



DESTROYED
CINEMA + MUSIC
VOLUME 3



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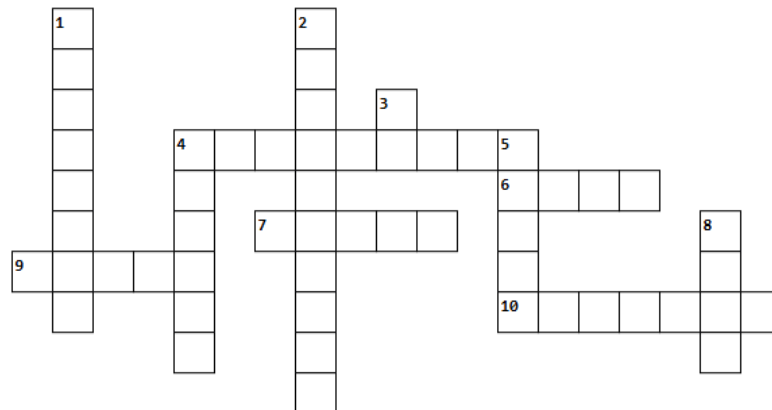
A Global Sampler of Summer Albums
by JP Meldrum

HOME MOVIES — REGIONAL HORROR & THE NO-BUDGET INDIE
by John Ledingham

On Domestic Beers
by JP Meldrum & Cameron Meldrum

Also, *Destroyed* asks if anyone who works at or is friendly with the brewers at Moon Under Water to encourage them to produce more Kernel Kentucky Common Ale for Summer 2026.

published in august 2025 for our Cinema + Music event for Search for Gold by John Ledingham, with bands Trackmeet, This Machine, The Thunes, and Teenage Art Scene playing



Across

- 4. Local Cinema + Music Events
- 6. The First of long-running Bravo Franchise
- 7. "Southland Tales" director
- 9. Not a meal but a...
- 10. Voice of Garnett in "Steven Universe"

Down

- 1. Subject of recent experimental documentary
- 2. Mechanical Combat
- 3. Local drumming virtuoso
- 4. Pickled vegetable served with Fried Chicken
- 5. Craft beer spot w/many hits
- 8. digital ____

answers on second last page

A Global Sampler of Summer Albums

by JP Meldrum

Part of growing up is making snap decisions about what you like and don't like and letting those become markers of who you are. This is the 'taste' that a young culturally engaged person defines themselves by. "I love horror movies; I hate Star Wars" - a yes-no personality quiz that makes you you. Perhaps the most cynical, snide, and platitudinous of these binaries are "I like everything, except rap and country"; the implication being you don't care for working-class music.

During the early days of the pandemic, I set out to finally check all the boxes on *Pitchfork's* decade lists. I discovered I was missing reggae records and 'world music' selections, which dominate a sizable position of their 70s and 80s lists; the latter of which had been updated in the late 10s alongside the 90s list to be more global and diverse. I had decided a decade ago - in my peak *Pitchfork* years - that part of my personality was disliking reggae - it was too repetitive, easy to parody, and only listened to by white guys with dreads and fourteen-year-olds trying weed for the first time. Largely, this was because my only exposure was a CD copy of *Legend*, a Bob Marley & The Wailer compilation, my mom played occasionally in the car. "I Shot the Sheriff" was akin to Raffi tune with its breezy storytelling and pseudo-punchline of a hook, and "No Women,

No Cry" was a prom night song for people two generations removed from me. I had heard whispers of 'dub', but never dug into it beyond 'dub techno'. In the fog of the pandemic, I became enraptured by the reggae records on the *Pitchfork* lists - The Congos, Ini Kamoze, Tenor Saw, Scientist, and of course Bob Marley and The Wailers were in endless rotation. I stumbled into these massive online communities of dub/reggae heads that sent me down myriad rabbit holes of record labels, studios, and session musicians. I would daydrink in my backyard, take edibles, and crush three-to-five reggae records a day; according to my records, I listened to roughly 200 dub/reggae albums during the summer of 2020 - and my family didn't mind at all - it was the perfect ambiance to this weird, isolated summer.

At the same time, my brother was becoming an obsessive Fela Kuti fan - a name I only knew trivially - his effect on McCartney's Lagos-recorded "Band on the Run" and stories of his innumerable polygamist marriages. Alongside this new-found appreciation for Caribbean music, came a hunger for the sounds of the world - and Kuti, as I'm sure many fellow white music obsessives, is a gateway into some of the most addictive, high-energy, politically engaging music put to record out of Africa. In throes of discovering Afrobeat, Juju, Highlife, and African music en-masse, I realized that my Western magazine decade list completionism didn't mean I had 'beaten' music; it just meant I

had ‘beaten’ the middle-brow,
white-anglo-Saxon elitist’s Western music
canon.

At this time I started hosting the experimental
music show *Outside the Box* on CFUV (now
called *Problem Child*). I bent the term
experimental as far as I could to colloquially
include anything outside the western paradigm:
gamelan orchestras, Gagaku, Hindustani
classical, even the then-brewing South African
Amapiano scene. Presenting this music that not
mine, I tried to find others Westerners who
tackled championing non-Western with grace. I
read in *Ocean of Sound* by David Toop that
connects Erik Satie’s exposure to Javanese
music at the 1889 Paris World Exhibition with
his increasing interest in ‘textural music’, and
ran with this as a form of ‘cultural appreciation’
rather than ‘appropriation’. Or, maybe, David
Byrne, who simply stated “Don’t sing like a
Black man” when approaching Talking Heads’
deeply African inspired music¹. While I’m
certainly no expert, nor am I of a racialized
background nor well-travelled nor a ‘music
ethnologist’, my appreciation for the music of
our big, big world taught me a simple lesson:
you never know *everything* about something,
and, in fact, that ‘thing you don’t like’ that you
heartily believe makes you more likely a
lack of understanding, the byproduct of some

youthful contrarianism, or some arrogant
prejudice of yours that needs to be challenged
asap.

My final note: the buck shouldn’t stop at those
global YouTube sidebar oddities you hear ad
nauseam in cafés; I’m referring to those
Ethiopique compilations, a lot of the City Pop
stuff, and E’tain D’Air. I find this hispterian
cherry-picking of regional music rather
distasteful, bordering into the Saidian ‘othering’,
despite being a great place to begin digging a
little deeper.

These selections are strictly summer albums -
stuff you can cook to, party to, drink to, dance
to, throw on in a social setting, mix into a
playlist, and so on. This is joyous music that
doesn’t require navel-gazing academic angles to
comprehend. Like that fourteen-year-old trying
weed for the first time, I’ll quote “Trenchtown
Rock” by Bob Marley & The Wailers: “I say one
good thing about music. When it hits you (You
feel no pain)”.

So, without further ado, here are some
summer-as-hell records from non-Western
countries; a contentious term akin to
‘experimental’ that I choose to define as
non-anglo and non-euro centric places.

¹ Vaguely recollected from *How Music Works*.
Although the context was about the stuff he saw as
unfavourable in his early CBGB days, I take it as a
rule he successfully applied to *Remain in Light*

**Msawawa - *The Hurricane* [South Africa;
2001]**

On the surface, *The Hurricane* is a novelty record. Msawawa was only eleven years old when this record dropped - the youngest star in Kwaito music history. His vocals are prepubescent and high-pitched, sounding nearly as if they were pitched up in hyperpopian fashion. But like the best Kwaito music, the young Msawawa effortlessly provides a counterpoint to old-school hip-hop, one that takes the schoolyard flows of yesteryears and adds a pool-party house flavour to an otherwise dated style of MCing. The novelty of his boyish vocals only add charm, ingenuity, and novelty (non-pejorative) to these high SPF Kwaito beats.

RIYL: “*I Go (feat. Brutal Youngenz)*” by a twelve year old Kodak Black

The Congos - *Heart of the Congos* [Jamaica; 1977]

Heart of the Congos weaponized its fidelity; Lee Perry carefully sun-baked, smoked out, and simultaneously gospelized its layered vocals and minimal grooves. The riddim track on this record is so locked in you’d think it was a drum machine, and the dub-y production almost begs you to doubt it.

But what really sells *Heart of the Congo* as one of Lee Perry’s opuses is these vocals - drenched in reverb, masterfully falsetto’d, devotional, and effortlessly behind the groove like a trail of vapor. This is a multitudinous record, with the saccharine summer pop Jimmy Cliff jams like “Children Crying”, cinematic weed-ounces like “Fisherman”, and minimal deep groovers like “Open Up the Gate”.

RIYL: Contemporary ‘lofi’ music like Dirty Beaches, or; Animal Collective, or; Craig Leon

Makhelwane - Nkosazana Daughter & Master KG [South Africa; 2024]

It was mandatory to include an Amapiano record to this list; it would be too easy and counterintuitive to pick the genres mega-breakout star Tyla’s eponymous debut (which is one of the greater pop records of the decade); it would be intellectually lazy to include NTS’s fabulous sampler *Amapiano Now*. However, this is not *really* an album genre - it’s single oriented and some of its best songs are credited to seven people with no clear ‘primary artist’. In this case, its Wantiwa Mos, which this album and many of Nkosazana Daughter and other artists’ music are listed under on streaming, is actually the label run by

Master KG. The star of this record, and its preceding collaborations (notably the life-altering euphoric “Sofa Silahlane”), is the airy-angel vocal from Nkosazana. Amapiano is DJ music, meant for dancing, and some of it more intense (‘Gqom-Piano’) or jazzy (Mr JazziQ & JazziDisciples), or influenced by contemporary RnB (Asake & Davido) but the minimal, optimistic, major-key production from KG meets Nkosazana’s quiet-storm melodies with fierce symbiosis. If it was the 80s, “In Your Eyes” era Peter Gabriel would’ve had Nkosazana on speed-dial, and KG would’ve been playing keys on *Graceland*.

for more on Amapiano, check out Ravessa Fezzullai’s CFUV show “Piano Piano” every Tuesday from 3-4 pm

Obaa Sima - Ata Kak [Ghana/Canada; 1994]

Ata Kak is another record that could be reduced to novelty or outsider art; it is without a doubt so bombastic, idiosyncratic, and bedroom-y that Iwrin Chusid² would’ve written about it back in the day should it have come across his desk. Kak intentionally sped-up this entire record, roughly 25 years before Nightcore was a thing. Its a party starter

and a litmas test for the party-guests; if they laugh at it, they’re out; if they laugh with it, they can hang.

RIYL: Hyperpop, Soundcloud autoplay, and BJ Snowden

Halloween - TKZEE [South African; 1998]

Some years ago, a friend of mine told me they were really into ‘kwaito’ music, and I asked if they could recommend any artists - they didn’t have an answer in a cloying, gatekeep-y way, so I just Googled ‘kwaito artists’ and the first result was and is TKZEE. “Bona Senzani” stood-out; the lyric “Guz love deluxe” over a township popified take on happy-go-lucky NYC style rap. The music of *Halloween* has the affect of a Dreamcast era Sonic game. While TKZEE’s breed of Kwaito is firmly rooted in 90s rap, its four-on-flour backbeat and digiutopia synth pads reform it as a slowed down, MC’d disco for a Johannesburg 90s.

RIYL Pumpkin Hill, Custom Robo, and The Pharcyde

² Author of *Songs in the Key of Z* and champion/pioneer of the Outsider Music genre

***Aventure* - Taeko Onuki [Japan; 1981]**

I ragged on City Pop hipsters earlier, and Onuki is certainly one of there favorites - 4 AM was a Tik Tok hit, and her album's *Summer Connection* and *Copine* are firmly in the YouTube algorithm. *Aventure* is Somali's choice Onuki record. *Aventure* has the optimistic, easy-listening, disco-clad summer feel of its City Pop counterparts, but its flourished with avant-garde synth FX, rapid tempo changes, complex jazz harmonies, and the "Techno kayō" style that brings to mind New Order, new wave, and loungey space-age pop of Juan García Esquivel.

RIYL Gran Turismo and/or Kate Bush

Epistolares+ - Akrilla [Chile; 2024]

Akrilla, alongside superstar Rosalia's *Motomami*, are emblematic of the "Neoperreo" sound - which I'd characterize as the experimental, dark, hypermodern, but still raucous and danceable side of reggaeton. *Epistolares* takes it a step further than *Motomami* - an experimental record in its own right - by taking cues from Liquid Drum n Bass and Digital Hardcore.

RIYL... I'm a neophyte of reggaeton and neoperro alike. Simply, I really enjoyed this record and have yet to find other neoperro that resonated quite the same.

***The History of Slack Key Guitar* - Various Artists [Hawaii; 1946-1950]**

A compilation best for the nightfall after a day in the sun. This record is a rarely comprehensive history of the Hawaiian slack-key guitar style - a laid back fingerstyle genre that plays with major sounding alternative tunings to create an inviting folk sound that sounds something like a more cordial John Fahey. This record legitimately charts the very first recording of the genre, most notable for a very young Philip "Gabby" Pahinui appearing. Friendly indigenous music at its recorded outset without the music ethnologist baggage.

RIYL "Sleep Walk" by Santo & Johnny, American Primitivism, and quiet BBQs

Khazana Vol. 5 - Abida Parveen [Pakistan; 1994]

The GQ hipsters, as my cohort Nick Workman calls them, have hardly championed music from South Asian countries; even Ravi Shankar is now trivially reduced to George Harrison's sitar buddy. However, Abida Parveen's new age tinged record *Raqs-e-Bismil* has

made something of a renaissance in recent years, likely as a result of Coca Studio's high-budget Pakistani music project making waves on YouTube. *Raqs-e Bismil* is a powerful, spiritually intoxicating introduction to Sufi music and the qawwali/kafi genre, it is a misleading entry into Parveen's massive discography. *Khazana Vol. 5* is an upbeat record blending playful antiquated synth lines akin to 80s anime OSTs, relentless tabla rhythms, and Parveen's flawless vibrato and unkempt passion. Frankly, I find Parveen's discography - an oeuvre far more cordial than her Sufi peer Nasrat Fateh Ali Khan - to be one of the more addictive body's of work I've stumbled on in recent years; forever a mystery from my Western slant.

RIYL Castle in the Sky, 80s synth music, and Aretha Franklin's vocal majesty.

**Mohammad Reza Mortazavi - Ritme
Jaavdanegi [Iran/Germany; 2019]**

The most experimental selection here, and perhaps a stretch to call it a

'summer record', but I'm one to believe pure percussion pairs well with blistering heat. Mortazavi is an idiosyncratic, virtuoso tombak and daf player; one that reminds of Victoria's own Maxwell Patterson's explosive and singular assault of the drum kit. *Ritme Jaavdangi* sonically achieves Mortazavi's cited goal to "[detach] from the instrument and national-cultural narratives, in pursuit of the idea of a universal music in which something human connects in a profound way". The timbre of his tombak and daf brings to mind Hollywood genericisms of the Middle East, at least from my colonial *Body of Lies* vantage point, but as his masterful polyrhythms lock in, it becomes solely human, like a hundred heartbeats syncopating with one another.

RIYL Ginger Baker solos, Maxwell Patterson, Zakir Hussain, Aphex Twin drum patterns, Indian Classical, or feeling inferior at your instrument of choice

1

When a movie nerd is talking “regional” filmmaking or “regional horror” they could be talking any number of things — Googling “regional movies” gets you Reddit and IMDB threads on Indian and international cinema — but probably they’re talking something specific.

REGIONAL FILMMAKING³ loosely defines a brand of independent, usually low budget, and usually sci-fi or horror genre filmmaking that appeared before the mass democratization of filmmaking with the advent of home video, accessible editing, and online distribution,⁴ and thrived on both the b-movie/drive-in theatrical circuit, and in the golden age of video rentals. Plenty in common with Hollywood’s own decades long tradition of b-movies, double bill stuffers made on a budget and distributed for a flat rate, (as opposed to a percentage of ticket sales) these *regional* movies set themselves apart by being born OUTSIDE of traditional filmmaking towns or cultural hubs like LA, NYC, Vancouver, Toronto, or Berlin— industry cities, flyover towns, *rural* areas, and not necessarily by grads of film

³ a critical term, like “progressive rock”, more a ‘know it when I see it’ than anything you can hard define... but I will go on trying anyway... *prepared for music nerds to tell me exactly what prog rock is...*

⁴ from shooting and editing to distributing and promoting, a *phone* is really all you need to be a filmmaker now, and in the extreme, movies shot on phone like *Tangerine* (2014) and *Sleep Has Her House* (2017) get wide theatrical release— and this overall multiplication of filmmakers and decentralization of production leaves the idea of regional filmmaking basically to history after the 90s

schools pipelined into the studio system but by *industrial filmmakers*, you know, the ones making workplace safety videos, or shooting for the news, and maybe even more by *fans*, before video rental made high-powered nerds like Quentin Tarantino possible out in the boonies — folks who’d maybe grow up on a diet of *West Side Story*-s and *Attack of The Crab Monsters*-s on their bunny ear TVs, and saw the entrepreneurial potential in their surroundings few others did, making *LOCAL* movies with *LOCAL* actors that not only *used* but somehow *represented* their own surrounds.

Movies like *Zaat* (1971), a Florida *Creature of the Black Lagoon* ripoff by an industrial film company known for its unmatted footage, showing the excellent looking fishman monster walking around in white sneakers bottom of frame. Like George Romero’s *Night of The Living Dead* (1968), the work of a then-unknown industrial filmmaker from Detroit, and like *The Alien Dead* (1980), a low budget *Living Dead* ripoff made for \$12,000 by Fred Olen Ray from Wellston Ohio, a cable news camera man (who to this day happily plies his trade in *Hallmark* Christmas movies.) Like Herb Robins’ *The Worm Eaters* (1977), a Sierra Madre, California horror whose entire production value is a cast willing and able to choke down mouthfuls of bait shop nightcrawlers. Like Wisconsin-based Bill Rebane, the Spielberg of regional horror, in movies like *Giant Spider Invasion* that turned \$300,000 into \$15,000,000 profits. Like the countless movies of

self-proclaimed ‘schlockmeister’ Larry Buchanan, including 1968’s *Curse of The Swamp Creature*, an insultingly bad Florida regional horror with a swamp creature in about the last 5 of its 80 minutes... Like the inexplicable anti-war supernatural horror *Blood Beat* (1983), a surreal masterpiece from one time and one-time-only Wisconsin filmmaker Fabrice-Ange Zaphiratos. Like the b&w occult horror *Coven* (1997), from Menomonee Falls Wisconsin, whose production is the subject of 1999’s *American Movie*, a one of a kind chronicle of regional moviemaking and portrait of director Mark Borchardt as *the archetypal figure* of a regional filmmaker— longhaired small town metalhead hassling his grandpa for funds and running a mostly 2-man show with his burnout acid-head best friend Mike Schank — immediately relatable and endearing dudes to anyone who’s ever dreamed of or tried or actually made something like a homegrown *Evil Dead*.

Movies that might traditionally be dismissed or labeled as ‘so bad it’s good’ and only laughed at, but really in their untrained, unpolished, un-normalized ways can contain a whole lot of charm and thrills not only in their homemade handmade effects — which often feel to me like double vision, as both your standard suspense build-up and payoff, and like a peek behind the scenes that almost brings you as a viewer *onto the side of the production* where you can laugh along *with* the creators at the desperate terms of their creation. And at other times regional horror can have that *Texas Chainsaw* effect of looking so goddamn shoddy and muddy, and rough around the edges that the low-production

values actually *add* a sense of menace to what feels like it could *actually be a snuff film* and *the product of deranged killers no different from the characters on screen* — and all the accompanying idiosyncrasies in plot and character, digressions of script that just would not fly in the normalized, Hollywood-style and Hollywood-aspired moviemaking. Take for example the Louisiana shot *Creature from Black Lake* (1976), from father-son producer Jim McCullough Sr. and Jr., a sasquatch horror whose narrative follows two University of Chicago students on a sasquatch expedition, but becomes sort of distracted halfway into the movie and becomes a teen sex comedy for about a quarter of the total runtime as the guys try and hook up with a couple local girls and find themselves comically thrown into jail on account of one being the sheriff’s daughter — this is *once the sasquatch has already been introduced mind you*, not some kind of slow-open to lull us into one setting and then subvert it by way of sasquatch horror. These are two sasquatch hunters getting *bored* of hunting sasquatch and the movie saying *ok, whatever!* and going along with it. A *crazy* move from a screenplay level. Not the normal order of thriller operations. But how damn funny is that? And true to life in a way. When’s the last time you really went from A to B without digression? There’s a room to breathe your Hollywood structure is missing that the hazard of these regional movies can account for. (Critic Robin Wood divides monster movies between ones where the monster is destroyed and normalcy is restored, and ones where normalcy remains in jeopardy because the monster can’t be destroyed and

remains out there lurking — where does this disregard *for monster and normalcy altogether* fit in? — *It doesn't!!*)

By effect of working outside the system (outside even any *counter-system*) these movies were generally produced, written, and directed by the same people, crew would wear different hats, and shoot on location in forests, fields, on swamps, in grandma's basement — and the work would take on the aspect of the backyard art project. This led to an often homemade charm as much to idiosyncratic breaks from expected movie conventions and standards of film form — rough technique, imperfect audio, scripts that do not necessarily follow any Robert McKee-approved 3-act structure or maintain a coherent communication with the audience (an extreme being Massachusetts' *Winterbeast* (1992), a horror (set mostly in what seems to be *fall...*) in production for over a decade and so full of discontinuity characters seem to change *actors* within the span individual scenes...)

Similarly, working outside filmmaking hubs like LA or NYC meant working far from a pool of available or professional actors⁵. This is one of the true marks of regional filmmaking, the use of local and often non-professional actors, sometimes awkward in their performances, other times awkwardly played off of one or two actors of a heightened style, who now themselves seem awkward— at any rate

⁵ Robert Rodriguez' famously \$7000 action-feature *El Mariachi* (1992) was so limited to the acting pool of Ciudad Acuña, as the movie goes on the supporting badguys go from adult men to young teens as all the adults Rodriguez and co-producer Gallardo could find were killed off — one of the obstacles of working outside the system...

nothing like the acting to come out of the standard set by homogenized Hollywood style. Directors' friends, family, coworkers and neighbors would take acting roles, often with a stilted or idiosyncratic delivery, a thick regional accent, and more importantly something like pure *personality* coming through in a way nobody can direct, or coach. Besides, direction is difficult where film stock's expensive and budget is tight, and third or second takes can be a luxury. — If there is a mascot of regional horror even more than the homemade fishman, it might be the backwoods drunk slurring through a set of lines like you don't know where the character begins or ends.

These movies were passion projects, but they were also usually *products*. They were made cheap not only cause that's all the funding that was available, but because they needed with just a handful of sales for theatrical screening (probably on a flat rate b-movie stipend, and only later through straight to video channels) to *turn a profit*. The commerce is key here, to separate regional filmmaking from the avant-gardists (despite its success, it's hard to imagine something like *Pink Flamingos* (1972) could ever be born of a profit motive) who had the free time, or money, or connections to make movies without any need for an audience (outside themselves, academics, or arts-grants), or any mind towards making a profit. Accordingly, this is why you *get* all sorts of regional *horror*, one genre that will always be able to sell, always have its audience.

Don Dohler of Baltimore Maryland, one of *the* big dogs of regional horror got into the game in 1976 with the sci-fi horror

Alien Factor, made for \$3500, (today about \$18,000.) Dohler's movie is a backyard tribute to the creature feature b-movies of the 1950s and 60s, movies already known for their cheesy special effects, but recreated here neither as a joke or just a cynical toss off like the studios could have it, but as an earnest kind of art project, (you get the sense the creative problem solving and practical effects work was always more the point for Dohler than the final product) and an approachable model of *commercial* filmmaking — one creature, a handful of suspense and violence scenes and you've got yourself a saleable product.

There are 4 creatures at the center of *Alien Factor*, 3 costumed and 1 animated: a black metallic flesh and bone humanoid, a hairy sasquatch-like creature operated on stilts, a cockroach like humanoid, and a large dinosaur-alien monster with the ability to go invisible, represented by optical effects and creative acting when invisible and by a superimposed stop motion miniature in its final reveal and battle. They look cheesy, for sure! like the ships (miniatures), lasers (opticals), and everything else in this movie, but they also look *fucking AWESOME* and super impressive for the homemade works they are, mostly put together with no more than you can find at your local hardware or craft store,⁶ and can only be called "bad" if looked at on a measure of realism (and it's a sci-fi movie, come on) or compared to the multi-million dollar standard of Spielberg or

⁶ This aspect of Dohler's filmmaking actually inspired his *Cinemagic* magazine, which taught homemade special effects and inspired the likes of JJ Abrams, who long before directing *Star Trek* (2009) made it out to Baltimore to apprentice under Dohler on the making of *Night Beast* (1982) ...

Cameron studio magic. They sure as hell look better than the cheapo creatures Roger Corman & co. got away with in movies like *Beast from Haunted Cave* (1959) and *Creature from the Haunted Sea* (1961)⁷.

And the great thing for Dohler was this \$3500 risk *paid off*— and not in the way Romero's did, effectively launching him into a career of more or less establishment (if still independent and Detroit-based) filmmaking, but in making Dohler the money to *keep doing what he was doing*, and carrying on a career of *Alien Factor*-like cult classics with the slasher *Fiend* (1980), the alien invasion thrillers *Night Beast* (1982) and *Galaxy Invader* (1985), the genre-bending crime-horror *Blood Massacre* (1987), and a belated sequel *The Alien Factor 2: The Rampage* in 2001, all featuring long-time friend George Stover, who juggled a career in local government with sporadic acting roles in the movies of Don Dohler and John Waters.

Later in his career, Dohler would be forced to adapt to the changing video landscape, and begin work as a producer-collaborator with straight to video director Joe Ripple, whose movies like *Harvesters* (2001) and *Vampire Sisters* (2004) were as much softcore pornos for a niche mail-order audience as they were horror. Dohler died of lung and brain cancer in 2006, during production of a last Dohler/Ripple feature *Blood Hunt* (2006)⁸. This last phase of Dohler's career, pushed into making movies he'd probably rather not

⁷ a monster you might recognize from the opening credits of *Malcolm in the Middle*— *that one!!*

⁸ whose production is documented in the great tribute to Dohler's career, *Blood, Boobs, and Beast* (2007)

have had to, represented the end of a golden age of straight to video production. Independent films having a boom in the 1990s, film schools and filmmakers outside of traditional hubs becoming more and more common, massively increased competition for distributors and the new streaming landscape just around the corner put both the limitations and unique resonances of that certain brand of Dohler regional filmmaking mostly in the past.

But these movies continue to inspire the new generations, and set an example for accessible, DIY, and unconventional local filmmaking. Regional movies are also at the center of “so-bad-its-good” cult movie circles, and movies like the Canadian direct to video masterpiece, *Things* (1989), (a kind of *Evil Dead* ripoff from Scarborough, Ontario shot for \$35,000 and about as bad, as hoser, and unintentionally funny as movies can get) and *Manos The Hands of Fate*, (the El Paso, Texas supernatural horror disaster that’s probably been ranked “the worst film of all time” more than any movie outside Ed Wood’s classic *Plan 9 From Outer Space*⁹ (1957)) are favorites of bad-movie-riffers *RedLetterMedia* and *Mystery Science Theater 3000*.

Recently screened by *Destroyed Cinema* was director Avalon Fast’s 2022 movie *Honeycomb*, a sort of folk-horror shot on Cortes island by Fast and her friends in 2019 for next to no-budget, and representing Cortes as not just a generic backdrop, but a lived in place with its own landmarks, culture, and mythologies ripe for horror-izing, especially resonant to folks

⁹ a \$60,000 USD movie in 1957 mind you, (about \$600,000 today) made in Hollywood with regulars of the studio system— NOT REGIONAL!!

who firsthand know the kind of eerie isolation those gulf islands and all their happy hippie exteriors can sometimes cast. — And if this isn’t a continuation of the regional tradition, what is? (Awesome movie by the way, *go watch it...*)

But it’s Matt Farley, Charles Roxburgh, Tom Scalzo, and MOTERN MEDIA who are the real champions of regional filmmaking today— not only hosts of the *ShockMarathons* podcast and writers of the paperback *ShockMarathons* journal which deal in b-movies & regional horrors of the 1970s and 80s - most of them, like *The Forest* (1982) and *Creature of Black Lake* (1976) pretty obscure outside ShockMarathon’s own personal canon — *they are ALSO* under the banner of MOTERN MEDIA creators of more than a dozen ultra-low budget (from no-budget to “the price of a used car”) totally DIY movies since the early 2000s, many of which are direct parody-homages to regional horror classics. Movies like *Freaky Farley* (2007), a slasher parody inspired by eclectic sources from the obscure and perverse Canadian horror *The Pit* (1981) and the famously bad (“GARBAGE DAY!!”) *Silent Night Deadly Night 2* (1987). And *Don’t Let The Riverbeast Get You!* (2012), a fishman movie in the lineage of everything from *Black Lagoon* (1954) and Bill Rebane’s *Rana: The Legend of Shadow Lake* (1980).

These movies are absolutely made in the regional style of using a recurring cast of Roxburgh and Farley’s immediate family and friends line-reading Roxburg/Farley’s comically overwritten dialogues, (frequently Farley himself in a lead role, his wife Elizabeth Peterson, and brother in law Pete

Peterson, along with Roxburgh and Tom Scalzo, and sister Sharon Scalzo supporting, as well as fan favorite, *Kevin McGee*, Farley's first boss out of college, who has been playing lead and villain roles in Farley's movies for going on two decades now) and integrating shooting locales like Manchester, New Hampshire and Danvers, Massachusetts into the character of the movie, playing versions of themselves as "Manchvegas" & "Thomasville", often with an emphasis on Farley's favorite spots in town.

It's not exactly right to just call them parodies though, as MOTERN is usually less interested in taking jabs at genre tropes like the *Scary Movie* franchise or affecting any "bad on purpose" acting registers, like you'd find in b-movie parodies from *Italian Spiderman* (2008) and *Black Dynamite* (2009) to *Sharknado* (2013) and its endless sequels, but more like using the genre framework and eccentricity of the regional tradition as license to tell *whatever kind of story they want*. It's swerves like *Creature of Black Lake* going sex-comedy for a minute I think Farely and co. appreciate and use in their own movies: this kind of giddy, totally un-self conscious way a movie like that just disregards the normal rules of moviemaking— absolutely not giving a shit about being any kind of played-by-the-rules example of good Hollywood taste, just doing its own thing, kind of humming along at its own pace in its own world ignorant of the demands of any so-called story structure. (And nowhere does MOTERN exercise their right to breaking even their own rules than in *Metal Detector Maniac* (2021), whose sudden left turn of an ending had me

laughing as hard as anything in MOTERN's movies— but I won't give it away here...)

By more recent movies like *Heard She Got Married* (2021) and *Magic Spot* (2022) MOTERN's found a mode of storytelling entirely their own, not exactly genre, but still rooted in this regional style, and looking nothing like you'd ever associate with film school indies — still showcases for friends and family and local surrounds, but stories less referential to other movies than *personally reflective* and exploring things like creativity and the toxic side of ambition, dreams, regrets, the importance of family and community.

All that to say that whole regional tradition¹⁰ and MOTERN's own take on it, made a big part of the inspiration for *Search For Gold*. I wanted to make a no-budget, non-professional, run and gun movie with my friends - and in some ways *about* my friends and the city and the coastline we call home. Not to make any statement about or caricature of Victoria, (though maybe in the end I did) but just to *show it*, and just to use that sense of place and community that's already there and genuinely important to me.

So a big part of that *was* the local music that both made up the soundtrack and the *subject* of a bunch of the movie's scenes. That wasn't really on purpose in a sense, it just came natural. Bowen's a musician, a lot of our friends here are musicians, a lot of my social life from my early 20s onward has revolved around going to shows. The centrality of music just *made sense* in telling a story from my immediate surrounds. And frick, it worked out awesome. Showing JP in the studio at CFUV, and the Thunes boys jamming, and dramatizing that feeling of everyone talking about some show you're going to miss out on. That's just completely real to me, and something funny about putting it up on the big screen, as little a thing as it really is.

¹⁰ the horror side we'd already kind of played with in scenes of me and Cat's *Kokanee Creek Incident*, a documentary with a kind of creature feature sasquatch played by Nolan Langolois in re-enactment scenes. And then again in me and JP's upcoming feature *THE LAND OF FISH AND HONEY* whose bear scenes were inspired on my end by b-horrors like *Grizzly* (1976) & Don Dohler's creature classics.

And then coming in on the soundtrack songs by *Wet Cig*, *Diploids*, *Thunes*, *ex-cowboy*, *Gordon's Head*, *Sofia Miller*, *Really Loud Free Jazz*, *Bowen Stauffer*, *Rob Wood*, *Liam McCarrell*, *Conjure Hand*, and *Daveed Saband* — 2 mainlanders aside, all local, and all bringing their own musical craft and personality to the larger smorgasborg the movie finally is. Couldn't thank them all enough.

Not to mention the *awesome* job Jack and Luc and Vinny did on that opening title theme, "The Slaughters of Starch", a parody version of Antônio Carlos Jobim's "The Waters of March." And that song just felt super right in a way cause Jack had showed it to me at a Thanksgiving party me and Cat had a couple years back, and so it got stuck in my head as related to not just Jack but also the good times and good vibes of getting together with friends.

In a way almost accidentally *Search For Gold* makes a kind of snapshot of a corner of the Victoria music scene circa 2024. Pretty cool if you ask me. And hopefully in another way, this whole movie will eventually start to look like a time-capsule, first of all for everyone in it, and especially cause of how much shooting we did around everyone's neighborhoods, houses, vehicles, (pets) which are all things I think we relate pretty strongly to different 'places' in our lives, and all things subject to change in time. But then also for everything documentary-style shooting inevitably picks up about the time, things that don't even register as "details" now, but will hopefully age into making this look like a kind of period piece of its own time. The whole cultural soup of it.

(Picture some person from a totally different time and place who knows even less about Victoria than they do about the 2020s — to them nothing's incidental, now everything's just *the movie*, and it's all new and strange...)

Working with a lot of these same musicians shooting music videos and live shows also did a lot to teach me a kind of 'make it up as you go' approach to shooting and collaborating that I used in making this movie. Like especially in some real collaborative ones with the boys in *Diploids* and *Thunes*: "Heavy Water," "Supersaunasubmarine", *the upcoming "Sunny G"!!*— There's not usually much of a director on those shoots— there's usually someone's vision as a starting point, there might be a few definite notes to hit, but usually not figured out just how until the day, and then there's a lot of us coming with ideas that all bounce off one other and evolve as we go along without much time to go over what it is we're doing— it's awesome, working like that, just shoot and pivot and figure it all out in the edit. Not trapping yourself too hard with any plan or wasting too much of your time framing every shot *just right*. Even in the edit, it's usually less about making sure it all looks exactly like I had in my head than responding to the footage and music on its own terms.

The movie was also majorly inspired by the early work of pioneering 90s-independent Richard Linklater, and a couple favorites of mine, *Slacker* (1991) - a \$50,000 indie made around the University of Texas, Austin campus with a pack of Austin locals and

Linklater's friends playing versions of themselves over the course of a summer's day - and his previous 8mm feature, *It's Impossible To Learn To Plow By Reading Books* (1988), a kind of inheritor of the existential narratives and slow, landscape filmmaking of Monte Hellman, Chantal Akerman, and James Benning.

Plow and *Slacker* were movies that *spoke to me* at 17, and they still do. Movies about middle class suburban *boredom*, and feelings of not really fitting in, or having any ambitions, not really wanting to do anything about that, and more or less, not really wanting to *do anything*— except maybe read, watch movies, get drunk and stoned with your friends, get as low commitment a job as possible and just sort of chase your own obsessions, and drift around, waiting for "the true call"...

Yep, this stuff was big for me. Big stuff. But I fell in love with the world of these movies first and became fascinated with the production side after. I started to see them as total instructionals on DIY moviemaking, and tried to learn everything I could from them. Both movies have great DVD commentary tracks, and taken together relate like a version of Linklater's whole apprenticeship in filmmaking.

The *Search for Gold* script was started the summer before shooting. I'd been tossing around starting a feature movie for a few years already now, but everything I wrote ended up being way outside any budget I could hope to get my hands on. This time I thought *ok*, write something that's *free and easy* to shoot, make that *shootability* the priority. I had a couple things in mind then,

other than the *Slacker* I was also thinking Kelly Reichardt's Oregon movies, like *Old Joy* (2006) which just consisted of a couple guys on a hiking trail, or *Wendy and Lucy* (2008) which was as simple production-wise as Michelle Williams talking to a few locals in a town she's passing through, looking for her lost dog. I was also remembering Alex Ross Perry's first feature *Imipolex* (2009), which I saw probably a decade ago, an ultra-minimal adaptation of Thomas Pynchon's wildly unadaptable novel *Gravity's Rainbow* that mostly also consisted of a guy wandering around the woods *encountering* people. *This was my great idea then: a guy walking around the woods, maybe the suburbs also, looking for something.* Because the search itself is a kind of 'action' that doesn't require any stunt co-ordination or budget. Easy as piss. And *searching* is a theme that *travels*. Looking for the lost dog in *Wendy and Lucy*, looking for a way home in *After Hours* (1985) — these always end up being about more than what they are. And I'd seen enough of those kinda shaggy dog stories, like another favorite, *Inherent Vice* (2015), to know you don't have to have any big picture to start putting the pieces together, so this kind of story would fit my kind of make it up as you go approach. Plus I remembered this contest they had in Vancouver when I was a kid, in some newspaper, for hidden money. And also this episode of the *Swindled* podcast about this rich guy, Forest Fenn, who sent a bunch of people off on a million dollar treasure hunt with just a riddle to go off. Five people died looking for it. People started to doubt the treasure even existed. Until just recently actually, in 2022,

when the over \$1,000,000 of gold and jewels was recovered. Insanity. We didn't include this part in Matson's telling though, cause I kind of liked the story better ambiguous. So anyway, why not that? And why not the Coffee News, which I've gotten in the habit of grabbing pretty much any time I have to wait for an order at Tim Hortons or A&W.

I wrote a rough sketch in Logan's room at the Yahk motel mid-planting season while he and Bowen used the room to work on some music. I'd asked Bowen at some point if he wanted to be in a movie and he said yes, he'd done another film project and was interested in doing some more acting, so I started to write this treasure hunt idea I had with him in mind. He just seemed like the right kind of friendly and relatable and yet *seeking* kind of guy to lead a movie like this. Later in August, I spent an afternoon at my brother's place in Victoria working that first outline into something more like a full shootable script, even if everything was still pretty minimal and I wasn't real sure of the ending. And so by this time me and Bowen already had loose plans to shoot the thing in October, when I was back from a fall plant. I told him it could be finished in 3-5 days. *That was a lie.* Or an error anyway. I think it ended up being 9 days with Bowen. *Sorry bro!*

Around that same time, in August I met up with JP and he was tapped way into Matt Farley's stuff and the whole MOTERN MEDIA universe. He told me something along the lines of *this guy is insane and insanely productive, he gives out his phone number to everyone*¹¹, *I've called him twice*

¹¹ (603)-644-0048

and he rocks, and his movies rock also. So I went and watched *Don't Let The Riverbeast Get You* (2012) on TUBI¹², and I was immediately hooked. That next month planting up in Port McNeill and Woss me and Cat watched a couple more MOTERN movies.

These really felt like the last push of inspiration I needed for giving it a shot making my own feature length narrative movie. My previous low budget indie points of reference like *Old Joy* and *Slacker* were still \$30,000 and \$50,000 movies, with a level of polish and production value I was never going to get on my own, and would only get myself caught up comparing my own movie against. Even *Slacker* had dolly shots, crane shots, and budget to pay its cast and full crew for full days *etc.* But MOTERN's embracing the limitations of truly micro-budget moviemaking and seeing that it actually *worked*, that they actually *made good movies that people actually wanted to watch* while doing it was huge. No need to go through *producers* or *arts grants* or put any big wads of cash on the table...

Search for Gold cost about \$500, mostly gas and food budget, also props + printing¹³, granted it used a total of some \$4000 of gear if you break it down to 2 DSLRs, 1 zoom mic, 1 tripod, 1 windows pc + Adobe Premiere, though all of this acquired over the last 10+ yrs.

We started shooting in October, the first scene being Bowen leaving work and driving the truck around for opening credits, and then the whole scene between me and

Bowen at my place. I think that first shoot went great. Bowen took off for the day and I drove over to Logan's that night and we shot his first scene over there. We were already on a roll. Lots more script to shoot, nevermind we didn't have an ending.

The cast was all friends, I mostly wrote with people in mind, but it was also whoever was available and keen at a given time. The idea was pretty much everyone playing a version of themselves, even if sort of in-character and hitting certain plot beats. We leaned into improvisation¹⁴. Except where I was feeding people lines from the script directly, everyone mostly came up with their own way to hit the beats I'd written. A couple scenes didn't even have beats to hit and were fully improvised which turned out great. And I think everywhere a sense of the cast's real personalities really *do* come through. Which is awesome. And a lot more valuable than whatever we'd get going for some fully fictional characters under the same desperate shooting conditions.

But there wasn't a lot of time for people to prepare, and there usually wasn't a lot of time for us to fit the shoot in—especially with those 4pm sunsets. Cam for example was just in town for the day when I was gonna shoot a different scene with Luc, so we just rushed through the filming a bit and put him and Simone in there, using him as one half of a conversation with Bowen to shoot Bowen's later, and it somehow just

¹² a great *FREE* streaming service for b-movies

¹³ GVPL has *FREE PRINTING*, what do you know?

¹⁴ (Note from JP) - John and I have talked at length about ensuring that our movies have a certain 'natural' quality in the improv about them rather than a mumble core affect; Realist vs. Mumblecore or Theatre Troupe improv. Maybe an article for another zine...

went smooth as hell, and now Cam's in the movie, you know? I used a lot of tricks from the MOTERN playbook. Going to *people's houses* to shoot, (huge for making things easy on your actor), not necessarily getting all your actors in one place to shoot a conversation, (a big no-no in any "professional" filmmaking repertoire but scheduling's not always easy) and shooting every scene if you can with a recurring actor all in one go (also helping to keep people in same outfits so you don't hit a problem later in editing and found yourself bound to some shitty law of continuity.)

As the shoot went along me and Bowen would riff back and forth where the story goes next, but I think I always wanted it to be a kind of anticlimax. It's never you who wins McDonald's Monopoly, it's always *some guy* from the next town over or whatever. That's just life, you know. But then there's also the octopus which kind of brought this other element. Something from outside normal reality. And just about the dirt-cheapest creature effect you could get. Just a frozen octopus from the seafood counter and a pitched-down voiceover.

Shooting finished in January. 26 days, I think 18 of those with actors, the rest just me going around shooting b-roll. Since I edited as we went, I had a pretty good cut together by February. Then the next few months were a lot of watching it back and endless tweaking. I think it's almost done now. *Just kidding*. It's done.

Looking back on it, not everything turned out great. I definitely got lazier and less

patient as the shoot went on. And since the movie's shot more or less chronologically that gives it the kind of funny effect of falling apart as the movie goes on. Things like, at Cordova Bay, where I didn't even make sure the tripod was fully locked into place before shooting Luc in a closeup, not reviewing the footage, not taking any second take for safety. *What the fuuck John?* Truly what the fuck was I thinking?

But you know what? it's alright too. Cause there it is. We got it past the finish line. I'm not under any illusion it's some great piece of art or going to make me any kind of money, - probably I'll end up losing several hundred to it after film festival submissions and all that (but hell if somehow we *do* end up making money off this I'll try and be real fair splitting it up with everybody who had a part in this.) But it's been fun you know. And it's something to do. What was the point? It was this weird dream in my head and now it's something concrete and full of shit I never could have by myself come up with. So that's pretty friggin cool if you ask me. And what's the point of doing anything, anyway?

The Meldrum's on Domestic Beers

My brother and I are lager men through and through. In our early drinking days, we'd experiment with Victoria's abundance of craft offerings. We'd get blind off of Philip's 8.5% Amnesiac, or Driftwood's Shipwreck IPAs. In some contexts, a couple hoppy pints does the trick; perhaps with a light dinner after work or as a one-two punch on a weekday night out, but, frankly, it feels neigh ungodly to stray far from beer at its most authentic self: with bready malt flavours and a clean, crisp golden aura.

Until recently, Victoria - a craft beer haven so abundant and thriving that they now sell Fat Tug in Japan and Blue Buck globally - trended towards the experimental and experiential side of beer. At some point, it began to feel like self-parody: Blackberry Grand Fir Ale, Cherry Blaster Sour, Nocturnal Portal Chocolate Raspberry Nitro Porter, and a Arcobaleno Vinello Fruited Cuvée all currently served at Refuge Tap Room. During a brief obsession with dark beer, I was rightfully chastised by my peers for championing a Creme Brulee Vanilla Stout from Salt Spring Brewing; and their right, in a way, when the equally desertish Guinness was abundant and available.

Maybe, we're philistines with more interest in alcohol's effects than in its ability to bring unique flavours to the palette, but domestic beers - the ol' reliables - should never be discounted for their own sapid appeal.

Domestic beer faces a challenge disparate from local fare: its cultural connotations. The same way a Starbucks Matcha Frappuccino might cause someone to prejudge the drinker as a yuppie, a certain domestic beer might read you as a cowboy, a bigot, or a frat boy. With that in mind, lets take a look at some of the best mass-produced beers on the market.

JP

BUD LIGHT

Bud Light cemented its place as the people's beer upon collaborating with popular transgender content creator Dylan Mulvaney. America melted down - Kid Rock

famously shot up a box of Bud Light in protest, Dana White screamed at Charlie Kirk insisting its still a “patriots beer” in defence of his multi-year contract with Anheuser-Busch, and Ted Nugent eloquently called their allegiance with LGBT community “the epitome of cultural deprivation”. Ultimately, there’s an irony of Bud Light’s star-spangled banner synecdoche — its a fucking light beer.

Bud Light is America’s most adaptable beer; it’s carefully malted, pinched with just enough sugar to make it go down easy, and carefully balanced between rice and wheat to avoid the puff of more glutinous lagers. Its low calorie, low test, and pairs well with myriad mixers - Clamato, Apple, Lime, Grapefruit, Orange, and Lemonade ranks amongst the various prefab Bud Light drinks on the market. That is to say, nothing about Bud Light’s contents suggest it’s a masculine beverage; if we’re playing into stereotypes, it’s decidedly feminine in its contents if not androgynous in its packaging since introducing the new label in 2015.

Outside the cultural semiotics, Bud Light doesn’t bore like other domestic beers; what I call the ‘flavour fatigue’ one suffers when going toe-to-toe with a fifteener. The aforementioned pinch of sweetness adds a saccharine drinkability comparable to the most refreshing of soda, and the low test prevents the ‘canned bread’ effect one would suffer from Budweiser standard edition. It’s not America’s beer, nor is it Canada’s nor is it Man’s nor the Republican Party; it’s simply the beer for seasoned veterans of the fifteen case.

JP

MILLER GENUINE DRAFT

In the glass bottle; it tastes like gracefully ageing. The tastes of my uncle’s garage in Victoria Beach, Manitoba. A nice gold Miller Genuine Draft will dissolve the differences between white collar and blue collar and unite them together in a perfect foggy ice cold slightly skanky straw coloured perfect beer.

It doesn't need a lime. It doesn't need a lemon. It definitely doesn't need a glass. It simply must be in a bottle and enjoyed after a long day. It's more effective than a Tylenol.

Memories like ours could be shared with craft beer Elitist individuals. I appreciate the local culture it fosters, which, for some may enhance the flavour experience, but for me it removes the uniting factor of a mass produced, shared experience that can be purchased at any liquor store worldwide. It's part of what makes a beer like Miller genuine draft so great. A universal, shared experience so easily accessible.

Cameron

PABST BLUE RIBBON

I can never shake the once-true and by-gone stereotype that Pabst Blue Ribbon is a 'hipster beer' exemplified by Tim Heidecker in *The Comedy* and microbudget wonder *Bellflower*; *Blue Velvet* too. Pabst was the original blue-collar appropriation akin to Carhartt, Bass Pro hat, and butcher shops. Frankly, I just think its logo had a certain iconography that resonated with the late-MTV generation as a palatable piece of Americana kitsch, and that the beer itself was relatively water-y with just enough hop-bitterness to still feel like a 'real beer'. Frankly, Pabst kinda sucks, but it so easily becomes water after two or three; for its cultural significance and innocuous flavour, it must be included.

JP

COORS LIGHT

Absolutely nothing beats a crisp cold blue Mountain certified Coors light on a hot summer day. There is no more crushable yet hydrating beverage ever - it should be served at -2°C just below freezing; about 0.0000001 Celsius from freezing. Once you achieve that you have the ultimate light lager. One of the biggest differences between Bud Light and Coors Light is that Coors Light sweetness holds up, rather than the sickly

sweetness of Bud, giving it that similar addictive edge that Diet Coke has. Coors light is a Diet Coke of beers. If you're looking to drink 15 beers and be marginally productive the next day, of course, its your best bet. Miller obviously trumps Coors in the flavour category, however, for maximum crush ability, you cannot beat Coors. It's clearly designed to be finished in under three minutes. It's the equivalent of an athlete grabbing a Gatorade; that same salty quenching flavour you get from an ice blue Gatorade after a great game is the equivalent of a Coors Light after a day of hard work; whether ailing from physical or mental exertion. Coors Light pairs with sunshine and swimming pools and barbecues. I dream of it daily.

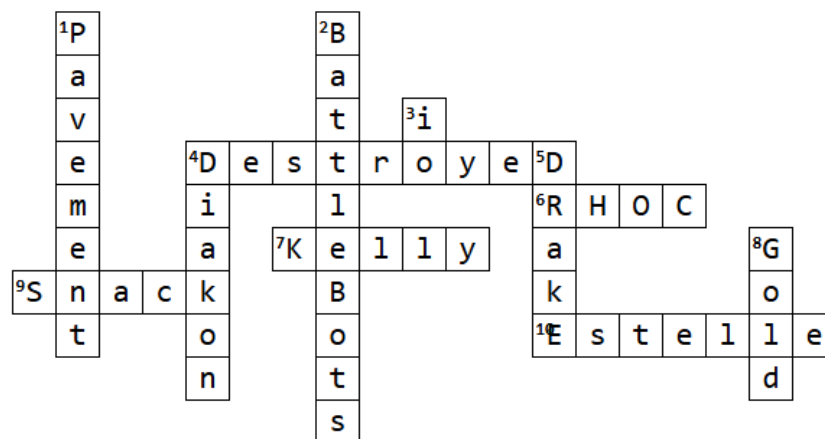
Cameron

EPILOGUE

Last winter, Cameron and I got some of our best drinking buddies together for a blind taste test of domestic beers to see who could identify them most accurately. We tasted PBR, Coors Light, Old Milwaukee, Budweiser, Bud Light, and Lucky

Cameron won by a landslide; he got 5/6 he was the only one of us to identify more than one beer correctly, so we tested a second time, and he was not able to produce the same results. Frankly, we couldn't believe they all tasted so similar when blindfolded. That is to say, the craft beer guys might be onto something...

JP



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