

Interview with the producers behind  
**Food Poisoning: Two Original One-Acts**  
*That May Be Hazardous to Your Health*  
 By Milla Goldenberg

**D**riven by their mutual love of theatre, the trio behind the upcoming *Food Poisoning: Two Original One-Acts That May Be Hazardous to Your Health* had no trepidation when they decided to work together. **Brad Raider**, **James Roday**, and **Aaron Saidman**, all in their late twenties, originally met in New York as young theatre students, eager for a big break. Now reunited on the West Coast, Raider and Roday formed RED DOG SQUADRON, a theatre company with two shows under its belt and another on the way.

For the current production, Roday asked Saidman to write and direct a one-act play, and thus “Chickens and Assholes” – starring Roday – was born. Roday, in turn, contributed “Sustenance,” which stars Raider. Together, the two acts make up the darkly funny *Food Poisoning*, running February 12 – 15 at Hollywood’s Stella Adler. Admission is free. The trio sat down with *NoHo > LA*’s Milla Goldenberg for coffee and conversation.

**MG:** What’s the premise behind your theatre production company RED DOG SQUADRON?

**Roday:** RED DOG SQUADRON is sort of a grassroots reminder to ourselves that, hey, it doesn’t take millions of dollars to create an hour of entertainment. It was all about art; it wasn’t about commerce. Doing theatre in L.A. is tricky. It’s hard to convince people in this town you don’t have to turn on a television or lay down 11 bucks for a movie ticket to be entertained.

**Raider:** We have a love of theatre, and we grew up doing theatre. It’s really an act of love, this company, as is theatre in general. Both the audience and the actors onstage are engaged in this tremendously courageous act of love just being involved in a theatrical event.

**MG:** What was the impetus for writing “Chickens and Assholes”?

**Saidman:** James came to me and said, “I want you to write an original one act,” which is not something I’ve ever done before. I’m a very political person, and I wanted to do a satire of this current, politically stressed environment that we find ourselves in. It’s set in the very near future in 2010... The quick premise is that once every 10 years, there’s a census, right? In this world in the future, instead of a census there’s a concensus, and there’s a concensus bureau that goes around collecting information from the



(FROM LEFT: RODAY, RAIDER, AND SAIDMAN)

populace in an effort to make sure that everybody agrees with every issue.

**MG:** What about “Sustenance,” what’s the idea behind that?

**Roday:** “Sustenance” is essentially about three very close friends who’ve been friends from the time they were tots, who, on one fateful evening, discover that everything about their friendship is not what it seemed. And things go from bad to worse to really worse to downright apocalyptic.

**MG:** What’s the unifying thread between these two one-act plays? They seem so different.

**Roday:** There is a kind of dark, sinister undertone in both shows, even though we’re coming from very different places. Aaron’s is a little more political, mine is a bit more primal.

**Saidman:** Both plays, I think, poke fun at ordinary, everyday things in an over-the-top way, and take kind of ridiculous situations and put them in banal contexts.

**Roday:** And both shows deal with the freedom of choice that we have as individuals.

**Raider:** I’m going to go out on a limb here and say that the two shows are very different, and the differences are as much celebrated as the similarities.

**MG:** What do you want the audience to take away from this production?

**Saidman:** I want to get the audience to a place where they’re asking the question: If we sacrifice our liberty in order to protect it, then what is it that we’re really fighting for?

**Roday:** For “Sustenance,” I would say that the boogey man is real, and how well do you know your friends?

**MG:** What has been the experience working together?

**Raider:** The thread of friendship that runs through this group is one of tremendous respect and trust. It provides an atmosphere for us to grow and create and have a ton of fun while doing it.