FREE PRESS

HOUSTON

MUSIC • NEWS • PUBLIC OPINION • ARTS • EVENTS



BEST ONE EVER
APRIL 2006


April 29, 2006
Ida-Bow
Resurrecting the Spirit of the Westfest

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editors@freepresshouston.com



Life is like a metaphor.

Wow. I think this may be one of the most goodest issues of the *Free Press* ever. This issue features such articles as M. Martin's look at the metro on Richmond debacle, rumors of nuke detonation in Houston, a pretty little massacre last week that your tax dollars funded, another look at the sad demise of Cactus Records, and even a poignant look at the Satanic powers lurking in Lakewood Church courtesy of Alex "Asshole" Wukman. Alex, Houston's premier scumfuck, makes his majestic return on the wings of Ramen Noodles and beers he stole by jumping the bar at Helios. When I go places with him, I ask that he please not speak or look at me lest the authorities assume I am involved with one of his many scandals. *See photo.* Also, this issue is the first issue that I has been printed with 100 percent soy inks on free-trade, organic, recycled paper by union workers paid in tofu. To top it all off, we printed all of the reds in the blood of Halliburton employees that we are keeping hostage in our dark dungeon in the Montrose. That's right. Don't say we never did anything conscientious.

P.S.—I just spell checked this letter and oddly enough Microsoft word caught the word 'Halliburton' misspelled. It just about never catches misspelled corporate names. For example, watch this: Clear Channel. See! The Freemasons have teamed up with the neo-cons to make sure we NEVER fuck up their namesakes.





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WALTERS ON WASHINGTON

April 1
Spain Colored Orange, Vox-trot, BoJones

Monday 3
Lorene Drive, April Sound, Jack In The Pulpit.

Thursday 6
Deadboy and the Elephant-men, Buxton, ESE.

Friday 7
An Albratros

Saturday 8
Stare Decisis, Heist At Hand, Transmography, Westview, Red Star of the Solar Fed

Monday 10
The Fatals, The Rat Traps, Skullening, Mr. Electric

Thursday 13
Two Gallants, Shurman, Holy Ghost Revival

Friday 14
The Absence, Thine Eyes Bleed, As Eden Burns, Cast In Grey

Saturday 15
Complete Control, Krum Bums, Razorwire, Countless Victims

Monday 17
The Prize Fight, Day Break Ends, Hollywood Black, 2 TBA

Tuesday 18
The Sword, Torche, Ags, Bowel

Wednesday 19
Fruit Bats, Amandine, Sam Jayne

Friday 21
Koufax, Cordero

Saturday 22
The Pilots, The Ivory Class, The Methods

Monday 24
Bowel, Ocean, Cardinal, God?s Temple of Family Deliverance

Friday 28
Rainer Maria

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MERIDIAN
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Mon. - Apr. 3
Asleep At The Wheel w/Sean Reefer & The Resin Valley Boys

Wed. - Apr. 5
Shooter Jennings

Thurs. - Apr. 6
JOE LYNN TURNER w/ LAZY-a Deep Purple Tribute Band

Fri. - Apr. 7
THE BLUE ROOM: Blackfoot w/Jailbreak- Sacred Ground, PJ Flowers
THE RED ROOM: Exene Cervenka and the Original Sinners w/Born Liars

Sat. - Apr. 8 **Klute**

Sun. - Apr. 9
Teddy Gieger w/Dirtie Blonde

Tues. - Apr. 11
The Iron Maidens w/ Powerload

Thurs. - Apr. 13
Helios Creed w/Chrome, Poor Dumb Bastards, Mescalero, Dead Roses

Fri. - Apr. 14
Alpha Phi Alpha Icebreaker After Party

Sat. Apr. 15
Jungle 14- A Space Odyssy

Thur. - Apr. 20
Dog Fashion Disco w/ Tub Ring, Look What I Did, Indorphine

Fri. - Apr. 21
Viral Load w/ Scattered Remains, Erzebet, Assimilation

Sat. - Apr. 22
Houston Roller Derby Prom

Wed. - Apr. 26
The Queers

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arts



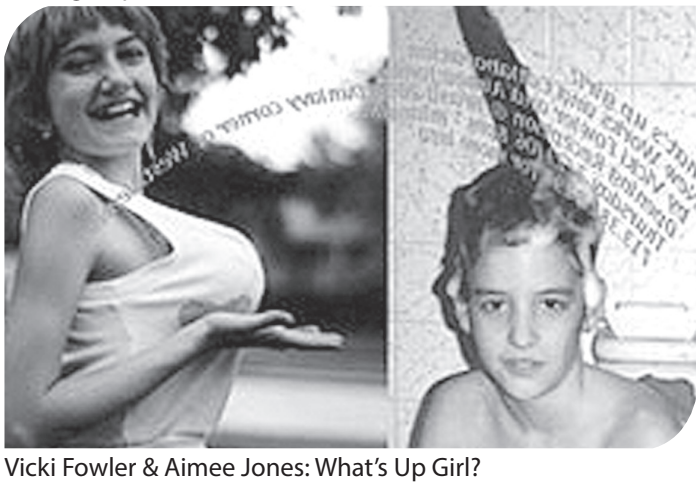
Daniel-Kayne: Shame
M2 Gallery (325 West 19th St)
Through April 15. (713) 861-6070



Ken Little: Bits and Pieces
Redbud Gallery 303 E 11th Street
Through April 30. (713) 862-2532



Artist Responding to Violence
Fotofest www.fotofest.org
Through April 23. (713) 223-5522



Vicki Fowler & Aimee Jones: What's Up Girl?
Café Brasil 2604 Dunlavy
Through May 15. (713) 382-8294



DEBRIS: Lit-tle Fluffy Clouds

Buffalo Sean

G Gallery, on 11th Street next to **Redbud**, opened well with a texified group show, Al Souza's band (Souza on banjo), and a kick-ass party. The Texas eccentrics are a group unto themselves. Generally liberitarian, whether Democrat or Republican, and with a clear sense of the imagery and demeanor Texas has historially echoed; the western, cowboy, renegade, straight-talker and his equally rough and tough alter-ego gal; the Texas eccentrics gather at some art shows to remenisce and do business, **Wayne Gilbert**'s debut in the Heights was a fine example of their talent balancing art appreciation and having a damn good time.

Two senior undergrad shows open this April, Rice and Houston field their candidates for "more school or teaching" consideration. On the 15th the **Blaffer Gallery** plays host to those toiling away on the fourth floor all year in their Masters Thesis exhibit. I hope it's better than last year. Through April 29th. **Rice** goes in-house by selecting **Christian Eckart** to curate their undergrad exhibit opening Thursday April 27th. At least he's got a great gallery to work with.

Check out Dan Steinhilber at the Contemporary Arts Museum, it's pretty good. Painfully lo-fi and deadpan funny, Dan uses modern detritus (starbucks cups, take-out containers, plastic hangers) to explore formal ideas most often explored in Minimalist work. They're great for a laugh, and the concerns Steinhilber tackles are art historically interesting, but there is a disconnect in their presentation, a lack of wonder. Through June 4th.

Houston artist Jim Love, who recently passed away, will bring out the old Texas art crowd to the CAM April 22nd, *From Now On* is a retrospective focusing on early, smaller sculptures from the 60s that laid the groundwork for AbEx's death with pre-Pop Art work by Jasper Johns and Robert Rauchenberg. From the press release: "Love created his early "put-together" sculptures out of objects he found in junkyards… He elevated ordinary things to inventive and often amusing works of art through his use of the Surrealist and Dada-influenced practice of assemblage, creating a body of work that includes oversized birds, jacks, and flowers as well as functional sculptures such as a chess set, coat racks, and chairs." There'll probably be a big book.

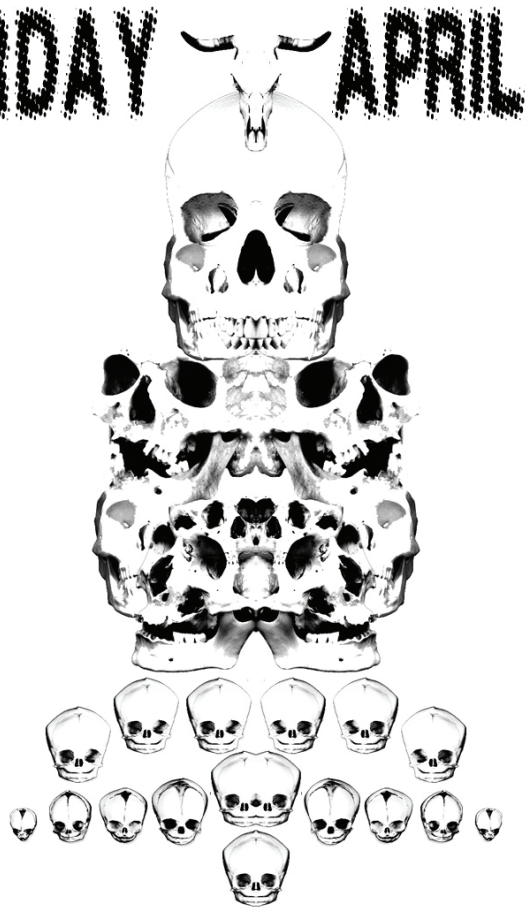
Yay! **Otabenga Jones** got on the cover of artshouston! At least they're not totally stuffy over there, you just have to be in the Whitney, have a New York gallery, and sell $3,000 shoes (they're full of marbles) first. Check out Michael Woodson and **Robert Pruitt**'s show *Living Art* on KPFT 90.1 Fridays at 11am.

If you're in Austin check out **Hana Hillerova**'s new exhibit *Super Space* at **Women an Their Work** (1710 Lavaca, Austin) . Giant, scary, and crappily made, Hana's installations are steadily ascending into space station/ space monster territory without losing her mainstay material, cardboard.

As part of **Westheimer Street Festival**, the American Wandering Club is attempting to turn the inside of **Numbers** (300 Westheimer) into a swap meet of installation art, or something like that. Echoing the freeform Happenings of Oldenburg and Kesey in the 60s, *SOLID: the state of things* will hopefully be as sloppy and dangerous as it's forbearers. From the press release: "the virus can now replicate without disturbing the metabolism and without being recognized as a virus.A symbiotic relationship has now been established. –w.s. burroughs". Saturday April 29th, 2-9pm.

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SATURDAY APRIL 29TH



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23 FILM 45

SXSW wrappage

by Michael Bergeron



| Forgiving the Franklins |

Cruising into Austin I knew there was no way I could see more than a dozen films and assorted shorts before notching another South By Southwest Film Festival on my celluloid belt. Thirteen features and five short subjects later my eyes are blurry but I'm well hydrated as one sponsor, Aqufina, offered free bottled water inside and out. (Lose the artificially fruit-flavored swill, it tastes like cough medicine.)

To put the amount of films I saw in perspective consider that SXSW 2006 programmed 118 feature films in categories including retrospectives, special events, premieres, narrative and documentary competition, midnight screenings, and emerging visions. Everywhere I walk, since most of the events are all within shouting distance of one another, I meet filmmakers most of whom are Austin residents, the rest attendees. The filmmakers literally outnumber regular audience members at some events. While publicists from Gotham might generalize Austin as a music festival town, the locals know that Austin has the biggest filmmaking scene of any Texas town, and in fact that week's cover of the Austin Chronicle celebrates a total of five films that were locally produced and playing in the festival.

SXSW always plays great documentaries and the music themed documentaries in particular benefit from the Capital City's special relation with sound. The BBC docu **The Passing Show – The Life and Times of Ronnie Lane** encapsulated his entire career from the Small Faces, The Faces, solo and otherwise. Fans of Lane know he spent time in Houston and Austin before his death in 1997. Funny how Rod Stewart, original lead singer for The Faces, is absent but rock legends Pete Townsend and Eric Clapton can't praise Lane's influence on rock enough.

Quite another story with **loudQUIETloud: A Film About the Pixies**. Sometimes you don't want to know too much about rockers you adore because loudQUIETloud was somnolent. This is not a concert film but rather a behind the scenes look at the Pixies on a reunion tour. Imagine a reality show about people who don't do drugs anymore. The filmmakers show us Frank Black a.k.a. Black Francis in three different scenes chest naked. But Kim Deal - clothes on in every scene. I feel ripped.

My personal favorite film was the music docu **Metal: A Headbanger's Journey**. This film may not see theatrical but you can get it on DVD in late May. Not personally being a fan of metal other than a song here or there I was fascinated by how director/producer Sam Dunn approached the subject in an anthropological manner befitting his own training in behavioral science and his love for heavy metal.

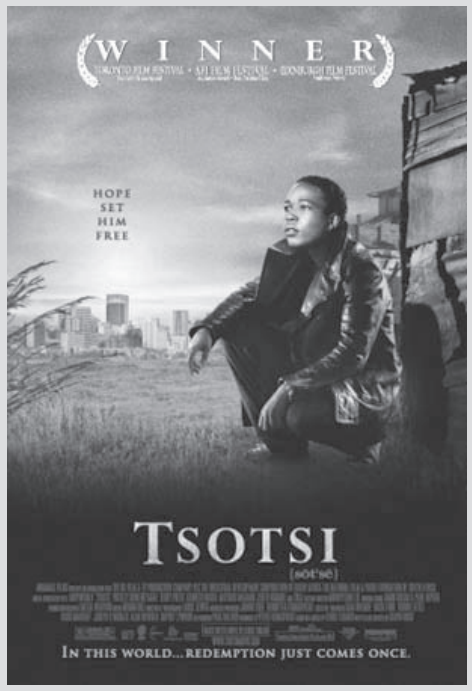
The film covers Richard Wagner, Metallica, Black Sabbath, worldwide banned LP covers, Dee Snyder testifying before Congress and Tipper Gore in the mid-80s, who was the first to use the fore-finger and little-finger devil-horn sign (other than UT alumni), and Norwegian Death Metal just for starters. Dunn never stays too long on one subject and the result provides a rocking ride through two generations of rock culture. Plus Dunn makes for a gracious host; his asides are illuminating, he talks to all the right people and he never deigns to his audience. A pedigree of heavy metal graphic chart comprehensively allows us to follow what for many will be an unknown road.

Also look for these above average documentaries to appear somewhere before the end of the year: **This Film Is Not Yet Rated** takes on the ratings board for motion pictures, going so far as to hire private detectives to identify who the actual members are; **Maxed Out!**, an eye-opening report on many misunderstood facets of credit card debt; and **Shadow Company** takes viewers into the outsourced military industry. Mercenaries are people too this film says.

Less interesting was **Fired!** (the title says it all), although the shock of recognition factor is high on this one. And **Nobelity**, where the filmmaker interviews Nobel Prize winners, is well meaning but meandering. The docu **The Last Western**, about a town time has forgotten on the edge of the desert, will itself be forgotten very soon.

Don't fret, your humble scribe merely uses the docus as a diving board for the more cerebral fictional features. Oddly the one that stuck when the others had faded was **Behind the Mask: The Rise of Leslie Vernon**. Behind the Mask is a horror spoof that's smart enough to cast Robert Englund in the kind of role that would be played by Donald Pleasence twenty years ago. But Englund's just a guest star. Leslie Vernon (Invasion's Nathan Baesel) wants to be the next famous mass murderer and a television reality crew films him stalking potential victims. Everyone thinks it's a big joke, natch, until Leslie turns the tables on everyone.

Other highlights included **The Cassidy Kids**, a mobius strip of a plot that involves the cast of a hit 80s TV Saturday morning show who reveal grim secrets when they meet in the present day to record the show's DVD commentary. Not to be outdone in the next voice you hear department, **Forgiving the Franklins** shows what happens when a family loses its guilt and religious inhibitions after they meet the real Jesus while in a group coma following a car accident. Watching this film it seems logical that the phrase "What the fuck," is the perfect way to start a prayer.



Tsotsi director Gavin Hood spoke to the audience at the Angelika Film Center in downtown Houston the Monday preceding the Academy Awards. His Q&A was filled with both technical details and the more human story behind the making of the movie. When **Tsotsi** won the AA for Best Foreign Film the following weekend viewers saw Hood's charismatic speaking style give grace and humor to his speech.

As Hood ordered the ceremony cameras to switch from him to the row with the actors from **Tsotsi**, he interspersed his acknowledgements with the cues from the teleprompter indicated the ticking clock. His commanding oratory skills aside it's no surprise to learn that Hood has a law degree from his native country of South Africa and subsequently came to UCLA to study film. A producer approached Hood to helm **Tsotsi** based on Athol Fugard's novel. Moving the story from the 50s to post-apartheid South Africa was one of Hood's concerns.

Tsotsi, the title character, brutally shots a woman as he carjacks her luxury car. In the back seat is an infant. Discovering the baby in the car that he has since wrecked, **Tsotsi** decides to care for the child. A wide range of characters reflecting many of South Africa's 11 official languages balances the film's gritty realism as seen through street gangs and poverty.

"At the crucial point of the movie, the man who has been speaking high-Tswana starts talking to **Tsotsi** in street-Tswana," Hood noted to the audience. Some of the other languages heard in **Tsotsi** include Afrikaans, English, Zulu and Dutch

Hood then demonstrated, walking back and forth in front of the screen, how he used stationary set-ups that kept "the eyeline tight to the lens." Using his hands to draw imaginary borders on the screen Hood demonstrated how he cropped the image for any subsequent television projection while in the digital intermediate stage of post-production.

Admittedly the best way to see a film is with the director explaining his movie commentary-style. A film like **Tsotsi** is loaded with so many fascinating peripheral aspects and they only become apparent when you're familiar with the culture in which it takes place.

ENJOY

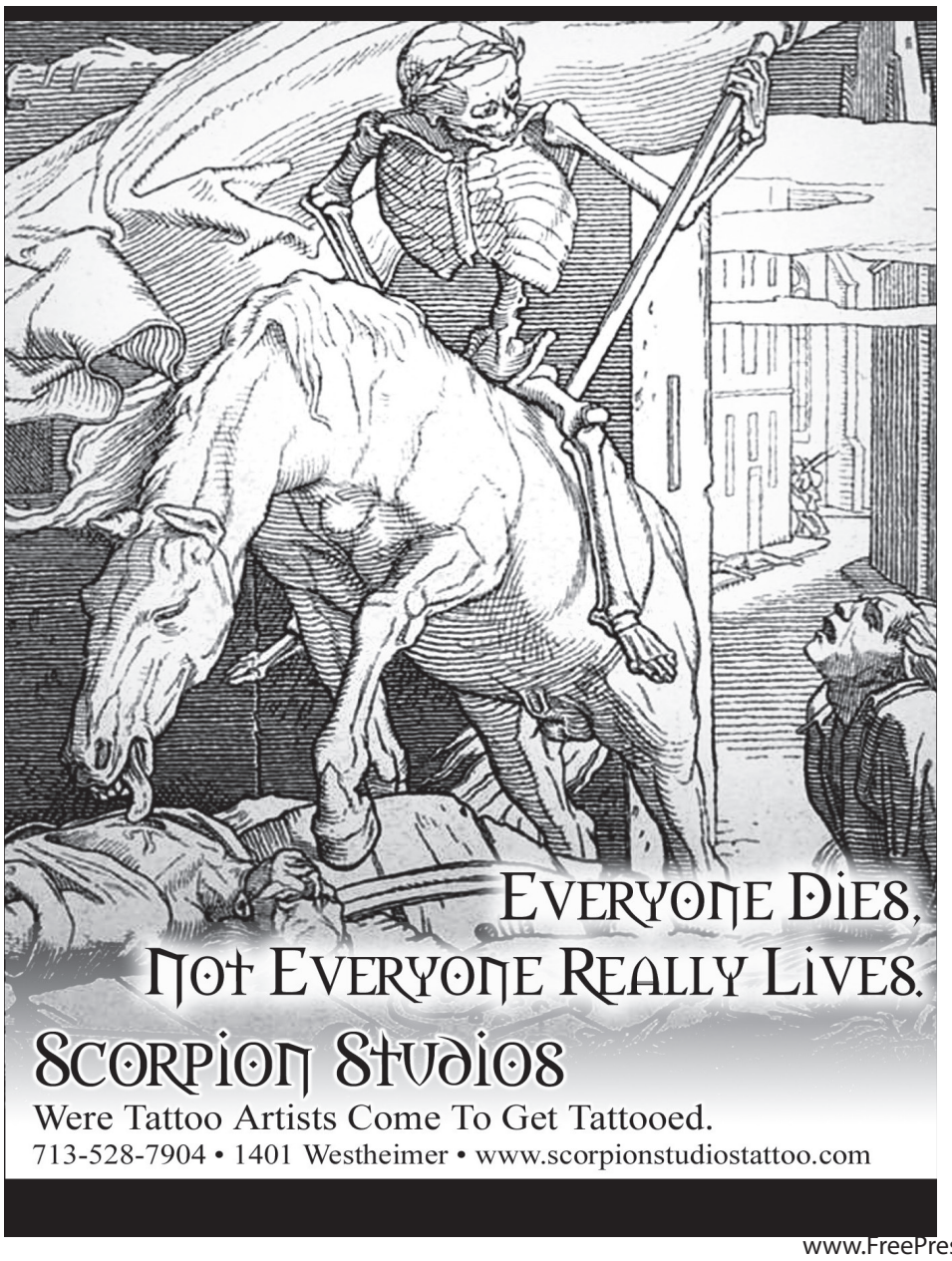
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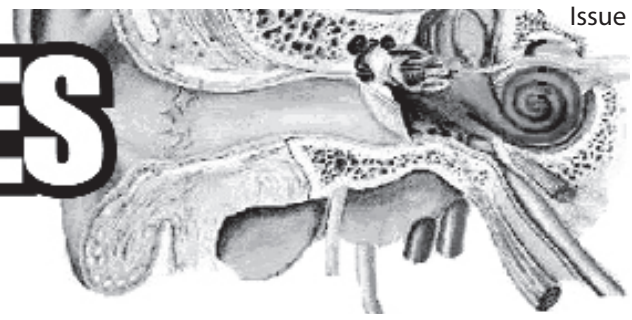
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SOUNDBYTES



The Irony Is …
What the loss of Catus Records really means.

Last night, I was one of the many sordid individuals who made it to Cactus Records goodbye hurrah. As with many cities around the country, Houston is saying goodbye to it's icon of independent music stores. The party was attended by many a record clerk, band members, customers who never bought shit there in the 1st place and other low income people who were drunk of the free booze. Cactus will be missed for much more than it's reasonably priced CD's or knowledgeable staff. The shop employed throngs of local musicians and artists who used the low but stable income as the life-blood as they pursued their various art forms; be it music, film-making, art, or just street corner philosophizing. What tangible affects this will have on local arts is arguable. Will they get jobs at PetsMart next door? Will the Texas Employment Commission office soon be filled with the banter of record clerks discussing Hawkwind albums? Who knows? What we do know is that there is one less place to for a young musician to get a fun clock-jockey job. One less place to get a credible opinion on a new release. One less place to pick up a gram of ganja after a long days work. One less place to get George St. Clair's authoritative synopsis of any movie ever released. Most importantly, there is one less place for bands and artists to leave flyers and posters for their upcoming events. This is critical as such available spots are either dwindling or being flooded with one of the various new 'vapid-fashionista-fake-tan-boobie' magazines. Soundwaves, once a Grand Central Station of local flyers and posters, has opted for a more antiseptic feel and forbade any such materials. This is not only hurts the critical spread of info, but also is a stab in the heart of those who so artfully produce these materials. Flyers and posters have evolved into one of the premier vessels for underground art and Houston has actually been at the forefront of this craft. It is a shame and something worth bitching about. Hence, next time you step into Soundwaves make sure to nag a little bit. Or how about a lot. So, as one of the last local, independent sources of underground music info, here is a short list of some shows to peep in the near future.

The Dimes
4/2 Super Happy Fun Land
2610Ashland7138802100

Mad Happy
4/2 Proletariat
903Richmond7135231199

Sitka sound
4/3 Rudyard's
2010WaughDr.7135210521

Asleep at the Wheel
4/3 Meridian
1503Chartes7132251717

Drop Trio
4/7 Helios
411Westheimer7135262628

Rebirth Brass Band
4/7 Warehouse Live
813StEmmanuel7132255483

Heist at Hand
4/8 Walter's on Washington
4215Washington7138622513

Penny Royal
4/9 Engine Room
1515Pease7136547846

Elvis Costello
4/13 Jones Hall
615Louisiana7132273974

Shows



Asleep at the Wheel
4/3 @ Meridian



Aviador Dro
4/15 @ Proletariat



Rebirth Brass Band
4/7 @ Warehouse Live



Chango Jackson
4/8 @ Fitzgerald's



Bones
4/7 @ Helios



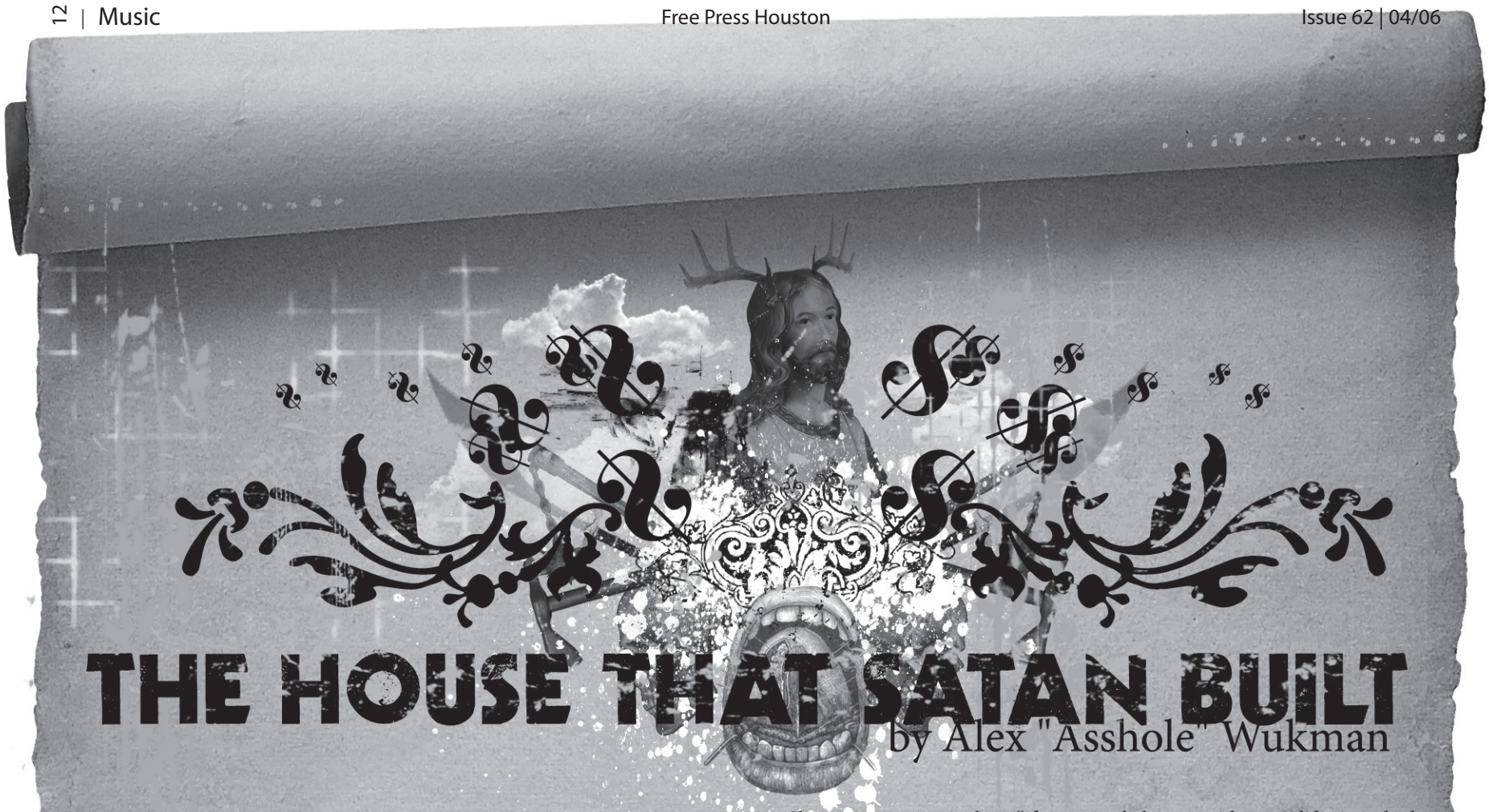
Jack in the Pulpit
4/3 @ Walter's

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THE HOUSE THAT SATAN BUILT

by Alex "Asshole" Wukman

Alex Wukman and Omar Afra explore the historical pop music legacy of what was the Summit, then Compaq Center, and now Lakewood Church

"I think that was the spot where Nikki Six drank a bucket of spit while Motley Crue played Shout at the Devil," Omar points at the stage as we sit down in the nosebleed seats at Lake Wood church.

"I know I had seats in this area when I smoked my first joint," I say as the middle aged white woman with a permanent scowl, a bad boob job and hair that could give Brett Michaels a run for his money leans in and tells us we need to move.

"Who was playing," Omar says as we get up and walk farther towards the ceiling.

"Rage Against the Machine and Gang Starr," I say as we sit down. Immediately we are asked to move over towards the aisle by a large black man with a bad suit and a secret service style earpiece.

"You went to that show," Omar asks me as we slide over so a pudgy family of five can sit next to us.

"Yea. I was supposed to interview Rage for the HCC paper but the promoter blew me off," I say as the Lakewood band goes into their ninth chorus of "I'm a friend of God" and the crane camera swoops low into the crowd to catch the children clapping and the mother's reading the words off the Jumbotron.

"Did you see the manhole covers," Omar asks as he flips through the program.

"No," I say, "why?"

"You didn't notice that the logo was on them?"

"Logo? What like a cross?"

"No," Omar says pointing at the stage, "the Lakewood Church 'L' was on the manhole covers outside."

"Interesting," I reply and then ask, "What do you not see on that stage?" Omar looks at the singer holding a wireless microphone in a hand with a diamond ring so big you can see it twinkle from where we are sitting, the twelve-piece band, the seventy-five-member choir, the three giant video screens, the slowly rotating globe, retractable electric bandstand, two artificial waterfalls, grand piano, three tier lighting system, custom made altar and brand new white carpeting.

"I give up," Omar says as Victoria Osteen comes onstage.

"This is the time in our service when we worship God by tithing," she stares directly into the camera and doesn't blink as the editor flashes the Lakewood Church mailing address on screen.

She goes on to say that, "if you aren't happy with your life, in a bad relationship, give god ten percent of what he's given you and it'll be all better. And please include your full name and file number on the envelope and make sure to make checks payable to Lakewood Church."

"Look around this whole building," I say, "What's missing?" He takes in the two crane cameras along with the two handheld camera and the two studio cameras on hydraulic lifts. His eyes drift down to the sound and light booth with the fifty-five channel mixing board, the editing computers, and wireless light board. He looks at the ushers directing people to find their seats with all the diplomacy of the Eighty Second Airborne. He notices the large American flag hanging, as it did for the rocket games, on one end of the arena. He sees the brand new carpeting, the brand new seats, repainted railing.

"I still don't know," he says.

"Think about the outside of this building," I say, "What didn't you see?" He remembers the logos, fountain, pillars and tinted windows.

"I'm getting tired of this game," Omar says, "What's missing from Lakewood Church?"

"A cross," I say and point to the stage. Omar looks at the stage, and then glances around the building.

"You're right," he says.



Notable Debauchery and Satan loving bands that rocked what is now Lakewood

Joel Osteen stands on hollowed ground when he spews his quasi-Christian motivational speeches. Many a beelsebub loving metal act and then some preceded his jibberish with some historic metal.

Def Leppard
Orgy Underneath Stage
Ozzy and Motley Crue
Nikki Sixx drinks bucket of spit
Slayer
Satan Worshipped
White Zombie
Satan Praised
Metallica
Satan Thanked
Pantera
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JAZZ TODAY

By Will Layman

As soon as people find out you're a jazz fan, there are a few things you hear again and again: I really like jazz, you know, for relaxing. Like: for falling asleep. Jazz all sounds the same to me. Just a bunch of boo-doooh, deeee, on and on. I'd like to like jazz, but I don't even know where to start!

The first two comments, well . . . But that last one begs for a response. The list.



Lest the indie kids con themselves into thinking jazz is music to sleep to, Layman delves into idiosyncratic listmaking to explain why jazz is still a living, aching, breathing thrill.



Arthur Blythe, Lenox Avenue Breakdown (Columbia, 1979)

This stew of mad rhythm and improvisation came out on a major label at a time when jazz seemed down for the count and nowhere to be found. The Marsalis neo-classical surge was still a couple years away, so Columbia had put some money on an acid-toned alto saxophonist with a band featuring electric guitar, flute and — huh? — tuba. He'd be dropped from the label soon enough, but this debut record never stopped dancing. Containing only fourtracks, it features long grooves that are meant to mimic street dancing and singing in Harlem, with alto and flute keening in harmony over the twin percussion of Jack DeJohnette (drum kit) and Guillermo Franco (hand drums). Guitarist James "Blood" Ulmer is like broken glass in the street: shiny and dangerous. Not fusion, not mainstream, and not avant-garde, this session is simultaneously edgy, melodic, and funky. Like Phish without the bad lyrics and with a dose of New Orleans street vibe maybe? No, actually. Better than that.

David Murray Octet, Home (Black Saint, 1981)

The essential tension in most good jazz is the rub between "sweet" and "hot", between melodic nicety and urgent tension. Too much "nice" sounds corny and too much "out" can be ugly and forbidding. David Murray is a saxophonist who lives to tread the line between "out" and "in", and his octet on Home is a perfect mid-point. The tunes and arrangements here are memorable and ride atop rhythmic groove, but the solos and the harmonies are tart. All the players (particularly Murray's tenor sax and Anthony Davis's piano) show gobs of personality and guts as they improvise without the mechanical perfection that makes so much jazz seem obvious or easy. The group is like a mini-big band, but one that has had a vodka or two before the party even started. Murray smiles throughout, and the listener does too.

Cassandra Wilson, New Moon Daughter (Blue Note, 1996)

Contemporary jazz singing is very nearly an oxymoron. It seems that the most prominent jazz vocalists today are either pale imitations of the past (Diana Krall) or simply soul singers working out their ershwin jones. Either way, today's jazz singers rarely seem direct, emotionally authentic, or original. And then there's Cassandra Wilson. She started singing jazz with Steve Coleman and his M-BASE coalition, a jittery kind of avant-funk that challenged her woody contralto to jump over a million obstacles. Here, however, her voice finds its best setting acoustic guitars and percussion, all recorded with deliberate crunch by Craig Street) and a repertoire that spans standards, blues, Joni Mitchell, and even the Monkees. Like a much more idiosyncratic Norah Jones (and, plainly, Wilson paved the way for Jones's success), Wilson suggests that jazz singing — at last — can be something new and something authentic again, something weird and something wonderful again.

Sonny Sharrock, Ask the Ages (Axiom, 1991)

It is time for a guitarist to represent. Jazz guitar is a beautiful thing, but there is a decent argument that nothing much has happened in the idiom since Wes Montgomery perfected it in 1960. In rock, the electric guitar pulsed forward in the '60s on the back of a blues revival and the audacity of folks like Jimi Hendrix. So why are so many jazz guys still playing bell-toned saxophone solos on their Gibsons? Sonny Sharrock is the antidote. On this juiced, raw date, he plays fuzz-toned, aggressive guitar in a way that pays notice to rock but also takes in the more aggressive strains of progressive improvised music. This quartet — rounded out by Pharoah Sanders on tenor saxophone, Charnett Moffett on skanky acoustic bass and Coltrane's drummer, Elvin Jones — is a yearning, honking, distortion-laced dream.

super happy fun land

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April 2nd:
Whitman
The Dimes
Riff Tiffs

April 5th-April 21st:
Super Happy Fun Land
US TOUR

April 6th:
Organ Failure
with Mad Mike
and Superfun Yeah Yeah
Rocketship at Lemp in St. Louis

April 7th:
Organ Failure
at South Union Arts in Chicago

April 8th & 9th:
Sock Monkey Festival in Rockford Illinois

Sat April 8th:
Organ Failure
at Trevia in Chicago
with Crap Engine

Mon April 10th-April 12th:
Days off in Syracuse

Fri April 14th:
Organ Failure
At Sputnik in Brooklyn
with Al Duvall
Mad Mike
Awesome Color
and Hi Red Center

Sat April 15th:
Organ Failure
at The Jerkstore in Baltimore
(21st and Howard)
with Abiku
Mose Giganticus
and Oceans

Mon April 17th:
Organ Failure
With Mad Mike
and Butch from 30ft Fall
At Twisted Branch Tea Bazaar
Charlottesville VA

Tues April 18th:
Organ Failure
I-Defy House
1055 Center Atlanta, GA
with Divided Like a Saint's

Thur April 20th: TBA Nashville

Fri April 21st:
Organ Failure
VZD's in Oklahoma City
with Grandpa Griffith

Sat April 22nd:
Always The Runner
The Nautical Mile
Architect
Tinzrame
Vanishing Kids

Sun April 23rd:
BROOMFILLER
Buck Brothers

April 24th:
Sic Alps
Rua Minx
Bully Pulpit
MK Ultra

April 25th:
Famine McCoy
7 Point 9

Wed April 26th:
The Noise Revival
Razorburn 77
BoJone

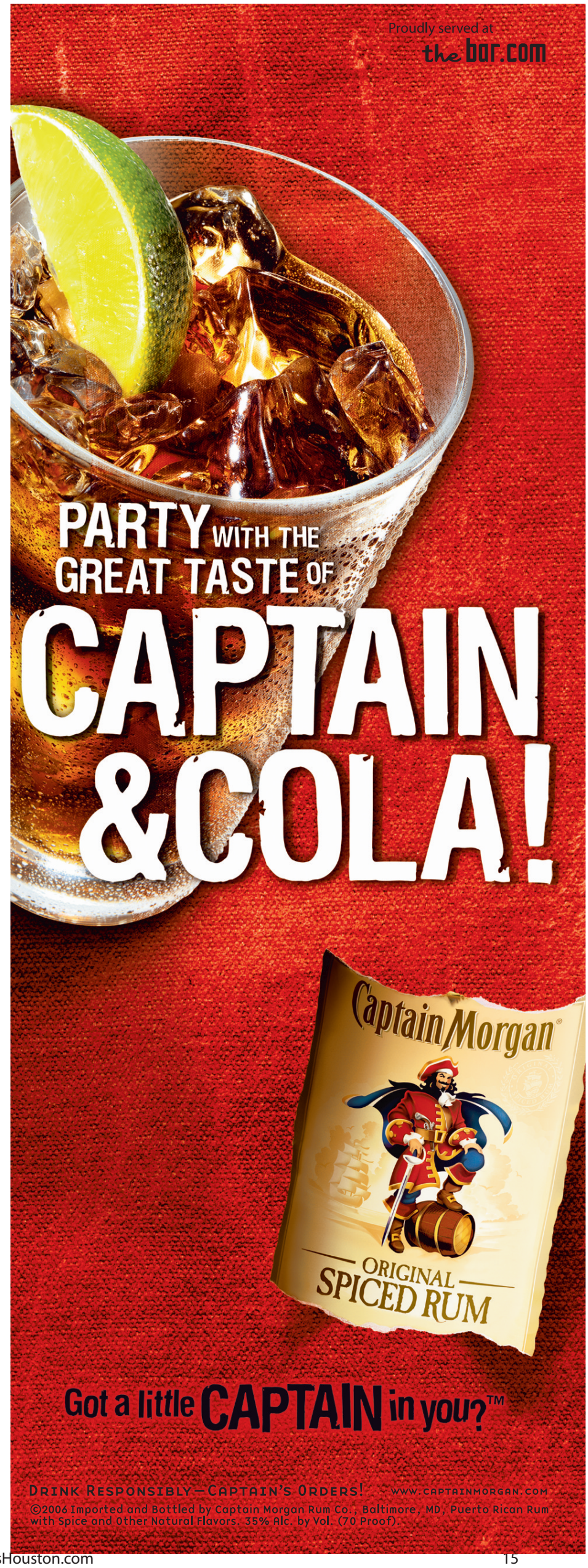
April 27th:
Extemp-O-Rama sponsored by Jam Houston
8:30 PM - Jude Vivona / Todd Helton Project
9:30 PM - Flash Mob
10:30 PM - Thomas Helton
11:30 PM - Free Radicals

April 28th:
Dumbarton
Riff Tiffs
Brains for Dinner
The Skandals

April 29th
West Fest Compressed
The Riff Tiffs
The Dimes
The Magentic Frosties
Organ Failure
Listen Listen
PSA
Suspender Man
The Krinkles

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MONDAY

The Medicine Show, The Trade @ Helios
The Mighty Orq @The Big Easy
Asleep At The Wheel @Meridian
Lorene Drive, April Sound, Jack In The Pulpit @Walter's
Open Mic Comedy @Laff Stop
the glass family, Sitka Sound @Rudyard's
Pool, Darts, Ping Pong @Fitzgerald's
The El Orbits @Contitnental Club
3

The Medicine Show, The Trade @Helios
The Mighty Orq @The Big Easy
Open Mic Comedy @Laff Stop
Pool, Darts, Ping Pong @Fitzgerald's
The B-SIDES @Proletariat
The Fatals, The Rat Traps, Skullening, Mr Electric @Walter's
The El Orbits @Contitnental Club
10

The Medicine Show, The Trade @ Helios
The Mighty Orq @The Big Easy
Dan Castillo @Proletariat
Open Mic Comedy @Laff Stop
Pool, Darts, Ping Pong @Fitzgerald's
The Prize Fight, Day Break Ends, Hollywood Black @Walter's
The El Orbits @Contitnental Club
17

The Medicine Show, The Trade @ Helios
The Mighty Orq @The Big Easy
Spankrock, Damon, Dayta @Proletariat
Open Mic Comedy @Laff Stop
Bowel, Ocean, Cardinal, God's Temple of Family Deliverance @Walter's
Pool, Darts, Ping Pong @Fitzgerald's
The El Orbits @Contitnental Club
Sic Alps, Rua Minx, Bully Pulpit,MK Ultra @SHFL
24

TUESDAY

Texas Tuesdays @Rudyards
Free Pool (all day) @Proletariat
Jeremiah Johnson @The Big Easy
Scott Daniels Band @Last Concert Cafe
The Sleeping Rubys @Contitnental Club
City Council Public Session
4

Texas Tuesdays @Rudyards
Free Pool (all day) @Proletariat
The Sleeping Rubys @Contitnental Club
Scott Daniels Band @Last Concert Cafe
The Iron Maidens @Meridian
Jeremiah Johnson @The Big Easy
City Council Public Session
11

Bells On Our Toes @Helios
Texas Tuesdays @Rudyards
The Sleeping Rubys @Contitnental Club
Free Pool (all day) @Proletariat
Scott Daniels Band @Last Concert Cafe
The Sword, Torche, Ags, Bowel @Walter's
Jeremiah Johnson @The Big Easy
City Council Public Session
18

The Sleeping Rubys @Contitnental Club
Texas Tuesdays @Rudyards
Free Pool (all day) @Proletariat
Scott Daniels Band @Last Concert Cafe
Famine McCoy, 7 Point 9 @SHFL
Jeremiah Johnson @The Big Easy
City Council Public Session
25

WEDNESDAY

Breakfast Club @Numbers
Asleep At The Wheel @Meridian
British Invasion Night with The Dreambreakers @Rudyards
Ian Bagg @Laff Stop
The Little Brother Project @Contitnental Club
Poetry Night @Helios
Pot Roast @Last Concert Cafe
The Ruse @Rudyard's
Fat Texas, Gandhi's Wheel @Proletariat
Shooter Jennings @Meridian
5

Breakfast Club @Numbers
British Invasion Night with The Dreambreakers @Rudyards
Poetry Night @Helios
Pot Roast @Last Concert Cafe
The Ragged Hearts @Contitnental Club
12

Breakfast Club @Numbers
British Invasion Night with The Dreambreakers @Rudyards
Miss Leslie and Her JukeJointers @Contitnental Club
Grand Champeen, Birds of Avalon @Rudyard's
Judas Bear Anabel @Proletariat
Fruit Bats, Amandine, Same Jayne @Walter's
Poetry Night @Helios
Pot Roast @Last Concert Cafe
19

Breakfast Club @Numbers
Dale Peterson @Contitnental Club
British Invasion Night with The Dreambreakers @Rudyards
Poetry Night @Helios
Pot Roast @Last Concert Cafe
The Noise Revival, Razorburn 77, Bo Jones @SHFL
Jon Reep @Laff Stop
26

WESTFEST
"THE BLOCK PARTY"
APRIL 29TH

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NUMBERS



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THURSDAY

The Hightailers @Last Concert
Blaggards @Contitnental Club
Hustle & Flo @Numbers
digifunk, Open Mic @Helios
Deadboy and the Elephantmen, Buxton, ESE @Walter's
Joe Lynn Turner @Meridian
Ian Bagg @Laff Stop
Walkabout, Counterparts @Rudyard's
Rock Box Pelvic Thrust Thursdays, One October Night! 2nd Anniversary Party! @Proletariat

6

FRIDAY

Classic Numbers @Numbers
Drop Trio and Bones @Helios
An Albratros @Walter's
Ian Bagg @Laff Stop
Christopher Wilson, Orange Is In, Arthur Yoria @Rudyard's
The Blue Room: Blackfoot @Meridian
Barbara Mason, Archie Bell @Contitnental Club

7

SATURDAY

The Squishees, Sharks & Sailors, Bring Back The Guns @Rudyard's
Spain Colored Orange, Voxtrot, BoJones @Walter's
Special April Fool's 'rent' @Meridian
Cinema Bomar, The Treasure Mammal, G.Styles,Sidekick, The X-Spearmint, Suspenderman, Yatagarasu, PSA @SHFL
James McMurtry, Two Hoots and a Holler @Continental Club

1

SUNDAY

Big E's Rockabilly @Continental Club
Whitman, The Dimes, Riff Tiffs @SHFL
Live Zydeco @The Big Easy
Accoustic Jam Sessions, David Fahl & Band @Last Concert

2

The Hightailers @Last Concert
Hustle & Flo @Numbers
digifunk, Open Mic @Helios
Rock Box Pelvic Thrust Thursdays @Proletariat
Two Gallants, Shurman, Holy Ghost Revival @Walter's
Helios Creed/Chrome @Meridian
St. James @Contitnental Club

13

Classic Numbers @Numbers
The Absence, Thine Eyes Bleed, As Eden Burns, Cast In Grey @Walter's
Gilbert Gottfried @Laff Stop
Hayes Carll, Lisa Novak @Contitnental Club
The Texas Sapphires, the small sounds @Rudyard's
Raj Pickens, Mo Pair, Kristi Rae, Jimmy Pizzitola @Helios
Alpha Phi Alpha Icebreaker After Party @Meridian

14

Klute @Meridian
Linus Pauling Quartet, Georgia's House, Born Liars @Proletariat
Jeff Crowder, Joel Mercado See and Get Set Go @Helios
Ian Bagg @Laff Stop
Tody Castillo, The Dragliners @Rudyard's
Stare Decisis, Heist At Hand, Westview, Transmography, Red Star of the Solar Fed @Walter's
Patricia Vonne, The Damnation @Contitnental Club

8

Big E's Rockabilly @Continental Club
The Book's Better Than The Movie "Breakfast At Tiffany's" @Proletariat
Honky, Donkey Punch @Rudyard's
Teddy Gieger @Meridian
Live Zydeco @The Big Easy
Accoustic Jam Sessions, David Fahl & Band @Last Concert

9

The Hightailers @Last Concert
Hustle & Flo @Numbers
digifunk, Open Mic @Helios
Rock Box Pelvic Thrust Thursdays @Proletariat
Choking Susan, Spector 45 @Rudyard's
Dog Fashion Disco @Meridian
Honky @Contitnental Club

20

Classic Numbers @Numbers
Koufax, Cordero @Walter's
Clouseaux @Rudyard's
Vallejo, Lanky, Molly and Ringwalds @Contitnental Club
Reggie O'Farrell, The Ride Home, The Nautical Mile, Krista Vossler @Helios

21

Danseparc @Numbers
Los Hijos de Manuela &Triple @Helios
Jungle 14 @Meridian
Mojo Nixon & The Toadliquors, The Goldstars, The Allen Oldies Band @Contitnental Club
Drunks @Rudyard's
Complete Control, Krum Bums, Razorwire, Countless Victims @Walter's
Aviador Dro , Zom Zoms, Black Snakes and Kangaroos?, DJ GINATONIC @Proletariat
Gilbert Gottfried @Laff Stop

15

Live Zydeco @The Big Easy
Accoustic Jam Sessions, David Fahl & Band @Last Concert
Big E's Rockabilly @Continental Club

16

Always The Runner, The Nautical Mile, Architect, Tinzrame, Vanishing Kids @SHFL
Motion Turns it on, The Button, Dizzy Pilot @Helios
The Pilots, The Ivory Class, The Methods @Walter's
Deep Ella, Arthur Yoria, Vicarious Me @Rudyard's
Denise and Wit's Birthday Party @Proletariat
Houston Roller Derby Prom @Meridian

22

BROOMFILLER, Buck Brothers @SHFL
Live Zydeco @The Big Easy
Accoustic Jam Sessions, David Fahl & Band @Last Concert
Big E's Rockabilly @Continental Club

23

The Hightailers @Last Concert
Kittie @Meridian
Hustle & Flo @Numbers
digifunk, Open Mic @Helios
Rock Box Pelvic Thrust Thursdays @Proletariat
Acid Mother's Temple, Antarcticans @Walter's
Jude Vivona / Todd Helton Project,Free Radicals@SHFL
Jon Reep @Laff Stop

27

Classic Numbers @Numbers
THe Invincible Czars @Rudyard's
Dumbarton, Riff Tiffs, Brains for Dinner@SHFL
Johnny Goudie and guests @Helios
Rainer Maria @Walter's
Jon Reep @Laff Stop
Molly and Ringwalds, Jon Dee Graham @Contitnental Club

28

Westheimer Block Party
4 stages+ 30 +bands
starts at 1pm
The Dimes-PennyRoyal-Arthur Yoria-
-Generic Tribe-Tody Castillo-Medicine Show
Million Year Dance-Q.U.E
-The Riff Tiffs-SkyBlue72
Mechanical Boy-Studemont Project
-Eldridge -DubTex
Vicarious me-the Wiggins
Los de Verdad-Vibe Committee
bojones-Closeaux
Guy Schwartz-Bowel
Sean Reefer and the Resin Valley Boys
Guy Schwartz
@ Numbers.Helios. Mango's.Black Widow

29

Brook Pridemore, Guitar Bomb @SHFL
Benefit Show for Joe King @Walter's
Big E's Rockabilly @Continental Club
Live Zydeco @The Big Easy
Accoustic Jam Sessions, David Fahl & Band @Last Concert

30

Free Press to cover this year's E3

by Tyler Barber



| The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess | | Mass Effect | | Gears of War | | Metal Gear Solid 4 |

Good news from the city of angels, this journalist has been approved for a press pass to attend this year's E3. What's E3 you ask? The Electronics Entertainment Expo is the world's largest annual trade show that showcases all things up incoming in gaming. Basically, E3 is the Super-Bowel of gaming. The only difference, no matter how hard you try, you wont find any ridiculously priced tickets for the events on Ebay, as it is closed to the public. Only those in the gaming industry are allowed. So, this reporter is gearing up to give you the full scoop on what could be one of the biggest E3's in history.

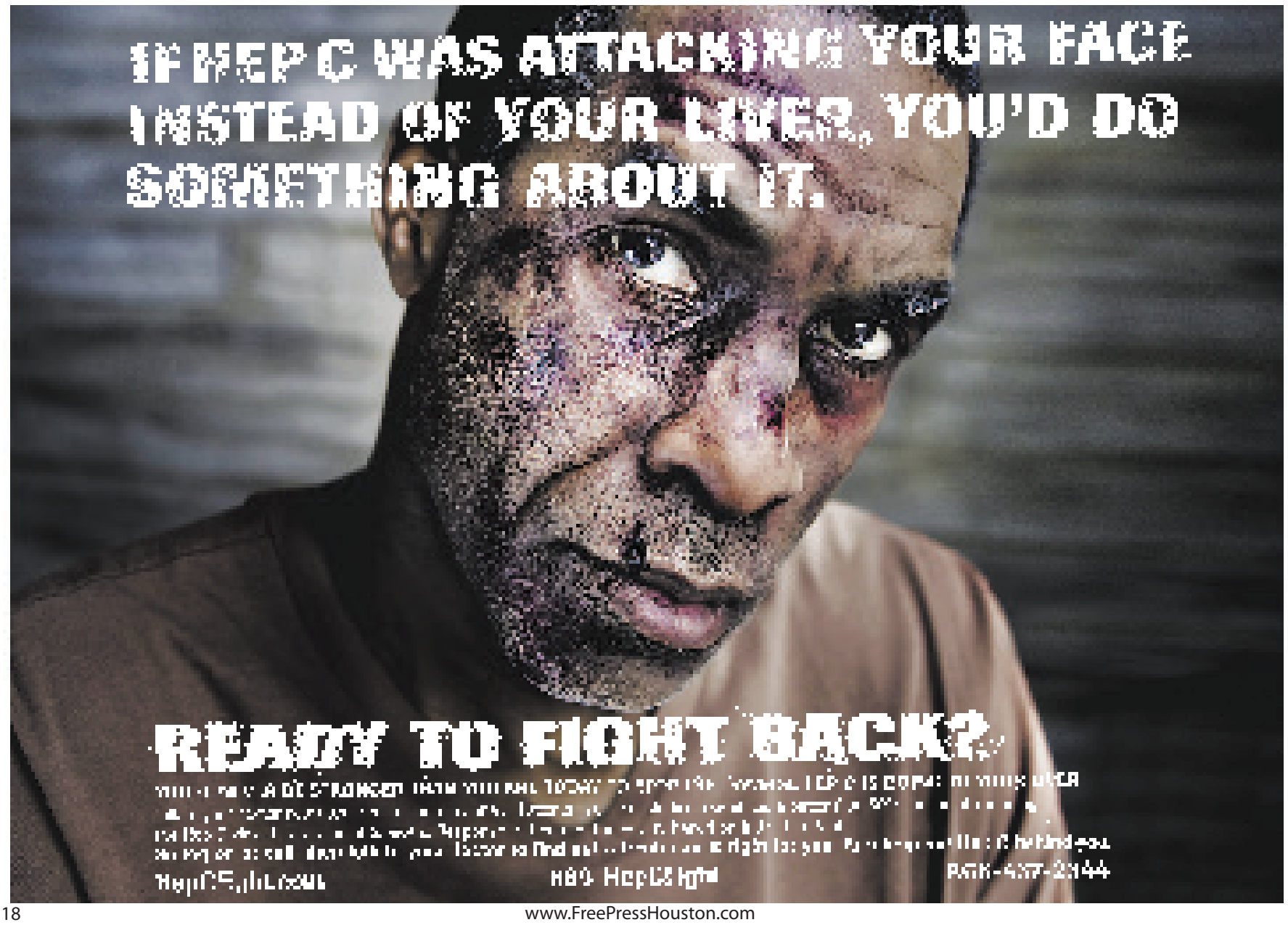
Beginning May 8th, Nintendo, Sony, and Microsoft will give attendees the chance to play games that have been under development for the current, and next gen systems. This will be the first time any outsider has ever laid their hands on the new Nintendo Revolution controller (and possibly the unveiling of the final name for Nintendo's new console). The Xbox 360 will bring out its heavy-hitters with playable demos of Gears of War, 99 Nights, and Mass Effect. Sony will also a hands on with titles for its PS3, including the introduction of the new controller design. And, lets hope for the love of God herself that Kojima lets us get our hands on the fourth and "final" chapter in the Metal Gear Solid Saga.

Since I began my subscription to video game magazine Electronic Gaming Monthly in Middle School, I've dreamed of attending E3. Even the lack of booth babes this year won't suppress my hype. Expect a full report in the second May issue of the Free Press Houston.



Feeling Crafty?

Head over to joystiq.com to learn how to mod your own NES game cartridge into a USB connected, external hard-drive. But, only use a Zelda cartridge if you have more than one copy.




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Band Profile

by Kwame M. Anderson

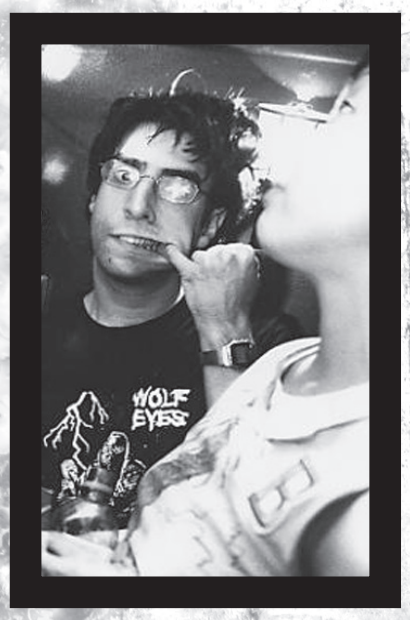
THE SECONDS

Repetition is the basis of understanding. Without it we could not walk, drive, or eat. Everything is a result of some repeated action or phrase. In that vein, The Seconds' music is natural. Moving at a pace, varied at times but always within the realm of a rhythm, there are patterns within the patterns that do not change- it builds, it subsides, it is fluent like life itself.

The Seconds are a band that features Jeannie Kwon, Zachary Max, and Brian Chase. They have an album out now called Kratittude on 5RC. Their sound may not jump out at you at first. Certain phrases are inserted to the beat, between the beat, but more in the sense of the voice as an additional instrument. It could seem that the band is making up the words. Maybe you wonder why the song seems locked in time.

I thought I would ask Brian Chases that question. He said, "That is an interesting aspect of minimalist music, like when it has that idea the music has no beginning or no end and it is just a moment in time…it doesn't move towards some end point or a goal or anything like that, and I think that's the beauty of the music of like La Monte Young or Terry Riley. But I think The Seconds' music always feels more highly structured, almost all of the parts repeat a specific number of times, and the structure is pre-determined, and we never feel like we have that room to stretch out, or extend sections if we really want, it always feels more concise and direct structurally, the only song that feels more, that deals with time in a looser manner is that last piece. The guitar noise piece, even that is structured in sections, and I think that's what distinguishes our minimalism from something like Black Dice or something, where they have long sections where they let the moment just take them wherever they wanna go, but there's always a structure that's imposed on us."





More recently it seems that some music is as much agenda as it is music. The handstands are planned, the staged thing is very popular, and to a certain degree, music journalists fall suit by immediately guessing the intentions of these things. Hence, people tend to hear categories, most of which they did not create. With that stated, The Seconds may strike some as an avante garde sort of art thing, because they do not have disco beats that go with debauchery and cocaine, but you know to assume that The Seconds see themselves as "outside" of the thing may not be the best assumption "Simplicity, I think that's a good word to describe our music…."

Simple, not as in the sense of Simon, but more of the sense of you don't need to know the particular notes or under aspect of music theory to get it. Another thing about The Seconds is the possibility of where this might go in a live setting. The element of improvisation is a really important aspect of the performance, but then, some bands are known for sounding exactly like the record. So The Seconds make music that can go both ways. I would love to see them play the songs, this exact way live, however, there is the hint, maybe this is just sampler of what is to come.

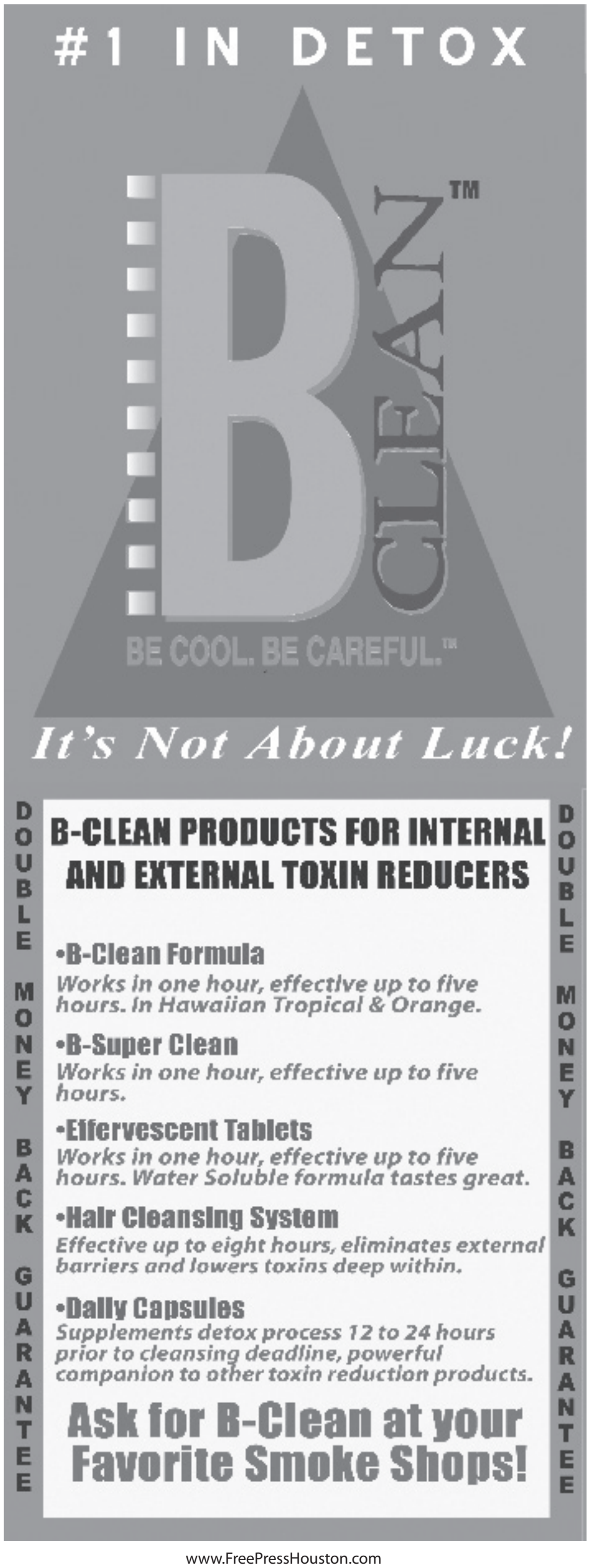
"The recorded versions themselves, are, just one example of how the song could it up sounding, rather than the perfect representation of the song. Even in the other takes we did of the songs, there were elements that were different from the takes that ended up being used. Pretty much anything goes live. We're pretty sloppy, there's always room for tricks and not playing. I like to do things like put my cymbals really far, like out of my reach, so I really have to jump or struggle to hit them, and I think that sort fun to watch from audience, just to see somebody, you know, make a physical challenge to play their instrument."

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THINE EYES BLEED
AS EDEN BURNS
CAST IN GREY
SCHOOL GIRL KNIFE FIGHT
Walter's 4215 Washington Ave.
Doors @ 8:00 All Ages $10

Saturday, April 15th, 2006
COMPLETE CONTROL
KRUM BUMS
RAZORWIRE
COUNTLESS VICTIMS
Walter's 4215 Washington Ave.
Doors @ 8:00 All Ages $10

Tuesday, April 18th, 2006
THE SWORD
TORCHE
ASG
BOWEL
Walter's 4215 Washington Ave.
Doors @ 8:00 All Ages $10

Wednesday, April 26th, 2006
THE QUEERS - Asian MAn Records
THE USUAL SUSPECTS
3-DAY WEEKEND
The Meridian 1503 Chartres
Doors @ 8:30 All Ages $10

Monday, May 8th, 2006
GO IT ALONE - Rivalry Records
LAST MINUTE FIX
LOOK OUT
ON MY SIDE
Rayford Rd. Community Center
2325 Rayford Rd.
Doors @ 7:00 All Ages $7
LMF CD RELEASE!!

Thursday, May 18th, 2006
THE BUSINESS
ROGER MIRET & THE DISASTERS - Hellcat Records
BRAIN FAILURE - Thorp Records
I-GENTS
THE QUARENTINES
The Meridian 1503 Chartres
Doors @ 7:00 All Ages $10 presale $12 @ the door Click here to purchase tickets

Sunday, May 21st, 2006
KNOW THE SCORE - Eulogy Records
TEN CROWNS
GRAVE ROBBERS
FORSAKE
Rayford Rd. Community Center
2325 Rayford Rd.
Doors @ 7:00 All Ages $8

Friday, May 26th, 2006
THE EPOXIES
THE PHENOMENAUTS
TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET
0 PIONEERS!!!
Walter's 4215 Washington Ave.
Doors @ 7:30 All Ages $10 presale $12 @ the door
Click here to purchase tickets

Tuesday, June 20th, 2006
NEKROMANTIX - Hellcat Records
SHARK SOUP - BYO Records
THE CHOP TOPS
The Meridian 1503 Chartres
Doors @ 800 All Ages $10 Presale $12

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by Douglas Herman

A

WORLD VIEW

Special Report

Many months ago, after I wrote my column for Rense, Dead Pool - Pick The Next City Attacked, I received a lot of suggestions about possible targets. Recently I read an interesting theory about a nefarious but brilliant plan to nuke a Texas city, terrorize Americans, suspend all Constitutional rights and possibly blame the black deed on "Islamo-Fascists." At the time I wrote my column, Houston did not seem like a high visibility or likely target. Now it does. I will give seven good reasons why an upcoming "terrorist" attack makes perfect sense there. From an Illuminati perspective of course. I will attempt to focus on a small historical town in Texas that once suffered a horrendous explosion (see photos) which may portend an eerie reoccurence. Located near Houston, the town offers the Neocon/Illuminati master planners a low risk and high rewards incentive to detonate a small but impactful nuclear device and blame the attack on terrorists. But why, you rightly ask, would our leaders do unthinkable deeds against their own citizens? Because those in power serve other masters, other agendas. Consider: the US government scatters toxic depleted uranium in the Middle East and has for 15 years (Depleted Uranium For Dummies) , which not only poisons Iraqis but slowly poisons US military personnel serving there. All of this is historically and scientifically verified. By doing this they serve their own diabolical agendas and allow millions of people to be poisoned (Not even the Nazis were so draconian as to slowly poison their own troops). So the unthinkable becomes thinkable, and then doable, as long as the action favors their agenda and they feel they can get away with it, which they have so far. Why Houston? The environs of Houston, according to author and local resident Ken Welch, present a perfect target for a false-flag nuke attack. In Welch's scenario, which reads like an episode form the defunct but prescient Lone Gunman TV show, Texas City, an industrial satellite of that megalopolis of Houston, will be nuked on Easter Day, April 16, 2006. Let us examine the seven good reasons why Welch may be onto something. Reason # 1. Houston is home to the global oil industry. What better way to jack up the prices (again) than a terrible nuke attack on our oil infrastructure? I mean, if two hurricanes, Katrina and Rita, were sufficient to boost oil prices up enough for Exxon-Mobil to earn $36 Billion in net profits, think what a mini-nuke near a Texas refinery could do? Reason # 2. Houston is the undisputed Capitol of BushCo. Whatever happens in Houston is well known beforehand to Carlyle and KBR and Halliburton and Dick Cheney and the Neocons. Thus if anything should get damaged there in Houston, all those global profiteers stand to make hundreds of billions in no-bid contracts to repair the problem, right? And guess who would award them? Reason # 3. Houston is part of Texas, and Texas is seen as the Bush family home state. Although the BushCo Dynasty is actually Connecticut Yankee, most Americans falsely believe The Lone Star State is George W. Bush's beloved home. Not so. Just because a man buys a ranch, does not make him a rancher. Yet an attack on Texas is perceived as an attack on the American president and the American people. The resulting hysteria will evaporate any talk of impeachment. Reason # 4. Impeachment. If the Democrats regain control of either house of Congress in late 2006, impeachment is a very real possibility. The Neocons cannot let that happen; some of them might face prison terms. What better way, to alleviate troublesome talk of impeachment, than a massive "terrorist" attack? Reason # 5. Since only about seven or eight percent of containers are inspected in US harbors and ports, any terrorist could theoretically send a device to America. A port attack-long predicted here on Rense-would result in another government bureaucracy: Department of Container Inspection (DCI). The end result? More taxpayer money to the government and another "security" organization in place. Reason # 6. To further the suspension of our Constitutional rights, what better catalyst than a bigger, more spectacular 9-11? Indeed, General Tommy Franks already predicted as much. Franks said: "The worst thing that could happen...a terrorist, massive, casualty-producing event somewhere in the Western world it may be in the United States of America that causes our population to question our own Constitution and to begin to militarize our country in order to avoid a repeat of another mass, casualty-producing event. Which in fact, then begins to unravel the fabric of our Constitution. Two steps, very, very important." Reason # 7. April 16 marks a historical anniversary, the anniversary of an explosion (see photographs) that nearly destroyed Texas City almost 60 years ago. The Illuminati love numerology and anniversaries. Wasn't the date of the Pentagon attack exactly 60 years after the building was begun-September 11, 1941?

I have outlined seven good reasons for a brilliant but diabolical master plan, the ultimate, NWO Northwoods-style black operation, and the first nuke terrorist strike by a nation against itself. The incremental, globalist agenda that has eroded America in the last several decades always requires innocent people die. Why not a town in Texas? "As for the bomb itself," says Houston resident Ken Welch, "it is (already) south of Houston, and the obvious choice is Texas City. There is simply no place to dock a freighter for an extended stay until you get down to Texas City and Galveston. I've driven down to Texas City twice to see what I could see, and it's an interesting situation. On the map it is an area that shows no roads, only water channels. In fact, the area is closed off and you simply can't get in there on your own. Nor can you see anything. "From a long jetty that extends out from Texas City itself you can look into the sea entrance of the port, and all you can really make out is what appears to be an oil terminal up front. Ships not stopping at the terminal go in, make a turn, and simply disappear from view. The whole place seems kind of run down, and with the exception of poorer parts of the city to the north it is surrounded by worthless scrub land. It's the perfect place for a baby nuke to cause significant damage, but then again not too much damage. My bet is that the bomb ship is tied up in there."

Douglas Herman writes regularly for Rense and believes eternal vigilance is the price a citizenry must pay to guard itself against its own government. Contact him at douglasherman7@yahoo.com



Editors note: Comprable rumors were spread last Easter that such a nuke attack would take place. Take this with a grain of salt. Nonetheless, some would argue that the evacuation of Houston after Katrina was merely a test run to research the capacity of outgoing freeways which was precipitated by weather manipulation devices. Others would argue that Alex Wukman is not the devil. You decide.



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DRIVING LINES

METRO RAIL ON RICHMOND?

by M. Martin

The plan began to backfire, however, when word of the proposed re-routing started to become public

By proposing to move it's new rail line onto Richmond Avenue, Metro is drawing a line that will divide neighborhoods, drawing a clear line of division between the interests of communities and the interests of real estate developers...and effectively drawing a line in the sand, daring the voters to step across it. It all began with a closely contested election in 2003 to approve a multi-billion dollar. The proposal passed by roughly the same margin as reelected George W. Bush in 2004. The parallels do not stop there. In both cases, a slimly elected majority has behaved as though it possessed a mandate. In both cases, voters have had ample opportunity for buyer's remorse. n the case of Metro's rail expansion, that remorse began for many when what had been described on the ballot as the "Westpark Rail Line" was re-christened "The University Line" as part of a move to make ambiguous what had been fairly clear on the ballot: a rail line connecting Wheeler Station on Main Street with Hilcroft Transit Center, using existing right-of-ways paralleling Westpark Road. Citing as its legal justification a vaguely-worded sentence stating that "final scope ... and other details" of the plan would be based on "demand and completion of the project development process", Metro began to float possible alternatives to the Westpark routing (including a possible routing on Westheimer that seems unlikely to have ever been a serious proposal). It quickly became evident that Metro intended to move the rail line to Richmond Avenue with a minimum of public discussion or consultation. The plan began to backfire, however, when word of the proposed re-routing started to become public. An immediate flash point of resistance materialized in the vicinity of affluent deed-restricted subdivision Afton Oaks, a resistance which rapidly manifested itself as signs protesting the proposed change began to appear in front of homes and small businesses all the way from Montrose to Loop 610. Nowhere, however, are those signs as prevalent as they are where Richmond cuts through Afton Oaks. This may have much to do with Metro Board Chairman David Wolff's recently-stated opinion that the University lines was "welcome" at the East end (i.e., Wheeler Station) and not welcomed at its proposed western terminus (Afton Oaks is located between Greenway Plaza and Loop 610). This opinion does more to confirm Metro's biases than it does to confirm any real information about public consensus. Metro has done as much to cherry-pick its sources of opinion as the Bush Administration did to cherry-pick intelligence before invading Iraq.....and the results may be equally disastrous. There are a number of differences between the areas surrounding Richmond Avenue at Main Street and Richmond Avenue at Loop 610, but one of the biggest differences is in the people who live there. As previously mentioned, Afton Oaks is a fairly affluential neighborhood of owned single-family residences. Despite recent changes, the Montrose/Museum District area surrounding the proposed eastern terminus of the University Line has traditionally been a community of renters. Particularly on Richmond Avenue itself, a significant number of those renters are Hispanic people with relatively modest incomes. Their attitude toward the Anglo community at large tends to be detached, distrustful, and fatalistic. Whether they love the rail line or hate it, they aren't going to be attending public meetings to talk about it. A fair number of their neighbors are very vocal however. Montrose is, after all, a blue mini-state of alternative lifestyles and political activism, very much in contrast to the pro-business pro-consumerism red-state vibe that defines much of Houston. No few of Montrose's more vocal denizens turned out for the "town hall" meeting held on March 20th at St. Luke's Methodist Church on Westheimer. They were not alone. Despite an almost total lack of advance notice in main stream local media (a Google News search on the day of the meeting turned up exactly two hits), official estimates on meeting attendance is at "over 500" and was probably a good deal closer to a thousand. The meeting began with a prayer for "open minds and understanding" and proceeded quickly to an opening statement by Houston Mayor Bill White, in which the mayor suggested that the differences in opinion be resolved "the Houston way", whatever that means, and promised that no rail line would be put into place without a clear consensus on the part of himself, Houston City Council, and Metro's board. He also promised that no one would find a rail line "crammed down their throats" against their will. In what would become a recurring theme through out the evening, Mayor White promised that there would be no re-occurance of the profoundly mis-planned rail construction that occurred on Main—although neither he nor any other public official who spoke that night provided a clear plan for insuring such a thing. The mayor was followed by city council member Anne Clutterbuck, who was followed in short order by Congressman John Culberson. Oddly absent was council member Ada Edwards, who had co-sponsored the event. Congressman Culberson managed to draw the first of several standing ovations when he stated his position: that the line should stay on Westpark as originally approved by the voters. As a member of the House Appropriations Transportation Sub-Committee, Congressman Culberson's cooperation is fairly essential to any new rail construction. Congressman Culberson repeatedly referred to himself as a "Jeffersonian Republican" and a fiscal conservative—probably in an effort to distance himself from the "Bushian Republicans" who have managed to turn a trillion-dollar surplus into a trillion-dollar war dept. One hopes he is better at arithmetic than history, given that the Republican Party did not exist until nearly fifty years after Jefferson's death. Another possible effort at historic revisionism was Culberson's repeated assertion that all of the problems resulting from the implementation of the Main Street rail line could be blamed on Metro's previous board, and that the current board could be relied upon to do business in a far different manner. While it is true that almost the entire board was appointed in 2004, it is largely a matter of faith to assume that they are any less beholden to large commercial interests and real-estate developers than the previous board. Their behavior to date is not encouraging. At least Congressman Culberson got a couple of facts unequivocally right: he mentioned that extended rail out to the suburbs of Fort Bend County was more important than providing rail service between downtown and The Galleria, and he mentioned that quality of life was an essential community value that could not be casually sacrificed for transportation expediency. Culberson was followed by Metro Board Chairman David Wolff, whose most noteworthy comment was to state that light rail of Richmond was actually sought on the eastern end of the line- an assertion that would be hotly contested as soon as the floor was open to members of the community. He was followed by Metro President/CEO Frank Wilson, who was most noteworthy for observing that resolving the differences of opinion in the room might well require "the wisdom of a Solomon"-- a disingenuous remark, given that almost every one of the nearly thousand people in the room clearly did not favor his management team's decision to move rail to Richmond. After a few closing remarks by the mayor, the floor was opened to public comments, which the mayor and a timekeeper tried valiantly to limit to a minute each. The public comments were started by an elderly and well-meaning gentleman who believed that the entire dilemma could be solved by installing a series of mammoth conveyor belts that he had conveniently designed immediately prior to the meeting. Following him, and somewhat more to the point, were the comments of Chris Seger-- an Afton Oaks resident who suggested that Metro might consider a refresher course in basic democratic process. This was a running theme throughout the public comments. Many people prefaced their remarks by noting that they had actually voted in favor of what they had believed would be a rail line on Westpark. Then they would, with less than a handful of exceptions, describe their adamant opposition to seeing that line of Richmond. One of the most articulate of those speaking out against the Richmond rail line was well-known art dealer and gallery owner Robert McClain of McClain Gallery. We contacted Mr. McClain the day after the meeting for a brief interview, which follows:

FPH: Mr. McClain, thank you for your time. I'd like to start by asking if you voted in favor of the original Metro expansion proposal.

RMC: I voted in favor of the 2003 Rail Referendum—which, as you may recall, contained no mention of Richmond or any other alternative route for West Houston.

FPH: When did you become aware of the route switch to Richmond, and how?

RMC: Last summer, after seeing a few back page articles in the Chronicle about Metro switching their priority from constructing the North line and the East End line to building the Galleria to Main line. Reports were vague as exactly what the route was to be, however in looking a maps provided by Metro, it

would be no re-occurance of the profoundly mis-planned rail construction that became clear to me that Richmond was under consideration. After speaking with Daphne Scarborough at the Brass Maiden did I understand that Metro's plan was Richmond.

FPH: How would you describe the impact on yours and other Kirby/Richmond area businesses of a light rail system on Richmond? Do you feel the impact would be purely during the construction phases, or would there be an ongoing impact once the line was in operation?

RMC: Rail on Richmond will destroy virtually every small business on Richmond. Construction will be a nightmare. Under Richmond are major trunk lines for natural gas, water, sewage and phone and fiber optic cables, all of which will have to be relocated. We can expect all of the services being interrupted much like downtown when businesses went without water for days at a time. After the construction phases, Richmond will look like a wasteland. All of the mature trees will be gone. A number of the buildings will be vacant as businesses close and those with short leases leave. Richmond will no longer support most small businesses. In my area of Richmond, auto traffic will be reduced to one lane in each direction with no median breaks allowing for traffic to access both sides of the street. What will occur is the purchasing of real estate by larger developers who wish to build high density residential. Eventually Richmond will be a canyon of 6, 8 and 10 story apartment towers who will feed off of the rail. This in turn will spike property values nearby (after the developers have bought vacant property on the cheap from failed businesses). The trend is evident. Townhouse developers caused the current spike in property values because they can put 3 or 4 residences where one existed. High density residential will accelerate this trend. This will be the end of single family homes inside the loop for the middle class. Only those with extremely high incomes will be able to afford single family homes. Also gone will be the small independent boutique shops and businesses as further real estate escalation will mean only national chain stores will be able to afford space inside the loop. Starbucks, The Gap and Burger King and the like will be the norm. Auto mobility will be a disaster. Richmond which moves 70,000 vehicles a day will be reduced by half or more. Factor all of the new residents inside the loop and where does the extra 40,000 cars a day go. Worse is the north-south axis. Kirby and Shepherd are bottlenecks now. Wait until a train arrives every 7 minutes and halts traffic. Shepherd and Kirby, Wesleyan will be train stops. The delay will be even longer.

FPH: Are you familiar with Metro's rationale for the route switch? If so, how much credence do you give it?

RMC: Metro claims that to receive maximum federal funding, Richmond is the most viable route. Unfortunately Metro has a very checkered reputation for distorting facts and adjusting the truth. Only a completely independent analysis will bear the truth. Congressman John Culberson is critical to Metro receiving Federal matching dollars. His position is to follow the will of the voters who selected Westpark.

FPH: What is the general consensus among other businesses and property owners in your immediate area?

RMC:I have yet to have a conversation with any business owner who supports rail on Richmond. Their conclusions are the same as mine. Most of us expect that Metro will condemn most property along Richmond and force us out of business.

FPH: Do you feel that Metro has, or is currently, properly consulting with the community in this matter?

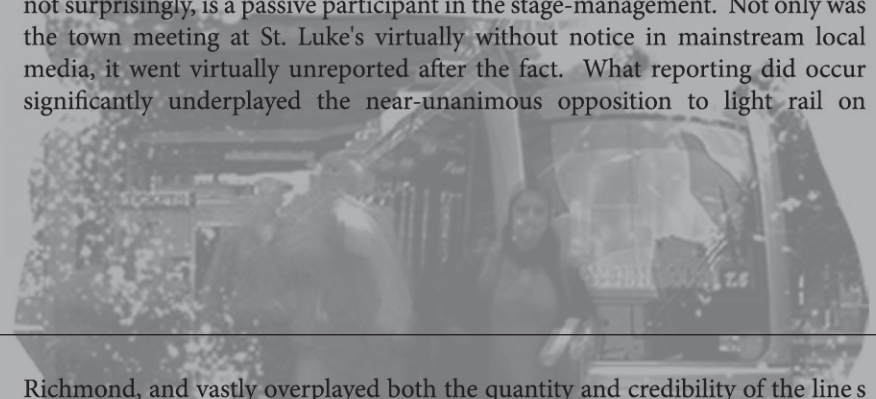
RMC: Metro has tried to run a stealth campaign. They have hoped that the public's apathy will allow then to do as they please unchecked and unchallenged. Metro has repeatedly avoided the issue in previous town hall meetings which I have attended. In one case at the Upper Kirby offices, Metro executives after arriving and sensing a combative audience left a press spokesman to deflect the challenge. At the last Metro board meeting at which I spoke, Metro deliberately filled the audience with school kids 30 minutes prior to the meeting so that there was very little room for the anti-Richmond supporters to sit. They ushered 200 people who were anti-Richmond into an adjoining room so that media and the board could not see their presence nor hear their comments.

FPH: Any other specific points you would care to make?

RMC: Richmond floods terribly. Any good rain makes Shepherd at Richmond impassable. Metro has already had instances of rail shutdown from high water after rains and electrical shorts because of water.Most important of all is the largely undiscussed matter of eminent domain. Metro got the Texas legislature to pass a special provision which allows them to condemn property within a 1500 foot radius of a rail stop. It has nothing to do with the operation of the rail line. It is about executing the vision that Metro, which is an unelected body, decides is the appropriate vision of what our neighborhoods should look like. In a country and a state in which property rights are paramount, a great miscarriage is potentially occurring.

FPH: Thanks again for your time.

Robert McClain paints a chilling and all-too-easily envisioned picture of what inner-city Houston might look like by 2012-- a bleak and soulless landscape that looks nothing like what is presently the most vibrant and livable community in Houston. In the process of what little public discussion has occurred so far, it becomes extremely evident that Metro is almost solely aligned with developers first, property owners second, and the mass-transit using public, the people who actually put fares in the boxes, last of all. They need to understand, as Congressman Culberson at least claims to, that "Quality of Life" is a shared value that belongs to all members of a community-- not just those who happen to own or make money from real estate. In a recent and unprecedentedly extended email conversation with Metro's community outreach group, I was repeatedly asked whether or not I was a "renter or a property owner" and repeatedly assured that "property owners are in favor of (rail) because studies have proven that property values increase along light rail corridors..." Questions regarding the possible fate of the many fine trees that line virtually every part of the proposed route have been brushed off with facile assurances that "adjacent beautification" will occur whenever possible. When I questioned the decision to switch the line itself, I was told that "It is believed that if the rail line is designated to be on Westpark that there will be no funding and therefore no rail line"-- but never once was I told who exactly held this belief, what it was based upon, or why this information had not been shared with the voting public when they authorized the rail expansion in the first place. The people who favor placing rail on Richmond seemingly consist almost entirely of either obese suburban bloggers, elderly rail enthusiasts, or people with an investment interest in Richmond-area real estate. Some of the latter include people who actually live in the affected area and have decided to place financial gain above quality of life....as is their right. But the majority of those who favor rail on Richmond do not have that stake in the game. They are placing their profits and predilections for Houston's future over the here-and-now concerns of people who see their homes, communities, and businesses they love and depend on placed at risk. The bloggers and choo-choo freaks are being used as pawns in a debate that is being stage-managed by Metro and real-estate developers into a foregone conclusion. Main stream local media, not surprisingly, is a passive participant in the stage-management. Not only was the town meeting at St. Luke's virtually without notice in mainstream local media, it went virtually unreported after the fact. What reporting did occur significantly underplayed the near-unanimous opposition to light rail on



Richmond, and vastly overplayed both the quantity and credibility of the line s supporters. Any fair resolution to this dispute must take into consideration the very diverse nature of the Richmond corridor. Richmond itself changes dramatically, widening from four narrow lines at Wheeler Station to eight fairly broad ones at Loop 610. Along the way, it passes through areas that are almost entirely residential and stand to gain little from light rail (claims of property value enhancement notwithstanding), as well as areas like Greenway Plaza that are almost entirely dominated by office and apartment complexes that would benefit greatly, as well as areas like Robert McClain's Upper Kirby District, which would effectively destroyed. One possible solution is evident from the maps on Metro's website and Metro chairman Wolff's continued assurances that everything is on the table—including a mixture of the two proposed routes. The current map for the University Corridor West shows possible crossovers between Richmond & Westpark at Edloe, Weslayan, & the Southern Pacific rail easement. If one of the driving forces behind Metro's plans is to service Greenway Plaza (and thus increase ridership), why not run the line on Westpark down to Edloe, run over to Richmond, and then run back again at Weslayan? The one part of Richmond where there is undisputed need for and support for light rail gets it, Metro gets sufficient ridership to meet Federal requirements (particularly with the grateful help of Congressman Culberson), and the home and small business owners who like matters as they presently stand get to keep those homes and businesses. As for developers who would otherwise stand to profit from re-inventing Richmond, there will be no shortage of opportunities to make money on Westpark. Other possibilities exist as well-- including the very real possibility that Metro will proceed with a one billion dollar debacle without significant interference. If that happens, the western half of the University rail line will be drawn as planned, cutting some neighborhoods in half and decimating others. A line will be drawn between the wealthy and powerful who run this city as their personal cash cow, and those of us who merely happen to live here. A line will be drawn between the unique and vibrant past of Houston's inner-city and a future that is considerably less so. Finally, a line will be drawn that Metro and the Houston community at large may have ample opportunity to regret. As George Bush is presently discovering, a three-percent margin is not a mandate—and treating it like one is a sure-fire way to lose trust and support. The 2003 referendum that began all this is surely not the last time Metro will find it necessary to go before the voters to finance their plans. But depending on how the University Rail Expansion is carried out, it may well be the last time the voters trust them at all.

THE UNVARNISHED TRUTH

by Dean Becker

The Drug War is NOT for the children.

It is for cowards who wear badges

It is for charlatans who wear black robes

It is for politicians afraid of losing your vote

Prohibition is a scam that robs our society at every level

Prohibition ensures that every year, our law enforcement community wastes a hundred million man-hours, busting little Johnny's for bags of reefer. Millions and millions of man-hours searching trunks, under the seat, rifling through ashtrays. The effort, wasted on this drug war is enormous, outrageous. Cops, sheriffs' deputies, DEA, CIA, FBI, justice department, state police, rangers, US military, Interpol, customs, border patrol, IRS agents, forestry service, the list is endless, of those involved in "fighting" the first of the eternal wars, the war on drugs. Meantime, the child molesters, the rapists, the murderers and the terrorists only have to worry about the few members of law enforcement not currently engaged in drug traffic control, an ongoing bust, escorting pot possessors to jail, testilying in court, or working on some 18 month undercover drug sting. Behind closed doors, these politicians, judges and law enforcement personnel agree, that the drug war is a failed, hopeless policy. Yet when the corporate media puts that microphone to their mouth and that camera in their face, they revert to cannibalism. In order for them to thrive, (can't back down now,) they insist on maintaining the lie and so they continue devouring our children's lives.

Drug Prohibition is not a minor issue, it is THE issue.

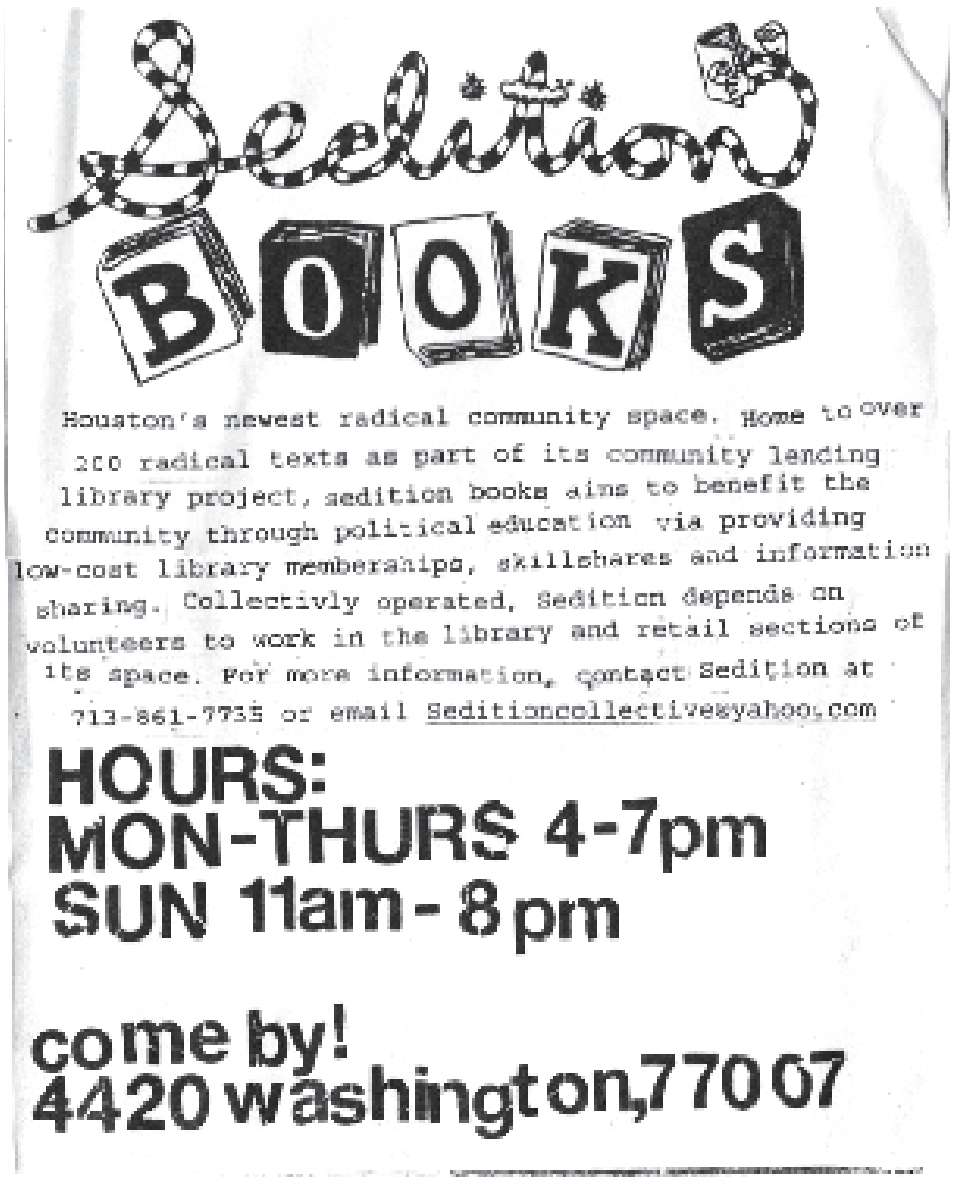
Drug prohibition is the means, the mechanism by which bigotry still thrives in America.

Over the decades of the drug war, the lies of drug prohibition have become sanctified, allowed through general consensus to exist, FOR THE CHILDREN. There is no truth, justice, logic, scientific fact, medical data or any legitimate reason for this drug war to continue. The only reason it continues is the silence of the lambs, the populace so afraid to speak, so paranoid of the glaring truth that surrounds us that they remain in the grip of a taboo so powerful, a lie so convoluted that truth is dashed on a daily basis and the lies embraced with a fervor that would make any Ayatollah proud. I work, daily, to end the madness of drug war. Some day, soon I hope, I can say proudly that I stood against this enormous, societal bugaboo, that I dared to stand against the illogical, deeply entrenched, onerous, dangerous policy of drug prohibition. There are thousands of active drug reformers in the US. There are millions of Americans who should be. Won't you join us? Please visit www.endprohibition.org

Do it FOR THE CHILDREN!

If you would like to learn more about the policy of drug prohibition, please tune in to our daily and weekly radio programs in Houston via KPFT, 90.1 FM, on the web at www.drugtruth.net and over the airwaves of 50 plus radio affiliates in the US and Canada. Our guests include Nobel Laureates, US Congressmen, Canadian Senators, cops, wardens, prosecutors, patients, prisoners and providers. You will hear "Poppy-gate" reports on the fiasco of Afghanistan, (that now supplies 90% of the worlds heroin while under US control.) We offer up Drug War Facts, Corrupt Cop Story's, The Black Perspective on the Drug War, The "Official" Government Truth and Drug War History reports from our half dozen reporters in the US and Canada. We offer cash money, ($1,200) to any drug warrior, (police captain or above, any agent of the DEA, CIA, FBI or justice department, any judge or any prosecutor,) willing to appear on our programs for 15 minutes to defend the policy of drug war. Please realize, that after years of proffering this cash sum we have never had one person contact us to defend their policy. There will never be a head on battle of the facts, the drug warriors have lost this war and they know it. Rope-a-dope worked quite well for Muhammad Ali; it now serves the drug warriors as well as they weather the info storms from those like me. Whether it takes a year or a decade, this drug war will crumble. If you dare to care, if you decide to support the truth, a year from now, prohibition will be a thing of the past. What will you tell your children and grand-children you did to expose the jihad of prohibition?





houston.indymedia.org

FBI names Indymedia, Food Not Bombs to Domestic Terrorist Watch List

by Liz

Austin's highly unprofessional FBI field office, famously staffed with bumbling losers, names IndyMedia a terrorist org...

In a guest lecture at the University of Texas School of Law on Wednesday, FBI Supervisory Senior Resident Agent G. Charles Rasner listed Indymedia, Food Not Bombs, and the Communist Party of Texas as “Terrorist Watch” cause groups in Austin.

Rasner gave a presentation entitled “Counter-Terrorism Efforts in Texas” to a U.S. Law and National Security class at the Law School. He used PowerPoint slides to illustrate the nature of the terrorist threat in Central Texas. The word “Unclassified” appeared prominently in bold red letters on the opening PowerPoint slide.

Listing three categories of cause groups potentially linked to terrorist activity, Rasner named white supremacist groups, Islamic terrorist groups, and Anarchists. When asked what anarchist activity in Austin the FBI was investigating, Rasner referred the questioner to the Ted Kaczynski Unabomber case, claiming that Kaczynski “was an anarchist.” He did not discuss Austin-specific anarchist activity when pressed.

Rasner used a map of Texas to illustrate the existence of the three kinds of terrorist groups in the state. Austin was listed as a site of all three kinds of terrorist activity.

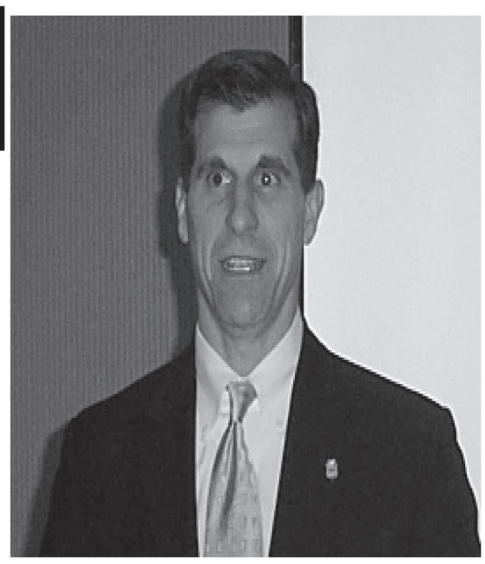
Rasner then placed the FBI’s Central Texas “Terrorist Watch List” on the screen. On a list of approximately ten groups, Food Not Bombs was listed seventh. Indymedia was listed tenth, with a reference specifically to IndyConference 2005. The Communist Party of Texas also made the list. Rasner explained that these groups could have links to terrorist activity. He noted that peaceful-sounding group names could cover more violent extremist tactics.

Food Not Bombs is an all-volunteer organization that recovers food that would otherwise be thrown out and serves vegetarian meals to the public at no cost. Austin Indymedia is an open newswire in which readers may publish news, events, and commentary.

In response to a questioner, Rasner stated that the FBI will attend activist group meetings whenever it suspects that the group might engage in illegal activity. He said that he saw no problem with an agent failing to represent himself as a representative of the FBI and implied that the practice was common.

Student Elizabeth Wagoner requested a copy of the PowerPoint presentation at the end of the class. Rasner refused, claiming the presentation was private government property. He then refused a request for the contact information of the FOIA officer in his bureau, saying it “was not worth [his] time”.

A copy of the PowerPoint presentation has been requested via the Freedom of Information Act. We will publish the presentation on Indymedia as soon as it becomes available.



FBI Supervisory Senior Resident Agent G. Charles Rasner



Mel Chin

Mel Chin's Exhibition: Do Not Ask Me

"In the abrupt terror of the moment, a job description appears: you must re-engineer desire."... “I want to create conditions where individual process isn’t negated but actually enhanced by collective invention.” — Mel Chin

Mel Chin is considered by many to be the 'Noam Chomsky' of the art world. He was in Houston recently to describe pieces in his retrospective exhibit 'Do Not Ask Me." Visit the Station Museum at the corner of West Alabama & La Branch to see the show for free, Wednesday through Sunday from 11-6pm. The show is in town through April.

Houstonians join global day of protest: 3 years since Iraq invasion

On Saturday March 18th Houstonians gathered for a Rally at Old Spanish Trail and Almeda in front of the Veterans memorial hospital to demand the US Troops in Iraq be sent home and adequate funding for Veterans and social programs. This was in observance of the 3 year anniversary of the US invasion of Iraq. The protest was followed by a rally in Herman Park, with music and speakers that drew connections to the occupation of Palestine and the ethnic cleansing in New Orleans.

March for a DREAM brings thousands to the streets of Houston

The Massive demonstrations that have taken place around the country appear to be having a major effect on this debate. Protests have continue in Houston with High School Students walking out of classes. Plans are underway for a national day of protest on April 10th.

On Saturday March 25, A 5,000 strong immigrant's rights rally followed the Dream March filling the streets of Houston with chants, solidarity and celebration.

The march was organized by Jovenes Unidos por un Futuro Mejor (Young Immigrants for a Better Future), around support for the DREAM Act, which would allow undocumented students who graduate from high school to receive in state tuition and allow some college students to apply for temporary and permanent legal status. Many march participants were participating with the draconian HR4437 in mind as well.

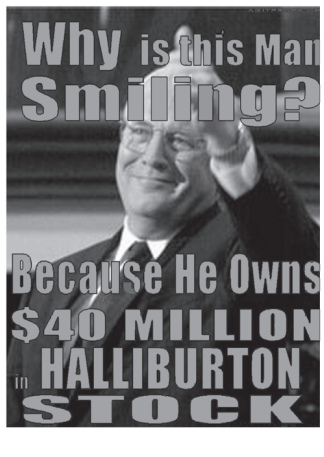


Earlier in March, Chicago had the biggest protest in the city's history when more that a hundred thousand people took to the streets against HR4437. Many other protest took place in the US, 10 to 20 thousand marched in Phoenix (The largest protest in the city’s history), thousands in Watsonvelle, and **50 thousand marched in L.A**, following a day of high school walk-outs across California.

Another World Is Possible... Even in Houston: www.houstonsocialforum.org/

Amid a national dialogue on immigration, this month Houston hosts an open meeting for social movements opposed to neoliberalism. Forget borders and globalize resistance to policies driven by corporate greed. Learn more about struggles taking place in your own community. Discuss alternatives and create better world.The Houston Social Forum Is... a regional event that addresses local as well as global issues; comprised of diverse groups building from common values; nongovernmental, nonpartisan; supportive of true participatory democracy; nonviolent resistance to the world's injustice; working toward mechanisms that value people over profit; seeking active participation for APRIL 29-30, 2006 at Texas Southern University.





Halliburton is on the run

The Houston based multinational Halliburton is having it's annual shareholders meeting in mid-May, as it has for the last two years. Unlike the past two years, they will not be holding their shareholders meeting in Houston, but instead in scenic Duncan Oklahoma, population 22,000. Duncan is where Halliburton was founded in 1924, but has not hosted a shareholders meeting for more than 30 years, in 1972.

While Halliburton spokespeople have denied it, many suspect that the change of locations is in an effort to stop the protests of Halliburton’s war profiteering over the last 2 years. The protests organized in large part by Houston Global Awareness have been noticed by media outlets around the world, and even gained the attention of the pentagon. It has been revealed that US Army analysts from CIFA (Counterintelligence Field Activity) deemed a small protest organized by HGAC in June of 2004 as a potential threat to national security. Ironically, just this week, the Pentagon has also begun an investigation of allegations that Halliburton subsidiary KBR has been providing contaminated water to US troops.

Plans for the 2006 shareholders meeting are still developing, including the possibility of busses to Duncan. As Katie Heim puts it, we have Halliburton on the run, and there is no reason to let up now.

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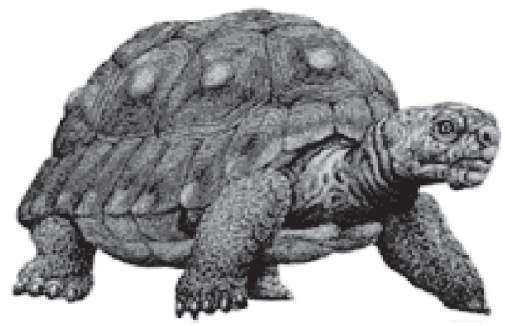
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JUST ANOTHER ATROCITY

by Chris Floyd



What happened in the village of Isahaqi, north of Baghdad, on Ides of March? The murk of war – the natural blur of unbuckled event, and its artificial augmentation by professional massagers – shrouds the details of the actual operation. But here is what we know.

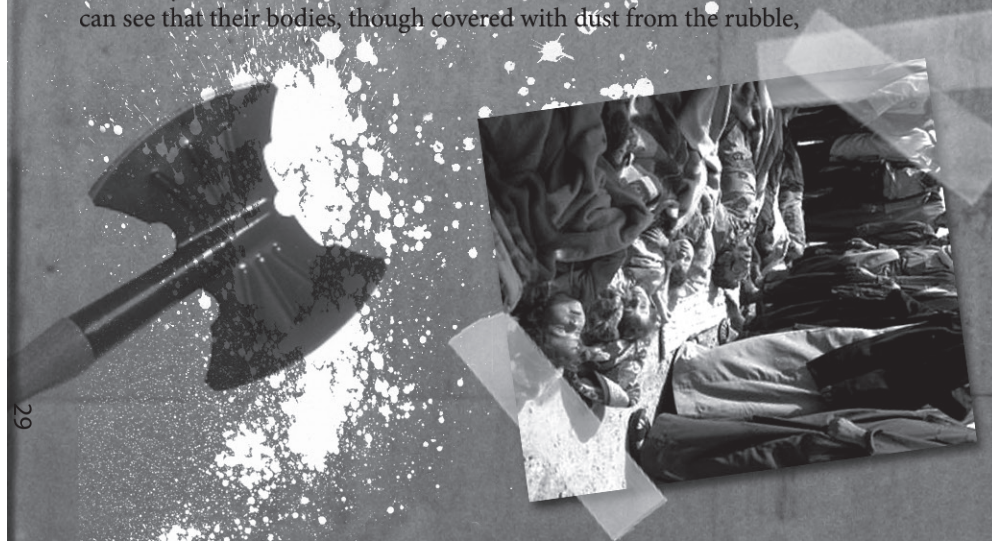
We know that U.S. forces conducted a raid on a house in the village on March 15. We know that the Pentagon said the American troops were "targeting an individual suspected of supporting foreign fighters for the al-Qaeda in Iraq terror network," when their team came under fire, and that the troops "returned fire. utilizing both air and ground assets." We know that the Pentagon said that "only" one man, two women and one child were killed in the raid, which destroyed a house in the village.

We know from photographic evidence that the corpses of two men, four shrouded figure s (women, according to the villagers), and five children – all of them apparently under the age of five, one as young as seven months – were pulled from the rubble of the house and laid out for burial beneath the bright, blank desert sky. We know that an Associated Press reporter on the scene saw the ruined house, and a photographer for Agence France Presse took the pictures of the bodies.

We know that two Iraqi police officials, Major Ali Ahmed and Colonel Farouq Hussein – both employed by the U.S.-backed Iraqi government – told Reuters that the 11 occupants of the house, including the five children, had been bound and shot in the head before the house was blown up. We know that the U.S.-backed Iraqi police told Reuters that an American helicopter landed on the roof in the early hours of the morning, then the house was blown up, and then the victims were discovered. We know that the U.S.-backed Iraqi police said that an autopsy performed on the bodies found that "all the victims had gunshot wounds to the head." We know that the U.S.-backed Iraqi police said they found "spent American-issue cartridges in the rubble."

We know that Ahmed Khalaf, brother of house's owner, told AP that nine of the victims were family members and two where visitors, adding, "the killed family was not part of the resistance, they were women and children. The Americans have promised us a better life, but we get only death."

We know from the photographs that one child, the youngest, the baby, has a gaping wound in his forehead. We can see that one other child, a girl with a pink ribbon in her hair, is lying on her side and has blood oozing from the back of her head. The faces of the other children are turned upwards toward the sun; if they were shot, they were shot in the back of the head and their wounds are not evident. But we can see that their bodies, though covered with dust from the rubble,



are otherwise unmarked; they were evidently not crushed in the collapse of the house during, say, a fierce firefight between U.S. forces and an "al Qaeda facilitator." They died in some other fashion.

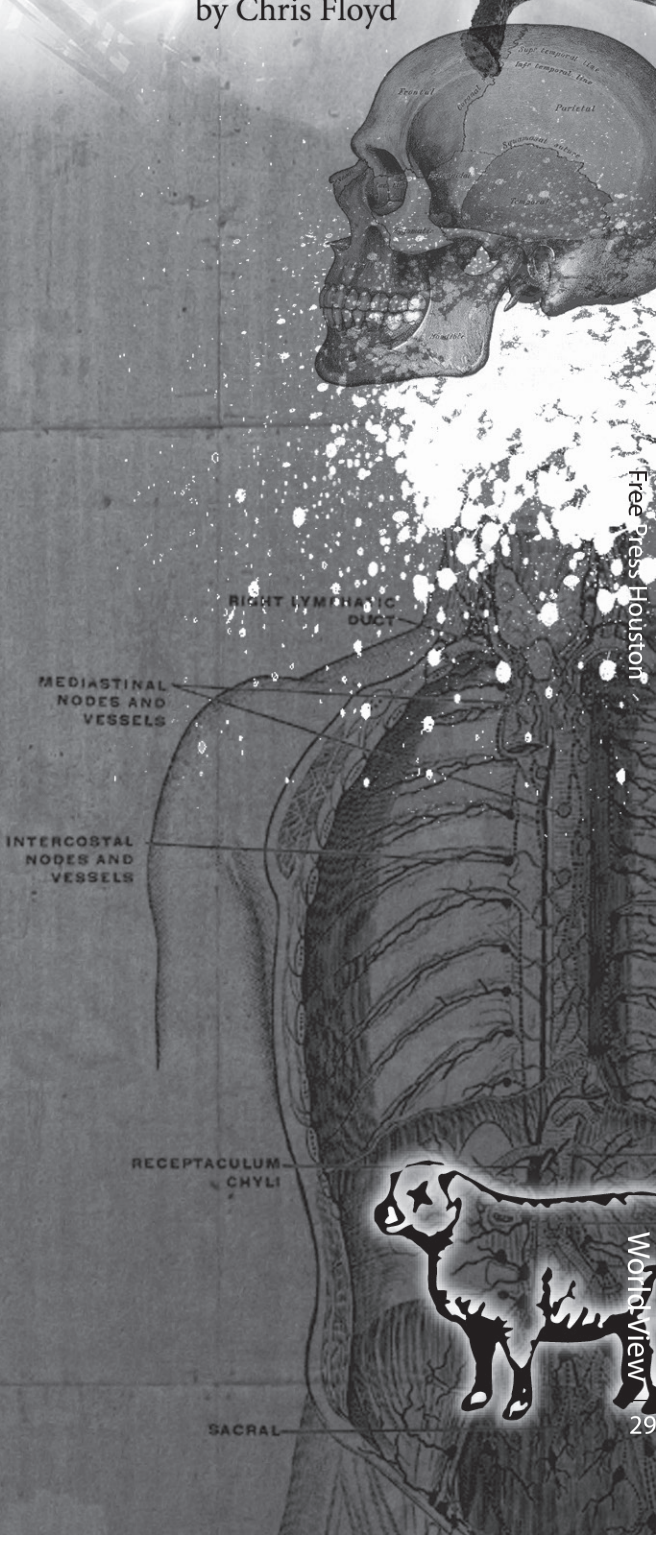
We know from the photographs that two of the children – two girls, still in their pajamas – are lying with their dead eyes open. We can see that the light and tenderness that animate the eyes of every young child have vanished; nothing remains but the brute stare of nothingness into nothingness. We can see that the other three children have their eyes closed; two are limp, but the baby has one stiffened arm raised to his cheek, as if trying to ward off the blow that gashed and pulped his face so terribly.

These facts are what we know from American officials, American-backed Iraqi officials and reporters for Western press associations on the scene. This is probably all we will ever know for certain about what happened in Isahaqi on March 15. The rest will remain obscured by the murk instigated by U.S. military spokesmen, who are evidently not telling the truth about the body count of the raid, and by the natural confusion that must attend the villagers' description of an attack that struck without warning in the middle of the night. But beyond this cloud of unknowing, there are a few other facts relevant to the case that can be clearly established.

For instance, we know that the American troops who caused the deaths of these children – either by tying them up and shooting them, an unspeakable atrocity, or else "merely" by storming or bombing a house full of civilians in a night raid "with both air and ground assets" – were sent to Iraq on a demonstrably false mission to "disarm" weapons that did not exist and take revenge for 9/11 on a nation that had nothing to do with the attack. And we now know that the White House – and George W. Bush specifically – knew all along that the intelligence did not and could not support the public case he had made for the war.

We know that the only reason that this dead baby has his arm frozen to his lifeless face is that three years ago this week, George W. Bush gave the order to begin the unprovoked, unjust and unnecessary invasion of Iraq. He hasn't fired a single shot or launched a single missile; he hasn't tortured or killed any prisoners; he hasn't kidnapped or beheaded civilians or planted bombs along roadsides, in mosques or marketplaces. Yet every single atrocity of the war – on both sides – and every single death caused by the war, and every act of religious repression perpetrated by the extremist sects empowered by the war, is the direct result of the decision made by George W. Bush three years ago. Nothing he says can change this fact; nothing he does, or causes to be done, for good or ill, can wash the blood of these children – and the tens of thousands of other innocent civilians killed in the war – from his hands

And anyone who knows these facts, who sees these facts, and fails to cry out against them – if only in your own heart – will be forever tainted by this same blood.





Israel - Palestine: The Emerging Case for a Single-State Solution

By Todd May

Recently, the debate about Israel and Palestine has taken an odd turn. The idea of a single democratic state in historic Palestine, once thought dead, has re- emerged as an option worthy of consideration. For some, the idea of a single state is a matter of realism. Tony Judt, for example, argues in The New York Review of Books that the integration of the West Bank may already be irreversible, and suggests that a single binational state may be the only alternative to ethnic cleansing. More recently, Noah Cohen has criticized Noam Chomsky's endorsement of a two-state solution. In Cohen's view, we ought to think of Palestine on the model of South Africa, and follow its solution of endorsing a democratic state for all who live in it.

Like many, I long favored a two-state solution. It seemed to me the best of a set of bad solutions to the problem of two peoples living side by side on a small parcel of land. I believe now that I was wrong. The two-state solution is neither moral nor realistic. The only politically and ethically viable approach to the problem of Israel and Palestine is to support a single democratic secular state that provides equal rights for all of its citizens. Furthermore, the failure to recognize this has, I believe, helped underwrite some of the most egregious of Israel's policies. The most important reason for this has not, to my knowledge, yet been sufficiently addressed. I would like to do so here.

Many Palestinians have argued that the formation of Israel was a case of solving European problems on Arab land. Let us look a little more closely at what that solution has consisted in. A single people is thought, in the name of its religion, to have primary dominion over that land. There are others living on the land; they are to be accorded secondary rights. (Although Israel claims its Palestinian citizens possess equal rights, such a claim is ludicrous. It is well known that the Palestinians are unable to form parliamentary coalitions with the Jewish parties that universally reject them, they do not enjoy equal municipal funding in their towns, they are dispossessed of their land, they are denied equal access to education, and so on.)

This is not simply a moral matter. Nor is it simply a historical one. It is both. And that is the problem that we who have endorsed a two-state solution have neglected.

To privilege a single people on a land that supports others as well is to create two intertwined problems. First, it implicitly accords a greater moral worth to that people. We who live in the United States should be viscerally aware this, given our history with native Americans and people of African descent. Second, according this greater moral worth erases the moral limits that any person or people should enjoy relative to others. Once those moral limits are erased, the door is open to abuses of the kind that are rife in Israel's history.

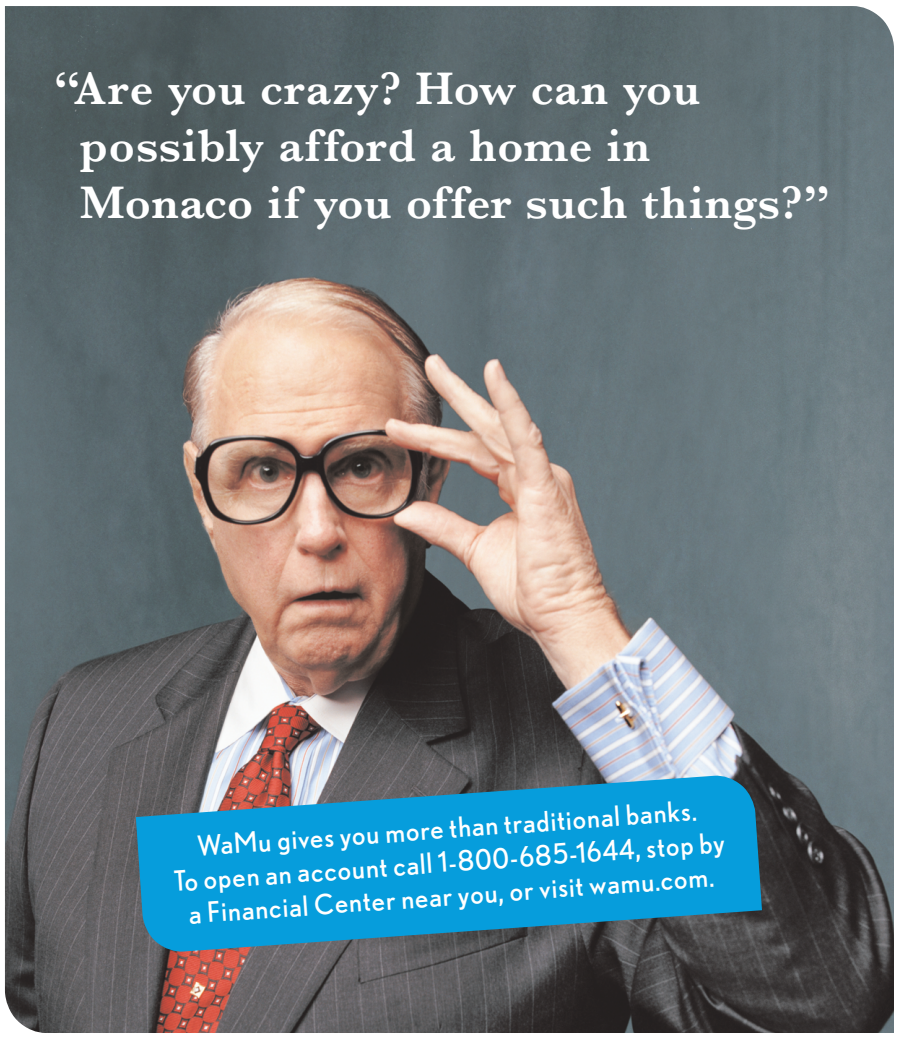
Think, for example, of the recent issue of terrorism. How many of us are ready to ascribe terrorism to suicide bombings but not to the destruction of homes with people still in them or the enforced starvation of towns and villages or the indiscriminate firing on nonviolent protestors? This imbalance is never far to seek, and even those of us who support the Palestinians find ourselves on the defensive. However, we who have supported a two-state solution have negligently endorsed the framing of the issue that allows this to happen. We endorse a "right to exist" that seems to apply to a particular nation but in fact applies only to a particular people within that nation: Jewish people. Further-

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more, that right is exercised at the expense of others whose rights, as the Bush administration does not cease to remind us, must be earned by renouncing their struggle against occupation.

The core of the problem lies here. To privilege politically a single people is to lay the foundation for all subsequent abuses. This is not to say that those abuses follow logically from this privileging. Nor is it to say that they were historically inevitable. Rather, it is that the struggle against such abuses concedes at the outset what it should not: that there is a certain privilege legitimately accorded to Israeli Jews.

We should deny this privilege, and anything that follows from it. One of the things that follow from it is a two-state solution in which Jews enjoy privilege in one of those states (and, presumably, non-Jews in the other one). We should endorse what we should always have endorsed: a single state that privileges nobody, a state where the primary address from one of its members to another is that of "citizen."

I am sure that this approach must ring false to the ears of many. There are a number of objections that one might raise to it. Let me put a few forward, and then answer them in the hope of giving some plausibility to an idea that cuts against the grain of much of received wisdom.

A first objection might appeal to the motivation for recognizing (although, historically, not for forming) a Jewish state in the first place. The Holocaust seemed to many to prove that Jews were unsafe anywhere, and that they needed a place where they could erect a barricade against the history of genocide they faced. A Jewish state would be a natural way to do so.

This objection is misplaced. Jews were indeed often unsafe in Europe. They were not nearly as unsafe in the United States, nor were they in Palestine before the advent of Zionism. That the Holocaust proves that European Jews deserve protection against the history of hatred against them is undeniable. It does not follow from this that they deserved a state where they would be privileged vis-à- vis another people. That idea has more to do with nineteenth-century nationalism than with the internationalism more characteristic of the contemporary world. Moreover, history has shown the effects of this privileging.

I should note in passing that in replying to this objection I do not mean to rule out the possibility of a single binational state, one that, like South Africa or Canada, recognizes the collective rights of all of its groups and seeks to protect them. However, I do not, with Professor Chomsky, see a two-state solution as a potential path toward binationalism. For the reasons I have given, I have come to see the former as resting on assumptions that undermine the possibility both of binationalism and even of the two-state solution itself.

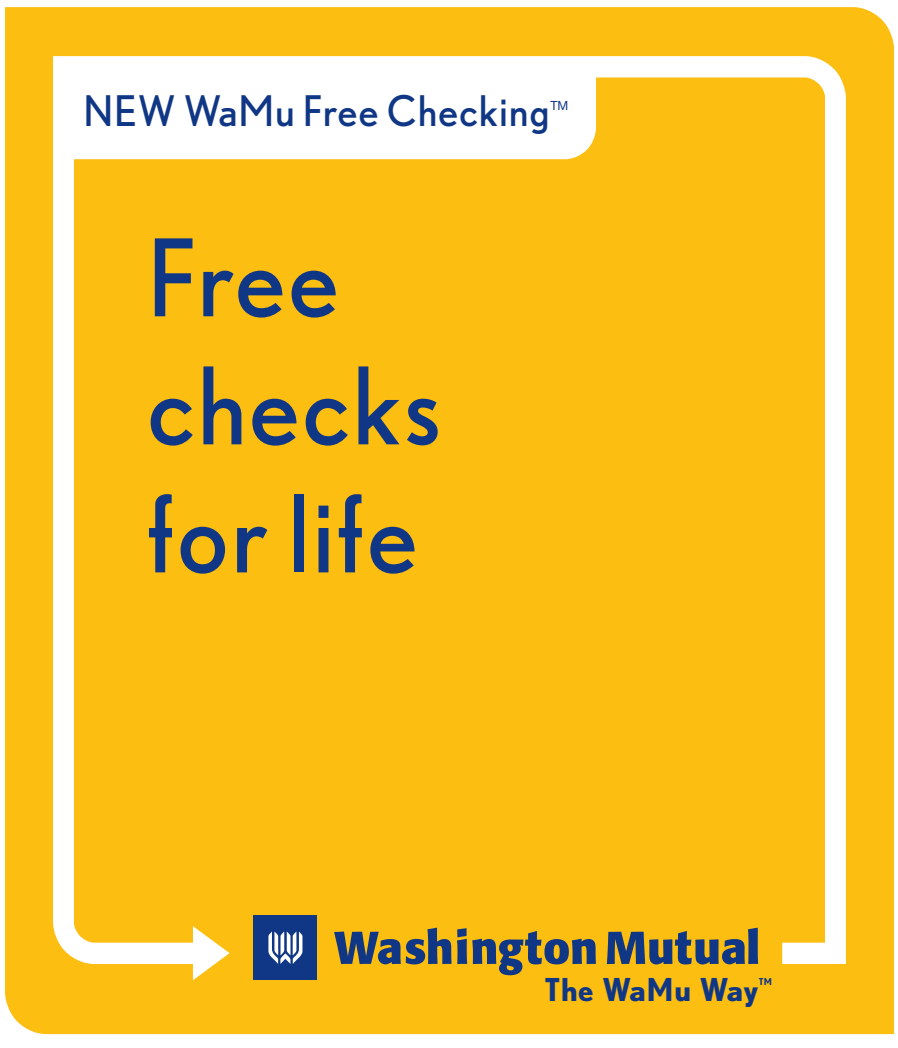
The second objection is that it is unrealistic to expect Palestinians and Jews to live side by side without acrimony. Things have gone too far; hatred has become too deep to expect anything but a cycle of violence and counterviolence. While hatred is certainly palpable between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, its inevitable longevity can be reasonably doubted. During the Oslo period, although Israel continued systematically to dispossess Palestinians of their land and settle Jews on it, there were numerous acts particularly of economic cooperation between Palestinians and Israeli Jews. Much of this cooperation occurred out of the glare of the media, so it was not noticed. But occur it did. Indeed, one should not be surprised. The opportunity for enhancing one's livelihood has proven a powerful motivator over the course of human history. There is no reason to expect economic cooperation, particularly if it is fostered, to drown in a sea of hatred. In fact, there is reason to expect the opposite.

The final objection is perhaps the most powerful one, because it is the most entrenched. All of this talk of a single state, one might say, is idle dreaming. Israel will not allow it to happen, because it will mean the end of Israel as a state and Zionism as an idea. In short, the proposal is a non-starter.

In addressing this objection, we should first recognize that what is and is not realistic to endorse depends on what the options are. Presumably, the more realistic alternative is a two-state solution. But is this really more realistic? The entire sweep of Israeli history argues against it. There is not a single moment in the history of Israel, and in particular of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, in which Israel was prepared to recognize a viable, independent Palestinian state existing along its borders. (The Barak proposal at Camp David is often offered as a counterexample. However, I fail to see how a demilitarized state that does not have control of its borders, its airspace, its aquifers, or many of its central roads is considered a viable state. If there is a non-starter, that was certainly it.) There is no reason to believe that Israel is to be enticed into a two-state solution, so the question then becomes one of the terms in which it is to be confronted.

Some might say, however, that Israel will more easily succumb to confrontation if it involves something less than the end of Zionism. I used to believe this. I no longer do. It is precisely the privileging of Jews to which Zionism is committed that fosters the idea that Israelis are justified in their horrific treatment of Palestinians. That is the tenet that needs to be attacked. We should not seek to welcome Israel into the community of nations, but rather seek to welcome Jews into the community of people. The first endorses a sense of Jewish exceptionalism, the second an integration that is all anyone is entitled to and something everyone (including Palestinians) should be protected in.

The struggle for a single state will certainly be a long one. But the struggle for two states has been a long one as well, and its results so far have not been promising. My suggestion here is that the reason for such meager results has more than a little to do with the framework within which many of us have thought about the issue. I do not want to deny that there are, in politics, times in which moral compromise is necessary for the sake of preventing a far worse fate. It has become increasingly evident that this is not one of those times. The politics of Palestine require that we remove our moral blinders, not in order to attain a greater moral purity in approaching a just solution to the "problem of Palestine," but in order to see our way to a solution at all.



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