

SLANT

- It's Oregon summer. That means juicy blackberries, **SLUG queen coronations** and outdoor parties. The Eugene Celebration and its hokey but awesome parade have disappeared, the Festival of Eugene lasted only two years before falling apart in a storm of racism allegations, but the Whiteaker Block Party thrives. Can Eugene bring its downtown festival back? Last weekend marked the 10-year success of the Whit Block Party with its free entry, and that might have some lessons for party planners. Come party with the SLUG queens 6 pm, Friday, Aug. 12, at 8th and Oak and think about what a new Eugene Celebration could look like.

- So what does corporate Oregon, including mainstream media, want to do about **education in this state**? Every day they fire away at ballot measure 97 (formerly IP 28), the proposed value-added tax on sales exceeding \$25 million for some corporations that would help fund Oregon's struggling schools. The historic neglect and current attack is ironic given that the quality of a state's education system is such a draw for businesses and young professionals. Governor Kate Brown endorsed 97 last week — good news considering how cautious her campaign has been. Next, how about all the eager Sanders supporters in Oregon going to work on the grassroots campaign for 97? The Berners could make a huge difference.

- Oregon has a direct line into the **Hillary Clinton campaign through Dwight Holton**, brother-in-law of Tim Kaine, her choice for vice president. Former U.S. attorney for Oregon and candidate for Oregon attorney general, Holton runs the Portland nonprofit Lines for Life dedicated to preventing substance abuse and suicide. His sister Anne Holton, Kaine's wife, is one of a foursome we'll see constantly until November and, hopefully, beyond. That's Hillary, Bill, Tim and Anne. The Holtons' father was governor of Virginia where they grew up. Maybe this all means Dwight Holton will become a bigger player in Oregon politics.

- What we're watching this week (aside from the Olympics)? **John Oliver's Last Week Tonight** and its brilliant skewering of the lack of support for print media. He lampoons digital first initiatives, points out that TV news needs print, as does social media — "Without newspapers around to cite, TV news would just be Wolf Blitzer batting a ball of yarn around" — and cites *The Wire* creator and former *Baltimore Sun* reporter David Simon as saying that thanks to newspaper cutbacks: "The next 10 or 15 years will be a halcyon era for state and local political corruption, and it is going to be one of the great times to be a corrupt politician." Catch the clip at [youtube.com/watch?v=bq2_wSsDwkQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bq2_wSsDwkQ).

ACTIVIST ! LERT

- Teatro Mundo presents **Secretly Famous: The works of Andrew Rodman** for one last weekend 6 pm, Aug. 11 to 13 at Café Mundo in Newport. The show is free but donations can be made to support Rodman who survived pancreatic cancer in 2011 but is battling the disease again. Organizers tell *EW* that the all-ages show is a "hilarious review of theater, including *Sneaker Wave*, *Hanky Pancreas* and *Lewis and Clark*, and includes songs and wild verse, performed by some of Newport's greatest theatrical talents." The show is outdoors at 209 SW Coast Street in Newport. Call 541-574-8134 for more info, or donate at [youcaring.com/andrew-rodman-terry-waldron-507935](https://www.youcaring.com/andrew-rodman-terry-waldron-507935). Rodman is a poet, writer, surfer and longtime editor of the *In Good Tilth* organic magazine.

FAMOUS CON ARTIST WORKED HIS SCHEMES IN EUGENE

"The ultimate con artist," "the master of impersonations." In Eugene?

The Downtown Athletic Club sent out an email Aug. 2, saying it had severed its relationship with general manager Carlo DiMaria, who "intentionally misstated experience on his resume."

DiMaria didn't just misstate his experience. Carlo DiMaria is better known as Fred Brito a confidence man with a history of cons dating back to the 1980s. He tells *EW* that the blame for hiring someone who lies on their resume lies with his employer.

Prior to his life as a conman, Brito "bounced in and out of prison ... by the mid-'80s he had shifted to inventing and assuming identities," according to 2005 *LA Times* article.

Brito, as he is mainly known despite a litany of assumed names, was the subject of a 2007 NBC *Dateline* special, "The Ultimate Con Artist," detailing his history of cons from working as a court-appointed psychiatrist to high-profile fundraiser and even a Catholic priest who married couples and performed baptisms. One of the couples faced off with "Father Fred" on a 2007 episode of *Dr. Phil* after discussing how upset they were to learn they had been married by someone who was not an ordained clergy member.

David Markland, an L.A.-based event producer, has been tracking DiMaria/Brito's exploits since 2007 on his blog, "The Lies of Fred Brito." Markland says he is troubled by the fact that many of Brito's former employers don't pursue cases against the fraudster, possibly because they are embarrassed at hiring a conman — even one who has fooled the UCLA medical center, the Red Cross and state officials — or because Brito uses his gift for gab to convince people he would file a lawsuit if exposed.

Ironically, according to *Dateline*, Brito is a pretty likeable guy. Those whom he had conned say he has a "good heart" and his homilies as a priest were "great." In fact, when the DAC parted ways with DiMaria/Brito, owner Rob Bennett wrote, "While he has done some positive things during his short tenure at the DAC, providing false information is not acceptable, and we are unable to move forward in our relationship."

It's not illegal to lie on your resume, though lying about credentials can lead to liability issues for employers and can of course lead to the employee's work relationship being terminated.

A source who contacted *EW* alleges that DiMaria's approximately three-month tenure at the DAC led to the departure of several longtime employees. Markland's source, cited on his blog, tells him that DiMaria "created such a hostile workplace that several of the tenured staff left in that time."

A glance at the DAC's staff roster on its website shows that between July 29 and Aug. 3, at least three employees working in membership are no longer listed.

EW contacted former DAC employees who confirmed "Carlo" was the man *Dateline* calls Fred Brito, and that employees sought other jobs as a result of "Fred's" presence.

EW has called and emailed Rob Bennett and Sarah Bennett, who are both part of the DAC's leadership, and has received no response. The Bennett's voicemails say they are out of town.

On the morning of Aug. 3, when *EW* began looking into the story, DiMaria was listed as the contact for the DAC on the Chamber of Commerce website, but by that evening his name had been removed. In its latest newsletter, the DAC writes that DiMaria was removed from his position Aug. 1 and, "As this is a personnel issue we will not be able to comment further."

In addition to being an athletic club, the DAC is often host to City Club of Eugene meetings, TrackTown USA gatherings and is the home of the Ax Billy Grill.

Markland says he has been tracking Fred Brito ever since he was writing about him for Metroblogging L.A. and people have been sending tips to his current "Lies" blog from Brito's employment at an IHOP in Kansas City to a Beaverton, Oregon Burgerville. According to the blog, Brito gets tripped up by disclosure of his past criminal history or the lies on his resume — *Dateline* says Brito was a five-time convicted felon by the time he was in his twenties.

According to *Dateline*, when Brito provides a reference, the number given forwards to Brito's own number and he changes his voice and gives himself a reference. A resume Brito allegedly used to obtain his position at the DAC, which lists G. "Carlo" DiMaria as the applicant, says he worked for "Southwest Hospitality Corporation" for about 30 years. The resume also says DiMaria served in the Marine Corps.

According to the *L.A. Times* article, Brito enlisted in the Marines as Fredrick Esparza from 1973 to 1977, the same dates DiMaria provides.

Brito has claimed in interviews with the *L.A. Times* and online videos that his criminal record precludes him from getting second chances and leads to his fabricated resumes. Using the email provided on the resume, *EW* contacted DiMaria/Brito, who places the blame for hiring a con on employers who don't do background checks.

Writing from Carlo DiMaria's email account, but signing his name as "Fred," he says that the story is not what he has done, but rather "how gullible employers are to hire people for high-level positions without a basic background check," which he says they have a fiduciary responsibility to do.

DiMaria/Brito points out that he's been hired to "a multitude of high-level positions throughout America, and I slipped right on in without even a background check." And he reiterates it is not illegal to lie on one's resume, but says, "To brandish a fake college degree would lead to incarceration."

DiMaria/Brito also claims in his message that "the Eugene Police Department detained me and they checked me out pretty good before allowing me to go my own way. Did I violate any crimes? No."

Proving the saying "never trust a conman," when *EW* contacted the Eugene police, spokeswoman Melinda McLaughlin clarified. "He was never detained," McLaughlin says. "There was a traffic stop where he was the driver."

She says the officer thought DiMaria/Brito may have provided a false name or ID, and "there was follow up that found that he had had a legal name change and that interaction was by consent, not detention. No charges or citations resulted from this."

When *EW* tried to contact DiMaria/Brito again to clarify what is his current legal name, the email account was no longer active. However, Markland says he found a 2007 court document from New Mexico showing DiMaria/Brito had changed his name from Fredrick Brito to Gomez De Maria.

Markland lists Brito's aliases on his blog as including: G. "Carlo" diMaria, Giancarlo di Maria, Carlo di Maria, Fredrick Esparza, Father B. Gomez de Esparza, Father Federico Brito Gomez de Esparza, Federico Gomez de Maria, Fredrick Mark Brito, Federiqoe Di-Britto III, Father Fred Esparza, Fred Brito Gomez and Fred Gomez.

Brito has tried to parlay his conman career into seminars and public speaking gigs. He tells *EW* he is writing a book due out in 2017, a claim he has made in the past. ■