

DATELINE:



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DOWNTOWN

HOLLYWOOD STEREOTYPES



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Pictured on Cover: Old Pulp Fiction Story with a representation of characters in the story. Shows an extreme version of stereotyping.
The number of Hispanic characters in TV and film has increased substantially in the last few years. But while this fast-growing demographic has earned Hollywood's recognition, it still struggles to earn its respect.

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Hispanics Gain Media Representation, But at What Cost?

by Elisa Gonzalez

The last few years have seen a surge in the media's representation of Latinos. Although this change seemed promising at first glance, much of that representation has been steeped in stereotype and caricature, tainting the Latino audience's sweet celebration with the bitter taste of irony.

The reasoning behind TV and film's growing interest in this audience is simple. Hispanics are the largest growing demographic in the country. The Wrap reports that they bought "25 percent of [movie] tickets sold in 2013." And The Guardian reports that in the age of video on-demand they make up "America's last audience of loyal, committed TV watchers."

The numbers have inspired production studios like politicians, and they've been steadily grasping at ethnic straws, introducing low-concept sitcoms—like "Cristela," whose premise was: I'm Mexican and a lawyer. Cristela ran for one season (2015) on ABC before her racial identity proved it just wasn't enough to base a sitcom on; similarly constructed shows, like "Jane the Virgin" (CW) and "Telenovela" (NBC) struggle to keep viewers. In the last decade, TV producers seemed unable to imagine a sitcom starring a Hispanic character whose premise does not hinge on their race, yet I searched Google and was unable to find any show starring white leads that were mainly about the main character's whiteness.

Production studios have also taken to peppering comedy or action blockbusters with fun Hispanic best friends, like Michael Peña whose recent sidekick role in Ant-Man earned him wide acclaim. While critics called Peña's role a show-stealer, it was largely based on cliché, like his style of dress, his criminal background, his accent and his dopiness. In fact, Peña's acting history is a model of the tired roles to which Hollywood relegates its Latino actors. A 2014 report from Columbia University found that Latinos "continue to be represented primarily as criminals, law enforcers, and cheap labor." Peña has played a cop six times and a criminal five times, in the last five years alone. His career, while impressive, reeks of typecasting.

Columbia University's findings rang strikingly true for a large number of the Hispanics in entertainment. So much so, that when I Googled "Hispanic actors"—Benicio Del Toro, Javier Bardem, Michelle Rodriguez, Danny Trejo, Andy Garcia and Jennifer Lopez—I found that they have all regularly been cast as either cops or criminals. While there are certainly worse things an actor could play besides a cop, the problem lies in how few opportunities there are for Hispanic actors to be cast as Hispanic characters that don't satisfy one of these tropes.

This finding inspired me to search the Sony hack database for insight as to the mindset with which Hollywood producers approach the Hispanic audience.

The following is an email from movie producer Neal Moritz to former Sony Pictures Entertainment Chairperson Amy Pascal:

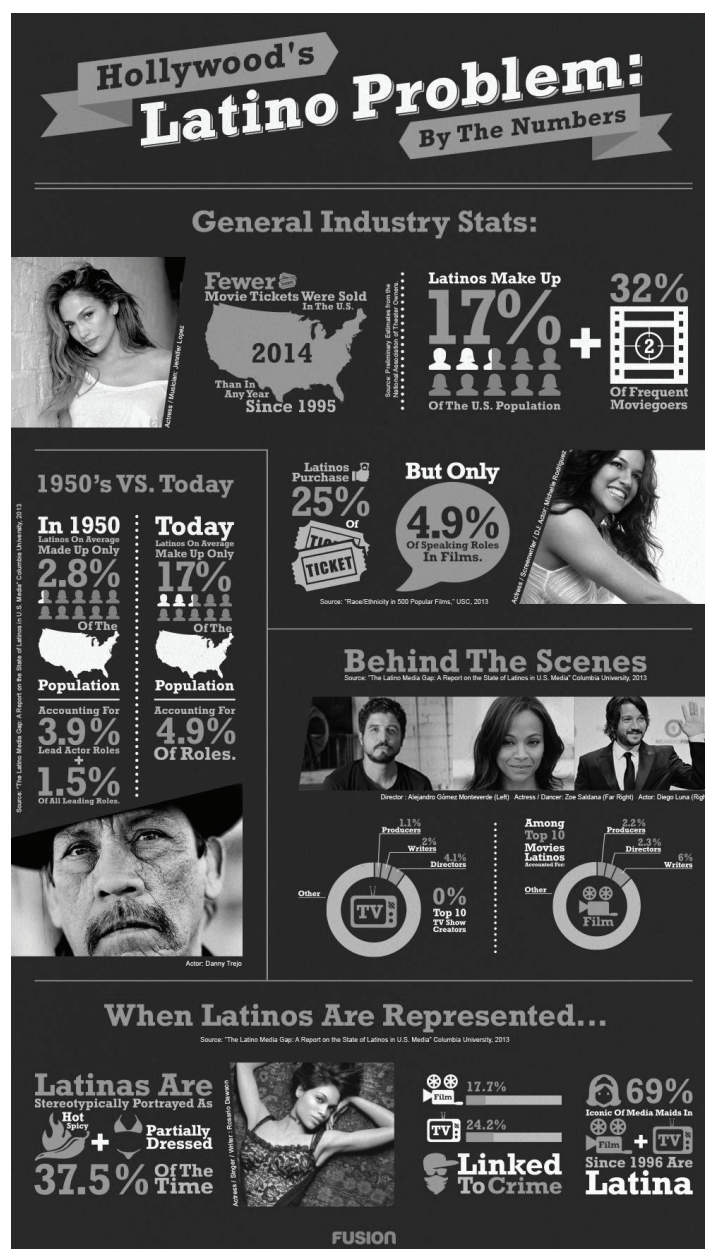
"We should do a series of Hispanic films like 'Best Man Holiday', the Tyler Perry films etc. The first one could be insane in-laws with two Hispanic families that are best friends and their kids surprisingly announce they are going to get married. The families have to plan the wedding together which causes the families great relationship to deteriorate. Hilarity ensues! Hispanic market is even bigger than the African American market. Am I crazy? Make for under 20 seems like a no brainer? Neal"

Moritz's message demonstrates the insincerity that underscores most of mainstream media's representation of minorities. When producers casually pitch movie formats that even they are willing to acknowledge as cliché, and then defend said pitches with reference to the "no-brainer" cash-grab that such productions would yield, it's not only an insult to minority groups, it is also a troubling example of how white movie executives are the beginning and end of the road for minority-aimed content.

Although increased media representation for people of color signals an improvement in social standing, the type of caricatured images that these projects nurture damages the progress of the ethnic groups they aim to please. Not only that, it dilutes the quality of entertainment.

Famed writing instructor Robert McKee wrote in his book Story, "A stereotypical story...suffers a poverty of both content and form. It confines itself to a narrow, culture-specific experience and dresses in stale, nonspecific generalities." Fortunately, the repeated failure of Latino-based sitcoms proves that Latinos want thoughtful, multidimensional characters and content; slowly they're getting it.

Last year, Peña played an astronaut in The Martian, one of 2015's most successful movies. Of his career Peña has said "I've been an actor for 20 years, and I think the first 14 years ... it was all gangsters. The reality [is] that everyone is stereotyped; everyone gets typecast so you have to work to get out of that."



Michael Jackson: Black or White

By Christopher Joseph

The black community is up in arms about the recent casting choice of the late King of Pop, Michael Jackson. In a new comedy sketch, Jackson is to be portrayed by white British actor Joseph Fiennes. Even though before his death, the pop star expressed opposition to that idea. “Why would I want a white child to play me? I’m a black American. I’m proud to be a black American. I am proud of my race. I am proud of who I am,” said Jackson in a 1993 interview with Oprah Winfrey.

Fiennes (*American Horror Story*, *Shakespeare in Love*) has come under fire for his upcoming role depicting the African-American superstar in a short comedy piece called *Elizabeth, Michael & Marlon*, produced by British pay-TV channel Sky Arts. The sketch depicts Jackson, Elizabeth Taylor, and Marlon Brando taking a road trip together in New York after the events of September 11, 2001. The white actor is portraying Jackson during his later years, when his vitiligo had completely lightened his dark complexion. Fiennes defended the casting choice, stating that critics who are getting worked up about his casting are overhyping the importance of the piece. “It’s a satire, it’s just a 20-minute satire. It’s a sketch about a story that could have been a legend or could have been true. So we’ll see what the audience makes of it,” Fiennes said on the French news station AFPTV.

Jackson’s skin color has been the subject of a multitude of tabloid rumors and innuendos regarding allegations of skin bleaching — alleging he did so to become whiter. Often, Jackson was the butt of many jokes from sketch comedy shows, from *In Living Color* to *MADTV*. Each portrayed the star using black actors to mock his appearance.

This isn’t the first time a casting choice has rustled some feathers in the black community. In 2014, Michael B. Jordan (*Creed*, *Chronicle*) was facing backlash as he was cast as the traditionally-white Marvel character, Johnny Storm, in the newest installment of the “*Fantastic Four*” movie. Many people are claiming that changing the race goes against tradition of the character, as he has always been a white character. The black community, along with many others, is arguing that it was the right move on Hollywood’s part: changing the race of the character to show more of a positive representation of people of color in Hollywood.

“At the end of the day, we love what we do; we’re breaking major ground doing it. These problems of today will eventually become problems of old. Let’s not let this negative issue of diversity beat us, [and] let’s continue to do what we do best. With that being said, congratulations on an amazing year,” comedian Kevin Hart said at the 2016 Oscars.

Hollywood has been under fire for the lack of diversity in films, but with recent support of actors and the rise of more people of color in films, Hollywood may be in store for a big change in power.



Batman vs. Superman

by Christopher Joseph

Batman vs. Superman is one of the most argued clash of super beings in comic history, and soon, questions about the mash up will be laid to rest. *Batman V Superman: Dawn of Justice*, is the newest and most anticipated film of the year. Marvel has set a standard when it comes to superhero movies, with most Marvel films tied in a shared universe. *Dawn of Justice* could be the push that DC films need to compete with their longtime rival.

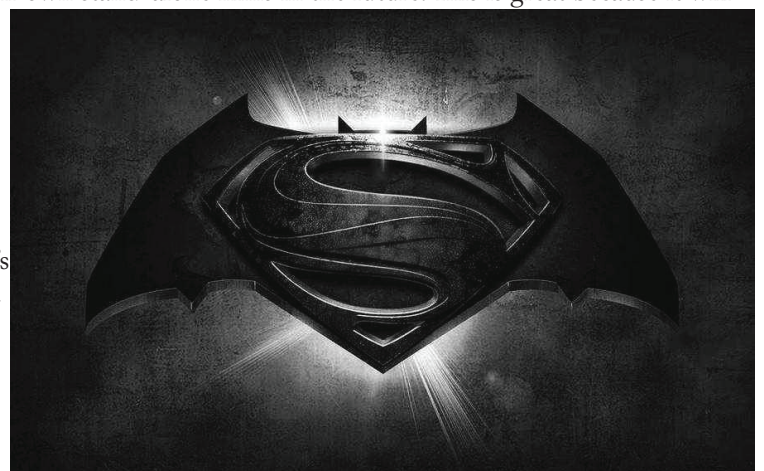
The film takes place after the events in the 2013 movie *Man of Steel*, where Superman (Henry Cavill) fought against Zod, which ended with the destruction of Metropolis. Now, Superman has come under fire, with some believing he is a hero, while others fear that he is too strong. This leads Batman (Ben Affleck) to leave Gotham to stop Superman, so there will be no more casualties. Unknown to either of them is a bigger threat that is coming for earth.

Dawn of Justice does not come from a preexisting comic book. However, it does take the majority of its material from Frank Miller’s 1980 comic *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*. One of the main points that *Dawn of Justice* borrows from the comic is that Bruce Wayne is older and has retired from being Batman for some time, plus the clash between the “*Man of Steel*” and the “*Bat of Gotham*.” The reason that Batman comes out of retirement is completely different in *The Dark Knight Returns*. The reasoning of the comic book is that crime in Gotham has skyrocketed since Bruce’s retirement thus making him pick up the cape and cowl again, while in the film Batman is coming out of retirement due to Superman’s total destruction of Metropolis. The trailer also revealed a suit of armor that Affleck wears in the fight with Cavill, and it is the exact suit that Batman wears when he fights Superman in the comic that the movie takes its cues from. The rest of the movie — in terms of plot and certain characters — is completely original, proving once again that DC has what it takes to make an original story in their movies. “The comic book will influence the history of *Batman vs. Superman*, on which the writer David S. Goyer and myself will work” Director Zack Snyder said in an interview with the French magazine *Popcorn*.

This isn’t the first time that DC has had a movie on the big screen, as they’ve had numerous attempts at Batman and Superman films. DC mostly uses their lesser known heroes for the smaller screen such as, FOX’s *The Flash* and Cartoon Network’s *Young Justice*. *Dawn of Justice*, as a stepping stone for a shared universe, with characters like Wonder Woman, Aquaman and Cyborg, who all make their first appearance in the film and then will get their own stand-alone films in the future. This is great because it will all be a part of the same universe and can ultimately lead up to one of the greatest superhero team-ups ever, the Justice League. These movies can possibly open up the doors for many of the heroes who get overshadowed by the bigger names on the DC roster.

“What I love about the fact we’ve introduced these two really important characters... is that we get to finally expand upon this incredibly rich DC universe. I think it would be a waste just to have one hero from this DC universe and focus on him when there’s so much opportunity to tell really good stories using everyone.” said Cavill in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*.

This will be great film and I can’t wait to see the future that this movie sets up. *Batman V Superman: Dawn of Justice* is scheduled for release on March 25, 2016.



Drew is That You?

by Chelsea Chance

In October 2015, CBS generated a considerable amount of buzz when they announced that the network was in the process of developing a new series that would revolve around the life of Nancy Drew. The drama, which is still in development, is described as a contemporary take on the character from the iconic book series that will depict Nancy Drew, now in her 30s, working as a detective for the NYPD.

Fans at first were confused by the show's description. Ever since Nancy Drew first appeared in her self-titled book series during 1930, she had always been described as a teen sleuth from River Heights. Aging Nancy by a few decades and moving her place of residence was shocking for most, but the changes didn't stop there. CBS Entertainment President, Glenn Geller, later revealed in early January of 2016 that the network's reimagining of the iconic character would be diverse.

"[She will] not [be] Caucasian," Geller stressed. "I'd be open to any ethnicity." We're not casting color-blind, we're casting color-conscious," he said. Geller explained that diversity is playing a major role in his development for the CBS season. "We have a lot of new series in development, both series targeted to have full African-American or Latino casts but also many leads that are being developed [as diverse]." True to his word, CBS announced on February 29, that they found their Nancy in Sarah Shahi, an American television actress with a notable heritage of Persian and Spanish.

If the changes in age, location and occupation weren't enough, it seems that the actress slated to play Nancy may be the final straw for some. Fans are quick to point out that Nancy has always been described as a Caucasian teenager with fair hair.

The character spawned a few short-lived TV shows in the past, and one has to wonder if Drew will be a success or a flop. With many fans threatening to withhold their support due to the ethnicity of the modern Nancy, will this series join the list of many failed attempts of introducing Nancy to the screen?

CBS certainly hopes not. While there are many that cannot and will not look past Nancy's new ethnicity, she is not completely without support. Nancy has always been hailed as a feminist icon, who has had a cultural impact on many readers across the world, in addition to many notable women such as Supreme Court Justices Sandra Day O'Connor, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Sonia Sotomayor, Oprah Winfrey, Barbra Streisand and many others.



South Wales Police Incident Report

by Jason J. Rivas



Reporting Officer: Inspector Thomas

Case Number: 12081958

Date: March 31

Location: Richard Warwick's manor in South Wales, near the Bristol Channel.

Name of All Person(s) Involved: Richard Warwick (deceased), Laura Warwick (wife), Jan Warwick (brother), Mrs. Warwick (mother), Henry Angell (butler), Miss Bennett (nanny), Julian Farrar (family friend), and Michael Starkwedder (No relation to victim or family)

Recount: Sergeant Cadwallader and I arrived at the Warwick Manor around 11 a.m. the following morning. Prompted by a telephone call from the family matriarch, Mrs. Warwick, concerning the discovery of her son's (Richard) lifeless body, late the previous evening. Mr. Warwick was shot at point blank range, in the head, in his study where he was known to spend most of his time. Mr. Warwick was a gun collector and big-game hunter, so there were many guns inside the house, but we have yet to positively identify the murder weapon. A cloud of mystery blankets the manor and those who reside in it. It has become clear that the victim was not well-liked and potentially had many enemies. All of the individuals inside the house were questioned regarding Mr. Warwick's life and their whereabouts prior to, and immediately following, the discovery of the body. We have many leads, but no primary suspect yet.

The investigation will continue on April 1-9 at the O'Kane Theatre for The Unexpected Guest. We welcome you all to join us in solving the crime.

Obituary

Richard Warwick, a successful British businessman, died in his manor last Thursday night. He was an intrepid traveler, avid sportsman, and collector of an assortment of weapons, guns in particular. His travels allowed for him to develop his passion for big-game hunting, with a remarkable array of exotic trophies mounted within his study.

Paralyzed during a tragic accident a few years ago, Mr. Warwick spent his final days convalescing at his manor on the Bristol Channel. Sadly, his condition confined him to a wheelchair and he was unable to pursue his passion for hunting abroad, but his family recalls the enjoyment he still received from recounting his many tales.

He was discovered, murdered, with a gunshot wound to the head. The police are actively investigating the sordid details, but do not currently have a prime suspect. Despite being surrounded by loved ones, it seems Mr. Warwick had a few enemies at the time of his demise, and the police are following up on all leads.

He is survived by his mother, Mrs. Warwick, wife, Laura, and half-brother, Jan. The family asks that if you have any information regarding the case and/or identity of The Unexpected Guest, to please contact the South Wales Police. A private funeral service is to be held at his estate with only relatives and close friends of the family in attendance. However, a public wake will be held on April 1-9 at the O'Kane Theatre. We welcome you all in joining us at any of the listed dates below,

Spring 2016
O'Kane Theatre
Performance
THE UNEXPECTED GUEST
by Agatha Christie

Friday, April 1
Opening Night, 8 p.m. curtain

Saturday April 2
Performance, 8 p.m. curtain

Sunday April 3
Matinee Performance,
3 p.m. curtain

Wednesday April 6
Student Matinee Performance
1:30 p.m. curtain

Thursday April 7
Performance, 8 p.m. curtain

Friday April 8
Matinee Performance
at 1:30 p.m.
and
Performance, 8 p.m. curtain

Saturday April 9
Performance, 8 p.m. curtain

For more information
please call (713) 221-8042.



UHD Intramural Soccer League

The UHD intramural soccer league REGISTRATION IS OPEN. We are excited for another year of our intramural soccer league, and look forward to seeing you all register for the upcoming league.

Free agent day will be taking place on Tuesday, March 22nd at 4:00pm at McReynolds Middle School. Free agents are students, employees, and alumni members that are not on a team yet, but would like for me to put you on a team. Free agent day consists of everyone showing up, meeting each other, and registering your team to play in the league. Everyone that shows up will form a free agent team, and have a scrimmage versus other members. Free Agent Day is MANDATORY for anyone wanting to play in the soccer league this semester.

You can register your team at the UHD Student Life Center or complete and print the forms online at the website below. This is not co-rec meaning that there are no gender requirements. Teams can be full or men, women, or a combination. The team entry fee is only \$20. Don't have a team? Register as a Free Agent at the UHD Student Life Center or at the website below and we can get you on a team.

INTRAMURAL SOCCER LEAGUE (8v8)

Entry Period: March 2nd – March 22nd

Start Date: Tuesday, March 22nd

Team Entry Fee: \$20/team

Time: 4:00PM

Location: McReynolds Middle School (1135 Zindler St. Houston, TX 77020)

To register as a Free Agent or as a team please contact Sports and Fitness or fill out the applications online at the UHD website on the Sprts & Fitness page.

All participants will receive a UHD Sports & Fitness t-shirt. Hurry, come join in the fun!

Department of Sports & Fitness

713-221-8225, Fax: 713-223-7472

sports&fitness@uhd.edu

www.uhd.edu/sports&fitness

A Message From Parking And Transportation

This January, the unpaved surface parking lot located at the southwest corner of N. Main and Naylor Streets, currently marked as "Lot A", was modified to allow some student parking. The Student designated spaces were marked with blue-colored curb stops stenciled with the word 'Student'. This change, which was consistent with UHD's philosophy of trying to improve student parking by all means available, has been well-received.

Now, recognizing that the majority of the staff parking in Lot A vacate the lot after 5 pm, it has been decided that students should be allowed to park in the Staff/Faculty-designated Lot A spaces after 5pm. These Staff/Faculty spaces are marked with yellow-colored curb stops stenciled with the words 'Staff/Faculty'.

So summarizing, students can park in Lot A at any time of the day as long as they are parking in a marked (blue) student space. And once we are beyond 5pm, students can park in any space inside Lot A, whether marked as 'Student' (blue) or 'Staff/Faculty' (yellow).

Note that this only applies to students holding a valid UHD Student Parking Permit. And remember, those holding Vine Street Garage permits are always able to park on a surface lot.

The lot will continue to be monitored by our Parking Enforcement Officer to ensure that valid permits are displayed and that the new guidelines are being followed.



Part-time Job & Internship Fair

Thursday, April 14th from 11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Location: Room A300

<http://www.uhd.edu/jobs4gators>

uhdcareer@uhd.edu

713-221-2787



Dress business professional
Bring lots of résumés!



AFPM Collegiate Energy Challenge

Houston, TX – March 9, 2016 - University of Houston - Downtown is one of a select group of schools nationwide to compete in American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers (AFPM) Collegiate Energy Challenge. This competition gives students a unique, real-world opportunity to apply their knowledge and develop a complete integrated marketing plan. The project raises awareness of the fuel and petrochemical industries and related career opportunities among AFPM's target audience, millennials and the local community, from March through April 2016.

Because the transition from classroom to full-time work can be challenging, AFPM is working with higher-education institutions to make students work-ready. "Each participating school is paired up with an AFPM member to provide guidance throughout the competition. Austin Industrial, Inc., has volunteered to work with University of Houston-Downtown. "Currently, the industry has more than 250 new projects that need entry-level workers in business, engineering, trades and more," said Whitney Hatcher, Marketing Manager "Introducing students to real-world projects while in school gives them the experience they need so they can hit the road running upon graduation."

To kick-off the project, students in the UHD's Integrated Marketing Communications class created an in-class, working agency, Millennial2Millennial Marketing (M2M). With a \$1000 budget, M2M will prepare, implement and evaluate their integrated marketing plan for their client. At the end of the term, students will measure their effectiveness and submit findings to their client. Finally, the top three teams will be invited to a formal, client meeting to present their campaign.

"We're very excited about this opportunity," said Jessica Bertsch, Student Agency Coordinator. "It provides each student with a unique experience that allows them to further develop practical skills and to connect with industry leaders."

To learn how you can be help Millennial2Millennial raise awareness of the fuel and petrochemical, please visit <http://facebook.com/M2MMarketingUHD>

About American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers

AFPM, the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers is a trade association representing high-tech American manufacturers of virtually the entire U.S. supply of gasoline, diesel, jet fuel, other fuels and home heating oil, as well as the petrochemicals used as building blocks for thousands of vital products in daily life. AFPM members make modern life possible and keep America moving and growing as they meet the needs of our nation and local communities, strengthen economic and national security, and support 2 million American jobs.

About EdVenture Partners

EdVenture Partners is an organization dedicated to developing innovative industry-education partnership programs. These experiential learning opportunities provide hands-on, real-world experience to students in tandem with providing marketing, recruiting, and social impact solutions at colleges and universities to clients. EdVenture Partners has designed and managed programs at over 800 campuses in North America and internationally.

Find out more at

Website: <http://www.edventurepartners.com> <<http://www.edventurepartner>>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Edventure.Partners>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/edventure-partners>

Writer Allen Gee Visits UHD

by Karen Reyes

On the afternoon of March 3, UHD students and staff had the pleasure of greeting writer Allen Gee. He is an English and Creative Writing professor at Georgia College (GC), where he lectures in the M.F.A program and supervises GC writers in the school program at Early College. Gee published his first essay collection, *My Chinese-American*, in April 2015, after being chosen by Lee Gutking (founder of the literary magazine "Creative Nonfiction") for the SFWP Award Series

Gee sat among a group of eager and attentive writers, ranging from beginners to published authors. Trying to break the ice, Gee went around the room asking about their current works in progress. A late bloomer himself, he was astonished to see young writers working on everything from memoirs to poetry, stating how lucky they were to have teachers they can seek advice from. Gee was particularly delighted by the new aspiring writers who wished to know more about the writing process.

After a brief conversation, Gee began reading from his essay collections. He selected a story called, *Osaka*, a personal essay on an encounter with an unpredictable American woman who baffles Gee with random talks about her former dates. With his witty personality and brief instances of humor scattered throughout his essay, he caught the attention of his audience, stopping momentarily to share small glimpses into his personal life.

Allen Gee is currently an editor of flash fiction for *Arts & Letters*. He humbly offered his academic email to his audience promising a brief commentary, free of charge, on any of their flash fiction stories, "I'm only giving you this email because this is a small audience but if my inbox starts to blow up. I might have to stop," he joked. Gee is currently working on a novel, called *Paul & Julia*, represented by Gail Houchman, his literary agent. His most recent stories appear in literary magazines *Ploushares* and *Jucked*.



March Madness Music Festival Coming to Houston!

By Karen Reyes

Gators, get your chairs and blankets ready for the March Madness Music Festival! During the first weekend of April, Discovery Green will present a free concert series sponsored by the NCCA Corporation alongside Corporate Champions AT&T, Coca-Cola and Capital One. The festival will feature local and national talent acts. The event is part of the NCAA Final Four National Semifinals and the National Championship exclusively televised by TBS. The NCAA March Madness Festival has been attended by thousands of music fans.

The concerts will start late in the afternoon, and while the audience waits for the performances to begin, they can enjoy various interactive games and activities or pick from the many refreshments provided by the tournament's sponsors. The event will also feature team pep rallies that will allow everyone to join in the fun.

So who will be performing during the festivities? Well, Friday, April 1, on the AT&T Block Party stage, Fall Out Boy and Panic! At The Disco are scheduled to perform in front of thousands of fans, followed by Jason Derulo on Saturday, April 2. On Sunday, Pitbull, Maroon 5 and Flo Rida have the honor of closing out the music festival on the Capital One Jamfest stage. Additional artists participating in the festival will soon be announced.

Because this is a free concert, entry to the event will be permitted on a first-come-first-served basis. Make sure you arrive early to catch a front-row seat to see the talented artists. No ticket or wristband will be needed. If you are unable to attend the Maroon 5 and Pitbull concerts, the performances will be featured during the iHeartRadio Music Awards, airing live from the Forum in Los Angeles on all Turner cable television networks. Also, the 2016 NCAA music festival will live stream all concerts throughout the weekend on their official YouTube channel, giving fans around the world a chance to see their favorite artists perform.

The official festival site will be updating prior to the big weekend. For more information on directions or any questions regarding the festival, visit the official Discovery Green website or the NCAA official site.



March Madne\$\$: NCAA Final Four

by Joshua Burgman

March 13 marked selection Sunday. 68 of the best teams college men's basketball has to offer will duke it out to become 2016's NCAA Champions. Now that the smoke has cleared, and we know which teams will meet up in the coming months—it's time to get those brackets ready.

One of the most exciting things about March Madness, outside of all of the great games, is the mystery of it all. There are teams that play all season without making much noise, and then they show up during the March tournament insidiously winning each game, until they find themselves cutting the net down from the goal after being crowned champions.

Of the 68 teams competing, it's tough to tell who will come out on top. From students we know on campus, to President Obama, fans have filled out their brackets with the hopes of predicting the team that will be the next champion, while also trying to win a little money along the way.

The Madness began in 1939 when University of Oregon defeated Ohio State University 46–33. Since then, the NCAA has grown into an organization that makes hundreds of millions of dollars a year. According to History Channel.com, "college basketball [has] become the most popular sporting event among gamblers, after the Super Bowl." Actually, the amount of money made from college basketball, especially during March Madness, is almost tantamount to that of the NFL. "The NCAA, as a whole, makes \$6 billion annually," reports U.S News & World Report. Endorsements, shoe contracts, the swag; the perks are endless, but the perks still don't amount to payments for the players.

Like professional basketball players, every time college players step on the court, they put themselves in danger of injuries that could end their career. Sadly, the only compensation the NCAA offers, is a free education, but is it really free? Granted, most basketball players that go to school on scholarships don't have to actually pay for school, but the amount of work that is put into the sport—for instance, working hard to make it to the final four—does not match the compensation they are receiving. In 2014, former University of Connecticut Point Guard, Shabazz Napier made headlines when he talked about going to bed hungry on many occasions. "We do have hungry nights that we don't have enough money to get food," he told ESPN.

Napier's case is one of many. This year as the NCAA tournament nears the home stretch, players continue to be in the same situation as Napier, several years ago. The situation regarding pay for players in college sports has not been resolved. So as you fill out your brackets, think about where all that money isn't going, to the players.

Buzzfest 35 is Rocking Out on April 16

By: Kara Moore

Since the mid-90's, the rock alternative station 94.5 "The Buzz" has been hosting Buzzfest, a biannual music festival. Held routinely at the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion in The Woodlands, it always hosts an excellent mix of the best alternative bands around. This year, the first Buzzfest of 2016 promises to not only be up to traditional standards, but to combine headliners of the past with the show-stoppers of the present.

This 10-hour event generally has a main stage and side stage, in the similar style of many music festivals. This year on the main stage, you can definitely expect to find Cage the Elephant as this year's headliner, with The Offspring, Joy Formidable, Andrew Watt, Blue October, Toadies, and Nothing But Thieves. The second stage will house AWOLNATION, Fitz and the Tantrums, Everclear, The Struts, Big Data, and New Beat Fund. For most of these bands, it's not their first time playing Buzzfest.

In fact, for the Toadies, the first time they played Buzzfest was in 1996, and the last time was 2012. The Offspring have played on and off since 2001. Even the festival's main band, Cage the Elephant, played in their second Buzzfest in 2014. There's a reason they keep coming back: the festival is an awesome collection for anyone who loves alternative rock, especially in a city better known for producing pop stars like Beyoncé and Hilary Duff. It's a saving grace for the head-bangers and mosh pit lovers of Houston, giving them two times a year to cut loose and jam out.

Tickets are currently on sale at a variety of ticket sites, and you might want to check out www.thebuzz.com/page/bf35/ for rules regarding what can and cannot be brought into the show. (Pro-tip: leave the selfie stick at home.)



HOUSTON'S OWN GONZO247 CREATES SPECIAL ART BRACKET FOR THE 2016 NCAA MEN'S FINAL FOUR

The NCAA and Final Four Houston Local Organizing Committee have commissioned Houston's Gonzo247 to create his own graffiti-styled version of the famous NCAA bracket. Starting with Houston's Selection Sunday event at Discovery Green this past Sunday, Gonzo began to bring together the base elements of his vision for the bracket, filling in school names as they were announced.

The bracket will be traveling throughout the city of Houston and currently resides at the Houston Galleria, right outside of the Westin Galleria hotel doors on the second floor. From there, it will travel to the Houston Zoo for the Sweet Sixteen and Elite Eight, completing its journey at the Hyatt Regency Downtown for the Final Four and finally, the championship!

This unique piece of art is one that will continue to morph, change and be added to as the teams advance. Beyond filling in team names and logos as the tournament is played out, Gonzo will add different dimensions, artwork and touches with each round.

"This has been one of the best experiences I've had in my history as an artist in Houston, especially with this being such an awesome year for sports in my hometown – it's been great to be a part of this and to work with the NCAA and Local Organizing Committee on bringing it to life," said Gonzo247.

"We're very proud to have the opportunity to work with Gonzo. He's not only an amazing artist, but also a terrific person to work with and a great Houstonian," said Rachel Quan, vice president of external operations for the Final Four Houston Local Organizing Committee. "We were excited that the NCAA wanted to really get creative. It's certainly a one-of-a-kind and unique piece of art, just like Houston – which is so diverse. The bracket is just a touch point for all of the amazing activities and events surrounding the Final Four – from Fan Fest to Music Fest and Final Four Friday."

Once the champion is crowned and the piece is complete, the winning team will be given the centerpiece of the bracket which will include their school's logo and the 2016 NCAA Men's Final Four logo, all done graffiti-style.



CCRS: Critically Discussing Race

by Joshua Burgman

University of Houston - Downtown is one of the most racially diverse schools in the country. The school's ethnic makeup spans throughout almost the entire globe; a globe that is increasingly getting smaller, and demanding — like never before — tolerance among its inhabitants. Achieving the type of tolerance needed for sustained peace requires education as a conduit. At UHD, The Center for Critical Race Studies (CCRS) is doing all that it can to be a partner in peace, by helping students to critically think about race on a global scale.

Established in 2013, CCRS “creates an opportunity to build knowledge by bringing together the multiple identities and cultures that form [the] student body,” according to the center's UHD website. In February (Black History Month) CCRS invited author and Professor of Contemporary Literature at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Dr. Subramanian Shankar, to be its scholar in-residence. Shankar represents one of several scholars that have come to UHD at the behest of CCRS.

In 1992, Shankar co-founded SAMAR (South Asian Magazine for Action and Reflection) and in his latest volume of criticism, *Flesh and Fish Blood: Postcolonialism, Translation, and the Vernacular*, he studies “translation and issues of caste in contemporary literature and film from India.” His particular perspective of race relations brought with it a glimpse of racism through a South Asian lens.

It's important to understand the concept of racism, says UHD Associate Professor and Director of CCRS, Dr. Vida Robertson. He recently spoke with *Dateline-Downtown*, and explained, what he called the “scope” of CCRS. “[It's] to think about the way in which race serves as a placeholder or a moniker in society, for intersections of oppression,” Robertson said, “With that in mind—we are interested in all identities.” In America, the stain of the transatlantic slave trade has put a black/white face on racism. When in reality, this country has a long history of racial animosity directed at a multiplicity of peoples. Native-Americans, Latinos, Asian-Americans, Muslims; the list could go on. Shankar's residency at UHD went a long way in transforming colloquial perceptions of racism.

Not only was Shankar effective in educating students during lecture events, but he also worked with fellows of CCRS and exchanged ideas about his interactions with his students, something Robertson believes is crucial when educating students of different racial ethnicities. “We help the faculty think about race more profoundly,” he said “and, more importantly, the way in which race informs their pedagogical practices in their classrooms.”

The classroom is a particular area of interest for CCRS. Recently, according to Robertson, “we just finished a minor, that's been accepted by the university, and we will finish up a major this semester that will be in effect this fall. The major will be a BA in Humanities with a concentration in Critical Race Studies.”

Implementing a major that focuses on critical race issues in a city like Houston is inspiring. Because of the QEP and the university further exploring community engagement, the courses taken for the major, “would allow students to see [race] from a multi-valiant perspective,” explained Robertson. “And so, we will take our courses, and we will make sure that there's a social justice project. So students in that African-American literature class, go inside an African-American community, and work with an African-American school, so that as they learn the literature of these peoples and learn to understand this community and its history, and its ideological dynamism — they equally get to take part in actual lived experiences, and empower that community that they are taking so much from.”

CCRS has embarked on a journey of critically studying race in a manner that embraces knowledge and edification above all else. Their invitation of Dr. Shankar is one representation of the “multi-valiant perspectives,” that Robertson spoke of. UHD, positioned in the heart of the nation's most diverse city, is the perfect institution for studying such controversial issues. Or in Robertson's words, “we are well situated, both as a professoriate and a student body, to do the kind of work, and come in contact with the kinds of communities, that are essential to a critical discourse about race in America.”

Re-Naming History

By Lachesha Rosenthal

There is no denying that conversations around race relations in our country are at an all-time high. It seems most any topic, no matter how grandiose or minute, has the possibility of taking on some kind of race-related connotation. This has set the stage for many long-overdue conversations to finally gain some traction. According to *Chron.com*, in January 2016, the Houston Independent School District (HISD) Board of Trustees voted 5-4 to rename four academic campuses that previously held Confederate loyalists as their namesake. In an identical vote, approximately one month later, three additional campuses were added to the list of those to be renamed. Needless to say, these votes were met with some resistance.

During the spring of 2010, the Texas Board of Education was able to successfully rename the “Atlantic Slave Trade” in its textbooks, giving it a name found to be more befitting — the “Atlantic Triangular Trade.” Noticeably absent from the new moniker is the term slave. Many see this change as an attempt to effectively rewrite history — a history to be taught to the students of the Houston Independent School District for years to come. In 2016, Scholastic Books released, and then stopped distributing, a children's book where slaves described as “servants,” shown in the book's illustrations to be black, were said to be happy to serve their master George Washington for his birthday. More often than not, history has proven that slaves were anything but happy. Despite this, when a small group of trustees to the HISD Board somehow became audacious enough to argue for renaming several school campuses within the district, it was a cause for concern. Those opposed to the changes felt it to be true that the board should redirect its energy, while to others these are just the buildings where the already-rewritten history would be taught.

There are more pressing — and considerably more important — issues to be addressed by HISD and its constituents; hopefully, in due time, those issues will be addressed with just as much vigor, if not more. Fortunately, in 2016, there are opportunities to finally be able to right wrongs and lead by example for generations to come.

While HISD re-naming schools can be easily defined as pointless, redundant or a waste of taxpayer dollars, it is important that those who are affected by the proposed changes do not get lost in the sauce. Rather, they should attempt to appreciate the level of progress that is being indicated by having a conversation such as this. It is the belief of some that the names of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, Richard Dowling and Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson are synonymous with American history. These names also represent a time in history that, the citizens of the communities where these campuses are located are not proud of.

Granted, renaming the schools will not guarantee improved performance by their students; it also will not erase history or negate any positive contributions the men these schools are named for may have made to society. It can, however, set the stage for a larger-scale conversation and demonstrate to others in the region that a city as diverse as Houston has no problem laying aside age-old ideologies and adopting an inclusionary mindset. Houstonians should harbor some feelings of pride, knowing that the city has reached a level of maturity where trustees of the school district are able to come together and present such a bold proposition for public consumption.

It should not be difficult to grasp the fundamental truth that remnants of slavery remain present in today's society — namely, in minority communities. On the contrary, of all the nations tattered by a history of slavery, the United States has put forth more effort than any other to reverse the actions of our founding fathers. If by some miracle, changing names, labels and titles could change the hearts, minds and thought processes of those who choose to use this as opportunity to further the divide, only then might there be true progress.

Dr. John Hudson: What Color Blindness Looks Like

By Joshua Burgman

On the third floor of UHD's Academic Building, down the hallway adjacent to the bookstore, sits the Center for Student Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In a small corner-room of the center is the office of its Director, and UHD Assistant Professor, Dr. John Hudson.

I met Dr. Hudson in mid-February when I sat on a panel discussing the intersections of race, religion and homosexuality — a panel that was organized by the UHD organization Stand Out, of which Hudson is also an advisor. Stand Out is an organization that advocates for the LGBTQ+ community. Around the same time, I was also attending events that were being hosted by UHD's Center for Critical Race Studies (CCRS). During these events, I met students who questioned Hudson, a white man, being the advisor to the Black Student Association (BSA).

Immediately, I became interested in this topic. I know white leaders of black organizations exist, but I never really questioned my reasoning for believing that this should not be until I met those students while attending CCRS events. Naturally, I believed that the best person to speak to about this was Hudson himself, and he agreed.

When I first met Hudson, I was somewhat taken aback by him. A wrestler in high school—he now coaches UHD's nationally awarded powerlifting team — he's a pretty big guy. Yet, when he spoke, it was with the calmness of still waters before a hurricane. After meeting him, I became more curious than ever as to his interest in BSA.

We met on a Tuesday. As we talked, you could hear the horn of the MetroRail howling in the background as it came to a stop; the rail station sits just outside his office window. We discussed myriad things: him growing up in a community that had little-to-no diversity, his stint as a high school wrestler in Michigan, and moving to North Dakota for college on a wrestling scholarship. Then I asked him the big question: why would he want to be the advisor to BSA? "One purpose of this office is to provide support and advising for diversity-oriented student organizations," he said.

I'll admit that I wasn't satisfied with that answer at first. But some of what he told me next helped me understand what color blindness looks like. It's something I don't believe in, color blindness. Today we are told that we live in a post-racial, colorblind society, and that's false. Hudson — who is not

only the advisor to BSA and Stand Out as aforementioned, but also to the South Asian Students Organization (inactive), International Students Organization and UHD Feminists — has a commitment to human rights that can only be described as color blind.

Of course, it's not that he is actually color blind, but his love for people overshadows any preconceived notions of race. At one point, he spoke to me about white privilege. I was surprised when he brought it up; it's a term that I don't often hear white people use when talking about themselves. "I am aware, every day, that I have white privilege and other kinds of privilege," he said. "I try to, whenever possible, look for ways where I can use that privilege to benefit social justice. We can't get rid of the privilege we have, it's not our fault that we have it—our responsibility is what we do with it."

I could have left his office then, and all of my questions would have been answered, but I'm glad I didn't. He went on to tell me a story that I believe will stick with me for a very long time. He talked about a road trip he took with the wrestling team to Dallas, and how it ended with several members of his team experiencing blatant racial discrimination. It wasn't really the story that I'll remember, because I've experienced my fair share of racial discrimination. As his wrestlers told him after the incident, "Don't worry, Coach, we see this all the time." It was Hudson's reaction to what happened to his team that I will never forget. While telling the story, he choked up. The sincerity in his voice was empathic almost, as if he had taken on their burdens. The entire time he told the story to me, he referred to his wrestlers as "my kids." It was something I could relate to.

In retrospect, I can't believe I ever thought a white person shouldn't advise a black organization. It wasn't until Dr. Hudson taught me what color blindness looks like that I changed my mind. Yolanda Green, UHD junior and vice president of BSA, really put it in perspective for me. "I feel like it's just a lot of misunderstanding due to some people not willing to accept a person beyond their color," Green said. "It's all for the greater good. One of our main initiatives [of BSA] is to make awareness and also to enhance the conditions of the black community. That's something any faculty member—white, black, Chinese, etc. — if they are willing to help with that cause, then most definitely they should be on board."



Top Left: Dr. Hudson receiving an award
image courtesy of OutSmart

Top Right: Dr. Hudson in his office with his many awards and recognitions—image courtesy of J.Burgman

Bottom Left: Dr. Hudson at a powerlifting competition
image courtesy of realjock.com

12 Gator News

Below are quotes that Dateline reporters got at UH the night of the GOP debate, from people gathered outside.

Liam Wright
Students for a
Democratic Society

-“We want to invite everyone to a post debate forum where we can debate on current issues. It will be on March 8 at 5pm in the class Social Work 101.”
-“Students here did not like that they were not allowed to attend the debate.”

-“We feel it is not a representation of democracy.”

Alex
UH Student

-Trump is a monster
-It’s amusing that a reality star is running for president

Sydney
UH Student

-“As the manager of the campus opera house, the closure of campus has left me unable to work the last three days.”
-“I had to turn it over to students who have very little knowledge of running a theatrical venue

Shauna
Protestor

-“I am a Muskoke Creek Native American. Donald Trump, who is an immigrant himself, wants to deport those same people.”

Alissa Carrie
UH Student

-“Having the debate on campus is a good thing. It brings our university to the national spotlight.”

Ivonne Ruiz
UH Student

-“Closure of campus has made the last few days very unproductive as it has interrupted campus life.”

Amy Schully
Fight for 15
Black Lives Matter Movement

-“We want to raise minimum wage to \$15/hr. We want to be able to form unions, \$7.25 is not doable as a minimum wage today.”

A Debate Night Date with Cougar Red Tape

By Terrance Turner

On Feb. 26, the University of Houston held a Republican Party presidential debate at the Moores Opera House. Beginning at 7:30pm, insults and accusations ran rampant. Senators Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz double-teamed front-runner Donald Trump, criticizing his bankrupt businesses and illegal hiring practices. Trump responded by ragging on Rubio’s unpopularity among his fellow GOP senators and accusing Cruz of borrowing money from Goldman Sachs. Gov. John Kasich urged America’s kids to “shoot for the stars,” and Dr. Ben Carson fielded the question of appointing Supreme Court justices by saying that he would look “at the fruit salad of their life.”

Inside was a political free-for-all.

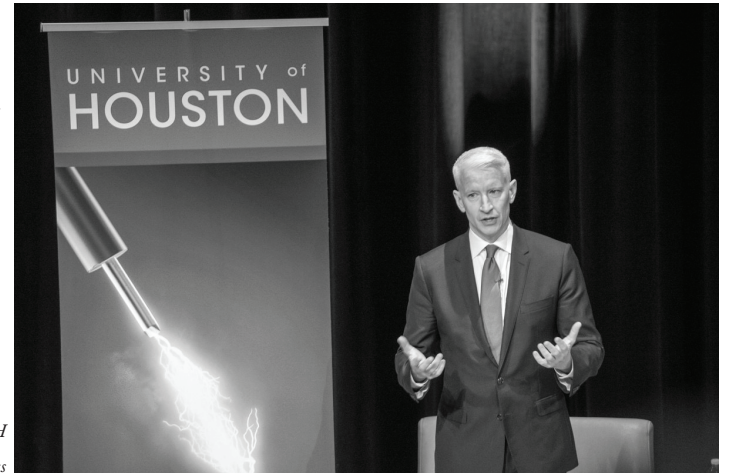
Outside were nearly all of UH’s students – and all of Houston’s media. That includes Dateline-Downtown. When two Dateline reporters arrived at the locale to cover the event, they were told by security that they needed tickets to enter. Strange. The UH.edu website said, “The University of Houston does not have debate tickets available. All tickets are managed by the Republican National Committee.”

We were sent to the nearby tents, where we were told we could be granted media credentials. When we reached them at around 7:05pm (after being stopped by police), we were told that the only media outlets allowed in the Moores theater were CNN and Telemundo. This was confirmed by KTRK anchor Ilona Carson, who wrote on Twitter, “None of us got to go inside Moores for the debate itself.” Regarding the presence of media, she revealed that “everyone besides CNN and Telemundo were in the spin room in [the] Athletic Facility.” That would be the UH Athletics-Alumni Center, 0.2 miles from the debate site itself. Also, “you had to get credentials weeks early. We couldn’t get our whole team credentialed – they were limited.”

Seats for students seeking to watch the debate were also limited. According to the Houston Chronicle, UH received tickets for just 25 of the 800 seats in the theater, per their agreement with CNN. Of those, 14 went to the UH regents, President Renu Khator and “special guests,” a UH spokeswoman said. The remaining 11 went to the students, faculty and staff via a lottery. The result, according to the Chronicle, was that six students were seated for the debate. UH student Connor Hendricks said that attempting to locate tickets was “incredibly difficult,” but added that he felt honored to have UH be the host for the event.

Anderson Cooper speaks to attendees at GOP Debate at UH

image courtesy of Houston Press



GDS Campaign, Revisited

By Terrance Turner

Chances are that you’ve seen the “Gators Don’t Say” campaign in UH’s hallways, bulletin boards and cafeteria, since their induction last semester. That campaign is an initiative of UH’s very own Center for Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. According to its Facebook page, the Center “seeks to raise awareness of the potentially harmful impact of our language choices as part of the broader mission of the Center to foster a campus climate that is welcoming, inclusive, and equitable for all members of the UH campus community.”

You may also notice that nearly all of the original posters have disappeared. According to Dr. John Hudson, the director of the Center, some of the posters were cleared out because of end-of-fall-semester cleaning; others were removed because they were defaced. “Oddly, mine is the one that gets defaced the most,” Dr. Hudson remarked.

The newest poster is the one reading “I Don’t Say ‘She Was Asking for It’ Because...” With this poster, the campaign tackles – for the first time – the subject of sexual assault. “My agreement with the administration was that we would use words or phrases targeting specific affinity groups or identity groups. This [poster] kind of falls outside of that, but because April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, I thought that this would be a perfect one to begin with,” Dr. Hudson said. He was also inspired by the fact that March is Women’s History Month.

He went on to say that “this is a problem on campuses, including ours... One of the things I’d become more aware of in recent years is how much abuse people – women, but men too – how much abuse they endure, thinking that it’s... that [it] just goes with the territory of having a relationship. They don’t understand that abuse is abuse, and it shouldn’t happen. But the only models they have are abusive relationships.” As a result of watching dysfunctional role models, he explained, people begin to think that volatile or abusive relationships are normal. Sexual assault isn’t the only controversial issue the center is bringing some much needed attention to. At last, one student stepped forward to take on that most noxious of slurs: the N-word.

“But she wants to spell it right out,” Dr. Hudson said. “How do we put it out there so that it’s going to be educative and not hurtful? Because I had at least four individuals – all African-American women, and these are all staff and faculty, my age or older – and they like what they’re doing with these posters. But they specifically asked me to make sure that we don’t have the N-word

spelled out,” he revealed. The hurtful nature of the word, he said, would be “something they remember too personally.”

In fact, one of the four said she was disheartened to hear young people using it so “cavalierly [sic],” as Dr. Hudson put it. They defend themselves by saying they don’t mean anything by it or citing spelling differences. Hudson disagrees, stating that people who use this excuse “have presumed that they have the ability to change the meaning.” He dismisses such people in no uncertain terms: “You cannot strip that word of the cultural baggage that it carries.” The poster’s premiere will be accompanied by some kind of event in which the Center for Diversity (which, in fact, organized the “school-to-prison-pipeline” event reported in Dateline last month) would collaborate with the Center for Critical Race Studies. Dr. Hudson envisions a student town hall: “I think Dr. Robertson would be great in leading it — in kind of demonstrating, ‘Here’s an academic way to talk about this word,’ while recognizing the reality that it’s a hurtful, damaging word, and it’s not going to be spelled right out.”

As well, be on the lookout for an upcoming poster dealing with the negative and limiting implications of having a disability or being labeled as “disabled.” Dr. Hudson used a campus office as an example. “We have on campus the Office of Disability Services,” he said. “We don’t have a Disabled Students’ Office.”



The Cashier's Office Might Be Lying to You

By Kara Moore

It's important for any college student to have access to their transcripts. Pretty much all scholarships require a copy, as well as graduate school, and it can also be nice to look at, depending on your GPA. Of course, there are ways you might not have access to your transcript. Any type of hold on your account — from parking, to library, to tuition — could prevent you from ordering one.

In fact, when I went to order a transcript online from UHD I ran into that problem. I would log-in and get to that page where you place an order, only to have it tell me that there was a "Transcript Hold" due to a stop placed by the cashier's office. This isn't the first time I've had a hold. One semester, for some reason, I had a hold because not all of my tuition had been pulled from my loans and scholarships. I thought maybe the same thing had happened this spring.

I went first to my tuition balance, then to parking, then to library, even though I have not checked out any library books since my first semester. My account balance kept coming up as \$0. Where was this hold coming from?

First thing I did was contact my advisor and set up an appointment for that following Monday, February 29. I needed the transcript for a scholarship due that Monday and was incredibly worried about getting it in now that I apparently couldn't even order one. Sitting down with her after a stressful weekend, she administratively reviewed my account and came to the same conclusion: I had no financial holds according to her records. Yet, the cashier's office still had a hold on my account. She printed my account balance (still \$0) and a record of the hold and sent me down there that same morning to sort this thing out.

Speaking with Bobbi at the cashier's Office, I asked her to explain the hold when my balance said \$0; the

reasoning behind it? Apparently, when I paid my tuition online this semester I needed to call the cashier's office and let them know to remove my hold. The only problem with this story? All the money for tuition and fees had come out of my grants, scholarships, and loans this semester. I didn't pay online. It was pulled directly from those sources and the refund was deposited. Another problem? The documents my teacher gave me showed that the hold went into effect last semester, November 2, 2015. How had I been able to register for classes if I had a hold on my account last semester? It didn't seem to add up.

I told Bobbi that I had not been notified of such a policy. She proceeded to print out a paper and read the policy to me. Hesitating for a moment, I said "okay," but then asked if I could see the policy for myself. She printed another page and handed it to me, but all it was was a copy of my account balance, again showing \$0.

"Is the policy on this paper?" Because I don't see it" I said to her, trying to keep the annoyance out of my voice. "No it's not on there," she replied, though she had just printed out a page and pretended to read the policy off of it. "I can't seem to find it but it's on the website," she then told me. Considering I have no balance to pay, I wouldn't know if it was on there or not. Besides, I didn't pay a balance online this semester, how was I supposed to know of a policy that didn't apply to me?

All of this culminated in a quick removal of the hold and I placed an order for my transcripts, unfortunately, past the due date for the scholarship. I explained the situation to the organization and they agreed that an unofficial transcript would be a fine placeholder while they waited for the official copy. But what if they hadn't made an exception? I wouldn't have had a chance to enter for a scholarship, something essential to any college student.

Dateline-Downtown Staff Writer Elisa Gonzalez has had a similar experience, though not necessarily one where she was lied to. Gonzalez was having trouble with a hold on her account and was instructed to reach out to the Texas Comptroller's office. They verified her hold and told her to go to the cashier's office at UHD. The cashier's office told her that there was a small amount, like a dollar or so, leftover from tuition. Sounds a little strange, but they waived the hold. A couple months passed and then she was told by the AP Department that she still had a hold on her account. She had to call back to the Comptroller and they said it was an orientation fee at UH-Main from 2007, which she never attended. She then had to contact the UH Orientation Office in order to get that waived, and everything finally cleared up.

These two events show a definite lack of communication between departments and with students. I don't know specifically what could cause the random placement of unsubstantiated holds. What I do know is that my hold was supposedly going to last until December 31, 2099, which would have affected my ability to order transcripts for graduate school. Elisa's hold affected her ability to receive payments from Dateline-Downtown for the stories she was writing. If I had not noticed, and rectified it when I did, what scholarships or schools might I have missed out on? Elisa has been unpaid still, despite the month that has passed. The question remains, what is going on at the cashier's office, and how long will students continue to be affected?



APPLE vs. FBI

by Elisa Gonzalez

If there's one thing Apple is accomplishing in its fight against the FBI, it's bringing the notions of mass surveillance and government overreach into the public consciousness. While this had previously been accomplished by modern proponents of transparency, Edward Snowden, and WikiLeaks, Apple's case has managed to reach an audience that likely had no previous interest in the politics of privacy: the average mobile device user.

In its refusal to open the iPhone of San Bernardino shooter Syed Farook, the tech giant has contended that doing so would set a dangerous precedent. "If the government can use the All Writs Act to make it easier to unlock your iPhone, it would have the power to reach into anyone's device to capture their data," Apple CEO Tim Cook wrote in an open letter. Apple's legal representative, Ted Olson, has also argued the possibility of a police state that could result from this kind of unfettered access.

Then there's the case of the backdoor. This is what Cook called the type of decryption Apple would have to build in order to gain access to the San Bernardino shooter's phone. That backdoor is what he says would make every device vulnerable to hackers.

According to Apple and its supporters—Google, Microsoft and Facebook among others—the public should be concerned with government surveillance, especially if the corporation is forced to fulfill the FBI's demands, and iPhone users should be concerned with hackers that stand to gain from the resulting weakened security.

Amidst backlash from some of the tech industry's largest companies, the FBI maintains that its goal in gaining access to the shooter's device concerns only that individual device—a point Bill Gates supports, "This is a specific case where the government is asking for access to information. They are not asking for some general thing, they are asking for a particular case."

He's also made a good point about the discussion currently being had and the importance of compromise: "I think very few people take the extreme view that the government should be blind to financial and communication data but very few people think giving the government carte blanche without safeguards makes sense."

The FBI continues to stress the importance of national security in this case and has called Apple's choice to fight a "cheap marketing ploy," implying that they're only feigning interest in the public's privacy. They've also likened the corporation to a feudal overlord for holding a monopoly-like power over the software distributed to its devices.

The FBI and Apple have both introduced valid arguments about our safety on both a personal and national level. And while involving more of the public in this important discussion is a necessary step in the path toward reasonable outcome, it has yet to make the debate any clearer-cut. Each party has a responsibility to the people who trust them, but both entities are also giant outfits with massive influence and control over a mostly-unwitting people. For now, it seems the best we can hope for is that the level of transparency between the public, and the bodies that wield power over them, continues to grow.



Candidate Profile: the People's Right to a Third Choice

Jason J. Rivas

Gilberto Velasquez, Jr. is an Aggie, a businessman, an organizer, a husband and a family man. He comes from a family-oriented background, in which he has seen the struggles and triumphs of the bounteous social classes that build our society. His forays and studies in life have developed into an astute dogma based on libertarian values. Democrats and Republicans continue to quarrel across partisan lines; as such, Gilberto and the Libertarian Party would like to remind the voters that they have a third choice this November.

His initial incursion into public service was with the Mayor's Office of Special Events with the City of Houston. The team was a major part of hundreds of yearly events, ranging from openings of city parks, to the organization and execution of "Freedom over Texas" and the Veterans Day Parade. After a few years, he entered the private sector, while maintaining his tenacity for public service through volunteering and non-profits. In Gilberto's opinion, public service of any form, regardless of magnitude, can contribute greatly towards the common good. "(Whether) it's to the SPCA or to the Habitat of Humanity or whatever, just give a little bit... we cannot ask government to do everything; otherwise, we tax ourselves into oblivion," theorizes Gilberto. It is with his desire to aid individuals and assemblages, along with an awkward phone call from Austin, which compelled him to seek public office.

In 2014, Gilberto had shown interest in running for the Texas Railroad Commission on the Libertarian Party ticket. However, the local party leadership asked if he would consider serving as their candidate for State Senate, District 7. State law dictates that all political third parties must garner at least five percent of the vote in any race in which they participate, in order to maintain their position on the ballot. This quirky Texas law was adopted with the intent of suppressing third party votes. Gilberto agreed to represent the Libertarian Party with the notion of being removed from the ballot afterwards as part of a public relations campaign. However, the understanding turned into a misunderstanding when Gilberto received a call from the Texas Ethics Commission. The speaker politely specified his intent to fine Gilberto, that day, unless he was able to file the necessary paperwork for his campaign. Flabbergasted, Gilberto called his lawyer and the two were able to file the necessary paperwork before the five o'clock deadline.

Gilberto, now both legally and mentally in the race, began campaigning across northwest Houston. He ventured into a number of community centers and swiftly realized his unique appeal to voters. A burgeoning plethora of voters had become disenfranchised by the two-party system, and his presence on the campaign trail became a breath of fresh air. He captured approximately seven percent of the vote, despite a late start, doing his part to keep the Libertarian Party on the ballot for the next election cycle.

"Seven percent of the people in the Senate district didn't even know who I was, so they voted for me based on the fact they were tired of Republicans and Democrats," Gilberto alleged. This revelation catapulted his ambitions towards House District 134, two years later. Gilberto is a fiscal conservative, but socially liberal. The Libertarian Party's platform is based on this "middle of the road" approach to government. "Government needs to stay out of the board room... out of the bedroom... out of the baptismal," said Gilberto. He believes people want their government to be responsible with their money, but also want to be left alone from government impediment concerning their personal matters.

As such, he wants to "delete" the government bureaucracy that oversees local undertakings. A major problem with government red-tape is that many of the individuals serving in these positions are not elected by the voters. They are appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor, or other officials. These bureaucrats are not held responsible by the voters for their actions and create unnecessary barriers towards the people.

It is this bureaucratic clutter issue that Gilberto has made his major policy proposal. Governmental disorder and entanglement from Austin has already hampered education, homeownership, economic opportunities, etc. He envisions the opportunity to reduce the pressure of state oversight stifling local businesses and dealings. It is an iterative process though, and he hopes more Texans become aware of the necessity to be patient and vote for Libertarian candidates who also support the process.

Libertarians, as a whole, believe government intervention in the home, business, and religion is unnecessary. Two examples in particular are of matrimony and recreational drug use. Gilberto and the Party believe the government should have no sway in whom one falls in love with and marries. Furthermore, they believe recreational drugs, particularly marijuana, should not be criminalized by the government. The state should only intervene when one person violates the rights of another.

"If you have the opportunity, and you know candidate A (the incumbent) is going to win, and you vote for candidate B but feel your vote is wasted, well then vote for the third party candidate C – this keeps third parties on the ballot," Gilberto said. He believes voters send a stronger message to government through the continued support of third party candidates. It will not only be registered into the official count which determines whether third parties may remain on the ballot, but also displays the growing percentage of the population unwilling to support the status quo that the two major parties purport. As Gilberto Velasquez Jr. sees it, "There is never a wasted vote."

*Pictured below:
Gilberto Velasquez, Jr.*



The Grand Ole Party v. President Barack Obama

by Jason J. Rivas

There is no denying that conversations around race relations in our country are at an all-time high. It seems most any topic, no matter how grandiose or minute, has the possibility of taking on some kind of race-related connotation. This has set the stage for many long-overdue conversations to finally gain some traction. According to Chron.com, in January 2016, the Houston Independent School District (HISD) Board of Trustees voted 5-4 to rename four academic campuses that previously held Confederate loyalists as their namesake. In an identical vote, approximately one month later, three additional campuses were added to the list of those to be renamed. Needless to say, these votes were met with some resistance.

During the spring of 2010, the Texas Board of Education was able to successfully rename the “Atlantic Slave Trade” in its textbooks, giving it a name found to be more befitting – the “Atlantic Triangular Trade.” Noticeably absent from the new moniker is the term slave. Many see this change as an attempt to effectively rewrite history — a history to be taught to the students of the Houston Independent School District for years to come. In 2016, Scholastic Books released, and then stopped distributing, a children’s book where slaves described as “servants,” shown in the book’s illustrations to be black, were said to be happy to serve their master George Washington for his birthday. More often than not, history has proven that slaves were anything but happy. Despite this, when a small group of trustees to the HISD Board somehow became audacious enough to argue for renaming several school campuses within the district, it was a cause for concern. Those opposed to the changes felt it to be true that the board should redirect its energy, while to others these are just the buildings where the already-rewritten history would be taught.

There are more pressing — and considerably more important — issues to be addressed by HISD and its constituents; hopefully, in due time, those issues will be addressed with just as much vigor, if not more. Fortunately, in 2016, there are opportunities to finally be able to right wrongs and lead by example for generations to come.

While HISD re-naming schools can be easily defined as pointless, redundant or a waste of taxpayer dollars, it is important that those who are affected by the proposed changes do not get lost in the sauce. Rather, they should attempt to appreciate the level of progress that is being indicated by having a conversation such as this. It is the belief of some that the names of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, Richard Dowling and Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson are synonymous with American history. These names also represent a time in history that, the citizens of the communities where these campuses are located are not proud of.

Granted, renaming the schools will not guarantee improved performance by their students; it also will not erase history or negate any positive contributions the men these schools are named for may have made to society. It can, however, set the stage for a larger-scale conversation and demonstrate to others in the region that a city as diverse as Houston has no problem laying aside age-old ideologies and adopting an inclusionary mindset. Houstonians should harbor some feelings of pride, knowing that the city has reached a level of maturity where trustees of the school district are able to come together and present such a bold proposition for public consumption.

It should not be difficult to grasp the fundamental truth that remnants of slavery remain present in today’s society — namely, in minority communities. On the contrary, of all the nations tattered by a history of slavery, the United States has put forth more effort than any other to reverse the actions of our founding fathers. If by some miracle, changing names, labels and titles could change the hearts, minds and thought processes of those who choose to use this as opportunity to further the divide, only then might there be true progress.

Ted Cruz and the Legend of the Pro-Choice Zodiac Killer

Jason J. Rivas

It is August 7, 1969. A serial killer is on the loose, taunting the police with a chilling letter declaring his love of killing unsuspecting bystanders and their destiny of enslavement under him, in the afterlife. The disconcerting letter would be followed by several more murders and written testimonies. And then he disappeared from the spectrum of reality, leaving behind ambiguous questions in need of answers. It was during this time the world first discovered another initiator, shrouded in mystery: Ted Cruz.

Is Ted Cruz the “Zodiac Killer,” the infamous serial killer who mercilessly slayed victims while publically jesting with law enforcement and members of the press? Foremost, one must examine the circumstantial evidence: Cruz was born in Calgary, Canada. Calgary can be split in two to form the names Cal and Gary, two names that may have belonged to undiscovered individuals murdered by the Zodiac Killer (gasp). Secondly, Ted is short for Theodore. THEODORE CRUZ contains twelve letters. What else contains twelve letters? ZODIAC KILLER (double gasp). Finally, and perhaps most damning of all: Cruz has never denied being the Zodiac Killer (faints).

In all seriousness, Cruz is not the Zodiac Killer, but that hasn’t stopped one individual from capitalizing on these seriously facetious allegations. Tim Faust is the man behind a recent campaign aimed at making the most of the satirical correlation between Cruz and the notorious serial killer. In 2013, Faust quit his tech job and became involved with Planned Parenthood of Texas. He felt Texas was barbaric and cruel in its efforts to regulate abortion. Last year, the activist caught wind of the Zodiac Killer allegations, originating from a Tumblr account. He saw an opportunity for Cruz, a proud proponent of pro-life initiatives, to indirectly support what he has always despised: the pro-choice movement. Faust and a friend, Rory Blank, created and designed a campaign in which shirts, purporting Ted Cruz as the famed killer, would be sold to support Pro-choice initiatives.

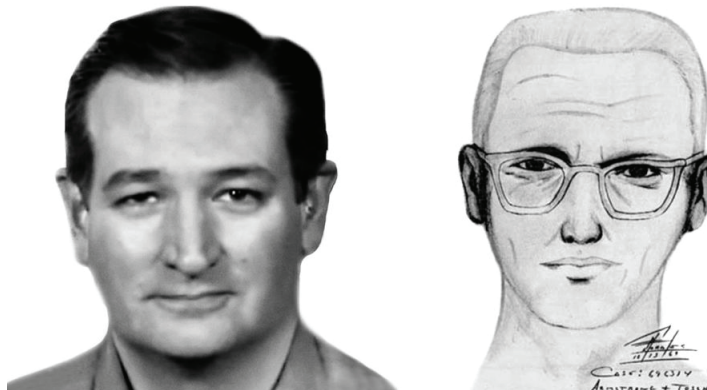
The shirts have, thus far, raised \$30,000 in proceeds for West Fund, a nonprofit entity. They specifically provide economic aid for women seeking abortions in the El Paso region. “Realistically, Ted Cruz’s indirect body count (by rejecting the Affordable Care Act expansion, anti-choice ideology, etc.) is way higher than anything the Zodiac could have dreamed,” Faust said. Success in expanding the Zodiac Killer’s story to a new generation has had unintentional consequences for another candidate.

Another Tumblr account has recently purported that Ted Cruz

is not the Zodiac Killer, but Bernie Sanders is. Conspiracy theorists conjectured Cruz was born after the killings in Alberta, Canada, far removed from the Bay Area in which the killings occurred. In Senator Sanders though, theoreticians discovered discrepancies in his supposed past. There is little record of Sanders prior to 1971, the last year the serial killer had made a significant presence. Then, out of the blue, Sanders introduced himself as an anti-war, far-left, Democratic socialist from Vermont, right after the West Coast killings subsided? These allegations may seem valid, but then again, what if these allegations were made by Ted Cruz sympathizers, hoping to conceal the truth of their own candidate?

Representatives for Ted Cruz have yet to issue any sort of statement regarding the campaign, leaving this reporter to ponder, “Is Ted Cruz’s silence a confirmation of his past as the notorious butcher of the Bay Area?” It’s a killer question; many are dying to know the answer, satirically speaking. The “Ted Cruz is the Zodiac Killer” shirts can be purchased from the online site:

<http://tedcruzwasthezodiackiller.bigcartel.com/product/ted-cruz-was-the-zodiac-killer>



Side by side comparison of Cruz and Zodiac sketch rendering image courtesy of esquire.com




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  A p r i l 						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Give 2 Gators Kick Off Lunch A300 11:30-1:30pm	2
3	4 Workshop on Field Ex. & Internships 1:30-2:30 S604	5	6 Democracy's Challenge 9:30 to 11:45am A300	7 Transfer Thursday 10 - 1pm 4 - 7pm	8 Student Research Conference 7:30 to 4pm A300	9
10	11 Workshop on Resumes 12-1pm S604	12	13	14 Get Your Geek On! A423 3:30 - 4:30pm	15 One Main Event & Ed's Bayou Clean Up! 8-2pm	16 UHD Open House!
17	18 Workshop on Workforce Professionalism 12-1pm S604	19	20	21	22 Scholars Invitational	23 First Day of Passover
24	25	26	27	28	29	30 Last Day of Passover