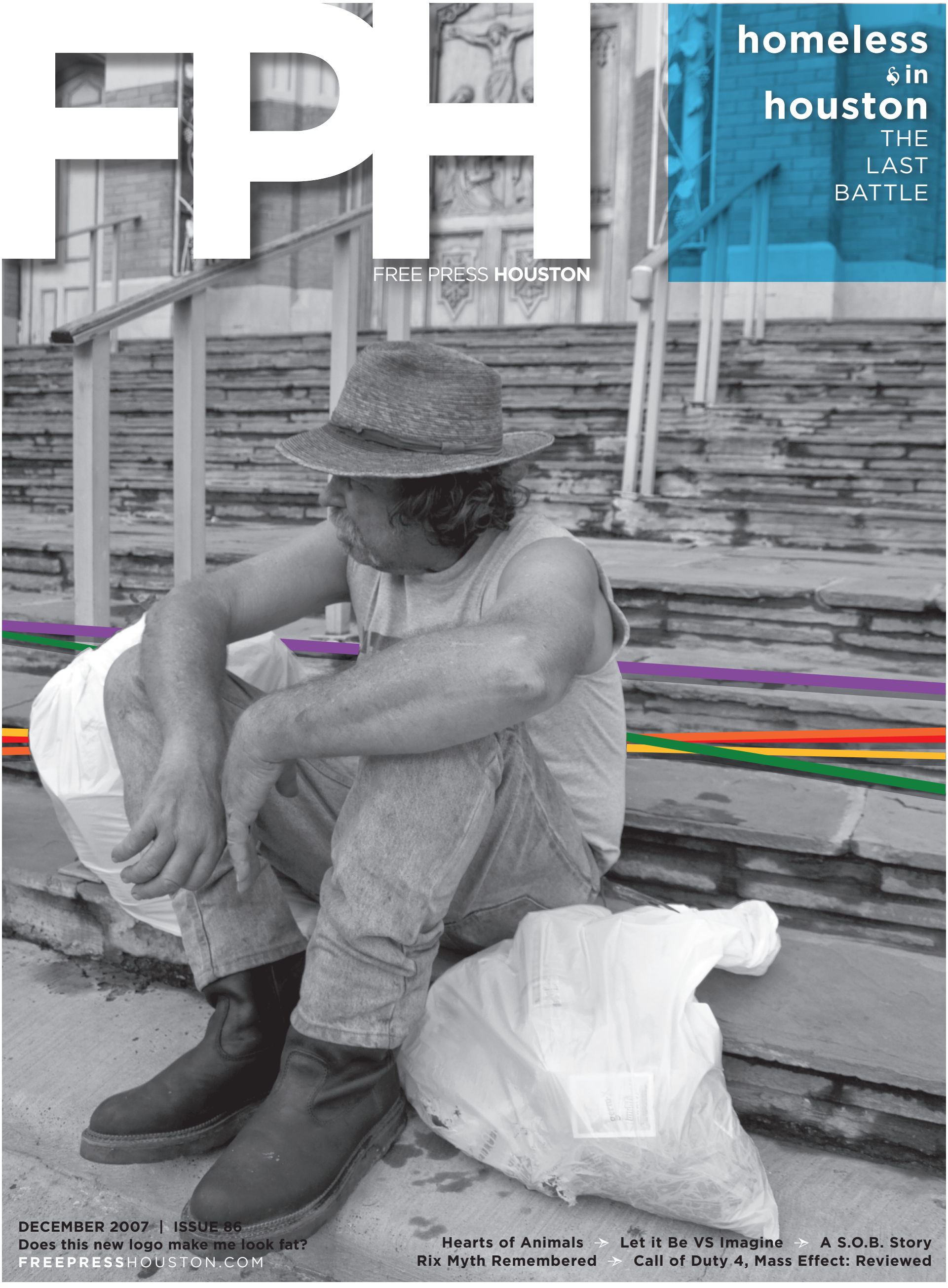
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THE LAST BATTLE



DECEMBER 2007 | ISSUE 86

Does this new logo make me look fat?

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Hearts of Animals ➛ Let it Be VS Imagine ➛ A S.O.B. Story
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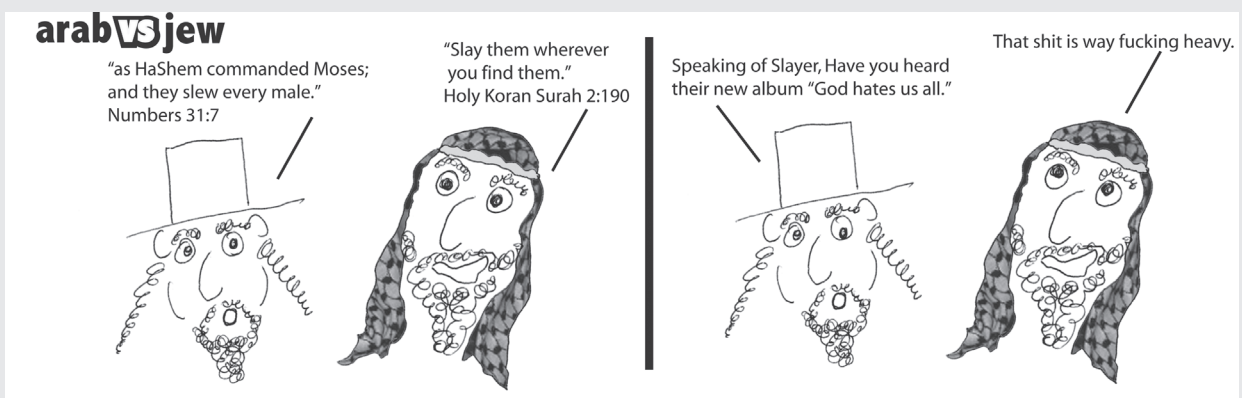
Feel Free to Take Us Seriously

a formal declaration

Montrose's SECESSION FROM Houston Proper

Having lost all affinity, identification, and kinship with the larger Houston Metropolitan area, The Montrose duly hereby declares independence and all of the municipal sovereignty thereby implied. The city of Montrose will no longer be subject to the jurisdiction of any City of Houston municipal entity including but not limited to Houston Police Department, Parks and Recreation, METRO, Finance and Administration, Houston Independent School District, or any department other than Solid Waste Management or Houston Fire Department. Subsequently, we also declare ourselves not subject to any local law, city ordinance, municipal tax, or any other despotic edict put forth. Hence, all City of Houston employees, officials, or police officers present within our territory shall be deemed anathema. We have declared our borders to be both simple and accurate: Allen Parkway and Highway 59 on our North and South and Bagby and Shepherd for East and West. All territory residing within these boundaries shall be ruled indefinitely by the City of Montrose and all of it's elected governing bodies. All magistracy and province of these areas from the City of Houston shall be null and void. Our mayor pro-tem shall be Christopher Hutto (Mr. Beer). City hall will temporarily reside at our distinguished mayor's favorite watering hole, Catbird's Bar at 1336 Westheimer until a more respectable place is found.

This letter shall be sent to Houston Mayor Bill White's office via registered mail.



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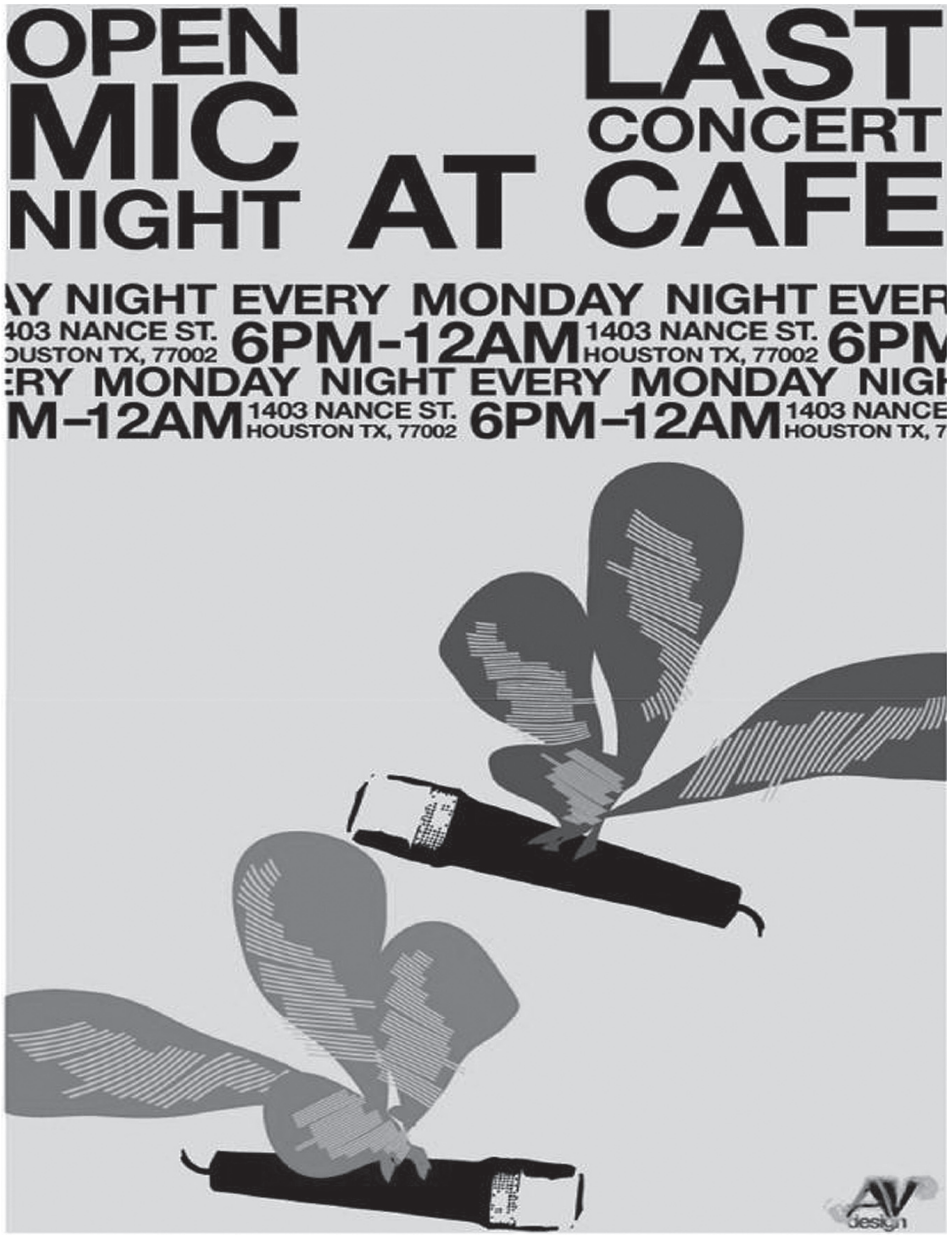
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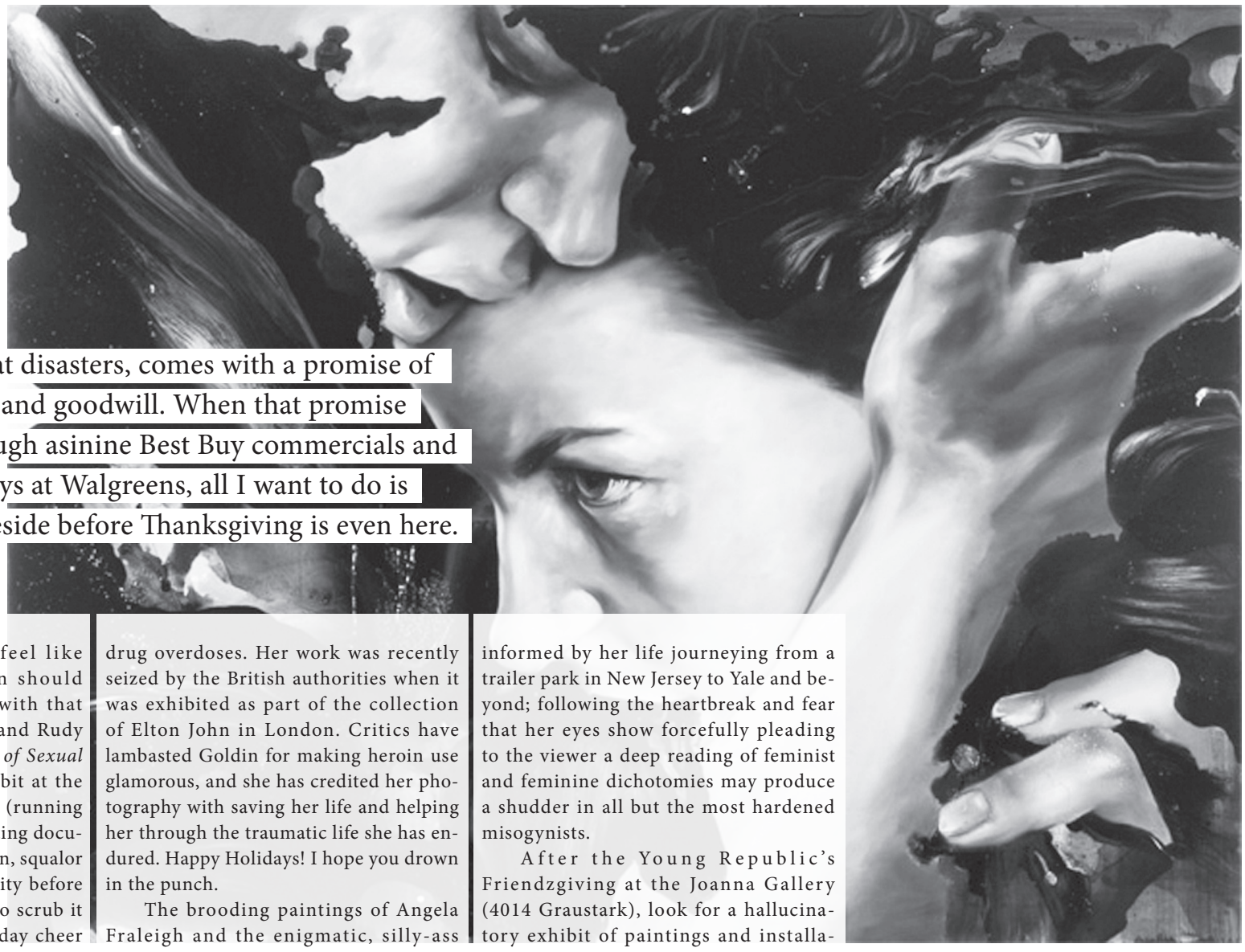

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DEBRIS: KILL ALL ELVES

By Buffalo Sean



December, like all great disasters, comes with a promise of new beginnings, hope and goodwill. When that promise starts in October through asinine Best Buy commercials and glitter and glam displays at Walgreens, all I want to do is hang myself by the fireside before Thanksgiving is even here.

For all those who feel like the holiday season should be drowned along with that new Disney movie and Rudy Giuliani; cheer up! *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* photography exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (running through February 12) is a haunting document of addiction and depression, squalor and sadness set in New York City before the Republicans had a chance to scrub it clean that will bring your holiday cheer back down to earth. Nan Goldin ran away from her home at a young age and grew up in foster care all over the east coast. At 20 she had her first exhibit examining the gay and transvestite communities in Boston. In the punk and new-wave vibe of New York she found the vibrant but disturbed hard drug culture of the Bowery, where she focused her attention on relationships in snapshots of bedrooms and hotel rooms. Most of her subjects in *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* were dead by the 90s, victims of violence, AIDS or drug overdoses. Her work was recently seized by the British authorities when it was exhibited as part of the collection of Elton John in London. Critics have lambasted Goldin for making heroin use glamorous, and she has credited her photography with saving her life and helping her through the traumatic life she has endured. Happy Holidays! I hope you drown in the punch.

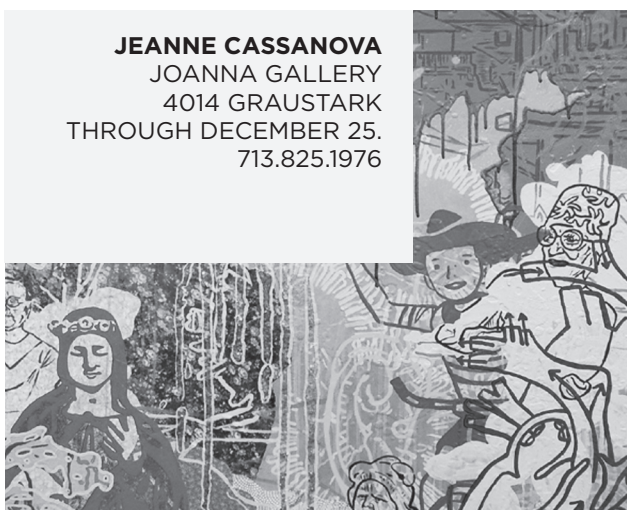
The brooding paintings of Angela Fraleigh and the enigmatic, silly-ass sculptures of Michael Jones McKean will be on display though the month at Inman Gallery (3901 Main). These two former CORE Fellows at the Glassell School came through Houston on their way to the big top, and they have been exceedingly successful since they left the bayou for greener pastures. Fraleigh's emotional life is played out in tearful embraces and wild-eyed terror as lush and realistic figures hemmed in by thick, dark brushstrokes and bleeding drips of oils. Her protagonists, always her own visage, are informed by her life journeying from a trailer park in New Jersey to Yale and beyond; following the heartbreak and fear that her eyes show forcefully pleading to the viewer a deep reading of feminist and feminine dichotomies may produce a shudder in all but the most hardened misogynists.

After the Young Republic's Friendzgiving at the Joanna Gallery (4014 Graustark), look for a hallucinatory exhibit of paintings and installations by Jeanne Cassanova and Reggie Rechuba. These New Orleans transplants have kept their candy-coated exterior through Katrina and losing a lot of their former lives only weeks after moving to Houston to try their hand at breaking into the Houston scene. Catch their brand of post-pop decadence from December 1st through Christmas, and if your Mom likes thinking about the Toxic Avenger covered in puff paint or monsters popping out of her head then bring her too. **FPH**

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APPEASE THE BEAST

By Brittany Bly



I'm sure you feel the pain of having cheesy parents, friends, and relatives that drag you to god awful ('tis the season for taking the lord's name in vain) nativity scenes at the local church or the worst of all American visual cultural traditions – the infamous trip around the neighborhood to look at Christmas lights.

But have no fear, Buffalo Bayou Art Park has the answer to this age old dilemma with the 7th annual Xmas Tree Show. And it's sure to please the 'rents without making you want to throw up.

The show is located at the park at Fish Plaza which surrounds the Wortham Theater at 501 Texas Avenue. If downtown is a little confusing to you -- that's right across from Bayou Place where Angelica Film Center and Verizon Theatre reside. Parking kind of sucks, so be prepared to give in and park underground. This year the trees will be on view from December 1 to January 4 and the artists include Daniel Adame, Felipe Contreras, Tommy Gregory, Michelle O'Michael, Patrick Renner, and Troy Stanley among others.

My favorite thing about the show in the recent past is watching all of the work slowly get destroyed and stolen. A few years ago, Daniel Adame had the windows kicked out of his play-sized house and Jason Kunke slowly had his artwork, which was a series of separate components, stolen piece by piece only to have his green garland sculpture destroyed the following year. But other pieces for no apparent reason remain perfectly intact. Although some trees are too sturdy to be damaged at all, most of the trees are somewhat vunerable. And of the ones that are, I think that the pieces that are good are destroyed. And the better they are, the more quickly their destroyed. And just so you know, I'm not trying to give you or your family any bad ideas. It's Christmas for Christ's sake! FPH





I'M THERE FOR I'M NOT THERE

by Michael Bergeron



Todd Haynes' I'm Not There reminds one of a great Bob Dylan song. There are several styles of verse that contain startling imagery, and the chorus catches you right away and has you humming along long after the movie wraps. I'm Not There is a non-linear biopic of Bob Dylan that's so noble it takes multiple actors to play the lead.

Dylan followers will gain a lot more from the film, due to its use of key songs during important moments, than the average movie going bear but its cinematic rewards are spread equally among viewers.

I'm Not There stars four actors you've heard from and two more with whom you may only be marginally familiar. Cate Blanchette has been getting all the love from filmblogs but there are some equally insightful performances from all the cast, not least Christian Bale (the Greenwich Village Dylan) and Bruce Greenwood (first as a BBC reporter and then secondly in a guise where I didn't realize it was also him until the credit roll). Plus Haynes semi-regular Julianne Moore playing a character molded by Joan Baez. None of the characters are named Bob, but rather Jude, or Billy or Woody.

It's easy to get lost in the different elements of Haynes' film. It crosses lines between surrealism and non-reality. It evokes the power of songs like Idiot Wind or Stuck Inside of Mobile with the same ease it slips between Dylans' personas. The heavy make-up Live at Budokon Dylan exists in a Wild West of Basement Tape characters while the Factory Girl scene of the mid-60s transforms into a Sapphic showdown. There's even the idyllic 50s with thick furniture and complex wall patterns that evokes Haynes most serious effort Far From Heaven. To put things into perspective, Haynes' first film was banned because he violated copyright by having a Barbie doll play Karen Carpenter. There's a bit of that anarchy on display in I'm Not There.

In the land of DVD

It's a coin toss, one side heads, the other tails when I watched two Johnny Cash Christmas Special DVDs. Released by Shout Factory in conjunction with the Country Music Hall of Fame these two discs - Johnny Cash Christmas Special 1976 & 1977 - would be an excellent watch at any holiday party.

The camp element abounds through the 1976 special but not so much during the '77 special, which includes an all-star tribute to Elvis as sung by Cash, Carl Perkins, Roy Orbison and Jerry Lee Lewis. The 1976 show will probably be watched once, while the 1976 show stands up to repeat viewings. If you're a fan of the recent biopic Walk the Line, several incidents in that movie (stationed in Europe while in the service, cutting his first recoding at Sun Records) are first given treatment here.

The 1976 Christmas Special starts off with Tony Orlando, and a version of Tie A Yellow Ribbon will make you cringe. Johnny, June and even Tony Orlando look askance through this one. The rest of the show includes guest appearance by Billy Graham and Roy Clark. Fortunately a Barbara Mandrell lap steel guitar solo blows you away and makes the whole thing palatable.

The 1976 show was shot in Johnny's homes in Bon Aqua and Hendersonville Tennessee. By contrast the 1977 special is stage bound, but abounds in energy. Throughout the entire proceedings Cash is the definition of charismatic - his presence has a sincerity that you never doubt. An added plus has Cash and June performing Darling Companion, one of the best songs in their repertoire.

Porno Dreams

The indie feature Dear Pillow never made it to Houston (where both of the filmmakers originally hail) - but now the film is available on DVD, with some cool extras. The team of Bryan Poyser (writer and director) and Jacob Vaughan (producer, cinematographer, editor) made this ultra low budget film in 2004. Dear Pillow, the engaging commentary track tells us, was one of the first movies shot using a DVX-100 24P digital camera. To put that piece of equipment in perspective it cost slightly more than high-end consumer digital video camera but less than the rent on the condo the filmmakers leased for a week in Park City Utah when Dear Pillow played at the 2005 Slamdance Film Festival.

The film stars Gary Chason, long a casting director in Texas (his credits include Last Picture Show and Brewster McCloud so you could say he's indirectly responsible for discovering Randy Quaid and Shelly Duvall) as the cool old dude named Dusty who writes for a porno mag and Rusty Kelly (Wes) as a teen living in the same apartment complex who dreams of professionally writing the same kind of sex hijinx. Wes listens in on cell phone calls with a Radio Shack type of receiver. Much to his chagrin the apartment manager, Viviane Vives, makes money on the side as a phone sex operative. By the time the film concludes they have all gathered in Dusty's one bedroom unit to film an ad hoc porno film.

The DVD includes a couple of shorts made by Poyser and Vaughan including Pleasureland, a short reminiscent of David Cronenberg's Videodrome about a guy (Vaughan, quite naked) who becomes addicted to sex vids and in the process becomes part coaxial. Another short film the duo made, Seen, is available on Youtube and chronicles a school shooting.

Dear Pillow constantly amazes mainly due to Poyser's sharp and witty script. The film has a polished look that never gives away its super miniscule budget. Quite frankly the mixture of coming of age comedy with sex drama interludes makes Dear Pillow one of the more original films, indie or otherwise, of the last few years. Poyser currently

Mature Immaturity

Superbad never stops providing laughs. The Superbad double disc DVD release, my favorite comedy (right behind Hot Fuzz) of the year, keeps the extras front and center. The film itself has additional dialogue in many key scenes and runs longer than the theatrical version. Disc 2 has so many menu items you have to take a breather and then dive back in. Highlights include script readings from several years ago by the writers (Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg) and with the present cast, a press junket interview (a joke set up by the producers) that causes Jonah Hill to elevate to level five meltdown, and Cop Car Confessions an improv style series with actors from various Judd Apatow films going one-on-one from the backseat of Rogen and Bill Hader's patrol vehicle. There's also a great commentary track and a preview of the upcoming Pineapple Express (google it, it looks killer).



• A comic strip of The Man From U.N.C.L.E.

Who's who in 60's tele

The Man From U.N.C.L.E. stands tall among classic 60s television series. Wedged between the absurd humor of Get Smart and the more realistic but still silly Mission: Impossible TMFU stamped its own brand of humor and adventure on the then culture. TMFU really wasn't about espionage so much as hot chicks in go-go boots and secret agent men with cool contraptions. There were no cell phones in 1964 so the stars Robert Vaughn and David McCallum talked to headquarters via a fountain pen (with an antenna that extends from the top). A vintage toy version of same just sold on ebay for $130.

Make no mistake of the influence of Napoleon Solo (Vaughn) or Illya Kuryakin (McCallum). Illya was the reason people wear black turtleneck sweaters and the entire project, while only lasting four seasons, inspired everything from input by Ian Fleming to making sure Mannix his second to third season transition from a private dick to a secret agent, plus the most dramatic attempt at a spy series I Spy.

Napoleon and Illya talk shit. In various scenarios they blackmail a thief to help them rob a casino, or warn a scientist that they do the dirty work so that huge corporations can get even bigger defense contracts. And one really saucy interlude has the duo chatting up a femme only to use her for subterfuge and then have Illya chilling tell her she is depraved after she fooled around with Solo and not him.

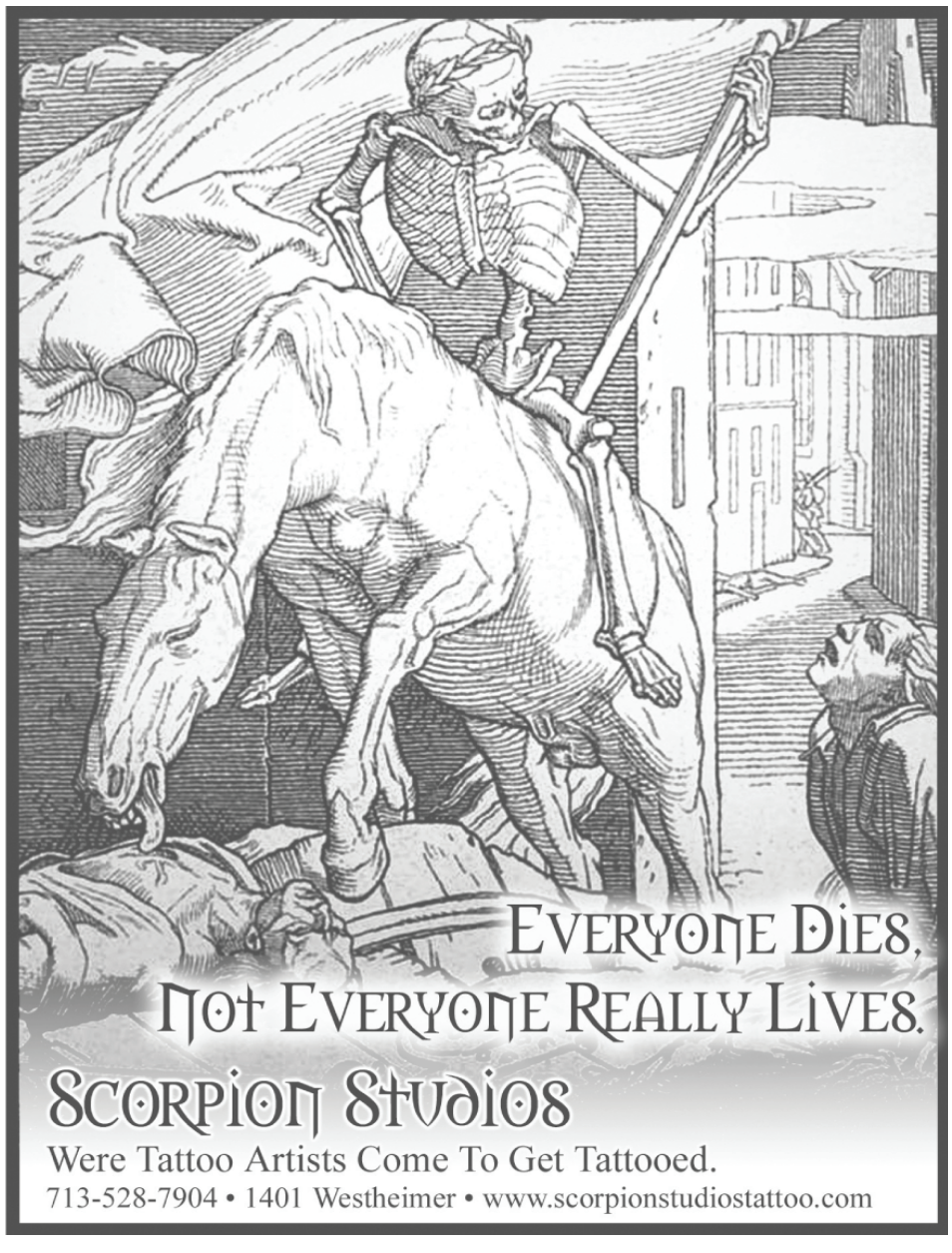
The first season, the only one in black and white, constantly amazes with top-notch guest stars and subliminal sexual tension. Imagine my surprise when after several episodes one particular man on man confrontation between Solo and Ricardo Montalban turns out to have been written by Robert Towne (Chinatown). One ep has both Jill Ireland (married to McCallum who introduced her to Charles Bronson) and Anne Francis (herself the doyenne as Honey West to every crime fighting woman who's appeared since). It's hard to top a show that guest stars William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy and Werner Klemperer in the same ep. By the third season plots had gone kitsch but that still allowed room for eps with Sonny and Cher, another with Nancy Sinatra. By the time the show tried to go back to the gritty feel of the first season during its fourth year it was cancelled half way through.

Exactly 105 episodes, all four seasons plus an unaired pilot, are now available on 41 DVDs as part of The Man From U.N.C.L.E. Complete Series. The set comes with so many extras (a couple of hours with each season) it might take months to completely view. One standout of the extras was a short devoted to the show's theme music. Jerry Goldsmith wrote the theme while Lalo Shifrin wrote background music during the first year. How cool is that? **FPH**

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HO, HO, HO. MERRY CHRISTMAS MY FOOT

By Kwame (slash) A (period)



Those who associate Santa Clause as the representative of Christmas should feel sad and ashamed. Many critics would slander Christmas on the basis it represents the idea of consumerism, as justified by the sentimentalism applied to gifts, forced on one by virtue of being "generous," and I may be in line with a frame of thinking.

What is Thanksgiving? The time to think of others, to think about family, and togetherness, and on the next day, is the first day of Christmas shopping. It helps for you to feel virtuous and generous, and then as an example of this newfound, or in some ways reheated, idea, you spend large amounts of money to show love under the guise of faith and family. That's what the big guy represents to me, the coming down your chimney, who even has a chimney? Let's say he got into your condo, or apartment, wouldn't that be disconcerting, what type of security is really running the gate. The law calls it breaking an entering. What do thieves, crooks, and perverts dress up as, during the holidays? You got it! Santa Claus.

Anyway, let's talk about some things I consumed, in fact let's call this the best things I heard and the tried to get you hear list…and some shows I went to.

JAY Z
AMERICAN GANGSTER (Def Jam)
Jay Z's Superfly. It talks about the drug game, the reasons, the successes, the pitfalls, and the downfall of the drug dealer. And yeah, I know, everything is about drug dealing these days. I don't know, it sounds really thought out, though it probably wasn't. He recorded it in three weeks, but regardless, it seems authentic much like the reasoning behind the pricing of Fuddrucker's or Prince's burgers. But yeah, American Gangster, "No Hook" is phenomenal and "Party Life" is equally exciting, and "Blue Magic" is proof that The Neptunes are going to always have "one of those beats."

Rap wise, the flow is ridiculous, he actually stays on topic, and he truly puts you in the mind, in the suit of the character. Jay Z has created a brilliant rap album at 37, yet the youth seemed to have lost their way…"Soulja Boy up in it, wooooooah…"

THE DIRTY PROJECTORS
RISE ABOVE (Dead Oceans)
If the purveyance of ignorance that has clearly driven the world into complete insanity has, in some way, caused you to feel disconnected, angry, disappointed, well, this album might not make that better, but dammit it's a good album.

Take the lyrics of punk wrapped in the simmering cool or funk of African pop filtered through a left of center guitar approach, and you might have Rise Above, The Dirty Projectors fabulous current (depending upon when you read this) album. Sade couldn't have done "Thirsty And Miserable" better; am I suggesting that it might in some way be similar or parallel a Sade composition? Possibly, yes I said, possibly. "Rise Above" would make Al Green proud, "Spray Paint The Walls," reaffirms my notion that there is soul in the defacing of property and, actually, the immediate gratification; society appreciates in a different area. This record infuses me with hope, though the songs are not all "hopeful," the idea of overcoming resilience, it strikes a chord. Indeed, we must all rise above.

BATTLES
MIRRORED (Warp)
If someone asked you what music in 2007 would sound like, this is probably the closest idea. IT treats electronic, dance, r and b, hip hop, and post rock in the way that most treat folk or psych-rock or whatever, it's an aural footnote, in the book of music. While everyone focuses on Chapters 1-10, Battles focused on the latter half. "Tonto" or "Leyendecker," or even "Atlas" really took the pop sensibility and redefined under a more current form, informed by technological knowledge of sound and sound manipulation. "Diamond" or ""Bad Trails" would what this new knowledge could reference as the "concept in action." This is an album that is much this as it is that, and really it's too good to worry about what it "is" because you're too taken by what it sounds like…yeah, its good.

shows in Houston



Penny Royal
12/15 | Warehouse Live



The Linus Pauling Quartet
12/16 | Rudyard's



Danseparc
12/8 | Numbers

KANYE WEST
GRADUATION (Def Jam)
If this was the record Kanye waited his whole life to make, then the accomplishment should feel good. Graduation is probably the most consistent album West has made. It contains bits if each album, and some editing, and produces a type of rap singular to Kanye. His lyrics are better, his beats are leaner, and his music shines where it usually shines and lacks some the stuff he could've left off other albums. "Everything I Am" is a true portrait of the artist and insight to the method to this madness, on a beat that evokes a the "boom-bap" type rap of Gangstarr (with even DJ Premier on the cut), 'Big Brother" manages show admiration and love and not seem soft or inappropriate, and "Champion" sounds like the song you would wanna' hear if you won. Regardless of the hype that surrounded this album it is probably one of the best examples why Kanye West's shit talk is not completely arrogant. **FPH**

HONORABLE MENTION

MOS DEF:
TRUE MAGIC (Geffen)
AKRON/FAMILY:
LOVE IS SIMPLE (Young God)
PAUL DUNCAN:
ABOVE THE TREES (Hometapes)
ANIMAL COLLECTIVE:
STRAWBERRY JAM (Domino)
SHAPES AND SIZES:
SPLIT LIPS, WINNING HIPS, AND SHINER (Asthmatic Kitty)
NINA NASTASIA AND JIM WHITE:
YOU FOLLOW ME (Fat Cat)
THE COOL KIDS:
TOTALLY FLOSSEDOUT EP



Nasty Nation
12/9 | Super Happy Fun Land



Jodi Adair
12/ 18 | Last Concert



Free Radicals
12/20 | Notsuoh





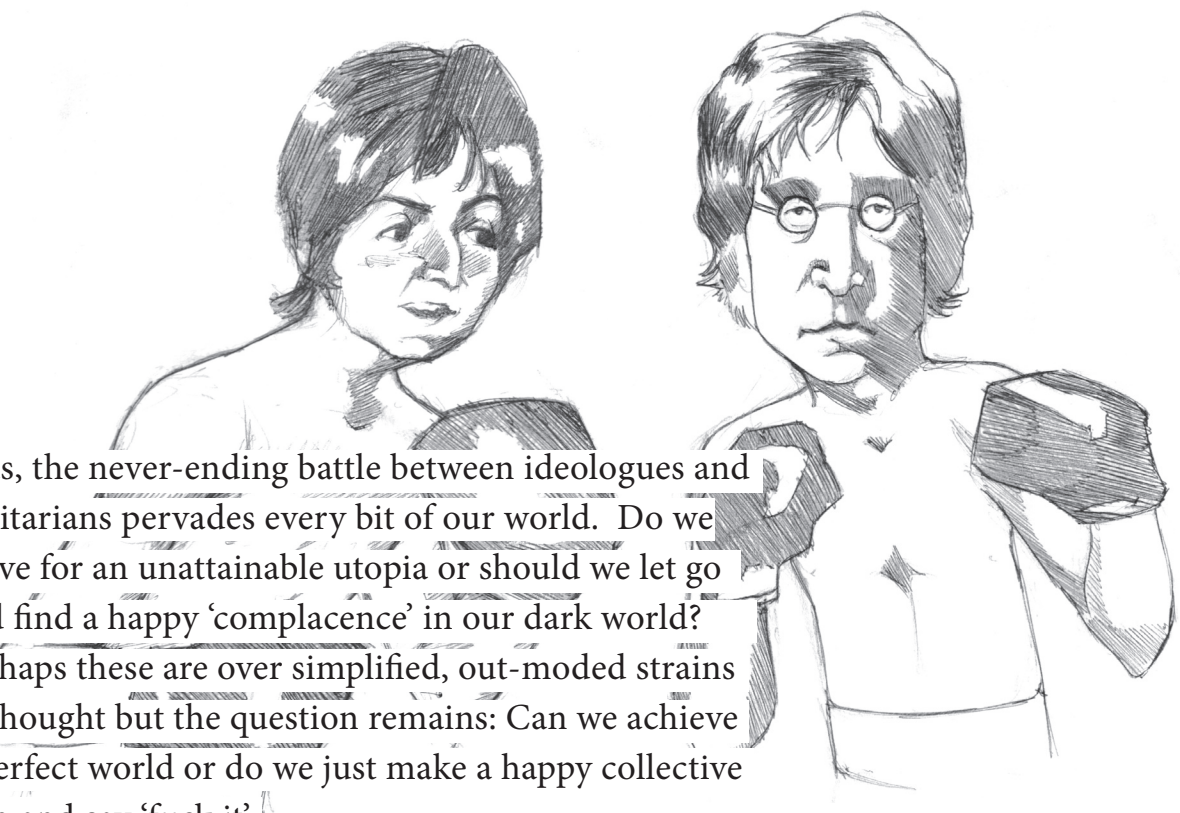
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LET IT BE VS IMAGINE

A comparative analysis of their philosophical differences

By Omar Afra | Illustrations by Shelby Hohl



Alas, the never-ending battle between ideologues and utilitarians pervades every bit of our world. Do we strive for an unattainable utopia or should we let go and find a happy 'complacence' in our dark world? Perhaps these are over simplified, out-moded strains of thought but the question remains: Can we achieve a perfect world or do we just make a happy collective sigh and say 'fuck it'.

Well, in my silly head, Lennon and McCartney were discussing these polemics in *Let it be* and *Imagine*. The dichotomy of their thinking is not only indicative of their ideological differences but their personal turmoil as well.

The two songs were written just a year apart during and after the tumultuous break-up of the Beatles that was preceded by the conflicted *Get Back/Let it Be* sessions. *Let it Be*, written during these sessions in 1970, and Imagine, written on Lennon first solo album in 1971, could easily be interpreted as a dialogue between the two on their diametrically opposing worldviews.

Imagine is a treatise of optimism for a quixotic, illusory world void of war, famine, religious strife, and probably void of McCartney as well. Lennon personally described the song as "virtually the Communist Manifesto." The song is ardently anti-religious, anti-capitalist, anti-nationalistic, and of course, anti-McCartney. (Laugh now please.) It could be very easily interpreted as an extension of Plato's Republic where the beauties of society reign supreme and there are perfect social, political, and spiritual orders. Nonetheless, others would argue that the song does not advocate an 'answer' or 'solution' yet merely encourages the listener to 'imagine' these things.

Critics of the song characterize it as nothing more than the grandiose ramblings of an insulated rock star that was sitting on nearly 100 million dollars. English journalist Robert Elms said "*I*magine" was written by a "multi-millionaire with one temperature-controlled room in his Manhattan mansion just to store his fur coats." Deluded or not, Imagine has had an enormous influence and impact on modern culture that reaches beyond the confines of shitty classic rock radio. President Jimmy Carter once joked that the song is played about equally with national anthems around the world

Let it Be has had a profound cultural impact but in a very different way. Many Catholic's have adopted the song as an anthem based on a misinterpretation of the intro lyrics " When I find myself in times of trouble, Mother Mary comes to me." The reference is not an ode to Christ's Mother but rather to McCartney's mother who died of cancer when he was 14 years old. Stressed over infighting among the Beatle's during album sessions, McCartney had a dream where his mother visited and told him "It will be alright, just let it be." Nonetheless, there is no denying the theistic elements of the song. *Let it Be* pictures a flawed world where we exercise little control other than to find acceptance and resignation. We are told "there will be answer" yet are not told what that answer may be. Just wait. It will fall from the sky. Oddly enough, the English translation to the word 'Amen' is 'let it be.' Paul bemoans that "When all the broken hearted people living in the world agree, there will be an answer." Does this mean that the 'answer' manifest itself once and for all upon the moment of all 'broken hearted people' finding some kind of consensus. This, however, leaves me ultimately with more questions than answers. *Let it Be* also does a surreptitious job of capturing the spirit of *The Serenity Prayer* where one is encouraged to ask the Lord to "Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. " However, *Let it Be* relies heavily on not only Judeo Christian thought but has Buddhist tendencies as well. The song espouses detachment just as many Buddhist and Hindu doctrines prescribe release from worldly desires and expectations. Critics would call this viewpoint apathetic or even dissassociative, Lennon was not a fan of *Let it Be* either. He once said that McCartney was " just trying to re-write *Bridge over Troubled Waters*" and that Wings as should have recorded the song opposed to the Beatles. Harsh words indeed.

Ultimately, Lennon and McCartney present strong cases for their particular world-views. Lennon typifies an idealistic yet naïve hope for a world that lacks the presence of all the stratifying differences that cause us so much strife and turmoil. We can no doubt 'imagine' such a place but must conscious of what are immoveable forces in our universe. Personally, I more readily subscribe to the McCartney-esque detachment put forth in *Let it Be* but hope the world fills up with more *Imagine* sympathizers. There are just way too many jaded pragmatists like myself.

Editors Note: Dating and chronology are open to dispute as journalists and Beatle's themselves rarely share consensus of what is factual and what is merely mental residue from LSD. **FPH**

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THU. 6
Ben Lee w/ Cary Brothers

FRI. 7
Team Sleep

SAT. 8
Chimaira
w/Kataklysm
Terror
Devine Heresy

MON. 10
Nekromantix w/ The Koffin Kats, The Chop Tops

TUE. 11
Diecast w/ Ekotren
Cellcyst
Cryptic
Subtracting Grace

THU. 13
Death By Decibles W/ Vader
Malevolent Creation
(Full Original Lineup)
Cattle Decapitation
Light This City
Abigail Williams
Veil of Maya
The Red Waltz
Look What I Did
With Faith Or Flames
As The Palisade Falls
Dine Upon The Flesh
and many more

FRI. SUN. 14 16
BBoy Hodown

THU. 20
The Holiday Babes w/
The Crush
Katie Stuckey
& The Swaggers

SAT. 22
Monster Metal Holiday Bash

FRI. 28 Asesino w/ PinHed

MON. 31
New Year's Eve W/
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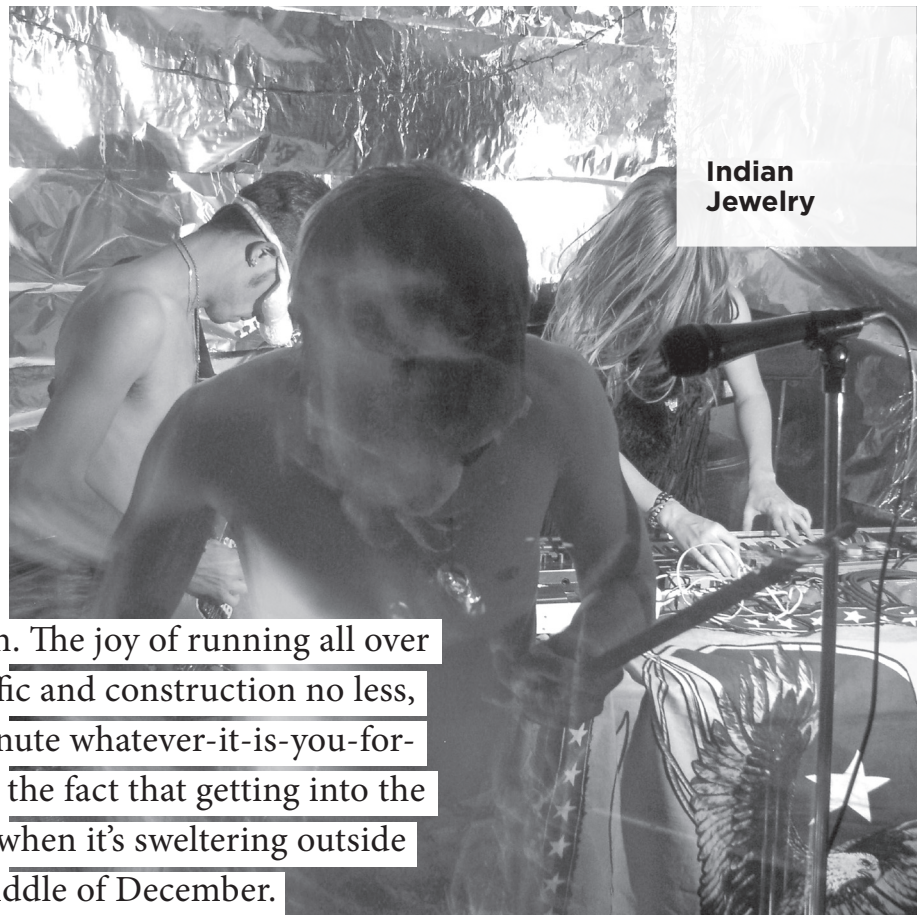






TIS' THE SEASON...

By BRIGITTE ZABAK | Photo by Ben Boeld



Yup. It's that time of year again. The joy of running all over town, in the endless sea of traffic and construction no less, trying to purchase that last minute whatever-it-is-you-forgot-this-time. Not to mention the fact that getting into the holiday spirit is kind of tough when it's sweltering outside and you are in shorts in the middle of December.

It would be nice to be able to take a break from those holiday duties and kick back with a bottle of yuletide brew and some tunes. While the musical pickings are somewhat sparse this holiday season, there are still a few shows worth fitting in amongst the office parties, gift exchanges, and family madness.

What better way to get a jump start on 2008 than to **venture out into the city and check out some of Houston's more eccentric venues.** After all, you have a handful of days left to honor your old New Year's resolutions to make way for a new batch. Super Happy Fun Land, located in the heart of the Heights, is hosting a number of possibly interesting shows throughout December. The first show of the month, in fact, is a true testament to SHFL's dedication to experimental arts and music. The 999 EYES Carnival is one of the last traveling freakshows still making its way through the United States. In addition to the various side show performers ranging from professional bug eater to conceptual artists, THAT Damn Band will be bringing their own gypsy/folk rock flare to the event. The 999 EYES freakshow is a rare and memorable opportunity to witness an almost extinct art form. Admission for this night of dancing dwarves and fiery talent is a mere $11 dollars. If you can't make it out on December 1st for 999 EYES, head over on the 3rd for a more mellow night of indie music with San Francisco based The Blank Tapes. Their music is a nice blend of unobtrusive folk rock with an indie edge. They will be performing with newly formed Houston band Audio in the Pregap. Audio consists, in part, of former members of .belville and The Oots which should make for a pretty fantastic set.

While it might be difficult to pass up the chance to see Stevie Wonder live after all these years, it might be a tad bit more interesting and definitely more affordable to veer away from the Toyota Center and spend an evening at the Proletariat. There has been a lot of underground buzz about Indian Jewelry. Their sound is difficult to describe, but seems to be a mixture of jagged notes, indecipherable din, and eerie background vocals. It's not conventional by any stretch of the imagination and, while it takes some getting used to, the sounds eventually blend into one another and create a noise that becomes really mesmerizing. They will be performing on December 4th with prog rock band Clipd Beaks.

If you are looking for something a little more retro, familiar, and industrial in nature My Life With the Thrill Kill Kult is playing out at the Scout Bar in Clear Lake on December 8th. If someone in your life has a fascination with mediocre alternative rock bands from the 90's, snatch up a couple of tickets to see The Toadies at Verizon Wireless on December 13th.

Every now and then, a dose of psychobilly/rockabilly does the soul good. Danish-American Kim Nekroman's vision to create music that transcends the mundane is ever-present in both the bands he has natured over the years. The Horrorpops, which consists of Nekroman and his wife Patricia Day on the upright bass, are more of a pop punk band, but their sound is still fierce and fun. Nekroman's other band Nekromantix definitely has the more psychobilly feel. Their sound is rapid, clean, and delectably macabre. They are bringing their flash and flare to The Meridian on December 10th with Koffin Kats and The Chop Tops.

Before retreating into the abyss of holiday hell that stretches from Christmas into the New Year, take an evening to travel downtown to support some of your favorite local artists at the We Are the Hollow Men Art Show. Bands like The Dimes, The JonBenet, and Fatal Flying Guillotines will be performing at the Keene Street Warehouse on December 22nd. Admission is just a few dollars and the event should serve as a much-needed break from the season of giving.

Whether it's sitting in morning rush hour traffic rocking out to Mariah Carey's Christmas album – dude, it's festive, alright?? - or actually finding the time to get out and experience a different shade of sound, enjoy the holidays and have a rocking New Year! **FPH**

METAL MOMENT: RIP VITEK

By Jeff Storm

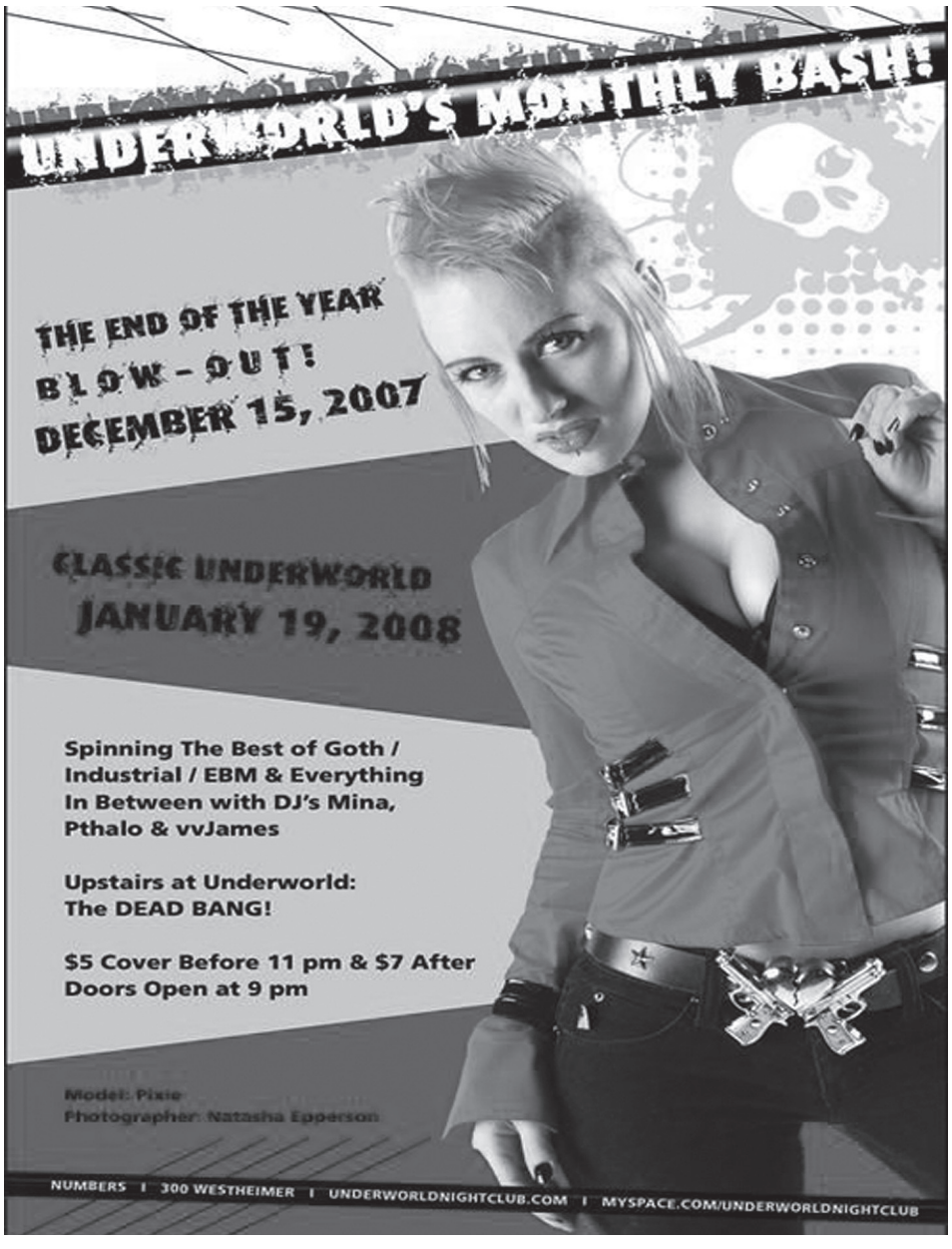


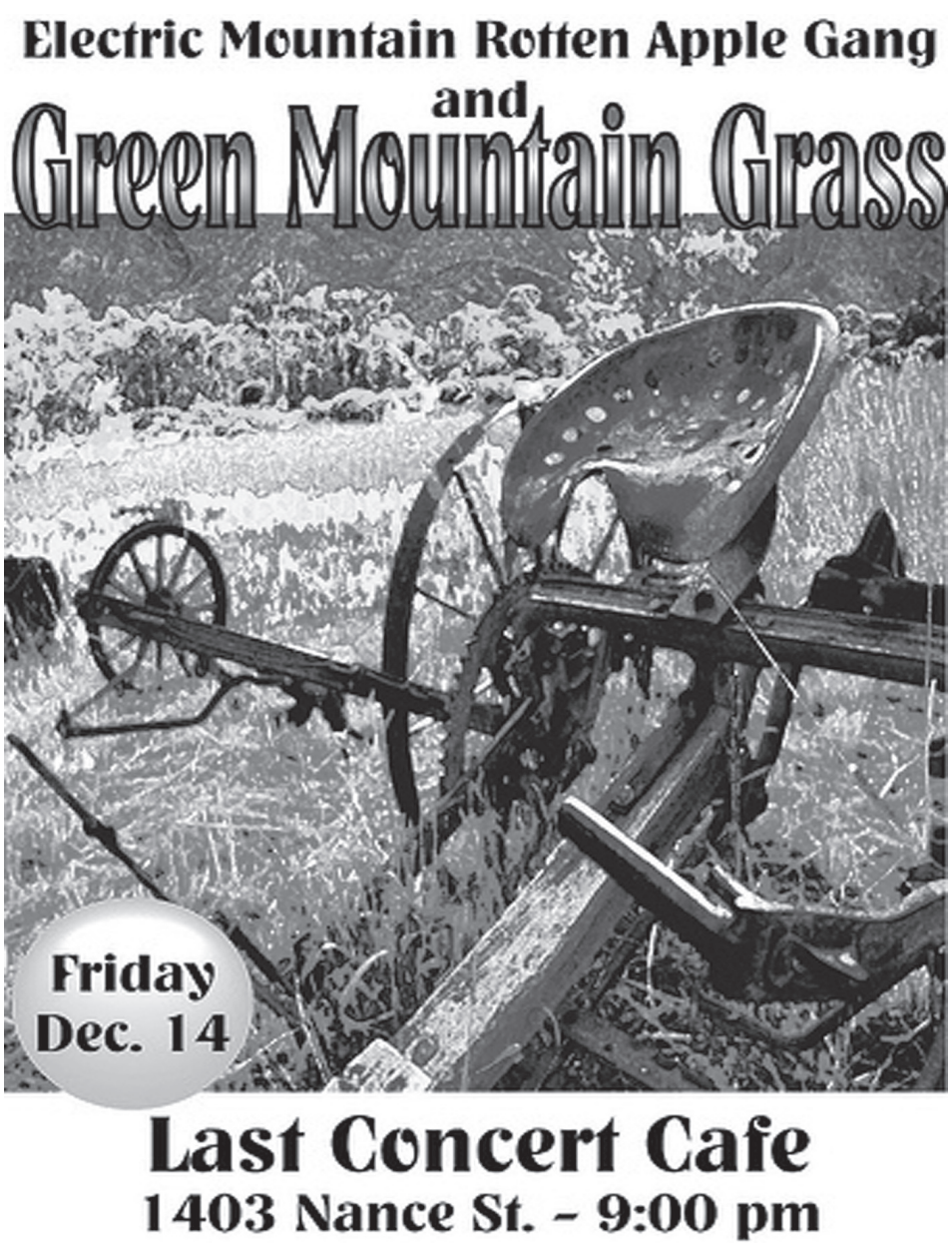
This past Sunday Suffocation, Immolation, and Skinless destroyed the Meridian. It was an awesome show, but instead of focusing on that, I'm going to address the passing of Decapitated's drummer Vitek a.k.a. Witold Kieltyka

While traveling on tour in Russia (near the Belarus border), Decapitated's tour bus collided with a truck carrying lumber. Both Vitek and Decapitated vocalist Covan a.k.a. Adrian Kowanek sustained serious head trauma. While recovering in a Russian hospital, Covan began to show signs of recovery while Vitek did not. Vitek succumbed to his injuries at the tender age of twenty three.

To me and many others Vitek was already one of death metal's premier drummers. Who knows how much more he would have improved. His technique and superior musicianship is definitely what set him apart as one of the best drummers period. I was fortunate enough to see Decapitated several times and if you've ever read my reviews you could tell how much I love the band and Vitek's drumming. One of the most amazing things to me is how incredibly solid Vitek was on the first Decapitated recordings, which were done when he and the others were merely teenagers. Also, his stage performance was pure perfection, not to mention how well he kept his composure while playing blast beats and some insanely fast drum fills. Besides being amazingly technical, I think his best attribute was how well his playing fit with the band. In his passing I feel deeply for his wife and child, but almost more so for his brother and Decapitated guitarist Vogg. I wish I could do a more fitting tribute to a now metal legend, but just as long you do a shot in Vitek's name, I'll be happy.

If you wish to contribute to Vitek and Covan's families please visit either Decapitated's myspace page at http://www.myspace.com/decapitated or at their official site at http://www.decapitatedband.net/.


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HEARTS OF ANIMALS

By Ramon Medina | Photography: Theresa K. © 2007



It's a bright Saturday afternoon in the Montrose. The Westheimer block party has just begun and the larger crowds that will eventually pack the area have yet to arrive. As you step into Numbers, the darkness envelops you until your eyes adjust. On stage is a woman behind a microphone holding a guitar; a Macbook sits atop a folding chair to her right.

She reaches down - punches a key. A drum machine echoes though the cavernous room. She begins picking notes on the guitar and she sings. The songs she sings evoke a loneliness and weariness earned through experience: bright poppy melodies that ring of hope and beauty with an undercurrent of sadness. If pop music is intended to be trite and disposable, in the hands of Mlee Suprean's Hearts of Animals pop becomes something more – through her lyrics, sense of melody, and rich textures – it becomes literary.

You could argue that music is in her blood. Her father's a talented bass player whose hook-filled work graces a few Hearts of Animals tracks. Her mother's side of the family were talented West Virginian folk musicians and the family still retains old scratchy records of family members performing Appalachian songs. Mlee retains that organic approach to music. She graduated with a music degree (half of a double major) from HBU yet, to her professor's frustration, she resisted music theory; "It was like re-wiring my brain. I play by ear, so it was very difficult learning and applying the math of music. I let my emotions write my music instead of trying to force my technical learning into my songwriting." Her latest EP is a perfect example of her writing from her gut. "I was going through a separation, I was ready to move on, and I'd never acted on that before." It had been a year since she had written anything then "one night that summer I sat on the balcony and wrote three songs." She later followed up this spark with four more songs that appeared on the Hearts of Animals debut EP Lemming Baby. It's an EP rich in emotion and immediacy. Stars Say No, for example, deals with the realization that the one you are with may not be the right person. The song plays on a Big Audio Dynamite song; in response to Mick Jones' Mr. Walker saying, "We're heaven made", Mlee's Mr. Walker concedes that the astrology is all wrong. Twenty Questions' bouncy bass line and sweet melody are belied by the nastiness of being confronted by a lover's suspicions. It's all pretty heavy stuff for a pop song but not all of her debut is all dramatic soul searching. Take Underwater Staggie's psychedelic pop which puts you next to Mlee as her friend Stagner discusses 2012, giants, astrology, and Houston's eventual submersion into the Gulf of Mexico. The songs lyrical content is playful, the melody is gorgeous, and the attention to texture, instrumentation, and arrangement is nothing short of masterful.

Hearts of Animals' current incarnation was something Mlee arrived at through an evolutionary process. The project became a personal challenge to prove to herself that she could indeed hold an audience's attention, "By nature, I'm antsy. If I get bored with a band, I leave. Last summer I was playing at coffee houses then, I threw-out beats and people freaked out." Beats and volume are hardly a coffee house staple but she followed her instincts and audiences loved it - volume and all. The physicality of volume is something Mlee relishes, "With a show, I want ears to hurt a little bit otherwise I'd be at home listening to the record." The use of prerecorded tracks came a bit later as she initially felt it would be "cheesy" but after some prompting she gave it a go and, again, the risk paid off.

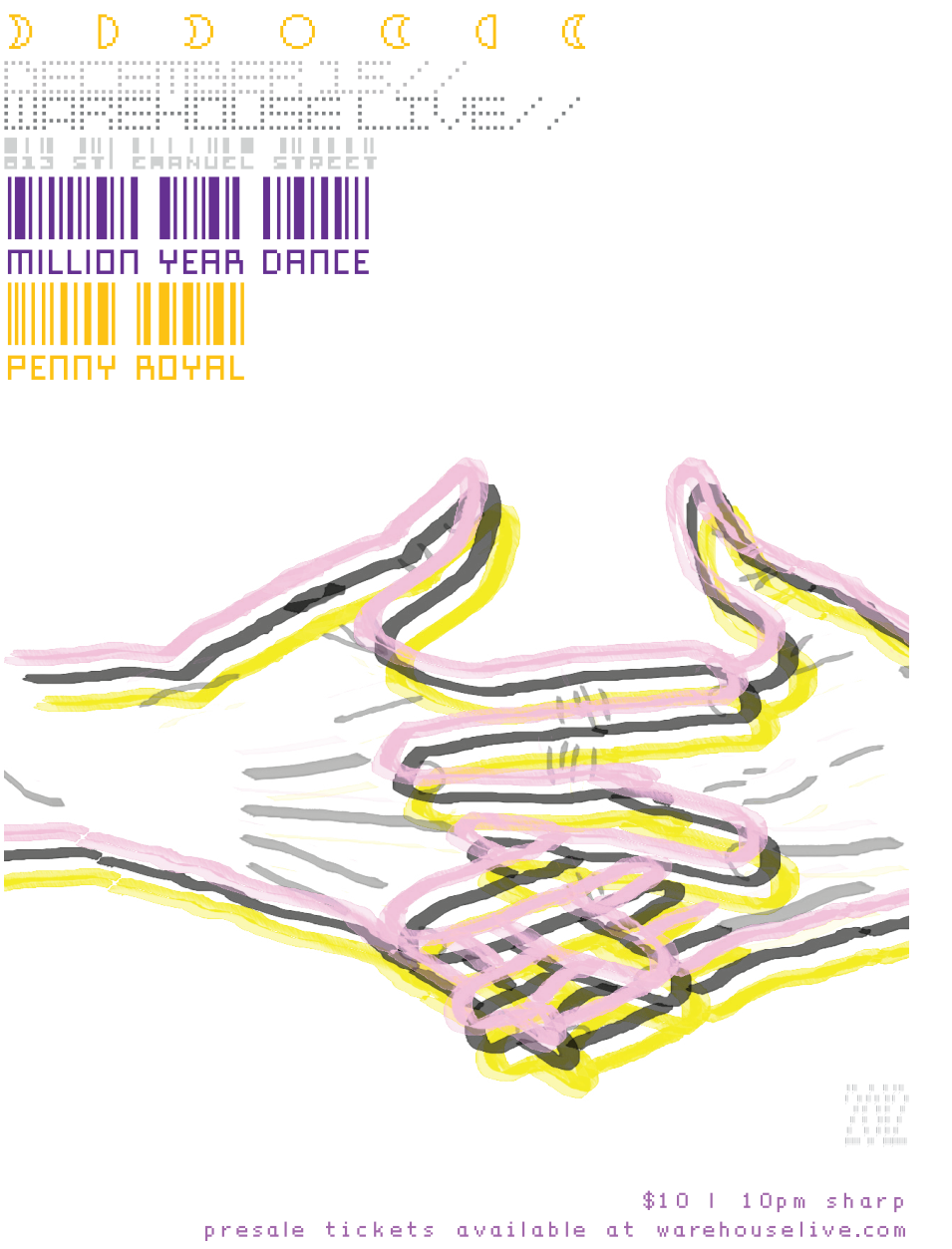
Beyond the rich melodies, textures, and performance, what holds audiences attention is Mlee's ability to write songs that are universal and yet very personal. The songs are not mere melodrama but are honest and conflicted internal dialogues where the narrator remains unsure and hesitant because, in life, choices have consequences. Mlee then takes that tension between fear and hope within the songs and grounds them in a particular sense of place – take the recurring seaside motifs for example. These sprinkled settings create a very real and tactile world yet there is a haze between what is literal and what is metaphorical and between what is said and what is unsaid. "I think there is a skill in expressing something without saying it. I like a story with lots of color, where I give them a window, but where people are left wanting more. I don't want people settled; I want them engaged and intrigued. It's like the end of Lost in Translation. What does he say?"

Hearts of Animals performs at the final night of The Texas Gone Garage festival on Sunday December 16th at Rudyard's for more information see http://rudyards.s425.sureserver.com/TGG/. FPH


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NOVEMBER CALENDAR

12/1 Jackie Gendel + Valerie Hegarty - CTRL Gallery
12/2 Sharon Engelstein: MY COOKIE! - MKG Art Management
12/3 Jeanne Cassanova - The Joanna Gallery
12/4 Yip Yip + Clipd Beaks - Proletariat
12/5 Lessons from Below: Otabenga Jones & Associates - Menil Collection
12/6 Ben Lee + Cary Brothers - Meridian

Former Death Row chaplain on lethal injection at Houston Public Library's Montrose

Rev. Carroll Pickett was chaplain in the Texas death house in Huntsville during 95 executions and authored the book 'Within These Walls: Memoirs of a Death House Chaplain.' He will share his experiences with the lethal injection process. Sponsored by Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. 6 p.m. in the first floor meeting room of the Houston Public Library's Montrose branch, 4100 Montrose. For more information, call Nancy Bailey, 281/933-4925.

12/7 Team Sleep - Meridian
12/8 American Fangs + Make Your Own Maps - Fitzgeralds

International Discoveries (last chance!!) - FotoFest
12/9 Perpectives 158: Kelly Nipper - Contemporary Arts Museum
Cafe Tacuba - Warehouse Live
12/10 Nekromantix + Koffin Kats - Meridian

12/11 Claude Wampler : PERFORMANCE (career ender) - Diverseworks

What you've seen this dude put out reminds you of behind the scene photo's to a Harmony Korine flick. Content could vary from self-realisation still photos to Mathew Barney-style installation. Solid photography work and insane content will make this some cool shit to go to with headphones on, heavy stoned, by yourself. Attend not knowing what to expect. www.claudewampler.com

12/12 Annette Scrhoter : HEIMAT - Barbara Davis Gallery
12/13 **Perspectives 159: Superconscious Automatisms Now** - Contemporary Arts Museum

12/14 B Boy Ho Down (14-16) - Meridian - This shit is gonna go so hard. We're talkin' freestyle contests, breakdancing, lectures, very solid hip-hop, djs, MADNESS. As well, it will probably be the realest thing you could hit up before you start droppin' all that dough on christmas shit. Speaking of luchini, if you're part of a crew or know what BATTLING is, you could maybe compete and see about winnin' you a little somethin green. www.bboyhodown.com

12/15 Million Year Dance + Penny Royal - Warehouse Live

In 2006, These two bands played together in 2006 at Warehouse on Friday the 13th,; the same night HPD roughed up Two Gallants at Walterís. It was a seemingly magical night with loads of synergy as these two bands share not only a close kinship but similar systems of belief, fan-bases, and approaches to music. However, their dissimilarities are achingly present in the live setting whereas Penny Royal executes a heavily layered, forward-thinking brand of ëspace-rockí and MYD exhibits a very organic, loose delivery of their soaring, songwriter-esque pieces. This should be an exciting performance as both bands will be playing new material and MYDís virtuosic vocalist Jonathon Welch will be just returning from a spiritual pilgrimage to India.

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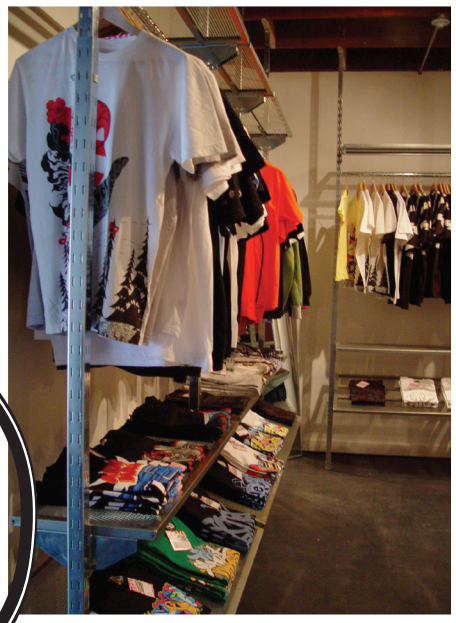
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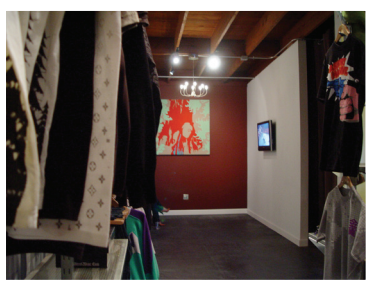
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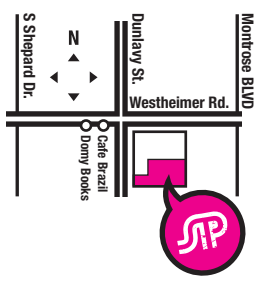






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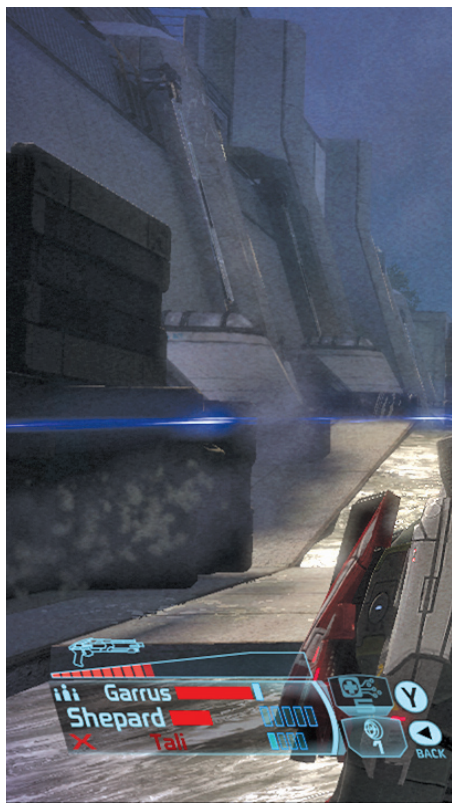
review:
CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE

A war you can actually win

By Tyler Barber



■ **Drop seven dudes without getting killed yourself, and you can call in a Helicopter Strike like the one here.**



Consoles: PlayStation 3, Xbox 360 | **Rating:** M | **Developer:** Infinity Ward

In his comfortable apartment, an overweight man sips coffee in-between respawns playing *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare* multiplayer. Perking up, fatty notices the appearance of a man in a business suit.

Final Grade: **A**

"**EXCUSE ME SIR,** but we've secretly replaced your testosterone-inflated shooter with a deep RPG experience."

Lowering his coffee mug, the well-gerthed gamer's face shifts. Perplexed at first, then slowly changing shape — the way clouds — do into an angry-buttholescrunched face exclaiming, "you son-of-a-BITCH!"

With one swift movement, his potato-sack-like arm flips the coffee table over along with the aforementioned coffee mug. The ensuing frenzy destroyed both the fat man's apartment and his macho facade. How could he admit to his buds that he's been playing a role-playing game? That stuff's for pale losers who watch anime all day about blue-spiky-haired 15 year olds' inability to confess their love to red-spiky-haired 9-year-old-transvestites-with-double-D's.

Not to worry, my rotund friend. Yes, we have been playing an RPG, but it's not the type of RPG that removes your testicles. It's the fucking *Call of Duty 4* multiplayer RPG. Well, technically its *not* an RPG, and no one's *calling* it an RPG, but if you look at its core: a persistent character that you level up, unlock new weapons, perks, and challenges, the lines start to blur.

CoD4's aggressive campaign and online modes are set in the modern-day war-zone. If you've never played the previous *Call of Duty* games, then you're in for a treat, but if like me and you've played all the previous games, expect that same on-rails shooting-gallery experience that established the series. Though its structure is a bit played-out, the campaign mode still offers some of the best tour-guide combat this side of *Half-Life 2*.

If the campaign is just good, consider the multiplayer excellent. Infinity Ward, the developers behind *CoD4*, have broke ground on the consoles offering a wide-range of customization, unlock-able items, and challenges.

But be prepared to have your ass kicked. *CoD4* easily has the most competitive online shooting on any console. And with matchmaking that isn't quite as good as Halo's, you'll be out-ranked almost all the time. Even so, with so much frantic action going on, even the lowest-ranked member of the team can help.

For the most part, *CoD4*'s weapons, perks, and stages are balanced. But one area that will have you calling foul are the bonuses you get with multiple kills without dying. Cap enough dudes in a row and you can call in an air-strike on any section of the map. Kill enough guys in the air-strike, and you'll unlock the ability to call in a helicopter that mercilessly guns down the opposition. Sounds sweet right? That's unless you're on the receiving end. If your team's getting their ass kicked, you could fall victim to several back-to-back helicopter and air-strikes, making it even harder to come back. ‘

With a glut of excellent shooters hitting the consoles this season, *CoD4* is definitely in the top ranks. Ultimately, between *Halo 3*, *The Orange Box,* and *CoD4*, it's more a matter of taste than pragmatic truth to which game is "better." I'd find it hard to believe that any fan of the shooter genre would be disappointed with *CoD4*.

Hello, my name is Tyler Barber and I am a *Mass Effect* addict. It started when I got my copy of *ME* early for review. That first day I thought, I'll create a character, dabble with the game, and move on. Little did I know that hours later, I'd still be tweaking my customizable character, yet to even start the game.

review: MASS EFFECT

... on your personal life

By Tyler Barber



■ **You'll need to choose the Soldier class if you want to play *Mass Effect* like a straight-up shooter.**

Consoles: Xbox 360 | **Rating:** M | **Developer:** Bioware

Final Grade: **B+**

I **HAVE HAD ALMOST** a week's worth of nights where the rising sun is my "Go to bed, loser!" alarm clock. I can't help it. I'm out of control. *ME* has a grip on my life, and I'm here today to take the steps necessary to rectify my addiction, and become a productive member of society.

Unsurprisingly, developer Bioware exceeds the status quo by creating believable characters in a universe that you actually care about. As in their previous RPG's (*Knight of the Old Republic*, *Jade Empire*), *ME* lets you play as either an asshole, a push-over or as some moody-middle ground. My recommendation: asshole all the way. The dialog options only show the sentiment of what your character is thinking. What you actually do say can be very unexpected, and oftentimes brutal.

The combat is extremely satisfying as the encounters are genuinely difficult. You'll have to juggle the right ammo and armor for each encounter, as well as controlling your character's special abilities (only if you want to). Be careful choosing your character's class. The abilities you'll use is dictated by which class you chose from the start — which is one area where *ME* runs into contention.

Another area where *ME* is lacking is that there isn't any kind of tutorial or guide to help the player understand the mechanics of the game. With little explanation of controls or tactics, players could easily become confused and frustrated. It's here where I think Bioware stumbles in capturing the non-RPG-playing audience.

Where *ME* really suffers are the numerous technical issues that plague everything from bad loading times, to horrible graphics pop-in. In a game that has so much of its creative talent and resources poured into sculpting an immersive universe, it's astonishing that there are so many times in the game that a technical problem pulls you right out of experience. Given that *ME* is a planned trilogy, there's hope that the sequels will rid themselves of these issues. FPH















They stand on corners in their faded field jackets and hold signs with simple, crudely written pleas for aid and assistance.

homless *-in-* houston

THE LAST BATTLE

By Alex Wukman | Photo essay by Anthony Chapman











There are on average
10,000 ~to~ 12,000
HOMELESS PEOPLE IN HOUSTON
There are less than h a l f *that many available beds*

"Homeless. Hungry. Anything will help. Vietnam vet," reads the sign held by a middle-aged, gaunt white man standing on Hillcroft.





HE HAS SCRAWLED "3rd Marine '69-'72" across the back of his field jacket. According to the "2005 Enumeration and Needs Assessment of Homeless Persons in Houston/Harris County," a report produced by the Blue Ribbon Commission to End Chronic Homelessness and the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County, there are approximately 3,500 homeless veterans in the city of Houston.

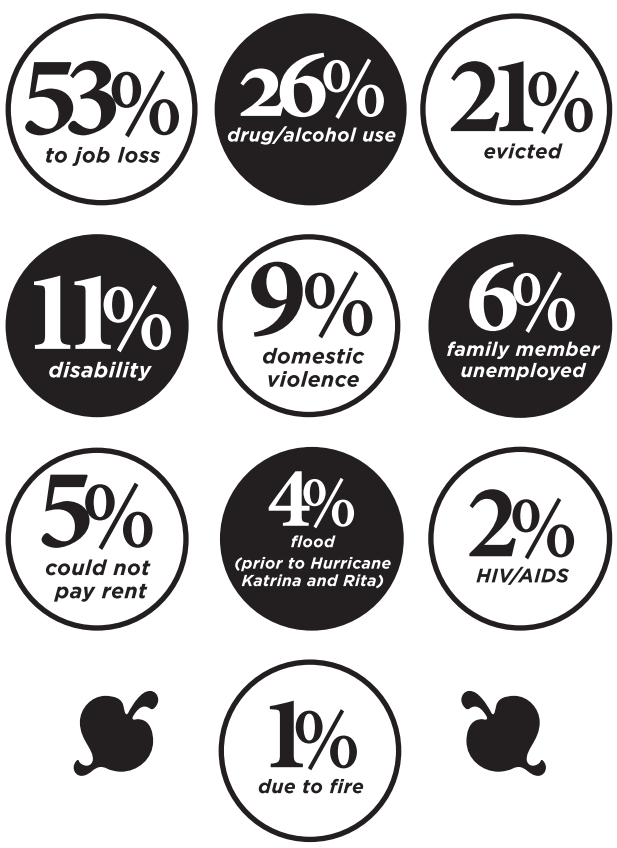
It's hard to look into the face of a man who fought for his nation—93.2% of all homeless vets are men—and not feel something. In 2005, a coalition of midtown residents and business owners looked into the faces of men who served in places like the Mekong Delta, Anbar Province and Panama City, and felt fear. The members of this coalition feared that a planned long-term housing and support facility for 428 homeless veterans would lower their property values. This was a particularly odd stance to take, considering that the plan was to renovate a defunct hotel, which actually would have increased property tax revenue.

The merchants and residents thought Main Street under US 59 was the wrong place for veterans, despite the fact that the veterans would live across the street from a light rail station, a mile from downtown and 3 miles from the VA hospital. It seems that the business owners in midtown viewed having the homeless in their neighborhood the same way that Paul Luccia, owner of Keystar Events Complex in Montrose, viewed having Interfaith Ministries in his neighborhood.

According to "A Dream Denied: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities," a 2005 report published by the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, Luccia claimed that the homeless congregating at Interfaith Ministries damaged his ability to rent his venue for business meetings and weddings. He also stated that his customers were "intimidated by the daily overflow of sidewalk trash."

These negative perceptions of the homeless are why he and other members of the Avondale Association pushed to have the city expand the civility ordinance beyond downtown. The civility ordinance prohibits people from sitting, lying or placing personal belongings on sidewalks from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Ordinances like this have consistently kept Houston in the top ten of listings like "Worst Cities To Be Homeless In" and "Meanest Cities."

Living in what is considered one of the meanest cities doesn't seem to bother many people. In fact, tonight Channel 11 investigates, "Is Houston Too



Soft on the Homeless?" Apparently quite a few of the members of the midtown community thought so.

Many wrote letters to city, state and federal officials stating that having men who bled for America living in their neighborhood would increase the crime rate. Even more midtown residents felt that renovating a derelict Days Inn and getting homeless veterans off the street would be importing drug users and felons into their neighborhood.

Some people were even afraid that giving a man who had survived the jungles of Southeast Asia a warm bed to sleep in, a meal to eat and help finding a job, would "bring Agent Orange into the community." For the record, Agent Orange has been linked to over a half-dozen types of cancer, two skin diseases, nerve damage, diabetes and birth defects. It has never been found to cause mental illness and it only affects those who were directly exposed and their children.

Furthermore, a simple analysis of the prevailing medical conditions in the homeless population suggests that Agent Orange exposure is not very common. The Enumeration and Needs Assessment states that 2.6% of the general homeless population in Houston has cancer and 7.2% has diabetes. Unfortunately, the report does not delve into the rates of cancer or diabetes among the homeless veteran population.

As it became apparent that no one in city, state or federal government wanted to be associated with denying assistance to homeless veterans, the midtown coalition decided to take matters into its own hands and organized a protest in front of the property. This led to the veterans staging a counter-protest as well as a letter-writing campaign.



Then the coalition decided to up the ante and started sending letters to the people funding the project. Trying to torpedo the project, the coalition claimed that the program would take advantage of veterans, that the facility did not meet the design standards and that the construction did not provide enough green space. It's worth mentioning that there were no design standards or green space requirements.

This disinformation campaign forced the non-profit group trying to construct the shelter to lobby city, state and federal officials in order to convince them that everything was as it should be. As 2005 rolled into 2006, it became apparent that the midtown coalition would not to be able to stop the construction of this facility, which finally forced the midtown community to begin working with the group building the shelter.

This attempt by the midtown community to prevent the construction of a shelter for homeless veterans is not unique. The arguments raised by the neighborhood association are the same ones raised each and every time low- or no-income housing is built; in this case the association was a little meaner because the arguments just weren't true.

Even the actions taken by the community weren't unusual. In fact, those actions exemplify working within the system to enact change. However, this time, those actions were used to try to keep out the men who fought to protect that system. **FPH**

The civility ordinance prohibits people from sitting, lying or placing personal belongings on sidewalks

***Two*-thirds**
of homeless persons *sampled*

are

AFRICAN AMERICAN

a ***3-fold*** representation since **African Americans** are only ***18%*** of the population in **Houston**

28%
are veterans

55%
have a history of mental illness

81%
are males



Lose that job with no friends and you're stuck sleeping under a park bench and having to go to church under the Pierce Elevator.

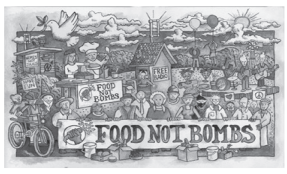
Photographer's Notes
By Anthony Chapman

I'm walking towards the south-east side of Minute Maid Park. I don't know what exactly to expect. I see a lot of people with plastic bags full of clothes and small belongings. They are walking to a parking lot where a church is giving away meals. This is where some of us like to ask the age-old question, "What the hell am I doing here?" I'm there to take photos of the homeless people around Houston. I've been like most people before. I've tried to avoid homeless people as they walk the downtown streets, thinking of them as an annoyance. I'm pretty sure we've all been guilty of it at least a couple times. I can't avoid it now though.

I'm not sure what to say, but I do know that I'm really just hoping I don't piss someone off. Hell, I'm essentially walking into their dining room, telling them they've failed in life, and asking them for photographic proof of such to show others as an example. All the while, they are just trying to eat their dinner. I know I wouldn't take that too kindly. I give my first introduction with a bit of nervousness. I tell the guy that I'm there to take photos for a newspaper of homeless people and ask if I can take a shot of him. He smiles and says, "sure." I take a couple photos and then step away. It was that easy. In fact it was that easy shooting photos all weekend. Now there were a couple people that asked me not to take their photos. But they asked. They didn't yell at me or throw shit or threaten to sue. They just asked and I was fine with that.

Most of the people that I encountered though were really nice and let me take a few shots. They smiled and chatted with me. They told me about living on the streets. They told me about the good and bad. They told me a bit of their stories. And by the end I got some good photos of good people that showed me the frailty of our decent lives. Lose that job with no friends and you're stuck sleeping under a park bench and having to go to church under the Pierce Elevator. All while Police officers will ticket you for sitting down on a bench with ratty clothes at 12am and try to tell you that your church can't be on a patch of grass underneath I-45. It can happen too damn easily. But these people are still kind. No matter how rude everyday people and police officers can be to them, they still have hope that things can turn around. I certainly hope they can too. **FPH**

fnbhouston.org

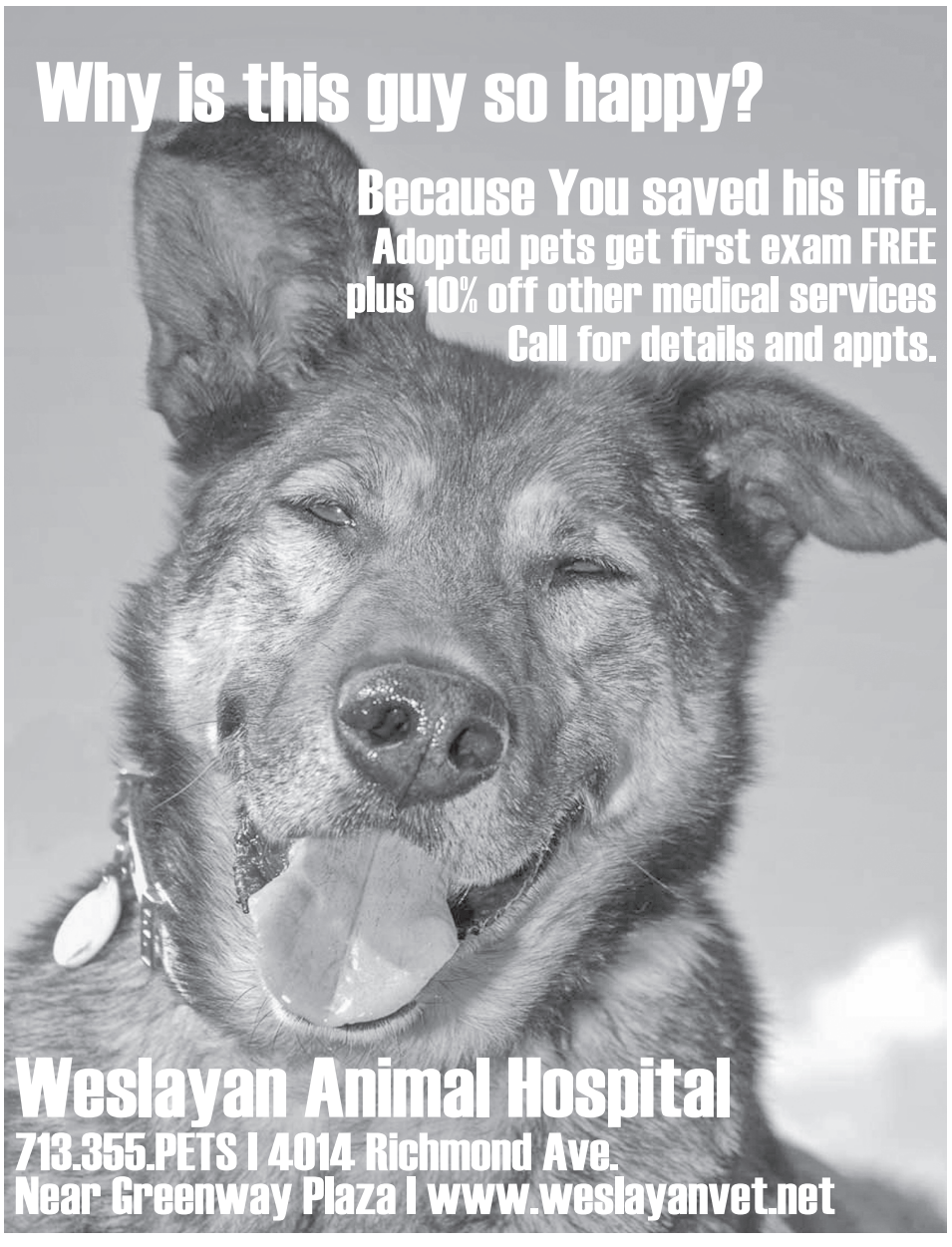


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Come help cook, serve, deliver, clean dishes, or provide blankets and clothing.



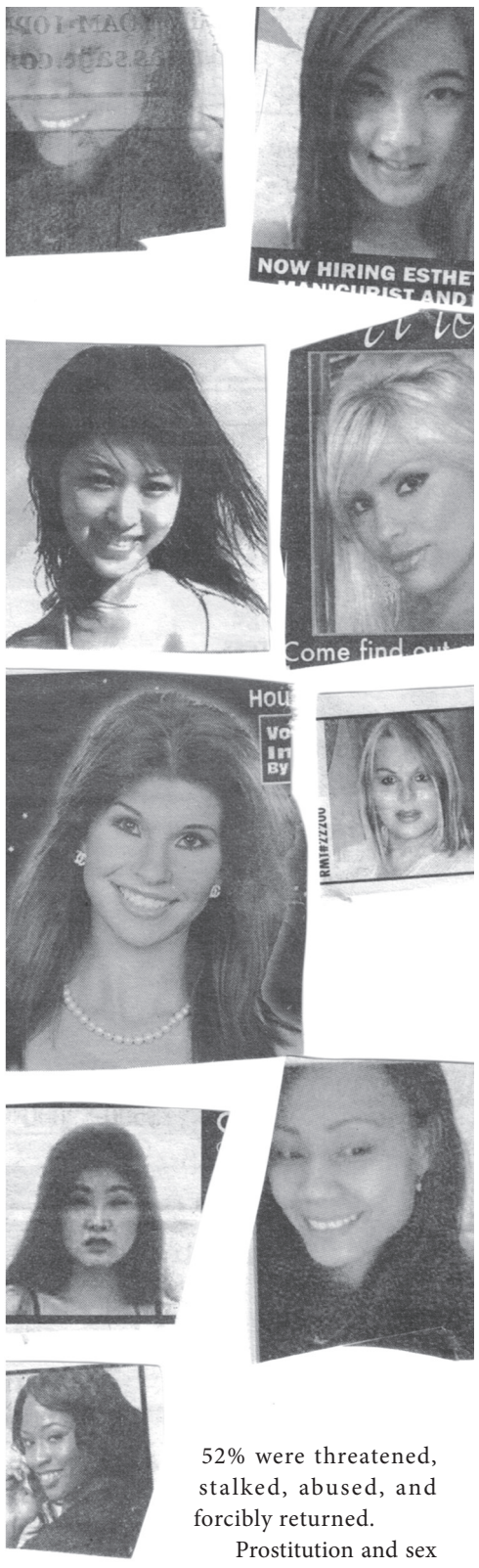




A S.O.B. STORY

The women of sexually oriented businesses and how we effectively pimp them

By Andrea Afra



Houston has found the prostitution industry so profitable that you could say we've perfected the art of pimping the pimps. Conveniently dismissing the statistics and facts that show that prostitution is far from being a victimless crime, Houston, as well as numerous other cities and private businesses, has been stuffing its coffers with revenues generated by local sexually oriented businesses that are widely staffed with victims of sex-trafficking.

The lack of action on the government's part to dismantle the prostitution industry is a glaring clue to the underlying motives of the parties involved on both sides of the law: Money.

In alliance with the traffickers, pimps, and business owners that operate fronts for off-street prostitution, the government has constructed an elaborate, high stakes, low risk game, rigged with loopholes and gray areas and rules written in invisible ink. The pawns are the prostitutes, who this society envisions to be wily entrepreneurs of the sex-trade, thanks in part to the hooker-Cinderella story, Pretty Women, and also to the mass media who portray them as such through print ads in the back of free newspapers and on the silver screen. The public's acceptance of this fallacy is detrimental to the success of the government in its quest for financial gain through the sex-industry. Reality suggests otherwise when the facts are revealed. Let us look at our 'victimless' sex-workers, our career-driven women of the night.

In a study conducted by Richard J. Estes, Ph.D., and Neil Alan Weiner, Ph.D., it was found that the average age of entry into prostitution was 12 to 14 years old ("Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S. Canada and Mexico," University of Pennsylvania, September 18, 2001). Under the same study they found that 162,000, or 70%, of homeless youth are victims of commercial sexual exploitation in the United States. Fifty percent of street prostitutes are under 18 years old, and 55% of minors in prostitution are African-American. One third of "off-street" prostitutes are minors working in the massage parlors, men's spas, modeling studios, some strip clubs, and escort services, all which are licensed by the city. According to client interviews, Portland's Council for Prostitution Alternatives reports that 85% of prostitutes were sexually abused in childhood and 70% reported incest. An American Journal of Health study of inner city prostitutes reported that fifty percent of prostitutes were raped before entering the business and up to 75% are raped by customers and pimps. The Council also estimates that female prostitutes are raped approximately once a week. They are physically assaulted, raped at knife and gunpoint, beaten and psychologically tortured into submission on a regular basis. In a five country study of prostitutes throughout South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, USA, and Zambia, 84% were homeless, 75% had drug problems and 92% said they wanted to escape prostitution immediately. (Farley, Baral, Kiremire, Sezgin, "Prostitution in Five Countries: Violence and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder", 1998) Of those in the USA who tried to escape, 52% were threatened, stalked, abused, and forcibly returned.

Prostitution and sex tourism fan the flame of demand for the trafficking industry, through the need for a steady supply sex-slaves. Of the estimated 1.2 million victims of human-trafficking worldwide, 80% percent of human trafficking victims are women and children who are sold and resold for sexual exploitation. Of the 80%, half are children, who are the caviar of the trafficking world. Their appraisal values are sometimes triple that of an adult.

The U.S. State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research states that approximately 45,000-50,000 women and



children are smuggled by traffickers into the U.S. annually and based on Estes and Weiner's studies sexually exploited children, more than a third, or 17,000, are children under 17, of which at "at least half eventually become victims of commercial sexual exploitation as part of their trafficking experience." Sometimes they are forced to work in brothels to pay off 'smuggling' fees, usually tens of thousands of dollars, and some of them earn their freedom eventually. However many are not even offered a debt-bondage, they are simply held as human slaves. In Houston, the nationalities of the trafficked victims in brothels are predominately Thai, Vietnamese, Chinese, South Korean, and from south of the border.

These statistics among many others all point to the blatant fact that most prostitutes are certainly not in the industry by choice. It doesn't even feel right calling them prostitutes, as they are forced into being prostituted. While there may be a handful of consensual, sound minded prostitutes who truly enjoy their career, the vast majority are victims of bad circumstances or victims of sex-traffickers who either coerce or force them into commercialized sexual exploitation, and we in turn exploit them as well.

"Nothing", was Houston City Councilmember Ada Edwards' response when I asked her what the city was doing to monitor and protect the sex-workers within the legally licensed sexually oriented businesses in Houston. We were at the September

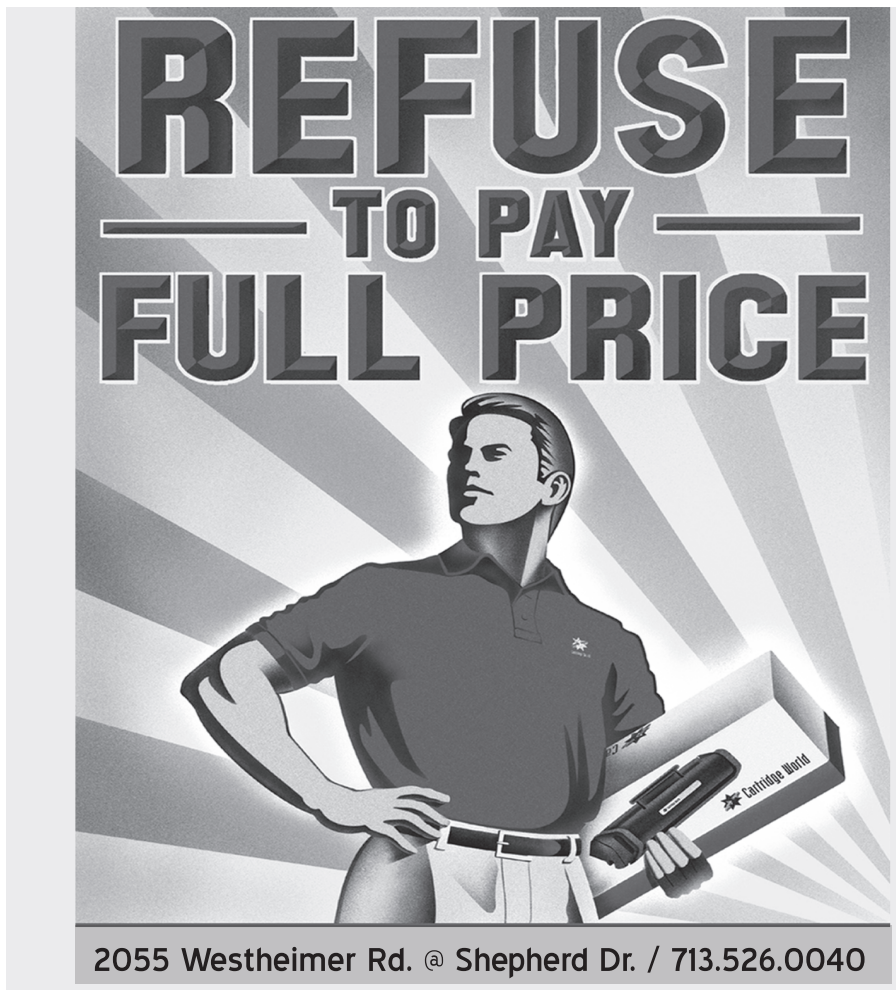
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A S.O.B. Story continued

OUR REPUTATION AS A CITY OF HIGH PROFITS AND LOW RISK FOR THE PIMPS AND BROTHEL OWNERS INSURE THE PROLIFERATION OF THE SEX-INDUSTRY IN HOUSTON.

press conference for Human Trafficking Awareness Week outside of City Hall.

Eyes shielded behind dark Jackie O sunglasses, she smiled wearily and shook her head, in visible disappointment that the city's lack of action forced her to say 'nothing'. There is no database keeping track of those employed in these businesses, no required registration to verify age or willingness to be working in the trade. The Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission recently passed a law that makes establishments that sell alcohol post signs featuring the human trafficking hotline if they don't hold a food and beverage permit however there are many places that don't fall under TABC's jurisdiction. She went on to say that we need to focus on slowing the demand for prostitution, but she ladled no burden on the city to monitor or inspect the businesses that are well known by all to be fronts for prostitution. Less than 20% of prostitution is 'street-level', where the workers are physically walking the streets. The majority of prostitution is 'off-street', and takes place behind the very doors of the sexually oriented businesses we allow the city to license for operation.

Yet, as with the drug war, when the law is more focused on financial gain than quelling the problem, preventative efforts would be counteractive to those gains. There are a number of ways that the government makes money from prostitution and a number of ways it could be using that money to sensibly abrogate the problem, yet for some reason (money) nothing is really being done.

In return for a portion of the revenues and tax dollars, the city allows these businesses to operate knowing full well what takes place behind their doors. The licensing fees for sexually oriented businesses range from the initial $475 fee and a $225 annual renewal fee. Supposedly, each 'entertainer' must apply for a $29 permit as well, however, those women who are bought by brothel owners from sex-traffickers, or forced into the business by pimps, are probably not registered with the city. Yet we have no way of knowing this as we've failed to implement a system that would monitor the individuals that work in these conditions.

While not openly discussed for obvious reasons, brothel owners have been known to use cash bribes to keep the law at bay. However, this is not necessary, as the rules of the game are outlined to allow the businesses to remain open and profitable to parties on both sides of the law. Thanks to the loopholes and gray areas of the law/game, most brothels are allowed to remain open for business, even after they've been raided and busted for prostitution. Police vice squads regularly raid businesses yet they aren't there to close the place down or arrest the owners. They are there to collect. When a vice squad raids a place, on top of arresting and ticketing the prostitutes, they are allowed to seize all valuables on the property and sometimes even the property itself. Cash, jewelry, electronics, automobiles, are all seized and handed over to the Feds where the items are auctioned off and the profits divided. The city gets a piece, the vice squads get a piece and the rest goes back in the government's cookie jar. Vice squads and task forces are expected and required to generate a portion of their operation costs, which ultimately will line the pockets of the agents involved in the sting. It's a great incentive, and they will take extreme measures to make a case.

In one case in Hays county, Texas, an officer went so far as to let the women he was busting put her mouth on his penis before giving the signal to raid the place. This was probably after a long, sensual massage by a naked woman, complete with a table shower if he was lucky. He withheld the information during the trial until he was forced to confess that he was ashamed because he was married.

Thanks to HPD Chief Harold Hurtt, undercover cops in Houston are allowed to get naked in order to solicit an offer of prostitution from the women on site. This is despite the fact that in 2003, while he was chief of the Phoenix Police Department, more than sixty prostitution cases were dismissed because the local sheriff's investigators not only disrobed, but engaged in sexual activities with the women they were trying to bust.

We have seen the grainy videos of half dressed women in the rooms of motels and brothels, where undercover cops try to negotiate prices for offers of sex. However it is extremely rare for an owner of a sexually oriented business to be charged with operating a front for prostitution.

Although it certainly takes two to Tango in this industry, women tend to be the target of most vice operations. In Chicago, police district 14 accounted for the highest number of prostitution arrests in 2002, in which over 89% of the arrests were prostitutes (mainly women), 10% were 'johns', and less than 1% were pimps or brothel owners. In 2005, the FBI estimated 89, 891 people were arrested for prostitution and commercialized vice combined. Commercialized vice is the term used to classify pimping, soliciting sex, operating a brothel or transporting humans for sexual exploitation. Of the total arrests made 21,056 were male and 41,607 were female. (*FBI Crime in the United States 2005, Estimated Arrests,* Tables 29, 39, and 40.) *However those two totals do not add up to the total number of arrests. The difference of 27, 228* is made up of the number of people arrested more than once, as the previous figure consists of total arrests, not how many individuals were arrested. Most of this remainder can be attributed to the fact that a high percentage of prostitutes have been arrested more than once. Typically, they are bailed out by their pimps and put right back to work. Fines and charges range from $2,000 and 180 days in jail. It creates a revolving door effect where tax-payers pay the inmates overhead, and the city jail gets repeat customers. Currently, 70% of female inmates in America were initially arrested as prostitutes.

Our reputation as a city of high profits and low risk for the pimps and brothel owners insure the proliferation of the sex-industry in Houston. If there was more focus on salvaging what little self-esteem is left in these women, or rescuing those who are their against their will, prostitution would begin to phase itself out. But, since the government, and in turn the people, have become dependent on the commercial sexual exploitation industry to increase our budgets, we must be weaned from that source of revenue.

Prostitution benefits the local economy as well. The budgets of companies in the private sector have also become dependent on the bought and sold rape of women. Landlords that lease the space for brothels and motels that rent hourly rooms for paid sexual encounters are on the receiving end of the funds that are procured through prostitution. Media owners, typically free, weekly publications that aren't 'family oriented', profit from the promotion of such businesses through print ads for massage parlors, modeling studios, escort services and even 'indie' call girls. The National Organization for Women recently threatened to protest *New York Magazine* and the new owners of the *New York Press* for gaining from the human sex-trafficking industry if they didn't stop accepting sex ads, accusing them of being a "marketing arm of the organized crime world of prostitution and human trafficking". The protests were cancelled when the publications announced that they would indeed stop printing sex ads.

On the NOW.org website, they claim that 'adult' advertisements generate 35% of newspaper gross revenue on a weekly basis. Many papers report that they would be unprofitable or unable to publish if not for these advertisements."

Also on their site: Village Voice Media, owner of several weekly publications around the country, **(including the Houston Press, to whom we owe our congratulations, as they have recently added a full color page to one page of their ream of classifieds, but just for the top-shelf "2 for 1 New Young Asian girls" ads)**, "generates an average of $80,000 a month on the adult ads that line its back pages, according to the classified ad sales department." The spa owners can afford it too—they tend to run consecutive ads and get a discount for doing so. Backpage.com is also owned by Village Voice Media, and while the majority of classified ad postings are free on the site, the only ones that are fee based are sexually related and extremely graphic. It illustrates clearly how untouchable the owners of the advertised business feel. Need a sexy eight month pregnant model to blow your mind? No? Then, here's a good one: Spinners are us at Relax Spa, New Young Asian Girls. Backpage.com also hosts a forum for client reviews of local brothels including addresses and names of the girls they bought sex from.

In the process of trying to figure out why sexually oriented businesses are allowed such leniency in their operations, the answer always comes back to money. It is not an argument of legalizing something that we are already prospering along with. We are not ready to legalize it because there is no way to monitor it for involuntary workers. The issue is that we aren't doing anything to protect the victims that we essentially pimp ourselves, and even a real pimp does that much. And the men who pay for sex have no desire to know that the woman under them is there against her will. They pay for consenting sex and that's what they fantasize it to be. It is a lucrative industry in which the demand for a product of penetrable, obedient flesh is for sale. And as long as there is money to be made from the prostitution industry, the violence and despair and corruption behind the neon lights, and tinted windows will remain a dark secret. FPH

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RIX MYTH REMEMBERED

BY M. MARTIN



Over the last couple of weeks, the community I call home has been saying goodbye to one of its linchpins... someone who had simply been so "there", so ubiquitous, that we all sort of assumed he always would be.

SADLY, THIS WAS NOT THE CASE.

Rick Smith — artist, musician, journalist, playright, and much more — died at home under circumstances that were almost as much an enigma as was sometimes the man himself. Apparently he sustained an injury, failed to seek timely medical treatment... and died of a blood clot, internal bleeding, or some other such indignity. He was thirty-nine years old.

I call the community Rick called home "The Montrose". Geographically, it sort of lies between Houston Heights, Downtown, Rice University, and River Oaks. But it's really a community of the spirit, with outposts as far north as Super Happy Funland, as far east as Commerce Street Artist Warehouse. Both geographically and spiritually, Rick's book and record infested apartment was very close to that community's heart....as was he.

He was an iconic presence: a scaled-down and grunged-out Hagrid whose shaggy brown hair and beard had not really been fashionable since the year he was born, whose wardrobe was both a matter of economy as well as an ironic statement of anti-fashion. His mere presence at a live music event was an enormous endorsement, long after he gave up music journalism. It meant the band didn't suck, despite what you might've heard.

Since the sad news of his demise, numerous tributes to Rick have appeared online. The Houston Chronicle favored him with a surprisingly comprehensive obit, probably the one time his name ever appeared in that publication. There's been at least three wakes spread across at least two different bars — not to mention accolades on the airwaves where Rick may've made his biggest impact. My community owes Rick a lot. We owe it to ourselves AS a community to honor him. The purpose of this piece is to try to pay a little on that debt.

I'm not completely sure when I first met Rick. It was sometime in the early 90's, a period that was (for me at least) rich in experience if not clearly remembered detail. Brian Arthur, the proprietor of alt music haven Super Happy Funland, has similar, somewhat clearer recollections:

"...Mark Fagan of the Bayou Pigs took me over to Rick Smith's apartment one evening around 1990 I think it was. We hung out all night and Rick played some amazing music for me that I had never heard before like Bongwater, King Missile, Negativeland, and a bunch of Butthole Surfers stuff I had never heard. The stuff really blew me away, and if I remember correctly he was also the guy who turned me on to The Funhouse show on KPFT..."

KPFT similarly figures into recollections from Chris Sampson of OM Radio:

> "...so, I'm hanging out around the station (KPFT) and as usual friends of friends become your friends often and Rick was friends with a few of my good mates. I noticed how quiet and agreeable he was at the outset and we got to talking bands and music. He didn't know a lot about the music I was into but was a vast encyclopedia of rock music and the history of many Houston bands..."

For myself, the catalyst that turned Rick from one of a hundred or so casual acquaintances into one of a dozen or so real friends was the five-year shared experience of Montrose Radio — later "First Amendment Internet Radio", later "EarthWire.net". He was one of the handful of people who started the project (predating my own involvement) and one of the handful of people who stayed with it until the end.

On the several occasions that the project dissolved into fairly ridiculous internal bickering, Rick remained a calming and steadfast figure. Unlike those who were attempting to make some sort of political statement, Rick's interests were simple and completely straightforward — he just wanted to do insanely great radio. On the several occasions when federal marshals or local police forced a hiatus in operations, he has always among the first back after they left. The one time I managed to publish a "Montrose Radio Program Guide", the art director for the project was Rick Smith. It was a collaborative effort of which I am still very, very proud.

Chris Sampson shared with me his recollections of what it was like to collaborate with Rick musically:

> "...When we'd play I found myself always falling back on riffs and themes I was always playing alone, or with tunes, and even though I could improvise and that was my primary way of playing, this was truly free form experiment. We'd settle into something sort of familiar and almost conventional, but then were driven to destroy it as it needed to pass. The learning curve was steeper than you might think. Rick rolled with the music so naturally that he simply was the music being played. He didn't fetter it with complicated formulas or chord progressions and yet it was expression worth hearing and turning into, none the less. His respect was something I'm not really used to in the music scene as I've experienced it. He had no cut-throat ambitions and yet worked all the time to have another show and another creative opportunity..."

That willingness to share and that commitment to creativity for it's own sake is probably the core reason that so many people have found themselves so genuinely sad or angry or disbelieving in Rick's untimely departure. That's why he is fondly remembered by local artists as diverse as Rusted Shut or Opie Hendrix, and being eulogized as in places as diverse as Seattle or New York or Austin.

That might also be why his impact, so great within the relative confines of The Montrose, is by no means limited to it. The day we found out about Rick, I got a call from a friend with a day job at a high-dollar accounting firm —even there, one of the younger employees knew about "that guy on KPFT."

Another mutual friend, who has since left Montrose for Baytown, called me at one of Rick's wakes and asked that I share a story: In Rick's honor, he'd worn his old Montrose Radio T-shirt to Lee College, where he's attending classes — and got stopped in the hall by some kid who asked "didn't one of the pirate radio guys just die?"

Maybe...maybe not. Certainly the meat puppet he walked around in for 39 years has failed and been reduced to ashes. But it seems impossible that the lively mind and generous spirit that touch so many could be so impermanent.

I was looking at some photos a couple of days ago on Rick's myspace page (www.myspace.com/rixmyth — currently maintained by Rick's fairly incredible mother), and ran across a few from the "turn of the millenium" party we both attended. For a moment, I had the odd sense that he and I were still at that party....and that he was having a better time than ever, passing joints of a quality I can't imagine, drinking beer beyond mortal comprehension....and hearing the music more clearly than ever.

So enjoy, my brother. All the records ever pressed are now your to spin and mix as you please. You've got a solid gold backstage pass to every show that ever has or ever will be produced, without one single dickhead promoter or tour manager asking anything in return. A perpetually open bar tab....and no hangovers unless you happen to want one.

But even though all eternity is now yours, I can't imagine that you have any more friends than you ever did.....not when every soul you ever met *was* your friend already. But do know this: Your friends still bound by mortal time will not soon forget you — or cease to benefit from your friendship. **FPH**

(artist, entrepreneur, occasional activist — M. Martin is proud to contribute to Free Press Houston and welcomes reader comments/criticism. His email addy is m-martin@earthwire.net. Warning: he sometimes writes back)

houston.indymedia.org

11/26 Sin Fronteras Needs your Donations

On June 4th 2007 two folks locked themselves to the gates at the Houston Processing Center, an Immigration Jail run by the for-profit prison company Corrections Corporation of America. Ben Browning and Ashley Turner were then charged with Felonies, possession of a criminal instrument (later dismissed by the grand jury), and a misdemeanor for criminal trespassing. For the past 4 months they have been raising $6,000 to pay off the lawyer who represented the two arrestees. They have around $3,000 more to raise. houstonsinfronteras@riseup.net or at myspace.com/houstonsinfronteras

Houston Indymedia Has a New Mission Statement

Houston Indymedia has changed the wording of our Mission Statement, which sits on the about page and serves along with the Action Guidelines as the document new participants sign. The wording of the new statement is: "The Houston Independent Media Center is an all volunteer collective committed to using media production and distribution as tools for promoting social and economic justice. We seek to provide alternatives to for-profit media not only in our coverage, but also within our collective by implementing consensus based non-hierarchical work-group models of decision making. While focusing on local social movements, we will explore connections to global systems. We believe that by reporting on dissent, by critiquing corporate, government and military domination, and by promoting art, culture and critical thinking through participatory events, we can contribute to the development of an equitable and sustainable society." Some of the significant changes since the previous Mission Statement from early 2001 includes that we are all volunteers, that we are focusing on social movements, that we reporting on dissent, and that our events are intended to be participatory. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer with us at Houston Indymedia, please send an email to: houston@indymedia dot org

11/17 March and Rally against Iraq war moves through Montrose

Around 100 folks gathered at the Erven Chew park just north of the Dunlavy bridge over 59, and marched down Richmond to Bell park, on Montrose south of 59. The mood was positive, the march was lead by Free Rads Protest Samba band, and filled with chants for the length of the procession. Police blocked off both lanes, though they only let us march in the right lane.
This was followed by a rally in the center of Bell Park, somewhat hidden from the traffic on Montrose (many protesters stayed on the sidewalk for folks to see signs). The speakers were from a number of diverse groups and backgrounds about the impacts of imperialism on Iraq, the middle east, and people of color and poor folks in the US.

11/13 Veterans for Peace get Rained on at Parade

Veterans For Peace marched in the Veterans Day Parade this past Sunday, on Armistice Day, November 11, 2007. We had some interesting experiences, including the man who sprayed us with a garden hose from a second story roof, which brought HPD into the scene for the first among several occasions. During the assembly, we had some interactions with parents of the Junior ROTC contingent gathering just ahead of us for the parade. One woman in particular wished that we could move away from her children so as not to infect them with our message of Peace. We refused to move. Some other of her co-parents asked us to pose with them for photographs. But she kept pestering so much that the police formed up a line between Vets for Peace and the kids. During the actual parade, response from the crowds was overwhelmingly positive about the message.

11/12 Border Patrol agents Brutalize Protesters During No Borders Camp Closing Ceremony

After about 45 minutes of marching, chanting and playing music along the Mexicali/Calexico wall we reached the border crossing. When we got to the spot on the Mexicali side we all crossed the street and began hanging banners on the wall, chanting and periodically blocking traffic by laying in the street. It was not long after this point that we noticed a swarm of Border Patrol approaching our comrades on the Calexico side. No more than 40 protesters were playing music, chanting and dancing next to the wall when the BP decided to show up in numbers large enough to create an auto blockade of a two lane street leading up to the wall and to herd the protesters away from the wall effectively cornering themselves up against it in an effort to completely surround them. It only took the musical stylings of one drummer to set off a shockingly aggressive response (that included baton beatings, close range pepper spray gun shots and pushing someone's head into a wall) against the protesters.

11/11 Aramark workers are ready to fight

Three ARAMARK workers give their personal accounts of what working for the second largest service company in the nation is really like. These first-hand accounts include union busting, withholding of wages, and retaliation for reporting harassment by company supervisors. November 10th saw around 200 Janitors, Service Workers, Union Organizers and community allies gather at Jones Plaza in Downtown Houston for a rally celebrating the one year anniversary of the victorious janitors strike, and kicking off the campaign to unionize Houston employees of Aramark. The hour and a half rally was followed by a march though downtown, around the Wortham Center as people we exiting the opera, to Tranquility Park.

11/10 Artist Rescue Mission: Project Iraq

Over the course of a year, Artist Rescue Mission: Project Iraq will host a series of cultural events, a film series, residencies for Iraqi artists, a documentary about their art, all culminating in a major Houston exhibition of Iraqi art in 2008. ARM is a non-profit organization that assists artists in areas of conflict, providing various means for their artistic expression. ARM was founded in 1994 to respond to the genocidal breakup of Yugoslavia.
Report from the delegation currently in Jordan:
We have made it to amman. the hotel here has internet so blogging will be much easier now and everyone has agreed to post one soon. we will be meeting with about 12 artists here over the next few days. its late and i'm tired, but here is one story from today: The car we had arranged to take to amman actually took off from damascus before we were ready to leave. we ended up going to the central depot to hire one. this meant getting SWARMED by about 50 taxi drivers who wanted our fare, nothing unusual about that, simply a hassle. they were all yelling at us at once, asking where we are going or shouting out destinations. see arm.linefeed.org

11/9 La Nueva Raza issue #8 is out! Needs your help

This issue has articles on the National Psychosis of Xenophobia, Contradictions of the Columbus Day Celebration, Brownsville Students Walking Out and Keeping Movimiento Alive, Hunger Strike Calls Attention to Legal Plight of Immigrant (From Houston IMC!), Articles on Music and Poetry and Groups in Your Area Making a Difference.
We were proud to feature the noticias of many folks and orgs across the state who are doing incredible work! But...WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!
This paper is a FREE publication and the goal is to get it out into the community. We need and are asking for your help in distributing LNR in your area. In the past we've distributed them at events, restaurants, schools, universities, and just about every/anywhere that folks can get a hold of them. Groups who have helped in the past have also inserted flyers (like bookmarks) in the papers prior to handing them out. Whatever it takes to spread the word that the movimiento is alive!!! la-nueva-raza.blogspot.com/

11/8 Judge Sharon "Killer" Keller

On September 25th, Judge Keller refused to allow the attorneys for Michael Richard, scheduled to be executed on the same day, to file pleadings on his behalf, based on a grant of certiorari by the U.S. Supreme Court that same day on the question of the constitutionality of lethal injection. The attorneys had requested that the court clerk's office remain open twenty minutes past the 5pm closing time because they had experienced computer failure in the preparation of their pleading. Judge Keller refused the request, even though she was not the judge assigned to the Richard case. As a result, Richard then was executed by lethal injection. Judge Keller has been quoted in the media as having told the clerk of the Court to convey to Richard's lawyers that "We close at 5". However, other judges have said in the media that they were in the building and willing to accept the submission. It appears that Keller may have lied by saying, "We close at 5", when she knew very well that the appeal could be accepted after 5 and that the court does not "close" at 5, because judges on her court are able to be reached and able to issue orders to stay executions even after 5. Judge Keller's actions denied Michael Richard two constitutional rights, access to the courts and due process, which led to his execution.

10/31 San Antonio Public Utility Approves New Nuclear Power

Despite overwhelming opposition, the CPS Board (San Antonio's public utility company) voted unanimously Monday night to invest $206 million of ratepayer money into initial design work on two nuclear reactors, the first in the U.S. in nearly 29 years. Twenty two residents, including representatives of eight community organizations and former City Councilmember Patti Radle, gave testimony over the environmental, safety, and financial risks the reactors pose and the existence of viable alternatives that combine energy efficiency measures with renewable power generation. Community members from Kleberg and Goliad County, including the Goliad County Commissioner, travelled several hours to the meeting from South Texas to bear witness to the devastating impacts of uranium mining on their drinking water, health, and economic livelihood.
After agreeing to give residents 3 minutes each to voice their opinions on the project, CPS shut the community out of the meeting, saying there were no chairs left. Only after 30 minutes of chanting and banging on the door, being pushed by security and intimidated by the SA Police Department, were ratepayers of this publicly-owned utility allowed to attend the public meeting.

10/28 Eighth Annual March to End Executions takes to Third Ward

Samba beats and chants for justice filled the streets of Third Ward on Saturday, October 27 as death penalty abolition activists from around Texas gathered for the 8th annual state march to end executions.
The SHAPE community center elders and Free Radicals Protest Samba band led the crowd through Dowling Street, stopping for a few moments to mark the assassination of Black Panther party member Carl Hampton and then marching on to SHAPE for a rally. In keeping with the march's theme, "Celebrating Our Victories, Remembering Our Losses; Continuing the Fight", the rally featured a range of speakers, from activists involved in past and current struggles to free death row inmates to families of the executed. Both supporters and family members made powerful speeches highlighting the injustice of the current system and urging the march attendees to work towards abolition everyday.

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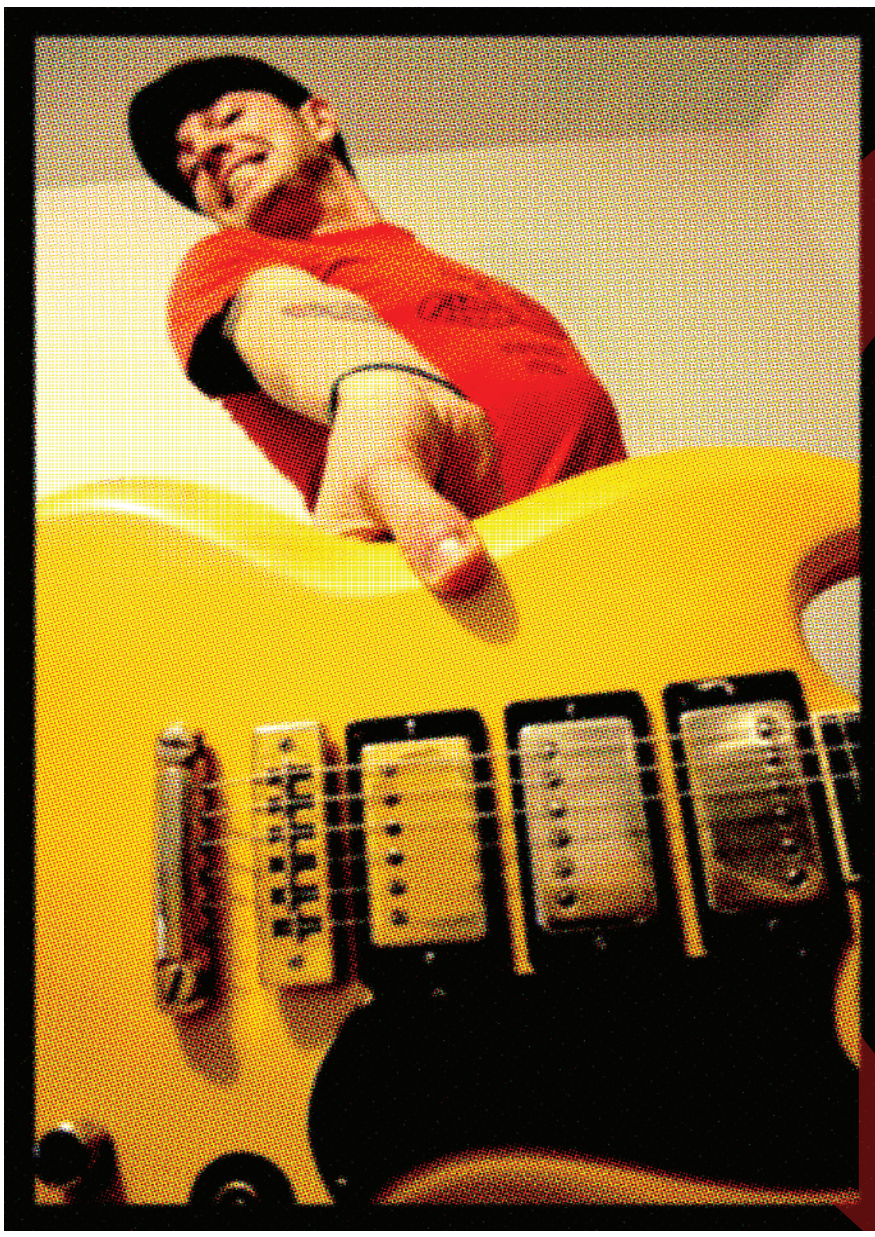
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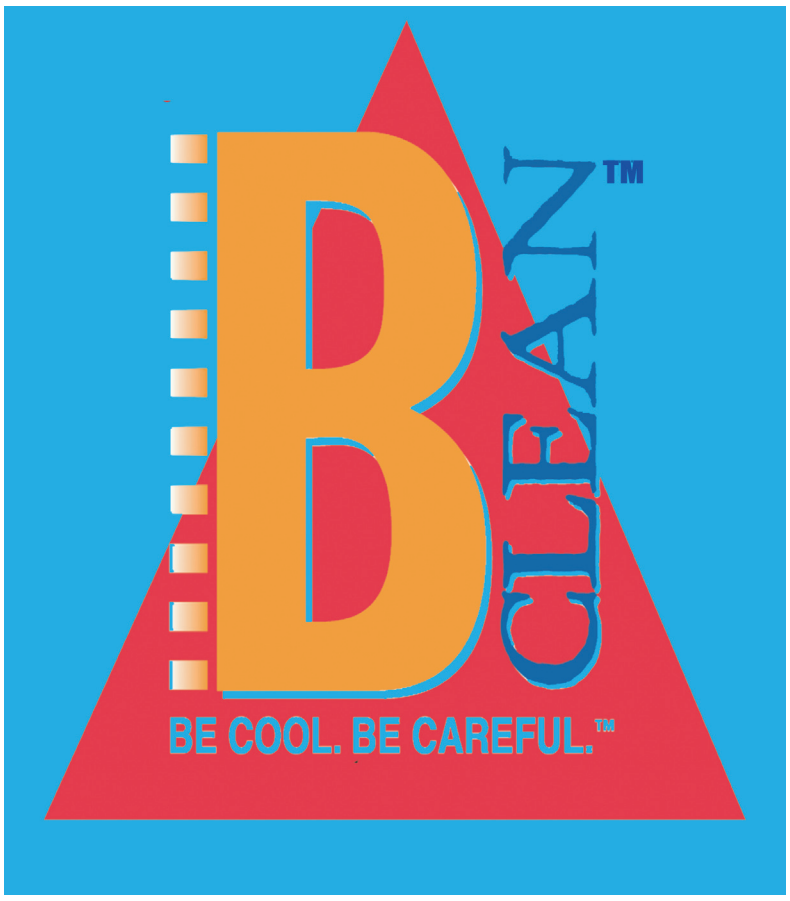
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