

# FPH

FREE PRESS HOUSTON

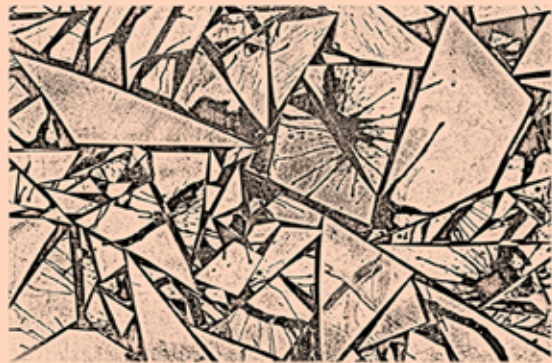
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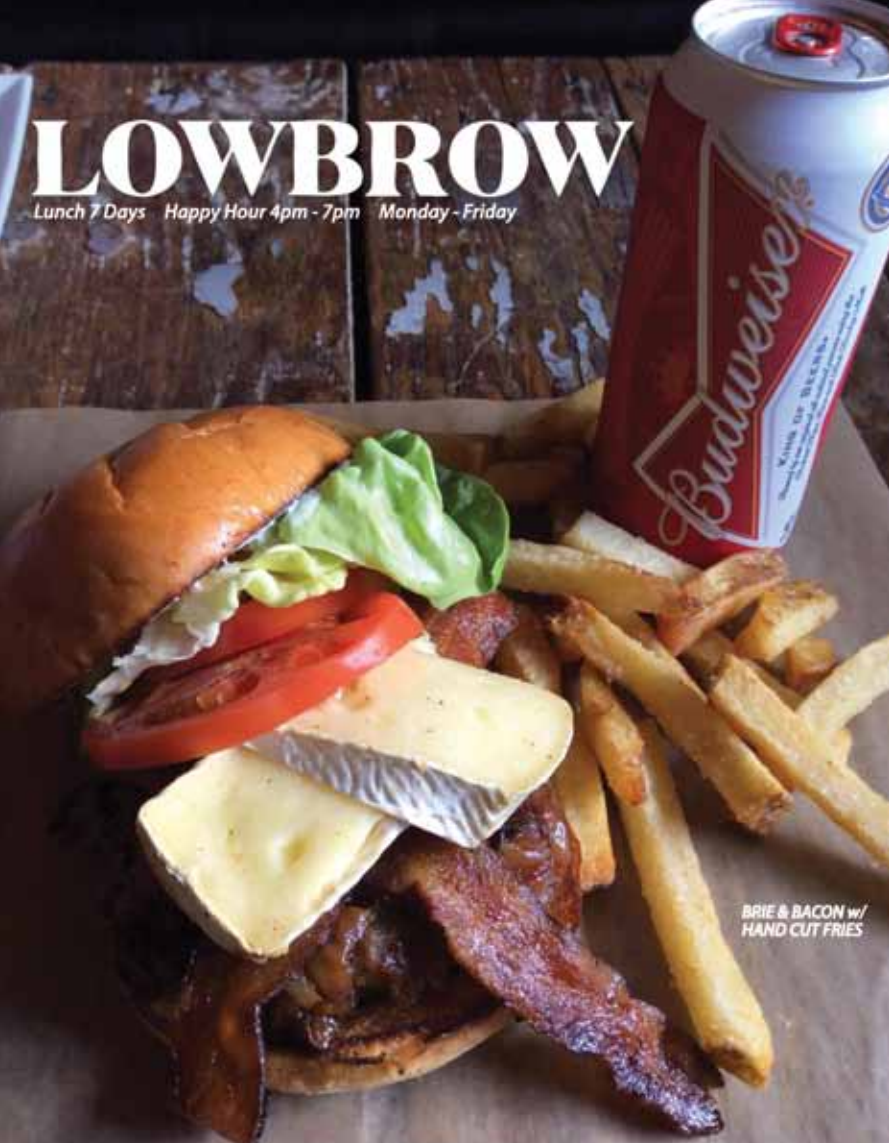


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# Letter from the Editor

Please. Please. I implore you my fellow Houstonians. Spend more time speaking about the things you like than hating on stuff. If you don't like a person, food, place of business, band, or artist then just ignore it. Let's spend our precious spare time talking about all of the rad shit out there you should find your way into.

Also, make sure your kids are not bullies. Otherwise, the kids that they push around end up being cops with a chip on their shoulder.

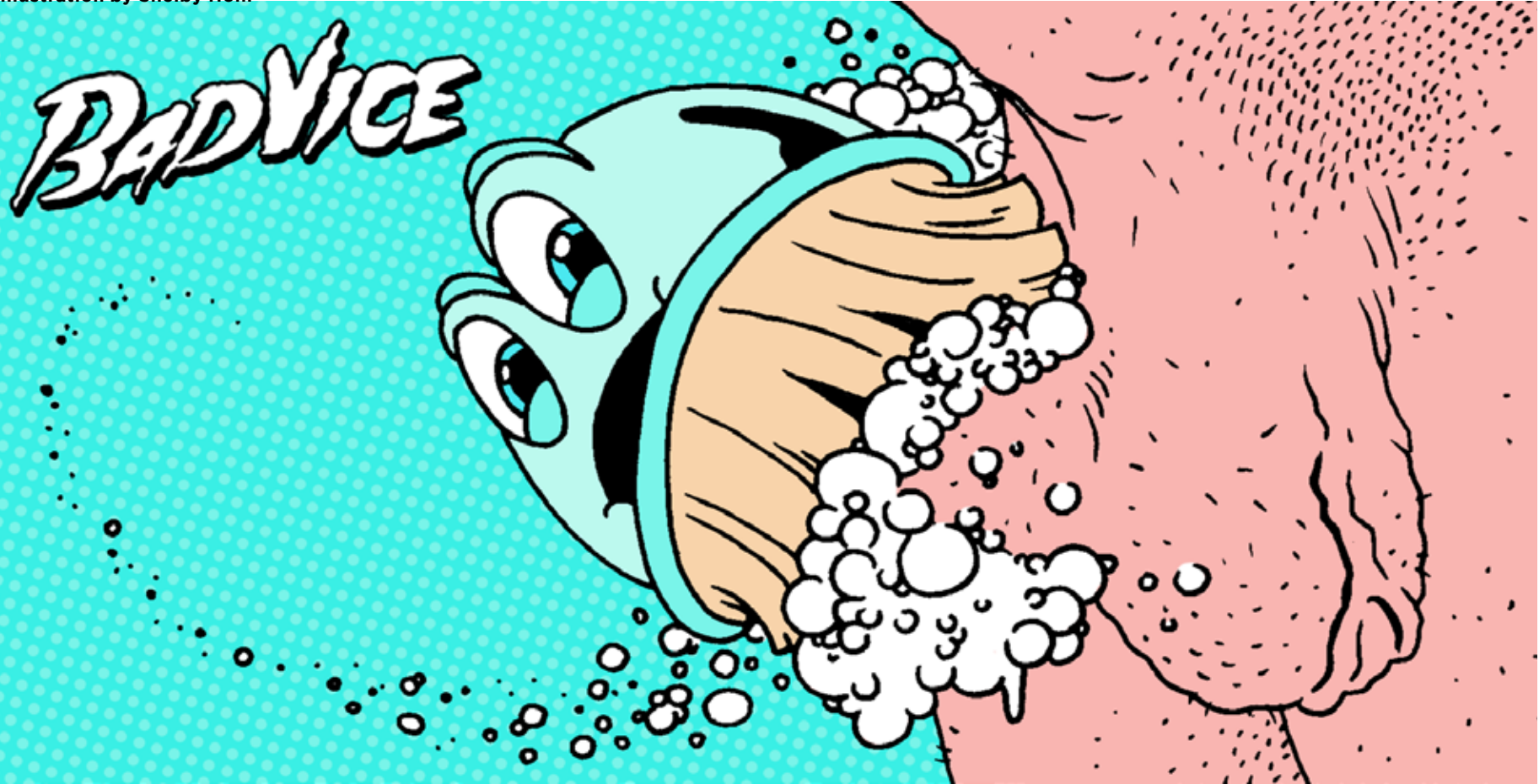
I think I have said enough.

Love you Houston. Check out our dope lineup for Day for Night.

# GRAB SOME BUDS

*Budweiser*





Fuck sober, thoughtful, level-headed advice. Here's the truth: BADVICE

Disclaimer: You don't have to fucking read this if you don't like it. I know I sound like an asshole. The title states: "BADVICE" which therefore constitutes an awareness that one reading should anticipate the nature of said bad advice.

Itsmy wiwife's birthday and we really would like to  
Have a threesome but we are not from Houston andshe can be shy at times and its mMonday any idea thanks

From the way this question is posed, I'm going to say that Craigslist is a good start for you. Your question is basically word for word from any Craigslist ad found in any city.

What would be a cool job for a mom (I'm young ish) that doesn't involve having to wake up at 530 AM every morning? Something that would allow me to sleep until about 8 (that's late for us parent folk) and wear whatever I wanted, like shorts and leggings and comfy t-shirts. Being a stay at home mom would drive me nuts. I need more in my life than constantly waiting on and catering to a little person who wants everything I didn't just give her. So that takes out restaurants and customer service in general. Is there a work from home job that  
exists that doesn't require me to start from the ground up? No, I don't want to sell scentsy or whatever else people sell, Mary Kay, sex toys or Tupperware. I hate this 9-5 life. It doesn't even start at nine. THEY LIED!!

Oh but I need to make decent money. You know, cause I have a kid and bills and a house and a car, cell phone, a stomach that requires me to eat, etc. I also want to get my hair did every now and again and that also requires money. Is there a money tree? Can I invent that? Would it even be real money if I invented that? Ok, ok, I'm drifting off course... see above (and beyond the tree) for the question, not this stupid money tree that will never be a thing because we live in the real world and not imaginary land where I am a single 20 something  
who's biggest responsibility is brushing my teeth. I miss those days. Hahha  
Probably should have thought a little harder about what you wanted in your life before letting a guy creampie you.

Yo, so my ex, of 5 years, broke up with me to fuck other guy around the world. she recently came back and told me she still had feeling for me and wanted to make it work. My question is what is the best way to show that I'm a petty asshole and embarrass her?

If you want to embarrass a girl, embarrass her publicly. So, get back together with her, take her out to meet up with all your mutual friends and casually bring up in conversation that her pussy stinks.

"It has been so hot lately. I can't get over this weather."

"Yeah, you know when you walk past a dumpster on a hot day and it just fucking stinks? Imagine what it's like walking around with Girlfriend and her pussy on a hot day."

But wouldn't you rather get revenge? Because the best way to get revenge is to get over her and to be totally cool about it and it's super beneficial for you too.

I am not gay but I have a gay friend who will not stop flirting with me. When he

gets drunk, he tries to get me to do gay stuff. What do I do to make him stop hitting on me?

My advice to you is to just suck his dick once. Just don't suck his dick too well - use a little teeth. Most people "want what they can't have" and if you handle the biz one time, he will likely be over it.

My bad if that doesn't work.

ok, so i'm objectively afraid of rejection. my life has been almost completely paralyzed into a state of inaction based upon my fear that others will see what i'm doing and entirely disassociate themselves from me and reject me as a human being. because ayahuasca seems to be out of the question in my foreseeable future, what should i do?

You should join the fucking club. Almost everyone is in it. Once you've realized everyone is in the club, maybe you won't be such a pussy and do whatever it is you want to do without the fear of what others will think of you.

I've been sitting in the bathroom at work for 10 min now. There are lots of people waiting for me. I should quit this place because I obviously don't like it here, right?

Yeah. Or see a doctor because there might be something seriously wrong with you. Not trying to freak you out, but WebMD says it's probably cancer.

Why do i feel that im exploiting the indians anytime i drink a Topo Chico?

I have no idea because that shit is made in Mexico.

So what are the rules with watching porn on an airplane. They have wifi now and I think it'd be fun. I mean I'm not going to just whip out my cock or anything and I definitely dont want my carnal videos in the view of any innocent adolescents. So is it okay? Should I ask my neighbors first? I think my neighbor is reading this as I'm on the airplane right now. Please help, I need answers.

I mean, the general rule with porn is "don't watch it in public". But if you're going to just set that aside, try watching one with a story line and just act casual, like you didn't know. Or watch Hentai because no one is going to look over your shoulder at that shit (unless you're on a plane to Japan) and everyone will just think you're a total dork.

But really, what's the point of watching porn if you're not going to rub your dick about it?

To the girl sitting next to me on this airplane who has been reading what im writing, would you like to grab my cock and just stroke it ever so softly until we get to our destination? iThe lights are dim and i dont think anyone would notice...

Did she touch it?

So with all this #blacklivesmatter and #alllivesmatter hokie pokie going on, when will people finally realize that #nolivesmatter and drown themselves in a tub of regurgitated beef jerky? #enditall #youwereneverworthit #justsuckonthatcold-steel

#TooSoon #EducateYourself #YouSoundLikeAnIdiot #AshamedYouReadMyColumn

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# Stand Up & Deliver: A Lion Or A Sheep

By David Garrick

Photo: Richard Flood



The Houston comedy world can be self defeatist at times. If someone breaks or gets any amount of attention, then you can almost bet that there's someone in the scene ready to tear them down. One of the comics who gets a lot of flack is Houston's Rich Williams. Williams moves a lot of tickets on his shows, he's opened for a ton of great comedians, and he's gotten paid longer than many of those who talk smack about him. Easily one of the biggest hustlers in the Houston comedy game, FPH took the time to sit down with Rich, and find out what makes him tick.

FPH: You hustle more than anyone I've seen in my life. You seem to sell out the bulk of your shows, and I know you sell the bulk of those tickets face to face. What makes you hustle so hard and what's the secret behind moving so many tickets?

RICH WILLIAMS: Actually, I divide the promotional burden between myself and the other comics on the show. What motivates me is that I realized early on that first off, you can't live off a host level or even feature level comic's salary. Clubs pay you \$50 a weekend to host, and \$200 to feature. Secondly, I learned fast that the show runners make the money. The first show I produced, I walked away with \$1,000 after paying the comics. Why should I accept \$100 to do a show when I can make 10 times that if I produce it myself? And finally, comics at the top of the game build a brand that sells itself. They do not rely on the club to promote them. While most comics are waiting for the phone to ring or begging for gigs, I can work whenever I want to.

FPH: Steve Harvey said, "Comedy is the one profession that's non-transferrable. You can become a better actor through classes but you can't become a better comic the same way." Do you feel like you can echo that sentiment, that you either have it or you don't?

RICH WILLIAMS: I agree. You can teach structure and professionalism, but people are either funny or not funny—you can't teach that. That being said, I've seen comics, including myself, become funnier over time, mainly because they learn to cut away the fluff and get to the joke faster. Also, certain people work better in different mediums. Michael Richards is an hilarious comedic actor, but his standup is garbage and we all saw the result. Ralphie May is one of the best of our generation, but I can't see him doing sketches.

FPH: I think that the bulk of the public doesn't know what a "bringer show" is. And I know, a whole bunch of comics in this town are against doing those types of shows where they have to sell their own tickets, and sometimes you'll do a show where the act has to sell their tickets. Explain why a comic should do at least one show where they have to sell their own tickets, and why you do it that way?

RICH WILLIAMS: A true bringer show emphasizes sales over talent. I never do that. If you don't believe that the comics on the ticket are as funny or funnier than you, you shouldn't do that show. Your fans will not be pleased. That being said, ultimately, my jokes are not funny in a vacuum. It is in my best interest to acquire as many fans as possible at every performance. When you sell tickets, you begin to understand the intrinsic value of the skillset you bring to the table.

You also educate your fans. Whereas before they could see you for free at open mic, now they have to attach a value to your service. When a comic tells me they don't want to sell, it's because either they have a day job and they don't need to make money off the show. They've tapped out their network and aren't growing their fan base. Or, they don't think they are funny enough to be paid, or they're lazy, or they don't need to sell tickets to get gigs. If they're at the level that doesn't have to sell tickets, then they are probably an established brand that sells itself. Whatever the case, unless it's a corporate event, the more you can show promoters you are a draw, the more you can command from the marketplace.

FPH: Houston's comedy scene has a lot of smack talking, yet it doesn't really seem to affect you at all. Do you ever find yourself getting into it with other comics?

RICH WILLIAMS: Talking smack is part of the game. If they aren't saying shit about you, you don't matter. I got into it online with another comic, and the guy who brought me in to produce Hard Rock, Steve Hofstetter, saw the exchange and said that I was being unprofessional. Then he told me something I will never forget. He said that, "Lions do not concern themselves with the opinions of sheep. Which are you?"

FPH: What's your definition of a successful comedy career?

RICH WILLIAMS: "Comedy" is so broad. I personally like the Kevin Hart model. Various successful movie and tv projects, and a strong online presence that all feed into successively larger tours. Most importantly, balancing that with a healthy private life where I'm staying healthy and developing spiritually. That's a successful career.

A young comic can definitely learn a lot from Williams about how to get paid, how to promote, and how to grow a fanbase. While he attempts to balance a healthy private life while building his brand, you can catch Rich Williams when he hosts the Jurassic Park Quote Along at Alamo Drafthouse in Mason Park on September 26th, when he headlines the Cock & Bull club in Clear Lake on September 29th; and the Houston Whatever Fest on November 21 & 22.

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16 Gramps - MIAMI, FL  
18 Republic - NEW ORLEANS, LA  
19 Fitzgeralds - HOUSTON, TX  
21 Granada Theater - DALLAS, TX  
22 The Parish - AUSTIN, TX  
23 Tricky Falls - EL PASO, TX  
25 Crescent Ballroom - PHOENIX, AZ  
26 Belly-Up - SOLANA BEACH, CA  
28 Regent Theater - LOS ANGELES, CA  
30 The Fillmore - SAN FRANCISCO, CA  
31 Star Theater - PORTLAND, OR

## FEBRUARY

02 Venue - VANCOUVER, BC  
03 Neumo's - SEATTLE, WA  
05 Liquid Joe's - SALT LAKE CITY, UT  
06 Marquis Theater - DENVER, CO  
08 Amsterdam Hall - ST. PAUL, MN  
09 Thalia Hall - CHICAGO, IL  
10 Skully's Music Diner - COLUMBUS, OH  
11 Lee's Palace - TORONTO, ON  
13 Irving Plaza - NEW YORK, NY  
16 Union Transfer - PHILADELPHIA, PA  
17 Altar Bar - PITTSBURGH, PA  
19 Fete - PROVIDENCE, RI  
20 Ottobar - BALTIMORE, MD  
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# Sign of the Times

By Michael Bergeron



language but we make film with the Ukrainian sign language. A person who speaks American sign language or French sign language would understand approximately 20-percent, not more.

**You are in Kiev, which is close to Chernobyl. Have you ever been to Chernobyl?**

Actually I made a short film about Chernobyl [Nuclear Waste (2012)] and I was a journalist in the '90s and I wrote about Chernobyl. My next full-length project is about the Chernobyl exclusion zone. Chernobyl is 130 kilometers from my apartment.

**The sex scenes in *The Tribe* are provocative yet very much like stylized art house films. They are erotic but not pornographic. How did you go about shooting those scenes?**

The sex scenes are very funny, by the way did you know the deaf community create an official nickname for *The Tribe* in sign language. [Miroslav demonstrates by signing the word with interlocked fingers.] It looks like this – it means 69.

Considering the sex scenes of course we had a lot of rehearsals. We had a problem with Yana [Navikova] because she is a girl and she's very young and she has a boyfriend and he was completely against nudity. We had no problem with the male character because he's a cool guy and he plays a cool character – it's not any damage for his image. But of course for Yana, she's from small Russian village and is very conservative, their society is very small and conservative. We had a long discussion about it and the nudity. I must tell you people who played roles in the film, they didn't study in the cinema school, they don't know film history and they know two kinds of film. One kind is mainstream, Hollywood, and the other kind is porn and nothing in between. We show them a number of art films that have sex scenes like Michael Winterbottom's "9 Songs," Larry Clark films, and "Blue is the Warmest Color." Yana was really impressed by "Blue is the Warmest Color" and its star Adèle Exarchopoulos. It was a step-by-step process. It's very funny. We ask everybody to leave us alone, and it was only me and Yana and the translator and the DP. And the first day it was trying to find subsidence of the scene. By the time we shot the 69 scene they break the border. The abortion scene was easy, because after all the sex scenes it came naturally.

**Talk about the soundscape of the film. There's no dialogue but we hear the sounds of cars and the natural sounds of the environment. How did you mix the soundscape?**

My sound designer Sergey Stepansky is one of the better and one of the most expensive sound designers in Kiev. When I called him and proposed to make *The Tribe* I told him he should pay me for the opportunity to make this film. Many sound designers go through life and have no chance to do something this special. The concept of sound design is very easy to me, it is the point of view of the person who can hear the deaf person. So if you see the deaf person on the street you hear what is happening all around, the cars, anything. That was the main concept and Sergey did it. We use foley sound in many places for special sounds but it is mainly the sound recorded on the stage. **FPH**

**"THE TRIBE"** is hands down one of the most unique and transformative films ever made. Not to be effusive but when the opportunity to interview "The Tribe's" writer/director Miroslav Slaboshpitsky via Skype was proffered I jumped at the assignment.

"The Tribe" unfolds with no dialogue as we follow a deaf teen at a boarding school. The entire film is told in Ukrainian sign language with no subtitles. Essentially "The Tribe" works like a silent film. You understand the story through the visual mise en scène. The plot, however, takes the viewer on a journey through hell.

Hours after arriving at his new home the protagonist is recruited into a kind of young adult crime ring run by older deaf students. Prostitution and robbery become the daily lesson plan. "The Tribe" has some graphic sex scenes to be sure. These scenes, and others including an abortion sequence and a violent climax, unfold mostly in lengthy one-take shots that add credibility to *The Tribe's* sense of cinematic ethics.

I have tried to preserve Miroslav's manner of speaking, as his English was very good even though he spoke using irregular syntax. (You should hear me trying to speak Ukrainian.)

**Free Press Houston: What was your original concept for the film?**

Miroslav Slaboshpitsky: Actually, when I was young boy I studied in a school – the film was shot at the same school I attended in my childhood – and on the opposite side of the road was a boarding school for the deaf. I saw how deaf people communicate with each other through sign language. For me it looks like a miracle, you know, it looks like the people can directly exchange feelings and communicate without the need for words.

I was studying at film school in the '90s, lots of modern ways of making bold films were taking place. I thought it would be a great idea to make a modern silent film. But I did not want to make a stylized silent

film, I think I need to have a real reason why people do not pronounce the words. A modern film without translation and without subtitles. Much later I developed the story and made the film.

**How did you establish the rapport with the actors? There's one scene where the protagonist is forced to strip before the other boys and even when he is taking off his socks he never puts his foot down on the ground.**

This scene you mention, I don't know if you understand it. Because they are testing him to see if he uses drugs and needles in particular. All the places on his body is places for injection. That is very common here, when you are caught by police they want to know if you are a drug person or not. It's a very important scene.

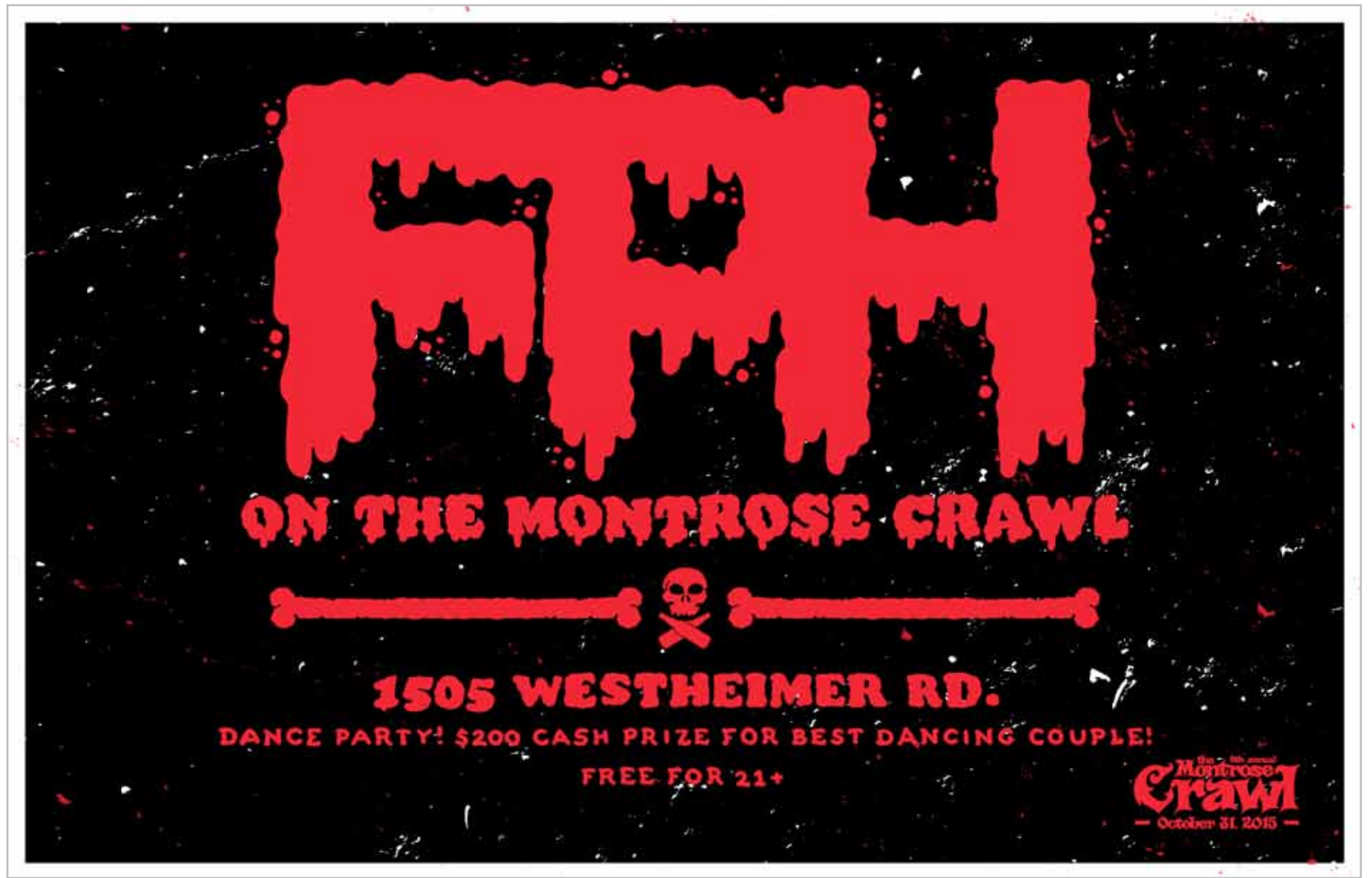
Concerning how I was working with actors it was very easy. I'm working in the same way as with any other non-professional teenagers. I mean we use an interpreter for everything, an interpreter for casting and an interpreter on the set all the time. When you have a group of non-professional actors you must have workshops and preparation. We signed the actors to a monthly fee and they are there every day so they have a real job, like in office for example. Day by day they come into the school and we rehearse. We can spend seven days on rehearsing the scene and then when we're completely ready we set up the film equipment. We did that day by day until the end of the film.

**The film contains many long takes. How many edits are in the film?**

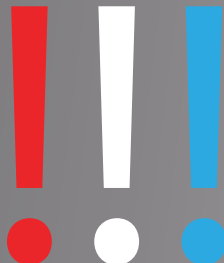
I am not sure, I think 34 or 36. The film runs two-hours and 13-minutes.

**Is there a universal sign language? Are the actors using Ukrainian sign language?**

It's Ukrainian and partly Russian sign language, but mainly Ukrainian. There is an international sign



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# Recorded Thus Reported

By Km Anderson

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FPH 10.15

## LA LUZ - Weirdo Shrine (Hardly Art)

The thing about terms (say surf rock) is that can be reductive. They evoke images of style, and if one were abhorrent to a particular style, they may inadvertently dismiss something possibly wonderful. Almost happened to me, as I am not the biggest fan of—though not repulsed by—surf rock. However, while definitely an accurate epithet for their music, La Luz’s latest is much more than one thing. Ty Segal did a wonderful job of fleshing out each player’s contribution: the almost Motown bass lines, the brilliant percussion, the multi-colorful keys, and the dynamic guitar playing. Four part harmonies reminiscent of the best 50s pop and 60s soul, slow burners (“I Can’t Speak,” “I’ll Be True,” “Oranges”), toe tappers (“Don’t Wanna Be Anywhere,” “Black Hole/Weirdo Shrine,” “Hey Papi”), this album is consistently satisfying after repeated listens. Catch the wave.

## WILCO - Star Wars (dBpm)

Eleven albums in, Wilco has the special ability to be self referential within experimentation, no matter the direction, they ultimately sound like Wilco, but this is the best they have sounded in years. Wilco is most identified by your album introduction—mine was Yankee Hotel Foxtrot—and that album was sort of corner turner for the band; a more experimental band that had Americana leanings, they were Big Star and CAN. This album has more tempo than previous efforts (Random Name Generator, Pickled Ginger) “You Satellite” is kind of like Wilco as Sonic Youth, but mainly Wilco, “Magnetized” is a new direction but would not have been out of place on Sky Blue Sky or A Ghost Is Born. At this point Wilco is beyond expectation or statement; this album sounds fun, it sounds loose, and for a band that is seen and judge so methodically, fun is a welcome attribute.

## HOLY SONS - Fall Of Man (Thrill Jockey)

The fall of man is an interesting idea, what is the catalyst of the fall? A phrase used to describe sort of a debilitated state brought on by the outside forces; C. Wright Mills had a book he orchestrated called “Images of Man,” and it spoke about the many things that effect man: the economy, the future, love, the past, etc. I attribute these ideas to Holy Sons’s Fall of Man, the latest album by Portland’s Emil Amos. With titles such as “Being Possessed Is Easy” or “Disintegration Is Law” it is not the cheeriest affair, but as he speaks of the “Myrcenary World,” there is the question of what “the world” represents. At times. everything can be a relationship or a career, or family, and any sort change or loss in that world can create a feeling of being “Trampled Down.” It is ultimately up to the listener to determine as they fall into these songs that conjure sounds reminiscent of 70s era Pink Floyd or Deep Purple.

## WHITE MAGIC - I’m Hiding My Nightingale (Leaving)

Mira Billote’s voice has a similar quality to that of say a Karen Dalton or a Nina Simone, it is a unique instrument unparalled by peers or contemporaries; it is the type of voice that gives each song her own signature, it becomes independent of anything but her tone and phrasing. A song such as Runaway sparsely accompanied by only piano and slight echo is still powerful because of parlance and space. White Magic has always been wonderful because of this, they are not one of, or another, they are their progenitors of their own style. I’m Hiding My Nightingale is another in their discography of mini albums (Through The Sun Door, Dark Stars—both on Drag City), how even in its brevity there is virtue and faculty, what others may need an hour or so to do, they accomplish in roughly 20 minutes. “Out Beyond The Moon” maintains the traditional feel of a folk song, the simplicity of spiritual, and that is probably the biggest attribute to their mysticism, the absence of noise, the will to allow songs to breathe and be.

## DERADOORIAN - The Expanding Flower Planet (Anticon)

Angel Deradoorian is known by many, based on her membership in bands such the Dirty Projectors and Avey Tare’ Slasher Flicks, but she is a dynamic artist in her own right, who has sporadically released music over the last few years, most notably 2009’s Mind Raft EP. The Expanding Flower Planet will be the first debut album by Deradoorian and it looks to be a compelling affair. “A Beautiful Woman” is the first taste of this meal, and what a first entree. Deradoorian employs many styles whether it be soul, jazz, avant jazz, or whatever—the styles never saturate or affect the wholeness of Deradoorian’s vision as each song carries an individualism and spirit that dictates the pieces as parts but never greater than the whole.

## MINT MILE - In Season and Ripe (Comedy Minus One)

Mint Mile is comprised of members of Bottomless Pit/Silkworm, Songs: Ohia, and Tre Orsi. Like those bands, Mint Mile comes from a place of subtle brilliance and understated elegance. This is displayed no more plainly than the lyric from “Modern Day”—“In the modern day everything’s turned on, there’s no peace for the young ones.” These are songs of introspection and observation, a look at what is, but also thoughts from outside of the thing; it is music for those who are settled but still restless, no more looking for what the world is to be. All of the members are arbiters of great musicianship, but also great songsmanship, a creation of skill and craft, more than flash and hype. This is not about punches thrown, it is about the punches that land—it takes only one to floor you.

# “...and I like chicken fried”

## -Oak Leaf Smokehouse

By Alvaro Chivas Fernandez

Photo by Harbeer Sandhu

**“AND I LIKE CHICKEN FRIED**, a cold beer on a fried-day night, a pair of jeans that fit just right, and the radio on.” Other than the pun I couldn’t resist adding, those are the famous words of one of my favorite bands—Zac Brown Band. What can I say, the song “Chicken Fried” speaks to me; it grazes my brain-heart in the same way that the year’s first cool night’s breeze grazes my face and reminds me that there are moments of my Houston life that don’t take place on top of a puddle of my sweat. So, to me, it comes as no surprise that when I was blasting that song and saw the sign for Oak Leaf Smokehouse, I absolutely knew that I had to stop by and eat there.

I had driven by the Dumble and Telephone Rd intersection a number of times but had not really noticed Oak Leaf before. In part, I think I hadn’t noticed this place because it’s decently sized parking lot was always empty when I drove by. As stated above, I was jammin’ out to some pop country (#pcp, #popcountrypunx, #datlyfetho #2frat-2care) so my country mindset enabled me to spot this spot.

The first thing I noticed as I was pulling into a parking spot is the RV just chillin’ in the back (by the way—I say ‘chillin’ instead of ‘parked’ because it is pretty apparent that that RV had not been moved in a bit). Instantly I got a good feeling about this place. After walking into the restaurant itself, I can tell you that I was not disappointed. Many of y’all who’ve been there might be a bit confused about my lack of disappointment; however, I challenge you to look once again.

Oak Leaf Smokehouse—the physical building—is pretty barren. It’s the barrenness, however, that gives it its charm. The smokehouse is essentially four walls with one wall-wide menu and one set of longhorn horns hanging right above the menu. That, I think, is the way smokehouses should be—to me it says, “We mean business, you are here to eat not to sit in a pretty room made to distract you from your food.” It’s a shame, however, that their food did not say the same.

I’m a very indecisive person, so I asked the cashier what his favorite thing on the menu was and he stared at me not knowing what to say and then stared at the menu and said, “Try the Chicken Fried Brisket.”—literally the one item that is bigger and bolder than anything else on the menu. Don’t get me wrong though, the cashier was super

nice and really tried to help and be cordial—there’s only so much anyone can say about a restaurant when they don’t eat there.

The food came out in a jiffy. Upon seeing the plate I knew that something was amiss—chicken fried brisket should not look like something that an Iron Chef came up with. I never thought I’d see a plate so faux-gucci-ly dressed at a smokehouse. I sat there poking at my food for a couple of seconds wondering, “Why do these veggies look like you’re SUPPOSED to eat them?” That, the veggies, the thinly sliced deep-fried onions artistically placed on top of the gravy, and the fact that the BBQ sauce was on a very small plate on the side made me question every single life decision I had made until that moment. Until then I had never been to an artsy smokehouse; a smokehouse that did not force you to drink 25 gallons of their BBQ sauce and whose pickled veggies were strictly for decoration purposes.

Not entirely discouraged I dug in. It turns out that the veggies were in fact meant to be eaten and so were the x-tra thin onion rings covering the chicken fried brisket so naturally I just set those aside and went to town on the mashed

‘taters and brisket. The chicken fried brisket was not bad, especially once it got cold (not kidding either, I took it home and placed it in the fridge) but by far the best part of my meal were the mashed potatoes covered in gravy. The mashers (as they call them) were softer than angel butt and as well-seasoned as an angel diaper. The mashers were coupled with gravy creamier-than-all-others and taste similar to sitting on the bed of a truck in the middle of a field watching Independence Day fireworks. I’m not even exaggerating when I say that that combination itself is enough to start WW4 if someone were to take a bite out of your plate.

In short, I don’t blame Oak Leaf (formerly Pete’s BBQ) for anything. They offer gluten-free brownies. If a smokehouse ever offers gluten-free anything, then you know that they are struggling. With all these hipsters “not gentrifying” the area, local businesses have had to keep up, and we all know that if there’s one thing hipsters like it’s gluten-free stuff and complicating stuff from the ways it was traditionally done.

Would I go there again? Probably not, because I can just have it delivered.

**FPH**



# Sinking to New Depths!

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# <http://montrosecrawl.com>

# Who Gets Left Behind in the Next Space Race?

By Alvaro Chivas-Fernandez  
Photo Courtesy of Houston Airport System



Back in June, the City of Houston joined the Houston Airport System in announcing that Ellington Field will become a licensed commercial spaceport. This means that, even as NASA's budget continues being cut, private interests will have a place to launch and land spacecraft for those space tourists who can afford it. Free Press Houston was glad to have the opportunity to talk about what this means for those of us left behind with Arturo Machuca and Bill Begley of Ellington Airport.

Houston is the home of the 10th spaceport in the US. What are the intended uses for these spaceports?

Situated near the Gulf of Mexico, and featuring more than 400 acres of land readily available for development, Ellington Airport is tailor-made for the requirements associated with an operating licensed spaceport. The infrastructure for Reusable Launch Vehicles already is in place, with plenty of room for facility expansion and development. Our vision is to continue the development of an even stronger commercial aerospace business community.

Which of these potential uses excites you the most, and why?

We believe the Houston Spaceport will act as an accelerator for innovation and an incubator for growth. As a whole, Houston offers a booming economy with a strong aerospace industrial base, a well-educated workforce with experience in the high-tech demands of space exploration. Houston offers balanced trade with diversified industries. The metropolitan area offers highly diversified industry clusters—energy and petrochemicals, aerospace and aviation, medical and biotechnology, information technology, and nanotechnology—that fits perfectly with the idea of cultivating the ideas and benefits that have long been a product of the aerospace industry.

Why did New Mexico, Alaska, Oklahoma, Jacksonville, FL, and Midland/Odessa get spaceports before Houston?

The concept of a commercial spaceport at Ellington Airport was something discussed for a while, but really began taking formal shape in February of 2012, when it was deemed—purely from a technical standpoint—that operation of a commercial spaceport was feasible. There already are NASA operations at Ellington, and when you consider Houston's history—its decades-long connection with an existing, robust aerospace community, with NASA and its “Space City” reputation—taking that step is a natural progression.

The Houston Spaceport website reads:

With the Houston application already approved by the FAA's Office of Commercial Space Transportation, the Houston Airport System (HAS) now turns its attention toward securing partnership opportunities with leading companies operating within the aerospace industry.

Could you describe some of these “partnership opportunities” and tell our readers who are the “leading companies” with whom the Houston Spaceport hopes to partner?

Business opportunities related to the Houston Spaceport development are coming to us in what we consider good numbers. We have several opportunities that we can't discuss in detail because of non-disclosure agreements, but a few examples we can discuss include:

**Sierra Nevada Corporation and their Dreamchaser Spacecraft:** In 2014, the Houston Airport System and Sierra Nevada Corporation signed a Letter of Agreement to work on studies focusing on what it will take to land the manned version of the spacecraft at the Houston Spaceport. That partnership grew even stronger in March 2015, when SNC and HAS signed another Letter of Agreement that made the Houston Spaceport a potential landing site for the unmanned cargo version of Dreamchaser.

**Satellite Applications Catapult:** The international appeal of commercial space travel is growing, and Houston's growing global profile was strengthened when we finalized our first international MoU with British company Satellite Applications Catapult (Harwell, Oxford). This company has chosen the Houston Spaceport to develop its first U.S. facility. Their vision is to serve the U.S. and the Americas from our strategic location. This document was recorded June 26, 2015.

**Intuitive Machines:** This is a homegrown, Houston-founded aerospace design and solutions company that is working to bring to the Houston Spaceport the assembly production the drone spacecraft they are developing. In addition Intuitive Machines is considering possibly relocating its entire operation to the Houston Spaceport Design and Solutions Lab, which we are planning to have as the first dedicated facility of the spaceport.

We have ongoing talks with companies such as Integrated Spaceflight Services and others to design and plan the best manner to establish the public-private partnerships that will serve as the foundation to build this project to the levels we envision.

What are some ways in which the Spaceport stands to benefit Houston and its people?

We believe it will help connect Houston even more to the world—an impressive goal, when you consider the city's already diverse population, diverse economy and established global profile. Connecting the people, the businesses, the economies and the people of the world to Houston is one of the Spaceport's major goals

as we leverage Houston's potential as a major center of aerospace development and operations. The Houston Spaceport will seamlessly fit into one of the largest international travel infrastructures on the planet.

One of the possible uses for the Spaceport is near-space travel (which, I might say, sounds galactically less exciting than outer-space travel). As I understand, ‘near-space travel’ means that passengers can get somewhere around the globe much quicker than through traditional air travel. How does this differ from what the Concorde used to do?

While the Concorde afforded faster travel to farther distances, it was not readily affordable to a lot of people. This concept, although not ready yet, could become an affordable mode of travel for international passengers, and could become a precursor to industry in this area, further connecting Houston to the global business world. Imagine a sub-orbital commercial flight from Houston to Tokyo in less than 3 hours. As we dip our toe into the new waters of near-space travel, we open up doors to opportunities we could only imagine just a few decades ago. Just as the Wright Brothers “shortened the distance” between points on the map when they invented heavier-than-air travel in 1903, commercial spaceflight promises once more to connect the world in ways only recently unimaginable.

With the price of oil falling, there has been talk about Houston's economy slowing. Will this affect the Spaceport and its plans?

That is hard to predict. What we can do is put in place the infrastructure that will open up yet another industry that can benefit Houston and the region. It is another avenue in the expanding economic climate of the city and the region, and a more diverse economy can only be a benefit.

Ellington Field is smack dab in the middle of what many would consider an environmental catastrophe. There are families in the area whose next door neighbors are refineries and petrochemical plants. I have to return my used car oil to a specific location, and I imagine that spaceship refuse can't be too good for the environment. How are Ellington Field and the Spaceport dealing with their environmental “externalities?”

The multi-level process for earning a commercial spaceport license from the FAA included an extensive environmental impact study. After reviewing and analyzing the available data and information on existing conditions and the potential impacts of the spaceport operations, the FAA determined the spaceport operations at Ellington Airport would not significantly impact the quality of the human environment. The full report is available at [faa.gov/about/office\\_org/headquarters\\_offices/ast/environmental/nepa\\_docs/review/operator/media/houston\\_spaceport\\_final\\_ea\\_and\\_fonsi\\_rod\\_508.pdf](http://faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ast/environmental/nepa_docs/review/operator/media/houston_spaceport_final_ea_and_fonsi_rod_508.pdf). Spaceflight operations will be no different than existing aviation activities. Spaceflights departing from Houston Spaceport will take off under existing jet power in the direction of the Gulf of Mexico. The spacecraft will transition to rocket power once it reaches a high altitude over the Gulf of Mexico.

Who pushed the most to bring the spaceport to Houston? Who can we thank/blame? Was it the city, the “leading companies,” or potential researchers?

The Houston Spaceport project was an initiative led by the Houston Airport System, with the full support of the City of Houston, the State of Texas and the Federal government, as well as leaders in the aerospace industry.

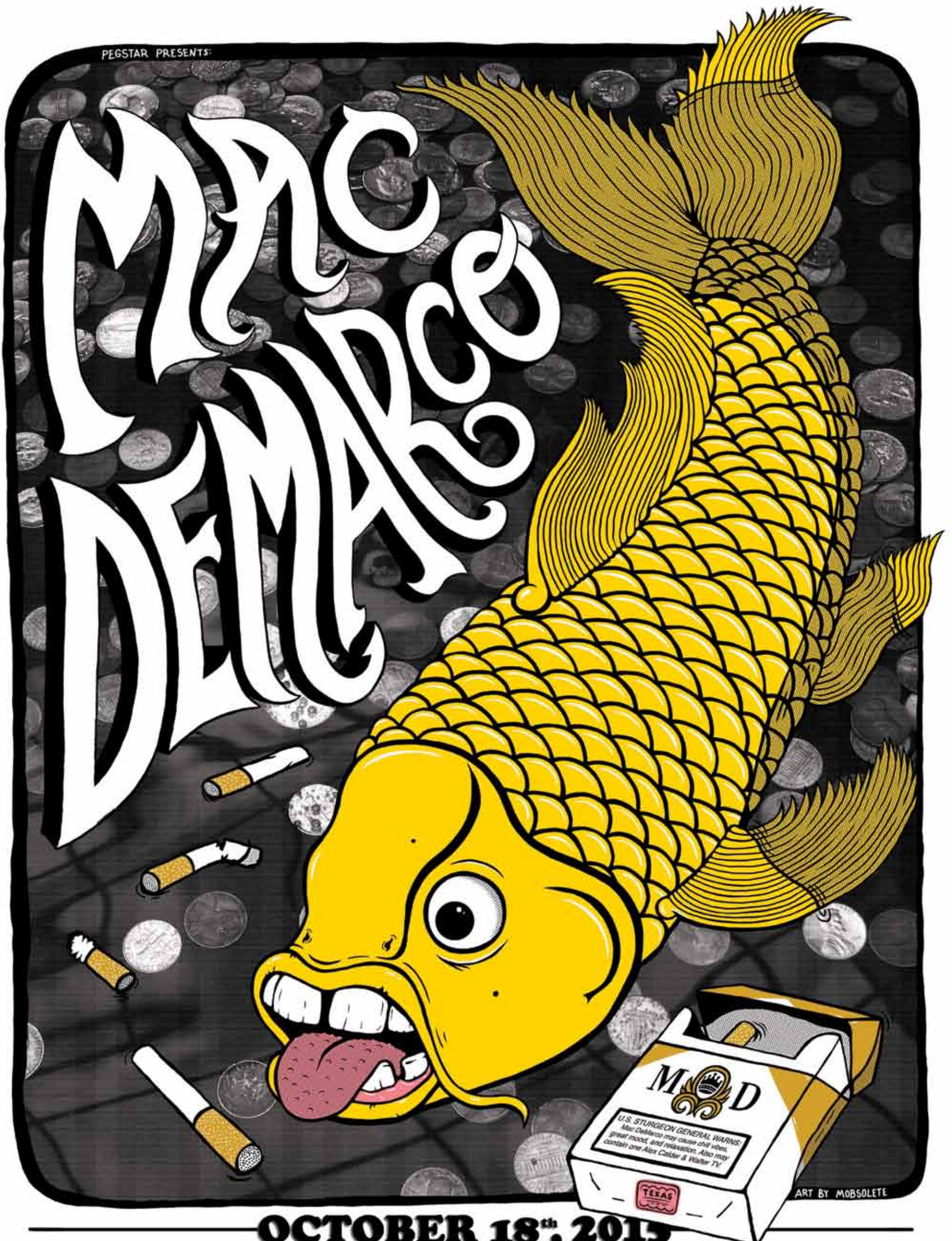
What is your reply to critics who might say that, amidst growing income inequality and a shrinking middle class, with cuts to publicly-funded space exploration, this spaceport is just another playground for the rich—little more than a dock for space-yachts?

It's worth noting that the Houston Airport System is entirely self-sufficient in regards to economic funding and does not draw from the City of Houston's overall budget in any manner. The three airports within the HAS operation support themselves through fees and charges paid directly by tenants and other airport customers (i.e. parking, concessions, rental agreements, etc). As a result, any expenses associated with the construction and operation of a Houston Spaceport would be covered by the airport system, private sector companies, aviation-related grants and/or a combination of these sources.

We believe that Ellington Airport and the spaceport can become a focal point for aerospace operations, such as the launching of micro satellites, astronaut training, zero gravity experimentation, spacecraft manufacturing and a host of other potential activities, including potential space tourism.

Houston is fortunate to be in the space business almost since beginning of the U.S. program so we have a wealth of human resources that include top aerospace scientists, engineers, technicians and all kind of aerospace professionals. We also have a tremendous base of aerospace companies already established in the Houston area. We have one of the strongest economies in our country and a superb infrastructure that includes roadways, rail, seaport, airports and now a spaceport. We also have the crown jewel when it comes to real space—NASA's Johnson Space Center, located just 4 miles from the Houston Spaceport site at Ellington Airport. This comes with all the intelligence that this first-class space agency offers not only to Houston, but to our nation and the world.

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# A Quick Look at Houston's Mayoral Candidates

By Nayeli Garza

Illustrations by Shelby Hohl



Election season looms in Houston. This November, citizens will vote a new mayor into office, to replace Democrat Anise Parker, who has served the maximum three terms since 2010. Seven candidates have declared their bid—five Democrats and two Republicans—and each offers his own response to the city's challenges, as well as strategies to ensure its growth.

Given that local voter turnout in mayoral elections has steadily decreased in the last few decades, it is critical to engage as Houstonians that have a vested interest not only in the city's cultural development, but in its political life as well. We are a progressive hotspot in an otherwise mostly red Texas, after all.

Read on to for a sixty-second snapshot of each mayoral candidate.

Chris Bell (Democrat) served as a lawyer, councilmember, and Congressman, and ran a strong campaign against Rick Perry in a bid for Governor. He recognizes issues such as the need for better schools, improved roads, and an improved budget. What makes Bell's vision for the city a truly exciting one is the way he integrates innovative technology as the basis of his response to those issues.

Bell's administration would tighten the city's finances to enable a more effective and accountable government. He calls for a universally accessible pre-kindergarten program, made possible through the improved use of public spaces such as libraries. On infrastructure, Bell calls for more efficient methods of fixing the roads and sharing information with all Houstonians. He urges the importance of a strong public transit system, noting that given the city's growth rate, simply building more roads won't ease congestion. [bellformayor.com](http://bellformayor.com)

Ben Hall (Democrat) started a career in Houston politics by serving as City Attorney under Mayor Lanier's administration in the 1990's.

His platform first addresses our crumbling infrastructure, which prompts his promise to dedicate new technology and a greater amount of labor to remediate. Hall highlights the city's pension system as unsustainable (as most of the mayoral candidates do), and deserving of immediate action, though his exact plan to address the issue is unclear. Also, like the other candidates, Hall calls for a decrease in criminal activity and pledges to promote improved relations between local law enforcement and communities. [benhallforhouston.com](http://benhallforhouston.com)

Sylvester Turner's (Democrat) approach to the question of the city focuses on increasing the opportunities available to the city's middle class families (in line with his voting record during his twenty-six year tenure as a State Representative).

Turner's platform addresses key issues that his peers also recognize—like failing infrastructure and a need for better education. Turner set himself apart with thoroughly crafted strategies to address these issues. He offers the Road to the Future initiative, to align community college and vocational programs with the needs of the private sector (an effort to increase the number of students trained to engineer and construct the roadways). Turner also promotes the improved expansion and integration of HPD into local communities, and invites supporters to sign a petition to fund police body cameras. [sylvesterturner.com](http://sylvesterturner.com)

Adrian Garcia (Democrat), the Harris County Sheriff turned mayoral candidate is, interestingly, the only one among his peers whose official platform is not detailed on his website. Rather, most of the site is a display of Garcia's life as a pub-

lic figure, highlighting past accomplishments. He offers only a quick nod toward the promise of balancing the budget, saving the taxpayers money, and protecting citizens.

From the standpoint of a citizen who adores the city and grows excited prospects of its continued evolution, it is truly difficult to feel inspired by a candidate whose vision seems only to contain his own reflection. [adriangarcia.com](http://adriangarcia.com)

Marty McVey (Democrat) nominates himself as one who can, "lead our city government with sound business practices," on the basis of his illustrious history managing businesses.

Though it is the case that a city is not a business, McVey vision for Houston calls for a strategy of strong economic development. His platform is largely built upon an observation of the city's present financial crisis, caused in large part by an unsustainable pension program, and worsened by limited revenue. McVey promises to attract international investment to the city: new jobs, new businesses, and new industry, with an emphasis on technological and manufacturing firms. McVey addresses his target issues with precision, even calculating the specific figure it would require to achieve the city's balanced budget (\$78.4 billion, if you're wondering).

Interestingly, McVey's official candidacy website gestures towards inclusivity by listing a Chinese translation of his biography. Oddly, there is no Spanish translation—although in Houston, Spanish speakers outnumber Chinese speakers roughly twenty-four to one (according to data published within the past ten years). [marty-mcvey.com](http://marty-mcvey.com)

Stephen Costello (Republican) is an engineer who has also served as an At-Large member of City Council. He prefaces his candidacy with the commitment to local communities he's demonstrated as councilmember.

Costello promises to expand and better equip HPD at no additional burden to the taxpayer. He also addresses the city's financial unsustainability. He declares a (somewhat vague) plan to return jurisdiction over the pension system to municipal rather than state politicians. Costello offers the Neighborhoods to Standards effort to improve the quality of the streets and drainage systems on the question of infrastructure. [costelloformayor.com](http://costelloformayor.com)

Bill King (Republican) served as a managing partner in a law firm that represented local government, where he learned how entities like the City of Houston manage finances.

Back to Basics' is the slogan on which King's straightforward, three-part platform is built. He highlights the dire state of the city's finances, and offers methods to correct the crisis, like zero-based budgeting. King calls attention to public safety and proposes the establishment of an independent entity to review HPD's operations (instead of just investing more money in the department). King also notes the urgency with which the roadways, waste and water systems in the city need repair.

King, like his Democratic counterpart Marty McVey, delivers touching homages to the city's great assets. And, like McVey, he anchors his vision in the pursuit of growing the economy to ensure the continuation of world-class level commerce. [billkingforhouston.com](http://billkingforhouston.com)

# The Biggest Tribe

## You Never Learned About In Your Texas History Books

By Juan Mancias & Andy Torres  
 With an anonymous member of the  
 Deer & Bear Societies

**WERE THERE INDIANS IN TEXAS** before the Spanish colonization? Before the Lipan Apache, before the Comanche, before the Kiowa, even before the Caddo, there were the Esto'k Gna living in this land that is now also known as Texas. In our Hokan language, Esto'k Gna means the Human People. Our oral tradition informs us that we have lived with these lands we call Somi Sek since time immemorial. The closest English translation of Somi Sek is this big land that we believe is alive and stands all by itself. The Spanish invaders mistakenly named us the Carrizo/Comecrudo. Carrizo (meaning Reed) for the reeds that we used to build our houses and many of our tools and weapons, Comecrudo (meaning Eats Raw) for the ways we prepared and ate our foods.

Our Ancestors developed a system of dozens of Clans, Bands and Societies based on the environment and wildlife of Somi Sek. Our Ancestors migrated through our territory in circles for various reasons—hunting, fishing, and harvesting an abundance of wild foods, the weather, the seasons, visiting relatives and conducting rituals in certain places at certain times of our calendar year. Our main living area was the Rio Grande River and its delta. In pre-European times, we traveled primarily by canoe and foot. In 1519, Spaniards stationed in Jamaica tried to invade our territory by ship through the mouth of our Rio Grande River. We swiftly put together a counter attack to defend our lands and our People that drove the invaders away from our nation with highly organized and coordinated maneuvers. More than indigenous to the North America, we are autochthonous of Somi Sek—that means that we are of this land—so we were intimately familiar with every hill, stream, river, mountain, valley, canyon and cave from the San Fernando River in Tampico to the Canadian River in the Texas Panhandle to the North.

We had good relations with every Nation in what is now known as the Southwest US. We had close relationships with the Atakapa-Karankawa, the Tonkawa, the Caddo, the Kiowa, the Waco and all of the smaller Nations of our region. We visited, intermarried, traded and danced with them on a regular basis. We defended ourselves from the Comanche when they first came onto our lands until they eventually became our allies and friends. We welcomed the Kickapoo and learned how to live in our territory together. Despite the continuing disruptions of our Life Ways, the Kickapoo probably helped maintain our Identity, as well as we helped them maintain theirs. The Massacre of our People at Devil's River near the Big Bend area verifies the connection and alliance to the early travels of the Kickapoo into Texas. We are a Plains "culture" pre-dating many of the more well-known Plains Nations. Evidence of our Ancestors' nomadic movements within our vast range of Somi Sek lies in the rock paintings all over our lands from Northeastern Mexico, Seminole Canyon, Painted Rock, Lake Allen Henry (Justiceberg, Texas) to Adobe Walls.

By the mid 1800's, due to the increasing attacks on our People, we adapted to the crisis by becoming



ing some of the first cowboys and heavily influencing the formation of cowboy and Tejano cultures. Our horsemanship and self-defense skills once saved a group of Anglo Texans who were being defeated by the Spanish/Mestizo Mexicans at the Battle of Mier during the Republic of the Rio Grande. We had spent three centuries since 1519 defending ourselves from continuing kidnappings and invasions from the Spanish Mexicans. The Reyes-Reyes-Leal, Mancias-Ramirez-Cavazos, Garcia-Cano- Mata, Deleon family ties made significant strides in maintaining and preserving our Life Ways into the 21st century. The same family combinations were prominent in contributions to the formation of early ranch life in South Texas. South Texas Ranching developed deeply from the villages that were maintained for centuries by Esto'k Gna. According to 90-year-old Elder Guadalupe Mancias, these Ranches were established in Tribal villages like Las Comitas, Tanque Alegre, Las Mujeres, San Isidro, La Venada, Penitas, Los Papeles, Papalote, Los Ebanos, Santa Elena, Rancho Viejo, Puerto Rico Rancho, and many others. Guadalupe Mancias speaks of the mule wagons they would ride to get from village to village. She speaks of living off the land and the use of mutates for grinding corn.

We are the original People of the Sacred Peyote Medicine, for we have lived amongst it in Somi Sek since time immemorial. In the late 1800's, our Ancestors shared our Peyote Ways with the Lipan Apache, the Comanche and the Kiowa. Our Ancestors' generosity in sharing our healing Ways was the main root of the Native American Church (NAC) that has since saved many Indian Nations around North America from complete extinction over the past century.

Our Life Ways are ancient though they are not primitive in the sense that modern society misunderstands "primitive," as being ignorant heathens with low-level thinking and understanding. Our Life Ways are simple and at the same time highly intelligent and sophisticated in everyday practical ways with deep

and grounded insights and understanding of living with a real respect for the Earth (who we know as Kamla' Kayka or Grandmother Earth) and every being that makes up our habitat—we are only a part of it. Contrary to misperceptions, we do not worship animals; we honor them to show gratitude for all that they provide to sustain us, along with our One Creator.

We continue to live our Life Ways based on our location of Somi Sek and our region's geography, weather, plant life and wildlife—which include our Ancestral Teachings, our virtues, our dialects of our Hokan language, our government, our science, our astrology, our math, our arts, our games, our foods, our hunting/fishing/harvesting, our stories, our ritual dances, songs, cleansings, healings, our multi-dimensional calendar—all of these together and more make up what we know and understand as our Identity and our Life Ways—we do not separate any of these one from another, they are connected, whole and provide us a complete Identity.

Our Identity and Life Ways have been misinterpreted by many European-Americans including Spanish-Mexicans who have written about us. Through complete lack of knowledge or arrogance, they misidentified our Clans, Societies and Bands as being separate small "Tribes." Many times, for devious reasons, we were intentionally mislabeled as other tribes such as the Lipan or the Comanche. A scholar went as far as making up a name of Coahuiltecan that grouped us with other Tribes from a whole region. The result was further confusion of our Identity. A priest even created the "Coahuiltecan" language by mixing vocabularies and grammar of languages from three different tribes. We are also mistaken as Aztec because our real name Esto'k (pronounced esh took') can sometimes sound phonetically like Aztec when pronounced quickly. For this reason, many of our own People may have thought their grandparents were saying they were Aztec since they had no previous media or literary reference to the word or a tribe called Esto'k. Worse yet, reporters, writers, scholars and people in authority positions over school curricula completely left us out of news stories or removed mentions of us out of history books.

In an Oklahoma University we are documented with our name misspelled as "Kerezo" and labeled as the "Mexican Indians". In these references, the Kiowas referred to us as the Ancient Ones and the Barefoot Ones.

Today, the Andy Torres family (Tejones—Badgers), the Xavier Ayala family (Garza Clan), the Bear Society, Deer Society, Raven Society along with the Mancias-Reyes family have made strong efforts in maintaining and preserving the Identity of the Esto'k Gna for survival into the future. These families continue verifying other Bands and Clans and individuals with ties to us Hokan speakers called Carrizo/Comecrudo. The individuals have identified the Casa Chiquitas, the Ocanas, and even the Ayala of the Borrado band. Groups of our People that for decades have been considered long gone have survived the premeditated termination of the original Texans who call this land Somi Sek, the Carrizo/Comecrudo Nation of Texas, the Esto'k Gna.

Currently, some continuing struggles we face in living our Life Ways: 1) An on-going battle for us is protecting our Ancestral Burial sites from development, desecration and even from other Indians who have been making monetary profits from doing burial site "ceremonies" and re-interments—these are all extremely disrespectful. Returning our Ancestors' bodies from the Witte Museum to be re-interred with proper respect is a part of our efforts. The Esto'k Gna expect members of other tribes who live on or travel to our lands to respect our Ancestral remains,

Burial Sites and our rituals—to ask properly for permission to conduct other rituals in our territory as we would do if we were in their homeland territory, that is the respectful Ways of our Peoples. Sometimes our deceased are disrespected when Powwows are held on top of burial grounds or where burial remains are being kept, like some of the major universities in Texas. We simply ask for proper respect for a land that has had our Ancestors' bodies buried all over it for many centuries. We do not want our people to die any more by another. 2) It is very important for us to financially secure the 30 acres of land where we gather for our rituals/dances so we can continue to live our Life Ways together. 3) We have long been researching and gathering documentation of our Ancestors in historical news reports, book references and government documents with our own limited personal funds and on our spare time.

If you'd like to learn more or get involved, please visit, like, and share our website <http://carrizocomecrudonation.com> and Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/CarrizoComecrudoTribeOfTexas>. Please also write to the Witte Museum in San Antonio to return our Ancestors' bodies and other remains for respectful re-interment, or send us artifacts, articles, stories, references, books, photos/illustrations, internet links that pertain to our history (including references to Coahuiltecan, Lipan Apache, Comanche) and groups of our People such as the Tejon, Pinto, Garza, Venado, Tortuga, Borrado and any other "tribe" that is described as living in and around the territory between the Canadian River in the Texas Panhandle south to the San Fernando River in Tampico, Mexico and from El Paso east to Matagorda Bay. **FPH**

*Article written in collaboration between Juan Mancias, Tribal Chairman/Historian, Head Man of the Bear Clan and member of the Deer Society, Andy Torres, Tribal Historian of the Tejones along with an anonymous member of the Deer and Bear Societies.*



from the series:

# Wise Women of Houston's Left

## Hopes and Fears About the Opening of Relations with Cuba

By Nick Cooper

Photo: Maria Jimenez



Thoughts on Cuba from a few of Houston's wise mothers and grandmothers.

Maria Jimenez is a Zapatista supporter and immigrant rights activist who has been featured in the pages of Free Press in the past. To her, the opening of relations with Cuba is long overdue.

The opening of US/Cuban relations is a step that rectifies an erroneous approach to establishing long-lasting peace between peoples. Even in the Cold War years, countries in Latin America were able to maintain cultural, economic, political and social relations with Cuba. Cuba and the Cuban people are an inherent part of the history of the continent. For the rest of the continent, it made little sense that the US would view Cuba and the Cuban people as enemies. The contradiction was especially apparent when the US recognized China, a "communist country" populated by billions of people, while closing doors to a Cuba, a "communist country" with about 20 million people. Establishing diplomatic relations will strengthen mutual understandings of each others economic, social and political systems and ultimately permit both peoples to learn from each other how best to build just societies.

Alma Cooper is a socialist grandma, and a KPFT programmer. She sees much that the US could learn from Cuba.

It is possible that, in the same way that the great wave of immigrants, mostly Latin Americans, fight for the recognition of the May Day as the celebration day of the working class, the Cuban people will influence American society about other ways of living in society. They will show that it is possible to have free education, as well as medical services and social services. Americans will learn that the government has the obligation to provide that because people work daily, not to create wealth for the 1%, but for themselves. Cubans will show inventions in agro-industry and discoveries in medicine to cure what it are diagnosed as incurable diseases in the United States. Cubans have shown the world, almost from nothing, miracles that work for the people. That is the kind of society that United States wants to destroy in the name of democracy, but I have great hopes in the Cuban people to reverse these perverse plans!!

Alma objects still to the embargo, which is set to continue.

The Cuban people have faced truly heroic conditions not having access to the global market due to the economic embargo. Although the US government has not agreed to lift the embargo, I hope the Cuban and progressive American people push for an end to this criminal embargo. The Cuban people can also counter the imperialist propaganda and brainwashing that will start running in Cuba.

Alma also expressed fears that the US would use the opening of relations to further oppress Cuba.

Now that the diplomatic relations are re-established, the US government thinks that the doors will be open to spread their so-called "democracy." Opening the embassy must not open the door to allowing interference in the lives of Cubans. The embassy could become the headquarters of the "trainers and funders" of the opposition as it has been in other countries...

Also my fear is that current employment levels, child labor (non-existent in Cuba), education, medical service, etc. might change to become a copy of the United States, to the detriment of the population. Similarly, open negotiations could initiate the compensation for property confiscated by the revolution, many of the former owners are Cuban exiles in Miami.

Lee Loe is a democratic socialist, a grandma, and a peace and justice activist. She echoes the ideas that there is much to learn from Cuba and that the embargo is oppressive.

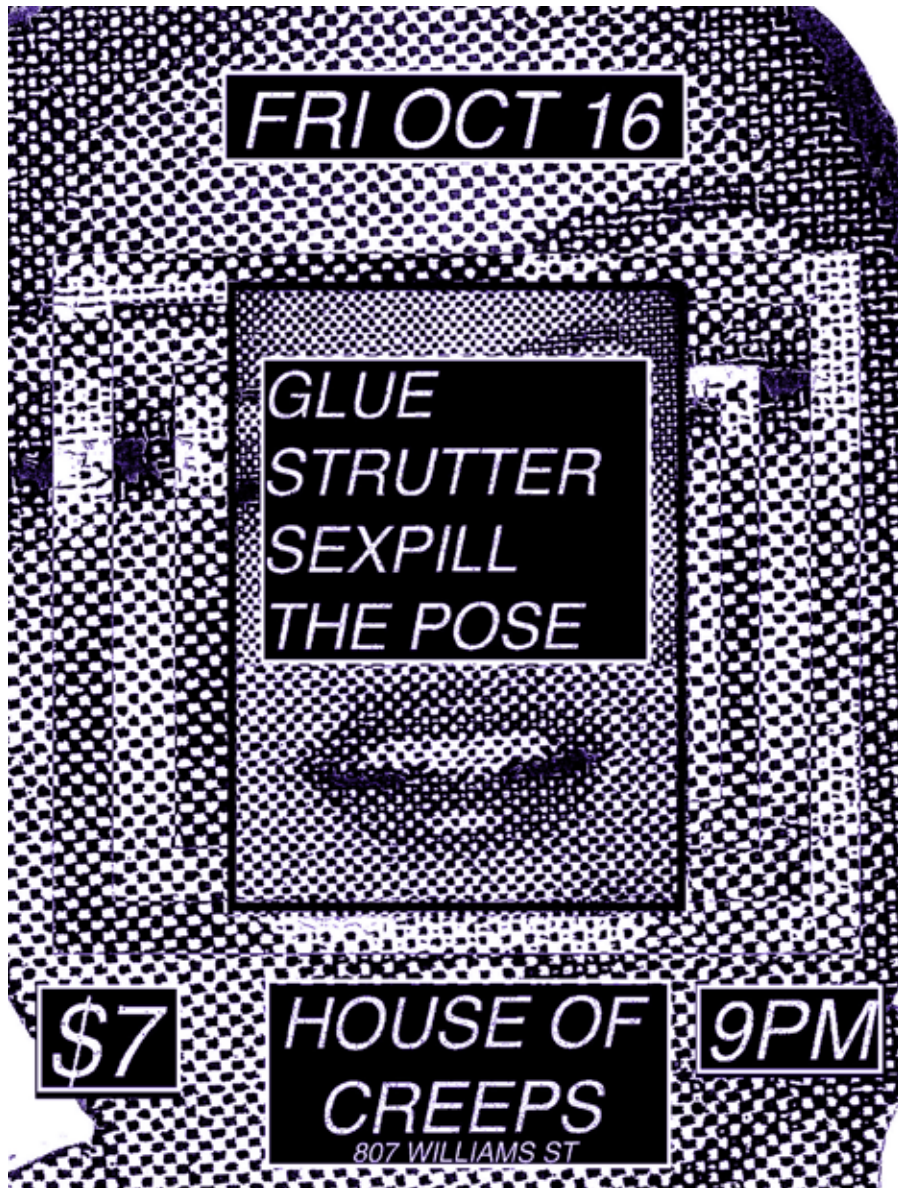
We inhabitants of the U.S. have much to learn from the citizens of Cuba and the vibrant, egalitarian culture they are creating. I am glad that some travel restrictions placed on our two societies will be lifted, and hope that those from the U.S. who visit will respect the sovereignty and uniqueness of the Cuban people. They also need to be aware of the harshness of the embargo and how it hampers the development of healthcare, nutrition, commerce and other aspects of Cuban life. From what I understand, the embargo can only be ended by a vote of the U.S. Congress.

Lee also raises concerns about US intervention.

The comments by President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry have not convinced me that they now respect the independence of this nation state and are no longer planning interventions in Cuba's internal affairs. For instance, President Obama explained that increased "contacts with the Cuban people" can "advance our interests and support for democracy and human rights."

What are "our interests?" (Was the dictator Batista, whom we supported, acting in "our interests"?) Will we continue our interventions in Cuba's internal affairs, which the USAID and other players have conducted? Secretary Kerry mentioned the Cuban people's need for a "genuine democracy" and more human rights as though they had neither. But he also said we should recognize that "U.S. policy is not the anvil on which Cuba's future will be forged." It "is for the Cubans to shape." I hope he means it.

Pope Francis was a key player in getting the rapprochement between the U.S. and Cuba. May he continue to monitor the situation—as so should we. We must work for the complete normalization of relations and an early end to the crippling, inhumane embargo on these amazing people.



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# DEMOCRAT- REPUBLICAN PARTNERSHIP EMERGES TO PROTECT THE HOUSTON EQUAL RIGHTS ORDINANCE



The Houston Stonewall Young Democrats (HSYD) and the Log Cabin Republicans of Houston (LCRH) have decided to work together to protect the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO) from being repealed.

One might not expect anything to bring the two parties together, least of all HERO, which has been fought tooth and nail by a group of local conservatives. This is the first time the two organizations have ever participated in a joint effort; in fact, they are the only two-party organizations in Houston working together.

The leadership displayed by HSYD and LCRH can teach us all a valuable lesson, not just about cooperation and collaboration, but also about HERO. As James Lee, president of HSYD stated, “We have come together, despite our differences, because the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance is more important than party affiliation.”

“It is always good when people can come together on a bipartisan basis to come to good legislation,” added Michael Baker, the Vice President of LCRH.

The Houston Equal Rights Ordinance reads: “Houston seeks to provide an environment that is free of any type of discrimination based on sex, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, familial status, marital status, military status, religion, disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity or pregnancy.”

HERO is for all Houstonians, including Democrats and Republicans, so it makes sense the two organizations would work together to protect it at the ballot box this November.

As Michael explained, HERO is something that will be beneficial for all Houstonians and the Houston economy.

“HERO is a business friendly policy which gives those who are discriminated against a local, swift solution that allows people with legitimate grievances an avenue to address discrimination complaints without the involvement of federal courts and costly, time consuming litigation.”

Since May 2014—from the approval of HERO to the recent Texas Supreme

Court ruling requiring HERO to be repealed or put to a public vote—President and CEO of the Greater Houston Partnership, Bob Harvey, has continuously supported HERO, arguing that it is good for both business and equality.

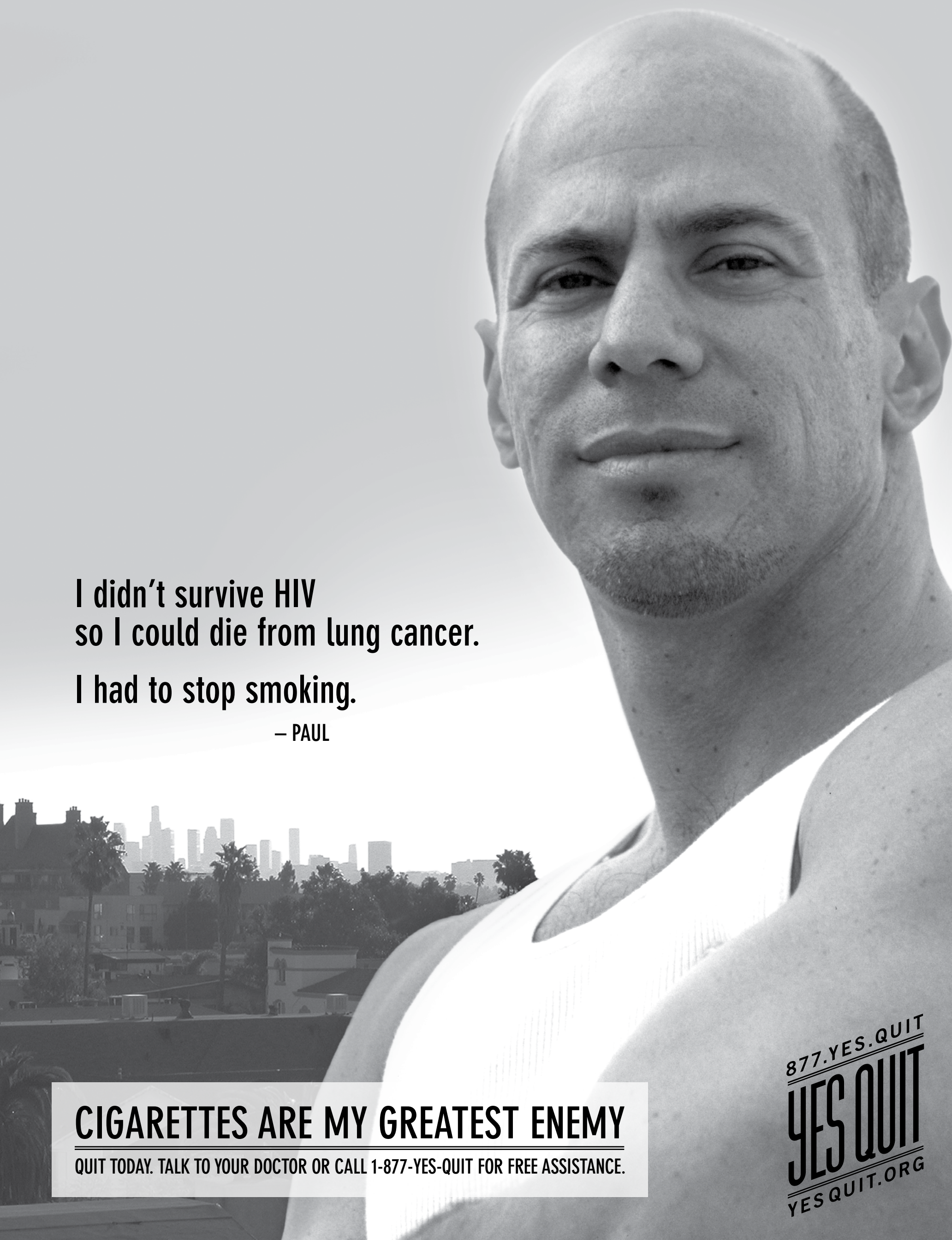
“We at the Partnership believe an ordinance that codifies our principles of non-discrimination is entirely appropriate,” Mr. Harvey stated during a public testimony at City Hall. “We have worked closely with other business associations, the Mayor, and members of City Council to help draft an ordinance that will be both effective and efficient – one that will neither require new staff at City Hall nor place an undue burden on Houston businesses – while speaking clearly to our values of respect for all Houstonians.”

Unfortunately, in order for HERO to remain in place Houstonians will have to vote in the November 3rd Mayoral Election. The ballot language for the ordinance will ask voters if they want the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance. If you want Houston to keep the equal rights ordinance, you vote yes. If you want it repealed, you vote no.

This seems straightforward, but a vocal minority wants HERO to fail by confusing the public about what it really does. Smear campaigns, failed petition drives, and hate speech are the tactics of those against HERO. While supporters are coming together, putting aside the rhetoric and their own political ideologies for the betterment of Houston, the opposition is desperately trying to scare people into voting against HERO.

As the most ethnically and culturally diverse city in the nation, a city of 2.2 million people with varying beliefs, traditions, backgrounds and idiosyncrasies, it is time to move forward together. Houston is the only major city in the country and the only major city in Texas that does not have an equal rights ordinance of any kind.

The HSYD and LCRH put it plainly. “We believe that all Houstonians should have the right to live, work, and prosper in our great city, and HERO will provide them the ability to do just that.”



**I didn't survive HIV  
so I could die from lung cancer.  
I had to stop smoking.**

**— PAUL**

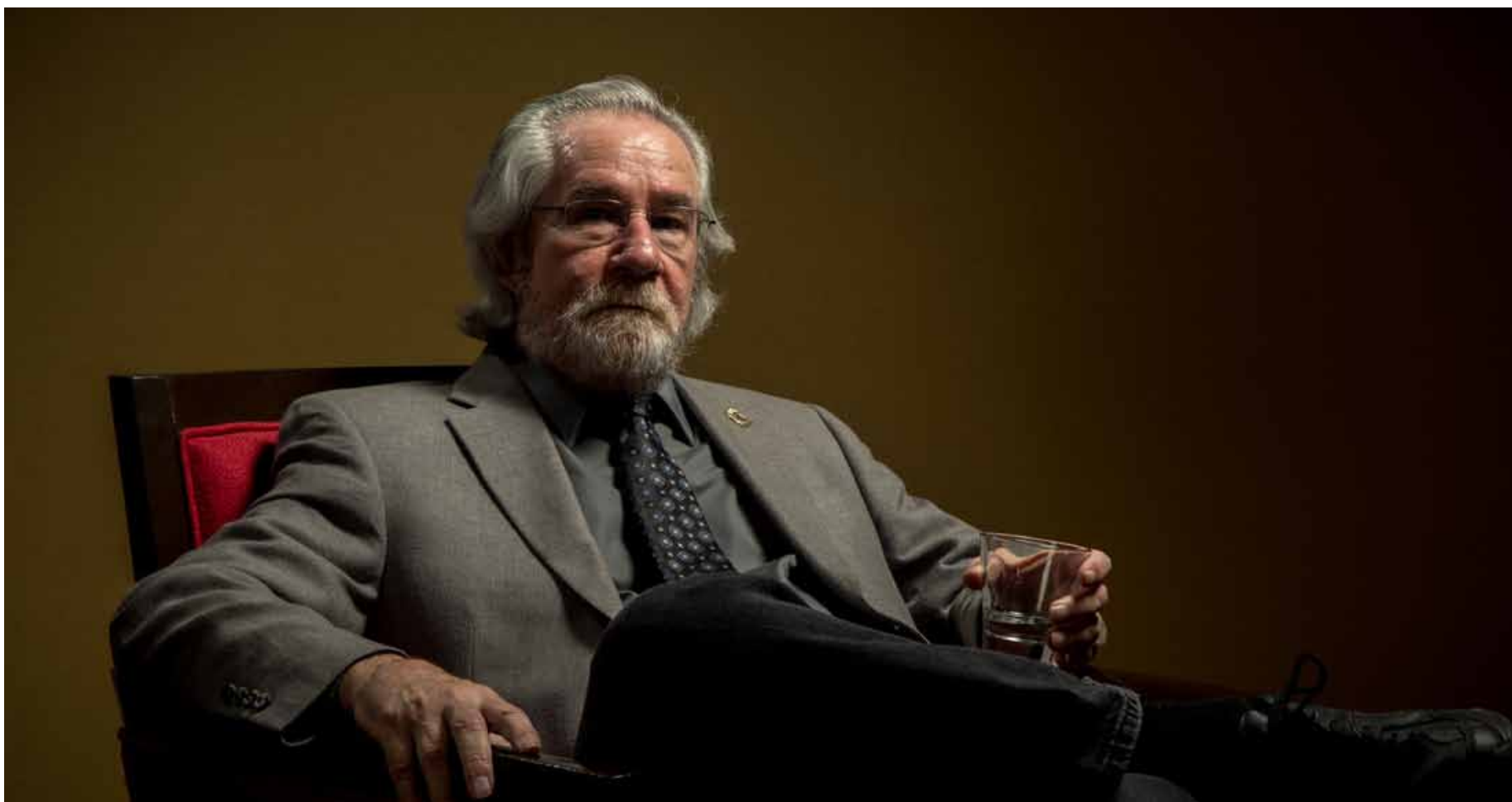
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# DEAN BECKER WANTS YOU TO CALL THE DRUG CZAR

By Dean Becker



For more than 15 years, I have been examining the policy of drug prohibition. I have traveled to Bolivia to witness the use of coca leaf for endurance in high altitudes. I visited Canada to observe the use of “safe injection” rooms to prevent death and disease from the use of heroin and cocaine, and I visited Ciudad Juarez in 2011 when that city was the murder capitol of the world. I have more than 30,000+ hours of investigation, have reported from scores of conferences and seminars, and have interviewed well over 1,000 drug policy experts.

Sadly, too many of those in positions of power have remained steadfast in pro-

claiming the need to continue this war on people who use certain plant products. However, last December, Houston’s Police Chief McClelland came to the KPFT studio and declared the drug war a “miserable failure.” Our District Attorney Devon Anderson seems to have had an awakening as well, striving to prevent our kids from pleading guilty to minor drug crimes.

Our legislators, for the most part, are not experts on drug users or even the drugs themselves, yet they continue doing what their daddies did, with no understanding as to why. Preferring to lean on the might and “righteousness” of the

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federal laws as justification, the state and local officials simply plod the beaten path with no rationale as to why.

So, rather than focusing my efforts too broadly on those who do not hold the “magic wand” of being the Drug Czar, I now seek a single discussion with the top dog, the head of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), director Michael Botticelli. I have called and emailed Mr. Botticelli and his numerous predecessors every few months for the last 15 years, to absolutely no avail, but with your help, perhaps this time will be different.

I need YOU to contact the Drug Czar to encourage him to join me on the airwaves of Pacifica Radio. I will provide the contact info later in this article, but first I want to underscore why you should be concerned enough to do so.

Originally, the drug war was declared to “protect the children,” to place an impenetrable barrier between the “evil” sellers and our innocent offspring. On December 17, 1914, with the passage of the Harrison Narcotics Act, the US began to escalate the machinations of law enforcement and the criminal justice system, leading us into this never-ending war on plant products. Supposedly, the act allowed doctors the option to prescribe narcotics to their patients, but US courts interpreted this to disallow prescriptions for Americans who became addicted to these drugs.

The Harrison act stated that “every person who produces, imports, manufactures, compounds, deals in, dispenses, distributes or gives away opium or coca leaves or any compound, manufacture, salt, derivative or preparation thereof shall register with the collector of internal revenue and pay \$1 per annum” for the privilege. Only a handful of such registrations were allowed. A hundred years later, doctors are still being punished if bureaucrats in DC determine they have stepped over the line in their number of prescriptions for “preparations” like Oxycontin, which have now overtaken heroin as our nation’s deadliest concoction.

This attempt at prohibition was sold to the American people as a justifiable deviation from the Constitution and Declaration of Independence, as necessary to protect our children and to protect us from ourselves. A century later, what have we wrought? Today, the best place to purchase drugs on Planet Earth are US colleges and US high schools, followed closely by US junior highs. There are now tens of thousands of gangs around the US, enticing our children to use these forbidden drugs or to join the financial feast of selling drugs to their classmates and friends. Despite decades of effort, tens of millions of arrests and more than a trillion dollars spent, we have never stopped even one determined child from acquiring their drug of choice.

Despite the expenditure of well over one trillion US taxpayer dollars in trying to stop the flow of drugs, our efforts have never intercepted more than 10 to 15% of the drugs being smuggled across our borders. Terrorists, cartels, and gangs actually need a number of these busts to occur so they can justify their highly-inflated prices to their customers, which has allowed them to reap more than ten trillion dollars in profits since Nixon’s declaration of “all out war” on drugs and the implementation of his ludicrously named “Controlled Substances Act.”

It has been suggested that smugglers use approximately half of their earnings to bribe and otherwise corrupt our border guards, customs officials, and law enforcement to ensure that the 10 to 15% rate of interception does not go any higher. According to the United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime Prevention, “profits in illegal drugs are so inflated that three-quarters of all drug shipments would have to be intercepted to seriously reduce the profitability of the business.” Surely not even the Drug Czar thinks this number of busts is possible.

The drug war impacts our lives in many ways, including invasive searches, as graphically witnessed in the recent series of reports of cops performing vaginal probes on parking lot pavement, and the literal highway robbery deemed “interdiction,” which has allowed law enforcement to seize (without a warrant or any evidence whatsoever), more than \$2.5 billion dollars from Americans for the crime of having too much money (which the cops simply declare to be “drug money”), in their wallets. For a more complete list of ways the drug war falls on its face, I urge you to read my book: To End The War On Drugs.

Here is where you come in. You already know the drug war is unwinnable, yet you remain wary of speaking up for fear of consequence at home, work, church, school or otherwise. Please rest assured that, most likely, your spouse, boss, minister, teacher and the majority of your friends and associates agree that the drug war is a hopeless cause. In order to bring focus to bear, to ensure that authorities who believe in drug war must validate this drug war, I need you to call and email the Drug Czar to motivate him to do so.

You can contact our nation’s drug czar, the head of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, through the White House switchboard. That number is (202) 456-1414, then ask to speak to the Press Secretary of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, Mr. Zepeda. Mr. Zepeda’s email is: Mario\_A\_MorenoZepeda@ondcp.eop.gov. Ask Mr. Mario Moreno Zepeda to please arrange an interview for his boss, Drug Czar Michael Botticelli on my Cultural Baggage show as soon as possible.

Please keep your message civilized. Decry the harms of the drug war, but please note that this is not a time to argue the merits of cannabis or any other drug, but rather to place focus on the the enormous, outrageous, glaring failure of drug prohibition, itself.

Many reform organizations stand with me in making the call for this discussion with our nation’s drug czar. Among the dozens of reform groups who seek this discussion on my radio shows are my band of brothers in Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (LEAP), the nation’s largest reform group—the Drug Policy Alliance, National Organization for Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), the James A. Baker III Institute, Veterans for Compassionate Care, Republicans Against Marijuana Prohibition, Broken No More, A New PATH, and dozens more.

Shown here is the only written response Zepeda has willing to send thus far:

You can attribute the statement below to me, Mario Moreno Zepeda, spokesperson for the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy:

“The Obama Administration has been committed to reforming drug policy in a scientific and evidence-based way. Research shows that substance use disorders are preventable and treatable diseases. So the Administration’s strategy for drug policy reform promotes a balance of public health and public safety initiatives, with a focus on substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery.”

Repetition of words like preventable and treatable do sound positive, and if you follow the link for “Administration’s strategy” you will hear of an intention to treat rather than jail users, even as the US remains the world’s leading jailer. There is no mention as to when or if Czar Botticelli will ever be my guest on Pacifica airwaves.

Rather than insist on a set message for you to send, I urge you to scan the boilerplate shown below and to then send your own brief yet heartfelt message to our nation’s Drug Czar.

Director Botticelli,

Sir, this drug war has gone on for far too long. We are not now and never will be a drug free nation, and it is time to make a major change to our policies regarding drug possession and use. When the harms of this policy include increased overdose deaths, children having easier access and criminals worldwide making more than a billion dollars a day by selling contaminated drugs to our children, we must seek another solution than this war declared for eternity. Please arrange a visit with Dean Becker on Pacifica’s Cultural Baggage radio program at your earliest convenience to discuss this matter.

If you desire, select a paragraph or two from this missive, or peruse the thousand transcripts from my radio shows at drugtruth.net to find a doctor, cop, legislator, warden, judge or prosecutor whose words better match your feelings about the drug war.

It has taken more than 100 years for the machination of drug war to slowly diminish our rights and freedoms in the name of a “drug free world.” Despite the kinder, gentler words of a few politicians and officials, the drug war continues to treat users as less than human, unworthy of dignity or even a true second chance. The incremental process and dehumanizing attitude that led us to this point of pig headed indifference to the lives of drug users still exists, and unless and until we examine the evidence in a free and open discussion it will likely take another hundred years to unwind.

We have been duped, fed this bag of lies for so long that many have closed their eyes and ears to the millions of instances of abuse, atrocities, lies and perversions that comprise the “logic” of this drug war. Why do people steal and whore for drugs? Prohibition. Where do terrorists, cartels and gangs get their power? Prohibition. Why do so many die and acquire diseases from using drugs? Prohibition.

I have beat my head against the wall for 15 years, striving to create the scenario wherein the fallacy, the futility of the drug war can be recognized for all to see. Will you please spend a few minutes of your time to motivate the Drug Czar to face down this toothless lion? Once we legalize these “recreational” drugs for adults and put them under government oversight, the price will fall to a penny on the black market dollar, overdose deaths will be mostly those committing suicide, and our children will have much less access because we will then have lots of room in prison for anybody who would dare sell drugs to our kids.

Hopefully, with your help, I will first seek an answer to a simple question: What is the benefit? What have we derived that begins to offset the horrors we inflict on ourselves, and the world, by continuing to believe in the viability of this drug war?

Please contact the drug czar to encourage him to be to be a guest on my radio program. Thank you!

\*\*\* Dean Becker reports the drug war NEWS for Pacifica Radio’s KPFT, 90.1 FM in Houston & on WWW.KPFT.ORG. His show is broadcast on Fridays at 4:30 PM CDT. Becker is a speaker for Law Enforcement Against Prohibition, is a Contributing Expert for the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy and is author of “To End The War On Drugs.”

**TRUMP'S  
POTENTIAL APPEAL  
TO SELF-HATING  
IMMIGRANTS:  
GO AHEAD AND  
LAUGH AT THE  
DUMPSTER-FIRE**



# JUST DON'T DISMISS IT TOO QUICKLY

FPH 10.15

By Jacob Santillan

Illustration by Shelby Hohl

I readily admit that I thoroughly enjoy the Donald Trump presidential campaign because he's clearly trolling everyone—the GOP establishment in particular. I don't agree with anything he says and I laugh at how ludicrous and blatantly offensive he is, because that makes his campaign the train-wreck I can't wait to see implode, which hopefully sunders the Republican party come Election 2016. I also don't want him to win because I'm not a conservative of any kind. I bear Old Left, Old Labor, deeply proletarian sympathies and because of that, I'm a Bernie Sanders man.

My allegiances aside, it's fascinating to watch people—both left and right—dance to Trump's tune. The conservative establishment shrieks that Donald Trump is an ignorant blowhard who makes the Republican party and conservatives look like lunatics. Left-wing publications like Salon hysterically clutch their pearls over everything Donald Trump says, cynically exploiting his campaign by writing about him not once or twice but ceaselessly, thereby granting him all the exposure he needs across the political spectrum. Any press is good press, as they say.

Right-on-right infighting, such as the anti-Trump establishment National Review vs. the pro-Trump insurgent Breitbart, is in full swing. Editor of conservative publication Commentary John Podhorerz calls Breitbart a “clown publication” and its readers “rape lovers.” GOP consultant Jack Wilson, who blasts 25% of his own party's base as “low information voters,” flippantly asked Ann Coulter if Trump pays her extra for anal sex, presumably because she backs his immigration plan. Such infighting on the left end of the aisle is promising as well. In this cynical and sclerotic political climate, it's quite fun to watch party bosses and their intelligentsia, left or right, lose control over their respective electorates. It's impossible to understate how nasty this could get.

Despite the circus clown car of the GOP primary, there are also appreciable moments of sobriety and caution about the Trump campaign, because there are reasons why Donald Trump should be taken more seriously—however absurd or offensive he comes across. Trump is the exact opposite of what GOP presidential campaigns have been in recent years (Mitt Romney anyone?). Trump doesn't come across as wooden and focus-group tested to death. He doesn't seem handled by overpaid consultants. He's blunt, and he's not hyper-sanitized as his rhetoric clearly indicates, whatever you think of it. I'm not sure even he believes everything he says—he may be a glib opportunist for all we know—but he sure sounds like he means what he says, and that must be deeply refreshing to conservatives dissatisfied by what they feel is an unresponsive party establishment.

Trump's critics point out that the only policy area where he has even the slightest substance is immigration, which is the only thing he seems to discuss. Of course, what he does say about immigration is flagrantly offensive, but that's part of his appeal. He comes across as willing to say what the electorate wants to hear and what I suspect they, themselves, wish to say. In Donald Trump, the conservative base finds its champion. And while it's understandably denounced as racist, it would be a mistake to assume his rhetoric appeals only to whites.

US demographic changes heavily favor the Hispanic community. Census figures project the Hispanic population will roughly double in size from 15% of the U.S. population now to 30% by the year 2050, which makes “courting the Hispanic vote” more electorally important than ever. Trump's rhetoric about illegal Mexican immigrants being rapists, drug dealers and murderers has analysts both left and right eager to bury his campaign, for different reasons, as fast as possible. There is, however, another force at work which should discourage the casual assumption that he's alienated the entire Hispanic electorate—native or foreign-born—or all

immigrants from anywhere else for that matter.

Today, only the most vicious racists openly deploy racial slurs, the kind that were considered normal in the 1950's and 60's. In the 70's and 80's, we started to hear about “lazy” and “entitled” “Cadillac-driving welfare queens” as a “dog whistle,” as coded racial language for African-Americans. Today we hear the term “illegal aliens” used similarly, which, technically, is the correct legal terminology for people in the country illegally. However, it is used politically to “other” Central and South Americans in particular, immigrants from everywhere in general, and by people hostile even to native-born Hispanic Americans. Such coded racial language makes it possible to drive a wedge between immigrant communities.

“[W]ithin immigrant communities, there's always a heterogeneity of views,” noted Ian Haney Lopez, author of *The Dog Whistle Politics of Race*, in a March 2014 interview on Movers and Company. “As each generation gets established, there's always a segment of the population that looks with resentment on the new arrivals, that says ‘These people are holding our community down. We really need to restrict immigration,’ they say, ‘because only by restricting immigration can we show that we're actually now part of the American mainstream.’ So, ironically, I would expect an effort to reach out to Latinos and to Asian communities, not by liberal reforms of immigration, but actually by toning down some of the hostile rhetoric while at the same time promising to restrict immigration.”

While Trump certainly hasn't toned down his immigration rhetoric, there may be opportunities for him to deliver it in a more targeted fashion. Indeed, Breitbart reports on Fransisco Rivera, a legal immigrant originally from Jalisco, Mexico, who protested before Huntington Park City Council in California against the appointment of two immigrants who are not in the country legally to city commissions:

“You want to become part of this great nation—that's fine—but you have to come through the right channels and background check. That's what I see these people are not doing. I went through all the process. I really appreciate this country and this great nation. A lot of these people, these teenagers, don't appreciate it.” says Rivera in an interview with Breitbart News.

“I literally remember this one guy, he must have been about 19 years old, bald, holding a Mexican flag. He looked at the sheriff and he literally told the guy, ‘F- the USA.’ I thought, ‘And you want to be a part of this country? Look at what you're doing, the way you act.’ People don't have passion and love for this country, but when they are about to be deported they say, ‘Please don't deport me!’ They only want to be a part of this nation when they're threatened with being deported.”

Attitudes like those of legal immigrants such as Rivera are ripe for exploitation, and you don't need a shortage of melanin to fall for it. So, when Donald Trump makes outrageous and offensive statements about illegal immigrant rapists thieves and murders, a portion of the immigrant population, itself, will likely think or say—“Oh you mean those immigrants; I'm one of the good ones”—and vote accordingly. Donald Trump has so far demonstrated that he's shrewd enough to strategically discriminate between legal and illegal immigrants for electoral gain. Whether he's clever enough to capitalize on those differences effectively remains to be seen, but the possibility still remains.

Free Press Houston Columnist Nick Cooper asks in part whether we should laugh or cry about Trump. I say laugh freely...for now. I know I will. By all means enjoy the spectacle, the theatre of it all, but enjoy it guardedly. Don't dismiss Donald Trump as the clown you might understandably think he is. After all, as an actor and establishment outsider, Ronald Reagan was once thought to be an absurd candidate too.

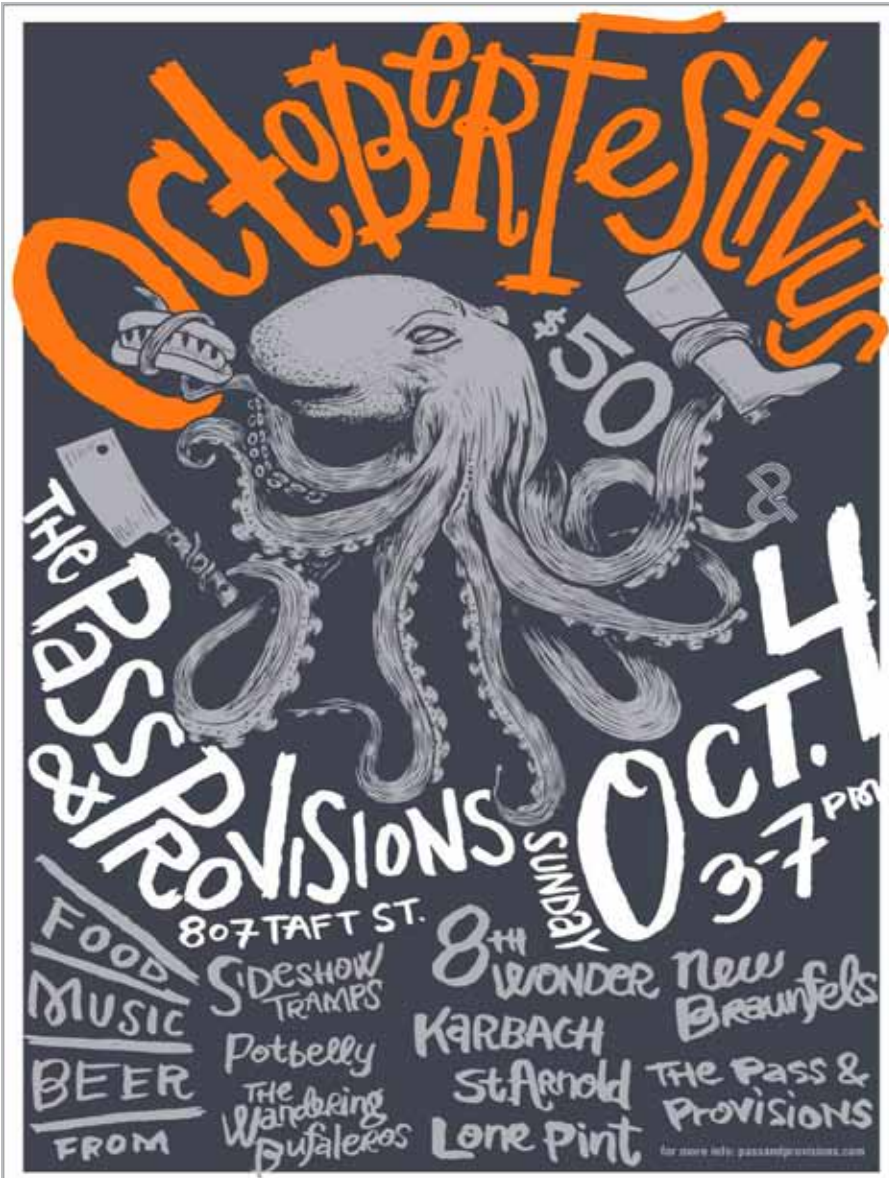
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|        |                         |                                          |
|--------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| SEP 2  | @ RUDZ<br>RUDYARD'S     | MUTOID MAN                               |
| SEP 5  | @ WHL<br>WAREHOUSE LIVE | MAN MAN                                  |
| SEP 8  | @ HOB<br>HOUSE OF BLUES | PASSION PIT                              |
| SEP 11 | @ WALTERS<br>DOWNTOWN   | DAVID RAMIREZ                            |
| SEP 11 | @ RUDZ<br>RUDYARD'S     | THE ATOMIC BITCHWAX                      |
| SEP 13 | @ WHL<br>WAREHOUSE LIVE | EL TEN ELEVEN                            |
| SEP 15 | @ WALTERS<br>DOWNTOWN   | THE GET UP KIDS<br>20TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR |
| SEP 16 | @ WHL<br>WAREHOUSE LIVE | GODSPEED YOU!<br>BLACK EMPEROR           |
| SEP 17 | @ WHL<br>WAREHOUSE LIVE | VERIDIA                                  |
| SEP 18 | @ RUDZ<br>RUDYARD'S     | CHELSEA WOLFE                            |
| SEP 19 | @ WALTERS<br>DOWNTOWN   | TITUS ANDRONICUS                         |
| SEP 20 | @ WHL<br>WAREHOUSE LIVE | LYDIA                                    |
| SEP 21 | @ RUDZ<br>RUDYARD'S     | AVAN LAVA                                |
| SEP 25 | @ WHL<br>WAREHOUSE LIVE | VACTIONER                                |
| SEP 25 | @ WALTERS<br>DOWNTOWN   | THE REVIVALISTS                          |
| SEP 26 | @ WALTERS<br>DOWNTOWN   | TOXIC HOLOCAUST                          |
| SEP 29 | @ WHL<br>WAREHOUSE LIVE | DALEY                                    |
| OCT 1  | @ HOB<br>HOUSE OF BLUES | BEACH HOUSE                              |
| OCT 1  | @ RUDZ<br>RUDYARD'S     | TEEN DAZE                                |
| OCT 4  | @ RUDZ<br>RUDYARD'S     | SHANNON + THE CLAMS                      |
| OCT 6  | @ RUDZ<br>RUDYARD'S     | EMPRESS OF                               |
| OCT 7  | @ RUDZ<br>RUDYARD'S     | SUPERHUMANOIDS                           |
| OCT 8  | @ WHL<br>WAREHOUSE LIVE | FIDLAR                                   |
| OCT 8  | @ RUDZ<br>RUDYARD'S     | ADIA VICTORIA                            |
| OCT 9  | @ WALTERS<br>DOWNTOWN   | BORNS                                    |
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