Good Food Is No Joke

George Lopez’s recently launched and successful food and beverage empire is seriously good, all comedy aside.

By Michele Stueven
When comedian George Lopez describes Benita Gutierrez, a factory worker and the tough maternal grandmother who raised him in the San Fernando Valley and helped mold his sense of humor, he says she was like a sour patch kid – a little mind blowing at the first bite, but the sweetness always set in soon after.

For someone who was afraid of his own shadow as a child, Lopez has fearlessly taken on and succeeded in two of the most challenging businesses there are – stand up comedy and food and beverage – both of which yield the same results, a smile on somebody's face.

He hints that he’s ready to hang up his mic, as the pandemic has allowed him to devote time to his three Chingon restaurants and the release of his first four Ta Loco Cervezas from George Lopez Brewing Co. He recently launched a line of Chingon Kitchen carne asada and pollo asado prepared meals inspired by his abuela, now available at all Southern California Food-4Less, Superior Grocers and Cardenas Markets locations.

“My grandmother was not a joyful woman,” Lopez tells L.A. Weekly on a Zoom call from his home in the Coachella Valley. “I don’t think she really understood life or the joy in life. She worked during the day and then came home and cooked for me and my grandfather. She’d always make homemade tortillas. I remember she used a wooden rolling pin. One day I heard a lot of swearing in the kitchen and she made

Good Food Is No Joke

George Lopez’s recently launched and successful food and beverage empire is seriously good, all comedy aside.

By Michele Stueven
my grandfather go out and get her a piece of scrap metal about a foot long and used it to make tortillas because she said the masa dough would stick to the wood, but not the metal. She used that metal rolling pin from a Northridge construction site for the rest of her life.”

Those tortillas left an indelible mark on the basis of the Chingon Kitchen. Lopez has been a day-to-day fixture in the development of recipes, getting inspiration from his grandmother’s marinades using Squirt, root beer, beer, grapefruits and blood oranges.

“Everything starts with the tortilla,” says Lopez. “If that’s not good, nothing that touches it is going to be good. I learned that in the kitchen of a small tract home in Mission Hills a long time ago. She’d make picadillo, which is like a stew made out of ground beef, onions, tomatoes and cilantro. She’d make fideo with angel hair pasta and Spanish rice with no peas. The rice was made with chicken broth she boiled for hours. She made the beans with bacon.”

Both the Chingon Kitchen collection of family inspired dishes and his cervezas are available on tap at the Brews Hall in Torrance, featuring the Paloma (a citrusy IPA inspired by the paloma cocktail), the Agria Fresca (a tart Gose) and the sweet Suavecito Stout with chocolate and caramel notes.

“My beer’s got a nice kick to it,” says the former Little Leaguer and San Fernando High School student. “My experience with beer growing up was Moosehead, Foster’s, Schlitz Malt Liquor Bull and one of my buddy Eddie Van Halen’s favorites, Colt 45.”

In addition to the Brews Hall location, Chingon Kitchen can be found in the San Manuel Rockin Casino in Highland, California and Vee Quiva in Arizona. Fresh and unfussy, the tacos come in choices of crispy and soft, corn, flour and cauliflower tortillas with various proteins like melt-in-your-mouth tender carnitas or soyrizo. The street corn has a sweet and creamy snap to it, the black beans mimic a rich soup and in keeping with tradition, no peas in the red Spanish rice.

There is also a selection of margaritas, like frozen blackberry sage and frozen pineapple jalapeno as well as house made horchata with spiced rum. Lopez says Mexican food is comfort food – nothing designer about it. He bristles at those who try to elevate it to something it’s not at an
inflated price, and feels consistent quality of the ingredients will bring customers back for an encore.

While the success of his food empire has shot up like a rocket, the comedy business that he has used as a coping mechanism since childhood during tough times has fizzled. In an age of political correctness and cancel culture, it’s getting harder and harder to be funny.

“I’ve been at it for about 40 years and this past year has given me my first chance to have any extended time off and reflect. In comedy, I’m kind of ready to wrap it up. These last three years weren’t what I expected towards the end. It has become very limiting for comedians. In the food world, people don’t come with an ax to grind or a bone to pick, they come to try things. If they like it, they come back. I was really angry in the late ’90s and kept wondering what kept making me this upset. I was spending my time worrying about what other people were doing. Then one New Years Eve I decided I was going to spend the rest of my time not worrying or reading about what other people are doing and just worry about staying in my own lane. That really changed the direction of my life and my career as well. I’m not going to say no, but if I were to never walk on a stage again I would be very pleased at how I ended up.”
Despite the serious words, there's no way to have a conversation with Lopez without ending up in tears laughing. He's got a funny story for everything, no matter the subject. For the tale of how the secret service ended up on his doorstep after some light Trump bashing, listen to our podcast. (www.laweekly.com/category/podcast)

Abandoned by his father, a migrant worker, at two months and his mother at age 10, Lopez was raised by his grandparents. He remembers his days growing up in the valley fondly and still frequents his favorite childhood haunts like Carrillo’s San Fernando and Presidente on Rinaldi.

He started doing stand up in the ‘80s in high school and was approached by Academy Award winner Sandra Bullock to co-produce, write and star in the groundbreaking George Lopez Show in the ‘90s, focusing on the Latin American community, which is still in syndication. He went on to host the Emmy Awards and co-stars alongside Edward James Olmos and Kathleen Quinlan in “Walking With Herb,” which comes out at the end of April.

The comedian’s perspective on life has shifted as he approaches his 60th birthday and the pandemic year has given him some therapeutic time to reflect on the past. An anchor and driving force in every aspect of his life, Benita passed away in 2009.

“When she started suffering from dementia, she’d cook me breakfast and would still make tortillas. She started getting forgetful and kept asking me ‘how many is that?’ Three (it was actually nine). Then she’d come back again, ‘How many is that?’ Four (it was actually twelve). We ended up with enough tortillas for the week. I couldn’t let her stop, her cute little face when she thought she hadn’t made enough. Sheryl just spin around and make some more. I took care of her til the end and that’s all part of our journey together, using humor with somebody who was losing their ability to connect with people. It made me who I am and how to find humor in tough topics.”

“From growing up trying to please everybody in every aspect of my life, and missing my grandmother as I do as the years go by, it’s harder to see her. The food has been a great way to preserve the memories of our experiences in that little kitchen.”

To hear more about the reboot of The George Lopez show, cancel culture, memories of Mission Hills and some classic Lopez humor, tune into the L.A. Weekly podcast.
The Rebuild SoCal Partnership (RSCP) consists of 2,750 contractors throughout Southern California that represent more than 90,000 union workers. RSCP is dedicated to working with elected officials and educating the public on the continued need for essential infrastructure funding, including airports, bridges, ports, rail, roads, and water projects.

Now you can keep updated on construction projects and learn how they impact your community and affect your daily life. Tune in to the new podcast, The Rebuild SoCal Zone Podcast.

https://rebuildsocal.org
BY BRETT CALLWOOD

It was me going back to my roots of Muscle Shoals, the swampers,” Cyrus says by phone. “Muscle Shoals, Alabama is a Mecca for recording throughout the years. A lot of times it’s overlooked in the shadow of Nashville, New York, L.A. or Detroit. But a lot of that Detroit sound was coming out of Muscle Shoals. So for me to go back to the Shoals and play with some of the greatest musicians in the world was great.”

One of those people is Vietnam vet Don Von Tress, who actually co-wrote “Achy Breaky Heart.” Cyrus had written a song called “Some Gave All” about veterans, and a bond was formed. Von Tress had a song then called “Don’t Tell My Heart,” and the rest is history.

“He became my best friend and my musical soulmate,” Cyrus says. “We ended up writing a lot of songs that are more reminiscent of what you hear in SnakeDoctor Circus. This is back in 1994. When we got together and reconvened for SnakeDoctor Circus, we were writing really what we were writing then. The truth of what we’re living, and the hard real-

“Globally, I immediately fell in love with him and his story, standing up for an underdog. Within 14 days of recording, it was released; shot to number one and stayed there for 19 weeks in a row. It was a wild ride.”

A blend of hip-hop and country is, at least on the surface, incredibly difficult to pull off. Besides the obvious musical differences, one would expect that the crowds are coming from different places.

“It was ironic that they added me to the record,” Cyrus says. “I was supposed to be the country element. But some of the stations said it didn’t have enough elements of country. Lil Nas had reached out to me before he had a record deal, trying to get the song to me. He got signed to Columbia and the song was moving but he was getting resistance at country [radio]. So they add me, and country completely bans the record. But the good news is hip-hop, pop, every other genre took off with it. It didn’t matter to me – a hit’s a hit. The song took on a life of its own. I have no hard feelings towards country. It’s just the way the story goes.”

This year, Cyrus releases a five-song EP called The Singin’ Hills Sessions – Mojave, recorded in the Mojave desert. Continuing with Cyrus’ recent foray into hip-hop territory, the EP features a cover of LL Cool J’s “Mama Said Knock You Out.”

“Bootsy Collins is the co-writer on ‘Mama Said Knock You Out,’” he says. “I’ve been friends with Bootsy for going on 15 years. I love the LL Cool J version. He hit with that song almost simultaneously with when I hit with ‘Achy Breaky Heart’ in ’91. I think he came out in ’91, and I came out in February of ’92. It was that moment, those early ’90s, when people were in the mood to dance. It was a natural fit and a part of who I am. That’s part of who I am, and it’s what Mojave is all about. My roots.”

So that’s where Billy Ray frickin’ Cyrus is in 2020. A holy roller exploring his bluegrass roots, unashamed of his chart-topping past and dipping his feet into hip-hop. His daughters, as we all know, are having tremendous success – life is good. But at the same time, the world is in a mess. All this is happening in the middle of a pandemic. Cyrus is hopeful.

“My prayers are with the first responders and all those on the front lines,” he says. “Their picture should be on the front page. I want everybody to be healed, I want the people to be healed, and by somewhere hopefully in the middle of 2021, we can all look up and say, ‘We can go to concerts again.’ It may take a little longer than that, but I’m hoping that somewhere by the end of 2021 what we once considered normal can come back and this darkness will be lifted. We’ll say that we made it through something really tough, and I don’t think we’ll ever take for granted what we once knew as normal. Be stronger and wiser as a people. All look at this moment and go, ‘We survived!’”

Billy Ray Cyrus’ The Singin’ Hill Sessions – Mojave EP is out now.
Art in the Plague Year processes the experience

A web-based exhibition unpacks the year that wasn’t

By Shana Nys Dambrot

As the nation and the world begins to commemorate the unhappy anniversaries of first cases, lockdown orders, and personal loss, the pandemic may finally be beginning to end. From the earliest days, the arts community has remained essential – pivoting to more virtual or otherwise distanced models, creating new models for engaging with culture, keeping us sane and as interconnected as possible, promoting profound contemplations, rising to challenges, facing urgent social and political issues without fear, and helping light a path, if not back to normal, then forward to a new normal.

Art in the Plague Year is an online exhibition organized by UC Riverside’s California Museum of Photography, curated by Douglas McCulloh, Nikolay Maslov, and Rita Sobreiro Souther, and featuring photographs, videos, drawings, audio pieces, and multi-media art by 55 artists from around the world. Divided into eight themes – Body, Nature, Absence, Presence, Ritual, Encounters, Dystopia, and Justice – this landmark show ironically will never be physically staged, but will nevertheless live forever in the internet space. This seems only fitting, as in its very presentation platform it recalls the virtuality of the majority of 2020’s experiences. Like many of the year’s most impressive exhibitions, it includes a great deal of video, sound art, VR space, website-based projects, and other multimedia formats which enliven the online viewing experience.

Across the exhibition, we encounter the familiar continuum of jostling emotions, as artists take unflinching looks at the multiplicity of crises which unfold, like their works, in layers. Other voices turn to poetry and magic to make sense of it and center personal and shared humanity in narratives of hopefulness and salvation. We see nature as both a nurturing and a nihilistic force, violence as a perpetual and pernicious dynamic, mutual aid as a possible antidote, dreams and fantasy as a way of processing trauma, humor as a coping mechanism, and our friends and family making life worth living.

L.A.-based Boots Hollar staged and photographed epic returns to nature, bringing their body into intimate contact with natural environments. So many of us found solace in nature during the pandemic, seeking out a sense of connectedness to something greater than ourselves, something eternal of which we are all a part, and these images celebrate and recall that comfort. Pittsburgh-based Mikael Owunna’s Infinite Essence series creates ethereal portraits, hand-painting the bodies of his Black models in a way that generates fluorescent, cosmic, starlight-inflected images that transmute the specter of death into a spectacle of soul, light, color, and infinite peace.

My Mother’s Titanium Hip (Video, sound, 6:36 min) by Jill Miller (Berkeley) is an enacted mediation on the intrusions of technology and isolation into experiences of loss and mourning. Losing her mother during the pandemic, Miller presents the instability of technologically mediated experiences, as trauma and losses mount and the world turns into a surreal kaleidoscope of glitches and fragments and reality becomes increasingly difficult to define and pin down. Stefanos Morrone (Mexico City) is also concerned with our individual and collective mental health, and his eccentric street portraits give form to the confusion.

Nature photographer Kiliiii Yuyan (Seattle/ circumpolar Arctic) presents images from the in-progress project Thin Places which examines a less comforting and more terrifying, though no less majestic, view of the earth. Focusing on what seemed like a sort of uprising, as nature both abandoned and emboldened by our absence, “rose up to assert itself.” Wildfires, climate change accelerations, and the virus itself expose the fragility of the natural world, and its power to disrupt human endeavor.

Sara Jane Boyers (Santa Monica) presents haunting photographs of empty theaters illuminated only by what is called a “ghost light” – a theater tradition in which when vacant, a single light is left on, often on the stage itself, within the empty space. Jody Zellen (L.A.) offers Ghost City, Avenue S – a pandemic-inspired addition to her existing Ghost City website. A new neighborhood within an imaginative hybridized space, consisting of images, rollers, animations, and hundreds of unique webpages, this exercise in personal worldbuilding both responds to and in the imagination ameliorates the condition of shared isolation.
(Berlin) made the webzine Another Day to bring together and honor the scattered community of friends and their daily experiences. With more than 600 contributions from Auckland, Beijing, New York, Ottawa, Paris, Seattle, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Tel Aviv, Toronto, Winnipeg, Wuhan, and more, her book "uses day-to-day life as the means to knit together a fractured world."

Tyler Stallings (Huntington Beach) took a more wry approach to the trials of daily life, with the short film Three Disasters in a Stairwell (Video, sound, 43 sec.) warning that disasters do in fact lurk everywhere at all times.

Andrew K. Thompson (Colton, CA) offers works from his ongoing Chemical Landscapes – Scarring Land & Time series, begun early in the quarantine experience, and honoring the physical threats of apocalyptic social and climate upheaval in photo-based works which are torn, punctured, sewn together, and stained in embodied images of the destruction in which we are all complicit.

Peter Wu+/EPOCH Gallery (L.A.) founded the VR site epoch.gallery as an artist-run exhibition space that not only harnessed the necessity of web-based culture but in its curations directly address themes of dystopia, entropy, and struggle.

Othered Suns by antoine williams (North Carolina) is a 14-minute sound installation that affectingly collages audio fragments including found sounds and dialogue from Isabel Wilkerson's The Warmth of Other Suns (from which the piece derives its title), No Longer Human by Osamu Dazai and williams’ own The Black Fusionist Society Manifesto. Positing the Black body as being in a centuries-long, still constant state of change, migration, and seeking – a condition with implications for radical distress across physical, emotional, and generation space and time – the piece unforgettable enacts shelter and exile, collapsing history into the present with the intention of creating a more conscious, loving future with a foundation in the righteous promise of safety.

Explore the full exhibition now atartintheplagueyear.com.
L.A. COUNTY TAKES STEPS TOWARD NORMALCY

Monday marked a full year of L.A. County being under COVID-19 restrictions, but it was also the day where more businesses qualified to reopen at a limited capacity.

BY ISAI ROCHA

It has been a year since the COVID-19 pandemic forced L.A. County to place its first lockdown orders, but with the number of COVID-19 cases decreasing and more vaccinations being distributed, the county is taking steps forward in returning to normalcy.

L.A. Public Health allowed additional sectors to reopen this week, including indoor dining, movie theaters and indoor gyms. Entering the “red tier” of California’s Blueprint for a Safer Economy means that L.A. County’s COVID-19 case rates are no longer considered “widespread,” but are still considered “substantial.” With COVID-19 transmission still high, the slew of reopenings come with restrictions and capacity limits. “Let’s not go back to a place where we have more spread that would require reinstating state and county mandatory safety restrictions again,” L.A. Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer said, Monday. “We ask everyone to please exercise great caution and good judgement in these next couple of weeks to avoid any surges in cases.”

Within the red tier, indoor dining will be permitted at 25% of a restaurant’s max capacity, so long as tables are stationed 8-feet apart, with a limit of six people per table (from one household) and an HVAC system working at its maximum possible ventilation.

Indoor gyms and fitness studios will be allowed to reopen at 10% capacity with masks required for indoor activities.

Movie theaters will be allowed to reopen at 25% capacity with a reserved seating system in place and six feet of distance between groups of moviegoers.

Museums, zoos and aquariums will be allowed to resume indoor operations at 25% capacity.

Personal care services, such as hair salons and barbershops, will be allowed to operate at 50% capacity instead of the previous 25% capacity limit that was allowed in the “purple tier.”

Indoor malls will also be allowed to op-
erate at 50% capacity with its food courts running at 25% capacity. The same mask and table guidance for indoor restaurants will be applied to food courts.

The red tier also triggered schools to restart in-person classes for grades 7-12, if the district chooses to. LAUSD was among the districts that petitioned to reopen and were approved by L.A. Public Health to move forward with in-person instruction.

The district and the UTLA teachers union came to an agreement on reopening terms, after UTLA spent weeks fighting the school district’s plan to reopen, saying 91% of its teachers did not want to return until proven that it can be done safely.

Multiple terms of the agreement were already mandatory under L.A. Public Health regulations, such as keeping the option for online distance learning and weekly testing for COVID-19, but there were terms added that provide opportunities for students to safely interact with each other and also have an outlet for “social-emotional support.”

LAUSD has already upgraded the filtration system in its school buildings to meet Public Health standards and personal protective equipment such as masks and gloves will be made available on site.

Another term in the agreement was to provide meals to students whether they attend in-person classes, or continue learning from home. In efforts to continue feeding students through the pandemic, LAUSD said it has distributed more than 100 million meals through its “grab-&-go” food centers.

LAUSD high school sports have also resumed practices and training in anticipation of playing outdoor sports this year, such as football, cross country and water polo.

While not specifically included in this week’s reopenings, starting April 1, theme parks, stadiums and outdoor venues will be allowed to reopen as long as the county stays in the red tier.

While once considered high risk activities, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti stated that theme parks and stadiums are no longer seen as “super spreader” sectors when running under limited capacity.

“Certainly stadiums and outdoor activities at limited capacity, we’ve seen generally are not the super spreaders,” Garcetti said on March 10. “A packed stadium is a different thing. A theme park operating at 100 percent is a different thing.”

Garcetti added that over the past year, controlled environments with protocols such as capacity limits and temperature checks are less of a risk for spreading the COVID-19 virus.

“Only at the worst moments would you want to close those down,” Garcetti said. “Over time, outdoor activities where you have enough spacing are not high risk and if the numbers are low enough, those are some things with some confidence, you can move forward.”

In order to move down to the “orange tier,” with the COVID-19 spread considered “moderate,” the county would have to average less than four positive cases per 100,000 residents.

With L.A. County’s population being around 10 million, the average case rate would have to fall below 400 per day.

The average case rate would loosen if California achieves 4 million vaccination in designated “highest risk” communities. If that California vaccination goal is reached, L.A. County would need less than six cases per 100,000 residents, or 600 cases per day.

A sharp decline in positive COVID-19 cases occurred over the weekend and into this week, with L.A. County seeing cases below 1,000 for the first time since November of 2020.

Hospitalization also dropped below 1,000 with Monday’s 865 being the lowest number recorded since November 4, 2020.

“These numbers aren’t just progress on paper,” Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said, Monday. “They are really having an impact and vaccines are working – we know this because for the first time patients over 65 are fewer than patients under 65.”

U.S. President Joe Biden put a date on when he expects the country to fully reopen, saying that on Sunday, July 4, “there’s a good chance folks will be able to gather with family and close friends to celebrate Independence Day.”

Biden also directed states to accelerate vaccine eligibility, with a goal to have every American eligible for one of the three vaccines by May 1. By that May 1 date, Biden said there would be enough vaccine doses available to distribute to every American adult.

With Biden signing the $1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan last week, financial support will be going to multiple sectors in the country and Americans will be receiving a third relief payment in the form of $1,400.

“If we all do our part, this country will be vaccinated soon, our economy will be on the mend, our kids will be back in school, and we will have proven once again that this country can do anything,” Biden said Monday. “After a long, dark year there are better days ahead.”
CANNABIS & LOCKDOWN: A YEAR LATER

We took a look back at the craziest year in legal cannabis yet, as every level of the industry worked to deal with the issues presented by COVID-19.

BY JIMI DEVINE

Saint Patrick's Day Eve represents the day the world changed for California. The Bay Area would officially enter lockdown the next day and L.A. would enter lockdown two days after the holiday as Gov. Gavin Newsom issued a mandatory statewide stay-at-home order - but the weed kept flowing.

There is a solid argument to be made that cannabis had the second most successful pandemic after Joe Biden, who used the idea of following the advice of medical professionals to ride his chariot of moderacy all the way to Pennsylvania Avenue.

While many businesses were forced to close, access to cannabis never stopped. Retailers, delivery services and industry organizations scrambled to implement effective measures to protect staff and customers. And they did well. The opposition would have loved to point to some dispensary super spreader event, but here we are. Certainly, people in the industry have got COVID, but it's generally done a good job protecting the pack.

Big Numbers

And it's a good thing they did, because more people smoked pot. We'll use the tax numbers to put it into perspective. California pulled in $177.3 million in the last quarter before COVID, which closed up fiscal 2019. The CDTFA announced in late February the state pulled in $236.4 million in the last quarter of 2020, and that doesn't even include local taxes.

But the 3rd quarter of 2020 saw even more monster numbers at $318.9 million. That Q3 revenue number is a little over $30 million short of doubling Q4 of 2019. Nothing can quantify how much legal pot moved in California through the pandemic better than these numbers because most of the data sets we use to understand the industry rely on small sample sections of dispensaries and distributors willing to participate. Plenty of big names don't participate.

The Weed

There was a ton of good pot out there, but we can always do better. While the battle for top shelf supremacy remained fierce in 2020, we saw a lot of affordable options too. Glass House Farms dropped $35 MSRP Runtz on us. Carlos Santana decided he wanted to sell quarters of decent weed from Wine Country and further points north. These kinds of things were pretty cool, but knockoff mylar packaging proliferated even further on Alibaba through the pandemic.

If I see anyone approach me with fake Devine Runtz, I'm going to cry on your Jordan 14s or Yezy, which I would also likely presume to be knockoffs.

But regardless of those tears, we benefited from growers being stuck in their garden for a year. The genetics we're seeing right now are spectacular. Gas strains with different notes, new takes on dessert weed. Here at L.A. Weekly, we've been particularly excited with new twists on Peanut Butter Breath, Jet Fuel Gelato and a bunch of other stuff we'll cover in our Strains of the Pandemic.

Equity and Prisoners Coming Home

Another cool thing we loved from the pandemic was seeing equity brands win big if their door were already open. The brands that were already going benefited from the surge of cultural awareness around race and criminal justice in America since these companies were literally born at the root of the issue well before what happened last summer. The most unfortunate part of the whole pandemic, in regard to cannabis, may be that more equity brands that were trying to open their doors were hit by the bottlenecks associated with the world closing.

But apart from that setback, the equity conversation is bigger than ever. When there is an absence of it, or attempts to move the conversation forward without it, the calls to include it are louder than ever. And this isn't just us being some pro-social justice charity cases outlet. The fact of the matter is a lot of these brands have awesome products. Supporting communities hit the hardest by the war on drugs is such a positive thing.

And finally, the pandemic saw more federal cannabis prisoners return to their families. This happened through COVID-related events with certain at-risk prisoners, or via clemency.
A cultural awakenings continue to play tug of war with public opinion - both old and new, the lines between sexism, objectification and misogyny have blurred, as have the actions and treatments that cross these lines altogether. In this context, a post #metoo reconsideration of Britney Spears' professional and personal trajectory was bound to occur. The treatment the young star received from the industry, the media and even fans was on display for all to see. The treatment the young star received from the industry, the media and even fans was on display for all to see. The treatment the young star received from the industry, the media and even fans was on display for all to see.

"I can't have one moment where I'm like 'I don't wanna see what's going on right now.'"\[1\] Cutler's cameras were there to capture everything that happened the past 3 years – from Eilish's songwriting sessions at home to touring the world with her family to her big Coachella performance to her Grammy sweep last year.

"I try to get her first car, and moments when she battles physical ailments including the ticks of Tourette's Syndrome and weak knees and ankles from dance injury when she was a kid. She comes off vulnerable (just like the teary fans who mouth the words to her songs) but she is also strong-minded about her music, her image and what she wants.

Spears was 17 years old when she sang "Hit Me Baby One More Time," styled in a schoolgirl outfit and thigh-highs, while Christina Aguilera was 18 when she sang "Rub Me the Right Way" in her own skimpy garb - which got skimpy as she showed to the world she was growing up. Though Ariana Grande and Miley Cyrus, for example, have both given up sex like some had found success as grown women celebrating sexuality in their music on their own terms, they were already young adults and were clearly trying to rebel against the squeaky images they had presented previously as child stars. Spears, Aguilera and Justin Timberlake came from Disney child stardom themselves, but while the two females were sexualized for seemingly older male audiences from their first videos on, Timberlake and his fellow boy band brood were positioned as fun and fashionable, aspirational teen boyfriend types. This disparity was never an issue and in some ways it still isn't. But maybe it should be. Ultimately, Framing Britney isn't just about Spears and the treatment she received, but how culture as a whole often uses and abuses the very people it puts on a pedestal, especially young females. It's led to reckonings against crude and downright creepy interviews (David Letterman has a couple handfuls of apologies to give), the paparazzi and public perceptions about what's fair game. Though it's been said "cancel culture" can be a bitch, when it hits deserving targets, it is the best way to hold those with toxic behaviors accountable and potentially change things in the future. As seen in Blurry, Eilish's success suggests that this shift has already begun.

---

**ENTERTAINMENT**

**FROM BRITNEY TO BILLIE**

**Youthful Pop Stardom Gets the Documentary Treatment in **Framing Britney Spears and The World’s A Little Blurry

**BY LINA LECARO**

The New York Times documentary for Hulu called Framing Britney Spears came out last month, but Spears has been the source of concern for some time now. Thanks to the #FreeBritney movement, this developed into a full-on fight for her freedom, with protestors making their presence known at the L.A. court hearings where she's been trying to get out of the conservatorship that was imposed on her back in 2008. Though she headlined a Vegas residency, judged a TV talent show and has even maintained a steady relationship (with model Sam Asghari) for the past several years, her father continues to control her affairs with no end in sight.

Add to this, the curious wonder of the star's social media. Something has been off about Spears posts for a while - so much so many fans have been questioning if it’s even her who is actually posting. (Her social media manager recently put out a statement refuting these rumors). But she often looks disheveled; she re-posts the same photos and videos multiple times and, as fans often note, she dresses in styles that seem stuck in the '90s. In between the sweaty selfies, dancing clips and corny captions, there are flowery memes and the occasional video, on which she answers questions in a childlike voice that never addresses the one thing her fans really want to know: Are you OK?

Nobody has to ask Eilish this question, because unlike Spears at the start of her career, the now 19 year old lays everything out, even and especially the dark side of being who she is. Eilish's rise to stardom is chronicled in R.J. Cutler's just-released Apple TV+ doc *The World's A Little Blurry*, which is notably as much about her family as it is about her.

"I don't wanna see what's going on right now."
**NEWSPAPER CLASSIFIEDS**

**NIRVANA Massage**
**$40/hr專業服務**

**Lion’s Spa**

**LEGAL NOTICES**

**ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME**

Case No. 21STCP00581
Superior Court of California County of Los Angeles located at: Central District Central Courthouse 111 North Hill Street, Department 74, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Filed on February 11, 2021 - In the matter of petitioner ANNA V. LITAVRINA. Petitioner(s) desire(s) to have change of name appear as indicated herein. Petitioner ANNA V. LITAVRINA to ANNA. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered that all persons interested in the matter of change of name should not show cause why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Court Date: 3/11/21, 3/18/21. Dated: 2/22/21. 

**WARNING**

Making a false or fraudulent claim is a felony subject up to 5 years in prison or a fine up to $50,000 or double the value of the fraud whichever is greater, or by both imprisonment or fine.

---

**LAW WEEKLY**

**CLASSIFIEDS Continued**

**FREE**

Monthly Minutes, Text & Data, Applicant Must Qualify Bring Your Own Phone and Number!

Service Works On Most Unlocked GSM Phones

CALL US TODAY: 800-544-4441

---

**BULLETIN**

Injured at work?
Workers Comp Law Firm
READY TO HELP!

For a FREE consultation, please call
310-664-9000 x 101 or text 310-849-5679
Website: www.workinjuryhelp.com

Warning:
Making a false or fraudulent claim is a felony subject up to 5 years in prison or a fine up to $50,000 or double the value of the fraud whichever is greater, or by both imprisonment or fine.

---

**Thank you Saint Jude, Saint of the Impossible, EC**

---

**To advertise contact us at**
**publisher@laweekly.com**
**310-574-7314**

---

**WANTED HOTWHEELS**

1968-1985
COLLECTOR WILL PAY TOP DOLLAR
(562) 708-9069
acmecollectables.com