

THE
NINE



FRANK MINYARD

Born into Irish Channel poverty, Frank worked his way up the city's treacherous social ladder – by dint of relentless effort and inexhaustible charm – to become the city's premiere gynecologist. And one of its best-known bon vivants and ladies' men. He was at the top of his game in the early 70's when, in a crisis of conscience, he renounced his high society ways and ran for city coroner – a post he has now held for nearly forty years.



BILLY GRACE

A child of Uptown privilege, Billy married well and moved nimbly through the upper echelons of the city's elite until he reached a cherished goal by being crowned King of Rex – one of the city's oldest and most exclusive Mardi Gras Krewes. Accusations of cronyism in a property tax boondoggle tarnished his reputation for a time, but after Katrina he regained a measure of good will by leading a consortium of local business tycoons in an effort to rebuild the ravaged city.



GEORGE MONTGOMERY

Billy Grace's father-in-law and the possessor of one of the city's wriest and most mordant wits. The owner of the city's Muzak franchise, George is amused by nearly everything he encounters and schools Billy on the dark secrets that lurk in Uptown's toniest closets.



© Christopher Porché West

TOOTIE MONTANA

For many years the Big Chief of the Yellow Pocahontas, one of the mightiest of the Mardi Gras Indian tribes, Tootie is widely credited with bringing an end to the intertribal turf wars that had raged in the streets for decades. Known as The Peaceful Warrior, Tootie's theory was that if the Indians fought by outdoing each other with the creation of ever-more elaborate Mardi Gras suits, then they would no longer need to resort to knives. And it worked.



TIM BRUNEAU

In the 80's and 90's the New Orleans PD operated at a level of corruption that rivaled the Wild West. Seemingly answerable to no laws but their own, huge sectors of the NOPD controlled the city's drug trade through intimidation and shakedowns. Until he had his come-to-Jesus moment in the midst of Katrina's maelstrom, Officer Tim Bruneau was one of the Department's most enthusiastic enforcers.



WILBERT RAWLINS, JR.

The son of a stern, principled father who moonlighted for years as the drummer for soul legend Irma Thomas, Wilbert grew up surrounded by, and consumed with music. After adolescent flirtations with the criminal life, he ultimately fulfilled his calling by becoming one of the city's most respected high school band instructors. In so doing, he also became a surrogate dad to scores of New Orleans' most at-risk kids.



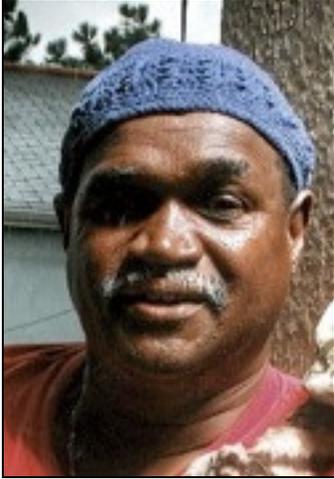
BELINDA CARR

Growing up in the Lower Ninth Ward, all Belinda wanted to do was to get out. The things that other people love about the neighborhood – the music, the food, the warmly chaotic community – were all anathema to her. Her dreams of a college education and a white-picket-fenced family life – dreams fueled by Nancy Drew stories and episodes of “Happy Days” – are challenged time and again by life’s inconvenient accidents, but she never gives up on them.



JOANN GUIDOS

John Guidos, the burly, Jesuit-raised son of a notions salesman could easily have become a linebacker, but what he always wanted to be was a woman. After years of soul-searching and electrolysis, John takes the plunge and emerges, once and for all, as JoAnn.



RONALD LEWIS

A lifelong son and booster of the Lower Ninth, Ronald had a long career as a track worker on the St. Charles Avenue streetcar line and as a union organizer before founding the city's only museum devoted to preserving the culture of Mardi Gras Indians and Second Line Parades. His book, "The House of Dance and Feathers", is essential reading on the subject.