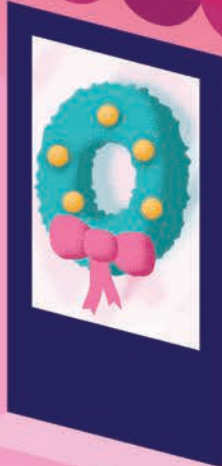


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ABOUT THE COVER: To conclude 2022, SLC creative firm *Underbelly* designed a funky gift bag adorned with easter eggs of Utah imagery as an introduction to our December *Big Hearts Buy Small* issue. Check out more from *Underbelly* on Instagram @underbelly or at underbelly.is.

Austin Doty

Contributor Limelight
Senior Staff Writer



Senior Staff Writer Austin Doty started at *SLUG* in August of 2015, providing *SLUG* with top-notch album reviews. Recently, Austin Doty has been bringing his fresh takes to the realm of community and food writing. As a local musician with a knack for tasty bites, you'll be sure to see him around. Read his review of *Slackwater Pizzeria* on p. 20 of our December 2022 issue.

Brooke Hannel

Contributor Limelight
Contributing Writer



The stylish, dynamic Brooke Hannel joined our team of Contributing Writers in February of 2020, using her refined writing skills in covering SLC's underground community, particularly within the arts and fashion scenes. Check out her feature with *Commerce and Craft* on p. 8 of our December 2022 issue.

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Commerce & Craft: A Bit of Magic in Sugarhouse

By Brooke Hannel • brookehannel8@gmail.com

Commerce & Craft sits in a corner surrounded by little stores and a tea shop. The trees have discarded most of their leaves by early November, and the evidence lays bare on the sidewalk leading up to the shop. Everything about *Commerce & Craft* screams cozy, begging you to stay a while. Even Gail Piccoli, the owner of *Commerce & Craft*, has such a soothing presence that you forget where you are for a moment.

Commerce & Craft is the retail child of Piccoli and her love of arts and crafts. Opened a few years back, Piccoli originally was looking for a studio to work on her stained glass pieces. "I really haven't done a whole lot since I've opened up the shop to be quite honest. But the intention with the shop was because I needed a new studio," she says. "I looked around and I was like, 'What if I got something that can be both studio and shop?'" Although the studio, *Luna Bella*, is in the back of the shop and still features some of Piccoli's work, her focus has moved more toward the store.

The combined love of craft and a cozy shopping experience is palpable in the shop. As you enter, you're immediately met with

soothing tunes such as "La Vie En Rose" and warm, sentimental candle scents that make you immediately nostalgic, as if you already miss it. The store carries pieces that make wonderful gifts or items you'd like to fill your home with; little knit kits, suncatchers, handmade jewelry, vases, clay mugs, bags, games and knick knacks that seem like remnants from childhood.

Although at first the shop solely carried Piccoli's own work, she now has over 70 artists featured in the store. "... They come from all over the country," says Piccoli. "Everyone thinks it's a local shop, and I do have a lot of locals, but my intent was always to bring in outside artists because I just think it's important." Some of those featured artists include: *Queen Bee Creations* from Washington, *Lost Sparrow Jewelry* from Wisconsin, and *La Pella Pottery* from Tennessee.

Piccoli came across these artists the old fashioned way: business cards. "I'd go to art shows and go around collecting all of these business cards," she says. "I had a binder filled ... and a couple of locals I knew, and that's how I started the shop.

And then as I got going on Instagram, I'd start following artists and ... other shops like mine around the country."

If Piccoli liked an artist that she found on Instagram, she'd "poach" the artist to sell through her store—which sometimes involves artists from across the United States. Piccoli's process of incorporating national artists promotes local access to different mediums, methods and cultural perspectives, enhancing the variety and appeal of *Commerce & Craft*.

With construction on the shop planned for next year, Piccoli hopes to keep the business going as long as she can. With the uncertainty of Sugarhouse's prices and reconstruction of the city, a worry lingers in the air over how long the shop can remain sustainable, but Piccoli wishes to keep *Commerce & Craft's* doors open for as long as she can.

The future of this rare gem of a shop? Perhaps a stained glass workshop. "I used to do classes and honestly, when they do some remodeling on the shop—supposedly next year—my foot traffic is gonna be way down," Piccoli says. "I was thinking [of going] balls to the wall and [doing a] glass studio." Sometime next year, Piccoli's landlord plans to add some extra touches to the shop, leading her to think about committing more to the studio side of the shop, *Luna Bella*.

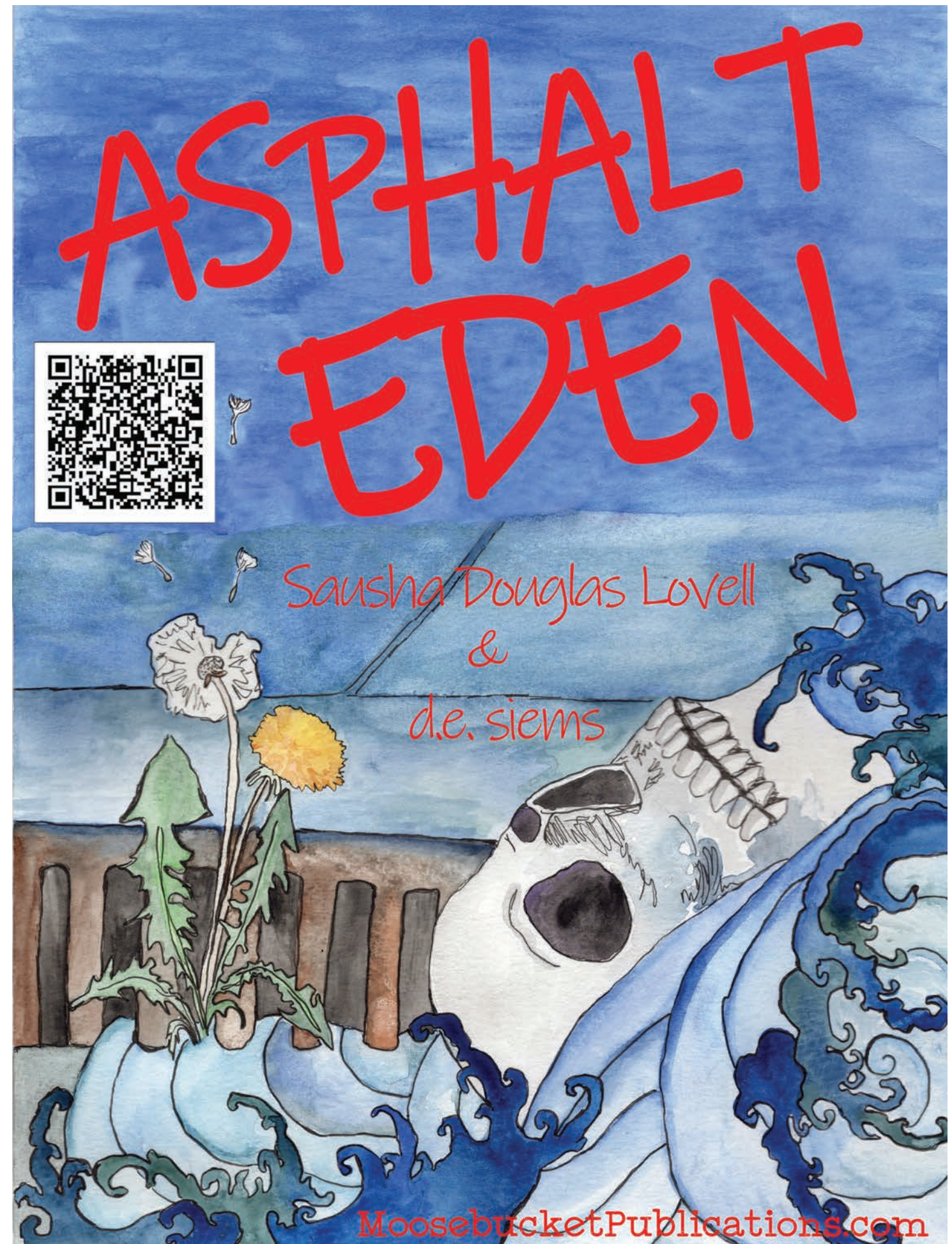
Walk into *Commerce & Craft* for a little comfort and look out for stained glass workshops soon. For more, visit their website at commerceandcraft.com.

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Photo: John Taylor

Gail Piccoli is the owner of *Commerce & Craft*, a shop that sells crafted work from over 70 artists both local and national.



Kahve Cafe: *feels like coming home*

By Ashton Ellis • ashton@slugmag.com || Photo: John Taylor

Navigating the holidays can be disorienting, especially if you're alone. The creeping feeling of homesickness once the days become shorter isn't something everyone can simply alleviate by plane, train or automobile. Inside a yellow victorian in the Avenues, *Kahve Cafe* has packed the feeling of coming home into a dense cup of coffee by preserving centuries-old traditions with rich flavor. From the cozy, worn-in rooms to a history full of snags and stitches, *Kahve Cafe* resembles an heirloom, hand-me-down sweater that warms and comforts the soul.



"I have always said, 'a Turkish cafe belongs in the home because Turkish hospitality begins in the home,'" says Elif Ekin of *Kahve Cafe*.

A lifelong baklava baker, Elif Ekin's "pandemic pivot" pushed her to seek out a brick-and-mortar location and jump right in. "It had to be a house," she says. "A Turkish cafe belongs in the home because Turkish hospitality begins in the home." She hands me a cup of locally sourced herbal tea to soothe my head cold as we settle in the Fairy Room in the corner of the first floor. Ekin named the pastel, three-storied house built in 1905 *The Wise Dragonfly* as an ode to transformative ancient wisdom. The different rooms above the first floor house tenants such as healers, tattoo artists, painters and even the supernatural (Ekin assures me that any malicious spirits that previously occupied the halls have since moved on).



Turkish coffee is over 500 years old, with tools and methods that have been preserved for centuries.

Kahve's walls are adorned with photographs of Ekin's family and ornate, handwoven rugs overlap on the hardwood floor—personal touches of another world. Her family fled to her mother's home of Rhode Island as refugees in the early '70s to avoid being imprisoned once political strife began. Her Turkish father was a professor, one of the professions that was deemed dangerous by the government. Ekin relays that coffee houses themselves originated as safe spaces to discuss taboo things like art, politics and philosophy in ancient Turkish markets. The buildings sprouted up as a refuge for expression and connection between people from different walks of life. "That's why a Turkish proverb says, 'A cup of coffee creates 40 years of friendship,' because people continue gathering together and create community through connection," Ekin says.

Her efforts to give back to the community aren't contained to *Kahve's* walls. Ekin implemented a giveback program with the purchase of *Kahve's* Turkish coffee bags, coordinating with the International Rescue Com-

mittee of Salt Lake City and their *Spice Kitchen Incubator*—for every bag purchase, 15% of the proceeds go to the IRC. "It's been really important to help people get back on their feet. Not having anyone you know in another country is scary," she says. Ekin has a goal to spread into the wholesale and retail business for her bagged coffee, with the aid from the sales going back into the community of immigrants and refugees like herself.

Kahve is one of only a handful of businesses in the entire country where Turkish coffee is ground, roasted, prepared and served in the traditional way. "There's a lot of the old world in one tiny cup of coffee," Ekin says. "We still use the same grinders, the same pots, cups and everything that we have been using for the last 500 years," Ekin says. She takes more liberty with her baklava and baked goods, incorporating beers from local breweries such as *Roha Brewing Project* and *Uinta Brewing Co.* and candy. The three-textured bites aren't sticky, or too large that they're intimidating—or as Ekin puts it, "So you don't get it on your beard or your boobs." Fair enough.

As the year dwindles to an end, many of us will be inventing new traditions in unfamiliar places. As for me, I know that I can walk into *Kahve Cafe* and Ekin will be there with tea, comfort food and a genuine care for every life that walks across her threshold. Be sure to check out *Kahve Cafe's* events such as their bi-monthly Sufi sound bath meditations, monthly open mic poetry night and traditional belly dancing performances. Tickets to these events and coffee bags are available on their website kahvecafeslc.com.

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PARADISE PALM

45 years of
interior plant care & sale

By Andrew Christiansen • achristiansen011@gmail.com

Photos by Bonneville Jones



"Plants are the new pets," says Bailey Mueller, who tends to the foliage with thoughtfulness and precision.

John Mueller has owned and operated Paradise Palm since 1998 and has made caring for and educating people about indoor plants his life's work.

Paradise Palm first began as an interior plant-care contractor and indoor garden store in 1977. John Mueller, current owner of the business and plant-obsessive who worked for the Bureau of Land Management, started working for *Paradise Palm* in his early 20s before purchasing the business when he was 23. "If you get him talking about plants, he never stops," says Bailey Mueller, John's daughter and manager of the store.

John began selling plants at *Paradise Palm's* Sugarhouse storefront in 1998 then moved to the current location on Broadway after outgrowing the original. "He definitely saw a pocket in Salt Lake, especially where there was a lack of resources to buy high-quality house plants," Bailey says. The business gradually grew over time, but they saw a huge boost in the late 2000s after two year-long construction work on Broadway was finished and the speed limit was decreased from 30 mph to 20 mph. "We had more walking traffic instantly as soon as they were done. It was a marked difference," John says.

As their storefront has become more popular in recent years, a key component of *Paradise Palm* is providing advice to customers. When it comes to plant care, Bailey says people tend to overcomplicate it. "We'll have people coming in really over-

whelmed at the prospect of taking care of plants when really the least intervention possible is usually the best route to take," Bailey says. She advises only repotting once every one to three years at most and fully saturating your plant once a week. Beyond plants, *Paradise Palm* also sells a variety of different pots and saucers, as well as bonsai shears, bonsai wire and organic insecticides and fertilizers that aren't harmful to the environment.

Paradise Palm's core business is the plant care services they provide to approximately 100 buildings all over the valley, recommending certain plants by considering budgets, the lighting and building interiors and if the customer wants contemporary or classical foliage. "Everyone in these buildings has to have every single one of their plants watered the same day. That's trim, water, rotate, fluff with moss," John says.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the *Paradise Palm* storefront has experienced a massive boost in customers, with their number of customers nearly tripling. John says sometimes customers would come in during the week when it was snowing, expecting nobody anywhere near the store on those days. "But then, there's like 20, 30 people in there buying plants ... After a year, we would just have people in their pajamas mass

buying plants to the point of extreme and then our suppliers were in shortage, so we couldn't get half of what we normally could get," John says. Their suppliers would have plants but they would be smaller than normal and limited in supply on all of the exotic, more coveted plants. "Everything was more expensive or non-existent, so we were just working every angle to bring in the right plants to meet that demand."

Bailey thinks part of the reason for the recent boom in interest in plants is due to plant trends on social media, as plant life gives people more nuance with interior design and responsibility to sustain life. "Plants are the new pets, right? It's something you take care of, a reason to get up in the morning. Connecting and communicating with your plants is a huge part of it," Bailey says. She adds that buying a plant as a gift can be really thoughtful and personal. "I think that the intention behind taking the time to pick out a plant and pot or multiple plants and showing us how they want them arranged speaks volumes," Bailey says.

You can find *Paradise Palm* on 307 E. 300 South and on Instagram [@paradisepalmslc](https://www.instagram.com/paradisepalmslc) and Facebook at *Paradise Palm, SLC*.



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Golden Braid Books

Compassion, Community & Consciousness

by: Birdy Francis
Birdy@slugmag.com

Photos by Lexi Kiedaisch

Golden Braid Books is dedicated to elevating consciousness, whether that be through in-store aura readings or the words of local Indigenous authors. Store manager **Jennifer Rugg** says that the efforts of *Golden Braid* come down to compassion, community and consciousness. This unique shop's team is hard at work to make as many responsible, uplifting choices and purchases as possible.

In 1982, **Jackie Pratt** opened the shop on Broadway and 300 South with zero sales in the first month. Following *Golden Braid's* gradual growth, it moved to its current location at 151 S. 500 East with major, sustainable efforts and a whole lotta love. As *Golden Braid* co-owner **Pamela Brown** explains, Pratt decided to open a cafe within the store. "*Oasis [Cafe]* is known and successful, and so people think that we're the bookstore in *Oasis Cafe*, but [the two businesses] have always been married," says Brown.

As a book buyer, Brown's job has been to maintain the long-time relationships made by Pratt over 30 years ago with local authors, companies, publishers and representatives. All the vendors *Golden Braid* works with are carefully researched and selected, and long-lasting collaborations take precedence. Brown says, "Products that take care of the people that are making them [are] a really



Golden Braid Books Assistant Manager Emily Fuchs.

Golden Braid Books provides spiritual enrichment and education through their products and in-person events.

high priority for me, [as well as the] relationships I've had for 25 years." Something important to the *Golden Braid* team is ensuring that all spiritual traditions are represented on their bookshelves as well as an array of genres: fiction, creativity, poetry and non-fiction focused on conscious living with children's books among them. Product-wise, they sell local jewelry, lavender wraps, wind chimes, journals, tarot, oracle decks and so much more. Non-physical services, such as readings, are provided alongside free events—a book club, guided journaling classes and storyteller workshops.

Golden Braid sells non-material experiences in addition to items you can love all year round. Rugg explains that they don't wish to create unnecessary waste and clutter. The two applaud younger generations who won't stand for unethical and single-use, disposable mindsets. Brown says, "We're providing what people are demanding, which is a result of a new consciousness about consumerism."

With 10 readers—eight in-store and two phone-based—*Golden Braid* offers a plethora of different tellings: "We have tarot and oracle readers and a palm reader, someone who does astrology and human design, a psychic medium, a couple of astrologers who do birth charts/full natal charts and an angel card reader. Any day, we have at least one reader in the store," says Rugg.

Since sacred, religious and spiritual items are sold within *Golden Braid*, Brown—who studied English and anthropology—makes ethical practices a priority. "The first thing I did when I took on buying was to have authors that were from the cultural origins for whom they were speaking. I wanted to include the original 13 tribes in Utah," says Brown. "I'm very aware of ... cultural [and] spiritual materialism. Education is important." They often have others come to the shop to educate them about the specific items. Recently, for example, a Rinpoche came in from Denver to teach Brown and her team how to present katas, a traditional Tibetan offering scarf.

Brown also encourages people to look toward their own lineage and traditions, as well as inward, before looking outward at others' spiritual practices. *Golden Braid* represents many traditions and spiritual holidays but puts integrity, education, sustainability and representation before any sort of profit. During the holidays, *Golden Braid* is not just a shop to stop at for Christmas stocking stuffers: "There are a lot of spiritual holidays. There are holidays of light in almost every tradition (Hanukkah, Bodhi Day, etc.). We want people to be able to come and celebrate all of those," says Brown.

You can look into *Golden Braid's* services and readers on their website, goldenbraidbooks.com. Give them a call at 801.322.1162 to schedule a reading or to ask questions regarding their services.



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Sugary Sweets

from Two Salt Lake Mavericks

By Audrey Lockie • audrey@slugmag.com

Photos by John Barkiple

Can anyone say no to a sweet treat? Especially around the winter holidays, a delectable, sugary confection can tell your loved ones you're thinking of them, bridge the awkward gap with that one coworker or fill a last-minute Secret Santa need. The Salt Lake valley is full of wildly talented artisans who approach the art of candy creation with deft skill. Here, find two distinct, accomplished and contrasting offerings—the renowned cocoa creations of *The Chocolate Conspiracy* and the spicy sweets of *Lenguitas Chamoy*.

The Chocolate Conspiracy



AJ Wentworth has been crafting and peddling fine chocolates since 2009, a time full of shifts in location, focus and product lines. After a few bouts of unexpected moves during the COVID-19 pandemic (including from their longtime location on 900 S.), *The Chocolate Conspiracy* was in a place of redefinition. “We were able to cut down and focus on what we do best, and that was the bars we make,” Wentworth says of their period of tumult. “We didn’t have to make hot chocolate or tea or coffee; we weren’t customizing truffle boxes for people.”

Wentworth describes this move as a “blessing in disguise” in that it allowed *The Chocolate Conspiracy* to “rethink how we wanted to approach where we were going,” he says. After years of expanding product lines, participating in events and more, the compa-

ny pared down their stock to their five-bar “core, signature line”—Classic Dark, Mint Chip, Blackberry Ginger, Maca and Wild Spice. Wentworth has since added back six other favorite bars—including two beer-infused bars using beers from *Uinta Brewing Co.* and *Level Crossing Brewing Co.*—as well as the company’s coveted drinking chocolate.

Now, *The Chocolate Conspiracy* is weeks away from opening their new brick and mortar on S. Redwood Road. “We’re happy that we can open the door to the public again,” says Wentworth. When they open, Wentworth hopes to host a “chocolate free for all” where customers can sample all of *The Chocolate Conspiracy*’s current line. Find more information at eatchocolateconspiracy.com and follow the business on Instagram [@chococonspiracy](https://www.instagram.com/chococonspiracy).

Lenguitas Chamoy



Lenguitas Chamoy’s Analee Camacho fell into her business by way of a pandemic whim. “My husband has a love for Mexican spicy candy,” she says, and Lenguitas Chamoy began as a way to replicate some of his favorite flavors at home. His passion for the final product urged Camacho to share the sweets with family, then friends, before she eventually opened an online shop and began exhibiting at local pop-up markets. “Everybody loved it,” says Camacho of the first trial run within her close circles. “If everybody’s liking this, I’m sure *everybody* else would!”

Lenguitas Chamoy’s candy is defined by its unique, homemade coating and spice blend, a mix of traditional chamoy seasonings like Tajín along with a litany of other flavors to add Camacho’s personal stamp to the mix. From

there, she applies the blend to dried fruits, premade candies (Airheads, Gushers), nuts and more. Depending on the consistency and flavor of the vessel, Camacho varies the mix of dry and wet spice blends, honing in on a specific mixture for each candy to ensure the base treats retain their identity.

The rapid growth Camacho has achieved in the time since first experimenting with chamoy signals a hunger in Salt Lake City for this type of homemade delight, and Camacho hopes to carry that goodwill further. “I wish we could grow to ... have a small location somewhere, for someone to be able to say, ‘Oh, I’m craving some Lenguitas Chamoy, let’s go pick some up.’” For now, purchase Camacho’s candy at lenguitaschamoy.com, and follow the business on Instagram [@lenguitaschamoy](https://www.instagram.com/lenguitaschamoy) for more.

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WHICH BAPTIST IS THE BIGGEST AND THE BADDEST?

By Steven Koonce • beard2010@gmail.com

What once started as a partnership with a popular coffee roaster has exploded into arguably the second most recognizable beer brand in Utah. *Epic Brewing Company's* Big Bad Baptist started as an imperial stout aged in whiskey (or bourbon) barrels and amazing, locally roasted coffee from *King's Peak Coffee Roasters*. Since those humble beginnings, it has exploded into an array of deliciousness that includes offerings that are single-, double-, triple-, quadruple- and even quintuple-barreled stouts along with a most delicious varietal coming from south of the border. You can now get the original BBB in a 12-oz can, or, if you live in the free world, on draft. This year, head brewer extraordinaire **Jordan Schupbach** has outdone himself with a half-dozen varieties of Big Bad. I tried all six, took a nap, and chose three to pass on to you for your holiday quaffing.



Photo: Lexi Kiedaisch

Barrel-Aged Imperial Stout Tasting Primer

- Burnt marshmallow is a good thing; notes of sweet, char and sticky toffee
- Tobacco *can* be a good thing with earthy notes of light chocolate or leather. It can also mean ashy, which is bad.
- Soy is good in some beers and not in others, providing an umami flavor with a slight salt aftertaste. Salt can be overwhelming.
- Booze refers to heat and can be good. It's that feeling that something bad will happen if you drink too much, which can be bad or good (depending on the night).

Big Bad Baptist Orange Stick

This Baptist took a stroll through the citrus grove on its way to the pulpit and came back smelling of sweet orange and whiskey. Notes of whiskey, orange and oak barrel play around in your nose with just a whiff of coffee. The first taste, which coats the tongue, brings lots of whiskey, burnt marshmallow, graham cracker, light coffee

and just a bit of orange zest. As it warms up, it gets thinner on the tongue—or, the tongue just gets thicker—and the coffee flavors come out just a little bit more. I would have liked more orange in this one, but overall, it's a tasty Baptist.

Big Bad Baptist Rum Barrel Aged

Arrgghhh! This one reeks of a pirate with big, huge, treasure chest-sized notes of dark rum on the nose with toasty barrel and roasted malt. Close your eyes and you're drinking a dark rum cocktail on the first sip as that rum blows through the other flavors like a Nor'Easter on the high seas. The second sip brings much more nuanced flavors of raisin, cocoa, tobacco and soy with light roast coffee. As it warms up, the rum sticks around but with it comes more cocoa, tobacco and soy along with a little bit of heat in the back of your throat. Shiver me timbers—this is one bloody good beer.

Big Bad Baptist Barrel Strength

This Baptist is most definitely the biggest and baddest of them all. The whiskey dominates the nose with espresso and light cocoa. The first sip is straight up whiskey with slight oak and roasted malts. Let it warm up and you'll start to get some amazing flavors of espresso, burnt marshmallow, soy, leathery tobacco and more booze on the tongue with lots of heat. This Baptist isn't quite ready to lead a whole congregation, so send it to the cellar for a year or so and let it calm down.

I guarantee you will have the best of these amazing Baptists on your hands to celebrate the 2023 holiday season. If you grab three, go with Barrel Strength, Rum Barrel and Toasted Coconut. If you're going to grab just one, go with the Rum Barrel. That will jolly your roger.



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Tastes Like Burning pizza with jalapenos, roasted chipotles and Slackwater's spicy marinara sauce.

Roasted pulled pork Bubba Ho-Tep Sandwich shares its name with the 2002 film starring Bruce Campbell.

Slackwater

Finding Success in SLC

By Austin Doty • rdotytwo@gmail.com
Photos by Em Behringer



After finding success with its first two locations in Ogden and Sandy, Slackwater is finally in Salt Lake City. The restaurant brought its artisan pizzas and vast beer selection to the Granary District in late 2021, and as it did with its first two locations, Slackwater hopes to win over SLC with its fresh ingredients, house-made dough and abundant drink selection.

When my date and I walk into Slackwater, we notice how open the floor plan is. The restaurant is set up in *INDUSTRY SLC*, an old, large, silver foundry converted into a modern office and restaurant space. The space is inviting and gives us a feel for the entire restaurant, from the wood paneling on the back walls and the exposed light fixtures above to the dog-friendly patio outside. Sitting just under one of the restaurant's large, open garage doors, there is an excellent view of SLC's skyline.

To start the night, we order drinks and an appetizer. I opt for the Becker's Best from *Ogden River Brewing*—a light, flavorful pilsner I hope will pair well with the pizza crusts. For an appetizer, our server recommends the Spin-Art Dip (\$10.25), a creamy, spinach and artichoke-based dip mixed with roasted peppers and Slackwater's three-cheese blend (parmesan, asiago and mozza-

rella). It's a fair blend of flavors that pops with large artichoke chunks and housemade tortilla chips.

We decide not to skimp on dinner and order a few different entrees. Up first, we try the Bubba Ho-Tep Sandwich (\$10.75), which shares its name with the 2002 film starring **Bruce Campbell**. It's a roasted pulled pork sandwich mixed with housemade barbeque sauce wedged between a hoogie bun from *Stone Ground Bakery*. Like any good pulled pork sandwich, it is sweet and tangy without overpowering the natural pork flavor. The housemade maple citrus coleslaw paired with the sandwich offers a pickled, crisp appeal I don't usually find with pulled pork sandwiches.

Our second dish is the Tastes Like Burning pizza (\$12.75). True to its name, it burns in our mouths. With jalapenos, roasted chipotles and Slackwater's spicy marinara sauce, it is not a dish for the faint of heart, but it's perfect for anyone looking to add some zest to their night out. It incorporates pepperoni, roasted garlic, red onions and the three-cheese blend to help even out the spice. While I don't know if I would prefer this pizza as a main dish, it's a nice change of pace and offers a unique punch to the night's palate.

We wind down our feast with the California Sunrise (\$14.75), a green goddess dressing-based pizza with roasted chicken, seasoned grape tomatoes, peppered bacon and the three-cheese blend. The menu claims this

dish is the restaurant's best seller, and it came highly recommended by our server. With anticipation building, we take our first bites and are far from disappointed. There's a divine burst of salt and tang found in the dressing that works well with the leaner flavors of chicken and bacon. The three-cheese blend and house-made dough create a tasteful, balanced canvas, allowing the more complex flavors to stand out. The avocado chunks and shredded spinach topped on the dish give it an unfound level of freshness, even for an artisan pizza.

As we wrap up our night, we ask our server for a few boxes and decide to make one last hurdle with an order of dessert. They bring us the 2nd Ward Delight (\$7.50), a caramelized graham cracker crust topped with layers of sweet cream cheese, chocolate custard and whipped cream. The usual hesitation to order dessert after a big dinner is that it is going to be too rich and heavy. But, this dessert is quite pleasant and light. It's sweet and crisp, and each layer is distinct while effectively blending as a whole, serving as a satisfying finish.

Visit Slackwater SLC in the Granary District, and keep up with all things Slackwater on their Instagram page [@slackwaterpub](https://www.instagram.com/slackwaterpub).

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By Sam D'Antuono • sam.dantuono@gmail.com
Photos courtesy of the performers

AS we get ready to close out another year and prepare for all the holiday festivities, it's time once again to take a look at the Salt Lake comedy scene and check out a new group of comedians that are making the city laugh. This edition of the *SLUG Localized Comedy Showcase* has a wide variety of talent—those just beginning their comedy career, those in the middle and some who have maybe been doing this way too long. Come to *Urban Lounge* on Thursday, Dec. 15 (doors at 7 p.m., show at 8 p.m.) to see **Gabe Olson**, **Alaina Hirschi**, **Brian Higgins** and **Karan Reddy** for just \$5.

ALAINA HIRSCHI

Alaina Hirschi has been doing standup for about a year now and is progressing faster than most. Like the majority of the comedians on this lineup, she has an observational style but identifies herself with a more offbeat delivery and is one of the more original voices in comedy heard recently. This might be due to the fact that Hirschi never saw standup until her late 20s. "When I got a job at *DryBar Comedy*, I had never really seen standup before, because I grew up Mormon," she says. "My parents were like, 'standup is inappropriate so you can't watch it.' They said standup is bad because they swear, and they weren't wrong." Hirschi started doing stand up after her introduction to it through *DryBar Comedy*—she thought it just looked fun! She is an extroverted presence off the stage. Hirschi has always loved writing, especially comedic writing, as well as being on stage in front of people. Stand-up seems to be a perfect fit! Alaina Hirschi has opened for **Maria Bamford** and performs regularly at *Wiseguys*. You can find her on Instagram for upcoming show dates @[alaina_n_hirschi](https://www.instagram.com/alaina_n_hirschi).



BRIAN HIGGINS

What's that, dear reader? You yearn for the dulcet tones of a pretentious know it all to talk down to you? Oh, you've got it! Brian Higgins is a Connecticut transplant to Utah but has quickly become a mainstay of comedy here in SLC. Higgins takes a more hardline stance on comedy when it comes to what he wants out of it: "I would like to kill myself ... and I'm hoping that somebody else does that for me onstage. I saw **Will Smith** at the *Oscars* and I said, 'That'."

Higgins is eight years into his comedy journey and is the personification of a comedic truth teller. "I think the essence of comedy is saying a thing that most people agree with and getting claps," he declares bravely before looking into his attaché case for a pen while muttering, "How many times can I say 'foibles' in a 30-minute set." Higgins is an avid fan of the *New York Times* crossword. He "likes when the themes are fun" and enjoys riffing with the boys in his spare time. Higgins is a writer by day, comedian by night. He has a spread of comedic talents ranging from extensive improv experience, standup and his ceaseless daily submissions to the *NYT* political cartoon section. One could say he lives, breathes, eats, sleeps and even shits comedy.

Higgins' jokes are silly and, in comparison to some of his fellow comics, avoid more real and heavy topics. After a show one night he was told that, "he's a fun guy on stage," which absolutely delighted him. "That's what I'm going for!" he replied gleefully. Brian Higgins hosts a semi-regular show called *Locals Only* at *SaltFire Brewing Co.* and has opened for headliners such as **Mark Normand**, **Joe List** and **Eddie Pepitone**. You can find him on Instagram @[brianhigginscomedy](https://www.instagram.com/brianhigginscomedy).



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KARAN REDDY

Karan Reddy has been steadily climbing his way up the local comedy scene ladder for about two years now, opening frequently on weekend shows at *Wiseguy's Comedy Club*. Reddy's style is observational and oftentimes boundary pushing.

Originally from India, Reddy watched a lot of stand up in high school and says, "I always wanted to do it but I never had the courage to go up. I moved to Utah and had no friends, no family. I was like, 'Oh this is the perfect place'—if I bomb, no one knows."

Reddy recounts some experiences of being an immigrant and how some are not as understanding as others. "Sometimes people think I'm only funny because of the accent. Some people come up to me and say, 'Hey man, good thing you have that accent'," Reddy observes of some audience member's racist attitudes.

Offstage, Karan Reddy is not a funny man, he is timid and meek. Everytime I see him, he takes one hand out of his hoodie to point slightly away from whoever he's talking to. Everytime I see him I think, "even I could fold this fucker." The stage is where Reddy can express himself, most of the time. Especially in the early stages, it can be hard to know what to do with someone shouting out at you during a show. Reddy quips that the thing that brings him joy in life is "owning a heckler 24 hours after a show in my bathroom." Karan Reddy can be found at [@karanreddycomedy](#) on Instagram, and has opened for big names such as **Dina Hashem**, **Duncan Trussell** and **Nimesh Patel**.



GABE OLSON

Gabe Olson loves sex workers; it is the linchpin of his personality. This is a fact of Mr. Olson that is so clear, were I to not mention it, people who know him that are reading this would think I've never met the man. He is due to be a new father, any day now. Olson's material focuses on his experience in the military, his love of sex workers, of course, and a deep passion for anime.

Olson is an energetic and giddy presence onstage. Despite some of the darker topics he entertains through his act, he keeps a consistently positive energy throughout. "My style of humor is aggressive and not consensual—people will laugh whether they like it or not. I'll tickle someone if I have to" he says, one eye drifting out of alignment with the other. Olson's aspirations with comedy are not far off from the classical definition of fame and fortune "My aspirations with comedy is to make it to a place where I don't sleep on a couch anymore. In five years, I see myself on a futon." He continues, "When people see me perform, they understand that I'm a ladies man and I have lots of money". Gabe Olson has performed with the likes of **Stavros Halkias**, **Fahim Anwar** and **Sean Patton**. You can check out his bi-monthly roast battle show that he co-hosts with another local favorite, **Scott Fillmore**. As well as his Instagram [@thegabeolson](#).

You can also find all of these comedians regularly at *Wiseguys*. The interview overall had to be cut short because a bee flew at me and chased me around the patio of the coffee shop we were all at for about 10 minutes. In that time, every last one of the comedians had scattered like rats and left me to die. Hope to see you all at the show!



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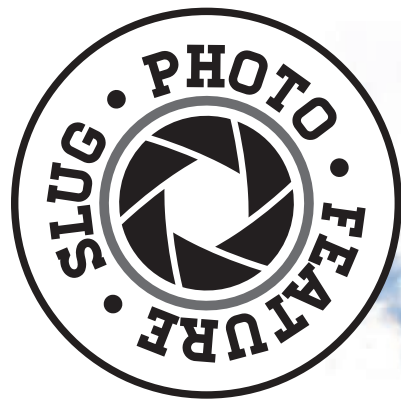
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SNOW

It was back to business at the *Bonzona*, the best place to ride before the resorts open for the season. Once snow starts falling, snowboarders and skiers alike meet by the Milly lift at *Brighton* ski resort and hike to a free admission, do-it-yourself terrain park full of trails, jumps and snow enthusiasts. Don't forget to show up with a shovel and help whenever it's needed. The *Bonzona* is the perfect place to dust off the cobwebs or for hanging with friends while checking those emails.

By Jovanny Villalobos • countercultureconscious.com



Jill Perkins - Brighton Ski Resort



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Monthly Calendar
December 2022

- 12/1 Thurs. Vibras Del Lago - Cumbia Dance Party**
- 12/2 Fri. DJ : Spaz**
- 12/3 Sat. DJ : James Beard**
- 12/8 Thurs. DJ : Gabba**
- 12/9 Fri. DJ : Bo York**
- 12/10 Sat. DJ : Godina**
- 12/15 Thurs. DJ : Andy Doors**
- 12/16 Fri. DJ : Bo York**
- 12/17 Sat. DJ : Flash & Flare**
- 12/18 Sun. DJ : Spaz - R&B Night**
- 12/22 Thurs. DJ : TBA**
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- 12/31 Sat. : NYE @ Alibi!**



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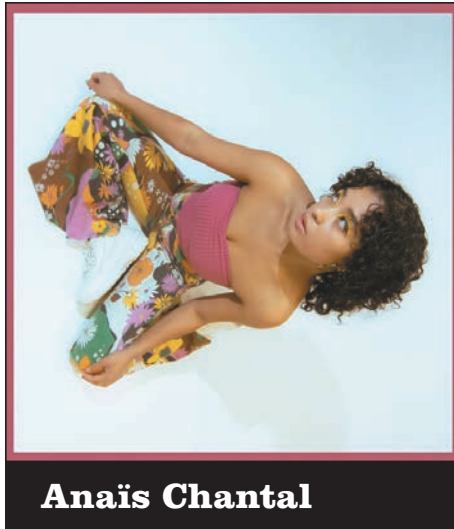
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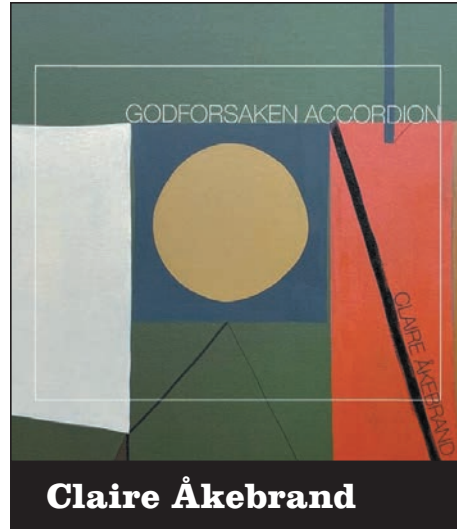
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LOCAL MUSIC SINGLES ROUNDUP

It doesn't matter how you prefer winter—whether it's shredding on the slopes of *Snowbird*, ice skating in the heart of Downtown's *Gallivan Center* or simply bundled up at home with hot chocolate, your favorite fuzzy socks and a book—*SLUG Magazine* has your December tunes covered with six new songs by turns shocking and seasonal to give all your winter activities a perfect snowy soundtrack.



Anaïs Chantal



Claire Åkebrand



Lil Du Bois

“Like it better!”
Self-Released
Street: 09.24
Anaïs Chantal = Andie x Nai Palm

Anaïs Chantal's latest soulful single opens with a smooth and slinky beat. She sings, “I like it better / When we get crazy / I lose my temper / You say you hate me.” Soon after, she and the music swell with the proclamation, “I like it better,” the music hitting on the beat of each word. Chantal passionately and warmly sings about “the pleasure from pain.” There's something exciting about someone singing and pining for a self-described “toxic” love. Are we celebrating unhealthy relationship dynamics? Maybe. Chantal triumphantly embraces the rawness of relationship tumult that being deeply in love can sometimes affect. It's toxic. What of boundaries? Why are we celebrating an unhealthy love? Because it's like that. “Logic is vacant / Call it toxic / When you're young and dumb in love / You can't stop it,” Chantal sings. Sometimes, you love stupidly. You just do. “Like it better!” is a passionate set of rose-colored glasses for two.
—Parker Scott Mortensen

“Godforsaken Accordion”
Self-Released
Street: 08.22
Claire Åkebrand = Karima Walker + Hausu Mountain-era Eartheater

Musician Claire Åkebrand also creates abstract paintings; pieces with misshapen blocks of bright, primary colors toppling over each other in new geometries. She approaches her music with these same multidirectional sensibilities. Through the first verses, her plaintive vocals tumble over the dragged pickings of an acoustic guitar while what sounds like detuned train whistles twitter in the background—not immediately pleasant, perhaps even a bit unsettling. In the track's second half, a filter drowns out the mix's high frequencies and Åkebrand becomes subsumed in an eddy and drifts further from the listener. In these abstract structural and production decisions, “Godforsaken Accordion” may startle or perturb on first listen. It forgoes clarity and directness in favor of a segmented, architectural approach to songwriting and production. Here, music isn't a two-dimensional line from speaker to ear; here, songs are something to be moved through and felt for their spatial depth. —Audrey Lockie

Lil Du Bois
“FACE THAT”
CQCX
Street: 09.19
Lil Du Bois = Playboi Carti + 2012 Beer on the Rug releases

Lil Du Bois' “FACE THAT” boasts one of the best beats I've heard on a local hip-hop cut this year. Built off of a pitch-shifted vamp of '80s Casio windpipes and shimmering chimes that would make DJ Screw and Macintosh Plus salivate in equal measure, the instrumental paints an image of a retro-tropical paradise as Lil Du Bois blithely slurs out the repeated refrain of “summertime.” Across the track, the vocalist bounces between singing and rapping with ease, shining the most in his liquid melodics. If his bars aren't head exploding—tried-and-true braggadocio, end rhymes built off of repeated words and a pace lying in a netherworld of lackadaisical agitation—his velvet voice is endearing and versatile enough to carry the track. This isn't hip-hop as an intellectual *what* but hip-hop as a physical *how*, an exercise in making the linguistically familiar sonically alien.
—Audrey Lockie

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Samia - 02.21 The Complex | **Tove Lo** - 02.21 The Union Event Center | **Viagra Boys** - 02.28 The Depot | **SonReal** - 02.28 Soundwell
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03.11 Soundwell | **JAWNY** - 03.13 Soundwell | **Our Last Night** - 03.17 The Complex | **The National Parks** - 03.17 The Union Event Center
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Urban Lounge Holiday Party (Free) 12.23
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Bon Entendeur 02.26
Suicide Commando (JRC) 03.28
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