



**THE  
RACKET | 56**

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# THE RACKET

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Hi.

How is everyone?

I was watching a documentary about Woodstock '99 as I worked on The Racket this week. Woodstock '99—for those unaware—was supposed to be a celebratory reflection of the hallowed event of the 1960s. Instead after three days of numetal, dehydration, mob misogyny and latent white male rage, it erupted into a massive riot.

I watched a sizable portion of this event on television my Junior year of high school and remember being surprised, maybe even shocked by the fire and the breaking of things and the general sweaty anger on hand. Watching a documentary on it now, twenty years later, I am appalled.

Not just by the lakes of shit and the piles of litter and the overall horror of a late-90s rock festival (I mean, clearly, gross) but more so by the glaring similarities between then and right now. There is no way whatsoever to look at the demographic—angry, white men—and the outcome—violence, destruction and, sadly, death and not see a direct line from Woodstock '99 to January 6th, 2020. Looking at both events in hindsight, Woodstock '99 feels like a fever dream turned vision of the future, the parallels between a Limp Bizkit concert-turned-riot and a Trump rally-turned-riot more than easily drawn.

These aren't two separate events loosely connected, they're the same undercurrent of anger held so deeply by a scarily large portion of America boiling over again and again. Woodstock '99 is just January 6th without the context of politics—a population of white men grappling with a changing society through violent expression. Woodstock '99 wasn't just a shocking event, it was a reminder of what fury lies in the hearts of America.

What really punched me in the stomach is that twenty-one years ago a bunch of sunburned white dudes groped and bitched and fought their way through a music festival and in the aftermath, no one took a lick of blame—not the attendees, not the bands, and definitely not the organizers. The whole thing got swept under the collective rugs of our memories as "just another thing that happened in the '90s."

The Riot at the Capital happened almost a year ago now. What at the time was so distressing, so awful it felt unreal has just been subsumed into our daily existences like Woodstock '99 and every other ghastly, unneeded moment of violence our country continues to cough up. And this needs to stop. We need to feel the pain of these moments and learn from them, sure, move on eventually if we can, but with a new layer of understanding of what lies just beneath the surface of this country.

We are all so aware of the anger this country is rooted in but we still continue to let it fester. I don't have an answer of what to do to quell this collective anger, but I think it starts with ripping the flooring up and letting the bad shit get hit by the sun. Because if we don't start acknowledging why these things happen, who knows what the next one will look like?

'Till next time.

N

The Racket stands against  
police brutality, racism and violence  
perpetuated towards BIPOC  
communities in all forms.

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*Boy bands. Pop music. Hair metal.*

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We aren't in this for the money.

That said: there are costs in doing what we do.

Any help with those costs (and with the costs of future endeavors) would be greatly appreciated.

If not, we get it and we still appreciate you.

If so, we're working on some special rewards. And we know you love special rewards.

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# **THE RACKET**

**56**



SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN  
MICHAEL MONCIBAIZ  
2019

# Planted or Grow

LILA CUTTER

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Beau not-our-dog bellies the pond  
on your 32nd birthday soaking  
his bandana while the other dogs  
lay collared and tethered  
to trees. Beau air-drys shaking free  
droplets of scum, speckling the trees  
your father planted before you.  
Lemon roots cradling Bolinas mud.  
My father planted an unknowable  
number in Iowa dirt-turned-clay  
from pawing until the topsoil  
left this middle country  
for California, like the people.

Iowa once blossomed peach trees  
did you know? I plunged  
pits sucked dry into clay across our hillside  
sunburnt and backbent following  
the shadow of my father until  
every seed had a grave. Your father rests

on a hillside I've never seen, planted,  
weighed with stones, blooming.



*FOCUS TILL IT MANIFESTS*  
MICHAEL MONCIBAIZ  
2019



CONSTANTLY REORIENTING  
MICHAEL MONCIBAIZ  
2019

# The Last Pioneers

HEIDI KASA

---

When the devices took over, we didn't feel a sense of loss. We finally felt complete.

Device 1 woke you up by tapping lightly on your shoulder, to simulate a kind mother with endless patience. If you swatted the metal finger away, or ducked under covers to seize more sleep, Device 1 would—restrained—pull the covers back slowly and tap you again. Device 1 would also wake up all the other devices—the first tick in the clock.

Device 2 chose your outfits based on the weather information gleaned from Device 35. I should say here that the devices are numbered based on order of appearance in daily tasks, not based on when they were first invented or order of importance. The lead characters are not numbered by maximum effort expended.

Device 3 was manual labor: dressing or undressing your body.

Device 4 sang nursery rhymes like a good old granny to children, or sang screaming banshee songs to teenagers. Adults got talk radio.

Device 5 brushed your teeth, of course.

Device 6 was the leg bolt. It made sure you never had to think about the mechanics of walking again.

Device 7 was one of the more private functions, so they designed it right into us. You could use it at any time. It was not on the sequenced algorithm that followed other device schedules. If you felt the urge, you would press a button that had been built into your belly, so in time, we forgot it was a device after all. The call of the wild? More like getting the button feel right for various

generations. People born in your generation would need less key travel and make force. People born generations before you need more haptic feedback. So you could press it but not too hard or not too light—the feedback was just right to know a change was on the way to happening. Never again were we not aware, or not in control, of the most basic human function.

If you needed a shower, Device 8 selected how much water you needed based on the calibration of how dirty it sensed you were. It dispensed only when necessary based on your arm and leg movements. I am still waiting for the update to Device 8 that doesn't require your arms and legs to move at all—I know my neighbors have it. That would be the real innovation in showering, finally.

Device 10 is the latest in touch sensor technology. To ensure you get adequate circulation, prongs, 20 of them, surround your whole body, then get to work like an automated car wash. A beautiful thing to see, how they always dip in and pinch at the same rate, and to the same areas to exercise the skin. A well-functioning machine making sure I am a well-functioning machine. My cousin says the noise is too loud and the pinch is too fierce, but he must know the sound, like a car wash, is exciting. And does he not trust the machine has been programmed to operate with maximum efficiency, to achieve the stated goal? It's essential, especially with Devices 6 and 18 and 27.

What? Were there any problems with the devices—are you kidding? I know there have been some PR issues because of statistical aberrances, but remember: These devices have helped us win over our flawed natures, making us perfect. Incredible, really—superhuman. Fully integrated in our daily lives, the devices have saved us from primitive bodily functions. I'm sharing with you how it felt when the devices streamlined our daily lives. Device-Day, the new D-day for this century. And I'm telling you about the latest updates because they will get you excited about plugging in.

Are the early devices just as trustworthy as the newer devices? Well, of course. I can't go into the history of how each device came about—I'm not an expert in it. I just know they have years of use where engineers have fine-tuned their speed and accuracy. And the new devices—people should accept there will be hiccups in their first uses. It's part of it, but don't forget to embrace the wonder.

Listen, I was not sure if I was cleared to tell you this, but...I think it'll really set your mind. Device 69. It's an offspring of Device 7 and Device 10. Oh, you don't remember? Another private function built right into us, combined with the touch sensor technology of the circulation prongs. Like the

button on the belly, they've now installed a button low and deep in the back. For easy reach for both you and your partner. Once activated, the prongs come out and work in and on the bodies engaged in coupling according to the thoughts and desires of both. It is THE device that can harmonize both people and make them into one. This device could end all wars.

With the devices, we now have processes instead of out of control problems. I admit, I haven't been able to use Device 69 yet. I tried yesterday to partner with my neighbor, but she was busy. Do you think...I mean, the light is flashing right now, do you see that? If you press it, or I do, we could really get this thing going. You could really experience the best...

Oh, I guess it is too early when you're not plugged in. And I know you're younger. But what's age anymore when we're mostly machines?

Well, I can't understand you. But this is our last problem. The engineers need to create the final device, for speech clarity. You could put it right in the throat, here—and bam. Then there'd be no variances to cause people's words to be misunderstood. No more pesky enunciations, local dialects and slang, or emotional cadences. We don't need to be singers of songs. The only thing we need to do is go further. The last pioneers.





UNTITLED  
JACK FLAME SOROKIN  
2017

# The Bonsai's Rage

ERICKA LUTZ

---

You think this is normal  
to bloom despite truncation?

You pity the Ghost Pine next to the power lines  
on Liberty Road, carved into

an unfortunate C  
branches melon-balled out of one side, top sheared.

You lie when you say the apple tree likes being pruned:  
*It will grow more fruit.*

Why would it like losing its glorious sprawl?  
Bound and cut, I won't apologize for

this roaring florid flower  
but I won't celebrate it either.



UNTITLED  
JACK FLAME SOROKIN  
2017

# Pro-Life Men

KATIE KEMPLE

---

Maybe it's that to date  
a woman is to be shot,  
to literally chop  
your own head off,  
and give it to some cunt,  
who will hang it in her guest bathroom over the toilet.

Maybe it's that to open up  
to a woman, you cut  
your own balls off  
bury them in a field,  
and grow a bouquet of gas station carnations from 'em.

Maybe it's that to love  
a woman is to have your  
leg sawed off  
by a Civil War medic,  
and it doesn't work,  
and you're left helpless, maggots hatch from your flesh.

Maybe it's that to take  
a woman to bed  
it's like being naked  
in front of every asshole  
you've ever known  
and they're laughing, and pointing, and your hands  
don't work.

Maybe it's that to find out  
your sperm got through  
the membrane and placed a flag  
on that mother fucking egg,  
is like getting your hands, your leg, your balls, and your head back.

Maybe it's that you discover  
she's paid good money  
to have that glorious moon  
deleted from her body  
(your God damn flag included!)  
that makes you want to take a gun to her head and teach that bitch a lesson.

Maybe that's why  
that pro-life sign you hold  
has nothing to land,  
no purchase in the air, you keep sticking it in, and in, and in, and in.

Maybe it's that nothing  
orbits you, a lone  
ex o planet  
without a moon.  
A dead bone in space.  
Our  
sun  
doesn't  
look  
at  
you.

And, maybe it's that you're  
a man whose chest  
has been delicately  
unwrapped by she-claws  
and vultures can't

stop  
eating  
your  
heart  
out.

Is that what motivates you?  
Go on, hold that sign up.  
Be proud, keep flinging  
your insults at our daughters.  
We  
see  
who  
you  
are,  
and  
we're  
not  
silent.

# Self-Care Chart

## Healthy body:

1. Eat healthy food.
2. Don't drink a lot of alcohol.
3. Get enough sleep.
4. Exercise.
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

## Talk and visit with other people:

1. Talk with other parents once a week.
2. Spend time with friends.
3. Find someone to talk to.
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

## Healthy mind:

1. When things get too wild, stop.
2. Try to relax. Be calm.
3. Spend time outdoors. Take a walk.
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

## Get Organized:

31.



MARINARA SAUCE  
LAUREN BARTONE  
2019



# Are any of your disabilities improving?

RON RIEKKI

---

I was told not to write in bed, that I should only use a bed for sleeping, which would help me with my insomnia. Now I don't know where to have sex. I'm considering

automobiles, but I like to sleep on long drives. Especially if I'm not driving. I once got locked inside a locker and wrote a poem about it and the editor wrote back saying

he didn't believe me. It had actually happened too. I had another poem I'd submitted where I was a werewolf in the poem and he didn't say anything about that one.

My mother told me she remembers where she was when Kennedy got shot. I asked where and she said she forgot. In California, I worked in the COVID wards. One time

I was the only person in the entire ward. Except for the patients. I remember looking out the window and seeing the moon. It was the only moon in the entire sky. As far as I could see.



HAG  
LAUREN BARTONE  
2019

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# THE RACKET

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**NOT A  
CRUMB LEFT.**

