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VOLUME 6



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The Artist as Outsider

For Destroyed Cinema + Music

By Steven Ross Smith

Outsider Artist. The term may conjure images: the poet in his or her garret; the indie songwriter working in rural isolation on a lyric or a chord; the actor in front of a mirror, deep diving into a peculiar, challenging character; the fashion designer staring at a fabric to style a quirky look. It may even suggest the unstable creator—the eccentric mad genius. In any case, this creator is often seeking to confront.

“Outsider”—as used here as an adjective to modify the noun “artist”, suggests a definition of *outside*—according to the Merriam Webster Dictionary. I’ve selected the descriptions most relevant, from the many-phased nuances of the term:

of, relating to, or being on or toward the outer side or surface;

situated or performed outside a particular place;

not included or originating in a particular group or organization.

Wikipedia offers intriguing information on the term *Outsider Art*, noting it as: “art made by self-taught individuals who are untrained and untutored in the traditional arts with typically little or no contact with the conventions of the art worlds.” It sources the term’s origin to “1972 as the title of a book by art critic Roger Cardinal. It is an English equivalent for *art brut* (“raw art” or “rough art”), a label created in the 1940s by French artist Jean Dubuffet to describe art created outside the boundaries of official culture. Dubuffet focused particularly on art by those on the outside of the established art scene, using as examples psychiatric hospital patients, hermits, and spiritualists.”

The context has broadened since the 1940s—the artist need not belong to such ‘exotic’ categories—institutionalized or isolated existences—as Dubuffet suggests.

In my mind, *Outsider* defines artists who work outside the mainstream—their art is made, in fact and intention, as resistance to institutions and structures (civic, social, cultural, artistic) which they may or may not work within. It can include obscure artists, or those who straddle the borderline between independence of, and dependence upon the corporations, the system, the marketplace. Though the *system* surrounds all of us, these artists seek the hidden corners. Wherever they stand, they maintain an unease, a dedication to challenging and creating beyond the strictures of received forms. Their undertaking is resistance, as a solo or communal movement. Their *going-against* is a practice, an activity of resistance to *art-official* (artificial) definitions. These forms of resistance, in whatever medium, offer critique through ‘othered’ artmaking. That artist *speaks against*, or *moves beyond*, or *newly-visions* what we already know, observe, or expect—they strive to show us a new way—of thinking, perceiving, manifesting. And they make their art without regard for audience receptivity.

Such artists must also be aware of the system’s ability—a structure that is, after all, ubiquitous—to absorb convention and innovation. The catch-22 is that resistant movements themselves can be co-opted. Preceding *Art Brut* was *Dada*, the European-originated, rebellious, resistant, multi-disciplinary *anti-art making* of the early 20th century, its efforts intended to disintegrate all forms of art. Dada assembled a melange of visual art, music, dance, poetry, and performance, even chaos, in concept and manifestation. Its energy and aesthetic are still potent today, but *Dada* itself became embraced and documented as a categorized movement within the realm of *official art*—the outsider welcomed to the inside. I think too of graffiti, some of it having moved from laneways to gallery walls; and rap pulsing from the ghetto streets, now sizzling on the global streaming platforms, and liberating few individuals, but lots of wealth.

The term *outsider artist* is, in a way, irrelevant to artmaking. Do we need categories? Well, the *system* seems to, as even using this term reveals.

Regardless, I ponder—is the artist-creator already, by occupation, an outsider? My guess is *yes*, though this may not be an absolute truth, applicable to all creative workers. Some want to be insiders, and most creators, whatever persuasion, create/play within some structured marketplace.

Yet, I believe that resistance is often intrinsic to the artist's makeup, rendering them already outside—looking in—and creating from that position. I think that there is something—genetic or conditioned—inherent in the personality of one who experiences ‘outsideness.’ It is a trait/behaviour, via which an individual always feels and stands at the fringe of the circumstance that person dwells in—family, culture, institution, art, and even geography—one who feels both a part of, and not, while also an observer, even a critic of that context. Some people, I suspect are just unaware ‘insiders’, while others, by nature, can’t be fully absorbed there. For the true *outside creators*, inside is a most uncomfortable place, impossible to inhabit fully.

I suppose, given such tendencies, that an *outsider*, artistic or not, can simply remain cynical, or may take to the street in protest, or rant online. Or one can choose to make art to express their perceptions.

Hence, I return to my opening thoughts. The rebel artist following her or his genuine creative impulses without regard or influence of the necessity of commercial viability or cultural acceptance, may dwell and make, in their own authentic space. I think to truly fit into that *outsider* realm, one must exercise resistance as a totality when creating.

But what counts, I think, is the initial impulse—in the creative moment—resistant to market networks, resistant to skewed political structures, resistant to received, comfortable forms—resistant even to art itself. It is creation that challenges established cultural/artistic norms. There's a cliché in art—“make it new”—I think it applies. Outsider artists are daring, rough, making up the rules as they go while

resisting those rules, resisting their own comfort, being willing to go, or to strive to go, where few have gone before, leaping into the unknown, stroking with pen, or brush, with tongues or bows, with gesture, construction—to make and be—truly outside, perhaps even outside of outside.

Defined resistant artistic realms I'm familiar with, their matter sometimes documented, sometimes not—hence short-lived, and often ephemeral or unrepeatable—include noise music, compostable poetry, disintegrative sculpture, erasure art, contact improv dance, sand mandalas, abstract cinema. Then there are burst forms, ranging from conceptual to improvisatory—radical, extreme, and on occasion dangerous: non-semantic recitation, performance art, free jazz, tossed paint, chance iterations, conceptual gesture, body modification. Not all resistant art, however, needs to be extreme. Challenging already-existing forms, through innovative techniques—sometimes referred to as 'experimental' modes—can be 'safe' while shifting the particular artistic manifestation outside 'hallowed lines'—being disjunctive, off the wall, unconventional, defamiliarizing, transporative, or even transcendent—confronting normative modes.

Outsider Artists are needed—to cause the alarm to ring, to stir and disturb our sleepy perceptions, to push all of us beyond our familiar comfort zones, with new alertness, new comprehension. Outside is a healthy, invigorating place to be.

~

Steven Ross Smith—poet, fictioneer, sound/performance poet, arts journalist, & literary activist. In a decades-long migration through Canada's geographic and literary landscapes—Toronto, Saskatoon, Banff—Smith absorbed poetic influences and amazements. In fourteen books and many other publications, his writing juxtaposes disparate threads, in myriad explorations, as in his seven-book poetic series *fluttersong*. Banff Poet Laureate, 2018-21, Smith lives now in Victoria.
More at: www.fluttersong.ca & <https://sloosmithy.bandcamp.com>

**HOW MOTERN MEDIA CHANGED (MY) LIFE,
or
MATT FARLEY (AND CHARLIES ROXBURGH) VS. THE WORLD
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On Irony and Hubris

Once upon a time, a young, intelligent, art-minded person detested the sycophant, thus the archetype of the sardonic, apathetic, misanthropic ‘hipster’ came to roost. Now, popitism, the ‘brat’ summer¹, the Swifties and/or Stan culture exist as adversarial byproducts of the 90s-00s disdain for anything popular. Popitism is an overcorrection; a collateral disdain for the abnormal and the avant-garde in an otherwise media-obsessed generation. Reactionary popitist subcultures come with a preordained set of likes and dislikes the same way navel-gazing hipsters did - Swifties hate Kanye by default, and the hipsters hate Taylor Swift for her monocultural dominance. Barbz are toxic and boygenius fans gatekeep. It's all precocious, and precocious young adults love to be better than - or equal to - their media; rigidly defining themselves by a set of like-and-dislike signifiers. The parasocial worship of these communities of media-obsessives quickly devolves into an adversarial disposition towards the artist, and the art - the fans want a say and the detractors know better than the artist themselves. Media-driven identities force a superiority complex upon the participant, especially in the creative types unconsciously envious of their object-of-derision/affection's success; like Jia Tolentino says “opinions used to be a jumping off point to find a deeper meaning, now they are an ends-to-a-mean” (paraphrased).

I, too, suffer from this media supremacist affliction, as one leaning more towards sardonic hipster than vibey popitist. For example, I once quarrelled for hours with a girlfriend after she misidentified Ought as Radiohead. I was 24, and she *was* wrong. I thought I was being polite and informative, but, really, I was being conceited. None of this tiff had to do with the music, in truth, but instead the foreknowledge I insistently injected into her appreciation of the music (though, still, not Radiohead). On top of that, my pal Nolan recently reminded me that in 11th grade I proclaimed to “objectively have the correct taste in music”, compared to anyone else we

¹ I'd argue Charli is the point of intersection between the dead-eyed hipster and the all-vibes stan; however, the ubiquity of ‘brat’ - namely ‘kamala is brat’ - put this current of era Charli squarely in the popitist camp and a recent touchstone of what I'm talking about in general.

know, or something to that effect. I remember saying this, but I do not remember *why*; maybe because my grades were bad and I didn't have anything else exceptional about me or maybe one of the guys had incensed me with an "anything but rap and country" shibboleth.

These days, I try to hold to the Taoist proverb "he who studies too much doubts what he knows" whenever I feel these tendencies bubble up - as much as my twenty page treatise on the *Rolling Stone* 500 last issue may suggest otherwise. That is to say, I understand the combative critical spirit of youth, but I do not condone it. Take the proclamation that *The Fabelmans* is poorly edited - a reaction from a younger friend so hubristic I'll take it to the grave. She reminded me of my own precocious past. It's one thing to not enjoy a baby boomer's self-mythologizing and hardly-difficult coming-of-age swan song, and it's another to think you know better than the guy who made *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and, furthermore, to be completely unable to articulate what made the editing bad; if my memory serves correct, their exact quote was a vocal-fried "it's just *bad*". Being at odds with the masters is a way of negotiating with culture; it's an exercise in contrarianism as much as it's a means to bring a monolithic idea back down to earth. On the other-hand, this single star *Letterboxd* review of John Ledingham and I's *The Promised End* by [redacted] - a freelance journalist and not a filmmaker - in which he derides us for protecting our minimalist conceit and self-indulgence "under the guise of experimental cinema" is painfully shallow and drenched in a superiority complex in which one takes pleasure in tearing down our movie in disregard for the fact that *The Promised End* is essentially one-to-one communications. I'm right here, man, forty people have seen my movie and I distributed it myself. IE; you can easily tell me it sucks, and it hurts my feelings *directly* in the process. Never was *The Promised End* marketed as experimental; it's just slow. He summarizes its content, undermines it with a categorical error, and decides our labour of love is a 2/10. [redacted]'s review signals a desperate need to be above or equal to us - and maybe he is - [he's written about shoes for Complex](#), Sabrina Carpenter concerts for *Exclaim!* and has a journal-y Substack; I look forward to his yearly newsletter about bumming it in New York, associating with famous rappers, and resenting Victoria, our hometown. In the meantime, John and I's next film *In the Land of Fish and Honey* you've likely just watched, and I've released ten albums this year, alongside five editions of a magazine categorically different from [redacted]'s humblebrag Notes app journal written under

the guise of Beatnik-meets-alt-lit prose. If [redacted] reads this, I sincerely have written a part for you in our next movie, if you're not too busy hanging out with JID.

That aside, we should address 'irony poisoning', a term coined by irony-king himself Nick Mullen and [misattributed to the New York Times](#). Irony poisoning is a neo-nihilist modus operandi that seeks only to destroy; to cringe, to laugh *at*, to be above it all. I, too, understand why one would scoff at earnest vanity projects by multi-hyphenated star-writer-director (like my films). The "Who do they think they are?" response. The desire to reign supreme over our media is, in part, the *Letterboxd* effect wherein users are rewarded for quippy sarcasm, narcissistic confessionals, and 100-level polemics above meaningful insights into ways-of-viewing. The superego inevitably drives the media junkie to desire equity or supremacy with what they watch; they've earned it through cinephilia, education, creativity and/or some intersection of special interests. The precocious want to be on par with Spielberg as a result, although, certainly, few are, and they're incensed that Wiseau's, or John and I's, or even Coppola's egoism saw *the Room*, *The Promised End* and *Megalopolis* across their respective finish lines.

In regard to Wiseau's reception, *The Room* has transformed from mysterious billboard hanging in LA, to ennuied hipster punching-bag, to outright irony-bro classic. I've seen its decimation first-hand. I worked at a theatre and a screening of *The Room* was the only time I've kicked someone out for being too drunk. *The Room* is certainly a baffling failure, beyond my "word-vomit", as [redacted] call it, and Coppola's billionaire-class liberalism, but it's the product of untreated mental illness and ESL difficulties rather than sheer narcissism. I, again, don't knock anyone for feeling above Wiseau, but I do condemn the conceited worldview it begets - a closed mind who's critical heels are dug in so deep and paved over with the most pretentious concrete that they are unable to be moved by the attrition of an outsider. Irony begets prejudice - to decide one does not like 'x' therefore they will not even engage with 'y' - and, even worse, causes one to hold themselves to an immeasurable standard in which they ultimately produce nothing, or very little, or create works so mulled over and beyond reproach that their voice is muted by the time it's done. Moreover, to enjoy nothing earnestly ever again; to lose sight of art's capacity for enchantment, to dismiss the vernacular as 'amateur'. The ironic, contemptuous gaze is nothing short of meek and insecure; a consequence of the ambition Catholics warn us of; the

true meaning of pretentious; a worldview that pits the viewer against the viewing; paralyzing arrogance. All the same, a one-sided equity is partisan and paradoxical.

Admittedly, my friend and close collaborator John Ledingham and I are huge fans of egosplotation cinema, particularly those outside of the Hollywood industrial complex. Bradley Cooper's Sondheim vanity project *Maestro* isn't all that exciting since he's got Netflix and *The Hangover* money to cushion the blow, whereas a Neil Breen, seven films deep and headstrong in his alien ideology, is a curio supreme. Misguided DIY attempts at filmmaking akin to Wiseau, Breen, and *After Last Season* are the products of real people making movies outside of the industry, and sometimes real people fail in ways impossible for an out-of-touch elite. "What were they thinking?" is a great jumping off point for interrogating motivation, but "who do they think they are?" is trifling. An ironic distance applied to something homemade is simply pretension at its most *Oxford English Dictionary* apt, and to do so towards something more knowing than it initially appears surely will make a fool of you. Such is the case, often so, with the reception to Motern Media mastermind Matt Farley's oeuvre.

On Matt Farley, Modern Media, and The Outsider Artist

Matt Farley is *not* Neil Breen. Matt Farley is *not* Tommy Wiseau. Matt Farley is *not* The Shaggs, *not* a Song Poet, *not* Florence Foster Jenkins, and *not* Wild Man Fischer. Nor is Matt Farley a Milli Vanilli, a Dirt Nasty, nor a cynical avant-garde nutjob-come-genius like Damon Packard or Henry Cowell. Matt Farley does not hide his "fundamentally toxic" proliferation under the guise of comedy. Instead, Matt Farley is ***the greatest and most true artist of all time.***

Matt Farley *is* responsible for thousands of viral songs about poop - which have, over the years, gotten him fly-by-night virality including coverage on *NPR*, *the New York Times*, and *Tik Tok* - but that's simply his gimmick; his day job. I know Matt primarily for his 12+ films with Charles Roxburgh. In the past few years, in part thanks to *The Important Cinema Club* podcast and *Letterboxd*, Farley and Roxburgh have reached cult-status with what I'd estimate to be probably three thousand rampant fans; a number estimated based on *Twitter* followers, *Letterboxd* logs, and off-hand remarks on his *Motern Media Infomercial Podcast*. Yet, Farley's solo novelty songs

have garnered the attention of hundreds of thousands, maybe millions, including Billie Eilish and the Kardashians. Unfortunately, his type of recognition does not necessarily sustain long-term patronage nor beget further curiosity. When I spoke to Matt on the phone for the first time - his number is freely available - I mentioned how *The Huffington Post* didn't acknowledge his film work, and he said he had some "really big, maybe the biggest press" coming next week, which turned out to be *The New York Times*. We both hoped that they had done their due diligence regarding the rest of his oeuvre. Unfortunately, they didn't really get into the movies nor the 'No Joke' stuff, although they didn't undermine his work ethic either. Much of the major press Matt has gotten has a smug undertone - one that wants to paint him as a grifter, as a bad faith actor, as a 'fundamentally toxic' fool.

Late last year, *Local Legends: Bloodbath!* debuted at the annual pre-TIFF Dankfest alongside alt-comedy darling Connor O'Malley's *Rap World*. I sent my Torontonians friend Jeremy Ugro to attend and he said it was "literally your dream, bro"; kind of back-handed, but nonetheless true. It felt like a watershed moment; like Motern Media - Matt's catch-all production name for his projects - was about to reach a level, and a type, of attention it finally deserved. Feeling the hype, as I and many other Motern fans did, Matt seized the zeitgeist and released *Bloodbath!* on Vimeo while it had the Dankfest momentum. Unfortunately, *Bloodbath!* failed to move more than a hundred or so copies as he bemoaned on his podcast some days later. I found it disheartening and hard to believe that John and I, two guys 3240.6 miles away from Matt's homebase, comprised almost two percent of the Motern diehards willing to shell over a measly twelve bucks to see his new film, and so did Matt. Around this time, a few jealous hit-pieces including institutionally bankrolled comedian Pablo Torre and industry bootlicker Dancing with Ghosts alongside an onslaught of negative comments on the *New York Times* article tried to paint Matt as a deceitful hack; simultaneously, Matt went mega-viral on Tik Tok, a platform he himself does not use, for his poop songs once again. It seemed as though these worlds he's created couldn't overlap, and that no one on the novelty song side did their research. Pablo Torre refused to take his "No Jokes" work in good faith and Dancing with Ghosts' polemic on "Dig In!" reveals his inability to listen with rectitude. What baffles me the most is their lack of curiosity. Wouldn't you want to know more about a guy who's made 30000+ songs, especially if you were to produce a video essay about him or cover him on your paint-by-numbers comedy podcast? The ironic lens has

been donned, and his conceited nay-sayers refuse to accept that his oeuvre is overflowing with meaning. Pablo Torre's been validated by Comedy Central, Dancing with Ghosts by his jaded subscribers, and [redacted] by proximity to J. Cole, while Matt Farley and I remain steadfastly *driven* by ourselves and our attrition. Moreso, we encourage others to commit to selfmade-vernacular artistry; to create art for art's sake; to inundate the world with folk art in the face of an industrialized society. Ted Kazinski by way of Jed Fair. Proliferation is one thing, but survival is another. Cheap adages like "less is more" or "quality over quantity" don't account for how one sustains creative drive; the exercising of the impulse; the compulsive nature of art-making. Because of proliferation, I have outlasted 100s of peers who briefly garnered infinitely more esteem and attention than my projects. Matt Farley, barnone, has made five movies since Tarantino's last and more albums than *anyone* since the dawn of the phonograph. That is to say, we are still here, and many of our more successful peers are not. Thus, Matt has set out to release one 'No Joke' album a month in 2025, along with his next film with Roxburgh *Evil Puddle* & rumours of a *Magic Spot* sequel entitled *Evil Spot*, in defiance of the irony-poised, conceited masses' perception of him as a trickster. I support it all the way, and have committed and thus far succeeded in making two films and twelve albums this year myself in solidarity with the Motern Method.

So, simply put, here is an elaborate laudation of Matt's first 'No Jokes' album of 2025 *What We Wanna Remember*, followed by a deep-dive into the dialogue between *Local Legends* and *Local Legends: Bloodbath* only a life-long vernacular creative like Matt could produce.

On *What We Wanna Remember* (2025) by Matt Motern Manly Man

People seem to forget that the bridge between Gen-X and Millennials is idiosyncratic singing. The rise of Alt Rock, and Indie too, is marked by an anti-virtuosity ideology - a time when an auto-tune free² Adam Duritz crooned flat and flagrant ballads following in the foot-steps of Johnathan Richman's slacker baritone. Bob Dylan is so ubiquitous that we forget that he can't sing, although philistine fans bemoan his contemporary concerts for under-singing and

² Discernable auto-tune; *Shrek 2*'s "Accidentally in Love" seems to have the mark of the beast akin to Anthony Kiedis's nasally pitch-correction circa *Californication* and onwards.

rearranging his already-undersung classics in concert - which I find to be charming, and punk-in-spirit rather an affront to his undeserving audience. In fact, a further aside, if Bob Dylan reared his eccentric head any later, he would be roped in with Daniel Johnston; listen to those Basement Tapes, read over the lyrics to “Murder Most Foul”, and watch *Masked and Anonymous* - Dylan’s an outsider cherry-picked by the establishment as a token eccentric. Regardless, it takes a little rewiring to adjust to Farley’s full-throated intonation. *What We Wanna Remember* is no exception.

Opening with the loungey Rhodes-rock joint “Anything that Moves Me”, Farley ponders the eponymous sentiment. I can almost hear the impulse to take ‘move’ literally; to crack jokes about modes of transportation and walking shoes, alas, this is a mission statement. Farley unabashedly revels in ‘following the muse’ to the utmost degree while skewering his catalogue of novelty songs: “Me and my Game, the jokes are to blame”. In a moment of humility, Matt acknowledges that his art is polarizing and oft deemed sinister and ironic, but refuses to discount his oeuvre as such. So long as he is inspired, a joke song about Ontario or a harrowing metareflection on his body of work have comparable meaning under the umbrella of his prolific *modus operandi*. Lana Del Rey’s most recent offering, *There’s a Tunnel under Ocean Blvd*, was rightly cherished for its tapestry of self-mythology, self-reference, and soft-apostasy of earlier provocations, while Matt simply acknowledges his preceding work generally to bolster its existence alongside his year of serious music.

“What We Wanna Remember” is an enigmatic Cougar-Mellencamp-esque story song seeped in summer nostalgia and limerence before escalating into a meditation on creative drive: “Keep on searching / Never Surrender” repeated ad nauseum. Farley exercises his songwriting chops by carefully weaving in character names that serve as convenient rhymes as much as resonate symbols for hermeneutic investigation. Farley harnessed imagery akin to *Blue Velvet*’s ear in the field tinged with Linklater’s coming-of-age nostalgia. The Motern Manly Man interrogates whether young people act in order to create nostalgia, or if these events will even be remembered, deciding that the memory-haver has the free will to decide what they eponymously want to remember. This track reads, metatextually, as if Farley is justifying his life's work. He wants to remember good rockin’ times by the train track as much as he wants to remember

making *Riverbeast* with close friends and family, and in this never quest of self-expression, his white flag is never waved and his curiosity remains, thus a larger rolodex of memories at his disposal.

Track three continues themes of powering through self-doubt. “You Shouldn’t have been Sentimental” is powerfully hook-heavy, mantra-like, and filled with regret. It’s clear from the outset that Matt is speaking to himself; he’d been too nostalgia-oriented, perhaps. A great affliction worth dissecting in another essay down-the-road - acting for sake of future nostalgia. I’m not sure it’s a meaningful motivator, nor is the character in this song - he’s “disenchanted [and] taken things for granted” thanks to his sentimental orientation.

“Xmas Lights (They Didn’t Have to Do That)” rings as a post-holiday hangover; Farley pokes at the excesses of the season bouncing between the positive comradery the season provides and the negative consumerist traditions implemented by Hallmarkian ideologues. “Xmas Lights” avoids feeling like a Christmas song - there’s no bells, no church organ, no reference to Santa nor reindeer - instead it’s a stellar January song.

“Madison Social” is the musical equivalent to the regional horror of Motern’s filmic output. Farley paints the picture of a charming parochial town-bar that reminds me of tales my father would tell me of his upbringing in the homely, working-class Winnipeg of the 80s; we started bouncing around Canada when I was seven before landing in the largely yuppie-ish, third-wave coffee shop metropolis of Victoria. Formally, “Madison Social” follows the style of an emotional aria in a tragic musical. Farley is solemn about the eponymous Social, but optimistic about its potential for personal growth; that this could be a place of refuge down-the-road.

“Red Bayou” is a grower; the guitar is awkwardly recorded and the rhymes are a bit slap-dash. It feels a bit like a rejected track from the *Monsters, Marriage and Murder in Manchvegas* soundtrack. Yet, Farley’s comically slacker Beach Boysian chorus is nothing if not an earworm. The summernight overtones of “Red Bayou” balance out the late-winter mood of *What We Want to Remember*’s first-half. Not quite a highlight, but a deep-cut for true Moternheads.

“Both of Them are Strange” is a Saturday morning cartoon fever-dream of a song; a hauntological *Scooby-Doo* montage; a flower-power tinged *Abbott and Costello Meet the Killer, Boris Karloff*. One of Farley’s obscure preoccupations is his disdain for drugs and alcohol - never quite sanctimonious but certainly moralistic. Notably, his oft-repeated story about being feeling judged by a group of stoners for being straight-edge and playing music free of psychedelia outlined on [“Narc at the Hippy Attic”](#), or his polemic characterization of the alcoholic in his *Druids* films or, uh, “Drugs Are Bad. Don’t Be a Druggie, Ok?”. Farley is, however, genial by default, so “Strange” resonates as a loving tribute to the creative minds clouded by marijuana smoke rather than an outright parody. “Both of Them are Strange” is a generous satire of the hippie-dippy vernacular, and a lofi spiritual successor to the “Monster Mash”.

I admit “Squishy’s Night Out” is the low-point of the record - it feels voyeurish to listen to this track without knowing who Squishy is. It rings as an inside joke, perhaps with his wife or with his kids or pets. “Squishy”, as a repeated word, sounds fetishistique in a sort-of hey-day of Tumblr perversion way - the same way the word “Moist” is a nails-on-a-chalk-board to some. Yet I know Farley is a PG dude all the way; Frankly, I don’t know what to do with “Squishy” besides praising it for the tastefully overdriven bass sound and the beautiful thesaurus-brained use of “magnanimous”.

I’m partial to Farley’s solo piano tracks - I’d argue he’s the Billy Joel of the last two generations without the baggage of cocaine and kitschy prog-rock orchestration. From what I understand, [“Your My Present this Year”](#) is inspired by the viral Folgers ad from 2009 that, intentionally-or-not, came across deeply incestual and perverse to an unsuspecting public. Farley, at his best and most automatic, simply paints the portrait of familial relief - someone beloved is home for the holidays amidst an unknown obstacle, and all of the senses, notably the smell of coffee, are elevated in the elation of their arrival. Farley’s blown-out croon and muzaky Yamaha keyboard always elevate beyond his silly affect into raw sincerity, and “You’re My Present” is no exception.

On Local Legends & Local Legends: Bloodbath!

The difference between imagination and creativity is manifestation. Imagination is step one; it's the fun part; to limitlessly conceptualize and dream on. Creativity, on the other hand, adds step two-through-one-thousand. I recall the aforementioned friend - the one knows better than Spielberg - telling me about a screenwriting circle they were in. They complained about how lofty and unmakeable their peers' scripts were; and while I didn't love how down on the rest of the class they were, I did agree that pragmatism is what transfigures imagination into art. Furthermore, I'm not convinced higher learning is conducive to creation either; it's an institution and institutions beget more institutions which beget waiting for [pug-faced mafia executives to give you their blessing to create](#). *Local Legends* is a radical act of giving oneself the permission to create. No middle man. No espresso tastings. No notes. No budget. No waiting. Institutions train you to wait for permission.

I recently sat through a long conference on the future of libraries³, which included legendary authors Lawrence Hill, Esi Edugyan, and excellent filmmaker Atom Egoyan, whom I sat next to; I've learned he uses Reddit and eats rather quickly. Largely, my takeaway from the conference was positive - that 'truth' is something we must redefine and reclaim in the age of (dis/mis)information, and because of truth's fickle contemporary state, libraries are a powerful vestige for the perseverance of truth that must adapt and curate rapidly in a climate of endless data; however, I couldn't help but feel there was an undercurrent of exclusionary ignorance towards the vernacular. The gatekeepers of truth - thoughtful, researched, combed over truth - whether they want to admit it or not, are on the inside. Academia is a vetting process that excludes those who do not fit into their overscrutinized medium through grading, through funding particular causes and disciplines, and through financial barriers. The late Charlie Kirk made a living off this part-truth about universities: they're stuffy, out of touch by design, and isolate different modes of thinking; though, his truth was distorted by a binary agenda of right and left, man and women, and god and godless. The binary I'm interested in, in regard to the

³ Worth noting: I was the sound guy for this conference, and not a formal attendee; worth nothing further, for transparency sake, I was invited to this conference by the host, a regular at my old job, who somehow knew I had made some movies and thought I'd enjoy seeing Egoyan speak. This was true, Egoyan is much more down to earth than the Academics were on the panel. I by happenstance teched the event, which is the kind of serendipity you get in this funny little town of ours.

academia and intelligentsia-at-large, is that of the vernacular versus formality, the DIY vs institution, or the spontaneous versus the calculated. Good information disseminators are forced to wait for establishments to validate their work by means of producing, funding, and/or hosting, whereas bad faith actors will do nothing but flood the market. Rarely are good faith actors prolific or immediate; losing their advantage against disinformation and toxicity because they have been led to believe that they require an intuition to tell them that their work is truthful and good - the academy or academy-like institutes, for better or for worse, are the bodies in which 'approve' the good/truth of a work. Yet, without fails, history will catch up to vernacular artists outside the vantage point of the intelligentsia causing these gatekeeping bodies to champion vernacular art long after its production because they can not vet such reactive creation; like an expensive conference on Trans zines or Riotgrrrl in 2025 (real examples at UVic) in stark contrast to the vernacular means in which they were created. I believe an anti-perfectionist, good-faith, vernacular focus on the contemporary, wherein the academy pushes and teaches discipline in rapid completion rather than in perfectionist opusing would be a vital answer to the question proposed at the conference. In which good faith artists and writers like Farley finally flood the market with positive and truthful media in defiance of partisan hackery like Kirk (on the right) or Harry Sisson (on the 'left'; read 'neolib'). *Local Legends* is perhaps the most truthful film of the 21st century, a manifesto redefining what 'success' is, and a radical act of good faith worthy of, but in defiance of, an academic mulling over.

In Farley's universe, a 'failed artist' is not someone who's failed to achieve renown; it's someone who fails to produce altogether. I think I've heard him use 'low-level' artists, but never failed. *Local Legends* does not seek to raise the low-level artist to the stature of celebrity, but to herald them as they are. Farley shrewdly proves that folk art offers something the intuition cannot. I spoke with my brother Cameron, co-star of all my films and all my films to come, about a local film *Church of the Flying Saucer* I had seen recently. I liked Silver's film for its Vancouver Island charm and for some of its wonderfully exciting party montages but felt disappointed that it followed the narrative and formal conventions of an 'indie' (in the Fox Searchlight sense, not the Motern Media sense) and 'coming-of-age' film. It was too safe, but no one is telling Silver to be safe. "I don't get it," I said. I proclaimed to Cameron that Silver was not shackled by an institution, by executives notes, and by a real-need to corner a market and turn-a-profit, yet made

something so in-the-box. My own brief conversations with the director suggested he was not interested in film festivals nor conventional distribution at all thus hoped that his film(s) had reflected that punk ethos. His other feature, *The Life and Death of Angel Candy*, was a little closer to what I had imagined - an agoraphobic descent into hustler-induced madness loaded with dialogic idiosyncrasies and DIY aesthetics. Regardless, Cameron simply replied “maybe that's what he likes. I like spy movies with predictable twists. I find them comfy. So do you”. And Cameron is right, but he's also so wrong.

Local Legends and its sequel are this exact conversation I had with Cameron - the former unabashedly taking my side, and the latter exploring Cameron's disdain for DIY dogmatism. *Local Legends* is a *Stardust Memories* imbued autofiction of his eccentric earnestness, while *Bloodbath!* is something akin to Allen's later *Deconstructing Henry* - a tear-down of one's creative ideology and a psycho-analytic act of self-criticism.

Local Legends should be the first and last movie anyone is shown before pursuing a degree in the fine arts. The institution does not galvanize the creative spirit--it informs it but it does not fortify it in a practical sense. Your film prof might encourage so-and-so lighting and your screenwriting prof so-and-so structure, but Farley is a genius pragmatist - deeply aware of his own limitations, weaponizes what one-might-call delusion into finished material, he's keenly conscious of the metrics of success constructed by society, and unabashedly unprecious about sharing his art. Nothing in *Local Legends* is upheld by the institution - the ethos is punk and the presentation its own. It's a radical act of autofiction, of inculcating an audience into a worldview, and of holding to one's own (openly fledgling) creative drive.

On the other hand, *Local Legends Bloodbath!* almost reads as a bitter screenwriting professor's red-highlighted notes on their otherwise-star-student's final project. It confronts what a modicum of success does to the ‘islanding’ of an unstoppable productive vernacular artist; one who's built up their own methodological armour that can not be chinked. He's been validated, on his own terms, giving way to a toxic tour of I told you so!'s and enabling his already self-involved modus operandi. Recently, Ben Affleck said to Theo Von that “money is great; I would never give that up. Fame ain't worth it”, or Mark Knopfler, who said “Success is the gas; Fame is the exhaust

coming out the tail pipe”. Geniality is a trademark of Farley’s persona, both the man and the character, but *Bloodbath!* lets the coy-desperation of its predecessor fester into acrimony towards his loved ones. He plays into the claims of Pablo Torres and Dancing with Ghosts; he’s a hustler now, a walking contradiction between the vernacular and the enterprise, and nothing can stop the contempt of this runaway paradox.

Bloodbath! is a PhD in self reflexivity, but not a metafictional exercise; in fact, parsing out its metafictional status is made impossible by Farley’s intentional well-crafted narrative design; *Local Legends*, the original film, exists in *Bloodbath!* as a movie Farley made, but its elements - namely Farley’s business alter-ego - come to life, yet the internal logic of these characters coming to life are not treated as a *Purple Rose Cairo* character-crawls-out-of-the-screen trope rather just par-for-the-Motern-course. *Bloodbath!* does not break-the-forth-wall, but disrupts the reality implicit in *Local Legends* autobiographical format by refiguring it as carefully constructed fiction upholding Farley’s vanity. Todd Philips tried to make something like *Bloodbath!* with *Joker: Folie à deux*, in which he refutes the philosophies of its predecessor and punishes its subject for the sins the text once condoned; but *Folie à deux* doesn’t work because Philips isn’t a radical outsider (I think *Joker I* doesn't work for the same reason); Philips writes in DNC campaign prose, and you can not refute a mainstream narrative with another mainstream narrative, whereas Farley is firmly grounded in the interpersonal and vernacular, as is *Before Midnight*, perhaps its best sequelized counterpoint. Maybe, the only meaningful Hollywood equivalent to *Bloodbath!* is *The Matrix Resurrections*, which seeks to interrogate its predecessor's legacies and the pressures of a franchise-pilled film industry; I found it impressively brazen but overall recondite.

On Novelty, Perception, and Over-Curating One’s Self-Image; On Matters of Reception

I worry sometimes about my band *Really Loud Free Jazz*, among my most successful projects to date, being too jokey. I mean, the band name is hilariously precise, and the music is ridiculously over-the-top. But when playing, I transcend, lost in Maxwell’s raging beehive drums and Liliana’s seamless ability to pastiche Jaco and Les Claypool while counterpointing my idiosyncratic Zornian squawks. But it's the poop songs that brought Matt into the cultosphere, and

funded his net-loss filmography, and it's Really Loud Free Jazz that's ingratiated me to a community of weirdos that I'd otherwise have never crossed paths with. Hopefully, a couple of them will watch my movie(s). But my faith in curiosity is squandered by the plague of the ironic lens and pretension of the precocious connoisseur. Curiosity can only start discourse, it can't join in on it.

An acquaintance of mine Zach, aka *Fussing*, went viral on TikTok for a particularly fiery noise set. It's nothing new for noise artists to exit their niche and fall victim to normie discourse, especially those that border on performance art. Same goes with Maxwell Patterson, aka *io*, who co-starred with me in *The Promised End* and serves as my “musical brother” on a recent r/drumming Reddit thread as well as a *Rate Your Music* infamy. But, whatever, I'm thankfully the vernacular keep trucking on because, really, that's all matters of reception, not the art unto itself; let the [redacted]'s combative spirit fuel creation, not upend it.

Matt Farley's response to the zine article

For as long as I've been creating art, I've longed to have my art taken seriously enough that scholars would write about it. In fact, my songwriting partner Tom Scalzo and I used to write scholarly pieces about our own work, which we would share with one another. If academia wasn't writing about us, then we'd do it ourselves!

Of course, for obvious reasons, there's something not entirely satisfying about having to write glowing pieces about your own work. One day, we hoped, an actual scholar would write about us.

And now it's happened! And it was just as wonderful as I'd hoped it would be.

Some artists claim that they never read the comments or the reviews. But not me. I scour the internet daily to read comments and reviews about my work. Why wouldn't I? I'm making this art for an audience. If that audience bothers to articulate their thoughts on the work, I'm gonna pay attention.

Many thanks to JP Meldrum for devoting so much time and energy to putting this piece together. I will continue to read it regularly.

XL Spandex Cocoon
by JP Meldrum

note: I wrote this short story about in 2019. I don't recall the spark of inspiration, but it was always meant to be the guiding light to a film; that film eventually became *In the Land of Fish and Honey*.

I awoke in a pair of oversized gym shorts. I used to be dependent on someone else, a someone kind, a someone bright. Their face a faded cloud. They left only a surreal supposedly. No longer am I warm. I am now the bare interior. I am now the gray light. I begged divine. My distinguished motion: Fetal Stillness.

Courageous, I am not.
Cowardly, no doubt.
I am a caterpillar now.

Fear and rustling leaves. Sounds of creepy crawlies, wobbly winds, but heavy. No, not an existential threat; nature; *animal*. Lusting for lost love and buried buddies. The sound closed in. The sounds grew primal. My instincts ate my dread with jelly. Action. I stood tall and shouted like the mountainman. The sounds moved intuitively. I walked towards it, not thinking of danger, but only self-preservation. I saw a black bear twice my size only once my size away. His back legs erect, his front legs now arms, his eyes transfixed on little me. I was angry. I was miserable. Evidently, he, the blackbear, and I, the caterpillar, ached as much as such creatures could ache. He cooed a guttural seismic gurr, singing his Richter song. The blackbear returned to big-dog. Bark, bark, all fours. Towards me, he glanced pitifully.

He spoke.

"Do you have any honey?" he said.

"Honey?" I replied.

"A sweet, viscous, light brown food." he told me.

"I do not have any honey." I said.

"There is no honey here. I cannot find a beehive, nor a river to fish in" he said with embarrassment.

"I am sorry"

"I am just a lonely black bear. I cannot leave this forest without causing fear and panic. Would you bring me honey?"

"Where can I find honey?"

I thought of transforming to beekeeper. Coated in mesh. Delivering a honeycomb to the sweet creature. I thought of my old self, in those oversized gym shorts, standing by the sea, fishing with my bare hands til I could my arms and legs gave in. But alas, the caterpillar's a landlubber. No seafarer nor beekeep am I.

"At the market, I've been told." he told me. "You can find fish there too".

Yes. I will go. "I will return".

"Thank you, my friend," his voice was like the thing, that feathery thing with wings; I could have sneezed. Friend. How lovely.

I was no longer a caterpillar. I have become a butterfly. But he, the blackbear, was a blackbear no longer. He was a caterpillar now.

I flew to the market. I found the honey. I found the fish. Salmon in its pink love. Radiant skin, glistening scales. Shined like memories anew: Bright, fond, wistful, nostalgic recollections of my someone gone. Longing no longer. I recalled an angel. *The Angel*.

I returned to the forest and brought my friend the food. On a pile of autumn leaves, we eat together. The caterpillar's hunger is just so effervescent, but you'd never notice, for he is so tiny. Newfound youth and hope in his eyes. He thanked me. I thanked him back.

And now, I am no longer a butterfly. I am not *Them*, but like *Them*.

In my periphery, the caterpillar cocooned into my oversized gym shorts.

THE ENIGMA OF NEIL BREEN
an investigation, and report on a 6-movie marathon
by John Ledingham

THE MAN FROM NEVADA...

Who is Neil Breen? Maybe you've heard of him. The Las Vegas real estate agent & architect turned cult director and total independent in his late 40s; the mad genius behind viral hits *Double Down* (2005) and *Fateful Findings* (2013); movies known for Breen's star persona, rambling narrations and uncanny outbursts, shout-speaking, throwing laptops, *throwing salad*; movies whose stories tend to be a delirious mix of action thrillers and new-age-ish 'message movies'; the sort of slouchy, sun burned, dress shirt and jeans guy who gives his lines all the passion of a staff meeting and time and again casts himself as the one-part Jason Bourne one-part Jesus Christ action hero at the center of them in roles that do not just smack of vanity but also seemingly a total *unselfconsciousness* that somehow come back around to being charming.

A cult has formed around Neil Breen as his work, throughout the 2010s, circulated film fan corners of the internet. Practically a whole damn industry has sprung up around making YouTube content on him, a charge lead by channels like RedLetterMedia and YourMovieSucks. His work has become known as much for their stilted acting - not just Breen's but also his rotating, mostly non-professional Craigslist supporting actors - as for their increasingly cheesy VFX, as they've moved more and more into awkwardly composited greenscreen and stock footage over time.

Let me state my case at the start: I am a Neil Breen fan. I've seen all his movies multiple times now, starting with *Double Down* back in 2015. I bought his last movie *Cade: The Tortured Crossing* (2023) off his ancient looking website to months later receive a handmade

DVD-R from a Las Vegas PO Box. Only a little disappointed to find it comes in a coverless CD case without any commentary track or special features. Drunk one night in 2023, I even sent Neil an email, expressing my admiration, and offering to fly myself out to Las Vegas to work in whatever capacity on his next project for free. Neil never got back to me.

You can pretty quickly understand the basis for Neil's cult in clips like the iconic *coffee spill* scene from *Fateful Findings*— in which Neil, acting out a dramatic collapse at his computer desk during a particularly intense session of research, wobbles a full cup of black coffee a full 15 seconds impressively close to brim but not spilling before finally collapsing on his keyboard face first and only then turning the cup over to pour full cup across his laptop and directly into his face with a dying man's whimper. Scenes like this riddle Breen's movies, - probably for a lot of Neil Breen fans, these are as far as their engagement with the movies go, watching these scenes like highlights in "Best of" compilations, and alongside the commentary of YouTube riff tracks - but there's more to them too. A worldview, and a baffling window into a baffling mind. Since his debut in 2005, Breen has made 6-feature length movies⁴, all alike enough to feel like variations on a theme, and taken together feeling like a kind of evolving serial project, each a response to the last, and a reflection of Breen's times.

⁴ as of September 25th, 2025, a 7th-feature was announced, likely to be released next year

THE PROFESSIONAL

By all accounts Breen approaches his work with total earnestness — he is no peddler of *Sharknado* style ready-made “bad movies”. Breen has made his position clear: these are not meant to be ‘midnight movies’ or any kind of cult objects of ridicule. And anyone calling him an Andy Kaufman long con — 5 minutes of listening to this guy talk you will lose any sense of skepticism. This man *believes* in his work.

Breen’s movies are low budget, not no-budget. A distinction he makes himself. Though he doesn’t release exact figures, they’re estimated to cost between \$5,000 and \$20,000 USD each. On each film Breen writes, produces, directs, and stars, but he doesn’t work without a professional crew, paid actors, rental equipment and locations. He does as much by the books as he can, paying out of pocket, supported by his career in real estate. (Though occasionally shooting on location without permits, according to actor Maraud Ford, this side of Breen’s filmmaking is not the image Breen leans into — where for many directors guerilla shooting is a point of pride.) Breen has never had investors and warns indie filmmakers ‘if you wait for investors, you’ll never make your movie.’ (Maybe not true for all indie filmmakers. But has been true for myself as it has for Breen.)

It’s clear Breen takes pride in this professionalism, and he seems to enjoy all the logistics and red tape of a production as much as the storytelling, doing everything from casting, to contracts, to accounting himself. It’s easy to see the transferable skills here learned in years of architecture and real estate.

And for what it’s worth, people in general seem to have *liked* working with him. Actors interviewed on the *My Scene with Breen* podcast are time and again calling him respectful, professional, efficient, and well paying. (Reportedly paying walk-on actors up to \$500 a day in 2005. This may or may not be

representative of usual Breen pay-scale. Actress Victoria Viveiros reflecting on *Fateful Findings* stressed the pay was “not SAG wages.”) Even, surprisingly, Nicole Butler, one of his female romantic leads with the unenviable position of basically *pretending to be Breen’s fantasy girlfriend*. They often even express admiration for his passion and drive, they just don’t know what the hell’s going on with the movies.

While Breen’s movies are surely making their money back these days with the audience he’s amassed in the last decade (Breen claims he never starts a new project until the last one pays itself off), it’s hard to imagine his first few releases paying off as a strictly face value competitors on the straight to DVD market. Even if he likes to describe his movies as intrinsically commercial, you can’t help feel they have always had to be passion projects first.

OUTSIDER STYLE

And here’s the recurring contradiction in Breen’s filmmaking — his stated and apparent aims: seemingly to make smart blockbusters somewhere in the neighborhoods of *Mission Impossible* or *Inception*, (at one point saying the only difference between himself and Hollywood moviemaking is *that he doesn’t live in LA*) and the totally gonzo, erratic, and even abstract (*arthouse*?) movies he delivers again and again. When you hear him talk about his movies he does not seem like a guy trying to make something as crazy as *Pass Thru*, a movie whose triumphant finale is essentially a Cultural Revolution-ish execution of 300,000,000 people based on their positions within society.

Is this some split in his personality? Or is he really just as aloof as he seems, and these radical stories just the *total misapprehension* on Breen’s part of what mainstream audiences want? No way to know.

Self-taught, Breen seems completely unschooled and uninterested in any of the

technical or narrative aspects of conventional filmmaking. He acknowledges no influences, says he has no favorite films or directors. He gives the impression of having made more movies than he's seen. Self-funded, and apparently not primarily for profit, he's not beholden to any studio notes or target markets. Breen goes out and makes exactly the movie he imagines, time and time again. *True* outsider art, in a medium usually too cumbersome for the solo practitioner, and more naturally tuned to collaboration than individual self-expression.

His scripts rarely seem to follow any traditional 3-act structure⁵, or stick to any genre conventions, (political thrillers are not “supposed to” incorporate magic stones, for instance, domestic dramas are not “supposed” to climax with half a conspiracy thriller plot.) He does not write to his budget, his stories often playing out on an apocalyptic scale, and isn't afraid to “tell” instead of “show” or let a cheesy effect do the heavy lifting to tell a story beat. (This only increases the uncanny sense of a middle aged man ‘playing pretend’ in the desert.) Most of his movies kind of swing between sci-fi, the supernatural, crime-action, and heavy handed social/political commentary.

But unlike your standard Hollywood ‘social issues drama’, or the product of a propaganda-ghetto that produces movies like *God's Not Dead* (2014) direct to order for its audience, you can never really put Neil's politics in an easy box, or necessarily even understand what his movies are getting at. He comes down hard against government “corruption” and corporate “corruption”, but never exactly explains what he means by that. He seems to adopt environmental, technocratic, populist,

authoritarian, anarchistic, Christian, and atheist positions willy-nilly. His heroes range from noble pacifists to noble mass-genociders. How much is meant to be taken seriously, how much is meant to be taken as Neil's *own* politics, and how much is just meant as entertainment is never clear. He calls his work “thought provoking”, and it surely is that.

ONE (OR TWO) MAN BAND

In many ways Breen's movies resemble the tradition of *regional* filmmakers and the independent production teams of George Romero and Bill Rebane, being these *total alternatives* to Hollywood style, conventions, and sheen, but unlike in movies like *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) or *Blood Harvest* (1987), you don't really get those cracks in the director's control where some sense of the larger community or regional flavor can make its way in— these things are airtight, micromanaged projections straight from Breen's subconsciousness with supporting cast and collaborators only there to do their jobs and help that singular vision along.

Among his rotating stock of cast and crew Breen counts only one true recurring comrade: *John Mastrogiacomo*, cameraman and editor on all 6 films, and Breen's Left-hand man. Mastrogiacomo appears only once on screen, as a drunk driver in *Cade*, who from his goofy, played up body language, (almost silent comedy acting) seems a bit more winking and “in on the joke” than Neil is.

Mastrogiacomo, operating Spectra Video, his own business out of Las Vegas, I imagine probably met Breen during a real estate photography gig, and I like to imagine how that first interaction went — meeting outside a Las Vegas McMansion some early morning in 2005, ready to go out and try and get this house sold and over the next couple hours, Neil watching over Mastrogiacomo's shoulder as he works the

⁵ Breen writes his scripts out of order, on up to 300 index cards that are later organized into some semblance of linear order. This is pretty much exactly how David Lynch described his ideas-first process of screenwriting from *Eraserhead* on. Only the first of many parallels I see between the works of David Lynch and Neil Breen... but that's another story.

camera making a strange and offhanded request — Mastrogiacomo having no idea that taking up this strange man's offer for a paid weekend gig was going to end up dragging him into 20+ years of work, and a place in independent film history.

THE 6-MOVIE MARATHON

But I'm not just here to sell you on the *idea* of a Neil Breen movie. To refresh my memory on the movies for this article, and maybe to discover something new in the process, me and JP watched all 6 of Breen's movies back to back over the course of a single afternoon and night.

We started at about 1:30pm and went till around 2:00am. Just a few tallboys of Parallel 49 lager, some Domino's pizza, and 11½ hours of pure uncut chronological Breen on a TV in JP's bedroom. It wasn't too rough, the beers helped it along. JP'd seen only the first 3, so finishing *Fateful Findings* was crossing into uncharted territory for him. I was on the verge of tapping out after *Pass Thru* (2016) around 10pm, but after a long pep-talk equivalent look at myself in the bathroom mirror I found my second wind and locked back in for the surprisingly enjoyable 2-part epic finale that was *Twisted Pair* (2018) and *Cade: The Tortured Crossing* (2023).

Granted, we talked over a lot of it, going in and out of analyzing the movies, speculating on Breen's mental condition, trying to find the right words or comparisons to describe him and his weird uncharismatic charisma, (Nic Cage, Steven Seagal, Kevin Costner) and doing further investigative work, like checking photos of Breen at various film festivals for a wedding ring, in other words— *slowly losing our minds*.

DOUBLE DOWN (2005)

Where it all began — the first Neil Breen movie.⁶ The first I ever saw, and in some ways

⁶ Unless it's not. Apparently Breen still holds a copyright on the title *Lawless Obsession* he took out

maybe still be my favorite. *Double Down* doesn't go quite as crazy as some of Breen's later films, and there is an appeal in that. For starters it's probably the most visually beautiful thing Breen and Mastrogiacomo ever shot — on 16mm film no less, which captures its Mojave desert setting in a rich, warm palette with some nice and classically cinematic grain. You don't feel like you're in the world of deep-internet, outsider art quite so much — this *feels* like something you might have accidentally rented at Rogers video in 2005. And spent the first few minutes still thinking this was going to be *Con-Air*.

The stock footage also feels of a much older vintage here, - like it's being taken from old TV news broadcasts and not cooked up as the bare minimum on a Shutterstock production line. There's this kind of warm, *recent-history* look to all its images of aerospace technology and infrastructure — almost like cutaways from *Koyaanisqatsi*, b-roll from *Goldeneye* (1995), or flashbacks to David Blair's weirdo early-internet classic *Wax: Or The Discovery of Television Among Bees*. (1991)

Double Down sees the first iteration of Breen's persona as the anti-hero. A denim vest and black-tanktop clad rogue, genius, ex-US intelligence agent and hacker, whose illegal control of cutting edge satellite technology has given him essentially godlike powers: control of lasers, a force field, and deployable invisibility cloaking. His mission? To shut down the Las Vegas strip from 3 laptops in the backseat of his sedan parked somewhere off-grid in the Mojave.

Kind of small potatoes for a man of his abilities, but it gives him time to also poison the Las Vegas water supply with anthrax, monologue about terrorism and the national security apparatus, discover a mysterious old hermit with an enchanted rock, become involved in some organized crime side missions, and

in 1995. Unclear if any of that movie actually went into production, but it has never been released.

hallucinate his dead wife in drawn out, psychological thriller scenes of actress Laura Hale coming and going like a mirage. He is at some kind of war with the US government, but he is a patriot, reflecting in a sad way on the government's inability to prevent the kind of terrorist attacks he is actively committing. The messaging here is extremely confusing. To what extent we're supposed to sympathize with any of it is unclear.

The plot is hard to even follow in any traditional sense of cause and effect, or read for even the simplest of meanings, like who is this badguy now? and what does he want? and *what* is Breen doing now? *trying to cure a little girl's cancer with his magic rock??* All of this stitched together by Breen's narration makes less of a concrete story than a kind of free-associative, droning poetry — full of skips, lapses, and self-contradictions. It feels in a genuine sense at times, like a bit of William S. Burroughs prose: hardboiled paranoia, derangement, and satire, a back and forth dream logic and scattershot circling of final meanings.

(Part of me wonders if Breen had just disappeared after just this one movie he wouldn't have been taken up by a very different crowd of film fans altogether for this vague, Don DeLillo-ish meditation on military-industrial menace and the unknowability of modern geopolitics... or something...)

It feels at any rate, like some kind of confused reaction to 9/11, and commentary on the War on Terror, though to what end it's hard to know. If by the end of the film Breen's rogue agent has gone from chaos agent to relinquishing his destructive power, it feels less like a redemption than a point of nihilistic frustration. Throwing his hands up and walking away from an untenable situation. But if this is a turn away from mass, individually plotted revolution as a solution to political ills, it's a point of *sanity* Breen will only go on to reverse across his later films and drive only deeper and deeper into.

I AM HERE... NOW (2009)

Breen steps his work up in *I Am Here... Now*, telling a much more complex story than *Double Down*, with a much bigger cast of non-professional actors, a panoramic view of social ills according to Breen, and a cast of intersecting characters with individual stories that weave throughout Breen's front and center alien-Jesus second coming story and Judgement Day trip to where else but the city of Las Vegas.

After a short, trippy, sci-fi coming to earth intro we follow Breen's alien-Jesus (also hinted once and once only at being a cyborg or robot by the electronics shown running up his arms — a secular *Food of the Gods* slant on an otherwise seemingly Christian story) coming to town like a Clint Eastwood vigilante. Preaching not only a message of moral strength against Las Vegas' den of sin, - mainly gang violence and sex work - but also an indictment of corporate greed, the corporate co-opting of governments, and the energy industry's failure to adopt *solar* as a solution to climate change and humanity's onrushing extinction.

Solar energy is really the key to this one. And it's undeniably funny how completely all-in this Jesus-alien is on it and how insistent he is on monologuing a kind of corporate sales pitch for solar while stock footage of the Ivanpah Solar Power Facility basks in its shimmering glory. In one of Breen's most memorable scenes of social commentary, corrupt government workers taking kickbacks from the oil industry cut funding to solar energy research and we follow a scientist go from losing her job, to walking the Vegas suburbs with her friend talking about the financial insecurity of her situation to being immediately reduced to prostituting herself for an assault rifle wielding street gang, whose natural state seems to be standing in a loose circle a dozen feet away from the "Welcome to Las Vegas" sign.

(I do have to wonder if architect and real estate agent Neil Breen's appreciation for solar energy doesn't have to do with some State of Nevada government grants for using solar in new construction. Not that I doubt his earnest concern for the planet and the future of humanity.)

In another great scene, Breen's messiah wheels a man in a wheelchair to the same "Welcome to Las Vegas" sign, whose dream it has always been to see the sign. The implication being like this man is dying or something? And what about the fact that Breen only wheeled him over from about a dozen feet away. (The default distance apparently everyone in this movie maintains from the "Welcome" sign at all times.)

The delirious repetition in this one, of the Jesus-alien's monologues, of Breen's two faces, one human, and one a rubber Spirit of Halloween style mask of a grim reaper type figure, (apparently representing the alien-jesus' human disguise vs. his real face, but I sort of mistook to be some kind of dualistic Yin and Yang) of disconnected dream images like a bloody knife in the desert, and its repeated dripping of blood across the sand in this same pattern, almost resembles the disorienting, stream of conscious stuff of art-filmmakers like Alain Resnais and Marguerite Duras.

After off-handedly revealing himself the original creator of humanity, the alien's mission concludes with his crucifying seven figureheads of Las Vegas corruption, each representing a deadly sin but basically criminal bankers, corporate heads, government officials, and one street gang leader. Much more articulate than *Double Down*'s spy/terrorist reversals and withdrawal ending, *I Am Here... Now* establishes the populist/institutional enemies that will recur through all of the rest of Breen's movies, and posits an evangelical, ubermensch type savior who will deliver the people from these evils through violence — while also leaving the human population in his wake to find

the strength in themselves to resist returning to this kind of corruption — a very Christian sense of free will and sin, though none of the movies going forward will seem to take quite as religious an angle.

For the Breen-curious, I probably recommend this movie as showing the *most* of what Breen's all about, while still having the advantage of being a shot on film spectacular of a nice 2000s vintage.

FATEFUL FINDINGS (2013)

Breen takes a different direction in *Fateful Findings*, turning to the domestic melodrama (at least at first) in the movie that's maybe least like the others. For starters, Breen does not play any kind of superpowered vigilante in this one, but a regular guy, with struggles and flaws (at least... *at first*.) It's an earnest attempt on Breen's part to do some emotional heavy lifting. Alcoholism, drug abuse, adultery, and depression are front and center, portraying a struggling middle class post- 2008 financial crisis. It is also Breen and Mastrogiacomo's first film shot on digital, as well as mostly shot in show-house like interiors, and has a very different look for it.

It's also the most actor-focused of any of Breen's movies, with Breen generously sharing the screentime with a professional supporting cast in character roles that are complex-ish and actually have their own arcs, compared with Breen's usual cast of Craigslist walk-ons in supporting parts.

His cult breakthrough in 2013, *Fateful Findings* boasts scenes like the infamous coffee spill, Breen's destroying his office, throwing books and laptops around, and the totally flat "*I can't believe you committed suicide. I cannot believe you committed suicide. How could you have done this? How could you have committed suicide?*" line reads going viral. Beyond the absurdity and energy of those high points, I think the soap opera stylings, and surface

similarities to Tommy Wiseau's *The Room* may have primed certain "bad movie" audiences to be receptive - looking near enough to something they already loved, but different — it could also just be the melodrama's a more accessible form than the delusional power fantasy for newcomers to get into.

The plot begins with a near-death experience when Breen's novelist protagonist is struck by a car, saved perhaps, by the lucky (magic?) stone he has kept on him since childhood. Not to mention a beautiful doctor who he misses meeting for the way he checks himself out the moment he wakes up, leaving the hospital still bloodied, face covered in gauze. This inciting incident turns out to be a narrative catalyst for the unravelling of two parallel relationships - Breen and his wife Emily (Klara Landrat), and his neighbors Jim (David Silva) and Amy, (Victoria Viveiros) as Breen reconnects with his childhood love Leah, (Jennifer Autry) the doctor who happened to save his life after the car crash.

I can't help but feel sorry for the actresses playing his romantic leads, who time and again he has these zero chemistry intimate moments with, which are uncomfortable enough to have to watch, but in the larger context of these vanity projects generally come off as somewhat disturbing — especially here where one thread of the plot is about his neighbors' teenage daughter seemingly trying to seduce him — which mostly comes off as a pervy kind of self serving. It must be said the actress was 19 at the time, and for what it's worth, there doesn't seem to have been any allegation made against him. But even as a fan of Neil Breen, I would not be giving the full story to ignore the genuine discomfort that comes with his territory.

Anyway the first half or so of the movie goes on as Breen's wife Emily slips into worse and worse drug addiction, as does his neighbor Jim with alcohol, before finally taking his own life, while Breen on the side begins an affair

with doctor Leah (you following this?) — when suddenly it makes a *hard shift* into something more like the first two films, as Breen's protagonist, to this point in the story only ever a novelist in the most generic sense, brooding at his work desk suddenly declares/reveals "*I am going to continue researching government corruption nationally and internationally!*" Maybe there was something to the 8 copies of Bob Woodward's Iraq war book Breen had stacked around his office, though maybe not. The turn comes so fast and furious and without build up or precedent it genuinely feels like Breen got bored with the more subdued domestic drama story he was working and had to fall back on old habits, and let it all out. The following scene of Breen's protagonist leaving a goodbye note to his wife and driving full speed into the desert is about as good a scene of mid-life crisis as has ever been put on film, and the way it represents this sudden shift in narrative makes it all the better.

Now we are in a supernatural world. Where translucent hooded figures in the desert give Breen's novelist an ancient looking ledger, presumably of names of guilty parties in positions of corporate and government power (not unlike the Epstein list) and he is suddenly saving Leah from kidnappers using his newly unexplained ability to phase through walls.

The movie's finale, where Breen, again, a novelist, holds a green screened presidential-style press conference for a giant audience including America's most powerful CEOs and government officials is about as good as the Breen filmography ever gets. A ten or so minute monologue on corruption that concludes in all these CEOs and big wigs one by one declaring their guilt and committing suicide to a roaring crowd of stock footage supporters while Breen smiles. Truly psychotic stuff! Even so, once again this in your face political messaging is not so scrutable. His rhetoric here is as much Occupy Wallstreet as it might be proto-QAnon.

Breen is the everyman's hero in 2013. Immorality *itself* is the enemy. But this is not to be his endgame, as we will see in *Pass Thru*. If it seems like I forgot about the domestic drama by now, it's because the film did too. There is no ending beyond this one. The day is saved. Breen's novelist with the help of desert ghosts has spoken truth to power, and exposed, power has willingly removed itself from existence.

While it feels like a detour in Breen's larger project, I would still call *Fateful Findings* a major Breen movie, even in the context of his larger work, and possibly his best, easily the one I'd most recommend the newcomer. Scenes like the finale, or Breen trashing his office, throwing his salad, three laptops, and eight Bob Woodward books around are sure to entertain.

***PASS THRU* (2016)**

Like a more ruthless retread of *I am Here...* Now, *Pass Thru* once again gives us Breen as a superpowered alien savior, and time traveller from thousands of years in the future posing as a bum in the Mojave desert. Heavily incorporating drone videography (by this time a staple in real estate marketing) *Pass Thru* gives us some of the most interesting and least interesting images of Breen and Mastrogiacomo's career (aerial footage of Breen slowly rotating at the center of a giant rock-spiral formation— good, the endless overhead shots of walking — not so good) and with its CGI tigers and de-emphasis on traditional cinematography, we feel a further inching away from that *Double Down* world that *almost* felt like Hollywood, further toward the green screen heavy work of purely homegrown outsider art ahead of us. Still, this is classic Breen. And clad in all denim, eating canned beans from a can in a broken down Airstream trailer, he has never looked more in style.

Its 2001-like opening of a ape-like early hominid painting the pictographs Breen will later use for time travel give the movie a level of

new-age scifi metaphysics from the get go, as will Breen's alien time traveller arriving in the physical form of the drifter's body, or waking from his sleeper state in conjunction with the passage of a meteor in an ultra-rare astronomical event (a plot point kind of like something from Gene Wolfe's *Urth of The New Sun...*)

The plot has less momentum than anything since *Double Down*, though less than that even. We follow two children and an astronomer in a Steven Spielberg-ish b-plot as they try to follow the meteor passage, while Breen mostly broods, pacing around his trailer and big empty stretches of desert, speaking in ancient aphorisms and bad imitations of ancient aphorisms, talking to his CGI tiger spirit animal, touching rocks and running his hands over cave paintings, and mentoring a woman escaped from a nearby illegal immigration turned kidnapping situation in vague supernatural arts.

Illegal immigration is chief among the issues explored in this movie and seems to take Breen dangerously close to MAGA territory, though the immigrants are explicitly portrayed as victims of both corruption back home and of the cartels who exploit, profit off, and betray them for their vulnerability. Still Breen's conclusion at the end of the film is this: Go back home. Start a revolution to overthrow your corrupt governments. Fix your own country. Not a great look, but credit where it's due, Breen makes a kind of abstract cultural cross-section of the immigrants, crossing an un-named border, where it would have been easy for him to lean into racist stereotypes of Mexican immigration, and or played off the fervor of Trump-era xenophobia around the Southern border.

But besides that one defense, Breen's political philosophy has never seemed so extreme, nor his narrative conclusions been so ruthless. His alien being's climactic move is to magically eliminate 300,000,000 "harmful humans" from the planet in one genocidal swoop, a kind of class-action deal targeting

lawyers, politicians, corporate heads, members of the media, and others. A mass rapture-like event sees them disappeared in cross-dissolve, only to then see them returned grotesquely in mounds and mounds of bodies laid out across the surface of the Earth. And there's some real pitch-black uneasy humor in the emotional triumph Breen pairs with this, even just in terms of score. This is truly the product of a very cracked kind of thinking — and here it is wrapped up like a budget-Spielberg climax. Especially if we think back to Breen's supposedly mass commercial aims in filmmaking. What kind of person thinks this is a popular depiction of heroism? Not even the most evil regimes in history have liked to speak of their genocides as directly as this.

As this all is happening, Breen hijacks a news station (after killing both the anchors in his mass extinction event) and goes on to propound his philosophy to the people of Earth for about ten minutes, in a kind of angrier, eviller retread of the *Fateful Findings* conclusion. Keep in mind this is 2016. Before the first Donald Trump presidential election. But there must have been something in the air for disgruntled, well off white guys in their 50s. And whatever it was, Breen was capturing it here, like Trump did. Again to Breen's credit, though this is paper thin, he *does not* include illegal immigrants in his 300-million headcount of "harmful people", and even now, in the populist fervor of mass murder, he finds the time to speak out against humankind's self-destructive exploitation of the environment. Neither being the moves of any MAGA mainstream.

I would *not* recommend *Pass Thru* to any newcomers to Neil Breen — it's easily one of his most alienating, but I *would* recommend it to any fans who want to see just how far that seed of his disenfranchisement could go.

TWISTED PAIR (2018)

Breen continues the trend from *Pass Thru* into a minimalist digital style, all but leaving reality behind altogether — this one being largely actors green screened onto stock image interiors, or else running around the same stretch of college campus at night reused again and again for a variety of different locations.

Twisted Pair is the first of Breen's 2-part, twin role, Cain and Abel epic completed in *Cade: The Tortured Crossing*. This one tells the story of Cade and Cale, twin brothers abducted by aliens as infants and made superhuman - for reasons I think unknown to both myself and Cade and Cale - by cybernetic and artificial intelligence implants. While Cade takes a righteous path, using his power for good, and settling into a mostly normal, healthy domestic life, fighting organized crime on the side - specifically the incredibly strange, pitch shifted, diamond loving gangster Cooz, whose posse consists of women with Halloween fairy wings surrounded by drag and drop sparkle effects, and a number of seemingly animate cat-shaped table decorations - while Cale has taken to a destructive path of drug abuse, and a kind of morally grey vigilante violence that Breen protagonists in the past have represented, tying up and torturing politicians in a basement.

Breen's lunacy seeming to have reached a crescendo in the last film and broken back toward a much gentler and more palatable territory. In general, this seems a much more sentimental movie than usual, with a surprisingly kind of effecting relationship between Breen and Breen, now looking quite old, despite the kind of characters he's giving himself, and speaking in declarations like: "Everyone has the right to be loved. Everyone has the right to love."

Cade's battle with Cooz and eventual reunion with Cale make up the plot of this film, which culminates with Cooz' destruction, but

ends on a cliffhanger in the relationship between two brothers, who have only just become aware of one another's existence, long separated, seemingly presuming one another dead.

Marking Breen's shift into a Peter Jackson-style warehouse green screen studio, (an 85" x 18" screen in a rented space in LA) about half of this movie is made of awkward composites, with Breen performing action stunts on still, unconvincing stock image backgrounds and getting into fully drag and drop action element combats. This does take a bite out of that classic Breen humor and uncanniness, as there's no longer the foundation of a normal feeling movie for Breen's absurdities to stick out against. It's all madness. It's all Breen. For others though, this might make a kind of pinnacle in Breen's work, and offers a different brand of "so bad it's good" humor, closer in wavelength to the likes of *Birdemic* (2010).

While this is far from my favorite Breen movie, there is still a lot to like in it. I mean even a 60-something year old man playing these action heroes, and especially the hoodie wearing anti-hero who should be a tortured twentysomething in anybody else's movie, is spectacle enough. But coming to old age and late career, lines like "Who am I? What am I? What has happened to us?" spoken from one Breen to another in desperation take on a new significance, and this far into the Breen journey, can't help but kind of move me. And there is a kind of wild late career freedom to the filmmaking here I like — a man with nothing left to prove to anyone, only stories to tell.

CADE: THE TORTURED CROSSING (2023)

The second and final chapter of Cade and Cale's story moves Breen entirely into the digital, with every single scene being shot on green screen, or composed of very soulless, very digital looking stock footage and pre-made graphics like something used to sell nootropics. Again there is

even less grounding force here. We are adrift in pure digital dream-space, and frankly, most of the movie feels more rambling and incoherent than ever. And though I don't think it's altogether "bad on purpose" I do think the increased pressure on Breen and Mastrogiacono to composite everything in Breen's increasingly complex vision may have led to a slight tongue in cheek-ness on Mastrogiacono's side.

(I *did* really enjoy Breen attempting to interact with a staircase within the limitations of his green screen. You can see he can't ascend more than 3 steps and doesn't know where to put his hand to rest on the handrail — but is trying, is possibly watching himself in a monitor off-screen. Then it cuts away to someone "following him" up the same 3 steps and he has himself become a cutout still image pasted somewhere 3/4 of the way up. Amazing.)

Since the first movie, Cade has become a playboy philanthropist and proud long-distance owner of a psychiatric hospital, while Cale has gone further into self destruction and possibly evil. The story begins with Cade checking in on the hospital he sponsors, only to find a nightmare asylum, where doctors commit immoral experiments on patients who do not get better and do not get enough treatment. Now I'm real unclear on this next part, but Cale *may* be somehow behind the evil misuses of Cade's asylum. But again, it's really really not clear.

Some part of the medical system is the target of Breen's critique in this one, but again, not really clear what part or how. Conceivably, he is railing against a misuse of funds, institutions profiting from donors and public funding rather than putting the money to patient care. There also seems to be some critique of a psych hospital's inattention to patient rehabilitation, instead making the mentally ill worse by isolating and objectifying them. But I'm definitely doing some *interpreting* here.

Over the course of the film, Cade trains the patients in his psych hospital in some form

of martial arts, and together they fight off a band of masked, black-clad hostile figures, who also use martial arts. One of the patients, in a final battle, reveals herself to be “the winged warrior” and grows large black and red turkey looking wings coming out her back while fighting. Breen also twice in this movie uses the line “Let’s make this an even fight!” before copy and pasting several versions of himself for backup in a martial arts confrontation. Cade is also revealed to have some kind of link with the supernatural in this film, in the form of a tigress-princess he sees as a kind of guardian angel, and his sparring fight with a fully CGI 3D tiger on a rolling green hill backdrop has been the standout viral scene from this movie.

Cale’s final confrontation with Cade, when it comes, feels long built up, but still not really cause and effect explainable. The mystery of the brothers’ early abduction and purpose is never elaborated on. Cale seemingly racked with regret for his evil ways confesses before Cale in a genuinely strange, vulnerable, and moving performance, (underneath a dollar store beard, against a green screen, & addressed to another version of himself who is looking kind of askew and not quite at him) culminating in his tearful asking his brother to kill him, which he does. And I have to admit, though completely confused by this on a narrative level, there is a lot of emotion and thematic resonance here. I will go out on a limb and say *it is a good scene*.

I will be honest, *Cade* can be a bit of a slog to watch. The detached, all-digital feel, and major incoherence, without too much in the way of big scenes going on is not Breen at his finest. But you have to cut the guy some slack too. He is now 66, and making a movie entirely independent is a lot of fucking work. His best work may be behind him - we may never get another *Fateful Findings* - but I still truly hope this man never stops making movies. I know I will keep on watching them.

5 FEATURE FILM RETROSPECTIVE (2020)

One more movie I should talk about — not part of me and JP’s marathon, but watched over several sittings as research for writing this — yes I am talking about the 5 hour and 40 minute *Neil Breen 5 Feature Film Retrospective* documentary, which is largely composed of Neil sitting on his living room couch, and giving a monotone monologue to the camera about his productions, intercut with clips of the movies. There are lots of fun moments in here, like especially every time Breen pulls out a prop from one of his movies with a sudden eyebrow raise or a slight grin, then talks about “the black cube” or his jean jacket from *Pass Thru* that has “never been washed.” A lot of what I gleaned from Breen’s perspective here was what I wrote in the intro: he sees himself as a professional, he sees his movies as essentially low-budget Hollywood productions. I think it says something that there is no political rant in the retrospective (though there are some jaded warnings that distributors *will* try to rip you off) or any real discussion of the thematic content of his movies. It’s all brass tacks, production, production. If one part of the creative process seems most important to Breen in this doc, it’s surprisingly actually the lighting, where he shares a lot of different setups from his different movies and the visual effects they produced. He seems hands on here, engaged, and more inventive than just watching the movies I had given him credit. Really though if there’s one thing this doc reveals it’s that the enigma of Neil Breen is total — that even with 5 hours and 40 minutes to explain himself Breen still never gets under the surface very far, and we still cannot put a finger on the genius behind or the reasons why these movies exist as they do — we are only left with the work.

10.31.25

**A LONG LIST OF OUTSIDER-ISH
OR OTHERWISE ESOTERIC
ALBUMS
by jp meldrum**

1. 50th Birthday Celebration
Volume 2 - John Zorn and
Milford Graves
2. Re:wired - Kuru
3. s/t - Sissy Spacek
4. Lulu - Lou Reed &
Metallica
5. Her Loss - Drake & 21
Savage
6. Tales Out of Time - Peter
Brotzmann
7. Jerry Garcia Ornette
Coleman
8. Going Place - Yellow Swans
9. Black Vomit - Wolf Eyes &
Anthony Braxton
10. The Ligeti Project II:
Lontano; Atmosphères;
Apparitions; San Francisco
Polyphony; Concert
românesc -Berliner
Philharmoniker
11. Pain of Mind - Neurosis
12. Harry Pussy - Harry
Pussy
13. +/- - Ryoji Ikeda
14. Town Hall, New York
City, June 22, 1945 -
Charlie Parker and Dizzy
Gillespie
15. Earth Awhile - M. Grig
16. Skies Above Skies -
Constance Demby
17. Susurrus - Anthony Tan
18. Futurpiano - Daniele
Lombardi
19. Can Opener's Notebook:
Fish Whisperer - Vylet
Pony
20. 50 Greatest Hits -
Abida Parveen
21. Picnic - Picnic
22. Uma Elmo - Jakob Bro
23. A Collection - Claire
Rousay
24. Hole in the Heart -
Ramleh
25. Flood City Trax - Nondi
26. Jesus is King - Kanye
West
27. Voice of the Rainforest
- Baka Forest People of
Southeast Cameroon
28. Sacred Flute Music From
New Guinea: Madang /
Windim Mabu - Ragnar
Johnson & Jessica Mayer
29. Surf - Philp Jeck

30. Grayfolded - John
Oswald/The Grateful Dead
31. From Whom the Frog
Tolls OST - Kazumi Totaka
32. Sonic Adventure 2
Greatest Hits Revisited -
Sonic4Ever
33. The Uplift Mofo Party
Plan - Red Hot Chili
Pepeprs
34. The Alchemist of Pop
Joe Meek, Vol. 1 - Various
Artists
35. Canticles of Ecstasy -
Hildegard von
Bingen/Sequentia
36. Takeshi Abo KID
Collection~My Merry May -
Takeshi Abo
37. Chair Beside a Window -
Jandek
38. El Tren Fantasma -
Chris Watson
39. M-Series - Maurizio
40. Confield - Autechre
41. Unjust malaise - Julius
Eastman
42. I abused animals -
Heather Leigh
43. Icon Give Thank - Sun
Araw & M. Geddes Gengras
Meet The Congos
44. Environmental Studies -
African Head Charge
45. A Turn of Breath - Ian
William Craig
46. Soundspinning - Ann
Southam
47. Polygon Window -
Polygon Window
48. Soused - Sunn 0))) &
Scott Walker
49. ...Is Doomed - Black
Wing
50. Lines Made by Walking -
John Luther Adams
51. PDCOMP001 - Various
Artists
52. Frantz- General Magic
53. Kesto (234.48:4) - Pan
Sonic
54. Rindik: Balinese
Traditional Bamboo & Flute
Music, Vol. 2 - I Gusti
Made Kecog
55. Mudanin kata - David
Darling & The Wulu Bunan
56. Karen James - Karen
James
57. Kepler - Missionless
Days
58. Far and Wee - Kazuo
Imai
59. Flowersfightforsunshine
- flowersfightforsunshine
60. Emily Montes - Emily
Montes
61. Loreseeker - BBY GOYARD
& DJ Smokey

62. The Passionate &
Objective Jokerfan -
Intensely Personal Songs
63. Jamaican Cult Music -
Various Artists
64. Dog Eat Dog - Joni
Mitchell
65. Black Millenium (Grimly
Reborn) - Mütiilation
66. Lion Piss + Arm
Vulnerability - Genital
Shame
67. Sewn to the Sky - Smog
68. Turiya Sings - Alice
Coltrane
69. OPN
70. Losing the Orthodox
Path - Musci, Venosta &
Mariani
71. Seven Waves - Suzanne
Ciani
72. Songs in the Key of Z
Vol. 4 - V/A
73. Cleaning the Mirror -
Pink Reason
74. Ideas+Drafts+Loops -
Flying Lotus
75. Technoself - Deatoni
Parks
76. Red and Blue - Stefani
Germanotta
77. 間違いの実 / The Fruit of
Errata - Yumbo
78. SUPER EUROBEAT presents
ayu-ro mix - Ayumi
Hamasaki
79. Rhythm & Sound - Rhythm
& Sound
80. Pinegrove - Audiotree
Live
81. Virgo - Virgo
82. Metal Machine Music -
Loud Reed
83. Versions - Zola Jesus,
JG Thrillwell, and Mivos
Quartet
84. The Ascension - Glenn
Branca
85. live action 37 -
Whitehouse
86. 1/2 Gentlemen / Not
Beasts - Half Japanese
87. E2-E4 - Manuel
Göttsching
88. Tigermilk - Belle and
Sebastian
89. Schwarzwaldfahrt -
Brötzmann / Bennink
90. 1017 Thug - Young Thug
91. Mount Eerie - Mount
Eerie
92. Inuit Throat and Harp
Songs: Eskimo Women's
Music of Povungnituk -
Various Artists
93. That compilation of
native singer songwriters

94. Prospect Hummer -
Animal Collective
95. Trans-Central
Connection - Various
Artists
96. Jackie OST - Mica Levi
97. FASTER - Lil Texas
98. White Glove Test - Iron
Lung
99. Live At Wnur 2-6-92 -
The Flying Luttenbachers
100. Scintillating Beauty -
Cat Toren's Human Kind
101. Juke Trax Online Vol.
13 - DJ Rashad
102. Without a Net - Wayne
Shorter
103. Rothko Chapel - Morton
Feldman
104. Last of the Country
Gentlemen - Josh T.
Pearson
105. Winter Break - Dragons
1976
106. Bon Voyage! (Cassette
Memories Volume 2) - Aki
Onda
107. Drums of Passion -
Babatunde Olatunji
108. Sweet Mother - Prince
Nico Mgbara & Rocafil Jazz
109. Music of Morocco:
Recorded by Paul Bowles,
1959 - V/A
110. Sing the Body Electric
- Ponytail
111. Purity - Hate Forest
112. In the Upper Room -
Philip Glass
113. The Firm OST - Dave
Grusin
114. The New World OST -
James Horner
115. A Written Testimony -
Jay Electronica
116. Luminarium - Tape
117. Farewell: Live in
Concert at Sydney Opera
House - Simply Red
118. Soldier of Love - Sade
119. Teenage Dream - Katy
Perry
120. Disappearance - Ryuichi
Sakamoto and Taylor
Duepre
121. BBF - Babyfather
122. Vol .1 Da Beginning -
DJ Paul & Juicy J
123. Fanmail - TLC
124. Thembi - Pharaoh
sanders
125. Christmas in the Heart
- Bob Dylan
126. All the Best, Isaac
Hayes - Mark Kozelek
127. Taking Drugs to Make
Music to Take Drugs To -
Spacemen 3

- | | |
|---|---|
| 128. Bath - maudlin on the well | - Olivier Messiaen / Amici Ensemble |
| 129. The Inalienable Dreamless - Discordance Axis | 141. Electronic Music from 1972-2022 - Carl Stone |
| 130. Mark Hollis - Mark Hollis | 142. Degrees of Freedom Found - Blue Gene Tyranny |
| 131. Scacco Matto - Lorenzo Senni | 143. + (Red Cross, Disciple of Christ Today) - John Fahey |
| 132. Pleasure - Hudson Mohwake | 144. Blood Farm - Ethan WL |
| 133. The Velvet Touch of Lenny Breau LIVE! - Lenny Breau | 145. Altar - Boris & Sunn O))) |
| 134. 64 Movie Review Songs - The Singing Film Critic | 146. Cassette - Viet Kong |
| 135. Hats - The Blue Nile | 147. Ashes 2 Ashes, Dust 2 Dust - Tommy Wright III |
| 136. Us - Peter Gabriel | 148. WLR Leaks and Beyond - Playboi Carti |
| 137. Dreams of Freedom (Ambient Translations of Bob Marley in Dub) - Bill Laswell | 149. Soundtracks for the Blind - Swana |
| 138. Practice Losing Farther, Losing Faster - JP Meldrum | 150. Jesus Blood Never Fail Me Yet - Gavin Bryars |
| 139. Nonsense Piano I - Elan Noon | 151. Right to Be Retarded - Ricky Bascom |
| 140. Quartet for the End of Time; Theme and Variations | 152. The Raincoats - The Raincoats |
| | 153. The Stargate Tapes - Emerald Web |

a little list of outsider cinema not be matt farley or neil breen (compiled by jp and john)

After Last Season (dir Mark Region; 2009)
 I am Sex Addict (dir; Caveh Zahedi; 2005)
 Cosplay Fetish Battle Drones (dir Gregg Golding ; 2013)
 A Sweet and Vicious Beauty (dir. Eric Thornett; 2012)

Reflections of Evil (dir 2002; Damon Packard)
Mumblecore (dir. Tao Lin & Megan Boyle; 2011)
Sick: The Life and Death of Bob Flanagan, Supermasochist (dir. Kirby Dick; 1997)
Center Jenny (dir Ryan Trecartin; 2013)
Still Flowin The Movie (dir. Raed Melki; 2013)
Wax, or The Discovery of Television Amongst Bees (dir David Blair; 1991)
Dracula's Angel (dir Bryan Beasley; 2014)
Dick Tracy Special: Tracy Zooms In (dir Warren Beatty; 2023)
I Think We're Alone Now (dir Sean Donnelly; 2008)
Cinephile Complex (dir. Avalon Fast; 2023)



