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The Society Page

By Gene Mahoney

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

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It's a shame about Ray: In 2014 I ran into former KGO radio legend Ray Taliaferro in North Beach. I saw a guy who looked like him, yelled his name, and he approached and shook my hand. I asked what he was up to since the mass firing of talent at the once proud talk station, and he replied that he was working on some documentaries in Los Angeles. I was going to let it go at that, but I just had to say it: "Ray, I disagree with just about everything you say, but good luck." His smile disappeared and he uttered, "Uh... yeah" before walking off. I must have irritated him because I got "Uh.... yeah." I didn't get his famous "Hmmm... Yes!" in that Paul Robeson imitating Ed McMahon delivery.

Check out the hilarious YouTube video of a caller asking Ray if he's gay.

R.I.P. Ray Taliaferro.

Oh, and a belated R.I.P. to another KGO host I agreed with a lot more – Ray's nemesis, Dr. Bill Wattenburg.

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And one of the nicest guys you could ever hope to meet, my accountant – James Greenbach of One Day Tax

Service in Pacifica, also passed away. Rest in peace.

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I've been meaning to write about these two low-watt radio stations I was listening to, but I have this habit of putting things off, so here it is now.

KCEA, at 89.1 FM, broadcasts out of Atherton and is operated by the Sequoia High School District. It plays Big Band, Swing, and similar music - songs like "Small Fry" by Hoagy Carmichael and "The House of Blue Lights" by Ella Mae Morse and Freddie Slack. You can listen to it online.

KRSA – "Relax 103.3" – plays a song by the Eagles, a song by Phil Collins, and a song by Stevie Nicks era Fleetwood Mac every hour. Songs on heavy rotation include good but forgotten ones by famous artists, like "Emotional Rescue" by the Rolling Stones and "All Those Years Ago" by George Harrison. There's also bad forgotten songs like "Love Touch" by Rod Stewart and "Sara" by Jefferson Starship. Oops, I mean Starship.

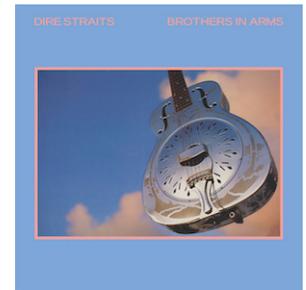
And if you want to transcend to another dimension, man, KRSA plays psychedelic rock. Not the standard Pink Floyd, Moody Blues, or Jefferson Airplane trip. Stuff like "Incense and Peppermints" by Strawberry Alarm Clock, "I Had Too Much to Dream (Last Night)" by the Electric Prunes, and "In the Year 2525" by Zager and Evans. I kept humming "Incense and Peppermints" for a week back in 2001, so I thought I'd interview Strawberry Alarm Clock for the Herald when it was a newspaper and make their day. Then I went on their web site and it claimed that they were the greatest band in the world and the whole tone was really "No

Autographs Please" – so I skipped the idea. Apparently they're still around, playing the Whiskey A GoGo in L.A. "I Had Too Much to Dream (Last Night)" is probably the greatest title for a song ever. At least of that era. It's a lousy song, but a great title for one. Though putting "Last Night" in parenthesis is a bit puzzling. It must have been for people with short attention spans. "In the Year 2525" was my favorite song in kindergarten.

Woops, looks like all that devil music caught up to KRSA - in late 2017 it became K-LOVE, a Christian Contemporary station. So I guess you can't check it out. See, I told you I have this habit of putting things off.

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And now, more old news...



The 2018 inductees to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame were announced a while back, and Strawberry Alarm Clock and the Electric Prunes didn't make it. But Bon Jovi, The Cars, The Moody Blues, Nina Simone, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, and Dire Straits did. Never liked Bon Jovi, The Cars were the first "New Wave" band I liked, I went through a Moody Blues phase, my mother was into Nina Simone during her high school years, I had to look up Sister Rosetta Tharpe, and then there's the odd case of Dire Straits (apparently the band's leader Mark Knopfler refused to show up because his travel expenses there wouldn't be

compensated – eat your heart out, Sinead O’Connor).

Here’s something I wrote in 2016 about the last band mentioned...

Well, it’s been about 31 years since it came out, and I didn’t hear any 30th anniversary buzz about it. That probably suits the mastermind of it just fine, as he voluntarily left the limelight because he thought he was getting too famous.

What am I going on about? The album *Brothers in Arms* by the former rock group known as Dire Straits. This thing just kind of crept up and took everyone by surprise in the summer of 1985 and proceeded to become one of the best-selling albums in history. Dire Straits had been putting out quality music since their inception nearly a decade earlier, but were they anybody’s favorite band? And just two years earlier they had released their weakest effort, a four track EP with a stupid song called “Twisting by the Pool” as its highlight.

Though it didn’t sell more than Michael Jackson’s *Thriller* (nothing has), it did beat *Synchronicity* by the Police, *Purple Rain* by Prince, and other heavyweights of the era. It’s the best-selling album of the 1980s in the UK.

But does it sound like it was recorded in the 1980s? It wasn’t post-punk or dance music. Actually, what was it? The band’s Wikipedia page likens them to pub rock (Dr. Feelgood, Joe Strummer and the 101ers, etc.), the mid-1970s warmup act for punk rock.

So since it came out a decade later, does that make it post-pub? No, that would be punk. Post-punk? No, that would be New Wave. Post-New Wave? Hmm... there’s a thought. Mark Knopfler’s mesmerizing yet understated guitar work alternated between finger-picking blues and folk strumming, and he sang like Bob Dylan with a British accent. So it’s up to you if you want to call it blues rock or folk rock. Or maybe post-New Wave would be more accurate after all. As a then-20 year old who was burned out from the hip New Wave music of my teens, it was refreshing to listen to a

quality rock album that wasn’t hip, by a band that didn’t care if they were hip.

I had just moved to California in the summer of 1985, and the *Brothers in Arms* cassette was a great soundtrack for driving around the Bay Area in a gas-guzzling ’77 Camaro. A friend of mine from Long Island visited, and as we drove down Highway One, the sun was setting, and the album’s title track began to play on the car stereo. I could tell that was the moment my friend decided he wanted to move to the Golden State. Years later he did.

The most famous song off the album is “Money for Nothing.” Knopfler was inspired to write it while frequenting an appliance shop, and the song’s lyrics are the mutterings of an employee at the store, bitter that he’s working there while rock stars are living lives of luxury. Here’s an excerpt:

The little faggot with the earring and the makeup/ Yeah buddy that’s his own hair/ That little faggot got his own jet airplane/ That little faggot, he’s a millionaire

It took a while to find those lyrics online, as some sites have deleted that verse while others have put ***** where the new f-word is.

“Money for Nothing” couldn’t have been recorded in 1955 because its lyrics would have been considered profane. And it couldn’t have been recorded in 2015 because its lyrics would have been considered politically incorrect.

Let’s end this column with something I wrote in 2006:

I also remember how much my Uncle Mike loved Dire Straits. He used to have a few drinks and listen to *Alchemy*, their great live album that had the Ralph Steadman-ish cover art. Maybe Ralph Steadman did draw the cover art, I forget.

What I won’t forget is how two years ago Uncle Mike laid in bed dying, we were all waiting for the inevitable, but he was hanging on longer than expected. He

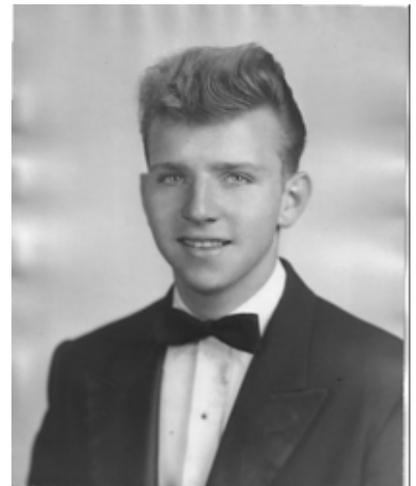
was tough as nails, having grown up in New York City, the son of Irish immigrants, and an ex-Marine to boot. We were still surprised at how long he was hanging on, though.

Then my dad answered the phone, and it went something like this:

“Oh, hi! How are ya? Na, he’s still hanging in there. I tell ya, this guy’s a pain in the ass. Heh heh. Huh? Oh yeah! I forgot about that! Hey, thanks. Bye.”

Then Dad pulled out the Dire Straits *Alchemy* CD and played it. Uncle Mike passed away before the third track, “Espresso Love,” came on.

He was a great uncle. I’m pretty sure he loved me. But I know he loved Dire Straits.###



Uncle Mike in the 1950s

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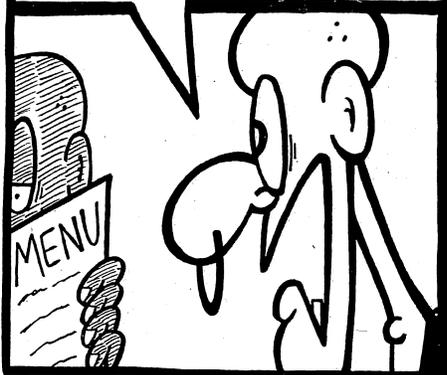
GOOD CLEAN FUN
WRITTEN, DRAWN, & ©2019
BY GENE MAHONEY
"WHITE LIKE ME"



YOU WON'T BE A
VICTIM OF A RACIST
HATE CRIME IN
DONALD TRUMP'S
AMERIKKKA!



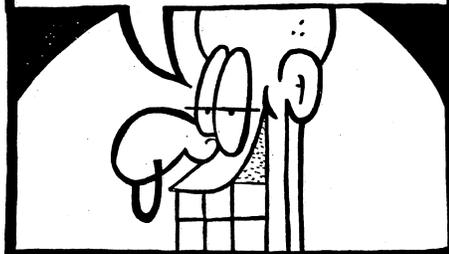
AND WE KNOW THAT
ABSOLUTELY NONE OF THE
RACIST INCIDENTS AFTER
THE ELECTION WERE HOAXES
PERPETRATED BY THE LEFT.



THIS IS MY PARTNER IN
SOCIAL JUSTICE...
AGNES DEVONSHIRE.
I, HOWEVER, NEED NO
INTRODUCTION.



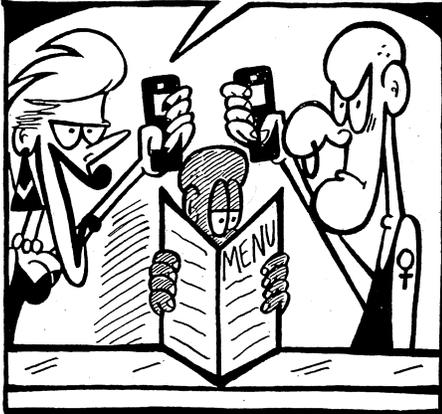
MY NAME IS CHANTEUSE...
FORMER HOST OF THE RADIO
SHOW "O' GAY CAN YOU SEE:
HOMOPHOBIA IN AMERIKA"
ON KPFA IN BERKELEY,
AS WELL AS FORMER COLUMNIST
FOR THE BAY GUARDIAN...
AND FRONTLINES.



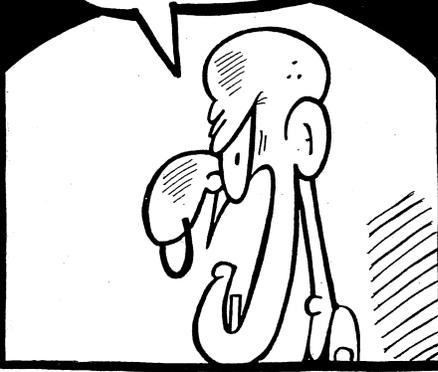
BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THAT
BLACK LIVES MATTER,
SCIENCE IS REAL,
NO HUMAN IS ILLEGAL,
WE WELCOME IMMIGRANTS
AND REFUGEES (EVEN
MS-13 GANG MEMBERS),
ALL ARE WELCOME HERE!



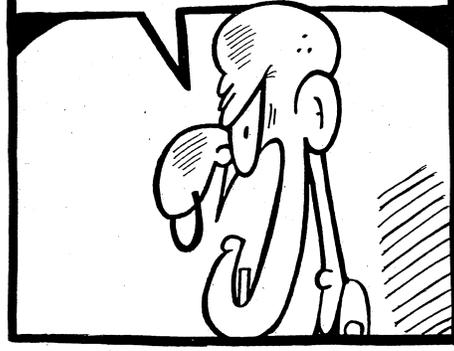
ATTENTION! YOU ARE ALL BEING RECORDED ON OUR SMARTPHONES TO PROTECT THIS PERSON OF COLOR!



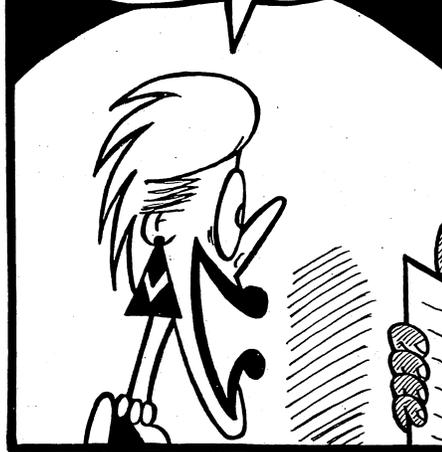
SURE, YOU MAY PASS YOURSELVES OFF AS SAN FRANCISCO WHITE LIBERALS...



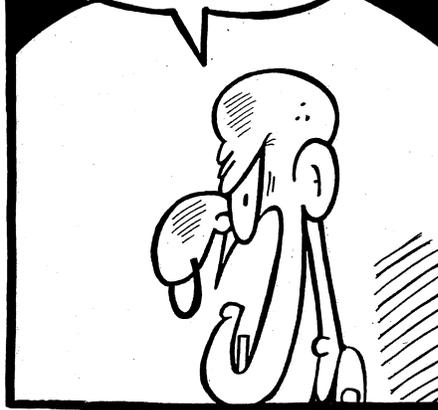
... BUT INSIDE YOU'RE ALL A BUNCH OF RABID RACISTS, HELLBENT ON TURNING THIS CITY INTO A PRE-MANDELA SOUTH AFRICAN HELLHOLE!



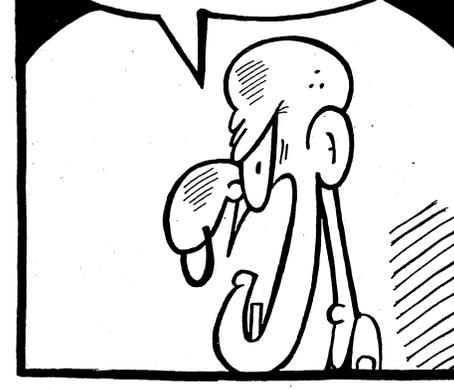
I NEED TO USE THE LADIES ROOM.



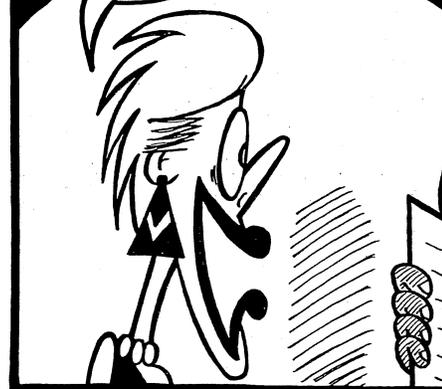
WELL, SO DO I. BUT I NEED YOU HERE, AGNES.



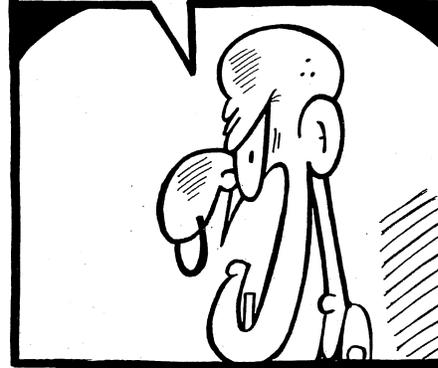
WE HAVE TO MAKE SURE THIS REPRESSED MINORITY DOESN'T FALL PREY TO THIS LYNCH MOB!



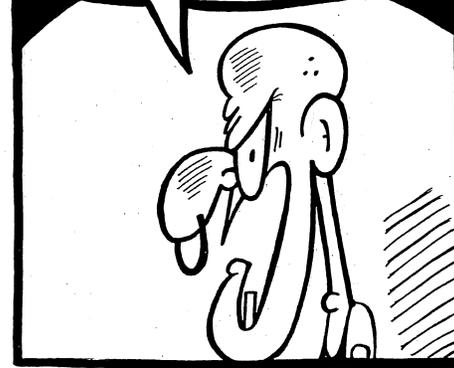
YES! I'LL SOLDIER ON!
'ATTA WOMAN!

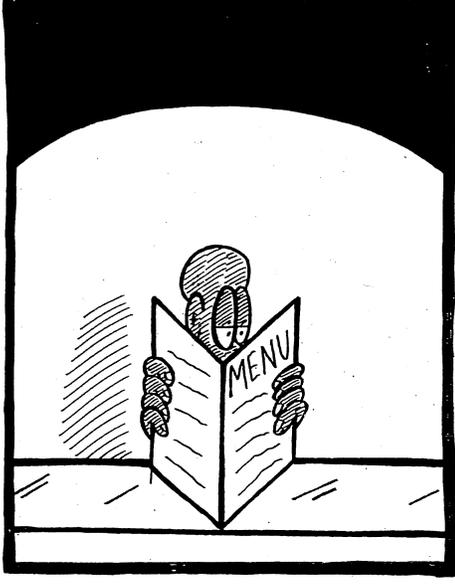
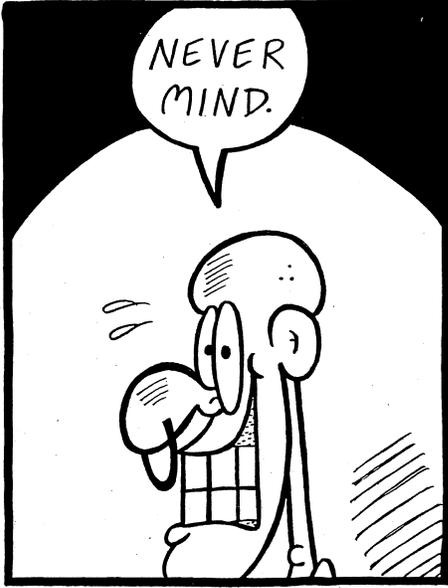
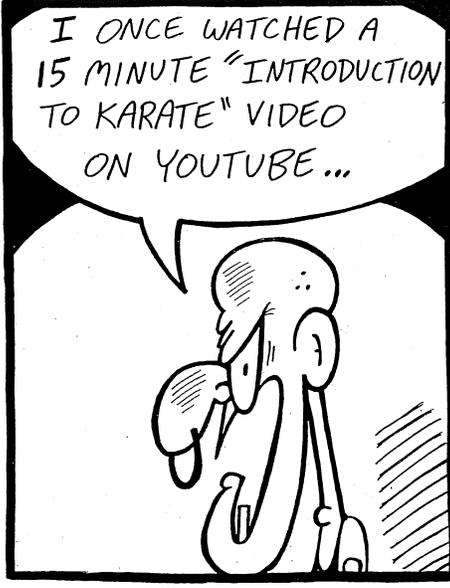


ALL THESE WHITE PEOPLE HERE MAKE ME FEEL LIKE I'M IN A SNOWSTORM! YA HEAR THAT, WHITEY?!



I FEEL LIKE I'M IN THE DONNER PARTY. I'D TURN TO CANNIBALISM, BUT I HATE VANILLA!





The Saga of Colin Kaepernick

By **Ace Backwords**

I'm just a casual football fan. But I've been following Colin Kaepernick's career pretty much from the beginning. And watched just about every game he played for the San Francisco 49ers. So I have a pretty good appreciation for Kaepernick's game and his skill set.

I first became aware of Colin Kaepernick when he was still in college and playing for this little school in Nevada. And he single-handedly demolished the mighty Cal Bears, ran them into the dirt. You could tell he was a special talent from the very beginning.

And then in his very first start with the 49ers he ran for 180 yards (against the Green Bay Packers) and set the record for most rushing yards by a quarterback. Off to a darn good start. Kaepernick completely took the defenses by surprise. No one had ever seen that kind of skill set before — that combination of size, speed and agility.

Then in his second season, when starting quarterback Alex Smith was out for 2 games with a concussion, Kaepernick took over as starter. But then after 2 games everyone assumed Smith would be back as the starter — Smith was a damn good quarterback after all and had taken the Niners to within one play of going to the Super Bowl the previous year. But to everyone's surprise Coach Harbaugh kept Kaepernick as the starter. Harbaugh was kind of a mad-genius football coach. And he couldn't resist playing around with this once-in-a-lifetime talent like Kaepernick. Harbaugh was like Dr. Frankenstein in

his laboratory creating this new monster on the slab. And Kaepernick took the Niners all the way to the Super Bowl that year, and came within one play of winning it.

And then in his second year as starter Kaepernick took the Niners all the way to the NFL Finals before his pass was intercepted by Richard Sherman of the Seahawks in the end zone on the last play of the game, preventing a second trip to the Super Bowl. That would pretty much be Kaepernick's last highlight reel. And the end of his glory years (which really only lasted a year and a half).

In the off season Kaepernick was heralded as the next great NFL superstar and his picture was on the cover of all the football magazines and the experts were predicting he would be the face of the new NFL (which he turned out to be, ironically enough, but in a different way from how they predicted).

But a funny thing happened on his way to the Hall of Fame. In his next season Kaepernick got worse not better. And the Niners slipped to mediocrity at 8-8. Coach Harbaugh knew what the problem was before everyone else. All the other coaches had been studying Kaepernick on film, and they had figured out his weaknesses and how to stop him. Kaepernick was like a rookie phenom in baseball who's called up to the big leagues and starts hitting the ball all over the field. And everyone predicts he will be the next great superstar. But then the pitchers figure out his weakness — the "hole in his swing" — he can't hit the inside curveball (or whatever). So all the pitchers start throwing him the inside curveball, over and over, and now they're all getting him out left and right. And now the phenom has to either adjust and fix the hole in his swing. Or he gets run out of the Big Leagues (which is usually what happens). That's what happened to Kaepernick. The defenses figured out the hole in his game. Coach Harbaugh even hired a full-time coach just to come up with new game plans every week for

new things that Kaepernick could do to keep the defenses guessing. But, unfortunately, Kaepernick didn't have any more tricks in his bag of tricks.

Then the hot topic among all the sports fans became: "What's wrong with Colin Kaepernick??" He had started out so great. And now he sucked. I used to listen to Steve Young's weekly radio show every week. Young was a Hall of Fame quarterback and an expert on quarterbacks. He said, "To be consistently successful in the NFL a quarterback has to master the pocket. Colin hasn't been able to do that. And I don't think he ever will." Kaepernick had always gotten by on his pure athletic skills. But he never really mastered the nuances of quarterbacking. Football is like a chess match after all. The defense makes its move, then the quarterback makes his counter-move, then the defense makes their counter-counter-move, and then the quarterback makes his counter-counter-counter-move. And so on. The quarterback has to be able to instantly "read the defense" and deliver the ball to the hole in the defense. No easy task, because the defenses all try to camouflage their alignments. Not only that, the quarterback only has like two seconds to make all of these split-second decisions after the ball is snapped, while 300-pound monsters are charging at him trying to take his head off. Quarterbacking is one of the most exacting and difficult positions in all of sports. And Kaepernick was unable to master it on the highest level.

The other thing we only realized in retrospect, regarding Kaepernick's initial success. Kaepernick had everything going for him when he first started out. He had a great coach who knew exactly how to use him — how to play to his strengths and minimize his weaknesses. The Niners also had the number one defense in the league. They usually gave Kaepernick great field position. And the team was usually in the lead. So Kaepernick rarely had to march down the whole field and deliver a come-from-behind victory. All he had to do was not make any

mistakes and let the others do their jobs. The Niners were loaded with playmakers at all the skill positions — all-pro receivers like Vernon Davis and Michael Crabtree, and all-pro running back Frank Gore. All Kaep had to do was run around back there and then dump the ball off to one of his stars and let them make plays.

It finally got so bad for Kaep, he ended up demoted to being a back-up to a career back-up. When he finally won the starting job back in mid-season, he still sucked, and only managed to win one game all year (and only barely that by one point). And the Niners ended up a miserable 2-14. Kaep would be 4-20 in his last 24 starts. And that just doesn't cut it in the NFL. So Kaep was released at the end of the season.

When none of the other teams signed Kaep after he was dumped by the Niners, Kaep claimed the owners were “colluding” against him because of his political beliefs — his controversial “sitting for the National Anthem” thing. But believe me, that's not the reason why nobody would sign him. At least not the primary reason. NFL teams would sign Charles Manson if they thought he could win games for them. But the NFL always had this double-standard. If a star player commits a serious felony or creates a big off-field distraction, you can bet some NFL team will get up there and sanctimoniously say: “We believe this fine young man deserves a second chance.” But if an average or mediocre player commits a serious felony or off-field distraction, the same NFL teams will say: “We won't tolerate this kind of behavior in our organization.” And they'll cut his ass so quick it isn't funny. Kaep is no doubt better than a lot of other back-up quarterbacks in the NFL. But back-up quarterbacks are a dime-a-dozen. And Kaep's just not good enough for teams to want to put up with his off-field baggage.

But don't feel sorry for Colin Kaepernick. He made a ton of money,

and had his moments of glory, and accomplished something that transcended sports, and (unlike most players) got out of the game before he was seriously crippled by injuries. And he could still get a ton of money if he gets a good lawyer to take over his lawsuit against the NFL.###

Herald Archives

Editor's Note: This next piece is from 2014. Look for Steven Capozzola's latest book – a collection of his Mr. Fabulous stories, available online. Some are new, most are from years ago in the SF Herald. The story after it is from way back. Must have been early 2000s. Another chapter in Lee Vilensky's adventures as a taxi driver.

The Naked Truth

By Mr. Fabulous

I had found a new agent, and one of the first auditions he sent me on was for an HBO series. I would be reading for the part of a father. It was an older, more mature role than I was used to. My agent told me to dress conservatively, maybe wear a suit.

I flew to New York the next day and took a taxi over to HBO's offices. I checked in at the main desk and rode an elevator up to the 11th floor. The elevator opened and a receptionist greeted me. She walked me into a small waiting area and told me to take a seat.

I was sitting alone in the waiting area when one of the show's production assistants walked through. She was carrying a stack of scripts. She saw me sitting in a chair and stopped. “Hi, are you here for the audition?”

I stood up. “Yes.”

“Can I get you some coffee?”

I shook my head. “No, thanks. A beer, maybe...”

She laughed. “Right. I hear that.”

I nodded. “Yeah, I'm a little nervous...”

She started to walk away. “I'm sure you'll be great.”

I smiled. “Thanks, baby.”

The girl stopped suddenly. She spun around. “What did you say?”

“What's that?”

“Did you call me ‘baby?’”

“Oh...yeah. Is that bad?”

“You called me ‘baby?’”

“I call everybody baby.”

“You're auditioning for GIRLS and you called me ‘baby?’”

“I didn't think—”

She dropped her pile of scripts on a coffee table. “Do you know who I am?”

“Are you one of the PA's?”

“OH-MY-GOD...”

“Baby, wait—”

“OH-MY-GOD.” She put her hand to her head. “I don't believe it...”

I tried to get her attention. “Wait, listen—this is TV, right?”

She was rubbing her forehead and looking at the floor. I waved to get her attention. “This is TV, right? We say ‘baby’ all the—”

The girl stepped in front of me. She stuck out her hand to shake mine. “Hi. My name's Lena. This is my show. You're auditioning for my show. Do you know why I started this show?”

“Listen, I really thought you were a PA—”

“Let me tell you why. So that women wouldn’t have to be called ‘baby’ and take crap from guys like you.”

“I call everybody ‘baby.’ Men, too.”

“Well, you must be very proud.”

She was standing very close. Suddenly, I recognized her. “WAIT—you’re the girl who always takes her clothes off, right?”

She was rubbing her forehead. “Listen, just forget the audition. Just pack up your stuff and leave. Now.”

“I’m sorry.”

She waved her arms. “Please. Just go.”

I picked up my coat. “But you’re the girl who doesn’t wear any clothes, right?”

“What?”

“I mean, that’s you, right? You do all the nude scenes?”

“Yes, that’s me.”

I smiled. “Wow, I’ve seen you...”

“OH-MY-GOD-OH-MY-GOD — Jeff—JEFF!”

A man came running into the room. “YEAH?”

The girl pointed at me. “GET HIM OUT OF HERE. NOW.”

The guy stepped in front of me. “Sir, I need to ask you to leave.”

I already had my coat in my hand. “Sure thing.”

I started to walk to the elevator. I could hear the girl stomping her foot behind me. I pushed the elevator button and turned to look back. She was pointing her finger at me. “You will never work in New York again. Do you hear me? I can promise you that.”

The elevator opened. I stepped in, pressed ‘Lobby,’ and rode the elevator down to the street.###

Shoo Fly

By Lee Vilensky

Young Asian man shyly flags me at the corner of Broadway and Columbus. By shyly, I mean he quickly flicks his wrist in my general direction, as if shooing a fly. I am annoyed by this cab flagging technique, as I am by most peoples’ pathetic attempts to get my attention. How hard is it to step off the curb and calmly and confidently raise one’s hand? You don’t have to do a little dance, or wave your arms frantically as if there’s an impending shark attack, or scream, or show some leg, or stare defiantly, or do anything but look at me and raise your hand high and proud. You know the answer to the question, and as your teacher I’ll call on you if you don’t act retarded.

I pull over and the man gets in the front and says nothing. He is carrying several pornographic magazines, has greasy hair and is clearly retarded. Actually he is probably autistic. He can’t look at me and is shaking. Literally vibrating. I am empathetic to his condition and hope that he gets right back out of my cab. (Empathy does not necessarily make allowances for loss of revenue in times of recession.) I ask him what he wants and he yells, “BARRR!” 3 times. I try to decipher what he’s just said. I don’t think he wants a drinking establishment, but “BARRR” isn’t ringing any bells. He looks out his window and moans, “barrr”.

I ask the man where he lives and get no answer. He can’t look at me. One of his magazines has a picture of a fake blonde woman spreading her ass cheeks, and I wonder what he thinks of that. Bet he can’t wait to get home and flail away with an uninhibited passion that can only be matched by his

pathological introversion. His public face. The one he’s showing me. I point towards downtown and he nods. I ask him if he wants BART, and he utters some kind of assent. I drive him to the Montgomery BART station.

As I pull over at Montgomery and Market, the man gets out and heads down the escalator toward the trains. I jump out of the cab, get in front of him, and ask for my money. He backs away terrified and mutters something I can’t understand. I point to the cab and say, “You owe me what’s on the meter... you have to pay me!”

I pull out a five and show him what it is that he has to give me in exchange for the livery service. I wave the five in his face. He screams and runs down the escalator. I might as well have tried to explain the “infield fly rule” to a shrub. I let him go, laughing at my attempt to make this strange person pay me for something he felt was owed to him. I’m sure his mother and father don’t charge him for rides. This is the only time I’ve ever laughed off a “runner”. Hell, if I had that fake blonde waitin’ for me at home, I’d run too.###



Thanks, Lee. That’s all for this issue. One more time, though... Let’s hear it for Uncle Mike!