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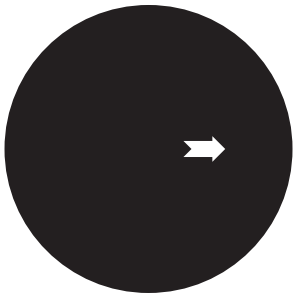
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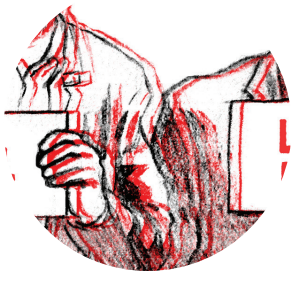
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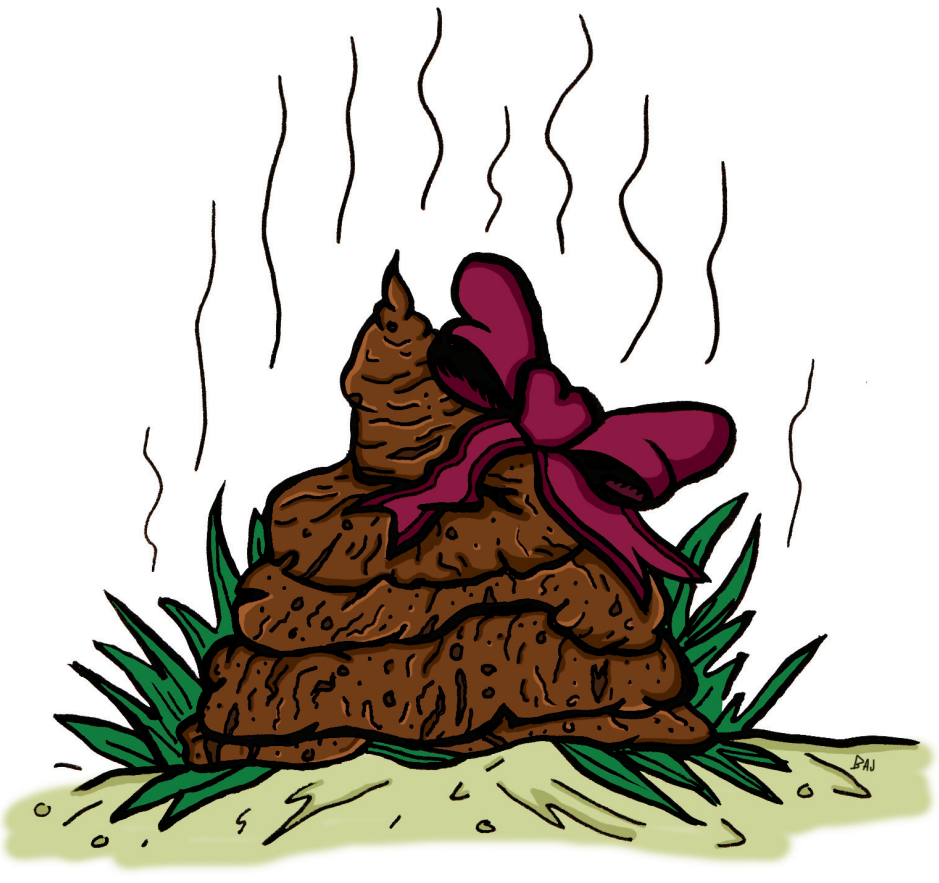
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letter from the editor

Art finds her own perfection within, and not outside of, herself.
She is not to be judged by any external standard of resemblance.
- *Oscar Wilde*

Just the other day, a good friend of mine used a stunning metaphor to describe how we often judge art and music by the wrong criteria. He used a gift one receives to succinctly illustrate this point. Focusing on song as a perfect metaphor, he said "A great song is like a gift. But sometimes we receive this gift and judge it by the wrapping paper and bow. Composition, soundscape, 'cool,' hype, genre, etc. are all merely parts of the wrapping paper and bow. But what matters is really the message contained within the box." Though simplistic, it makes perfect sense. We are often so caught up in those frivolous aesthetics that we miss the wondrous gift contained within OR more frequently the wondrous gift NOT contained within. We humans write songs or paint paintings or write literature to convey a message. If your message is "Look at my composition" or "We recorded this all on analog on 2 inch tape" or "This shit is punk rock" or "This is really some cutting edge, cool shit," then you are a poser. Period. End of fucking story.



All's Fair in Love & Warhol

BY MICHAEL PENNYWARK

CONGRATULATIONS, you made it through Oktoberfest with your liver intact and only slightly embarrassing stories to tell about you and your neighbor's dog—what now? Sure, you can sit outside and make banal comments about how lovely the trees look as the leaves change colors, or become reacquainted with your favorite TV shows now back from their summer hiatus. But everyone knows that October really means haunted houses, bad horror movies, and the opportunity to hide your shame behind the anonymity of a giant chicken outfit for one drunken night. Of course, since you've grown up, the candy and pranks have been replaced by booze and slutty zombie nurses, but that's what makes Halloween one of America's favorite holidays no matter what age you are. So, what should you do between now and then? I'm glad you asked.

If there was one opening last year that I enjoyed the most but remembered the least, it has to be the inaugural Texas Contemporary Art Fair. From what I recall before I found the tequila at Glasstire's Old West Cantina, the Texas Contemporary certainly lived up to its billing. And apparently that miniature white pony with a pink mane hanging out at the cantina wasn't a hallucination after all. Opening October 18 at the George R. Brown Convention Center, this year's fair promises to be bigger and better with artwork from 65 of the world's leading galleries.

Keeping up with their On-Site Installation Series, the fair will feature a performative piece by Okay Mountain courtesy of Mark Moore Gallery, a sculptural series by Agnes Denes courtesy of Ballroom Marfa, a site-specific work by Gina Phillips presented by Jonathan Ferrara Gallery, a new installation by artist Dan Douke of the Peter Mendenhall Gallery, a performative wall drawing by artist Eric Beltz courtesy of Morgan Lehman, and a video presentation by Keren Cytter presented by Diverseworks Art Space, just to name a few.

To fill me in on this year's show and what I might have blacked out on from last year's, I talked to Max Fishko, managing partner of art-MRKT Productions—producers of the fair. He assured me that last year had been a resounding success and that they were delighted by the response from colleagues and collectors across the state. When asked how this fair differs from last month's Fine Arts Fair, Fishko pointed out that, "Texas Contemporary focuses on emerging and mid-career contemporary art from many of the world's leading artists."

Inspired by the collaborative and supportive Houston art scene, the Texas Contemporary offers more than just a platform for emerging artists. This year will feature the Texas Contemporary Award showcasing national and international artists navigating new and innovative directions in art. Galleries will present their nominee's work inside their booths and the winner will be announced Saturday, October 20th, at 4pm. If that wasn't enough, Texas Contemporary VIP ticketholders will also be invited to a reception at CAMH Saturday October 20th 6pm-8pm for Rob Pruitt's The Andy Monument- a seven-foot-tall chrome statue of Andy Warhol atop a pedestal that has been on view in Union Square in New York City, near the original site of Warhol's "Factory."

Bill Arning, the director of CAMH, and his team have been striving to bring the tribute to Warhol to Houston in the hope that it will become "a destination and gathering point" as it was in New York. As Fishko explained, "Throughout history, public monuments and installations have served as historic references and as a place to bring people together. In Houston, the piece will be placed in a highly trafficked area on CAMH's front lawn, extending the exhibition area to outside the museum walls and alerting people to the fact that inside the building there is more wonderful artwork to see."

I think I've just found a new idea for my Halloween costume this year.

FPH



FEATURE INC.
Andrew Masullo, 5007, 2008; oil paint on canvas; 16 x 20 inches, Courtesy of Feature Inc.
Kinke Kooi, Searching for Support, 2010; acrylic paint, graphite, colored pencil, marker on paper; 39.875 x 26 inches, Courtesy of Feature Inc.



STEVE TURNER CONTEMPORARY
James Gobel, Washing Over Us Again and Again, 2012; felt, yarn, acrylic, embroidery thread on canvas; 52 x 64 inches, Courtesy of Steve Turner Contemporary
Jacob Yanes, Philomela, 2012; cardboard, wood putty, asphalt primer, acrylic eyes, pleated wool and cotton jaquard-woven tapestry; 68 x 27 x 16 inches; 80 x 54 inches, Courtesy of Steve Turner Contemporary



MISAKO & ROSEN
Josh Brand, Cross Paper and Space Blue and Green, 2009; c-print; 13.7 x 10.5 inches, Courtesy of Misako & Rosen
Takezaki Kazuyuki, 64-3, 2012; acrylic, color pencil on canvas, 12.5 x 16 inches, Courtesy of Misako & Rosen

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PRETTY CLOSE TO THE TRUTH.

The Ground Beneath Their Feet

BY MEGHAN HENDLEY

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8

Artists G.T. Pellizzi & Ray Smith tell a narrative of regional resonance



IN THE MIDST OF A POLITICALLY CHARGED FALL, WE ARE ALSO DEEP INTO THE VISUAL ARTS SEASON, WHICH THROUGH VARIOUS EXHIBITS OFFERS VISUAL AND INTELLECTUAL ESCAPE FROM THE BOLD AND OFTEN HOSTILE HEADLINES. IF ALL IS FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR, PERHAPS ALL IS ALTERED THROUGH ART AND LOVE.

EVEN THOUGH ARTISTS G.T. Pellizzi and Ray Smith are not directly putting their artistry in the line of fire and debate of the Texas/Mexico border, they are making a statement of both beauty and intrigue that is an homage to the people of that region and the land that connects both cultures.

The exhibit at Peveto gallery space, (a Fine Arts Resource Management Company), is more than a collection of pieces. It is an artistic movement and a living recollection of both place and memory. Pieces made on the historic Yturria Ranch include soil, native plants, and random debris objects from the fields fused together with paint. The extended family and friends, including ranch cowboys, all participated in the creation of the pieces, making this process a happening of generations who had touched this land for many years.

As the debate boils over, it seemed that these two cultures found at the border would be severed and cease to coexist. Instead, these two artists embraced the oppositions and created works that tell a narrative of regional resonance. The opening reception featured a celebration of life on this landscape with family and friends circled around the statements they had helped make along with the artists.

The massive pieces, as tall from ceiling to floor, are labors of love just as the cultivation of the land is for these individuals. This exhibition is a cultural celebration uniting a socially divided standoff, all executed with a giant, yet quiet presence and a unique impression of border ranch life. We asked the two artists to explain their work further through a little joint Q and A:

YOUR EXHIBIT IS TITLED BORDER PAINTINGS. TELL ME ABOUT THE PROCESS OF TAKING ELEMENTS OF THE LAND AND MELDING THEM INTO THE CANVASSES.
We first went around and collected paint from the local “pulgas” or flea markets. Our intention was to not choose the colors ourselves but use the discarded paint from the local community. We then went out into the desert and poured the paint on giant canvases, up to five gallons on each 9x12 canvas, and spread out the paint evenly. These became giant monochromes, painted on the desert floor on the border between Texas and Mexico. Immediately after spreading the paint we would flip the canvas face down on the desert floor and let them cook all day in the 114-degree sun. In this way the paint, the canvas, and the landscape would fuse together. When we finally ripped the canvases up off the ground, the surfaces of the paintings had become a physical testimony of the place.

WHAT SPARKED THIS COLLABORATE ARTISTIC EFFORT?
Both of our cultural identities are tied to Mexico and the United States. Ray’s family has a ranch on the on the Texas border near Brownsville.

MANY OF THE NATURAL MATERIALS CAME FROM LAND ASSOCIATED WITH FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY, THESE INDIVIDUALS WHO WORK THE LAND WITH THEIR OWN HANDS. WHAT WAS YOUR INTERACTION LIKE WITH THIS COMMUNITY WHEN YOU WERE WORKING ON THIS PROJECT?
The making of this work is kind of like an event, or a happening. It involves lots of people, and especially the cowboys from the ranch. The cowboys know the land better than anyone else, and their knowledge and experience is invaluable to the process of making the work.

THESE PIECES ARE MASSIVE MEDITATIONS ON THE SUBTLE TEXTURES OF THIS REGION. WHEN YOU ARE FACE TO FACE WITH THESE PIECES, YOUR EYES TAKE IN THE SCALE WHILE BECKONING YOU CLOSER TO SEE THE FINE GRAINS OF THE MATERIALS. HOW DID YOU APPLY THE MATERIALS TO THE CANVAS?
The paint itself holds everything on to the canvasses. We actually don’t touch it after we take them off the ground.

HOW DOES THE SCALE COINCIDE WITH THE CONCEPT OF THE PIECE?
Well, they are just fragments of the landscape. Tiny sections, even though translated into a gallery, seem huge. The landscape is enormous and powerful. It is a harsh landscape full of chiggers, ticks, snakes, thorns, and coyotes.

THIS REGION HAS BEEN MARKED WITH POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STIGMAS, LEAVING IT A BATTLEGROUND FOR THOSE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY. WHAT WAS THE CLIMATE LIKE FOR YOU AS AN OBSERVER IN AN ARTISTIC SENSE?
The border has been a completely porous and fluid abstraction for centuries. For the people of this region family, work, and all aspects of daily life bring people back and forth between one side and the other. Recently, with the tightening of border security and the escalating of drug violence in Mexico, the local community has experienced a radical transformation.

WHAT SORT OF CONNECTIONS OR CONCLUSIONS DO YOU HOPE VIEWERS DRAW FROM YOUR WORK?
We would hope that the work gives physical testimony to the border region. We hope that it helps take the land and its inhabitants out of the realm of abstraction and political punditry. FPH

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Obey Your Master

Compliance

If several people witness an isolated incident they will all have different recollections of what actually happened. That forms the core of the powerful, button-pushing Compliance. A prank caller talks unsuspecting small town managers of fast food establishments to strip search employees by convincing them they are police detectives.

The experience of watching Compliance was one of the most intense movie going encounters I've had all year. I was completely riveted until the end and at times angry at the way characters reacted to the situation. When you read about the actual events that inspired the movie, and if you see the film you will look up the various crimes and court cases on the internet, you will be blown away by the fact that everything depicted in Compliance is based on occurrences as taken from transcripts of criminal and civil court cases.

Compliance has a gritty independent mood, populated with actors most people won't be familiar with. Dreama Walker is in a television show and Ann Dowd and Pat Healy (The Innkeepers) have been small supporting players in bigger films, but here they totally own the screen. Seeing Compliance is like a litmus test of your own ability to discern reality.

The Master

In The Master a scientific thinker meets his archetypal other and sets out to convert him to his cause. In the new movie from writer/director Paul Thomas Anderson we are introduced to past life regression as a force of nature, and along to enforce that view are actors that are themselves forces of nature.

Joaquin Phoenix is so good, so completely wrapped up in his character, you just want to pinch off a piece of him and put it on your shoulder and dare somebody to knock it off. Phoenix is matched scene for scene by Philip Seymour Hoffman and Amy Adams. The Master starts at the end of WWII establishing Phoenix (Freddie Quell) as a loose cannon able-bodied seaman that specializes in making moonshine out of booze mixed with caustic liquids (torpedo fuel, Lysol, paint thinner). I cannot remember any film that used actual Rorschach cards in a psychiatric scene but The Master is if anything exacting in its detail.

After a couple of scenes that establish Quell's inability to hold a steady job, we move to 1950 and Quell stowed away on a ship lorded over by Hoffman (Lancaster Dodd). Rather than toss Quell off the boat, Dodd sees his double in the troubled man. People refer to Dodd as Master, mainly because of his charming yet conniving manner and his unique method of psychological training. The use of repetitious questioning during therapy is one of the reasons people have likened Dodd's cult to the creation of Scientology by L. Ron Hubbard in the '50s, yet I haven't heard a peep about past life regression as it's used by the Rosicrucian Order, and that group is quite public about its goals of wisdom and universal knowledge.

The Master progresses in beautiful beats, moving like a slow boat but always headed for a point in the distant horizon. The Master feels like a film that was made in another time, perhaps another dimension; certainly made for adults who want to wallow in thought and emotion sans explosions and super heroes. Phoenix moves like an animal, his body hunched over, his shoulders like an ape, his face constantly pointing like a predatory bird. Once you see The Master its themes will resonate in your mind, perhaps even enter your bloodstream, for some time to come.

Tim League interview

Regular, everyday films may "not be my cup of tea," Alamo Drafthouse founder Tim League tells Free Press Houston in a phone interview. By that, League specifically means he champions the underdogs--foreign and genre movies. Just take a look at the titles listed for this year's Fantastic Fest, an exciting film festival League started with a couple other movers and shakers in Austin in 2005, and you know what he's talking about. It's the difference in exotic white or green tea as compared to instant tea.

League also puts his money where his mouth is; take a gander at the Alamo Drafthouse Ritz. The theater on Austin's Sixth Street is the only venue in the South playing The Master in 70mm. League installed the 70mm projector at great expense. "I talked to Paul Thomas Anderson and made a promise to project the film the way he intended it to be seen. It was important to him," says League. "Some theaters use regular glass in the projection booth, we use optical glass. The difference is a couple of hundred dollars but it preserves the brightness of the projection."

Another spinoff of the Alamo Drafthouse is Mondo, a gallery that creates new movie posters for classic titles. "At first it was difficult getting the license rights when we started it 8 years ago. Now the studios are quicker to give approval due to its steady revenue stream," adds League.

In addition to running Fantastic Fest and constantly upgrading the Austin locations of Alamo Drafthouse, League also started a distribution arm, Drafthouse Films, which this year has already rolled out acclaimed foreign films like Bullhead and Klown. A lot of the films that play Fantastic Fest "would be regulated to midnight slots at other festivals," explains League. Some of the films playing FF that Drafthouse will subsequently distribute include Quentin Dupieux's (follow-up to Rubber) Wrong, and the re-release of a classic 1971 Australian film Wake in Fright. "Wake in Fright was the film that kick-started the Australian film renaissance and eventually led to films like Mad Max and Road Warrior. It's directed by Ted Kotcheff," notes League. **FPH**



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Cool Breeze

BY WILL GUESS

THE IDEA OF IT BEING COOL OUTSIDE in Houston seems almost impossible considering the summer we just had. But alas, October is here, bringing with it a much needed break from the weather in the city along with the overload of status updates about said weather. I'm sure everyone living here appreciates a change of pace as far as the weather is concerned, and along with that, the breeze in the air is also blowing some pretty rad shows our way.

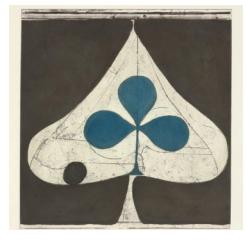
Washed Out
Sunday, October 7
Fitzgerald's
While starting out with making music in his bedroom 3 years ago, Ernest Greene, AKA Washed Out, has proven that he is a musical powerhouse. Greene rose to popularity rapidly with the release of two EPs in the span of only one year. Best known for his single "Feel It All Around", which serves as the theme song for the hit IFC show Portlandia, he has written one of those songs that makes just walking down the street better. He didn't stop there though. His full-length album, Within and Without, expands on the ideas of his previous work with more precision, the sounds of a guy who is really honing in on his craft. Fans expecting a typical "play the songs exactly like the album" show will be surprised, hopefully pleasantly, as Greene usually strays from the recorded versions of his songs to give a new spin on them.

Venomous Maximus
Saturday, October 20
Fitzgerald's
Tattooer extraordinaire, occult wizard, and axe shredder Gregg Higgins leads the best metal band in Houston as they release their new album Beg Upon The Light. Just to give you an idea of what level Venomous Maximus is on, they've played with such seminal acts as Mastodon, Valiant Thorr and The Sword among many other notable bands. They won the Houston Press Music Award for Best Metal Band not once, but twice. In one year, they've become one of the most popular acts in the city. Higgins explodes on stage, wailing and wielding his guitar like a mad-man. When you see him perform live, it's an amped up, no frills version of his off-stage persona. The rest of the band are the perfect fit and compliment the stage show with a precision that is unmatched. There hasn't been a Houston metal band like this in years. Seriously, these guys fucking rip.

Twins of Evil Tour: Rob Zombie and Marilyn Manson
Tuesday, October 30
Reliant Arena
I know what you're thinking: Zombie and Manson together the day before Halloween? Awesome. I was thinking the same thing. Rob Zombie has been off making average horror movies and less than average horror remakes for some time now, and is finally bringing back his over the top concert experience. And who better to resurrect it with than Marilyn Manson? The undisputed king of shock rock next to Alice Cooper, Manson has made some serious classics. While not doing so in some years, Antichrist Superstar and everything before it still stand the test of time. At his most recent appearance in Houston, Manson had a stripped down set virtually nothing like his previous performances, probably due to the lack of a budget, but with Rob Zombie in tow, I'm expecting him to bust out his extravagant stage show from years' past. It's truly a sight to see. **FPH**







Analysis Of Songs In Sequence / October Album Reviews

BY KM ANDERSON

Political blurb: In this election season, it is important to weigh the choices you have been given, to determine, find, and support the lesser evil. Corporations are the basis of government in the U.S., but it is nice to be pandered to. Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy, it is the magic to our Disney, and the president is our Mickey Mouse. People fought and died for your right to...

Grizzly Bear-*Shields (Warp)*- Grizzly Bear have taken time between each of their records, which has boded well as each has been significantly better than the last. Veckamitest gained them the love of critics and The Carters (Sean and Beyonce), which helped them be known as awesome and "kinda tight." Their newest album, Shields, is excellent, no sarcasm, from the rooter to the tooter. "Sleeping Ute," the first song, may be one of the best Grizzly Bear songs thus far. "The Hunt" is soft and dark, which they do well, and album closer "Sun In Your Eyes" will have you standing and applauding.

G.O.O.D. Music-*Cruel Summer (Def Jam)*- Kanye West is probably the best of what music has to offer right now—he is charismatic, egotistic, and up to this point, all of his music has supported his claims of loftiness and swagger. "Mercy" is hood and grand. "New God Flow" is slightly sacrilegious, but that is endearing here, and "Clique" boasts the line, "my girl became a star from a home movie," which noting his girl, is funny and true.

Chris Cohen-*Overgrown Path (Captured Tracks)*- Chris Cohen has been in bands before (Deerhoof, Cryptacize, Ariel Pink) but in all of them he has been phenomenal, so I would also use complimentary adjectives in this respect. Psychedelic rock but more in the Syd Barret than the Can way, classic rock, but not in a Mountain or Cream context. Maybe the British side. It is mellow and colorful, and you will enjoy it.

Washed Out



Dinosaur Jr.
Friday, October 5
Fitzgerald's

GZA
playing "Liquid Swords"
Killer Mike &
Sweet Valley
Sunday, October 7
House of Blues

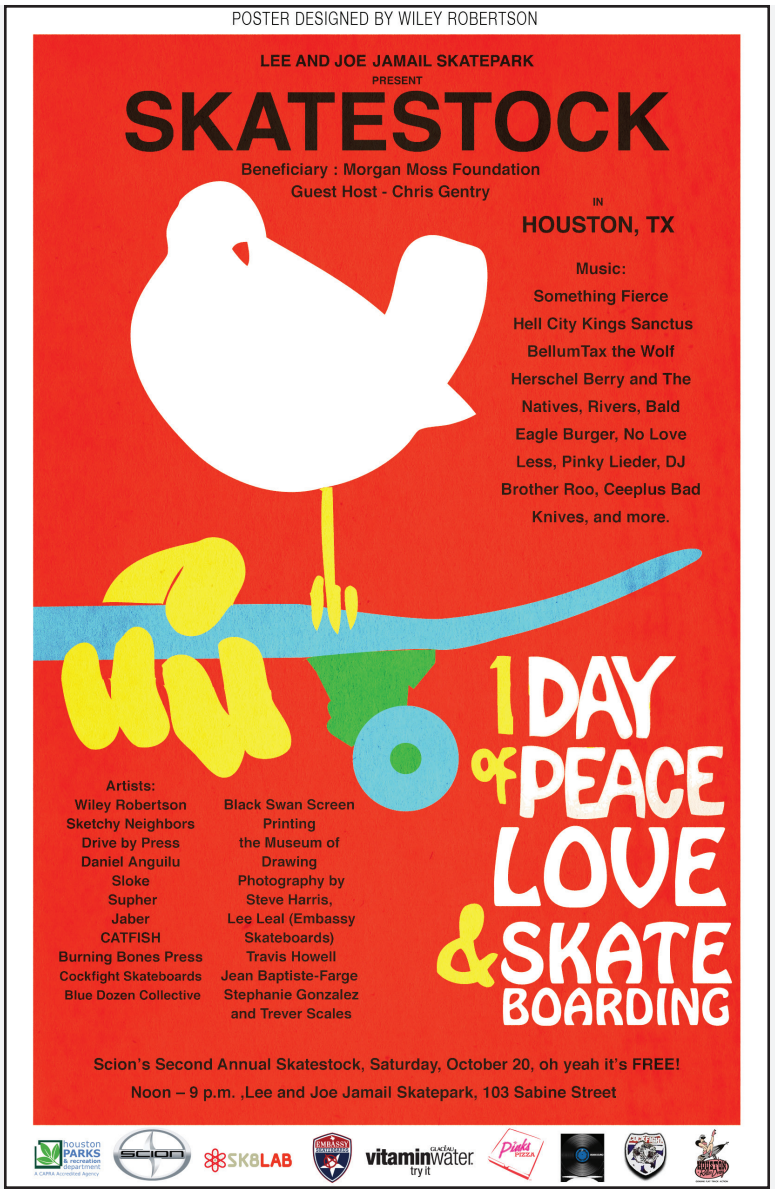
Big Business
Monday, October 8
Warehouse Live

The Shins
Wednesday, October 10
House of Blues

The Weeknd
Friday, October 12
Bayou Music Center

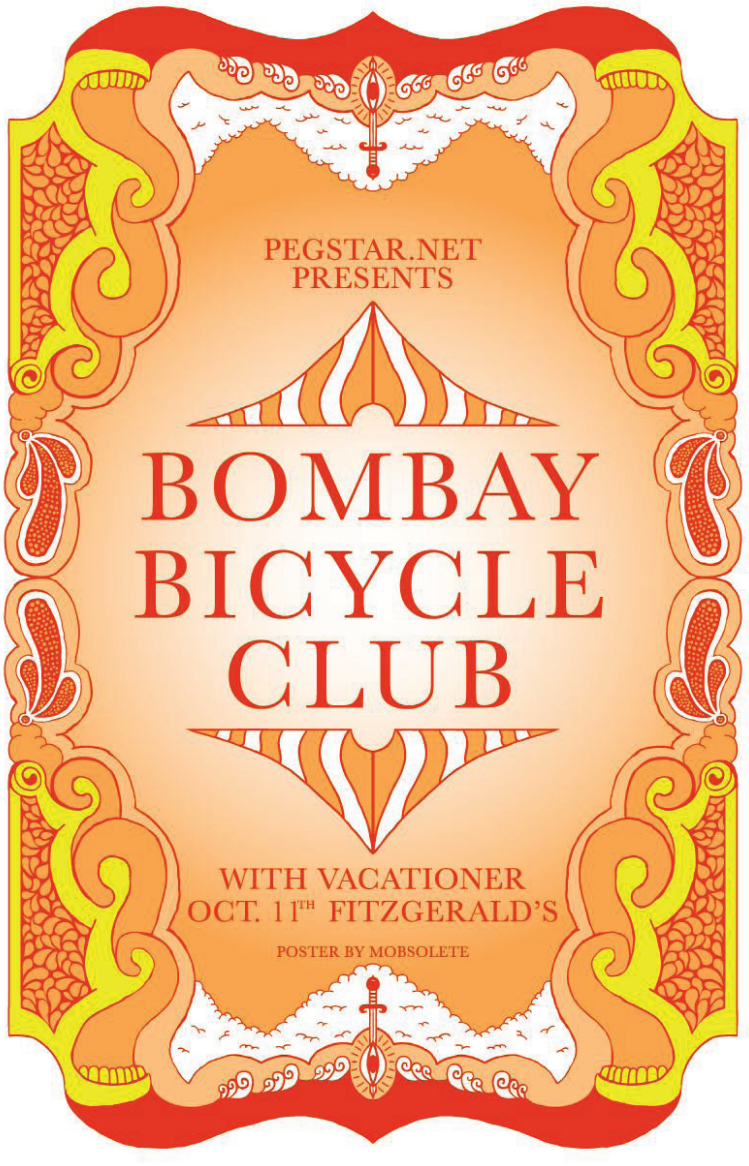
Meat Puppets
Infinite Apaches
Saturday, October 20
Fitzgerald's

A Sea Es
(Record Release)
Poor Pilate &
Mystery Flavor
Friday, October 26
Fitzgerald's


POSTER DESIGNED BY WILEY ROBERTSON
LEE AND JOE JAMAIL SKATEPARK
PRESENT
SKATESTOCK
Beneficiary : Morgan Moss Foundation
Guest Host - Chris Gentry
IN
HOUSTON, TX
Music:
Something Fierce
Hell City Kings Sanctus
BellumTax the Wolf
Herschel Berry and The
Natives, Rivers, Bald
Eagle Burger, No Love
Less, Pinky Lieder, DJ
Brother Roo, Ceeplus Bad
Knives, and more.
1 DAY of PEACE LOVE & SKATE BOARDING
Artists:
Wiley Robertson
Sketchy Neighbors
Drive by Press
Daniel Anguilu
Sloke
Supher
Jaber
CATFISH
Burning Bones Press
Cockfight Skateboards
Blue Dozen Collective
Black Swan Screen Printing
the Museum of Drawing
Photography by
Steve Harris,
Lee Leal (Embassy Skateboards)
Travis Howell
Jean Baptiste-Farge
Stephanie Gonzalez
and Trever Scales
Scion's Second Annual Skatestock, Saturday, October 20, oh yeah it's FREE!
Noon – 9 p.m. ,Lee and Joe Jamail Skatepark, 103 Sabine Street
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Pinks Pizza


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OCTOBER 4, 2012 • FITZGERALD'S • HOUSTON, TX
POSTER BY WILL HARRISON


NEW ALBUM IN STORES 10/22
THE SWORD
Gypsyhawk
AMERICAN SHARKS
DECEMBER 18TH AT FITZGERALD'S
FACEBOOK.COM/THESWORDOFDOOM SWORDOFDOOM.COM RAZOR&TIE


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BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB
WITH VACATIONER
OCT. 11TH FITZGERALD'S
POSTER BY MOBSOLETE

Gregg Higgins of Venomous Maximus

INTERVIEW BY RAMONLP4
PHOTO JESS BRUNGARDT

WHEN IT COMES TO HOUSTON METAL, Venomous Maximus stands out as one of the heavier purveyors of the dark and cacophonous arts. Their releases have met with wild acclaim and their live shows are loud and brutal affairs. In keeping with their musical philosophy, the new album, Beg Upon the Light, reaches deep into the cauldron of classic metal and pulls out something uniquely of their own making. Unlike many metal bands, VM does not shy away from gentler folk and psychedelic elements - for every searing "Battle of the Cross" there is a quieter "Father Time." It's that balance that marks them as a metal band whose sound is as expansive and cinematic as it is heavy and brutal. Vocalist and guitarist Gregg Higgins was kind enough to chat with us about the new album.

THE ALBUM OPENS WITH AN ORGAN. WHY NOT JUST GO RIGHT TO THE ROCK?
Tradition. Most of my favorite heavy metal recordings began with organ intros. I am also a big fan of soundtrack music like Goblin. Any chance we get to play around with stuff like that, we are gonna take. Plus, it gives you a chance to prepare your ears and set the mood.

A LOT OF THESE SONGS ARE IN THE TRADITION OF CLASSIC OLD SCHOOL METAL. I HEAR ELEMENTS OF MAIDEN, SABBATH, PRIEST, AND THE LIKE. WHY DOES THAT MUSIC STILL HOLD UP?
In the 70s, those Brits really got it right - combining classical leads on top of blues hard rock. It's the philosopher's stone. Some things are just perfect and never need to change. That's one of my complaints about the world today; no one's satisfied. Everything has to be better and easier - heart and soul don't work like that. We never wanted to do anything new. It's all about resurging things from the past. Someone has to hold down the fort.



EVEN WITH ALL THOSE ELEMENTS, VENOMOUS MAXIMUS STANDS ON ITS OWN. WHAT MAKES THIS BAND SO UNIQUE AND NOT JUST A REHASH?
It's all about knowing when you can break the rules. My older sister played a lot of Depeche Mode, Fleetwood Mac, and Madonna. When I sing, I have them all in mind. None of us are afraid of these things. If you embrace everything, you have absolute power.

YOU HAVE A LOT OF QUIET ELEMENTS FOR A METAL BAND.
If you're a guitar player and you don't sit at home practicing and playing medieval riffs, you're missing out and shouldn't be playing heavy metal or hard rock. Being just heavy means you're only producing one feeling. Life is a battle 60% of the time, and people need ways to express dark and unsettling feelings. Music has been helping do this since day one but if all you can do is project anger and aggression, you're just a macho one trick pony to me.

WHERE WAS THE ALBUM RECORDED AND WHAT WAS IT THAT TOOK IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL?
Craig Douglas and Mark Lopez recorded us at Origin Sound in Spring, TX. I've known Craig for over a decade and that dude jams metal for breakfast. I always knew when it was time for the full-length album it would be with him. Whoever is recording your record should be a fan of the type of music you play. This year I am turning 30 and it's also 2012 so I feel an urgent panic to create everything that I have always wanted. This is the record I envisioned writing when I was a little boy and it's taken this long to finally get the chance. That's the thing with life; when you want something so bad for so long, it might take half of your life to get there.

HOW IMPORTANT IS ART IS TO YOUR MUSIC?
It's everything. There's a list from 1 - 10. Music is first, art is second, and you're crazy if you think I am gonna finish this list. We always have a good laugh because most people don't know there's a list.

WILL WE EVER SEE A VM PIC WITH YOU GUYS DOING ANYTHING INVOLVING THE SUN?
This band is a creature of the night, not a day-tripper. The daytime is for the working class - nothing magical happens during lunchtime.

THERE'S A SUPERNATURAL ELEMENT TO VM. CARE TO ELABORATE?
Some of us have these things in our lives since day one. The first thing you learn is not to talk about it; it's pointless. So what better way to talk about it than through the band? Our songs are real things that have happened. I don't read Bukowski and write about how he influenced me. I am Bukowsi. All of these songs have something to do with things that have happened to me. Once you transfer experiences into a piece of art it makes me feel better about understanding why it happened.

WHEN WILL YOU KNOW YOU HAVE REACHED THE APEX OF ALL HEAVINESS?
It's like following a treasure map with no map or treasure. If I knew, there would be no point in doing this. FPH

Venomous Maximus album release October 20th 2012 @ Fitzgerald's with Mothership, Hamamatsu Tom & The Drink Tickets, and Brimwylf $10 All Ages 8pm

For more visit: www.venomousmaximus.com

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Must be 21 to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages.

Special Thanks to the Neal Hamil Agency and Dillard's.

Styling by Lenny Matuszewski and Tamara Bonar.

First 100 guests receive a complimentary wig from RockStar Wigs.

MFAH
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Hey, You. Don't Be A Dick.

BY BRIGITTE B. ZABAK ILLUSTRATION BY BLAKE JONES

IN THE MONTH LEADING UP TO WHAT IS SURE TO BE A CONTENTIOUS ALL-OUT BATTLE FOR THE TITLE OF MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE, PEOPLE WILL MOST CERTAINLY GET A LITTLE OFF-KILTER. IT DOES NOT MATTER IF YOU ARE LIBERAL, CONSERVATIVE, OR APATHETIC—CHANCES ARE YOU'VE HELD SO TRUE TO YOUR CONVICTIONS AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER THAT IT HAS TRANSFORMED YOU INTO AN UNBEARABLE ASSHOLE. SO, IN AN EFFORT TO RESTORE BALANCE AND MAKE NICE-NICE WITH OUR KARMA, WE AT FPH HAVE COMPILED A LIST OF HELPFUL TIPS TO REMIND YOU HOW NOT TO BE A DICK. YOU'RE WELCOME.

RULE #1 Your beliefs are your beliefs. They don't belong to anyone else but you, so think about that the next time you try to shove them down someone else's throat. It's okay if someone doesn't agree with you just as it's okay if you don't agree with someone else's beliefs or opinions. Diversity of thought is a beautiful thing. Embrace it and learn to listen and engage in respectful conversation instead of being an absolutist. Just because someone shares a differing theory doesn't mean you have to accept it as truth. You can just listen and share opposing points of view in a peaceful and respectful manner. Yay for adult-like conversation!

RULE #2 Please try to remember this: unless your day job involves working in, with, or around politics, politicians, policy analysis, legislative reform, or a political think tank of some sort – you are probably not an expert in political commentary. Yes, you are entitled to your own opinion but that doesn't mean we need to read or hear them as frequently as you believe we should.

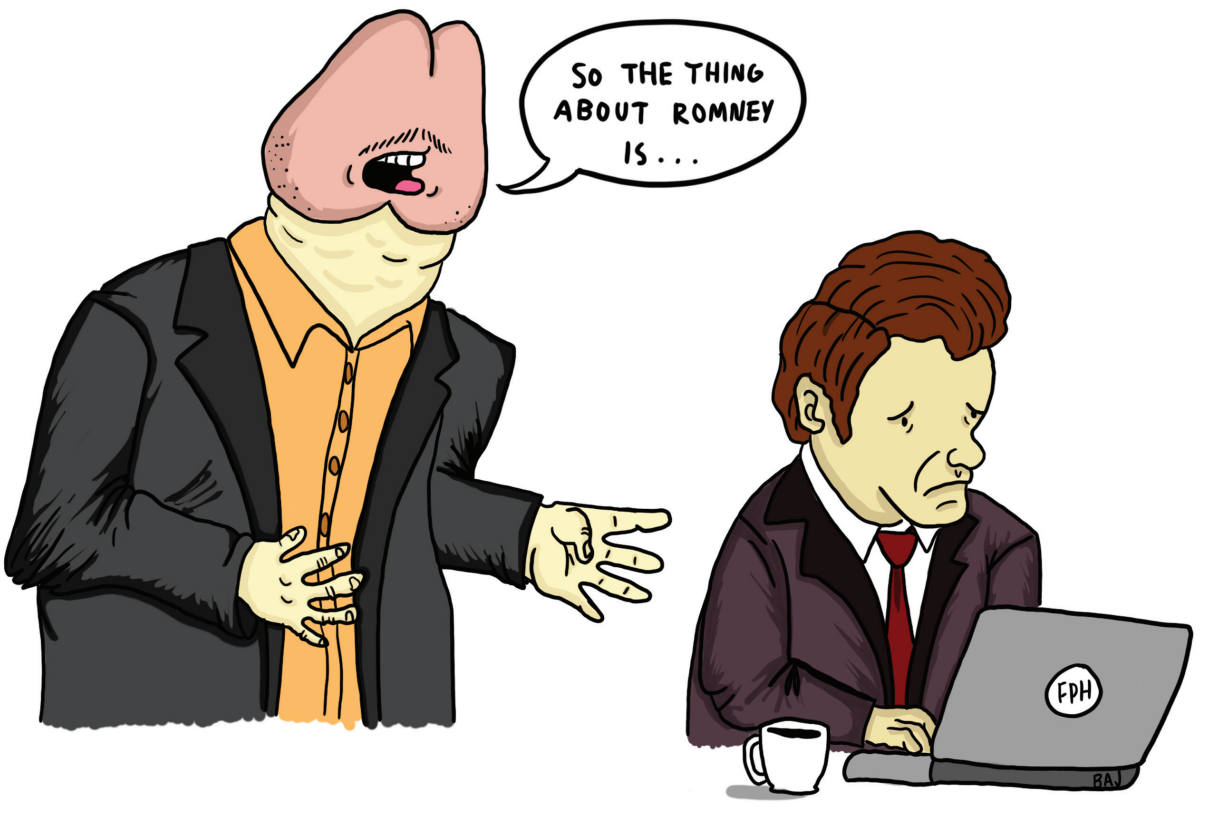
RULE #3 Don't assume. You've heard this cliché before and it bears repeating – mostly because it gives us the opportunity to use the word ass – "Don't assume. It makes an ASS out of you and me." It's silly, but it's true. You have no clue what another person is thinking or feeling. You probably know very little about their personal history or even how their day is going – so take the time to ask a question before you just up and decide you know exactly what is going on with someone else or with a specific situation. It's called communication, people; you should use it once in awhile.

RULE #4 Rule #4 serves as a companion suggestion to Rule #3. Whereas we sincerely hope you don't make blanket assumptions about a person or their personal history, we also hope that you will employ the same logical thinking when it comes to things you don't know shit about. For instance, say you're at a party and you wander into a heated conversation that has been in progress for awhile. The topic of that conversation is something that interests you but one that you don't know all that much about. But, hey, you've been drinking and you're bored, so do you: a) immediately butt into said conversation by offering up completely useless observations b) hijack the conversation and try to start a new one about something dumb like why you want to own a pet unicorn, or c) shut up and listen. Hint: the answer is C.

RULE #5 On a somewhat related note, your shitty mood is your shitty mood. At the risk of sounding like a hippie, your energy, good or bad, affects the people around you. Please consider this the next time you want to unleash your fury on the innocent folks who have to be around you at any given time. The old lady at the grocery store who just stopped in to pick up her monthly canister of Metamucil doesn't need your bad attitude. Conversely, if you're having a fantastic day, spread the love. Kindness goes a long, long way. There is no such thing as too much love or happiness.

SIMPLY PUT Just don't be a dick. It shouldn't be that hard. When you are faced with an opportunity to either be kind or be an absolute cunt, choose kindness.

FPH



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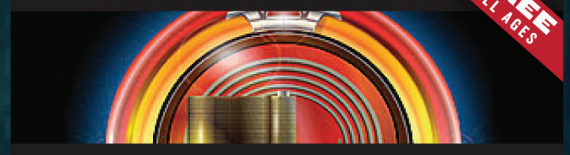
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OCT. **05** DINOSAUR JR.
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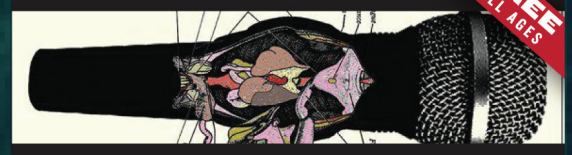


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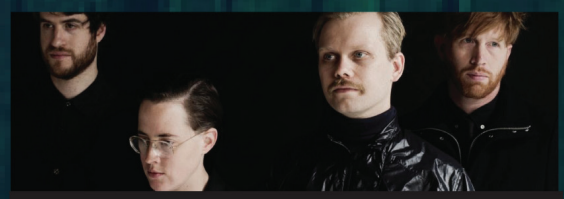
OCT. **10** DAN DEACON
WITH **HEIGHTS WITH FRIENDS + MORE**



OCT. **11** BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB
WITH **VACATIONER**



OCT. **12** TENNIS
WITH **WILD BELLE**



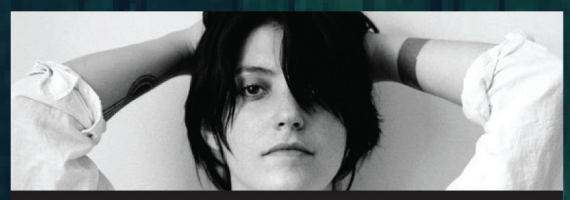
OCT. **17** LOWER DENS
WITH **WICKED POSEUR + BED MOVES**



OCT. **20** MEAT PUPPETS
WITH **INFINITE APACHE + MORE**



OCT. **29** MIKE WATT
AND **THE MISSING MEN**



NOV. **01** SHARON VAN ETTEN
WITH **DAMIEN JURADO + MORE**



NOV. **01** TOMAHAWK
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CENTRO-MATIC OCT. 25 | **CROCODILES** OCT. 28 | **OMAR RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ GROUP** OCT. 05

The Perfect Storm & the Damage Done

BY M. MARTIN
ILLUSTRATION BY SHELBY HOHL



AT THE END OF AUGUST a storm descended upon the sleepy Gulf city of Tampa. Not Hurricane Isaac, which forced the Republican Party to cut its convention agenda to three days. No, the storm was the convention—and just as more and deadlier hurricanes reflect wider and more dangerous changes in the world, so it is equally with the perfect storm that nominated Mitt Romney for the presidency. A week later, the Democratic Party gathered in another small southern city, were also challenged by bad weather but still managed to confirm Barack Obama as their standard bearer.

Let's be perfectly clear on a couple of things.

For starters, on a wide range of issues, the U.S. Republican and Democratic parties are little more than the right and left-handed sock puppets of global corporate capitalism. Neither party has shown any convincing interest in reining in the U.S. government's imperialist tendencies abroad or its recently expanded domestic police state apparatus. Neither party has shown any real interest in dismantling the corrupt political influence of corporate cash, or forcing corporations with U.S. interests to behave like U.S. citizens, or making anyone but lower income U.S. citizens bear the consequences of a largely unregulated financial sector.

Let's also be perfectly clear that anyone who thought they were supporting a progressive by voting for Obama in 2008 was either delusional or ill-informed or letting charismatic YouTube videos do their thinking for them. Obama may have masterfully used progressive rhetoric as a campaigner, but his thin legislative resume was determinedly moderate from the start. After four years as President, it is the rhetoric that is thin not the resume, and the progressive language has given way to a blunt defense of the status quo.

Those who knew what they were buying into but voted for him anyway have reason as well for buyer's remorse. With regard to civil liberties, the phony war on terror, and government secrecy, future historians may fairly describe the last 12 years as the "Bush/Obama Era". The fact that the United States continues to hold prisoners that have been denied due process of law and apparently intends to do so indefinitely is by itself a flagrantly broken promise that would, in any ordinary election year, put the President beyond any morally justifiable claim to a second term.

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SAN PEDRO, CA

SUN. 10/28
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R R

The problem is that this is not an ordinary election year. It is extremely easy to make the case that liberal democrats and progressive independents might as well sit this one out. Obama promised to be the Democratic equivalent of a Ronald Reagan, promised a permanent shift in the political dialog. What he delivered was a healthcare reform tailored to please Republicans who rejected it anyway. Oh yeah, and he "got" Osama bin Laden.

It's extremely easy to make the case that Mitt Romney and Barack Obama are both just facile apologists for an elitist power structure that has no intention of surrendering the gains acquired over the last thirty years of bipartisan corporate acquiescence that it doesn't matter which one of them "wins" a pointless and largely rigged contest.

It's also wrong. The consequences of an Obama second term are current status quo at worst, minor improvement in all likelihood, and—just maybe—a good deal more. A Romney presidency, in contrast, is a starkly dangerous proposition. Here's why:

Romney will be a lame duck from day one—in order to make it to the nomination, Romney—who started out as a suspiciously moderate and insufficiently Protestant political figure for current GOP tastes—has had to make one concession after another to the right-wing extremists who currently dominate his party. The GOP's latest poster boy for de-evolution, Todd Akin, has made this very clear. Romney carefully waited until after a consensus of party leaders made it clear it was "safe" to denounce Akin's bizarre notions of reproductive mechanics and women's rights. Then Romney and running mate Paul Ryan both asked Akin to step down from the Missouri Senate race. Akin, a Tea Party darling and favorite of delusional fundies, then told the putative leader of his party that "party bosses" were not going to tell him what to do and that he would stay in the race.

There is absolutely no reason to believe this pattern will change after the election. A Romney Presidency will function as a rubber stamp for every ridiculous piece of garbage legislation the nutjobs and zealots currently running the House manage to get past the Senate. If he attempts to use the one unignorable tool at his disposal—veto—he can expect to be paid back with the same hostility and stubbornness as greeted his predecessor.

Romney will further corrupt the Supreme Court—That's right: I said "corrupt." If there was ever a case for impeaching high court justices, the decisions that gave us the Bush Presidency and granted unregulated free speech to corporations has made that case, even though that impeachment will never occur. Even a one-term President Romney is going to have the opportunity to make at least one Supreme Court appointment. Count on that appointee being someone who makes Scalia look like a moderate. Assume that any proposed appointment will be tailored to legislate from the bench against reproductive rights, environmental protections, and anything approaching regulatory restraints on corporations or the financial sector. Even one further seat filled on the bench by a so-called "conservative" could have impact for decades. The risk is simply too great.

Romney will validate and accelerate the country's rightward drift—one of the most pernicious notions to arise from the right-wing commentariat is that America is a "Center-Right" country. This is ridiculous. The founders of this country went to great lengths to make sure that this is a "Center-Center" country. Unfortunately, they could not foresee the effect on our political process of massive concentrations of wealth having centralized control of information and communications media. America's supposed center-right status is almost entirely a matter of letting vested and far from impartial interests set the terms of public debate. A Romney win will be reported by Fox News and MSNBC alike as proof that the country has rejected Obama's tepid efforts at reform, and as evidence that the Tea Party Movement speaks for America.

It will also perpetuate even further what may well be the worst consequence of the Bush Presidency. Because, in the long run, the worst of Bush's many shameful legacies will not be the wanton squander of blood and treasure in Iraq and Afghanistan, not the embrace of casino capitalism, not the establishment of quasi-legal secret prisons where torture may be practiced and not even the effective overturn of the Bill of Rights. The worst consequence of the Bush Era is that these things have been permitted to exist long enough to be defined as normality. Even a mere four more years of permitting outrage to be legitimized by longevity is too many, particularly in a government that will be all too willing to find and exploit new atrocities. Even though his embrace of Bush's wars and state secrets makes Obama more than a little complicit in this state of affairs, there can be little doubt that a President Romney could only make them far worse.

In contrast, the worst we can expect from an Obama second term is merely a four year perpetuation of the current unsatisfactory state of the union. At best, a President no longer concerned with reelection and finally aware of the limits of bipartisanship might find a way to redeem at least a little of the promise and hope he squandered. Let's not forget that almost everything Reagan did to earn the lasting hero-worship of conservatives took place in his second term. Obama will never again have the opportunity he gave away—but he may yet have a pleasant surprise or two for this country's embattled progressives. As overdue as Obama's "evolution" has been on issues like marriage equality, at least he actually believes in evolution. His opponents neither believe in it nor practice it. Their intentions tend in the opposite direction.

Ultimately the answers for 21st century America are no more likely found within the current two-party duopoly than in the philosophies of John Adam's Federalists or John Quincy Adam's Whigs. We are long overdue for a fundamental re-examination of this country's basic political institutions. A Romney win will not circumvent that assessment—but it can postpone it and increase the cost. After forty years of backlash against the civil rights movement, thirty years of trickle-down economic fantasies and over a decade of ruinously expensive wars, this country has paid enough for the Republican Party's bad faith and worse governance. A solid GOP rebuke in the upcoming election is only a start - but it's a good start.

The one indisputable truth that both Bill Clinton and Barack Obama shared in their speeches, that Mitt Romney is betting his shot at the White House on America overlooking, is that the current state of affairs has been decades in the making... and will take more than a one-term president to fix. A vote for Barack Obama is neither a ringing endorsement of the Democratic Party's policies or a pass on its failures. It's a play for time, a purely defensive play against creeping authoritarianism. At best, it's an effort at giving the Occupy Movement (or something like it) a second and more effective chance. At worst, it is simply delaying the inevitable.

Arguably, Barack Obama doesn't deserve his second term—but we do. **FPH**


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NOV 1st - BROTHER CANE
FRIDAYS
OCT. 5 - WATTZIT2YA
OCT. 12 -HIGHWAY TO HELL
OCT. 19 - MANNY CHARELTON'S NAZARETH
KAT JAMES &TROUBLEMAKER
OCT. 26 - VICTIM WITH WINTER'S END
NOV. 2 - BLACK ROSE THE DAM TORPEDOES
SATURDAYS
OCT. 6 - THE DOGZ W/ AMERICAN SWINDLE
OCT. 13 - JD'S THROWDOWN BAND
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OCTOBER 27

Unfairly Balanced

BY HARBEER SANDHU
ILLUSTRATION BY SHELBY HOHL

IN THE CONTEMPORARY U.S., we expect our news to be unbiased, but this was not always the case.

According to University of Chicago economics professor Matthew Gentzkow, prior to the 1870s, newspapers in the US were explicitly partisan. Each town had its equivalent of a Republican newspaper and a Democrat newspaper, and the rhetoric was even more "heated" than it is today—filled with unrestrained emotional appeals, half-truths, mistruths, and ad hominem attacks. The newspapers of old had mission statements that laid out their partisan affiliation and they took money from political parties. Audiences had no expectation of "objectivity."

The reason newspapers in early US history were so partisan is because the cost of printing was very high—primarily because of the high cost of textile-based papers. Printing papers was an expensive business without much of a profit margin, so newspapers were dependent on political patronage. If they supported the winning party—if they helped that party get elected—then they could count on making money through lucrative printing contracts (like when new laws are passed, or how, to this day, marriage and death announcements are required to be announced in the papers, along with big property deals and such). Oftentimes, supportive publishers were given the cushy job of Postmaster General. Publishers had an economic incentive to keep their funders happy, even if that meant alienating a portion of their presumptive audience.

Then, in 1867, the process of making paper with pulped wood was invented, and the cost of publishing went way down. Additionally, literacy went up and the potential audience grew. The invention of the telegraph in 1844 meant that more and better information was available more quickly. Thus, supplying papers and information became cheaper as demand grew, so there was a greater potential for a higher profit margin. The economic incentive flipped—there was now more to be gained by attracting a greater readership, which could be achieved through more "balance" or by staying away from controversial subjects. There was more money to be made through high-volume sales than through political patronage, so publishers started becoming more interested in catering to consumer desires. (For more details on this, check out the NPR program Planet Money's episode #134, "The Price of Bias.")

In their seminal tome from 1986, Manufacturing Consent, Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky identify six filters, dubbed "the propaganda model," by which our allegedly unbiased, objective media reinforce the status quo and propagate the interests of the wealthy and powerful. I don't have room to get into too much detail about the six filters (media ownership by giant corporate conglomerates; funding through advertising; reporters' too-cozy relationships with powerful "sources;" flak; and anti-communism, which can be updated to also include anti-"terrorism") but I encourage you at least to read "the propaganda model's" Wikipedia entry. (If you're feeling more ambitious, check out Manufacturing Consent from your local library or watch the film version on Hulu.)

What you realize after reading Manufacturing Consent is that there is no such thing as an unbiased press. "Fair and balanced" is a myth—not just on Fox News, but also in any corporate media. Bias is expressed by the simple choice in which stories are covered and which ones are ignored.

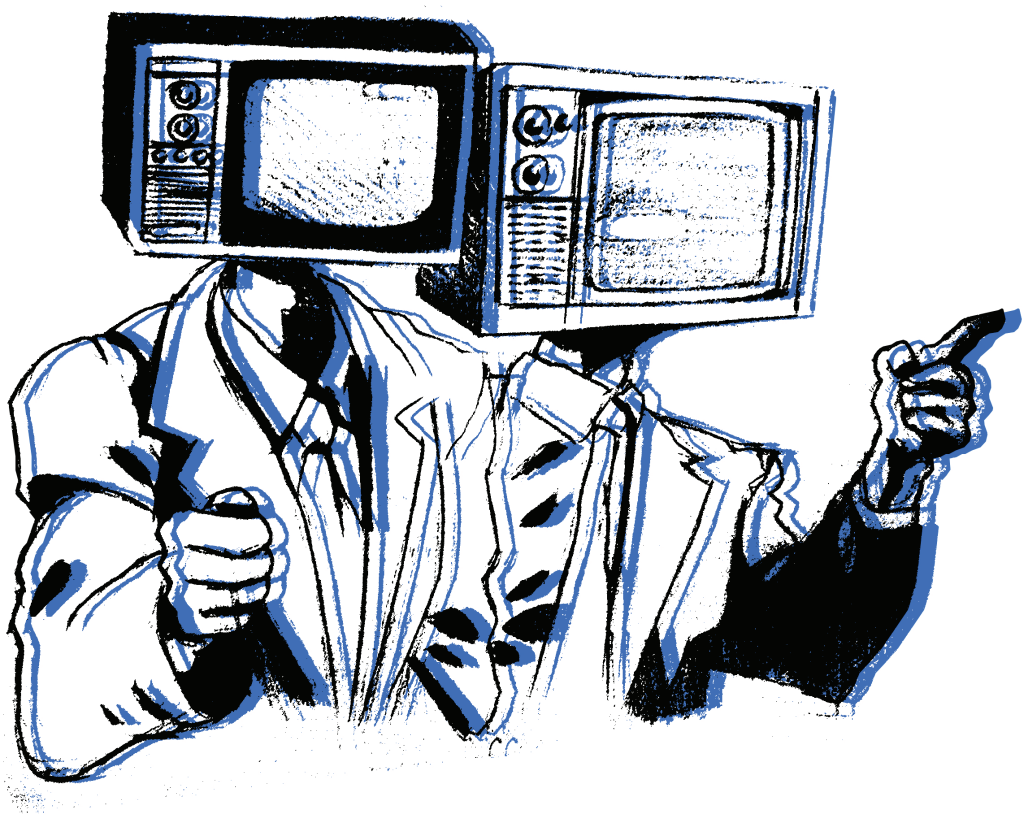
And can a paper or article that shows "both sides" of a story really be unbiased? Let's unpack that assumption—are there really only ever two sides to any given situation? Can the whole world be split into liberal vs. conservative, Democrat vs. Republican? Are the issues on which these sides agree not worth questioning, like "free trade," for example? Is it possible that there are other perspectives worth considering, perspectives that might fall outside of the liberal/conservative or Democrat/Republican paradigm?

Not only that, but even when "the two sides" are divided, is each side worthy of serious consideration? As Jon Stewart pointed out, using the climate change "debate" as an example, should news outlets be giving equal time to "both sides" of the climate debate? Is climate change a political issue, best described by "Democrats say" vs. "Republicans say" or is it a scientific issue? If you ask the scientists—there is no debate (unless you ask the small minority of scientists who are funded by fossil fuel industries).

Margaret Sullivan, the new public editor of the New York Times covered this very topic in her September 16 column, titled "He Said, She Said, and the Truth." She calls this "false balance" and defines it as "the journalistic practice of giving equal weight to both sides of a story, regardless of an established truth on one side."

Myself, I don't believe in "unbiased, fair-and-balanced" media. I don't think it exists, and believe it is actually outside the realm of possibility. I get most of my news from very biased, "independent," left-wing sources, and they acknowledge their bias. They also provide evidence for their claims. I like to check in on media watchdog groups like Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) and Media Matters, to get the story behind the story. Those groups do great meta-analysis of the news—they count how many times certain words are used, they check into the backgrounds of some of the talking heads (like when people who work for mercenary companies are invited onto news shows as "military experts"), they do the fact-checking that reporters don't consider part of their job description any more.

So, in the absence of unbiased media, and living in a climate where almost all the news that reaches our ears and eyeballs is vetted by the Chamber of Commerce, I just want to come out as an unabashed leftist. I make no claims of "balance." I think the general climate is unabashedly right-wing, and true balance is going to require more lefties to openly claim their own values. Yes—we support workers' rights. They are not whiny babies. **FPH**





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Bryan Stevenson

A Voice of Justice for All

BY WILL GUESS
PHOTOS COURTESY OF EQUAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

FOR THE MAJORITY OF HIS LIFE, Bryan Stevenson has fought against racial inequalities and injustices in the court system. A graduate of Harvard Law School and a professor at New York University, he started the Equal Justice Initiative in Alabama, which serves to defend people who have been treated unfairly and unjustly. He is a strong proponent of the anti-death penalty movement and one hell of an orator, receiving the biggest response ever at a TED talk. Stevenson is this year's Houston Peace & Justice Center's 2012 National Peacemaker Award recipient, an honor previously given to Helen Thomas, a former member of the White House Press Corps, and Jim Hightower, a syndicated columnist and political activist. He will be in town to accept the award on November 10 at The Artery, adding to his already stacked list of achievements. Stevenson was gracious enough to talk to FPH and share his thoughts about growing up with racism, his organization and the death penalty.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH RACISM?

Well, I grew up in a poor rural community and so as a small child we were dealing with the last vestiges of Jim Crowe. I didn't go to the public school. I started my education at a local movie theater that was still racially segregated. The teachers were racially segregated. I think that it wasn't clear to me just how structured things were until there was integration at the schools, and that's when we encountered all of the growing pains that many of these communities went through when the Supreme Court's rulings that banned racially segregated education took effect. And there was always evidence of racial hierarchy and racial subordination; I just kind of grew up with that. Things got better over time in terms of the more dramatic aspects of racial inequality. It was very much a part of my early childhood.

WHY DID YOU START THE EQUAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE? WHAT DRIVES YOU TO DO THE WORK THAT YOU DO?

While I was very interested in race and poverty generally when I went to law school, it was really in the criminal justice system that I saw tremendous challenges and tremendous needs. I first met someone on death row when I was a law student and it was really hard for me to accept that there were people in this country who were literally dying for legal assistance - people who couldn't get the legal help they needed and were going to be executed as a result of that. So I started working in the criminal justice area and on death penalty cases and excessive punishment cases right out of law school. A few years into that it just became clear that Alabama was a place where there were critical unmet needs and I decided to start a project there. There was no public defender system; there were huge problems with reliability of these convictions and sentences. It just felt like there was a need to have some institutional response and I started the project and it has been going ever since.

DO YOU THINK A SOCIETY SHOULD BE JUDGED BASED ON HOW IT TREATS THE LOWER CLASS?

I think it does and certainly a commitment to the rule of law and the character of our commitment to justice has to be measured in that arena. I don't think you can look at how we treat powerful, privileged, protected people and have any real understanding of our commitment to law. I think when we judge ourselves that way we have a lot of work to do.

ONE OF YOUR MAIN GOALS IS TO GET THE DEATH PENALTY ABOLISHED IN ALABAMA. HOW CLOSE DO YOU THINK YOU ARE TO MAKING THAT A REALITY?

My goal really is to end the death penalty everywhere, not just in Alabama. There are some encouraging signs. We've had five states in the last five years abolish the death penalty and no states had abolished the death penalty for almost 40 years prior to that. So, that's an encouraging trend. I've been involved in some work in California where there's going to be a referendum this November where we have a real shot at ending the death penalty there, which would be huge. That would reduce the death row population in this country by about 20 percent. All of these developments have me encouraged. Places like Alabama and Texas are probably going to be the last bastions of capital punishment but if there's success anywhere on this issue, I interpret that as success everywhere.

DO YOU THINK SERVING THE REST OF YOUR LIFE IN PRISON IS MORE OF A TORTURE THAN DYING?

For some clients, it is harder for them to confront a sentence of life in prison without parole than the death penalty. There are other people who recognize that where there's life, there's hope and see in any sentence that's less than execution the possibility for change, recovery and rehabilitation. I think it depends on the client and the situation. I do believe that when we execute somebody we are doing something. It's not just a person who is executed that is implicated by that punishment but the whole society is, and because I think that that is a



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OCT. 12 -HIGHWAY TO HELL
OCT. 19 - MANNY CHARELTON'S NAZARETH

KAT JAMES &TROUBLEMAKER
OCT. 26 - VICTIM WITH WINTER'S END
NOV. 2 - BLACK ROSE THE DAM TORPEDOES

SATURDAYS
OCT. 6 - THE DOGZ W/ AMERICAN SWINDLE
OCT. 13 - JD'S THROWDOWN BAND
OCT. 20 - ADAM AND EVE PARTY

OCT. 27 - HALLOWEEN PARTY W/ SUBDIVIDED & BLACK DOG
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YOUR TEXANS FOOTBALL HEAD QUARTERS

• OCTOBER EVENTS •

FRIDAYS
OCT. 5 - JD'S THROWDOWN BAND
OCT. 12 - TREY GADLER & DEAD MAN'S HAND
OCT. 19 - SPARE HEART & BENASTAR

OCT. 26 - HIGHWAY TO HELL
NOV. 2 - BAND TBA

SATURDAYS
OCT. 6 - FAUX DOUBT
OCT. 13 - ROCK TIL U DROP, SLIP OF THE SNAKE , & METAL MAIDEN

OCT. 20 - THE SPICOLLI'S
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fundamental violation of basic human rights and human dignity that should never be permitted. There are lots of people who have been really damaged by illness, neglect and a whole range of things. We have to find ways to provide for humane and appropriate care and management of those folks. But generally, I think we need punishment that is more hopeful than the punishment we have.

WHY NOT EXECUTE SOMEONE WHO HAS PROVEN THEY DON'T HAVE REGARD FOR HUMAN LIFE? WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE DEATH PENALTY?

First of all, the question of the death penalty really isn't, in my mind, about whether people deserve to die for the crimes they've committed. There have been some really tragic and awful crimes that people have committed that we have seen. I think the question about the death penalty is do we deserve to kill. Do we have a system of justice that is fair and reliable, that is not affected by racial bias, discrimination against the poor or politics? I don't believe we have that kind of system and because of that, I don't think we can presume to do something like execute someone when we will not have the power to correct the mistake. For every nine people that we've executed in this country, we've identified one innocent person. That should cause us to stop immediately with executions and it's not because everybody is innocent because they're not. It's about our commitment to a system that is reliable and accurate which we can't have with the current issues that we're dealing with. I think that's number one. Number two, even when people have committed very severe crimes and there's no question about their guilt, we have to think differently about what we do in response. We don't rape people who are guilty of rape, we don't assault people who have been convicted of assault and we don't torture people who have been convicted of torture. We don't do these things because it would undermine our integrity and our dignity to engage in those kinds of acts. In the state of Texas, to pay someone to go rape people in prison would be obscene. Yet, we kill people who kill. I think the same logic that causes us to say no when it comes to raping rapists or abusing abusers ought to cause us to not kill those who have killed. Because we can do it at night in what appears to be this sterile way, doesn't justify what we're doing. It's still taking another human life. And finally, I actually have met hundreds of people who have been sentenced to death and there are a lot about whom I can say this person may never be released and should never be released. I've never met anybody who I can say is beyond hope, redemption, recovery or progress - even in people who have committed some pretty terrible crimes.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT PEOPLE WHO SAY THAT RACE ISN'T A PROBLEM WHEN IT COMES TO INCARCERATION?

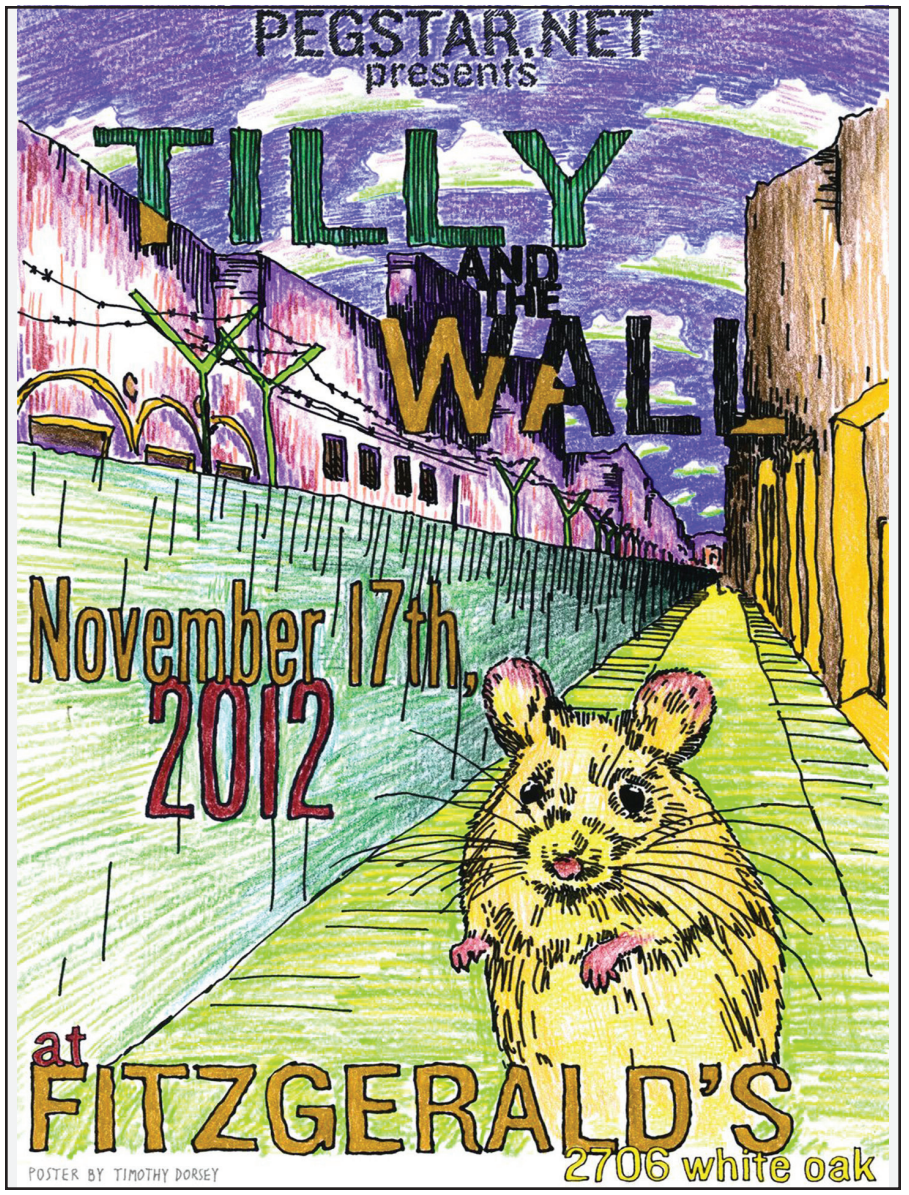
The analysis and the data don't bear that out. We are finding just incredible disparities that are really not explained by anything other than race consciousness. I've been doing a lot of work with children who have been sentenced to life in prison without parole. About 75 percent of the children under the age of 14 that have been sentenced to life without parole are black or brown children. It's not because they are committing 75 percent of the crimes. There are thousands of majority children, white children, who are engaging in these same kinds of acts who are not receiving these sentences. I think that our system has too few decision makers of color. In my state of Alabama, all of the appellate court judges are white and all but one of the prosecutors are white. We have a horrific problem with excluding African-Americans from serving on juries. The absence of perspectives of colors on these juries contributes to a distance with minority defendants that often times gives them much worse outcomes. The policies themselves are sometimes bias - they reveal race consciousness. And the way we overly punish some kinds of drugs crimes but under punish some kinds of DUI crimes - it's reflective of that. You don't have to look really hard to see tremendous evidence of racial disparity and racial bias in the criminal justice system. **FPH**

You can read the full interview online at freepresshouston.com

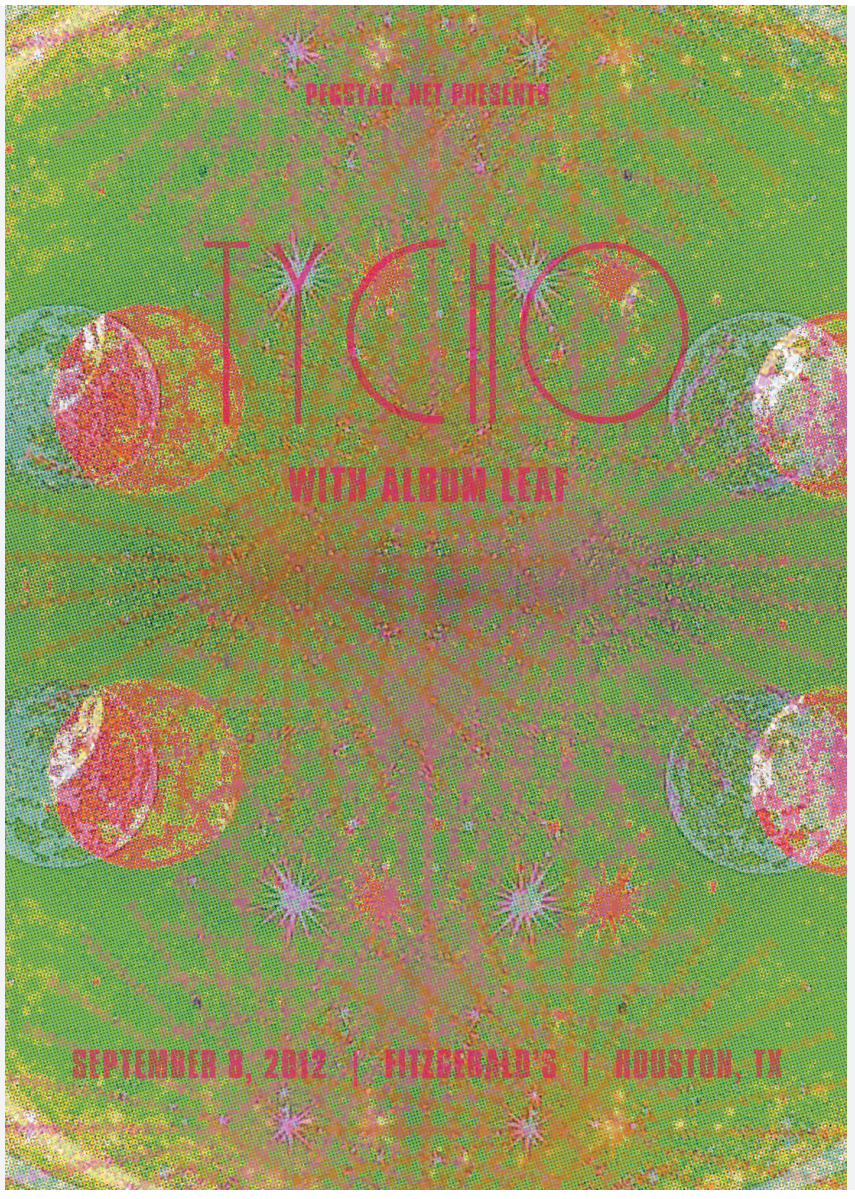
For more information on the Houston Peace & Justice Center, visit hpjc.org

For more information on Bryan Stevenson and the Equal Justice Initiative, visit eji.org




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Vagina Voting Guide

BY AMANDA HART
ILLUSTRATION BY BLAKE JONES

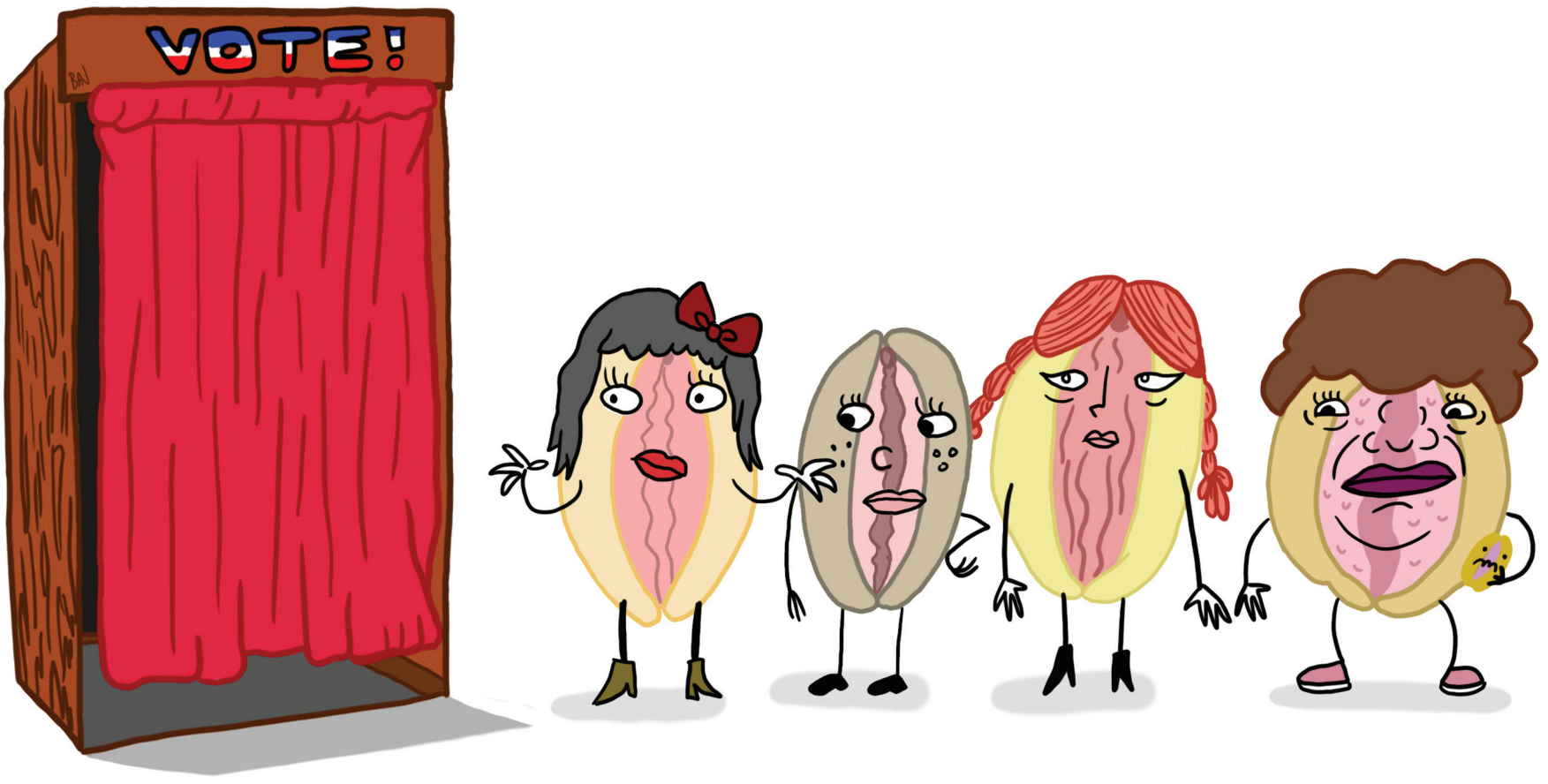
IT HAS BEEN A ROUGH FEW YEARS to own a vagina. In 2011 alone, there were 711 anti-choice measures enacted across the country. Texas, as we all know, didn't exactly wave its "We <3 Vagina" flag. We lost the Texas Women's Health Program effectively leaving low-income women without access to birth control and life-saving cancer screenings all because the federal government would not allow our legislators to exclude Planned Parenthood from the service providers list. Just this year, 430,000 women will be left without birth control, cervical exams, breast exams, STD testing, and other basic health care due of the loss of this program and budget cuts. Governor Perry also signed a mandatory ultrasound bill into law this past legislative cycle. This bill requires that all women seeking abortions be subject to a transvaginal ultrasound at least 24 hours prior to their procedure (including those who are victims of a sexual assault or incest). And if having a giant heartbeat-seeking dildo shoved up your twat wasn't invasive enough, women must also now view and listen to a detailed description of the fetus. And, just for good measure, the House and Senate cut the family planning budget from $111 million down to $38 million. These cuts have left over 300,000 women without family planning services and, according to our Legislative Budget Board, will result in 20,000 more unplanned pregnancies, costing taxpayers a total of $231 million. With all of that in mind, we here at the Free Press Houston decided that a Vagina Voting Guide was highly needed for our upcoming election. We urge you to do your own research of the candidates but here is a good jumping off point for candidates that will be appearing on your ballot this election season.

A great source for such candidates is the Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast Action Fund. Here is the official list of candidates they have endorsed in our area:

Al Green for U.S. Representative District 9
Sheila Jackson Lee for U.S. Representative District 18
Gene Green for U.S. Representative District 29
Mario Gallegos, Jr. for Texas Senate District 6
Rodney Ellis for Texas Senate District 13
John Whitmire for Texas Senate District 15
Craig Eiland for Texas House District 23
Vy Nguyen for Texas House District 26
Ron Reynolds for Texas House District 27
Alma Allen for Texas House District 131
Gene Wu for Texas House District 137
Sylvester Turner for Texas House District 139
Armando Walle for Texas House District 140
Senfronia Thompson for Texas House District 141
Harold Dutton for Texas House District 142
Ana Hernandez Luna for Texas House District 143
Mary Ann Perez for Texas House District 144
Carol Alvarado for Texas House District 145
Borris Miles for Texas House District 146
Garnet Coleman for Texas House District 147
Jessica Farrar for Texas House District 148
Hubert Vo for Texas House District 149
Vince Ryan for Harris County Attorney
Adrian Garcia for Harris County Sheriff
Traci Jensen for State Board of Education, District 6

And last but not least, the Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast Action Fund has endorsed Barack Obama for U.S. President. Well, duh. Mitt Romney in March of this year made the following statement, "Planned Parenthood, we're going to get rid of that." The best part is when a follow-up question asking where women would go after Planned Parenthood was eliminated Mitt said, "Well they can go wherever they'd like to go. This is a free society." Oh, well okay as long as we are clear on that. Romney also came out in support of the Blunt amendment, which would allow your employer to deny you access to birth control through your insurance company based on "moral" conviction. Romney also thinks that states should be allowed to ban contraception, and supports "personhood" amendments that would define life at conception.

For the love of all vaginas, please get out and vote! FPH







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Drill Baby Drill

Part Two

BY NICK COOPER
ILLUSTRATION BY SHELBY HOHL



FOUR YEARS AGO, at the 2008 Republican National Convention in St. Paul, MN, activists from Rainforest Action Network, Codepink, Veterans for Peace, Oil Change International, and others followed the Texas Republican delegates around to their parties and events. The activists dressed up as "oil company executives who were cheering them on," says Antonia Juhasz, author of The Tyranny of Oil. Houston activist David Graeve explains that the activists were using satire "to bring attention to the influence of money and oil in the campaign."

Across town, Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele stayed up until 2am working on his speech for the next day, debating whether to include the slogan, "Drill, baby, drill." Erik Rush, a conservative blogger, had used it a few days earlier:

"Guns, baby, guns" was the call of black militants during the civil rights movement, who reasoned that armed rebellion was the only way blacks would realize the fullness of their constitutional rights. So perhaps "drill, baby drill" ought to be the mantra of those proponents of drilling for new oil.

The expression also brings to mind "Burn, Baby, Burn," which was associated with the 1965 Watts Riots in Los Angeles (and of course the 1976 song "Disco Inferno"). It was also invoked during the California electricity crisis of 2000 and 2001; an Enron trader was recorded chanting "burn, baby, burn" during a forest fire that would further raise the price of electricity.

With the history of the phrase inextricably linked to guns, riots, and disaster, it couldn't connote a very conscientious policy. So, Steele thought twice about using it. In a recent interview with Greenwire, Steel recalled, "I was worried about how it would be received in the convention hall." He was aware it might sound like a celebration of recklessness.

The activists were coming up with phrases to encapsulate the same culture of recklessness. Juhasz remembers brainstorming, "We were struggling. How would you cheer on oil drilling? And we came up with, 'Drill! Drill! Drill!' Then our parody was topped by the reality that night..."

With no taste of irony, and with increasing pride and volume, the audience inside the convention hall chanted "Drill, baby, drill" during Steele and Palin's speeches. Oil company executives could never have imagined such success at branding their product. The activists stood stunned.

"When we heard them chanting it inside," said Graeve, "we were like oh my god - do we have folks inside too?!" Jeff Grubler, an activist from a group called The Ronald Reagan Home for the Criminally Insane, said when they heard that chant, "we were all blown away."

After spending days trying to come up with the most biting parody of this culture, their targets had come up with the perfect parody themselves, and wore it with pride. How could you satire such people?

Four years later, the Republican Party's energy plan hasn't improved one drop. Both ABC News and Time Magazine have referred to Republicans' energy plan as an extension of "Drill, baby, drill."

For Juhasz, the Republicans are, "utterly ignoring the idea that there are consequences like climate change. At least in 2008 there was a feint in that direction. In 2012, it's been eviscerated."

For Juan Parras, of the non-profit organization Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (TEJAS), the poor are always closest to the pollution of extraction, spills, and refining. "There is an extensive risk," he says, "that we have to assume in communities for the sake of 'progress' and profit for those that benefit from it."

Though Juhasz still sees significant differences between the parties' positions on regulation, she says that since 2008, the Democrats also have moved closer to the energy industry's positions.

However, it is the Republicans who proudly embrace the most destructive policies. In their 2012 platform, in a section titled "Reining in the EPA," they enshrine wholesale deregulation:

The most powerful environmental policy is liberty, the central organizing principle of the American Republic... Liberty must remain the core energy behind America's environmental improvement.

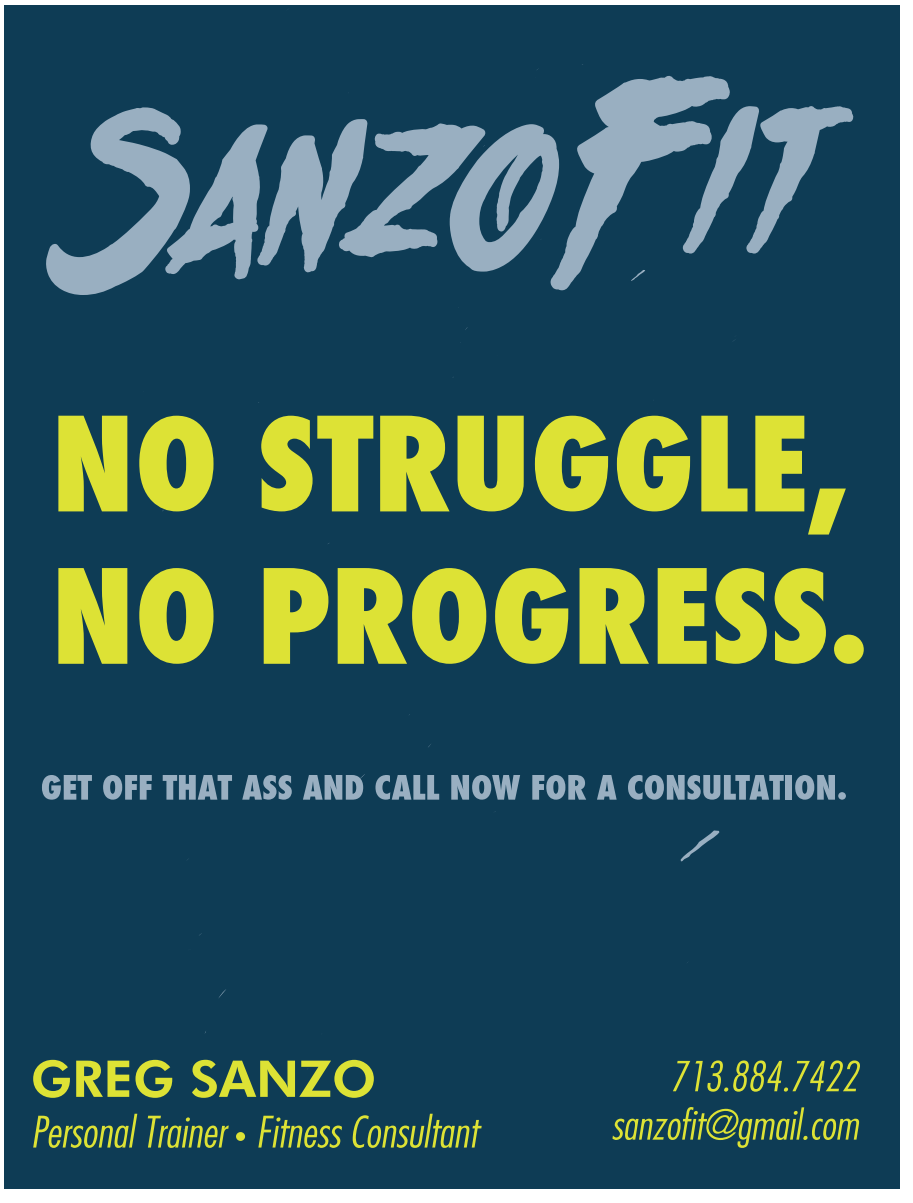
Houston Tomorrow's Jay Blazek Crossley responds, "It is the role of the government to properly assign external costs. When a government fails to do this, we reach the least optimal economic solution and impose an oligarchic order where the wealthy are polluting and extracting profits at the expense of the health and quality of life of the bulk of the people."

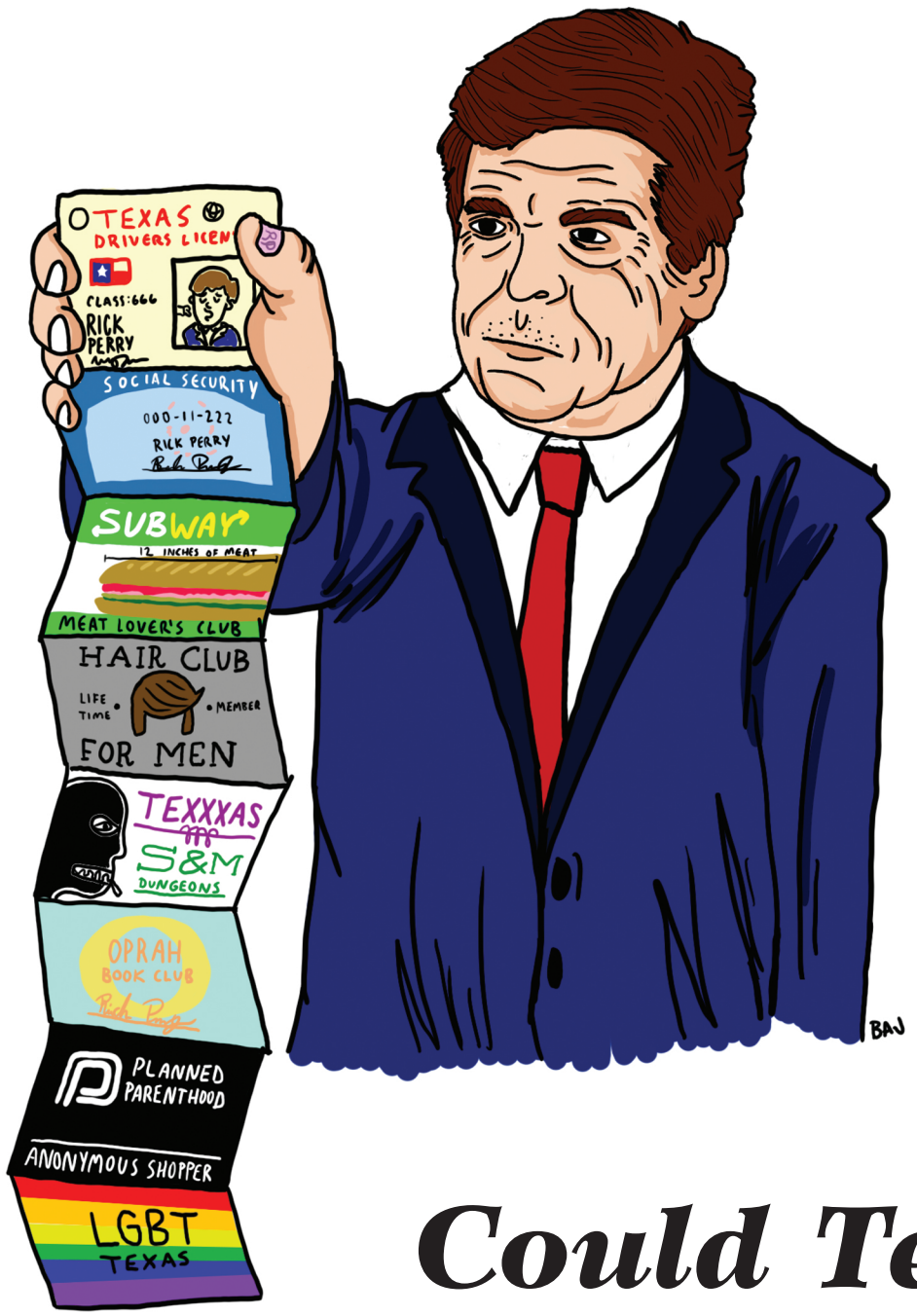
"We have to save ourselves," says Juan Parras. "Those in authority are not looking seriously at those issues that are having an impact on low-income communities. We should be pushing for a clean environment instead of 'Drill, baby, drill'." **FPH**


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BY AMANDA HART
ILLUSTRATION BY BLAKE JONES

Could Texas Become a Swing State?

A LOOK AT HOW PROPOSED VOTER ID LEGISLATION IS ATTEMPTING TO SILENCE THE MINORITY VOTE

THIS PAST MONTH a Federal District Court, along with a little help from the Voting Rights Act of 1965, thankfully struck down the recently passed Texas voter ID law, SB 14. The law would have required voters to show a government issued identification to be able to cast a ballot this election cycle. A letter from the Justice Department to the state of Texas clearly outlines why Texas can't have nice things, "We conclude that the total number of registered voters who lack a driver's license or personal identification card issued by DPS could range from 603,892 to 795,955. The disparity between the percentages of Hispanics and non-Hispanics who lack these forms of identification ranges from 46.5 to 120.0 percent. That is, according to the state's own data, a Hispanic registered voter is at least 46.5 percent, and potentially 120.0 percent, more likely than a non-Hispanic registered voter to lack this identification. Even using the data most favorable to the state, Hispanics disproportionately lack either a driver's license or a personal identification card issued by DPS, and that disparity is statistically significant."

The three-judge panel of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia stated in their ruling, "The State of Texas enacted a voter ID law that—at least to our knowledge—is the most stringent in the country. That law will almost certainly have retrogressive effect: it imposes strict, unforgiving burdens on the poor, and racial minorities in Texas are disproportionately likely to live in poverty."

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is really what saved Texas voters this election cycle. According to Section 5 under the act, Texas must obtain clearance from the Justice Department's civil rights division or a federal court prior to any changes being allowed in regards to elections. The reason for the section in the act is due to the racist history that the South established in its past. Many states in the South have a history of discriminating against minorities at the polls and due to this history we must seek permission from the justice department before any changes can be made. According to the Associated Press, "An analysis by the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University's law school found that 11 percent of Americans lack a government-issued photo ID such as a passport, driver's license, state ID card or military ID. Nine percent of whites don't have such ID, compared with 25 percent of blacks and 16 percent


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of Hispanics." It would appear that section 5 of the act could predict the future quite well. I mean, we are attempting to enact a variation of racist laws that would do nothing but suppress the minority vote.

Luckily the ruling was handed down so close to election day that our state rulers will have to wait till the next election cycle to attempt to silence Texas voters. The American Civil Liberties Union has estimated that 1.5 million voters in Texas could be kept from casting a ballot once the law is allowed to take effect. According to the ACLU, this will have a devastating impact on minority voters as well as college students, the elderly and economically disadvantaged populations.

Our attorney general, Greg Abbott, vowed to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court. In a statement issued the day of the ruling Mr. Abbott contested, "The Supreme Court of the United States has already upheld Voter ID laws as a constitutional method of ensuring integrity at the ballot box. Today's decision is wrong on the law and improperly prevents Texas from implementing the same type of ballot integrity safeguards that are employed by Georgia and Indiana - and were upheld by the Supreme Court. The State will appeal this decision to the U.S. Supreme Court, where we are confident we will prevail." It would appear, based on this statement, that Mr. Abbott is confused by the term "election integrity." I think what he meant to say was "voter disenfranchisement." And leave it to Rick Perry to always have something 'insightful' to say. The day of the ruling he released this in a statement, "Chalk up another victory for fraud. Today, federal judges subverted the will of the people of Texas and undermined our effort to ensure fair and accurate elections." Careful Texas, the courts might just give Perry another reason to threaten secession.

Republicans across the country are masking their attempts to disenfranchise the minority vote by claiming that voter fraud is running rampant in our country. A claim that no matter how high of a mountain top they yell it from is just not backed up by any form of valid proof. A measly five formal voting complaints involving voter impersonation were filed with the Texas Attorney General's Office from 2008 to 2010. And nationwide since 2007, only 120 charges and 86 convictions were documented. These numbers simply do not justify putting 1.5 million Texans at risk of not being allowed to vote.

The United States Attorney General Eric Holder told the N.A.A.C.P. that the Texas law's requirements were no different than a poll tax. This is also what the three judge panel was highly concerned with when they handed down their verdict. Economically disadvantaged populations should not be burdened with the costs of acquiring a birth certificate or be forced to travel hundreds of miles, as in some cases in rural parts of Texas, just to acquire proper identification to vote. Texas lacks a driver's license office in a third of its counties. And interestingly enough, while Texas lawmakers claim they are willing to foot the bill for people to acquire proper identification, they consistently vote against extending office hours or offering weekend hours, effectively making it incredibly difficult for the working class to be able to get the proper identification.

The effects that voter I.D. laws could have on the youth vote is also being analyzed. According to Cathy Cohen, a University of Chicago expert on young and minority voters, "Our estimates are conservative. We are looking at demobilization from 9 to 25 percent. If young people really have valid IDs at a rate of only 25 or even 50 percent, the number of young people of color disenfranchised will be even greater than what we estimate." According to their findings it is estimated that the voter identification laws currently being enacted across the country could potentially disenfranchise, "475,000 young black voters, 250,000 young Hispanic voters, 46,000 Asian-American voters, 6,400 young Native American voters, and 2,700 young Pacific Islander voters."

The conservative white men who run our state seem to be highly concerned with allowing non-whites to exercise their right to vote. It might have something to do with political analyst citing that as early as 2020 we could see Texas turn blue. The republican strong hold in Texas has plagued us for decades. I mean, we did elect Rick Perry to govern our state now for the last 12 years. The Hispanic population in Texas is causing republicans in Texas to hyperventilate. According to the Center for American Progress, a Washington-based policy research and educational institute, over 2 million voting-age Latinos are not registered to vote in Texas. And with the Hispanic population only expected to continue to grow, you begin to understand why our white legislators are really attempting to disenfranchise minority voters at the polls. Well, mainly because they aren't the minority anymore and have the numbers and ability to remove these bastards from office. The future of Texas is looking brighter and brighter.

Reminder: Don't forget to bring your voter registration certificate to the polls. If you have lost your little yellow card here are some other forms of ID that are considered acceptable identification: driver's license, state issued identification card, birth certificate, passport, paycheck or a utility bill with your name and address on it. Early voting will be held October 22nd through November 2nd so if long lines are not your thing be sure to hit the polls early. If you can't make it out early be sure to get to the polls on November 6th. You can check your voting status and polling location information online at www.VoteTexas.gov. FPH

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