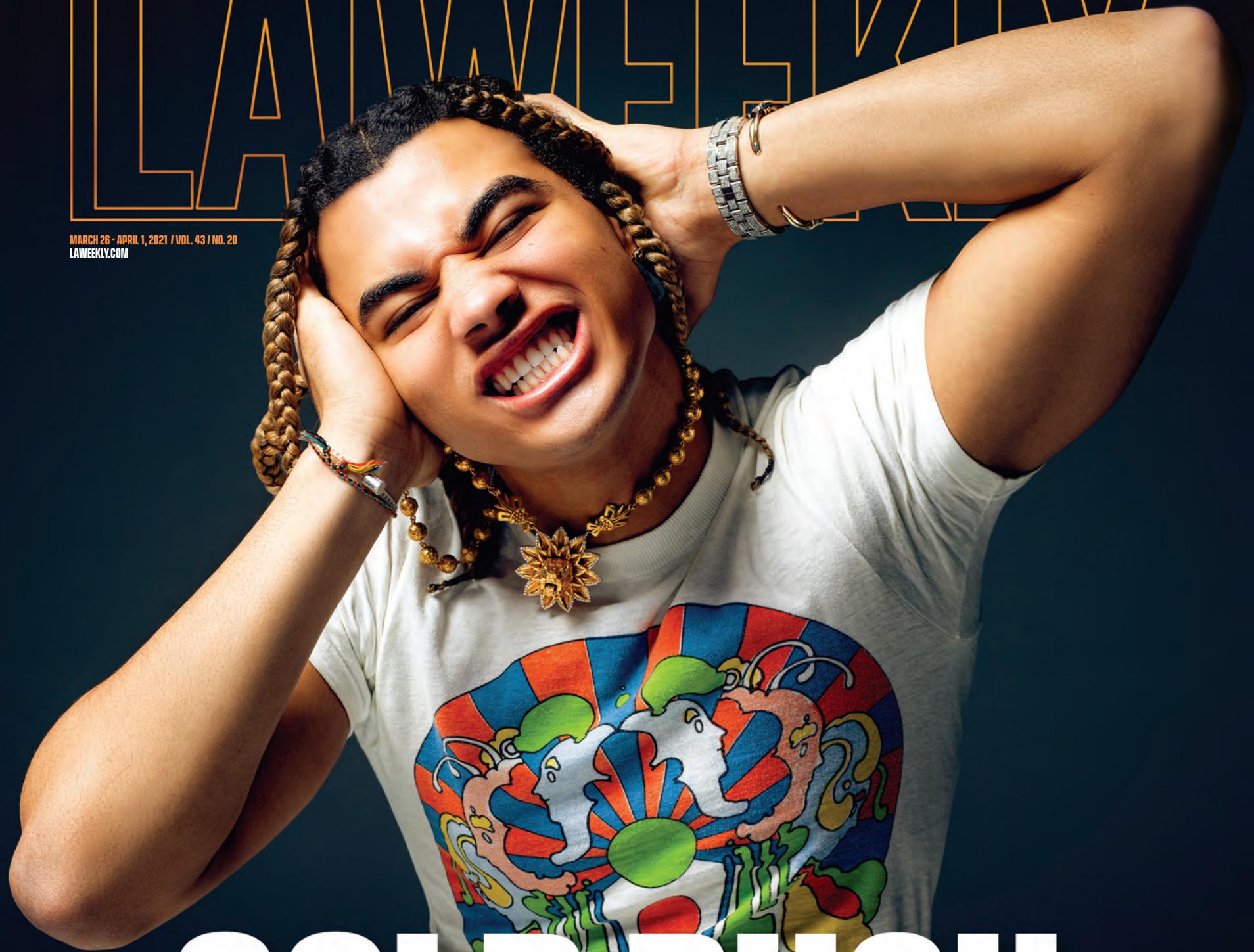


PROTESTERS MARCH AGAINST ASIAN HATE • LA WEEKLY'S MOVIE GUIDE • COMEDY STORE AND PUFFCO TEAM UP FOR LAUGHS

LA WEEKLY

MARCH 26 - APRIL 1, 2021 / VOL. 43 / NO. 20
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GOLD RUSH

24KGOLDN GOES TO LOST CITY TO FIND HIMSELF • BY BRETT CALLWOOD



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Photography courtesy of 24KGoldn.

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CHEF SPOTLIGHT: KAYLA GREER IS ACING IT AT 40 LOVE

BY MICHELE STUEVEN



L.A. Trade Tech College's new state-of-the-art Culinary Arts Pathway building (LATTC)



Chef Kayla Greer



Roasted Vegetable Whipped Feta Salad

Chef Kayla Greer, better known as personal chef Kay Kay to her A-list celebrity clients like Demi Lovato, Diddy, Drake, Migos, Jhene Aiko and the late Nipsey Hussle, is shaking things up as the newly installed executive chef at the recently reopened 40 Love country club themed sports lounge in West Hollywood.

The L.A. native, who has lived everywhere from South Central to Hermosa Beach, is re-vamping the menu with signature items from family recipes like her Aunt Trena's clam dip and the crab cake sliders she made for Diddy's Easter dinner last year. And in addition to her spin on fried chicken deviled eggs, she's also introducing healthy options like a roasted vegetable and whipped feta salad with asparagus,

broccoli, red bell peppers, heirloom carrots and goat cheese.

Her first major gig as a personal chef was Drake's 2011 Super Bowl party. What was supposed to be 100 people turned into 300 people and Greer aced it. She prepared the entire 15-item menu by herself, which included fried chicken, roast chicken, grilled chicken, pastas and salads. Her chicken strips from that party have found their way to the new 40 Love menu as well.

"We weren't wealthy growing up, but I had a wide palate," Greer tells *L.A. Weekly* in the outdoor patio at 40 Love. "I cook a lot of soul food for my clients and had to actually teach myself how to make fried chicken. I don't know what my mom's fried chicken tastes like. My

favorite meal of hers was a salmon steak with white rice and broccoli."

Homeschooled in high school by her mother who is a former BBW model and mother of four, Greer started cooking early. Already towering at 5'11 in the 6th grade and standing 6'1 now, she was cooking eggs with her grandmother at about seven years old because she could easily navigate the counter. The love for cooking steered her towards L.A. Trade Technical College's culinary program.

"I had the option of going to a big school," says the LATTC graduate. "But because I was homeschooled, my mom wondered if I wanted to get lost in a big school like the Cordon Bleu. She said try out LATTC first. I lived downtown at the time. They had such great teachers and

we used the same books as the Cordon Bleu. It's the same education for a lot less money. For me personally, I took advantage of every opportunity they offered."

Out of only four students who qualified, she went to the culinary olympics twice with her teacher, traveling to Germany for the first time at 18. Often overlooked and highly underrated, the culinary program at LATTC has placed graduates into some of the best kitchens in Los Angeles, including Melisse, Patina and Animal.

According to LATTC Culinary Arts Pathway Chair Martin Gilligan, in a regular non-pandemic year, the college has about 700 culinary students. He expects that to triple in the next two years thanks to the campus's brand new state-of-the-art 170,000 square foot, \$75 million building for culinary arts, baking and restaurant management programs. It's even got its own rooftop urban garden which is tended by the students.

With the agility of Serena Williams and due to the overwhelming demand for her services, Greer started the Saffron Agency last year where she places chefs with clients and will be coming out with a spice line soon.

"I've gotten so overwhelmed with doing up to four clients a day and parties for 30, 40, 50 people and weddings by myself, I started running myself into the ground. But the biggest challenge since starting the 40 Love menu process in June 2020 has been writing down my recipes. I had no idea how time consuming that is. It was the hardest part. I'm used to just putting things together and making things up on the spot. At the end of the day, I just like to keep my food simple."



Julian Petty, left, and Genelle Brooks-Petty at Leimert Park Village

MICHELE STUEVEN

SNEAK PEEK: ALL CHILLIN IN LEIMERT PARK

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

What do you get when you mix an interior designer's passion for ice cream and a Warner Bros. music exec with an overabundance of rap memorabilia? All Chill, a combination rap music museum and sweet shop in the heart of Leimert Park.

Genelle Brooks-Petty was frustrated with the lack of ice cream in her underserved neighborhood and with the help of her husband, Julian Petty, EX VP of Business and Legal Affairs at Warner Music, the pair started a neighborhood pop-up that will open soon in Leimert Square overlooking the park.

With the motto of All Chill, Cream, Culture, Community, the couple who met in business school at Howard University is currently popping up every other weekend until the shop officially opens next month and is joined in the space by Treme Kitchen, which features New Orleans style pralines, whiskey truffles, rum and 7 Up cakes. Also on hand for the pop-up is Cooking with Bee Spices, including salty ginger, raspberry chili and jerk.

Brooks-Petty makes all the organic ice creams and sorbets herself including honey lavender, cherry vanilla, bubble gum, a

unique smoked olive oil, champagne sorbet and the intoxicating top seller, whiskey pecan praline.

"I have to drive at least 30 minutes to get the simple luxury of decent ice cream," the mother of two says in between scoops at a Saturday pop-up. "We live in this community and felt our community deserved that. We always joked that when we retired we'd open a record shop and I said what if we could do both – sort of a sweet delicious pizza. We're lucky because the space allows us to work alongside other local vendors. We want to be advocates for this community."



MICHELE STUEVEN

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Jesse Colin Jackson -
Turtle Rock

ART

SUBURBAN ECOLOGIES: THE ORANGE COAST THROUGH A TRANSCENDENT LENS

Jesse Colin Jackson is obsessed with Irvine’s “perfect” terrains

BY LIZ GOLDNER

As a recent Irvine resident (who moved here from Laguna Beach), I often feel as though I am driving through an imaginary village. I marvel at the flawlessness of the city with the trees and bushes trimmed to near perfection, and the cohesiveness of the housing. This suburban environment is also recognized by Jesse Colin Jackson, an artist, designer and UC Irvine art professor, who photographed many of the

modern and contemporary homes here for his innovative series, *“The Villages of Irvine.”* This series, part of Jackson’s exhibition, *Suburban Ecologies* recently installed at Irvine’s Great Park Gallery, was curated by Adam Sabolick, Community Services Specialist for the city. (While the lockdown prevented visitors from viewing the show and it is now closed, personal tours are available, as well as a video tour. See below for more information.)

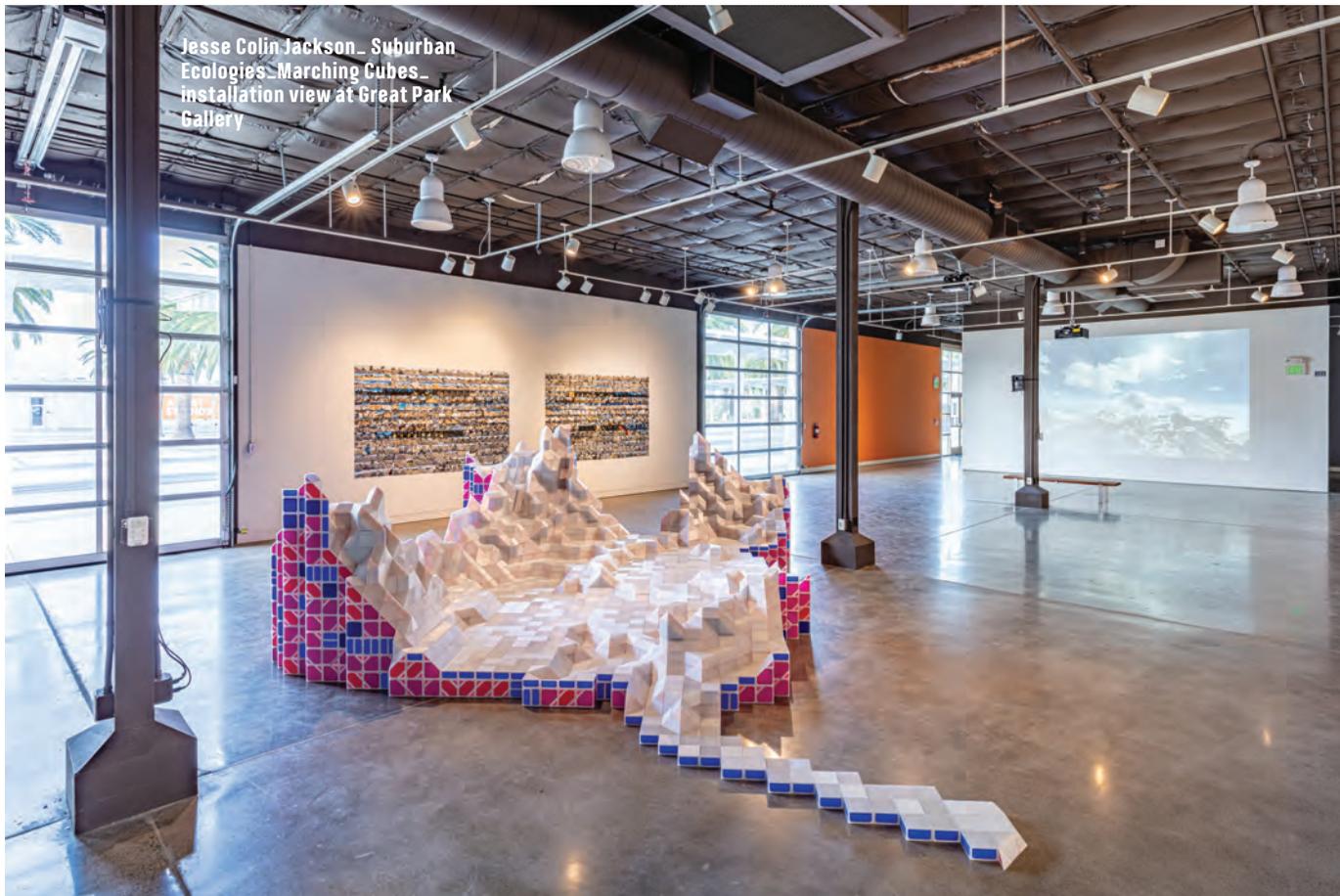
The *Villages* series was inspired by five Irvine areas — Northwood, Stonegate, Turtle Rock, University Park and Woodbridge — which Jackson visited many times over several months. His goal was to locate structures in each area that have similar design features, but are slightly different from each other. Or as he explains, “Less distinct are the individual buildings, which are subtly mirrored, shifted, and finished in ways that maintain predictability while making it dif-

ficult to pinpoint exact copies.”

He ultimately created seven composite photos — six of homes, one of large planters in Turtle Rock— with each photo comprised of eight digitally overlaid images. Each resulting 36 x 54-inch inkjet print brings to light the similarities of the structures; while their slight variations, enhanced by the digital manipulation, result in glistening artworks evoking the work of the French Impressionists, particularly their brushstrokes and depiction of light. They also suggest the paintings of Claude Monet, whose landscapes often illuminate the early morning mist.

Jackson explains, “These composite images collapse Irvine’s simulations into shimmering compositions that speak to a quality ascribed to both Irvine specifically and suburbia more generally: a sense of placelessness born of repetition, where the impression and its precedent are one and the same.”

As *Villages* further demonstrates, Jackson employs his skills in photoshop, photography and film. “I am part of the late Generation X, born in 1978. We were the first group who learned how to use computers as an integral part of everyday life, but we still had to build them from scratch and fix them from basic principles.” He adds, “I learned photography the old way, in the darkroom, but came of age



Jesse Colin Jackson_ Suburban Ecologies_ Marching Cubes_ Installation view at Great Park Gallery

artistically using digital technology.”

By merging his lifelong technical skills with artistry, Jackson transforms Irvine’s classic architecture into images of astonishing artistic splendor.

Jackson’s *The Orange Coast*, an organically-inspired series in this exhibition, is composed of digitally overlaid panoramic shots of the shorelines and nearby environs in San Clemente, Dana Point, Laguna Beach, Newport Beach, Huntington Beach and Seal Beach. The six resulting 30 x 90-inch inkjet prints, centered on the water’s horizon, illuminate the ocean, sand, surfers and birdwatchers, along with regional sights including the Huntington Beach and Seal Beach piers.

The ocean — when viewed through the lens of multiple layers— appears to be churning as it would during a fierce storm, while the series portrays a mystical sweep of the ocean meeting sky and sand, evoking the romance and passion of our shorelines.

Jackson expresses his architectural training and skill in the creation of *Marching Cubes Watershed #2: Santa Ana* (58 x 242 x 160 inches), composed of 5,000 3D-printed PLA plastic components, with magnets affixed to them. The installation depicts the topography of Orange County and regions beyond as it progresses inland from the Santa Ana Watershed.

He explains, “Orange County’s historic orange groves, such as those found at the Irvine Ranch, were irrigated by the Santa Ana River, which brings water from Southern California’s highest points to its current artificial outlet at the border of Huntington Beach and Newport Beach.” The art piece also includes Saddleback Mountain, Big Bear Lake, Mount Baldy, and the San Jacinto and San Geronio Mountains.

As a low-slung sculpture with light filtering through it, *Marching Cubes* evokes the Southern California Light and Space move-

ment of the 1960s and 70s: an immersive style in which various materials were used to create sculptures and installations reflecting

the magnificent southland light.

Another series in this show, *Santa Ana Fall Line*, consists of two pixelated films on opposing walls in the gallery’s main room. Available for online viewing, these videos record a hiking/biking journey that Jackson and a friend pursued from the mouth of the Santa Ana River to the top of San Geronio Mountain, a trip of about 100 miles each way.

To create the films, Jackson and his friend Nicholas Bradley first shot 20,000 still images each of the terrain, foliage and people during the journey — one photo each minute — wearing body-mounted cameras. Jackson culled these to 10,433 frames per channel by deleting breaks and most of the night shots.

The first resulting film, with dissolving figuration, is redolent of the play of sunlight on flowing water, or of the appearance of movement in impressionist paintings, while echoing *The Orange Coast* series installed on the room’s side wall. The second more abstract film, comprised of large moving multi-colored squares, complements the *Marching Cubes* sculpture on the floor nearby.

Suburban Ecologies exhibits aspects of postmodernism as it contains borrowed elements, repeated design motifs and complex juxtapositions, while combining high art with images from daily life. It is a transcendent installation, created by an artist who intuitively uses the latest digital tools and methods in his work.

Jackson has temporarily relocated his art-making studio from UC Irvine to his home, where he is pleased to receive visitors. Email him at jesse@jessecolinjackson.com to arrange a visit.



Jesse Colin Jackson_ University Park

Important Facts About DOVATO

This is only a brief summary of important information about DOVATO and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and treatment.

What is the most important information I should know about DOVATO?

If you have both human immunodeficiency virus-1 (HIV-1) and hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection, DOVATO can cause serious side effects, including:

- **Resistant HBV infection.** Your healthcare provider will test you for HBV infection before you start treatment with DOVATO. If you have HIV-1 and hepatitis B, the hepatitis B virus can change (mutate) during your treatment with DOVATO and become harder to treat (resistant). It is not known if DOVATO is safe and effective in people who have HIV-1 and HBV infection.
- **Worsening of HBV infection.** If you have HIV-1 and HBV infection, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking DOVATO. A “flare-up” is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before. Worsening liver disease can be serious and may lead to death.
 - Do not run out of DOVATO. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your DOVATO is all gone.
 - **Do not stop DOVATO without first talking to your healthcare provider.** If you stop taking DOVATO, your healthcare provider will need to check your health often and do blood tests regularly for several months to check your liver.

What is DOVATO?

DOVATO is a prescription medicine that is used without other HIV-1 medicines to treat human immunodeficiency virus-1 (HIV-1) infection in adults: who have not received HIV-1 medicines in the past, or to replace their current HIV-1 medicines when their healthcare provider determines that they meet certain requirements. HIV-1 is the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). It is not known if DOVATO is safe and effective in children.

Who should not take DOVATO?

Do not take DOVATO if you:

- have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine that contains dolutegravir or lamivudine.
- take dofetilide.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before using DOVATO?

Tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- have or have had liver problems, including hepatitis B or C infection.
- have kidney problems.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. One of the medicines in DOVATO (dolutegravir) may harm your unborn baby.
 - Your healthcare provider may prescribe a different medicine than DOVATO if you are planning to become pregnant or if pregnancy is confirmed during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.
 - If you can become pregnant, your healthcare provider will perform a pregnancy test before you start treatment with DOVATO.
 - If you can become pregnant, you should consistently use effective birth control (contraception) during treatment with DOVATO.
 - Tell your healthcare provider right away if you are planning to become pregnant, you become pregnant, or think you may be pregnant during treatment with DOVATO.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. **Do not breastfeed if you take DOVATO.**
 - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
 - One of the medicines in DOVATO (lamivudine) passes into your breastmilk.
 - Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Some medicines interact with DOVATO. Keep a list of your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

- You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for a list of medicines that interact with DOVATO.
- **Do not start taking a new medicine without telling your healthcare provider.** Your healthcare provider can tell you if it is safe to take DOVATO with other medicines.

What are possible side effects of DOVATO?

DOVATO can cause serious side effects, including:

- **Those in the “What is the most important information I should know about DOVATO?” section.**
- **Allergic reactions. Call your healthcare provider right away if you develop a rash with DOVATO. Stop taking DOVATO and get medical help right away if you develop a rash with any of the following signs or symptoms:** fever; generally ill feeling; tiredness; muscle or joint aches; blisters or sores in mouth; blisters or peeling of the skin; redness or swelling of the eyes; swelling of the mouth, face, lips, or tongue; problems breathing.
- **Liver problems.** People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus may have an increased risk of developing new or worsening changes in certain liver tests during treatment with DOVATO. Liver problems, including liver failure, have also happened in people without a history of liver disease or other risk factors. Your healthcare provider may do blood tests to check your liver.
 - **Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following signs or symptoms of liver problems:** your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice); dark or “tea-colored” urine; light-colored stools (bowel movements); nausea or vomiting; loss of appetite; and/or pain, aching, or tenderness on the right side of your stomach area.
 - **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis).** Lactic acidosis is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. **Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms that could be signs of lactic acidosis:** feel very weak or tired; unusual (not normal) muscle pain; trouble breathing; stomach pain with nausea and vomiting; feel cold, especially in your arms and legs; feel dizzy or lightheaded; and/or a fast or irregular heartbeat.
 - **Lactic acidosis can also lead to severe liver problems**, which can lead to death. Your liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and you may develop fat in your liver (steatosis). **Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the signs or symptoms of liver problems which are listed above under “Liver problems.” You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female or very overweight (obese).**
- **Changes in your immune system (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome)** can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having new symptoms after you start taking DOVATO.
- **The most common side effects of DOVATO include:** headache; nausea; diarrhea; trouble sleeping; tiredness; and anxiety.

These are not all the possible side effects of DOVATO. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

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GOLD RUSH

24KGoldn Goes to Lost City to Find Himself

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

Bay Area rapper 24KGoldn is near bouncing out of the Zoom session as he meets with the L.A. Weekly team to be interviewed for this cover story and a corresponding podcast. The guy is jovial – full of life – and a charming conversationalist.

It's no wonder that he's so infectiously cheerful; the pandemic and lockdown have been challenging for everyone but Goldn has seen his career thrive thanks in no small part to the global smash that is his "Mood" single (with Iann Dior). It didn't hurt when it was later remixed by Justin Bieber AND J Balvin. It's been a crazy year.

"I'm having the biggest career moments of my life so far, in the middle

of a global pandemic," Goldn says. "What the fuck is going on?"

It's a fair question. Nobody saw the success of "Mood" coming, least of all the artist.

"I don't think unless you're at the Drake, Taylor Swift, Weeknd, Ariana Grande level, you can't expect a song to go number one like that," he says. "I hadn't had anywhere close, I hadn't even had a top 40 song at that time. So I knew it was a great song, if it gets 300 million plays, I'm ecstatic. It did that in like three months. I knew we had something special. I think it's over a billion between everything now."

That's incredible, and perhaps it points to the fact that the world needed a song like "Mood" to literally lift the collective mood. The song was included on Spotify's mood-boosting playlist, only increasing



PHOTO BY JONATHAN MANNION



the feel-good factor. And now, life has completely changed for the artist. Hell, he has even performed on Ellen.

“In every way possible, from where I live to what my day-to-day basis is,” he says. “I would say literally, my entire life has changed. Now it’s readjusting and figuring out the new normal.”

It’s all a long way from his 15-year-old self, rapping at home to YouTube beats.

“At 15, I was going to this sneaker store, DreamTeam SF, and I had developed a mentor relationship with the owner Paypa Boy,” Goldn says. “I came in one day and said I want to make a song. He said, ‘Don’t even worry about it, we’ve got the studio upstairs. You’re good.’ I go to the studio upstairs, make my first song, drop it on Soundcloud, send it to literally every single person I went to school with. Then when I came to school the next day, kids were bumping it in the courtyard and at lunchtime. I thought, this could be nice.”

24KGoldn (genuinely born Golden Landis Von Jones) has two former models for parents, so he was stylish from the get-go. A career in advertising beckoned.

“I had this crazy big afro, and nobody had an afro back then,” he says. “I’d walk into an audition and they’d be like, that kid’s different, we gotta put him in. So I did Lunchables commercials. Blue Diamond Almonds, Honda, Toyota. When you’re 14, 15 if you get \$1,000, it’s like you got a million dollars. You can buy any video game you want. I was enjoying that.”

Financial success was understandably addictive to the young man, and he was even tempted to a career in finance due to his admiration for a family friend who worked as a hedge fund manager.

“I was like, I like this house, I like this lifestyle. I want to be able to provide that for my friends and family,” he says. “I’ll be a hedge fund manager because I can do whatever I want. I went to school for business, but at 15 I had just gotten my ears pierced, trying to get into that rapper mode. I go to the house, and he’s like, ‘If you’re trying to get into finance, they’re going to try to block you out by any means necessary. You’re already a black man, they don’t want to see you win. Having earrings gives them another reason to write you off. I didn’t want to be in a career where I can’t be myself and live the way I want. So I decided to be a rapper.’”

Clearly, it worked out for the best. Goldn has a chill style that has been evident from the start – even when he was rapping “B**ch I Go to USC” and raising a ruckus. Forever a hustler, a cease and desist letter from the college wasn’t what it seemed.

“Now that it’s been enough time, I can admit that I photoshopped that to create the hype around the song,” Goldn says. “The truth has



PHOTO BY JONATHAN MANNION

been revealed. I was like, people like controversy and how can I get the song out.”

In fact, Goldn soon dropped out of school to pursue his career, releasing the Dropped Outta College EP in 2019 to celebrate. The evolution from then to now, and his about-to-drop El Dorado debut album, is huge.

“The EP was more me figuring out what I can do,” he says. El Dorado is my own sound. R&B, pop, rock, alternative. I mixed them all together to create something that’s uniquely me.”

The title of the album is of course a reference to the lost city of gold, a continuation of the theme in his name.

“It also means the ‘golden one,’” he says. “That was a nickname I had gotten from my mom. It always stuck with me. Hundreds of explorers came looking for this mythical treasure and nobody found it. I just think music takes you to another world. I mixed it all together, made some music, and we’re here.”

The rapper is convinced that El Dorado features the best music that he has made in his life (unsurprising seeing as it’s his debut album). His goal, he says, was to create a world, rather

than lump a bunch of songs together.

“This is the start of my world,” he says. “Something I learned during this pandemic with ‘Mood’ was, music really does have the power to transport you to a whole other reality. So many people told me that ‘Mood’ saved their quarantine. It’s literally helping people. With El Dorado, let me create this world that people can escape to if they’re stuck in the house or not feeling what their current situation is. Just live in the music.”

Things are clearly going swimmingly for Goldn, though the yin to that yang is the pressure that comes with success. There’s no resting on laurels now.

“After the song was going crazy, I was like ‘fuck, how do I do it again? Can I do it again?’ But that wasn’t even a song I thought was going to be that big,” he says. “All I can control is the music. I can control what I say, the production we use. A little bit of marketing too. But anything beyond that is more up to the world. So if I’m trying to force these situations or getting upset because things aren’t happening just like ‘Mood’ did, that’s unreasonable

expectations. All I’ve got to do is be happy and proud of the music I put out there, and then let the universe take care of the rest.”

He’s playing humble though – it’s

“SOMETHING I LEARNED DURING THIS PANDEMIC WITH ‘MOOD’ WAS, MUSIC REALLY DOES HAVE THE POWER TO TRANSPORT YOU TO A WHOLE OTHER REALITY. SO MANY PEOPLE TOLD ME THAT ‘MOOD’ SAVED THEIR QUARANTINE. IT’S LITERALLY HELPING PEOPLE.”

not just the universe. Goldn hustles harder than most anyone else.

“Hard work is gonna beat talent every time,” he says. “I was in the studio so much, trying to meet people and make all these plays for so long. One day, it had to pay off. You’ve got to believe in the vision, believe in the dream, but if you don’t put the work in, ain’t shit gonna happen.”

El Dorado is the culmination of all that hard work to this point. “Mood” is the song that closes the album, while the ultra-emotional “Don’t Sleep” precedes it.

“It’s important to show people that not every day is a party,” he says.

“Have music to help people process and understand those feelings too. There are two types of sad songs – the songs that let you wallow in your feelings, and the songs that offer some perspective. Some days you’re happy, some days you’re sad. I wanted to give people ways to work through those feelings.”

So that’s where we are. No surprises on the album (unless he’s looking to genuinely surprise us) – he’s laid out his work over the past year or so, proudly, for all to enjoy. And then, as 2021 shows signs of life, he’s hoping to take it out to the people.

“I’m ready to go but it’s not under my control so I’ve just got to roll with the punches,” he says. “There’s been a lot of virtual shows, and things are starting to open up in the south which is cool. I’m trying to see the world. I’m an international superstar right now and I’ve only been to three countries – USA, Japan and Tanzania – in my whole life. What’s up with that?”

24KGoldn’s El Dorado album is out March 26 on all major streaming platforms.

Thanks to Brian Calle, Bryan Escalante and Ryan Leutz (the podcast crew).

L.A. WEEKLY'S MOVIE GUIDE

Reviews of the hottest films available on your TV sets, electronic devices, and in select theaters and drive-ins throughout Southern California.

LA. movie theaters are slowly starting to open again, and there's no shortage of diverse and engaging films out there. The past few months have been particularly fertile for film. As always, our film critics let you know what's worth the watch time and what's not — from indie art house gems to popcorn-perfect blockbusters to new movies garnering buzz. Here, our critics review some of the biggest titles that should be on your radar.

Nomadland / In theaters & VOD

Based on the book by Jessica Bruder, Chloe Zhao's *Nomadland* is so finely tuned and masterful you won't even discern its machinations. Frances McDormand plays Fern, a struggling widow who works part-time at an Amazon factory in Nevada. She's lost everything to



the recession and lives in her van. Once winter hits, Fern drives to Quartzsite, Arizona where a group of vagabonds live in a commune. Most of the people in the commune are retired, spit out by society, and forgotten. Zhao smartly casts real-life people, who are fascinating, and McDormand's performance is so good that you can't tell the difference. She's "acting," but you wouldn't know it for a second. **CHAD BYRNES**

The United States vs. Billie Holiday / Hulu

The main reason to see this movie is Andra Day, who inhabits the soul and physique of Holiday with an effortless grace. There's not a moment when the Grammy-nominated singer is onscreen that you're not mesmerized and it's extremely hard to believe this is her first acting role. Of course, she can sing like the legend by adjusting her rich, sultry vocals, but she also personalizes her take with a naturalness that shatters any preconceptions that might feel like basic mimicry. With her bruised stare, fierce humor, impulsive fits of



anger and gravelly voiced passion, Day taps into Holiday's complexities while simultaneously revealing her humanity. It's an extraordinary performance, and deserving of her Golden Globe win and Academy Award nomination. **CHAD BYRNES**

Land / In theaters & VOD

In her feature film directorial debut, Robin Wright gives her finest screen performance yet while establishing herself as a director with an innate sense of timing and tone. The film's first third is beautifully concise. Unable to find



solace through therapy or family, Wright's Edee heads west, buys a cabin in an isolated Rocky Mountain spot surrounded by a magnificent, god-high green forest, and begins teaching herself the ways of the wild. She's brought along a thick hunting manual, but she is quickly undone by nature's whims and her own naiveté. She soon suffers a mental collapse and for a long, painful screen moment, she is a woman completely alone in the universe. In the mountains, nature doesn't worry over backstories or language. All that matters is the present and the trust you have for the human at your side. **CHUCK WILSON**

Biggie: I Got a Story to Tell / Netflix

Now streaming on Netflix, Emmett Malloy's documentary is a hip-hop doc about the artist who created his own sound and became



a staple of the genre. Much like Christopher Wallace himself, the film is a shot of adrenaline, humor and personality. While other documentaries about Biggie have chronicled his glory days, what's refreshing about this one is the way it explores his modest, humble beginnings. Raised by a single mother — a Jamaican immigrant, who worked as a school teacher — Biggie spent most of his time as a boy hanging out on a few blocks in Brooklyn, including a street run by drug dealers. While he and his friends were selling crack, he was also working on his music, honing a lyrical flow that was unlike anything anyone had ever heard before. After his charisma is demonstrated in archival footage of concerts, recordings and radio freestyles, Biggie's death hits like a freight train at the end. He was gunned down in Los Angeles at the age of 24, just three weeks before his second album, *Life After Death*, was to be released. It's easy to think about what could have been if he had survived, but Malloy's doc is about his life, not his death. It's about celebrating what he did while he was here, which is what Biggie's brash, braggadocious, semi-autobiographical music was all about. **ASHER LUBERTO**

Coming 2 America / Prime Video

In Hollywood, everything gets a sequel. As much as we whine about what's being released these days, intellectual property rules because it's easy to remake, reboot, restore. Remember



Coming to America? How about more Coming to America, but with the same old jokes and the same old premise? Um, how about no? Eddie Murphy reprises his role from John Landis' 1988 film, *Coming to America*, as prince of a fictional nation called Zamunda. Akeem (Murphy) will soon be king but he doesn't have an heir himself — that is, until his loyal sidekick Semi (Arsenio Hall) breaks the news. It turns out he has a son with a woman in Queens, who he met on the dance floor and who kind of/sort of raped him while he was passed out, which is played for laughs. Ha. Ha. Ha. What ensues is a rehash of the original set-up, this time with Akeem's son Lavelle (Jermaine Fowler) and his mother, Mary (Leslie Jones), being fetched from Queens and dropped into a country with real queens. With its stale humor and rehashed, haphazard direction from Brewer, there isn't much *Coming 2 America* can do to win us over. A last-minute appearance by the charis-

matic *Sexual Chocolate* reminds us why these characters are so great. But it just makes you wish you were watching Landis' original film, which is genuinely hilarious. If this sequel proves anything, it's that stealing jokes from the original makes for a pretty pointless affair. **ASHER LUBERTO**

Cherry / AppleTV+

The Russo Brothers' harrowing and hollow drug addiction drama, *Cherry*, utilizes the camera to re-create the mental effects of trauma and drug abuse. The movie is a visceral gut-punch, an aesthetic representation of a shattered mind, in which Tom Holland goes for broke as *Cherry*,



in a role that asks him to navigate the highs and lows of a heroin addict in Cleveland, Ohio. In flashbacks, we meet our troubled protagonist at the age of 18, going to college and skipping classes. He falls in love, joins the army, moves through basic training and the Iraq war, and comes home pretty messed up, rapidly descending into addiction and crime to finance his habit. Though the narrative could use some structural integrity (it crams way too much in the middle), the Russos create a courageously visceral, experimental piece, tapping into the mind of a junkie who is always one phone call away from getting clean. **ASHER LUBERTO**

Moxie / Netflix

Built on Amy Poehler's name recognition and all the good intentions in the world, Netflix's *Moxie* is an optimistic, coming-of-age romp about female empowerment that does its best to instill a positive message in its storytelling. But is it successful? The answer: kinda sorta, but



not really. The crux of *Moxie* is about power: who has it, who uses it, and who needs it. In this case, power is abused by the athletes of the school who are protected by the senior staff, while fringe groups are nullified by the system. It is one of many tropes that run rampant in the hallways of this particular high school as the story falls victim to every cliché in the John Hughes handbook of mainstream teen movies. And unlike her cohort Tina Fey's *Mean Girls*, there's no self-aware satire to make this tolerable. All this can be forgiven with good acting and writing, and for the most part, the cast really tries to sell the messaging even with pigeonholed characters, but it doesn't quite cut it. **ERIN MAXWELL**

PROTESTERS MARCH THE STREETS TO "STOP THE HATE"

With nearly 4,000 crimes against the Asian community in the past year and a recent mass shooting that killed six Asian Americans, protesters across the country hit the streets over the weekend, asking to "Stop Asian hate."

BY ISAI ROCHA



Protesters across Los Angeles County hit the streets to make their voices heard and urge that crimes stop against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI). The protests came in response to not only multiple incidents of violence against the

Asian American community, but a mass shooting in an Atlanta, Georgia spa that left eight people dead, six being women of Asian descent.

Atlanta Police said the shooting suspect, Robert Aaron Long, 21, "took responsibility" for the shootings and said the attacks

were not motivated by race, but rather sex addiction." Cherokee County Sheriff's Office Capt. Jay Baker added that the suspect saw the spas as "a temptation that he wanted to eliminate."

Protesters and supporters of the "Stop Asian Hate" movement believe otherwise.

"The AAPI community is all too familiar with acts of hate and violence, particularly with the escalation of this hate in the last year," the AAPI Progressive Action organization said. "America's history is riddled with violence against Asian Americans. Members of the AAPI community have been targets and victims since the beginnings of American history, stemming from fear, ignorance and hatred. Our community deserves the same opportunity as all Americans to achieve the American dream in peace and without fear. Right now we need more than words to heal and to keep us safe. We need to know that our government at all levels - the ones AAPIs and all Americans elected - will protect us."

From protests in the city of Los Angeles, vigils in the city of Alhambra, to marches in Diamond Bar, Los Angeles County mourned and made its voice heard with signs to "Stop AAPI Hate," "Hate is a virus," and chants of "We are not silent."

A caravan protest was organized in Koreatown by the Korean American Federation of L.A. (KAFLA).

"We need to raise awareness about Anti-Asian hate crimes," KAFLA said. "In light of what happened last Tuesday in Atlanta, although we live thousands of miles away,

investigators at each of its stations. The department said that any officer can take a hate crime incident report adding that hate crimes "will not be tolerated."

"We're living in America, so everyone should be treated as American," LAPD Olympic Booster Association President Brad Lee said in an LAPD-hosted press conference Monday. "Just because we look different, we should not be treated any differently than others. Looking different is not a reason for hate, or reason to discriminate."

Not all of the protests went without incident, as the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department investigates an incident involving a car that drove through a crowd of protesters during a Diamond Bar march, Sunday.

The Sheriff's said they were approaching it as a "hate crime" with the early information they had.

The incident was caught on video and posted by Instagram users @idalingi and @vikivikki. The footage shows "Stop Asian Hate" protesters crossing the street on a green light on the intersection of South Diamond Bar Boulevard and Grand Avenue. A car is then heard honking at a protester who can be heard saying, "Get out of your car. Pull up."

Moments later, a car at the front of the stop light can be seen driving forward on a red light, through the crowd, and making a U-turn toward one of the crossing protesters.

The person in the vehicle can then be heard yelling, "fuck China!" before driving off, pulling over, getting out of his vehicle and yelling more obscenities.

"Thank you to all those who came forward to report this hate incident which occurred at the 'Stop Asian Hate' rally in Diamond Bar yesterday," Sheriff Alex Villanueva said in a social media post. "Hateful acts like this are not welcome in Los Angeles County and must STOP!"

The video showed a black Honda Civic's 7XIV483 license plate number and as of this writing, investigators are still trying to identify the man.

LASD described the suspect as a white man in his 50s and will be presenting the incident to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office for filing consideration.

No injuries were reported in the incident.

A Pew Research Center survey showed that three in ten Asian Americans experienced racial slurs since the start of the pandemic.

The Stop AAPI Hate organization reported 3,292 incidents of verbal assault or physical harassment toward Asian Americans during the 2020 pandemic, a number up from 2,808 in 2019. An additional 503 incidents have been reported since the start of 2021.

Local leaders have responded to recent attacks on the AAPI community, with incidents happening in Los Angeles as recent as February 16, when a 27-year-old Korean-American man alleged he was waiting for a friend in Koreatown when two men began to yell slurs and punched him in the face.

"Los Angeles has zero tolerance for bigotry or racism. I am profoundly disturbed by both the rise in hate crimes directed at our Asian American Pacific Islander neighbors and the recent incident in Koreatown," Garcetti said in response to the Koreatown incident. "I want to send a clear message:

LA is the most ethnically diverse community in the entire world. What happened in Atlanta can happen anywhere."

The caravan was peaceful, with LAPD standing by and no incidents reported.

LAPD has called for Angelenos to report any "hate crimes," assigning hate crime in-

first, to our AAPI community, we stand with you and will protect you from these senseless attacks. And second, to all those who would perpetrate violence against our fellow Angelenos, you will be held accountable for your actions.”

Los Angeles City Councilman Ridley Thomas added:

“I unequivocally stand in solidarity with the AAPI community against all forms of racism, hate and violence. It’s only through our collective commitment to fight against xenophobic rhetoric and against all those who seek to cause harm to others that we will be stronger together.”

Gov. Gavin Newsom also spoke on recent

attacks on the Asian Americans, meeting with AAPI leaders in California and condemning the violence.

“It breaks your heart... I think it infuriates all of us —the idea that people have to live in fear because their race, their ethnicity, because the language they speak,” Newsom said. “That has been exacerbated throughout this pandemic as this disease has been politicized, this disease has been used as a way to divide this country. We have to be mindful of the incredible damage that has been done over the last number of years and mindful of the work that now we must do to immediately call this out and condemn these acts of hate and violence... and demand that that ends.”

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COMEDY STORE AND PUFFCO TEAM UP FOR ROSE BOWL LAUGHS

The greatest institution in comedy is teaming up with the kings of digital dabs to bring the laughs to the Rose Bowl parking lot this weekend.

BY JIMI DEVINE



PUFFCO PRESENTS • MARCH 26TH & 27TH • THE ROSE BOWL STADIUM

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This weekend will see The Comedy Store team up with Puffco to bring laughs to the Rose Bowl parking lot for The Comedy Store Drive-In.

The two-right run will feature 18 of The Comedy Store's biggest names, including Bill Burr, David Spade, Whitney Cummings, Jeff Ross, Iliza Shlesinger, Fortune Feimster and Donnell Rawlings.

Comedy Store regular Frank Castillo helped get the ball rolling as Puffco had already been considering involvement in socially distant festivities. In the end, few things pair better than great hash and good jokes. In addition to his stand-up, he dives into pot topics alongside his host JP on their podcast "Buddies!"

What started as a general digital content idea turned into 400 parking spots after an email with Puffco about putting something together. Now it's three drive-up comedy shows in the Rose Bowl Stadium parking lot H on March 26 and 27.

"Kim from Punch Extracts was the one who said, 'You should just email Chelsea from Puffco and tell them your idea and then that'll get the ball rolling.' I was like, I don't know, I don't know if they answer emails," Castillo told *L.A. Weekly*.

But they did! And they loved it. Castillo was quick to emphasize the crew at The Comedy Store and Puffco did the groundwork, he just helped connect the dots.

Castillo once even got written up at the Comedy Store for hitting his Puffco on the clock. "It was just so funny to be able to bring this all together and for it to come full circle. Because I love comedy, I love The Comedy Store, I love weed, and to be able to bring these two communities together was really dope."

According to Puffco's founder Roger Volodarsky's, Puffco's events lead Kevin Chapman had been mulling around how to make something happen all year. The company was a regular face on the cannabis events circuit even prior to launching the successful Peak. The Puffco Plus was the go-to concentrate pen for people that owned hash companies in the mid-2010s. But, like all, they didn't get that precious face time with their base in 2020. Eventually, Chapman and Castillo would connect and found out they shared a fairly similar vision.

“It just seemed perfect, you know, in the middle of all this to be able to put on a comedy show where people can safely come out and chill in their cars,” Volodarsky told *L.A. Weekly*. “It just felt like the best thing we can do while we’re still getting through this pandemic and that’s kind of how it came to be.”

We asked Volodarsky about the synergistic aspect of weed and laughs coming together to help an institution put on its first big show for an audience in a year.

“I mean, honestly, dude, it’s an honor,”

“IT JUST SEEMED PERFECT, YOU KNOW, IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL THIS TO BE ABLE TO PUT ON A COMEDY SHOW WHERE PEOPLE CAN SAFELY COME OUT AND CHILL IN THEIR CARS,” VOLODARSKY TOLD *L.A. WEEKLY*.

Volodarsky said. “I’m a New Yorker, I would say most of our employees are fans of comedy and go and watch stand up. They’ve been to lots of comedy clubs. And so, for me too, I was tripping out telling my girlfriend. Yeah, Bill Burr is gonna be there. I might get to meet Bill Burr, and I’ve been laughing at Bill Burr, I mean honestly, since I was a teenager. It’s the best kind of weird, you know? I feel like it’s very surreal to be working with people you have admired for most of your adult life.”

Volodarsky reinforced his hopes that everybody comes out and has a good time. “This is one of the first times that I’m leaving my house to be near anyone. Even though everybody’s gonna be in their car. So please come share this moment with us. It’s gonna be a blast,” he said.

The team at Alien Labs, famed for some of the best cannabis in the world, is also sponsoring the show.

“I feel like when everyone is looking at rappers to advertise their brand, we needed to find a new audience to resonate with,” Alien Labs’ founder Ted Lidie told *L.A. Weekly*. “I mean, how long have cannabis and comedy been intertwined? Since the beginning I feel like. Also, the cannabis community and comedian community are so damn similar. Everyone knows everyone. Just little culture pockets. And I’m pumped to be doing it with our longtime friends from Puffco. Together we have been creating new communities within this industry for the last few years. Happy to lead the charge!”

General admission tickets are \$200 each and good for four passengers. There are also a limited number of \$350 VIP admission tickets, also good for four passengers, and includes a front row parking spot.

www.showclix.com/event/puffco-presents-the-comedy-store-drive-in




LA WEEKLY Classifieds

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TECHNOLOGY

Electronic Arts, Inc. has multiple job openings in Chatsworth, California: "Character Artists (LA443): Collaborate with Animators and Technical Artists to create a low-resolution 3D model that will animate and deform properly for in-game use. "Senior Concept Artists (LA444): Work closely with the Art Director and other creative leads to help establish and enhance the visual direction of a video games projects.

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LA WEEKLY Classifieds

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Business Strategy Specialist: M.B.A. plus 1 yr wk exp. req'd. Software & Devops Engineer. B.S. in Comp. Sci. & Engineering plus 4 yrs wk exp req'd. Send resumes to: PUBG Santa Monica, Inc., 1601 Cloverfield Blvd., N.Tower, 5th Fl., Ste. 5000N, Santa Monica, CA, Attn: V. Yoo.

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LEGAL NOTICES

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Court file number
19AVFA-20-2328
**Dissolution of Marriage
(divorce) without Children
and without Real Estate.**
Petitioner Marilynn
Rowena Baker
Respondent: Willie Lewis
Baker Jr.

Your spouse has filed a lawsuit against you for dissolution of your marriage. You must serve upon Petitioner and file with the court a written Answer to the Petition for Dissolution of

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