

INDEPENDENTLY PUBLISHED BY THE COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS SINCE 1989



MINIMUM SUGGESTED DONATION TWO DOLLARS.
STREET SHEET IS SOLD BY HOMELESS AND LOW-IN-COME VENDORS WHO KEEP 100% OF THE PROCEEDS.
VENDORS RECEIVE UP TO 75 PAPERS PER DAY FOR FREE.
STREET SHEET IS READER SUPPORTED, ADVERTISING FREE, AND AIMS TO LIFT UP THE VOICES OF THOSE LIVING IN POVERTY IN SAN FRANCISCO.

STREET Sheet

APRIL FOOLS 2022



Dave Loewenstein
daveloewenstein.com

FINDING PEACE ON AN SF
MUNI BUS: A STORY OF
RESILIENCE AND TRANSIT

3

A.B.O. COMIX
Art and Comix from LGBTQ+
creators behind bars

OP-ED: SRO
COLLABORATIVES SHOULD
BE CONTROLLED BY
TENANTS NOT LANDLORDS

6

HANK'S STORY:
THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF
SHORT FICTION STORIES

7

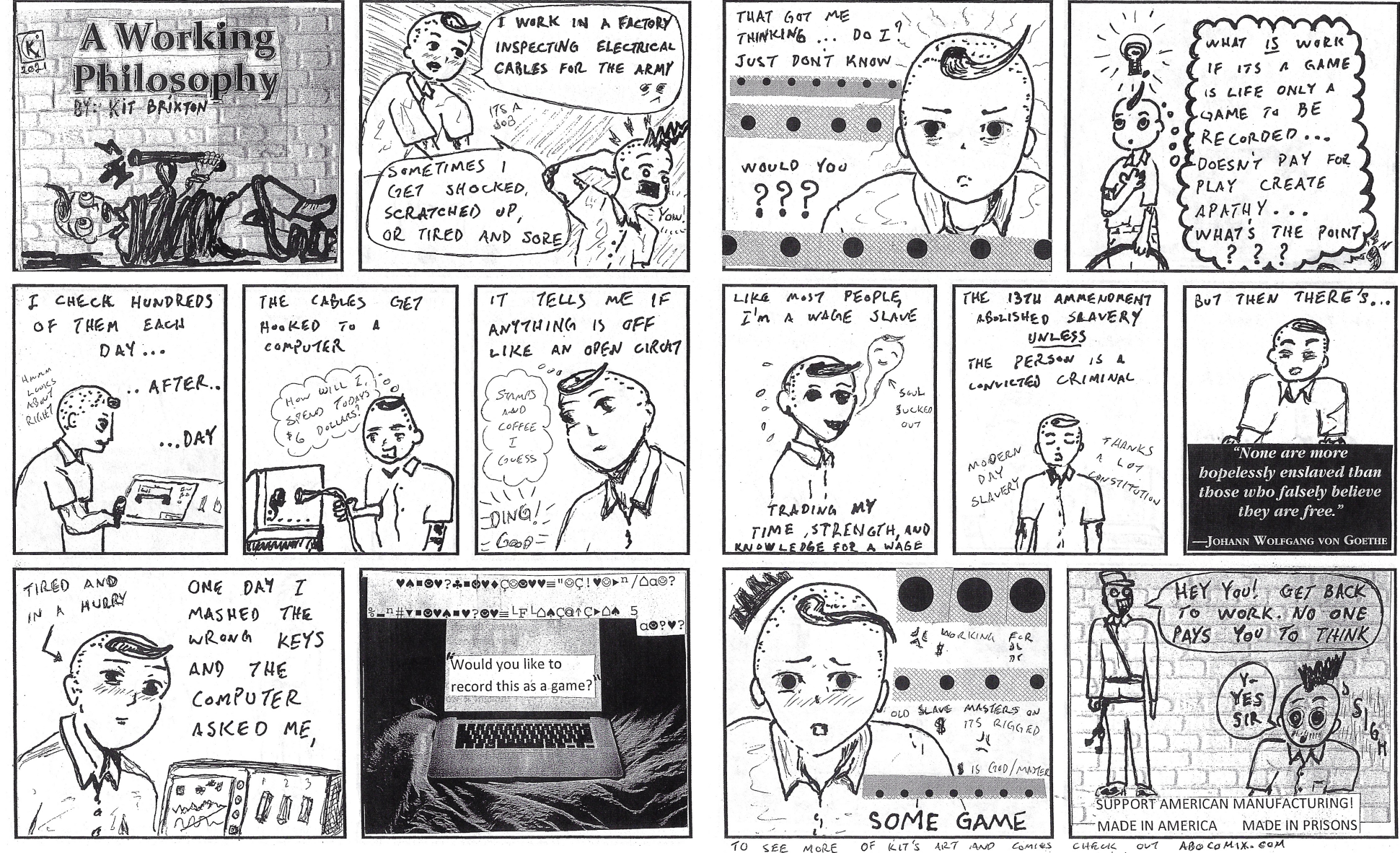
CORRECTION: In our last issue we ran a piece called “My Mother’s San Francisco” which was written by Lisa Willis. We misprinted the author’s name as Lisa Williams.



STREET SHEET IS CURRENTLY RECRUITING VENDORS to sell the newspaper around San Francisco. Vendors pick up the papers for free at our office in the Tenderloin and sell them for \$2 apiece at locations across the City. You get to keep all the money they make from sales. Earn extra income while also helping elevate the voices of the homeless writers who make this paper so unique, and promoting the vision of a San Francisco where every human being has a home.

TO SIGN UP, VISIT OUR OFFICE AT 280 TURK ST FROM 10-4 ON MONDAY-THURSDAY AND 10-NOON ON FRIDAY

Kit Brixton



DONATE TO KEEP STREET SHEET GOING STRONG!

SCAN ME

coalition.networkforgood.com

COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

The STREET SHEET is a project of the Coalition on Homelessness. The Coalition on Homelessness organizes poor and homeless people to create permanent solutions to poverty while protecting the civil and human rights of those forced to remain on the streets.

Our organizing is based on extensive peer outreach, and the information gathered directly drives the Coalition’s work. We do not bring our agenda to poor and homeless people: they bring their agendas to us.

HAVE YOU SEEN TARIQ?

We are looking for Street Sheet vendor Tariq Johnson. If you see Tariq please let us know we’re worried about him!

STREET SHEET STAFF

The Street Sheet is a publication of the Coalition on Homelessness. Some stories are collectively written, and some stories have individual authors. But whoever sets fingers to keyboard, all stories are formed by the collective work of dozens of volunteers, and our outreach to hundreds of homeless people.

Editor, Quiver Watts
Assistant Editor, TJ Johnston
Vendor Coordinator, Emmett House

Coalition on Homelessness staff also includes Jennifer Friedenbach, Jason Law, Olivia Glowacki, Miguel Carrera, Tracey Mixon, Carlos Wadkins, Kelley Cutler, Tyler Kyser, Ian James, Yessica Hernandez, Solange Cuba

Our contributors in this issue include: Dave Loewenstein, Kingsley Price, Kaveh Waddell, Olivia Glowacki, Kurt Schwartzmann, Jordan Davis, Anthony Carrasco, Ace Backwords, Lawrence Hollins, and the incredible A.B.O. Comix artists: Kit Brixton, Gabriella “CoCo” Wyatt, Jorge Gonzalez, Sophia Aleksandra Brett LaFerriere, Horace Thomas, and Billy Thomas

TO SEE MORE OF KIT’S ART AND COMICS CHECK OUT ABOCOMIX.COM



How Muni Saved My Life

Kurt Schwartzmann

The author originally told this story before an audience in San Francisco as part of an evening of performance and storytelling sponsored by Tipping Point Community on November 18, 2021 at Manny's, 3092 16th St. San Francisco. This story has been adapted and edited for your reading pleasure, and hopefully, inspiration.

I think of the places I've slept in in my life—buses, trains, staircases, in between neighborhoods, and the beach. The beach isn't so wonderful when you wake up sunburned and dehydrated, and you don't have a home to go to.

It's 3 in the morning. It's cold, windy and lonely. I've been wandering the streets for days. I felt like a rat in a maze: always moving, but going nowhere. I went to a bus stop in the Excelsior District.

Moments later, a bus pulls up—a 52 night owl. The doors open. The driver says, “Come on aboard.” I explained to her that I have no money for the fare. She said, “Come on aboard anyway. I've gotta drive, and you can keep me company.”

It was the first positive communication I've had in weeks. I looked her in the eye, said “thank you,” and boarded the bus.

Sometimes, when I was homeless, I felt like I was invisible or transparent to society. People would look right through me, or worse, I was in their way. I walked to the back of the bus and sat down.

I was so thankful to be inside rather than outside. It was warm, comfortable and safe. I looked around the bus, and there were other folks like me. I leaned my head against the window and fell asleep. I slept on other Muni vehicles – the N Judah, which goes from the Embarcadero to the beach. It's about a 90-minute ride, so I was able to get 90 minutes of sleep in a safe place.

You might be wondering, “What happened, how did you become homeless?” I had a career. I was a Baker and Pastry Chef for over 20 years. I'd take the 38 Geary to the Cliff House or the 38 downtown to Fog City Diner. I also worked at a wedding cake shop over on Potrero Hill called Cake-work. I worked at Costco mass-production baking. I took the F Market to a bakery in the Castro called Sweet Inspira-

tions. I was a meth addict for over 20 years. In the early '90s I was diagnosed with HIV and given six months to live. I went on disability. I left San Francisco because I couldn't afford it anymore, and moved back to my hometown of Fresno, California.

While I was there one day, someone knocked on my door, and I looked through the peephole. I could see them out of my right eye, but couldn't see out of my left. I panicked and called my doctor, and they rushed me into surgery and tried to save my vision, but it was too late. The virus had severed the optic nerve.

It came on so slowly, quietly and painlessly. It wasn't like I was in a car accident and, BOOM, I lost my vision. It was gone before I knew it happened.

I wear a patch to communicate to the world that I can't see out of my left eye. If I happen to bump into you on the subway or on the train or bus, you would instantly understand that I didn't see you. Lighthouse for the Blind was instrumental in helping me adjust to my new reality.

I moved back to San Francisco, homeless, because I would rather be in San Francisco than in Fresno. But don't get me wrong: I had a wonderful childhood, and loving parents, friends and a big church family—which I still do.

But the first time I drove my little white '65 Volkswagen bug across the Bay Bridge and saw the San Francisco skyline and the Transamerica Pyramid, I breathed a sigh of relief. It was a place where I could express myself freely. I had a refuge from intolerance—a place that felt like home like no other place I ever had or ever could.

While on the streets, I was able to put down my addiction

to meth. It was like chewing a piece of gum for over 20 years, and it became stale so I spit it out. That was over 10 years ago.

One year, I volunteered at a Gay Pride fest. From that experience, I met a really nice guy who invited me to stay with him. So I moved from the shelter I had been in. He had an apartment in Twin Peaks. From the balcony, I could see downtown to the shelter I had stayed in for months. It was located below the Coca-Cola sign that's no longer there (so sad).

As a gay man, I would hang out at a bar called The Eagle, and they were known for their Sunday beer busts. One day a man in full leather walked in. We made eye contact, hit it off and dated. We got married in 2013.

Shortly after, I started taking drawing classes at the City College Fort Mason campus. I would take the 6 Parnassus to the 43 Masonic to get to the class. One of my assignments from my teacher Diane Oliver, who happens to be here tonight, was to create a series. So I created a series—64 drawings, to be exact – in honor of all SF Muni operators, because Muni was there for me when I had nothing.

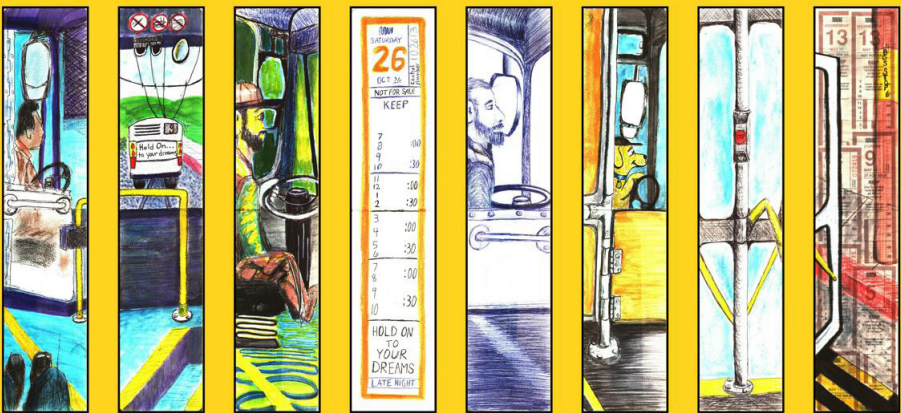
I would draw the Yellow Line that we must stand behind to keep us safe from harm and the driver with the huge side view mirrors, the fare box and everything around them.

Some day, I hope to find the bus driver that befriended me. I haven't seen her since that one night when she was so kind and showed me humanity. I've been looking for her, but I haven't been able to find her. When I find her, I'll say, “Thank you so much, because you were the inspiration for my body of work.”

In closing, I'd like to share that every morning when I awake, I am grateful to have a bathroom to use, to pour



Alana Smith, Kurt Schwartzmann and Rafael A. Calderon at the opening reception of Schwartzmann's exhibit at the First Congregational Church of San Francisco in 2015)





A.B.O. COMIX

A.B.O. is a collective of creators and activists who work to amplify the voices of LGBTQ prisoners through art. They publish comic books and anthologies promoting the work of people inside, and the profits generated go back to incarcerated artists. A.B.O. is working towards compassionate accountability without relying on the state or its sycophants. A.B.O. believes our interpersonal and societal issues can be solved without locking people in cages. Through artistic activism, they amplify the idea that a better world means redefining our concepts of justice.

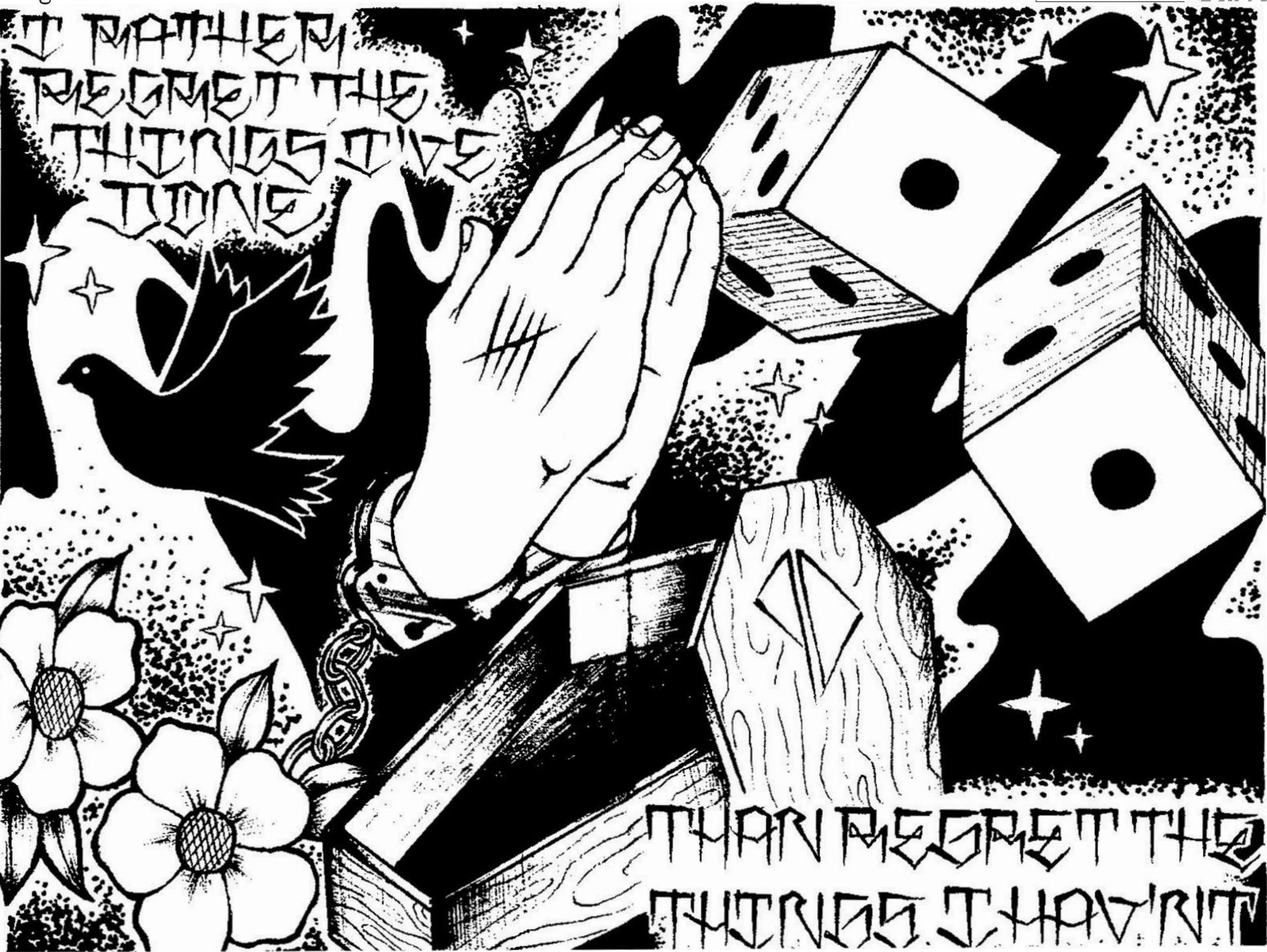
SCAN ME

To purchase one of the many incredible books A.B.O. has compiled, visit them online at abocomix.com or scan this code!



Gabriella "Coco" Wyatt





Sophia Alexsandra Brett LaFerriere



Op-Ed: SRO COLLABORATIVES, THE CITY, AND THE NONPROFITS IN BETWEEN

Jordan Davis

If you are placed in supportive housing, it will likely be a single-room occupancy (SRO) unit, and you will also come into contact, in various contexts, with the SRO Collaboratives. They tend to get tenants plugged in by holding dinners, giving out free ice cream and getting them involved in neighborhood issues, and yes, an SRO Collaborative got me interested in these oft-ignored equity issues. However, if you dig deeper, you will find conflicts of interest, influence peddling and the same corruption that has plagued the Department Of Building Inspection (DBI) in recent years, all of which funded by the City, and my experience has made me believe that there needs to be major changes to how the city helps empower low-income tenants to deal with issues in their building.

So, what are SRO Collaboratives, you might ask? SRO Collaboratives are groups that are funded by DBI through contracts with non-profit organizations that help SROs achieve code compliance, ostensibly with a focus on helping SRO tenants assert their rights. That in and of itself is not nefarious, but where it gets problematic is that the nonprofits who act as fiscal agents are and have served as landlords in permanent supportive housing and affordable housing.

When I asked a source at DBI who does not want to be named why nonprofit landlords are basically the intermediary between the City and SRO Collaboratives, they stated that they needed “established” nonprofits to make this work. I felt no satisfaction in that response. The source also stated that the SRO Collaboratives were funded only to do code enforcement, although DBI would “look the other way” when it came to other things.

First, let’s look at Central City SRO Collaborative, which is a program of major supportive housing provider Tenderloin Housing Clinic (THC). Its main program is hiring tenant organizers for \$200 a month for not only private SROs, but SROs operated by the Tenderloin Housing Clinic. It’s like having a major private landlord like Veritas reducing a tenant’s rent to organize their building however Veritas wants.

The organizers in each building are picked less for their abilities than how well they can toe THC’s line. I have seen buildings go without tenant organizers for months just so they could find someone who would say what the bosses want to hear, rather than what they need to hear. In addition, some of the organizers had claimed that rents would go up if we had laundry facilities in our building (which is not true as rents are subsidized by the city) and have told people that while District 6 Supervisor Matt Haney was making a visit, they didn’t want the tenants talking about issues in the building, rather about issues outside the building, which is beyond the scope of a program centered around building

code enforcement. Also, Central City SRO Collaborative will not let Mission SRO Collaborative go into THC buildings in the Mission, which is sketchy due to THC’s director Randy Shaw being an outspoken supporter of the type of development that the Mission has protested.

And then, there is the Mission SRO Collaborative, run by Dolores Street Community Services (DSCS). To be fair, DSCS was a big supporter of #30RightNow and wanted to see tenants at its sole supportive housing site, Casa Quezada, pay no more than 30% of income towards rent. MSROC was also where I got my start with tenant organizing, and who initially recommended me to the now-defunct SRO Task Force. However, when I wanted to see organizing around the various issues in nonprofit SROs like THC, MSROC staff would regularly block me from talking about it, and when I reapplied to the Task Force, another staffer with the organization told me that Dolores Street told them not to send letters of recommendation about me because of my organizing around nonprofits and the issues I expressed around the Tenderloin Housing Clinic’s reps while on the Task Force.

Then, there is the Chinatown SRO Collaborative, which is funded through the Chinatown Community Development Center, which manages various affordable housing sites. Recently, District 3 Supervisor Aaron Peskin’s legislation expanded the rights of tenants to organize in their buildings, however, tenants in nonprofits were carved out of a major provision that would have provided recognition from tenant associations. I received an email from a stakeholder in the legislation that CCDC sought to carve out nonprofits from that critical provision. This was a real case of “rules for thee, not for me.”

The problems posed by these conflicts of interest are not abstractions; they cause real harm by interfering with and co-opting tenant organizing and creating a culture where tenants can only tell the nonprofits what they want to hear, rather than what they need to hear. The non-profits may assert that the city funds these programs and that they are just the intermediary, however, there remains a perverse power dynamic that stifles any tenant activism that goes against the interests of management, even at the expense of the tenants.

So, what is the solution? I do not advocate necessarily for the dissolution of the SRO Collaboratives, nor the dissolution of housing nonprofits. However, non-profit landlords cannot be the fiscal agent for SRO Collaboratives, and if they must exist, they should be placed under a nonprofit that does not manage any SROs. The City should review the contracts between DBI and the nonprofits who run the collaboratives and re-evaluate their role in tenant organizing and code enforcement. If the City is going to help develop tenant

organizers, it must give them the skills and tools to be independent of nonprofit landlords and be able to organize on their own terms.

Jordan Davis (she/her) is a supportive housing tenant who fought for 30% rents and continues to fight for supportive housing tenants. She can be reached at 3orightnow@gmail.com

Horace Thomas



Billy Thomas



TWISTED IMAGE by Ace Backwards @NMF



HANK’S SPEECH

OR, HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE WRONG

Anthony Carrasco

Despite both parents working full-time, a day laborer and a baker, the Carrasco family struggled to overcome the hardships of homelessness for over ten years in an urban high-cost Southern California housing market. Moving every couple of months to a new motel, Anthony’s grandmother took care of the three Carrasco boys after school, taught them about tea, art, and cheeses, and always believed they deserved better opportunities than life had afforded them. Tragically, the biggest impact she left on the boys was her untimely death. She developed stomach cancer and passed away within six months. Leaving the family \$15,000, they relocated to an affordable rural housing market in Northern California where Anthony was able to attend the same school for more than a year and get a chance at a quality public education. Hank’s Speech is the first installment of a multi-part online short fiction series; to read more, check out anthonycarrasco.com.

Hank works for the Department of Economic Replacement. The Federal Bureau tasked with recycling the surplus human capital of America’s booming metropolitan areas was founded in 2068 after the great crisis of Pelican Bay’s two hundred-twenty.

The homelessness on Pelican Bay, a landmass constructed off the coast of San Francisco to host visiting dignitaries, became so vast that on April 2nd, 2063, two hundred and twenty homeless mothers put their children on a doomed water vessel directed towards the peninsula. Immigration from Pelican Bay was only permitted to residents of Pelican Bay, so this was the only means by which these mothers could conceive a better life for their babies. These children, the youngest only 2 weeks old, were not considered homeless in the eyes of any governmental municipality. Ironically, this was due to their inability to provide proof of residence. Sadly, every one of the two hundred and twenty children perished when Walter Fullman’s seacraft, The Titan, sliced the ship in two. Walter Fullman owned two ships called The Titan; one was the largest ship on Earth, the second, the fastest. It was the latter that terminated all of the passengers aboard the Moisés.

This was not the first time a ship of homeless children was obliterated off the coast of Pelican Bay, just the first to receive national attention. In 2062, a large retrofitted submarine was packed with over three hundred homeless children with a similar objective, but after only 20 minutes all the passengers perished from radioactive contamination from the ship’s fuel cell. Both the Moisés and The Titan were fueled by Fullman brand renewable energy. It was Fullman’s involvement in the massacre that solicited a global spotlight. Walter Fullman, the second richest man to ever wander the Earth’s surface, was running for President of the United States. The polls had him down .00034 percentage points in California, so the industry man hosted a sea race fundraiser to save the spotted owl toad. The people of California adored the spotted owl toad.

Originally called by the press the titan’s massacre, Fullman’s media relations team quickly turned what he characterized as a witch-hunt into an example of social policy failure. Fullman hired a homelessness expert who had survived over a decade of homelessness in Pelican Bay as a child. The expert was Rafel Sans. Sans escaped Pelican Bay via a small clipper ship piloted by a rogue Pelican Bay immigration agent who unbeknownst to Sans was his biological father. Alone in San

Francisco at the age of 12, Sans enrolled in community college and would go on to earn three graduate degrees, the first from UC Berkeley, the second from Harvard, and the third from UC Santa Cruz. His first degree was in Trauma-informed Economics, the second in Social Policy, and the third in Biological Physics. None of the degrees were “paid off” so, with the financial support of Fullman, Sans was awarded his three degrees, after two decades of work in the field, 20 minutes before his first opportunity to testify before a congressional hearing. Sans was a gifted orator so after three days of highly publicized proceedings, the titan’s massacre became the great crisis of Pelican Bay’s two hundred-twenty.

Sans’s thesis was simple. The economy was one big biological organism. Every subcomponent was interconnected and interdependent. Every social and economic relationship is a two-channel relationship in which something is given and something is taken. In college, Hank read Sans’s first book, based on his three dissertations, titled Unhoused: How the Housed Depend on the Homeless. According to Sans, the homeless were placeholders for the economically stable. The homeless occupied space and consumed goods which were, at the time of consumption, deemed undesirable by those who have high levels of power. Sans loose definition of power would become fodder for two generations of critiques and one generation of revivalists.

Sans’ data, however, could not be denied. The most reliable explanation for why homelessness existed in greater or lesser quantities from one location to another was the desirability of the living space. As space became a more desirable place to live, the cost of living would increase accordingly until those occupying the space were unhoused. This process took very little time. The process by which these people would be relocated to a location of decreasing desirability traditionally took much longer.

After being publicly vindicated on Capitol Hill, Fullman became President and created the Department of Economic Replacement, and appointed Sans its first head. The department took as its mission the “replacement” of unhoused children, families, and individuals from regions of high desirability to zones of low desirability. After a rocky start, the DER became a national institution. Hank himself benefited from the program as a child. When the weather of Deet’s Bend transitioned from dry to tropical, the gradual increase in industry, employment, and economic development resulted in Hank’s mother’s inability to afford a home where she, her mother, and her mother’s mother raised three generations of children. Like dead batteries in a flashlight, Hank’s family was replaced.

* * *

Hank was nervous. He had a lunch scheduled with former DER Secretary Sans, former President Fullman, sitting DER chief Haley Watts, and current chief of staff to the President. Hank did not know what the meeting was about.

Sitting patiently in the DER’s premier waiting room, Hank found himself shrinking. His shoulders became tight, his stomach tucked, his arms collapsed around himself, and his chin nailed to his chest. Like a clam, Hank realized that he needed to crack open his shell before his superiors caught him. A study he read in grad school said that people from high socioeconomic backgrounds took up more physical space than their less affluent counterparts. Furthermore, the space they took up was more often than not, asymmetrical. Hank popped his head up, crossed his legs, and put one arm behind his chair. Just then DER chief Watts entered the room laughing alongside Fullman. The two seemed to adore each other. Fullman, between laughs, shook his head as if he could not believe what he was hearing.

Hank stood up and bowed to the two before Watts asked him to take a seat. After exchanging pleasantries, Fullman began serving an ideological soup he had been slow cooking for the last 48 hours. The bowl offered to Hank had a couple of rhetorical questions sprinkled on top.

“Do you know what the biggest difference is between me and my father?” Fullman asked Hank. Hank waited before suggesting that Fullman choose to invest his wealth into public service. Before Hank had finished his response, Fullman interjected, “He made more money. That’s it. The guy made more money than me. Does that make him a better man?” Before even waiting for an answer, Fullman went on. “I consciously worked to make less money than him; did you know that? Now, that was the hard part. I’d say it was the second hardest part of being his son.” Almost in a half-thought Fullman added, “I think the hardest part of being his kid was having to tell people I was the son of history’s richest man.”

Hank was very confused but kept listening ever more intently hoping Fullman would say something intelligible or at least offer another rhetorical opportunity to chime in.

“I looked in the mirror one day and I said, I will never be like my father. I honestly think he made all that money by mistake. I think it was the worst thing to ever happen to him. I knew at a very young age that being the richest man in history was a curse and I had to break it.”

Fullman stood and began walking in circles. “If only my old man knew. Today, I’m older than he ever was, but you know what, that doesn’t matter. The point is that people love me. People love me, Hank. People have love in their hearts for President Fullman. I love that.”

Watts took advantage of Fullman’s emotional swell to interject. “We want you to introduce President Fullman and Secretary Sans at the unveiling of the Moisés monument.”

After a pause of 30 seconds, Hank asked, “Where is Secretary Sans, it’d be an honor to…” “He’s not in good health at the moment,” Watts quickly replied. We need you to introduce these two men at the ceremony. We’ll give you 15 minutes. Tell everyone where you come from and what the DER means to you. Fullman and I agree; you’re our guy. Are you our guy?”

Hank began to clam up but then jerked his left arm forward, placing his wrist on the table, leaning in as if to write something, and with a circular nod the words before, “this is true” escaped his lips.

Fullman, who Hank did not realize was behind him, shot his two boney, pale, and hungry hands over Hank’s shoulders, clasped his shoulders, and shook his shoulders in excitement. “They are going to love you Hank and they are going to love me.”

A QUESTION OF MINE

By Lawrence Hollins

When you and I are far apart
Can sorrow break my lonely heart
I really love you, yes I do
Sleep is sweet, when I’m dreaming of you
All you are is a blooming rose
Night is here, so I’m lest close
With the first words in each line
You will find, a question of mine
Again I say, I love you
Baby
?



Crafts with a Cause

A fundraiser benefitting
the Coalition on Homelessness



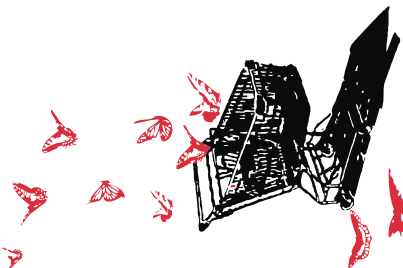
Friday April 22
3:00-9:00pm
@Barebottle Brewery:
1525 Cortland Ave SF 94110



NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 3481
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94188

Coalition On Homelessness
280 Turk Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-346-3740
www.cohsf.org
streetsheetstf@gmail.com

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Coalition on
Homelessness
San Francisco

STREET SPEAK EPISODE 12: A.B.O. COMIX



Did you enjoy the incredible comic art in this issue? Many of these comics were originally collected and published by A.B.O. Comix, an amazing collective based in Oakland that is working to amplify the voices of LGBTQ prisoners through art.

On our latest podcast episode, listen

to Casper Cendre talk about the importance of centering the perspectives of queer and trans prisoners, why comics can be a powerful form of storytelling, and how prisons and homelessness intersect.



SCAN ME

Support for Street Speak comes from our listeners! Please donate to us online at <https://coalition.networkforgood.com>