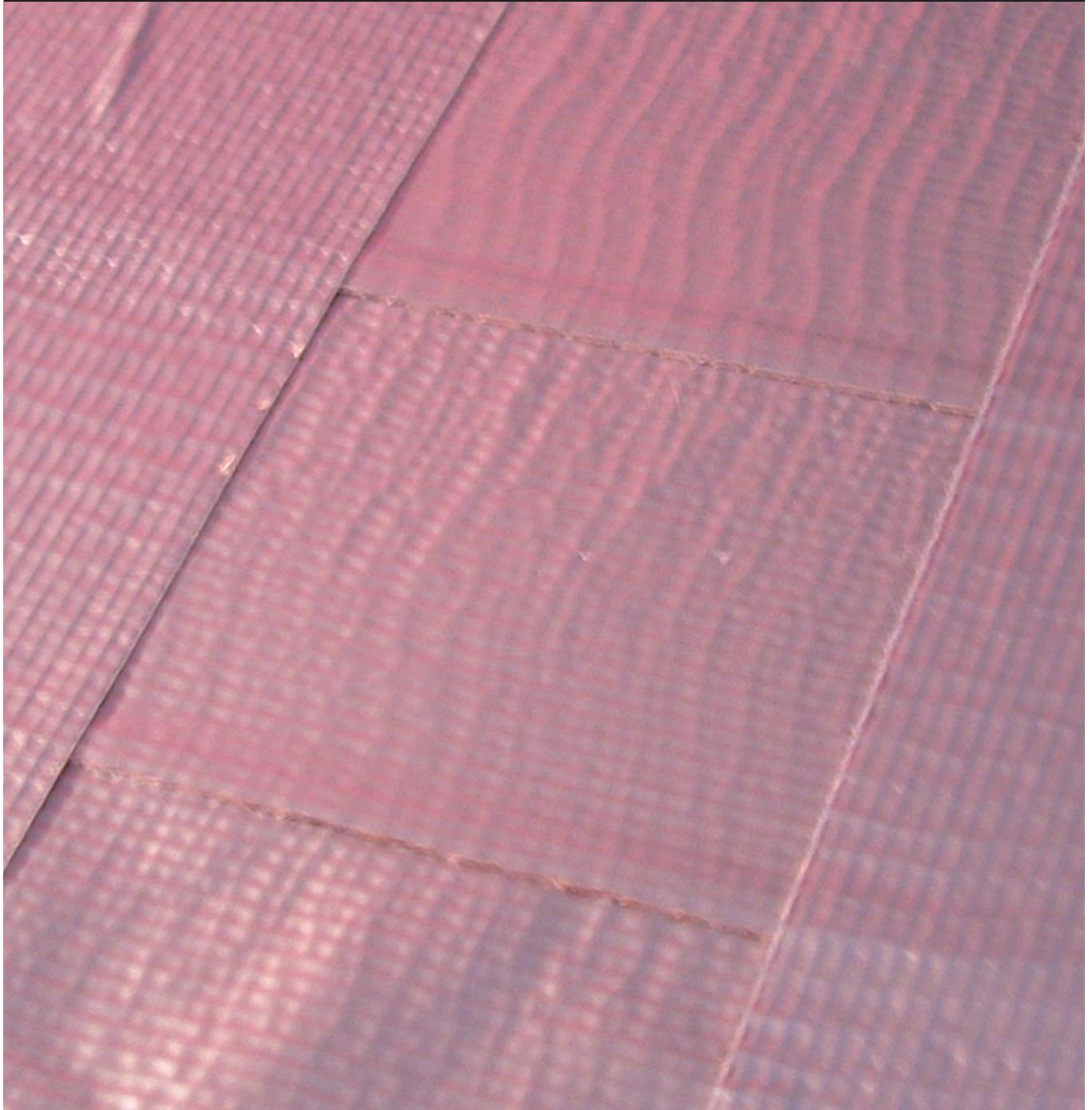


The Blotter

Magazine
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I'm sorry I'm confused I'm sorry I'm confused I'm sorry I'm confused

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Our Weirdest Issue in Quite Some Time, Featuring: **Brent Powers's "The Alamo,"** a shameless affront to time, space, history, logic, and tolerance. Kelly Skinner pulls an equally outrageous stunt with "Women." **Comix by One Neck and mckenzee to leave you feeling uneasy.** A segue back into real life with poems by S. Peterson, Alson H. Wheeler, and C. W. Stewart.

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Cover art: photo of duct tape in
artificial light, Johnny Pence, 2006.

The Blotter is a production of The
Blotter Magazine, Inc., Durham, NC.
A 501 (c)3 non-profit
ISSN 1549-0351
www.blotterrag.com

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non-profit. The magazine is published in
the first half of each month, and enjoys a
free circulation throughout the Southeast
and some other places, too. Submissions
are always welcome, as are ad inquiries.

Subscriptions are offered as a premium for
a donation of \$20 or more. Send check or
money order, name and address to The
Blotter Subscriptions, 1010 Hale Street,
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available, 5 for \$5. Inquire about availabil-
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*This magazine may contain typos or
bad words*

Items Worth Mentioning
from the desk of Johnny Pence

Errata:

Last month I misspelled our cover artist's name: Alena "Hennesy" is correct, not "HennesEy," the way I spelled it. I have also misspelled "mckenzee" from time to time, even though his comix are in every damn issue.

My bad. I'm sorry.

Welcome to the Empire

This month, we begin distribution in Wilmington, NC, and a renewed distribution program in Greensboro, NC, apparently home of recent American Idol tryouts. Hot damn, Greensboro!

Thanks to former cover artist Wendy Kowalski for doing the deed in Wilmington and to our poet friend Alson H. Wheeler for the 'boro.

Welcome also to super-freak cartoonist One Neck, joining us from Edinborough, Scotland.

Thanks

Thanks also to pH-7 and Offbeat Records for renewing their ads, thanks to Dirty South Improv and the Full Frame festival for their support, and to all our constant, sweet-hearted advertisers.

You readers should shop there first.

Thanks also to the Cave in Chapel Hill for hosting the return of our Blotter reading programs, Tuesday the 21st, 7:30. Our folks will read first, then it's open mike. The Cave sells beer, which bookstores do not, so that should add something to the event.

No Pictures, Not Normal

It's always interesting to me how sometimes we have art, sometimes we don't. Sometimes we don't have any poems, sometimes it's fiction that's missing. Sometimes all of it's overabundant. There's no such thing as a normal month here.

Anyhow, no art this month. You'll have to read the magazine if you want to get anything out of it. And speaking of normal, the reading is far from it this month. I'm pretty excited. I think y'all have gotten off easy recently, so it's time to plunge you back into the really bizarre stuff.

Good luck.

Okay, Let's get on with the show, springtime. Bring it.

—ediot@blotterrag.com

The Alamo

by Brent Powers

"History is written by the horses."
—de Tocqueville

Jim Bowie kept getting crazy letters from his wife. They disturbed him. They made no sense. They were letters from some future time, it seemed. He wrote her back, informing her of his decision to join Lieutenant Colonel William Barrett Travis at the Alamo to defend what he called the State of Texas against the people who already occupied the land, whom he called usurpers. "What's more, they're Mexicans," he wrote. "What do Mexicans know about where they're supposed to live? As gentlemen we are obliged to shoot some sense into the fools."

Really, all this was a way for him to have further adventures and add to his fame as a badass and a prestigious designer of cutlery. He had figured this was about as far as he could go but then he met Davy Crockett, who was King of the Wild Frontier, and what's more, a Congressman for a time, and this intelligence started up a buzzing in Jim's head that sounded like crowds cheering, firecrackers, cannonades, drum rolls and tooting horns. Then, too, his wife's letter kept saying things like, "The Prince shall wield a Long Knife. The Prince shall roll down stairs like a Barrel of Old Hickory. The Prince shall spill hot seed upon the ground before a Great White House, and grass shall rise upon the instant and bow down before him. 'Mow that Goddamned lawn, Terrible Winston,' he shall command ...". And so on. He couldn't make head nor tail of most of it but at times her words seemed

obscurely meaningful.

He was drinking in the cantina with a lot of other men and a few naked Mexican women who were rubbing themselves against poles.

"See, she's loopy," he said to Crockett, who had joined him. Bowie shook the letter under his nose. Crockett sniffed at it and gave a quizzical look.

Travis, standing nearby, approached and removed his fashionable hat.

"It is not proper, sir, to show such disrespect to your wife," he reprimanded Bowie.

Bowie, who was deep into his cups, confused and angry, turned to the Lieutenant Colonel and said, "Whada you know about wives, Travis, you inflated, perfumed gender-ambivalent?" Yet his eyes blurred over even as he said this, for in that same letter his wife had further prophesied that in the last times those of the same sex shall join in wedlock.

Crockett, however, was busting up laughing. "A *gender-ambivalent*?" he repeated. "What the hell is that, Jim, a confused policeman, haw haw haw? You know, yer full of it, Bowie. I always said so, even before I met you in person. I heard you were full of it from Old Hickory, himself, President of these-here United States. I heard you were full of it from the pirate we used to call John the Feet, who was bald as a goat but wore a toupee styled in a pompadour, trying for the same effect old Jackson had naturally—best goddamned pompadour in the history of these United States, I'd say. He was a Frog, too, was John, but he didn't have nothing to say about no con-

The Dream Journal

real dreams, real weird

Uision Quest, The Rodl, PTL

I'm walking through the yard and I see some kind of strange little animal in the distance. I walk closer and realize that it's not an animal but a human head. I walk a little closer and see that it's actually a person who's been buried up to his neck, maybe as a punishment or something. I realize it's my friend Toolie with some kind of tribal whitewash all over his face and head. I talk to him and turns out he's participating in some kind of a vision quest and he's super stoked. He gives it a B, maybe a B+.

(Henrik Rodl is a former UNC basketball player, ca. 1992) I'm playing basketball and I have to guard Henrik Rodl. At some point during the game you were expected to make a bank deposit. I felt a gnawing responsibility to make that deposit, as though I had a child who depended on them.

Me and a group of friends are doing missionary work in a foreign country and we are seated in an outdoor congregation and my buddy is up at the pulpit preaching and saying stuff like, "Blessed are the poor, praise the Lord, y'all don't know shit about Durham," and he asks for a witness. My friend Felisha (from the hospital) stands up and raises her hand and says, "Y'all don't know shit about Durham!" And I'm sitting there thinking, "Man, that seems like a rude way of preaching," but I look around and nobody seems to mind, if they even understand.

—T. J., Durham

Please send excerpts from your dream journals to Jenny at mermaid@blotterrag.com. If nothing else, we love to read them. We won't publish your whole name.

They told you that nobody likes a smart ass?



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fused policemen, haw haw haw. Look, Jim, I don't much cotton to this Suit neither, but yer gonna call him names, call him something a fella can understand. Call him a lily-livered, silly-assed, glass-gazing sumbitch whoson mofo from Kokomo or something like that. Why hell, back home in Tennessee we just call such critters silly boys. Jim, yer full of it. Let's us go get us some pussy."

Jim wasn't really listening, however. He was brooding upon his ambition. He was thinking, hey, if this dumb bumpkin can get to Congress, how far could old Jim Bowie, a man of far sturdier mettle and of a keener edge of wit, hell, just a better-looking guy and dressed for action instead of all duded up in dandy pants and a waistcoat (and the sumbitch calls *Travis* a Suit!), and just an all-around good-ole boy, with his own long Shadow of Legend trailing him like a mugger, yessir, just how far could James Bowie go in the Theatre of History?

But that was crazy. His wife was crazy. Forget about it, he scolded himself, and he twisted up the letter so that it was all pointy at the end, and he put it to the fire nearby. He then lit his cigarette with that burning, pointy-ended letter. He was so busy doing this, in fact, that he didn't feel the slap delivered to his cheek by the

insulted Travis, who was now holding forth about honor and the rites of Chivalry and shit like that.

"Wake up, James," Crockett said, yanking Bowie out of his reverie, "I think the Suit here wants some kind of satisfaction. Maybe we'd better forgo that pussy for now."

"Satisfaction, eh?" Bowie muttered. "Well, let him seek his own kind for satisfaction."

"Give us one of them fags over here, Jim," called some fella down to the end of the bar.

"You want this one?" Bowie giped, pointing at Travis.

Everybody looked blank, even Crockett, who saw humor in almost everything.

But Jim was remembering another of his wife's prophesies. "For they shall be known as Faggot Degenerates in the Eyes of the Lord, or Fags for short, and they shall go brazenly about in the Land."

Travis now said with gritted teeth, "Colonel Bowie, I don't believe you've familiarized yourself with the Decorum of Chivalry, for this very moment I've made the sign of challenge upon your person. Indeed your cheek still bears the mark of my glove. Indeed, I can see the imprint of its manufacturer branded there to be plainly read by all who take an interest in such things. However, in view of

Gift on "Rope"

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the circumstances of this conflict, I feel it would be remiss of me to absent one fighting man from my small force and therefore suggest that we meet upon the Field of Honor at some later time, when these hostilities have ceased and the Republic of Mexico ends at the southern banks of the Rio Grande."

Cheers arose. "Drinks all around!" called some Patriot, who had been stirred by the ending flourish of Travis' speech, completely ignoring its general import.

Bowie, too, showed no interest in the challenge to himself but simply slapped Travis on the back and said, "Bill, I love ya."

Crockett joined in. He raised a glass to Travis, tears coming to his eyes. "To Lieutenant Colonel William Barrett Travis, who don't half talk, who is a true and brave Knight of Democracy and Manifest Destiny. What's more, he looks good in a suit, shoots straight, and takes no guff from any man."

"Hear, hear!" came cries from all around.

Travis reddened and stalked out of the place.

Outside he encountered Commander Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna Perez de Lebron, dressed in

what Travis could only assume was mufti, for his attire consisted of high-waisted baggy pants, draped long coat, a dangling watch chain, and broad-brimmed flat-top hat crowning a long duckassed hairdo, and leaning against a hitching post, snacking on a small lump of the hallucinatory cactus presented to him by some fool Royalty he hung with from time to time, digging on the salsa music in various cantinas. Without preamble, this worthy, who was to be his opponent in the Great Battle to come, said to Travis in perfect, albeit heavily accented English, "You rebel American. This is *our* land. You are only a guest here."

Well, Travis heard "American" as "*maricon*", which is pejorative Mexican argot for "homosexual," and he took umbrage even further at this than he already had with Bowie and Crockett and the whole ragtag crew back inside the cantina.

"Sir," he said now, once more gritting his fine, strong teeth, "I truly object to is this constant mis-assignment of my sexual orientation. Know this: I am a married man, sir. Further, I am married to a lady, that is to say a human of the female gender, and most impor-

tantly, if I had formerly harbored some reservations as to the justice of this conflict, I am now convinced that these grounds shall be ours, shall be starred and striped if I have to paint it myself in my own blood, which, being of mixed lineage, as is only proper for a true son of this great nation, whose shores invite the mixed and the mongrel to conjoin with the purebred, aristocrat with commoner alike, lion with lamb, savage with sultan ... anyway, so paint it, red, white and blue, for I do have those colors flowing within my veins. Now, good evening to you, sir. I will expect you upon the field at the appointed hour."

Day and night the Mexicans had a band playing a scarifying little blues number called *El Degüello*, which signifies no mercy, no quarter, and is known to have a laxative effect upon those who are about to die. The message was clear: "Us Mexicans will wipe your asses for you, as is only proper in this case." They hired the Duke Ellington Orchestra for the purpose. The sexy, whining salsa trumpet you would normally hear in *El Degüello* was, however, replaced by a saxophone, which gave rise to some

Sinister Bedfellows by mckenzee



discussion between Santa Anna and the Duke.

“*El Degüello* must always be led by the trumpet,” the general insisted. “*El Degüello* could in fact be described as a species of concerto for raunchy salsa trumpet and orchestra. The saxophone is little used in our music. I therefore beseech you to adjust your arrangement accordingly. Why do you think I hired you, just for you to do your own thing and be remembered for it on gramophone recordings when this battle is about my own fame and the greatness of my people?”

“Listen, Heneral,” Mr. Ellington replied. “You don’t quite dig the scene here, as we say. For while the trumpet can be used for what you intend on this great occasion, and I have a man in my orchestra who could perform to your specifications, I feel you should hear Mr. Paul Gonsalves, who is I believe

himself of Mexican descent, on the saxophone because he has the stamina for the sort of provocative effect you seek here. He is known to blow for close to a half hour at a time, in fact, and I’m sure could go much longer. I have even been obliged upon occasion to literally step on his solo with my foot, even kick him in the face. But you see, Heneral, none of our people tremble at the fury of the trumpet. But the sax, now, your sax has some fearful jizm to it. It hankers after death and terrible worlds to come. A City of Dreadful Night with everybody fornicating every which-way from Thursday. In America, this is a frightful image of a World to Come.”

The Duke then introduced him to Mr. Gonsalves, who had already studied the changes of the *El Degüello*, and asked the great sax man to demonstrate his agility on that instrument, which he proceeded to do at some length until Mr. E. finally had to bash him over the head with a jug of mescal.

Santa Anna drew a blank on all this. His long face sank.

“Please, Mister. Just get to it. I am not paying you to shit with me in this way.”

“You got it, daddy-o.”

And with that, the Duke began the long drone of *El Degüello* with Paul Gonsalves wailing away on the sax. All night long they wailed.

Meanwhile, up in the battlements of the Alamo, Jim Bowie wondered, “What the hell is *that* all about?”

Davy Crockett, an Ellington fan from way back, explained as how it was the *El Degüello*, as them people call it, and what it signified to ‘em.

“Nice arrangement, doncha think? Got some swing to it,” he said.

Travis, mortified, told them, “I

abominate jazz,” then retired to his quarters to get down to some secret drinking.

That’s when he wrote the famous letter that has come down to us through the Unreliable Halls of Time.

Dear Rosanna:

I realize that you weren’t expecting to hear from me in response to your kind letter, yet I needs must make a Secret Will in the extremity of the Conflict before me. Having abandoned you and our son to enter upon dubious ventures westward, I feel duty-bound to inform you that certain treasures of my ancestors lie buried beneath the grounds of our formerly joint property in Claiborne (please find enclosed Official Treasure Map drawn with invisible ink wrought of the unspeakable byproducts of my clandestine dipsomania, simply heat and peruse at your leisure, matches not included).

But permit me to tell you what is happening here, for you must wonder why I find it necessary to communicate this to you. Yet dearest, the fact is my own present wife and little ones are indifferent to me and my projects, my Fate here, all to do with my “military adventures,” having dismissed me as an hallucinated drunk and a pervert to boot per certain rumors spread abroad by coonskinning ward healers, inflated fabricators of piss-elegant cutlery and degenerate half-breeds claiming rights to United States lands as Spanish Colonies ...

It goes on but, as is well known, all that remains of Travis’s



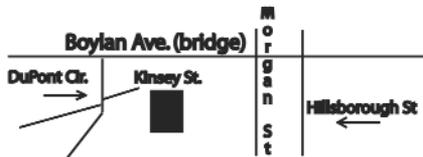
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letter is the following:

"The enemy has demanded my surrender. It is my intention to answer that demand with a single cannon shot. I shall never surrender."

What's more, this remaining page was put in the wrong envelope and is all that Travis's abandoned wife, Rosanna, received from him, while what was intended for her was sent as a dispatch to the Authorities, but was withheld from Command by certain parties who appeared later in Clairborn at the home of the former Mrs. Travis with a large digging crew and proceeded to destroy her prized Tudor Rose garden with picks and spades and a big-ole backhoe.

"What in Heaven's name are you doing?" she demanded.

A Gentleman of Dubious Character came forward to explain their presence, addressing her thus:

"Why, we're digging up that treasure, Ma'am. By rights, all of that there treasure is property of the United States Government."

"What are you talking about?" she wailed. "What treasure? My roses?"

"Why, no, Ma'am. I refer not to roses nor flowers of any sort, which are easily replaced with a little seed and recreational gardening activities known to be beneficial to bodies and minds of the practitioners thereof, nay, indeed, Ma'am, but rather all them doubloons and shit your hubs mulcted from outen the sunken Armada in the Gulf of Mexico, which is inside our territories and perforce must join all them other monies and prized objects in the Treasury Department to finance and enable the Sacred Workings-Out of Manifest Destiny and the Continuance of our Precious Life Style."

"I see, I see. Well, gentlemen, I

think there has been some mistake."

"With your permission, I would have to contest that, Ma'am."

But he'd gotten her interest. "What gave you the idea that there was treasure buried in my rose garden?" she asked.

"Why, a dispatch from your former husband, Lieutenant Colonel William Barrett Travis, which I, being Post Master to the Southwestern Territories, took the liberty of withholding from the party or parties to whom it was addressed (ain't no ranking officer I know of named Rosanna but I figured it's a code handle), yes, yes, to whom it was addressed, for fear of fomenting confusion and discord among an already disordered unit due to the overabundance of tequila made available to them by Representatives of the Republic of Mexico, which was gratefully

accepted by General Houston, himself. Yet I felt duty-bound to act upon the intelligence vouchsafed unto a private party which should by all rights belong to the Public Domain."

Whereupon the man held the letter up before the former Mrs. Travis in order to allow for her perusal, yet withholding its entire possession by means of a powerful grip he'd obtained with the aid of the Charles Atlas Program.

Now, Rosanna, being a speed reader, quickly relinquished her hold upon this epistle meant for her eyes only and ran into the house to retrieve the message she had received by mistake and requested that the one "Addressed to me," she said, "my name being Rosanna, a name which I'm certain I do not share with your Commander, and am even more certain is not to be construed as a code name," be returned to her in

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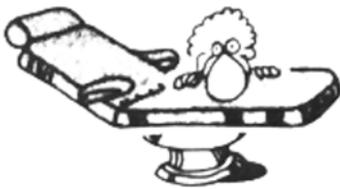
exchange and that “you shovel-wielding, waffled-eared, walrus-mustachioed muckrakers betake yourselves to other gardens of interest in the district, which could use some work to my way of thinking (those preposterous French ideas have invaded this city and infected the minds of horticulturists and formerly sensible landscape craftsmen throughout), and furthermore you tell that swash-buckling Caesar in the White House that what lies on my property is mine to keep and he can go straight to hell. Now, absent yourselves from my lands or I shall summon the Constabulary and have you removed by force.”

Meanwhile, Jim Bowie had received another prophetic missive from his own wife, Maria Ursula.

Dearest:
This shall be my final

Howard L. Shareff, DDS

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communication, I fear, for a pernicious Plague has stuck the town. This affliction, which is of an insidious, venereal species, originated in the Dark Continent, where it took only those of the Negroid Race, hence denying us huge portions of our potential work force. Upon this our Blessed Soil, however, it afflicts exclusively members, and males exclusively, of the vile homosexual persuasion – *in that future time from whence it sprang in the first place*. Yet here it poisons us all, natural and unnatural alike, and not only humans, for the dog has expired; the parrot and gerbils, as well, and every chicken in sight has kicked the bucket. Of course our children now fail. I am myself shewing symptoms of the Peenumonia and fear I shall soon join the

shades below.

Now, dearest, I must remind you that your Commanding Officer, this Travis creature, who leads you in the Desperate Conflict that shall no doubt have already commenced and shall do so over my dead body, a Desperate Conflict against a vast army led by none other than the venerable Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna Perez de Lebron, *Godfather to your own cherished and stricken wife* – is himself of more than questionable virility.

Bowie couldn't even finish the letter. He crumpled it up and began weeping uncontrollably. Finished with that, he looked up into some private mirror of his own thoughts which subsisted in the air before him. There he saw Travis, he saw the Evil that Travis

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Had a piece lately?

represented, the Homosexual Plague from the future—what's more, of Servile Origin (henceforth, for the few hours remaining to him of This Our Precious Life Style and his enjoyment thereof, he would refer to the menace as The Homosexual Plague of Servile Origin). It was the eve of battle. *El Degiello* was blowing strong, Paul Gonsalves entering upon his longest and finest solo, which is unfortunately unavailable to us in recorded form. Bowie could not sleep. He paced back and forth and swigged tequila straight from the bottle. He no longer cared what happened to him, to America, to Travis in particular. In fact, it was his intention to frag the sumbitch first chance he got but he needed to work himself up first. And there were Decisions of Historic Import to Consider: How did he want to

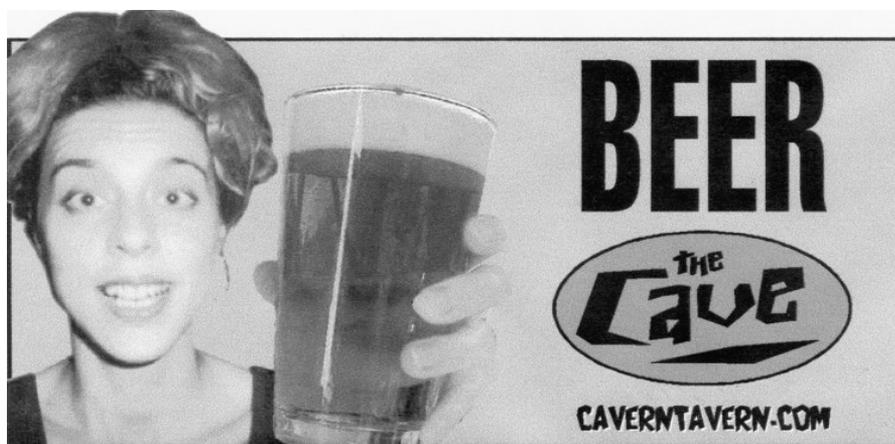
go? Fighting for Might and Right and Liberty beside that fag, *defending* that fag, who was of the unnatural sex which had been indirectly responsible for his wife and children's suffering and demise, what's more fighting *against* the Godfather of that same wife (even though he had no use for the vain fool and his army of zoot-suiters—made the whole of Texas smell of hair tonic and cloying men's cologne) ... yes, but all of that needs must be weighed against the Heroic Factor, the Historical Image, of himself there dying beside the great Davy Crockett and ... and ... so on. You can see it would keep a man up drinking.

Travis had said that he would answer Santa Anna's call for surrender with a single cannon shot, and was as good as his word.

Yet no sooner had he discharged the said cannon shot than Travis found himself wherever you do when you are dead, for almost simultaneous with his own somewhat theatrical act of belligerence came Jim Bowie, maddened, as we say, with drink and the knowledge of his wife and children's deaths, to his own mind now directly by the hand of Lieutenant Colonel William Barrett Travis, taking unsteady aim with a pistol. Meanwhile, Davy Crockett, seeing what was about to transpire, swung his flintlock rifle at Bowie, thinking to prevent him by this means. However, one Terrible Winston, the Bowie Family's African American slave, who attended upon "Master Jim" and served in the role of faithful sidekick in his adventures, despite having been upbraided, nay, denounced in somewhat delirious terms, even threatened with death for his collusion with Travis in the destruction of his family only moments before by his master, fired upon Crockett, wounding him fatally. The great coonskinning Congressman staggered about, swinging wildly with his rifle and fell almost at the moment Bowie's own pistol fire found its mark in Travis's forehead — all of this occurring moments after the Lieutenant Colonel had set off the cannon which was his reply to the enemy's call for surrender.

Paul Gonsalves, close to exhaustion yet still blowing strong, completed his Great Solo at more or less the same moment that these heroes fell with the long remembered series of high soprano bleats which Mr. Ellington would later reprise in his score for the film *Anatomy of a Murder* more than a century later.

Thus ends the Great Saga of the Alamo, except for the inciden-



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tal detail of what was at last found in Rosanna's garden, which will serve as a fitting denouement to our story. This amounted to several attaché cases full of neat bundles of French New Francs, purportedly minted in 1948 and thus would not be legal tender until that time and were therefore presently useless. What's more, paper money was as yet unknown in our land, hence those involved in the excavation of Mrs. Travis's rose garden could only view what they found as worthless for any purpose other than kindling and, insulted, injured, and exhausted by their work of excavation, proceeded to ignite their find and make merry as best they could around the bonfire. Mrs. Travis, seeing no reason not to at least join in the fun, had her staff bring out champagne and fresh baked scones and a fine time was had by all. Some months later, a US Gardener reported to her

with bags of seed and tools and set about the work of restoring her fine Tudor Rose display, which is still intact at what is now known as the *Maison Travis*, one of the more fashionable restaurants of Clai-borne and environs. People from all over the surrounding districts will travel far to enjoy the fine Provencal fare that is the specialty of that establishment.

Now, one mystery yet remains, and this, I fear, remains yet a mystery, at least to this reporter, or no record has yet been uncovered which would vouchsafe unto history by what means, how, when, and where did an officer of the United States Army, who was born in 1809, and died March 6, 1836, defending the Alamo, obtain unknown yet certainly large amounts of cash money in the form of 1948 New Francs, packed in attaché cases—yet another anachronism, for this form of lug-

gage was also a product of the next century. I leave it to researchers of later times and greater tenacity and imagination than myself to shed further light upon these matters.

However, on a final note, chiefly of interest to those who may wonder why a native son of California such as myself would be concerned with the affairs of the State of Texas, which I have yet to visit, I herein offer a summary of yet another curious document which has some bearing on the matter of the "time-slippage" which seems to have occurred during this affair.

My family is of Norman French descent, yet my particular branch of it seems to have migrated in the 1700s, first to England and, having settled there, soon found the governance of the Crown to be lunatic and insufferable, and moved on to Ireland, where it joined in several skirmishes with

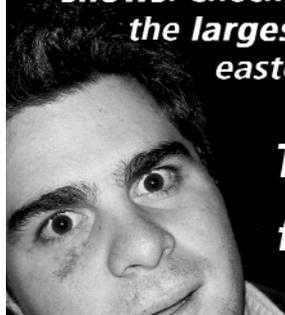
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the Royalists over the years until, finally tiring of what came to be viewed as a lost cause, they emigrated to Canada, thence to the US, settling for a time in Brooklyn, NY, thence to Alabama. It was there that my great grandmother received the curious letter from the *Banc National de France* which promised the delivery of vast sums of money in exchange for what they called a small service in view of her influence over a certain M. Ellington, whose "Famous Hot Jazz Band" they wished to engage in the performance of music such as he had provided for His Excellency, General Santa Anna during the "War of Los Alamos" at the site of a planned conflict of their own at a place called Waterloo. This letter was delivered by a man dressed in a curious manner, who bowed, removed his large flat-top hat, smoothed his ornamental hair ("all pomaded like a

macarou with his duckassed-do," she said), introducing himself as Edward, the Teller, of Oppenheimer Mutual, where the funds were due to be transferred, he assured her, within a week to ten days *par avion* ("I guess he meant by pigeon," she said, "which just goes to show you how backward they are in the Old World").

Unfortunately, this message was lost in what my family has always referred to as "The Explosion." I often asked my mother what that meant, and she always told me that whenever she had brought the question up with my father he would "turn all gray and dummy up."

As to what led the representatives of the a French bank to believe that my relation had any influence over Mr. Ellington is perhaps the greatest mystery of all in this affair. I could make something up, I suppose, but the truth already

strains credibility. I will therefore conclude here with the confession that this is all I can relate of these strange events.

Author's Note

El Degüello, used here fancifully, was actually composed by Carlos Santana for his daughter's football squad. It is not at all a "blues number" but rather a boisterous march intended to rouse the players before a game and also serve as their victory music afterwards in the event of a win.

Additionally, as is well known, it is now the consensus of historical opinion that Davy Crockett never existed.



Brent Powers gave up writing at the age of 18 and has devoted himself to it full time ever since, having made his fortune in selling pasts.

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Women

by Kelly Skinner

It was a Tuesday morning when all of the women disappeared. Everywhere, in every house, men woke to find that they had lost their wives, their acquaintances, their girlfriends, their whores, their lovers, their friends, and their family members. It took some men longer to notice than others. Some had made it all the way to the kitchen, to their cars, to jobs, to gyms, and to various Waffle Houses across the world before they noticed there was a change.

There were no more women. No women anywhere.

Not in any house, under any bridge, in any city, in any state, in any country in all of the world.

There were no more women.

No nerdy girls, no artsy girls, no trophy wives, no little old ladies, no curvy girls, no skinny girls, no translucent girls, no drama queens, no Queens, no princesses, no Snow White at Disney World, no little black girls with plastic bows all over their heads, no Asian girls, no white girls, no baby girls, no half-black/half-Korean girls, no Madonna, no hippie chicks, no chicks with dicks, no alcoholic white trash girls, no biker bitches, no bitches (period), no menopause moms, no soccer moms, no sorority girls, no New-Age gypsies, no artsy waifs, no angry girls, no power-hungry business-suit women, no foreign substitute teachers, no innocent girls looking sad, no girls with crayons coloring My Little Pony coloring books, no hookers, no teeny-boppers, no all-star athletes, no newly discovered lesbians, no rocker girls, no anemic-iron-deficient-hypoglycemic-

worry-about-everything girls, no fine-fuck-of-a-secretaries, no homeless women, no anorexic girls, no plastic Pamelas, no MILFS, no movie stars, no Twinkie pushers, no pill pushers, no naturally beautiful girls with long hair, no sweet girls, no little girls, no dwarf girls, no disabled girls, no environmentalist-save-the-planet women, and there were no muscle-bound Helgas. There were no more women, not anywhere.

They were gone. Every last boob, every last lipstick, every last eyelash.

Even the very stupid men, the ones with very small brains and large penises, felt the loss heavily. There was an infusion of very confused (and flaccid) penises. The world was a land of sausage. Very cold, sad, limp sausage.

For the first week, the world was sad. Men dressed in black and cradled photographs of the women formerly in their lives. Men wallpapered their homes with pornography, they trimmed their hedges into breasts. Everyone, everywhere, drank way too much milk.

They got out cookbooks and ruined perfectly good turkeys with too much salt. They wrote reflective journal entries, they did interpretive dance, they made great art, they went to church, they prayed, and most of all they wept over their losses. They thought a lot during that week about things they could have done differently, how they could have been there more or been more cautious when handling such matters as emotions and "her needs." They felt alone and afraid. For awhile, nothing on

earth was good or happy without woman's presence.

These were the early days.

The second week was not as bad as the first. Men got tired of sitting around being depressed. Men went to action. Men went to work lost in thought but happy to have something productive to do. Homeless men sat on benches without their women but enjoyed the silence in the sunshine without the constant chatter, little boys went to school, college guys skipped class and got stoned. Life moved on.

Day 16: Men realized that they were free. All the women were gone.

There were no more rules, anywhere. Men masturbated whenever they wanted in public, they cursed, they spit and they rubbed their crotches. They talked about sports and politics and cars. They pulled pranks and drank beer and got dirty. They did everything that they had been forced to hold back in the time of woman. They talked about deep things, about dreams and emotions and fears and all of those parts of themselves they had been afraid to share with the world of women. Men became more tender towards one another. They admitted with laughter that they had all watched When Harry Met Sally and liked it, that they had read romance novels and hidden them so that their girlfriends didn't know. Men told each other how much they appreciated one another, and hugged and were not ashamed. Men who loved other men were accepted by all and felt safe to go out in the streets and proclaim their love. The men finally admitted that their wives were right about everything they ever said, and agreed that they no longer had to be tough or arrogant or racist. Lots of men cried. The

world did not blow up and men did not kill each other. Of course, there were some men who grew violent when all the women had left, but these were all men with instability issues and would have been fighting even if the women were there. These men died off quickly through violent explosions, drownings, and encounters with raging squirrels.

Most other men changed entirely.

There was no obligation and no need to impress. They were all kinder to each other.

The third week, after finding a new role for themselves, ways of life changed. Everyone decided that work was stupid, so everyone quit their jobs. Merchandise lined the shelves and food filled the stores. There was enough for everyone to survive on for a little while. People took what food they needed and what clothes they needed. Homeless people were invited to live in garages and basements. Men lost all ambition. They did not drive anywhere. Good friends moved in together. There was no reason to drive to bars to hang out. There was no one to visit. There was no need to drive to work. They walked when they went out or rode bikes. Even the fattest ones were not too fat to get on the bicycles.

The environment had never been so clean, but at the same time, it had never been so dead either. Animals were dying of depression as they too had lost their mates. Flowers died and trees lost their leaves. The grass was still growing and a few tree stumps remained, though all the leaves had dropped a week before. The squirrels let themselves fall out of the branches and explode on the power lines. The birds never landed, just flew melancholy in the air until they starved to death, dropping like

furry brown balls of shit. The animal kingdom could not go on, they shook their heads at the humans who didn't realize the worth of what they had lost. Most of the animals hoped that they would be gone before the men turned to chaos.

After two months of peace and wasting time, something odd began to happen. Men had already taken down pictures and pornography. The hornier ones had sex with each other, but for the most part, men forgot about sex and about women. The subject had grown sad, distant, and no longer logical to fret over. Evolution, apparently, was moving too quickly. Men were adapting to this new world. They forgot what women looked like and how they smelled. The importance of hygiene and such things had long since been forgotten. Everyone forgot what their mamas taught them. Many men forgot to brush their teeth and to eat vegetables. Most men's diets consisted of a cow a day.

After a while, the men stopped talking to each other. It wasn't out of malice. It was just their way: They had nothing to boast about anymore. They spent all of their time outside walking. They lost weight and replaced it with muscle. They ran a lot, out of instinct and stopped wearing clothes. Most men decided that bathing was pointless. They grew body hair that was so thick it looked like wool, even on the men who were balding. They were all walking carpets.

The ones with teeth remaining grew sharper canines. Their jaws were growing, their brains shrinking. The animals were mainly dead now, most of them at least. All that was left of the animal kingdom were the reptiles and insects and of course the very small plankton and whales. Natural disasters swept

through and destroyed businesses and cities and homes and society, but the men still had building skills. They built rafts and good oars to ride out the floods and monsoons and tsunamis. After the five-year fire, the earth began to rebuild itself.

Men learned how to hunt, they ate crocodile and whale and ran and hid from the very large reptiles. Twenty years passed. All that existed were sea creatures and men with large penises and lots of fur. No women.

The last generation of man had been born at the time that woman had disappeared. Woman was forgotten, memory was nonexistent.

They were apelike before they moved to the sea. Spending so much time underwater catching whales and sea-dragons had caused the development of gills. The salt water withered their penises. The men grew more and more compact and furrer. First their limbs fell off, then their ears, then their eyes, then their brains dissolved. Lastly, their penises flaked away completely. They didn't mind too much. By this point in time, they were excreting waste and consuming food through the same hole.

On the last day of humanity, man resembled amoeba. There were one hundred square yards of these amoebas. They linked their bodies together through Velcro-like body hair. They formed a giant mass of swirling hair.

The amoeba fortress was eaten by seven hungry sperm whales. The shit nourished the ocean floor.

That was the end of man.

Kelly Skinner is an Athens barrista and student. She gets free food, free drinks, and works when she wants to. Take that.

Untitled

by S. Peterson

i wanted to call—
to tell you i'd let your progeny
ooze out in curdled clumps -
but it was friday
and soon forgotten.

i dreamt you
drenched in sacred hearts
and christmas trees—
with a twenty-cent wish i'd
laid at your feet (will you
send love to Kate? she
deserves it more than me)

i broke your communion
with a 21-year-old boy.
he was black-haired and -eyed,
smelled of sinatra and sex—
but at 2am, in the
deepest of the dark, this is
how life begins—
under cotton/polyester
and with windows closed,
the air too sweet to breathe.

Of Echoes

Translated now by Alson H. Wheeler

The seasons were changing
the trees showed this promise of leaves of fruit
but we had seen this before
and
the snow would come one more time
and the cold would come one more time
and hold everything in this timeless echo
appearing as if it never had moved
as if it would never move again
and
our holy men would murmur and whisper
around small fires
look at small bones of some forgotten kill
and tell us of things we could not understand
I am in awe of each life ... and sense there is no need of
holy men
I breathe and sense life is more than any breathing ...
and
it was during this time when the seasons could not decide
to come
or go ... I would go out
search the trail ahead
search for the herds ... the sound of children and holy men
calling
as I went
and
I would glance back at my footprints in the snow
and watch newer snow fill them
and smile ... soon it would seem I had never been here
never walked here
once ... on a lower branch a small bird watched as I
passed
our eyes met ... the bird should have flown ... but watched
there was a small point of light in each of its eyes
it felt good to be here
to hold everything in this timeless echo.

nine lives and eight well wasted
by c. w. stewart

this is the one we get—where we dont feel pain
a cantaloupe without the seeds
the ninth

take flight, for
you have nothing to fear

drive recklessly,
have another beer

twist your cap around, flea flicker
twiddle your thumbs, marry a virgin

take out your calculators
divide add and multiply, but never subtract
cuz

because these are the days when

you have your window down—
and no one else does

imagine- imagine- imagine
43 degrees and love has you
cold

is there anywhere you'd rather be?
the 9th

facing a total disregard, second-guessing
the concerned eight

both bicker back baby,
throwing disregard to the wind—

**Everybody on this page has initials
and short bios:**

Alson H. Wheeler is a Greensboro-
based poet and painter.

S. Peterson a pseudonym.

c. w. stewart doesn't edit.

