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12 January/February 2002

Days of War, Nights of Love

292 Pages - \$8 postage paid



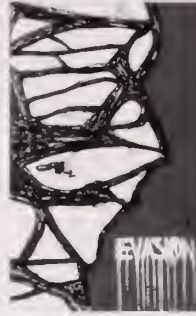
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-Daniel Quinn, author of *Ishmael*

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-*Clamor Magazine* #6, Dec. 00/Jan. 01

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A 288 page novel-like narrative, *Evasion* is one person's travelogue of thievery and trespassing across the country, evading not only arrest, but also the 40-hour workweek and hopeless boredom of modern life. The journey documents a literal and metaphorical reclamation of an individual's life and the spaces surrounding them—scamming, squatting, dumpstering, train hopping and shoplifting a life worth living and a world worth the fighting for.

". . . then life began, and since then we remember each dumpster, abandoned house, and foot-chase by retail security. At night, after running around, plotting and scheming, our checklist items all crossed out, we paused to think—"What to do tomorrow?" and the answer was always, "As we please . . ."

when we fight,
we are fighting for our lives.



pickAxe & Breaking the Spell

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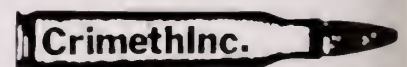
Two great documentaries on one tape. pickAxe: To stop the proposed "salvage" logging of an incredible ancient forest, citizens face down a bulldozer and the State Police, creating the Cascadia Free State which becomes the focus for a developing community dedicated to protecting ancient forests throughout the mountains of Oregon. This inspiring documentary is two years in the making. Breaking the Spell is an hour-long look at the WTO and anarchists, especially those from Eugene, who went up, created a stir, and faced national media presence in the wake of the action that took place there.

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ADVERTISING

Rates and deadlines available upon request. Please call 419-353-7035

PRINTING:

Dartmouth Printing Co., Hanover, NH
P: 603-643-2220 / F: 603-643-5408

WEB DESIGN:

Derek Hogue

CLAMOR is a bi-monthly magazine. Single copies are \$4 ppd and 6 issue subscriptions are \$18 ppd in the US (Outside of the US single issues are \$6 and a 6-issue subscription is \$25 in US Funds). Checks may be made payable to *Become The Media*.

BACK ISSUES are available for the standard single copy rate. Visit www.clamormagazine.org for more info.

DISTRIBUTION:

CLAMOR is distributed to stores and distributors by Big Top Newsstand Services, 2729 Mission Street Suite 201, San Francisco, CA 94110-3131 info@bigtoppubs.com

CLAMOR is also available through these fine distribution outlets: Active Distribution UK, AK Press, Armadillo, Gordon & Gotch, Ingram, Last Gasp, Media Solutions, Milligan, Newborn, RPM, Small Changes, Stickfigure, Tower, Tree of Knowledge, and Ubiquity.

Do you sell CLAMOR at your independently owned store? Let us know and we'll list you on our website!

CLAMOR (ISSN 1534-9489) is published six times a year (Jan/Feb, Mar/Apr, May/June, Jul/Aug, Sept/Oct, Nov/Dec) ©2001 in the US by Become The Media Incorporated, PO Box 1225, Bowling Green, OH 43402 Telephone: 419-353-7035

Postmaster: Send address changes to Clamor Magazine, PO Box 1225, Bowling Green, OH 43402
Periodicals postage paid at Bowling Green, OH

The holiday season has come and gone and many of us have overextended ourselves financially — again. We do it because we want to get nice things for the people we love. We do it because we aren't paid enough for the labor we do and because the things we think we need are too expensive. We do it because our culture teaches us that consuming things makes us feel better. We don't even need to get into an in-depth analysis of consumer culture to understand how and when this works. The rubble from the World Trade Center disaster was still smoldering when the President declared that the true way for a country like ours to heal was for everyone to go out and spend a lot of money. Never mind that even with a conservative estimate, 50,000 people have lost their jobs while the government agreed that airlines deserved an immediate \$15 billion dollar bail out package. Never mind that there is a huge gap between the reality advertising creates and the one that most of us live everyday.

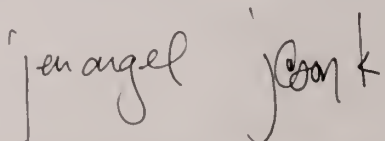
A number of pieces in this issue look at life on this divide; the space where consumption fantasies and economic realities collide. Leading this issue is an article by Kari Lydersen about the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, a group that has employed "direct action case-work" to achieve concrete results for disenfranchised people and their communities. OCAP is not alone in their efforts to represent people who are continuously overlooked in favor of free market enterprise. Mike Schade's exposé on Kodak (p. 31) and the hazardous environment it has created for the communities surrounding its New York headquarters is another example of people working to hold corporations accountable to the communities they affect.

From another perspective, a lot of frustration with our economic situations comes from being bombarded by a marketing culture that thrives on the idea that happiness is always one purchase away. Colleen McGraw (p. 16) challenges this notion in her essay about the joy found in reclaiming trash as curbside treasures. Diana Fox (p. 46) writes about how she succumbed to and then ultimately defeated cultural pressure to feel like the size of her chest was a direct measure of her worth as a person; a realization many men and women never accomplish, let alone during formative high school years. And Davida Gypsy-Breier (p. 61) talks about how doing something she loves (photography) for money has impacted her art in ways she didn't even realize were happening.

This edition also covers another issue that is affecting us all. The continued war against "terrorism" is wrought with inconsistencies that are sparsely reported in mainstream media, so our media section (p. 34) is devoted entirely to providing context to the war and voice to those who oppose the notion that vengeance is a rational response to irrational violence. We are also featuring an interview with former Weather Underground member Bill Ayers (p. 20) discussing his reflections on his years as a Weatherman and how the current political climate is conflating dissent and terrorism. Gabe Thompson, Jonathan Schnapp, and Katie Player also provide us with a glimpse of the mounting anti-war movement as they report from the demonstrations that happened in Washington, DC at the end of September (p. 66).

This issue marks the end of Clamor's second year. While we certainly *hoped* it would go this well, we never imagined that it would grow this quickly and be received so favorably. We owe it all to our amazing contributors, advertisers, and subscribers — without your support CLAMOR wouldn't be here today. Please support our advertisers and contributors in any way you can. And if you haven't subscribed yet, please do so and help us make sure that we can thank *you* next year. Thanks for everything!

Peace,



p. s. We've recently updated our website, adding new features such as a message board and an expanded selection in our online store. Let us know what you think!
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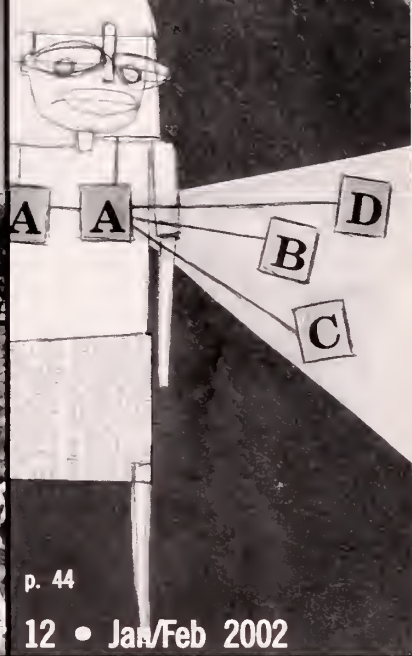
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on the cover:

Ontario Coalition Against Poverty activist Diana Hart, who was charged at the June 15 "Queens Park Riot" with breaking a police officer's arm. She was 17 at the time. The police officer's name was Charles Stern, whom OCAP targeted years earlier for beating and sexually assaulting prostitutes in the Dundas Sherbourne area.

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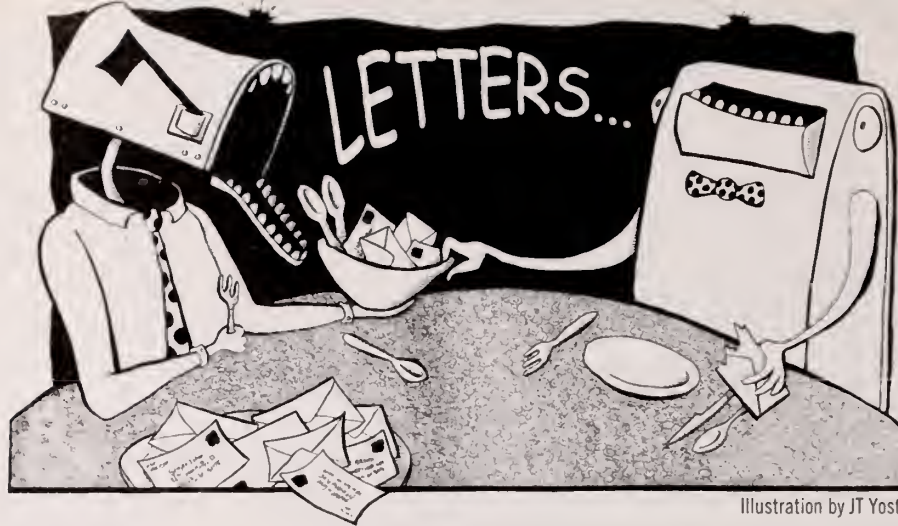


Illustration by JT Yost

Jason and Jen,

I thought you might be amused by this:

I live in a small town in Idaho. I read the June 2001 issue of CLAMOR and loved it. In it was an article by an anarchist about stealing at work ("The Poor, The Bad and The Angry" Apr/May 2001). The author worked for a natural food co-op type store. The employee would ring people up and ask them if they wanted their receipts or not. He/she would keep track in his/her head to keep the till balanced. Remember?

A couple weeks ago I visited a town nearby and went to the natural foods store. A very cute guy rang me up. I said hello, looking him in the eyes, because I don't usually. Where I live, there are very few people I respect, so I don't even bother hoping for a human behind the counter. This guy looked pretty hip, so...

We get to the end, and he looks me in the eyes and asks if I want a receipt. I'm sure I blushed and took too long to answer. Quietly, deliberately, I said, No. He smiled the biggest smile I've seen on anyone in the US since I returned here from Africa. It was beautiful. I felt sure I'd done business with, if not the author of the article, a friend of the movement.

It made me smile all the way home.

Peace,
Lark Ondigo
Smalltown, ID

Jason and Jen,

I wanted to let you know I picked up a copy of CLAMOR at Barnes & Noble the other night, the back to school issue, and being a first year teacher, I was glued to the pages. Wow! Great issue. Sean Carswell's article, awesome, I've been there, Man, have I been there. Also Casey Boland's article, "Two Day Teacher"

(Sep/Oct, 2001) very very cool. I laughed so hard my gut ached, I've had that same experience, accept my kids didn't get paid, I sometimes wonder if inner city kids would behave if they got some kind of monthly stipend, but obviously it didn't really matter, anyway, reminded me so much of my experience at a local inner city high school just last month. Things are changing for the worse in some parts of the country, concerning education and the people in your issue have the power to make a difference, if only they could break down the wall of the school boards. Administration and education apathy and dissent that has built so steadily to the tune of Hurricane Andrew, just wait until it hits, and breaks, then things will get worse ... standardization is taking over and students are walking out, and before they leave they harass teachers, and with good reason because the curriculum sucks! Sorry, anyway, you guys did an awesome job on this issue and I'm still getting through it. I look forward to supporting CLAMOR in the future as well. Looks like I found a place where like minds who march to a different drum beat congregate and in Lincoln, Nebraska that's pretty hard to come by.

Keepin' it real,
Yasmin Helen
Lincoln, NE

CLAMOR,

There is plenty of misery going on at Pelican Bay. The publicity is leaking out everywhere and I'm glad that CLAMOR Magazine ("Inside Pelican Bay State Prison" July/Aug 2001) really points out the atrocities that are taking place at this hellhole establishment. The Security Housing Unit is cruel and unusual punishment. We are supposed to be a civilized people, how can we mistreat our wayward kind like this? With 80

square foot cells that inmates are supposed to be kept in for 23 hours a day, is way too harsh. Plus knowing that they may share this cell with someone else? What madness is this? This is not the dark days of humankind! Super Max is not the way to go, what are we teaching our children, when they learn that fellow humans are being kept in restrictive premises that is not even worthy to keep our dog in! For shame, for shame!

Sincerely yours,
Paul Dale Roberts
Political Reform
Elk Grove, CA

Hello

I think your magazine is among the best around right now and would love to help support y'all. I like the mixture of fact, fiction, unpretentious "politics," essays and personal stories (not to mention a consistent knack for layout and aesthetics). Great subject mixture too...very personal, inspiring and energizing! Great job!

Thanks so much for existing,
Jason powers
Portland, OR

p.s. It's great to see so much about the great things in Portland in CLAMOR. Its good to know that many of the wonderful things about this town are being shared and can serve as an inspiration to others everywhere.

Correction

In The November/December 2001 issue, the Cascadia Forest Alliance website was listed incorrectly. The correct address is: www.cascadiaforestalliance.org

In the November/December 2001 issue, photos of Boots (p. 48) should have been attributed to Vagabond, not Not4Prophet.

CLAMOR
Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

Publication Title	Clamor
Publication Number	15-34-9489
Frequency	Bimonthly
Annual Subscription Price	\$18.00
Complete Mailing Address	P O Box 1225, Bowling Green, OH 43402
Publisher	Become The Media, Inc. P O Box 1225, Bowling Green, OH 43402
Editors / Managing Editors	Jen Angel, Jason Kucзма
Owner	Become The Media, Inc.

Average Circulation information for 2001 not available

Circulation information for No. 10, 2001

Total copies printed 5800

Paid Copies

outside county	610
inside county	17
sales through dealers	4941
other	37

Total paid 5605

Free Distribution

outside county	177
inside county	1
other classes	7
outside the mail	10

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ANOTHER YEAR ON THE STREETS

volume 2

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FACE TO FACE, THE GET UP KIDS, HEY MERCEDES, HOT ROD CIRCUIT, THE NEW AMSTERDAMS,
NO MOTIV, ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT, SAVES THE DAY, VIVA DEATH.

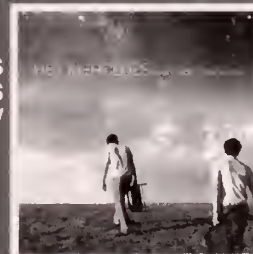
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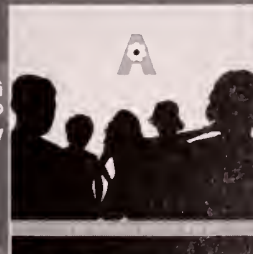
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clamor contributors

David Gypsy Breier (p. 61) does several zines (*Leeking Ink*, *The Glovebox Chronicles*, and *Xerography Debt*) and has even written a book. She still occasionally works as a youth sports photographer. It drives her insane when her co-worker makes the kids say "fuzzy pickle." Contact her at PO Box 963, Havre de Grace, MD 21078; David@leekinginc.com; www.leekinginc.com.

Tom Breen (p. 41) is a freelance writer who lives in southern New England. He collects Mexican wrestling paraphernalia and works on the Paranormal Connecticut Project (www.paranormalct.com) in his spare time. Email tbreent@earthlink.net or write PO Box 353 Manchester CT 06040.

Andy Burns (p. 27) is an organizer for the 180/Movement for Democracy and Education, a chapter-based organization dedicated to the democratization of schools and a 180-degree turn away from corporate control. Andy lives in Madison, WI (and sometimes various places in Arkansas). He staffs the 180/MDE Clearinghouse, an informational resource and organizing tool for students, workers and educators across the US. He also plays in bands that you've never heard of and likes talking on the phone, shopping and just being with friends. Andy and 180/MDE can be contacted at 31 University Square, Madison, WI 53715. (608) 256-7081; clearinghouse@tao.ca

wispy cocksles (p. 48) is a trouble maker. Currently he spins records with the 215noise crew (215noise.com) and organizes with the Richmond Queer Space Project aka Queer Paradise (queerliberation.org). Allegedly he can be contacted at 120 West Marshall Street Richmond, VA 23220 or wispy@defenestrator.org

Andy Cornell (reviewer) is an activist and writer living in Philadelphia, PA. He publishes the zine *The Secret Files of Captain Sissy*, and is the co-editor of *Better Punk Homes* and *Community Gardens* magazine. Drop him a line at captainsissy@girlswirl.net.

Diane Deaton (back cover) is a photographer currently living in Western Pennsylvania looking to be rescued from one-hour photo hell...Her other work can be seen at www.emayhem.com and at the Gallery Six zine webpage at www.angelfire.com/zine2/gallerysix

Jim Cummer (reviewer) is the owner and operator of Madhatter Music Company in Bowling Green, OH. Drop him a line at mcfiver@yahoo.com

Sophia Delaney (p. 25) is a Chicagoland native who wishes she hadn't run away from her own suburban nightmare quite so quickly at the age of sixteen. She is currently fundraising cash to get herself and her friends out of the legal system. If you can help, please write to PO Box 3272, Aurora, IL 60504-0272.

Diana Fox (p. 46) is a senior in high school and lives in Connecticut. This is the first time she has contributed to a magazine, though she has worked within the confines of her school newspaper. She enjoys doing weird things for the fun of it and to see other people's reactions. She vows that she will wear a pirate hook to school one day. She can be reached at D_Fox@mail.loomis.org

Richard Gilman Opalsky (p. 34) is presently working on a Ph.D. in Political Theory at the Graduate Faculty of New School University, making noise for a genre called "Musical Activism" with his comrades in punk propaganda, writing, and sometimes teaching as an adjunct professor. He spends whatever time he has left with Robyn (partner), Spartacus (cat) and Ramona Africa (cat). Respond: thoughtandaction@yahoo.com

When not figuring out a way to get out of working a "real" job, **Shawn Granton** (p. 16) can be found riding his bicycle aimlessly around the streets of the Rose City, or lolly-gaggin' about at the Independent Publishing Resource Center, where he supposedly volunteers. Other than that, he's the feller behind such comics as *Ten Foot Rule* and *Modern Industry*. Contact him at 3719 SE Hawthorne Blvd #243, Portland, OR 97214 or shawntfr@hotmail.com.

Heather Haddon (p. 56) is one of the founding members of the *Independent*, the monthly paper of the New York City Independent Media Center. She continues to help produce and publish in this year-old alternative news source hhaddon@hotmail.com

Dustin Amery Hostetler (reviewer) aka upso is an artist geographically residing in NW Ohio and otherwise existing at www.upso.org.

Catherine Komp (reviewer) lives in Portland, Oregon. By day, she wields the powerful airwaves of community radio station KB00 90.7 FM to battle the 9-headed corporate media behemoth. By night, she goes undercover and slings drinks to pay rent and William D. Ford. She can be contacted at joanoxford@yahoo.com

Joshua Krause (p. 46) is an artist living in New York. He uses illustration, design, photography and fine art in a variety of approaches. You can view his work at <http://www.KrauseArt.com>

Wylie Lenz (p. 52) also writes the zine *Punkanot* (the latest issue is \$2 ppd.) At

though transient, mail sent to P.O. 540304, Houston, TX 77254-0304 or punkanot@yahoo.com will eventually reach him.

Michael Kai Louie (p. 57) Buries zinc-coated leads like they were stolen Spanish treasure. Declared himself Employee of the Year at the bagel shop, Recently unemployed. Pretends to work at *Giant Robot* magazine. mklouie@hotmail.com

Kari Lyderson (p. 9) is DJ Gurgle at Guerrilla Love Radio in Chicago and is trying to overthrow "the boss's sick system" at *StreetWise* newspaper, where the staff just won a nasty battle to unionize and had fun doing it. She is also a youth instructor for We the People Media. Karilyde@aol.com

Josh MacPhee (p. 52) is a street artist and a member of a loose body of cultural miscreants that sometimes go by the name Department of Space and Land Reclamation. He is also currently working on a book about street stencils called *Stencil Pirates*, so send him yer flicks at pobox476971.chill60647@justseeds@hotmail.com.

Eamon Martin (p. 20) is an editor of *Asheville Global Report*, a weekly, independent newspaper known to bend daring minds with under-reported info suppressed by corporate media. Since the Bush coup, Martin spends nearly every waking moment struggling against manifesting, exclusively, the qualities of an irritable asshole. Get in touch c/o Asheville Global Report, PO Box 1504, Asheville, NC 28802, www.agnews.org, emartin@agnews.org

Colleen McGraw (p. 16) was her high-school Homecoming Queen in 1996. Nothing has been the same since. It is a label that she is destined to take to the grave with her. Write her at mcgrawcolleen@hotmail.com

Stephanie McMillan (p. 40) is the prolific and incisive creator of Minimum Security. View her archives and contact her at www.minimumsecurity.net.

Kate Merkel-Hess McDonald (p. 14) worked with homeless populations in Sacramento, CA from August 1999 to August 2000. She is a graduate student of history at the University of California at Irvine. Contact her at katehess@hotmail.com.

Jim Munroe (p. 74) was previously a managing editor for *Adbusters* and wrote the novels *Flyboy Action Figure Comes With Gasmask* and *Angry Young Spaceman*. This story in Clamor is a kind of prequel to his forthcoming book, *Everyone in Silico*. His books, video games, and short flicks are available online at <http://NoMediaKings.org>.

Claire Rumore (p. 73) lives in Alabama and is rather eclectic. She invites you to come visit anytime! Alabama is beautiful, historic, spiritual, herbal, and laid back year-round. Contact clairedeviva@onebox.com, 1100 S. 51st Street, Birmingham, AL 35222, (205) 595-3142

Ailecia Ruscini (p. 69) is an American studies graduate student at the University of Kansas who spends all her free time working with the newly formed Mother Earth Collective in Lawrence. She writes a zine called *alabama grrrl*, which is available for \$2 from ailecia@hotmail.com or pobox297lawrence,ks66044.

Mike Schade (p. 31) spends most of his time in the Nickely City drinking loganberry and lately has been spending his time working with grassroots citizens groups organizing around toxics issues. He also publishes *Hodgepodge* zine. Contact via email at cecwny@buffnet.net or PO Box 454 / Buffalo, NY 14209.

Jonathan Schnapp and Katie Player (p. 66) live in Bowling Green, OH and can be reached care of CLAMOR.

Adam Sonderberg (reviews) 5'08", 140 lbs. is employed in the service sector. He works with sound and operates a record label. He can be contacted by visiting: <http://www.geocities.com/longboxrecordings>.

Sunshine (p. 15) is a multimedia artist interested in all things creative. His work can be seen at <http://armoredbaby.com>, his primary website. He is also a member of <http://www.sito.org>, a web-based art community. Sunshine briefly attended the School of Visual Arts (NYC) a long time ago.

Mike Taylor (p. 34) recently moved to Providence, Rhode Island to conduct extensive research on the speech patterns of assholes. His zine, *Scenery*, is entering its eighth year and is still paper-only. Contact him at PO Box 28226, Providence RI 02908

Gabriel Thompson's (p. 66) writings have appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Nation* magazine, and some other places, too. He's so far to the left that if he ventured any further he'd fall right off his soapbox. He currently lives in Brooklyn, where he works as a tenant organizer. Email him at Gabriel_Thompson@prattarea.org

Tom Washington (p. 69) is currently missing in action, but any correspondence can be directed to him through the CLAMOR address.

D.M. Yankowski is a freelance editor and writer living in Washington, D.C. You can reach him at dmyankowski@excite.com.

FIGHTING TO WIN!

the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty

by **Kari Lydersen**



On October 16, 2001, Ontario Premier Mike Harris, commonly known as "Chainsaw Mike" because of his hard-line conservative budget-cutting policies, announced that he will resign before the end of his term.

On that same day, thousands of homeless people, high school students, First Nations people, union members, homemakers, activists, and other residents marched through the streets of Toronto, blocked roadways with slow-moving car caravans, walked out of class, and shut down parts of the business district for the morning in what a coalition called the *Ontario Common Front* termed an "economic disruption" campaign in protest of Harris's policies.

But the campaign was more than a "protest." In fact, in the words of John Clarke, a leader of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) — one of the country's best-known community organizations and one of the driving forces behind the Common Front — the acts of dissent that swept the country on October 16 and in the ensuing days were anything but a protest.

"We are against protest," said Clarke at a Direct Action Network conference in Chicago this September, using an oft-repeated phrase that often draws startled looks from rooms full of activists. "We're not interested in the politics of respectability and tokenism, making our moral case and then expecting the inevitable being ignored. We need to begin to redefine what it means to resist capital."

The "O16" campaign of economic disruption, which actually began on October 16, but was slated to last for weeks or months, was based on OCAP's motto of "fighting to win."

The resignation of Harris could definitely be seen as a concrete victory for the Common Front, a coalition of about 75 social justice and community organizations that came together for the purpose of defeating his policies and changing the increasingly conservative tide of



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FIGHT TO WIN

FIRST NATIONS
HOMELESS
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THE LONG RETREAT IS

Ontario politics. Though Harris claimed he resigned for personal reasons, including wanting to reconcile with his estranged wife, members of the front see it as no coincidence that Harris announced his resignation on the O16 day of action. Coverage of his resignation by the Associated Press noted that Harris had come under attack for privatizing water treatment and other state services — something critics say contributed to a massive outbreak of E. coli in the water in May 2000 — and for police repression, anti-labor policies, and massive budget cuts.

"The widespread belt-tightening prompted labor protests, including several teacher strikes and violent demonstrations by anti-poverty groups," the AP said of Harris.

Direct Action Casework

Fighting to win concrete gains, rather than just making a statement, has been central to OCAP's work since its founding by Clarke and others in 1990. The group practices "direct action casework," a concept that combines the direct action tactics of the anti-globalization movement and its glitzy roving mega-protests with the day to day grind of community organization work on tenants' rights, immigrants' rights, labor rights and policy work.

For example: a typical community organization will fight an eviction, a case of discrimination or harassment on the job, an illegal firing or a pending deportation, by filing

paperwork, appealing to local politicians, letting media and the public know about the situation, and possibly holding protests or informational pickets. OCAP also uses these tactics but, if they are not successful, they are prepared to take it to another level.

This is where "direct action casework" comes in where OCAP members physically prevent authorities from evicting or deporting a person or turning off their gas, or where they take concrete action that is too creative, destructive or persuasive to be ignored. Among their many actions in the past few years, members have opened squats in vacant buildings owned by absentee landlords, confronted officers who have beat up homeless people, picketed a restaurant whose owner was trying to get an adjacent shelter shut down, and occupied a hospital which was standing empty while a nearby shelter was overflowing. The hospital administration ended up opening 150 beds for homeless people.

"We do hundreds and hundreds of these things and have a 98- or 99-percent success rate," said Clarke. "These bureaucracies don't know how to handle that kind of response."

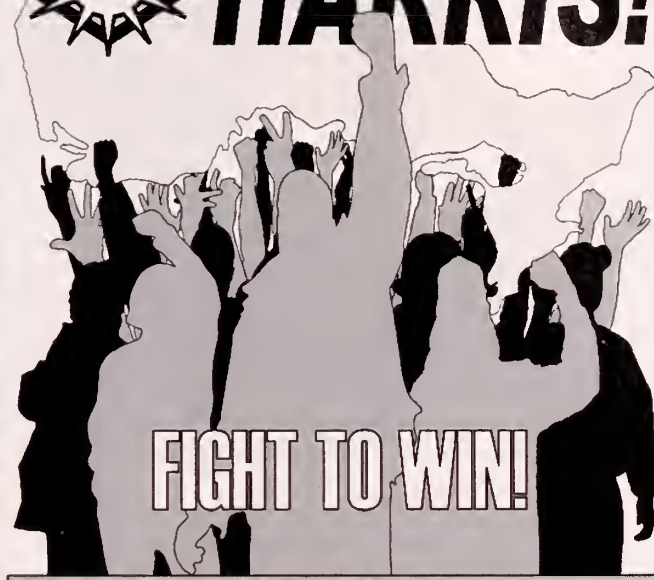
Originally formed as an anti-poverty and homeless people's advocacy group, OCAP, which has about 300 actual members and a wide base of support, has expanded to a wide and diverse range of issues. Along with advocating for homeless and poor people, OCAP focuses on the rights and struggles of indig-



by David McNeil



DEFEAT HARRIS!



FIGHT TO WIN!

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enous people, immigrants, workers, high school and college students and potentially any other person or group who is being victimized by the capitalist system.

A summary of the group's mission says that: "Everyone in society deserves to be treated with respect. Native people must have their land, working people must be paid a decent wage, unemployed people must be given benefits that will let them survive with dignity, and homeless people must be given housing — all without exception."

"We are not a social agency or a legal clinic or a charity. We are a political organization of the poor, whose goal is to secure a just society, a society that does not allow people to sleep and die in the streets, that does not allow the police to target people of color and the poor, and does not allow vast segments of the population to live in grinding poverty."

Defeating Harris

While OCAP's work predates the Mike Harris era, the conservative leader's policies and the general ascendance of conservative politics, often modeled on U.S. examples, have upped the ante for OCAP and other groups over the past six years.

Harris led the conservative Tory party's rise to power in 1995, when it won 82 of 130 seats in the Ontario legislature. Home to 40 percent of Canada's population, Ontario plays a major role in setting the agenda for the whole country.

Harris's government has slashed social services and called for tough-on-crime policies, as well as targeting immigrants for arrest and deportation, and gutting the sovereignty rights and harming the economies of First Nation tribes.

He cut welfare rates by 22 percent, closed hospitals, and slashed state employment rolls by as much as 50 percent in various departments. He passed "Safe Streets" laws that criminalize homelessness, and instituted massive standardized testing in schools.

"The Ontario Crime Commission spent a lot of time visiting [Mayor Rudy] Giuliani in New York and [former Gov. Tommy] Thompson in Wisconsin to study their ways of operating," said Clarke.

As in the U.S., Harris's government has imposed increased state control on First Nation tribes and attacked their autonomous decision-making powers.

"Under new Tory 'child welfare legislation' there are 5,300 more children in state custody than there were five years ago, and most of them are aboriginal," wrote OCAP member Sue Collis. "The law is written in such a way that all children in most native communities are now defined as being at risk and subject to removal. Kids from remote reserves all over the North are rapidly disappearing into foster homes in Southern Ontario."

In 1995, the mainstream media reported that Harris had met with senior police officials

shortly before police brutally cracked down on First Nation protesters at a park and shot one protester to death.

Dire economic conditions for the Pikangikum tribe, where Harris instituted a freeze on federal funds, fostered a rash of suicides under Harris that was 36 times higher than the national average. The tribe has suffered eight suicides already this year, including one by a 12-year-old girl who said she felt desperate because she had nothing to eat. Funding for the Pikangikum, fishing rights for other native tribes, and racism by federal employees against Indians were some of the topics of a First Nations gathering that OCAP participated in on September 27.

Immigrants and Union Members

Along with First Nation struggles, deportation defenses and other actions in support of immigrants have been a major part of OCAP's work in the past few years.

On September 5, OCAP members say they actually prevented the deportation of Kenyan immigrant Abdalla Soud, a man who has been in Ontario for 12 years and is married to a woman in Toronto with serious health problems. After an OCAP action leafleting passengers and visiting the immigration office at the Toronto airport, Soud got a message from immigration that his deportation date of September 11 had been canceled.

"While immigration claimed that they had

Jan/Feb 02 clamor 11

FIGHT TO WIN JUNE 15

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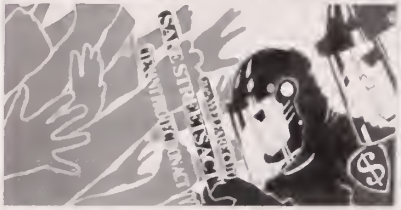


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merely had a sudden change of heart because of his wife's medical condition, Abdalla's lawyers noted that it was certainly unusual for them to cancel the date before the matter was challenged in Federal Court," says a statement from OCAP.

In contrast to some direct action groups that tend toward the homogenous, OCAP's membership and support base includes a well-balanced mix of homeless and poor people, students, First Nation people, long-time activists, people with families, and older people.

The group has gained widespread media attention in Toronto and around the country, with government officials and police quoted in the Canadian media referring to the group as "terrorists," "opportunists," and "disgusting."

"They've already compared us to Osama bin Laden," said Clarke.

Members gained significant media coverage — and jail time — for "evicting" Finance Minister Jim Flaherty from his office on June 12, actually throwing furniture out the window and trashing the place to protest privatization and policies that OCAP says attack the poor and increase poverty. OCAP members sliced through the awning that held Flaherty's name, wrote obscenity on the walls, and overturned office furniture and filing cabinets.

At the time OCAP member Sue Collis issued a statement saying, "Today's is the first skirmish in an all-out war on the government."

Clarke and others are facing charges of assault, resisting arrest, unlawful assembly and other charges from that action. Clarke already served 25 days pretrial detention jail time. Members are also still facing criminal charges from a June protest in Queen's Park, adjacent to the government seat.

The eviction of the Finance Minister and other increasingly radical tactics cost OCAP

the support of the Canadian Auto Workers, previously one of their major funders. In the past OCAP relied primarily on organized labor for their funding, but Clarke said this is likely to change as they are not willing to compromise the militancy of their tactics to appease more moderate unions like the auto workers.

"In this climate, if trade unionists are willing to be passive in the face of something like the Harris government, that's very troublesome," said Clarke. "That's a problem all over the world."

Other unions and union members have been a major force in these militant actions, most notably CUPE (a large union that represents public sector workers) and the postal workers union. A long-time OCAP tactic has been to bring "flying squads" from unions to confront managers or CEOs and prevent business during labor disputes.

October 16

Constable Debbie Abbott, spokesperson for the Toronto police, said that the department has no problem with OCAP unless they are engaged in something illegal.

"They're not protesting right now so we have no real concerns with them," she said in September. "We deal with them as they bring issues to us."

The police were definitely ready for the O16 events, however. Protesters were met by lines of riot cops throughout the city and many were illegally searched and arrested for having vinegar-soaked bandannas, gas masks, or other protest gear. By the end of the day, at least 34 people were arrested, facing an array of charges.

The government and corporations in the business district knew about the O16 event well in advance, with many businesses closing or asking their employees to stay home. A memo

from Bell Canada declared a "Limited Condition Orange Alert," according to activist Jaggi Singh, and a memo from the First Canadian Place bank tower warned that "normal building operations will definitely be disrupted on Tuesday until all threats of violence and/or vandalism have passed."

The actions started at dawn on Tuesday, and lasted for over three hours, with close to 2,000 people "snake-marching" through the financial district in three or four simultaneous marches. A snake-march is a highly mobile and flexible march meant to specifically block operations and respond to changing situations, with marchers changing direction and branching off from each other frequently.

"There was a clear disruption in downtown Toronto today, although there wasn't a complete shutdown of Bay Street, Canada's Wall Street," reported Singh. "Major intersections were systematically barricaded with overturned newspaper boxes, while subway station entrances were temporarily closed. Many buildings locked their doors for large stretches of time, or implemented security measures which amounted to the same thing."

A large contingent in the snake-march was made up of high school students who had previously walked out of class. In addition to walking out, students used the internet to post the answers to a standardized test slated to be taken by 150,000 10th-graders that day, reportedly costing Ontario \$7.5 million.

Also on October 16, cars created slow-down barricades on major freeways and solidarity demonstrations and actions were held throughout the country. Ongoing protests and actions, including economic disruption actions at the border, are scheduled as part of the campaign for the coming weeks.

"The idea is to elevate things to the level where you are putting a literal price-tag on the



government's policies," said Clarke. "In their language, you're making their policies cost-ineffective."

Direct Action Post-9/11

While the direct action casework tactics of OCAP and the Common Front have received widespread attention in North America, Clarke notes that similar radical tactics with concrete goals have been commonplace for decades, or even centuries, throughout much of Latin America and Asia.

"There are parts of the world where this is used all the time," Clarke said. "You have rural movements in places like India where peasants are going against agri-business and digging up crops. In Argentina and other parts of Latin America, you have massive road-blocks against oil companies and foreign investment. They're already way beyond the moral appeal."

While OCAP and Common Front participants celebrated the resignation of Harris, they noted that this is only the start. Some protesters noted that Harris's resignation may be something of a ploy by the conservative government to take the heat off their party while continuing to push for the same policies advocated by Harris.

And fallout from the September 11 terrorist attacks has made the situation for immigrants, activists and poor people in general even more dire, presenting OCAP with increased challenges as well as increasing repression against activism.

"September 11 has huge implications in terms of our casework," said Clarke. "Especially in terms of immigration. Canada is being pressured by the U.S. to develop common border policies so 'undesirable' people don't get into North America at all. Eighty-six percent of Canada's economy is based on exports

so if Canada doesn't agree with the U.S., the U.S. can slow down trucks at the border and bring Canada to its knees. And there's no doubt they will implement much harsher policies against immigrants and refugees. We have a lot of work ahead of us." ★

HELP OCAP CONTINUE ITS WORK

OCAP currently operates on \$50,000 a year — employing 5 organizers, covering rent, and taking on forces of evil. Still, they manage to accomplish more than most overfunded liberal organizations. Help them continue their work by supporting one of these fundraising projects.

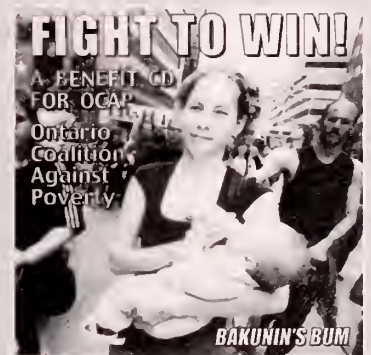
2002 OCAP wall Calendar - full of "stunning" photography by: David Maltby, Ken Brown, Brennan O'Connor, Lisa Silverman, Jeff Shantz. Call 416-925-6939 or e-mail ocap@tao.ca for your calendar (sold on a sliding scale \$10-\$20)

Bakunin's Bum CD

FIGHT TO WIN!

Benefit for The Ontario Coalition Against Poverty

This album, featuring 1 Speed Bike (from Godspeed You Black Emperor! and Exhaust) and Norman Nawrocki (from Rhythm Activism & Da Zoque!), takes a passionate, inspirational speech from two OCAP anti-poverty activists (*Sean Brant* and *Sue Collis*) and edits it into 11 spoken word pieces of radical beats and strings. The result: a powerful, 69 minute mix of music and ideas about how to step up local resistance to the effects of globalized misery.



The words from the OCAP activists offer a fresh perspective on how to combat growing poverty in the face of abundance; about how to confront and challenge an insensitive, uncaring, police-dependent, State apparatus; and about how to work with others, in community organizations, using "direct action" approaches, uncompromisingly, to "fight to win."

The album comes with a 20-page booklet about the history, aims, and principles behind OCAP, and ideas and resources for how one you become involved locally in anti-poverty campaigns.

Available online at www.g7welcomingcommittee.com/fighttowin_release.html

The Giving Season

by Kate Merkel-Hess McDonald

Three days before Christmas we were still trying to figure out what to do with all the Barbie dolls. At last count, there were more than 70 of them, stacked in the corner of the storage room, all smiling disingenuously from behind the plastic windows of their pink boxes, surveying below them a chaos of piles. Among the piles you could find colorful children's coats, cartoon-emblazoned backpacks, women's flannel nightgowns, two boxes of handknit winter caps, bath products and make-up kits, 30-some boxes of Harry and David's fruit, cakes, and cheese that had been waylaid en route to their destination and were sent to us in lieu of the trashcan, a train set, enough crayons to give each child in the shelter twenty boxes apiece and coloring books to match, stuffed animals, sweaters and silky shirts, matchbox cars in number simulating a Los Angeles freeway traffic jam, shampoo and toothbrushes, handmade quilts, Christmas stockings, candy canes, underwear and lacey bras, and children's footie pajamas.

Each of the 40 people staying at St. John's Shelter for Women and Children on Christmas would receive a gift package and it was for this gift-giving bonanza, requiring 300 to 400 total presents, that the staff had been preparing since September.

The letters to corporations were the first to go out — in late September — followed by requests for gift certificates from large stores like Target, the Gap, Macy's, and Kmart in early October. In late October we fabricated 30 children for an organization that passed out names and wish lists of needy children to "adoptive" families. We hoped a few of our creations would provoke responses. The shelter allowed a stay of two to four weeks and, as the population served was an extremely transient one, even two weeks before we had little idea who would be there for Christmas. But people wanted a name to which they could attach their generosity, so we made them up: Edward, Latisha, Princess, Hunter. I chatted with the woman in charge of this extremely secretive organization, known to many mystified children and their parents only as Santa Claus.

"Even if you send those lists over, I can't guarantee you'll get what you need," the woman said. We had requested new pajamas, backpacks, coats, toiletries and one or two toys for each child. "People like to give the toys," she continued. "I remember last year there was a little girl who wrote to Santa asking for toilet paper because her mother hadn't had the money to buy it for several months. Toilet paper! Can you imagine? The family that picked up her letter bought her a frilly pink dress and patent leather shoes."

"No toilet paper?" I asked.

"Well," she said. "It's not a very glamorous present."

It is more fun to give glamorous presents, as anyone who has waited too long to check a gift registry knows. After all, who wants to buy the ice cube trays when there's a martini shaker to be had, or the diaper bucket when the recipients still need a Pooh pull toy? St. John's Shelter was always looking for donations — travel-sized shampoo and soap, tampons, new underwear, diapers, baby food, canned goods, handbags and backpacks (when you carry everything with you these are of great importance). Regular donors, many of whom volunteered in the shelter,

understood the needs of the guests. But as the donations coordinator, I quickly learned that some people would give what they wanted, regardless of the shelter's needs. Like the family that purchased patent leather shoes instead of toilet paper, they had their own ideas of what would improve someone else's life, and though, of course, it is always up to a giver to dictate the present they choose, it meant that a lot of donations went to waste, or perhaps made less difference than their giver had hoped.

We insisted that all Christmas gifts be brand-new; no hand-me-downs for our guests on this one day of the year. But the rest of the year we, like our guests, accepted donations of all kinds.

We frequently received bags of filthy stuffed animals decorated by the drool, dirty hands, and food remnants of another child, torn and graffitied books, shoes that reeked to high heaven, expired baby formula, and size 2 clothing. One potential donor questioned my fellow advocate Dana about what the women needed most. Dana, an outspoken woman who frequently chose to work with our most severely mentally ill guests and guarded those women with the protective air of a mama bear, looked the woman squarely in the eye and responded that what the guests needed most were cigarettes, an addiction many guests were reticent to relinquish, given that a cigarette on the patio was often the most relaxing moment of their day.

One donor pulled up in a new minivan, her two young children in the backseat of the car, and cheerily told us that she had just finished her spring cleaning. She insisted we unload her trunk, as she was afraid to leave her children for even a moment "in such a bad neighborhood," clearly oblivious to the women and their children sitting on the steps of the fire escape and the nearby curb who would be sleeping on the streets of that "bad neighborhood" if we couldn't procure a bed for them. She had hardly pulled away before we lugged the bags, stuffed with unwashed clothing, wet towels, dirty toys and the like, out to the dumpsters.

Donors weren't the only ones who expected the marginalized to take what was given them; those of us who worked with them often felt our own generosity stretched. Working with the poor and marginalized is constant practice in battling neediness and our own reactions to that need. The women at the shelter frequently overwhelmed me with demands and my immediate reaction was one of anger, a sense that they were not grateful for what I was doing for them. But they were simply trying to direct my giving to their own greatest need (which could be negative, in the case of an alcoholic who returned to the shelter drunk and insistent that she was not, or positive, in the case of a woman who kept on my case about her application to a transitional housing program). Day to day work with need teaches one to be more flexible and open about ways of giving.

My roommate Erin, a petite redhead with a leprechaun smile and a cut-to-it attitude, handed out new t-shirts one day to some of the homeless men with whom she worked. One approached the counter and said he didn't like the shirt she had given him. Erin opened her mouth to utter her mother's snap phrase to complainers. "Beggars can't

Adults, the implicit message is, are responsible for their mistakes, while children are not. Thus, it is much easier, and more fun to provide toys and children's clothing than to think about pooling resources with your neighbors to pay a family's rent for a year. The flaw in this reasoning, of course, is that the punishment of adults for their presumed mistakes and transgressions is often a sentence to the same lifestyle for their children.

be choosers," but stumbled when she looked into the man's eyes and recognized the literal meaning of the phrase in front of her, with beggars all around.

We believe it, that the poor should have no choices, or that they long ago relinquished their right to choices. Such a belief is evidenced in everything from public policy regarding welfare and drug treatment to the small-time donors who thought that a drool-covered, food-smear teddy bear was better than none at all. The belief that poverty is simply a "bad choice" or that the poor "could have a job if they wanted it" is widespread in this country. What is a much more difficult realization is that the individuals who live on our streets are damaged souls, like birds with broken wings, who do not need rules or confinement or the judgment of others who consider themselves morally superior, but rather a great deal of care. They need assistance in making choices, not an absence of choice itself.

That limitation of choice was present in the lives of our guests in so many ways, from the state removal of their children against their wishes to their landlord's eviction of them to the drug habit they picked up in Vietnam and now can't kick. These actions may have been the result of earlier decisions where there was some element of choice, but blame and punishment for choices poorly made doesn't help. Instead, it instigates a cycle of poor choices, each less of a choice than the one before it.

By the time they found their way to our door, the women and children at the shelter had few options available to them. We tried to offer them options, and did a limited amount of hand-holding through the process of finding housing, choosing treatment programs, and enrolling children in school. What we could not control, particularly during the non-holiday season, was the kinds of gifts bestowed upon our guests. We worked with what we had in those dry times, and though painful, the ten-month gift giving drought did make the holiday season that much more gleeful for us. It was a time when we did not have to deny our guests the things they needed and wanted.

Standing in the midst of the storeroom that was, in effect, a Santa's workshop for St. John's Shelter in the winter of 1999. My coworkers and I were amazed at the generosity of the community. But it was a selective generosity, leaning away from the utilitarian and toward Barbie dolls. We often mused, as donations began to arrive by the carload in November, why people had no qualms giving toys, baby clothes, and bubble bath (not particularly useful if one doesn't have a bathtub) but seemed so reticent to allow a bigger chunk of taxes to go towards welfare, or were not willing to have

previously homeless people living in transitional houses or shelters in their neighborhoods. Part of that tendency is the desire to provide direct assistance so one knows where one's resources are being used.

There is also a sense, though, that no one should be given a free out. Adults, the implicit message is, are responsible for their mistakes, while children are not. Thus, it is much easier, and more fun, to provide toys and children's clothing than to think about pooling resources with your neighbors to pay a family's rent for a year. The flaw in this reasoning, of course, is that the punishment of adults for their presumed mistakes and transgressions is often a sentence to the same lifestyle for their children. By refusing marginalized and poor adults the assistance they need, we effectively remove the possibility of a childhood from their children, and those children, rather than coveting a b.b. gun or a new dollhouse, ask Santa for toilet paper instead.

December went by in a whirl of cookie baking parties, tree decorating, and Santa letter writing. As the month continued, donations of toys continued to pour in. Soon, almost half the storage room — roughly a 10 by 15-foot space — was filled with toys stacked almost five feet high. The pile appealed to me in its brightly-colored, slickly-packaged promise — the promise of delight on Christmas morning, the promise of playfulness, the promise of happiness for a child who can't seem to get enough of that emotion. It is the promise of material goods and their marketing campaigns, that satisfaction and happiness linked to a physical thing. Such giving — from the purchase of the goods along the aisles of toy stores to their delivery at the shelter's door — had evoked for the giver the same delightful promise I myself experienced, the same delight such an object would promise the recipient. But it was a promise that did not hear the actual needs of the children and adults who were staying at the shelter.

Instead, those stacks of toys were a kind of penance, a sad offering to a segment of the population we have failed so miserably in so many ways — from their lack of educational opportunities to their cold nights sleeping under bushes by the freeway. On this one day of the year, there was a material abundance denied them the rest of the year. Never mind that it was an abundance of dolls and chocolate rather than a new house, a safe school, or legislation that might allow their mother to receive a welfare check on which she could live or that would forgive their father his drug misdemeanor charge. Never mind that the gifts are now squandered, dirty, thrown away. Never

mind that the recipient did not, perhaps, need a new Barbie doll.

★



AMERICA: LAND OF THE FREE

by Colleen McGraw

Free stuff is the best. My house in Northeast Portland is proof that a home, wardrobe, and bookshelf can be adequately furnished for the more than affordable price of Free. Having just moved into a house after several months of travel and post-graduate unemployment, my housemates and I were faced with the dilemma of trying to furnish a fairly large home on as low a budget as possible. With a combined income of \$775 per month as none of us had yet solidified any "real world" employment, our budget was scraping at bare minimum. So with that we took our needs to the streets.

Junk is a relative term. Although pockets of Northeast Portland are more affluent than others, the general median income is significantly less than that of the greater metro-area. If Portland had a ghetto, indeed it would be in its northeast quarters, just north of Fremont and beyond. The streets though, we promptly discovered, are littered with really nice stuff. It was with both surprise and pleasure that we found and immediately procured the following "junk" off curbsides and into the vacant space of our unfurnished home: a mint-green sofa supported by wooden clawfeet (a bit soiled but nothing a rented steamer couldn't fix), a yellow desk that looks as if it belongs in a 19th century primary school room, a washer, a lazy boy, et al. Despite the obvious idiosyncrasies of each item (the washer, for example, is emblazoned with graffiti), they function and make our home cozier.

Thanks much to Henry Ford and his turn of the century business savvy of assembly line production, we Americans have before us modes of producing virtually anything, anytime, in any quantity. Department store shelves are stocked with not one or two but five to infinity choices of any given product. You want cola? You can have your cola and you can have it diet or caffeine-free or cherry-flavored or thirty-six in a case. You want a good reliable vehicle, preferably red? You can have a scarlet sedan with airbags and power locks or you can have a candy apple red wagon with full suspension and anti-lock brakes. You want it and America has it already primed and packaged for you for your convenience.

Convenience is a novelty. Who doesn't appreciate the immediate satisfaction of getting what you want when you want it? But think of trends and fads and simple shifts in taste. Do you remember that loveseat you bought back in the '70s, the one with the paisley floral print and pullout mattress? Do you remember how perfectly wonderful it was for that time then? Do you also remember how when the '80s rolled around and you were no longer borderline gutter punk but something of a professional in your bank teller job? Do you recall how the paisley floral loveseat no longer seemed to meld well with the hipper-than-thou image you were trying to convince yourself was the New and Improved You? So

what did you do but go and buy your self a new couch, a nice gray suede number. Of course, rather than parting with the old paisley girl, you decided to lodge it in the back of the basement next to the retired foosball table and similar such residuals of your former self. While your life continued on upstairs — you switched jobs again, re-married you hardly noticed that the foosball table and the old loveseat could barely be discerned amidst the additional rubble of has-been possessions in the basement.

Years pass and before you can say Monica Lewinski, it is the 1990s and your collection of dislodged davenport numbers not one, but five, four of which reside beneath two decades worth of dust and grime in your storage room. What to do with the four couches, six lamps, eight boxes of clothing, and a lava lamp? Your mother, ever the benevolent being that she is, suggests that you donate them to the Salvation Army or else have a garage sale. Your father, with forty-odd years of janitorial service under his belt, doesn't really voice much concern but grunts a simple enough recommendation, "Take 'em to the landfill, they're junk."

Junk schmunk, I say. Off the top of my head, I know about six or seven people who would love to get their hands on a good couch and I know about ten more who would wrastle something silly for the ownership of a lava lamp. I plead then, place it on the street with a

sign that says "FREE STUFF, TAKE IT," or else have it delivered to the neighborhood St. Vincent DePaul but do not send it first class to the landfill. Your paisley loveseat needs a proper home and the Indiana landfill is not going to serve it the justice it deserves.

The advent of the environmental movement in the early-1970s ushered in an ethos of consumer consciousness unprecedented in the latter half of the Twentieth Century. While the Depression was certainly an era of large-scale thriftiness, its conclusion harbored an even greater sensation: widespread con-



granton • Efr • Nov 01

The World is Not For Sale: Farmers Against Junk Food, José Bové and François Dufour, Interviewed by Gilles Luneau; Translated by Anna de Casparis; Foreword by Naomi Klein. Verso; 206 Pages.

In *The World is Not For Sale: Farmers Against Junk Food*, radical French farmers José Bové and François Dufour recount, in captivating and spirited voices, the decades of experience that led them past the industrialization of agriculture and back to sustainable methods rooted in respect for land and people. Bové first grabbed worldwide attention two years ago, in the summer of 1999, after his arrest for the symbolic dismantling of a McDonald's in Millau, France. Dufour, while covered less in the U.S. media, has been a stalwart companion of Bové, helping to lead the sustainable farming movement as the General Secretary of the French Farmers' Confederation. Both men have been involved in the fight to reclaim agriculture for over thirty years.

The World is Not For Sale is a lengthy interview with Bové and Dufour conducted by the independent French journalist Gilles Luneau. In the book, the farmers illustrate how globalization of agriculture has devastating ramifications on the farmer, the environment, and the consumer. Their story moves beyond the borders of France, decrying the global consequences of intensive farming combined with irresponsible trade. Bové and Dufour discuss how the specialized farmer loses touch with the ability to adapt diverse crops and livestock to changing seasons and unique topography. The unprotected environment depreciates as land is overworked, soil and water are polluted, and grazing fields are replaced with cement barns and technical workshops. Also at risk is the consumer who is subject to unregulated products doctored by biotech giants with hazardous growth hormones and genetically modified organisms.

Globalization, according to Bové and Dufour, is treating the planet as one vast commercial domain. They say it is creating a phenomenon of monoculture where fast food moves beyond unhealthy hamburgers and is now part of a ready-made mentality, bought and consumed by people throughout the world. By acquiescing to this monoculture, Bové argues, we not only risk losing the intimacy, pleasure, and social cohesion of food, but also our relationship with Earth and the cycles of the universe. Bové asks a simple and startling question: "Who gets to make decisions about the quality and integrity of the food we eat? The citizens, or faceless international trade institutions?"

Despite the dismal state of agriculture, Bové and Dufour are largely optimistic about their fight to restore sustainable farming and local control of the land. Militant, shrewd, and true to their beliefs, the two men have helped galvanize a growing movement of farmers, ecologists, and consumers. They espouse redistribution of the land for the collective use of local inhabitants, cooperative management structures independent of the state, and multifunctional farming which takes into consideration non-commercial ecological and social aspects of agriculture. They call on all farmers around the world to act in solidarity by rejecting export subsidies that create imbalances in local markets. They ask for transparency in trade relations, and that the WTO adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The World is Not For Sale: Farmers Against Junk Food is an engaging account of two twentieth century heroes who, in their fight for sustainable agriculture, have embraced the larger vision for a more just, healthy, and harmonic global community. After experiencing the solidarity in Seattle, after witnessing 100,000 people gather last summer in Millau to support Bové during his trial, both men realized the magnitude of this campaign. Bové and Dufour are confident that, in the years to come, this new citizens' movement against globalization will win their hard-fought struggles.

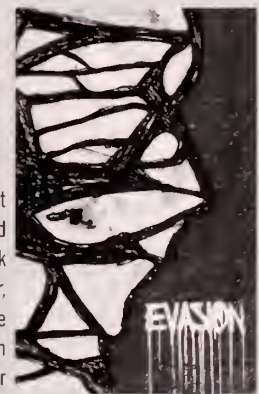
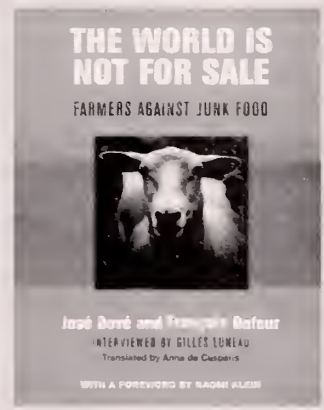
-Catherine Komp

Evasion

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Evasion is the latest work published anonymously from the people at Crimethinc. For me this was their most enjoyable work yet. In all honesty I read it all within 48 hours, it is one of those books you just can't put down. The book furthers the ideas put forth in other Crimethinc publications (i.e. *Days of War, Nights of Love, Harbinger*), but expands on them and gives the reader the down and dirty on how to live without working. It is a series of stories written by different people who live off the excess of society, whether it's dumpster diving, the left-handed technique, jumping trains, or finding free housing. *Evasion* covers it all. It is the manual of free living, akin to the boy scouts manual for being a scout. However *Evasion* isn't meant for entertainment, and we won't see it on the *NY Times*' "Best Seller" list, it was published in my eyes because the accounts within its pages are simply fascinating and the ideas put forth are simple, easy to put into action, and liberating. Ideas that should be shared with everybody. Let's not forget however that once this book is read don't let it sit on the shelf and collect dust. Bring it with you wherever you travel, because you will need it as reference when you finally start living free. Remember you have nothing to lose except the 40-hour work week!

-Richard Furlay



sumerism. Following 1945, Cold War America turned its back on the save and hoard habits customary to the 1930s-40s and almost immediately assumed the position of self-assured Capitalist spendthrift. Why? Because we could. With the capitulation of Axis powers, post-WWII America was ripe for economic command what with our seemingly infinite resources, political omnipotence, and internal commercial stability. Efforts to conserve were promptly substituted with prodigality and opulence. Leisure had never been so fashionable, so reasonably priced.

Although consumer purchasing power remains to this day the salient feature of Capitalist culture, its ostensibly devastating effects (i.e. Have you seen the stockyards teeming with rusty automobiles? Have you? Do you ever wonder what will become of them? Whatever will become of the three ears you own?) have been partially mitigated by the recent dialogue girdling the issue. The triumvirate maxim "Reduce, Re-use, Recycle" is as much a part of our daily discourse as are quotidian questions concerning the weather (in terms of popularity among the masses, recycling ranks right up there next to Harry Potter and hula-hoops). The dialogue is out there, even in our small towns and our local taverns. People are pausing and re-considering, just one moment is all it sometimes takes before they do or do not hurl used appliances and television sets into the dump.

This pause, this re-consideration, this is Progress. Cheers to that, but what of it? Why not go full circle? Why not become a full-time gleaner? Why not re-use that which is already in circulation? So you think you need a new couch? Surely your neighbor or sister or colleague has an extra sofa floating around somewhere in the chasm of their basement. No friend, put the credit card away, tuck away those coupons because what you need is probably eight steps shy of your front lawn, hunkering all shy and abandoned on your neighbor's curb. Be bold I say, strap on your galoshes, earmuffs, or what have you and grab hold of some junk. Be the gleaner you were meant to be. Gather what is left, the junk, the refuse, the dilapidated Lazy Boy — and use it. A simple swash of soap, a mere dusting, and you have your self a perfectly adequate product. A dose of creativity coupled with a fifth of bleach applied to any extricated item equals guaranteed satisfaction. Priciless, tax free, and no receipt to be sure. Yes I say, leave the shopping to the millionaires, the czars, the bored daughters and sons of oil barons. ★



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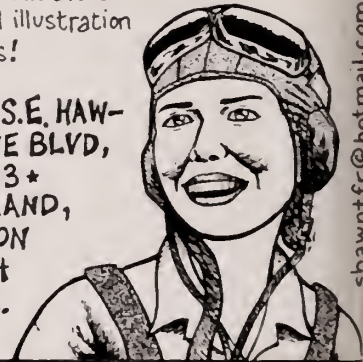
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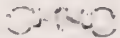


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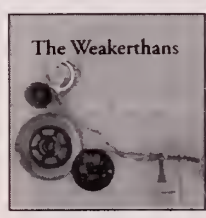
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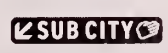
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States of Amnesia

discussing dissent and “terrorism”
with former Weather Underground member Bill Ayers

by Eamon Martin

*For ten years, Bill Ayers lived on the run as a fugitive on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted list. As an integral member of the Weather Underground, he was wanted in connection with the bombing of New York City's police headquarters in 1970, the US Capitol building in 1971, and the Pentagon in 1972, among other acts, which included breaking Timothy Leary out of jail. I spoke with Ayers about his recently published memoir, *Fugitive Days* (Beacon Press), and the uncanny timing of the book's release coinciding with the attacks on September 11. Today, Ayers is Distinguished Professor of Education at the University of Illinois in Chicago, and Director of the Center for Youth and Society.*

CLAMOR: *Many people today don't know about the Weather Underground or even that the Pentagon was actually bombed once before. How would you describe who the Weathermen were, today?*

Ayers: Well, I think you're absolutely right, first of all, that people don't know and that's part of the legacy of living in a country with a short attention span. I refer to America a couple of times as the *United States of Amnesia* and that's both a great strength in some sense in that we're kind of allowed to be innocent and reborn and everything anew. But it's a weakness in that we lose the historical thread, and I think it puts us in peril again and again. Right now, we can sort of see that.

But I would describe the Weathermen as a militant group that when the main student organization opposing the war in Vietnam and supporting civil rights splintered, the Weathermen were the most militant opposition to the war. They went underground for a decade and fought against the war, using all means — including illegal means. That's who they were.

In your book you make a crucial distinction between what you refer to as the “armed struggle” of the Weather Underground and bombings by “terrorists.” You say the “real” terrorists are — for example — the ones who have executed much of US foreign policy. You cite the nightmares of the My Lai massacre during the Vietnam War. Could you elaborate for readers about the moral distinctions you make in your book?

I have to try and make this distinction first — that what I wrote was a memoir, even though it's being read as a manifesto. But, anyone who reads it will see that it is a story that tries to capture the resonant feeling of those times and then describes how I made choices in that terrible and difficult time. So it's not a legal brief, it's not a manifesto, a de-

fense or polemic. It is a story. The story that I tell is a story of a kid blinking his way awake in a relatively over-privileged situation, seeing the world on fire and trying to figure out what just, caring thing to do in that situation. So I became a part of the civil rights movement, and I believed deeply in the anti-war movement and the questions of social justice, fairness, and compassion and so on, that were in the air when the Vietnam war began to build up. But what I describe is, I think, a crucial distinction in that violence is one of the most terrible things in the world. It really is. But violence exists in all kinds of official and invisible ways that we're not always aware of. So when we see violence burst forth, we tend to condemn what we're seeing on the surface, but we sometimes forget to look a little deeper and wonder about what are the conditions that create that kind of violence. So I talk in the book about a couple of things. One is the kind of violence, for example, of US policy in Latin America where kids die of curable diseases all of the time. They're violent deaths, but they're quietly executed all the time. And then when we see Guatemalans rise up with guns, we say, well, they're being violent. But we actually missed chapters one through ten that led us to that situation. In our own history, the clearest example of this is slavery. Slavery is a violent relationship, whether anyone objects, resists, rises up, or escapes. It's all in its nature, as is colonialism.

So, the chapter I think you're pointing to is the chapter where I narrate two stories, both using my imagination: In one, a group of young, despairing, determined Americans, slightly off the hook, gather together and steel themselves to put a small pipe-bomb inside a drain pipe in the Pentagon. It's to go off at two in the morning and they call in a warning saying their intent is not to hurt anybody but to cry a shrill, shrill alarm against war. In that very same chapter I describe another group of young Americans, equally despairing, frightened, also off the hook, who walk into a Vietnamese village and kill 347 people [including many] women and children. They go on a rampage, burning and raping and stealing, killing animals — and then I raise the question: well, what is “terror”? And I don't even accuse those young Americans. I basically say that this is policy. This is policy. And so, there's culpability right up the line. And, in some ways I think that's why I wrote the book, to try to tell the truth about those days so there'd be some truth-telling, some understanding, some sharing of the good things that went on in those days, as well as the not-so-good things.

A lot of people don't understand the “desperate times — desperate

measures" or the "bring the war home" mentality that drives a person to expose or directly thwart US imperialism, now euphemistically referred to as "our foreign policy."

Right. Exactly, exactly.

Could you describe for our readers your awakening to this form of radical consciousness and maybe how — no pun intended — it has weathered over the years?

Well, I guess what happened to me... one of the themes in my book and in my life is the theme of self-exile. That is, I find myself, again and again, wanting to leave the comfort of what I know in order to perhaps embrace something broader and bigger and so one of the first exiles I completely planned was leaving the privileged, suburban Chicago life I lived while at the University of Michigan, where, as it happened, I got opened to all kinds of things, which is kind of a common college experience. But what happened in 1963, '64, and '65 — as the war in Vietnam built up — I found myself drawn to people trying to make sense of that. I describe in some detail taking part in the first teach-in, the first international day of protest against the war, because really, I think what America needed then and what we need now is to wake up to see ourselves as a nation among nations — as situated in a world with a history and an economy and a socio-cultural surround. And we need to see we're one among many, not the "one and only," not — as we designate ourselves — "the world's only superpower," which has a hollow ring after September 11, but to see ourselves as partners with others, not dominator of others.

So for me, the first eye-popping, eye-opening event was the civil rights movement, where the social justice agenda for a generation was set, and the notion that some human beings are not less than other human beings — that all human beings have a right to a life in pursuit of liberty and to full participation. And when that struggle that started in the South went all over this country, I just got in the act. The fight against racism led easily to the fight against the concepts of neocolonialism or America dominating other people for our own purposes. This was what woke me up. This was what radicalized me and for reasons that I can't fully explain, I began to feel that every Vietnamese life lost was personal, was my responsibility, because it was being done in my name, and I found myself wanting very much not only to stop the war, but to know the Vietnamese people personally.

I find one of the most moving aspects of the coverage of what's going on today is the *New York Times'* little biographies of the people who died in the Trade Center. I read them religiously. They make me cry. And in an odd way, that's exactly what I wanted us to do for the Vietnamese that were being killed in this other terror war. That is, I

thought, each of them — I actually have a passage where I say each of them had a mother and a father, each of them had people who relied on them and now each was dead — without a name, without a reminder or sense of the horror of it all. So, I took it very personally, and that is what radicalized me. How has it weathered over the years? I hope I've gotten a little less self-righteous, a little less close-minded, arrogant perhaps, but I hope that the values that powered me when I was 18, 19, and 20 are still the same values, that is, the notion that the world can be more democratic, that we can have a democracy here that is more robust, that we can end the situation where as 5 percent of the world's people, we as Americans consume over half of the world's stuff. That's an untenable plan in the long run. So I feel like we need to find ourselves and wake up and participate.

At the time of the Weathermen bombing, you described the Pentagon as "ground zero for war and conquest," the "organizing headquarters of a gang of murdering thieves, a colossal stain on the planet, a hated symbol around the world." Right now, a lot of people don't understand or have that perspective. Would you say the same thing today?

I would. I would say that one of the distinctions that the Vietnamese made that I think is terribly important, and one that I think we made, is that there's a great difference between the American people and the American government, policy, and military. The Vietnamese never were at war with the American people. They were embracing the American people. We, on the other hand, were at war with the Vietnamese people that were being killed indiscriminately. What we just witnessed in September is not only a monstrous crime

against humanity, but in the service of a monstrous ideology. And that's quite a different situation. But the Pentagon — and this is something that we have to be very clear about — when George Bush says to us that "you're either with us or with the terrorists," that's a terrible conflation because most people in that part of the world are not with us in terms of policy, but they're not with the terrorists either. And I'm not with us in terms of policy, but I'm not with the terrorists either. And you can't make those things "one." You have to separate them, and you have to say, American people can be good people and are capable of great things. Our democratic institutions, as imperfect as they are, should be strengthened, not weakened. People all over the world admire us for our history, especially our early history — the Declaration of Independence and so on — our prosperity. What they don't admire is our presence in their lives. They don't actually find the beneficent American presence in their lives to be, in fact, kind or gentle or helpful. So, we as Americans should wake up to the fact. Frankly, I'm encouraged by a couple of things right now — the fact that more and more Americans are listening to BBC, to Canadian radio, to al Jazeera. These are good

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The persons shown here are active members of the militant Weatherman faction of the Students for a Democratic Society - SDS.

Federal warrants have been issued at Chicago, Illinois, concerning these individuals, charging them with a variety of Federal violations including interstate flight to avoid prosecution, mob action, Antitrust Laws and conspiracy. Some of these individuals were also charged in an indictment returned 7/23/70, at Detroit, Michigan, with conspiracy to violate Federal Bombing and Gun Control Laws.

These individuals should be considered dangerous because of their known advocacy and use of explosives, reported acquisition of firearms and incendiary devices, and known propensity for violence.

If you have information concerning these persons please contact your local FBI Office.



William Charles Ayers
W/M, 28, 5-10, 170
brn hair, brn eyes



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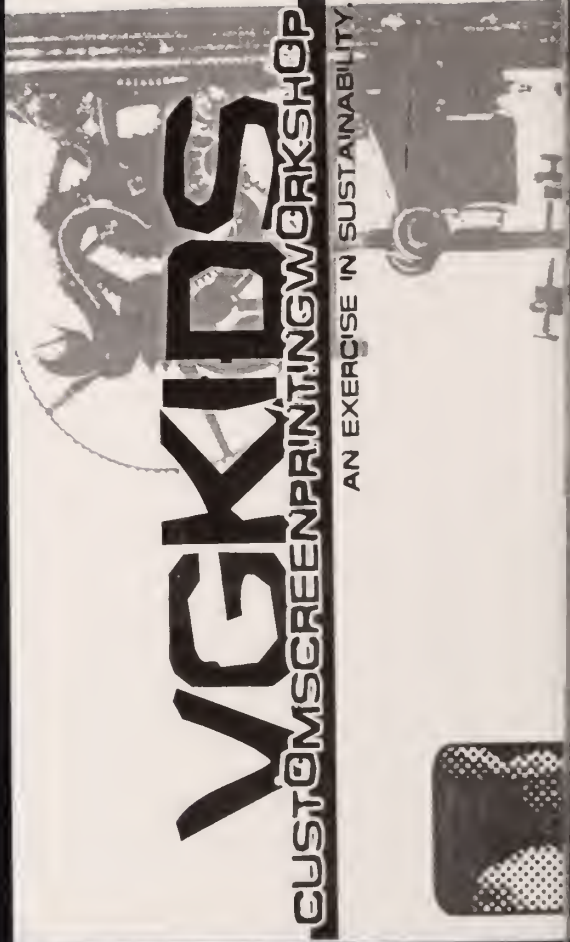
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ink political violence exists in certain situations. One of the things that I try to draw attention to is the ways in which violence is not always a choice, but is sometimes embedded in relationships and the ways in which America has a tradition of trying to think of itself as innocent and violent-free.

things because the world doesn't look the same from Europe or from Latin America or Asia as it does from Chicago.

What is your impression of the social justice movement today? It seems like in the past couple of years that there's been a groundswell.

Oh, I think these are very exciting times, and I think the struggle of young people in Seattle, Genoa, and Washington has been very encouraging. I also think there's kind of a globalism — a good globalism — that you and I couldn't have imagined a decade ago or 20 years ago. The good globalism is international human rights, a world court — unthinkable. There's actually discussion now about Pinochet and Kissinger being in the dock. This was unthinkable twenty years ago. Another good global movement is the movement for women's rights and the movement for environmental sanity. These are things that young people are spearheading, that progressive people are participating in, all of which give me a tremendous amount of hope.

Would you still advocate for a lifestyle of radical resistance?

Absolutely. I think of Rosa Luxemburg when she was in prison. At one time she wrote to a friend and said, Whatever you do, try to be a 'mensch.' And then she said, I can't really define 'mensch,' but it means something like enjoying each day, loving each day, the life you're given, the sunrise, the sunset, the clouds and the sky. But also, enjoy yourself on history's wheel in the hope of a more just social order. And it's that

combination, that dialectic of living in happy resistance to the immorality and the insanity that you see all around you. But don't forget to enjoy your life.

Would you say your political desires are the same today?

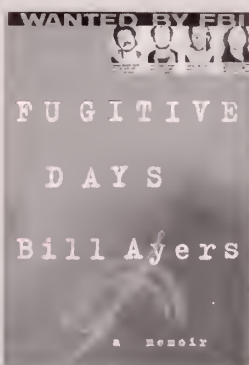
The conditions have changed but I don't think that my long-term goals are very different. I can easily imagine a future that's fit for children, where there is a world at peace and where people are fed and where there's some measure of social justice. I think that we have to always be willing to struggle and fight, but I think that we can't accommodate the enduring stain of racism in America or the enduring conquest of others for the service of — what — some other consumer good? It's just nuts. I think we have to resist. I know where dreams of Utopia go. I mean, I know that they go to the gulag and the guillotine. On the other hand, I can't give up the idea that there could be a Utopia, or a fairer, more just social order. Otherwise, you live accommodating yourself to the unacceptable. I don't want to do that and I don't want my kids to do it and I hope none of us do it.

By odd coincidence, your book appeared right in the midst of the attacks on September 11. You mentioned before how profoundly that affected you. Right now, there's a lot of contentious debate about the role of political violence in the world today. Have these circumstances given you any pause to reflect any differently about your past?

continued next page →

Fugitive Days: A Memoir

By Bill Ayers
Beacon Press
304 pages / Hardcover / 0-8070-7124-2
\$24.00 U.S. / \$36.95 CAN



Bill Ayers has written what would be a useful complement to more thorough histories of the Weather Underground, a militant white leftist group of the late '60s and the '70s. Problem is, historical and analytical scholarship on the Weather Underground doesn't really exist. With most of the books published about the organization long out of print, it takes a dedicated researcher to compile a working knowledge of the group and the context it arose in.

Fugitive Days is a personal memoir and, as such, provides insights into the personal life, emotions, and perspective of a committed American anti-imperialist fighter. Ayers moves skillfully from describing the total grief and horror he felt upon learning of his lover's death from a bomb-building accident, to writing compelling, fast-paced, first hand accounts of fighting cops in the streets and bombing the Pentagon. He follows the latter with a timely and pertinent discussion, given our current global situation, of the meaning of terrorism, strongly refuting the term as an accurate descriptor of Weather, and pinning it instead on the U.S. government.

What *Fugitive Days* doesn't provide is an accurate chronology of the movement or a detailed evaluation of the Weather Underground's ideology and tactics. Ayers rarely uses dates and doesn't provide many details about

important individuals and organizations before and after they enter the narrative of his personal life. Ayers is quite critical of much of Weather's work, such as their attempts to organize poor blacks as middle class whites, and their overemphasis on the importance of militant, armed conflicts with police and other authorities. But, unfortunately, he doesn't lay out much of the reasoning behind these reassessments, lending them an unhelpful, "You'll understand when you're older," tone.

This is unfortunate because today's progressive and radical activists have a lot to learn from the previous generation. In fact, one of the most interesting aspects of *Fugitive Days* is how strikingly similar the movements of 30 years ago and today are revealed to be. Halfway through the book Ayers describes preparations for the massive protest of the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

"We arrived on the evening of the large rally...settled our belongings into the church basement, which would be our home for a week, and hurried to the park...Workshops sprang up everywhere: Non-Violent Direct Action, Revolutionary Parenting, Guerilla Theater...On a long table were all the books and pamphlets you'd ever want to read...People baked bread and

cooked brown rice in twenty-gallon pots to distribute to the crowd."

Out of context, his words describe almost perfectly the scene of A16, Seattle, or the Democratic National Convention of 2000. The issues being debated span the decades just as well; what sector the mass base of the movement must come from, the appropriateness of tactical violence and property destruction, how to deal with sexism in the movement, and issues of leadership in multi-racial, cross-class struggles. If Ayers doesn't give current activists solutions to these complex issues, he at least emphasizes how critically important giving careful consideration to them is, and offers up his personal experiences as real life examples from which others can derive insight.

Bill Ayers has written a fascinating book about his life and his experience as a Weatherman. A work of this type can't provide a full historical survey and critical assessment of the period it is about, and it shouldn't be expected too. But, if current activists are to avoid making the same costly mistakes as their predecessors, they need to study works that give an objective balance to Ayer's personal accounts. *Fugitive Days* is a fast, compelling narrative that leaves readers wanting to know more.

—Andy Cornell

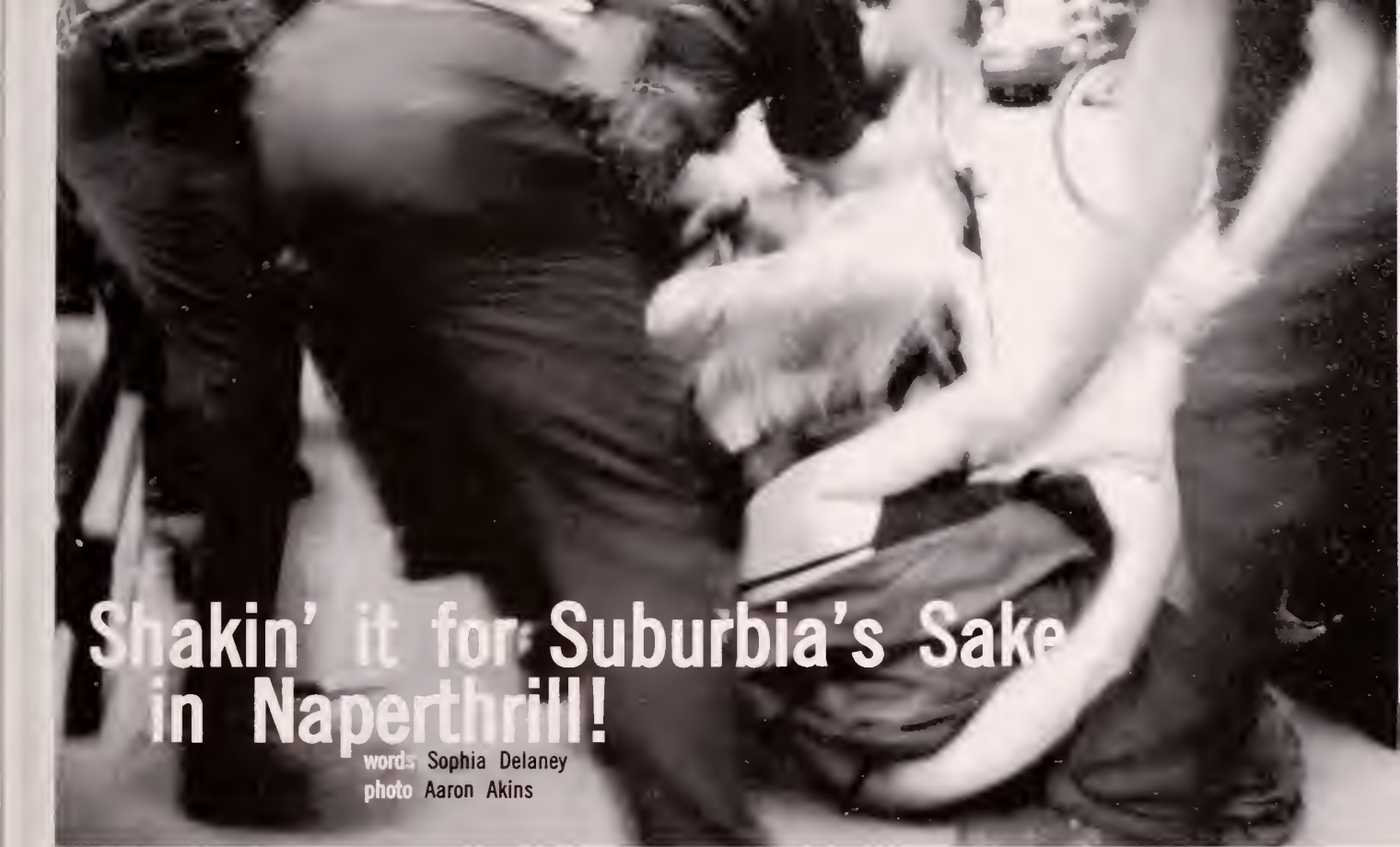
As I said, I think violence is one of the terrible things in the world. I think political violence exists in certain situations. One of the things that I try to draw attention to is the ways in which violence is not always a choice, but is sometimes embedded in relationships and the ways in which America has a tradition of wanting to think of itself as innocent and violent-free. But actually it rains violence all over the world. One of the things that I think is troubling and that people should pay attention to is that many, many people in the world look at our policies in Iraq, for example, or our policies supporting Israel against any aspirations of the Palestinian people to rise up, off the ground and not be humiliated constantly — to have the right to a job, and free access to work and so on — many people look at us and say, You are the terrorists. You're the people that we're against. Political violence — I think we should always be discussing it. It's always troubling. But one of the things we should not allow is that America gets a kind of exceptionalist path. "We never do anything." The fact is that long before the bombings started on October 6, we were perceived in many parts of the world as the most violent, the most frightening. If you ask Americans what percentage of the world's people makes up the United States, the guesses range from ten to twenty percent. Well, it's less than five. So we don't know who we are in the world and that's troubling. And we don't know how we're perceived and that's troubling as well. So we need to wake up. We need to think about our role and the ways in which our support of Israel, for example, is seen as the most violent, aggressive thing and why we've become a target of every wingnut in the world who has a grievance.

One of the themes that I would say is relevant from the book comes near the end. I reread the book after the 11th, and there were a couple of places where I actually felt like I was going to break down and weep. And one is where I say, if I can read a few sentences: "I think back to my childhood, to the houses in trim rows and the identical lawns and the neat fences; I remember everyone sleeping the deep American sleep, the sleep that still engulfs us and from which I worry we might not awake in time. We are living our isolated lives in our shattered communities, and in our names the US project shatters communities everywhere — in the Middle East, in Colombia, in the Philippines. The world roils in agony and despair, the catastrophe deepens, and our ears are covered, our eyes are closed. Perhaps only the bark of bombs at our doors will shake us up after all."

Now that freaked me out. I don't want it to be true. I don't wish it upon us. I hate it. I've had so much trouble, psychologically, since September 11 because it's so huge and so horrible. And yet, could we wake up? Could we notice where we are in the world? Not to forgive or impugn good motives onto these rightwing, feudal fanatics — no. What they did was unforgivable. On the other hand — and this feels really important to me too — to say that this is a war and to use the war metaphor is a mistake. I don't think it's a war against terrorism. I think that it's a monstrous criminal act against humanity and that it should be dealt with as a criminal justice problem. Which doesn't mean that you don't fight. You do fight in a criminal justice situation. But, it means strengthening the UN, strengthening the World Court, strengthening justice and peace efforts, not weakening them. And who are we at war with? Forty-three countries? What are we — nuts? There, the dream of the rightwing, feudal fanatics comes true. We're closer to world war. We're closer to an arid, one-dimensional society and that's all bad. So we should resist it. ★

24 clamor jan/feb 02 *This interview originally appeared in the Asheville Global Report. Printed subscriptions to the Asheville Global Report are available throughout the world. US subscription rates are \$40 for one year, 52 issues, \$25 for six months, 26 issues.*

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Shakin' it for Suburbia's Sake in Naperthrill!

words Sophia Delaney
photo Aaron Akins

In the hot night, we are screaming. I am trapped in a pile of bodies, a fence at our backs. We need to scatter and can't, the police run up faster than my overheated head can comprehend, someone's arms are around me and together we are falling. My eyes are shut, and the air in my lungs disappears with my normal sense of time — but my memory remains and records each millisecond in its painful sudden lengthiness. In that endless moment, I think the people I hopelessly clutch are falling with me. "We are fucked," I think, as my body meets the ground.

When I open my eyes, the people above aren't frightened teenagers. They are policemen, and as they yank my arms and legs, they yell, "Stop resisting!"

"I'm not resisting," I utter with frightened voice from breathless hngs.

The handcuffs click around my sweaty wrists.

Glen Ellyn, IL, October 9, 2001 — We're ensconced in a booth at a suburban Denny's, and Random* is considering the question I just asked. He emphatically intones, "I would characterize police response as *extraordinarily* excessive."

I half-listen as I recall memories of the event we are discussing: Reclaim the Streets (RTS) in Naperville, IL, where I was arrested.

Random and I — and Mark, sitting beside us — were part of the group that organized RTS, and we are discussing the aspects of RTS I found most interesting — not what happened, but why and where, and what will happen next.

Naperville is a west Chicago suburb of 150,000 people. It's upper-middle class, white, stereotypical in its conservatives, SUVs, manicured lawns, and boutiques — and also the richest suburb in western Chicagoland. A working class, largely black and Latino town, Aurora, lies just beyond. Local kids call it "Naperthrill," a sardonic shot at its lack of excitement. Many teens also say they regularly experience petty police harassment.

Random, 22, was one of those kids. After moving west to Yorkville,

he became a bioregionalist, which he defines thus: "It's basically the idea that you stay in the same basic area that you grew up in ... The purpose for me is that I want to see the area ... be a fun and interesting place to live, as opposed to a place that you just escape when you're 18."

Because that's inevitably what Naperville is — a place kids leave when they reach adulthood — and because Random is both bioregionalist *and* activist, he decided to organize an RTS party there.

RTS is an activist tactic started in the 1990s by criminalized ravers and environmentalists upset with urban auto pollution. It's as much party as protest, as much concept as campaign — the idea is to take over a street and stop traffic to oppose destructive car use, commodified culture, and the criminalization of youth, and to celebrate an anti-corporate culture of resistance. RTS events have occurred across the western world, with varying success — but almost always in urban, not suburban, areas.

Random was motivated by his analysis of suburbia. "It was a place that really needed to have things shaken up a bit ... It's important because if you look at history, the suburbs in America have never been this big ... Political activity is usually centered on the rural areas and the urban areas. What you have now is that, as a movement grows, you'll see it in one of the two but you'll always have this buffer zone where people can just shut themselves off from the problems of the world. ... People shut themselves off from the problems suburbia has. It's the culture of suburbia. ... So it's important to have [RTS] in suburbia for two reasons: to keep people from having a place to escape problems ... and a lot of kids have to grow up in the suburbs and it's important to give them a kind of connection to the world. As a kid, I really wish I would have had that connection."

Mark, a 23-year-old Naperville resident, agrees. "I hate the idea of the suburbs, and nothing represents the idea of the suburbs more than the mentality of moving away from your problems ... It's a very

revolutionary thing to stick to something and stay there and transform a place.”

Mark got involved because RTS “captured [his] imagination.” He believes there is great potential for political action in suburbia. “There are a lot of issues within the suburbs [“environmental issues ... race and class, transportation, work”] that you can use to draw broader connections to ... issues that people don’t tend to get interested in right away.”

If their hearts were true, their experience was limited. What happened in Naperville on July 20 was a mix of failure and success:

About 250 mostly white kids convened in a downtown park on a sweltering Friday evening. The gathering began jubilantly. The police — who may have expected the event to replicate an earlier RTS effort that was poorly organized and rained out — were initially sparse, then grew to over 100 officers. RTS attempted to move into the streets without safe or effective tactical planning, and was pushed back easily with threats of pepper spray and arrests. Soon, the party devolved into an angry stalemate between kids and cops.

By many accounts, cops gave no clear order for protesters to disperse and appeared intent only on keeping kids off the streets. Older residents and families, meanwhile, jaywalked with impunity and gawked in confusion.

Amidst chaos, the police made 17 arrests — including two 15-year-olds who were maced in the eyes and two people who visited the hospital with police-inflicted wounds. Some arrestees allege that police choked, tackled, fondled, and/or insulted them. Others say they were pepper-sprayed after being handcuffed or tackled and subdued (I know I was). Several have video evidence damning the police. All were charged with mob action and resisting arrest; charges against two people (including a minor) were later raised to felonies.

The action did get the city’s attention — the protest was in the local news for weeks afterward. In addition, some participants said they felt empowered by the event.

If an earlier Reclaim the Streets had failed in Naperville, why attempt another? Random explains: “It’s a way to get people involved. ... It’s a way to get people energized about things. It doesn’t recreate the problems of the left — which tends to be seen as overly intellectual, boring, not very serious about their goals. ... RTS is fun but it’s much more serious — it’s tying in different issues and it’s not preaching to the choir in the way a permitted rally would be. ... If you have something like RTS, which is an informational event, it’s a political event, but overall it’s an enjoyable event, you can bring in people who are vaguely interested ... in doing something [politically] empowering.”

RTS is unusual not just in its radicalism — certainly an oddity in a Republican town — but also in its target audience. Overwhelmingly, suburban activism is an affair for older people. A recent sparsely attended Suburban Civic Fair in Palatine, IL, was almost bereft of activists under 25. Participants hailed mainly from local community and single-issue groups, but none was youth-oriented, and none had specific information about young people involved in their campaigns, suggesting that youth and their political opinions are not a priority — and perhaps not even on the radar screen.

If the lack of youth involvement in many suburban activist groups is a problem, RTS-Naperville’s problem may have been its lack of outreach to adults. Local newspapers tarred the group as irresponsible, potentially violent youth with little to say. “I’m hoping that they are handed the bill [for police ‘costs’] and are held responsible for payment,” Laurel Nixon wrote to the Naperville *Sun*. And some onlookers weren’t confused: police reports indicate bystanders yelled “white trash” and “losers” at the protesters.

Perhaps RTS failed to articulate clear goals or demands; many seemed to think that we were in their space strictly to act like jackasses. Mark says what mattered was the action itself and the attempt to create space for freedom of expression: “It’s about creating a ground out of which things can grow. ... The way the suburbs are laid out, it’s hard to find places for people to gather and share that don’t exist within a capi-

talist, consumer-type framework, so if activism can focus on creating those forums ... then there is a huge potential for communicating radical and revolutionary ideas. ... [It] offers opportunities to overcome the mainstream media’s wall of just one message or the political climate of this country that just shuts out alternatives.”

But if the goal was to educate, then Naperville RTSers have work to do. One arrestee, a seventh-generation Napervilleite, says she’s heard rumors about rumors: police supposedly telling locals that a car was destroyed and that hysterical protesters beat a cop. The rumor-mongering couldn’t be verified (according to local RTSers, the content is untrue but unsurprising), but locals reportedly are buying the hype.

Police Chief David Dial held a press conference to announce the NPD’s belief that RTS plans to reappear in Naperville and harm people and property. Dial aired a video of the protest, congratulating the NPD on its “restraint”: “Notice you don’t see officers swinging nightsticks.”**

Naperville cops aren’t alone in characterizing the group as dangerous: FBI director Louis Freeh called RTS a terrorist organization in recent congressional hearings. This is both laughable and alarming, given our current “war on terrorism.”

Still, RTS-Naperville says it plans to reappear next year — despite police repression and the struggle to get their ideas acknowledged and understood. The truth is, RTSers aren’t sure how to engage a conservative place with little venue for social interaction in progressive thought and action. Then again, RTSers say that’s the point: to celebrate radicalism and make space available for change. To that end, some RTSers support staging public meetings and community forums to air their issues. For now, though, they’re focusing on getting their people out of court.

When asked about the chances for telegraphing radical revolutionary ideas in a positive light to suburbanites, both Random and Mark return to the optimistic — and to them, necessary — reasons they wanted to be involved.

Random: “I think the chances are good. One fear I have of radical activism is [it] doesn’t always create the impetus for revolutionary change. What I’ve seen historically is that there have been pivotal moments in history where the dominant ideas amongst the people have kind of reigned, and ... if people’s only exposure to politics is mainstream politics ... then when the pivotal moment occurs and they’re looking for a solution, they tend towards the ones they’re comfortable with. I think that the point is to broaden the basic politics that people know, so when that moment occurs, people have a much wider choice ... I see it as increasing the possibilities.”

Mark agrees. “I think it’s a humongous challenge. ... That’s why it’s necessary ... It’s easy to go where your message is more readily accepted, but you’re going to miss a broad segment of society, and if you want to work for any social change, you can’t just work within a select group, you have to reach out to a broad range of people.”

After September 11, will the crackdown on dissent make RTS impossible? Random says no. “I think that there is an attempt to link the fundamentalist right with the American left, which I think won’t stand up ... As time goes by, I think that people will believe that less and less.” Only time will tell.

One thing seems certain: activist suburbanites’ fight to redefine suburban space will be long and arduous. As Random says: “Apathy is definitely, definitely rewarded in this society.” ★

Sources and Footnotes:

*Mark, Random, and the arrested RTS participants asked not to be identified by their legal names.

** Drana Wallace, “Naperville Chief Issues Warning About Anarchists,” *Naperville Daily Herald*, 28 Sept 01, Page 3.

More Information

www.reclaimthestreets.net

www.rtstreets.org

www.chicago.indymedia.org

No Logo, by Naomi Klein



When groups of people undertake campaigns that question and undermine the legitimacy of undemocratic universities and schools, a question will always come up — what else is there?

RECLAIMING CAMPUS POWER

by Andy Burns
photos courtesy 180/MDE Clearinghouse

For many young radically minded people, the school or college environment is the last place they would consider in looking for places where an activist agenda could be furthered. However, one way that activists have found to confront the status quo is by looking at colleges and schools as strategic places to develop a radical democratic consciousness among the students.

Students and youth are a typically less-than-politicized demographic and working with them can seem very difficult — indeed, almost impossible. However, successes have been realized by many working to expose the education system for its corporate, authoritarian nature. The greatest potential lies not in those who create home schools, charter schools, or other various dropout cultures, but in the potential of everyday people — organizers — to use the education system as a vehicle for encouraging participation in movements for the liberation of American society from the grips of corporate domination and white-male privilege; in short, as breeding grounds for real and participatory democracy.

When groups of people undertake campaigns that question and undermine the legitimacy of undemocratic universities and schools, a question will always come up — what else is there? This question is a very typical response and people interested in change should be prepared for it, but more importantly, it is important to realize that the question is closely linked to the issue of freedom and democracy itself. It shows that people are not encouraged to consider or create alternatives in everyday society.

The Problem: Corporate Control of Education

At this point in our history, corporate influence has pervaded nearly every aspect of society. From simple things like our daily diet and the clothes we wear to the way we com-

municate with each other, corporations are redefining the world. The feel of the new corporate age is one of isolation, shallow interaction, and a sense that important matters are beyond the control and even the understanding of the average person. The lack of meaningful citizen power in state and national political affairs is a prime cause for this current condition. The two-party system and corporate control of information are inherent and necessary to perpetuate this order.

As in life so goes education, and it is true that this situation exists on campuses, both in higher and secondary education. An overall sense of apathy tends to pervade as decisions are left to the university president or chancellor and a handful of vice-presidents. Students are excluded from most important campus decisions such as where their money goes, what services they will have and how they will be administered, and if and how much they will pay for their education. They get a token amount of power over issues of “student affairs” through what are generally powerless campus government bodies. Faculties have little say in the selection of deans and are generally discouraged from speaking out against government, business, or campus policies. Campus workers are sorely missing from decision-making processes and are frequently without the right to organize, not paid a living wage, and subject to intimidation, harassment, and firings if they speak out. State institutions and private institutions differ in most of these respects and there is no set of conditions that is true to every campus, but it is clear that the general political environment on US campuses is unfortunately one of disempowerment.

The disempowerment is not a natural or accepted one, as some journalists have attempted to portray it. College campuses are traditionally one of the more lively hotbeds of debate and political activity. Against a back-

drop of fear and intimidation, courageous students, faculty, and campus workers are indeed standing up for themselves and in solidarity with others. The examples are too many to mention but through the organizing of committed local activists, as well as a few national campus groups such as the 180 Movement for Democracy and Education, the Center for Campus Organizing, Teachers for a Democratic Culture, and numerous campus unions, there are hundreds of campuses where there are lively, ongoing campaigns targeted at shifting the local balance of power from powerful corporate interests to real, everyday people, both student and non-student.

But administrators and corporate tycoons don't want anyone to know that, so the corporate media and other outlets of information have long ignored these campus movements. In the 1980s, there wasn't much widespread coverage of the shantytowns built on several campuses calling for divestment from the South African apartheid regime. Many people never heard about the on-campus solidarity work that students were doing to stop direct US military intervention in Central America. These campaigns continued well into the '90s, but the corporate media rarely reported on it. The tired cliché of Generation X as a lost generation with no purpose is a misconception that fits all too well with the interests of the power

elites. Luckily, campus organizers are continuing to break through this half-truth.

Well-known campus campaigns of the '80s and '90s focused on issues somewhat removed from daily campus life. Socially responsible investment, anti-sweatshop, human rights, US militarism, and anti-logging or mining campaigns have all been driving forces behind the growing chorus of students dedicated to halting the corporate juggernaut. When students tried to apply these campaigns to their administrations by demanding concessions, time and time again they were rebuffed or given token acknowledgment. The level of struggle in the 1980s over the South Africa divestment campaigns was one of the most intense seen anywhere in the US in years. The students had a morally persuasive cause, great organization, and well-executed campaigns, but the administrations were incredibly reluctant to concede to student demands. In many cases it took strikes, riots, or actually shutting down the university administration to get anything accomplished.

Campus organizers have learned from these struggles and many have identified two main reasons why administrations will not listen to student, faculty, or worker demands. The increasing connections between private business and higher education have transformed university administrators, never a very progres-

sive lot to begin with, from having somewhat of an educational background, to a group of corporate-style executives. Boards of regents/trustees seats and university presidencies are increasingly taken by businessmen and they've been all too eager to respond to the call of the almighty dollar. These corporate managers of the education system have an interest in moving universities toward the model of education for profit. It would be acting against their interests if they agreed to limit the power of a corporation by, for example, forcing it to implement a code of conduct mandating socially responsible investments or against sweatshops.

The second and even more dismal reason is one that shows the true nature of power on university campuses. For campus administrators to agree to the demands of any progressive group that is circulating a petition or doing a media pressure campaign would be a small capitulation of their unaccountable

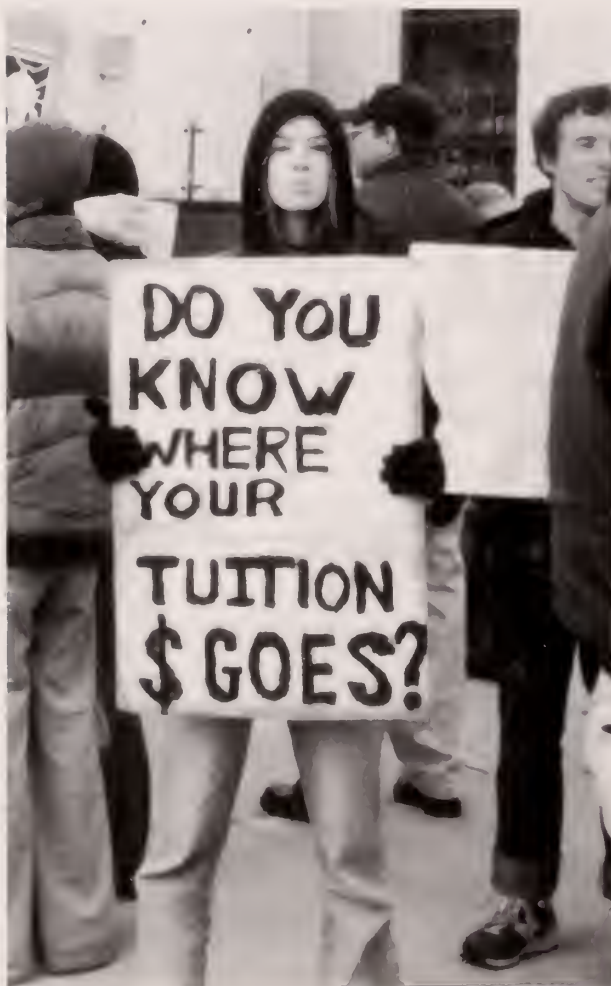
power, without which they could not function in the same capacity. Giving in to student, faculty, or worker demands would rob the administration of its perceived legitimacy. If they gave students what they wanted, it would set a precedent that their opinions actually mattered, when they don't. Then students would just ask for more and more. This is a possibility that the wealthy business owners and administrators who dominate universities can not cope with because it undermines their right to exist. The result is a corporate-controlled, authoritarian university that forces its population to resort to measures outside the scope of legalized power to accomplish its goals.

These ideas, although not new, have slowly become consolidated in the collective minds of campus organizers over the past two decades. Through previous struggles against corporate power on and off campus and heavy administrative resistance, many have learned that in order to accomplish their goals, the playing field has to be radically altered. The voice of dissent on college campuses is becoming focused not only on reprehensible university policies, but also on the actual decision-making structure that created those policies. Campus democracy is coming into its own.

Education for Democracy?

This principle of equal decision-making power has been long thought of as inherent to just and fair systems of government. Homage is consistently paid to it, although it is not truly practiced. It is agreed in most circles that people have the right to decide what the conditions of their living will be. However, in a setting of higher education, these democratic principles are not considered a human right. The reason for this is that participation in institutions of higher education is seen as a choice. There is no choice about the fact that one has to live in civil society, but there is a choice about whether or not one chooses to attend college. The corporate, or status quo, argument is that the choice doesn't inherently give a person the right to manipulate the conditions of the educational system. This line of thinking provides justification for administrators, and sometimes faculty, to control education since they provide this service. In this situation, students are simply consumers who can choose at will the wide variety of different educational products, those products being diplomas from universities and colleges.

This market-based model of education should be rejected by serious organizers. There are valid reasons why such a model should not and does not hold weight with rational people. The first is that in our current society, higher education is a gateway to security. Without it, people are forced into a labor market that has become increasingly unpredictable. It is true that people are, in effect, coerced into needing higher education to be successful and healthy. Therefore, as in civil society, people have a



right to participate in decisions of systems that are vital to their interests. This right does not come from their special ability to manage institutions effectively but from their inability to escape from the effects of the system that privileges those who are able to enter college.

The second argument against the market-based, authoritarian system of higher education is that it is education's responsibility to teach people how to function in a democratic society." When schools and universities give their students no chance to be involved in the decisions that affect them, students learn that this is the reality of life in the larger society. It becomes ingrained in the psyche of the disempowered student that others are looking out for their interests and they should trust them. Indeed, they are made to feel that there is no alternative. Until institutions of education from grade schools to professional schools start giving students these democratic decision-making skills and experiences, they will continue to fail the students and society at large in their mission of producing a democratic and free society.

In order for these decision-making lessons to be effective, they should not be undertaken in a laboratory setting where the outcome has no bearing on actual reality. Students, along with the other groups who make up the campus, should be able to participate in making the highest and most important decisions. Without such decision-making authority, the participants will never be involved enough to feel ownership of the institutions or the decisions that are made for it. Why would a student, who has no procedural power over the decisions that a university board makes, feel inclined to defend or justify a decision that may be in the interests of her/his university (and therefore that student as well) unless she/he has some say in the decision? If those who make up the universities are not allowed to also constitute the highest level of decision-makers, then they will continue to be apathetic, uninterested, and removed from the politics of the institution itself.

Campuses at the turn of the century are however, much removed from this ideal. They are consistently governed by corporate-style boards of trustees or regents who make decisions concerning the hiring of administrative officers, resource and fiscal supervision, determining the general character of instructional programs, university business contracts and setting requirements for admission and graduation.

The generally unaccountable boards are made up primarily of successful businessmen. Several characteristics are associated with this condition that make it undesirable. Campus organizers ought to become familiar with them in order to be grounded in a comprehensive analysis. Some of the disadvantages of filing university boards with businessmen include: lack of a background in education or collegiate



subject matter, lack of ability to identify with underprivileged, a tendency to operate the university as a business, and a biased class structure (acting in interest of wealthy).

The unaccountable boards give authority to an executive officer, be it a rector, chancellor, or president, to carry out the actual daily business of the university. The executive officer delegates many of her/his administrative duties to a myriad of vice-executives and other bureaucrats while giving governance of curriculum and academic affairs to deans. Different means of designating these officials exist at different schools, but the great majority are not commissioned from the grassroots up. Instead, they are ultimately subject to the highest administrative authority. Corporate influence thrives in this atmosphere, especially when administrators are obligated to make financial connections. Without controls, this influence can affect the academic freedom of the faculty and even the free speech of the students (as seen with the attempts made at introducing non-disparagement clauses for exclusive corporate contracts with cola or athletic shoe giants).

This condition has been identified in academic journals as "corporate managerialism."¹ With the rise of corporate culture throughout society, university administrations have begun to take on the qualities of a corporate board of directors, including such aspects as exorbitant salaries and benefits, bulging bureaucracy, god-like status, and a tendency to think of themselves as being the university. This style of administration naturally tends to cultivate ties with the corporate world, even going as far as to select administrators and trustees directly from that sector. The most important aspect of this trend is the streamlining of decision-making that accompanies it, giving in-

creased authority to unaccountable executive administrators in the name of efficiency and competitiveness, while giving responsibility for departmental fundraising to the individual departments. This creates a competitive system wherein departments and programs that are capable of raising funds from private sources are the ones that survive and prosper. For the democracy activist to be able to transform this condition, continued investigation and analysis of this trend must take place and be acted upon.

Campus Democracy - a power grounded in everyday life

What does campus democracy look like? There are some public and private educational institutions that have unique and democratic structures, but the real impetus behind those structures, as well as the real source of democracy in general, is in the struggle to achieve it. Any institution that has no agitation and free, meaningful debate will inevitably become just that — an institution. The word implies a stagnancy and lack of immersion in the concerns of the people who depend upon it and/or make it up — witness the American educational system.

Many campus organizers have identified a taxonomy of campaigns that are fundamental to moving the educational system in a more democratic direction (i.e., a campus democracy orientation). Social responsibility; right to organize; access to education; diversity and civil Rights; research, curriculum, and/or technology; and campus governance campaigns, all increasingly common, share this as a common link.²

These campaigns may seem disparate and unconnected and different organizations coming from a variety of perspectives and employ-

ing many different strategies have been set up to address them separately in different ways, but each one relates to the direct self-interest of the campus population and surrounding community that depends on it. Each one speaks to people in ways that relate to their everyday experiences and work. They are campaigns that have the potential to mobilize thousands who would never give activism a second look, opening up a potentially incredible conduit to channel radical ideas such as participatory democracy and anti-corporate/capitalist themes.

The key to each campaign is not moral or media pressure as with activism (although they can play significant roles in such campaigns), but sheer economic power. In a similar fashion to workers in a factory, students, workers, and educators *are* the education system, be it K-12 or higher education. They have the latent power to control it. Administrators and the administrative class, the decision-makers, are not the education system, and, though they are allowed to control it, do not have such power — or at least they only have the power because the students, workers, and educators let them have it. The aforementioned campaigns can be and are being used to strike at the root of the administration's power because of their ability to show that the administration's interests are inherently opposed to the interests of students, workers, and educators. In a particularly strategic environment where people are relatively receptive to such ideas — schools — these campaigns also expose the current reality of the ongoing corporate takeover of education, transmitting ideas in a particularly strategic way.

However, an important distinction should be made. Campus democracy campaigns differ markedly from student activism. Oftentimes, students are recruited by what could be considered adult organizations to work on their campaigns for them as a student or youth arm. While it is good and right to work within the schools and colleges for goals such as human rights abroad and environmental and labor struggles, campus democracy movements do not use students for their own goals, campus democracy *is* the students' own goal.

Demolishing the Ivory Tower

However, that is not to say that disengagement from the surrounding community, be it the city or region, is a good thing. One of the chief complaints against the mobilization of activist resources toward the democratization of universities is the tendency for educational settings to become quite removed from the real world of society at large. Many people feel that a campaign targeted at simply at changing the power structure of universities would neglect other, more dire causes. College students are indeed a privileged sector of society and, for the most part, are incredibly out of touch with the concerns of the working class, farmers, and minorities in the inner cities. It should be well

understood, especially after the large mobilizations in Seattle, Washington D.C., and elsewhere that campus groups can not and should not work in isolation.

Democracy on campus must work in tandem with a larger society and promote democracy and social justice at large. Campus organizers must be able to fuse local, on-campus elements with off-campus organizations. This is necessary to avoid becoming removed from the struggles of those more oppressed than themselves and to be effective. Students, by themselves, or even in conjunction with faculty and workers, will find it difficult to justify their demands for democratization without the support of the community which draws on the university for a source of knowledge and an educated labor force. Many possibilities exist for these avenues to be explored and since it holds that larger coalitions produce more effective results, steps should be taken to work with those who would not generally consider themselves allies or even activists. Coalitions are necessary to produce results and are desirable to connect struggles in various places. Organizers should work with other organizations on their causes, attend their events, and generally support the community at large.

Campus democracy cannot be actualized without equalized access for all. Therefore, support should be given and allies made within the more established organizations that promote this cause. The Scandinavian universities show this to be true. Democracy on their campuses came along with significant democratic movements within the larger framework of a social democratic society. In the 1960s, the limited amount of campus democratization that did occur in the US came in the context of a larger movement of general protest against the values of the dominant militarist-capitalist hegemony. True to the spirit of the populist movement of the turn of the century, organizers should nurture coalitions and a general solidarity with all that have a complaint against the authoritarian, corporate-controlled university, but especially with those outside its walls of ivy.

With the current university system being incredibly entrenched in its routine of playing to the concerns of private business, the goal of educational democracy will be notably difficult to achieve. It is even hard for many people to imagine. After a lifetime of living under an anti-democratic system that constantly makes the case that it is the leader of the free world, it is understandable that people would encounter this problem. Being familiar with some of the real world scenarios that already exist will hopefully prove useful and, if well-transmitted, could have a significant impact on campuses across the world. As long as students, workers, faculty, and the larger community outside the walls of ivy are united, there are no limits to what can be achieved. ★

Notes

1. Currie, Jan and Leslie Vidovich. "The Ascent Toward Corporate Managerialism in American and Australian Universities." *Chalk Lines*. Ed Randy Martin. Durham: Duke UP, 1998.

2. Manski, Ben. "In the Hands of Youth: the Coming Struggle for Campus Democracy." *Campus, Inc.: Corporate Power in the Ivory Tower*. Ed Geoffrey D. White. Prometheus Books, 2000.

For More information including accurate historical accounts of ongoing campaigns and information on bringing this kind of democratic movement to your campus or community check out the following resources:

180/MDE Democracy Teach-In Organizing Packets
180/MDE Clearinghouse
<www.corporations.org/democracy>

Campus, Inc.: Corporate Power in the Ivory Tower
-ed. by Geoffrey White; Prometheus Books, 2000.

Campus Organizing Guide; Center for Campus Organizing
<www.cco.org>

Chalk Lines: The Politics of Work in the Managed University, ed. by Randy Martin. Duke University Press, 1999.

Education in Crisis, pamphlet. Ben Manski, 180/MDE Clearinghouse
<www.corporations.org/democracy>, 1999.

Labor's Untold Story
-Richard Boyer and Herbert Morais; United Electrical Workers, 1955.

Leasing the Ivory Tower
-Lawrence C. Soley; South End Press, 1995.

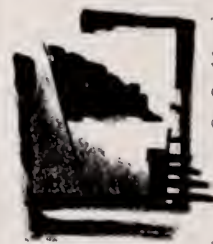
Midwest Academy Organizing Manual
-Midwest Academy <www.midwestacademy.com/>

Pedagogy of the Oppressed (30th Anniversary Ed.)
-Paulo Freire, Continuum Press, 2001

The New Radicals in the Multiversity and Other Students for a Democratic Society Writings on Student Syndicalism: (1966-67)
-Carl Davidson, Clark Kerr Press.

When Corporations Rule the World (2nd ed.)
-David Korten, Kumarian Press, 2001

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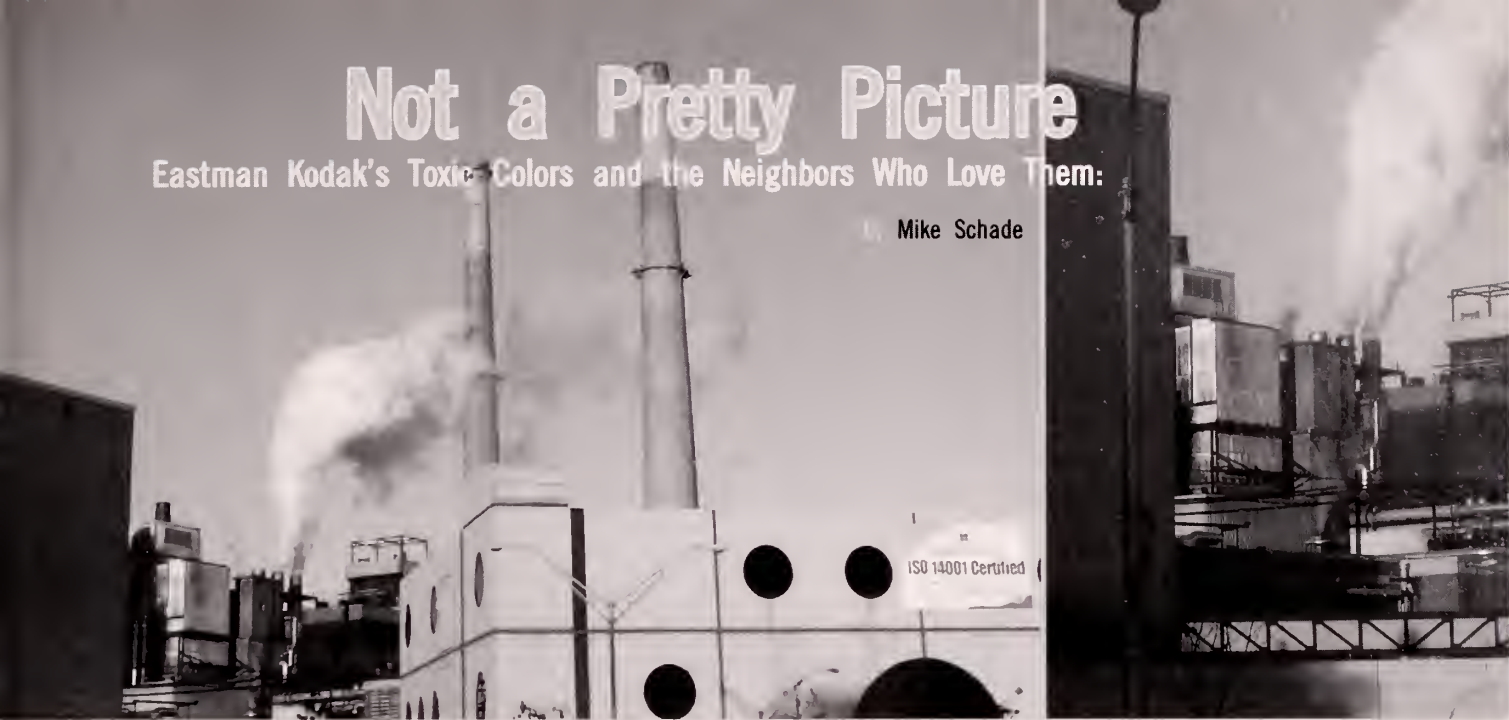
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www.social-ecology.org

Not a Pretty Picture

Eastman Kodak's Toxic Colors and the Neighbors Who Love Them:

by Mike Schade



Western New York has a rust belt industrial past where steel and auto manufacturers have dominated the skyline. Due to a local failing economy and free trade policies, many of those very companies have left our communities in recent years. But still today, we live in the shadow of one of the biggest corporate polluters in the world and the largest emitter of recognized carcinogens in New York State: Eastman Kodak.

Eastman Kodak, a multi-national corporation with headquarters in Rochester, New York, is the state's number one manufacturing polluter. Kodak has a long history of environmental violations, contamination of the Rochester community, dumping of hazardous waste, and advocacy for the weakening of environmental regulations. In addition, Kodak has laid off thousands of workers over the past several years, has been accused of discriminatory labor practices, and has moved some of their operations to Mexico where they avoid paying US workers a living wage and instead pay Mexican workers \$0.95 an hour. However, these examples of Kodak's dismal environmental and labor record are only a small snapshot of the problem.

A Snapshot Look at Kodak's Air & Water Pollution

Kodak Park is located on more than 1,300 acres and stretches for nearly four miles through the City of Rochester and the Town of Greece. Much of Kodak's 22 miles of fenced perimeter borders residential neighborhoods. Approximately 13,000 households and 550 businesses are located close enough to be considered its neighbors. Kodak Park has 154 major manufacturing buildings, 30 miles of roads, two power plants, its own sewer system and water treatment facilities, its own fire department, and its own railroad.

The most recent information reveals that in 1999, Kodak emitted 4.6 million pounds of chemicals into the air and 633,000 pounds into the water at Kodak Park, earning Kodak the dubious distinction as New York's number one manufacturing polluter. In fact, Kodak releases more chemicals than all of the companies in Erie, Niagara, and Monroe Counties combined. The table below summarizes Kodak's emissions by health effects.

1999 Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) Pollution Releases Sorted by Health Effect

	Air Releases	Water Releases
	<i>(Pounds from TRI sources)</i>	
Recognized Carcinogens	1,443,674	24,825
Suspected Carcinogens	583,014	5,370
Suspected Cardiovascular or Blood Toxicants	1,842,032	524,712
Recognized Developmental Toxicants	67,856	1,320
Suspected Developmental Toxicants	915,054	43,929
Suspected Endocrine Toxicants	1,440,427	4,083
Suspected Immunotoxicants	113,191	16,004
Suspected Kidney Toxicants	1,621,763	42,133
Suspected Gastrointestinal or Liver Toxicants	3,892,722	97,175
Suspected Musculoskeletal Toxicants	730,000	
Suspected Neurotoxicants	2,532,156	119,718
Recognized Reproductive Toxicants	886	
Suspected Reproductive Toxicants	1,686,645	18,712
Suspected Respiratory Toxicants	4,497,686	112,751
Suspected Skin or Sense Organ Toxicants	2,536,269	102,166

**Note: Some chemicals are associated with more than one health effect, so their release may be counted multiple times in this table.*

Methylene chloride is one of Kodak's main pollutants. According to the EPA, methylene chloride is a potential carcinogen and is regulated by the Occupation Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). It is the chemical used in largest volume at Kodak Park. The Department of Environmental Conservation's Division of Air Resources has recently established the annual guideline concentration for methylene chloride to be 0.6 parts per billion (ppb) while the annual average air concentrations as high as 6.8 ppb can be found to be in some areas surrounding Kodak.

What Develops in Kodak's Dioxin-Spewing Incinerators

The true picture of Kodak is their towering hazardous waste incinerators, that burn over 70 million pounds of toxic chemicals every year, releasing cancer-causing chemicals like dioxin and hexavalent chromium into the air. Just one of Kodak's two hazardous waste incinerators release more dioxin and hexavalent chromium (both known human carcinogens) than all the other tested hazardous waste incinerators in New York combined.

Kodak annually releases the equivalent of 544 million adult doses of dioxin into the air from their incinerators. Sometimes referred to as the most toxic chemical in existence, dioxin builds up in body fat and is

linked to health problems such as prostate, breast, and liver cancer; reproductive disorders; and birth defects. Dioxin is particularly harmful to children and the elderly. The EPA has recently classified dioxin as a known human carcinogen and 10 times more hazardous than previously thought.

Kodak is currently in the process of upgrading one of their hazardous waste incinerators, which they claim will reduce their dioxin emissions by 50-80 percent. Groups such as Citizens' Environmental Coalition and the Kandid Coalition argue that this will only result in a toxic shell game, where instead of dioxin being released to the air, it will be released into the water or burned in sludge at Kodak's Kings Landing Wastewater Treatment Facility. Thousands of people across New York contacted Kodak calling for better protection of the environment through a state-of-the-art incinerator upgrade. Kodak announced an upgrade in February last year but rejected a request by 13 state and national groups calling for dioxin-reducing Activated Carbon Injection technology, considered by EPA to be the most effective. For Kodak, a \$15 billion a year company, to sacrifice our health in order to save a buck is simply shameful.

Kodak's History of Negatives

Past reports indicate that about 100 hazardous spills or releases occur each year at Kodak Park. During one six-hour period in December of 1997, more than a ton of solvents linked to cancer spewed into Rochester's air. In the face of their massive pollution, Kodak actively protests New York State policies and guidelines for environmental protection. They use threats of legal action and their enormous political influence to pressure government officials to weaken environmental policies. In 1999, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) fined Eastman Kodak \$775,000 for environmental violations including: a 60,000-pound toxic release, including over 21,000 pounds of methylene chloride, a potential human carcinogen; dumping more than 5.6 million gallons of wastewater, including 800 pounds of metals, into the Genesee River; failure to inspect and record waste storage areas, improper identification of containers and storage

tanks, containers in poor condition; significant inaccuracies and omissions in two permit applications (11/18/96 and 12/13/96); and chemical spills in violation of state groundwater standards.

Thousands of People Affected

Thousands of people live in homes surrounding Kodak Park. In particular, children are most affected by Kodak's dangerous pollution. Twenty percent of the residents within a quarter mile of Kodak are under 10 years old. Twenty-one schools are located within three miles of the Kodak site.

Children are not the only ones that are susceptible to Kodak's legacy of pollution. A lifetime of chemical exposure, coupled with weakening immune systems, puts seniors, 22 percent of the population just east of Kodak Park, at greater risk of suffering the adverse health effects associated with the known and probable carcinogens released from Kodak.

Women, Children, and Cancer

Health studies indicating risks from Kodak's pollution are of great concern to New Yorkers. In 1995, a study by the Department of Health concluded, "Women living near Kodak Park had approximately an 80 percent greater risk of developing pancreatic cancer," an aggressive and usually fatal disease. The same study reported that women who have pancreatic cancer are nearly twice as likely to live near Kodak Park as elsewhere. The study found that when only the women who had resided in the area for at least 20 years were considered, living near Kodak Park was associated with a 96 percent increased risk for pancreatic cancer.

A concerned parent whose child had brain cancer uncovered the names of 119 Monroe County children under the age of 21 diagnosed with cancer since 1994. Of those children, 64 had cancer of the brain or spine. In 1998, the Federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) released a report on the apparent cluster of childhood brain cancer, concluding that there may be an excess of thyroid cancers in young girls in Monroe County.

Resulting from health concerns, a \$75 million lawsuit by five families charges Kodak's pollution caused their children's central nervous system cancer. Of the five children represented by the lawsuit, two have already died.

Hold Kodak Accountable!

Kodak has listed the company's values as: "Respect for the dignity of the individual, integrity, trust, credibility, continuous improvement, and personal renewal." As you can see, Kodak's record on the environment indicates that Kodak's actual practices are quite the opposite of their publicly stated values. It's time for Kodak to live up to their vision of an environmentally responsible company. Kodak should phase out their hazardous waste incinerators and make a true investment by implementing alternative technologies and working towards zero waste through source reduction techniques. Kodak should fully inform rather than delude the public about the health effects of Kodak's toxic emissions. It is only fair and just to inform workers and residents of the increased risks of cancer and other diseases from their exposure to high levels of dioxin, hexavalent chromium, and other dangerous pollutants released by Kodak.

Over the past five years, Citizen's Environmental Coalition and the Kandid Coalition have helped publicize concerns that Kodak's pollution may be contributing to the area's cluster of childhood central nervous system cancers, rates of thyroid cancer in young girls, and female pancreatic cancers near Kodak Park. They have also been active within the company, introducing shareholder resolutions to limit executive compensation during periods of so-called "cost saving" downsizing and to force Kodak to reveal all environmental liabilities to shareholders. They have challenged Kodak wherever and whenever appropriate, trying to shine public lights behind the curtains of corporate business as usual. CEC and the Kandid Coalition continue to work towards reducing Kodak's dangerous emissions, and need your help to continue working for a clean environment. ★

For more information or to get involved in the campaign to eliminate Kodak's pollution, check out www.kodakstoxiccolors.org or get in touch at cecwny@buffnet.net.

No one told this child Kodak's dangerous dioxin emissions don't stop at the fence line.

Here's a candid shot of Eastman Kodak, one of the nation's largest polluters of cancer-causing chemicals:

Everyday, over 21,000 people breathe in dioxin and other pollutants from Kodak's hazardous waste incinerators. Unfortunately, Kodak's dangerous dioxin releases may be taking a profound toll on the people of Rochester, NY. As a multi-national corporation with sales exceeding \$13 billion, Kodak needs to make an investment in our children's health and Rochester's future by phasing out their toxic incinerators.



Take Action now to clean up Kodak Kid's Air!

Join the Kodak Kids Clean Air Campaign and hold accountable one of the biggest corporate polluters in the world. You will receive monthly action alerts asking you to email or mail brief letters to help clean up Kodak.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Fax: _____

Return to:
Citizens' Environmental Coalition
425 Elmwood Ave
Buffalo, NY 14222

phone: 716-885-6848
fax: 716-885-6845
email: cecwny@buffnet.net

www.kodakstoxiccolors.org

photo: Julia Wells / design: Paul Salamone

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By Richard Gilman Opalsky

FEEDING THE APPETITE OF ILL-LOGIC

September 11, Before and After.

Shocked by the Expected

On the morning of September 11, I arrived in New York City earlier than usual. When I exited the train station at Union Square to go to work, I saw the streets swarmed with people, their heads tilted upward. At that time, only the first plane had crashed into one of the towers of the World Trade Center. The second plane made contact while I was standing outside amongst a bewildered mass, and I later watched as one

of the buildings crumbled to the ground. It was an atrocious sight, but the weight of the tragedy had yet to impact the city's consciousness, let alone the nation's. There was something profoundly surreal about seeing a magnanimous disaster and knowing it was not a scene from a film, or a situation in a country far away. Immediately, I heard so many people shocked by what had happened, saying, "I can't believe this, I can't believe this." These words of disbelief floated through the air like a mantra as you walked through the streets.

The obvious reason so many entered into shock is that very most people in our country have been deprived of viewpoints about America that are not distinctly American. The reality of interrelations between the United States and other nations is not a regular part of our education, our news coverage, or our cultural interest. For example, when our leaders began to talk about international relations in the language of Good vs. Evil and villainous plots to destroy democracy and freedom, to destroy a patently American way of life, we did not disregard them as silly characterizations. That so many of us are poised to accept portrayal of international relations as a conflict between good and evil is not a sign of our stupidity, but rather a sign of enormous fields of missing data. Mythology, we must remember, tends to work best wherever facts are scarce. To recognize these characterizations as silly, one would have to know that worldwide, most of the regions that are angry with the United States are fighting for democracy and freedom for themselves, and that the United States has spent an enormous amount of time and resources supporting regimes that are not democratic and that govern according to principles of repression rather than freedom. But I am getting ahead of myself.




One of my most naive and immediate hopes was that the disgusting mass-murder of September 11 would compel Americans to ask some important questions: What makes so many people hate the United States? Are we listening to those people? Can we relieve future expressions of hostility towards the United States by addressing the concerns of people who are hostile towards the United States? Despite the fact that I heard people in the

streets of New York yelling, "this means war" and "kill an Arab" and that I saw graffiti that read "Kill all Arabs" days after the attack, I held out my naive hope that we would have to try, at least, to understand what happened.

Did Somebody Say Context?

The United States has decided that Afghanistan's Taliban government is its enemy. We have been given a tangible reason for this: The Taliban government has not given us Osama bin Laden, the wealthy Saudi Muslim who supports the attacks of September 11, who hates the United States, and who is a source of inspiration to Muslim fundamentalists who encourage violent acts against America and its people. We know that the United States has the help of Pakistan and the UK in striking at certain targets in Afghanistan, and qualified support from many other nations in the vague task of fighting a war on terrorism. We know that Afghanistan is poor and already in ruins. We believe that the United States, in clearly having to do something by way of response, should destroy whatever military and training facilities, government stations and any other potential arsenals that may be employed for future strikes on America. We know that the Taliban government did not respond to George W. Bush's ultimatum of "cooperate or be considered our enemy" in the way that we demanded: we asked Afghanistan for bin Laden and they said they did not have him to give us. Presumably, we heard these words and decided, without any hard evidence, that they were lying, and that they must have bin Laden or his associates somewhere in or near the targets that we are striking. If you have



been watching television, reading *Time Magazine*, and listening to the radio, this is basically what you'll know- give or take twenty-or-so other important details. There is so much to know, and though we all have different impressions, we share largely similar pools of information, since we're fed from many of the same sources.

But what don't we know that is necessary for understanding the United States' strikes on Afghanistan? Perhaps we have not been furnished with the fact that if there are any countries on this planet that have very good reasons to hate the United States, Afghanistan is amongst the top 10 of them. The United States has actually had a brutal and bloody, self-serving and destructive relationship with Afghanistan and the people. U.S. involvement in the destruction of Afghanistan began in 1979 when the United States was involving itself, in a myriad of ways, in blocking the spread of communism globally. For the United States, as William Blum writes in his book *Killing Hope*, the task of fighting communism was America's own "holy war."

For 12 years the United States funded constituencies within Afghanistan who, for altogether different reasons than the United States', hated communism with an inflamed passion. From 1980 to 1992 the United States helped an Afghan group of determined rebels called the mujahideen fight the Soviet Union out of its land. At the helm of the mujahideen, which consisted of right-wing fundamentalist Muslims, there was a very dangerous man named Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Hekmatyar "was the head of the Islamic Party and he hated the United States almost as much as he hated the Russians."¹ But, at that time Hekmatyar and his comrades were facing the immediate threat of communism, so the wrath of their fury was not nearly as concerned with the United States as much as with the Soviet Union. Because of the United States' coincident struggle against communism, Ronald Reagan made a habit out of referring to Hekmatyar and the mujahideen as "freedom fighters." In fact, the *New York Times* began also to only call them freedom fighters, and our government found many occasions to applaud the bravery and courage of the freedom fighters in Afghanistan resisting the looming Soviet boot of communism. The mujahideen were not fighting on behalf of capitalism, as was the United States, but on the grounds of their religious convictions and the right-wing politics rooted in them. In September 1979, before the *New York Times* joined President Reagan in calling the mujahideen freedom fighters, they wrote of the mujahideen that their "favorite tactic was to torture victims [often Russians] by first cutting off their noses, ears, and genitals, then removing one slice of skin after another."² Hekmatyar and his followers were well known for throwing acid in the faces of women who refused to wear a veil. After the United States began its millions of dollars in funding for the mujahideen in 1980, however, the *New York Times* and the rest of America would be hard-pressed to learn about their "widespread torture and execution of prisoners, killing of civilians, looting, and raping."³

For 12 years the United States gave unending support to the fundamentalists who it now believes were involved in the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, even though they were committing disgusting attacks on their own people the whole time. Suddenly, with September 11, we began to call the same people "terrorists" who we

used to call "freedom fighters," even though they have not changed their convictions in any significant way. Hekmatyar's forces were largely trained by the United States CIA, and were given millions of dollars of assistance. The United States could not pass up this ingenious and safe way to fight its war against communism: in another country, and using none of its own soldiers. By using the mujahideen, America avoided its own casualties.

Not all of the Afghan people were on the side of the mujahideen. The official government was beginning to take a more liberal stance towards women's rights, education, and health care. Hence, Afghanistan was already considered to be too prone to communism because of these liberal initiatives, both by the mujahideen and by the United States. With all of its efforts and resources, the United States played a major role in turning Afghanistan into ruins for its cause of combating communism. The mujahideen were, ideologically, close allies with Osama bin Laden, although bin Laden had not yet become the figurehead of inspiration that he became in the 1990s. At that time, in fact, he was not a major player in these developments. But at the end of the war on Afghan soil, "the Afghan people could count more than one million dead, three million disabled, and five million made refugees, in total about half the population."⁴ When Russia and the United States finally pulled out of Afghanistan it was in the shambles that it remains in today: No roadways, a demolished economy, and the ascension of the fundamentalist Taliban government. The country and half of its population were ravaged and destroyed largely due to the American forces in the war. Yet, no efforts to rebuild the country came from the United States in the decade to follow, except for assisting some recent UN efforts to remove land mines that have claimed many more Afghan lives.

But surely, besides this 12-year conflict in Afghanistan, any other motivation to do harm to America must fall into the category of inapplicable evil. Sociologist Mark Juergensmeyer, in his *Terror in the Mind of God*, attempts to understand what else it could be by proposing three reasons why religiously motivated violence tends to take America as its enemy. The first reason is the alliances of America. Whose side does it take in global conflicts, and what are the effects of its choices. The United States' ongoing support for Israel in the conflict in the Middle East, and its complete isolation, along with Israel, from the global community because of this, may be a fine example. As Juergensmeyer says, "In its role as trading partner and political ally, America has a vested interest in shoring up the stability of regimes around the world."⁵ Secondly, there exists a cultural conflict where America is often considered the driving force in Westernizing traditional cultures and imposing its morality on them. You can witness this cultural threat all over the world. "In a world where villagers in remote corners of the world increasingly have access to MTV, Hollywood movies, and the Internet, the images and values that have been projected globally have been American."⁶ This example strikes most deeply at the root of religious motivations against the United States, since American values often conflict very sharply with the values of religious communities who hardly have the resources to influence and shape the infiltration of these global media forces. No doubt, technology has

helped make America more interventionist in terms of ideas and ideologies. Finally, Juergensmeyer addresses what is probably the most far-reaching source of hatred for the United States: "Although most corporations that trade internationally are multinational, with personnel and legal ties to more than one country, many are based in the United States or have American associations... America's culture and economy have dominated societies around the world in ways that have caused concern to protectors of local societies."⁷

Review Juergensmeyer's triad of America's global distinctions: (1) Selective political alliances based more on vested interests than in humanitarian principles, (2) cultural imperialism, and (3) economic domination. We don't know what specific message was intended by the attack, and perhaps we never will. We do know that the World Trade Center represents America's financial strength, and the Pentagon represents America's military force, and that both of these were highly symbolic targets. Even with this context, though, there is nothing any more justifiable about the attacks of September 11 - for no reasonable context could ever exist that would justify such a senseless destruction of life. Nevertheless, to say that such attacks have no motivation other than evil is an extreme conclusion that only our media and President have been willing to travel to.

The Media and Yellow Rain

If there is anyone or anything that seems to be not at all concerned with the loss of life outside of the United States it is our media. Only the mass media, rallying behind the objectives of a government, could be responsible for peddling such ridiculous generalizations to an entire country. There are two points I want to make about the media's role in strategically shaping our thoughts about September 11. Both of these points make the case that the mainstream media tries to facilitate uncritical support of any U.S. act of retaliation, no matter how illogical and ineffective it may actually be. The first point regards the omission

of all tragedies that do not directly affect American interests and the strategic selection of news stories that reinforce a particular perspective for political reasons. The second point regards the outright fabrication or exaggeration of facts.

On the first point, the media has had little to no interest in global tragedies wherever the United States is the key protagonist or simply not implicated. It is amazing that the media would deem so many devastating tragedies to be utterly uninteresting, since they are often far greater in magnitude than the September 11 attacks that occupied television screens without even a break for commercials. Americans don't get daily coverage on CNN of the ongoing bombings in Iraq. Nor are they treated to human-interest stories on the devastating effects of economic sanctions on that country's children. When NATO bombed civilian targets in Kosovo- including markets, hospitals, refugee convoys, passenger trains and a TV station- NBC didn't do interviews with survivors about how shocked they were by the indiscriminate destruction."⁸ One way to make sense of this blatant neglect is to accept the idea that the media is just naïve and ill informed or that it truly finds such information boring due to its non-American nature. Or perhaps the media is reiterating the will of its government, advertising the opinions that produce the greatest patriotism with the least amount of inquiry. I don't know about you, but I don't find the first explanation very compelling.

The media has recently been overtaken by ongoing news reports about increasing anthrax cases that have been popping up very suspiciously, as if any case of anthrax wouldn't be suspicious. And no pretense was made, for approximately two weeks of nonstop coverage, about whether or not it was suspected that some evil bin Laden-cronies were likely to be behind these anthrax attacks. The FBI rapidly distributed advisory notices about what to do with suspicious letters to universities and corporations throughout the country. The advisory notices call for all individuals who are not sure of the sender of any piece of mail that looks strange to "Treat it as suspect! Call 911."⁹

With such widespread hysteria, I cannot help but be reminded of the news coverage of yellow rain during the war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union. In 1981, at the start of that brutal conflict, the American media, solely upon finding a strangely yellow leaf and some yellow particles floating through the air, exploded into hysteria about how the Russians were employing chemical warfare. ABC news television aired a special documentary entitled "Yellow Rain," and *Parade* magazine and the *Washington Post* spoke with great conclusiveness about "'germ warfare in Afghanistan, Cambodia, and maybe elsewhere'. The evidence? A single leaf supposedly taken from the Thai-Cambodian border, containing trichothecenes, a toxin found naturally in many fungus-ridden plants including spoiled grain. Such were the claims of a U.S. government that had sprayed over five million acres of Vietnam with twelve million gallons of Agent Orange, containing dioxin, a substance so poisonous that its use has been banned in fifty-eight countries."¹⁰ With the reports of yellow rain and germ warfare, the nation grew frightful with panic over chemical attacks, just as the media has been priming our hysteria-pumps with stories of anthrax attacks and the threat of poisoned water supplies. Amidst the yellow rain headlines, those commies seemed much more evil than ever before, and the media instilled enough fear of personal safety to have us eager to accept any act that would be committed under the rubric of protecting us. When the *New York Times* later revealed the findings of two American scientists that the so-called "yellow rain" in Southeast Asia was nothing more than the ex-



cretion of masses of wild honeybees,” the people had already been saddled with the kind of fright conducive for strengthening the American government’s attitude and actions toward communism.¹¹

Of course, the main difference between the yellow rain phenomenon and the anthrax attacks, and it is not at all a small one, is that the anthrax attacks are actually happening! People have been diagnosed with anthrax, the spores of which have been determined to be of “weapons grade” manufacture. Weapons grade anthrax spores can not be produced without access to advanced laboratory technologies or without a very detailed knowledge of chemical warfare. Yet, the media speaks very sparingly about this substantial fact. What is very peculiar about this epidemic is that it was being discussed as such on the basis of fewer than 30 confirmed cases of anthrax nationwide. Until this point, I had not been aware that 30 cases of anything were sufficient to constitute epidemic proportions. And despite the unlikely possibility that these anthrax attacks could be engineered from Afghanistan, the media has been loathe to confess that they probably come from elsewhere, and even more reluctant to consider domestic sources. But with all of the media’s choosy reluctance, the confirmed cases were cause enough for the *New York Daily News* to plaster the front cover of its October 18 edition with the enormous headline, *Anthrax Nation*.

Unrestrained speculation about these attacks as a part of the terrorist plot behind September 11 is as unsubstantiated as it is dangerous. The danger lies in the fact that everything now construed as an attack on the United States will work to justify the repression of civil liberties domestically, and the destruction of lives overseas.

And finally, with regard to these points about the media, we should ask ourselves why the historical facts and analysis featured in this article have been entirely and conveniently absent from the news coverage during the present crisis. Meanwhile, one of the most despised Presidents in the history of the United States rose quickly to a 90 percent approval rating after September 11, and you might not want to doubt that media representations had something to do with that.

Osama bin Laden and Very Bad Strategy

History tells us that members of every religion, if they are fanatical enough, will commit heinous crimes in its name. Of course, there are legions of people in Afghanistan and the Middle East who are of Arabic descent and who deplore the horrible attack of September 11. Despite the fact that the media has done a surprisingly good job (credit where credit is due) in reminding us not to go blind with misdirected hate for Islamic people, there still exists the notion that the children starving for food and dancing in dirt roads in downtown Kabul today will inevitably grow up and do something horrible to us ten years from now. Perhaps this irrational fear is a large part of the reason why Americans are more willing to accept collateral damage in Afghanistan than in America—because we believe that we are attacking people who will want to kill us in ten years anyway.

It is amazing how eager we are to put a face on our enemy so that the disposal of any threat to America will be easily identifiable. The possibility that there may exist some problems that the United States cannot solve with swift and devastating force is too much for us to consider. On the day of the attack, “[i]n its usual incautious rush to judgment, television and its often ill-informed chatterers have already identified the culprits: Muslims and Arabs in general, Osama bin Laden in particular.”¹² The media quickly realized that some Americans might take it upon themselves to strike back at Muslims and Arabs, so it quickly refined its anathema for bin Laden, although he still denies direct involvement and we still have uncovered no evidence to the contrary. Sure, we do know that he is the source of inspiration for many who would and may have done this, but not that he was directly involved. As Noam Chomsky wrote on October 8th in response to the first wave

of retaliatory attacks on Afghanistan, “After what must be the most intensive international investigative effort in history, they were able to find very little—much less than I speculated on my own, without resources—to link bin Laden to the Sept. 11 crimes. That tends to support the conclusion of many specialists that the perpetrators come from decentralized networks, probably with limited communication, and very hard to penetrate.”¹³ And, as Arundhati Roy pointed out, “On September 20, the FBI said that it had doubts about the identities of some of the hijackers. On the same day President George Bush said, ‘We know exactly who these people are and which governments are supporting them.’”¹⁴ Then, on Sunday October 14th, the Afghan government told George W. Bush that they would cooperate in helping to secure bin Laden for the United States if we would exchange our evidence connecting him to the attacks of September 11 with them. They wanted an end to the bombing, which had already made UN food relief efforts impossible, and which destroyed a Red Cross building on Tuesday, two days later. But Bush, rather defiantly, said that he would never give them the evidence, since everyone already knows that bin Laden is guilty. This is a logical quandary. If Bush wants bin Laden so badly, why not share the evidence linking him to the crime with the government offering to turn him over? Or, we should ask, why not share the evidence with the American people, who are being asked to support a war? Perhaps the only evidence we have is the fact that we knew, well before the attacks of September 11, that bin Laden would celebrate such a large scale ravaging of American buildings and people—a fact he has never bothered to hide. In any case, given the shortage of evidence and the eagerness to identify a culprit with a face, we need to be very cautious and very critical about what the United States is doing now in Afghanistan. After all, if anyone there has access to the mobility needed to get out of the way of U.S. air strikes, it is precisely Osama bin Laden and his well-funded associates—and not the millions of civilians without the resources to stealthily escape the path of tomahawk missiles.

So what about this strategy of striking Afghanistan? There is overwhelming evidence that U.S. air attacks will not only fail to curtail future attacks on America, but that they will also intensify the likelihood of them. Furthermore, Afghanistan did not strike at our nation. Only individuals who we believe to have come from Afghanistan did. So why are we striking Afghanistan? And, is it really a war if only one side is fighting? Doesn’t a war require two or more parties in combat with each other? The main reason why the U.S. attacks on Afghanistan are violations of international law and the UN charter is that we are attacking a country that is not attacking us. Right after September 11, one million Afghan citizens fled to the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, while “the UN estimates that there are eight million Afghan citizens who need emergency aid.”¹⁵ Meanwhile, the United States has pulled a publicity stunt to address this by fluttering food down, which could feed only half of the people at the border for one day, onto mine-infested fields.

“Beyond the cries for revenge, there are also demands that the United States demonstrate its power through some massive display of force.”¹⁶ What we are really doing in Afghanistan is flexing our muscles, demonstrating the consequence of rousing a mighty beast, pretending to deter through some indiscriminate punishment, turning our grief into a blood thirsty mission, and reproducing our tragedy elsewhere— all in order to feed the insatiable appetite of our patriotic illogic. But could that really be true? Would any government ever spend so much money and energy for so little purpose? Could we have really just decided, as we seem to have, that the people who are associated with this act need to be obliterated, and that no one else will take their place if we manage to ‘get them’? Yes. America, rather famously, wholeheartedly believes in deterrent through punishment, more than any other industrialized country on the planet. But someone will always be eager to take the place of the dead terrorist, and even more so when they have been martyred. As Juergensmeyer points out, “The war-against-terrorism strategy can be

dangerous, in that it can play into the scenario that religious terrorists themselves have fostered: the image of a world at war between secular and religious forces... In some cases it makes recruitment to their causes easier, for it demonstrates that the secular side can be as brutal as it has been portrayed by their own religious ideologues. The 1998 U.S. attack on Osama bin Laden's camp neither destroyed the militant Muslim's operations nor deterred his aggression."

If not war, what else could have been done? Sadly, so much else could and should have been done. The International Criminal Court could have been used, if the United States did not already burn that bridge by refusing to recognize its jurisdiction. The World Court could have been used to try the crimes of September 11, or the UN Security Council could have been appealed to. When the United States waged a war against Nicaragua where tens of thousands of people were killed, "Nicaragua did not respond by setting off bombs in Washington. They went to the World Court with a case, the World Court ruled in their favor and ordered the United States to stop its 'unlawful use of force' (that means international terrorism) and pay substantial reparations."¹⁷ The United States ignored this ruling and subsequent rulings in Nicaragua's favor made by the UN Security Council and General Assembly, but as Chomsky duly points out, these routes are still in place, the United States could have used them, and their ruling would certainly not be ignored by any nation smaller and less powerful than the United States. In fact, the Security Council has already demonstrated its willingness to help the United States by indicting the attacks of September 11 on two counts. Or, we could establish an International Committee to which we invite nations who deplore the United States, and seek to, for the first time in our history, openly address their con-

cerns and work towards ameliorating conflict. Sitting at a table with the nations that have special odium for the United States, and working towards diminishing antagonism, as much as can realistically be done, is a proactive method for diluting and weakening international hostilities. This kind of diplomacy is certainly at our disposal, and would make it far less likely for the downtrodden and exploited to lash out in such extreme ways in order to barely make a point at the expense of 7,000 lives. It is difficult to believe that the attackers would go through all of the work they went through to carry out their misguided and heinous act if they felt like their concerns were being seriously considered by the nation with which they have grievances. Some will be quick to retort that diplomacy could never quell such severe antagonisms, and that a military solution is necessary, but if we are too adverse to even try- how can we ever know?

If you have a sneaking suspicion that the attackers were not motivated by a magical spring of evil will, then you'll likely agree that we should explore the historical and underlying causes, and at least be open to a radical re-evaluation of major U.S. policies. As long as the United States maintains economic sanctions at the expense of 500,000 Iraqi children, picks the most peculiar people to call 'freedom fighters' and allies, and supplies weapons to the likes of the Indonesian government who is using our donations to brutalize the people of Aceh, there will never be a shortage of individuals who want to lash out at the United States. Or, perhaps you think it just might be worth the deaths of thousands of innocent people as long as the intended targets are successfully destroyed in the process. But isn't that the exact same logic employed by the terrorists- to hit their targets regardless of the senseless massacre of human life?



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¹ Blum, William, 338

² Ibid.

³ Parenti, Michael, 121

⁴ Blum, William, 351

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¹⁰ Parenti, Michael, 152.

¹¹ Ibid.

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Women And The Game of War In Afghanistan

by D.M. Yankowski

It is an oddity that in chess, a game traditionally dominated by men, the king is the weakest piece on the board and the queen is the strongest. In Afghanistan, women are revolutionaries and, under the banner of RAWA, the Revolutionary Association of Women in Afghanistan, advocate a popular uprising against fundamentalists and an end to meddling by "world powers [who] try to fish in [Afghanistan's] troubled waters."¹

Despite the asymmetric nature of war in Afghanistan, the chess metaphor is appropriate. For the last 20 years, the heart of Asia has been the chess board in a game conducted by foreign players – the former Soviet Union, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Iran, and the United States. The game continues with the US-led war effort.

The chess set is complete with a vulnerable king, Zahir Shah Mohammad; bishops and knights, religious and ethnic factions; and pawns, the war-weary and hungry population. But where's the queen? Gunned down by KGB and fundamentalists in 1987. Her name is Meena, the courageous leader of RAWA who began her organization to raise the voice of oppressed women in 1977, joining the war of resistance to oust Soviet forces in 1979. It was then that RAWA went from a women's organization to a revolutionary organization with a broad political agenda.

Meena sufficiently angered Soviet forces when she grabbed the attention of attendees at the French Socialist Party Convention in 1981, causing the Soviet delegation to walk out. I suppose they never forgot, and so she was killed.² Considering the misogynist fundamentalists, some of whom were well entrenched in the Pakistani ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence), it was not hard to find collaborators to further the KGB's wicked aims.

Meena's agenda lives on with thousands of young women and their male supporters continuing their non-violent war of resistance after the humiliated Soviets left, the Soviet-puppet government under Najibullah fell, and fundamentalist factions took the helm.

Which fundamentalist factions? To RAWA they are all the same. Jihadis and Taliban are "brethren-increed."³ RAWA has not ceased stopped to pointing this out: "...any effort by the United Nations or any other authority or country, if it does not include the complete disarmament of Jehadi and Taliban traitors, has no value and is condemned to failure."⁴ – a dire warning that the United States only partially abides as they it clears the way for the Northern Alliance to grasp power. The United StatesUS have has even laid the groundwork to include "moderate" Taliban forces in the Loya Jirga, the tribal council that will choose Afghanistan's next government, which led RAWA member Tahmeena Faryal to appear puzzled as she repeated the phrase at a press conference at the University of Maryland in Baltimore, "Moderate Taliban?"

RAWA argues that the roots of fundamentalist terror have been watered by foreign governments' support for the Taliban and Jehadi mujahideen (holy warriors), starting with Pakistan's funding of Madrassas – fundamentalist religious schools where young boys are



Tahmeena Faryal at a press conference at the University of Maryland-Baltimore Campus (UMBC)

taught a peculiar version of Islam that is unabashedly misogynist and anti-Western. Faryal is emphatic that pressuring governments and non-governmental actors to dry up funds for these schools is essential to stemming fundamentalist terror. While this could be seen as religious intolerance, it is a legitimate concern.

Furthermore, RAWA argues "...that the US Government is no friend of the people of Afghanistan, primarily because during the past two decades she did not spare any effort or expense in training and arming the most sordid, the most treacherous, the misogynic and anti-democratic indigenous Islamic fundamentalist gangs and innumerable crazed Arab fanatics..." This point has hardly gone unnoticed by commentators.

Chief among RAWA's concerns has been education and medical care, although RAWA members have also held raucous demonstrations in Pakistan, but because both education and healthcare are seen as *haram* (forbidden) to the Taliban, RAWA has worked in secret. That is, they keep things secret at home; for the rest of the world they run a Web site stating their aims and goals and smuggle out covertly filmed videos showing human rights abuses. They know that the fight against fundamentalism is worldwide and thus the world must fight together.

The worldwide reach of fundamentalist terror was confirmed September 11. I am told a Buddhist proverb says, "Whenever two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers." By the same logic, RAWA condemns the US-led aggression against Afghanistan. To women on the front line of social restoration, bomb-

ing only increases an already tenuous situation: "From our point of view a vast and indiscriminate military attack on a country that has been facing permanent disasters for more than two decades will not be a matter of pride,"⁵ especially considering the vast human toll the war will take beyond bombs and bayonets, through starvation and disease.

So what is the alternative to achieve a humane Afghanistan free from fundamentalist excess? What RAWA and other prominent Afghan people have been saying all along, largely ignored by the United States and others. That is, the Afghan people need to be given a chance to resolve this issue for themselves, and Western support, not gaming, would be appreciated. Education and healthcare are crucial to the fight, although not as glamorous as pyrotechnics and commando raids. In the fight, women cannot be left behind. They are the key piece on the board that will win the *real* game, the fight for human dignity and social restoration in Afghanistan.

¹ "RAWA Message to Afghan Solidarity," RAWA, 14 July 2001 <<http://rawa.fancymarketing.net/a-solid.htm>>.

² "Biography of martyred Meena, founding leader of RAWA," RAWA <<http://rawa.false.net/meena.html>>.

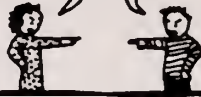
³ The difference between Taliban and jihadi fundamentalists," RAWA <<http://rawa.fancymarketing.net/difference.htm>>.

⁴ "RAWA Message to Afghan Solidarity."

⁵ "The people of Afghanistan have nothing to do with Osama and his accomplices."

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HEY, THIS GUY LOOKS LIKE HE COULD POSSIBLY BE OF MIDDLE EASTERN DESCENT!

SHE'S NOT A U.S. CITIZEN!



THESE PEOPLE HAVE FOREIGN ACCENTS!

SHE'S WEARING A HEAD COVERING!

HE'S AGAINST WAR!

SHE'S REFUSING TO WEAR A U.S. FLAG LAPEL PIN!



SHE BELIEVES U.S. FOREIGN POLICY SHOULD BE RE-EXAMINED!

THESE JOURNALISTS CRITICIZED BUSH!

UNITED IN OUR CUSTOMARY STUBBORN ISOLATION WE STAND



Irreversible Damage

Mainstream Media Fosters, Then Decries, Anti-Arab Sentiment

By Tom Breen

Almost as soon as the second passenger airplane crashed into the World Trade Center towers in New York City on September 11, commentators and politicians alike began comparing the events to the Imperial Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. In the weeks to come, the image of "America United" was pushed in shockingly aggressive terms by the press. Before a month had passed, it was already a cliché to state that the attacks had showcased both the best and the worst of human nature.

Both the identification with Pearl Harbor and the near-hysterical insistence on a revitalized national community are instructive, but mostly because of their unwillingness to acknowledge what was, in the first weeks after September 11, the dirtiest open secret of American public life: the attacks on Arabs, Moslems, and people who happened to get mistaken for being Arabic or Moslem.

In the first instance, the government was able to pat itself on the back and win plaudits by announcing that it was going to protect the civil rights of Arab and Moslem Americans, as if it had any other option. This was not going to be a repeat of 1942, ran the narrative, when 110,000 Japanese Americans were herded into concentration camps following the attack on Pearl Harbor (incidentally, the term "concentration camp" remains a sore point with most Americans, who for some reason prefer "internment camp," although it is less accurate, presumably because it has less associations with the Third Reich).

Indeed, the response to September 11 was like Pearl Harbor turned upside down, in which the government urged citizens to forego violent attacks on Arabs and Moslems, and in which such attacks were common. America was, at the time of Pearl Harbor, indisputably a more racist, less educated country than it was on September 11, 2001, and yet attacks on Americans associated with the perpetrators of the attack were more common in the more enlightened climate. What could account for this?

Whatever it may be, the mainstream press was not the place to find a discussion about it in the weeks after the attacks. With Americans suddenly faced with a political issue they couldn't ignore, the media chose to focus on images of candlelight vigils and French poodles dyed red, white, and blue rather than mentioning that a wave of discrimination and assault was occurring at the same time as Red Cross blood drives and all-star celebrity benefit concerts.

On September 12, 300 people marched on a mosque in Bridgeview, Illinois, and had to be prevented by police from storming it. On the same day, a man in a ski mask fired on a gas station clerk of Yemeni descent in Gary, Indiana, an elderly man in New York attempted to run a Pakistani woman down in the parking lot of a shopping mall, a bag of a blood-like substance was thrown at the door of a mosque in San Francisco, and the windows of a convenience store which employed Arabs were smashed in East Hartford, Connecticut. Doubtless there were other such incidents that didn't make the Associated Press wires; the AP was almost alone, initially, in covering the attacks on Arabs and Moslems. On the first day after the attacks, the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee confirmed 30 incidents of "violent harassment" in the United States, Canada (where a Montreal mosque was firebombed), and Australia (where a bus full of Moslem school children was stoned).

In terms of non-violent harassment, the days after September 11 saw an unprecedented outpouring of hatred for Arabs, Moslems, im-

migrants, etc. Internet chat rooms and message boards, never the refuge of the wise or considerate, became disgusting cesspools of obscenity and racist pathology. Outside the Internet (which admittedly is seldom taken seriously by anyone), the attitude was less directly obscene, but still ugly. Conservative columnist Ann Coulter became infamous for her exhortation regarding Moslem countries: "We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity," she wrote (*National Review*, for which Coulter was an associate editor, later fired her for another, even more inflammatory column, although she apparently didn't learn her lesson: On October 16, a column of hers was run by Yahoo which blasted the Bush Administration for not discriminating sufficiently against Pakistanis and women [sic]).

Coulter was the most infamous example, but the ugliness was everywhere: *US News and World Report* Columnist John Leo wrote that Arabs were going to have to get used to racial profiling, a sentiment echoed by a former Aetna CEO who wrote a column in the *Hartford Courant* in which he also recommended national identification cards and blamed Israel; repugnant New York radio personality Howard Stern filled his Wednesday time slot decriing "ragheads"; Louisiana Congressman John Cooksey hit what was perhaps the low point of mainstream discourse, when he ridiculed those who "wear diapers on their heads held in place by fan belts," referring to turbans.

Meanwhile, the attacks continued. In the span of a week, four mosques in Texas were firebombed, and one shot at; a Moslem community center in Chicago was bombed; women in Moslem garb on numerous college campuses reported harassment and even violence against them. On Friday, September 14, many mosques simply canceled prayer services, a move which one Moslem spokesman called "totally unprecedented."

This despite a statement on Thursday from the Justice Department saying, among other things, that "Any threats of violence or discrimination against Arab or Muslim Americans or Americans of South Asian descents are not just wrong and un-American, but also are unlawful and will be treated as such." Along with Justice, President George W. Bush and New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who at that time had still not spoiled his newfound national credibility by attempting to prevent the upcoming mayoral election, also condemned the attacks and attackers. It turned out that many people weren't particularly interested in what Bush, Giuliani, or John Ashcroft had to say about patriotism.

Frank S. Roque of Mesa, AR, was apparently one American whose commitment to homeland defense and national renewal went farther than the acceptable limits set by Hollywood and Washington. On the afternoon of Saturday the 15th, Roque allegedly went on a shooting spree in Mesa, wounding two gas station attendants and killing a third man, Balbir Singh Sodhi. Sodhi's killer didn't know much about comparative religion: Sodhi was a Sikh, a religious minority in India that prescribes turbans and beards for its male adherents, rather than an Arab or a Moslem. As he was handcuffed by police, Roque reportedly shouted "I stand for America all the way." Later that night, Dallas convenience store owner Waqar Hasan was found shot to death in what police described as a hate killing.

On Sunday, a Ford Mustang was driven through the glass doors of an Islamic Center in suburban Cleveland, doing between \$70,000 and \$100,000 worth of damage. Also on Sunday, a New York man was

arrested attempting to board a bus carrying a home-made bomb. He explained that he thought police would let him go once he made them understand that he was taking the bomb to kill Arabs.

On Monday the 17th, two men, including a Cook County IL corrections officer, were charged with assaulting an unnamed man of Middle Eastern descent. The two assailants allegedly chased the man on motorcycles before attacking him, while shouting "This is what you get, you mass murderer." Also on Monday, Reuters reported on a number of attacks in Great Britain, including an arson attack on a Bolton mosque, an assault on a woman by two men wielding baseball bats, and an assault on a cab driver by two men which left the victim paralyzed from the neck down. In San Gabriel, CA, sheriff's announced that they would investigate the murder of Egyptian convenience store owner Adel Karas as a hate crime.

These attacks were remarkable partly because they seemed so random. "This is unprecedented because it's not just directed at Arabs," Margaret Fung, executive director of the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, told a Boston *Globe* reporter. "It was first also directed at Sikhs, then [other] Indians. ... It seems to be directed at immigrants in general." This is again reminiscent of the Pearl Harbor comparison; in that earlier America, Chinese and Korean immigrants were not herded into camps or attacked, but in the America of 2001 anyone who looked like they might be Arab or Moslem could be attacked. For example: in Worcester, MA, a Puerto Rican delivery man was attacked by a man shouting about Osama Bin Laden, the fugitive Saudi millionaire who the US government holds responsible for the terrorist attacks on September 11, as well as for other attacks on US personnel around the world.

One week after September 11, the FBI announced that it was investigating 40 alleged hate crimes, although the Council on American-Islamic Relations said on the same day that the real number of attacks was closer to 400. In the following week, incidents of violence began to decline as incidents of non-violent discrimination increased. Arab passengers on major US airlines such as Delta, United, America, and Northwest reported that they had been forced off of flights because either the crew or other passengers refused to fly with Arabs on board, even though, in some cases, the men ejected from the planes were employees of the airline.

By the end of October, with US and British war planes bombing Afghanistan, the Central Asian nation accused of harboring Bin Laden, the national mood had cooled, although according to the FBI the one week period between September 11 and September 18 had left four men dead: Sodhi, Karas, Hasan, and San Francisco convenience store owner Abdo Ali Ahmed.

This, of course, was not the whole story. Numerous representatives from Moslem organizations told the press that they were overwhelmed at the vocal support they had gotten in the wake of September 11 (indeed, this was an element of Ann Coulter's muddled diatribe on October 16, when she complained of published reports that restaurants had been giving Moslems free meals and suggested that white people deserved free meals because of the slave trade [sic]).

Clearly, the big story about the response to the attacks was the "Two Americas" theme suggested by the Associated Press, but this was a story that the press largely missed. The *New York Times* printed their first story on the attacks a full week after September 11, when at least three men were already known to have been murdered. Instead of coverage, what most Americans got from the mainstream press was warmed-over mush about a "national sense of unity" and the "extraordinary heroism of ordinary people." Amidst all the comparisons with Pearl Harbor, the press missed a historical parallel that was more relevant: the war hysteria that preceded World War I, and the largely quiescent media that went along with it (to say nothing of the Spanish American War).

As of this writing, it is impossible to tell what will happen next in America's "war on terrorism." New Cabinet-level positions have been created, billion dollar industries have been bailed out by Congress, and unprecedented restrictions on personal freedom in the name of security have been enacted. In the months and years to come, though, it is to be hoped that Americans do not allow themselves to fall prey to racist hatred again, and that the true story of the week between September 11 and September 18 does not remain buried under a heap of discarded newspapers and cheaply manufactured flags.

Iraq Under Siege

Anthony Arnove, Ed.

Paperback - 192 pages

South End Press, ISBN: 0896086194

"Are Iraqis less worthy of life than we are?
Are their children less innocent than ours?"

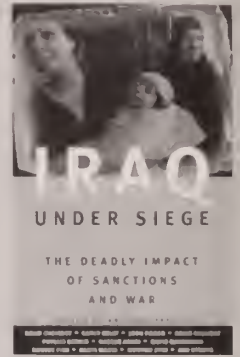
-Howard Zinn, Chapter 8

I had just finished *Iraq Under Siege* before the attacks on NY and DC. As I watched CNN's questionable coverage of the days events it became clear that the majority of the American public has ABSOLUTLY NO IDEA about the politics and violence that go into supplying the oil we consume everyday. We need all of the tangible resources we can get to learn about the ramifications of America's foreign policy towards the Middle East. *Iraq Under Siege: The Deadly Impact of Sanctions and War* is a solid beginning to understanding a portion of the West's influence on this diverse and complicated part of the world.

Who's responsible for the suffering of the Iraqi people? Is it Washington, through the filter of the UN, or is it Saddam Hussein's Baath Party, selfishly redirecting resources while using the deaths of children to create support for his regime? One must consider the possibility that both are directly responsible to various degrees. However, it is undeniable that both governments abuse their power at civilian expense to accommodate their own self-interest. The fifteen articles in *Iraq Under Siege: The Deadly Impact of Sanctions of War* illustrate this power abuse. Be it Saddam's troops gassing Kurds in the late '80s (with the help of equipment supplied by the US) or the current US/ UK bombings and exploitation of Iraqi children, violence is being responded to with more violence, hence a tragic lose-lose situation. This compilation of 15 articles lets the reader know how much the innocent have lost and continue to lose. Before venturing into this collection, one must prepare oneself for the worst expressions of misguided and violent foreign policy.

Iraq Under Siege discusses the aftermath of Desert Storm on the Iraqi people. After 11 years of sanctions and constant military aggression, the people of Iraq are still suffering tremendously under US/ UN policies. These policies were created in hopes of weakening Saddam Hussein's regime while securing strategic influence on Iraq's vast oil reserves, the second largest in the world. As a result, basic human necessities have either been destroyed by US/ UK bombing raids or withheld by the UN embargo, leaving the Iraqi people to suffer through one of the worst humanitarian disasters of recent times.

From individual perspectives, *Iraq Under Siege* explains the pain created by sanctions and military attacks on citizens and infrastructure, and why they have been an unsuccessful deterrent against Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. This group of radical scholars, activists, media specialists, and even a one time UN



Humanitarian Coordinator paint a picture of a recently prosperous country that has been conscientiously forced to sub-human standards. The wide range of authorship leaves us with a resource that is diverse, while presenting a focused cry for resolution.

Due to the number of experts commenting on related issues, redundancy is unavoidable. However, due to the weight of information, this redundancy does not infringe on the overall strength, but provides a constant reminder of important and necessary facts. This can work to the advantage of the non-avid reader, who can easily read one article and receive a complete perspective.

The entanglements of human rights, oil politics, propaganda, and enormous egos leaves the reader with tons to digest when formulating a platform for truth. Certain issues, such as the deliberate destruction of infrastructure, media perpetuated bigotry towards Muslims, and the ineffectiveness of the "Oil for Food," program are discussed using accessible language for those of us lacking a masters degree in International Relations. These are all topics that mainstream media may recognize on occasion, but do not comprise a significant portion of the journalism on Iraq.

Even with recent improvement, the majority of western mainstream media has not felt compelled to give the effects of sanctions anywhere near fair coverage. Upon deeper understanding, one realizes the purpose of sanctions is to cripple the economies of states that are reluctant to meet US nuclear and economic demands. This style of diplomacy operates on demonstrating American strength, a far priority stretch from preserving human life. Sanctions, especially in Iraq, kill by means much different from bombing campaigns. They use slow torturous methods such as malnutrition and preventable disease to accomplish premeditated goals. *Iraq Under Siege* uncovers any notion that the west is setting a positive moral example.

The million Iraqis who have died were not soldiers defending Saddam's regime, but mostly children under the age of five who continue to be victims of arrogant heads of state. Its once again a case of over privileged, air-conditioned decision makers acting as though "preserving life" only works for public relations, but when oil and muscle flexing is involved, is deemed impractical.

I mention air-conditioning because the average southern Iraqi needs a gallon of water a day to cope when the temperature can reach 140 degrees. It is no coincidence that much of the water and sewage treatment plants have been destroyed over 11 years of bombing, plus the embargo denies the entrance of chlorine (along with other water purification chemicals). This is just one of the many examples *Iraq Under Siege* presents that contributes to Iraq's ongoing quagmire... one problem always influences another.

America learned an awful lesson about the ramifications of misguided Foreign Policy toward the Middle East this past September 11th. As I write this review in the early stages of this unfolding of American humbleness, I wonder about the two possible outcomes. Either Iraq will be lifted out of devastation because of new understandings of abuse or trampled by an increasing rage that time and time again prevents policy makers from recognizing the sanctity of human life.

-Andrew Dickson

5 Days That Shook the World

by Alexander Cockburn, Jeffrey St. Clair & Allan Sekula
Verso Books

Paperback - 144 pages
ISBN: 185984779X

The title *5 Days That Shook the World* is an obvious reference to John Reed's opus on the Russian Revolution, *Ten Days That Shook the World*, which saw the Russian Revolution as the penultimate moment in the circulation of working class struggles that took place in the 1910s and 1920s. And like the Russian Revolution, the Battle of Seattle has its roots in a revolution in Mexico (both involved, in some way, with the name Zapata). Also like the Russian Revolution, attempts at "leadership" over the new anti-capitalist movement are being made by would-be vanguards. This leaves a question is left open: will we allow this new movement to be strangled by a vanguard just as the Bolsheviks strangled the Russian Revolution?

One of the most inspiring aspects of five days is that it relentlessly attacks some of these would-be leaders, the hierarchy of organized labor and liberal environmentalism, and in this way is divorced from Reed and his pro-Bolshevik cheerleading. However, the truly positive and important aspects of this book more-or-less end there.

The main parts of the text are diaries of the n30 actions in Seattle, the a16 action in DC and the DNC action in LA. These are a fun and informative read, especially for someone like me who really enjoys the autobiographical format. However, they do not really break any new ground or tell you anything you don't already know (if you know about these actions).

The rest of the text is taken up with analysis... and there is a lot to criticize.

One of the main problems is that the expressed politics, while having obvious affinities for the magazine *Monthly Review* and the eco-Marxist theorist James O'Connor, is amorphous at best. There is a sort of generic radical-Social Democrat feel to much of it that carries the classic problem of Social Democracy: it sounds radical, but isn't.

This is all neatly summed up with the assertion, "... justice in world trade is by definition a revolutionary and utopian aim. Let's get on with it" (p. 118).

One of the problems of Social Democracy is that it's based in the Second International, which was a Lesslean organization that saw the working class as containing only those engaged in industrial production and distribution¹, and which saw the working class as an object acted upon by the ruling class. Or put more succinctly: the ruling class (the embodiment of capital) is the active subject in the capital-labor relation, while the working class (the embodiment of labor) is an outside object which only reacts to the free movements of capital (this is the basis behind Lenin's idiotic statement "The working class can only attain a trade union consciousness").



This capital-centric notion of capitalism was alien to Marx who, in the *Grundrisse* and other texts, argued that the working class not only exists inside and against capitalism, but is an active subject. This notion has been taken up in recent years by the Autonomist Marxists², such as Harry Cleaver (author of *Reading Capital Politically*) and the Midnight Notes Collective, who argue that this capital-centric notion of capitalism has dogged revolutionary theoretical activity since the Second International. They've argued that this capital-centric notion creates rather absurd notions, such as the one expressed above, that "trade" can somehow be made "just".

The economics aspects of capitalism are based in exchange relations, the most basic of which is "trade". Here, "trade" is understood to mean "the exchange of goods of more-or-less equal value" [emphasis added]. This assigning of value is what necessitates a universal exchanger, such as money, which in turn enables the easier accumulation of capital, and thus creates economic inequality. Economic inequality is part of the basis of class distinctions (the other part being power inequality), and class distinctions necessitate a hierarchical governing structure (such as a state) to unify the ruling elite and keep the lower class(es) in line.

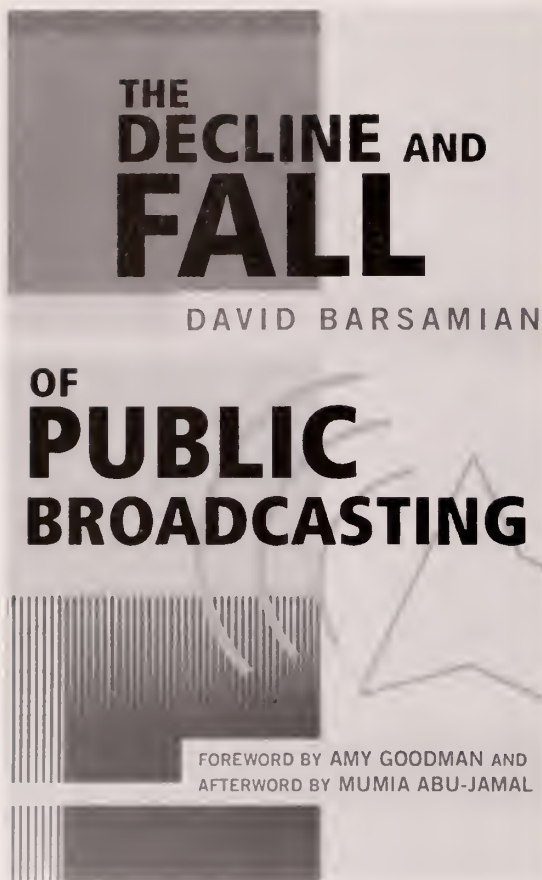
Thus, the struggle for "fair" or "just" trade is, at best, an attempt to regress to pre-capitalist notions of exchange, in which everyone gets a "fair" and "just" price for their commodities (regardless of whether or not their commodity is labor or balls of string). But the problem is that this is the basis for capitalism, and, as history has shown, can only serve to re-create it. This re-creation of the economic basis of capitalism necessitates hierarchical governing structures since class distinctions will necessarily re-appear. In this way, hierarchy also gets back in and destroys democracy. This struggle is by no means "revolutionary" since it is by no means essentially anti-capitalist.

In this way the authors, while rejecting the authoritarian behaviors of would-be vanguardists and their ilk, let capitalism back in through the back door through a sanctioning of exchange relations... much like how vanguardists have always let capitalism in through the back door by sanctioning hierarchical relations. Thus, while *5 Days...* does a great job giving an insider's look at the anti-globalization movement, it potentially undermines this movement with its programmatic statements.

-Eliza Joyce

¹ Against which people are increasingly coming to understand that the working class is composed of anyone who is involved in reproduction, as well as production (and who isn't part of the capitalist control structure... thus cops are *not* working class), since it is the exploited labor of those in both areas that enables capitalism. Thus, the working class is not only blue and white-collar wage workers, but also homemakers, students, peasants, the unemployed, etc.

² The Autonomist Marxists are an *anti-state* tradition, which come from the anti-state / left communist tradition which began with Marx (see Marx's introduction to the 1872 edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, where he states that the statist formulations in the manifesto are wrong, as well as *The Civil War in France*, *The Critique of the Gotha Programme*, and the *Grundrisse* as well as numerous letters and other texts for a great deal of evidence of his anti-statism). The primary concerns of the Autonomist Marxists are the autonomy of the working class from political parties and unions (both of which they view as instruments for incorporating the working class into the capitalist system) and class composition (with which they seek to understand how the working class is composed, as well as how it is *decomposed* by the attacks of the ruling class and *recomposed* by the actions it takes which confronts capitalism).



The Decline and Fall of Public Broadcasting

DAVID BARSAMIAN

Foreword by Amy Goodman

Afterword by Mumia Abu-Jamal

Concentration of the media has reached new heights, making it harder for alternative and critical voices to gain a hearing. Market pressures increasingly have encroached on the original mission of public broadcasting, which was to "provide a voice for groups that may otherwise be unheard."

"We are subjected to programming that is vacuumed of content, that presents a range of opinion from A to B, from GE to GM," writes David Barsamian, producer of *Alternative Radio*.

Yet around the country, innovative journalists and activists are creating more democratic, informative, and engaging media. In *The Decline and Fall of Public Broadcasting*, Barsamian gives an insider's account of these new media activists and the challenges they confront, drawing on his years of experience in public radio.

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Propaganda and the Public Mind: Conversations with Noam Chomsky
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THE AESTHETICS OF COMICS

David Carrier

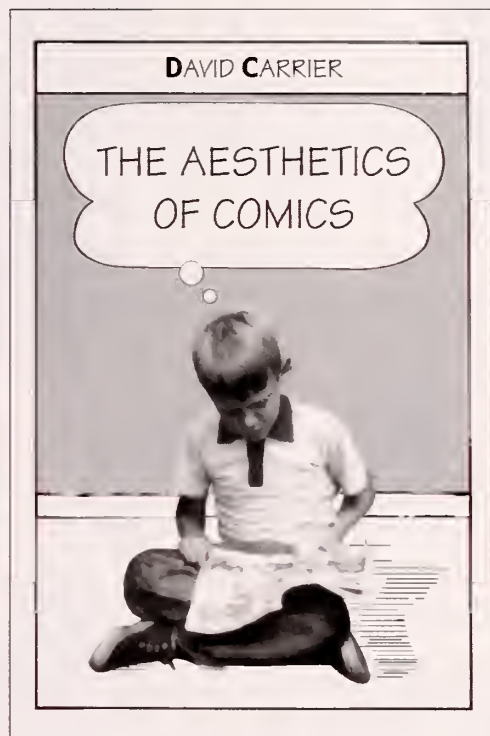
"The ingenuity with which the classical comic strip artists found ways of telling whole stories in four or five panels has been insufficiently appreciated by philosophers or historians of art. Carrier has written a marvelous book on these narrative strategies, from which we cannot but learn something about how the mind processes pictorial information and how the Old Masters coped with the urgent stories simple people had to understand." —Arthur C. Danto, Columbia University

"An indispensable and enjoyable contribution to discussions dealing with the end of Modernism, the function of art history, and the will to form a healthy development beyond current mannerist, postmodern malaise." —Mark Staff Brandl, *The Art Book*

From Gary Larson's *The Far Side* to George Herriman's *Krazy Kat*, comic strips have two obvious defining features. They are visual narratives, using both words and pictures to tell stories, and they use word balloons to represent the speech and thought of depicted characters. Art historians have studied visual artifacts from every culture; cultural historians have recently paid close attention to movies. Yet the comic strip, an art form known to everyone, has not yet been much studied by aestheticians or art historians. This is the first full-length philosophical account of the comic strip.

Distinguished philosopher David Carrier looks at popular American and Japanese comic strips to identify and solve the aesthetic problems posed by comic strips and to explain the relationship of this artistic genre to other forms of visual art. He traces the use of speech and thought balloons to early Renaissance art and claims that the speech balloon defines comics as neither a purely visual nor a strictly verbal art form, but as something radically new. Comics, he claims, are essentially a composite art that, when successful, seamlessly combine verbal and visual elements.

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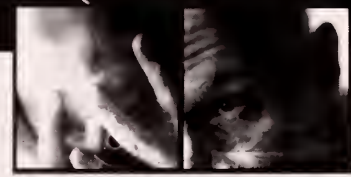
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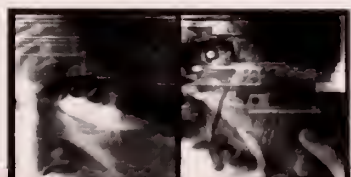
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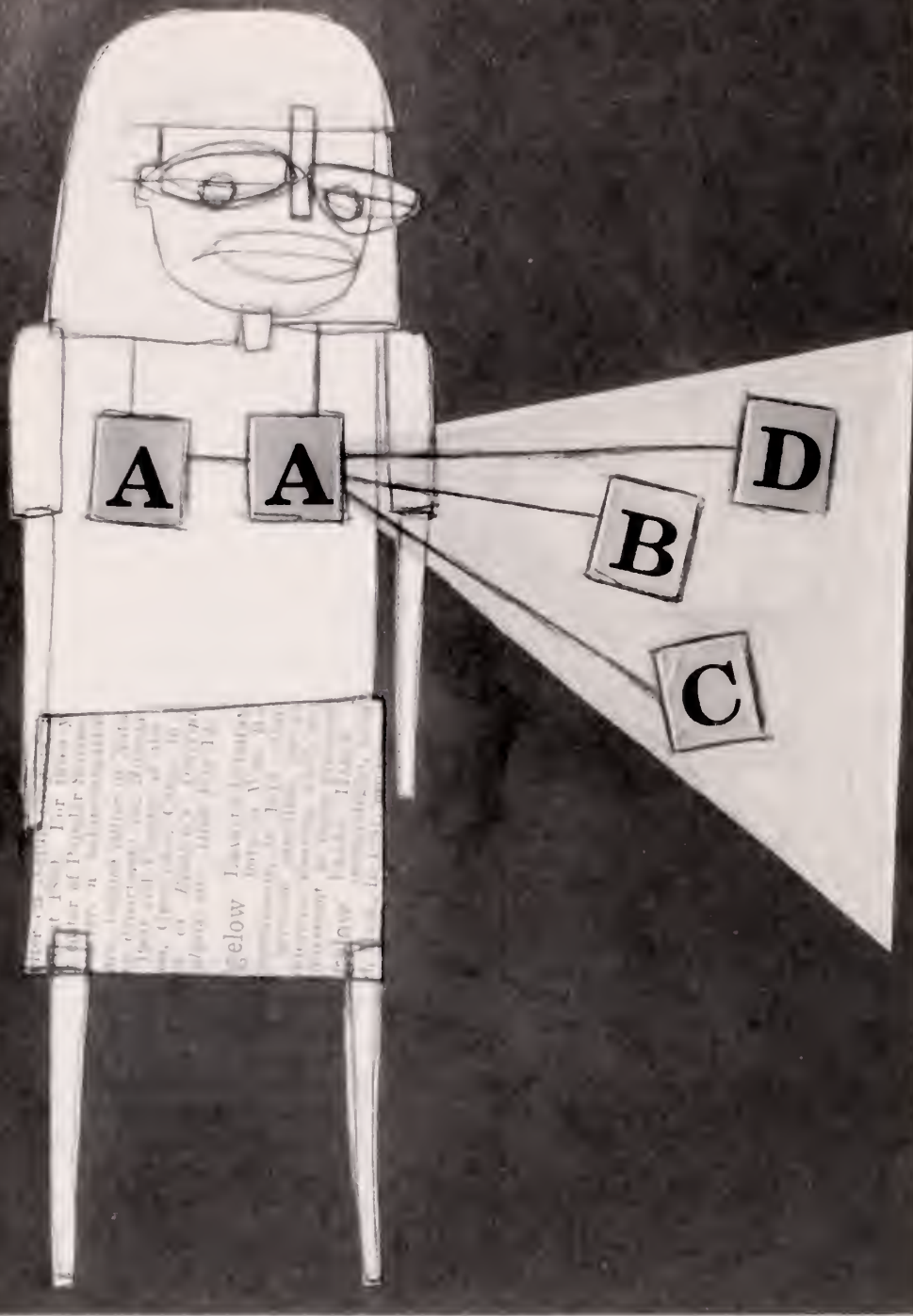


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SMALL BOOBS

talking about America's "Breast Obsession" with high-schooler Diana Fox

illustration Joshua Krause

Is American pop culture obsessed with body image? Having lived 17 years in America (my whole life), this is my conclusion: the culture places great emphasis on breast size. It values large breasts. Just flip through a Victoria's Secret catalogue filled with voluptuous models, look at the numerous breast implant advertisements on the back pages of *New York* magazine or *Marie Claire*, check out the latest air- or gel-bras at the department store, or watch one of the Oprah shows that showed women how to achieve Cosmo cover girl cleavage with masking tape. Growing up in boob-obsessed America, my AA-cup chest has not fared well. By the 7th grade, puberty had worked its hormonal powers on everything except my chest. I remember one of the boys in science class commenting, "Jeez...my sister even has a bigger chest than you, and she's in fifth grade." I was at the bottom rung of the boob superiority ladder in middle school, for I had nothing more than "mosquito bites" and, having no use for a sports bra in gym class, was left out of the sports-bra-wearer camaraderie. By the time I entered high school in ninth grade, I still was at the bottom rung, but this time I concealed my low boob status. With what? With a padded bra. A few rungs up on the boob ladder, I no longer felt like the odd girl, like a minority. The two wads of foam provided me a sense of confidence, pride and satisfaction, however false, superficial, and unauthentic it was.

Soon I discovered something better than a padded bra, something that would bounce like breasts, convincing all passersby that *mine*, the two mounds jutting protruding from my chest, were real. These were silicone breast inserts called Curves. I remember persuading my mother in ninth grade to let me purchase them online, arguing that I could not go to pool parties wearing a padded bra under a swim suit, nor could I wear a regular swimsuit which would make people wonder, "Where did her boobs go?" upon seeing my sudden lack of breasts. The Curves were about \$100, but after reading the testimonials at the website—"Thanks to Curves, now I feel so much more confident! Kathy, Seattle, Washington"—and watching the Curves television advertisements, I was convinced I'd feel more worthy as a female if I'd buy this product. I was convinced I'd wake up every morning with a new eagerness to take on the day, for the

Curves would provide me extra confidence, an extra feeling of superiority, a feeling that I was better than other females simply because there was something protruding under my shirt, simply because I had something to jiggle as I walked through the school corridors.

Initially I felt this greatness. But then later I started worrying – “What if these Curves, to my horror, fall out of my bra, to lay on the school cafeteria or student lounge floor?”

“Or,” I thought to myself, “what if one day I’ll find myself in a hot-and-heavy moment and *he* will discover my miniscule mounds shamefully hiding behind these slabs of silicone?” And thus I resorted to herbal supplements.

I read somewhere that certain herbs had estrogenic properties and learned from bio class that estrogen was responsible for breast development. I learned about herbal breast supplements from the least expected place: the 11:00 nightly news. A woman who had been taking herbal supplements and allegedly grew two inches was being interviewed. If it worked for her, it should work for me. I thus leapt into the world of Grobust herbal supplements.

I spent significant time researching the estrogenic properties of soy, fenugreek, and Goat’s Rue. I drank pungent soy milk. I purchased bottles of bitter, dark-brown fenugreek extract and fennel seed capsules at health food stores, piously consuming the products. I drank herbal teas meant for lactating mothers, figuring that these liquid concoctions would enlarge milk glands and thus make my boobs bigger. I visited a Grobust online message board where I communicated with other women who had hang-ups about their breasts.

There we updated each other on our “progress” and suggested other boob remedies such as olive oil or herbal pastes. It was an intimate yet anonymous environment, in which we supported each other in our quest for bigger breasts. One message board frequenter wrote about her venture to the grocery store on a hot summer day without wearing a padded bra and described how another woman, who she knew from high school, reacted with catty disgust towards her flat chest. I remember when other women at the message board, over the two years I had been visiting it, stated that they had given up on herbs and had already scheduled their implant surgery date. Consumed by the boob issue, I visited all kinds of breast herbal and implant Web sites.

I had considered implants and was an expert on the topic, thanks to informative Web sites, television news shows, and books, but I knew that I was too young, that I didn’t want to deal with scars or medical complications, and that my mother would not let me.

Next I resorted to real hormones. I had

heard from someone about a *Maxim* magazine article about transsexual men who apparently, according to the article, took hormones in order to develop breasts. If it worked for men, wouldn’t the hormones also work for me? I purchased birth control pills, progesterone cream and estrogen pills online. Yet I still had no success.

* * *

Then all of a sudden I decided to shed the padded bra, shed the Curves, and forget about the boob issue. The boob issue was only consuming me. It was superficial. I was not being true to myself. I gained inspiration to go pad-less from a small-chested friend who chose not to fake it. Summer of sophomore year I decided to see how my new Playtex *Thank Goodness It Fits* size 34 nearly A bra would fare at my month-long summer program. That summer I grew comfortable with going pad-less. I derived a sense of satisfaction and self-value from sources other than my cup size.

Although I now am a high school senior, I again hang, for the second time in my life, at the bottom rung of the boob superiority ladder. But I do not care.

What has influenced me to be obsessed about my boobs? I acquired my sense that bigger-boobs-are-better from day-to-day living in America. At the grocery store there’d be the large-breasted, computer-enhanced cover girl models you’d stare at while waiting in line. Popular female music pop stars such as Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera have breast implants. I used to watch *Baywatch*, featuring the 24-inch-waist, 34-D female life guards (who also didn’t have a bit of fat on their upper thighs thanks to liposuction). There is an entire market concerned with boob and body image. This market thrives. There are plenty of products out there to fix your inadequacies. Most people find it be easier to purchase a solution in a bottle rather than change their attitudes about body image and accept flaws. There is collagen for the lips, liposuction for the tummy, plastic implants for a more masculine jaw, spandex girdles, and more, all promising greater confidence.

I remember when I was at my mother’s dermatologist to experience my first Power Peel (exfoliation treatment), where I sat in the waiting room littered with beauty magazines. The bathroom had mirror walls, which strategically played on patient’s insecurities. I remember a clip of one of the dermatologist’s conversations with a patient, “...and it’s so important, some people’s careers depend on their looks.” Later I reflected on that. Humans are not tolerant of differences or flaws, such as warts or moles. Taunting or name-calling is part of everyone’s childhood. A kid who

doesn’t wear name brand clothes will be ridiculed. A kid who’d have a pimple on his nose would be derided simply because bacteria happened to infect one of his oil glands.

Most of us carry these feelings of I-am-better-than-you-because-I-have-a-cool-lunchbox superiority into our adulthood, except as adults we replace lunchbox with car, face, body, or house.

We are consumed by consumerism. We feel superior because we purchased the latest Palm Pilot (and the John next to us doesn’t have one). We feel elevated because we are wearing Calvin Klein Obsession perfume, equating it with sexiness and coolness, the television advertisement in which two lovers leap towards each other having left us in awe.

We need to question what is suggested by commercials and magazines. We shouldn’t treat billboards and the Dos and Don’ts section of the *Glamour* magazine as our bibles, things that should be followed simply because it was printed on pretty, glossy paper. Just because the magazine says that puff coats are the hottest new winter coats doesn’t mean you should go out and buy one. People need to realize that advertisements are created by other humans (not by God) whose sole intention is to play on human weaknesses/insecurities and thereby sell their products.

If buying the latest goods or perfecting one’s body is the primary source of one’s happiness and security, then what would happen if a fire left one covered in scars? One would feel worthless, miserable, and embarrassed to face the public. One’s looks would fail to make one feel superior to the nearby Joe or Jane.

What if breast cancer led to a mastectomy? Would you be an emotional wreck because you lost the confidence and sexual worth your breasts once provided you with? You never practiced resisting the culture. You found it easier to go with the flow, to not question.

Living according to American pop culture standards, heeding the advertisements for the latest new suede pants, inhibits one from developing an authentic identity. Yeah, having a symmetrical face and minimal body fat is currency in our culture. I read an article in a *Vogue* magazine entitled “Confessions of a Pretty Woman,” in which the writer haughtily lipped off about her perfect body getting her ahead of movie lines or getting her speedy restaurant service, but then again, narcissism and materialism buys a fake ego. This ego can crumble when your expensive Lamborghini gets wrecked, when an apartment fire has turned your skin into wrinkled leather, when a mentally-ill person on the subway slashes your face with a knife, when you go into debt and can no longer afford the latest Gucci sunglasses. Consider this. ★

What you see before you is a work in progress and will likely remain so. I write this to encourage dialogue and to provide a resource to people dealing with difficult situations. I do not write this to provide answers to every situation where someone is accused of abuse. Every situation will have unique characteristics that require unique responses and courses of action. What I hope is that this will spark a dialogue about how people accused of rape or abuse or sexual assault should conduct themselves regardless of their feelings of guilt or innocence. As radical communities we need to have extensive dialogue about how to deal with abusive behavior, and this is one current within that dialogue. We should ask ourselves many questions. What responsibilities does the accused have to upholding a process of accountability regardless of their feelings of guilt or innocence? As survivors and communities how do we hold abusers responsible? How do we create strong communities that are ready to deal with difficult and controversial situations without factionalizing or falling apart? Is it a priority to determine guilt and innocence, or is it a priority to create processes that demand accountability and deconstruct privilege?

There are some aspects of the ten suggestions I would like to explain first and foremost. We find ourselves in a world where the overwhelming amount of abuse occurs with men preying on women. It is a patriarchal phenomena. In this document I have used the gender neutral term s/he. I wish for survivors that fall outside of the male = assailant / female = survivor model to have visibility. I wish to speak to all abusers regardless of their gender. It is not an attempt to cloak the fact that abuse is largely perpetuated by men against women.

Also in this document I do address people who feel that they have been falsely accused of whatever they've been accused of doing. My reason for doing this is mainly, because people who are in denial need to be spoken to, and they need to be held to standards of conduct that support an atmosphere that challenges privilege and oppression. It goes without saying that in the majority of instances when people are called out for abuse it is because, in fact, they abused the person(s). However, there exist a minority of instances in which people are falsely accused of things.

This writing comes from the context of my own experience of dealing with accusations of sexually coercive behavior. Accusations which were later revealed, by the person my accusers had pegged to be the "survivor," to have no validity. However, there were a good three months where, due to miscommunication and misunderstanding (take my advice, don't use e-mail to communicate about serious and emotionally charged issues), I honestly believed I was being accused by someone of manipulative and sexually coercive behavior. I did a lot of self-investigation and soul searching. Luckily, I had some great people to help me process through my conflicting feeling surrounding dealing with these very frightening accusations of abuse. This is my way of giving back to all those who gave so much to me, and to a radical community which inspires me. It is a product of a very real, very intense lived experience facing accusations of abuse, and the reflection that followed.

I would like to say, in my opinion, that false accusations of abuse are themselves a form of emotional abuse. However, it is very important to keep a perspective about such things. The priority, in any situation, where someone is calling out someone else for abuse must clearly lay with the needs and desires of those claiming to have survived abuse. This is not just to err on the side of caution, as false accusations are by most accounts an extreme rarity. It is to support the beginnings of communities that trust those who stand up to those that hurt them. It is to support those that occupy the front lines in the struggle against hierarchy. Those beautiful souls who take the struggle home, where its most difficult, and those whose strength should be displayed, if they wish, on the covers of radical tabloids alongside photos of black blockers doing property alteration. Their militancy doesn't leave them when the demo or deed is done, they live it.

Ten Suggestions For People Called Out For Abusive Behavior

1. Be Honest, Stay Honest, Get Honest

If you know that you hurt the person calling you out for abuse, acknowledge it. If you think it's a possibility that you might have hurt them let them know. If you have any inkling that some way that you interacted with them might have compromised their dignity and boundaries, let them know. The first step to dealing with our abusive tendencies is getting out of denial. Denial is like an infection. It starts in some locality (specific instances and situations, nitpicking at certain parts of an account of the situation[s]), and if untreated festers and eventually consumes us entirely. When we are able to vocalize that we are aware that something isn't quite right with our behavior it brings us a step closer to dealing with it in a meaningful and honest way.

2. Respect Survivor Autonomy

Survivor autonomy means that the survivor of abuse, and the survivor of abuse alone, calls the shots concerning how abusive behavior is dealt with. This means s/he calls the shots and you live with her/his decisions. You don't get to determine how or even if a mediation/confrontation happens, or initiate action towards a resolution. You get to make it explicitly clear that you respect their autonomy in the situation, and that you're willing to work towards a resolution. They may prefer to never be in the same space with you again and may not wish to speak with you.

It is not their responsibility, nor their duty, to attempt resolution or enter into dialogue with you or take any specific course of action, for that matter. However, it is your responsibility, as someone being called out, to respect their needs and desires.

3. Learn To Listen

It is imperative that you open your ears and your heart to the person calling you out. This will likely be difficult, because people tend

TAKING THE FIRST STEP

ten suggestions for people called out for abusive behavior

by wispy cockles

to get defensive and closed when they are accused of wrongdoing. Very few people in this world want to be pegged as the bad apple of the bunch. To listen, you will need to keep your defensive and knee-jerk reactionary tendencies in check. These suggestions could be very helpful to you:

- A) Let the person calling you out direct the dialogue. If they want you to answer questions do so, but otherwise let them have the floor.
- B) Be aware when you're formulating responses and counterpoints in your head while they're expressing their account of the situation(s), and attempt to stop doing so.
- C) Focus on their account of things, and save going over in your head how you remember things until after they have spoken.
- D) Reflect upon the entirety of what they expressed and not just the disparities between your and their account of events.
- E) Talk with your friends about how you can better listen before you enter a mediation/confrontation.

4. Practice Patience

Sometimes things take time to be resolved. Sometimes it takes months, years, decades for a resolution, and sometimes there is no clear cut resolution. However, there is no timeline for resolution when human dignity is at stake. Be patient and never attempt to force a resolution, a process, or a dialogue. You may ask for a dialogue or a mediation, but if the answer is *no* it is *no* until s/he says it is *yes*. Don't attempt to wear down the boundaries of the person calling you out by asking for dialogue or mediation over and over again. Stay put, reflect, and think about the power dynamics in your relations with others.

5. Never, Ever, Blame the Victim

S/he did not ask for violence or abuse. S/he did not ask for it in how s/he dressed. S/he didn't ask for it, because s/he was under the influence of alcohol or drugs. S/he didn't ask for it, because s/he is a sex worker. S/he didn't ask for it because she chose to make out with you or because she went back to your place or because she is known to be into s/m or because she is a "tease" or because she is a "slut". S/he did not ask for it in any way. It is not acceptable to write off his/her responses to your behavior, because she is "hypersensitive" to "your" threatening of abusive behavior. It is not acceptable to say that s/he is "exaggerating" the abuse, because s/he is a feminist/queer liberationist/activist/punk/youth/"a PC thug"/etc. It is not acceptable to say that s/he is making it up, because s/he has a history of abuse or any other such nonsense. Making excuses for why someone is to blame for your hurtful actions are a way for you to avoid taking responsibility for "your" fucked up behavior. They expose you as a coward.

6. Speak For Yourself

You can account for your experience and your experience and your experience alone. Don't ever assume that you can know how the person calling you out as an abuser experienced the situation(s). People

walk down the same streets everyday and have very different experiences. This is a simple fact of life. It is, also, a very different experience to have the winds of privilege blowing against your back than to have the winds of oppression blowing in your face as you walk down those same streets. You cannot know how someone else felt at a certain moment, and so you should never presume that you have the right to judge the validity of their feelings. If they have expressed how they feel, then what you need to do, first and foremost, is to listen. It is important that you actively seek to understand their feelings. If you find that you simply cannot understand their feelings no matter how sincerely you try it is still not your place to judge the validity of them.

7. Don't Engage In Silencing Behavior

By telling your side of the story, you could be creating an atmosphere that silences people who have been abused. If you feel that there are major discrepancies between your account of the situation(s) and their account, and that you are being falsely accused, take a deep breath. First you need to know that you can never stop sincerely investigating yourself and questioning how your behavior affects others... the case is never closed. With time you might come to realize that, yes, in fact your behavior was abusive. It is your responsibility to continuously challenge your notions about how your behaviors effect others, and to challenge your understandings of how you hold power over others in your relationships. Read books, enter into recovery programs for batterer/sexual assailants, seek out a therapist, and discover your own ways of challenging yourself and your conceptions of how your behavior effects others.

Understand that if you attempt to silence the person(s) by promoting your account of things as "the truth" you will silence others as well. People will fear coming forward with their stories and fear confronting abuse, because of YOUR silencing behavior. If you are committed to creating a world where people speak freely about the wrongs done to them you will want to avoid focusing on how the accusers are "lying" about you, and you will want to avoid airing your presumptions and theories as to their "motives." One example off the top of my head is how one particular rapist/sexual assailant passed out a list of 40 points of contention at a punk show to refute the stories of three women calling him out. The flyer went on and on about the disparities between these women's stories and the "truth." This is one blatant example of silencing behavior, but it can act in far more subtle ways.

Silencing behavior is ANY behavior which attempts to make the survivor of abuse out to be the perpetrator of misinformation. It is any behavior which attempts to make the abuser out to be the victim. It very quickly puts into question the character of the person calling out an abuser. Often it leads to a backlash against them both explicit (threats, harassment, violence) and implicit (endless questioning, non-supportive behavior i.e. "I don't want to get involved in this" or "I'm hearing a lot of different stories"). Silencing behavior creates an atmosphere where people fear and don't call out their abusers, and therefore an



atmosphere where abuse flourishes.

However, this does not mean that you should not speak of how you experienced the situation(s) differently from the other person(s) calling you out. It simply means that it is your responsibility to do so in a way that is respectful and that does not help to foster an atmosphere of silence around abuse. You may need to relate your experiences to those with which you have close friendships/working relationships and to those that approach you, but as I said above speak for yourself. Do not intersperse their account with yours to illustrate the inconsistencies that you perceive. Do not relate the person(s) stories for them. Do not go on and on about how they should have called you out in a different manner. Do not talk about their shortcomings in the relationship/ friendship. Do not cast yourself in the role of the victim of a "witch hunt" or "cointelpro". Do not assert that they are lying, and if your account differs from theirs make it clear that this is how you and only you account for your experiences(s) of the situation(s). Let what you say be limited exclusively to your recollection. If you feel the need to vent, find a good person to vent to who is outside of your immediate social scene/community (if you look hard enough you might find a therapist willing to work with you on a sliding scale basis, preferably find one with a radical feminist analysis) or someone outside the scene community altogether (who you know for sure has not been a victim of abuse). If you honestly believe you are being falsely accused, your character will have to speak for yourself rather than you speaking for your character.

8. Don't Hide Behind Your Friends

Often the people most vocal in defending abusers are not the abusers themselves, but their friends, comrades, and lovers. "But s he's really a good person/activist/artist" or "S he contributed so much to the community/scene" or "The person I know would never do something like that" are some common defensive reactions among many. If you feel that people are trying to insulate you from your problems or from questioning your actions... let them know that it isn't acceptable. You need to hear the criticisms and anger of the survivor(s) and their allies. As well you need to stop others from engaging in silencing behavior. Let them know that if they truly care about you, that instead of defending your character and reacting to the accusations, they need to help you examine yourself and figure out ways of transforming dominating behaviors.

9. Respond To The Wishes Of The Survivor And The Wishes Of The Community

Taking responsibility for our harmful actions is an integral part of the healing process. You will need to respond to the wishes of the survivor and the community not just for their healing, but yours as well. If s he or they wish that you be suspended from certain projects/activities or that you engage in a batterers/assailants program or that

you do book reports on books about ending rape and abuse or if they want you to do anything within the realm of possibility don't argue with them... give them what they ask for. You need to show the survivor and the community that you are acting in good faith and that you are ready to deal with your problems of abuse or at the very least that you are willing to sincerely investigate the possibility that you engaged in abusive behavior. You need to show the survivor and the community that you respect their autonomy and their ability to make decisions that meet their needs and desires for safety, healing, and ending oppression. Again if you want to live in a world free of abuse, rape, and oppression you will support survivor autonomy and community self-determination even if you feel you are being "falsely accused." Do not engage in the silencing behavior of attacking the demands and process of the survivor(s) or the community. This is what abusers and their supporters typically do to create a smokescreen of issues to take the heat off of themselves.

10. Take Responsibility... Stop Abuse and Rape Before It Starts.

It takes a lot of courage and self-knowledge to admit that you've hurt someone, that you compromised their dignity and self worth, or that you used power over someone in the worst ways. It takes a lot of sincerity to make an apology without expecting to be applauded or thanked for it. However, this is what it will take to start overcoming our abusive tendencies. To know that you have wronged someone and to do otherwise is to perpetuate the hierarchy. It is to be more than simply complicit within it, but to actively support it. It will take honesty, diligent self-investigation, and compassion to start to overcome our abusive tendencies. Once your able to admit that you have a problem with (sometimes or always) abusing people you can begin to learn how and why you do it. You can learn early warning signs that you're slipping back into old patterns, and you'll be better able to check yourself. My life has been a life of unlearning such patterns of abuse, of learning to reject the roles of both the abuser and the abused, and it is far from over. Bad habits are easily taken up again, and many times it is easy to assume that we are not wielding power over someone. We must persistently question this assumption just as we would demand that any assumption be questioned, lest it become dogma.

It is crucial that we learn to ask for consent from our sexual partners. It is crucial that we learn to recognize aggressive and passive aggressive abuse in its various emotional, economic, physical, and sexual manifestations, and that we stop it before it escalates to more severe and harmful levels. We need to call it out when we are aware of it in other people, as well as ourselves. This process is a process of overcoming of oppression, of rejecting the roles of oppressor and oppressed. It is a path that leads to freedom, and a path that is formed by walking. Will you take the first step? ★



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incident on norfolk street

wylie lenz and american car culture



illustration by josh macphee

It was Thanksgiving Day, which didn't hold any real emotional significance for me, but the fact that it did for so many other people meant that I ended up spending the day with my mom and my brother, Andrew (our respective groups of friends were all busy). We went to see a movie together and ate a soy-turkey dinner at a vegan buffet. Later that evening, Mom had gone over to her boyfriend's place, and Andrew (who normally had a full social schedule) suggested that the two of us go bike riding. I was just getting over a cold, and felt that some moderate exercise might do me good. Plus, I rarely got the chance to spend time with my brother. So, I took him up on his offer.

We rolled out of the driveway and pedaled north over the wet pavement. Traffic was light — a rarity in Houston. Chatting about whatever came to mind, we made our way to the nearest bank so that Andrew could deposit his paycheck at the ATM (being stoned, he had some difficulty working the machine). The original plan had been to do some dumpster diving. This was a nightly activity for me, making the rounds of my favorite trash receptacles, rooting through discards behind book stores, magazine stands and bagel shops. My brother, on the other hand, had little experience reclaiming still-useful trash, although he was supportive of and interested in the concept. As we rode along the mostly empty streets, I pontificated obnoxiously about how our disposable society encourages waste, and touched upon some of the finer points of dumpster etiquette.

Unfortunately, we never made it to any of my choice spots, because the sky opened up and it began to rain. We considered just finding some shelter and waiting to see if we could sit it out. Eventually, however, I urged that we head back home.

We were less than half a mile away from Andrew's apartment when the downpour abruptly ended. Annoyed, I didn't want to go home, but I also didn't want to venture as far away as the used book store and risk getting caught if it started raining again. So, I suggested heading over to the Post Office where I had a mailbox. It was only a couple of blocks out of the way, and I'd been expecting some mail; this way, I reasoned, it would not feel as if the whole evening — and getting soaked — had been for naught. I felt a great satisfaction when I opened up the box to find a plethora of letters and zines.

With my shoulder, I pushed my way through one of the pair of heavy glass doors that opened from the lobby into the parking lot, where my brother was waiting with our bicycles. It was raining again, the cold, hard drops smacking against the cement and our skin. We stood there for a short while, again considering whether we should wait or just ride the few blocks home. After a few moments, it did seem to let up a bit, although it didn't stop completely. Still, it seemed like a good cue, and we hopped on our bikes and pedaled towards Shepherd Street.

* * *

At first, I hadn't even seen the woman. She was on the opposite side of the street, facing me, standing on the curb and poised as if she too was waiting for a break in the traffic. Even from across the street, her attire struck me as flamboyant, gaudy: skin-tight leopard print pants, a silver spaghetti-strap blouse, and high-heeled black shoes. I also noticed that she carried no purse.

I observed her antics even while pretending not to see her. She called out and waved, although I wasn't sure to whom these actions were directed. I thought she might be drunk, trying to engage me in conversation. I looked at the pavement, and then directly across the street and down the road.

The woman stepped off the curb and into the street. I don't recall thinking that she might be in danger of being hit; the thought simply didn't occur to me. As it was, the approaching car slowed down as it neared the woman, gradually decelerating until it had almost reached her, finally coming to a complete stop, the front bumper only inches away from the pedestrian's knees. She turned towards the windshield, and her movements seemed to echo and encapsulate Rizzo's angry exclamation in *Midnight Cowboy*: "Hey, I'm walking here!"

I saw it as my own opportunity to hustle across Shepherd; the car was stopped, after all, with the woman running interference. Andrew was waiting for me on the other side, slowly wheeling his bike in circles. Within moments, I was next to him, and we easily fell into pace with each other, riding side by side. However, we'd only gone a few dozen feet from the intersection when it seemed that the same thought occurred to each of us independently. In fact, I can't even recall whether we said anything out loud, something along the lines of "We really should go back and make certain that woman is okay". It may have been that we just silently agreed to backtrack, my brother curving to the right while I steered a tighter arc, to the left.

We hadn't yet finished our respective U-turns. I was looking at Andrew's face as we

passed each other, perhaps confirming the mutual decision, when we heard the sound. It was a heavy, dull thud, and the slick skidding of rubber over wet asphalt (although, moments later—and now, as I write—I couldn't say with any confidence which sound reached my ears first). There was a drawn-out spilt second before my brain had a reaction, but suddenly comprehension gripped me, as I saw my brother's face contort and I heard him moan a plaintive, "Oh, no."

* * *

I should say this now, confessing to my partisanship: I hate ears. I've been making that same statement for more than a decade, but I don't think I really meant it in anything other than a casual sense until recently. Indeed, I have been a car owner, from the age of sixteen (when my dad kicked down a decrepit old Buick), until the age of twenty-six (when, after being introduced to train hopping, I took out a classified ad in the newspaper and sold my truck). As such, I was forced to limit my disdain, in order to absolve myself of the guilt of being a conscious hypocrite.

Previously, when I would say that I hated ears, sure: I disliked traffic, particularly when it affected me personally; I was capable of being intellectually outraged by the pollution produced by automobiles; I became indignant when reading about the environmental disasters and human rights abuses associated with oil exploration. And now, if I wanted to write a position paper rather than an impassioned polemic, I would discuss at length the aforementioned negatives, citing statistics regarding the mass consumption of finite resources, suburban sprawl, automobile-related deaths, the rise of the phenomenon of road rage.

Ultimately, however, these concerns remained somewhat abstract for me, as they do for many people: knowing the facts was not enough to get me out of my car, at least not completely. Really, I lacked the passion of someone who has ceased to view a social ill as something other than a necessary evil; after all, I knew that we all needed cars to be fully functional members of society. It was only when I got rid of my car that I actually internalized a sincere opposition to this dominant mode of transportation, that I was able to gain some objective distance from driving and, more broadly, car culture.

Now, what really resonates with me emotionally and personally is the tangible impact of that car culture, the way I observe both my immediate surroundings and myself being affected. Essentially, I have come to feel that the automobile is indicative of an outrageous arrogance, wedded to the nurturing of an oblivious state of mind; in fact, when the potential consequences are sufficiently resonant, being

oblivious becomes a form of arrogance.

I see this combination manifested in the actions of individual motorists when I am crossing a street on foot or on my bike, when the drivers of the approaching cars are too unobservant to notice me. More disturbingly, I often make eye contact with a particular driver, yet he or she still refuses to tap the brakes, to deviate from the procession even for a moment in order to allow my safe passage — it as if I am being dared to not move quickly enough. This observation is not limited in its import to a comment on manners: these people are behind the wheels of automobiles, swiftly moving machines that weigh a ton or more. If they were to strike me, I'd be seriously injured or killed, yet this thought most likely doesn't enter into their minds, failing to penetrate the insulated world of their ears' upholstered interiors. Apparently, these drivers think nothing of risking my life and the lives of others. In this way, the living human being is reduced to the level of mere physical obstacle, less important than the functioning of a mechanized object, a consumer product.

Reading the local newspaper, I find that the "Area Briefs" section lists a cyclist or pedestrian injured or killed by a motorist on an average of about once every ten days; typically, this sort of perfunctory report ends with some variation on the assurance that "no charges were filed." This is not to mention the multiple daily reports that exist to cover the number of injury accidents involving only motorists. Yet, virtually no one will admit to being anything other than a good driver. As a passenger in friends' cars, I find myself biting my tongue as they back up without looking, make a right hand turn while looking to the left, come to a stop blocking cross walks, tailgate, etc., etc.

On a societal level, this oblivious automotive arrogance is on display most profoundly when I take a moment to consider the physical design of our civilization. Simply put, it is absolutely staggering to think about how much public space is devoted to the automobile. Stepping off private property, I am swept into a world that seems to be designed exclusively for the movement of cars and trucks. Now that I only rarely and reluctantly participate in this world as a driver, it strikes me as utterly ridiculous, and downright obscene. How did we get to this point, at which our physical world has been manipulated so that seemingly all available space is devoted to cement rivers to be navigated by these stinking metal boxes, and islands at which to dock them? How many laws have been written to regulate this traffic? It strikes me as such an offensive waste, covering the earth with asphalt where vegetables could be grown, where houses could be built, where children could play, or where nature could simply remain

wild. Sometimes, I feel overwhelmed by the concrete that separates my body from the dirt.

* * *

I didn't see the actual collusion. Andrew told me later that he hadn't witnessed the moment of impact either, but he had turned around in time to see the woman being hurled through the air and landing on the pavement, face-first, a good fifteen feet from where she had stood. When it clicked, when I realized what had just happened, I heard myself scream, "You fucker!" I jumped off my bicycle, let it drop in someone's front lawn and ran back towards the intersection.

As I approached, the driver was getting out of his car. "I didn't see her!" he cried defensively, although I don't know if it was in reaction to my accusation, or if he was already beginning the process of rationalizing his role in the accident. I yelled to Andrew, "Ride home and call 911!" Time was moving slowly, and it seemed as if several minutes passed before I figured out why my brother was apparently ignoring my imperative: instead of riding the block to his apartment, he rode back across the street to the fast-food joint to use their telephone.

He later told me that he was ignored at the counter, as he pleaded with someone to call an ambulance. In fact, he had given up and was ready to head back across the street to the video rental store, to see if he might have better luck there. Before he was out the door, however, someone told him that there were two Sheriff's deputies in the restroom; when they emerged, Andrew explained to them what had happened.

When the two officers arrived on the scene, almost immediately I became even angrier. The woman was still face down on the pavement, as I crouched down next to her, encouraging her to lie still. One of the cops went to direct traffic around the accident, while the other squatted next to the woman to begin grilling her. "So, have you been drinking tonight?" was the first question out of his mouth. He asked her if she had any identification, if she lived nearby. She just shook her head, and the occasional gurgling sound forced itself past her lips. Every so often, she would attempt to get up off the ground, at which point either the cop or I would urge her to stay still. I wasn't convinced that she understood what was happening, if she even knew that she'd been hit by a car.

Not surprisingly, a small group of people gathered at the intersection. I saw the driver standing behind his car, his face illuminated by the flashing hazard lights. He looked like

Sylvester Stallone, if the action hero had quit exercising and become soft. A goatee lent definition to a chin that was being engulfed by his swollen neck, and his husky body was clad in fashionable clothes, a slick suit worn with a navy turtleneck shirt. Over the course of the next half an hour or so, I watched his frightened eyes become more assured, as he repeatedly explained to anyone who would listen how the woman had suddenly appeared in the street — that he'd hit his brakes, but there simply had not been enough time to stop. A few men circled around him, talking loudly, offer-

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ing their versions of the accident. They all seemed to be confirming each other's stories, helping each other to fill in the missing details, subconsciously working to get all the elements to match. I don't think it was conspiratorial, but rather quite natural: the power of suggestion is especially potent during moments of excitement and drama.

The Sheriff's deputies told us (only after we'd asked, more than once) that an ambulance had been called, and that an HPD officer would soon arrive to take statements. In the meantime, a carload of young, hip women stopped on Norfolk, unable to pass. When they got out, their expression of concern led me to wonder if they knew the woman who'd been hit; it turned out that they were just being sympathetic, an emotion no one else on the scene managed to muster. One of them approached the injured pedestrian, holding a towel, and attempted to cover her with it, or offer it as a cushion. Apparently, this display of compas-

sion was just too much for one of the cops, as he suddenly felt motivated to clear the street, forcing us all to abandon the injured woman and retreat to the curb.

As we were waiting, another on-looker joined me on the corner, next to the stop sign. It turned out that he was the person driving the car that had managed to come to a stop before the woman as she stood in the right lane of traffic. "I pulled into the Blockbuster parking lot so I could come see if she was alright," he told me. Unfortunately, the accident had already happened by the time he had parked. Later, as the group on our corner mingled with the group that had formed around the driver, I heard this Good Samaritan claim, "She was just standing in the road, I almost hit her myself." From my perspective, it seemed that he had easily come to a gradual stop.

I thought about it, trying to set aside my anger (regarding both the specific incident and cars in general) and see things as they were. Shepherd is a straight shot, so the line of vision is uninterrupted all the way to Richmond, the next major intersection. It is also fairly well lit at night. Admittedly, it was raining, which would reduce visibility and stopping time. Yet, that first car had managed to stop under exactly the same circumstances. Of course, the woman shouldn't have been in the street, but she most definitely had not suddenly darted into the road from the curb.

While I don't believe that the driver had deliberately run her down, I do believe that he was negligent as a motorist. Either he simply didn't see her, which only would have been possible had he not been paying attention; or he had been going much too fast, too fast to stop; or he had seen her and simply assumed that she would move out of his way.

* * *

The HPD officer was big, beefy and befuddled. He arrived about the same time as the paramedics. The pair of EMTs backed up the ambulance as close as possible to the spot where the woman was sprawled. One of them seemed serious and competent, while the other one appeared to be in the middle of his first night on the job, completely cynical and remarkably undisturbed by his own lack of knowledge or ability. In fact, the competent fellow soon enlisted Andrew and me to aid him, as he labored to get the women onto the trauma board, after having first secured her neck in a brace. He wanted us to hold the gurney steady while he and his partner lifted the

woman onto it; as I leaned over her, a powerful whiff of alcohol flooded into my nostrils. It was distressing to witness the lack of grace with which the EMTs handled her — I'd always wanted to believe that paramedics would be precise and cautious in their actions. The two of them were quick to let their irritation show as the woman protested incoherently and wept.

The HPD cop questioned the woman before the gurney was loaded into the ambulance. He was less coarse with her than the Sheriff's deputies had been, but certainly no more sympathetic. Mostly, it seemed that he was merely going through the motions, interviewing witnesses because it was required for his report, not because he was interested in determining what happened (having already decided that the driver was not at fault). His main concern appeared to be getting out of the rain.

Amazingly, the cop did not ask Andrew and me for our statements. I asserted my position: "My brother and I were both about twenty-five feet from the intersection when the accident happened. We'd like to make statements." I couldn't believe that I was going out of my way to talk to a police officer. The cop fumbled with his notepad and pen; the rain was now coming down in sheets, and I saw the ink running across the page as he jotted down our names and telephone numbers. He asked which we'd heard first, the thump or the skid. Both Andrew and I had to admit that we could not say for sure.

The cop thanked us. Along with my brother and myself, the cop and the driver were the only people left at the scene. The cop indicated to the latter that he was free to go, and with a nod dismissed Andrew and myself. I felt frustrated and guilty. I wanted some conclusion, or some indication that I would be contacted when the situation was resolved in some way. As Andrew and I mounted our bikes, I couldn't help but sneer at the driver, "So, what about you: have you been drinking tonight?" It was a pointless accusation, not designed to accomplish anything other than to give expression my self-righteous anger.

"Nope. No sir," he replied, shaking his head, refusing to meet my eye.

* * *

The next day, I called the police, attempting to locate the officer who'd taken my statement; I was less agitated, and felt that I'd be able to offer a more coherent recollection of the incident. After calling several numbers, I ended up reaching someone who was willing to speak to me, although his effort to help was marginal, at best. I explained what I wanted, and asked if I had the appropriate department.

"Look," said the man on the other end of the line, "I'm sure that the officer got all the

information he needed." He was unwilling or unable to help me any further. I couldn't believe that it was impossible to call the police with information relating to an accident, that there was no established method for a citizen to contribute pertinent information.

I also called Ben Taub, the hospital where people without money are directed, guessing that this would be the facility to which the woman was taken. It came as no surprise when I was told that the hospital would not release information about its patients, except to family members. I hung up the phone, having quickly exhausted any means of discovering what had happened, or the woman's current condition.

My overactive sense of guilt was operating full-force. I started to think more and more about why the woman had been in the road, acting so strangely. It was fairly apparent that she had been drinking, but I began to wonder whether there might have been some other explanation. Perhaps she was having a medical episode. Maybe she'd just had a fight with a loved one. Maybe she'd just been robbed, or her child kidnapped. As much as I tried to think of something else, my mind kept at it. The worst scenario I could imagine was that she'd just been raped, and then dumped by her attacker into a strange neighborhood: there she was, trying to signal some random guy on a bicycle for help, only to be run down by a car.

I didn't know what I wanted to happen, how I wanted the situation resolved. I still don't. Surely, injuring a person with a vehicle ought to be taken more seriously; certainly, regarding this specific incident, the driver did share some culpability. Yes, the woman shouldn't have been in the street, and yes, it did seem that she was inebriated, but the circumstances would have allowed for an alert driver to stop in time (in fact, that is what had happened just before the accident).

One of the flaws in the way the law approaches this sort of situation is that mutual responsibility is not an option: it was either the fault of the driver or the pedestrian. Besides, do I even want this man to go to jail; do I actually feel that anything would be accomplished if he were incarcerated? I am undeniably angry when thinking about this incident, and the anger leads to an emotional desire for punishment—to be doled out either by a judicial system or through an approximation of karma (or by an angry mob).

Yet, I must ask myself, how much of my anger is generated by the guilt I feel for not having done something five minutes earlier (after all, if I had stopped to help this woman when I first saw her, she might not have been hit by a car)? Beyond that, what do I expect from other people — for them to follow my shining example? Sometimes I worry that I am becoming crazed, like a pro-life activist; I

worry that my ability for rational thought on this subject is being threatened. I catch myself assigning motives to drivers, even though there is no way I could actually penetrate their thoughts or divine their intentions.

So, I try to relax, and remind myself of the ideals I claim to possess, that I choose to rely on neither a state nor a god to mete out vengeance. Really, what I want is that this woman be given all the medical and financial assistance she needs. I want the man to realize on a profound level how he has affected another person, to see his driving as part of an integrated system that ultimately makes life so much less pleasant. In short, I want a sea-change with regards to how society views the automobile.

I fantasize that the driver is racked with guilt, that he is being forced to deal with the consequences of his actions. I want to believe that even though the legal system fails to address such a scenario sufficiently, the driver has been forced by his conscience to re-evaluate his behavior. Of course, if I am realistic, I must admit that the most likely result is that he had a few nights of disturbed sleep, and perhaps he was more careful to watch for people crossing the street for a while, but eventually he became as complacent behind the wheel as he once was, oblivious to the world outside of his mobile metal cubicle.

It is highly unlikely that it will be suggested to him that he was, at least in part, at fault. Who would imply such a thing? Our whole world (in this country, at least) is set up, intentionally or not, to reinforce the notion that the only reasonable option is for all of us to own and drive our own vehicles. There is no room to suggest that we could choose to not pursue our individual destinations (literal and figurative) at the expense of everyone else's well being. Almost every automobile advertisement makes some use of the word or concept of freedom, but it is ultimately limited: space is finite, and each new car on the road contributes to the chain of events that further depletes that resource. Fundamentally, the freedom of mobility promised by car culture comes at the sacrifice of freedom from a mentality that favors machinery over life. ★

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Accept your meager wages or I'll report you as a terrorist.

by Heather Haddon

That's the newest scare tactic utilized by some of the bosses who employ the nation's 6 million plus undocumented workers, according to immigrant rights groups.

Not only did thousands of immigrants lose either their lives or livelihood on September 11th, the public acceptance of foreigners has decreased remarkably. Just two months ago the Bush Administration was considering granting amnesty for hundreds of thousands of Mexicans, but today many immigrants, even non-Muslims, fear the threat of deportation or harassment more than ever before.

Zoila, a staff member at Workplace Project, a Long Island-based migrant labor advocacy group relayed the following story:

In early October when "Marcos," a Salvadoran laborer went to his boss for his weekly pay, the employer refused. He then threatened to report the undocumented Marcos saying "I'll tell the police you have a bomb in your house, and say you're a terrorist."

According to Zoila, "His employer threatened not just to report him to INS, but to the police."

Anti-immigrant hostility has taken many forms from hate crimes to the mass detention of hundreds of innocent Arabs and Muslims after the World Trade Center bombing. Yet migrants of all origins, especially those without documents and with brown skin, are now feeling strong-armed by repressive legislation, a suspicious public and hard economic times.

"[Employers] are just going to take advantage of this," worries Zoila, who chose not to give her last name. She too is a native of El Salvador.

Like all Americans, Zoila is still trying to come to grips with the tragedy's human loss. Estimates of missing Latino migrants vary widely, with Asociacion Tepeyac, a Mexican advocacy group, documenting at least 100 but USA Today pegged the number around 500 in a September 20 article. But it remains unclear how many of these immigrants are included in the official tallies of dead.

"It is the undocumented workers who were not included," "Democracy Now!" host Amy Goodman stated. Upwards of a thousand Latino immigrants, according to New York City-based Tepeyac, lost their jobs. Undocumented workers are the invisible glue of downtown Manhattan's dense business sector, and a gamut of industries nationwide. During the last decade's economic boom, their numbers grew exponentially as low unemployment rates and a plethora of low-skill jobs made for little incentive to enforce immigration restrictions.

The jobs, and that liberalness, are waning. In a sampling by Tepeyac of 59 small downtown business closed after Sept. 11 — mostly restaurants, bars, cleaning companies and newsstands — immigrants comprised about half the workforce.

"[And as] the service industries are hit, the job loss is going to have a disproportionate impact on undocumented workers," said Naomi Zauderer of the National Employment Law Project. Just three weeks after September 11th, the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union reported between 40 to 60 percent of its national membership had been laid off.

New York City's unemployed immigrants also face uphill battles obtaining benefits. "Undocumented workers are eligible for assistance from the Crime Victims Board, the Red Cross and several other private charities," says Zauderer. But in practice, she notes, numbers of immigrants have left emptyhanded when unlawfully asked for their social security numbers or proof of identity.

Proof of employment, required to claim disability monies or disaster unemployment insurance, is far more difficult to obtain and potentially threatening. "Employers are reluctant to admit [illegal immigrants] were working for them because they are subject to employer sanctions," says Zauderer.

As "Marcos" harshly saw, many employers are none too sympathetic to the plight of

their former busboys, porters or other illegal laborers. "(Marcos) lived with his employer, and couldn't even return to get his TV," says Zoila.

While the Immigration and Naturalization Services extended its public support to immigrants in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, current legislation passed by the Bush Administration has been dubbed anti-immigrant by some critics. The bill (Patriot Act), which recently passed both the House and Senate, "enhances" the 1996 Anti-Terrorism Law. One controversial provision allows for indefinite detention for non-citizens suspected of terrorism.

Much of the public appears to be supporting such measures. In a Zogby International poll taken immediately after the bombing, 72 percent supported dramatic increases in resources for enforcing border control and immigration laws.

"Advocating a more controlled immigration system may become a very politically attractive option for many politicians," stated the Center for Immigration Studies.

During domestic crises, that option easily moves beyond control to suppression according to Muzaffar Chishti, UNITE Immigration Project Director. "Every time there is an event like this, there are strong and immediate consequences on immigrants."

Berta Hernandez, of the San Francisco-based group Movimiento por los Derechos de los Inmigrantes, is already noticing the backlash. "We received 25 complaints about Latino immigrants being detained and, in some cases, arrested at airports...for not having passports or green cards... those documents were never required to fly domestically."

Hernandez's group, part of a coalition of 300 other organizations pushing for migrant amnesty, laments the blow to what was a building campaign. "(In July), the media, Congress and even Bush and Mexican President Fox were discussing some kind of amnesty," she says. "Now, we are confronted with a situation where, once again, we have to fence ourselves from attacks."

Chishti predicts Congress will unfurl additional legislation, such as tracking all foreign entrances to heightened border militarization. "Those who need our protection the most, will be the most vulnerable," he says.

Already, immigrants "feel insecure, very insecure," says Zoila of the hardships cases starting to appear at the Workers Center. "Before, we said we had rights like other human beings. Now we are just not sure." ★





California's Gang Enhancement Statute criminalized gang membership. The Youth Crime Initiative, Proposition 21, enacted mandatory minimums and enhanced sentences for gang-related crimes, such as one-strike sex offenses and charging children as young as 14 as an adults. This is what it is like to live there.

FUCKIN' ROUGH

The Real Life of an LA Gangbanger

by Michael Louie

It's closing in on 7 p.m. and Shady just isn't feeling up to it tonight. He's evasive; his eyes are shifting from the faded and cracked veneer of the parking lot off the Boulevard to the space behind Brownie who's talking in staccato bursts about retaliation for some tagged-over graffiti in their neighborhood.

"You're stupid, fool. How are you gonna go slashing when you see how many cops are over there?" Shady asks his friend, who, at around five-foot-five with a dark-complexion and a white T-shirt that looks about a size or two too big, has the reputation for being as vicious as a cornered wolverine.

"I'm just sick of looking stupid, fool," he says.

"Then stand up straight then."

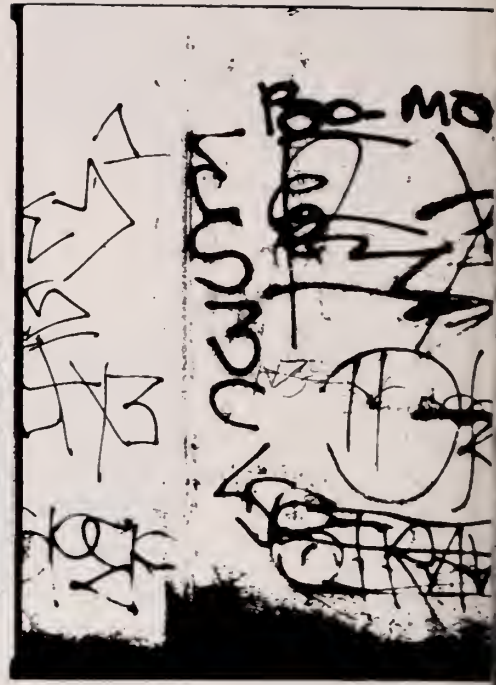
Tagged-over graffiti, especially in gang territory, is a violation often requiring swift retribution and, just as often, dangerously repaid. And for a relatively small, primarily Hispanic, gang like Psycho Ass Life, retaliatory slashing through a Mara Salvatrucha graffiti means more than simple retribution against the much larger, more violent, and mostly Salvadoran gang. But despite Brownie's cajoling and the opportunity to reclaim what's theirs, it's apparent that Shady's not coming. With his 8pm probation curfew approaching, Brownie leaves, armed with spray paint, alone. Shady leans against a beat-up black Topaz, and says, "Now this fool is gonna tell everyone, 'Oh, I think Shady is changing. He chose a security guard and a parking lot over us.'"

[Breaking Away]

Shady, known by most people as Vicente Gonzalez Jr., is getting used to this, however reluctantly. Like more than 200,000 others, Vicente is a Los Angeles gangbanger, and at 20 years old, maybe he's already seen enough. Shootings, stabbings, jumping fools, and getting jumped himself — maybe he's growing out of it. Maybe the angst is working its way out of his system. Maybe he's tired of getting hit up by other gangs; maybe he's tired of walking around strapped or seeing his friends locked away on multiple life sentences. But getting out is, of course, easier said than done.

He is by no means a burnt-out and retired gang member. He keeps his hair razor short and his eyes betray a sense that he can turn from his usual comedic self to a brutal realist in a second. He sometimes brings his silver .357 Magnum to work and he'll flip the revolver open to show his friend six bullets in six chambers. In May, he shot into a group of MS members who were jumping another friend. One was hit in the tailbone and remains paralyzed, while the condition of the other, whom Shady shot point-blank in the chest, remains unknown. But he brings the strap mostly for his friends Lazy (Jonathan), Grumpy (Carlos), and others who drift in and out of the area. "My friends want to borrow my toy," he laughs. "They want to bring World War III to L.A. Something must have happened."

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At first glance, it's difficult to label the bright, funny young man as a violent gangbanger. "When I was growing up, I always had people who were older and cared about me," he says. "And that's fucked up because some of my friends come from the streets, like they have nothing, so they're like 'fuck the world.'" But the gang influence was present much earlier, when his family lived in a sketchy apartment complex unremittingly surrounded by gang activity. Vicente would occasionally deliver drugs and packages for them so he could buy birthday presents for his family and flowers for his grandmother.

When he was suspended from 10th grade at St. Gregory's, a private school off Crenshaw, Vicente's parents sent him to live with his cousins in Montebello as punishment while the rest of the family vacationed in Mexico. That proved to be his official introduction to gang life in southern California. "That was their mistake, because my cousins were all gang-related, and when I came back I had a shaved head and was dressing all big and baggy," he says. His adoption of the gangster appearance eventually got him kicked out of St. Gregory's, and his parents, for the first time, sent him to public school in the Valley. He soon transferred to a closer school in Hollywood where he began associating heavily with other gangsters.

But mere association, though the law states *very* differently, wasn't enough for Vicente to become gang-related. "There was this guy and he was always saying, 'Come in with me,' but I'd say, 'No fool, that's not my style,'" he explains. "I didn't like walking around having to worry." It took a fight with another crew called CNE (Crime Never Ends) for him to become fully involved. "I was standing there watching my friend get jumped and I was like, 'Fuck, I got to pick a side.'" From there, he joined Psycho Ass Life, which was formed from a band of underdog graffiti artists who were tired of getting jumped by rival crews. Compared to the notorious 18th Street gang, or La Deciocho, which has nearly 20,000 members, more than 40 years of history, and more territory than officials can comprehend, PAL was a premature fetus. And from there came names like Shady, Lazy, Grumpy, Chuky, and others like Creeper, Profit, and Shyboy.

It was Shyboy who became best friends with Shady when he transferred schools. They'd gone to St. Gregory's together years before, and now with both of them gangbanging, there was little to separate the two. "I had so much respect for Shyboy," Vicente says. He was still maintaining himself in school, joining a literature club, and getting decent grades even with gangbanging a big part of his life. "I was doing good until I met my homeboys," Vicente says. "I don't really regret it, but they changed my life."

That change came rapidly in March 2000, when CNE members jumped a PAL member outside the school. "My homeboy Shyboy called me up and said it's time to do something," he recalls. They planned to page Shady and have him skip a school assembly the next day and meet up with Shyboy and another PAL member outside. Together, they would jump a CNE kid named Anthony*, just take him down and beat the shit out of him. But Vicente missed the page and was sitting in the auditorium while something outside was going terribly wrong quickly. Anthony ended up getting stabbed to death, and Vicente ended up getting fingered as the one who did it. "Two girls saw it," he says. "They knew one, but not the other one. The only person who fit his description was me."

He was quickly arrested and charged with Anthony's death. "[The police] didn't care as long as they closed the case," Vicente says. "I was fucked. They asked me, 'How come you're getting so mad?' And I said, 'You're talking about me doing a murder, how do you want me to react about this?'" His friends eventually turned themselves in, but it still wasn't over for him. "Everyone said, 'They already think it's you, you might as well admit it was you,'" Vicente says. "Shyboy has a little girl and I kept thinking about it." But would he have taken the blame for Shyboy had he asked? "Yes," he says. "Definitely."

School wasn't through with Vicente either. "They said, 'It's not safe for you here. Just come back next year,'" he says. "And I was like, 'Fuck that, I've only got three months left to graduate.'" He returned to his first public school in the Valley where he was met with an authoritarian administration. "They said, 'You want to come here? Well, let



your hair grow; wear your glasses. Wear big pants and we'll kick you out, and if we see you hanging out with baldheads, we'll kick you out," he says. In June, Shady graduated, having to take the MTA every day since the school saw him as a threat to the rest of the students. It's been over a year since then, and "Fuck," he says. "A year has passed and I think, 'What the fuck has happened?'"

"I'm stupid because I want to get out [of gang life], because I know I could do better, you know? But I'm confused, I don't want to leave just to get out."

[Gang Wars in California]

The state of California, however, can provide plenty of reasons for him to get out. California is the leader in the U.S. clampdown on gangs with actions often raising critics' questions of whether the state has declared war on crime or on youth. From neighborhood injunctions to Proposition 21, California has passed nearly 1,000 anti-gang statutes since the late 1980s, and jail time for criminals identified as gang members has been increasing steadily. And as more and more members fill the world's third-largest prison system, after the United States itself and China, the legal requirements dictated for gang membership become increasingly broad.

The Supreme Court in 1997 overturned a 1995 appellate court's decision, making constitutional an injunction that, according to an ACLU article, imposed a fine of up to \$1,000 or six months in jail for "engaging in such legal activities as being seen in public with another 'known gang member,' talking to someone inside a car, climbing a tree, making loud noises, wearing certain clothing, or carrying marbles, screwdrivers, pens, pagers, and sparkplugs." Amitai Schwartz, an attorney with the ACLU, stated that "The enthusiastic affirmation of anti-gang injunctions by the state's highest court adds momentum to the broad movement ... across the country that advocates criminalizing non-criminal conduct, if such conduct is engaged in by people out of favor — justifiably or not — with the social mainstream."

Indeed, it seems that many of the gang injunctions and anti-gang statutes passed in California are used as political footballs rather than to quell the gang problem. Alejandro Alonso, the man behind the Streetgangs.com Web site, says the laws not only inflate gang statistics, but also the notion of racial profiling. "These injunctions are criminalizing people of color and in doing so, they are oppressive," he says. "You only find [injunctions] in communities that pose a threat to affluent neighborhoods. The communities that actually need these injunctions are being ignored."

"These are moves that are highly effective for politicians. Everybody wants to hear 'tough on crime.' But on the streets they actually solve very little — gangs will just avoid the area defined by the injunction, and another area inherits the nuisances, loitering, drug dealing, etc."

California's Gang Enhancement Statute set the standard for packing the burgeoning state prison complex with gang members, laying out some of the broadest criteria possible within constitutional bounds. In an article by Michael Slate for *Revolutionary Worker*, the statute is said to "make gang membership a crime," by designating gang members as "anyone active in a criminal street gang, defined as three or more people involved in criminal activity, [which] can be punished with one year in jail — it doesn't matter whether the person committed a crime or not." The statute also defined gang membership as anyone who fits at least two of the following descriptions: you admit you are in a gang, you associate with gang members, your name is mentioned by gang members, you wear baggy clothing or "gang-style" jewelry or tattoos, you throw gang signs, you write gang graffiti, or you write to or receive letters from gang members in prison. Add to this the liberty of the "probable cause" stop, and you've got a system that routinely targets young minorities as criminals.

March 2000 saw the enactment of the Youth Crime Initiative, a.k.a. Proposition 21. Like the GES, this law sought to solve the gang problem by targeting youth — but instead of marking them on the streets, Proposition 21 aims at youths in the court system. Children as young as 14 can be charged as adults for special-circumstance homicides, one-

strike sex offenses, and a number of other crimes, including hate crimes and crimes against the elderly or disabled. Gang-related carjacking, home invasion robbery, and drive-by shootings require a 15-year minimum sentencing. Active gang recruitment is also punishable by three years in state prison. The law targets graffiti as well, lowering the felony damage claim from \$50,000 to \$400. Misdemeanor charges can be elevated to felony level if there is a gang connection, and the statute puts minors 16 or older who are convicted in adult court in the California Department of Corrections instead of the California Youth Authority.

Homicide is a special case for Proposition 21, adding a minimum of 10 years to any gang-related murder, regardless of whether the act was gang-motivated or not. "They look at it as beyond the usual murder," Alejandro Alonso says. "In Chicago, a gang-related murder has to be motivated by gang affiliation, not an individual act. L.A. is very unique in that regard of defining a [gang-related] homicide, because it's not defined by motivation of a gang. Just being a gang member is enough to be indicted."

The results of these laws can be devastating to the youths targeted by these statutes. In the case of Michael Duc Ta, an alleged member of the Asian Boyz, gang laws left him sentenced with 35 years to life for a drive-by shooting in which no one was killed or seriously injured. Ta, who was 16 at the time, would have faced seven years for the attempted murder, but under gang laws, the charge increased to 15 years, and the gun charge added another 20 years. Serious questions arose from the fact that prosecutors never fully proved Ta was a gang member — a charge he's always denied.

[Back To The Shit]

It's 9 p.m. on Saturday and Vicente's family has gathered in the gym of St. Gregory's for his sister's quinceañeros party. He's dressed in a dark gray suit and he's talking and laughing with family friends and relatives, while Lazy and Grumpy patiently hang out in the middle of the courtyard. They're walking in circles, talking shit on each other, shadowboxing, feeling restless. Carlos, who cuts a very intimidating figure with his broad shoulders and thick arms marked with PAL tattoos, has six or seven keloidal scars on the back of his shaved head from "when I was running from a gang of fools and they cracked me on the head with a tee-ball bat." Like Shady, Carlos was a good student in high school before getting expelled for fighting one week before graduation. "I had A's and B's so they couldn't say shit about a baldhead doing nothing," he says. He seems angry, but his dark, burning eyes change quickly from bitterness to regret. "A week away from graduation and then my whole life went down the drain. In one minute my whole life went down the drain," he says.

It's that kind of lament that makes Carlos, like Vicente, such a conundrum: He can almost watch himself in third-person and isn't oblivious to the likelihood that this kind of lifestyle is going to get him either dead or imprisoned. He has hopes and wishes beyond gang life, which seems to point to the belief that gangbanging is a phase out of which he'll eventually grow. "Once I get my GED, I'm out of this shit," he says. "I want to join the Marines. I want to disappear. I'll make it, I hope."

Later that night, Vicente and Carlos return to Jonathan's apartment off Wilshire in West L.A. In the corner, Jonathan's resume is lazily draped overtop a computer. Jonathan is tall, has a strong love for writing and books, and though his hair is cut short, it isn't shaved. Without him telling you, it would be difficult to pin him as a gang member, but underneath the expensive shirt are PAL tattoos. "I'm a

schoolboy, straight up; my friends know I'm a schoolboy," he says. "Once I got jumped with Grumpy, and there were like five of those fools and my backpack was like 90 pounds and I just went in swinging that thing." On his coffee table are pages of hip-hop lyrics he's written about gang life, and most start with typical gangster fashion before drifting off to ask when it's all going to stop. In the dim lighting of his apartment, as he's wiping up spilled beer from his rug and grumbling about losing his security deposit, it seems like Jonathan will be the first one of the three to make it out.

It's now 11 a.m. in August and Vicente has been waiting outside the County Jail for five hours to see Lazy and Grumpy. The first week of July they were arrested at the same apartment for attempted murder. There is no hiding their gang affiliation; their tattoos speak for them before they can open their mouths. They face at least 10 years each, with gang charges that can bring it to 25 to possible life in prison. Jonathan and Carlos are both 19 years old.

Vicente still lives the disjointed life of the disinclined gangbanger. In the three years he's been in PAL, he's gone from a prominent member to a peripheral one, and his absence has not gone unnoticed. "Older guys, like 25 or 26, who have kids, are coming back out," he says. "And they say, 'Where's Shady?' It makes it so much harder. When I did the shooting, everyone said, 'I knew you'd be back,' but that was the last bullshit." Though his ambiguity is running thin with the friends he feels he cannot rid himself of completely and with whom he cannot heavily associate, it seems that these same friends are what's keeping him locked in a cycle that pits its constituents in a dangerous and violent struggle for respect and recognition before spitting them out into the prison system. "I think everyone fucks shit up, and I've had my time," he says. "I want to move away from all that little by little, just let it fade away."

But even with three of his best friends facing long prison terms, is there ever a time when he won't claim PAL as his neighborhood? "That's a tough one," he muses, not making eye contact, and seeming to waver again, avoiding the question. "I know I have to handle my shit, but I don't want to be away from everything and come back to find out my homeboys got killed or are in jail. We've always just been together; it all started because we were in a tagging crew and we didn't like getting dissed. If we didn't trust in each other, we wouldn't be here. The whole reason we're here is because we believe in each other." ★

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And If You Gaze Long Into the Abyss...

“Next!”

“Bring your right foot onto the box. Hold the ball like this. Hand on top of the helmet.”

Walk back to the camera. Focus. Center.

“Straighten your head a little. Turn toward me. Good. Where’s that smile!?! Say peaches! Say booger!”

Just smile *goddamn it*.

The smile. The pre-made, manufactured *smile* that will bring joy to the hearts of grandparents and cornered co-workers everywhere.

Click. Flash.

“Next!”

“Bring your right foot onto the box...”

I’ve acted out that scenario thousands, probably hundreds of thousands, of times by now.

In the summer of 1995 I stopped at a garage sale up the road from my house. The guy had some camera equipment for sale that I was perusing. It was all for medium format cameras, which I had never used. I had been using same old 35mm Nikkormat since I was 14. My mother had used the camera for at least a decade before that.

“Are you a photographer?” he inquired.

“Sort of. I have a degree in fine art and enjoy taking pictures, but most of my technical experience is self-taught.” I neglected to mention how much of my education stemmed from my beloved 9th grade photography teacher.

“I’m always looking for new employees. Give me a call in the fall.”

I went home and grabbed a copy of my resume and took it back to him. I would later learn that it was one of the only resumes he had ever been given by a prospective employee. And so it was that I got a job at a garage sale.

How Money Distorts Art By Davida Gypsy Breier

Above — I attached the polarizing lens on top of the high contrast filter. I wanted to give the few clouds in the sky some drama. Houses nestled into the dune line with a single, conspicuous, white cloud above them.

That fall I walked onto a field in Cecil County, Maryland and my education of posing hulking teenagers with helmets and footballs commenced. I had wanted to be a wildlife photographer when I was younger...in fact, I still do. I was accustomed to going out into the woods and swamps by myself with just the camera. I had avoided human subjects for the most part. Then the flood of kids started bearing down on me like an assembly line of adolescent testosterone. I couldn't slow down or stop or everything would back up. I quickly embraced the barrier the huge portrait camera created between me and the kids and coaches and started shooting. Thus I became a paid "professional" photographer.

Over the years I became faster and faster at finding "the shot." That moment when you know you got a look or smile from a child that the parents will love. There were times when I had to be fast, like the night a particularly wicked storm was approaching and we were set up out on a field. We *just* finished the last of the lacrosse players when the first crackling flash struck. Then there were times when I would push it, just to see how fast I could pose, crop, focus, and shoot. I turned it into a game. My record was 45 seconds. I shot about 200 kids one night and it averaged out to about 45 seconds per child from the receipt of the package order envelope to the shutter snapping. That was when I turned something I once loved into a commodity.

I had long since quit taking pictures as I saw them. I took the pictures someone else wanted to see. That would have been fine, except that this rolled over into my own photography. I have few personal photos from the times when I was primarily working as a youth sports photographer. It was too much like work. Many of the photos that do exist are banal at best. Then about a year ago that old desire started creeping back.

I took some shots of the amusement rides on the Wildwood boardwalk on a late summer night. You can feel the dried saltwater in your hair, the tingle of freshly sunburned shoulders, greasy fries sloshing in your stomach, and the giddy delight of whirling circles and plunging descents. A few months later I found myself in Times Square about 9pm on a Saturday night. Standing there, waiting to meet everyone I had ever known, I caught the vibrant, peacock strutting displays of consumerism, the hustle and bustle of international and Midwestern tourists surging up and down the avenues clutching their own cameras. Most importantly, I captured Patrick, wearing his vintage thrift store green suit, in a completely Kerouac moment. The luminosity and motion swirl around him as he plays deep inside his own head. That photo is on my desk as I write this.

This past summer I bought several new filters and experimented with them as I traveled through the Pacific Northwest. When the rolls were developed I was satisfied with some of the shots, but I realized I was still rushing to catch the shot and not taking my time. Some events have to be captured in a split second, but many will patiently wait until you have composed something worth memorializing.

When you take an art form and allow consumerism to sink its teeth into it, you are being paid to create an image for someone else. You are expected to know what Jimmy's "natural smile" looks like and record it perfectly. I've heard parents shriek, "Smile right! Don't make me come over there, boy!" That beatific smile sitting on that parent's desk at work is the product of threats and intimidation. Often the children have awkward pre-teen fangs, missing teeth, or braces they want to keep hidden, but they are commanded to "show them teeth!" They are expected to smile whether they are happy or not. Cherubic girls in cheerleading costumes are made into small, sexual women for the cam-



I held the camera to my eye and watched as Patrick and his father talked. I saw several easy shots of them laughing, but I let the moments pass, waiting for one that would capture the two of them basking in one another's company



At the top of Jockey's Ridge hikers can be seen in the distance. They look like tiny toys left behind at the beach.

era. On cold autumn mornings soccer players are ripped from jackets, thrown in front of the camera and expected not to look hypothermic. You shoot what they want to see, not what is actually seen. The truth found in photographs is powerful, but you seldom find it in paid portraiture. You go for the cheap, easy smile and take what looks good. This also bled over into my own work.

I once saw the value in just looking through the lens to see what was there. Then I got paid for it and eventually found the view had become distorted. This past autumn I began looking through the lens again. In September, Patrick and I went to Nags Head, NC for the weekend. We met up with his father, mother, aunt, and brother who had rented a house there for the week. On the way there, I loaded the camera with 400ASA black and white and attached the high-contrast red filter I had bought in July, but had yet to use. By mid-day Saturday we were on the beach. It was a blindingly bright, warm day. I picked up the camera and began looking around...

* * *

I have actually learned a great deal about photography by being a youth sports photographer and now finally. I am also realizing what I knew when I started. I've been trying to take more honest portraits of kids this fall, while still giving the parents what they want. I don't manipulate the kids with goofy chatter, and the smile, if there is one to be had, will often come with greater ease. I enjoy it more that way, and so do they. Now I can look at their faces and see the traces of a budding smile, overwhelming self-consciousness, sublimated hostility, the desire to be liked, casual confidence, and more. It doesn't make my job any less commercial, but it does make the resultant photographs and the photographer more human.

Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel. I asked to stop at Sea Gull Island along the bridge (where the restaurant and pier are located). It was late afternoon and the sun cast a gamboling sparkle on the water. These photos look like they were taken at midnight under a full moon. They almost look like monochromatic paintings.



I looked down at the water lapping against the rocks. Through the red, high-contrast lens and polarizing filter the light on the surface of the water created an effect like exploding fireworks. I had Patrick take a look. It reminded me of the scene in *American Beauty* where Ricky Fitts talks about the dancing plastic bag. It was one of the most beautiful things I had ever seen through a camera lens and yet there was no way to capture what I saw. Like Ricky, says, "Video's a poor excuse. But it helps me remember...and I need to remember. Sometimes there's so much beauty in the world I feel like I can't take it, like my heart's going to cave in." I had finally quit trying to snatch, take, and capture an image and instead starting seeing what was truly there.



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Bouncing Back

from
September 11

words Gabe Thompson
photos Jonathan Schnapp and Katie Player

Upon seeing the images of the planes crashing into the World Trade Center, my thoughts were a jumbled mess. What seemed clear, above all, was that this was bad and that one didn't need a left or right-wing perspective to understand that the tragedy was inexcusable. Everyone was on the same page, with the unthinkable images running through their heads, trying to make sense of the unfolding scenes. George Bush came on television, looking heavily sedated and on the emotional cruise control that unanticipated disaster can bring. At that moment, the first in my life, I was interested in what he had to say.

But as the days passed, my initial shock wore off, not to be replaced with a strong sense of patriotic duty but sickening dread. With this dread as a backdrop, my emotions followed no rational blueprint. My mood would swing from disappointment to anger to apathy in minutes. I was constantly second-guessing myself: Is this how I should be feeling now?

By the third day of watching the news, I finally realized what was causing all the confusion: I was having an entirely different reaction to the terrorist attacks than the people I saw on my screen. If we began with the same horror and disbelief, my path and that of the collective American psyche (or at least the collective American television psyche) quickly diverged dramatically. I heard that Wal-Marts were selling record numbers of American flags. I watched an interview with a man who had taken black tape and spelled out a message on his back windshield: TIME TO USE THE BOMB. People would read this message

and honk in celebration, demonstrating the new unity that the TV networks kept mentioning. The armed forces were reporting a sharp increase in enlistment. One marine recruiter marveled at the idealism of the younger generation, volunteering to fight this new kind of war and keep American soil safe.

The big disconnect is that, for me, patriotism lost any positive connotations years ago when I first wondered why no one ever seemed to die during the endless GI Joe battles. There wasn't any anti-war activity in GI Joe because there wasn't any war, really. Grenades and machine guns were enjoyable as aesthetic creations that felt good, looked neat, and blew up wonderfully. No one can deny the wonder of painless destruction; whole industries are based upon it.

But painless destruction is itself a fiction, at least when it comes to nation-states fighting it out. I don't know when I first realized this elementary fact, but it must have been early. In sixth grade, I remember babysitting the five-year-old son of my next door neighbor. We were playing army but at one point I called time out and we huddled up around the large tree house we were using as our headquarters. I explained in absolute seriousness (we often forget how serious we can be as children, an unfortunate development) that it was okay to play army but that one must not join the army in real life because they fight wars and wars are bad. I remember feeling proud of myself for explaining the world in such terms, which I still believe to be roughly correct.

And so it is not only the 20-something radical who feels ill when



Peace Activists Needed Now More than Ever

reports come in of marches on mosques and people chanting "USA! USA!" It is also, and most profoundly, the sixth grader who recoils in fear and sadness. I cannot embrace patriotism because human emotions are too complicated and interconnected and nationalist sentiments can only occur within an anti-others framework. In a strictly logical world, it might be possible (though I would still argue that it would not be preferable) to separate the good aspects of patriotism from the deadly. However, patriotism throughout history has been, regardless of its understandable origins, too volatile an ideology to create more good than harm. It is rooted in fear, not hope, and so its proponents must make themselves appear strong because they cannot afford to look weak.

Democracy, on the other hand, is rooted in the hope that people can and will rise above their base instincts and work for a greater purpose. It requires that independent thought and critical reflection *never* be sacrificed for some abstract notion of unity. For this reason, in times of war principled democrats become the enemies of the state. They refuse to give up their hopes and replace them with patriotic fear. They refuse to sacrifice the ideals that patriots are itching to fight for and so must be squashed so that their dissent does not affect the prerogatives of the powerful (who have the most to fear).

The A.N.S.W.E.R. to War-Mongering: Take Action

The only remedy to feelings of powerlessness is to take action, so on the morning of September 28, I got on a bus in New York City and

headed for Washington, D.C. The much anticipated World Bank and IMF meetings had been disbanded, but some organizations, led by the International Action Center, decided to transform the anti-IMF/WB rally into an anti-war and racism action under the title of A.N.S.W.E.R. (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism). Although many activist organizations had pulled out of the D.C. mobilization after September 11, I felt the need for protest was greater than ever. That evening, my friends and I gathered around the television and heard local newscasters predicting large numbers of pro-war counter-protesters, then going on to list the times and locations of the actions of the weekend. To us, it felt like an invitation to all patriotic citizens who felt like beating up some granola-eating hippies. I began to hope that there would be a large police presence, if only for our protection against any flag-waving violence.

Reading the Washington Post only added further to my anxiety. Michael Kelly's op-ed on September 26 went the furthest in denouncing the pacifist position. "If the Americans do not fight," he wrote, "the terrorists will attack America again. And now we know such attacks can kill many thousands of Americans. The American pacifists, therefore, are on the side of future mass murderers of Americans. They are objectively pro-terrorist."

Now I've been accused of many things, from naivete to radical leanings to being inappropriately socialized, but I've never been labeled an objective friend of terror. My stance against US-sponsored



military aggression has always been rooted in an absolute hatred of pain and terror, the same sort of pain and terror that was visited upon the people of Washington, D.C. and New York City. But here I was, being labeled an accomplice of terror for all to read. I went to bed uneasy.

The next morning was bright, a good omen for any protest. When we arrived at Freedom Plaza, a large crowd had already gathered and as numerous speakers came forward, the numbers swelled dramatically. By the time the Anti-Capitalist Convergence group joined us, after being detained for some time by police at the headquarters of the World Bank, we numbered well over 10,000. Most incredibly, it seemed only 25 to 30 patriots had shown up to criticize our lack of courage and resolve. Of these, my favorite was the obsessively pacing man with cigar in mouth and sign calling for some sort of nuclear retaliation to kill "fuckin' Bin Laden." A pretty crude worldview but he expressed it with civility, a fact we all appreciated.

Around three o'clock, the group began its march to the Capitol which went off without a hitch. Contingents of pro-war demonstrators stood on the margins of the march, but they were so outnumbered that they did little but watch and give the occasional finger. It was beautiful, after weeks of listening to our media's drumbeat for war, to momentarily be in a position of peaceful strength. The following day, another march was conducted, this time sponsored by the Washington Peace Center, embarking from Malcolm X Square. Fewer people turned out for this event but it was still empowering and added momentum to the peace movement. Upon heading back to my home in Brooklyn, there was a sense that something important had taken place. During a time when dissent was not being tolerated in the major media, thousands had recovered from their fears and voiced an opposition to more civilian deaths in any country. A spirit of liberty and peace was emerging from the wreckage of Lower Manhattan.

Organizing for the Future

What ultimately makes the unity of hawkish leaders and citizens so sickening is that the phenomenon of working together and reaching consensus can also have inspiring, humane ends. With every uncritical demonstration of patriotic uniformity I wince. Groups of people coming together can dull normally alert nerves and can convince others to stifle legitimate concerns in unconscious acts of self-censorship, but, as the anti-war demonstrations in Washington D.C. showed, groups of people coming together can also open avenues of discussion and liberate instead of confine. As the wartime hysteria continues to heat up, we as peace activists must strive to communicate our ideas to people not already committed to our cause. It is not the time to prance around in pseudo military garb and hurl invectives at fascist America. Juvenile games of revolution can be satisfied in private. For now, real lives are at stake, and we must remember that the public will be a much more receptive audience if we communicate our ideas in a peaceful and compassionate manner.

Finally, what must be foremost in our minds is that throughout history, our nation has had only one effective restraint when it comes to the killing of civilians in foreign countries — domestic dissent. We cannot allow the terrorist attacks to become a blank check for whatever actions our government decides to take. There is never, in a democratic society, a need to support our President, or maintain unity, or any other duty often cited, unless one believes that doing so will lead to justice. Activists must now demand that no more innocent civilians be killed and lay the groundwork for a more humane US policy in the Middle East. Let the horrors of September 11 renew the call for international justice and peace. The citizens of the world need it, now more than ever. ★

EXPATRIOT GORE



Thomas Washington's Return Home to the U.S. Finds Him in Unfamiliar, Consumption-Driven Territory

Images Ailecia Ruscin

It's been five years since I've been home. Everything looks bigger. Especially the cars. A Sportmart appears as large as the Roman Coliseum. The entire population of Hamburg, Germany could fit into the Dominick's finer foods grocery store. The widened boulevards and mall architecture that cemented the farms and cornfields have the same deformity that I remember from the bombed out center of Alexander Platz in East Berlin.

I ride shotgun in the family mini-van. We're on a treasure hunt in Chicago's south suburbs for a shelving unit. My friend Anna complains that her husband has started collecting too much. He cuts out the weekly penny saver ads and stocks the bootie anywhere he can find room: Yesterday, five more bottles of wild citrus salad dressing; six cans of Boston baked beans with bacon; ten Chicken of the Sea tuna tins. I wait in the van and watch her five-year-old while she rummages through the Hobby Barn, Pier 1 and Sam's Warehouse Club. She comes out of each empty-handed. On the way home, her son screams "Krispy Kreme doughnuts! I want a Krispy Kreme doughnut!"

A Desert Storm invasion of SUV's coils around the Krispy Kreme doughnut house and winds its way to the side road exit. The five-year-old spins fragmented tales of his many trips here and gives me a run down of the relative advantages of sprinkles over chocolate coating. A longer line of people - everyone here has a round look, an excess hide lending a soft, puffy shell - winds its way through pink and purple seats until we're face to face with the doughnut rings tumbling five at a time into a pool of burning fat. We watch them float downstream until the glazing machine udders squirt a sugar coating on each. The doughnuts are dry racked until a man with a paper hat plucks them off the board and shovels them in boxes. To further divert our attention from the agonizing wait,

we're placated with trays of free samples. Children blast through the crowd begging for another tray. The adults pretend not to care, but we're all over them with that bottomless hunger for more. Our fingers are a sticky mess before we've got our hands on our first box.

The five year old kicks the back of my seat on the way home and shouts for more sprinkled doughnuts. He's crashing big time from the sugar overload. We tune him out and turn on the radio. I'm glad to hear American radio again, but when scanning the air waves for a tune, I feel like Rip Van Winkle. The radio stations are in the middle of a Memorial Day weekend Rock and Roll 500 countdown. We're still tethered to that retro 1970's hollow metal sound of Billy Joel, Aerosmith, and "Ramblin' Man" from the Allman Brothers.

It's not as though I've been living in the African Bush. Germany has gladly imitated and imported most things American ever since we bombed them into submission and weaned them on the Marshall Plan and Coca-Cola. Nonetheless, life abroad still opens your eyes. You observe more intently because the familiar moorings of family and home are pulled from underneath you. Mostly, you look upon your own country with a more skeptical eye. The view from the outside looking in presents a different picture.

In Europe, I went cold turkey on the credit card. I consumed less and stayed home on Sundays like most everyone else. I didn't watch TV because I couldn't understand the language well enough. I had no car and pedaled a bicycle with wobbly fenders and rusted rims with three days worth of groceries strapped to the rear grill. I lived in a garden apartment, a little larger than the walk in closets I see here. Next door, a car sharing project rented cars for three bucks an hour. Two of them ran on electricity. I composted and walked the wine bottles and papers to the re-

cycling bins. There was no junk mail. I smoked as many cigarettes as I pleased in cafes, without the threat of the tobacco police or smoke free environments.

What is most disappointing about returning home is our apparent obliviousness to the way the rest of the world is living with so much less. SUV's, for example, have been maligned to no end, but in my two weeks here, I have found no better symbol for our prodigal ways than these behemoths, which have taken over the streets in quick fashion. Comparing Europe with life in the U.S. can sound smug and condescending. That's not what I want to be though. Most of us need to identify with a sense of place, with a home, and America is still that place for me, I think.

"Don't get taken over by the pods," my girlfriend said to me as she boarded the gate to return to Europe. "Don't get sucked into it and let them take your mind away." She was talking about Jack Finney's 1955 science-fiction classic, *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, where an alien force in Mill Valley, California has taken over the minds and emotions of earthlings. In his recent book, *The Twilight of American Culture*, Lawrence Berman referred to the book (and later the 1978 film) as the "perfect metaphor for our age" as it describes the general sense of numb bliss out there.

I can understand how you grow numb to it, how you take comfort in the smell of the lingerie and bedding department at the mall, all those items to buy for the kitchen. The brainwashing process is little different than a prisoner who grows fond of his captor. It took me more than thirty years to decide I'd had enough. Then I left the country. I've been back less than two weeks and I'm already at breaking point.

It happened on the way back from Iowa City. I'd spent two hours searching for a hotel



in the towns off I-80 in Illinois, anything besides the sterile Comfort Inn or the Econo Lodge. What I had in mind was one of those turn of the century buildings with a big lobby and brass rail, a room with a wooden floor and old bed, a functional sink, maybe a bar downstairs or across the street. Just something with character. By 8pm, I'd given up and followed the familiar "gas, food, lodging" logos to the Comfort Inn. A Subway, Burger King and Wendy's stood across the street. With the smell of burning flesh in the air, I walked across the street to Burger King. The place smelled like a urinal pellet. An eleven year old girl was yelling at her father because he'd forgotten to order the green drinks, slime green for the color of Shrek, the latest two minute rage among the kiddies. Burger King was onto the theme in no time: green shakes and cardboard crowns to wear while you downed your beef and fries.

It was on the third or fourth bite of my chicken sandwich, right about the time another Dad got pissed and yanked his whiny son off

the play slide because he was ready to go home, when I looked at the slop in front of me and said "no more." In his book, *Fast Food Nation*, Eric Schlosser gives the same advice. The only way out of the fast food rut, he says, is not to eat it. Of course, it's more than just the fast food racket. The same goes for just about everything you see along the road, from Bath and Beyond to Circuit City.

Returning home feels like walking into a frat party the morning after. It's the keg party that never ended, the bong that keeps smoking. It's American history as arrested cycle pendulating between puberty and adolescence with wild swings of infantile regression. I've been in the New World funhouse for less than two weeks and I don't know whether to suek my thumb from fear or confusion or ditch into the bathroom to stroke off.

When I lamented to a friend about my discontent about returning, he told me I should just go back to Europe. It was a response half out of sympathy and half out of anger at my

turncoat pessimism. Call it what you wish. No one is going to convince me that what I now see across this once familiar landscape of farms tucked off two-lane highways among elms, oaks, and sycamores has been a good move.

A couple of years ago I'd read somewhere that the economic dynamo was generating so many new dollar bills, so much new opportunity for all, that the proceeds were even trickling into the cracks and crevices of the urban ghetto. Two trips to Chicago's West Side have discounted that theory. It appears just as desperate and forgotten as ever before. Beyond the bigger appetites for everything in sight, very little has changed here. Our collective direction, at least for the last half century (much longer, in fact), is a continued scourge on all of us, on basic cultural aesthetic. To live in it and accept it as a way of life is, in itself, a kind of insanity. ★



Dear Mr. Mackin...
Rev. Richard J. Mackin
Published by Gorsky Press
P.O. Box 320504 Cocoa Beach,
FL 32932
198 pages \$12

Reverend Richard J. Mackin comes correct with 160 pages of letters reprinted from his zine (plus a few personal stories at the end) "Book of Letters".

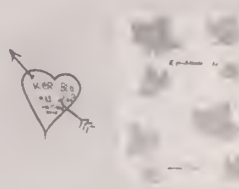
What Mackin does is send sometimes insightful, sometimes whimsical and almost always funny letters to various manufacturers of consumer products asking various questions regarding business practices, marketing, packaging and about the products themselves (what does the 'M' in M&M stand for?). The corporate responses (or in their absence a simple "no reply" stamp) are reprinted next to Mackin's queries and give the reader a small window into the world of corporate PR and customer service. Responses vary from cold, faceless form letters (Lever Brothers), to warm personal responses complete with free samples (Goetze's Candy Co.).

Mackin bills himself as a 'consumer defense corporate poet' (yes there are actual poems devoted to among others Trix cereal and Biore pore strips) and the often naive tone of his letters really makes the reader feel as though the Rev is writing on behalf of the young consumer inside us all. Thought the majority of Mackin's letters are on the lighter side, there are plenty that could be classified as rants. Moral and social issues such as animal testing, human rights, environmental abuse and yes, good old fashion consumerism are all addressed by the good Reverend (though they don't often receive replies)

If you've never read the hilarious zine version, Dear

Mr. Mackin is an excellent introduction to the Reverend's work and the perfect accessory for any well appointed WC. Also an excellent and unique research tool for those cheapskates among us who want something for nothing (responses are reprinted on their original corporate letterhead). The reader can gauge a company's generosity with the freebies by their responses to Mackin. One stamp and a short note later: hello free samples/discount coupons!

-David Stokamer



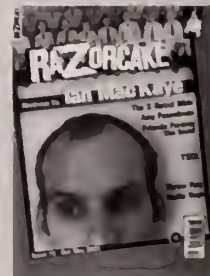
Ker-Bloom #31 and #32
PO Box 3525
Oakland, CA 94609

This is a quarter-page zine that lives a life outside its understated format.

In fact, each of the 12-16 pages of Ker-Bloom is created with hand-set type and printed on a Vandercook Model 4 printing press. Each issue is not only aesthetically brilliant, but features lucid glimpses into the life of the author, Artnoose — often discussing issues not only as they relate to the author personally, but also how they fit into the bigger picture of all that is. Issue 31 features Artnoose's second annual trip to the Underground Publishing Conference and the camaraderie and complications involved. Issue 32 is perhaps the best issue I've read perhaps because it seamlessly deals with the death of the artnoose's grandmother as well as September 11th, family conflict and litigation against an ex-partner — all in 6 pages. You've got to read this to see how it's done.

-jason kucsma

Razorcake #4
\$3ppd
PO Box 42129
Los Angeles, CA 90042
www.razorcake.com



Page 62 of issue four has a caricature of Jesus reading a porn mag with his tongue hanging out like a dog in August. It leads off an interview with Ben Edward Akerley, author of *The X-Rated Bible* and is just one example of how Razorcake is not the same old punk music rag. Self-identified as a fanzine and a webzine, Razorcake rises from the ashes that were Flipside. For those of you not familiar, Flipside was the seminal rock (primarily of the punk variety) zine based out of Los Angeles. Strictly music magazines have a tendency to bore the pants off of me, so I've honestly only read Flipside a handful of times when I was particularly interested in a featured band or artist. Razorcake departs from its predecessor in its ability to represent punk rock culture as a whole, not just the bands and the people who love and hate them. Sure, Razorcake is heavy on the artist interviews (this issue features a head-to-head between Nardwuar and Ian McKaye), but the columns are unfiltered windows into the lives of punks, nerds, rockers, geeks, zinesters, drunks, and everyone in-between as they talk about everything from music (duh!) to activism to literature and work.

-jason kucsma



Fugazi

The Argument
Dischord Records
3819 Beecher St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20007
www.dischord.com

What the fuck is going on with popular music nowadays? With a few corporations lock stepping to the teen boy/girl cash beats, with punk whirling itself into a hole so deep it's become a musical prison, with kids continuing to wander about wearing their fucking Fred Durst baseball hats backwards...and thinking it's still cool, most of this years alleged "new" releases were simply nothing more, to my ears, than retro garbage, recycled REM or some other variation on the same theme. Maybe it's the times we live in, maybe it's the lack of drugs, maybe it's the fact that anyone with a computer can call themselves a musician, release a CD and get it out of their system. I don't know, sometimes I felt I just wanted to stick an ice pick in my ears. And then there is the new Fugazi. "The Argument" has single-handedly rescued me from the dismal state of today's sordid musical world.

Amazingly, after seven albums, they still manage to dance to no tune but their own. And that's clearly the foundation of this album.

Because it sure isn't punk. And it's not jazz, it's not pop, it's not psychedelic, it's not rock...it's melody meeting distortion, distortion meeting dissonance, dissonance dissolving into meandering simmering melodies...and back again. This is a musical orgy, Fugazi style.

During each successive listen, I heard an album as sophisticated as anything Thom Yorke could dream of. Initially I wanted it to be louder, more intense, more energetic. But the damn thing kept pulling me in with its incredible song structure and musical sophistication, and I kept going back for more. The next thing I knew another song opened and flowered, then another, and then I'm thinking this might be the best record of the year. And much as The Beatles pushed music into adulthood, Fugazi takes their punk and accomplishes exactly that with "The Argument." It's courageous, pure and simple. (If the Beatles analogy disturbs you, tough shit. Those Liverpoolians, back in the day, were punk rock, fighting for the right to do it there way, long before there was a punk rock sound or ethic. Of course, they took the cash and played the game but they also left a legacy of musical independence of which punk

inherited and is a direct beneficiary of.)

This album won't work for you if you want Fugazi to be your little old punk band screaming about shit you failed to do anything about. The lyrics here continue to address their traditional societal obsessions ("forced removal of the people on the corner" in CASHOUT, for example). So they still give a shit. But they must be feeling the need to break out and explore music outside of punks' confines. And here they succeed by crafting an album where their music catapults the lyrics to another level with rock solid melodies, cellos, female backing vocals, crisp and taunt production...all adding up to one magical moment in contemporary music. The ice pick has been tossed.

-Jim Cummer

Infernal Noise Brigade

Insurgent Selections for Battery and Voice
PostWorldIndustries
1122 E. Pike Dept #949
Seattle, WA 98122
www.postworldindustries.org

Infernal Noise Brigade is a revolving band of anonymous musicians that you may have spotted on their "World Tour" last year in Seattle, Prague, or San Francisco. Self-described as a "tactical mobile rhythmic unit," INB has been showing up at mass demonstrations or cultural free-for-alls to lay down the structure, the different beat to which we can all dance. I was especially interested in hearing a recording of INB's efforts after hearing so much about them and knowing what projects some of the members had been involved with. Still, I was cautiously skeptical. How interesting can a full-length CD of a radical marching band/street theater performers keep my interest? Quite simply, they're able to do it by combining eclectic world rhythms, samples from street protest and essential female vocals that are at once entrancing and undecipherable. Purchase of this CD will undoubtedly help ensure INB's presence at your next demonstration gathering.

-jason kucsma

Francisco López

Buildings [New York]
V2_Archief; www.v2.nl/archief

Michel Foucault argues that by viewing a text through the "lens" of the author we are inputting a more palatable form of it, that the text can be written by anyone and it shouldn't matter who. Over the

course of more than 100 sound works, Madrid-based Francisco Lopez has demonstrated the flipside of that idea. He encourages Blind Listening, stripping the sounds of their context so that what remains is composition and an author. I am suggesting that what remains through Blind Listening is a composition by an author, if we are placing that listening experience in the context of a home stereo unit or concert hall.

This is somewhat important to think about when approaching a Lopez composition and that couldn't be more true of one of his most recent works, "Buildings [New York]". From January through March, 2001, Lopez recorded a diverse set of areas within buildings: air shafts, hallways, boiler rooms, a freight elevator and eerily enough, an empty studio on the 91st floor in the first tower of the World Trade Center. Given the events of the last few weeks, this record couldn't have been released at a more appropriate time. When I first heard about this album I immediately thought of a series of "aural snapshots" that would be melded together to form the inner workings of these human creations and indeed that was what I took from the work upon first listen. But subsequent listens have revealed something quite different. "Buildings" shares something in common with another Lopez work, "Le Selva" (V2_Archief, 1998). Both compositions are comprised of completely untreated material. In other words, the sounds are left as is. This makes it that much harder to not be informed by the context. But if one tries to divorce the sounds from their origin, the work clearly transcends all of the boundaries imposed by the respective sources.

The bulk of Lopez, work is concerned with the manipulation of field recordings done in natural settings: rainforests, deserts and the like. The result at times sounds like a musical equivalent of a Gerhard Richter "out of focus" painting. The edges are blurred and the object, once clearly discernable, is now more ambiguous but no less powerful. In fact this is where its strength lies.

"Buildings" is not supposed to be about confronting sounds that we are forced to live with and mostly choose to ignore: The sounds of machines housed within a steel, concrete and glass body that keep us warm, perpetuate industry, move us from floor to floor and clean our clothes, but I don't think it can be anything other than that upon first listen. These are structures that we have to come

to terms with, to recognize as systems which we build for our utilization, comfort and security. After that acknowledgement may come an abstract form of respect, then we can move on.

I had the opportunity to ask Lopez a few questions: Stripping these sounds of their context makes for an exhilarating experience, did you first approach this project from the standpoint of taking "aural snapshots" of the structures?

"No. I've never been interested in the "snapshot" concept. I deeply believe in the idea of the "real world" as the best sound generator and field recordings (be them from nature or from man-made environments) are almost exclusively my source material for creating my sound works. 'Buildings [New York]' is a parallel work to 'La Selva', in which I worked with non-processed sound recordings from the Costa Rican jungle. In both works there's a strong commitment to the idea of non-referential, profound listening."

Have you listened to, "Buildings [New York]" since 11 September? If so, has your view of the work changed in any way?

"Yes, I did. It hasn't changed at all. I'm personally affected by the tragic events, but this has nothing to do with the music created by the decision of recording and editing those sound materials. I think this is the way it should be with all music."

-Adam Sonderberg

Nathaniel Merriweather Presents:

Lovage

Music To Make Love To Your Old Lady By
75Ark Records
370 7th Street, Suite 12,
San Francisco, CA 94103
www.75Ark.com

The members of Lovage consist of: Vocals- Mike Patton (Mr. Bungle, Faith No More, Fantamos), Jennifer Charles (Elysian Fields), Turntables- Kid Koala, and is presented/produced by Nathaniel Merriweather (Dan the Automator of Handsome Boy Modeling School and Dr. Octagon Fame). Special guest "sexologists" include: Prince Paul, Afrika Bambaataa, Maseo (de la soul) and Damon Albarn.

I don't know about you, but that line up is enough for me.

This thing sounds like Portishead, Handsome Boy Modeling School, and Mr. Bungle on a slightly buzzed night out. This



album is perfect to chill to, sitting at home with friends, sipping some Robitussin. Mike Patton and Jennifer Charles, voices are beautiful and passionate together. The beats are perfect and the little scratch sample interludes (like handsome boy modeling school, but more mature) break up the disc nicely. And with a cover of Berlin's "SEX (I, m A)" it is brought home to your friends and family.

I heard about this release a while ago and couldn't imagine what it would sound like. I thought it was a joke. Now that I've heard it, I can't imagine it sounding more right. There is nothing not to love about this disc, and hopefully it will give everyone featured some more exposure to their other works. This is a masterpiece in every sense of the word.

File under Trip Hop for lack of a better classification.

-Dustin Amery Hostetler

Princess Superstar

Is
!K7 Records
75 9th Avenue Suite 12R
New York, NY 10011
www.k7.com

A guilty pleasure? I'm a little embarrassed to admit that I really like this CD.

For the same reason that I buy all of Kool Keith's CDs and only listen to them by myself... preferring to listen to enlightened tracks by the likes of Heiro and Cannibal Ox when I'm in public, I think I'm gonna keep this one in my car, and listen to it with a big smirk on my face as I drive my Taurus to work.

This disc is filled with humor, ironic feminist twists in a male-dominated music form, and something really weird, and really unique... yet familiar in a well written (she writes her own lyrics and makes most of the beats) and perfectly filled with guest appearances disc. Everyone guest featured on this enhances, supports and helps explain her style. Kool Keith, High & Mighty, Bahamadia, Mr. Len, Beth Orton and more grace her songs and give credibility to this independent.

"I'm a cunning linguist twist words round my tongue, And I ain't gonna rhyme the next one, you do it after I'm done..."

Pick up this disc if you are interested in East Coast underground hip-hop with mainstream credibility. This shit is refreshing, hardcore, weird AND genuine

-Dustin Amery Hostetler

Reindeer Section

Y'all Get Scared Now, Ya Hear!
[pias] in America; www.pias.com
Brightstar recordings elsewhere;
www.brightstarrecordings.com

I find it pretty ironic that my inaugural review for this magazine is the musical antithesis of it. Sluggish, brooding and understated are the best ways to describe the bulk of the songs that make up this album, but that's no surprise when you review the roster that makes up this Scottish super group (you'd have thought that term would have died with Temple of the Dog). Featuring members of such notables as Arab Strap, Belle and Sebastian and Mogwai, Reindeer Section is the brainkid of Snow Patrol's Gary Lightboy.

It's an album that is the equivalent of a tuneful bouillon cube, a rendering of the key elements that characterize the aforementioned groups (minus the shitstorm that Mogwai can whip up).

Love: lost and the needing of are served up in generous helpings throughout the fourteen songs, which vary somewhat in length, melodic sophistication and orchestration, although a dreamy element is omnipresent. This makes for a rather satisfying listen. I have only a couple of complaints, both of which can be fixed by the dutiful listener. Number one: the sequencing is a little off kilter, all of the upbeat numbers are stuffed at the end. Number two: the cover art betrays the musical content. If these complaints are too stuffy, then strike them from your record.

-Adam Sonderberg

Sorry About Dresden

The Convenience of Indecision
Saddle Creek Records
PO Box 8554
Omaha, NE 68108
www.saddle-creek.com

This CD will take its time in getting a hold of you. Kind of like a new friend who seems aloof at first, but is really actively wooing you without you even knowing it. I've started to listen to Sorry About Dresden about five times and I rarely got past the first four or five songs. The last time I threw it in, I let it ride all the way through and realized I had been ignoring a side of this outfit that I didn't even know existed. Sorry About Dresden (not coincidentally acronymically SAD), play melodramatic rock that hits peaks and

valleys of emotion while remaining musically consistent in their creativity and energy. At times, they have the raw energy reminiscent of Archers of Loaf and at other times you'll hear the soft spoken influence of Elvis Costello. The album features guest appearances from members of other Saddle Creek projects, which is one of the things I have come to expect from and love about this label.

-jason kucsma

Submission Hold

Sackcloth and Ashes;
The Ostrich Dies on Monday
Ebullition Records
PO Box 680
Goleta, CA 93116
www.ebullition.com

Submission Hold will go down in history as one of the best political hardcore/punk outfits in the last 25 years. In 2075 when scholars decide that it's safe to write about cultural and political subversion at the turn of the century, they will be easily discredited if they fail to mention the creative genius of Submission Hold. Combining an orchestra of instruments and voices that unite to create the eight songs on this CD, Submission Hold have upheld their obligation to continue writing hauntingly relevant music; an obligation they have imposed on themselves, no doubt. I could go on about Jen's fantastic voice that flawlessly transitions from operatic to rage-induced screams; or I could talk about the eclectic mix of rhythms and instrumentation that make this CD unpredictable and well-rounded. But this effort is so much more a collaboration of brilliant people with hope for a better world than it is a commodity. The accompanying booklet features art, poetry and lyrics (translated into Spanish and French) that document a momentary union between a diasporic community of talented individuals working, creating together. If you think you'll find this elsewhere, good luck. This is authentic.

-jason kucsma

The (International) Noise Conspiracy

Capitalism Stole My Virginity
G7 Welcoming Committee Records
PO Box 27006, C-360 Main St
Winnipeg, MB R3C 4T3 Canada
www.g-7welcomingcommittee.com

G7 Welcoming Committee Records is painfully ahead of their time. Some years ago, they released the "The First

Conspiracy" by The (International) Noise Conspiracy. While it was fairly well-received, I can't imagine the record was paying salaries at the label and supporting T(I)NC world tours. G7 also released "You Can't Keep a Good Band Down" by the other Swedish supergroup, Randy; and based on my own informal survey, Randy's CD has remained relatively unknown in circles of folks whom I personally know love to dance sweatily to politically-conscious punk rock music. That is, until both Randy and T(I)NC were snatched up by Burning Heart Records and catapulted to the top of the charts. Okay, so that's a bit of an exaggeration, but both bands' sophomore efforts are the ones that are going to introduce them to the rest of the world while we cherish their "early work." This CDEP is your chance to not only check out the new stuff from the unconscionably revolutionary soul outfit known as The (International) Noise Conspiracy, but also to support a label that often finds themselves one step ahead of the trends and miles behind them on the way to the bank.

-jason kucsma

Tracesubscript

<http://tracesubscript.tripod.com>

This is undoubtedly one of the finest self-released CDRs to land in our hands this issue. Musically, Tracesubscript delivers a new definition for acoustic music — one that refuses to fall back on folk standards and instead reinvents them with an eclectic ear tuned toward world rhythms and instrumentation. Visually, this CDR is meticulously (and professionally) designed in full color with an opaque sleeve liner detailing the track titles and instrumentation. Heading up this quartet is Hal Hixson, a tireless volunteer and writer for CLAMOR ("Seeds of Poverty and Forests of Wealth", Feb/Mar 2001).

-jason kucsma

Send us your reviews! The goal of reviews in CLAMOR is to expose readers to new and interesting projects that may sneak under the radars of most folks. If you've heard, read, or seen something that you think others should know about, expend 300-or-so words to share it with us. Send your reviews to reviews@clamormagazine.org

Consuming the Art of Pilgrimage

by Claire Rumore

consume (v) — to destroy; to spend wastefully; to devour; to engross

I WANT TO TAKE A WALK!! A simple enough exercise — but — I'm not talking about just any walk. This walk will be a very long walk, a journey by foot, a bona-fide pilgrimage. But, there will be no Santiago de Compostela trek in Spain or Mayan route through the Yucatan for me just yet. This pilgrimage may be as much metaphorical as real. The relics I'm hoping to visit are not ancient; they're timeless. They're not religious; they're universal. They're not buried in the earth; they're tucked away in the psychic. For me, it's time to reclaim them. **I want to take a walk.**

I want to take a walk in search of *simplicity*—a gentle though challenging interlude amidst the ever-present maelstrom of consumer appetites and urgings in our society.

I want to take a walk in search of *the kindness of strangers*—a lost but not forgotten art; a soon-to-be casualty of isolation and individualism.

I want to take a walk in search of *my personal strength*—have I forgotten how to trust myself and my environment because I've never truly been put to the test?

The comforts of modern life have done much to mercilessly consume these lost joys.

The immediate gratification that consumerism teaches us to yearn for has left me feeling unfulfilled and entirely overwhelmed. I feel weighed down in an endless cycle of buying things I don't really need, with money I don't really have, to impress people I don't really like. The lack of logic in the circus of consuming is astounding. Are we really the brainwashed children of the advertising agencies, ready to run out en masse and consume whatever our parental ad agents and market analyzers tell us is chic today? I feel myself rotting from the inside out; I feel myself frantically searching for an escape. **I want to take a walk.**

In competing for material wealth, many of us have turned to some sort of violence to one-up everyone else. We have been destroying any sense of community because rampant violence has led us to the emptiness of mistrust and extreme paranoia; and these have basically eradicated compassion for others and kindness to strangers. What happened to the days when we felt safe leaving our doors unlocked, picking up hitchhikers, and even strolling around our own towns and cities alone? Deep inside we're all feeling consumed by a hope for that security to return. We know it's there because everyone of us continues to experience it in little, subtle ways, like those moments when we're short 3 pennies at the check-out or when we catch a flat on the highway. The sun's rays are breaking through the clouds. **I want to take a walk.**

As technology has increased, so has isolation in many ways. Sure, we're E-connected more now than ever and quickly becoming a little global cyber-village, but occasions for authentic interaction with living, breathing beings seem fewer and fewer each year. And who wants to make the effort when they really don't have to? Riding in my car I watch the world pass me by—it indifferent to me, and me mostly oblivious to it. Holed up in my house, consumed by creature comforts, I think to myself how great it would be to get out and

see the world; yet I go on living vicariously through National Geographic, the Travel Channel, and foreign films. But now, I want to reclaim my instincts. I want to journey into the unknown, knowing that, if nothing else, I will be safe because I intend to be so. **I want to take a walk.**

The determined pilgrim has a destined goal that can be as intangible as it is indefinable; nevertheless, it is destined. The goal becomes the sole purpose for the pilgrim's existence, which will not be complete unless the effort to seek it is made. I feel my destiny gently guiding me to question all this mindless consuming and my part in it. How much do I really need, and when can I make/do? I feel my destiny is a pilgrimage of eternal questing, and questioning. **I want to take a walk.**

Ever threatened, though undaunted, by the possibility of not reaching the destination, the pilgrim sets out with little more than a voracious will to seek the diamond in the rough, the impossible dream, against all odds. And with any journey, simplicity is key to attainment! But simplicity? Where does one begin with simplicity in such a complex world?

First, I want to learn how to exist with less STUFF weighing me down. By STUFF I mean the vast array of material items without which, I convince myself, I can not continue to exist. In mental preparation for these pilgrim journeys, I find myself torn between two schools of thought: 1) be prepared, and 2) less is more.

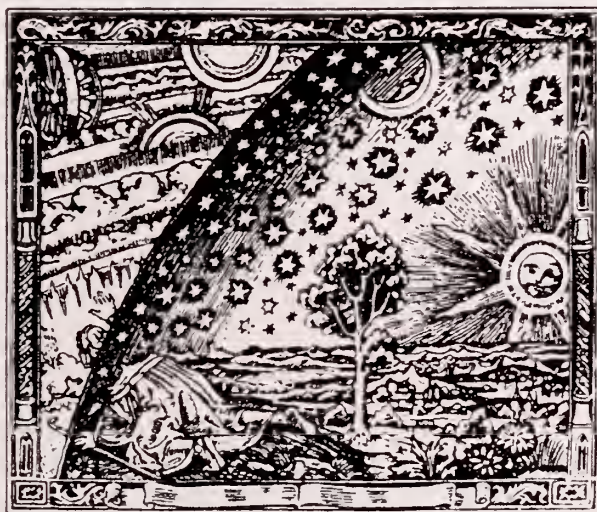
We have on the one hand the aim of accounting for every last detail, with every possible scenario anticipated. But this, of course, means a lot of extra weight weighing me down, making me excruciatingly aware of the load I'm baring. Such a weight grounds the search for higher pursuits.

However, on the other hand is the idea that less is more—a very Zen thought. I'm enthralled by the challenge of striking out with only the barest essentials (pen, paper, toothbrush, water bottle, change of socks) and trusting my environment to provide for me all else I might need, even if that means innovating with dried leaves, dental floss, and a long-lost tennis shoe on the side of the road. Creativity will be an essential tool for learning and exploration as I get to know my surroundings, my travel companion(s), and, most importantly, myself better.

Indeed, if there is a unifying energy that brings just the right people together at just the right time for just the right purpose, then seeking to solidify my faith in that will take me far. I hope to gain immense insights about my personal strength, where it is lacking and where it is full. Only

the road can teach me these lessons I'm eager to know, reveal to me these dreams I'm dancing around, and awaken me to realities I'm beginning to perceive. Nothing in this world is perfect. **I want to take a walk.**

In the end, the pilgrim's progress, though tempted by every alluring bargain and seductive sale rack, is truly toward no earthly destination. It is toward a genuine reclamation of all that is sacred. For the present direction of my pilgrim path, the most sacred destinations are simplicity, the kindness of strangers, and personal strength. Please get in touch if you'd like to take a walk too! ★





Promise Me the Moon and the Stars

Fiction by Jim Munroe

I work the night shift so it's easier for them to get me.

"Hiya Max. What's up?"

"Not too much, Mark," I say. "Just woke up."

"Oh, shit, sorry — I forgot, the night shift."

"S'okay, hadda get up anyway."

"So what have you been up to lately?" Mark said. It sounded like he was eating something.

"Went to a movie yesterday with Flora."

"Oh yeah! The girl... well, how's it going with her?"

I shrugged. "I dunno. I didn't get any signals, so I didn't..."

"Aw man!" Mark chastised. "Forget that crap, Just Do It!"

My stomach dropped. I had known Mark since third year at college. Five years. But I continued, just to be sure. "What about you? What you been up to?" I tried to sound distracted, casual.

"Aw, not much. We were supposed to go to this restaurant yesterday but then I saw the prices. We went to McDonald's instead. Hey, have you tried the McSoyburger? It's really —"

I slammed the phone down. Bastard. I mean, sloganeering is one thing, but a fucking product endorsement? I brought up his name on the phone and told it to block all future calls.

I thought back to the last time we had lunch. He had picked up the tab. I was surprised — he'd just been laid off. Don't worry about it, your nuts and berries don't cost that much, he said.

That was another thing — there's no way he would have eaten a McSoyburger! He was always veggie bashing, despite the few friends it made him. One in four people didn't eat meat, for Christ's sake, it was a significant demographic —

That's when it all made sense. He would have stood to make a bundle if he could have pulled it off — a product placement with member of the target demographic. It would have been worth a lot if he was working for one of the new personal marketing startups. More than our friendship, I guessed, and with a heavy heart I erased him from my speed dial.

★★★

I missed Mark. He was, in a way, my only tangible link to the average person on earth. I didn't trust anyone who trusted the corporations. Flora and I had a bitter fight after I told her I couldn't bear another movie about soda pop choices and the young people who make them.

I got involved more deeply with a group of malcontents called the Harmless Cranks that met every week. When the news about AT+T's A Big Step For Mankind campaign reached our stuffed ears — none of us enjoyed infotainment — we took it hard. But preparations were made.

The AT+T people said that the billion dollars it was donating to the special children fund would spark a billion smiles. They said if they didn't do it, someone else would do it anyway. Murphy

Brown, in her straightforward manner, explained that carpet-bombing the moon would actually go a long way in making it habitable for humans.

One of us Harmless Cranks had a job safety testing personal shuttles. They didn't have weapons, unfortunately, but another one of us said quietly that he might be able to jerry-rig some disrupters. We nodded without smiling. It was not exciting, this project, it was numbingly dreadful. But it needed to be done. I agreed to coordinate the first wave. I would not live in a place where night was sponsored by a telecommunications company, its logo glowing yellow-white over all future midnight rendezvous. No.

★★★

My mom gave me the news. It had been tied up in the courts for months and I had hoped the campaign would die a horrible death.

"Now I know you're upset, dear, but if it wasn't them it'd be Coke or Pepsi or McDonalds or something. Plus, that billion dollars will go a long way. Remember those kids born with cancer?"

"The ones with the parents who worked at the cell phone factory?" I said dully.

"Yes, Sony, I believe. Was it Sony, dear? I can't remember..."

I didn't say anything for a second. Then got up. Looked through the closet for my suitcase. There it was.

"It was the one with the little jingle, 'Forward, forward to the future world!' Yes, well, how has it been at work, dear?"

I scanned the contents of my silvery suitcase, wondering if she got extra money for singing the damn thing. Probably. "Work's been fine. But I've got more healthy concerns now, like protecting the moon from hateful, filthy bloodsuckers."

I snapped the suitcase closed, listening for my mom's reaction. I could hear her breathing. I hefted the suitcase in one hand. Plutonium cells were heavier than they looked!

Slyly, I said, "So I'll leave the phone off the hook so you can register a few more product endorsements, OK?"

"Oh, thank you dear," she said, tittering nervously. "It's just that things have been so tight recently, with the payments doubled up. Microsoft, Mierosoft, Mierosoft, Miero—"

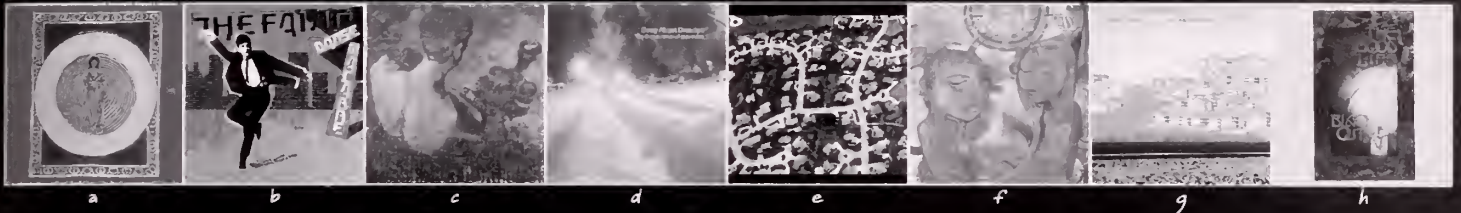
My suspicion confirmed, I hung up immediately. I had a sudden, irrational image of Mom stealing the coins from my dead eyes.

For neatness's sake, I blocked her, then erased her from my speed dial. I couldn't remember what her face looked like. Then I pressed the only button left.

The Harmless Cranks.

"George's Carpet Cleaning Service," Romano answered guardedly.

"Max here." I took a breath. "It's time."



a. **Son, Ambulance**
Euphemystic LBJ-36 CD/LP released 9.11.2001

b. **The Faint**
Danse Macabre LBJ-37 CD/LP released 8.21.2001

c. **Now It's Overhead**
s/t LBJ-38 CD released 10.2.2001

d. **Sorry About Dresden**
The Convenience of Indecision LBJ-39 CD released 10.23.2001

e. **Desaparecidos**
The Happiest Place on Earth LBJ-40 CDS released 11.05.2001

f. **Azure Ray**
November EP LBJ-41 CD EP released 1.21.2002

g. **Desaparecidos**
Read Music/Speak Spanish LBJ-42 CD/LP released 2.11.2002

h. **The Good Life**
Black Out LBJ-43 CD/LP released 3.4.2002



Saddle Creek PO Box 8554 Omaha, NE 68108-0554

Check our website for other releases from Bright Eyes, Cursive, The Faint, Lullaby, and Son, Ambulance. Prices include US fourth class shipping. For international rates, please check the website. Secure credit card transactions available online at www.saddle-creek.com
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