if Netflix wants to make a fun Christian musical to reach families and wider audiences, that's fine! But if they thought *A Week Away* was it? God help them.

—TARYN ALLEN *94 min. Netflix* 📺



ON HOUSE ARREST WITH MOHAWK JOHNSON

CPD has tried to turn the rapper and comedian into a cautionary example to social justice protesters. He has other plans.

By **LEOR GALIL**

Just before 8 AM on Saturday, February 13, Chicago rapper and comedian Jeremy “Mohawk” Johnson awoke to an e-mail from the Cook County Sheriff’s Office. “You are in violation for an unauthorize [*sic*] leave,” it said. “Return home immediately to avoid return to Cook County Jail.” But when the message had arrived, about an hour earlier, Johnson had been in his Lakeview apartment—in fact, he’d been sound asleep in his bed.

“I can’t even sleep in my own fucking bed without getting accused of shit,” Johnson says

in a phone video he shot within minutes of waking, his voice still groggy from sleep. “And I’m doing what they told me to do.”

Johnson posted the video to Instagram that morning. He used to use his page mostly for memes, homemade comedy sketches, and previews of his forthcoming music, but for more than seven months now he’s also been accumulating short videos documenting his ongoing issues with the GPS monitor the Cook County Sheriff’s Office has strapped to his ankle. He’s been under house arrest since August 20. He was arrested during an August

Mohawk Johnson and a rare Pokémon called Electabuzz  ISIAH THOUGHTPOET VENEY AND JADE LONDON

15 downtown protest calling to defund the Chicago Police Department and abolish U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. He's been charged with aggravated battery of a peace officer.

Johnson guesses he's made half a dozen court appearances since then, but he still has no idea when he'll go to trial. He won't comment on the specifics of the case, and the Cook County State's Attorney's Office likewise does not comment on pending cases. According to paperwork filed with the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Johnson has no prior convictions of any kind. His next court date is April 20. "I'm probably gonna be here another year before anything happens," he says.

In the meantime, Johnson can't leave his apartment without permission from the sheriff's office. He's only been out to attend court and to buy groceries, and he'll need approval to go get a COVID vaccine when he finds an appointment. He says a sheriff's office representative has told him he'd break his house-arrest radius if he took out the trash.

Johnson was furloughed from his job as head of the dishwashing staff at Second City when the pandemic shut it down. He's been receiving unemployment since then (aside from a week when he couldn't certify for benefits because he'd been jailed), but his house arrest has made it difficult to apply for new work, much less accept it. "I can't work, I can't go anywhere," he says. "Paying bills is becoming very difficult because I'm running out of my savings, because I can't find work, because the police superintendent went on national TV and called me a violent monster. I can't imagine that anybody's super gung ho about hiring me."

Between February 18 and March 21, Johnson posted seven Instagram videos that each document a false violation alert. On one of those occasions, he was getting groceries, after receiving approval from the sheriff's office, but every other time he'd been in his apartment.

The electronic monitoring program of the sheriff's office has grown by more than 50 percent in the past year, according to spokesman Matthew Walberg, with more than 3,600 participants at present. But at the same time, Walberg says, it's lost staff, which makes it harder to identify persistent problems like Johnson's monitor. "When it's cloudy and it snows, it goes off," Johnson says. His apartment is in the back of its building, which he

suspects interferes with the signal. "I've had monitor issues since I've been on the monitor, and since I've been home. It has been a non-stop struggle."

According to Walberg, Johnson received 55 alerts between October 16, 2020, and March 25, 2021. An actual violation can be used against him in court, so each time he has to call and report the false alarm so that an officer can confirm he hasn't left his apartment. After a lengthy back-and-forth, the sheriff's office finally installed a beacon to amplify the signal last week, but it's still too early to tell if it's working.

Johnson was arrested late in a season of unusually intense street protests and even more intense police action against demonstrators. The weekend of May 29 alone, 2,172 people were arrested in Chicago—70 percent of them Black—and that set the tone for the summer.

"In recent years, this is the highest number of mass arrests that we've seen—the last time that we saw anything remotely like this would have been during the Occupy Chicago and NATO years, and that was in the hundreds, not the thousands," says People's Law Office attorney Brad Thomson, who volunteers with the Chicago chapter of the National Lawyers Guild.

The NLG sends legal observers in lime-green hats to protests in order to document arrests and other police conduct. They had their work cut out for them last year. "We also saw an excessive number of examples of police violence and brutality used against protesters this past summer," Thomson says. "We saw a lot of tactics and weaponry that had not been used previously by the Chicago Police Department at demonstrations—or at least not used in decades."

On August 15, CPD officers employed several forms of violence, including pepper spraying protesters at close range. "People were subjected to a lot of chemical weaponry, brute force of batons, violent arrests, and being knocked to the ground," Thomson says. "There were also examples of kettling, which we hadn't seen in Chicago since March 25, 2003—of police surrounding protesters on all sides, preventing them from being able to leave, detaining them on the street, and effectuating arrest."

Johnson says he was arrested shortly after the police kettled the crowd. "I thought that they were gonna kill me," he says. "I hadn't been Mirandized. I wasn't even told why I was under arrest. Four to five officers grabbed me and held me against the car before they hand-

cuffed me, and didn't tell me why. They kept yelling, 'Don't struggle, stop struggling.' I said, 'I'm not struggling, I'm just confused as to why I'm being arrested, because I was just told by the officer on the bike that I was allowed to go home, and now I'm not being allowed to go home. I'm getting conflicting information from people that I'm supposed to trust. It makes it difficult for me to listen to you when all of you are telling me different things. I just want to know what I need to do.'"

Johnson was arrested at 200 S. LaSalle, about an hour and a half after the alleged battery for which he was detained—and about a mile southwest of 109 E. Wacker, where the alleged battery occurred during an earlier confrontation between police and protesters.

CPD arrested 24 protesters that day. Johnson, 26, was one of four charged with a felony. He's alleged to have struck an officer with a skateboard.

In a September piece fact-checking the claims made by CPD superintendent David Brown about the August 15 protest, the *South Side Weekly* noted that police had released video to support their claim that protesters "initiated a scuffle"—but that video (and several others) shows officers first grabbing umbrellas and bicycles away from protesters. "The video CPD released appears to show one protester swinging a skateboard at a helmeted officer," wrote Jim Daley and Jason Schumer. "However, the video also shows that the confrontation appeared to have begun when multiple police charged into the crowd to attack other protesters."

Superintendent Brown singled out Johnson by his full name in a widely disseminated news conference on August 17, linking him to the alleged skateboard assault. He named no other arrestees. The day after Johnson's arrest, CPD's Twitter account posted his mug shot and his home block address. His roommates responded to this doxxing by seeking shelter elsewhere as a safety precaution—they didn't return home for a few weeks.

Within days, Johnson's friend Kim Whitfield had launched the Free Mohawk campaign, which has relied heavily on social media to spread awareness of his legal battle. The campaign's Instagram and Facebook pages provide updates on Johnson's sporadic court dates and encourage supporters to call or write elected officials and insist his charges be dropped.

The Free Mohawk Linktree collects links that allow supporters to help him in various ways: by e-mailing Governor Pritzker and State's Attorney Kim Foxx, for instance, or

donating to his PayPal or buying his music on Bandcamp. (He's timed several releases to arrive on Bandcamp Fridays, and he'll appear on a single dropping April 2.) His musical collaborators, including a loose collective of producers and rappers who organize shows under the name Reset Presents, have helped spread updates via the #FreeMohawk hashtag.

Johnson is a multidisciplinary artist with a history in dance and poetry, but in recent years he's done more comedy and rap. His music synthesizes his broad range of interests and talents: on October's *Fire-Type*, he delivers a spray of comedic rhymes about Pokémon atop scorching, abrasive, dance-inflected beats. His arrest has inspired some viscerally political verses, including on the February EP *AClosure*, where he collaborated with his roommates, rapper TYGKO and producers Cam Stacey and Jake "Ell!psis" Doan. On "Balance," Johnson raps, "I don't sleep at night / Because I replay what they did / They laughed when they beat us / Then they threw us in the clench."

Politics run in Johnson's family. His maternal grandfather, Charles Seavers, served as the Republican committeeman for the 21st Ward in the 2010s. Two generations earlier, Seavers had campaigned for Democrats. "He went to Jimmy Carter's inauguration because he was a Democrat for a long time, of course, being in Chicago—he was a Democratic precinct captain," says Karen Ford, who's Seavers's daughter and Johnson's mother. "Then he switched parties somewhere along in the 80s and started doing work as a Republican. He worked on a number of Republican campaigns—he was a delegate to the national conventions."

Johnson learned an appreciation for political engagement from his grandfather. "He grew up in a time where Black people couldn't vote, or couldn't vote without being tested—and I don't think he missed an election after getting the right to vote unimpeded," he says. "I think to some degree his understanding was, 'If we can vote, we can control stuff, and then we won't be in danger anymore.'"

Seavers was born in Clarksdale, Mississippi. His family moved to Chicago in 1942, during the Great Migration, and his father worked as an auto mechanic in Englewood. When Ford was a child, Seavers worked as a Cook County sheriff's officer, quitting shortly after his wife died in 1963. "He recognized that he probably would not move up in the force," Ford says. "I think he let himself understand that that was what it was going to be as a Black man in Chi-

MUSIC

continued from 33

cago in the early 60s.”

Seavers told Johnson stories about his time as a police officer, but he left out important parts of them till his grandson was a little older. “He didn’t start talking to me about the severe racism he dealt with until I was about 12 or 13,” Johnson says. “It was just, you know, n-word this, n-word that, n-word this, n-word that. He was rarely called by his name while at work.”

Seavers also loved newspapers, which impressed Ford as a child. “I wanted to do two things,” she says. “I either wanted to be a spy, or I wanted to be a journalist.” As an adult, she’s become a member of the National Writers Union, the largest trade union for freelance and contract writers, and she’s freelanced for *People’s World*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Parent*, and the *South Side Weekly*. In 2000, when Johnson was five, she took a job at NWU headquarters in New York, so Johnson spent almost two years living in Brooklyn and going to school in Manhattan.

Ford was a single mom, and Johnson and Seavers were close. “My dad taught him how to tie his shoes, and my dad taught him how to shave,” Ford says. Her move to New York didn’t change things. “If I had to travel somewhere, my dad would come to New York and stay with Jeremy in the house so that Jeremy could be home,” Ford says. When they resettled in Auburn Gresham in late 2001, Johnson could again see Seavers every day. “Throughout my dad’s life, they were running buddies of the first order,” Ford says.

Ford would take Johnson everywhere when he was young, including to union actions. “Jeremy was with me, walking picket lines,” she says. “He was with my dad during political campaigns. So his bent for justice came very, very early.” As a seventh-grader at Luther South in Ashburn, Johnson campaigned to remove the building’s Coca-Cola vending machines due to reports of the company’s human rights violations at bottling plants in Colombia.

Johnson also got interested in theater, poetry, dance, and photography as he grew up. At Englewood High School he joined the school’s poetry team, Team Englewood, and during his senior year in 2012, they won *Louder Than a Bomb’s* Spirit of the Slam Award for a group piece he cowrote called “What Black People Say to Racist Republicans.” That April, his team performed at the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates. “Us parents were not allowed to go,” Ford says, “because security



Mohawk Johnson with more of his collection: Marshstomp, Combusken, the Black Power Ranger, Mewtwo, and Naruto © ISIAH THOUGHTPOET VENEY AND JADE LONDON

was intense.”

Many poets in Johnson’s circle also rapped. “I could kind of rap, but I didn’t do it often,” he says. “My friends would always tell me, ‘Bro, we could tell by the way that you do poetry, you probably rap really well. You should just do it.’”

In fall 2012, Johnson enrolled in Columbia College, where in 2014 he met producer and songwriter Naughta. Johnson’s interest in dance had already led him to Chicago footwork producers such as DJ tha Pope, DJ Nate, and RP Boo. Naughta’s music fuses neosoul sensuality with intense EDM production, and he expanded his friend’s horizons. “He exposed me to a lot of EDM,” Johnson says.

Johnson and Naughta became roommates in early 2018, around the time they collaborated on Johnson’s first recorded rap song. “Hush” combines biting verses about substance abuse and mental health with a visceral instrumental that ratchets up the intensity throughout.

A bad breakup the previous year was a big part of what motivated Johnson to start rapping. “I thought, ‘Oh, if I become a rapper, she’ll love me again,’” he says. “Instead of, ‘I

have to take responsibility for the things I did wrong in that relationship, accept the fact that I probably helped destroy it, and change my behavior and move on.’”

Johnson says Naughta not only helped him unlearn bad behaviors but also introduced him to friends who’d push him to grow as a person and an artist. Among them was Cam Stacey, who recalls running into Johnson at dance shows before they properly met at an Albany Park house concert in summer 2018.

“It was one of Mohawk’s first live appearances rapping—until then, I really just knew him as an incredibly talented dancer who would just show up and tear it up at shows,” Stacey says. He was struck by Johnson’s set. “You can really tell he’s opening the core—baring himself, as it were—when he’s performing.” Stacey offered to help Johnson in the studio, and their first session produced five songs that Johnson released in September 2018 as *The Relapse EP*.

Stacey had just graduated from Loyola, where he’d been part of a dance-production collective called SoundAsleep, which was doing well enough to play the occasional show outside Chicago. They’d met University

of Indiana student and producer Jake “Ellipsis” Doan at a Bloomington show hosted by electronic collective Home Planet, and Doan reconnected with Stacey after graduating in 2016 and landing a job in Chicago. When Doan met Johnson a couple years later, they hit it off immediately.

“He and I clicked on a lot of different levels,” Doan says. “Also lots of nerd stuff—he and I both appreciate Pokémon, Star Wars, and Marvel Cinematic Universe stuff. Pretty easy recipe for becoming really good friends.”

The musicians in Johnson’s circle tended to play mainly at DIY spaces, and Stacey sought to expand their opportunities at aboveground venues by launching the event-production group Reset Presents. Reset enlisted Doan to help book talent and organize events, and in February 2019 they threw their first show at the Throne Room in Lakeview, with Johnson among the openers for Georgia rapper-producer William Crooks.

“He was maybe second or third on the lineup,” Stacey says. “He showed up to the show, and he was dancing right up until he got up onstage. Spat for a good 20 minutes, and then hopped back off and kept on dancing.”

Johnson's work with Stacey and Doan helped their creative community grow. "It definitely opened it up a lot more, I think," Doan says. "Mohawk has always been very vocal about wanting to find more Black communities—for his own music, but also to inform our viewpoint and expand not only our reach but also our worldview."

At a Reset gig in October 2019, Johnson befriended Doan's cousin, Maria Koliopoulos, who'd recently moved to Chicago from Omaha to attend Loyola. "He actually got me out of my shell," Koliopoulos says. "I'm not the kind of person to just walk up to people and talk to them—I'm pretty shy. He is not. He pushed me out of my shell, started talking to me, and then we really fell into a natural friendship."

One night when Koliopoulos was on her way to visit Johnson at his old apartment by the Argyle Red Line stop, she noticed a group of men following her. "I had no idea what to do," she says. "I was still several blocks away. I called him and quietly let him know what was going on. Within two minutes, he was at my side, walking me all the way back to his place." When Koliopoulos returned home, Johnson walked her back to the train. "I knew we were friends before then," she says. "But that's when I knew that I could pretty much trust him with anything."

In October 2018, a few months into a job as a dishwasher at Second City, Johnson met a new coworker named Kim Whitfield, who'd moved to Chicago from New York to attend Columbia. During one of her breaks, while she was eating in the back kitchen, Johnson propped himself on a stool and began asking her questions; shortly afterward, he helped her get home after a shift. Whitfield describes herself as standoffish, but she says Johnson's forthright appeal for friendship won her over.

"When he started coming over to my house, I was like, 'I don't let anyone into my home, because I'm such a private and protective person—I've just been through so much,'" Whitfield says. "I stated my boundaries early on. I was like, 'I'm trusting you—I'm giving you something I don't give a lot of people. You mess that up, I'm never gonna give it to you again.' He took that to heart. I put him to task to just be a decent, kind, trustworthy human being. And he was everything above that, every single way. He just kept showing up."

In fall 2019, Whitfield got the chance to produce an evening show at Second City and recruited Johnson to perform. "I know he definitely had a following at the time from his

music, and I initially came to him because I wanted more musical acts," she says. Johnson surprised her by asking to do a stand-up set instead. "I'm like, 'OK, I thought it was gonna be music, but we could do stand-up,'" Whitfield says. "Lo and behold, it was freaking great."

"I make jokes about and also rap about a lot of the same subject material—dating, politics, family," Johnson says. "All of those things come from the same source, they're just articulated differently." He also aligns his comedy with his activism. "I try to make comedy that is politically charged, but in a way that does not step on the people who are being stepped on," he says. "People go through so much daily. And then they come to me to make them happy, or they come to my shows or my art to bring them joy. Why would I write something or perform something to actively make their time worse? I don't believe in that."

Last summer, Whitfield began working on a documentary called *We're Here*, interviewing Black Chicagoans in improv and stand-up. "We wanted to focus on and highlight their accomplishments, their achievements, and what their experience is like being a person of color trying to navigate this historically and predominantly white space that is Chicago comedy," she says.

Johnson was among Whitfield's interview subjects. "Literally in our last two weeks of filming, that's when Mohawk was arrested," she says. "The minute we wrapped, it went straight to the can, and I went all hands on deck with everything involving Mohawk. Anything and everything for Mohawk."

In 2014, Johnson was running to catch a bus for work, heading east along 87th Street near his old Auburn Gresham home. He'd just missed the bus at Sangamon and hoped to catch up at Vincennes, but then a police car pulled in front of him. "One of them hops out the car and he's like, 'Are you running from us?' I'm like, 'No, I'm trying to catch that bus, I'm gonna be late for work,'" Johnson says. "Then they grab me, search my ID, take my bag, search my bag for weapons, look at my face." Johnson kept his hands on his head as the cops searched his belongings.

He says he tried to report the incident to the police, but he got nowhere. His luck wasn't much better with his fellow students at Columbia. "I tried to bring it to the attention of the people around me on my campus," he says. "And it was, 'Well, you shouldn't have looked suspicious.' Or 'You shouldn't have been running.' I don't know how to justify 'I'm leaving

my house and going to work' to anyone, and arguably I should never have to."

Johnson had an even more frightening encounter with police three months later, during a power outage. When he went outside to investigate, along with his partner and a friend, he saw a car slow down in front of his house. "It's the police, and they hop out of the car and they yell, 'Stop breaking into that house!'" Johnson says. "Then one of them yells, 'Drop the knife,' and starts going for their gun. The knife is my house keys."

Johnson says the cop who reached for his gun was the same one who stopped him on his way to work. "So this officer has now put me in danger twice in front of my house," he says. "For nothing."

Those experiences helped spur Johnson's activism. "For a long time I was a bystander in the conversation about racism," he says. "I had been angry, but I didn't know what to do, and then it happened to me twice within one year. And I'm like, 'Well, I gotta figure out what to do, 'cause I don't know how to organize, I don't know how to plan.' I could at least look up when protests are happening and show up to them. And that's what did it."

Around 11 PM on Saturday, August 15, Doan received a Twitter DM from a friend who'd heard Johnson had been arrested. Johnson's roommates tried calling his cell but couldn't get through. Around 12:30 AM, Doan and Stacey arrived at CPD's Second District station at Wentworth and 51st on a tip that it'd be a good place to check. They waited close to 45 minutes before finding a National Lawyers Guild attorney, who told them Johnson was at the 11th District in Homan Square.

Doan and Stacey arrived at the 11th District headquarters around 2 AM. An officer at the front desk confirmed that Johnson was being held there but said he was with detectives at the time. On their way out, Doan and Stacey passed four cops who knew the two of them had come to look for an arrested friend. "One of the cops muttered under his breath something about a skateboard, like, 'Here's to hoping he never gets out,'" Stacey says. "And then he said something about antifa and slow-clapped us all the way around the block."

The morning of August 16, Doan and Stacey got conflicting information about Johnson's whereabouts from CPD. As they worked to locate him, Whitfield and other friends from Second City also began calling various precincts. Whitfield spearheaded fundraising efforts to get Johnson a lawyer, and Stacey

hacked into Johnson's Twitter account to let his followers know he'd been arrested. Johnson's supporters began to protest outside the 11th District headquarters that afternoon, where they were told he'd been moved to Cook County Jail near 26th and California.

Ford had moved to Mississippi with her husband in 2018, but she found out her son was arrested after her husband's relatives saw his mug shot, which CPD had made public on Sunday. "If my husband's relatives had not called us and told us that they saw him on TV, I never would have known," she says.

When CPD doxxed Johnson, it also posted a video that allegedly showed him assaulting an officer—though it's difficult if not impossible to positively identify the person of interest in the clip. Whitfield says that during a court date on September 9, which she watched on Zoom, Judge Edward M. Maloney admitted that he couldn't tell whether the man wielding the skateboard was Johnson. Maloney did not respond by publication time to a request for comment sent via the Office of the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County. But in a transcript of the session obtained from the court reporters' office, he makes statements in both directions. "I have seen the video of the incident, counsel points out, maybe it's difficult for me to see if it's the defendant," Maloney says. Later he refers to what he saw on the tape as "a very violent act on the part of the defendant."

Stacey saw clearly that the way the cops were presenting information about his friend played into stereotypes criminalizing Black life—and CPD incurred harsh blowback for its behavior. Alderman Bryan Sigcho-Lopez demanded that the department "stop doxxing my innocent-until proven-guilty residents" (Johnson isn't in his ward, but some arrestees whose info was posted did live there). Within days, the police deleted most of the offending posts.

In their own effort to counteract CPD, Stacey and his friends began posting silly photos and videos of Johnson to help round out the public picture of his character. But everyone who lived with Johnson had other pressing issues after police shared their home block address on social media.

"Our concern wasn't people affiliated with the police department coming to harm us or damage anything in the house," Stacey says. "Our concern was primarily more extreme people who might want to come and do as they please."

On Monday, August 17, Judge John F. Lyke

ordered Johnson be placed on electronic monitoring. The court's pretrial public safety assessment of Johnson had recommended he be released with no conditions, according to paperwork filed with the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County. A 2017 *Injustice Watch* report on rules changes at the county's felony bond court notes that during a month of observation by the group's reporters, Lyke instituted electronic monitoring in roughly one-third of his cases—and in about two-thirds of those, the court's pretrial services department had not recommended it. (The other three judges observed used electronic monitoring about one-fifth of the time.)

Lyke added the condition that Johnson not skateboard or have a skateboard in his possession, and set his bond at \$20,000. The Chicago Community Bond Fund paid Johnson's 10 percent bail deposit later that day.

It would be three more days till Johnson was released from Cook County Jail. Doan heard from him the morning of Thursday, August 20. "I got a call at eight or nine in the morning," Doan says. "I was in tears to hear my friend's

voice, and to hear from him that he was OK, and was tested for COVID and didn't have it. He seemed pretty hopeful that he would be released very shortly. The call cut off about a minute and a half in."

Ford felt similar relief when she was finally able to talk to her son. She'd spent the days leading up to Johnson's release calling anyone in her network who could provide insight on her son's legal situation—including, fruitlessly, a cousin who'd formerly served as a Cook County police officer. "This was the first time I've had to deal with the criminal justice system," Ford says. "And it has been a rude awakening."

On October 6, the night before Johnson's 26th birthday, his friends helped him throw a fundraising telethon with live music and comedy. "A Fire Type Telethon" riffs on the name of the album he'd released at the beginning of the month, which he'd been working on for a year and dreamed of for longer. "I've had the idea for a long time, 'cause I'm a nerdy dude—I like nerdy stuff. But

I didn't think I had the skill yet," Johnson says. "So I waited about a year and a half into my music career before I started rapping about Pokémon."

In November, Johnson began streaming sessions of *Pokémon Sword* and other Pokémon video games on Twitch. He uses his streams to present more than just gameplay—he addresses politics there, just as he does in his music and comedy, talking about topics such as patriarchy and toxic masculinity. "I try to use my Twitch to have conversations about how to unpack that stuff," he says. "Like, where body standards and beauty standards come from, our definitions of gender and where we got the binary from, and how those things are antiquated. How not to be harmful—stuff like that, 'cause I feel like I'm in a particular position where I can just reach a lot of people. I want to be able to do good while I can."

Johnson can't participate in further protests, of course—not while he's still on house arrest. And his case proves that not everybody sees protesting as "doing good" anyway, no matter how worthy its aims. The city and CPD

consistently frame protest as malicious and deserving of a harsh response—no amount of pious official rhetoric can erase their violence toward protesters or their attempt to publicly condemn Johnson long before his trial. "This is happening everywhere," he says. "People are being put away for years, are being charged with felonies and being threatened with their livelihoods, or being put on probation for long periods of time, to serve as examples to other protesters to deter them."

But Johnson knows that protests won't stop until the injustices that provoke them finally disappear. The stakes are simply too high. "The people are hurting, and it seems like the people in charge of doing right by them are the ones who have dedicated themselves to harming them the most on behalf of capitalism, on behalf of racism, and on behalf of the status quo," he says. "The city is not stuff, the city is people, and we are hurting our people right now on purpose to keep them quiet. There won't be a city left if we continue." **✎**

🐦 @imLeor

CORSETS
CUSTOM FIT
 ANY STYLE | ANY COLOR
 WWW.LEATHER64TEN.COM

64TEN
 CHICAGO

6410 N. CLARK ST CHICAGO, IL 60626 | 773.508.0900 | [f](#) [t](#) [i](#) /LEATHER64TEN

CHICAGO
 POP STARS,
 HARDCORE
 HEROES, AND
 HOUSE
 LEGENDS:
 — 10 YEARS —
 OF CHICAGO READER MUSIC FEATURES
 BY LEOR GALIL

DONATE TO GET LEOR GALIL'S BEST ARTICLES
 OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS OF CHICAGO MUSIC!
 CHICAGOREADER.COM/LEORBOOK

PICK OF THE WEEK

Blueswoman Joanna Connor honors beloved Chicago blues club Theresa's with *4801 South Indiana Avenue*



MARYAM WILCHER

JOANNA CONNOR, 4801 SOUTH INDIANA AVENUE
Keeping the Blues Alive
joannaconnor.com

IF YOU'D STUMBLED UNAWARE into one of Joanna Connor's regular gigs at the House of Blues or Kingston Mines in the 2010s, the blues singer and guitarist might've seemed like some sort of hidden treasure. But Connor has been playing all over the local blues scene for almost four decades, and she's attracted devoted fans drawn to her forceful stage presence and fiery slide guitar. When she moved to Chicago from Massachusetts in the mid-1980s, she started out as a guitarist for Dion Payton's 43rd Street Blues Band, then the house band for the storied Checkerboard Lounge. She branched out with her own group in 1988, building a reputation as a reliably energetic shredder with a brassy alto and playing steady gigs at a variety of clubs. She released her debut album, *Believe It*, in 1990, and spent the next 11 years touring internationally and enchanting festival audiences. Connor took time off from the road in the mid-2000s to raise her daughter, but the music didn't stop: she became a mainstay on the local circuit, playing several nights a week and using the occasional blues festival appearance to show off new songs. The growth of social media helped launch yet another stage in Connor's career—a 2014 audience video from Maine's North Atlantic Blues Fest received more than a million views on YouTube and gave her recognition beyond the blues world. And with the new *4801 South Indiana Avenue*, Connor shows off the passionate blues-rock sound she's developed over the past 30 years. The album is named for the address of legendary Bronzeville blues club Theresa's Lounge, which closed around the time Connor arrived here, and on songs such as "Come Back Home" and "I Feel So Good," she sounds like she's trying to shout out the devil and conjure up the soul of Albert King with her guttural growl and chunky guitar leads. The solid set of electric blues grooves on *4801 South Indiana Avenue* makes a great showcase for this seasoned blueswoman's talents. —SALEM COLLO-JULIN



Josh Caterer (center) with John San Juan and John Perrin © PAUL BEATY

JULIEN BAKER, LITTLE OBLIVIONS
Matador
julienbaker.com

Julien Baker's 2015 debut album, *Sprained Ankle*, and its 2017 follow-up, *Turn Out the Lights*, centered the singer-songwriter's sometimes fragile but always sincere voice as she journeyed through addiction and came to terms with her sexuality and spirituality. Her songs were bold in their lyrical honesty and unadorned presentation: *Sprained Ankle* featured just Baker and her guitar, and while *Turn Out the Lights* added guest violin and woodwinds, it still focused on her singing, which wedded her sadness and struggles to guitar-driven melodies. On this month's *Little Oblivions*, a less world-weary but more world-aware Baker sounds like she might be accompanied by a full band, but she plays nearly everything herself—including drums, synths, and even a bit of banjo and mandolin (Memphis-based engineer Calvin Lauber also has a vague credit for "additional instrumentation"). Baker tends to record only with people who have an intimate understanding of her sound: She and Lauber began their music careers running in the same circles, and Lauber also produced *Turn Out the Lights*. The new blood on *Little Oblivions* comes from Baker's partners in the indie-rock band Boygenius, Phoebe Bridgers and Lucy Dacus, who add deep vocal harmonies on "Favor." The new album's standout track is the comparatively stripped-down "Song in E," whose sound faintly recalls *Turn Out the Lights* and whose lyrics reveal an intimate understanding of self-loathing. When Baker sings "I wish you'd hurt me / It's the mercy I can't take," it's a punch in the gut. —SALEM COLLO-JULIN

JOSH CATERER, THE HIDEOUT SESSIONS
Pravda
joshcaterer.bandcamp.com/album/the-hideout-sessions

Don't let the live vibe fool you—*The Hideout Sessions* features no cheering, no clapping, and no cries for "Freebird." Josh Caterer, lead singer of the Smoking Popes for 30 years, recorded this new

collection of songs and covers pandemic style last October: he played to no one, just cameras that livestreamed the show from the Hideout to virtual fans. Nevertheless, Caterer suited up with his new band as if they were playing a grand ballroom on a Saturday night. That attention to detail is reflected in the sharply executed playing and blazing bursts of energy that carry the momentum of this ten-song set. Drummer John Perrin (NRBQ) and bassist John San Juan (Hushdrops) round out the power trio, and together these precision players reinvent several pop standards, some from nearly a century ago, according to their own vision. "My Funny Valentine" becomes heavy with menace, especially with Caterer's ecstatic guitar soloing and Perrin flipping through time signatures with every fill. The band explore a wide range of dynamics in these doom-laden love songs: on "I Only Have Eyes for You," Caterer launches into a free-form solo that scales the mountaintop, and the band transforms the *Music Man* ballad "Goodnight, My Someone" into speedy power pop. One of the distinctive characteristics of Caterer's sound has always been the contrast between his choirboy vocals and the crunch of his band, and the allure of that approach has never been stronger—it reveals a direct lineage connecting the deep yearning in his songs to the songbook writers of the past. "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face," written by Scottish folk singer Ewan MacColl and popularized by Roberta Flack, could be a lost Popes number for how it amplifies the simplicity of its heartache. Popes favorites "Someday I'll Smile Again" and "Megan" are here to please the fan base; "Writing a Letter" gets a slowed-down update that swings with a Latin beat, topped with a trumpet solo from Max Crawford of Poi Dog Pondering. Right now there's no word whether this excellent band will play to people, not just cameras, once music venues reopen. Here's hoping. —MARK GUARINO

FOLIE, 123!
Dog Show
folieonline.bandcamp.com/album/123

Chicago-via-New York producer Folie belongs to



Moontype © JULIA DRATEL

continued from 37

a loose collective of artists who've put out playful inversions of pop music through Dog Show Records, a Mad Decent imprint run by 100 Gecs cofounder Dylan Brady. Folie made her way onto Dog Show's roster with some assistance from producer Gupi; in the mid-2010s, they both worked with an eclectic dance label called Rora Team, and after Gupi joined the Dog Show family in 2019, he urged Folie to send her stuff to Brady. In May 2020, Folie released her debut for the label (two bundled singles), and last month she followed it up with *123!*, a full-length mixtape. Folie's sweet but abrasive music can loosely be categorized as hyperpop, a frustratingly imprecise umbrella term that refers to a growing pool of stylistically disparate pop experimentalists. On *123!*, Folie uses what sounds like TV static as a brittle base for calamitous trash-can percussion and glistening keyboards ("Clean2," released early as a single) and melts video-game synths onto a chattering beat that occasionally sounds like an army of colliding B-movie androids ("Lost the Project File"). Folie doesn't attempt to conform to a genre, but by following her gut she can render eruptions of noise into sweetly melancholic songs that set your heart aflutter. She processes her singing so thoroughly on "4AM Insomnia, Crying" that I can't quite make out the lyrics, but her vocals gel perfectly with the song's zigzagging synths and frothy melody—its rapturous intensity speaks to the quixotic hopefulness of living. —LEOR GALIL

GENGHIS TRON, *DREAM WEAPON* Relapse relapse.com/genghis-tron-dream-weapon

In a 2020 filled with unwanted surprises, one bright spot was the unexpected reunion of experimental metal group Genghis Tron after a self-described "indefinite" hiatus. *Dream Weapon*, the New York-based band's first album in 13 years, departs from the sound of their earlier records in a way that may startle the group's patient fans, but it's worth the wait. Despite their punny name, during their brief tenure in the mid- to late 2000s Genghis Tron had a reputation for electro-metal brutality. Their sec-

ond and until now final album, 2008's critically lauded *Board Up the House*, was Nintendo-core as nightmare fuel, with duelling synths and Hamilton Jordan's beefy guitar accompanied by abrasive vocals from front man Mookie Singerman. So it'd be reasonable to expect a Genghis Tron album recorded during the hellscape of 2020 to reflect the chaos of the Now Times. But rather than issue another pummeling metal opus, the band have drawn more from other genres on *Dream Weapon*—a little new wave here, some progressive rock there—to create lush and ethereal soundscapes underscored with a heap of dread. Live drums from Sumac powerhouse Nick Yacyshyn replace the drum machines of past Genghis Tron releases, intertwining with Michael Sochynsky's spiraling synths and the hazy, melodic singing of new vocalist Tony Wolski. "Alone in the Heart of the Light" balances shoegaze-style psychedelia with plenty of noise, and final track "Great Mother" slowly builds to a thunderous close while echoing the sparse synth lines of the album's introduction. While they're still plenty heavy, it's probably safe to say that Genghis Tron aren't really a metal band anymore. Nonetheless, *Dream Weapon* makes a meditative, brooding return to their signature disturba. —KEIDRA CHANEY

VINCE KAICHAN, *LOST IN TIME* Self-released vincekaichan.bandcamp.com/album/lost-in-time

Chicago electronic producer Vince Kaichan is an omnivorous listener—or at least that's the impression I get from the hodgepodge of styles in his own music. For roughly a decade now, he's tussled with chiptune melodies, jazz-influenced lite-funk grooves, and serrated funk carioca rhythms. Recently, Kaichan has taken a shine to footwork, and his years of molding chiptune's helium-sucking chirps into heartwarming melodies serve him well on this new path. On his second footwork full-length, March's self-released *Lost Time*, Kaichan appends stuttering polyrhythms to cosmic melodic flourishes ("1000 Lives") and molds shimmering piano samples into hectic, fluttering loops that retain their alluring

delicacy even alongside hiccuping bass detonations ("Hollow Planet"). Kaichan's serene sensibilities lend clarity to his riptide rhythms while smoothing over their hard-edged blows—his beats feel like warp-speed massages. Under ordinary circumstances, footwork is best served through speakers at a volume intense enough to satisfy battlers and a crowd, but Kaichan's version lends itself to headphones and quiet solitude. For those of us who have to spend our pandemic days circulating between the same few rooms by ourselves, *Lost in Time* can provide a cleansing peaceful feeling with a shot of energy to propel us through the grassiness. —LEOR GALIL

VIC MENSA, *I TAPE* Roc Nation rocnation.com/music/vic-mensa

Chicago rapper Vic Mensa has had a career trajectory unlike many other Chicago artists the past decade. After rising to national prominence in the early 2010s as front man of Kids These Days, he became a solo star, delivering a sharp debut mixtape (2013's *Innanetape*) and a career-making hip-house single (2014's "Down On My Luck") en route to signing with Jay-Z's Roc Nation label in 2015. Since then, Mensa has bared his soul in a smattering of stylistically scattered EPs, dropped the lucid 2017 studio full-length *The Autobiography*, and swung for the fences with the 2019 agitprop pop-punk album *93Punx*, produced by Blink-182 drummer Travis Barker—a memorable curiosity that feels destined to find a cult audience. Mensa's recorded output has sometimes lacked the personality and vision he's so frequently brought to his laser-sharp radio freestyles, but he snapped into focus on the August EP *V Tape*—and his follow-up, the new *I Tape* EP (Roc Nation), achieves the narrative nuance and refined clarity he's been working toward in the autobiographical tracks that fill his back catalog. Better still, Mensa sounds like he's having fun on the mike: on "Victory," he complements Just Blaze's barrel-chested production with rapping that courses with the "anything can happen" energy of his freestyles, making the song's title feel well earned. —LEOR GALIL

MOONTYPE, *BODIES OF WATER* Born Yesterday moontype.bandcamp.com/album/bodies-of-water

Bassist and vocalist Margaret McCarthy began releasing music as Moontype while enrolled in Oberlin's music conservatory. She began with a 2017 self-released EP called *Fan Music*, in which drifty singing, plucking, and strumming are barely audible through what sounds like the hum of a box fan. McCarthy shifted to more traditional songwriting with 2018's *Bass Tunes, Year 5*, which she released upon graduating from school in June of that year; it's a bare indie-rock album built from her steady, gentle bass and overdubbed layers of yearning vocals. She soon relocated to Chicago, where she connected with two fellow former Oberlin students, guitarist Ben Cruz and drummer Emerson Hunton. The three of them began playing in alt-country five-piece the Deals (with two more Oberlin alumni), and soon McCarthy enlisted Cruz and Hunton for Moontype 2.0. Their chemistry has helped trans-

form McCarthy's spacious, tender solo material into fleshed-out indie-rock rippers that maintain a tender luster. The 12 songs on their brand-new debut album, *Bodies of Water* (Born Yesterday), included reworked versions of all four tracks from *Bass Tunes*; Cruz's runaway riffs and Hunton's workmanlike drumming help transform the chilly, romantic postpunk of the original "About You" into a giddy shot of joyful power pop. McCarthy's restrained, gossamer vocals carry a dreamy hopefulness, and on *Bodies of Water* it seems to intensify whenever she's faced with a wall of sound. On advance single "Ferry," she sings of setting out across Lake Michigan to Canada, her voice coasting along waves of shoegaze distortion with a serene poise that suggests all her desires are within reach—either that, or it doesn't matter if any of them are. —LEOR GALIL

SERPENTWITHFEET, *DEACON* Secretly Canadian serpentwithfeet.bandcamp.com/album/deacon

Experimental musician Serpentwithfeet (born Josiah Wise) is many things, including a man of his word. "Life's gotta get easier / Can't carry a heavy heart into another year," he vows on "A Comma" from last April's EP *Apparition*. If you take the new *Deacon* (Secretly Canadian) at face value, he hasn't: the album is the artist's most ecstatic release to date. But like much of his output, the record has a promise at its surface that masks layers of depth underneath. Serpentwithfeet proved his heartbreak bona fides millionfold with the shattering *Blisters* (2016) and *Soil* (2018), so in the context of his discography—and of what was nothing short of a traumatic year—*Deacon's* paean to Black queer love becomes all the more effusive and subversive. There's love of all flavors here. We find belonging right off the bat in the balladic "Hyacinth" and the sultry, swaying "Same Size Shoe"; "Amir" captures the sexual and conversational voraciousness of a new relationship, winkingly delivered through 90s R&B tropes, while the irrepressibly danceable "Sailor's Superstition" provides a how-to for keeping that initial spark burning. To my ears, *Deacon* seems to get winded after "Heart Storm," which features English singer-songwriter and record producer Nao: lyrics become sparse; structures grow formulaic. But just as we sink into the morass of the predictable, album closer "Fellowship" rears its head. Buoyed by springy, mbira-inflected percussion, Serpentwithfeet leaves us with a final tribute: "I'm thankful for the love I share with my friends." It's a remarkably uncynical sentiment in a time often characterized by its cynicism, and a fitting send-off for this quietly courageous album. —HANNAH EDGAR

TOMAHAWK, *TONIC IMMOBILITY* Ipecac tomahawkofficial.bandcamp.com/album/tonic-immobility

Twenty years after the release of their self-titled debut LP, freaky supergroup Tomahawk have returned with their fifth and best album yet, *Tonic Immobility*. Formed in 1999 by the best of the best from the avant-punk and noise-rock scenes, Tomahawk originally consisted of Faith No More and Mr.



Ryley Walker COURTESY THE ARTIST

Bungle vocalist Mike Patton, Jesus Lizard guitarist Duane Denison, Helmet and Battles drummer John Stanier, and Cows and Melvins bassist Kevin Rutmanis—who has since been replaced by Melvins and Bungle alum Trevor Dunn. The group has faded in and out of existence multiple times, and when they do come together, they're a rarity among supergroups, pushing ego and flash aside for the sake of the song while bringing all their members' outstanding qualities to the forefront. On *Tonic Immobility*, Tomahawk's chemistry works better than ever before. These songs plow straight ahead on Stanier's stopwatch-perfect, rock-solid foundations, while Denison's southern-fried postpunk guitar twang guides them through huge, creepy dynamic shifts. Patton pulls out some unanticipated tricks, trading in his usual operatic singing and ballistic vocal noises for an eerie, unsettling growl, sounding almost like he's taking a cue from Daughters (another group on his Ipecac label), who have transformed themselves from a sassy grindcore band into a seasick noise-rock powerhouse. "Tattoo Zero" recalls the unsettling chiming of the Jesus Lizard's "Pastoral," "Fatback" hammers with Helmet's aggression, and "Howlie" tastes like the grimy crawl of the darker moments from the 1995 Mr. Bungle album *Disco Volante*. *Tonic Immobility* stands on its own as a killer record, but it'll also scratch any itch you might have for more music from Tomahawk members' old bands. —**LUCA CIMARUSTI**

RYLEY WALKER, COURSE IN FABLE

Husky Pants
ryleywalker.bandcamp.com/album/course-in-fable

When guitar wunderkind Ryley Walker releases his first album of proper songs in a couple of years, this new glimpse at where he's headed in his music is cause to rejoice. The Rockford native shredded in a noisy fashion as a youth, playing in free-jazzin' bands Heat Death and Tiger Hatchery, but about a decade ago Walker seemed to undergo a seismic shift: he traded in dissonance à la jazz guitarist Sonny

Sharrock for the mellow sound of troubled singer-songwriters such as the Tims Hardin and Buckley. On his 2015 solo full-length *Primrose Green*, a fuller, more autumnal aesthetic entered the picture, familiar to fans of UK acts such as Pentangle and Accolade (and even Van "Grumpy Old COVID Denier" Morrison) that combined elements of prog, folk, and jazz. With 2016's *Golden Sings That Have Been Sung*, Walker shared his love of the dry, angular pop abstraction practiced in the 90s by the likes of Gastr del Sol and Tortoise, and for the new *Course in Fable* he enlisted Tortoise's John McEntire to engineer, mix, and produce.

To the ears of this longtime fan, *Course in Fable* is the album Walker has been leading up to his whole life. His current progressive-rock obsessions, among them Genesis and Gentle Giant, have already illustrated how to throw in everything but the kitchen sink, and here Walker channels all his past influences into a singular voice. His conversational, John Martyn-esque vocal delivery has grown into something unique, especially when he couples wry, self-deprecating observations with sweetly sung melodies ("Rang Dizzy" includes the lines "Fuck me, I'm alive" and "I sat on the lawn wondering 'Should I dose again?'" while on "Striking Down Your Big Premiere" he remarks, "Always shit brained when I'm pissed"). Walker recently marked two years of sobriety, and throughout *Course in Fable*, he's clearly on a redemptive journey through the darkest and most drug-damaged parts of his psyche, both lyrically and musically. Complex, dizzying arrangements unfold from the first moments of opener "Striking Down Your Big Premiere," and things break down into utter cacophony at one point on "Axis Bent." Still, this is no obtuse, inaccessible concept album for music-school nerds; the impossibly sugary chamber-pop hooks of "Shiva with Dustpan" and "Rang Dizzy," which recall the cough-syrupy, darkly tuneful heights of Big Star's *Third* or John Parker Compton's underappreciated *Appaloosa*, have been stuck in my head for days. Released on Walker's own Husky Pants label, the album features several longtime collaborators, including badass stand-



Sunny War FLORENCIA P. MARANO

up bassist Andrew Scott Young, godly guitar picker Bill MacKay, and in-demand session drummer Ryan Jewell. But while *Course in Fable* maintains a warm nostalgic glow, it also looks toward the future. I can't wait to see where Walker goes next—even if he tries fusing techno with Krautrock and tropicalia, I'm in. —**STEVE KRAKOW**

SUNNY WAR, SIMPLE SYRUP

Hen House
sunnywar.bandcamp.com/album/simple-syrup

Nashville-born, Los Angeles-based singer-songwriter Sunny War is known for her clawhammer fingerstyle guitar playing, her vivid autobiographical lyrics, and her distinctive sound, which starts at the crossroads of blues, country, folk, and punk, and only expands from there. She left home as a teenager to busk on Venice Beach and in San Francisco with friends she met in local punk scenes, and since then she's battled homelessness, substance abuse, and domestic violence. After releasing a couple albums on her own in the mid-2010s, she stepped into the national limelight with 2018's *With the Sun*, released by LA-based label Hen House Studios—that January, *Rolling Stone* named her one of "10 New Country Artists You Need to Know." These days War is firmly entrenched in Los Angeles, and her latest album, *Simple Syrup*, follows a busy period when she launched a downtown chapter of Food Not Bombs, participated in Black Lives Matter protests, and released a couple EPs and a few singles (including "Amen," a gospel- and funk-driven collaboration with fellow songwriter Chris Pierce under the name War & Pierce). War recorded *Simple Syrup* at Hen House Studios, working with producer and longtime collaborator Harlan Steinberger, who owns the studio and its label. Her soft guitar and hushed vocals lead the way as she blurs the lines between styles, and though the album's songs easily flow together, each one is memorable in its own right; opener "Lucid Lucy" lands like a sweet lullaby, "Losing Hand" has a charming old-timey feel,

and "A Love So True" rhapsodizes about romance over a hypnotic, soulful groove. War wrote most of the material before the pandemic, but on the jazz-tinged "It's Name Is Fear," she speaks directly to the anxious, lonesome, or regretful feelings that preoccupied so many of us during lockdown: "The life we knew, it came and went / Ready or not, the change is here," she sings. Despite its foreboding mood, the song overflows with the power and resilience we'll need to live our post-pandemic lives to the fullest. —**JAMIE LUDWIG**

WRITHING SQUARES, CHART FOR THE SOLUTION

Trouble in Mind
thewrithingsquares.bandcamp.com/album/chart-for-the-solution

Many rock 'n' roll duos deal with economy of one sort or another. In the case of Philadelphia group Writhing Squares, it's not a matter of compensating for thin arrangements: woodwind player Kevin Nickles and electric bassist and rhythm programmer Daniel Provenzano both sing and play synthesizers as well, and they can make so much noise on their own that there's rarely room or need for other musicians. The overblown sax and ultracoarse fuzz of "Geisterwaltz," from the new double album *Chart for the Solution*, sound as big and mean as the *Funhouse*-era Stooges might have if they'd been willing to tackle 3/4 time. *Chart for the Solution* is littered with references to a rock 'n' roll canon that's long on pugnacious attitude: Dick Dale, Suicide, Neu!, Roxy Music. But Writhing Squares also make canny use of textural contrasts—such as the succinct, airy flute solo that bisects the butt-rocking "The Abyss Is Never Brighter"—to make their punches land even harder. On previous releases, the band sometimes lost their way when they stretched out, but on *Chart for the Solution* the opposite is true; three songs last between eight and 18 minutes, and the pacing of each epic keeps you hanging on to see just what'll happen next. —**BILL MEYER**

EARLY WARNINGS

CHICAGO SHOWS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IN THE WEEKS TO COME

ALL AGES FREE



Jinjer © ALINA CHERNOHOR

NEW

Paul Abella Trio 4/7, 7 PM, Fitz-Gerald's, Berwyn **FREE** **U**

Peter Bradley Adams 1/20/2022, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston **U**

Brian Allison 4/9, 8 PM, Carol's Pub

Amazing Heeby Jeebies 4/3, 3 PM, Montrose Saloon **FREE** **U**

Courtney Marie Andrews 9/29, 7 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music **U**

Joseph Arthur 4/20, 7 PM, livestream at citywinery.com **U**

Axes of '76 4/10, 4 PM, Fitz-Gerald's, Berwyn **FREE** **U**

Bat for Lashes 4/9, 2 and 10 PM, livestream at veeeps.com **U**

Josh Berman, Tomeka Reid, Joshua Abrams, and Mike Reed 4/10, 8 PM, Constellation, 18+

Between the Buried & Me 8/20, 8:30 PM, House of Blues, 17+

Andrew Bird & Jimbo Mathus 4/11, 7 PM, livestream at sessionslive.com **U**

Birdy 4/15, 7 PM, livestream at universe.com **U**

Black Peaks 4/7, 2 PM, stream at audiotree.tv **U**

Bluesday Tuesday featuring Lil' Ed & the Blues Imperials 4/6, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn **FREE** **U**

Paul Bolger, Alan Baster, Steve Ball, and Garrett Degnan 4/13, 8 PM; 4/20, 8 PM; 4/27, 8 PM, Reggie's Music Joint

Hayes Carll 4/17, 9 PM, livestream at citywinery.com **U**

Chicken Wire Empire 4/18, 4 and 7 PM, City Winery

Joey Chimes 4/10, 2 PM; 4/17, 2 PM; 4/24, 2 PM, Montrose Saloon **FREE** **U**

Michael Steven Cohen 4/11, 2 PM; 4/18, 2 PM; 4/25, 2 PM,

Montrose Saloon **FREE** **U**

Jacob Collier 5/15/2022, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre **U**

Colors of Virtuosity with Danbi Um, Paul Huang, and Amy Yang 4/10, 7:30 PM, livestream at nscmf.org **FREE** **U**

CSO Sessions episode 17: Mozart's Gran Partita 4/8-5/7, stream at cso.org **U**

Day La Soul featuring **Fli Nation DJs** 4/10, 8 PM, the Promontory

Hamid Drake & Michael Zerang 4/16, 8 and 10 PM, Constellation, 18+

Essentials: A Private Vibe featuring **DJ Slow Mo** 4/9, 8 PM, the Promontory

Jennifer Fletcher & the Reckoning 4/10, 8 PM, Carol's Pub

Fuzz 4/24, 7 PM, stream at levitation-austin.com **U**

Ali Gatie 4/8, 8 PM, livestream at momenthouse.com **U**

Grandstand Quartet 4/4, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn **FREE** **U**

Greasy Gravy 4/11, 1 PM, Fitz-Gerald's, Berwyn **FREE** **U**

Hed PE 7/30, 7 PM, the Forge, Joliet **U**

Hippo Campus 4/8, 8 PM, livestream at noonchorus.com/hippo-campus **U**

Jazz Community Quintet 4/11, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn **FREE** **U**

Jinjer, Suicide Silence 11/7, 7:15 PM, House of Blues, 17+

Jungle 10/16, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+

Tom Kastle 4/29, 8 PM, livestream at oldtownschool.org **U**

Killer of Giants, Sandblasted Skin, Gznad, Zero Signal 4/10, 8 PM, the Forge, Joliet

Lifeguard 4/10, 1 PM, Fitz-Gerald's, Berwyn **FREE** **U**

Los Sudakas 4/8, 7 PM, Fitz-Gerald's, Berwyn **FREE** **U**

LP's Happy Hour featuring **Andrew Sa** and **J.P. Cyr** in

conversation with Lawrence Peters 4/2, 5 PM, livestream at noonchorus.com/hideout **U**

Maiden Chicago, Lovedriver, Bad Boys 4/17, 8 PM, the Forge, Joliet, 18+

Stephen Marley 3/18/2022, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston **U**

Aurelio Martinez & the Garifuna Soul Band 4/23, 7 PM, livestream at uchicago.edu **U**

Memba 2/19/2022, 8 PM, Chop Shop, 18+

Midland 4/8, 9 PM; 4/9-4/10, 10 PM, livestream at nocapshows.com **U**

Peter Mulvey, Sistastrings 2/18/2022, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston **U**

Haru Nemuri, Air Credits 11/2, 9 PM, Sleeping Village

Mackenzie O'Brien 4/16, 8:30 PM, Carol's Pub

Osees 4/10, 7 PM, stream at levitation-austin.com **U**

Sean Paul 4/10, 3 PM, livestream at dreamstage.live **U**

Junius Paul Quartet 4/17, 8 PM, Constellation, 18+

Rhythm & Booze: After Dark featuring **DJ Jay Illa, DJ Gee-O** 4/16, 10 PM, the Promontory

Rhythm & Booze Happy Hour featuring **DJ Jay Illa** 4/16, 6 PM, the Promontory

Fletcher Rockwell 4/9, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn **FREE** **U**

Songwriters on the Loose featuring **Brian Krumm, Scott & Odie, Chris Rawlins, David Prusina** 4/8, 6 PM, Montrose Saloon **FREE** **U**

Tasha, Kiwicha 4/9, 8 PM, stream at noonchorus.com/ hideout **U**

Nate Venturelli 4/17, 8:30 PM, Carol's Pub

Waco Brothers 4/10, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn **FREE** **U**

Greg Ward's Rogue Parade

4/23, 8 PM, Constellation, 18+
Dan Whitaker & the Shinebenders, Charles Hill Jr. 4/23, 6 PM, Montrose Saloon **FREE** **U**

UPDATED

NOTE: Contact point of purchase for exchange or refund information.

Louis Cole Big Band 12/12, 8 PM, Chop Shop, rescheduled, 18+

Steve Dawson & Funeral Bonsai Wedding featuring **Quartet Paraplue, Louis Bardales** 10/15, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, rescheduled **U**

Dead Can Dance 10/7, 7:30 PM, Chicago Theatre, rescheduled **U**

Decemberists 8/10, 7:30 PM, Auditorium Theatre, canceled

Robbie Fulks, Al Rose & Steve Doyle 4/30/2022, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, rescheduled **U**

Lane 8, Sultan & Shepard 3/4/2022, 9 PM, Aragon Ballroom, rescheduled, 18+

Milky Chance, Giant Rooks 11/27, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, rescheduled, opener added **U**

Ministry, Helmet, Front Line Assembly 10/10, 7 PM, Riviera Theatre, rescheduled; opener changed, 18+

Monochrome Set, Jetbeats, Phil Yates & the Affiliates 5/29/2022, 7 PM, Bananna's Comedy Shack at Reggie's, rescheduled

Nada Surf 11/14, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, rescheduled, 17+

Off Broadway, Handcuffs 10/30, 8 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, rescheduled, 18+

Out of Space presents Big Boy 9/2, 7 PM, Temperance Beer Company, Evanston, rescheduled, 18+

Out of Space presents Drive-By Truckers, J.D. McPherson 9/3, 7 PM, Temperance Beer Company, Evanston, rescheduled, 18+

Out of Space presents George Clinton & Parliament Funkadelic 9/5, 7 PM, Temperance Beer Company, Evanston, rescheduled, 18+

Out of Space presents Neko Case 9/4, 7 PM, Temperance Beer Company, Evanston, rescheduled, 18+

Pvris, Royal & the Serpent 4/7, 8 PM, House of Blues, postponed **U**

Russ 5/20/2022, 7:30 PM, Aragon Ballroom, rescheduled **U**

Secret Sisters, Logan Ledger 2/26/2022, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, rescheduled **U**

Marty Stuart & His Fabulous

Never miss a show again. Sign up for the newsletter at chicagoreader.com/early

Superlatives 11/21, 3 and 7 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, 3 PM sold out **U**

UPCOMING

Apocalyptica, Lacuna Coil 9/5, 8 PM, House of Blues, 17+

Armor for Sleep 7/23, 7 PM, Metro **U**

Sebastian Bach, Stitched Up Heart 6/9, 7:30 PM, Joe's Live, Rosemont

Chicago Celler Boys 4/13, 8 PM; 4/20, 8 PM; 4/27, 8 PM, Green Mill

Clannad 9/20, 8 PM, Irish American Heritage Center, 17+

Rose Cousins 6/3, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston **U**

Dance Gavin Dance, Animals as Leaders, Issues, Veil of Maya, Wolf & Bear 9/21, 5:30 PM, Aragon Ballroom **U**

Elrow 11/20, 8 PM, Radius Chicago, 18+

Kiss, David Lee Roth 9/4, 7:30 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park **U**

Lady Gaga 8/27, 7:30 PM, Wiley Field **U**

Stephanie Lamprea 5/1, 8 PM, livestream at artic.edu **FREE** **U**

Mary Lattimore 4/9, noon, livestream at youtube.com/constellationchicago **FREE** **U**

Ramsey Lewis 4/24, 1 PM, livestream at stageit.com/ramseylewis **U**

Dan McGuinness 4/24, 8 PM, Carol's Pub

Megadeth, Lamb of God, Trivium, In Flames 8/6, 6 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park **U**

Alanis Morissette, Garbage, Liz Phair 9/11, 7 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park **U**

Murder by Death 11/17, 7 PM, Thalia Hall **U**

Sinead O'Connor 8/18-8/19, 8 PM; 8/21, 8 PM, City Winery, 8/18 and 8/21 sold out **U**

Okilly Dokilly, Steaksauce Mustache 5/1/2022, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen

Tomeka Reid & Junius Paul; Mars Williams, Steve Marquette, Brian Sandstrom, and Tyler Damon 4/8, 7:30 PM, livestream at twitch.tv/elasticartschicago **FREE** **U**

Chris Renzema, Ry Cox 10/18, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston **U**

Tame Impala, Perfume Genius 10/7, 8 PM, United Center **U** **FI**



GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

GOSSIP WOLF WAS shocked to realize it's been almost 12 years since the **Empty Bottle's** beloved house cat **Radley** died, ending a long career patrolling the venue's nooks and crannies and soaking up enough shows for nine lives. In March the Bottle reopened on a limited schedule (with dine-in seating for **Pizza Friendly Pizza** next door), and while concerts have yet to resume, cat people already have reason to celebrate. A few months ago, Bottle staff adopted a sweet-tempered tabby named **Peg** from Oak Park shelter **Animal Care League**, and now you can say hello! This wolf has made a few visits, and Peg seems right at home. She's currently accepting visitors from 4:30 PM till 9:30 PM Wednesday through Sunday—that is, whenever the bar's open. You can also e-mail her at peg@emptybottle.com.

COVID-19 hasn't made much of a dent in the productivity of singer-songwriter **Dan Whitaker**, front man of hardworking country jammers the **Shinebenders**. In addition to hosting semiregular gigs (solo or with the band) via Facebook and YouTube, in January he dropped **Movin' On With You**, a ramblingly romantic Dylanesque solo album he recorded in 1999 but never properly released. Fans looking to pull on their cowboy boots and dance in person will soon have their chance too: Dan and the 'Benders have several upcoming patio gigs, including Saturday, April 10, at **Phyllis' Musical Inn** and Friday, April 23, at the **Montrose Saloon**.

On Friday, April 2, heavy Chicago shoegaze trio **Lume** will drop their third album, **False Calm**. Their mystical, cavernous songs can pull you into a trance—something they do especially well on the lulling "Somatic." **False Calm** is the first release from **Ohmstead**, a label and collective with a recording studio in Humboldt Park; member **Adrian Kobziar** engineered and mixed **False Calm**. The folks at Ohmstead also aim to release films, books, and anything else they find artistically fulfilling. —**J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL**

Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip_Wolf or e-mail gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com.



KASIA BARAN

CHICAGOANS OF NOTE

Monique Golding, vocalist for Mosaic Soul and the Black Monument Ensemble

“A music community is a group of individuals that create music because they love doing it, and I think that’s the most important thing for me.”

As told to LEOR GALIL

Monique Golding, 40, moved to Chicago in 2017 and quickly became enmeshed in the city’s music communities. She’s a member of vocal group Mosaic Soul, which recently self-released the live album Blessed. She also sings as part of the Damon Locks Black Monument Ensemble, whose second-full length, Now, is due via International Anthem on Friday, April 9.

I grew up in a small town in central Louisiana called Alexandria. That’s where I spent my childhood until I graduated high school. Small but powerful little community. A lot of

church going on—that pretty much was all you could really do growing up, back in those times. So it was a lot of church and a lot of singing, which was a great influence in my life.

I was really shy when I was younger, with singing for people. It was really my mom pushing me to sing in the church choir and sing solos. I wouldn’t say I was as involved as some of my counterparts that went to church. I have friends that went to church every single day; that was their life. I didn’t grow up in that type of household, but we definitely were there every Sunday. I was moderately involved, not extensively. I could tell it totally makes a dif-

ference when you’re singing every day, versus singing a piece of a day or a piece of a week.

I mostly sang at home, when I wasn’t singing at church. I was always singing in front of my brothers, and I was always coming up with songs in my mind. It was just something that was a natural part of me. I really didn’t think of it as a gift or a talent either. I thought of it as something that was a part of me that I loved doing.

I sang for the first time onstage in my high school for a Christmas performance—this was back in my senior year of high school. People would say, “Wow, you really have a nice voice.” Hearing other people sing and comparing my voice, I realized, “OK, I seem like I’m a little more advanced in that area than some other singers.” And it’s because it was something I was always doing, and just really because of the compliments that I received from other musicians and artist friends reassuring me. And I’m always like, “Are you telling the truth? You guys are lying.” I realized, “Wow, this is actually bigger than me just doing it and loving it.”

When I went to college, I didn’t major in music. I kind of figured my only options would be either to teach music or do some type of side job that wouldn’t really sustain me financially, so I didn’t go to school for music. Originally I went to school for biology, and realized that that wasn’t my calling. I still sang; I sang in talent shows in my college, and sang for my suitemates and my roommates.

In the back of my mind, I always knew that this was something that I wanted to do. I ultimately wanted to be onstage and perform. To a certain degree, I’m still getting to that point in my life where I want to be able to perform on my own, with my own band, and on my own platform. My move to Chicago was really the biggest game changer for me.

My husband’s job led us here. For the last few years, I had been working as a business education teacher. I met this young man, Phillip Armstrong, at a school in Oak Lawn. I was talking with him about my love for music. I recorded myself singing one day, and I sent it to him. He was like, “Wow!” He knows quite a few people in Chicago music, and he started inviting me to different functions—if he needed an

alto voice and I was available, he would see if I was interested. He was a big, big factor in connecting me with the music world of Chicago.

One of the performances that I remember was for Bethany Pickens. This was for a dedication service for her father, Willie Pickens, a legacy jazz artist. I was performing with people like Dee Alexander. We performed at the Fine Arts Center.

Damon Locks is also someone that I was introduced to from Phillip Armstrong. He heard me sing, and we’ve just been going on since then. The next thing you know, I’m on a live recording at the Garfield conservatory doing this live album, *Where Future Unfolds*. I’m also a part of a singing group called Mosaic Soul, which was originally founded by Phillip Armstrong and Greg Woods.

My daughter, Rayna Golding, is also in the Chicago Children’s Choir, learning music and theory. She sings on the Black Monument Ensemble song “Rebuild a Nation,” and she also does a few little cameos here and there. She’s getting her experience. She’s definitely a phenomenal singer already, and she’s nine. I’m just so excited to hear where her gifts and talents are gonna take her. That’s my little mini me.

We can harmonize, and she can harmonize her own note. This girl, she has it. She has it going on, so it’s exciting to share the experience. She’s teaching me, I’m teaching her, and she’s branching out into her own sound and developing her own voice.

The biggest part of being involved in the music community is actually being in a community of people who feel the same way about music as you do. It doesn’t necessarily mean we have to like the same type of genre, but it’s just a passion for the art, and to create music just because we love music. One of the reasons why I always stood back from trying to pursue music as a career is because it becomes about money, and that was always something I was afraid of. It was a turnoff for me. At the end of the day, a music community is a group of individuals that create music because they love doing it, and I think that’s the most important thing for me. 🎧

🐦 @imLeor

THE CANNABIS PLATFORM

a Reader resource for the canna curious

nuEra
A NEW ERA OF CANNABIS

Close to Downtown!

Free parking and buses & trains nearby

Friendly dispensary staff for best product suggestions

nuEraCannabis.com

GREEN MIND PHYSICIANS
MEDICAL CANNABIS CARD CERTIFICATION BY PHONE
QUICK & CONVENIENT TELEMEDICINE

LIFETIME SUPPORT EXPERIENCED PHYSICIANS

GREEN MIND PHYSICIANS

RESOURCES FOR CHICAGO PATIENTS
greenmindphysicians.com/thereader

NeuroMedici
by Dr Consalter
Your partners in health and wellness.

Find out today if medical cannabis or infusion therapy is right for you. Telemed available!

Serving medical cannabis patients since 2015.

www.neuromedici.com 312-772-2313

BLISS SHOP
CANNABIS ACCESSORIES & CBD

4809 N PULASKI
(773) 997-9238 BLISSCBDSHOP.COM

THE CITY IS SPEAKING...
AND WE HEAR YOU.

#cannabisequityncc

expungement know your rights careers in cannabis
www.naturescarecompany.com



Reader 420 Companion Book

A cannacopia of fun!

CBD / cannabis recipes, psychedelic drawings to color, word puzzles to stimulate your brain, growing tips, and more!

Print and digital versions available.

chicagoreader.com/420book

To advertise, email ads@chicagoreader.com

The Chicago Reader BOOK CLUB

Mikki Kendall

Hood Feminism: Notes From the Women That a Movement Forgot
Author Talk: Oct. 22, 2020

Sonali Dev

Recipe for Persuasion
Author Talk: Nov. 19, 2020

Riva Lehrer

Golem Girl
Author Talk: Dec. 17, 2020

Emil Ferris

My Favorite Thing Is Monsters
Author Talk: Jan. 28, 2021

Eve Ewing

1919
Author Talk: Feb. 25, 2021

Nnedi Okorafor

Remote Control
Author Talk: Mar. 25, 2021

Natalie Moore

The South Side
Author Talk: Apr. 22, 2021

Rebecca Makkai

The Great Believers
Author Talk: May 26, 2021

Fatimah Asghar

If They Come for Us
Author Talk: June 24, 2021

Kayla Ancrum

Darling
Author Talk: July 22, 2021

Jessica Hopper

(TBD)
Author Talk: Aug. 26, 2021

Precious Brady-Davis

I Have Always Been Me: A Memoir
Author Talk: Sep. 23, 2021

Book Club membership includes:



Exclusive access to conversations between Authors and the Reader

Discounts to your favorite independent bookstores

A curated monthly newsletter

A members-only discussion forum

Special offers from Reader partners

Presented by:

THE-FOLEY--
FOOD--WINE
SOCIETY ♻️

POETRY
FOUNDATION



Learn more at chicagoreader.com/bookclub



Natalie Moore
Author

Natalie Moore reports on segregation and inequality, covering race, housing, economic development, food injustice, and violence. She is the author of *The South Side: A Portrait of Chicago and American Segregation*, which won a 2016 Chicago Review of Books award for nonfiction and was named a BuzzFeed best nonfiction book of 2016. Moore is also co-author of *The Almighty Black P Stone Nation: The Rise, Fall and Resurgence of an American Gang* and *Deconstructing Tyrone: A New Look at Black Masculinity in the Hip-Hop Generation*. Using her degrees from Northwestern University and Howard University, Moore has worked for the Detroit News, the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, the Associated Press in Jerusalem, Columbia College, and Northwestern's Medill School. She also spent time reporting in Libya as a fellow at Columbia College. Moore reports at WBEZ and writes a monthly column for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, but her work has also been published in *Essence*, *Ebony*, the *Chicago Reporter*, *Bitch*, *In These Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Guardian*. Just some of her awards include the Chicago Library Foundation's 21st Century Award in 2017; the Studs Terkel Community Media Award in 2010; a Casey Medal for Meritorious Journalism; the 2017 Voice of Progressive Journalism Award; and other honors from the Radio Television Digital News Association (Edward R. Murrow), Public Radio News Directors Incorporated, National Association of Black Journalists, Illinois Associated Press, and Chicago Headline Club. She and her husband Rodney currently live in Hyde Park with their four daughters.

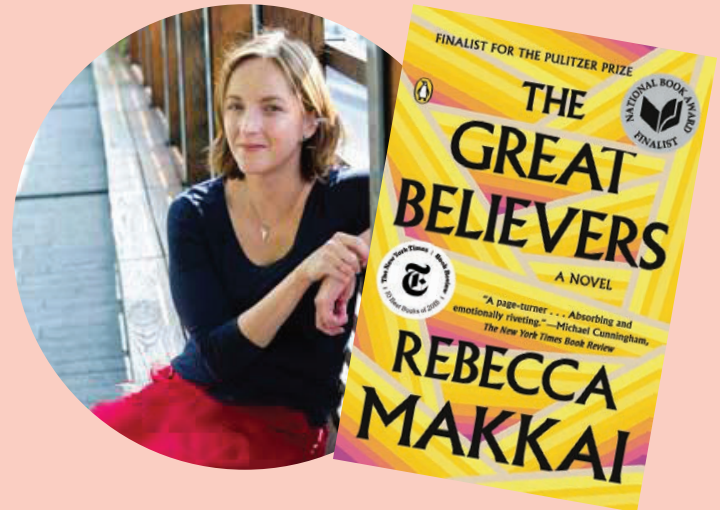
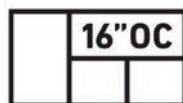
Maya Dukmasova - Moderator

Maya Dukmasova is a senior writer at the *Reader*, where she's been on staff since 2016. Her work is focused on housing, the courts, policing, local government, and social justice movements. She's won several local and national journalism awards for feature writing and investigative reporting and been the recipient of fellowships and grants to support long-term projects. Her writing and translations have also appeared in *The Appeal*, *Places*, *Harper's*, *Broadly*, *Truthout*, *The Progressive*, *In These Times*, *Jacobin*, and *Slate*. *A Home in Chicago: Rent, ownership, and neighborhood struggle since the collapse of public housing*, a collection of her reporting on city housing issues, was published by the *Reader* in December 2020.

Presented by:

THE-FOLEY--
FOOD--WINE
SOCIETY ♻️

POETRY
FOUNDATION



Rebecca Makkai
Author

Rebecca Makkai's latest novel, *The Great Believers*, was a finalist for both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award; it was the winner of the ALA Carnegie Medal, the Stonewall Book Award, the LA Times Book Prize, the Clark Fiction Prize, the Midwest Independent Booksellers Award, and the Chicago Review of Books Award; and it was one of the New York Times' Ten Best Books of 2018. Her other books are the novels *The Borrower* and *The Hundred-Year House*, and the collection *Music for Wartime*—four stories which appeared in *The Best American Short Stories*. Rebecca is on the MFA faculties of Sierra Nevada College and Northwestern University. She is Artistic Director of StoryStudio Chicago. Visit her at RebeccaMakkai.com or on twitter @rebeccamakka.

Tracy Baim - Moderator

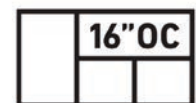
Tracy Baim is co-publisher of the *Chicago Reader* newspaper. She is co-founder and former publisher of *Windy City Times*. Baim received the 2013 Chicago Headline Club Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2014, she was inducted into the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association Hall of Fame. She was inducted into the Association for Women Journalists-Chicago Chapter Hall of Fame in 2018. She is also in the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame. Robert Feder named her to his Top 20 Women in Chicago Journalism list. She has won numerous LGBTQ+ community and journalism honors, including the Community Media Workshop's Studs Terkel Award in 2005. Baim has written and/or edited 12 books. Her most recent books are *Kuda: Gay & Proud* and *Barbara Gittings: Gay Pioneer*. Her other books include *Gay Press*, *Gay Power: The Growth of LGBT Community Newspapers in America*, *Obama and the Gays: A Political Marriage*; and *Out and Proud in Chicago*. Baim was executive producer of the lesbian film *Hannah Free*, starring Sharon Gless, and Scrooge & Marley. She directed and produced e. nina jay's *Body of Rooms* film. She is creator of *That's So Gay!*, an LGBTQ+ trivia game. Baim is the founder of the Pride Action Tank and the Illinois LGBT Chamber of Commerce. She was also co-vice chair of Gay Games VII in Chicago, and in 2013 was founder of the March on Springfield for Marriage Equality.

She received the American Institute of Architects-Chicago Presidential Citation Award in 2016 for her work on tiny homes for the homeless. Additional awards include those from the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, the LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois, and Unity Parenting.

Presented by:

THE-FOLEY--
FOOD--WINE
SOCIETY ♻️

POETRY
FOUNDATION





SAVAGE LOVE

You can't unsee your boyfriend's browser history

Snooping can only be justified retroactively.

By **DAN SAVAGE**

Q: I've been with my boyfriend for two and a half years and we have a great relationship—or so I thought. Last week, I snooped on my boyfriend's browser history and I don't know what to do with what I found. I'm a longtime reader and *Savage Lovecast* listener SO I KNOW WHAT I DID WAS WRONG. I believe my actions were driven by 1. lingering trust issues (a while ago, I found out my boyfriend had been looking at Tinder since we'd been together, though I don't believe he ever messaged or intended to meet anyone) and 2. my general anxiety/depression, which seems particularly high one year into the pandemic. Now, to what I found: my boyfriend has been looking at random women on Facebook—not people he's friends with, or people in his immediate network, so far as I know. And then he clears his activity log. What do you think this means? Where is he finding these names/women? Is he using these pictures to masturbate? Should I raise the issue with him or just feel shitty about invading his privacy? He gives me no other reason to not trust him, I should say, and he seems like a pretty open book. (Everyone in my

life who knows him agrees.) However, I can't shake the fear/paranoia that he's living a double life and I don't want to be blindsided. I would appreciate your insight. —**SINCERELY NERVOUS OVER ONLINE PATTERN**

A: My position on snooping is more nuanced than you think. To quickly summarize: I DON'T NECESSARILY THINK WHAT YOU DID WAS WRONG. I mean, snooping is wrong and I believe people have a right to privacy—even partnered people—but sometimes a snooper finds out something they needed to know and/or had a right to know. A woman who finds out her husband has been sneaking off to big gay sex parties and taking loads until cum bubbles are coming out of his nose and then goes home and has unprotected sex with her? *Yeah.* She needed to know that and her husband doesn't get to play the wronged party because his wife found out about it by snooping on his phone.

My position—my maddening position (as it seems to madden some)—is that snooping can only be justified *retroactively*. If you learned something you needed to know and had a right to know, the snooping was justified. If you didn't, it wasn't.

A person should only snoop if they have other evidence or cause for concern—some will regard your boyfriend's harmless interactions on Tinder as grounds, some won't (for the record: I don't)—and just being a jealous or insecure or paranoid person doesn't count. Additionally, anyone who is tempted to snoop with or without cause needs to consider the not insignificant risk of finding something they 1. didn't need to know and 2. can't unknow. I once got a letter from a man who snooped on his wife's computer and discovered that she had, years before they met, slept with her brother—just the once, and shortly after they met for the first time as adults. But the husband didn't need to know that and couldn't unknow it and knowing his wife had slept with her brother messed up his sexual relationship with the wife and his ability to enjoy family gatherings.

Moving on . . . So you snooped, SNOOP, and what did you find out? Something you didn't need to know—your boyfriend isn't cheating on you, he doesn't have a secret second family in another city, he doesn't spend every other Friday duct-taped to a sling in a gay sex dungeon. All you know

JOE NEWTON

now that you've snooped that you didn't before is . . . well, all you know now is something you should've known all along. Your boyfriend, like most people's boyfriends (mine included), likes to look at people on the Internet. If you have no other reason to suspect your partner is cheating on you, SNOOP, then you'll have to do what everyone else does and give your partner the benefit of the (very trivial) doubt here. Discreetly checking out the hotties on the street or on Facebook or even on a dating app is not cheating. Masturbating to images, mental or otherwise, of other women or men or nonbinary folks isn't cheating. What you found is not, by itself, proof that your boyfriend is cheating or plans to. So your snooping is

not, I'm sorry to say, retroactively justified, which means you'll have to shut the fuck up about it.

Your boyfriend is entitled to a zone of erotic autonomy. If he's checking out hot people on the Internet and having a wank every once in a while but not touching anyone else with the tip of his penis or the tip of his tongue or the tips of his fingers or with any other part of his body that he's pledged to you and you alone—and if he's not neglecting you sexually and if he's not being inconsiderate (clearing his browser history/activity log isn't evidence of guilt, it's evidence of consideration)—then he's done nothing wrong here. Only you have.

Finally, if your boyfriend demanded a zone of erotic autonomy for himself but denied you the same—if he

checked out other women online or off but blew up at you for checking out other men or being checked out by other men—then you'd have a problem of a different sort, i.e. a controlling, sexist, and hypocritical boyfriend. Thankfully, SNOOP, your boyfriend doesn't appear to be any of those things. That doesn't mean you couldn't be blindsided by him at some point—just because someone hasn't cheated yet doesn't mean they'll never cheat, not finding evidence that he's cheating doesn't mean he isn't—but there's no need to tell him what you did or confront him with what you found. Which is nothing.

Send letters to mail@savagelove.net. Download the *Savage Lovecast* at savagelovecast.com. @fakedansavage

SQUIRT.org

Real Men. Real Community.

VISIT WWW.SQUIRT.ORG AND CHECK OUT OUR NEW FEATURES:

- Video Chat
- Video
- Push Notifications
- Search Filters

... and more!

the platform

The Chicago Reader Guide to Business and Professional Services

business consulting



DB MATTERHORN GROUP
A Capital Funding Consulting Firm

DO YOU NEED CAPITAL TO START OR GROW YOUR BUSINESS? WE WILL PREPARE, POSITION, AND PRESENT YOUR COMPANY TO OUR FUNDING PARTNERS FOR CAPITAL FUNDING. CALL NOW 312-268-5842 OR VISIT DBMATTERHORN.COM

sports

ENJOY YOUR SPORT IN STYLE



LGBT GOLF
WWW.LGBTQGOLF.ORG

home improvement

Noise from Outside?

Soundproofing Window Inserts

Reduce or Eliminate Fog & Water | Keeps Bugs & Spiders Out

Visit stormsnaps.com or noisewindows.com

sales@stormsnaps.com
Alpina Manufacturing, Chicago, IL
1-800-915-2828

Cubicle & Desktop Sneeze Guards

• Any size • No damage to cubicle • Easy removal • Portable, lightweight Desk shields for Children or Adults

Reopen Your Offices

sales@fastchangeframes.com
Alpina Manufacturing, Chicago, IL
1-800-915-2828
773-202-8887

Visit our website or call us for info: fastchangeframes.com

entertainment



LIVE & VIDEO
Entertainment

KIDS • CIRCUS
NIGHTLIFE • TELEGRAMS

320-333-4095
fireflyproductions.co

job skills



JARC
JANE ADDAMS RESOURCE CORPORATION

Start your career with **FREE** job training

With our Careers in Manufacturing Program, you can learn skills in:

- CNC (computer numerical control) machining
- Welding
- Press Brake Operation

Supportive services and job placement provided

Jane Addams Resource Corporation | 708.581.8356 | www.jane-addams.org

legal

Considering Divorce? We Can Help.

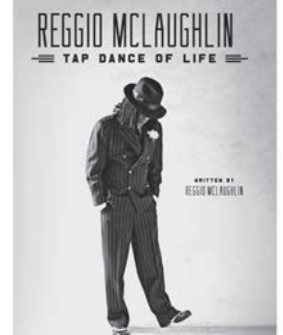
COLLABORATIVE | PRENUPTIAL
DIVORCE | MEDIATION



Brigitte Schmidt Bell, P.C. | 847-733-0933
lawyers@bsbpc.com
BrigitteBell.com
BrigitteSchmidtBellPC


books

REGGIO MCLAUGHLIN
TAP DANCE OF LIFE



AVAILABLE AT AMAZON, BARNES AND NOBLE AND OTHER FINE BOOKSTORES. CHICAGO TEACHER, PERFORMER AND AUTHOR.

education



Start a Career in Healthcare!

- Hybrid Programs (online and/or on-campus)
- MRI, X-Ray, Surgery, Dental, Dialysis, Ultrasound & MA/Phl. Programs
- Online, Weekend, Evening and Day Schedules
- Financial Aid and Grants Available (if you qualify)
- Accredited and Affordable

Stellar Career College
205 W. Randolph Street, Suite 200, Chicago (loop) | 312-687-3000 | stellarcollge.edu

insurance services

THE BOSS
Insurance Group, LLC

- Home
- Auto
- Life
- Commercial
- Small Business

312-759-7740
www.tbossig.com

WE LISTEN, WE CARE, WE EDUCATE AND WE PROTECT BY ELIMINATING THE RISK

your heading here

YOUR AD HERE

To advertise, email ads@chicagoreader.com

Shop Sexy

IN-STORE ONLY

20% OFF

ENTIRE PURCHASE

HUSTLER
HOLLYWOOD

LINGERIE • NOVELTIES • GIFTS • GAMES

1615 N CLYBOURN AVE, CHICAGO

*Must present this ad and meet minimum purchase to redeem. Valid at listed retail store only, not available online. Offer ends 6/1/21. CODE: SPRING20

GOOSE ISLAND BEER CO.

312

Lemonade SHANDY

THE Chicago ORIGINAL

YES YOU LEMONS...

GOOSE ISLAND BEER CO.

LEMONY. JUICY. REFRESHING.

© 2021 GOOSE ISLAND BEER CO., CHICAGO, IL | ENJOY RESPONSIBLY

the platform

continued

health and mental health

your heading here

Mental Health is Essential

Chicago Behavioral Hospital provides hope for those struggling with depression, anxiety, substance use, and other mental health conditions.

We are all in this together. Let us help.

Inpatient and intensive outpatient programs for teens and adults.
Free and confidential assessments.

CBH
CHICAGO BEHAVIORAL HOSPITAL

844.756.8600
chicagobehavioralhospital.com

Troy Johnson, MSW, LCSW
Licensed Psychotherapist

Telehealth Sessions
LGBTQ-Oriented
Schedule Online
Free Initial Consultation

Accepting
BCBS of Illinois

773-875-0928
www.TroyJohnsonCounseling.com

**YOUR AD
HERE**

To advertise, email ads@chicagoreader.com

**THANK
YOU!**

**Thank you Illinois.
Thank you Chicago Reader.**

**Every vote cast
is a celebration of Cannabis
and the joy it creates.**

**Visit a RISE dispensary to try our award winning products.
Canton, Effingham, Joliet, Mundelein, Naperville, Niles, Quincy**

RISE

risecannabis.com

@rise.cannabis

BEST OF CHICAGO
2020 

ORANGE HERIJUANA by Rythm

Best strain for pain relief

KOSHER KUSH by Rythm

Best strain for relief of anxiety