

# A Story of the Human Cost of



by Phillip Adcock,

I've known instability and hardship my entire life. At 16, I was removed from my home by child protective services. After spending years searching for a place to belong in many different fields from tech to juvenile detention with no education, I found hope in San Antonio. I landed what I first thought could become a career with a respected company in *Centro San Antonio* and received assistance finding an apartment from them. This feat had seemed impossible due to my spotty credit history.

However, my optimism was short-lived. A few months into my new job, our *Centro* announced its support for a new baseball stadium in downtown San Antonio. Initially, we were told only that the project would be “positive for downtown,” without being informed of its location. Weeks later, I received a notice that the stadium would be built near my apartment at the *Soap Factory*, threatening my home and community. Since my home was not in the footprint of the ballpark, my apartment is doomed as the owner can do whatever he wants with it. Its demolition and rebuilding as higher-end apartments will be funding for the stadium building. And it will be done on the backs of several *Centro* employees who have lived here for generations as working-class downtown residents.

I immediately expressed my concerns to the operations leadership, requesting a meeting to discuss the issue, but was met with silence and dismissal. Our morning briefings repeatedly reminded us that we were not allowed to contact *Centro* leadership directly, emphasizing the power imbalance between employees and management.

During this time there was a *MOU (Memorandum of Understanding)* agreed to by the city promising an assistance program partially funded by *Weston Urban* and the *City of San Antonio*. This was done with no real input from residents and a number was thrown out by *COPS Metro* of \$2500 with so many stipulations. There was a group that was supposed to handle the distribution of these funds, *Building Better Communities*, that has since disappeared leaving the distribution to apartment management. These funds have yet to materialize for those tenants who moved out during the Fall of 2024.

As the details of the stadium project became clearer,

I began attending community meetings and advocating for my home and my future. Quickly finding my voice, I attended city council and school board meetings voicing my concerns. The stress and pressure of this fight and working for a company so involved in this destruction while ignoring my concerns combined with my existing health issues, took a significant toll on my well-being.



A couple protests against the proposed San Antonio Missions ballpark project during a demonstration. Photo by: Michael Karlis, SA Current: [bit.ly/Soap-Factory](https://bit.ly/Soap-Factory)

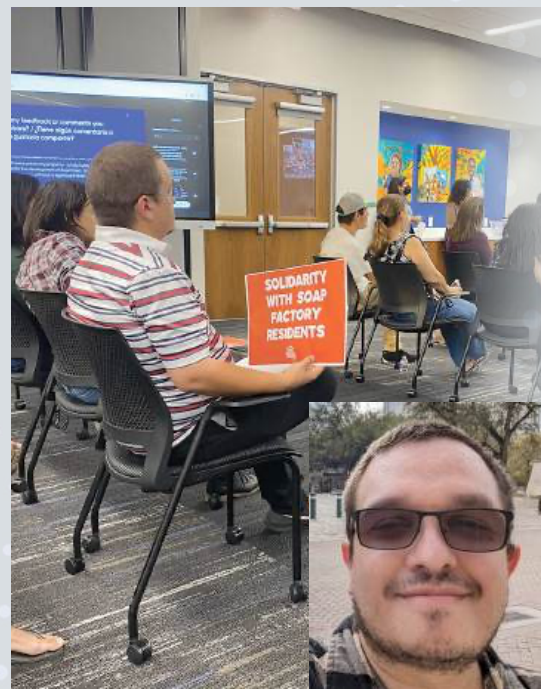
After months of seeking a meeting with *Centro* leadership, I was finally granted an audience with Trish Deberry on November 18th, the day of a school board meeting that I had to attend to stand up for my home and neighbors. However, the meeting was scheduled with only 4 hours' notice and during a time I was working. It felt like a token gesture. Deberry assured me that she would “protect *Centro* workers,” but her words rang hollow given her supposed commitment to affordable housing and assurances that downtown was for everyone.

In the following weeks, I continued to advocate for my community, attending meetings and speaking out against the stadium project. However, my employer, *Centro*, began to push back, denying my requests to leave mere minutes early to attend meetings out of uniform and ultimately deeming my participation “no longer tolerated.” The final blow came when I was terminated, days after the December 16th SAISD board meeting. *Centro* also contested my unemployment claim.

Now, I stand on the verge of homelessness again, struggling to find stable work and maintain the fight for my community's rights. My story is a tale you can hear all over this city—a story of the human cost of corporate greed and the importance of standing up for what is right, even in the face of overwhelming power and adversity.

As a resident of the *Soap Factory*, I've witnessed firsthand the

Phillip holds a sign while listening attentively at a community meeting.



## A Story of the Human Cost of Corporate Greed

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devastating impact of corporate greed and government neglect on our community. The proposed development plan, spearheaded by *Weston Urban* and *Centro San Antonio*, threatens to destroy the very fabric of our city, displacing long-time downtown residents—many recovering from homelessness—and small businesses—just to be handed directly to a billionaire who already has more vacant buildings downtown than I can count.

Our government and large corporations have so many more resources than we do and they feed on the divisions that spawn from situations like this. Protections for housing are virtually non-existent, and residents are thrown into vague plans for relocation with the expectation that tenants must take it and shut up. Ultimately, the allocation of funds and resources to aide displacement does not touch on the true cost of uprooting your life and starting over. Most of us are living paycheck to paycheck and may even be behind on cost-of-living expenses which makes the additional cost of moving crippling. Those in power do not realize the state of so many lives and don't care to know.

### The Human Cost of "Progress"

The past few months have been a relentless struggle, as we've faced intimidation, hostility, and disregard for our well-being. Some leases began to expire, and people moved out expecting the relocation funds promised in the city's *MOU*. People are still waiting for these promised funds and there has been no progress. Management even went so far as to send out a letter informing people that if they continue to fight and this fails, their homes will still be destroyed. They will receive nothing. The lack of affordable housing alternatives makes relocation nearly impossible and will only worsen with this development. The consequences are dire: homelessness, poverty, and the erasure of our community's identity.

This is not an isolated incident. Corporate entities have been exploiting San Antonio's resources and disregarding its working class in favor of tourism for centuries. The city's pervasive poverty,

lack of affordable housing and the iron grip that large corporations have over downtown are testaments to this neglect. It's time for our elected officials to prioritize the needs of the community over the interests of corporate profiteers. *Centro San Antonio* knows firsthand about the homelessness issue in San Antonio and uses its ambassadors to actively push people out of busy storefronts and public view with water bottles as a bribe to get people to move on.

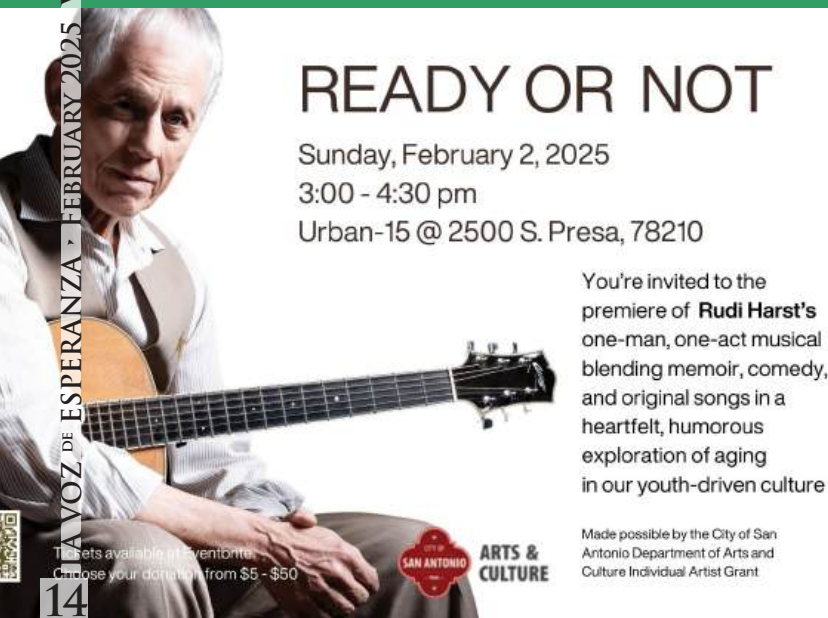
### A Demand for Action

To the decision-makers, I urge you to listen to our voices, acknowledge our struggles, and take decisive action. The working class needs to be able to afford to live close to downtown to serve multiple industries. The further we get pushed out, the harder it is to maintain those jobs, and the more empty buildings we are left with. We demand a seat at the table to discuss the future of our homes and our community. It's time to stand up against the bullying tactics of *Weston Urban* and *Centro San Antonio* and their cronies in the city and county. These actions are destroying the working class in the name of tourism dollars, yet again.

### A Call to Heroes

When the powerful urge us to conform, it's time for heroes to emerge. Educators, community leaders, working class, residents of San Antonio and the surrounding area, let us stand together and say no to the destruction of our city. Has a stadium ever really helped this city or you? All we see are broken promises and big numbers that never turn out. Let us fight for a San Antonio that values its people, its history, and its culture. The future of our community depends on it. We will continue organizing in the face of continued displacement of working-class community members from downtown and the inner-city neighborhoods closest to downtown San Antonio. Please reach out to me as we build a coalition of housing, anti-gentrification and anti-development that threatens our lives. Please email me at: [phillipadcock@gmail.com](mailto:phillipadcock@gmail.com)

*BIO: Phillip Adcock, a resident of the Soap Factory, is dedicated to working on affordable housing in San Antonio.*



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