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COMPTON’S TRANSGENDER CULTURAL DISTRICT

ANTI-PANHANDLING? MORE LIKE ANTI-HOMELESS

ANTI-HOMELESS SWEEPS ARE ANTI-QUEER SWEEPS

NARCAN AND THE RISE OF FENTANYL IN THE TL

VEHICLE TRIAGE CENTER COMES UP SHORT

IF EVERYONE CAN’T AFFORD THE RENT

THEY SHOULDN’T FUCKING TAKE OUR TENT

SHELTER WAITLIST UPDATE: As of July 29th there are 1,111 people on the waitlist for shelter in SF.
The Street Sheet is a publication of the Coalition on Homelessness. Some stories are collectively written, and some stories have individual authors. But whoever sets fingers to keyboard, all stories are formed by the collective work of dozens of volunteers, and our outreach to hundreds of homeless people.

Editor, Quiver Watts (they/them)
Assistant Editor, TJ Johnston
Vendor Coordinator, Emmeet House

Our contributors include:
Jennifer Friedenbach, Sam Lew, Jason Love, Jay Rice, Miguel Carrera, Kelly Gutierrez, Anisha Tammana, Olivia Glowacki, Mike Russo, Joshua Gudinski, Alexa Finkenrider

Poisonous Wolf

The day I met u I jumped through hurdles of conclusions
not noticing I was braving the road u would use
struggle, desire, my emotions
navigate mindless eyes through a raging sea
do u even want what's mine to give

Muffled Mania

Flag down my mana
tarnish my trots as I put things in perspective, my ears shut wide
can u see me
can u see me

Flag down my mana
Tarnish my trots as I put things in perspective, my ears shut wide
Can you see me? Can you see me? On the front line, bravery slips into a flatline my society rules frustrated stressed juice pressed to impress my heart breaks down the compression in my veins let the gas mask muffle the cry in vain.

New Count for the Homeless

The homeless population has grown to 9,800 people — how did this happen?

I’ll tell you how. Our elected officials feel as though the homelessness problem is too great for them. My answer to them is, if so, then you should resign and let someone else who can fix it have your job. Quit catering to the special interest groups, pull up your sleeves and get to work.

We can also use a helping hand from the business community. You say it is not your responsibility to help fix society's ills, but it is. You just can’t suck the life out of a city, get rich and move on. Just like breaking a campground, you leave a city in better shape than you found it.

We look to our business, religious and community leaders for leadership and answers. You call yourselves "exceptional." You call yourselves "the best and the brightest." I say, prove it.

Show us what you can do besides complain and beg for money. Put that try League education to good use before it’s too late. Help the poor and give something back to the community that made you wealthy.

Poetry by M.Y.N.D.

I met M.Y.N.D. on a trip to Los Angeles. She was facing housing instability and a difficult situation at the time, and her struggle and resilience was apparent to me. In just a couple of hours we talked about everything from intersectional feminism to her intensely emotional poetry and her past. M.Y.N.D. has written poetry since she was 12. When I read her poetry I knew her voice had to be heard - Anisha Tammana

The initial rumblings of this movement were birthed when the powerful real estate agency Group I attempted to purchase the 900 block of Market Street. For context, this part of the Tenderloin held a density of TLGBQ bars, cruising spots, hotels and bathhouses unmatched in the city for decades. What’s more, some of the earliest examples of trans and queer political organizing and consciousness raising happened in this part of the Tenderloin. Basinger recounts: “I did not feel like the community that made you wealthy.

To make the District and in surrounding areas.

Straight from the mouths of its founders, this is huge. If you’ve been through the process of getting back into stable housing in the Bay Area, you know how important this commitment is. The District’s founders are particularly attuned to how displacement affects trans and gender non-conforming unhoused people. Mahogany broke it down beautifully when discussing her work as a community mental health director in Concord. “A lot of my trans clients had lost housing in San Francisco and were placed in housing in [Concord] away from their communities and resources for health. That caused a lot of isolation and negative outcomes like missed appointments and eventually, cancelled health care. San Francisco can be a lot better, it’s like a bubble for visible trans folks. Outside of the city, continues on page 5...
The ways in which Compton’s intervenes on this grim cycle are already clear to offense. “I’ve seen an effect of the district in that we’ve been able to negotiate with developers to secure space. She’s also determined to take things a step further and focus on the plethora of empty buildings in the District. “I’ve been talking to the supervisors about them… We want to rezone and co-op-ify to provide housing for the community. Mahogany adds that “the goal is to get everybody housed. We’re fighting for low income housing and community services centered in the district to get people off the streets and into homes and to keep people to avoid giving money to usually panhandling campaign.

As previously mentioned, the leaders of Compton’s Transgender District are integrated into the community within their district and are acutely aware of the challenges involved in improving the district’s living conditions. Mahogany identifies the need for “strategic planning” when organizing to increase housing and livability without gentrification and displacement. “We advocate for affordable housing and specifically low-income housing, not just tearing down SROs to create market-rate buildings with some proportion of affordable units included.” She admits that this balance is “something we really struggle with,” but the Compton’s team offers tangible and practical ideas to achieve it. Johnson names these ideas rapidly and with excitement. “We’re looking at creating co-ops and community businesses and business opportunities for our community. If a developer brings a business in, they need to HIRE TRANS PEOPLE! We’re aiming for collective opportunities to make things like healthy meals and our own bars affordable… In the end it’s about safety, it’s about transgender safety”. Any and all development within Compton’s District is designed to be by and for the community, and the likelihood of founder accountability is high.

Questions about the actual impacts of the district remain. How will Compton’s Transgender District actually affect the unhoused communities of the Tenderloin? Will there be fewer sweeps and cameras and more services and housing? Will the wealthy and white members of the TLGBQ community sacrifice their neighbors for their own exclusionary sense of safety? At this point, it’s impossible to tell. Compton’s only solidified in the last three years. But if the founders have anything to do with it, this district should remain just as radical as the cafeteria not it gets its name from. The future seems bright.

“In other articles, we have used LGBTQ+ as the acronym to describe the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community. We use TLGBQ+ here to reflect to language used by the founders of Compton’s Transgender District and to reflect the trans-forward approach of the district.

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How San Francisco Sweeps Endanger People

In a city with a homeless crisis declared "cruel and — alongside politicians and real estate developers putting LGBT+ lives at risk.

This article was originally published on the website Them.Lu. them chronicles and celebrates the stories, people and voices that are emerging and inspiring all of us, ranging in topics from pop culture and style to politics and news, all through the lens of today’s LGBTQ community.

One June night in 1966, a few dozen young dykes and queens gathered in San Francisco’s Tenderloin district for a symbolic act of defiance against police and property owners. In what historians consider one of the earliest queer protests against cops and gentrification, the youth marched holding brooms, sweeping the streets as they went. The establishment considered them to be trash; the broom-streets as they went. The establishment, who were members and collaborators of the early queer liberation group Vanguard, obviously begged to differ. And just in case anyone failed to get the symbolism of the sweep, they carried handmade signs reading the cops and landlords, with messages like ALL TRASH IS

BEFORE THE BROOM.

Their protest came two months before a Vanguard collaborator, Dixie Russo, would break a sugar pot at a Tenderloin coffee shop, setting off the Compton’s Cafeteria riot. The Stonewall riots wouldn’t ignite New York City’s West Village for another three years.

Today, the month of June is still a mess in San Francisco. In preparation for the West Coast’s largest Pride party, the city enacts sweeps of homeless people — with a disproportionate number of queer and trans people among them (30 percent are LGBTQ+, according to the city’s 2017 count) — off the same streets where Vanguard activists pushed their brooms in 1966.

Carried away from any community they’ve formed, it’s an attempt by the city to ensure that San Francisco’s ongoing housing crisis is placed well out of sight of the oncoming flood of tourists, who more than double the city’s overall population during Pride weekend.

For low-income queer people, the Vanguard action is even more relevant than it was 53 years ago. The city doesn’t save its anti-homeless sweeps for events like Pride; in 2019, they’re a year-long effort. Today, real estate corporations use words like “gritty” and “urban” to describe the Tenderloin in ads; they also fund campaigns that effectively make being poor a crime, like the one for the ableist “sit/sit” law that makes it illegal to sleep or even sit on the sidewalk here.

At the same time, the Tenderloin has turned a large chunk of the neighborhood into the world’s first official “Transgender Cultural District” in 2018. But on an average night, entire blocks are eerily quiet. Police cars have a special low-register horn to disperse people who linger on the sidewalks, and their new neighbors have a highly efficient weapon, the city’s 311 “quality of life” hotline (a.k.a. 911 for gentrifiers), which dispatches city workers — usually cops — to harass homeless people via a simple call, text, email, or tweet. Today, an area that used to harbor dozens more queer and trans bars than the more-famously gay Castro District has just one, Aunt Charlie’s on Turk Street.

Organizations representing real estate corporations and hotels, like the Civic Center and Tenderloin Community Benefit Districts, are campaigning to raise taxes for more surveillance cameras around their neighborhoods, which they say will make them safer. But as homeless queer people know all too well, “safety” can mean very different things to different people, especially when it involves surveillance and police.

Homeless sweeps are especially brutal to queer people working in the underground economy, like sex workers, or for anyone who sleeps in tents, vans, or generally lacks stable housing in a city with a 1,000-plus nightly waiting list for shelter beds. Restaurants affordable to low-income people have closed, and their shells remain empty, like the 24-hour Carl’s Jr at 10 United Nations Plaza that went dark in 2017 and offered a warm place to go for the price of some waffle fries. For lease signs gather dust in its windows at the edge of the formerly busy plaza, where police now patrol the area from a permanently stationed Winnebago.

Tommie Avicolli Mecca works at the local Housing Rights Committee. In 1971, the homeless and tenants rights activist came out to his family and left home when his dad offered a warm place to go for the price of some waffle fries. For lease signs gather dust in its windows at the edge of the formerly busy plaza, where police now patrol the area from a permanently stationed Winnebago.

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A photo of Vanguard activists documenting their “Sweeps” action, from an October 1966 issue of the group’s publication, Vanguard Magazine. Courtesy of the GLBT Historical Society.

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A photo of Vanguard activists documenting their “Sweeps” action, from an October 1966 issue of the group’s publication, Vanguard Magazine. Courtesy of the GLBT Historical Society.
Sweeping endanger Queer Houseless — alongside politicians and real estate developers pushing for increased surveillance and policing — are people. Voters passed it anyway. Over $50 million a year to fund homeless services. San Francisco's homeless situation as "crueal and inhuman" in 2018 — and also really hard to understand, given the massive loads of tech and real estate money flowing through the city. Some of the wealthy gay Castro residents who benefited from the radical activism of a generation ago "had no sense of history," Mecca says. They were actively working to label homeless queer and trans youth as "less than human," in a calculated campaign to sweep them out of their neighborhood. Mecca, an atheist, eventually teamed up with Reverend Jim Mitsuaki at the LGBTQ+ -centered Metropolitan Community Church, which gave out pot straight from the pulpit to people who were hurting from AIDS-related illnesses in the 1980s and early 90s. Landlords who valued profits over people didn’t have a problem with evicting tenants with HIV in order to raise the rent (which is still a problem). Mecca remembers working with ACT UP to present two gay realtors (and evictors) with the ashes of someone who’d died of AIDS. Businesses and neighborhood associations didn’t love that kind of attention, but went full-on "bulletin" when activists later turned a Castro rec center into a youth shelter.

"People need housing that’s free or cheap for everyone," says Tommi Avicolli Mecca — not non-solutions like 311 calls and police harassment. These neighborhood associations continue to lobby and win the backing of the city’s politicians, like San Francisco’s current mayor, London Breed. During her campaign, Breed stressed that she grew up in public housing and bootstrapped her way into City Hall; at the same time, she promised to hire hundreds of new police officers to push up a department with a disgrace of a record dealing with homeless folks, disabled people, and Black and brown people. Breed later opposed a tiny one-half of a percent tax on corporations that make over $50 million a year to fund homeless services. Voters passed it anyway.

Meanwhile, San Francisco’s Black population has bottomed out since it began to decline in the 1960s, when the city began a plan that Black queer writer James Baldwin dubbed "Negro removal." Of the Black San Franciscans who are left, thousands are homeless (the city’s 2017 count found 43 percent of homeless San Franciscans are Black, even though they make up just 5 percent of the city’s total residents).

Against this backdrop, the United Nations specifically called out San Francisco’s homeless situation as "crueal and inhuman" in 2018 — and also really hard to understand, given the massive loads of tech and real estate money flowing through the city. Gay California legislator Scott Wiener has helped. When his reign in local politics began in 2011, Wiener made clear that one of his missions was to wipe out homeless people from the Castro. He soon removed benches in the district’s Harvey Milk Plaza, spearheaded efforts to add "defensive architecture" to block people from sitting in public spaces, and closed a recycling center that provided a way for homeless people to make a tiny income. Wiener’s now pushing a housing deregulation bill, SB 89, which urban planners say will make problems worse for lower-income renters and homebuyers, while pushing for cities to fund SB 1045, his bill to lock up people who are homeless, disabled, and/or use drugs under a scheme called conservatorship.

Like Vanguard, groups like the Coalition on Homelessness, Gay Shame, LAGAI — Queer Insurrection, the Lucy Parsons Project, and the coalition behind Services Not Sweeps in Los Angeles fight the powers that rule California during its worst homeless crisis ever. Their message: Housing instability isn’t safe. Panier surveillance cameras won’t make the lives of homeless queer and trans people safer. The effects of global warming are just beginning, the San Francisco Department of Public Works’s dumpster-ing of homeless peoples’ tents during last winter’s record-breaking rainfall and dangerous smoke from last fall’s Camp Fire, the worst fire in California history, won’t make people safer. Hosing down, herding, and moving people without doing much of anything to get low-income people into stable housing: clearly not safe.

The shelters that houseless people are meant to turn to, it’s well worth noting, are also notoriously anti-trans. Activists like Mecca have managed to make 24 beds available for trans and nonbinary adults at Jazzie’s Place, America’s first LGBTQ+ adult shelter. Larkin Street Youth Services has about 290 beds for youth across the city, but some of those are in buildings owned by transphobic and queerphobic landlords. And these places are just temporary places to land, not permanent, stable housing. Activists like Breed and Wiener say San Francisco can just build way out of homelessness, which probably sounds like a magic cash register to the real estate developers who funded these politicians’ campaigns. But as Mecca notes, you can’t build luxury condos “and expect that it’s going to trickle down to the people who need it. We learned that from President Reagan,” who refused to help during the beginning of the HIV crisis, and then created another crisis by turning much of Roosevelt-era public government housing over to private developers and making housing insecurity great again.

"People need housing that’s free or cheap for everyone," says Mecca — not non-solutions like 311 calls and police harassment. Something that has worked for houseless people with HIV/AIDS and veterans is government-subsidized public housing systems created in the 1990s and 2000s.

In a crisis, solutions might even mean squatting, as one of England’s highest-ranking politicians, Jeremy Corbyn, suggested after the 2007 fire in London left hundreds of people homeless. Mere meters from Grenfell exist hundreds of "ghost condos," a name for homes that sit empty because they’re owned by investors waiting for prices to go up, or by people who are rich enough to, in many cases, never actually see the properties in real life.

In March, the mortgage dot-com Lending Tree did the math around “ghost condo” prices in pricey cities like Los Angeles, New York City, and San Francisco, the number of ghost condos make homeless populations seem relatively tiny. Los Angeles County, for example, has about 270,000 empty housing units, while its official homeless count is 35,000.

With more billionaires per capita than anywhere in the world, non-wealthy queer and trans folks in San Francisco — especially those of us at the intersections, who are disabled, and Black, Latinx, or Native American — are living precarious lives. As a Vanguard member’s sign put it so eloquently back in June 1966: ALL TRASH BEFORE THE BROOM.

© 2018 by Tommi Avicolli Mecca
Page 5 AUG 1, 2019
Every year, thousands of people die from opioid overdoses. Fentanyl, however, seems to have a particularly shocking effect. In 2017, 53 percent of opioid-related deaths involved fentanyl compared to 14 percent in 2010.1 This phenomenon isn’t just national; it’s happening here. In 2018, San Francisco had 57 officially recorded fentanyl-related deaths. This is a staggering number—in perspective, that is more than one death each week.

Pharmaceutical fentanyl was created in a lab by Janssen Pharmaceuticals back in 1959. While synthetic fentanyl is primarily manufactured in the US and Mexico, China is also a major wholesale supplier of fentanyl products. Fentanyl was originally a controlled substance used only for pain management in chronic sicknesses like cancer and distributed for intravenous use only. Fast forward to the 1990s, the drug was introduced to the public for the first time in the form of a patch.

Despite its pharmaceutical origins, fentanyl has hit the streets like many other opioids. On the streets, fentanyl is usually illicitly manufactured, which means the fentanyl people typically use recreationally is completely and totally different from what is prescribed in hospital settings. Illicitly manufactured fentanyl in San Francisco comes in a powder, usually white or light-colored, and it typically contains about 3 - 4% fentanyl and ~95% a bunch of other drugs, including other opioids, much more powerful fentanyl analogues, stimulants/uppers, and even baking soda or lactose powder.

High overdose rates can be explained by the drug’s strength and the way people usually consume it. Given that pure fentanyl is 50 to 100 times the potency of morphine (and fentanyl analogues can be 1000-10000 times stronger than pure fentanyl itself), other drugs are frequently cut with it to reduce costs to distributors. Buyers are, more often than not, unaware of the true chemical breakdown of what they’re using and end up consuming a higher dose than intended of a more powerful drug than expected—leaving them more vulnerable to overdoses.

In a closer look, we hear from an anonymous local harm reduction expert what the narrative around fentanyl is and how folks are taking in response to this potentially devastating drug.

“The narrative around fentanyl is that it is 50 times more potent than heroin, and that’s true. But that doesn’t mean people won’t overdose on it, or that they won’t overdose on heroin. It’s just that fentanyl is more dangerous because it’s often cut with other drugs and people don’t realize how much they’re consuming.”

So to answer the ultimate question, how are we combating fentanyl?

“Fentanyl is the weapon of choice for the cartels. They’re the ones in the supply and having to navigate the risks every minute of the day. We can control: What information is available to us, who are the experts to consult, what works? The experts are the people who use drugs—actual geniuses who know how drugs work better than anybody, because they’re the ones engaging in the supply and having to navigate the risks every minute of the day. We consult them, and then we amplify their voices to a larger audience, ensuring that what works is being replicated throughout the community.”

If you choose to use fentanyl, or use other drugs that may contain it, here are some concrete tips for using fentanyl as safely as possible:

1. Use less to start.
2. Slow.
3. Test your drugs whenever possible.
4. Smoke or snort instead of inject.
5. Try not to use alone, or have someone check on you.
6. Carry naloxone and know how to use it.

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increase parking restrictions.

**DEADLINE TO SUBMIT ART FOR ARTAUCTION19**

To find more information on how to submit artwork to benefit the Coalition on Homelessness visit [WWW.ARTAUCTION19.INFO](http://WWW.ARTAUCTION19.INFO)

To say this is inhumane and inadequate is an understatement. Until every San Francisco has a home, we need safe parking.

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**VEHICLE TRIAGE CENTER**

*Since 2017, homelessness has increased by 30 percent and a significant part of the increase in that population is due to an increase in the vehicularly housed population. Since 2015, the population of people living in their vehicles increased 22%. In response, what does the Department of Homelessness want to do?

Increase parking restrictions.*

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**QUEST: FILM SCREENING**

**WHERE:** Roxide Theater, 3117 16th St, 01:30PM

**QUEST - the Truth Always Rises**, is a magnumroup love story highlighting our need for healing and empathy told from a 12-year-old girl, addicted to tagging and losing faith in humanity. Stay after for a QA with director, Santiago Rizzo, followed by a panel discussion hosted by the Coalition on Homelessness to examine some of the film’s themes in the lives of San Francisco residents.

**ACCESS:** The Roxie offers ADA seating, assisted listening/audio description headsets and captioning devices. There are ADA restrooms available in the Little Roxie theater two doors up from the main theater.

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**NEVER AGAIN IS NOW: Mobilizing the Next Generation**

**WHERE:** 100 Montgomery Street, the Predisio 07-09PM

Please join us for a screening of Alternative Facts: The Lies of Executive Order 9066, a documentary feature film by filmmaker Jon Osaki about the false information and political influences that led to the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans. Through post-film discussions, we hope to promote the emergence of new storytellers who will serve as the next generation of spokespeople for the Japanese American incarceration story.

**ACCESS:** Ramp access is available at the back of the building on Taylor Road between Sheridan Road and Blux Avenue. This building is ADA compliant.

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**DETECTION, DENIALISM AND RESISTING THE CAMPS THAT WON’T GO AWAY**

**WHERE:** 100 Montgomery Street, the Predisio 02-04PM

Join historians Gary Okimoto (Tate University) and Alice Yang (University of California Santa Cruz) and other leading voices as we explore the interaction of detention, denialism and resistance and how the rise of antiimmigration and demonization of Central American refugees is only the latest example of the xenophobia, greed and political violence that led to the WWII incarceration of Japanese Americans.

**ACCESS:** Ramp access is available at the back of the building on Taylor Road between Sheridan Road and Blux Avenue. This building is ADA compliant.

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**ARTAUCTION19: Transforming Art Into Action**

**WHERE:** SOMArts Cultural Center 934 Brannan St 05:30PM

The Coalition on Homelessness cordially invites you to our 19TH ANNUAL ART AUCTION AND EXHIBITION. Come enjoy and bid on work by over two hundred local artists and activists that truly transform ART INTO ACTION.

**ACCESS:** SOMArts is wheelchair accessible and has gender neutral restrooms.

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**DISLOCATION: Black Exodus Launch Party and Community Gathering**

**WHERE:** Bayview Opera House 4075 3rd St 05-07PM

The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project is proud to announce and invite you to a launch party and community gathering to celebrate the print and online publication of (Dis)Location: Black Exodus, the culmination of several years’ work in the community.

**ACCESS:** The Bayview Opera house is wheelchair accessible. We do not have a lift but can arrange assistance. Contact streetsheetsf@gmail.com for accommodation requests!

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**AUG 14**

**DRUGS IN THE TENDERLOIN (1966)**

**WHERE:** Roxie Theater, 3117 16th St 08-30PM

The Tenderloin Museum brings back Robert Zgone’s Drugs in the Tenderloin to the Roxie Theater for a one night only special engagement. Don’t miss this rare opportunity to view Robert Zgone’s guerrilla-style documentary that captures the Tenderloin transforming into a center for young queers, drug users, and social services.

**ACCESS:** The Roxie offers ADA seating, assisted listening/audio description headsets and captioning devices. There are ADA restrooms available in the Little Roxie theater two doors up from the main theater.

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**AUG 15**

**STREET SHEET WRITER’S WORKSHOP**

**WHERE:** Coalition on Homelessness, 468 Turk Street 012PM

Join our Street Sheet writer and editor TJ Johnson for a writer’s workshop that will cover the basics of journalistic writing and storytelling.

**ACCESS:** The Coalition on Homelessness is up a flight of stairs and offers a gender neutral bathroom. There is no scent policy here. Contact streetsheet@hotmail.com for accommodation requests!

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**AUG 16**

**DEADLINE TO SUBMIT ART FOR ARTAUCTION19**

To find more information on how to submit artwork to benefit the Coalition on Homelessness visit [WWW.ARTAUCTION19.INFO](http://WWW.ARTAUCTION19.INFO)

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**AUG 17**

**NEVER AGAIN IS NOW: Mobilizing the Next Generation**

**WHERE:** 100 Montgomery Street, the Predisio 07-09PM

Please join us for a screening of Alternative Facts: The Lies of Executive Order 9066, a documentary feature film by filmmaker Jon Osaki about the false information and political influences that led to the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans. Through post-film discussions, we hope to promote the emergence of new storytellers who will serve as the next generation of spokespeople for the Japanese American incarceration story.

**ACCESS:** Ramp access is available at the back of the building on Taylor Road between Sheridan Road and Blux Avenue. This building is ADA compliant.

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**AUG 18**

**VEHICLE TRIAGE CENTER**

Sam Lew

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The Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing has requested overnight parking restrictions to support their work to resolve vehicular encampments and discourage re-encampment on these streets. DHSH will conduct the outreach and, engagement with, people living in vehicles parked on these streets before carrying out encampment resolutions, and coordinate with the SFMTA on timing for posting parking restrictions.

You may be wondering, is this because they have housing for those people living in their vehicles?

The short answer? No.

The plan is to “resolve” areas where people are living in cars and then restrict those areas entirely. Just like folks trying to survive in tents, people in vehicles are inhumanely swept from place to place when their vehicle is often the last thing keeping them from living directly on the streets.

Where are people supposed to go?

The Homelessness Department has introduced a plan to build a “Vehicle Triage Center”, but that center will only have 33 parking spots — and the initial draft plan was to have 15 spots only for the storage of vehicles and three spots for staff. That would leave just 15 spots for people to have a safe place to park, and only for the duration of 60 to 90 days.

This is the department’s cruel and inhumane work. Instead of simply focusing on providing services and housing to vehicularly housed people, they have insidiously advocated for increased parking limitations. At the SFMTA Engineering Public Hearing on August 2, they will vote on taking more than 79 “oversize vehicle” spaces in the vicinity of Evans Avenue, Cesar Chavez and Phelps streets, while the Vehicle Triage Center will have 30 spots at most.
I came to the city in 2007 because I have two boys. I was driving trucks countrywide for work. So I came to the city to be around the kids, they needed someone stable around. I took a job at Fort Miley VA hospital, I met a young lady who worked there and we ended up having a child. Once she had a child she went back to college, she got a degree at SF State. In 2015 she got a job and left Fort Miley. Around that time we broke up.

When I left her I ended up homeless, and that’s how I met Stanley, who taught me the ropes while I was staying at Next Door. I was scared, didn’t know how I would make it. But after a few years I got my own place. I was dealing with the loss of my family, my son and my ex-girlfriend who wouldn’t let me see him. So I went to family court to explain to them what was going on. But instead of helping me out they gave her full custody, and made me start paying to see my son. So I wasn’t just paying, I also had to take drug tests. And I had to do supervised visits.

Parenting is my joy, I’m a good parent, but they took that from me. I did this for two years, but every time I made a contract, they would break it. Two years of paying for supervised visits, 24 drug tests, all clean. They would give me one day with him when they agreed to two days. I jumped through all the hoops and it still didn’t matter, they wanted more. And you know, we were in a cement room with toys on the floor and a two way mirror. When I told them I couldn’t keep paying for visits they stopped letting me see my son at all.

To this day I have no contact with my son, no phone calls or anything. This is practiced nationwide, keeping fathers from their sons. They give the judges immunity, and allow them to rule by presumption.

Presumption is the new prejudice. I am allowed to be prejudiced legally. But now a 9-year old boy hasn’t seen his father in three years, and no one cares.

So this gives me a feeling of powerlessness. I’m a disabled vet, I pay taxes. I’m invested in these systems that do nothing for me. The attorney that I used to have took my retainer and then showed up to court on Monday just to accept a bad deal that I didn’t consent to. So I went and got another attorney, and I give him a retainer, and by the time we went to court I ran out of money, so he left, and just kept that money. And the third one got $1,500 off me too.

But in spite of all of this, I have still made a home for myself. He has a room at my place that he’s never seen. It’s got toys, got a guitar, and he’s never even seen it. And I brought all this information about how she is lying about me, but they are stuck on punishing me and my son. And three years is a long time to not see your dad, when you’re a kid. It feels like yelling into space.

If I saw my son today, I would want to heal. I would want to show him we’re family. I would give him a hug, eat some food, and just let him talk to me.