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ART

# Lead, Follow, or Get The Hell Out of The Way ~ Interview with Matt Furie

By **L.A. TACO STAFF**

12:36 PM PDT on May 19, 2016



Matt "Big Dog" Furie is a talented artist who moved to Los Angeles a few years ago from the Bay Area. Whether he is creating fine art or

comic strips, there is a sense of both intimate relationships and fantastical dreaming in everything he touches, as if his hallucinations are real somewhere in some other land that only he can access. His best-known character is Pepe the Frog, AKA the "feels good man" King of Memes. Pepe was first drawn in the comic strip Boys Club, which has its Fantagraphics debut this month in *Boys Club Volume One*, a collection of all the comics in one nice package. We wanted to ask Matt about the origin of his nickname, if he had ever drawn a taco, and why he is so good at drawing fur...

### **What is your favorite taco spot?**

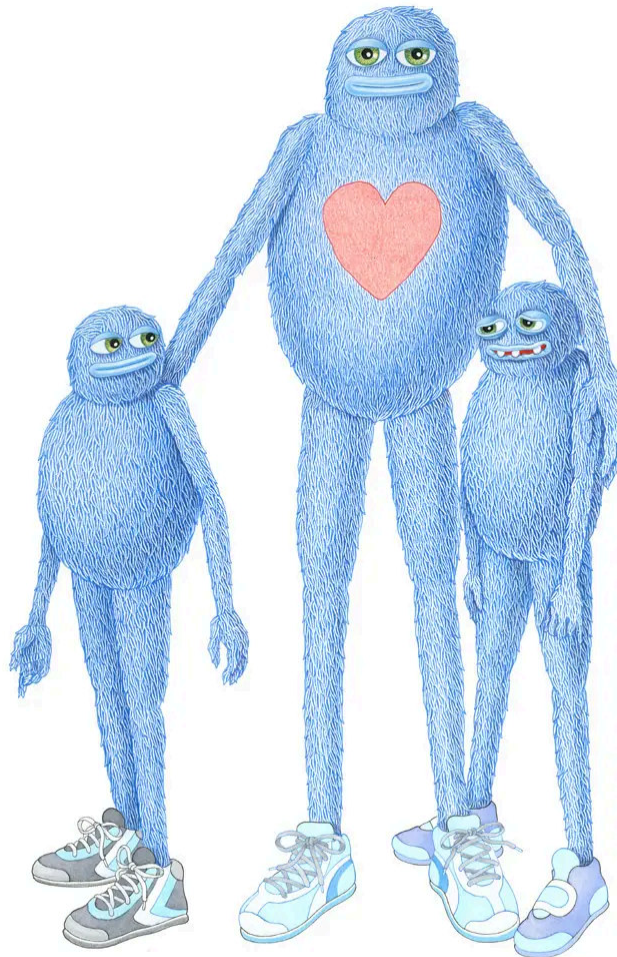
There is a delicious taco spot just north of Historic Thigh Town and south of Mid-Section Naval Academy. Just cruise up Leggs Drive until you hit a soft patch where Leggs dead ends. Or you can circle around Twin Peaks, go south past Mid-Section Naval until you reach the tunnel inside a patch of grass.

### **What is your favorite and least favorite things about living in Los Angeles?**

When the sun dips under the earth and the traffic dies down and the crickets chirp and it's warm outside all night long. Garbage and abandoned furniture silhouette and the smog of the night sky lights up and there is a feeling of possibility in the air. Bright lights, big city, a brand new night. It's nice. Then daylight and traffic creeps in and burns like hell as you cook in your car all day long with no chance to puff your feathers and flap your wings. You're just trapped in a cage despite all your rage. But soon it's night again. Just wait.

### **A lot of your work seems to center around relationships within families and between friends. Do you think about those things a lot?**

Sure, we are all human animals that depend on one another. We were born to be wild. Our relationships are the sun and the soil and the music that helps us to open up like a flower. Love is best reflected when looking into the eyes of another. It's the gateway they say. I love drawing eyes.



**Do you base your characters on people you know, or parts of your own personality, or some mix of both?**

It's mixed business! It's me, my friends, stories I've read. The more real it is the more relatable it can be.

**How did you get the name "Big Dog"?**

"You either lead, follow or GET THE HELL OUT OF THE WAY!" -Big Dog. (T-shirt my brother used to have- maybe it was a St. Bernard on a skateboard.)





Possibly similar t-shirt

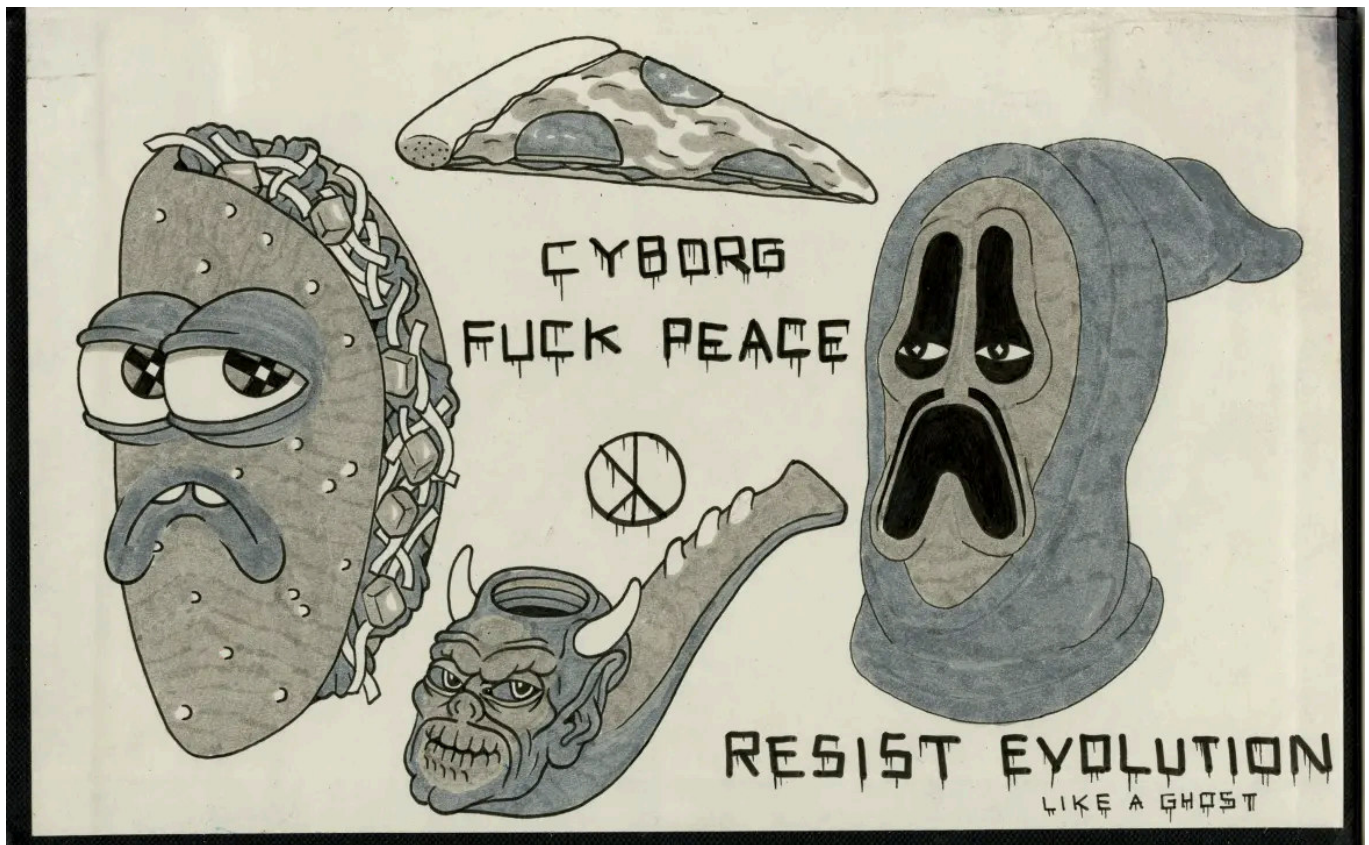
Possibly similar t-shirt

## Do you have a lucky number?

14

## What parts of LA have you explored the most, and what are some off-the-beaten-path places you like?

Koreatown. I like to hang out in Korean Malls and watch music videos in the hallways. There are endless gigantic malls in Koreatown full of crazy stupid ballcaps all bedazzled and toothy and tasteless, delicious food courts and grocery stores with beautiful live blue crabs piled up on one another slowly dying a miserable and suffocating death. Also the best toothbrushes you can imagine. I own a Korean toothbrush that looks like a colorful punk rocker and is called "Climax" and my lady has a charcoal toothbrush with jet black bristles. Plus Koreatown is exactly like Blade Runner.



*Taco themed collab between Albert Reyes and Matt Furie*

### **What is Future Colors of America and how did the idea to collaborate with Albert and Aiyana?**

It's an art gang with three good friends and we all just collaborate on 2-d art. Albert Reyes does graffiti and titties, Aiyana Udesen does weed and Trekkies and I do drooling skulls and frog faces. The idea was born out of friendship and mutual appreciation and blood sugar sex magic.





**You are especially good at drawing fur, why is that?**

Thanks! I like to really get in there and trip out on the fur pattern. It's meditative and fun and I like the way it looks when I render the hell out of it. I want the creature to jump off the page and snuggle up like a furry kitty cat and give me a sniff and a lick.

**What are the largest pieces you've made, and have you attempted a mural or something really huge yet?**

The big ones are usually around 30 x 40 inches- the standard size of an uncut matboard. My name is Matt so I only use matboard. I made a mural

in highschool on the large plane of windows in the school cafeteria. It was a Worthington Kilbourne Wolf stomping the shit out of a wildcat or something like that. It was my junior year and it was judged to be the best of four between freshmen, soph, junior, and senior. I beat the senior artist and carry a sense of pride with me to this day.



**Do you have an all-time favorite version of Pepe you've seen? Do you collect rare Pepes?**

The truth is I've made all the Pepes on the internet. They are all mine. I made them and I own them all! Message me if you would like to license my copy written intellectual property! My email is: lardnardo@hotmail.com. Thanks!!

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**Have you been approached by people wanting to make official Pepe merch?**

"Official Pepe" fashion line coming this Spring! <http://boredteenager.com/>



**Some would say Landwolf is cooler than Pepe but Pepe is more famous now. Do you think Landwolf cares?**

Being famous is inherently uncool. Wearing sunglasses is always cool. Frogs are cool. It's all so cool. The word "cool" is not cool. Will there ever be a new word to replace "cool".

**Can you tell us more about your newest creations and the art in your new show at the VPAM in East Los Angeles?**

That art is a range of work spanning a decade. The new stuff in that show is all Pepe art. Aiyana Udesen crafted the 3 big papier mache pepes and



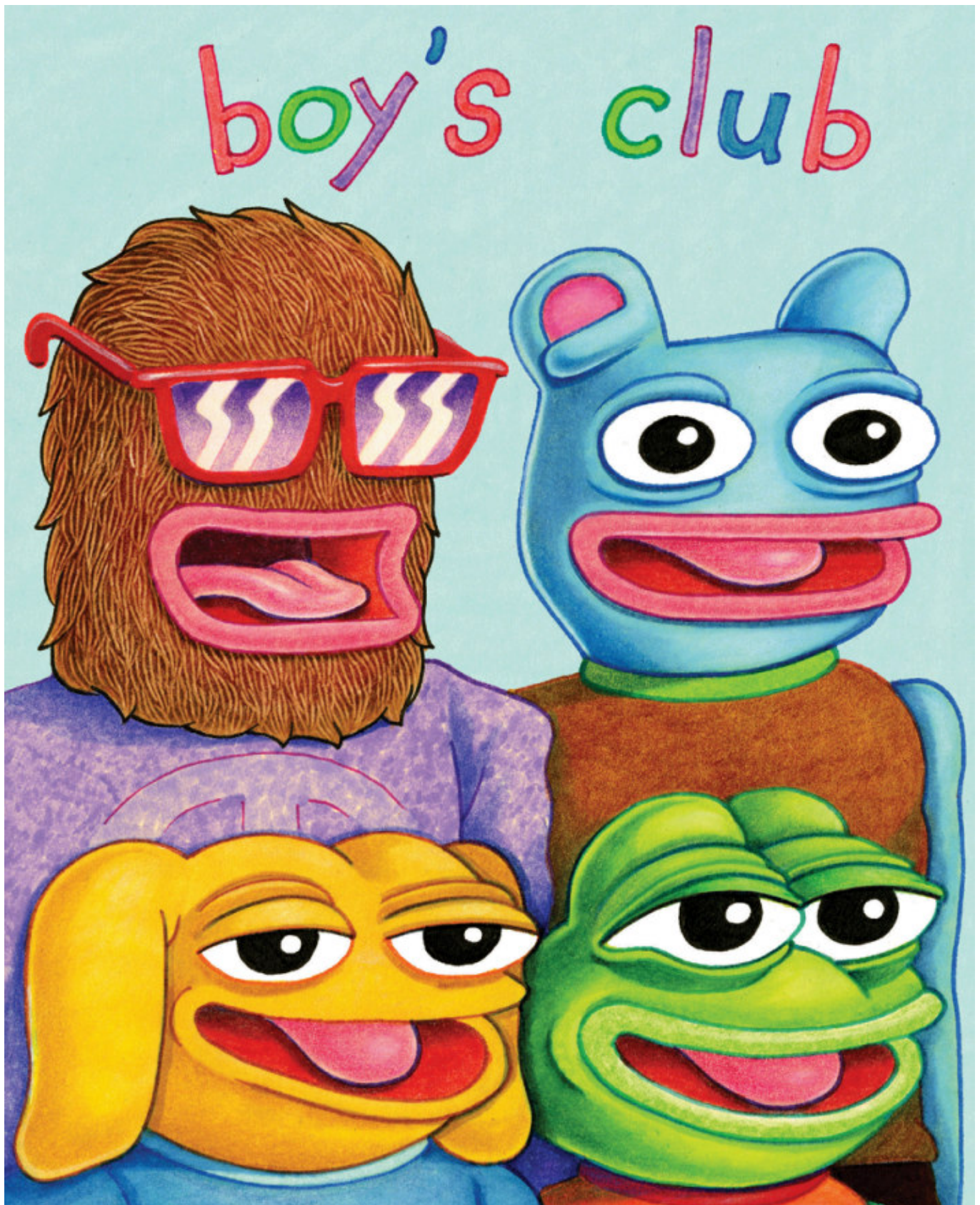
anonymous kids did the new pepe drawings. I don't even do my own art anymore. It's crowdsourced.

**When and where were you most happy?**

I don't think like that. The challenge is to be present. No future, no past, just here and now brother! The moment, if you are in tune with it, is all you need. It's a potent as fuck goddamn miracle. Tune in, turn on, drop out. Don't trust anyone under 30. Kill your phone.

**Indica or Sativa?**

I enjoy long walks in the park, a good book and an occasional glass of wine. I'm in bed by 9 and I always brush my pubes. I have to go right now, someone is videotaping me in their spaceship.



Everyone is very excited for *Boys Club Volume One*, which has just been released by Fantagraphics. What's in the book?

It's a collection of all 4 volumes of 'boy's club' plus all the comics I made for Alvin Buenaventura's "Comics" section in the Believer Magazine plus

one I did for Wizard Magazine and a few other rare nuggets. All my boy's club comics under one roof!

**Were you a big Peanuts fan as a kid? What are some of your favorite comic strips?**

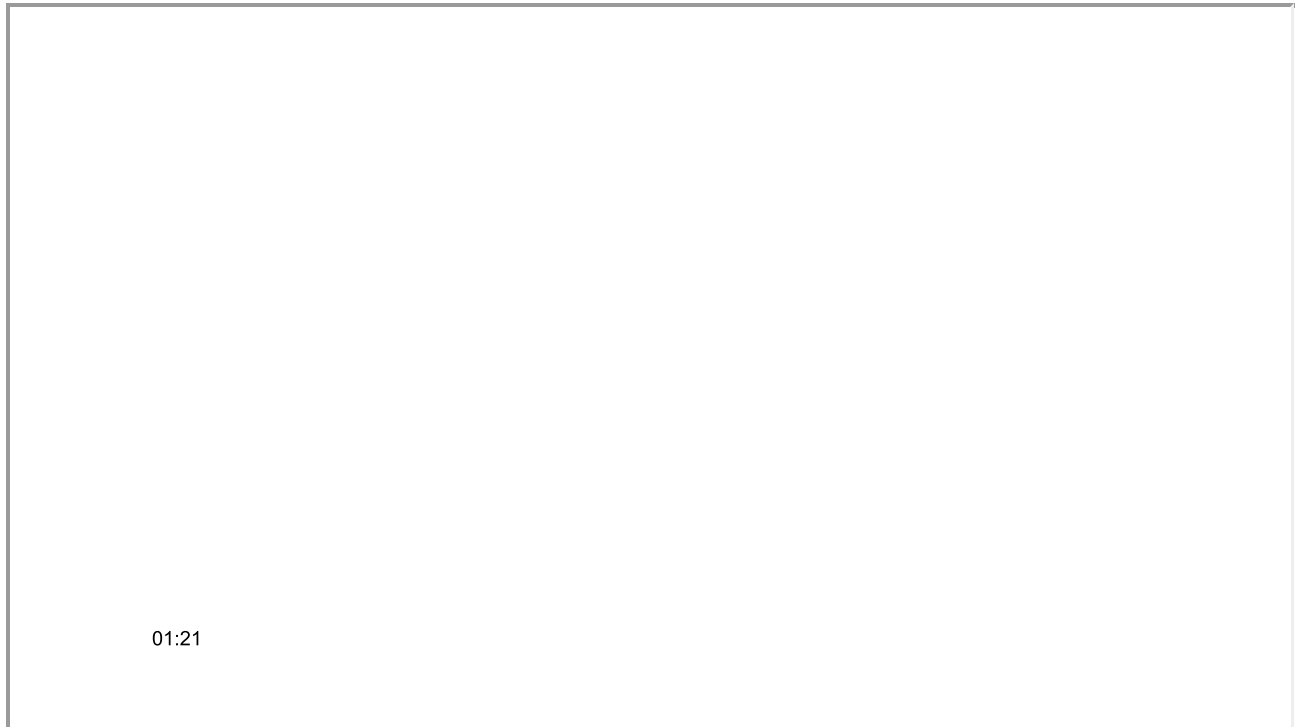
I like Peanuts- I had the gang on my bedsheets and I remember the cartoons on TV- the x-mas specials, more than the comics. I love The Far Side, Charles Addams, Edward Gorey, Garfield, R. Crumb, etc.





**Have you tried animation; is that something you would like to explore for your characters? How much of your time is spent on fine art vs. things like comics or special projects?**

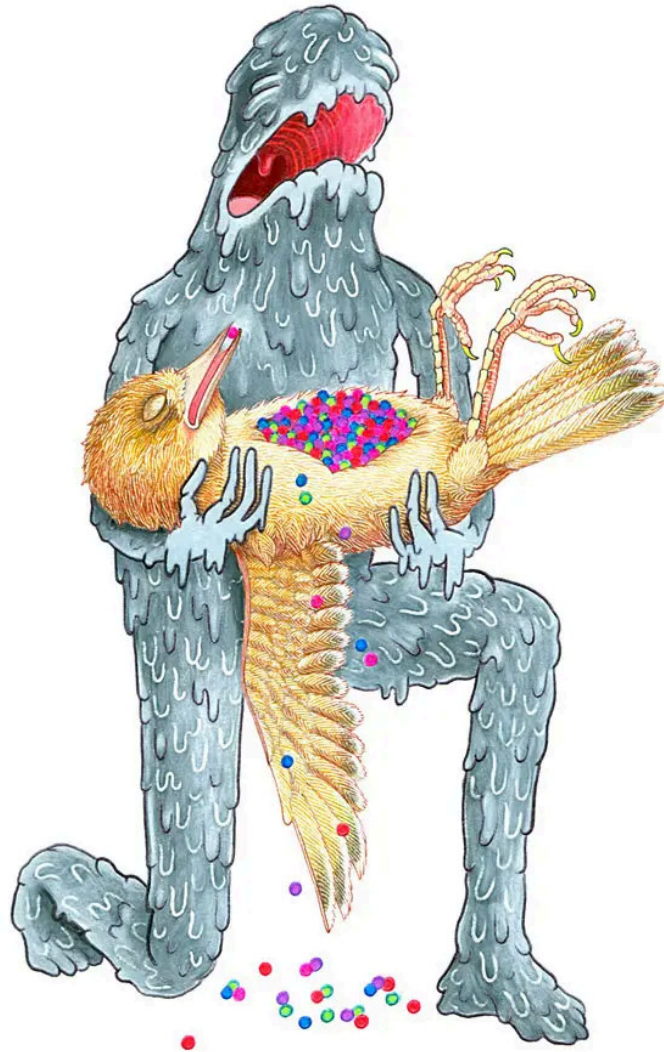
I've dabbled in animation: <https://vimeo.com/122279671>



I like a balance, I work on all kinds of different projects but besides all that I like to go outside and hang with friends. I think art can be a trap if it's all you do. Unfortunately it's the ones that are caught in the trap that are the most successful but only after they die.

**Got any shoutouts?**

Hi Dad! Did you find this on Google alert? Love you!!



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Visit Matt Furie at his online home: <http://www.mattfurie.com>

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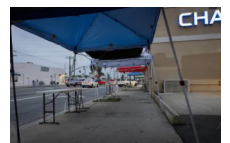
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