FPH

FREE PRESS **HOUSTON**

Go to block party

04.12.08



* *Westheimer Block Party*

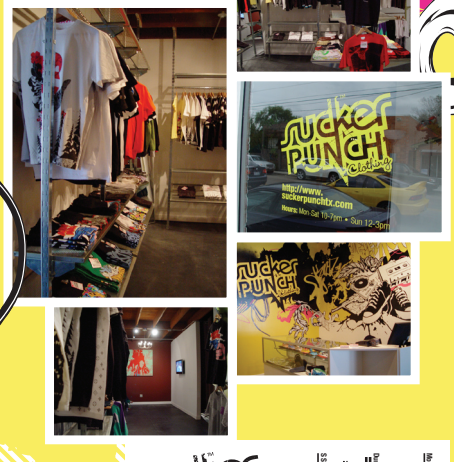
STAGE GUIDE

Also:

- ***Poverty Pop-Quiz***
- ***Mutually Assured Destruction***
- ***Richard Ramirez***
- ***Health** (the band, not the subject)*

APRIL 2008 | ISSUE 90
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FRIDAYS
Live Music

SATURDAYS
Live Music

APRIL BAND LISTINGS

FRIDAYS
April 4 - J.D.'s Throwdown Band
April 11 - The Lost Boys
April 18 - Powerload
(AC/DC Tribute)
April 25 - La Raza Connection
May 2 - Band TBA

SATURDAYS
April 5 - Fireball
(Deep Purple Tribute)
April 12 - Fearless
(Pink Floyd Tribute)
April 19 - Black Dog
(Led Zeppelin Tribute
April 26 - Love It To Death
(Alice Cooper Tribute)
May 3 - Xes Whiskey
(Van Halen Tribute)

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Artwork by Shelby Hulh

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editors

FEEL FREE TO TAKE US SERIOUSLY

Houston

If you had not noticed, we are working double time to shamelessly self promote this upcoming April 12th Westheimer Block Party. As always, there will be the usual array of great local bands, underground arts, and our staff loopy drunk by 3PM.

However, this one will be a touch different as we have added a couple national acts to a show following the Block Party at Numbers : *...And you will know us by the Trail of Dead* and *Health* along with *Spain Colored Orange*, *The Dimes (Young Mammals)*, and *By the End of Tonight*. We are also trying to clean up our act by getting a tad more organized, expanding the cleaning and recyling of waste produced by the event, and all around trying to provide a more crunk-tastic day. We of course, are making an open invitation to artists to come display their works, decorate the street, and participate in our live painting project on several massive canvases we are painstakingly trying to assemble. All in all, we expect a great time and, Allah willing, it will be splendid spring weather. Hope to see you there.

April 12th Westheimer Block Party.



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Sat. 5- Alpha Rev

Thu. 10- Inner Lights , Mansion, Antarctica Starts Here

Fri. 11- Whorehound, Son(s) of Evel, Spilt Hoof

Sat. 12 -Amplified Heat, Scorpion Child

Wed. 16- The Independents, Vatos Locos, Dicky Hands

Thu. 17- Jeremy Nail, Nathan Singleton & His Sideshow Tragedy

Fri. 18- Deadbolt

Sat. 19- Playing With Stars, PJ Flowers, Live Oak Decline

Wed. 23- The Timmy Wood Show with Friends & Enemies

Thu.24- The Neptones, The Misfires, Picture Book

Fri. 25- Orentis Sterner, Tody Castillo, Arthur Yoria

Sat. 26- Alkari, Mechanical Boy, Zykos

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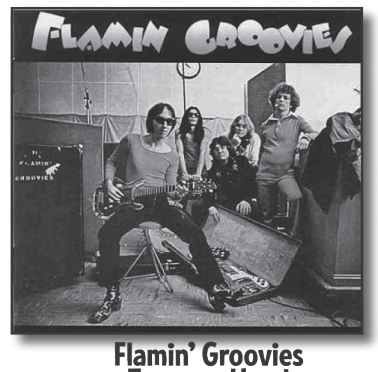
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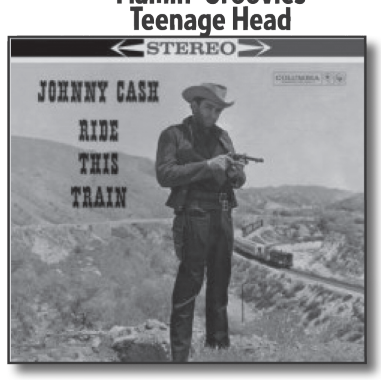
$4.99 3 Classics Sale Priced For The Month of April



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Greatest Hits



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APRIL 19, 2008

Stop by Cactus on April 19th, Record Store Day.

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In-Stores For Record Store Day, 4/19

- South Austin Jug Band @ Noon
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Don't Miss These Other Live In-Stores

- The Stone Coyotes - Sat. 4/12 @ 3:30pm
- Hayes Carll - Wed. 4/16 @ 6:00pm
- Texas Sapphires- Fri. 5/2 @ 6:00pm
- The Old 97's - Thurs. 5/15 @ 5:30pm

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9:00P-Open mic poetry followed by The Seed Grass Gypsies from Boston

Apr 4 2008
9:00P-Magic Jewels Band /Wiggins

Apr 5 2008
9:00P-Lazy Horse

Apr 11 2008
9:00P Generation Landslide/Honeysuckle

Apr 12 2008
8:00P-Hillary York

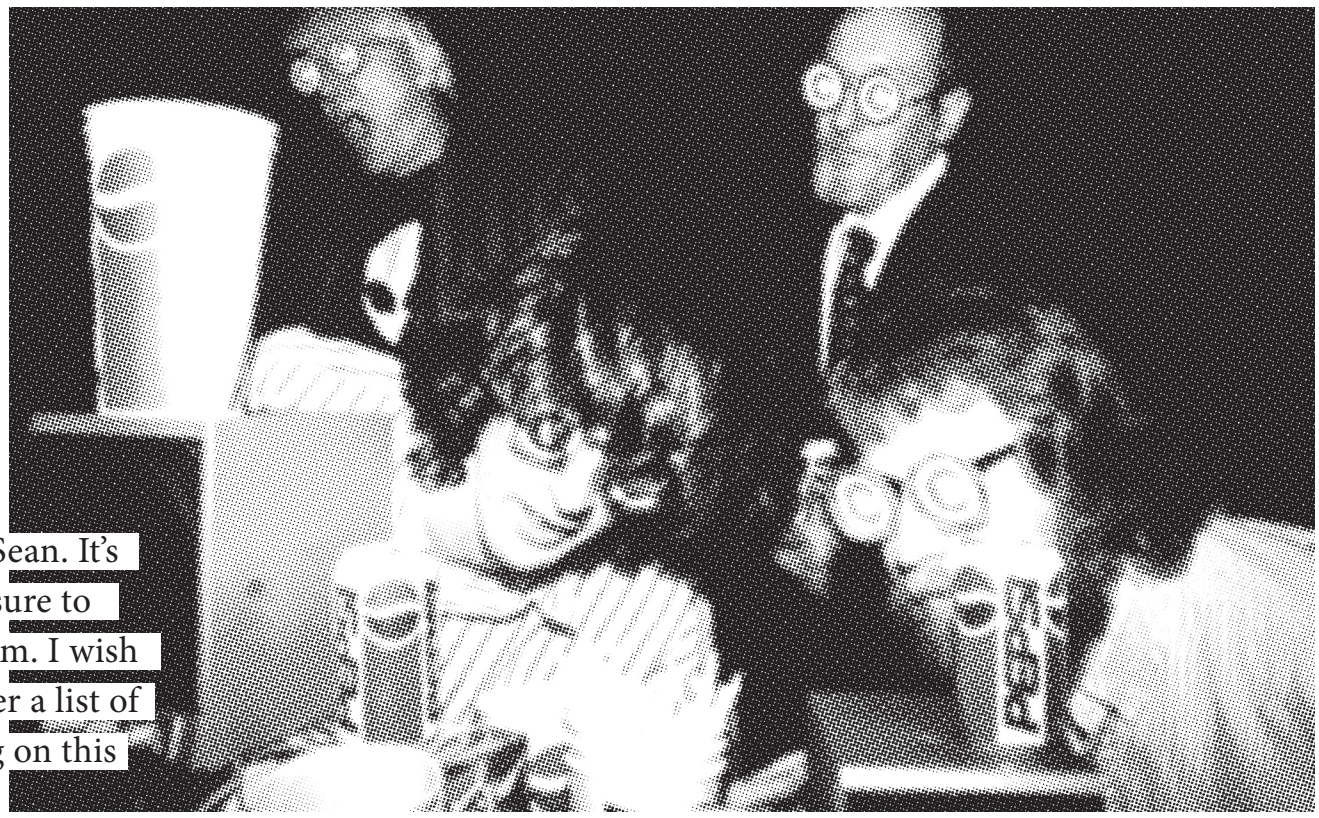
Apr 19 2008
9:00P-The Goods

www.myspace.com/notsuohmusic
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DEBRIS

More of the Same
(I mean that as a compliment)

| Brittany Bly



So, I'm sure you noticed that I'm not Sean. It's true. Sean just got married! So make sure to congratulate him next time you see him. I wish that in his honor we could put together a list of wedding themed art exhibitions going on this month. (Un)fortunately, none exist.

It might be a better idea to go to a real wedding and pretend that it's an artistic performance. You could bring an arty friend with you and say things like, "mmmm . . . I just don't believe the actors are really experiencing the moment." Or, "the visual aesthetic plays off of the idea of post-structuralism and kitsch so perfectly. Do you think that this piece is influenced by Jean Baudrillard?"

On the topic of wedding themes, have you noticed how much Houston loves themes? This year's Fotofest is coming to a close, the rodeo has just ended and has anyone noticed the advertisements for the Red Bull *Art of the Can*? Houston has a unique way of hyper-matching its rodeo with its rodeo themed art, with its cowboy boots to create something larger-than-life. It's so diverse and de-centralized here that it takes something behemothic to inspire people to drive from even distant suburbs to look at art. And this month is not short of art that's held together thematically.

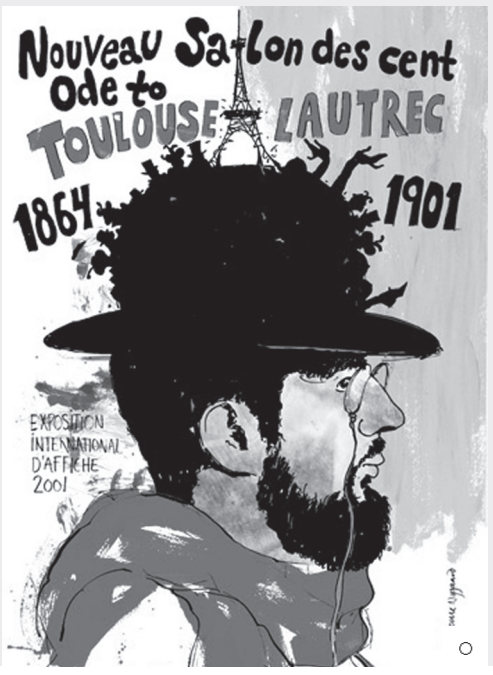
First of all, there's the annual education rivalry. The CORE *Artists in Residence* exhibition is on view at the Glassell School until April 18th; the University of Houston *Master's Thesis* exhibition will open at the Blaffer Gallery Friday April 11th; Nancy Hixon, who just retired from the Blaffer Gallery, is the guest curator of *Launch: Rice Student Art Exhibition 45* opening Thursday April 24th; and last but not least, the Teen Council will host their annual fashion show at Contemporary Arts Museum April 3rd. These concurrent exhibitions vary from a work in progress student aesthetic to a completely professional quality and not necessarily in a chronological order. It seems that talent is where it is, whether that is in a CORE resident or a high school student.

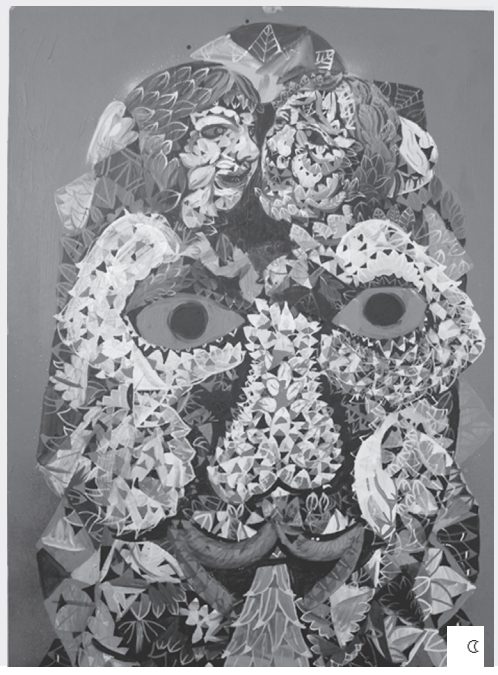
Also coming up this month is the Aurora Picture Show hosted *Media Archeology* which is a series of multimedia events that incorporate live performance with video looping, and sound production into dizzying blends of audio visual chaos. This year events take place April 17th through 19th at Rice University, Diverse Works, and the Orange Show. *Negativland:It's All in Your Head*, the first event on April 17th at Herring Hall on the Rice University campus, will simultaneously broadcasted on KTRU at 8pm. Negativland is an audio performance about a fake radio show in which characters will debate Christianity, Islam, Judaism and other world religions, so just close your eyes and listen. FPH

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Giant: Westheimer Block Party
Westheimer at Taft
April 12th |







GRANDMA TAKE ME HOME

| Michael Bergeron



A photo exhibit consisting of fairy tales, grandmothers and elevator girls holds more than your interest. This exhibition with its surreal comments on consumerism practically grabs you by the ring around your collar.

The Miwa Yanagi: Deutsche Bank Collection contains major pieces from this Japanese photographer who can easily be divided into the distinct Fairy Tale, My Grandmother and Elevator Girl series. This collection is currently on display at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston until May 4. Most of the photos are wall sized with one over 60 feet in length. In another time zone you could drive and hide a Datsun in one.

Of the three series of Yanagi's photos the elevator girls are a phenomenon that doesn't exactly exist in out culture. Then again maybe they do if you replaced elevator girl with cheerleaders. In Japan elevator girls wear white gloves and dresses color coordinated with their respective corporate parent. The femmes are chosen specifically for their body type, skin and youth. A companion video Kagome Kagome utilizes the narrow spaces along corridors of commerce to comment on these well-groomed lasses. Yanagi has frozen images of these young ladies in a fetishistic blur of blues and reds. Yanagi, who lives in Japan's most beautiful city Kyoto, used the concept of elevator girls in two performance art pieces that preceded her leap to photography.

Much of Yanagi's imagery is computer enhanced. Shooting the elevator girls in actually malls, usually late at night so as to not conflict with the business of the day, Yanagi uses space to distance the girls from the stores they serve even while digitally removing signs and objects in windows and repeating visual motifs.

By contrast the grandmother series uses young models that were told to write what they would be in 50 years. Recruiting responses from a website, Yanagi choose some of the applicants then staged her tableaux. She digitally altered the faces in addition to using prosthetics to reflect the wages of age. One of the centerpieces of the show depicts a young girl/grandmother in the sidecar of a motorcycle, being driven by a young stud, traveling along the Golden Gate Bridge highway, her dyed red hair waving in the wind, one hand casually dangling a cigarette and her diamond tooth catching a ray of the sun.

In sharp contrast to the blazing color and life affirming nature of the other two chapters of Yanagi's photos, the fairy tale series presents carefully staged poses in rich black and white imagery that practically beg the viewer to conjure unpleasant images. All of the photos resonate familiarity with their titles – Rapunzel, Snow White, The Little Match Girl – yet their staging, involving mostly young girls and masks, makes you shudder to consider the consequences – not unlike real fairy tales. Welcome to the world of Miwa Yanagi, a place where space becomes fantastical landscapes. FPH

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LOVE,
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UNDER A SIMILAR MOON

| Michael Bergeron



Home entertainment will never replace the experience of going to the movies. Likewise going to the movies will never replace the experience of going to film festivals. At the SXSW Film Festival and Conference, which unrolled in Austin last month, important documentaries played next to stoner midnight flicks. Mainstream studio fare unwound besides obscure indie films themselves seeing light for perhaps the first and only time.

SXSW was recently referred to in a trade publication as the film festival that Slamdance (an unofficial companion to the Sundance FF) hoped to become. The buzz (not including the smoke in the air at the premiere of Harold and Kumar Escape From Guantanamo Bay) was created evenly across eight different categories.

Recounting the 17 films I saw (I counted 112 feature length titles in the program), there are some whose images remain in my mind. Then there are the films I missed yet cannot wait to catch up with, like an Alex Gibney docu on Hunter S. Thompson or a new film from Julian Schnabel called Lou Reed's Berlin.

Here are some thoughts on films that found me a willing captive, organized by SXSW category. Of the 16 films listed in competition The Lost Coast was the only one I caught. The story takes place overnight during Halloween in San Francisco and the digital lensing accentuates washed out colors – in fact the film looks black and white at times (evidently due to perfectly overcast skies during production). Another entire sequence was shot during a celebration involving thousands of people in the Castro district, a feat logistically impossible with a studio film. A group of friends come to terms with repressed issues of sexuality but more importantly the filmmakers use their actual locations, and how they affect the character's emotions, to great effect.

In the Emerging Visions category the mocumentary A Necessary Death played it straight for the world premiere. The film works, even though you know it's a faux documentary, because the chain of events follows a true path. The filmmakers would have us believe they posted an internet ad looking for potential suicides, then interviewed several people before coming up with the most likely candidate. The ending catches you off guard. Will you believe it? Hey, people with degrees were telling me Blair Witch was real.

Six films in the Spotlight Premieres section, out of 35 total, ran the gamut from important documentaries making their world premiere to genre films getting small to wide releases in the next month. 21 (Sony/Columbia) and Stop Loss (Paramount) were received with cheers by their respective festival audiences if only because of attendance from the various stars and directors. Both films tell familiar stories with some of today's hottest actors. In other words Sony's release of 21 has a lot to do with them positioning Jim Sturgess as their new It Boy. Sturgess was great in Across the Universe and miscast in The Other Boleyn Girl. 21 never registers strong enough on the richter scale of coolness to give it raves, but the first half where they explain the technique of card counting at blackjack was fascinating. Stop Loss saw a heavy push with plenty of media placement (MTV Films) and appearance by writer-director Kimberly Pierce in both Austin and Houston.

Pierce noted during a chat with Free Press Houston that it had taken over seven years to get this film in theaters since her debut Boys Don't Cry. After that film she'd tried to get the go word on a film about the murder of William Desmond Taylor (the most famous Hollywood murder of the then young 20th century) and had Robert Towne writing and Rachel Evan Wood starring. Obviously the film was never made and when Pierce cut her deal for Stop Loss it was as a green-lit movie from the beginning.

Stop Loss never overwhelmed me like In the Valley of Elah, the film I consider the benchmark for current Iraq themed films, yet there are solid performances from the likes of Ryan Phillippe and Abbie Cornish, the latter an Australian actress who will find a following in America down the road.

Then She Found Me finds Helen Hunt in the director's seat and also in the lead. Film follows her relationship with a lady (Bette Midler) who arrives in the midst of crisis and claims to be her biological mother. Hunt has some good comic moves and overall Then She Found Me takes delight in playing against the grain.

Spotlight Premieres also offered two documentaries that bridged the history of documentary filmmaking domestically for the last two generations. Wild Blue Yonder tells the story of documentarian David Mayles from the viewpoint of David's daughter Celia. With interviews featuring the likes of D. A. Pennebaker, Lois Wright (who lived at Grey Gardens), Susan Froemke (who worked on Grey Gardens), and brief clips or photos from Salesman and Grey Gardens and Gimme Shelter the film plays like a greatest hits record of images from a more turbulent era. Rather than incriminating or vengeful Wild Blue Yonder offers a salute to the documentary vision that set the current standard, even while resembling the documentary subgenre of the search for one's parents experience epitomized by My Architect.

Steve James could arguably, along with Michael Moore, be called the leading American documentarian. Unlike Moore, James makes his polemic points (think Stevie) without polarizing his audience. The case of Carlos De Luna bookends At the Death House Door. James found out about De Luna through two Chicago Tribune reporters who believe that De Luna was wrongfully executed. This led James to Carroll Pickett the prison chaplain on Texas death row in Huntsville from 1982, when the death penalty was reinstituted, to 1995. Pickett's job was to counsel the condemned on the day of their execution. James' special gift as a filmmaker is the way the whole thing occurs in front of your eyes organically, like you had just lived the experience over a period of years.

While the De Luna case is front and center, much of the power of At the Death House Door comes from its exhaustive overview of the Texas prison system from the 1974 Huntsville siege by prison inmate Fred Carasco (two of the hostages killed were from Pickett's congregation) to the present day. With *At the Death House Door* James has made such a well balanced, tolerant and



at times disturbingly honest film about the death penalty. You feel like you've watched something important, something that needed to be said.

SXSW Film has always leaned towards musical documentaries and this year had its share of treats in the 24 Beats Per Second and Special Screenings categories. Wesley Willis's Joyride answers some much forgotten questions about this iconic and deceased Chicago musician. Joy Division tells essentially the same story as the film Control with the actual participants (except Deborah Curtis). The film is very well paced and edited with rare live footage. Ditto for The Sweet Lady With the Nasty Voice, a tribute to Wanda Jackson. When you hear her sing in vintage footage, and watch her recount her life in the film's main set piece you'll believe she's the original female rocker who influenced and charmed Elvis before he was the King. An Irish docu Heavy Load found grace in the story of a garage level band, some of whose members are physically challenged. Rock is rock the world over. These last music related films will probably never pop up in theaters but are worth seeking in whatever eventual disc release is deemed righteous by the film gods.

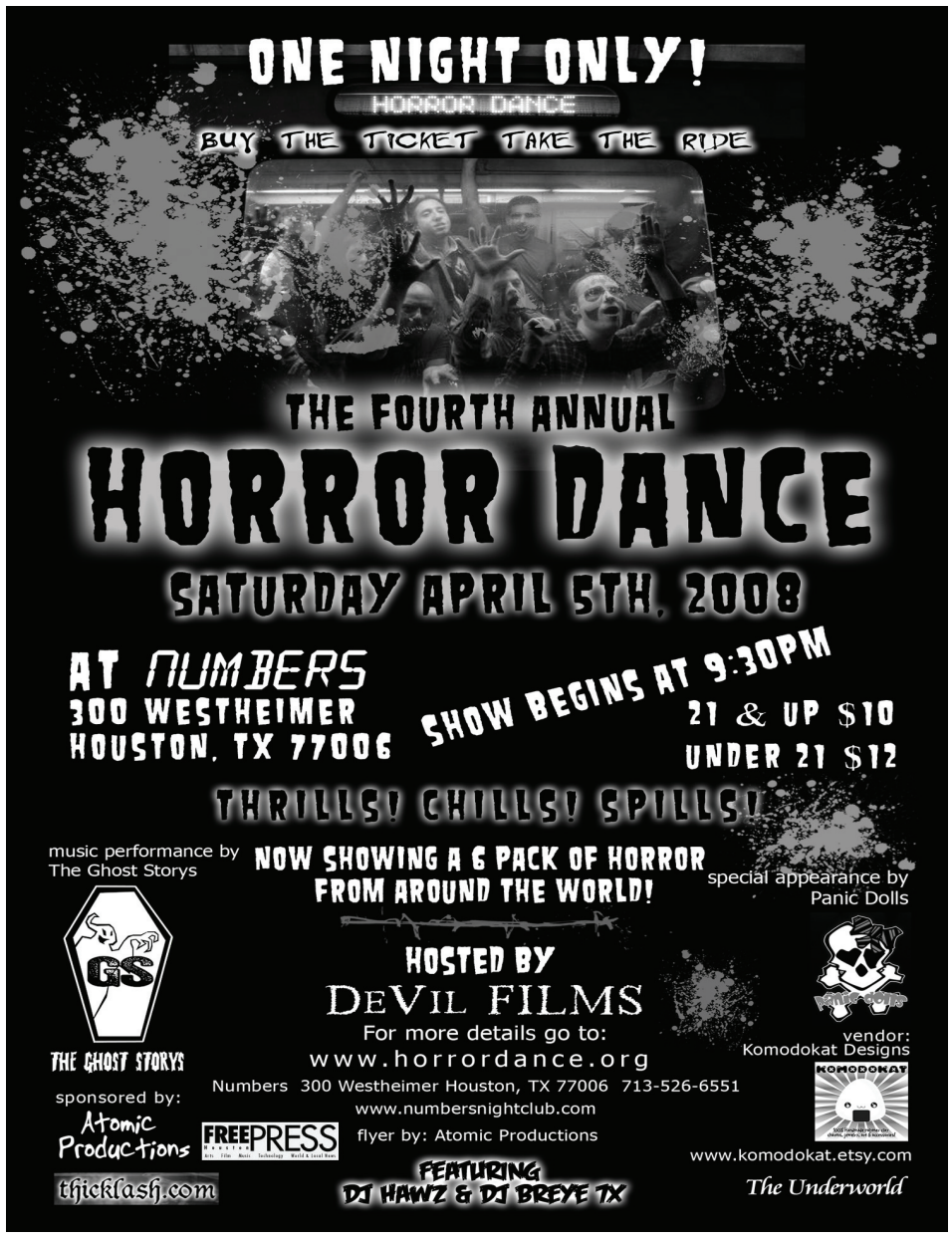
Pull a job

Roger Donaldson's The Bank Job provides top-notch crime thrills in the heist genre while flushing out the plot with purported "new evidence" about an actual UK bank robbery from the early 1970s known as the walkie-talkie robbery. If you are familiar with names like Princess Margaret or Michael X you may know some of the story, and if not the movie compels regardless. The Bank Job stars Jason Statham and Saffron Burrows in roles that allow them to shine rather than languish as second leads or in Stratham's case a B-Movie action guy. Here Stratham carries enough of the movie with a combo of charm and brute force that he can hardly just be referred to as the Transporter guy.

Not unlike the electronic surveillance of The Anderson Tapes the film goes back and forth between the robbery in progress, the branch of government skullduggery that set up the robbery to cover up another covert action, and the police listening to radio transmissions of the break-in on a ham set trying to locate the actual bank that's being robbed. Further complication arise when the robbers make off with the contents of hundreds of safe deposit boxes and raise the wrath of a porno king whose records of corruption payments are among the loot. Meanwhile the British government declares a ban on all news about the getaway declaring the facts will reveal national secrets.

The Bank Job is a conspiracy inside a caper wrapped around a delicious evocation of 70s filmmaking. FPH





SOME OF US WANT THE MONEY, AND SOME REMAINED TO BE DESTROYED

| Kwame M. Anderson



Supposedly there's not a recession, everything is fine, or there is a recession, and still, everything's fine. So I've come to report that, allegedly, everything is fine. Someone said that Americans are going to have to "tighten their belts." I pictured tightening my belt, I could not see how that would save me money…I guess…

Oh! We'll have to tighten our pockets, mainly because theirs has been so loose. Crazy. They (you know who "they" are) spend your money on tapping phones, air attacks, not necessarily armor for soldiers (but) wars. Now they're going to give you some of that money back, and they have to pass legislation to do this, to give you back your own money, because apparently the economy is fine, though they have to give you the money because it isn't, but that's what is done to help the American people, take a way the loaf, but give back a few slices.

SHOW YOU HOW TO DO THIS SON

SAUL WILLIAMS w/ DRAGONS OF ZYNTH

4/1/08 I Warehouse Live

Saul Williams is a beast, and you all know this. Once I saw him on the TV show "Girlfriends," and after it went off I said, "Saul Williams is a beast!" Because his message is never watered down, he's they type of dude you want to see win, he's taken it all on, his poetry is fierce, there is a meter and language, but more, is impossible to hear and not leave affected. Dragons Of Zynth are another unavoidable truth (FOR REAL!!). Their live show is equal parts razzle and dazzle, there is NOT another band like Dragons OF Zynth, there is a TV On The Radio comparison, but while possibly and influence, they are their own thing. Their album "Coronation Thieves" is a lovely mix of slow jam r&b, psychedelic something or another, rock, roll, soul, etc. If this article comes out after the this show, hopefully, they will still print this, so you can know what you missed.

XIU XIU

4/4/08 I The Orange Show

Xiu Xiu does have disturbing moments on his albums, but more recently there have been more dance-y disturbing moments, you groove AND cringe, but more you must pay notice that Xiu Xiu can never be called boring, really how can this music not arouse some emotion, his latest album "Women As Lovers" expands the an already fabulous catalog. Now that Xiu Xiu is more a band than the vision of key member Jamie Stewart. This adds a new element to a recipe that needs not new spice (seemingly), but never question the chef, just enjoy the meal. Attendance is mandatory.

HEALTH

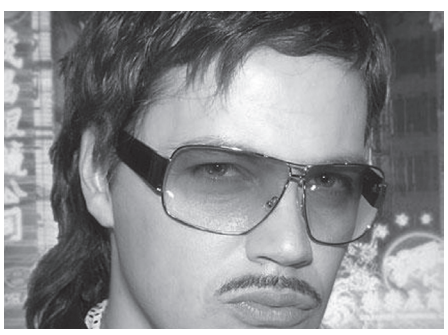
4/12/08 | The Mink

Los Angeles California's Health are many things. On their Myspace they are described as experimental rock, which I'm sure is just the closest comparison on the pre-made list. Their rock has industrial, beat machine/ heavy guitar qualities, there are touches of feedback and screech, a little big booty beat banging. Because of the emotion and expression conveyed through the coldness of my computer speakers, I'm sure that in the flesh the music will hunt and find you, attack you where you stand and then pummel your sensibilities. However this is just what I get from it, you may think "They're alright, but when's the costume change, and why is the beer so cheap here, I'm used to paying 25 dollars for a Miller Light."

ELF POWER

4/26/08 I The Mink

Right now much is made of freaky folk that transcends genre. Elf Power are one of the best teams in this league. Hailing form Athens, Georgia and once a part of posse that included the equally influential and fantastic Neutral Milk Hotel, the band has been making big music with modest means for some time now, and, as their newest release "In A Cave" proves their legacy continues. My old friend Gram used to play this band a lot, he's moved away now, but every time I think about him, I think about this band, well…not…really…



GUNTHER AND THE SUNSHINE GIRLS

4/4 | Meridian



…AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD

4/12 | Numbers



PARTS AND LABOR

4/13 | KTRU Outdoor



HONEYSUCKLE

4/11 | Notsuoh

MUSIC TO PURCHASE

EVANGELISTA
Hello Voyager (Constellation)
Evangelista is the product of Carla Bozulich who once played in the Geraldine Fibbers with Nels Cline.The album is Hello Voyager has a few sounds, but most of them are spawned from a darker place. "Lucky Lucky Luck" is almost like a swing, almost Broadway, you know it's grooving toe tapping thing, but "Frozen Dress" is an haunting, riveting ride through six minutes and twenty seven seconds. While "Smooth Jazz" is kind of a no wave, early raga meets raucous, stomp that calls to mind the desert chase in Mad Max (symbolically speaking). "Hello, Voyager" is the rise and fall of a monster (symbolically speaking). Music is best as a weapon, I don't even know what that means.

NEW BLOODS
The Secret Life (Kill Rock Stars)
The wonderful about early reggae and punk was the bareness, there was not the sheen, it conjured a feeling of being n the room, music that was close to you, that was next to you, not on top of you, or around you, but right there. Organic is a word. New Bloods combine sounds familiar to more people music (i.e. reggae, punk, Ethio-funk). We could also think of band such Sleater Kinney, The Raincoats, or Unwound in some ways. The rhythm carries the songs, the third instrument, where usually a guitar, is a violin, that provides a completely different tonal quality than that normally done in this context. The lyrics speak of empowerment, realization, illusion, or disillusionment, there is poetry there are layers that unfold with each listen. The bus is here! Get on the bus!

STEPHEN MALKMUS & THE JICKS
Real Emotional Trash (Matador)
Something happened at the end of Pavement, Malkmus became Eric Clapton. No, not really, but his latter material is chock full of guitar, amd guitar solos, big guitar solos, like reaching for the sun guitar solos, which if you were a fan of smarmy Pavement too cool for school.rock, when the Malkman became more song- y, might've made you mad. Well, I'm not one of those people, dude is 41 years old, he music has the dignity of not trying to compete with the Vampire Weekend's and the whoever's popular thing. The song craft remains, I'd pt "We' Can't Help You" or "Out Of Reaches" against any Pavement hit. But still, the album is not as quirky as it may be as his last, but what it lacks in perceived quirk, it gains in the solidification of the band by Janet Weiss. She and Joanna Bolme are competing for rhythm section of the time period in which a superior rhythm section would be picked. "Dragonfly Pie" is a rocker, it's the equivalent of a rattlesnake in a cage that gets out every now and then, it sits and then it strikes. "Cold Son" is an anthem, a proclamation of rock music, it blends American rock and British rock in a way that screams "Press repeat!" I'm hungry... **FPH**



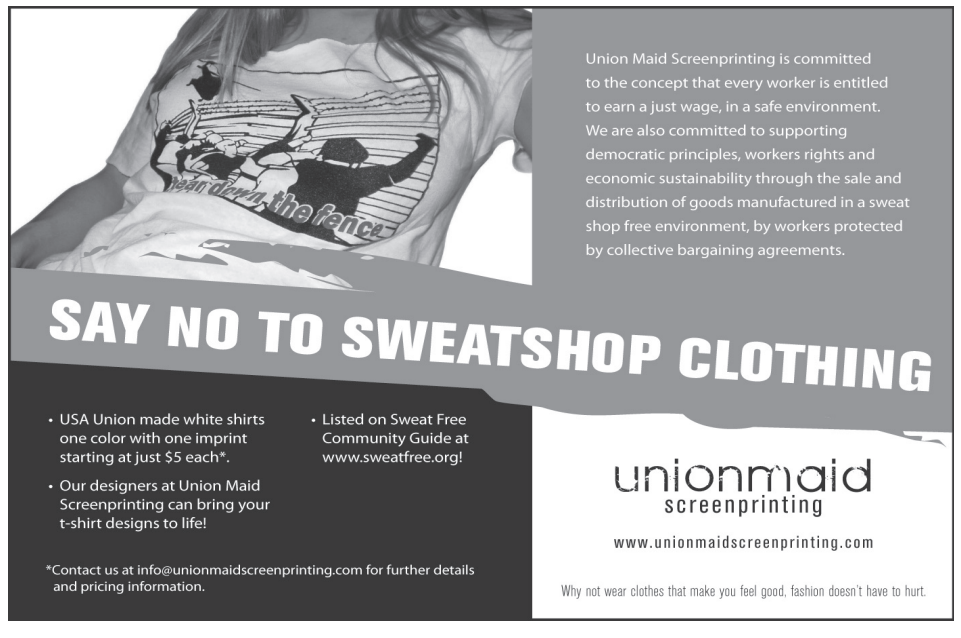
PEPPER
4/19 | Warehouse Live



ALPHA REV
4/8 | Rudyard's







RICHARD RAMIREZ

Interviewed by Ramon Medina, Richard Saenz Fashion
Photography by Jessica Molina



Richard Ramirez has long been recognized as one of Houston's most important Noise/ Experimental artists. Whether designing fashion or making music he has been producing challenging work for nearly 20 years with a fierce sense of daring and independence. Ramirez recently was good enough to answer a few questions for us:

FPH: What are you expressing through your music?

RR: At times, I would say aggression through 'noise'. I utilize metal items, chains, broken equipment, film samples, and field recordings for my work. For the most part, it is about taking sounds (natural and electronic) to its extreme. I say extreme because it pushes sound sources to the highest volume that can be created for a recording.

FPH: What attracted you to the noise/experimental genre?

RR: I liked that the artists were pushing the envelope of sound and thinking outside of traditional instruments and structure.

FPH: How do your other endeavors relate to your music?

RR: I am also an 'avant-garde' fashion designer (under the alias, Richard Saenz). In fashion, my work is also about thinking outside of the 'box'. An extreme form of creating garments with irregular stitching burned fabrics, frayed hems, deconstructing items. I think my methods in my 'noise' is very similar to that of my fashion work.

FPH: In what way?

RR: I treat garments for my fashion in unconventional ways. 'noise' is treating equipment/sounds in unconventional ways. With both I sometimes see an item or hear something (field recordings) and I just want to deconstruct what I see or hear. [Noise/experimental is] more 'art' than 'music' for me. It is similar to abstract expressionism.

FPH: How are you distinguishing Art and Music? Isn't Music an artform?

RR: I just would not consider 'noise' to be music. The way I describe what I do is that it's 'sound art'. It may sound pretentious and it's not meant to sound that way. A lot of experimental/noise artist perform in galleries and artspaces. I guess the preference is to be linked to the art community. Maybe it is more accepting than the music industry.

FPH: Can you elaborate on any festivals or international performances you've played?

RR: I performed in Tokyo, Japan a few years back. It was a two day festival. Great turn out!!! They treat you like a 'rock star' which was kind of funny and strange. Last year, BLACK LEATHER JESUS, did a show opening for SONIC YOUTH in Marfa, TX. It was during the Chinati Open House weekend. Thurston and Lee are fans of my work and asked if I'd do it. It was the second time I had met them. My boyfriend, Jovan, and I met them a couple of years ago backstage at their show here. I was scared that their audience would not like us. However, it turned out well.

FPH: Why does noise exists and what part of modern life does it reflect?

RR: Noise is all around us everyday. Noise is part of the destruction of our environment. Sadly, we add to the pollution that exists. IT IS the soundtrack for the end of the world. As horrible as it may sound, I feel it is true.

FPH: Why so?

RR: Noise is chaos to some. Noise is destruction to some. There can be beauty in the ugliness of this genre. It really depends on the artist that creates it. I can only speak for myself and close friends that do this, as well. Not all noise is about negative issues and imagery. Some are about pornography (not necessarily a negative issue), eroticism, fetishism, and humor. There are noise artists are very political, as well.

FPH: How have things changed over the years?

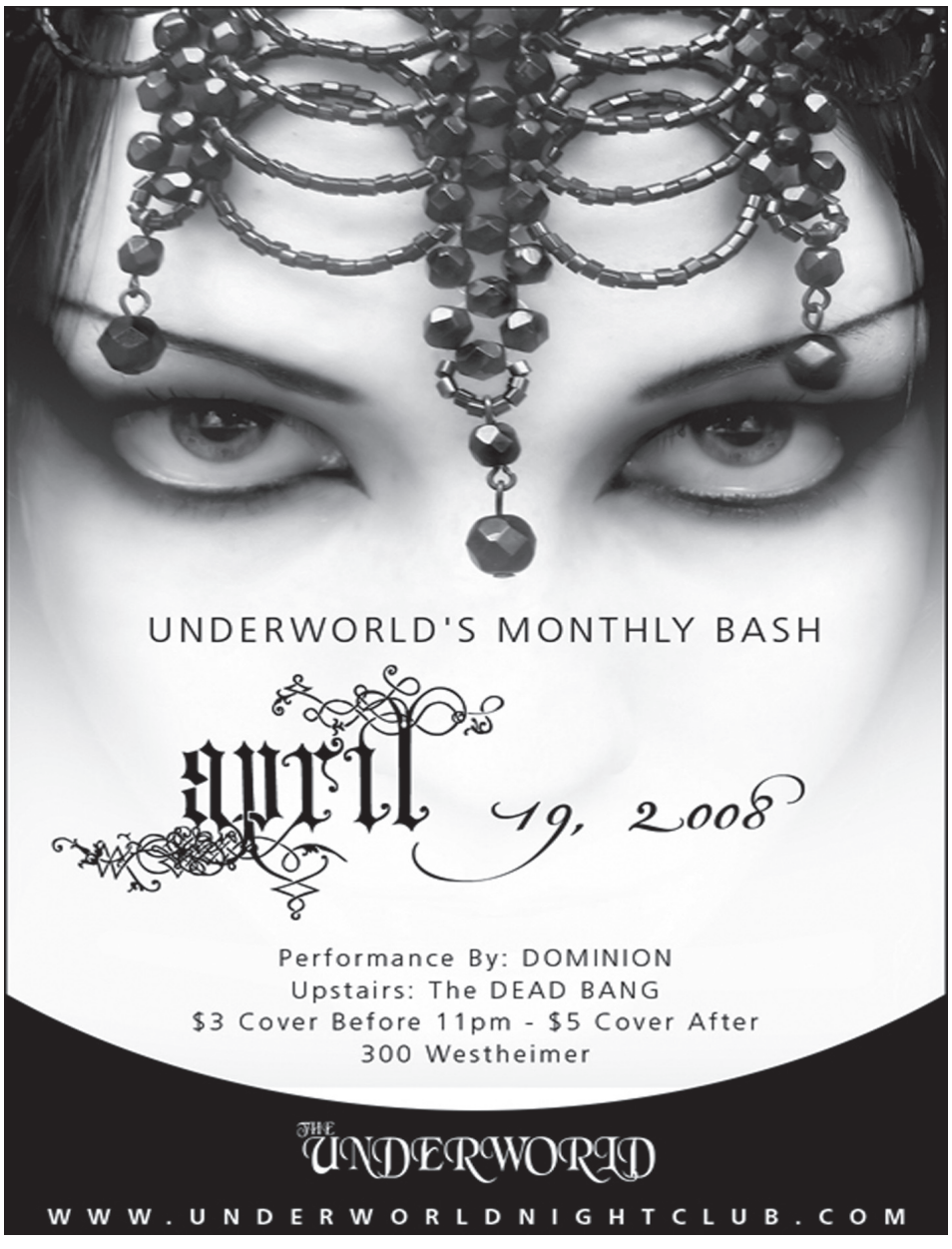
RR: At first, it was difficult. I came 'out of the closet' early on. I got a lot of hate mail from that. There were not too many 'out' experimental/noise artist. I have been here for quite a long time. I am happy with the notoriety and respect that I have gained over the years. I've done so much with my solo and with my side projects. I feel more accepted now more than ever. I now see other 'noise' artists use 'homo-erotic' art (even though some are heterosexual). I don't receive as much hate as previously. I hope it stays that way.

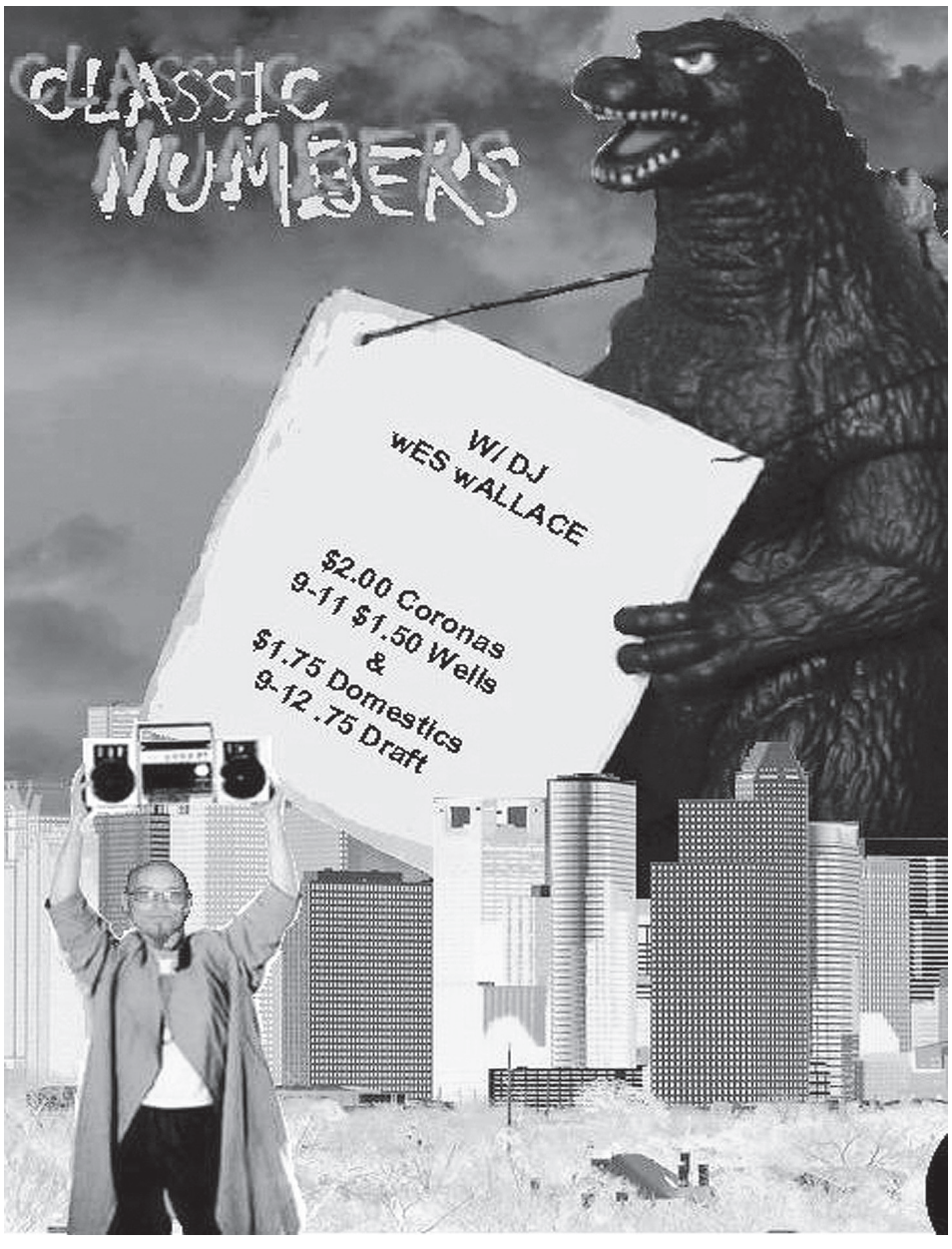
FPH: Do you feel it really informs your music? Do you really think your music would be any different if you were straight?

RR: The artwork would be different (laughs). The noise/power electronics genre is known for its machismo and, at times, misogynist theme material. I wanted to show men in the same manner as women were being shown. It was a 'in your face' attitude with my imagery. I took a chance with it. It represents 'ME'. This is what I love to do (noise) and I so happened to be gay. It was necessary for me to do this regardless of the outcome.

FPH

Richard Ramirez will be performing at the No Fun Fest in New York City on May 18th at the Knitting Factory. Later this year, he will also be performing in London. Closer to home he will be performing as Last Rape at the International noise conference April 6th at the Jet Lounge.





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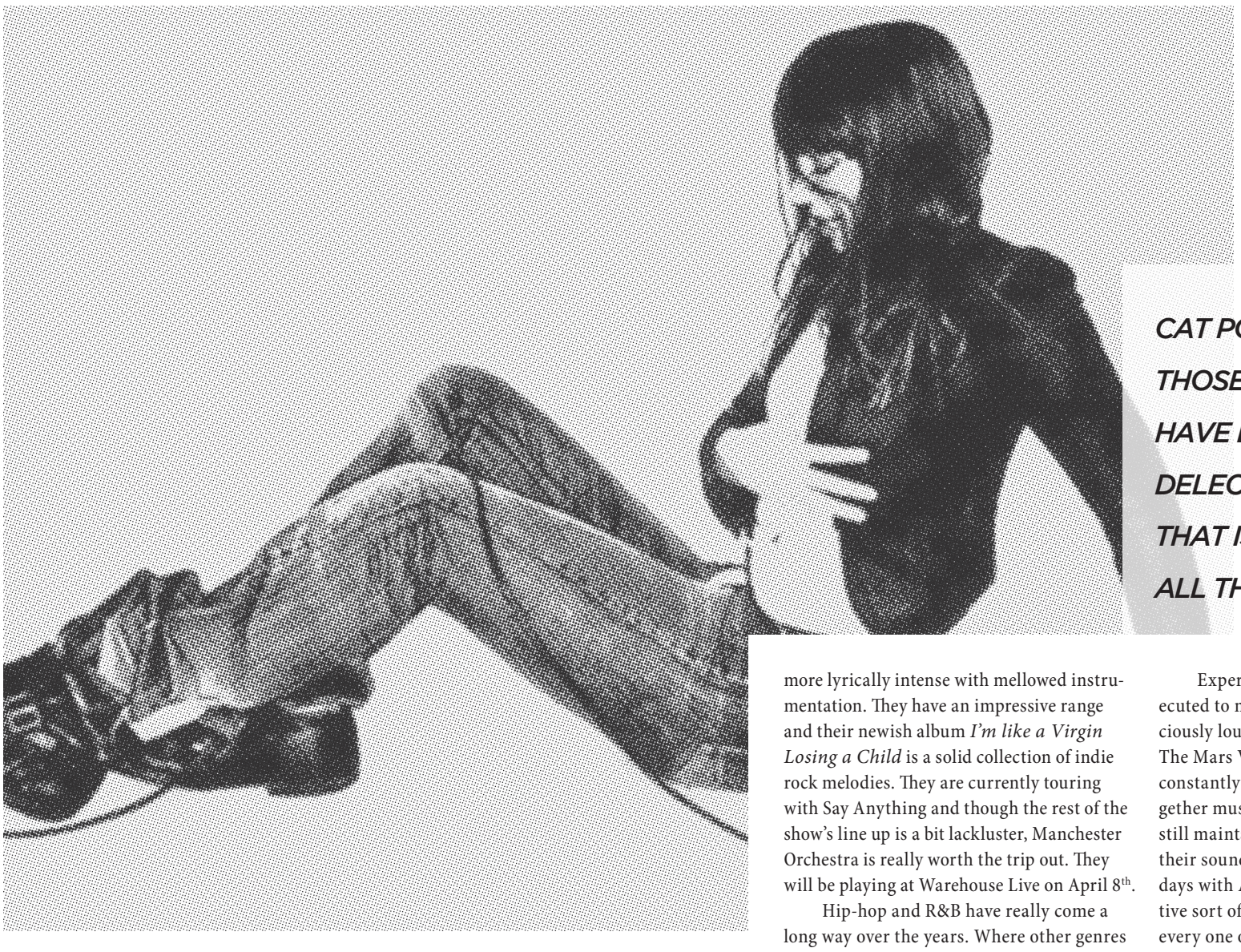
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CONFESSIONS OF A MUSIC FAN

(A very exhausted music fan…)*

| Brigitte B. Zabak



CAT POWER IS ONE OF THOSE WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN MAKING DELECTABLE MUSIC THAT IS STRIPPED OF ALL THE BULLSHIT

*This month's article is a slight deviation from normal practice. Enjoy the madness.

There are very few times in my life when for whatever reason, be it sanity or lack of appropriate funds, I have to take a step back and just say to the proverbial world "Screw live music! I'm staying home and watching endless reruns of whatever the hell I want"! It is unfortunate and really only happens when I have just stretched my listening ears to the ground. March was an intense music-filled month and my soul is saturated with more sights and sounds than it has had in months.

Now, when I say, "Screw live music"! I don't really mean it as harshly – or literally – as it might sound. What I am daring to say is simply that sometimes it probably does a body good to see a couple of really great shows that you know will be worth the time and money versus seeing a bunch of shows that have true suck potential. It's the age-old quantity versus quality scenario. Usually, I am all for quantity – and that is not to say that you can't have equal parts quantity to quality – but sometimes it is just nice to revel in one or two truly incredible shows and let those experiences carry you for awhile.

After enduring days upon days of music that span the gamut of indie rock sounds, I have to confess that I am tired. Not tired of music – just tired. So, as April sets into high gear and my allergies come back from vacation to wreak havoc upon my unsuspecting nasal passages, I bring to you the handful of shows that I believe are genuinely worth enduring the inevitably high pollen count.

Manchester Orchestra is an indie rock band from Atlanta that plays really clean, contagious music. Sometimes their songs are frenzied and loud and other times they are more lyrically intense with mellowed instrumentation. They have an impressive range and their newish album *I'm like a Virgin Losing a Child* is a solid collection of indie rock melodies. They are currently touring with Say Anything and though the rest of the show's line up is a bit lackluster, Manchester Orchestra is really worth the trip out. They will be playing at Warehouse Live on April 8th.

Hip-hop and R&B have really come a long way over the years. Where other genres of music have faltered, hip-hop, neo-soul, and R&B have, in many ways, set the bar a little bit higher. A lot of these newer acts have the old school veterans to thank for paving the way. Veterans like Mary J. Blige who have endured the ebb and flow of the popular music industry and still come out on top. Blige's music has matured exponentially over the years and her sound is real and unencumbered. She will be performing at the Toyota Center on April 10th with Jay-Z making this show a definite must see.

British Sea Power is another indie rock band that has been around for a while but until recently seems to have remained somewhat under the radar. Often times, when you read about BSP what inevitably gets mentioned is the band's quirky and outlandish demeanor more than the actual music. Their sound to date has been above and beyond intriguing albeit a wee bit unfocused. Their new album *Do You Like Rock Music?* is a departure from the traditional BSP meanderings. It is a polished album with song after song with the right balance of ambient lushness and ferocious texture. They will be playing with Film School at Numbers on April 13th.

Experimental noise fusion, when executed to near perfection, can be so deliciously loud and utterly fascinating to watch. The Mars Volta is one of those bands that are constantly pushing themselves to piece together music that is markedly different while still maintaining integrity. Even though their sound has been evolving since their days with At The Drive-In, there is a distinctive sort of "home-base" that is prevalent in every one of their albums. In other words, you know exactly when you are listening to a Mars Volta record. Their live performances are legendary and this time around it appears they are only playing a handful of shows, one of which is in Houston at the Verizon Wireless Theater on April 14th.

Women who rock are truly a gift from a higher power. These women breathe life into music when it is stale and gasping for air. In the indie rock world, women can break down walls and create music that is gorgeous and real in its simplicity. Cat Power is one of those women who have been making delectable music that is stripped of all the bullshit and stands naked in all its glory. Her voice is comforting and warm in the same way that a familiar face calms you in a crowd of unknowns. She will be performing in Houston on April 22nd at Warehouse Live.

Despite the aching desire to stay home and make myself a permanent fixture on the couch, it is glaringly apparent that I would be at a loss if I missed out on a few of these shows. So, with reluctance in my bones and with sleep in my eyes, I'll venture out into the night and stand idly by while I let the music consume my being. Care to join me?

FPH

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04/05 Alamo Draft House
04/19 Old Houston Ice House

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04/11 Danelectro's (Bobcat Benefit)
04/18 TBA
04/19 Westfield by the RailRoad
04/25 The Nutty Bar
04/26 Wild Wing Cafe
05/02 Elegant Hogg
05/03 Monkey Bar
06/14 Rudyard's
with PJ Flowers & ???
07/01 Summer Tour of Germany begins

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5- Sat
Kaos Entertainment

6- Sun
Sick Puppies

10- Thur
Street Light Manifesto

11- Fri
Starting Line

12- Sat
India Fest

12- Sat
Saves the Day

16- Wed
Mae

18- Fri
Rev. Butter, Marzi

19- Sat
Clutch

20- Sun
Blind Melon

24- Thur
Converge

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SUN 20
ADVENT SCARS

FRI 25
TEMPLE OF WRATH

SAT 26
TODAY IS THE DAY

WED May 14
THE CAVE SINGERS, Dark Meat, Quiet Hooves

WED May 28
MURDER BY DEATH, Dios, Gasoline Heart

HEALTH QUESTIONS

| Omar Afra



Well, fuck. We very fortuitously landed L.A.'s Health to perform at the after-show at the Westheimer Block Party as they ride the precipice of 'awesomeness' after their wave-making appearances at SXSW.

Though they could be easily compartmentalized as noise-rock, Health ventures into harmony and melody just as easily as they as muddle the soundscape with their cacophony of 'brgghhs' and 'bzzps'. Health is also danceable. That is, if you can dance. I can't. I once 'danced' with your sister though. She can dance. Anyways, I digress. I had the luxury of asking John, the bass player, a few questions to shed some light on the highly-mentionable phenomenon that is Health.

How was SXSW? Any pitfalls?
JOHN: SXSW was awesome, especially our showcase and the Todd P show. The only pitfall was the soundguy at the Village Voice show throwing his hands up in disgust at Jupiter's guitar tone, and leaving the booth before we played.

Do you guys have any particular protocol to writing a piece?
JOHN: We have different methods, but the most common is a diagram. Written out on paper, words + arrows + boxes.... we work through it together slowly.

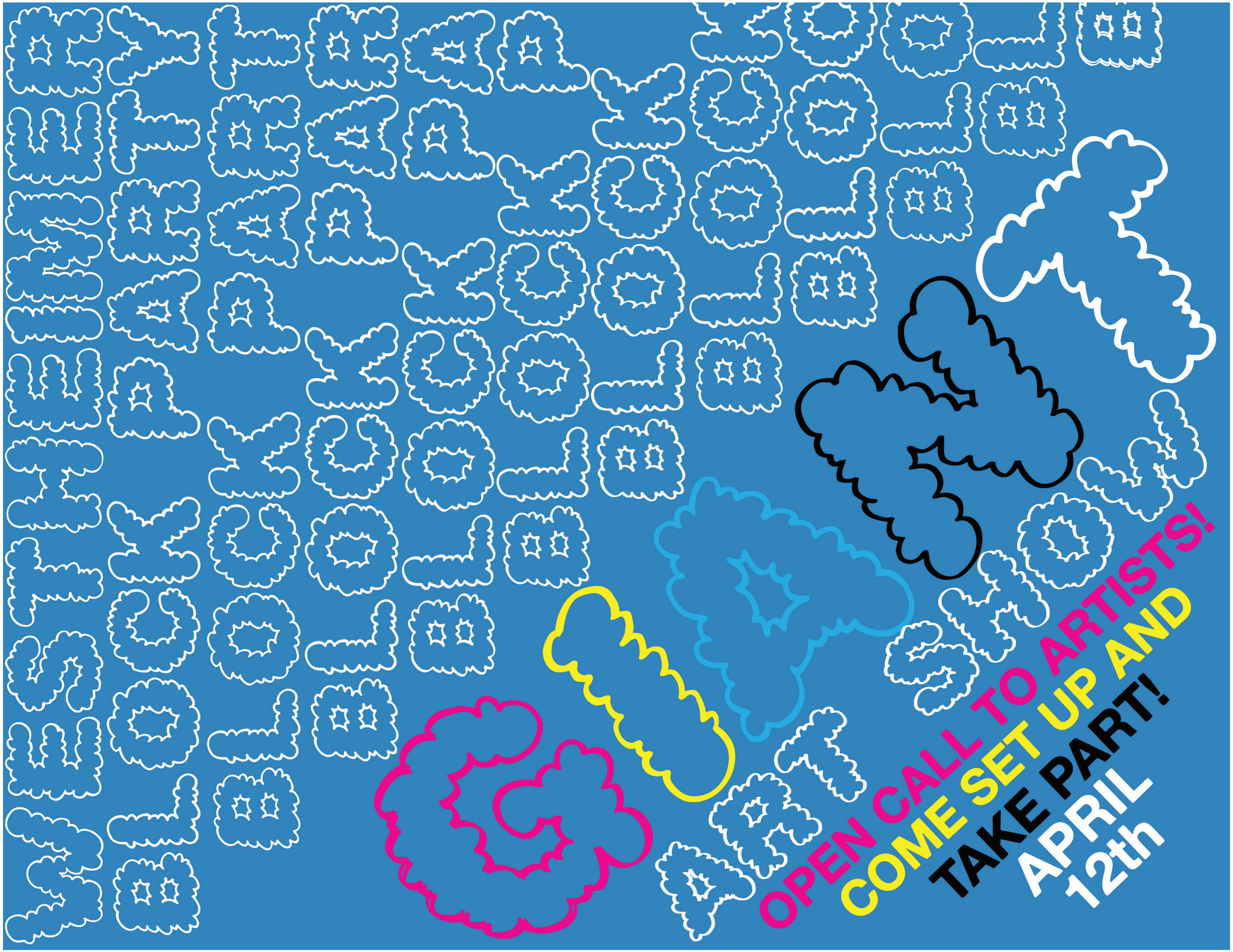
Any band that all of you share an affinity for?
JOHN: Led Zeppelin

Have you ever been in a Turkish prison?
JOHN: No. But I love the Midnight express soundtrack.

Bring back 3 master musicians from the dead. Who and why?
JOHN: Bach, Mozart, and Scarlatti, not because of their musical contributions, it would just be awesome to see them freak the fuck out when I show em' the internet, airplanes and all this crazy shit.

What's next, sonically, for Health?
JOHN: Everything we do now but um... Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger.....more grooves, more noise, more hardcore, more pop. Everything. Also a few collaborations with our favorite people in music.

Health plays Numbers on April 12 w/ Trail of Dead, (Young Mammals) The Dimes, Spain Colored Orange, By the end of tonight, and CeePlus all after the Westheimer Block Party. FPH


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STAGE GUIDE

NUMBERS *in the evening*

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SPAIN COLORED ORANGE • BY THE END OF TONIGHT

All night long CeePlus BadKnives and Damon

Doors open at 7:50 Just $10/12

AVANTGARDEN (Helios) 411 Westheimer

OUTSIDE

Guy Schwartz	12:00-12:30
The Defenestration Unit	12:45-1:15
News on the March	1:30-2:00
You(Genius)	2:15-2:45
Buxton	3:00-3:30
Piano Vines	3:45-4:15
Sideshow Tramps	4:30-5:00
Free Radicals	5:15-5:45
Papermoons	6:00-6:30
O! Pioneers	6:45-7:15
Elaine Greer	7:30-8:00
Sabra Laval	8:15-8:45

UPSTAIRS

Verecity	12:00-12:30
Team Death Trap	12:45-1:15
Antarctica Starts Here	1:30-2:00
Dunnock's Ill Advisory	2:15-2:45
Finnegan	3:00-3:30
Cop Warmth	3:45-4:15
Death Hell Battle Tank	4:30-5:00
The Electricks	5:15-5:45
Dead Roses	6:00-6:30
Midnight Pilots	6:45-7:15
Econo	7:30-8:00
Micah Omega	8:15-8:45
The Gold Sounds	9:00--9:30
BooTown Presents...	9:45-10:30

Rebel Crew on front Patio

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DJs throughout the day, into the evening

Partyfone kicks it off at 1pm

NUMBERS 300 Westheimer

OUTSIDE

Kam	12:00-12:30
skyblue72	12:45-1:15
Orengus Deltroid	1:30-2:00
Perseph One	2:15-2:45
Basses Loaded	3:00-3:30
Tha Fucking Transmissions	3:45-4:15
Thee Armada	4:30-5:00
Electric Touch	5:15-5:45
Nosaprise	6:00-6:30
Lisa's Sons	6:45-7:15
HISD	7:30-8:00

INSIDE

Literary Greats	12:00-12:30
Generation Landslide	12:45-1:15
Noon	1:30-2:00
Mechanical Boy	2:15-2:45
Fat Tony	3:00-3:30
Southern Backtones	3:45-4:15
Karina Nistal	4:30-5:00
Concrete Rose Cabaret	5:15-5:45
B	6:00-6:30

MANGO'S 403 Westheimer

INSIDE

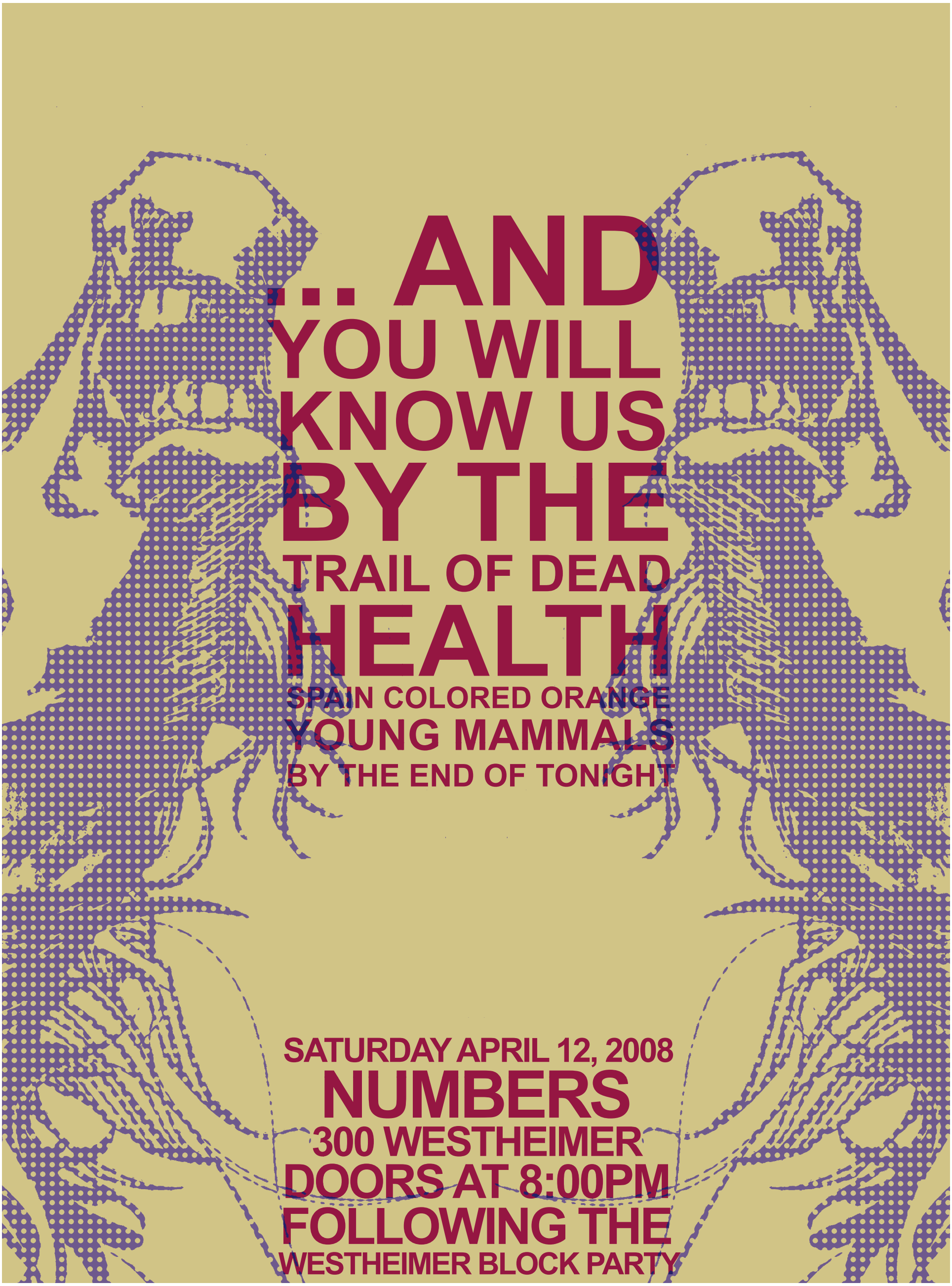
Release the controls	12:00-12:30
Closet City	12:45-1:15
Come See My Dead Person	1:30-2:00
Estudiantes Social Club	2:15-2:45
Giant Battle Monster	3:00-3:30
Poison Apple Martini	3:45-4:15
The Takes	4:30-5:00
JD's Throwdown	5:15-6:20
American Sharks	6:35-7:05
Satin Hooks	7:20-7:50
Lazlo	8:05-8:35
Studemont Project	8:50-9:40
The Chapter	9:55-10:30

OUTSIDE

The McKenzies	12:00-12:30
Mexican War Band	1:30-2:00
Mistress Green	2:15-2:45
Lovie	3:00-3:30
Rise Over Ruin	3:45-4:15
The Wild Moccasins	4:30-5:00
Poopy Lungstuffing	5:15-5:45
The Annoysters	6:00-6:30
Rise over Ruin	6:45-7:15
The Delta Block	7:30-8:00

DJs CeePlus, Just Jesse, John the 3rd, and Damon on Patio

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HEALTH
SPAIN COLORED ORANGE
YOUNG MAMMALS
BY THE END OF TONIGHT
SATURDAY APRIL 12, 2008
NUMBERS
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DOORS AT 8:00PM
FOLLOWING THE
WESTHEIMER BLOCK PARTY

NEEDS MORE GAY

Condemned 2: Bloodshot review

| Tyler Barber



+ Please excuse my lolcats. Bloodshot really needs an injection of the cute and light-hearted. You'll thank me later.

Console: PlayStation 3 & Xbox 360 | **ESRB:** Mature **Developer:** Monolith Productions | **Players:** 1-8

I need kittens, rainbows, Bob Ross, and cotton-candy. Playing *Condemned 2: Bloodshot* for a few hours can do that to ya'. The urbandistopia realized in *Bloodshot* is littered with the bile you'd find in Numbers' restrooms, and their inhabitants look like they've bathed in it.



Final Grade: **B+**

Bloodshot is a very concentrated adventure, with very linear progression, and very narrow options for progressing through the game's 12 stages. In some games this would be a problem, but not with *Bloodshot*. The first-person perspective, for example, is pulled in closer than most FPS games, making your view claustrophobic and more focused. There were several times I found myself creeping closer to my screen to make out the shapes in the darkness. And in darkness this game is shrouded. Luckily, or maybe not, you have a flashlight that seems like it just barely doesn't illuminate enough. Of coarse not being able to make out the shadows from enemies helps the game's suspense, and it's ultimate propensity to make me jump out of my seat, yelling like a little girl when a derangedmeth-addict pops out of the shadows to bing my head with a baseball bat.

Bloodshot does an excellent job with melee combat in the first-person perspective; something many games have tried with varying success. When you get hit in Bloodshot, you feel it. When you stun a crack-head with your left hook, and follow up with a round-house-kick, you feel it. And what would the kinetics be without the audio? You'll hear the rabid vagrants in the next room, shuffling about in frightening muffles come into full fidelity when you throw-down with them. The crackles and dings of landing punches and lead-pipes translate immediately, and the grit and grime of the games atmosphere is not lost on the dialogue. Enemies charge you, swearing and convincingly threatening your life.

To perfectly accent it's threatening setting, *Bloodshot* has the real threat of death. You won't find regenerative health here, only less-than-you-need health-bars and kits found around the world. You will die a lot, and that perfectly adds to the threatening nature of Bloodshot. With death coming often, you'll discover a few areas that are too trial-and-error. They'll switch it up the stressful parts with investigative bits, which are essentially multiple-choice questions you answer using cool CSI-esque investigation techniques. I really loved the investigation bits, I just wish they occurred more often, and that there were several ways to uncover each mystery, (some puzzles have more than one way of seeing them through, but most are a one-way street).

Bloodshot also hosts excellent online modes that deliver the same genuine scary, tense moments of the offline modes. The standard deathmatch modes are present, but the online really shines in the cops verses drugies Bum Rush, and Crime Scene modes. Both give the cops guns, but no respawns, and have the meth-addicts either hiding evidence, or just trying to eliminate the cops with various blunt objects. It's funny, because most games tack on multiplayer just for another bullet-point on the back of the box, and in Bloodshot, the multiplayer does feel tacked-on too, but it works. Strange.

With a surprising online mode that extends *Bloodshot*'s life, and an engaging and genuinely scray campagin mode, Condemned is an under-the-radar hit. My main complaint lies in my water-bill. Wha? Yes, my water bill. Everytime I play Bloodshot, I feel like I gotta take a shower afterward. I guess that's a testiment to it's enthralling, derranged world. FPH

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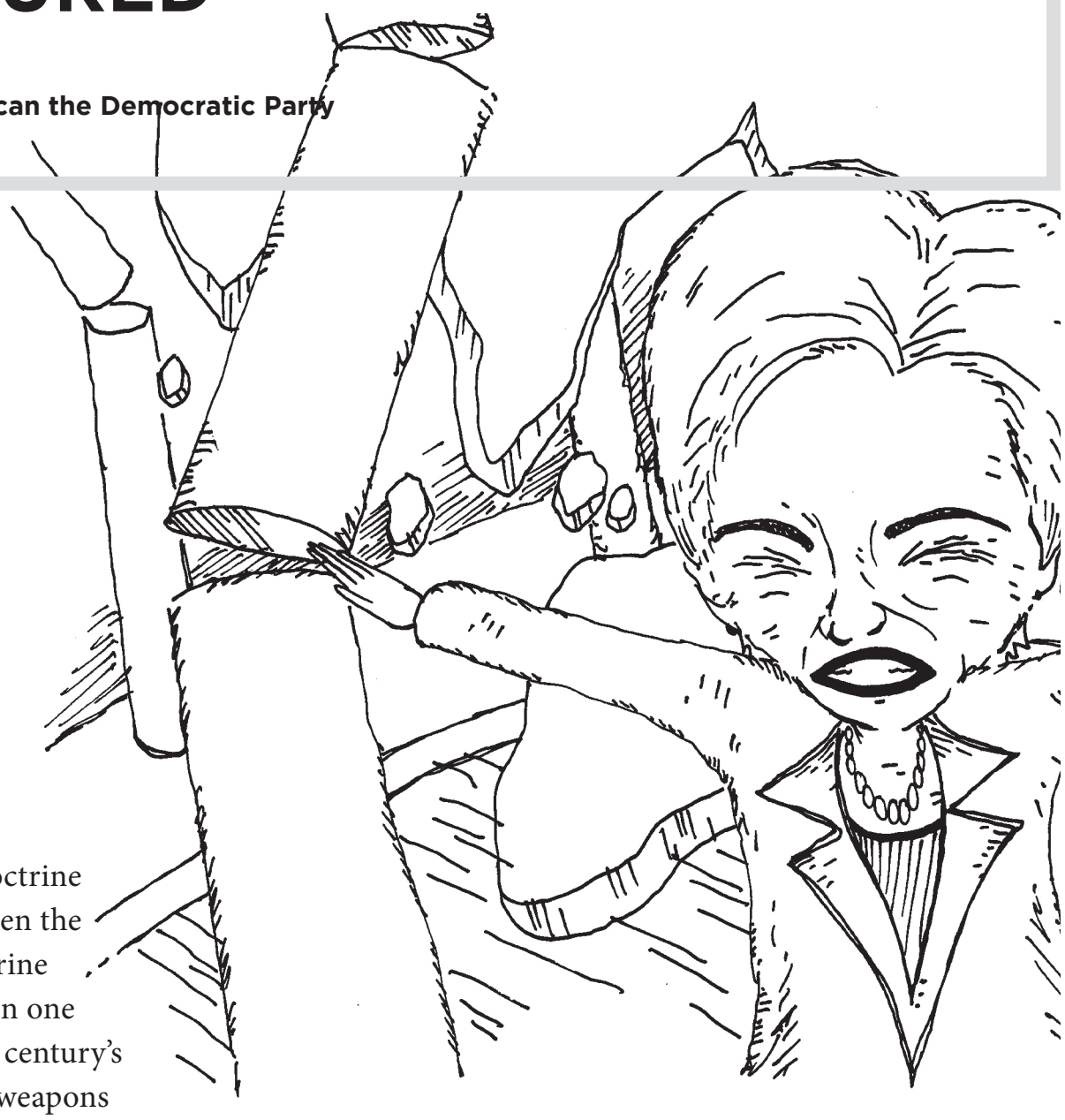
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MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION

Why Hillary Clinton Can't Win....and neither can the Democratic Party

| M. Martin | Tim Dorsey



In the decades following WWII, a military doctrine emerged that maintained uneasy peace between the United States and the Soviet Union. The doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction was based on one simple premise: that if either of the twentieth century's nuclear superpowers initiated an attack with weapons of mass destruction, the resulting retaliation would ensure that neither party "won"— and incidentally ensure as well the extinction of the human race.

The battle currently being waged between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton to be their party's nominee has begun to very much resemble the stalemate that kept the USSR and USA from destroying the world for the better part of fifty years. Neither participant really has the capacity to "win"--neither Clinton nor Obama can secure their party's nomination solely on the strength of "pledged delegates" won in the remaining primary contests. Also, it is a contest that very much carries with it the threat of extinction--to the Democratic Party, if not the human race.

The threat of "extinction" for democrats is this: suppose the current stalemate persists until the Democratic Party convenes its national convention in August. Not only does that give John McCain a "free pass" during several critical months leading up to the general election, it sets up a situation in which at least half of those who voted in Democratic primaries have every reason to believe that they have been disenfranchised by party leadership--and every reason to either stay home on Election Day, vote for McCain, or do something really stupid like vote for Nader. At that point, it doesn't matter whether the nominee is Obama or Clinton--either one enters the general election contest with serious liabilities.

A much weakened Democratic nominee then takes a very belated battle to a Republican nominee that has had months to benefit from a united party and the undivided attention of his party's financial backers. Suppose then, against all odds, John McCain then wins the Presidency. While such an occurrence is pretty bad for the country at large, it is disastrous for the Democratic Party in specific. having failed in two subsequent national elections to demonstrate any real ability to act as a credible alternative to the GOP, the Democrats will lose support to a greater degree than in any comparable time in their history. The party may break into multiple factions. At the very least, it will spend much of the next two years in search of a meaningful identity.

If any of this comes to pass, it will squarely and indisputably be the fault of Hillary Clinton and the architects of her disastrously divisive campaign-- with perhaps a shred of onus left over for Howard Dean for his singular lack of leadership as the Democratic National Party Chairman....and more than a shred for an utterly compliant Mainstream Media.

This train wreck did NOT have to happen. Clinton could've followed John Edward's example and left the race on a high note. Howard Dean could've followed the example of previous DNC Chairman (and current chairman of the Clinton campaign) Terry McAuliffe and taken an uncompromising stand on behalf of party unity and discipline. Had the Clinton campaign received formal notice of the folly of participating in the unsanctioned primary contests in Florida and Michigan, it is at least likely that Clinton would've bowed out by now. At the very least, the "kitchen sink" fusillade of negativity the Clintons threw on March 4th might have been perceived as the desperate attempt it was. If Mainstream Media were not determined to present Clinton's candidacy as viable at any cost, the vicious and destructive campaigning that enabled "Hillary" to secure wins in Ohio and Rhode Island would've received the condemnatory attention it deserved.

If Hillary Clinton considered either her country or her party at least equal in importance to her personal ambition, the United States would at this point have a clear choice between Barack Obama and John McCain. The electorate could be doing its job of weighing these options.....perhaps the media might be left with no choice but to report on substantive issues, and stop behaving like race track touts.

Alas, none of this is to be, at least not yet. A perfect storm of incompetence, dishonesty, and overweening ambition has turned what should be a defining moment in American politics into a "Jerry Springer Moment" instead, showcasing all the worst traits of this country. Instead of dealing with substantive issues of economic and social inequality, we get to deal with the unrepentant racism and gender entitlement of Geraldine Ferraro. Instead of focusing on Barack Obama's proposals for repairing the United States' reputation in the world, we focus on his former pastor's unfortunate honesty in describing 9/11 as a self-inflicted wound. Instead of showing leadership and providing the United States with a clear alternative to the disastrous policies of the last eight years, the Democratic Party is providing a sideshow and a distraction.

Hillary Clinton can't win without inflicting significant damage on the Democratic Party in the process. If she does win the nomination, every single argument she has



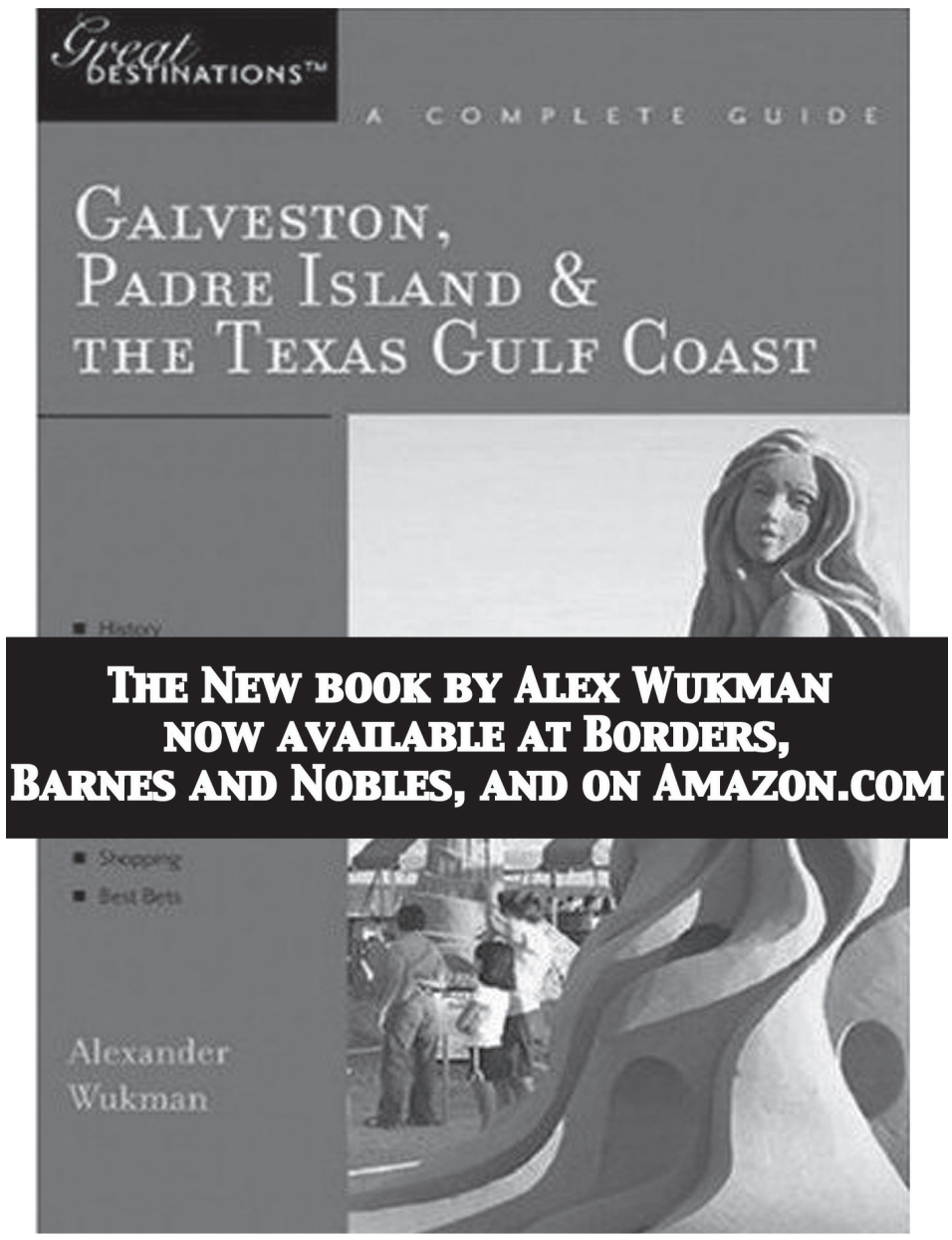
attempted to use against Barack Obama will be used to even greater effect against her by John McCain. She will unite conservative Republicans in a way that John McCain can only dream of. She either loses in the general election or wins by the same hairbreadth margin that gave us George W. Bush...and then proceeds to govern (if her campaign is anything to judge by), just as Bush did-- as though that razor-thin margin were a landslide and a mandate.

Barack Obama can't win, either. He can't secure his party's nomination purely on the strength of projected wins in the remaining primary contests. He has to broker a deal to seat the Florida and Michigan delegates without giving the Clinton campaign an undeserved and unfair advantage; he also has to secure the endorsement of a majority of uncommitted superdelegates.

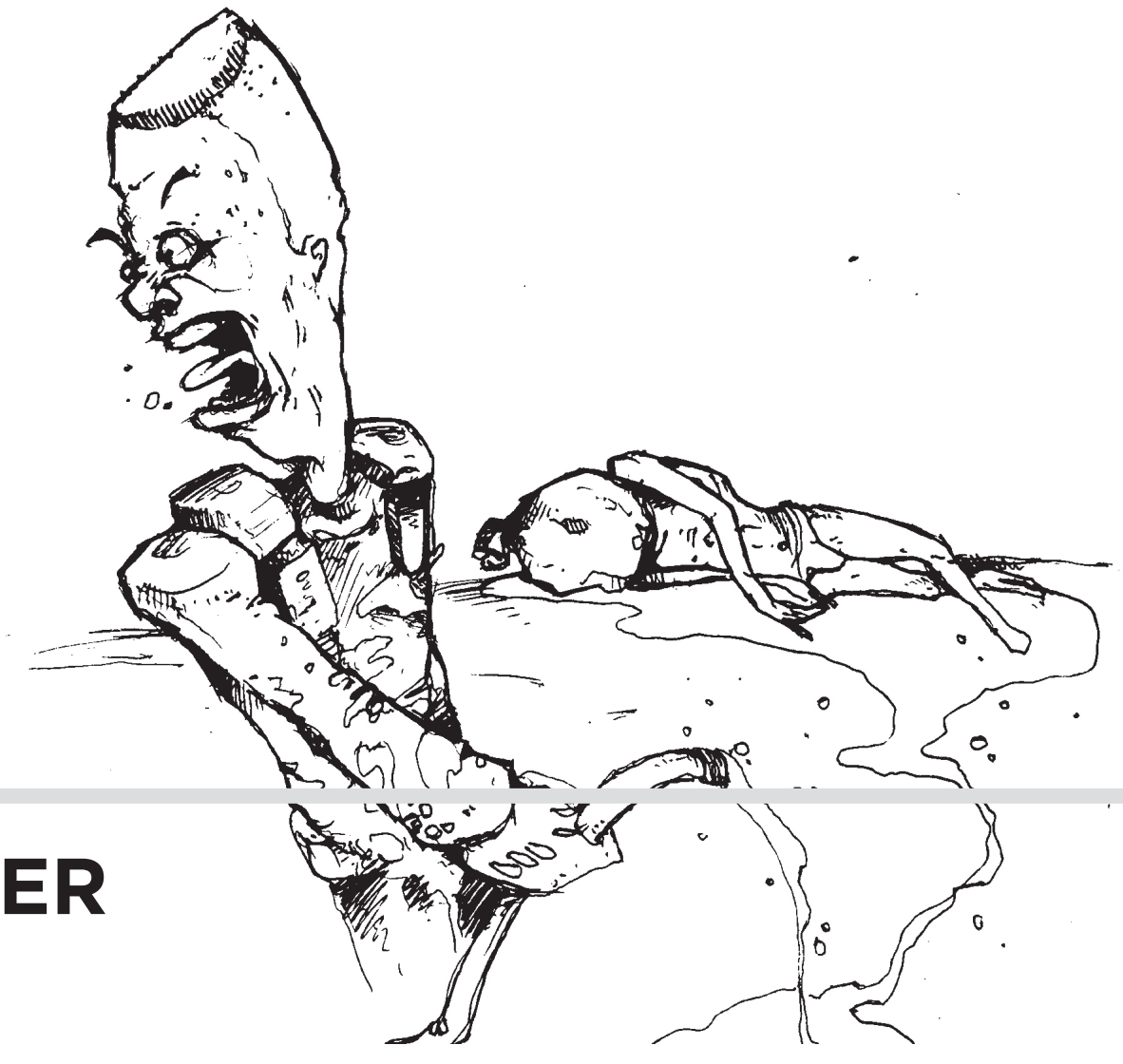
Most of all, he has to find a way to bring this contest to a close. It is obvious that the Clintons will not be stopped by mere matters of patriotism or party loyalty. They have to know that they cannot win. That will only happen once the Democratic Party leadership has clearly aligned behind the current front runner. Then remains the daunting task of repairing the damage done by Hillary Clinton. Barack Obama is no saint, for all the cult-like attention he's received. But he's one of the smartest men to pursue the presidency for a long time. The evidence is that he's equal to the task.

Republicans like to claim that Ronald Reagan "won" the Cold War. That's really not true. The beginning of the end of hostilities between the USA and the USSR was Mikhail Gorbachev's frank admission that his country was committed to a dangerous and expensive stalemate that it could not possibly win....and that it was in the interest of the greater good to end that stalemate. It is time for Hillary Rodham Clinton to show at least as much leadership. Regardless the supposed "bounce" from March 4th, regardless the upcoming outcome in Pennsylvania, Senator Clinton cannot win except at great and destructive cost. The real test of a commander in chief-- or any other commander-- is not whether or not they strand ready to take hypothetical 3 AM phone calls. The real test is whether or not their leadership is based on something besides mere ego and self-advancement. As matters stand, Hillary Clinton is failing that test. It is time for her to stand down. FPH

(M. Martin is a frequent contributor to Free Press Houston, particularly on matters of national politics. Comments on this article are welcome and may be directed to m-martin|earthwire.net)







WINTER SOLDIER TESTIMONIALS

An Iraqi Perspective

| Nick Cooper | Shelby Hohl

Defying a virtual black-out by the mainstream media, we bring you these testimonies of Iraq veterans. For four days in the middle of March, soldiers convened at the National Labor College in Silver Spring, Maryland for Winter Soldier, an eyewitness account of the war and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan

CAMILO MEJIA | My name is Camilo Mejia. I joined the military in 1995 as an infantryman, and I deployed to the Middle East in March of '03, first to Jordan and then to Iraq in April of that same year.

The first mission that we had when we got to Iraq was at this place called Al Assad, and our job there was basically to run a prisoner of war camp. And at this prisoner of war camp, our job was basically to keep prisoners who had been deemed enemy combatants sleep-deprived for periods of up to seventy-two hours in order to, quote-unquote, "soften them up for interrogation." And the way we did that was by yelling at them.

So my first question to the people who were training us on how to do this was, you know, "How do they understand? I mean, they don't speak English." And he said, "Well, they're just like animals. They're just like dogs. If you keep yelling at them, it doesn't matter what language you're yelling at them in, they're going to get the point. If you yell at them, 'Get up!' enough times, you know, just like a dog gets up, they'll get up. If you tell them to move left, eventually they'll get it and they'll move left. And they said, "But that's not going to always work, because they're so tired." By the way, they were hooded with sandbags, and they were tied with plastic restraints, barefoot, and circled around with concertina wire. So they were not only being deprived of sleep, but also of light and sense of space.

And so, the next thing that we did was to hit the wall next to them with a sledgehammer to create this explosion-like sound to scare them. And when that didn't work, the next step was to put a gun to their heads and to charge it as if to execute them. Basically we were performing mock executions to scare these men. And every now and then that wouldn't work, so you would grab the person who was not obeying and put him in a chamber and hit the wall next to this person to basically drive him insane and get them to obey.

Another time I remember, we were at a traffic control point, and we had received reports of ambulances being used to deliver explosives. So we were really close to the only—we were actually blocking the only road that led to the hospital, to the local hospital, and this ambulance came upon our traffic control point. And they told us that we could not let the ambulance through. There was a pregnant woman who needed to get to the hospital, but they said we don't know if that's a pregnant woman or if this is, you know, a van full of explosives and it's going to explode. So we basically turned it back. And I remember at the time I felt bad, and I wanted to send a team to basically—to search the van and to establish whether it was—there really was a pregnant woman, but I kept thinking of the images of the ambulance exploding in the perimeter and killing a bunch of our people, so I basically made the decision not to search the van and to just turn it away.

And one last incident that I want to talk about was the first time that I opened fire on a human being, and this happened right after a protest. They were throwing grenades at us, and they said, you know, if anybody throws a grenade, you know, open fire on them. So we saw this coming, and I saw this young man basically—you know, his arm was swinging, and he had a black object in his hand, which was indeed a grenade. And I remember seeing all of this through the rear aperture of my M16 rifle sight, and I remember when we opened fire on him. And then I remember when two men came from the crowd and basically dragged him by his shoulders back into the crowd after we killed him. And after that incident, I remember going into a room by myself and counting the rounds that I had left in my magazine, and I had nineteen rounds left, which meant that I had fired eleven rounds at this person. And—but yet, I had no recollection of hitting him or him going down, him dropping, him dying.

MIKE TOTTEN | […] Mike Totten, I served with the 716th MP Battalion in the 101st Airborne. I was deployed to Iraq in April of 2003 and returned home in April of 2004. For the first six months of my deployment, I served as a driver for a security vehicle for my command sergeant major and my lieutenant colonel. And for the last six months I served, I was put back in a line platoon with the 194th MP Company. Our mission was in part to run a jail in Karbala, not for enemy prisoners of war, but just for the general population prison. These prisoners would be brought into the—by the Iraqi police, and then we were to show them through the processing and how we do things in America.

We weren't in charge necessarily of any prisoners of war, but on the night

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of October 17th in 2003, six people were brought in by the Iraqi police, who claimed that these six were participants in the actions the night prior, therefore they were enemy prisoners of war due to coalition standards. When these people were brought in, they were—appeared to be beaten already badly. I grabbed a man by the jaw, and I looked him in the eye, and I slammed his head up against the wall. And I looked him again in the eye and said, "You must have been the one that killed Grilley." And then he fell. I kicked him. An Iraqi policeman, probably the size of the biggest security man here, with hands to match the size of a Kodiak, hit a guy in the side of the head about six times, and I thought to myself—I'm looking at him, and I laughed—I'm like, yeah, these guys are getting what they deserve. I never found out what happened to these people, these six prisoners.

I grabbed a man by the jaw, and I looked him in the eye, and I slammed his head up against the wall.

TANYA AUSTIN

[…] Tanya Austin, and I am a US Army veteran, but I am not here speaking on—about my own story today. I am actually here to give a story of an incredibly strong and brave individual. This is a story of a female in the Coast Guard who was raped and then discharged and punished for being raped. I'm—I've been lucky enough to meet this young woman and see the amazing things she has done to bring not only her story out, but the story of men and women who have been raped in the military.

What we have up here is stopmilitaryrape.org . As you see there on the homepage, these are some really frightening statistics. 25 percent of women will be sexually assaulted on college campuses. 12 percent of women will be raped while in college. 28 to 66 percent of women in the military report sexual assault. The reason the number varies so much is military reports versus VA reports. It's a lot easier to tell someone at the VA that you've been sexually assaulted than it is to tell your own command, which is not right. And 27 percent of women are reported raped. And what's interesting about this statistic is if you report that you've been raped and no charges are brought against your rapist, you haven't been raped. You're not part



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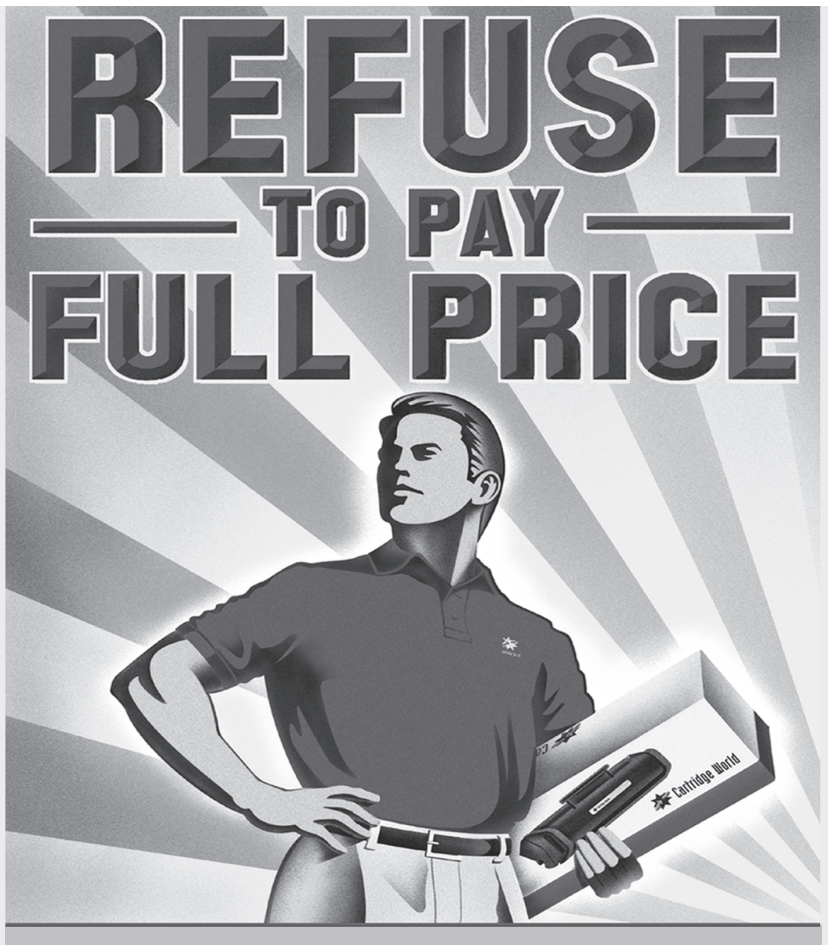
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I was raped in May of 2006 by a fellow shipmate.

of that statistic. And, unfortunately, for our military, this is something that happens way too often, is the cover-up of sexual assault, of rape of individuals experiencing the worst from their comrades.

So here is what they're currently doing about it. According to the Department of Defense's own statistics, 74 to 85 percent of soldiers convicted of rape or sexual assault leave the military with an honorable discharge, meaning rape conviction does not appear in their records anywhere. Only two to three percent of soldiers accused of rape are ever court-martialed. And only five to six percent of soldiers accused of domestic abuse are ever court-martialed. In fact, several multiple homicides have recently taken place on military bases that have not even been criminally prosecuted. Now I'd like to tell this individual's particular story. And having experienced sexual harassment in the military myself, this is kind of difficult, as it is for everyone on this panel up here. But our stories need to be told.

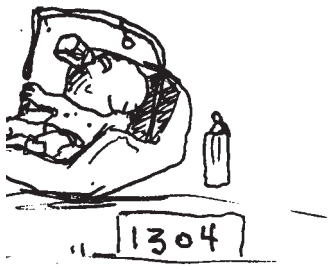
We are often asked how we get started with Stop Military Rape, Military Rape Crisis Center. I'm a veteran of the United States Coast Guard and a survivor of military sexual trauma. I was raped in May of 2006 by a fellow shipmate. I followed all the necessary steps, including reporting the assault and providing evidence: a confession letter written by my rapist. In August of 2006, I was informed that I will be discharged. According to the Coast Guard Academy psychologist, surviving rape makes deployment—makes one ineligible for worldwide deployment, and as a result, I can no longer serve in the Coast Guard. What follows was a nine-month battle between the Coast Guard and myself.

I was a female in my early twenties, brand new to the Coast Guard. I admit it: I did not know every Coast Guard policy or try to know something beyond my E3 rank. All I know is that what was happening to me was not—was just not right. I felt powerless. I didn't know how to fight the military. I was taught how to fight with them, for them. But how could I fight for my rights to stay with them?

Stop Military Rape and the Military Rape Crisis Center was formed. We are the nation's largest support group for the survivors of military sexual trauma. In 2007, we assisted over 12,000 men and women of military sexual trauma and their families May 30th is International Stop Military Rape Awareness Day. Write to your representatives, contact the media, do what we're doing now, and let them know that military rape is something we just can't stand for.

JEFFREY SMITH | My name is Jeffrey Smith. I enlisted in the Army as an infantryman in September 1997. I served three years active-duty in the 3rd Infantry Division and then enlisted for six further years in the Florida National Guard. I was a grenadier with Bravo Company, 2nd of the 124th Infantry, and was deployed to Camp Anaconda, Balad, Iraq, in early May 2003. Upon deployment to Balad, my unit was primarily tasked with gate and perimeter security at Camp Anaconda, the largest of the enduring presence bases in Iraq. Providing security at the front gate, one of the daily rituals we were tasked with was clearing Iraqi nationals who came to work on a daily basis on post, doing such jobs as filling sandbags, clearing rubble and trash, etc. These Iraqi nationals were paid a dollar a day and were given an MRE for lunch. They worked under extreme conditions of heat and dust, oftentimes 130-degree temperature, and were always escorted by armed guards.

One of the other missions that we were occasionally tasked with was raiding houses in the local area, especially when we first arrived in country. One of the houses that we first raided was supposedly the home of a former Baath official. It was the middle of the day when we raided this house. When we arrived in the neighborhood, we were told that we were going to try to force the front



gate open to the house, but apparently the armored cavalry unit that was with us had other plans in mind. They rolled over the front wall of the house, destroyed the vehicle that was inside, and upon entry to the house, I was second in the stack of a formation of troops that went through the gate. There was an older female who was in the courtyard by this time, and she was screaming something unintelligible in Arabic. I didn't see her as a threat, so I continued on past her into the building itself. One of the soldiers behind me apparently thought that she was a threat, butt-stroked her in the face, knocked her to the ground, and someone after him apparently zip-tied her and took her out into the front yard.

Then we proceeded to ransack this house. I was in the master bedroom. There was dressers and wardrobes. Wardrobes were locked. We pulled the doors off. We turned everything in the room upside-down. We went through everything. Personnel in my unit that were in the kitchen turned the refrigerator upside-down, pulled the stove—actually broke the stove, pulled it out of the wall, broke the line to it.

After we searched through the house and we had everyone, including the children, zip-tied on the front lawn, apparently someone in my chain of command realized that we had the wrong home, we were on the wrong street, that the home we were supposed to have raided was actually behind this house on another street. So we went over to that home and raided that house. We searched through that home, detained the person that we were supposed to detain. And, you know, upon searching the home, we started coming across all this paperwork in his office and in his bedroom, and it looked to me like he was an algebra instructor, maybe at the local high school, maybe at a local university, because there was just reams of stuff that was math problems. This guy is supposed to be a former Baath official.

We took him, put a sandbag over his head, loaded him on a truck, and we started back towards Camp Anaconda. He was actually on my vehicle with my squad, and on the way back to Camp Anaconda—it was about a forty-five-minute drive—my squad leader thought that it would be funny to pose for a picture next to this guy, and he asked me to take a photo of him and this detainee. And I refused to do so. I didn't believe that that was the right thing to do. And upon arrival back at our quarters, I was disciplined for quite some time for this, including physical punishment, because I had disobeyed him in front of the rest of the squad. **FPH**

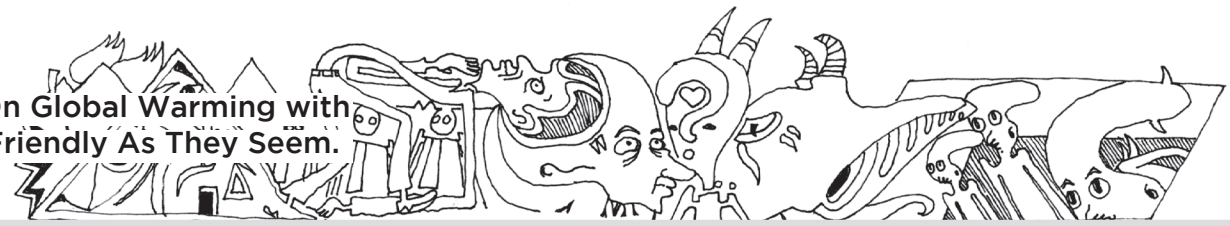


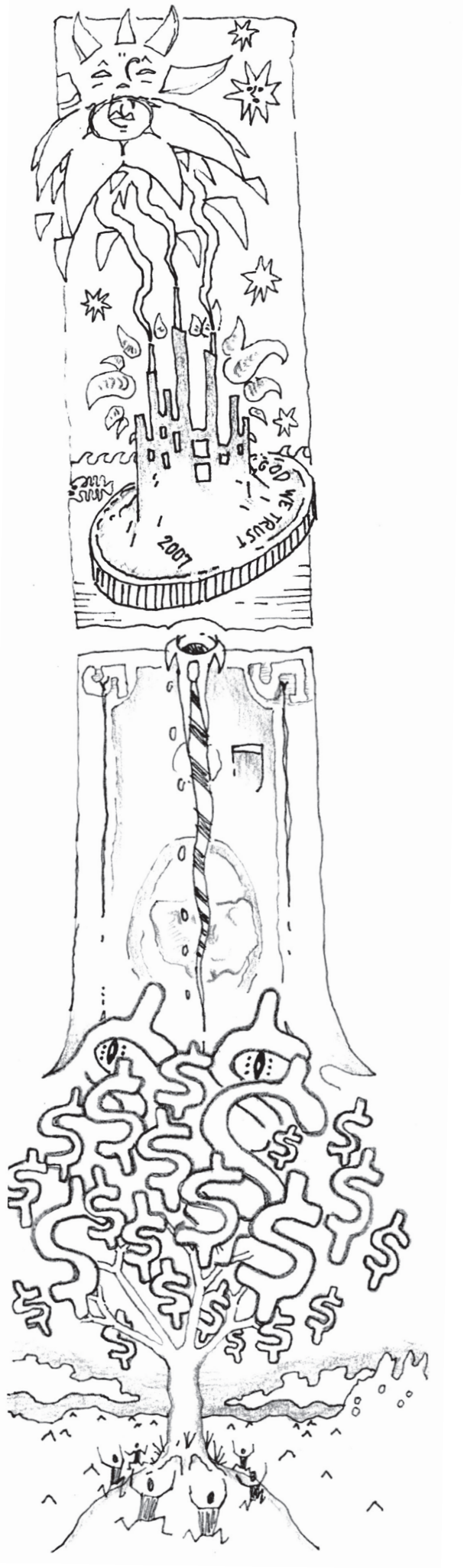


ENVIRONMENTALISM FOR BILLIONAIRES

How Businesses Are Looking To Cash In On Global Warming with Green-Washed Plans That Aren't As Eco-Friendly As They Seem.

| Glenn Hurowitz | Tim Dorsey





Lately, I've been inundated with phone calls from venture capitalists, private equity guys, and hedge fundistas. They're coming to me because I'm their environmentalist friend and they all want to know one thing: how they can make a buck off the surge in interest in combating global warming.

In a way, that's a sign that the environmental movement has finally arrived. After decades of struggling to convince the titans of finance that protecting the planet and making money weren't mutually exclusive, the tycoons are now coming to us.

But many of these capitalist converts need watching. While Wall Street's eco-splurge has generated a flood of financing for legitimately clean ventures like wind and solar power, it's also spawned extremely dangerous projects that are painted green by their unscrupulous backers, but that at their core are as black as, well, coal.

The green sheen plastered on some of these projects — like burning down the rainforest to generate electricity for homes — has actually convinced some members of Congress to start throwing billions of taxpayer dollars their way. Of course, not all those representatives and senators are gullible enough to believe that making forests into electricity is really good for the planet. Some just think voters will be so dazzled by the spin doctors' lovingly applied emerald veneer that they won't notice them pocketing these eco-pretenders' campaign donations.

Take that burning-the-rainforest-to-power-your-iPhone proposal. All over the tropics, international agribusiness giants like Cargill, as well as smaller domestic operators, have turned pristine rainforests into millions of acres of soy, sugar, and palm oil plantations. Much of that provides raw material to make biodiesel, touted by its numerous backers as a quintessential green fuel.

Unfortunately, rainforest biodiesel is triply bad for the planet. When rainforest is burned to clear the land, the carbon that had been safely stored in tree trunks, orangutans, and other living matter gets incinerated and becomes the carbon dioxide responsible for warming the planet. Also incinerated: vital habitat for endangered species (like the orangutans) and indigenous people who need intact rainforests to survive.

Then, the farms that replace the forests spew out greenhouse gases as workers drive their tractors and spray pesticides made in factories running on coal, natural gas, or more biofuels. And when that biofuel finally arrives in your gas tank or the local power plant, it may actually produce slightly more cancer-causing toxins than regular old gasoline, according to a recent Stanford University study published in the journal Environmental Science and Technology (though the study didn't evaluate rainforest biodiesel, but other biofuels instead).

But you don't have to go to the tropics to see billionaire faux-environmentalism at work. Just drive out to West Virginia, where Big Coal executives are hoping for a renewed mining bonanza if they can somehow convince members of Congress that coal is clean and that liquefied coal can replace gasoline. They're lobbying hard for taxpayer guarantees for liquid coal projects that they argue can help free America from its reliance on foreign oil. That's the kind of sweetheart deal that could make even oil executives jealous.

But not only is the proposal expensive, it's also extremely dangerous to the environment. Turning hard coal into an automotive fuel takes a lot of energy, which is why liquid coal produces twice the greenhouse gas emissions of regular coal. Liquid coal backers claim that, with the right amount of additional taxpayer support, they can use advanced technology to capture and store that extra global warming pollution. Even if that's true (and taxpayers are willing to take the hit), it doesn't do anything about coal's remaining non-climate environmental hazards: the soot and smog that kill more than 30,000 people every year and the destruction of mountaintops across Appalachia and elsewhere.

That's bad, but it's nothing compared to the scam being pushed by the timber lobby. The logging industry not only cuts down the forests that act as the planet's lungs, they also use tremendous amounts of energy to turn dead trees into furniture and paper. If Congress takes serious action to stop global warming, the loggers would have to clean up their act. But their resident wonks at the American Forest and Paper Association have found a way to reap a financial windfall from likely climate legislation.

Call it the Sofa Scheme. They're arguing that every sofa, Post-It note, and Kleenex tissue they produce should be counted as carbon storage, just like forests are. Their logic is that even when these forest products are discarded and put in a landfill, they're keeping that carbon safely in the ground rather than sending it into the atmosphere in the form of carbon dioxide.

If the timber lobby gets its way, that could mean big money for the logging companies. Under the carbon trading schemes likely to be a part of any global warming legislation, they could use all the credits they get from producing furniture and paper to avoid having to make any actual reductions in their greenhouse gas emissions or preserving actual living forests. Alternately, they could sell those credits to other polluters who would use them to avoid making their own reductions.

That could perversely endanger recycling programs, which are huge energy savers (it takes less energy to make paper from paper than from virgin trees). If wood and paper are given value just for lying in a landfill, it could create an incentive for trash operators to dispose of them that way, rather than recycling them. Indeed, whoever is able to get credit for landfilling the 59 million tons of forest products disposed of annually would reap more than $1 billion in profit, based on the price of carbon pollution permits being traded in European markets.

The good news is that some lawmakers are starting to get wise to these polluter schemes. Facing worries about the impact of increasing demand for palm oil grown in ecologically sensitive parts of Southeast Asia and Colombia, Europe may ban biofuels grown unsustainably. During the debate over the energy bill, the Senate defeated an attempt to provide billions of dollars in subsidies and loan guarantees for liquid coal. And there's growing support for giving financial value to living forests instead of forests that have been turned into toilet paper.

But even if these particular scams are beaten back, environmentalists and others must remain vigilant. Capitalism is, for good and bad, an infinitely creative phenomenon. America must be sure to harness that creativity to solve the climate crisis rather than letting rogue billionaires make it worse. FPH

Capitalism is, for good and bad, an infinitely creative phenomenon.





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COLOMBIA: murders and threats against the organizers of the March 6th march



On the 6 of March last, hundreds of thousands of people were mobilized in 24 parts of the country for a day of shared solidarity summoned by the Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE). The same day, acts of solidarity were carried out in 74 cities of the world. Since the moment at which the proposal for the day became public, stigmatization and signals, coming at bottom from the high Government and other sectors of the extreme right, have generated a climate of polarization whose consequences have not been hopeful. Through several means of communication since the 10th of February, presidential advisor José Obdulio Gaviria accused the march of the 6th of March of being "summoned by the FARC". On the 12 of February, pamphlets threatening the organizers of the march were spread by electronic mail, and a wave of murders was let loose.

colombia.
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LOS ANGELES: Four Years Since the Coup Against Aristide



On Saturday, March 1st, as part of the International Day of Action in Solidarity with the People of Haiti, globalwomenstrike.net hosted a showing of the films Haiti: Harvest of Hope and What's Going on in Haiti? at the Eastside Café in Los Angeles. Margaret Prescod of Pacifica Radio and Women of Color in the Global Women's Strike, moderated the event. "The Reports that I've gotten are is that things are going very well, there were events in about 36 cities around the world," she said. "There were four major events in Haiti yesterday, including in Port au Prince, that were quite large, including a contingent of people who were also demanding the safe return of Lovinsky Pierre-Antione, one of our comrades who's been missing in Haiti"

PHILADELPHIA: Move 9 Parole Hearings Set For April

Almost 30 years after the Aug. 8, 1978 confrontation in Philadelphia, the eight remaining "MOVE 9" prisoners are now eligible for parole (see Philadelphia Inquirer and Metro articles). In early April, they will be interviewed by the Parole Board. With the hearings just weeks away, MOVE is asking for support by contacting the Parole Board (http: //move9parole.blogspot.com/2008/03/call-sign-petition-and-write-letter-for.html) and signing the online petition (already signed by Howard Zinn and Noam Chomsky) . A new video series features interviews with MOVE members Ramona Africa (the sole adult survivor of the May 13, 1985 police bombing of MOVE headquarters) and Mike Africa Jr. (the son of MOVE 9 prisoners Debbie and Mike Sr.).

In a recent interview, veteran Philadelphia journalist Linn Washington Jr. cites his sources in the police department who told him that Officer James Ramp was actually shot by police gunfire, and not MOVE.

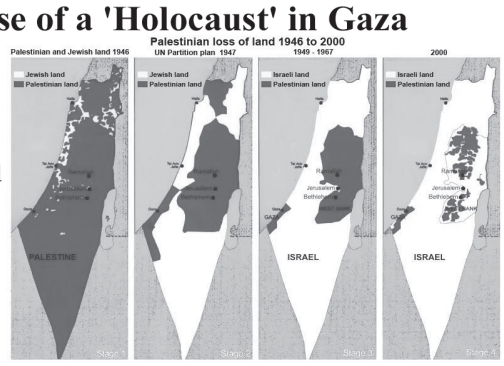


PUERTO RICO: Teachers' Assembly Agrees to Begin Strike

It has already been more than five days since the teachers' strike began. In this week we have been present at more than 10 arrests, two manifestations of force and more of a 80% of our schools remain paralyzed.

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Israel keeps its promise of a 'Holocaust' in Gaza



After months of inhuman siege and daily attacks, Israel last week mounted a massive offensive against the Gaza Strip, which has claimed the lives of over 100 Palestinians, including many civilians and children. Israeli officials had threatened the Palestinians with "a holocaust" if home-made rockets fired at nearby Israeli towns did not stop. As the aggression continues, so do solidarity protests throughout the world.

Free Henry Okah of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta!



Since September 3rd, 2007, Henry Okah, a respected youth leader and so called "silent player" in the Niger Delta struggle was arrested in Angola on his way back to Nigeria from South Africa. The Angolan government, likely at the behest of the Nigerian government and the multi-national oil companies operating in Nigeria, detained Mr. Okah and his fellow traveler (Capt. Edward Atatah), under dubious pretexts. These included the possession of "incriminating literature", gunrunning and the sponsoring of a coup attempt in Equatorial Guinea. Due to the absurdity of the manufactured cases, the charges were eventually thrown out of Angolan court.

After 5 grueling months in Angolan prison, where the two were beaten and denied access to counsel, it is believed that the prisoners were secretly and illegally extradited to Nigeria on February 14th, 2008. At current their exact whereabouts are unknown. Recent attempts by legal counsel to locate Mr. Okah and company have been repudiated by the Nigerian government, and the worst is feared. In a February 29th, 2008 communiqué, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) calls on the Nigerian Bar Association and the International Community to intervene and compel the backward Nigerian government to respect the rule of law. The group has repeatedly threatened reprisals against government, military and oil installations if proof of life for Mr. Okah is not made available. Lawyers representing the two men will file a contempt suit at the Federal High court in Abuja against the Nigerian government.

Henry Okah's brother has made available the attached letters that were smuggled out of Angolan jail before Okah and Atatah's illegal deportation to Nigeria.

Sea Shepherd Activists Injured As Japanese Military Open Fire, Throw Flash Grenades

A clash between the crew of the Sea Shepherd vessel Steve Irwin, who are in the Southern Ocean to fight the ongoing Japanese whaling slaughter near the Antarctic, turned violent when the Japanese Coast Guard began to throw flash grenades at its crew. Captain Paul Watson of the Sea Shepherd was struck by a bullet in the chest. Fortunately, the bullet was stopped by his Kevlar vest.

Other injuries were sustained by crewmembers Australian Ashley Dunn and Ralph Lowe. Dunn suffered a hip injury as he tried to get out of the way of the exploding grenades. Lowe received bruises to his back when one of the flash grenades exploded behind him. Japan is denying that any bullets have been fired, saying "warning devices" were thrown after their ship was attacked. According to the Japanese foreign ministry their coastguard on board on of the whaling ships had thrown a "baseball-sized device, which exploded near the activists' ship emitting a loud noise". However, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society has posted a video on their website, clearly showing devices being thrown from the whaling ship exploding and a bullet being recovered from Paul Watson's jacket.

COAST SALISH TERRITORIES: INDIGENOUS RIGHTS



The Secwepemc have never ceded their lands to Canada or to anyone else. They have consistently affirmed their right to live as they always have, by hunting and fishing to sustain their communities. Development has slowly been eroding this way of life. Despite their recognized right to their ancestral lands, Canadian courts have sided with the province and developers in destroying their habitat as well as the habitats of many wild animals. The concerns of the First Nation peoples are not new. Naomi Klein wrote a 2003 piece entitled, "The Olympics Land Grab," in which she described the repressive measures used by the Canadian government to enforce its presumed right to overrun native lands. Vancouver, British Columbia (Coast Salish Territories) has been chosen for the site of the 2010 Olympic Games. To many, British Columbia seems like a great location, with its rugged coastline, mountain ranges, pristine wilderness, and temperate rain forests. Indeed, many peaks in the Canadian Rockies are permanently snow-capped, so skiers can indulge themselves year-round.

Direct Action and Rally at Chevron Richmond Refinery

On Saturday March 15th, activists and community members protested the war in Iraq, environmental racism and global warming by blockading the Chevron oil refinery in Richmond, CA. A coalition which includes health, environmental and anti-war organizers had called for people to shut down the Chevron refinery for the day in support of community efforts to stop Chevron from expanding its Richmond refinery. An expansion will increase pollution and cause asthma, cancer and rising death rates in surrounding communities.Chevron was shut down all day in anticipation of the protest. Protesters marched to one of the main gates of the refinery and people laid out lock down tubes and barrels and up to 50 people locked themselves down.

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POVERTY POP QUIZ

| Alex Wukman | Jacob Laren



If you can't answer these you are wasting your time on the internet.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. You can get out of a ticket in Texas by saying you are too poor to pay it.

2. There are no public defenders in Texas.

3. If you are arrested the state of Texas will pay for a lawyer for you as well as expert witnesses

4. and any investigation you need during the trial.

5. If you lose the case the state of Texas will pay for a lawyer to handle the appeal.

SHORT ANSWER

6. What Houston charities offer rental assistance ?

7. Name 3 places to get free or reduced cost dental care in Houston?

8. How do you find out if you qualify for assistance in paying your electric bill in Texas?

9. Which hospitals in Houston (aside from Ben Taub) provide all medical care free or at severely reduced rates for those who qualify, because not all of them do?

10. Do you know how to get $3,000 from the state of Texas for a new car?

BONUS

1. What does a hospital have to do to comply with the Texas anti-patient dumping laws?

ANSWERS

1. True. This is known as "pleading indigency" and it is up to each particular court in Texas to determine how difficult it is to claim poverty. Some judges require detailed proofs of income and expense others simply require anyone claiming to be too poor to pay a ticket sign a form and swear that they are poor.

2. False. Public defenders are on a county by county basis. Currently fifteen counties in Texas have them. However each county in Texas, even the ones that don't have public defender's offices, are required to have filed an indigent defense plan with the state of Texas which allocates funds for lawyers for the poor. Also state Senator Rodney Ellis argued for the creation of a public defender's office for Harris County in a March 15th editorial in the *Houston Chronicle*, a cause that was championed by Lisa Falkenberg three days earlier when she wrote that all that's required to create a Public Defender's office is "one judge to support it and county commissioners to fund it."

3. True and False. This is described under Gideon v. Wainwright, an almost 45 year old case that went before the Supreme Court and guaranteed equal access. It is enshrined in the Miranda rights. However lawyers are only guaranteed in cases where there is a legal need. In the eyes of the state of Texas TRAFFIC TICKETS DO NOT REQUIRE A LAWYER. Even if you have been arrested you don't get a free lawyer.

4. True. Although defendants can't request pay for investigators or expert witnesses, that is done by the court appointed attorney.

5. True. Of course getting the money may be time consuming and difficult it is there and depending on what you are charged with the appeals process could be guaranteed.

6. Short Answer. Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, ACAM, and Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. ACAM is a non denominational group of Houston Area churches who give money to other to non-profits and people and the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston is exactly what it sounds like, the social activism wing of the local Catholic Church. There is also the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs which issues Rent Vouchers and Section 8 housing.

7. Short Answer. Ibn Sina Foundations Community Medical Clinic at 11226 S. Wilcrest Dr. They're open 9-6 Monday through Friday and 9-noon. UT dental School, it's only good for emergency clinic and requires people to be at the building at 7:30 a.m. If you just want to go for a cleaning or check up, good luck getting in. You have to call at 7 am and try to book an appointment.

8. Short Answer. Call 2-1-1. If you want to know about any and all government assistance programs simply call the government.

9. Short Answer. Memorial Hermann, LBJ and Methodist. Memorial Hermann is privately owned, LBJ is part of the Harris County Hospital District and Methodist has just been sued by the Texas attorney general for not providing enough charity care.

10. Short Answer. If you have a car that is 10 years old or older and you can prove that your income does not exceed the requirements set by the grant committee The Houston Galveston Area Council will give you a voucher to get a 2005 or newer car from a Houston area car dealership. To find out if you qualify simple Google Air Check Texas.

Bonus: The 1986 Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act stipulates that all hospital emergency rooms can not deny medical screening or stabilizing treatment and can not transfer an individual whose condition is not stable. All that a for profit hospital has to do is make sure a patient doesn't die, once stable they can put the patient on the curb. Non Profit or community hospitals have to treat everyone in the community. FPH

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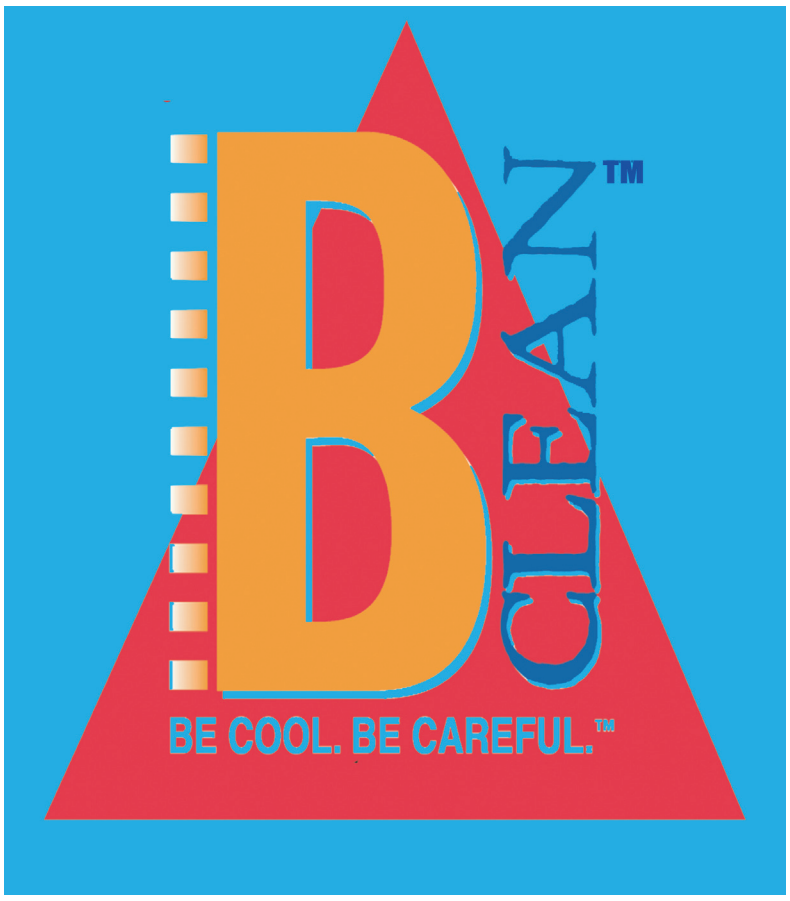
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