

THE HEAVY



VOLUME 3



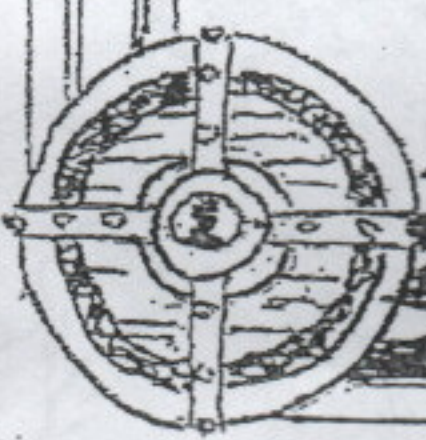
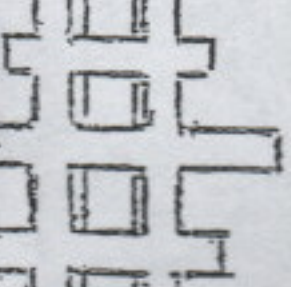
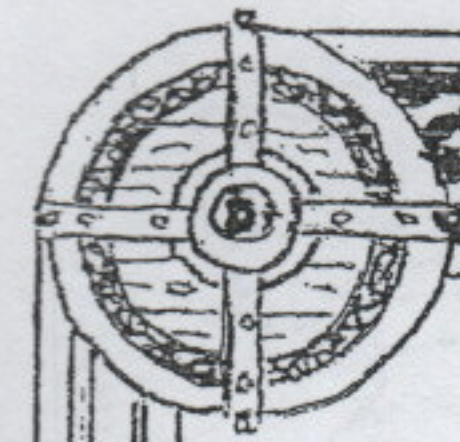
Volume 3

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BJ - Cover Art, Interior Art
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Edited/Assembled - Athánatos



Alot is happening in this volume! There are two excellent genre primers, an article on avoiding AI music, and plenty of reviews. Subscription music is lacking at present so we created space for a new section called...

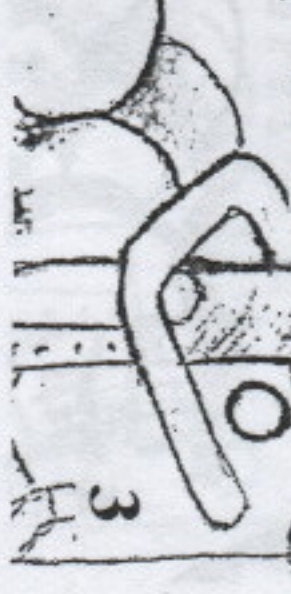
Key Trax

Within Key Trax are reviews of single songs, EPs, and value deals. Besides all of that, in the center of this zine is a full-page tribute to Ozzy. RIP.

This volume spotlights all the women in heavy metal. We aren't pandering, every band & album stands on its own merits. You also won't find us copping a "pretty good...for a girl" attitude. Spiritbox, Heriot, & Oceans Of Slumber are all musical heavyweights. Courtney Laplante from Spiritbox is an in-demand guest vocalist, Heriot earned acclaim from members of Slipknot, and OOS are the best metal band from Texas hands down. Arch Enemy's Angela Gossov achieved legendary success with her band while battling sexism within the scene all at once.

Why spotlight women? Well, because despite this being 2026, sexism & discrimination are still things women confront within our scene & without. Our aim here is to demolish any notion that women can't hang in the metal world. Additionally, a lot changed in the last 10 years of metal & those of you who have been locked up awhile might not even be aware of these awesome bands existence.

Granted many of the bands we mention have front women that are singers, but women are everywhere. Gina Gleason plays guitar and sings backing vocals for Baroness. Jo Bench is the standout bassist for Bolt Thrower, and death metal band Crypta is entirely female.



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- Athana

We REALLY don't
sexism





Depeche Mode-style synth-pop but got heavier as the decade wore on. The influence of metal came to the fore on their respective albums The Land Of Rape And Honey & Rabies. Best examples of their guitar-driven trax are "Stigmata" & "N.W.O." for Ministry (misspelled as Ministry on the tablet) & "Fascist Jock Itch" & "Death" for Skinny Puppy. Other notable bands from this era include Front Line Assembly, started by an ex-member of Skinny Puppy, and KMFDM, who mix mosh pit & dance floor better than anyone (try "A Drug Against War").

Some newer bands like HEALTH have carried industrial metal forward, but sometime in the last decade the label "industrial" got attached to a style of EDM that bears little resemblance to the original meaning or sound. Few listeners today are aware of industrial's ideological roots or influence on the counterculture. Like an artifact from a forgotten civilization, its message has been buried over time... yet the music endures.

- Jayson Hawkins

Wisp & the Shoegaze Revival

My formative rock years fell in that oh-so-sweet time between the late '80s and the mid-'90s. We had Metal, Industrial, Grunge, Punk and Alternative, and rock bands usually fit into one of those categories.

I now have a 23-year-old daughter who is way cooler than I ever was, and she loves to school her old man with her rock knowledge. One thing I've learned from her is how many sub-genres there are. One exploding in popularity right now is Shoegaze, which traces its roots to the early to mid-'90s with bands like Slowdive, Starflyer 59, and Ride, then continued into the 2000s with My Bloody Valentine, Whirr, Nothing, and more.



A pre-requisite for the Shoegaze sound is the contrast between the heavy, fuzzy, loud, and distorted guitars with the floating, lighter-than-air, and sometimes hard-to-hear vocals, creating an atmospheric, ambient, and often gloomy sound that transports its listeners to a completely different place.

Apps like TikTok have enabled the youth to not only rediscover older genres but use the platform to launch new sounds, causing an uptick in younger rock fans. One band credited for this Shoegaze revival is Wisp. Singer Natalie Lu, a computer science major at San Francisco State, released her first single, "Your Face," on TikTok in 2023. The song went viral, receiving tens of millions of views and hitting #8 on Billboard's top rock songs. Her debut album, Pandora, came in 2024, sparking a renewed interest in Shoegaze. It has become so popular that the original Shoegaze bands like Slowdive are playing to bigger audiences than they ever have, while new bands like Just Mustard, Div (pronounced 'Dive'), and Wisp are enjoying a popularity not seen in rock for a long time.

Wisp's new album, If Not Winter, is not available to purchase on the tablet yet, but Pandora and several singles are.

They say everything old becomes new again, and I can't describe how excited and happy it makes me that the next generation is discovering for themselves the awesomeness of rock 'n roll while also creating all the cross-pollinated genres coming out today. What's cooler than all of that is the fact I get to share in this experience with my daughter.

Long live rock 'n roll, in all its old and new forms.

- Joey Neeley



Randy Blithe from Lamb Of God said it best, AI music generators are "plagiarism machines." They are programs that create music by stealing from existing artists and then stitching what they have stolen into a Frankenstein's monster of soulless, vomit inducing evil whose very existence flips two middle fingers into the face of art.

MeiGAN, VampNet, and Mosai are just some of the many "waveform-based generators" that we're going to deem "terminators." Any shifty person can now create music with a text prompt which leads to a host of genuine issues. Floods of AI content, fraudulent music on services like Spotify or Securus, and unfair competition with artists are just SOME of the problems.

Music is the ultimate culmination of human feeling; it's the use of sound to travel to a place words alone cannot. These terminators cannot innovate, improvise, or develop anything new. They must cannibalize our hard work to do anything. AI will not take us to any new place worth visiting and will only cynically serve us the same old simulated slop.

Fortunately, people like those at Deezer Research are actively developing weapons for our war against the terminators. Deezer's big weapon is an AI music detector that can sniff out fakes. The bad news is we do not have access to it inside TDCJ. BUT! We've done a bit of research and found some techniques you can use to detect and avoid fake music.

AI Detection Toolkit

-> Vocals: Often sound too perfect & lack emotion. Also, AI vocals rarely include any breathing. Humans breathe terminators don't.

-> Lyrics: Cliché, generic, & repetitive. Pay attention to lyrics that sound like a 3rd grader's first attempt at poetry.

-> Strange Noises: Artifacts in the recording, time warping, and unnatural/unintentional distortion. Vocals are more easily identified as fake and are subject to more detectable mistakes.

-> Albums: Awful & obvious AI art, bad grammar, albums with the same release year. See Alice Curly & CrimsonTheFox as examples.

Next Level Detection - Ask someone you write or talk on the phone with to look up any artist you find suspect. AI bands don't play live shows & usually have no presence in media.

Use the techniques above to help you identify and avoid buying fake music. Rest assured that The Heavy is leading the resistance against the AI terminators & will not feature or review anything generated by them.

- Athanatos

We're SERIOUS

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THE HEAVY



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In the alt/rock scene of the '90s, there was a commonly held sentiment that we'd be dead before we were 30. From the eyes of youth, 30 just seemed so... old. It was hard to imagine living past that age without selling your soul to a corporate job, buying a minivan, and surrendering to a monotonous middle-class existence in the suburbs. Death seemed a more noble option than carrying on an empty cycle of consumerism & consumption.

While many of our icons from that era have not survived, the majority of Gen X has. Most of us are in our 50s now, somehow, and perspectives have evolved. The songs that defined our youth still play in an endless loop on the radio, still move an audience for whom the teen angst of high school is but a blurred memory. That music captured a certain moment in time, one that spoke to the pathos of a generation. It makes one wonder what the current crop of popular bands says about the mental state of kids today.

This brings us to Spiritbox, a Canadian 4-piece that creates polished metalcore melded with snatches of electronica. What makes the band stand out in a crowded field is frontwoman Courtney Laplante's bipolar vocals & soul-baring lyrics. Their latest effort, Tsunami Sea, has been critically acclaimed as one of 2025's top metal albums and the band's most intense offering so far. Its 11 tracks run the gamut from ready-for-radio cuts ("Deep End," "Perfect Soul") to full-on mosh igniters ("Black Rainbow," "No Loss, No Love").

While I'm not a huge fan of the guttural roaring vocals that have become so common in modern metal, this album has a nice balance of Cookie Monster vs. clean singing. "Crystal Roses" falls in the latter category as a softer track that's getting some radio play by emphasizing Spiritbox's more introspective side. "Soft Spine" goes to the opposite extreme, opening with the scream-along hook "YOU ALL DESERVE EACH OTHER" before blasting into a brutal groove. It's not hard to imagine the pit erupting when the band grinds this one out in concert. "Ride The Wave" blends the band's extremes into a 5-minute emotional rollercoaster from melancholy to rage. Whereas "Soft Spine" is an easy recommendation for Heavy fans, "Ride The Wave" provides the full scope of Spiritbox's power.

As a graybeard listening to this record, what jumps out is the younger generation's willingness to expose their personal struggles. "Back in the day," as we say, we had neither the context nor the courage to talk openly about our mental health. The bands we loved managed to express our anger & alienation in general terms, but today's artists are speaking directly to issues that we weren't yet comfortable discussing. As one fan said of another new band, Sleep Token, "They have a song for every kind of trauma."

Metal has always been the voice of the disaffected. Well-adjusted kids living a Disney-fied life didn't listen to Sabbath or Slayer. That was our shit, and it often felt like all we had. In expanding the language of the genre, Spiritbox and their contemporaries are reaching a new audience that needs this music more than ever. The future of metal is in good hands.



1948-
2025

For being the Prince of
Darkness he sure gave us a
lot of Light.

Tobias Forge +
(Ghost)

Arch Enemy, Wages Of Sin

Remember Hot Topic? It was that store in malls that sold band t-shirts & pants accessorized with chains & spikes a cenobite from Hellraiser would be jealous of. I bought a sampler CD from there around 2002. Ravenous by Arch Enemy was on it & happens to be on Wages Of Sin as well. The album is now considered to be a 'melodeath' classic but in its time it was a watershed moment for future female vocalists. Angela Gossow's vocals proved to every cynical misogynist that testosterone isn't required for false-chord screams akin to Death or Cryptopsy.

Wages was my intro to AE and the dive-bomb gymnastics & catchy hooks of the songs are just as good today as they were then. Getting into a song proves an issue for me when I can't understand the vocalist. Gossow's delivery is as understandable as it is monstrous. \$19.87 for 19 songs is a decent deal for such a classic. Key tracks for me are Ravenous, Behind The Smile, Shadows & Dust, & Heart Of Darkness. Avoid buying Hydra or Snowbound on their own as they're short instrumentals. Sound quality is excellent.

- Athanatos

Oceans Of Slumber, Self-Titled

Oceans Of Slumber formed in 2011 and are the natural evolution of prog metal such as Opeth. I'm not the only one to see a connection, an article published by Noissey goes so far as to call them "a female-fronted Opeth" which I feel is a disservice. That comparison is lazy, although the two may have similarities they are distinct.

Cammie Gilbert-Beverly is frontwoman & uses the full range of her vocal talents to

capture a full gamut of emotions - defiant, mournful, vengeful, - everything is on display. Instrumentation by all of the members is spot-on. OOS is broken up with two instrumental tracks which help control pacing.

Key tracks that caught my ear are 'Pray For Fire' & the sultry 'To The Sea' whose vocals might grace a smoky tavern. The entire album is worth purchasing. Audio quality is perfect.

- For: Fans of Opeth, Rivers Of Nihil, Epica

- Athanatos

King Witch, Shoulders of Giants

A mysterious tune beckons through a fog, beguiling one towards the 'sludge metal' atmosphere from King Witch's spirited coven. Shoulders of Giants' indulgences cross genres and is for fans of 'doom metal', 'sludge metal', and 'traditional metal.'

This 3 song EP enchants with strong, rhythmic cadences, catchy harmonization, and a willingness to drastically ramp up or curtail tempo within a song. The female vocals sing sweet sultry notes that peak with powerful energy. Guitars travail through murky swamps, haunting graveyards, and then explode with electric solos. King Witch conjures a thundering heaviness without becoming bogged down & drowning in the morass. They have earned my emphatic endorsement.

For fans of - Windhand, Witch Mountain, & The Sword.

- Josh Crowder



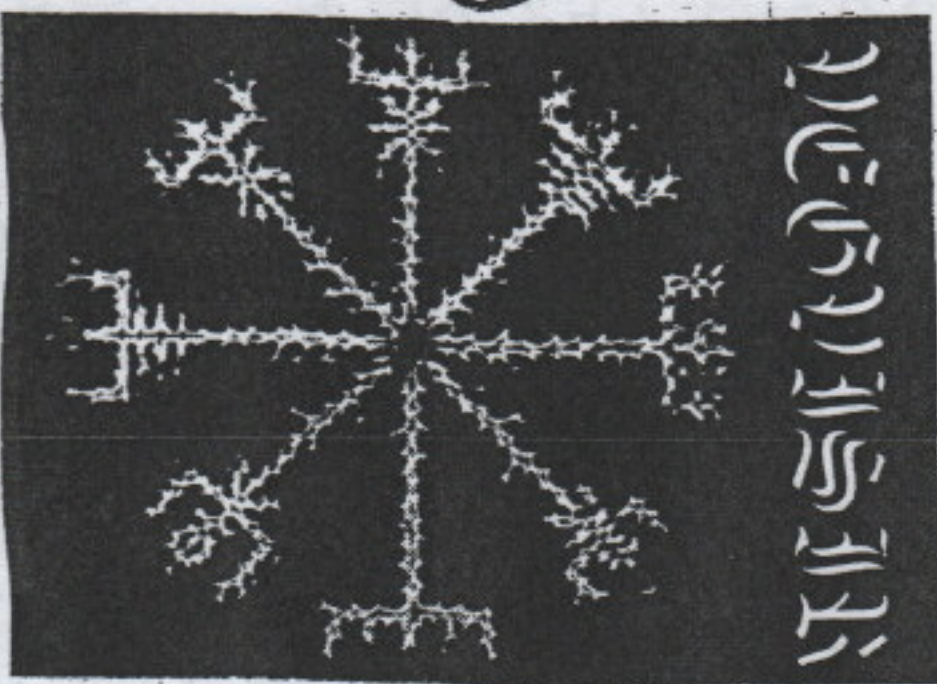
Heriot, Devoured By The Mouth Of Hell

Heriot caters to extreme metal lovers by blending the brutality & intensity of death-metal' with the rhythm & melody of 'metal-core' breakdowns. The result sounds like a demonic horde rupturing forth out of sludgy earth ready for conquest.

Overdriven bass propels Devoured's tonal motif throughout the record, bludgeoning the soundscape with sonorous pulses. Vocal performances replicate the bass's ferocity, oscillating between Debbie Gough & Jake Packer with dichotomous wails & bellows. Gough defaults to a frenetic scream with touches of manic panic which distinguish her vocal stylings from Packer's nearly indiscernable bellow. Gough contrasts her screams with an ethereal singing voice which could echo across the rafters of a gothic cathedral.

Lyricaly, Devoured delves into themes of domination, anguish, & bloodshed. Guitar riffs are grimy with a distortion akin to Cannibal Corpse. Drums pound savagely & set apace appropriate for that demonic horde marching across a battlefield.

The dynamic combination of songs commands the listeners attention. "Foul Void" defines Heriot's sound, foreboding claxons give way to an assault of chugging guitar, behemoth bass, & a harpy's hail which combine to toll impending suffering. "Harm Sequence" & "Sentenced To The Blade" both capture Slayer-like solos that toy with 'thrash' tempos. "Opaline" & "Visage" decelerate & add atmospheric elements for a haunting ambience. A Corrosion Of Conformity inspired solo midway through "Opaline"



MEIKS

Th. Mayfield & J. Hawkins

The authors of the Heathen Handbook and The Rune Book take you deeper into the mythology and culture of our ancestors. Unlike most books on Odinism, Vegvisir goes beyond the basics to explore advanced ideas tied to ancient traditions.

Available now on Amazon.

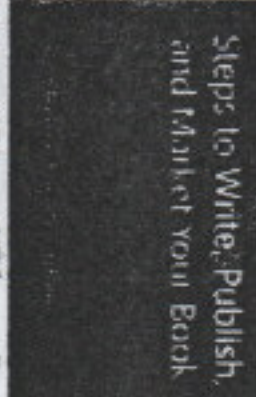
How to Write a Book from Prison

How to Write a Book from Prison

Charles Hill and Jayson Hawkins

After publishing a few dozen books and selling thousands of copies, Hill (Hot Pot Chef) and Hawkins (Dog Days, Next Level Sudoku) take you step-by-step through the process of writing, editing, publishing, and even marketing your own book.

Available now on Amazon!



cements Heriot's sludge to their death-metal. "Lashed" goes left field & throws 'industrial' beats similar to Filth Pig era Ministry.

As far as audio fidelity - the crispness of the cymbals is crushed by compression from the weight of the overdriven bass. However, don't let this stop you from picking up a superb album.

- Josh Crowder

Live Review: In This Moment

A forty-five minute drive south over the mountain from the Shenandoah Valley to Lynchburg--VA, past Devil's Backbone & Wolf Breweries takes you to Phase 2, my favorite concert venue. \$300 will get you a VIP pass & it's worth every penny.

I present my pass & go upstairs to find the lounge is all white, from the plush sofas to the rigid tablecloths. Everyone's attention is focused on the glass wall between the lounge & concert hall. As I approach the bar I see the bartender already working on my usual order since I am here almost every weekend - regardless of who performs. He pours 2 Bacardi on the rocks for me; one to drink at the bar while we chat, & the other to take to my private table on the balcony overlooking the stage. Lights go out & a spotlight hits Maria Brink as she is loved from the ceiling. In This Moment lurches into their hit song Blood.

In This Moment plays 'metalcore' music & I've been a fan of both them & their genre

for awhile. This is my first time to see them live. Maria Brink is the band's front-woman & as a consequence is the focal point of the spotlight. Her performance is athletic & agile with almost every song involving a wardrobe change. At the end of their set Brink & the rest of In This Moment are visibly exhausted. The whole thing is a literal spectacle & the greatest concert I've seen.

This concert was over a decade ago but it is no surprise that In This Moment still tours and records new music. Maria Brink helped pave the way for the women in our current generation. Thanks to her and other bands like In This Moment, today we have acts like Spiritbox, Heriot, & Oceans Of Slumber.

-Editor Note- "Sick Like Me" is also a jam.

-Issac Copeland

Dog Days

An Alternative History of the Counterculture

and Why They're Out to Get Me

a novel by Jayson Hawkins

Dog Days

Equal parts history & novel, Dog Days reveals the hidden connections between bands like TG, Ministry, & Tool with esoteric figures like Crowley, Anton LaVey, & Timothy Leary. As darkly hilarious as it is illuminating, this is an ideal book for Heavy fans.

By Jayson Hawkins
Available on Amazon

Myrkur, "Mañéblót"

Myrkur is one of the best 'black metal' acts ever. Watain meets Wardruna as 'norse folk' collides with icy 'black metal' in spectacular fashion. \$1.51 well spent.

Arch Enemy, "Nemesis"

Complex riffing & an anthemic chorus made this song a live staple. An essential.

Full Of Hell, "Trumpeting Ecstasy"

'Grind' is notoriously difficult to penetrate. FOH seem endlessly creative & push the limits of what their noise/death/grind can emoté. 'Ecstasy' throws haunting vocals, thrumming noise, & a killer breakdown into a key grind song. It's over 3 min & worth the price of \$1.51.

I Prevail, "Blank Space"

Confession - when I first heard this song on 102.3 The Eagle's 'Metal Garage' I rocked out to this song for about 3 years before I discovered this is a cover of a Taylor Swift classic. Screw it, 'Blank Space' is a good song & this is a great cover. Worth it.

Wardruna, "Himindotter"/"Hertan"

Heavy readers may not be familiar with the neo-folk genre that's grown out of Scandinavian black metal. It began with bands looking to their Viking roots for inspiration, then abandoning their electric axes for traditional instruments and vocal styles. Wardruna, a project from a former drummer of Norway's Gorgoroth, sets the standard for the genre and here offers a pair of tracks from their latest album.

For Heathens, it's ideal ritual music; for the curious, it's a cheap way to dip your ear into something quite different.

Destroy Boys, "Shadow (I'm Breaking Down)"

This all-female group makes mature punk rawk reminiscent of the riot grl '90s (L7, Hole, etc.), yet their lay-it-all-there lyrics put them at the cutting edge of the current scene. "Shadow," like many of the band's songs, sinks a hook that burrows deeper in your brain the more you listen to it - in a good way. I was soon pogoing along and singing the words (even though one verse is inexplicably in Spanish). The Shadow Self album offers 3 versions of the song for the price of 1 (\$1.51). While the "Sped Up" take borders on Alvin & the Chipmunks territory, the "Slowed Down" makes a nice addition to the original. Recommended.

HEALTH, "Children Of Sorrow"

Children Of Sorrow delivers a heavier edge. The title track hits the hardest with an explosive opening riff and lyrics about the trauma of warfare. "Sicko" feat. Godflesh masterfully blends HEALTH's crystalline production with Justin Broadrick's trademark jackhammer sludge. "Hateful" feat. SIERRA bears the lightest touch of the collaborators, nudging electronic elements forward and letting guitars add depth. The EP's three songs are among the band's best, and buying them together lowers the price per track.

No issues with volume or clarity. My only criticism is I wish the songs were longer.

-Jayson Hawkins

Band List

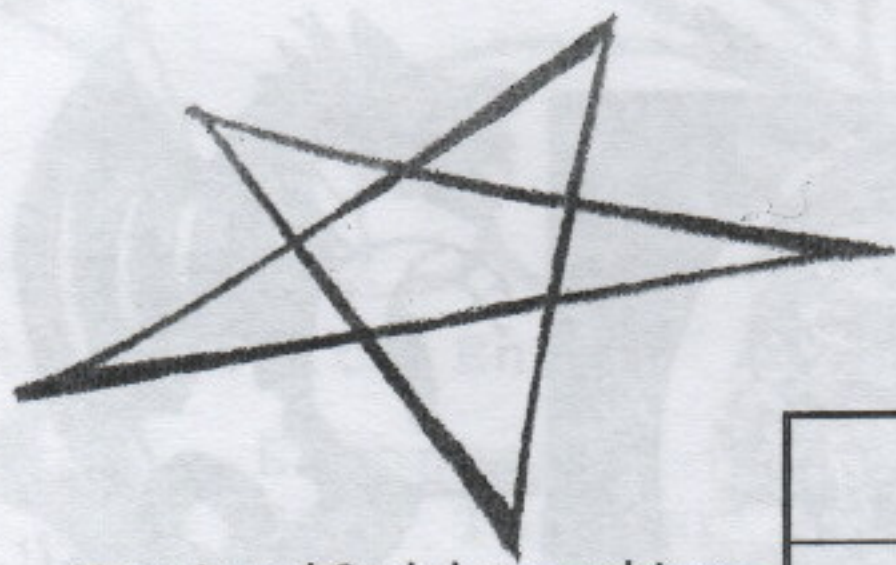
Arch Enemy	Black Sabbath
Baroness	
Bolt Thrower	
Cannibal Corpse	Children Of Sorrow
Corrosion of Conformity	Cryptopsy
Crowbar	
Death	Depeche Mode
Destroys Boys	Div
Epica	
Frontline Assembly	Full Of Hell
Godflesh	Gorgoroth
H.E.A.L.T.H.	Heriot
High On Fire	Hole
I Prevail	In This Moment
Just Mustard	
King Witch	
L7	
Ministry	My Bloody Valentine
Nothing	
Oceans Of Slumber	Opeth
Psychic TV	
Ride	Rivers Of Nihil
Skinny Puppy	Slayer
Sleep Token	Slipknot
Slowdive	Spiritbox
Starflyer 59	
The Sword	Throbbing Gristle
Wardruna	Whirr
Windhand	Witch Mountain



Do you want to lose weight in prison? Do you want to find new ways to cook? Hot Pot Chef: Texas Prison Cookbook concocts appetizing recipes while keeping personal health in mind. This book will show you how to lose weight and keep it off while in prison. There is a calorie Chart for food served in the Chow Hall as well as over 230 recipes for entrees, desserts, and drinks. This book will give a fresh new perspective on how to cook while in prison.

\$14.99 on Amazon.

Approved by TDCJ.



Next Level Sudoku

TOOL: Forty-Six & 2

Next Level Sudoku combines three 9x9 sudokus into a single puzzle. The shared 3x3 area that connects one sudoku to another must work for both. Only one solution is possible for the puzzle as a whole.

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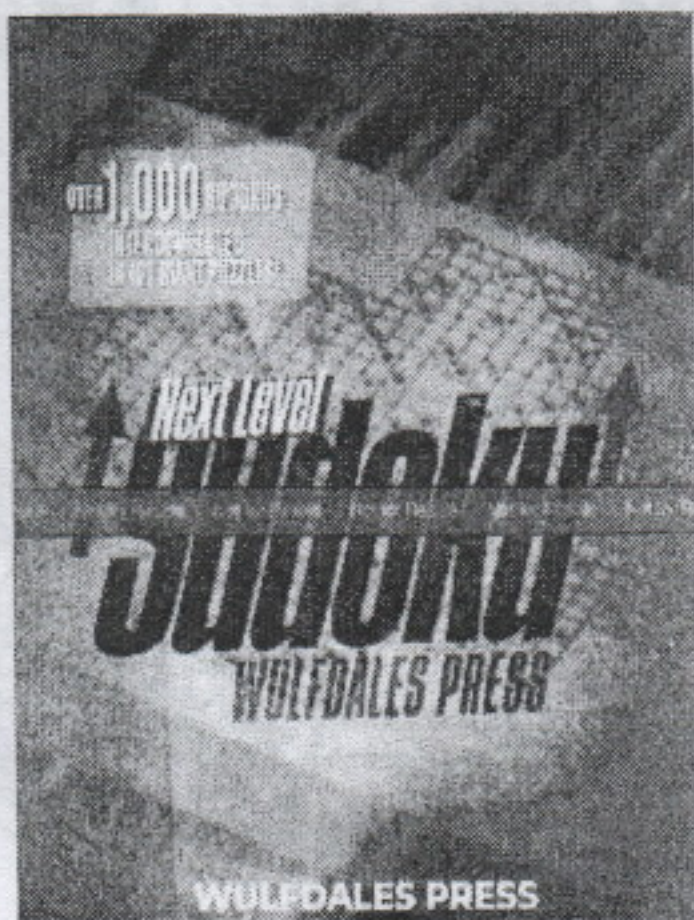
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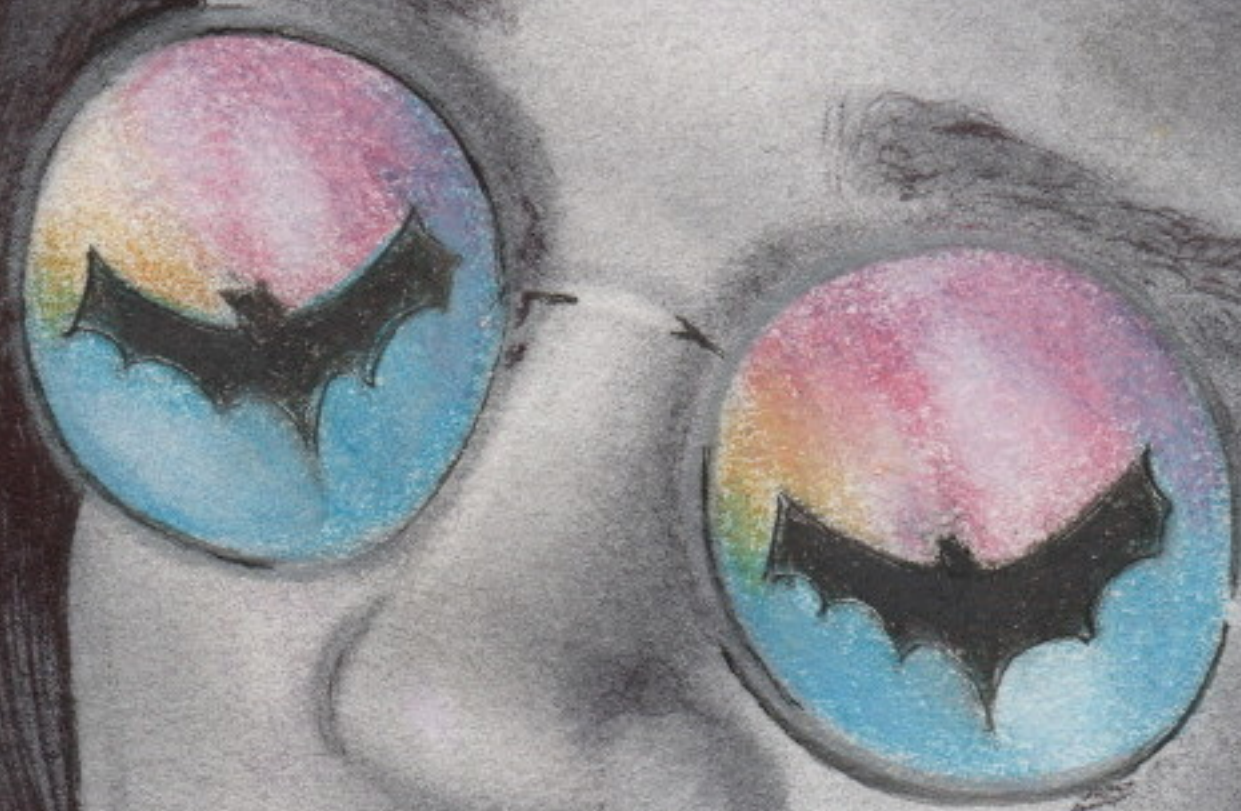
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Next Level Sudoku



1948-
2025



For being the Prince of
Darkness he sure gave us a
lot of Light

Tobias Forge