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MUSIC - NEWS - PUBLIC OPINION - ARTS - EVENTS



GAMING 2006...LOADING

DEBRIS: GRIEF

SUPERFICIAL ABSTRACTIONS,: THE UNREAL DEATH OF JOURNALISM

SEEING THEM OUTSIDE ACTIVISM, TERRORISM, ATTACKS AND TACTICS

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Mon Feb 13th:
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Division Theory

Tues Feb 14th:
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Goodbye Blue Monday
Blame It On Rio

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Aquarius Party

Feb 18th:
Ek$on, Tzar Bomba
Foreign Affairs

Feb 19th:
Cry Blood Apache
The Strange Boys. Rua Minx

Feb 22nd:
Kickball (Olympia, Wa.)
Mt. Smaller, Matt and Kim (NYC)
Pumpkin Pie

Feb 23rd:
Realicide

Feb 24th
Shapes & Sizes (British Columbia)
The Dines, Listen Listen, Weird Weeds

Feb 25th:
VU 21st century, Porch Creeps
Rotten Piece, Rose Lange
Concrete Violin
Mass Murder Media
Organ Failure
Dan and Christi Workman, Muzak

Feb 26th:
Monkeysoop
Chim Charoo
24/7

March 3rd:
Mandism

March 4th:
From Postcards to Letters
Calbakes
The Hard Luck Heroes (San Antonio) (10pm)
Brains for Dinner (11pm)
Dynamite Club (12am)

March 8th:
Calhoun
The Follow
Krista Vossler

March 9th:
Nebakanezzah -(8pm)
Jon Crocker (9pm)
I Want To Kill Every Human (10pm)
Enloom (11pm)
Seraphim (12am)
Architect (1am)

March 10th:
All in your Head
Million Year Dance
Desmond Zavalla
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DJ Simiyu
Show Me The Pink

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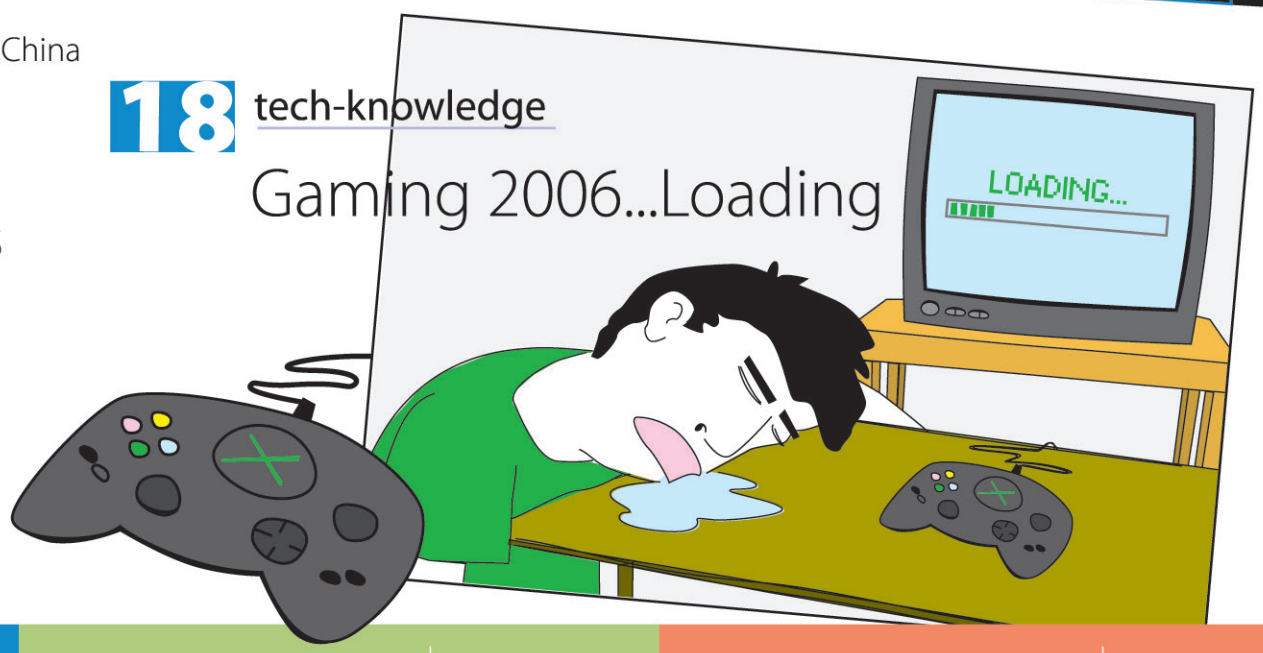
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Cover Art: Angel Perez Guzman

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editors@freepresshouston.com



Without snuggle there is *no* progress

What really matters most? Is progress paramount to everything? You gotta ask yourself these questions sometimes. Are we to walk on eggshells to maintain some static balance or should we be a bull in a china cabinet all for the sake of forward progress? Demands for moderation and "the middle way" are comforting yet do not offer any tangible solutions. There are times for hyperbole and there is time for action. This all leads me to one thing: I have not washed my clothes for two weeks. What this has to do with you, Houston, journalism, this paper, or anything else really boggles my mind. It is kinda like this letter from the editor is just a bunch of nonsense that I am self-indulgently spouting. Man, I guess I now know what it feels like to be a member of Fox News or even worse, some dirty hippie. The one serious, usable piece of information I will put out there is this: When driving with no registration or insurance, always stay in the right lane lest you see a filthy copper and need to stop at some bath store that was never on your itinerary. Well, that does it for this dose of semi-comical jibber jabber. We hope you have enjoyed it and return next time we remember to publish an issue. Thanks...

The creditor

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Thu 03/09 Mates Of State w/Sound Team/Spain Colored Orange

Fri 03/10 30 Seconds To Mars w/Aiden/Emanuel

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In Flames w/ Trivium, Devil Driver, Zao

Thur. Feb. 9
Big Head Todd & The Monsters w/Jackie Greene

Sat. Feb. 11th
Pimpadelic, South

Tues. Feb. 14th
The Fray

Wed. Feb. 15th
SKA 2006 TOUR
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w/ Satori, WestboundTrain

Mon. Feb. 20nd
Brandon Stanley Acoustic Duo / Benjy Davis Project

Tues. Feb. 21st
45 Grave , The Dead End Guys Phantom Pains, Heist At Hand

Fri. Feb. 24th -
Galactic w/ The Hot 8 Brass Band

Sat. Feb. 25th : RENT

Sun. Feb. 26th
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Wed. Mar. 1st
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DEBRIS: Grief
by Buffalo Sean



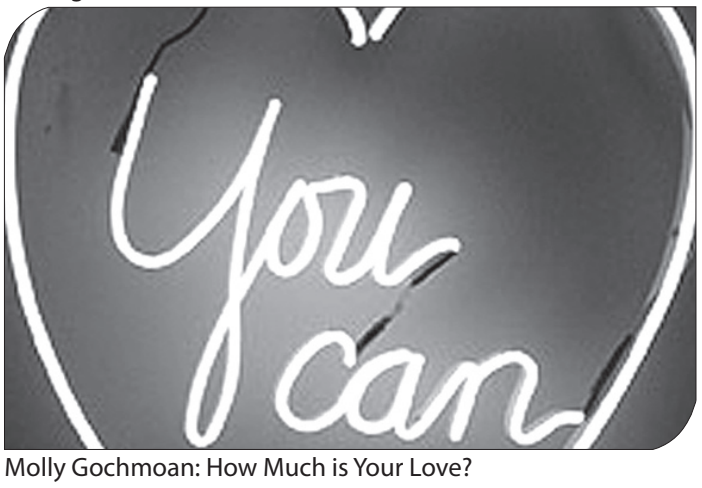
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Aurora Picture Show @ Clarks — 314 Main near Preston
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Joseph Wooten: Someday I'll Be Nobody
Lawndale Arts Center, Mezzanine Gallery
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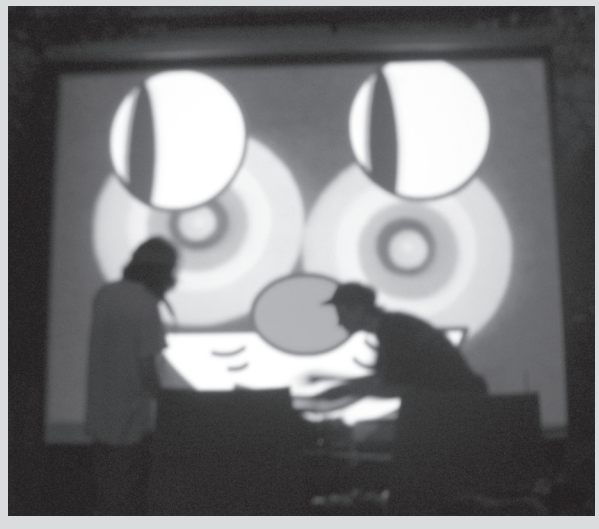
Bernard Mattox: Zortext
Hooks-Epstein Galleries — 2631 Colquitt
Through March 11. (713) 523-8238



Molly Gochmoan: How Much is Your Love?
Commune on North — 2445 North Blvd.
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It feels like the American mainstream is more important than New York today, that the credit is due for Wal-Mart and Old Navy. Corporations are a large part of that rather than designers or artists, but they bend to the fantasy of Americana. We can always be convinced to like something classic, we all believe we're middle class. The fakers of this core concept have become common reality, everything (even the original) is a reference. The world may be a lot funner if it simply got a little sillier. One-offs instead of reproductions.





Our appetite for the monolithic corporate industry of film and music is waning. You can nearly hear a whole day of rap from Houston (owing to heavy rotation), it's nice to think that we're listening to ourselves these days.

Seeing Los Angeles produce shows about Brownsville (*The Brownsville Four*, at Cal Poly) and the Whitney put Austin musician Daniel Johnston's drawings in their biennial is nice.

Fotofest is going to vomit all over the city of Houston. Opening photography exhibits on March 10th: Diverseworks (2), DIG101, Sippora, White Swan, Arthur Mayerson, Art Car Museum (according to spacetaker.org) I think there's more Saturday too. Camera Co-op, Dakota Framing, De-Frog (what?), a house (5004 Feagan), CSAW, eight community and specialty colleges, The Raven Grill, Croissant Brioche, Picnic, and the Tart Café. A populist effort worthy of cheer. At the Doubletree in downtown thousands of photographers (a high strung lot) will submit themselves to portfolio reviews and seminars. Thirteen days of it, through the 23rd. Sounds frightening.

The Eva Hesse drawings currently showing at the Menil speak little; going from bad, sloppy, and derivative to vague and technical doesn't really do anything for me. The great thing is when you find some of her objects, which are really amazing. Eva Hesse is best known for her liquid minimalist sculpture, a convenient and complex circumvention of the boys club of Minimalism with all their cubes and angles. Here at the Menil they are tucked towards the end of the circular exhibit, the juxtaposition of these historic artworks with the rather routine early drawings and paintings gives me great hope that much can come from nearly anyone- given time and friends. You can see her experimenting with different influences, working through fixations or trying new mediums and none of it is very compelling. At one point the work starts to pick up a little thickness; obsession, process. From there the drawings start to become cursory artifacts to the realization of work that breaks through into real originality. Worth seeing, but maybe expect to hate it.

From the Orange Show! A good excuse to get out during the day on March 11th "Wear orange, drink oranges, juggle oranges, and love oranges as we unveil our winter Monument renovations and make trophies for Everyones Art Car Parade. Performances by Spain Coloured Orange, Houston Men of Morris Dancers, and the Waxploitation DJs will get you all

The Gospel According to Miss Bly

Boston is a City Like Houston but Farther North

I am totally bitter that Paper Rad performed another live show in Houston while I was out of town. And it wasn't just me that was gone but all the other diligently dedicated art historians were in Boston for the College Arts Association annual conference. Was this a ploy created by Paper Rad or Dan Fergus to keep the art historians away from the performance? I hope not because their previous show with Cory Archangel and Animal Charm was without a doubt one of the best art events I've ever seen in my life. Luckily, I heard that the one that took place of February 22 was merely "okay" but not "bad".

Or at least not Museum of Bad Art bad (which for the record is located in the great city of Boston). Although it was the one institution that I was most looking forward to visiting, I never actually made the time to go. First of all, you can't really convince a group of art historians to go to a place that brags about having bad art and secondly anyone who had heard of it (I even found one guy who was pretty sure he had been there, but not totally convinced because of its utter forgetability) said that it really was just plain bad – not good – not worth visiting because it is really intended as a web presence than an actual institution.

So, instead I ate Boston baked beans, went to go see the band Boston at the Boston Ampitheatre with my boston terrier. And then later we went to a tea party. The next day I went to Art Interactive a gallery in Boston that focuses on new media and interactive art. The show was entitled New Media/New Work and was a collaboration between several art organizations Leonardo, the New Media Caucus, and Art/Technology Boston. It could definitely be described as an event with too many chefs in the kitchen. Fou screens playe fourdifferent curated sets of video art that ranged in themes and subject matter. Sometimes you could hear the sound and sometimes you had to use little h e a d p h o n e s which occasionally played the sound from the videos. It could be summed up as a total mess. And I didn't see one vide worth mentioning.



No trip to Bostor complete without a vis the Museum of Fine A Boston which houses a grand collection of ancient Greek, Roman, Chinese, Japanese and Egyptian art. I was absolutely astounded by its substantial collection. There were two shows that particularly struck me. One was an exhibition of silkscreen rock posters from the 60s and 70s of bands like Airplane and the Doors. The fonts were rfully created and the colors were dizzying sychedelic. The greatest part about them that they had layers and layers of images ich could only be seen under different olors of light. The gallery had club lights and strobes on several of the pieces which brought out images of nude women, fauna, and insects. The second was a juried exhibition of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts alumni. Look out for Hannah Barrett, Cliff Evans, Lori A. Paradise, and Rachel Perry Welty. Evans video was comprised of still images appropriated from the internet strung together in a quasi-narrative fashion describes his work as, "a moving wall of paranoia, a claustrophobic carousel without depth or horizon, a prison of Big Eye." I'm pretty sure he will be regarded as a genius one day.

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Oscar redux: Berg gives his Oscar picks

by Michael Bergeron

The 78th Academy Awards will unroll Sunday March 5. Jon Stewart will be the host. I am not making fun when I say that this year's Oscar telecast will be the lowest rated Oscar telecast in years. After all is said and done, no matter how many awareness commercials ABC runs on ESPN, no matter how many sponsors buy a half-minute commercial at $1.6–million, the Oscars will be seen by less people than any other Oscar ceremony in modern time.

The telecast will still draw between 40 and 45 million viewers, and that is considered sinking. If Fox wanted to outdraw the Oscars they could show an episode of American Idol, but instead they are showing the Michael Bay directed Bad Boys 2. See, there is honor among thieves.

Crash, Good Night and Good Luck, Munich, Brokeback Mountain, and Capote - are all worthy films. But don't you also wonder why The History of Violence, The Upside of Anger, The Constant Gardener, Grizzly Man, The New World, The World's Faster Indian or Match Point were virtually shut out? The point being the Academy Awards can never be all things to all people. And the films chosen are the tip of the iceberg of total films made.

In one year's time we could be sitting here discussing BABEL, FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS, V FOR VENDETTA, THE DEPARTED, ZODIAC, or maybe THE GOOD SHEPHERD, or even a film that was pushed back from last Christmas, ALL THE KING'S MEN.

2006 will see two films from studios that depict 9/11. Universal has Flight 93 in May, a retelling of the doomed flight hat crashed in Pennsylvania shot in real time, and from Paramount Oliver Stone's World Trade Center starring Nicolas Cage. The summer of 2006 will be a weekly battle of mega-movies with budgets north of $100-million and titles like MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3; X-MEN 3; THE POSIDEON ADVENTURE, PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST, SUPERMAN RETURNS, or THE DA VINCI CODE. In sharp contrast to the hundreds of millions Hollywood throws at tent pole pictures, the movie Crash had a budget just over $6-million. Industry reports put the amount Lionsgate has spent promoting Crash's Oscar possibilities at $4-million. Usually a studio will send out at the very most 15,000 maybe 20,000 screeners of a film for an Oscar campaign. Part of Lionsgate's cost included the 130,000 DVD screeners of Crash that were sent to, well, everyone but the people here in this room. Hollywood likes to shine a light on its artistic contributions and if you ban a film they will surely come to its defense. You have to imagine that most of the Academy members vote with their artistic passion – for what the really feel is the best contender. Then you have your first standard deviation of people who will cast their ballot according to what their friends vote for. Do you really think that what a critic's group or Golden Globe member rallies behind has that much credibility with the various Actors, Directors, Producers, Executives, Art Directors, Cinematographers, Editors, Writers, Sound and Visual Effects artisans and Members-At-Large of the Academy? One must also consider what I call the Cold Mountain effect of certain films. While Cold Mountain was nominated for 7 Academy Awards it only won one (Best Supporting Actress) and was not favored by the Hollywood community from the point of view of runaway production. Cold Mountain was shot in Eastern Europe and many of the voters are people who live and work in California. Another film that is nominated this year in the foreign film category, Paradise Now, is the subject of slanderous email and verbal campaigns by people objecting to its nation or origin – the film is listed as both from Palestine and the Palestine Authority on two different Academy web sites. Memoirs of a Geisha, despite mainlining at the box office, has more than a good chance at picking up a couple of technical and craft awards this year. It was mostly shot on a recreation Japanese village constructed just outside L.A.

There are always the annual Oscar parties and brouhahas, but is anybody really watching? The last time I checked films like Brown Bunny and now, Manderlay, will not play theatrically in Houston because it's the last stop on the train schedule. The Landmark Theatres affiliate Magnolia Pictures' touring show of Oscar short films will not be playing in Houston because we're not hip enough, although the program has bookings in over a dozen (smaller) U.S. cities.

If you've seen the Best Picture choices you see more films than the average bear. Most people have not seen Brokeback Mountain (USA Today put the number at 12-million in North America) but perceive it as a gay cowboy movie. That is incorrect. If you want to see a film about gay men as portrayed by straight actors see The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert with Terence Stamp, Guy Pearce, and Hugo Weaving. Truman Capote will be the subject of a film coming out later this year from director Doug McGrath and the cast includes Sandra Bullock as Lee Harper and Daniel Craig as Perry Smith. The actor playing Capote previously played the voice of Dobby the Elf in the Harry Potter films.

My choice is Good Night, and Good Luck but my choice never wins. Kind of like the Presidential elections.

On a side note, movie theaters are only hurting themselves by refusing to innovate. Sooner, rather than later, major studios will release DVDs on the same day and date as the theatrical release. And they will do that because it will bring in more money than the current economic model. Movie theaters by contrast will continue to lose audiences until they re-define the movie going experience as something more than stadium seating and bottled water. Consider soundproof plexi-glass booths with the sound piped in for people who want to watch movies and talk on their cell phones at the same time. Again, my choices never win. Let's take it category by category. There are a few hundred retired and associate members of the Academy but they do not vote. With the exception of short subjects, documentaries and foreign films, for which members must sign-in and view in-person, the various branches on the Academy determine their respective nominees from a list of eligible films, and those final nominations are voted on by the entire Academy body. While my methods for choosing the Oscar winners are far from foolproof, I always accurately pick better than 50-percent. I'm soooo much smoother than Matthew McConaughey in that crap movie Two For the Money.

78TH ANNUAL ACADEMY AWARDS®
OSCAR® Picks

Best Motion Picture of the Year:
Brokeback Mountain.

Achievement in Directing:
Brokeback Mountain - Ang Lee

Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role:
Philip Seymour Hoffman ("Truman Capote" in Capote)

Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role:
George Clooney ("Bob Barnes" in Syriana)

Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role:
Felicity Huffman ("Bree" in Transamerica)

Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role:
Rachel Weisz ("Tessa Quayle" in The Constant Gardener)

Achievement in Writing (Adapted Screenplay):
Brokeback Mountain - Screenplay by Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana

Achievement in Writing (Original Screenplay):
Crash - Screenplay by Paul Haggis & Bobby Moresco. Story by Paul Haggis

Best Foreign Language Film:
Tsotsi (South Africa) Directed by Gavin Hood

Animated Feature Film:
Tim Burton's Corpse Bride (Warner Bros.) – Mike Johnson and Tim Burton

Cinematography:
Dion Beebe Memoirs of a Geisha

Art Direction:
Memoirs of a Geisha

Costume:
Memoirs of a Geisha

Documentary Feature:
March of the Penguins

Documentary Short Subject:
God Sleeps in Rwanda

Editing:
Crash

Make-Up:
Chronicles of Narnia

Original Score:
Brokeback Mountain, Gustavo Santaolalla

Original Song:
"It's Hard Out Here For A Pimp" - Hustle & Flo, Music and Lyric by Jordan Houston, Cedric Coleman and Paul Beauregard

Animated Short:
The Mysterious Geographic Exploration of Jasper Morello

Live Action Short:
Cashback

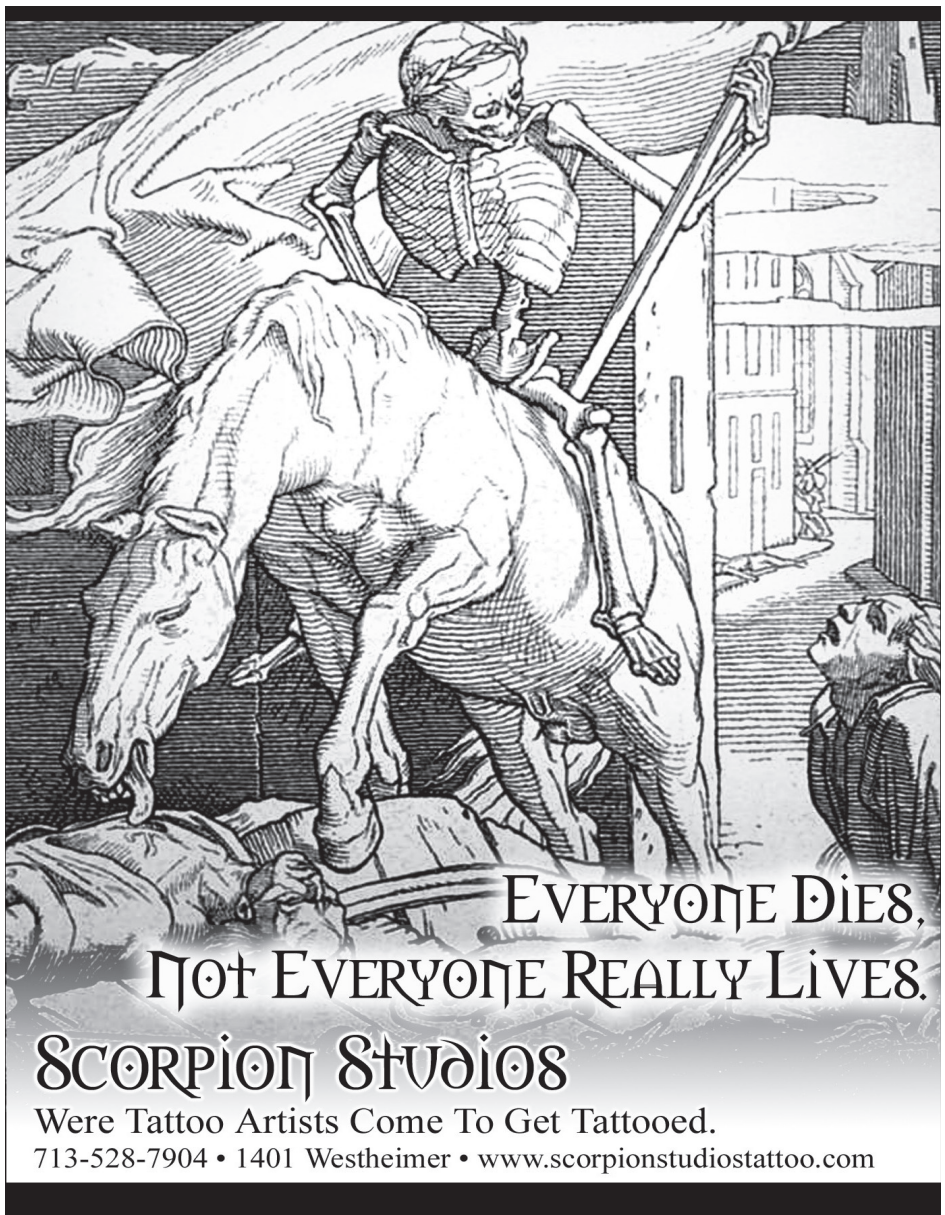
Sound Editing:
War of the Worlds

Sound Mixing:
War of the Worlds

Visual Effects:
King Kong

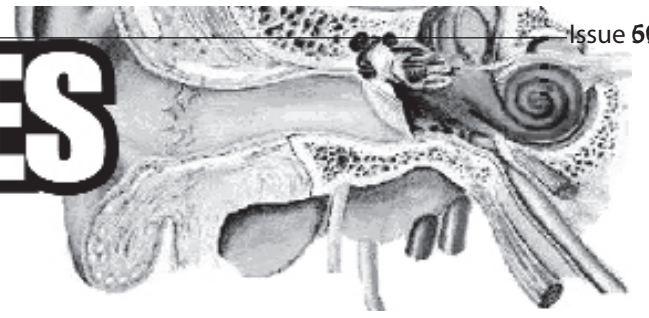
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SOUNDBYTES



Borrowed and Never Returned: Emotions, Books, Outlooks on Life

by Kwame M. Anderson

And from a blank page arose the language, at once so majestic only to dissolve into something confusing and appalling, for I too hate these verbal symbols we have been given, for what sense to does it truly make to speak in a nonsensical dialect? I do not know, you are right. Anyway, hello, greetings all good thoughts and well wishes extended. Let's talk about perception. Perception is a difficult thing to control. Ice Cube could remind me of the day, as a teenager, I walked from a friend's house and rapped the entire Amerikkka's Most Wanted album, much as an old black woman may hum a gospel tune or spiritual as she does her daily doings. It was the same ritual but now the gospel was rap about injustice, ghetto households, and male bravado. It was a worship of a deified concept that conjured a freedom in an otherwise oppressive society. See, that makes Ice Cube sound deep, right? But some of you just might hear the cursing or remember the guy who listened to "gangsta" rap that said to you, "Move out of the way bitch!" and now you eternally hate the usage and /or user of such a term. It depends on your background and education and sensibilities. We are all trying to stress our opinion, our truth, to convert others to our way of thinking. It is selfish, it is self serving, it is the basis of criticism. Who am I to judge? I am (by my own perception) an intelligent person with implied (but never labeled) superiority over you because I have (read a book) researched the things that I say, I do not (I think) just say things that have no relevance (to me).

So with that stated let us also talk about the stupid people. Let me first say that if you seek out knowledge or have the opportunity to gain knowledge from something yet you refuse it, based on whatever thing you can concoct in your own mind, then that is (in my opinion) stupid. The rejecting of knowledge in order to maintain a comfortable ignorance, that is stupid. "Why should I learn Spanish, I live in America, they should speak English." See that is stupid. "We are going to prove to the rest of the world that our views are right by blowing ourselves and people around us up who do not make or really influence the corrupt polices that we so hate. Then, by the destroying of the lives of people who are also oppressed, I will show the oppressors that they are wrong and must give me and my constituents power over the people that we senselessly murdered. See, that is stupid. My father doesn't believe I should use the terms "stupid" and "idiot". I see what he is saying, but I mean hey, what do you do in a society that is so congratulatory towards simple things. Like a child who can sing and dance, woopty fucking doo, they'll get more attention than a child who understands the structure of a paragraph, or an essay for that matter. Whenever they interview celebrities they always go, "School wasn't my thing." It's OK to be stupid nowadays, because we are more sensitive society, semantically, but the world is still cruel, and it's really cruel to the stupid, excuse me, misguided (intentionally).

I'm not going to SXSW this year, so no reports coming from the festival. I'll be here like you guys but I do know Animal Collective and Frog Eyes are performing, and I'll hate missing that. But Man Man are coming here and a lot of other people, because it's Spring time, boyee!!! Does anyone else hate what they've done to the legacy of Flava Flav? There's also a bunch of released/soon to be released music to talk about, so without further due, let me introduce to you; KWAM TALKING ABOUT STUFF.

PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF SONGS AND/OR FASHION

MATISYAHU
3/12/06 Warehouse Live
(813 St. Emanuel St.)

Matisyahu is an orthodox Jewish reggae artist. See, all I really have to do is ride the kitsch value of that. His CD sold a couple hundred thousand copies, and it was of a concert he did at Stubbs in Austin. That's like a KISS album. It was a CD of him in concert singing reggae songs, and it sold a lot of copies, and he's an orthodox Jew, meaning he doesn't smoke weed or any of that craziness, but he still sings about righteousness and the way of the Lord, and that's really what roots reggae is about. Now they do smoke weed, but hey, the world don't move to the beat of just one drum. So, Matisyahu, will be here on the 12th which coincidentally is a Sunday, which is the Sabbath, although I read somewhere he tries not to perform on Sundays, so this will be special and appropriate.

MAGNOLIA ELECTRIC CO.
3/17/06 Rudyard's
(2010 Waugh)

Jason Molina is a fabulous singer- songwriter and guitar player as his new album shows. However, it would be inaccurate to say Magnolia Electric Co. was his band as it, over the years, has become more a unit with a member who made popular records before being in this band. Either way, their "working class rock" ethic has gotten names like Bruce Springsteen, Bob Seger, and John Fogerty dropped in their record reviews and press kits. Well, with the exception of Fogerty, I don't listen to any of those dudes, so I just think it sounds like solid, slightly country-ish classic rock. Then again classic rock is another one of those terms that implies there is no modern feel to the music. You'll like it if you like, say, Black Mountain. Whatever the case, this is a live band and the stage is where they are best illuminated. Rudyard's is always a good place to see bands in illuminated light. See, all plusses.

TED LEO and THE PHARMACISTS
3/19/06 Walter's On Washington
(4215 Washington)

Ted Leo has enjoyed an illustrious career as an artist that has a poppier slant, but still has the cool of an indie artist. He and his band, The Pharmacists, are critically acclaimed and his cover of Kelly Clarkson's "Since U Been Gone" got him mentioned in some magazines with Absolut Vodka ads, so hey. Recently he's become part of the Touch And Go Records familia. Now he will bring the rock, the sound, a huge crowd (maybe) to Walter's to mow them over with his wit and melodies. There might even be girls at the show, so hey again!!!

WE ARE SCIENTISTS
3/20/06 Walter's On Washington
4215 Washington)

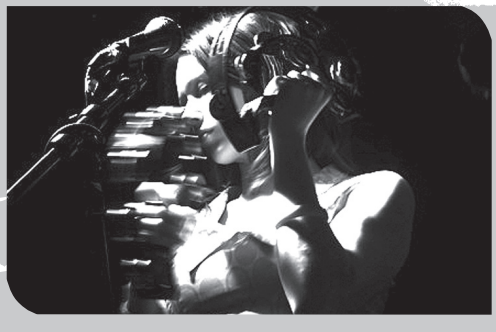
Shows



Mogwai
3/14 @ Numbers



SpainColoredOrange
3/9 @ Engine Room



Morning After Girls
3/6 @ Meridian



DJ Suma
3/10 @ Super Happy Fun Land



Kelly Lancaster
3/12 @ Mucky Duck



LesslieandJukeJointers
3/15 @ Continental Club

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This band was raved about in NME and other pretty credible magazines. And so as, Free Press Houston is trying to get it's named mentioned with magazines with advertisements and shit that falls out of them when you try to read them, we too will endorse the consideration of seeing We Are Scientists. Their songs have a quality of the new wave, Brit pop, drum skip thing that you hear in music by bands like Interpol, Bloc Party, and you know that dreamy Johnny Marr guitar thing with background vocals and Gang of Four leanings, it's decent enough to stand up and watch for an hour.

DILATED PEOPLES/LITTLE BROTHER
3/23/06 Warehouse Live
(813 St. Emanuel St.)

There is a certain aesthetic that hip hop groups like Dilated Peoples and Little Brother possess. There's a whole facet of the hip hop community that still worships the hop of a good DJ Premier or J Dilla (R.I.P.) beat, and those people also respect the beats of Dilated member Evidence or maybe the turntable kinetics of their DJ Babu. The group enjoyed a little shine with their Kanye West produced single, "This Way," but the real fans were already witnessing the real. Little Brother features Big Pooh and Fontay under the beat umbrella of 9th Wonder. 9th Wonder has laced everyone from Destiny's Child to Buckshot with his soul classics and Little Brother has proven itself to be one of the more original and authentic rap groups on the scene right now. If you're a fan of hip hop, then you'll be lovin' it.

RELEASED OR SOON TO BE RELEASED MUSIC

DESTROYER: "Destroyer's Rubies" (Merge Records)

Dan Bejar is known for writing loquacious love songs that recall the sounds of David Bowie classics. Who knows, I guess that's a description. I prefer to say Destroyer is one of the most magnificent bands humming ditties these days. Dramatic and grand, the songs hark back to things that are classic, yet they reach into new places. In the first song "Rubies" Bejar sings to a lover "You disrupt the world's disorder by virtue of your grace." Now if that line It's on the first song; he comes out the gate with greatness. While the last album, Your Blues, was an experiment in the MIDI orchestra and was jarring to fans who came into the graces of the band after experiencing the masterpiece Streethawk: A Seduction or the reverb laden pop of This Night, the absence of a rock band's furor was missed on the last album. Here, it has returned, and apparently for good, as the players on this album, all frequent collaborators, are now THE band. It is here where I feel Bejar as the director of the ship, manning the direction of the voyage, is in top form. "European Oils" is possibly one of the best Destroyer songs ever. Buy this album as soon as you read this, for every second you live without it is a moment you ignore greatness.

MAN MAN: "Six Demon Bag" (Ace Fu Records)

Maybe you never heard of Man Man and missed their last album and their show here last year. Well, you know what? Man Man is a charitable band, and it is for that reason, they've released a new album and decided to return to Houston and rock you again. First things first, Six Demon Bag, Man Man's new album accomplishes a rare feat, by being better than their first album, Man With the Blue Turban Face, and their first album was a motherfucker (pardon my Cantonese). Six Demon Bag maintains a lot of the same elements that made their debut unique; wild drunken vocals, like that of a carnival announcer, insane background chants, anything goes music sensibilities, wrangled by beauty and violence. The songs howl, wail, stomp, prance, and march down your street burning torches and stirring up revivals. The music has a darkness to it that also is playfulness. Rhythm is married to chaos, but the union is equally compromised. One of the best albums that has and will come out this year, I said it, I will stand by it. I also will stand by the stage when the band plays here on March 15th at Walter's On Washington (4215 Washington) to promote this album, make extra money while in Texas for their 2 million SXSW performances, and give you another chance to see their monster of a show. And yes I know it's a Wednesday night, and yes I know that a band called The Strokes is also playing that night, and yes I know that you are wack and may not go because you are lame, but let's say you shake off the crack addiction, come and witness something that will be more awesome than anything you're doing that night, which I know is incredibly presumptuous, but I tend overemphasize so that it may inspire the placid.

TOWN & COUNTRY: "Up and Above" (Thrill Jockey Records)

I have heard some classify Town and Country as folk music. I have never heard this type of folk music, but the instrumentation is similar to things I have heard in all types of music that could be considered folk. But, in a way, the music is very futuristic, very post modern, it hints at the possibility of sound in relation to space and rhythm and texture and volume. It's exciting like watching a changing landscape, or looking at clouds form and dissolve in the sky. The sound is very natural, it unfolds itself, it morphs itself into shapes and colors that are mixed and presented, there are shades of sounds, it like looking out into the distance and slowly gaining focus of everything between you and something far away. It is more percussive than previous Town and Country releases, which is a new direction, but maybe it is more of an expansion to an already pretty broad sounding band. In terms of songs that will make you think of your girlfriend or boyfriend, I'm not sure if that is present, yet I believe if one was so inclined, they could maybe begin to think about someone they care for within whatever world is opened in their mind as the music plays. But then, some people are so obsessive, anything reminds them of their mate. For just the other day I farted and woman told me of how the aroma of my flatulence was similar to the smell of the shit she takes from her man everyday, yet my farts smelled more nurturing and willing to compromise on a "we" instead of a "me" vision.







THE GARAGE-PUNK BAND SUBS ARE FROM CHINA, AND THEY WISH THAT DIDN'T INTEREST YOU

Subs are an angry band, but not in the way that anyone who has seen their live set or heard their self-produced and distributed EP might think. With ferocious riffs, pounding rhythms and hell-bent screaming vocals, the band seems to take out its frustrations on its instruments. But what has the Beijing-based garage-punk band particularly pissed off lately has to do with why it is also one of the happiest rock acts in the Middle Kingdom.

The members of what would become Subs first met in Wuhan, a city on the banks of the Yangtze River, known mainly for its oppressive summer heat, and the spicy cuisine it produces - not coincidentally, perhaps, it is called the 'hot pot' of the country. Also, perhaps not coincidentally, it has produced a large amount of punk rock, including that which Subs singer Kang Mao, guitarist Wu Hao, drummer Shi Xudong and bassist Shen Xia played in various local bands. By February 2002, they had all moved to Beijing and formed Subs. In June 2002 Shen suffered a brain aneurysm (from which she has since recovered) and was replaced by Zhu Lei. In February 2003, the band played their first gig, but the SARS scare abruptly brought their career to a standstill along with much of the country. Still, within a year of their live debut, their energetic performances generated enough buzz to earn them chances to play alongside bands visiting from Europe, including the Norwegian band Bonk, who played in China in the fall of 2004. Bonk's manager, who also books acts for the Øya festival, was impressed with what he saw and invited the band to Norway to perform at the three-day event.

Now Subs are fresh from nearly three late-summer weeks in Scandinavia, where they played ten shows in all for Norwegian and Finnish crowds ranging from dozens to thousands, as well as from another seven-show tour of Amsterdam and Germany that wrapped up at the beginning of November. And though they return knowing they have earned a new fan base and future opportunities, a bad taste is still in their mouths from their first European trip. Not used to Western media attention, the band sat through interview after interview in which reporters were more curious about the band's homeland than their music. "Reporters only asked questions about China," said Kang, lamenting the off-stage reaction to the band. In Bergen, Norway, a frustrated Kang told the host of a local punk radio show that he needn't have bothered to interview the band: "The questions you asked us," said the vocalist, slipping into her onstage punk persona from her usually amicable off-stage self, "you could've asked any Chinese person."

Not that having the China label works against them: It certainly helped them attract crowds across Northern Europe. The 'China' label may help get people to shows, but the band laments that people might be attracted only by the exotic allure of their home country. "Now, we're China Subs," observed Kang. "Soon, we'll be China Subs. Then, eventually, we'll be Subs China, and then just plain Subs." But if their first trip outside of the country as a band -- for three out of four of the members, it was their first trip outside of the country period -- revealed anything, it's that they had a long way to go before the 'China' might get dropped.

But while curiosity first brings people out -- Chinese punk is for much of the world still an oxymoron -- it doesn't take long before they forget that the band isn't local. Until, that is, the band members start to speak to the crowd during song breaks. Their English isn't up to the task of communicating much to an audience, but according to a local paper reviewing the band's show in Os, Norway, it didn't much matter. Subs were better than anyone in the crowd imagined a Chinese band could be.

Despite Subs' aversion to the focus on their Chineseness, though, they still managed to become somewhat PR-savvy during their first trip abroad. Their poster, specially designed for their Nordic tour, featured a backdrop of traditional calligraphy in addition to the big "Punk From China" stamp across the middle, both obvious hot-buttons designed to attract curious onlookers. It was only in the hours before they boarded a plane back to Beijing that they divulged the meaning of the calligraphy: "It's pretty much just random cursing: 'Fuck your mom, asshole, jackass,' that kind of thing," said Kang. For this band who is getting a taste of life above the Beijing underground, it's the small victories that count.

-Jon Campbell

Pegstar Concerts

MARCH 2nd - Engine Room

Electric 6 / She Wants Revenge / Rock Kills Kid
DJ Ceeplus & The House Of Bad Knives

MARCH 14th - Walter's On Washington

Asobi Seksu
The Czars

MARCH 15th - 1415 **with Boys & Girls Club**

Boys & Girls 2 Year Party W/ Moving Units
The Fever / DJ Franki Chan / B&G's DJs

MARCH 20th - Walter's On Washington

We Are Scientists / The Grates
Foreign Born / Zykos

MARCH 22nd - Walter's On Washington

The Living Things / The Vacation
Flowers To Hide

April 21st - Warehouse Live

Benvento Russ Duo

MAY 14th - Walter's On Washington

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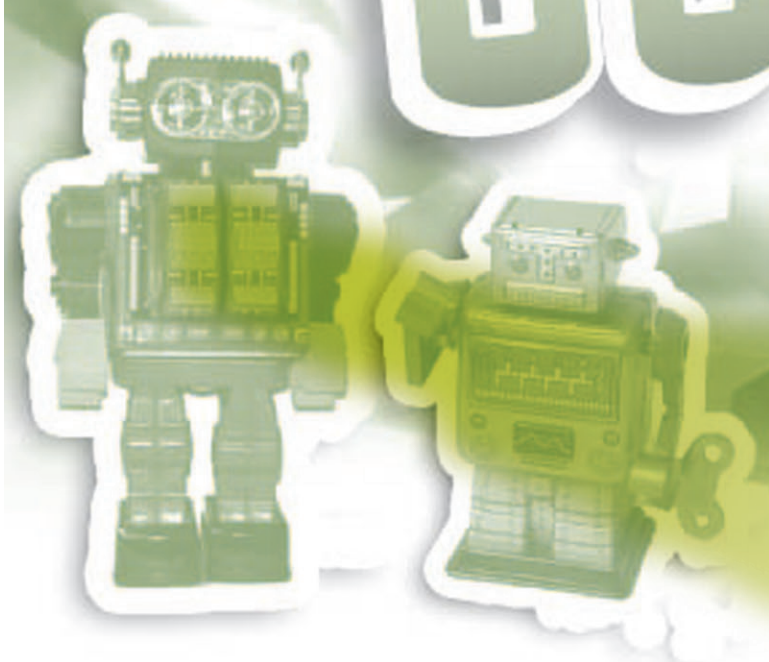
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SEEING THEM OUTSIDE

by Lance Scott Walker





Crooked Fingers in Chicago. The Faint with Les Savy Fav in New York. Slint in Seattle. Fugazi in Milwaukee. Sonic Youth in London.

It's a rare opportunity when you find yourself in another city seeing a band you dig. A far away city, that is. Not Austin, Denton or New Orleans, but a city you had to fly to (or drive really fucking far) in order to end up lucking out to be in said city on said lucky night when said band had a date booked. When it does happen, for the most part, you're out of your element. None of your friends are there; you don't know the bartender (or even what the bar does and doesn't serve); the venue is probably unfamiliar and you might not even know much about the city.

But one thing is for sure when you're watching a band play in an environment other than your standard Mary Jane's (RIP), Rudyard's or The Proletariat here in Houston: you see that show differently. Gone are the taps on the shoulder from rogue friends shouting drunken nonsensicals into your ear about what's going on in their world, absent is the ex-girlfriend or boyfriend you don't want to run into tip-toeing around the room and a yet present is a whole new backdrop against which to watch the band. The band in question might not sound different, they probably don't look different, but you certainly notice that their interaction with the crowd is different.

So here we find none other than myself standing three or four folks from the stage at a Low gig in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Feels weird calling it a "gig," but that's exactly what it was. Black Sheep, where the show was booked, is very obviously what served as more of a punk rock joint through the better part of its existence -- trading off a half-dozen names (one of them being Industrial Nation) before it became Black Sheep. The quality of the acts has gone up in the warehouse-style room, and apparently so has quality of the room itself -- under new ownership with new graffiti painted on the inside wall and two very cool doormen manning the gates.

But Low was on shaky legs tonight. Two days into the tour (a long, straight shot from home in Minnesota) with a new bass player in tow, they were loose. Alan Sparhawk butchered a solo to end one of the first few songs, which had followed an all-too quiet intro song that did nothing to divert the conversation mounting up in the back of the room, and the ill energy that followed that onstage only mounted throughout the set. Low has gotten louder over the years -- mostly notably on last year's The Great Destroyer, but half of their set still registers at a whisper, and the room, nearly at a roar in the back, was unforgiving. I'm not going to blame that on Colorado Springs, however; the very nature of what Low does isn't conducive to night clubs and it never has been. Still, it's hard to tell how that affects the band. At a set at Rudyard's a few years back, the machine shop-volume noise that was bellowing out from the bar area was so deafening that it inspired Houston ex-pat Davey McEathron, sitting in front near the stage, to turn around and scream Everybody at the bar, shut the fuck up!

Sparhawk put his hand up immediately after that, shaking his head and saying No, no. They paid money.

Paid money for what? Ten bucks to go and talk over a band? Far be it from me to say I've never talked during a show -- even a show by a band I wanted to see. But going to see Low isn't a cool thing. It isn't and never has been the flavor of the month or the hot spot to be on any given night -- and anyone paying good money to see them should know they're all about quiet time -- at least half of the time. So why show up if you're just going to stand in the back caterwauling and ignoring them?

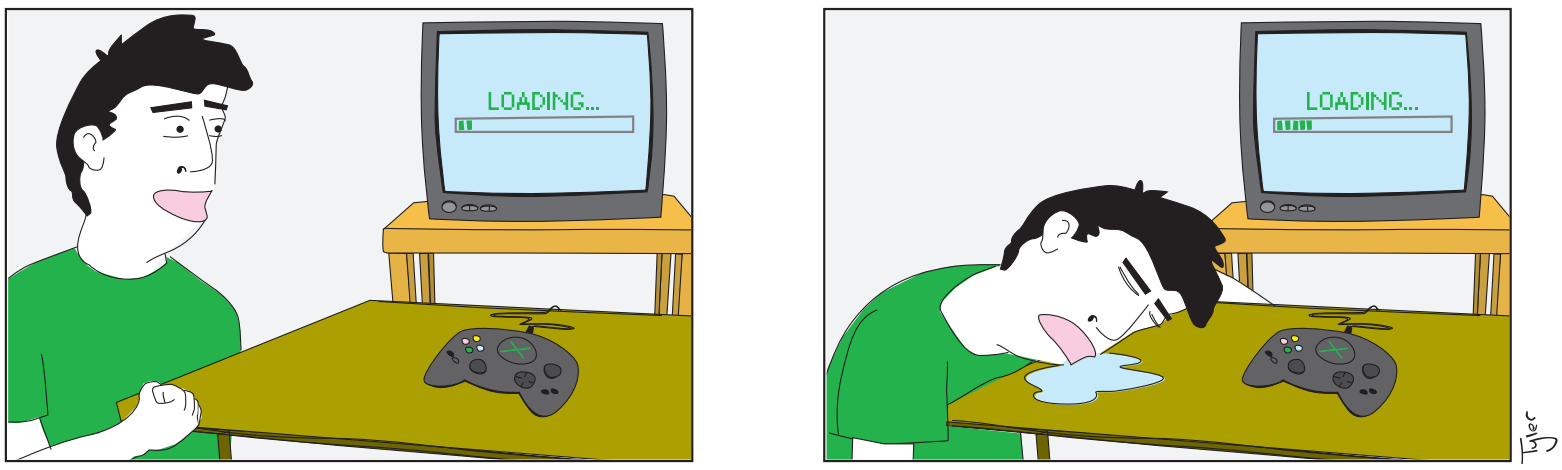
Maybe Colorado Springs isn't that different from Houston in the end. Maybe San Diego is more like Virginia Beach than we know. Maybe, just maybe, Miami and Minneapolis have more in common than their first two letters when it comes to the behavior of their residents at shows. The difference is in us, the people in the crowd, and how we each watch the show as ourselves. My brother Brian, standing next to me at the show, didn't see the same show I did, and neither did the two girls standing in front of me or the three professional whiskey drinkers in the back howling at each other while they gave high fives and ignored over a decade's worth of fine songwriting being showcased onstage. Sparhawk had a point in letting the room be as it would. Take it how you will, every show, but never let the crowd dictate how you feel about it -- no matter where you are, because no matter where you are -- it's your show in the end.


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Gaming 2006... LOADING

by Tyler Barber



In 2004 the video game industry soared to record highs in sales and popularity. Titles like Halo 2, Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater, Katamari Damacy and Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas trumpeted critical praise and carried with them the sales that competed with the film industry. Likewise, 2005 proved to be another record-breaking year in sales where franchises and genres were re-invented a la Resident Evil 4, God of War, Psychonauts, Jade Empire and Nintendogs. However, 2006 may prove to break the trend. Though the next generation of gaming is at our doorsteps, with the Xbox 360 already in just over 1 million homes, it is also on the receiving end of the blame for the lack-luster sales. Transition years between consoles are always shaky, but this particular year is plagued by myriad factors leading to the decline of the industry. Gamers are in a limbo land of expecting anything for the next-gen consoles—be it release dates of games, the consoles themselves, as well as any specifics regarding the Playstation 3 or the Nintendo Revolution (still code named... I think???).

Game of table tennis anyone?

Sony's official press statements on the PS3 has been like playing a silent game of table tennis, with no ball, or paddles. Journalists and bloggers alike are watching each other publish articles with headlines reading, "PS3 will surface sometime in 2006," "PS3 might be delayed to 2007," "PS3 still set to launch in Spring," and on and on with no official word from Sony. Piracy concerns, hardware specifications, and manufacturing protocols are at the root of the back and forth speculation for the launch of the PS3. However, all these combined fail to overshadow a report from Merrill-Lynch that estimates each PS3 will cost Sony upwards of $800. That means Sony may take a $300 to $400 loss on each system sold in its first year and a half. Compared to Microsoft's Xbox 360, which loses roughly $200 on each system, the expense is found in both the Blue-Ray DVD technology, and in the Cell processor. To further problems on the aesthetic front, developers working on PS3 titles are claiming that there is no way the physical unit will fit into the prototype case that Sony's been teasing us with. Regarding Sony's online plans—though nothing is confirmed, information on a code named "Playstation HUB" has been surfacing with aims to meet Xbox Live feature-per-feature. But again, exact details are nowhere to be found. So far, all we know is that Sony is sticking to their guns on a Spring release, which puts the official end of Spring on the business calendar at May. So that would mean that Sony would have to start production by the end of this month to have enough units to ship for May. And again, whether they plan to release in Japan first, or the US, is still a mystery. Yeah, the PS3 will launch in Spring, and New Orleans will resurrect itself as the chocolate city.

Too little, too soon

On the other hand, the Xbox 360 has already launched, but its contribution to the decline of the industry has been in its shortage of Xbox 360's, and through its over-zealous claim to provide gamers with a "lucid dream like" experience in gaming. Well, what it has turned out so far has been less than such, unless you've ever had a lucid dream with shiny plastic people bouncing all over the place in physics defying motions. The graphics for most 360 launch games where re-hashed titles—more akin to a makeover at Foley's cosmetics counter than a reality TV Extreme Makeover. What Microsoft has going for itself is its Xbox Live Arcade service, which has gained more critical acclaim than its $60 games. For about $12 gamers have been going online and racking up bragging rights in the leading scores. Microsoft has successfully delivered back to the basics of gaming where points and bragging rights stand at the forefront. Instead of the generic initials that scrolled trough arcade machines, real players occupy the top ranks of score boards. Once more, you can look into any gamer's profiles and peep all of their achievements. While Microsoft will turn out more 360's in the coming months to meet demand, the one thing we're not seeing much of are the games. With the doubling of development costs, and the time to develop games for the next gen, 360 titles have seen frequent delays and To Be Announced statuses. Only two of the four titles that Microsoft is touting as their killer apps have a solid release date: Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter (on store shelves by the time you are reading this). Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion is the other title with a concrete release date set at March 31st. The other two: Too Human, and Gears of War remain TBA. With only four exclusive titles that are the alleged killer apps of the 360 one may wonder if Microsoft has anything else up their sleeve. Halo 3 anyone? Don't count on it, rumors persist that Bungie's next outing will be on Xbox Live Arcade. And, if I were you, I wouldn't hold my breath for Halo 3 in 2006. Bungie, and Microsoft reps are responding to the hype and rumors as the "mythical Halo 3." Given Bungie's long-winded development protocol, I wouldn't be surprised if we didn't see Halo 3 until 2008

Disappointment for green tights

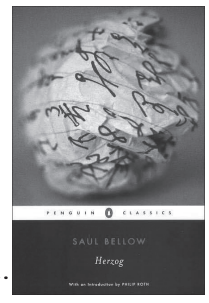
And for Nintendo, while gamers won't have to sell their bed-ridden grandma's kidneys to afford their new system, they have no idea what to expect on the machine come launch. Nintendo holds that there is much about their new system that is still a secret. The company even plans to continually release information following E3 all the way up until launch. Nintendo's tight-lipped policy is understandable given their track record for standardizing gaming as we know it. Too often has Nintendo had their great ideas stolen early in conception. Word from developers is that the system is remarkably easy to develop for and that it is a synch to port projects also slated for the 360 and the PS3. One thing that is certain is Nintendo's stance with online gaming: it should cost nothing, and be hassle free. This comes as a ray of light in the wake of uncertainty. Nintendo has evidenced their commitment to the online realm in the form of online connected kiosks that will allow players to connect their Nintendo DS's for game demos, previews, and game updates. Perhaps the most disheartening news from Nintendo of recent comes as yet another delay for the Gamecube's Zelda: Twilight Princess. After a ton of delays, it seemed certain that Zelda: TP would drop early summer. However, the company has officially scheduled the game to debut this holiday season. And to further break Link fans' hearts, the company has constantly alluded to, then retracting comments regarding compatibility with the new Nintendo Revolution's controller. Now it seems that any interaction that the two will have will be played out only in the mini games (fishing, conducting music a la Wind Waker, and possibly the grappling hook).

prepare for the inevitable **information blue-balls** in reference to anything **next gen**

Signs of a shaky industry come to us in the form of rampant lay-offs at big name game companies, and pricing going up on both the development end, and the consumer end. However, Nintendo, Microsoft and Sony all seem to be holding back for this year's E3 conference. Expect to have your gaming appetite whetted come May, but prepare for the inevitable information blue-balls in reference to anything next gen. Surely the gaming industry will dig itself out of this hole that the next-gen hype created. Hopefully the industry can learn from the mistakes made this go-around.

Books n' Shit

by Brandon Montes



Herzog

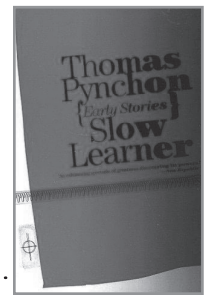
Saul Bellow's *Herzog*, sadly, is one the more overlooked American classics. It's the sort of book that changes the reader. Well, at least, I think reading it changed me. But then maybe I identify with Moses E. Herzog, the story's protagonist, more than most.

Herzog is the archetypal failure–likable, if a bit unhinged. He has failed as a parent, as a spouse, as a teacher and as a writer. When the combined stress of his failures finally take their toll, he takes to writing letters. Mostly unsent. He writes letters to anyone he can trace back to his sad state, be they friends, family, or famous strangers. He even goes so far as to write to a few who are already dead. Somewhere along the way finally gets himself together. More or less.

Bellow does an amazing job laying out the landscape of a man's mind in crisis. There were points, plural, where the technique had me reading on my belly with my legs in the air. Yeah, now that's submission to the arts.

I wish I could say this book is for everyone, but it's not. It's getting to be an old book, and Bellow's style was probably dated when it was originally published in <. The language is unnecessarily thick and at times it's easy to lose track of the non-traditional plotline. But the letters alone are fucking priceless.

(Herzog, by Saul Bellow. Penguin Books.)



Slow Learner

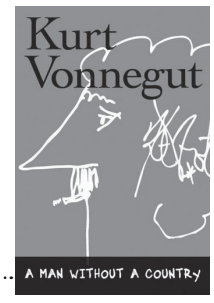
Slow Learner is a collection of five early short stories by Thomas Pynchon. The author is best known for his absurdist tome *Gravity's Rainbow,* which is about an American solider whose hard-ons are tracked by Nazi rocket-bombs. It's one of my all-time favorites, so you'll have to excuse the quick plug.

Pynchon is notorious for his reclusive ness. Rarely photographed, the guy has what you might call a "face for radio." But it's what's inside that counts, right?

The stories making up *Slow Learner* were originally published in various literary mags during the late '50s and early '60s. It helps to keep in mind that these stories are the work of a novice, and they lack a certain polish that a truly talented writer builds over a lifetime. Most of the stories end without clear resolution, half never even clearly establishing a conflict. His voice, at times, is a little too dry. But his humor remains sharp and intact.

Having read his later work, it was a lot of fun to see his fledgling technique develop. For those of you who have never heard of Pynchon before, this is a great way to test the waters without committing to an almost 800 page epic, such as *Gravity's Rainbow.*

(Slow Learner, by Thomas Pynchon. Back Bay Books.)



A Man without a Country

I'm not alone when I say this guy has a very special place in my heart. If it weren't for his work, I probably would have stopped reading before I learned to drive.

The legendary Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s most recent book, *A Man without a Country,* is more a collection of memoirs, antic dotes and insights, than an autobiography. And at 83, he has a lot of tidbits to share. His reads a little different here than in his unusual fiction. It's the same Vonnegut, but the Wizard has stepped out from behind the curtain. That is, his ideals aren't hidden behind one of his colorfully created characters.

This was by far the quickest read of the lot. At under 140 pages with pictures, I tore through it in two sittings. Somehow though, it's the hardest one to review. It's brilliant, of course. But the book is basically a long string of tangents. And he spends a good part of the page count on a soapbox. It's bearable, like when you grandfather tells you about that time, during the depression when… Only with *A Man without a Country,* it's closer to "We know, Grandpa Kurt, the President is an evil monkey. Tell us something we don't already know before you die…please?

(*A Man without a Country,* by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. Seven Stories Press.)







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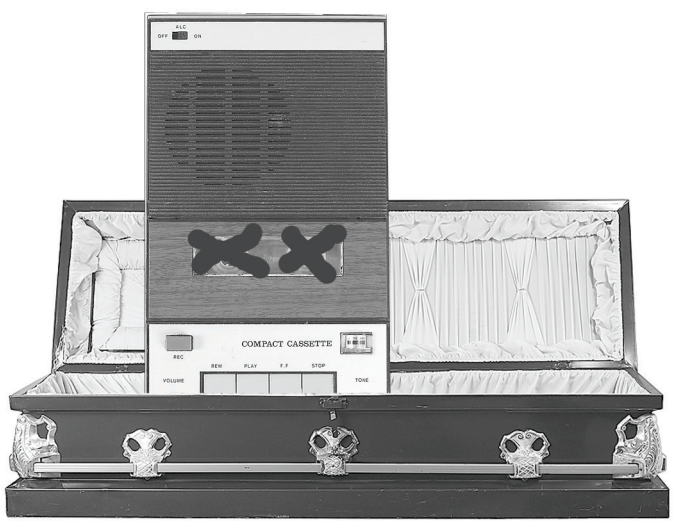
WORLD VIEW

Superficial Abstractions

The Unreal Death of Journalism

By NORMAN SOLOMON

Death is always in the news. From local car crashes to catastrophes in faraway places, deadly events are grist for the media mill. The coverage is ongoing -- and almost always superficial.



It may be unfair to blame journalists for failing to meet standards that commonly elude artists. For centuries, on the subject of death, countless poets have strived to put the ineffable into words. It's only easy when done badly.

Yet it's hard to think of any other topic that is covered so frequently and abysmally in news outlets. The reporting on death is apt to be so flat that it might be mistaken for ball scores or a weather report.

Pallid coverage of the dying is especially routine in U.S. news media when a war is underway and the deaths are caused by the U.S. government.

When a news report breaks through cliches to evoke realities of carnage, the result can be memorable. Here's a passage from an April 1999 story by Robert Fisk, reporting for the London-based daily Independent about a U.S.-led NATO bombing raid on a target in Yugoslavia:

"Deep inside the tangle of cement and plastic and iron, in what had once been the make-up room next to the broadcasting studio of Serb Television, was all that was left of a young woman, burnt alive when NATO's missile exploded in the radio control room. Within six hours, the [British] Secretary of State for International Development, Clare Short, declared the place a 'legitimate target.' It wasn't an argument worth debating with the wounded -- one of them a young technician who could only be extracted from the hundreds of tons of concrete in which he was encased by amputating both his legs. ... By dusk last night, 10 crushed bodies -- two of them women -- had been tugged from beneath the concrete, another man had died in hospital and 15 other technicians and secretaries still lay buried."

*The reporting on **death** is apt to be so flat that it might be mistaken for **ball scores** or a **weather report.***

Compare that account to the easy enthusiasm for NATO's air war from New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, who wrote a day earlier:

"It should be lights out in Belgrade: Every power grid, water pipe, bridge, road and war-related factory has to be targeted."

Or consider the contrast between Fisk's grisly account and the media jargon that the Times brought to bear on its front page that same week:

"NATO began its second month of bombing against Yugoslavia today with new strikes against military targets that disrupted civilian electrical and water supplies..."

Such contrasts -- between facile journalese and human experiences of death -- are also part of the standard media terrain much closer to home. Days ago, the state of California was all set to kill Michael A. Morales in a San Quentin death chamber. But news reports told of delays after two anesthesiologists refused to participate in the lethal injection.

Public acceptance of killing thrives on abstractions. And, in turn, those abstractions (like the phrase I just used, "lethal injection") are largely facilitated by news media.

The reporting about the death penalty is usually light years from what really goes on. We're accustomed to those kinds of gaps. By the time we become adults, we've seen thousands of televised narratives -- from entertainment shows to newscasts -- that purport to depict death but actually do nothing of the sort. It's not hard to watch because so much about death is hidden from media viewers.

For those who champion death-dealing policies as solutions, whether administered by the "Department of Defense" or the "Department of Corrections," euphemisms are vital. Fog prevents acuity about what can't stand the light of day.

"Government officials don't want the American public to view the death penalty as a lethal, destructive, violent act that isn't really necessary," says Bryan Stevenson, executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative of Alabama. "Therefore we sanitize and obscure the act of killing a person, who is no longer a threat to anyone, with protocols and procedures that are aimed at comforting the public. The problem is that intentionally killing another human being is always painful and shocking. As medical doctors, correctional staff and anyone who gets close to capital punishment quickly discover, there is no comfortable way to kill a human being who doesn't have to die."

But there are plenty of comfortable ways for news media to report on the killing of human beings.

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March for Dignity and Respect and Against HR 4437

HR 4437 is a piece of legislation that has passed in the house and will soon reach the senate. If passed, it will have immense repressive impacts on undocumented immigrants and people who provide services to them.

On Sunday February 26th near a thousand people gathered at the intersection of Westheimer and Post Oak to participate in the March for Dignity and Respect and show opposition to house bill HR 4437. People and flags from throughout The Americas were present at this crowd marched North on Postoak to eventually arrive at Brady Park at San Felipe and Yorktown. At Brady Park there was a rally with numerous speakers about the repressive nature of HR 4437 and how to build a broad movement for the rights of immigrants and all people. On March 25th, Jovenes Inmigrantes Por Un Futuro Mejor are organizing the Walk for a Dream, in support of The DREAM Act. The DREAM Act is a piece of legislation that allows for undocumented students the right to continue their careers once they graduate from college.





Cindy Sheehan and Diane Wilson Confront Barbara Bush

On Monday, Feb. 20 (Presidents Day) Gold Star Families for Peace in conjunction with Veterans for Peace and Code Pink organized The President's Day Protest with Cindy Sheehan on the sidewalk in front of St. Martin's Episcopal Church, near where George H. W. and Barbara Bush live. As mothers, fathers and American citizens, citizens joined Cindy Sheehan in asking Barbara Bush "Why did our sons die for your son's lies?" It was a peaceful, nonviolent protest aimed at the heart of Bush Country in Houston. There were several members of Gold Star Families for peace present including Cindy Sheehan, Dede Miller, Amy & Maxx Branham, and others. Also present were Ann Wright, Mimi Kennedy and Diane Wilson.

Diane Wilson has been freed

Unreasonable Woman Diane Wilson was released from jail on Friday the 17th of February after serving more than 75 days of her 120 day sentence. The charges stemmed from a banner drop at a Dow Chemical factory.



Wilson was arrested in Houston back in December after interrupting a speech being given by VP Dick Cheney.

Diane says she's delirious to be out of jail, and was humbled by the experience. The time spent behind bars gave her the opportunity to reflect on situations like Guantanamo Bay where inmates have no outside contact at all. The environmentalist and anti-war activist described herself as more committed then ever to the cause of social justice.

Despite what she's been through, including the vindictive arrest of her daughter when she came to visit, "I have no regrets" says Wilson.

Each year thousand of students are graduating from high schools and now colleges and unable to work in the United States. The DREAM Act, a piece of legislation addresses this issue and if passed thousands of students across the United States would be able to have greater access to higher education and a life of basics needs such as an identification or driver's license. Saturday March 25th "Walk for a DREAM" starts at Harry and Chestnut. Close to Davis High School (1101 Quitman) Be there at 11 AM.

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Activism, Terrorism, Attacks and Tactics

by Nick Cooper
www.nickcooper.com

"Pray for the dead, and fight like hell for the living."
--Mary Harris "Mother" Jones

A few days after 9/11, Bush's crew was mostly concerned with finding ways to make their Iraq attack happen. Peace and justice activists were confused about what to do. A movement had been growing in the US with intensity—from Seattle in December of 1999 to Quebec in April of 2001. Large groups of young people acting on behalf of themselves, sweatshop laborers, old-growth forests, clean air, unions, sea turtles, indigenous people, and many other causes suddenly emerged to take on corporations, governments, and the cops who defend them.

The protest in Washington DC of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) during the last week of September 2001 was to be the big one, within a few hours travel time of most East-coast activists. But after 9-11, almost all groups decided quickly to call things off (the notable exception was The Anti-Capitalist Convergence which went ahead with marches). Since then, the largest protest of a corporate government conference was in Miami in 2003. It was an eighth the size of Seattle.

In the weeks after 9/11, there was talk of how the public would be turned off by a large protest, and the tactics would backfire. But there was another catchphrase, "respect for the victims." How exactly it would respect victims in the US to abandon victims of IMF/WB policies around the world—no one explained. Yet, on some level, it made sense. Funerals and cemeteries are often associated with silence or quiet. Mourning is associated with quiet meditation. Families of some 9/11 victims might have indeed wanted to be comforted and not riled up.

But the quiet that somehow seemed appropriate after 9/11 was connected to a patriotic circling of the wagons. It somehow said if "they" did this to us, it is no time for us to be rallying in solidarity with "them." But "them" is a group that somehow came to include terrorists and third world poor. Perhaps this was the chance we had to catch, before it slipped into our culture, the idea that illegal aliens are somehow connected to terrorists.

In the nationalist fervor that followed 9/11, Bush and the corporate media lumped immigrants and activists in with the terrorists. Though we fought such lumping, perhaps we had already affirmed it ourselves—by canceling a protest out of "respect." We had taken dissent out of the category of essential things, and let it become an indulgence.

When we feel threatened, we have a tendency to want someone to take care of us. Like little children, we are comforted to think of a more adult figure facing threats while we remain under the covers. Somehow, in the cultural infantilization that followed 9/11, Bush has come to take on such a role as parent. Activists became the naughty children, whose overindulgence was no longer to be tolerated.

The White House also used 9/11 to get whatever it wanted that had been on the back-burner—the Iraq invasion, withdrawing from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and The National Security Strategy (establishing the concept of preemptive defense). The CIA was allegedly to blame for the intelligence failure, and was punished by being given all kinds of new powers. The activists didn't get anything from 9/11 that they wanted. If terrorist attacks become a victory for politicians and a defeat for activists, then why exactly would the government want to deter them in the future? Any time the government feels threatened by internal pressures, they know that they can consolidate power by their own failure to prevent another attack.



Top: Discarded picket signs after an anti-war protest in New York City. Middle: Criminal Justice Bill protest at the British PM's retreat. Bottom: "StopBush" protest, London 2003.



Top: G8 protests in Geneva, 2003. Middle: Women's Rights march on the Brooklyn Bridge. Bottom: A lone marcher at the Geneva G8 protest.

"In the nationalist fervor that followed 9/11, Bush and the corporate media lumped immigrants and activists in with the terrorists."


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STICK IT TO THE MAN

Jumping into the Frey

by Devin C. McNulty

Editor's Note: The information in this column is not legal advice. It is merely intended to illustrate general information about the law by using hypothetical examples. If you have a legal issue, including one that resembles the situation described below, you should consult with an attorney regarding the circumstances of your particular problem.

I am a recovering drug addict. I purchased James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* and loved every word of it. It was a constant source of inspiration for me. His chronicles of loss, hope and redemption touched a part of my soul. When I learned that not a word of it could be trusted, I became bitterly disillusioned. I feel manipulated and foolish. If I would have known it was fiction I would have thought of the book completely differently. I've read that some people are suing James Frey. How can they do it and is it a good idea?



The legal theory is fraud. James Frey knew what he was writing was untrue and he held it out to the public and represented it as truth. If people relied on his representations as being true then they were intentionally mislead by him. He then benefited from their mis-placed trust in him by buying his book and in turn, made him a multi-millionaire. That is the essence of fraud. It's the same legal theory that a buyer would use if they bought a TV or a car that was described as "brand-new" or "never been in an accident" and then the consumer later learns that the seller knew it was used or had been in an accident and deliberately lied to the buyer. The buyer could bring a fraud action against the seller.

If you go at it alone, you will probably end up losing a lot of money. If you spent $22.95 on the hardcover or $14.95 on the soft cover your actual damages are not very high. If you go out and hire an attorney at $150/hour to file a lawsuit on your behalf you will lose exponentially more money than you could hope to gain by winning your lawsuit. If you seek mental anguish damages for hurt and humiliation you experienced at the hands of the mendacious James Frey you are going to have a hard time convincing a jury to award you any large sum. Even if you did win it is a virtual 100% guarantee that the wealthy publisher would appeal. A small lawsuit for just one person with very limited damages is not worth it. Once you paid your lawyer his fee and the costs for filing a lawsuit, you will lose far more money that you could hope to gain through the courts. Corporations know this. Companies can count on ripping off consumers one by one over essentially nickel and dime stuff and they know that very few people would bother to bring an individual lawsuit. Hence, one of greatest anti-fraud and anti-rip off legal devices ever created; the class action lawsuit.

Class action lawsuits combine lots of little lawsuits into one big lawsuit. If everyone has loses $5-10 dollars in misleading or fraudulent deals, it would not be worth it for any one of the people with $5 in losses to bring a lawsuit (especially when just filing a lawsuit can cost $200 – never mind the legal fees for an attorney). So if Blockbuster rips you off for $5 each day for a late rental even though that is never really explained in the rental agreements, you (could have) joined in the class action against them and forced them to adopt a fair and clear rental policy. A class action lawsuit can combine everyone who has lost low-dollar amounts into one giant lawsuit and that normally gets a corporation's attention. Class action lawsuits are often misunderstood by a public that has been conditioned by corporate and insurance company propaganda. Class action suits typically make companies more honest and make them play more fairly. Best of all they are generally free to join.

The attorneys that typically take class action suits work on a contingency basis – if the consumer does not recover anything then the lawyer loses all the money they put into the case and they do not make any money either.

While your $14.95 in losses from buying A Million Little Pieces is not worth pursuing on your own, joining a class action lawsuit may be the way to go. At least three class action suits are currently pending in the courts. One of them was filed on behalf of all Washington state readers and buyers of the book (particularly effective since Amazon.com is based in Seattle) and rather than seeking merely the money damages for the purchase price of the book, the lawsuit seeks to recoup damages for the lost time people spent in reading it (critics scoff at that novel measure of damages – but hey, you don't blaze a new trail by playing it safe all the time). A substance abuse counselor that recommended the books to all of her clients is the lead plaintiff in another class action suit pending in New York. No one will likely get rich off these lawsuits, but their existence is probably a good thing. The threat of lawsuits will (hopefully) cause publishers to engage in a little more due diligence and to screen their products a little more closely. No one should benefit from bald-faced deception and, after all, one should not forget that A Million Little Pieces has made James Frey and his publisher very rich.

To recap: James Frey committed fraud when he held out his book as truth when he knew he made up significant parts of it. He, and his publisher, financially benefited from intentionally misleading the book-buying public. An action could be brought against him for fraud. However, the only practical way to use the courts would be to join a class action lawsuit. Class action lawsuits combine lots of little, small-dollar lawsuits into one huge lawsuit. Most bookstores are permitting the book to be returned for a refund, so if just want your money back you should consider taking it back along with your receipt. You could also keep A Million Little Pieces on your book shelf and use it as a conversation starter, "...remember that jackass James Frey..."

Devin C. McNulty, a former prosecutor, is engaged in the private practice of law in Houston, Texas. He can be reached at devin.mcnulty@gmail.com with any questions or comments.



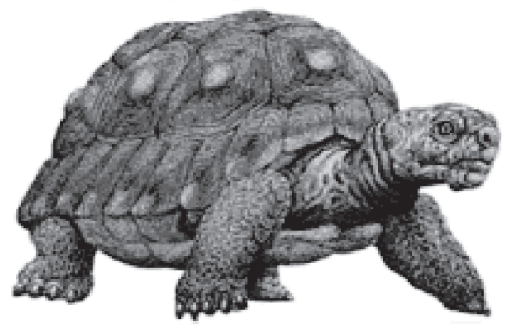
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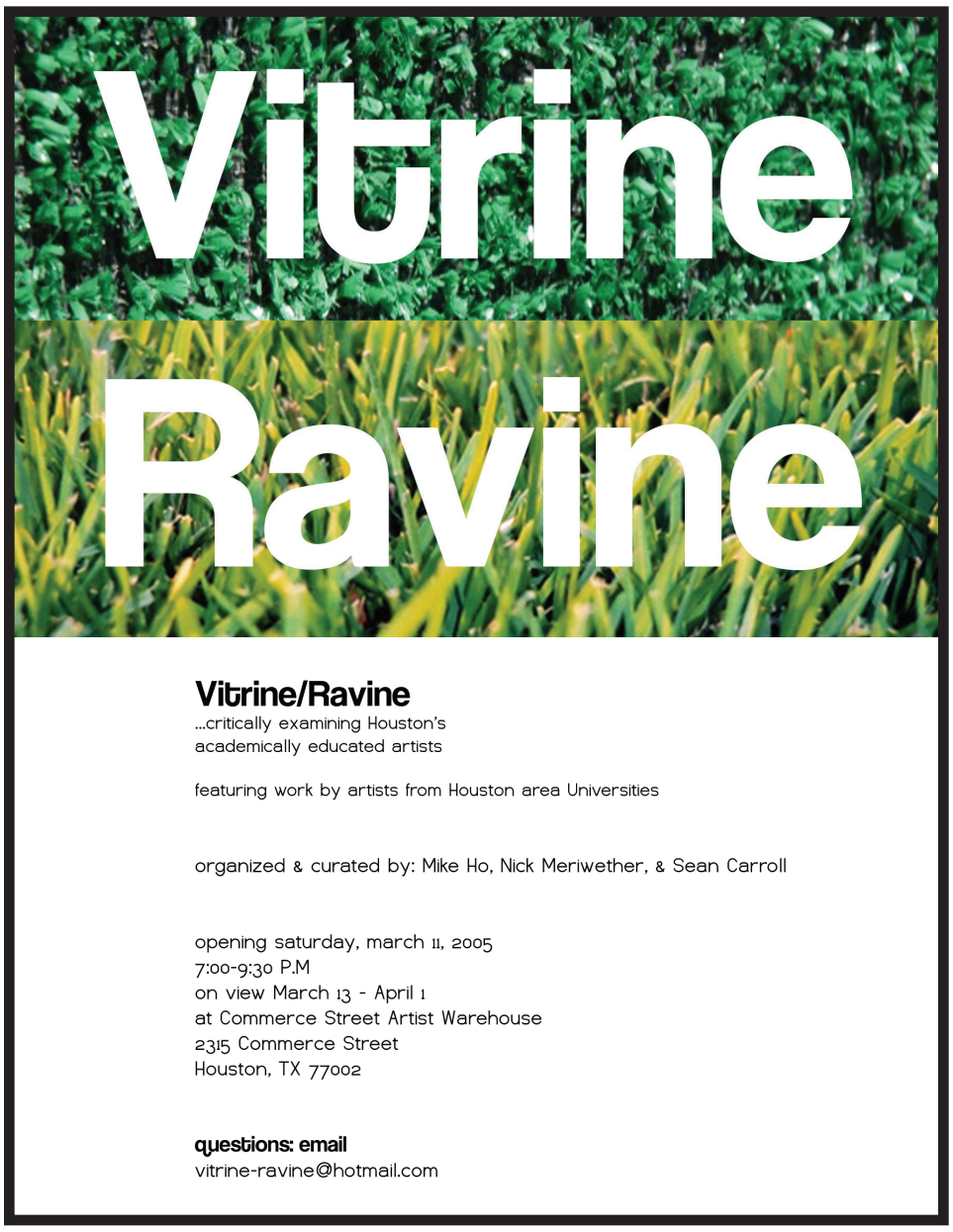
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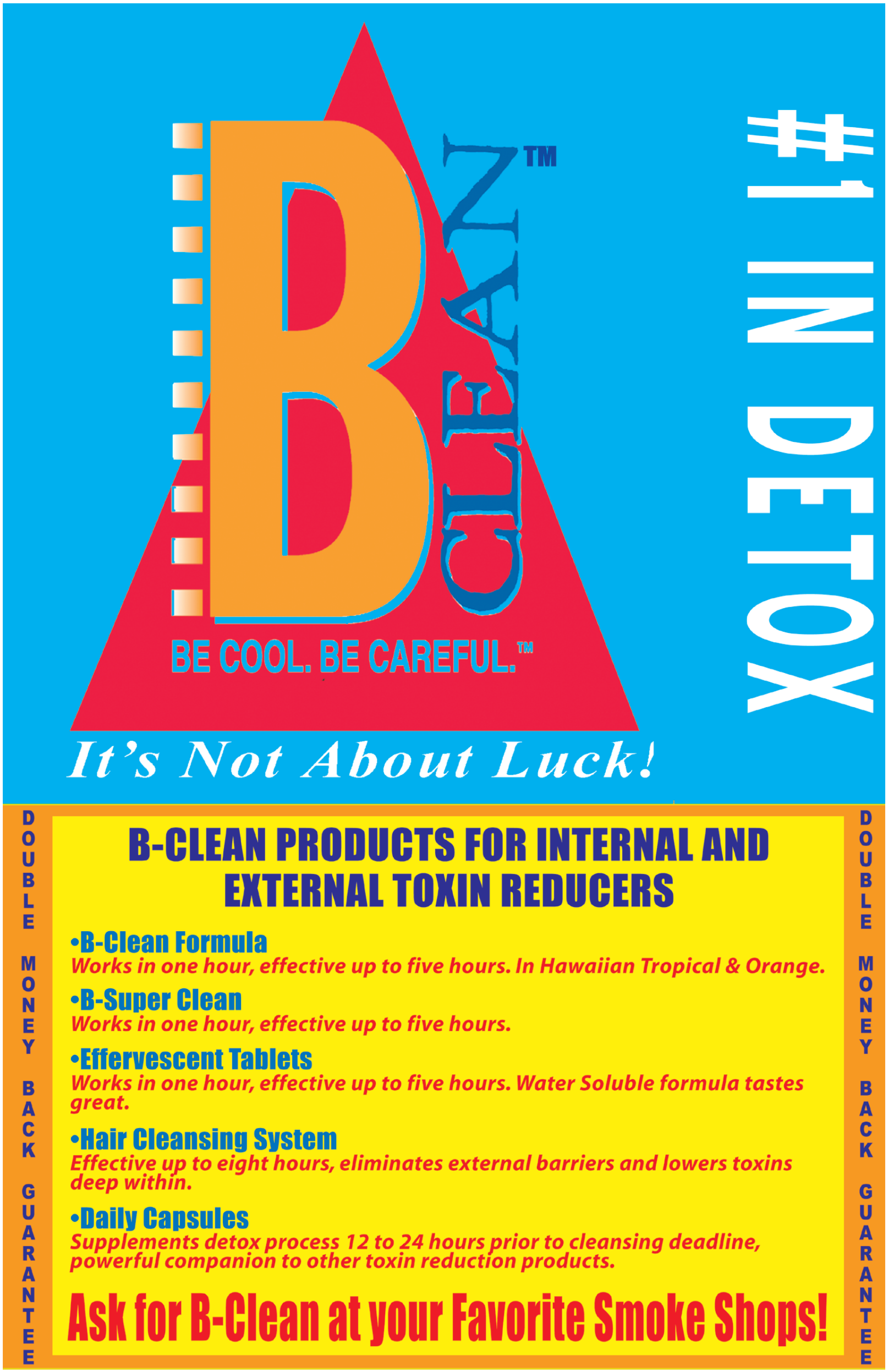
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Talk to your doctor now about prescription treatment. Patients in clinical studies overall had a better than 50% chance of reducing the Hep C virus to undetectable levels. Response to treatment may vary based on individual factors.
So log on or call, then talk to your doctor to find out if treatment is right for you. And help put Hep C behind you.
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#1 IN DETOX
It's Not About Luck!
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B-CLEAN PRODUCTS FOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL TOXIN REDUCERS
•B-Clean Formula
Works in one hour, effective up to five hours. In Hawaiian Tropical & Orange.
•B-Super Clean
Works in one hour, effective up to five hours.
•Effervescent Tablets
Works in one hour, effective up to five hours. Water Soluble formula tastes great.
•Hair Cleansing System
Effective up to eight hours, eliminates external barriers and lowers toxins deep within.
•Daily Capsules
Supplements detox process 12 to 24 hours prior to cleansing deadline, powerful companion to other toxin reduction products.
Ask for B-Clean at your Favorite Smoke Shops!
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Phone offer requires activation and two year subscriber agreement per phone.



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- Nationwide long distance. Every minute. Every day.

Now starting at $55.00 for 1000 anytime minutes.

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45 and Broadway, big yellow building
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**Rates exclude taxes & NEXTEL fees (including USF charge of up to 2.12% that varies quarterly, cost recovery fees up to $2.83 per line, & state/local fees that vary by area). NEXTEL fees are not taxes or gov't required charges.

PM-A840 by Samsung BOGO offer: Offer expires February 16, 2006 or while supplies last. Requires in-store activation, 2-year agreement, and trial PCS Vision subscription ($10-$20/month) per phone. Vision is free for one month, after which monthly charge will apply unless canceled during trial period by calling customer service at 800-SPRINT-1. Additional Fees: Up to $36 activation fee per phone. $150 early termination fee. Fair & Flexible Plans: Two-year subscriber agreement required. Additional Fees: Up to $36 activation fee per phone. $150 or $200 Nextel early termination fee. Includes 200 Anytime Minutes adjustable in increments for $5.00 with $0.10 per minute for usage above 700 minutes. Nights (Mon. to Thurs., 9pm to 7am). Weekends (Fr., 9pm to Mon., 7am). On the Nextel National Network calls are rated by the appropriate minute throughout the call. As of November 1, 2005, an entire call will be rated according to when the call is initiated. Partial minutes are charged as full minutes. With unlimited roaming plans, Sprint may terminate service if a majority of minutes in a given month are used while roaming off of the Sprint PCS Network. Nextel Local Walkie-Talkie $0.15/min. (times # of participants). Nationwide Walkie-Talkie uses the local walkie-talkie minutes in your plan or buy-up. Other Terms: Sprint reserves the right to cancel/extend offers without notice. Offers may not be available in all markets. Coverage rate plan features, services and phone availability vary by network. Nationwide Sprint PCS Network reaches over 250 million people. The Nextel National Network reaches over 263 million people. ©2006 Sprint Nextel. Sprint, the "Going Forward" logo, and other trademarks are