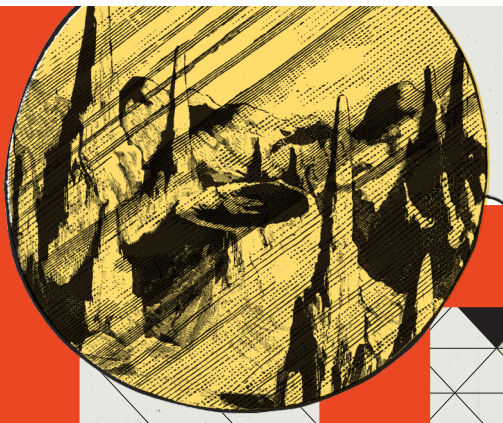
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WHAT'S STOPPING YOU?

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DARWIN DAY | PETER BESTE | FINNEGAN | THE CANDY SHOP | LET'S HAVE A REAL DEBATE ON CITIZENSHIP 02.11


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UP IN HURR

febrary









06 FIXING THE GEARS

08 THE CANDY SHOP ●

10 HIDDEN MEANINGS ●

12 YOU WILL DO WHAT LOOKS GOOD TO YOU ON PAPER, WE WILL DO WHAT WE MUST

14 INTERVIEW: FINNEGAN

16 INTERVIEW: VENOMOUS MAXIMUS

18 INTERVIEW: PETER BESTE

22 DARWIN DAY ●

26 LET'S HAVE A REAL DEBATE ON CITIZENSHIP ●

28 AUTISM IS ANARCHY

30 SHE'S CRAFTY: TEXAS BREW PUB LAWS

34 HONKY TONK BLOOD

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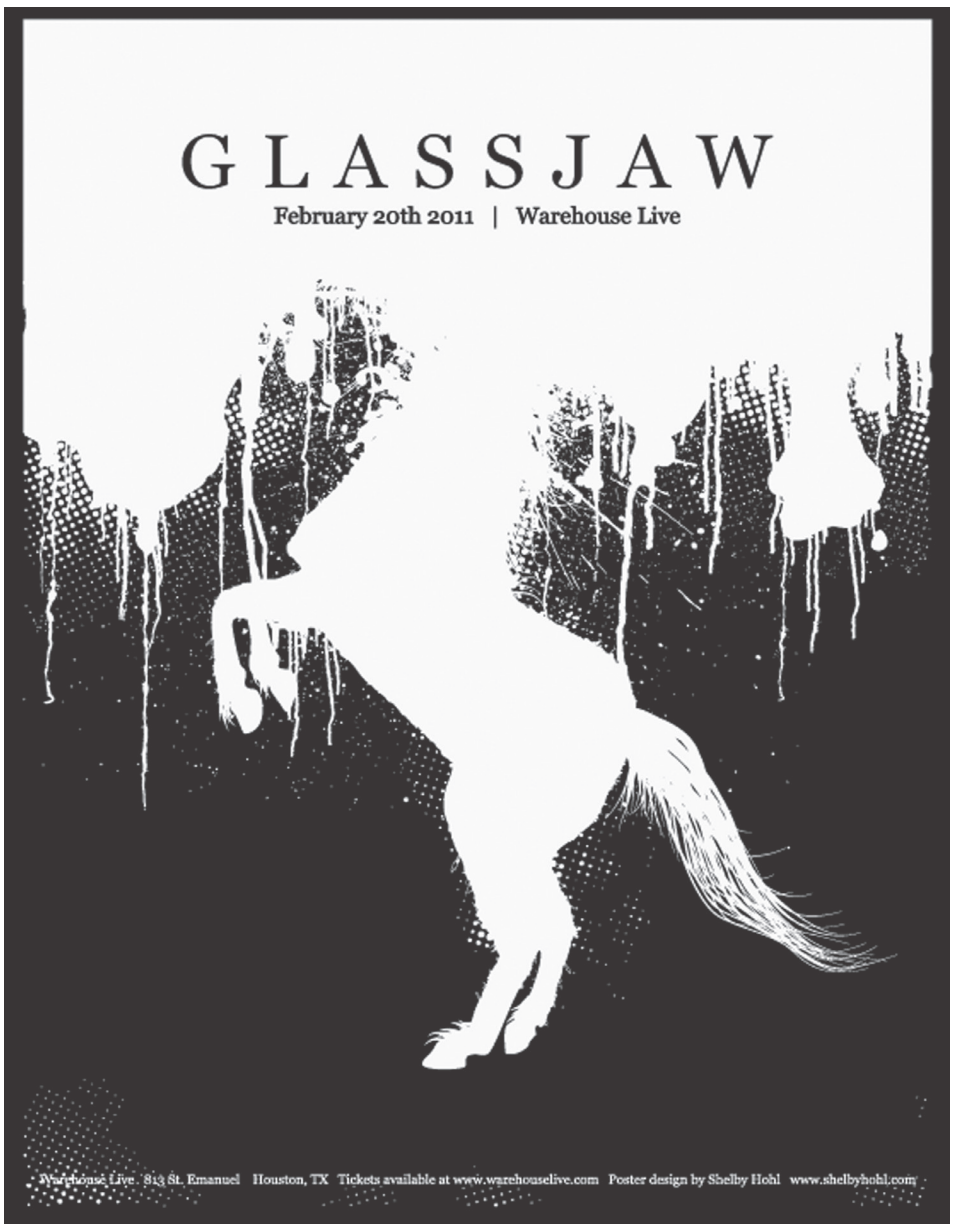
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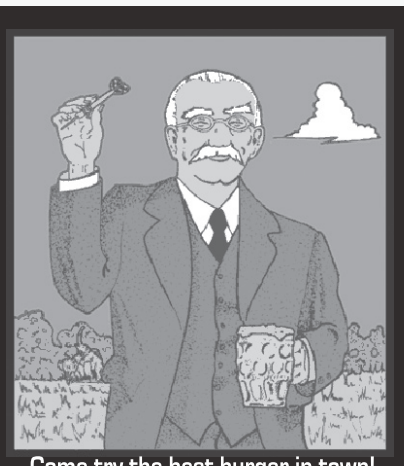
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- Fri. 11 This Years Tiger, Born Again Virgins, All At Sea
- Sat. 12 Hearts of Animals, Fiskadoro
- Sun. 13 The Pendulum Theatre Company Presents: The Love Tunnel 9pm
- Mon. 14 The Pendulum Theatre Company Presents: The Love Tunnel 9pm
- Tue . 15 Bootown Presents: Grown Up Storytime
- Wed. 16 NOBUNNY, The Wiggins, All At Sea
- Thu. 17 Rogue Improv
- Fri. 18 KRULLUR, H.R.A., Talk Sick Brats
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letter from the editor

This dog. This dog eats my shoes. Turns over the trash can. Shits in my closet. This dog is so ugly. Look at his face. Look at it. Even when he sleeps he is ugly. Also, this dog won't even look at me. He won't fetch, beg, or even let me pet him. Yet I pay for his every need. He is worthless to me. Why do I love him?

↓



DEBRIS: Fixing The Gears

BY BUFFALO SEAN

Gasoline prices are going up, buy yourself a bike. It is a high point of irony that when Houston is getting rich off all that sweet, sweet black gold 80% of its citizens are cringing at the wrench suddenly thrown into their monthly budgets.



IN PAST BOOM TIMES the cavernous divide between the rich and poor was amplified- but this time we all need bikes.

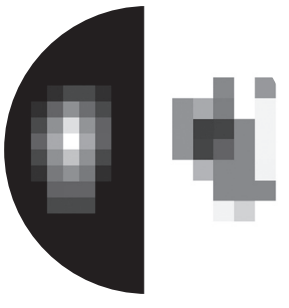
To start, winter is when gas prices are at their yearly nadir, when vacationers are largely resigned to cruise or fly their way to warmer climes rather than drive. Already in January 2011, national average gas prices are nearing $3.20 and could climb to four bucks by the summer. Unfortunately for Houston companies the cost of production is rising at the same time, meaning that this time the industry execs aren't even getting rich off the cash. Commodity markets are finding that the world has changed dramatically since 2008 as emerging markets in India and China wield more control in pricing. Hell, GM's largest market is China these days and all those cars need gas. To make matters worse, American companies drill new wells in difficult countries. As seen recently in Kazakhstan, DR Congo and Brazil, when prices go up those countries tear up contracts to make sure they keep all but a thin sliver of the profits.

This is a grand opportunity for the backbone of Houston to really demonstrate that it is really all about energy, not just oil. Use the city as a palette, make it livable without cars, and turn us on to energy from other sources. I would love to see green algae farms, experimental or working, dotting the landscape and possibly fueling cars and electrical plants. First put small ones in empty lots in the city and retrofit a refinery in Texas City to process algae. If it all works out then the whole ship channel can slowly turn into algae farms and algae refineries. At the same time, appealing for public works projects like bike trails, parks and trains from big business seems like a better way to spend my time than waiting on the municipal government to stop sitting on their hands. Shell and BP could do what Annise Parker will not. Slap your logo on it, whatever. Being a leader in quality of life here in Houston would improve their image nationally more than sappy and scripted commercials about "making things right". Simple things like fixing the sidewalks, or building new ones, would make life outside the car so much more bearable.

There are some things that Mayor Parker could do to help- without even spending any money. Occupancy laws based on the number of parking spots a building has have got to go. The same goes for archaic and anti-business restrictions on food trucks and carts. Reducing corruption in METRO's offices has helped a lot, but city resources could be better devoted to planning rail lines so as to secure federal funding. A more visible presence on the street by the mayor would also encourage media attention to quality of life issues. I'd like to see her riding a bike. **FPH**







←

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FEBRUARY

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FEB 5: Funkotron

FEB 11: Michael Burks

FEB 12: TBA

FEB 18: Governor's Chair

FEB 19: Jeff Coffin, Neck & Neck

FEB 25: D.R.U.M.

FEB 26: Finley Knight Band

SEE WEBSITE FOR MORE SHOWS

The Candy Shop
A Sweet & Spicy Experience

With only 90 days until Easter and Halloween about 278 days away (yes, I'm counting) I decided to get in training for the eventual orgy of sugar that, for better or worse, has come to embody these holidays.

BY MICHAEL PENNYWARK

WHAT COULD BE MORE INSPIRING then than an exhibition featuring one of the world's favorite foods?

Starting February 5th, Spacetaker ARC gallery will be hosting "The Candy Shop," a collaborative exhibition exploring nostalgia, community, and the cultural effects of Latin and South American influence, through candy. The show will feature work by Andre Amaral (Brazil), Eduardo Portilla (El Salvador), and Raul Gonzalez (Mexico) from the Montrose Art Society- a local collective of emerging artists from around the world.

Reminiscent of the Pop Art movement in its use of mass-produced visual commodities, the exhibition draws on the growing interest in Latin and South American cultural and culinary traditions, examining the aesthetic appeal of packaging and the combination of sweet and spicy flavors. These influences can be seen in Raul Gonzalez's tribute to Andy Warhol's Campbell soup paintings which are reimagined as Mexican candies in an acknowledgement of a constantly evolving American culture. "I am not only changing a product, but also a symbol," he explains. Gonzalez depicts these changes through a series of paintings, sculptures, and installations.

While Gonzalez's work represents the changes in American culture, Andre Amaral explores the nostalgia that food can evoke in his paintings that focus on iconic candies and chocolates of Brazil, highlighting the association between culture and identity for expatriates. Through sculpture, installation, painting and mixed media, Eduardo Portillo expands on his individual sense of participation in a growing community as he probes the popularity, history and variety of candy that evokes an analogy between the people of the world and candy.

If this wasn't motivation enough to see the show, on further investigation, I noticed amongst the artists was listed Chef Adan M. Medrano. Excitedly I asked Raul Gonzalez, who was responsible for bringing the show together, and he confirmed my suspicions. Yes, there will be real candy, too! Chef Medrano notes that "enjoyment is at the basis and it is personal, since eating candy can also recall memories, foster belonging and preserve identity." He will be making some Mexican candies especially for the show.

As Gonzalez explains, "I wanted this exhibition to be more than just about artwork. Contemporary art tends to carry with it: performance and audience participation." To complete the night, the band, Grupo Alee will perform its 100% original blend of Tejano, Regional Mexican Music, and Colombian-style Cumbia. "Chef Adan Medrano believes food is art and the band Grupo Alee believes the same about their music. So...having them both be as much part of the show as the artwork is being able to be part of the contemporary art movement. I want this show to be one of those 'you had to be there' type shows. It's about an entire experience." **FPH**





The Candy Shop "A Sweet and Spicy Experience" runs from February 5-18 at Spacetaker ARC Gallery (2101 Winter Street). Opening Reception on Saturday, February 5, 2011, 6 – 9 p.m.

↑ CINNAMON FLAVOR, INK AND MARKER ON PAPER, *RAUL GONZALEZ*
← DULCE DE LECHE QUEMADA, *CHEF ADAN M. MEDRANO*

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Alison de Lima Greene is curator of Contemporary Art & Special Projects at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Awards
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About the Masur Museum of Art
The Masur Museum of Art is the largest collecting and exhibiting institution of modern and contemporary art in Northeast Louisiana. We are dedicated to bringing dynamic public programming to our community that emphasizes artists from Louisiana, the Southeast, and around the world.

For more information send e-mails to info@masurmuseum.org

Image: Ildiko Voros, Lonliness, archival digital Cprint from Polaroid, 2008

Blue Valentine

Ryan Gosling proves to be a force of nature as far as Blue Valentine is concerned. BV wants to be appreciated for its adult content and indie cred. In short, it's a film of little substance that's raised to a geographically rich plateau by virtue of the performances by Gosling and Michelle Williams. Combined the performances are overwhelming at times; individually they are naked reflections of the interior of our hopes and aspirations.

Blue Valentine goes out of its way to establish that it's working class; although certainly not like in The Fighter where the lead actor is worried about winning a worldwide bout. In BV, Gosling just seems happy if he gets a job that starts in the early ayem.

Director Derek Cianfrance seems to be using BV as a calling card. He directs the film in a non-linear flow as opposed to a film that relies on flashbacks within the narrative. We start out with the worst part of the marriage of Gosling (Dean) and Cindy (Williams) but then the mood and story shifts as we see them on their first date. It's an euphoric moment, as Dean lamely plays a ukulele singing "You Always Hurt the One You Love" while Cindy tap dances highlighted in front of a storefront window.

Yes, Blue Valentine has its share of intense love making scenes only the point is that Cindy doesn't want to have sex with Dean for more than one specific reason, and it's the crux on which BV lives or dies on the vine in the garden of alternative cinema. For my money, Blue Valentine has enough charm and energy to justify its singularity.

Enter the Void

Nobody will ever accuse Gasper Noe of making easy to understand films, nor will anybody ever leave one of his movies unscathed. In only his third feature film (after I Stand Alone and Irreversible) Noe attempts to condense the Tibetan Book of the Dead into a psychedelic narrative, and for the most part succeeds.

Noe displays a punk esthetic right down to the trance soundtrack and sordid lives of his main characters. There were references all throughout Irreversible to Stanley Kubrick and indeed Enter the Void clocks in at 161-minutes, the same length as 2001: A Space Odyssey before Kubrick trimmed a reel or so from its running time. Specifically the visual design of Enter the Void creates a loop of repetition where the lead character finds himself trapped in a circle of confusion that always leads him back to the same place. An eternal return if you will.

Enter the Void refers to the passage from life to death and back to life, but also slyly evokes a nightclub called The Void, a place that advertises sex, money and power in giant neon lights.

While Enter the Void is a foreign film per se, the entire enterprise takes place in English despite occurring in downtown Tokyo. The garish neon lit mood of the city becomes as important a character as Oscar the protagonist. Oscar deals drugs in the Japanese city as a means to an end, making enough quick cash to send his sister, whom he was separated from when their parents died years ago, a ticket to join him. She rapidly acclimates to the city by getting a job as a stripper.

After sitting around smoking DMT and zoning out, Oscar goes to The Void to deal drugs. Only instead of a quick connection he finds himself trapped in a police sting. Running to the bathroom, locking himself in and trying to flush his stash Oscar is shot by the police and dies on the bathroom floor. The remainder of the film follows Oscar as his spirit floats around Tokyo eerily going in and out of houses, clubs, planes, and visiting the people who were closest to him. The close bond between Oscar and his sister gets special treatment, and to the audience's chagrin her life has its own share of traumatic moments, the least of which are learning of her brother's death.

Noe uses the camera like an extension of Oscar's astral soul weaving in and out of adult situations in a phantasmagoric loop of sensuality. When we see people making love behind closed doors it's like their organs are glowing with lights that attract Oscar. Much of the film uses CGI effects that seamlessly blend the surreal nature of what we're seeing into the repeating tracking shots. Eventually Oscar seems to be swallowed into the void only to be himself reborn from one of the gyrating couples.

Much of Enter the Void contains adult only imagery that thematically carries the film to a realm beyond its superficial scenes of drugs and carnality. Enter the Void, which got the slightest of theatrical releases in North America last year will run as a midnight movie at the River Oaks on February 4 and 5. Enter the Void is a movie that wants to clip the umbilical cord that connects the average moviegoer to normalcy. **FPH**



Hidden Meanings

BY MICHAEL BERGERON

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BY KWAME M. ANDERSON

…and from the darkness appeared a more illuminated darkness, the beauty lies in its opaqueness. For now is the time of paphian tales.

HERE WE ARE, February, a time for love and blackness, the idea of anyway. Twenty eight days to appreciate the ex-slaves and one day to appease the jewelry makers. Love, how something it is sold as. Stuff, 'tis wonderful, no? What are we if not the results of a Google search? Well, rants aside, sort of, this is the time when I inform you of the happenings, problem is, ain't much happening, but when has that stopped me before. Black history, a condescension as a celebration, the equivalent of "talking white" or "women's work" with a more polite connotation. Let's celebrate it, let's give it significance, thank you negroes for being more than…well… negroes. Shows ands records, shows and records, here come da judgin'…

PERFORMANCE

FREE ENERGY - FITZGERALD'S, 02/03/11

The proverbial Saturday night, it dictates a rock aesthetic. Free Energy personify "The Saturday night." They invoke adjectives such as feel good and freewheelin', and what is wrong with that? Sometimes you prefer PE to chemistry, sometimes you just gotta move, you gotta make it alright. February 3rd is a Thursday, but at midnight , it's sort of a Friday night, and you can make it last until Sunday morning. This is the music for the moment, me and you, let's leave it all behind.

YANN TIERSEN - FITZGERALD'S, 02/04/11

Yann Tiersen made an album a few years back with Shannon Wright. Most likely there was some kindred spirit of the emotional, the dimensional, the idea of music as a place, an environment to be inhabited. Yann Tiersen believes in sound as theater, you hear AND feel, you become more and travel beyond. This is the type of show that one attends as a musical venture more than a social function (I assume).

BROKEN SOCIAL SCENE - WAREHOUSE LIVE, 02/17/11

Broken Social Scene encapsulate that time. Pavement to Dinosaur Jr. to Feist to CAN, they are many sounds, a sound of many sounds. Their last album, Forgiveness Rock Record (Arts and Crafts), was majestic and grand, beautiful and multi-colored, and it was a reminder of the music that is made by musicians immersed in the craft and the feeling. Fans as much as performers, a homage as expression, what made it matter was that it felt like it mattered so much, that you reached out and they reached back, and in the middle you met, and that splash of light was the reason you still believe… or something like that.

RECORDED

LUV CLOWNS - LOVE CLOWNS (GONER RECORDS)

Luv Clowns are a band from Memphis, Tennessee. The band dresses like clowns, performs at children's parties, and for the most part, makes convincingly honest children's music. But the band's lineage encompasses Fuck's Tim Prudhomme, Doug Easely (famous of engineer of albums such as Pavement's Wowee Zowee), Harlan T. Bobo, and Alex Greene (Reigning Sound). With that stated, this music is not necessarily garden variety, and many times you may wonder if the band is serious (which they are). Tunes like "Draw" are childlike, authentically country, but a song like "Monkey Island" is a smidgen psychedelic AND cute. I've played it for my kids (even though I've also played US Maple for my kids), and my wife found it mildly appropriate. FPH

→









LIVE MUSIC OF NOTE

NO BUNNY
02/16 at Rudyard's

SHOULDER VOICES
02/18 at Super Happy Fun Land

SMITH WESTERNS
02/06 at Fitzgerald's

KENDRICK LAMAR
02/18 at Warehouse Live

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DOKKEN TRIBUTE

Saturday, February 19

BLACK DOG North



LED ZEPPELIN TRIBUTE

Saturday, February 26

Ozzmosis

(Ozzy Tribute)

with Special Guests!!

Gangus Bon

(AC/DC Tribute)





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Finnegan are pretty new on the local Houston music scene, but they're made up of Houston musicians you might recognize. Local folk mainstay Sara Van Buskirk and her frequent collaborator, cellist Val Young, are aboard, as are Taylor and Darin Lee of folk-rock stalwarts The Literary Greats.

FINNEGAN'S MUSIC is a mixture of swoony, sentimental balladry and thumping, riff-heavy barroom rock, highlighted by thick, heavenly vocal harmonizing, equally perfect for a rainy day alone at home or a rowdy concert throwdown like their successful show this past weekend at the Big Top during the Main Street Block Party. I caught up with Taylor Lee for some info.

HOW DID YOU GUYS GET TOGETHER? WHO SUGGESTED THE COLLABORATION FIRST? ¶ Having had the songs written for several years, I worked with a few artists in the past on them and actually played one show a long time ago under the name Finnegan, but the current lineup came about when I produced Sara Van Buskirk's album (The Place Where You Are) last year. Working with her, she took an interest in some of my Finnegan material, and that was the catalyst for the whole band coming together.

WHAT'S IT LIKE HAVING A BAND WITH THREE WOMEN AND THREE MEN? IS THE DYNAMIC DIFFERENT THAN OTHER BANDS YOU'VE BEEN IN? WHAT ABOUT BEING IN A BAND WITH YOUR BROTHER AND SISTER-IN-LAW? ¶ Yeah, it's totally different. I know a lot of bands have drama when there's men and women together, but we're lucky that we don't really have any of that in our band. It helps with honesty to have people I know and who I'm related to in the band (brother Darin and sister-in-law Jenny), because I know how well certain people take criticism and suggestions. It's kind of like what I would hope a family would be like. It's fun. There's a lot of trading off of instruments and stuff like that. There's a lot of harmony in the band, literally and figuratively.

YOU'VE GOT A VERY DISTINCTIVE SOUND. WHICH VENUES AROUND TOWN HAVE YOU NOTICED SEEM TO BE THE MOST RECEPTIVE TO IT? OR HAS IT MADE ANY DIFFERENCE? ¶ We've actually had a lot of good experiences. No matter where we play we've had a good response from the audience. As far as venues taking a liking to us, definitely the first and longest-running is Avant Garden. Sara and I play there a lot, and Amara has always been really encouraging towards all of our projects, including Finnegan. Eric from Walter's and Ground Hall has been super supportive. Shane from Dean's and Echo, too. We love playing Fitz because they've got so many inputs. A lot of places don't have the PA to handle all of our equipment, so it's nice to play someplace that can mic all of our instruments. You know, a lot of places it's like "Sorry, Asher, we need your kick drum mic for the cello, so kick harder."

Finnegan's next show is February 11, Saturday at Fitzgerald's. Look for the release of their debut album, What Happened to Jaqueline?, in March. Around the same time, they'll also be playing a few unofficial showcases at South-by-Southwest in Austin. According to Lee, "We're gonna try to add something new to each set so that every show is a little different." **FPH**

Interview: Finnegan

BY JOHN GRAY
PHOTO BY BOB BOYD



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It is summer of 1968 and deep in the jungles of Vietnam there is a squad of American soldiers on patrol. The heat engulfs the men like a fog and beads of sweat roll down their skin and soak their shirts.

Interview

Venomous Maximus

BY RAMON MEDINA
PHOTO BY RAMON MEDINA ALSO



THEY HOLD THEIR WEAPONS at the ready for they can smell the enemy nearby and their instincts are correct; they are in-fact surrounded. Yet, the VC hold their fire and let them pass for they see on the arms of the Americans a symbol they fear - a tattoo that heralds death itself. It's maker, Norman Keith Collins, is better known by the nickname Sailor Jerry and lives half an ocean away in Honolulu. A former Navy man himself, Collins is a tough old right-wing libertarian bastard who not only can hold his own in a fight but also plays jazz saxophone and hosts a radio show to boot. Now it's a fact that soldiers are competitive when in comes to tattoos and Collins, having tattooed fighting men for years, is quite aware of this and so he developed a new tattoo but this was not just any tattoo, this is one that had to be earned and one that Collins will only give to the baddest of the bad and the toughest of the tough. It is the tattoo that strikes fear in enemies and respect from peers - the Venomous Maximus.

Flash forward to January 14th 2011. It's exactly 100 years since Sailor Jerry's birth and Gregg Higgins, guitarist and vocalist of Venomous Maximus, is up in arms, "See people don't know the origins of shit! They just press Google and the first thing that comes up they fucking run with it! They need to do their fucking homework! It's a lot older than fucking Cobra Kai!"

"I don't think any of us knew about the G.I. Joe thing," adds guitarist Christian Larson, "until Space City Rock posted something like 'Venomous Maximus - I heard it's great but I hope they didn't name themselves after a GI Joe character.'"

"See, fuck all that G.I. Joe shit! We don't even know about that shit. I got it from the origin of where that shit came from. The idea was the soldier who had done the most kills - the Venomous Maximus of the soldiers - could get that tattoo. I saw that tattoo and I was like, the band I want to put together has got to be the Venomous Maximus of bands."

The fact that the band's name comes from a tattoo is not surprising given the fact that tattoos are what brought the band together. Higgins grew-up on the heavy stuff - heavy metal, black metal, and grind - and then moved from Victoria to Houston where he opened up Secret Tattoos. "Bongo was coming to the shop getting tattooed and I would listen to old records and stuff and one day he popped his head in and was like 'Hey, you like that kind of music?' I'm like 'Fuck yeah! I wanna start a band!' and he said 'Well, I'm a drummer...' and it was like OK, let's see what can happen."

"This is like the heaviest band I've been in," admits Bongo, "I went through a bunch of shit when I left Nashville. I was really upset about the music scene there and I winded up moving back here so I really wanted to so something with a lot of heart. This is the last band I'm ever gonna be in. After this, I'm quitting. So either this works or I'm not gonna play music anymore - it's either do or die."

"The funniest thing about it," says Higgins, "is that this is actually the softest band I've ever been in. Everything else was like a hundred miles way fucking heavier. Our whole idea for this band was fuck all these styles going on, let's play what we grew up listening to: Black Sabbath, Mettallica, Ozzy...nothing special, nothing underground just the straight meat! Me and him jammed out for like a year in secrecy - nobody knew and we knew we needed members and one by one we got them."

Larson was getting Tattooed at the shop and as he put it, "Gregg hit me up like a 19 thousand times, 'Dude you gotta play guitar in our band!' He kept talking about it and talking about it and talking about it and I finally said 'OK, let me come by check out the jams.' I did and it was good so I was in."

When I ask how they came to know Trevi Biles, Higgins responds with a laugh, "Who don't know Trevi around here? We just knew the bassist we needed was Trevi just from his years of experience and because he knew exactly what the hell we were playing because he's old as fuck. "

Biles takes up the story, "I knew that stuff - The old Celtic Frost, the old metal kind of stuff, the old rock stuff - I grew up listening to that when I was 16 years old but I was playing in Whorehound when they first asked me. Then, a week later, the guitarist from Whorehound left for Austin and I knew the long distance relationship wasn't gonna work so I gave Gregg a call and it ended up working out."

"Trevi's in that band! That's all I heard," exclaims Bongo, "Me and Trevi have known each other for a long time way before I moved to Nashville. We knew all the same people and played together."

"This was about a year ago," continues Biles, "The first show was in March 2010 with Torche and Nebula then I think it was High on

Fire and Pentagram...We are shameless in pulling our connections. If someone comes up and says 'You haven't paid your dues!' I'll say bullshit I've paid my dues since you were born."

"That's also something about this band," adds Higgins, "We all know we're not gonna fuck around! And what I like about our band is that Trevi does Big Daddy's Ass Burn Sauce on the side, Bongo builds motorcycles, I tattoo, and Christian makes all this shit happen. We're all crafty motherfuckers. There are no dead links."

But the band goes beyond just the four members - consider the artwork. "I didn't want to miss anything in this band," says Higgins, "I wanted the logo to be just as good as the music! I wanted the song titles to be just as good! We couldn't miss anything in this one - VENOMUS MAXIMUS! Dan Miller was one of my clients and he was in a band called Jon Benet and now he's in Black Congress. I tattooed Dan for years and years and I told him about this Venomous Maximus thing I was trying to put together. I tired to explain to him that I wanted to do the Iron Maiden thing with the art. You'll never mistake Iron Maiden artwork for any other band. So, what I mean is having the same logo and look where it can always be identified. I started telling him about things like the occult, leaders, witches, spirituality, warriors, journeys and all this stuff and he was the only person who knew exactly what I was talking about. This all came about from my actually tattooing him so we had hours to discuss all this. So, when everything started rolling, Dan started making the art. It's the same thing with Chris Ryan (of Dead City Sound) we trust Chris, he rolls with us, and he makes us sound better. Same with Dan. I'll give him a call, 'Hey dude, we need a dude in a robe.' and that's what you get."

Biles agrees, "The whole imagery that Dan comes up with is just as important as anything."

"Otherwise," adds Larson, "you end up like one of those bands where the band is awesome but the merch and artwork suck."

When asked how they developed the style, Higgins replies, "One thing in the underground scene that is really easy to put together is kind of like a punk band. I'm not saying anything bad about them but it's just easy as fuck to put one together and me and Cassidy (of Cutthroat Records) were saying man, why isn't there metal and all this stuff we felt was missing? And that's where we wanted to come in - with music that nobody was doing but we all wanted to hear. That's what Venomous Maximus was. It was just combining two worlds - heavy metal with blues stoner rock. If I could be in any band it would be a stoner band or a heavy metal band. Fuck it! Let's put them both together. Venomous Maximus! The Maximus!

The songwriting process is just as inspired. "Me and Gregg hide away a lot like in secret," says Bongo, "We call each other like 4 or 5 times a day and talk. He'll call me up and be like 'Dude I was watching this Toyota commercial and they have this one part where they have this weird band that kicks off like TANA- TANA-WAKA-TANA.' I'm like 'Oh yeah I saw that shit!' and he's like 'Man, we gotta Venomous Maximus that shit!'"

"We get inspired by really weird things," admits Higgins, "I've written stuff off of bands, movies, but words are what really inspires me. If I'm walking past somebody and I hear a phrase like Moonbones. Moon and bones, that's fucking great! You know, anything dark or occult. We're very much into the occult and I'm very much into Aliens so we have tons of influences."

I love alien stuff so I ask Higgins about it and the rest of the band laugh and tell me that I really don't want to keep asking or this will be a seven hour conversation. But Higgins takes the reigns and gives me a brief break-down of his take on aliens. "OK, well, first of all we have to realize that we are all half-alien. That's part of being a modern human. We are not natural humans anymore and we have a lock on our minds right now that allows us not to experience certain things like extreme pleasures and stuff like that. That's why you get people gravitating towards things like music, sex, and drugs to get away from this hold that is on us. Humans gravitate towards a release cause we're controlled by aliens - the Anunnaki. But it don't matter whether you believe in Aliens or not, all I'm saying is that there is a lock on humans that stops us from doing shit and music is one of the things that releases us."

That may sound weird to some but once you've heard the crushing riffs, the brutal drums, the dirty gallop of the bass lines, and the dark vocals of Venomous Maximus you will know exactly what he means. Venomous Maximus! The Maximus!

Venomous Maximus have a 7" out on Cutthroat Records. Look for a new EP and full length soon as well as a video directed by Brian Forrester soon. Check them out on facbook and myspace. FPH





Interview:

Peter Beste

Best known as the photographer behind the beautifully shot True Norwegian Black Metal Book, Peter Beste has put together a mind blowing collection of photographs that capture the Houston rap scene at it's grittiest, truest form.

BY OMAR AFRA

PHOTOS BY
PETER BESTE

Esg and Syrup



NO JOKE: THESE PHOTOS SMELL LIKE SWISHERS AND CATFISH. Born in Houston yet now a New Yorker, Beste's prodigal return to Houston has given us an insiders/outsiders/insiders glimpse into our local culture. He was kind enough to tell us about it.

WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO MAKE THE HOUSTON RAP SCENE A SUBJECT OF YOUR WORK? ¶
While growing up on the outskirts of Houston I got into local rappers like the Geto Boys, Ganksta NIP, 5th Ward Boyz and others in the early 90s. I was instantly attracted to the music and the gritty portraits

Devin the Dude



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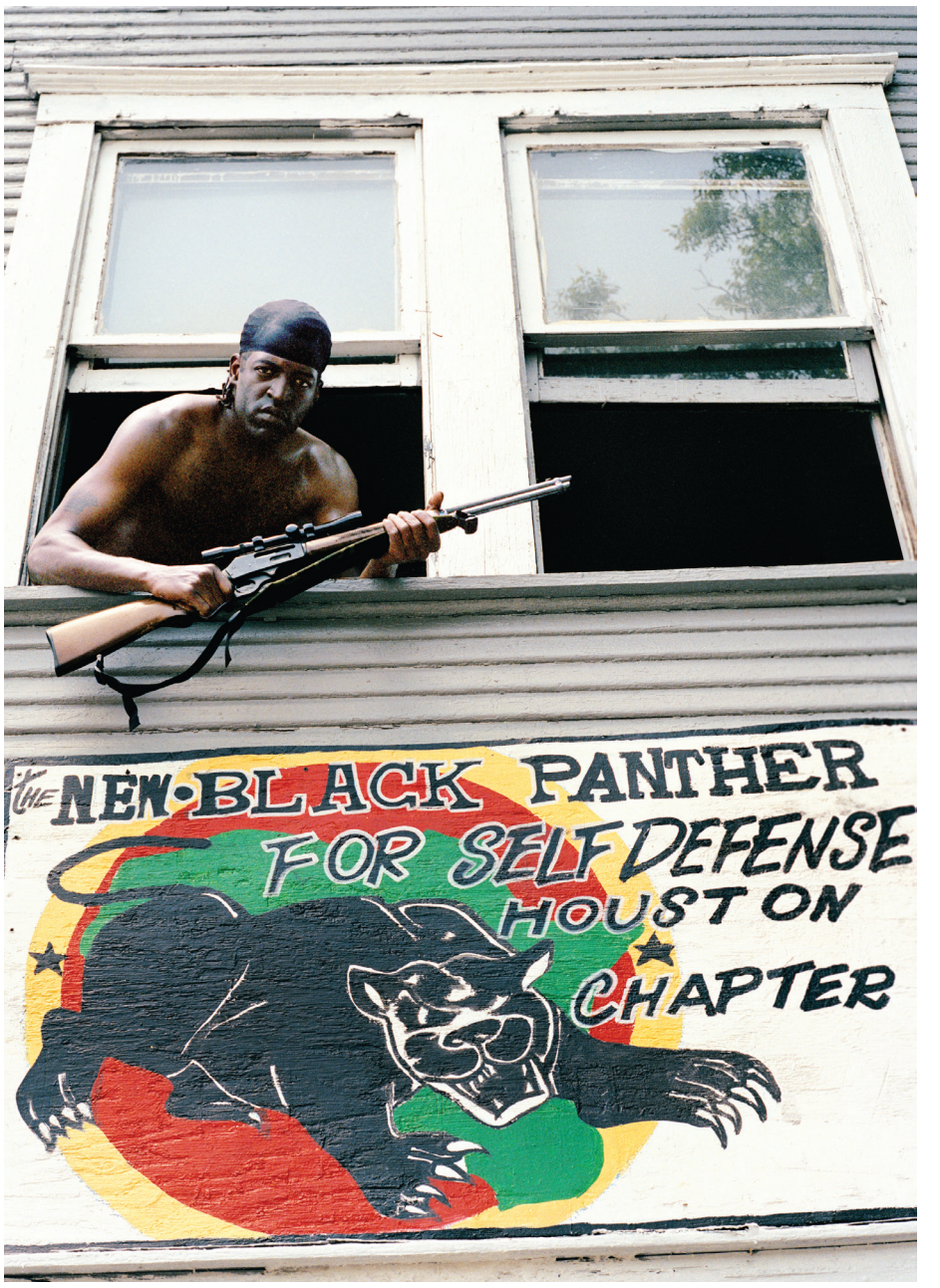
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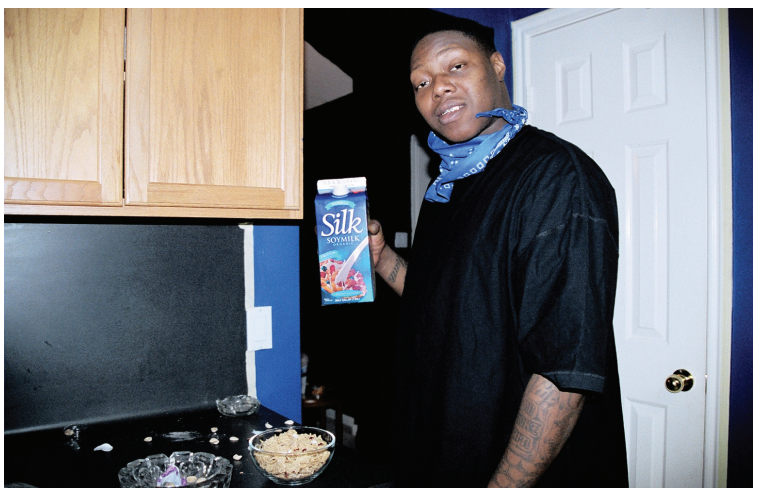
During that time thousands of touring bands from all over the country and the world are in the region for SXSW in Austin. Almost all of the touring bands are looking for shows in the region. For the past 7 years we have been hosting as many of the touring bands as we can every night, we average 100 bands in a two week period, hosting between 6-10 touring bands a night.

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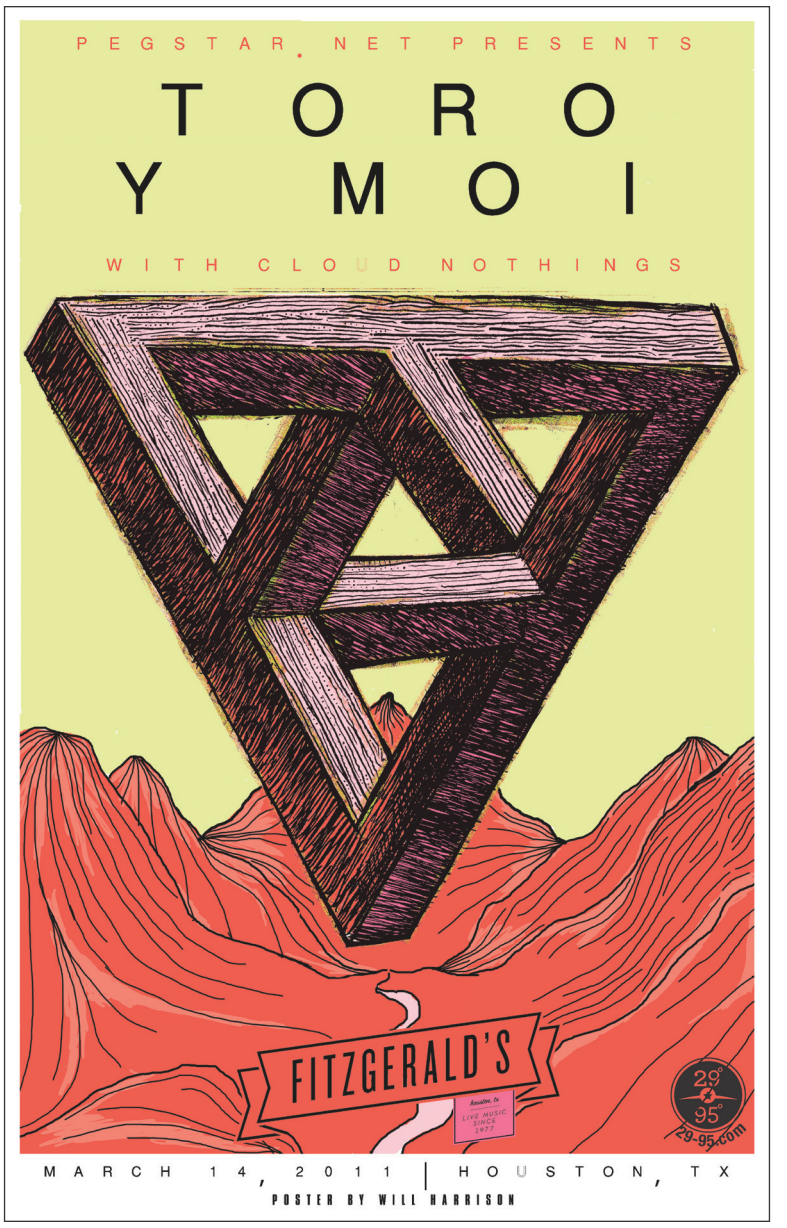
→ they painted of the neighborhoods of South Park and 5th Ward. As I got older and became interested in photography I decided to try to portray that image with my camera. I decided to track down as many of the early Houston rappers as I could and photograph them in their personal environments. Over the past six years I have photographed dozens of Houston's most respected rappers, nightclubs, along with many neighborhood landscapes. I am working with writer and Houston native Lance Scott Walker on a book entitled Houston Rap which should be out in about a year. Lance has collected priceless quotes and stories which will accompany the photos. We are collaborating with the University of Houston, who has an impressive collection of Houston Rap ephemera and history, on an exhibit that will coincide with the book's release in 2012.

DID YOU FIND ANY COMMONALITY BETWEEN THE THE HOUSTON RAP SCENE AND THE NORWEGIAN DEATH METAL COMMUNITY? ¶ What ties them together for me personally is my childhood connection with both scenes. These two projects aren't meant to be companion pieces, but there are some similarities between the two scenes. Importance of image, status and an us vs. them mentality is common among both.

SO, DID YOU HAVE TROUBLE GAINING THE TRUST OF ANY OF THESE PEOPLE AS THEY SEEMINGLY ALLOWED YOU QUITE A BIT OF ACCESS? ¶ It is ironic that I felt more instantly welcomed by the Black Metal community half way around the world in Norway than I did at first in my hometown of Houston. Needless to say, a white guy in the hood with a camera raises many eyebrows! The awkwardness disappeared quickly as I befriended many of the rappers, and doors began to open once they learned I was for real.

GEEK GEAR QUESTION: WHAT DO YOU SHOOT WITH? ¶ Mamiya 645 medium format film camera, Canon 5D Digital, and I used an old Canon 35mm on many of my Houston photos. No lighting set-up, only an occasional on-camera flash.

WHAT WERE YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF HOUSTON AS A CITY? ¶ This project gave me an opportunity to see Houston from an entirely new angle and I consider it a second home. **FPH**





02/12

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TEXT & ILLUSTRATION BY TYLER BARBER

My education at Texas public schools contains a knowledge gap that students who came before and after me were able to fill. I was a product of the "evolution blackout" in public education that took place in the mid '90s as various religious groups in (usually) conservative states sought to either dilute or ban the teaching of evolution in public schools.



WHILE EVOLUTION WAS NEVER OFFICIALLY BANNED from the classroom in Texas, I never had a single drop of evolution education in my science classes because my teachers at the time were intimidated by the status quo of the Bible-belt South, or were sympathetic to the cause of Creationism. Luckily, I was drawn to the sciences in college, and have since grown as much an appreciation for the many disciplines of science as I have for, say, music, art, literature, or film. I group these together for a reason: I want to promote science here as something not only "cool" and "interesting," but beautiful, transcendent, or as a lucid way of understanding reality.

More specifically, I want to share some fascinating facts about evolution, present some common misconceptions, and even point out criticism within the field. What I will not do, however, is leave room for supernatural causes in evolution, the creation of man, or the universe for that matter. The fact that a disturbing majority of Americans believe in some form of creationism tells me that most of you reading this may believe in a supernatural power. Most of you are going to be loosely-defined-deists, bred out of the liberal new-age movement in the '90s, who accept the fact of evolution, but leave room for God's hand in the creation of the universe. While one can certainly believe in a divine creator and accept evolution, as I'll show later, doing so only complicates one's model of the universe.

The Fact of Evolution

Ask almost any biologist who their most inspiring scientist is, and they'll probably answer Charles Darwin. Born on February 12, 1809 (the same day and year as Abraham Lincoln), Darwin would be lucky to come of age during the period of the Enlightenment, which valued free inquiry, reason and logic. The Enlightenment allowed Darwin to question the institutions that came before him, which ultimately allowed him to dethrone God as the guiding-stick of life. Unfortunately, at the time, Darwin did not have a whole lot of evidence to support his claim. He did have evidence (his travels on the Beagle, for example, where in the Galapagos Islands he observed Mocking Birds and tortoise shells of varying types distributed uniformly through the islands) but not the type of closed-case evidence we have today.

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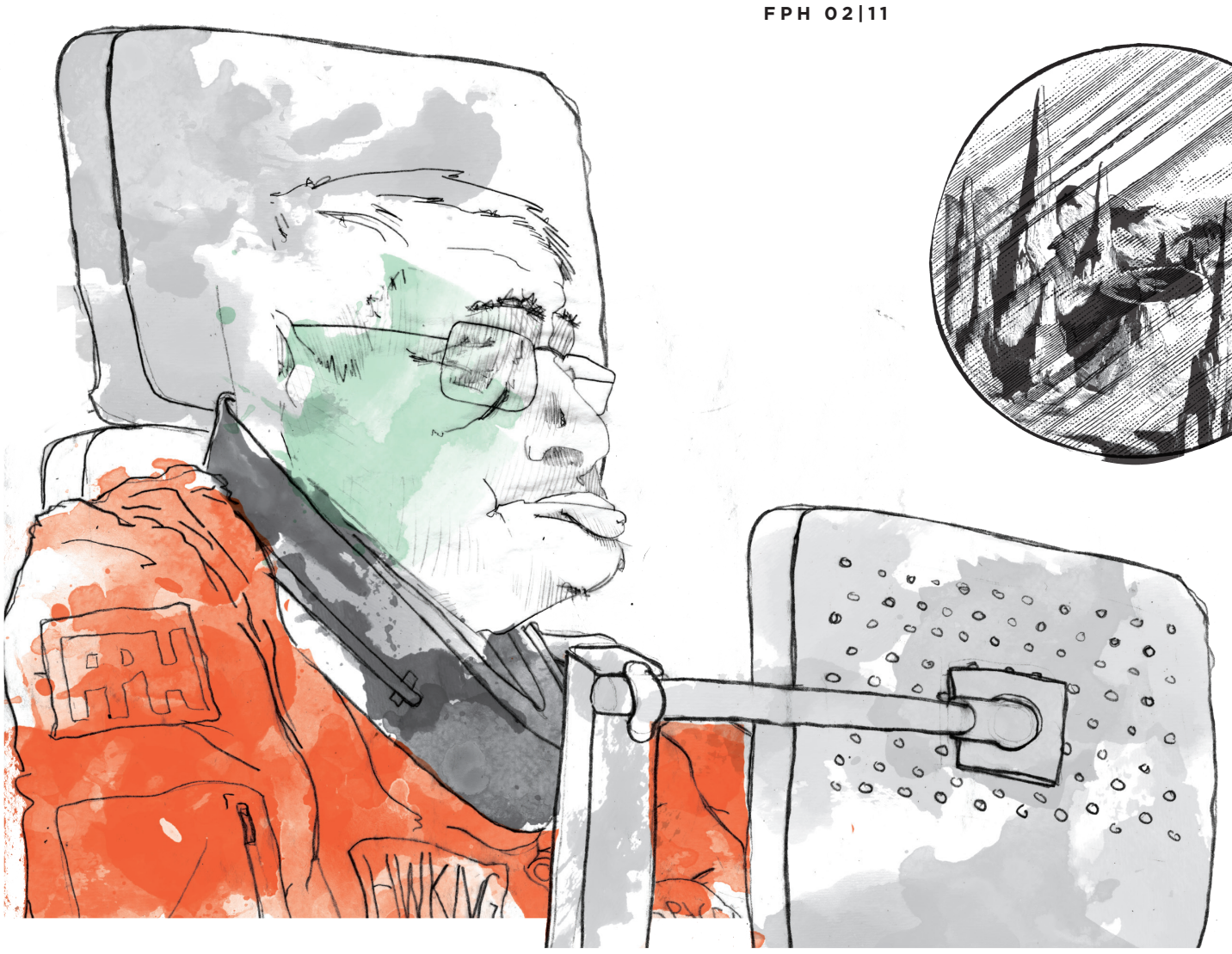
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→ The fossil record is so extensive that it alone is enough evidence to prove evolution, but if any of you have heard a creationist debate evolution, the term “missing link” is all-too familiar. Framing the debate in this way reveals an ignorance about one’s understanding of evolution. So-called “links” are found all the time, but when a creationist is presented with a transitional fossil between two organisms, they invariably ask for the two links between them, regressing into infinity.

Another solid line of evidence for evolution can be found in Radiometric Dating - a technique of dating rocks by measuring the amount of radioactive decay in the sample. What do the age of rocks tell us about evolution? When we discover a fossil, dating the rock it was found in gives us the approximate time the organism died. The implications of this are potentially deadly for evolution, but not a single organism has been found “out of place” in the geologic data. In other words, we’ve not yet found a rabbit fossil in the Precambrian (as made famous by J. Haldane). Radiometric dating supports evolution and also shows that the Earth is 4.5 million years old – another point of contention for creationists who believe the Earth is about 6 thousand years old (to scale, that’s a difference, as Richard Dawkins points out, of thinking the distance between New York and San Francisco is about 7 yards).

Even if you disregard both the examples above, the one end-all, be-all body of evidence that supports evolution is microbiology. DNA and RNA were acronyms that wouldn't exist for another 50 years after Darwin’s death. Darwin had no insight into the building-blocks of life, DNA and RNA, but that’s just what we want from science: a model that makes a prediction where all future circumstances play-out accordingly. Such is the case with microbiology. If you want, you can watch evolution on the micro-biotic scale right before your eyes. High school science classrooms across the country replicate bacterial evolution annually. So what sort-of gymnastic trick do creationist employ at this evidence? They’ll tell you evolution exists on the micro-scale, but not in the macro.

Was Darwin Wrong?

About some things? Yes. About evolution? No. One thing us science-lovers echo is that if Darwin where here today, evolution would look almost alien to him. Many creationist try to use this fact as a nail-in-the-coffin for evolution, but this outlook outs them as being ignorant not only about evolution and the Scientific Method, but to the values scientists hold. Their whole point, and the point of the Enlightenment era for that matter, is to question authority. Creationists often call us who accept the fact of evolution “Darwinists.” This idiotic tactic is disingenuous at the least; it’s as if I’m somehow a “Newtonian” because I also accept the laws of gravity.

Speaking of Newton, (founder of physics, the first to describe gravity), I often draw analogies between his theories and Darwin’s to illustrate how people (even intelligent ones), can pick and choose their reality. For example, you never hear creationists try to shoot down the theory of gravity. And yes, that’s all it is, a theory. But even there, you can get into trouble. A theory in layman’s terms, is “hypothetical thinking.” A theory in scientific terms, however, is not what it is to layman. A theory in science is the strongest body of knowledge one can build. What many people confuse “theory” for is what scientists call a hypothesis. The hypothesis is the idea, the theory is the proof.

Why the Stephen Hawking Illustration?

I’ve been a fan of his for years, and have read almost all of Hawking’s books. Ultimately, if you want to understand evolution, and why it requires no supernatural force to operate, you have to gain a wider understanding of all the sciences. Hawking, a theoretical physicist, penned several books over his years, and throughout all of them (excluding his most recent, The Grand Design), he allows for the possibility of Spinoza’s God to have a “starting touch” to our universe. But in The Grand Design, Hawking courageously jettisons this position. Just as evolution is all you need to explain the propagation of life, Hawking realizes you don’t need God to explain the propagation of the universe. That’s the type of final step I hope more people will take when looking at evolution. Instead of thinking that some supernatural guy with a “Universe Starter Kit” put our lives in motion, start with a more humble and grounded-in-reality approach that we all descend from a common ancestry on planet Earth, and that that’s amazing enough. **FPH**

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There is a debate on citizenship that conservatives want to have. There is another debate on citizenship that some progressives are trying to have—so far, typically, without much success.

BY MILLS-MCCOIN



Let's Have a Real Debate on Citizenship

THERE ARE ARGUMENTS TO BE MADE, both good and bad, in both debates. I say we should have them both.

First, the conservative argument—which can be summed up in the closet racist and blatantly inhumane phrase "anchor baby." Ironically, given their supposed reverence for the U.S. Constitution, teabaggers and their conservative fellow travellers have expressed an enthusiastic willingness to tamper with one of the core tenets of American society: the concept, as stated in the Constitution and reinforced by the 14th Amendment, that anyone born on American soil is, indeed, an American. Their reason for doing so? The fact that an increasing number of those native born Americans happen to be the offspring of people who happen to be in this country illegally. What anyone with a heart and a mind sees as a consequence of human beings attempting to make a life for themselves under adverse conditions, they see as a deliberate criminal effort by "illegals" to swindle American taxpayers by acquiring social services for which they are otherwise unqualified through the good graces of their newly-born citizen offspring.

This is as fundamentally inhuman and wrong-headed as the assertion (not surprisingly, often from the same people) that being homosexual is a matter of conscious choice. It shows a shocking lack of empathy for one's fellow humans to suppose than someone chooses on a whim a sexual preference that can get you randomly killed on a street corner in a lot of places, render you ineligible for military service, and render virtually impossible the ability to enter into a legally recognized state of loving commitment with the person of your choice. It shows an equal lack of empathy to suppose that anyone would endure the extraordinary risks and dangers of traveling to this country illegally (frequently through the good graces of coyotes who will kill or abandon their clients in a heartbeat, should the need arise) and live in constant danger of deportation...merely to acquire a fraudulent welfare check.

Unfortunately, as heartless and wrong-headed as they are, these fair weather constitutionalists do have a point: no other

industrialized nation on earth has as liberal a concept of citizenship as the United States, and there is, indeed, a social cost to that liberality. Canada, for example, has public health care and other social services that Americans would kill for and often die for lacking—but unless you speak English AND French, have an education, and an employer, you are NOT going to legally emigrate to Canada.

Nor are you likely to be employed as an illegal immigrant—which is really the point, and the real issue that quack notions like "anchor babies" are intended to distract from. If we don't want people in this country illegally, all we really have to do is leverage punitively expensive measures against individuals and corporations that provide employment to undocumented workers. We don't have to change the constitution, we don't have to deport newborn infants. We just have to be willing to sanction the hell out of those who exploit illegal immigrants (and maybe accept the idea of national ID card...but that's really part of a different discussion).

Consider for a moment that phrase, "individuals and corporations". It leads us into the second emerging debate on citizenship, the one that conservatives and corporate-owned mainstream media don't want you to hear about...or think about.

In a recent article entitled "Walmart is not a Person" (excepted from a forthcoming book), commentator and author Thom Hartmann made the entirely reasonable argument that the best way to undo the damage of the Citizen United Decision might be to close the legal loophole granting corporations First Amendment protection in the first place. The means of doing so? An amendment that explicitly defines the Bill of Rights as "humans only"— in other words, to make it a matter of established law that not Walmart, Exxon-Mobil, AT&T or any other artificial legal construct enjoys the rights of U.S. citizenship.

The tricorn hat crowd should love this. The word "corporation" does not appear once in the original Constitution they treat as inerrant holy writ, and there is ample evidence (as Hartmann points out) that the Founding Fathers harbored a deep suspicion and resentment toward such entities. That resentment boiled over in the lead-up to the American Revolution as the REAL "Tea Party"—an event in which an insurrectionist gang wearing identity-concealing disguises destroyed over $2,000,000.00 (in current dollars) worth of property belonging to a multinational corporation. So... people who like to compare themselves to the Founding Fathers should be all over dismantling corporate power, right?

Don't count on it. For all of the powdered-wig posturing and supposed reverence for the ideals that produced the American Revolution, the various groups that make up the "tea party movement" have never really been about anything else but making sure that the election of 2008 would be nothing more than a speed-bump in the path of the corporate/state power consolidation set into motion during the Bush Presidency. The people who show up at the rallies may be hapless bumpkins, gun nuts, and racists buffoons...the people who pay for the events are about as hapless as Dick Cheney.

Let's not forget that the core issue in the "Citizen United" case was whether or not the right-wing front group of the same name was free to advertise a hatchet job film about Hillary Clinton in violation of the McCain-Feingold Act. And now, thanks to the most reactionary right-wing Supreme Court in U.S. history, McCain-Feingold is history—and corporations now have a first amendment right to spend as much money as it takes to subvert as many elections as it takes to get what they want. The modern corporation was essentially created in 1886 as a workaround to subvert legal restrictions on large concentrations of wealth. It has worked quite well. The plutocracy of corporate shareholders who effectively run this country are not likely to give it up without one hell of a fight.

Just as attempts to deliver average Americans from the predations of an out-of-control healthcare system have been successfully relabeled as "socialism", efforts at limiting the ability of large corporations to subvert U.S. democracy can expect to be slandered as "attacks on free enterprise" and worse. Not that it matters very much: any anticipation that the American progressive movement is going to be any more adept at fighting back against creeping corporate fascism than they have been to date is highly optimistic.

Just for argument's sake, though, how about we have a real debate on citizenship? If it is acceptable to put parts of the Constitution on the table for purposes of restricting the citizenship of actual humans, it ought to be just as acceptable to consider restricting the "citizenship" abused by corporations on behalf of the relative handful of humans who profit from their existence.

A constitutional amendment can be many things, address many things. Citizenship is just one of several issues addressed in the 14th Amendment in the aftermath of the U.S. Civil War, although it is certainly the most important. The Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment guaranteed that the slavery that African-Americans had been delivered from at great cost would not merely re-emerge in a different form. It states unequivocally that any person "born or naturalized" in the United States is a citizen and cannot be deprived of their fundamental rights by any state or local jurisdiction, for any reason. If you are born in America, you are, simply, an American.

These same protections ensured the status of children born to the immigrants who flooded into this country in the Civil War's aftermath. Those immigrants, their children, the subsequent immigrants (for as long as we would take them)... they helped build the greatest expansion of industrial power and prosperity the world has ever seen. If there is any true basis for the notion of "American Exceptionalism" it is that accomplishment—that a nation was made of peoples of many nations, and that of that diversity came greatness.

It can be fairly argued that this expansive and uniquely American notion of citizenship and nationhood is a luxury this country can no longer afford. Possibly so. America is not what it once was. What worked for a country that had for all its history been its own frontier may not work for a country that is now as thoroughly constrained as any of the "Old World" nations of Europe.

But it can also be fairly argued that this country has lost its way and become divided against itself as thoroughly as has ever been the case since the Civil War. It is very doubtful that the current tensions will escalate to a war between states (not least because the divisions run equally through every state, and the entire country), but very reasonable to assume that healing these divisions may very well require measures as sweeping as the post-Civil War Reconstruction.

The so-called "Reconstruction Amendments" addressed long-standing shortcomings in America's original founding documents, and established new definitions of nationhood and citizenship. A new round of redefinition may well now be in order, as well as a little more honesty. There is a fundamental unfairness and hypocrisy to an immigration policy that turns a blind eye to the exploitation of undocumented workers, only to ritualistically scapegoat the victims on the eve of elections. Equally hypocritical, if more well-meaning: the notion that anyone has an inalienable right to parent children that neither they nor anyone else can afford to support, either in a host country or the place of their birth. The world is not inexhaustible.

Nor is the patience of those who have and continue to be exploited. The "citizenship" and supposed inalienable rights of corporations have been used to created what is rapidly becoming the wealthiest oligarchy in human history. Their wealth comes at the expense of undermining the core democratic values of an American society to which they give astonishingly little in return. Sooner or later, one way or another, that issue will be addressed.

The Tea Party Movement is an elaborate fraud, the latest reinvention of Harry Dent's "Southern Strategy", but the resentments it exploits go beyond the anxieties created by the country's first African-American President. In an increasingly pluralistic country, the issues of race, religion, and sexual identity the Republican Party has used to militate Americans against their own interests will lose power. Unless the staggering inequality in this country is reversed, the next "tea party" may have a lot less interest in cosplay reenactments of the last revolution... and a lot more interest in a real revolution of their own.

So, yeah...let's have a real debate on what it means to be an American and who (and what) gets to claim citizenship. And let's do it now...while America still exists; while that citizenship still has some measure of value. **FPH**



Autism is Anarchy

WE ARE HERE, WE ARE WEIRD, DEAL WITH IT.

"Oh, you pathetic NTs. You know not the joy of taking over a grocery store, a gas station or the line at the DMV."

GREETINGS AND SALUTATIONS, AMERICA!

Autism is a delightful and quite popular permanent federally-recognized disability. According to the USA Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the wonderful and exciting disability of Autism falls within the group of Autism Spectrum Disorders. Today, 1 in 110 children will be born with Autism. Autism is a developmental disability that causes odd, curious and significantly exciting challenges in social interactions, all communication and behaviors. Isn't that neat?! What is even more better-er is that it appears before the age of 3. It is estimated that there are currently 750,000 Americans living with the challenges of Autism. AUTISM IS ANARCHY.

And no one knows what causes it. No one agrees on how to treat the symptoms. No one can give you a reliable prognosis. And the best part is how this invisible friend will begin to dismantle your entire life. It will take your job. Your marriage. Your home. Your relationships with your other children. It scares away your friends, your family, and former co-workers. Why? AUTISM IS ANARCHY.

Why? I am so glad you asked. Autism requires 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Autism requires that you shift the locus of your day, your life and goals to attending to its malleable and slippery constant needs. Autism is not your child; but it has your child in its grasp. You will spend every waking and sleeping moment in repeated attempts to pull your child out. To pull out a personality. To develop a human separate from the invisible disability and deadly foe called, Autism. AUTISM IS ANARCHY.

Autism can kiss my ass, your ass and your ex mother in law's ass. If I saw Autism at a party, I would toss it through the largest plate glass window I could wobble over to. I will never see Autism, because it is invisible. So Autism can worry not about me 'going EXPLODO' at a Junior League cocktail party, nor should you. Our family is 100% non-violent and there is zero tolerance for acts, words and threats that imply aggression. In this Writing Project, in words, I can be the stone sold bitch that I am. In person, I am as warm and fuzzy as they fucking come. Be advised.

750,000 is the population of a small country, and I am taking control, as it's Deposed Duchess, Lord, God and Buddha of Autism. I will communicate our demands, but we, as families who demand to

live well on the Autistic Spectrum, will make changes in the way we interact with YOU, the sad sad people who are Neuro-Typical (NT) s. Oh, you pathetic NTs. You know not the joy of taking over a grocery store, a gas station or the line at the DMV. When you are Living Well Within Autism, you might bring a small tent where your autistic child rocks and stims and screams and chirps and wails as you scoot said tent along with you. You may have already built a platform on wheels. I am not kidding and aren't you jealous. Also, you have never been in a shopping mall with a child walking with a fluorescent yet dirty yellow blankie wrapped over their head. Tightly. Sad, sad YOU and fun, fun, fun WE.

WE ARE HERE, WE ARE WEIRD, DEAL WITH IT.

THE TOOLS OF OUR AUTISM ANARCHY REVOLUTIONARY FORCE ARE MOSTLY FROM THE DOLLAR STORE AND RADIO SHACK. GET YOUR ASS THERE IF YOU WANT TO HELP. HELPING COSTS LITTLE MONEY - BUT A TRUE DEDICATION IN TIME, ATTENTION, COMPASSION AND COMPROMISE. IF YOU ARE A HUMAN WITHOUT THESE QUALITIES, FUCK YOU. YOU ARE NOT INVITED TO OUR AUTISM ANARCHY REVOLUTION.

The adaptations we must make on a daily basis to help our loved one for whom the world is a constant assault of images, smells, feelings, sounds, motion and confusion is not to entertain you; but for basic survival. Because Autism is an invisible foe, I have built an inexpensive messaging system to telegraph to you sad, sad NTs that Autism is in da house. I will tell you how you can help, and give you strategies on how to effectively interact, or dare I say HELP when invisible Autism is animating our loved one in a truly strange fashion while we are out and about in the world outside our bunker homes.

BE ADVISED. WE ACCEPT NOT YOUR SUGGESTIONS. WE KNOW WHAT OUR LOVED ONE NEEDS. WE HAVE AUTISM: YOU BEND, YOU GO AROUND, YOU SLOW DOWN, YOU SPEED UP, YOU CHANGE. WE ARE STRUGGLING FOR OUR LOVED ONE'S SURVIVAL.

AT THE SAME TIME, WE ARE HAVING MORE FUN AND JOY AND SILLINESS THAN HUMANS SHOULD BE ALLOWED. JOIN US IN "LIVING WELL WITHIN AUTISM - A USER'S GUIDE."

IF OUR DEMANDS ARE NOT MET, WE REQUIRE A SMALL COUNTRY FOR OUR 750,000 AND 4 FAMILY MEMBERS EACH. THAT WOULD BE AN ISLAND WITH REALLY NICE WEATHER AND BOTH SMOOTH JAZZ AND COOL ISLAND RHYTHMS THAT CAN SUPPORT 4,000,000 HUMANS. WE DEMAND DOGS, KITTIES, HORSES, CHICKENS AND SHIT TO KEEP US HAPPY AND HEALTHY. WE WILL SETTLE FOR HAWAII, CORSICA OR CUBA. PLEASE RELOCATE THOSE PEOPLE INTO OUR EMPTY LIVES WHEREVER WE ARE RELOCATED FROM. FAIR?

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to forcing you to understand how you can help a family helping a loved one Live Well Within Autism. Please stop trying to find a Cure; our loved ones hear you saying that and they think 'You' want to kill them. Or, wish they had never been born. Instead, please direct all those fucking dollars to buying us a cool place to live, like Cuba or Corsica or Hawaii. That is all for now.

Warmest Regards,

APOCALYPSE FINANCIAL FPH

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THURS 17: Big Daddys Assburn Bloody Mary party

FRI 18: The Rebel Crew

SAT 19: Southern Backtones

SAT 26: Robert Pearson, Carl Smith (Austin), Stefan Gonzalez (Austin/Dallas), Thomas Helton

THURS 24: Honkey Tonk Blood afterparty

CHECK CALENDAR ON WEBSITE FOR THE LATEST DETAILS

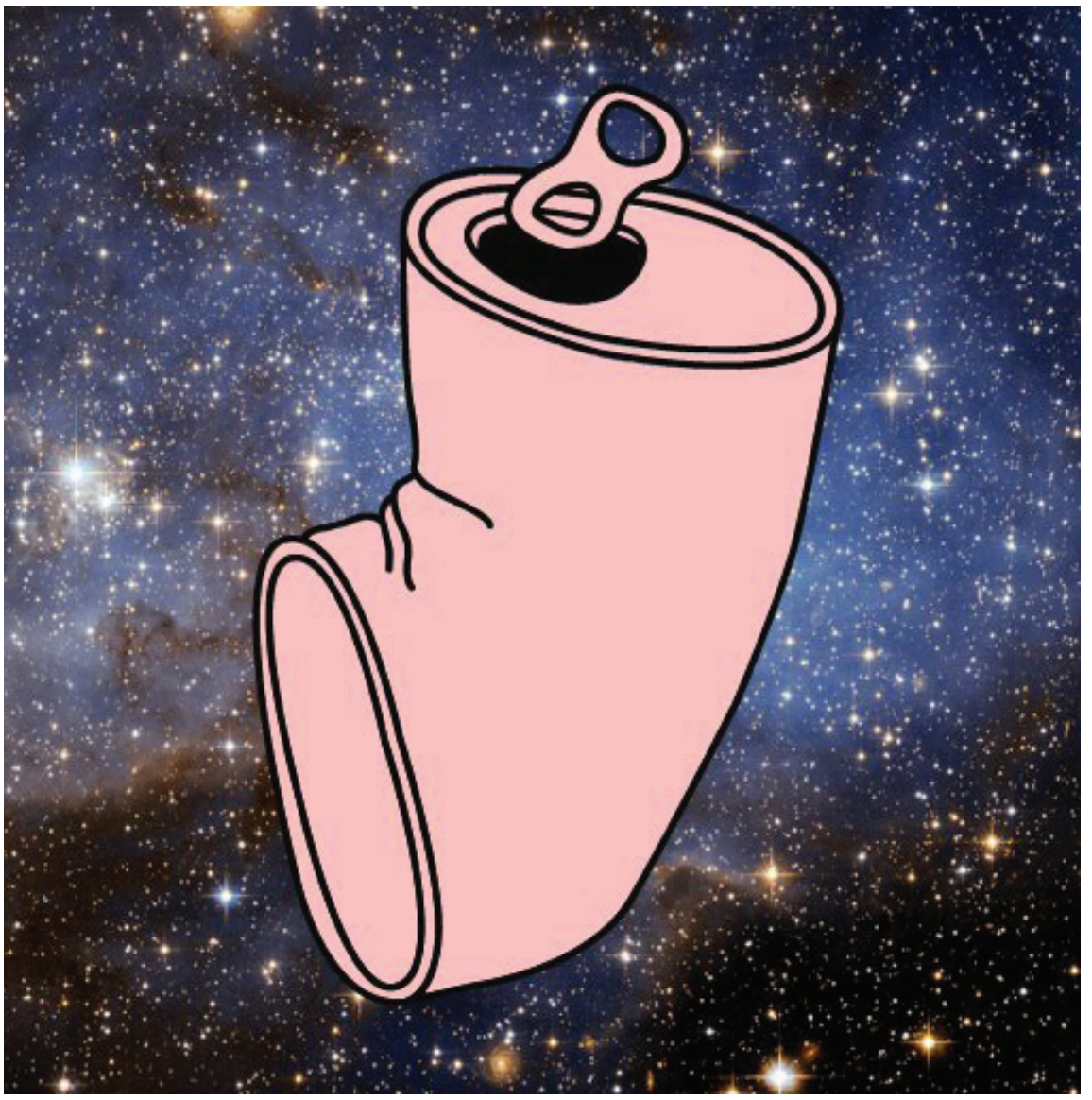
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She's Crafty

Texas Brew Pub laws

What if there was a law in Texas that prohibited petroleum refined in the state of Texas to be sold in Texas; it must be sold elsewhere outside of the state? That would be crazy.

BY MILLS-MCCOIN



OR WHAT IF THERE WAS A TEXAS LAW that prohibited any child educated in the state of Texas from using his education to garner income within the state of Texas? I'm just making up ridiculous laws that don't exist but they are patently analogous to the current laws that govern brewpubs and breweries like our beloved Saint Arnold's here in Houston.

Here's one of the ridiculous laws that DOES EXIST: Section 74.01 of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code "(f) A holder of a brewpub license may not sell an alcoholic beverage for resale." This is a real law. In other words, if (par example) Petrol Station in the Heights brewed its own beer... you couldn't buy it anywhere else except Petrol Station. I can only offer one explanation as to why this law exists: companies like Budweiser and Miller Brewing Co. lobby (make contributions to particular Texas lawmakers) for it to exist so as to avoid proper competition- basically the generic crime of politics. Sadly, there are more laws like this one.

Fortunately, the current economic climate and public outrage along with the rise of craft beer popularity have given those questionable people in Austin all the reasons in the world to change this silly legislation.

Citizens of Houston, I present to you House Bill 660 and House Bill 602. If you enjoy fine artisan beers brewed here in Texas then these splendid pieces of proposed legislation are a must-read. Together, they completely overhaul the sections of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code pertaining to brewery and brewpub licenses allowing the holders of said permits to operate like a NORMAL REVENUE GENERATING COMPANY INSTEAD OF A SHAMEFUL PEDDLER OF SIN JUICE.

At present, the TABC restricts the number of barrels a brewpub can produce annually to 5,000; and for on premise sale only. When passed, HB660 will allow brewpubs an annual production of 75,000 barrels. And this is only one of many changes that these two bills will usher in.

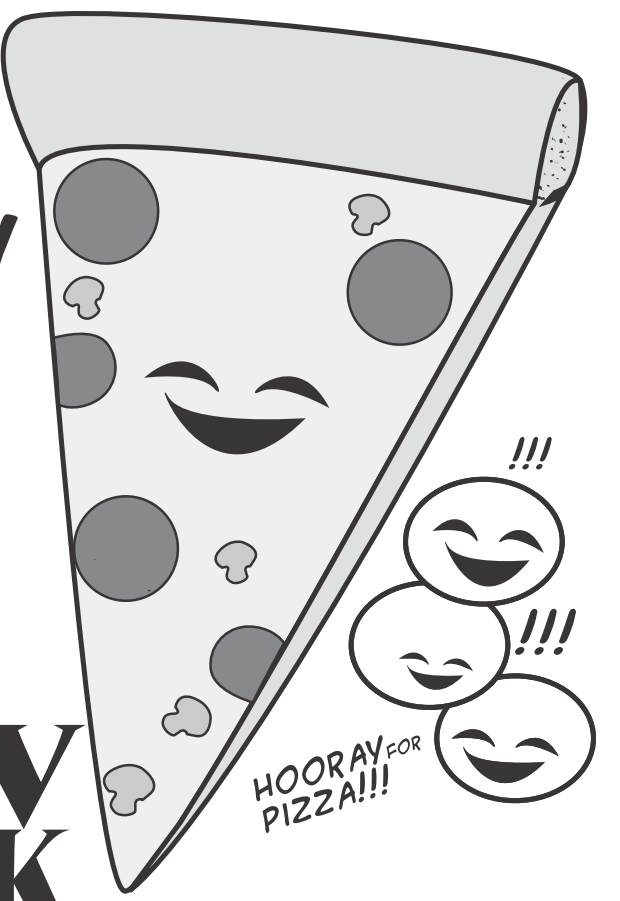
"This bill is designed to help local businesses grow. The results would be increased market access for small brewers; increased sales portfolios for wholesalers; the ability to feature local products for retailers; increased consumer choice; and an increased tax base for our state while it faces a massive budget deficit," claims founder/owner and Chief Executive of Freetail Brewing Co., Scott Metzger (@BeerMonkey on Twitter).

So what can you do to help see this bill pass? You can continue drinking fine beers and raising all sorts of Hell in the name of HB660 (it has its own Twitter account @HB660).

My favorite line in House Bill 660 is at the very end (Section 4) and it reads beautifully: "Section 74.01(f), Alcoholic Beverage Code, is repealed." I delight in seeing the word "Repealed", which is fancy talk for "that horrible rule forced upon us is murdered in cold blood like a filthy Nazi pedophile." Cheers. **FPH**



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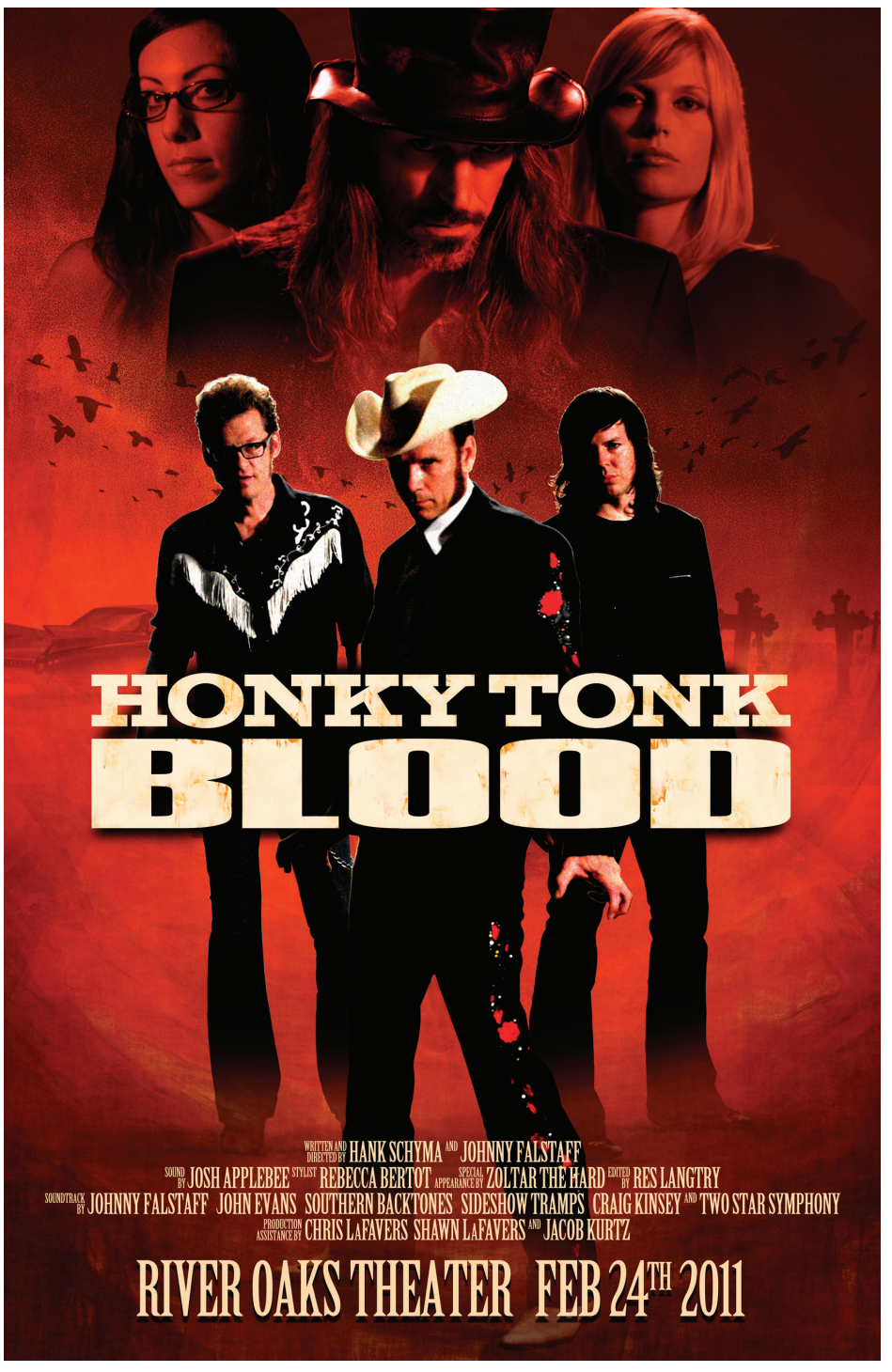
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Honky Tonk Blood

trailer & info at honkytonkblood.com

Honky Tonk Blood is a film about the stranger than fiction life of a few local Houston musicians who soon find that their honky blood is being spilled in frightening and mysterious ways.

THIS INDIE WESTERN HORROR FLICK is the combined spawnage of Hank Schyma of the Southern Backtones, country singer Johnny Falstaff, and John Evans who performed on the Tonight Show last month for writing two songs featured in the Hollywood blockbuster Country Strong. Together they comprise the three main stars of the film along with many other Houston artists including Sideshow Tramps, Two Star Symphony, Calvin Stanley of Pale and the lovely Emile- Bell and Dejonckheere. It seems like everyone in Montrose got in on this movie with over 100 cast members and the setting is in some of its most beloved places. Over four years of effort has been put into writing, editing, filming, casting, coming up with crazy ass ideas, editing and more editing. Finally, their baby will finally hit the big screen at the historic River Oaks Theater on February 24th. I had the chance to catch up with John, Johnny, and Hank for their thoughts on the film.



IF I HADN'T HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT HONKY TONK BLOOD- HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE IT? ¶ *Falstaff:* In short, it's a look at the dark underground of the music industry. *Evans:* It's a modern fictional b-grade horror/spaghetti western movie placed inside an emerging music scene where the musicians embrace every aspect of their rock star lifestyle.

HOW DID THIS IDEA COME ABOUT BETWEEN YOU AND HANK? HOW DID YOUR SONG "HONKY TONK BLOOD" EVOLVE INTO THIS FILM? ¶ *Falstaff:* I love horror movies and wanted to incorporate that in some way with a music video or short film. I wrote the song and made a crappy B-grade video for it (not to be confused with the actual movie). About that time me, Hank and John started talking about making some kind of movie that involved the Houston music scene. We had a few different ideas floating around, but ultimately chose a plot that Hank had in mind...we didn't really know what the hell we were doing, but we figured we could knock it out in a couple of months...that was about 4 or 5 years ago.

WHAT'S THE CRAZIEST BATSHIT IDEA THAT FOUND ITS WAY INTO THE FILM? ¶ *Hank:* Definitely Johnny's idea. I was driving to Dallas and he calls me. "Man, I got the most awesome idea...." After he told me- I felt like deleting his number from my phone and never calling him back again and then the more I thought about it- the more I thought we had to do it. We thought no one in Houston will let us do this to them but we finally found someone who was willing- it was Jo Bird from Two Star Symphony. She was very willing and eager to let us do what we did to her. (Slight spoiler: it's a scene that involves a disfiguring, an alien and someone masturbating.)

JOHN, YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE COUNTRY STRONG SOUNDTRACK IS THE FIRST TIME YOUR MUSIC IS BEING HEARD BY MAINSTREAM MASSES NATIONWIDE- HOW DOES IT FEEL TO FINALLY HAVE YOUR MUSIC HEARD TO THIS MAGNITUDE? ¶ *Evans:* It is pretty mind blowing. As of today, it's the number one selling album on iTunes. I've actually got two songs on the number one record in the country. I really don't know how to feel. It's a good day for Houston.

WHAT WAS THE HARDEST PART ABOUT FILMING HONKY TONK BLOOD? ¶ *Falstaff:* Giving back the camera that we borrowed and trying to come up with the bread to buy one of our own. *Hank:* Zoltar...but the most TEDIOUS part would be when you're acting and filming - you set the camera on the tripod, you push record, run in front of it and start acting.

TELL ME ABOUT THE SOUNDTRACK THAT WILL ACCOMPANY THE FILM. ¶ *Hank:* Day one we were like even if the movie sucks the soundtrack is gonna be awesome. It's some of the best music from Johnny Falstaff, John Evans, Two Star Symphony, Craig Kinsey, Sideshow Tramps and the Southern Backtones. We're gonna have the release party for the soundtrack February 18th at Café Brasil where Falstaff, Evans, and I will be performing and issuing a sneak peek of the film.

IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIFIC YOU WANT VIEWERS TO KNOW ABOUT THE FILM BEFORE ENTERING? ¶ *Falstaff:* Leave the kids at home with Grandma and a Toy Story DVD.
Hank: That's not my penis....

WILL THE AUDIENCE'S THIRST FOR HONKY BLOOD BE QUENCHED BY THE FILM'S END? ¶ *Falstaff:* If not, there is an after-party at Avant Garden! FPH

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