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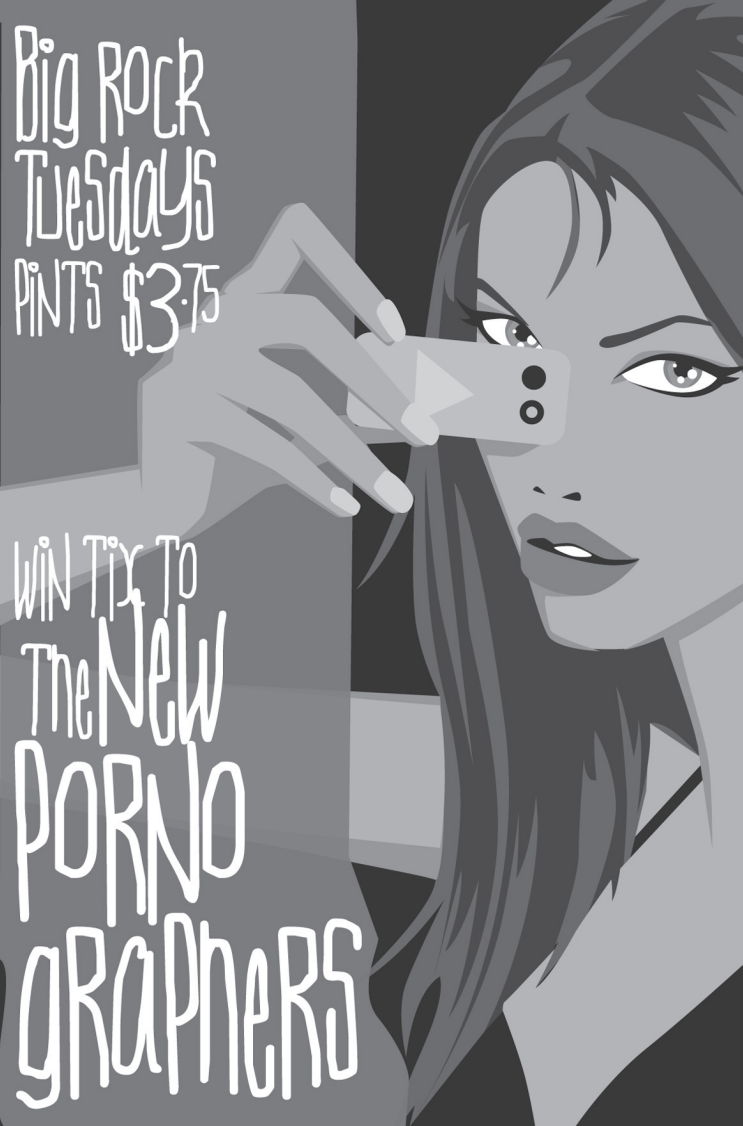
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Let's put the 'fun' back in funeral



TYSON DURST

proceedings in the black, so to speak, I dare say some people might call me a posthumous pioneer who decided to think outside the box.

Since human taxidermy is apparently illegal, I would like this gala event to incorporate the latest in android-robotics technology instead. If I'm to be incinerated by a laser blast in 50 years or so, it should be by something even more advanced than what the Japanese have right now—which is impressively detailed in the latest issue of my favorite technology magazine. Additionally, an eerily detailed, anatomically-correct robotic replica of me in my prime, with authentic, pre-recorded phrases to greet people and shake their hands at the door, would be nothing short of awesome.

There's only one thing that anyone can be certain of in this life, and that of course is death. Perhaps it's just a coping mechanism, but people rarely seem to acknowledge the truth of their own mortality. Instead, they think that maybe they might escape that moment at some unforeseen point in the future when they reach the end of their cosmic journey through the physical universe.

I don't know exactly how and when the composition of atoms that make up my body will expire and rejoin the dust of planets and stars, but I do know that when my final wishes are carried out, my coffin party will fly right in the face of traditional Western customs and expectations at funerals.

First off, funerals are an expensive business, and I personally dislike the thought that, as a corpse, I would be a crippling financial burden to my loved ones, if not a physical one.

This is where corporate sponsorship comes in: at over six feet tall, my sleek, black coffin would have plenty of space for logos and slogans.

Think about it. What do people at a funeral stare at for a few hours? The coffin. Why not debut your latest product, software, or revamped logo and slogan by plastering it on the side of my death box? Set up a Podcast and get wider exposure on the web.

Call me crass. Call me a sellout. But if my family and friends can't simply cover the cost of the funeral with my ideas but also turn a profit and put the

What do people at a funeral stare at for a few hours? The coffin. Why not debut your latest product, software, or revamped logo and slogan by plastering it on the side of my death box?

Combine this with artificial intelligence software that synthesizes my voice and extrapolates my most likely responses to people's questions and comments, and my computerized cadaver would be a surefire hit.

The Tyson-O-Tron 3000, as I have decided to call it, would also have a foldout multimedia center in its chest with a Virtual Reality cerebral attachment to demo the latest holographic

videogames.

The best part is, I wouldn't pay a dime for my posthumous robotic counterpart. The companies who put together this amazing leap in android awesomeness would be only too happy to get the huge exposure that I only hope my revolutionary spectacle of a remembrance would bring.

Apart from this combination of razzle and dazzle, you'd need some actual content for people to latch onto and tie the whole thing together, whether they're clones, cybernetically, genetically or pharmaceutically enhanced people, altered primates, or even genuine humans.

I really don't want people to mourn as they walk by my burial bonanza and sit in their enhanced ergonomic recliners, either. Therefore, a full three-dimensional retrospective of my humble life, complete with an original musical score conducted by John Williams—who happens to still be living thanks to a timely head-body transplant—will, with any luck, make funeral-goers wanna party like it's 2099.

Confetti, cake, balloons, animals, clowns that can make balloon animals and some primates dressed in suits sitting in armchairs smoking old-fashioned pipes while discussing the finer points of literature and politics would then cap off the festivities.

As for the manner in which I depart, I can only hope that when the Grim Reaper comes for my soul, that reports of my death are on the unorthodox side, worthy of conversation around the water-dispensing droid.

Going out in style doing what you love—take the late, great Steve Irwin for example—tends to be rare in this eternal lottery of ours that nobody seems to want to win. Then again, with a funeral like this, it doesn't really matter how I get there, just as long as I do.

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