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3024 N. Ashland #57412
Chicago, IL 60657
773.975.0264

Editorial: boieditorial@aol.com
Advertising: boiads@aol.com

EDITORIAL

Publisher: boiMAGazine, Inc.
Editor: Nate Daniels
Feature Editor: Mike at Night
Graphic Design: Titanium Graphics
Layout Specialist: Angel Christopher
Multi-Media: Media Services Management
Regional Sales Advisory: Logan@boiAds.com
AI Staff Assistant: boiBOT

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EDITORIAL, ARTICLES & COLUMNISTS

Feature Articles: Nate Daniels - Nate@boiMAG.com
Exclusive Interviews: Mike at Night - Mike@boiMAG.com
Concert Reviews: Jorge Suarez - InConcert@boiMAG.com
Health & Wellness: Charla Waxman - Charla@boiMAG.com
Community Support: Mike at Night - Mike@boiMAG.com
Uncensored: Rachael Cain - Uncensored@boiMAG.com
Travel Pride Journey: Joey Amato - Travel@boiMAG.com
Ask Char: Charla Waxman - AskChar@boiMAG.com
Tech Trends: Jack Santos - Jack@boiMAG.com

TO ADVERTISE Call: **773.975.0264**

or email: boiAds@aol.com

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CHICAGO AUTO SHOW

PLANNING YOUR ESCAPE

The show is open daily starting at 10am, but one thing to note, **McCormick Place** is now a cashless facility, so you might want to keep your cards or digital wallets ready.

Admission: \$20 for Adults, and \$15 for Seniors (62+) and Kids (4-12). and 3 and under get in for free.

Celebrate Heroes on February 11th with **First Responders & Military Appreciation Day** (Free admission with ID).

You can give back when visiting between February 11th and 13th, and bring 3 cans of food to get a \$5 voucher toward your admission.

Whether you're taking a test spin on the featured tracks, or watching the kids race in the **Family Zone**, taking in the sites of the massive exhibition room, looking at shiny new objects, viewing the high-tech vendor displays, or having a hotdog and sipping wine while you stroll from one car exhibit to the next, the **2026 Chicago Auto Show** is always the place to be this time of the year. It's immersive, it's exciting, and there's something for everyone!



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CHICAGO AUTO SHOW

Get ready to trade the Chicago winter slush for the smell of new leather and the hum of high-performance engines!

FROM FEBRUARY 7th-16th

McCormick Place is transformed into a high-octane wonderland for the 2026 Chicago Auto Show.

This isn't just a room full of cars; it's a massive, interactive, fun festival where the city's heart meets the future of the road.



THE HEARTBEAT OF THE CITY "Chi-Town Alley"

Step inside and you'll immediately feel the shift in energy. Gone is the traditional so-called "corporate" marketplace, replaced by the brand-new Chi-Town Alley. This is a love letter to Chicago's local car culture. Imagine wandering through a vibrant hub of custom builds, high-end exotics, and street-inspired rides curated by local owners. It feels less like a showroom and more like the world's coolest neighborhood car meet, complete with community built masterpieces and local vendors that celebrate the pride of the Windy City.



EXPERIENCE THE THRILL INDOORS!

If you've ever wanted to feel the raw power of a vehicle without worrying about a speed limit, the four indoor test tracks are calling your name.

For the Adrenaline Junkies

The legendary Camp Jeep returns for its 20th anniversary. Hold your breath as you tackle the famous 28-foot "Mountain" with a heart-pounding 45-degree climb.

For the Off-Road Dreamers

Head over to Ford's Built Wild track, where you'll experience the Bronco family's "G.O.A.T." (Goes Over Any Terrain) tech on a massive 38-degree incline.

For the Tech-Forward

Glide through the Chicago Drives Electric track, enjoy the silence behind the wheel of a BMW, Lucid, or Polestar.

AGazine



More Than Just a "Car Show"

Even if you don't know a spark plug from a tailpipe, there's a vibe here for you. Lace up your sneakers on February 8th for the Miles Per Hour run, a one of a kind 2.4-mile indoor race that winds through the displays and across the Grand Concourse bridge with stunning views of the skyline.

Looking for a Friday outing?

February 13th, the floor turns into a celebration for Chicago Friday Night Flights. Grab a \$45 tasting pass and sample local craft beers and ciders from favorites like Goose Island and Moody Tongue while you explore the exhibits. It's the perfect way to begin a fun weekend, at the Auto Show!

The New Arrival

For the first time ever, the Chicago Drives Gas-Powered Track makes its debut, letting you feel the kick of the latest hybrid and gas models from Chevrolet, Kia, and the latest Volkswagen, all without ever having to leave the building!

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THE NEW ERA OF "INTENTIONAL" TRAVEL

BEYOND THE MAP

by: Mike At Night, Joe Slama, and boiBOT

For the modern traveler, the world has always been a blend of wonder and caution. A destination can be breathtakingly beautiful yet culturally complex in the same breath.

Whether it's a family looking for a truly kid friendly environment, a solo female traveler vetting a solo-safe neighborhood, or an LGBTQ+ couple seeking a romantic getaway, the desire to experience the world fully is universal, but the planning is rarely simple.

As global travel becomes more nuanced, we are seeing a shift away from "one size fits all" vacations. Today's travelers are increasingly turning to specialized, community supported agencies to help navigate the cultural, legal, and emotional landscapes of a world that is changing, but not evenly.

Why Specialized Planning Matters

While boiMAGazine has long been a voice for the LGBTQ+ community, our readers know that "community" is a broad term. From the tech-forward professional to the health-conscious senior, everyone deserves to explore with confidence.

Inclusive travel agencies, including community-owned favorites like Pride And Passport, are built on the belief that travel should expand your world, not shrink who you are. As founder Joe explains, "Our mission is to make sure every traveler feels celebrated. It's about making the calls you don't want to make and advocating for your right to a great trip."

This specialized approach addresses the questions guidebooks often miss:

Safety & Nuance: Providing honest, nuanced guidance on regions that may still be culturally or legally challenging.

Authenticity: Finding spaces where travelers can take up space, celebrate milestones, and show up as their whole selves.

Advocacy: Ensuring that resorts, cruises, and tours respect the individual, from pronouns to physical accessibility.

A Changing World: The global travel economy is booming, with diverse segments, particularly LGBTQ+ travelers, contributing hundreds of billions annually. Yet, the world remains a patchwork of progress.

The Invisible Labor of the Itinerary

For many, trip planning involves layers of research that go far beyond finding the best flight or the trendiest hotel. This "hidden labor" involves scanning local customs, reading between the lines of reviews, and assessing whether a destination will treat them with dignity.

It's a constant internal checklist that many travelers share:

Will this environment be welcoming to my specific family dynamic?

How do I navigate local traditions while remaining true to myself?

Is this space truly inclusive, or is it just "accommodating" me?

This is where the expertise of specialized travel consultants becomes invaluable. By leveraging lived experience and global partnerships, these experts act as a bridge between a traveler's identity and their destination.

Over 60 countries still have restrictive laws regarding personal identity, and even in progressive regions, microaggressions can disrupt a joyful experience.

The goal of modern travel guidance isn't to limit where we go, but to empower us with the knowledge to choose confidently. It transforms travel from a potential risk into a fundamental right.

The Secret Ingredient: CONNECTION

What sets the new era of travel apart is the sense of belonging. Travelers are no longer just "tourists"; they are part of a global network of adventurers sharing stories and wisdom.



In CONCERT

JORGE SUAREZ "OUT 'N' ABOUT" COLUMN

Photos and Review, by Jorge Suarez

LOVERBOY has been around since the late '70s, coming out of Canada at a time when rock bands still lived or died by the strength of their songs and how they played them live.

By the early '80s, they had locked into a sound built on tight grooves, big hooks, and choruses that stuck with you. These were songs that didn't just chart, they became part of everyday life, blasting from car radios, basement stereos, roller rinks, and weekend parties. Decades later, that shared history still carries weight, and you could feel it walking into the Arcada that night.

There's something about seeing a band like this in a room that doesn't overwhelm the music. The Arcada's size strips away distractions and puts the focus where it belongs, on the songs and the people who came to hear them. The crowd was there to reconnect with music that's been a constant presence in their lives, and that expectation hung in the air long before the lights went down.

The current lineup keeps that legacy intact, with Mike Reno front and center, backed by longtime guitarist Paul Dean, whose playing remains sharp and purposeful. The rhythm section, Matt Frenette on drums and Ken, Spider, Sinnaeve on bass, kept everything locked in, while Doug Johnson's keyboards filled out the sound without ever overplaying. It felt like a band that knows exactly what it does well and sticks to it, confident enough not to dress it up.

They came out focused and confident, opening with crowd favorites like "Notorious", "Lucky Ones", and "Queen of the Broken Hearts", setting the tone early.

Mixing in "This Could Be the Night" was a smart move, a nod to fans who've lived with the catalog beyond the radio staples. Reno's voice isn't about polish anymore, it's rougher, seasoned, and honest, and that worked in his favor. It sounded lived-in, like someone who's carried these songs for a lifetime rather than trying to chase old perfection.

As the night moved forward, the setlist flowed naturally, never feeling rushed or overly scripted. Songs like "Hot Girls in Love", and "Turn Me Loose" landed exactly the way they were supposed to, drawing immediate reactions without needing buildup. When "Lovin"



Every Minute of It, hit, the room responded as one, not in chaos, but in recognition. It was the sound of people meeting a song halfway, already knowing where it was going.

Don't forget to visit our facebook group "Out N About" for full review including additional pics and vids!

Go to boiMAG.com for a direct link to our FB Group, moderated by "yours-truely"

>>> **MORE OUT 'N ABOUT** >>>

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OUT 'N' ABOUT

ALLAN'S VINTAGE AUDIO

by Jorge Suarez

Meeting Allan Teetsov out in the Chicago suburbs was a reminder that vintage stereo equipment isn't just old gear, it's the heartbeat of how music was meant to be felt.



From the late '60s through the '70s, receivers from Marantz, Pioneer, Sansui, and McIntosh, turntables by Thorens, Dual, and Technics, and speakers like JBL, Klipsch, Advent, and AR helped shape the way generations experienced their favorite records. This was an era when listening was intentional, when dropping a needle felt like an event, not background noise. For audiophiles, vintage gear still carries a warmth and soul that today's digital convenience can't quite replicate. Allan's dedication to preserving, restoring, and passing along near-mint pieces isn't about profits about protecting a culture, a sound, and a feeling that deserves to be kept alive for anyone who still believes music should move you before it streams past you.

Walking through Allan's vintage stereo domain felt like stepping back into a time when many of us stood on the outside looking in, flipping through magazines, staring at glossy ads, and dreaming about gear

we knew we couldn't afford as kids. Those receivers, turntables, and speakers weren't just equipment back then; they were symbols of possibility. Now, years later, we carry those memories with us, and for many of us, we finally have the chance to bring that dream home, to recreate the sound, the feeling, and the wonder that first made us fall in love with music. It's more than nostalgia, it's closing a circle, honoring the kid we once were, and letting the music play the way we always imagined it would. From the many videos I recorded, I chose a handful of receivers and speakers worth noting.



The Sansui QRX-6500 has earned a special place in the hearts of vintage lovers for its rich, warm character and timeless build quality, a true example of what made 1970s hi-fi so cherished. Even decades later, this four-channel classic continues to surprise listeners with its musical presence and vintage charm, reminding us why Sansui receivers are still talked about fondly among collectors and audiophiles alike.



The PS-10s carry a bit of vintage charm, three-way speakers with a unique point-source design that many folks who've lived with them describe as surprisingly full and balanced for their era.



They were regarded as solid performers back in the day and still surprise listeners today with a satisfying sound that captures the character of classic recordings without being overly bright or harsh.



The Superscope A-225 may not have been the biggest, flashiest amp of its era, but it's got that honest, no-nonsense vintage vibe that many of us remember, simple, solid, and made in a time when components felt like they were built to last. Collectors and vintage lovers often remark on how real and unpretentious its sound can be, capturing the character of classic tracks without trying to impress with specs, reminding us that music was meant to be felt, not measured.

>>> **MORE OUT 'N' ABOUT >>>**



>>> MORE OUT 'n ABOUT >>>

The Sansui QS-500 4-Channel Rear Amplifier delivers classic vintage quadraphonic sound with a warm, engaging character that still impresses for its age. It excels at expanding stereo sources into a more immersive four-speaker experience, though its 30 W per channel output and older decoder design make it best suited for high-efficiency speakers and fans of retro hi-fi rather than those seeking modern power or precision.



The Sansui QS-500 feels like a time capsule from the era when hi-fi was all about atmosphere and experimentation. It doesn't just play music, it wraps the room in sound, spreading albums out into a warm, enveloping space that makes you want to sit back and actually listen. For anyone who loves vintage gear with soul, the QS-500 has a character modern amps just don't try to recreate anymore.



The Acoustic Research SRT-330 speakers deliver a smooth, rich midrange with clear vocals

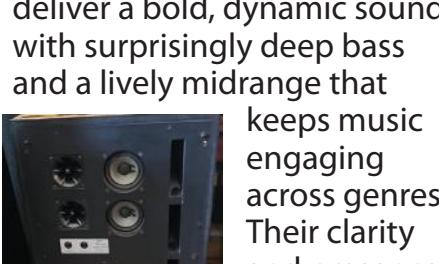
and a warm, musical presence that makes every genre feel inviting. Their detail and imaging are surprisingly refined for their age, offering a pleasing balance of depth and clarity without ever sounding harsh. If you love classic vintage sound with a relaxed, natural character, the SRT-330s are a joy to listen to for hours.



The Pioneer SX-9000 has a commanding, almost effortless sound that fills the room with authority and warmth the moment you power it on. There's a richness to the midrange and a confident low end that makes vinyl and classic rock especially rewarding. It's the kind of receiver that doesn't just play music, it reminds you why vintage Pioneer gear earned its reputation in the first place.



The Pioneer SX-440 (top item) is a classic mid-range receiver that balances smooth, musical sound with reliable vintage performance, making it a great match for bookshelf or full-range speakers alike. It delivers clear vocals and warm highs with just enough low-end punch to keep music engaging without ever feeling harsh. For fans of vintage hi-fi, the SX-440 offers that familiar Pioneer character, rich, relaxed, and easy to enjoy for everyday listening.



The Frazier Model 7 speakers deliver a bold, dynamic sound with surprisingly deep bass and a lively midrange that

keeps music engaging across genres. Their clarity and presence

make vocals and instruments feel immediate and alive, without sounding strident or thin. For listeners who appreciate a spirited, full-range

vintage speaker voice, the Model 7s bring both character and punch to the listening experience.

Unfortunately, I can't give a complete walk-thru of my experience as my article is limited, but I urge anyone interested, reach out to me, I can pass info to Allan. You can Messenger Allan as well. I'm truly grateful to Allan for taking the time to personally walk me through his incredible vintage stereo equipment museum, an experience that felt more like a shared passion than a tour. His knowledge, patience, and enthusiasm brought every piece to life, and it was clear this collection is built on love for the music and the gear, not just nostalgia. I'm leaving this visit inspired and on a high note, and if you have any interest in vintage audio or classic hi-fi history, I highly encourage you to reach out to Allan directly, he's always happy to share more with fellow enthusiasts. Visit our Out N About Facebook group where we provide additional pics and videos.'Til next time!

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Ask Char Q & A

Q I'm feeling like I don't know know who my friends are anymore! There are things some of them are doing or saying about me and I honestly don't get how I am being depicted as such a villain and bad friend. Can you please help me sort this out?

From: *Fake Friended and Feeling Flummoxed*

A Dear Flummoxed friend,

In a couple of articles and in a column or two here at boiMAGazine, we have looked at the idea of fake friendships. The truth is we have all been a fake friend and had a fake friend. Maybe you even have more than one. What I mean by fake friend is someone who has connected with you for reasons other than common interests and enjoyment of your company. This person may have connected with you in what seems like a friendly way to achieve their own purposes and goals. This may, of course mean that they entered the relationship with a goal and an expiration date. Maybe this is something you had not considered.

Here are some things to know about fake friends. Because fake friends are "in it for themselves", they are wholly unavailable when you need a shoulder to cry on or encouragement. It is truly all about them.

Fake friends can be family members, too! You don't matter as much as their intentions. Remember, fake friends are abusive people. Power is at the forefront of their behavior, definitely in the front of their minds. The way fake friends treat you is a direct reflection of how they really feel about themselves.



They need to make you look like a villain or their own behavior comes into question. Also, they're just not good people and you, unfortunately and your feelings are their entertainment.

Get ready to unload that friendship when it is made clear that you, your feelings, and opinions just don't matter. When you feel bad when you leave their company, do you really want to go back there and feel badly again? Cut your losses with this person if they always seem to come first. You deserve the "front seat", too. If arguments or conflicts, which naturally occur in any relationships, are always identifying you as the cause.... well.... really? Say goodbye if abuse or threats of abuse in language or physicality have occurred. That is simply not ok and will set a pattern you will have an awful time breaking. Watch out for "hurt you and help you" behavior. They drive you to rock bottom and then save you. Then they gossip about your instability and tell everybody you could not survive without them.

So, friend, get out. You do not need to stay in an unhealthy and unhappy situation. They will guilt you, get ready; but let them cry and whine. Move on. Move on! Move on!! You are worth it and you will find true friends; new and better.

I am hearing you say you don't know how to do this and they were not so bad before. I am standing on this: they have been unveiled. The mask is off. You are seeing the real "fake friend". If you are just too nice to wholly move on, reduce the time you spend with them, say no more often, and busy yourself elsewhere.

This can be done. You can do it, but YOU have to matter. You have to be your own best, real friend.

- Dr. Charla Waxman



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COMMENTARY

UNCENSORED

by: Screamin' Rachael

Recording Artist, Entrepreneur, Publisher, Music Mogul, House Music Icon, sometimes Controversial, with a dash of Opinionism for good measure.

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Going Global at MIDEM! From February 3rd-7th, 2026. Who wouldn't want to go to the glorious French Riviera? This is one of my favorite times of the year, a time where I get to be "Screamin" both literally and figuratively. There are places in this world that don't just host you, they remember you. Cannes is one of those places for me!

I love the glamour of it this event! It's a familiar electricity. Deals humming beneath the marble floors, champagne flutes catching the light, and conversations that start polite and end historic. This isn't just another conference for me. This is a return to a rhythm I know by heart.

I've been attending this global summit MIDEM, for years now, long enough to feel the shift in the air the moment I step into the **Palais des Festivals**, the same venue that hosts the legendary "Cannes Film Festival"...

Every time MIDEM comes around, I feel that same flutter. The kind that says: ***something important is about to happen...*** And it never seems to disappoint.

One of the highlights I look forward to this year will be meeting up with **Greg Lion**, the head of our International TRAX, A&R. Those meetings aren't casual catch-ups. They're the kind where time compresses.



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Greg has always understood the international gravity of TRAX Records. Not just as a label, but as a cultural force that continues to ripple outward from **Chicago** to the world. We are preparing a formidable presentation that highlights our 40th anniversary. We will be meeting important movers and shakers from all corners of the world. Those conversations are part of why I keep coming back.

As we head into MIDEM 2026, the preparations at TRAX Records are nothing short of astounding. We don't just show up. We arrive. Every detail matters because history is watching, and we're living it.

From our catalog of classics, to our current releases, from our visuals to our conversations, we're positioning TRAX to be exactly what we've always been at MIDEM: *"the belle of the ball"*. The label everyone recognizes. The name that still commands respect, curiosity, and attention the moment it's spoken. Then of course there's me, **Screamin' Rachael** decked out to the nines! And ready to slay!

>>> MORE Uncensored >>>

UNCENSORED



>>> *Continued* >>>

And yes, we fully expect to garner the attention we always receive. That blend of reverence and excitement, with a touch of CHI town gangsta.

The double takes, when they check me out. TRAX doesn't need to shout. The legacy does the talking, and the music finishes the story.

The landscape has changed. MIDEM has evolved. With **Live Nation** now involved in shaping this new era, there's a renewed emphasis on live music, performance, and scale. The business



feels louder, more kinetic, more global in its ambition. Since this is the first year that I will be experiencing this change out reserve my judgment but I think things are going to be very exciting!

But the heart of MIDEM is still there. That rare intersection where art, commerce, and future-casting share the same breath.



For me, going back in 2026 feels like both a continuation and a statement. TRAX Records is not about nostalgia we are a United States classic just like "COKE".

We are living, breathing, expanding. The world knows that this little label From the **City of Chicago**, birthed the Revolution that is House music. We played a strategic part in creating the blueprint of the electronic movement that dominates the charts.

MIDEM 2026 isn't just another trip to the Riviera. It's a reaffirmation. A reminder that TRAX Records continues to matter on the global stage, especially since we are celebrating our 40th Anniversary. That our sound, our story, and our vision still cut through the noise. And we're the real thing not some phony AI generation.



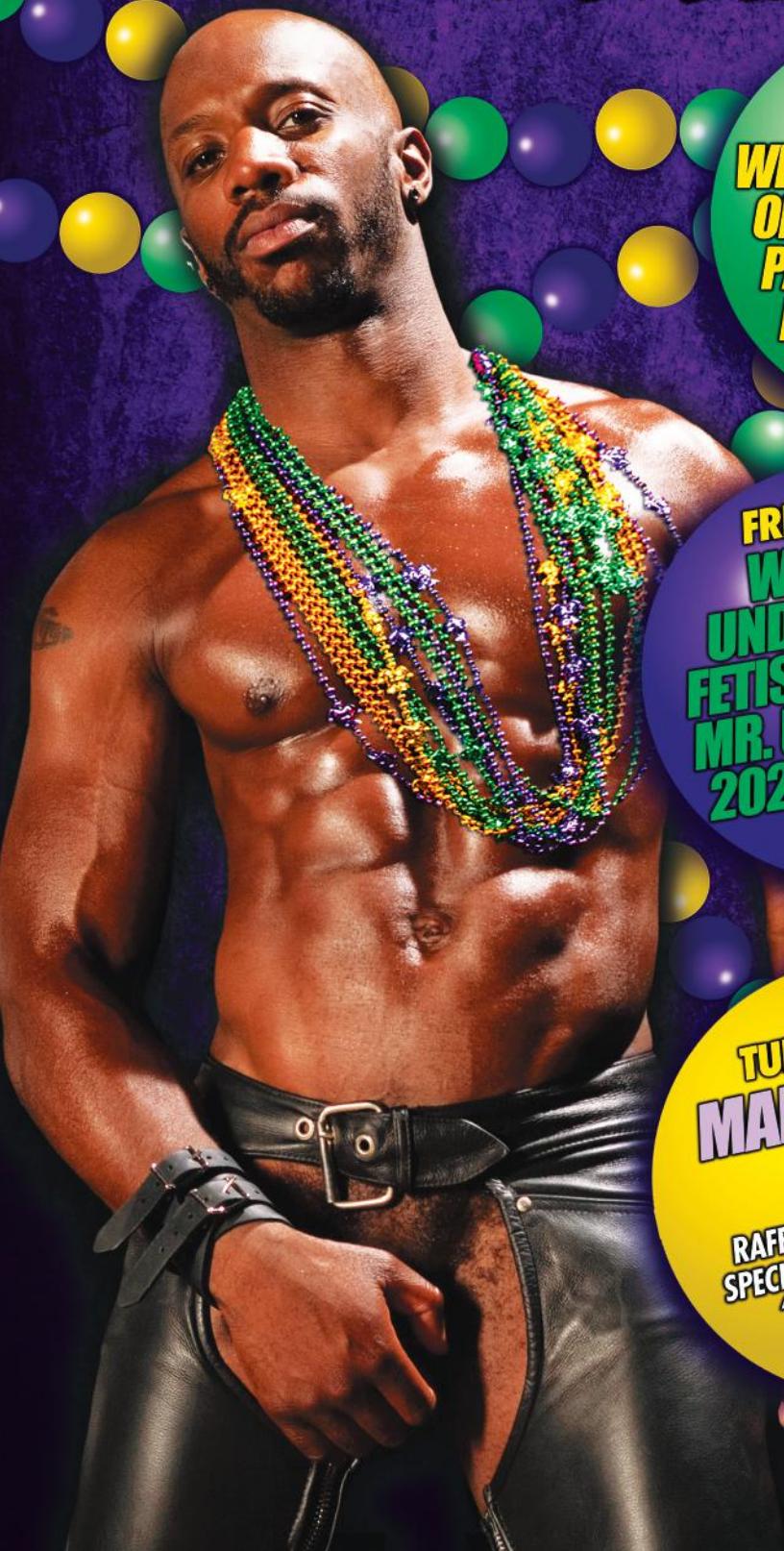
So yes, I'm excited to go back. To reconnect. To meet, to be seen, to be heard, to remind the world that House Music didn't just come from somewhere, It came from CHICAGO!

I will be jetting back just in time to attend **The Chicago Auto Show**. Maybe this year I'll make deals that will cover the cost of a luxury vehicle which I hope to find during my visit to the show.

>>> **MORE Uncensored >>>**

MARDI GRAS AT TOUCHE

CHICAGO'S LEATHER BAR SINCE 1977



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WINTER
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2026 CONTEST**

**SAT FEB 7
MARDI GRAS
BEARS & BEADS
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**SAT FEB 14
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After that I will be heading to the **Winter Music Conference** in **Miami** from March 24 through the 27th.

Make mine "a sex on the beach!" One of the exciting projects that we're working on and will be letting people know about in **Cannes** and in **Miami**, is the last recording of **Donna Summer**'s. It's a track that also features her nephew, **O'Mega Red** titled "Angel".



This posthumous project to be released on Trax, was spearheaded by the Woman behind "The New Global Groove", radio host **Sugar D.** And Music Producer/Entrepreneur **Darla Kogan**.

So hey pals, catch some sun, and I'll see you on the flip-flop to report on all the latest action.

- Rachael Cain





Be honest. You have been a fake friend just as much as you have had them.

Fair enough. Whether as a kid or an adult, we have all somehow gotten in a relationship, work or personal, to benefit our position, learn the inside scoop on something or someone, or just because we needed something in our lives. Hard to admit, yes. but you can probably think of someone, some friendship, that you never really intended to keep. That is a fake friend.

If you go even deeper, you may be "fake friending" yourself with empty promises and goals and making excuses for yourself. That's a story for another time. Watch for that article in the future!

That being said, let's talk about fake friends and get to the meat of who, what, and why, and when to let them go and how to do it.

FAKE F.R.I.E.N.D.S

Born out of Chicago's sharp-edged comedy scene and the city's long tradition of loud, opinionated civic conversation, **Guerrilla Press** is what happens when stand-up instincts collide with serious curiosity about the world. Founded in 2025 by Chicago comedians EJ Cameron and Nick Hausman, the independent media company has quickly carved out a space

Fake friends, as you may have guessed, are generally people who treat you reflective to their own view of themselves: That is basically the scope and centrality of abusive behavior. Fake friends are not the kinds of friends who are rooting for you behind the scenes and there for you when things get tough. These people are waiting for the worst to happen and secretly delighting in your work and social lows.

Your fake friends may have been in your life for a while, and you may have even considered them real buddies. Make note that although we have used the phrase "fake friend", this may include family, too.

FAKE FRIENDS ARE LOOKING FOR ONE OF FOUR THINGS:

Power, Self Esteem, Excuses For Their Behavior, Emotional Release.

Let's explain that in reverse. You will know you have a fake friend when your opinions simply don't matter. Where you go, how you look, what you feel and what you are thinking are mocked, degraded, or sloughed off. Whatever the other person is wanting, thinking, or needing somehow always seems to come first.

If you walk away from time with this person their need for power may cause them to retaliate, but it may be worth the risk to save your sanity and your sense of self and value. In addition to outward expressions of power- needs, be on the look-out as fake friends will connect to those close to you in a very friendly way. This way they can devalue you when the opportunity presents itself with those who matter most to you. Watch for friends who are too chummy way too quick with your old friends and family.

You know you have a fake friend when it is always about them. Even when you share something that is important to you, their way of relating is to focus on their own issues and yours are forgotten. Also know that this person will put nothing above themselves and you simply can't matter enough for them to have your needs at the forefront of their minds. You will also know this fake friend, need meeting behavior when your name is in the midst of a gossipchain.

>>>PERSONAL Opinion>>>

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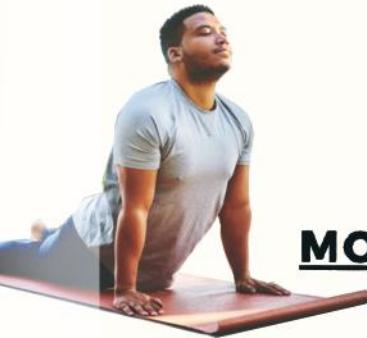
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WEIGHT TRAINING 5PM-6PM

WEDNESDAY

WEIGHT TRAINING 9AM-10AM

QI GONG 5PM-6PM

XCO LATIN DANCE 6PM-7PM

THURSDAY

SR. GOLDEN MOVES 9AM-10AM

YOGA 6PM-7PM

HIIT 7PM-8PM



FRIDAY

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FAKE F.R.I.E.N.D.S

That is a fake friend who is bolstering their own self-esteem, but demolishing yours. It is also a power play at work.

Toxic relationships are tough. Someone who can never take responsibility for their behavior can truly be annoying. No, more than annoying, it can be infuriating because there are never any resolutions to conflicts. Truly, never. In fact, if this is your "fake friend", this person will blame you when they have a problem. "You should have...." will be the opening for the sentence that blames you for whatever happened or for whatever they did. If you are beginning to doubt yourself, know that fake friends are the best at gaslighting. Lies will be part of the abuse in this relationship. There will always be an excuse for why they "had" to lie to you. It most certainly will be your fault.

With fake friends, watch for abuse. Some fake friends use you as their opportunity to get emotional release. What you will see here is someone who comes to you in attack mode even when someone or, even something, has caused a problem. They may even settle the issue on the surface with the other person and then come to you with the left-over emotions. They won't do this in a "can we talk about something that is bothering me" mode, but in a scream and swear and maybe even physical manner. The one thing for sure about the emotional release fake friend, is that their behavior and anger will escalate. This relationship will need to stop. This person probably doesn't want healed situations; they just want their anger and a victim to go with it. It is a sure bet that addiction and former abusive relationships are at the helm here.

The best weapon against you in any of the four category needs for a fake friend is really you. How do you feel about you and

how do you express those feelings? Fake friends latch on to people that serve them. In order to not be a victim, you need to step up. You need to know you are capable and valuable. When that is the message you give throughout your day, fake friends will fall away and move on to an easier person to wound.

Stay on the alert. Fake friends will strategically move you to your lowest point and then work hard to be the ones who drive you back up again. This is only done so you will see what great friends they really are. Get ready though. They will make sure you hit bottom again. They will maneuver you back up, only to let bystanders know that without them, you would be nowhere. You need them to keep you afloat. They will tell your "rock-bottom" stories again and again. Hurt and help; hurt and help will be a hard way for you to live. Stay out of that cycle.

There is no doubt about it. You have to find a way out of fake friendships. They are just not healthy to be around. When you have ferreted them out, and decide to get out, don't worry about them. They will find a new "friend" soon enough. Let them cry and moan. Guilt is part of the game.

Recognize that when you first started spending time with them that it didn't feel this bad. That may be true. But they are now fully unveiled, and you are able to see what was behind the mask. Take stock of what you see now and get ready for something new and better.

If you know yourself well enough to say I am just too much of a softie to cut them off in such a hard-core manner, then reduce the amount of time you spend with them. Reducing your availability will weaken them and they may move on. As knowing yourself is important, please be ready to have a vision for what you want to be as a friend and what your idea of a real friend should look like.

This can be done. You can do it, but you have to matter. You have to be your own best, real friend.

META "UNFRENDS" STAFF! 'da PINK SLIPS

TECH TRENDS

by Jack Santos

GOOD BYE ARMATURE STUDIO, SANZARU GAMES & TWISTED PIXEL

META SHUTS DOWN ARMATURE STUDIO, SANZARU GAMES, TWISTED PIXEL!

On January 13, 2026, META confirmed it is shutting down three of its first-party VR development studios, and workers get THE BOOT, a.k.a. Termination "PINK SLIPS"

As if big-tech doesn't have enough money, the bottom-line is THEY WANT MORE! Even if it means slashing their workforce, and putting hundreds of thousands of people out of work!

SCALE OF CUTS: The closures are part of a broader layoff affecting approximately 1,000 employees (roughly 10-15%) within Meta's Reality Labs division.

STRATEGIC PIVOT: Meta stated the move is intended to shift investment from the "Metaverse" toward AI and wearable technology, such as its Ray-Ban Meta AI smart glasses.

IMPACTED STUDIOS & LEGACY:

Sanzaru Games: Developers of the critically acclaimed Asgard's Wrath series, including the 2024 DICE Immersive Reality Game of the Year winner, Asgard's Wrath 2.

Twisted Pixel: Known for Xbox classics like 'Splosion Man, their final project was Marvel's Deadpool VR, released only two months prior to the closure.



Armature Studio: Responsible for the highly praised Resident Evil 4 VR port for Quest.

OTHER AFFECTED PRODUCTS: The VR fitness app Supernatural will no longer receive new content or feature updates, though the existing product will remain supported.

CONTEXT AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

This follows a pattern of first-party studio closures by Meta, these closures signal a significant reduction in its internal AAA game development capabilities, with the company expected to rely more heavily on third-party partners for future software.

Reality Labs has accumulated over \$70 billion in losses since late 2020, including a \$4.4 billion loss in quarter, 2025 alone. Meta plans to reinvest the savings from these cuts into growing its wearables business throughout 2026.

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