

Raiders of the Lost Marc

OLD CROW STREET -- Famed adventurer, anthropologist and bar-hopper Louisiana Jones arrived in New Orleans, on his quest for the Ark of the Court-bouillon, symbol of the last remnant of local culcha in the Corporate States of America.

Jones had travelled the country searching for any place with surviving local customs, but all he found were endless Burger Kings, McDonalds and Wal-Marts, until he could no longer tell one place from the next. Finally, desperate for a ray of hope, he landed in New Orleans.

Blending in with the local populace, Jones soon learned that many of the city's hallowed institutions no longer exist or had been sold out, and that even Mardi Gras was being sold cheap. He heard rumors that the Ark was being held captive at City Mall (formerly City Hall), so, disguising himself as a power broker, he fought his way through a swarm of political contributors, airport contractors, corporate raiders and other reptiles -- only to find his way blocked by eunuchs leading a procession marking the coronation of Mayor Marc. His HIGHness, recently proclaimed "Emperor for L.I.F.E." by his sycophantic supporters, was bedecked in lavish garments provided by his supporters: suit by Harrahs-badashery, shoes by Nookie, and crown by PrimeCo-ronations. Louisiana Jones had never seen such a corporate-sponsored spectacle in all his years of digging dirt in the desert. He feared all was lost for New Orleans, America's "Most Unique City", and her citizens.

Beer-battered and disillusioned, Jones headed over to da Quarters, where he found himself surround-

ed by hordes of people dressed in Rock Hard Cafe regalia, swarming to and from Planet Whoreywood, the House of Rules and the Fascist Crappe. Fearing he was hallucinating, wondering what unholy vision he would see next -- Strawbucks? Bubba's Rump Seafood? -- he went stumbling towards the Old Absinthe Bar in search of a stiff drink, some hot music and a kindred spirit.

Suddenly Jones found himself staring at a daiquiri stand. Despite his state of advanced shock, he gradually noticed a figure standing in the shadows, watching him. Swiftly and silently, the figure (man or woman, he couldn't tell -- a good sign, he thought) handed him a note saying "Krewe de Vieux, 7PM tonight. Look for the Totally Orgasmic Krewe of Intergalactic Ne'er-do-wells and you will find that which you seek."

Later that evening, finding his way back through the nightmare landscape of t-shirt shops, tacky souvenirs and drunk German tourists, Jones heard the blare of brass bands in the distance. Feeling his pulse quicken as he followed the sound, he came upon a sight that lifted his spirits. All is not lost! New Orleans still has the Krewe du Vieux!

As he stood there, Jones realized he was surrounded by the members of T.O.K.I.N., disguised as Arabians with their traditional election-day turdans on their heads, following their float -- on which it sat: the Ark of Court-bouillon, triumphantly and symbolically, if not obscenely, rising from the corporate ruins of City Mall! Grabbing a drink from the Ark, Louisiana Jones joyously joined the Krewe in its annual celebration of debauchery and depravity,

confident that there was still at least one thing left in New Orleans that no amount of money could buy.

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NU OARLENS -- Some schools have more bats than books. Some schools award test scores that are higher than the students can count. Some schools have metal detectors that work -- and toilets that don't. And speaking of toilets, Dr. Morris "Bart" Holmes sits flush with success (and outrageous pay raises) while the New Orleans public schools head down the bowl and into the sewer.

To honor this matriculous achievement, the Krewe of Space Age Love presents the "Dr. Morris Holmes School of Business and Administration". Their float will be a dilapidated school building, its foundation crumbling, surrounded by weeds, beset by bats, and populated by students in graduation gowns and dunce caps.

The school will be covered with appropriate grafitti, such as "Any Grade 4 Sale", "3 Bats Equal Strate A's", and the beloved "A Mind Is A Terrible Thing". Maskers from the carnivorous krewe will hand out diplomas, courtesy of Dr. Holmes and inflated test scores.

The master of malaprops, the sycophantic superintendant, the money-mad manager was himself too busy counting his loot to comment. However, we have all learned at least one valuable lesson from this truly elementary educator: "It is better to give pay raises to superintendants than to fix the toilets."