FPH

STREET NEWS HOUSTON



HIGH SPEED RAIL

MAY 2010
ISSUE 115

GET THE MOST
NOT THE LESSER

THE YOUNG & THE HOMELESS

FREE PRESS SUMMER FEST STAGE GUIDE!

INTERVIEW: FERNANDO

AQUA TEEN HUNGER FORCE

MORE MISSPELLINGS THAN
YOU CAN SHAKE A STICK AT



WILL YOU JOIN US?

Activists harmed by -- and fighting back against -- the Chevron Corporation are coming to Houston from Angola, New Mexico, Kazakhstan, Alaska, Ecuador, Nigeria, California, Colombia, Mississippi, Canada, Thailand, and more to confront the oil giant at its annual shareholder meeting.

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Tuesday, May 25
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Rice Media Center
http://film.rice.edu/Content.aspx?id=90

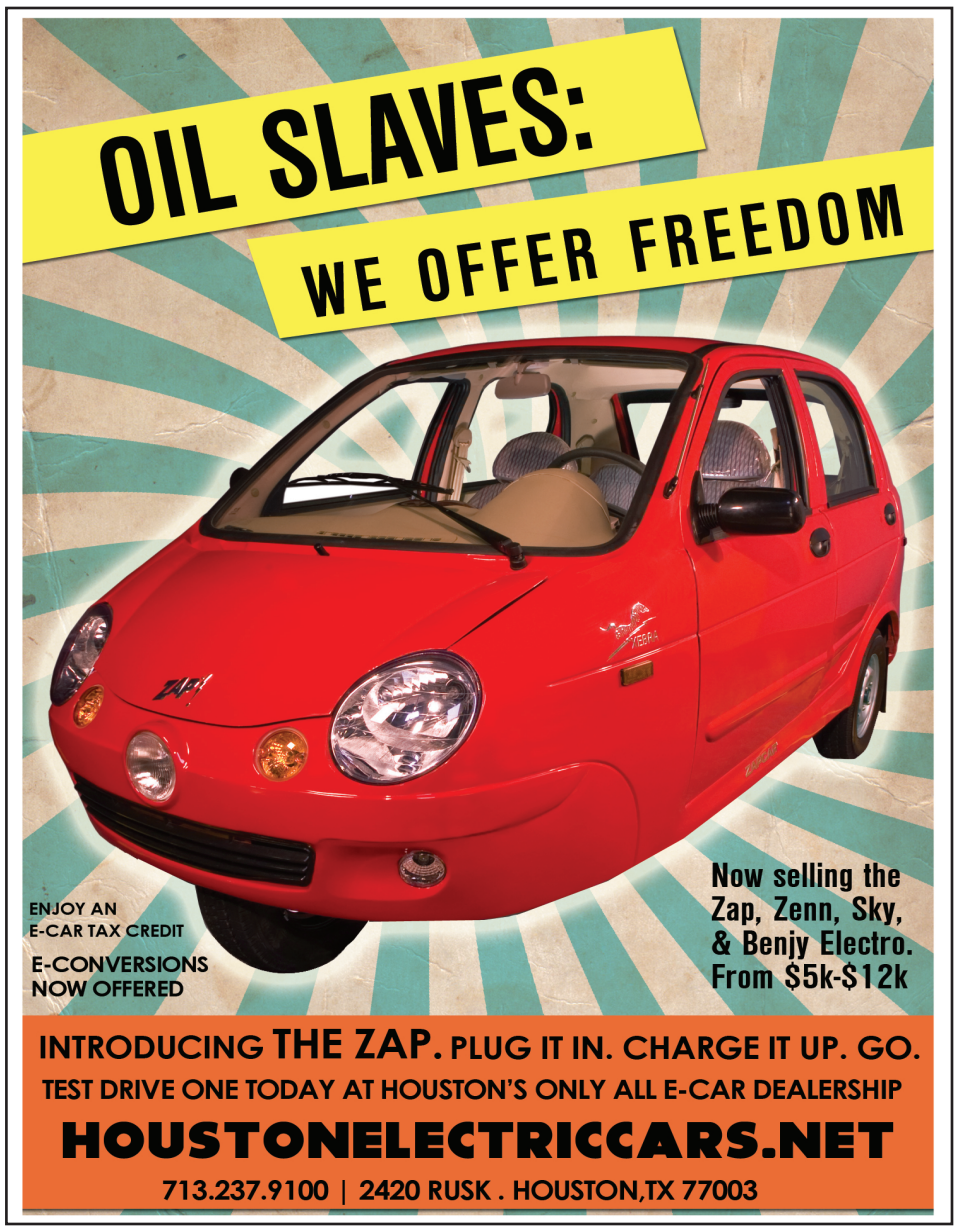
Protest at Chevron's shareholder meeting

Wednesday, May 26
7-11am
Chevron Corporation
1500 Louisiana St.

For more information

www.globalexchange.org/chevron
www.changechevron.com
www.truecostofchevron.com







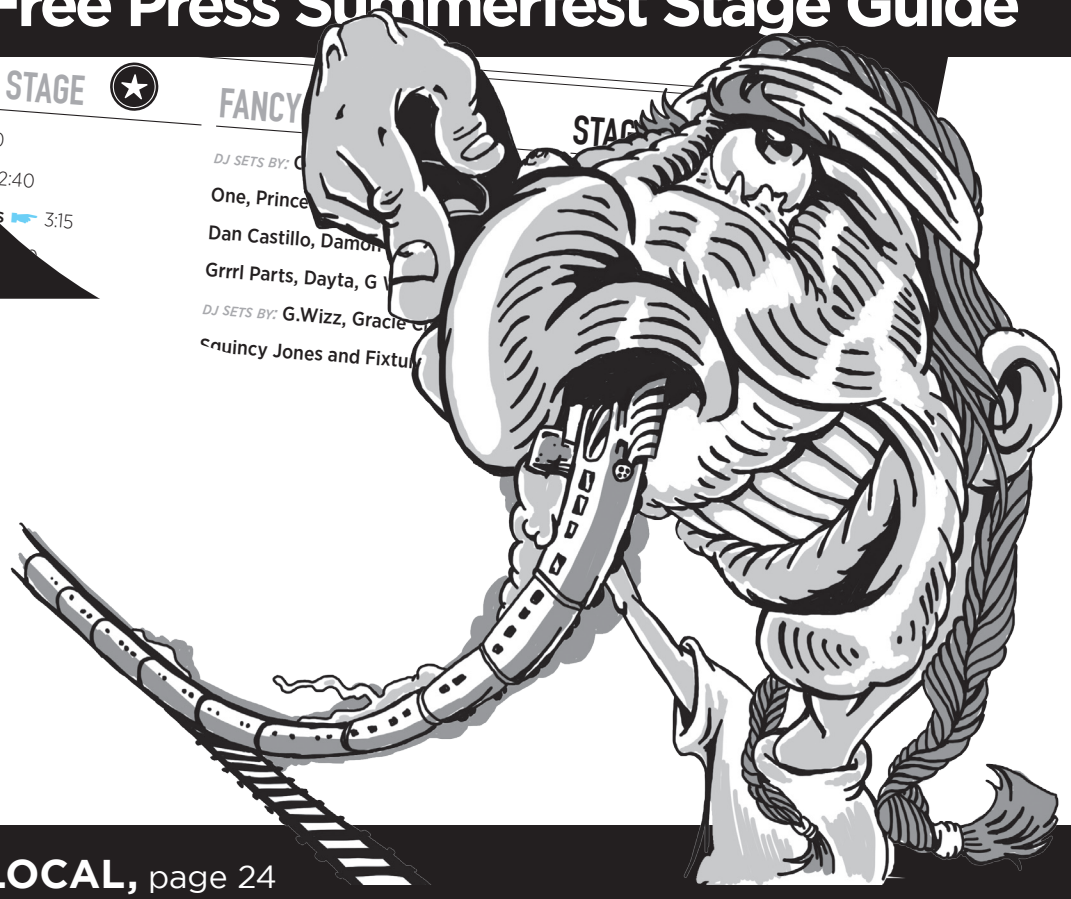
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Free Press Summerfest Stage Guide



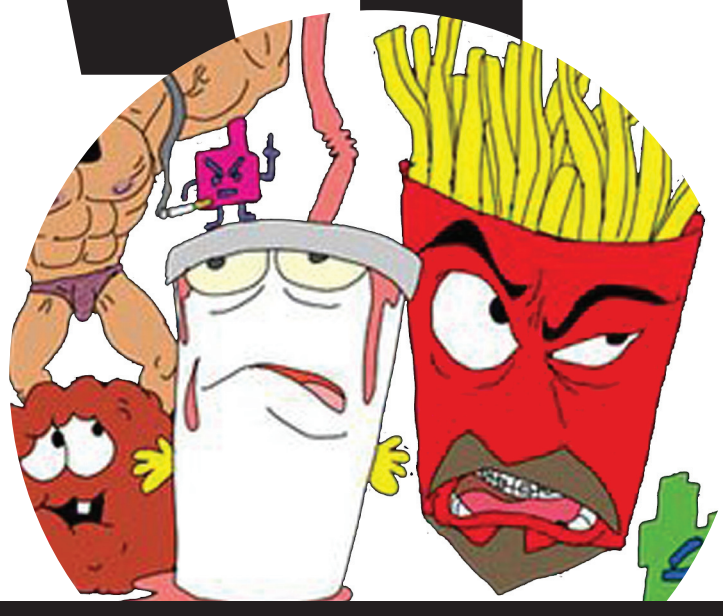
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Texas High Speed Rail



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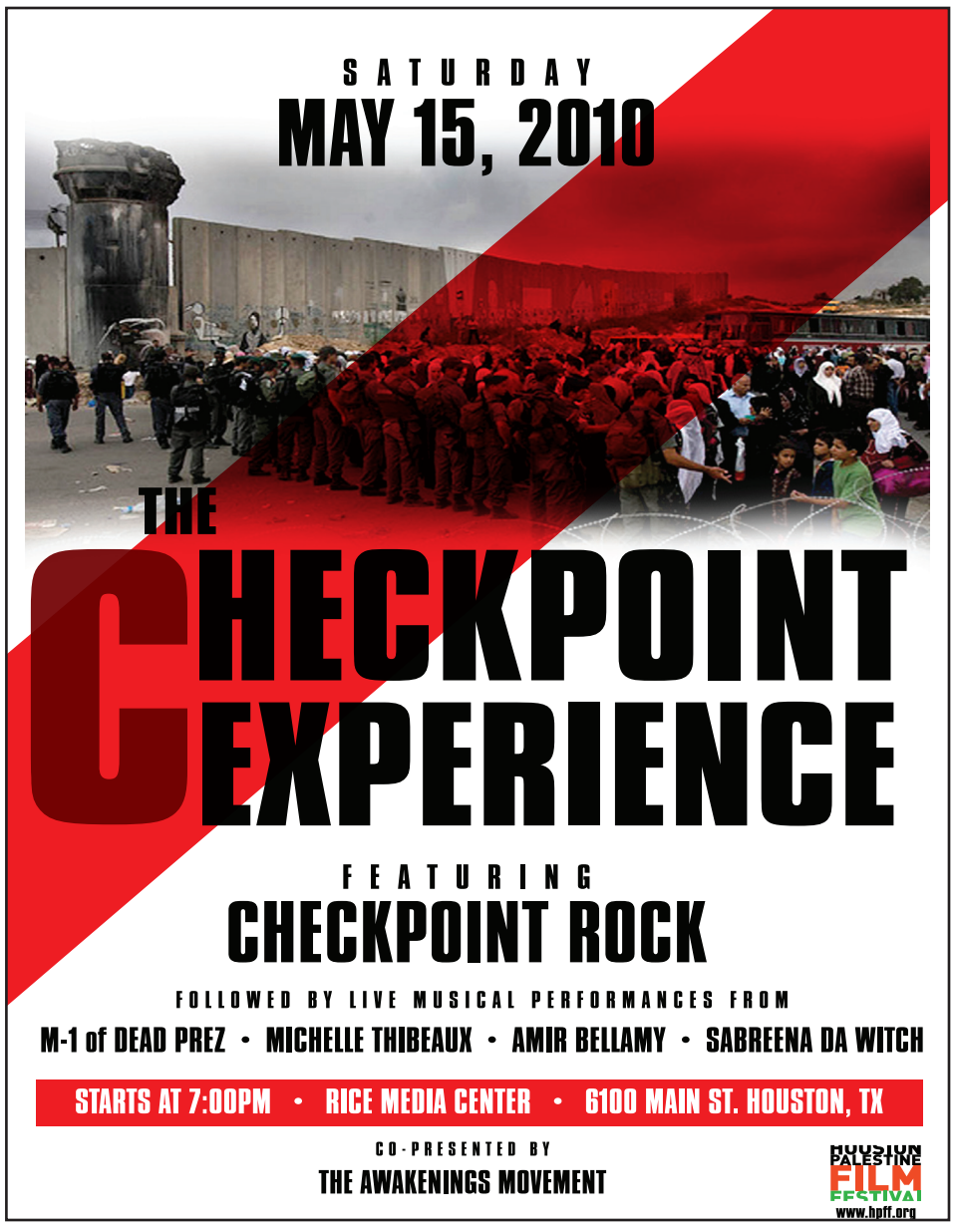
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Fri. 7
Dax Riggs

Sat. 8
Imaad Wasif

Thu. 13
Fake Believe

Fri. 14
Opie Hendrix (CD release)

Sat. 15
Orange Is In

Wed. 19
Jet Setta Booking/Onstage Events Presents: Deadbolt, Poor Dumb Bastards, Black Market Syndicate, The Hot Things, Skeleton Dick (Doors 8:30)

Fri. 21
Hell City Kings, Bexar County Bastards, Dykes On Bikes

Sat. 22
Letters to Voltron

Fri. 28
Jet Setta Booking/Onstage Events Presents: The Spits, NoBunny, The Energy, No Talk

Sat. 29
ST37 & Linus Pauling Quartet (Split 7" release) w/ Golden Cities

BEER TASTINGS
Last Thursday of the month

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MONDAYS
SIDESHOW TRAMPS!!

TUESDAYS
ROLLIN ON DUB

WEDNESDAYS
ROBERT ELLIS & THE BOYS

UPCOMING SHOWS ALL AGES

5/1
Dissent

5/5
These United States, Arthur Yoria, Tody Castillo

5/7
Something Fierce

5/8
Tax the Wolf, Papermoons, Listen Listen

5/10
Eluvuim, Benoit Pioulard, Searching For Signal

5/15
Indian Jewelry, Lower Dens, Future Islands, Black Congress

5/20
Most Serene Republic, Annuals, What Laura Says

5/21
Everybody was in the French Resistance

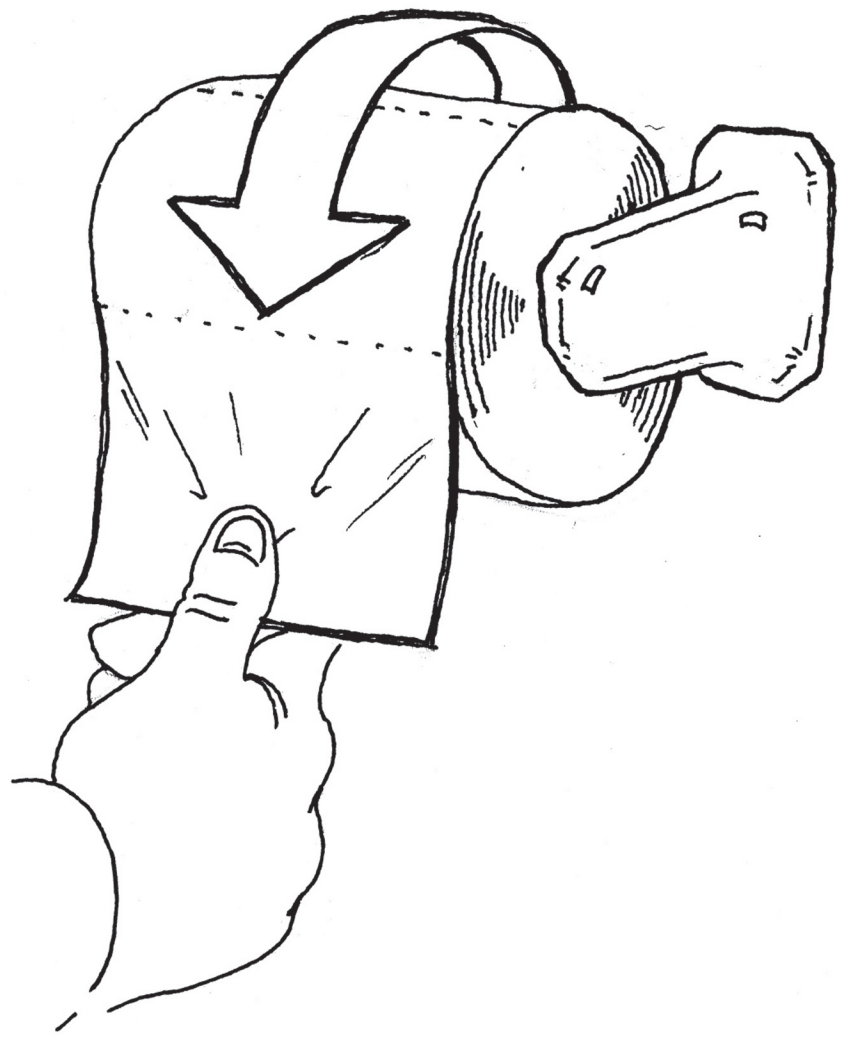
5/28
Scroggins

5/29
Dax Riggs

Check the website calendar for more shows this month

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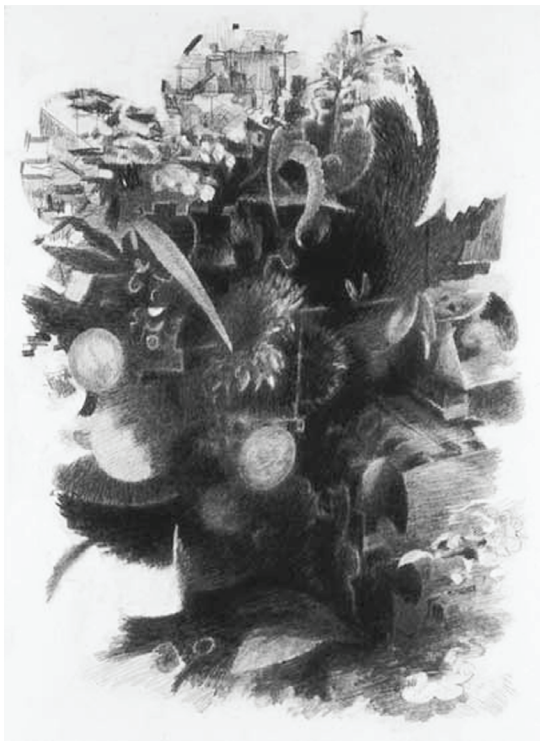
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR
FEEL FREE TO TAKE US SERIOUSLY



SHIT TICKETS?

The other day, a good friend of mine Mark Armes told me how his father referred to toilet paper as 'Shit Tickets'. I mean, how perfect is that? The fact that toilet paper is an absolute necessity to pinch a loaf, for most of us, makes it so appropriate to call them tickets. No ticket, no scheizzer. Which brings me to my next important point: Do not be mean to people who do nice things for you. Fact is, there are many people out there who do not do dick for you who you can direct your stress and frustrations at. I know, some people would say 'be nice to everyone.' But frankly, those people are communists. And communists are responsible for most bad things that have ever happened that were not perpetrated by capitalists, religious fundamentalists, polytheists, backup dancers, best boys, etc. I really hope you are paying attention here because this is some real ass esoteric shit I am spitting at you. Because If one thing in this whole mixed up crazy world is for certain, always keep extra Shit Tickets lying around.

OMAR AFRA



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ART SHOWS THIS MONTH

DEBRIS: COCA-COLLA

by BUFFALO SEAN



RADICAL REGIONALISM IS BEGINNING TO TAKE HOLD ACROSS THE WORLD, AS PEOPLE TUNE IN AND DROP OUT OF CORPORATE LIVING FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A CENTURY. IN THE PERFECT STORM OF ECONOMIC COLLAPSE, FINANCIAL RUIN, INCREASINGLY UNCOMFORTABLE AIR TRAVEL, BLOSSOMING CONSUMPTIVE AWARENESS, GREEN INITIATIVES, FROZEN WAGES AND COMMUNICATION OVERLOAD WE FIND OURSELVES BUCKING EVER-SHRILLER ADVERTISING FOR CONTENT FROM AROUND THE CORNER INSTEAD OF ACROSS THE WORLD.

A SENSE OF REGIONALISM can function as an underpass between religious and political divisions. Where sports teams channel bravado and art movements grasp at the collective unconscious there lays a powerful tool for societal change. We can learn not to stand consciously in relation to global centers of cultural production, instead drawing strength from the myriad of influences already contained in Houston. As Texas continues to grow- drawing strength, personality and population from across the US and around the globe- regional aspects will be major touchstones for transplants as well as natives. If we don't watch it, we might have a little basic human decency around here.

The response to each new evolution of radical regionalism has ricocheted across the globe, the palimpsest of ancient knowledge faintly visible in the newest, hippest thing. In Bolivia they just released a new soft drink that uses indigenous coca leaves- the main ingredient in cocaine- to give it a particular "pep." In Denmark chef René Redzepi forages along the coastline for ingredients for his restaurant. In Houston, Mark Vorderbruggen runs *houstonwildedibles.blogspot*, making salads, teas and meals from the thousands of empty lots dotting the city. Pola Creamery is a cheesemaker crafting intense flavors in a Montrose home converted to a cheese factory.

Within this city is a capacity for invention that rivals any other. This month the Art Car Parade rolls through town with thousands of incredible variations on the automobile, all spawned by the influence of the Lawndale Art Annex and their 1984 exhibit *Collision*. Houston artists took the lessons of Robert Rauschenberg's combines and East LA's low-riders to new levels with imaginative autos layered with pop culture detritus, obsession, conceptualism and outsider sensibility. For a quarter century this movement has evolved and deepened, prompting casual artists and aficionados to paint, sculpt or splice an old car or truck into a gas guzzling public demonstration of protest against tedium- and you should too. Then you can get to go see what everyone is making here in Houston; what they're painting, cooking, building, writing, acting, selling, hustling, imagining, playing, singing and sewing. *(and tweet about it)* FPH

Monday & Wednesday

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STEAK NIGHT

Steaks start sizzling after 6pm.

Tuesday

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Weekly Shows unless otherwise posted

Monday
Open Mic

Tuesday
John Hogan, Jambolism

Wednesday
Moonshine Summit, Potroast, Drum Circle

Thursday
Leslie Newman, The Hightailers

Sunday
Acoustic Jam Session 12-5:30, Fahl & Folk/ Jimmy Deen

UPCOMING SHOWS

MAY 1- MIGUEL, HAMILTON LOOMIS

MAY 7- COW JAZZ, FUNK 4AM

MAY 8- ERMA LINDA, BROTHER READ, SUBROUTINE

MAY 14- JIMMY LEE DEAN, RAINA ROSE, SQUINTO

MAY 15- CONGAS BY CARLOS, GLEN BRYANT, BIGGA STAR, FONDUE MONKS, SISTERS 7 W/ PATRICE PIKE

MAY 21- PREMIUM BLEND

MAY 22- PRAIA URBANA

MAY 28- GENERATION LANDSLIDE, STARFISH DNA

MAY 29- EAR FUNK

MENDACITY

by MICHAEL BERGERON

MAY AT A GLANCE

THE HEAT IS ON. Every weekend for the next four months is front loaded with another brick in the wall, another tent pole production filled with the usual amount of suspect effects. After the rush job 3D in Clash of the Tightwads the word on the street leans towards skepticism at anything bearing an extra dimensional logo. The same plots with the same stars only in different garb (think Robert Downey Jr., once the coolest actor on the planet and now the most overexposed superhero in the house).

As with all things, the upcoming docket for the summer o' 2010 represents a double-edged sword. Who else but RDJr. to mug his way through Marvel PG-13 fodder like Iron Man 2 (May 7), which marks the first of many such branded films that will include Thor, Captain America and hopefully a cameo from Stan Lee before he keels over in consternation. I guess the filmmakers think that nobody will notice that the part of Rhodney has gone from Terrence Howard to Don Cheadle without a sigh, and they're probably right. As for the dynamic duo of Ridley Scott and Russell Crowe, a collaboration that's resulted in everything from Glad He Ate Her to Body of Lies, with American Gangster and A Good year in between, comes Robin Hood (May 14).

The first Friday in May pits Iron Man 2 against, well nothing much save for Focus Features Babies, a doc that will sit well over Mother's Day. The second Friday plays the previously mentioned Robin of Locksley with Just Wright, a basketball romance triangle with Common, Queen Latifah and Paula Patton. Also a derivative of love letters called Letters to Juliet opens.

By the third Friday in May we've come close to signs of the apocalypse with Shrek Forever After (get it, it's the fourth of the franchise) and the Saturday Night Live spin-off MacGruber. Great scott man, the last time a SNL derived movie was good your Dad was still in college.

The month closes with a blast of humidity in the form of Sex and the City 2 and Disney's Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time. That's a lot of tanned skin to have to process.

Some smaller titles playing exclusively include the lyrical; sheep herding docu Sweetgrass, the Van Cliburn piano competition docu Surprise in Texas (one surprise is a contestant who's blind), the Italian comedy Mid-August Lunch, and the Iranian underground rockers flick The Truth about Persian Cats.

The Houston Palestinian Film Festival (www.hpff.org) unwinds at various venues including the Rice Media Center and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston after kicking off with a rooftop sunset party on May 13 (2808 Milam). The MFAH continues rolling out cool retrospectives with a series of films starring Jeff Bridges. Launch a trip to the Houston Museum of Natural Science where Hubble 3D unreels in IMAX and May has plenty of cinematic magic to offer.

ALSO ON

THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN IN AMERICA A wordy title that suggests terrorism and patriotism in the same phrase this documentary examines the cause and effect of Daniel Ellsberg and his decision to covertly release what is now known as The Pentagon Papers to newspapers and Congressmen at the height of the Vietnam War. If history is written by the victors Ellsberg's feat was rewriting said history.

Ellsberg was a high-ranking analyst for the Rand Corporation as well as a close advisor to then Secretary of Defense McNamara. Before his conscious got the best of him Ellsberg helped plan the Vietnam War. At one point he commanded 211 Marine troops in the rice fields he had studied so extensively. Top secret access to documents led a paper trail from the Truman administration (financed the French in Indochina after WWII) to Eisenhower in the 50s (Ike canceled Vietnamese elections called for by the Geneva Accord) and up to the Kennedy and Johnson regimes lying about Vietnam to Congress. In other words, especially in light of current events, politics as usual.

The film features Ellsberg then and now recalling his act. Other talking heads include prominent (and recently deceased) historian Howard Zinn. The addition of select outtakes from the Nixon Whitehouse Tapes (everything in the Oval Office is tape recorded) give the President the pompous sound of a gangland boss. Something about "bombing that shit ass country to the stone age."

Ellsberg eventually smuggled over 7000 pages of documents, page by page, took them home and photocopied them and then returned the originals. The first installment was published by the New York Times but as the government intervened and suppressed that effort other papers took the lead.

The Most Dangerous Man in America will play well with older crowds who lived through the tumulus time depicted here. But younger crowds will find the story as thrilling as a mystery. The timeline only reveals near the end how the entire event played out, complete with a deciding case in front of the Supreme Court.

DVD SLIGHT RETURN

THE ICONS of Suspense Collection Presents Hammer Films is a 6 film set on 3 DVDs that celebrates some of the lesser known, especially to US audiences, products of Hammer Film Studios. Distributed domestically by Columbia Studios these films range from murder thrillers to robbery capers. The real surprise was not having heard of five of the films and being blown away by three of those five to an extent I wouldn't have thought possible.

I had heard of These Are the Damned, mainly because it was directed by Joseph Losey (in 1961 although not released until 1963)) in the UK after his dealing with the blacklist led to fleeing the United States years earlier. The edit of These Are the Damned in the Hammer set is the uncut version. An allegorical tale that starts off with a motorcycle gang chasing an American tourist only to take a bizarre sci-fi twist with government experiments with radiation and mutant children.

Stop Me Before I Kill! (1961) and Maniac (1963) are run of the mill B-grade thrillers albeit with great locations in seaside and rustic France.

Cash on Demand (1961) immediately grabbed hold on my senses. COD unfolds like a tense psychological drama as a bank heist occurring in real time takes place. Think of it, most films don't unwind in the length of time it takes to watch them, and when they are the mood isn't always concise. In the last several years such films would include Nick of Time (1995) or Tape (2001). More experimental yet noteworthy examples are Russian Ark (shot in one digital take) and Hitchcock's Rope. But I digress.

Cash on Demands pits a weak willed Peter Cushing as a loathsome bank manager who's blackmailed by master criminal Andre Morell. Morell threatens to kill Cushing's wife if he doesn't cooperate. The real time conceit is handled without patronizing the audience and the tension and acting keep you glued to the story.

The Snorkel (1958) just begs to be different and refuses to be pigeon holed by genres. A sociopath kills people with gas while hiding under their floorboards wearing a snorkel with hoses running to fresh air. Gradually the daughter of one of his victims comes to suspect him and yet nobody will believe her.

Never Take Candy From A Stranger (1960) seems like it could've been made yesterday because of the way the story of a child molester unfolds with a matter-of-fact documentary feel. Set in Canada, we take the point-of-view of a new couple to town, in fact the principal of a school. Their child calmly relates how she and another girl went into so-and-so's house and, well, took their clothes off. At first the parents freak, then they debate whether to pursue charges. Against everyone's advise the case goes to trial and the old man accused is found innocent. In a gripping third act the same old man chases the girl into the woods with the intent to kill them. They certainly didn't make many films like this in 1960 and frankly very few films nowadays can match the intensity of Never Take Candy From a Stranger. The package includes trailers for the various films all of which are in glorious black-and-white. **FPH**



SAVE THE DATE

HOUSTON PALESTINE FILM FESTIVAL

ROOFTOP KICK-OFF PARTY

MAY 13 | THURSDAY
ROOFTOP OF KHON'S

2808 Milam, 7:00 - 12:00 PM
Dabka, food and drink, live entertainment, dj.

FILM SCREENINGS

FILMS AT RICE MEDIA CENTER

Friday | May 14, 7:00 PM
Spotlight: Gaza, featuring "GAZA WINTER" with special guest M-1of Dead Prez (who recently visited Gaza), followed by a reception and photo exhibit.

Saturday | May 15, 7:00 PM
The Checkpoint Experience, featuring "CHECKPOINT ROCK" followed by a live musical performance by Sabreena da Witch and reception.

Sunday Matinee | May 16, 3:00 PM
Honoring Women, featuring "FATANEH" first Palestinian animation followed by "MARIA'S GROTTO". Panel discussion, director invited.

FILMS AT MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON

Friday | May 21, 7:00 PM
Remembering Mahmoud Darwish, featuring AS THE POET SAID and 9AAB (9 AUGUST). Directors invited, poetry reading and reception to follow.

Saturday | May 22, 7:00 PM
Closing Night: Award-winning feature film, THE TIME THAT REMAINS, followed by a reception.

Sunday Matinee | May 23, 2:00 PM
Second Screening of THE TIME THAT REMAINS



A CREATURE IN THE SKY GOT SUCKED IN A HOLE,

NOW THERE'S A HOLE IN THE SKY.

by KWAME M. ANDERSON

I GUESS IT'S TIME FOR A TEA PARTY, FOR HOW CAN LONG CAN BULLSHIT LIKE THAT STAY DORMANT? THE IDEA IS THAT AMERICA NEEDS TO BE SAVED, BUT I FIND THE WORD "AMERICA" TO MEAN NOTHING.

I MEAN HONESTLY, what is America? A place where people came for refuge to own slaves, worship whatever, and sleep with their family members. OK, I'm not sure about the last part, though I'm sure that was part of it, but isn't that part of the whole historical narrative? Somebody's taking somebody's right to do something and we have to get it back. But look at the Bush years — there were people trying to save America from conservatism, now conservatives are saving the country from socialism, or immigrants, or homosexuality, or negroes, or aliens, or whatever the fucking thing. I say, you can save all that bullshit. One agenda will always be against another agenda, and that is fucking America. This country was born out of dissention and created on the basis of disagreement. Essentially, we came here to disagree, so keep writing your signs and yelling about your causes, and I will disagree, and you will disagree, and in a way our agreement to disagree is the uniting principle of our country. Fuck me? No, fuck you.

PEOPLE PLAYING MUSIC

NORAH JONES
05/05/10 | Verizon Wireless Theatre

Norah Jones is known for her mellow (read: sleepy) style that is favored by keep it down purists and supporters of the why so loud faction of music. Her music, which is played and sold at Starbuck's, aligns the soundtracks of televisions and shows to accompany the somber or reflective moments, and this is the reason that most dismiss her music as too demure and boring. However, her last album, The Fall (Blue Note), was a surprising and welcome change. While not completely out of her presumed league, the album featured things like guitars with volume (even some feedback), variance in tempo, and drumsticks without brushes. Fans of bands like Okervill River, the "dad rock" of current Wilco, should love this album (Marc Ribot guests on a song), but the winner is always the songs and songwriting which I think Jones accomplishes well. Either way, I think this album will translate well live, and give the concert a balance between soft and slightly harder.

CYPRESS HILL
05/11/10 | Warehouse Live

Cypress Hill is one of the more important hip hop groups in the sense that they not only made bilingual rap an international phenomenon, they help to indoctrinate Latin culture into the mainstream in the way Public Enemy or N.W.A did for black culture. Now, sure there's that marijuana thing too, which happened way before the The Chronic. Cypress Hill's self titled debut stands as one of the greatest rap albums ever, and while their rock style helped usher in everything from Incubus to Limp Bizkit (unfortunately), they helped to breakdown cultural walls. Cypress Hill shows are always fun in the sense that throngs of people between the ages of 14 and 50, waiting for Insane In The Brain amidst of a sea of weed smoke, is fascinating and entertaining. It's the type of thing everyone should see at least once, and yes someone might pass you a joint, but in the words of DEVO: Freedom of choice, it's what you got.

MUSIC PLAYED BY PEOPLE

FROG EYES
Paul's Tomb: A Triumph *(Dead Oceans)*

Frog Eyes has been one of my favorite bands for some time now. The beauty of the band is that they haven't seemed to reach that place where they have enough comfort in their sound that they wouldn't change it. If one traces their catalog, there is a continuity, but it is not necessarily redundant. With their last album, Tears of The Valedictorian (Absolutely Kosher), the sound of the band was again rearranged. The new album, Paul's Tomb: A Triumph, may be a perfection in the new style. From the first minute of "Flower In A Glove", it is evident the band did not come for the fucking around. The twisted, broken keyboard-guitar whatever, while Carey Mercer howls "You were always so focused," outdoes most songs I could grudgingly sing along to in traffic. That song creates one of those "This is the first song?" moments. Later comes "Odetta's War", which begins with a twinkling guitar that gives way to a thunderstorm and an aftermath; it is a six minute epic. It is songwriting and arrangement- you are there in that place. By the time you have made it to "Styled By Dr. Roberts", it's not the song that you expect it to be. Frog Eyes also seemed to have become more of a live band, or maybe it's that the album was recorded as a band, not each member doing their "part". It feels alive, it is layered, it attacks, it rests, it lurks and then leaps, and a minute later you are staring at the sun, swimming between the guitar and Mercer's melodies. Needless to say, I think a lot of this album. Maybe that might get you to think a little about purchasing it.

TRANS AM
Thing *(Thrill Jockey)*

It is rumored that Thing is an unused soundtrack for a big Hollywood film, which upon hearing it, makes all the sense in the world. Trans Am is a rock band that is difficult to define, if only because, depending on the album, Trans Am has sounded many ways. Their music has influenced and be championed from everyone from Tortoise to Tool, who the band opened for last year, and can be pummeling rock, dance floor appropriate, or spaced out and trance-y. Thing is probably one of the best Trans Am albums, as always, the ingredients are present: rock, electro, some prog, some psychedelic. The thing about Thing is it is cohesive, no veer in sound, no change in style seems out of place within the theme. It all seems as if each mood is necessary to the complete piece as an album. However, a song like "Heaven's Gate" proves that the band always has a wild card up its sleeve, with the song going from blip to thrash. "Black Matter" should be played at the next NASA launch. This will be one of the albums of the year easily, if only for the reason that I'm sorry there be no other THING like it this year. FPH



1. **THE BESNARD LAKES/STAR DEATH & WHITE DWARVES**
05/19 | WALTER'S ON WASHINGTON

2. **CARIBOU/TORO Y MOI**
05/15 | WAREHOUSE LIVE

3. **INDIAN JEWELRY/LOWER DENS**
05/15 | MANGO'S

4. **ANNUALS**
05/20 | MANGO'S

turnin' headz

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& Rob Jay

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hip-hop showcase
mangos no cover

hosted by: ensane & that purple bastard

CACTUS MUSIC

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FREE LIVE MUSIC
Refreshments provided by St. Arnold

- The Happen-Ins - 5/1 @ 1pm
- Mike Stinson - 5/1 @ 3pm
- Civil Twilight - 5/8 @ 1pm
- Miss Leslie - 5/8 @ 3pm
- Gary P. Nunn - 5/8 @ 5pm
- Houston Hearts Haiti - 5/22 @ 1 - 3pm
  + Jennifer Grassman + Bret Gyrich
  + Karina Nistal + Mary Sarah
  + Ren Patrick & Ian Crawford
- Smoke Fairies - 5/22 @ 5:30pm (Third Man Recording Artist)
- The Louvres (feat. Sean Walters) 5/29 @ 1pm
- Andrew Karnavas - 5/29 @ 3pm
- House of Hits - 6/5 @ 1pm
  Book Signing + Q & A Session
  w/ Andy Bradley & Roger Wood
- Truth & Salvage Co. - 6/8 @ 5:30pm
- Loreta Kovacic - 6/12 @ 10:30am
- Wild Moccasins - 6/12 @ 3pm
- Anders Osbourne - 6/12 @ 5pm

Summer DJ Session
Sunday, 5/23 @ 2pm - 5pm
DJ No Fun & Special Guests

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INTERVIEW: by OMAR AFRA

FERNANDO ALEJANDRO



EVERY CITY IN THE COUNTRY NEEDS A FERNANDO ALEJANDRO. A FOUNDING MEMBER OF COP WARMTH AND NOW THE DEFAULT, BY AGE AND THE FACT THAT HIS YOUNGER BROTHER IS A MEMBER, LEADER OF PUNKFUSION EXPERIMENT SOMOSUNO, FERNANDO HAS EDGED OUT A NICHE AS A FORWARD THINKER IN THE UNDERGROUND HOUSTON MUSIC SCENE.

BUT WHAT MAKES FERNANDO such a cornerstone of this community is not his history or his chops rather his constant smile and enduring positive attitude. We managed to tie him down long enough to answer a few questions both silly and serious. He loves answering in ALL CAPS.

WHAT DOES SOMUSUNO MEAN? ¶ SOMOSUNO means Unity. All kinds of Unity. GALACTIC UNITY, EARTH FORCE UNITY, CONSCIOUSNESS UNITY, CULTURAL UNITY, MUSIC SCENE UNITY. UNITY IN DIVERSITY. SOMOSUNO is a movement of vibrations that makes ONE feel good. SOLO EXISTE LA UNIDAD ARU-CU-TUCU-TA.

DOES PLAYING IN A BAND WITH A FAMILY MEMBER PRESENT COMFORT OR TENSION? ¶ COMFORT. WE ARE CARNALES, WE LOVE JAMMING TOGETHER AND SHARING THE SAME EARTH.

WHAT IS THE MOTIVATING FACTOR FOR MAKING MUSIC FOR YOU? ¶ LIFE ON ALL LEVELS OF EXISTANCE is the motivating factor. OUR BREATH AND THE COSMIC BREATH. CULTURES, FOOD, HUMANS, PACHA-MAMA. VIBING WITH OTHER VERSIONS OF OURSELVES AND MAKING THEM FEEL GOOD.

DOES IT HELP TO HAVE A PARTICULAR MUSICAL PHILOSOPHY OR SHOULD SOMEONE BE PRACTICAL FROM START TO FINISH? ¶ DO WHAT YOU FEEL AND OPEN UP TO WHAT IS REAL.... BE YOU, WORK FROM WITHIN .....We've always been practical, but our philosophy is "if we feel it, we play it." We also love comedy A LOT and sometimes comedy is spontaneous and random. This is our COSMIC COMIC PHILOSOPHY

NAME ME ONE HOUSTON MUSICIAN THAT INSPIRES YOU? ¶ B L A C K I E (after listening to ABOVE GROUND over and over, the way i looked at music and at myself changed.)

FILL IN THE BLANKS: HOUSTON IS THE CENTER OF THE MUSICAL UNIVERSE BECAUSE _____ ? ¶ Houston is the center of the musical universe because WE ARE REAL. WE ARE HIGHLY EVOLVED MINDS, THAT WORK TOGETHER IN UNISON TO BRING ABOUT A COSMIC ORGASM IN ALL DIMENSIONAL LEVELS OF THE EARTH (including in the Heart Chakra of the Earth which is right underneath Elenor Tinsley Park by the way) WHICH THEN GIVES BIRTH TO AMAZINGLY TALENTED ARTISTS OF ALL KINDS AND EACH OF THEM MAKE A UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO THE TAPESTRY OF MUSICAL EXPERIENCE IN THE MUSICAL UNIVERSE. WE ARE HOUSTON MUSIC BECAUSE OF OUR WORK, DEDICATION AND LOVE FOR THAT WHICH REASSURES US THAT WE ARE ALIVE....MUSIC!!!!! LOVE ALL LIFE. LOVE HOUSTON. LOVE YOURSELF. AGUANTE FREE PRESS! INLAKESH! FPH

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1.5" Buttons- Upload your art

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Saturday, May 22



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(Ozzy Tribute)
and
Holy Diver
(Dio Tribute)



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WEDNESDAYS
Ladies Night
$2 Specials All Day and All Night!

THUMPIN' THURSDAYS
with DJ REAL
Spinning Your Favorite Mixes & DJ Jason On The Patio

FRIDAYS
Live Bands Inside!
Live DJ Outside On The Patio

SATURDAYS
Live Bands Inside!
DJ Jason Outside On The Patio

MAY BAND LISTINGS

Sunday, May 9
Have A Rockin' Mother's Day Here At The Concert Pub!!
Drink Specials All Day and Night!

FRIDAYS
April 30 - Less Than Serious
May 7 - Rapture
May 14 - 8EPlus
May 21 - Eleventh Hour
May 28 - Chi-Town
June 4 - Surprise Band

SATURDAYS
May 1 - Judith Priest
(Judas Priest Tribute)
Love It To Death
(Alice Cooper Tribute)
May 8 - Destroyer
(Kiss Tribute)
May 15 - JD's Birthday Bash
JDs Throwdown Band & More
May 22 - Ozzmosis
with The Dirt & Holy Diver
(Ozzy, Motley Crue, and Dio Tributes)
May 29 - Xes Whiskey
(Van Halen Tribute)

Saturday, May 15
JD's BIRTHDAY BASH!
Music by
JDs THROWDOWN BAND
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6 BANDS!!!



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MAY LOOKS BAD, MAY LOOKS GOOD

by SPENCER SCHYMA

Al Green
Arena Theater | May 16th

In listening to Al Green's new album Lay it Down for the first time, I was skeptical old Al could deliver that same sexy soul he once did in the 70s. While Al Green might be old enough to seduce my grandma, I could not have been more foolish! The lush strings, tight grooves, and stylish backing vocals are all there in brilliant form; all encapsulated by absolutely immaculate productions that give off that sexy 70's sound. You can smell the dust of vinyl as the silky horns usher in behind Al's still ever sensual voice. At 64, Green still commands one of the greatest voices in the music industry. Throw your doubts away, the genius of Al Green is still very much alive and doing exceptionally well. See him the 16th - don't miss your chance to see Southern Soul's greatest talent.

Houston Symphony *performing Igor Stravinsky's Rite of Spring*
Jones Hall | May 21 - 23

Russian composer Igor Stravinsky's chaotic and mesmerizing ballet "Rite of Spring" was a piece before its time. When it first premiered, the ritualistic choreography and chaotic inharmonic music lead a majority of the audience to start booing. The incident escalated when another part of the audience who loved it started throwing punches at the haters, and eventually ended up as a full blown riot that spilled onto the streets of Paris, and into history, as one of the most infamous concert events of all time. Stravinsky's vision was so beyond the conventional music listener's ear at the time that one critic suggested hanging the Russian composer for spawning such an atrocity. Later, of course the music critics came around, eventually hailing the composition as one of the most important and revolutionary pieces of music to grace the 20th century. With its violent rhythms, colorful instrumentation, and innovative use of dissonance, some have gone as far to say the work "completely changed the way music was written and heard." See the organized chaos May 21st through the 23rd at Yuppie Hall.



Skeptycynic
Warehouse Live | May 23rd

When I think of Katy, I think of kids morbidly bored with their existence in a suburban hell hole, so naturally they turn to drugs and alcohol to escape their boring manicured lawn reality. This four piece group Skepticynic are clawing their way out of the suburban mazes and are on their way to liberating themselves from the art deprived shit hole that is Katy, Texas. Their sound can be described as a clusterfuck between the quirkiness of Modest Mouse, the Prog-Rock of Muse and some white boys who've got their foot in the funk. Over the power chord crunches and Toadie-like guitar melodies, the crooning of Stuart Cooper towers above, throwing listeners into a world of heartbreak, and sometimes "bloody condoms on the floor." Skepticynic also possess a dynamic bass/drum combo with their seven foot tall bass player, BJ Thomas, playing funky riffs in between Eric Douglass' tasteful fills. See these Katy boys and their robotic rhythm guitarist May 23rd.

Gypsy Kings
House of Blues
May 7th

Gringos may not be able to understand what they're singing about, but you needn't understand any Spanish to enjoy the furious, flamenco fretwork that the globetrotting Gypsy Kings have been playing for decades now. An unlikely group, they encompass every groups dream of making it big in the grandest sense imaginable. Starting all the way back to the mid 70s, with their humble beginnings as a small group in in the south of France where they lived so much like gypsies, they adopted the name that'd eventually be known around the world. They would soon travel around Europe playing in small weddings, festivals and even in the streets, eventually developing a devoted following. They lived like the poor gypsies they were until their big break in 1986 when they signed with Sony and came out with a debut that sold millions world wide, making their fiery blend of progressive Latin pop laced flamenco, Servillana, worldly known. After a 15+ album discography and two decades of relentless touring, they are now rich gypsies living the dream.

Reflection Eternal
(Talib Kweli & Hi-Tek)
Warehouse Live | May 12th

MC Talib Kweli and beat producer Hi-Tek comprise Reflection Eternal, a duo which eventually became the incredible trio of Black Star. Wordsmith Kweli carves his rhymes with political issues, complex metaphors, vivid imagery, and a quick, precise lyrical presentation that leave other emcees in the dust. Hi-Tek, on the other hand is the unsung hero behind Black Star, placing chill, soulful beats under Talib's raps. Luckily for hip hop fans, their potent collaboration is alive and well again and every time they're together they deliver consistently high quality hip hop. Their new album, Revolutions Per Minute, which comes out six days after this show, is being held high in anticipation with good reason. You can't go wrong when these two get together - something great always follows.

Sideshow Tramps
Every Monday at Mangos

Whenever I get into a conversation with people who try to talk down on Houston's music scene I will more often than not refer them to a Sideshow Tramps show. Utilizing a gritty fusion of folk roots with a hard edge punk rock appeal, the Tramps deliver an absolutely explosive live show. Dubbed a "mystical experience" by some, the group frequently seduce their listeners into an eruption of uncontrollable moshing that leave drunken women wondering where their clothes went. Truly "a new kind of Rock band," their live shows have been one of the most exciting features to bless the Houston music scene for years now. Musically, their influences are extremely diverse, branching out with everything from bluegrass, blues, old school country, hard rock, and even gypsy jazz. They often feature an array of homemade instruments that includes a wash tub bass, a percussive washboard, a cigar box guitar, even a saw can find its way into a Tramps set. What could be greater than a medicine show with the ability to make girls naked? Nothing. This is about the greatest thing to happen to Monday night ever. FPH

DIEGO BERNAL

WHILE COMMERCIAL SHELF, RADIO WHORING MCS ARE NURSING THEIR EGOS WITH RHYMES THAT LET EVERYONE KNOW HOW FLY THEY ARE, HOW MUCH MONEY THEY HAVE, THE PLETHORA OF PUSSY THEY GET, AND EVEN HOW MANY RHYMES THEY HAVE, THERE'S ANOTHER MUCH MORE INTERESTING MOVEMENT UNFOLDING IN THE UNDERGROUND HIP HOP SCENE.

EVER SINCE DJ SHADOW'S ENTRODUCING came out in '96, there has progressively arisen a generation of beat makers who believe they can make good hip hop by pasting together a collage of sampled sounds and turning it into a solitary, cohesive, and listenable piece of music-- without an added MC ego. San Antonio native, Diego Bernal, is doing just that-- crafting luxurious head bobbin' beats with a collage of organic, silky soul and psychedelic undertones. His laid back grooves are giving a breath of fresh air to an increasingly stagnating Texas hip hop scene that's in search of something different. A busy man, he was kind enough to answer these questions between his swamping day job as a civil rights lawyer:

I HEAR AN ECLECTIC ARRAY OF INFLUENCES IN YOUR MUSIC. WHAT ARTISTS DO YOU DRAW THE MOST INSPIRATION FROM? ¶ I like artists who convey a particular mood. It's no secret I'm a huge Dilla fan, along with the usual suspects: Pete Rock, DJ Premier, DJ Shadow, Flying Lotus, etc. But as far as other music I love and that inspires me: Radiohead, Led Zepplin, Michael Jackson, Johnny Cash, Jimmy Smith, Los Angeles Negros, Bill Withers, Brian Eno, Tortilla Factory, Sade.

HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT COMPOSING AND MIXING YOUR SOULFUL BEAT SUITES? ¶ I made the first record with Reason, and although I really liked the sound I got out of it, I found the process to be pretty laborious. Before I started working on music again I decided to transition to Ableton, which was praised and recommended by many of the other artists around me. Smart move; I'm never going back. Ableton is great for taking sounds and patterns and experimenting with them. You can essentially try out any idea and never lose your work.

YOU HAVE MENTIONED IN A "HIP HOP AUDIT" ON MYSPACE ABOUT HOW MC'ING IS ON "LIFE SUPPORT". HOW HAVE YOU COME TO THIS CONCLUSION? ¶ "Conscious hip hop" used to mean "music with a message." Now it means "not stupid." If we look at the music and the lyrics separately, we'll see that people are taking beats in all sorts of really exciting and diverse directions. It's really evolving. Lyrics… not so much. There are some promising people out there, but the market is saturated with mediocrity and, well, crap.

CAN YOU ATTRIBUTE THE GENERAL LACK OF SUBSTANCE TO ANY SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS LEADING THE MAINSTREAMERS OR IS IT JUST AN UNATTRIBUTABLE GENERAL MOVEMENT TOWARDS A DEMISE OF GOOD RHYMING? ¶ I attribute it to people regarding the music as a means to an end as opposed to an artistic exercise. I think we can all agree the best music came at a time before this, when there wasn't so much money involved. Now you have guys who are 20 years old talking about building their brand. I'm all for them making their money, but the brand is often bigger than the talent, and it's too bad. I want more Tribes, De La's, Outkasts, Fugees and Lauryn Hills- great art and commercial success coexisting, even if it's tenuous.

DO YOU THINK IT CAN REBOUND OR DO YOU THINK HIP HOP SHOULD ABANDON THE ART OF RHYMING ALL TOGETHER AND FOCUS ON MAKING ITSELF A MORE INSTRUMENTAL GENRE? ¶ We need it. To be honest, when someone sends me a DJ remix that has Mos Def , Nas or Q-Tip lyrics over my music I get excited- that's when I'm the most excited. Plus, hip hop is so powerful because of the rhyming. The lyrics are what make it a political force. You can move the world with drums, but you can't change it.

CAN YOU EVER SEE YOURSELF WORKING WITH AN MC IN THE FUTURE? ¶ I like when people use the songs for their own projects or mixtapes. I'd like to do more, but with my job it's hard to fit it all in. There are a few things in the works, but they're a ways off.

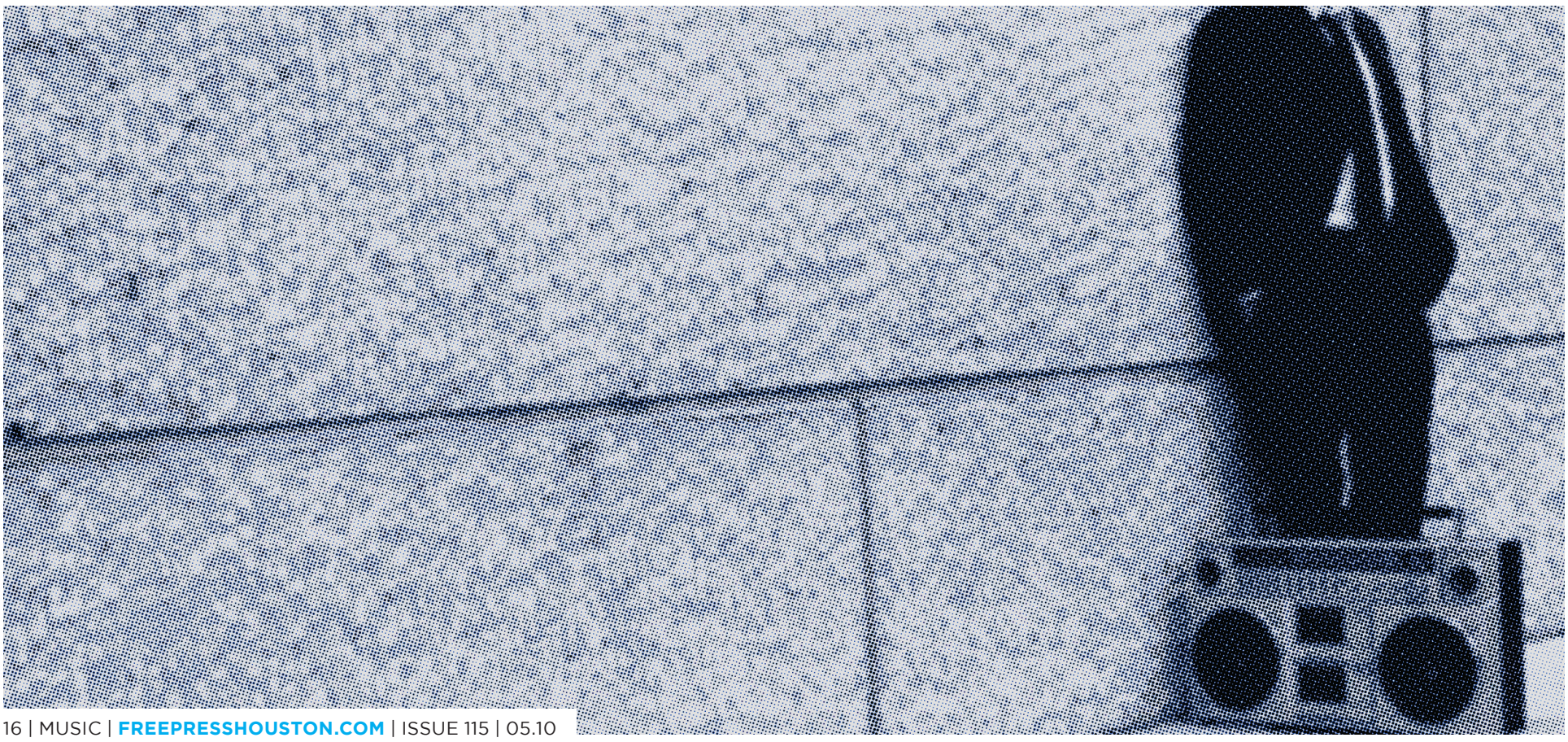
WHEN YOU'RE NOT WORKING ON BEATS, YOU'RE A FIGHTER FOR JUSTICE AND EQUALITY AS A CIVIL RIGHTS ATTORNEY. WHAT KIND OF CASES DO YOU USUALLY DEAL WITH? ¶ I work primarily on employment discrimination and education cases, but I also do some work on immigration issues.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS TEXAS' BIGGEST CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATION IN PLACE TODAY? ANYTHING THE COMMON PERSON CAN DO ABOUT IT? ¶ Good question. I think overall there is a thinly veiled racism that presents itself as concern over immigration that we should acknowledge and address.

BOTH OF YOUR ALBUMS FOR CORNERS AND "BESIDES…" HAVE BEEN OF THE NICE PRICE OF $0. YOU ARE ONE OF THE FEW SOULS IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY OUTRIGHT GIVING LP'S AWAY ONLINE, CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE METHOD BEHIND YOUR MADNESS? ¶ I have three answers: 1) no one is going to pay for your record if they've never heard of you before, 2) I'm more satisfied having the music slowly crawl around the world than make money, and 3) I have a job.

WHAT DO YOU GOT DOWN THERE, DIEGO? ¶ Nothing… just a little project. **FPH**

(His two LP's- For Corners and his new album "Besides…" can be found free for download on his myspace or at antipop.net)



GREEN STEAM CIRCUS

MAY 15, 2010 3:00PM

DJ Lineup

Klever
Bassbin Twins vs Uberzone
Dj Manny
AN-TEN-NAE
Snakecharmer

Band Lineup

Abney Park
White Ghost Shivers
Lions
The Blue Hit
THAT Damned Band
The Tyburn Jig
Minor Mishap Marching Band

Performer Lineup

Ring leader - Surly Joe ov tha Girlie Show
Elemental Uprising Fire Troop
Carousel Cabaret
999 Eyes
Brass Overies Pole Dancers
Mr. Cirque
Schave & Reilly
Oops the Clown
Katzen the tiger lady
Austin Bike Zoo

18 and up

The Backyard

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FREE PRESS SUMMER FEST 2010

★ STAGE GUIDE

ELEANOR TINSLEY PARK

Day One

SATURDAY, JUNE 05
Festivities from 2pm to 10pm

www.freepresssummerfest.com

MAIN STAGE

Ghostown Electric 2:05
Wild Mocassins 2:30
Mix Master Mike 3:00
Medeski Martin & Wood 4:30
Ra Ra Riot 6:10
Special Set by Golden Axe
Kid Sister 7:10
Detroit Cobras 7:55
Girl Talk 8:20

KTRU STAGE

Golden Cities 2:05
Many Birthdys 2:40
Omatai 3:05
Balaclavas 4:05
Something Fierce 4:40
Dissent 5:05
The Entrance Band 5:35
Come see my Dead Person 6:05

29-95.COM STAGE

Spain Colored Orange 2:05
Chase Hamblin 2:40
Roky Moon 3:05
American Fangs 4:05
I am Mesmer 4:40
Tyagaraja 5:05
The Growlers 5:35
Caddywhompus 6:05

DOS EQUIS STAGE

Fat Tony 2:10
Eastern Sea 2:40
Sideshow Tramps 3:15
Perseph One 3:50
Sugar and Gold 4:20
Givers 5:05
Saviors 5:55

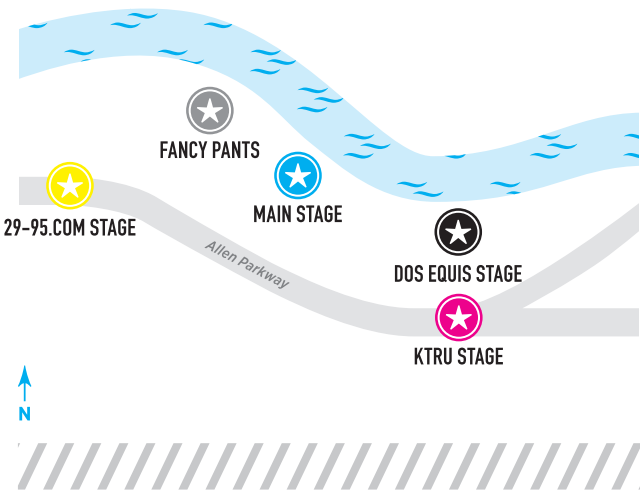
FANCY PANTS

DJ SETS BY: **Ceeplus Bad Knives, DJ Czech One, Prince Klassen, DJ Richard Gear, Dan Castillo, Damon Allen, Fredster, Grrrl Parts, Dayta, G Wizz** 2:00

DJ SETS BY: **G.Wizz, Gracie Chavez, Squincy Jones and Fixture** 4:00

Guerilla Foco Clan 5:30
Yppah 6:00
Nosaprise 6:30
Hollywood Floss 7:30
Ghost Mountain 8:00

STAGE LOCATIONS ★



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FREE PRESS SUMMER FEST 2010

★ STAGE GUIDE

ELEANOR TINSLEY PARK

Day Two

SUNDAY, JUNE 06
Festivities from 11am to 10pm

www.freepresssummerfest.com

MAIN STAGE

- **Free Radicals** 11:30
- **Muhammad Ali** 12:05
- **Robert Ellis** 12:40
- **Black Congress** 1:10
- **Grandfather Child** 1:45
- **Uh Huh Her** 2:20
- **Lymbyc System** 3:25
- **Lucero** 4:25
- **Stars** 5:30
- **Slim Thug & Bun B** 6:50
- **Flaming Lips** 8:20

KTRU STAGE

- **The Takes** 11:00
- **Listen Listen** 11:35
- **Western Civilization** 12:05
- **Elaine Greer** 12:35
- **Giant Princess** 1:05
- **Giving Tree Band** 1:40
- **Plump** 2:04
- **The Energy** 2:40
- **Weird Party** 3:05
- **Michael Kingcaid & The Black Power** 4:05
- **The Handshake** 4:40
- **Sharks and Sailors** 5:05
- **YokoMono** 5:35
- **Young Mammals** 6:05
- **Miniature Tigers** 6:40

29-95.COM STAGE

- **The Gold Sounds** 11:00
- **Blacklisted Individuals** 11:35
- **The Manichean** 12:05
- **Rusted Shut** 12:35
- **D.R.U.M.** 1:05
- **Hell City Kings** 1:40
- **The Small Sounds** 2:05
- **Bull Thieves** 2:40
- **The Hates** 3:05
- **Leg Sweeper** 4:05
- **Somosuno** 4:40
- **The Watermarks** 5:05
- **Ashes of Babylon** 5:35
- **The Mahas** 6:05
- **Sour Notes** 6:40

DOS EQUIS STAGE

- **Tax the Wolf** 11:05
- **Female Demand** 11:40
- **Buxton** 12:05
- **Terry Sleeser** 12:40
- **B L A C K I E** 1:10
- **Neilyo** 1:30
- **30 Foot Fall** 2:05
- **Cro Mags** 2:50
- **Municipal Waste** 3:50
- **Dead Prez** 5:40

FANCY PANTS

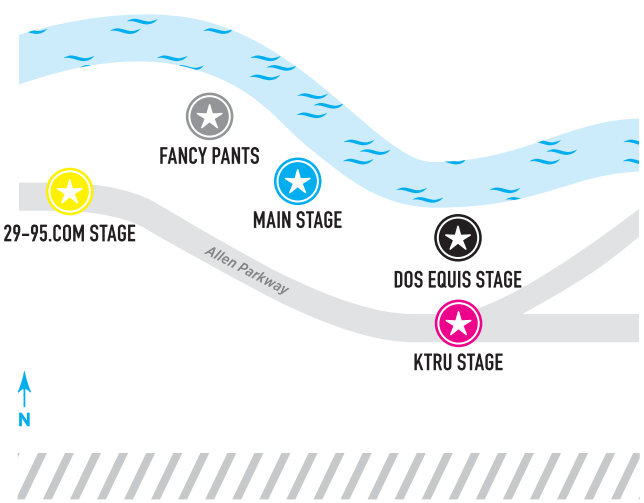
DJ SETS BY: **G.Wizz, Gracie Chavez, Squincy Jones and Fixture** 11:00

DJ Meshak 2:00

DJ SETS BY: **Ceeplus Bad Knives, DJ Cze One, Prince Klassen, DJ Richard Gear, Dan Castillo, Damon Allen, Fredster, Grrrl Parts, Dayta, G Wizz** 3:00

- **Squincy Jones** 4:00
- **Limb** 5:30
- **Mike Skillz** 6:00
- **Shina Rae** 6:30

STAGE LOCATIONS



SUPER HAPPY FUN LAND

May 3rd:
Hi8Us

May 4th:
Jason Shannon Band

May 6th:
Art Car Ball

May 8th:
Art Car Parade

May 9th:
Duet for Theremin and Lap Steel, Charlie Naked

May 10th:
Dirty Bourbon River Show, New Grass Country Club
Days n' Daze, U Not I

May 11th:
Weatherbox, Gypsie Davies

May 13th:
Giant Cloud, Rovar 17 (Hungary), Livid Archaic

May 14th:
Moira Scar, Caddywhompus

May 21st:
Aurora picture Show Presents: The Slant Film Festival 7pm-9pm

May 21st:
Labretta Suede and the Motel 6 (New Zealand)
The Born Liars, doors @ 9pm

May 22nd:
Aurora picture Show Presents: The Slant Film Festival 7pm-9pm

May 23rd:
+DOG+, CCR Headcleaner

May 25th:
Lazy Ass Destroyer

June 2nd:
Jon Crocker

June 3rd:
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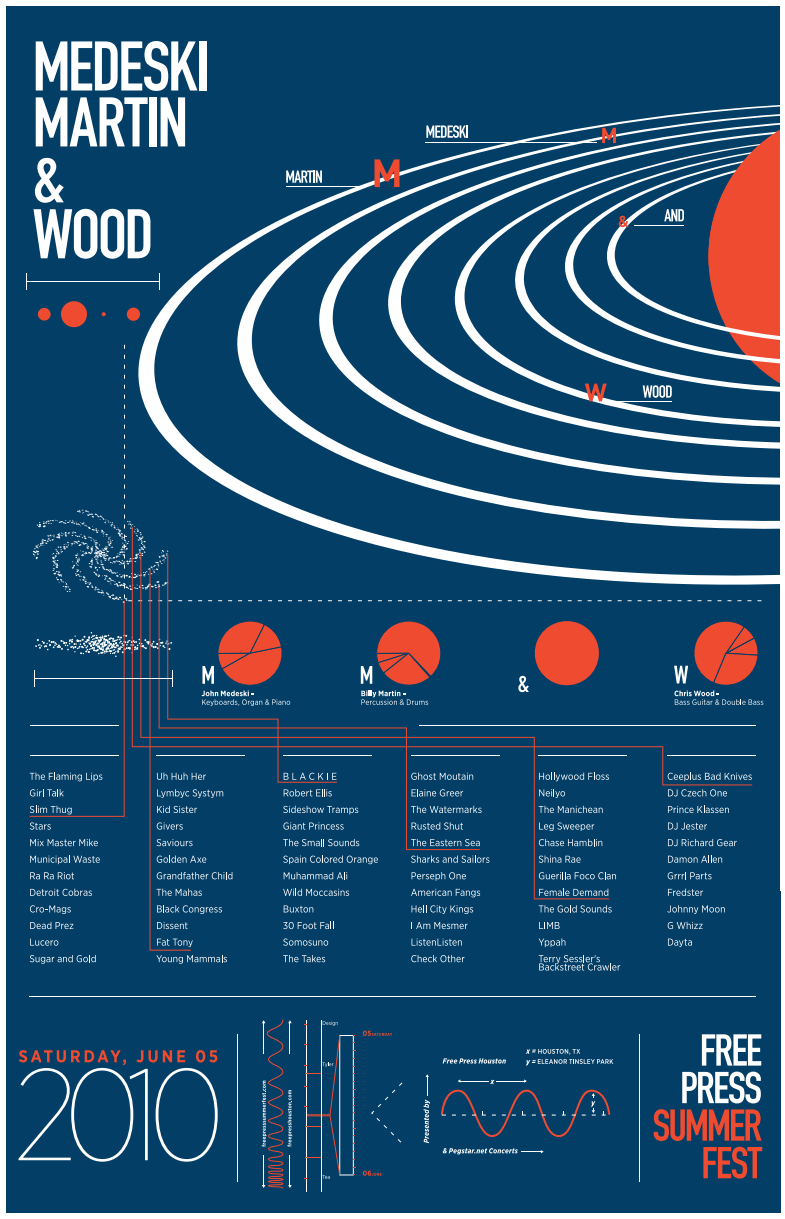
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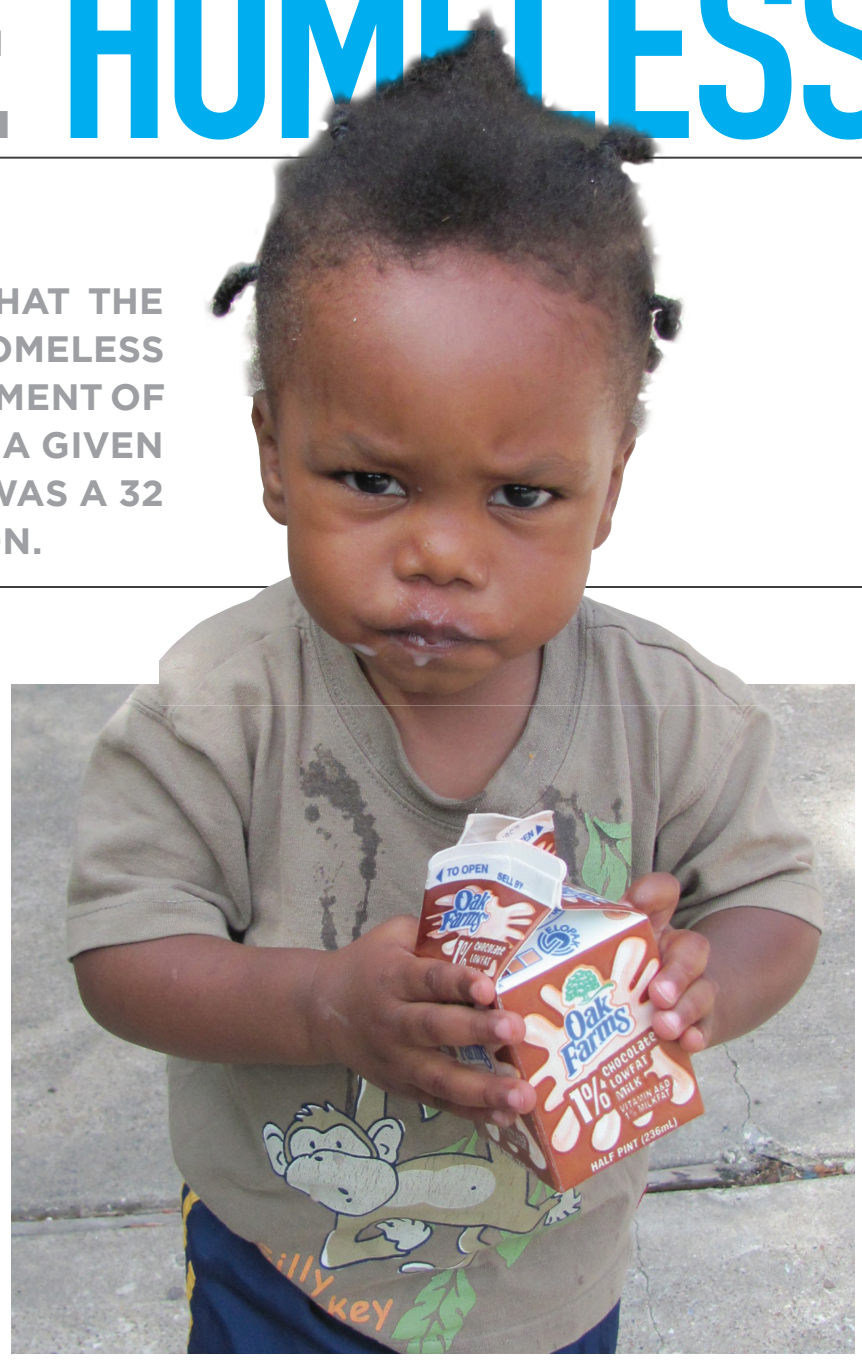

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YOUNG & THE HOMELESS

by ALAN SMITHEE

IT'S BECOME SOMETHING OF A CLICHE TO SAY THAT THE ECONOMY HAS INCREASED THE AMOUNT OF HOMELESS PEOPLE, HOWEVER ACCORDING TO THE US DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) FROM A GIVEN NIGHT IN 2008 TO A GIVEN NIGHT IN 2009 THERE WAS A 32 PERCENT INCREASE IN HOMELESSNESS IN HOUSTON.



THE LATEST FIGURES FROM HUD show that there are approximately 40,000 homeless people in Texas and of those, there are 10,000 in Houston alone.

Star of Hope's Director of Public Relations, Scott Arthur, states that approximately 20-25% percent of the people that are homeless in Houston are children. He goes on to say that 5 percent to 10 percent of Star of Hope's new clients are women and families that have become victims of the economy. A 2009 article from the Associated Press states that over 5 percent of the children in Texas are homeless.

A 2004 report from the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County, Inc (CHHHC) estimated that in 2004 only 5,333 homeless people were recorded as living in a shelter. However, Arthur states that in 2009 the Star of Hope alone saw approximately 6,600 unique individuals which amounts to about "half of the city's homeless population."

Arthur went on to state that the Star of Hope's Women and Family Emergency Shelter has been over capacity for two years. He describes women and children sleeping in every available space in the building. "We've got people sleeping in the lobby," said Arthur. He also stated that the Men's Shelter and the Transitional Living Facility are "almost always at capacity."

Arthur optimistically described how Star of Hope works to get families off streets by taking them into shelters, but he recognizes the difficulty of the work. "The cycle continues for so many reasons and kids are the victims of that," said Arthur. He went on to state that despite an increasing amount of homeless people of all ages "all agencies in Houston only have about 5,000 beds."

The CHHHC report went on to say that in Houston "every year over 100 unaccompanied children are reported to have stayed in a shelter." Since Star of Hope does not work with unaccompanied children Arthur could neither confirm or deny the amount in Houston. A 2008 report from the National Center on Family Homelessness (NCFH) ranked Texas 50th in the nation when it came to implementing policies to combat homelessness amongst families.

The CHHHC report states: "housing costs, lack of jobs, lack of job training programs, and lack of child care are factors that contribute to the homelessness of these families." Dr. Ellen Bassuk, NCFH president and founder, stated that one of the main things leading to homelessness in families is often one of the most overlooked, poverty. "Poverty is a structural factor in homelessness," said Bassuk. Bassuk told the AP that 23 percent of Texas' children live in poverty compared to 18 percent nationwide.

The NCFH report cites other factors that put families at risk for homelessness, such as a lack of employment opportunities and the percentage of average monthly income that a family has to spend on rent.The report states that "a two-bedroom unit priced at the fair market rent (FMR) falls outside of the financial reach of a full-time worker earning minimum wage in Texas."

Bassuk added that the number of affordable housing units throughout the state contributes to the difficulty of families finding housing. Those who can find affordable housing often may need assistance to offset the difference between the cost of living and wages. However, government assistance is difficult to receive.

The report states that the Section 8 housing voucher program is critically underfunded. "Current funding for the voucher program meets the needs of only one-quarter of homeless families. Providing housing at fair market rent for homeless families in Texas would cost an additional $6,000 per family, an annual total cost of $834 million, or approximately 2 percent of the state budget," reads the report.

Approximately 51 percent of the households on the Section 8 waiting list and 49 percent of the public housing waiting lists are low-income families. According to the CHHHC report, the factors contributing to homelessness for unaccompanied youth differ slightly from the factors that contribute to homelessness amongst families.

The CHHHC report includes drug use, physical and emotional abuse and the failure of social services to help youth as factors contributing to child homelessness. It goes on to state "almost half of the children, ages zero to 12, and over two thirds of the unaccompanied youth ages 13 to 18, who were living in shelters in 2004 were African American." Approximately 10 percent of the children who were homeless in 2004 "had a disabling condition."

One of the main contributors to homelessness amongst children aged 13-years-old to 18-years-old is family conflict over sexual orientation. A 2007 report from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) states that "of the estimated 1.6 million homeless American youth, between 20 and 40 percent identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender."

The NGLTF report continues by saying "one study found that 26 percent of gay teens who came out to their parents/guardians were told they must leave home. LGBT youth also leave home due to physical, sexual and emotional abuse." The NGLTF report states that homeless LGBT youth are statistically more likely to engage in higher risk behavior than their heterosexual counterparts including drug use, participation in the sex trade and attempt suicide at least once. "Also, LGBT youth report they are threatened, belittled and abused at shelters by staff as well as other residents," reads the report.

One of the criticisms that has been levied at the State of Texas by organizations like Bassuk's is that the state has not been active in planning to combat homelessness. Bassuk said that Texas currently doesn't have a 10-year plan for addressing homelessness. The NCFH report also states that Texas does not have a statewide definition of homelessness.

Stuart Campbell with the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) said the state has begun initiatives to combat homelessness. "Last year the Texas Legislature appropriated $20 million for homeless housing. It was the first time the state approved programs specifically for homelessness," he said. Campbell added that the first round of funds will only be going to the state's eight largest cities, none of which are in the Rio Grande Valley.

The cities that do receive the funds will have wide latitude as to how they can spend the money. According to Campbell, some of the cities are using it to build more shelters while others are using it to provide rental assistance. In addition to the state funds, the federal government allocated approximately $100 million to Texas to combat homelessness. Of those funds, approximately $60 million went straight to cities and counties and approximately $40 million went to the TDHCA. Schools districts received $6 million of the monies.

Campbell responded to the criticism from the NCFH by saying that the state is in the planning stages of a plan to combat homelessness. "We are in the process of drafting and developing a 10-year plan," said Campbell. He went on to say that the state "doesn't want to write a plan and have it sit on the shelf like so many other plans do...We want to put a lot of thought into it." Even without a statewide plan, Bassuk said, there are many steps that can be taken to help homeless students and homeless people in general. "The trick is outreach and the coordination of community services," said Bassuk. FPH

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THE TEXAS HIGH SPEED RAIL



PART ONE: IT DAMN WELL BETTER HAVE A **BAR CAR** THE SIZE OF TEXAS

by

MILLS-MCCOIN
ILLUSTRATION BY SHELBY HOHL

IT'S BLOOD-STAINED OFFICIAL! "THE TEXAS HIGH SPEED RAIL" NO LONGER DESCRIBES A MYTHICAL LINE OF COCAINE WILLIE NELSON TOOK DOWN WITH A GENTLE SNIFF IN THE EARLY 70'S. IT'S A DAMN TRAIN NOW. BUT BY GOD IT'S A FAST ONE.

ON FEBRUARY 9, 2010, the Harris County Commisioners Court achieved a unanimous vote to join the Texas High Speed Rail & Transportation Corporation with hopes of ensuring the expensive and thorough development of the Texas T-Bone high speed passenger rail system. And these officials aren't screwin' around this time- the word "corporation" is in the title. Harris County Judge Ed Emmett was elected to serve on the Board of Directors of this ambitious corporation. Do you remember Judge Emmett? He was one of the guys on TV yelling at you to evacuate the City of Houston during the days prior to that tropical fart, Hurricane Rita. In all of his savvy judgment, he seemed to figure if everyone got on the freeway at the same time nothing would go wrong. So now what's he yelling?

"All abooooaaard!"

When I first caught the stench of this project, I was deeply embedded in one of Councilman Peter Brown's mayoral campaign events in June of 2009 (The Women for Peter Brown Happy Hour at Hotel ZaZa- I was disguised as a frumpy lesbian with a giant mustache). During the event, Councilman Brown spoke of the development of a high speed rail that was essential to Houston, but more importantly the entire State of Texas. He said the goal was to connect San Antonio, Houston, Austin and that smug tramp, Dallas, by a train that traveled upwards of 200 MPH. As the councilman continued, I thought to myself, "Those silly fast trains are all over Europe and Asia. Texas would never allow such fantastic efficiency to breech its borders. We're still reeling from mistakes like barbed wire and 'landing on the moon'."

It was that attitude and all the requisite math surely involved that brought my due diligence on the matter to a foolish halt... at least until The Texas High Speed Rail visited me in three strange hallucinations.

In the first apparition, I was standing in front of the Alamo. No car keys, no cash and no iPhone. Just the ability to speak English and a high speed train ticket in my pocket. So I took a knee at the steps of The Alamo, said a little prayer for all Texans- then immediately began asking people where I might find the train station. I shouted, "Dande esta el train station?" No one answered. Finally the snow cone guy with bees whirling all around him whistled at me and pointed at a sign reading, "Shuttle to THSR". I shook the man's hand, got stung twice and was back in Houston in an HOUR (200 miles / 200 mph = 1 HOUR)...!

In the second delusion, I was standing on the platform reluctantly waiting for the THSR to Dallas (this one started out as more of a "nightmare"). I was on my way to a wedding in which the Groom made me an usher in the wedding party so that I would be forced to attend. Boarding the train, I was thinking I had four hours (drive time) to devise an evil escape plan, like food poisoning or alcohol gluttony. To my extreme misfortune, the train arrived on time SEVENTY TWO MINUTES later (240 miles / 200 mph = 1.2 hours x 60 = 72 minutes). Likewise, I made it on time to the wedding. The ceremony was lovely... only 30 minutes. There was an open bar at the reception, which I took full advantage of (I figured I'd give that "alcohol gluttony" thing a try anyhow). In the end, I managed to wrangle a bridesmaid using the slurred poetry of, "My place is only 30 minutes away." We were in Houston SEVENTY TWO MINUTES later.

This final hallucination is the least farfetched, in my opinion. It's more of a plausible dream. While standing in the middle of Sixth Street in Austin near 2 AM, the words "Warning: Only 10% of Battery Remaining" were staring at me from inside my iPhone. With no car and no pre-arranged place to stay for the night, I made a quick dash for the THSR redeye leaving Austin for Houston. I grabbed a PediCab by the dreadlock and gave orders for the train station. Once underway, the Rasta Armstrong cabbie turned around and asked, "Soooo, you enjoying SXSW?"

I answered, "Yeah. But I'm wasted and I want to sleep in my own bed."

Then he said, "Oh man, yeah I know what that's like. I hope you don't live in St. Louis." I'm still not sure what St. Louis had to do with anything. But, thankfully, we arrived at the train station with plenty of time to spare. I paid the humble weirdo and then he asked me, "Where you from man?"

"Houston."

"Oh well then alright man. I'll see you tomorrow."

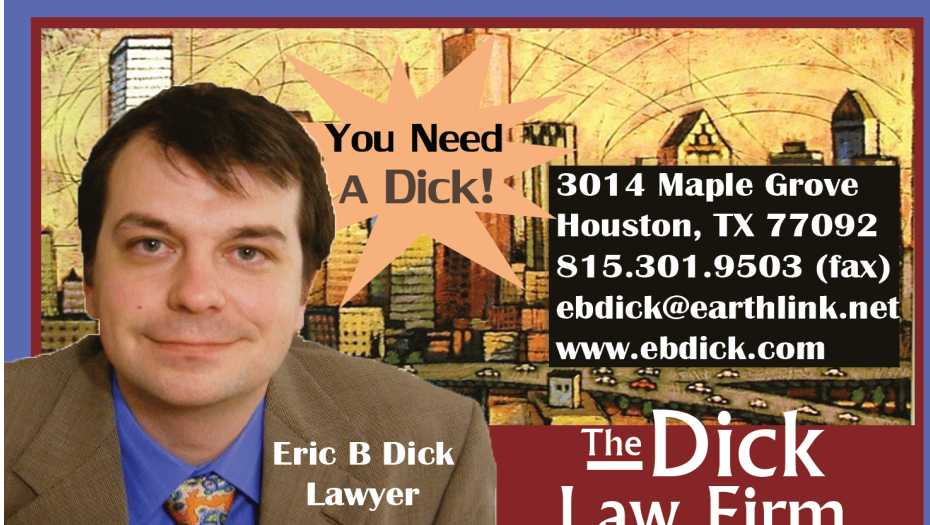
Several strange high-fives later, I bought a ticket and boarded the train. The car I was in was packed. Wall to wall with hipsters on their way home to Houston. Most of them had instruments and gear with them. People were drinking beers; passing around bottles of whiskey, buckets of wine, etc. It was like I hadn't even left Sixth Street. The scene made me want to explore and see how far deep this late night luxury went.

I decided to jump train cars at the stop in La Grange. To my delight, when the doors opened, I saw Tim Dorsey, Bryan Jackson and Jacob Calle (wearing the torso portion of his Hurricane Bear costume). Everyone was all smiles and good cheer. Bryan Jackson poured Jameson on everybody. Cop Warmth played a set. There was gambling and nudity. Twas a shame it only lasted for LESS THAN AN HOUR (162 miles / 200 mph = .81 hours + .16 hours for the stop in La Grange x 60 = 58.2 minutes)!!! - we drank bloody mary's on the ride back to Austin the next morning.

All of this complicated madness is meant to explain the simple idea that The Texas High Speed Rail might in fact be... a good thing. Certainly there will be lifestyle adaptations (imminent domain issues), ridiculous fundraising (money laundering) and years (waiting) ahead of us. But the notion that Europe and Asia have used these high speed rails for decades should strike a chord in that dormant Cold War nerve. If anyone's going to build the fastest train in the world with the biggest saloon car... then Hell Yeah it should be Texas! Cheers. **FPH**

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THE PROBLEM WITH PARKING ORDINANCES

A TALE OF TWO SHOPS

WHY PARKING RATIO REQUIREMENTS DON'T MAKE SENSE

by ANDREW BURLESON

TODAY I WANT TO TAKE A LOOK AT TWO LOCAL BUSINESSES, AND SEE WHAT THEY CAN TEACH US ABOUT THE REALITY OF PARKING AND THE ABILITY OF PARKING ORDINANCES TO ADDRESS PARKING SUPPLY AND DEMAND. THE TWO BUSINESSES ARE BOTH LOCATED ON WEST ALABAMA ST., NEAR THE INTERSECTION OF WEST ALABAMA AND HAZARD.

MY HOME IS WITHIN A FEW BLOCKS of there, so I walk or drive past these businesses almost every day.

The first business is a small retail center that contains an art gallery, a candy store, and one of my favorite Houston institutions: the Chocolate Bar. The second business is Erick's Auto Repair shop, which is exactly what it sounds like. The two businesses are as different in character as they are in the lesson they can teach us.

SHOP NUMBER ONE

First, lets take a look at the retail center. This center is about 110ft wide and 60ft deep, and the building takes up most of its lot. Half the center (3,300 square feet) would be classified as retail (COH Requirement: 4 parking spaces per 1000 square feet), and the other half would be classified as a restaurant (COH Requirement: 8 parking spaces per 1000 feet). All together this building is required by the City of Houston to have 40 parking spaces.

The building has 8 parking spaces, a deficit of 32 spaces. You'd think that this would mean the parking situation was dire — and yet, the parking lot is rarely full. Consider photo (a).

I took this picture at about 5:30 PM on a weekday. According to the City of Houston, this should be peak parking demand for a restaurant. However, as you can see there are only 3 cars parked in the center, and about a minute after I took this picture one of them drove away.

Are these businesses failing, then? Quite the contrary. The Chocolate Bar is very popular, and draws large crowds that literally barely fit inside the building. The peak of activity occurs in the late evenings, especially on weekends – which makes sense as they primarily serves desserts.

Still, even during the peak crowds on Friday and Saturday evenings, the parking lot is rarely full. Further, the crowd isn't heavily spilling onto nearby streets. There's no parking allowed on West Alabama, and the only side street (Driscoll) is not over-congested with on-street parking.

SHOP NUMBER TWO

Now let's look at Erick's Auto Repair. Erick's is a small auto repair shop at the northeast corner of Alabama and Hazard. It's roughly 60' x 35', or 2100 square feet. The City of Houston has its own category for auto repair shops, and it requires they provide 5 parking spaces per 1000 square feet of floor area. Erick's, therefore, is only required to provide 10 parking spaces. However, Erick's has converted a large area behind their building as well as most of the space in front and to the side for parking spaces – and they double park the cars.

As you can see in the photo (b), Erick's manages to squeeze every possible car onto their lot. It's hard to know for sure exactly how many they fit, but I counted 30 cars on the lot the day I took the photo above.

So Erick's has a surplus of 20 parking spaces more than the City requires. That should mean there's an abundance of empty parking space, right? But as we saw in the picture above, there isn't – they use every inch of their lot, and then some. Consider the pictures below.

Erick's makes a habit of parking cars up and down Hazard Street, to the point that there's rarely an available space on Hazard while the shop is open. Not only do they park cars on the street, but they routinely block the driveways of the Condo building behind the shop, as well as the Chinese Antique store across Hazard Street (photo below). Most interesting of all, they frequently send mechanics to work on the cars while they are parked on the street!

This raises an interesting question. The street is public, but does that mean it's acceptable to conduct one's business within the right of way? I mean, if I wanted to set up cones and block off the outermost lane on Westheimer to put up a tent and sell stuff, do you think the City would let me?

Remember that this business is accommodating about 3 times as many cars on their property as the city says they are required to.

LESSONS LEARNED

I hope by now the point I'm trying to illustrate is clear. The City does not know how much parking any particular business or residence really needs. That said, remember two of the cities assumptions going in to this ordinance review:

1. The parking ratios (ie. X parking spaces per 1000 square feet of a given land use) aren't necessarily working.





2. To fix them, the City believes a greater number of more specific requirements are called for.

If you recall, the example Marlene Gaffrick gave in the parking meeting I attended was that the City might need to differentiate between "really popular" restaurants and "smaller" restaurants.

Should the City also differentiate between "really popular" mechanics and "less popular" mechanics? After all, as Erick's Auto Repair clearly demonstrates, the City's requirement doesn't even come close to keeping all the parking generated by their shop on-site.

If we're going to make that kind of distinction between businesses then what about residents? I mean, "really popular" people have more guests than "less popular" people. Should popular people be required to provide extra driveway spaces for all their guests? That would certainly alleviate the congestion associated with house parties! Let's start a petition!!

If that last example sounds like a stretch, just look around the nation and observe some of the unusual parking regulations that other cities have. We're not that far away from that kind of stuff, folks.

Remember that we already have requirements broken down into 69 different categories of land-use. Quick, here's a test: try to make a list of 69 different kinds of land use. Seriously, try it. If you can make it to 70, send me your list and I'll post it here along with a hearty congratulations.

WRAP-UP

The critical takeaway here is that parking ratios cannot and do not work. Even if we create 69,000 categories, it is not possible for anyone to predict all the subtle nuances from one business or residence to the next, and without taking those into account we cannot know with any accuracy what the need for parking will be at that particular site.

Now, this post has already gotten pretty long, so I'm going to stop here for today. I hope this local example has been informative, and that you'll check back over the next few days. Today I hope I've shown why the government won't be able to adequately control parking supply – in the next installment I'll discuss how the market is able to do handle it just fine. **FPH**



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THE PSYCHIATRIC DRUGGING OF CHILDREN

INVENTING DISORDERS

by BY EVELYN PRINGLE
ILLUSTRATION BY TIM DORSEY

OF ALL THE HARMFUL ACTIONS OF MODERN PSYCHIATRY, "THE MASS DIAGNOSING AND DRUGGING OF CHILDREN IS THE MOST APPALLING WITH THE MOST SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR THE FUTURE OF INDIVIDUAL LIVES AND FOR SOCIETY," WARNS THE WORLD-RENOWNED EXPERT, DR PETER BREGGIN, OFTEN REFERRED TO AS THE "CONSCIENCE OF PSYCHIATRY."

"WE'RE BRINGING UP A GENERATION in this country in which you either sit down, shut up and do what you're told, or you get diagnosed and drugged," he points out.

Breggin considers the situation to be "a national tragedy." "To inflict these drugs on the growing brains of infants and children is wrong and abusive," he contends.

The kids who get drugged are often our best, brightest, most exciting and energetic children, he points out. "In the long run, we are giving children a very bad lesson that drugs are the answer to emotional problems."

Dr Nathaniel Lehrman, author of the book, "Coming Off Psychiatric Drugs," believes that giving infants and toddlers "powerful, brain-effecting psychiatric medication is close to criminal activity."

"Giving them these drugs," he says, "has no rationale, and ignores the basic fact that youngsters are very sensitive to their environments, both social and chemical, with the juvenile brain easily damaged by the latter."

During an interview on ABC Radio National in August 2007, Dr David Healy, the noted British pharmacology expert, and author of the book, "Mania: A Short History of Bipolar Disorder," told reporter Jane Shields: "Just to give you a feel for how crazy things have actually got recently, it would appear that clinicians in the US are happy to look at the ultrasounds of children in the womb, and based on the fact that they appear to be more overactive at times, and then possibly less active later, they're prepared to actually consider the possibility that these children could be bipolar."

On April 9, 2009, Christopher Lane, author of the book, "Shyness: How Normal Behavior Became a Sickness," published an interview on his Psychology Today blog with Dr Healy. In the interview, Healy explained the history behind the drastic rise in the sale of anticonvulsants and antipsychotics as "mood stabilizers," and the diagnosis of bipolar disorder.

"The key event in the mid-1990s that led to the change in perspective was the marketing of Depakote by Abbott as a mood stabilizer," Healy tells Lane, and further explains:

"Mood stabilization didn't exist before the mid-1990s. It can't be found in any of the earlier reference books and journals. Since then, however, we now have sections for mood stabilizers in all the books on psychotropic drugs, and over a hundred articles per year featuring mood stabilization in their titles.

"In the same way, Abbott and other companies such as Lilly marketing Zyprexa for bipolar disorder have re-engineered manic-depressive illness. While the term bipolar disorder was there since 1980, manic-depression was the term that was still more commonly used until the mid-1990s when it vanishes and is replaced by bipolar disorder. Nowadays, over 500 articles per year feature bipolar disorder in their titles."

"As of 2008, upwards of a million children in the United States—in many cases preschoolers—are on "mood-stabilizers" for bipolar disorder, even though the condition remains unrecognized in the rest of the world," Healy points out.

"But there is no evidence that the drugs stabilize moods," he says. "In fact, it is not even clear that it makes sense to talk about a mood center in the brain."

"A further piece of mythology aimed at keeping people on the drugs," he reports, "is that these are supposedly neuroprotective—but there's no evidence that this is the case and in fact these drugs can lead to brain damage."

Healy says the FDA's decision to add a black-box warning about suicide to SSRIs likely had little to do with the switch to prescribing antipsychotics as safer for children. What "was quite striking was how quickly companies were able to use the views of the few bipolar-ologists who argued that when children become suicidal on antidepressants it's not the fault of the drug," he points out.

"The problem, they said, stems from a mistaken diagnosis and if we could just get the diagnosis right and put the child on mood stabilizers then there wouldn't be a problem," he explains.

"There is no evidence for this viewpoint, but it was interesting to see how company support could put wind in the sails of such a perspective," he says.

Because having just one label was very limiting, Healy says, child psychiatry "needed another disorder—and for this reason bipolar disorder was welcome."

He reports that the same thing is happening to children labeled with ADHD. "Not all children find stimulants suitable," he advises, "and just as with the SSRIs and bipolar disorder it has become very convenient to say that the stimulants weren't causing the problem the child was experiencing; the child in fact had a different disorder and if we could just get the diagnosis correct, then everything else would fall into place."

A report titled, "Adverse Events Associated with Drug Treatment of ADHD: Review of Postmarketing Safety Data," presented at the FDA's March 22, 2006, Pediatric Advisory Committee meeting bears witness to Healy's explanation by stating in part: "The most important finding of this review is that signs and symptoms of psychosis or mania, particularly hallucinations, can occur in some patients with no identifiable risk factors, at usual doses of any of the drugs currently used to treat ADHD."

Between January 2000 and June 30, 2005, the FDA identified nearly 1,000 cases of psychosis or mania linked to the drugs in its own database and those from the drug makers themselves.

The antipsychotics are just as dangerous as the SSRI antidepressants, Healy says. "Long before the antidepressants were linked with akathisia, the antipsychotics were universally recognized as causing this problem," he explains in the Lane interview. "It was also universally accepted that the akathisia they induce risked precipitating the patient into suicidality or violence."



"They also cause a physical dependence," Healy states. "Zyprexa is among the drugs most likely to cause people to become physically dependent on it."

"In addition," he points out, "these drugs are known to cause a range of neurological syndromes, diabetes, cardiovascular problems, and other problems."

"It's hard to understand how blind clinicians can get to problems like these, especially in youngsters who grow obese and become diabetic right before their eyes," Healy tells Lane.

As for what he calls the "medicalization of childhood," in the radio interview, Healy points out that "children always have been unhappy, they always have been nervous, but that's actually part and parcel of being a child."

"You have to go through these things," he said. "This is how we learn to cope with the problems of life."

Children can best be helped in the safest way, he says, "if they're just seen and if they actually have the opportunity to talk about their problems, and if they get basic and sensible input about how to perhaps help them cope with these problems."

Healy said it's important to remember that severe mental illness is rare in children and that most children with a mental health problem do not need medication. Children are being picked up and put on pills "who really don't need to be on these pills and who are going to be injured by them," he warned.

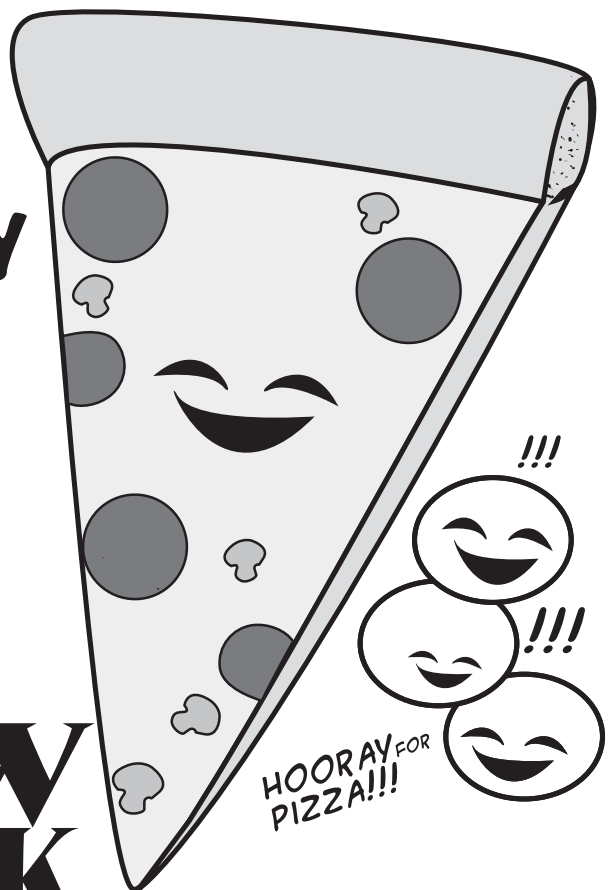
"I think possibly 10 to 15 years up the road," he told Shields, "we're going to be looking at a generation of children who will have been seriously injured by the treatments that they appear ever-increasingly likely to be put on now."

But the administration of multiple drugs at once complicates the situation so that it may be impossible to determine which drugs are most responsible for the adverse reactions children experience, according to Dr Breggin.

"Because so many doctors and so many drug companies will share the blame for mistreating these children, they will be unable to seek redress against individual perpetrators through the courts when they grow up," he explains. **FPH**

Evelyn Pringle is an investigative journalist focused on exposing corruption in government and corporate America.

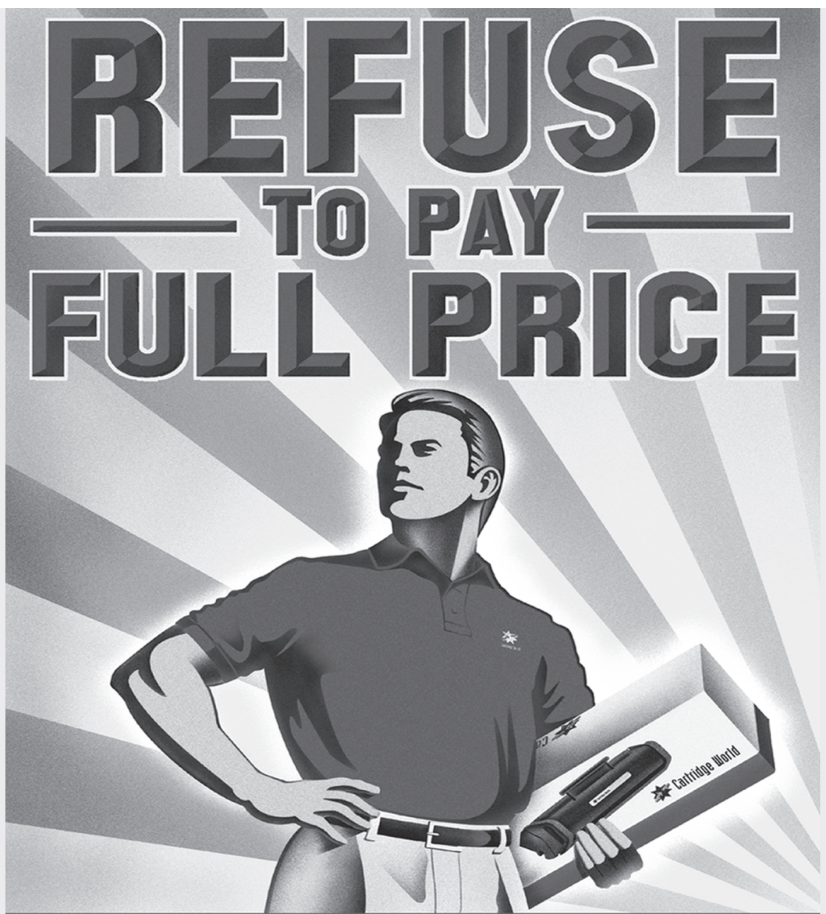
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BUILT TO SPILL

HOLD CHEVRON'S CORPORATE SLOBS ACCOUNTABLE MAY 26TH

by KARLA AGUILAR

AN EXPLODING OIL RIG APRIL 22ND SINKS INTO THE GULF OF MEXICO AFTER TWO DAYS OF RAGING FIRES ON THE SURFACE. THE ESTIMATED 336,000 GALLONS OF PETROLEUM SPILLED DAILY INTO THE OCEAN AS A RESULT SPIKES CONCERNS OF THE GULF OF MEXICO'S "DEAD ZONE" WHERE THE MISSISSIPPI'S CHEMICAL AND WASTE NASTINESS RUNS OFF AND LINGERS.

OF COURSE THE 11 MILLION GALLONS from the 1989 Exxon Valdez spillage on Alaska's Prince William Sound devastated the image of pristine beauty and pales in comparison. But the worst environmental spillage in our lifetime wasn't an accident to begin with, yet it has scarcely made the news.

Between 1964 and 1990, using obsolete technology and substandard environmental controls, iconic Texas brand Texaco (which Chevron acquired in 2001) drilled for oil in a remote northern region of Ecuador's Amazon rainforest. They deliberately dumped 18.5 billion gallons of highly toxic waste sludge into the streams and rivers on which local people depend on for drinking, bathing, and fishing. Over 900 open air and unlined waste pits remain that continue to seep toxins into the ground, in the rainforest.

The sludge contained some of the most dangerous chemicals known – including benzene and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) – lethal concentrations. Rupturing oil pipelines and gas flaring was also a regular occurrence. What's worse, the dumping was done intentionally to cut corners and save an estimated $3 per barrel.

In the Oriente region of the Ecuadorean rainforest, once supporting 30,000 people, land itself has become toxic and entire water systems are contaminated. Almost any kind of food from this region – whether farmed, domesticated, caught in the wild or in water – is unsafe to eat. More than 1,400 people have died of attributed cancers and continue to die from Chevron's toxic legacy. Children under 14 are most vulnerable, suffering high rates of birth defects and leukemia. Local economies and communities have collapsed. And for Indigenous communities who remain, their way of life, culture and traditions, have been radically altered.



DAVID & GOLIATH CENTER STAGE

Seventeen years ago a class-action lawsuit from residents was filed and continues with a decision intended to come down later this year. Damages for this historic trial, taking place in Ecuadorean court, have been assessed at a record $27.3 billion. Between 2002 and 2008, Chevron's profits increased by an astounding 2100%, to $24 billion: its largest profit on record and the fourth highest profit of any corporation in the world that year. In 2008, only 36 countries on the planet had GDPs larger than Chevron's revenues. If successful, the case will establish a monumental precedent for corporate accountability and environmental justice across the globe.

Chevron, based in San Ramon, California, is the fifth largest corporation in the world, the fourth largest global oil company, the second largest oil company in the U.S., and the largest corporation in California (by revenue). It is the product of several mega-mergers, including in 1984 with Gulf, in 2001 with Texaco, and in 2005 with UNOCAL.

COMPLICITY IN CRIMES

For over a decade, a powerful movement has been building to expose the true cost of Chevron's operations and the communities in struggle against them. Communities harmed by Chevron's operations have increasingly united and built more allies to demand human rights, environmental, economic, and climate justice, and corporate responsibility.

Families from the Niger Delta filed a suit for Chevron's complicity in a the murder of two protesters by the security company hired to secure pipelines. In Kazakhstan the company was fined $609 million for illegally storing sulphur contaminating land and water resources. In Canada's Alberta region, Chevron is invested in tar sands – one of the most environmentally damaging projects on the planet. In the Philippines, regular oil leaks and spills have sickened Manila residents. Chevron's operations in Burma are providing a financial lifeline to the Burmese military regime – known for its appalling human rights record. In Western Australia, Chevron's liquefied natural gas facility threatens the health of local communities and fragile humpback whale and turtle populations.

TEXAS CONNECTIONS

A Woodland's based partnership with Conoco Philips in 2000 has half it's chemical facilities in Texas. As reported in the upcoming 2010 True Cost of Chevron: Alternative Annual Report, "These facilities, dangerous even when operating in top form, are mired in constant violations and fines by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for both air quality and hazardous waste releases." In 2009, Chevron Conoco was cited 17 times, one TCEQ order listed 29 separate violations, "including hundreds of instances of failure to prevent unauthorized emissions of volatile organic compounds, ethylene, butadiene, benzene, nitric oxide, and propylene." Indeed, the Dirty South.

On May 26, representatives from communities harmed by—and fighting back against—Chevron will descend on Houston to confront the oil giant at its annual shareholder meeting. People from Ecuador, Nigeria, Colombia, Indonesia, Angola, Burma, Australia, Thailand, Kazakhstan, Canada, Texas, California, Alaska, Wyoming and beyond will be in attendance. Organizations like Amazon Watch, Rainforest Action Network, Global Exchange and T.E.J.A.S. are working to change Chevron. But to really move one of the world's largest and most dangerous corporations, we need an even bigger, more powerful, and more global movement.

May 26 at 8 am in front of Chevron's Houston office at the former Enron building, concerned Houstonians will demand real change and justice for those most affected by Chevron's toxic legacy. FPH

For more information readers can go to: www.truecostofchevron.com



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Protest in Raymondville demands Tent City Detention Center be shut down

On April 10th, SDS at the University of Houston joined student activists from the Social Justice Action Committee and the Palestine Solidarity Committee of UT Austin and the World Peace Alliance and Southwest Workers Union and representatives of the United Methodist Church of the Rio Grande Valley assembled in Raymondville to protest the Willacy County Processing Center, better know as Tent City. The 3,086-bed Willacy County Processing Center, a private prison operated by Utah-based Management and Training Corporation (MTC) and partially constructed of Kevlar tents, is the nation's largest immigrant detention center.

This action is part of the national Dignity not Detention campaign to resist the unchecked growth of the immigrant detention system.

4/12 Radical History Bike Tour Rolls through Houston

Thanks to everyone who came out to our Radical History bike tour! More that 30 people came out to ride with us and learn about the history of some of the social movements that have taken place in Houston. The day was beautiful, the feedback was positive, and we hope to host another ride in the not too distant future. We are really greatful to Ester King, Gloria Rubac and Lenwood Johnson for speaking to us about social struggles in Houston, as well as to Bohemeos for hosting the afterparty and Urbane Guerilla and Alex for performing.

We d also like to thank Zack for putting together this great compilation video of the presentations that were made as part of the bike tour. If you couldn t make the ride, this video is the next best thing.

4/9 Lyrics From Lockdown: Bryonn Bain

by Dopako Jones

On Monday April 5th, 2010 prison activist and poet Byronn Bain performed his one man show. Infused with poetry, hip hop, West Indian culture and real life experiences, Bain successfully addresses issues around race, politics and the prison industrial complex. The entertaining evening of social justice education was called Lyrics From Lockdown, and has been performed for audiences around the world.

Wrongfully imprisoned during his second year at Harvard Law, Bryonn sued NYPD and wrote a cover piece for the Village Voice entitled -- "Walking While Black". His story drew one of the largest responses the progressive paper had ever seen. Bain's one man show tells a story through spoken word, hip hop, theater, and letters from Nanon Williams who was sentenced to Death Row here in Texas.

After being wrongfully incarcerated for nearly two decades, Nanon will finally receive a de novo hearing here in Houston.

For more information regarding Nanon Williams case, and the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, please email abolition.movement@gmail.com



3/31 Stop the White Stallion Coal Plant in Matagorda County, TX!

by Rising Tide Houston to the Open Publishing Newswire

A new coal-fired power plant in Matagorda County, TX will endanger the public health of residents in the region and fuel global warming. Please take 2 minutes to sign this petition and then send off the email. Get in contact if you would like to become more involved in stopping this facility!

Texas is already due to experience increasing levels of drought and more frequent and intense natural disasters such as hurricanes and floods; among other effects of climate change. At a time when the science is clear that world greenhouse gas emissions needed to have been decreasing already, emissions continue to rise (not even level out). The building of a new coal-fired power plant anywhere is insanity.

But even aside from global warming, the proposed White Stallion plant is not far from Houston, and the pollutants are expected to blow over through our city occasionally. We are already surrounded by facilities that have us breathing unsafe levels of cancer- and asthma-causing chemicals..the last thing we need is another coal plant! Not to mention the residents of Matagorda County.



3/30 Alabama Theater Call to Action

by Sarah Gish from Gish Creative

You may have heard the rumors that the art deco interior of the 1939 Alabama Theater is at risk. Media personnel learned that a local architectural firm submitted plans detailing a near total interior demolition of the Alabama at the specific request of Weingarten Realty Investors (WRI).

My interest in cultural activities (and finding them for you!) extends to my desire for a Houston with an interesting cultural landscape in every way, which includes saving our landmarks as much as possible. I used to manage the lovely, historic River Oaks Theatre and, when the theatre was threatened with demolition in 2006, I formed a group, Save Our Landmarks, to help get it and the Alabama Theater site designated as city landmarks which happened in 2007. We were hoping that Weingarten would apply for the designation and follow the example set by business owner Bart Truxillo, who was the first to have a commercial property designated as a protected landmark (see story here). Bart took advantage of a then new preservation ordinance enacted in 2005 that ensured that if a property owner applies for a landmark designation, not only will they get substantial tax abatements, but their site will be a ìprotected landmark and safe from future destruction. However, since the landmark status for the Alabama Theater was sought by the city and not the owner, it became designated as only a ìlandmark, which means that WRI can tear it down with only 90 days notice. And unfortunately, this designation does not extend to the interior of the building.

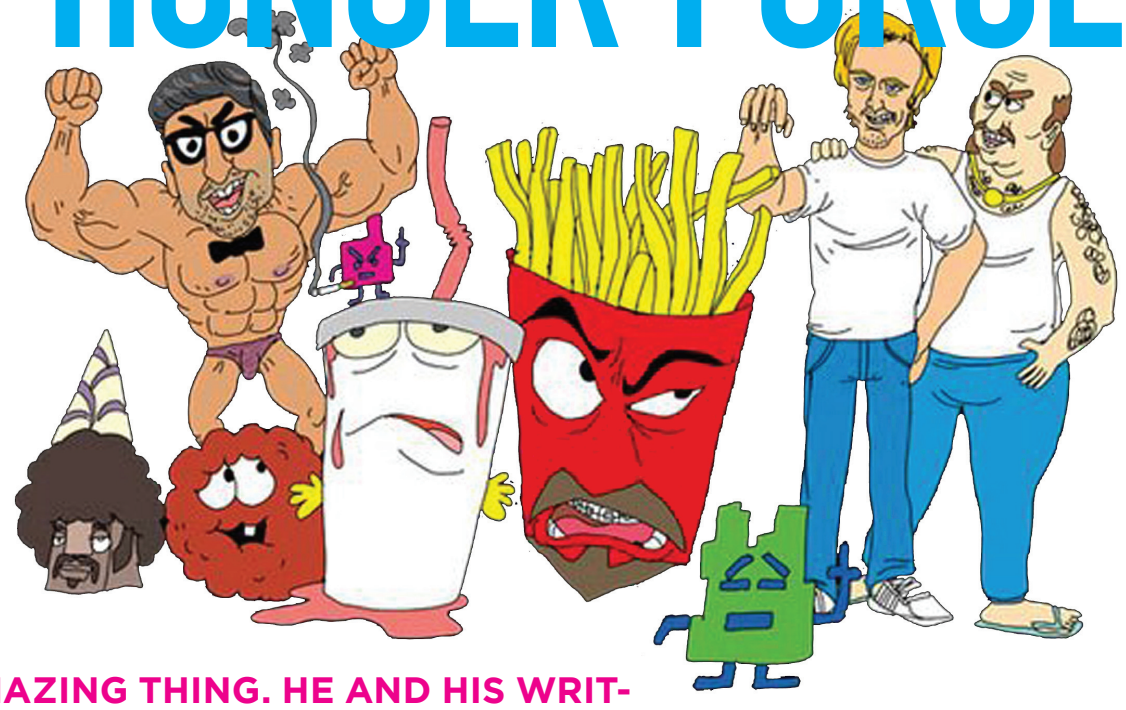


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AQUA TEEN HUNGER FORCE

AN INTERVIEW



by MARK ARMES
PHOTOS BY FUNWUNCE

10 YEARS AGO DAVE WILLIS DID AN AMAZING THING. HE AND HIS WRITING PARTNER CONVINCED A MAJOR TELEVISION NETWORK TO RUN A SHOW ABOUT A SADISTIC MILKSHAKE, A CARTON OF FRIES WITH SUPERNATURAL POWERS, AND AN ENDEARINGLY DIM WAD OF MEAT.

TO THE SURPRISE AND AMAZEMENT of all parties involved, Aqua Teen Hunger Force has become one of Cartoon Network's most popular shows and has even been made into a feature length film. Since then, Dave has successfully produced and voiced several more shows for Adult Swim. Teaming up Dana Snyder, who provides the voice of "Master Shake" on ATHF and "Granny" on Squidbillies, the duo have embarked on a tour of the U.S. to bring the absurdity uncomfortably close to you. I caught up with Dana and Dave early on a Saturday morning to talk some shop about Adult Swim and prepare myself for the inevitable weirdness that will ensue on April 16th at their House of Blues gig.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR TV SHOWS TO SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER SEEN THEM?

DAVE: Well they're intensely plotted, and the story actually spans over many seasons…
DANA: There's always some exciting resolve at the end….
DAVE: It's your classic three act structure, but condensed into eleven minutes.
DANA: Both of things that he just said.
DAVE: And intensely adult situations, but perfectly suitable for children as well.
DANA: And it's awesome!

WHAT'S THE PROCESS LIKE WHEN YOU START A NEW EPISODE, DOES IT CHANGE FROM SEASON TO SEASON?

DAVE: Uh, it really comes out of boredom, like most stuff. We had one year we were just going to have the characters not be in the show, for the whole season. The star was gonna be the house ATHF lived in, and then new people were gonna move into the house and then over the course of the season they would become the Aqua Teens, but then we were told that we would be fired for doing that.

DANA: I have to agree. That's actually bullshit, Dave, because I don't wanna not have been in it all year.
DAVE: Yeah, then there's a giant middle finger to anyone who cares about us.
DANA: We would have gotten into George Lucas territory at that point.
DAVE: But I tell you one thing- we're going back to the ATHF being detectives. we're writing a lot of crime stories right now.

I'm serious, we're coming back in a big way, new detectives again.
DANA: Aqua Teen Hunger Force 2.0 Recap!
DAVE: I think we're actually changing the name of the show to Aqua Unit Patrol Squad though. We're gonna shake it up, we're gonna add the smoke monster too.

SO THE SUITS WERE RIGHT, YOU'RE GOING BACK TO THE FORMULA THEY WANTED ORIGINALLY.

DAVE: We're going back to the formula they wanted, and it took us ten years to figure it out.
DANA: ... the suits are always right.

DAVE, I READ THAT YOU WERE ORIGINALLY FROM WICHITA FALLS, DID YOU LIVE THERE FOR ANY AMOUNT OF TIME?

DAVE: Ahhhh, you found my Wikipedia page too. Hey can I ask you to please change the photo on that?

I look like Frankenstein. I'm not so vain that I'll do it myself but I am vain enough that I will ask you to do it.

OK, I CAN DO THAT.

DAVE: I look like a monster from the grave. Like I had risen to feast on your brain. No, … uh yeah, I was born in Wichita Falls, my mom is from McKeeny, which as you well know is right by Iran, Texas. I'm actually in Dripping Springs right now. We're going to record Jimmy del Gilmore for Squidbillies, and his amazing saw player from those flatlander albums, so it should be an interesting little trip here.

SPEAKING OF SQUIDBILLIES, DID TEXAS PROVIDE YOU ANY CANNON-FODDER FOR WRITING FOR SQUIDBILLIES?

DAVE: I think anything on this latitude line from Texas all the way across to the Atlantic coast of Georgia- there are morons that inspire our scripts, so yeah, no doubt, no doubt. But yeah, I spend a lot of time out here- west Texas you know. And some time in Austin. We've hit the South by Southwest a number of times.

THE VOICE OF EARLY FROM SQUIDBILLIES IS DONE BY ECCENTRIC SINGER SONGWRITER UNKNOWN HINSON. WHAT'S THAT LIKE?

DAVE: It's terrifying. He brings a lot of firearms to the studio, he cajoles and when he doesn't get his way he threatens. You have to have five bottles of Crystal Geyser spring water next to the microphone, or he'll pistol whip you. Five unopened bottles. Can't be four, can't be six. Labels fronted.

IS THERE ANYONE IN PARTICULAR THAT INFLUENCED ANY OF THE CHARACTERS ON SQUIDBILLIES OR AQUA TEEN HUNGER FORCE?

DANA: I have one. I have used the voice of Diane Rehm from NPR as my inspiration for Granny- She has this weird, I don't know what the word is, what do you call it — affectation, some kind of... it's not a disease — it's like a thing that she does, she can't control her vocal chords. She just doesn't have control of them, so as a result, she'll talk like this (erratic accent) and uh, yeah. That's what Granny does: like the air is coming out faster than she can actually control it.

That is a 100% true and little known fact.

I'M GLAD WE SCOOPED THAT.

DANA: You didn't know you were going to be an investigative journalist today, did you? Blowing the lid off Squidbillies.

AND I GUESS THE VOICE OF MASTER SHAKE - HE'S KIND OF LIKE AN INSULT COMIC?

DANA: (voice of master shake) «I'll tell you what he is!" Yeah, that's where I garner a lot of my enjoyment from-- from classic comedians.

WHO IS THE MOST EXCITING GUEST YOU GUYS HAVE HAD ON THE SHOW?

DAVE: Most exciting? Most terrifying?

YES.

DAVE: It's probably in our other interviews and stuff but I think Glenn Danzig was still… Still an adrenaline rush to argue with him over the phone. And I know that he's probably standing on a desk, all four foot ten of him, with a goat skull belt buckle, explaining why his character needs to be «more cut than that.»

Finally my animator had to have an intervention with me and he was like, «I cannot add more muscles, it would make him look ridiculous», and I said, «Well look, he's got approval on how he looks and he said he's more cut than that.» And he also said, «I look small», and I'm like, «Yeah, well you're on an eleven inch sheet of paper...».
DANA: Yeah, we're not giving you the drawing in life size here.
DAVE: Oh yeah, and then he looked 6'4», which is like twice his size… I was like yeah, we'll put you next to R2D2 and he'll be like up to your knee. There, now you're a giant. We ended up drawing a picture of him hanging off the Empire State Building. FPH

LIGHT OF THE SUFIS

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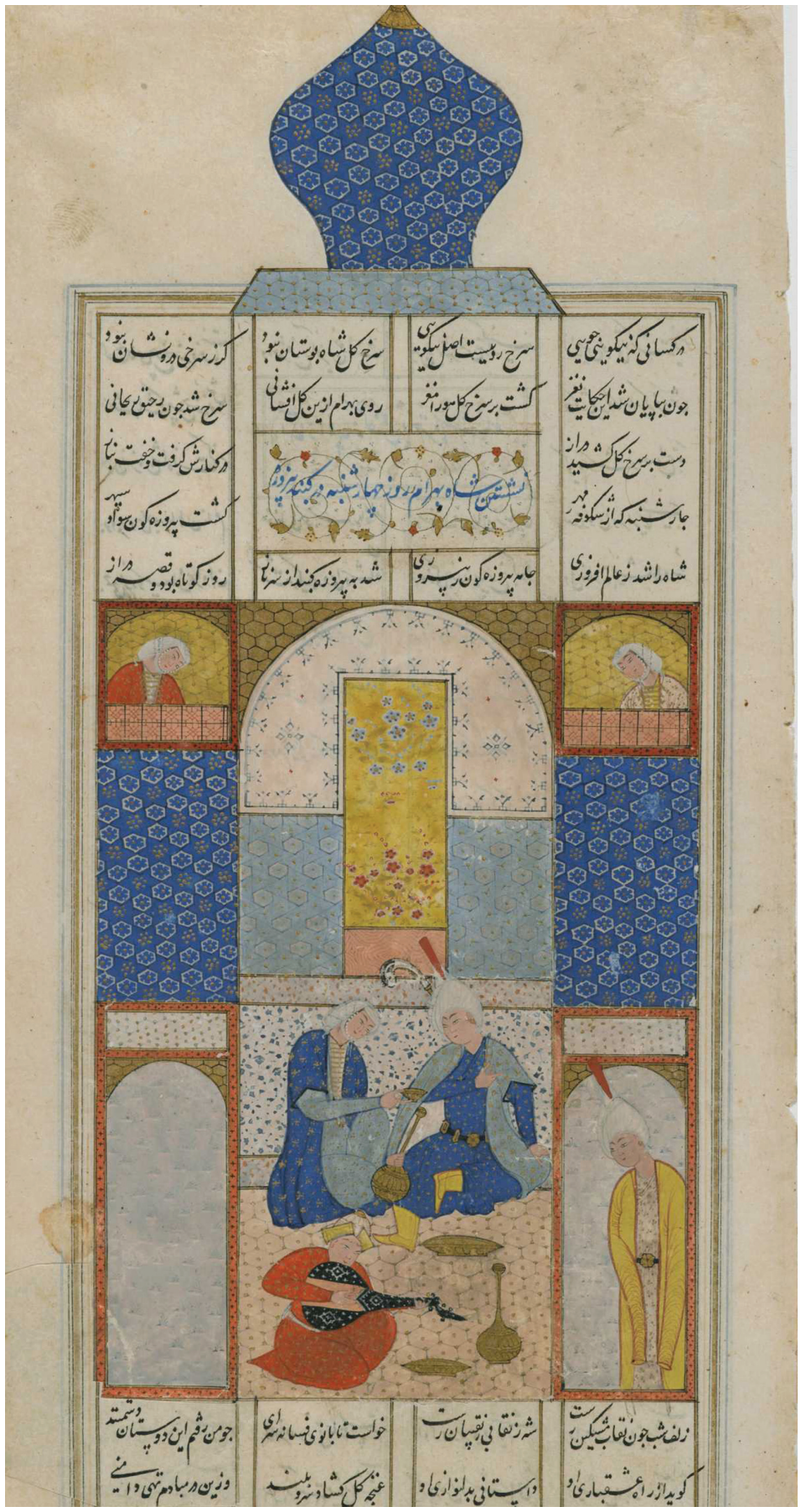
by JACK BETZ

HOUSTON WILL SOON GET THE PRIVILEGE TO GLIMPSE SOME BEAUTIFUL SUFI ART TRAVELING ALL THE WAY FROM THE PRESTIGIOUS BROOKLYN MUSEUM, COURTESY OF LADAN AKBRANIA AND HAGOP KEVORKIAN ASSOCIATE CURATOR OF ISLAMIC ART AT THE MUSEUM. THE EXHIBIT WILL BE OPEN FROM 11 TO 12:30 AND REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED FROM 11 TO 11:30.

JUST TO GIVE SOME BACKGROUND, Sufiism is a sect of Islam devoted primarily to finding union with God in a personal, mystic, way. Their preferences for asceticism and mysticism came about in response to the worldliness of certain caliphates. The name Sufi comes from the word "sûf" meaning "wool". Early Muslim ascetics would traditionally wear simple wool cloaks; and for some these cloaks would be used as a symbol initiation into the Sufi tradition. One of the most perfect summations of the Sufi practice I've found are the words of al-Rudhabari; he described the Sufi as "the one who wears wool on top of purity".

Although mysticism in general aims at a personal interpretation and experience of the divine Sufiism absolutely requires the input of a spiritual counselor so that the follower does not go amiss in their search for God. The specific traditions of Sufism are tailor-made for each follower because the content of Sufi worship is intended to remove obstacles in the way of one's union with God which is always the end goal. Followers learn how to worship and live according to the advice of a Sufi master who assesses their life in order find exactly which habits and choices are keeping them from being close to God. Asceticism and suppression of base desires are key to the Sufi way of life and following the advice of their Sufi master. Just like the mysticism in other faiths, the Sufi must unfetter himself from sin and worldly things if he is to successfully discover mystical truths.

Sufi art reflects the mystical traditions of the faith and is vastly different from the western style that most of us are accustomed to. In Sufi art there is definitely a break from the Greco-Roman tradition of strict realism and an extreme focus on a strictly realistic human form. I've looked at a few paintings and works that will be at the exhibit and I noticed that even when there are people represented that they are normally overshadowed by ornate inscriptions and patterns which seem to receive the same amount of care that the human form normally does in western art. This will surely be an epic show. **FPH**



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