

A Romantic Date On Broad Street

BY CHRIS MAYNOR AND
CHRISTIAN JOHNSON

Ah, Valentine's Day is close upon us. For most, this means trying to find that one special card or fretting about which chocolates to get for your significant other. But really, that mass-produced Hallmarks greeting card isn't that unique, and chocolate from Walgreen's is, well, chocolate from Walgreen's.

So in order to go beyond these commercialized rituals and find a real way to celebrate true love or whatever, the two of us decided to go on a little lunch date to Watts Grocery. The restaurant is open Tuesday through Friday for lunch, Tuesday through Sunday for dinner, and Saturday and Sunday for brunch. Lunch prices are around \$10 for a main entrée, while dinner is a little more expensive.

Well then, how did it compare to cards and chocolates?

Good Food, Good Date

CHRIS

For the appetizer, I ordered the chili bowl with cheddar cheese and mole verde. The dish was a beauty to look at when it arrived at the table, but the tongue told a truer tale. The mole verde, a Mexican sauce made from toasted pumpkin seeds, was creamy and infused with a subtle roasted flavor. While the beef chili had a mild spiciness to it, this was partnered nicely with an underlying sweetness. The texture of the chili was almost perfect, but it could have been slightly meatier and a little less runny.

For the entrée, I ordered Zuke's Country Pate on buttered baguette with Creole mustard dressing, cornichons [basically small pickles] and pickled vegetables. In all honesty, the sandwich had me at first bite. The tangy, crunchy cornichons and vegetables along with the mustard gave good contrast to the softer yet still meaty pate, while the mixed greens salad on the side with a creamy balsamic vinegar was simple yet refreshing. I found myself taking smaller bites so that the dish might last longer.

The two courses went very well together, and although most of you won't have the chance to experience dining with the tall, handsome, and still-single Christian Johnson, I'd definitely recommend this location for a simple meal out with someone close.

Restaurant All To Myself

CHRISTIAN

I was duly impressed with the atmosphere of Watts Grocery as soon as I entered—the place certainly seems very well-kept and we were seated immediately. For anyone who cares, the sanitation score was 93.5 if my memory serves me, more than satisfactory for a casual restaurant like this. I took no issue with any comfort or service amenities, except for the fact that we were the only customers in the restaurant for about half an hour.

I ordered the Yellowfin Tuna Sandwich with bacon, avocado, and red pepper aioli, mostly because I saw that it had bacon in it, and overall I was extremely satisfied with my choice. I found the tuna to be just the right consistency for a sandwich, without being overcooked or chewy. Likewise, the bread was toasted just a slight amount, which provided some nice texture contrast. Unfortunately, the sandwich suffered from slight structural integrity problems: the tuna and bacon had a tendency to slip out of the bread. In addition, the aioli was, in my opinion, a little lacking in flavor. However, these are at best very minor complaints, and in general the sandwich was fantastic.

I ordered my sandwich with a side of French fries, which were definitely up to snuff. They were crispy without being crunchy, and were perfectly seasoned. If you would like to learn more about Watts Grocery, you can visit their website <http://www.wattsgrocery.com/> and check out their different menus. I'm sure you will have as good an experience as I did!



Chris Maynor (left) enjoys a romantic lunch with Christian Johnson (right) one Tuesday. (This is not actually Watts Grocery.)

•Photo by Dustin Burleson

Non-Couples To Celebrate Single Awareness Day

BY EMMA HAWKINS

Valentine's Day is a day for lovers to buy chocolate, teddy bears, and giant cards. It is a time where one can experience romance and love in all its magnitude. But what are the chronically single to do? Some suggest they simply spend the day with their friends, buying gifts and enjoying each other's company. But if you happen to be without a significant other or friends this year, here are some options you can look into to make sure your SAD (Single Awareness Day) is all that it can and should be.

One's first course of action is avoiding couples sure to be roaming about campus this Valentine's Day. As an inherently awkward person, I find that sneezing loudly or jingling my keys usually forewarns any caught in an awkward position. However, if this Valentine's Day the couples are extra aggressive, don't leave your room without a water gun. Whether the couple is holding hands or studying anatomy, a few squirts of water typically does the trick in breaking them up.

Something else to do this SAD is invest in Ben & Jerry's.

You would be surprised how much Cherry Garcia heals a broken heart. So go ahead, head to the school store, and buy a pint—or two if you are really depressed. Grab a spoon and attack the ice cream. You could go to the gym and work out your frustrations; but let's face it: this feels so much better.

Find some sad songs. I find that Whitney Houston's cover of "I Will Always Love You" is a heart-breaking ballad. Or if you're looking for something to mock yourself, I find that Ne-yo's "So You Can Cry" is an excellent find. If you're single because you're in love with someone who hasn't noticed, I recommend Taylor Swift. Anything by Taylor Swift. That girl has some man-issues.

However, the most important thing you should do is go to Sadie. Whether you weren't asked or didn't do the asking, get dressed, get sexy, have a good time, and don't think about how depressed you'll be tomorrow. Just get out there! Then this Sunday, SAD, follow the afore-mentioned tips to ensure your February 14th is all it can be.

Music Review: Justin Nozuka

BY XAVIER JARRETT

Though it is now almost three years old, Justin Nozuka's debut album, *Holly*, still has a profound musical impact today.

The acoustic indie-soul album harbors a great deal of talent along with meaningful lyrics. Justin Tokimitsu Nozuka, 21, decided to push the envelope in a unique way when he constructed the album. Instead of having the profanity and sexual implications found in many songs of today, each song from *Holly* features a mature, adult-themed topic that has an undercurrent of sadness or nostalgia.

"After Tonight" was the first single released from the album and won Nozuka momentary fame. The acoustic guitar sound along with his soft, yet powerful vocals mesmerized many. The love song's carefree video could be found repeatedly running through VH1's Top 20 Countdown for several weeks straight; however, the song lacked the true feel of Nozuka as an artist.

The centralized theme of the hit single radiated an upbeat and positive message that could be said to contradict

Holly as a whole. Nozuka found his niche in the musical world with the more hardcore songs that fought back against the troubles and talked less about subjects that make up our society.

The melancholy feel of Nozuka's music in its entirety can be heard in "Mr. Therapy Man." The second single from *Holly* tells a story of heartbreak centering on a woman fleeing secretly into the night from Nozuka. The lyrics are filled with a pain that is conveyed expertly by Nozuka as an artist. Melding in with the heavy drum and guitar instrumentals, the song showcases a slightly more up-tempo side of the album while keeping up with Nozuka's image of being a thought-provoking and serious artist.

Eventhough "After Tonight" and "Mr. Therapy Man" were two singles released by Nozuka, the true masterpiece track on *Holly* was "Save Him." The song is the epitome of Nozuka's indie-soul image. The five minute track runs like a miniature novel telling the love story of a couple whose relationship dies due to the effects of domestic abuse.

The song places Nozuka in

an apartment flat next door to the fighting couple where he hears the husband beating his wife each night after returning from work. Each time that he would beat her though, the wife would fall to her knees and ask for him to be saved from his sins.

The song continues, telling about the physical abuse she received from her father in her early childhood. Eventually the song reaches its climax with the father killing both himself and his wife while their child, the wife now being beaten as Nozuka listens and watches from the doorway.

Holly is not an album for everyone; some of the messages conveyed are depressive and grave. But there are inspirational tracks scattered throughout the album, which showcases human nature in its rawest form and is guaranteed to have a song that you can relate to.

Nozuka seeks to affect people on an emotional level that few other albums have accomplished. Through the release of *Holly*, he surpassed this goal as his music continues to bridge the three year gap since the CD's release and still attracts fans young and old.