FREE PRESS
HOUSTON
MUSIC - NEWS - PUBLIC OPINION - ARTS - EVENTS

We're Being Set Up for
Wider War in the Middle East

Prison Soup

Godless
That Bitch Ann Coulter's New Book

The Stoopid Paradox

Toastosterone

The Information Gap

Issue 68
August 06

Also:
Sharks & Sailors
Clerks II



Free Press Houston
Issue 68 | 08/06

super happy fun land

...PETS WELCOME...

July 23rd:
Ferveur Noire
Gil San Marcos
TEF
Dot Heaven

July 24th:
Treasure Mammal
Asleep in the SeaJuly 25th:
EL OLIO WOLOF
The Red Faced Laughter
Shine Shunshine

July 26th:
Cosmogirl
Fortress of Attitude
Scrote
G Styles

Thursday July 27th:
Jay
Leatherbag and the Cows
Jude/Ross
David Israel and the Elders of Zion

July 28th:
Kristi Rae
Raj Pickens
Obed-Edom
Dimas
Paige
Clock Hands Strangle

July 29th:
Girls Rise With Heat
Aier Sauft
The Gentlemen's Club

July 31st:
Wildebeest
The Bluebirds
Rabbit Haven
Hussy Hicks

Aug 1st:
Fire Don't Care
New Orleans is a Dead Museum
Bizzart
Antarctica Starts Here
A+ Setup
Wall With One Side

Aug 2nd:
Rosematter
Mile High School
Los Desconocidos

Aug 3rd:
Numbers Like Dinosaurs
Grand Color Crayon
The Blinking Project
The Gentlemen's Club

Aug 4th:
Fra Pandolf
Notes From Underground
Tambersauro
The Nautical Mile

Aug 5th:
This Song is a Mess but so am I
A Black Lux
Yatagarasu

Aug 8th:
The Prids

Aug 9th:
Luke Leverett
Knight of Antartica

Aug 10th:
Back to School Show
Doors open at 5pm show starts at 6pm
The Mischevious Wombats
The Curbside Tree Project
InDenmark
Dumbarton
The Low Ends
Chuck Turner

Aug 11th:
Circuit Bending Workshop hosted by Beatrix*Jar (4pm-6pm)
A Crack IN The Wall
The Riff Tiffs
Beatrix Jar
Another Run

Aug 12th:
Extemp-O-Rama sponsored by Jam Houston
Still Frames
Special Anthony (tentative)
Tambersauro
Vibe Committee (tentative)

Aug 13th:
Julia Sinelnikova Art Opening

Aug 13th:
Stabby Face
The Velcro Secret

Aug 14th:
Brrr
Juniper Sky
Dirty Leg
Econo

Aug 18th:
Graham Wilkinson & the Underground
Township
The Championship
Archer Avenue

Aug 20th:
The Summer We Went West
Dawn Treader
Hobis
Margot

Aug 22nd:
A Passing Feeling
Ayn

Aug 23rd:
Wilmot Proviso

Aug 24th:
Lebanon (Israel)
The Snake Trap
The Curbside Tree Project
Warren Jackson Hearne

Aug 25th
Divided Like a Saint's
The Lovely Sparroww
Listen Listen

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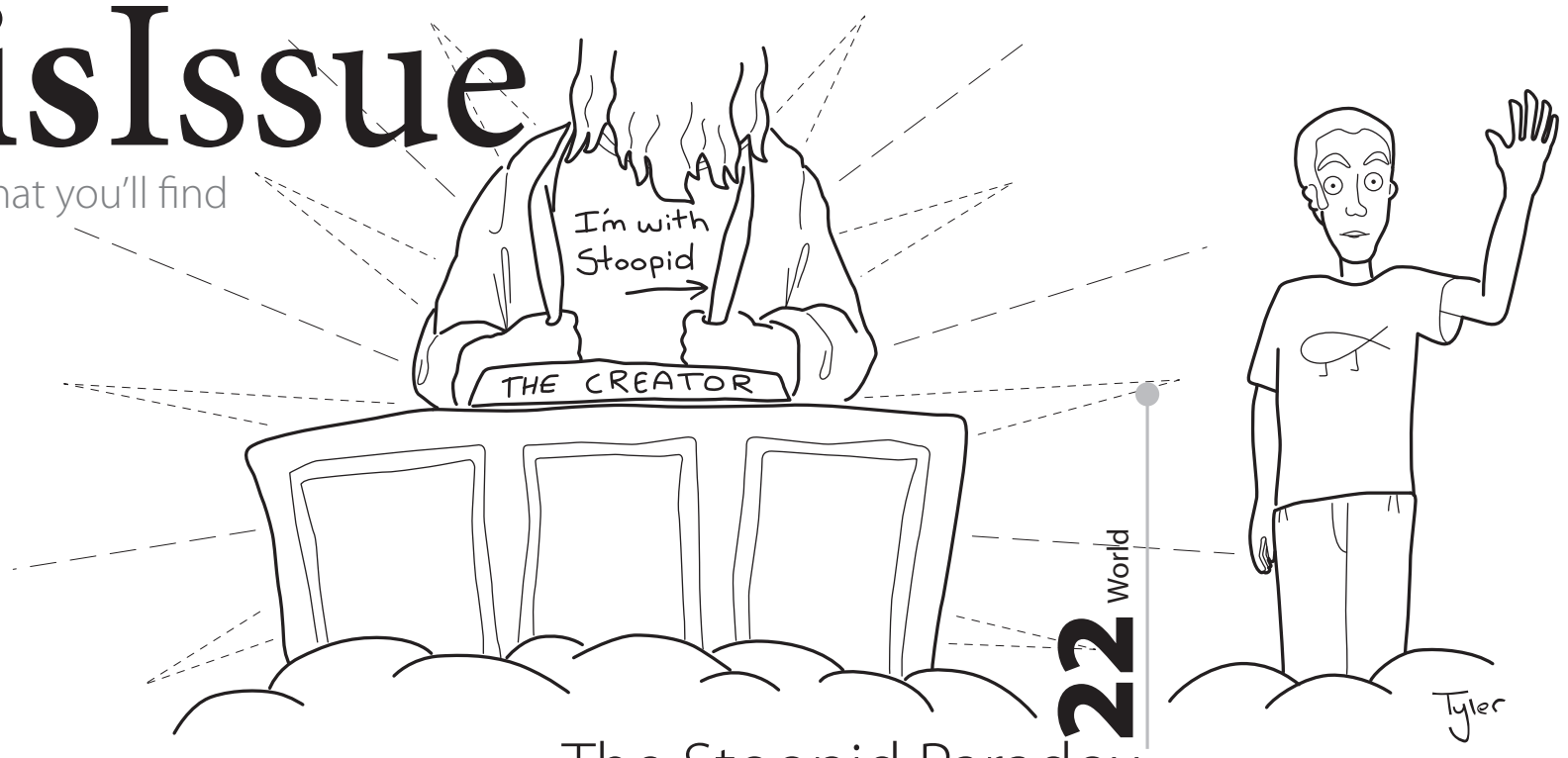
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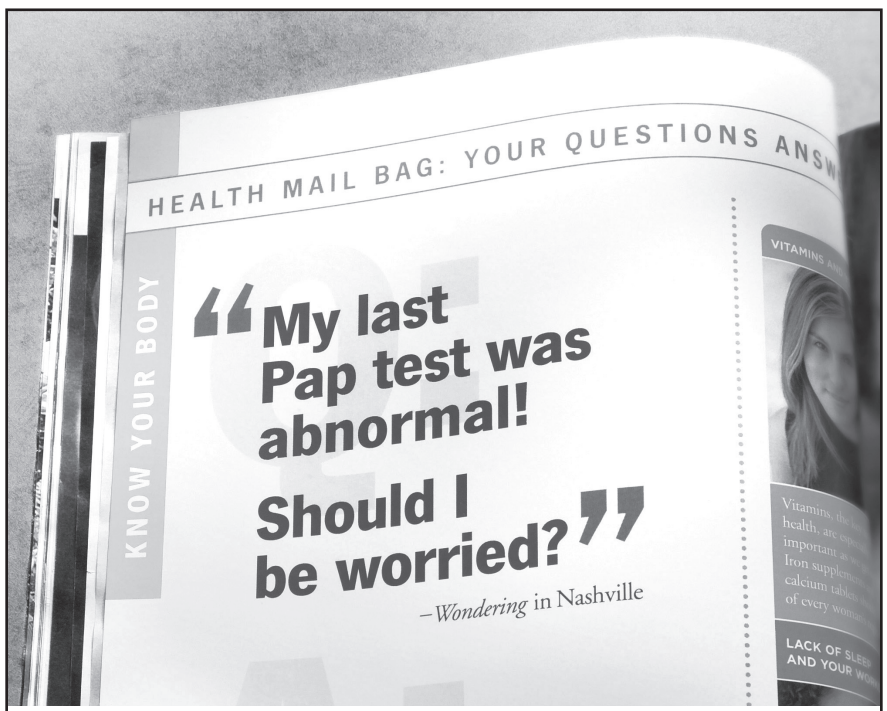
| Cover Art: Carlos Latuff

I hate to get this serious.

What a mess. I have been on the phone with my mother's side of the family in Beirut just about every six hours for the last 12 days. Despite their facade of resilience, you can hear the undertones of helplessness and futility in their voice. You just can't help but to imagine a bomb that you paid for with your own tax dollars killing your family in your native country. And Oh yeah-- My dad's side of the family lives in Baghdad!

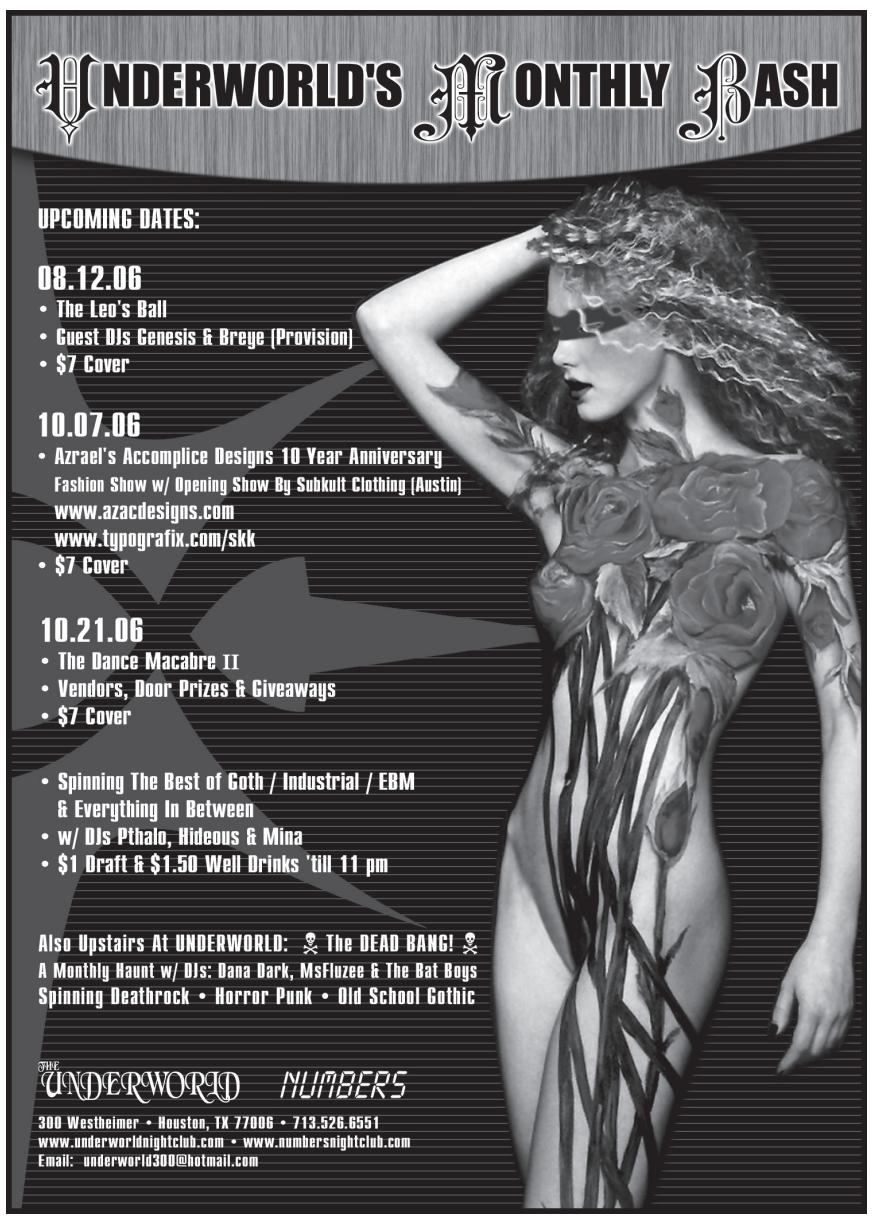
Anyways- I was initially apprehensive about using such an, pardon my pun, incendiary piece of artwork for the cover. I hate to seem over-zealously partisan but sometimes you have to call it like you see it. Thanks to Tyler Barber for giving me the chutzpah to put it out there. If you don't like it, write us and tell us what sensationalists we are. Until then-pray for peace. Next, act on it.

Editor



It's not uncommon to worry about an abnormal Pap test result, which could be caused by a number of things. This includes high-risk HPV (Human Papillomavirus), a common sexually transmitted infection which may cause problems of the cervix, and rarely, even cancer. A medical research study for women with cervical high-risk HPV is being conducted by physicians in your area. To find out more, call Planned Parenthood of Houston and SE Texas, Inc. at (713) 831-6561 or visit www.indigo4women.com today.

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for women's health

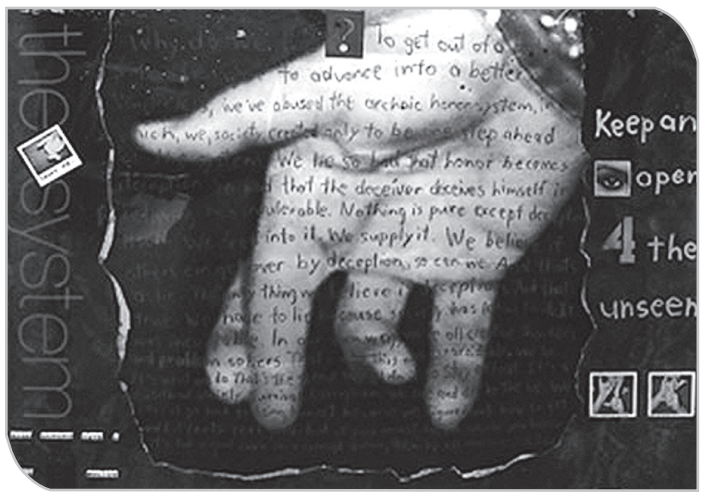




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The BIG SHOW 2006
Lawndale Art Center 4912 Main St.
Through August 25. (713) 528-5858



Len Davis: Slices of Life
Hooks-Epstein Galleries 2631 Colquitt
Through August 5. (713) 523-8238



Howard Sherman: Venti Americano
McMurtrey Gallery 3508 Lake Street
Through August 5. (713) 523-8238



Johnny Robertson: It's all about Atmosphere
Anya Tish Gallery 4411 Montrose
Through August. (713) 524-2299

DEBRIS: Ain't Shit Changin'

Buffalo Sean

Congrats to Otabenga Jones coming to the attention of the myopic Houston Chronicle; article writer Bill Davenport wears his nepotism on his sleeve with a page on his wife Francesca Fuchs immediately following the Otabenga article. Titled "Black Like Us" I hope the article is not as offensive to others as I'm taking it. The first art article in a Sunday Zest without a rich bitch gallery owner telling her audience that "art is for everyone" or visual valium, the article still ignores the political bent of OJ & Associates, the history of the Black Panthers in the Third Ward, and radicalism as a real political and social strategy.

Oh, rumor has it Robert Pruitt has left Project Row Houses, and that PRH kicked the 3rd Ward Bike Shop out of their prominent spot on the corner of Dowling and Elgin. The Bike Shop, along with a Chopper Shop, Hip-Hop Shop, and others, has been a model of civic action perpetrated by a small group from liberal Oberlin College in Ohio who moved to the Third Ward at the behest of Houstonian Benji Mason to experiment with art, community, and organizational structures. In a wildly successful run under the El Dorado Ballroom 3rd Ward Bike Shop has become a great success of grassroots planning, providing free bicycles to hundreds of children and building a reputation among hipsters as the place to go to get a bike, creating a vast group of volunteers. Boo to Row Houses for closing their eyes! Good luck finding a new place guys!

The Lawndale Art Center's annual clusterfuck "The Big Show" is a popular open call exhibit attracting hundreds of entries from students, Sunday painters, established artists, and jokers. Juried by an arts administrator usually from some semi-famous place in a slightly smaller city; Dominic Molon, associate curator at the MCA Chicago, plays the patsy for 2006.

For the past twenty years the show has been full of erratic highs and lows; this year the exhibit is amazingly even. A cohesive show emerging out of the same city that has produced such uneven Big Shows in the past is amazing, and truly Dominic and the Lawndale have done a particularly interesting job this year. As a psychological portrait of the juror, the Big Show 2006 emphasizes organic lines, collage, and textures. The palette is cool, muted brown and blues dominate. The exhibit is curatorially cohesive as it is juried, but the installation is also refined, the standardization of sizes, materials, and technical aspects works well to class up the joint, with more people standing around in uniforms you may mistake yourself for being in a museum. 4912 Main St., through August 25th.

Check out Summer Sucks down on Commerce Street this July 29th; YAR, Derek Shumate, and David Ubias have been painting in the gallery for over a week, their large installations layering and mutating every day. Jenny Schlief will be there with bells on, make sure to get one of her THIS SUCKS pink balloons, they look good on your neighbor's mailbox. Sasha Dela has been hunting storms, looking for the perfect thundercloud to video while driving on the freeways through vast suburbs and East Texas flatness. Lucas says there will be free beer when The Turkeys play, they'll be dragging a keg up to the stage for their set. Artist Will Boone plays bass, and Lucas, who plays bass for Satin Hooks, gets to thrash on guitar with his big hair. Living the cottage industry lifestyle, Elaine Bradford is in 12 hour a day shifts crocheting huge sculptures for concurrent shows in Houston and at sparkly new Okay Mountain in Austin. Come out to the hotter than hell opening, it starts with a dance performance at 7:30, followed by an overhead projector video and lecture by Nick Meriwether at 8pm. Video work premieres by Sasha Dela and Atton Paul will follow Meriwether, with the Austin no-wave group ZomZoms and The Turkeys performing later in the night. Exhibit runs July 30th through August 20th.




TEXAS IS A STATE OF MIND.
TEXAS IS AN OBSESSION.
ABOVE ALL, TEXAS IS A NATION
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IF I OWNED TEXAS AND HELL
I WOULD RENT OUT TEXAS
AND LIVE IN HELL.
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DAVID UBIAS
FRANCES TROTTER
YAR. DEREK SHUMATE
DAVID CHIEN
ELAINE BRADFORD
SASHA DELA
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American Wandering Club and Phillip Henry Sheridan

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Teeth of the hydra upon you.

by Michael Bergeron

You know how years are divided between A.D. and B.C. Nobody started selling calendars in 1 A.D. with new logos, that was a move decided years, centuries later. Well, civilization has reached a similar point for cinema, only it will be years from now before anyone will officially recognize such a line of demarcation.

This isn't the before and after of sound and silent, nor of CGI versus analog effects, digital versus high-def, or Oprah versus Uma. Rather there is now a division in the way people perceive films compared to the way they used to perceive films.

In 2006 a cognizance exists concerning the tiniest details of movies for both people in the industry and civilians who make up the bulk of everyday audiences. Specifically websites track daily (not just weekend) grosses, films are reviewed the moment they are screened (even if the screening is private), visibility and advertising reflect the synergy of opening a single film on thousands of screens simultaneously worldwide. 2006 marks the year that a single film, Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest, blasted all previous opening weekend records based solely on its marketing.

POTC: DMC is a film so sloppy and haphazard that there's no way it could become a box-office behemoth save for the marketing. Over 1000 POTC: DMC items have been trademarked, everything from cereal to bottled water to artificial eyelashes. Take a look at the top 100 grossing films in history and none of them sucks the abysmal wind of POTC: DMC. That being said, 2006 marks the year that the content of a film became truly irrelevant.

It doesn't matter that The Devil Wears Prada displays no verisimilitude. It hardly counts that the horrific The Descent rates far below similar Lionsgate releases like Hostel, or even the B-level Saw. Who cares that You, Me and Dupree is so un-funny that it elicits weak smiles rather than laughs and guffaws. It's not about what movies you like, it's about the marketing of same. From now on critics should critique the cleanliness of theater bathrooms, efficiency of concession lines and availability of ergonomic parking spaces.

I've seen every film Johnny Depp has starred in save for Private Resort (1985) and The Astronaut's Wife (1999), and I think the guy deserves the kudos as the Brando of the new millennium. In the sequels to Pirates of the Caribbean though, Depp is just jerking our collective wang.

In 1997 Depp directed and starred in the film The Brave (also with Brando). The Brave concerns an American Indian who agrees to star in a snuff film to help finance the dreams of his poverty-ridden family. The Brave was booed when it premiered at Cannes. It has never been released theatrically anywhere (but is available on DVD). Disney could release The Brave with the caption "a film directed by Captain Jack Sparrow" and that puppy would gross millions. Disney won't of course because they just pink-slipped half their staff, and cut their annual slate of films by half. That's the cinematic landscape that modern movie mavens must traverse.

Film directors like Kevin Smith take the heat for not turning out a masterpiece every time. All films are not destined to be instant classics, although Smith's debut Clerks captured the zeitgeist of the mid-90s unlike any other phenomenon of its time. For your humble scribe, Smith's films, good and bad, fill a void in my life, much like Eric Rohmer's films with their unmistakable similarity are welcomed like friends at a reunion.

It was no slight thrill to interview the stars of Clerks and Clerks II, Brian O'Halloran (Dante) and Jeff Anderson (Randal) during their recent press stop in Houston. In a way, it's the ultimate sign of coolness to have been the star of a single film that every member of a generation (gen-Xers in this case) can recite by memory. Kind of like the French director Jean Vigo who only made one full-length feature before he died, but a film that is still discussed relevantly by cinephile today (L'Atalante).





With the wide release of Clerks II (July 21) O'Halloran and Anderson are hardly residing in the where-are-they-now-file. Kevin Smith made Clerks II for a sweet $5-million, which has already been recouped by foreign presales. Every penny this film makes is pure profit.

Anderson attended Henry Hudson Regional High School with Kevin Smith. When Anderson auditioned for Clerks it was an easy fit for Smith. "He didn't go to college," laughs Anderson. " He enrolled so he could get the student discount on film stock." How Smith used a few credit cards to pay for the under $30,000 Clerks is a feat that many have copied, and the success of which so very few have attained. Although they knew each other from high school Anderson and Smith formed a friendship when Jeff would stop by the video store where Smith worked. It's the same strip store site where the original Clerks was lensed.

O'Halloran mentions the eight-minute standing ovation Clerks II received at Cannes. An actor on the legit stage since the original Clerks, O'Halloran comes off every bit as the opposite of Anderson in real life as the characters they portray on screen. His look is clean, nails polished and cut, clothes quiet.

Anderson on the other hand looks more like the rebel, jeans, pullover shirt, a no-bullshit way of talking. I ask the duo if they had a backend on Clerks II. Brian mulls over the answer and in a vague way and gives an answer that's ambiguous.

Jeff smiles and arches his head, and replies just like Randal: "I would say that that's a big no."

ABOVE: Anderson (left) and O'Halloran (right) from **Clerks II**.

BELOW: Director Kevin Smith.

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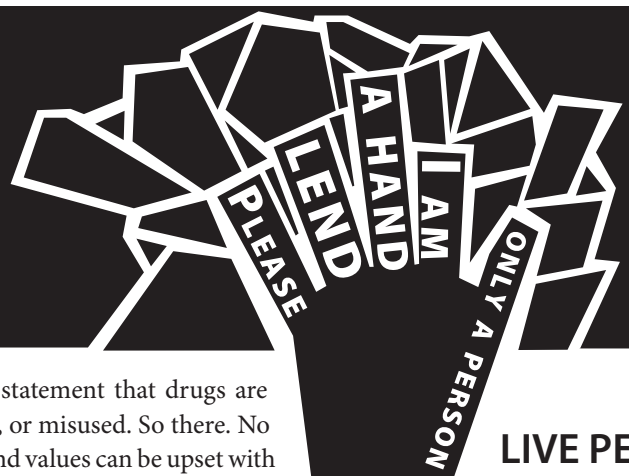
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By Kwame M. Anderson

Okay let me preface this with the statement that drugs are bad and can be harmful if abused, or misused. So there. No parent, or purveyors of morality and values can be upset with me. However, I am working under the assumption that parents and morality police read this publication, which could be wrong, but you know, the box, and thinking outside of it. One thing about pot smoker generalizations is that they are mostly hippies, who care nothing about baths, and purvey this sort of "whatever man" aesthetic. To a certain extent this is true. If you smoke pot, you know that this faction exists all over the world. However, is this because of the pot, or is this because of the generalization? I would say the generalization, I mean, to some, a hippie is a personality graft, a model in society, like the businessman, the baker, the candlestick maker, the rebel, the nerd, the whore, the chaste, etc. Can you blame a hippie for being a hippie? I say no. Just because you like sports does it mean one day you will become a wife abusing, womanizing alcoholic? No, though many do. But you never hear someone go, "these fucking athletes and their penchant for illegitimate children and spousal abuse!" So let's not be so hard on people. We all have a place in this world, we all have a role in this school cafeteria called life. Are you gonna stand with the misfits in the corner, or sit at the table with the popular kids, or are you just a regular kid.

While we're on the subject of whatever I was talking about, I'd like to say, I really like to listen to trippy folk-like music, such as Akron Family or Animal Collective or Angels Of Light, or something like that, and drift off into a place, sometimes a dark place, and allow my mind to escape the constraints of time and responsibility. I don't condone the use of any substance to alter your reality, unless it's cold medicine or diet pills, because you need to be healthy and skinny. But, yes, I from time to time indulge myself, but right now the folk rock thing is big. The Incredible String Band or Captain Beefheart exist in a world that parallels my reality, but not only that ,I love the music of Rufus Wainwright. He's like a Frank Sinatra figure— he sings songs of New York, and men, and addiction, and family and love. Antony and the Johnsons is another favorite, as he weaves tales of falling in love with dead boys, and plastic surgery, and other disturbing things. I feel he is like Billie Holiday, only white and a man. This is summertime to folks like me, sitting in a house, without a shirt, typing ramblings, high on marijuana, looking for a job. It's what I do. That's why you read my column. That is why you trust my opinion. I'm just like you. We are cut from the same tattered cloth. So, as you count on me, I will deliver…

LIVE PERFORMANCE

7-27-06

Black Heart Procession

Walter's On Washington

Black Heart Procession released an excellent album earlier this year, The Spell (Touch And Go). Now, in line with that release, they are touring in support of that album. BHP have that special mix of mystery and magic. Their shows are usually very dimly lit. The time I saw them one of the few things that you could make out on the stage was the flashing beating heart inside the singers' shirt. The shirt isn't as theatrical as maybe a Faun Fables or something like that, but there is a notion of the visual matching the music. Musically, BHP can be considered dark and sad, and their show is sort of an extension of the album— it moves along at the pace of a film, you are drawn in, and engulfed in the spirit. For the hour or so that they play, you can see, hear and fell the anguish, as well as be entertained by the musicianship of the band.. Their album is great, if they just show up, and play their songs without the production, the show will most likely be great as well. However, let's say Paul Wall comes out and they try to do a "screwed up" version of their set, that might not be so…well, hell that might be good too

7/27/07

ONEIDA

Rudyard's Pub

Oneida music is described as synth heavy intense rock. I guess that fits. I think their music is intense, but also really beautiful. Beauty can be translated many ways. There is the beauty of looking at your significant other sleeping, then there is also the time she thought you were out sleeping with another woman, and in her rage, she shows up at your house and immediately begins to smash and pummel all of your shit. In the moment, that blur of anger and commitment is beautiful. That is how I see Oneida music —a multi-faceted thing of splendor, an amalgamation of many sounds and moods which creates a huge portrait, a sculpture if you will. Plus, Rudz has really cool bartenders and great sound, and sometimes that makes all the difference.

RECORDED VERSIONS

Espers

II

(Drag City)

There are albums that are just a collection of songs, and there are (said emphatically) albums! The Espers are part, or shall I say, associated with the movement that has brought us folks like Devandra Banhart, Vetiver, Joanna Newsom, and others. I can see the connection in terms of tour support, and the need for grouping and whatnot, but I think of The Espers as something completely different. While there is something in common with folk, there is also a very heavy psych-rock thing going on. Drones and overtones color the album, each song a slightly different trip that moves effortlessly from what hallucination to the next. Once a three piece, now a six piece, their songs encapsulate a moment in its entirety. Not only the sky, but also the leaves blowing gently across the ground, the light trickle of rain from the sky, the birds in the distance. It can be as much a visual experience as it is au-

More Shows



Raj Pickens
7/28 @ Super Happy Fun Land



Space Cadet
7/28 @ Engine Room



Pork Pie
7/29 @ Helios



Junior Brown
7/30 @ Meridian



Diplo
7/26 @ Warehouse Live



Ginn Sisters
7/30 @ Mucky Duck

ral. "Mansfield and Cyclops'" grooves as it moves, it unfolds like blooming flower petals, it's beauty reveals itself with each minute of the song. "Moon Occults the Sun," will either open or close the movie I'm working on writing. Here's where I've started: Man sits down in a chair….I know its riveting stuff.

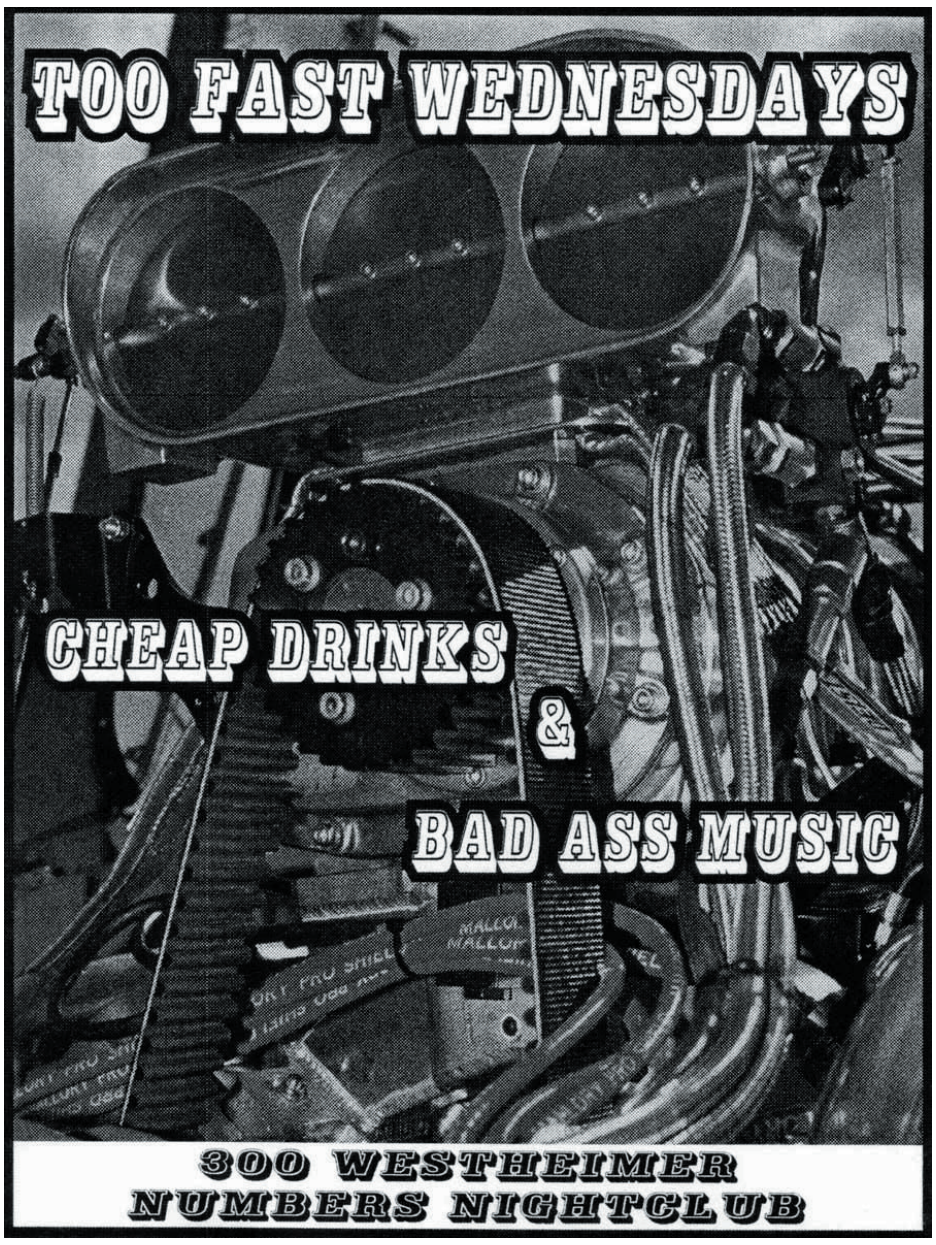
Be Your Own Pet
Be Your Own Pet
(Ecstatic Peace/ Universal)

Here's the science: Nashville teens start band, create buzz, compared to Yeah Yeah Yeahs, and eventually sign to Thurston Moore's boutique Universal imprint. OK, that's the part that will be in the first paragraph of any article you read on this band, now let's talk about the album. The band gets compared to the Yeah Yeah Yeahs a lot, and this album will not make people shy away from this comparison. It's basically what people wish the YYYs would've kept doing. It's punk, new wave, no wave, jumping and clapping ready music which is pep rallied by the band's lead singer. Here's the thing. This album is good, really good, but then where will the band go. Will they get tired of this sound? Probably not, because as the YYYs were twenty-somethings making energetic music that would eventually succumb to their art house tendencies. BYOP are young, and probably wouldn't mind romping for a few more years, unless they move to New York, then who knows…

El Perro Del Mar
El Perro Del Mar
(Rough Trade)

Some of you may not be fans of the Ronettes, Phil Spector, Darlene Love, or early Dionne Warrick albums. But, I am, and obviously, so is El Perro Del Mar. This is her second album, but, I think, her first US release. It's a juxtaposition in sound and concept—breezy feel good pop, with depressing lyrics. The sound is Motown, the lyrics…well Motown has a lot of sad songs too. While this could be seen as some sort of throwback, it feels really natural, as if this is the only way these songs could be represented. "I Can't Talk About It," is reminiscent musically of David Ruffin's solo work, it hops and it's danceable, but the lyrics are anything but cheery. "Dog," has the singer telling her estranged love, the love you have for me, is similar to that one has for a dog, but you wouldn't pick that up from the melody and handclaps. It's a remarkable album, and may go under the radar, but it shouldn't since I've told you about it now, and we all know how the print media influences spending habits.





MERIDIAN
"BEST NEW CLUB 2004" -Houston Press
1503 Chartres

Mon. - Jul. 24 -
Reel Big Fish w/ MXPX, Streetlight Manifesto, Whole Wheat Bread, Transition

Wed. Jul. 26 -
The Church w/ Rob Dickinson—

Thur. - Jul. 27 -
Another Werewolf Western Showcase No. 4

Fri. - Jul. 28 -
Raw Uncut Fights W/Special Guest Sam Hoger, "The Alaskan Assassin"

Sat. - Jul. 29 -
'rent' 36

Sun. - Jul. 30 -
Junior Brown w/ Sean Reefer and the Resin Valley Boys

Mon. - Jul. 31 -
Bodog Music Battle of the Bands
go to MeridianHouston.com for lineup

Tue. - Aug. 1 -
Bodog Battle of the Bands

Wed. - Aug. 2 -
Shadows Fall, Poison The Well, It Dies Today, Suffocation, Still Remains

Thur. - Aug. 3 -
Houston Press Music Awards Party

Sat. - Aug. 5 -
The Accident Experiment with Vallejo

Sun. - Aug. 6 -
Brujeria w/ PinHed, Adumus, Images of Violence, Lycophile, Burnt Face Jack, Blood Void

Mon. - Aug. 7 -
Bodog Battle of the Bands

Tue. - Aug. 8 -
Bodog Battle of the Bands

Sat. - Aug. 12 -
Jetspeed Showcase No. 5 Monster Music Showcase #5

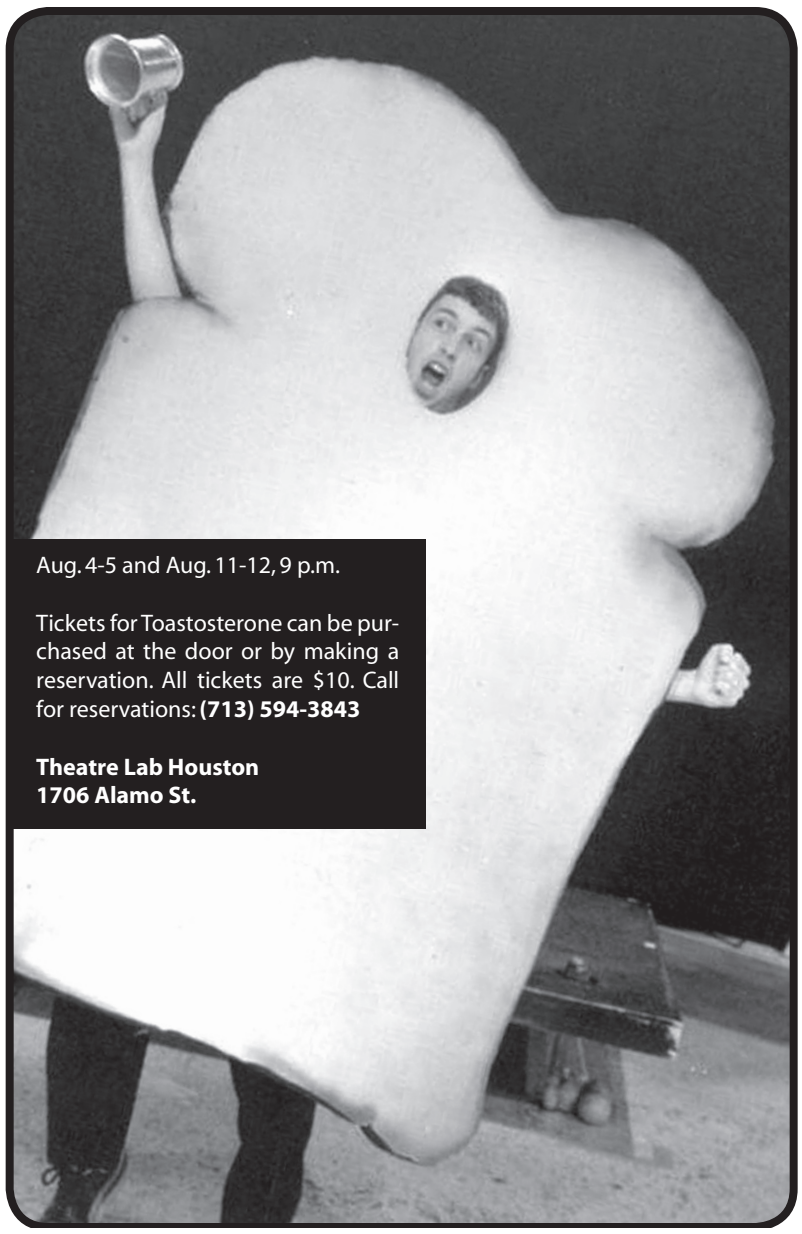
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Toastosterone

COMEDY TROUPE UBERTOAST GETS CLUTCH ON US

by Toastmaster

Ubertoast, Houstons most irreverent comedy troupe, will be bringing its unique brand of humor and sketch comedy to Theatre Lab Houston. The troupe will be presenting its latest installment, Toastosterone a 90-minute showcase of original sketches, videos and songs written, directed and performed by the company members...

Watch lovable British Cardboard-Tube Arms as he gets a new job as a chef, be in the live audience for Necromantickthe necrophiliacs dating show, and go ahead, accept Kevin Bacon as your personal Savior.

As always, the comedy of Ubertoast is not recommended for people under the age of 18, pregnant women, puppies, Ronnie James Dio fans, pregnant men or people who protest outside of Planned Parenthood. Language, nudity, sophomoric situations and cartoonishly bad violence are a staple of many Ubertoast shows. Outrageous and offensive, the buzz around the water cooler at work is that you just might go to hell for attending. But the important thing is youll go there laughing.

Founded in December 1999, Ubertoast features the collective talents of Franz Hill, Jen Harvill, Joseph Milillo, Aaron Stryk, Chris Tennison and Jack Tomas. The groups sketches cover a wide range of subjects, from puppetry and social satire to the all-out absurd and/or outrageous. Past sketches have targeted the low points of popular culture such as the American Idol phenomenon, Martha Stewart, the Blue Man Group and the Power Team. The troupe is also known for its truly bizarre imagination, writing and producing sketches about dance parties for amputees, a motivational speaker for slaves, and a Botox party for a couples pet penguin, among others.

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Find out more at harley-davidson.com/biglife

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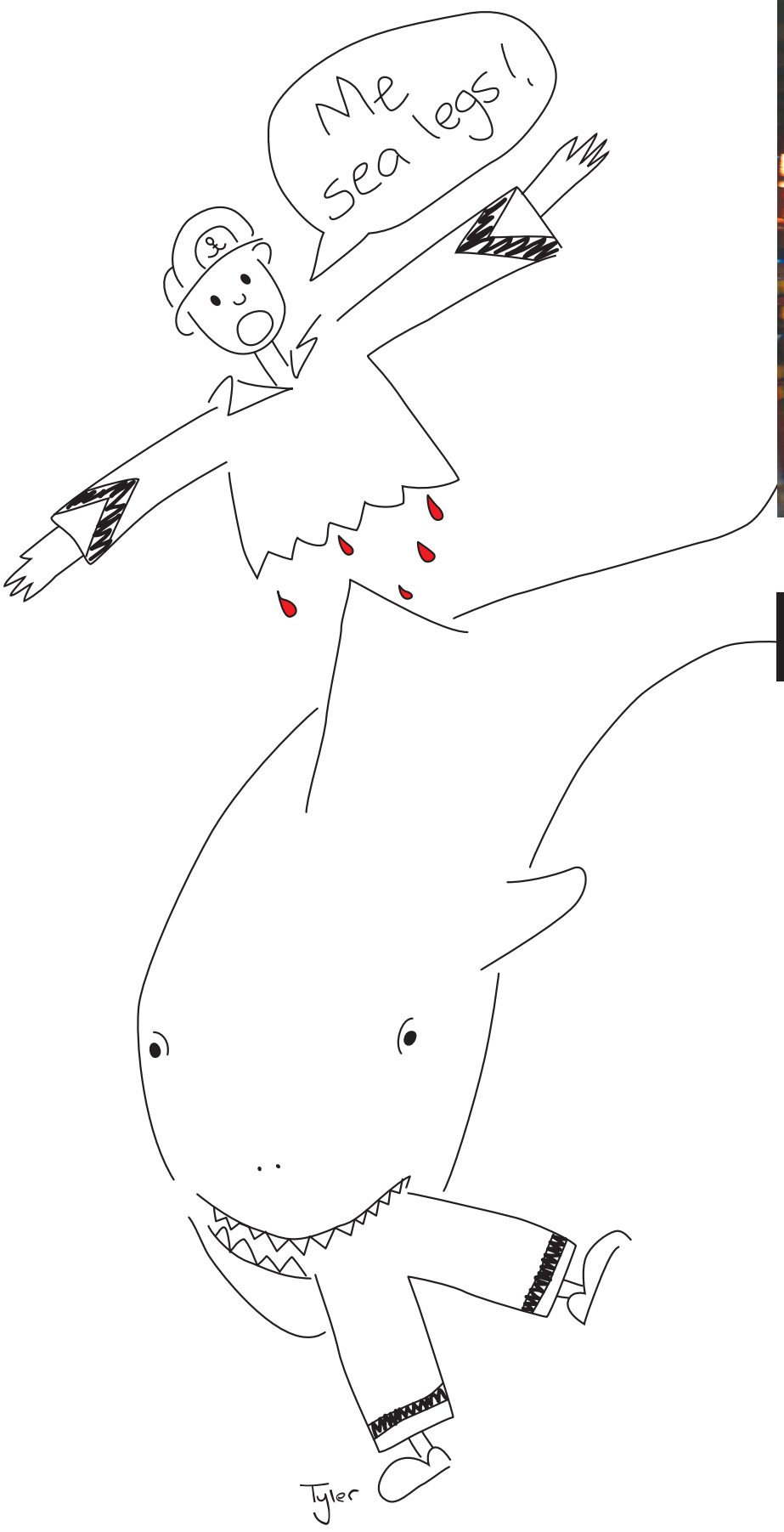
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Arghhhh!!!

Sharks and Sailors Blast out of Houston

by Alicia Crowder





In downtown Houston, I've lately spotted a number of music fans sporting t-shirts celebrating the local band **Sharks and Sailors**. Intrigued, I was able to catch their live show one night at **The Proletariat** (on Richmond near Montrose). The show I attended was just one day in their media-publicized, four-day mini tour, where four different bands from four different cities in our fair state (Houston, Ft. Worth, Denton and Austin) all joined together to play in one another's home towns.

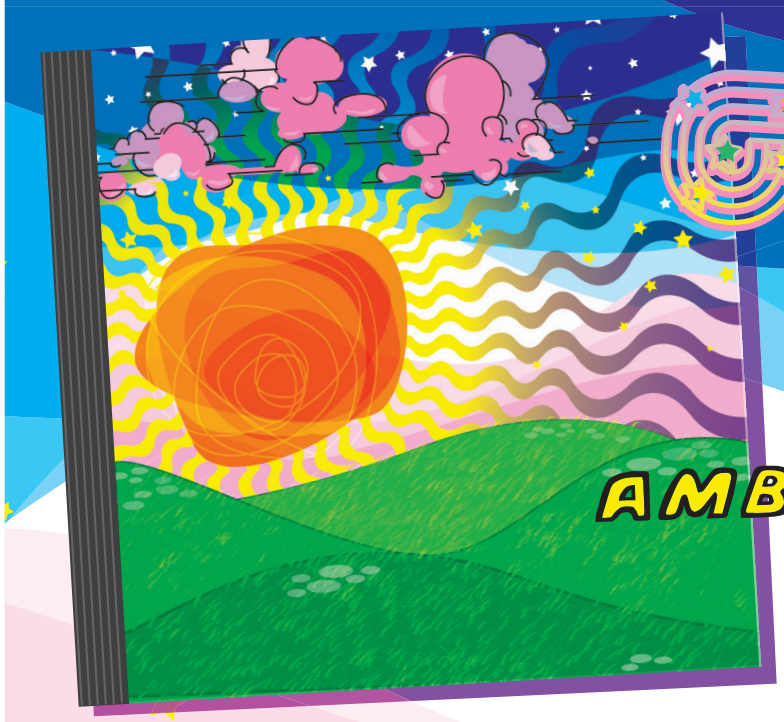
Sharks and Sailors is doing much more, though. As of the end of May, they've taken off to travel out of Texas and into the Midwest, going cross-country. It'll be their first large tour and after hearing their solid and unique sound, I have no doubt they they'll be able to make a name for themselves countrywide.

Live, Sharks and Sailors has a combined vocal effort between band members. Allen Hendrix and Michael Rollin are the guitar players, while Melissa Longchambon plays bass and Phillip Woodward plays the drums. I was blown away by the power and skill of Lonchambon, in particular, as she belted out lyrics while keeping a tight bass performance going, all the while making it appear as though it was the easiest thing in the world for her to do. Besides, I refuse to go without mentioning that most everyone loves seeing a chick in a band -- her natural beauty is amplified by her clear talent in this male-dominated, hard rock forum.

Woodward, for his part of the rhythm section, was solid and powerful, with unique timing that I saw catch the audience's ear, bringing them a little closer to the stage to feel more involved in this attention-grabbing performance. His energy level and showmanship was remarkable. For an added bang of entertainment at the finale, Phil toppled his drum kit over onto the stage at the closing moment of the final song. Of course, I have to mention that his studly stage presence is already gaining groupie support...

I always enjoy watching the hands of guitarists as their fingers connect in a beautiful dance with the strings of their instruments and was very impressed with the skillful collaboration between guitarists Hendrix and Rollin. Their alluring riffs resonated through the Proletariat that night, enriching the vibe of the club. These guys (and girl) are going to be the "big boys" (and girl) of whatever show they play.

Catch Sharks and Sailors Aug 5th at Proletariat with the Linus Pauling Quartet



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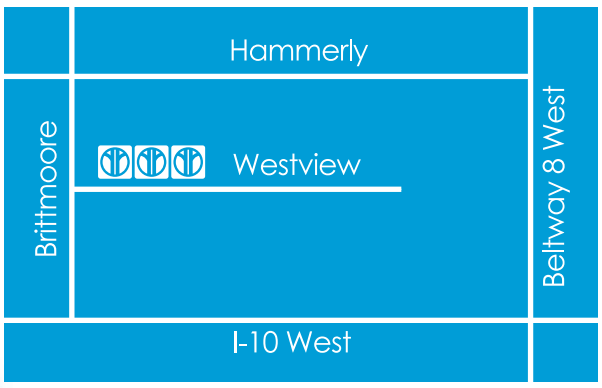
"from **Ween** to **Talking Heads**, their music is basically the equivalent of the fizzy, crackling candy, **Poprocks**. What that candy did for your mouth, this music does the same for your mind."
-CD Baby

"their extensive acid-tinged output includes music that ranges from **psychedelia** to **rockabilly**, only to be interrupted with **hip-hop** breaks and **Middle Eastern** chants in a somewhat confounding stuff-it-all-in-there approach."
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HOUSTON

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Letters from Palestine

Houstonian Hadeel Assali continues to give us the real deal on the ground.



Salamat Houston fam,

I am still here, in the occupied homeland. for the past several days, everyone has been preoccupied with the news of the onslaught in gaza - it seems everyone is suffering from depression, and it is contagious. Yesterday, spirits were lifted with the news of the Hizbollah abduction of two Israeli soldiers in southern lebanon. People were giving out candy and sweets in celebration in the streets of gaza and Lebanon. And now, at this very moment, attacks are going back and forth between Hizbollah and Israel. Very intense and very serious. Hopefully israelis will have the bubble they live in burst.

Also, now, as I write this, celebratory sirens, gunshots and firecrackers are going off around ramallah and probably all of palestine. Tawjeehy scores are released today (Tawjeehy is the last year of high school, and students spend months studying for final exams. results are made public, published in newspapers, announced over the radio, etc). These scores/results are what determine the future of all high school graduates - if they can go to college, what type of degrees they are eligible for, etc.

It is a strange mix of emotions. yesterday I visited Mahmud Darwish, the infamous poet of Palestine (whom I had the honor of meeting in early may in Italy). he told me I look very sad compared with the way I was in Italy. I apologized for not being able to hide it, and told him he looks sad too. he answered "what is there to be happy for in this life?"

I don't mean to bring anyone's spirits down or to make a big sob story out of all this, but there is one common message from people here, from my family in Gaza, to ex-political prisoners, from activists and artists and workers and merchants and villagers and refugees - "Please tell people in America (USA) what is happening here, that we are not the terrorists. Please tell them the truth." I will try to start with Houston.

Obviously they care most about Americans knowing because it is the US that is sending Israel billions of dollars every year, it is the US president who claims "Israel has the right to defend itself" as they continue to kill scores of people in Gaza and now Lebanon.

I have to confess, this is all wearing on me. I feel powerless like never before, but I know that I am not. Not only is my own family in a precarious situation - I can speak to my relatives in Gaza on the phone but I cannot see them or offer them any solace. But the entire future of Palestine as a nation, as a people is at stake.

I know the situation is extreme in many places in the world, even in the US. And shamefully, my own Palestinian community in Houston (and most of the US) is not organized or concerned enough to have any effect on the situation here.

I am not sure what to ask of you all other than for your support in any way possible to help spread the word about the reality here. I apologize if this seems abstract, or if it is not clear what exactly I am requesting. I am very disoriented these days and feel slightly ashamed for not being more "effective" while here. Although nothing seems to draw attention here other than the armed struggle - which some may call terrorism, but I am sure that you all know better. I am done with censoring myself and with my unwaivering support for those brave souls who have given their lives in the past, and those now whose days are numbered.

I am tired. only a few days left here. I am sad to leave, but I am looking forward to coming back to Houston, and looking forward to seeing all of you and sharing all the stories I have to tell.

love and solidarity,
Hadeel

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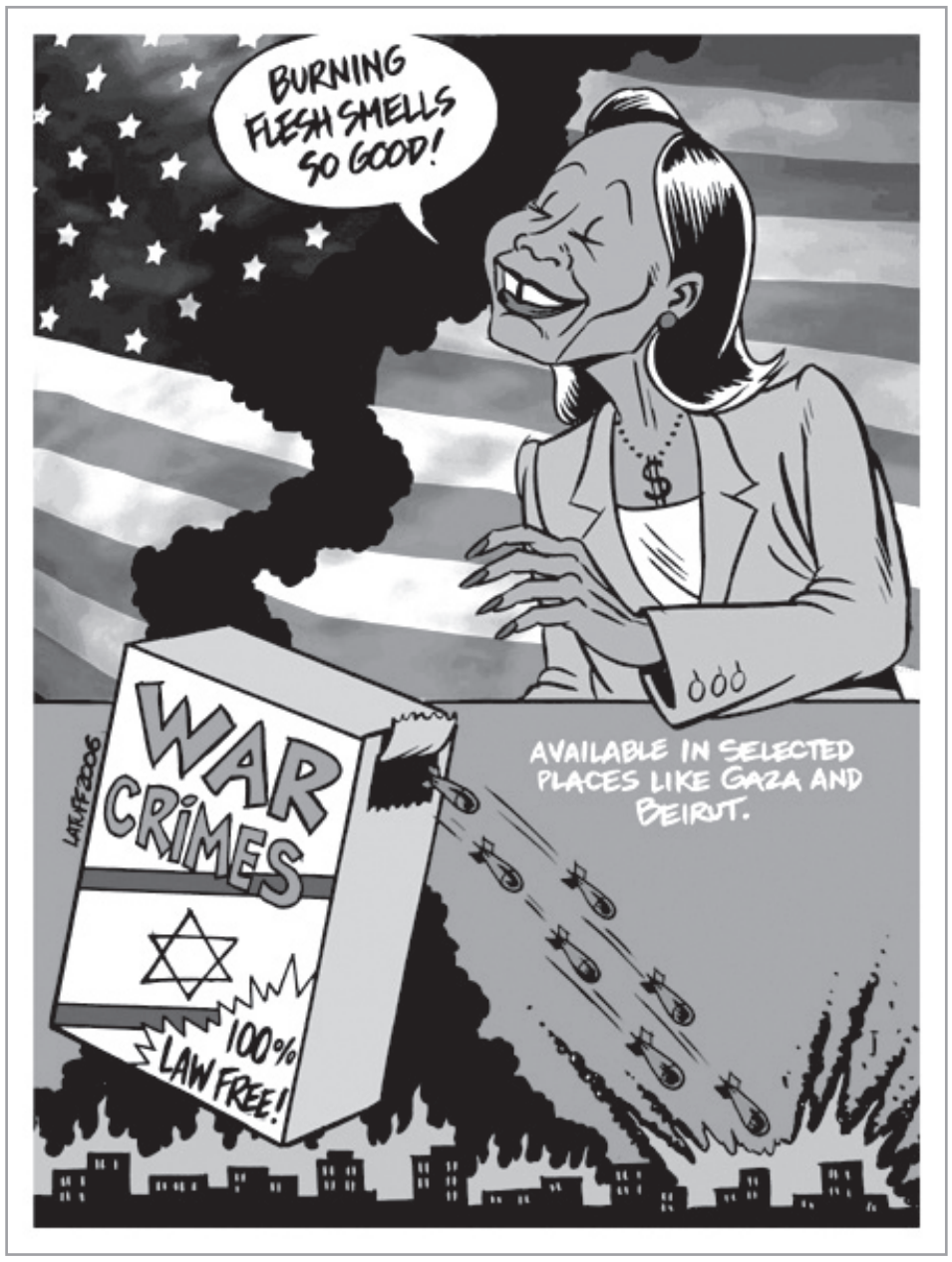
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Free Press Houston
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The Information **Gap**

Your TV is lying to you about the situation in Lebanon and Palestine

by Mazin Qumsiyeh, PhD



The gap between facts on the ground and Mideast coverage in many mainstream US media is harmful to US public interest. The fruits of Israeli militarism in the past two weeks included over 500 Lebanese and Palestinian civilians killed (including entire families), 20% of Lebanese civilians displaced, over $4 billion of Lebanese civilian infrastructure destroyed, and whole neighborhoods flattened by US-supplied weapons. The Israeli army (already 4th or 5th strongest in the world) will see its budget increased by nearly $500 million and the US is rushing delivery of aviation fuels, bombs and munitions all funded buy the US taxpayer. Meanwhile, 1/3rd of Israeli children and 2/3rds of Palestinians live below the poverty line. Yet, many TV and newspapers simply regurgitate lies generated in Tel Aviv and parroted by a well-funded network of lobbyists for Israel in the media, on Capital Hill, and in the White House.

The fictional narrative goes something along the lines that "the troubles started" when Hamas "abducted" an Israeli soldier and Hezbollah "kidnapped" two Israeli soldiers. As to why this happened, it is argued that Hamas and Hezbollah are fanatical terrorist groups genetically predestined to make trouble unless crushed by massive military force. But Israel is a colonial and occupying state that has left 2/3rd of the 9 million Palestinians as refugees or displaced people by a systematic process of ethnic cleansing, land grabs, and attacks on civilians, all perpetrated well before the establishment of Hamas (acronym for Islamic Resistance Mo0vement) in 1987. In fact, the first suicide bombing came only in the mid 1990s after the massacre by an Israeli settler of 29 worshippers in the Ibrahimi mosque in Alkhalil (Hebron).

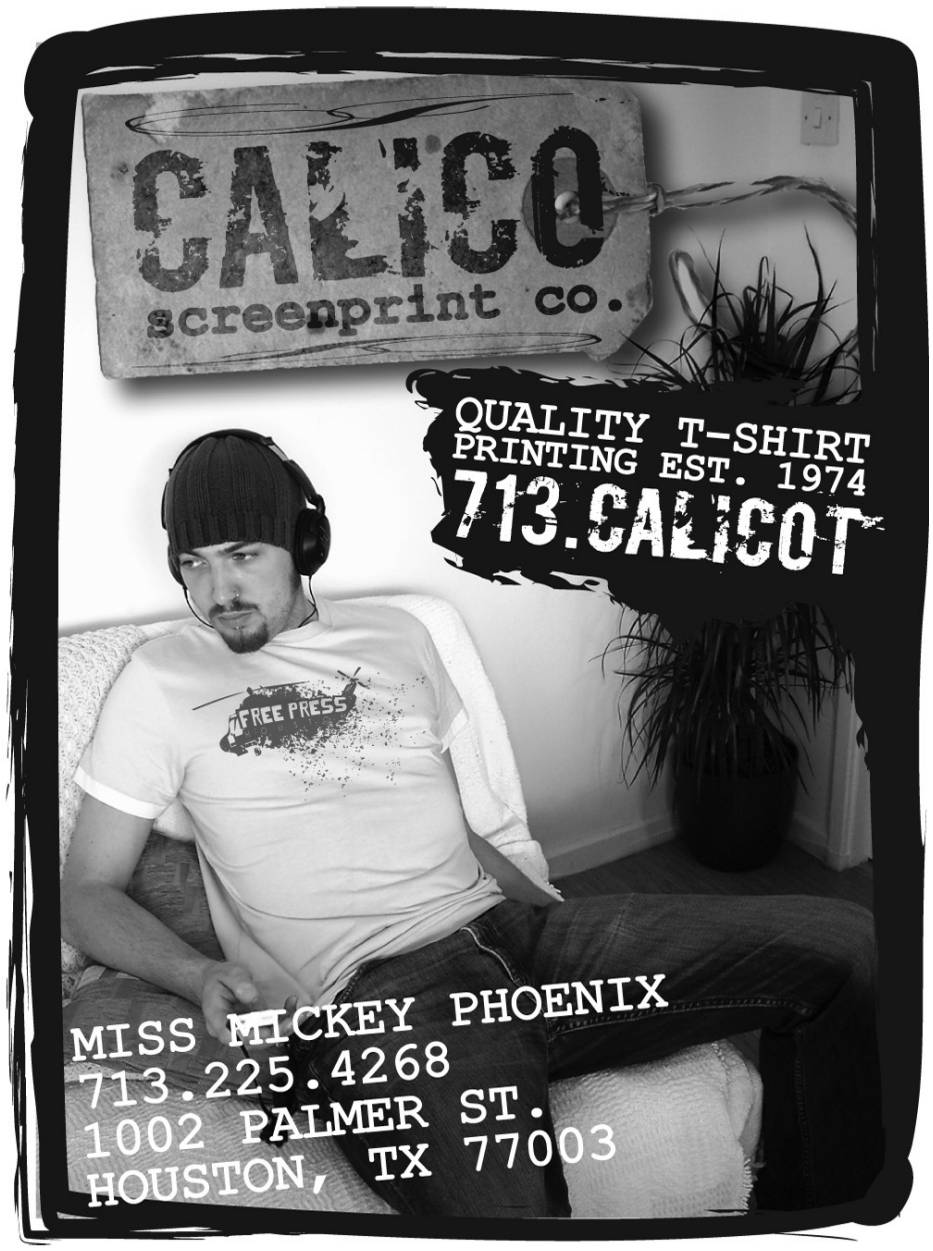
10,000 Palestinian political prisoners are held illegally in Israeli jails

The Israeli government (backed by the US) responded to the massacre not by punishing the colonial settlers but by rewarding them and punishing the native Palestinians (clearing whole Palestinian neighborhoods to satisfy the few settlers). In our visit to that ancient city two weeks ago, we observed how 400 fanatical colonial settlers (supported by nearly 4000 Israeli occupation troops in the area) have displaced thousands of native Hebronites and kept nearly a hundred thousand as virtual prisoners. Hamas skirmished with the occupation forces resulted in the capture of an Israeli occupation soldier, an act of resistance supported by all existing International laws (Gaza is still occupied, even by UN standards). By contrast, nearly 10,000 Palestinian political prisoners are held illegally in Israeli jails. They were kidnapped from their own homes and towns and illegally transported to Israeli jails.

Similarly, Hezbollah is an indigenous Lebanese resistance force that formed AFTER the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. For those with short memories, it is important to recall that tens of thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians (the latter refugees from 1948) were massacred by the Israeli occupation forces in Lebanon in 1982 alone. Hezbollah earned wide popularity and support among all sectors of Lebanese society (including its Christian population) for its success in ousting the Israeli brutal occupation machine from most Lebanese territory. Of course Israel remains illegally occupying Gaza, the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), the Sheba Farms, and the Golan. Israel also continues to deny international law by preventing Palestinian refugees from returning to their homes and lands. All Arab countries agreed in Beirut three years ago to a comprehensive peace plan based on International law.

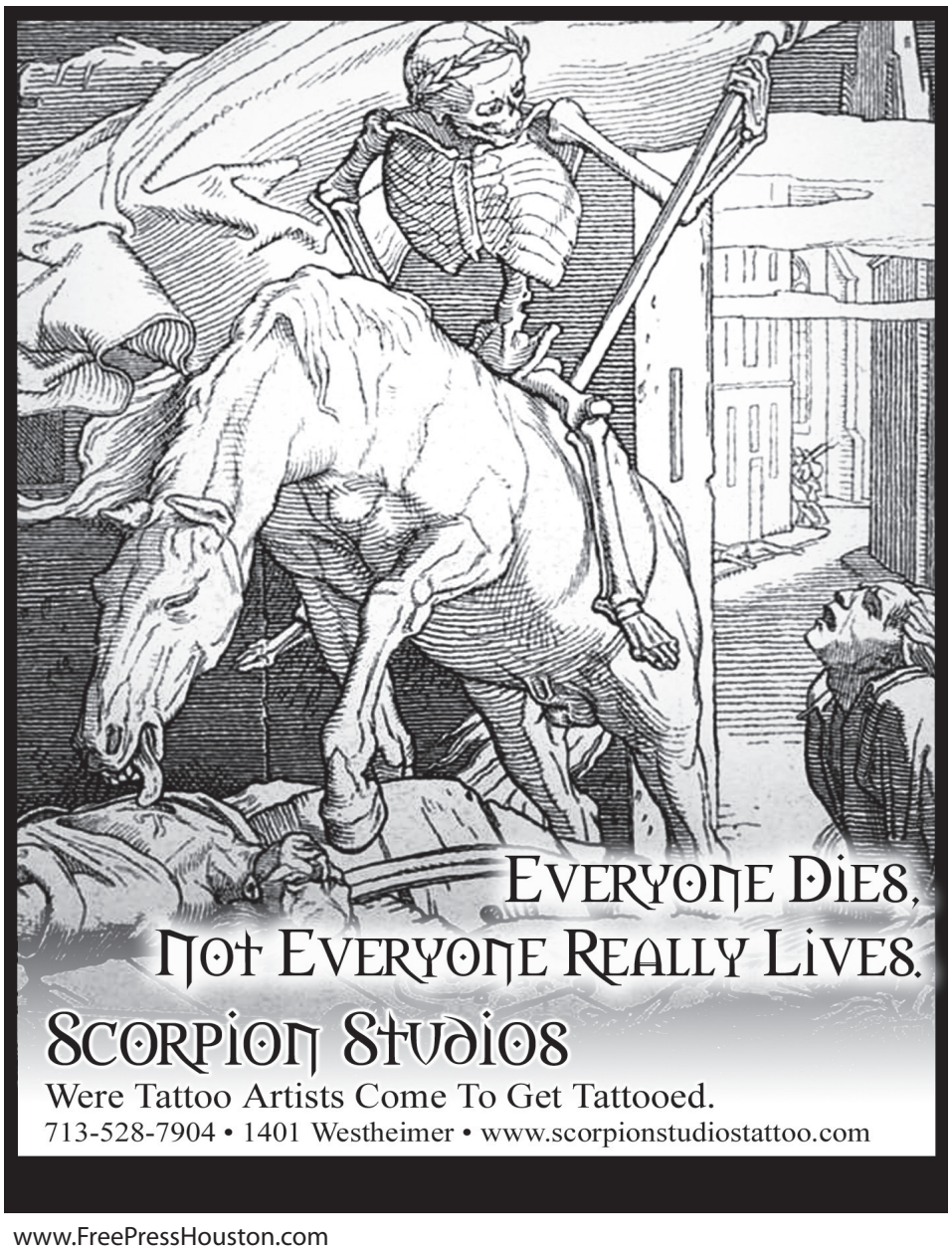
Why does the US government refuse to call on its client state to accept a ceasefire in Lebanon let alone peace based on International law? Why does the US veto UN resolutions critical of Israel even when the vast majority of countries support such resolutions? The reaction to a paper on the Israeli lobby by two respected professors at Harvard and University of Chicago (Mearsheimer and Walt) should give us hints. There was a paranoid overreaction about this research simply because it showed that Zionists push their interests at the expense of US interests.

Hundreds of millions around the world look in horror at the US complicity in Israeli war crimes. Campaigns of boycotts, divestments and sanctions on Israel by civil society are now picking steam. Unless the US government changes course and accepts applicability of human rights and International law, US economic interests around the world would also be effected and we may be embarking on a perpetual war in which everyone loses.





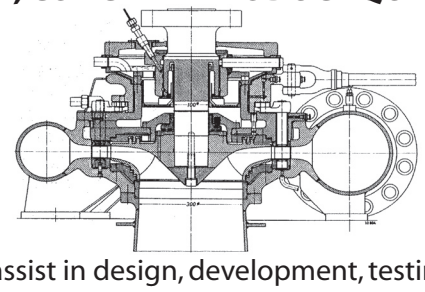
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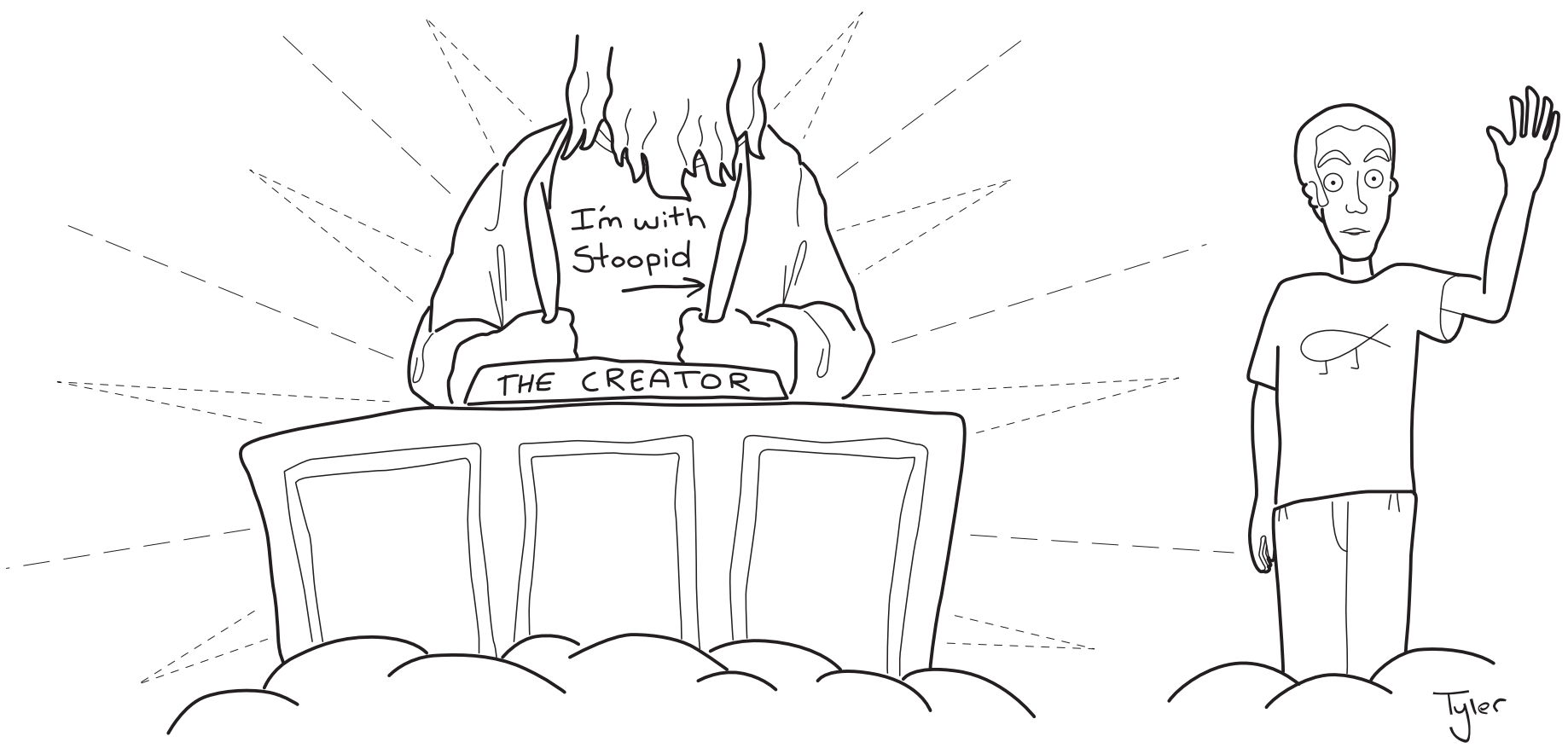
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The Stoopid Paradox

By Stoopid Alex Wukman



Let me tell you a story, this really happened. About a year ago a frat boy was out for his daily jog in Norman Oklahoma. He was running along a railroad track as a train was approaching. Now this strapping young lad decided that he could run faster than the oncoming train. So he accelerated and cut in front of the train.

Needless to say he didn't make it. Now the truly sad part of all this isn't how he died, but how the community reacted. The local paper called it a senseless tragedy. There was a huge outpouring of grief. Everyone who knew him said what a bright, intelligent athletic boys he was. People commented on how well his parents had raised him.

Some arrogant cynics brought up survival of the fittest. Which is a true shame, by saying that this boy's death was an example of Darwin theory misses the actual lesson. The lesson here isn't that unsuitable genes don't survive, the lesson here is that stupid people call into question the theory of intelligent design.

Think about it, by saying that the earth was designed by an intelligent being implies that there is an amount of intelligence in the outcome. If an engineer designs a product that doesn't work then it stands to reason that the engineer isn't very intelligent now is s/he?

Now no engineer would design a product that doesn't work, and intentionally running in front of a train demonstrates a pretty sever lack of function on the part of the product. Which leads to the belief that only the randomness of evolution would allow for people who think running in front of trains is a good idea. No intelligent designer would create anything that flawed.

But there is one problem with this theory; it doesn't explain why Crackhead Joe has kids. Before I go on I have to explain just why Crackhead Joe was called Crackhead Joe, it wasn't because he smoked crack. It was because he acted like his mom had smoked crack when she pregnant with him.

This was a guy who gave his new Camry to a valet to park and when the car was brought back to him he insisted that it wasn't his. Even though his name was on the insurance, his key fit the door, it was exactly where the valet parked it—he insisted that it wasn't his because the valet wrote down Corolla on the key tag.

If that was the only time Joe acted like a Crackhead the name wouldn't have stuck. Another good example of Joe's Crackheaded behavior is how he would drive. If he was following someone he would stay right on their ass. No right on their ass—he would run every stop sign, cut people off, blow through every light because he was scared of losing them.

It didn't matter if he had their cell phone number or if he knew exactly where they were going if he was following someone he would disregard all traffic laws because he didn't want to get lost. Yet despite all known logic, Darwinian theory or scientific reasoning Crackhead Joe has kids. Not just a kid, no he has two kids by two different women.

Now if we accept survival of the fittest as truth then the fact that someone as inarguably dimwitted as Crackhead Joe was able to convince two different women to sleep with him enough times to get pregnant seems to refute any notion of genetic or scientific viability in the selection of suitable mates. So there seems to be only one possible explanation for why Crackhead Joe has kids, his love life was an act of God.

It's the only way that stupid people having children makes sense. Which leads us to the paradox: the production of stupid people is a testimony to the existence of evolution; the reproduction of stupid people is a testimony to the existence of God.


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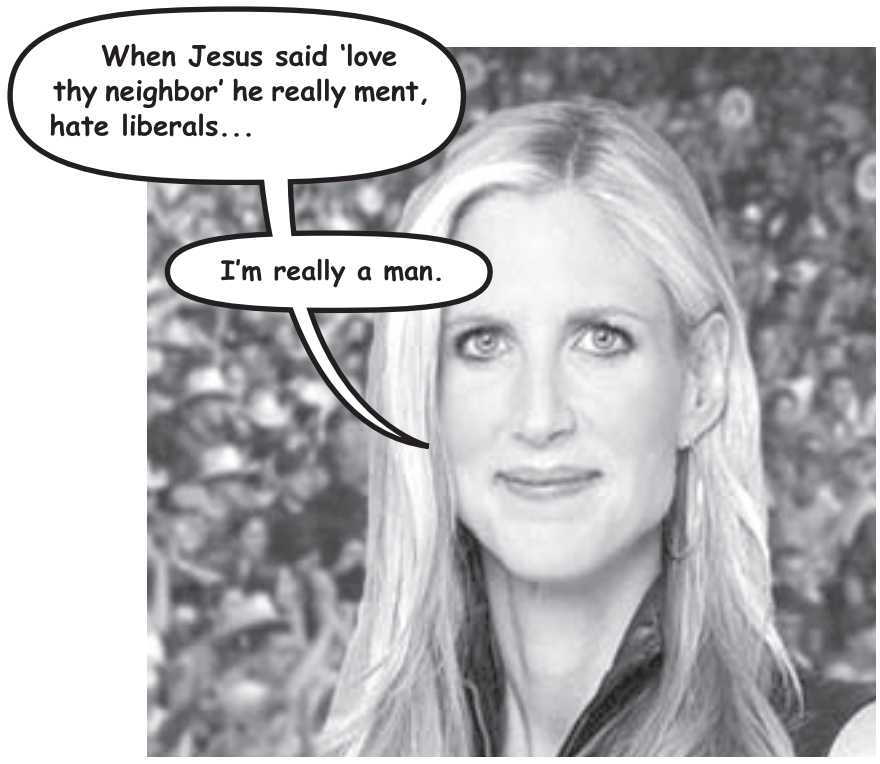
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GODLESS

That bitch Ann Coulter's new Book

by Celeste Beckendorf

"Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty."



In the 1920s, author Upton Sinclair read the above to a group of Chicago businessmen, saying they were the words of anarchist Emma Goldman. The men were aghast, "That woman should be deported at once." Mr. Sinclair then confessed the passage was from the Bible, the words of the apostle James. If they were shocked, they shouldnt have been. Someone looking for a nice justification for free-wheeling, profit-driven capitalism, wont find one in the Bible. This is why Ms. Ann Coulter, having produced a book with both "Church" and "God," in the title, does not quote from it.

A wise choice on Anns part. Theres not much in the Bible to calm the nerves of a free-marketeer waiting for the benefits to trickle down, or someone looking for a portrait of Jesus as a moral crusader. Open up the New Testament, and what you actually find is this socialist-sounding claptrap about loving your enemies as well as your neighbor.

You can imagine poor old Ann, realizing this omission a book supposedly about religion that fails to quote that religions central text so she sits down with the Good Book to correct the glitch. What she found probably put her in a sour mood. It turns out that when Jesus came upon a man of means, he didnt chuck him under the chin and praise his entrepreneurial spirit. He told him to give away his wealth. When Jesus came upon people with deviant lifestyles, he didnt turn to the crowd and lecture them about Romes decaying morals. He took those people into his fold, usually with a snarl or two at the gawkers nearby. In her research, did Ann find accounts of the early Christians sniffing out offensive lifestyles, then going on the warpath to make them illegal? Nope. How disheartening that must have been for our intrepid commentator. Whats more, America's basic tenants, the right to a government that does not encroach on personal freedom, the individual's right to pursue happiness, "let a man live his own life," are not in the Bible. That doesnt mean theyre wrong. Not at all. Its just not appropriate to doll them all up in spiritual mumbo-jumbo. I think Thomas and Benjamin and George would agree with me.

Now, Ms. Coulter may feel a little uncomfortable roaming around the Good Book to support what shes saying, but me? I got noooo problem with it. Its quite simple. The Christians first religious duty is to help the poor:

Jer. 22:3. Do justice and righteousness, and deliver the one who has been robbed from the power of his oppressor. Also do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the orphan, or the widow; and do not shed innocent blood in this place.

Is. 58:10. "And if you give yourself to the hungry, and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then your light will rise in darkness, and your gloom will become like midday

.

Luke 12:33. "Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, nor moth destroys."

Luke 6:20-21. Blessed are you who are poor, for yours in the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

Is. 58:66ff. Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke? Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into the house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

Mt. 5:42. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

The Bibles clear bias towards the poor always comes as a surprise to my non-churchy friends, whove long witnessed the priorities of Christians around them, and rightfully assumed the Bible must be a massive tirade against gay marriage and abortion.

Yes, Im a wild-eyed liberal, and I go to Bible studies, fairly fundamentalist ones, at that. And contrary to Coulters book, liberals are not bent on transforming America into some sort of pan-sexual Amsterdam. We dont preach abortion as birth control, nor do we think the ACLU should busy itself with protecting quirky behavior at the expense of common sense. We dont think courts should take over the rightful role of parents, and surprise, surprise, our opposition to the war in Iraq is just as motivated by the death of American soldiers as it is by the death of Iraqis.

Now, this Bible study I go to has its share of Clinton-bashers, as well as a few liberal fellow-travelers like myself. Once the bashing starts, we quietly roll our eyes, and wait to say our piece. Yes, people know Im liberal, but except for Coulter, no one has ever called me Godless. Shes one of the few who seem to think that a belief in science makes you anti-God. Around this nation are many believers in Christ who recognize that fossils show the evolution of species, but not transmigration. Theres evidence that indicates changes within a species over time, but not fish to fowl, fowl to mammal and so forth. This is important because Ms. Coulter likes to paint a monolithic portrait of two camps: God-hating evolution-believers in one, and God-fearing creationists in the other. Nothing could be further from the truth.

That Bible study I go to represents a spectrum, where we each place differing emphasis on private vs. public morality. You might say a liberal Christian places more emphasis on decisions made as a society, "We ought not to go to war." "We ought to take care of the poor," whereas a conservative Christian shifts the emphasis to private life, "A woman ought not to have an abortion." "A man ought not sleep with another man." But these are not absolutes. There are plenty conservative Christians who think Bushs policies in Iraq are disastrous (it makes it harder to preach the Gospel abroad), and quite a few liberals who dont appreciate seeing women on TV parade around in their underwear. Of course there is a division in society, a divide along church and class lines that Coulters writings help to foster, but it is not a natural one. First, a little background:

Until the beginning of the last century, most Christians believed that redistributing wealth and helping the poor was just as important as personal moral

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behavior. To turn ones back on the hungry was considered just as much a sin as anything you might do in the bedroom. Struggles against slavery, child labor and unsafe working conditions were all fueled by fiery sermons from the pulpit, complete with all the Bible-thumping and moral certitude that today, we associate with gay-bashing. The fiery revivalist preachers of yesteryear excoriated the rich for neglecting Americas growing class of street children, and economic conditions that forced women into prostitution. In early American Christianity, morality and justice were intertwined. In fact, the division that Coulter helps to inflame today, did not exist in the least.

What caused the division was urban migration, but mostly, the Scopes Trial. The attorney that prosecuted the Tennessee science teacher for teaching evolution was William Jennings Bryant, three-times presidential candidate and the greatest orator of his time. A fervent Christian as well as an early believer in a world body to arbitrate disputes, he was appointed Secretary of State under Wilson, but resigned to protest the growing drumbeat to enter WWI. His Cross of Gold speech is considered to be one of Americas top oratory masterpieces. Bryants faith represented the prevailing "pitchfork populism," that put justice and morality on equal footing, and was broadly represented across America.

But when called upon to prosecute Mr. Scopes, Mr. Bryant was clearly past his prime. During the trial, he frequently sounded befuddled. The science was a little above him, and his opponent was the sharp and urbane Clarence Darrow, who was content to let Bryants ignorance do the talking. The trial, broadcast daily over the newly minted medium of wireless radio to an audience of millions, left a bad taste in peoples mouths. Mr. Darrow, with his big-city arrogance and snobbish condescension, appeared to take pleasure in publicly humiliating a great American icon, smirking while this hero twisted in the wind. Mr. Darrow lost that day, won on appeal, but lost the hearts and minds of regular Americans. Pretentious, know-it-all book-learning had bested simple heartland faith. But the Scopes Trial was only battle one of what we now call the Culture Wars.

> Seeing Coulters books for sale makes you wish humans were born with a built-in crap detector

Today, Coulter's anti-liberal hate-talk is a distraction, because in reality, both sides are working towards the same general goal: a better world to live in, a better place for our kids to grow up in. Ann does not want you to recognize the church schism as a historical misunderstanding, two strains of faith that were once united. For her own reasons, she wants you to see "liberalism" as monolithic, irrational state of mind, hoping youll disregard everything we say. According to her, all liberals are cut out of the same defective material. Skilled at the time-honored technique common to all hate literature, she de-personifies her target, referring to us liberals as one indistinguishable group. We're *all* unchurched, unpatriotic, amoral, and have never met a government program we didn't like. If you were to download any of the famous works of hate literature, for example, "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," replace "Jews" with "Liberals," the resulting book would seem oddly familiar: One target, one enemy, scheming as one to undermine all the nation holds dear.

Seeing Coulters books for sale makes you wish humans were born with a built-in crap detector, something inside us that buzzes when commentators use phrases like, "they always," "they never," "they all hate America." At such times, it should kick in: "What do you mean all? Where did you learn that? How many liberals have you reall met, sat down and talked to?"

There exists reasonable commentary that suggests American supremacy is not such a horrible thing, just as there are books on my side of the fence that warn of Americas conservatism without sounding like some goofy spy novel. One things for sure. Our nation is at a crossroads, at a critical juncture deserving of better guidance than Coulters simplistic rants.

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My husband is a big-time barbecue enthusiast. So, I planned a barbecue-themed party for his birthday and ordered a fancy new grill from an online vendor. Long story short: it arrived late, and our barbecue party had no grill! I know I can't have that day back, but what can I do?

- Ticked Off in Tampa

Dear Ticked:

Stop cooking your food outside. What is this? The dawn of man? Here in civilization, we cook our food indoors. In a kitchen. Now, I've never actually seen this happen, but my personal chef assures me this is how it's done.

Dear Bankers Pen:

I'm a busy working mother of three. After a full workday and running the kids all around, the last thing I have time for is stopping by the bank. I heard you can open a checking account online with no paperwork at wamu.com. What do you think?

- Swamped in San Diego

Dear Swamped:

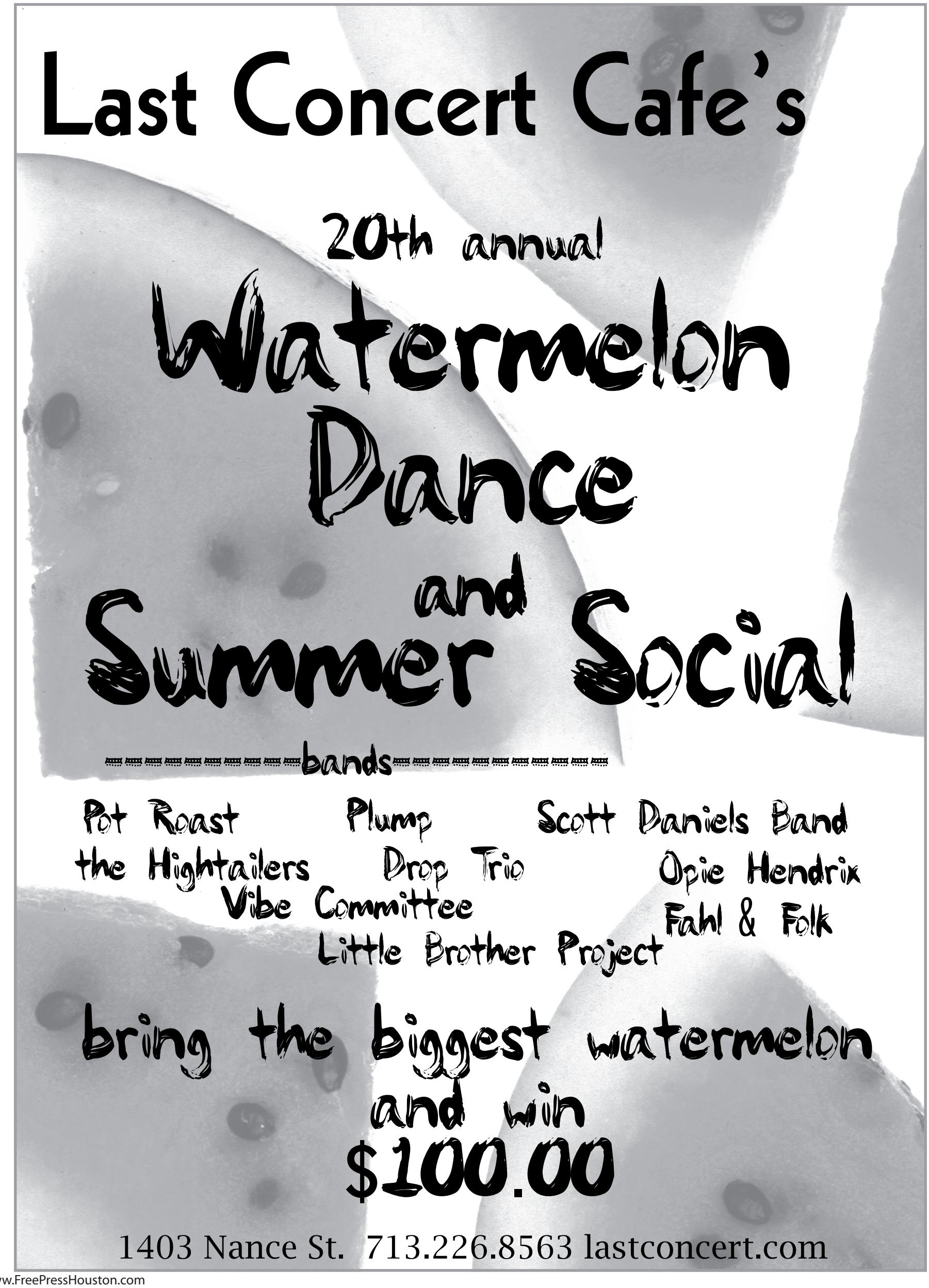
I think you're out to brunch. If you keep raving about banking without paperwork and mythical "online" accounts, people will think you're one olive short of a martini. Listen, if you want to open a checking account, just walk into the bank and talk to the men with suits. I've never heard of this "wamu.com" bank though. Is it near the expressway?

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Free Press Houston
Issue 68 | 08/06

We're Being Set Up for Wider War in the Middle East

by Paul Craig Roberts

The old adage, "fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me" does not apply to Americans, who have shown that they can be endlessly fooled.

Neoconservatives deceived Americans into an illegal attack and debilitating war in Iraq. American neoconservatives are closely allied with Israel's Likud Party. In the past, some neocons lost their security clearances because of "mishandling" of classified information. According to Insight magazine, "the Pentagon has banned security clearance to Americans with relatives in Israel. Government sources and attorneys said the Pentagon has sought and succeeded in removing security clearance from dozens of Americans, mostly Jews, who either lived, worked, or have relatives in Israel."

Despite questions of dual loyalties, neocons hold high positions in the Bush regime. Ten years ago these architects of American foreign and military policy spelled out how they would use deception to achieve "important Israeli strategic objectives" in the Middle East. First, they would focus "on removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq." This would open the door for Israel to provoke attacks from Hezbollah. The attacks would let Israel gain American sympathy and permit Israel to seize the strategic initiative by "engaging Hezbollah, Syria, and Iran as the principal agents of aggression in Lebanon."

Today, this neoconservative plan is unfolding before our eyes. Israel has used the capture of two of its soldiers in Lebanon as an excuse for an all-out air and naval bombardment against Lebanese civilian targets. However, a number of commentators have pointed out that such a massive attack requires weeks if not months of preparation that could not be done overnight in response to the capture of the soldiers.

Regardless, in the first two days of the Israeli military attack on Lebanon more than a hundred civilians, including Canadians, have been killed by Israeli bombs (gifts from U.S. taxpayers). The Beirut International Airport has been repeatedly bombed, as have residential neighborhoods, roads, bridges, ports, and power stations.

Soldiers are a legitimate military target. Civilians, civilian neighborhoods, tourists, and international airports are not. Under the Nuremberg standard used to sentence Nazi war criminals to death, the Israeli government is clearly guilty of war crimes.

Meanwhile, the Israelis are committing identical war crimes in Gaza. Again Israel's excuse is the capture of an Israeli soldier. However, the distinguished Israeli professor Ran HaCohen said that the Israeli army "had been demanding a massive attack on Gaza long before the Israeli soldier was kidnapped."



"The prime minister of Lebanon...has twice appealed to Bush to pressure Israel to stop its criminal attacks. Our great moral, democratic, Christian leader has twice rebuffed the appeal from the legal representative of the Lebanese people."

By blocking UN Security Council action against Israel for its massacre of civilians in Gaza, the Bush regime has made itself complicit in these monstrous war crimes. Just as Germans who supported Hitler were deemed to be complicit in his war crimes, Americans who support Bush are complicit in Bush's war crimes.

Hezbollah is not the Lebanese government. It does not rule Lebanon. Hezbollah is the militia organization founded in 1982 in response to Israel's invasion of Lebanon. Hezbollah defeated the Israeli army and drove out the Israeli invaders six years ago.

According to the BBC, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said that the two Israeli soldiers "were captured to pressure Israel to release the thousands of Palestinian prisoners in its jails," especially the women and children.

The BBC also notes that although Hezbollah operates "from Lebanese territory and the militant group has two ministers in the Lebanese government, the central government is almost powerless to influence the militant group." (Note that the BBC applies the loaded word "militant" to Hezbollah but not to Israel.) Hezbollah, reports the BBC, "is also very popular in Lebanon and highly respected for its political activities, social services, and its military record against Israel."

The prime minister of Lebanon, who was installed with President Bush's approval when Syria, under Bush's pressure, recently withdrew its troops from Lebanon, has twice appealed to Bush to pressure Israel to stop its criminal attacks. Our great moral, democratic, Christian leader has twice rebuffed the appeal from the legal representative of the Lebanese people. Instead, Bush is willingly going along with the 1996 neocon script. Bush is laying the blame on Syria and Iran, exactly as the neocon script calls for him to do.

When Bush demands that Syria "stop Hezbollah attacks," he forgets that he was the one who forced Syria out of Lebanon (to enable Israel to attack Lebanon). If Americans were attentive, they would be ashamed to witness "their" president acting as an Israeli propagandist.

Fox "News," CNN, and the rest of the Bush propaganda ministry are echoing the lie that innocent Israel is under attack from the "terrorist states" of Syria and Iran through their surrogate, Hezbollah. Americans, who are sick of the Iraq occupation and want the troops home, are being fooled again and set up for wider war in the Middle East.

Evangelical "Christians" are part of the propaganda show. Three thousand of them, under the lead of the

Rev. John C. Hagee, are heading to Washington for a "Washington/Israel summit" to demand, needlessly, that the neocon Bush regime show "stronger support for Israel."

It is difficult to see how Bush could show any stronger support without using the U.S. military to assist Israel in its attacks, which is, of course, what the "Christian" Rev. Hagee intends when he declares: "There's a new Hitler in the Middle East [he doesn't mean Bush or Olmert]. The only way he will be stopped will be by a preemptive military strike in Iran."

Present at Rev. Hagee's "Washington/Israel Summit" will be Israel's former Minister of Defense, Lt. Gen. Moshe Ya'alon, Israeli Ambassador Daniel Ayalon, Republican National Committee Chairman Ken Mehlman, Republican Senators Sam Brownback and Rick Santorum, the Rev. Jerry Falwell, and Gary Bauer.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the most powerful lobby in Washington, expressed its thanks to Rev. Hagee for demonstrating "the depth and breadth of American support" for Israel. Recently, AIPAC has been under investigation as a suspected nest for Israeli spies.

David Brog, former chief of staff for Republican Sen. Arlen Specter, has gone to work for Rev. Hagee. Brog, who is Jewish, says he works for Hagee's evangelical enterprise because "we're bringing into a pro-Israel camp millions of Christians who love Israel and giving them a political voice. Israel's enemies are our enemies, and this group instinctively understands that." Brog goes on to say that Hagee's evangelicals understand that they are not supposed to talk about Jesus, only about saving Israel: "Christians who work with Jews in supporting Israel realize how sensitive we are in talking about Jesus. They realize it will interfere with what they are trying to do."

Gentle reader, is this an admission that evangelicals have set aside Jesus for war? Do these bloody-minded evangelicals really believe they will be wafted to Heaven for helping Israel involve the U.S. in more war? Have evangelicals forgotten that "an eye for an eye" is Old Testament? "Turn the other cheek" is New Testament.

On July 14, Reuters reported that alone among Christians, the "Vatican condemns Israel for attacks on Lebanon."

Whose delusion is the greatest – the evangelical "rapture" delusion, the neocon delusion about American power, or the Zionist delusion? The three together mean disaster for America, Israel, and the world.

One of the great evangelical/Zionist/neocon myths is that "tiny Israel" armed with 200 nuclear weapons is threatened by Muslim Middle Eastern countries. In actual fact, Egypt and Pakistan, which have the bulk of the Middle Eastern Muslim population, are ruled by American puppets. Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the oil emirates are totally dependent on U.S. protection and, thereby, are also under the American thumb. Iran is Persian, not Arab, and has no common borders with Israel. Hezbollah was created when Israel tried to seize Lebanon in 1982. Hamas is a Palestinian response to the atrocities Palestinians have suffered for a half century at Israel's hands.

Israel's land-stealing policy is the source of Middle Eastern instability. America is hated because American money and weapons are what enable Israel to steal Palestine from Palestinians.

As numerous Middle East experts have pointed out, what is decried as "Arab terrorism against Israel" is, in fact, the only tactic Muslims have for calling the world's attention to the plight of the Palestinians, about which Americans are generally ignorant.

It is absurd for Bush to condemn Syria for not behaving as an American puppet and for not fighting Israel's battles by taking on Hezbollah. Syria and Iran (and Iraq prior to the U.S. invasion) are the only Middle Eastern countries independent of American control. It is far beyond the boundaries of reason and morality to expect these two remaining independent countries to give up their independence in order to enable Israel to steal Palestine and southern Lebanon.

It is the refusal of Syria and Iran (and Saddam Hussein's Iraq) to stand with Israel against Palestine that has made them targets for American attack. Neocons have total control of U.S. foreign policy in the Bush regime, and they have morphed our strategic interests into Israel's.

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Students Defend HB1403 (from the open publishing newswire)

Young Immigrants for a Better Future organized a protest in defense of HB1403-in state tuition for undocumented students. The protest took place at Houston Community College. It was done to voice the concerns on Rep. Culberson's amendment to charge out of state tuition to undocumented immigrants. HB1403 gives undocumented students the opportunity to attend college and gives them "state residency". This allows the students to pay in state tuition but does not give the students residency in terms of a visa. The organization is also advocating the passage of the Dream Act which would give residency to qualified students. The amendment however has declared war on thousands of students fighting to gain an education.

What to the Prisoner is Your 4th of July? (From the newswire)

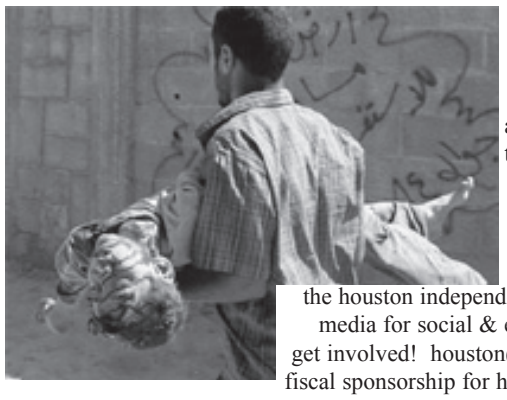
What to the Prisoner is Your Fourth of July? To commemorate the independence of the United States of America, Texas prison kitchens are fired up earlier than usual. The traditional Fourth of July meals are prepared by unpaid prisoners (can you say slaves?) whose only incentive for the extra work is leftover mashed potatoes and an extra oven-barbecued soybean patty, if they are lucky.
In fact, the reality is that prisons are neocolonial concentration slave camps. For the plantation to run smoothly, the master is dependent on the docility and ignorance of the inmates/slaves.
In Texas prisons, where the population is disproportionally Black and Latino, rehabilitation and educational programs are rare to nonexistent. The only thing a prisoner is guaranteed to learn how to be a better criminal, guaranteeing their return to enslavement, again and again.
For most prisoners, the July 4th holiday signifies a moment of relief, a day to eat, drink and be merry.
For the 400 Texas death row prisoners, the Fourth of July is simply a day closer to our impending execution.

Tejano Anarchist Released Following 7 Year Sentence

Rob "Los Ricos" Thaxton was released on June 29th from Oregon State Prison following a 7 year prison sentence. Rob was born in Pampa Texas and was active with activist and anarchist projects throughout Texas, including Dallas, Austin and organizing for protests of the G8 summit and Republican National Convention in Houston in the early nineties. Rob later moved to the west coast.
On June 18th 1999 Rob attended a reclaim the streets demonstration in Eugene Oregon as part of the J18 global day of action against the G8 meeting in Koln Germany. The protest ends with 15 people arrested including Rob, who is charged and convicted for throwing a projectile at the police.
Rob wrote this before his release: It's hard to believe that in three days I will walk out of the gates of this concrete razor wired medium security facility and step into freedom. I've been moved four times in as many weeks but it's not likely that I'll be moved again with so little of my sentence left.
To my supporters; I want to send you all a great big thank you for helping me make it through this long and strange trip. Your letters and visits over the past seven plus years have meant more than I can ever convey. Your light at the end of my tunnel has helped make it possible for me to continue to stay true to my ideals. You have also helped me sustain the vision of that I hold dear in regard to my post prison activism.

Southern Girls Converge on Houston; Volunteers Bust Ass on Coverage

From the open publishing newswire:The Southern Girls Convention brought folks from all around the South and the country for a weekend of workshops, networking, and partying. A good turnout of guys and girls showed up at the University of Houston to enjoy the events and to talk about serious issues concerning women and social justice in a two-day series of workshops.
The event kicked off on Friday with a party and registration at the Artery on Friday. It continued on Saturday and Sunday at the UC Underground at the University of Houston. Workshops were presented on a variety of topics including; Drag 101, Drumming, Popular Education, Strategic Action Planning, Reproductive Choice and Monkeywrenching, Carceral Christianity and a variety of other topics.
The Thursday beforehand, Houston Indymedia hosted a Be the Media workshop, which yielded a large amount of community news coverage:

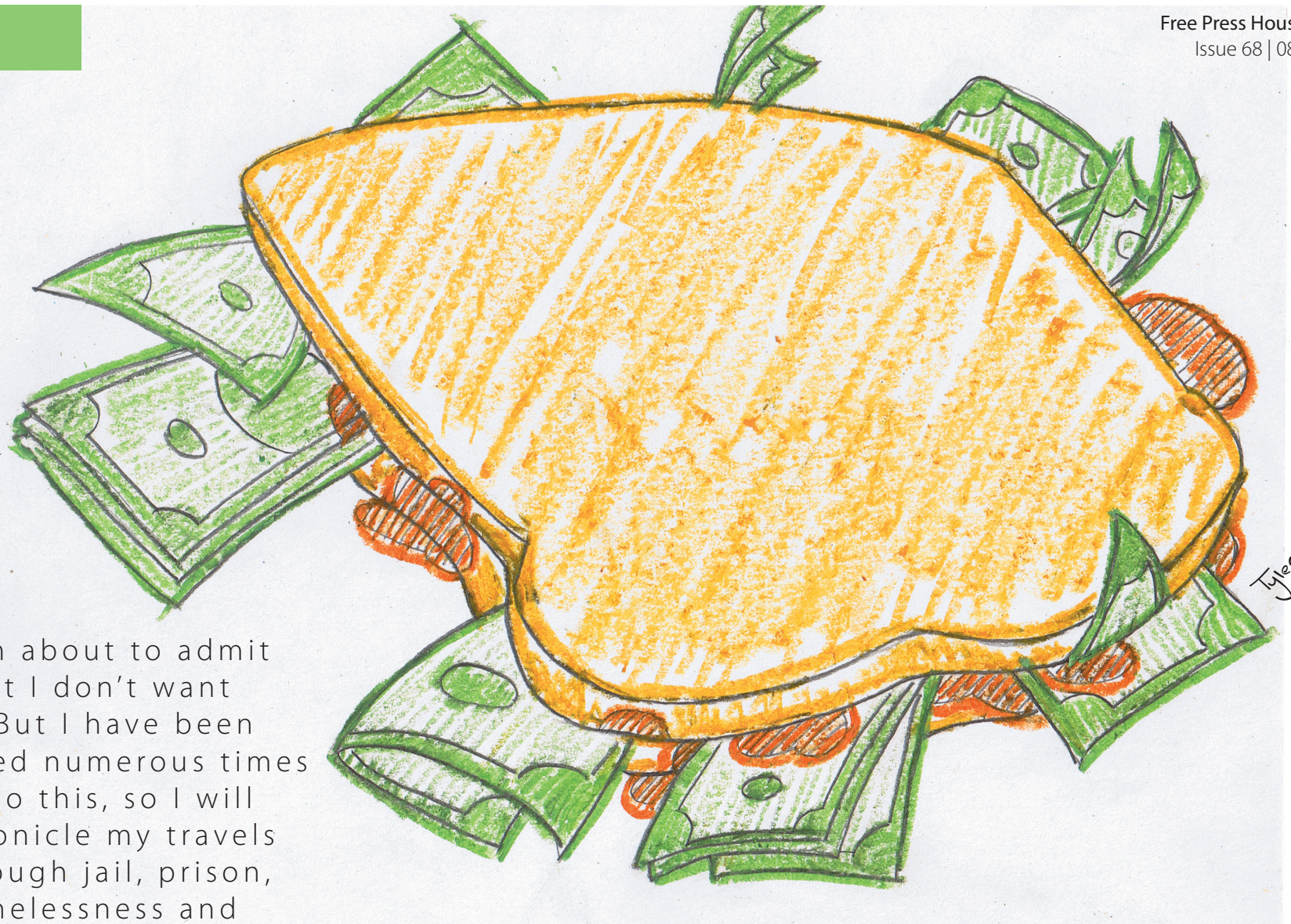


A Palestinian carrying the body of a killed boy after Israeli mobile artillery fired shells at Beit Lahiya in the northern Gaza Strip July 6, 2006. (MaanImages/Mohamed al-Zanon)

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Issue 68 | 08/06

Prisons up



I am about to admit what I don't want to. But I have been asked numerous times to do this, so I will chronicle my travels through jail, prison, homelessness and lifestyle recovery.

On Feb 2nd, 2005, I was stopped by the police while very drunk in my friends truck. I freaked out and pushed the vehicle into drive. I lost control and wrecked head on into an innocent man's house. The air bag on that Ford never deployed. I exited the vehicle and jumped over a 10 foot barb-wired fence, jumped over another 8 foot iron gate, ran a mile and was finally caught. When I arrived at the hospital I had a blood alcohol level of .23. I can still do a mile in 5 minutes!

I awoke in county jail on a cold, hard floor. They asked me the usual questions, "Are you a homosexual?

My drugs put you out cold = I can eat good

Do you have AIDS"? "Step through and test for TB". Then the real test began.

I entered with absolutely no support from the outside world. The only saving grace was that I placed in the pharmaceutical wing of County Jail. BONUS! Most people never get the drugs they need on a daily basis.

So what do the drugs do for you? I learned very quickly that the one desire of the inmate was to sleep their time away. I also learned that the daily food rations weren't enough to keep anyone content. Just because I didn't have any money coming in to buy food from the commissary didn't mean that I couldn't buy anything. My drugs put you out cold = I can eat good.

I was put on a daily regimen of 600mg of Seroquel (A bi-polar drug). Each 100mg is worth approx. $1. Twice a day the med-cart would come by and deliver my money. There are various ways to hide your supply. I would normally put the pill under my tongue and take drink of water, showing my empty mouth and later to spit it out. Putting cellophane over the top of the water bottle keeps your mouth dry while giving the illusion of drinking. Sometimes I would perform one of my famous "Topit Drops" with my front shirt pocket. Anything to fool the nurse. Getting caught consisted of having your "privileges" taken away. This normally consisted of not being able to, get this, buy anything from the Commissary for 2 weeks or a month. Even if I got caught it wouldn't matter any way.

There are many different things one can do to make money. I was an extraordinary drug dealer and businessman. When I left I was a very wealthy philanthropist. Let me tell you how it's done.

It is important to understand that money is NOT created equal. The standard (dollar) is defined as a SOUP, $.55. This is a very cheap, high saline, carbohydrate, pasta solution. You might call it a Raman. If you look at the commissary menu you'll find items that look elementary. These are items that you might pick up at the local market. However, these are the staples of comfort. Soups, beans, and most importantly... peanut butter in very small quantities.

If four soups equals $2.20, it is not at all equal to a jar of peanut butter at $2.25. I could get 6-7 soups for that. A candy bar costs $.70 but can trade those for other drugs. Why is peanut butter so important? Because it is high in protein and you can put it in your soup for flavor (think Thai). Nearly every meal you receive includes bread, hence PB. It is also very high dollar and most inmates aren't willing to invest that kind of money in one product. If they have good funding then they are willing to invest in sleep, therefore...me.

If I knew they had funding and "time" I would run a credit line. This would consist of a rate against the 100/1 ratio in lieu of future payments. I was very fair in receiving a 30-50% rate. Anything to beat the Dow Jones (Seriously). This is how I was able to get major quantities of high ticket items because after a while soup is just boring to trade; though very risky, extremely profitable. Others would rarely attempt these maneuvers. But never worry, I was also paying off the thugs to do the dirty work if things went wrong, because personally I'm not a violent man.

There was always the nightly supper when everyone in the cell chipped in. If you were wealthy you were expected to share, which I did and it pleased me to do so. Soups + PB + Hot Sauce and maybe some beans would make for fine dining. But the best part was that I was receiving enough to have my cake and eat it too. I could sell 400mg a day and still drop out at night. Just do some aggregate math and you can imagine how wealthy I became (4.5 months x $3-4 a day). But beware of cornering a market. I tried to get the Vicodin trade and felt a handful of wrath. I did it for all of the wrong reasons... SPITE (Another story all together).

So what's the moral here? Take the drugs, turn them into food, turn the food back into drugs (psychotropics and pain killers), turn the food into food, the drugs into drugs and again and again. One soup over another every day. Stamps, envelopes, hankerchiefs, one strange variation over another—Capitalism and Barter-ism at it's finest. Survive, grow wealth, do something to occupy your day, but don't be greedy. You could get your ass kicked if you're not careful.

Next: Prison Issue # 2 – Inmate Crafts *(How to make Soup)*

mW

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