

## The Society Page

By Gene Mahoney

Russian Hill Upholstery & Decor is still located in Nob Hill, not Russian Hill.

**At the Warfield:** Jim Jefferies, 5/30. Taking Back Sunday, 6/1. Girl in Red, 6/2. Echo & the Bunnymen, 6/6. Tokischa, 6/9.

XXXXXXXXXX

I'd like to thank O.J. Simpson.

I know he was a scumbag. But he at least had the decency to die on April 10<sup>th</sup>, not on April 12<sup>th</sup>. April 12, 2024 was the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my mother losing her 3 year battle with cancer at the age of 40.

I heard about O.J. taking that white Ford Bronco to hell on the Armstrong and Getty Show, this morning radio program I listen to, and one of their listeners texted them: "O.J.'s cancer has been found not guilty."

Another big event occurred on April 10<sup>th</sup> – the day O.J. died. This happened:

*(From CTV News Toronto)*

**An Ontario resident has successfully secured public funding for a specialized gender-affirming surgery argued to be "experimental" by the provincial health insurer following a years-long legal battle.**

**The prospective patient, identified only as K.S. in documents filed with the provincial Health Services Appeal and Review Board (HSARB), was seeking coverage under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) for a penile-preserving vaginoplasty, a procedure in which a vaginal cavity is surgically created while keeping the penis intact.**

Ever been told to go fuck yourself? Now you can! And if you live in Ontario, Canada those Canuck taxpayers will pick up the bill.

I'm not a doctor, I don't play one on TV, but who knows -- this procedure may have cured O.J.'s prostate cancer. Apparently no one in Canada knows how to do it, so they have to send patients to Dr. Curtis Crane in Austin, Texas.

Anyway, on April 10<sup>th</sup> I texted one of my mother's friends this: "O.J. Simpson died. Rest in... nah!" and she texted back: "'I know you're not supposed to say bad things about the departed, but he's dead, good!'"



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So I tried to think of something contrary to traditional mourning etiquette and texted back this old favorite: "BETTE DAVIS: Say something good about Joan Crawford? The bitch is dead. Good!"



**Bette Davis (left) and Joan Crawford in *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?***

My mother had two girlfriends she used to quote lines with from the 1962 movie *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*. The woman I texted was one of them. About twenty years ago I finally got to see it at the Castro Theatre, and these gay guys in the audience were yelling the film's dialogue back at the screen, ala *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Apparently it's a favorite among the gay community. It has a similar vibe to Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, which came out a couple of years before it, but I like *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?* much better. And I like it much better than the 1991 TV movie remake of it starring Lynn and Vanessa Redgrave.

So that's my column for this month – O.J. Simpson, schizophrenic genitalia, and *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*

Maybe it's time I took a long rest.###

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## My Storage Unit Time Capsule

By James Dylan

I lived in San Francisco for much of the 1990s, living the bohemian art-student life; renting rooms wherever I could find them, riding my cafe racer Triumph motorcycle around town, usually with a hot Asian girlfriend on the back, holding on tight. I spent weekends riding around the Bay Area on Skyline Blvd or down to Half Moon Bay, or maybe up in Marin County. It was a good life, and only after graduating from the diploma mill known as The Academy of Art University did I realize my degree was worthless and I couldn't get a job due to the dot-com bubble bursting. As fate would have it, 9/11 happened and I joined the military in April 2002 and left San Francisco for good. I was sent to Fort Bragg, North Carolina and had all my possessions shipped to me -- my art supplies, my paintings, my small but decent record collection, basic kitchen pots and pans, rugs, bedsheets and clothes, boxes of photographs and family memorabilia.

I found a small one bedroom apartment right off base, and lived a much more somber life. If anyone reading this has ever lived in Fayetteville, North Carolina you will know it is not much more than fast food joints, strip clubs, mega-churches and gas stations. I spent my weekends in coffee shops reading or writing, as there wasn't much to do, despite even having my motorcycle with me. It wasn't the same.

In 2004 we were told we would be going to Iraq, and to pack everything up. I found a

storage unit nearby and packed everything away. I returned to Fort Bragg a combat veteran in late 2005, and started out-processing, as corporate defense recruiters were already contacting me for tax-free, six-figure jobs overseas, so I really didn't unpack anything from the storage unit. I only rented a small room until I found a job and left.

My first job was as a military contractor in Doha, Qatar where I spent three years. When that job ended due to Obama pulling out the troops, I headed home and again didn't touch the storage unit. I immediately went to visit my girlfriend in the Philippines and stayed there for six months. While there, I found a job with ITT Systems in Afghanistan, and was there for five years, and didn't return to the U.S. until mid-2015.

At this point I was tired of working overseas, and was a little burnt out anyway. Wanting to head back to California, I loaded everything into a small U-Haul and drove to Los Angeles and put it all in yet another storage unit. My sister thought I was a moron for paying for a storage unit for all those years, but what was I supposed to do - throw everything in the trash? It wasn't a huge amount of stuff, and the unit was only 7' x 10', so it wasn't crazy expensive, maybe \$50 or \$60 a month.

As I was hanging with my sister in L.A. and debating moving back to San Francisco, I received an email from yet another recruiter, this time from Hawaii. I didn't plan on moving to Hawaii, but the offer was great, and I had always wanted to visit, and it wasn't in a combat zone, so I accepted it. Once again I packed a few suitcases, locked up the storage unit, and headed there. I rented a room in a shared apartment, and started working on a military base.

In 2017 my girlfriend received her marriage annulment from the Philippine government, which allowed us to get married, so we applied for a fiancé visa and got hitched. We moved out of my little room and found an apartment, and in the end stayed in Hawaii until October 2023 - a full seven years! In that time, we planned on moving to the west coast, and visited L.A. and Seattle several times to look for places to live. Whenever we visited, we brought things with us to store, and the storage unit got more and more packed, and I had to get a 10' x 10' unit.

Finally, in March 2024, we had our things in Hawaii packed up and shipped, then we flew to L.A., rented a U-Haul, loaded everything up and drove to our new home in Colorado Springs, Colorado! Finally, after 18 years, everything I own is together under one roof. In the next article, I'll write about what it's like for a 58 year-old bohemian hipster to crack open a time-capsule from his past. Hint: I'm currently wearing my old Chuck Taylors and listening to my Buffalo Springfield LP, and trying to squeeze into my old jeans.###

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*Herald Archives: 2006*

## Beating

By Michael Madsen

Why do some men ask for a beating?

You can see it in their faces,

You know... they need it.

I beat a guy

With a tire iron once

who pulled a knife on me

and it felt so good

to break-the-bones

in-his-face and see him bleed.

I probably would've killed him...

If I hadn't stopped---

I guess... we will both

remember each other.

## Roger Brand

By Ace Backwords

I met the underground cartoonist Roger Brand once, briefly, back in 1981 when I was a young man. He was sitting at the desk in my friend B.N. Duncan's hotel room in the old Berkeley Inn. Duncan had recently interviewed Roger Brand for an issue of TELE TIMES, this little zine he was publishing at the time. Brand had an old trench coat on, even though he was indoors. And he had a six-pack of beer, which I'm told he took with him everywhere he went. It gave him this "skid row wino" ambiance. "Roger Brand is an alcoholic," Duncan had told me. Brand was quiet, subdued, unassuming, ghostlike. He came across like an old man who had run out of gas, even though he was only in his late thirties.

Duncan had shown me some samples of Brand's cartoons, which were kind of dark and muddy and unappealing to me. He seemed to put way too much black ink on each panel. I was told it was an after effect of Brand's years as a speed freak. That his pencil drawings were excellent, but that he would obsessively overwork the panels, putting more and more ink on them. By the time I met Roger Brand he had stopped drawing cartoons and was basically homeless, bouncing around, sleeping on friends' couches and etc.

Duncan said that Roger Brand had once been one of the prominent figures in the booming 1970s San Francisco underground comix scene. He knew everybody and everybody knew him. Drew comics, edited comic books,

worked in comic book stores. When he was a young man in the 1960s he had moved to New York City to break into the "comics industry," and had worked as an assistant to the legendary cartoonists Gil Kane and Wallace Wood. This gave Brand a certain cache and gravitas with his fellow underground cartoonists, many of whom had grown up reading and idolizing those two legends.



Brand had sold his first cartoon to the Pelican, the Berkeley campus humor magazine, when he was still in high school, and was seen as a real up-and-comer in the comics field. And yet here he was, just 20 years later, sitting in Duncan's little hotel room just a couple of blocks from the Berkeley campus where it had all started, as a down-and-outer. And he would soon be a done-and-goner -- dying a couple of years later at age 42.

At the time, it was a bit of an eye opening experience for me to see somebody like Roger Brand. I was 24, just starting my artistic career, burning with energy and inspiration, and feeling like the sky was the limit. That my work was just going to keep getting greater and greater, and my career would keep getting higher and higher. But Roger Brand was sort of a sobering example of how an artist could start out with great promise, but that that promise could sometimes be short lived. And largely unfulfilled. And that there could be many strange and unexpected twists and turns in the life of an artist.

I'm 67 years old. And life has passed me by in a way. But you gotta keep going. If only to play out your string. And this life is so unpredictable. Who knows? There could still be something cool waiting for me down the line. During his final year on this planet, my friend Duncan used to say, "I'm tired of living. But scared of dying."

Which was a good line.###

## When You Gotta Eat, You Gotta Eat By Mr. Fabulous

Whoopi called me at 4 PM on a Tuesday afternoon. She said that she needed a date for Sally Struthers' Annual Hungerthon Dinner that night. Would I go with her? She promised that there'd be a full dinner and lots of wine. I said, "I'll be there, baby."

I was supposed to meet her at 7 PM at The Regency Hotel. That left me time to cram in a full workout at Biceptual, the new gym that Richard Gere had opened with Tom Cruise. I drove over to the gym and spent an hour on the bike. Then I lifted weights for about 30 minutes. By the time I finished my last set of free weights, I was feeling incredibly weak. I was ravenous with hunger and my arms felt like lead. As I showered, my legs began to stiffen from the exercise bike. I dressed as quickly as I could, then squeezed into my Hyundai and raced over to The Regency.

I was running late by the time I arrived at the hotel. I ran inside and found Whoopi waiting for me at the bar. She was talking to Brad Pitt and Ashton Kutcher. They were debating whether or not Winona Ryder looked exactly like the kid in 'Lord of the Rings.' Whoopi jumped up as I greeted her. She gave me a big kiss on the cheek, then quickly introduced me to Brad and Ashton.

"Hey guys."

"Hey."

"Hi."

Whoopi handed me a glass of wine. We said a hurried goodbye to Brad and Ashton, then walked quickly to the ballroom. As we stepped into the hall, Whoopi nudged my shoulder. "You look all buff."

"Yeah, I just got through working out. But listen, I'm starving. When do we eat?"

"Soon. We just have to wait for Sally to make a speech. Then they'll serve dinner."

"All right. I hope she makes it quick, though. I'm starting to get lightheaded."

Whoopi poked my arm. "God. You're always such a baby."

We walked to our table and took our seats. I noticed Drew Barrymore and David Lane sitting next to us. They had their chairs turned toward the podium. We sat down.

Just at that moment, the whole room stood up and began applauding as Sally Struthers stepped up to the podium. There was a long round of clapping. Then everyone sat down.

Sally looked out at the audience and paused. The room fell absolutely quiet. Someone

coughed at a nearby table. Sally looked down at her speech for a moment. She cleared her throat. "Eight million," she said. She paused for a moment as her voice echoed through the large hall. She repeated herself: "Eight million." Then she looked out at the audience and said, "Eight million children will die of hunger this year."

I turned to Whoopi and whispered, "Eight million and one if I don't eat something soon."

Whoopi put a finger to her lips. "Shhh..."

Sally began to launch into her speech. It was something about hunger in Africa and Asia and a lack of running water. I took a sip of my wine. It went immediately to my head. I felt a sudden tightening in the front of my skull. I knew that I needed water. There was a glass of water in front of me on the table. I grabbed the glass and drank the whole thing down. Then I looked around for a waiter to pour a refill. I couldn't spot one. But I noticed a large metal waiter's tray resting on a fold-up stand next to our table. It was holding a half-empty pitcher of water. I leaned over and grabbed the pitcher. I poured myself another glass of water.

Sally talked on. She was mentioning something about the United Nations. I began to feel light-headed. My blood sugar was getting too low. My head and neck felt uncomfortably warm. I turned to Whoopi.

"Hey...I gotta eat something...I'm getting lightheaded."

Whoopi waved me away with her hand. I leaned toward her and whispered, "But I'm really feeling faint."

Whoopi whispered back. "Why didn't you eat before you got here?"

"I didn't have time. I had to get to the gym. And you said they'd be serving dinner."

"Why didn't you eat a Power Bar or something?"

"I forgot to."

"Well then, that's your problem."

Whoopi sat back in her chair. I took a deep breath. I leaned back in my chair and slowly exhaled. I began to massage my forehead. Sally's speech continued. She passed the 10 minute mark. Little parts of her speech filtered in and out of my consciousness: "World Health Organization...50,000 rations per day...if we sit idly by...vaccination teams...hookworm and ringworm...agriculture department...wheat and grain surplus..."

After a few more minutes I turned to Whoopi. "I think I'm digesting my spleen right now."

"Oh hush up."

"But I feel faint."

"She'll be done soon."

"Yeah, but when?"

"I don't know."

I sat back in my chair and began to glance around the room. I spotted Lindsay Wagner and Andy Garcia sitting at a nearby table; Lindsay was yawning. I turned back to Whoopi. "I'll bet everybody's just waiting to eat."

Whoopi looked at me. "Yeah, but they're behaving like adults."

"But I'm really feeling faint...I gotta do something..."

"Shhh."

I looked around the room. At various tables, I could see people fidgeting and yawning. I noticed Lee Majors sitting at a side table. He was holding his head in his hands. He looked exhausted. Sally's voice droned on: "a concerted effort...political involvement...for just pennies a day..."

A wave of nausea rippled through me. I felt close to fainting. I looked around at another table, then noticed the waiter's stand parked next to our table. It held a large silver tray almost two feet in diameter.

With the last of my strength, I lifted myself out of my chair and stepped over to the tray. I could feel my heart pounding mightily in my chest. All the blood seemed to drain out of my head. I began to see gray.

I picked up the tray with my left hand. My arm trembled from workout fatigue. I held the tray up in the air like a mirror. Then, with a quick punch of my right fist, I gonged the tray as loudly as I could. It sent an enormous metal boom reverberating through the hall.

Instantly the whole room jumped. Everyone turned to look.

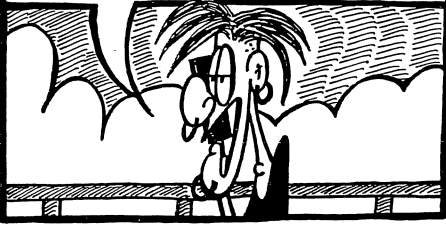
People stared at me. I nodded at them and quickly replaced the tray on its stand. Then I sat down next to Whoopi; she was covering her face with her hands.

At the podium, Sally stumbled for something to say. For a moment she looked down at her speech. But then she interrupted herself. "I think...uhhh...we'll, uhh...we'll finish here and...just...thank you..."

The audience stood up and began to applaud. I turned to Whoopi. "See, now we'll get to eat."

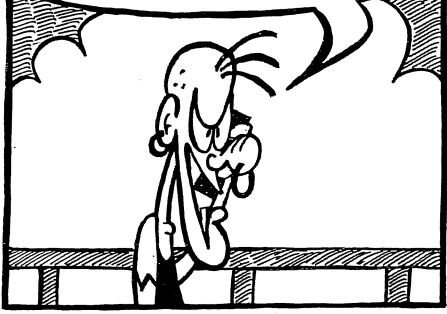
I sat back in my chair and waited for dinner to be served.###

NO, I'M NOT WORKING AT OMAR'S PIZZERIA TODAY. I'M BLOCKING TRAFFIC ON THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE. I'M AT A "FREE PALESTINE" PROTEST. I'VE BEEN IDENTIFYING AS A PALESTINIAN REFUGEE FOR ABOUT A WEEK SO MR. OMAR WAS OKAY WITH ME CALLING IN OPPRESSED. I'M WORKING THERE TOMORROW. WE'RE CATERING A BAR MITZVAH. MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T USE THOSE PIZZA BOXES THAT HAVE "DEATH TO ISRAEL" PRINTED ON THEM. THOUGH.

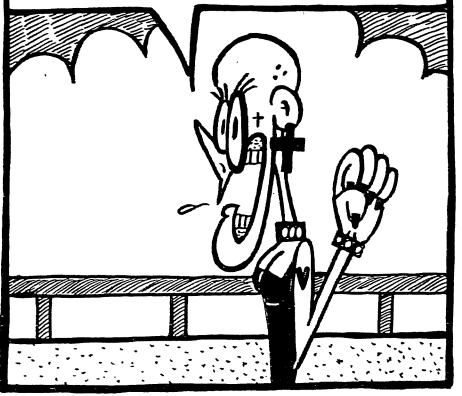


WE'VE ONLY BEEN BLOCKING TRAFFIC ON THE BRIDGE FOR FIVE HOURS AND THE DAMN PIGS EXPECT US TO LEAVE. WE LIVE IN A POLICE STATE!

THAT NOISE? IT'S A SIREN. SOME FASCIST IN AN AMBULANCE WANTS TO GET THROUGH.



TODAY, TO SHOW OUR SUPPORT FOR THE REVOLUTION... WE WILL NOT GO TO CLASS!!! WE WILL NOT GO TO WORK!!! (SO DON'T WORRY, IT'LL BE JUST LIKE ANY OTHER DAY.)



HEY, EVERYBODY—I'M GLAD TO BE HERE AND, UH, I DON'T MEAN TO BE A... UH... A, UH... YOU KNOW, WET BLANKET... BUT, UH... THIS HAMAS POLICY OF... UH... MURDERING GAY PEOPLE... ISN'T THAT A LITTLE HOMOPHOBIC?

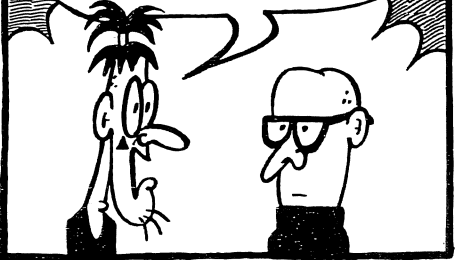


HI, KIDS! IT'S AGNES DEVONSHIRE! GEE, I HAVEN'T BEEN TO A RALLY SINCE THAT PRO-CHOICE ONE A FEW YEARS AGO WHEN MY MOTHER SPOKE AND SAID THAT HAVING AN ABORTION WAS THE GREATEST THING SHE EVER DID!  $\Rightarrow$  SNIFF  $\Leftarrow$  THAT WAS SO BEAUTIFUL.



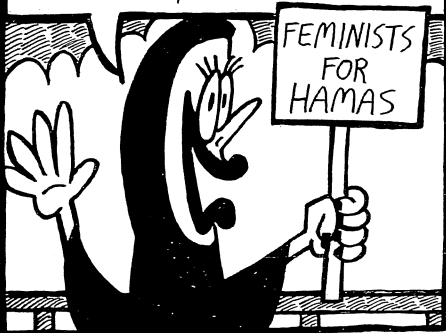
I CAN'T BELIEVE THE ISRAELI WAR MACHINE CONTINUES ITS GENOCIDE EVEN AFTER THE SAN FRANCISCO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS URGED IT TO STOP.

BIDEN'S ONLY HOPE OF WINNING MICHIGAN IS TO GO ON TV AND YELL "DEATH TO ISRAEL! DEATH TO AMERICA!"

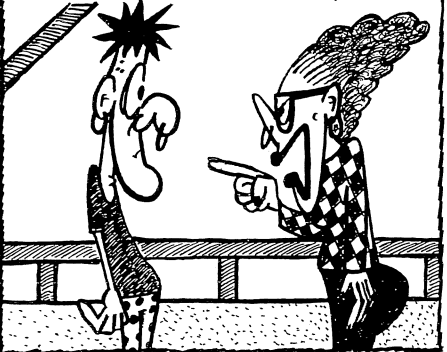


GUESS WHO! IT'S STILL ME... AGNES! DRESSED IN THE SPIRIT OF TODAY'S AMAZING FESTIVITIES IN THIS LOVELY HIJAB!

GEE, I, UH... FEEL DIFFERENT ALL OF A SUDDEN. HMMMM... WOW... REALLY, REALLY DIFFERENT...



TYLER, I THINK THAT, LIKE, YOU ASKING ME TO HAND YOU A BOTTLE OF WATER WAS TOTALLY SEXIST! I THINK YOU NEED COUNSELING! IN AN AGE WHEN REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ARE UNDER ATTACK YOU—



HOW DARE YOU DISHONOR YOU BY SPEAKING TO YOUR MAN WITH A FOUL TONGUE! WOMEN WERE PUT ON EARTH TO OBEY MEN! WE WILL NOW STONE YOU TO DEATH.

