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JULY 2008 | ISSUE 93
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- *The Stucco Scourge*
- *'Dem Summer Bands Papermoons, The Ka-Nives, Lenny Briscoe, Imaad Wassif, This Moment in Black History*

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BANDS
Young Mammals
News on the March
Wicked Poser
Hard Place

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editors

FEEL FREE TO TAKE US SERIOUSLY



Our neon orange Welcome Home Frisk Stickers from the good ol' US of A.

HOUSTON

I AM GLAD TO BE HOME. WHEREVER THAT IS.

HAVING RETURNED FROM BEIRUT shortly ago, I am starting to notice a few nuances about our fair city that I have taken for granted for so long. First and foremost, the tap water does not give me a fierce diarrhea. Secondly, I have realized that despite not being 'American', I am not 'Lebanese'. Dammit. Nobody wants me. Am I forced to be an international orphan? I was treated like a terrorist in American airports and like a colonialist in Lebanon. In all seriousness, I have realized that many of us are, fortunately, devoid of national identity. That is fine with me. There is hope in this. Don't blame me for shit. Anyways, you would be surprised how your personal narrative can change so drastically on such a trip. In the U.S., my perceptions are viewed as anti-American whereas in the Middle East my views are stridently western. Hmm. As you may guess, it is very fashionable outside of the U.S. speak of the crumbling American Empire and how the Chinese are the future. This kind of talk does not bother me here, but over there a very surprising tinge of, dare I call it, patriotism sprang forth. I made sure my foreign hosts knew that when the Chinese take the helm of the planet, they will be longing for their previous American lords. Maybe not but it sounded cool. Nonetheless, my newfound American loyalty was soon diminished when our 'handlers' in Paris informed us that the U.S. government had strict protocol for Arabs flying into the states. We were separated, frisked for the umpteenth time, had our every last belonging searched, and had our passport tagged with scary orange markers. However, that paled in comparison to the way we were treated in the U.S. Upon going through security to leave Bush Intercontinental, my whole family was herded in a large glass room and given the 'treatment': we were all frisked (including my 2 year old son) and held for everyone to watch in amusement. Simply because we are Arabs. Racial profiling is alive and well. Don't let people tell you otherwise.

Well enough about me, how bout you? Have you been well? Have you been taking care of yourself? I hope so. By the way, there are some great things popping' in this issue such as our article on the mistreatment of circus elephants to coincide with the circus coming to town this month. Also, Ramon takes a look at local band the Papermoons and newbie Mills McCoin laments the state of the Montrose. Other than that, this is your standard dose of phenomenal Free Press clutch-time shenanigans. Lastly, please join us every Thursday at Numbers for our ever-evolving Recession Thursdays. Always lots of great local bands. Always cheap drinks. Always 5 bux. See you there.

***–Omar Afra**, Editor in Chief, reluctant patriot*

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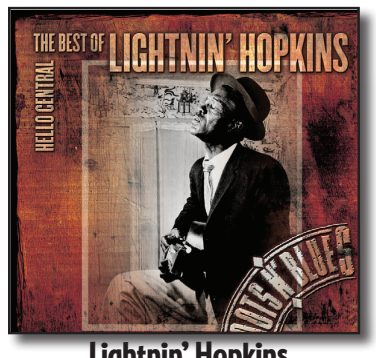
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8/26 - Roger Creager - 6pm
8/30 - Electric Touch - 4pm

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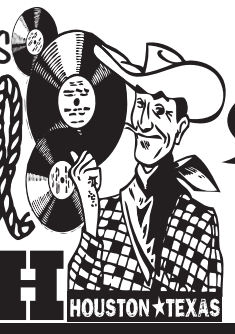
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ESTADOUNIDENSE

| Buffalo Sean



TO THE REST OF THE WORLD THE WORD AMERICAN MUST SOUND A BIT DISINGENUOUS. THE APPLICATION OF A BLANKET TERM TO WHAT WE REGARD AS A COUNTRY AND MANY REGARD AS A MINDSET TAKES US FURTHER FROM EQUALITY -- BOTH WITHIN OUR OWN CULTURE AND TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.

IDENTITY POLITICS ARE A BIG DISTRACTION, and for now right-wing politics use the word American as their own personal bludgeon. I may not want their America, but I do want the word back.

Montrose wants it back for their Pride Parade, as if the Stonewall riots weren't American. The black cowboys who marched through downtown on Juneteenth want the word American back, as if the Buffalo Soldiers weren't American. First generation immigrants who rallied at Guadalupe Park on May 5th want *la palabra* too. As if their sons and daughters in the military aren't American.

In a year ripe for change, in the middle of a hot summer, in a city in transition, in the depths of the reddest red state, we look for ways to call ourselves American. Barreling through a recession without a dip in housing prices or a drop in average speed on the freeways it is still impossible to ignore the ugliness on the horizon. America doesn't mean relentless consumption and callous wastefulness; it only meant that to the 20th century. Energy is our business here in Houston, and without an evolution we may be looking to Copenhagen or London for our center of power, in more ways than one.

Two Houston curators are now stepping into the fray with timely shows that reexamine Americana without Modernism. It's a curate-off! The Old, Weird America and *Neo-Hoodoo* delve into the collective past that we learn as children and recycle as adults. Today, for the first time in my life,

Rene Cruz, Paradise/Gravedigger
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an America without a political party may emerge- and these exhibits play on our collective education and culture with a knowing hand. Whether your last name is Cruz, Uzokwe, Naseer, Fitzgerald or Butler digging up the messy innards of American life is not as easy as describing our differences or how we have been horrible towards each other.

The integrated, interwoven fabric of American society has at its core a sense of entitlement straight from English law, but the roots of American society are West African and Scotch-Irish. Two peoples oppressed by the iron grip of the British Empire defined the temperament, cuisine and folklore of an emergent American culture, coming together three centuries later as rock and roll. As peoples from across the globe have emigrated from their homes to America they adopted the 'pull yourself up by your bootstraps' mentality so thoroughly, it was thought that the great melting pot knew no bounds.

Our past century of hate and destruction that began and ended with Modernism may now relent; we may be free from cruel logic. We have no illusions of parity and no rules to rail against. At the Contemporary Arts Museum (1000 Montrose Blvd), *The Old, Weird America* teases folkloric implications out of contemporary, market-driven artwork. The results are supremely nostalgic, and even if their presence here validates the backroom manipulation that oppresses the American people their touching inclusion in an art museum reminds us all of how we do contribute to the moneyed class' playthings. The ironies of post-modern artwork allow for the realities of America's dirty past bleeding through even if they are contained in sanctified sarcophagi. Curator Toby Kamps has truly tried to create something worthwhile out of the glad-handing art industry.

At the Menil Collection (1000 Alabama) another curator new to town, Franklin Sirmins, tries his hand at divinizing American history with *Neo-Hoodoo*. Tailored more toward African religious themes, the artists included in HooDoo are hopelessly entwined with other cultures and a sense of abandonment in the same way that all Americans struggle. Even if hackneyed trite like Jean-Michel Basquiat makes it into the mix, there is more than enough careerists like William Cordova to provide the show with a revenue stream and critical acclaim. Reaching out to Latin American artists may give the curator reason to believe he is thinking differently than The Old, Weird America, but it simply points of Kamps deficiencies in including Hispanics in America's "old, weird" period. The adaptations of Central American and Caribbean cultures to scarce materials may be attributable to their country of origin without a historical compass, but their struggles mirror those of poor Americans as well as new immigrants across the globe. Treating an ethnicity as particular and unique is a typical folly in our divisive times, as well is the commoditization of folk rituals and themes once they are mimicked by an artist with a higher education.

Both shows rely on illustrative work that narrates rather than demonstrates, but in all they are a good reflection of why it may be our heritage on the Left to be American too. As the artworld spirals into obsolescence it is first-rate to see the institutions of the 20th century point our way out of the degrading elitism of art and toward our own forgotten past.

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QUE PASTA?

| Michael Bergeron



THERE ARE SOME UBIQUITOUS IMAGES FLOATING THROUGH MOVIE ADVERTISING THIS YEAR. ONE DEPICTS A PERSON WITH A BAG OVER THEIR HEAD. IN THE STRANGERS PEOPLE WEARING DIFFERENT MASKS, IN ONE CASE A GUY WITH SAID BAG, PROVIDE THE TERROR.

IN **AUGUST LOOK FOR THE FILM** Towelhead, the feature debut of writer Alan Ball (American Beauty, Six Feet Under), which was titled Nothing is Private when it played at the Toronto FF last fall. No relation to anything we're talking about. Then there's Baghead.

Brothers Mark and Jay Duplass burst onto the film scene with The Puffy Chair, a small indie film that played in extended runs in places like their then home town Austin. Their second feature Baghead shows that as artistically evolving artists they're not shooting blanks. Released by Sony Pictures Classics, Baghead opens at the Angelika on July 18.

Baghead mixes genres with ease. What starts out as a typical indie film romp soon flowers into a domestic drama that spawns a mystery thriller with a twist. In the end, this is a fresh, sweet film. If there's a cinematic reference point that would probably be Roman Polanski's Cul de Sac, a film some describe as weird and entertaining.

"We didn't set out to make a genre twister," Mark Duplass the younger of the brothers tells Free Press Houston in a phone interview. "We just wanted to make a good movie." The Duplass Brothers grew up in New Orleans and later moved to Austin, a city that spawned a filmmaking renaissance in the '90s. Baghead was shot primarily in Bastrop and Smithville, outside of Austin. Specifically Baghead explores the changing relationship and "personal passive aggressive dynamics of two couples" during a supposed idyllic retreat to a country house.

With the limited but positive reception of The Puffy Chair and now Baghead getting distributed by Sony Pictures Classics the Duplass Brothers have made the move to L.A. What the brothers took from Austin was a work ethic that includes knowing the history of cinema. "When someone asks me for filmmaking advice," Mark says, "I tell them 'Don't start with a figure for a budget, start with a story and performances.'"

Try as I might I couldn't get Mark to tell me how they shot a scene that involves a chase through the woods and an automobile. "Did you undercrank the camera and use a stuntman?"

"I would rather not say," replies Mark. "That scene you mention, we felt it was a pivotal moment in the film, and I will say that we very carefully prepared how to shoot it. But for now I'd like the specifics to remain hidden."

In a New York Times article a few years back the reporter called the Duplass film an example of "mumblecore."

"The press decided we were mumblecore," says Mark. "I think it's just a way of trying to classify low-fi budget films. Making films is difficult period. There's chaos and luck."

The guy with a bag over his head may be what gets people into the theater but the film and its four main characters, themselves a litmus strip of typical young adult motivations, will win over audiences who demand sophistication with their popcorn.

Also unreeling

There are Adam Sandler films and there are Sandler films. His serious, for want of a better phrase, films would include Punch Drunk Love, Spanglish, and most recently Reign Over Me. Sandler wouldn't attract directors like PT Anderson without some talent. He obviously understands comedy, and his films make a guaranteed $125-150 million domestic.

That stated the Sandler brand of comedy rarely amuses me: Anger Management was good for a couple of grins, but that played outside the Sandler usual circle of Mr. Deeds and Longest Yard antics. You Don't Mess With the Zohan is Sandler's funniest film since The Wedding Singer. That's how much I liked it.

There's a muted political lesson, natch about Palestinians and Israelis, that seems more effective than some polemic beating you over the head with the age old message about the futility of endless fighting. Caricatures of rednecks and Sandler-brand gay humor (George Takei and Bruce Vilanch have cameos) also provide laughs. The part where the Zohan and his buds are talking



Baghead

about banging FLOTUS exceeds the quota of righteous humor usually reserved for comedies like this.

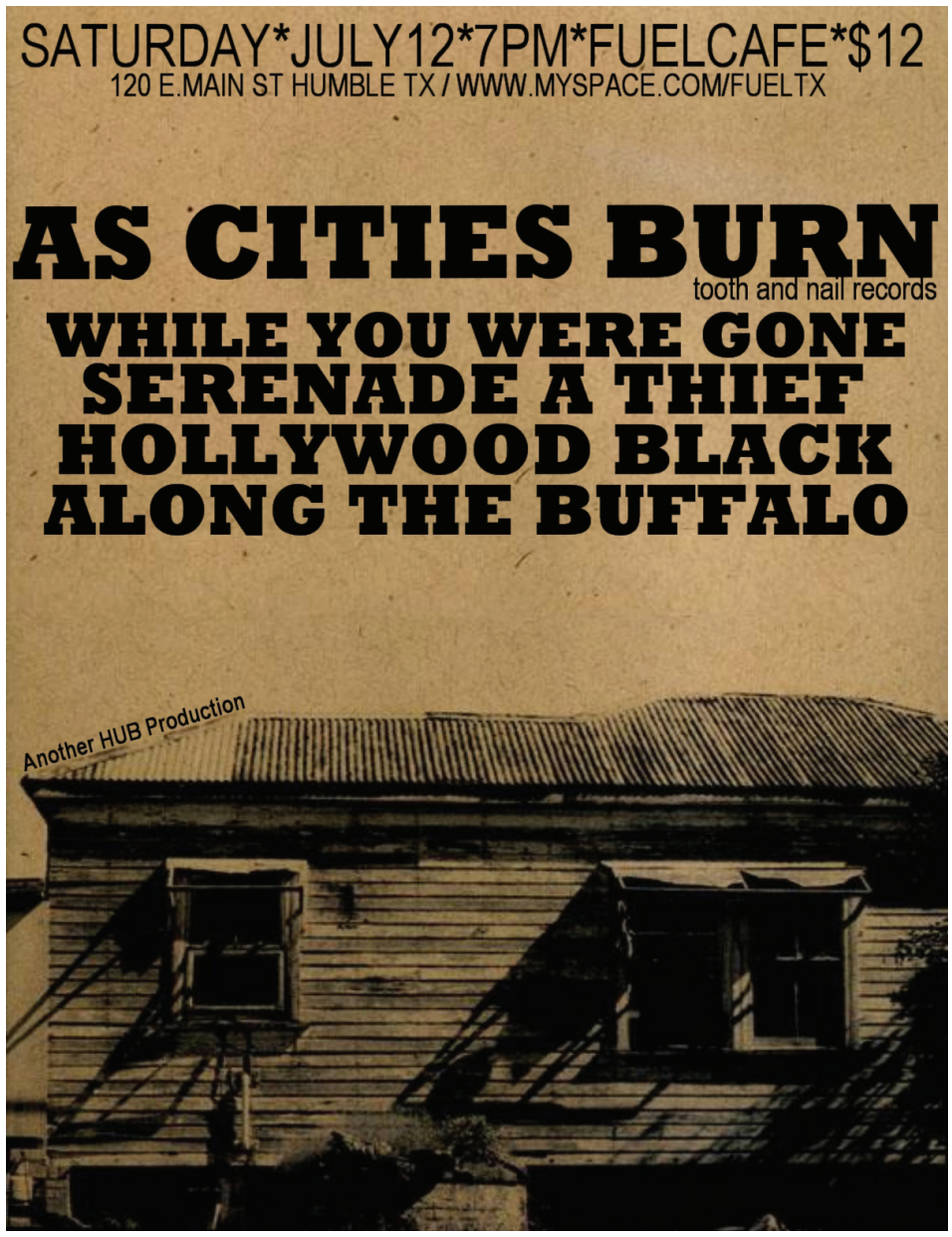
The plot is simple and despite repeated mock action scenes nobody, even kitty cats, really gets hurt. The Zohan decides to quit being Israel's top secret agent and become a hairdresser in NYC. Once he hooks up with a local beauty shop he becomes the main attraction with his combination of hair wizardry and stooping elderly ladies in the back room. In a sight for sore eyes to behold Sandler drops trou at least three times, but so does Lannie Kazan. You Don't Mess With the Zohan knows how to work equal opportunity laughs.

WALL-E IS AN ACRONYM for Waste Allocation Load Lifter – Earth Class. Sure it's a new Pixar film, which means different things to different people, but be assured there's a thread of humanity running through WALL-E that surpasses some cute cartoon robots falling in love.

Jetting through Houston last month WALL-E director Andrew Stanton told a round table of film columnists that while the film does contain an ecological message (remember the brilliant Happy Feet?) the original concept has been in development for over a decade. "I'm not that psyched that this film has become prophetic," said Stanton with his tongue firmly in cheek. WALL-E starts with about 45 minutes of no dialogue. While silent sequences are common in serious films, like the beginning of There Will Be Blood or the island sequence in Cast Away, for an animated film primarily aimed at kids it's more of a risk. It's not hard to see adult audiences embracing this future tale of cyber love.

Additionally the filmmakers hired noted cinematographer Roger Deakins and six-time Oscar winner for special effects Dennis Muren as visual consultants. The result are CGI shots that push the boundary of merging Pixar style CGI and live action. Fans of Star Wars will immediately recognize the man behind the voice (sounds, not words) of WALL-E since Ben Burtt was also the sound designer who created the blips and beeps of C-3PO.

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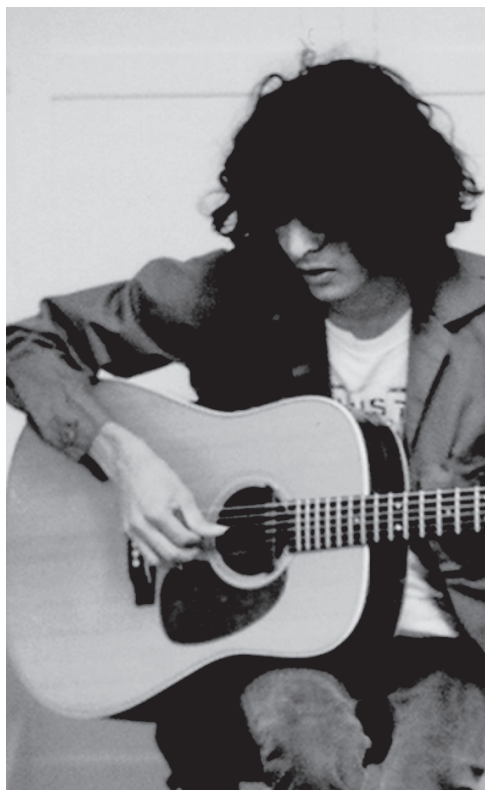


THIS IS WHERE YOU WRESTLE WITH THE PURPLEA BEAR

| Kwame "The Middle Initial" Anderson | Image 'Imaad Wasif

COMMON SENSE IS SOMETHING I'VE COME TO RELY ON A LOT IN LIFE. IT IS SAID WHAT MANY CHILDREN LACK TODAY IS COMMON SENSE. BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT THIS IDEA OF COMMON SENSE WOULD BE RATHER INCOMPETENT IN THIS DAY AND AGE. PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF THE NOTION OF WHAT IS COMMON.

IMAAD WASSIF
07/06/08 | The Mink



COMMON IS TO SAY A SHARED, widely shared, idea that is supported by a major consensus of people, a majority of a group. Well, one must examine the ideals and values of the popular group, the unconscious understanding that they all share, in order to determine what is common, and what about that exemplifies a particular sense, and whether or not the erudite decision would be to follow that line of thinking. The sense of the common, the common man, who is he/she/it; what do they believe? In the recently publicized "pregnancy pact" that was made by group of teens in Massachusetts, the "common" thinking, in their particular sect, was that pregnancy would help them to feel "important" (it was speculated). When a reporter asked an 18 year old girl, who'd had baby at 15, if she thought that celebrity's pregnancies, particularly young female celebrities, made it more appealing, she responded, "I mean, everyone looks up to celebrities, I know I do." In using the term "everyone, she believes that the "common" thinking of people is based in the choices and actions of celebrities. When my wife spoke to one of her friends, and they were discussing her pregnancy and the fact that she and her friends were all pregnant, she commented, "We're like the celebrities." I'm going to raise my child in a compound; her common sense will be that of a very structured curriculum that touts reading as a superpower in defense from the stupid that has poisoned the common-folk. "Baby, we can't go down there, the people are sick!"

CONCERTS

RTX w/ IMAAD WASSIF
07/06/08 | The Mink

When I was a young boy I was introduced to rock music through television. That means 1984-era Van Halen, Def Leppard, Quiet Riot, Motley Crue, and a lot of fist pumping, drum kick stomping, whoa-ohs, and guitar solos and shit like that. Anyway, while this became wholly uncool, at the time I didn't question the hair and the tights, and the bandannas soon became a part of gang fashion. Well, as rock had gone the way of the Led Zeppelin Mountain Cream kind of heavy blues pot brownie thing, people sort of abandoned the big guitar T Rex thing, but it seems RTX embrace it. Now, the songs are still weird and at times turn into this alien Prince 1999 thing, it still remains rocking and loud, and fist pumpish, and when listening to it, I tend to spill Bud Lights on my carpet, but hey rock n' roll, or whatever. Imaad Wassif, is a completely different beast, spacy and psychedelic and epic like Tom Petty song, understated but mysterious, you can picture tumbleweeds and deserted towns and dust.

HARRY & THE POTTERS
07/08/08 | Walter's On Washington

Honestly I know nothing about this band except their songs are based on things in Harry Potter books. But, they are a popular band, apparently. I've never see Harry Potter or read a Harry Potter book, however, I don't know what most songs are about anyway. I think it would be like listening to Pink Floyd or Funkadelic, there is a narrative a back story, but maybe it's more of like a thing GT kids have in common, that and Radiohead, and environmental causes, and podcasting.

ALBUMS

MARC RIBOT'S CERAMIC DOG
Party Intellectuals (Pi Recordings)

When Ol' Dirty Bastard says there is no father to his style, this record has that kind of thing going. But not really, Marc Ribot is a highly talented guitarist who's worked with everyone from T. Bone Burnett to Tom Waits. He's dabbled in rock, punk, jazz, Latin, soul and No wave. In a way, these are all index notes that would help one to understand this album. This is all over the place, but not in the sense that there is no cohesion. The cohesive element is the band of Chess Smith and Shahzad Ismaily who anchor the



The Jonx
7/3 | Numbers



Geto Boys
7/4 | Warehouse Live



Peter Murphy
7/10 | Meridian



Papermoons
7/11 | The Mink



twists and turns with grace. "Shsh Shsh" is something is that would not be out of place on a soundtrack about whales opinions of space travel; it is above and below you. "Never Better" could be Don Caballero or of the instrumental rock era, "When We Were Young And We Were Freaks" is sort of a spoken word free guitar Lee Ranaldo like song. The album has many moods, many colors "Todo El Mundo Es Kitsch" is something that would rock people at a party or on a patio, while giving off a sense of tropicalia or Spanish rock. You have heard bits of these sounds in different places but here they mingle under one gazebo.

PORTISHEAD

Third (Island)

Portishead had released two fantastic albums and it seemed that would be it. While what they did was referred to as trip hop, at the time, it was much bigger than a tag line. It blended sensibilities of electronic, psychedelic, hip hop, French movie soundtracks, Can, and a variance of other things into a moody (mostly somber) group of songs. Third is some of those things, but what it is not is as one dimensional in terms of groove, there are the slow haunting pieces (Plastic, Threads), but then there are songs like "Nylon Smile," "We Carry On," and "Machine Gun" that upped the ante, they are dark but they are also danceable, they have a futuristic funk. The songs are very raw, very bare, and skeletal in a way, but big in others. The pace lures you into the payoff, you are captured, intrigued, it translates sadness and forgives, problem and resolution. It is powerful and beautiful. Sounds sneak into the songs, they lurk in the winds of the melodies; they drizzle and sometimes erupt, only dissolve again. Did Portishead do it again, or did they just continue to do it?

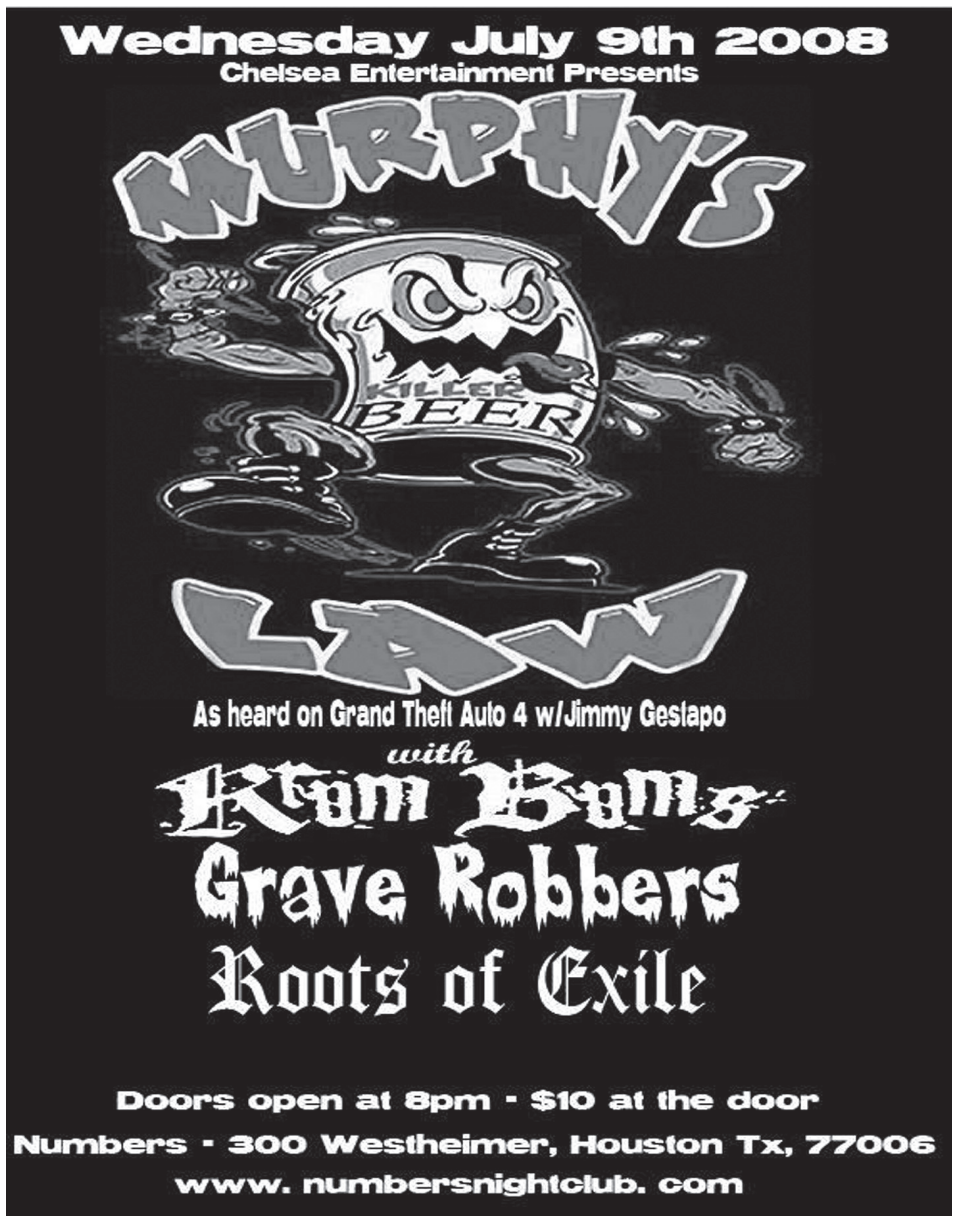
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Eldridge
7/18 | Fitz



Amplified Heat
7/26 | Rudyard's







GLASS HALF-FULL

JULY IS CHOCK-FULL O' CRUNK

| Brigitte Zabak



'THIS MOMENT IN BLACK HISTORY'

THE WORLD CAN BE A SCARY PLACE SOMETIMES AND ACCORDING TO AN ARTICLE WRITTEN BY A COUPLE OF WRITERS FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, AMERICANS ARE PRETTY TORN UP ABOUT THE STATE OF THE THINGS. THE ARTICLE PAINTED AN UPLIFTING PICTURE OF OUR FUTURE BY OFFERING UP THE POSSIBILITY THAT MAYBE THE GLASS ISN'T HALF EMPTY – INSTEAD IT'S BONE DRY.

AND, OF COURSE, THE ONLY THING ONE CAN DO with an empty glass is to fill it with pessimism and hopelessness, right? Wrong! Although the writers of this wonderfully uplifting article did a smashing job of kicking us while we're down, they failed to offer any useful information to help refill our glasses.

That just ain't right, people.

Making the world a better place doesn't take much. You don't need to save babies from burning buildings or chain yourself to a tree in protest in order to create change. Sometimes, just doing the thing you are good at, like playing music, can turn that frown on a weakening Nation's face upside down. Even if you can't make your own music, listening to others who do can send millions of happy rays out into the universe… so go check out some of the awesome shows playing around town this month.

What better way to celebrate the independence of our great Nation than to check out a bunch of bands struggling to emancipate themselves from the oppressive shackles of crappy music everywhere. Local rockers **Black Congress** will be rocking in the free world with Ohio-based **This Moment in Black History** at Walter's on Washington on July 4th. They will be accompanied by **The Monocles** and **Camp X-Ray** and together these four bands are going to rock the stars and stripes right off our flag.

Try to save a wee bit of energy for Saturday night, July 5th because **IHeartU Productions** is putting on a show that cannot be missed. For $12 bucks, you get an entire day and night's worth of music ranging from loud and intense to louder and more intense**. Andrew W.K**. will be headlining (he goes on around 9 pm). W.K.'s style is loud and in-your-face, but his genuine dedication to living life to the fullest is infectious and endearing. Also playing this warehouse party of awesomeness is **The Octopus Project**, an experimental pop band from Austin that consistently put on shows that are interactive and full of shoe-gazing goodness. Local bands contributing to the sound and the fury include: **Winning, Andy Dixon, Bring Back the Guns, The Watermarks, The Riff Tiffs, O Pioneers!!!, Papermoons, American Sharks, Limb, Welfare Mothers, B., Lisa's Sons and Blackie**. The festivities will take place at the Keene St. Warehouse starting at 1 pm. All ages are welcome and prepare to sweat profusely and for an extended period of time because the festivities don't end until 4 in the morning!

On the complete opposite side of the musical spectrum, there is a show coming to town that is so full of wonderment and nerdiness you won't believe your ears. (Caveat – My inner nerd is going to shine through with this post – so be prepared.) Back in 2002, two brothers living in Massachusetts got together and started an indie rock band unlike any that had ever existed to date. They named themselves **Harry and The Potters** and wrote lyrics based on the popular children's books about a boy wizard written by J.K. Rowling. What may have just been an attempt at paying homage to a set of books that sparked a love of reading in so many people, actually turned into an entire subculture of young musicians who make music dubbed "Wizard Rock". There are huge conferences organized just to showcase the hundreds of Wizard Rock bands that exist today. Yea…it's nerdy, but some of the music isn't half bad. Harry and The Potters style is solid indie pop goodness. It's not the most mind blowing instrumentation you will ever hear – but it is fun and innovative. They are touring with the **Unlimited Enthusiasm Expo '08** which is like a traveling summer camp and indie rock tour. What is so unique about this tour is that these young adults are partnering with **Wizard Rock the Vote** as a way to reach out to people at their shows who are of age to vote in the upcoming election. They actually reach out to local volunteers in the cities they are touring in as a way to empower their fans and get the younger generation involved in changing the system for good. Two volunteers will be stationed at every show to sign up unregistered voters and answer questions in regards to the election. How cool is that?? Glass half empty my arse! Harry and the Potters will be playing on July 8th at Walter's on Washington with **Math the Band** and **Uncle Monsterface**. It's an all ages show and definitely worth checking out.

Yes. I did just spend almost 350 words talking about a band who plays songs about Harry Potter and have know run out of space to let you know about other cool stuff going on around town this month. Make sure not to miss out **The Skyline Networks return of the Hootenanny** (aka – Twotenanny). Last year's event was insane. There was such an amazing turn out and the Backroom at the Mink was overrun with hipsters edging their way in to see their favorite local bands covering their favorite bands. This year's lineup is killer and you better get there early because it will get packed. The show takes place July 26th at the Mink and admission will be cheap.

There are loads of other interesting shows that deserve some recognition like **Peter Murphy** at the Meridian on July 10th or the **Papermoons** record release shindig over at The Mink on July 11th. Whatever you end up going to see this month (like George Michael or Warrant) make sure to keep hope alive and never let 'the man' keep you down. (Hooray for clichés!)

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I LIKE YOUR BAND..... HONEST?

| JD and Stacey Tucker



SO, LENNY BRISCOE PLAYED AT THE WHITE SWAN and a co-worker of mine shows up with a friend. Lenny did what they do and the co-worker said, "You guys are awesome! I really liked it!" (For anonymity purposes: thanks for coming M*nica!). I went back to work only to find a mutual co-worker, who had met up with her later that night, told me that the entire time she had talked smack about Lenny.

Now, M*nica showed a great example of a**holery. Not because she didn't like Lenny. Maybe even partially because she talked smack, but mostly because she got called out!

Now I am not at all, condoning the lying method, but let me explain: we all have bands and friends of bands. We are scientifically designed to be unique. We are not always going to enjoy everything we hear, but what do you say if your friends band if you just didn't like them?

1) You could be blunt and honest and tell your friend the hard truth (mind you, they aren't always the most popular of friends, but you gotta respect them for that).

2) You can be a total a**hole, lie, then talk smack (you best be aware to whom you speak)!

3) You could still lie, but be nice about it (ugh). *or...*

4) you could look for one positive thing to say that you truly did like. Now, don't go overboard and say more than you intend to. That could easily open a new can of worms you gotta lie your way out of.

It's never easy, but we love our friends and want to protect them. Whether you believe in tough love, or gentle love, just remind that buddy-ol-pal of yours that they are the keenest m*r f*r's in town, and share a beer.

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Summer Slaughter Tour

Thu.Jul 10.
Peter Murphy

Sat. Jul. 12
Kill Hannah w/ Support

Sun. Jul. 13
MAIN ROOM
Faster Pussycat & L.A. Guns w/ Bang Tango, High Four

Sun. Jul. 13
RED ROOM 69 Eyes Tribute Party

Thu. Jul. 17
Less Than Jake Big D & The Kids' Table, Suburban Legends

Fri. Jul. 18
Butch Walker

Sat. Jul. 19 Summer Sinfest '08

Sun. Jul. 20
RX Bandits

Wed. Jul. 23
(HED)PE

Fri. Jul. 25
MAIN ROOM
Micro Wrestling & Comedy Show
RED ROOM
Green Jelly

Sat. Jul. 26
Zosos - Led Zeppelin Tribute

Fri. Aug. 1
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L.L. Cooper , Mike Conde

Fri. 11
Bob Log III, Scott Biram, Posessed By Paul James

Sat. 12
Yuppie Pricks, Young Heart Attack

Thu. 17
Super Pancho Combo, Stamen, Tyburn Jig

Fri. 18
Broken Teeth, Whorehound

Sat. 19
The Ends, Something Fierce, Manikin

Sun. 20
Samuel Locke Ward, Teddy Boys

Wed. 23
Avenue Rose, Luxury Sweets

Thu. 24
Lazy Horse, The Misfires, The Mathletes

Fri. 25
Invincible Czars

Sat. 26
Amplified Heat, Shandon Sahm
Big Green Machine

Sun. 27
Mostly Bears

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THE SKYLINE NETWORK presents

Hootenanny II: Twotenanny

| David A. Cobb | Rosa Guerrero



THE KA-NIVES
July 26 @ The Mink's Backroom

MANY PEOPLE SHUDDER WHEN THEY HEAR THE TERM "COVER BAND," BUT THE CREW OVER AT THE SKYLINE NETWORK KNOWS A GOOD IDEA WHEN IT STRIKES: GET SOME OF THE BEST LOCAL BANDS TOGETHER TO PLAY AS THEIR FAVORITE CLASSIC BANDS.

AFTER THE INAUGURAL HOOTENANNY in January--which featured 10 bands and seemed to be way past capacity--it was pretty much a sure thing that there would be a sequel.

This month's show, which is July 26th at The Mink's Backroom, features another excellent, varied line-up: The Ka-Nives as The Lemonheads, Flowers to Hide as The Cure, The Kimonos as Blondie, Buxton as Bjork, Custom Drinker as Rod Stewart, Tody Castillo and Friends as Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers and Friends, Sharks and Sailors as The Police, American Sharks as The Cars, Judas Bear as Spoon, and Paris Falls as Rush.

Sharks and Sailors' Mike Rollin says the inspiration for their set came from their admiration of The Police. "We're all big fans, and we wanted to do something fun," he says. "It's also a good chance to rip off...I mean, learn some new chords. Andy Summers is a wizard."

As for which bands he's excited about seeing at the Hootenanny, he says, "The Ka-Nives' set will be insane. I also want to see Paris Falls doing Rush. I want to hear "2112" in its entirety...Marshall covering Rod Stewart will be fun, and Flowers to Hide's three-guitar attack should lend itself well to The Cure."

Tom Petty is an obvious choice for local crooner Tody Castillo, who will play alongside a Who's Who of local musicians, including Ben Murphy, Travis Foster, Kurt Coburn, Arthur Yoria, and Ryan Chavez. It's nice to hear from you. "All of these guys are big Petty fans and we're psyched to be doing it," Castillo says. "We're going full force rock on this one..."

Musician Ray Brown (Paris Falls) says Rush wasn't the band's first choice but that it works perfectly with their current line-up. "We first thought Alice Cooper but we didn't think many people would know the tracks we wanted to do," he says. "Iron Maiden was out of the picture because we needed more guitars. We didn't want to come off doing a band someone would expect us to do like the Beatles. Since we're a three-piece band now, it worked out to do Rush songs. We will be doing a *2112* song but unfortunately not [The Temple of] "Syrinx." We couldn't land the Taurus pedals. Also expect songs from *Signals*, *Moving Pictures*, *Hemispheres*..."

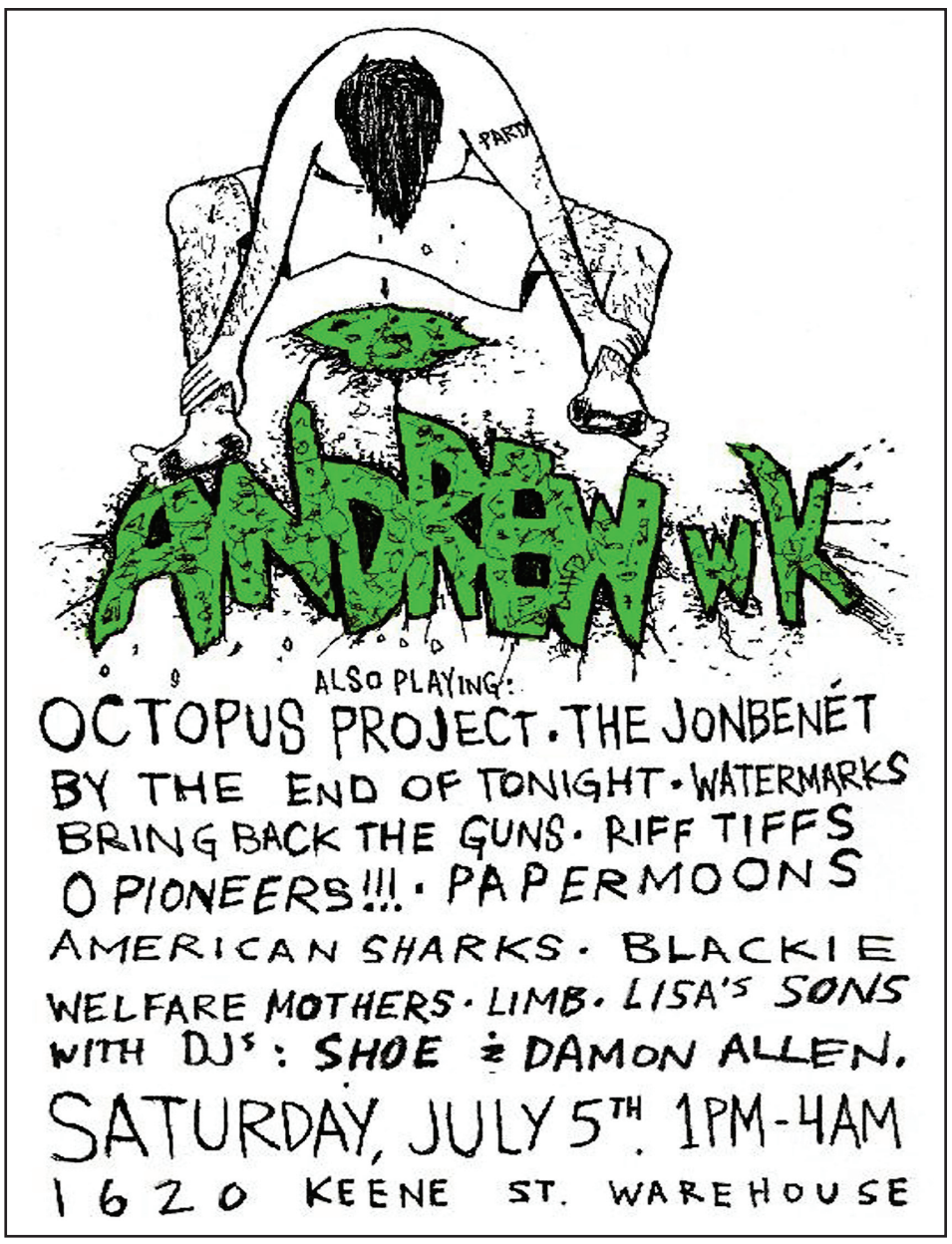
"Plus we all grew like three sets of extra balls each and we needed to use them," he jokes.

Brown also says he's looking forward to seeing The Kimonos and Sharks and Sailors. "And bands with more sweet 'staches, naturally, even if Mikey's isn't."

Cover is a mere $5, so you really have no excuse.

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THE PAPERMOONS

| Ramon Medina | Self Photo



PAPERMOONS

IT'S SUNDAY AFTERNOON AND I'M SITTING WITH THE PAPERMOONS OUTSIDE KING BISCUIT IN THE HOT TEXAS SUN AS GUITARIST MATT CLARK AND DRUMMER DANIEL HAWKINS ARE GETTING ALL IN SEARCH OF ON ME. A HOUSE PARTY ON THEIR UPCOMING TOUR IS RIGHT NEAR THE HOMETOWN OF THE LEGENDARY MOTH MAN WHICH, AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, IS A LOCAL LEGEND INVOLVING SOME CREATURE THAT LOOKS LIKE...WELL...A MOTH MAN.

THE SUPERNATURAL IS AN ODD LITTLE DIVERSION for the Papermoons. "We went to an old graveyard in Sleepy Hollow at night." says Daniel, "That was some freaky shit!" Cleary not freaked out enough on that tour, they plan to spend some time this tour visiting Gettysburg where ghosts are said to roam and people can visit at night. It's all par for the course for a band that clearly loves not only making music but also travelling. Talk with them for any length of time and it's clear that, for these two, touring is still a grand adventure filled with the promise of the unexpected and the memorable.

That love of the road is actually quite appropriate as the duo met while touring in different bands. Danny had been drumming in Houston's Little Compass and Matt had been in playing guitar in the Akron, Ohio band Adios. The bands met through the internet, toured together, and the two immediately hit it off. Then, when the bands were coming to their logical end, a night at Late Night Pie sealed the partnership. "We were talking about quieter bands like Wilco," says Matt, "and it turns out we had similar ideas of what we wanted to do. We started sending tapes of songs back and forth between Ohio and Texas where one of us would build on the ideas of the other. Eventually, I was over with school and had nothing keeping me in Ohio so I moved to Houston."

The new duo soon discovered the challenges and rewards of the new less-is-more approach. "There's a freedom in just playing a backbeat and not overplaying." says Danny, "Believe it or not, it's actually easier to overplay than to just hold-back but it's amazing how much a song can be just as powerful without resorting to simple volume."

"My guitar has to do a lot more work," explains Matt, "and I have to try to fill the sound. But if you can play a song – just vocals and a guitar – and it holds up, that's a good song. That's my benchmark."

"When we work on songs, we hear arrangements in our heads," says Danny, "so if we don't feel that, we drop it. This new album was written pretty fast. We wanted to release it in time to tour during the summer so all the songs were written and recorded under that time constraint but we didn't compromise in the process. This album is exactly the album we wanted to release."

The album was partially written in Matt's small apartment. "Danny set up his drums here in the living room," says Matt as he sketches three very small rectangles in an L shape with stick figures on my note pad. "I was in the bedroom here, and in this small bathroom between the two rooms is where I set my amp. We recorded the entire thing on Adobe Audition starting with Danny's drums and I'd layer on top of that. We'd start with the music and find the vocal harmonies."

"Harmonies were the first thing on the table when we started his band!" exclaims Danny. "We love killer harmonies so that's one of the things we concentrate on. We'll work out the melodies and Matt will write the lyrics."

"I'm not much of a lyricist," says Matt as his leg shakes up and down under the table, "I'll try to write broad lyrics that everyone can relate to. Some of it is from stuff I've experienced but the lyrics are never specific. I just try to find that one line and, once I've got that down, the rest of the lyrics flow from that one line."

Matt may be humble about his lyrics but there is a simple honesty in his words that seem as organic and of-the-earth as the music. Take the opening track – *Follow The Sun* - from the new Papermoons album. Chiming guitar notes play off a lonely slide guitar as vocals sing a gorgeous melody evoking a melancholy joy. They sing "Yeah, I chose this life/ a life with no money at all/ and you get what you put in/ if you do what you love/ give in/ just give in." That is the Papermoons in a nutshell.

FPH

The Papermoons' new album "New Tales" will be available in July on Team Science.

Their tour kicks off on July 11th with their record release at the Backroom at the Mink. You can also see them at the Keene Street Warehouse Party on July 5th with Andrew W.K., Octopus Project, and many more.



JULY

RECESSION THURSDAYS

@ nUmberS

7/3/2008
The Jonx
Closet City
Mesus the Thesis
Sew What

7/10/2008
Studemont Project
Wicked Poseur
Wolves at the Door
Trusty Tape Recorder

7/17/2008
Riff Tiffs
Lisa's Sons
Pale
The Takes
CeePlus Bad Knives

7/24/2008
Southern Backtones
Generation Landslide
Muzak John
The Sweaters

7/31/2008
Peekaboo Theory
Los Imagenes Ocultas
Barkus, Sly, and the Golden Egg
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THESE GAMES ARE SMARTER THAN YOU

| Brittany Bly

To celebrate the opening of the new Art Storm, Eli had the Free Press writers make drawings using pieces of colored construction paper. When the writers were done making them, everyone laid out their finished drawings and they voted on which were the best. Determine the full name of the Free Press writers, the color of construction paper each of the winning drawings was drawn on, and where each drawing placed. *A note before you get started: the writer's last names do not match their last names in real life!*

1. The writer who used green construction paper was not Jody Martin. The first place drawing wasn't made on red construction paper.

2. The five writers who won were, from 5th place to 1st place, Brittany, the writer whose last name was Carroll, the student who used white construction paper, the girl whose snowflake won 2nd place, and the student whose last name was Afra.

3. Nick's last name isn't Carroll and he didn't use blue construction paper. The fifth place winner doesn't have the last name of Wukman.

4. Tim, whose last name isn't Shumate, didn't use red construction paper. The pink construction paper was not used by a girl.

5. Jody didn't use the red construction paper. Andrea's drawing placed better than Tim's but not as good as the drawing done on blue construction paper.

6. The writer whose last name is Afra didn't use the green construction paper.

	Shumate	Afra	Wukman	Carroll	Martin	blue	green	pink	red	white	1	2	3	4	5
Andrea															
Jody															
Brittany															
Tim															
Nick															
1															
2															
3															
4															
5															
blue															
green															
pink															
red															
white															

E A B O R Z X E P A P S A R M S T O M M
X E X E C U T I O N S K O J K L M N I O
M S B W A G H D D G S P A O E Q M O N T
N O T B T R Q N R H A N O I S S E C E R
T R X E C W Y I O O K K T S B R M Y U U
E T T R O A P V I H O O H X I K G L V P
M N E J F N A M H T O M K E X Q Y H B H
O O V H T J C N N V H I V C S L M A A O
O M C P I X A R B G L H D S M A R R T O
B B W W S K X Y M J L H M A K B P M L P
A C Y X U O A O L K U C M M S E N O I L
W P I G B W O O T N B T Y O G S L N O U
E F R B G H I D S V A I O H O Z U I K K
E X E E H P O C H S G S S T Y N L E U E
D P C G P I N R E U T I P Y G O L S H O
B A M T B A G L R C D O M M Z Q U T Y O
F C E R T Y P F P R B G B M E W R E E N
P P V P K U H P O I A R W O I S Y X T X
O A B D O E R A H C N O I T R I V S S O
L P M C O R O P Y C O P U H L U P O P N

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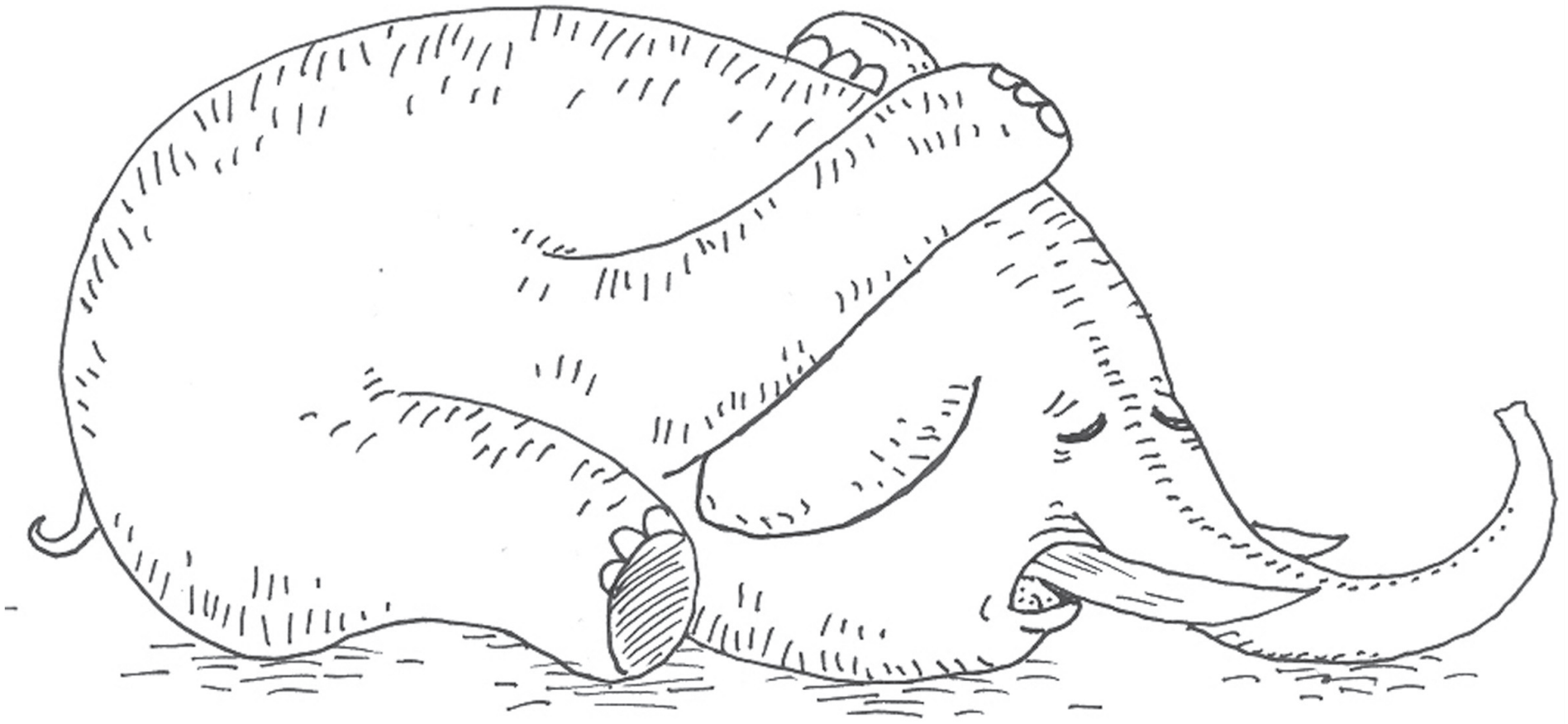
"WHEN I SAY RIP HIS HEAD OFF, RIP HIS FUCKING FOOT OFF... IT'S VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO IT."

BREAKING THE BEAST

The Abuse of Circus Animals

| Andrea Afra | Tim Dorsey





IN 1999, TIM FRISCO, a Carson & Barnes circus elephant trainer was caught on video by an undercover PeTA cameraman during a training demonstration for new employees. As he screams, curses, and stabs at the elephant students he is 'training' with bullhooks and electrically charged prods, his goal is to evoke cries of pain and fear from the giant beasts.

"When you hear that screaming, then you know you got their attention."

Frisco learned his techniques from his father, Joe Frisco Sr., a former trainer for the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus. Owned by Feld Entertainment, Inc., the same company that puts on other family shows like Disney on Ice, the Ringling Bros. Red Tour is coming to Houston's Reliant Stadium in July and they'll do anything to hide what takes place behind the scenes...

"Right here in the barn, you can't do it on the road...I'm not gonna touch her in front of a thousand people...she's gonna fucking do what I want and that's just fucking the way it is...I am the boss, I will kick your fucking ass...I'll kick the shit out of you, you little prick."

Austin July 2006: Closer to home Ringling Bros. is caught on video as elephants are being paraded through a neighborhood. An elephant named Tonka is being made to hold onto another elephant's tail but she lets go and the person guiding her has a bullhook behind her left ear. He yanks on it eliciting several of the most horrific panting cries, like someone trying to breath heavily through a trumpet. A close up shot of the back of her ear shows a bleeding wound where the hook has ripped into her flesh. Austin police illegally confiscated the tape from PeTA.

Animal rights groups such as PeTA have been documenting circus animal abuse for over two decades. As a result the Ringling Bros. FAQ link on their website leads to a seven page, poorly written rebuttal, every single entry a defensive response against accusations made against the circus. For example, they claim their animals get ample exercise and care and have a better, longer life than those in the wild. This could be true if in the wild they enjoyed activites such as riding in cramped box cars for up to seventy hours without a break, fifty weeks a year, being chained with shackles long enough to leave deep gashes on their ankles, and learning stupid pet tricks under the force and threat of violence.

In retaliation for whistleblowers like PeTA and other animal rights groups such as PAWS and The Elephant Alliance, Feld Entertainment, Inc., hired none other than former CIA Covert Operations Director Claire George to oversee an undercover operation to infiltrate those organizations that were most deemed to be a threat to ticket sales.

Worse than Ringling's spy games are its treatment of animals. In 1998 USDA formally charged Ringling in the death of Kenny, a baby elephant who was forced to perform while ill. They settled out of court for $20,000. In 1999, the USDA cited Ringling for the injuries of two baby elephants that had suffered severe rope burns during the separation from their mothers. After consulting with experts and in opposition to Ringling's denial that the separation process was ethical, the USDA stated "there is sufficient evidence that the handling of these animals caused unnecessary trauma, behavioral stress, physical harm, and discomfort to these two elephants."

This incident took at the Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Center for Elephant Conservation in central Florida, which is nothing more than a pachyoderm farm for future circus animal acts. Video footage revealed the birthing process that takes place there. Shirley, the seven year old under-age mother elephant, stands shackled to a fence as her newborn baby slips from her body and falls to the concrete floor. She is frightened and as the keepers try to pull the baby away she accidentally kicks it. She is then yanked away as she tries to reach out with a searching trunk to feel and smell her baby, which they named Riccardo. He was euthanized 8 months later when he fell off a circus pedestal during a training exercise and fractured both of his hind legs. Many ex-employees of Ringling have spoken out as witnesses to the daily violence that takes place out of the ring.

Several companies and cities and countries have gotten wise to the mistreatment of circus animals and have stopped collaborating with Ringling. Yet in 2000, when Seattle tried to pass a bill against allowing circus animal acts, Feld Entertainment, Inc. threatened to pull all of their productions from the city forever. The Seattle City Council thought life without Disney on Ice would be unbearable so they nixed the bill that would have set an honorable example for the rest of us.

There are many ways that people can take action against acts that use animals. You can boycott and picket such circuses and attend shows that use live people instead. Cirque du Soleil is much more impressive than any live animal act. Also, if you find a business that offer free tickets don't be afraid to tell them to do a little research before continuing to associate with the circus. For the true guerilla, if you see free tickets left out on a display, pocket them all and throw them away. Yet the most effective way to help these animals is to tell their story to a kid. Circuses like Ringling Bros. cling to the hope that there will be several more generations that are brainwashed by tradition and lies, the old notion that since we went to the circus we should take our kids too. If kids knew how the animals are treated, they will tell their friends and so on and attendance numbers would drop significantly. Children shouldn't be made spectators of these broken wild animals and if given the choice and told the truth, their generation will be the death of this tradition.

Circus Glossary

Ankus/Bullhook: *A device used to inflict painful reinforcement on circus elephants. A long metal prod with an inconspicuously sharp steel hook and tip, nearly identical to a fireplace poker. Some of these are equipped with electric prongs.*

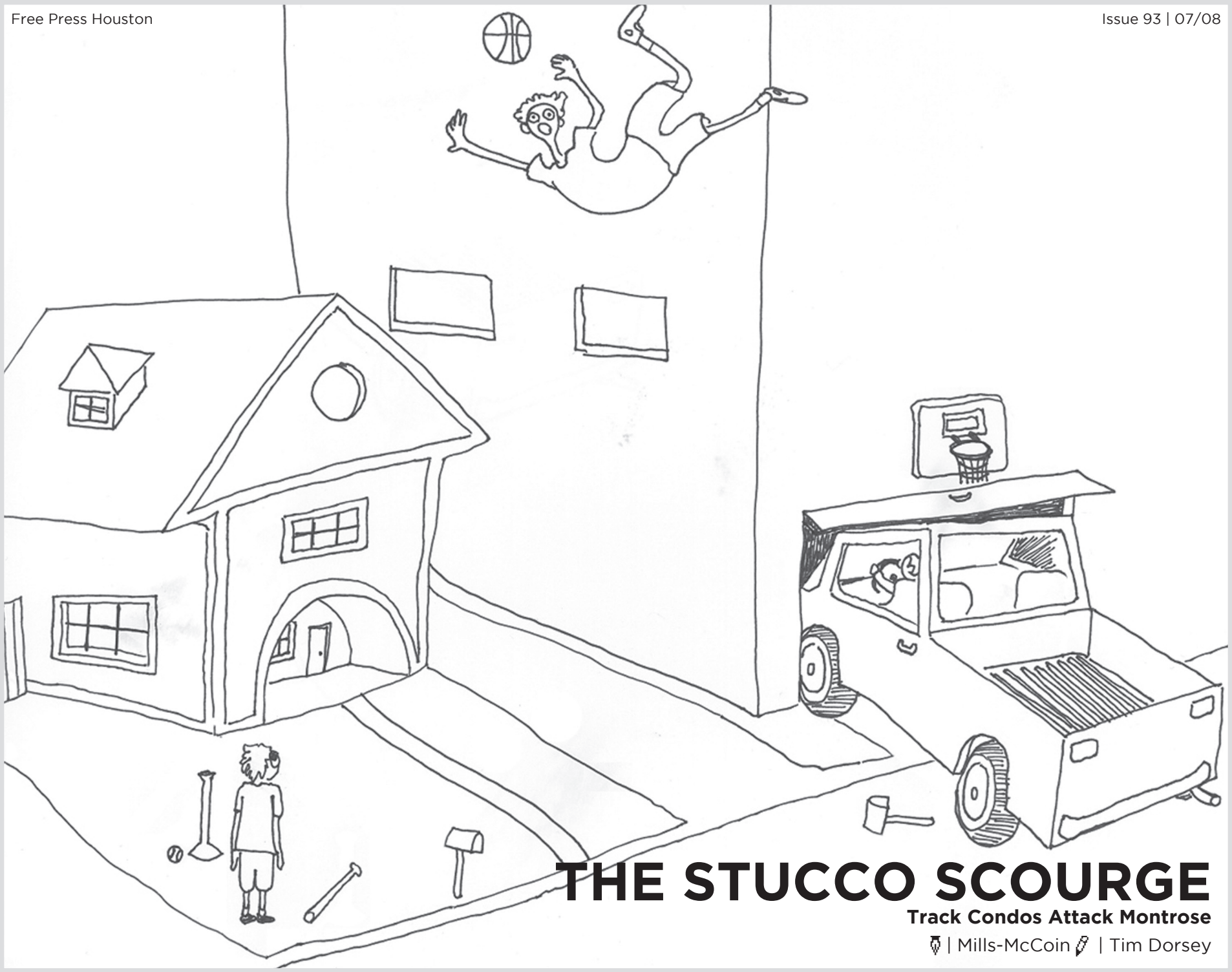
Wonder Dust: *A blood coagulant used to stop bleeding and conceal flesh wound caused by bullhooks.*

Free Tickets: *Sneak attack! If you see a stack of tickets being given away, take them all and then throw them away (recycle, of course)*

Spanky the Clown: *Thomas Allen Riccio, former Ringling clown known as "Spanky" was charged with 10 counts of child sexual exploitation*

Sacha Houcke: *Ringling's ringmaster was charged after witnesses saw Houcke choke his daughter, push her to the ground and punch her in the face in a park in Pennsylvania.*

FPH



THE STUCCO SCOURGE

Track Condos Attack Montrose

| Mills-McCoin | Tim Dorsey

A HOUSING DEVELOPER FROM KATY, TEXAS ONCE TOLD ME THAT HE APPRECIATED "A NEW HOME IN AN OLD LOT." I TOLD HIM THAT I WOULD TAKE HIS LIFE IF HE EVER TRIED TO GO TO EUROPE.

I'M NOT PREJUDICE, pretentious (well?), or racist. I just hate people that love to destroy perfectly good houses in Montrose. I strongly dislike people that profit from such murder. Not doubt it's premeditated. And not only do they get away with it, they make shit loads of cash! Son of a bitch that pisses me off!

Ahem.

Hi, my name is John and I have a problem with condo and townhouse developers in Montrose.

<Hi, John>.

As a child I loved playing in my front yard. It had grass I could roll around in and a tree to climb on. If I was a kid growing up in Montrose today and I was playing in my front yard, there's a likelihood that I would get run over by my dad coming home from work, pulling into the garage because I would have no front yard. Maybe that's not so "likely" but the point is that front yards are disappearing from the Montrose landscape. They are and it's a downright shame. Not only are they disappearing, they are being replaced by slabs of concrete. A street basically. And I'm not too sure about the science, but it seems like it's getting hotter around here because of this. Like there's no soil to soak up the humidity, but instead a giant rock that reflects the heat back into the atmosphere! <cough> <cough>.

The house I grew up in also had a backyard. My dad was kind enough to build me a huge, wooden fort in said back yard. It didn't have walls really, but I still slept up there a few times for fun. If… I was a kid growing up in Montrose today, the fort would be made of stucco; it would have walls, and running water. It would be called "home" instead of "fort"; and yet they would be nearly the same size.

New York City and London have pulled off the "oh, it's really crowded here" -thing for quite some time. And cheers to them. But… it's terribly cold in New York and London. Everyone is huddled together on purpose- body warmth.

We live in Texas. It's hot. I sweat. If you're reading this article outside right now, then you're probably sweating too. It will always be a good idea for us to stay spread out.

Maybe the situation isn't as bad as I'm portraying it; I just really don't want it to get any worse. Profit margins are a growing

tragedy in America. Energy costs, inflation, technology, etc… Money is pretty damn scandalous right now and the most efficient way to make it is by abandoning your morals and giving in to greed. For instance, some people buy one hundred year old houses in Montrose and tear them down to the ground to build a pair of condos (that look exactly the same no less).

Obviously, the type of person that would do such a thing is maligned in the soul but there's another culprit- the fucker who buys the condo. They're the worst. They create demand for this vile yet easy way out; and our neighborhood landscape suffers with every condo that is built and purchased. These buildings aren't even nice to look at. They're all built the same way- Early Profit-Margin Deco, which is a French term for "sinfully boring".

What's worse is that this development is supposed to save money for someone. Obviously, the builder and developer get their cut of the Devil's booty. But it's the home owner that gets fooled in the end. By replacing soil with concrete and sharing the other half of the lot with your neighbor, the home owner incurs expenses he would not have otherwise incurred had he bought a house. The laws of thermodynamics shed light on this matter. Quick science lesson: in your hand is a cold bottle of Lonestar; when you hold the bottle at the bottom, the beer gets warm due to the transfer of heat from your hand to the bottle. Two insights here. One: hold your beer by the neck like you know what you're doing. Two: don't build two hot rocks next to each other and expect to save on energy costs. You will likely spend more money on air conditioning in your new condo than you would if you were to not ruin the architectural integrity of our neighborhood. I'm not a scientist but this makes sense to me.

An even quicker lesson in economics. "The paradox of thrift"; you have to spend money to make/save money. The idea here is that you spend the money buying the house instead of saving money buying the condo. Or at least spend the money to cover the roof of your condo in solar panels (your only redeeming option). I'm not an economist but, damn, do I know a good one.

Now, those of us that hate this developing infection in our neighborhood are helpless. We can't really do anything to stop the bleeding. Unless… we take a page out of the "Stop the Ashby High Rise" book. God bless those old ladies and their grandchildren that stood and protested on Bissonet during rush hour for months on end. The people of the Boulevard Oaks Civic Association and the South Hampton Civic Club fearlessly banded together to stop the monster of commerce invading their quaint part of town. I admire such moxie. I will say though that the task before them is a bit easier to tackle since they are just stopping one giant building. We have to combat an entire army of track condos fueled by greed and poor taste.

In no way am I advocating that people start burning down these monotonous buildings. That would be bad. But there are some things you can do to discourage this movement. For instance, if someone destroys a house on your street; builds a pair of condos and moves in to one of them; you might want to spit on their front lawn/driveway when you walk by. You could even welcome them to the neighborhood by taking them a basket of fruit that looks fresh but is in fact on the verge of being rotten. If you want to save on your water bill then don't use your toilet- just pee on their condo. That's what they're made for.

I'll stress this again- no violence or vandalism. Instead, pay one of the weird gypsies on Westheimer to put a curse on the building. I've been doing that for years. It's very passive-aggressive and it really gets the point across that you don't like what they are living in.

To all of the housing developers, here's some free advice. Midtown is a place for condos. Yuppie lawyers and investment bankers love that crap. It makes them feel like they are working in Manhattan.

That barren prairie we call "Katy" is perfect for track condos. Build all the track condos you want out there. Just please don't bring your nastiness into Montrose. Katy is already void of a decent landscape so why not just ruin it some more. You could even line the Westpark Toll Road with condos and might actually do some good.

As a citizen of Montrose, I beg of you- do not look favorably on condos and townhouses that are randomly strewn about the hood. Instead, be outspoken and verbal about your hatred. Go to meetings like I do. We meet at any bar in town. Yelling profanities at condos from across the street makes you look passionate and scary. Maybe the inhabitants will move out and then we can tear down their condo and replace it with a giant "lost and found" for bikes.

Did I mention that trees get cut down when they prepare the land for a condo? I bet you tree-huggers love that.

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OIL AND RACISM

| REZA FIYOUZAT | CARLOS LATUFF

IT IS CUSTOMARY TO RUN INTO BRAZENLY RACIST COMMENTARY COMING OUT OF THE U.S. LIBERALS AND RIGHT-WINGERS ALIKE, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO THE QUESTION OF OIL. BESIDES THE OCCASIONAL SURREAL HEADLINES ABOUT CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS SUING OPEC, IT IS NORMAL TO READ HEADLINES URGING OPEC MEMBER COUNTRIES TO INCREASE PRODUCTION. IT IS AS IF WE WERE AT A RESTAURANT, TRYING TO GET MORE SERVICE. 'HEY WAITER! MORE DRINKS OVER HERE!'

THE MORE LIBERAL ONES, of course, take it to another level. In the context of 'oil shortages', when the right wingers assert that more internal exploration/extraction is needed, the inevitable liberal knee-jerk reaction is, 'Of course not! Leave our wildlife alone!'

Shocking bulletin to Western 'environmentalists': 'Oil Producing' countries too have environments.

As it relates to the issue of oil, there is proliferation of a language and mentality that is racist to the core. The two variations, militarism and capitalistically defined 'environmentalism', are espoused by the right and the liberal wings respectively. The line of thinking starts out with something like this: Those damned Ay-rabs (say, Saudis) are holding us hostage (or, insert any other OPEC member the State Dept and media lackeys are bullying that day); and concludes with: So, we must reduce our dependence on foreign oil (with the adjective 'foreign' intoning a four-letter word). By all means, do!

But ... Hostage to what? Hostage to our needs, hostage to our way of life. That's about the gist of it. The attitude is as narcissistic as it is racist.

Is There a Shortage?

A component of the liberal racist argument is the quantitative comparisons of proven worldwide oil reserves. In an inverse pissing game, they paint a picture of an abundance of oil those, say, Saudis are 'sitting on' (260 billion barrels), compared to the measly sum available underneath the U.S. (a mere 21 billion; weep, weep!). This '21 billion barrels' is the figure usually given for the amount of oil available in the U.S.; Wikipedia gives this number, as do numerous mainstream and even some leftist journalists and writers. However, this is an erroneous figure.

According to a report prepared by the Dept of Interior, for the U.S. Congress, dated February 2006, the amount of actually recoverable oil available to the U.S. exploiters is more than five times the 'official' 21 billion barrels. "The total endowment of technically

recoverable oil and gas on the [U.S. Outer Continental Shelf] is comprised of known resources—i.e., cumulative production, and estimates of remaining proved and unproved reserves and reserves appreciation—plus estimates of undiscovered resources. The estimate of the total hydrocarbon endowment ... is 115.4 billion barrels of oil (Bbo) and 633.6 trillion cubic feet of gas," (from the Executive Summary, p. vi-vii, emphasis added).

For comparison, the current proven reserves the Iraqis are 'sitting on' is likewise 115 Bbo.

Additionally, according to a 2004 report prepared by the Dept of Energy's Office of Naval Petroleum and Oil Shale Reserves, "The vast extent of U.S. oil shale resources, amounting to more than 2 trillion barrels, has been known for a century. [...] The huge resource base has stimulated several prior commercial attempts to produce oil from oil shale, but these attempts have failed primarily because of the historically modest cost of petroleum with which it competed. With the expected future decline in petroleum production historic market forces are poised to change and this change will improve the economic viability of oil shale," (emphasis added). The market forces clearly are a-changing, so shale oil is no longer such an uneconomic energy source after all.

There are therefore vast amounts of available oil that consumers in the U.S. can start tapping into, thereby cutting their urge to wage wars of possession for energy resources of others. As you see, you do have your own oil, and lots of it, too. Just dig it up!

So, why is all this oil kept underground? As relates to oil, what are the strategic interests of the U.S. ruling classes? The view from the Third World is not complicated. The good singer once sang: God blessed the child who's got his own. Well, the U.S. ruling classes sure have got their own, but what they really want is to keep their own. And the reason for that is: If the resources of other societies in the periphery are depleted first, the center can continue to hold its central place, strategically. It is really very simple.

Other understated facts

1) Non-OPEC countries produce 60% of the oil available on the world market. Canada, for example, is the biggest exporter of oil to the U.S. Yet, do you ever read any headlines demanding the Canadians increase their oil production, or threatening to sue Canada for withholding higher levels of oil production and driving up the prices? Not very likely!

2) The real demand for oil has not increased at the same rate (or, in proportional percentages) as the increases in oil prices. Even given the increased demand (due to 'insatiable appetites' of the economies of India and China), surely the global gross output of products cannot have jumped by so much as to explain the rate of the increases in oil prices. The world aggregate production is the key, not merely the Chinese and Indian GNP growth. The production sites for specific commodities may have changed locations, hence the increase in demand for oil in some locations, but the world capitalist system as a whole has not increased its production levels by an amount that can explain the rise in energy costs.

3) Most oil companies secure their inventories through long-term contracts, such as five, ten- to thirty-year contracts, and at set prices. This means that the handful of monopolies that control about 70-80% or more of the distribution networks (the key element in control of oil prices) are getting their supplies mostly at prices set ten, twenty or even thirty years ago.

From the above, you can easily guess what shall be concluded: the oil price rises are a classic, right out of the playbook, gigantic scam.

Smile for the cameras, you've been had!

Environmental Racism

But what really and truly tortures millions like me is the racism in not seeing the adverse environmental effects of oil exploration/extraction in Third World countries, particularly in the Middle East.

Since the Americans do have their own oil to the same extent that the Iraqis got their own, why is it that oil companies don't extract that oil? Environmental laws? Well, again, other people too have environments. You've destroyed theirs for about the past one hundred years, why not carefully and selectively disturb some of yours for the next century? Why are environmental concerns deemed so supreme in some habitats, and not relevant at all in other habitats? Do western environmentalists believe that the 'environment' stops at their national borders?

The mass media, such as the TV, is a good indicator of how the popular imagination is shaped. As regards reporting on environmental concerns of the lesser peoples, the singular instance of 'coverage' of such issues that comes to mind is when the mainstream media in the U.S. was particularly concerned about the effects of the Iraqi oil dumped into the Persian Gulf by Saddam Hussein; showing us what horrible monster Saddam was, dousing those poor birds! (Or, was the real outrage over all the oil not directed into engines?)

Since very little else is reported, we must assume that all the daily drillings and extractions going back a century; the fumes and the poisonous discharge from the wells and from the refineries and petrochemical plants lining the waterways of the Gulf; all the thousands of oil tankers, cargo ships and aircraft carriers -- all that activity must be causing a lively proliferation of the most magnificent array of wildlife in the Gulf!

do you ever read any headlines demanding the Canadians increase their oil production?

All manner of colonial carving up of our region has taken place over the last century. Vast amounts of wealth have been outright stolen from our societies. Just for one count, in 1901, William D'Arcy, a "millionaire London socialite" (according to Wikipedia), negotiated an oil concession that basically gave him the rights to explore, extract and take out whatever amount of oil he liked, from anywhere in Iran. Not bad. He extracted this 'concession' from a hugely corrupt, unpopular and in fact illegitimate absolutist monarch on his way out.

Under the auspices of the said 'concession', the British oil giant BP got its start; back then it was called Anglo-Persian Oil Company, and it made the first discovery of vast oil fields in 1908 in Masjed Soleiman, southwest of Iran. For the next forty-some years, this oil company was getting its oil supplies (with only a slight exaggeration) mostly for free. That's the way you do it, not through 'free market'! Money for nothing!

[Incidentally, the Iranian government would get itself a world of good publicity internationally and domestically if it stopped pursuing nuclear technology (which only introduces into our people's environment the most noxious toxins, capable of extreme radioactive toxicity for thousands of years, in the best case scenario), and instead pursued an actionable lawsuit against BP for historical reparations.]

So, in lay language, we in the Middle East have been bucked again and again and again, in one form or another, for the past one hundred years. And all that, for what? For oil. And for all those one hundred years, our environments have been subjected to all those nasty damages that make American environmentalists cringe when any mention is made of drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Isn't one hundred years enough?

Here is another angle on the environmental nightmares people in the Middle East are currently subjected to, as a result of the American Way of Life: Uranium-enriched munitions used in the war of aggression against the Afghans and the Iraqis alike.

The U.S. Dept of Justice accused, jailed and tortured Jose Padilla until he went insane, for a probable fleeting thought at which he may have smiled, about possibly it would maybe not be such an evil and insane idea after all, in a hypothetical kind of way of conjuring a fantasy, that maybe if some asshole found a way of letting off a 'dirty bomb' ... you know ... What would it be like?

So, setting off dirty, radioactive bombs (even the thought of it) is very bad, a supreme crime even, right?

Well then, why is it that these same high-ranking authorities, along with thousands of other co-conspirators are in the open and official business of enabling and facilitating the obliteration of Iraq's and Afghanistan's environments with hundreds (by now perhaps thousands) of tons of radioactive dust produced through the use of uranium-enriched munitions, the tips of which explode upon impact into millions of highly radioactive and poisonous particles. These highly radioactive uranium dust particles then either remain in the air that people breath, or enter the water they drink, or go into the soil in which food is grown. And the half-life of uranium is four BIOLLION years.

Could it be that Henry Kissinger's recommendations -- regarding the imperialists' need for the elimination of millions of people in the Third World -- are being enacted?

Socialize It!

Peak Oil is a scam. When looked at superficially and if one's outlook is that of the status quo, it sounds logical: when you have

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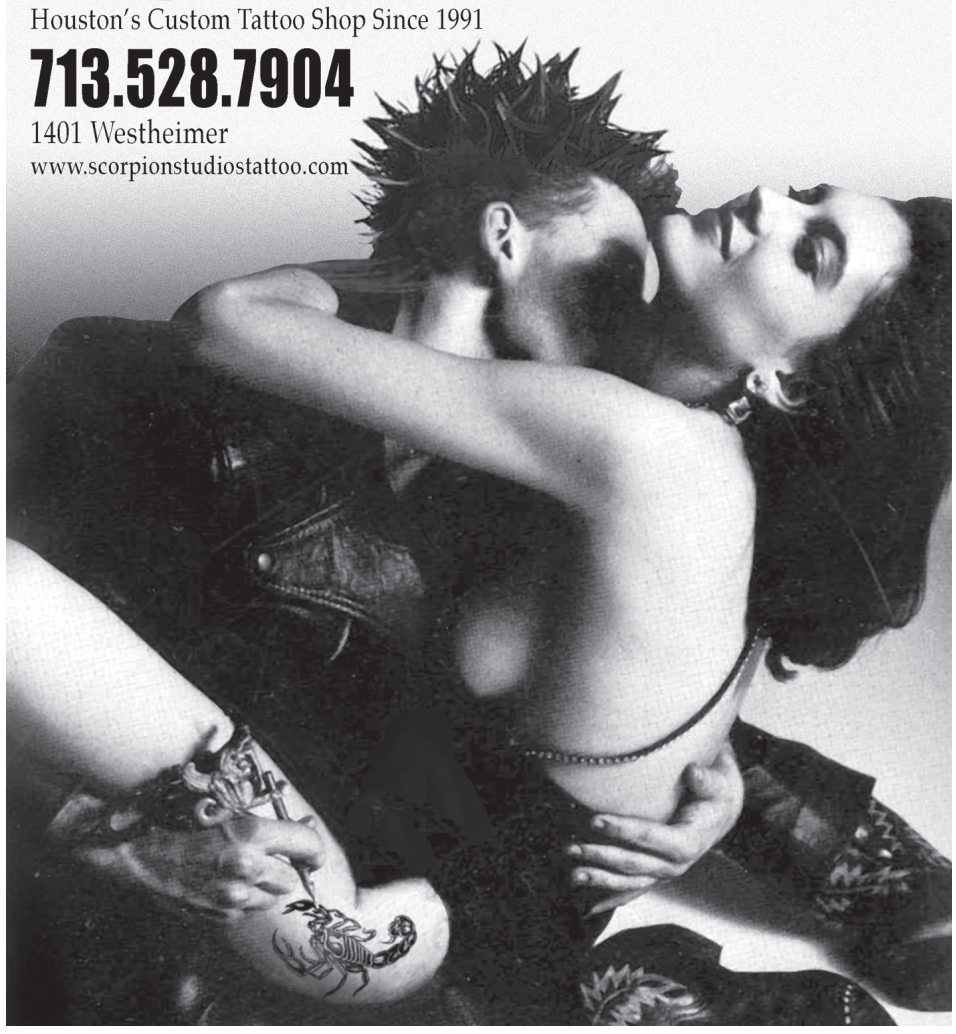
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a finite resource, and your way of life burns that resource much faster than your way of life can replenish it; and once you get past the halfway point of what remains of that resource, your access to that resources will go into decline. Common sense enough. But, common sense is not always the best sense. In this case, the explanation provided doesn't even add up to common sense.

Here is the real common sense, which the Peak Oil people pass right over. If, as these good folks tell us, we have already gone through about half of the stuff, then there is still half of it left! The first half took us through one century, so we have about another century to figure something out. OK, maybe less than one century because population has increased, world aggregate production has gone up, etc. But, in the meantime, other energy sources with related technologies are being developed, too. So, why so bleak?

Even this common sense is not a true sense. Peak Oil folks, to base their predictions of the looming doom, are using figures that are simply not correct. The very low estimate of 21 Bbo of available oil in the U.S. is one example. When actual figures are known, we shall see that the protests by the Peak Oilers may have been the smoke and mirrors necessary to actually foment more racism toward the people whose natural resources Uncle Sam is eyeing.

Also important, the Peak Oil people use capitalist vocabulary, while trying to shoehorn quasi-non-capitalist semantics into those bourgeois concepts. If they were to use their vocabulary correctly, they would say the following: The remaining oil is not as easy to get to as was the first half, so it will not be as profitable to dig up as the first half. The resource is there; it's just not as profitable as before.

Rude bulletin to the Oil companies: Well, mother suckers, you have enjoyed gluttonous, astronomical profits for an entire century, it's time to settle for a smaller take.

What the Peak Oilers never ask is: for whom is it not profitable to extract the oil? They don't ask such questions because of where the answer may take them. Extracting oil may not be as profitable as before for those who seek to maximize their profits, but it can remain highly 'profitable' for a very long time for those who are concerned with meeting a need.

Another thing Peak Oilers forget about capitalism is that, according to capitalist logic, exactly in such conditions as exist right now in the 'market' those who want to maximize their profits actually have an incentive not to extract more oil. If a commodity is precious and rising in value, you can help the value rise further by holding onto your precious goods. It's called hoarding; as old as capitalism.

Besides these lesser objections, the fundamental question not addressed by Peak Oilers is ownership relations. Maybe there is something fundamentally wrong with the proprietary relationships, especially over natural resources, dictated by the capitalist system.

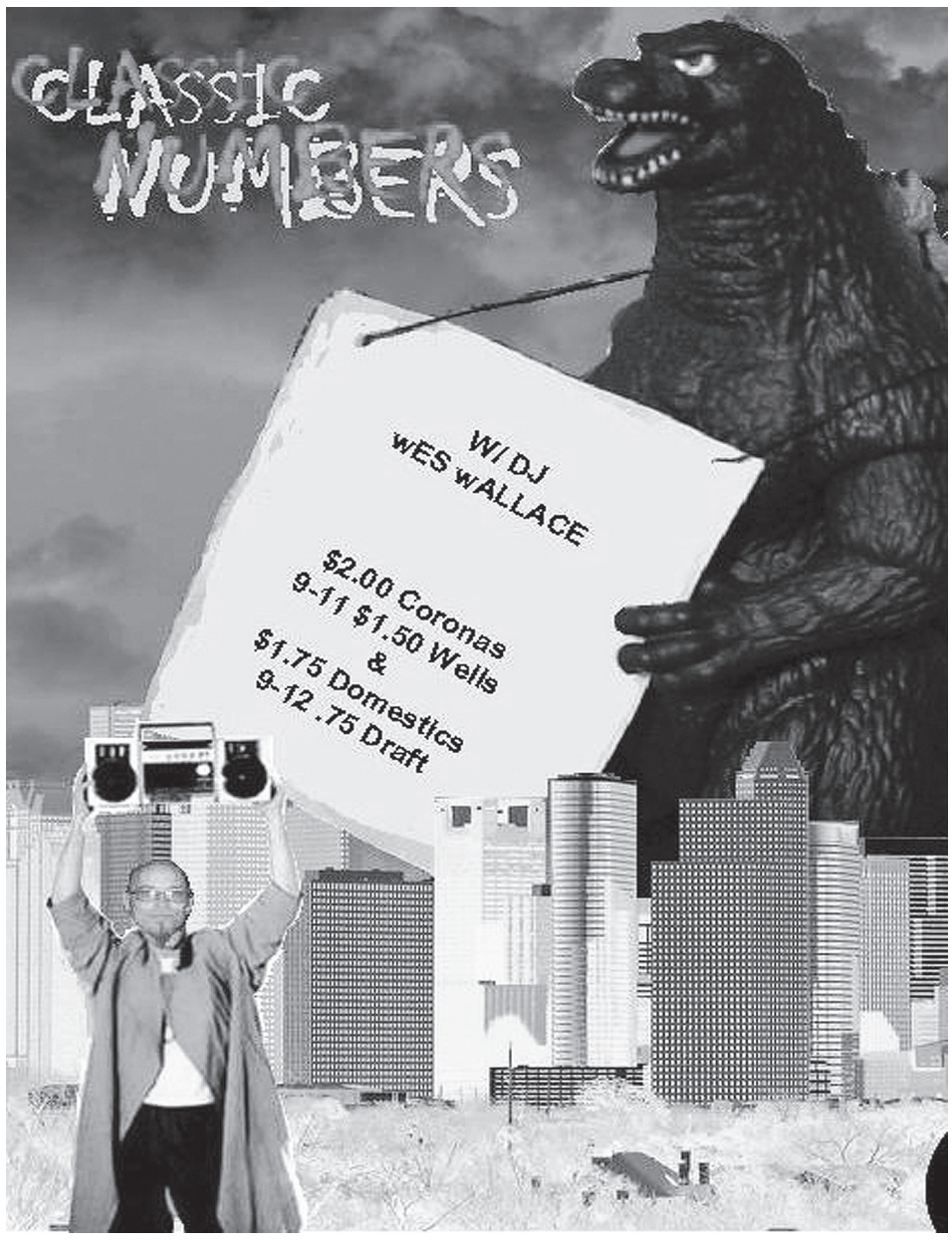
We need to change our practices fundamentally and look at the concept of 'resource management' as one in need of social re-solutions. For example, let's ask naive questions: Do these privately owned corporations, five or six of which control a majority of the vast worldwide oil resources, actually 'produce' the stuff? Of course not! They employ a bunch of available machinery (and in a truly free market, such machinery would be available for rent/lease/etc. to any entity) to drill large, sometimes vertical sometimes diagonal, sometimes short sometimes long holes that reach this resource just sitting there underground, and then to get the oil/gas out of the ground, bottle it up and present it in a form that can be used on a daily basis. Technically speaking, any group of people with the relevant knowledge and the necessary human-and-machine-power should be able to gain access to this oil.

So, the relevant and truly meaningful solutions to the riddle of oil must start out by questioning the legitimacy of private ownership over a natural resource that humans didn't create; i.e. private property rights over things that came with the planet. If we accept private ownership over a natural resource such as oil, what objection can we raise to the privatization of the air we breathe?

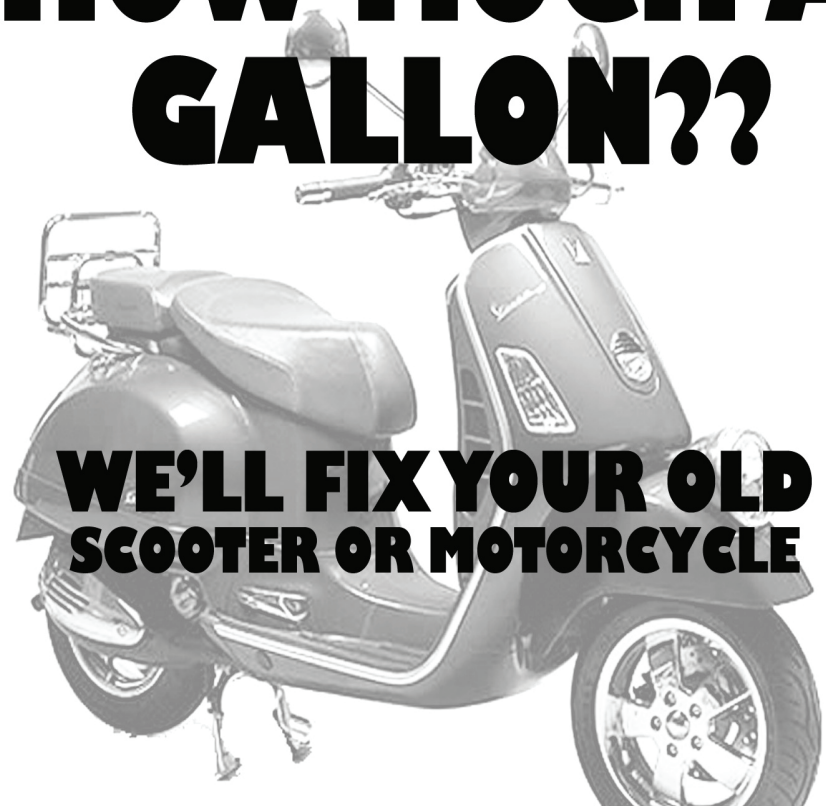
Even assuming that a peak has been reached with regards to oil and we are past the 50% point of what remains, our answer to those who consider the remaining oil as not profitable is simple: by all means please step aside! We propose socializing this natural resource and digging it up ourselves.

The End of the World as We Know





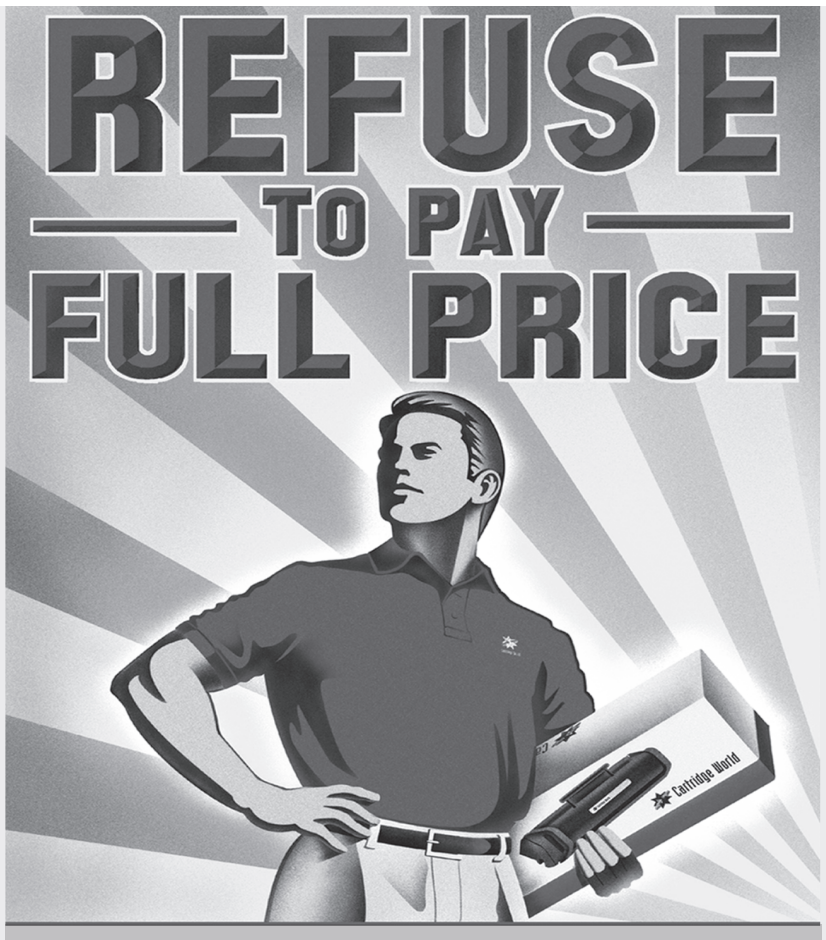
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It? You Bet!

Here is some added motivation to go in the direction of socializing all natural resources. Some historians have described the big shifts (or quantum leaps) in the successive hegemonic structures of the world capitalist system as characteristically accompanied by particular industries/capitalists taking the lead in shaping each particular era (see, for example, Giovanni Arrighi's The Long Twentieth Century).

One possible conclusion we can reach concerning the current round of historical events is that those with the greatest economic and political power to shape the next hegemonic structures are the military-oil-finance capitalists, who are unilaterally trying to rearrange the world into something resembling their wet dreams.

The outlines of such a possible future (if unchallenged soon) are already in place: permanent wars for decades; the intensification of the one-sided class warfare worldwide and at home; complete dissolution of civil liberties; extremely heightened levels of incarceration and proliferation of prison camps; increased poverty for increasing portions of the human species; the eventual depletion of most major energy resources of the Third World countries; and by the end of the process, a world fit for the lifestyles of only the wealthiest.

All these elements of a fascistic state must give the working classes a tremendous amount of substance against which to organize. In organizing a counter-offensive, any organization or political activist who wishes to advance the sovereignty of people and workers, must demand the socialization of all natural resources. It is time people realized that capitalism's answers to questions of resource management have been utter failures on all key counts: socio-economically, politically and environmentally.

As explained above, there is no shortage of oil, and it is not disappearing that fast, and all the frenzy about its disappearance is covering up something more sinister, especially since the people most worried about the depletion of energy resources also have problems with 'world population trends'; by which they mean there's too many people in the Third World. Their rhetoric provides smooth winds for the sails of those who want to wage wars of possession over the resources of other peoples.

Henry Kissinger is well known for explaining that a fundamental problem facing imperialist planners in the U.S. is world population, particularly the Third World population. Capitalist world system's capacity to feed and house does not cover more than an optimal number (which number falls far below the current population levels). As this system ages, it will be even less able to house and feed, and the leaders of the current world system know this too well. They have peered into the future and seen too many pissed off humans, which cannot be a pleasant prospect for the rulers. So, dissolution has become the solution.

For a declining world power with enough arms and weaponry to destroy the world many times over, what better way to remain powerful than to destroy others? One way of destroying is by bombs and bullets; and while you're at it, use uranium munitions, hence besetting others' environments with radioactive poisonous material that burns cancers into cells for thousands of years.

Another way to destroy others is sucking up all their resources.

But, just as important, if not more so, is the 'others' within: the U.S. ruling class can no longer provide even a modicum of a half decent existence for tens of millions of the citizens under its legal and formal jurisdiction, and the rulers have no intention of doing anything to better people's lives. Meaning, tens of millions (and counting) of unpleased humans live here at home. And the rulers seem to think that it will get far worse; if the suspension of habeas corpus is any indication.

In U.S. history, the only other time that habeas corpus got suspended was during the Civil War (which, incidentally, means that this time around, it has been suspended for longer than it was during the Civil War!). In this light, it is easy to fancy that for the ruling classes in the U.S., a civil war is already underway. We the People have been ambushed. When will the people fight back? That is the question.

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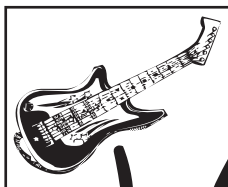
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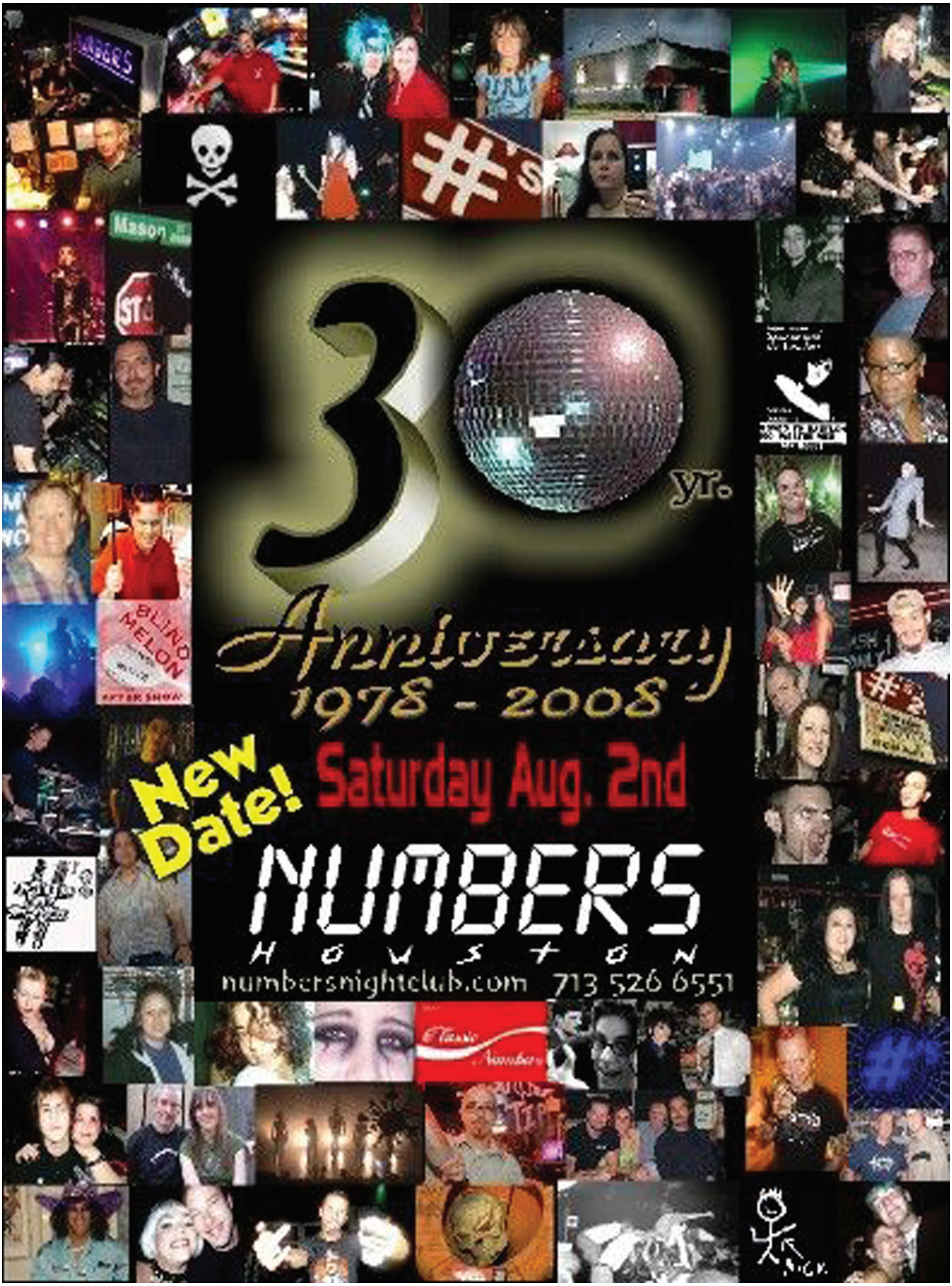
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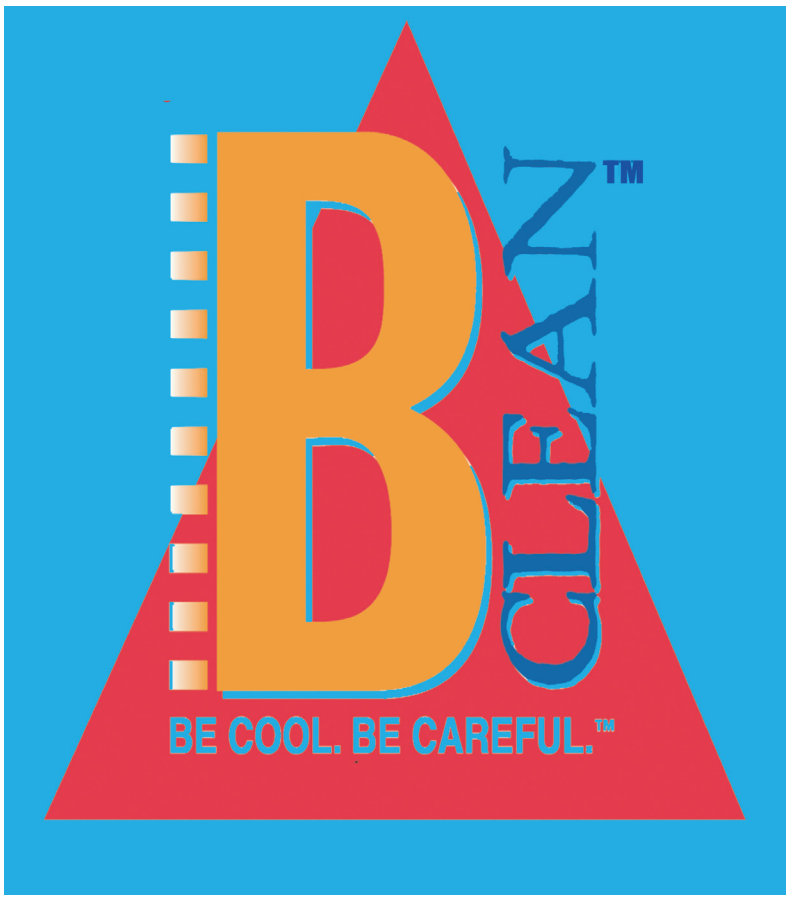
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