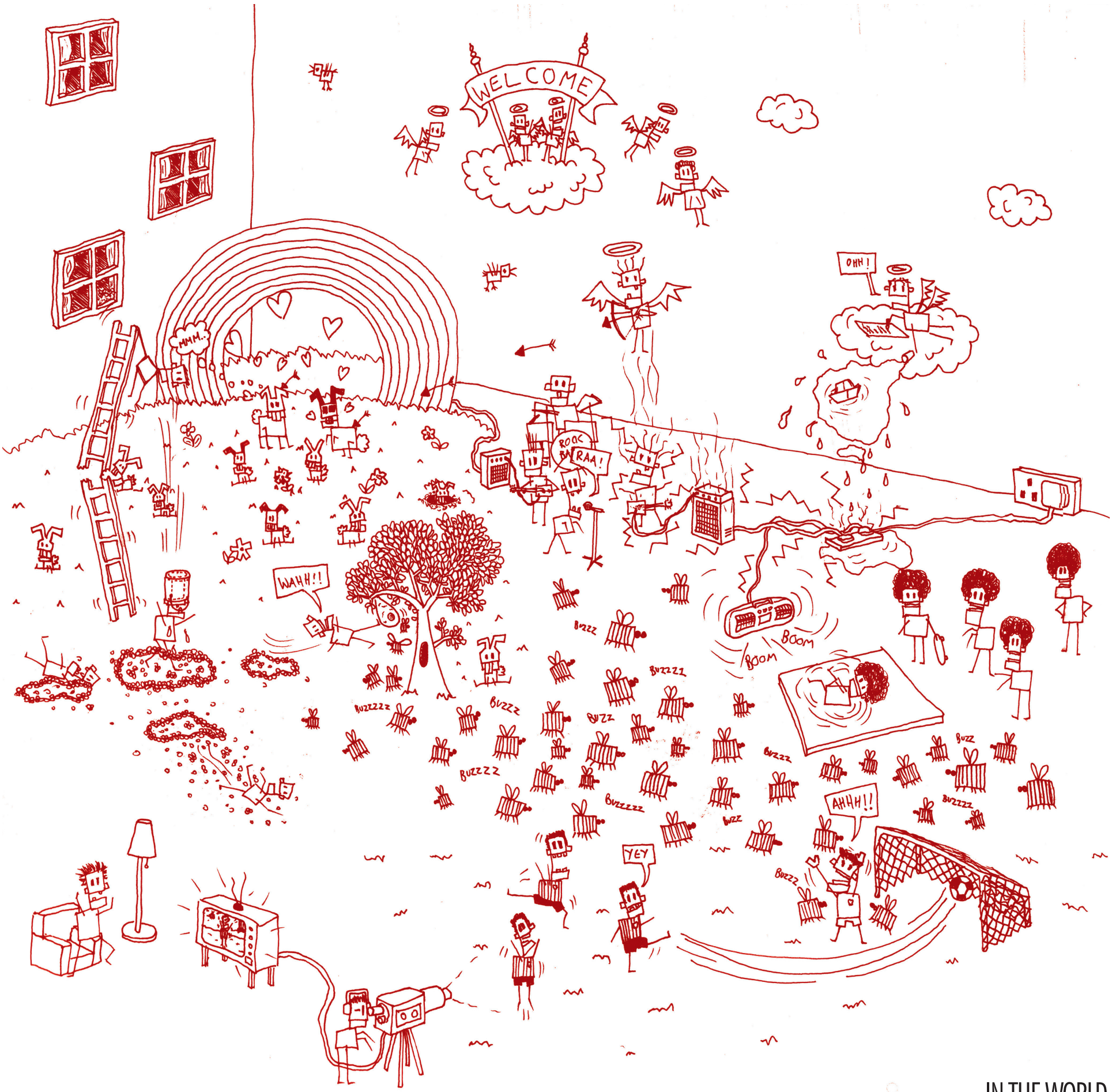
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JUNE 2007
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on the cover:
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Image by Sean Carrol

FEEL FREE TO TAKE US SERIOUSLY

SHOULD THE MONTROSE secede from Houston proper and subsequently invade and occupy the Heights? It deserves some good thought.

Helios has re-opened under the new name 'Avant Garden'. Old patrons have just about swallowed their tongues upon seeing the pristine Victorian décor and to hear Rob Thomas on the speakers. Gone are the tagged bathrooms, local riff-raff, and most of the live music. Imagine: Marble bar and shiny floors in the new smokeless bar. This is a FAR cry from the legendary Helios. Nonetheless, stop by and have a 5 dollar drink and try and remember the time you saw the 17 year old girl barfing spaghetti over the balcony.

In a weird way, the massive I-10 reconstruction is quite beautiful at nights as the workers weld and work away at the monumental inefficiency. The welding makes a massive shower of sparks that light up the freeway.

Anyways, enough of that shit. Enjoy the latest issue and send us some scorching feedback.



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DEBRIS: Hunting for Bullshit

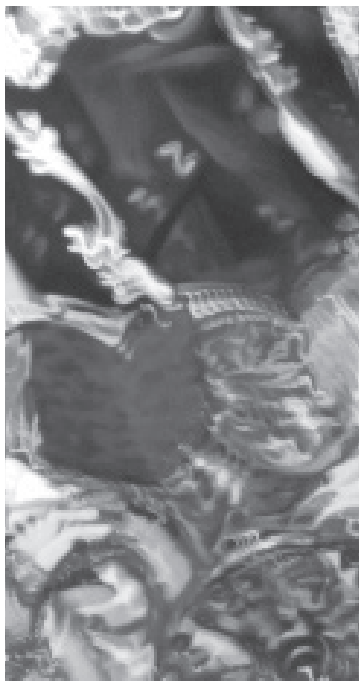
By Buffalo Sean



SOUNDS LIKE international oil company The Hunting Group LLD, with some deep pockets and silky ties, is a little insecure about their new position in Houston. Moving their headquarters from London meant leaving posh digs in the UK's capital for McMansions in Sugar Land, but it has also relieved these suits of their scruples as well (let's assume they had some at some point). In a windfall for Texas artists they brought their $50,000 Hunting Prize with them to the Lone Star State, and the hundreds of people who signed up to enter the competition this year were starry-eyed with promises of recognition and prestige. When this year's strangeness started with a 'short list' of 104 artists; it appeared the corporation couldn't get their shit together and make a decision. No biggie. When they sent out an email requesting entrants to wear a blazer and tie to the award ceremony April 28th it only rubbed a few people the wrong way, last year's winner Francesca Fuchs did look a little funny in all those pictures surrounded by Armani suits wearing her "I'm not an Artist" tee shirt. Whatever. The same email asked artists to arrive an hour before the event; here the little things came into focus quickly, exposing the event as a sham publicity stunt free from critical thought or respectability.

Now it's tough to say a big prize and a big check are bad things; these guys can do whatever they want right? They just have to live with themselves, that's all. Unfortunately the class conflict that came with this year's prize was a bit too much for me to respect these bastard nouveau rich and their representational painting prize. Arriving an hour early at the Decorative Center Houston, a furniture store on Woodway with an excessive lobby, artists were led upstairs to a separate hall where they dined on chicken fingers and macaroni and cheese before being asked to return downstairs and stand next to their paintings, hung in a hallway, for the duration of the event. This degrading display of strength by the Hunting oil company was only compounded by the immense spread of hors d'oeuvres, crab and shrimp in the lobby provided for guests. Unraveling the bullshit, with or without credible jurors, begins with the massive 'short list' provided for the event which served as a show of force by the corporation, compounded by the order to 'stand by your painting'. Shilling for rich people and shuffling your feet for quarters is not the way to ingratiate yourself to anyone except patronizing facelift victims and their whiskey-addled cheating husbands. Most artists try to let their artwork speak for itself, but the ingrates at Hunting decided a mouth stuffed with macaroni and cheese speaking through clenched teeth at the indignity of it all could do it better.

When t ll enter your competition next year. Seeing as the Prize seems to go to representational painters, perhaps this is what Hunting is looking for- a diminished impact and a good 'ol fuck you from anyone worth his salt in Houston. Give the prize to idiots, it's yours to give away- but don't think many people will want to put up with your crude condescension for very long. Tole's photo-realist paintings of Faberge eggs promptly went on sale in May at Conduit Gallery in Dallas, where they should stay, surrounded by mediocrity in a culture of egotistic materialism.





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Virtual Popcorn

By Micheal Bergeron



In Hot Fuzz, there are visual laughs, physical slapstick laughs, clever dialogue laughs, and some insane gore (car accidents, church steeples falling on people) thrown in for good measure.

Looking over the last month at trends in movies some truths are obvious while others are revealing. It's no surprise that huge films unwinding worldwide simultaneously make lots of cheese. But think about it, those films have a short lifespan compared to films that achieve true cult status. Movies like The Big Lebowski and Kill Bill will still be making the rounds well after we're gone, while instant hits like Spiderman 3 will be forgotten long before the sheen on their DVD surface has eroded.

Most surprising were the success of Disturbia and the mordant humor of Georgia Rule. Shia LaBeouf rules the roost as the new It Boy. Disturbia was okay as a thriller but not exceptional and its studio certainly didn't think it was capable of dominating for nearly a month. The only way to ascribe it's being numero uno for three weeks is Shia, soon to be seen in Transformers and Indy Jones 4; directors like him and he has a fan base, many of which are teens. At one point in the movie a character has broken into the garage of the next-door neighbor who may be a killer. "It smells like the corpse of a rotting hottie," says he. Kind of says it all.

Being for or against a particular actor accounts for why some watch a certain movie. You may avoid movies with certain stars because you don't like the glow of their wattage. Lindsay Lohan, currently in Georgia Rule, is one of those types, but to disdain her (or Jane Fonda) merely means you'll miss out on some good laughs. Lohan has solid acting chops, and they're on display in Georgia Rule, an odd duck of a film that wavers between melancholy and sweetness even as it struggles with issues of child molestation. The funny stuff unfolds with the serious stuff, only the serious stuff has a lining of seditious humor.

But comedy can be so much more as seen in Hot Fuzz, my personal favorite film of the year. Hot Fuzz is funnier than Knocked Up, which is a laugh riot. Hot Fuzz isn't strictly a comedy. Directed by Edgar Wright and written by Wright along with lead actor Simon Pegg, Hot Fuzz banks on the stylized humor from their previous effort Shaun of the Dead. There are visual laughs, physical slapstick laughs, clever dialogue laughs, and some insane gore (car accidents, church steeples falling on people) thrown in for good measure.

Firm in its social satire, Hot Fuzz actually falls into the genre deconstruction camp as it progresses from breezy English countryside comedy to suspense thriller to a balls out buddy film with a snide tip of the bobby's cap to such American actioners as Bad Boys 2 and Point Break. Occasionally Hot Fuzz lifts a few bits from the previously mentioned films with Pegg muttering "This shit just got real," or his country bumpkin cohort Nick Frost recreating a male bonding scene from Point Break.

The ads proclaim: From the guys who've watched every action film ever made. You'll believe it after seeing the intensity Wright uses in the editing of chase scenes. The feeling Wright gets with his transitional montages evokes Aronofsky in Requiem For A Dream (one of over a dozen film references sprinkled liberally throughout). But Wright uses sounds and rhythm in a way of his own, so much that you can identify it like a signature. The way Sam Raimi's films used

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15 Dave Mason

16 VNV Nation

20 Hawthorne Heights w/ From First To Last, Secondhand Serenade

21 Big Brother & The Holding Co., w/ Miss Molly & The Whips

22 He Is Legend w/Maylene & The Sons Of Disaster

24 Doro w/ Chris Caffery, The Final Plague, Azrael's Bane

26 Radio Birdman w/ Awesome Color, The Kimonos

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"The first one was okay, the second not so much, but the third Pirates has a steady dark tone (hanging women and children, purgatory scenes) that doesn't vacillate between wacky and serious like its forebears."

to look (think Evil Dead or The Quick and the Dead).

Pegg plays police Sergeant Nicholas Angel, such an A-type personality that the London division transfers him to an idyllic crime free village in the country. Angel fits in like a square peg with the usual line-up of eccentric Brit characters that populate the police service and town. Jim Broadbent and Timothy Dalton co-star but keep your eye peeled for cameos from Cate Blanchett, Peter Jackson and Steve Coogan. Increasingly violent and gory but in a manner that balances its primary comic tone Hot Fuzz would be a worthy alternative to the summer spate of tentpole uberfilms.

A British film by birth that's been a huge hit in Europe, by the time Hot Fuzz opened domestically last month it had made over 40-million internationally. Projections have the fuzz reaching 30-mill domestic. Consider the film Perfume, which had grossed over 100-million internationally only to land in America without a campaign of any kind. Perfume limped away with less than a couple of million domestic a few weeks later.

Knocked Up provides plenty of situational laughs. KU should be a breakout part for Seth Rogen whose work with writer/director Judd Apatow extends backwards to 40 Year-Old Virgin, beginning with Freaks and Geeks. Rogen has a Borgnine grasp on playing the regular guy type. There's a shroom scene and close-up shots of the birthing process.

Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End closes with fighting pirates swinging back and forth between two ships, while the boats are swirling in a maelstrom. There's an additional epilogue set ten years afterwards, but that's after the lengthy credit roll. The theater had emptied by that point save for yours truly and the guy from comingsoon.net and his posse. The print I caught was digitally projected (house # 12 at the Edwards Grand Palace) in one of the theaters Disney has upgraded with such equipment. The image was consistently sharper than film projection, which says more about the condition of the projectors than the films.

The first one was okay, the second not so much, but the third Pirates has a steady dark tone (hanging women and children, purgatory scenes) that doesn't vacillate between wacky and serious like its forebears. The Keith Richard cameo appears during a pirates round table that also features many international actors that will attract some attention in their respective countries. Ironically the main reason At World's End opens all-at-once worldwide (industry reports peg the number of screens at over 20,000) is to combat video piracy.

Whereas a typical psycho killer film concentrates on the actual deeds, Mr. Brooks is about "what goes on with a serial killer between the killings," director and co-writer Bruce A. Evans tells Free Press Houston in a phone interview.

Evans penned Mr. Brooks, with his writing partner Raynold Gideon, as a spec script. Over the years the pair have written films as diverse as Stand By Me, Starman, Cutthroat Island, and Evans directed Kuffs in 1992. Mr. Brooks "was written with Kevin Costner in mind," Evans mentions about the script. On the strength of its propulsive twists and intense characters the script also attracted a strong cast.

The movie begins with titles telling us something is going on in the mind of Mr. Brooks. Brooks first appears along with his reflection in a mirror. He's getting the Businessman of the Year award in Portland and while the action shows him confident in manner we soon meet Marshall (William Hurt), the evil id part of Brooks. The actors frequently appear in two-shots and display perfect timing in their laughter and palpable tension as Marshall pushes the correct buttons that turn Brooks into a serial killer. Unlike Fight Club where the twist at the end shows that the two actors are the same guy (Tyler Durden) here the duality device comes in the first ten minutes. "Before filming I had a week of rehearsal with Hurt and Costner where we were able to explore things like the timing," says Evans.

Brooks drive an inconspicuous early 1990s Volvo 240 DL. Evans had another car written in the script. "I'm a smaller guy, I had them in a small car." Both actors are over six foot, and the Volvo provided the space needed for the actors and camera placement, yet doesn't draw suspicion on the road when he's stalking his victims.

Demi Moore plays a tough nails homicide detective and Dane Cook surreptitiously sees Mr. Brooks committing his crime. Cook, calling himself Mr. Smith, blackmails Brooks, not for money, but to go along on the next kill. The real substance of the story follows different plot threads that eventually knit together. Brooks' daughter arrives home to announce she's dropped out of college; only she's got two bigger secrets. And Moore's stalked by another serial psycho, the Hangman Killer, who's just escaped from prison with the vow to kill her. That's just the first half of the film.

Mr. Brooks was shot in Shreveport. With a fairly low budget production compared to mainstream studio fare, Evans found ways to stretch creativity when he couldn't get what he'd envisioned. A hallway shootout between Moore and the Hangman was scripted for a very long hallway. Instead they had a normal hallway, so Evan has Moore shooting out the overhead fluorescent lights, and the sound of gunfire vanishes and is replaced by the stylistic soundtrack from Hans Zimmer protégé Ramin Djawadi. It's truly a cinematic moment.

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Doors @ 6:00 All Ages $12
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HATES
LOS DE VERDAD
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THE WARRIORS
FIRST BLOOD
TOO PURE TO DIE
SINCE THE FLOOD
Walter's 4215 Washington Ave.
Doors @ 7:30 All Ages $12

Thursday, June 21st, 2007
UNHOLY
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YEAR OF DESOLATION
THE DESTRO
ISCARIOT
Walter's 4215 Washington Ave.
Doors @ 7:30 All Ages $10

Friday, June 22nd, 2007
JERRY'S KIDS
IRON AGE
I AM WOLF
EL DESMADRE
Walter's 4215 Washington Ave.
Doors @ 8:00 All Ages $12

SO LET"S WATCH THE DOWNFALL OF MAN,

I CAN MAKE SECONDS FEEL HOURS

Kwame M. Anderson

SUMMER TIME.

Time for the summer. You can fool summer the people, summer the time...OK, it went too far. Hello Houston motherfucking Texas it is I says he. I was at a high school graduation a few days ago, and I thought to myself, damn, I forgot to pick up my dry cleaning, but that's the type of thing that becomes important after high school. You know, resumes, dry cleaning, a list of references, which way is the bathroom, you know, life's important things. The older I get, the more depressed I get, because I realize, they got me. The IRS, the mortgage company, the diamond embezzlers, the rest of them, they got me. I'll owe someone for the rest of my life. Somebody should say to the graduates, the key to life is fuck everything. Everything that involves a line of credit, forget it, don't get a car, don't buy a home, that shit is over rated The price of gas, the plight of the commuter, do you know how much it costs me to fart in my own bathroom? Exactly. That's what it comes down to. What does it mean to own something? I don't own my car, but I have a car that was pre-owned, but still I bust my ass for that car. The house? The thing didn't even come with grass in the backyard. And then when I do own it, what am I going to do? That's right, sell it, and get another one (ideally) or die in it, while still paying it off. Almost everything in the world depreciates in value after you buy it, lease it, rent it, whatever. You never own anything, you just get it, and decorate it, and show to your friends, and they get drunk and fuck it up, or some dude robs you and what then what of your precious debt sponge. It's a fuckin trick!!!!!. Dreams... here's your fucking dream realized. Bust your ass, take shit from some some fuck face with a bigger and prettier debt sponge, listen to your significant other complain about how it could be bigger or better or prettier, or on this side of town, dump all of you r money and time into it, (maybe) pay it off, and repeat. Welcome to adult life. In the movie "Little Miss Sunshine" the Alan Arkin character tells the mute dude "Fuck as many girls as you can," well I concur, not with the fucking thing, though why not, but no, waste time, shoot the shit, because one day you won't have that luxury, and then you'll be working all the time, or dodging the phone, or loathing the mail, or you'll be typing a rant on a computer that caused you to owe an amount of money to someone (say Circuit City) and then while they attempt to bleed you dry with interest payments and late fees, they will still tell you about the sale on the other useless thing you don't need and can't afford but want. This is life and it's flat....(Pavement, So Stark You A Skyscraper plays and scene fades to black)

(slow build from black and scene begins) So, you're probably thinking after that; Where can I spend money this month? Well I'm glad I made up the question you supposedly asked. June can be a hot time for music, shit, June can be a hot time, but here we'll relegate it to music. Since this is the first real month of the summer and there are a lot of people with nothing productive to do, or anywhere to go, I shall give them something to do or listen and a places they can go to listen and/or be in the presence of music being performed. While on that subject, at the end of last month I saw the band Tussle play a show at Super Happy Fun Land. It was an entertaining experience though the attendance left much to be desired, but it was a Monday night. How were they one might ask? Well, let me first state, Tussle is a band from San Francisco who specialize in music without vocals that mixes dub-ish basslines with samples and varied instrumentation. Live, this is accomplished with two drummers, a sample composer(?) and a gentleman who doubles up on the bass and keyboards. Their sound has been described as minimalist and ghetto-tech and all of this was in effect on the night in question. They have an album out called Lytstra and another to be released this year. Now, let us get down to bidness, as the British might say.

SHOWS THAT MAKE ME SMILE:

DAN DEACON | 6/10/07
The Mink

Dan Deacon is a Baltimore performing artist who is 5 different types of awesome. Strapped with electronics from every era of electronic music, the Dan Deacon experience is a mind blowing interactive occurrence. Pedals and keyboards and wires and glasses and a voice that helps bring the magic to its peak, to see it is to know the joy. But though the performance itself is enough, the tunes are in no way shabby. His latest album "Spiderman Of The Rings" is THE summer soundtrack. If we think of the wonderful sounds of DEVO, ELO, Kraftwerk, we see the possibilities, but that only scratches the surface of this masterpiece. I endorse this album against anything released this year, kitsch aside, the solidity of these works is inspiring and beautiful like a million stars dancing. Dan Deacon tours religiously, and I hear he is even looking for a choir, come join the congregation, be compelled.

MENOMENA &
ALL SMILES | 6/20/07
Walters On Washington

Menomena is a Portland, Oregon experimental rock band. Now the term experimental is a tricky one. Do not expect something extreme as much as something layered. There are melodies, there is pretty-ness, it's sort of like Beatles experimental where there still is an inviting sensibility to it, or like Flaming Lips or something, don't think like it's experimental like one of those SYR recordings Sonic Youth does, think My Bloody Valentine without some of the distortion. All Smiles opens,

shows in Houston



Unwed Sailor
6-22 | Super Happy Fun Land



Black Rebel Motorcycle Club
6-14 | Meridian



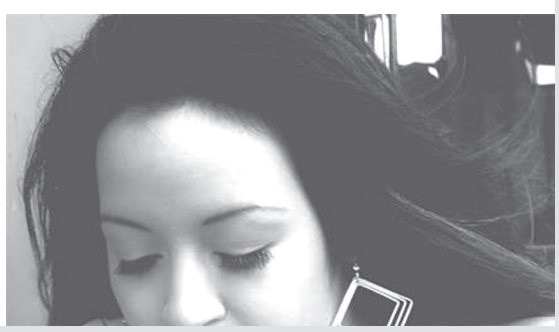
The Wiggins
6-13 | Rudyard's



Battles
6-23 | Numbers



Patrice Pike
6-15 | Fitzgerald's



Karina Nistal
6-21 | Mosaic

which is the project of Jim Fairchild (formerly of Grandaddy). His album Ten Readings Of A Warning (Dangerbird) features some skewered pop songs that fans of his previous band may enjoy.

BATTLES!!!!!!!!! | 6/23/07
Numbers

OK let us talk about perhaps the greatest band of this century. Yes, I did say century. I will not go down the beaten trail of this band's lineage, because in all reality none of that matters at this point. The time is now and now is Battles time. Math rock? Hardly, nothing on their latest album is so far out that you couldn't rock a party with it, most of the rhythms are slightly straightforward, but the precision in which they are played is mind numbing. Battles implores a technique that mixes the man and the machine in a way unheard or unseen. What is the loop, where is the live part? There is a part played and then looped and then there is a counter melody and then the counter melody is looped and that is manipulated and then somewhere someone started playing guitar, but wait no, that's not a guitar, and then there is a bleep, then a blip, then the drum part starts, then there is a voice, that becomes two voices that becomes a loop, and then that is sped up and before you know it's been two minutes and your neck is weary from bobbing and your ears are confused, your senses are aroused, and that is the first song. Listen to any Battles album and you would easily believe it is the result of studio trickery, it could never be done live, and you would be wrong. Because as it is amazing on CD, live it's thrice as amazing, It's like watching a NBA game with instruments, each member is pumped, hopping, bobbing, jumping, jerking, it adds the human element to something that seems to be mechanical. On You Tube there is a video of one of their recent concerts, listen to any song on their album Mirrored and watch them recreated and expounded upon. Seriously folks, if you see one show this year, this is the one. It will single-handedly reaffirm your belief that it has not all been done, and never been done like this. OMFG as a sixteen year old girl might say.

CDS

SHANNON WRIGHT
Let In The Light
(Quarterstick)

Shannon Wright has consistently put out solid albums and this is no exception. A realized piece of work, less spastic, or as outwardly dark as some other work, it continues in the tradition of Wright finding the song and presenting it a way that maximizes its color and emotion. "When The Light Shone Down" is one of Wright's poppiest affairs yet in no way compromises or seems like settling for the simple. "In The Morning Light" is as haunting as it is grooving. The spaces, the tone of her voice, the creeping keyboard, it reveals itself like the morning light, peeking through to eventually blind you with the beauty. "You Baffle Me" sounds classic, both in the standard of a Shannon Wright song and yet conquers new territory. Wright has the quality of any great artist, while staying true to her sound, she seems to constantly outdo as she updates her sound.

QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE
Era Vulgaris
(Interscope)

QOTSA is one of those bands that, while stupidly huge, continue to make credible music. Their catalog is solid from their debut to their latest Era Vulgaris.

Josh Homme understands there's a place between hard rock, weird rock, and pop, and he walks this line excellently. The guitar tone alone is a star on this album.

"Into The Hollow" is FM rock but with enough of a groove that even in it's darkness there is sexiness, it's the wicked girl in the black mini-skirt with the spider tattoo and the darkside. "Sick Sick Sick" is an easy lead single, as it is nods to old QOTSA material while still leading into the new territory. This album sort harks back to their debut and Rated R while still having something for the Songs For The Deaf fans to latch onto. "Make It Witchu," is a song that's been kicking around for years (originally featuring PJ Harvey on back up) finally makes its official showing on this album, and it's still that raunchy Prince/ZZ Top romp it's always been.

MEG BAIRD
Dear Companion
(Drag City)

Jeff Tweedy said that a song should be able to stand on its own without the need of certain pedal to make it tick. Sometimes we forget about the brilliance of simplicity. Meg Baird's Dear Companion is mainly just voice and guitar recorded mostly in her Philadelphia apartment and comprised mostly of folk classics, still nothing about this album seems nostalgic, it is more a testament to how a beautifully sung song can tell a story and create a mood. As a member of The Espers, Baird's voice is usually part of a tapestry of psychedelic guitars, whirl and woosh, but here it stands and radiates. Rather it's the soul of "Do What You Gotta Do" or "Willie O'Winsbury" each song translates a beauty that might be lost if not for the spars arrangement presented here.





reviving the "faith" METAL MOMENT



by Jeff Storm

I know it's been a hot minute since our last metal moment, but truth be told there hasn't been shit worth writing about in quite a while. Also, don't let the title fool you into thinking I've gone all religious n' junk; I'm referring to my faith in the metal population of South East Texas. What event could evoke such feelings? The Heaven and Hell (Black Sabbath) show at the woodlands this past May. For those of you that don't know, there was a period of time where Ozzy was kicked out of Black Sabbath and replaced with the charismatic Ronnie James Dio. They made a couple of classic yet often overlooked albums 'Heaven and Hell' and 'Mob Rules', and the totally overlooked 90's album 'Dehumanizer'. But before I get into how incredible Black Sabbath was, I need to talk about the opening bands Machine Head and Megadeth.

Machine Head opened to a mostly empty pavilion, but started off with energy. It was not the best performance musically but it's been a relief to me to see them go back to being heavy instead of the weak shit they put out a few albums back. I was glad they played 'Davidian' which is my favorite track of theirs although it seemed watered down with the chorus effect they had on the guitars. The other set highlight was their performance of their new song 'Aesthetics of Hate'. The subject of which is directed at William Grim, a bona fide piece of shit, who after Dimebag's death wrote an article calling him "an ignorant, barbaric, untalented possessor of a guitar and large amplifier system" among other things. Although this article is a few years old I'd like to send a personal message to Mr. Grim, "If ever we shall meet, for your personal safety I'd suggest that you pretend to be someone the fuck else."

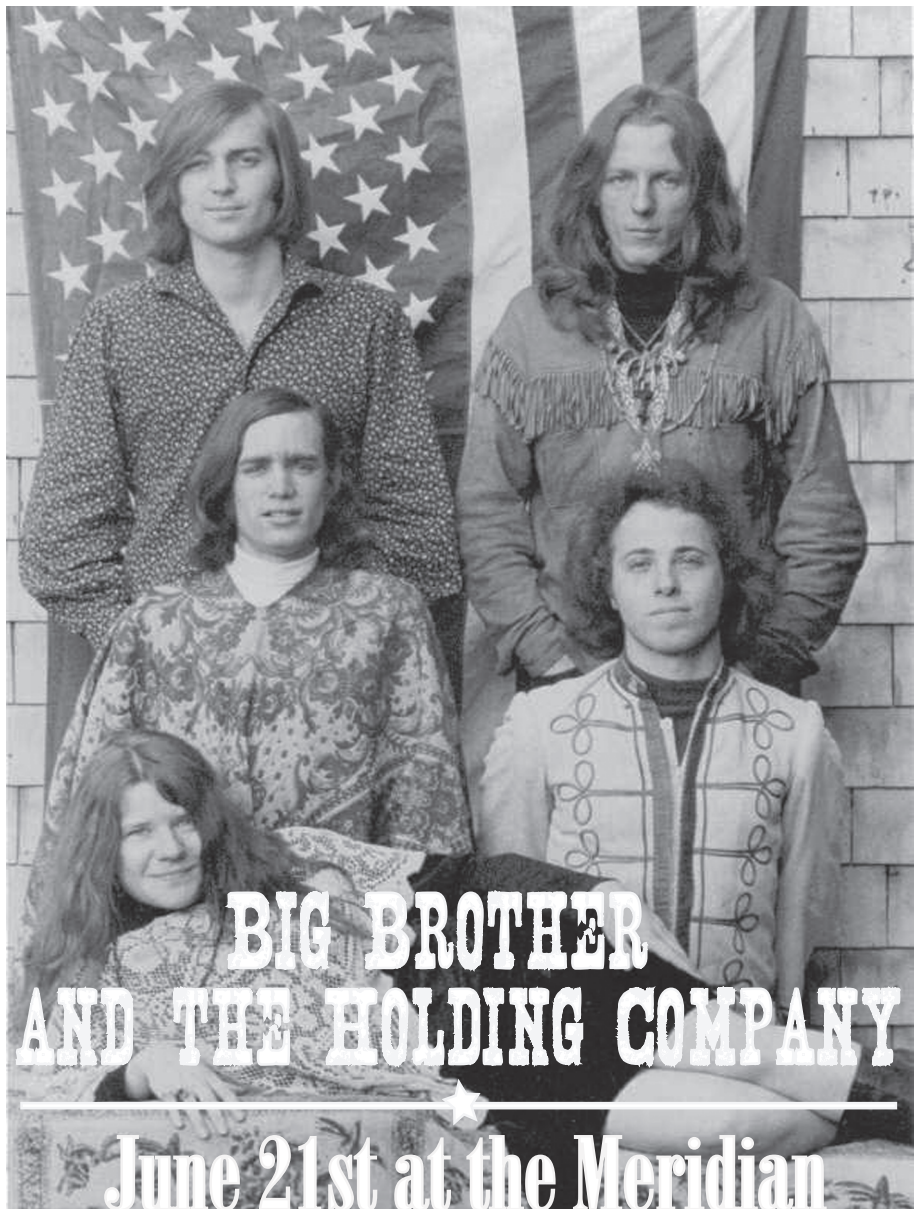
Megadeth came next, and the pavilion started filling up, just like the cute concession stand girl told me it would. Megadeth was amazing and they just went song after song. They played some stuff off of the new 'United Abominations' album and the previous album 'the System has Failed', but mostly the played off the now classic 'Rust in Peace' album. The musicianship of the current line up is uncanny; Glen Drover's ability to perform all the past Megadeth lead guitar players style is just incredible.

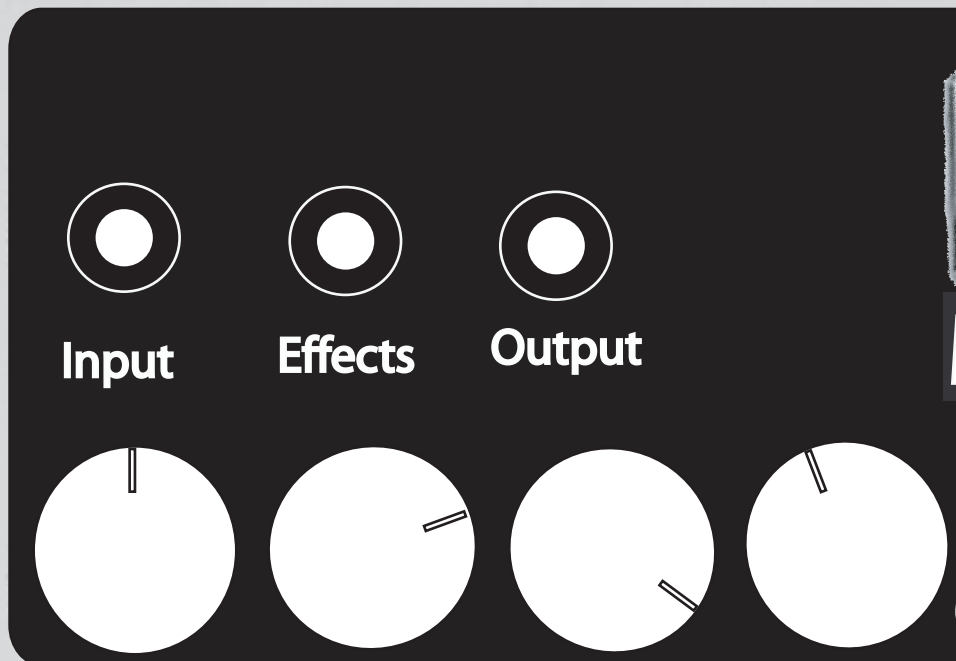
Next up the legends took the stage. Black Sabbath kicked ass! Their stage set up was pretty far out, they had a background that changed throughout the show and displayed some images which looked similar to some of the album art work, suffice to say I wasn't exactly on the front row. Dio was just amazing, for him being nearly 65 he has a voice that just can't be fucked with, his stage presence and everything is just too good to even try to write about. But not only was Dio amazing Tony Iommi's playing was fantastic, and although he pretty much had his eyes on his guitar the whole time, the one time he acknowledged the crowd drew cheers from everyone. Even though they played a track off of 'Dehumanizer', they pretty much stuck with the 'Heaven and Hell' and 'Mob Rules' albums, playing greats like 'Children of the Sea', 'Turn up the Night', 'Heaven and Hell', and my favorite 'Falling off the Edge of the World'. It was an awesome show to be able to experience and as much as I hate on people I must say I have a world of respect for those of you who stood the entire time. Thanks to y'all and of course Black Sabbath for renewing my "faith" in the world of metal.

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Free Press Scumfucks at COACHELLA

By Shelby Kelley

SO ME AND TRENT "MISSISSIPPI MOONSHINE" MOSS SCORE PRESS PASSES TO ONE OF THE BIGGEST FESTIVALS IN THE WORLD. YES THAT SHIT IS AS TIGHT AS YOU THINK IT IS AND YES WE DID FEEL LIKE WE WERE PART OF SOMETHING HISTORIC.

The 2007 line-up for Coachella was fucking RETARDED sick. Rage Against the Machine reuniting for the first time in 7 years, Bjork actually in the States, Jesus and Mary Chain reuniting and performing songs with Scarlett Johannsen, and even Danny DeVito introducing Mike Patton's Peeping Tom. You gotta understand that shit at the highest caliber was rampant here and there is nothing I can think of in my history that I've ever been a part of that was as amazing as this.

First off, Trent and I rented a car in Los Angeles and drove 200 miles east into the desert to the small ass town of Indio. We parked the car in the Empire Polo Field's grass parking lot and slept in that bitch the whole time we were there. Like ten seconds into walking out of our car the first day, some dude from another car hooked us up with sun block and a bag of some gnarly ass chronic. I had a photo pass and a VIP pass which allowed me access into the ten to thirteen foot area in front of the front stage guard rail and right at the foot of the stage AND the area where 'celebrities' went to drink and be seen.

So yeah, I fucking scored some cool ass shit in the end. I stood next to Drew Barrymoore and Cameron Diaz who were smoking a joint, dancing to Amy Winehouse (who slayed and is fine). I got to meet 2 of the three core members of Failure, Greg Edwards who was spinning at a DJ tent and I got a photo with Wee-Man from Jackass. Big ups to Afradisiac for making it happen and this very article you're reading.

HIGH LIGHTS

Of Montreal

who even in the 104 degree California sun, made the stage theirs with an assortment of colors that would make any Bjork fan or make-up artist feel soft.

Interpol

got real lucky and played at that point in the day when its like dusk turning to night. Very, very appropriate for their music. The atmosphere, their precision, and the debut of some new music all made for a fucking clean ass show.

Blonde Redhead

have a sexy Asian girl singing for them that pulls off the perfect "indie-hero" for girl's vibe. If I were an indie chick and I could model myself after someone it would be her, and even though I'd be a girl, I'd still lez out and rule you. For a three piece, they do a great job live and do a great job with the way they layer their songs. Suitable for most moods and moments.

Junior Boys

Rice Radio staple, yeah, you've heard they songs. I think one "In the Morning" is even being used for some hotel commercial or something now. Upon first listen, one would tap the foot, hear the glitches and bleeps and after about thirty seconds, write it off as another indie electronic robot fuck me band. Surprisingly, they all play live instruments and sound incredible live. These guys actually sweat on stage!! Like, that was banned from indie shows I don't know how fucking long ago. Go them! Listen to their album and picture them rocking out.

Rage Against the Machine

Are you serious? I don't feel like I should have to write anything more on how fucking smooth that shit was other than this: Musicians, you know how when you make that chord progression or magical moment happen that gives you those crazy spinal and back chills? That's what it was like the whole time.



Her highness, Bjork



Rage Against the Machine



Of Montreal

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June Bugs

Shelby cusses his way through his favorite June shows, as usual
By Shelby Kelley



TWO GALLANTS, TRAINWRECK RIDERS
Walter's on Washington | June 18th

Whoaaaaaa, you know what shit is crazy about this? This is the band that played during the melee of police brutality and tazering that happened last October. I wonder if people will show up just to see if any police brutality starts jumpin' off in that bitch? Expect the usual on-stage jokes such as: "Yeah last time we were here I think we got tazed?" Nah, in reality, Two Gallants are pretty fucking decent. They're like Lucero with shittier tattoos and REAL hand me-downs. This will no doubt be a great show.



SUMMER SLAUGHTER TOUR FEAT. NECROPHAGIST, DECAPITATED, CEPHALIC CARNAGE, CATTLE DECAPITATION
Meridian | June 8th

Yes ass please!!! This shit is gonna be fucking horns to the sky all the goddamn way. Gauntlets in the air fucking DIIIMMMMEEEDDD OUT!!! Expect Hispanic-heavy death metal circle pits and lots of people throwing the devil horns at odd times in the songs. Last time I went to a show of this degree, I got hooked on death metal for like 2 months.

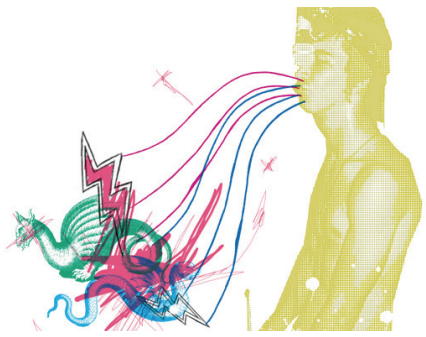
Cattle Decap are fucking vampire slayers.



AWESOME COLOR, RADIO BIRDMAN
Meridian | June 26th

Last time Awesome Color came to town, my boy Mark had to go film some bullshit and I had a ride dilemma so I had to miss them AND SATIN HOOKS. Fuck that, not happening again. Anything Ecstatic Peace is fucking golden so you should attend on that alone. I really don't know much about Radio Birdman but they looked kind of funny on the poster and if they think Awesome Color is good then they must have some sense.

Awesome Color always plays a great live show.



COP WARMTH, MAKE YOUR OWN MAPS, THE CHINESE STARS
Proletariat | June 5th

Cop Warmth is a really dynamic punk band from a really smelly part of Houston. But wait! There's more!! Make Your Own Maps are our neighbors who let you borrow the sugar!! These boys are from San Antonio-piece main!! They will also slay that face up skateboard wreck-style so don't get too close to the sharp guitars. What's funny is The Chinese Stars are probably the shittiest band on this bill and they are the headliners (I think?). Fuck it, give The Proletariat all of your 'Rice' money this month.



super happy fun land

June 8th:

Ex Night with
Earnie Banks (ex. Playground)
Piano Vines (ex. Hilites/Lazlo)
The Brud (ex Carousel Shy)
Shades of Blue
Riff Tiffs

June 9th:
Sat Matinee Showcase for Local Bands
Jono Lacy
rachel t(oombstone) aka sew what
Indian Jenny
Shutting Up
and more...

June 12th:
Christopher's Liver
Blood on the Tracks
Cedar Boy Bailey
Aunt Belle

June 13th:
Tugnut
Tambersauro
A Silhouette
Mammoth Grinder

June 14th:
Chaz

June 15th:
Bobbin Doctrine Presents
365 Days/365 Plays/7 Answers (7pm-9pm)
THE HOPE SYMPHONY (Sacramento, ca)
NORTH (Tucson, az)
STORMS THREATEN TO DESTROY
GLACIER PACE
CO-PILOT

June 16th:
Sat Matinee Showcase for Local Bands
Bobbin Doctrine Presents
365 Days/365 Plays/7 Answers
The Giants of Gender
The Defenestration Unit

June 18th:
thenumber46
Dave Dove
Juan Garcia
Jawwaad Taylor
Ryan Edwards

June 19th:
Wildlife
New Thrill Parade
The sonic rabbit hole
The Trainwreck Riders

June 21st:
Superhouse
Something Really Dirty
Communal Death Duck
The Baristas

June 22nd:
Unwed Sailor

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Love Bungie

HANDS ON WITH HALO 3

By Tyler Barber



You *can* ride on the back of the Mongoose, but you'll forfeit your manhood

HALO NEEDS a bridge. No, not a bridge like the one in Halo 2's Mombasa level, but a bridge of gameplay between Halo 1, and Halo 2. Ask any Halo player and almost unanimously you'll find players prefer the perfect simplicity of Halo 1 to the unbalanced, glitchy Halo 2. Luckily, for the past month I've been playing the Halo 3 Multiplayer Beta, and it looks like my engineering prayers have been answered. Though the final version of Halo 3 will differ from the public beta, my time with the game has proven that Halo 3 Multiplayer is both a return to form, and an innovation. Jealous? You should be. Read on to find out what aspects of Halo, both big and small, have changed this time around, and uncover the secrets Bungie (creator of the Halo universe) has in store for us when Halo 3 debuts on September 25th.

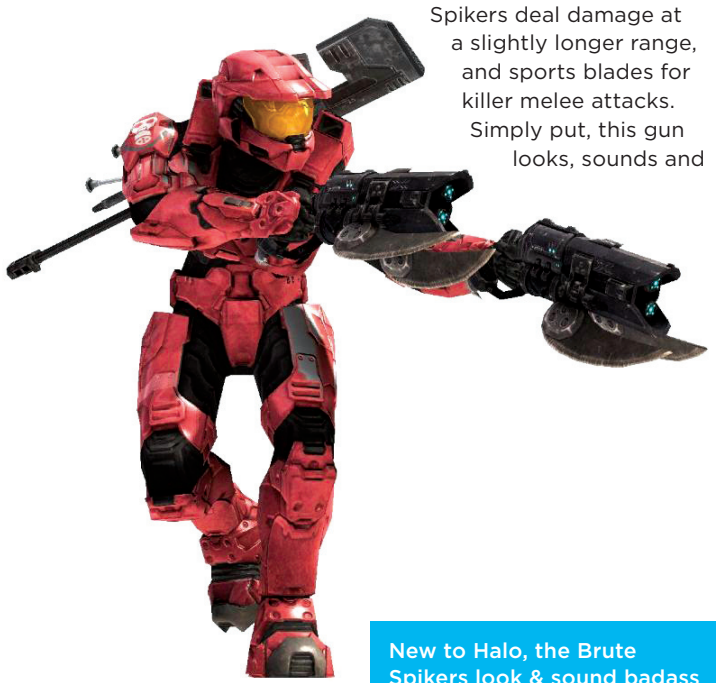
The Perfect Pyramid

Guns, grenades and melee form the masterfully balanced pyramid of Halo gameplay that has so many gamers hooked. Most weapons perform more or less like their former iterations in previous Halo games, with the exception of a few, (listed below). And don't think Bungie is going to send you into battle with nothing but old ballistics, check out how the new weapons will bring an added level of balance to the gameplay.

Assault Rifle - this was the trusty go-to weapon in Halo 1 that got axed in Halo 2. Making a return in Halo 3, the Assault Rifle has been reborn with a slightly longer range, better accuracy, and is now the default weapon you spawn with in Halo Multiplayer.

New Weapons

Brute Spikers - this is the dual-wieldable Brute answer to the SMG. While the SMG has a super-fast rate of fire, the Spikers deal damage at a slightly longer range, and sports blades for killer melee attacks. Simply put, this gun looks, sounds and performs at high levels of kick-assness.



New to Halo, the Brute Spikers look & sound badass

Spike Grenades - the Brute's signature grenades will stick to any surface its thrown at unleashing a furry of ricocheting shards into the area. The Spike Grenade's conical blast radius, (unlike the frag, and plasma grenade's spherical blast radius) prove most useful as a defensive/retreat weapon, ideal for booby-trapping would be pursuers.

Spartan Laser - This is the weapon of the expert Halo player. The Spartan Laser takes five-second to charge up, letting off an ejaculation of power with infinite range. The reward for perfecting this weapon is that it deals a one-hit-kill not just to troops on foot, but to vehicles too.

Missile Pod - Look a the Chief! Picking up this weapon brings you into a third-person view a la' Gears of War. The yin, however, is that you'll walk much slower than normal, and can jump only half the height. The Missile Pod is an anti-vehicle weapon fully equipped with lock-up capabilities, but isn't very effective against those on foot.

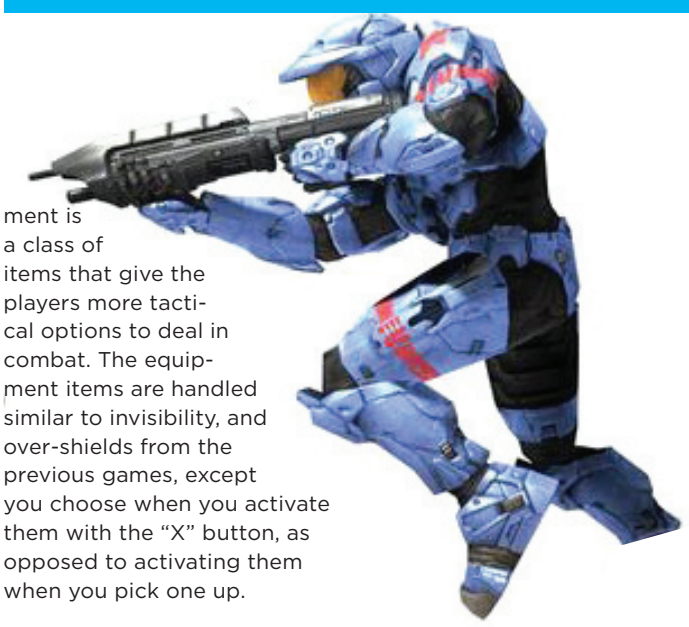
Turret Gun - another weapon that takes you into third-person view, the Turret Gun is picked-up by ripping it right off the stand of an immobile turret. Mind the ammo, as you can't carry around a black hole of bullets. Again, your movement will be handicapped carrying this bad boy.

Equipment

Brand new to Halo 3, equipment is a class of items that give the players more tactical options to deal in combat. The equipment items are handled similar to invisibility, and over-shields from the previous games, except you choose when you activate them with the "X" button, as opposed to activating them when you pick one up.



The Missle Pod (above) and Assault Rifle (below)



Bubble Shield - as made famous by the "Starry Night" theatrical trailer aired during the Super Bowl, the Bubble Shield deploys a protective sphere that deflects gun-fire, grenades, rockets, whatever you throw at it. Its use is defensive, saving your ass when your shields are down, but more often than not your enemies will likely enter the shield with you and melee your face.

Trip Mine - this device is both blessing and curse. If someone's giving your team a hard time in the Warthog, just plop it down in their path, and when they run over it, you'll glee with the double kill you've just earned. But, be warned, many times I'm walking through the battlefield, and next thing I know, I'm blow to bits by a mine that my own team set down. Betrayal!

Power Drainer - another offensive device, this one drops the shield of any who enter its sphere, and will eventually kill

HANDS ON WITH HALO 3



Grab the big guns to see the Master Cheif in third-person glory

anyone dumb enough to stand in it too long. This works great for covering your flag in CTF, or for securing a small room full of foes.

Gravity Lift - this is probably the most fun to use. Drop the Grav LIft in front of the opposing team's wall, and it will send you flying right over it. Its also useful for finding tucked away sniper spots.

Vehicles

While the beta only showed the Warthog, Banshee, Ghost and the new Mongoose, we know there's going to be plenty more vehicles to come in the final game. A common complaint in the beta was that the vehicles where way to hard to destroy with conventional weapons, so lets hope they balance that.

Mongoose - the only new vehicle in the beta, the Mongoose first saw the potential for life in Halo 2, but was axed before the game was finished because Bungie couldn't get the handling right. The extra time spent must have worked, because the Mongoose is a blast to zip around levels in, and it lets a team mate ride on the back (or broke-back as we call it).

Lastly,

Sound - the sound in Halo 3 is enough reason to buy Halo 3. For one, when you get shot in the head from a sniper rifle, all you hear is the mushy-squish of the bullet passing through your head like a hot-knife through butter.

Graphics - two camps, those who like, and those who like Gears of War's graphics better. Still, Bungie has said that no one has seen the final graphics, and that much tweakage will go into the final version.

Maps - only three in the beta, Valhalla, High Ground and Snowbound, but each one has the super-polished, super-balanced, Bungie signature.

Saved Films - one of the most interesting non-game features in Halo 3, Saved Films allow you to store replays of your matches. Your also given full editing capabilities, a controllable camera and slow motion.

L33kz - the Halo 3 beta opened the flood gates to hackers looking to spy on Bungie's secrets, and aplenty they where. Everything from the pistol from Halo 1, custom game types (zero gravity FTW!), a FLAME THROWER!!!, and... Master Chief's actual face where uncovered. If you don't want any spoilers come September 25th, don't look any of these up, as you will find yourself curdled like old milk.





Bee Here Now

By Michael Bergeron



What is up with the honeybees? Nobody really knows the answer to reports of honeybees disappearing and chronic colony collapse from all points in the world, but there are plenty of theories.

OF COURSE you could keep your own posse of honeybees in your living room in the manner that a bee colony is displayed in the Cockrell Butterfly Center at the Houston Museum of Natural Science.

The beehive is mounted on a stand and enclosed behind clear panels through which you can view the bees on both sides. At the bottom a wooden duct leads out of the tropical environment of the butterfly center, through the wall and spills outside. A quick glance through the window shows bees coming and going around the tunnel entrance. The honeybees fly off and gather pollen that they bring back to the colony and apply to the octagonal cells of the hive. The entrance to the bee tunnel is guarded against errant wasps or other invaders by a couple of beefy bees.

"The tunnel entrance was much bigger but our bee keeper told us to make it smaller to make it easier for the them to defend" HMNS staffer Nancy Greig tells Free Press Houston.

"Bees were brought to America in the 1600s by Europeans," Greig continues. The Indians called the buzzing insect white man's flies. There are several kinds of bees, not just honeybees, but bumblebees and carpenter bees among many others. Greig notes that there is no such thing as a killer bee, just strains of bees that are more aggressive than normal. Because of the recent missing bee occurrences whenever swarms are reported, say in abandoned buildings, the hives are relocated instead of being destroyed.

Continuing to look at the hive the sameness of all the bees begins to fade and individual bees begin to appear unique. Some of the honeybees are doing the waggle dance, where they wiggle their rears back and forth. The speed and direction of their movement communicates to their brethren how far and where the pollen is located. Some of the honeybees carry visible crumbs of pollen that they are putting in the cells.

The queen seems mired among the thousand or so insects on view in the observation hive. Eventually she stands out due to her large abdomen. She's laying eggs in one of the cells. The males can be spotted with their large thorax region; the females a thousand to one outnumber them.

Nobel prize winner in medicine Karl von Frisch studied bees and a link to one of his Nobel lectures on the language of bees can be found on the web resource after this article.

"People don't realize how important bees are to the food system," notes Greig. Bees pollinate most of the foods we eat. We discuss the news stories that attribute the honeybee disappearance to everything from pollution and insecticide to cell phones. Nobody really knows, and maybe it's combination of all of the above.

An alternative food source, perhaps not for the squeamish, are edible insects. Near a separate basement display of bees is a vending machine with larvae, crickets and other munchable insects. Will America's love affair with burgers and fries be supplanted with crispy scorpions and bread with butter and ants? The local restaurant Hugo's (1602 Westheimer) serves crickets. One of their managers explains by phone that such appetizers are a treat at high-end restaurants in Mexico. Surely you know about the worm at the bottom of the bottle. Hugo's crickets are imported.

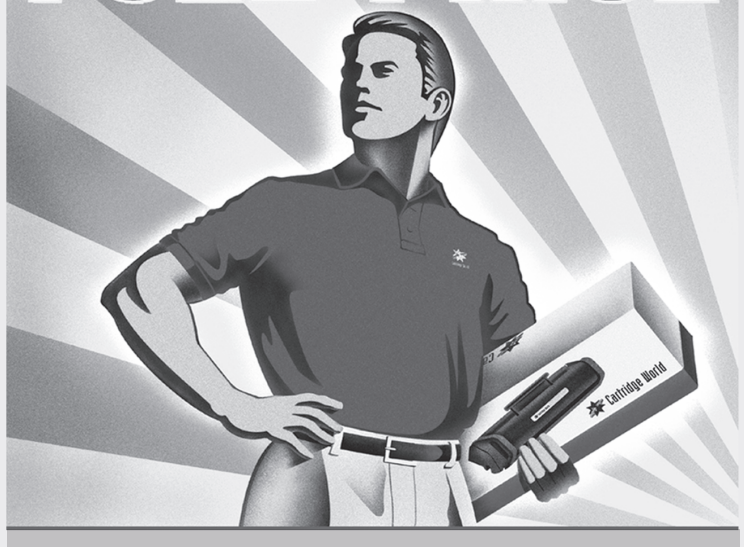
Internet Bee Resource:
http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/laureates/1973/frisch-lecture.html
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Gun and Tonic

The asshole examines Governor Rick Perry's proposal to allow guns in bars

By Alex "Asshole" Wukman



THIS IS MONTROSE, Saturday night. The street kids' cries of "Spare change please, can you spare some change please" mix with the liquid laughter of half-a-dozen NASA engineers escaping the monotony of Clear Lake for an evening.

I'm sitting on one of my favorite bar stools — four beers and half-a-pack of Camels into watching the world go by — when it happens.

It starts out small, like it always does. A 6-foot, 2-inch, 220-pound-if-he's-an-ounce, brown-haired, green-eyed college kid whose name I don't catch doesn't like what a 5-foot, 7-inch, 150 and change, buddy of mine says.

I don't hear the comment, but later I find out it's about a girl or drugs. Either way it's a simple misunderstanding. Unfortunately, the college kid and my buddy are just past belligerent and halfway to hostile, so all it takes is one wrong comment to set them off.

The next 30 seconds are swallowed by chaos. A punch is thrown, bottles break, the bartender threatens to call the cops, half a dozen people rush in and hustle my buddy and the college kid out the door, the music gets turned up, the din of conversation rises and we keep drinking.

Another Saturday night, another bar fight. Not even worth mentioning except for a comment the 45-year-old guy with thinning hair, glasses and a salt and pepper beard sitting at the video poker machine makes.

He looks up from his Texas Hold-'Em hand just long enough to say, "At least neither one of them had a gun." The bartender says "Thank God" as he uncaps another Lone Star.

I ask no one in particular if they've heard about Gov. Rick Perry's proposal to allow firearms into bars. Two people within earshot reply they haven't, so I outline what I can remember: If this passes into law, properly licensed, concealed carry permit holders will be able to bring their pistols almost anywhere — including bars, churches and college campuses.

Inevitably, the usual statements are made. The guy with the tattoos, black hair, Ronny James Dio T-shirt and tight Levis calls it an overreaction to Virginia Tech. The girl with the polka-dot shirt, Capri pants and Jayne Mansfield hair, who seems to be with him, sucks on a Camel Light and points out the irony of banning smoking in bars but allowing pistols.

I opt not to take a side and simply say that if passed, this law would be a direct reversal of one already on the books. The bartender looks up from the kamikazes he's making for the table full of Midtown girls by the door to ask what law. I point over his shoulder to the 51 percent sign and say, "That one."

I saw amplifiers get stolen, guitars get broken, people get naked, bathroom walls get defaced... but never once did anyone pull a gun

Neither the bartender nor the well-dressed couple seems to know what I'm talking about, so I read it off: "Anyone in possession of a licensed or unlicensed firearm on these premises faces up to 10 years imprisonment and a $10,000 fine." The bartender says "Ah" and moves off to deliver drinks, the couple say it's been nice talking but they have to get back to their friends and I'm left all alone to ponder bullets and bars.

I start to reminisce about the times I had behind the bar. In the year or so I slung drinks, I broke up fistfights, shut down drug dealers, saw a stabbing and dealt with break-ins. I triaged wounds, cleaned up body fluids, tried to diagnose illnesses and never once saw a shooting.

I turned away people so drunk they couldn't find their car. I helped drag friends of mine to taxis. I pounded on bathroom doors because I thought people were doing drugs, but I never once saw a shooting.

I saw amplifiers get stolen, guitars get broken, people get naked, bathroom walls get defaced, people hook up, people break up, lovers quarrel and make up, but never once did anyone pull a gun.

I remember it was once rumored that someone brought a gun he was trying to sell to the bar I worked at. He was a big guy, easily over 6 feet and in the neighborhood of 250 pounds. He also drank heavily. He was the type of guy who would order two pitchers for himself and not tip a dime.

It wasn't until after he stormed off in a huff for what we thought was no reason that the rest of the bar staff and I found out he had a gun. Then and there we decided the next time he showed up we'd refuse him entry and call the cops. There was no debate about the rights of the property owners versus the rights of the individual; there was no discussion about the Second Amendment.

There was simply a concern for the safety and well-being of the staff and customers. We felt then as I feel now — that when anyone other than a law enforcement officer who brings a firearm into an establishment where people are in varying levels of sobriety puts the safety



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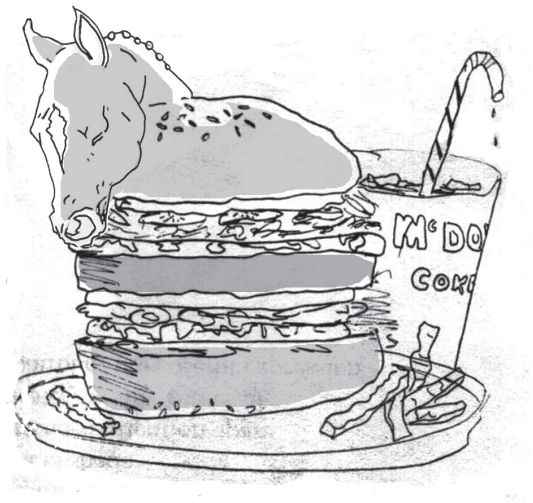
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Say Nay! to Horse Slaughtering

By Peter Stern



WELL, THE BATTLE GOES ON

here in Texas for most people to protect the honor and status of the horse. State Senators and House Representatives are trying to sneak in "end around" legislation that is generated for their special interests to circumvent the recent Federal ruling that closed the two horse slaughterhouses in North Texas. Horse slaughtering may be the new terrorism that Americans need to battle.

Bel-Tex of Fort Worth; Dallas Crown of Kaufman, Texas, and Cavel International of Dekalb, Ill. are the only horse slaughterhouses inside the U.S. Because of basic economics and special interest contributions, most legislators have opted NOT voting to close the horse slaughterhouses. Let's face it, horse slaughterhouses are good business. Horse meat is sent overseas for human consumption to France, Belgium and other countries, where they are willing to pay top dollar for their horse flesh.

Slaughterhouse owners and their legislators tell Americans that they are providing a needed and humane service of eliminating unwanted, old and sickly horses. The truth is far from that point. There is little distinction made of these categories and of healthy horses. Furthermore, the slaughtering of horse is NOT a humane process as may be seen below. We've lost our horse-sense when we let these creature die such horrific deaths.

Sen. Glenn Hegar, R-Katy, inserted an amendment into a bill on the duties and regulations of the Texas Animal Health Commission. It said animals tested by the commission would be exempt from the part of the state agriculture code banning the sale of horse meat for human consumption. Passed around under a veiled amendment to another bill, apparently neither Hegar or other legislators seem to care to make this amendment more public for fear of public outcry.

The provision that Hegar added to Senate Bill 911 before colleagues actually approved that it would allow the sale of horse meat for human consumption, if the animals are tested by the commission. There was no debate before passage of the bill, which was carried by Sen. Craig Estes, R-Wichita Falls. Only Democratic Sens. Leticia Van de Putte of San Antonio and Kirk Watson of Austin registered votes against Hegar's amendment.

THE TERRORS OF HORSE SLAUGHTER

Before shipping American horses to slaughterhouses in Texas, Illinois and as far away as Canada, the horses are placed into over-crowded holding pens often standing in disease-infested muck. Often sick, the horses are crammed into double-decked cattle trucks. Without sufficient room to hold their heads upright, they travel for 36 hours through summer heat or brutal winter cold without stopping for rest, food or water.

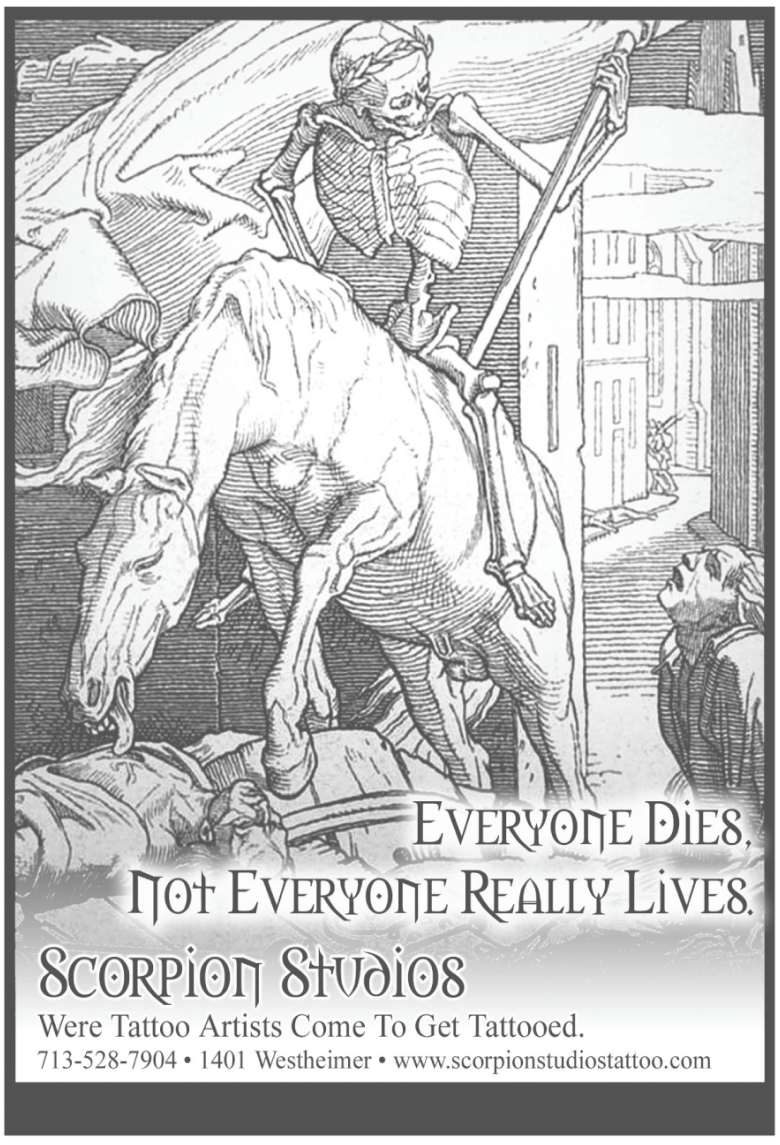
At the slaughterhouse, the horse is electrically prodded into the "kill box" to be repeatedly bludgeoned in the skull by a dead-bolt gun with a four-inch nail. Alive, and often conscious, the horse is then shackled by a rear leg, hoisted into the air, its throat slit and body dismembered.

No horse is spared this ordeal. These hungry, dehydrated, fatigued and terrified horses include not only the old, sick, blind and crippled, but the young and healthy, our children's pets, mares with helpless foals standing at their side, and our wild mustangs.

Say "Nay" loudly and clearly to elected officials. Horse slaughterhouses must go the way of the dinosaurs and so should killing horses in the U.S. for human consumption abroad. It is interesting that two of the three horse slaughterhouses are based here in Texas, where historically cowboys only ride and work their horse partners --- NOT eat them.

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



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"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

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Bush Cheney '08

by Nick Cooper
art by Levi Rosen



SURE, YOU'VE HEARD of the Patriot Act, and you know about the NSA warrantless surveillance controversy. Many Americans are cynical about the human rights record of the Bush administration. But, what do you know about these directives and acts Bush signed into law in the past few months -- The John Warner Defense Appropriation Act, The Military Commissions Act, The National Security and Homeland Security Presidential Directives? These acts and directives give dictatorial powers to the President of the United States, and leave open the question -- are these guys planning to leave office?

Some Latin Words

"Posse Comitatus" is Latin for "power of the county." The Posse Comitatus Act (18 U.S.C. § 1385) passed on June 16, 1878 after Reconstruction. It states: "Whoever, except in cases and under circumstances expressly authorized by the Constitution or Act of Congress, willfully uses any part of the Army or Air Force as a posse comitatus or otherwise to execute the laws shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than two years, or both."

Habeas Corpus (Latin for "we command that you have the body") is the name of a legal action or writ by means of which detainees can seek relief from unlawful imprisonment. The writ of habeas corpus has historically been an important instrument for the safeguarding of individual freedom against arbitrary state action. Dating back to 13th Century England, the procedure for the issuing of writs of habeas corpus was first codified by the Habeas Corpus Act 1679. Habeas is a court order addressed to a prison official ordering that a prisoner be brought before the court so that the court can determine whether that person is serving a lawful sentence or should be released from custody.

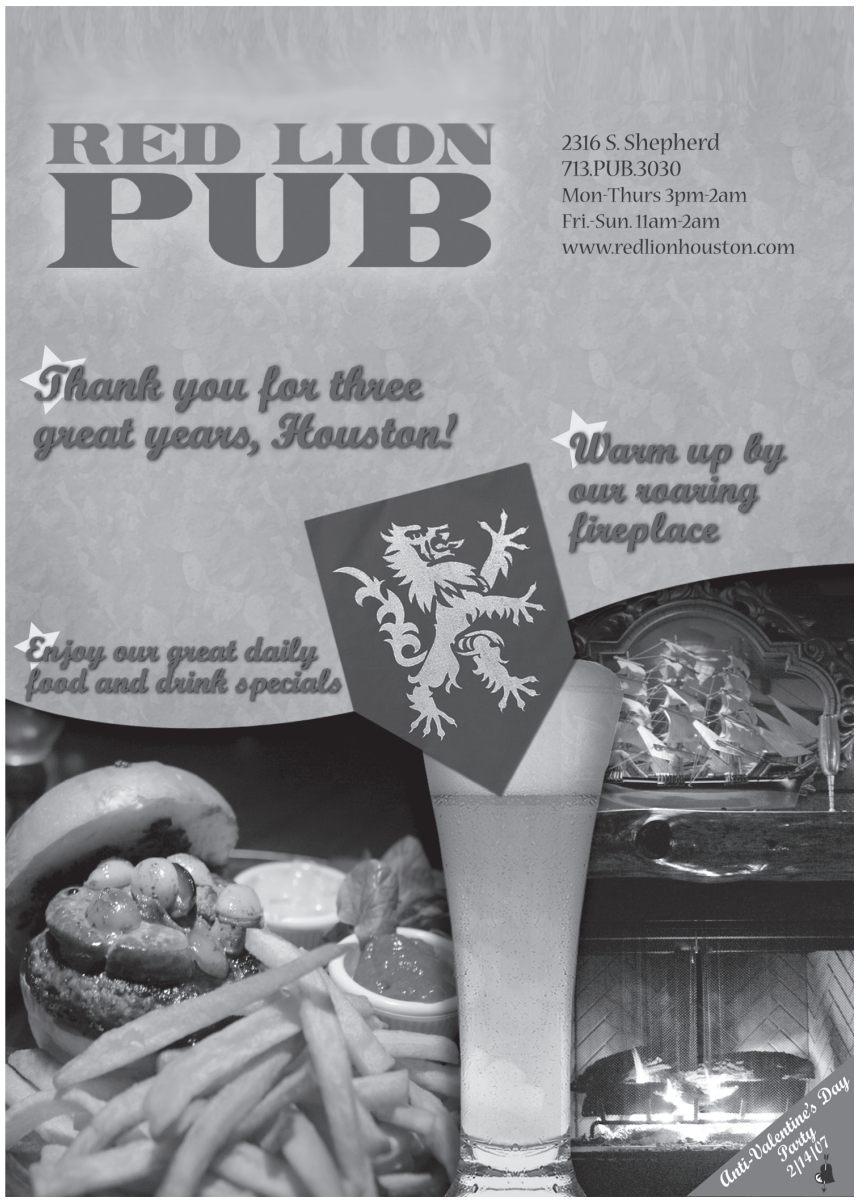
The civil rights protections against the government calling out the army against its citizens, and detaining folks arbitrarily, had been considered crucial cornerstones of "democracy in America." They seem to have been taken away without much of a fight.

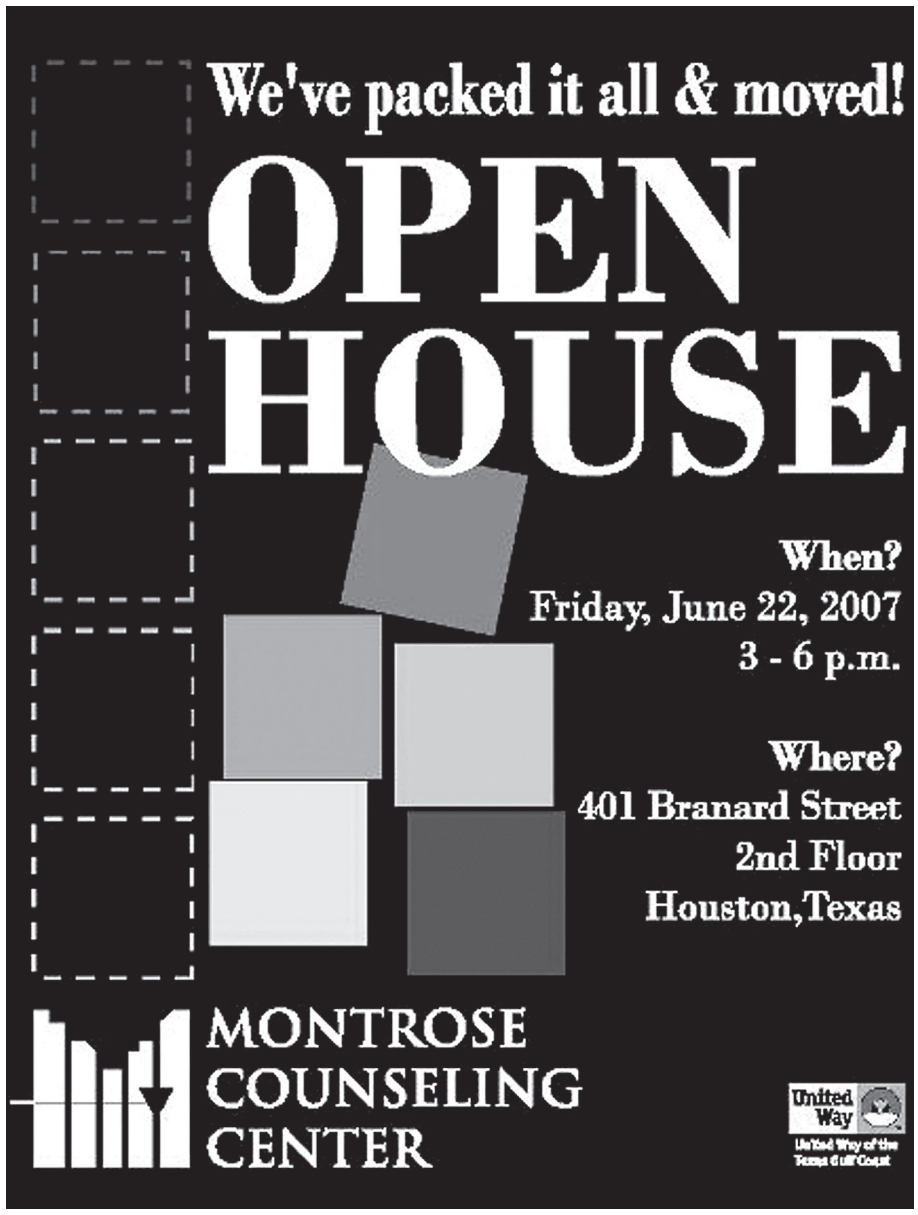
Good-bye Habeas

The United States Military Commissions Act of 2006, (Senate Bill 3930[1]) signed on October 17, 2006, set out to "facilitate bringing to justice terrorists and other unlawful enemy combatants through full and fair trials by military commissions." The Act creates the category of "unlawful enemy combatants," who lack the right of habeas corpus, and traditional protections from torture under the Geneva Conventions. Furthermore, the Act avoids any clear language ensuring that U.S. citizens will not be classified as unlawful enemy combatants. This Act side-steps the traditional protections associated with the judiciary branch. The determination of the status of an individual as an "unlawful enemy combatant" is made by tribunals established under the authority of the President.

Good-bye Posse Comitatus

The John Warner Defense Appropriation Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (H.R. 5122.ENR), signed on the same day, allows the President to "...employ the





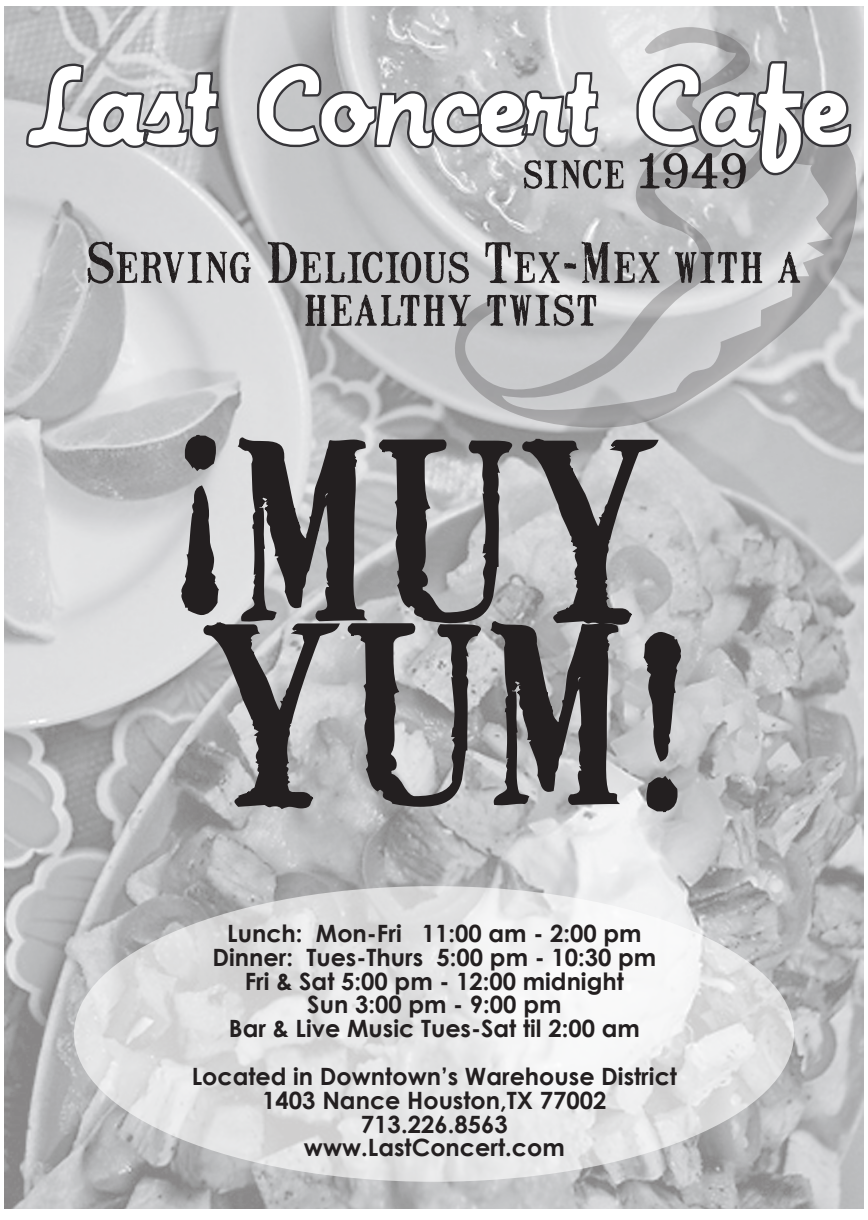


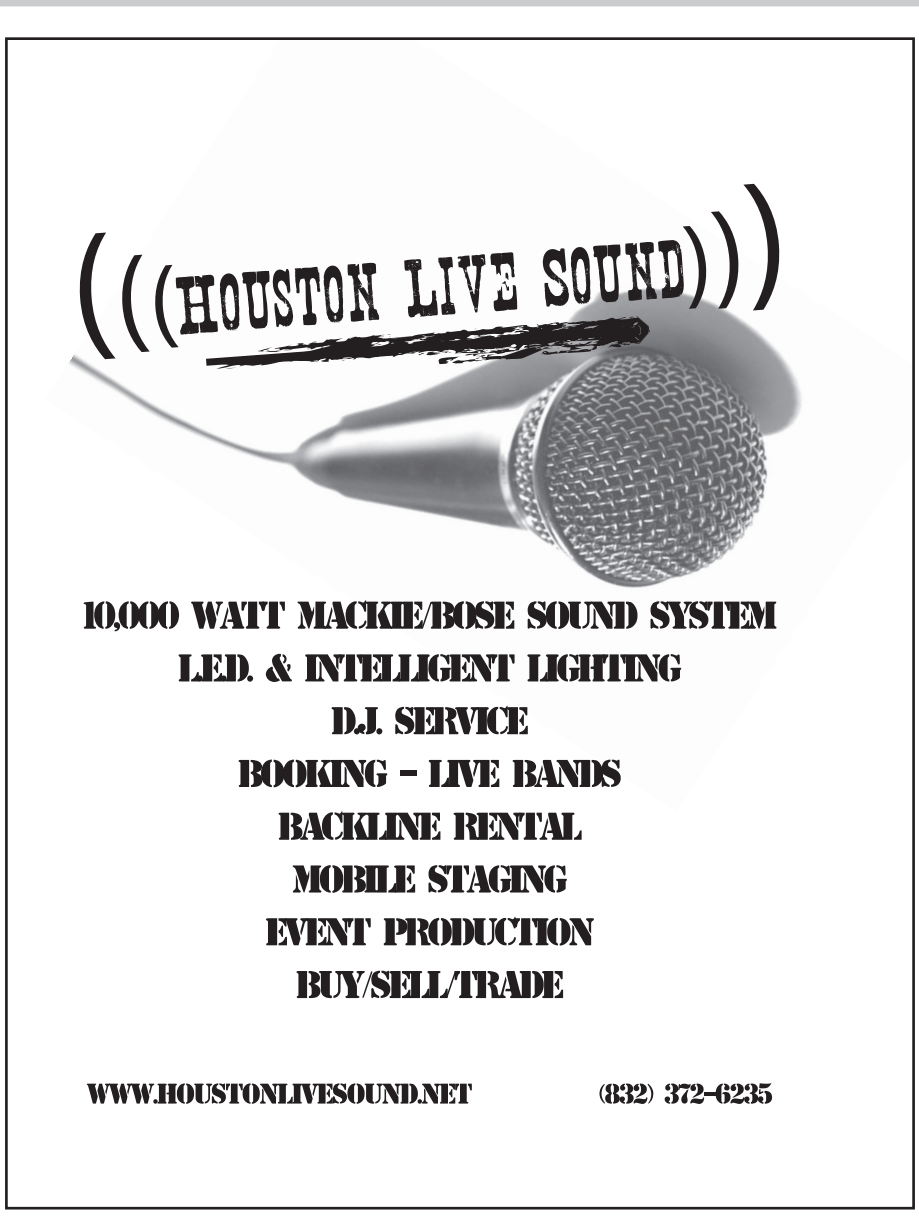
armed forces, including the National Guard in Federal service, to... 1. restore public order and enforce the laws of the United States when... the President determines that,...domestic violence has occurred to such an extent that the constituted authorities of the State or possession are incapable of maintaining public order; 2. suppress, in a State, any insurrection, domestic violence, unlawful combination, or conspiracy..."

Good-bye Separation of Powers

The National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD 51), and the Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD-20), signed on May 9, 2007, give special powers to the President in the event of a "Catastrophic Emergency," which means "any incident, regardless of location, that results in extraordinary levels of mass casualties, damage, or disruption severely affecting the U.S. population, infrastructure, environment, economy, or government functions." In such situations, "The President shall lead the activities of the Federal Government for ensuring constitutional government."

During the Bush presidency these totalitarian laws have arisen. At the same time there has emerged a rising cynicism among the people. There is a hope for a silver lining during oppressive presidencies that at least the people get to see how bad unchecked power abuses are. I once read that when Hitler came to power, the German communists were relieved that at least the people would get the opportunity to see how bad the Nazis were, and would therefore be more likely to vote communist in the next election. But there was no next election. It doesn't matter if the people are more cynical once they have been arrested, tortured, and disappeared. The damage done by Bush may indeed have had some effect of waking people up. By now we are as awake as we will ever be, so it is the time to take up all forms of non-violent action and civil disobedience, or to give up and leave the country. Military dictatorships around the world arrive rather quickly without giving the population time to choose to leave. In the aftermath of a terrorist attack, an environmental disaster, or even a stock market crash, the legal protections no longer exist in the U.S. that might make it difficult for a full military dictatorship to take over.





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Houston Rallies in defense of Mumia



from the Open Publishing newswire: I arrived late to the rally that tool place on Thursday May 17th, on the first day of Mumia Abu-Jamal's arguments in federal court. The Houston rally was of around 30 people in front of the Harris County Courthouse building at Franklin and San Jacinto. As I arrived the rally was surrounded by cops, there were 18 cops at the San Jac Franklin corner of the sidewalk, at least 3 cops on horses who looked really dehydrated facing the crowd, and 8 or 10 cops on bikes on the east side of the building. The rally was totally surrounded.

The crowd at the rally was an good mix of people. there were people there from the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, Houston Anarchist Black Cross, the SHAPE Center, the National Black United Front, People's Party 3, Code Pink Women for Peace, Nation of Islam, and other folks who I'm not sure what group they were with (my apologies to folks I left out). A number of people made statements on the soundsystem, opposing the death penalty, supporting Mumia and other political prisoners, and railing against the injustice of the US justice system.

There was some chanting including "Brick by brick, wall by wall, we're gonna free Mumia Abu-Jamal". The rally ended with a Unity Circle and a prayer lead by Minister Robert Muhammed. We all headed our separate ways, and the cops dispersed, to go intimidate someone else. Thanks to Gloria and everyone who helped put this event together!

Halliburton Takes the Money and Runs



During Wednesday's shareholder meeting, Halliburton said its finished selling off its controversial subsidiary KBR, and had no comment on allegations of fraud and overspending in Iraq. Opponents of war profiteering threw Halliburton a send-off party at its annual shareholder meeting with the theme Take the Money and Run. Activists came from all over Texas to participate.

Corpwatch just released a report, "Goodbye, Houston," critical of the company's sordid way of making money through fraud and overcharging on government contracts in Iraq. It outlines suggestions for more transparency in how the it spends billions in taxpayer dollars. Halliburton may be linked to missing oil Iraqi oil.

Houston Palestine Film Festival



May 11 - 20, Voices Breaking Boundaries and members of Arab Roots curated the Houston Palestine Film Festival in order to expose the perspective of artists as a first step toward circumventing the many government and media filters that pollute our understanding of Palestine and the wider region. Houstonians who attended saw an bring an honest and independent view of Palestine and its diaspora's society, culture, and political travails.

Indigenous to ConocoPhillips: Basta Ya!



With help from Amazon Watch, Achuar and Kichwa leaders arrived in Houston on May 8 to tell an audience at the Artery about the latest on-the-ground developments in their countries. Disturbingly, ConocoPhillips has declared it will push forward with drilling plans against the wishes of remote Achuar peoples and has acquired yet another oil block in Peru's pristine Amazon rainforest.

On May 9, Houstonians stood in solidarity outside Conoco's annual general meeting at the OMNI Houston Hotel. The leaders then went inside the meeting to directly tell ConocoPhillips: Basta ya!

The indigenous leaders included Tomas Maynas Carijano and Andres Sandi the visionary elder of the Achuar people and president of FECONACO, who together led the 2006 peaceful protest that led to a groundbreaking accord with the Peruvian government, and Petronila Nakaim Chumpi Rosales, the secretary of FECONACO and women's affairs chair. Joining them, was Patricia Gualinga is from the Kichwa community of Sarayaku, in Ecuador's southeastern Amazon rainforest.

Hutto Detention Facility: Bustamante Denied Access



UN Rapporteur for the Human Rights of Migrants, Jorge Bustamante has been planning a visit to the USA with particular interest in migrant detention centers such as the T. Don Hutto prison in Taylor, Texas. Bustamante announced that he would visit Hutto on April 27, but on May 3rd, the US government cancelled his access. read the full report by Greg Moses, and his earlier report.

Hundreds of children and their parents who came to the United States seeking asylum have ended up in this privately run family detention center, which may violate minimum standards for housing minors in federal immigration custody.

Immigration Raids were focus of 7 day hunger strike



For the entire first week of May, hunger strikers fasted in front of the local offices of Senators Cornyn and Hutchison, the Harris County Republicans and Democrats, and in a community park. They demanded a moratorium on immigration raids until comprehensive immigration reform is in place. Hunger strikers wore shirts made by family members of undocumented students, and many drivers honked their horns when passing by. Fasters assumed drivers who yelled incoherent remarks were enthusiastically saying 'Viva Mexico!' The separation of families caused by raids that score political points but fail to respect human rights and dignity is sure to get more attention as the Coalition in Defense of the Community plans its next steps.

Protesters take to the streets worldwide in celebration of Mayday

Mayday was first celebrated in 1890, observing the Haymarket Martyrs; anarchist labor organizers from Chicago, mostly immigrants from Central Europe, who were executed by the state of Illinois in 1887. It is observed as International Workers Day by workers and radicals all over the world.

In the United States, there were protests in dozens of cites, primarily advocating for immigrant rights, and against the immigration raids. In Los Angeles a march of tens of thousands was followed by a police riot, where LAPD attacked people rallying in MacArthur Park, hospitalizing at least 10 people including journalists with Fox News. In Chicago it's estimated that 150,000 people marched for immigrant rights. In New York, police arrested a Super Barrio look alike amidst the thousands of marchers hitting the streets.

In Houston there was a rally at the Federal building of around 100 people, which was called for by PWOC, Latin American Organization for Immigrant Rights and Mexicanos en Accion as well as the Indymedia Film Screening of Gigante: Despierta! Giant Awake! filmscreening at Rice Cinema

March in East Houston to End ICE Raids

Between 400 and 500 people participated in the March that took place on April 28th in Houston's East end. People rallied at the Church of the Imaculate Conception and marched down Harrisburg then 75th Street and ended in Mason Park with a rally and music.

There was participation from a diverse number of groups; students and youth, Chicano organizations, Leftist groups and contingents from various Latin American countries as well as numerous people from the neighborhood that joined the march as it passed. In Mason Park counter protesters gathered across the street, their threats of trying to deport people were drowned out by a large distance and the vigor of the immigrants right rally. This protest is close to a year after the May Day protests and boycott of 2006, which brought thousands of protesters to memorial park in Houston and as many as 1.5 million across the country into the streets protesting against HR4437 and for causes from Just Immigration Reform, to the DREAM Act, to the abolition of borders.





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