



HOLE IN THE WALL

AUSTIN, TEXAS

AN AUSTIN LEGEND IN LIVE MUSIC

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Articles



The Hole in the Wall gang nabs would-be guitar plucker

1995

BY JIM PHIWPS American-Statesman Staff

It was just like a posse out of the Old West - when you might mess with a man, but you'd never mess with his horse - but this was a 1995 version, Austin style.

These days, in Austin, there still are some things worth protecting. One of them is a guitar. Longtime Austin guitarist Miles Zuniga, whose name is Max Dillinger when he is onstage with Magneto U.S.A., was playing the last verse of the last song of the night early Wednesday when a patron grabbed Zuniga's spare guitar and ran.

This happened at the Hole in the Wall, where almost everybody is friendly and where nobody cottons to guitar snatchers.

"He just reached up on stage, grabbed it and booked it," said Alfred Walker, who has worked at the Guadalupe Street bar/restaurant/pool hall/music venue for all of its 21 years. "Then everybody in the place, about 20 people, jumped up and headed for the door. Half went to the left, half went to the right."

Zuniga, wrapped up in the closing song, Human Torch, did not yet miss the guitar, but he sure missed his audience.

"I thought there was some sort of horrible car accident right outside," he said. "All I knew was we were playing and then the whole bar was running out the door. I thought: We don't sound that bad. They stayed there the whole set. Why would they leave now?"

Meanwhile, another musician kept pace with the thief, but "he didn't want to tackle him because he'd scratch up the guitar," Walker said. "So he said, 'Don't drop the guitar. Don't drop the guitar.'"

The man was cornered, the \$1,500 Gibson Chet Atkins Tennesseean was returned to Zuniga, and a passing police officer arrested Christopher Payne, 19, of Austin.

He was charged with altering his driver's license to make it appear he is of drinking age.

"This sort of compounds my fondness for the music community here," Zuniga said. "That's the cool thing about Austin."

<http://holeinthewalltx.tripod.com/articles/miles1995.html>