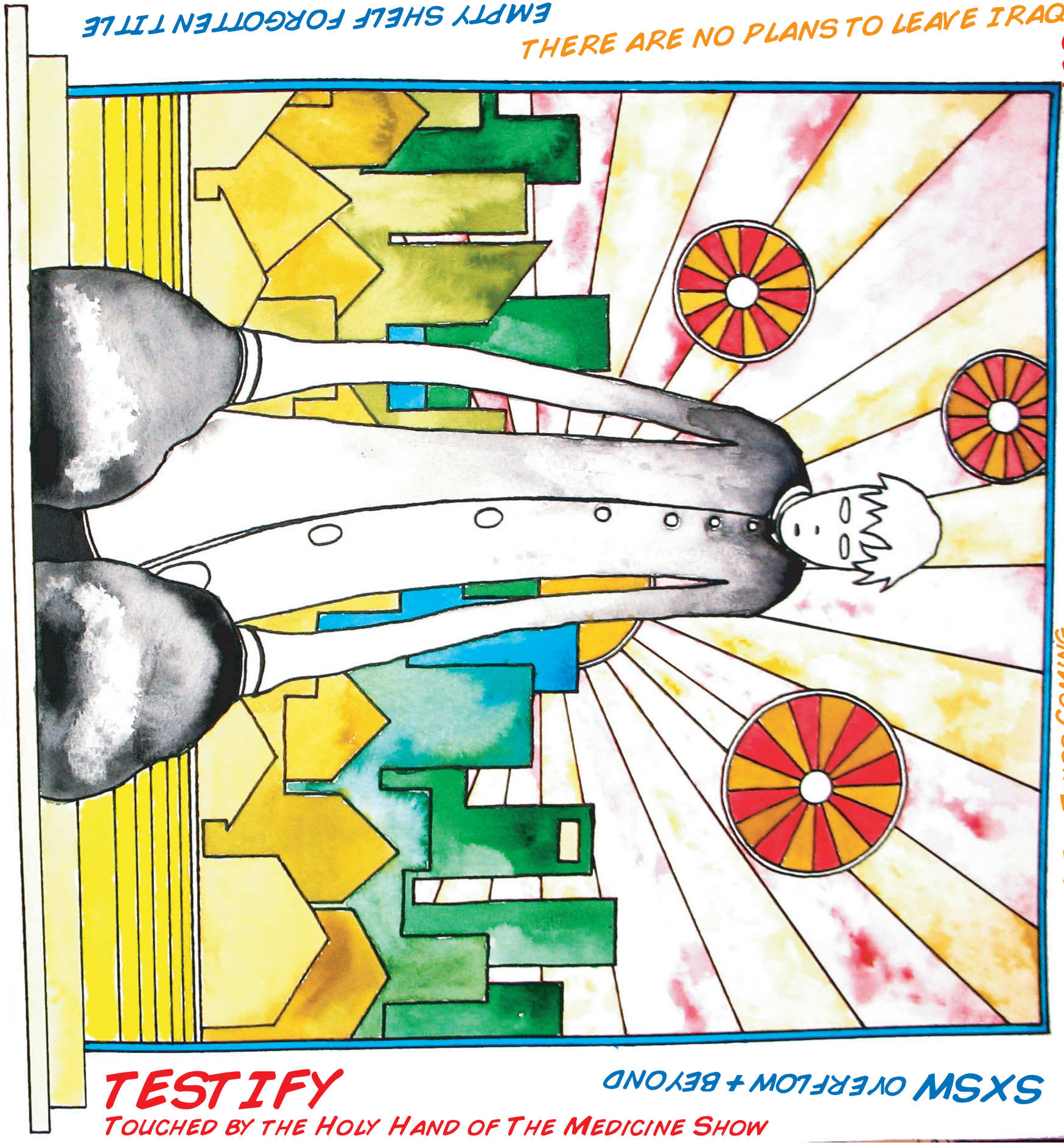
Issue 61
03/15 - 03/31
March 2006

Austin Chronicle Music Issue

Farewell Cactus Records

MUSIC - NEWS - PUBLIC OPINION - ARTS - EVENTS



super happy fun land

...THIS IS ONLY A TEST...

Wed March 15th:
Alex Atchley (9pm)
Los Abandoned (California) (10pm)
The Polysics (Japan)(11pm)
The Gaskets (12:30am)
Very sorry, no photography or recording permitted at this show

Thursday March 16th:
Lanterns (San Diego)(8pm)
Paula Maya (Seattle) (9pm)
Locks (Chicago) (10pm)
Col. Knowledge & the Lickity-Splits (Georgia) (11pm)
Afton (Kansas) (12am)
Mau Mau Tsunami (New Jersey) (1am)

Fri March 17th:
SXSWOverflow Fest 2006
Chim Charoo (9pm)
El Paso Hot Button (Oklahoma) (10pm)
Whirlwind Heat (Michigan)
The Mother's Anger (Israel)

Sat March 18th:
SXSWOverflow Fest 2006
Dogme 95 (8pm)
Some By Sea (Seattle)
The Ex-Boyfriends (San Francisco) (10pm)
The Mathematicians (New York) (11pm)
The Noise Revival (Austin) (12am)

Sun March 19th:
SXSWOverflow Fest 2006
Freeloader (NY) 2pm
Christine Fellows (Canada)
Carolyn Mark (Canada)
Luke Doucet (Canada)
The Bats (New Zealand)
Cortina (New Zealand)
Man in Gray (New York)
Boss Martians (Seattle)
Die Die Die (New Zealand)
The Dead Betties (New York) (11pm)
The Wrinkle Neck Mules (Virginia) (12am)

March 20th:
Organ Failure at SXDE Fest at Dan Electro's

March 21st:
Junkload (Los Angeles)
This Calendar Year
MK ULTRA

March 22nd:
This Flood Covers the Earth
Fire Team Charlie
Burned Out Bright
The Architects (Austin)
American Distress (NewYork)

March 23rd:
Boo and Boo Too (Kansas)
Leeroy Stagger & the Sinking Hearts (Canada)
Still Pink (Virginia)
Stare Decisis

March 24th:
Super Happy Fun Land
3 Year Anniversary 2 day party!
Rise over Ruin 6pm
In Denmark 7pm
Leeroy Stagger (Canada) 8pm
Black Magic Marker 9pm
Muzak John 9:30pm
The Krinkles 10pm
Organ Failure 10:30pm
9 Volt 11:15pm
Suspenderman
PSA

Sat March 25th:
Super Happy Fun Land
3 Year Anniversary 2 day party!
3rd Annual SHFL Art Bazaar/Barter Fair/Garage Sale/Independent record and musical equipment fair

Bring out your art, music, and junk to sell or trade!

12pm-5pm (tables provided, or bring your own)

Potluck Veggie BBQ 4pm (BYOV!)
From Postcards to Letters 5pm
Listen Listen 6pm
The Dimes 7pm
A Crack in the Wall 8pm
Things That Go Pop 9pm
The Riff Tiffs 10pm
Scream Club 11pm
Organ Failure 12am
Don Walsh/Bully Pulpit/Uncivil Society(12:30am)
Brian's Birthday Film Festival/Karaoke Slumber Party 2am-7am

2610 ASHLAND BETWEEN W.26TH/27TH
713.880. 2100
SUPERHAPPYFUNLAND.COM

SUPER HAPPY FUN LAND IS HOUSTON'S VENUE FOR EXPERIMENTAL ELECTRONIC MUSIC, UNDERGROUND JAZZ AND OUTSIDER ART, FEATURING: PATIO & OUTDOOR STAGE, THE SHFL THEATER 2/ ROOM FOR 200 FOLKS, THE SUPER HAPPY FUN CAFE, THE SHFL ART GALLERY.

#1 IN DETOX

B-CLEAN™

BE COOL. BE CAREFUL.™

It's Not About Luck!

DOUBLE MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

B-CLEAN PRODUCTS FOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL TOXIN REDUCERS

- **B-Clean Formula**
  Works in one hour, effective up to five hours. In Hawaiian Tropical & Orange.
- **B-Super Clean**
  Works in one hour, effective up to five hours.
- **Effervescent Tablets**
  Works in one hour, effective up to five hours. Water Soluble formula tastes great.
- **Hair Cleansing System**
  Effective up to eight hours, eliminates external barriers and lowers toxins deep within.
- **Daily Capsules**
  Supplements detox process 12 to 24 hours prior to cleansing deadline, powerful companion to other toxin reduction products.

Ask for B-Clean at your Favorite Smoke Shops!

DOUBLE MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

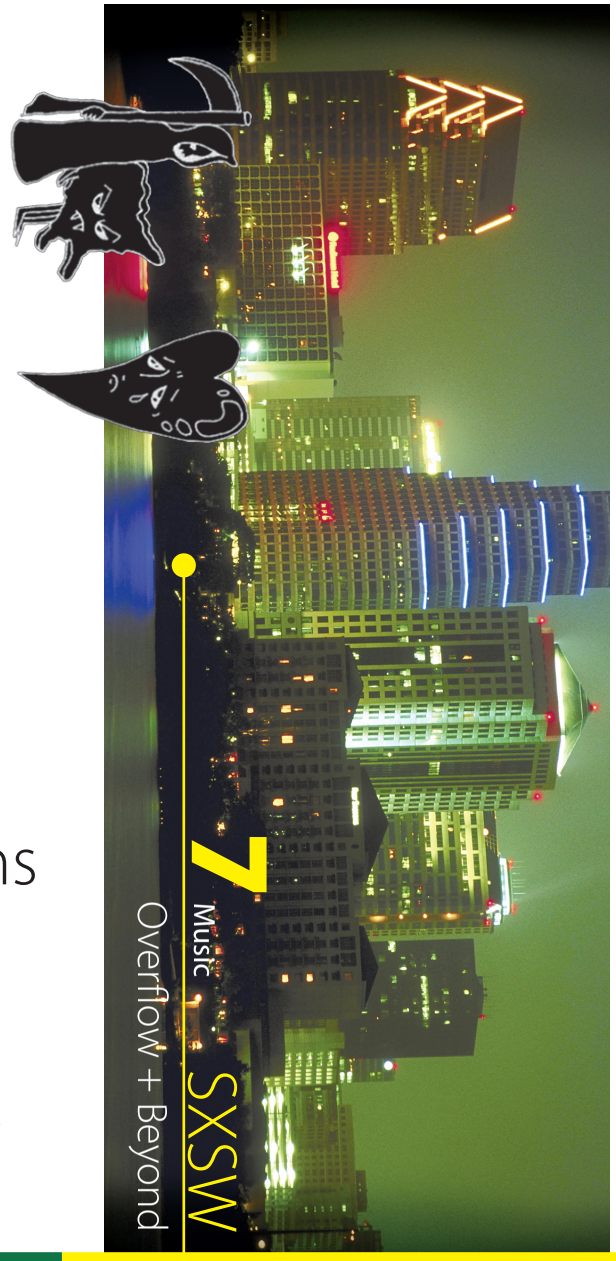
6 Art
Debris:
Thug Love

8 Film
Empty Shelf
Forgotten Title

12 Music
Testify
Touched by the Holy Hand of The Medicine Show

24 Worldview
There are no Plans to Leave Iraq

30 Worldview
Gender Politics &
Who Pays for Baby

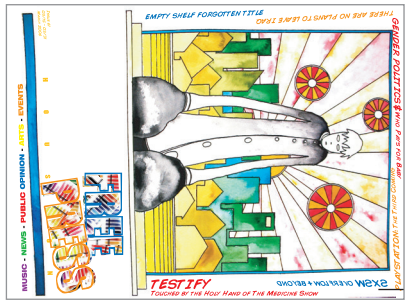




18 Tech-knowledge
Playstation
The Third Coming

Issue 61 | 03/06

ThisIssue
March 2006 what you'll find



Cover Art: Sean Carrol
Typography: Tyler Barber

The *Free Press* is an open forum. Public submissions are encouraged. The *Free Press* will never refer to itself in third person. We do not endorse any of the ideas, products, or candidates included in this publication. The *Free Press* does not knowingly accept false advertising or editorial nor does the publisher assume responsibility should such advertising or editorial appear. **The *Free Press* is not liable for anything, anywhere, ever.**

Staff

Publishers Andrea Afra, Omar Afra, Omar Al-Bochi

Associate Editors

Arts Sean Carroll
Film Michael Bergeron
Local Alex Wukman
Music Kwame M. Anderson

Managing Editor Omar Afra

Contributors & Staff

Writers Lance Walker, Brandon Montes, Tyler Barber, Devin McNulty, Jeff Storm, Alex "Asshole" Wukman, John Fergusin, Timothy O'Brien, Brittany Bly, Shelby Kelly, Nick Cooper, Eric Anthamatten

Photographers Anthony Rathbun, Mark Armes

Art Director Tyler Barber

Designers/Illustrations Jody Worthington, Lyndia Haryanto, Omar Al-Bochi, Ryan Ottea, Shelby Kelly, Tim Dorsey

Delivery Tyler Barber, Jeff Storm, Mark Galveston, Tony Kaelin, Jerri Huston, Evan Dunivan, Ozcan Ozcelik

Feel FREE to take us Seriously.

editors@freepresshouston.com



A message to the 'art community.'

• 10 other people on this block have that tattoo.
• Don't dare compare that DJ you like to John Lennon. He is not talented. He merely replays music that talented people played before.
• Your emo band sucks.
• Your 3 piece indie band sucks.
• Your jam band sucks.
• have already seen that same Photoshop brush. Pick up a pencil.
• Your fake ass implants do not change the fact that you are ugly. Both inside and out.
• There is nothing profound about your cause. I will 'Save the Shrimp' right after this guy gets his boot off my neck and stops drinking children's blood.
• It is only nostalgic once. Stop playing that record.
• You are not unique.
• Nobody cares about how fucked up you got last night. Excess is NOT rebellion and escape is not cool.
• Stop whining. Somewhere, some kid is dragging 17 tons of rice behind his back uphill for 30 miles.
• You are NEVER gonna 'get signed.'
• Your 'artwork' is reminiscent of the last dump I took. Don't expect my respect if you did not spend endless tedious hours.
• I think I heard those same rhymes back in 97 from some kid that was 10 years too late.
• You are not a mystic. Especially when you asked for that burger well done.
• Do not try to pass off you store bought education as intellectualism. 10 million other dolts have read that book and most of them are community college students.
• And lastly: Please, Please, Please stop using the word 'dichotomy'.

That ends this tirade of douchebaggery. Please go back to spreading loving-kindness and believing you are important.

-Editor



photo: Tyler Barber







WALTERS ON WASHINGTON

Mar 20
We are Scientists, The Grates, Foreign Born, Zykos.

Mar 22
Living Things, Vacation, Twenty Twos, Flowers to Hide.

Mar 23
Coretta Scott, Grace Gale, Hollywood Black, Kemo For Emo.

Mar 24
Intestinal Strangulation, Disfigured, Scattered Remains, Immortal Remains, and Cerebral Rot

Mar 25
Doug Stanhope, Neil Hamburger.

Mar 31
Deathray Davies, Satin Hooks, The Dimes.

April 1
Voxtrot

April 3
Lorene Drive

April 6
ESE, Oklahomas, The Irish Car Bombs

April 7
An Albratros.

April 8
Stare Decisis, Heist At Hand, Transmography, Westview, Red Star of the Solar Fed

April 10
Max/Beerland, The Fatals, The Rat Traps, Skullening, Mr. Electric

April 13
Two Gallants, Shurman

April 14
Ringworm

April 15
Complete Control, Krum Bums

April 18
The Sword, Torche

April 19
Fruit Bats, Amandine, Sam Jayne

April 21
Koufax, Cordero

April 27
Acid Mother's Temple, Antarcticans

4215 WASHINGTON AVE.
713-862-2513

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

Tues. - Mar. 14
Hank III

Wed. - Mar. 15
Particle With Special Guests
skyblue72

Thurs. - Mar. 16
Hellacopters w/Nebula &
The Illuminati

Sat. - Mar. 18
DareWare's FetishBall

Sun. - Mar. 19
The Subways w/ Gun Shys & The Ashbury Keys

Fri. - Mar. 24
Sam Bush Band & Classical Grass

Sun. - Mar. 26
Bleeding Through w/ Every Time I Die, Between The Buried and Me & Haste The Day

Tues. - Mar 28
Cap Models Fashion Show

Wed. - Mar. 29
The Independents w/ The Scarred, Something Fierce & The Rated R Kids

Fri. - Mar. 31
The Blasters w/ JW Americana, The Romeo Dogs & Snit's Dog & Pony Show

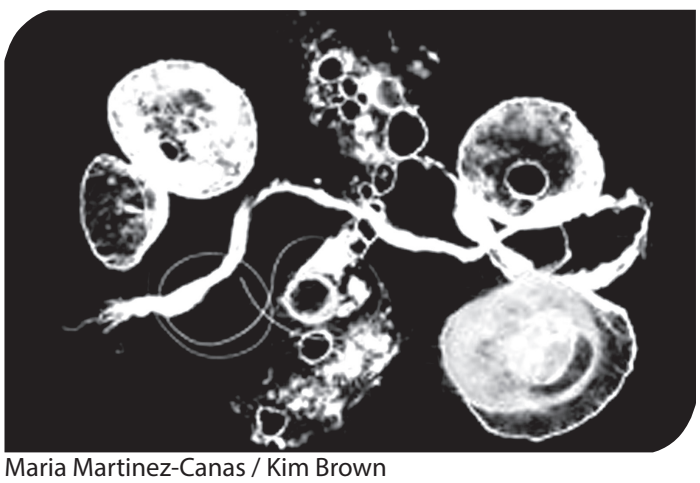
Sat. - Apr. 1
Special April Fool's 'rent' w/ DJ's
Randall Jones
Sean Carnahan
Amanda Robinson
Brotha Jabril

Mon. - Apr. 3
Asleep At The Wheel

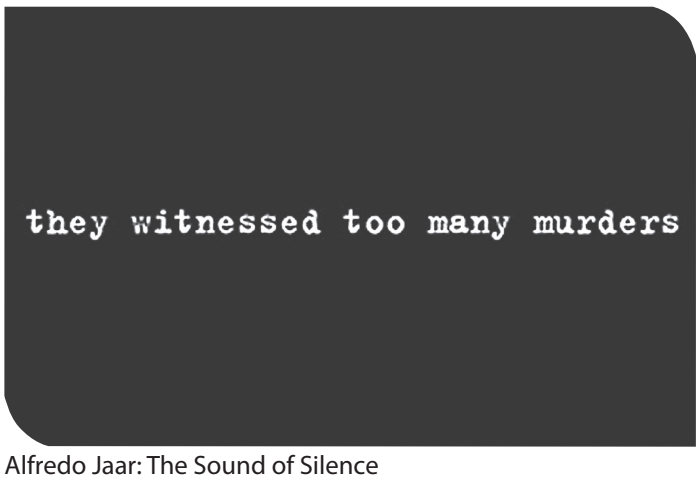
BOOK MERIDIAN FOR YOUR OWN PARTY OR SPECIAL EVENT
www.MeridianHouston.com
BOX OFFICE HOURS
NOON-6:00 pm MON-FRI
713.225.1717



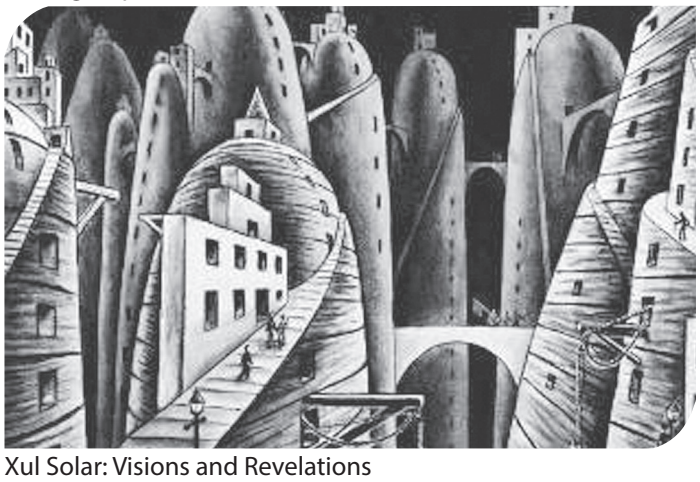
Leigh Ann Lester: Artificial Arrangement
Lawndale Arts Center (Mezzanine gallery)
Through April 29. (713) 528-5858



Maria Martinez-Canas / Kim Brown
Desantos Gallery 1724-A Richmond Ave.
Through April 15. (713) 520-1200



Alfredo Jaar: The Sound of Silence
Diverseworks (Main Gallery)
Through April 15. (713) 223-8346



Xul Solar: Visions and Revelations
MFAH (Caroline Wiess Law Building)
Through April 16. (713) 639-7300

DEBRIS: Thug Love

Buffalo Sean

The big 'ol photo show up at **Finesilver Gallery** (3913 Main) right now is just one in a million considering how flooded Houston is with giant C-prints right now. Chuck Ramirez, and Coke Wisdom O'Neal throw up a decent showing, and Christine Bruni Fondren exhibits some bullshit close-ups of broken glass. Ramirez's extremely vaginal photos of purses should have perverts whacking off to the catalogue (if there is such a fetish), the sensual arrangement of these anonymous portraits has me looking for the clit rather than examining the contents of each person's bag [sic]. O'Neal works with rectangular space directly, leaving no white space to ground the image in fantasy. With one series of medicine cabinets Coke delves into the same space as Ramirez (with less luck) but the best of his showing is the series where he constructed a 30 foot by 20 foot box to take pictures of people in. replacing background with an even wood grain, and dwarfing it's inhabitants at least three-fold has the look of a baroque landscape flattened into nothingness. Only the figure remains, and the quirky people chosen, their animated antics and diversity of character leads the imagination all around; fantasies are constructed, personalities assigned and stereotypes challenged. Did you not like those, Kelly?



Project Row Houses is gearing up for a new round, check out Delilah Montoya: The New Warriors in the main building at the corner of Holman and Live Oak if you're in the Third Ward anytime soon. (reception March 25th) These boxers are tough; large portraits of tired, jaded pugilists speak volumes; below each one is a set of action shots winning and losing bouts. Immensely strong, one is set away from the rest- a mother standing with her whole family, hip-hop kid, worn-down immigrant father, street tough husband; but she's the center, the fighter being held up for deification- and they're all there to back her up.

Aimee Jones and Vicki Fowler present "What's Up Girl?" at **Brazil** (2604 Dunlavy) March 23rd,8 pm till midnight. A collection of daily and artistic activities will be installed in the lively hotspot (and I hope there's a performance piece or two) through April. Collective action is all the rage, ok, ok, but the personality and tone of this work will most likely resemble Ilya Kabakov with Sean Landers's broken confidence. We'll see, right?

Ground at **Space 125** (3201 Allen Parkway) is another one of those damn C-print factories, luckily Soody Sharifi has instead devoted her money to mass distribution of her photos of Houston's Muslim youth. Advancing more toward photojournalism than her usual staged compositions, the work loses little in it's newfound spontaneity, you can just say it actually happened now. Soody has printed thousands of large brochures (with an awesome 70's faded earth color tint to them) to distribute; please get out there and give 'em to everyone, man!

A two year anniversary? I hadn't ever been that far down Center before seeing the new show: Doug and Mike Starn at **New World Museum** (5230 Center) but that was what I overheard in the gallery. An all-CGI all the time approach to the very organic material of decaying leaves took me aback at first, but the money oozing off of those 10' x 10' C-prints (here we go again) was palpable. A video projection upon entering the gallery weaves through an assortment of the CGI created (or mapped?) leaves looking like the opening to Fight Club weaving through neurons of the brain. Since that was what they were trying to get across, I guess it worked (brain=leaves=nature) but the reference was a little too strong for the particular piece to come off as standing alone.



Diana Sofia Estrella is totally pissed. Her installation at the behest of **BBAP** down by Sabine Pass is right in the line of fire of dozens of wasted, khaki-shorts-wearing ultimate frisbeers [sic]. Four large photo panels are on a hill positioned on the course where "you've just got to lob it up there", so everyone just whips the shit right at the work. Damn. Her concurrent work at **The Law Offices** is much more well protected, although it would blow to pieces at the slightest breeze. Don't know what I mean? Mapquest 5108 Center and check out a biting comment on our "trade" with the rest of the Americas.

DanSeParc

Numbers

January 7, 2006 300 Westheimer

www.numbersnightclub.com www.danseparc.com





HOUSTON POETRY SLAM

**FIVE POETS WILL FORM
THE HOUSTON SLAM TEAM
AND REPRESENT HOUSTON
AT THE NATIONAL POETRY SLAM
AUGUST 9-12 IN AUSTIN**

**YOU COULD BE ONE OF THE JUDGES
THAT DECIDES WHICH POET IS ONE
OF THE FIVE THAT GOES.**

**BUT CAN YOU BE ONE OF THE POETS TO GET IN
WHERE YOU SLAM IN!**

THE HOUSTON SLAM OFF
APRIL 22
@ THE SILVERHOUSE THEATER

16 Poets cross words for the five spots on the Houston Slam Team
QUALIFYING SLAMS ARE GOING ON RIGHT NOW

Top three winners may qualify for the Houston Slam Off.
Doors open @8pm.
Sign up Starts @ 8pm.
$3 for participating poets.
General Admission: $5 before 9pm, $7 after 9pm

www.writerinkhouston.org

@ THE JAVA CUP
3704 Scott BEHIND YATES HIGH SCHOOL

23 FILM 45

EMPTY SHELF FORGOTTEN TITLE

by Michael Bergeron





| David Lowery in-store concert at Cactus Music and Video |

Take a stroll through Cactus Music and Video on South Shepherd and most of the shelves stare back empty. The majority of CD inventory has been sold and the resultant space looks like the melee at supermarkets in Houston last year just before Hurricane Rita. Empty shelf after empty shelf after empty shelf.

Such are the realities of "the decline of the CD, file sharing, downloading, CD burning, predatory pricing from big-box retailers, and decline of video rental" writes general manager Quinn Butler in an open letter to Cactus customers posted at the store.

Frankly, most of the CDs I've bought in this century have been purchased online, however I would always price check first at Cactus and then Soundwaves (where CDs retail for about a dollar less). I see so many movies that I rarely rent DVDs, and if so it's usually an oldie to prepare for an interview not a new release. So my ilk are to blame as much as any of the reasons stated by Butler. Take a quick glance at another long time CD/DVD retailer Soundwaves (on Montrose) and it's obvious that unless they had recently diversified with surf clothing and related boarding supplies, as well as an in-store coffee shop, they too would be shuttering. The other essential Houston disc store Record Rack, formerly catty-corner from Cactus, closed a few years ago.

Cactus employees can be downright uncanny in their knowledge of music and film. Hell, the video manager George St. Claire knows more about films than I do and I see 400 movies a year. St. Claire can pronounce the most obscure foreign director's name with ease even he doesn't look at you while he speaks. It's an open secret that Cactus rented the occasional bootleg – but where else would I ever have found a VHS rental copy of Wong Kar-Wai's Ashes of Time.

All the Cactus video is for sale, in fact that's about all the inventory left apart from several boxes of vinyl, a few posters, CD box sets and some peripherals of sound.

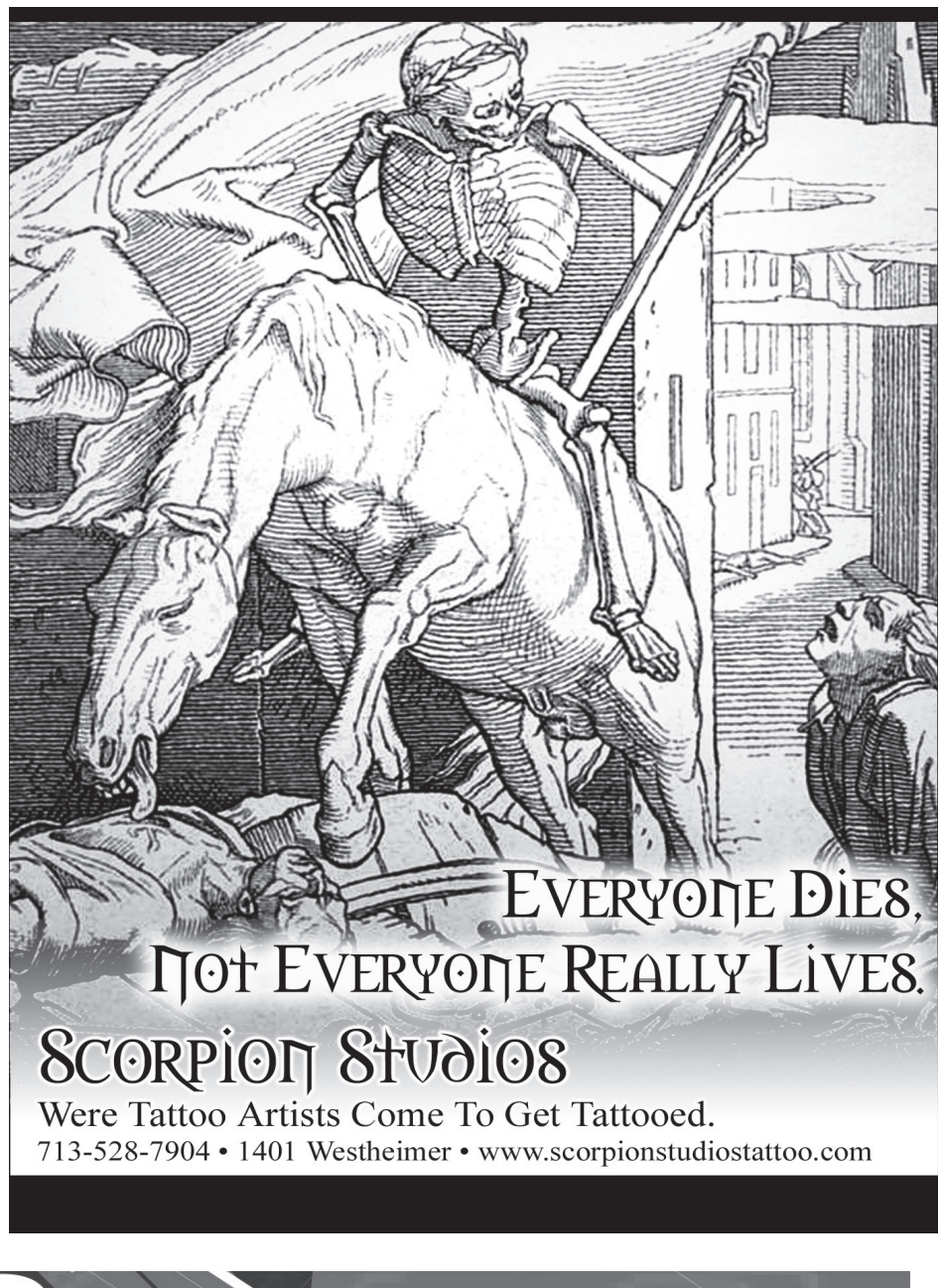
After March 31, Cactus will close and probably house a new business so fast your head will spin. Just like the Alabama Theatre became the Bookstop and Whole Foods became Petsmart. (The latter being popular because dogs are allowed free reign to pee on the floor while teen employees have to clean it up.)

Cactus employees can be downright **uncanny** in their **knowledge** of **music** and **film**

But Cactus was not just *the* place to hang posters for indie concerts or kidnapped cats (see the wall along the west exit). There were the in-store concerts complete with complimentary kegs of St. Arnolds. Just in the last couple of years artists like David Lowery (and Camper Van Beethoven) or James McMurtry provided jams for an unforgettable happy hour. And the list reads like a who's who of rock when you count all the acts that made appearances at Cactus in the last twenty years.

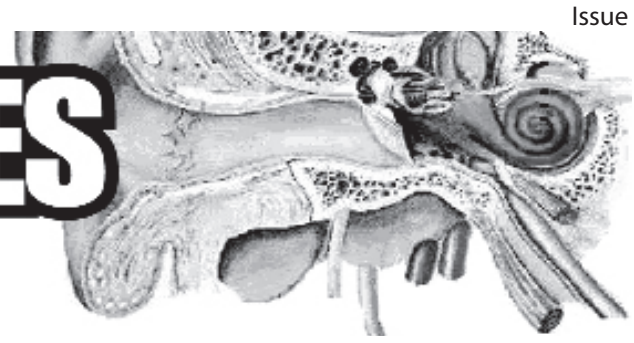
Cactus, I will miss you although I hardly knew you.

ENJOY
Classic Numbers
EVERY FRIDAY
w/DJ wES wALLACE
The originaL & most authentic & attended
80s night in town! .50 cent Shiner & Bud on tap ALL NIGHT (or till it runs out)
$1.25 well drinks & $1.50 domestic till 11pm! $3 cover
before 10pm 18+
NUMBERS
300 westheimer houston tx 77006 usa 713 526 6551
numbersnightclub.com





SOUNDBYTES



HERE YE, HEAR ME; I CONTROL YA, CHECK OUT MY GUITAR SOLO

Kwame M. Anderson

I like to watch television. It's like cigarette smoking OF THE MIND. Yeah, I live in a dangerous world. I'm constantly intrigued by the dramas that unfold on television, be it fiction or non-fiction. I love the flash and the blur of the whole thing. Words and images: it's confusing but it's beautiful. It's horrifying yet entertaining, I love me some tel-o-vizion. KnowhatI'msayin? Yeah, neither do I but I'm saying something, Anyways, with the end of another month, safety is major issue to me. I would not want to be leaving someplace and be threatened with a knife, put in to the trunk of my car and left. That's just me. And that brings me to my next point, let's get out of the house and possibly be attacked, doesn't that give you sort of a jolt. Like, let's say you're out with some girl and some dude talks crazy. You'll be expected to get/give an ass whooping that night depending on your prowess with type of thing. Anyhoo, get off the couch, or the hard black chair, or the floor, or somebody's case, or whatever. LIVE, MAN LIVE!!! A friend of mine told me recently, "shut up, you are so stupid". That is so true, I do need to shut up but Omar keeps e mailing and shit got to get cracking you bleeping know what I mean…

So there a few shows of note that I will speak about and then there's a little interview with the band Shoplifting. So without dragging this on any longer I present…

PEOPLE PLAYING SONGS IN FRONT OF YOU

3/31/06 DINOSAUR JR
Warehouse Live (813 St. Emanuel)

No cow manure here. J. Mascis is one of the finest guitar players of our time and Dinosaur Jr. is one of the bands that colored my early twenties. Now it seems the original lineup of Lou Barlow, J. Mascis, and Murph have reunited and decided to hit the road for all of us 30-somethings that are just starting to get to that place between old and young. We need a reminder of our youth while still dodging responsibility but gaining weight. It's like a classic rock concert for the indie rock set. We once wore button downs and worshipped weird guitar music. We now wear button downs and listen to weird guitar music. In fact, probably the same records. Why just the other day I was listening to *Little Fury Things* while I sat in a car smoking weed playing air guitar as I did when I was 20 and slightly a bit more optimistic. Ahhh, the memories….

4/01/06 GHOSTFACE/M1 (of DEAD PREZ)
Warehouse Live (813 St. Emanuel)

The Wu Tang clan sparked a revolution in hip hop music and culture and Ghostface personifies and energizes this movement. Like a fine poet of African American culture, Ghost twists and tangles the language. It's important to listen to understand the context and to understand the dialect. At first listen, it's nonsense over gutter beats. Then the light appears and you see it as new negro spirituals: a slang of slang itself. Ghostface tells stories that are funny, tragic, but always enthralling. It's brilliant, it's breathtaking, and he will be in town receiving donations for his art from those who contribute to the cause . I hope to be there among the throngs and maybe even early as I am curious to see what M1of the mighty Dead Prez is offering. "All in all, is all is all…" That's a quote from a Storm and Stress song "Micah Gaugh Sings All Is All" which really has nothing to do with this, but you know, this stuff pops in and out of my head.

4/22/06 TV ON THE RADIO
Warehouse Live (813 St Emanuel)

The thing with TVOTR is when things are happening, they are happening. With only one album, a single, an EP under their belt, they've played with everyone from George Clinton to The Fall. They released an album that was supported by the people and the label and in a relatively short time went from two people to like seven. Now the band has signed to Interscope and will tour with the Bauhaus and Nine Inch Nails. So, as all of this is going on , they are also releasing a new album at some point. The band are also on tour with the Celebration who I saw the other night when I went to see Man Man. Anyway, TVOTR is an important band in my eyes. They take from soul music, weird rock music, and electronic music. And that's just the one I'm sure about. But even their vaguer influences help them to create a sound that manages to be danceable and grooving and innovative and strange. It is beautiful but jagged music and now you will get the opportunity to hear new songs. Songs you already know. Then you can buy T shirts and other things to show an allegiance to the band. I've seen TVOTR like 4 or 5 times and I'm OK with that which means they're pretty good. Most bands kind of suck after seeing them the second or third time. I haven't seen the band with the current lineup, so it will be new for me. So let us congregate and exalt the musicians.

Shows



Every Time I Die
3/26 @ Meridian



Playing With Stars
3/31 @ Fitzgerald's



Dilated Peoples
3/23 @ Warehouse Live



Anti-Flag
3/30 @ Engine Room



Corpo-real
3/26 @ Super Happy Fun Land



Back at the Ranch
3/26 @ Mucky Duck

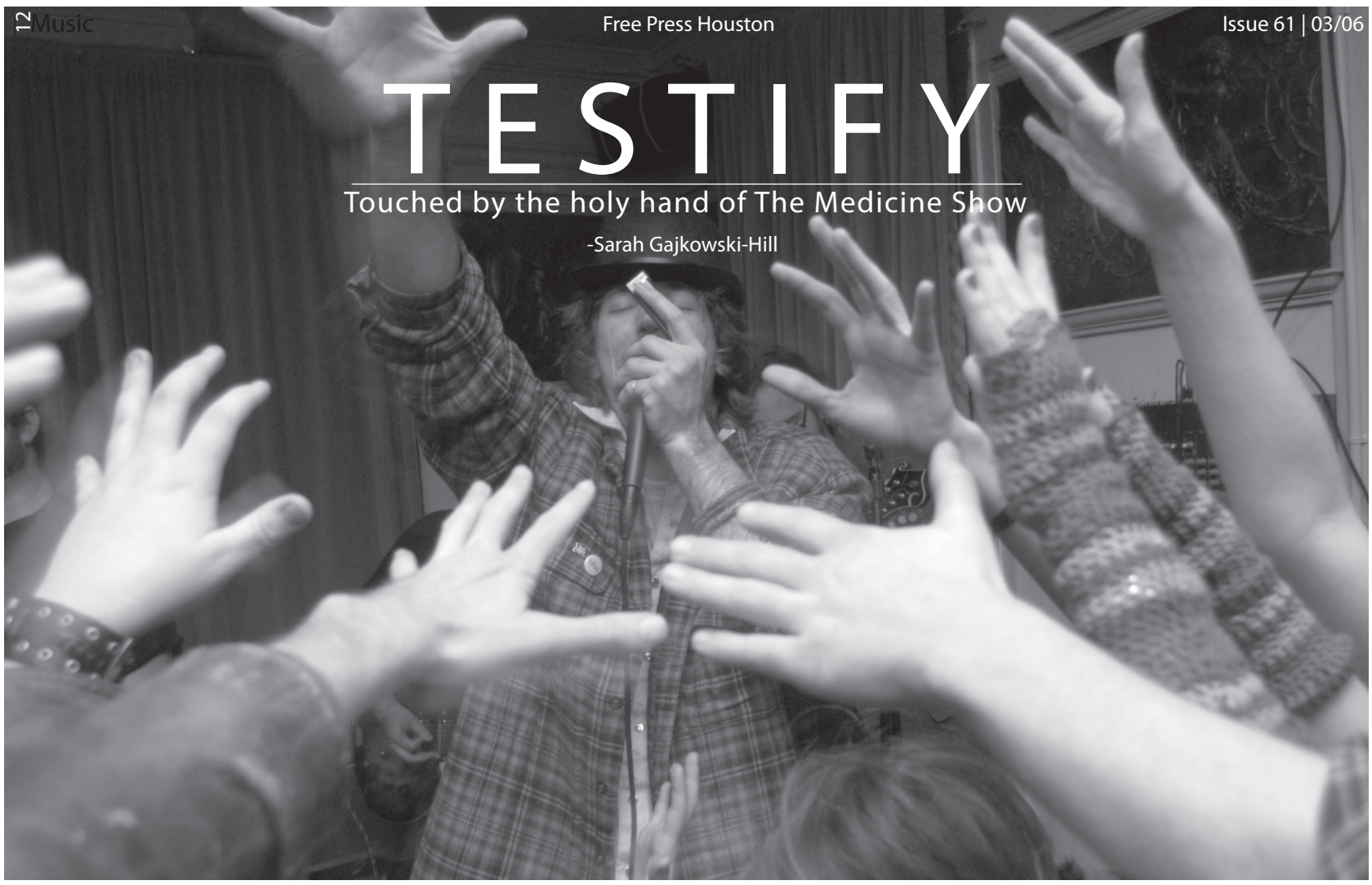
for info on venues, visit freepresshouston.com


HOT ROD
TATTOO & PIERCING
HOUSTON, TX MOTHERFUCKERS
THE CLEANEST AND LARGEST SHOP IN HOUSTON
713.533.1239
1533 Westheimer Houston, TX 77006
Homer Suenz
Joel Torrez
B.B.
Cory Rogers
Lee Lopez
Christina
AWARD WINNING STAFF
Can You Keep Up?
WWW.HOTRODTATTOOSTUDIO.COM

TESTIFY

Touched by the holy hand of The Medicine Show

-Sarah Gajkowski-Hill







It's Lent people! Get off your knees (yeah, that's what I said) and confess that you've seen the light at Helios Monday nights! While the name "Medicine Show" conjures up visions of Depression-era preachers trying to sell you some magic elixir (and I'm not saying they won't) this Houston band is a unique blend of incredible musicians, self-taught inventors and performance artists. The homemade instruments were first constructed by one Geoffrey "Uncle Tic" Mueller out of things like 2"X4"s and cigar boxes. But then he and the other members of the band: Craig "The Reverend" Kinsey, Scott "RagTagMac" McNeil, Shane "Coach" Lauder, and Patrick "Hambone" McLaughlin, taught themselves to play these junkyard instruments better than any old dude on the "O Brother Where Art Thu" soundtrack. Asked what the hell inspired all this, Mueller insists he's always just tried new things…it is almost as much of a surprise to the band that this was the genre Houstonians were craving; this was the experiment that stuck. But for the Southern kids who remember hearing Cajun in their kitchens growing up, perhaps a bit of Muddy Waters on the Sunday afternoon ride to Grandma's, this eclectic mix of throwback punk and old school bluegrass is just the medicine they needed. The hipsters, the thugs, the businessmen—and some of the hottest thrift-store broads I ever saw—are breaking down the doors here around 11:30 and the awe is palpable—how DOES one play a washboard that fast, Hambone?!

You never know what will happen, what the set list will include, or for that matter, what instruments will be introduced throughout the night: mandolin, steel guitar, harmonica, bongos, tambourine…As the clock winds closer to 2 AM and the liquor runs freer the energetic crowd really runs the show as the musicians, especially Craig, vocalist and harmonica-player extraordinaire, circle the room to keep the frenzied crowd a-stampin'. The whole scene nearly crashes through Helios' floorboards when the musicians leap onto chairs—it's a hands in the air, stomping good time. And nothing is more sweetly ironic than the chorus of "Won't get drunk no more" screamed out over finger-picking banjo at full-tilt while a Guinness-soaked crowd responds in kind. It, my brothers and sisters, is truly a sight to behold.

it's a beautiful thing to suddenly recognize **"The Humpty Hump"** played on **banjo** and **mandolin**

That's not to say it's strictly one genre. The musicians, seasoned in the musical styles of Serbian, Macedonian and Greek fare as well as a healthy dose of hardcore and punk are really, well—alone in that. You can't really give a designation to a band like the Medicine Show, but it's a beautiful thing to suddenly recognize "The Humpty Hump" played on banjo and mandolin. If you don't see them at Helios, or happen in on a show at the Proletariat, the Continental or the Alabama Ice House, they may just find you. During a self-appointed "guerrilla tour" of Houston hotspots, they paraded their jug band through bars, convenience shows and other area establishments—take note, House of Pies!

Some nights the Reverend will ask a believer up on stage to give a (granted, drunken) testimonial. Always the contemplative one, he thinks there is an aspect of worship in the returning of fans. "People have told me that the Medicine Show is their church… and everyone worships in their own way. So what does the Medicine Show offer--?" he shrugs. "Fellowship," Mueller answers. While it's probably true that people would stick around church longer if they served beer afterwards instead of coffee, the real point is that the crowd has a great time. Expect a CD out in 3 or 4 months but until then, catch these unpretentious performers: "People should know that they're going to have fun. They're going to dance." And if that's what Uncle Tic is serving up, I say *hallelujah* to that.

photographs by L. John Powers

Pegstar Concerts

MARCH 2nd - Engine Room

Electric 6 / She Wants Revenge / Rock Kills Kid
DJ Ceeplus & The House Of Bad Knives

MARCH 14th - Walter's On Washington

Asobi Seksu
The Czars

MARCH 15th - 1415 **with Boys & Girls Club**

Boys & Girls 2 Year Party W/ Moving Units
The Fever / DJ Franki Chan / B&G's DJs

MARCH 20th - Walter's On Washington

We Are Scientists / The Grates
Foreign Born / Zykos

MARCH 22nd - Walter's On Washington

The Living Things / The Vacation
Flowers To Hide

April 21st - Warehouse Live

Benvento Russ Duo

MAY 14th - Walter's On Washington

SoulPosition (RJD2 + BLUEPRINT)
One Be Lo

all shows listed are all ages

INFO + TICKETS / www.pegstar.net



2DAY
POSTCARDS
.COM

YOU KNOW YOU NEED THEM
HEY!
YOU
WITH THE
MIC
YOU KNOW YOU NEED THEM
FLYERS POSTERS FLATS ALBUM ARTWORK
FLYERS POSTERS FLATS ALBUM ARTWORK

INDIE BAND SPECIAL

5000 FULL COLOR POSTCARDS DOUBLE SIDED ON 12PT C2S

100 FULL COLOR 11X17 POSTERS 1 SIDED

ALL FOR ONLY $450 DESIGN INCLUDED

713.224.8808
WWW.2DAYPOSTCARDS.COM



SXSW Overflow + Beyond

By Lance Scott Walker

It's that time of year again -- where all the flights into and hotels scattered around Austin are booked solid, and the capitol city's streets are jammed with rental cars taking up illegal spaces and double-parking to where only the taxicabs can nudge through with their fare of badge-carrying industry folk.

I hate South by Southwest. I have for a long time. For one, it's a clusterfuck, jamming that city to the gills to where it's nearly impossible to move around with any sort of goal of seeing more than one band in one night. It's too small for that (not to mention poorly laid out). I like to refer to Austin as the city where you make reservations to get a table for breakfast; add in over a thousand bands and over 10,000 attendees and you've got an anthill packed into a glass vial. The best bands are on the best bills, and usually in clubs that are far too small to host them, resulting in only an A-list of industry people squeezing in to watch a short set under hurried circumstances.

As Houstonians, however, we do get the benefit of a runoff of bands that have booked tours around their 45-minute, $150-175 set at the conference. Needing to lessen the financial teeth-pulling that results from that lengthy drive, they'll take what they can get booking-wise, in just about any club within an any-mile radius of Travis County.

What that does is to fill our clubs up here in town for a week and a half with hundreds of the same bands that are playing the festival. Here are a few of the brightest and shiniest.



Slug of Atmosphere

SXSWOverflow Fest 2006

Friday, March 17th through Sunday, March 19th
Super Happy Fun Land (2610 Ashland @ West 27th, 713-880-2100)

SHFL has the right idea: give folks the option to attend one night of a bill put together stitched together of bands that ended up in town on the same night, but then give them added incentive to come back by offering a discounted pass for three nights' worth of music: $8 per evening or $15 for all 3 nights. All of their bills are about as diverse as humanly possible -- with bands coming in from as far away as New Zealand on the Sunday night. Whirlwind Heat would be my favorite, on the Friday night, but every bill looks pretty stacked:

Fri March 17th

12:00am	**The Mother's Anger** (Israel)
11:00pm	**Whirlwind Heat** (Michigan)
10:00pm	**El Paso Hot Button** (Oklahoma)
9:00pm	**Chim Charoo**

Sat March 18th

12:00am	**The Noise Revival** (Austin)
11:00pm	**The Mathematicians** (New York)
10:00pm	**The Ex-Boyfriends** (San Francisco)
9:00pm	**Some By Sea** (Seattle)
8:00pm	**Dogme 95** (8pm)

Sun March 19th

11:00pm	**The Dead Betties** (New York)
10:00pm	**Die Die Die** (New Zealand)
9:00pm	**Boss Martians** (Seattle)
8:00pm	**Man in Gray** (New York)
7:00pm	**Cortina** (New Zealand)
6:00pm	**The Bats** (New Zealand)
5:00pm	**Luke Doucet** (Canada)
4:00pm	**Carolyn Mark** (Canada)
3:00pm	**Christine Fellows** (Canada)

The Velvet Teen, Aloha, Maritime
Saturday, March 18th at Walter's On Washington
(4215 Washington Ave, 713-862-2513)

I could go on and on about the merits of The Velvet Teen's songwriting (everyone else does), but honestly the captain's wings on this bill belong to Aloha, who crafted what was easily one of the best records of 2004 with *Here Comes Everyone*. That record screams *opus* from beginning to end: Tony Cavallario's vocals and lyrics are the sullen narrator throughout and the strings, pianos, vibes and everything else are so perfectly (and uniquely) arranged as to make one think a conductor was standing on a podium directing them as they recorded it. This show, if absolutely nothing else, is at least a chance to see them try and pull it off live.

Atmosphere, Los Nativos, Nosaprise
Sunday, March 19th at Warehouse Live
(813 Saint Emanuel, 713-629-3700)

The most impressive thing about reading Slug's lyrics (as they are printed on the insert of Atmosphere's new record *You can't imagine how much fun we're having*) is that they don't *read* like rap lyrics. They read like streams of thought rather than lines of rhyme stitched together, telling stories from the outset but bouncing around enough to only remind you that there was, in fact, a point. But that takes a lot of listens to unearth, all with the possible exception of the brilliant "Little Man," the album's closer and its most black and white moment: having fallen out of touch with three friends, Slug wrote each of them a letter, then dropped all three letters straight into the track. The strength isn't just in the lyrics, though -- the production on this record is thicker, more dynamic and a lot funkier than anything they've done in the past. Go see them before he grows out his mohawk.

Ted Leo/Pharmacists, The Duke Spirit, The Joggers
Sunday, March 19th at Walter's On Washington
(4215 Washington Ave, 713-862-2513)

The Joggers. I liked them better when they were called Television. It's becoming rarer and rarer to hear a band that's truly doing something unique. That's why this bill is so lopsided: Ted Leo is arguably one of the great punk rock pop songwriters of our generation, and The Duke Spirit, with a husky-voiced female singer and a sound I could only lazily compare to that odd Kills/Royal Trux aesthetic, are making records that sound nothing like what anyone else is doing these days. And that, brothers and sisters, is a very good thing.

Beyond

Doug Stanhope, Neil Hamburger
Sunday, March 25th at Walter's On Washington
(4215 Washington Ave, 713-862-2513)

Once you've shaken off all that is the schmoozefest that was SXSW2K6, you can laugh off whatever's left. Standup comics are *dark* characters with lonely lives and really, incredibly fucked up stories to tell, and I can't think of a more self-depricating pair of comics than the filthy Stanhope and the sad Hamburger. If Hamburger doesn't piss you off with how incredibly, geniusly *bad* he is, Stanhope will likely as well offend and amaze you with how candid he gets about all the disgusting things he's got checked off on his list: from having sex with a midget fan just so he could say he did it to inadvertently getting a blowjob from a hooker that turned out to be a *guy* -- a guy who, by the way, subsequently stole his wallet.


the
Generic
Tribe
AMBIDEXTROUS LUCID PONY
6TH FULL LENGTH ALBUM
COMING SOON!!!
winners of the 2005
Abon Studios recording contest
in Oslo, Norway
WWW.THEGENERICTRIBE.COM


THE
Rhythm
Room
Hammerly
Britmoore
Westview
Beltway 8 West
I-10 West
713.465.6122
COME EXPERIENCE HOUSTON'S SAFEST AND CLEANEST
REHEARSAL COMPLEX
Video Surveillance
Monthly Rates
24 Hour Access

audible › stellar › hypnotic › situations

ASHS

saturday march 25th 2006

CD RELEASE PARTY

2215 commerce street

houston TX

supporting acts:

DJ Cee Plus and the House of Bad Knives

Dubtex

DJ Joe B

Andy B*sides

www.ashs.us

$10/21+ includes a copy of their self-titled debut album available at cdbaby.com/ashs

FREE BEER.....FREE FOOD.....GOOD VIBES











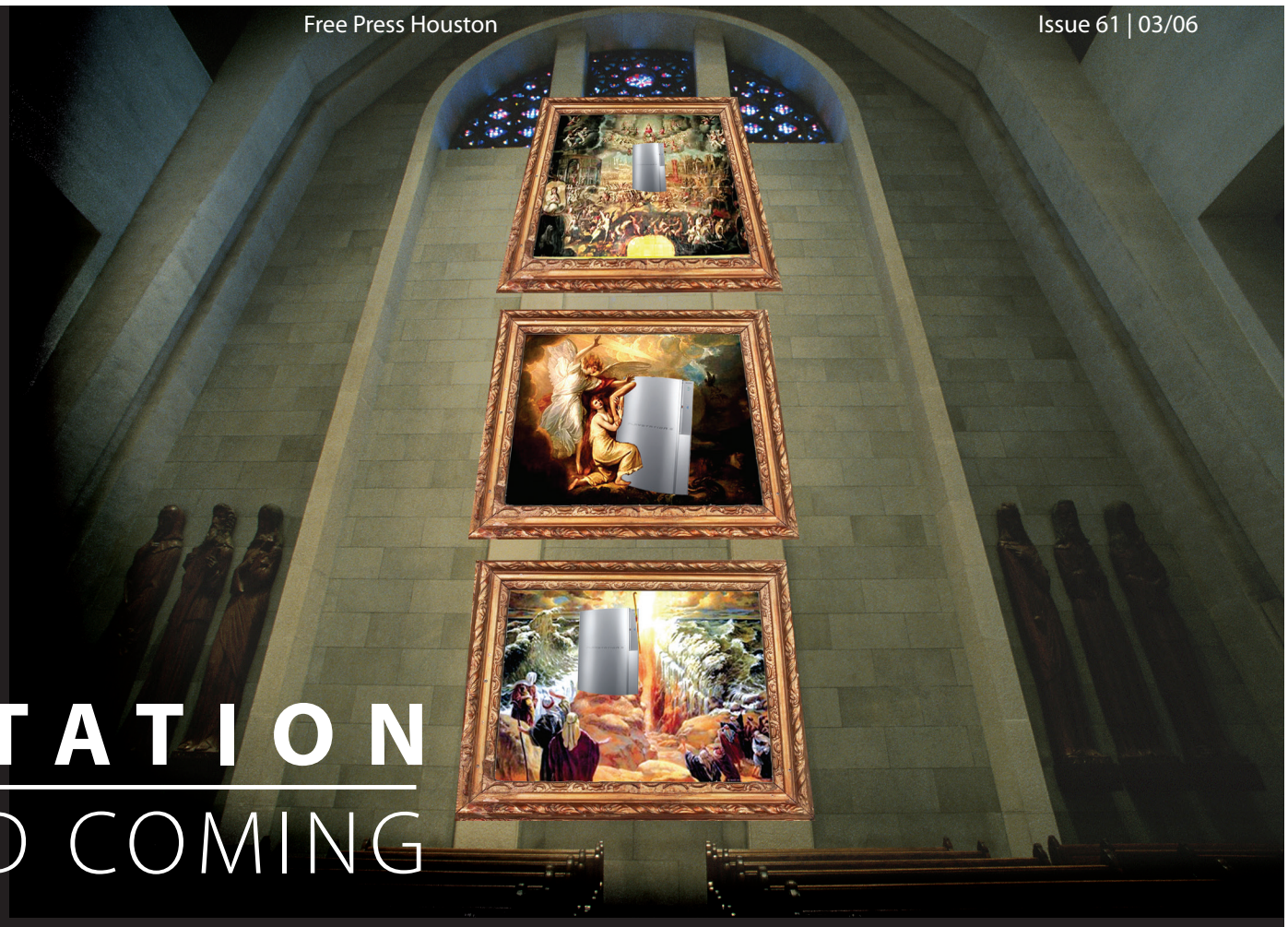
DRINK RESPONSIBLY—CAPTAIN'S ORDERS! WWW.CAPTAINMORGAN.COM

STEP UP TO THE GREAT TASTE OF A CAPTAIN & COLA!

Got a little CAPTAIN in you?

Captain Morgan ORIGINAL SPICED RUM

©2006 Imported and Bottled by Captain Morgan Rum Co., Baltimore, MD, Puerto Rican Rum with Spice and Other Natural Flavors. 35% Alc. by Vol. (70 Proof).



TECH-KNOWLEDGE

PLAYSTATION

THE THIRD COMING

A maelstrom of rumors, and doomsday predictions have plagued Sony's Playstation 3. However, the storm subsided when Sony's President Ken Kutaragi announced a sea-splitting wealth of information at a Sony business conference in Tokyo.

A worldwide release of the Playstation 3 will occur sometime within the first 10 days of November. A first for Sony, the worldwide release is a risky path to take (similarly, the shortages of Microsoft's Xbox 360 are attributed to its worldwide release). Sony remains confident that it will be able to produce 6 million units by the end of March 2007. Sony will include a 60GB hard drive when the unit ships, and an "upgradable" unit will be available. With so much good news coming from Sony, no word was given on the price of the system. One Sony representative claimed that the system will not cost any less than $425. The blame for the system's high cost, its blu-ray format, holds more then six times the info as a DVD, and will be standard on all PS3 games.

No news or announcements were made on any games for the PS3, but Sony did report a concise amount of information on their online plans. Sony plans to provide messaging, voice and video chat, matchmaking, rankings, friend lists, in-game shopping, as well as uploading and downloading. Most importantly, the service will be free. Many predict a premium paid for service to be announced, but is all speculation. Sony has its cards lined up right to compete with Microsoft's Xbox Live service, but it's too early to tell how Sony will pull it off.

Some light was also shed on the future plans for the Playstation Portable. A $199 price drop will come at the end of March. Sony's PSP browser will also get an upgrade which supports Macromedia Flash, as well as video and voice-over support, and a USB Global Positioning Satellite receiver to be used with games. The best news headed to the PSP is undoubtedly the PS1 emulation. Players will be allowed to download and play PS1 games on a PSP memory stick.

The end times are nigh! With E3 in May, we'll see the end of the next gen confusion. Sony's clarified plans for the next gen may force Nintendo to grace games with news on their new system. This could also force Microsoft into a holiday season jihad lead by Master Chief himself. One thing is certain, before today my faith in the PS3 had wavered. Now, my spirits for the next-gen are high, my doubts undoubted, and my pocketbook proactively indebted.



Updates

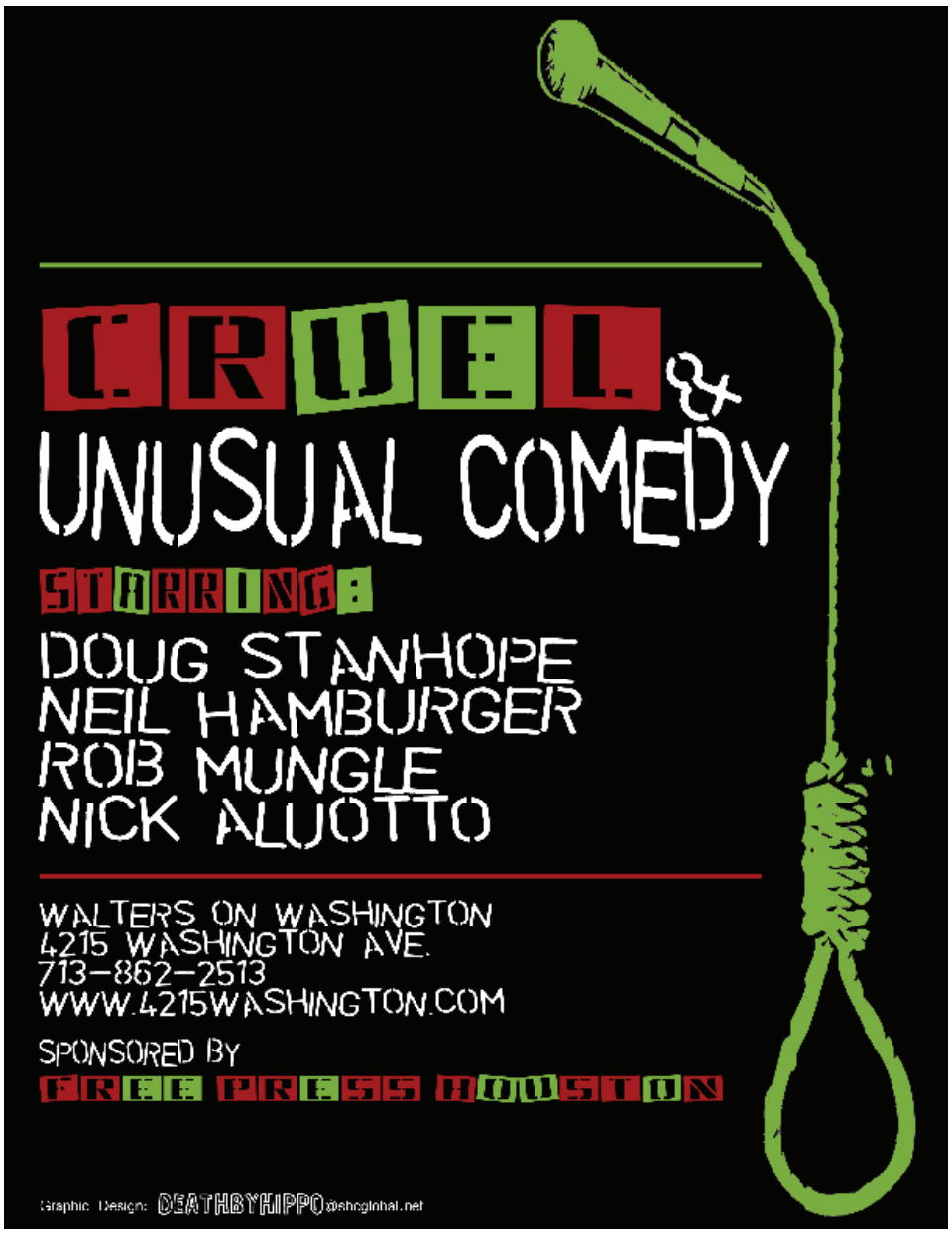
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess

The delay of the latest Zelda games comes with a blessing in disguise. Nintendo's Shigeru Miyamoto confirmed that Twilight Princess will take full advantage of the Revolution controller. Now would be a great time to start working on your own green-tighted costume to wear while thwarting evil plans. Inactive, and overweight couch heros are sure to pull a few muscles here.



Halo 3

All Halo 3 rumors have been laid to rest, (for the time being). Turns out Bungie's latest project is not a game, rather it is a full-color, graphic novel to be distributed by Marvel comics. The novel will feature "an anthology of original stories, including one big story, and three shorter tales." Expect Marvel to puts its finest writers and artists on the mission.





Tyler Barber
Graphic Design, Video & Audio Solutions

tylertron@gmail.com



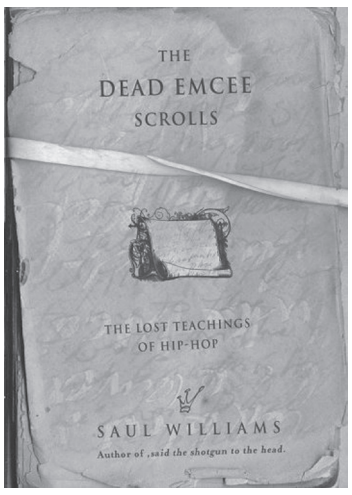
Books n' Shit

THE DEAD EMCEE SCROLLS: THE LOST TEACHINGS OF HIP-HOP



by Saul Williams

Review by Michael Frauenhofer



The Dead Emcee Scrolls is the fourth book of poetry from spoken word artist and rapper Saul Williams, and its tone from the start is distinctly different. He begins with a long "confession" of a foreword, in which he gives the background exposition (while looking at graffiti in the subway, he found scrolls containing "the lost teachings of hip-hop" that he has spent his entire career translating and interpreting -- the "dead emcee scrolls", get it?), which is, yes, probably not true. He then moves on to seven long serial poems, divided into numerous "chapters" of more traditional poem length, and ends with a collection of journal entries from 1994 to 2001. While the conceit is annoyingly smug, and a number of the poems have already been collected elsewhere, overall *The Dead Emcee Scrolls* is a solid summation of Williams's work and a strong introduction for the uninitiated.

"NGH WHT" is probably the most interesting poem here. Beginning "BCH NGH. Gun trigga. Dick's bigga. Why / fuck? Killer. Blood spiller. BCH stealer. Mack / truck. Bad luck, fuckin with this black buck" and raising more questions than it answers, it's clear that this is not a typical Saul Williams poem. It's closer to an embodiment of the gangsta archetype Williams so often rejects, and a tantalizing glimpse into an alternate universe: what if Williams was a gangsta too? The imagery is still powerful: "Like the way I hold my gat, flat on its / side, like a pup. And I'm tickling the trigger. / Make it laugh from its gut. You would think / I'm a comedian the way it erupts," or, later on, "…Got you smokin them trees. At your / front door with my sawed-off. Got you snortin / them keys." Williams's intent here is unclear: is he slipping into a gangsta stance in order to shock, to point out the prevalent negative attitudes before he condemns them in later poems? Or is he taking advantage of the level of separation provided by the plot device of the scrolls, to take the darker, more tempting path from a safe distance: if you're offended, don't worry, *Saul* didn't write this. Williams also refers to himself at points as "Niggy Tardust", an interesting reference to Bowie's alien and alienated Ziggy Stardust -- where Ziggy Stardust was separated from society because of species, his alien nature reflected in his name, Niggy Tardust is separated by race; where Stardust was, for better or for worse, the embodiment of the self-destructive excess of the rock'n'roll lifestyle, Tardust embodies the street-corner thug culture. Equally interesting is Williams's use of "NGH" instead of "nigga" -- does further abbreviation really take more of the sting out of a controversial word with negative origins? By capitalizing "NGH", Williams also draws more attention to it; later on, he brings up the historical spelling of "Yahweh" as "YHWH", although he stops short of directly paralleling "nigga" to the concept of God.

The problem is that too often in other poems, by trying to be too revolutionary, Williams can threaten to lose himself in his own incendiary proselytizing. For every glowing endorsement like the back-cover quotes -- "he challenges us to be individuals," says Russell Simmons -- he has a detractor; in his intense focus on the cultural battle for the soul of the young black male, especially with regards to the role of hip-hop in shaping said soul's worldview, Williams at times swoops dangerously close to losing relevance, tirade after impassioned tirade turning him into the homeless man with the "repent the end is near" sign or, worse, the crazed, grizzled old man in the corner that *nobody* listens to. But by that same token, for every critic he has a disciple: a quick glance at his books on Amazon reveals a cult following of passionate readers, "Saul changed my life", this is a man with a vision. And indeed, for every time Williams's poems blur together into a less-than-inspiring parade of religious/historical references and empty calls for revolution, he pulls out a powerful punch of verse that reminds you just why he was so vital and important in the first place, that takes you back to the energetic young man in the Brooklyn Moon or the Nuyorican with his eyes wide and voice raised.

> as you read, you can almost hear the beat behind the words

When he does write about other things, it's a refreshing break. Williams, even without the soapbox screams and the quest to save the world, is still an extremely talented wordsmith, and his simpler poems are sometimes all the more beautiful for their simplicity. Chapter one of the poem "1987" paints a vivid picture of Saul and three of his friends almost exclusively through the use of brand names and culture references -- "Acid wash Guess with the leather patches, / sportin the white Diadoras with the hoodie / that matches. I'm wearing two Swatches and / a small Gucci pouch…" -- evoking both nostalgia and a commentary on modern consumerism; in his rare love poems (not counting the many love poems to hip-hop), he shows again his knack for imagery, drawing, for instance, interesting parallels between sex and God: he begins one poem with a short, startlingly blunt sentence, "God and pussy." He builds the metaphor over the course of the poem, flipping meanings with lines like "I'm about to slide up in the kingdom / of God with no protection", contrasting "holy union" and "holy crap", creating a brilliant interplay between the sacred and the obscene. In the final line, "Cosmic slop on everything", he tears it right back down, the release bringing to mind Cummings's "nearer:breath of my breath:take not thy tingling" in its almost crude anticlimax.

The closing journals at points drift into boring metaphysical clichés, but mixed in are fragments of truly great poetry, nimble wordplay ("I'm charged / With possession of illegal substance / But my substance / Makes eagles of the ill"), and even moments of unexpected humor ("I was walking down Fifth Avenue today when Russell Simmons came out of a building and crossed right in front of me. / Is that the same as a black cat?"). Not all of it is new, but it's a testament to Williams's writing that even older, previously-released material, such as the masterful manipulation of imagery on "Penny for a Thought", retains every shiver of its original power.

Williams is not just a strong poet but a great MC as well (the voice behind tracks like "List of Demands" and "Black Stacey"), and his command of rhythm comes across undiluted even on the written page; as you read, you can almost hear the beat behind the words. He has a way with imagery and a gift for language, and even when his preaching can grow tiresome or heavy-handed the underlying message is still important. For those seeking a deeper understanding of the hip-hop generation, *The Dead Emcee Scrolls* isn't a bad place to start. And if he's just a little bit arrogant, well... what else is hip-hop?



Chapultepec
Lupita
Mexican Restaurant

813 Richmond
2 blocks East of Montrose
713.522.2365
OPEN 24 HOURS for
Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Tired of missing **Happy Hour** *somewhere else? Don't worry! Come to Chapultepec Lupita, where our Happy Hour is from* **11am-9pm everyday!** *Try our new flavored* **Ritas and Martinis**- *We have all of the flavors! Plus check out our new* **Tequila Bar**- *We now have more than* **100 Tequilas** *and counting.* **Our full service bar is now open! Big screens, and bigger drink selection for Happy Hour!!!**





ARNA'S CHILDREN

"Yussef committed a suicide attack in 2001. Ashraf was killed in the battle of Jenin. Alla leads a resistance group. I have known them since they were small children in a theatre group I directed. I returned to the ruins of Jenin with my camera, to see what happened to the children I knew and loved…my film tries to tell their stories and to understand their choices."

Director, Juliano Mer Khamis

Winner of Best First Documentary at the 2004 Hot Docs Film Festival

Must-see documentary penetrates a Jenin refugee camp to follow several Palestinian children from laughing little kids in a theater group to grim actors on a grislier world stage.

Ronnie Scheib, www.variety.com, May 2004

March 23, 2006
8pm
Rice Cinema

Rice University

Entrance #8 (University Blvd & Stockton Dr.)

"It is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees!"

Emiliano Zapata

"Houston Indy Media's Food Sponsorship Provided by Swamp"

WORLD VIEW GOVT

Life Under the Klan Wasn't This Bad
Gitmo on the Mississippi

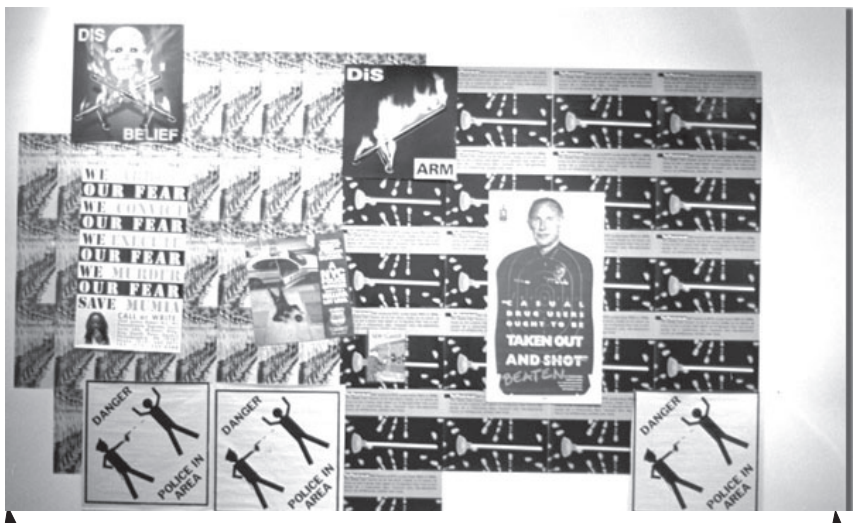
By JORDAN FLAHERTY

Sometimes the injustices here in New Orleans leave me numb. But the continuing debacle of our criminal justice system inspires in me a sense of indignation I thought was lost to cynicism long ago. Ursula Price, a staff investigator for the indigent defense organization A Fighting Chance, has met with several thousand hurricane survivors who were imprisoned at the time of the hurricane, and her stories chill me "I grew up in small town Mississippi," she tells me. "We had the Klan marching down our main street. But still, I've never seen anything like this."

Safe Streets, Strong Communities, a New Orleans-based criminal justice reform coalition that Price also works with, has just released a report based on more than a hundred recent interviews with prisoners who have been locked up since pre-Katrina and are currently spread across thirteen prisons and hundreds of miles. They found the average number of days people had been locked up without a trial was 385 days. One person had been locked up for 1,289 days. None of them have been convicted of any crime.

"I've been working in the system for the while, I do capital cases and I've seen the worst that the criminal justice system has to offer," Price told me. "But even I am shocked that there has been so much disregard for the value of these peoples lives, especially people who have not been proved to have done anything wrong." As lawyers, advocates, and former prisoners stressed to me in interviews over the last couple of weeks, arrest is not the same as conviction. According to a pre-Katrina report from the Metropolitan Crime Commission, 65% of those arrested in New Orleans are eventually released without ever having been charged with any crime.

Samuel Nicholas (his friends call him Nick) was imprisoned in Orleans Parish Prison (OPP) on a misdemeanor charge, and was due to be released August 31. Instead, after a harrowing journey of several months, he was released February 1. Nick told me he still shudders when he thinks of those days in OPP.



in **New Orleans** you're **guilty** til you're proven **innocent**

"We heard boats leaving, and one of the guys said ëhey man, all the deputies gone,' Nick relates. "We took it upon ourselves to try to survive. They left us in the gym for two days with nothing. Some of those guys stayed in a cell for four or five days. People were hollering, 'get me out, I don't want to drown, I don't want to die,' we were locked in with no ventilation, no water, nothing to eat. Its just the grace of god that a lot of us survived."

Benny Flowers, a friend of Nick's from the same Central City neighborhood, was on a work release program, and locked in a different building in the sprawling OPP complex. In his building there were, by his count, about 30 incarcerated youth, some as young as 14 years old. "I don't know why they left the children like that. Locked up, no food, no water. Why would you do that? They couldn't swim, most of them were scared to get into the water. We were on work release, so we didn't have much time left. We weren't trying to escape, we weren't worried about ourselves, we were worried about the children. The guards abandoned us, so we had to do it for ourselves. We made sure everyone was secured and taken care of. The deputies didn't do nothing. It was inmates taking care of inmates, old inmates taking care of young inmates. We had to do it for ourselves."

Benny Hitchens, another former inmate, was imprisoned for unpaid parking tickets. "They put us in a gym, about 200 of us, and they gave us three trash bags, two for defecation and one for urination. That was all we had for 200 people for two days."

State Department of Corrections officers eventually brought them, and thousands of other inmates, to Hunts Prison, in rural Louisiana, where evacuees were kept in a field, day and night, with no shelter and little or no food and water. "They didn't do us no kind of justice," Flowers told me. "We woke up early in the morning with the dew all over us, then in the afternoon we were burning up in the summer sun. There were about 5,000 of us in three yards."

Nick was taken from Hunts prison to Oakdale prison. "At Oakdale they had us on lockdown 23 hours, on Friday and Saturday it was 24 hours. We hadn't even been convicted yet. Why did we have to be treated bad? Twenty-three and one ain't nothing nice, especially when you aint been convicted of a crime yet. But here in New Orleans you're guilty til you're proven innocent. Its just the opposite of how its supposed to be."

From reports that Price received, some prisoners had it worse than Oakdale. "Many prisoners were sent to Jena prison, which had been previously shut down due to the abusiveness of the staff there. I have no idea why they thought it was acceptable to reopen it with the same staff. People were beaten, an entire room of men was forced to strip and jump up and down and make sexual gestures towards one another. I cannot describe to you the terror that the young men we spoke to conveyed to us."

According to the report from Safe Streets Strong Communities, the incarcerated people they interviewed described their attorney's as "passive," "not interested," and "absent." Interviewers were told that "attorneys acted as functionaries for the court rather than advocates for the poor people they represented.the customs of the criminal court excused ñ and often encouraged poor policing and wrongful arrests. The Orleans Indigent Defender Program acted as a cog in this system rather than a check on its dysfunction."

Pre-Katrina, the New Orleans public defender system was already dangerously overloaded, with 42 attorneys and six investigators. Today, New Orleans has 6 public defenders, and one investigator. And these defenders are not necessarily full-time, nor committed to their clients. One of those attorneys is known to spend his days in court working on crossword puzzles instead of talking to his clients. All of these attorneys are allowed to take an unlimited number of additional cases for pay. In most cases, these attorneys have been reported to do a much more vigorous job on behalf of their paid clients.

"We have a system that was broken before Katrina," Price tells me, "that was then torn apart, and is waiting to be rebuilt. Four thousand people are still in prison, waiting for this to be repaired. There's a young man, I speak to his mother every day, who has been in the hole since the storm, and is being abused daily. This boy is 19 years old, and not very big, and he has no lawyer. His mother doesn't know what to do, and without her son having council, I don't know what to tell her."

Pre-hurricane, according to the Safe Streets report, some detainees were brought to a magistrate court shortly after being arrested, "where a public defender was appointed ësolely for the purposes of this hearing.' The assigned attorney did not do even the most cursory interview about the

arrestee's ties to the community, charges, or any other information relevant to setting a bond. Other interviewees were brought to a room where they faced a judge on a video screen. These individuals uniformly reported there was no defense lawyer present."

The report continues, "after appointment, (defense attorneys) by and large did not visit the crime scene, did not interview witnesses, did not check out alibis, did not procure expert assistance, did not review evidence, did not know the facts of the case, did not do any legal research, and did not otherwise prepare for trial with few exceptions, attorneys with the Orleans Indigent Defender program never met with their clients to discuss their case. Appointed council did not take calls from the jail, did not respond to letters or other written correspondence, and generally did not take calls or make appointments with family members (defenders) frequently did not know the names of their clients."

"This ain't just started, its been going on," Nick tells me. "I want to talk about it, but at the same time it hurts to talk about it. Someone's gotta start talking about it. It's not the judge, its not the lawyers, it's the criminal justice system. Everybody who goes to jail isn't guilty. You got guys who were drunk in public, treated like they committed murder."

I asked Price what has to happen to fix this system. "First, we establish who was left behind, collect their stories and substantiate them. Next, we're going to organize among the inmates and former inmates to change the system. The inmates are going to have a voice in what happens in our criminal justice system. If you ask anyone living in New Orleans, the police, the justice system, may be the single most influential element in poor communities. Its what beaks up families, its what keeps people poor."

How can people from around the US help? "Education, health care, mental health. All these issues that exist in the larger community, exist among the prisoners, and no one is serving them. We need psychiatrists, doctors, teachers, we need all kinds of help," Price says.

"One thing I can't forget is those children," Benny Flowers tells me. "Why would they leave those children behind? I'm trying to forget it, but I can't forget it"

Sitting across the table from Benny, Nick is resolute. "I'm making this interview so that things get better," he tells me. "The prison system, the judicial system, the police. We got to make a change, and we all got to come together as a community to make this change. I want to stop all this harassment and brutality."

Jordan Flaherty is a resident of New Orleans, an organizer with New Orleans Network and an editor of Left Turn Magazine

Heartland's card processing & payroll services summed up in one word.

Reliable.



You're busy enough running your business so you shouldn't have to worry about credit card and payroll processing, too.

Heartland Payment Systems (HPS) does it all for you.

The Heartland team knows that you deserve the best from your card and payroll processors. That's why we offer faster transaction times, assistance with installation and employee training, multi-application terminals, and a local Relationship Manager who knows your industry.

Why Wait? Call us today.

Bottom line. It's your business. It's your money. It's your call.

Call Now: 281-748-1076
www.HeartlandPaymentSystems.com

Heartland Payment Systems
Member Service Provider for Key Bank, National Association, Cleveland, OH
Your Hometown Payments Provider

Free Radicals

Sundays at Helios, 411 Westheimer
Free 11pm - 1 Joe B. on the patio
freerads.com



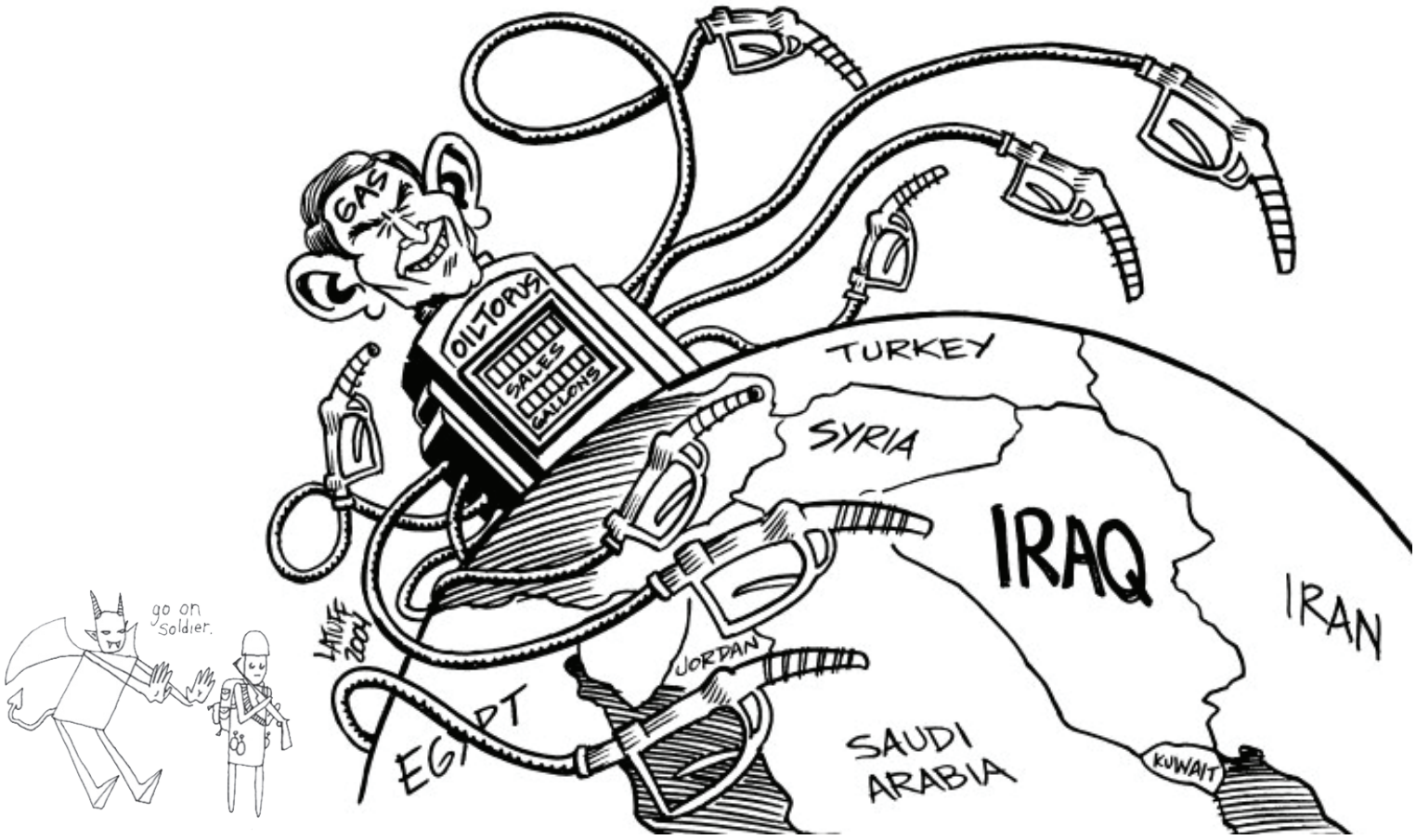
LUCKY BURGER



MONDAY-SATURDAY 11AM-9:30PM CLOSED SUNDAYS
FREE DELIVERY W/IN 2 MILE RADIUS $10 MINIMUM
1601 RICHMOND @ MANDELL 713.522.5650

There are no plans to leave Iraq.

by Dahr Jamail



Why does the Bush Administration refuse to discuss withdrawing occupation forces from Iraq? Why is Halliburton, who landed the no-bid contracts to construct and maintain US military bases in Iraq, posting higher profits than ever before in its 86-year history?

Why do these bases in Iraq resemble self-contained cities as much as military outposts?

Why are we hearing such ludicrous and outrageous statements from the highest ranking military general in the United States, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Peter Pace, who when asked how things were going in Iraq on March 9th in an interview on "Meet the Press" said, "I'd say they're going well. I wouldn't put a great big smiley face on it, but I would say they're going very, very well from everything you look at."

I wonder if there is a training school, or at least talking point memos for these Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, because Pace's predecessor, Gen. Richard Myers, told Senator John McCain last September that "In a sense, things are going well [in Iraq]."

General Pace also praised the Iraqi military, saying, "Now there are over 100 [Iraqi] battalions in the field."

Wow! General Pace must have waved his magic wand and materialized all these 99 new Iraqi battalions that are diligently keeping things safe and secure in occupied Iraq. Because according to the top US general in Iraq, General George Casey, not long ago there was only one Iraqi battalion (about 500-600 soldiers) capable of fighting on its own in Iraq.

During a late-September 2005 Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, Casey acknowledged that the Pentagon estimate of three Iraqi battalions last June had shrunk to one in September. That is less than six months ago.

I thought it would be a good idea to find someone who is qualified to discuss how feasible it would be to train 99 Iraqi battalions in less than six months, as Pace now claims has occurred.

I decided that someone who was in the US Army for 26 years and who worked in eight conflict areas, starting in Vietnam and ending with Haiti, would be qualified. If he had served in two parachute infantry units, three Ranger units, two Special Forces Groups and in Delta Force that would be helpful as well. And just to make sure, if he taught tactics at the Jungle Operations Training Center in Panama and Military Science at the United States Military Academy at West Point, thus knowing a thing or two about training soldiers, that would be a bonus.

That person is Stan Goff.

"This is utter bullshit," was Goff's remark about the Pace claim of having 100 Iraqi battalions when I asked him to comment, "He must be counting the resistance among his forces."

Goff adds, "That dip-shit [Pace] is saying he has 60,000 trained and disciplined people under arms … 65,000 with all the staffs … and almost 100,000 with the support units they would require. To train and oversee them would require thousands of American advisors. It must suck for a career Marine to be used so blatantly as a PR flak."

Goff mentioned that Pace "and everyone else" knows that the Iraqi forces, "however many there are," are heavily cross-infiltrated.

"He [Pace] is saying that the Bush administration is going to empower a pro-Iranian government with 100 ready battalions, when this administration was handed this particular government as the booby prize in exchange for Sistani pulling their cookies out of the fire during the joint rebellions in Najaf and Fallujah," added Goff.

Further discrediting the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Goff said, "To train 99 [battalions] since last September is a claim only the average American might swallow. The right question to ask is, where are they? Where are they headquartered, and where are they in operation? Claiming operations security doesn't count, unless they believe they can hide 100 units of 600 people each in Iraq … from other Iraqis … who are often related to them."

He concludes, "These guys have become accustomed to saying any damn thing, then counting on ignorance and apathy at home – along with hundreds of Democrats who need spine transplants – to get away with it. You can quote me on any of that."

There's a good reason why Pace and others are busy spewing smoke – it's to hide the fact that there are no plans to leave Iraq.

While we're addressing propaganda, we mustn't leave out our brilliant military strategist and warrior for protecting human rights, the illustrious Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

On March 8th, Rice delivered the opening remarks on the release of her Department's '2005 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.'

The introduction to the report says: "In Iraq, 2005 was a year of major progress for democracy, democratic rights and freedom. There was a steady growth of NGOs and other civil society associations that promote human rights."

Uh, right.

This report is submitted to Congress by the State Department. I've often wondered if our politicians are just this ignorant, or simply horrifically misinformed like so many Americans. This report, perhaps, answers the latter.

My point is, if there is a concerted effort by high-ranking officials of the Bush administration to portray things in Iraq as going well, then why are there permanent bases being constructed in Iraq?

This media smokescreen from the likes of Pace, Rice and even "sharp-shooter" Cheney, who recently said things in Iraq are "improving steadily," conveniently leads the American people toward believing there will eventually be a withdrawal of American soldiers.

But the problem with smokescreens is that pesky thing called "reality."

And in Iraq, the reality is that people like Pace, Rice, Cheney and their ever-eloquent front man aren't telling the American public about their true plans for Iraq.

One example that provides some insight into their agenda is the US "Embassy" which is under construction in the infamous "Green Zone."

As you read this, a controversial Kuwait-based construction firm is building a $592 million US embassy in Baghdad. When the dust settles, this compound will be the largest and most secure diplomatic compound in the

world.

The headquarters, I mean "Embassy," will be a self-sustaining cluster of 21 buildings reinforced 2.5 times the usual standards, with some walls to be as thick as 15 feet.

Plans are for over 1,000 US "government officials" to staff and reside there. Lucky for them, they will have access to the gym, swimming pool, barber and beauty shops, food court and commissary. There will also be a large-scale barracks for troops, a school, locker rooms, a warehouse, a vehicle maintenance garage, and six apartment buildings with a total of 619 one-bedroom units. And luckily for the "government officials," their water, electricity and sewage treatment plants will all be independent from Baghdad's city utilities. The total site will be two-thirds the area of the National Mall in Washington, DC."

I wonder if any liberated Iraqis will have access to their swimming pool?

And unlike the Iraqi infrastructure, which is in total shambles and functioning below pre-invasion levels in nearly every area, the US "Embassy" is being constructed right on time. The US Senate Foreign Affairs Committee recently called this an "impressive" feat, considering the construction is taking place in one of the most violent and volatile spots on the planet.

Then there are the permanent military bases.

To give you an idea of what these look like in Iraq, let's start with Camp Anaconda, near Balad. Occupying 15 square miles of Iraq, the base boasts two swimming pools (not the plastic inflatable type), a gym, mini-golf course and first-run movie theater.

The 20,000 soldiers who live at the Balad Air Base, less than 1,000 of whom ever leave the base, can inspect new iPod accessories in one of the two base exchanges, which have piles of the latest electronics and racks of CDs to choose from. One of the PX managers recently boasted that every day he was selling 15 televisions to soldiers.

At Camp Anaconda, located in al-Anbar province where resistance is fierce, the occupation forces live in air-conditioned units where plans are being drawn up to run internet, cable television and overseas telephone access to them.

Mr. Bush refuses to set a **timetable** for withdrawal from Iraq because he **doesn't intend to withdraw**

The thousands of civilian contractors live at the base in a section called "KBR-land," and there is a hospital where doctors carry out 400 surgeries every month on wounded troops.

Air Force officials on the base claim the runway there is one of the busiest in the world, where unmanned Predator drones take off carrying their Hellfire missiles, along with F-16's, C-130's, helicopters, and countless others, as the bases houses over 250 aircraft.

If troops aren't up for the rather lavish dinners served by "Third Country Nationals" from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh who work for slave wages, they can visit the Burger King, Pizza Hut, Popeye's or Subway, then wash it down with a mocha from the Starbucks.

There are several other gigantic bases in Iraq besides camp Anaconda, such as Camp Victory near Baghdad Airport, which – according to a reporter for Mother Jones magazine – when complete will be twice the size of Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo. The Kosovo base is currently one of the largest overseas bases built since the war in Vietnam.

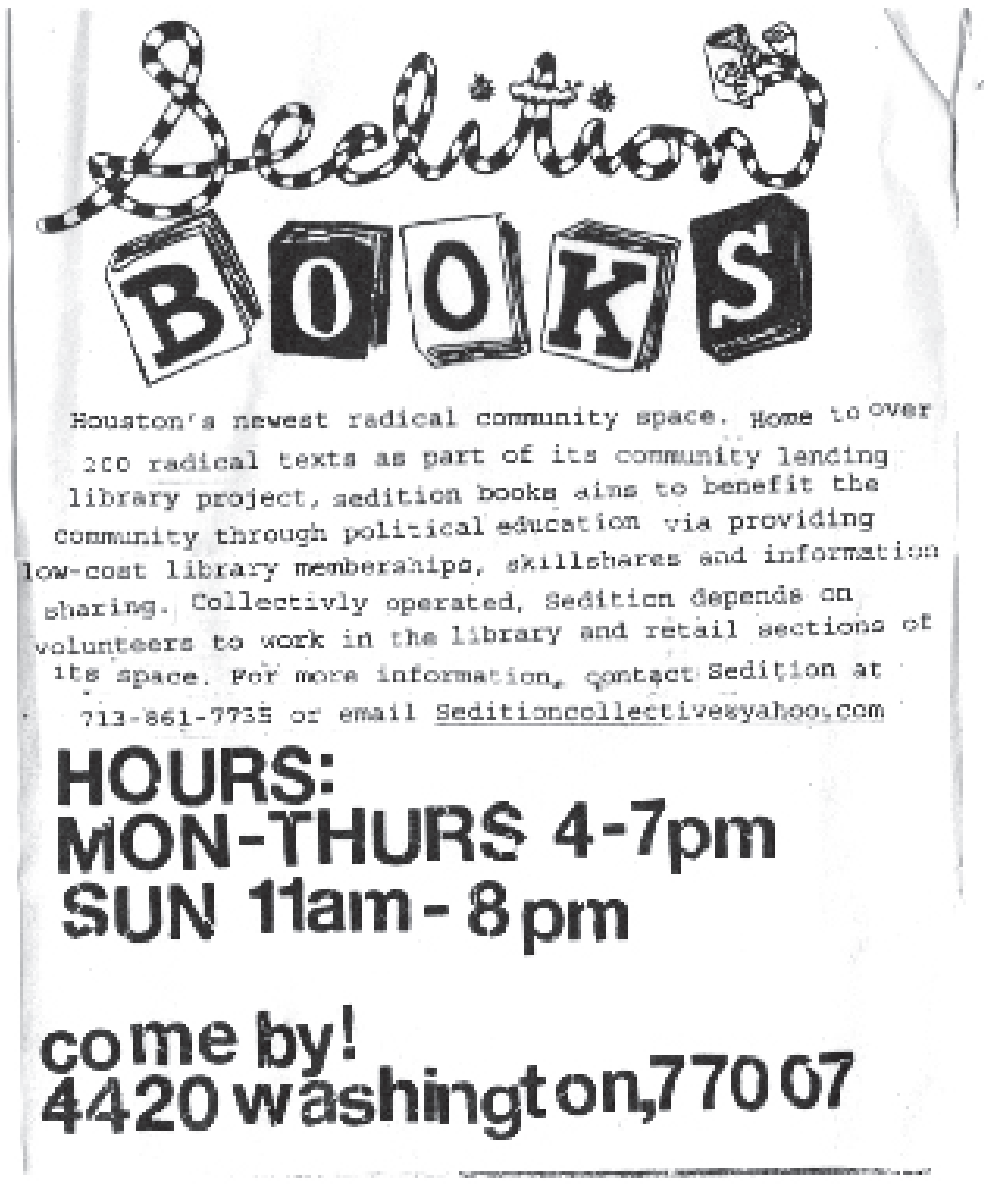
Camp Liberty is adjacent to Camp Victory – where soldiers even compete in their own triathlons. "The course, longer than 140 total miles, spanned several bases in the greater Camp Victory area in west Baghdad," says a news article on a DOD web site.

Mr. Bush refuses to set a timetable for withdrawal from Iraq because he doesn't intend to withdraw. He doesn't intend to because he's following a larger plan for the US in the Middle East.

Less than two weeks after the fall of Baghdad on April 9, 2003, US military officials announced the intention to maintain at least four large bases in Iraq that could be used in the future.

These are located near Baghdad International Airport (where the triathlon was), Tallil (near Nasiriyah, in the south), one in the Kurdish north at either Irbil or Qayyarah (they are only 50 kilometers apart) and one in western al-Anbar province at Al-Asad. Of course, let's not forget the aforementioned Camp Anaconda in Balad.





More recently, on May 22 of last year, US military commanders announced that they would consolidate troops into four large air bases. It was announced at this time that while buildings were being made of concrete instead of the usual metal trailers and tin-sheathed buildings, military officers working on the plan "said the consolidation plan was not meant to establish a permanent US military presence in Iraq."

Right.

The US has at least four of these massive bases in Iraq. Billions of dollars have been spent in their construction, and they are in about the same locations where they were mentioned they would be by military planners back before Mr. Bush declared that major combat operations were over in Iraq.

It appears as though 'mission accomplished' in Iraq was not necessarily referring to guarding the Ministry of Oil and occupying the country indefinitely (or finding WMDs, disrupting al-Qaeda, or liberating Iraqis, blah-blah-blah), but to having a military beach-head in the heart of the Middle East.

Note that while US officials don't dare say the word "permanent" when referring to military bases in Iraq, they will say "permanent access." An article entitled "Pentagon Expects Long-Term Access to Four Key Bases in Iraq," which was a front-page story in the New York Times on April 19, 2003, reads: "There will probably never be an announcement of permanent stationing of troops. Not permanent basing, but permanent access is all that is required, officials say."

Why all of this? Why these obviously permanent bases? Why the beach-head?

A quick glance at US government military strategy documents is even more revealing.

"Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States," reads the 2002 National Security Strategy.

To accomplish this, the US will "require bases and stations within and beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia."

US policymakers have **replaced** the **Cold War** with the **Long War** for **Global Empire** and Unchallenged **Military Hegemony**

Another interesting document is 'Joint Vision 2020' from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, whose "vision" is "Dedicated individuals and innovative organizations transforming the joint force of the 21st Century to achieve full spectrum dominance [bold type theirs]: persuasive in peace, decisive in war, preeminent in any form of conflict [italics theirs]."

US policymakers have replaced the Cold War with the Long War for Global Empire and Unchallenged Military Hegemony. This is the lens through which we must view Iraq to better understand why there are permanent US bases there.

In the Quadrennial Defense Review Report released on February 6, 2006, there is a stated ambition to fight "multiple, overlapping wars" and to "ensure that all major and emerging powers are integrated as constructive actors and stakeholders into the international system." The report goes on to say that the US will "also seek to ensure that no foreign power can dictate terms of regional or global security. It will attempt to dissuade any military competitor from developing disruptive or other capabilities that could enable regional hegemony or hostile action against the United States or other friendly countries, and it will seek to deter aggression or coercion. Should deterrence fail, the United States would deny a hostile power its strategic and operational objectives."

In sum, what is the purpose of permanent US military garrisons in Iraq and the implicit goals of these government documents?

Empire.

—

Dahr Jamail is an independent journalist who spent over 8 months reporting from occupied Iraq. He presented evidence of US war crimes in Iraq at the International Commission of Inquiry on Crimes against Humanity Committed by the Bush Administration in New York City this January. He writes regularly for TruthOut.org, Inter Press Service, Asia Times, TomDispatch, and maintains his own website dahrjamailiraq.com.

"The Surfer's Guide to Stock Investing"

The ultimate momentum trading course surf the waves of the stock market's biggest winners.

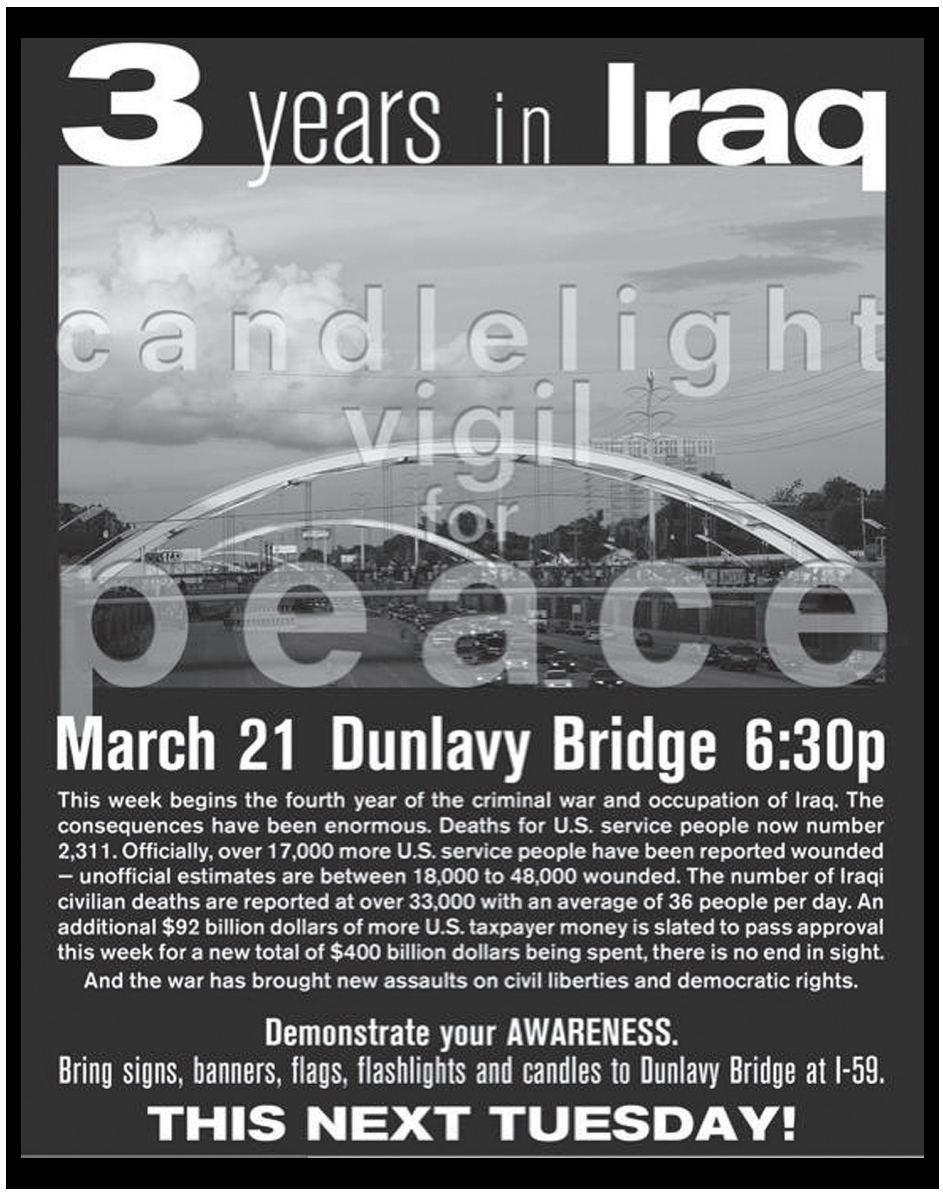
Can your stock trading system do this?

IIIN +96% 30 days
NVAX +253% 18 days
ENY +171% 5 days
HOM +144% 31 days
BCON +269% 18 days

And many, many more….

For more info and free report, log on to:

Bottomspringers.com




CALICO
screenprint co.
QUALITY T-SHIRT
PRINTING EST. 1974
713.CALICOT
FREE PRESS
MISS MICKEY PHOENIX
713.225.4268
1002 PALMER ST.
HOUSTON, TX 77003



CK IT TO THE MAN

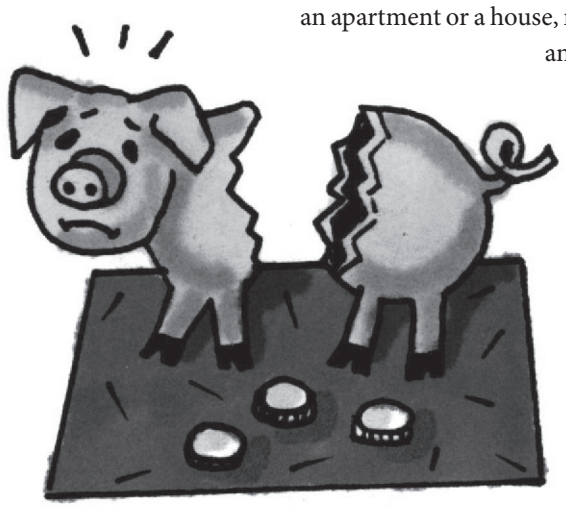
Security Deposit Question

by Devin C. McNulty

Editor's Note: The information in this column is not legal advice. It is merely intended to illustrate general information about the law by using hypothetical examples. If you have a legal issue, including one that resembles the hypotheticals below, you should consult with an attorney regarding the circumstances of your particular problem.

You're a renter and you're moving out of your apartment in a few months to move into someplace better. Your security deposit is equal to about a month's rent (or more) and you're worried that your landlord won't return some or all of it to you. What are your rights and how can you best position yourself to get your security deposit back?

This situation is a thorn in the side of renters everywhere. Renters often assume that they cannot do anything if their landlord withholds the security deposit upon the lease's termination. The law, found at Texas Property Code Chapter 92, provides significant protection to renters and details the remedies available to them if their security deposits are improperly withheld. If a landlord wrongfully keeps a renter's security deposit, he/she could theoretically be forced to pay three (3) times the amount of the deposit, plus $100, plus court costs, plus attorney's fees (for the trouble of having to get an attorney to force him/her to pay in the first place). Furthermore, a landlord may not withhold a security deposit for "normal wear and tear" on the property.



A lease is a two-way street. It's a contract. You give something and you get something. If you have upheld your end of the deal, then the landlord must uphold theirs. In order to maximize your chances of getting your deposit returned, here are a few suggestions;

First, read your lease (if you've lost it, request a copy of it from your landlord). Find out how much notice you must give to move out. Find out if you must give written notice (almost all leases require you to). For example, if your lease ends January 15th and you must give 30 days notice of moving out, do not wait until you pay January's rent to give notice. In that scenario, giving written notice by December 15th of your intentions to vacate the dwelling would be necessary. Also, make sure you provide your landlord with a forwarding address. This very important, yet often overlooked step can significantly delay receiving your deposit. Your landlord does not have you send you any portion of your deposit until 30 days after he/she has received your forwarding address.

Second, clean your apartment when you move out and take a few pictures of it once you have finished. Does that mean scrub each carpet fiber or use of toothbrush on the inside of your toilet bowl? No. The unit or house is probably going to be professionally cleaned before the new tenants move in. Take out all the garbage, don't leave anything in any of the rooms, vacuum the floors and dust the blinds. Scrub the countertops and sinks. Put a little effort into making it look decent, and you should be fine. There is usually no requirement that you leave the apartment or house in "move-in" condition for the next tenant, but making it appear clean and photographing your work will go a long way in getting your deposit back. You might also want a friend (that doesn't live with you) or a neighbor to come by and take a look at the place before you drop off the key. This will ensure you have a "3rd party" witness to the condition of the apartment when you moved out.

Third, if a landlord deducts some or all of your security deposit, they must give you a written, itemized list within 30 days of you moving out. If this list is not provided, then the landlord will probably not be allowed to keep any of your deposit. If you get some of the deposit back and dispute the amount withheld, try not to cash the check while the disagreement is ongoing. If you really need the money and you cash the refund check, send the landlord a written explanation saying that you dispute the rest of the amount as well. If you choose to dispute your landlord's itemized list, do so in writing. Tell him or her why you disagree with the amount withheld and offer to show him or her the photographs of the apartment that you took when you moved out.

A landlord cannot deduct from the security deposit for "normal wear and tear." "Normal wear and tear" is from the expected, regular, daily use of a property. A landlord should not deduct from, or withhold your security deposit because of things like nail holes where you hung frames or pictures. After all, you are renting an apartment or a house, not a hotel room. Hanging pictures in a dwelling is a usual and customary practice. If you lived someplace for a few years and the carpet is worn in high traffic areas that would be considered "normal wear and tear" and a landlord should not deduct from your deposit to replace the carpet. The key word is "normal" though. If you leave gaping holes in your wall or your carpet has enormous stains, that is definitely not normal and your landlord would be well within his/her rights to keep some or all of your deposit for necessary repairs.

Always put your communications with your landlord in writing. If your dispute is not resolved mano a mano and you decide to go to court, you will need convincing evidence in order to win. Describing telephone calls is bad evidence. Letters, photographs and other witnesses are much more convincing for a judge or jury than someone's recollection of a conversation that may or may not have taken place.

Some renters mistakenly believe they do not have to pay their final month's rent and assume it will merely be deducted from their security deposit. If you refuse to pay your final month's rent and it's not clearly stated in your rental agreement that you're authorized to do so (which it probably won't be), your landlord can sue you for three (3) times your rent plus court costs and attorney's fees. In fact, it's often a condition of getting the security deposit returned that the renter has paid all rents and fees owed under the lease.

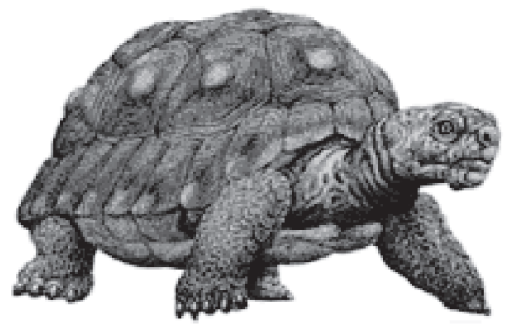
To recap: Read your lease, give written notice at least 30 days before moving out, clean up your apartment and snap a couple of photos of your handiwork, give a forwarding address. If your landlord withhold some or all of your rent, he or she needs to send you an itemized list of what he/she is withholding and why. If you dispute the list, do so in writing. If your landlord attempts to deduct for normal wear and tear damages inform him or her that normal wear and tear damages are not legally deductible from a security deposit.

Devin C. McNulty, a former prosecutor, is engaged in the private practice of law in Houston, Texas. He can be reached at devin_mcnulty@hotmail.com with any questions.

DEREK DUNIVAN
713.880.0401
Learn to shred for this low, low price!
PLAY LIKE A STAR!!!
$20 1/2 hour
$35 hour



GET COVERED



Personal/Auto Insurance
Auto-Home Owners-Mobile Homes-Flood-Fire-Renter's-Boats-RVs-Condos
Motorcycles-Antiques-Same Day SR.22

Health Insurance
Group and Individual Health-Children-RX Card-Dental-Mortgage Life-Term Life-Whole and Universal Life- Disability-Long Term Care-Medicare Supplement-
High Interest Annuities

Commercial Insurance
Clubs-Restaurants-Contractors-Doctors-Realtors-Accountants-Garages-Dealers-Truckers-Retailers-Small or Large Properties-Workman's Comp-Umbrella-Malls-Clinics-Churches-Schools-Nonprofit Organizations-Limos
Any Business Can Save Money With Us!

SAFECO, CHUBB, PRUDENTIAL, THE HARTFORD, PROGRESSIVE, CNA, TRAVELERS, AIG, BLUE CROSS/BLUE SHIELD & More

Independent Insurance Agency
Located in the Heart of Montrose
2117 Dunlavy just N. of Fairview
Houston, TX 77006
713.355.7228



FINE Scooters FROM $1200.00

SCOOTERSMITH.NET
713.869.4885 HOUSTON TEXAS

THE FINISHING TOUCH
BY
MICHAEL COKER

Acoustic and electric Guitar
- *Repairs and maintenance*
- *Setups and adjustments*
- *Cleaning and detailing*
- *Strobe Tuning*

(713) 477-5164

1226 Westheimer @ Commonwealth 713.522.8895
The former owner and chef of Patu's in the Village bring you...

Bangkok Place
Delicate Thai Cuisine

The Best Lunch Buffet in town!
All of your Thai favorites in one place:
Seafood, Curries, Tofu, Panang, Vegetables, Soups, Pad Thai, Salads, and new items everyday!
Also try our full dinner menu

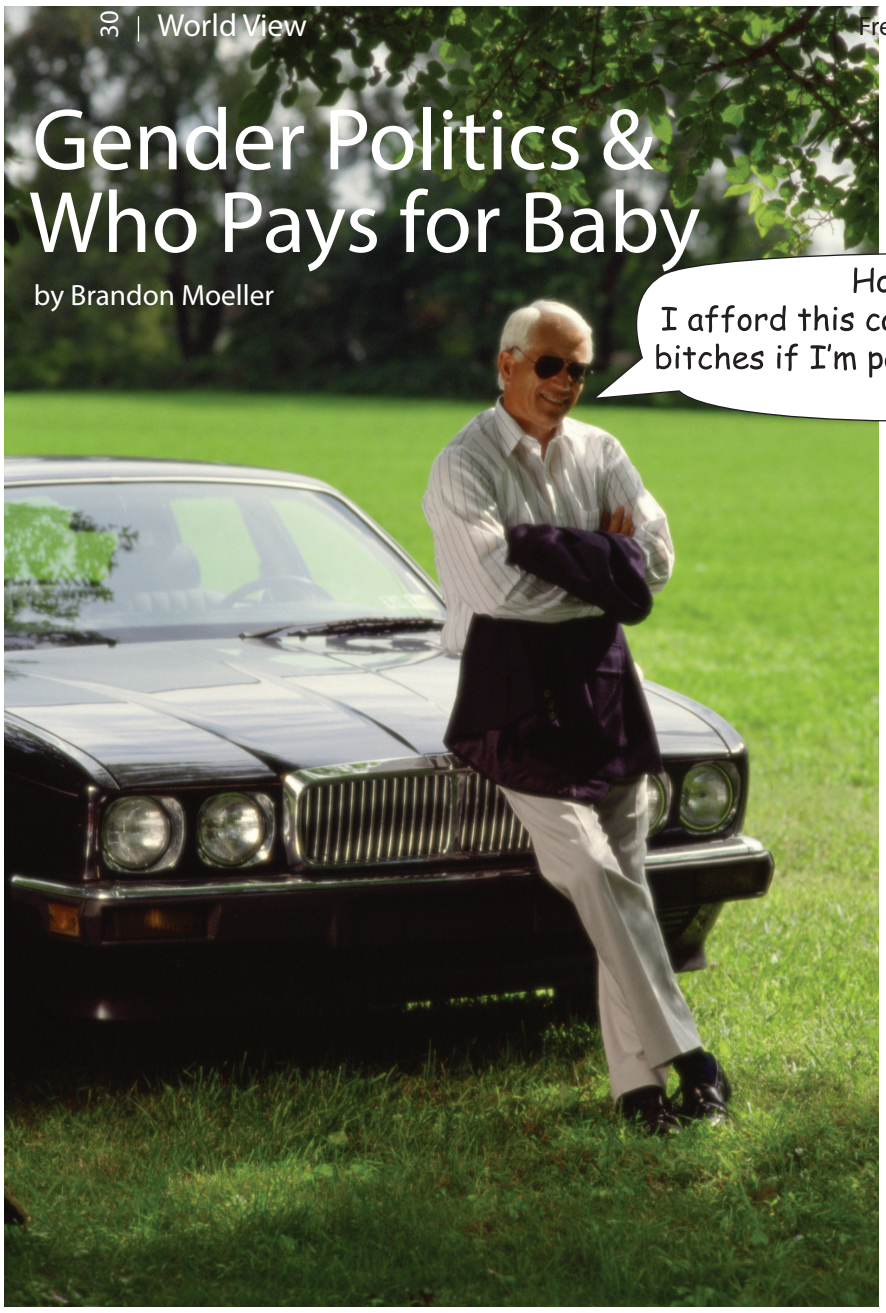

Basil Seafood

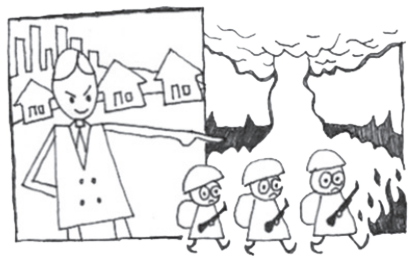
Perfect for Vegans & Vegetarians

Lunch: M-F 11-2 Sat. 12-3
Dinner: Mon-Thur. 5-9
Fri.-Sat. 5-10pm
Free Dinner Delivery
$20 Minimum
4 mile radius
we don't use msg because our food is delicious without it!

Gender Politics & Who Pays for Baby

by Brandon Moeller





Women have the right to choose whether to terminate a pregnancy while men have the right to choose whether to support them in their continuing struggle. As predominantly white male conservative revisionists continue to challenge Roe vs. Wade, a recent lawsuit filed in a Michigan federal courtroom challenges the notion that the landmark decision only applies to women, arguing such gender discrimination violates the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment.

Enter 25-year-old Michigan resident Matt Dubay, who fathered a child with a woman he dated for three months. A woman who assured him a medical condition would prevent her from becoming pregnant. A woman who knew, according to the lawsuit, Dubay's desire to not be a father.

She gave birth anyway – her right, sure. But the lawsuit, filed by the National Center for Men, practically contends her right to have the baby interferes with his right to keep $500 in his pocket every month, instead of doling it out for child support.

"We will ask a United States district court judge to apply the principles of reproductive choice, as articulated in Roe vs. Wade, to men," a press release from the National Center for Men reads. "A man must choose to be a father in the same way that a woman chooses to be a mother. We will ask that women be required to share reproductive freedom with men."

It's an interesting argument, though responsible parents everywhere are probably rolling their eyes and lamenting the whole scum-bag factor of Dubay's complaint. The harsh reality is that in today's downtrodden economy, it takes two paychecks to adequately raise children.

Though, even the lawyer that filed it frequently admits it's likely to fail. The Center for Men argues – at the very least – it will stir public debate about men's rights.

I should have thought something like this would find its way to a court docket. Instead, I always figured we'd see more lawsuits concern-

NEW WaMu Free Checking™

Free checks for life

Washington Mutual

Free checks when ordered through us; select styles available.

NEW WaMu Free Checking™

And you haven't switched to WaMu because?

WaMu Free Checking™ gives you way more than traditional banks.
To learn more about it, visit wamu.com.

Washington Mutual

Not available with Free Checking accounts opened prior to 3/11/06. Deposits are FDIC insured.

ing a father's say in whether a woman has an abortion. The Supreme Court has consistently denied a father – married to a pregnant woman or not – from making a choice about abortion.

Such is the contradictory nature of our legal system. A child has the right to at least a portion of daddy's paycheck. If daddy doesn't have a job – or chooses to work in a profession that doesn't pay as well as more traditional ones – then judges have actually ordered that daddy buck up and find a job or even one that pays more. Unemployed? Child support laws in Texas still require payment, and if you get behind, any federal income tax returns can be forfeited to the state's attorney general. It's not a hippie-artist-drifter friendly law, at all.

The Supreme Court has consistently denied a father – married to a pregnant woman or not – from making a choice about abortion

Meanwhile, there are no laws on the books that say mommy must be employed. And though they're a small minority, I have met a few women who live from child support check to child support check, without gainful employment of their own. They usually can't afford their own residence, and mooch off a series of friends, family and strangers. In my experience, drug addiction or other mental-health usually issues play a role in this rare phenomenon.

But usually such behavior warrants the non-custodial parent – usually the father – to again, buck up, hire an attorney and fight for custody on the grounds of abuse, neglect or financial stability. In instances like this that I have observed, usually the non-custodial father will bargain away child support in an attempt to strengthen his case for custody.

Family law, though set in precedent, usually comes down to the bargaining table between two adversaries. Whatever agreement the parents come to is usually rubber-stamped unless a judge finds it's not in the best interest of the child. But these things are never clean cut.

Sometimes, a well-meaning custodial parent's unemployment is only temporary. Sometimes, the job-drought lasts longer because of factors beyond their control. Small, rural communities don't normally offer jobs outside of retail hell or the local school district. Why work at Wal-Mart when they'll start you on the overnight shift as a stocker in a town that doesn't offer 24-hour daycare?

The lower you land on the economic totem pole, the lower the likelihood your boss actually cares if your first responsibility is to your children. Can't flip burgers today because Johnny's sick? You're fired.

Which is why teenage pregnancy is so scary for many young women and why so many young men frequently leave the picture, thus leaving momma and baby to fend for themselves. Even college girls – who have made a steady investment of time and money toward a framed piece of paper – don't want to get pregnant, out of the fear their dreams will be traded for unplanned single parenthood. They know the consequences. And sometimes, the choices are too limited. Sadly, to many young women, abortion looks like the only alternative to living in poverty.

Of course, if the anti-abortion crowd was serious about reducing the number of abortions, they would propose more laws that would strengthen American families and make it easier for parents to be parents *and* contributing members of society. Such laws could prohibit employers from terminating parents for caring for sick offspring.

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 goes a long way toward this end, but like most laws, it was written to protect business, not families. For instance, the law only helps you if you've worked a certain number of hours and have been employed for more than a year at a company that employs more than 50 employees. The law needs to be strengthened, and additional tax breaks need to be added for both custodial and non-custodial parents.

Meanwhile, sexually-active non-parents – especially the progressive types – should think hard about 25-year-old Michigan resident Matt Dubay. His argument, though irresponsible, seems fair. If a woman can abort her responsibility, why can't a man?

Talk to your partner about their current attitudes toward unplanned pregnancy. Establish relationships built on trust, not lust. Remember: Harm not! Be prepared! And be honest – to yourselves and your partner.

Of course, such open and honest communication would probably kill all the fun of those late-night drunken one-night hook-ups. In these situations, pray for latex protection, not the 14th's equal protection. Wear your jimmy hat, boys!

brandonmoeller@yahoo.com.



One overdraft or non-sufficient funds fee refund each anniversary year.
Not available with Free Checking accounts opened prior to 3/11/06. Deposits are FDIC insured.

Be seen *and* heard with your camera phone





Samsung PM 840

- **Built in Camera**
- **Sprint PCS Picture Mail enabled**
- **SMS Text messaging enabled**

$29.99

Reg. $219.99 each

Phone offer requires activation and two year subscriber agreement per phone.



Sprint Fair and Flexible Plan

- **No roaming charges, no huge overages**
- **Unlimited Night and Weekend Minutes**
- **Nationwide long distance. Every minute. Every day.**

Now starting at $55.00 for 1000 anytime minutes.

Other monthly charges apply. See below for details. Offer requires two-year subscriber agreement.

Sprint

Together with NEXTEL

WESTERN TALK, L.C.

11 convenient locations

514 Elgin
Next to Late Nite Pie
713.961.0811

8620 Spring Cypress
East of Champions Forest
281.251.9961

6078 Fry Rd.
Corner of W. Little York & Fry
281.859.4582

11618 SW Fwy @ Wilcrest
832.328.4663

8104 SW Fwy @ Beechnut
713.541.4552

5710 Memorial Dr.
East of Memorial Park
713.869.5505

11429 Veterans Memorial
Corner of Veterans and Greens Rd.
281.895.8522

3341 Telephone Rd.
45 & Wayside behind Wings & More
713.921.6461

8000 Gulf Fwy
45 and Broadway, big yellow building
713.645.8808

4610 FM 1960
West of Veterans Memorial
281.895.9400

7640 Airline Dr.
North of W. Little York
281.931.3773

**Rates exclude taxes & NEXTEL fees (including USF charge of up to 2.12% that varies quarterly, cost recovery fee up to $2.33 per line, & state/local fees that vary by area). NEXTEL fees are not taxes or govt-required charges.
PM-A840 by Samsung BOGO offer: Offer expires March 31, 2006 or while supplies last. Requires in-store activation, 2-year agreement, and trial PCS Vision subscription ($10-$20/month) per phone. Voice is free for one month, after which monthly charge will apply unless canceled during trial period by calling customer service at 888-SPRINT-1. Additional Fees: Up to $36 activation fee per phone. $150 early termination fee. Fair & Flexible Plans: Two-year subscriber agreement required. Additional Fees: Up to $36 activation fee per phone. $150 or $200 Nextel early termination fee. Includes 200 Anytime Minutes adjustable in increments for $5.00 with $0.10 per minute for usage above 200 minutes. Nights plan: 9p to 7am; Weekends: Fri. 9pm to Mon. 7am). On the Nextel National Network call is as rated by the appropriate private throughout the call. As of November 1, 2005, the entire call will be rated according to when the call is initiated. Partial minutes are charged as full minutes. With an Initial roaming plan, Sprint may terminate service if a majority of minutes in a given month are used while roaming off of the Sprint PCS Network. Nextel Local Walkie-Talkie $0.15/min. Direct to participants. Nationwide Walkie-Talkie uses the local walkie-talkie minutes in your plan at long-up. Other Terms: Sprint reserves the right to cancel/extend offers without notice. Offers may not be available in all markets. Coverage area plan features, services and phone availability vary by network. Nationwide Sprint PCS Network reaches over 230 million people. The Nextel National Network reaches over 200 million people. ©2006 Sprint Nextel. Sprint, the "Going Forward" logo, and other trademarks are trademarks of Sprint Nextel. MOTOROLA and the Stylized M Logo are registered in the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office. All third-party product or service names are property of their respective owners. All rights reserved.**