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BRUTAL REALITY DIGEST

Volume 11 - January 2021

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Including
Time Survivor

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A Firelight Inside

but Jesse LeBourdais threw caution to the wind and made it happen. And no, I am not talking about blog writing or poetry, LeBourdais has rolled up his sleeves and published his first fantasy novel. And his punk DIY training has served him well, for better or for worse, as he's declared it the first of an upcoming trilogy!

And what better time to create a fantasy world then in the midst of a global pandemic? With his cross-country tour kiboshed, it only made sense for him to dust off his typewriter and begin smashing out words. "Fiction's nice because it provides an escape. I think that's why I started writing a fantasy novel because our world just sucked so bad. It's nice to just create a world where we don't have to follow the same rules of our world and it can be pure escapism." LeBourdais comments as he reflects on *Firelight*: the first chapter of his upcoming trilogy of books. But what is it about?

"It's a fantasy tale that's set in this world that is recovering from a couple centuries of the worst ruling possible. They've destroyed the land and destroyed the place and then this person called The Dead King shows up with this massive armada and reclaims the

entire world that we know." Of course, that is just the spoiler-free elevator pitch but LeBourdais goes on to describe it as "a group of soldiers escorting a large refugee caravan through this long forest to repopulate some of the abandoned villages tucked in the forest." A small story set in a huge world.

His DIY ethics have definitely come in handy, as his eagerness to get his book out in a timely fashion has led him to self-publish under the Falter Press banner. Having a publisher name to release it under has proven to be useful as LeBourdais realized quickly that reviewers, retailers, et al don't seem to respect self-published books. It's an unfortunate truth he learned in his music career. "It looks better than having nothing!" he comments. "It seems to go a little further and people take it more seriously." Ultimately, he pulled it off and *Firelight* is now out there and ready to be discovered. Grab yourself a copy as we could all use a break from reality these days.

-JH

Listen to the full interview on brutalrealitydigest.com and order a copy of the book at jesselebourdais.com!

There's a natural progression that exists in the aging punk rocker community. You may start off as an angry teen smashing loud and violent power chords in your dad's garage but it is only a matter of time before you begin to hear the seductive call of the acoustic. And then before you know it, you're wearing flannel and crooning at your local coffee shop. Suddenly, your mom is plenty more keen to show your music to her friends and your CD may become more than just a drink coaster for anyone over the age of 40.

This is a completely acceptable transition and many punks successfully bounce back and forth between the styles as opportunities present themselves. However, not many people are aware of a further step in the punk rock evolutionary chain. It takes a lot of gumption and a plethora of balls to take the final plunge into punk rock prose



By the time you read this, I've probably recovered. Hopefully, you too. I shouldn't assume what you did to celebrate New Year's Eve, I'm just taking even money that a lot of you wanted a night to cut loose. If you didn't, if your New Year's was the quietest it's ever been...good! Mine was no riot. I was lucky enough to share it with a new friend, but I've had plenty without, too.

Now that it's January, I'm sure that newspapers, magazines, blogs and everyone else with a keyboard or a crayon have this irresistible urge to write about the last twelve months and how nice it is that we can hang new calendars. Not me. I don't have much to say about last year. Meeting Sophia was pretty cool, though.

I remember when I was fourteen years old, some friends and I did New Year's out in the country in a rancher's doublewide. We must have been young, because I don't remember us having much booze. We had something better: we had snowmobiles, and we took those Arctic Cats howling across the hills all day. One of the motors blew. Another quit and wouldn't start again. With night falling, we abandoned them and headed indoors. At midnight, we stripped down and dove through the drooping branches of snow-covered trees into the piles of powder below. We screamed and laughed, but the cold was so shocking that I thought I was going to puke. It was fun at the time. If I'd known how seriously people take nudity when you're an adult, I would've done it more often back then.

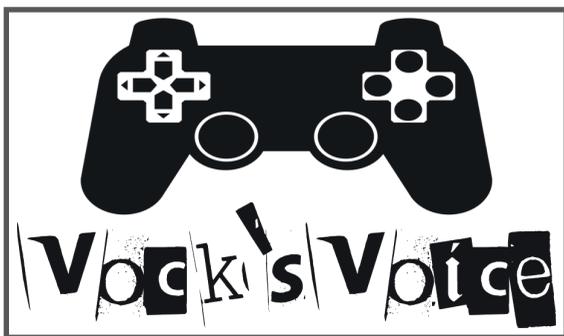
Another year, we drove the sleds up onto a hill where we could look down on our town. People were setting off fireworks. We watched them exploding far below. We lit flares for the countdown. The night was ours: we had machines, we had fire, we had

monsters. My friend screamed when a black shape charged out of the shadows towards us. He thought it was a cougar attack. It turned out to be a deranged stray dog. This thing would stand on its hind legs in the narrow beam of the snowmobile's headlight, and bark skyward. It partied with us for a few hours, then it vanished. We never saw it again.

On yet another New Year's, I got in a fist-fight with a lifelong friend. You'd almost think I've been degenerating since puberty. You could be right. Thankfully for both of us, I didn't know how to hit back then.

If you have good memories from this most recent New Year's Eve, I'm glad. If you don't (like maybe you went to bed early or did something embarrassing), hell, I'm still happy for you. Why? It's better than a midnight mauling by a wildcat.

Spending this last New Year's Eve with Sophia was great, but honestly, it's all about what you're doing next weekend.



PAIN

I've spoken before about how much I enjoy Kingdom Hearts, and one of the main reasons why I love this crazy cacophony of chaos so freakin' much is the insane boss fights you get to experience in these stupid games. This was pushed to the logical extreme in KH3's amazing DLC package, Re:MIND.

In Kingdom Hearts 1, Sephiroth descended unto the battlefield to ruin your day. Kingdom Hearts 2 brought us Lingering Will to destroy your will. Birth By sleep dropped The Unknown from unknown origins to crush your spirit. Base game KH3 was disappointing in this regard for the hardcore KH fans, but Papa Nomura was plotting something all along. One year on from the release of 3, he set loose Yozora. This edgy prick gave me a solid month of unending pain (more than the usual existential pain I mean) and removed years off my life.

After going through 13 great fights that can be dick-desecratingly-difficult, the player is rewarded with this monstrosity. With insanely powerful attacks, he can actually dunk you in a second. In a second flat your health is reduced to minimal amounts, so you pop an elixir. That's when he swoops in like a fleet-footed fox and steals your items so he can heal because his stupid big health bar was not enough. So, you die like twenty times and learn his attack patterns to start the counterattack. That's when this dick steals the damn Keyblade you spent hours grinding for, so you have to run around dodge rolling like a hyperactive Sonic the Hedgehog. But at least you have one saving grace, one Hail Mary, one last stand, the Kupo Coin. This one-time-use item will instantly revive you at all full health when (not if, WHEN) he nukes you to hell. GUESS WHAT YOZORA CAN DO TO THE KUPU COIN!? It's his now, so if you take him down . . . LOL, do it again kid! All the while, he taunts you. Every. Single. Time.

Every time this anime asshat ends you, you have to listen to his VA Dylan Sprouse arrogantly say, "You thought you'd win?" The only correct response is to scream back "NO!" as you fight through sweat and literal tears as your soul rapidly degrades. SCREW YOU ZACK MARTIN YOU JERK. All you can do is bend over and hope this Arrogant Anime Adonis decides to be gentle, only

he never will. So, you reload, watch the Shibuya cityscape skyscraper battlefield materialize in front of you (it's actually a really cool visual) before any sense of happiness you managed to obtain in this depressing year dematerializes. You continually retry, knowing that for every one attempt you go in with the confidence that this time you'll do it, there will be at least ten times you feel the hope get sapped from your body. If you film yourself playing, you can actually see the moment your heart rips in half each time.

But then, you somehow do it. You boot up the fight, kind of lose yourself and enter a weird trance that you have nothing on your mind but ending this edgy epidemic engulfed in encroaching emergencies, and you win. This kind of insane garbage, this kind of suffering, this kind of euphoric sense of masochistic mental maiming, this is why I love Kingdom Hearts so much.



This brooding bastard looks like a bitch, but he is about to make you his.



Ahoy brutes and broons, homeboys, dudes and bros.

After last night (December 21st)'s big ol' dump of snow, I'm AMPED. While my last writing may have been a bit more bleak, we're in the spirit now, baby. It's mountain town energy, and I'm taking it for everything it's worth after this whack time, and now, hopefully sharing its flippen magic with you. (Feel it, FEEL the magic!) While getting around 70cm of snow in the past 48 hours with temperatures hovering above -10 degrees means avalanche

hazard is in a all red zone (and thus, no send zone), this is by far the best thing you could have winter wise. Lots of snow, and it's not -45 degrees.

I was definitely a bit spoiled living in a city during those crazy big dumps of snow in previous years seeing as plows would start the second the snow would and the streets would be magically clear, this morning was magically greeted by hopping out of the van in sweats and street shoes into knee deep snow, seeing as most of our readers are from central Alberta though, you get it. At this point, especially since 'normal' has taken a massive seat in the back, may as well embrace the typical annoyances and inconveniences as a good thing, something different and exciting! Knee deep trek to work? Amazing, thanks for spicing up my life today with something new.

So, here's to a Vanmas, with after-work pizza, eggnog and rum, and a whole lot of Home Alone (but only the first two). Cheers to a calm and quiet holiday season, catch you in the New Year with different varieties of the same nonsense.





TIME SURVIVOR

With
Marty
Foster

Recently, BRD interviewed Marty Foster, co-creator and star of *Time Survivor*, to find out what it's like making his show, and about his plans for the future. The interview did not go the way we expected.

Marty Foster is the biggest celebrity you've never heard of. For the past two years, Marty and his team filmed an entire season of *Time Survivor*. Using HERBERT, a one-of-a-kind time machine, Marty made multiple solo trips to the past, camped out, filmed it all, and lived to make it back! How did he do it? We're here to find out!

We ask Marty how he first learned to survive alone in the wilderness. "I worked at a summer camp for a while," he explains. "Also, I watched *The Edge* when I was thirteen." He says that these experiences laid the foundation for his life as an outdoorsman. He never expected to use his survival skills on television, but one day, as he looked at a family photo album, he realized something: "I look great on camera! I knew at that very moment that I needed to pursue a career in television."

How did Marty wind up with HERBERT, his time machine? Out of respect for its anonymous inventor, Marty won't say much. "It's a very interesting story," he explains, "And that's all I can say right now." As of now, it is the only machine of its kind in the world. Marty is being coy for the moment because, as he says, he plans to explore HERBERT's story in Season Two of *Time Survivor* (if there is a second season).

As of December 2020, Marty has travelled back in time on seven occasions to film episodes. What exactly is the process of filming a survival show in the past? "We do some testing to find a decent place to go back to," Marty explains, "And once we find a good location, I go there and I live off the land with nothing but my wits and a Leatherman, for fourteen days. I have to set up several cameras to record myself as I build my camp, find food and water, and deal with the challenges of a completely new environment." We ask if he takes modern clothing back with him. "Definitely," he confirms. "One time, I tried ten days in a loincloth, but the past has a lot of bugs."

Marty uses his knowledge of bushcraft and knots to stay alive in the mysterious landscapes he explores. Clean water and warmth are his main problems, followed by wildlife (in episode two, Marty encountered giant sloths.) If he encounters unfriendly humans, his judo training (white belt) and his dulcet singing voice (baritone) are his primary

means of defusing the situation. "I don't time travel to get into a ruckus. For me, it's all about capturing my struggle against the elements, and the amazing sights and situations I encounter!" Highlights of Marty's time-travelling journeys include stealing a Viking longship, performing magic for cave-dwellers, and domesticating cats. We asked him if he's ever used his 21st-century knowledge to profit from time travel. "Nah," he replies.

With such fantastic material, how come you've never heard of Marty and *Time Survivor*? That's where it gets complicated. "We do have ten episodes edited, completed, all ready to go," Marty explains, "But we haven't been able to sell our season to any major networks. We have not received a single reasonable offer in the past six months. The big networks don't seem interested in time travel! We approached TLC, but they turned us down. They said, 'We're not really about "learning" anymore. We're basically just "The Channel" now.' Discovery Channel asked us, 'Does Marty drink his own piss? No? Then, no thanks.' Comcast told us, 'Time travel is problematic.' Marty is determined not to sell out to any corporate goons. We ask him about the rumours of embezzlement at his production company, and whether it's influenced his struggles. "No comment," Marty says.

We ask Marty: why not use HERBERT to do some fundraising? We suggested that Marty become the world's first time-tourism entrepreneur. "Uh, here's the thing," Marty says. "Shari, my producer, she's learning how to be a survivalist too. She has huge ambitions for next season and she wants to play a bigger part. So she's been doing missions of her own since the summer. Three weeks ago, she went back for her final training session. She promised me she would take it easy, and I believed her, but she hasn't come back. She's missing in the past. I don't know what's happened to her. I don't have any way to reach her."

BRD asks Marty how we can help. "Help me find a buyer for season one," he pleads. "With enough money, I will finance another time machine and go back to find Shari. For all I know, she's touring with the Beatles - that's something she would do - but there's only one way to find out. I have to help her." Marty, we will do whatever we can.

Awful Movie Reviews

Words by Pert

C.A.T. Squad

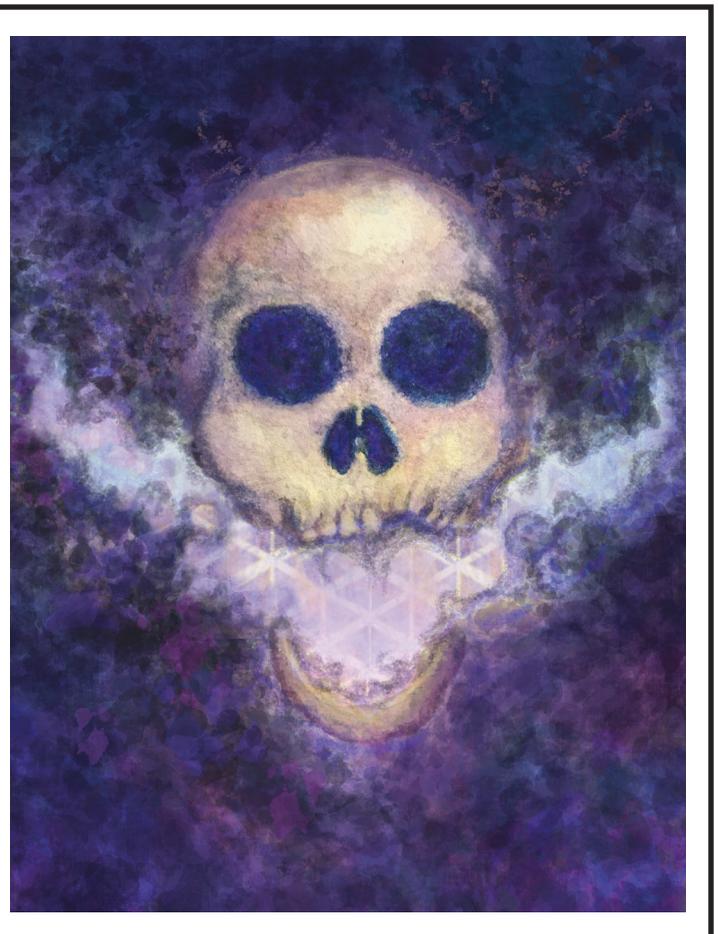
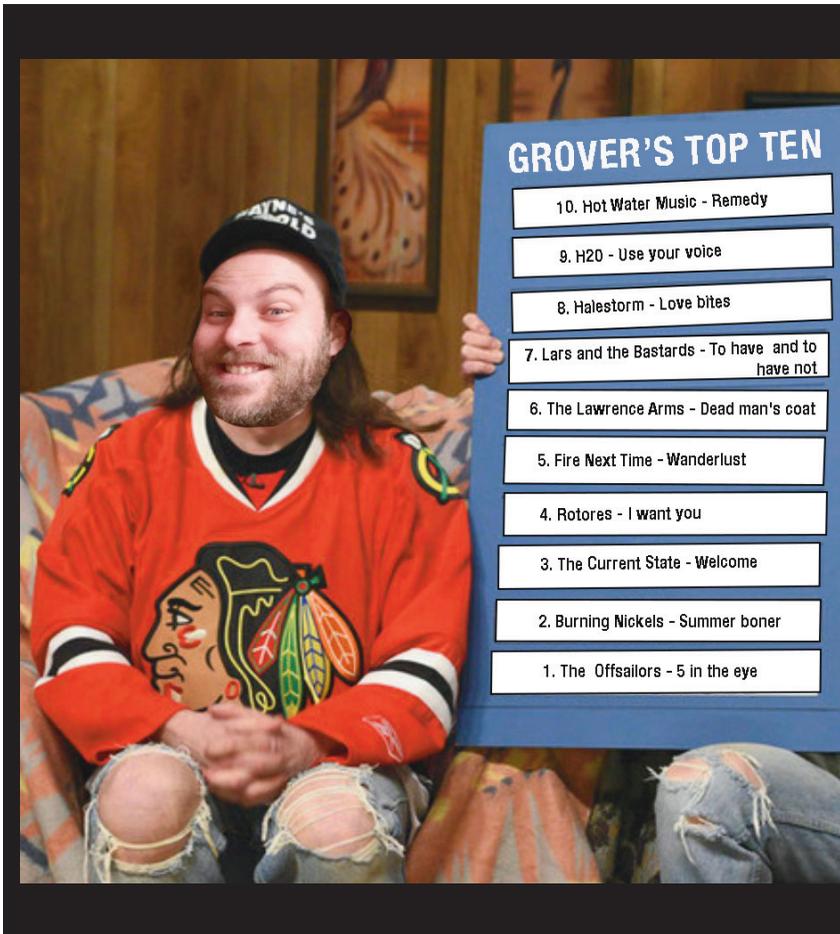
Kittens, are we at that time already? Through all the hustle and bustle of Christmas shopping at the last minute, mostly boozed and filling my online cart with stuff for myself, hey I deserve this, and making excuses to avoid seeing the family... it seems this month has flown by. We have done it though, friends. We survived the holidays with a bit of dignity intact so let's get rid of it and really dig through these VHS' and find ourselves an action packed hidden gem. This looks good: a film about a rough around the edges, but tough as nails cop, that saves a group of people from an evil genius foreign terrorist. No, you dullard, this isn't the holiday classic Die Hard. Pour yourself a coffee and Baileys. I suggest extra Baileys. Grab your leftover turkey sandwich and sit your holidays-are-done ass down in that comfy recliner because we are watching the made for TV movie C.A.T Squad.

With a top notch director and an award winning cinematographer, my expectations were high for this telefilm. What a fool I was. Within the 10 minute mark, my hopes were crushed. I am not positive, and we will have to check the books, but probably an all-time hope crushing land speed record was set. When will I learn? William Friedkin, the director of The Exorcist and The French Connection, why? Why did he sign on to direct this pile of steaming trash? When and who killed your passion, William? I have a feeling the words "Should we get another take, Mr. Friedman?" and the response "Nah f**k it." were said an awful lot during the making of this tele-movie.

I know I have written before about actors delivering unemotional and soulless performances but this trounces all others before it. You could swap any character for a wooden mannequin and ADR the lines in post and no one would have noticed. Actually, I think it would have made it more interesting. How will they pose the mannequin for this scene? What will the mannequin wear? Will it be the same

mannequin from the last scene? Where can a regular Joe such as I get a mannequin? How much is the cost of a used mannequin? Why does the word mannequin feel so weird coming out of my mouth after saying it so many times....mannequin.....mannequin... mannequin...sexy mannequin... oops.

Wait, are the credits rolling? That's the end? What the....what happened? This movie is so boring that I think my brain went into a coma-like state to protect itself. I literally don't even remember the lead character's name. Watching this has made me appreciate the movies I have reviewed before this. Perhaps I was a little too harsh on them. The problem is I literally own the physical copy of this movie. That means I saw this movie on a shelf somewhere and thought "This looks like something I should watch and I should pay actual real money for this that I worked very hard for." I need to reevaluate not only my life, but my own survival instincts. Oh and the biggest crime? I sat through the whole 1 hour 37 minutes and not one cat in this dang film, let alone a whole squad of cats. What a crushing disappointment. 1 star.





Let me tell you of a wonderful, almost magical place from my 20s. A place where dreams come true and money is no object.... The Buckle or maybe it was the Silver Buckle. Either way it seems like a myth now. This bar is probably the reason many people in Red Deer developed a dependency on alcohol. The reason I say this is the fact that for 4 days every week you could drink 50 cent draft from open til close, Wednesday til Saturday, and if you do the math that means 40 plastic cups of draft for 20\$ which should be more than enough to get you lubed up and ready to s**t talk a bouncer! This may have happened on a weekly basis coupled with a lumpy head and a cold walk into the night in pursuit of a taxi.

The set up was pretty perfect. Just 2 long rows of booth seats with a path between them for the poor servers to

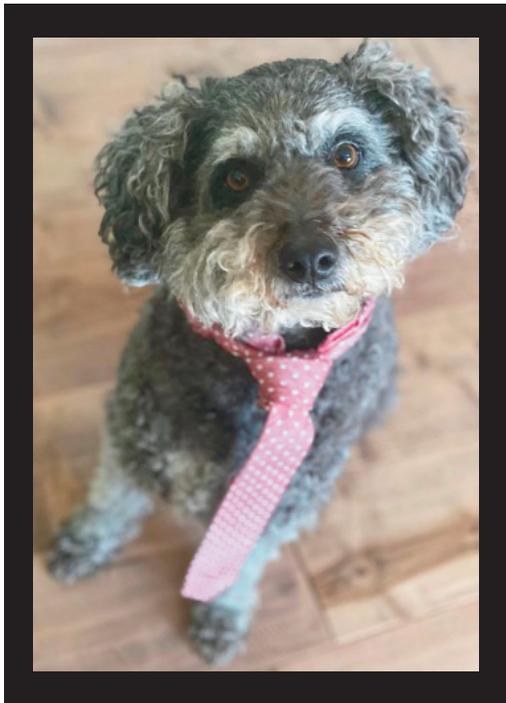
carry over burdened trays of draft to the surly patrons and a very large dance floor/stage area. Beer fights would happen occasionally with half full cups of draft being thrown back and forth between booths and sometimes a brawl would break out and the well fed bouncers dressed in cowboy boots and hats would have to intervene. (Those poor guys couldn't have been paid enough.) My friends and I had few run ins with these bouncers and it would usually end in a large frantic melee in the entrance as one by one we would be tossed out, hurling insults and statements of unjust treatment (I guess sliding chest first across a table full of beer like it was a slip and slide was considered grounds for dismissal.) The bouncers were actually pretty good guys because after we'd slept off our drunks and were ready for another round of guzzling the draft, they would usually let us back in sometimes with a warning or sometimes just a head nod and a smile.

SNFU played there one night and to say it was an absolute barnburner is an understatement. Picture 200 people liquored up on heroin beer and then add a dash of killer punk rock to the mix. The place erupted into a pit of epic proportions (for Red Deer.) There was a bit of a mix bag of people involved: cowboys throwing punches convinced they were in a fight for their lives, some poor girls who confused the swarm with a chance to show off their two step prowess only to be devoured and trampled upon and the punks who were actually there to see the band. Chi pig, in traditional Chi pig fashion, proceeded to put a garbage bag on and ask everyone

to spit on him and the crowd did not let him down. Loogies of all shape and texture enveloped him.

He continued singing, never missing a note. Stage diving began, a first for a few people I think. The moment someone jumped off the stage, most of the people would move out of the way and let the dancefloor catch what would've been a beautifully executed swan dive... Pretty sure there were paramedics involved at one point. The bass player had begun stealing people's shoes while they were crowd surfing and had built up a pile big enough to fill a garbage bag, my shoe being one of them and I think they stole my hat too, and ripped my shirt in half...? I can't be certain.

Anyways, the show ended and most of the people got their shoes back, but not me. I had one shoe and never got the other one back (damn you SNFU!) Finding a taxi would prove difficult, as apparently smelling like a booze soaked hobo covered in sweat with one shoe, an exposed nipple and hair that looked like it was combed with a balloon is not a desired fair in the taxi world. Luckily, a bunch of girls who were catching a cab conned the driver into letting me get in. They clearly felt sorry for me. I felt sorry for me and that concludes my story. I miss going to shows and just hanging out in crowds with no worries. Hopefully this new year will be better and we can get back some of the things we took for granted. Fingers crossed and HAPPY NEW YEARS!!



PUNK PUP OF THE MONTH

Name: Mr. Noodles

Interests: Beach days, networking at the dog park, a good stick.

Dislikes: Sharing, long bouts of loneliness (cured by COVID-caused work from home arrangements), skateboarders.

Favourite Albums: Joel Plaskett's Three

Words of wisdom: Don't strive to be a good boy, strive to be a great boy. The greatest boy who ever lived.

