

A Blue Blood in Houston

Written by Dave Howard



I grew up right outside of Berkeley. Angela Davis was my Poly-Sci teacher at San Francisco State. I tried to be a good hippie/bohemian in my youth. I failed miserably; a suit looks better on me than a tie dye, my locks turn to pubis should I try and grow it long, I pass out when smoking the sticky bud.

I dated a hippie girl once, but lost her when I got stoned and started giggling at the George Washington Day Protest or it could have been the Valentine's Day protest. Was there an Arbor Day protest that year? I do remember there wasn't a pizza joint, burger joint or massive box of Cap'n Crunch anywhere to be found..

She was smelly more than sexy.. We saw the Fellini Flick "8.5" together

So what does this uptight, liberal from Berkeley do? Naturally, he moves to LA to be a part of the mainstream Hollywood system. He can change the system from within, man.

But in any case, at heart, I am a blue blood. A warrior for the common man in the better Beverly Hills lounges. So naturally I go and fall in love with a girl from Houston.

And last weekend, I had to go to Houston, Texas.

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A dizzying flim fest from my days as a bad hippie/bohemian flooded my upper lobe. Gunracks, rednecks, chaw, Ole Dixie flying above the plantation, Toby Keith, Charlie Daniels, Halliburton, lynchins, Enron, the Houston Texans, John Wayne and other general idiots. I flew into George H.W. Bush Airport. I took a poll of my friends who would actually come to Houston should I eventually marry this gal. Houston did not fare well in the polls.

Aw, Crap!

However, as the five days progressed, I did find a lot to like about Houston

BAD ASS SPACE STUFF- I was fortunate enough to take a private tour of the NASA [Neutral Bouyancy Lab](#)

, I don't think I am allowed to post the pictures I took and I couldn't find any on the Google. But this is a huge pool that astronauts use for training. They actual rebuild the Shuttles and the Hubble Telescope and the astronauts practice making repairs in space. We also saw the Saturn rocket. Until you actually stand next to a rocket that has been to outer space, you really can't appreciate it.

Weather: Billy Joel once said that "L.A. is not tramp, just a bit misdirected" Sure we get 90 degree heat waves in December. However, at night it gets cold. The town turns on you. You get 90 until 5:00 then it's 55 at night. Houston punches it's weight. It's 75 during the day 68 at night. Steady, I like that.

OPEN CONTAINERS—LEGAL!! It was with pride that I swigged my beer down the merry promenades of Houston and Galveston, window shopping for things I did not need. However, I wanted them a bit more.

Friendly Folks—Every shopkeepers I met was the nicest gal that even the most Aquanet could not hide.

Tolerance —Yes folks you read that right. Tolerance. We spent an evening at BIG JOHN'S ICE HOUSE. Before plunking in my dollar for eight songs, Clete the bartender, warned me of his veto power. "You put on shit that sucks and I'll skip it" Sure, we tested the jukebox waters with the DIXIE CHICKS, life went on as my girlfriend danced with me to ["Goodbye Earl"](#). The true test was when I put her real favorite song... "Waterloo" by Abba. And they were tolerant, yet happy, when the 3.25 minutes were up.

No Zoning Laws- This makes for hysterical couplings along the streets. My favorite was "The Legs Cabaret" and "Dairy Queen"

The Best Thing I Learned in Houston, Texas: I went to see a high school/college friend of the girlfriend's, Michael. The discussion turned to a subject my 20 year old self would have laughed at me for discussing, the grandeur of children's birthday parties. The shit parents go through putting together some kind of extravagance for a five year old's birthday party. The 5, 10, 20 grand parent's will put down on a child's birthday party.

Well, the daughter discovered that some pets were homeless. While this daughter will always get presents from her family, with some slight coaxing from her folks, she has turned every birthday party for the last three years into a fundraiser for the SPCA. Instead of presents, give help. The daughter is 8. What did you get for your eight birthday? I'm sure it was nice. But do you remember what it was?

The best thing I learned in Texas... there are some really good folks out there.

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