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Arts Film Music Technology World & Local News



JANUARY 2007  
**ISSUE #75**  
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| <i>Delivery</i>                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

# Feel free to take us seriously

## Happy New Year.

I woke up January 1<sup>st</sup> and decided to go to the emergency room. Seems the sinus infection I had from early December decided to return with a vengeance in the form of a massive fever and lymph nodes the size of baseballs. After a night of partying, my body just could not take it. Or maybe, it was the whole previous year that put the hurt down on my health. I have been quite the glutton. From food to liquor to unmentionables, I don't think I said no to anything put in front of my face in 2006. Now, Let's hope this is not the ramblings of a wishy-washy resolution maker who will soon be scarfing beignets down his throat faster than you can say *morbidly obese*. I write this today on the day of the six-year anniversary of my father's death and sincerely hope I can get my shit together. That said, I have great hopes for 2007. Maybe this will be the year I can finally convince Alex Wukman to get his anus bleached for the sake of journalism. Let's hope so. Q2



Voices Breaking Boundaries presents

**Words from Exile: Suheir Hammad**  
Beats from the Middle East

**Rhymes from Occupied Palestine**

**Thursday, January 25, 2007, 8pm onward**  
*General admission: \$5 (no one turned away)*  
**Proletariat, 903 Richmond Ave, Houston, TX 77006**

Suheir Hammad's unique style led her to join the debut episode of HBO's *Def Poetry*, using words to confront and inform about the Palestinian American experience. Born in Amman, Jordan to Palestinian refugee parents, growing up in Brooklyn, Hammad has performed from Ivy League universities to Brooklyn street corners, and is published in anthologies, periodicals, books, and zines – her new book *Zaatar Diva* (Cypher Books) is out now!

After-party with **Beats from the Middle East / Rhymes from Occupied Palestine**, featuring DJ Rami, DJ Antonio, and DJ Gracie, followed up by Rok Box with DJ Witness.

Words from Exile: Suheir Hammad produced by Hadeel Assali, Hana Elsahly, Gunjen Mittal, Iman Saqr, Hahleemah Wright, & VBB; cosponsored by the Proletariat, KPFT 90.1 FM, & Arab Roots; and funded in part by the Houston Arts Alliance, Houston Endowment, Texas Commission on the Arts, and Poets & Writers.

**next from VBB Un/Natural Disaster: Katrina/Kashmir - 2/4/07**

Jan 25 : 8pm

**words from exile: suheir hammad**  
**beats from the middle east/rhymes from occupied palestine**

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# Arts

## DEBRIS: Plastic

by Buffalo Sean



### Agnieszka Sandomierz: The Limits of Intimacy

Anya Tish Gallery 4411 Montrose  
Opens Friday, January 12, 6 - 9 PM  
Through February 10. (713) 524-2299



### Femininity: Myth and Iconography

Commerce Street Artist Warehouse  
Opens Saturday, January 13, 7 - 9 PM  
Through February 1 (713) 523-6883



### A Gorey Spectacle: The Book Illustration of Edward Gorey

Museum of Printing History 1324 West Clay  
Through January 31. (713) 522-4652



### Viveka Barnett: Dog Life

Joan Wich & Co. Gallery 4411 Montrose  
Opens January 12, 6 - 8 pm (713)-526-1551

This Saturday the 6th, cross Buffalo Bayou to the Heights for the opening of Angelbert Metoyer's *Royal Blue* at G Gallery. They throw strong parties at 301 E 11<sup>th</sup>, and besides the anal retentive bartender it's usually a good time. Sharon Kopriva's studio is in the same building with the two galleries and a printmaker, and her doors are regularly open to all. A week later on the 13th Redbud Gallery outdoes Metoyer with *Outsider Art Texas: Making Do*, curated by Jay Wehnert. Opening January 7-9 pm.

In CSAW's Main Gallery *Femininity: Myth and Iconography* is a group exhibition featuring local Houston artists Seth Alverson, Doren Bernard, Angela Maxwell, Sondra Mullenax, Donna Lovong, and Laura Neaderhouser. Curated by Whitney Riley, the show is bound to have a strong perspective and thoughtful sexuality. Come enjoy special drinks handed out by the Candy Bikini Femininity Squad! 2315 Commerce, across the tracks in the Warehouse District.

Congrats to the new residents of 4912 Main Street, the Lawndale Studio Residency kicks off with Dawolu Jabari Anderson, Donna Huanca, and Stephanie Saint Sanchez for a six-month stint. Pop on over to the third floor and say Hi!

January 20<sup>th</sup> opens *One Way or Another: Asian American Art Now* at University of Houston's Blaffer Gallery. Featuring new paintings, sculptures, installations and video by seventeen emerging Asian American artists born in the 60s and 70s *One Way or Another* focuses on new work by artists who are firmly rooted in the United States. *One Way or Another* is made possible with support from Altria Group, remember Phillip Morris?

Around the corner from the Proletariat, 4411 Montrose will swim with the Beamers and Benzes that make hipster punks sneer during the opening of OVERDRIVE at Barbara Davis Gallery. The old looking for good investments and the young looking for famous stuff not seen in Houston should enjoy this show featuring Chuck Close, Kiki Smith, Carroll Dunham, Elizabeth Peyton and Jessica Stockholder. Downstairs at Joan Wich Viveka Barnett's *Dog Life* looks to really challenge the gallery's staid identity with youthful drawings and as the start of a new year that will soon bring recent Houston grads B. Moss, Julie DeVries and Rabe'a Ballin to the space. Friday, January 12, 6-8 pm.

Michael Jones McKean will be back in town this January with *River Boat Love Songs for the Ghost Whale Regatta* at Diverseworks, the second showing of this monstrous installation that, along with its metal song title, should be required viewing for all first year art students as a lesson in 'shoot for the moon' whether good or bad. Friday, January 12, 6-8 pm.

## Congrats to Sean on his engage- ment, and best wishes for the future.

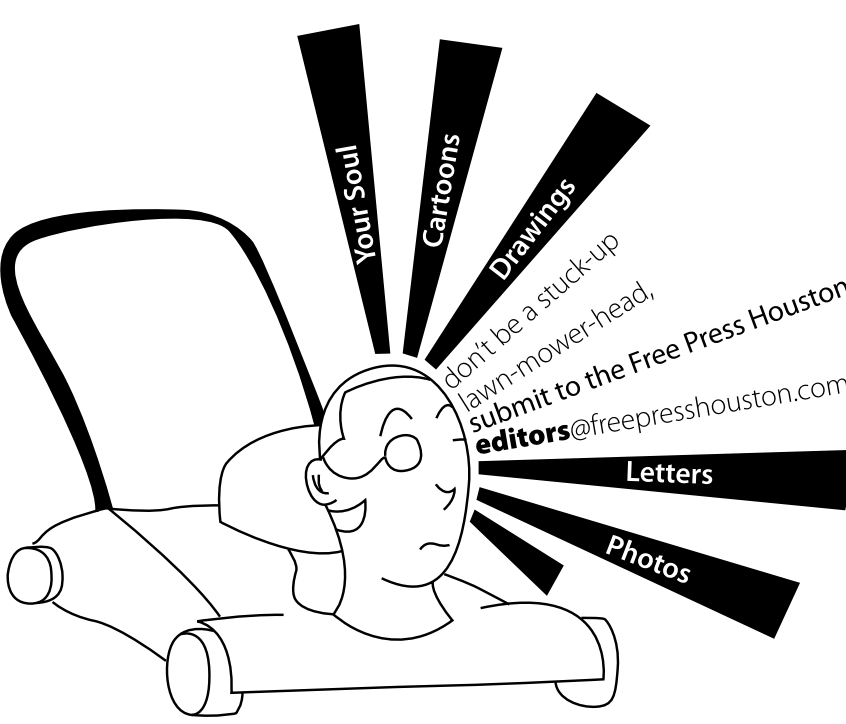
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- To forever pursue the cultivation of oneself.
- To contribute to the development of culture
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THE WAY OF THE SWORD

# What do you want from life art guide

by Carshal Nash



Wayne Gilbert, an artist who uses “unclaimed human remains” in his paintings is telling me about a performance art piece based on string theory. “It’s that moment of light and dark where a whisper travels through the universe,” Titled String, this multi-media starts in the lobby with an interactive art piece by Neva Mikulicz. Following to the main theatre, creative director David LaDuca welds images and sounds of a world in which time is fluid, space the constant of nature. This one-night-only show combines the musical talents of Symphomaniac Christine Wu, composer Dan Workman and R&B vocalist Ralz Mathias, along with filmmaker Ramzy Telley. Also expect intriguing and mesmerizing art works from McKay Otto and Gilbert. Everything takes place at the place formerly known as El Mercado del Sol (The Americas), 333 S. Jensen, Saturday, January 13. Lobby interactive at 7:30 pm, show at 8 pm.

Similar Differences, an installation of works by Sheila Klein and Kate Petley on view January 19th through March 2, at the Art League Houston (1953 Montrose Boulevard) is the follow up to the successful completion of their monumental Civic Art projects Leopard Sky and Air Drops at Bush Intercontinental Airport. Opening reception for the exhibition is January 19, beginning at 6 pm with an Artist Talk.

Third-grade students from K.E. Little Elementary have their artwork on display in the Kinder Gallery of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The exhibition opens on January 13, and there will be a special reception for the young artists, their parents, other students, faculty and administrators, and just whomever drop by, on Sunday, January 28. starting at 2 pm. The

students’ creations, inspired by the James Turrell tunnel and other works in the MFAH permanent collection, are rendered in crayola, marker, tempera, gel pens, pastels, and modeling clay. Reception and display are in the Kinder Foundation Teacher Resource Gallery on the lower level of the Caroline Wiess Law Building. In the same building, Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color – part of a joint MFA and Projeto Hélio Oiticica, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil project to document, conserve and exhibit the work of Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica (1937-1980) – is on display until April 1.

The end of one year opens the gates on a new extravaganza of opportunity. So if you know of an art opening where the DJ will be spinning “Monster Mash” and “Disco Inferno” simultaneously

let us know because we want to be there now. Would it surprise you that the Houston Museum of Natural Science has the third highest attendance of any museum in the United States, after the Smithsonian Institution and Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art? Their paid attendance for 2006 was 3,171,690. It surprises the heck out of me because that’s more people than are in Harris County. Later this year HMNS rolls out a world premiere exhibition, Lucy’s Legacy: The Hidden Treasures of Ethiopia that includes the world’s most famous fossil, a 3.2 million year old hominid ancestor known as Lucy. That’s serious bone.

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Saturday, Jan. 6th  
TWO HOOTS & A HOLLER  
Luxurious Panthers  
++++++

Friday, Jan. 12  
TZAR BOMBA  
Dumbarton, the Boxing  
Lesson  
++++++

Sunday, Jan. 14  
The Cross 98  
++++++

Monday, Jan. 15th  
Hate Tank Presents :  
FIRST BLOOD  
Bloodlined Caligraphy  
Death Before Dishonor  
Dead Hearts  
++++++

Thursday, Jan. 18  
JUCIFER  
Bowel, Pillcrusher,  
Golden Axe  
++++++

Friday, Jan. 19th  
Superunison Presents :  
EMPEROR X  
Bring Back the Guns  
++++++

Saturday, Jan. 20  
FIRED FOR WALKING  
Whorehound, Novox  
++++++

Wednesday, Jan. 25  
Hate Tank Presents :  
FALL OF TROY  
++++++

Saturday, Jan. 27  
JOB FOR A COWBOY  
Psyopus  
See You Next Tuesday  
++++++

Wednesday, Jan 31  
GOD FORBID  
Goatwhore, Mnemic, Arsis  
the Human Abstract

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THUR. - JAN. 18 -  
SNOCORE TOUR WITH ARMY  
OF ANYONE  
HURT  
DROPPING DAYLIGHT  
NEUROSONIC

SAT. - JAN. 20 -  
MTV'S MAKING THE BAND -  
OPEN AUDITION

SAT. - JAN. 20 -  
WEDNESDAY 13

FRI. - JAN. 26 -  
ALL THAT REMAINS

SUN. - JAN. 28 -  
KILL HANNAH W/THE PINK  
SPIDERS ACTION REACTION.  
LOVE ARCADE

SAT. - JAN. 27 - 'RENT' 42

WED. - JAN. 31 - THE QUEERS

FRI. - FEB. 2 -  
BOB'S 50TH BIRTHDAY BASH

SAT. - FEB. 3 -  
YONDER MOUNTAIN STRING  
BAND

THUR. - FEB. 15 -  
BIG HEAD TODD &  
THE MONSTERS  
W/ RECKLESS KELLY

FRI. - FEB. 16 -  
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# Watch not watch

by Michael Bergeron

The end of December is a dead zone for your humble scribe as far as movies are concerned. I've already seen everything that cinema audiences are flocking to currently. More than a couple of high profile movies won't even open in Houston until early to mid-January – titles like *Letters From Iwo Jima*, *Pan's Labyrinth*, *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer*, *Miss Potter*, *Notes On A Scandal*, *The Good German* and *Children of Men*. Houston does present itself as a bit of a backwater town now and then.

Meanwhile local auds are just adjusting to *The Good Shepherd* and *The History Boys*, or if Santa left you a hunk of coal in your stocking *Black Christmas*.

With end of the year kudos being extended for many current films you'd think it was the best month of the year to see films. For me, that would be last March when I saw *V For Vendetta* and *Thank You For Smoking*. Those two films along with the fall release *Little Children* get my vote for best trio of films of the year. Other exceptional films would include the dense *Brick*; the tense *Hard Candy*; the documentary *The Bridge*; *Happy Feet*; natch Scorsese's *The Departed*; Emilio Estevez's emotional *Bobby*; and the dystopian tinged road movie *Children of Men*. Those were my best, here's the rest.

That's not to say that I didn't enjoy the length and skullduggery of *Good Shepherd* or the infectious rhythms of *Dreamgirls* (none of the film's songs are anywhere as good as a Motown hit), nor the minimalism of a Clint Eastwood war romp, or the animated rumbles of *Cars*, the grief of *The Queen* or the sheer intensity of *United 93*. And I definitely sat on the edge of my seat for most of *Apocalypto*, and thought *The Fountain* was way over the heads of the studio and moviegoers alike. Likewise I laughed like a hyena at *Borat* and disavowed fast food after *Fast Food Nation*. Perhaps the coolest single shot from any film was the swooping crane discovery sequence from *The Black Dahlia*, otherwise a misfire from Brian De Palma. When you see as many films as I do it's not so much about what you like, but about what you can't wait to end.

Two films epitomize all that is wrong with filmmaking: *Stranger Than Fiction* and *The Holiday*. The former was a Huckabees wannabe metaphysical comedy that painted itself into its own lame corner. It has to be good because it's absurd seems to be director Marc Forster's mantra. Oddly his badly reviewed *Stay* was more interesting than anything in *Stranger Than Fiction*. Will Farrell seems destined to be the George Gobel (a popular comic actor from the 1950s) of this generation.

*The Holiday* just sets the right mood with the most impossibly beautiful people making love to each other. What's wrong with that you may ask? After two reels of foreplay Cameron Diaz and Jude Law hop in the sack and after consummating their relationship she still wearing her bra. Welcome to PG-13 filmmaking. *The Holiday* has brilliant thespians like Kate Winslet overacting, and natural hams like Jack Black downshifting his usual kinetic method. Nancy Meyer's direction oversimplifies the romance a film like *The Holiday* needs to sustain interest, but then again she turns out holiday pap like this on a regular basis (anyone own a DVD of *What Women Want?*).

## The Bridge

*The Bridge*, playing at the Angelika, turns documentaries on their head. Originally the filmmakers contracted to film every day for a year from different angles (mostly elevated guard posts) of the Golden Gate Bridge. At the year's end, they realized that they had filmed over a twenty people committing or attempting suicide. The Golden Gate has the distinction of being the most common structure



of its kind for offing oneself. The film's subject matter caused a furor when it played in San Francisco last May, but its distribution has continued unhampered. The filmmakers added footage of interviews with the victim's family and friends, and while nervy the end result is a soothing and passionate reverie on life.

One person interviewed actually survived his "4 to 6 second fall at 120 miles per hour." The account of his failed attempt brims with life affirming destiny.

## Children of Men

*Children of Men* takes its viewer through an odyssey of future terror, at a time (2027) when the mankind has become infertile. Also important is the emergence of director Alfonso Cuarón as the technical wizard of the trio of Mexican filmmakers (Alejandro Innaritu and Guillermo Del Toro) currently burning up the charts. *Children of Men* creates magic in some sustained long takes that involve as elaborate a kind of choreography as anything seen in a staged team of dancers.

The story, set in a totalitarian U.K., follows Clive Owen as he's brought back from his dulled sense

of reality after being contacted by a long-ago love interest (Julianne Moore). She heads a terrorist cell (for want of a better description) that seeks to protect and smuggle out of the country the first woman to become pregnant in a generation. COM pads out its agitprop with some remarkable action scenes, one involving a complicated camera set-up that's attached to a van being pursued by motorcycles in a forest. The film's strength is the way it alternates the action with commentary on the pitfalls of technology. Scenes with supporting actors like Danny Huston and Michael Caine resonate its dystopian presence. For instance, Caine lives in hidden seclusion in the countryside, bidding his time listening to classic rock and caring for his sick wife. You would think he was still in the 60s. Meanwhile Huston plays an upper class friend of Owens who just happens to have the world's raided art (a Michelangelo statue with a fake leg, Picasso's *Guernica*) in the alcove and living room of his stately home.

While COM may not be an accurate prediction of future occurrences, you're so caught up in Owen's state of duress under attack

that it's easy to confuse the future depicted here with current events. At its conclusion, the future is rooted in the past.

## MFA

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston showcases the 14th Iranian Film Festival unreeling five Iranian features during January. The Rice Media Center screens additional Iranian films in February. The MFA also presents Bela Tarr's *Santantango* on January 5-7. Tarr's 1994 movie, set in a remote Hungarian village, runs seven-and-a-half hours. Friday and Saturday night the film screens in two parts, and on Sunday the film unwinds starting at 1 pm, with an hour break for dinner before the concluding part at 6 pm. The various shows will be a treat and endurance for foreign film fans. While the mainstream theater chains wait a month to catch up with fare in other major cities, the MFAH programs movies with a flair for the unusual and provocative. That being said, the MFAH also has former First Lady Barbara Bush introducing Roberto Benigni's *Life is Beautiful* on Monday, January 29. ([www.mfah.org/film](http://www.mfah.org/film))

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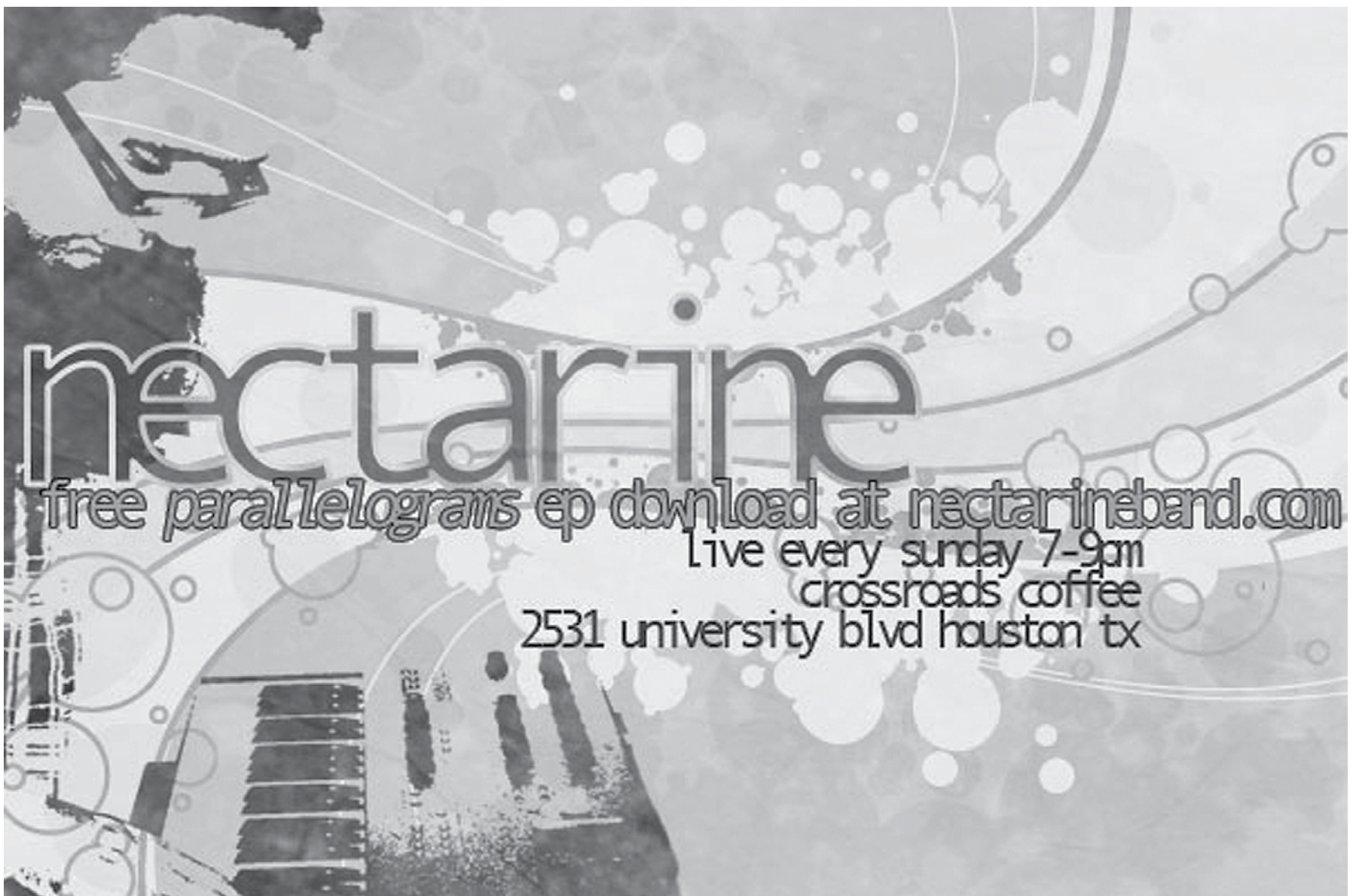
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## Music

## 2006: THE YEAR THAT FOLLOWED THE ONE BEFORE IT

by Kwame M. Anderson

What can be said about the year 2006? It was the sixth year after the millennium. Many things took place this year, and to recall those things is the job of Time Magazine, or Newsweek, or Rolling Stone, or some other publication with much more credibility. Well being that I'm not in the business of credible journalism, I prefer to focus on the things that I remember. This year as the Democrats regained popularity, I gained more dutiful employment, love was gained and lost, and Donald Rumsfeld retired, I will remember...um...the, no wait that was last year...there was the...no, wait a minute, that was...was that this year? Oh well, I'm sure that so much happened, that I can't pinpoint one particular moment. But, I do remember the music. OK, not really all of it, but enough of it to compile a reasonable list of albums that I do not regret owning, which were released this year.

This year was a decent year for music. There were not many

surprises, but very few disappointments; which basically means it was as good of a year as I assumed it would be. This could mean a lot of things, but let's say it means something good. My biggest problem with 2006, the Battles album was never released, I mean, shit, how long could I make it off of those 3 EPs. Cam'ron (one of my favorite rappers) released a dud, but he dissed Jay Z, who also released a dud, and that is proof that beef isn't good for rap. Sonic Youth released a pretty good album, and Timbaland returned with a vengeance causing me to utter the words, "Have you heard the Nelly Furtado album?" The inflection after the question being a good one as opposed to the more negative connotation. While I did like the Justin Timberlake album, it was more of a confirmation of Timbaland's genius rather than an acknowledgement of JT's talent (?)

However, this year Arthur Lee and Ed Bradley died, and that is sad moment in African

American history, at least in my humble opinion. But, a Black Muslim was elected as a mayor in Minnesota and that almost combats the damage done by Flavor Of Love. So let us recap the year in music...from my point of view.

**MAN MAN***Six Demon Bag*

(Ace Fu)

Anyone who's seen Man Man will attest to the fact that their albums, thus far, can do no justice to their live show. But while their debut, Man With The Blue Turban Face, was a good album it greatly paled in comparison, while the last album, Six Demon Bag, was closer to the magic. You can use words like Tom Waits or carnival music, or rock, to describe the band's music, and maybe all would be accurate. But if it were that simple, the album would not be the powerhouse that it is. Whether it is the gentle pain of "Van Helsing's Boombox" or the mystic

groove of "Banana Ghost" the greatness of this album is hard to deny. Intriguing, humorous, and somewhat melancholy at times, the album represents the attack on the heart that love is, but still man, you HAVE to see this band live.

**LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM***Under The Skin*

(Warner Bros.)

Lindsey Buckingham is perhaps one of the most interesting figures in the world of pop/rock music. He's a phenomenal guitar player with pop sensibilities and avant-garde tendencies. While Fleetwood Mac's album Tusk stands as one of the most expensive albums ever made, it still is as weird and out there as any thing outsider rock artists have made. Well, Under The Skin, is pretty much the same. Mostly recorded in home studios with Buckingham providing most of the accompaniment, it's a pop record in an eccentric coat, it is

not as of the songs are presented to be strange, but parts of them are. The title track with its reverb vocals and spacey guitars is poppy but wouldn't be out of place on an Animal Collective album. The album shows that even at almost 60, Buckingham is adventurous as he ever was.

**TV ON THE RADIO***Return To Cookie Mountain*

(Interscope)

When TVOTR released their debut album there was as much praise as there was suspicion. For even as these dudes seemed like the truth, were they really? Are they an over hyped group or were they really as great as the accolades would have you think. Well, after the release of their major label debut Return To Cookie Mountain, the band surpassed "indie" success to prove that they are perhaps one of the most interesting, challenging, and trailblazing bands of the last 20 years. The

**Wednesday 13**

1/20 @ Meridian

**Girls Rise with Heat**

1/11 @ Super Happy Fun Land

**Grupo Fantasma**

1/19 @ Warehouse Live

**The Generic Tribe**

1/19 @ Engine Room

**Mansion**

1/15 @ Proletariat

**Electric Mountain Rotten Apple Gang**

1/13 @ Last Concert

band made no apologies for their “larger than hipster band” aspirations, making a huge sounding album on a huge major, doing a huge tour with Nine Inch Nails, and still managing to wow or silence music listeners here and abroad. “Wolf Like Me,” is new wave post punk at its best, and “A Method” is electro soul avant Purple Rain-esque boom bap.

## WHITE MAGIC

### *Dat Rosa Mel Apibus*

(Drag City)

Mira Billote is not an artist that is great because of any reason other than she is unequivocally individual in scope and vision of what she does. White Magic’s sound can most closely be referenced to Quixotic, the other band Billote was a member of. Middle Eastern tinged, gypsy blues, or whatever term you could concoct would still be an unfair representation of the sound voyage that is “Dat Rosa Mel Apibus.” “All The World Wept” is an esoteric gem of a song that is a much an environment of sound as it is a jaunt to a spiritual world. “Song Of Solomon” is the song Burning Spear would’ve made had they been a rock group. “Hold Your Hand In The Dark” is courageous and grandiose while still remaining humble in spirit.

## JOHN MAYER

### *Continuum*

(Sony)

John Mayer could be this generation’s post Cream Eric Clapton, which may not be that good of thing, but Mayer never played in a psychedelic rock band, though he does exhibit a love for Hendrix and rock blues trios. Continuum is Mayer’s latest album, and while for much of his career, Mayer was straight-laced; he’s currently taken a liking to Whiskey and vaporized weed, which could attribute the bluesy soul thing on his album. “I Don’t Trust Myself With Loving You” could’ve been a Bobby Womack song, and it wouldn’t completely out of place to here Z.Z. Hill or PercySledge singing “Slow Dancing In A Burning Room.” But there is also the introspective “Stop This Train,” which discusses the catapult from youth into adulthood with the phrase “So scared of getting older, I’m only good at being young.” Now you may say: “C’mon man, you can’t be serious.” To which I would reply: Why are you concerned who I come on?

## CLIPSE

### *Hell Hath No Fury*

(Jive)

I never sold crack, but does that stop me from being inspired and enthralled by this ode to all

things illegal and obnoxious. Yes, The Clipse latest album is one of the best hip-hop releases this year. OK, it’s not the positive rap of say Lupe Fiasco, and it’s not the bullshit Vegas act Jay Z is performing, it’s the reason we all love rap music. It’s brash, it’s arrogant, and it would probably disturb some of the decent folk rap has been pandering to these days. On the song “Dirty Money” and ode to supporting women with funds acquired through illegal means, the lore is spit “And you have to love me, just be convincing.” I think that pretty much sums up my wish for all music.

## AKRON FAMILY

### *Meek Warrior*

(Young God)

The world is overcrowded, overpopulated, and completely entrenched in technology and capitalism. So maybe that’s why an album that seems completely obsessed with spirituality, love, and space. This album devoid of the worldly pleasures, and more concerned with the mind’s landscapes. “The Rider (The Dolphin’s Song)” is a flight over a desert through the safari into a cave of fire. “Blessing Force” is a séance, a tribal congregation, a rock opus that is at once Mountain and then Andrew Cyrille.

## TAPES N’ TAPES

### *The Loon*

(XL Recordings)

Some of us miss the days of great bent guitar rock of Guided By Voices, Pavement, Spoon, or The Pixies, and that is why Tapes N’ Tapes album the Loon makes me stupendously excited. “Manitoba” will be the drunken slow dance at my wedding.

## SWAN LAKE

### *Beast Moans*

(Jagujagawar)

Dan Bejar of Destroyer. Casey Mercer of Frog Eyes. Spencer Krug of Wolf Parade and Sunset Rubdown. The sound of the explosion of rock music resurrected then exorcised into a demon that haunts my headphones. It’s beautiful like the fire that burns inside of my tortured soul.

Other notables:

**THE ROOTS-** *Game Theory* (Def Jam)

**JOANNA NEWSOM-** *Ys* (Drag City)

**THE CURTAINS-** *Calamity* (Asthmatic Kitty)

**DANIELSON-** *Ships* (Secretly Canadian)

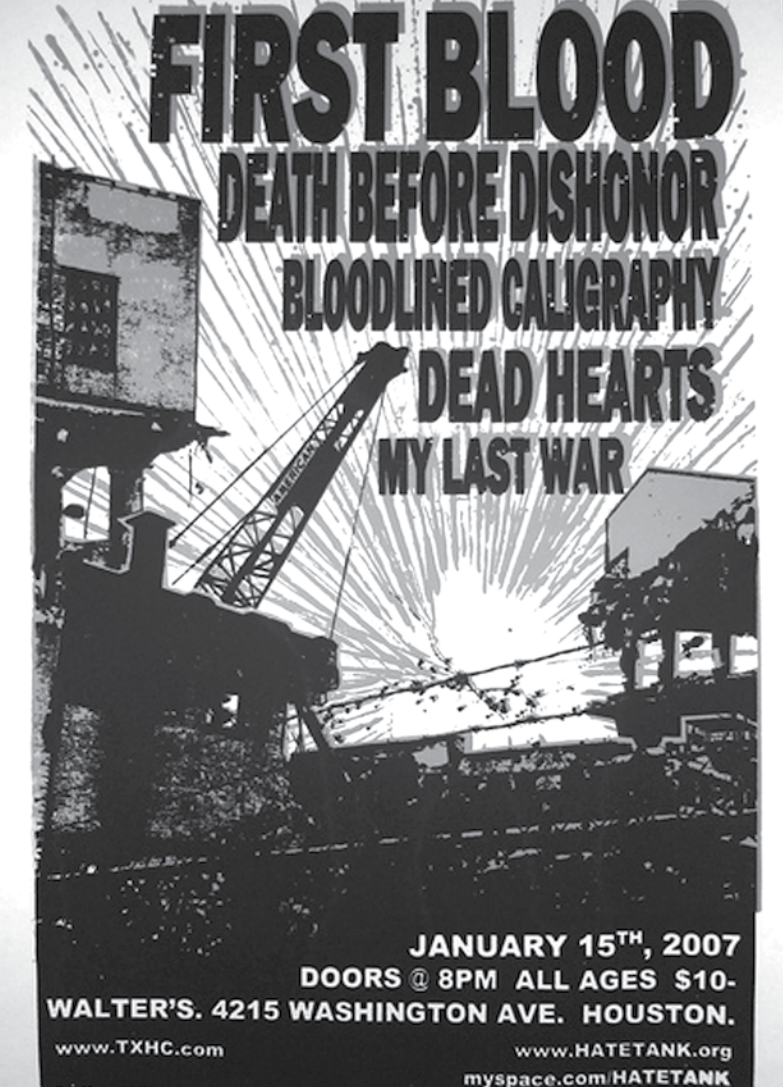
**GHOSTFACE-** *Fishscale* (Def Jam)



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Feature

# 2006 Worst of: Houston

by Houston

“we are  
Houston’s  
worst  
news-  
paper”



Sometimes you have to look in the mirror. Especially if you have an ingrown hair. To be able to identify your worst traits is the precursor to progress. For instance, my worst trait is either my smashing good looks or my enormous penis. Well, maybe those are not ‘worst’ traits but still, you get my point. I know there are categories that have been missed or those that should have been dissed, but we are Houston’s worst newspaper so bear with us. Just dig your teeth in and enjoy this imperfect world we live in. Keep on Sucking, Houston.

## People Worst Philanthro- pist: Carolyn Farb

1<sup>st</sup> off, Carolyn Farb is really a man. I have seen her balls. Which makes the fact she beds unwitting men a travesty. Secondly, it is overwhelmingly apparent that this vapid bitch has never been told of the concept whereas those who donate are more pious and noble if they do so anonymously and don’t make socialite magazine pictures as a prerequisite to their philanthropy. Bottom line: This lady merely throws her husband’s money around as a social stepping-stone. Let’s get real: When you have that kind of money, you are not honorable for donating. You are merely doing what should be an obligation of the filthy, stinking rich.



## Worst Human Being: Craig Baker

Craig Baker lives in Katy. Figures. A mosque dared to move in next door to his home so he decided to hold pig races and cook sausages in his regularly afternoon prayers. What a douche. This guy exemplifies the new southern racism. He says he is just ‘defending his property rights.’ What a joke. How would people react if he did the same if a synagogue moved next door? There would be outrage. And rest assured that it would make the local news. It has not thus far, yet it has made it to CNN. Strange. Oh well, fuck that guy. I shit on his whole family.

*Honorable Mention: Alex Wukman*  
by Omar Afra

## Worst person named Matt Manalo: Matt Manalo

This dude does so many of those myspace questionnaires that you could compile a biography from that shit. Could you believe it? He’s just angry cause some girl liked me instead of him. But come on, she wasn’t in love with him in the first place. And he has some bizarre obsession with how my initials BLT coincidentally stand for a sandwich.

by Bao Long Ton

## Worst Person Ever: Bao Long Ton

He’s the fucking worst person ever because his initials stand for BLT, which is a fucking sandwich. He’s too cool to be a sandwich, besides, I love BLT sandwiches and I stopped eating them when I met him. He totally changed my whole perception of the sandwich. He sucks.

by Matt Manalo

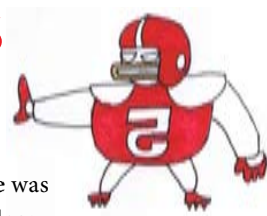
## Sports Worst Sports Team: Texans

The highlight of the last year for me was watching the Texans lose every game. It’s called karma Houston; maybe you should start paying attention.

by Andrea Ponce

## Worst Draft Picks: the Houston Texans

Love you Blue is a phrase that will always live in the true Houstonian football fan. It has great meaning, for a great owner, running a great team, with hometown players leading the charge on the football field (props to Earl Campbell). This last year the citizens of Houston had reason to believe they could come full circle and resur-



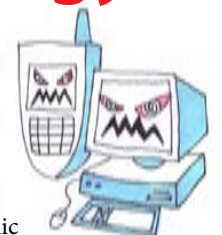
rect Love you Blue with the new and improved Houston Texan franchise, with possibly the help of Houston native Vince Young. This of course did not happen. Which brings me to the worst of the worst. The Texans Draft picks, not only did they not solve our dilemma of being a boring, poor performing football team, (I attended church a lot more this football season) but also revealed that the General Manager making the picks, pursued a job as the NFL’s vice president of football operations. Well, I guess a stab in the back never hurt anyone.

by Omar Rodriguez

## Technology

### Worst Inter- net Addictions: Myspace

We’re gonna go ahead and just come out with guns blazing because MySpace has become public enemy number fucking one. I bet you could ask those junkies what color the sky was and they’d have to fucking post a bulletin telling everyone that a new hair color was coming later that nite and to expect “new pics”. I always think about how hard it was for bands back in the day, pre-internet. That probably has a lot to do with why most bands before 1993 are “legendary” as opposed to a “that band that has 43,000 friends”. YouTube being bought out by Google too? What the fuck?! Get off that goddamn site people. You are being watched from the inside of the earth to the sky and those watching you are reptilian. It can be said that youth and naiveté plays a large role in the rise of sites like these but wait until Officer O’Malley is at the door with



“He’s too  
cool to  
be a  
sandwich”

“This guy  
exem-  
plifies  
the new  
southern  
racism.”

# super happy fun land

Jan 5th:  
Dogme 95  
Pseudonecrophile  
Secant  
Blades

Jan 6th:  
Alle Norton  
Avery  
Savory Special  
Sunday Best  
Miss The Mark  
Status green

Jan 8th:  
The Frontier Brothers  
The Wolf  
Continental Congress (formally Carousel Shy)  
Apple and the Ghost  
Mammoth Grinder

Jan 11th:  
A Vague Sound  
Girls Rise With Heat  
Pseudonecrophile  
G Styles

Fri Jan 12th:  
Sick's Pack  
(Featuring Sick formally from The Asylum Street  
Spankers)  
Poopy Lungstuffing  
You(genious)

Jan 13th:  
The Soledad Sons 6:30 p.m.  
And This Army 7:15 p.m.  
Despite the Loss 8:15 p.m.  
We Are The Music Makers 9:00 p.m.  
Motion Turns it On 10:00 p.m.  
The Nautical Mile 10:45 p.m.  
Riff Tiffs 11:30 p.m.  
Pretty and Nice 12:15am

Jan 14th:  
Animal City  
DJ Areil  
Pseudonecrophile  
Emperor X  
Applied Communications

Jan 17th:  
Porsches on the Autobahn  
Plid  
Skandalon

Jan 18th:  
Brass Bed  
The Wolf  
Anabel  
The Overdue Bill

Jan 20th:  
Shades of Blue CD Release Party

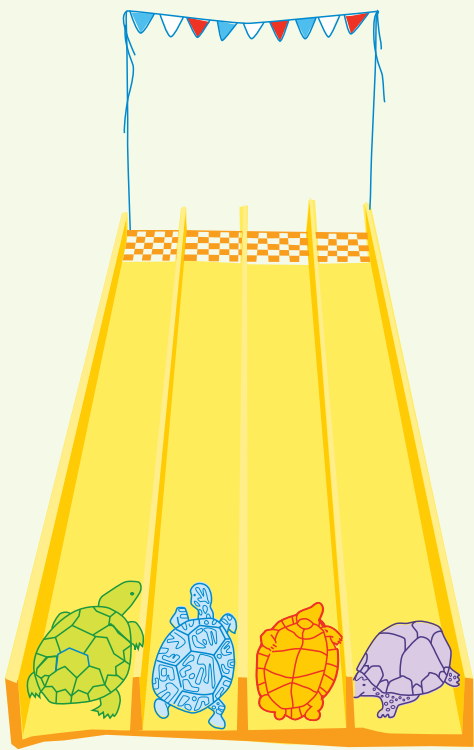
Jan 23rd:  
The LP's

Jan 25th:  
Monty Python tribute @ Southmore House with  
Organ Failure

Jan 26th:  
The Pleasures of Merely Circulating  
Adam Bork (formerly known as Earthpig)

Jan 27th:  
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Feature

2006 Worst of: **Houston**

“Al Gore is still a fucking joke.”

“Would someone please blow George Bush so we can impeach him?”

“I spend around 25 minutes pretending I’m in an off-road rally race on Westheimer”

a search warrant for you posting that picture on MySpace of you tagging up the Washington Mutual. Al Gore is still a fucking joke.

### Worst Technology: Sidekick/Blue Tooth

If I hear one more Sidekick snap open I’m going to smoke at a bus stop so I can go back to jail. Does life not even fucking matter to you anymore? Is the fact that you are having a 75-degree day, no humidity, and a full tank of gas in the car your parent’s bought you not good enough? Or are you so drawn into your 6-inch world of AIM and MySpace comments that you actually wouldn’t care if someone cut off your legs and left you in the middle of I-10? Blue Tooth, oh Blue Tooth users...you don’t look cool with that piece of shit “molded” onto your ear. Yes, it does look like you’re talking to yourself and yes it looks retarded. Ipods, now this is totally a personal bias and probably doesn’t apply to everyone but it is true. Apple is fucking Seth, straight up, they created a device that not only perpetuates laziness and lack of physical effort, but they are also in the process of destroying jobs for all those artists out there, making no money already, by convincing the masses that the “whole package” is the song. I don’t know about you guys but I like picking up a CD or a Record and experiencing the WHOLE PIECE OF ART. People didn’t buy Grateful Dead because the music was good; people bought Grateful Dead because they were fucking ripped and thought the album art would be something cool to “trip out to”.

by unknown

## Politics

**Worst City Council Member: Anne Clutterbuck** is a syphilis-infested whore with white supremacist tendencies. Well, maybe not but this At-Large Council member is notorious for yapping on her phone while City Council open session is going on. People wait in line for 4 + an hour for literally 1 minute to speak and Clutterbuck does not have the respect to listen. I wish Ada Edwards would smack her smug face and then body slam her on the council floor.

by Omar Afra

**Worst Corporate Citizen: Weingarten Realty**, for even CONSIDERING demolishing the River Oaks Theatre to make way for yet more wretched rabbit hutch condos for even more



wretched yuppie scum. Warehouse these people in Kingwood, as god intended.

**Worst Opportunistic Political Hack: Sheila Sekula Gibbs**, for her doomed to fail attempt at gaining Tom Delay’s old seat in a run-off election as well as her doomed to succeed run at completing the Hammer’s now-expired previous term of office.

**Worst Opportunistic Political Hack (second place): John Culberson**, for having the nerve to describe himself as a “Jeffersonian Republican” at a community meeting at Rice University. Jefferson died in 1826. The Republican Party was founded 28 years later. It is reasonable to assume that an audience at Rice might contain a few people who realize that, just as it is reasonable to assume that the Republican audiences he normally addresses barely know who Jefferson was.

**Worst former Houstonian and current war criminal-** Or, as *Comic Book Guy* would say “Worse President EVER”: Would someone please blow **George Bush** so we can impeach him? by M.Martin

## Public Works

**Worst Public Utility: Metro**, for roughly doubling the cost of my environmentally-friendly bus commute to work, and for shoving a train system down my neighborhood’s throat that will benefit no one but real estate speculators and suburban train fetishists. *Honorable Mention: CenterPoint Energy* by M.Martin



### Worst use of public funds: Houston Growth Plan

This past summer the Houston City Council allocated \$1 million for a committee to consider the possibility of developing a non-comprehensive general plan for Houston’s future growth. In real world language this means that the Houston City Council spent \$1 million for a committee to consider developing an idea about how Houston should grow. Great, no wonder people in the rest of the world think we still ride horses.

### Worst case of NIMBY syndrome: Rail off Richmond campaign

The very public campaign to move a planned East-West rail line to a street that doesn’t connect to the already built North-South one is quintessential Not In My Back Yard behavior. If this behavior was isolated to this issue it would be one thing, but the residents of the affected neighbor-

hoods protested the reconstruction of Spur 527 because they feared it would shuttle too much traffic onto Richmond Avenue. The irony of the situation is that these are some of the people who support light rail, reducing traffic congestion, etc. etc. As long as it’s not on their street.

### Worst public works campaign: Widening of Studewood

Nothing about this almost four-year-old construction project makes sense. The original idea was to simply add an alternating turn lane to Studewood, but has developed into an exercise in alternating lane closures for no reason. The best example of the callous disregard for the residents that the construction company practiced is the fact that they poured the concrete and left it to harden for two months. Apparently they wanted to be sure it was dry before they opened the road. And now after it’s all said and done, the alternating lane lights don’t even work.

### Worst case of media over coverage: Montrose Gang Fight

This is always a hard one because when Houston media gets a story they are like a dog with a chew toy, they won’t let it go until they’ve shredded it into tiny little pieces. This over zealousness led to weeks of coverage on the immigrant smuggling trial, anything that involved Katrina and scores of articles on the Walter’s on Washington incident. However, the three part series detailing the lives of two teenager’s trip to El Salvador to photograph a corpse and more articles than you can shake a stick at, this 10 minute-West Side Story style-fight takes the cake.

by Alex Wukman

### Worst Nuisance: Potholes

It’s sad to say that a beautiful city such as Houston (in most parts) is stricken with unsightly blemishes of potholes and asphalt patches. My drive to work every morning is about 45 minutes and I spend around 25 of those minutes pretending I’m in an off-road rally race on Westheimer, Eldridge, and Kirkwood Drive. When I actually get past the landmines of suspension killers I hit my best friend Ms. Katy Freeway, and boy is she pissed, (like I never called her the day after). With all the butt cracks of my people and “BABY ON BOARD” signs that keep me company as I lose more of my life waiting in the biggest parking lot in the world, I tend to realize why people like the freeway. No potholes!!!! Yeah you get to wait like a lamb to the slaughter of boredom, but the ride is pretty gentle. I guess the city feels since this is truck country, then we won’t mind the potholes so much. I’d like to meet the shit kicker who thought that up. Where

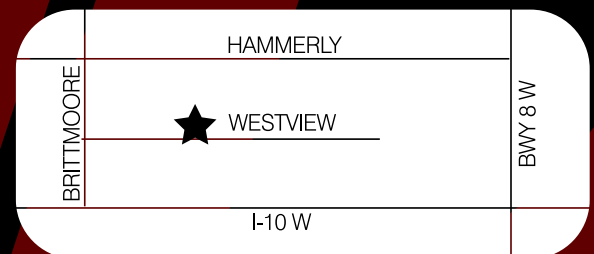


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Feature

2006 Worst of: **Houston**

“I’d like to meet the shit kicker who thought that up.”

was I.....? Oh yeah, Ms. Katy. So anyway, I’m just very surprised that with all of our advances in technology, (sending shit to space, computers, chemical warfare, and the microwave) we can’t build smooth streets. I mean its wet dirt for crying out loud! How hard could it be? The Egyptians had the shit to a science. C’mom someone, grab a book and look at the pretty pictures! I can understand rebuilding the freeways for obvious reasons, but don’t forget about the little guys. The worst of Houston; the streets!

by Sinjerith

**Worst House of Worship: Tie—Lakewood Church and Second Baptist**

Lakewood Church takes the cake for being the type of ‘church’ that has little or nothing to do with Jesus, spirituality, or the Bible. Despite that fact that Joel Osteen has removed his wretched curly mullet, he is still nothing more than an over hyped motivational speaker that is neither credentialed by any ecumenical organization nor qualified to cite scripture. So he does not. Also, who can forget his evil wife? She made out with Alex Wukman. Maybe. Call and ask: (713) 635-4154. The folks at Second Baptist are led by a group of baby-blood drinking freemasons as deacons and pastors. They have loads of gay sex during their rituals. Don’t believe me? Call them now and ask: (713) 365-2310. Not to mention, Pastor Ed Young likes to put gerbils in his butt. There is a video on YouTube.

by Omar Afra

“Rudyard’s has toilet paper yet has no door.”

“This was perhaps the biggest fuck-up of the year”

**Business****Worst Affliction of Greed: Diedrich’s Coffee on Westhiemer closes.**

Apparently, coffee house beatniks are not the favored crowd of hair salon metro-sexuals (I think its all the open-toe sandals). So when the neighbor, and owner wanted no more coffee smell in the morning, Diedrich’s Coffee on Westhiemer and Hazard was declined a lease renewal. Regular patrons and locals were up-in-arms as the Westhiemer location was the best the franchise had in its Houston real-estate. Gone are the days of a convenient spot for a good cup of joe, and free wi-fi.

by Tyler Barber

**Worst Gas Station: Valero Gas and Convenience Stores**

Convenience stores in Houston do a transformation every few years, from Circle K to Diamond Shamrock, 7-11, U Totem, or etc. This time, the millions of dollars it must take to change all the signs has brought our streets the new word “Valero.” Valero Energy Corporation is the largest refiner in North America, with annual revenues of more than \$80 billion, and some connections to Halliburton. Leftists across Houston who are still using gasoline-powered vehicles can instead go to Citgo instead where the money flows to Venezuela.

by Nick Cooper

**Worst place to take a dump: Tie—Numbers and Rudyard’s**

Both of these places are staples of the Houston music scene and both of these places are horrible to get stuck at if you need to pinch a loaf. Numbers rarely has toilet paper and often has urine and feces preceding the toilet by several yards. Rudyard’s has toilet paper yet has no door. Hence, someone walking in to merely take a leak gets to watch you drop bombs. My friend, let’s just call him Omar Al-Bochi, took a dump there several weeks ago and is still feeling the sting of such a dark experience.

**Worst Trend in Bars: One-word names and quasi-rock bars**

Listen folks, the far-too-similar one word bar names have got to go: HUSH, Chrome, Next, Touch, Mink, Bond, Deco, Dirt, Glo, Opus, etc. The more I see of these cookie cutter names, the more I appreciate a place called McGonigels Mucky Duck. Or Catbird’s. The next painful local bar trend is the advent of the ‘quasi-rock bar.’ This is the bar that puts images of rockers on the wall, plays rock music as opposed to dance, uses zebra prints for decor, yet has no interest in ever feauturing any music, supporting the local scene, or even allowing musicians to disseminate info about shows in their establishment. The patrons are folks straight out of Night at the Roxbury but feel it is a cute novelty to play Motley Crue fan for the evening. Tomorrow night, they will be at the one word bar drinking a red bull with Grey Goose. You know who you are.

by Omar Afra

**Police****Worst Sign of the New World Order: HPD overzealous use of force**

Oh where to begin, HPD has stepped up its police force over the last year to now have,

capacitated, over 25,000 county prisoners, filling up the jail with new born “felony” charges such as a gram or less of crack-cocaine. Don’t these guys know they live in HOUSTON! For fucking Christ’s sakes, most of the people running the streets, hustling the fuck out of the 3rd ward, have keebler elf factories baking crack behind their teeth. So what do they do to cut down the workload a little bit more? They start enforcing Metro police to actually start doing something other than wearing a different colored uniform. The “no smoking at a bus stop” law is fucking pinning these county’s dicks to the wall



with cases that are over crowding the already full Texas penitentiary system, which in turn keeps that retarded amount of taxes deducting from your right wing check every week funding those enforcement, “get rid of the colored’s” policies you fucking cling to. Get a new job.

**Worst Traffic Police Tactic: De facto Checkpoints**

As Houstonians, we are forced to reckon with such myriad police organizations as HPD, Metro Cops, Harris County, and various constables. Our city has become rife with de fact checkpoints that one would think are character-istic only on developing nations. Law dogs often set up shop underpasses, intersections, Toll ways, and my favorite: the HOV lane. Cops set up shop at these critical points and check all registrations, inspections, and run speed traps. Is that shit il-legal? Have the police state arrived? Should I just haul ass and keep driving? Soon enough we will hear “Papers, please!”

by Omar Afra

**Worst police overreaction/Worst community reaction: Two Gallants show at Walter’s on Washington**

This was perhaps the biggest fuckup of the year, a simple noise complaint is blown so far out of proportion that it prompts state legislators to consider banning tazers. As nice as a tazer ban might sound, it would inevitably lead to more officer-involved shootings. However the effect of this incident won’t be measured in the possibility of a statewide tazer ban. It won’t even be measured in more touring acts opting to skip Houston, it will be measured by the fact that a sense of public outrage wasn’t turned into a sense of public duty. No one who was at the show filed a complaint with HPD, those who went to the city council meeting came unprepared to answer questions and no one from the Houston music

Feature

# 2006 Worst of: Houston

community has stepped up with anything that resembles an answer or option to resolve the club vs. condo conflict.

by Alex Wukman

## Worst HPD Aggression Against Peaceful Protesters:

Striking Houston janitors were four weeks into creative daily protests when mounted HPD officers galloped into their non-violent act of civil disobedience.

About forty people handcuffed themselves to each other and sat cross-legged in the middle of the intersection at Travis and Capitol to block traffic on November 16th. Video of the protest shows officers riding their horses directly onto the protesters.

Gabe Wies, a member of the striking Service International Employees Union who participated in the protest recalls, "There was no attempt to arrest us peacefully. Me and the girl next to me got dragged like 10 feet across the ground. I got cuts all over my legs and a badly bruised wrist.

The girl got a deep gash in her arm. Everybody was dealing with their own horse but we were all chained together. We were just trying to stay low to the ground and the cop was yelling "We're gonna trample you! We're gonna trample you!" But the girl and I were able to sweep our arms under the hooves and then stand up to make our way to the police van."

Three people suffered broken bones in the incident, and an 83-year old janitor from New York was sent to the hospital. The people arrested spent two nights in jail after their bail was originally set for \$888,888 for each protestor, for a total of around \$40 million.

The next week, the janitors won a contract that will double their income within 24 months and guarantees affordable health care. The victory could be a major breakthrough for previously invisible low-wage workers around the country who are expected to survive on less than \$20 a day.

by Renee Feltz

"here was no attempt to arrest us peacefully. Me and the girl next to me got dragged like 10 feet across the ground. I got cuts all over my legs and a badly bruised wrist."

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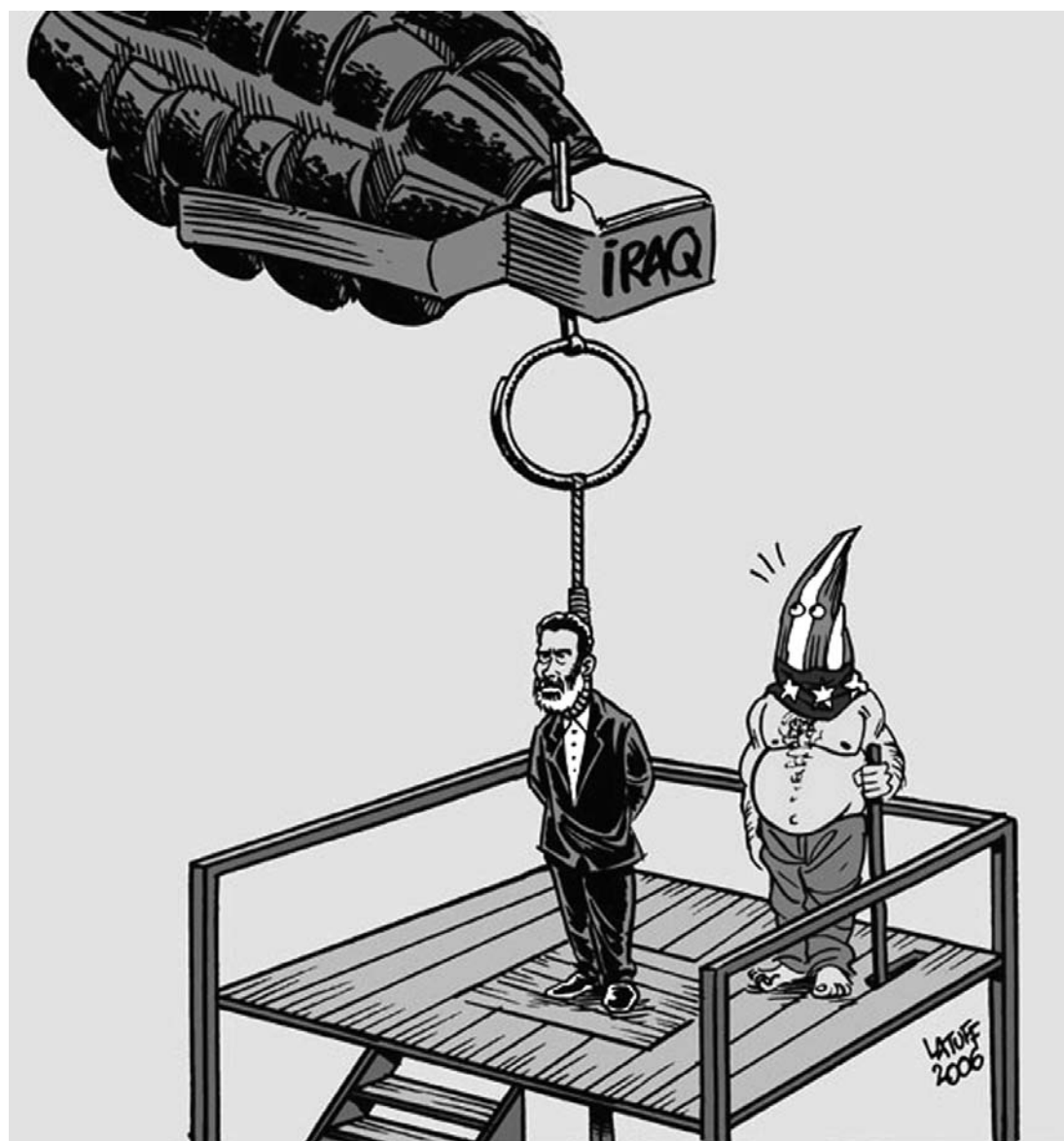
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# World

## Texas Justice by Rope: The Assassination of Saddam

by Pierre Tristam



One day from year's end, it is the non-story of the year capping a dozen imagined "turning points" in Iraq's dismal disintegration. The only kind of turning has been in the shape of a spiral drilling ever downward, toward a Mesopotamian heart of darkness: The assassination of Saddam Hussein by hanging had about it the very same haste and furtiveness, the very same pretense of legitimacy and crack-of-dawn obscurity as—remember that one?—the secret U.S. transfer of sovereignty to Iraq, like thieving shadows in the night two days before it was scheduled, on June 28, 2004. There was then no "sovereignty" to transfer as the United States had neither earned nor managed to conquer the right to Iraqi sovereignty. It had embezzled it, and poorly at that, in the ama-

teurish heist known to this day as Operation Iraqi Freedom. There was, at dawn on Saturday, no "justice" meted out in the assassination of Saddam. It couldn't even have that Mussolini feel about it: a popular execution in broad daylight, unafraid and unquestioning, because in this case the executioners themselves have too little to distinguish them from the executed. It isn't just their faces that are masked, but their motives and future plans. Meanwhile the hanging has been merely the enactment of a scene written in American stage directives almost two years ago, to fulfill another one of those sensational benchmarks the Bush administration invented as substitutes for real strategy, for policies that could make a workable difference for Iraq.

From the very first day of

the war on March 21, 2003, the American adventure in Iraq has been one of foreseeable defeat, of rank cluelessness, of corruption and corporate-greased crime organized at the highest levels of an administration rich in the tenor of Texan sopranos. How else to cobble a façade of success but through the fingerprint of fictions? It started with the fabricated rescue of Jessica Lynch and the equally fabricated toppling of Saddam's Statue at Firdos Square weeks into the war. Then came the Lord and Savior President's stud-packaged "Mission Accomplished" performance on the USS Abraham Lincoln, his tumescent hubris swelled as stuffily as the the push-up jock-strap Karl Rove had implanted in the presidential crotch. Then came the assassination and parading of Qusai and Odai

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Hussein, the tyrant's sons, whose deaths were supposed to be the fatal blow to the insurgency. After that, as the insurgency was proving Viagra-proof to the American military's impotence, the turning points took on the trappings of political theater: the night-owl transfers of power, the purple-fingered elections, the Philadelphian chatter over the writing of an Iraqi constitution, all of it interspersed with other "fatal blows" to the insurgency—the capture and cavity-search of Saddam, the reconquest of Fallujah, Saddam's trial, the killing of Zarqawi, the "securing" of Baghdad, all of it paralleling an incessant surge in violent incidents,

morality of this whole production under American aegis. (It would have been nice to see Saddam, like any criminal, any terrorist, any "evildoer" from Timothy McVeigh to Osama bin Laden rot in a dank prison the rest of his days, days elongated as much as possible to enable him to mull over his defeat and diminishment, and to enable the rest of us to know that justice needn't be retributive to be effective and, most of all—what it has never been in Iraq and never could be given the American compulsion for revenge—just.)

Saddam became irrelevant in 1991, at the end of the first Gulf War, in the same way that

year-end festivities to go along with New Year celebrations and Islam's Eid el-Adha, Saddam's death is as irrelevant now as his reign through the 1990s had been, as his capture and trial had been to the Iraqis in the streets. They're past the Saddam reign. They have other accounts to settle, and they're settling them. The war will continue to rage in Iraq, indifferent to a single man's hanging (when hundreds of men, women and children are slaughtered without so much as notice in neighborhood gossip).

The embarrassment is in the United States, where the assassination is triggering its run of celebrants and false analysts (the

# The trial was a sham, the hanging an act of revenge, the barbarism of a hanging alone, of capital punishment in any form...

to about 1,000 per day, a surge in the slaughter, to about 150 Iraqis a day, and a surge in presidential ignorance to it all, to about 1,000 counts of dereliction a day disguised, as always, in the strutting language of decisive, unbending arrogance.

Iraq is in a state of Hobbesian civil war and all the American president can do is point to the latest episode of Iraqi "Law & Order"—Saddam's assassination—and call it "justice. The hanging, of course, is an irrelevance. A moot point. An entertainment. It won't make a difference to anyone in Iraq no matter how fattish the headlines in the United States. The trial was a sham, the hanging an act of revenge, the barbarism of a hanging alone, of capital punishment in any form, one more symbol of the im-

Castro would have been irrelevant for decades had it not been one president after another's fixation on granting him a legitimacy he doesn't deserve, by granting him an enmity he could only welcome. Saddam became that fixation after 1991, marginal and idiotic though his shows of shelled-out power had become. The invasion gave him a brief grasp at the old relevance, but it couldn't last.

What the Bush administration never realized, what it refused to hear as it was launching its blitzkrieg on Iraq, was that Saddam was the only thing standing between Iraq and disintegration into the kind of sectarian madness that now makes the Saddam reign look, for all its brutality, almost benign in comparison. Its reality-show components aside, its playing into

false prophets of today), of friggid up hopes and unpresidential boasting. The dancing the in the street, the official boasting, the pompous Sunday-morning chat-show preachers--it all has the same feel as the morbid festivities that surrounded the execution of Timothy McVeigh in Terre Haute, Indiana, in May 2001. It's as infantile, and shameless, as scabrous in its glee for vengefulness. In this case it's entirely in keeping with the proud misreadings not only of the war in Iraq, but of America's role in a Middle East that never forgives stupidity, and in a world that no longer believes in an America as a beacon for human rights, law and due process. The worst, in other words, may yet be to come.

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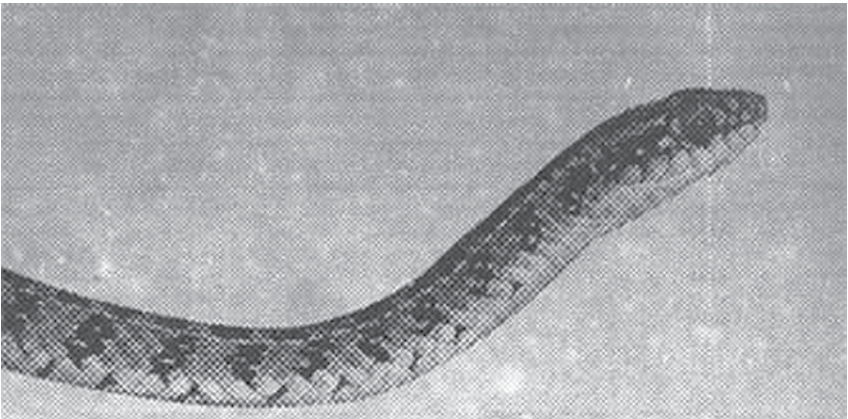
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Located 5 minutes from downtown, exit Collingsworth from 59 N.

Harris County Animal Control (281) 999-3191  
[www.harriscountyhealth.com/countypets2/index.htm](http://www.harriscountyhealth.com/countypets2/index.htm)  
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Located in Northwest Houston, just west of the Hardy Toll Rd.

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# 2006 P.U.-litzer Prizes

by Norman Solomon & Jeff Cohen

## **FACT-FREE TRADE AWARD** **New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman**

In a press corps prone to cheer on corporate-drafted trade agreements as the key to peace and plenty in the world, no cheerleader is more fervent than Tom Friedman. During a CNBC interview with Tim Russert in July, Friedman confessed: "I was speaking out in Minnesota -- my hometown, in fact -- and a guy stood up in the audience, said, 'Mr. Friedman, is there any free trade agreement you'd oppose?' I said, 'No, absolutely not.' I said, 'You know what, sir? I wrote a column supporting the CAFTA, the Caribbean Free Trade initiative. I didn't even know what was in it. I just knew two words: free trade.'" (Friedman may not have read even the pact's title; CAFTA actually stands for the Central America Free Trade Agreement.)

## **LOCK UP THE FIRST AMENDMENT PRIZE** **CNN's William Bennett**

Soon after being hired as a CNN pundit, Bennett went on his radio talk show and offered his views on freedom of the press -- and on reporters who broke stories about warrantless wiretapping and secret CIA detention sites "against the wishes of the president, against the request of the president and others." Bennett fumed: "Are they embarrassed, are they arrested? No, they win Pulitzer Prizes. I don't think what they did was worthy of an award -- I think what they did was worthy of jail, and

Competition has been fierce this year for the fifteenth annual P.U.-litzer Prizes. Many can plausibly lay claim to stinky media performances, but only a few can win a P.U.-litzer. As the judges for this un-coveted award, Jeff Cohen and I have deliberated with due care. (Jeff is the founder of the media watch group FAIR and author of the superb new book "Cable News Confidential: My Misadventures in Corporate Media.")

I think this investigation needs to go forward."

## **BROKE-BRAIN MOUTHING AWARD** **MSNBC's Chris Matthews**

As the movie "Brokeback Mountain" (about a relationship between two gay cowboys) was gaining attention and audience in January, Chris Matthews appeared on the Imus show to hail "the wonderful Michael Savage" and the talk-show host's nickname for the movie: "Bareback Mounting." Matthews and Savage had been MSNBC colleagues until "the wonderful" Savage was fired -- after referring to an apparently gay caller as a "sodomite" and telling him to "get AIDS and die." Now that's hardball.

## **CASUAL ABOUT CASUALTIES AWARD** **Fox mogul Rupert Murdoch**

Echoing an Iraq war talking-point heard regularly on Fox News, owner Murdoch said on the eve of the November election: "The death toll, certainly of Americans

there, by the terms of any previous war are quite minute." As FAIR noted, U.S. deaths in Iraq exceed those in the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War and the Spanish-American War, not to mention the combined U.S. deaths of all this country's other military actions since Vietnam -- including Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, the first Gulf War, Somalia, Haiti, Kosovo and Afghanistan.

## **FRONT-PAGE PUNDIT AWARD** **Reporter Michael Gordon and The New York Times**

With many voters telling pollsters that they want U.S. troops to leave Iraq, the Times



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MISERY SIGNALS - Ferret Music  
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DAATH - Roadrunner Records  
Walter's 4215 Washington Ave.  
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THE HEART ATTACKS - Hellcat Records  
THE RIPTIDES - Red Scare  
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GOATWHORE - Metal Blade Records  
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ARSIS - Willowtip Records  
BYZANTINE - Prosthetic Records  
Walter's 4215 Washington Ave.  
Doors @ 7:00 All Ages \$13

## Is it possible for prison walls to disappear? Family wrongfully imprisoned in Texas jail

by Sousan Hammad



At early dawn on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2006, an Arlington home was raided by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (BICE). The Ibrahim's, a Palestinian family, was immediately arrested and after an arduous 20 hour journey, they were taken to the Don Hutto 'Residential Center' in Tyler, TX - a privatized jail designed to house undocumented aliens.

Salaheddin Ibrahim, his pregnant wife and four of their five children, are now being detained at the Hutto jail. The Immigrations and Customs Enforcement took their 3-year-old daughter, Zahra, away from her mother and siblings since she was born in the U.S. and therefore has citizenship. Salaheddin's brother, Ahmed Ibrahim, currently has custody of Zahra, otherwise ICE would have placed her in a foster home.

The circumstance of the Ibrahim family's situation has become a world reminiscent to the surrealistic complexities that they once lived when in Palestine. There are no windows for these children who wish to see a tree or even a squirrel prowling the concrete streets - and no door to open and walk into what used to be called a home.

Ahmed is mostly concerned about the children, who range from ages 5 to 15. His despair was apparent as I spoke with him

over the phone. "I'm avoiding going there again (Hutto jail), I don't want to see a five-year-old wearing a prison jump suit," he said.

Ahmed painfully described the situation as he went to visit them the first time, "It's almost like a maximum security prison - I had to talk to my nieces and nephew through a glass window, I couldn't even hold them or hug them."

Hamzeh Ibrahim, 15, sits in a cell by himself - away from his younger siblings - while Rodaina, 12, and Maryam, 7, share a cell together and the youngest, Faten, who is 5-years-old, comfortlessly sleeps in a cell by herself and is only allowed to be with her mother during the day.

The Corrections Corporations of America (CCA) was founded in 1983 with the help of entrepreneurial executives from Kentucky Fried Chicken. The CCA specializes in design and management of prisons, jails and detention facilities. In 2004, CCA



## The Corrections Corporations of America (CCA) was founded in 1983 with the help of entrepreneurial executives from Kentucky Fried Chicken.

announced the Hutto jail would be closed for lack of occupancy, but after new immigration enforcement policies, the site was revived.

Thomas Beasley, co-founder of CCA

commented that 'selling prisons is like selling cars, real estate or hamburgers'. It makes me wonder if they give detainees at the Hutto jail KFC's crispy chicken strips to go along with their miserable windowless cells.

Privatized prisons, which have been around the U.S. since mid-1800s, are under contract to the U.S. Marshal's Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

The CCA has an immense influence in lobbying and corporate PR campaign; as well as prison operators who influence policy decisions and have a vested interest in sentencing guidelines, parole rules, corrections budgets and new criminal legislation - all to increase profits.

The Ibrahim's, who emigrated from Jenin, Palestine, came into the U.S. with a five year visa and within six months of expiration, they applied for onshore asylum. The family's attorney, John Wheat Gibson, describes the roundup of the family as a 'political publicity stunt to make it appear that Muslims among us are our enemies.'

As they timidly await the court's decision on their asylum claim, the Palestinian family has to deal with the brutalities of living in the Hutto jail, where they are being treated as if they were detrimental criminals. While some governments are relatively tolerant and accepting of such claims; other governments such as the Australian government will not only refuse onshore asylum claims but may actually arrest or detain those who attempt to seek asylum.

When I asked Ahmed about the mental health and predicament of the children in regards to their imprisonment, he explained to me how the children are deeply perplexed and have no understanding as to why they have been sitting in a prison-like cell for almost two months.

"Children don't know the difference

between right and wrong," says Ahmed with an irritable voice, "what kind of message is America sending to other countries when you allow children to be jailed...they are setting a wrong example to the whole world, it is a nightmare of all nightmares."



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# +Tech-knowledge

by Tyler Barber

News Bite: *Xbox 360, Halo 3*

## Play Halo 3 early

Bungie, the brilliant minds behind Halo, are going to open their servers to a few thousand people who will play Halo 3's on-line multiplayer mode, for hours on end, to test and perfect the game before its finished.

Last December gamers applied on Bungie's website, and awaited approval for the beta, but that's no longer an option, so how do you get into the beta test? Lucky for you, there's still two ways to get into Halo 3's beta-test. Bungie has announced that when you buy a copy of the game Crackdown on February 20th, you may get a golden ticket to the beta—Crackdown, a Grand Theft Auto meets Oblivion meets COPS game, is shaping up nicely, and should be worth the gamble even if you don't get into the beta test.

Lastly, and by far the most complex way to get into the Halo 3 beta, is what Bungie has coined the rule of 3. First, Xbox 360 owners, 17 and older, must play at least 3 hours of Halo 2 on Xbox Live between February 1st and 3rd, and then be one of the first 13,333 people to register at [www.halo3.com](http://www.halo3.com) (US residents, and Xbox Box Live Gold members only).

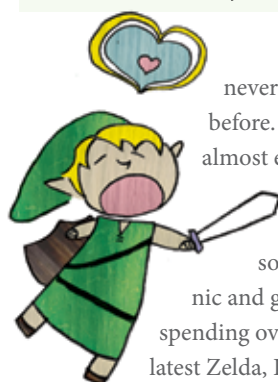
If you are lucky enough to win a chance to play the beta-test through Crackdown, don't expect to just pop in the disc and start Warthogging around in Halo 3's online world. Instead, expect to wait until March, or April before the beta will open. Additionally, Bungie claims that the beta-test will be the final version of the game, but will not reveal all of the gameplay elements that Bungie wants to keep secret. For example, the unknown new function of the X button will not be active in the beta-test.

While beta-tests are nothing new to the videogame industry, a beta-test on a game this popular is unprecedented. Kudos to Bungie for including their die-hard fan base in the testing phase in one of the best franchises in videogames. Bungie, please do not screw up the ending this time.

## Review: The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess

Nintendo Wii  
1 player

### Make your New Year's resolution to play this game.



I'll admit it, I've never played a Zelda game before. Though I've owned almost every console made (sans 3DO and CDi), for some reason, I neglected the tunic and green tights. But, after spending over 60 hours with the latest Zelda, I am a true convert.

Nintendo launched what may be its most memorable console with what also may be considered its most memorable game.

The action, puzzles, story, music, controls, characters... hell everything about the game is crafted with expert precision. You will not notice when an 8 hour gaming session has passed because the pacing of Twilight Princess



presents new gameplay elements through the entire game. The story too never gets stale as it unfolds; taking constant turns as you conquer each dungeon. Some might yawn at the slow start of the game (it takes about 6 hours before you really start on the main quest), but if, like me, you enjoy well-developed characters with a well-developed world for them to populate, then you'll find the long-winded introduction appropriate.

As far as the graphics go, they are the best the Wii has to offer (thus far). And, though the Xbox 360 and PS3 are leaps ahead of the Wii's graphics, the immersion of the world in Twilight Princess will put you in a state where the experience is paramount.



Throughout the development of Twilight Princess the gaming community stood up-in-arms over the thought of a Wii control scheme messing up the much celebrated control scheme from previous Zelda games. But, as Nintendo's mantra goes, playing is believing, and in Twilight Princess, the controls will not let you down. Simply put, this game is 99.9% perfect.

# +A

## Review: Rainbow Six: Vegas

Xbox 360  
1-16 players co-op, or versus

### With more Terrorists than the real world.

In the first 4 hours of Vegas I thought to myself, "I've played this game already, it was called Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter, and I liked that game more." But once you leave Mexico and hit the casinos, you'll find out why this game makes its own way in the shooter genre.

As you play through the story mode with two teammates constantly by your side, you'll debunk terrorist plots and hostage situations with the latest high-tech gear. Vegas also sports its own cover system akin to Gears of War, but different in that in Vegas you stick to cover by holding down the left trigger (nullifying alot of the complaints Gears of War's cover-system has received). The best part of Vegas are the weapons, and how you can customize them with accessories like scopes, and bigger magazines. I



also loved all the SWAT tech at my disposal: riot shields, thermal goggles, rappel ropes, an assortment of grenades, and the often used snake cam that lets you feed a small camera under doors to scout enemy locations.

Though Vegas provides great environments, and high-tech gear for tactical play, the enemy intelligence is forgivably bad. Many times I'll encounter enemies that are frozen behind cover as I whale into them with led. While I'm being critical, grenade throws feel completely disconnected from your character, thereby subtracting from the immersion of the game.

To its merit, Vegas offers two single player modes: the standard story-line game, and a Terrorist Hunt mode that would make G.W.



proud. Additionally, you can take the single player experience online with up to four players playing cooperatively through the game. But, play through the story mode alone first as you won't receive any of the intel (read: directions to complete the levels) when you play co-op with buds online. Rainbow Six: Vegas doesn't revolutionize the shooter genre in any way, but its solid gameplay and good graphics make it well worth your \$60.

# B

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