

< PRESSURE BILLIARDS >

by Fred Sasaki

FROM: Fred Sasaki <fredsasaki@gmail.com>

TO: pressurebilliards@gmail.com

DATE: Tue, Aug 31, 2010, 11:58 AM

<SUBJECT: PRESSURE BILLIARDS>

Dear Pressure Billiards,

I am writing after reading about a Groupon Deal on the e-mail and internet. I am alarmed. First I am confused, slightly irritated, then nervous/anxious/upset and some would say impatient over the idea of being pressured into playing billiards or betting on billiards games (a natural thing to think) and then being pressured by attractive women or strong men who are watching me play billiards, waiting not talking just sitting there with their pitcher of beer (BTW, do you sell pitchers?), looking at my form and commenting internally about the sound my balls make and if I make a good shot or if I am a good pool/billiards player and what does that say about me as a person or sex object. This is all too much, I think you will agree!

Then I visited your website against my better ideas and read a scary story about a baby?! A baby named "Pressure"?! What is this meaning? A two-sided-faced baby?

I'm not really sure what to think here anymore. But I know I'd like to speak to a manager or the owner or his or her mother.

Thank you so much,

Fred Sasaki

FROM: Wahib Merchant

TO: Fred Sasaki

DATE: Tue, Aug 31, 2010, 5:05 PM

<RE: PRESSURE BILLIARDS>

Hey Fred, thanks for your email, though I have to admit I am confused as to what you were getting at. We are not in anyway intimidating a place to be in. We do not have people, no matter attractive or strong, looking over other players. We pride ourselves

continued next page >

Chicago writer **Fred Sasaki's** "Letters of Interest" series might well be the Lazlo letters for the internet age—marketing its target, manipulation through on-the-spot interaction its method. Parts of the series have appeared or are forthcoming in the *Iowa Review*, *Pax Americana*, *MAKE* and others. "Pressure Billiards" will also appear in THE2NDHAND's 10th anniversary anthology—reserve your copy at **Kickstarter.com**, search "THE2NDHAND," through Feb. 15.

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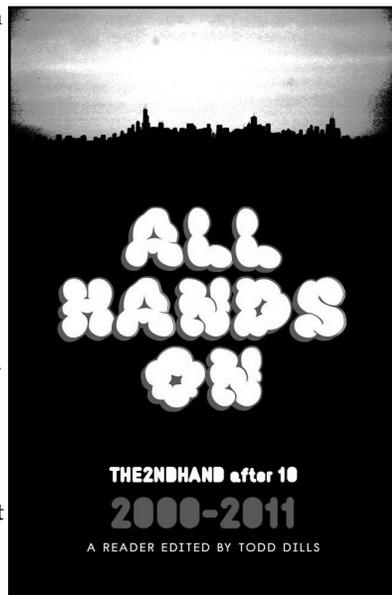
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Special extras for those donating at different levels are available, too (including but not limited to T2H bergamot olive oil soap from TheLeftHand.net, Featherproof books by T2H contributors, prints by Nashville wood-block printer Martin Cadieux, packets of not-exactly-apocryphal but quite historical broadsheets with wood-block-printed envelopes...). A donation of just \$14, though, will get you a copy of the book as well as copies of three special broadsheets we're publishing in the run-up to release, including this one. It'll be chumpy, and in our world that's a grand thing indeed.



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in being very contemporary and recreational...and absolutely NO GAMBLING happens in Pressure Billiards & Cafe.

As far as the story in About Us goes, that was a very creative way to describe how Pressure Billiards came to be...nothing to be scared of.

Hope you were making light and really dont have these strong feelings for a place you havent been in.

Take Care...

BTW, we do not have pitchers.

FROM: Fred Sasaki

TO: Wahib Merchant

DATE: Wed, Sep 1, 2010, 12:12 AM

Hi Wahib,

Well well well, I visited your website again and ran the table, as they say. You say you are "not in anyway intimidating a place to be in." And there, on your website, I see written under "Billiards" the following: THE "POOL HALL" REVAMPED—THIS IS POOL IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT. WITH A CONTEMPORARY FEEL AND 13 PROFESSIONAL 9FT BRUNSWICK TABLES, THIS POOLROOM IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE AN INTIMIDATION-FREE ENVIRONMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL AND RECREATIONAL PLAYERS ALIKE. THE 8 LCD TVs ARE THE CUES ON THE RACK (ICING ON THE CAKE); ENJOY YOUR FAVORITE SPORTING EVENTS WHILE YOU SHOOT.

I also see the art galleries with art on the walls and people playing trumpets onstage. That does seem really intimidation-free. I think this is a place where even I can be intimidating to other people, which would be a nice change of pace. Icing on the cake, as they say.

You are smart to shoot right to the eight ball and say about not being intimidating. I realize that in pool places I have been agitated against many times, mostly for seeming gay and being not white or too white. I sense that you get this a lot, too. The gay thing is really my friend's fault as he seems much more gay than I do. When I play pool with people that are not him the agitation is just for being me and them wanting to fight with me for no reason or other reasons. Of course it could be a silent gay thing. Who knows?

Since I have so many stories about intimidation and pool, and there is the big misunderstanding about Pressure Billiards being so intimidating, I can send you my stories or we can create a blog about being bullied while playing pool. We can end the stories with ideas about how not good it is to fight with people while playing pool, highlight the pool places where mean people go to, and put in a plug for Pressure. I'm really good at spinning things. Watch this: "Take the pressure off at Pressure Billiards!" That works in many ways, like a poem.

I have so many stories about playing pool that we could make a book with all the scenes. I'll start working on an outline and send it to you. This week is no good. Can you give me till the first week of October?

Yours...

FROM: Fred Sasaki

TO: Wahib Merchant

DATE: Wed, Sep 1, 2010, 3:27 PM

Hi Wahib,

Let me know, by the way, if you just want me to come in with my stories. I could bring my friend so you can see what I'm talking about.

FROM: Wahib Merchant

TO: Fred Sasaki

DATE: Wed, Sep 1, 2010, 4:12 PM

Fred, I appreciate your willing to share your story...and willing to look at Pressure objectively.

Unfortunately, I am pressed for time in the near future and do not know if I partake in a blog or publishing of any stories at this time.

Do feel free to come by and checkout Pressure...and I hope you have a good experience there.

Thanks and take care...

FROM: Fred Sasaki

TO: Wahib Merchant

DATE: Wed, Sep 1, 2010, 4:25 PM

Hi Wahib, Well, that's really really really disappointing. I guess I am sorry, too. Really really sorry. And I sort of feel deceived about the whole thing. Maybe that's not your fault, but it feels like it. I'm going to add this to my litany of pool stories. So in that way I thank you. Thank you.

Can I come by Pressure and read my stories on your stage some Thursday or Friday night? Saturdays are OK too but not ideal for me. I would only need about 45 minutes, a projector, and two microphones. One for me and one for my friend (the gay seeming one). I should tell you in advance that my friend recently came out of the closet as an androgen and is neither a man or woman but something more fantastic. Xe dresses in women's clothes and wears makeup. Xe dates women (or wants to) and hasn't had operations or anything. So don't worry.

OK? September is not so good for me as I think I said, but let's get this booked now even if it's for later. Also how much do you pay?

Thanks for the opportunity...

FROM: Wahib Merchant

TO: Fred Sasaki

DATE: Wed, Sep 1, 2010, 4:32 PM

My intent is not to deceive you, but to be upfront with my time restrictions.

Our stage is reserved for events we have currently going on, which are a comedy show on Friday nights. We do not have other events at this time and are trying to setup a musical event night...which is yet to be seen.

I don't know if our stage is the right venue for your stories. Sorry.

FROM: Fred Sasaki

TO: Wahib Merchant

DATE: Wed, Sep 1, 2010, 4:45 PM

No, your stage is definitely the right venue for my stories. While there are funny bits in my stories like how I always scratch on the eight ball (8), I am not a comedian and my travails are not for you to laugh at or make fun of or call comedy. But maybe I can open or close for your comics. Like a cool-down.

I don't play any instruments. Or at least I don't play anything really well but I could see turning my stories into songs. Let's try that! How much are you offering me to play? Saturday nights are all you have?

Looking forward to this...

FROM: Wahib Merchant

TO: Fred Sasaki

DATE: Wed, Sep 1, 2010, 4:49 PM

Im sorry we do not pay for anything that happens on our stage...from comedians to musicians.

We currently only have comedians and musicians that play at Pressure.

FROM: Fred Sasaki

TO: Wahib Merchant

DATE: Wed, Sep 1, 2010, 4:55 PM

OK, it's a deal. I'll do it for no money. You can just owe me later or pay me in beer like in the old days. I can tell only the funny parts during comedy time or sing serious stuff as songs. Which one do you want? Or I can do both. Let me know so I can enter it into my Google calendar.

Thanks so much...

FROM: Wahib Merchant

TO: Fred Sasaki

DATE: Wed, Sep 1, 2010, 4:58 PM

Sorry to disappoint you Fred, but you will not be able to perform at Pressure.

The Comedy show is a booked showcase handled by an individual that only books seasoned comedians to perform.

The musical night has not started yet and we do not have a setup for that as of yet.

You will need to find another venue if you want to share your stories on a stage.

FROM: Fred Sasaki

TO: Wahib Merchant

DATE: Wed, Sep 1, 2010, 5:03 PM

Well. That is disappointing. Why can I only find disappointment in pool? It is like a bad break all the time.

Should I come in to talk about this with you? Maybe we can play a game of pool and figure out what to do next. I can bring my friend or not. I'll buy a pitcher for us. Two!

FROM: Fred Sasaki

TO: Wahib Merchant

DATE: Wed, Sep 1, 2010, 8:38 PM

O Wahib! I learned some great news today. I learned we will be seeing a lot more of each other! I visited my favorite website, chicagopoetry.com, and saw this:

NEW POETRY VENUE ALERT! PRESSURE BILLIARDS AND CAFE, AT 6318 NORTH CLARK ST, IS LAUNCHING AN OPEN MIC EVERY THIRD THURSDAY, WELCOMING POETRY, SHORT STORIES, MUSICIANS AND COMEDIANS, WITH A FOCUS ON SUPPORTING THE POETS AND WRITERS OF CHICAGO WITH A SAFE, FUN ENVIRONMENT TO PERFORM IN. IT STARTS AROUND 8:30 PM, WITH NO COVER. THEY WILL OPERATE IN TWO ROUNDS WITH ONE TO TWO POEMS PER PERFORMANCE, SO POETS WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PERFORM UP TO FOUR POEMS THROUGHOUT THE EVENING. PRETTY COOL, HUH?

Pretty cool! Why didn't you tell me about this? This is perfect for me to tell my stories at. Are you trying to sabotage my storytelling? What gives?

Either way, I'll be hanging out a lot. See you tomorrow! I LOVE Thursdays!