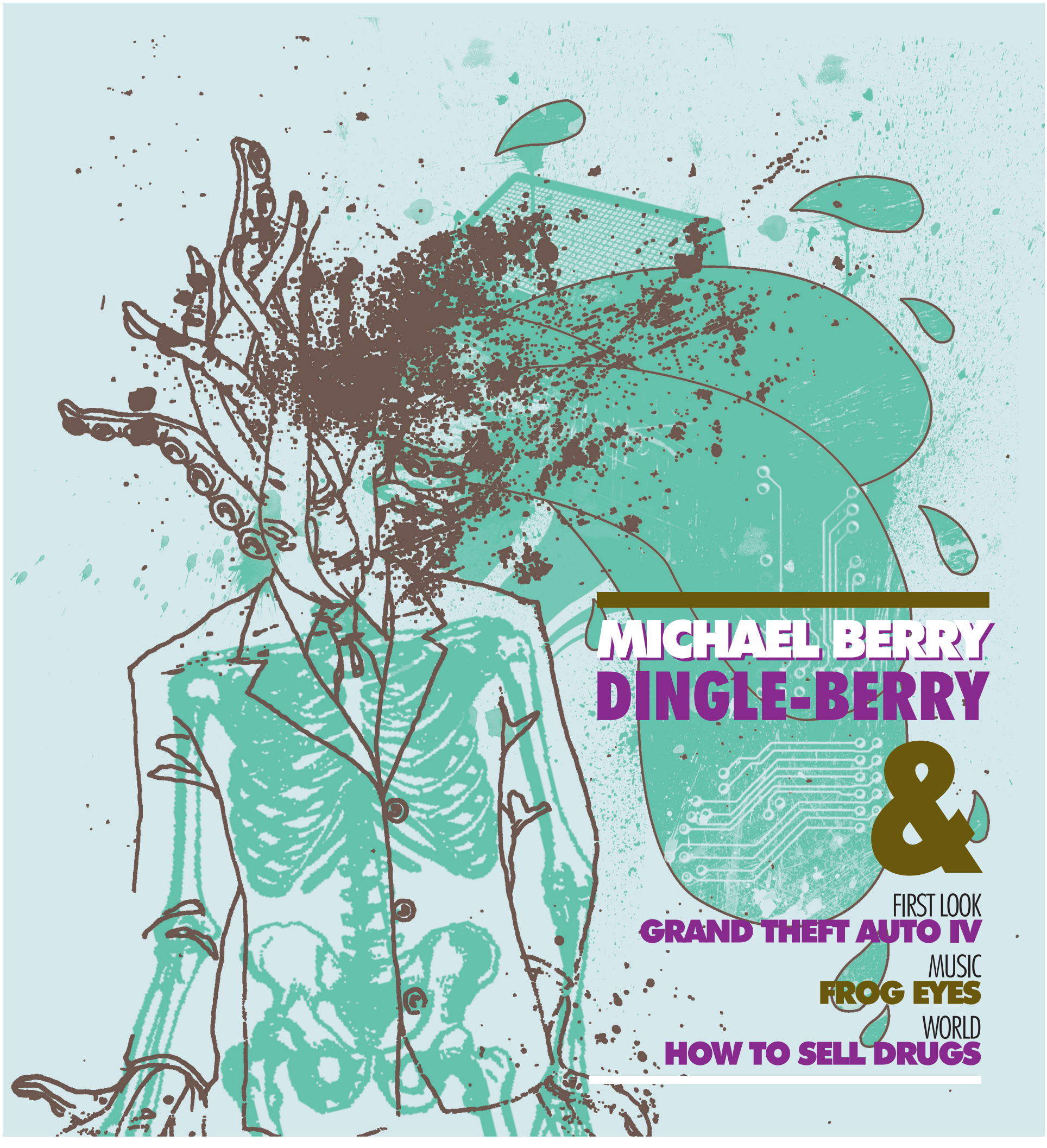
FREE PRESS
Houston
Arts Film Music Technology World & Local News

May 07
Issue #79



MICHAEL BERRY
DINGLE-BERRY
&

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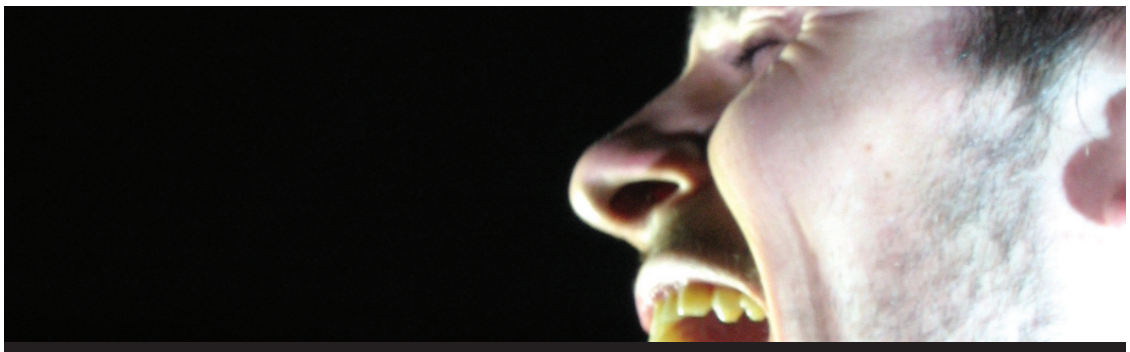
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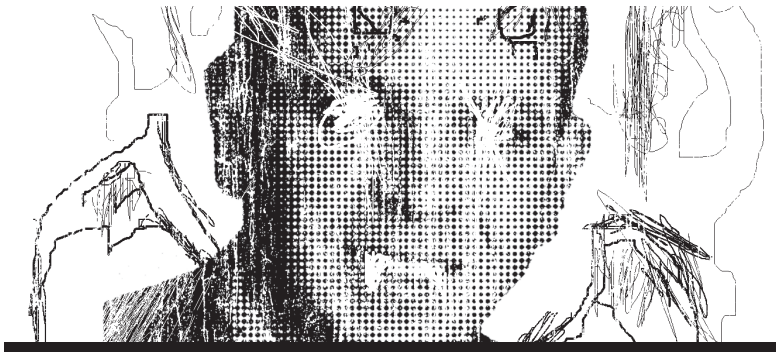
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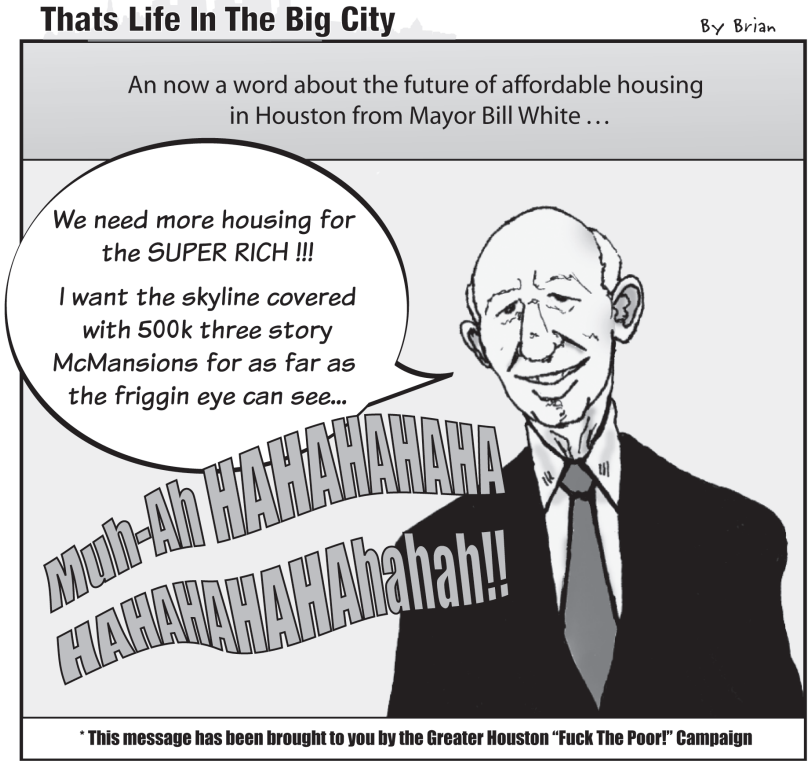
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editors

FEEL FREE TO TAKE US SERIOUSLY.

Woe unto Houston! A splendorous dose of Free Press shenanigans is here to expand your consciousness and make your nether regions tremble with joy. So prepare thyself for May. However, the question remains: Will this issue be so profound that you fall into a deep state of despair at the futility of our lives? Question your own sexuality? Re-evaluate your understanding the concept of zero? Commit to a life of complete abstinence? I think the most of you will. That's how incredibly clutch this issue is. So be forewarned, a great paradigm shift will soon occur in your life and what you thought was real will be no more. Greens will become blues and reds will be come a dark shade of purple. Jews and Arabs will reconcile and alkaline levels in the water will once again find balance. OR—you will find a few great shows, films, and articles that tickle your fancy for a millisecond and then you will get back to the rat race. Either way, enjoy. We put extra love into this one. And when I say love, I mean this issue smells like sex. Go ahead. Sniff.





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Free Press Houston
Issue 79 | 05/07

Arts

DEBRIS: Cannibal Ross

by Buffalo Sean



The University of Houston art department has really been engaging this spring, stocking large amounts of lecturers and visiting artists into the last few months. If you missed the Intermedia Lab exhibit at G Gallery in the Heights check out the Collaboration projects on the third floor of the Lawndale. Hurry up! New things like this never stay up for long. The Intermedia Lab was composed of artists with one notable writer (who sold all of her drawings opening night); Collaboration is composed of teachers and students of many departments working in small cells. Both exhibits excelled in energy and depth, boding well for the school and the city's future.

Speaking of the city, they'd better put that rail line right down Richmond. Sorry to be insensitive but you can't pay attention to a few landowners when Houston needs a spine. Uptown Galleria needs congestion relief, Downtown Montrose needs an audience. Hell, imagine a 24 hour rail line about ten blocks from most shit you'd want to go to? It's not like people would ignore it, the short line they have now carries 40,000 people a day. I want to be able to quit driving.

Rice University's "Art for Profit" is going to have a tough time living up to last year's great show, the Art Guys curated this one though, and its funny that the press release has a whole paragraph on their history. Hmmm…

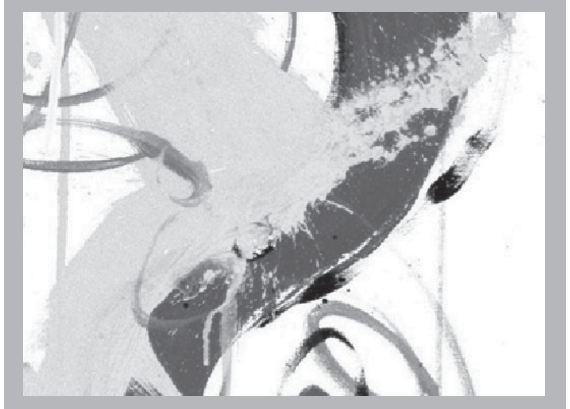
Down at CSAW, I Love You, Baby is back in circulation, filling their iloveyoubaby.org site with creamy nonsense for the first time this year. Lots of it involves guns.

Thank you goes out to William Betts after holding down the fort as Interim Director of the Lawndale Art Center as they searched far and wide. After Christine West settled in as Director Betts bowed out as Chair of the Programming Committee, where he forced more than fostered but succeeded in starting a resident artist program that will be a lasting legacy; and also opening two third floor galleries, outdoor spaces and hallways as new places to exhibit in the Lawndale. He will be missed but never forgotten by that building on Main Street.

Sunday, May 6th, Leslie Hewitt joins the subjective circle of speakers who have made "The Artist's Eye" talks at the Menil wildly different with "On Andy Warhol (3:00 pm). May 11th opens an exhibit of great mid-century painters that was bequeathed to the Menil Collection by David Whitney. With seventeen precious Jasper Johns drawings at the heart of the exhibit, look for the not-too-shabby fringes to be full of seldom seen Oldenbergs, Lichtensteins and Warhols.



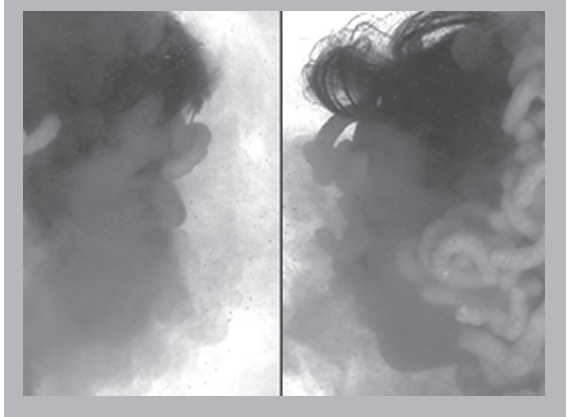
Art for Profit:
Rice Students Art Exhibition 44
Rice Univ. Art Gallery 6100 Main Street
Opens Thursday, April 26
Through May 13. 713-348-6069



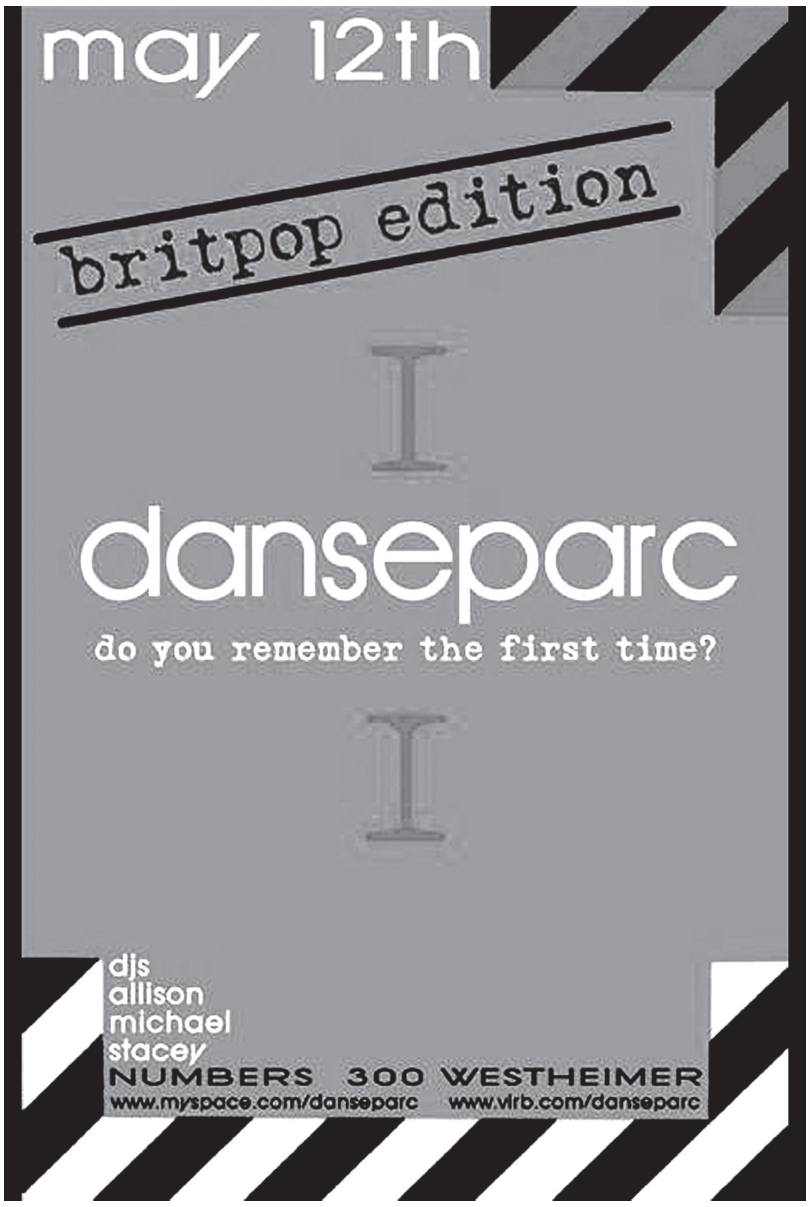
Norman Bluhm: *The Last Paintings*
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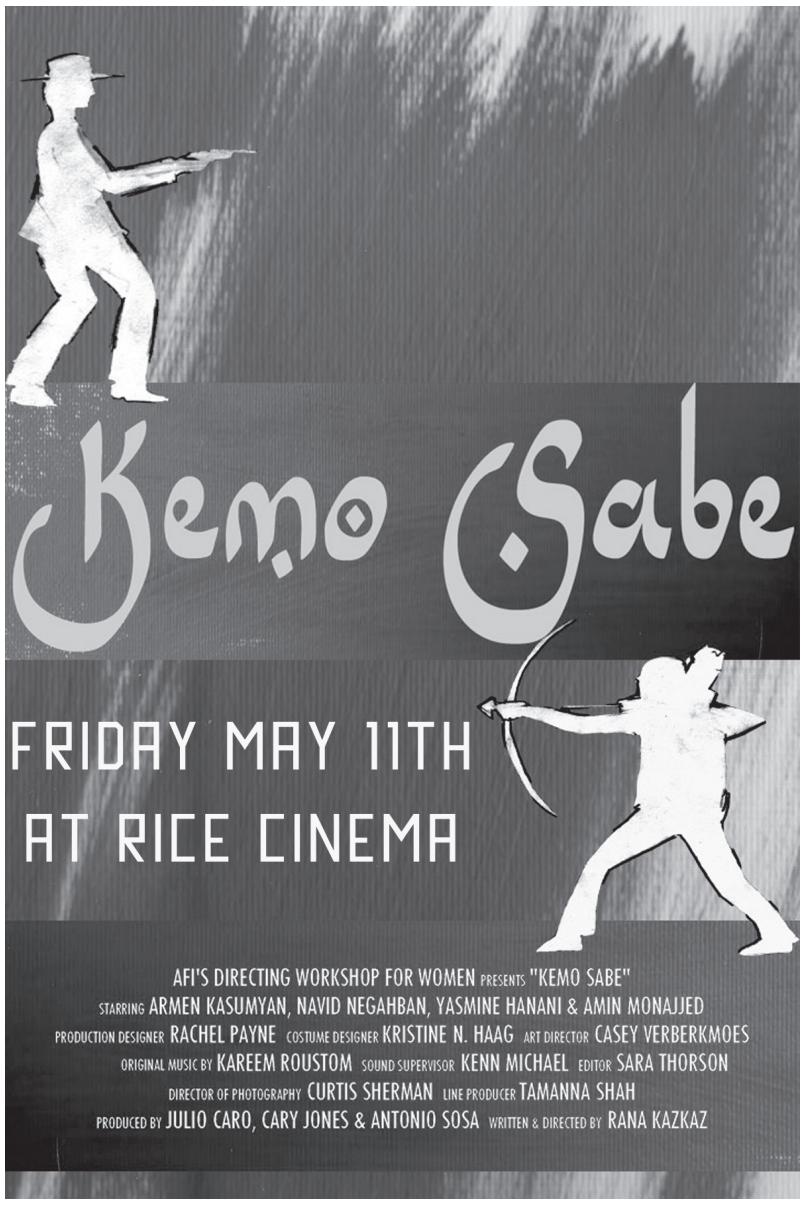


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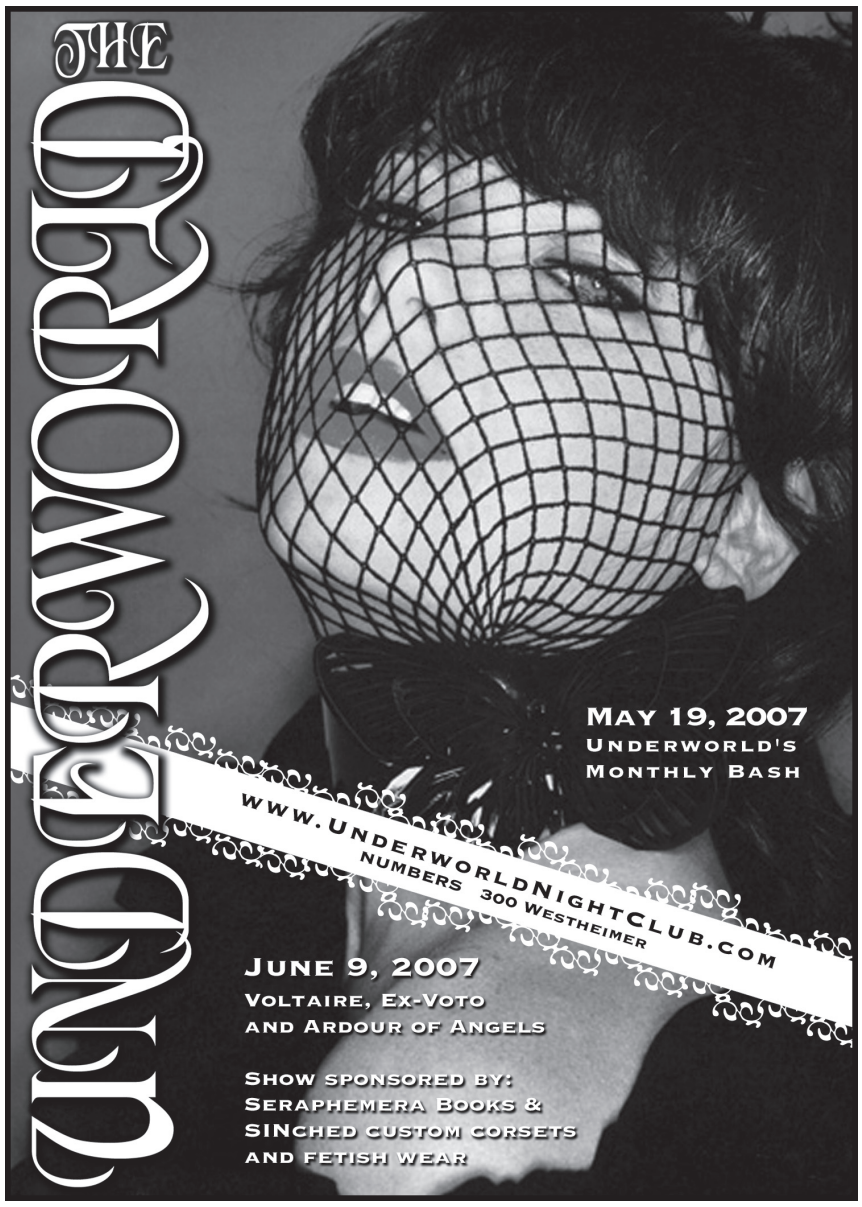


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Free Press Houston
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Film

Syntax Obsession

by Michael Bergeron

Ever notice how in foreign films the subtitles aren't always an exact translation of what the actors are saying. Language, of course, being something that doesn't always translate from culture to culture.

Recently at the MFA screening of Rules of the Game, considered one of the best films ever made and famously rediscovered years after its lackluster release on the eve of WWII, I noticed that one particular line was not as I recalled. While I hadn't seen Rules in several years I watched it nearly once a year from the mid-1970s until the early 1990s, and in addition to the skeleton dance performed to the accompaniment of "Dance Macabre" I had never shaken from my memory the chef's saucy retort to a guest who asks for only sea salt in the preparation of their food: "I cater to diets, not to fads." Only in this recent print the subtitle now reads: "I cater to diets, not to obsessions." Since in English a fad suggests a far different path than an obsession, one has to now wonder what the chef really means. Another series of films the MFA sponsored consisting of contemporary Latin American films further confused my nebbish countenance.

In films from Mexico, Argentina, Brazil the Spanish speaking characters curse quite a lot, and a common pejorative is the word puta. Only when the subtitles translate puta it's quite obvious this word operates in Spanish the way the word fuck does in English; it can be used as a noun, verb, adjective, adverb, hey be creative. At one point in the Columbian film Bluff a character curses, the syllables that form puta are enunciated and the translation reads: "Son of a thousand donkey whore bitches" or something like that. Man, that Latin cursing is like hot sauce.

Back in the day when growing up in San Antonio I would watch the channel 5 late Friday night horror or sci-fi film that was presented under the banner Project Terror. Project Terror is where the scientific and the horrifying merge went its deep bass introduction. One time on a sojourn to Laredo I was pleased to see they also had a Friday late night horror flick, only it was presented by a character named Dr. Zerko. The Zerkmeister was easy to spot on the street since he wore a cape and had a ping pong ball cut in half, with a hole cut in the middle, over each one of his eyes. Dr. Zerko would push his local sponsor during commercial breaks. "I like fried chicken, you like fried chicken, everybody likes fried chicken. So go to Gonzales Fried Chicken."





Robert Rodriguez also grew up in San Antonio so it's no surprise his part of Grindhouse sports a title vaguely suggesting Project Terror, namely Planet Terror.

Pack a snack because Grindhouse provides an evening's entertainment at three-hours plus. Of course you won't feel like putting anything into your mouth during the first segment unless squeezing pus out of festering zombie boils doesn't gross you out.

In rough order Grindhouse offers a trailer for Machete (Danny Trejo in fine form), a slide ad for Acuna Brothers Tex Mex (next door to the theater), various actual 1970s Coming Attractions segue-ways, Planet Terror (full length Robert Rodrigeuz feature), trailers for Don't, Thanksgiving, and Werewolf Women of the SS, and Quentin Tarantino's featurette Death Proof. Also the features have scratch marks built in, and both are missing a reel.

In some ways the first half, the Rodriguez half, has such a high gross-out perimeter it's practically Olympian. Trying to catalogue the slime intervals in Planet Terror is like trying to count the number of times Sean Penn says fuck in State of Grace. You lose count it's so staggering. Bodies explode as they're hit by 18-wheelers, limbs are flung about with abandon, bodily fluids assault the lens. You know that line in Full Metal Jacket where F. Lee Ermey says he's going "Gouge your eyeballs out and skull fuck you?" The first part of Grindhouse seems to use that line as its guiding esthetic. Planet Terror is most reminiscent of 1970s era George Romero, especially The Crazies, although with more CGI and pumped on steroids.

By contrast, the Tarantino half, Death Proof, proves that QT is in the driving seat when it comes to camera placement, editing and writing dialogue. As if that wasn't enough Death Proof offers up Kurt Russell in a performance so wicked it instantly rates high in his gallery of iconic roles. Zoe Bell, Uma Thurman's stunt double for Kill Bill, also gives a classic performance.

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

The second half displays an all-new femme cast, themselves the crew of a movie on location in 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.

Grindhouse is at once profound and greasy, like a feast that satiates but takes several napkins to clean. I can easily see watching Death Proof many times, although the novelty of Planet Terror is very much a one-time fling.

2007 Houston Palestine Film Festival
May 11, 12, 13 and May 18, 19, 20



Friday May 11th @ Rice University - 7pm
Saturday May 12th @ The Station Museum - 7pm
Sunday May 13th @ MFAH - 6pm

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Special Thanks to Mike Rabie, Aziz Shaibani, Fady Joudah & Hana El-Sahly, Issa Cook, Ali Dahir, Yassin Al-Azzeh, Ahmed Rabie

Music

SCIENTISTS WILL SOON FIND A WAY TO CLONE YOUR TWIN AND THE MARCH WILL BEGIN AGAIN

Kwame M. Anderson

and the creeps, and the motherfuckers, ● ● ● and the creeps and the motherfuckers. Oh, excuse me there. Scary, scary world how is your terrified ass today. I know what you're thinking, me too. Let us talk about perpetuating myths for a second. A lot is said about the negativity in rap music. But I beckon to that faction, I believe it is all inane. For a potty mouth does not an idiot make. I mean idiocy exists all around us. We cannot impugn the dumb for they are part of the problem but not the problem. Stupidity is a result of, so to question the burger you must first question the one who wants to meat, who must question the need for meat, who must question the slaughter of, in order to appease the want. It is all a matrix that leads straight back to the person responsible who owns the land where the meat is raised, murdered, and sold, and who sickly profits from the debate as much as the subject of the debate. Circles people circles. We run in circles, and enjoy the trip, the rat doesn't know he's in the cage, but the scientist does and he's taking notes. So yeah, all that, and the rest of it, and we all float on OK….

Speaking of Modest Mouse, that album is fuckin boss!!! Anyhoo…The buying and selling still takes place during the collapse, the bills will be stolen from your cold dead hand. I am as responsible as they are, I'm pushing this shit too, and push it I will. The Rockets made the playoffs, hell yeah. My homey Beto once told me, "Hold on man, let me call you back." Well that's how I feel. May is here or will be when you read this (supposedly). So I speak to the you in the future not the you now, because well now won't be now when you read it… well I guess it will, just not my now. Love is in the air. A lot of people are faking it, the summer can be a lonely time. But not me man. Love is beautiful, and when I'm outside watering a lawn, excited about a water sprinkler, I know it must be love. But yeah, I got a friend, she's fucking playing the role man, her shit is like some sick 28 days shit, it's as real as Pinocchio The Valentine's Bunny. But whatever…

Albums to buy, shows to see, and all of you should listen to me. The Free Press has suffered a hard blow recently, and things won't be the same, but we can still give it you motherfuckers, and give it we will, conspiracies, and drunken ramblings, and all that shit. So yeah, let's get out of the house and go and see the things and buy the things and make people happy. I don't know about you, but the money's OK, and so you know what that means, I'm looking for useless shit that's important to me. This dude told me the other day something about church, and I was like, this dude needs to hear that last Arcade Fire album. But that's what I do, people depend on me, and I won't let them down…yet.

MUSIC LIVE

PIT ER PAT

5/15/07 Diverse Works

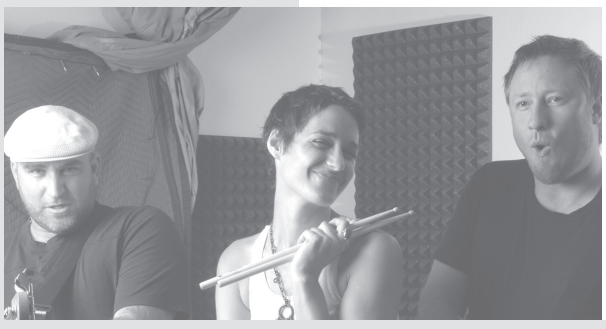
Pit Er Pat hails from the Chicago, Illinois. Their sound can go from groove, and I mean real groove, not like that bullshit bass riff and wah wah guitar shit, to like space in like 30 seconds. I was turned on this band by a friend of mine awhile back and have been a dedicated fan since. They record for Thrill Jockey, and their last fabulous album "Pyramids" was recorded by John McEntire of Tortoise and Sea And Cake fame. Their last effort is a little stranger their previous efforts, but in another way it's probably one of their more accessible records, if that's possible. Butchy Fuego's drumming is reason enough to catch this show as the places he goes rhythmically within the sound of the band are nothing short of "Oh, man look at that dude." It will impress the easily impressed and the other assholes who are impressed but may not admit it at the expense of seeming informed. Either way, I'm more than sure this show will be good, even on a Tuesday night, I mean yeah it's a week night, but for the employed, it's pay day, which is a credible reason to do most things that require you to pay money.

MELT BANANA/ XBXRX

5/27/07 Numbers

There are many things in this world that scare me, this is at least two of them. Melt Banana are incredible, a force, something to witness before death, other exclamations! There is noise rock and then there is Melt Banana. It is like setting fire to your face in a way, it may be one of the most riveting things to ever take place at Numbers. But, as if this not enough, XBXRX is opening the show, which basically means, you're fucked, no kiss. XBXRX are legendary for their shows and barriers and rules be damned, they are coming for that ass ("that ass" meant to be seen as to entertain you, not literally for your ass, unless you'll be bringing one, they may possible go for it…). This show is going be bananas, B-A-N-A-N…OK it's a dated joke, but you get the point. So come one, come all, hurry up, and don't stall, the rock will be at Number's on May 27. I may be there, waaaaaaay in the back, yelling, "What! I can't hear you!"

shows in the Houston area



Skyblue72
May 11 | Warehouse Live



Penny Royal
May 31 | Numbers



Toots Mayal
May 2 | Meridian



Generation Landslide
May 25 | Last Concert



Awesome Color
May 6 | Rudyard's



Mirabai
May 5 | Super Happy Fun Land

SCIENTISTS WILL SOON FIND...
cont.

MUSIC LISTENING

BJORK
VOLTA (One Little Indian)

So my undying love for all thinks Bjork cannot and will not die. So, it is with great pleasure, I talk about her new album Volta. On this album she worked with Timbaland, Brian Chippendale of Lighting Bolt and Antony of Antony and The Johnsons fame. I really should just stop there, because that should be enough to make you salivate. It is said to be Bjork 's return to fun music, though I had a ball listening to Meudlla. This will be a more percussive affair in the tradition of maybe Homogenic but not as dark. What can you expect? It's Bjork, I expect to shit myself by the fourth song, and so yes I will be prepared with a diaper. Bjork, is, was, has been, will be, one of the most original artists of the music climate, she doesn't make albums as much as she makes statements, and for years she has managed to mix elements of electronica, folk, beat boxing, dance, even throat singing into albums that are put out by a major label and are artsy and obscure while still being pop sensible to a degree.

BATTLES
MIRRORED (Warp)

Battles describe their music as "modern." Well, I would agree, take everything you like about music of the last twenty years and all of it is present in Battles music. I've been waiting a looooooooong time for this album to come out, and it was definitely worth the wait. For those of you familiar with the Battles of their 3 Eps, please abandon that idea, as that was the four musicians becoming the band, this IS the band. Where there was once space, there now lies two or three more counter melodies. John Stanier's drumming is no less amazing than it phenomenal-perb. Metric and solid like a drum machine, but not, his fills are amazing his sense of timing unreal, you are not ready. The trio of Ian Williams, Tyondai Braxton, and Dave Konopka continue to bounce melodies to and fro, hither and tither, and the tennis match of sound is beyond enjoyable. Add to the mix Tyondai's take on "singing" and you have not only and instrumental powerhouse but a band with actual songs, though I doubt they will ever be karaoke fodder, though I could see singing this drunk and making up words, muck like karaoke. It will take seven to eight listens to fully grasp what is really happening here, but one listen and the other six or seven will come naturally. Music from this point changes for me, the period after this record will be called the "post-Mirrored" era.

SHAPES AND SIZES
SPLIT LIPS, WINNING HIPS, A SHINER
(Asthamtic Kitty)

Shapes and Sizes debut album was full of serrated pop that while seemingly fine, was only the beginning of has now become grand. Split Lips, Winning Hips, A Shiner hints at many things while still charting new horizons. Songs simmer and explode, they drip and ooze, the life on this music is apparent and unmistakable. We could mention things like Broken Social Scene, US Maple, or Animal Collective. Maybe even Destroyer, but what does that say about this band? Really nothing. But you know…For real, this album kills on many levels, it swells and lingers, it's emotional and captivating without being cliché or relying or overdone tricks. I feel it in my veins, it bleeds, it becomes your stereo, it makes your popcorn better. Don't sleep sleepers the dawn is upon you.

WILCO
SKY BLUE SKY (Nonesuch)

If there is an album that will return Wilco to their position with the haters of their weird songs, this is the album. This one doesn't go too far out, it has the classic feel of Ghost Is Born but no ten minute free from jams. "You Are My Face" manages to mix soul rock with something else and Nels Cline. Speaking of Nels Cline, as he was not a member of the band on their last album, he is now in tow, and his paint-strokes color this record in a way that elevates the band while still remaining true to sound of the band. "Impossible Germany" may be the gem of this album. As Tweedy is free of the woe and drug haze, this album is open and spacious, and while not sunny, it's like the sunny cloudy jacket weather kind of day, that's warm enough in the day, but cold at night. To anyone who dismissed the band as noodley and experimental this record could as easily be played in hipster digs as it could on one of those smooth rock stations right along with Buffalo Springfield. So people expecting Yankee Hotel Foxtrot you may be disappointed and for those expecting Summerteeth, you might feel better about this one. I think Wilco is one of the few bands that continues to improve and spread a new wing as it continues to fly, a multi winged bird, yeah, a bird man….

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Toots & The Maytals

Thu. - May 3
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Ladybug Mecca
From Digable Planets
MC Nosaprise
DJ Comp1

Fri./Sat - May 4 & 5
Houston Splash

Sun. - May 6
MuteMath
Somebody Still Loves You,
Boris Yeltsin
The Cinematics

Thur. - May 10
Outlaw Art Car Ball
Dash Rip Rock
Honky
Amplified Heat

Fri. - May 11 - War & Peace
Party Benefit for Autism
DJ Sean Carnahan

Sat. - May 12
Paramore
This Providence
Quietdrive

Mon. - May 14
The Tooth & Nail Tour
featuring MXPX
Hawk Nelson
The Classic Crime
The Fold

Sat. - May 19
Pimpadelic
Whiskey & A Revolver
Six Past Hell
Pinche Gringos

Sat. - May 19
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Friday, May 4th, 2007
THE JONBENET - Pluto Records
FUCK THE FACTS - Relapse Records
50/50 - 625 Thrashcore
INDISGUST
ALL HANDS ON DECK
Walter's 4215 Washington Ave.
Doors @ 7:30 All Ages $8

Friday, May 11th, 2007
KITTIE X Of Infamy Records
WALLS OF JERICHO - Trustkill Records
CALICO SYSTEM - Eulogy Recordings
NEUROSONIC - Bodog Music
EYES SET TO KILL
SINCE THE ASHES
Engine Room 1515 Pease St.
Doors @ 6:30 All Ages $14
presale / $16 Day of Show

Sunday, May 13th, 2007
THE HANDSHAKE MURDERS - Goodfellow Records
LIGEIA - Ferret Music
YEAR OF DESOLATION - Prosthetic Records
BEFORE...THERE WAS ROSALYN
Walter's 4215 Washington Ave.
Doors @ 7:30 All Ages $10

Tuesday, May 15th, 2007
KRUM BUMS - TKO Records
HARD SKIN
Walter's 4215 Washington Ave.
Doors @ 8:00 All Ages $10

Wednesday, May 16th, 2007
ON MY SIDE - Words Of War Records
BATTLE!
LMF
OFF MY BACK
Walter's 4215 Washington Ave.
Doors @ 8:00 All Ages $8

10 Questions?

Jonathon Welch of Million Year Dance

His Holiness Jonathon Welch, vocalist from Million Year Dance, has graciously agreed to an interview with his favorite Houston rag (after the Indigo Sun). Welch is an immensely talented vocalist, Yoga instructor, and ground-breaking narcissist. Here is a glimpse into his mind.



1. Who was the 1st singer you ever found yourself imitating or inspired by?

My Dad

2. Where is music headed? Where is your music headed?

Doyle (guitar player) would like to see more dynamic of melody in our music and on that Doyle is coming into his own. Steven writes all the time, and there would be no way to keep up. Joel has been interested in keeping it simple and fitting the music whereas Nic said that sometimes he just wants the song to end. We all tend to drag out the mood with guitar and piano on every song. My music itself is getting smaller while the melody lines and lyrical content deepens. There are so many things to be discovered in one or two chords. Kind of like a clock. I want my guitar to sound like a clock and the melody to sit over it.

3. Why are you such a pretentious bastard? I mean c'mon, why do critics call you 'self-obsessed'?

This might add to the steam of the persons whom carry that opinion. It is something that has happened to me since high school. What I do as an artist is pure. I don't have any attachment to who I think I am or who I want to be. I open myself to be the mouthpiece of God or what ever you might call spiritual divinity, the inherent light of eternity; and this sense works itself through me. It is hard for people to accept something that is pure. Purity is frightening because it leaves you vulnerable. Then the basic human reaction is to lash out and protect yourself from changing. I don't know, I really don't know what makes people say things. I guess the obvious answer is jealousy. That's what my mom would tell me. I honestly think that who ever might feel that way about me, wouldn't if they just hung out with me for a while. Speaking specifically about being self-obsessed, I think that goes for everyone. Everyone is wrapped up in their personal dilemmas. Still, how can you make any progress or help anyone else unless YOU are not taken care of on the inside.

4. Who are your favorite Houston bands?

I think there are many folks in this city sharing the common thought that Houston has a scene, and that scene is creating a subculture of its own, and not to toot the Free Press horn, but I feel both the bands and the scene were present at the last Block Party, and it seems to me, the bands in Houston, like us, are creating our own scene and it's something that could strike a sense of belief. And this is who could do it.

Million Year Dance, of course, I have to keep up my image here...
Studemont Project , The Defenestration Unit, Penny Royal, Scattered Pages, The Generic Tribe, Peek-a-boo Theory, Deep Ella, Two Star Symphony, Lanky, Lee Alexander, Arthur Yoria, The Lost Keys, Bring Back the Guns ,Drum, Natty Turna, Persephone, Eye Against, The Fucking Transmissions, Free Radicals,

Sorry, if I miss anyone, that's just off the top of my head. If you had these bands on a line up you would be in for a great show, and yes, they are all out there, somewhere in Houston, building a scene around them. I say we all help each other.

5. Does this belt make me look fat?

If I know who is asking this question the answer is probably yes, but with a nice slimming suit coat, we can knock ten inches off your waste, for sure.

6. Any notable projects/shows coming up you wanna tell us about?

May 19th at Fitzgeralds. Be prepared to see Fitz in a new light, meaning, you won't recognize the place when you walk in. Two bands on the bill, Us, and Eye Against. It sounds like a strange matching and that's what we like about it, sort of like a battle, to see if we can hold our ground. This show is also a video shoot for Eye Against, and the show will sell out, so you have to get there early. Persephone will be opening the show as sort of a middle ground between the two bands. We have new material, and free stuff to share. We also relate to Eye Against very well. They are really getting their hands dirty and digging up their own scene out in Houston, acutually shaking hands and building relationships with the people that support their shows. It's a great thing to be a part of, and it will be the way we do things from here on out. Building true, and intimate relationships, one of meaning and inspiration.

7. What is your earliest memory?

Walking into our new house in Hutto TX when I was two. I remember falling on my butt in the kitchen and being frightened because the tall ceilings and the tile echoed.

continued pg. 13



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YOUNG LOVE
UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF GIANTS

FRI. MAY 25th @ WALTER'S ON WASHINGTON
LAURA VEIRS
and Saltbreakers

SAT. MAY 26th @ WALTER'S ON WASHINGTON
MARY TIMONY

SUN. MAY 27th @ NUMBERS
MELT BANANA
XBXRX THE JONX

MON. MAY 28th @ NUMBERS
EL-P

SAT. JUN 2nd @ WALTER'S ON WASHINGTON
STATE RADIO
(ex-DISPATCH)

THU. JUN 7th @ WALTER'S ON WASHINGTON
THE HOLD STEADY

FRI. JUN 15th @ THE PROLETARIAT
GREAT LAKE SWIMMERS

FRI. JUN 16th @ THE PROLETARIAT
UNSANE

WED. JUN 20th @ WALTER'S ON WASHINGTON
MENOMENA

8. Prerequisite question: Who would win in a brawl between Henry Rollins and Glen Danzig (circa 94)?

Well if this is the year that Henry was singing "LIAR" and Glen was singing "Mother" in that fishnet wife beater, then Henry Rollins would have defiantly kicked his ass that year.

10. Who would make a better bass player for Million Year Dance: Buddha Post-Enlightenment or Christ Pre-Ressurection?

It would have to be Buddha, simply because Nic Houston already has that minimal, droning sound, that gives our music it's deepness. I think Buddha would probably play like Nic. I think Christ would have probably been in to funk at this point of his life. No room in our music for slaps and be-bopin'.

Purity is frightening because it leaves you vulnerable

9. How often do you write? What song do you wish you wrote?

I write all the time. If you asked some of the employees at Whole Foods they might tell you I never shut up. I can't help it, it just comes out, you know first hand, you heard me singing in the bathroom at Warehouse Live talking about holding my penis. I wish I wrote what ever song my turn you on.

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Free Press Houston
Issue 79 | 05/07

FROG EYES;
REIGN ON REIGN ON REIGN ON

By Kwame M. Anderson



If there had to be a word to describe a Frog Eyes album, that word could be adventure. Whether it be musically or lyrically, the feeling of exuberance one can feel after listening to one of the band's albums is undeniable. The lyrics tell tales of kings, mayors, merchants and their various disappointments or manipulations. The lines are written with quotes and parentheses infusing perspective, it as if sometimes to read the lyrics and listen to the songs is a separate experience, rewarding in both instances, but not to be over-thought. But so often it may be, for as songwriter/singer/guitarist Carey Mercer is a writer of moving and vivid prose, he also fronts a rock band, and to intellectualize the band's music without taking into account the fact that they too rock may be missing the point.

"I think the first three records (The Golden River, The Bloody Hand, and The Folded Palm, all available on Absolutely Kosher records) were more, had more somatic connections to them, and I think this record (Tears Of The Valedictorian) is way more blank," responds Mercer, "And I think the reason for that is written over a larger period of time. So, um, there isn't one, there isn't a single lyrical statement you could make about it, I don't have the focus to, you know, think of something for three years…it's funny because there isn't much of any over-arching thread to this record, but if you listen to it, to my ear, it's the most cohesive record, which suggests to me that music is about music, not about stories. Stories find themselves in the music, but I think, primarily, it's (music) more important you know…"

Mercer, along with Melanie Campbell, Michael W. Rak. McCloud Zicmuse, and (sometimes) Spencer Krug have crafted music that is cinematic in a sense, wildly dramatic, a bit zany, but never boring. Their sound has seemed to evolve over time, from the slower pace of songs such as "Masticated Outboard Motors" to the crooked groove of "Russian Berries You're Quiet Tonight" to the urgency of a song like "Stockades." As the band has developed so has the ability of the band to translate the sordid sentinels. Some songs seems to invent and re-invent themselves, and Mercer tends to revisit material all the time in various forms whether it be acoustic or whether it be pieces of lyrics in other songs that eventually form in to songs as is the case with the phrase "I was a singer and sang in your home" which first appeared in the song "The Putrid Dawn Is For Us Baby" (which appeared on Mercer's solo Blackout Beach album) and eventually reappeared on the song "Bushels." But it is the evolution of an idea, the discovery and exploration of the design, which keeps Frog Eyes interesting and intriguing. It is not uncommon to hear a song performed or approached many ways whether it be Nina Simone's take on "The Ballad Of Hollis Brown" versus Bob Dylan's version, or whether it be Lee Hazelwood and Nancy Sinatra's version of "You Lost That Loving Feeling" versus The Righteous Brothers version. Songs can tend to put on different suits for different occasions, and in the case Frog Eyes this is most definitely true.

"It's true, I like Karen Dalton a lot, she's, her and Nina Simone are like, I don't know, the greatest singers of the 20th century, for me at least, and they're, you know, they sing other people's songs mostly, if not exclusively…but uh, I guess difference is uh, you know…I mean is it fair to say that I'm covering myself? I don't know if it's exactly that. I think it is neat to hear different versions of things, not necessarily remixed, but coming fresh and from a totally new day, new standpoint.

Another great quality about the music of Frog Eyes, is that as it seems to unravel itself, new things can be uncovered, the picture is not quite what is seems in a way. Much like looking at a painting, or a picture in your house, or maybe even like looking at your neighborhood or something. At first there is the recognition of the constants, but once your eyes really become transfixed and (sort of) used to the scenery, the subtleties begin reveal themselves. The flowers, the colors of things in the background, the shape of the clouds, or something more abstract. The same can be said for Frog Eyes albums, after the initial bombast has set in, after becoming accustomed to the chord changes and melodies, all of a sudden there is something else. The whispering in the right speaker, the guitar part really low in the mix, the keyboard melody that was never apparent, and as the parts become recognizable there is still a long way before understanding the song (the thing as it may be) as a whole.

"One of the things that I would love to achieve all the time is to have things buried within the music that pop up, after repeated listening, you know, and lyrics is something that I think gives the song a bit of longevity, you can come back to the lyrics, but I also think that first and foremost the sound of it should be hiitng you first. If you don't like the sound of it, then, there's not much beyond that. But I also think it's a record that takes a few listens to reveal itself and I'm happy with that…That's such an incredible thing about music, I guess it's the same with a lot of art (but) music has so much movement, it's so alive, um, and that's one of the things I love about making music is that once you're done with your creation you still get to swim around in it, you get to rock, you know, you don't get to rock a novel, and think that temporal nature allows you to come back and back and back to it."

Well, you will get your chance to rock to or with Frog Eyes when they appear in our city at The Proletariat May 12th. While much can be stated about the band in terms of recordings, live, they aint no punk, as one might say. For it was after seeing them, ONCE, that I fervently hunted down all of their albums after a spirited performance, in a record store of all places, and I cannot remember an instance that matches that in the case of this writer. Will it change your world, that is all dependent upon how willing you are to take in the experience, but the same can be said for most things. But let me assure you, Frog Eyes is one of those bands that reminds me why I am fanatic about music, why I write about bands for little or no pay, because in the end, this is what you hope for when you listen to music to be touched, to be shaken, and Frog Eyes is definitely eligible for that qualification.


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Dead Man Wukman

by Alex "Asshole" Wukman



Stephen Marley feat. Jr. Gong

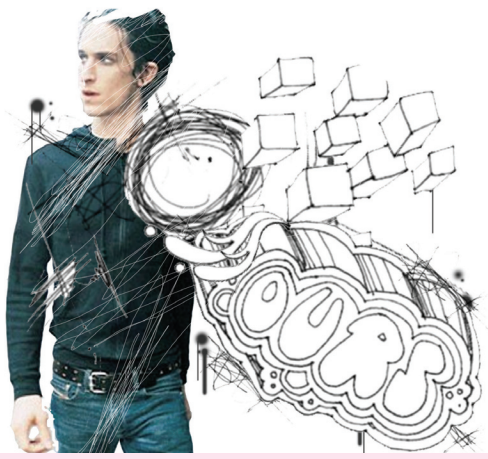
May 4th | Warehouse Live

234 this is the kinda shit I'm talking about. Marley siblings still up in the mix kickin ya in teeth with weed hits. I don't know why people celebrate 4/20 anymore because all you have to do to relive that day is attend a Marley concert. Warehouse Live is going to be vibed out on this night and I will be layin all up in the mix, hopefully swaggerin my drunk ass in and out of hot African American chicks in clean ass clothes, dancin tight. Reggae is music for the soul and the Marley's are legends in the genre, do yourself a favor and meet me up at this shit, just look for the crowd of women in a big cloud of smoke.

Ours w/ April Bauer

May 21st | Warehouse Live

The singer of Ours sounds just like Jeff Buckley. Enough fucking said. Go to this just because I said that. If you're a fan of U2, Radiohead, Jeff Buckley and the like, then I would highly recommend attending this. I honestly haven't heard any of the new stuff they've put out though, and the last stuff I remember from Distorted Lullabies was in fucking warp drive. One can only wonder why a band this good hasn't gotten proper recognition and acclaim yet and has kind of been proof that it doesn't matter how good you are in the record industry but rather how hard you suck and how much you can swallow.



Melt Banana w/ XBXRX

May 27th | Numbers

In the words of Beavis "YES! YES!! YES! this RULES!! This RUULLLEESS!!". Melt muthafuckin BANANA ALL UP IN THIS BITCH FROM JAPAN!! The Japanese do it ruthless on that musical stylings and Melt Banana is no exception. The singer is this like, small, little Japanese chick who hops around and yells her fucking ass off and looks hot and revives punk rock all at the same time. I'm a big fan of good guitar work in bands as well and I've heard that Melt Banana's guitar player didn't know how to really play when they started the band so he just made noise with effects pedals. Three years later, homeboy is fucking slaying your ass. I swear to god if this is not sold out, I will drive a stake in the heart of all that is known as music in Houston.



Penny Royal

May 31st | Numbers

The fucking Royal. These boys is probably some of the clutchest musicians I know, and it appears as if they will be clutching it up Numbers-style on the 31st. I will be at this. Friends Timmy, Omar, and I got to listen to their new EP in the car on the way back from "The New Vernon", Penny Royals new lair, and probably played the first track on repeat 20-something times. I am definitely going to recommend attending just to pick up their new EP, not to mention watching the show. I don't write puff pieces if I don't think they're necessary or well-deserved, but these guys are extremely talented and I would much rather see kids watch Penny Royal have an electronic mishap than go see the same Eyeagainst show we've been watching since we were all 13. If you're a fan of Muse, Radiohead, The Beatles, Queen, or pretty much anything revolutionary, go to this show. I have converted many lost souls into checking this band out and they are all believers now. Penny Royal also just returned from some much-anticipated showcasing in New York with a great response, so I'm just saying catch 'em now before you have to pay $60-$100 to see them when they open for _____ _(insert stadium band name here).





May 31st 2007

NUMBERS



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Free Press Houston
Issue 79 | 05/07

Grand Theft Auto IV

by Tyler Barber



GTA IV's Eastern European protagonist Niko Belic

Or, GTA Mainline?

Grand Theft Auto IV's debut trailer drew so much traffic that it crashed any site hosting the video. Viewers were treated to a sixty-three second tour of the densely populated location for GTA IV. Liberty City, a farce New York City and the location of GTA III, will host several familiar landmarks, but with the signature GTA satire. There's a faux Statue of Liberty, Brooklyn Bridge, Met Life building, even four of the five boroughs are represented (sorry Wu-Tang Clan, Staten Island isn't included). Rockstar, GTA's developer, says the city will be smaller than San Andreas, but will feature a more layered environment, complete with indoor locals. The graphics impress when coupled with the new physics engine, which will generate realistic reactions not only from the citizens that inhabit Liberty City, but also main protagonist Niko Belic. For example, when Niko opens a heavy, wooden door, he'll lean into it, conveying the sense of weight behind the door. With this engine, Rockstar hopes to channel a deeper narrative where they give the players a choice in how *they* will unfold the story. In addition, Rockstar aims to accurately capture the vibe of present-day New York City by createing the assortment of characters that you would run into in the real Big Apple. Expect a lot of foreigners, elitists, weirdo's and muggings, as in true New York fashion, when the sun goes down, it will become a different city. But what about the terrible combat in all previous GTA titles? Rockstar says it found a new, "sweet spot" for targeting and combat, but keep in mind, this is what they said for all the former GTA's too. Unfortunately with GTA IV, the sky is the limit, as there will be no airplanes or the like in this one. Still, the game's release date, October 16th, couldn't come fast enough.



super happy fun land

May 1st:
Foolproof
Icarus Rises

May 2nd:
She
Tartufi
Burn Alaska

May 3rd:
Ohsees
Plastic Farm Animals

May 4th:
Black Heart Society
Odd Toddler
Airline

May 5th:
Sat Matinee Showcase for Local Bands 3pm-7pm

May 5th:
Stephen Chavez
Buttercup
Dirty Leg
Theater Fire
Mirabai

May 10th:
Boids

May 11th:
Pontiak
The Neptones

May 12th:
Super Happy Fun Land Mobile in the Houston Art Car Parade!

May 12th:
Z'EV
Sikhara
Rotten Piece

May 13th:
BBQ & Art show 3pm-8pm
The Carnys
The Bird Names
The Defenestration Unit
Smoke Detector

May 15th:
Hollywood Black
Casados
The Goods
The Loving Ones

May 17th:
Eiliyas
Club of Rome
Fire Knife
Kunst Fascion
Rua Minx

May 18th:
B-Side & the Sans Bayonet with Gentle Gentile
The Cocker Spaniels
V8
D- Rail
The Low Ends

May 19th:
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Drowned In Sound Club (DISC)
The Adalines

May 19th:
Vegan Chef Joshua Ploeg
The Alice Rose

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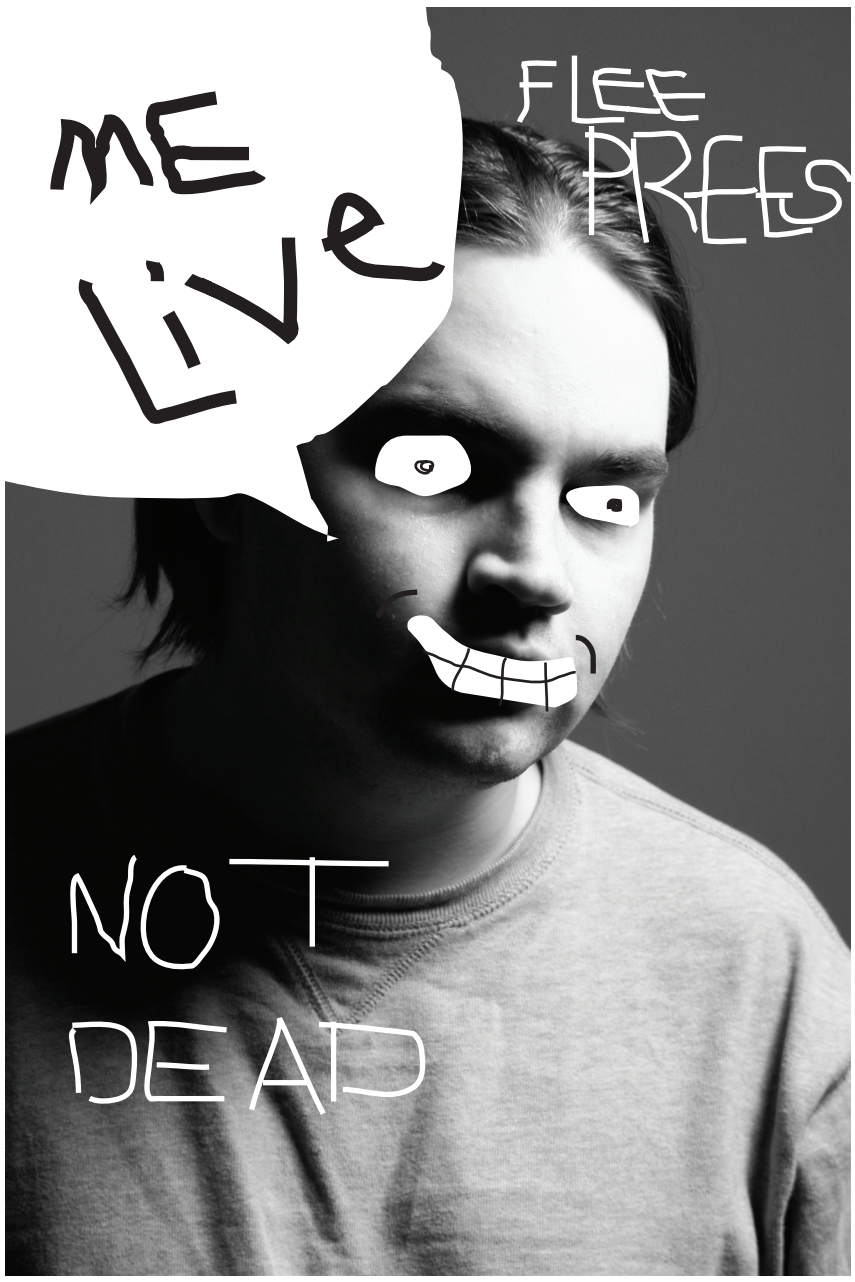


Free Press Houston
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World

Dead Man Wukman

by Alex "Asshole" Wukman



symbolically cast off the shackles of the past and move into the liberating potential of the future

Dear Everyone,

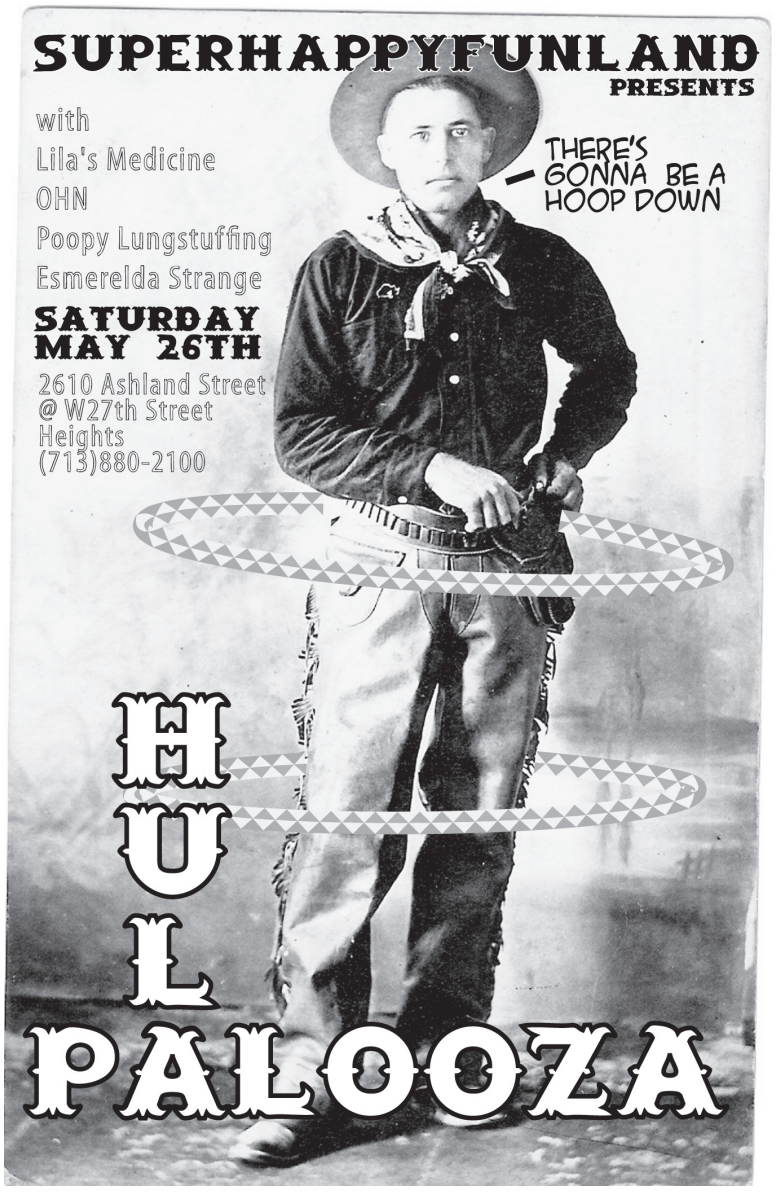
Initially I was going to write an article on the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Center controversy. For those of you who don't know the City of Houston wants to cancel a 99 year lease made in 1964 to the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Authority. The Center, which is located on West Dallas at Shepherd, has been paying $1 a year rent to the city since the lease was signed. Two weeks ago city council decided that under the city charter they didn't have the authority to enter into a 99 year lease. So they told MHMRA to pack up. This in effect would end decades of in and outpatient support and service to one of the most at risk segments of the population, but you don't want to heart about that. You want an apology. You want an explanation. You want blood. And I'm willing to give them to you. All I ask in return is that you hear me out because there are things I need to say. I need to tell you I'm sorry. I'm sorry for the pain and suffering this caused. I'm sorry that it spread so far so fast and affected so many people so negatively. I'm sorry that you felt you lost a friend. I'm also sorry that you thought this was nothing more than a sick joke, a desperate plea for attention or at worst a cynical ploy to get laid. None of those were the goals I started with. I didn't set out to hurt anyone, get negative attention, alienate friends or have a one night stand. What I wanted was based on simple, powerful goals; goals that resonated to the very depths of the human soul and tried to transcend the earthly bound.

I wanted to create a piece of art that was real. One that wasn't hidden away in a gallery, trapped in a theatre or bound to a bar, a piece that followed you home. I wanted it to be about the heaviest of topics—life and death. I wanted it to remind you of the transitory nature of life itself. I wanted to cut through the layer of armor we build around ourselves so we all could experience a true, pure emotion—one that hadn't been commodified, co-opted, assimilated or absorbed. Sadly that emotion was grief. I wanted to do the improbable to prove that it was possible, to die and be reborn; to symbolically cast off the shackles of the past and move into the liberating potential of the future.

I also wanted to give my friends better entertainment. Something to talk about besides the usual—work, sports, relationships, TV, movies, music, videogames, drugs, etc. I wanted to give them a mystery, something to use those critical thinking abilities and deductive reasoning skills. Which is why I left 13 clues anyone could have grasped. Many found some, some found most but none found all. And I wanted to do all of this while making a biting social commentary on the media and internet domination of our lives, the decline of interpersonal relationships and the self-imposed information isolation of those in "the scene."

I have just one more thing left to say. I'm ready for that beating now.

Sincerely,
Alex Wukman





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Dingle-Berry

Michael Berry is a terd on the collective ass of Houston

By Sousan Hammad



City councilman Michael Berry, host of the conservative Talk Radio show on KPRC, is battling to save his reputation from a war of words he espoused on air. In a series of racist and bigoted comments that are archived on KPRC's Talk Radio website, Berry incredulously insults the Native American people.

On March 27, the city councilman who chairs the City of Houston's Transportation, Infrastructure and Aviation Committee, said that the U.S. should "stop the continuous apology for what was done to the American Indians." These are the words that come from an "educated" man who has two "prestigious" law degrees. And, ironically, these are the words coming from a man who serves on the Houston Holocaust Museum Board.

Now let us imagine that Berry said that people should 'stop the continuous apology for what was done to the Jewish people.' Berry would be immediately fired, labeled an atrocious anti-Semite, and probably even lose his beloved title as city councilman. It is clear however that he desires the acceptance from the Jewish community, (i.e. Jewish lobbyists…i.e. campaign funds), and wouldn't dare question the remembrance of their suffering.

The perplexity of Berry's racist comments are a mockery to everything he stands for – including "councilman of the year," an award given to him by none other than our local blue pig army (the Houston Police Department).

Berry also said, "We continue to give land (to American Indians)…why are we still doing that?" Sorry to inform you, oh educated one, but Americans are occupying a land that first belonged to the Native American population which your forefathers massacred.

Berry responded to criticism and fury over his remarks by posting a letter on his blog site. In the very first sentence he says, "The reason I love hosting a talk radio show is that it gives me an opportunity to share ideas I have…" He goes on to claim that he did not intend to insult or demean American Indians. Aside from all the bullshit, Berry has the audacity to claim he said what he said in order to "challenge policies."

After reading the transcript, I emailed Mr. Berry and asked him if he had anything to say in regard to his racist comments which were aired on the conservative

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Dingle-Berry cont.

radio show. He replied back to me and said, "That happened a month ago, and shortly thereafter, I did research on the matter." Apparently he researched and came up with this conclusion: "I don't think that challenging policies of our shared government… is insulting…or anyway racist or hateful. It is a healthy part of making good public policy."

Perhaps if Michael Berry did not waste so much time on expressing an urgency to pass a law to ban the Freeway Bloggers from protesting on the bridges that overlap US-59, (this merits as "good public policy"), he would find better time to research. Nevertheless, Berry claims that the protestors are a distraction to drivers and that it can potentially lead to car accidents.

Or does Berry just disagree with the anti-war message that the freeway bloggers adhere to? In January of 2003, a coalition of Houston anti-war groups proposed a resolution at City Council to add Houston to the other 43 cities that have passed resolutions against the war in Iraq. Michael Berry however opposed the resolution, saying "I would suggest that we stick to the issues that affect this city…", because the war in Iraq does not affect Houstonians, only the 655,000 Iraqis (and counting) that have died.

Alas, Michael Berry cares about humankind after all. He went on to say how more blue pigs (police officers) are needed on the streets of Houston, because face it Houston, without the blue pig army we would live in a horrible place, with horrible people, in a horrible state of anarchy.

Michael's last words, (a pathetic apology indeed), were "I should've been more careful in how I expressed myself." Well Houston, here is your chance to let him know how you feel, call Michael Berry at the KPRC station at 713-212-5772 weekdays from 6-9 a.m., (and be nice at first so they put you on air).





Let's send Michael Berry to a reservation for politicians who think that all's fair in love and genocide



design: nickcooper.com

"We need to stop wasting all this time and energy apologizing to the American Indian, which we continue to do ... We give them casinos, we give them special licenses, we give them special scholarships and why I don't understand ... We conquered them, that's history - Hello... You got to be against giving welfare to the American Indians because of the fact , that 200 years ago they were whipped in a war. Lets just call it what it is, they lost a war."

-- Houston Councilmember Michael Berry, March 27, 2007

This shirt on sale at:
cafepress.com/michaelberry

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How to Sell Drugs

The Strange Profits from a Re-Branded Cancer Drug

By PETER ROST, MD



In a February 2007 press release, Abraxis BioScience reported record revenue of $765 million in 2006 versus $521 million for 2005. They made that money selling a new version of an old cancer drug at $4,200 per dose.

That new drug is called Abraxane and it has pushed Abraxis BioScience stock from $5 in 2002 to $27 in 2007. The lofty stock price has made Abraxis CEO and Chairman, Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong a billionaire; Dr. Soon-Shiong owns 84 percent of the stock, today worth about $3.8 billion.

Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong has been criticized for hyping his research results and he has been accused of ripping off investors. Even his own brother, an early backer, sued him for fraud and fired him-twice-from the company they started. Their fight lasted two years and destroyed their relationship. But in the end, it is Dr. Soon-Shiong who has prevailed.

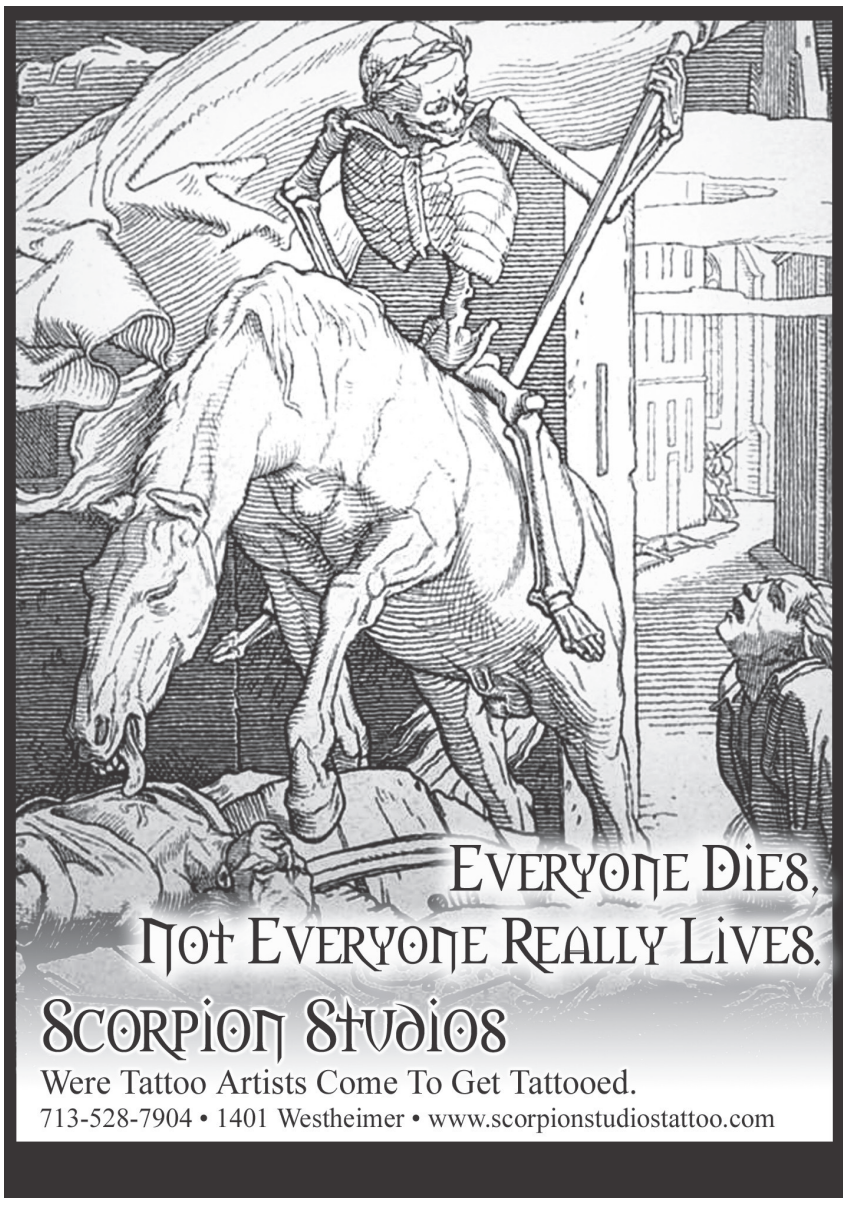
Today, Dr. Soon-Shiong is making money hand over fist. After all, his "new" drug costs 25 times more than an older, generic version (paclitaxel). There is, however, little difference between the new drug and older therapy; in fact, they both use the same active molecule. The only difference is that in Abraxane paclitaxel is bound to a protein, to make it easier to inject. And Abraxane doesn't help patients live longer than the old, generic, version of the drug.

It is also noteworthy that an independent review article of Abraxane and similar drugs in "Annals of Oncology" concluded, "do these agents represent anything more than old wine in a new bottle? With currently available data, we have to say, 'not really'."

So how has Abraxis BioScience been able to sell so much of a drug that isn't

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How to Sell Drugs cont.

really much better than the old version and how has Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong been able to get so rich?

Some AstraZeneca oncology sales reps think they have part of the answer. They claim that those rapidly escalating sales may have been built upon off-label marketing.

AstraZeneca co-promotes Abraxane with Abraxis BioScience, and those sales representatives claim that at a joint sales meeting between AstraZeneca and Abraxis, which took place in December 2006 in Pittsburg, things went awfully wrong.

The meeting was led by AstraZeneca Regional Sales Director Mike Zubillaga, who has since been terminated by AstraZeneca, together with an Abraxis Medical Science Liaison (MSL) and two District Sales Managers; one from Abraxis and one from AstraZeneca.

Eight AstraZeneca oncology sales reps and eight Abraxis reps participated in the training, and they received the assistance of a whopping seven oncologists, who made some extra cash, tutoring the sixteen sales reps.

According to some of those AstraZeneca sales reps, the Abraxis Medical Science Liaison made it known that the Abraxis MSLs were available for off-label discussions (such as lung cancer) with oncology doctors, and that the AstraZeneca reps should use them as a resource. Then the Abraxis District Sales Manager allegedly pointed out that coordination of these meetings should be done by cell phone only, and that email or voicemail should be avoided.

If these allegations are true, this all sounds very familiar.

In May 2004, Pfizer's subsidiary Warner-Lambert paid a $430 million fine for off-label promotion of Neurontin. The Department of Justice stated that Warner-Lambert "utilized "Medical Liaisons," who represented themselves (often falsely) as scientific experts in a particular disease, to promote off-label uses for Neurontin."

And the sales efforts for Abraxane are clearly paying off. Over 20,000 people have been treated with Abraxane, and sales are expected to reach $1 billion by 2010.

But that may not be how things play out.

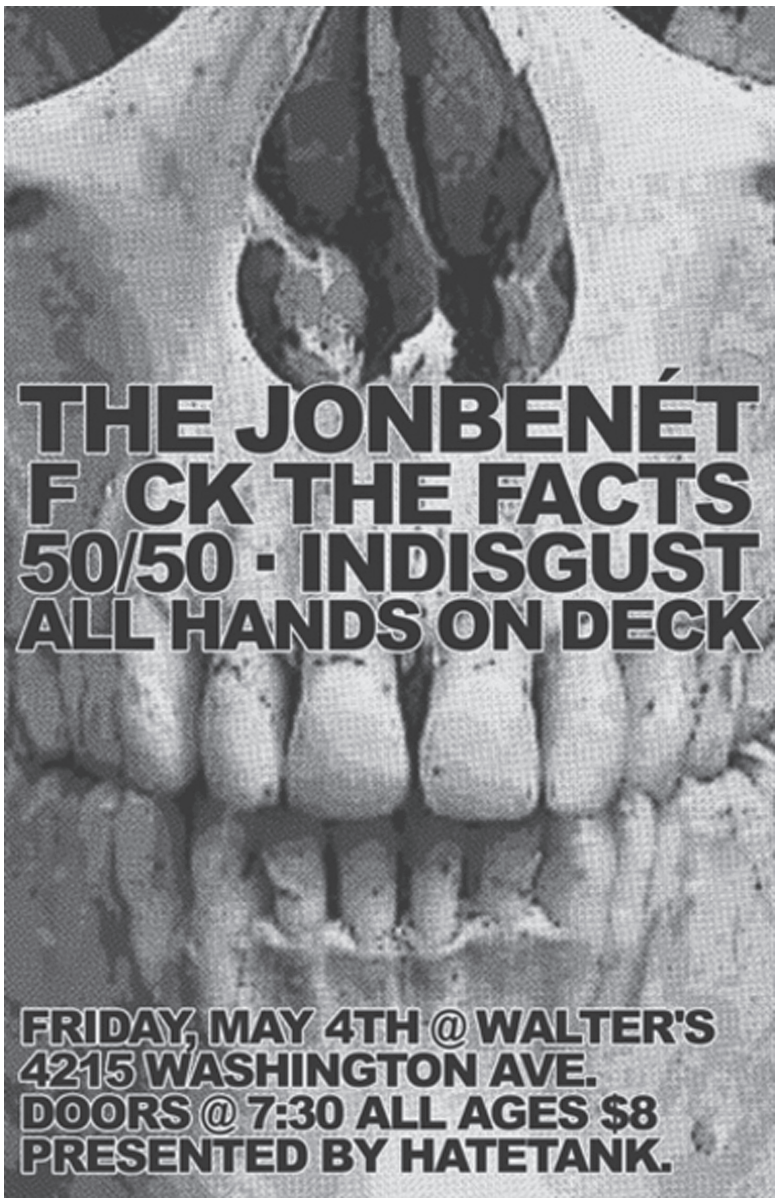
Because those concerned AstraZeneca sales reps who participated in the meeting with Abraxis BioScience didn't stay silent. They claim a "Code of Conduct report was submitted through the AstraZeneca hotline shortly thereafter." They also told me that, "thus far we are not aware of any investigation or interviews by AZ. No official response from them as of today."

So when AstraZeneca took no visible action, and did not respond, the AstraZeneca oncology sales reps decided to talk to me. And that's the reason you're reading this story today.

UPDATE: AstraZeneca has now responded to the sales reps. Five months after the first report was made, they finally left a message on the hotline for their internal whistleblowers, AFTER the story was leaked to the press.

Peter Rost, M.D., is a former Vice President of Pfizer. He became well known in 2004 when he emerged as the first drug company executive to speak out in favor of reimportation of drugs. He is the author of "The Whistleblower, Confessions of a Healthcare Hitman." See: http://the-whistleblower-by-peter-rost.blogspot.com/

Over 20,000 people have been treated with Abraxane, and sales are expected to reach $1 billion by 2010.





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Sedition Books New Place!

Houston's own radical infoshop, lending library and community space Sedition books is coming back after being victims of arson in February. They have found a new location at 4816 Old Spanish Trail. Sedition Books also has a wishlist of things they are hoping to acquire to spruce up their space.

Billionaires for Coal Show Merrill Lynch some Love



TXU is planning to build 3 new coal power plants in texas and bush's energy plan calls for another 150 coal plants in the us over the next decade. The banks we billionaires rely on to finance our money-making, climate-warming coal power plants are coming under attack from a bunch of environmentalists! These misguided do-gooders are actually trying to stop banks from funding our wonderful, cheap, profitable coal plants. Us billionaires are here today to show our support for merrill lynch for being a major funder of the coal plants that keep making us filthy rich.

Police Increase Surveillance of Freeway Bloggers



For several years the freeway bloggers have stood on bridges over highway 59 with signs calling for the U.S. to stop fighting Israel's wars, and more recently, to Impeach Bush. They protest on weeknights to rush hour traffic.

Recently, At Large City Councilmember Michael Berry proposed a restriction on this exercise in free speech. He claims the protests cause a traffic problem.

Later that day when the freeway bloggers were on Dunlavy bridge, an HPD officer told a protester not to drape his banner over the outside of the fence. The member of Veterans for Peace took down his banner, but was later put into the back of a police car. He was given a 2 minute talk about the possible dangers of banners on the outside of fences, and then let go.

Vigils Show Opposition to Immigration Raids



One year after a major national day of action for immigrant justice, people are mobilizing again. Houstonians will be among thousands of people gathering petitions for comprehensive immigration reform, the DREAM Act, and a halt to immigration raids.

A mix of seasoned and youth organizers addressed a crowd full of families who gathered for a vigil on the one year anniversary of immigration rallies that brought thousands into the streets. The vigil was also in memory of suffering caused by recent ICE raids.

Several speakers mentioned upcoming local actions, including a rally on Saturday, April 28, and a protest against U.S. Border Watch on April 27 when the group will host a fundraiser for anti-immigrant presidential candidate, Tom Tancredo.



Captive Voices

Captive Voices is a prisoner edited bi-annual newsletter zine that Houston Anarchist Black Cross sends to nearly 200 people almost all incarcerated. Issue #15 is 20 pages long and covers a variety of issues with a focus on prison struggles. The Cost of Private Prisons in Florida, Updates on the Angola 3 in Louisiana, The problems with Parole enforcement, death row organizing and other stuff from Texas, as well as prison struggles in Europe, Africa and the Middle East are all addressed in this issue. As most prisoners have very limited means, this burden falls on CV to copy and mail this.

It costs CV $1.20 to print and mail a copy to a prisoner in the US. They also mail a number of issues internationally and submit CV for review with several radical publications. CV is making subscriptions available to free world folks for 3-5 dollars an issue, which will cover your copy as well as defray the expense of at least one prisoner subscription.

Contact: houstonabc@riseup.net, Houston Anarchist Black Cross, Po Box 667614, Houston, TX, 77266

Every Day is Kids' Day at the Bayou City Farmers' Market



Grocery store shelves are lined with rows and rows of boxes and boxes of bleached out, dead, dyed, depleted substances, that have been “fortified” with "nutrients" defined by The Food and Drug Administration. The same entity that approved Vioxx® and Sacharin®. Packaging and branding are the food industries equivalent to spin and propaganda. The last thing the Agriculture Industrial Complex wants a consumer to question is, what’s really in that colorful box, where did it come from, how was it grown and should my children be putting it in their mouths?

Visit your local farmers’ market. You can put food on your family and have fun doing it. Vendors will gladly give you the dirt on their produce while the overhead PA plays live music. There is fresh coffee, cake and cookies as well as the freshest produce in town. There may even be a baby goat or two frolicking among the bokchoy.

Mayor Pro-Tem Michael Berry Attacks Native Americans on his Radio Program

Houston Mayor Pro-Tem Michael Berry had the following to say on his Tuesday March 27th program on KPRC 950am:

If you're against apologizing for slavery then you gotta be against giving welfare to the American Indians because of the fact that 200 years ago they were whipped in a war. And let's just call it what it is: They lost a war. Why don't we go hand the Germans a few million dollars and the Italians and the Japanese -- OK, so we did rebuild their country -- we don't continue to give them aid because they sit around whining about a war from 200 years ago. Are you kidding me? Seriously? And what's interesting is, it's one thing when we do stupid things as a government and we oppose it. What's interesting is how many people out there believe that's a good idea -- "Oh, you gotta help the American Indians, what we did was so wrong." What'd we do? We conquered them. That's history.

Critical Mass Rides Again!



After years of being dormant, Critical Mass returned to Houston last month and will be taking to the streets this Friday as a celebration of the bicycle and human powered transportation. Critical Mass Meets at Tranquility Park in downtown Houston at 6:30pm and rides at 7pm on the last Friday of every month.

Critical Mass is a bike ride typically held on the last Friday of every month in cities around the world where bicyclists and, other self-propelled commuters take to the streets en masse. Critical Mass is not led, and has no officially-stated message, though it is largely understood to be an effort to promote alternative (non-motorized) modes of transportation and to raise awareness about the safety issues that face commuters using non-motorized forms of transportation when sharing the streets with motor vehicles.

March and Rally for Economic Justice Demands Responses to Poverty



On Saturday March 24th, there was a march and rally organized by the Coalition of the Working People and the Poor. The demonstration attracted a diverse crowd of approximately 200-400 people. After a short march the crowd convened at the steps of City hall to chant and hear speeches by community activists and politicians. The raucous chants of the crowd advocated raising the federal minimum wage, healthcare for all, and adequate funding of human needs programs. Many of the speeches were quite poignant and the crowd responded enthusiastically.

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Art Car Confidential

by Michael Bergeron



Ever since anybody can remember Houston has been an energy and gas industry mecca. But not every public occurrence has the charm to attract corporate sponsors and counter culture cachet. The Art Car Parade and its subsequent celebration attracts world wide attention, although as a happening it's the polar opposite of an event like the Houston Grand Prix.

Does it really matter that the nectar of the cars, gasoline is nearing three bucks a gallon? At that price petrol is still cheaper than mouthwash. Most art car drivers don't really put that many miles on their vehicles on an annual basis. You want green energy? More than one art automobile has grass growing on its metal exterior.

Briefly put, the Orange Show hosts the Art Car Parade every year in May and has since its inception in 1988. Previous to that there were a handful art cars and select events like a 1986 parade down Montrose Boulevard featuring floats and cars.

Filmmaker Harrod Blank has documented the art car scene with his auto trilogy Wild Wheels (1992), Driving the Dream (1998), and the upcoming Automorphosis. Over the years the event has achieved a kind of alternative significance that's reserved for true iconoclastic revels like Burning Man. Yet unlike that desert bound holiday the Art Car Parade skews a family audience.

During the early days an Art Car Ball would be held in conjunction with the parade. Some classic parties with chic bands (Red Elvises, Brave Combo) took place on the top level of downtown parking garages, with parking on the lower levels, and food, car displays and booths on the next to top floor.

As the event grew so did a divide between the hoi polloi and the corporate interests. This was most evident when the Art Car Ball took place in the Astrodome in 2001. The coliseum interior all but conjured images of fascist architecture with the domed ceiling, the prominence of the roped off section, and the band du jour's dance music bouncing metallically against the vast space.

This year the Art Car Ball is really the Outlaw Art Car Ball, taking place at the Meridian (1503 Chartres) Thursday May 10, starting the ignition at 8:30 pm. The Art Car Parade rolls at 1 pm, Saturday May 12 starting on Taft Street, the along the Allen Parkway, looping around the Heritage Society downtown and back the way it came. The entire event is televised. An awards show with cash prizes in many categories takes place the following afternoon at the Orange Show.

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