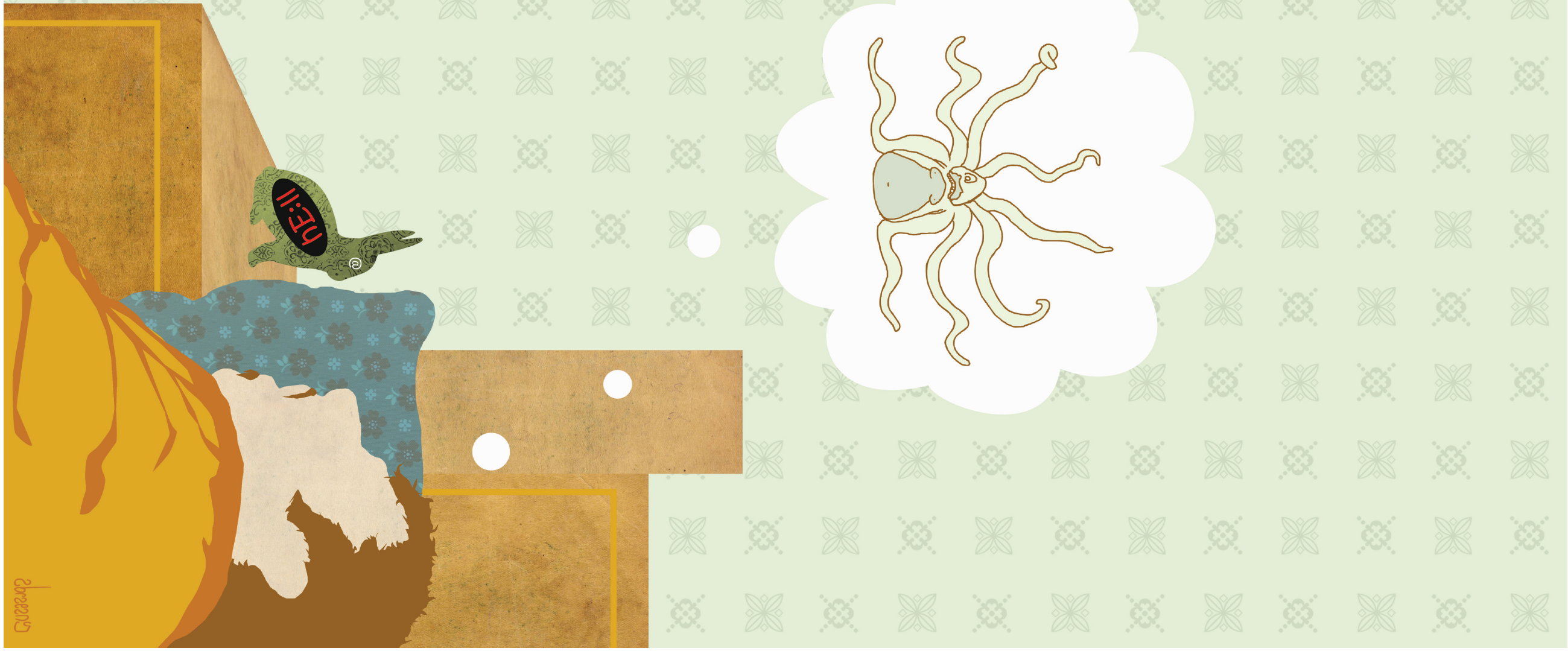


FREE PRESS
Houston
Arts Film Music Technology World & Local News

OCTOBER 2007 | ISSUE #84
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The Cost of Sanctuary | Block Party Stage Guide | ACL in Review | Stupid Consumer Tricks

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Oct. 1st:
**The Friendly Friends, The Frauds,
Giant Princess**

Oct. 2nd:
**Cory Derden, Sabra Laval, Daniel Markham,
Ceci Gomez**

Oct. 3rd:
**Flame Shark, The Hungry Villagers,
Mockingbird**

Oct. 4th: **The Bridge, The Rising**

Oct. 5th:
**Douglas Ferguson, Yellow Crystal Star,
Concrete Violin
iLL prospekt**

Oct. 7th: **Harptallica**

Oct. 9th: **The Itch**

Oct. 10th: **Blind Texas Marlin**

Oct. 13th:
**Westheimer Bloc Party At Mango's Cantina
(Outside)
with The Rudyments 12pm
Captain Electric and the Asians 1pm
Elaine Greer 2pm, Doo Doo Butter 3pm
Tha Shot Shots 4pm, Rise Over Ruin 5pm
The Annoysters 6pm, Bully Pulpit 6:30pm
Rusted Shut 7pm**

Oct. 15th:
gods good soldiers, Murdervan, Verbatim

Oct. 16th:
**Hentai Lacerator (Realicide members)
Bully Pulpit, Bavab Bavab, Yatagarasu**

Oct. 20th:
**Professor Gall, Cory Derden
The Hungry Villagers**

Oct. 22nd:
**Alas, Alak, Alaska!, French Quarter
Foot Ox, Listen Listen, Sabra Laval**

Oct. 23rd:
**Old Growth, Science of Yabra
Here You Me, The Goods**

Oct. 24th:
Flaming Fire, A Pink Cloud

Oct. 25th:
Gadget, Paula Maya, El Gato Negrito

Fri Oct. 26th: **Jucifer**

Oct. 27th: **Wolff**

this issue OCTOBER 2007



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October has never had it so Good

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Block Party Stage Guide

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AWN

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EDITORS

Feel Free to Take Us Seriously



OCTOBER IS UPON US

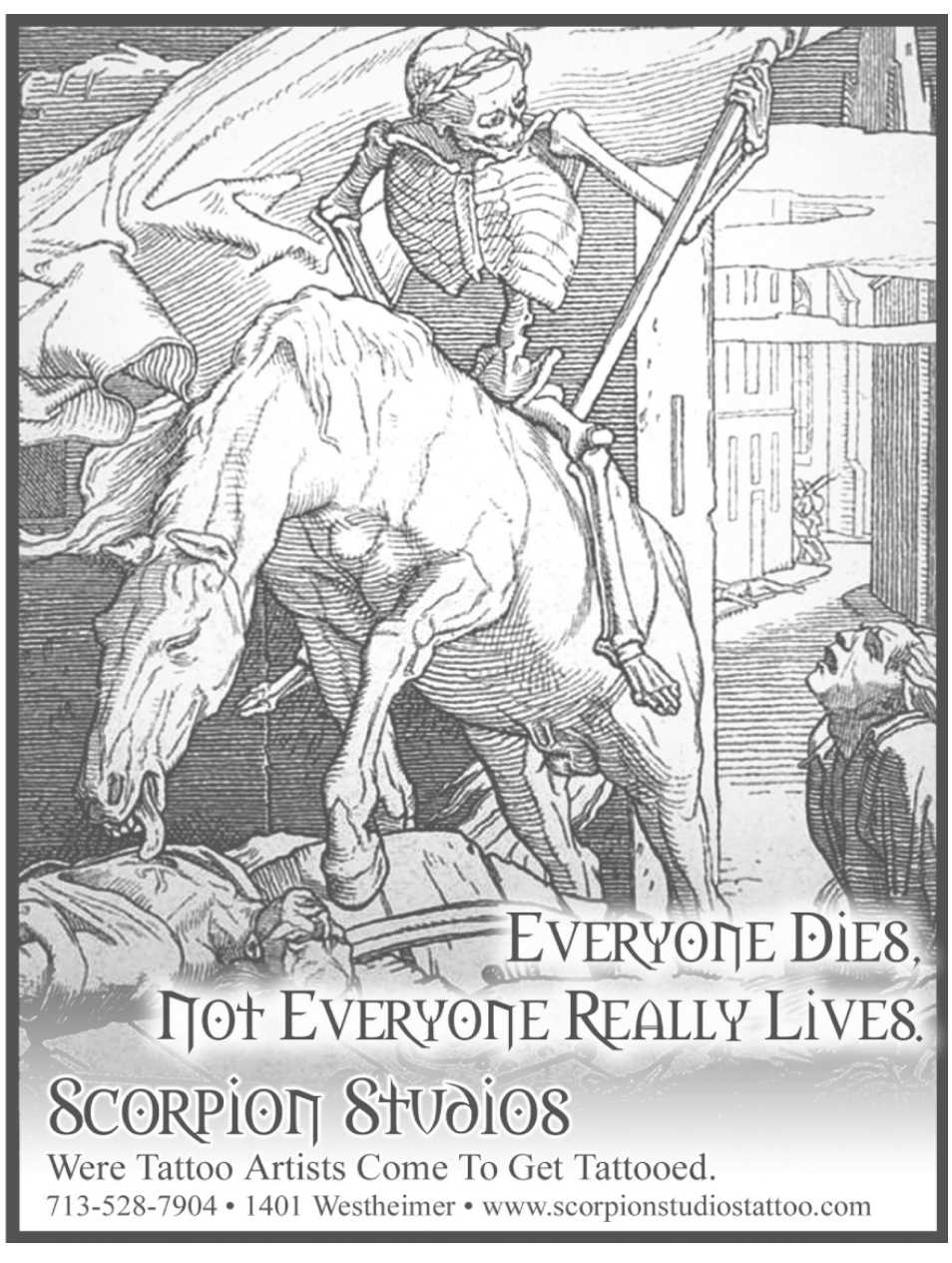
and the city is abuzz with the coming onslaught of events, holidays, festivals, and tolerable temperatures. We have a stacked month as we prepare for the October 13th Westheimer Block Party and the 1st Annual Montrose Pub Crawl on Halloween. The Block Party is set to be our clutchest one yet with an aces lineup of local music and arts. The latter is a Halloween pub-crawl between Poison Girl, Agora, Boondocks, and Catbird's that is sure to be good times.

WE HAVE AN ACTION PACKED ISSUE HERE RIFE WITH GREAT STORIES AND SHENANIGANS FOR ALL:

Resident douche-bag Brandon Montes takes an insightful yet fucking hilarious look on playing the game with service providers, we explore the many dubious faces of Osama Bin laden, immigration issues, local band Blades, and of course, give you the complete Stage Guide for the Westheimer Block Party on pg 18.

So enjoy, utilize, proselytize, and beware of tazers. Bro.

Remember to check our new website and blog regularly at www.freepresshouston.com





OCTOBER ROCKS

THURSDAY	OCT 4	HR (BAD BRAINS) , JACK RUBY, SHARK ATTACK, COSMIC FORCE
FRIDAY	OCT 5	RYAN SCROGGINS CD RELEASE WITH HUB CITY STOMPERS
SATURDAY	OCT 6	LONESTAR PORNSTAR'S 4TH ANNUAL BIRTHDAY BASH
THURSDAY	OCT 11	COWBOY MOUTH
FRIDAY	OCT 12	THE AXIOM 20TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION FEATURING SPRAWL
SATURDAY	OCT 13	THE AXIOM 20TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION FEATURING MICHAEL HAAGA WITH ACADEMY BLACK PERFORMING DEADHORSE!!!
THURSDAY	OCT 18	THE HOUSTON BAND COALITION NEW MEMBERSHIP SHOWCASE
FRIDAY	OCT 19	THE ULTRA SIBERIAN PANT FACTORY, THE AMERICAN MASQUERADE, SNOW PLOW, THE PHLEGMATICS AND MORE!
SATURDAY	OCT 20	EYEAGAINST, CRITICS HALL OF FAME (FORMERLY MORNINGSIDE DRIVE), OTENKI, AUGUST HOUSE, THE LAST PLACE YOU LOOK AND MORE!!!
WEDNESDAY	OCT 24	HOUSTON BEAT BATTLE ROUND 4 - DJ / PRODUCER COMPETITION
FRIDAY	OCT 26	HUB HOUSTON PRESENTS HUB HALLOWEEN BASH - MAIN STAGE SUPERNOVA ENTERTAINMENT SHOWCASE - LOUNGE STAGE
SATURDAY	OCT 27	RETRO PROM - THE PROM YOU ALWAYS WANTED - MAIN STAGE PEELANDER Z WITH SEARED AND DOWNFALL2012 - LOUNGE STAGE
WEDNESDAY	OCT 31	HALLOWEEN SCARY HOUR DRINK PRICES ALL NIGHT LONG FROM 8PM TO 2AM!!! $2.00 MARTINIS, $2.00 KAMIKAZE AND MORE!!!

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Debris

ALL I WANT IS EVERYTHING

By Buffalo Sean



October brings the fall's real meaty exhibits to Houston galleries and museums, between the explosion of spectacle in September and the blockbusters of November (actually this year's November looks a little slim).

Coming when Texas finally cools down for Thanksgiving, the **Artcrawl** "this is the Houston I miss living out in the Woodlands" in the warehouse district and a Claude Wampler "critics go on about glowingly without ever managing to put their fingers on what exactly she does" performance at **Diverseworks** look to be the best bets. New York photographer Nan Goldin's photo essay *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* at the **Museum of Fine Arts** will be supreme for photo nuts.

In the past twenty years **Laura Lark** and **Mark Flood** have evolved their practices drastically, riled most Houston art critics and curators, and lived well on top of their bad reputations. This October they will split the gallery at **Devin Borden Hiram Butler Gallery** (4520 Blossom St.) in the West End for what promises to be a gathering of "every drunk that's ever been around art" and more. Flood (who once fronted the band Culturcide) will display his recent 'lace' paintings which have gotten good press here and in Dallas. Lark will definitely have some portraits up, but I'm not sure if it'll be pointillist realist or intricately detailed patterning- either way I know they've taken forever to make. Check out Moody Gallery this month too for Houstonian Michael Bise's 17-foot long drawing and a few more for good measure in *Tomorrow*.

All the ol' hippies and bikers and punks who braved the original incarnation of the **Axiom** (2524 McKinney St.) will be out Friday, October 12th for a full-on, two day reunion show. They're bringing back members of *dead horse* and The Awful Truth among many, many others. The organizers are coy about where the show will be, so keep your eyes peeled. Since the **Infernal Bridegroom Theater Company** went down this might be the first event at the venue, but no one should expect it to go out so easily this time either (its first recorded death is 1992). Stop on down off Dowling to see what makes this hole in the wall in the middle of a burned out neighborhood so irresistible; then try to find the show somewhere else!

At the **Art League Houston** on Montrose they pick horses and ride them. Their Patron of the Year for 2007 is **Gus Kopriva** (of G Gallery in the Heights) and his wide ranging taste and enthusiasm as an agent of change began back in the 80s when the city's non-profits were getting their legs under them, and continues today. This fall Kopriva brought an exhibit of Houston artists to Lima, Peru. It hangs in the National Gallery- ample space for the 62 artists he whittled the list down to. In the past decade the gallerist has made similar expeditions to Shanghai, China and Leipzig, Germany in addition to producing dozens and dozens of exhibits and catalogs for young artists- and old. October 26th, 6-9 pm at the Art League this very, very tired man will curate an exhibit of buddy Wayne Gilbert's sculptures and paintings- all made with his morbid medium, cremated humans.



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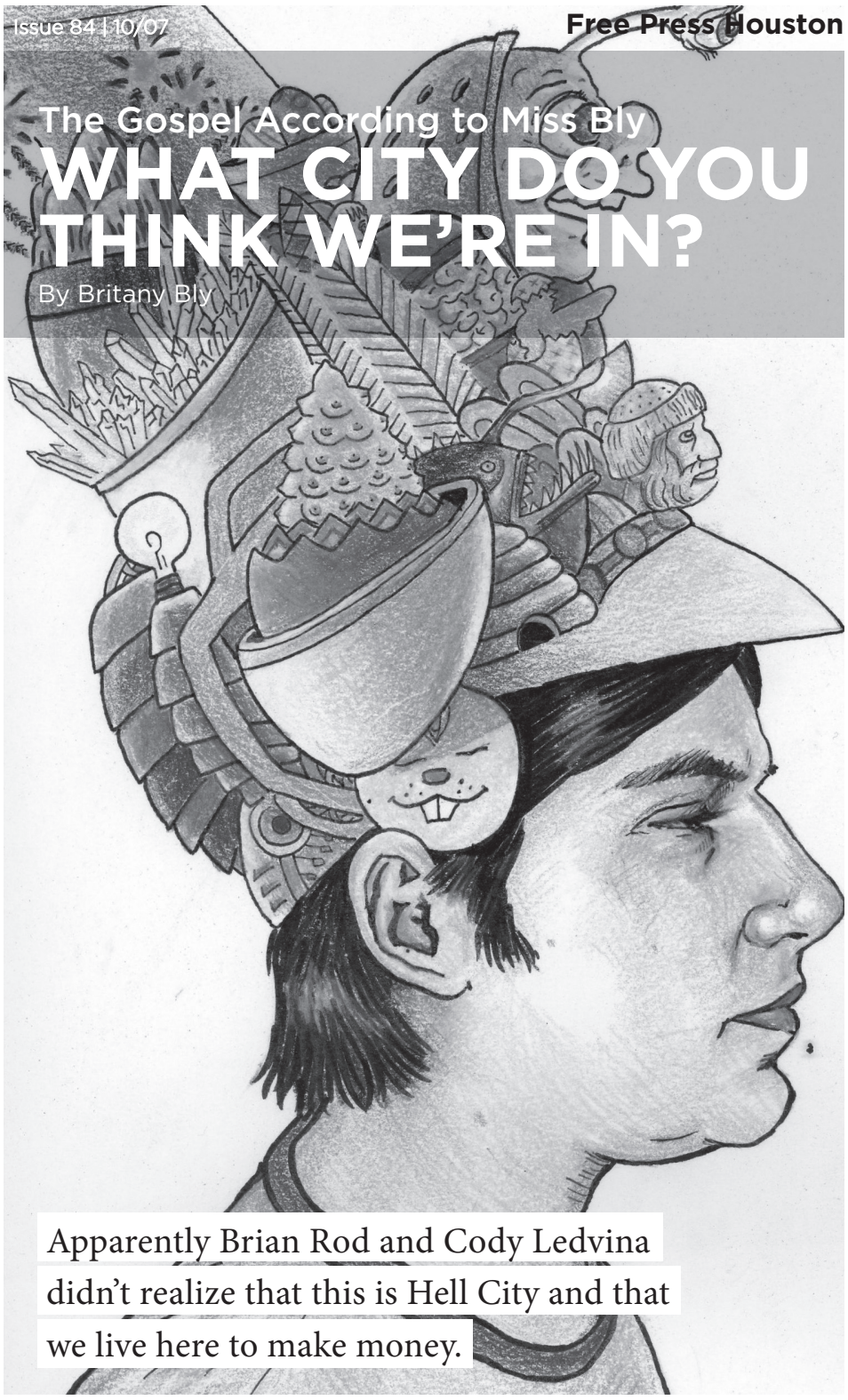
HIROSHI WATANABE:
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WATERMARK FINE ART
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The Gospel According to Miss Bly

WHAT CITY DO YOU THINK WE'RE IN?

By Britany Bly



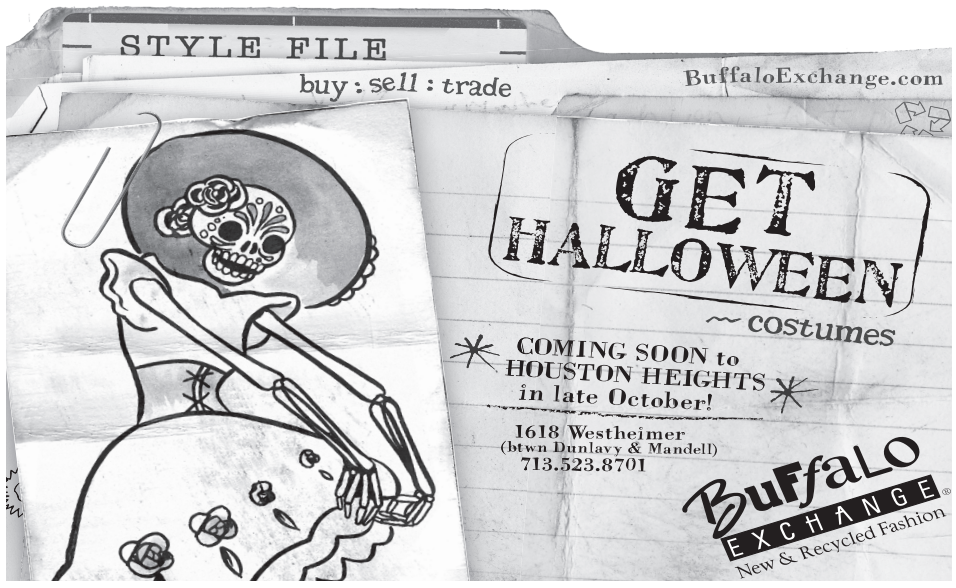
Apparently Brian Rod and Cody Ledvina didn't realize that this is Hell City and that we live here to make money.

We are an economic machine. This isn't Austin or some cooler city where everything is done for the sake of fun. But then again, it doesn't have to be. This pair of D.I.Y.ers have just opened a gallery space, The Joanna, at 4014 Graustark right near the Menil which has more in common with Okay Mountain or Art Palace (pretty badass art spaces in Austin) than most of the galleries we've grown accustomed to here in town.

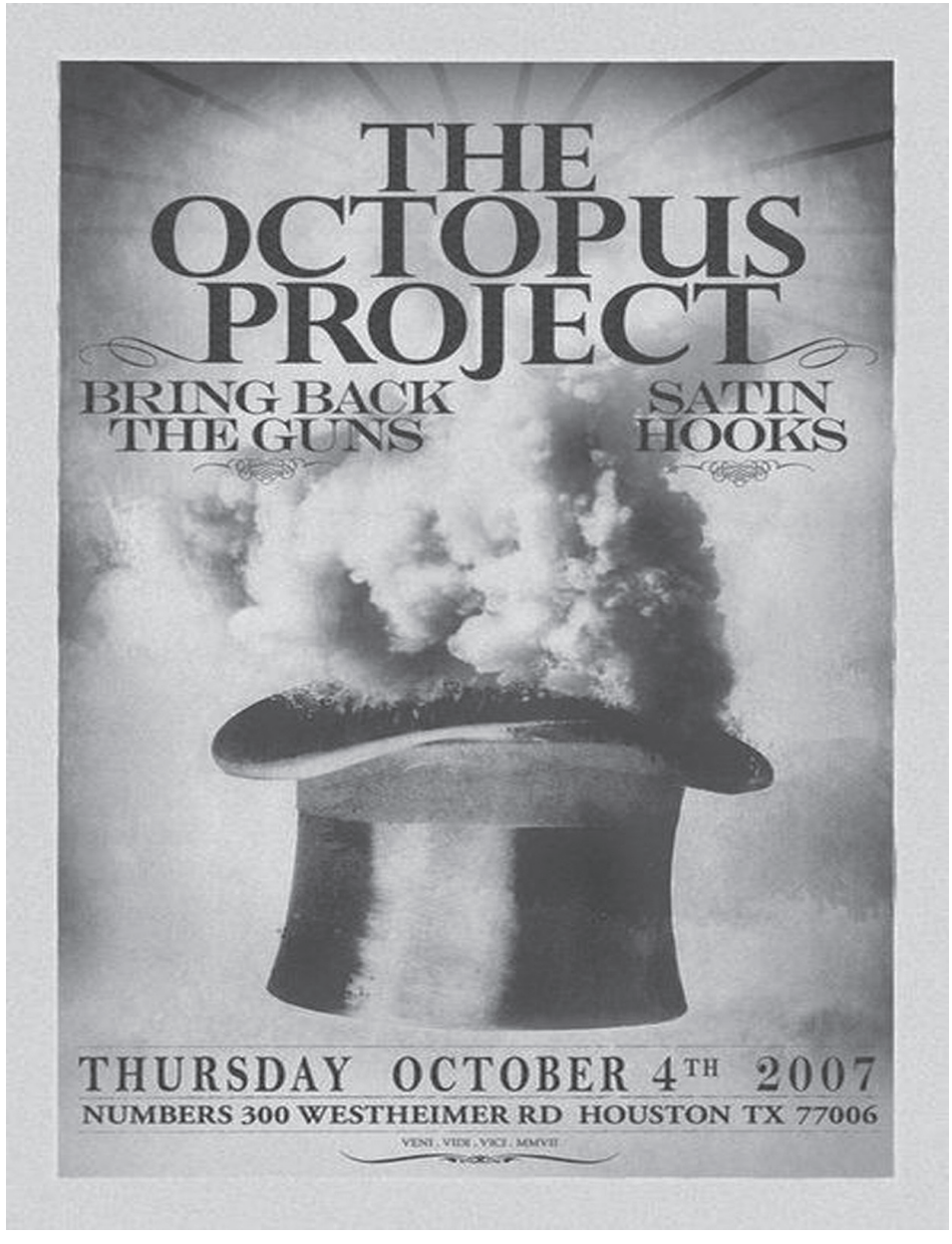
Okay, I have to explain something before I move on: Brian and Cody as a curatorial team call themselves "The Joanna" but since opening this gallery space is artistic endeavor in and of itself the space is also being called The Joanna. *A Drawing Show* which is the follow up to last month's *No Skeleton Armies*, opened September 21 and includes the artists Patrick Phipps, Caleb, Eric Pearce and Rachelle Vasquez among others. The artists have created self-portraits of themselves at parties or rather have visually illustrated their thoughts and feelings of parties.

Cody and Brian are interested in creating these large group exhibitions that are that have a common theme among the individual works of art as apposed to solo shows to foster a greater art community and to create a space that's fun and lively but I also see it as a greater opportunity for them to act as curator and involve themselves in the creative process. And in fact, most of their energy is spent in the creative process and none of the usual ass kissing of collectors because they have found ways to save money and cut their overhead, so commercially selling art becomes a perk more than a necessity. And beautiful things happen when the purpose is for the love of art rather than making money.

Even if you don't want to support them for giving H-town a new twist on showing art, these guys have personally promised me games of Twister and Sorry at their openings – a worthy promise. Plus, if you guys didn't already know this, there's always free booze at openings. And you know what happens when you combine alcohol and Twister!







INTO-ISM

By Michael Bergeron



There's a cinematic pleasure in seeing a really great film that makes one want to spread the word like gospel.

Likewise there's a nauseous emptiness in the depth of my gut when I see a film like Balls of Fury or Good Luck Chuck. It makes me want to see five unfathomable foreign films in a row just to get the aftertaste out of my mouth. Another critic summed it up succinctly after Good Luck Chuck my reminding me about the time Dad caught his kid smoking a cigarette and then bought a pack and made him smoke all 20 cigs in a row. That's the kind of feeling Chuck left me with. I went because I wanted to see Jessica Alba in her thong undies and I paid the price of my lust with complete boredom. Although the raucous audience, some of who were reliving puberty at the time, howling at the scatological and sex humor would probably disagree.

So perhaps it's no coincidence that two of my recent favorite films use the preposition into in the title. The use of this word reflects a kind of inward and spiritual journey of the protagonist. In the Valley of Elah and Into the Wild are two of the best films of the year.

Paul Haggis wrote and directed In the Valley of Elah. The title is a reference to the David and Goliath legend and the story is based on actual events. Tommy Lee Jones plays a crusty retired military type of few words. Upon hearing his son, newly returned from duty in Iraq, has gone AWOL he drives half way across the country to perform his own search. Upon arriving at the border town base he finds his son has been killed, and the murder itself couldn't be any more grizzly. (We see the forensic aftermath.)

The interesting thing about In the Valley of Elah is how we become part of Jones' investigation process. He sees things the military and civilian police have overlooked. Along the way he gains an ally with a detective played by Charlize Theron, herself ridiculed by her fellow detectives because of her gender. Eventually she (and the audience) makes a breakthrough in the case but only because of the perseverance she's learnt from Jones.

Haggis won the Academy Award a couple of years ago for Crash but In the Valley of Elah is so much better a film, right down to its closing shot that hits you where you live.

The movie version of Into the Wild has been gestating for over a decade. Based on a best selling book by Jon Krakauer and starring Emile Hirsch the film takes the viewer on a journey to pristine wilderness. Beware because Mother Nature does not tolerate mere mortals easily.

A person would never know Sean Penn directed Into the Wild because of two things. First, Penn has directed three previous films in a vague style reminiscent of improvisational acting. Those films are good but not for everyone. Into the Wild is so far beyond that limited genre but still contains powerhouse acting. Secondly, this is the film of a serious artist and Penn has grown as a director to the point where he lets the events and not his own personal mindset dictate the message.

Hirsch is a force of nature, but there are several awesome performers along his journey (including Bart the Bear). The actor who sticks out is Hal Holbrook. Mostly known for 60s/70s era television like his Mark Twain one-man show, Holbrook comes across like a freight train in his all too brief role.

After seeing both Into the Wild and In the Valley of Elah the best word to describe my head would be devastated.

ALSO ON DVD

Death Proof offers up Kurt Russell in a performance so wicked it instantly rates high in his gallery of iconic roles, and this is the guy who created Snake Pliskin in Escape From New York. Zoe Bell (actually playing herself), Uma Thurman's stunt double for Kill Bill, truly gives a standout performance.

A wordy and clever script sets up Russell as Stuntman Mike a different kind of serial killer. He stalks and kills with his muscle car. Death Proof easily divides into two parts, both united by Stuntman Mike. In the first part Austin gets the royal treatment as the city itself plays a kind of character in which a group of femmes party to their heart's content, while bar hopping, one-hitting and joy riding.

The second half displays an different femme cast, themselves the crew of a movie on location in Lebanon, Tennessee (shot in Southern California). Here's where Death Proof goes from entourage style female bonding to an edge-of-your-seat action thriller with obvious tips of the beret to classic 70s pulp like Vanishing Point.

Quentin Tarantino has basically knocked the ball out of the park with Death



Proof, especially if your taste is for a post-modern reinterpretation of genre specific subjects. In this case a revenge flick with lots of cool automobile stunts.

For the DVD release of Death Proof nearly 30 minutes have been restored. Remember Death Proof was truncated and released as a double bill with Planet Terror under the common name Grindhouse last April. The extra footage fills out the film without padding. The scenes include the missing reel of Vanessa Ferlito's lapdance for Stuntman Mike as well as a black-and-white interlude to the second half of the film. Here Stuntman Mike figures out a way to furtively touch Rosario Dawson's toes. There's also a bit more of the barroom banter from the first half and camera set-ups that show the progression of a series of cellphone text messages. At one point we see a real Austin phone number (512 4312164) although when I call the number I get a busy signal. There's no director's commentary but extras on the second disc of this double DVD release include short featurettes, brief interviews with the actors and Tarantino, as well as a gag reel the actors made for editor Sally Menke.

OCT FILM EVENTS

The Film Expo Texas 2007 takes place on the weekend of October 19-20 at the Houston Grand Plaza Hotel (across from the Astrodome). Events include panels, workshops, a trade show and short film screenings. Check out their website (www.filmexpotexas.com) or call 800-975-8119 for info.

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I FEEL THE PRESSURE UNDER MORE SCRUTINY, AND WHAT DO I DO? ACT MORE STUPIDLY

Kwame M. Anderson

What's up muhfuckas? I think only in rap music is it cool to refer to the audience as motherfuckers and bitches. It's me bitches!!! Do you feel endeared by that, do you feel closer to me, is my foul language creating a more personable tone? October. It's the 10th month of the year. I don't really have a concept of time other than before, during, and after work. The weekends are the time when I get stoned and argue with my girlfriend as a recreational activity. Oh the domestic bliss. Nothing goes with the munchies like the dissolution of romance. So, anyway, Free Press is becoming more professional, we're having staff meetings and shit, but really, it's just an excuse to go to Rudyard's. Well this is the time when I promote the shows and CDs or Mp3s or whatever, and since there are like three music sections, I can just focus on the albums and shows I'm interested in, and there are some good ones. So why wait. Let's get it on…bitches.

APPEARING

NINA NASTASIA & JIM WHITE
10/04/07 | The Orange Show

I did an interview with Nina Nastasia to promote this show, but at the conclusion of the conversation, I saw the tape recorder was still on pause. But I will not let my bad interview skills deprive you of the poetic waxing I will drop to accompany this occasion. Nina Nastasia and Jim White released "You Follow Me" in August, and to say that it is one the best albums released this year is an ineffable truth, however, it can't really be ineffable since I'm writing about it, but, you know, you got to make things sound elegant and important. I had the opportunity to see the duo play songs from this album earlier this year, but I was informed it wasn't the best presentation of the material. But this album must be difficult to perform, because the songs are not really party jams. The intimacy of this album, the deliberate silences, the pacing and building, the sizzle and the smoke, these things are hard to translate as it seems the subtle nuances are as much an instrument as the guitar or drums. Jim White doesn't play a backbeat, he provides a percussive wall, an environment, the songs exist within the chase, the interplay between White's rumbles, taps, rolls and brushes and Nastasia's gentle strums and building and subsiding rhythms help one to understand the album's title. Who's leading, who's following, and where are we going? It's not really as important, while Nastasia describes her technique as "rigid," one would be hard pressed to find the moment that begins "on the one." The songs happen more than they are played, and the exchange between these musicians is a delight to witness aurally or visually. While neither player is exceptionally wild or overly expressive, the music and the stories in the songs command the attention rather than disguising mediocrity with antics and audience pandering. A song such as "I Write Down Lists" rocks, but not in the beer bong, bump bump "hey" sense. The sounds become the mood, the pictures appear and each become vivid portraits in your mind, this is one of the shows where, a leaf may fall from the sky at the most appropriate moment which is like the equivalent of flash of light, yeah, it's that serious. The Orange Show lends itself to moments such as this, the seating, whatever the weather might be, the ambiance, all of these things will help to capture the feeling. Nastasia's voice is sugar in the coffee, the hidden ingredient, the color created from the mix of two other dominant colors, the element that magnifies the instance. Be here, witness this, you will be levitated, moved and returned safely, but different than when you left and as you gather yourself to leave, hold the moment, cherish, and know you may never feel it again.

MAN MAN
10/18/07 | The Proletariat

At this point if you have not seen Man Man live, then you should drop everything you are doing on the date of this show and be present when the circus comes to town. As I've seen the band numerous times, it is always the first time when I see them again. To call it theatric would imply that it is an act, but I think it's more of a reaction to the music which deserves more than a distant cool or a hip posturing. Like an NBA game, Man Man shows are full of action, flashy dunks and spectacle. It comes at you, you are a part of the show, not in the sense of like slam dancing or that the band will pull you on stage and have you do the off key drunk singing thing, though they might, but more like it is an inclusive experience. When they whoop, you want to whoop, when they yell, you're already yelling. If you know the songs, it's like that Baptist church thing, where they testify and you amen. Each song draws you in further, the madness, the drama, the excitement, it's all there. Through the course of two albums the Man Man has established itself as a unique entity in the current music scene, a stellar live act, fabulous albums, and consistently challenging and recreating their sound while remaining true to their individualism. Proximity is not the determining factor, but in small space this band is unstoppable. Songs that go from gypsy rants to sexy rhythm and blues to jazz to juke joint romps to whatever else they choose to be. They are having as much fun playing as you are watching, there's no separation, no us and them, it is all one thing, that builds into this ball of energy before exploding. Walk in and introduce yourself to the people in the crowd you may be pressed against them or vice versa later that night, and it would be better to feel like you know them before you sweat on each other. They will, they will rock you.

HEARING

Dragons Of Zynth
Coronation Thieves (Gigantic)

Some music is psychedelic, some music is sexy, some music, rocks, some rolls, and some music has soul. Well (you know what I'm about to say) Dragons of Zynth does all of this simultaneously. What does their music sound like? Well that would depend on the song, but it's not as much as sound, as it is an eruption of sound. Produced and/or recorded with Dave Siket of TV On The Radio fame, this album packs that genreless punch that crosses lines between weird and romantic and isn't that how you want your music to sound. Most of the songs I've heard from this band I don't know if they're going to be on this album, and that's more exciting than if I knew. There is the air of mystery where will they go, what will it sound like? One thing is for sure, it will be unlike anything we've heard before. I'm sure it will redefine the idea and preconceived idea of "black" music or even rock music for that matter. To think that Prince and SonicYouth, Hendrix and Jodeci could

shows in Houston



Friends of Rock-n-Roll
10/13 Westheimer Block Party



Sabra Laval
10/13 Westheimer Block Party

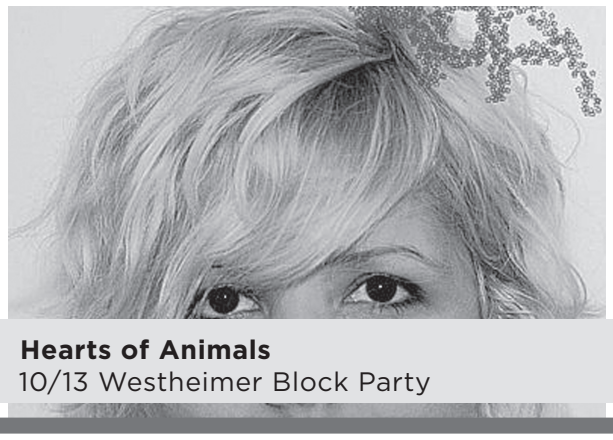


Tha Fucking Transmission
10/13 Westheimer Block Party

be a footnote is as intriguing as whatever "Xerathyn" is, but a quick visit to the band's Myspace page, will at least give you a taste of what is to come. I was floored by this band after seeing them at SXSW and ever since then have anticipated this release probably more than anything else this year, mainly because up until a few days before writing this, I didn't even know when it was coming out. If the song "Harlot's Blues" (which can be downloaded for free from the Daytrotter site) is any indication we're thinking psychedeli-soul-funk-rock, but that's a made up word to supplement a description other than motherfucking bad ass and awesome. Get ready to not be ready.

Fatal Flying Guilloteens
Quantum Fucking (French Kiss)

The Fatal Flying Guilloteens are soldiers. They were there in the beginning donning cowboy suits, they've started fights, ruined clubs, been attacked by the audience, and for something like the last ten years or more have continued to be one of the most interesting things happening in/on the Houston music scene and beyond. But outside of the spectacle and in some ways infamy of their live shows, the band has always made solid albums. Some say punk rock is dead, some say punk is the word on Ashley Simpson's wife beater, some say punk is fashion, this album really has nothing to do with the byproduct or sound of punk, but the idea of guitar bass and drum music as an uncontrollable beat as a result of some punk rock records, well maybe. Let's say Jesus Lizard, or Unwound, or The Wu Tang Clan, or heavy blues, we could say all of these things. The Band stands firmly behind this one, which hasn't always been the case. In an e mail I received from ex Guilloteen Brian McMannus he commented "I hope the new record we did does well. You should get it when it comes out. It fucking smokes!" Roy Mata calls it the best thing they've ever done, and you should believe Roy, he's usually drunk when I talk to him, and they alcohol brings out the truth. Support the home team, this band is probably the best thing to come out of Houston since…



Hearts of Animals
10/13 Westheimer Block Party



Golden Axe
10/13 Westheimer Block Party

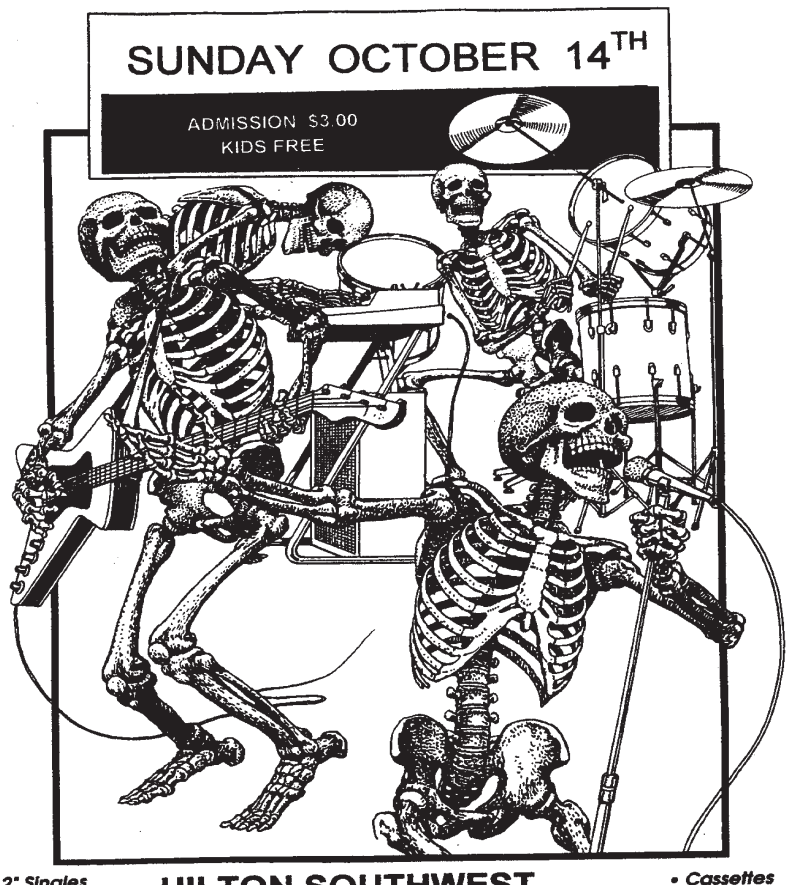


Spain Colored Orange
10/13 Westheimer Block Party

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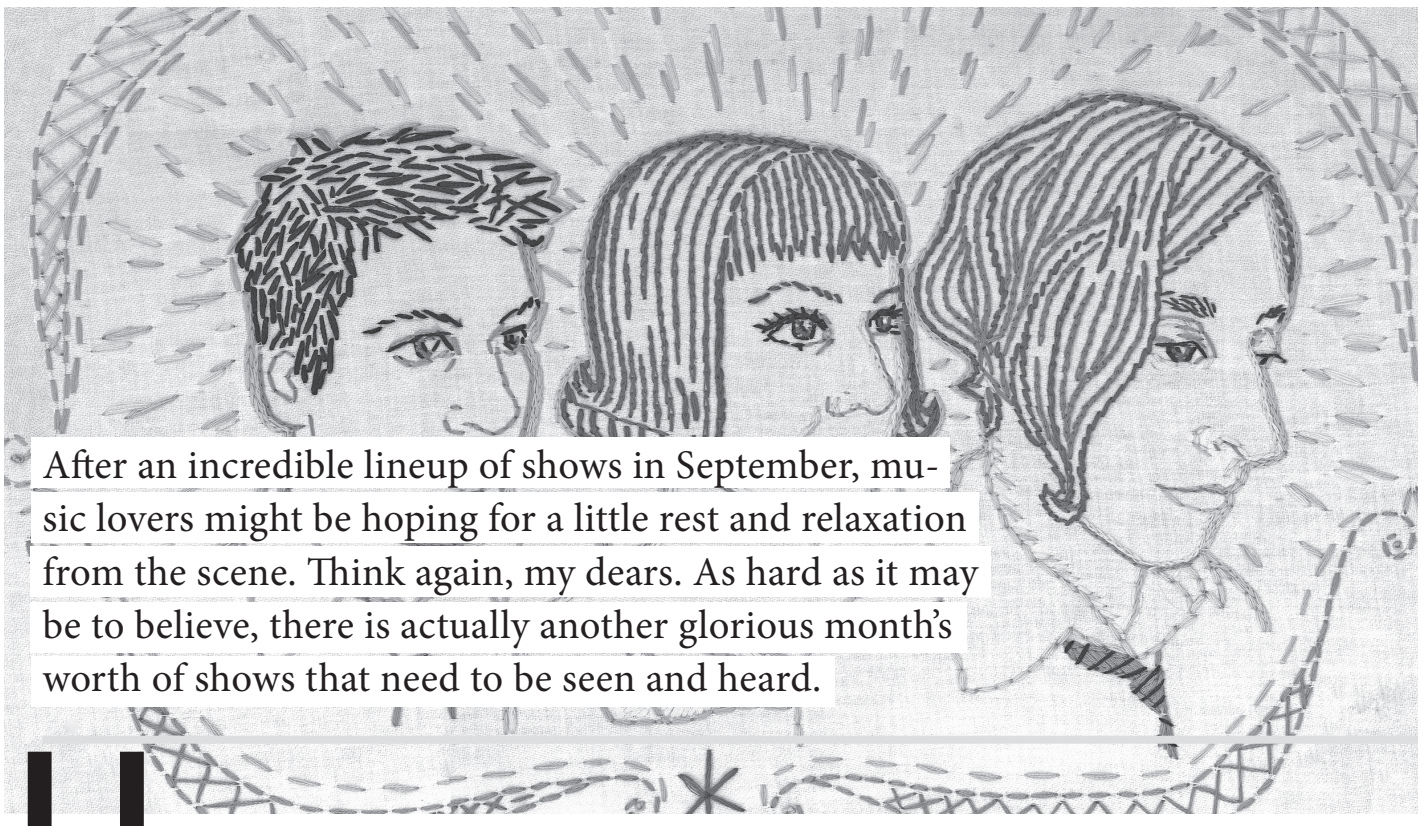
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OCTOBER HAS NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD

By Brigitte B. Zabak



After an incredible lineup of shows in September, music lovers might be hoping for a little rest and relaxation from the scene. Think again, my dears. As hard as it may be to believe, there is actually another glorious month's worth of shows that need to be seen and heard.

Unless there is an overwhelming desire to see Live perform with Collective Soul over at the Verizon Theater on October 2, take a few days off at the beginning of the month and save your energy for the lovable and loyal foursome from Austin, The Octopus Project. Their sound is an oscillation between convulsive experimentation and gentle pop beats. Over the years they have garnered a dedicated and attentive following with their unparalleled creativity and infectious personalities. The Octopus Project will be performing at Numbers on October 4th with some of Houston's finest acts: Bring Back the Guns and Satin Hooks.

There is no rest for the weary! Pick yourself up and dust yourself off after a night at Numbers and head down to Warehouse Live on October 5th to take a gander at Rilo Kiley. Collectively, Rilo Kiley has always been an indie rock band that has consistently produced quality albums with fresh and innovative sounds. They manage to put a modern twist on classic genres of music and they do it with gentle respect and luminous dexterity. Jenny Lewis' captivating presence plays nicely against Blake Sennett's quirky and likeable demeanor. They have recently set out on tour to promote their new album Under the Blacklight and are being supported by Grand Ole Party and Art in Manila.

Though there is plenty to see between Rilo Kiley's gig and October 13th, but you might want to chill out and save your strength for a day's worth of music and mayhem at the Westheimer Block Party. From the gentle sway of Spain Colored Orange to the intense goodness of Golden Axe, block party attendees are promised a day filled with free and fantastic noise. However, if one must venture out before the 13th, check out: Okkervil River at Walter's on October 6th, Augustana (who is touring with Dashboard Confessional) on October 9th at Warehouse Live, and Molly & The Ringwalds at The Continental Club on October 12th.

After a day's worth of debauchery at the Block Party, the list of shows to see is out of control. There is so much to take in and so little time to appreciate it all. Earlimart is an indie rock band from California who has also recently produced a stunning new album. Mentor Tormentor is a tender and dense collection of songs that are sure to resonate well live. Be sure to check them out with The Watermarks on October 16th at the cozy and intimate Backroom at The Mink.

Make way for the illustrious vision that is Holly Golightly. The beautiful British crooner will be back in town playing at Rudyard's on October 17th. Golightly's hypnotic voice and soulful lyrics immerse the listener in a melancholy bath of blues and keep you coming back for more.

Canadian electronic pop guru Caribou (formerly known as Manitoba) will be playing at the Engine Room on October 18th. Caribou, or Daniel V. Snaith, is a solo artist that creates psychedelic, pop-infused music that reads jagged and sleepy and lovely. Snaith actually holds a PHD in math from Imperial College in London and his music is definitely a manifestation of his right and left hemispheres joining together to make calculated and crisp noise.

Seattle-based indie rockers Minus the Bear are embarking on an extensive tour to promote their new album Planet of Ice. Though Planet of Ice is still filled with all familiar MTB staples, like the band's signature taps and Jake Snider's one-of -a -kind vocals, it has an added layer of depth and maturity that is missing from their other records. The best part of their newly developed sound is how unbelievably good it is going to sound live. There is an intense and urgent air to these new songs that demand they be heard loudly and in front of a live studio audience. Minus the Bear is set to take Houston by growl after ferocious growl on October 20th at Numbers.

Barely the middle of the month and already pocketbooks are emptying from the overwhelming catalog of shows to drink in! The last week of October is stocked with an array of choices. Hot Hot Heat will be performing at The Meridian on October 22nd. Matt Pond PA will also be performing at The Meridian on October 24th. Their sound is unassuming and perfect for a laidback night on the town. Funky fresh Galactic will be playing The Meridian on October 25th. After three back-to-back days of The Meridian, venture over to the Heights and check out random rockers Jucifer at Super Happy Fun Land on October 26th or go more mainstream with Maroon 5 and The Hives at the Toyota Center. The hardest part of the month is figuring out what to do for Halloween. There is tons of stuff going on, but the Halloween Party featuring the Fatal Flying Guilloteens at The Proletariat is sure to be a howling good time.

We accept this as truth

THE AXIOM REUNION
Oct. 12th and 13th @ Fitz
By Lance Scott Walker



In the late 80s and early 90s, before Austin's popularity had begun to truly blossom and thus drain Houston's creative pool on a daily basis, Houston had a pretty phenomenal music scene. Not in the sense that it was huge, but because it was special... almost innocent.

The thing was that there was nothing back then on which a band could capitalize. There was no outline for what music from Houston sounded like, no massive Houston success stories on which to base a career path and thus a sort of purity that shrouded the scene that point. It was unique, it was fresh and it kept the music genuine—both for those in the bands and for those of us attending their shows.

Some of those bands (**Bayou Pigs**, **Academy Black**) should have been huge. Some of them (**Sprawl**, **Dead Horse**) actually *were* huge. Some of them (**de Schmog**, **Toho Ehio**) were either really far or really behind their time; some of them were razor-made rock stars waiting to happen (**Cinco Dudes**); some of them were absolutely mind-blowing live (**Joint Chiefs**) and probably still will be, and still others (**Fleshmop, Anarchitex**) are very likely to sound as novel/weird/relevant today as they did when they arrived on the scene. Fitzgerald's will be hosting a re-union for many of these bands October 12th-14th.

Below is the lineup:

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12th, 2007

UPSTAIRS: Sprawl, de Schmog, Blunt, Toho Ehio, U.Y.U.S., Fleshmop, David von Ohlerking with the Stelly Hall String Quartet

DOWNSTAIRS: The Cave Reverend, Anarchitex (ex-Pain Teens, Really Red), Bad Samaritans, The Awful Truth, Grindin' Teeth,

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13th, 2007

UPSTAIRS: Academy Black with guest Michael Haaga (ex-dead horse), Cinco Dudes, Bayou Pigs, Joint Chiefs, Sad Pygmy, Uncle Charlie (Dresden 45 acoustic mini opera!)

DOWNSTAIRS: The Cave Reverend - late night encore!, Turmoil in the Toybox, Backyard Epics, Jimmy Bradshaw (ex-Squat Thrust)

Fitzgerald's 713-862-3838
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MERIDIAN

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OCTOBER

1 ***Epica***, Visions Of Atlantis

2 ***Between The Buried & Me,*** Horse The Band, Animosity

3 ***Tiger Army***, Street Dogs, Imperative Reaction

4 ***Aiden***, Drop Dead, Gorgeous; Still Remains

5 ***Obituary***, Full Blown Chaos, Alabama Thunderpussy, Hemlock, PinHed

9 ***Sonata Arctica***, The Agonist, After Forever, The Final Plague

10 ***Saosin***, Norma Jean, Alexisonfire, The Dear & Departed

11 ***Finntroll***

12 ***Johnny Winter***

13 ***Boys Like Girls***

15 ***Twizted,*** Mower. Ill Bill

16 ***Melvins,*** Big Business

17 ***The Donnas***

20 ***FallCore: TBA***

21 ***Prong***, Necrofaith, Saturate, Deus Machina

22 ***Hot Hot Heat,*** Bedouin Soundclash, De Novo Dahl

23 ***Job For a Cowboy,*** Behemoth, Gojira

24 ***matt pond PA***

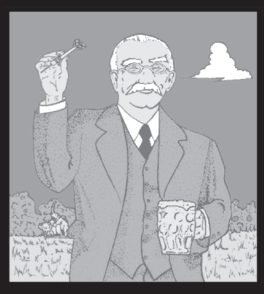
25 ***Galactic*** Featuring Chali 2na (of Jurassic 5) and Boots Riley (of the Coup) With: Lifesavas

26 ***The Ghouls on Parade Tour with Wednesday 13***, Trashlight Vision & AntiProduct

27 ***Porcupine Tree***

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Fri.5
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Sat.6
Savoy Special, Skyblue 72

Tue.9
Weedeater

Thu.11
Atlas

Fri.12
Fake Believe, Bayou City Beach Party

Sat.13
Black Math Experiment, Screaming Red, MK Ultra

Sun.14
Sprawl and Friends(tba)

Tue.16
Holly Golightly & the Brokeoffs

Thu.18
Mind's Eye, Avenger, Ex-Truckers

Fri.19
Luxarata

Thu. 25
PJ Flowers, Juan Louder, Chenoa Farrell

Fri. 26
Lick Lick, Cat Scientists

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Open Mic Night

Tuesday
Scott Daniels Band

Wednesday
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Midnight Drum Circle
Hula Hoopers, Poi spinners

Thursday
The Hightailers
Drum circle @ 10:30
Bring a drum to get in Free
Unescorted ladies get in Free

OCTOBER

5th -Funkotron
6th -Black Water Gospel (Austin, TX) w/ Backbeat Fetish - $7
12th -Hundred Year Flood - $7
13th -The Intersection w/ Familiar Strangers - $6
19th -Jabarvy - $6
20th -Dirtfoot w/ GIANT BEAR! (Memphis, TN) - $7
November 3rd -GoGirls Fall Music Fest

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BLADES OF GLORY

(Is that our worst title yet?)

By Ramon Medina



Instrumental rock has to get over a tough hurdle. If you take away the human voice within a rock context, you'll find a lot of people keep a safe distance because instrumental music is considered by many to be cold and unapproachable.

Thankfully, any performance by Pasadena's Blades takes this notion head-on. The band's decidedly unpretentious approach is a kick in the pants to anyone expecting music for chin-scratching intellectuals and last month's performance at the Mink surely must have laid that notion to rest. That night Blades and their music careened with volume and force: bassist David Ibarra convulsed like he was being electrocuted, Chris Mason swung his guitar like John Henry taking on that steam drill, and Kyle Jones beat his drums with such violence that you'd have almost expected blood to pour from his kit. As all this was going on, the other guitarist, John Dannar, seemed content to play the John Entwistle role with a huge shit-eating grin on his face the entire time. In fact, the only chin-scratching I witnessed was Allen Hendrix (guitarist of Sharks and Sailors) pondering the performance, lowering his head in deep thought, and summing it up by declaring the entire performance "very late-90s spicy with zombie flavor."

Still not convinced? Consider Kyle who, during our recent photo shoot shouted, "Drop your pants on three!" Suddenly, there is the band standing inside a trailer in their underwear as everyone tries to contain their laughter. Some bands might be stiff or self-conscious during a photo shoot but not Blades; they ran through rock photo clichés and braved dubious construction sites with abandon and glee. That is the thing that strikes anyone about Blades, that despite the serious work behind their music they are hardly serious people. Lance Higdon, drummer from fellow proggy band Tambersauro, is charmed by all this; "Yeah, they are accomplished musicians but beyond that, what sets them apart and puts a skip in my step, is the humor, levity, and humility in their approach. They don't put on airs."

But don't let all this silliness fool you, despite the energetic performances and the general goofiness, **Blades puts out some seriously complex music.** The Saturday before the Mink show I walked into Francisco studios and found, crouched on the floor over a digital 8-Track, local one-man mobile recording lab John Sears listening to levels as behind him the four musicians were working down some Vietnamese sandwiches and some last minute arrangements. The mood was much more restrained as the band was focusing on recording for its entry into John Sears' Grey Ghost series*.

As he twiddled knobs, Sears explained, "I can totally see why people are put off by bands like Blades. Unless you are familiar with the music, the changes can seem jarring. But this is music in which you have to make an investment". He's right of course. The first time I put on their EP "Who's The Cream Puff Now?" it was late and I was tired and I wasn't ready to listen. My reaction was as if I was on an elevator but then, later that week, I popped it in the car stereo and, giving it my full attention, found a band with a sharp emphasis on composition and arrangements. The music itself is very sculpted and can hardly be described as haphazard; the music drops rises and shifts with purpose and the players know exactly where they fit into the picture they are painting. The rewards of investing some time with a band like Blades is there are always new textures or layers revealing themselves upon each successive listen. Even David confesses that he will listen to a recording and hear things he never realized were there.

Kyle elaborates, "David and I hold everything down so really the layers and textures you hear are coming from John and Chris' guitars. There are times where we go off and improvise but the music you hear is pretty much composed…it's really cut and paste composition."

Chris jumps in, "Yeah, we are *collage* rock. But don't get the wrong idea. It's not like we say 'Do this four times and this five!' It's all feel. We also never consider the songs finished so they're always changing."

That constant changing, be it the ebb and flow of sound or the evolution of a composition, is the most fascinating thing about Blades. For them, there is always a way to make their music better and challenge themselves as players. Their music moves like water and we in the audience simply need to be willing to put our feet in the river.

You can catch Blades opening up for Don Caballero on November 3rd at the Proletariat.

*The Grey Ghost CDR Series is a John Sears project in which he issues a limited 13 CDR edition of one band's music for one week for $2 each at Domy. October's planned releases include Halocine, Li'l Red Lighthouse, and Something Fierce.

HATETANK

www.HATETANK.org

Monday, October 1st
TODAY IS THE DAY, TAIPAN DEFCON-4, CHRISTINE CALVARIA
@ Walter's
4215 Washington Ave.
Doors @ 7:30 All ages $10 presale $12 day of show

Tuesday, October 2nd
BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME HORSE THE BAND, ANIMOSITY THE END, SCALE THE SUMMIT
@ The Meridian 1503 Chartres
Doors @ 6:00 All Ages $13 presale / $15 day of show

Thursday, October 4th
AIDEN, DROP DEAD, GORGEOUS, STILL REMAINS
@ The Meridian 1503 Chartres
Doors @ 7:00 All Ages $14

Sunday, October 7th
HORRORPOPS, ROGER MIRET AND THE DISASTERS, THE APPLICATORS
@ The Meridian 1503 Chartres
Doors @ 7:00 All Ages presale $13/Day of Show: $15

Tuesday, October 9th
FUNERAL DRESS, KRUM BUMS RESILIENCE, THE GHOULS
@ Walter's
4215 Washington Ave.
Doors @ 7:30 All Ages $12

Saturday, October 20th
WILL TO LIVE, BITTER END THE JONBENET, P.L.F. T'ANARI, YOUR MISTAKE, TEN CROWNS
@ The Meridian 1503 Chartres
Doors @ 1pm All Ages $15
Also Playing:
HANDS OF THE FEW, FIGHT PRETTY, SUDDEN DEATH, I AM WOLF, ON MY SIDE, FLAWLESS VICTORY, FULL CONTACT, LIE AND WAIT, SACRED SHOCK, A.N.S., DTD

Tuesday, October 23rd
JOB FOR A COWBOY BEHEMOTH, GOJIRA
@The Meridian 1503 Chartres
Doors @ 7:00 All Ages $15 presale / $17 day of show

Wednesday, October 31st
TOXIC HOLOCAUST, IRON AGE MIDNIGHT, GRAVE ROBBERS,
@ Walter's
4215 Washington Ave.
Doors @ 8:00 All Ages $8

WALTERS ON WASHINGTON

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MON. Oct. 1
TODAY IS THE DAY
Tai Pan, Defcon-4, Christine
$10.00 adv., $12.00 door

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SAT. Oct. 6
OKKERVIL RIVER
Damien Jurado, Colour Revolt
$10.00 adv.$12.00 door

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TUE. Oct. 9
FUNERAL DRESS
Krum Bums, Resilience, The Ghouls $12.00

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FRI. Oct. 19
QUI (David Yow of Jesus Lizard) $10.00

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FRI. Oct. 26
DR, DOG
Apollo Sunshine, The Delta Spirit
$10.00 adv.$12.00 door

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TUE. Oct. 30
THE LAWRENCE ARMS / AMERICAN STEEL
The Falcon, Sundowner
$10.00 adv.$12.00 door

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WED. Oct. 31
TOXIC HOLOCAUST
Iron Age, Midnight, Grave Robbers
$ 8.00

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FRI. Nov. 2
POISON IDEA
Krum Bums, Channel 3
$12.00

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WWW.4215WASHINGTON.COM
713-862-2513



OCTOBER CALENDAR

By Shelby Kelly

Every Tuesday and every Friday from 5 to 6:15 p.m. anti-war and impeachment activists are holding up signs on the Montrose Bridge over Highway 59 in Houston.The most fun thing about this is watching angry rednecks get out of their car to flick you off during gridlocked rush-hour traffic. Lots of nice folks to chat with and kid/dog/communist friendly. Bring a bottle of water.

10.30 The Lawrence Arms w/ American Steel - Walter's

10.27 Peelander Z - Fitzgeralds
The Porcupine Tree - Meridian

10.01 The Friendly Friends w/ Giant Princess - SHFL
A Drawing Show feat. Seth Alverson, Sean Carroll, + more - The Joanna Gallery

10.02 Del the Funky Homosapien w/ Devin the Dude - Warehouse Live
Del is returning to Houston to bring that flow your Free Press can only describe as "tripe". Tripe, a hybrid of trill, hype,and tight, is also a dish served at Vietnamese restaurants and also can be used to describe headphone bumpin', gold chain sportin', high top Nike, MUTHAFUCKIN ASS HIP HOP! We are hoping Del will just do the whole "Both Sides of the Brain" of the album and leave everyone slain in their wake. Also,if you don't already know bout it, go ahead and do yourself the favor of snagging a copy of "Both Sides of the Brain", your ears will thank you. Homegrown legend Devin the Dude supports this show and will be probably be playing new shit and putting sweets up in the air so if you want in the rotation hit this shit up.

Between the Buried and Me w/ Horse the Band -Meridian

10.03 Flame Shark w/ The Hungry Villagers - SHFL
Tiger Army w/ Street Dogs - Meridian

10.04 Unearth w/ August Burns Red - Warehouse Live

10.05 Rilo Kiley w/ Grand Ole Party - Warehouse Live
Obituary w/ Alabama Thunderpussy - Meridian

10.06 Hunter Ward Memorial feat. The Drunks, Something Fierce, + more - Meridian

10.26 Marcel Khalife, Lebanese singer, composer, and oud master, reshapes traditional Arab music into a universally communicative form of expression. Khalife has been injecting a new life into the oud through his deep attachment to the lyrical text, through his association with great contemporary Arab poet 8 p.m. at Stafford Centre - Performing Arts Theatre, 10505 Cash Road.

10.07 Harptallica - SHFL
How could we NOT send people to this. Harptallica, are you serious??!! This show is earning the title of Master Slayer for the month of October for a multitude of reasons. POWER DUO. CHICKS. METALLICA'S OLD SHIT BEING DIMED OUT ON A HARP.

10.08 Tracey Snelling: Another Shocking Psychological Thriller - Houston Center for Photography

10.09 The Itch - SHFL
Funeral Dress w/ The KrumBums - Walter's

10.10 Mickey Avalon w/ Andre Legacy - Warehouse Live
Saosin w/ NormaJean - Meridian

10.11 Finntroll - Meridian

10.12 Johnny Winter -Meridian
Keo Wolford "I Land"- Diverse Works

10.13 WESTHEIMER BLOCK PARTY

10.15 God's Good Soldiers w/ Murdervan - SHFL

10.16 The Melvins w/ Big Business - Meridian
The Melvins are a staple to heavy music everywhere and definitely set the standard for heavy discordant rock in the late 80's and early 90's. Bringing such an awesome act as Big Business though might prove to be too much doom for this city. There will be crushing. Amps might fall apart. Hands with and without drinks will coursing through the air in demonic,inebriated fury. Let that fuzz pedal send you to the doctor tomorrow! Let that spit from the singer fly right onto your lip. Get dirty houston.

10.17 The Donnas w/ Donita Sparks from L7 - Meridian

10.18 David McGee: El Sonador Elegante - DiverseWorks

10.19 QUI (feat. David Yow of Jesus Lizard) - Walter's

10.20 Fallcore '07 feat. Will to Live, The Jonbenet, Fight Pretty, +more -Meridian

10.21 The David Whitney Bequest -Menil

10.22 Hot Hot Heat w/ Bedouin Soundclash - Meridian

10.23 Job for a Cowboy w/ Behemoth - Meridian
Old Growth w/ Hear You Me - SHFL

10.24 Matt Pond PA - Meridian

AUSTIN CITY LIMITS

In review

By Sierra Irwin | Photos By Anthony Chapman

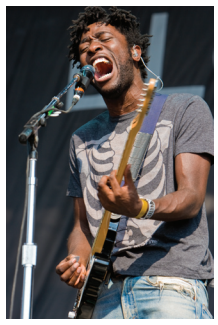
The Austin City Limits Music Festival boasts of "3 days, 8 stages, 130 bands," and they're not kidding. If you didn't make it out to Zilker this past month, here's my list of must-sees and oddities from the 2007 festival.



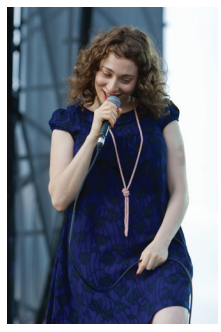
Oddity: Two separate fires broke out during Friday's festivities, one in the staff only area around 2:30 p.m., which was reportedly caused by an exploding propane tank, and later one of Björk's speakers suffered a power surge. Kudos to all those festival goers who calmly moved out of the way so both fires could be quickly controlled. Björk only stopped her performance a minute to say that a burning speaker was not going to keep her or anyone else from having a great time that evening.



Must-see: **Ben Kweller**, from Greenville, TX, was back this year after last year's disastrous nose bleed incident. He has commemorated this occasion with a tee shirt that proclaims in blood "The Return of Ben Kweller to ACL 2007" on the back with the redhead's bloodied nose dripping on the front. His fairly mellow set did include a preview of two new songs off an album he is currently recording in Austin, one of which had a strong gospel flavor to it. But some reason unbeknownst to me, Ben ended his set ten minutes early, leaving his fans "wasted and ready" for the song that never came.



Oddity: I'm always amazed by the remarkable number of British bands who flock to Texas to rock out while we're still deep in the throes of summer. **Muse, Bloc Party, Arctic Monkeys, Joss Stone, the Kaiser Chiefs, M.I.A., and Damien Rice** were all big draws at this year's festival. Some have been to the festival before, and some are newbies, but why they come to such a hellish climate to perform outdoors is beyond me. I'm glad they do, though. So hey Brit bands! Y'all come back now, ya hear?



Must-see: Russian born, NYC bred **Regina Spektor** seemed shocked that so many festival goers came to see her show early Sunday evening. She shouldn't have been, though, with all the airtime she's been getting lately on radio and TV. Festival goers seemed shocked that this pale and petite brunette's voice was even more dynamic live. Check out her other records, folks! She started out with just her piano, her electric guitar, and her drumsticks on a wooden chair, and I'm glad that's what she performed with at ACL.



Must-see: **The Decemberists** from Portland, Oregon, returned to ACL this year to play a hodgepodge of songs spanning nearly all of their albums. I've seen these guys live three times now and they always put on an amazing, if very different, show. At the end of a long hot weekend, the Decemberists still had their audience dancing, clapping, waving their arms in the air, and echoing lead singer Colin Meloy's la-di-dahs as a part of sing-along time. Despite their folksy sounds, the Decemberists showed they know how to rock be finishing their a la Spinal Tap - thrashing on the floor, jumping into each other, and (accidentally) smashing instruments - leaving audiences with a rush of energy and high expectations for next year's festival.

Photos by Anthony Chapman

Words by Sierra Irwin



STAGE GUIDE

WESTHEIMER BLOCK PARTY

AVANTE GARDEN

(we still call it Helios) 411 Westheimer

OUTSIDE

The Gold Sounds	12:00-12:30
Novice	12:45-1:15
Mechanical Boy	1:30-2:00
Lazlo	2:15-2:45
Sabra Laval	3:00-3:30
Balaclavas	3:45-4:15
Nosaprise	4:30-5:00
Prodigal Sons	5:15-5:45
Perseph One	6:00-6:30
Studemont Project	6:45-7:15
Million Year Dance	7:30-8:00
Free Radicals	8:15-8:45

Abstraction Art Exhibit in Parking Lot

NUMBERS

300 Westheimer

OUTSIDE

Generic Tribe	12:00-12:30
Dead Roses	12:45-1:15
Standing Souls	1:30-2:00
Sideshow Tramps (Medicine Show)	2:15-2:45
Peekaboo Theory	3:00-3:30
Eldridge	3:45-4:15
The Friends of Rock -n- Roll	4:30-5:00
skyblue72	5:15-5:45
Spain Colored Orange	6:00-6:30
Golden Axe	6:45-7:15
Tha Fucking Transmissions	7:30-8:00

followed by Danseparc inside at 9PM

INSIDE

Playing with Stars	12:00-12:30
Rustler	12:45-1:15
Hearts of Animals	1:30-2:00
Concrete Rose Cabaret	2:15-2:45
JD's Throwdown	3:00-3:30
Eugenius	3:45-4:15
Generation Landslide/The Gold Sounds	4:30-5:30
Cop Warmth	5:15-5:45
The Hates	6:00-6:30

MANGOS

403 Westheimer

INSIDE

Osirus	12:00-12:30
Studio Magick Black	12:45-1:15
Lunara	1:30-2:00
The Octanes	2:15-2:45
Muzak John	3:00-3:30
Micah Omega	3:45-4:15
The Takes	4:30-5:00
Econo	5:15-5:45
Basses Loaded	6:00-6:30
The Rudyments	6:45-7:15
Electricks	7:30-8:00

OUTSIDE

Captain Asian and the Electrics	12:00-12:30
Elaine Greer	1:30-2:00
Doo Doo Butter	2:15-2:45
Tha Shot Shots	3:00-3:30
Rise Over Ruin	3:45-4:15
The Annoysters	4:30-5:00
Bully Pulpit	5:15-5:45
Dirty Bird	6:00-6:30
Rusted Shut	6:45-7:15
D.R.U.M	7:30-8:00

DJ's from Rebel Crew on patio

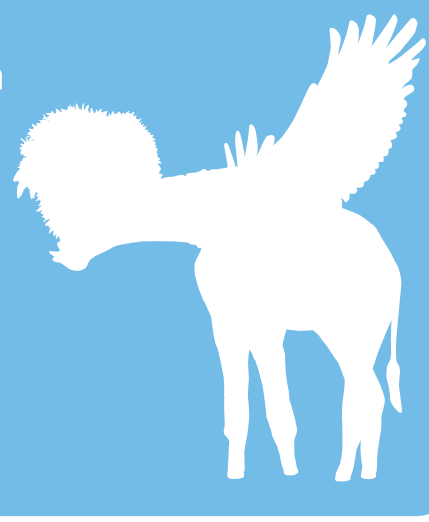
LA STRADA

322 Westheimer

DJ's throughout the day into the evening:

Party Fone and Housetown Records

John The Third
Sasha Braverman
Mike W
Chello
Alex C
J Reyna
DJ Pooks
Jeffrey Mac





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Saturday October 13th
12-8 pm
In conjunction with the
Westheimer Block Party

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Betsy Askew
Eli Brumbaugh
Joey Bender
Vonetta Berry
Caleb
James Ciosek
Bryan Cope
Sasha Dela
Matthew Dupont
Lisa Marie Godfrey
Norberto Gomez Jr.
Tina Hernandez
Robert Hodge
Shelby Hohl
Mark Hougham
Chad Jessel
Mary Keene
Cody Ledvina
Amye MacCarther
Brian Moss
Frank Olsen
Cheyanne Ramos
Patrick Renner
The Rick Bros.
Brian Rod
Derek Shumate
Jeff Smith
Chloe Stewart
Keijiro Suzuki
Timothy Tuxedo
David Waddell

at the corner of Westheimer and Taft
presented by the American Wandering Club



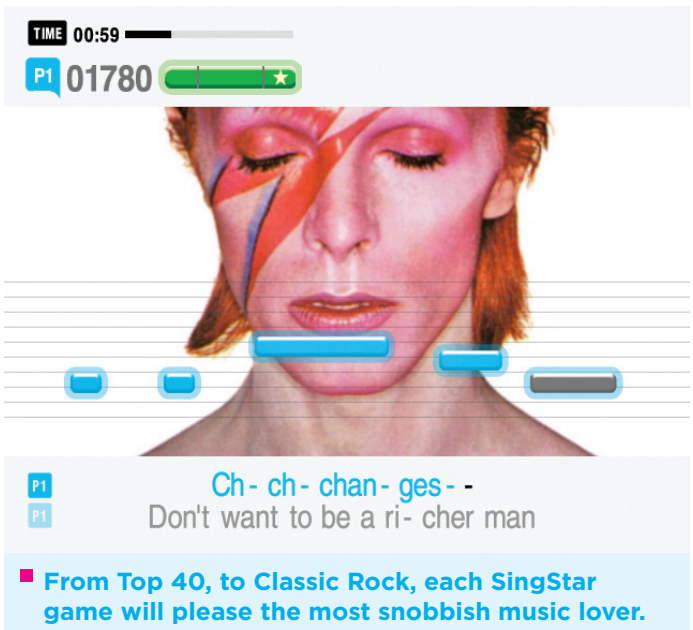
“SING OUT LOUISE!”

SingStar: Pop, Rocks!, Amped & ‘80s Reviewed

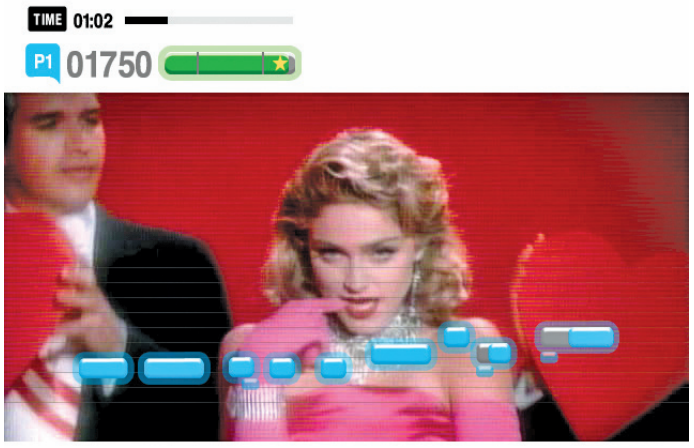
By Jody Worthington



■ **The gray bars in the image above indicate the pitch of the lyrics, making it easier to sing along with songs even if you really don’t know the melody.**



■ **From Top 40, to Classic Rock, each SingStar game will please the most snobbish music lover.**



■ **No need for Rose-colored glasses, the classic music videos in SingStar are always entertaining**

It was about 10 o’clock on a Friday night when the pizza guy showed up. Only - we didn’t hear him. His feeble knocks were completely inaudible over the thumping bass of “I’m a Survivor” by Destiny’s Child, the spastic jumping-slash-booty-dancing and the piercing, sporadic shrieks we tried to pass off as “singing.”

Console: Sony PlayStation 2 | **Rating:** E10+ | **Developer:** Sony Computer Entertainment Europe

For singers, non-singers, gamers and non-gamers, SingStar karaoke for the PlayStation 2 brings about a revolution within two venerated, cult-ish pasttimes: videogames and karaoke.

First, forget that it’s a videogame. I did. I’m your typical non-gamer, the type who twiddles aimlessly with analog sticks and is confounded when my boyfriend tells me that “up means down.” Yet, the first time I hooked up the PS2 and popped in a DVD, I found the SingStar control scheme and menu panels to be pretty visceral. The clean, white background and simple colored icons are refreshing. The complete lack of a daunting learning curve allowed me to concentrate on the most important part - picking a song.

The song selection is, surprisingly, quite awesome. Now, I’ve done a lot of karaoke - I even own an old-school clunker of a karaoke machine and a ton of CDs to go with it. I’ve always lamented about the lameness of most karaoke compilation discs. They usually consist of two or three good, solid hits, while the other 20-odd tracks are pure duds that no one has heard of.

Not so with SingStar. Every DVD is bulging with hits that people actually get excited about. So far, there are four compilations: Amped, Rocks!, Pop and ‘80s. You can buy each game on its own for $30, or with the two obligatory microphones included for around $50. There is also a bundle package with an exclusive white PS2, SingStar Pop, and both microphones.

The dual mic setup is crucial - I’d say the duet and battle mode are 100 times more fun than the traditional solo approach. Duet lets you share the burden of embarrassment during the high warbles of Europe’s “The Final Countdown,” while battle mode ups the ante a bit. Competitors (red team vs. blue team) will take turns screeching/rapping/grunting the versus and choruses, while striving to get the most pitch-accuracy points. Some songs are great for battle mode (usually the ones that have rapid-fire back-and-forth cadences, notably Run DMC’s “It’s Tricky”).

The makers of SingStar know that a great song is enhanced tri-fold by a great music video. Until now, I had never seen such a large crowd gather ‘round the TV for karaoke. If you don’t care to sing, or don’t care about watching people sing, you can just catch the original recordings and their accompanying music videos.

Quite the opposite of the geek-in-basement-for-days stereotypical gaming experience, SingStar, with its ADD-proof music videos and easy learning curve, creates an impromptu party atmosphere - whether you have two or 20 people.

Final Grade: **B+**

Double-diped Favorites

Our two favorites from each SingStar game:

SINGSTAR ‘80S
Tears for Fears - *Everybody Wants to Rule the World*
Starship - *We Built this City on Rock and Roll*

SINGSTAR AMPED
Iggy Pop - *Real Wild One*
Yeah Yeah Yeahs - *Gold Lion*

SINGSTAR POP
Britney Spears - *Hit me Baby One more Time*
Destiney’s Child - *Survivor*

SINGSTAR ROCKS
Elton John - *Rocket Man*
My Chemical Romance - *Helena*

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Dai Huynh- Houston Chronicle

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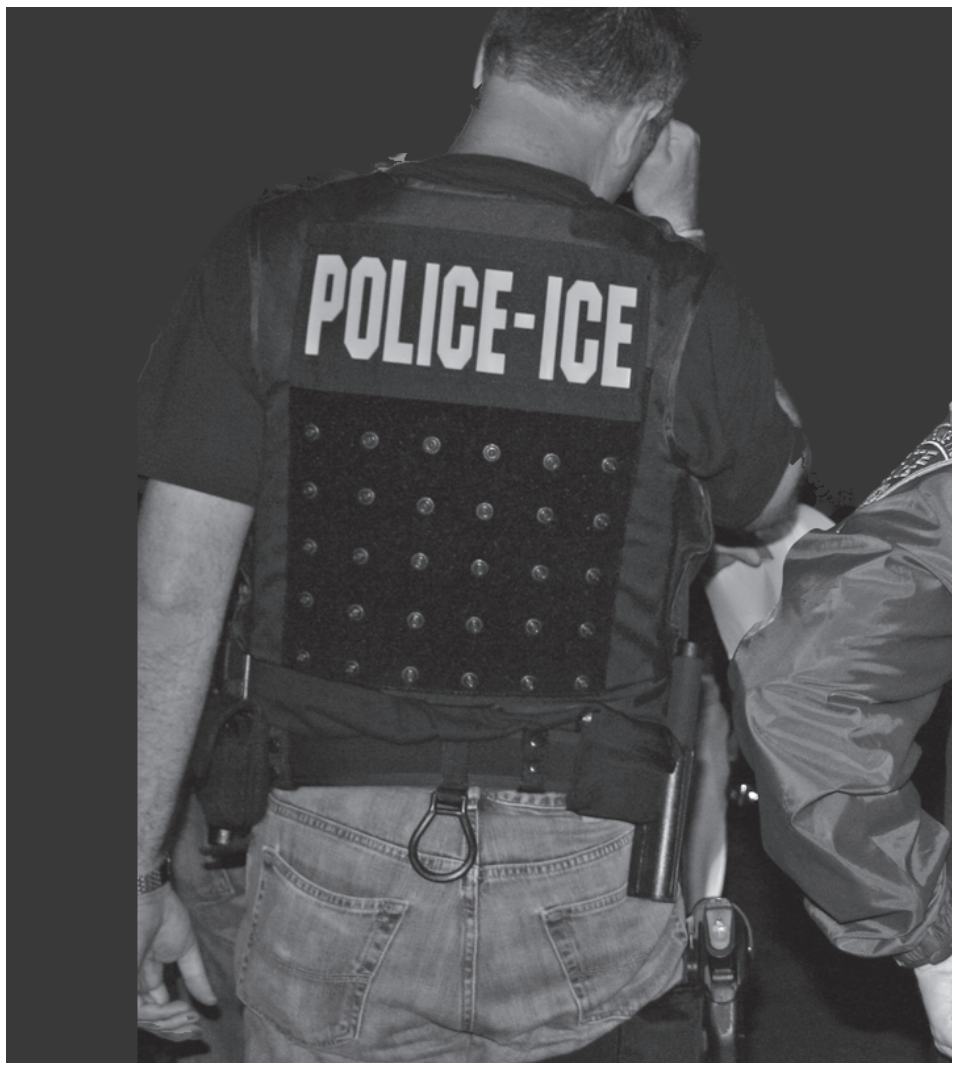
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THE COST OF SANCTUARY

New law to deny emergency funds to sanctuary cities that harbor illegal immigrants

By Andrea Afra

Everyday in the U.S. a countless number of crimes go unreported by illegal residents and legal residents of immigrant communities who fear deportation just for calling on the police for help. Many local police departments around the country have invoked a 'don't ask, don't tell policy' they promote to illegal residents in hopes they will come to them when victimized or as witnesses to crime.



To the detriment of this progress, new laws are being passed that use financial gains and penalties to pressure local law enforcement to take on the role of federal immigration officers. According to these laws, police officers may soon be encouraged to arrest and ascertain the legal status of anyone they come in contact with, be it a victim of crime, a witness, or you if you happen to look 'foreign' enough. Without some sort of protection by the law, from the law, in the form of amnesty or leniency, fewer immigrants will report crimes and fewer criminals will be taken off the streets.

Section 287(g) was passed as an amendment to the Immigration and Nationality Act. Approved by Congress, it states that local police officers may act as federal officials and interrogate and detain immigrants whether or not they have committed a crime in order to determine their legal status. Police departments are encouraged to participate in these programs and receive federal funding to train their officers to become honorary Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, agents. ICE was established in March 2003 as an extension of the Department of Homeland Security.

The new law that will change the way police officers respond to situations involving foreigners was sponsored by Republican presidential candidate and voracious immigration opponent Tom Tancredo of Colorado, and is also supported by former Massachusetts Governor and Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney. The U.S. House approved his plan this past June which now only awaits Bush's signature. To complement 287(g), and still abiding by the 'with us or against us' mentality, Tancredo has proposed that federal emergency funding through the Homeland Security Department should be denied to so called 'sanctuary cities' whose law departments don't arrest and report all encounters with possible 'illegal' residents.

It is already standard procedure for most local law officials to check the identifications of anyone involved in a criminal matter, whether they're a suspect, a witness, or a victim. If their status is revealed as illegal then under the new law enforcing 287(g) the police must arrest them and turn them over to the INS. In the end, the victim gets punished and the criminal gets away. Free to move on to their next prey, the criminal often targets another immigrant that will more than likely avoid contacting the police.

To avoid this lack of trust from our large immigrant community, and well before 287(g) was in place, the 1992 Houston Police Chief Sam Nuchia followed suit of other cities around the country and issued an order stating that officers were not allowed to check the immigration status of those that were not under arrest, and the order still stands.

After 9/11, even more intense pressure was put on local police chiefs to crack down on illegal immigration in their communities. However, not all were on board to do so and several chiefs went on record as to why.

[Noting that the mission of police is to prevent and solve crimes] "It would be virtually impossible to do that effectively if witnesses and victims, no matter what their residency status, had some reluctance to come forward for fear of being deported." Tom Needham, Former General Counsel & Chief of Staff Chicago Police Department, Illinois. *Chicago Tribune*, 4/14/02

"We've been trying to get the immigrants in our town to believe that we're not like many of the governments in their old countries, governments that were corrupt and wanted to railroad them, not serve them." Sgt. Robert Francaviglia, Hillsdale Police Department, New Jersey. *Bergen Record*, 4/22/02

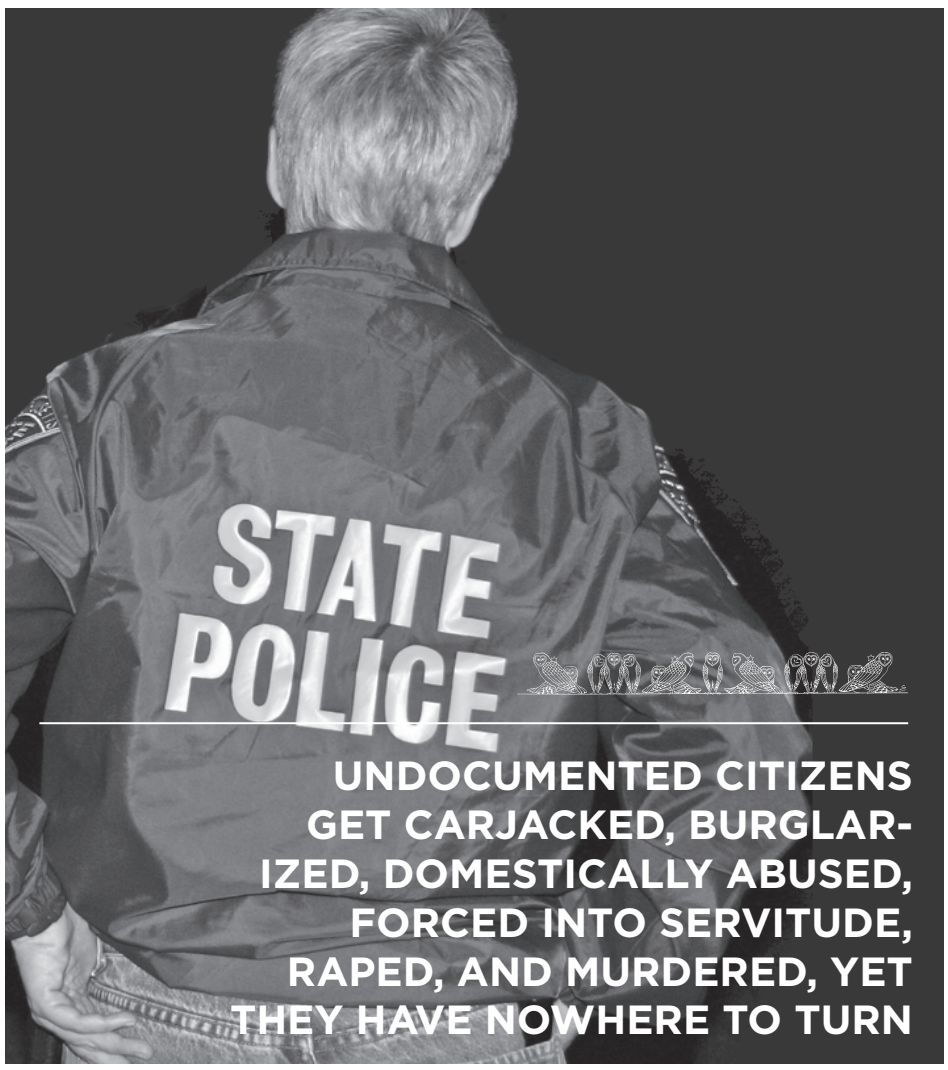
"We can't and won't throw our scarce resources at quasi-political, vaguely criminal, constitutionally questionable, nor any other evolving issues or unfunded mandates that aren't high priorities with our citizenry." Chief Theron Bowman, Arlington Police Department, Texas. (*Dallas Morning News*, 4/5/02)

A change in this same stance once held by HPD was fueled by the shooting death of Officer Rodney Johnson who was killed by an illegal immigrant the 21st of last September. Houston Police Chief Harold Hurtt decried that a change was in the air and his force would begin working more closely with ICE. In a 2006 interview with CNN's Lou Dobbs, Hurtt described the process.

"Anybody that we come across that is going to be booked into our jail or either the county jail, Harris County Jail, and they've been arrested by the Houston police department, we're going to be asking them, were you born in the U.S. and are you a U.S. citizen? Depending on their response, we'll put that into the booking blotter and now ICE, that is Immigration Custom Enforcement (sic), have full access to the Houston police department, county jail, city jail, and they'll be able to go in, look at those booking slips and take whatever action they deem necessary with those individuals."

Opponents of illegal immigration, such as the Minutemen and former Houston city councilman Mark Ellis (who was rear-ended in early 2005 by an illegal immigrant and furious that the cop wouldn't arrest him at once) define this lack of scrutiny as the actions of a sanctuary city. Later that year, Ellis tried to get city council to force the hand of HPD to overturn the unwritten 'don't ask, don't tell' policy regarding immigrants. A whopping dozen people showed up in support of his motion. Whipping out his ever trusty 9//11 card in a publicity stunt/interview with Channel 11 News' Doug Miller, he stated:

""We've had some rapists here in the



UNDOCUMENTED CITIZENS GET CARJACKED, BURGLARIZED, DOMESTICALLY ABUSED, FORCED INTO SERVITUDE, RAPED, AND MURDERED, YET THEY HAVE NOWHERE TO TURN

city of Houston that were illegal immigrants," says City Council Member Mark Ellis. "We know that some of the terrorists that attacked New York back on September 11, 2001, we know that they were illegal immigrants. And so, when do we say enough is enough?"

Chief Hurtt's stance on not training local officers to become ICE agents is that he doesn't have the authority or the resources and isn't getting paid enough to do the Feds' job for them.

"I can only concentrate on what's happening here in the city limits of Houston and do the very best we possible can here. Those issues that are based upon national efforts and international efforts, those are, as someone said, above my pay grade."

It hardly sounds like he is concerned with maintaining the fragile trust bridged between the law and immigrant communities as long as the price is right.

And with the new law threatening to deny emergency funding to 'sanctuary cities', the ante has been upped, for Houston will soon have to choose between making or losing money based on HPD's attitude towards working with ICE. There could be a change of heart among the local officials who would feel the pinch if the city lost funding, especially those who already feel they are underpaid. We will see more aggressive background checks by police officers to determine the legal status of anyone in contact with the law, including victims and witnesses and possibly random pedestrians who just look suspiciously dark-skinned. Next stop, checkpoints.

Undocumented citizens get carjacked, burglarized, domestically abused, forced into servitude, raped, and murdered, yet they have nowhere to turn to for help without risking the loss of what they've established here. A simple amendment to our laws should be instated providing amnesty from arrest or deportation due to status to anyone reporting a crime. This should also apply to legal citizens that have an arrest warrant out for a petty offense, such as missing a court date or owing traffic fines. This would give a voice back to those who must choose between arrest and/or deportation or remaining silent when faced with crime.

Without an extension of a compassionate law protecting those we call illegal, the cycle of crime will continue to grow until it reaches our own doorsteps. There are no perfect crimes except for the ones that are never reported.

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THE MANY LIVES OF

EMMANUEL GOLDSTEIN BIN LADEN

By M. Martin | Illustration By Derek Shumate



"...as usual, the face of Emmanuel Goldstein, the Enemy of the People, had flashed on to the screen. There were hisses here and there among the audience....

Goldstein was the renegade who had engaged in counter-revolutionary activities, had been condemned to death, and had mysteriously escaped and disappeared. The programs of the Two Minutes Hate varied from day to day, but there was none in which Goldstein was not the principal figure...

All crimes against the Party, all treacheries, acts of sabotage, heresies, deviations, sprang directly out of his teaching. Somewhere or other he was still alive and hatching his conspiracies: perhaps somewhere beyond the sea..."

- George Orwell's 1984

On the eve of the so-called 'Petraeus Report' in favor of George Bush's perpetual state of war, The administration's own Emmanuel Goldstein once again popped out of his cave for yet another well-timed Two Minute Hate.

Once again, the bogeyman specter of the person allegedly responsible for the horrors of 9/11 appeared as required to once again frighten the populace into supporting a war against a nation that had nothing to do with 9/11 in the first place.

This time around, the chattering 'commentators' of Fox and CNN had an additional derisive talking point to play with: the fact that Mr. Bin Laden had apparently nipped out of his back-country cave hideout long enough to pick up a package of 'Just For Men' at the neighborhood pharmacy and dye his beard a shade of black not seen in some twenty years. Not only did this observation add a layer of comedic contempt to the Two Minute Hate ritual....it also managed to distract the audience from the fact that "Bin Laden" has also apparently found time for a nose job (in contrast to Michael Jackson, he has apparently instructed his surgeons to find a way to make his nose larger), as well as opt for a significantly darker skin tone than featured in earlier (and substantially better photographed) communiques. In short: this "videotape from Osama Bin Laden" is every bit as authentic as General David Petraeus's ghost-written "report".....and just as much serves the purposes of our own little Ministry of Truth.

There is significant basis for doubting the legitimacy of ANY of the "Bin Ladens" that have so conveniently appeared on the eve of elections and congressional decisions. Outside of U.S. corporate-controlled media, reliable reports of Bin Laden's death have been in circulation since late 2001. Even the Bush administration's own mouthpieces have admitted that Bin Laden has required frequent kidney dialysis treatments since well before 2001. The idea that such delicate medical equipment could be maintained in a cave on the Afghan border is no less far-fetched than the notion that the man himself has not only survived there, but seemingly been rejuvenated by the experience (beard color notwithstanding, the latest Osama appears significantly younger than the ravaged figure in pre-9/11 videos).

Even Bin Laden's videotaped 9/11 'confession' is highly suspect....and terribly convenient. It makes considerably less sense to believe in the superhumanly durable and evil Mr. Bin Laden than it does to believe that that the CIA and NSA are at least as capable of producing blurry fake videos as the amateur auteurs who flood UTube with far more convincing footage of UFOs hovering over Haitian resorts, or-- at the very least-- that there is no shortage of amateur actors willing to don fake beards and the robes of a jihadist.

The one area where comparisons between George Orwell's 1984 and George Bush's 2007 break down is the question of who owns who. The media in Orwell's dystopia was 100% state owned and operated in the classic Stalinist model. In the dystopia we presently inhabit, the primary media outlets in The United States are completely owned and operated by multinational corporations-- as is, apparently, the government of the United States of America.

The one ray of hope in all this is that the scam is apparently wearing thin. A Google News search on "Fake Bin Laden" turns up thousands of stories from Sean Hannity wannabees sneering at "Bin Laden's" presumably fake beard. A Google Blog search on the same words turns up tens of thousands of writers sneering at an arguable fake "Bin Laden." Even MSNBC TV's pet liberal, Keith Olbermann, only barely fell short of declaiming the blatant falsehood the day the story broke. Even among those who accept the basic premise of the 9/11 narrative, there is a growing cynicism and disbelief over the Bush Administration's conduct of it's mind-numbingly expensive war of choice and the ever-changing justifications for that war. That cynicism has expanded to include the war's propaganda props as well.

The critically important question remains, though: just how much of that skepticism bleeds through into the red-tinged flyover states of America's mainstream middle? There really are "Two Americas", after all. The internationalist and progressive America that lives in coastal cities, shops at Target, and gets their morning coffee at Starbucks.....they've already made up their minds. Were if not for the quirks of the Electoral College and the fact that Wyoming elects as many senators as California, "Blue State America" would've ensured by now that George Bush was either (merely) the former governor of Texas, or the third impeached president in U.S. history... or serving a lifetime sentence for crimes against humanity. But as demonstrated by the elections of 2006, "Blue State America" commands only a thin functional margin.



It is now up to the "other" America--the people who shop at Walmart and get their morning caffeine fix at Dunkin' Donuts. Because it's relatively easy to manipulate their prejudices, "REd State America" been on board so far. But they're beginning to figure out they've been punked.....that maybe "queers gettin' married" ain't that big a deal after all, that maybe "wetback construction workers" are just guys supporting their familiies.....and that, just maybe, the kid brother/sister/child that came back from Iraq in a box or minus a limb got bled for all the wrong reasons.

If that is truly the case, we can expect to see "Emmanuel Goldstein Bin Laden" morph like a Japanese toy robot, as the marketing geniuses who packaged Bush and his wars in the first place try even more desperately to fine tune their pitch to a changing market. At some point, if all efforts fail, we can probably expect to see "Bin Laden" canceled like a bad network sitcom. The reports of the climatic final gun battle will be thrilling, the returned corpse problematic at best. And yet the news will be reported with a straight face.....by people who will certainly know better.

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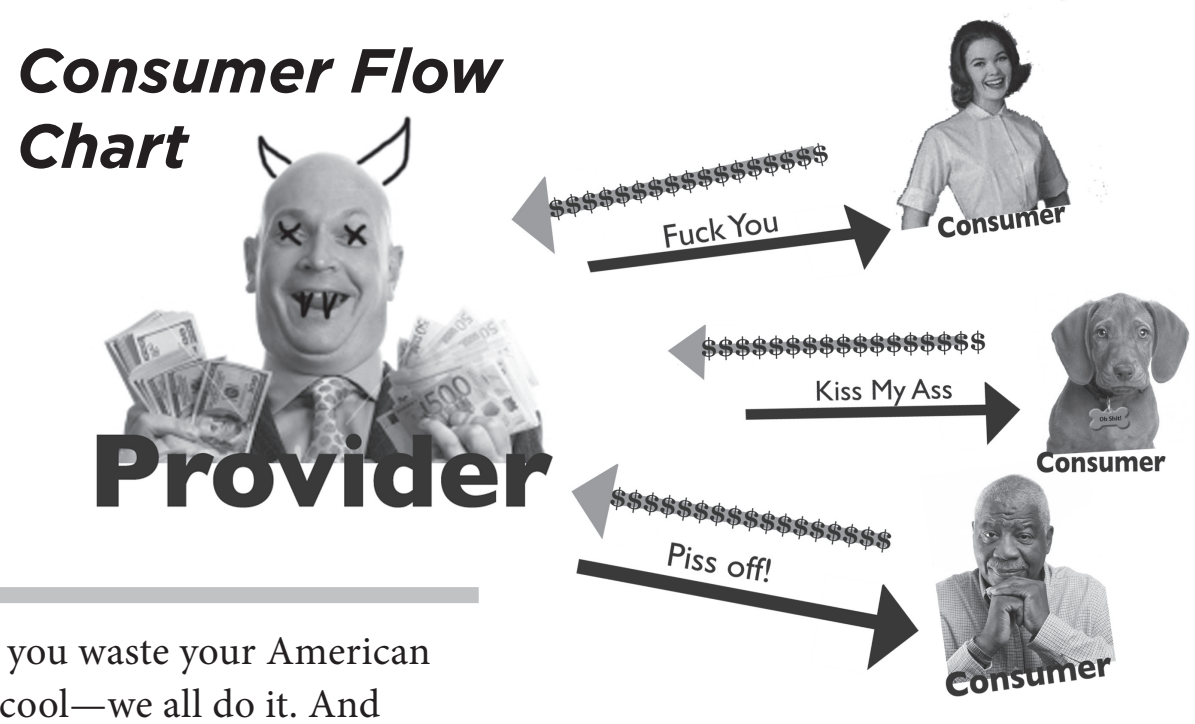
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STUPID CONSUMER TRICKS

A quick and dirty guide to getting what you paid for

By Brandon Montes



Admit it, you're a dirty capitalist pig and you waste your American blood money on worthless crap. Hey it's cool—we all do it. And along the way we all get fucked over. But that doesn't mean you have to take it without a fight.

As a consumer, you have rights. Specifically, you have the right to bitch until something is done to compensate you for the shoddy goods and/or services you wasted your money on.

LOW-LEVEL DIPLOMACY

We all know that most large companies are staffed by incompetent schmucks, but this doesn't necessarily mean they're evil. It just means they're stupid. So before doing anything drastic, try to settle things through normal channels.

Start by making a call to the evil-doer's customer service department. Not that it's

actually going to help solve your problem, but it's standard procedure, and following it could help cover your ass down the road.

Before you even think about picking up the phone, take a few minutes to write down any relevant information. At the very least this should include the name of the product or service, its serial number, date and place of purchase, and a quick outline of your problem.

Use the half-hour they keep you on hold to review your notes and practice what you're going to say. When an actual flesh-and-blood human being finally does pick up, remember to stay cool and professional.

As soon as they finish their obligatory greeting spiel, ask for their full name, location, and ID number if they have one. Explain the situation to them in full detail and tell them how you'd like to have it resolved.

Unfortunately, customer service reps rarely have the authority to do anything useful, so odds are you're going to have to move up the food chain to find a resolution to your problem. Politely ask to speak with their supervisor. They may ask if it's alright for someone to call you back later. Tell them no, and that you want to speak with someone right away.

A lot of service-based companies (such as cable and telecoms) have an entire 'retentions' sub-department. Their sole reason for existence is to keep you from canceling your service, or even worse, switching to the competition. Leverage this to your advantage.

FORMAL COMPLAINT LETTERS

Okay, so your perfectly legitimate attempts at resolution have thus far been ignored. Go figure. It's time to draft up an ol' fashioned complaint letter.

This is a business letter, so make it sound professional. If you don't have much experience with this sort of thing, I suggest looking up a few examples online to get a better feel for it.

The heading should include detailed contact information; specifically your name, physical address, e-mail and phone number. Follow this with the recipient's full contact information including their title and department.

Keep it brief—one or two typed pages at the very most. Begin with the same basic information you wrote down before calling customer service. (Product name, serial number, place and date of purchase, etc.)

Explain the problem in detail. If you have a history with the company let them know, and don't be afraid to lay a guilt trip on them. If, for example, you've been dissatisfied with the way their customer service has handled the problem, explain why.

If you mentioned canceling service or switching to their competition while on the phone, do so again in writing. Don't be afraid to name-drop a few regulatory agencies or consumer action groups either. This lets them know that you're not going to roll over without fight. (But again, do your homework so they don't catch you talking out your ass.)

Close by clearly stating how you'd like to see the problem corrected, and set a firm but realistic deadline for them to get back to you.

SHIT ROLLS DOWN HILL

Okay, so now you have a kick-ass complaint letter ready and waiting, but where do you send it? Well my advice is to start at the top, because as the old saying goes, shit rolls down hill.

Finding contact info for most corporate executives takes a little detective work, but it isn't rocket surgery. Looking up old press releases, or digging around on the Securities Exchange Commission's Web site (www.sec.gov) are both good places to start.

You can also try to reverse engineer their e-mail address by looking at the format used by other people in the company. For example if you know that 'Joe Douchebag' is the guy in charge, and you know that 'Mary PRslag's' e-mail is 'PRslag.m@wesuck.com,' then there's a good chance that Mr. Douchebag's address is 'douchebag.j@wesuck.com.'

And if all else fails, post your letter on large business site forums. If the company that screwed you over is publicly traded, you'd better believe that they keep a close eye on what people are saying.

Oh, and remember those threats you mentioned in your letter? Follow through with them you lazy fucking pacifist.

If you'd like to learn more about standing up for your rights as a consumer, I HIGHLY suggest checking out the Consumerist.com. Nearly everything covered in this article somehow stems from information gleaned from either their editorial staff or vocal readership.

the defenestration unit

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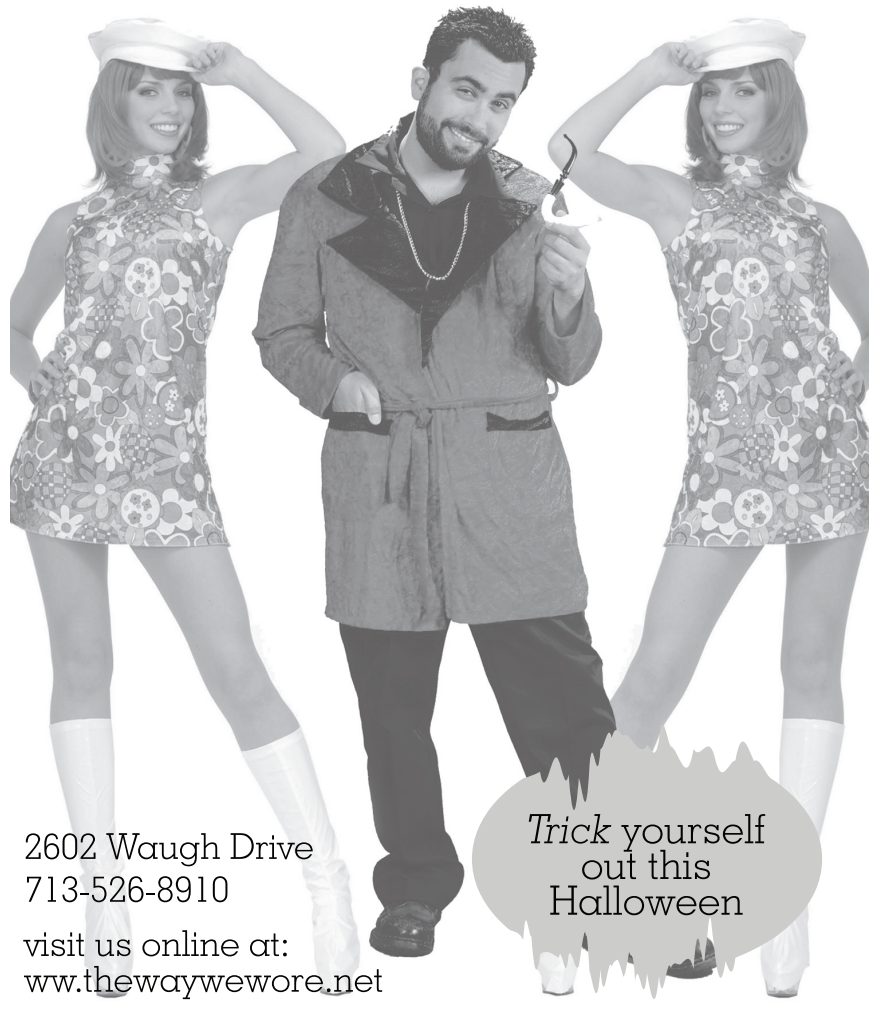
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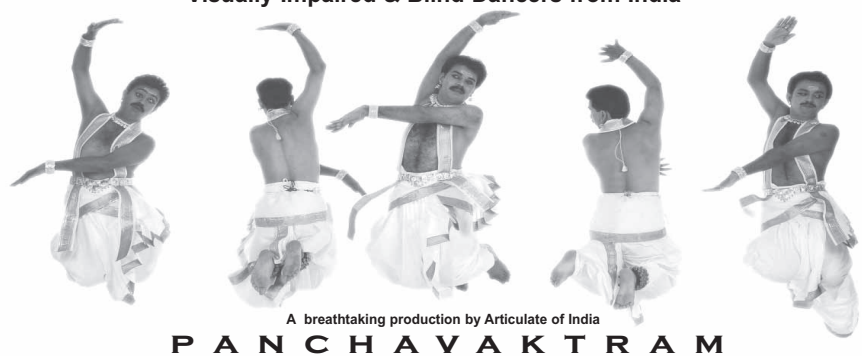
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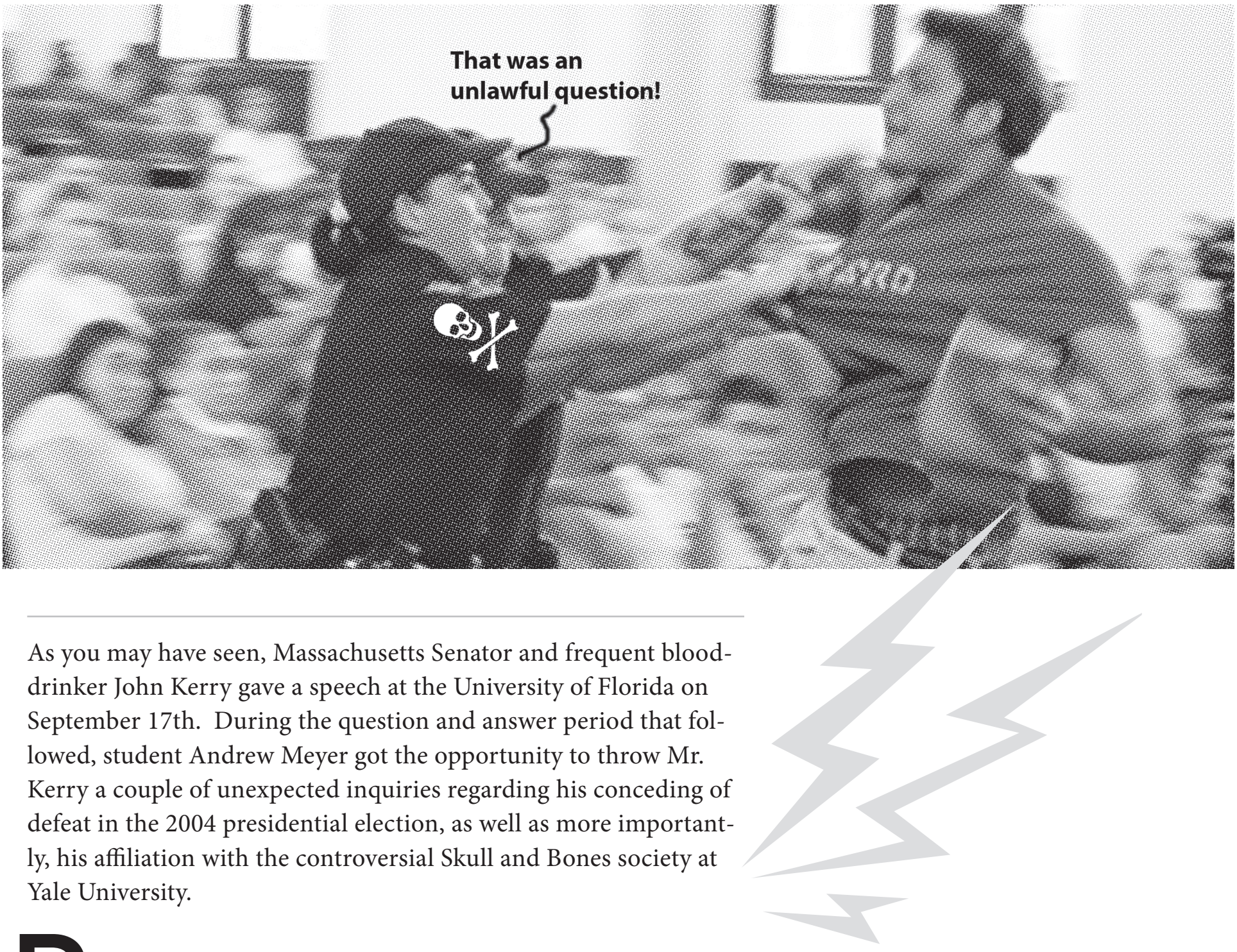
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BYSTANDER APATHY

Tazers, Blood drinkers, and the New World Order

By Evan D.



As you may have seen, Massachusetts Senator and frequent blood-drinker John Kerry gave a speech at the University of Florida on September 17th. During the question and answer period that followed, student Andrew Meyer got the opportunity to throw Mr. Kerry a couple of unexpected inquiries regarding his conceding of defeat in the 2004 presidential election, as well as more importantly, his affiliation with the controversial Skull and Bones society at Yale University.

Prior to being admitted into the auditorium, Andrew Meyer reportedly said that he was going to ask some questions that would stir up some controversy and probably get him arrested. However, I seriously doubt that he expected the reaction that followed.

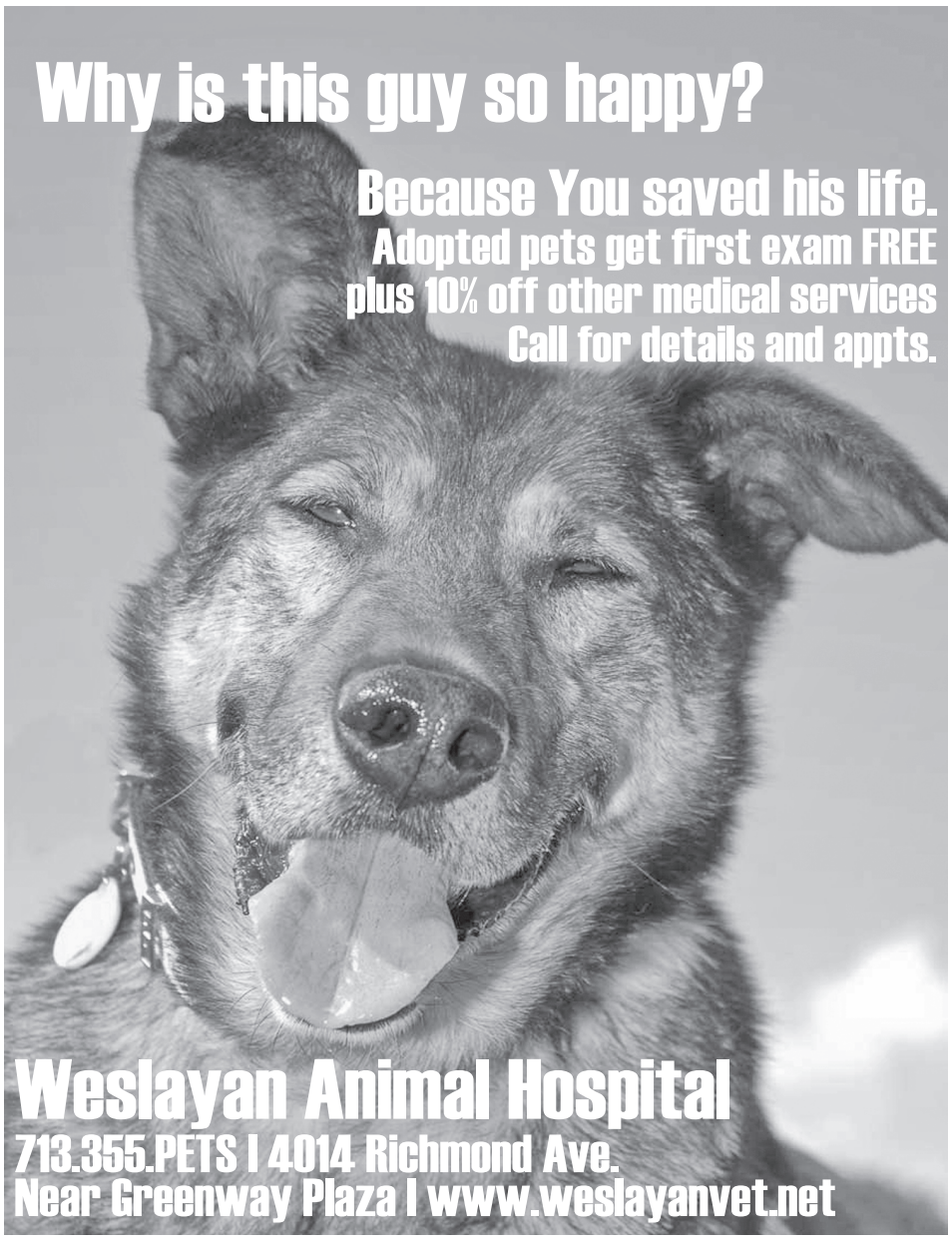
I have now had the chance to view several videos of the incident. I must say how particularly inspiring it was to see the general complacency of the audience as someone was being forcefully detained and tazed for merely attempting to shine some much needed light on the age old secrecy of the global elite and their War on Human Consciousness. During the process of detaining and successfully tazing Mr. Meyer as he was handcuffed, there were only two people out of probably two hundred who even made an effort to stand up for their fellow man. It seems to be no secret that **we have entered into the age of "keep your mouth shut and enjoy your freedom".**

When asking what he was being arrested for, the officers repeatedly informed him that he was being arrested for "inciting a riot". I guess it is now considered inciting a riot when one simply asks a couple of polemic questions in the midst of pointless political rhetoric that often doesn't solve a thing. Obviously, within a couple of days this thing was already brushed under the table with classic Orwellian tactics; portraying the student as some sort of flaky stoner kid looking for media attention.

> **we have entered into the age of "keep your mouth shut and enjoy your freedom."**

This is clearly only one of many recent examples of the rapid decrease in our already dwindling civil liberties in this country. The fact remains that this incident took place on a University campus, which by all means should be one of the few places left where any individual can freely speak their mind. I would assume that by this time next year, with the Real ID Act in place, the NAFTA Superhighway beginning construction, and the dollar quickly becoming an ineffectual currency of 20th century economics, the New World Order will have their king fully secured, just waiting to declare 'checkmate'. Will the predominant amount of bottom-feeders in this country continue to buy into the never-ending facade of sensory overload and fear tactics all at the expense of their souls? Most certainly.

Watch for yourself at www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bVa6jn4rpE



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THE MORE MORE SOLUTION

By Nick Cooper | nickcooper.com



On August 14, Reuters ran a story about a Bush adviser declaring that the keys to fighting global warming are technology and rapid economic growth. James Connaughton, Bush's senior environmental adviser, told reporters that:

"The emerging consensus is that the solution to climate change is the advancement of technology. And there is also consensus that you need growing economies to pay for that technology."

The Bush administration has used the language of consensus before to characterize its very marginal positions, including during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon last year. There is no context given so one wonders among whom has the consensus emerged -- experts? people that previously had diverse opinions? Bush and Cheney? Whoever has reached consensus on this is falling into a pattern of this administration and many before it: when something isn't working, or when something is causing a problem, they do more of it. In Vietnam, multiple administrations were unable to imagine alternatives to escalating the conflict. And we see similar patterns, of course, in Iraq.

Politicians often think the solution to everything happens to be exactly what big business wants. Before the war, when asked how to raise the trillion dollars, Congressman John Culberson, first response was "tax cuts." It would seem logical that new taxes would be needed, not cuts, to raise money for something. However, to Culberson, tax cuts always cause more economic growth, resulting in a greater tax base for things like schools, hospitals, and wars. The idea that the most unencumbered market is always desirable fits into an obsession with tax cuts that became almost religious dogma under Reagan. It also fits into the problematic conception of more as always better.

It is not scientific to think that science will save us from whatever mess we make. During the cold war, scientific progress was a value drilled into society. Sometimes it was reinforced with dreams of futuristic utopias, and other times with nightmares of Russia having the capability to "win" a nuclear war. With "Silent Spring" and in the environmental movement, it was a challenge to get people to imagine that miracle products like pesticides and plastics could create toxic problems. Now many people can see that technology has positives and negatives, simultaneously curing more and creating more cancer, purifying and polluting water, teaching us and making us less educated, etc. Healthy skepticism is a mark of critical thought, as is an awareness that even beneficial things have side-effects.

But the Bush administration has always been a little behind the curve in relinquishing cold-war era fantasies, and it embraces simplistic good-and-evil conceptions of the world. In the article, the environmental adviser goes on to explain:

"These are not a trade-off: if you don't have a growing economy, you don't have the resources to pay for the new technologies."

There's not even a trade off? Rapid economic growth is a win-win situation for the environment? As if there is no evidence that rapid growth causes problems? These people believe more money is always best, and science and unfettered markets will save us. They would have us believe that rapid profits will create solutions that so far outpace the environmental problems they create that they need not even mention the problems. And furthermore that there is a consensus about that.

But looking at evidence would entail an other conception of science, not as a savior, but as a methodology for evaluating and analyzing. The Bush White House has never been interested in that kind of science, and has earned the scorn of scientists around the world by trying to bend science and information to politics.

I don't imagine that Bush's spokesperson could win a debate about this. However, there are no debates, no judicial review, no journalists asking tough questions. Just this dude, explaining what the executive branch has already decided, saying some words that Reuters writes down and publishes as if they make sense, with no counter-argument.

Technology will, in fact, solve the problem. Not by turning around global warming, but by continuing it until the industries of technology themselves becomes impossible, drowned along with us and many other species in the storms and floods they create.

9/4 International Tribunal on Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

The second anniversary of hurricane katrina was marked by International Tribunal on Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This event called into question the ongoing ethnic cleansing of New Orleans and commemorate the lives of the 2,000 people killed or missing, the 800,000 people displaced, and the additional 3,000 people who have died post Katrina-Rita as a result of ongoing human rights violations.
The International Tribunal on Hurricane Katrina and Rita is an outgrowth of the demand for justice and restitution called for by the more than two hundred Survivors gathered at the first Survivors Assembly held in December 2005. The Tribunal aims to:
-Hold the US government accountable for its crimes against humanity;
-Demand financial restitution and justice for the Survivors of Katrina and Rita;
-Advance the Katrina-Rita reconstruction movement;
-Build a national and international campaign against the US government's program of ethnic cleansing;
-Demand that the US government adheres to UN guidelines on Internally Displaced Persons (IDP).

8/23 400th execution in Texas protested at old hanging tree

Responding to the call from the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement near 30 protesters gathered downtown at Bagby and Capitol right next to the 'old hanging tree' where the Harris County tradition of killing people to promote justice got started. People held signs with slogans about the barbarism of capital punishment and demanding the end to such a horrible and useless government policy.
"We will protest at the 200-year-old oak tree where Black people were illegally lynched many, many years ago. Today lynching in Texas is legal and it is done by the government in Huntsville. But Texas does not have the moral authority to execute anyone. The death penalty is used only against the poor and is a racist attack on the African American and Latino communities," stated Njeri Shakur, a spokesperson for the Texas March Against Executions Committee.

8/22 Houston Rallies for Elvira - Hosts Family and Supporters

A vigil in front of the Mickey Leland Federal Building expressed solidarity with immigrant rights activist Elvira Arellano and called for a stop to raids and deportations. Elvira Arellano is an immigrant rights activist who sought refuge from deportation for a year in a Chicago church. She decided to leave the church and rode to Los Angeles for a press conference at the Our Lady Queen of Angels Church. On her way to another press conference, the vehicle she was in was surrounded and she was arrested and shortly after was deported to Tijuana.

9/1 Houston Rainforest Action Network targets Bank of America

from the open publishing newswire: In solidarity with Mountain Justice Summer The newly started Houston Rainforest Action Network group targeted downtown Houston's Bank of America headquarters at 700 Louisiana St.
The security guards of bank of america were a little confused and off-guard as 7 members of Houston R.A.N. let loose a banner supported by over two dozen helium filled balloons stating "Bank of america STOP Funding mountain top removal" in the main entrance lobby. There were no arrests and over several hundred flyers were handed out to people coming and going from the bank. As the banner climbed several stories to rest on the ceiling bank security admitted that the banner would remain there until the balloon lost helium and dropped on it's own. I guess after funding king coal bank of america could not afford the costs of getting the banner down to save face.

8/29 Houston Sin Fronteras takes Plea Deal

From the Open Publishing Newswire: On August 16th, Ben and Ashley accepted a plea bargain at their court appearance for the civil disobedience they took part in on June 4th to block the entrance gates of the north Houston immigration jail for three hours. Upon pleading guilty to Criminal Trespassing, a class B misdemeanor, they were given time served and a $100 fine. With court costs, they have to pay $326 each ($752 total) and still owe the lawyer $4000. They accepted this plea bargain so that we could return to the front lines of the struggle as soon as possible, and return their energies to where they feel it does the most good - in the streets.
"We feel that this plea agreement is an effort by Harris County and most likely the Corrections Corporation of America to sweep this issue under the rug. We have no intention of letting this happen. The struggle against the unjust policies of immigrant detention enforced by the federal government and private companies is becoming more widespread and coordinated throughout Texas and the United States".

8/29 Radical Chicano comic dropped from the Chronicle

from the open publishing newswire: The Houston Chronicle has dropped the ONLY COMIC STRIP IN THE UNITED STATES that regularly supports Latino immigrant rights and explores Chicano/Latino/Mexicano political and social issues- "la cucaracha" by me, Lalo Alcaraz, and has replaced it with a PENGUIN-themed comic strip by a New Zealand cartoonist! Can you help me get "la cucaracha" back in to the paper? It can happen, as in March I was dropped WITHOUT NOTICE by the LA Times and reader response was so OVERWHELMING they brought La Cucaracha back in 36 hours!
E-mail: comics@chron.com Call: 713-362-3222

8/27 ACLU Settlement over Conditions at Hutto facility

The American Civil Liberties Union announced a landmark settlement with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) that greatly improves conditions for immigrant children and their families inside the T. Don Hutto detention center in Taylor, Texas. Dozens of children were released from the facility with their families as a result of the litigation. The settlement is expected to be approved shortly by Judge Sam Sparks of the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas. "Though we continue to believe that Hutto is an inappropriate place to house children,conditions have drastically improved in areas like education, recreation, medical care, and privacy," said Vanita Gupta, a staff attorney with the ACLU's Racial Justice Program.

houston.indymedia.org

9/9 Remembering Innocent Executed People

from the open publishing newswire: Friends and supporters joined the families for a graveside commemoration, bringing memories, songs, photos, and poems to share, honoring the memory of these three innocent people who were taken from us by the state of Texas: Shaka Sankofa (Gary Graham), Frances Newton, and Joseph Nichols.
Early September is significant for each of these families. Shaka's birthday was September 5; he would have been 47, had he not been executed on June 22, 2000. Joseph's birthday was September 8; he would have been 46, but was executed last March 3. Frances was executed at the age of 40, two years ago on September 14.

9/7 Kenneth Foster in his own words

Kenneth Foster Journal Entry from August 30 -When the Board didn't deliver their decision on the 28th as planned I knew that something greater was in the works. I knew that they were feeling the pressure and would want to consult with the higher ups. As I told my supporters - if the decision comes back negative it's over. That would be a sign that nothing else would go for me. But... if it comes back in my favor I knew that it had been decided that I would live. So, when that 6-1 came down I knew that victory was mine. My father left the visitation room leaving me and my wife to rejoice amongst each other. We gave each other kisses and I pointed something out to her. I told her that I was always looking for the signs from God. Once upon a time as a youth I didn't know how to pay attention, though I was always getting signs. Now I'm very much more alert. And while I had been getting mixed signals from all the bad dreams my closest friends were having one sign came right before I left the death chamber to go to visit. The night before when all my property was taken and searched they took all the shoe strings from my shoes. I had not known this, because they kept my shoes and said that they would give them to me when I went to visit. So, that morning before visit I told them that I had some tennis shoes and some boots and that I would like my boots. As I got dressed and my boots were handed to me and I saw the missing laces I could only crack a very wide smile, because my mind drifted to my poem "The Final Call" where I start saying: "I'm coming straight off death row in boots with no laces." I pointed this out to them and before I closed my visit with my wife I reminded her I'm coming straight off death row. She replied emphasizing "OFF!" I smiled and concurred. "Yes, OFF!" We ended our visit with a kiss from behind the glass and I was escorted back to the death chamber. As I was placed in the cell I spoke to some of the rank that was around me. I let one of them know why my family was so excited. I know that they were monitoring all attitudes, actions and behaviors, so I wanted them to know why my family got so excited. The guard looked back at me and said "well, today just might be your day." No sooner than he said that the Warden walked through the door on his cell phone. He looked at me and said, "They're commuting your sentence." I guess I was kind of surprised that he told me just like that, so I was like, "That's it? It's done?" He said, "Yeah, your sentence was just commuted. We'll have you out of here in just a few." My head was tingling and I wasted no time to drop to my knees and say a little prayer of thanks to the Most High, because I knew that He had had His hands around this situation. A few minutes later I was headed back to Polunsky.
On the drive back everything seemed brand new. Even officers were telling me that I had a new chance at life and I knew that. The sky was brighter and my heart was lighter. I got back to Polunsky Unit and was just hoping to be able to get around some comrades. While I was in a holding cell I had the fortune to see my best friend and mentor Tony Ford pass by and he had a smile so big on his face that I would have swore he had 2 mouths. That was a perfect passing, because that was my best friend and I'm glad he got to see my face before I left. I was placed on a pod where I only stayed about 30 minutes. As I walked through the door there was an elder comrade of mine in the dayroom - Harvey Earvin - and I went up to the bars and let him hug me.
I went into the cell and had only enough time for about 3 persons to send me short kites of congratulations. And in no time a team came to pick me up.
They wanted me OFF death row and I was ready to go. In just that fast of time I was being moved off death row and sent to the Byrd Unit to be reprocessed as a general population prisoner. Having had an international campaign, an armed SWAT team escort and a political commutation there wasn't too many people that didn't know who I was. Most had good things to say to me and one guard even came up to me and asked how I was being treated. I told him that I was being treated ok thus far. Not knowing if this was a man of importance I asked him who he was. He simply replied "Just an officer."
But then he added in "I listen to KPFT everyday. And Democracy Now!" I could only smile and say - "Right on, brotha!"
And Right On it has been. After a 10 year battle of fighting the death penalty I can finally sit back and breathe a bit. I can finally let off a small sigh. I've said if from the beginning that as long as the battle was on that I couldn't do that. And though the war isn't over a huge battle has been won and I can finally sit back and exhale and even let go a few tears of joy joyous tears that say that I'm going to continue to have the fuel to do positive and great things.

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Houston drivers don't know how to share the road with bicyclists

I WANT TO RIDE MY BICYCLE

Critical Mass rides through Houston

By Sousan Hammad

It is unfortunate that we live in a city so consumed with cars, and being that Houston is a commuter city; we should support alternative methods of transportation to reduce the city's traffic and environmental crisis.

For those who live inside the loop (610), commuting by bicycle shouldn't be an issue (you just have to forget about heat and humidity). In fact, in cities around the world, people are gearing up for their monthly group bicycle rides – otherwise known as Critical Mass bike rides.

The idea first began in 1992 in San Francisco, with the monthly bike ride celebrating the alternative notion of creative and peaceful methods of transportation. Critical Mass rides are self-organized, non-commercial and non-competitive. The rides returned to Houston this year after a long slumber. Since February, Critical Mass continues to see a growth in the number of participants.

"More people need to be on a bike. My bicycle is my car, it's my legs … I have more freedom by commuting on my bicycle," said Hunter Marmon, a Critical Mass rider.

Some get on their bikes to participate alongside marching protestors, some ride in an effort to promote alternative modes of transportation and others partake in the monthly ride as an opportunity to socialize with fellow cyclists.

Though some say Critical Mass should not be perceived as protest activities, others use it as an opportunity to voice our so-called democratic right to free speech. In NYC, cycling advocates continue to face target surveillance and policing ever since the Critical Mass bike rides that happened during the Republican National Convention in 2005. Police arrested about 400 bicycle riders during the days surrounding the RNC, according to Amy Goodman of *Democracy Now*.

The last political protest that Houston Critical Mass riders participated in was four years ago; a protest against CAFTA. A flyer for the event shows Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata sitting on a bicycle with a caption stating, "Ride with Zapata, and show the neo-colonialists that they are not welcome in our town."

For Fred Zapalac, owner of Blue Line Bicycles, his Heights shop will occasionally see people drifting in to buy a bicycle in replacement for their vehicle. "It's nice to go out on the Critical Mass rides, but Houston drivers don't know how to share the road with bicyclists," he said.

And it's true that Houston motorists are not used to sharing the road with bicyclists; on some occasions Critical Mass riders witnessed angry drivers yelling and cursing vulgarities at them. I asked a couple riders if they had any run-ins with the police, but besides minor traffic incidents, (riders running red lights), Houston cyclists have not had any complications with our local blue pig army.

As for those who live in the bleak suburbs of Houston, let those truck-drivers and rednecks know that just because you choose to ride on a bicycle, it doesn't mean you are a poor immigrant. Bicyclists have feelings too. And yes, I am aware that it could sometimes take ten minutes just to get out of your neighborhood, but won't the sweat be worth it to see the 'shock and awe' look on faces of suburbanites?

We can only hope that the interaction between bicyclists and motorists will improve, and the only way this can be done is by educating the ignorant folks on how to transform the city into being biker-friendly. Maybe then we will finally witness the death of reluctance from Houston motorists who don't know how to share the road.

Critical Mass bike ride meets at Tranquility Park (400 Rusk St) *on the last Friday of every month, at 7 p.m.*



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Third Ward Bike Shop helps those who help themselves. You can buy and earn parts through their open shop or earn a bike through their work exchange program which teaches you the basics of bike repair. Tour de Hood, an all ages group, rides together every Saturday at 8 a.m. The best part is they supply the bikes so you can just show up and ride! For more info visit www.workshophouston.org and tourdehood.org.

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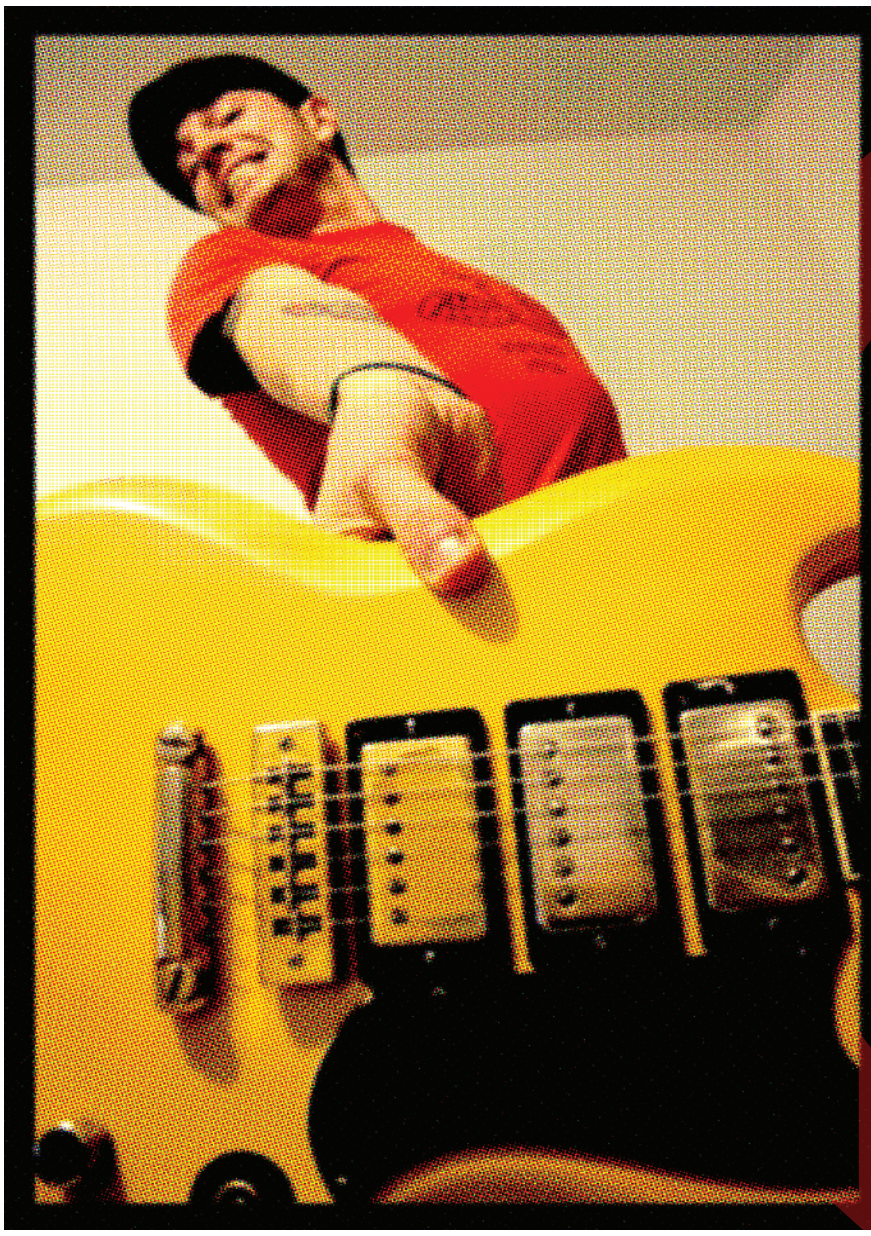
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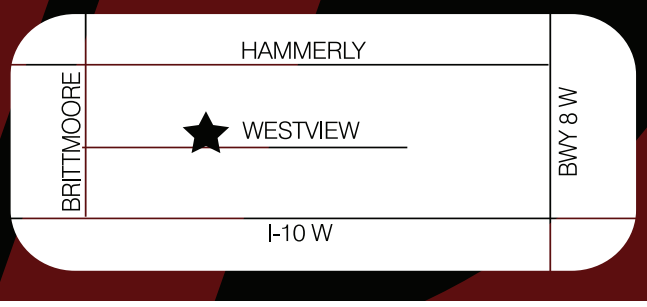


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Supplements detox process 12 to 24 hours prior to cleansing deadline, powerful companion to other toxin reduction products.

ASK FOR B-CLEAN PRODUCTS AT YOUR FAVORITE SMOKE SHOPS!