

FREE PRESS **HOUSTON**

ISSUE 100

FEBRUARY 2009
CENTARIAN SMELLY NUTS

SPAIN COLORED ORANGE/COVER ART RETROSPECTIVE/HISTORY OF HOUSTON'S BLACK PANTHERS/CHRISTY CARACAS


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ISSUE 100
CELEBRANZA
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this issue FEBRUARY



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MAR 7	ONE NIGHT WITH QUEEN: A TRIBUTE TO QUEEN
MAR 15	LISA HANNIGAN WITH THE LOW ANTHEM
MAR 21	ANDREW BIRD WITH HEARTLESS BASTARDS
MAR 24	HOLLYWOOD UNDEAD & SENSES FAIL WITH HASTE THE DAY, BROKENCYDE

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2/5 - The Bridge @ 5:30pm
2/7 - Randy Weeks @2 3 1:00pm
2/7 - Denice Franke @ 3:00pm
w/ Clive Gregson
2/12 - Jessica Lea Mayfield @ 6:00pm
2/13 - Macon Greyson @ 5:30pm
2/14 - LOVE FEST w/ The Mighty Orq, The Hates & The Corey Wilson Group @ 1:00pm til 4:00pm
2/20 - ... Trail of Dead @ 5:30pm
2/21 - DollyRockers @ 5:00pm
2/28 - The McKenzies @ 2:00pm
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EDITOR'S LETTER

FEEL FREE TO TAKE US SERIOUSLY

WE CAN'T REALLY INTERNALIZE THE FACT THAT WE HAVE THAT WE HAVE PUBLISHED 100 ISSUES OF THIS PAPER. IT'S HARD TO SEE THE FOREST FROM THE TREES WHILE YOUR CRANKING THESE THINGS OUT BUT OUR MEMORIES ARE LITTERED WITH LAUGHS, BROKEN DEADLINES, CRISES, TRIUMPH, MISSPELLED WORDS, SPECIOUS ARTICLE TITLES, AND STAFF MEMBERS COME AND GONE. BUT THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR LONGEVITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE FACT THAT THE PEOPLE WHO BRING YOU FPH ARE ALL FRIENDS. BESIDES BEING THE PEOPLE WE RELY ON TO COME THROUGH ON DEADLINES, THE STAFF HERE RELY ON EACH OTHER FOR RIDES, BEERS, LUNCH, ADVICE, AND THE LIKE. BECAUSE, FRANKLY, IF WE DID NOT ALL HAVE AN UNDYING FRIENDSHIP, THIS PROJECT WOULD HAVE SURELY DIED IN IT'S INFANCY. FINANCING AN UNDERGROUND ARTS, MUSIC, AND POLITICS PAPER IS NOT THE EASIEST TASK ONE CAN UNDERTAKE. SIMPLY SAID, MOST 'ALTERNATIVE' TABLOID PUBLICATIONS IN OUR COUNTRY RELY ON SEXUALLY-ORIENTED BUSINESSES FOR MORE THAN 30% OF THEIR REVENUE STREAM (SEE LAST HALF OF HOUSTON PRESS.) MANY OF THE FPH 'STAFF' ARE VOLUNTEERS. MANY OF THE WRITERS SPEND MORE THAN THEY MAKE ON AN ARTICLE ON RESEARCHING THAT ARTICLE. ULTIMATELY, WE ALL HAVE A BOND AND COMMON GROUND IN A DESIRE TO SEE OUR COMMUNITY, SCENES, AND MOVEMENTS FLOURISH HERE IN A CITY THAT IS OFTEN DISMISSED AS ANOTHER MUNICIPALITY BEHOLDEN TO NOTHING MORE THAN OIL INTERESTS AND PETTY COMMERCE.

OUR PAPER HAS ALWAYS BEEN EITHER A GLORIFIED DIY PROJECT OR A POORLY EXECUTED PROFESSIONAL PROJECT. BUT WE LIKE TO THINK OUR CHARM IS IN THE FACT THAT THIS IS THE PAPER BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE ARTISTS, MUSICIANS, AND WRITERS WHO HAVE THEIR EAR TO THE GROUND AS OPPOSED TO A GROUP OF JUST-GRADUATED JOURNALISM STUDENTS WHO WILL WRITE ABOUT ANYTHING FOR A PAYCHECK. WE ALSO LIKE TO CONSIDER OURSELVES A SORT OF LOCAL BULLETIN BOARD WHERE RANDOM FOLKS CAN DISSEMINATE INFORMATION AND FIND FUNCTIONALITY DESPITE THE 'CLUTTER'. SO REMEMBER: WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO UTILIZE THIS MEDIUM TO ITS FULLEST WHETHER IT BE BY SUBMITTING ARTICLES, TIPS, DATES, OR WHATEVER MAKES YA FEEL USEFUL. WE THANK YOU HOUSTON AND HOPE WE CAN MUSTER UP THE ENERGY TO GIVE YOU ANOTHER 100 ISSUES.



DEBRIS

Won't Get Fooled Again, Again.

| Buffalo Sean

Heal the heartache. Soothe the wounds of a divided nation and a hateful world. No, I don't think so.

TALKING WITH BRIAN MOSS is like a conversation with Kup from the 1986 *Transformers* movie. Everything that happens has a reference, and they're usually not too flattering. Watch as a planet changes into a giant robot and grabs the earth in its hands, you might have something new, but besides that- it's all been done under the sun.

Elect a charismatic leader with too many hopes and dreams? Been there. Financial system collapses due to American greed? Done that. Another new fashion, designed to titillate and offend? Bullshit. It's been done, and done better. Moss will be center stage this February 20th at Joan Wich Gallery (4411 Montrose) for his first solo show, but don't expect that to be a time for reflection. A gruff snarl, maybe a silly face, but no deep introspection. The man stands for a minute with pain on his face, but then grabs his knee and complains about digging palms out of the ground all over the Third Ward and Eastwood. He rotates his shoulder slowly, speaking of exploding head gaskets and motorcycles chopped into *Road Warrior* monsters. Rubbing his eyes, he is reminded of the sights and smells of war in Bosnia in the late 90s. Soreness may only portend a story about racing bikes in San Francisco in its punk rock heyday. Any and every task is easy work, when compared to twelve hour shifts at a printing factory in Oakland, brutal on the body and mind. With the same gallivanting Hessian spirit that sent mercenaries across the world to participate in the American Revolution, it's the fight that drives Moss, and it's always worth it.

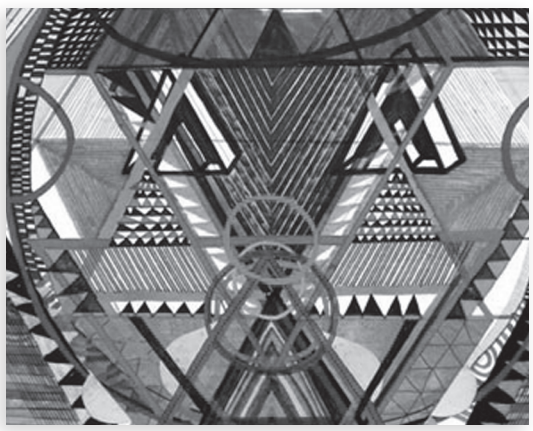
The fields and forests of the heartland lie in the back of Moss's mind. Born into a generations-old military family, his early years were spent in art school in Missouri learning the tedious, oil-based printing processes that dominated the identity of the 20th century. Wood-block prints illustrated the seedy, brutal world of newly industrialized and commoditized German Empire and the Weimar Republic between world wars. Lithography brought out Parisian nightclubs, dark alleys and drunks passed out in cafes. Offset printing from rubber to paper brought newspapers into ubiquity. Photo-collage propaganda masked the horrors of Soviet Russia in Technicolor technology and bright, shining smiles of the people's will- before many of the artists themselves were sent to the Gulag for torture and death. Silkscreens carried the American cultural explosion across the world on T-shirts; from "Property of USC" to "Frankie Says Relax" and Kid Robot creations. The tactility of printmaking began to break down as soon as Moss had mastered his medium, from the invention of the photocopy to the laser printer and the digital press. Imagery has moved onto the screen and out of the confines of physical reality, leaving the anachronism of printmaking solutions to aestheticians.

Into this space, the loss of real solutions in the face of psychological band-aids and fully realized imaginary worlds, steps Moss's latest body of work. He began in parking lots, on sidewalks and in empty lots, zeroing in on discarded material to repurpose. Moss found photographs, banal scenes from other people's eyes. Buoyed along by the GI Bill, he copied, redrew, distilled, sketched, denatured, scrawled and scribbled his snapshot inspirations into ghostly, depopulated landscapes and examinations of emptiness. Moss struggled against the faculty at the University of Houston, continually denying them a window into his process, an easy explanation for his work. His rejection of artworld mores led him to be labeled nihilistic and poisonous. The final coffin nail was Moss's thesis, presented as a five-inch thick stack of unreadable transcripts. Undeterred, he always believed that there was no place in art for pop psychology, for easy answers. For this February 20th exhibit Moss has expanded the size of his large charcoal drawings, the emptiness populated by abstractions of light, wind and texture. As the 21st century buoys us away from physicality, reality and tactility, these wisps of calm hold the viewer to the inevitable loss of their life- to a moment when the world, in all its vitality and emotion, floats away from us- leaving only quiet contemplation and the search for a reference to ground it in.

FPH

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WEEKENDS IN FEBRUARY:

Feb 6 Hightailers 20th Anniversary Bash - w/ the Rafters
Feb 7 Joey Farr and the Fuggins Wheat Band $8
Feb 13 Plump
Feb 14 Heartless Bastards w/ Three Fantastic
Feb 17 Gregg Ginn w/ Jambang $8
Feb 21 Funkotron w/ Fatty Lumpkin, Dirt & Earthy Vibes
Feb 27 Fulton Read
Feb 28 Lil Joe Washington's 70th Birthday Bash
Mar 7 The Blue Hit CD Release Party

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FRIDAYS Live Bands Inside! *DJ Outside On The Patio*

SATURDAYS Live Bands Inside! *DJ Outside On The Patio*

FEBRUARY BAND LISTINGS

WEDNESDAYS
Feb. 4 - The Trip Band
Feb. 11 - Tokyo Road (Bon Jovi Tribute)
Feb. 18 - Boneyard
Feb. 25 - Lounge 4407

FRIDAYS
Feb. 6 - Alter Ego
Feb. 13 - Unique Soul *(Dance-n-Funk Band)*
Feb. 20 - 80 Proof
Feb. 27 - Mr. Hands Revenge

SATURDAYS
Feb. 7 - X's Whiskey *(Van Halen Tribute)*
Feb. 14 - Frush *(Rush Tribute)*
Feb. 21 - Black Dog *(Led Zeppelin Tribute)*
Feb. 28 - Destroyer *(Kiss Tribute)*

Saturday, February 14
Valentine's Day Party featuring
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FRUSH

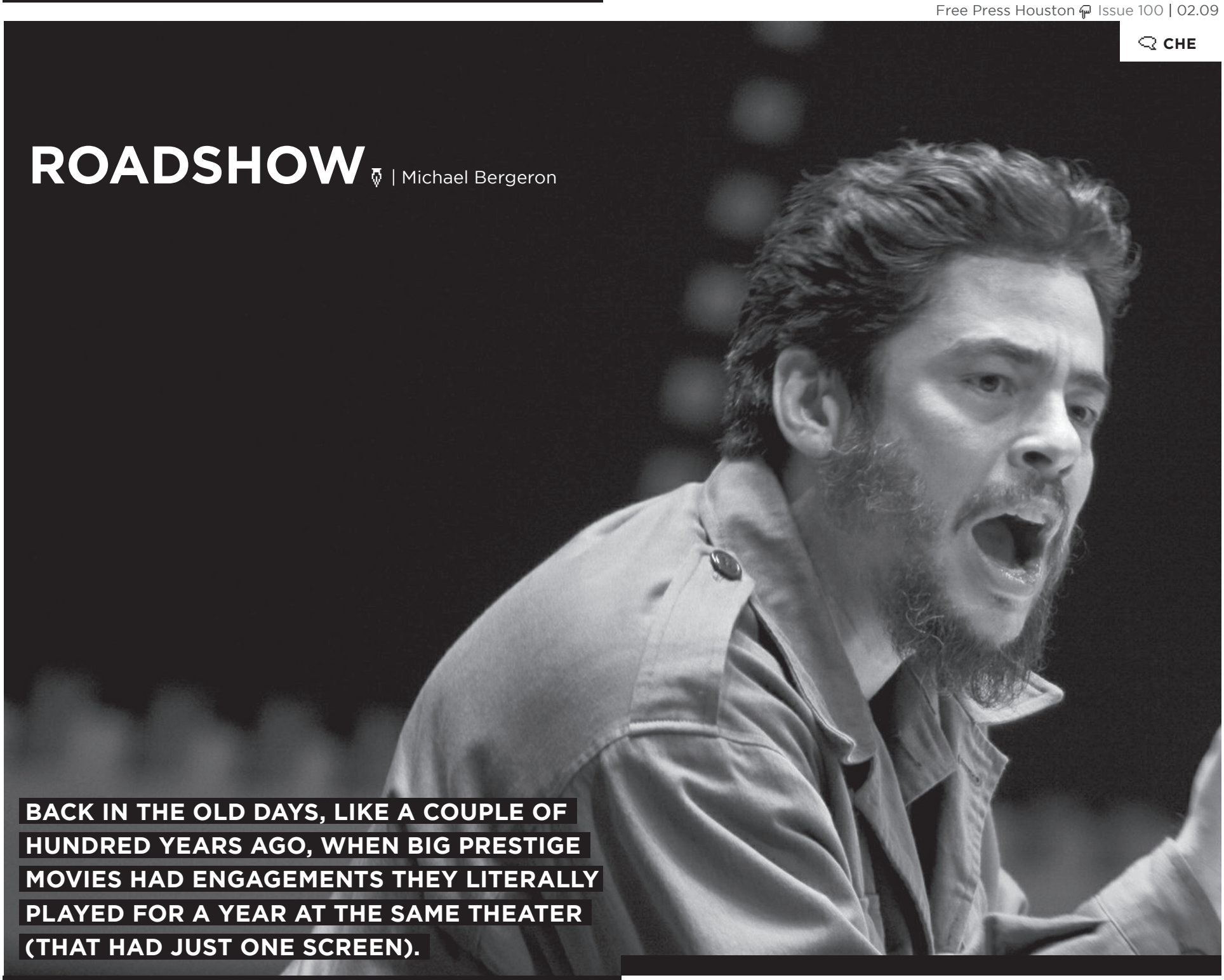


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ROADSHOW | Michael Bergeron



BACK IN THE OLD DAYS, LIKE A COUPLE OF HUNDRED YEARS AGO, WHEN BIG PRESTIGE MOVIES HAD ENGAGEMENTS THEY LITERALLY PLAYED FOR A YEAR AT THE SAME THEATER (THAT HAD JUST ONE SCREEN).

THESE MOVIES HAD A SENSE OF THE SHOW - they featured music by which to enter the film. Che, directed and shot by Steven Soderbergh, harkens back to this mode of celluloid unwinding, a leisurely yet engrossing experience.

At four hours plus change it's meant to be a cinematic moment to remember, a feat Che easily accomplishes. Please allow me an aside on the time element. I heard more than one person on mentioning Benjamin Button first saying, "I hear it's three hours." You heard right tumbleweed.

Maybe this is not the era of watching long films but I never hear anybody lamenting an extra innings or sudden death ball game, or a super long concert with multiple encores. That's as political as I'm getting. Che doesn't get too political either, at least not in the sense that viewers are going to be converted to Marxism. It's a given though, once you see Che you won't think like a colonized person.

Che unwinds as the psychological mindset of a commander, with the physical reality of existing in the jungle. That one side is propelled by one type of ideology in conflict with the forces of another way of thought is just the background for the conflict itself, which unfolds at times as gripping action with spectacular set pieces. The same could be said for the forest guerillas fighting the Axis as depicted in Defiance.

Soderbergh has made an intelligent and thought provoking film about the revolution as opposed to the coup. It doesn't matter if you don't know who Batista or Castro or Simon Bolivar are (although it couldn't hurt). At times Benicio Del Toro (also the producer, it's not a paycheck flick) spends as much time speechifying at the UN or operating on peasants (Ernesto Guevara was also a medical doctor) as he does firing bazookas (with great accuracy).

Che runs with an intermission. The visual for each half's intro consists of first Cuba and then Bolivia being graphically divided into states and cities, or in the case of Bolivia showing the outlines and then identifying the other countries in South America.

Soderbergh constantly cuts directly after an important look or explosive moment. For instance in a party scene with Senators and high society types Che attends in New York there is a moment where, while waiting for the elevator in the high rise, an associate mutters it was "quite a party." Che just gives him a death ray stare and Soderbergh instantly cuts back to the jungle. Likewise during action sequences involving a railroad train or guerilla gunfights at a farmhouse there is a rapid ending edit. Even though it's obviously a lengthy sit, Che keeps the momentum fast paced.

The first part is more war action while the second half emphasizes the man in his environment. The first part has a different aspect ration (2.35:1) than the second part (1.85: 1) and the whole thing was shot using the Red camera and lenses, the hottest in digital technology.

Che boosts top-notch production values and special effects like the constant gunfights. Several recognizable actors appear throughout. I didn't even snap when Julia Ormond as a blonde interviews Che in a black and white sequence set in New York in the 60s. Joaquim de Almeida appears as the President of Bolivia, Catalina Sandino Moreno plays a recruit who marries Che. Franke Potente plays a rebel named Tania and Matt Damon and Lou Diamond Phillips pop up briefly up in the second half.

The feeling of lyricism that Che delivers has little to do with recognizing actors. It's how the revolutionaries go about their business with a sense of justice one doesn't associate with our current media drenched, world-in-an-instant lifestyle. Che makes one of his troops return a car stolen from a Batista officer. When he travels into a conquered Havana he's rather walk then arrive by crook.

DVD SLIGHT RETURN

The two-disc set The Films of Michael Powell contains A Matter of Life and Death and Age of Consent. Powell is primary viewing for film buffs and these two films deserve some attention for their DVD debut. A Matter of



Life and Death was released in the US as Stairway to Heaven (in 1947). The story was David Niven's return to acting after war service and also stars Kim Hunter, Raymond Massey, Kathleen Byron and Roger Livesey.

The story revolves around an angel (Marius Goring) who missed snagging Niven for the hereafter and must now convince him to die. But Niven demands a heavenly arbitration panel and the whole issue of life and death proceeds as a spirited cosmic trial. This comedy concerns transmigration and the special effects (heaven in black and white, Earth in Technicolor) have only been copied but never surpassed.

After Powell practically ended his career with the notorious Peeping Tom (although Psycho made the same year only boosted Hitchcock's career) it took several years for him to regain his film footing. The result shot on the Great Barrier Reef, Age of Consent was one of his last but the first for Helen Mirren. She plays a teen nymph who provides inspiration for blocked artist (and also producer James Mason). Extras on the discs included Martin Scorsese intros for each film, commentary by film historians, and for Age short docus with Mirren, and one on the underwater photographers Ron and Valerie Taylor, themselves responsible for most of the underwater footage of the Great Barrier Reef waters in that era.

FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT check out the 3-DVD box set with all five Secret Policeman Balls movies in addition to outtakes and a documentary that culls all the events. The comedy and music concert series started in the mid-70s and ran through the late-80s as benefits for Amnesty International. John Cleese and Monty Python, not to mention Peter Cook and Dudley Moore, are front and center but the interesting way in which people who were starting out but who are now known performers – Rowan Atkinson, Hugh Laurie and Stephen Fry, Billy Connelly, Jennifer Saunders – only reinforces how hot the tickets were for these events. Musical performances are pretty amazing also with everyone from Pete Townsend to Peter Gabriel to Bob Geldof and the Boomtown Rats (years before Live Aid) wowing the crowd with song. Other cool musical moments are provided with sweet duos like Kate Bush and David Gilmour, Mark Knopfler and Chet Atkins, and Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck. I actually found myself watching the comic bits a second time. Even though the music segments are legendary, there's some really side-splittingly funny stuff occurring on stage.

FPH

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| Kwame M. Anderson

"I GOT A PROBLEM WITH EVERYBODY AND EVERYTHING." THERE I SAID IT, GET OFF MY BACK. I'D RATHER SCARE YOU WITH THE TRUTH AND NOT AN ACT.

IN LIFE, IT NEVER HELPS TO USE TACT especially in February, the month of marketed love and manufactured emotion.

It's also black history month, and with the Barack Obama victory it's that much more significant. It's time to look past the pessimism and look towards the light at end of the tunnel. Or is that a train?

My daughter smiles when she sees me, and my wife calls me baby even when she's mad. It feels good. Love.

MUSIQUE LIVE

BROKEN SOCIAL SCENE | 02.2.09 | Numbers ¶ Broken Social Scene made *You Forgot It In The People*, which, in my opinion, is one of the greatest albums of all time. They are one of those musical collectives like Tortoise or The Traveling Wilburys. From that collective sprung Feist who is so magnificent they gave her an I Pod commercial. Their music can be drone-y and dreamy, and then upbeat and rock-ish. As a live experience it's one of those things where you feel every second becomes a greater moment as if something is special it is happening. When one goes to a live show, the most appealing aspect is the idea (hopefully) of instruments and the interaction between musicians and the crowd to create something timeless. I think this will be that, and a chance to go to Numbers again.

THE ANNUALS | 02.12.09 | Walter's ¶ The Annuals are described via their Myspace as 'experimental pop'. Experimental is not a word that I am privy to. In a way, T Pain is experimental, and in a way, this is like T Pain: well structured pop with a twist. Music has become so amalgamated in the last few years that simply relying on chord progressions is passé, for now it is all a reach. The Annuals extend their hand to you, they beckon you to come forth, and it's not an alienating sound. It's inviting, it calls for movement and interaction, and it helps that there are also pretty melodies. It is a Lindsey Buckingham type deal; strange with a pop strength.

MUSICA QUE E GRAVADA

D.RIDER | MOTHER OF CURSES (Tizona) ¶ There are many things I could call D. Rider's music. I will start here: sexy. There is a song on the D. Rider album called "Body To Body" and the song actually sweats and drips from your speakers. It drools and fawns and it makes you feel sticky. It's beautiful in the way it crawls and writhes on the floor and taunts you. The keyboard's bassline hugs and caresses you. There is an energy, which explodes in the guitar burst that is excited and overanxious like when your hand mistakenly touches a butt in a makeout. This is one of the songs on *Mother Of Curses*, a twisted pop album. Yes I'll call it a pop album. It's all there. *Welcome Out* is majestic and beautiful.

Todd Rittman of US Maple and Singer leads this band, yeah, it's some of that stuff too, but not just that, it's the rock they don't make anymore, because they haven't made it yet, *Mother Of Curses* is the name of the album. It's a gift to you

AZITA | How Will You? (Drag City) ¶ Azita's music is many things, but mostly there are the stories and the soundtracks to those stories. Her voice is not one that you associate with pop or rock or soul but the same can be said of a Randy Newman or a Karen Dalton. Still, her songs have an essence; the lyrics can go anywhere there is no predictability in melody or theme. *How Will You* is her third album and I would suggest you own them all. It's music that is constantly rewarding; each listen opens and offers new perspective and insight. It's the soul record that speaks to the soul, of the soul, and for the soul.

SHOLI | Sholi (Touch And Go/ Quarterstick) ¶ Sholi's music is full of adventure and texture. The colors are amass and many. It travels, drops off passengers, picks up souvenirs, and maps new territories. Their debut album is produced by Greg Saunier of Deerhoof, which shows that sonic adventures travel in packs like wolves. Sholi make the type of music that could accentuate any aspect of your day from the book you are reading to a walk to the laundry room. It is now all a part of an epic moment. Music can be furnishes the spaces in our heads and I would say this album would be a welcome accoutrement to adorn one of the rooms of your conscious.

SUGGESTED READING

NO LOGO-Naomi Klein (Picador) ¶ HERE I STAND-Paul Robeson (Beacon Press) ¶ SHOPPING FOR IDENTITY-Marilyn Halter (Schocken Books) ¶ ***,,,and reading is always a good suggestion.***

FPH



The Annuals



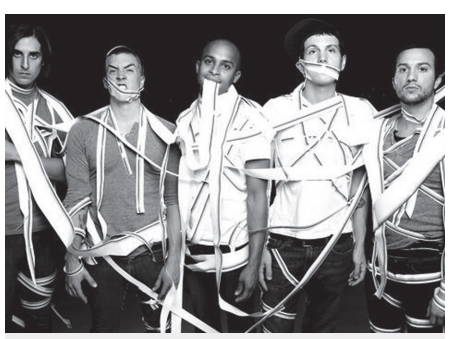
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02.07 | NUMBERS



STATE RADIO
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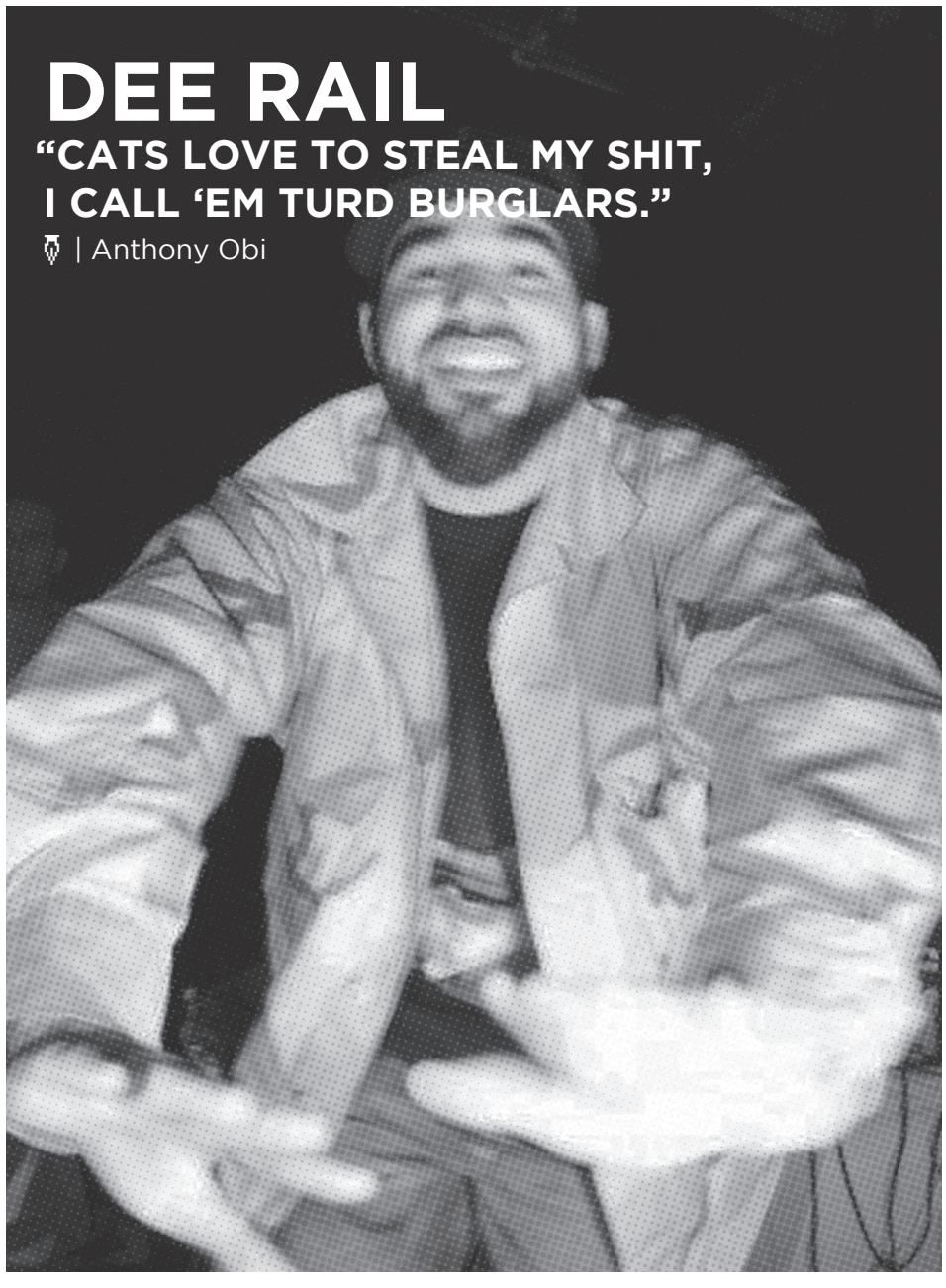


AMERICAN FANGS
02.07 | NUMBERS

DEE RAIL

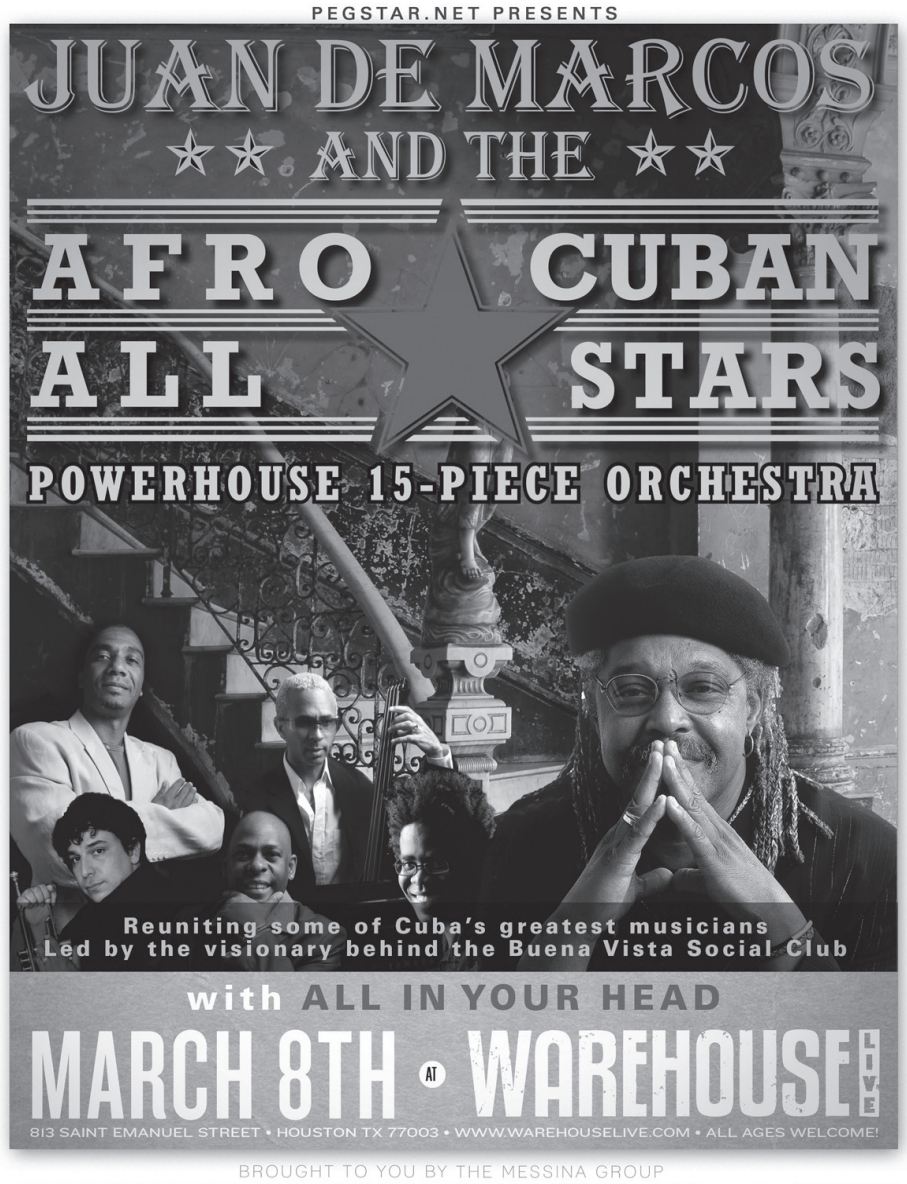
"CATS LOVE TO STEAL MY SHIT, I CALL 'EM TURD BURGLARS."

| Anthony Obi



BORN APRIL 2ND, 1985 WAS DEE RAIL, a Houston based Hip Hop artist with a heart of (black) gold (more along the lines of the Texas tea variety than Care Bear-esque). He is a man passionate about good times, good wine, good music, and good pine. On his records he sings of introspective insights, pain & pleasure, night time escapades, and smashing the shit out of any rapper he deems to be lacking in the talent department. A member of Devin the Dude's Coughee Brothaz crew, Dee Rail assembles all-American stoner wit, boyish charm and lung wrenching inner city blues into a Martini-like shaken not stirred collage of rap-croons. ¶ **When did your interest in music begin?** Ever since a nigga first heard some music I gravitated toward it. Been making songs ever since I figured out what I was doing. When I was 11, I made my first personal mix tape called "Yo Mama." It was a mix of my favorite songs from the nightly top 5 at 9:00pm on 97.9 The Boxx and 104.1, plus snippets from various sounds I liked. Had some Rocky Horror Picture Show and Twilight Zone samples thrown in there too with me announcing over everything on the tape. ¶ **What motivates your creations?** Big blunts, bad bitches brew (the Miles Davis album and secreting vaginas), as well as beautiful bangin' beats. Man, really... the idea that one day all this work will be worth my efforts motivates me more than anything. Knowing that possibly Hip Hop fans years down the line will continue to jam the Dee Rail is all I need. ¶ **What artists would you cite as your main influences?** My biggest influences are Sublime, Al Green, Nas, Devin the Dude, Outkast, BlackStar (Mos Def & Talib Kweli), and Donell Jones. ¶ **Tell me about your fall/winter 2008 tour with Devin the Dude & The Coughee Brothaz. What experiences left the biggest mark on you? How did you first connect with Devin and his group?** The parts I can actually remember were unforgettable. Rockin' Emo's outside stage was a lifetime achievement. It has always been a dream for me to perform to a full house there and we definitely did the damn thing. Devin first introduced me to the Brothaz. I met him at a Big Daddy Kane concert in Feb. 2007 at Warehouse Live. I called him a week after I did my first NY show in April, and we linked up at the Coughee Pot [Devin the Dude's recording studio]. We got together and went through a gang of each other's songs and familiarized ourselves with one another's music. ¶ **Outside of the Coughee Brothaz, do you have any affiliations and alliances?** I fucks with Tha Coughee Brothaz, Fat Tony and iLL Faded. Shout out to Tony, Coache Johnson, and Domino! ¶ **What are your ultimate goals for 2009?** I want to be recognized as the artist that I am. I plan to make a bigger dent in the local scene and perform on choice occasions including the My Bloody Bunny Camp valentine's day party this February 14th. Right now I'm completing the W-Tour '09, which is something I would prefer to talk about in person with whomever is interested. **Find out more about Dee Rail myspace.com/deerailmusic**

FPH





REALLY RED

| Ramon Medina | Ben DeSoto



IT WAS 1978 WHEN BOB WEBER, A SKINNY MIDDLE-CLASS COLLEGE GRADUATE, WALKED INTO SOUND EXCHANGE AND SAW A NOTICE FROM A BAND LOOKING FOR A DRUMMER.

HE HAD BEEN PLAYING DRUMS IN A SMALL JAZZ ENSEMBLE but hadn't felt particularly inspired. Behind the counter was the band's singer, Ronnie Bond, a Canadian known for his "encyclopedic knowledge of 20th century music" and for "spitting revolution to the natives." Ronnie invited him to try-out and Bob knew immediately that Ronnie had the inspiration he had been searching for.

Ronnie along with bassist John Paul Williams and guitarist Kelly Younger had been friends for years. "We had similarities." says John Paul, "We were all looking for answers. We started out as teenagers. We did drugs, we hung out at Love Street Light Circus, we got into meditation, we listened to Roky Erickson's 13th Floor Elevators, Red Crayola, early Pink Floyd and the Who, the Stones, MC5 and the Kinks which were my favorite band. Those were revelatory times where we were discovering life, women, looking for answers. Ronnie, Kelly and I lived together for years. We always had the coolest house around. We had our studio at our house and practiced a lot. As a group we went through different musical incarnations prior to becoming Really Red."

"Ronnie, John Paul and I had been in different cover-blues bands over the years." says Kelly, "We had recently let go of another guitar player, Curtis Riker, who wanted us to be Cheap Trick. Bob came to practice and we hit it off right away."

John Paul recalls the audition "I will always remember him auditioning after all of these other drummers came with their giant drum kits and hard rock and roll beats. Bob came from more of a jazz background; he was a studied drummer who knew how to play technically. He wasn't as big and strong as some of the drummers we tried but we knew if we miked Bob we could get the big sound out of his drums. As odd as it seemed, he was the perfect fit for our group."

"Then," says Kelly,"a Legionnaire's Disease show showed us the error of our ways. We were meant to be a punk band. And we were damned good at it."

That revelation changed everything! With a seemingly unstoppable fury, Really Red raged with music that was fast, loud, and intense. It was a band with something to say and the band's mixture of sharp socio-political lyrics and a ferocious sound demanded people's attention whether it was through their classic recordings or their legendary live shows. The future was now, the future was Punk, and, while the future came to an end six years after Bob walked into Sound Exchange, there was no denying the frenzied and insistent energy of the music.

"Punk is a lizard," explains Bob, "scrambling and shouting and pulling on the restraining cables of a Saturn 5."

John Paul notes that heeding the call of Punk took a lot of dedication, "If memory serves me correctly, we practiced on Tuesdays, Thursdays and sometimes all day on Sunday. No excuses. There was no leader in this. Kelly, Bob and I would jam for hours and hours. Either Kelly or I would come up with a riff and we would hammer until it became something. Bob, Kelly and I did the music and Ronnie would spend a lot of time thinking about what he wanted to say and eventually come up with some lyrics and a vocal."

But, Bob explains, it wasn't just simply aimless jamming, "This is what I think was special about Really Red. Many of the songs developed from tossing around structural concepts and expressing ideas verbally before the music happened. It's a different method than jamming and waiting to hear something that you like."

At this, Kelly scratches his head, "Wow! I must have been unconscious. I thought it kinda" just "HAPPENED."

The recordings (most of which were cut live) were something Bob recollects as being like "kids on Christmas morning" while John Paul remembers it as being both "fun and a pain in the ass at the same time." He goes on to lament "It's too bad Andy Bradley didn't take good care of our original tapes. We'll never remix some items that should have been louder as an example Dennis Grevsky's sax playing. He was one of the best sax players ever."

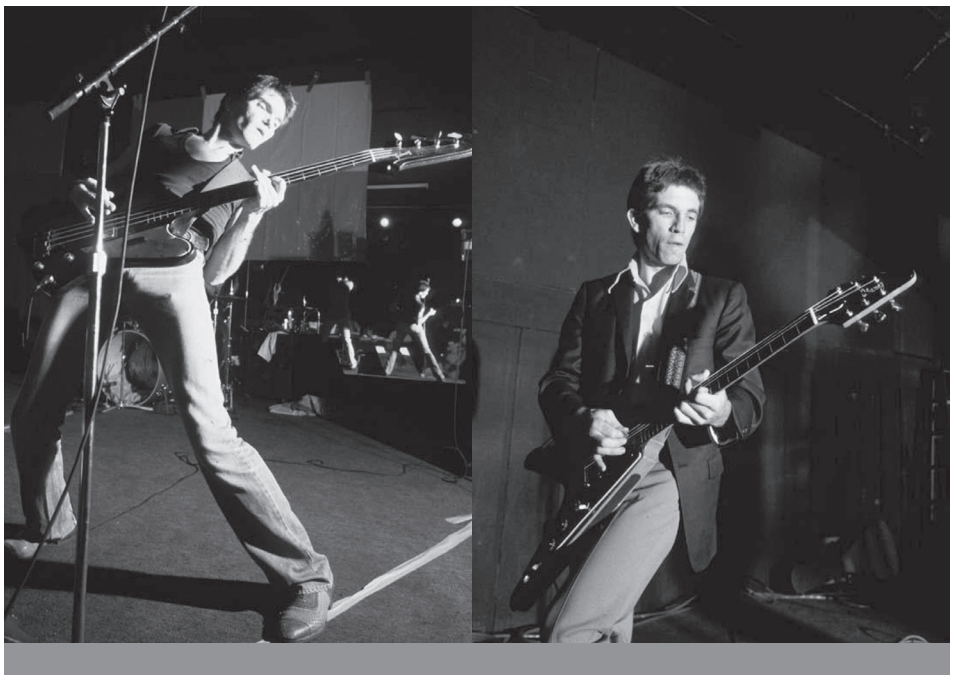
Kelly agrees, "The only regret I had was Dennis Grevsky's sax solo on 'No Art in Houston' being mixed so low. It was a great solo. Thanks Ronnie, you dipshit."

The band's recordings were all on CIA (Completely Ignorant Adults) Records an organization that was less a traditional label and more of a local collective. Bob describes it as having been "a cooperative of highly motivated individuals testing the black waters to see if there was anything alive or dead in there. For instance, the Mydolls would be working on a project or organizing a show. We'd get together and share contact information, make phone calls, write some letters, toss out some ideas for a leaflet and talk about the best places to get it out there on the street. Sometimes Kelly would copy things, because he worked in a print shop. Kwik Copy first opened in the early 80's and people were finding different ways to disseminate propaganda."

John Paul adds, "Really Red proved that you can self-produce your own band. We would press 45's and send them to college stations and use the play list in return to determine where our market was."

That market wasn't simply regional; the band met with some national recognition thanks, in large part, to a fair amount of touring. Bob recalls, "We did four cross-country tours: 1980, '81, '82, & '83. 1982 was our mid-west 'Cowpunk' tour. The other three were round trips from Houston to Vancouver and back in two weeks. Otherwise, it was anywhere we could get on a weekend trip. "

John Paul loved touring, "The tours were great. We all had to bring our own money. We loaded up the van with equipment, Lone Star Beer, our Texas flag, and hit the road plenty. We typically would only play in town for one weekend per month so we wouldn't wear out our scene and that idea worked pretty well. We had some great gigs



and some lousy gigs. We played in front of a Sheriff and a few of his friends in California and we packed houses in Seattle and San Francisco. We bombed in front of Nick Lowe and Rockpile. We played a Legionnaire's hall in Reno, gambled and played around all night, and drove like mad to UC Davis. We played for a dollar in LA and the concert at UC Davis in California was a day to remember. We played in Vancouver. We ate lots of sushi and stayed up drinking and driving for hundreds of miles. We listened to great compilation tapes that Ronnie made mostly which would be music from so many genres from punk to country to rock to oldies."

Bob's favorite story was meeting SPK at the 7th Street Entry in Minneapolis but he's a bit dodgy on the details. "Ask me for details another time, suffice it to say I was still learning the meaning of performance art."

Kelly doesn't do much to fill in the details, "SPK was too much for me. I had to leave. Not to mention the fact that I had to clean cow guts off of my Marshall amp."

The shows could get out of control at times as John Paul recalls, "We were playing a gig at the Island when a bunch of 'punks' started throwing fists in the name of being punk and hurt Diana of the MYDOLLS. That is what 'I Refuse To Sing' was about. We had holes in our jeans because we wore them out working but people thought that was cool. Much of the so-called punk scene was nothing but an excuse for some to act like idiots. It was also a reason for people to act out violently. I remember some jerks spitting and throwing beer on Kelly at a show with 999 and The Stranglers in Houston. Kelly, Ronnie and I flew off stage to fight. I never thought that behavior was cool. It was an invitation to kick somebody's butt. I think the punk scene brought a lot of shock and awe but it was all rock n roll to me. I liked to play fast and loud with lyrics that meant something. I didn't give a shit what you called it."

The touring led to the band being featured in the seminal 1981 compilation "Let Them Eat Jellybeans" on Alternative Tentacles something the band seems to almost shrug-off now. "Outside of being a real honor and an ego boost," says Bob, "it was just business, I guess. We did end up opening for the DK's at U of H in '84. That was the largest captive audience we ever played for."

"The only thing I remember," says Kelly, "was Jello and Ronnie going toe to toe. God only gives you so many syllables in your life. Man, those two could TALK!"

Really Red's notoriety also brought them an offer from The Clash to perform with them in Houston, Austin, and possibly throughout the entire Texas leg of the Combat Rock tour - an offer the band famously refused. "Yes, we turned down the Clash." says John Paul, "My memory was that we were offered a pittance to open for them and, when we saw the rider and all of the ridiculous demands they had, we decided we did not want to compromise our principles just to open for them. We were not going to grovel at the altar of the Clash for the sake of exposure. I never liked Mick Jones anyway. I did like Joe Strummer and thought he was a good songwriter. When I think of this time, I think we should've done the gig and not been so naive. We should've gone for it and used the press to OUR advantage."

When I ask them what they accomplished 25 years ago Kelly retorts "Accomplish? Pussy. Stardom. Wealth. We failed. But we left with a sense of self-worth and accomplishment."

That is about all you could really expect given the era. As John Paul puts it, "The era was encapsulated by young people trying to understand themselves. It's always easy to look back and think that people knew what they were doing but most of us were flying by the seat of our pants. Anyone who says different is lying."

FPH

This article is dedicated to Bill Steen, remembered as a true artist representing the Montrose.

PEGSTAR
PRESENTS

JANUARY 29
LOS CAMPESINOS!
TITUS ANDRONICUS

FEBRUARY 6
THE APPLESEED CAST

FEBRUARY 7
MONOTONIX + STATE RADIO

FEBRUARY 10
LONELY, DEAR

FEBRUARY 20TH
...TRAIL OF DEAD

FEBRUARY 27
DELTA SPIRIT
OTHER LIVES + DAWES

MARCH 8
AFRO-CUBAN ALL STARS
(BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB)

Info and Tickets available at Pegstar.net.

TAKE A CHANCE ON ME

| Brigitte B. Zabak | Gary Isaacs



DeVotchKa

AMERICA (WHICH I AM FINDING HARD TO INTERNALLY PRONOUNCE WITHOUT ADDING A SIGNIFICANT SOUTHERN TWANG) HAS A NEW POLITICAL LEADER.

A LEADER WHO MANY BELIEVE STANDS AS A SYMBOL for the every man. A leader that is promising change despite the mess our former administration has left for him to clean up.

Now, while many of us will inevitably gather together over a tasty adult beverage and philosophize about our new President's strategies for an ailing economy or the Palestinian-Israeli conflict …I have found it necessary to ask a completely different kind of question. If, as a nation of people, we have gotten our shit together and elected into office an individual who says he stands for the same things we stand for…can we logically deduce that it is now possible to rejuvenate Houston's indie music scene once and for all? It may not be the most pressing issue for most – but it's a completely valid question. What we once thought impossible – electing someone other than a rich, white man into the highest political position in this country – has now been made possible. So…if millions of Americans can actually do something right for once – why can't the same thing be said for pretty much anything at this point?

I am hopeful (heh…) that our local music forefathers have passed on enough wisdom that a new generation of *Yes-We-Canners* will eventually emerge from the three music venues that are still standing in this city and make something happen. Don't let me down, folks. I'm waiting for an indie rock revolution.

In the meantime, I am forcing myself to get back out there and immerse myself in live music once again. I've taken a significant break from our humble music scene – but I'm finding it hard to ignore some of the shows booked this month.

There are two shows on February 2 that are definitely worth checking out. Verizon Wireless Theatre is hosting an oddly matched lineup with M83 opening for The Killers. I am vehemently opposed to The Killers, so the ticket price to just see M83 is a bit steep…but should be well worth the extra dough. M83 – that is comprised of now solo artist Anthony Gonzalez – released *Saturdays=Youth* back in April of 2008. The album reads like a musical interpretation of pretty much any and every John Hughes film ever made. It is endearing and unexpectedly evocative and should prove interesting to watch in a live setting. The same night – Broken Social Scene is playing with The Lymbyc Systym over at Numbers. Both bands play pretty straightforward indie rock and if you happen to have the extra cash to spare, their performances should provide you with a solid night of above average music.

Many may not think they've heard of DeVotchKa, but anyone who has seen Lil Miss Sunshine has gotten a small taste of what this Denver based indie band has to offer. The foursome creates a tantalizing blend of gypsy punk folk rock that is as romantic as it is energetic and fun. They will be performing with fellow Denver-based indie rockers Crooked Fingers at Warehouse Live on February 9.

The rest of the month is peppered with an interesting mix of shows that include everything from blues to more indie rock. Don Caballero will be performing at the Meridian on February 7 and one can only hope it will be more interesting than the last time they played at the Prolo. Local favorites News on the March will be playing with Loney,Dear at Rudyard's on February 10. The H-town Blues Festival takes place on February 13 at Reliant Arena. Rounding out the month is My Education - Austin's answer to intoxicating ambient noise. They will be performing at Rudyard's on February 28 with Sad Like Crazy and Exterminating Angels.

So, whether you're sitting on your ass hoping for change or actually getting out there and helping to create it… at least you can enjoy good music while you wait.

FPH

ELECTRIC ATTITUDE

with

FLOWERS TO HIDE

The GOODS

AND

ALKARI

Doors At 8:00 PM

Show Starts At 9:00 PM

Friday, Feb 20th

The Mink

3718 Main st

$7 COVER



FOR THOSE OF US WHO THOUGHT THAT 2008 WAS GOING TO BE "TWO-THOUSAND-GREAT" AND WERE, IN SPITE OF WONDERFUL ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME CELEBRATIONS, SORELY DISAPPOINTED, I OFFER A COMPROMISE TO THIS CONJUNCTURE BY SIMPLY EXPECTING 2009 TO BE "JUST FINE".

SO FAR, I HAVEN'T BEEN DISAPPOINTED. Indie Houston kicked off the year with a by-all-accounts stellar New Year's Eve celebration. Wild Moccasins told us all when and where to be for the release of "Microscopic Metronomes", which is one of the most eagerly anticipated local releases in recent memory. Houston is getting its own bona fide pre-SXSW showcase in the form of the Merge Music Fest, uniting not only H-Town favorites but neighbors from Austin including some "name brand" talent filling the seats (SROs?) as well. Let's see, then we've got ListenListen over here putting together something special for us in the 2k9, which word has it is spectacular. And let's not overlook the return of Dead City Sound, a triumph of man over nature. And with all of these super helpful folks coming out of the woodwork to organize shows both conventional and unconventional; write local music blogs covering nearly every angle of our sprawling and segmented music scene; to facilitate releases big and small for all of the bands working so hard to be remembered; and to photograph, record or by other means document this moment in our time; we will not be forgotten so easily when our day is done.

And even in the losses we have seen so far this year, there is a new hope. Foremost, I express my sadness at losing one of the best friends in the Fourth Estate a local band could have; Sir Lord von Awesomeness Ramon "LP4" Medina, as he gives up the reigns to spend his time being the raddest dad this side of Kyle G. Otis. Though, my sadness is sublimated to thankfulness since here I am, attempting to inject that same "you can't miss it!" enthusiasm that Ramon always had for local music. Another hit we have taken so far is the death of the Secret Saturday Show as we know it. It was the finest walk-out I have ever had the privilege of witnessing firsthand complete with Johnny Paycheck's "Take This Job and Shove" playing on the jukebox. After the dust settled, I told show organizer, JD Tucker that the Secret Saturday laid the foundation for what is happening now. He gave chances, was non-judgmental, and he provided a space where many of our current heavyweights could meet, network, and build friendships based on a pure enthusiasm for music, myself included. And though the shows will continue on in a new manner (the venue is now secret, you must email them for an invite), I can say that many folks will miss the sunny days spent downing beers at the Shady Tavern, and taking in sounds previously unheard. And lastly, I dread the moment I must say goodbye to the best band that this city dropped the ball on, Lazy Horse…but more on that another day.

It seems we have a lot to look forward to in the coming year. And I can't wait to keep you posted as this just might be the year that we put the whole "suburban wasteland" business to rest. Granted, it may have been the single greatest catalyst in the current revolution, but it didn't exactly do much good PR-wise for attracting these crucial "touring Indie bands" to our town. So, let's drop all that nonsense and look forward to all this awesome shit we're doing ourselves!

FPH



SPAIN COLORED ORANGE

| ADAM P. NEWTON | ERIC HESTER

WHILE IT MAY BE A FAMILIAR AND CLICHÉD WH IPPING BOY FOR THE MASSES, THERE REALLY IS NO DISPUT ING THAT THE MODERN MUSIC INDUSTRY SUCKS AND SUCKS H ARD. THERE ARE ALL MANNER OF STORIES CHRONICLING H OW MAJOR RECORD LABELS ARE WILLING TO DROP A POP ULAR BAND OVER ARTISTIC DIFFERENCES (REPRISE V. WILC O) OR MINE A POPULAR ACT'S BACK CATALOG ONCE THEY'VE LEFT THE FOLD (CAPITOL V. RADIOHEAD).

IN THE CASE OF HOUSTON'S OWN SPAIN COLORED ORANGE, the band recorded a full-length record a couple years back, only to see their efforts locked away by their record label because of a contract dispute. Thus, as the band continues to build a reputation as one of the hardest-working outfits in Houston, I decided to chat with Gilbert (lead vocals and keys) about that record, their personal take on the music industry, and what keeps them excited about making music.

"Yeah, it was quite the hassle. *Sneaky Like A Villain* is coming out - finally. We're off of Lucid Records and signed a music licensing deal with Shout It Out Loud Music (Brooklyn, NY). The good folks at SIOLM are releasing the record. We are ready to go back into the studio to record a new(er) album. This time around, we have promised ourselves to have it released by November 2009."

As I've heard of more than a few indie outfits going the route of creating a licensing agreement over signing a traditional record contract, I asked Gilbert what advice he would give to other up-and-coming groups.

"Handle your own business best you can. Record labels aren't miracle makers. They're good for 3 things: paying for the recording, manufacturing, and distribution. I would say - expect to get the run-around from the music industry. I've come to accept that it's part of the business. I don't like it, but I understand it (as it buys time)."

Since the creation of *Sneaky Like A Villian*, one would expect for this experience to have prompted growth within the band in terms of songwriting and band chemistry.

"Well, the music and songwriting has gotten a little more exciting for me lately, but what do I know? I always feel like I play with the best musicians in town. But again, what do I know?"

Moreover, the record label concerns must have taken a toll on the guys, but they remain consistently focused on making music and playing shows.

"We love doing it. Writing and performing are the two things we do best together as a band. Well, that and happy hour. There's nothing like a good show! People say we play too much, perhaps. We spread ourselves out a little though. We'll play a party for MFAH, The Continental Club, The Scout Bar, Discovery Green, Rudyard's (our favorite), Boondocks, Warehouse Live, Walters, The Mink, or even a warehouse party. All of them have different crowds, so it's totally worth it. Entertaining folks is a blast and it always involves having a good time; sometimes, too much of a good time."

With *Sneaky Like A Villain* finally available to the band and its fans, we can expect from great things from the upcoming Spain Colored Orange release, not to mention some touring.

"The new record will contain sex talk, lies, god and the devil, she left me for him/she left me for her, last call, love, a smoky kiss, and perhaps a melody here and there. We do plan to go on tour this summer with The Sour Notes (from Austin)."

Finally, we talked about what makes Houston a great city in the eyes of Spain Colored Orange.

"Arthur Yoria is pretty amazing live and recorded. We always have a great time playing shows with him. I also dig Dizzy Pilot, You(Genious), Paris Falls, Motion Turns It On, and Buxton. I'm sure there's more, but that's all that comes to mind. Our favorite place to play in town is Rudyard's. We just started doing shows at The Continental Club and it's a pretty awesome place to play. Also, there's Boondocks and The Mink that are really cool, but, once again, what do I know?" FPH

Spain Colored Orange performs February 14th at Continental Club
myspace.com/spaincolouredorange

March 28
2009

BLOCK PARTY

YESTERMEN

SIX UNDER

DEATH FROM ABOVE

ALEXISONFIRE

VALIENT THORR

THE SHOW IS THE CANDLE

CLOSURE IN MOSCOW

BEARE

DANEZ

ECHOES

FPH
FREE PRESS HOUSTON

THE REAL WEDDING OF ALEX WUKMAN AND ANDREA TAGUE

ART

STEEL PANTHER

GANDHI

ARTWORK BY SHELBY HOHL WWW.SHELBYHOHL.COM

WESTHEIMER BLOCK PARTY SPRING 2009

MARCH 28, 2009 ✣ NOON - SLEEPY TIME

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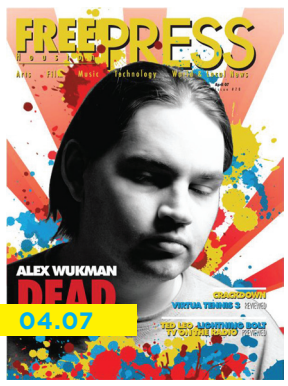
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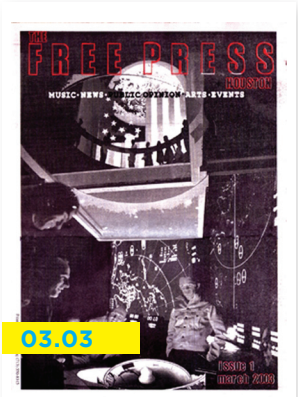
St. Vincent ✣ Valient Thorr ✣ Devin the Dude
HEALTH ✣ Daniel Francis Doyle ✣ Belaire
The Show is the Rainbow ✣ Pictureplane

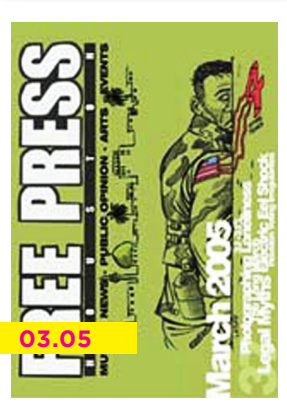
Ringo Deathstarr (Austin) Linus Pauling Quartet Pretty Little Flower Golden Axe The Eastern Sea
Hollywood Floss Wild Mocassins Hell City Kings Sideshow Tramps The McKenzies News on the March
Spain Colored Orange Cry Blood Apache (Austin) The Small Sounds The Tontons Factory Party
Meriwether (Baton Rouge) The Handshake Tambersauro Mic Skills Southern Backtones Guitars
Delta Block Skeyptecynic Western Civilization Mantis Woozy Helmet Stadium Free Radicals
Lenny Briscoe Bolt Lisas's Sons Juzcoz Plump Electric Attitude Flowers to Hide O'Doyle Rules
Darwin's Finches Abbey Birds Your Kisses Cause Crashes Organ Failure Noon The Boxing Lesson (Austin)
Oh No! Oh My! (Austin) Shit City High (Austin) Come See My Dead Person Robert Ellis In Beds (San Antonio)
Rusted Shut The Manichean Motion Turns it On American Sharks Dizzy Pilot TheLastPlaceYouLook
Phillip Foshee B L A C K I E Poopy Lungstuffing The Vettes Female Demand The Last Starfighter
sIngs Marry Me Church Camp Tax the Wolf Hueman The Gold Sounds Cop Warmth Future Blondes
The Watermarks Dremnt the End Death by Texas Barstool Forest DISSENT Groggy City of Compton
Buxton Giant Princess Giant Battle Monster Clubs (San Marcos) Elaine Greer Finnegan Lazlo SkyBlue 72
Hungry Villagers Perseph One Mothertone Trusty Taperecorder Jim and the Toms (Austin) Studemont
Windsor Drive Phonocast (Los Angeles) YPPAH Babel Fishh Bowel Without a Face Ghost Town Electric
American Fangs Satin Hooks Guerilla Foco Clan The Unbearables (Austin) One Hundred Flowers (Austin)
The Homopolice Ladyheat Estudiantes Social Club I Am Mesmer Sarah & Octopus (San Antonio)
A Dream Asleep Chase Hamblin Piano Vines Tha Fucking Transmissions Magnetic Desmond Zavala
Dead Roses Half Nelson D.R.U.M. The Literary Greats Caddywhompus Nosaprise Sew What
The Takes Balls Deep Winter Wallace Limb Ozeal Bugchaser Mechanical Boy Heptic Skeptic



















FPH
COVER ART RETROSPECTIVE

Omar Afra, Alex & Tyler Barber

THEY SAY "DON'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER," BUT WHAT ABOUT A NEWSPAPER, ZINE, PAMPHLET, PRODUCT BROCHURE, OR MAGAZINE? WE HOPE YOU HAVE JUDGED OUR COVERS WELL AND THEY HAVE INVITED YOU TO READ OUR HUMBLE NEWSPAPER.

WE ARE *VERY* PROUD OF THE ARTWORK on our covers and have always thought one of the biggest things we could do for the arts community in this city is to yield that real estate to hungry artists. I would go as far as saying we have the BEST damn covers in town. Now that's not a tall order but I will bring about anything I can get my dirty little hands on. Here is a small selection of what have been some of our most favorite and significant covers. It's hard to choose what to spotlight when we have published 100 issues with 100 covers but these here deserve the ink without a doubt.

JUNE 2005 BY JERMAINE ROGERS ¶ This was the first true cover story the paper ever ran. It also was one of the most well read non-Block Party issues in the paper's history. Within a week of publication the issue couldn't be found inside the Loop.

A large part of the popularity is because of cover artist Jermaine Rogers. When he heard that we were doing a story about meth in Montrose he asked to be able to do the cover.

At that time, Jermaine was charging around $5,000 to do a cover yet he did it for us for free. As he was working on the cover, his house caught fire, which he incorporated into the artwork.

This issue brought the mayor, city council, chief of police and all of the Houston media to the West Gray multi-service center to discuss Montrose's drug problem. It also cost the director of Covenant House her job and got many of the homeless teens off the streets of Montrose.

APRIL 2007 BY TYLER BARBER/ ANTHONY RATHBUN ¶ This is possibly the most famous cover Free Press Houston ever ran. In many ways it took us from a spectator/ commentator to a participant in the Houston arts scene. It is also the very first time a photo made the cover.

Some local bar owners reported that this cover improved their alcohol sales by 15-20 percent. Apparently patrons who normally bought a glass of wine would buy a bottle and those who bought a pint of beer bought a pitcher.

There were mistakes made in the execution of the performance, most notably the fact that the memorial service was held over two weeks after the cover hit the streets.

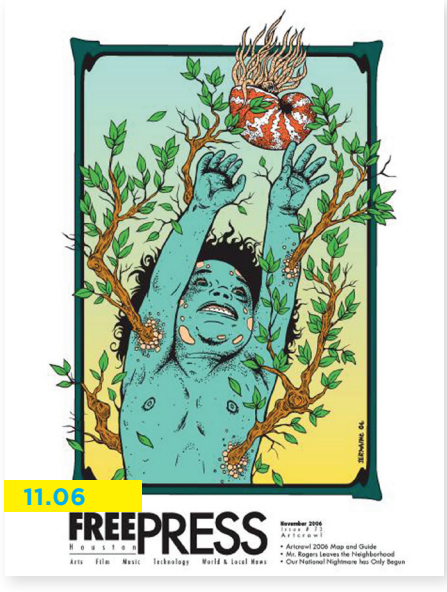
DECEMBER 2004 BY SHELBY HOHL ¶ On a cold winter's morning, I opened my inbox expecting cover art from an unnamed artist as I needed it for an impending print deadline. Much to my dismay, nothing was sent and the artist simply flaked on me. So, I called go-to-guy Shelby Hohl and said we need a cover pronto. He said in so many words that "didn't you hear the news? Dimebag was shot last night." This of course was the perfect opportunity for him to create a tribute to the beloved Texas axe-man.

MARCH 2003 BY GABE NOLAN ¶ We really felt like we were going all out by spending the extra bucks for the single spot color on this very first cover. Gabe Nolan made this military-industrial-complex inspired collage for us at the last minute but we felt it really captured the Zeitgeist and our editorial direction. Plus, it looks clutch.

MARCH 2005 BY CARLOS LATUFF ¶ We like to think we were against the Iraq war before it was cool to be against the Iraq War. There was much debate around the office about this one: Was it too didactic? Is it insensitive to soldiers? Palestinian-Brazilian artist Carlos Latuff, who is world reknowned for his political comics, has a sharp tact when it comes to pushing the buttons that need to be pushed. So after printing, we got quite a few angry phone calls about that cover selection where as we often replied " Why are you angry we printed it but you are not angry it is happening?"

SEPTEMBER 2004 BY ALEXANDRE ROSA ¶ Thematically, this cover piece stands apart from many as its meaning seems rather hidden and elusive. There is definitely an androgynous element yet there is just not a simple 'message' behind it. The red and brown tones made this cover one of the divergences from the usual spastic colors that preceded most cover pieces. The man responsible for this, Alexandre Rosa, has done several other covers and flyers for us and is an immensely talented artist.

DECEMBER 2005 BY TYLER BARBER ¶ A drunk asshole, er... should I say his garden decoration, inspired this cover design. Neighboring The Generic Tribe's old recording studio, he would constantly threaten to call the police on us and would always talk





shit whenever he saw us outside. So I thought it was pretty ironic that such a jerk would have 1) a Buddha garden statue, and that 2) that the statue sported nerd glasses. The quaint scene couldn't go undocumented, so now it has a cover to cement the memory forever. And really, the illustration was a much better outlet than the alternative: to burn his house down.

OCTOBER 2003 BY JERMAINE ROGERS ¶ Jermaine Rogers is one of the Godfathers of modern poster art. He has done posters for everyone from Radiohead to Bowie to the Deftones and has even been honored by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. And, he is from the Montrose. We have long been fans of his work even before publishing the paper and made it a point to start annoying him right away after we began. Eight months into it, w managed to be enough of a thorn in his side for him to throw down on this splendid Jimi-Kurt piece. Jermaine also schooled us on many standards we hold so dear today and we spent hours on the phone with him explaining that "punk rock don't mean shitty."

NOVEMBER 2007 BY TIM DORSEY/ SHELBY HOHL/TYLER BARBER ¶ Behold! The sordid tale of city planning gone awry through the lens of greed, cronyism, and gentrification. This cover for Alex Wukman's expose on the Richmond rail fiasco is a collaboration between staff aretists Shelby Hohl, Tim Dorsey, and Tyler Barber. After sketching out a picture-perfect rail car, Shelby passed the drawing on to Dorsey who in turn added a skyline and peripheral craziness.

NOVEMBER 2006 BY JERMAINE ROGERS ¶ This is the last piece Jermaine Rogers gave us before moving to Colorado. We felt like it was a parting gift and were ecstatic when we first saw it. The simple color scheme and striking image made for one of our best, and my personal favorite, cover ever.

OCTOBER 2008 BY GRAYSON COFFEE ¶ Café Brasil barista and local artist Grayson Coffee (yes his last name really is 'Coffee') is a master of painting zombies. We met him about a year ago and shortly thereafter saw the hyper-realistic works he created of people who knew as zombies. No joke, this kid is zombie obsessed. While trading pleasantries during a coffee order we pitched him the idea of working up a cover. When he asked what we wanted we joked about how funny it would be to have a zombie portait of the presidential candidates eating a fetus. Well, Grayson evidently loved the idea and quickly put together a mock up. We were floored. Quite a few people took offense at the artwork, especially Obama supporters who were repulsed by the fact that the cover drew a moral symmetry between the two candidates. Obama has yet to prove his zombie status however McCain's is well attested.

FPH






PEOPLE'S
PARTY II

A history of Houston's Black Panthers

By Robinson Block

The pigs assassinated Carl in an attempt to destroy the party, but their attempt failed because pig brutality and murder is one of the phenomena that brought the party to birth. The oppressive conditions that Black people and all poor people suffer from is the reason why the party managed to stay together and it is because of these conditions that it will continue to get stronger

– James Aaron, Chairman of People's Party II

I HAVE ATTEMPTED TO AT LEAST PARTIALLY DIG UP the history of People's Party II, an organization in Houston based on the Black Panther Party. I was unable to find any scholarship on the People's Party II, and the activists I spoke with are also unaware of any scholarship on the local organization. What I have put together here is based on some of the news articles I have been able to find, and the testimony of activists in and around People's Party II and the Black Liberation Struggles that took place in Houston.

Peoples Party II began early in the 1970's as Black Panther Party chapters were being established all across the United States. The success of the Voting Rights Act and other legislation that was won by the civil rights movement was largely viewed as inadequate to young urban blacks, and youth generally. Many participants in the civil rights movement were beginning to become impatient with the slow pace of reform and the tactics of non-violence which were closely associated with the activism of groups organizing and mobilizing for civil rights in the south. One group that presented these frustrations and made much more radical demands quickly became the vanguard of the black power movement; The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.

Started in Oakland California by Oakland Community College Students Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in October of 1966, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense created a ten point program demanding employment, housing, and end to police brutality and self-determination for black people in the United States. The Black Panther Party was inspired by the a a number of revolutionary movements and largely Marxist and Maoist political philosophy. They organized as a cadre formation, creating social programs like free breakfast programs, clinics, and armed community patrols to help defend the black community from police harassment and brutality.

Both the aesthetics, militancy, and revolutionary ideas of the Black Panther became very popular with Black urban youth, particularly men and chapters began to pop up all across the country. The Panthers ideas also became very popular with revolutionary youth outside of the black community, such as the Puerto Rican Young Lords in Chicago and New York, the Mexican American Brown Berets in California and Texas, the Asian Red Guard in California, and White formations like the White Panthers in Detroit, Young Patriots in Chicago and others, who all modeled their groups on the Black Panthers.

The first establishment of a Black Panther Party Chapter in Houston ended up being very controversial, and limited the appeal of the later People's Party II. The founder, Willie "Iceman" Rudd is widely believed to have been an agent for a law enforcement agency. Rudd had traveled to Oakland to get permission to establish a chapter in Houston. He was accompanied by the wife of Lee Otis Johnson, a black activist in Houston that had been sentenced to 30 years for giving a marijuana cigarette to an undercover police officer. With this high profile companion, Rudd received permission from the National office to start a chapter in Houston. When Rudd returned to Houston, he reached out to black activists already organizing at Texas Southern University and th University of Houston.

Eventually many people became suspicious of Rudd, who claimed to be employed by the AFL-CIO, but had an expensive car and endless free time. Following numerous suspicious events, there was a meeting following a speaking event of Bobby Seale, where Rudd was confronted, and Seale dissolved the Houston Chapter.

This made the reception of Carl's Hampton's efforts to organize a chapter of the Panthers in Houston very cool. Carl grew up in Pleasantville in east Houston. He moved to California in his teens, and when he returned to Houston in 1969, he was determined to establish a Black Panther Party Chapter. His efforts to recruit membership from the TSU and UH campus was not very well received due to the recent problems with the Party under Rudd. With little support from students, Hampton set up in the middle of the working class neighborhood of Third Ward, opening an office on Dowling street.

The Growth of popularity of the Black Panther Party had lead to new chapters opening all over the county, at this point in 1970 when Carl Hampton began organizing, the National Office in Oakland was not approving new chapters. Not having permission to open a BPP chapter, he called the organization People's Party 2, seeing the Black Panthers as the first people's party. Despite having a different name, Hampton and the other young men and women that began organizing in Houston envisioned People's Party II as aspiring to be Panthers and do the work of the Party.

Hampton was inspired by the work of the Black Panther Party in Chicago, including the Rainbow Coalition, an alliance of the Young Lords, Young Patriots, Students for a Democratic Society, and the Blackstone Rangers street gang. In the very early stages of Carl Hampton's organizing in Houston, he met with Robert E Lee Jr. a Panther who grew up in Jasper Texas and organized with Fred Hampton and the Chicago Black Panther Party.

Hampton and Lee met at the apartment of Mickey Leeland, a black activist who later became a Democratic congressman for Houston. They watched the film American Revolution 2, which documented the establishment of the Rainbow Coalition in Chicago.

Carl Hampton was fascinated by the possibilities of organizing with white youth,

particularly the Young Patriots, who used the confederate flag as there logo. This inspired Hampton and People's Party II began to work with the Mexican American Youth Organization (or MAYO) and the John Brown Revolutionary League, a white revolutionary group that grew out of Students for a Democratic Society. These groups worked together in opposing police brutality in Houston, such as the killing of Bobby Joe Connor, a black youth who was stomped to death by Galena Park police in April of 1970. The Rainbow Coalition also worked to show opposition to the Vietnam war.

The area of Dowling Street where People's Party II had set up was a working class and lumpen neighborhood there were a number of commercial businesses, as well as a open air drug market (reportedly robitussen was very popular) in the alley behind Wolf's department store and apartment and shotgun houses crammed with a high population density. They regularly interacted with the residents of the neighborhood winning support from many of the young folks, but also earning some ill will from the drug dealers and pimps who's business was were viewed as exploitative form of predatory capitalism and destructive to the black community. The Panthers would work to help victims of theft or burglary locate their stolen goods from pawn shops. PPII began to work in esablishing survival programs such as clothing and food programs.

The time that People's Party II spent organizing on Dowling Street came to an explosive point in July of 1970. A black teenager selling the Black Panther paper on Dowling street was stopped and hassled by 2 white police officers. Carl Hampton arrived on the scene and intervened on behalf of the youth. Hampton was open carrying a automatic pistol, which was legal at the time, but provoked an angry response from the Police officers. The Police attempted to arrest Hampton and guns were drawn by both parties. Party Members from the office emerged with weapons and the police moved to their car and radioed for backup. The scene quickly became a standoff.

A large contingent of Houston Police arrived quickly and attempted to negotiate the arrest of Hampton who had moved into the fortified office on Dowling street. A large crowd of Third Ward residents gathered in the street, press reports claim as many as 2,000 people, many moving in between the police and the People's Party Headquarters. Many people present had witnessed the initial confrontation and the crowd was outraged with the over the top police response. Ester King recalled many members of the crowd arriving with firearms and other things that could have been used as weapons.

With the situation escalating rapidly, the Houston Police Department decided to temporarily withdraw. The crowd viewed this as a victory, and as word spread of the confrontation people from black communities all over Houston, and activists from across the city descended on Dowling street to offer their support. A number of black youth joined the party on the spot, and plans were made for an around the clock armed defense of the PPII headquarters.

Many activists expected a quick and brutal response from the police department to move into the neighborhood and attack the parties headquarters and anyone else who was in the vicinity. Many expected a response like the police attack on Texas Southern University where 300 police marched from the Jefferson Stadium (now Robertson Stadium) onto TSU's campus and opened fire on protesting students. More than 400 students were arrested and 5 were tried for the death of a Houston Police officer who was shot and killed, but were later acquitted when it became clear that the officer was killed by a bullet fired by the police.





Houston policemen came by night and invaded the 2800 block of Dowling St. July 26. There were 300 riot-equipped officers guarding this black section.

Brandishing shotguns, submachine guns and carbines, the policemen allegedly killed 21-year-old Carl B. Hampton, then arrested more than 60 bystanders.

The police department began to prepare and elaborate operation to attack the radicals that had occupied the heart of third ward. Houston's Police chief at the time, Herman Short, had taken the role of chief in the early sixties. He was a very conservative and supportive of the Jim Crow status quo. George Wallace of Alabama made statements in support of appointing someone like Short as the director of the FBI if he was to be elected president. The city's white elite was very nervous about the perception of a growing black power threat, and Short was supported by Mayor Welch and most other city officials in aggressive, possibly illegal tactics against black activists in Houston. According to Dwight Watson's book *Race and the Houston Police Department 1930-1990:*

> "Herman Short saw Black Power as an egregious assault on the police and on the moral order and decency of the city. He received the green light to control the Panthers and other radicals from a citizenry worried about their potentially violent nature. He and the police CID commanders used surveillance and informants to detail every move of the panthers."

By July 26th more than 2 weeks after the standoff began, many began to think that the police had given up on trying to violently move onto Dowling Street or arrest Carl. This Sunday was also the Chicano Moratorium march in Houston's Magnolia neighborhood, and many of the Chicano and white activists that had been doing security on Dowling Street attended. This march demanding an end to the Vietnam war, and encouraging Mexican-Americans not to participate in the armed services. This was the day that Houston Police executed a large operation which by the morning of the 27th had killed Carl Hampton, resulted in the shooting of PPII member Johnny "Shotgun" Coward and John Brown Revolutionary League leader Roy Bartee Haile, and caused the arrest of more than 60 people.

Earlier in the day 2 black activists patrolling north of the Dowling Street were arrested by Houston Police, a rally of around 100 people was held in front of the PPII headquarters to raise money for the bail of the arrested activists. At the same time Houston Police were setting up in the St Johns Baptist Church, just a block Northeast on Dowling Street. Someone in the neighborhood noticed white people on the roof of the church and notified the rally. Carl Hampton dismissed the rally in hopes of dispersing the civilians in the crowd, if the scene became violent. Hampton crossed to the east side of the street and walked up towards Wolf's Department Store to see what was going on at the church. As he reached the east side of the street he was shot several times by a sniper from the second story of the church and hit with dum-dum rounds.

A firefight began between People's Party II and their supporters and the Houston Police. Many of the residents of the apartment complex just south of St. Johns Church open fire on the police in addition to party members. Carl Hampton was picked up by a neighborhood woman, who Hampton had befriended in the past and worked as a prostitute. While under fire from the police in the church, she was able to drive out of the alleyway on Tuam where there was usually an open air drug market, in order to evade police checkpoints established on Dowling and Elgin. She took Hampton to Ben Taub Hospital, first taking off his beret and buttons that identified him as an activist, and checked him into the hospital with the ID of her husband. Hampton died in the hospital early in the morning.

The aftermath of the shootout was very messy. 64 people were arrested, and three were shot There were lengthy prosecutions of Johnny Coward and Bartee Haile, and near constant police harassment for years afterwards. James Aaron, an 18 year old took over as the Chairman of People's Party II, and


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along with Charles Boko Freeman, were the primary leadership of the organization after Carl's death. While the death of Carl was tragic, as the man whose vision and efforts had put the Party in motion, it also served to steel the resolve of the members of People's Party II and gave them a higher level of recognition in the community.

There was a short lived black coalition after Carl's assassination that included a broad range of the black community, from radical activists to businessmen and athletes, that pressured the city for reform of the police department which continued to brutalize black brown and young people. The leadership of the coalition was Pluria Marshal of Operation Breadbasket and Earl Allen of Hope Development. This Coalition pushed for a boycott of downtown businesses viewing the white business leaders as those who really called the shots in town and hoping to pressure Mayor Louie Welch into taking action to end police brutality against the black community.

Also, 1971 saw some of the first electoral victories from black politicians, including the first black city councilor Judson Robinson Jr. Many of these black officials lobbied Welch to fire the police chief, Welch referred to these demands as "incoherent babbling" in the Houston Post.

This period of time saw widespread repression of the Black Power movement in the United States, the Black Panthers in particular. While it was largely unknown at the time, the FBI had began Counter Intelligence Programs (or COINELPRO), plans to disrupt and destroy the Black Panthers and prevent the rise of a "Black Messiah." The militant and continual organizing by the panthers resulted in multiple arrests, prosecutions and incarcerations of Black Panther activists. As repression mounted, more and more energy went into trying to keep members out of prison and support those who had been incarcerated.

The Continued harassment of Black Panther Party Chapters by federal and local law enforcement agencies made it very difficult for them to accomplish many of their desired programs. Following Hampton's murder, efforts were made to open a clinic on Dowling Street, and later in 5th ward, however neither ended up materializing.

There were many programs that did end up being fairly successful, the Panthers initiated a program to test for sickle cell anemia that took place on TSU's campus, and opened a Free Breakfast Program, in a church in Houston's Fourth Ward. Peoples Party II operated a 'liberation school' every Sunday in Cuney homes, a public housing project just north of Texas Southern University, providing childcare and education services to residents. One of their most successful programs was the Free Pest Control Program, where Party members would help residents in treating infestations of roaches, fleas and rats.

Peoples Party II had attempted to construct and operate a clinic on Dowling Street at Tuam, with support from radical whites. Due to very constant police harassment and arrests of whites on charges of prostitution and loitering, the Dowling Street clinic never became fully operational. In 1971, the Black Panther Party had acquired a building in Fifth Ward and appealed to black contractors to help renovate it. They received support from architect and contractors who donated supplies and labor, but never were unable to make it operational.

While the Peoples Party and Black Panthers were largely viewed as fringe and extremist by the elites of Houston's black community, they were sometimes able to get support from the black community such as the support given by black contractors and businessmen for the renovation of a building in Fifth Ward as a clinic for the black community. They Panthers operated breakfast out of a Church in 4th ward and assisted Operation Breadbasket a project that had been started by the Reverend Jesse Jackson to provide food to poor families.

In the Fall of 1971 the national Black Panther Party in Oakland recognized People's Party II as an official chapter of the Black Panther Party, in no small part due to the sacrifice of Carl Hampton, and the name was changed from People's Party II to the Houston Chapter of the Black Panther Party.

The Houston police continued to direct large amounts of resources to moinitoring and disrupting the activities of radicals in Houston, with Blacks, and People's Party II as a top priority.

This police harassment of the Houston Panthers, included a house raid in June of 1971 where 7 people were forced out of the house by police at gunpoint and arrested, including James Aaron, and Claude Frost. Subsequently, Charles Freeman and Johnny Coward were arrested the same day. The newspapers would print the names and addresses of those arrested, which surely intimidated people sympathetic to the cause that did not want their home address printed in the newspaper.

Earlier, in February of 1971 police arrested 4 Peoples Party II activists for fixing a car in front of the peoples party II headquarters, based on a law against doing work on a car's engine on a street unless its an emergency. The activists were fixing a flat tire. While in custody, police planted a matchbox full of marijuana on Charles Freeman, and he was later indited on Felony possession charges. This reminded many of the Lee Otis Johnson case, the SNCC activist who was convicted in 1968 of giving a joint to an undercover police officer, and sentenced to 30 years. Johnson was eventually release from prison after serving 5 years after national outcry and a lot of work by progressive lawyers.

Freeman was eventually acquitted by an all white jury in October of 1971, because they did not believe the police testimony, after having to be bailed out of prison and undergo a trial being defended by Bobby Caldwell. This constant harassment drained energy, time and resources from People's Party activists.

According to Charles Boko Freeman, the Party was active in Houston until 1974, when the National chapter in Oakland dissolved the local group and recalled the membership to California to assist in work being done there. As the seventies wore on the strength and prominence of the Black Power Movement, and the Black Panther Party became a shadow of its former self. The FBI's counterintelligence programs had been successful in excacerbating a split between Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver, which resulted in many Panthers and supporters joining the Black Liberation Army, an organization dedicated to armed struggle which viewed the Panthers emphasis on survival programs as reformist. Dozens of Panther members were jailed or forced to flee the country.

At the same time the concessions of better political representation to African Americans served to temper the impatience of young people who wanted radical social change. In Houston the end of at large city and county elections allowed Black and Latin@ communities to elect their own representatives.

The legacy of the Black Panther Party is an important one in understanding the period of the 1960's and 70's as well as the efforts of revolutionary movements in the United States to study as a serious organizing effort towards radically trasforming out society. Houston's local movement is still not widely know or documented, and there is still quite a bit of work that needs to be done in order to contextualize the time and place that People's Party was working in, and connect all the dots to other local and national events and struggles. Hopefully this will help scratch the surface.

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FROM THE SPORTSDESK...

| Mills-McCoin

"For once let us try to think about a political convention without losing ourselves in housing projects of fact and issue. Politics has its virtues, all too many of them — it would not rank with baseball as a topic of conversation if it did not satisfy a great many things — but one can suspect that its secret appeal is close to nicotine. Smoking cigarettes insulates one from one's life, one does not feel as much, often happily so, and politics quarantines one from history; most of the people who nourish themselves in the political life are in the game not to make history but to be diverted from the history which is being made."

-Norman Mailer

NORMAN MAILER FOLLOWED THIS FIRST PARAGRAPH WITH AN ADDITIONAL... EH, 13,800 WORDS OR SO IN AN ESSAY THAT APPEARED IN *ESQUIRE'S* NOVEMBER ISSUE IN 1960- WEEKS BEFORE JOHN F. KENNEDY WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT.

IN THE ESSAY, that many critics say marked the beginning of a new genre of political journalism, Mailer's idealism drove him mad about the nation's need for the fresh and new perspective that was JFK. Mailer was cutthroat. Unashamed. Unwavering. Hateful of the many years of conventional government and politics. But Hopeful for change.

In his lengthy creed of "hipsterism" that clearly influenced the rest of the Sixties, Mailer called out for a hero. A man he called, "the edge of mystery" and "a great box office actor." The essay was titled "Superman Comes to the Supermarket".

Okay let's stop here... and discuss the elephant in the room.

Obviously, Norman Mailer was NOT referring to JFK. Norman Mailer was talking about uh Barack Obama.

Somehow Norman Mailer saw the future. Maybe he watched every episode of the soap opera called *Holy Shit!: The 2008 Presidential Election*. Maybe he caught reruns of *How Is This Happening?: The W Years*. I don't know. I can only speculate,... which is very fun to do.

But somehow Norman Mailer saw America's maddening crave for a hero in 2008, as well as in 1960. An animate figure, possibly from Earth, to save our souls and cancel our entire 8-year-debt of fuck ups with his American Express Red White and Blue Card. A man (maybe, who knows) to solve all of our problems: heal the sick, feed the poor, and put cash in the hands of people that don't spend it well anyway! Hope! Change! Amen! Hollalelujiah!

<ahem>

Like us... Norman Mailer and the rest of 1960 America got their Hero. He was tall. Handsome. Had a place in Cape Cod. He was Catholic (that was weird). I think he had a birthday once... But in his mere three years as President, JFK didn't change the things that America had hoped he would. Instead, supporters like Norman Mailer, found him to be the same old hat that smelled of War, Depression, and Fear. To idealists, JFK turned out to be just a politician, not a hero.

In "The Presidential Papers", Mailer jotted down this of Kennedy: "he had the face of a potential hero, but he embodies nothing, he personifies nothing, he is power, rather a quizzical power, without light or principle."

In the end *they* shot him. <another thing I hate about Dallas>

Here's my point:

1960 America expected one man, JFK, to change the fortunes of an entire nation. Almost half a century later, We are expecting the same Fourth Quarter Hail Mary from President Obama.

Breaking News: Superman isn't real. Cheers.

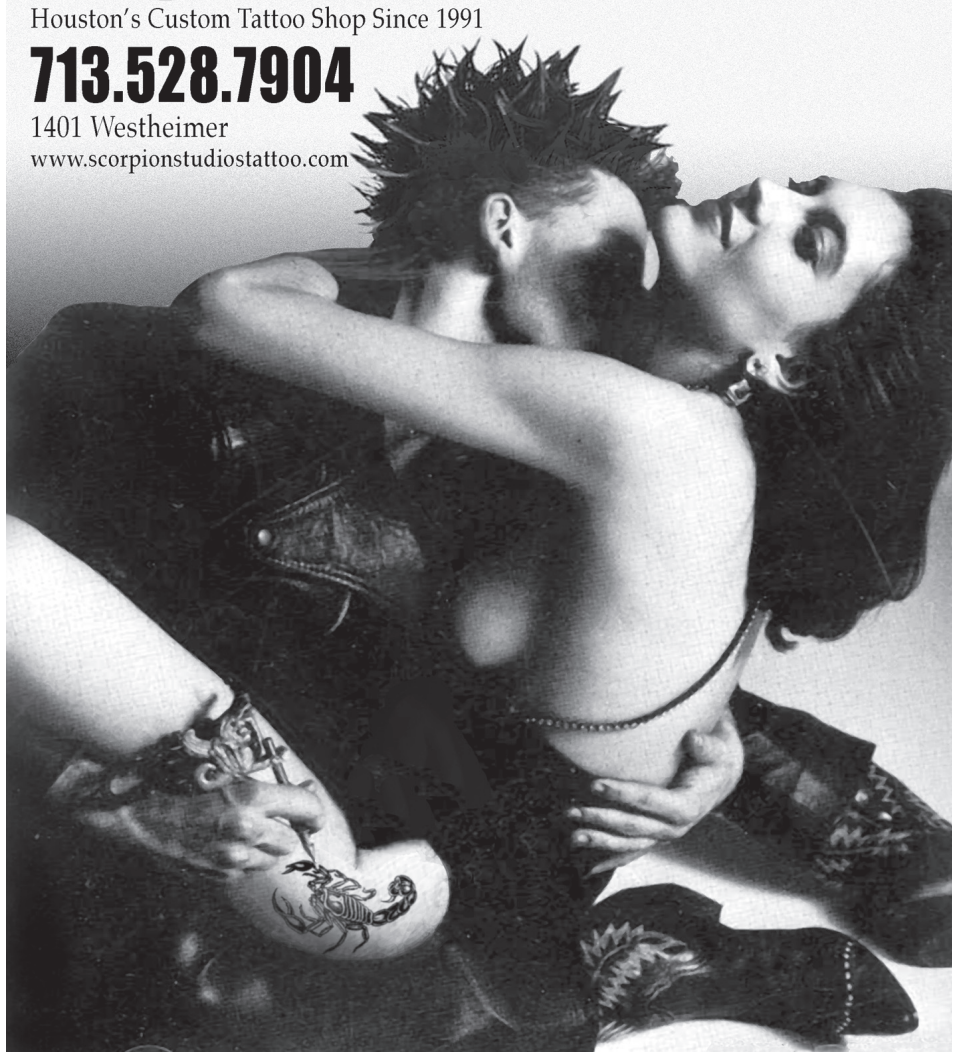
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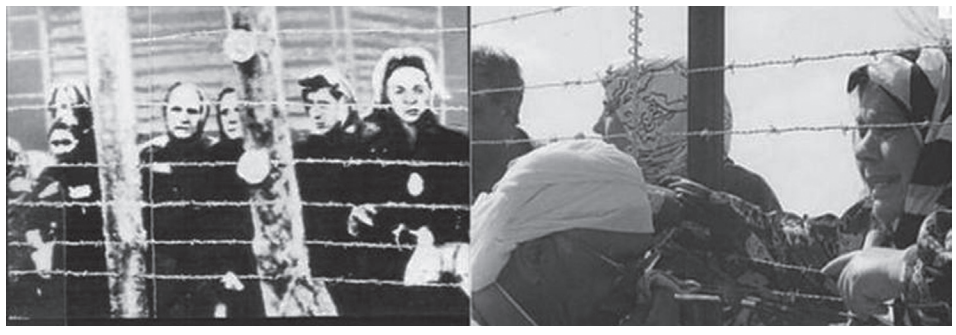
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PUNISHING THE PALESTINIANS

STATE TERRORISM AGAINST GAZA

| RALPH NADER







IN THE LONG SIXTY-YEAR TORTURED HISTORY OF THE PALESTINIAN EXPULSION FROM THEIR LANDS, CONGRESS HAS MAINTAINED THAT IT IS ALWAYS THE PALESTINIANS, THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY, AND NOW HAMAS WHO ARE TO BLAME FOR ALL HOSTILITIES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES WITH THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT.

THE LATEST ILLUSTRATION OF THIS WASHINGTON PUPPET SHOW, backed by the most modern weapons and billions of taxpayer dollars annually sent to Israel, was the grotesquely one-sided Resolutions whisked through the Senate and the House of Representatives.

While a massive bombing and invasion of Gaza was underway, the resolution blaming Hamas for all the civilian casualties and devastation—99% of it inflicted on Palestinians—zoomed through the Senate by voice vote and through the House by a vote of 390 to 5 with 22 legislators voting present.

There is more dissent against this destruction of Gaza among the Israeli people, the Knesset, the Israeli media, and Jewish-Americans than among the dittoheads on Capitol Hill.

The reasons for such near-unanimous support for Israeli actions—no matter how often they are condemned by peace advocates such as Bishop Desmond Tutu, United Nations resolutions, the World Court and leading human rights groups inside and outside of Israel, are numerous. The pro-Israeli government lobby, and the right-wing Christian evangelicals, lubricated by campaign money of many Political Action Committees (PACs) certainly are key.

There is also more than a little bigotry in Congress against Arabs and Muslims, reinforced by the mass media yahoos who set new records for biased reporting each time this conflict erupts.

The bias is clear. It is always the Palestinians' fault. Right-wingers who would never view the U.S. government as perfect see the Israeli government as never doing anything wrong. Liberals who do not hesitate to criticize the U.S. military view all Israeli military attacks, invasions and civilian devastation as heroic manifestations of Israeli defense.

The inversion of history and the scope of amnesia know no limits. What about the fact that the Israeli government drove Palestinians from their lands in 1947-48 with tens of thousands pushed into the Gaza strip. No problem to Congress.

Then the fact that the Israeli government cruelly occupied, in violation of UN resolutions, the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 and only removed its soldiers and colonists from Gaza (1.5 million people in a tiny area twice the size of the District of Columbia) in 2005. To Congress, the Palestinians deserved it.

Then when Hamas was freely elected to run Gaza, the Israeli authorities cut off the tax revenues on imports that belonged to the Gaza government. This threw the Gazans into a fiscal crisis—they were unable to pay their civil servants and police.

In 2006, the Israelis added to their unrelieved control of air, water and land around the open-air prison by establishing a blockade. The natives became restless. Under international law, a blockade is an act of war. Primitive rockets, called by reporters "wildly inaccurate" were fired into Israel. During this same period, Israeli soldiers and artillery and missiles would go into Gaza at will and take far more lives and cause far more injuries than those incurred by those rockets.

Civilians—especially children, the infirm and elderly—died or suffered week after week for lack of medicines, medical equipment, food, electricity, fuel and water which were embargoed by the Israelis.

Then the Israeli bombing followed by the invasion during the past three weeks with what prominent Israeli writer Gideon Levy called "a brutal and violent operation…far beyond what was needed for protecting the people in its south." Mr. Levy observed what the president of the United Nations General Assembly, Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann called a war against "a helpless and defenseless imprisoned population."

The horror of being trapped from fleeing the torrent of the most modern weapons of war from the land, air and seas is reflected in this passage from Amira Hass, writing in the leading Israeli newspaper Haaretz:

"The earth shaking under your feet, clouds of choking smoke, explosions like a fireworks display, bombs bursting into all-consuming flames that cannot be extinguished with water, mushroom clouds of pinkish-red smoke, suffocating gas, harsh burns on the skin, extraordinary maimed live and dead bodies."

Ms. Hass is pointing to the use of new anti-civilian weapons used on the Gazan people. So far there have been over 1100 fatalities, many thousands of injuries and the destruction of homes, schools, mosques, hospitals, pharmacies, granaries, farmer's fields and many critical public facilities. The clearly marked UN headquarters and UN school were smashed, along with stored medicines and food supplies.

Why? The Congressional response: "Hamas terrorists" everywhere. Sure, defending their Palestinian families is called terrorism. The truth is there is no Hamas army, airforce and navy up against the fourth most powerful military in the world. As one Israeli gunner on an armored personnel carrier frankly said to The New York Times: "They are villagers with guns. They don't even aim when they shoot."

Injured Gazans are dying in damaged hospital corridors, bleeding to death because rescuers are not permitted to reach them or are endangered themselves. Thousands of units of blood donated by Jordanians are stopped by the Israeli blockade. Israel has kept the international press out of the Gazan killing fields.

What is going on in Gaza is what Bill Moyers called it earlier this month – "state terrorism." Already about 400 children are known to have died. More will be added who are under the rubble.

Since 2002, more than 50 Arab and Muslim nations have had a standing offer, repeated often, that if Israel obeys several UN resolutions and withdraws to the 1967 borders leaving 22 percent of the original Palestine for an independent Palestinian state, they will open full diplomatic relations and there will be peace. Israel has declined to accept this offer.

None of these and many other aspects of this conflict matter to the Congress. Its members do not want to hear even from the Israeli peace movement, composed of retired generals, security chiefs, mayors, former government ministers, and members of the Knesset. In 60 years these savvy peace advocates have not been able to give one hour of testimony before a Congressional Committee.

Maybe members of Congress may wish to weigh the words of the founder of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, years ago when he said:

"There has been anti-Semitism the Nazis Hitler Auschwitz but was that their [the Palestinian's] fault? They only see one thing: We have come here and stolen their country."

Doesn't that observation invite some compassion for the Palestinian people and their right to be free of Israeli occupation, land and water grabs and blockades in the 22 percent left of Palestine?

FPH

Ralph Nader is a consumer advocate and three-time presidential candidate.

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Immigrant Rights activists gather with clergy to vigil and pray for immigration reform

by RoB Jan. 22, 2009

Dozens of immigrant rights advocates and members of the Faith Community gathered in front of the Mickey Leeland Federal Building on Wednesday the 21st of January to encourage the new President Barack Obama to pass comprehensive immigration reform in his first 100 days.

Around 2 dozen people gathered the day after president Obama's inauguration to hold a vigil and pray for comprehensive immigration reform in the first 100 days of his new administration. This was one of multiple events that took place around the country raising the issue of immigration reform. An organizer at the event said that on the campaign trail both McCain and Obama had promised to make changes to the broken immigration system in the first 100 days of their administration, and that this event was hoping to softly nudge the administration to do so.

The event was composed largely of reading of scripture and prayers by clergy men and women about the Christian commandments to love our neighbor and take care of the foreigner. There were also speeches given by community organization composed of and advocating for immigrants , including the Houston Interfaith Worker Justice Center, the Central American Resource Center, and Immigrant Families and Students in Struggle.

The event was hopeful and positive, and those present were cautiously optimistic that positive change may be possible from this new administration.



Black Heritage Society News Conference

by John H. Jan. 16,

As the Israeli aggression continues on the people of Gaza, more and more Americans are speaking out, demanding an end to the murder of innocent civilians, along with the blockade of the Gaza strip.

In Houston, The Black Heritage Society, held a news conference, attended by several local activists, all calling for an end to the attacks on Gaza. As The Black Heritage Society announced plans for its annual Martin Luther King March and Parade, this years theme calls for an immediate cease fire in Gaza, to Save Our Children.

Statements of solidarity with the citizens of Gaza, and a call for peace, and an end to the bombings were read by Ovid Duncantell, Esther King, David Atwood, Dr. Tarek Hussein, P.K. McCary, and Rev. Robert Gilmore.

Plans were also announced for this years march and parade. In a joint statement issued, by all the participants at the press conference, an invitation was issued to “all Peace and Justice loving people to join us at the corner of 610 loop South and Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd. at 12 Noon, Monday January 19th as we march to the parade kick off site at the intersection of MLK Blvd. and Griggs Rd.



March for Peace on Martin Luther King Day

by RoB Jan. 19, 2009

Around a hundred folks gathered at a boarded up burger joint at MLK Blvd. and 610 to march for peace north on MLK till we reached Griggs Road.

Around a hundred people gathered to observe Martin Luther King Day and participate in the march for peace organized by the Black Heritage Society. The march left a boarded up burger joint just inside the loop and marched north on MLK through the South Park Neighborhood.

Around half the march was people from the arab community and their supporters, marching in solidarity with the people of Gaza and against the Israeli siege. The majority of chants were for a Free Palestine and Peace in the middle east, with some chanting against police brutality.

The Parade has been happening for decades, and as we marched, many people were sitting on the side of the road in lawn chairs to watch and cheer for the march. Many folks in the neighborhood wore Barack Obama gear and seemed excited



Houston Food Not Bombs Harassed by HPD

by Nick Jan. 13

I arrived with a pot of hot food to find a bunch of HPD officers politely asking us to find a new place to serve, taking down ID information, and willing to threaten us if we didn't comply.

Houston Food Not Bombs has been harassed by cops before and has been hassled by the library before. Last night, for the first time in a year and half, the Downtown Public Library (contact them at ContactHPL@cityofhouston.net) decided to ask us to go elsewhere, this time by sending out the HPD. Supervisor Pribilski was not stating that any law was being broken, but spoke on behalf of the "Public" Library, that they would like us to go away.

This type of NIMBY (not in my backyeard) oppression of the rights of the homeless has been a constant theme for FNB, causing us to move several times over the years, until reaching our current location at the Downtown "Public" Library.

The HPD officers took down the ID information of volunteers to fill out a report. When I denied my ID, Pribilski threatened to tow my car if I did not. They asked us to find another place to go, not realizing, of course, that wherever we go, they would be sent out eventually to ask us to go elsewhere.

Several people there to eat were very supportive, thanking us for risking such confrontations to feed them. One said he hadn't eaten in three days.

Protesters gather at River Oaks shopping center to demand gay marriage rights

by RoB Jan. 12

The protests for marriage rights that began following the passage of Proposition 8 in California continued this Saturday with a protest in the River Oaks neighborhood against the Defense of Marriage Act and for gay marriage rights.

It was cold on Saturday when me and my girlfriend biked to West Gray to support the protest called for by Impact Houston against the Defense of Marriage Act and demanding same sex marriage.

Impact Houston asked people to "make signs listing the different legal rights and responsibilities of marriage, none of which are available to same-sex couples here in Texas, following the passing of the constitutional ban on same-sex marriage that passed in 2005."

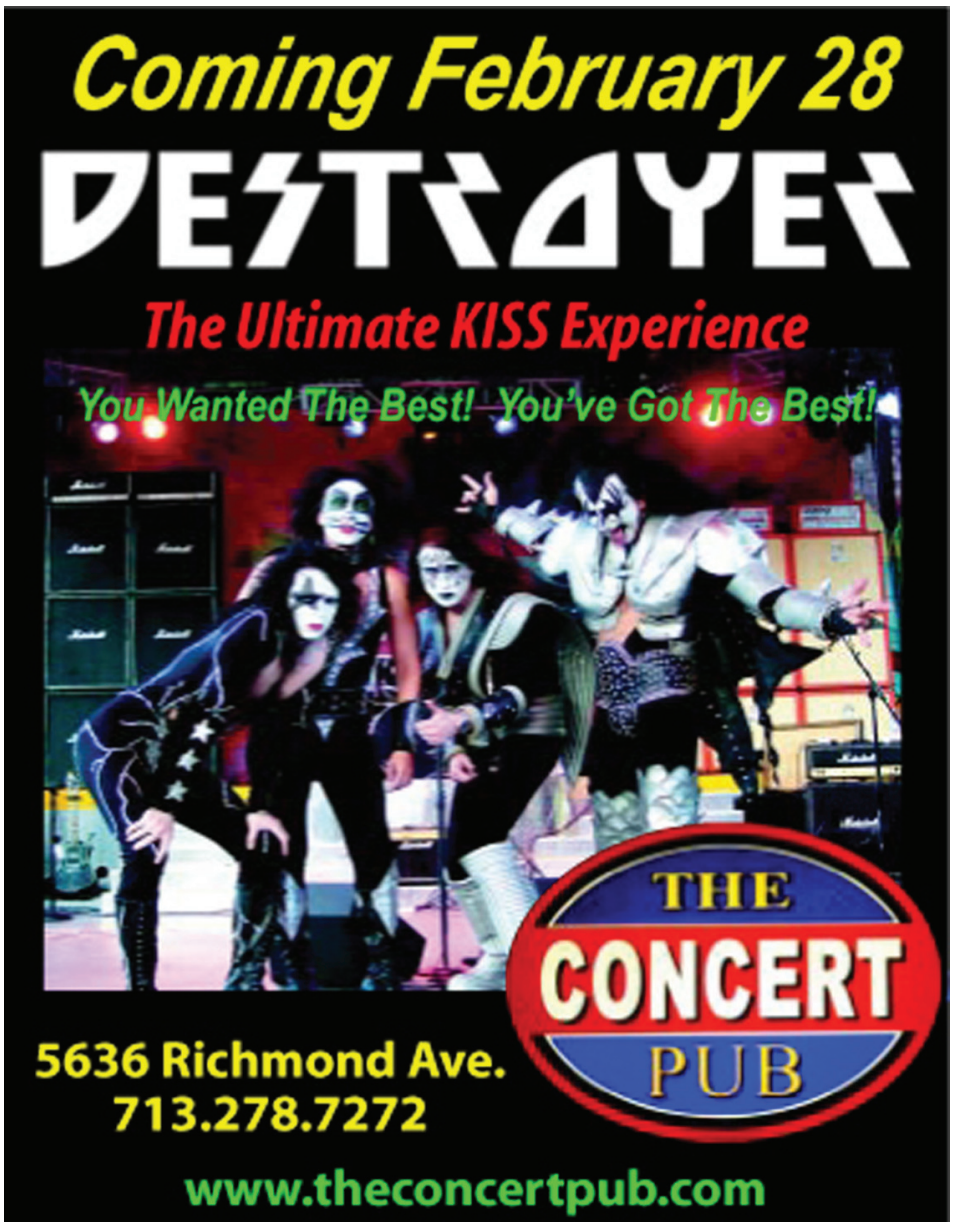
It took us a while to find the protest, as the 100 or so protesters had begun to march, we caught up with the protest and marched from around Woodhead to Shepherd, where protesters set up showing signs to traffic stretching from Shepherd to the River Oaks theater. Many folks honked, and I only noticed one negative response, a yuppie white dude who while walking from his car to a store gave us a thumbs down and a frown.

The protest was an interesting mix of age, race and gender, while the older protesters were almost all white, and predominantly men, the youth were much more noticeably multi-racial, with black, latin@, and asian youth present and protesting.

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Interview

CHRISTY CACRACAS

| Shelby Hohl

FPH HAD THE CHANCE TO CHAT WITH ANIMATOR CHRISTY KARACAS ABOUT HIS NEW CARTOON *SUPERJAIL* WHICH IS CURRENTLY AIRING ON ADULT SWIM. WE PICKED HIS BRAIN ON EVERYTHING FROM GAINING ARTISTIC EXPOSURE TO NEW WAVE PUNK BAND LES SAVY FAV. READ ON FELLOW SCRIBES, WITHIN LIE MAGNIFICENT SECRETS TO CREATIVE JUSTICE!

Where did you get the idea to do a cartoon about a hallucinogenic jail-house run by a Willy Wonka-style warden? ¶ I had an old pitch that was a reality jail show. When we had our meeting with adult swim I brought it up and it wasn't really what they were looking for so we were like, how about the most insane, crazy, jail in the universe? A 'superjail'? Little did we know that there are real 'superjails'...without all the psychedelia of course. Also, it was kind of constructed to be a place/show where anything could happen giving us the freedom to do whatever we want creatively.

How large was the crew it took to produce the cartoon? ¶ About 25 people on staff, 4 sound people, the composer of the score and a ton of interns.

The crew is extremely talented and hard-working-I can't say enough good things about them! If any animation people are reading this--if someone's resume says 'superjail' on it HIRE THEM IMMEDIATELY cuz it means they are great-hahah.

It's made at Augenblick studios in Brooklyn entirely in house which is also pretty cool.

Your student film *Space War,* garnered you a lot of attention and even was featured on MTV's Cartoon Sushi. Did you produce the whole project yourself? If so, how long did it take you to make it, start to finish? ¶ Yes. That was my degree project I did my senior year at Rhode Island School of Design. It took about 6 months maybe? It was A LOT of work as I did it all myself-drawing, animating, sound etc...plus that was all hand drawn-no computers. Ha.

Are we expecting a season 2 of *Superjail*? ¶ Yes! (I think so, cross your fingers)

Can we expect any Superjail merch? shirts? DVDs? ¶ Definitely. Not sure what exactly, but definitely DVDs. the rest is up to adult swim. I hope there are action figures. That would be awesome. I want the warden troopers from season finale more than anything.

Suggest a book and a band! ¶ The stars my destination (a.k.a. tiger! tiger!) by Alfred bester. It's amazing. It was written in the 50's but reads like the newest coolest craziest sci-fi adventure...kind of a 'Count of Monte Cristo' in space. A band-Les Savy Fav-they are one of my favorite bands-they are also amazing.

Do you think it would be of benefit to Mr. Spock to have a handlebar moustache? ¶ Only if it was logical.

***Superjail, Bar Fight,* and *Space War* are notorious for their very graphic and intense fight scenes. What kind of stuff inspired you to go the route you did?** ¶ I love the cartooney violence in the fights but it's also about the movement and the challenge of the 'choreography' of the fights-trying to keep them intense and interesting. Influences are obviously classic cartoons like Popeye and Looney Toons, but also weird psychedelia...kung fu movies, action, anything cool really.

What do you think about the current state of animation — where do you see it going/ where would you like it to go? ¶ When you say 'current' I'm assuming you mean TV/movie animation entertainment right? I'm not the biggest fan of 'current' animation. I would love it if it went in a more hand drawn looking and more importantly cartoony fun visual direction instead of 'scripted sit-com' direction. Seems like that's the only thing the networks want. I'd love a show that was purely visual with no talking... i'm not huge into the whole '3-d' thing either. I do love the Pixar movies-they are amazing. Maybe it's a love or nostalgia for what you grew up loving? I dunno. There's also tons of crazy independent animation that's really cool but doesn't really exist as 'popular entertainment' so most people don't even see it. I like a lot of that kind of stuff. Festivals are great way to see that kind of stuff-and the Internet, even though watching stuff on the computer kind of sucks.

If you could pit any two cultural icons against each other in a skin shredding death match — who would it be? And who would win? ¶ I think I'd rather watch two cultural icons get drunk together. Jim Morrison and Harry Nilsson would be pretty cool.

You play guitar in a band out of New York called 'Cheeseburger'. Any particular reason to go with that name? Planning on touring anytime soon? ¶ The name is iconic-its fun-classic-all American-badass. What's better than a cheeseburger? We are working on our second record right now. If it is on time--we're kind of behind schedule right now--we were supposed to tour spring 09-so i'm not sure if we'll wait till next fall or what...you can stay posted on our my space page (myspace.com/cheeseburger)

Do you have any recommendations for aspiring artists to help them further expose themselves? ¶ Work hard, be productive, and to expose yourself to many different things. Also don't worry too much about being 'current' or 'selling'. You have to be true to the kind of stuff you want to make. The short film *Barfight* that we made is what got us on Adult Swim's radar. The funny thing is that it was rejected from every film festival we entered it into and there was a three or four year gap until they contacted us (we made Barfight in 2000!). Kind of insane when you think about it.

FPH

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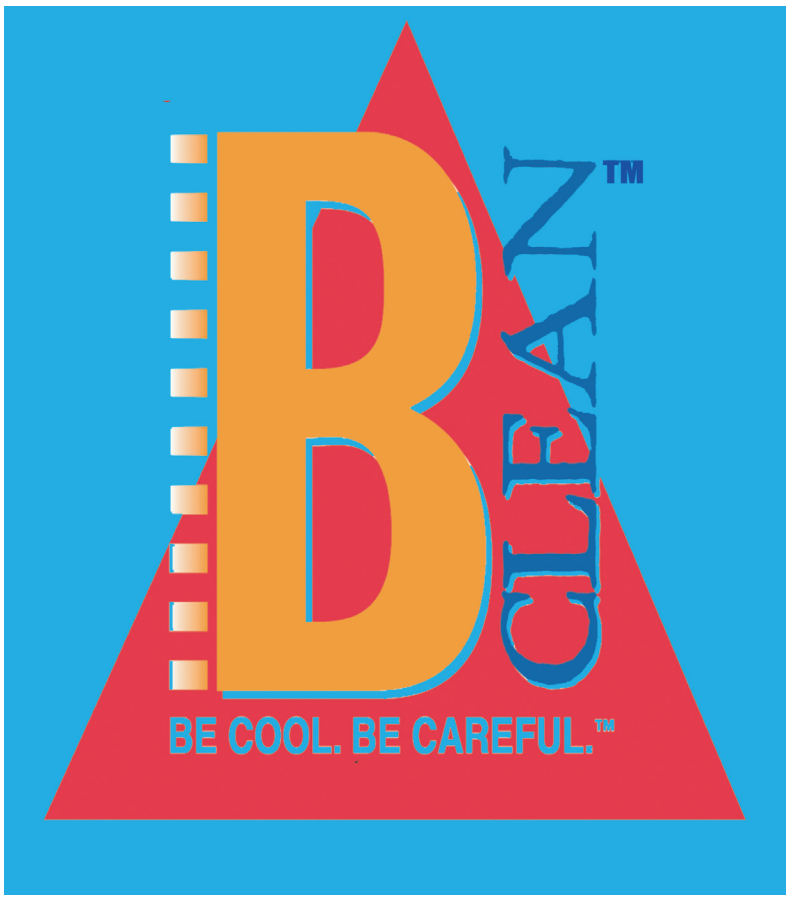
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