

dium plan has been abandoned, Adams says that he will concentrate on the "long-term interests of the franchise and ensure its continued financial viability." Which to some longtime Oilers observers translates into another Bud bluff. To them, it will only be a matter of time before he once again threatens to move the team (read: San Antonio). But with the Oilers in shambles, this time Houston may be ready to call him on it.

ALEX HECHT

Tiny Matters

Dallas' James Burnett is single-handedly resurrecting the fortunes of his has-been idol, Tiny Tim.

BEING A TINY TIM FAN IS like being a Maytag repairman—it's a lonely job," laments James "Big Bucks" Burnett, a Dallas concert promoter and record store owner. Since meeting backstage at a local club twelve years ago, the 35-year-old Burnett and the flamboyant entertainer have become friends. Burnett even started one of the country's few Tiny Tim fan clubs. Burnett insists Tiny is "underrated and overlooked," so he tries to keep him in the spotlight by including him in his concert productions. First there was Edstock, a 1984 tribute to the TV horse Mr. Ed that featured Tiny jamming with Lubbock rocker Joe Ely. Four years later came Ed A Go Go, with Tiny as the judge of the World Peace Beauty Pageant. This past July, Burnett staged a comeback concert, dubbed Tiny-palooza, at Club Dada. On a night Burnett predicted would "turn the entire universe into a giant yummy fruitcake," some 150 twenty- to fortysomethings packed the Deep Ellum club and sang along as Tiny belted out tunes like "God Bless America" and "The Yellow Rose of Texas." (These days the sixtyish Tiny has mostly forsaken his youthful falsetto for his natural singing voice.) Most recently, Burnett has opened a Tiny Tim museum in his cramped store, Fourteen Records. Tucked unceremoniously in a glass case at the front of the store, amid stacks of old albums and dog-eared magazines, are a pair of the singer's size twelve black patent leathers, a Tiny Tim Game of Beautiful Things, a

Tiny Tim says the museum is flattering, but he's not ready to hang up his ukulele.



DANNY HUBLEY, HAIR AND MAKEUP BY BRIAN HOLLINGSHEAD, STYLING BY JOHN FRASIER

BUSHED

Since leaving D.C., the former first lady can't slow down.

SOMETHING ABOUT THE COMBINATION OF BARBARA BUSH AND THE BRAZOS BOOKSTORE seemed to promise one of those classic Houston evenings: Where else would the most aggressively understated first lady in modern times promote her book, *Barbara Bush: A Memoir* (Charles Scribner's Sons, \$25), than at the city's most aggressively understated—yet most fashionable—bookstore? It was easy to imagine throngs of white-haired supporters, those sporting Ferragamos and Tanglewood zip codes, politely mobbing the Rice University-area establishment, providing Bush with a warm welcome home. But it wasn't just the old-money, Republican crowd who turned out on the last week in September. Yes, there were women of a certain age wearing expensive scarves and talking on cellular phones, but mostly it was regular folks—kids in T-shirts, young mothers with strollers—and a bevy of flash-bearing autograph hounds.

The event seemed more like a White House reception than the usual cozy book signing. Customers were ushered in one at a time for a book autographed by the arthritis-suffering Bush in advance, and if requested, a photo. A question or two was permitted, the vast majority of which concerned Millie, the springer spaniel who was the subject of an earlier Bush best-seller. Bush seemed to be a woman still engaged in one long, endless campaign. She was still contending with the press: The *Times'* Frank Rich trounced her book, and Charlie Rose raised the specter of George's alleged infidelity. She still kept a schedule that would exhaust lesser spouses of the famous: Houston on Monday for the book signing, Maine on Wednesday for an interview with David Frost, Guatemala on Sunday for an aid junket. Most of all, she still had her candidates to promote and protect: When Bush wasn't talking up sons Jeb and George W.'s twin campaigns in Florida and Texas, she was busy bur-nishing the reputation of her husband, a lifetime mission. A student of the transition from public to private life might find a basic truth exposed here: Almost two years after Bill Clinton's victory, Barbara Bush's quiet retirement has yet to begin.

MIMI SWARTZ



Barbara Bush is still overbooked.

Tiny Tim doll, "Tim Rules" bumper stickers, and a copy of the 1993 low-budget thriller *Blood Harvest*, starring Tim as a psychotic clown (Burnett jokes they chose Tiny for the role so "they wouldn't have to spend a lot on makeup or clothes"). Also on display are some of Tiny's favorite personal products, including a bottle of Maybelline Kissing Potion lip gloss (strawberry swirl flavor) and a package of Depends. "He doesn't need them," Burnett says of his friend's proclivity for the adult diaper. "They're just more sanitary. He likes to be able to throw his underwear away at the end of the day."

Another Tiny trait has been the shameless romanticizing of the women in his life. Remember his first wife, Miss Vicki, whom he married on the *Tonight* show in 1969? Now there's Miss Stephanie, a 26-year-old from Denton, whom Burnett introduced to Tiny at Ed A Go Go. "On May 19, 1988," Tiny said, recalling their meeting dreamily from a Rhode Island motel room. (Tiny lives in a hotel in downtown Des Moines but spends an average of fifteen days a month playing small clubs around the country.) "She is the eternal princess, the only woman who can do no wrong," Tim declared. "If Miss Stephanie came to me today and said, 'I thought it over, and I must be nuts to do this, but I'll run away with you and get married in Vegas,' I would commit bigamy." (Tim is currently separated from his second wife, Miss Jan.) While Stephanie is a fan of Tim's—Burnett took her backstage so he could sign her ukulele—she isn't interested in him romantically. Although in September Tim was moaning, "If I ever get to heaven, I pray the Lord will make another Miss Stephanie and put the spirit in her to love me," he has recently told Burnett that he has put Miss Stephanie behind him. But for three years Tim's unrequited love was so painful that even speaking to Burnett was too upsetting, which was a problem because Burnett was coproducing a Tiny Tim album. Now the two are talking again, and the record, which teams Tiny with Texas polka-rock

StateWide

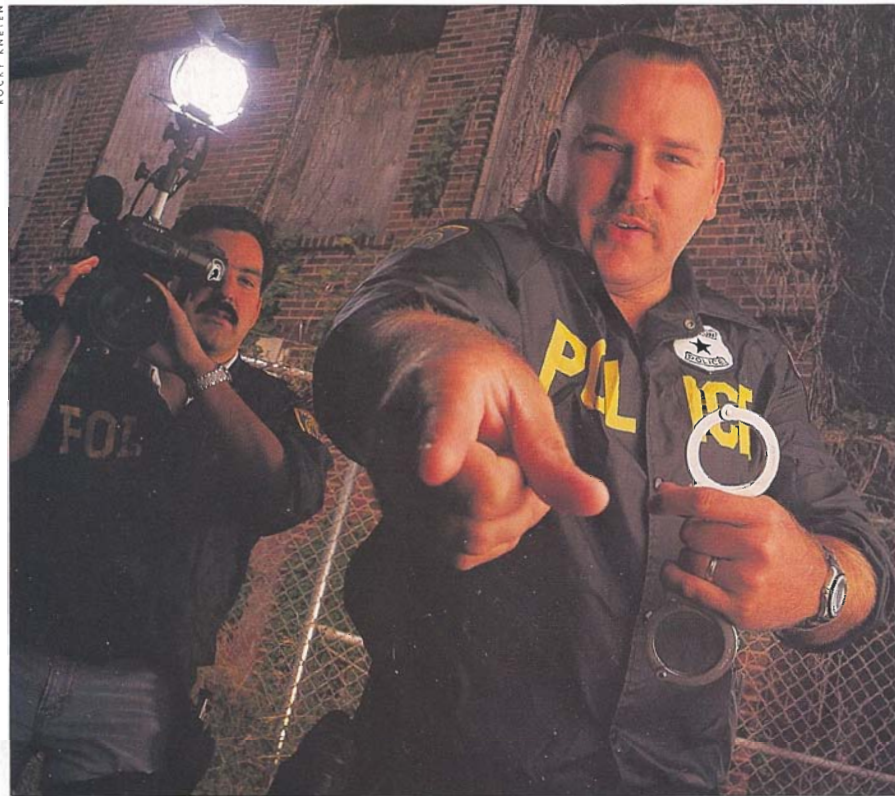
band Brave Combo, is due out next year. It features a song from the 1800's ("Sly Cigarette," a pro-smoking anthem) and classics from the twenties to the seventies, including the Beatles' "Hey Jude" and Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven."

"I recognize that I have a problem," Burnett says of his devotion to the one-time pop icon. But he's not alone. In fact, Burnett's fixation has brought him some secondhand celebrity of its own. Tiny Tim groupies from all over the world call on him to help them locate hard-to-find artifacts, or Timorabilia as he calls it. "Tiny Tim fans are one extreme or the other," Burnett admits. "They feel like they're the only ones with the disease, and that just makes the obsession stronger." JILL BECKER

Arrested Development

In a popular TV show two wise-cracking Houston cops turn real busts into slapstick.

WHEN A HOUSTON news station gave two smart-aleck cops a camera and told them to have at it, the result was a show called "2 Catch a Crook." Crime



fighting has never been so amusing. Officer Ken Wiener is the host, and his partner, Bob Segovia, handles the camera work. The program takes typical reality-based cop-show footage of the police serving warrants and busting drug dens and embellishes it with corny *Saturday Night Live*-style studio bits featuring these veteran officers, who love to mock their collars. For three years "2 Catch a Crook" has been a two-minute segment on Channel 2 news in Houston (it currently airs Thursdays during evening newscasts). Now a slicked-up, half-hour show featuring collections of their best busts is in the process of being syndicated—which could bring nationwide acclaim to these two goofball law enforcers, who are a cross between Batman and Robin and Penn and Teller.

The creator and star is Wiener, a thirteen-year police department veteran. At first glance he doesn't seem like someone with much of a sense of humor: The five-eleven, 230-pound, flat-topped and mustachioed cop dresses in starched black Wrangler jeans, black silver-tipped boots, and a black leather vest over his black T-

When it comes to crime, Officer Ken (right) and Officer Bob have the last laugh.

shirt, which says "FBI Street Survival School." He wears his sleeves rolled snugly around his large biceps, expos-

ing the bottom part of a tattoo that reads "Bad Boy." Around his waist are two guns, extra bullets, a retractable steel billy club, and a military-style survival knife.

To this badass with a badge, criminals sure can seem silly, and he loves to make fun of them for it. In one scene an alleged bad guy denies having the gun in question. "No, I'm a dope man," says the man in handcuffs. "Oh," Wiener responds in a patronizing voice. "Now *that's* something to be proud of." Before slamming the door of the patrol car, he gets in the guy's face and says, "Have a nice, long stay." Other episodes have Officer Ken and Officer Bob (as they call themselves on the show) evaluating hiding places of elusive crooks like judges in an Olympic diving competition. (High scores and much applause went to a 350-pound man who somehow squeezed underneath a bed and to a small woman who