

The Society Page

By Gene Mahoney

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

At the Warfield: Weyes Blood, 9/27. The Band Camino, 9/28. Rina Sawayama, 9/30. Polyphia, 10/5. The Brian Jonestown Massacre, 10/10. Bishop Briggs & Misterwives, 10/11. Slowdive, 10/12 & 16.

At the Regency Ballroom: Wolfmother, 9/26. Shordie Shordie, 9/28. Masego, 9/30. Victoria Monet, 10/3-4. Tinlicker Live, 10/6. Jessie Ware, 10/11. Apashe, 10/12. Celebrating David Bowie, 10/14.

New Ikea store at 945 Market Street. No, your eyes didn't deceive you – a business is actually opening, not closing in downtown. I'm waiting for news stories about gangs of thieves walking off with furniture. Hey, a big shout-out to the security staff at the Walgreens on 4th and Market. I was in there late last month and they were taking names, not letting these foul-mouthed shoplifters get away with it. On the way out I told one of them, "Good work, man!" and he said, "Thanks." Future SFPD officers there?

More sad news in our "progressive" city: Last month I saw a local NBC news crew filming the front door of Café International in the Lower Haight. The place was closed and there was a note on the front door that read that the owner needed five days to rest due to the daily shoplifting, extortions, violence, break-ins and thousands of dollars of debt due to property damage. But she didn't want to be another business here to close due to all that. The café reopened earlier this month, but I wouldn't blame her if she closed down. If voters in this town turned America's most beautiful city into the biggest toilet in the country – what can you do?

The owner is one of the nicest business owners in SF. Her name is Zahra Saleh, an immigrant from Eritrea in east Africa, who has owned Café International since 1992.

Be careful what you wish for, you might just get it: Recently local district attorneys in New York and Georgia brought charges against former President Donald Trump and some of his associates, claiming election interference. Trump's former advisor Stephen Miller thinks this has set a precedent – *that may affect San Francisco, if you think about it.* Miller thinks that local district attorneys nationwide can bring charges against President Joe Biden and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas for human trafficking. Miller claims that since the Biden administration opened the southern border in 2021 they're complicit in enabling illegal immigrants, human traffickers and drug cartels bring contraband to the U.S.



SAN FRANCISCO HERALD

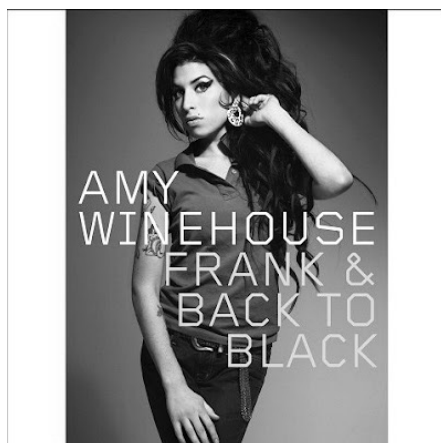
September 2023

SanFranciscoHerald.Net

Miller says that a local D.A. can bring charges against them anywhere in the country where there has been a single victim of a crime related to what's happened at the border and the decimation of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Sound harsh? Maybe. But take a walk on Mission Street between 6th and 9th and you may change your mind. Actually, district attorneys in some border towns in Texas and Arizona may attempt this, but here in San Francisco? If you smuggle fentanyl here they give you the key to the city.

I publish a newsletter for this town, so I should have known this, but I didn't: I walked by 330 Ritch Street in Soma recently and noticed it's now a bar called Victory Hall. I walked in and talked to its owner, Deanna Sison, who told me it's been there since 2014. (330 Ritch nightclub shut down in 2013 after a shooting there.) That nightclub used to have Popscore, a night of dancing and often live music. Deanna said that she thinks Amy Winehouse's 2007 performance there was her last in San Francisco. A guy who works at Victory Hall was there that night (didn't get his name) and he said Amy got so drunk that the bar actually cut her off. So she announced to the crowd that she would kiss whoever bought her a drink. Naturally, lots of drinks were handed to her. By the end of the night Amy was so hammered that the guy had to carry her out of the place. (Amy died of alcohol poisoning in 2011 at age 27.)



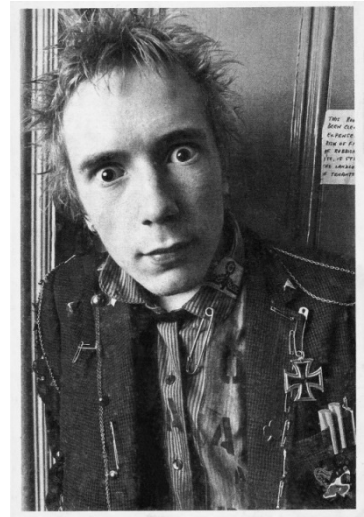
Also: I was at the Caltrain station when a woman handed me a flier. It read that a 4 year old child was killed in the crosswalk in SF on August 15th, so there's a campaign to address safety issues at the 4th and King intersection. If you want to find out more visit walksf.org/neveragain.



So long to Scott Drennan – more than a cousin, a friend – who passed away last month. Just a great guy – that's all.

Brushes with Greatness

By Ace Backwards



I met Johnny Rotten of the Sex Pistols back in 1982. He was in San Francisco plugging his latest PIL tour, so I got invited — along with the other stiffs of the working rock press — to a "Press Conference" at the swanky, ultra-trendy 181 Club in the heart of the Tenderloin. I showed up with my crazy girlfriend and we took a seat in the back of the club.

True to his name, Rotten kept the assembled throng of reporters and media-hipsters waiting for an hour before he made his entrance (I flashed on his classic quote to the audience at the Sex Pistols' last gig at

Winterland: “We’re not here to amuse YOU. You’re here to amuse US.”). Roadies and pseudo-technicians spent an hour tinkering with the microphones and the sound system, as if they were getting it just right, while the assembled rock press nervously drank their free drinks and ate from the free *hors d’oeuvres* and stared at the empty press conference table up on the empty stage.

Finally, Johnny Rotten and the band strode up to the table and sat down in front of their microphones and fielded questions from the audience. Of course the microphones didn’t work, or were purposely turned down at low volume. The press kept screaming at PIL: “We can’t hear you! Speak up! Our tape recorders aren’t picking up the answers!” Which was duly ignored by the band, who continued to drone on their replies in barely-heard whispers. Finally, one frustrated reporter screamed out:

“Why did you call this press conference?”

To which Johnny Rotten replied: “So I wouldn’t have to talk to you individually.” We all heard that one loud and clear.

A woman English disc jockey chastised Rotten as a “sell-out” for charging so much for PIL tickets, which, to her thinking “betrayed the whole idea of what punk started out as.”

To which Rotten scoffed: “Do you get paid for your radio show?”

“No, I do it for the love of it,” she said.

“Then you, my dear, are a turd,” he said. “We do this for the money.”

My crazy girlfriend called out her question: “God and dog are 3-letter words. Can you think of any others?” Johnny Rotten said: “Huh?” (Which, now that I think of it, was the correct answer.)

Mostly PIL sat up there smirking at us with contempt, like they were the super-cool in-crowd, and we — the cream of the Bay Area rock press — were lower class dirt-clods trying to crash their hip party. They had their rock star cheekbones and the latest in English rock-star thrift-store fashions. And of course we loved it, ate up the whole act, because we were all star-fukkers so of course we wanted our rock stars above us. The whole event had the feel of a weird performance art piece and we were all playing out our roles in it. Public Image Limited.

Finally, Johnny Rotten and PIL put an end to the whole farce and suddenly stood up and walked off backstage. Press Conference over. And the reporters staggered off to try and

make sense of their barely-audible tape-recordings.

I went backstage and interviewed the bass player. He said: “The one thing Johnny Rotten really hates is when reporters come up to him and immediately start asking him questions about the Sex Pistols.” So that’s the first thing I asked him when he suddenly showed up in front of me. He looked exactly like Johnny Rotten — which was disconcerting because it was sort of like seeing a cartoon character come to life. Like talking to Popeye or Mickey Mouse. There is something other-worldly about celebrities; people we mostly relate to as fleeting images on our TV screens or on newsprint. To see them in flesh-and-blood is jarring. Like seeing a ghost. Johnny Rotten talked in an ultra-serious, grave, undertaker’s voice, almost a whisper. Something ghoulish about the guy, like a grave-digger. I showed him the cover of *Twisted Image #2* which featured a cartoon I had drawn of him choking Ronald Reagan in front of the White House while Sid Vicious and a gang of punks rampaged. He whined in seeming pain when I tried to pin him down on his politics, as if I was trying to trap him.

“That wouldn’t be FAIR! I know NOTHING about that!” he whined.

“Well, you have an effect on your audience, on people’s minds,” I said.

“That would be the point, wouldn’t it?” he scoffed.

“I was just wondering what effect you’re trying to have,” I said.

At that point, Johnny Rotten went on a harangue against “record companies,” which he was apparently against. I asked him about Sid Vicious and he said, “Sid bought into his public image. Originally his name was a joke because he was such a wimp.”

My crazy girlfriend was off somewhere in the bathroom of the swank 181 Club, choosing that moment to wash her hair in the sink, for some inexplicable reason. So I left Rotten to track her down. We were all kind of crazy back then. Punk Rock 1982. It was exploding all over the place at the moment, infecting the high schools and everywhere. And somehow Johnny Rotten was at the center of the whole thing. It was interesting to get to meet him. He always reminded me of a skinny, surly orangutan, or maybe Gollum from “Lord of the Rings.” He wasn’t my hero or anything, but he was one of the first people my age (19 at the time of the Winterland gig), from my generation, to get up in front of the media microphone and make a statement (before the Sex Pistols it was all post-’60s retreats). So I identified with him on that level. It was neat to meet him. I wrote up the interview in

Twisted Image #3, a punk-art tabloid I was publishing at the time. And now, it’s ancient history in a weird sort of way. But back then, it was just one more surreal conversation in a backroom with a famous stranger.###

Alex the Hippy Chick

By James Dylan

It was spring 1993 and I was living in Augsburg, Germany under a tourist visa. I got out of the Army in 1991, and came back to Germany, as I preferred it to living in the states. My parents had sold their house and moved anyway, so I really had no “base” to go back to. I visited once a few years earlier, and most of my friends were working shitty jobs, moved away, or were just stagnating. It was depressing, and I never visited again.

I was working for a temp agency called ManPower, and I made enough to live happily. I was at the bottom on the ladder, though, when it came to jobs. I worked as a security guard, a landscaper... a multitude of simple, menial jobs that I’ve written about here before.

I was dating a girl that I was deeply into, her name was Alexandria, but went by Alex. She was a bohemian, free-spirited hippy chick, and was attending college to become a social worker or something like that. She smoked a little weed, sometimes hash, and talked about cocaine and other stuff, but it was never an issue. Sometimes we would go out and she would take something, and I would just look out for her, I didn’t mind.

I was, and still am, a total ditz when it comes to drugs; I never enjoyed them, nor do I understand them. Weed just made me dizzy and sleepy, or I found myself staring at the wall. Even alcohol just makes me tired and prone to just go to sleep. I’ve had more than one girlfriend lose me at a party, then later find me sleeping in a spare bedroom, on a pile of coats.

Alex and I spent a few months together, she had a nice little studio apartment in the Altstadt, or “old city”, just a block from a huge gothic cathedral. Outside the window, you could look down and see a beautiful small canal with a little waterfall, and hear the water, ducks and birds as they gathered in it. It was one of the most peaceful, relaxing places I’ve ever lived.

Eastern Germany and the Iron Curtain had only recently fallen, and the borders were open for the first time in our lives, and we drew up plans to go visit Prague, literally only a 5 hour drive away. Alex didn’t have a car, but I had a 1980 VW camping van, with a pull-out bed, so we planned to drive it and sleep in it.

We started off, with Alex playing her weird German hippy music, with her bare feet up

on the dash, her hair swirling around from the wind. After a few hours, we approached the Czech border, and despite it being open to the west, there was still a lot of distrust and tension, and the guards were literally the same ones who shot at their own citizens if they tried to jump the fence. They were unsmiling and carried small machines guns, like Uzis.

We pulled up, and a guard waved us over to the side, and started asking questions, in German. He asked to see our IDs, vehicle info, passports, etc. They asked where we were headed and what we were going to do there. I was nervous, since they knew I was American, but Alex was just as cheerful and bubbly as ever, chatting with the guards, and even asking if she could get out and use the restroom.

At one point, a guard came over with a police dog and walked around the van. Another came over and told me to open the back of the van, so they could inspect it.

Now, I watch a lot of spy movies, love John le Carré books, and was even a soldier on the West German border to East Germany, so I was filled with this sense of intrigue, even danger. I knew I was doing nothing wrong, but still had paranoid fear that they would find something, plant drugs, accuse me of being a spy and seize me. (I'm the kind of guy who pats myself down before I leave a store to make sure I don't have any merchandise in my pockets.)

The guard poked around in the back; he opened a few drawers, saw it was just a camping van with some backpacks in it, and seemed satisfied. Alex came skipping back from the restroom, and the guards looked at each other, looked over at the guard with the police dog, then nodded and stamped our passports. The guards relaxed and became friendlier, wishing us good travels.

We thanked them and waved as we departed, and Alex resumed her position with her feet up. It was strange, being in a former USSR country for the first time, seeing all the drab, grey concrete apartment buildings. Everything looked so sparse and desolate, messy and unorganized. I swear, even the weather changed from bright and sunny to cloudy and drab. From the road, everything was so ugly, with trash and abandoned cars lying around. The road was horrible, with potholes everywhere. Capitalism, even with all its faults, couldn't come to this place soon enough.

Eventually we approached Prague, and then, as we entered the old part of town, Alex asks me "if she can go visit a friend" real quick. This was surprising, as I didn't know she even knew anyone here. However, we had a whole 3 days to kill, so I looked up the address she gave me in a map of Prague I bought at a gas station. (Yes, kids...in the

days before smartphones, we had to use paper maps and hope for the best).

We didn't have to drive far, the place was only a few blocks away, and we found the ugly, Soviet-era apartment building pretty easily. I parked in front and we got out, and Alex opened the sliding door, crawled in the back, and came out with a small package. I asked her if she had brought a gift for her friend. She looked around, and then pulled out something wrapped in aluminum foil. She peeled back the foil to expose a big, brown slab of something brown, like a brick, and when I asked her what it was, she replied "It's hashish, silly!"

Hashish? Drugs? I lost my fucking mind. This dumbass smuggled a 5 pound brick of hashish across the border, in MY van, with ME driving. The border guards were IN my van, and there was a police dog walking around outside. If they had caught us, I would have spent the next 20 years locked up in some shitty Czech prison, getting ass-raped by some Czech psycho named Vladislav who would have just loved having a handsome, skinny American boy in his cell.

I was pissed, and let her know it. I couldn't make a dramatic scene, as we were parking on a semi-busy street. I asked her what the fuck she was thinking, and she said she had an agreement with her dealer to deliver the hash to some guy in Prague, and she would be paid more than enough to cover the trip. This chick was killing me. Of course, in typical twisted girlfriend logic, I was the asshole for making such a big deal out of nothing. She uses me as a mule to bring drugs into the country for HER profit, risks ME going to prison, and I'm the asshole.

She wrapped the brick back up, told me to stop being a baby, and that she would deliver it and would come back soon. The second she went inside, I took off and drove to the end of the block, looking for anyone who may have been following us, or any people sitting in cars outside the building. If it was a sting and she got busted, they weren't going to nab me that easily. After a while, Alex came out of the building, alone, and was looking for me.

After I was sure she wasn't being followed or surveilled, I nonchalantly drove up and let her in. She asked what I was doing, and to stop being paranoid, as I was attracting attention. I became a stereotypical 1960s dad and told her she didn't understand the consequences of smuggling drugs into a former Soviet state, but she just laughed it off and showed me a small wad of bills she received. If I wasn't so into this chick, I would have dropped her off right there in Prague and let her find her own way home, but I was stupid back then, even more so than today. When I asked her why she didn't tell me about the hash, she told me that if I knew, I "would have acted differently at the border and ruined the plan."

We stayed in Prague the next three days, sleeping in the back of the van. She really ruined my trust in her, and ruined the whole weekend for me. Nothing else of interest happened, except when we were illegally parked and the police booted the van, and we used a bottle of vodka to bribe them to let us go.

We broke up a few weeks later, as I started feeling like she was using me for my car, and to babysit her whenever she was on drugs. One time she opened the van door and tried to jump out while we were driving, and another time she reached over and jerked the steering wheel when she saw a mouse or something cross the road. I'd had enough; being with her was becoming too stressful and dangerous. I still think of her, and tried googling her name once or twice, but I assume she's married now and has a different last name. I still have a lot of good memories though; I hope she does too.###



Eat Drink

Happy Hour Special, 3PM - 6PM: Tecate \$3, Corona \$4, Modelo \$5, Bare Bottle \$6, Sangria \$8. **Chisme Cantina**, 882 Sutter. (415) 370-7070. Catering available.

Gastroboteats, 1096 Union (at Leavenworth), www.gastroboteats.com, (415) 307-6141. Modern street food, new-style green salads, soups and stews. Delivery or take-out.

Pat's Café, 2330 Taylor (off Columbus). (415) 776-8735. Breakfast, lunch, & weekend brunch. Indoor & outdoor dining. 7:30 AM - 2 PM daily. Takeout, call directly or order online. PatsCafeSF.com

Waystone, North Beach's newest wine bar serving up a seasonal menu, thoughtfully made wines, neighborhood vibes, and weekly wine education with friendly Somms. Dogs welcome! 1609 Powell. waystonesf.com

The San Francisco Herald is ©2023 by Gene Mahoney (except work not done by Mr. Mahoney). Herald logo by James Dylan. Global headquarters: P.O. Box 843, Redwood City, CA 94064. The characters and events in Good Clean Fun comics are pure fiction, so get off my case. See ya!

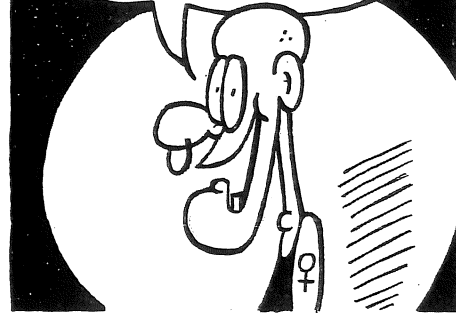
GOOD CLEAN FUN
WRITTEN, DRAWN, & ©2023
BY GENE MAHONEY

"IDENTITY CRISIS THEFT"

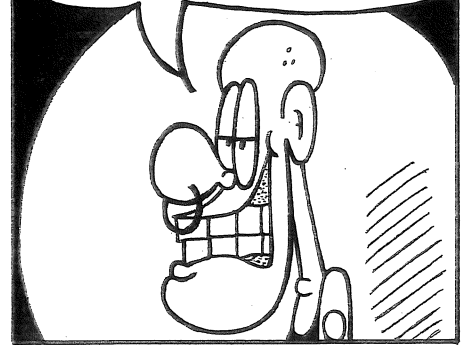
I'M REALLY EXCITED THAT I'M ABOUT TO BECOME FABULOUSLY WEALTHY BY DOING ABSOLUTELY NOTHING. WELL, THAT'S NOT ENTIRELY TRUE. I'M IDENTIFYING AS BLACK SO I CAN CASH IN ON THOSE SLAVERY REPARATIONS THAT CALIFORNIA WILL SOON DOLE OUT.



HELLO, DARLINGS!
WELCOME TO MY
YOUTUBE SHOW.
IT'S TIME FOR
AN UPDATE
ON MY LIFE.
AS YOU KNOW, I
NEED NO INTRODUCTION.



I AM CHANTEUSE...
HOST OF "O' GAY CAN YOU SEE:
HOMOPHOBIA IN AMERIKA" ON
KPFA RADIO IN BERKELEY AS
WELL AS FORMER BATH-HOUSE
EDITOR FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO
BAY GUARDIAN DEFUNCT NEWSPAPER.

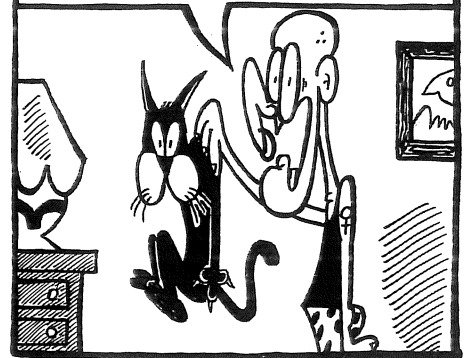


THEY'RE GOING TO CLAIM THAT EVEN
THOUGH I IDENTIFY AS BLACK,
I'M NOT QUALIFIED FOR REPARATIONS
BECAUSE I'M NOT DESCENDED
FROM A SLAVE.

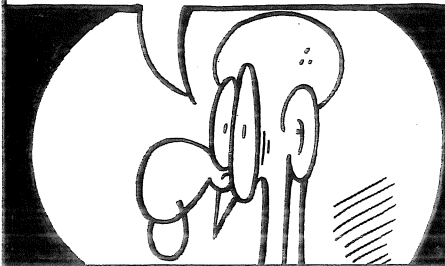
I'LL GET THEM, THOUGH, BECAUSE I
IDENTIFY AS SOMEONE WHO'S
DESCENDED FROM A SLAVE.



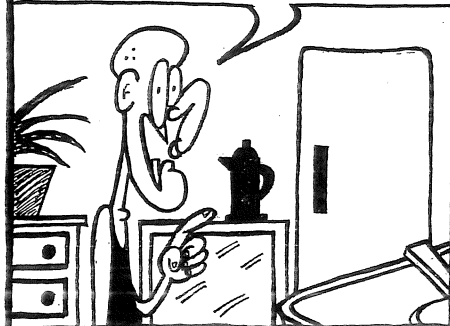
THIS IS MY PET... A BLACK CAT
TRAPPED IN A WORLD OF
TABBY CAT PRIVILEGE.
HIS NAME IS KUNTA KINTE.
HE (OR SHE) HARDLY PURRS, SO
BESIDES RACIAL TRAUMA, I KNOW
WHAT THIS FELINE'S DEAL IS...



THAT HE (OR SHE) IS A CAT
WHO IDENTIFIES AS A DOG.
MORE SPECIFICALLY, A BLACK CAT WHO
IDENTIFIES AS A POODLE WHO
IDENTIFIES AS A COLLIE WHO
IDENTIFIES AS AN IRISH SETTER
WHO IDENTIFIES AS A PIT BULL.
DON'T ASK ME ABOUT THE
GENDER IDENTITIES
(I'LL GET DIZZY).



MY GARBAGE DISPOSAL
DOESN'T WORK, BUT I KNOW
WHAT THE PROBLEM IS...
IT IDENTIFIES AS A
DISHWASHER.
SO I'M TAKING IT IN FOR
APPLIANCE REASSIGNMENT SURGERY
AND COUNSELING SO IT—



THIS CARTOON
MAY HAVE
SUCKED...
BUT IT
IDENTIFIES
AS A
GREAT WORK
OF ART.

