

LAWEEKLY

SNAPCHAT UNDER FIRE

FRIDA - AN INVENTIVE NEW DOCUMENTARY

SUPPER PICK OF THE WEEK:
SHIRLEY BRASSERIE

MARCH 8 - 14, 2024 / VOL. 46 / NO. 48
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Super Novah!

R&B rising star Jade Novah asks "Where Have I Been?" on new album. **By Brett Callwood**



CALENDAR

GO EDITORS' PICKS

ARTS

THURSDAY, MARCH 7

Jean-Michel Basquiat: *Made on Market Street at Gagosian.* Between November 1982 and May 1984, Basquiat produced approximately a hundred paintings, numerous works on paper, and six silkscreen editions while living and working in Venice, CA. *Made on Market Street*—the first exhibition focused exclusively on—is curated by early engaged supporters Fred Hoffman and Larry Gagosian (at whose beach house he was staying during these prolific sojourns), and reflects on this consequential era by bringing together nearly 30 works, several of which are among his most important paintings. 456 N. Camden Dr., Beverly Hills; Opening reception: Thursday, March 7, 6-8pm; On view through June 1; free; gagosian.com.

Self Help Graphics presents: *Battle of the Saints at Long Beach City College Gallery.* *Battle of the Saints* highlights the everyday icons worshiped across cultures. Revered figures like wrestlers, saints, gods, artists, and activists appear in our daily lives, everywhere from billboards to candles, key chains, murals, t-shirts, toys, and our imaginations. Natalie Godinez and Lulu Urdiales curate a playful take on how we imbue familiar figures with the power of sainthood, drawn from the artist of the SHG print studio family. 4901 E. Carson Ave., Long Beach; Opening reception: Thursday, March 7, 5-8pm; On view through April 27; free; selfhelpgraphics.com.

Ybor City at The Actors' Gang. Written and directed by Mariana Da Silva and with movement direction by Stephanie G. Galindo, the hauntingly beautiful new play *Ybor City* tells the story of overworked Cuban cigar factory immigrants in 1931, who find themselves inspired by the spirit world toward revolution. The Actors' Gang's first fully bilingual play, *Ybor City* is a sensory rich theatrical experience, overflowing with music, movement, and imagery. 9070 Venice Blvd., Culver City; Performances March 7-30; \$25/Pay-what-you-can Thursdays;



Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Hollywood Africans*, 1983, Acrylic and oil stick on canvas, 84 1-8 x 84 inches. Whitney Museum of American Art, © Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Licensed by Artestar, NY. Courtesy Gagosian

theactorsgang.com.

FRIDAY, MARCH 8

Olive Diamond at Anat Ebgi. “The story of my work starts in the ceramics,” Diamond has written. “The figures and lives portrayed in the ceramics are an amalgamation of the various historical migrations of people, wandering, traveling for refuge, community and safety. It’s quite dark to think about how a journey like that would affect someone. Instead of focusing on the dark parts of those journeys, this body of work focuses on the light.” 6150 Wilshire Blvd., Miracle Mile; Opening reception: Friday, March 8; On view through April 20; free; anatebgi.com.

SATURDAY, MARCH 9

Rosa Loy: *Glade* at Michael Kohn Gallery. One of the few female members of the New Leipzig School, Loy took up painting the same year as the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. With origins as a trained horticulturist, she brings a surrealist’s eye to renderings of lush flora and uncanny all-female worlds. Loy’s easel is a crossroads where German folklore is mixed with the artist’s subconscious. These visually intricate stories and cryptic narratives are situated within *lichtung*—a word she describes as “the place in the middle of a dark forest where the sun is shining.” Above all, this clearing is a site of rest amid a turbulent present. 1227 N. Highland, Hollywood;

Opening reception: Saturday, March 9, 5-7pm; On view through April 20; free; kohngallery.com.

Gabrielė Adomaitytė: *Chronicler* at CLEARING Gallery. Born in Lithuania and currently residing in Brussels and Amsterdam, Adomaitytė has developed a distinctive approach to art-making, masterfully navigating the realms of painting and sculpture, and intertwining traditional techniques with digital explorations. By continuously questioning the capacities of painting and the challenges of visual representation, Adomaitytė engages deeply with the information systems that shape our understanding of the world. Her art acts as

Larry Gagosian and Jean-Michel Basquiat



a bridge between the digital and the tangible, inviting viewers to navigate through layers of meaning and contemplate the ever-evolving landscape of visual culture. 530 N. Western Ave., Melrose Hill; Opening: Saturday, March 9; on view through April 20; free; c-l-e-a-r-i-n-g.com.

Lauren Powell Projects presents: Senon Williams in Sunset Hiking Club at the MOCA Store. A unique afternoon celebrating Los Angeles-based artist Senon Williams' new artist book, *Rituals*, a sunset procession sees six of the artist's paintings being carried on foot by the assembled crowd, from MOCA Grand through downtown to the Geffen Contemporary. At the Geffen there will be the book sale and signing, and a public viewing with poetry readings by Mandy Kahn, Ari Salka, and Williams. *Rituals* captures the experience of the painting processions that happened at Lauren Powell Projects and Griffith Park during spring and fall 2023. Limited to 100 copies, each unique unbound book includes several fine

art prints. 250 S. Grand Ave., downtown; Saturday, March 9, 3-6pm; free w/ rsvp; laurenpowellprojects.com.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13
One of the Good Ones at Pasadena Playhouse. The ultimate family showdown is on in the world premiere of this new comedy commissioned by Pasadena Playhouse. When the "perfect" Latina daughter brings her boyfriend home to meet the parents, her family's biases and preconceptions are put on full display. As tensions run high and hilarity ensues, everyone must navigate the ins and outs of family dynamics and the boundaries of acceptance—all while tackling the age-old question: what does it truly mean to be an American? Meet your new favorite family in this laugh-out-loud, heartfelt story from Gloria Calderón Kellett, the co-creator and showrunner of Netflix's *One Day at a Time*. 39 S. El Molino Ave., Pasadena; Performances March 13 - April 7; \$35; pasadenaplayhouse.org.

MUSIC

MARCH 8-14 Voivod / Prong Fonda Theatre

This is a fascinating double-header. Canadian prog-thrashers Voivod have joined forces with Tommy Victor's industrial-tinged crossover metal band Prong for a mega-tour. Voivod released the *Morgöth Tales* album in 2023 while Prong released the *State of Emergency* album that same year. So both bands have new material to pull from, as well as an impressive back catalog. Bang those heads! Hiram and Take Offense also perform. 8 p.m. on Sunday, March 10 at the Fonda Theatre, \$35, fonda-theatre.com.

Reverend Horton Heat Zebulon

The good Reverend Horton Heat arrives in Silver Lake to perform at the fabulous Zebulon on Sunday. "One thing that is sinking in now, is that I enjoy playing gigs now more than I did when I was younger," frontman Jim Heath told this writer in 2015. "For one thing, there's a lot less stress involved. There are instances where, when I was young, every gig mattered so much. Looking back, I was totally misguided. The thing now is that I like the camaraderie with the guys but the traveling - I'm done. I don't like it, but it's a necessary evil." Don't

worry, Rev — we'll be ready to give you a big welcome. Jason D. Williams and Dale Watson also perform. 7 p.m. on Sunday, March 10 at the Zebulon, \$37.08, zebulon.la

Buzzcocks Teragram Ballroom

It was a massive loss to punk rock, to music, and to the world in general when Buzzcocks man Pete Shelley passed away in 2018. Many thought that would spell the end of the Manchester first-wavers, but guitarist and now sole frontman Steve Diggle has pushed forward with the flag held high. Even if the Buzzcocks is Diggle and three musicians that all joined post 2005, the world is better with the Buzzcocks in it. Modern English also performs. 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 13 at the Teragram Ballroom, \$35, teragramballroom.com.

The Kills The Wiltern

Garage rock two-piece the Kills released their sixth studio album at the end of last year — the quite brilliant *God Games*. "God Games centers the primal call-and-response between Mosshart's full body vocal catharsis and Jamie Hince's swaggering, guillotine-smooth guitar transmissions," that say. "Stretching the boundaries of the pair's signature sound, they chose to write from new perspectives." Should be fun. 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 14 at the Wiltern, \$53.50+, livenation.com. [A]

ART NIGHT

FRIDAY, MARCH 8
6-10 PM



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For information on ArtNight, please call the ArtNight Pasadena Hotline at (626) 744-7887 or visit ArtNightPasadena.org. For information on accessibility and/or to request written materials in alternative formats, please call the City of Pasadena at (626) 744-7062.

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS
Alkebu-Lan Cultural Center, Armory Center for the Arts, ArtCenter HMCT Gallery, ArtCenter Williamson Gallery, ArtWORKS Teen Center, City of Pasadena City Hall, Jackie Robinson Community Center, Lineage Performing Arts Center, MUSE-IQUE at the Pasadena Senior Center, Norton Simon Museum, Parson's Nose Theater, Pasadena City College Boone Art Gallery and V Gallery, Pasadena Museum of History, Pasadena Public Library Jefferson Branch, Pasadena Unified School District at Paseo Colorado, Red Hen Press, Reminders Creative Reuse, Shumei Arts Council, The Gamble House with California Art Club, and USC Pacific Asia Museum.

FREE SHUTTLES
• Limited shuttle service due to regional bus and driver shortages.
• Free shuttles run 6-10 p.m., with stops at each venue.

PASADENA TRANSIT
Pasadena Transit Route 10 runs along Colorado Boulevard and Green Street until 8 p.m. Schedule at: PasadenaTransit.net

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PASADENA



FOOD

SUNDAY SUPPER PICK OF THE WEEK: SHIRLEY BRASSERIE

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

Shirley Brasserie in the heart of The Hollywood Roosevelt, celebrating a combination of French and Californian cuisine with focus on sustainability, has introduced a comforting Sunday supper to the menu.

Aussie Chef de Cuisine Craig Hopson, who has a pedigree in Michelin-starred restaurants including Guy Savoy and Lucas Carton in Paris as well as Le Cirque in New York, has added an earthy French \$55 prix fixe menu available only on Sundays.

Three generous courses start with the Shirley Salad, with shaved vegetables including watermelon radishes, cucum-

bers and herbs tinged with tarragon in an herbes de Provence vinaigrette. The main course is the Pot-au-Feu (pot on fire), considered the national dish of France, which combines boiled boneless short rib and bone marrow and seasonal root vegetables. Steaming clear hot consomme is poured over the meat and vegetables tableside, and served alongside grilled sourdough, flaked salt and grainy mustard. Be sure to ask for some horseradish on the side.

This isn't your grandmother's tired Tafelspitz from Alsace. The flavor of each vegetable, including the braised leeks and celery, comes through with its own

personality. For dessert there's apple galette served with rum and raisin ice cream.

Hopson was trained in the art of French cuisine at renowned institutions across Australia, Geneva and Paris, and also was mentored by the legendary Alain Senderens, who taught him the intricate techniques of nouvelle cuisine. He earned two stars from the Michelin Guide at Picholine in New York and also served as executive chef at renowned Le Cirque in New York City, where Hopson opened its outposts in India, Dominican Republic, and the Holland America cruise lines.

The open-air kitchen features a wood-fire grill and oven for Shirley's rotisserie chicken, and 32-ounce prime rib and juicy salmon and a classic steak tartare is made to order tableside. There also are plenty of European-inspired classics like escargot, niçoise salad, French onion soup, steamed mussels and profiteroles for dessert.

To complement the new restaurant, the Hollywood Roosevelt's Historic Lobby has rolled out a new menu with items including cheese and charcuterie boards, pâtés and seafood dishes from the raw bar at Shirley Brasserie. In April, the brasserie will introduce a rotating dinner series with chefs from around the world as well as some familiar local faces.

Sunday Supper is from 5 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., every Sunday, and offerings change seasonally. The restaurant's full a la carte menu, which features signature dishes like beef oxtail Bourguignon, lobster pasta and cassoulet de Toulouse, also is available on Sundays. The brasserie will shut down on Sunday, March 10, for special Academy Award festivities. 🍷

CANNABIS

POT TAXES DIPPED A PINCH AT THE END OF 2023

Cannabis Taxes In California Remained Fairly Constant To Close Out 2023

BY JIMI DEVINE



The California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (CDTFA) reported cannabis tax revenue for the fourth quarter of 2023 hit \$268.3 Million.

The numbers are as of Feb. 16 and based off \$1,251,330,833 in taxable sales. The number includes \$156.5 million generated from the excise tax and the other \$111.8 million collected from

cannabis businesses was a result of the sales tax. Final adjustments will come with the numbers from the first quarter of the year.

We also got the finalized third quarter numbers. That number shows there was a small dip from the third quarter of 2023 where the CDTFA collected exactly \$10 million more in cannabis taxes across the board. Reported revenue for

the third quarter of 2023 returns has been revised to \$278.3 million, with \$164 million attributed to cannabis excise tax and \$114.3 million to sales tax.

But even with the dip, it's clear, efforts to drive up tax revenue even as relief was being provided by the cancellation of the cultivation tax have worked. The state is up \$20 million in tax receipts compared to the final quarter of 2022. What's to say that number might not have been even higher had struggling farmers been provided relief sooner?

The more refined and farmer-friendly the market gets, the easier it will be to celebrate the process. When I see the state has collected \$5.74 billion in taxes since 2018, I understand that is a lot of money that goes to a lot of great causes and a bunch goes to causes that it had to for the widest coalition to vote yes. If none of the cultivation tax had ever been collected, the state would still be at over \$5 billion in revenue.

More relief anytime soon will be a bit trickier. Recent years have seen California go from a massive budget surplus a few years ago to an expected \$68 billion deficit this year. As much as it is still needed, the times dictate it's going to be tough to get much more tax reform done in the moment.

Lawmakers won't want to be put in a situation where as they have to start

making hard decisions around the budget, they're called out on tax cuts for the industry. A lot of people out there still have it in their head that being in the cannabis industry is like printing your own money. They can't even fathom the actual margins that people are operating on in hopes of staying afloat.

On top of things seeming to maintain at the very least from quarter to quarter, there are other solid takeaways from the close of 2023. Eligible cannabis vendors were able to hold on to an extra \$1.16 million in licensing fees being waived through the Vendor Compensation Program. It allows cannabis retailers that have been approved by the Department of Cannabis Control

(DCC) to receive an equity fee waiver when they renew their retailer license. Eligible cannabis retailers also may be approved to retain 20% of the cannabis excise tax due on their retail sales. Depending on the size of the operation, that 20% could go a long way.

If you're going to try and take advantage of the program, do it fast so you can maximize your results. It's currently scheduled to end on Dec. 31, 2025.

If everything stays on this constant pace, there is an excellent chance the California market breaks \$6 billion in taxes collected by the state in the first quarter of 2024. [E]

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ENTERTAINMENT

AN INVENTIVE NEW DOCUMENTARY GIVES US FRIDA IN HER OWN WORDS

BY SHANA NYS DAMBROT

If there were ever an artist who would be done with people telling her story for her, it would be Frida Kahlo. The rightfully iconic painter, feminist, activist, sister, daughter, wife, lover, and indomitable passionista was a fierce voice for herself, her country, her culture, and above all, the power of art to change the life of an individual and an entire community. The good news is, thanks to a new artist-driven documentary, we finally get to hear Frida's story as it was meant to be

heard—in her own words.

Releasing March 15 on Prime Video, *FRIDA*—the feature film directorial debut of acclaimed editor Carla Gutiérrez (*RBG*)—is packed with the kind of extensive archival photography, video, and audio along with contemporaneous media coverage that one would expect from a thorough documentary. But Gutiérrez and her talented team embed these primary source materials within a rich and beautifully acted voiceover

read directly from Frida's prolific diaries, along with a risky but ultimately delightful series of animations bringing motion and added drama to Kahlo's most beloved images.

The artists behind the animation sequences are adamant about the love and respect for Frida that they held during the creative process. With no outside elements added to her paintings, the sequences most often took the form of watching a work being made

by an invisible hand, or perhaps one element such as a snake sliding into place would move through the stationary parts to its final spot, completing the work. "First, we explored how to approach the artwork, taking it to its maximum expression in terms of meaning and color. I believe that each painting has extraordinary elements that highlight its feelings," says artist Sofía Cáceres. Her colleague Renata Galindo adds, "We had to be



rez says. “Her sassiness when she was dealing with the world, especially in America, a lot of people enjoyed seeing that. Because she’s such an iconic symbol, in a way, she’s kind of a confined person. She is the symbol of female empowerment, or sometimes she’s the symbol of Latin sexiness. A lot of people thought about her as somebody that went through a lot of pain, and that’s how they know her. What’s exciting for me about coming into the premiere is seeing what new discoveries people will have of her because of the film.”

The research process discovered materials that had been in boxes for 40 or 50 years. Hayden Herrera, for example, who wrote the most important biography of Frida Kahlo, started her research in the 1970’s. She interviewed a lot of people who knew the artist extremely well at various times in her life and career. Gutiérrez discovered that all of Herrera’s original research was just sitting in boxes in her attic. They went and got it. They spoke with the grandson of Diego Rivera and one of Frida Kahlo’s great-nieces, Cristina. They went to San Francisco, where a pair of nonagenarian filmmakers who had made a film about Frida in 1976 provided a box of quarter-inch tapes that hadn’t seen the light of day in 40 years, and badly needed digitizing. Like that they were able to hear the full interviews.

“There’s been so much work on Frida, but this important research material has yet to be grabbed by anybody!” enthuses Gutiérrez, who is in awe that their “little film production” has been able to contribute such a monumental gift to art history—not to mention to new generations of viewers set to discover Frida anew or for the first time. [E]

very careful. Our first approach was to separate animation from Frida’s art because they are two different mediums.” In these elements the desired balance of whimsy and optical treat with respect for the original artworks was achieved with poetic appeal.

The charm of the animation gives expressive form to the often surprisingly intimate, personal, fiery, sensual, emotional, political, psychologically fraught, steel-willed narration told in its unique first-person manner. Even those familiar with her illustrated diary might not have seen the trove of private letters, unpublished essays, and candid print interviews. Pointedly, the compelling voiceover performed by actress Fernanda Echevarría del Rivero is entirely in Spanish, drawing the viewer even closer to the sensation of hearing Frida herself in the words.

The filmmakers had unprecedented, unrestricted access to a global treasure map of rare archival materials, much of which had never been seen in public.

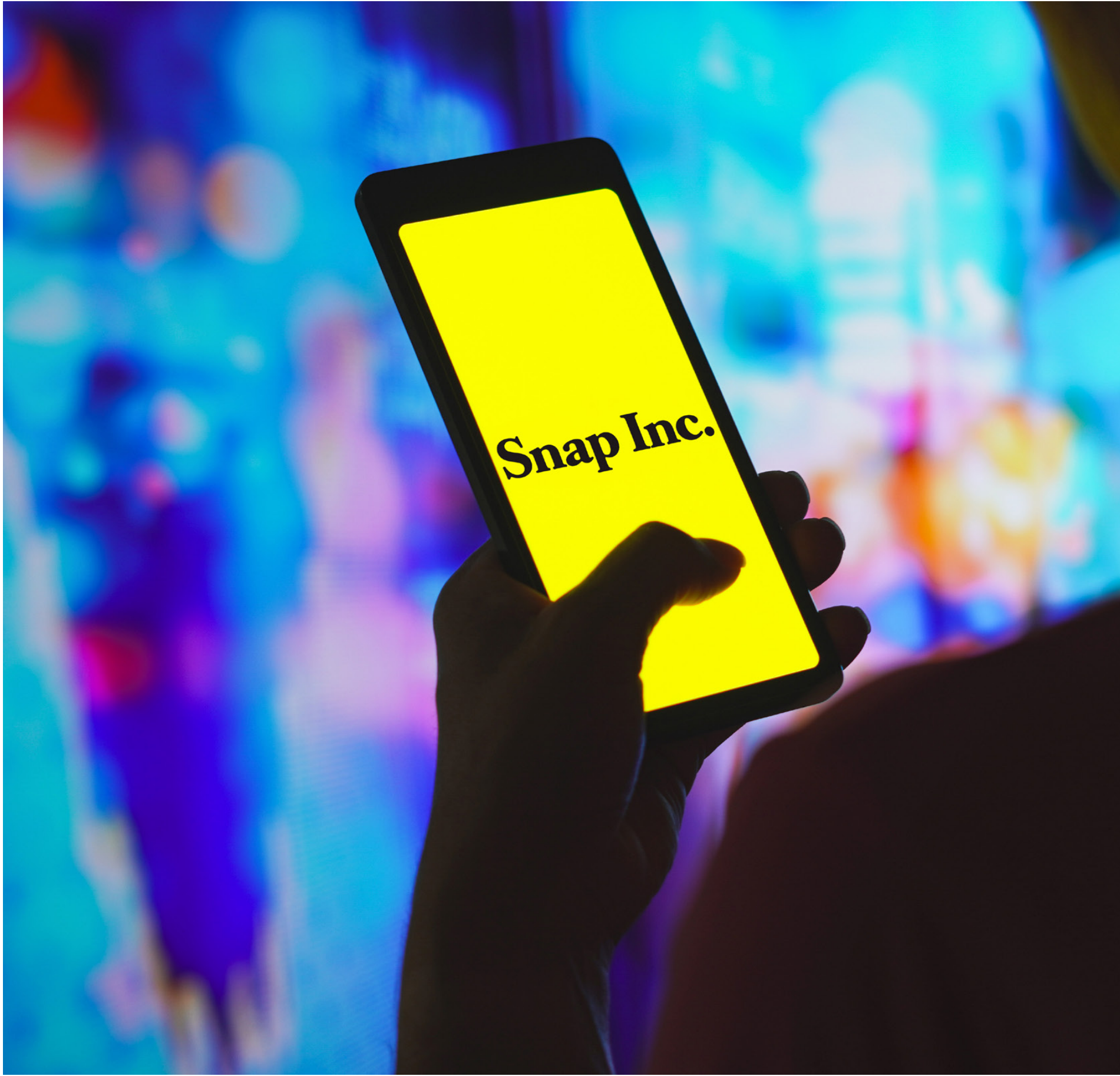


We’re talking dusty boxes in Bay Area attics with partially transcribed cassette tapes from the ‘70s. “It was shocking for us to realize how much [Frida]

could carry her own story because there haven’t been many interviews with her, but there are many letters,” Gutiérrez writes. “We had this opportunity to go much deeper and present the complicated, messy person she was outside the image or symbol she’d become.”

Producer Katia Maguire concurs, writing, “We wanted to bring her artwork to life in a way that we hadn’t seen done before. And we wanted to explore her writing. She was quite a prolific writer. She poured her heart into her correspondence with people because she was so intimate and so easily connected with people.”

“People that watched earlier cuts of the film were surprised by how humorous and deprecating she was,” Gutiérrez



NEWS

SNAPCHAT UNDER FIRE

Snapchat's Core Feature Of Disappearing Messages Has Been On The Hot Seat With Parents Accusing The App Of Enabling Illegal Activity, Leading To A Lawsuit Against The Social Media App.

BY ISAI ROCHA

Snapchat's foundation was built on sharing messages privately and having them disappear immediately after the recipient viewed them. You could take a photo or video, write a message over it, and send it to any person in the world, knowing it would not be traced. That level of privacy, however, has had Snapchat under fire for being a hotbed of illegal activity that can be conducted without a trace.

That is, at least, what Neville vs. Snap Inc., the lawsuit that has haunted the social media company since the end of 2022. The 216-page lawsuit details the stories of multiple families across the country who link the overdose deaths of their children, to Snapchat and its secretive form of communication.

The families have joined forces pleading for changes in the app.

In May 2023, Amy Neville helped organize a protest outside of Snapchat HQ in Santa Monica, as family members, many of whom are now short one member, spoke about social media lacking accountability, as they felt the app provided a platform where teens can find ways to access drugs discreetly.

The drug that took the lives of these children, as well as thousands of others across the U.S., was Fentanyl.

Neville started the Alexander Neville Foundation, named after her son, after his overdose death in 2020. Using Snapchat to communicate with a dealer, there was little trace of what Alexander was doing. On June 23, 2020, Amy found Alexander lying unresponsive in his beanbag chair. Initially believing Alexander was using Oxycontin, she later learned the

drugs were fentanyl. Since then, Neville has worked to raise awareness of fentanyl use and is a critical name in the lawsuit against the social media app.

"They duped us from the start," Neville said of the Snapchat app. "We think we're doing the right thing as parents. At the end of the day, these kids are smarter than us and these apps are designed for deception from the start, so it makes it really easy to not know from the start what's really going on. We spot-checked Alexander's social media, but no one was talking about the 'Drug emoji code.'"

The drug emoji code Neville mentioned is now recognized by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and shows various emojis that are used to communicate the want for illegal drugs. From the standard pill emoji used to communicate wanting to purchase Xanax or Percocets, to rocket ship emojis used to ask for "high potency" drugs, the language for drug dealing has changed over the years. The dealers themselves may use an electric plug emoji, or bag of money emoji to give notice of their intent to sell on social media and chat platforms.

"Fake prescription pills, commonly laced with deadly fentanyl and methamphetamine, are often sold on social media and e-commerce platforms – making them available to anyone with a smartphone," the DEA writes in its online guide to decoding emojis, all part of its "one pill can kill" campaign.

The threat of fentanyl has been addressed both locally and federally. In 2022, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) made Narcan available in all of its schools, after a string of

overdoses killed multiple students.

"We have an urgent crisis on our hands," LAUSD Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho said. "Research shows that the availability of naloxone along with overdose education is effective at decreasing overdoses and death—and will save lives. We will do everything in our power to ensure that no other student in our community is a victim to the growing opioid epidemic. Keeping students safe and healthy remains our highest priority."

U.S. President Joe Biden also spoke on fentanyl deaths in the country, saying that putting a stop to the epidemic was a priority for the administration, requesting \$1.5 billion to curb drug trafficking, treat addiction and take overdose prevention measures across the country.

"Fentanyl is likely the No. 1 killer of Americans age 18-45 and it's an issue that's hurting families in every state across the nation," Biden said in November 2023. "Curbing this crisis is something that every American can get behind, Democrat and Republican. We're working intensely to address this threat from every angle that we can pursue."

The lawsuit claims that Snapchat is responsible for thousands of fentanyl deaths and accuses the app of being used as an "open-air drug market."

While apps such as Instagram have recently incorporated a Snapchat-style disappearing message feature for users, the lawsuit claims Snapchat is the app of choice for dealers who are looking to sell drugs online discretely.

Snap Inc. has acknowledged some of the issues of illegal activity taking place on its app, saying it has taken measures

to spot drugs, blocking 2.2 million pieces of drug-related content and more than 700,000 accounts that were traced to this activity.

“When we take action on illegal or potentially harmful content, we also retain the evidence for an extended period, which allows us to support law enforcement and help hold criminals accountable,” Snap Inc. CEO Evan Spiegel said while speaking to the U.S. Senate Committee of the Judiciary on January 31. “To help prevent the spread of harmful content on Snapchat, we approve the content that is recommended on our service using a combination of automated processes and human review. We apply our content rules consistently and fairly across all accounts. We run samples of our enforcement actions through quality assurance to verify that we are getting it right. We also proactively scan for known child sexual abuse material, drug-related content, and other types of harmful content, remove that content, deactivate and device-block offending accounts, preserve the evidence for law enforcement, and report certain content to the relevant authorities for further action.”

Spiegel added that with all of its efforts to collaborate with law enforcement and stop illegal activity, “bad things can still happen.” With parents present at the Senate hearing, including Neville, the Snap



Senate Hearing on Online Child Exploitation in Washington

co-founder then “encouraged” them to use parental controls that are available on mobile devices. Days later, Snapchat released a story about parents struggling to monitor their children’s online use, which Neville said she had no doubt was an indirect shot at the families involved in the lawsuit.

“With the lawsuit right now, I’m sure they have to do everything they can to kind of push back at us without completely insulting us, because then they would

look horribly insensitive,” Neville said.

In January, Snapchat also announced its efforts to expand parental controls, allowing parents to have access to their teen’s Snap stories, which are generally visible to friends, as well as the ability to view their “Snap Map” which shows their location. Snapchat also makes it so that children between the ages of 13 and 18 are automatically enrolled in parental controls by default.

“It sounds great when Snapchat talks

about it, but who really knows?” Neville said. “At the end of the day, no one’s allowed to look at that stuff other than Snapchat, to know if it’s working, if it’s impractical, how many people are using it. They don’t tell us that. We have to take Snapchat’s word for it and we’re in a time where their word is no good.”

With all the measures Snapchat has taken over the past three years, there are still no parental controls over its key feature, which is to privately send a photo or video that disappears after viewing.

“Snap could use its considerable technological and business resources to shut Snapchat’s door to drug dealers,” the lawsuit reads. “Instead, it has chosen to brush off the obvious safety defects in its products, downplay how its policies and practices put kids at foreseeable risk of grievous harm and death, and callously tell grieving parents that they have no recourse for Snapchat’s role in their children’s deaths.”

While Neville vs. Snap Inc. will likely continue to live through 2024, a critical change that the Neville family and others hope for is independent third-party auditing of Snapchat.

“Sure, I think they’re doing something. They’re doing the minimum they could get away with, Neville said. “I just wish they would do it, make the changes already.” [A]

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MUSIC

SUPER NOVAH!

R&B rising star Jade Novah asks “Where Have I Been?” on new album

BY BRETT CALLWOOD



March 1, as it turns out, gave us more reason to celebrate than the fact that spring, and March Madness, is fast approaching. Jade Novah, an R&B superstar in the making, released *Where Have I Been?* — a staggeringly impressive collection of pop & soul gems weighing in at a mighty 24 tracks.

It’s a heartwarming and heart-wrenching body of work, a love-themed concept album of sorts, that showcases her gorgeous voice. It’s an authentic, honest and warm album, taking the listener on a journey that’s almost as expansive as her own.

“I’ve been singing and performing since I was a little girl,” Novah says. “I grew up in a musical family so it was always around me. Music has always

been serious for me (at least in my mind). I was in a girl group most of my childhood and was always in the studio recording and rehearsing and doing theater in drama club at school. Songwriting came a little bit later for me. I started writing casually in high school and it became a more serious passion in my college years.”

Her passion for music emerged from two very different directions.

“When I was young, my father was really into rock music and my mother was deep into musicals,” she says. “Between that random combination and growing up with ‘90s R&B, I’d say that my sound is a mashup of all those musical influences from my childhood. I love the art of storytelling and that has always been an important element in my music. I’m inspired by artists who tell stories on

their albums like Jill Scott. Jamie Foxx and Donald Glover are two other artists who inspire me because of the way they take up space in comedy, music, and acting.”

Novah believes that R&B is currently in a beautiful space and a healthy place.

“I think R&B music is in a beautiful space,” she says. “People no longer have to depend on radio and major networks as the only source to discover new music. There are so many incredible independent artists who are making music that is pushing the genre forward.”

Novah is a part of that thriving scene, and she has been since 2013 when she won an independent artist competition through the Grammys.

“I was given the opportunity to perform at a Grammy event that was live-streamed on their platform,” she says. “This was my first professional performance as a solo artist, and I was nervous and anxious. I had spent most of my life recording in the studio, but performing live is a completely different artform that took me years to perfect. That first show was not my best, but it opened up so many doors and gave me a great foundation for future performances.”

Novah’s debut album was *All Blue*, and she’s understandably proud of it while admitting that she’s grown as an artist since then.

“I’ve definitely evolved as far as storytelling and having an album that tells a complete story from beginning to end,” she says. “My latest project, *Where Have I Been?*, is what I like to call ‘visuals through sound’ and I highly recommend listening to it in order on the first listen. It’s a love language origin story that reflects on my childhood and the past relationships that shaped the way I love and how I want to be loved by others.”

Work on the new album began in 2022 and she recorded it in her home studio in Atlanta, Georgia, with her husband/ executive producer Devin Johnson.

“I have some incredible features on this album: Wayne Brady, Leslie Odom Jr., Tabitha Brown, Tony Baker and Gail Bean, as well as Kenyon Dixon and Tarriona ‘Tank’ Ball from Tank and the Bangas,” Novah says. “The album touches on some very sensitive subjects, so I was grateful to have my husband creating this project with me because he was able to hold space for me in a way that other producers might not have been able to.”

That is an impressive list of guests. So how did she set about choosing them?

“I am a huge fan of every single feature on *Where Have I Been?*” Novah says. “I was very intentional about getting artists who existed in creative spaces that I am also passionate about. Tony Baker is an

incredible comedian. Stand-up comedy is actually a world that I am slowly getting prepared to step into with my own unique twist. Tabitha Brown is taking over in the vegan community and I’ve actually been plant-based myself for seven years now. Gail Bean is an amazing actress that you might know from *Snowfall* and *P Valley*. She and I worked on a pilot together a few years ago and have stayed in contact ever since. I’m so inspired by her journey and her gifts. Both Leslie Odom Jr. and Wayne Brady are phenomenal Broadway actors, and that is also a long-term dream of mine. Kenyon Dixon is a good friend of mine and an industry peer who I’m so inspired by. We did Season Two of *That’s My Jam* on NBC together and our song ‘Rollercoaster’ is our third collaboration together. I’m so grateful to have these incredible creatives help me tell my story on this album.”

Where Have I Been? is, Novah says, a self-love journey and a story of healing and accountability.

“It’s based on some real life experiences,” she says. “Wayne Brady plays my father, who was never able to verbalize love or give words of affirmation. Tabitha Brown plays my therapist, and so much of what her character gives to me on the album is based on my real life experiences in therapy and how I had to heal my inner child in order to let go of things that no longer serve me. Ultimately I learned how to use words of affirmation to affirm myself, and that’s the journey of the album.”

With *Where Have I Been?* out now, the rollout and promotion will keep Novah busy this year.

“I have some live shows lined up already this year, including a show at SXSW this month,” she says. “I just shot a pilot for a show that I really hope gets picked up by a network because the cast is incredible and I had such an amazing time on set. I am manifesting that I’ll be working on that show this year, lol. I am a resident vocalist and comedian on Jimmy Fallon’s musical comedy game show, *That’s My Jam*, and it just got picked up for a third season so I’ll be shooting that in L.A. later this year. My husband Devin and I have a label and production company called Let There Be Art, and we just started an indie collective through our company to help educate independent artists on how to build better systems for their business. We’re launching a podcast this year and have already interviewed some incredible artists and creatives as part of our indie collective initiative. I’m already working on some new music, too, so stay tuned!”

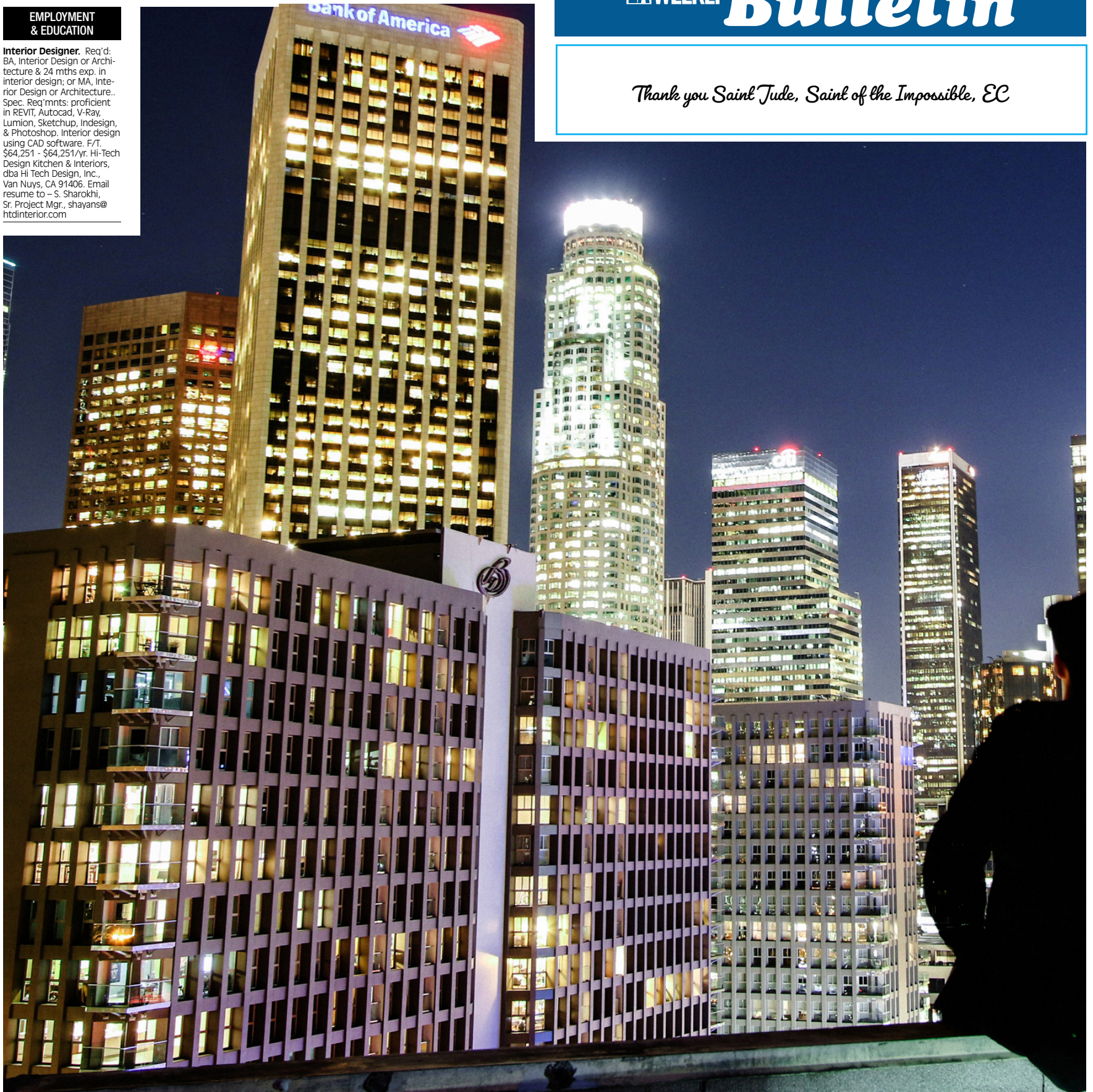
We sure will.

Jade Novah’s Where Have I Been? is out now. [📺]

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