

The following was prepared in response to the release of [Picture Newspaper \(Atlanta\)](#). The LGBT Collections Fellowship from the Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library at Emory University has made both the printing of the publication's regional edition as well as the events surrounding its release possible. This includes the publication's release at [Murmur, Spring 2017](#), as well as the subsequent exhibition, [NEWSPAPER \(1969 - 2017\)](#) at University of Georgia's Lamar Dodd School of Art, co-curated by myself and [Marcelo Yañez](#), the publication's publisher and the individual responsible for its contemporary iteration. I am grateful to both [Randy Gue](#) and [Christeene Alcosiba](#) for their profound kindness, patience and unexpected support. I am similarly thankful to, and celebratory of, those artists whose contributions comprise this edition. This includes;

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Christopher Berntsen
Jon Dean
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Jess Dugan
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Joshua Shearod
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Additional information, including documentation of the exhibition and release, is available through the following links;

*[NEWSPAPER \(1969 - 2017\)](#)
[Lamar Dodd School of Art](#)
[Picture Newspaper](#)
[Wussy Mag](#)*



Image Courtesy of Skylar Fein

Somewhere i read that the space formerly known as the UpStairs Lounge now contains
business offices and a kitchen,

Another tab. Same window.

It was probably Nunez who started the fire - wasn't Nunez kicked out earlier that day? -
wouldn't leave the guys upstairs alone. Died a year later, Nunez. Took his own life.

I read, i gather.

Not there, not having been there, not having been. Only pictures and words.

Words like, David Gary. A name.

And,

died seated on a white baby grand piano.

It's 1973.

It's New Orleans.

It's three blocks from the Mississippi.

It's 1973 and the fan is on high.

The evening of the fire, there was a fundraiser for the local Crippled Children's Hospital. The Lounge was full of people, i read and MCC, i read. Below that there are names, more names. Names like, Buddy Rasmussen and George Mitchell and his boyfriend Louis Broussard and Luther Boggs and Ferris Jerome Le Blanc and Bill Larson, Reverend Bill Larson. After Nunez came and left, they say, you could see the Reverend's blackened body from the grey street below, black fingers gripping the black bars - behind him, the black and grey charred bodies of Louis and Mitch, clinging to one another, bones visible, though mostly ash and forever one.

I read all of this with my shirt off and at my desk, the one against the wall and the fan is on high on account of i'm alone and the fridge is loud. i get cold and i put on a coat that is new, or at least new to me, and its corduroy and inside there's this brown fleece, and i leave it open - like i don't do the buttons, just let it kind of hang there. Otherwise ill get warm and then cold again i think and anyways i kind of like it, my belly going up and down and up and down behind corduroy doors. Outside truck lights stutter across the window pane, casting yellow where it is black and where is it red, the walls are red and on my desk, a glass of milky water. It is a glass i like, and not just because it wasn't a set, though its nice when theres just one because the plastic wrap they use to keep cups that are similar together is really a drag and next door charlie parker?

To the right of this glass that's been there for i don't know how long there's this envelope with a stamp, a red stamp, that says The Studio of Skylar Fein. Inside it - i'd saved the envelope all this time - a small book, maybe five by seven, with pictures, and words, though mostly there are pictures. They are haunting and they are tender and they read of the dead among us. They are colors like gold and brown and olive too. And one that is sweater yellow - were they lovers i wonder? - another, frosting blue. Buddy, i think - with black lips, black eyes, white cheeks and everywhere Red. Bricks and blinds and spandex and Buddy's cock and Buddy's thighs and wall paper and a red light, and more red lights, like candles, and there in the background, a father, surely, and someone else's son.

I'm tired, i think, and these photos glow and they are warm and they are friendly. And they are familiar, but only in the way that dreams are familiar. Somewhere to gather, i think. Somewhere warm and friendly and everywhere queer. Another page, another tab. More pictures. After Nunez, i think.

Here an arm, there a leg, a hand, a single leather boot. Face not visible, no longer visible, never was visible. Press photos, largely ignored at the time of their conception. And on the radio, only this-

Where will they bury the queers? In Fruit Jars!

That was the joke, i guess. Told over the thin grey of cubicle, of bathroom stall. Where was the Mayor? What island? With what wife? And what for dinner? Ham, surely, dressed for two. Meanwhile, white flash, thick like kerosine. Heavenly father, heavenly father, heavenly father and an officer in tight pants and one rubber glove preside over the charred body of unknown, age unknown, profession unknown, captured by anonymous Speed Graphic in the night.

Another Tab. Milky and white.

Wikipedia. UpStairs Lounge Arson Attack. It takes me several minutes to realize I've been here before. Scrolling, slowly, quicker now, before slowly once more. A list that reads, black and bold, Killed, blue, space white space [edit]. Names, more names, followed by a profession, maybe a lover and years lived. There's Reginald Eugene (Reggie), 24, a salesman and Joseph William (Bill) Bailey, 21, the lover of Clarence McCloskey, age unknown, a waiter and Donald Water Dunbar, 21, cleaned carpets (in what buildings? in whose homes?) and James Walls (Jimmy) 45, and died in a hospital (another salesman? what was he selling? and to whom? and what restaurant? and what hospital? and where are their bodies now?). Willie Inex Whatley Warren, their mother (whose mother?) and three unidentified white males.

[edit]



[edit]

Douglas Maxwell Williams Jr. was 20 when he died. Peter - , bank clerk and Harry - and Stephen Whittaker and seventeen others were luckier and escaped that night, maybe through the back door, or a window on to the roof of the neighboring building. There was Uncle Al, 68 and Robert Thomas Price, various jobs and Ronnie and Robert and Ronnie and Rusty and Don and Michael and Eugene and Peter - , bank clerk and Harry - too.

Related,

The space formerly known as the UpStairs Lounge now contains business offices and a kitchen,

and just below this, light purple reminds me of easter celebrations in nursing homes. VTE, all caps and I'm unsure what it means, just that its followed by more words and more lists. Lists like Nightclub fires and starting in 1929 and ordered by year there was the Study Club fire the Rhythm Club fire the Cocoanut the Karlslust the Top Story Club fire The Blue Bird the Whiskey the Summer land and Gulliver's night club and Beverly Hills Supper Club fire and Denmark Place and Stardust and Happy Land too.

There was the Kheyvis fire and the Ozone Disco Club fire and the Gothenburg and Louang Christmas fire the Kiss fire the Formosa Fun Coast fire the Colectiv nightclub fire and its spelled just like that Colectiv and in 2016 the Oakland warehouse fire. Another list reads, black and bold, Attacks, and i think that the categories are unclear even if the purple is nice and below Attacks there is Disasters and below Disasters there is a yellow smiley face and next to it there is a portal to the 1970s. I know this because it reads, 1970's portal and next to it death portal and fire portal and next to that, a portal to New Orleans itself. Somewhere on these lists is UpStairs Lounge and i think, i wonder how many other fundraisers for the local Crippled Children's Hospital were cut short.

[edit]

I take my chances on Death Portal. Blue, now purple. Birth was like that, i think. There was a snowstorm that night and the Doctor?

Never made it. Ham, served for two.

It's 1973.

Its 1973, New Orleans, three blocks from the Mississippi - i read, i gather, not having been.

It's 1973 and the fan is on high.

Its 1973. Four years after Stonewall and just three blocks from the Mississippi, there's a bar where bodies gather. Brown Waves slamming against the grey shore in June, again and again in the same way forever.

GA, 2017