

The Society Page By Gene Mahoney

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

If you read it in the Herald, you probably know it already: *New (sort of)* - Located at the cross streets of Fillmore & Haight, **The Faight Collective:** retail, workshops, art galleries, private parties, team building events and more. **The Click Studio** – the city’s first self-portrait studio, 1334 Haight Street. **More Lower Haight News:** Club Deluxe has apparently closed. It closed in April, but I just noticed it a few weeks ago. A shame. Not just about my obliviousness, but also about the place closing down.

At the Warfield: Tamar Braxton, 12/29. Jerry Harrison & Adrian Belew’s Remain in Light with special guests X, 12/30. Machine Head, 1/19. Melvin Seals & JGB, 1/26. Dark Star Orchestra, 2/2.

I steered clear of the city during the week the APEC conference was here. They cleared all the bums and drug addicts out of town so American President Joe Biden and Chinese “President” Xi Jinping wouldn’t see them, which was really unfair. Those two men didn’t get to see the fruits of their labor. Xi Jinping sends fentanyl to Mexico and Joe Biden lets it flow across the border. And we get to live among the results.

Actually, I heard some shop owners claim they saw new bums in their neighborhoods that week, so the cops probably just pushed them out of downtown and into other ‘hoods.

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You got sick and tired of quick wars that turned into long occupations in Afghanistan and Iraq? Imagine how those doing the actual fighting felt. Donate anything (*even ten bucks, whatever*) to Warrior Foundation Freedom Station and help our veterans have transitional housing from the military to civilian life. You can volunteer with them, too. All the info is at warriorfoundation.org. They spend so much of the money on the veterans, as opposed to some charity organizations that seem to have a lot of overhead expenses.

Do it today, okay? If you like this newsletter, please send something in. If you think it sucks, please send something in. (Yes, I know I asked you last year. Just do it.)

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Wow, I can’t wait to read this new issue of the Herald! There’s Ace Backwards, James Dylan, Allison Parks... OH BOY OH BOY!



SAN FRANCISCO HERALD

December 2023

SanFranciscoHerald.Net

Some Phil Spector Stories

By Ace Backwards



Most of Phil Spector’s friends weren’t surprised that he shot and killed somebody. They were more surprised that he had made it that long without shooting and killing somebody.

They used to say: “Phil Spector is the only person who has a body guard to protect other people from him.”

Spector’s father committed suicide when he was 9. On his tombstone was written: “To know him was to love him.” Spector would use that as the title of the first hit song he wrote in 1958 at age 17.

Spector accompanied the Beatles on their plane ride to America in 1964 for their first tour. Spector had such a great fear of flying that he paced up and down the aisle for the entire trip. To which Ringo quipped, “Phil is the only person to walk across the Atlantic.”

John Lennon was a huge fan of Spector’s Wall of Sound records. And he was the driving force at bringing in Spector to work on the “Let it Be” album. To which George

Martin quipped: “Produced by George Martin. Over-produced by Phil Spector.”

During his Lost Weekend period Lennon went violently berserk one night on drugs and alcohol and got into a physical altercation with Spector and his bodyguard. They ended up restraining Lennon by tying him down to his bed. . . The next day Spector came to the studio with his face battered with bruises and welts. When Lennon saw him he spent a long time apologizing and prostrating himself to Spector. Until Spector finally told him he had went to a Hollywood make-up artist and had his face done up for a joke. Ha ha.

Sonny Bono got his start in the music business working as a go-fer for Spector. And he studied how Spector got his Wall of Sound in the recording studio (you can hear some of the Spector influence on the instrumentation of “I Got You Babe”). Spector once called up Bono in the middle of the night, woke him up from a sound sleep at 3 in the morning, and asked him if he’d join him for cole slaw at this all-night deli. So Bono got dressed and joined him. Spector sat there glumly with his cole slaw, which he never touched, and never said a word to Bono the whole time.

Spector went to his high school reunion, I forget what year, I think his 30th. Spector spent the whole night sitting by himself at a table in the very back, nursing his drinks, and he didn’t say a word to another person the whole time.

I had an odd fascination with Phil Spector. And I’d regularly Google “Phil Spector prison life” to try and get an idea of what his life was like in the slammer. But almost nothing ever came up. He got punched in the mouth by another inmate and lost a couple of teeth shortly after he was put in the general population. Probably for mouthing off to the wrong guy, and forgetting he no longer has his body guards around to protect him. But after that there wasn’t much news.

From what I read, he was in poor health, had lost the ability to speak, and mostly just laid in bed all day. He had no contact with family or friends, and the only person he kept in touch with in the outside world was with his lawyer (periodically there’d be news items that he was in the process of suing somebody).

He would have been eligible for parole in 2025 at age 86. But he never made it.###

The Old Fool of Moanalua Valley – Part I

By James Dylan

(The names have been changed to protect the idiots.)

My wife and I had been living in Honolulu for several years, which is where this story starts, in January of 2020. We made a decision to leave and head back to the mainland, as Hawaii (well, Oahu) didn't turn out to be the "paradise" everyone said it was. It was way hotter and more humid than what we expected, we were tired of the constant soul-crushing traffic, the crazy high prices for basic things like milk and eggs (\$4 for a mango? There are mango trees everywhere!), the armies of homeless people and addlebrained crackheads sleeping on doorsteps. Yes, the mountains were beautiful, the oceans and beaches were nice ... we decided to head to Colorado for a change. It's like that old saying; "It's a nice place to visit, but you don't want to live there."

Also, we never planned to stay in Hawaii forever. I had just spent 3 years in Qatar and 5 in Afghanistan working for the military, and didn't have a place to live, so I took the opportunity to just fly to Hawaii and get a place - kind of a spur of the moment decision. I had just spent 8 years in the shittiest places in the world, so why not try the so-called "best place in the world." We showed up with a few suitcases in 2016, found a place to live, and gave the place a shot.

We found a nice apartment and lived our lives, going to work, then on weekends, going to the beach or hiking. It was a nice life, but we slowly developed what they call "island fever," i.e. stuck on a small island in the middle of the ocean with limited leisure activities. How many times can you go to the beach? Hike the same trails? And I hope you like Korean BBQ or sushi, because that's about the majority of restaurants here. After a few years we grew tired of it and decided to leave.

Our lease ended two months earlier than my job contract, so we made the decision to move out when the lease ended, pack everything up into a storage unit, and just rent a room until we left Hawaii. I had arrangements with a moving company to box up and ship what little we had accumulated, I made a reservation with a vehicle shipping company to ship my Tacoma to L.A. where we would pick it up, I bought airplane tickets from Honolulu to Hanoi (we would spend a few months traveling around Asia before flying back to the U.S.), and finally I found a guy renting out a master bedroom in a house in Honolulu for \$500 a month.

I found the room on Craigslist, as my wife was busy working and packing. I have to assume she trusted my judgement, but if she had read any of my earlier stories about roommates, she would probably have banned me from the internet and done it herself. In my defense, it was (and still is) extremely hard to find a person willing to rent a room for 2 months - most want 6 months minimum, if not a year.

Anyway, I texted the guy and he said I could come over and look at the room. It was a master bedroom with its own bathroom and bathtub, which was great. The house was old, a typical ranch house built in the late '50s or '60s, but that was standard in Hawaii. It was in a middle-class neighborhood near Aloha Stadium, certainly not bad. The owner was a very old Chinese guy named Mr. Fong, and when I say old, he was in his early 90s, and looked it. He was very tiny and skinny, but very active. He lived on his own, and would take the bus to Chinatown to meet up with his friends and do his shopping, or stay home and putter around in his yard. He seemed very "there" mentally, and seemed to have his wits about him, although he spoke very little English. He said he immigrated to the U.S. when he was in his 20s, so he had been living in the U.S. for about 70 years at this point.

Now, I don't want to sound like a right-winger, but it's always been a pet peeve of mine regarding people who come from other countries and refuse to learn English. Mr. Fong had lived in the U.S. for longer than I had been alive, he had owned a successful business and his own house, but he refused to learn English. This always bothered me. When I went to Germany with the military, even though I didn't have to, I learned German in a few years, taking classes at night, and learning from my German friends. Today I speak it fluently, even though I left Germany in 1995. My wife is from the Philippines, and even though it is much harder than German, I have been trying to learn it. I feel it's just common courtesy or respect to learn your host nation's language. But anyway...

We moved in with only our suitcases and a few household items like my beloved Delonghi espresso machine (we had everything in storage because the moving company said it was too soon to ship everything).

We moved into the room on February 1, 2020 and planned to leave Hawaii on April 1st. Little did I know....

(Insert foreshadowing)...

At first everything was non-eventful. We had a large room and our own bathroom, and we were on the far side of the house, away from the other rooms, which was great. The only thing we shared was the kitchen, as the living room had no TV and no one really hung out there.

There were a few other roommates in the house, but this story is too long, so I'll save them for part II. For this part, I'll focus on Mr. Fong. He and his wife were both in their late 70s, lived in the house, and were enjoying their retirement.

Then she left him. This is why...

Have you ever wondered who falls for those idiotic email scams from someone claiming to be a Nigerian prince, or looking to "transfer" a large amount of money?

Well, that was Mr. Fong.

He naively (or stupidly, or maybe greedily) fell for some hair-brained email scam, and sent every penny he had saved up to a scammer in Africa, wiping out their savings. When his wife found out what he had done, and that they were penniless, she took off.

I found all this out because Mr. Fong once asked if I could scan something into my laptop and email it for him, but he told me it was personal and not to look at it. I told him no problem, and he gave me some documents, keeping them face down. I scanned them, but of course, I did see them. One was an obviously fake "contract" from the "Nigerian High Court of Justice," and signed by the "Refugee Governor," but no name, just a scribble. It read (exactly as printed, just not actual names):

"CONTRACT BOND

The Power of Attorey is given this Day 12th Oct 2011

This Contract Bond made this 12th Oct 2011 between Ibrahim Karine and Mr. Fong in respect of two consignment boxes that Mr. Fong have to been incharge to invest and help them to return back to school."

Another scan was a horribly photoshopped photo of a newspaper with a fake headline. The background image of the newspaper was horribly pixelated, and the fake headline was in crisp, clear text, and if anyone ever believed either of these papers to be real, I would have thought them delusional. The newspaper headline read (again, I'll write it exactly as it appeared, just not actual names):

"The Home care millennium as been Commission by minister of interior, Mr. William .A. Kwesi, Barrister Robert Tette, commission the warehouse of Mr. fung CEO of Home care millennium."

The date on the "contract" was from 2011.

Mr. Fong asked if I could help him send an email, as he didn't have a computer, just a phone. He sat down and logged into his Yahoo account, and I stood in the background as he typed words to the effect of "Dear Mr. Ibrahim, I am again emailing you, why you don't respond? What is happened to our business? I send you all my money, but don't hear from you. My wife, she leave me, because no money. I am old man now, no one to help me." I helped him attach the scans, he sent the email, and signed out.

Damn. The old man fell for one of those emails; I couldn't believe it. And he was wiped out, plus his wife left him. No wonder the house was falling down around him. He had lived a long life, was respected and had a

quarter mil saved up, owned his own home, got a nice little sum from Social Security, and had just settled down to retire. He could have stopped there and lived out his life in peace, but no... he wanted more.

Obviously, it was too late to give any advice, or even call social services, so what could I do. To this day, I just can't get how a guy like him, who ran a successful business and seemed to have all his mental capacities about him, fell for something so ridiculous and scammy. Again, it had already happened, there was nothing I could do about it, and he had no money left to lose, so I just moved on and minded my own business.

The wife and I settled down and waited for our departure from Hawaii, but as you know, things started looking worse and worse because of the pandemic. We started having lockdowns, were told to work from home, and then Delta Airlines told me that they cancelled our tickets, but "not to worry, as we've issued you Delta Credit! Which you can use within 12 months! Aren't you lucky!"

Then, the moving company cancelled the appointment and refunded my deposit, and Matson, the vehicle shippers, cancelled my drop off date. Well, fudge. (I didn't really say "fudge" but it was very similar.) We decided to wait and see what would happen, and just stay in the room for the time being. To say that it wasn't the best time to backpack around Asia was an understatement.###

-To be continued-

Herald Archives: 2009, I think.

Coping with your DUI

By Allison Parks

One of the most brutal donkey punches to a person's life, alongside such tragedies as: birthing a retarded baby, gangrene, and bankruptcy is the dreadful DUI. It's so tragic that they should make sympathy greeting cards for it. *Especially* if you live in California, a DUI is simply a horrid, unforgiving, punishment, that seems to go on forever. It almost makes you wish you had driven into a tree and burst into flames.

Sure you *should* have taken a cab home last night, but that would be costly, you'd have to wait for it to arrive, *and* suffer through wafts of BO cascading out of the driver's pits. Then, what if you end up on *Taxi Cab Confessions* talking about your g-warts? You'd never get laid again! Then the next day you would have to get a ride back to your car. Eff that! You're not *that* drunk. Ugh! Just hop behind the wheel, what's the worst that could happen?

Then suddenly those wrenched lights appear in your rear view mirror. Maybe it's Animal

Control and you merely have a raccoon clinging to your bumper? He will simply ask you to pull over so the little bastard can run into the woods. Nope, it's the fuzz, and you're off to spend a night in the clink.

Although I don't have a DUI myself, I can feel your pain, and I deserve many. I kneel on my little rug each morning, thank Allah for not giving me one, and promise to carry out his wishes in return.

(Note to policemen reading this: if you pull me over drunk, I'll do ANYTHING to get out of a DUI: back door, front door, Cleveland steamer, dirty Sanchez, mow the lawn, do your taxes, wash the squad cars in a gorilla suit, change the litter box, murder your in-laws.)

Many of my friends have received a DUI, and they all say the same things! The feelings intensify with each subsequent DUI. Here, to ease you through the awful transition are the 5 stages of grief – normally helpful when coping with the death of a loved one – applied to your DUI.

Denial: No big deal, I'll get out of this. Their Breathalyzer was broken. That policeman was inept/unfair/not wearing his corrective lenses. Johnny Cochran himself will crawl out of the grave to defend me. Everything will be fine, I will keep my driver's license. This is a small matter that I will squash in a short matter of days.

Anger: How dare they convict me!! I paid for a lawyer and everything! I only had 4 glasses of Boone's Farm! I could still drive just fine! I knew I shouldn't have gone to visit Uncle Cleatus, that rat bastard, this is his fault. Why didn't I take the frontage road, why??

Bargaining: Please, if I could just get it down to a wet and reckless, it would be OK.

Depression: My life is over, I have no driver's license, I'm drowning in a sea of fines, there is no coming back from this, this is the worst thing that could possibly happen to me. Wail!

Acceptance: I'll do my time, and pay the fines. I have no choice. I will eventually emerge from this hell of my own making, poorer, but wiser. After all, everybody makes mistakes, even Mel Gibson has a DUI and he's Jesus' BFF.

I know things look bleak now, but stay strong and get yourself a bus pass or a horse. And for eff's sake don't get another one! If you somehow get a fourth one, pull over, jump out of the car, and sprint to the nearest semi to be run over. The fourth is time to end your life.###

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