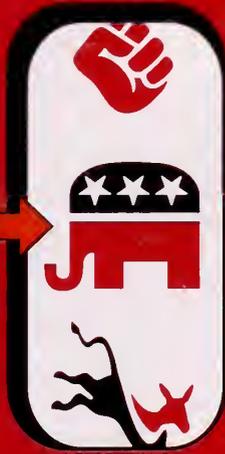


A LOUD AND CONTINUED UPROAR OF MANY HUMAN VOICES

Clamor

August/September 2000

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THE BIG GAMBLE

THE VOTING DEBATE

perspectives on electoral politics

filmmaker erroll morris'

MR. DEATH

photographer

CHARLES GATEWOOD

kenya • art cars • un-jobbing • animal rescue
violence & masculinity • the rock & roll hall of fame

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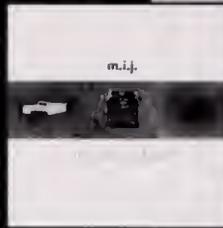
The New Rising Sons
 "Thieves & Angels"
 CDep \$7.00
 grapeDS

[the boys are back in town with four
 new songs]



Reflector
 "Where Has All The Melody Gone?"
 CD/LP \$9.00/\$7.00
 Status Recordings
 [Often compared to Hoover and Sunny
 Day Real Estate, Reflector rocks out!]

Moods For Moderns
 "Two Tracks Left"
 CDep/12-IN \$6.00 each
 Doghouse Records
 [ex-empire state games]



m.i.j.
 "The Radio Goodnight"
 CD/LP \$9.00/\$7.00
 Caulfield Records
 [Impressive expanding power-trio with
 roots in high energy, melodic post-punk.]

Shai Hulud/Another Victim
 split MCD \$8.00
 Trustkill Records
 [fury from two of hardcore's best]



At The Drive In/Sunshine
 split
 MCD/12" \$8.00/\$6.00
 Big Wheel Recreation
 [progressive-aggressive rock]

Botch
 "We Are The Romans"
 CD/LP \$9.00/\$10.00
 Hydra Head Records
 [evil math rock]



Piebald
 "The Rock Revolution..."
 MCD/10" \$8.00/\$6.00
 Big Wheel Recreation
 [catchy indie-pop]



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 D I S T R I B U T I O N

[P.O. Box 434]

[Toledo, OH 43697-0434]

[Phone: (419) 726-3930]

[Fax: (419) 726-3935]

[E-mail: info@lumberjack-online.com]

[On The World Wide Web: www.lumberjack-online.com]

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EDITORS
Jen Angel • Jason Kucsma

PROOFREADERS
Joshua Liner, Kristen Schmidt, Fred Wright

LAYOUT & DESIGN
Jen Angel • Jason Kucsma

COVER ILLUSTRATION
Theodore Hennessy (theodork99@hotmail.com)

ADVERTISING
rates and deadlines available upon request. please call 419-353-7035

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
Jim Engel, Pete Menchetti, Brian Edge, Paul Kucsma, Keith Myers and Advertisers

PRINTING:
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Bowling Green OH 43402
clamormagazine@hotmail.com
www.clamormagazine.org
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from the editors

Well it's been about a year since *clamor* magazine was first conceived, so to speak. Sometime last summer, after attending two independent media conferences, we decided that we wanted to put our own skills to work to start a magazine. We wanted a magazine that would get some of the thought-provoking and inspiring ideas out of the underground and into the hands and heads of those who would be less likely to come in contact with them. At the same time, we thought *clamor* should also be a magazine that served to connect all sorts of people who, for whatever reason, have found little solace in the status quo. A friend suggested that we're not just creating a magazine, but we're building a community. And while it is too early to suggest *clamor* is changing the face of culture and politics in the new millennium (though it is fun to entertain such a notion!), the response from readers all over the world suggests that we are heading in the right direction.

This issue is the "over the hump" issue that marks a half a year of publishing this magazine behind us. We're learning the ropes of editing, designing and financially operating this magazine, and we've managed to put out a bunch of good issues in the meantime. We're learning a lot and making some mistakes, but most of all we're discovering that publishing this magazine is very rewarding. In all our years of independent, small-press publishing, this is something new that we've never done, and it brings a whole different dimension to what we've been doing all along. We're able to reach and connect more people, more often, on a larger scale than we ever would have dreamed of a few years ago.

This issue is also a bit of an experiment. Here, we spend the entire "Politics" section talking about one topic—electoral politics. We feel that this topic is especially pertinent as the presidential election approaches and we are inundated with media that not only tells us we should vote, but assumes that voting is our utmost civic duty. Assumptions like this serve to discredit other actions that might equally foster a vibrant democratic society, from grassroots community organizing to something as simple as sharing stories with each other.

One of the main reasons we publish *clamor* is to help give a voice to those who are excluded from the usual avenues of public discussion, meaning those media resources which are the most pervasive and accepted in our society, like television, magazines, newspapers, etc. You may have heard this argument before, but one of the ways we're trying to accomplish this is by publishing the real stories of peoples' lives, ideas, and inspirations. In such an information-based society we are somehow more and more alienated from one another, and we hope that *clamor* will help counter that trend by connecting people with each other.

With that in mind, please remember that *clamor* is built from the ground up, by contributors, readers, and supporters. If you feel you have something to contribute to *clamor*, whether it be stories, artwork, or financial assistance, we'd love to hear from you.



Jen angel Jason K.



Letters

please address any correspondence to letters@clamormagazine.org or via USPS at PO Box 1225 Bowling Green, OH 43402

clamor.

Hey, I just got the new ish of *clamor*, and read a couple articles. Wanted to give ya some feedback.

1. The design of the mag is EXCELLENT. Very clear, and hip. Perfect. In past issues, I think the design was a little rushed, but this time it's razor-sharp!

2. I like the article on drug testing ("Chemical McCarthyism," June/July). It made me hate this practice all the more. Who cares if someone smokes a J in their apartment? It's obscene and Evan Endicott did an excellent job of documenting and articulating why the Ritual of Pissing is wrong. The fear tactic definitely works. The photos were cool, too. When I had my piss-test, I didn't have to do it in front of someone! That's nasty!

3. The article about punk and porn ("Strange Bedfellows...," June/July) was articulate also. I'm glad Mike Roth had the guts to speak out against anti-women bullshit. I also admired his commitment to the ideals of punk. I respect a lot someone who tries to bring out the best in others.

4. The vegan travel guide ("The Traveling Vegan," June/July) by Davida Gypsy Breier was great, too.

5. About the letter to the editor from Brob (Tilt!) on page 5 (June/July) – in a way I agreed with him... I worry that the quality of *clamor* may suffer if it comes out too regularly (tho I would miss it if it was quarterly). He also had a point about there being almost too much to read. It is a little tough to get to it all. As for price, screw that! It's worth it! But I still want youse to think about that stuff, cuz I don't want *clamor* to burn out.

At first, I also agreed with him about *clamor* being TOO diverse, but then, the more I thought about it, that's the same angst I occasionally have with *QECE* (the zine *Question Everything Challenge Everything*). "Shouldn't I focus more? Wouldn't it be easier to target and retain subscribers?" I thought. But then again, *QECE* is personal, and I have many diverse thoughts and adventures. Who doesn't? There is a plague covering our mental-scape I call label-think. It reminds me of discussing the WTO protests. An ex-journalist friend was having much angst because she kept saying,

"What's their message? What's the protest about?" It really showed that she was an ex-TV news producer: she just had to package the thing in a neat little phrase.

But that can't be done and still convey the story even close to accurately. These protests (among many other things) are a revolution against labels, against demographics: their indefinability is their strength. It's a clamorous screaming. "We are not numbers that can easily be sorted!" You want to know what the protest is about, you have to ask each person and they're all right. It's a serious culture-jam against the quantizing mentality of demographics! (Ha! You'd never know I was a proud college dropout after that last sentence!)

Anyway, I think Brob has joined in a dialogue that needs to continue: the viability of diversity versus specialization. From a Darwinian standpoint, specialization works great, but if you specialize so much that you are unable to adapt and the environment changes against you, you're screwed. Think this never happens? Think about college students choosing a major and investing a couple years only to realize they've changed and don't like it. Now what? Switch majors? But then you lose credits and have to stay longer! Oops! Of course there are places for zines that focus, but there are also places for zines that are diverse. I enjoy *clamor* precisely because it contains things I don't know anything about (like boxing and motorcycling). The travel articles are great too because I'm so lazy I don't travel as much as others but I can live vicariously thru them! About the only thing I wouldn't want to read about is anything that tolerates cruelty toward others (human and non-human).

Anyway, I absolutely LOVE the *clamor* mission (from your website): *Since we first started talking about clamor, we knew that we wanted to start a magazine that broke the trend of top-down media. The kind of media where all the stories, information, news, and entertainment that we hear, read and see comes from corporations that are more concerned with selling products than presenting useful media that has some connection to the everyday world that we all live in.*

That is so perfectly put! So well said. Exactly what the world needs. Feel free to print

some or all of this letter in the next ish of *clamor*. That would be an honor. You guys ROCK!

Larry Nocella
Collegeville, PA

clamor.

There are accented names in my article about Mirbeau ("Célestine Dismembered," June/July), including the oft-repeated Célestine. The second letter of her name is an "e" with an acute accent, but sometimes, when this is emailed on English speaking computers, it comes out as a different letter. All of the times in the article, it's come out as "Cilestine." I should have forewarned of this, since you would not have been familiar with the names, but I thought it was going to sound too obsessive, and I was already probably sounding like a manic nut about the photographs (which look great).

At any rate, not to worry. It's the best magazine in the movement and getting better with each issue. Thanks for running my piece! See you soon.

In Solidarity,
Bob Helms
Philadelphia, PA

clamor.

I noticed that my title of my article ("More World, Less Bank" June/July) was changed from "Choose The World, Not The Bank" to "More World, Less Bank." I know that "More World, Less Bank" was the phrase being thrown around. I knew that fact when I wrote the article, and it is even part of the reason for my writing the article. "More World, Less Bank" implies a reformist stance that capitalism can work as long as we better balance our priorities. As long as we include environmental protection in WTO policies, or more progressive than that even (which a large percentage of demonstrators were saying) that the WTO, World Bank, IMF, MAI, NAFTA, and Free Trade in general needs to be done away with. It's nice to see people standing up against world financial policy systems that have proven themselves to be disastrous and absolutely hypocritical to what those institutions pretended to be in

the first place. BUT what I was saying in my article (and as I am still saying) is that WE MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN THE TWO (the world *OR* the bank) not just to change the levels. As anarchists, we are saying to abolish the bank, not just to decrease its grip on the world. It upset me that the title was changed without asking me. I know that it was difficult to get a hold of me and that I didn't specify that I wanted that exact title and the change of title might not have seemed like a big deal but to me it is. I hope this doesn't come off like I'm a big jerk or anything.

Rob Augmann
Gainesville, FL

clamor.

While killing some time at a newsstand in this dull space called consensual reality, I was magnetically, magically drawn to issue #3 of *clamor*. THE BEST NEW MAG-A-ZINE I'VE SEEN IN YEARS! Integrity, wit, intelligence, literacy – whatsa matter? youse guys sick or something?

I'm a 45 year-old writer and psychedelic anarchist (gotta do something about these inadequate labels), former editor of national lampoon many eons ago, current scribe for *LA Weekly*, *Penthouse*, *Rolling Stone*, *High Times* and other corporate bullies; as well as various zines too. I will send some self-penned merde to peruse, but first I'm enclosing some money for a year subscription plus back issues #1 and #2.

I'll be in touch – whether you like it or not.

Yer fan,
Michael Simmons
Los Angeles, CA

clamor.

I saw *clamor* on the shelf at a corporate chain bookstore and took a look. Very slick, very impressive. Nice bar-code. It's further evidence that everything in this country is dominated by rich kids – even the underground.

Regarding one of the articles: That Richard Opalsky equates anarchism with socialism is discouraging (“End of Chaos Through Anarchy?” June/July). Evidenced by his going after a PhD at an exclusive university, becoming a secular priest, Opalsky loves hierarchies, institutions, certifications, regulations, monopolies, law. What some of us desire is instead is liberty: freedom from corporations, and acadmies; a return to small-scale enterprise, and to a human, unmonitored, uncontrolled life. Smug elitists like Opalsky represent merely a different form of slavery.

Sincerely,
Karl Wenclas
Philadelphia, PA

clamor.

Thanks for issue #2. I definitely enjoyed parts of the magazine. I liked the Whole Foods/corporate health food-bashing article (“Green Consumerism,” April/May) though I would have detailed their anti-union polices and the U.S.'s general lack of subsidies for organics a little more. Working in a worker-run health food store certainly reinforces my skepticism of a lot what I would call the “buy your way out of responsibility” pseudo-green politics. Also the non/mnogamy article (“Maybe We Should See Other People,” April/May) was a good primer.

But one article in issue #2 I really need to respond to because it sums up the fuzzy thinking behind most punk abolitionism and it seems like it might be an important part of *clamor*'s theoretical underpinning.

I honestly read Amanda Luker's (“Not Just Posing for the Postcard,” April/May) article three or four times because I simply couldn't believe her leap of logic. Let me see if I got this straight . . . two (visibly) white women on a bus give another (visibly) white woman a little shit for dressing punk and all of a sudden the punk woman is John Brown?

When I used to work on a zine in the late '80s we had a column called “Fuckin' Idiots.” Basically, it was a collection of quotes by local officials or famous left- and right-wingers saying stupid things. I'm proud to say that our first choice of quote, and indeed part of our inspiration, was the wonderful Jerry Rubin statement, “I dropped out of the White Race and the Amerikan (sic) nation.”

Which I'm sure Jerry really meant. At least until he didn't. After he married and used old (white) (male) money connections to set himself up as a stock broker he probably didn't say that a lot around his new friends.

And isn't that the crux of the issue? You can't really throw away your white privilege cuz it's always there like that comfy old coat that you can put on when you're tired of wearing that punk leather jacket.

Which may account for the incomprehensible (to Luker) incident where Black kids on the street call her a skinhead. She doesn't understand why they can't see she's an “ally.” This was another section which I had to read over. I guess I could just leave it at the fact that there are many ways to read someone's appearance, and relying on fashion to convey your ideas is, to say the least, dubious. Unless you expect people from other cultures or subcultures to understand the minutiae of ours and say “Hey wait, she has a *Profane Existence* patch not a Skrewdriver logo. She must be down with us” (And assuming that if they read *Profane* that would be their conclusion.) Besides, punk hasn't exactly had a, shall we say, consistent approach to dealing with the fact that it is mostly constructed as a white identity.

In addition, the back cover seems to set up *clamor* as the voice of (politeized) middle-class, white men. Who else are the “inheritors of the white supremacist, patriarchal, capitalist world

order [with] a prime position. . . set aside” for them? I get the context of the statement, (because I've read *Profane Existence*) and though I disagree with the concept/possibility of “rejection” of white privilege, I understand its place in the current punk/anarchist discussion of race. But don't you think that by privileging that one (seemingly white, male, middle class) voice on such a visible place, it kind of writes off many of the “human voices” which *clamor* might hope to include?

Sincerely,
Gordon (Zola) Edgar
San Francisco

**ANOTHER MOUTHPIECE
ANOTHER PALETTE
ANOTHER TOOL...
USE THEM ALL**



WWW.CLAMORMAGAZINE.ORG

clamor contributors

Beth Barnett (p. 16) managed to write a zine called *Eight Items or Less* before graduating and moving from Ohio to Oregon, and then moving again. Write her at bethbee@usa.net. Find her in Corvallis, OR.

Eric Boehme (p. 75) is a teacher and activist finishing up his doctorate in political theory at Rutgers University. He also works on *ATR* zine and contributes writing to the academic, activist and punk/hardcore press. He can be reached at 118 Raritan Ave., Highland Park, NJ 08904. eboehme@eden.rutgers.edu.

Casey Boland (p. 10) works, writes some and reads a lot. He does a zine called *I Defy* whenever he feels like it, and has injected his words and photos into some other zines. Contact him at 614 S. 48th St. Apt. 2R, Philadelphia, PA 19143, and if you've been sucked into the cyber trap. rscb@earthlink.net.

Tracy Bosworth (p. 59) writes a British fanzine called *Sharkpool* and spends her days teaching and conducting research at her local university. Her study of gender relations in the punk scene has been published in a number of countries and she is hoping to embark upon a PhD into the same subject in the near future. If you are interested in reading, contributing to her research or her zine she can be contacted at PO Box 208, Nottingham, NG7 6EN, England or emailed at TracySharkpool@hotmail.com

Scott Carrick (p. 57) is a 19 year-old boy who rides his bike and does cartwheels. He is all about doing things to build his and others' self-confidence, such as hopping trains, climbing huge scaffoldings at the church, telling and listening to stories, cooking up feasts of dumpstered food, and encouraging anarchy! Write to him with glue-coated stamps and he'll send you his zine *wild children*. scottcarsick@hotmail.com, 545 Calle del Norte, Camarillo, CA 93010.

Andrew Cornell (p. 26) writes the zine *The Secret Files of Captain Sissy*, is a member of the Words As Weapons Zinc Distro Collective, and is a former Library Assistant at the Labadie Collection. For correspondence or the latest issue of his zine, write to: 751 Hazelwood Ave. Apt. 2, Pittsburgh, PA 15217

Matthew A. Donahue (p. 43) is a multi-dimensional artist working within the fields of visual arts, music and the written word. He has displayed his art at festivals and galleries across the U.S. He recently traveled to Houston to exhibit his art cars. His musical group, Universe Crew, has three releases on the On-U Sound Green Tea record label from London. In addition to his book *I'll Take You There: An Oral and Photographic History of the Hines Farm Blues Club*, his writings have appeared in numerous magazines and journals. He credits Andy Sirotnyak with inspiration. The photos accompanying his piece were taken by himself and **Giles Cooper**, who can be reached at gilescoop2@aol.com. You can reach Matt care of *clamor*.

Basil Elias (p. 83) is a truth-seeker, someone who wants justice, an end to oppression, and to fill his heart with love. He works on many projects including *The Planting Seeds Community Awareness* project, as well as writing and healing. See the *Planting Seeds* ad in this issue (p. 87) for contact info.

Daniel Gatewood (p. 79) is a writer, activist and a public school teacher. He publishes his zine, *Sound Off*, occasionally and regularly contributes to other publications. He has been involved with a number of activists who are attempting to start a network for radical teachers. He can be reached at PO Box 340954, Milwaukee, WI 53234, or at soundoff@earthlink.net. **Rico Myszewski** lives in Portland and runs the Primary Thoughts Distribution of radical books and magazines. Dedicated to the DIY ethic, he spends his days roaming about his city and finding new ways to think about just about everything. He can be reached at kahveh@hotmail.com.

J. Gerlach (p. 42) takes breaks from frequent travels in his hometown of Minneapolis where he rides bicycles and works on various projects including the zine, *Breakfast Served All Day*. He can be reached at 1827 Fifth St. NE, Minneapolis, MN. 55418.

All of **Richard Gilman-Opalsky's** (p. 15) various moving parts operate under his close discretion. He likes to spend good times with snuggly Robyn and the cuddly cats. He likes to read, make music, and write essays like a mighty ideologue. He studies philosophy at the New School in NYC for the MA and Ph.D. He also seeks to use his hands, legs, and mouth to make noises that draw attention to social, political and economic inequities... He is a pretty skilled wordsmith, and considers his mouth a weapon... Direct all love letters and hate mail to thoughtandaction@yahoo.com

Loolwa Khazzoom (p. 37) is a published author, and the editor of *Behind the Veil of Silence: Arabic and Iranian Jewish Women Speak Out*, an anthology. She is also a self-defense instructor with Women Defending Ourselves and

has done ground-breaking work as a Jewish multicultural educator, founding organizations in California and New York and offering workshops internationally. Loolwa Khazzoom also is a musician. She has performed original rock and traditional Middle Eastern and North African Jewish music locally. She currently is putting together an original band, Grrl Monster! See more of her work at www.loolwa.com.

Reginald Sinclair Lewis (p. 15) is a poet, activist, writer and thinker currently serving a death penalty sentence in Pennsylvania. You can write him personally at: Reginald S. Lewis, #AY2902, 175 Progress Drive, Waynesburg, PA 15370.

Robyn Marasco (p. 76) is working toward her PhD in political theory/philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley. During those precious moments when she is not reading or writing papers, she is working on the fourth issue of her own zine *Alice is an Island*. She also contributes regular columns to *HeartattaCk* and *Hodgepodge*. Please write her at PO Box 13445, Berkeley, CA 94712-4445 or via email at hereinhell@aol.com.

Vique Martin (p. 64) transplanted herself from the UK to California to work at a record label. She also has a zine and record label, both called *Simba*, and she contributes regular columns to *HeartattaCk* and other magazines. She can be reached at viquesimba@hotmail.com, and *Simba 13* is available now.

Eric Meisberger (p. 17) has been known to collaborate on a zine project called *Here Be Dragons* and can be reached at xerix@telerama.com.

Jessica Mills (p. 71) publishes a zine called *Yard Wide Yarns*. She can be reached via email at yardwideyarns@hotmail.com. The illustrations that accompanied her article were done by **Caroline**, who does a zine called *Brazen Hussy* and can be reached at brazenhussy@netscape.net.

Larry Nocella (p. 51) is editor of *Question Everything Challenge Everything* (QECE) zine. He also writes the oddball comic-prose-story zine *eXtreme Conformity*. *QECE* and *eXtreme Conformity* can be found at selected Tower Books' Magazines stores worldwide. To order directly, send \$3 pp in well-hidden cash per zine to *QECE* or *eXtreme Conformity*, 406 Main St. #3C, Collegeville, PA 19426 (qece@yahoo.com). He likes to trade zines, too. Send yours. P.S. Go Vegan!

A Baltimore expatriate, **spike** (p. 22) is currently finishing his master's degree at Bowling Green State University, where he concentrates his academic life on studying gender sexuality and popular culture. Whatever remnants of a life remain after that he spends annoying his neighbors with house music and watching the sunsets on his roof with a little "al green." He credits the following for inspiration: Carl Craig, Carole Marvin, Ritchie Hawtin, Sarah S., Robin M., Grim, and Team Citrus.

Billy Tile (p. 86) self-publishes several independent comics including *Tile* and *Invisible Robot Fish*. Contact him at BillyCSQP@aol.com.

Stewart Varner (p. 47) an MA student in the Department of Popular Culture at Bowling Green State University, is currently working under the illusion that teaching college level culture studies classes is just as cool as singing in a rock 'n' roll band. He can be reached at varners@bgnet.bgsu.edu or by smoke signal.

Greg Wells (p. 69) lives in an anarchist collective household in Richmond, Virginia where he works around issues pertaining to community development and publishes the zine *Complete Control*. He can be reached by writing: P.O. Box 5021 Richmond, VA. 23220 or at gregwells36@hotmail.com

Peter Werbe (p. 19) is a staff member of the *Fifth Estate*, the longest publishing English-language anarchist newspaper in American history. Sample copies are available from 4632 Second Ave., Detroit, MI 48201. Peter is also the Public Affairs Director for WCSX-FM and WRIF-FM in Detroit. His interviews are broadcast via the internet at wcsx.com and wrif.com in Real Audio, Sundays at 7 a.m. and 11 p.m. EST, respectively.

Eric Zass (p. 28) works at City Lights bookstore and publishers. He also puts out a bunch of zines, including *KYEzine Internationale*. kyezine@yahoo.com.

When not dreaming of being a Kung Fu Master, **Kevin Zelko** (p. 18) is imagining where in the world he will go next. Currently he is working as a social worker in Seattle to save up for a long trip to China, India, Philippines, etc. and is looking for travelmates or people to visit/entertain. Contact him at hueyproudton@hotmail.com if you wanna play. Kevin also likes Herman Hesse, does a zine called *Wellfair?*, and is a member of the Huey P. Proudhon Family Collective.

To vote or not to vote? If so, for whom? If not, why? Six people share their perspectives on the issue that is at the heart of Campaign 2000.



Democrat

Republican

Casey Boland
Richard Gilman-Opalsky
Beth Barnett
Reginald S. Lewis
Eric Meisberger
Kevin Zelko



TOO LONG!

Question





Alternatives to the Big Two



and why you won't hear much about them

By Casey Boland

In a nation as vast, diverse and individualist as the United States, it's difficult to find anything everyone can agree on. We'll dispute everything from social issues to sports teams to television programs to soft drinks. Yet we as a nation can embrace one another and rejoice in our collective disgust of one thing: major politicians, especially those running for an office as esteemed as the presidency. With the exception of those unfortunate individuals on the payroll of either the major political parties or those fortunate few to reap the material benefits bestowed by the corporations and economic sector which own the major political parties, Americans love to hate big wig politicians. Every four years we watch as older, white rich guys play the part of Joe Normal, while reciting the lines stated ever-so sincerely every four years by similar, older, white rich guys generation after generation before. Today presidential elections and their concurrent campaigns and conventions are nothing more than entertainment. They are bad theatre, or abysmal television. And yet some still summon the strength to go to the local polling station, pinch their nose, look the other way, and pick the "lesser of two evils." TV pundits and syndicated columnists shouldn't ask why so few people vote, but why so few choose to vote at all.

Unless you have a spare million dollars lying around, none of us has much of a say in presidential campaigns and presidential elections and presidential politics and we know it. Which may explain why the nation's appetite for an alternative to the Republican monopoly on major political (and economic) power in the U.S. grows. The elusive "third party" pesters the major parties every four years. It is a specter haunting the marble-tile floors of American Power precisely because it challenges that power. "Minority" parties or "fringe" parties span the ideological political spectrum from left to right. Some focus exclusively on one issue (Marijuana Reform Party), while others take on the entire decaying edifice of American democracy (though many will argue what is called "democracy" in the U.S. was never a democracy at all). Most third parties and their candidates evade the media spotlight (or the media evade third parties, to be more precise), while some become celebrities. Yet as Reagan so adeptly illustrated, celebrities make for bad politicians (those among you with more potent cynicism coursing through your veins will spit, "all politicians are bad"). What follows is an educational romp through the highs and lows of the Third Party in U.S. presidential politics.

Extra! Extra! Don't read all about it

It goes without saying that the media make or break presidential contenders. It's a horse race where the one with the sleeker mane, the more melodious whinny, the whiter teeth and the faster pace will win. We know that. But what we often forget is that the media have nothing to gain from fringe parties who prattle on about the horrors of capitalism and neoliberal trade pacts. After all, the mainstream media is mainstream because it is a business, and a business owned and operated by the biggest corporations on the block. Wouldn't it be akin to biting the hand that feeds were the media to champion any candidate who castigated the wealthy fat cats who buy off the politicians? As progressive author and academic Michael Parenti put it 14 years ago, by not covering in any seriousness alternative political parties and their candidates, "The media help perpetuate the pro-capitalist, two-party monopoly."

OK, OK, you may argue, what about Ross Perot in '92? Or what

about John Anderson in '80, smarty pants? True, both Ross Perot and John Anderson appeared to be genuine alternatives to the Republican and Democratic candidates. Yet it would be a stretch to label either Perot or Anderson as genuine alternatives. Perot is a millionaire whose vision lives on in the Reform Party. Their "reforms" don't go much beyond upholding the capitalist hierarchy that has plagued this nation since its inception. And John Anderson was an estranged Republican. Like Perot, he offered no concrete message of change. Hence, they in no way threatened the established power order and were showered with vast quantities of media coverage. How many of you know that Gus Hall and Angela Davis ran in 1980 on the Communist Party ticket? Does the name Barry Commoner ring a bell? Or Larry Agran? Each sacrificed loads of time and energy to combat the two party duopoly and now barely register as a teeny blip on the radar screen of America's political memory.

Journalists don't try to hide the fact that they shortchange third parties. One *Newsweek* editor was quoted as stating: "If we don't think that you have at least some chance of being elected, you don't get any coverage." An *L.A. Times* reporter adds: "An election is not a matter of who has the best ideas . . . What it really comes down to is who can win the most votes." Since the public learns most of what they know about candidates from the mainstream media, if someone doesn't fit into their spotlight, they have virtually no chance of attracting a significant number of voters. As Parenti notes, "Media exposure confers legitimacy on one's candidacy. By giving elaborate national coverage only to Republicans and Democrats, news organizations are letting us know that these are the only ones worth considering."

Think about it. How many of you said or heard someone say "Well I wanted to vote for X but they'd never win. I didn't want to throw my vote away, so I picked Y." The media don't exactly encourage voting for third parties by labeling them "fringe" parties with little hope of attaining anything but an obscure historical reference point for future third parties. It takes a well-stocked "war chest" of millions of dollars for a candidate to achieve the status of "serious contender" through the warped eyes of the mainstream media.

It's the issues, stupid

While alternative parties and candidates are often derided for their lack of political finesse (i.e. not being "politicians") they have played a vital role in bringing important issues to the fore of a campaign. Such issues as the abolition of slavery, the right of women and African Americans to vote, environmentalism, and progressive reform in general were all championed by "fringe" parties that changed the thinking of the vast majority of the nation. They force subject matters that the media and especially the Big Two candidates would much rather ignore. The mainstream media chatter incessantly like well-groomed chickens about the devious role of money in presidential campaigns. Yet they never seriously question that role nor do they seriously cover less financially-endowed prospective politicians.

Instead of digging deep into the bubbling cauldron of social ills and economic issues addressed by non-major political parties and activists, the media serve us sugary sweet reports about as substantial as cotton candy. We hear about George Bush 2 breakfasting with blue-collar workers at a diner in Texas, or Bore Gore delivering speeches to grade school kids. And when we do witness the random news story on

their stance on an issue, all we receive are the same tried and true, tired and worn platitudes. Norman Solomon suggests that this emphasis on meaninglessness "tell(s) us that candidates and the media are trying, in their own ways, to dance past engagement with real issues." While 40 million Americans have no health insurance, 30 million have substandard diets, and the U.S. gets the award for having the highest child poverty rate in the industrialized world, the media and BushGore Inc. pontificate superficially about acceptable (though no less significant) issues such as social security, taxes and education. And they exhibit an egregious paucity of concrete solutions to these issues.

Monopoly in the debate club

Traditionally, candidates for the presidency put up their dukes with words and the wrangling over of important issues in the public forum. Contemporary society knows the media as the most public and wide-reaching of forums. Presidential debates serve a function for allowing candidates to express their ideas and opinions (however insincere and fabricated) for an audience of millions. So it's a given that landing a spot in the debates is crucial for any serious presidential wannabe. And it's a given that the most serious candidates on issues of genuine concern to the public will not be granted permission to face off with the major party candidates.

The bipartisan (Republican and Democrat) Commission on Presidential Debates devises the rules for the presidential debates. Any candidate must meet constitutional requirements and appear on the ballot in a number of states to show at least some chance of winning. This year they decided that a person must also, one week before the debates, gain the approval of 15 percent of opinion poll respondents. Their decision reaffirms the role of big money in presidential campaigns, since any candidate of modest means needs the coverage only a nationally televised presidential debate could provide. Not to mention the fact that, according to a 1999 Gallop poll, 38 percent of Americans considered themselves neither Democrat nor Republican.

Look at The Body. Jesse Ventura shocked the nation by winning the Minnesota gubernatorial election in 1998. All the old political hacks and tired pundits must have suffered a coronary upon learning such ghastly news. Six weeks before the election, Jesse netted a measly 10 percent poll rating. Then came the gubernatorial debates—he first broadcast live before a television audience. Jesse ran on the Reform Party ticket and the only way he found his way into a televised debate with the big wigs was elementary political scheming. The Democratic candidate Hubert Humphrey III mistakenly thought Jesse would drain votes from the candidate of the pachyderm party. After the debate, many media-bred political specialists concluded that Jesse "made an impression." A slew of debates followed for The Body, each one revealing him to be the champion of the audiences who watched him body-slam the other candidates. A *Star-Tribune* poll conducted about three weeks after the initial debate revealed that Ventura's support rose to 21 percent. As Norm Solomon points

out, "At the time that poll was completed, Ventura's cash-strapped campaign had not yet aired a single television advertisement — but the candidate had participated in several televised debates with his major-party opponents." As we all know, Ventura trounced the other two and ascended to the governorship of Minnesota.

It is debatable whether or not Ventura would have won if he had not appeared in his first televised match with the other candidates (had the CPD's 15% rating been in effect in Minnesota, he would have been barred from participating). But it is undeniable that it certainly awarded him a substantial degree of attention and notoriety. In all likelihood — and most importantly for his campaign — the televised debate performed the legitimizing function Parenti discussed earlier.

The same could probably be said about our old buddy, millionaire-cum-political-mainstay Ross Perot. Throughout the '92 presidential campaign season, Ross sparred with Bill and George for an American television audience. I remember the TV being glued to the debates in my house—and ours was just one in some 97 million (for the last night of the debates). It entertained. It somewhat enlightened (as far as any program brought to you by Pepsi or Maxi-Pad or General Electric can enlighten). People liked seeing Ross chuck witty barbs at the meticulous scripted and choreographed Bush and Clinton. And what happened when American viewers were treated to a presidential debate between two old farts trading carefully scripted candidate lines, straight out of their Presidential Debate 101 textbooks in 1996? A mere 36 million tuned in for the last night, down 10 million from the first night. A third candidate can add colour to a debate—they can spark an exchange, which may tiptoe outside the acceptable boundaries of what is allowable in a major political debate. And just imagine what would have happened if someone in media-land fell asleep and allowed Ralph Nader to debate Bush and Gore.

To vote democrat or not to vote democrat?

Let's be honest with ourselves: just about anyone reading this publication is not about to vote

Republican. Considering that this is indeed a magazine emanating strong sociopolitical overtones, this leaves us with three possibilities for the *clamor* readership — 1) They see the futility of voting at all in this sham democracy and opt not to locate the local polling booths come election day 2) They will investigate and support an alternative party 3) They will vote for Gore.

Indeed, quite a battle has been raging amongst the left intelligentsia in the United States over whether to Go Gore or to Go Green.

Several contenders do in fact exist as viable third parties on the left, yet for all of our intents and purposes, Ralph Nader wins most progressive popularity contests. Perhaps the small yet potent criticism leveled by Katha Pollitt from major-progressive publication *The Nation* serves as an appropriate synopsis of the Democrat vs. Third Party issue.

Pollitt essentially argues that third party candidates, particularly Ralph Nader, have routinely run half-hearted stabs at the presidency and accomplished nothing but perhaps some stolen votes from the Democrats. She maintains that though Gore certainly is no desirable president, he is preferable to Bush. While many on the left-liberal end



...ngs vociferously deride Gore as no different than Bush, Pollitt writes that there are some major concrete political contrasts that could potentially affect such members of society as public school teachers, small-business owners and minorities. According to Pollitt, Nader and those of his leftist ilk follow in "the long tradition of high-minded progressives making principled but hopeless runs for the White House."

Progressive economist and media analyst Edward S. Herman contends Pollitt's assertions in a *Z Net* web site (vast progressive resource) editorial. He states that Gore, like many Democrats before him, is hardly a lesser evil. Amongst other crimes to which the Clinton-Gore administration is culpable, Herman cites the economic sanctions (not to mention outright aggression) against the people of Iraq leaving over a million dead. The Democrats (the supposed party of the people) were also responsible for the Personal Responsibility Act of 1996 (Orwell would have appreciated that euphemistic misnomer), which, along with Democrat-supported terrorism legislation, "have been serious betrayals of principle and elementary decency and attacks on human rights and civil liberties." Ed doesn't stop there. He adds, "A vote for this 'lesser evil' is therefore a vote that implicitly approves seriously regressive policies at home, a growing military budget, an aggressive and murderous foreign policy, and the commission of literal war crimes abroad."

Herman also evokes another idea others, including many alternative political parties, have suggested: why not make NONE OF THE ABOVE an option for voters? It makes perfect sense. When we as the American populace are so violently disgusted by the choices for Presidency of this great nation (sarcasm most certainly intended), we should be able to record our vote of no confidence in the candidates forced upon us by CNN and the CDP. Of course we could also write in Howard Stern or Rush Limbaugh as so many surely do, yet a vote for NONE OF THE ABOVE could carry some serious weight regarding the public's trust and faith in their electoral system. Yes, we could just not vote. Scores of folks across the country exercise their right to do just that (while in some countries you are fined for not voting, something our friends on Capitol Hill have considered instituting here). But to do so is to be ignored and to go uncounted, though Herman says: "A vote is a form of approval of the candidate as well as the process – nonvoting is a way of expressing disapproval of both, and as more and more people do refuse to vote the system as well as the candidates lose credibility."

Public citizen #1

Then along comes Mr. Nader. Actually, Ralph has been mucking his way about Washington for quite some time—outside the government, not within. Unlike, BushGore and their corporate puppeteers, Nader has genuinely served the common citizen. Thirty-Five years ago Nader commenced a counterattack on the corporate behemoths that be and their war on unsuspecting "consumers." The water we drink, the seat belts we strap on (some of us) whenever we need to resort to automotive transportation, the air we breathe—all of this has been affected or instituted care of the vigorous and relentless work of Ralph Nader. As radio talk show host Jim Hightower commented, "The guy has saved more lives than Mother Teresa."

And what better person to be the neo-left, anti-corporate movement's own Mother Teresa than Nader? The guy's life embodies a non-stop offensive against corporate power. He was in Seattle to join the tens of thousands doing their civic duty to be a thorn in the side of the WTO. He fought against NAFTA and other unilaterally pro-wealth trade pacts. But what many see in Nader is the possibility of a progressive doing the impossible—uniting the young, college-age activist types with the working class union folks—a "blue-green" coalition. Can such a thing happen, you gasp? Consider the WTO protest, where student activists and construction workers marched side by side. Or the mutual disgust of anarchists and longshoremen to GATT and multinational corporations. Of course their interests and ideas diverge immediately when you go beyond the issue of unaccountable companies depriving Ameri-

cans of good jobs (ask a Philly AFL-CIO member what he thinks of Mumia Abu Jamal, and remember to not wear your "Free Mumia" T-shirt). Yet for those inebriated with optimism over the potential of a progressive candidate, they need look no further than Nader.

Progressive-lefty types can dream all they want about a Nader presidency; it doesn't mean he will actually win. Yet we must not forget the numbers, those grand indicators of the current of thought across the land, the *polls*. A Zogby Poll conducted in April revealed that Nader snagged six percent support, while Patrick Buchanan garnered a paltry 3.6 percent. Yet who pops up on TV more often? Good ole Pat. As Jeff Cohen of Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting points out, though Nader receives much respect and praise from various segments of the population, he nevertheless rarely appears in the mainstream media's coverage of the election. Cohen states, "Imagine what Nader's poll numbers would be if his candidacy weren't so ignored by national media."

The third wheel(s) on the politics vehicle

The land of third parties spans far and wide beyond Ralph Nader. Let's take a gander at five major third party options for the ballot box-friendly American. Please note, each offers an extensive agenda were they to gain office (though some are constantly working towards their prospective goals regardless of structured politics). Due to space, time and the attention span of readers, I can do no more than pick and choose what piqued my interest and trivialize each party. You'll have to dig for yourself to get the full gist on what each plans to do for you and your society.

The Green Party. If you didn't happen to know, there is much more to the Greens than Nader. About 600,000 people voted Green in the presidential election of '96 and by most accounts, they are the biggest party on the left. But don't expect a homogenous crowd of uniformed comrades here – there is much divisiveness on all fronts. Two major groups bear the banner of Green, the Association of State Green Parties (formed to elect Nader) and the Greens/Green Party USA. The former focus on "serious alternative-party challenges at the polls," while the latter devotes much energy towards grassroots activism. As for a general party platform for the Greens, they essentially view the realm of politics and society as intertwined with the environment, hence their call for "an ecological economic system that is based on democratic and decentralized cooperative and public forms of ownership and control." They state the need for the restructuring of the capitalist system as we know it, a "corporate-market system" forged out of the exploitation of all life "for profits and growth." But they are not calling for state socialism, since they believe it has exploited for similar ends. The Greens are a party with radical revisions in mind and they have a detailed plan for doing so, beginning at the local level. And don't judge this book by its title, the Greens have many ideas for realms beyond the environment, such as foreign policy, public transportation, banking and finance, health care, and more.

The New Party. Like the Green Party, the New Party arose in the early 1990s and continues as a "community-centered political organization." This highly structured group has somewhere around 10,000 members, though the New Party stresses coalitions with other parties. They fought to establish a rule that would allow candidates to run on more than one party's ticket. This process, known as "fusion," was summarily shot down by the Supremes, when the high court decided states could ban fusion. The aims of the New Party are congruent with those of the Greens, though without the emphasis on ecological harmony. The New Party platform says it best: "We believe in democracy. Corporations and technocrats shouldn't rule this country. The people should." The New Party strategy is to run candidates in local elections and they have seen successes with candidates serving in city councils and on school boards.

The Constitution Party, A.K.A. The Taxpayers Party, the American Heritage Party, American Independent Party, etc. etc., Whatever

way you cut it, this is one angry slice of ultra-conservative, radically religious ideologues. Their platform immediately states: "The Constitution is rooted in Biblical Law." Though they concede that the government is the product of citizens and should be beholden to them, don't expect the Constitution Party to seek more democracy (like most third parties). Instead they say, "The U.S. Constitution established a Republic under God, rather than a democracy." On the pressing issues of the day, this party is as conservative and reactionary as it gets. Abortion? "As to matters of rape and incest, it is unconscionable to take the life of an innocent child for the crimes of his father." I wonder how many women partake in the average Constitution Party rally. Females in the military? "We reject the policies and practices that permit women to train for or participate in combat." They blame the deterioration of America's armed forces on the "feminization of the military." Education? "All teaching is related to basic assumptions about God and man." Environment? They seek to repeal the Endangered Species Act and to end U.S. involvement in all international environmental treaties. Family? "One man and one woman." Need I continue? Do not be foolish enough to think of this as a 'fringe' party with little support, they've received over 100,000 votes in past presidential elections.

Reform Party. The party of Perot. Born from the ashes of Ross' '92 stab at the presidency, the Reform Party continues to run candidates in elections for all levels of public office. Their platform focuses much attention to rooting out corruption from government in order to attain the "highest ethical conduct" for politicians. They also describe in detail their views on trade policies and business, with emphasis placed on reducing U.S. deficits and campaign-finance reform. They don't like the WTO (though Perot reportedly supports it) or NAFTA. They're pretty vague on education and health care and

play lip service to the environment. Any liberals hoping they'd found a perfect party would be disappointed when they read the Reform take on immigration: "The employment of those workers has led directly to the reduction of real wages and the displacement of native U.S. workers in some fields" (I doubt they're speaking about Native Americans). The Reform Party's bottom line: the system needs some fixing. A little privatization here, the elimination of social services there, and you'd have a great nation.

Libertarian Party. If you aren't careful, you'd think the self-described "party of principle" was downright left-wing. They think defense spending should be cut, the war on drugs ended, NAFTA and GATT dissolved, and they actually consider immigration to be a good thing. Then you read the fine print and see that the Libertarians, though allied with the anarchists in a fierce loathing of government, see the free market as the answer to humanity's problems. The magic of the market has no louder preacher than the Libertarians. They believe it will solve all problems with "the abundance and prosperity it brings." On the question of poverty and social ills, they see them as an outgrowth of bad government policy. Their solution is to completely abolish welfare and all social programs, and allow "private charity" to clean up the mess left by the economy. They also feel all minimum wage laws should be repealed. As for the "root causes of crime," they list public schools, welfare and government regulations of the economy. In the eyes of a Libertarian, a strong economy will lead us down the golden path to Utopia. Nevermind that capitalism leads to inherently unequal distribution of wealth and is by its very nature exploitative. Or that big business never granted a concession without being forced to.

Is three a crowd?

The PEN Voting Party

By Reginald Sinclair Lewis

And imagine this: The American Constitution is amended giving every prisoner in the United States the right to vote. State by state, county by county, inmates immediately form a powerful nationwide third – oops – fourth party. Perhaps they'll call it the "Furniture Makers License Plates Printers Union" or the "Inmate Multiracial Congress," or ...here's a good one: "The PEN Voting Party."

In every county, state and federal prison in the U.S., voter registrations are conducted cellblock to cellblock, tier to tier and pod to pod. The PVP acronym is emblazoned in bold gold letters over the ID numbers of drab prison uniforms. The inmate workers at the Washington Twin Rivers Corrections Center (TRCC), where Microsoft products and software are packaged, shrink-wrapped, bagged, and shipped, allege voter fraud after the liberal department of corrections head is voted out of office by a fierce right-wing opponent. They threaten a work stoppage. Microsoft stock plummets. A number of options are discussed at an emergency shareholders meeting. The Seattle branch of the FBI investigation concludes there were a number of irregularities in a voting district that had long been a Republican stronghold. The incumbent demands a recount and it indeed confirms that he had retained his position by a slim margin. The controversy brings to the forefront a number of issues – including slave wages and cheap prison labor – and prisoners organize unions with the PVP's backing.

The party's membership skyrockets. Disaffected ex-offenders and parolees shut out by the traditional political parties become PVP spokespersons in the free world. They are invited to speak at prestigious universities, roundtable discussions, town hall meetings – and even

make appearances on the Howard Stern Show.

They are soon joined by the MTV/BET generation X'ers – hip-hopppers, radical punks, anarchists, gays and lesbians, and Marilyn Manson fans. Muslims and Jews and Christians and Buddhists form alliances within the party. The biggest punk bands and political rappers sponsor free concerts on the internet. DVDs and MP3s are pumped out. The CDs fly off the shelves. The PEN Voting Party even gets an official website. They challenge the NRA. After all, aren't they living, breathing witnesses who could attest to the need for gun control?

They urge Congress to pass legislation banning all handguns and assault weapons in America. On Capital (sic) Hill, Senate hearings are convened. Representatives are seated alongside the organizers of the Million Mom March.

Vote-seeking politicians now view this party as a constituency they cannot afford to ignore. The "Lock-'Em-All-Up-And-Throw-Away-the-Key-Fry-the-Bastards" rhetoric dramatically softens. They patronize the voters with slick pitches. They express their views on the need for a Death Penalty Moratorium, and end to racial profiling, conjugal visits, college courses behind bars, an end to building more prisons, unfair and tough drug sentencing laws that target poor minorities. Shrew Republican strategists abandon George Bush Sr's clever skit of a chicken eatin' black boogey man rapist – not straight outta Compton, but *Birth of a Nation*. Willie Horton has been voted into sainthood. The politicians rush to attend \$10-a-plate (the best prison chow) political fundraisers held in the prison auditoriums and

No, though the Republicans and Democrats would like you to think so. Is it possible for a third party candidate to defy the odds and win an election? Just ask Theodore Roosevelt or Abraham Lincoln. And even if they don't crash the Republican monopoly political party on Capitol Hill, alternative parties still serve an important function in bringing issues to public attention that the big cheeses in Washington refuse to touch.

To end on a somewhat contradictory note, I must address my concerns regarding the classic anarchist argument against reform. I haven't decided whether or not I will participate in the 2000 presidential election, due to my anarchist inclinations. Those pesky impulses dictate that the system of politics and power in the U.S. is rotten to the core; no drop in the ballot box or a change of the window-dressing on this sham democracy will repair a structure that should be condemned. Yet that doesn't preclude the necessity for alternative political parties vying for the major post of political preeminence in the U.S.A. These alternative parties are especially crucial on the local level. While this article exclusively explores "third parties" in the presidential realm, that should in no way lead one to believe it is only at that level that alternative parties, or voting in particular, can make a difference. In fact, the political shenanigans going down in your neighborhood deserve your undivided attention. The Greens, the New Party, the Reform Party and countless others understand this and work tirelessly on that level, behind the scenes, in the shadows of the limelight. Everyone should get involved, however they see fit. And remember, voting is not the only way to flex your democratic muscles.

Some other third parties. Investigate at your own risk.

American Conservative Party
American Reform Party
Christian Alliance Party
Confederate Party
Communist Party USA
Constitution Action Party
Creator's Rights Party
Freedom Socialist Party
Grassroots Party
Labor Party
National Party
Natural Law Party
Pansexual Peace Party
Patriot Party
Puritan
Socialist Party
Socialist Party USA
Socialist Equality Party
Socialist Workers Party
Workers Party USA
Workers World Party
U.S. Pacifist Party

Resources

Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting <http://www.fair.org>
Z Net <http://www.zmag.org>
Jim Naureckas and Janine Jackson. *The FAIR Reader*. 1996. Westview Press.
Michael Parenti. *Inventing Reality*. 1986. St. Martin's Press.
Norman Solomon. "The Performance Art of American Politics."
Norman Solomon. "Campaign Forecast: A Long Hot Summer of Punditry."
Norman Solomon. "The Media Queries Falling Short of Mark." Aug. 22, 1999.
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"Three's a Crowd, Says Debate Commission." *Extra! Update*. Feb. 1999.
Katha Pollitt. "Progressive Presidential Politics." *The Nation*. Apr. 17, 2000.
Jeff Cohen. "Nader, Buchanan and the Debates." Apr. 16, 2000.
Matt Bai. "'The Body' Slams His Party." *Newsweek*. Feb. 21, 2000.
Jim Hightower. "Here's a Democrat for President!"
Greens <http://www.greens.org>
New Party <http://www.newparty.org>
Constitution Party <http://www.us taxpayers.org>
Reform Party <http://www.reformparty.org>
Libertarian Party <http://www.lp.org>
"I Want a Real Choice" third party web site (great resource)
<http://home.earthlink.net/~realchoice>

gyms. They now shun the patronizing black churches and kissing black babies to eagerly pose with some bulked-up, iron-pumping inmate – particularly the well connected ones who gave hefty campaign contributions for their help in defeating the legislation that would have banned weightlifting programs in prisons.

Shaka Kenyatta, PVP's founder and chairman of the West Coast, convinces the California Department of Corrections to fund the "Habitat for Prisoners," project, a housing program which enabled prisoners and their families to stay intact while co-habiting in safe, sterile environments. The program is a huge success and the model communities expand to 25 states.

The Republicans discuss what to do about this renegade party. They meet conspiratorially. In think tanks, cigar bars, students of Newt Gingrich, Rush Limbaugh, and Jesse Helms.

WE INTERRUPT THIS PROGRAM TO BRING YOU THE FOLLOWING NEWS:

"Krissy Simpson, the beautiful young blond, blue-eyed daughter of prominent Republican Senator Dan Simpson of California, has been found dead of a cocaine overdose in a Habitat for Prisoners condo occupied by Shaka Kenyatta,"

News of his arrest shocks everyone who knows him – particularly his wife, political activist/poet Shante Davis. In a statement to the press, she says, "I wholeheartedly stand by my husband. No justice-minded jury will ever convict him of these crimes because he is 100 percent innocent."

The authorities charge Kenyatta with a host of offenses, including murder, cocaine possession, statutory rape (the "white chick" was only 16), and the misappropriation of PVP funds. CourtTV covers this sensational case. Los Angeles county assistant prosecutor Martha Parks, a shrewd man-hating feminist, is assigned to the case. She is not at all intimidated by the defendant's newly-assembled "Dream Team."

Kenyatta professes his innocence. Says he was framed by the FBI.

"Are you telling this jury that 20 L.A. cops pumped enough cocaine into Miss Simpson to kill a horse?" Parks asks in cross-examination.

"That's right." Kenyatta replies.

"And I suppose they moved her dead body into your condo without anyone seeing them, correct?" Parks retorts.



On Anti-democratic Voting



By Richard Gilman-Opalsky

I invite you to ponder this snippet on voting intended to provoke some serious thought, and to compel you to consider alternative election possibilities.*

The system of voting in the United States is an old and often struggled for privilege granted to the American people. Yet, were it not for raging movements for social change, women and black Americans would not have been granted this privilege. Today, the existence of our voting system is usually taken as the proof and substance of American democracy. Voting is indeed the *only* systemic procedure whereby the government tries to guarantee the political power of the people. And, within the voting system as such, it is really more appropriate to only address voting at the state level, as opposed to at the national level. At the national level, the Electoral College, a committee of already elected high officials from each state, conduct



a vote that is tallied separately from the vote of the people. Twice in American history it happened that the Electoral College chose a candidate who lost by a landslide in the popular vote, and it was the candidate chosen by the Electoral College who took presidential office. It is indeed a written rule of our system to give the Electoral College sovereign voting power over that of the will of the people. Only in the state elections of selectmen, selectwomen, governors, senators and mayors, are the votes of the people given direct decision-making power. At the state level, there is a moment of democracy when we go and vote to fill these offices ... a moment of democracy which passes once you exit the voting booth ... a moment of democracy which is off limits until the next term. In this moment of democracy, the people choose their stately leaders of various position and locality. Then, during the time that passes between the election and the last day of the term, the chosen leaders, with their advisors and administration, are busy creating new laws at will. They are making legislation and policy determining the course of police regulations and procedures, drug laws, rent and development plans, infraction fines, park usage laws, homelessness, government spending, social services, taxes, gun control, and many other issues. The people do not get to exercise another moment of direct democratic power while all of this is taking place, and they divide into camps of public opinion until the next state election comes around. According to this, our system of voting can hardly be called democratic. The people are not doing the governing, for they are merely electing, approximately once every four years, who it is that shall govern them. And the elections proceed; mainly guided by propaganda that many Americans have come to learn is the poorest indicator of future performance. Under close examination, it is painfully clear that democracy has very little to do within our current system of voting. In a real democracy the people are not supposed to *interact* with the government from time to time— they are supposed to *be* the government itself. To better prove and substantiate a democracy the government could allow communities to elect representatives who will lobby every bill of legislation, with equal coverage through the media, to every state citizen. Then, the people could enact their voting power sometimes as often as once a month— but every passed law regarding imprisonment, policing, etc. would be concretized as the law of the people. Or, as Jello Biafra suggests, we could add a “none of the above” option to the ballot so that a prevailing vote could force a new election with new candidates. It is quite peculiar, actually, that the voting ballot is one of the few multiple choices without that option. In any case, under such alternative systems mobilizing the vast pool of non-voters to go and vote might be a little more sensible. But don't hold your breath ... who that currently holds office will petition to radically restructure the system that got them there?

This brings me to my second point: The point of representation. Everybody in New York knows, or will

“You damned right.” answers Kenyatta.

“So how do you explain the DNA that proves 99.9 percent that you were responsible...you, Mr. Kenyatta!” Parks asks.

“Well it isn't me.” Kenyatta claims.

The jury, composed of eight black women and four black men quickly find him guilty on all counts. Overnight PVP membership drops dramatically.

The President of the United States issues an Executive Order banning all inmate unions. Martial Law is declared. Inside every prison in America. The poets and jailhouse lawyers and librarians are taken out and shot. On the street, PEN Voting Party officials are rounded up and arrested. The FBI raids their campaign offices. The amendment giving prisoners the right to vote is suspended. C

learn, who the Democratic and Republican Senatorial candidates are. However, the majority of New Yorkers do not know, and will never learn, that Al Lewis is also running as the Green Party candidate. This ignorance is not the fault of the people. In spite of any new political party, our media thrives the most when using the psychology and drama of bipartisan political competition. The trick of electoral politics is to serve up two moderate conservative thinkers as opposite extremes. It is an advertising strategy: The voter who so enthusiastically endorses George W. Bush over Al Gore is as duped into their preference as the shopper who so enthusiastically endorses Coke over Pepsi—or Crest over Colgate. We are majorly convinced that the representation of left to right politics spans the gamut under our two-party system. Alternative parties will absolutely not get the media of the Republican and Democratic parties. They never have. There are two main reasons for this. First, bipartisan politics have long been established as encompassing the contrast of all *viable* political difference. We are led to believe that if a particular politics is not the one or the other, then it is an “extreme” politics that is not as viable as the agendas of conservative moderates. The media’s characterization of the subtlest differences is an exaggeration of bitter feuds, name-calling, and an emphasis on opposing stances on the most controversial issue of the day. This whole climactic process would be successfully dissolved if there were a third party that accrued mass credibility in claiming that the republican and democratic agendas are nearly identical. If such a claim could gain mass credence, voters would be compelled to take third party politics more seriously. Second and more significantly, to lobby newspapers, produce television commercials, and to loudly tour the country campaigning at well-publicized events, a candidate needs to have incredible funding. The greater bulk of this funding is posted by corporations and special-interest groups whose own security would be better looked after by certain leaders. In a sense, then, a party that wants to compete *must* tow the political lines that are most favorable to those wealthy groups capable of funding their campaigns—or, the party itself must be independently wealthy. Any candidate who openly opposes big business will not have the funding and support of big business, and grass-roots efforts, as potent as they are, cannot affect as sizable a community as that affected by the mainstream media. And in state elections, it is not quality but quantity that rules. Indeed, as history has always documented, whenever grass-roots organization threatens to infiltrate public discourse, the mass media uses its enormous weight to debunk the credibility of the alternative (ex. the existence of COINTELPRO, paranoia of communism, the news coverage of the recent protests against IMF, WTO, and World Bank, the media’s depiction of animal rights activists during the Primate Freedom actions last summer, and the very existence of the nonsensical word “eco-terrorist”). While I would insist that grass-roots activity is where our actions should be focused, the machine of popular politics cannot reciprocate our demands.

This maintenance of bipartisan politics, coupled with the requirement of any competitive candidate to have competitive campaign funding, necessarily and historically excludes the political representation of poor people and people of color. The increasing population of non-voters does not stem from apathy, laziness, or a lack of intelligence, as the most ignorant and racist of voters love to suggest. Actually, the increasing population of non-voters stems from a justified feeling of helplessness and from being convinced that our voting system can not yield any substantial progressive change.

This leads me to my final point. The language and the dialect of popular politics *intend* to address only a certain sect of the nation. Who of our elected officials does not have a college degree and has not studied U.S. history, law, politics, or some combination of these? Who of our elected officials were raised in a diverse ethnic community? Who

must these people speak to in order to be understood? That is, whose language are they speaking? Who is most considered in the discourse of popular politics? The American poor do not control mass media, nor do they possess the means to be politically charitable: they endure economics, not oversee it. The interests and concerns of the poor and marginalized are not represented by leaders who always, first and foremost, promise to protect the interests of the propertied and employing classes. From this standpoint, non-participation in elections does not imply apathy at all. Mostly, it implies that people lack real democratic force in hyper-capitalistic America. “Seldom is nonparticipation treated as a justifiable reaction to a politics that has become somewhat meaningless in its electoral content and disappointing in its policy results ... by the turn of the century [twentieth] most of the political means for making important decisions had been captured by powerful industrial elites. Business interests perfected the arts of pressure politics, wielding a heavy influence over state legislatures, party organizations, governors and congressman” (Parenti, Michael: *Democracy for the Few*).

There are those who argue that mobilizing enough poor and marginalized Americans to vote will force the current system to implement radical social change. These people have not been paying attention. Such an argument is comparable to the belief that mobilizing the poor and marginalized to work will eradicate their economic oppression. This is the first mistake commonly made by such enthusiastic voters – to not understand institutional inequity. The second mistake lies in their misperception of political activity. The real armchair politics belongs to those who tune out and content themselves for four years because they fulfilled their civic duty at the polls. The current voting system in the U.S. is, by design, fully operational even without the slightest consideration of the poor and marginalized, and yet it would collapse without capital interest. Throughout all of the different eras of voter participation, our electoral politics has failed to eradicate the most basic institutional inequities that society still suffers today.

**I was not too happy about having to rush together this contribution to the issue on voting. Unfortunately, I learned about this issue's voting theme much too close to the submission deadline to write a more substantial piece. This topic, however, happens to be one that I plan to write on extensively, and I hope to offer something more comprehensive in the future.*





My Vote On Voting

By Beth Barnett



Sensible Civics

By Eric Meisberger



I voted in 1996. Since then, I would have voted, but I was a resident of one state, living in another, and it was a hassle to absentee vote for local politicians arguing local issues not local to me. I feel bad about that. But now I am a resident of the state and locality I live in, and I am going to start voting in earnest. I have had friends who claimed that voting was a stupid waste of time, and a support of the current system. Practically speaking, voting is not the best thing a person can do to make a change in his or her town or the entire country. Participation in one's community and society as a resident and concerned person requires a greater commitment than filling out ballots. I must admit, I have not gotten far in being a good "citizen" in that way besides trying to be a fair and good person to others. But I am working on it.

There is no mandatory national poll of political sentiment. Besides calling representatives on particular issues, the only way to vote without voting is by donating heaps of money. Even though the way voting currently works is frustrating and not particularly representative, it is a really easy way to go ahead and officially participate. Voting is as much about actively electing someone, as it is about actively trying to block someone from being elected.

In general, I think poorly of politicians. Most people that I like feel the same way. To succeed in politics mostly is to try and please everyone, say the right things everyone wants to hear, and generally be mediocre. I don't really like people who try to act like that, whether or not they are politicians. No one is going to please everyone and grant every little interest group its wishes. In general, successful politicians are manipulative and charismatic, and their personalities make me nauseous.

The way the two-party system currently works, I vote preventatively. I vote against the worst person, not for the "best." There is usually never a "best." But I also vote against the two-party system, if I can. In 1996, I voted for Ralph Nader for president. I like him, from what I already know. I knew he wasn't going to win, but I also didn't have a great fear of Bob Dole or Bill Clinton. Since neither of the two main candidates was completely terrifying, I voted out, for someone I liked "best" for once.

This time around, I am a little more concerned. I have been listening to the news, I've seen some interviews, and Republican candidate George W. Bush scares me. He has bad attitudes about the prison system, and he has a bad environmental record. He never seems to say anything of substance, and panders to the Christian Coalition and Bob Jones University. I don't want this guy to be in office for four years, choosing new Supreme Court justices, screwing everything up. I haven't decided yet if I should vote for the guy I think is "best," Nader, or if I should vote in the most effective way *against* Bush, by voting Democratic.

Our political system allows for a candidate to win an election with less than 50 percent of votes, especially when there is a strong third party candidate in the election. The "most votes" policy has serious flaws when there is only one vote allowed and only one count. It encourages a two-party system. If there were a run-off election after minor party participation, then there would be no dilemma between voting for someone who won't win but who is "best" and voting to prevent the "worst" from taking the office. A person could vote for both. If more people vote for third party candidates, maybe there would have to be changes. Maybe some day, voting for the "best" and against the "worst" would be the same vote.

I have to think more about what is the best thing for me to do this year. But, I am going to vote, even if it is a lame prevention vote against the worst people. I'd rather do that than throw up my hands in frustration, and do nothing at all.

I had been so excited to actually do this voting thing. It was really corny, too. It had a very "civic" class feel to it. I mean, here I was, a grown man, politically aware about things that seemingly mattered, and an activist to boot, and I was getting some kind of "18 and free" style chills up my spine just driving that wet spring day to the primary polls. I hadn't voted in an election of any kind up to this point...and I was 23 years old.

I walked through the drizzle and was lambasted by electoral dogooders handing me more fliers than had ever been foisted upon me at any hardcore show. Once inside the gymnasium, I scoped out whom I needed to talk to, and before I knew it, I was in the booth, the blue curtain drawn behind me. There was, no doubt, some sense of falsely constructed "Democrat Pride" in the people with whom I spoke (you see, in my attempts to allow myself the ability to vote in the Penna. Primary, I registered Democrat rather than the "Non-Partisan" that I had been...I almost felt bad...like the kid on the team in gym class who hated the whole sport anyway and wasn't filled with team pride, but the other kids didn't know that yet and hadn't been let down...come to think of it, this experience was happening in a gym, too...some things never change).

But I digress. Standing there faced with rows upon rows of those menacing little levers I started to feel a bit nervous about the choices I was about to make. After all, I was registered in my parents' district...way out in the west hills. Sure there were countywide candidates in this election...but the majority of these were local judges and whatnot, people I didn't know from Adam. So I started to make my selections based on the fliers that the toadies outside had given to me. I found myself nixing the possibility of voting for anyone who was a boss. This was one thing that I know in my heart of hearts I couldn't do. I wouldn't be able to look at myself in the mirror. I was surprised, however, to realize how many of these candidates were indeed bosses. They owned companies that, as I learned from the fliers and pamphlets, were very successful and now these men wanted to give back to the community that fostered their independent economic growth. I also found myself almost voting along gender lines with the mindset that, even if I didn't know the candidates, it might be a better idea to get some women in office. Then I remembered that women could be fascists and idiots, too, so I was faced again with my conundrum. I refuse to vote on a "party line." As the letters on the amplifier of Washington, D.C.'s Q and not U's guitar amp spelled out: "THERE IS NO PARTY LINE."

I refuse to vote on gender lines. I refuse to vote racial or ethnic lines. I refuse to vote single-issue lines. In retrospect, I came into this situation with more of a skewed sense of civic duty, rather than a real knowledge of the candidates.

I have come to few conclusions about the greater subject of voting...I've extrapolated them, if you will, from my one meager experience. Simply put, it doesn't hurt to vote. I've heard it said, "Don't vote, it only encourages them." If that logic follows then I suppose NOT burning down the courthouse only encourages them as well. In addition, I've heard "Don't blame me...I didn't vote!" This bit of bumper sticker politics sounds nice, but I question if the person touting this slogan does any "voting" at all? It's important to realize that every action is a vote. Every dollar spent is a vote for what you want to stay in your town. Is it for the locally owned and operated hardware or is it for Wal-Mart? Every time you stay silent in the school or workplace when someone is throwing around sexist remarks, that's a vote for complacency and acceptance. When you shift your view of what being a responsible human being is, you find the opportunity to vote rears its head every day, not one day every few years. The opportunities we have to make changes in our immediate environment exist with that daily vote. It takes a lot more responsibility to realize that each action is a vote that we are expected to cast. The phrase "I vote, I do my part" takes on a whole new meaning. Voting in elections doesn't hurt, but if that's all you do, and that's all you view as your duty to your community, you're selling yourself and your community short. Using your body as your vote goes much, much further.

Support the Anti-Voting League

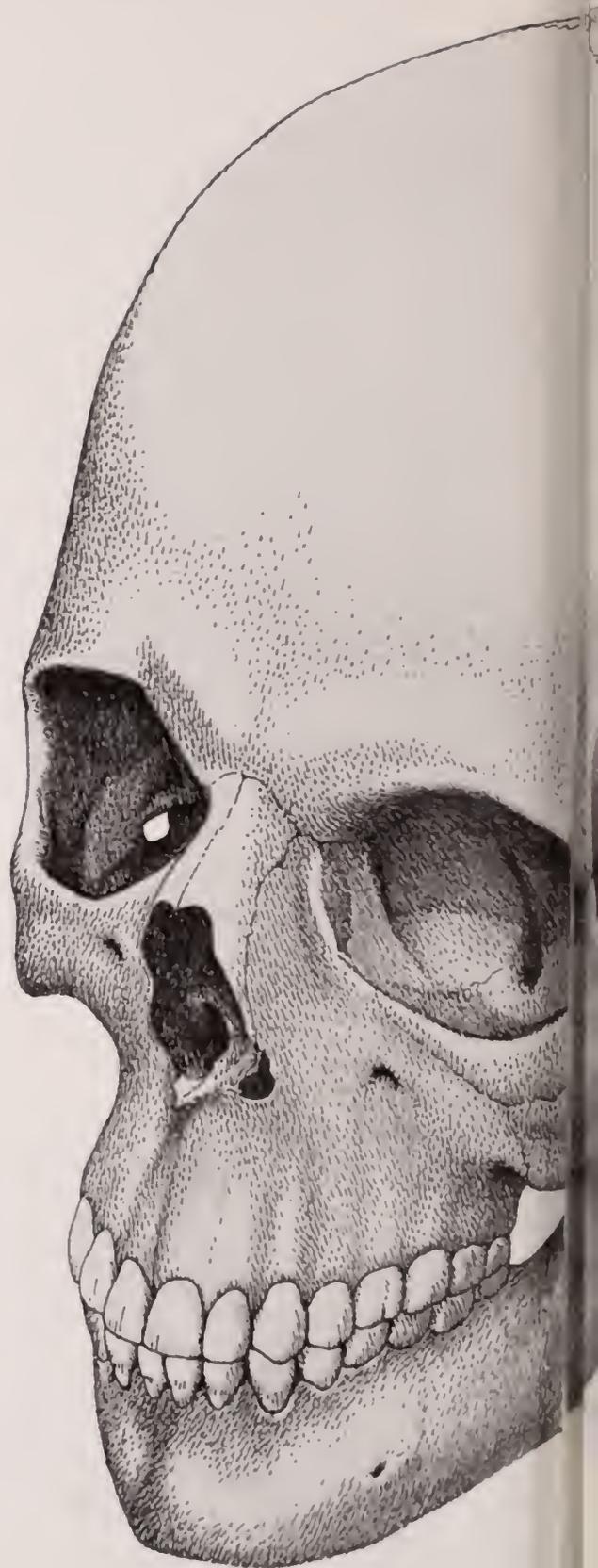
By Kevin Zelko

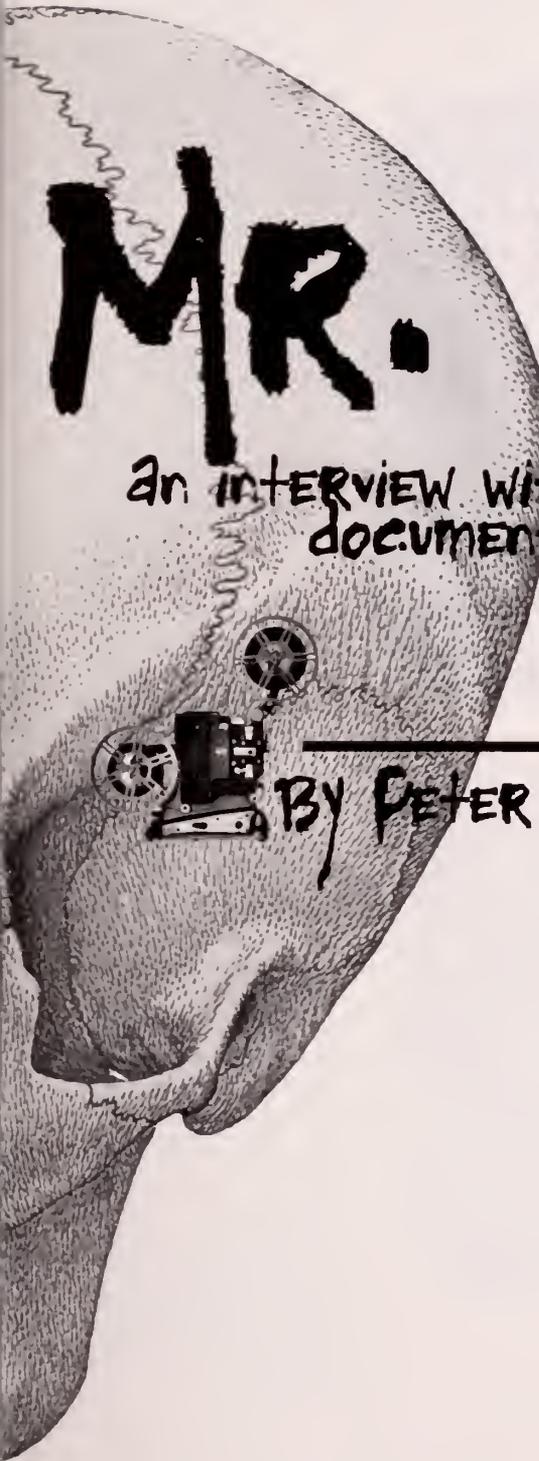
It's the time of year again where I have to check my conscience and decide if I'm going to vote. Local initiatives have always been my weakness. I do feel I need to go to the poll and throw my ballot into the box. This voting thing has become increasingly important to many people. My friend has chewed my ear off in agony over my current non-voting status. Our local discussion group threw the topic around and came up with some fun ideas on how to voice our distress with the options and the repercussions of voting today. Voting truly seems futile to me, especially in Seattle with the recent history. Three years ago, the people of Seattle went to the polls to vote against the initiative to build a new stadium for baseball and another for football, yet there stands the brand new SAFECO Field and its brother football stadium is being constructed right next to it. Voting doesn't seem to accomplish anything in our political environment; it's money that matters.

I had a friend complain to me that I especially don't have a right to complain about politics if I don't vote. This point is empty and trite. First it assumes that the only way to participate in a democracy is to vote and puts all focus on that. This is exactly what the forces of power want with the people they rule and own. A public that doesn't stand up against systems, laws, and orders that are oppressive. A public that will show up once a year to be civically participating in the democratic process. A public that sleeps the rest of the 364 days of the year and will not shake things up when rights get stepped on. Not a public that will put its freedoms and rights on the line to make things just or a public that will take their own initiative to improve their own communities. A people that confront systems using economic boycotts or solidarity to stop the systems isn't stable for the structures in power. They love this little propaganda piece. This argument also fails to address the point that the two parties attempting to win office are one entity with some minor differences. The two parties smell more and more like each other every day. Clinton, being the Democrat, ended up starting more wars than Reagan or Bush combined. The system in place ensures that the two choices will be balanced and stable for the rich and famous. The process of winning office involves a lot of buying and selling of power and they all end up in bed together.

The old anarchist doctrine holds true today. Voting does endorse, accept, and justify the government we live under. Even voting for, as Michael Moore says, "the evil of two lessers" chalks another statistic in support of true and prideful American democracy. Voter apathy is at its highest ever due to years of voting accomplishing nothing for anyone except big business. There was some talk in our discussion group about people setting up protest votes in support for Mumia Abu Jamal which sounds at least interesting and beneficial to get that issue out there. Another protest vote is for Ralph Nader of the Green Party, but no one seems to know what he stands for. Elections appear to be like just another distraction from the bigger problems that need to be addressed: the destruction of the systems that keep everyone working so hard, yet so broken down. The media is given two teams to support and cheer on in the lull of a sports-dry time period.

We started a group in Seattle that we are calling the Anti-Voting League and will be setting up actions to bring up issues involved with voting nationally and locally in Seattle. Posters and pamphlets will be made and hopefully we can share ideas with others out there. Situationist art can be fun! We would love more involvement from others all across the country or even some topics to debate and ideas to put together. We are looking into direct action and an accumulation of resources if they are out there. Please contact me at hueyproudhon@hotmail.com for more information. We still have time to come up with some beautiful actions!





MR. DEATH

an interview with
documentary filmmaker ERROLL MORRIS

BY PETER WERBE

Survivor has swept the nation as a television show that supposedly portrays the real-life drama of humans pitted against each other and against the odds. Before that, *The Real World* set up a fishbowl experiment to see how entertaining it would be to watch a group of people attempt to coexist in the same plush apartment, beach house or studio. And before that, *Cops* brought the "seedy underbelly" of America into our living rooms for us to safely gawk at the work of America's police forces. This fascination with self-reflexive entertainment has tapped into an underlying desire to seek reality in our art, media or entertainment. Documentary film has been doing this since the birth of the motion picture camera, and no one has done as much for documentary film as Erroll Morris has. Unlike the aforementioned attempts to create or capture reality on television, Morris has spent his life making documentary films about real people that open a window into the human spirit that is not always easy to understand but is always captivating. With his most recent efforts *First Person* (a cable television documentary program that takes as its subject "ordinary people who do extraordinary things") and the film *Mr. Death* (a film about a self-taught expert of death and dying), Morris continues to redefine what documentary film is capable of doing.

...amor: Janet Maslin of The New York Times says you are "one of a kind capable of melding science, philosophy, poetry and sheer whimsy into an elaborate meditation on mankind's mysteries." Are you all that?

Erroll Morris: It's very, very kind of her. Am I the best person to say? Maybe. If true, it sounds good.

Your latest film is *Mr. Death, The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter, Jr.* Am I saying his name correctly?

Yes, although he pronounces the name somewhat differently when he goes to Eastern Europe and is working on behalf of a number of neo-Nazis.

Tell us why you chose Fred A Leuchter, Jr. as a subject for a documentary and why he is *Mr. Death*. We have *Dr. Death, Jack Kevorkian, here in Michigan*, so he could only be called *Mr. Death*.

He was downgraded from Dr. to Mr., unlike Kevorkian and unlike a psychiatrist who I profiled in "The Thin Blue Line," Dr. James Grigson, yet another Dr. Death, Fred has no advanced degree. He is a self-made man, kind of a crazy version of an American dreamer. An entrepreneur who found a need and filled it.

The need he found was execution. In the late 1980s, early 1990s, executions became a reality again in the United States. There had been a moratorium on them for many years imposed by the U.S. Supreme Court and then, bam, all of a sudden, people were being executed again. Fred steps into the fray and, says wait a second, a lot of these execution devices are antiquated, they don't work properly, there are botched executions. I'm going to offer a new kind of service. I am going to call the various prison wardens in the country and sell myself as an "execution technologist."

I sometimes call him The Maytag Man from Hell. The guy who comes in and services your electric chair or your gas chamber, and among other things, credits himself with the invention of the lethal injection machine. That's how I first heard about him. I heard about him because of the capital punishment stuff, the execution stuff.

You frequently get turned on to subjects just by the newspapers, like your first film *Gates of Heaven*. You see some odd little article in the paper and say, "Whoa, there's more to it here than appears."

That has been my M.O., for better or worse. I am asked unendingly, where did you hear about this story? How did you hear about this story? The implication is, do I have some secret source, some place that I go to — that dumpster hidden out back where I get one story after another. But, the truth of the matter is that many of these stories come from the most ordinary places. It is just that they have been treated in a way that, in my opinion, overlooks what is really truly interesting about them.

You quoted Janet Maslin earlier. Well, I showed "Mr. Death" for the first time at the Sundance Film Festival over a year ago. There was a work in progress screening of the movie and Janet Maslin interviewed me and asked me that question, where did you hear about this story? I told her it is from a very, very obscure place . . . Page 1 of *The New York Times*.

The paper she writes for!

Indeed. I am doing a series for Bravo now, Wednesdays at 10:30 called "First Person." There are 11 new stories that come from all over the place. Magazines, newspapers; sometimes I'll hear a network news magazine show, whether it's *Turning Point* or "20/20," and look at the story and think to myself, well, there is a completely different way of doing this story, a richer, more interesting way. And, then I go and do it.

Roger Ebert says that *Mr. Death* deserves an Academy Award. Is your motivation for these films presenting oddities of the post-modern world we live in, is there an agenda? Is there compassion? Do you find them personally amusing? Is it done for our amusement? Why make these films?

Well, maybe it could be all of the above and more. I like to think that it is not just a collection of

oddities for oddities' sake. If that was the reason I put Fred Leuchter, Jr. on film, I would be a little bit disappointed in myself. I think there is something far more interesting about the story.

In his own very peculiar way, Fred Leuchter cuts across some of the major issues of the 20th century. So, yes, this is an odd story, an eccentric story. An execution repairman who spends his honeymoon in Auschwitz. Yes, eccentric and peculiar. But, on the other hand, a very rich, disturbing, thought-provoking story about the nature of evil, self-deception, the misguided pursuit of truth. And, most powerfully for me, it's a story about a man who is able to always see himself and his actions as heroic, despite what he is doing. To me that is the really frightening and absurd element in this story.

We should tell people as a brief outline that Fred A. Leuchter, Jr. is this technician who works with different states bringing their execution equipment up to speed, then becomes an expert witness for neo-nazis in a Canadian trial following a trip (and honeymoon) to Auschwitz where he illegally takes a sample of the brick, decides there could not have been executions via gas chambers at Auschwitz, and then his whole career begins to fall apart. Is that a fair summation?

Yes.

I haven't seen the movie yet, although we saw the trailer for it at a local theatre. I said to my wife, "Let's go see this," and she replied, "It's too creepy; I'm not watching this." Part of that sensation is created by the atmosphere you create by use of an interview machine you call the *Interrotron*. Is that real? What is it?

Yes, it's real. I attempt to create a different style of interview. Just think about interviews that you see on television, for instance. You are always standing on the sidelines. You could be, for all intents and purposes, hiding in a closet looking through a peephole at two people talking. I sometimes call that the Third Person perspective. You are the observer. You are separate from what's going on.

My crazy idea was, what if the interviewer and the camera could



Fred Leuchter Jr. behind the *Interrotron*

be in the same place? What if there could be eye contact where the person being interviewed looks at me and looks directly into the camera and hence, directly at the audience at the same time. I used it for the very first time in *Mr. Death*.

There is this odd connection that you have with Fred. On one hand, here is a guy with what I would have to say are a number of unwholesome obsessions. But, this is a story that goes well beyond Fred Leuchter, the character. It's a story that involves so many diverse issues. What is so surprising to me about this story is how Fred in his own strange way engages some of the major issues of the 20th century.

Like the Holocaust, like executions, how we intersect with all of that ethically?

Yes, and it touches on questions about evil and self-deception. I've often compared the story of *Mr. Death* to the story of *Schindler's List*, and the comparison is a simple one. *Schindler's List* has the very unsurprising and uncontroversial idea that anybody can be a hero, anybody can be a villain. My story has a far more disturbing theme: anybody can *think* they are a hero. Here we have a man, Fred, who, that no matter what he is doing, sees himself almost as the unflappable hero of a Hardy Boys mystery. He is the good guy. He is the guy who wants to take the sting out of capital punishment—the Florence Nightingale of death row.

He is the guy who wants to champion the underdog. Ernst Zündel, this crackpot neo-Nazi is on trial in Toronto for publishing a book claiming that the Holocaust never happened, and Fred rushes to his defense. Why? Because he is a civil libertarian. He is a guy who believes in free speech, and what's even more important to him, he sees this as an opportunity to correct a wrong using science. The only problem here is that there is a huge gulf between how Fred sees himself and who he really is. He may see himself as a hero. Unfortunately, we see him at best as a deeply misguided, creepy guy.

I think that's what crept out my wife. In fact, she used that phrase.

OH, TELL HER TO GO TO THE MOVIE! (shouting)

In some ways it's a testimony to your technique; your use of this Interrotron. She has seen stuff about the Holocaust; she knows about executions, but I think that it was Fred A.

Leuchter, Jr. looking directly into the camera and being Fred A. Leuchter that was almost more creepy than all those things we know about him. Giving it a personality, those very disturbing events of the 20th century.

Making them come alive in the form of one individual, yes. I think there is something very different here. I have always had a little bit of trouble when people say you are a documentary film maker. Well, yes and no. I make films first and foremost. I guess they are documentaries insofar as they have real people in them. But, I try to create something of a dream or, if you prefer, a nightmare, because we are taken on a trip inside of Fred Leuchter's mind. We are invited to look at how he sees the world. We are invited to look at the world through his eyes, so to speak. And, the results can be very frightening.

One reviewer said this movie was more frightening than the *Blair*

Witch Project. I don't know if that's true, but I think there is something disturbing about being forced to confront. If he is not an evil man, he has certainly done really despicable, nasty things. We are invited to think about what's going on here. It's a mystery, if you like. Not a mystery about executions or the Holocaust. It's a mystery about human personality. Who is this guy? Is he like us? Is he different than us? Are there elements in common? What are they? If there are elements of difference, what are they as well? What is going on here?

Does Mr. Death have a moral stance or is it just Fred Leuchter talking?

It certainly is a piece that has a moral stance in the sense that I was walking a tightrope with this movie. It was very clear that there were certain kinds of ambiguities that had to be cleared up. When Fred makes factual claims about Auschwitz, you can't just let that go. It has to be made, and it is made, absolutely clear that he's wrong. Wrong, wrong, wrong and wrong.

On the other hand, I think there's something important about preserving real ambiguity—uncertainties on my part. Not a coyness like I know and I won't say, but a deep ambiguity about this character that I myself felt and asked repeatedly, "Is this an evil man, a good man, a bad man?" And, that's exactly what I was trying to achieve—putting the viewer in my place in part, of trying to deal with this; trying to figure out what is going on here. The mystery of Fred A. Leuchter, Jr. and the mystery of ourselves.

Does Fred A. Leuchter, Jr. think it's a hit piece?

When you say a hit piece, do you mean that I'm out to get him?

Yes, that's it's set up to make him look bad.

I think I'm far kinder to him than anyone else would be.

Has he seen it?

Yes.

What does he think of it?

He liked it. But, as I pointed out to a number of people, given that this is a story about a guy who is pretty damn clueless, is it so surprising that he would see my movie and see himself in the movie differently than I see him?

So, there's not a condemnatory narrative. Essentially he's allowed to speak for himself and we make of it what we will.

Yeah.

Does your film have elements of a polemic against capital punishment?

Oh, go and see this thing!

It doesn't sound like you want to give it all away.

It's interesting. In nonfiction films, people think it's my obligation to give it all away. They talk about films as if they're all plot and we'll now lay it out for you. But there are some really interesting surprises in this film. So, yeah, I don't want to give it away; go see it!

Note: Mr. Death has been recently released on video. ☿



Erroll Morris



iTransgressive Dance!

The Detroit Electronic Music Festival

By spike

Sometimes a person has to go a very long distance out of his way to come back a short distance correctly. Edward Albee

This past Memorial Day Weekend, the city of Detroit was host to the First Annual Detroit Electronic Music Festival (DEMF), almost 20 years after Juan Atkins, Carl Craig, Derrick May, et al, began producing a form of music, raised out of the ashes of disco, played on Japanese beat boxes and synths, beholden to the sounds of the German band Kraftwerk, English synth-pop of the early '80s, and the urban decay of Rust Belt America, which came to be known as techno. From the United Kingdom, to Goa, to Tokyo, the history of techno, and of the subculture(s) in which the music has flourished and grown, have become legendary, the originators of techno oftentimes receiving greater respect and recognition outside of the United States than from their native city. No longer can that be said to be true, over 900,000 people – young, elderly, black, white, Asian, Hispanic, unemployed, tattooed, Canadian – were witness to the unifying power of electronic music in the city of the music's origin.

Electronic music's relationship with the rave scene here in the United States, and across the world, has suffered from the negative implications of that subculture. The ubiquitousness of drugs and the hedonism that the rave scene fosters have attached a stigma to electronic music as shapeless background noise for youth dissension. Though in part true, in that the rave scene does allow for an expression of alternative lifestyles and desires suppressed in modern consumerist patriarchal society, the ability of electronic music to transcend imaginary, though nonetheless powerful, boundaries of race, class, and sexuality has largely been ignored. This has been in part because of the relatively underground nature, at least in the United States, of the electronic music scene. Because the rave scene has been primarily a youth culture and thus susceptible to greater societal scrutiny, there has been a great deal of discourse in the media about the dangers found within the scene, but little discussed about the unifying factor behind raves, the music.

The music has been ignored by the mainstream, left to spread by its own inherent seductive nature, leaving traces of itself in the collective unconscious, metamorphosing, multiplying, and inducting millions into a religion of sound. Although Carl Craig, one of the primary organizers

Select Media

of the DEMF, defines any form of music that is recorded, produced, and digitized as electronic music, the sounds emerging from the speakers of the four stages of Hart Plaza were the sounds of continuous bass and hypnotizing synth leads which have come to signify dance culture throughout the world. The deep unending bass filtered through downtown Detroit, drawing electronic music fans and the curious average citizen with its primal resonance. So much power has been prescribed to the repetitive bass behind electronic music that the 1994 Criminal Justice Act in England specifically constricted the playing of 'repetitive beats' in hopes of halting the momentum of rave culture. The city of Detroit though has a long relationship with music that has been judged dangerous by the conservative, fear-inducing watchdogs of society, and by accepting the festival, bringing the music and the culture into the mainstream, Detroit has legitimized a scene that has long known its own worth despite overwhelming negative media attention. It would seem that now would be the time for those that characterized the rave scene, and techno music, as faddish, as merely another excuse for youth to rebel, to reexamine their presuppositions. It is largely a testament to those who have dedicated their lives to the music, and the cultures from which it was born out of, that the DEMF was the success that it was.

The festival brought the music out of warehouses and clubs, the dark, dingy surroundings that have inspired so much fear in the minds of parents and politicians. The music became available to all. Parents could bring their children to listen to music without fear of losing them to the dangers (real or imagined) of drugs or unsafe urban environments. Ravers could in turn introduce their parents to techno culture so that the music and scene, which they devote so much energy and time to, could be demystified, the unknown exposed as a source of spiritual unification. Random passersby, with little or no acquaintance with the music, besides the homogenized and diluted servings of Top-40 radio, were introduced to some of the best DJs and producers from around the world. Even those that had little or no knowledge of the DJs were fascinated by the sounds, by the people, and by the selfless generosity of those in attendance. Everywhere one turned there was another person to whom the music was a new experience bobbing their heads, smiling, understanding the rhythm instinctively. People danced without self-conscious fears of 'proper' dance styles, they simply moved with the bass, aligning themselves with the rhythm that has been with humankind since time immemorial. The attendees of the DEMF learned what ravers across the world have known for counting on 12 years now, that this music touches the most primal, communal, and affirmative aspects of the human soul.

The DEMF educated in the best possible of ways, by having those who have dedicated their lives to the music do what they love to do, and invite anyone and everyone to participate. Ten years ago who would have imagined that in downtown Detroit, outdoors, free of charge, there would have been an entire weekend devoted to a form of

music that had to be transported outside of its home town before it was taken seriously. Yet, one couldn't go anywhere near Hart Plaza and not be mesmerized by the various sounds reaching towards one from each stage. Walking around the festival one could decide

Arsenal: A Magazine of Anarchist Strategy and Culture



This is a welcome addition to the progressive magazine posse! *Arsenal* takes as one of its missions the task of fostering the creation of a contemporary anarchist culture that is "a movement, a potential avalanche of projects, groups, voices, encounters and more." With 30 pages of articles on topics ranging from Anarchist football (the *real* football, not the American kind), anarchists working within Mumia Abu-Jamal campaigns, reviews of political prisoner Rob los Ricos' jailhouse writings and a stellar advice column hosted by none other than Red Emma, *Arsenal* has set a tone for itself to be an amazing publication. In addition to the great content, the aesthetic sense of the magazine is unparalleled for a first issue – great woodcut graphics combined with original sketches, "found" art and solid design make *Arsenal* worth checking out as well. *Arsenal* is published quarterly by the Arsenal Collective out of Chicago, and copies of the magazine are available for \$4 by writing to *Arsenal Magazine*, 1573 N. Milwaukee Ave., PMB #420, Chicago, IL 60647.

Delta 88



You're sitting on the porch of your house in the middle of the summer. As the sun fades into night, your friends slowly trickle onto the porch bearing instruments in hand and songs in their hearts. The songs borne from the evening are a blend of bluegrass, country, rock and folk that lyrically lament and rejoice in the heartaches and joy of love and life. Songs about slow days swimming at the town quarry with friends, love lost and found and drinking and partying all make up the songs of this night and of your lives. So goes the debut release by Delta 88, hailing from the great midwest. This self-released CD is truly amazing and sits comfortably alongside the likes of Billy Bragg, Elliott Smith, and Ani DiFranco. This is excellent grassroots music that you won't be able to stop listening to all summer and probably right on through the fall. CDs are available online at www.cdbaby.com/delta88/ or in person for \$14 payable to Alex Anest at 1135 Lincoln, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.



Robnoxious reinforces the power that the small press has to relate to our lives on the most intimate level. *The Fall of America* spins such a believable story that I am convinced that it is primarily based in fact, although at times you want to believe it isn't. Following the life story of Dug, *The Fall of America* relays the story of a young man and a woman who fall in love and have a child together. The remaining conflict that drives this novel is the internal and external struggle that Dug encounters in trying to reconcile his desire to live a life free of the pressures imposed by a consumption-centered society (i.e. steady job, accumulation of wealth, etc.) while also feeling the need to responsibly care for his daughter. The most captivating tool that Robnoxious uses in weaving this narrative is the fluid back and forth methods of storytelling that go from third person narratives to first person journal accounts from Dug, the main character. While this is hardly the first time this has ever been attempted in a piece of fiction, it works exceptionally well by allowing us to reflect on the events from multiple perspectives. The book is printed on newsprint with hand-screened covers that are done on recycled cardstock papers. Single copies of this book are available for \$2 from Rob at: PO Box 743, Mankato, MN 56002-0743.



to dance to some soulful house music, the rapid-fire beats of jungle, the desolate and ethereal pounding of techno, or if that wasn't to one's taste, one could lie down on the grass overlooking the Detroit River with the skyline of Windsor as a visual backdrop to the aural happenings which surrounded one. Positive energy flowed through Hart Plaza as the music that Detroit created brought a renewal of the hope that perhaps the attitudes towards other present during the festival could be taken outside, into the world which is in great need of such unity.

The festival confirmed a hope that has lived within the hearts of all those for whom the music has become an integral part of life: that this music, this culture, this movement has the capability of transcending the separation of particular identities enforced by a social order dependent on keeping people from living and playing together. The electronic music (r)evolution doesn't imply that all have to listen and enjoy the same music, or that they even have to be ultra-knowledgeable about the history of the music. What it does point to is the surfacing of a community that reaches beyond national, racial, and ideological boundaries. No longer can the techno community be dismissed, the music shut out of the mainstream and left to evolve outside of the boundaries of civilization. No, the techno movement has ruptured the stereotypes of being a culture obsessed with an unfathomable form of noise, and has shown itself to be dedicated to forming an international community based on music and respect, bringing people together to dance and ultimately to feel united as humans under a groove. ☿

Godass

For some, independent film has become synonymous with poor quality, bad acting and weak scriptwriting all put together in the name of independent creativity and a "fuck all" attitude toward mainstream movie politics and conventions. Without access to extremely expensive equipment, time, actors and other Hollywood resources, artists who want to create their own films are often forced to scrape together funds to create a work that exhibits the aforementioned traits. *Godass* defies all the preconceptions one might have toward independent film. Esther Bell has written and directed this intense film about a young zine writer who moves from the south to New York City only to be forced to come to grips with a childhood traumatized by the divorce of her mother from her gay father. In addition to the compelling script, Bell's use of digital video technology (which some hail as a democratizing force in the motion picture industry) gives the film an aesthetic feel comparable to the high production quality that most people expect from major films and cable programming. *Godass* also stars Fred Schneider (of B-52's fame) and Julianne Nicholson (from TV's "The



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be a part of independent media.

ad design by larry nocella

Others"). As winner of the 7th annual Underground Film Festival, *Godass* has renewed this reviewer's enthusiasm for the potential of independent film to reach wider audiences with creative, thought-provoking films. *Godass* is available through Bloodlink Motion Pictures for \$12 at 4434 Ludlow St., Philadelphia, PA 19104.

I'm Johnny and I Don't Give a Fuck



I first read an issue of *I'm Johnny and I Don't Give a Fuck* about three years ago when I met Andy (the author) and his friends as they traveled through town. It was a small 1/4 page zine full of handwritten stories that didn't fail to provide the reader with a momentary glimpse into Andy's life, mind and heart. I hadn't seen an issue of *I'm Johnny* ... in awhile, so I was pleased to see the recent installment is a 220-page book. Still handwritten and utilizing a vibrant combination of humor, anger, love and every emotion in between, the fourth issue of *I'm Johnny* ... is a travel journal compiled while he and his bandmates were on a North American tour. Unlike average tour diaries, Andy splices bits of short fiction with the detailed sketches of the characters they encounter to create a tour diary that contemplates the existence of parallel realities and the effects of collisions between those realities. Accompanying artwork for this issue was provided by Carrie McNinch who does the zine *Assassin and the Whiner* and *Food Geek*. Copies of *I'm Johnny* ... can be ordered by sending \$7 to PO Box 21533-1850 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, BC V5N 4A0 Canada.

Stylex



Over five years ago, a band called Brainiac sprouted from the earth of Dayton, Ohio and swept the independent music scene by storm. Combining straightforward rock and roll with an electronic element exemplified by the Moog keyboard, Brainiac made us reconsider what we think when we think of catchy, complex challenging rock music. Stylex steps in with this self-released CDEP to remind us where today's electronic rock bands have gotten lost. Bands like The Locust toss keyboards into their mix as an afterthought to distinguish themselves from the lot of posthardcore music, but Stylex has so incorporated the electronic element into their sound that they it is an integral part of the instrumentation. The result is well-written songs with complex structures that keep you interested while they are still catchy enough to keep you singing along. The CDEP is available by sending \$6 to Stylex at 434 N. Prospect St., Bowling Green, OH 43402.

Reclaiming Radical History in the Labadie Collection

Bi-coastalists, cat shit! Rap scenes and magazines you might have, but don't diss the Midwest so quick! As further proof of the continuing (and still developing) cultural relevancy of the much maligned mid-America, I offer the Labadie Collection of radical and social protest literature.

Housed for over 80 years at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, the Labadie Collection makes the selection of any infoshop, autonomous zone, or radical bookstore look about as broad as the variety of fine patés available at Starvin' Marvin.

If you're interested in radical politics and history, counter-cultures, queer communities, or activism of any type, Labadie is overflowing with what can most accurately be described as "really cool shit." The shelves on the seventh floor of the University library, where the collection is stored, contain Emma Goldman's passport, a set of hand printed Black Panther greetings cards, recordings of Angela Davis and Mario Savio speeches on vinyl, and every letter written to Ted Kaczynski (a.k.a. the Unabomber) since he's been imprisoned.

While rarities of this sort are exciting to gawk at, the true strength of the collection lies in its breadth and thoroughness. With approximately 40,000 books, 20,000 pamphlets, eight thousand older periodicals and nearly 700 current subscriptions to newspapers and magazines, one can find years worth of reading material on even the most esoteric personalities, ideas, and movements. The collection also contains massive amounts of meticulously organized ephemera, including 1,500 original photographs, 700 posters, and dozens of file cabinets containing flyers, clippings, articles, and brochures on 6,000 different subjects. The personal archives of important writers and activists such as Bob Black, Ammon Hennacy, and Mike Gold complete the collection. Containing material from the Spanish Civil War to lesbian separatist farming communes, from American Atheists to the Mission Yuppie Eradication Project, the Labadie Collection is



By Andrew Cornell
Photos By Kurt Mangum

recognized as one of the most all-encompassing radical archives in the world.

Where did this thing come from and what the hell is a "Labadie" anyway?

Joseph Labadie, the collection's namesake and founder, was a prominent Detroit radical during the second half of the 1800s. Throughout his life Labadie worked with dozens of labor and left political organizations, such as the Knights of Labor, the Socialist Labor Party, and the Single Tax Movement. By his early 30s, however, he became an outspoken advocate of individualist anarchism and began seeking solutions to social problems and injustices that didn't rely on government aid or participation. Although Labadie proved an able and successful organizer, perhaps his greatest contribution to the movement was his writing. A typesetter by trade, Labadie began to write, edit, and print newspapers and pamphlets of his own early in life. He also contributed an opinion column, "Cranky Notions," to dozens of radical newspa-

pers throughout the country.

Labadie's wife, Sophie, saved every paper his writing appeared in, along with all the pamphlets, books, periodicals, flyers, and personal letters he brought home. A few years after the turn of the century, scholars from prominent American universities, recognizing the incredible value of the massive collection the Labadies had accrued over the decades, tried to convince Labadie to sell it to their respective institutions. Labadie understood how useful the collection would be to researchers and radicals if made public, but he also wanted it nearby for his own research and nostalgia. Labadie strongly felt that the collection should remain in Michigan since it was the most complete archive of the state's labor history, and because, he said, "my people have lived in Michigan for something like 200 years." In 1911 Labadie decided to donate the collection, in its entirety, to the University of Michigan,

where it would be available to students and researchers, as well as Ann Arbor's "strong socialist club." In exchange for his invaluable gift, Labadie only asked that the University properly preserve it and make it available to the public.

The University did not fulfill its promise to make the collection accessible and easy to use for more than a decade. It sat unopened and disorganized in the boxes Labadie shipped it in for 12 years. This might have gone on indefinitely if Agnes Inglis, a local anarchist, hadn't begun rummaging through the boxes in search of information for an essay she was writing. She was so fascinated with the collection that she dedicated the rest of her life to organizing and expanding it. Inglis, never trained in library science, created her own system of filing based around hand written notes on index cards.

After her death, supervision fell into the hands of disinterested and unsympathetic librarians for nearly a decade. They gave away or sold off many important pieces, and left the rest locked behind chicken wire in a back corner of the library. Luckily, Edward Weber, a progressive young librarian, convinced the staff of the collection's worth, and in 1960 was assigned to curate it full-time. Weber knew the collection contained many one-of-a-kind items, such as personal letters from American anarchist Emma Goldman, but couldn't locate them amongst the clutter. Months later, when cleaning office supplies out of an old desk, he found the letters carelessly left in a box marked "File Folders." Over the next 40 years Weber increased the holdings many times over and began the arduous process of cataloging the material under the standard Library of Congress system. Eventually, the University administration allocated enough funds for Weber to hire assistants. For more than 20 years, Mei-ying Moy has taken on the burdensome job of ordering, processing, and organizing the hundreds of current periodicals the collection subscribes to. Weber recently retired, but still works in the collection nearly every day. Julie Herrada, a professionally trained archivist and active anarchist who has worked in the collection full time for six years, assumed Weber's position as curator.

A slight matter of accessibility

Today, patrons are able to search approximately 80 percent of the holdings in the Labadie Collection through a standard computerized cataloging database. However, numerous impediments keep the collection from being easily accessible to many people.

As one might guess, housing one of the world's largest collections of radical literature at a prominent public university has significant benefits but also serious drawbacks. On the positive side, the University pays for the buildings it is stored in, can afford to employ professionally trained librarians and archivists, and fronts the enormous sums of money needed to expand such a collection. Though much of the material is donated, many important items need to be purchased from expensive rare-book dealers. A single Black Panther poster purchased recently ran the collection \$800, for example.

Funding the collection with public resources, however, also has disadvantages. As anyone who has followed the recent spat over the

publicly funded painting of a shit-covered Holy Mother knows, religious groups and conservative politicians still have a penchant for attempting to restrict public expenditure towards art and literature that diverges from their narrow moral and political agendas. Accordingly, the University of Michigan administration tries to keep the collection low profile. It went so far as to put a gag order on library staff regarding the Kaczynski donation until the story broke in a local newspaper. Though the school doesn't attempt to hide the collection as a whole, it does so little to promote it that many radical student activists study at the University of Michigan for years without ever learning of its existence. Compounding this lack of visibility is the University's vision of the collection as a specialized archive for scholarly academic research. Access to the collection is tailored to the needs of professional researchers, making it prohibitive for other people who might find the collection useful and interesting. The entire collection is closed to circulation, and must be viewed in a reading room. Patrons are not allowed to browse; they must request the staff bring items from a storage area to them individually. This is an understandable security measure for the rare and very old pieces in the collection. However many of the books and magazines remain in print and are as easily replaceable as the materials in other sections of the library that circulate freely.

The non-circulating nature of the collection would not be such a significant hindrance to users if the reading room hours were more accessible. The collection can currently be used only from 10am to 5pm on weekdays and during a brief two-hour period Saturday morning. Those who work or go to school during the day, therefore, have very little access to the material.

Due to these impediments the Labadie Collection remains a resource primarily for academics studying history rather than for activists currently attempting to shape history. Use of the collection for research is certainly not without its merits — authors such as Paul Avrich and Carlotta Anderson used the Labadie Collection extensively while writing books that activists find useful in their current struggles. How-

ever, many other groups could benefit enormously if the Labadie Collection was more accessible. Its reading room would be an ideal site for local political study and discussion groups. The gay and lesbian materials would be helpful for queer youth to network and help form positive self-images. If the existence of the collection was more widely known, and if it was open in the evenings and on weekends, activists could use the materials to learn from the successes and failures of past movements in order to improve their current struggles. Joseph Labadie in-



tended for his collection to be used in ways such as these. Shortly after Inglis began processing the collection, Labadie wrote, "It is a matter of satisfaction to know that the collection is appreciated, [and] is now available for the purpose for which it was intended, and that the old struggles for the labor movement will not be forgotten. All this may prove to be of inestimable value to the students, writers, and speakers of Today and Tomorrow." He would most certainly be disappointed that today his papers aren't being used to their fullest potential.

A program for making the Labadie Collection more readily available and relevant to current radicals, cultural dissidents, and oppressed

It is difficult to formulate. Labadie curators are overwhelmingly sympathetic and supportive of present day social movements, but they are restricted economically and otherwise by higher level University administrators. Despite the relative abundance of funds the University provides, the Collection's budget is consistently so tight that finding money to pay an adequate number of librarians is a constant challenge.

Since the University keeps the Labadie Collection low profile, individuals who might be interested don't know of its existence, and therefore don't ask for or insist on more accessible hours. Conversely, the library sees no reason and feels no pressure to make the collection more accessible since it doesn't know about the desires of groups other than academic researchers to use it. The first step in a campaign for accessibility must be to address this cycle of under-use. When individuals see for themselves what an incredible treasure vault of ideas Joseph Labadie, Agnis Inglis, Edward Weber, Mei-Ying Moi, and Julie Herrada have compiled, they will most certainly be moved to insist on their right to use and enjoy the books, newspapers, record albums, photos, videos and other materials just as Joseph Labadie intended them to be used when he donated his life's work nearly a century ago. ¶

documenting



the margins

Charles Gatewood

photographer



Flipping through *Badlands*, Charles Gatewood's most recent brick-like book of photography, one can't help but be amazed by the diversity of subject matter and styles of the pictures inside. Comprised of hundreds of photographs, taken over 35 years, *Badlands* features posed shots of fetish devotees in mid-play, gritty documentary photos of police clashing with protesters, intimate nude portraits of individuals or couples, candid pictures of *Wall Street* automatons on their way to and from work, alongside almost clinical shots of heavily pierced and tattooed genitalia, torsos, backs, arms, and faces. They're pictures that intend to elicit a different reaction with each page turned—anger, desire, disgust, curiosity ... Gatewood is best known for the controversial photographs that have earned him criticism from the police, angry artgoers, and Christian fundamentalists alike — pictures like "Tattooed Fetus" and "Del's Cock." You're as likely to find examples of his work in your high school U.S. history textbook, however, as you are to find them hanging on the walls of your local piercing studio or neighborhood S/M den. Gatewood received his degree at the University of Missouri where he was trained as a cultural anthropologist, but then dropped out of the sterile academic environment to pursue a different kind of career, and lifestyle. After spending enough time in Sweden to become interested in, and then disillusioned with, their version of enlightened socialism, Gatewood returned in 1966 to a tumultuous United States where he found work as a photojournalist for magazines like *The New York Times* and *Rolling Stone*, as well as a number of textbook publishers. It was around this time that he got a reputation for being the photographer of America's underbelly, copping shots of the seedier side of American everyday life. "The *New York Times* used to phone me for anything involving sex or drugs, Times square porno stories, junkies in Harlem... anything that was dangerous or highly bent" (from the introduction to *Badlands*). His first book, *Sidetripping* (1975), was a collaboration with William S.

Burroughs; a look at the carnivalesque underside of American culture that launched him into the art world. From there he met up with the group that would eventually crystallize into R. Mutt Press. Among them were "post-porn modernist" photographer and porn star Annie Sprinkle, avant-tattooist Spider Webb, experimental eroticist author Mareo Vassi, and poet Michael Perkins. *Forbidden Photographs*, published by R. Mutt in 1977, was a tribute to their work, featuring a number of examples of Webb's tattoos, as well as Sprinkle in S/M gear, and various moments in the artistic underground they were helping to create. Gatewood added his own episodic autobiographical writings about the period in which they were taken. In *Wall Street* (1984), he returned to his photojournalistic roots, taking aim at America's wealthiest, if bleakest, daytime neighborhood.

In 1989, Gatewood met up with V. Vale of RE/Search Publications to put out *Modern Primitives*, an exploration of the underground body-modification and neo-tribalist scenes that became a seminal guide for the fledgling movement. His *Primitives* book (1992) and *Charles Gatewood Photographs: The Body and Beyond* (1993) largely documented the explosion in tattoo and body modification cultures that followed as the sexual and tribalist underground spilled into the mainstream. *True Blood* (1997), his last book before *Badlands*, explores what might be the last serious taboo in our culture, erotic blood play and vampirism. Lately, Gatewood's been concentrating on his own video and book production company, Flash Productions, releasing several videos and books a year, among other projects.

If there is a thread that runs through Gatewood's photographs, it's a fascination with what's conventionally considered deviant and a desire to understand, through the lens of his camera, what's most commonly misunderstood or ignored. This might explain why the most shocking of Gatewood's pictures has an element of playful curiosity to it, and why even the most explicit of his photographs don't seem at all exploitative. Instead the viewer is almost complicit in the action or ceremony. I suppose what I admire most about Gatewood is his ability to present his subjects—and his own vision—honestly, unapologetically, and without compromise.



In a lot of interviews and books, you describe yourself as an 'anthropological photographer.' What do you mean by that?

I studied anthropology at the University of Missouri. I did some graduate work in anthropology as well. So I was primarily trained to go into the field to observe and bring back information. I left academia halfway through grad school and never finished my master's degree because I was bored with the social science on an academic level. But I'm still doing the same things in my work today: going into the field, taking pictures, collecting information—sometimes doing interviews—doing quite a lot of video, and then bringing it back, presenting it to people, not in an academic context, but in a popular context.

At the same time, you're involved with a lot of the subjects of your photographs. How do you strike a balance between objectivity and being a participant?

I guess you could say I keep one foot in each world. Part of me is always the observer. Part of me is always watching and recording. Sometimes I do get quite involved with my subjects, but never all the way. I don't mind getting interested and involved in what they're saying or doing to some extent. I enjoy it. I know that's a touchy subject for academics, but I don't have to answer to anybody but myself. For example, a scientist can't know what it's like to take LSD. He can study it, he can interview people about it, he can read books about it, but he'll never know what it feels like until he takes some. But then, the moment he takes some, he allegedly loses some of his so-called objectivity. For better or for worse, that's the eternal question. I don't worry about it too much. I just do my work. I interact with my subjects. I do my report. If I get involved, I get involved.

How do you choose your subjects? What interests you about a certain subject that makes you want to find out more?

Well, there's a famous quote by Flaubert, "one does not choose one's subject matter, one submits to it." That's really true for me. The kind of work I do is not always conceptual or cerebral. It's much more intuitive and visceral. When I started photographing, I just so happened

that the '60s were exploding. Things started to happen at exactly the same time I picked up a camera. There were so many revolutions going on and so many wonderful visual and behavioral things happening, that my subject matter just presented itself and I submitted to it. I never really needed to think about it. I just documented what was going on around me. I came back from Europe and moved to New York in 1966, and that was one of the peak years for '60s activity.

But that quote makes it seem like your subject matter had chosen you to submit to it ...

It's true. The Sufis in Morocco say, "you hear your music and you fall in line." I saw the energy that was going on, and I fell in line. I didn't really have to think about it. I knew that what was going on was important. I knew it was extremely interesting, very visual. And I followed it.

What interests you now? What about your latest work has you submit to it?

I meet really fascinating subjects and I work with them closely, usually one on one, and usually in private. Most of the work I do is within three different communities: the pagan community, the body modification community, and the radical sex community. There's a big overlap between those groups. It's not unusual that one person will be involved in all three. I'm kind of known as the family photographer of those communities. Most people know me, know my work, and they know I'm not out to exploit them, that I'm a righteous person and I'm trying to do good work with their help. I'm out to document and reflect their interests. Lately I've concentrated mainly on fetish girls and erotic photography. This kind of behavior interests me. I've always had a big attraction to sensuality, sexuality, and different kinds of radical sexual behavior. I gravitate to it. It's not all I've been doing lately, but it is a large part.

What makes something radically sexual?

There are lots of different ways to define it. In San Francisco, especially, there are a lot of people who practice radical sex. They include, you know, bondage, sado-masochism, master/slave relationships, cutting, play-piercing, sensory deprivation, hot wax, whipping, caning, flagellation, and so on. The people I meet in those communities consider regular, missionary, peg-in-the-hole type sex "vanilla sex." That's their term for it. They use the term in a slightly derogatory way, because what they're doing is so much broader, elaborate, and complicated. Another way to look at it comes from the writer Marco Vassi, who called it meta-sex. He said, basically, that "sex" is what you do when you want to make babies; "meta-sex" is everything else.

Your work has changed so drastically though. Has it been that different subjects have repeatedly chosen you? Or is it that you've been aggressively tracking down different subcultures and underground communities?

Well, one thing leads to another. I can draw a pretty straight line from the excesses of the early sixties to what I'm photographing today. I mean it went from hippies and drugs and Hell's Angels and protests and a lot of really extreme counter-cultural scenes to a lot of crazy public events like Mardi Gras.

Was there a time you decided to focus on deviant, or underground worlds, or did that just happen naturally as you followed events in the '60s?

My early work was mostly candid, or had a candid feel. And it was authentic because it was all on location. Very little was posed. I consider *SidetrIPPING* and *Wall Street* my two major books in that documentary style. Stylistically they're quite different, but they both come from the same sensibility of authentic, in-the-street reportage. I guess

in the late '70s, as I got more into these deviant subcultures, I became closer to some of the people I worked with. I made a conscious decision to leave the critical, political work, and go more into my own private realities. In other words, I wasn't expressing anger or contempt as much as I was my fascination for the underground people I was meeting. There are still some political and social statements in the later work, but they tend to be much more about strong interests or fascinations with people or events in the various scenes. Some people tell me they like the early work better. They don't like the private realities as much as the social commentary. That's their opinion. I like some of the earlier work better, too. It's more authentic in a way, and it's certainly easier for a traditionalist to understand. It's traditional photojournalism, whereas some of the later work goes off into some pretty esoteric private spaces.

I know that some of my recent work, like the fetish girl project, is not as deep as my *Wall Street* book. It's just not. The *Wall Street* book is deep, and the pictures are packed with meaning. The fetish girl project is kind of what it is. There might be a few pictures that go deeper, but most of it is on the surface. It bothers me sometimes. I'm always trying to figure out why it bothers me and what I can do about that. How I can pack more meaning in those pictures? How I can make them more profound? And so on. On the other hand, you know, I'm 57 years old now, and when I go on the street, and I try to work like I used to, my feet hurt, and I get tired. I can't stay out all night. Street photography is a young man's profession. It's much more comfortable for me to go one-to-one with a model in my living room, drink tea, and try to put together some pictures in a collaborative way. Hopefully, putting the same kind of meaning and multi-dimensionality into it as the earlier work had. It's a challenge; I'm always thinking about it.

Thinking about packing more political meaning, or aesthetic meaning?

Everything. I want to pack the pictures with all kinds of different levels of meaning, and aesthetics. Part of it is to do good photography — or better photography. The other part is to make images that have layers and layers of profound meaning, so that you can go into them and just get lost looking at the pictures and thinking about the ideas they bring up.

Maybe you just don't have so much of an axe to grind as you did in the '60s, when everything seemed more volatile?

Definitely. That's part of the satisfaction, but it's also part of the problem. A lot of times the best art is made from anger or frustration or misery. When you're fat and happy, you don't tend necessarily to generate the same ideas that you did when you were young and pissy.

Do you think that there's a common thread that connects your earlier critical work to what you're doing now?

Most of my work has been about the human body and the things that people do with it; the way they use it to express themselves, the way they decorate it and play with it, and so on. That carries through from my earliest to my most recent work. As far as political threads, that's harder to detect, but it's still there. You can see it clearly in the early work: protesters getting beaten by cops and so on. I think you can see it in the recent work as well. Take the picture of Dragon, the modern primitive with this crown of needles in his head. You can see that picture as a socio-political statement if you want to. I don't have any problems looking at it that way, but most of the people I show that one to, who don't really understand the scene, don't pick up on all those reverberations. They don't read it that way. They see a freak with a bunch of needles in his forehead. To me, that guy is an astronaut of inner space, and he's exploring some realities that are so profound that most people have never even dreamed of doing what he's doing. It depends on your point of reference.

I just published a new book called *Badlands*, and I've been playing a game where I have people sit down and look at it and force them to tell me which pictures they like best. I've done that with a whole bunch of people now, and I've heard radically different answers from everybody. It shows that we all have our own points of reference, and we all have different points of view. Some people like the fetish girl pictures best, others like the early documentary work, and others like the Mardi Gras pictures best. There doesn't seem to be any rhyme or reason to the choices. They're all over the place. I'm really quite surprised by that. We each bring different ideas to the work. We each have our own prejudices and our own ways of looking at things. There isn't one correct way of looking at things. There isn't one answer that's right for everybody.

Why do you think there's been such a resurgence in body modification and urban tribalism in the past five or 10 years?

There was a real Renaissance in body modification activities in the mid-'70s. I started seeing it in the early '70s on the streets of Mardi Gras and a little bit in New York, among gay men mostly. There was some extreme piercing, extreme tattooing, and some other kinds of body play or body modification. Some cutting, some play-piercing. It started picking up steam in the mid-seventies, and by the late '70s the first wave was cresting. All of the sudden, it was obvious to me and a few other people that something big and important was being born. Fakir Musafar, who was kind of the godfather of the movement, has called these people modern primitives. The basic idea is that modern society is so plastic, so controlled by advertising and big business, that a lot of important impulses have been lost, and a lot of very basic primitive sources and ideas have been washed away.



In other words, we're told that we're weak, we're ugly, we're powerless, we're not sexy, and we're not complete unless we buy whatever it is they're trying to sell us. They ram this message home pretty hard. Most of us believe it one way or another. If we don't measure up to what we see on TV, or what we read in magazines and newspapers, we don't think that we're a complete person, on some level. Part of the modern primitive project is to rub all that social conditioning away, and to get back to more important ideas; ideas about tribal brotherhood or community — as opposed to the superficial messages we receive every day. It's about finding new ways of getting together. Neopagans, especially, are getting together in groups and saying, "Wait a minute, we're not isolated, we have each other. We're not stupid, we're intelligent. We're not brainwashed, we can decide for ourselves what's important and what's right and wrong." A lot of this thinking came out of the '60s, when hippies stood up and said, "We don't have any problems with the Vietnamese. We like the Vietnamese." And women stood up and said, "Our bodies belong to us. They don't belong to our mother, or the state, or Big Brother. Our bodies are ours. We can do with them whatever we want." The body modification movement is based on reclaiming one's body. We're going to do whatever we want with our bodies, and we're going to decide for ourselves what's important.

What do you mean by "extreme" piercing and tattooing?

Well, extreme is extreme. I've got one little tattoo on my butt. That's obviously not very extreme. I know people who are covered. Also, some people have their tattoos in extreme places, like on their face or their hands, or on their genitals. I consider that pretty extreme. So I guess if you have a piercing or a tattoo in an unusual area, you qualify. Does a person have to have a lot of tattoos and piercings to be a modern primitive? It usually happens that way, but it's not necessarily so. I think you could call me a modern primitive just because, viscerally and spiritually, I feel like I'm part of the tribe. But I don't

have any primitive body marks except one tiny tattoo. I've had ritual play piercings, but those were taken out right after the ritual. I think it could also be a lifestyle, a state of mind or an attitude. I certainly agree with most modern primitives' philosophies, especially the ideas about relearning what Big Brother's been trying to shove down our throats.



When you say you consider yourself part of the tribe, do you see this as one collective tribe. or a number of smaller tribes? Would you consider these different movements, the punk movement, the beat movement that seem to form their own little tribes. Are they all part of a large movement, or are they just smaller tribal arrangements?

To me, most of this goes back to the '60s when this country really did experience a genuine revolution. It was a revolution in thinking, in lifestyle, and so on. There were some pretty strong subcultures emerging then from groups that had been underground, ignored or closeted. For instance, bikers, poets, intellectuals, longhairs, musicians, and so on. San Francisco was the focus for a lot of this. The first Human Be-In was held, I think, in 1966. The poster advertised it as a "gathering of the tribes." It sounds like something from American Indian culture. I think the use of the American Indian symbolism was deliberate. It was the idea that there were many different tribes of people with primitive, tribal beliefs who would come together. That's kind of what happened in the '60s. Different tribes came together who had been doing their own things, separately, for a long time beforehand. I've been studying American subcultures for 35 years. What I'm finding is definitely a tribal sensibility. I think the word 'tribal' is very appropriate.

You've been called "the missing link" between Diane Arbus and Robert Mapplethorpe. Do you think that's fitting? They're both sort of controversial and sort of grotesque.

I'm flattered to be mentioned in the same sentences as Arbus and Mapplethorpe. I don't know about being the missing link, but I do share their interest in photographing underground activities and extreme behavior. I especially like Arbus. The way she had her own vision, and her own way of looking at things and of photographing people. It wasn't just her choice of subject matter— although that was pretty important— but the way you can see her own vision coming through her pictures. Her vision is absolutely unique and personal and private, and kind of twisted. But totally unapologetic. She was fascinated by her subjects; she got really close to them. She interacted with them; there was no distance between them. She wasn't just an observer; she was definitely a participant. She brought back documents that are brilliant. Not just because they were aesthetically beautiful, but also because they were psychologically loaded. Mapplethorpe's work is a little too cold and formal for me— although there are pictures I love. He has a picture of a black guy in a suit with his dick hanging out. You just see his torso in the suit and this big black penis. There are pictures like that that really break through and get me really ex-



cited. I'm glad he had the courage to photograph his underground, mostly gay men. I think his form and composition and aesthetics were pretty darn good. But I don't consider him in the same league as Arbus, who I think was an absolute genius.

Both of them were also known for taking what is ugly or unwanted and aestheticizing it, making it beautiful. They've both been called 'shock photographers' Do you think of yourself as a 'shock photographer.'

I guess that's where we have a kinship. Most of my work tends to have a shocking quality. Not all of it is that way; I've done a lot of different kinds of work. I like to make the bizarre elegant. And definitely, that gives me a kinship with those two.

You've taken a lot of nudes, but you've never shown anybody ever having sex. Why not?

It's an interesting question. True, I very rarely photograph sexual activities. I usually photograph the posturing and the play that goes on around the idea of sex but I very rarely photograph the actual event. I guess that's because I haven't figured out how to photograph sex and make it artistic and really meaningful. I'm not interested in taking pictures of people fucking unless I can take it to another level. I don't care about the peg going into the hole. That doesn't really excite me at all. I'd rather see the look on someone's face or the caress or the touch or the prelude, the foreplay, or the preliminaries, or the costumes, or the leather, or the sweat, or the ropes, or the toys, or the... postures. It's also not easy to find models who will work with you on that level. There was a photographer who did a book on people having sex recently. He had to pay his models quite a lot of money. The same models who would pose for free when he was doing nudes wanted to be paid a lot of money when sex was involved. But that's not the only reason. Obviously, if I wanted to do it, I would pay whatever it took. And I'm certainly not a prude about it. I guess that's one area I haven't begun to explore yet. I probably will one of these days.

What if you did? Would you see a difference between what you're doing and what a mainstream porn magazine or hardcore porn video is doing? Would there be a difference, and what would it be?

What I'm trying to do with most of my work is make work that's multi-dimensional, that works on a lot of different levels, that has a lot of different things going on. The opposite of superficial, the opposite of shock for shock's sake. My best work is full of different meanings, and has a richness and a depth that will keep you coming back to look at it again and again over time, hopefully. Most porn is very one dimensional. It is what it is, and that's all it is. You look at it once, and maybe you get aroused or titillated, and then you turn the page and you never care whether you see it again or not. I'm not really interested in making images on that level. I'd rather make two great pictures than two million superficial shots. I'm interested in making deep, meaningful pictures, and that can certainly be done with erotica, or sex. Off the top of my head, I can't think of any photographer who's done it. Can you?

Not really.

One wonders, 'why not?' If it's such a basic and fascinating subject, then why are the pornographers the only ones who are tackling it? It's the same in film. How many really great explicitly sexual films have there been? Not many.

I think that has to do with ratings. I think Hollywood, and maybe our whole culture, has a very one dimensional view of what pornography is, of what can't be aestheticized no matter how much is put into it. Sex is one of those things that we consider pretty base. What would you consider exploitation?



Exploitation means you rip someone off. You take something from them and use it for your own selfish purposes, and don't give them any of the fun or the profit. It means they get nothing but used. When I was younger, I used to shoot a lot on the street. I would take pictures of people, without their permission, on the street and put them into all kinds of books and projects. There are a lot of ethical and moral considerations about doing that. If you take a picture of someone on the street and use it without a misleading caption, in an honest way, you're covered, legally. But doing that raises certain moral and ethical questions. What I've been doing lately is working with people in a collaborative way. I've been working with models one-to-one to set up situations that are chosen by both of us. You get a different kind of picture working like that. In some ways it's a more satisfying way to work. Certainly nobody gets exploited when you work that way.

Doesn't the work cease to be less documentary? It's not of the moment, you know, it's not capturing something honest.

I know. The energy's different and sometimes the pictures look contrived, and they usually don't have the same punch as an honest, in-the-street documentary. It's a trade off.

In some of your interviews, you talk about the absence of ritual in modern life. What is it you see missing, and how do you think your work changes the experience of ritual?

It's complicated. We do have a certain number of rituals in our society and some of them are pretty nice. The various rituals surrounding having a kid, or getting married, or coming of age rituals like Bar Mitzvah. A lot of modern primitives say that American society doesn't have any meaningful rituals anymore. That's not really how I feel. On the other hand, a lot of our rituals are controlled by big business. Every month there's a certain holiday that has to be celebrated with cards



and gifts. Whether it's Secretaries' Day or the Fourth of July, or Christmas, usually it's big business that's controlling how it works, even controlling how our sentiments are expressed. An example of that is the Super Bowl, which I see as a more contemporary ritual. It can be nice on it's own level. That is, getting together with your friends, getting drunk, and watching the game. On the other hand, the message, the whole meaning it's given by television is all about big business and control. It's not the kind of ritual that leaves you satisfied, happy, or feeling like you've experienced anything meaningful.

I've been doing a lot of ritual with different Pagan groups. For example, I go away for a long weekend retreat with a group of 20 people. There's a leader who leads us in rituals that are designed to work the mind, the body, and the spirit. Some of them are about overcoming personal demons, some are about encouraging a common spirit and understanding that we're all a part of a community, that we're not isolated unless we choose to be, that we have brothers and sisters and together we can be strong and focused and change things. Other rituals are designed to remove energy blocks. Others are designed to make our bodies stronger and healthier. Still others are designed to facilitate good communication and help us love each other, and so on. When I come back from one of those long weekend retreats, I feel so high and so good. I feel like I'm just glowing. I turn on the TV, and it just looks like a bad joke compared to what I just came from. It's just so dead: electrons bouncing on a screen trying to send me a message from Chevrolet. It makes me want to go back into that magical ritual space and stay there. That's where the really good stuff is happening. That's the kind of thing we need to encourage more in today's society: real, authentic rituals that make us feel like we're more than we were when we started.

So you think that most of our modern rituals, like the Super Bowl, make us into passive spectators, instead of active participants?

Fakir Musafar pointed out that after the Super Bowl in San Francisco a couple years ago, there were riots. There were fights, drunks going around smashing things. All because of this football game. His point was that people were not only working on a low-level consciousness, but that they were trying to get some vicarious kicks from this football game. In primitive rituals, you participate. You don't sit there and watch, and then go out and imitate. And primitive rituals usually involve some hard physical experiences. In primitive societies you get your teeth knocked out, or you get your body scarred permanently, or you get your foreskin cut off. You have to spend three nights in a cave with nothing to eat. Most primitive rituals involve some sort of suffering and hardship and real strong physical experience. You learn something on different levels by doing that. You come out of the experience feeling like a stronger person, a more connected person. You bond with the people in your group. It's such a contrast to what we often do in our society: sitting around on our butts drinking beer and eating potato chips, watching Big Brother tell us what kind of car to buy.

Tell me about your experiences with the group surrounding R. Mutt Press. They've sort of been overlooked as a group. What do you think they contributed to your own development and to the development of the artistic underground?

Tattooist Spider Webb published one of his own books in the '70s called *X 1000*. It was about a conceptual tattoo he did. There were one thousand X's tattooed onto this one guy, which all formed a larger X. He hired Marco Vassi to write the text, and me to do the photographs. It was the first time I'd worked with Spider, and the first time I'd met Marco. We realized we had a lot in common, and started hanging out together. That was the basis of the group. Very quickly we decided to expand it and see what we could do to make it deeper and richer. We invited Annie Sprinkle to be a part, Michael Perkins, and an editor in New York named Mam'selle Victoire. That was the core of the group. Later we had associates like Veronica Vera. We were never formally a group. We didn't have meetings, or stationary, or a joint bank account. Instead, we decided to stay loose and fluid and invisible. But we did influence each other greatly.

We were all heavy-duty underground artists. Each of had our own area of expertise. There was a lot of talent in that group. There still is. I think R. Mutt came about at an important time in the late '70s. There were so many kinds of different energies in the air. It helped crystallize some of that intensity. Through R. Mutt, we got out my work, Spider's work, Annie Sprinkle's work. Through Annie, I met Fakir. The modern primitives work I did with RE/Search was based on a lot of the work I'd done with Spider. A lot of the ideas we were playing with spread throughout the world like viruses. Many of the radical ideas we were kicking around in our little group changed the thinking of a lot of people in the world, especially in the modern primitive community. That came right out of the tattooing and piercing underground that Spider and Fakir helped create.

We photographed each other. We had a lot of sex together, too. We worked together, we played together, we inspired each other, we taught each other, we did books together— big books, little books, chapbooks. We still work together— those of us who are left. Marco [Vassi] died of AIDS about 10 years ago. The rest of us scattered, but we still stay in touch and strike sparks. I see Annie [Sprinkle] frequently, I see [Michael] Perkins frequently. I see Spider [Webb] at least a couple times a year. The energy is still pumping. It was an essential part of my education. Very important. We still correspond; we still help each other as much as we can. The main focus of the group was to exchange information and help each other, kind of like a salon.

Can you go into the scene at the Hellfire Club in New York? Did that influence you at all?

There was a time in the late '70s — while the AIDS virus was around but nobody yet knew about it — when New York was incredibly wild. It wasn't until about 1980 or '81 that people started to get sick. Just before, it had been wilder than anything that I've ever seen. It was like there were no limits. Everything was wide open and crazy. That was the period of time when the Hellfire Club really flourished. It was in a dark basement in the meat-packing district of Manhattan. Totally illegal. The club had no permit, no liquor license. Nothing. It was just there. All these real outlaws would go there, especially on Saturday nights, to play and party. There were no rules, except you weren't supposed to fight. That was about it. You could do anything else you wanted. It was unusual because all these different underground groups and all different persuasions were welcome. Hellfire was completely mixed. On any particular Saturday night, Annie Sprinkle would be in her starched white nurse's costume, with a name tag that said "Nurse Sprinkle." She'd be standing on the bar pissing on people. And over in one corner there'd be two gay guys fisting each other. And over in the piss room there'd be a girl in a bathtub with four or five guys peeing on her. Over here there'd be a dungeon scene. Over here there'd be something with hot wax. And here there'd be four guys jerking off, sniffing poppers and watching. It was the best kind of living theater you could ever ask for. I only went there a few times. I was always blown away by it. I don't know if there had ever been anything else like it.

There had been several Hellfire Clubs in London in the 1770s, and the New York Hellfire Club was loosely based on them. The 1770s

Hellfire Club was more about Black Mass, mocking the Church, and breaking those kind of religious taboos. I don't think it was quite as elaborate or kinky as the New York version. A bit of American history that a lot of people don't know: Benjamin Franklin was sent over to England in the 1770s as a spy to find out what the English might do if the colonies declared independence. His job was to hang out with the aristocracy, keep his ear to the ground and get their opinions on what might happen if the colonies were to revolt. One of his tactics was to join the English Hellfire Club. Maybe he was a bit kinky, too. He definitely attended the Hellfire Club, ostensibly to get close to degenerate aristocrats. He spoke with a bunch of drunken, degenerate aristocrats and came to the conclusion that a rebellion wouldn't be taken that seriously, and that America could get away with it. And we did.

Did Flash Productions come out of R. Mutt?

No. In about 1976, I started doing *The Flash*, which was kind of like a zine. I printed it on 50 pounds, white-coated newsprint-type paper. *The Flash* was an occasional visual tabloid and experimental newspaper. I published eight or nine issues over the next couple years. Then I bought my house in Woodstock, and all of the sudden I was broke. Flat broke. And I had to leave it alone. It got some attention. It caused a fuss. It was a good sketch-pad for me to try out some new ideas. I published mostly my own work, but also the work of several other photographers and artists. I experimented with a lot of surreal collage and writing. One thing I liked doing was appropriating not only type, but words or whole stories from other magazines. I didn't see the point in having something type-set if you could just take type from other sources. I would take a headline and then write a story to go with it. Or find a headline and make a collage to fit it. It was mostly appropriation done in the surrealist spirit. So *Flash* was before R. Mutt. I was still exploring my own creativity and seeing where it could go. I sold a few subscriptions, and so I had a few checks made out to '*Flash*.' In order to cash those checks, I had to register it as a business at the bank. When I started a publishing company and then a video company, I already had a DBA for *Flash*. That's why my businesses are now called Flash Video and Flash Publications. I just decided to keep the name.

How do you think Flash and R. Mutt differ?

Well, *Flash* was a one man show, and R. Mutt was a group effort. I was drawn to surrealism early on, like everybody in R. Mutt. Duchamp really was a radical. Dada and surrealism were two of the main movements of the 20th century that really shook everything up, and are still shaking things up. They changed the way people look at art... probably for good.

Have you ever encountered censorship?

Yeah, I've encountered my share. I had a guy at xerox store chuck a few pages of *Forbidden Photographs* back at me and say, "we don't xerox this kind of stuff." I took it to the printer who'd printed two of my earlier books, they refused to print it. I had to find another printer at considerably greater cost. I've had the vice squad come into art galleries where I was showing my work and tell the gallery that the offending pictures of which they'd had complaints had to be taken down. A bookseller in London was arrested for selling *Modern Primitives* because it had a picture of mine of Fakir hanging from a tree with hooks through his skin. The store owner was arrested and put on trial for selling that book. There've been other incidents.

Yeah, I've been censored.

Which pictures have encountered more censorship: the newer fetish pictures or the street documentaries?

Mostly pictures from the late '70s or early '80s that were in or



around my *Forbidden Photographs* book. It happens fairly often one way or another. The publisher of *Badlands* edited out a couple pictures that I put in the book because, he said, "we can't print that." It happens all the time on one level or another. I guess I'm kind of used to it by now. It doesn't seem like a big surprise anymore. A lot of my pictures are pretty strong, and do upset people.

Which shots have people found most upsetting?

The pictures that have caused the most trouble have been Spider holding up a tattooed fetus. Then, "Del's Cock", which is a picture of a tattooed penis. That one's caused some trouble. And the fat girl—that one caused the vice squad to come to a gallery in San Diego and ask them to take it down. Somebody complained about this picture of a fat woman laying on her side on a rock. It's a classical art historical motif. Fakir hanging from the tree — that one caused a lot of fuss. I think a person without any knowledge of modern primitive body practices would call that a crime against nature. It's a picture of a naked man hanging from a tree with hooks through his skin. People see that and "Oh, my God, there's something wrong here."

I think those pictures are considered so offensive because they challenge most people's basic belief system. Most people just say, "Why are you showing me this?" or "Why did you send me that?" To them it seems as if I had set out to photograph the most shocking thing possible for the sake of its shockingness. They think that some of my images are obscene, or more than obscene.

As somebody who's successfully been able to do what you want to do, and do it yourself, do you have any advice for others trying to do something similar?

Yeah. Underline the whole sentence: stay true to your own vision, and don't let bullshitters compromise your vision one millimeter. The way you're probably going to have to do that, at least at first, is doing it yourself. That came out of the '60s really, but it was the punks who took that to another level. Publish your own zine. Make your own records or your own clothes. Do your own publicity. Make your own work. Don't go out and buy something somebody else has done. Make it yourself. Do it yourself. Get together with your friends and figure out how to do it, and how to get it out there. That's what I've done all the way down the line. I've published my own tabloid. I publish my own books when publishers won't do them. I started my own video company. When I was a kid, you had to have a television studio to make a show. Now you can buy a 300 dollar camcorder and make something great. With a computer, you can publish anything yourself. It's revolutionary, the way technology now allows us to do things that used to be only in the hands of the big boys. The worst thing that an artist or a publisher, or a writer, can do is to sit around and whine and say, "They won't publish my work. They won't listen to me, and they don't think it's important, and they they they." Who the fuck is they? If 'they' won't support your work, then support it yourself. If nobody will publish it, publish it yourself. If no one will distribute it, distribute it yourself. There's always a way to get it out there. And sitting around and whining about it is the worst kind of cop-out possible. The bottom line is, make it happen.

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Oreo-Cookie Feminists

By Loolwa Khazzoom

He took me aside and advised me confidentially, "Don't trust all the men here. Not everyone is as great as he seems." I was at one of my first workshops at the NOMAS (National Organization for Men Against Sexism) conference in Chicago, and I had just shared with the group how amazing it was to meet so many committed, pro-feminist men. As this one man cautioned me following the workshop, he also suggested I stay close to the woman watch-dog of the movement, Phyllis. When I connected with her 20 minutes later, she was friendly and motherly and in turn advised me to stay close to Rus.

Rus was a leader of the national movement, Men Can Stop Rape. According to the descriptions I received from Phyllis and others looking out for me, Rus was The Bomb, the prototypical Good Man, the model NOMAS citizen. I stayed close to him, as advised.

I sat next to Rus at lunch and admiringly listened to Phyllis, as she spoke to a crowd of several hundred. That woman had no mercy. She was brilliant, naming all the ways men had to hold themselves accountable and had to be held accountable by women. She described a former NOMAS chair who turned out to beat his wife with something like a curtain rod, all the while putting on a grand feminist front. I gathered strength and daring as I listened to Phyllis.

Rus and I shared an instant connection and hung out together during the following days. I felt safe and comfortable with him and felt myself healing through our budding friendship. As we sat in a hotel lounge one evening, Rus asked if I would feel comfortable if he was touchy with me. He was a touchy kind of guy, he told me. I was blown away by a man asking for permission to touch me. His overtures felt purely platonic, and I myself love physical affection. So I was delighted and happily agreed.

The platonic, close physical experience was powerful for me, and I shared that with Rus. In fact, I shared many important things with him about where I was in life – how I was healing from sexual abuse, how I needed healing experiences with men ...

Later that night, as we sat cuddling and talking on a couch in the lounge, I expressly stated to Rus how wonderful it was to be able to be physical with him without it turning sexual. "My experience," I confided in him, "has been that when a man is physical with me, he wants it to be sexual; and that if I deny being sexual with him, he dumps me and our friendship altogether."

Rus' face headed towards mine. Something died in my stomach, and I felt sick. Time froze with thickness. I watched Rus' head as if in a slow motion film, as his lips aimed at mine. I sat in disbelief, hoping, praying, wishing it was all some mistake ... I turned my head at the last possible moment and felt my body and soul go numb, as his lips missed his mark and landed on my cheek.

He looked at me. I looked back at him through a dense fog, thick from shock. He stood up

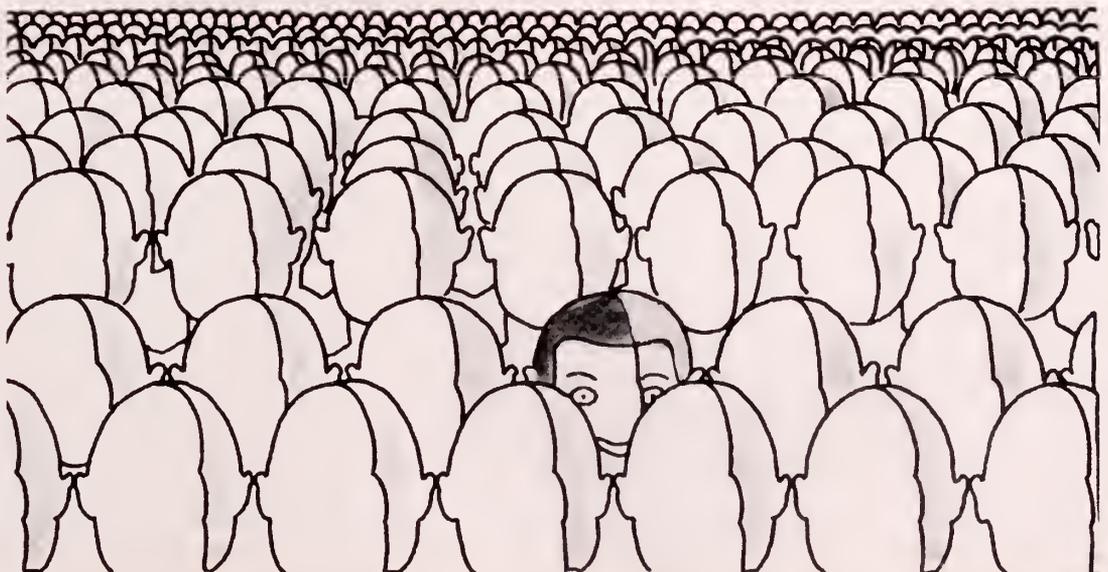
abruptly. "Let's find somewhere else to go," he said. "Why?" I asked, completely dissociated from my body. "It's too noisy in here. Let's find somewhere quieter." I got up slowly and followed him mechanically, empty, numb. He wanted to go to the floor below, but I was aware enough to know I did not want to go anywhere we would be completely alone. I suggested checking the conference rooms down the hall. *Well maybe he really wouldn't have kissed me on the lips, maybe he was just aiming for my cheek, maybe he really couldn't hear me well and wanted a quieter place ...* I desperately did not want the death and betrayal to be a reality.

Rus looked in one room and declared it unsatisfactory because a janitor was there. I listlessly suggested the adjoining room. He checked it out and made the same pronouncement. "Oh well," he chirped, "I guess we'll just have to go to bed!" He smirked at the double meaning, as I keeled over inside. He tried to kiss me again. I turned it into a hug, attempting with all my power to preserve our connection while shifting the energy.

We walked towards the elevator. Rus nailed me against the wall between the elevators and came at me forcefully, determined to get that kiss. Again, I turned it into a hug, all the while feeling ashamed, humiliated, degraded. My head buzzed incessantly. We released our embrace and got into the elevator. I was nowhere to be found in my body.

When we reached Rus' floor, he said, "Goodnight!" in a mocking tone and exited. I nearly slithered to the floor in grief. When I reached my room, I headed straight towards food. "I'm ugly," I thought to myself. But as the familiar mantra began, I caught myself mid-act. "No," I thought, "this is not about me. What just happened is a typical dynamic of sexual assault. He took advantage of his reputation, because nobody will believe me if I tell. I'm taking it out on me because I feel powerless." I put the food away and journeyed about the experience, then I went to sleep.

The next morning, I had to leave the conference early, to catch my flight home. I did not want to just slink away, so I got up the courage to talk to Rus. I hoped for some connection, some resolution, and I wanted to somehow confirm for myself what had or had not happened the night before. Rus was preparing to lead his workshop (on ending rape), as I entered the room. I walked up to him, but he said



nooning. He kept fiddling with papers, not even looking up. "I'm leaving," I finally offered. "Bye!" he chirped with a fake smile, glancing at me just briefly before returning to his organizing. I stood and looked at him for a moment longer, then turned around and walked out the door, knowing the night before really had happened.

At the following year's annual conference in San Francisco, the weekend opened up with some New Age "tribal dance" performance. As part of the event, the performers handed out fortunes to everyone. I looked at mine: "You will speak more truth each time, and each time speaking truth will be easier." I had been shaking from anticipation, knowing I would confront Rus during the conference. I felt instantly validated and comforted, and I beamed a smile from the feeling of universal confirmation and support. I clung to that slip of paper.

I found Rus and told him I wanted to talk with him that evening. After the performance, everyone divided into affinity groups. I joined a Jewish affinity group, and we plunged deep into issues. I did not want to tear myself away early. After waiting around for me for a while, Rus informed me he had to take off; and we agreed to speak the next day.

The next morning, NOMAS participated in a march demanding equal rights for queers in the military. At the end of the march, everyone gathered for speakers, performances, and general merriment. I spotted Rus surrounded by a crowd – mostly young women – as he signed and distributed copies of his newly published book, *Men Can Stop Rape!* I felt sickened by his hypocrisy and decided it was the perfect time to confront him.

Pulling Rus away from his crowd of admirers, I told him straight-out that he was a hypocrite. "Considering what you did to me last year," I continued, "you have no right to get credit for a book like this." Rus feigned innocence, acting as if he had no idea what I was talking about. I refused to bite. "You know exactly what I am talking about," I countered. He tried in numerous ways to get me to play a round of Recount the Abuse for the Abuser, where the perpetrator manipulatively reframes events so he looks good and his victim looks (and feels) like a lunatic. "Rus, you know exactly what I'm talking about, and I'm not going to play this with you. You can sign all those little signatures over there, but you know and I know that you're a fucking hypocrite. Those people may fall for it, but I don't. You make me sick." I stared him down. "OK," he shrugged. I turned and walked away, feeling free.

The next year, I was ready to take the confrontation one step further. At the opening of the conference, this time in Rhode Island, participants were asked to break up into groups and share with the others what, if anything, was holding them back from being fully present there. Rus' buddy Jon was coincidentally in my group. I took a deep breath and talked about what had happened with Rus to date, referring to him only as "this guy." When I was through, Jon looked at me and asked, "Are you talking about who I think you're talking about?" I looked back at him. "Is it someone we both know, someone you've seen me with a lot?" he continued. "Yes," I said anxiously, fearing how he would react. Jon sighed and looked down at his hands. "I thought that's what was going on," he said sadly. He looked back up at me. "I saw it as it was happening." I was shocked. And brimming with excitement. To the contrary of disbelieving me, Jon confirmed and validated everything – as a witness, nonetheless!

When I returned home from the conference that year, a friend of mine was not as ecstatic about Jon's response as I had been. "Oh, great," she snorted, "he saw everything, but he didn't do anything about it or say anything to you? That's fucked up!" I realized she was right and with a sinking feeling acknowledged to myself that I was not yet done with this issue.

By the next annual conference in Pennsylvania, I had decided it was time to take the matter to the organizational leaders. Each year,

there had been a certain leader who had stood up and spoken about the importance of safety – emotional as well as physical – at the conference. He had encouraged individuals to come and speak with him if there were any problems. He seemed like a gentle, wonderful spirit. I went to him first. "What are you telling *me* for?" he asked incredulously. I was thrown off by his reaction and reminded him that he always encouraged people to come to him to discuss issues of safety. "Oh, you just have to say that kind of stuff ... *you* know," he chuckled. I was stunned, disillusioned. Was all the love, all the care I had cherished at NOMAS just a farce?

Next I tried speaking with Phyllis, the female watchdog champion from my first conference. When I told her I had an important matter of harassment to discuss with her, she told me to meet her at a given time and place. I showed up there, but she did not grant me the courtesy of sitting down and talking. Instead, she brusquely instructed me to follow her as she walked to the next workshop. I told her it was

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a painful experience I had to tell her about, and I tried to arrange to sit down and talk, if only for a few minutes; but she would hear nothing of it. "If you want to talk to me, you need to walk with me now," she snapped. As Phyllis practically sprinted across campus, I found it difficult to keep up with her. I felt insulted and

humiliated having to recount something so traumatic and frightening while chasing her tail. I practically choked on my tears and nearly gave up several times. Somehow, I got my story out. "So why are you telling me?" she asked, with an almost hostile edge. "What do you want *me* to do about it?"

Was this the same woman who had exposed the former NOMAS chair who beat his wife? Was this the self-appointed watchdog who was there to hold all the men accountable? "I don't know," I managed to reply, despite my shock. "I came to you for help. I don't know what to do. You always talk about accountability. I was hoping you could help me think about the situation and figure out what to do about it, how to hold Rus accountable..." Phyllis cut me off mid-sentence and went to grab some coffee, abandoning me in the hallway of a building we had just entered. As I stood and fought back tears, I considered dropping the whole damn thing. But I remained resolute to take the matter as far as I could. Phyllis returned, chatted with a few people walking in, then told me to speak with a woman who had showed up on the scene. She then ran off to the next workshop, wishing me luck. Clearly, she didn't give a fuck.

I felt crushed. Desperate to talk to someone about my feelings, I went off with the appointed woman and sat in a lounge area with her, sobbing about what had happened. The woman offered a few suggestions for what I could do to take care of myself, and I appreciated her kindness. But she was not in a position to enact the kind of accountability I sought.

After speaking with this woman, I just stood around, distraught and teary-eyed. A group of Australians approached me and asked if I was OK. We had spoken briefly before, and they seemed like wonderful people. As I tried giving them an encapsulated version of events, I burst into tears again. They opted to skip the workshop in session and instead took me over to a grassy field, to listen to my full story. "As my mother would say," one of them offered when I had finished, "'Off with his head!'" I giggled with the group, heartened by their

care and encouraged by the clear validation I finally was receiving.

This group of three young women (one of whom was actually American) and one young man proceeded to share with me the extensive work they had done in their community, on the issue of accountability. They showed me the latest issue of their community magazine, dedicated entirely to the topic. Then they moved into action, like a well-oiled machine:

"Are there individuals here you feel safe enough with, to tell this story to as a group?" I thought of about five men I considered friends or allies. The Australians proposed picking a time to gather that group together for a meeting, and I chose the next evening. Feeling strongly that it is men's responsibility to work with other men to end sexual violence, the group explained that David would speak with and gather the men together, while the women would emotionally support me. As such, they would provide me a buffer zone, to protect me from additional suffering. "All you have to do is show up and tell your story," they said lovingly.

Shortly after our gathering, I was informed that a meeting had been set and that all of the chosen men had immediately and wholeheartedly agreed to participate. I felt so loved! I never had experienced such group support in my life, nor had I experienced such validation for my standing up to sexually abusive behavior.

As the conference continued, the Australian women stayed by my side, but David mysteriously disappeared, remaining perfectly friendly yet distant. I felt confused and a bit hurt. The day of our scheduled meeting, David joined me for lunch. Without my raising the issue, he explained that he had remained distant so as to avoid the hero-izing dynamics that can occur when a man stands up for a woman. "I'm just doing what should be done," he said, "and I'm doing no more than the women are doing. But given the sexist context of our society, there is a tendency to put men on a pedestal for doing basic work, and I wanted to avoid that dynamic."

When the appointed moment arrived that evening, the Australians and I met the group of friends and allies in one of the conference rooms. Following the "fishbowl" procedure proposed by the Australians, the six men all sat together in a circle, and the four women – including myself – sat in an arc around them. I told my story, and the men just listened.

When I was done, the men responded to my story, addressing each other, and the women just listened. The men expressed anger, dismay, and frustration. A few revealed that they had done similar things in their pasts and that they did not want to respond self-righteously, as if they were completely innocent. After discussing the personal impact this story had on each of their struggles as pro-feminist men, they decided to take action by each speaking with Rus individually. I watched in amazement as the plan unfolded. When it was time for the women to respond to the men's response, I approved the men's course of action. I shared additional thoughts. The other women shared their reactions, and the meeting was closed.

The meeting and its results were simultaneously exhilarating, powerful, and frightening. It was a bewildering new sensation to go all the way with naming and fighting assaultive behavior. It was heady to challenge a man with a grand national feminist front, calling him on his decidedly anti-feminist behavior. It felt deliciously subversive to have a group action on my behalf during the conference, when the organizational leadership had done its best to downplay my concerns and thwart my pursuit of justice. Up to that point, every time I had seen or heard Rus mentioned as leading some form of his men-ending-violence workshop, I had felt sick and angry. But I no longer felt powerless.

As a survivor of multiple forms of covert and manipulative sexual abuse, I fully expected Rus to deny everything and initiate a show-down with me. I felt apprehensive. When I was abused as a child, I

was told that I was imagining my abuse; that the behavior in question was normal; that it was my "evil side" casting the perverse spin on it. I learned to metaphorically stand on my head in the shape of a pretzel, so as to reframe events and give them innocent meaning. Feeling powerful and being taken seriously took me across a threshold to thrilling yet anxiety-producing new territory. In addition to feelings of power, love, and excitement, I also experienced feelings of fear and even guilt, worrying about ruining Rus' reputation and career, feeling I should protect him and just let go of what happened.

But by the next morning, all my anxieties were quelled. Rus was gone. After being confronted by one or two of the men from the group, he had split the scene. Other men from my support group searched for him in vain. I could not prove the connection between his being confronted and taking off early, but it seemed too close to be coincidence. A smile spread across my face, as I realized that I had won. I felt a kind of peace, power, and freedom I never had experienced before.

I knew Victor for three years, since the first NOMAS conference I attended in Chicago. He was a prominent figure in anti-racist work, and we connected on that issue. Over the three subsequent NOMAS conferences, we got to know and appreciate each other more and more. By the conference in Pennsylvania, we were pretty touchy, hugging when we said hello and goodbye. One evening, Victor and I bummed around with a number of friends, then joined the larger conference gathering to watch a performance. During the event, he asked if I would like a back massage, and I said yes. I enjoyed it until he also massaged the sides of my breasts. Simultaneously, he leaned over and said, "We live in the same area. We should spend more time with each other, get to know each other better."

I felt violated and had a sinking feeling. After the performance, I went up to him and told him I was angry that he had touched my breasts. He said he had not been aware of it, and he apologized. Right after he responded, "Kate" – the one Australian woman with whom I had spent a lot of time and become friends – came over and asked what had happened. I wasn't sure what to say. I opted for an honest reply, sharing that I had been angry at Victor and that we were talking about it. "I touched her breasts," he said. "I didn't *mean* to." Victor spoke in a tone that felt callous, almost mocking. When I did a reality check with Kate later on, she agreed about his insensitivity – both in his telling her the details and in his tone of voice while telling her. I felt unsettled.

Victor was friends with my conference roommate, so I saw him later on, in my room. "Loolwa," he said, "I am *really* sorry about what happened." He seemed sincerely caring and apologetic, so I wanted to talk with him about the experience. Assuming he was a pro-feminist male ally and friend, I wanted to share the emotions and questions I had felt.

I discussed the dilemma of how to know what a man's intent really is, given that many men exploit the ambiguity inherent in touch. How was I to know he truly had *not* been aware of what he had done? How was I to know his claim of ignorance was not just a convenient cover, as it had been in my past? I shared these unsettling thoughts with Victor, in an effort to reach out. I hoped to commiserate over the danger women risk and the resulting difficulties I had in getting close with men – in this case, in getting close with him. I wanted to take the risk of sharing my pain, and I wanted to get support from him as a man and a friend.

But Victor got nervous. "I don't feel comfortable continuing this conversation," he said, "unless there are other people present." I felt my hope for connection bust. He was worried about a sexual harassment suit, when I was simply trying to reach out to him past all the fear and pain.

If Victor's intent was pure, I began to wonder, could he not have listened to my pain without getting defensive? Did he just apologize

concern for his reputation? If he really did want to get to know me better, would he not want to hear my struggles, as a friend? Victor and I ended up continuing our discussion, and I felt pretty satisfied. The next day, however, when he barely tapped my arm, he asked bitingly, "Oh, is that ... OK?"

With the exception of the Rus and Victor incidents, NOMAS conferences had been completely safe for me – a yearly Utopia, a vision of what life would be like without the burden of sexism. The conferences were the only space I had found where I could be raucous, outspoken, affectionate, and sensual without experiencing the negative, sometimes violent consequences that usually followed in the world outside. NOMAS participants affirmed my bodacious, radical feminist being in every way. "You have such an amazing spirit!" people told me frequently (including Phyllis, in previous years).

In this environment of individuals committed to social justice and personal transformation, I felt my heart open and trust blossom. The annual conferences became a kind of spiritual temple for me. I got to share platonic physical affection with many wonderful men – experiences which were deeply healing. I got to be aggressively playful without being sexually assaulted; thus I got to relish in the kind of fun I had as a child. (One of my favorite memories was tackling a group of 19 men as they played frisbee, turning a ho-hum game into a spirited wrestling match.) Throughout the conferences, friendships formed quickly, and I maintained a number of those friendships during the months and years between gatherings.

The annual dance party was a yearly event I especially loved, being the only public place I could dance in an uninhibited manner. In dance clubs, men constantly harassed me and responded to my sensuality as an invitation to molest me. But at NOMAS, I could flow with the music however it moved me and still have the space and respect I craved.

The last night of the Pennsylvania conference, I went to the dance party as usual. As I danced by myself, one of the men from my support group – a much older man – approached me and began dancing close, in a sexually suggestive manner. I turned him away in a move I made part of my dance, playfully shaking my finger "no." I felt disturbed by the overture but told myself he was just playing. Still, I felt weird about the familiar dynamic of *assuming* my movement was a sexual invitation, when I so clearly was dancing by and for myself – as if the energy of life pulsating through a woman's body is a neon placard with flashing lights, reading *Come & Get Me!*

Some time after that interaction, I heard a man bellow at me, "Alriiight! Shake it baby, show me what you got!" Shocked, I spun around to see a complete stranger giving me the standard dance club routine. I said something to the effect of "Fuck you! That's not what this is about!" He shrugged his shoulders. I tried to keep dancing, but the moment was ruined. I left the dance floor and went off in search of my friend Ben, who lent a sympathetic ear to my venting fury. Ben was disturbed by the man's comment and agreed it was fucked up to happen at a gathering for pro-feminist men.

Ben was a co-chair of the NOMAS Council (Victor was the other co-chair), a position he had held for about two years. Since his appointment, Ben had encouraged me numerous times to join. "You're like an arrow that cuts straight through shit," he had said. "We need you on the Council." Overwhelmed with my own pursuits, I always had declined. But after the cumulating of several disturbing events at the Pennsylvania conference, I decided it was time for me to jump on board the decision-making wagon, and I told Ben I would join. He beamed with excitement.

The next day, after the conference was over, I went to the scheduled Council meeting. Phyllis and another leader officially stepped down from their supervisory positions, leaving Ben and Victor at the

helm of the NOMAS ship. After those formalities finished, the council voted in 10 new members, including Sven – a new friend and member of my support group, Lisa – the American woman from the Australian clan, another man from my support group, and me. People voting us in included long-time Council members like Jon – Rus' friend. Shortly after our "inauguration," I said goodbye, excused myself, and dashed off to the airport to catch my flight.

A few weeks after my return, I found myself puzzled about why I was not hearing back from Sven or Lisa, despite repeated attempts to contact them. Weeks after that, while clearing my answering machine as usual, I heard a message that apparently had been left a couple of months back. "Hi Loolwa, this is [some white-boy-steals-Native-American-name, I can't remember ... Raven? Wolf?]. You know, we thought we had 10 spaces available on the council, but it turns out we only had nine. Since you were the last one voted in, we can't accept you in the Council. Sorry. If you want to talk about this, call me."

I felt disgusted.

I had not been the last voted in; Lisa had been. But even if I had been the last one, I found it immoral to alienate and kick out one person rather than bend the rules a bit – especially considering the Council already had voted me in.

Ben and I were in regular contact throughout the year, and I shared my distress with him. He said something to the effect of, "That sucks." But months later, he spilled the beans about the scandal that really had happened. "When you left," Ben told me, "Phyllis stated emphatically, 'I don't want that woman on the Council!' I asked her why, and she replied, 'She's too outspoken, and she dances provocatively.' I said, 'Wait. You're telling me that this Jewish woman is too loud and sexual?' Then Phyllis practically jumped out of her seat at me and shouted, 'Don't you tell me what I can and cannot say! As a man, you need to listen to me as a woman. I am telling you she should *not* be on the Council.'"

"I felt trapped," Ben continued. "I felt I couldn't contradict her, because I would be a man silencing a woman." "That's bullshit!" I protested. "That's taking it to an absurd extreme. If she's saying crap, you have every right to say so. Aside from which, *I'm* a woman too, and look how *I* was treated." "That may be so, but I'm just telling you what happened," Ben replied. "So what did you do?" I continued. "Well, the Council voted on kicking you out, and everyone voted in favor except me. I abstained." "You didn't even vote against it?!" I asked, flabbergasted.

Ben proceeded to explain to me how he valued his position as co-chair of NOMAS and how he did not want to lose that position. "As co-chair, I can do more good fighting sexism than I could if I stepped down or if I was booted off." His hypocrisy screamed in my face and turned me purple from exasperation. "But Ben, how can you or NOMAS fight sexism with integrity in the outside world, when you don't confront it within its ranks? That's like a man who beats his wife at home while fighting for women's equality in the political world ... I was kicked off the NOMAS council because I was outspoken about Rus assaulting me. You don't think that's a problem of sexism? You don't think it's sexist to say I dance 'provocatively' and thus should not be a NOMAS leader?"

Ben decided to take the opportunity to mope and repeatedly say what an asshole he was and how much he felt like shit. I effectively was silenced from further protest – how do you fight with a wet rag? He told me he would think about what I said and let me know his decision.

We hung up the phone, and the betrayal hit me like a block of

iron thrown at my head. I sat on my bed, scooped my knees in my arms, and sobbed. *That's why Sven didn't call me back. That's why Lisa didn't call me back – guilt.* How could they consciously participate in such betrayal and hypocrisy? I pictured Sven and me at the conference – kindred spirits running around being outrageous goofballs together. I looked at the pictures of us beaming at the camera. I recalled all the spiritual love I felt for him. I felt sick. I thought about the other man from my support group who apparently had voted against me. How could he justify what he had done?

Months later, I saw Victor in a gathering of what turned out to be mutual friends. "You know a lot of my friends," he said to me. "See, I have good credentials." I felt appalled. Victor apparently was still stuck on his reputation. After participating in the scandal booting me off the NOMAS Council, his attitude especially disgusted me. I have seen him numerous times since then, leading anti-racism workshops at the same conferences as me and working behind the scenes of a documentary in which I was featured – a documentary, ironically enough, about women overcoming the double whammy of sexism and racism. Whenever I see him, I smell hypocrisy and feel ill.

The betrayal I experienced at NOMAS cut me so deeply that I could not respond to or even write about it until today, four years later. The scandal against me shattered the innocence and trust I had reclaimed through my previous healing experiences with group members. It also left me seriously cynical about self-proclaimed feminist men: I now assume oreo cookie status – feminist on the outside, sexist on the inside – until proven otherwise.

But my new attitude ain't all bad; I think of myself as more savvy now, wise from experience. Here are some of the things I learned, which may prove helpful to others:

1. Whatever issue a group addresses inevitably will rear its head within that group. The test of a group's integrity lies in its response to such an occurrence.
2. Every movement is limited by the limitations of its organizers.
3. It is easier to kick out a shit-kicker than to clean up the shit. See #1 for implications.

The End...?

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By J. Gerlach



Taking It to the Streets! Art Cars in America

By Matthew A. Donahue

Photographs by Giles Cooper and Matthew A. Donahue

We have all heard and seen the slogans. We have all heard the advertising agencies' attempts to convince us that the value of the self comes from the consumption of material goods. Perhaps the most prominent of those material goods is the American automobile. Almost 100 years after the invention of the car, we are still burning up natural resources in transportation vehicles that promise us freedom and individuality, but often leave us shy of our final destination.

One of the most recent advertising campaigns that exhibits the automobile industry's failure to live up to empty promises is Dodge's "The New Dodge/The Rules Have Changed" marketing campaign. Boasting an innovative new design, Dodge's new automobiles do not get more efficient gas mileage, have free energy motors in them, or have mufflers that don't rust. Instead, they are the same old five-passenger, four tire, moderate gas mileage automobiles ringing in at \$20,000 to \$30,000. Changed rules or not, the automobile is still a luxury enjoyed by those who can afford them.

Recognizing the prominence of the automobile in American culture, despite the fact that a new car is often economically out of most people's reach, there is an art movement that combats the automobile industry and the often equally exclusive art scene. That movement is art cars. An art car is a decorated method transportation (including bicycles, motorcycles and even go-karts) that claims the automobile as an artistic medium by painting or gluing objects onto the car. The art world is colliding head-on with the automobile industry in the form of



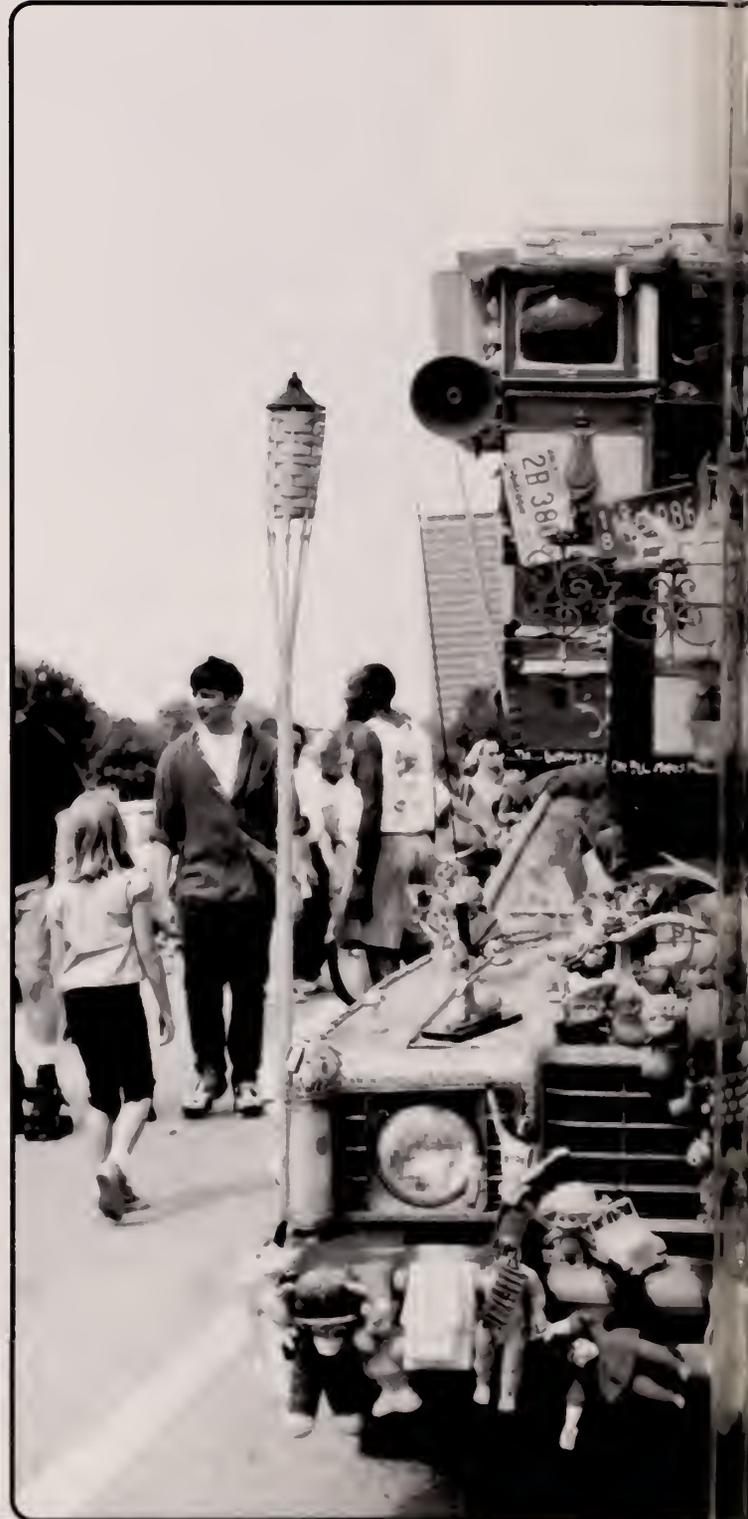
art cars, and the collision is happening on the streets, roads, highways, and back alleys of America.

This isn't to say that the art car movement is entirely new or unprecedented. In fact, ever since the automobile hit the pavement in the early 1900s there have been folks who have been challenging the automobile aesthetic. Buckminster Fuller, an architect, philosopher and humanitarian, was one of the first to challenge the automobile's presence in American life. Although not colorfully painted or otherwise adorned with glued-on objects, Fuller's design implementation of the Dymaxion Transport Vehicle was an art car even in its time period of 1933. Fuller sought to improve the already existing equipment (including automobiles) for future generations by embracing the notion that technology should, "reform the environment instead of the human being." The automobile set up roadblocks to the market release of his Dymaxion Transport Vehicle. It is hardly surprising that Fuller's highly efficient vehicle and innovative design was refused entrance at the annual auto show at Madison Square Garden in 1933. In response, Fuller parked his car near the street entrance of that same automobile exhibition and caused notorious traffic jams with onlookers swarming at his strange pear-shaped vehicle.

Over the next couple of decades after Fuller's Dymaxion vehicle was roadblocked, little was done by the auto industry to advance the transportation needs of humanity. A tail fin added here or taken away there, and a few more miles per gallon were the among the minimal advancements of the automobile.

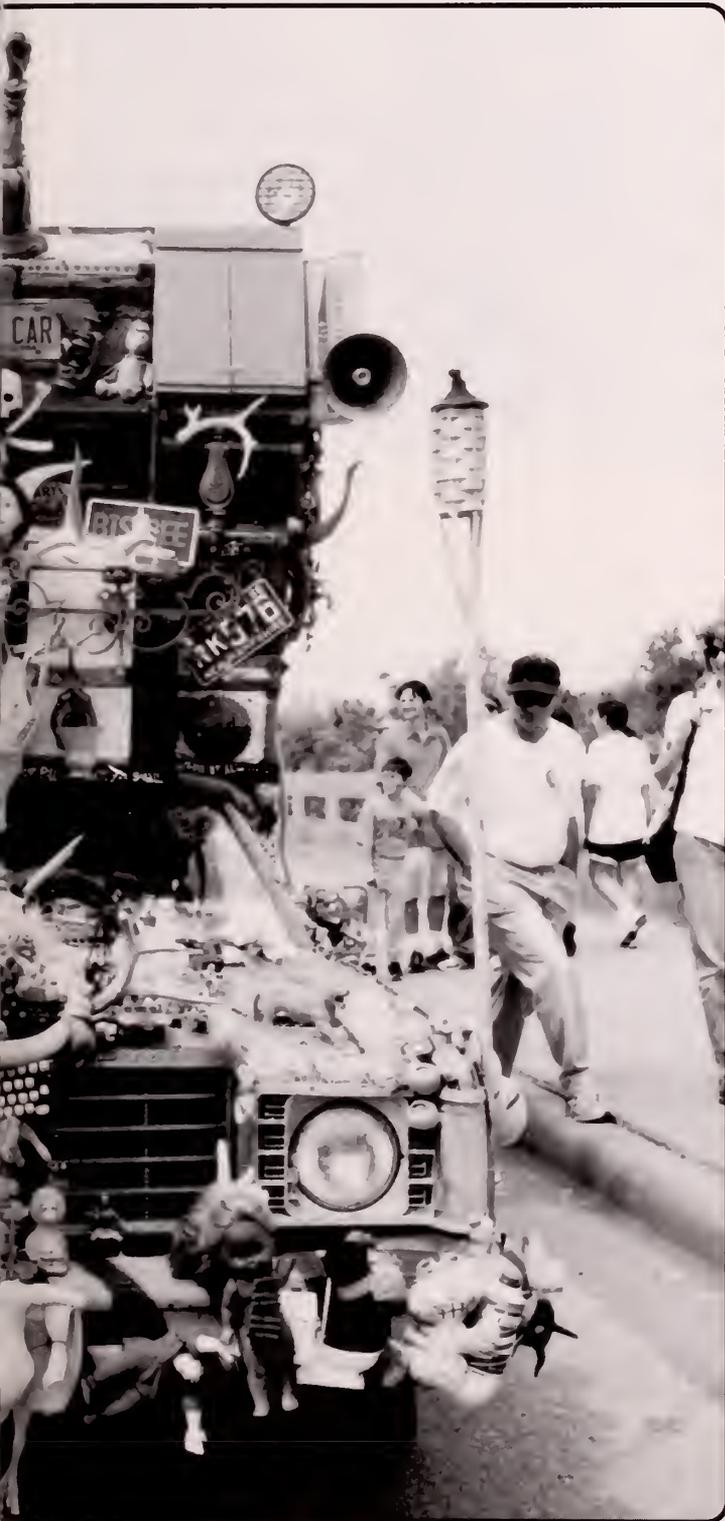
In the 1950s and 1960s, many car owners took it upon themselves to bring about a change to the visual aspects of their transport vehicles. Custom car enthusiasts began working with paint by providing custom paint jobs and "souping up" their automobiles.

continued page 46





Photos from *The Roadside Attractions Exhibition 2000*
— Houston, Texas.



There were many performers along the way who helped popularize the concept of the art car in the late 1950s. For example, country and western musician Webb Pierce had his Cadillac convertible custom decorated with silver dollars and Colt 45s. Fellow musician Jimmy Bryant cruised around in his "Vox Guitarmobile," which was a car shaped like a Vox guitar.

By the late 1960s, the hippie generation brought the art car design to an accepting generation of their peers. What they lacked in design engineering, they made up for in creative interior and exterior decorating and artwork. Perhaps the most notorious was Ken Kesey's cross-country experiment with the Merry Pranksters in "Further," a school bus decked out with a psychedelic paint job that served as the vehicle for the literal and metaphorical trip the pranksters invited the nation to take with them. Another classic representation of the 1960s art car and its effect on society can be seen in the cult classic film, *I Love You Alice B. Tokles*. In this film, uptight lawyer Harold Fine (played by Peter Sellers) is forced to drive a psychedelic art car while his other car was in the shop. The art car dramatically changes Fine's life and enables him to break the chains of an uptight, straight-laced lifestyle.

I became involved in the art car scene in 1995, entering a movable Yurt Hut in the First Annual Art Car Exhibition and Parade in Chicago. A few car artists and organizers at this event suggested that I check out the annual art car exhibition in Houston sponsored by the Orange Show Foundation. This exhibition, entitled "Roadside Attractions" is the "Mother of All Art Car Parades" and occurs every year on the third weekend in April. The event is held over three days and includes over 300 cars and their artists from all over North America. In addition to art cars, there are decorated bicycles, rollerbladers, and any other mode of transportation that exists on wheels. In response to the popularity of this exhibition, many other cities throughout the U.S. are now sponsoring art car exhibitions.

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the art car movement is that very often art car artists are paid to display their vehicles, something that is often reserved for the biggest names in the art world. You may not get rich displaying an art car, but you will get your art seen, and most of the organizations sponsoring the events will provide the artists with a stipend, room and board and admission to all of the events at the exhibition. Artists can also have inexpensive postcards made of their cars and sell them to passersby.

My experience with the art car scene has led to opportunities where I have been able to display my music and art to folks who are a bit more open to grassroots art culture than your average art gallery crowd. I have also made connections with other art car artists throughout the U.S. who are not only down with the cause, but are also fellow travelers, willing to put you up for the night if you are out on the road. I am currently working on my 11th vehicle and am preparing to do some art car workshops with deaf children in Glasgow, Scotland. But perhaps the most satisfying feeling is when you drive by the yuppie in the \$30,000 Sport Utility Vehicle that never even touches dirt in your decorated art car getting all the attention an automobile can get. ☿





Institutionalized Subversion

at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum

By Stewart Varner

Of the many histories of rock music that can – and should – be told, the most interesting to me is rock's history of subversive potential. Personally, my ever-expanding political awareness is just as much due to my exposure to Public Enemy, The Indigo Girls, The Clash and Bruce Springsteen (just to name a few) as it is to revisionist historians like Howard Zinn, radical thinkers like Hakim Bey and many of the teachers I have studied both in and out of school. Though I am personally a bit disturbed by some recent trends in popular music, I have not given up on rock's ability to offer a voice to the marginalized and for those who listen to rock to get something valuable out of it.

So last spring when I took a class on museum studies I thought this would be a good opportunity to merge my intimately connected interests in radical politics and rock music in a study of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland, Ohio. I wanted to see how the anti-authoritarian, often revolutionary expressions of rock 'n' roll have been interpreted into the Rock Hall. I was particularly interested in how the Rock Hall's values affect their interpretation. Additionally I looked at how the Rock Hall functions within larger networks of commercialization both inside and outside the museum. More often than not I was troubled by what I found and I want to share these findings because I hope they will be interesting to those of you who, like me, take rock seriously and want to see its stories told in meaningful ways.

You Say You Want a Revolution (Well, ya know . . .)

On the third floor of the Rock Hall there are several kiosks where you can listen to songs by all the people in the Hall of Fame. I was listening to something at one of these kiosks when I heard someone behind me singing – badly. I turned around and there was a guy listening to headphones, singing along – and dancing – to Little Richard's "Tutti Frutti." People were walking by, staring at him like he was a freak. I have to admit I was startled at first myself. You just don't act like that in a museum, do you?

My initial reaction to seeing this guy singing exposes an important paradox of the Rock Hall. By putting rock music – which at least presents itself as wild and free – in a museum, something that is perhaps intangible is lost. This loss seems to be what leads to the dismissive statements some people make about the Rock Hall.

With the growing popular interest in social history, there now seems to be some concern with making museums political. Maybe the existence of the Rock Hall itself is a manifestation of this. However, in some ways the museum is very conservative. In order to examine this paradox I want to examine two exhibits that deal – or rather, don't deal – with subversive political issues.

The first exhibit I want to look at is called "Don't Knock the Rock," a very short installation on the ground floor. The exhibit is made up of a series of televisions that continuously show video clips of different people denouncing rock music for a variety of reasons. The overall tone of the exhibit, as is evidenced by the name, is that censorship and other protests against rock are conducted by humorless and conservative killjoys.

The films more or less follow a chronological time line. The first video begins with a DJ, I assume from the late 1950s or early 1960s, who is explaining that his radio station will no longer play rock 'n' roll because it is morally corrupt. It is followed by preachers in the early '60s talking about the overtly sexualized beats and rhythm of rock. There is also footage of mass anti-Beatles protests after John Lennon said that he was bigger than Jesus. Of course speeches by conservative "moral crusaders" like Tipper Gore and Bob Dole were also displayed. The most interesting one of these was one senator who said that freedom of speech does not apply to rock and roll.

The quotes pulled out for this exhibit were by and large silly. Visitors are practically encouraged to laugh at the ridiculous things people have said about rock by the loaded name, "Don't Knock the Rock." But one thing really struck me. Amid all the sexually and religiously reactionary rhetoric, there was one video clip of a National Organization of Women (N.O.W.) protest against sexist images and language in rock. This struck me because it seems to undermine many of the exhibits in the rest of the museum that deal with the contributions of such artists as Patti Smith and Janis Joplin and the voices their lives, art and legacies helped women find. The Rock Hall has been very conscious of representing women's contributions throughout the exhibits. However, by lumping N.O.W. rallies in with the laughable reactionary protests, the message in the other exhibits seems to be contradicted.

The larger problem I saw was not really a lack of context for these films – they were all connected by the idea of problems people have had with rock music. However, this was an implied context. Most of the protests really looked ridiculous so everything presented seemed ridiculous by implication. As with most of the exhibits at the Rock Hall, very little context was explicitly given for these films. While this arrangement in some ways encourages visitors to come to their own conclusions, as I did, they are simultaneously pointed in a particular direction – one that I would argue is dangerous in this case.

The exhibit I probably spent the most time with was the section of the "Rockin' All Over the World" installation which is devoted to the kind of music that has come to be known as punk and new wave. This is the only exhibit which used one case to talk about two cities – New York and London – in two different countries (two different continents even).

Inside the case there are many artifacts from these punk/new wave scenes. I was quite impressed with the variety of artifacts they had collected. There were instruments (or, in some cases, the remains of instruments), clothing and posters associated with many different artists ranging from The Clash to The X-Ray Spex. Many of the artists who have come to be associated with punk rock were never taken very seriously by any sort of mainstream media (and the underground media that did take them seriously was rarely taken seriously outside of the punk cultural ghetto). But somehow the Rock Hall managed to find obscure evidence of existence for this cultural phenomenon that seemed to value under-exposure and invisibility.

The film that runs constantly in this case, however, was very disappointing. It begins with footage of two groups of contemporary punks, one group of British punks hanging out on Kings Road in London and another group of American punks in front of CBGBs in New York. A voice off screen asks each group where punk started. Not surprisingly, the Americans argue in favor of the States by citing MC5 and The Ramones while the British point to British groups like The Sex Pistols and The Clash who, they claim, added a heightened level of political awareness to the music. While this issue of genesis is still to some degree debated within the punk scene, the argument is hardly the most culturally significant aspect of punk. The film continues on to talk about other superficial matters like people's favorite bands and at one point all the punks sing "Anarchy in the UK" for the film crew.

Furthermore, the people interviewed were portrayed as being rather foolish. The overall impression of punk rock a visitor gets after seeing this is that punks were and are lazy, fowl-mouthed and not very bright. While it is true that some punks tended to shun the normal values of

work as well as many other social expectations, I felt as if these groups were not asked questions that would have yielded interesting answers. Granted, as some people have noted, many punks are more likely to spit on you than to discuss cultural theory, but a discussion of why this is the case may have been less demeaning.

Despite having the tools at hand, the Rock Hall failed to construct a meaningful narrative for this exhibit. Many of the artifacts are very good examples of the kind of Do It Yourself ethic that lies at the center of what has come to be known as punk. For instance, all the playbills on display seemed to be made by hand and photocopied at the local copy shop. This is very different from the large multi-colored posters in some of the other exhibits. A discussion of why this is so might have produced some interesting insights into the punk critique of capitalism and its aesthetics.

The Rock Hall's insistence on treating radical subversion in rock and roll frivolously is at best disturbing. Much is made throughout the exhibits of the rebellious nature of artists like Elvis Presley, The Who and U2, but after seeing the use (misuse) of the N.O.W. protest, and the demeaning depiction of punks, I fear the Rock Hall values subversion, but only the kind that will not really offend their visitors. Revisionist historian Michael Wallace said in his essay "Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States" that if a museum's "subjects were critics of their society, the museum should refuse to blunt the jagged edges of the original message" (197). Many of the people exhibited and even interviewed in the Rock Hall were very critical of their society and while some of this criticism is presented, the "jagged edges" seem to be blunted in an attempt to make the information less threatening and thus more comfortable for some of the visitors.

I think that part of this can be linked to how the Hall of Fame and Museum go about deciding what to exhibit. There seems to be two kinds of artists on display, those who sold lots of records and those who have been cited as influences on those who sold lots of records. Because the artists who fall into the first category tend to have left behind more artifacts (more instruments and more posters for example) which have ended up in the Rock Hall, an implied illusion that they were of greater significance is created while the artists in the second category almost seem like coattail riders. Such a value system that indirectly gives primacy to artists who have become financially successful in the rock business tends to exclude those who have expressed radical, and thus unpopular, ideas in their music, behavior and/or business practices. However, that the Rock Hall values money over radical politics (even if it seems to claim otherwise) should not really come as a surprise. The issue of commercialization is central to the institution inside and out.

I Sold My Soul to the Devil (At the Crossroads of Rebellion and Capitalism.)

Something that I paid particular attention to as I went through the Rock Hall was to what extent visitor's movements are controlled as they move from exhibit to exhibit. What I discovered was that the planners, I think quite intentionally, had left the space relatively open so visitors were more or less free to wander around to wherever they felt like going. The chaos was informed by a map that each visitor is given upon entering the museum that shows the location of all of the exhibits. However, I only found one logical way to leave the top floor which is where most people finish their visit: the escalator which dumps you out right in the museum's gift shop.

Visitors may have a good reason not to take the time to look around this final destination. One such reason is that they have already been there because they had mistaken it for an exhibit upon arrival. The gift shop is the only thing on the floor where the main entrance is and you can walk in without a ticket.

The placement of the gift shop is striking and, in my experience, disconcerting. Something that added to this was that the gift shop is not simply an in house operation, but an HMV store. Not surprisingly, they sell tapes and CDs in addition to Rock Hall T-shirts, shot glasses and

other souvenirs. This only makes sense I suppose but it made me feel as if all the *interactive exhibits* throughout the museum were not very different from the listening stations found in most music stores these days. I am not attempting to argue that the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum is just a giant advertising campaign for the HMV store and the record companies whose wares are sold there (although one could possibly do so) but there is no way to deny that the museum is intertwined in an incomprehensibly large network of commercialization.

Perhaps a good place to start thinking about this is the induction process. In the performer category, artists are only eligible for induction 25 years after they release their first album. This is the only objective requirement for nomination. Even though this process does not necessarily exclude performers who choose to work outside the traditional framework of the recording industry, it certainly puts them at a disadvantage. Furthermore, looking at the list of inductees, it is telling to note that record label support (major label support in the vast majority of cases) is almost the rule.

While it may seem strange to think about an artist who has never formally made a recording being worthy of induction into the Hall of Fame, this is only so because, without the support of a record label it is almost impossible for an artist to reach a wide audience. Therefore, all the talk about musical talent and innovation in the Rock Hall is secondary to the artist's ability to get signed to a label with the means and motivation to successfully promote the artist's work. In the past 25 years, very few artists working independently have been able to do this.

On this note, bands that work independently do so for a variety of reasons. In a few cases bands do this in order to maintain some level of control over their production. While I admire many of the anti-authoritarian views of many of the artists found in the Rock Hall, the power of these sentiments seems diminished by their association with multinational corporations. A critique of the record industry – and thus of capitalism – from an artist who worked as independently as possible (like Ian Mackaye or Ani DiFranco to name two famous examples) might seem a bit more real – and a bit more dangerous. Besides, one might argue that if someone in one of the films said that record companies are manipulative and exploitive and purely profit driven and this someone actually had a leg to stand on (read, has been working independently), then it might not be too long before the HMV people started getting worried.

Another example of how the Rock Hall is intimately connected (maybe a little too intimately connected) to the record industry is how frequently an artist's induction is preceded by new releases and a media blitz. Although I hate to do it, let's take Bruce Springsteen for example. Though the official announcement of Springsteen's induction was not made until late in 1998, it was fairly obvious that he would be a first round pick. He had been involved in most of the induction ceremonies and he is featured prominently in several of the films shown inside the museums.

A few weeks before the announcement of his induction, it was announced that a box set of studio outtakes would be released. I am not saying there was any sort of formal agreement between Sony Records and the Rock Hall (but it does not seem that far fetched) but certainly the exposure Springsteen received for his induction helped sales of this collection. Also, his reunion tour with the E Street Band seemed to be well timed to capitalize on the publicity.

In addition to the commercialization found within the museum and its "convenient" connections to the recording industry, the Rock Hall is also part of a larger commercial effort in the city of Cleveland. When the Rock Hall opened, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* devoted an entire section of the Sunday edition to coverage of the institution and its opening events. Not unlike most sections of the paper, it was about 40 percent copy and 60 percent advertisement. Most of the advertising in this section was in some way connected to the Rock Hall, whether it was a vote of confidence from a car dealership or a local club that promised patrons a "rockin' good time."

Expressing his vision of what the Rock Hall should be like, humorist Dave Barry said, "[t]he other businesses in Cleveland should have to call the police constantly to demand that the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame be turned down" (Barry G9). However, the reality is that the Rock Hall gets along very well with its neighbors. The area is full of various tourist attractions such as a science museum, sports arenas and the Hard Rock Cafe – all of which were built after the Rock Hall. All of these things seem to be part of a wide-ranging plan to gentrify the downtown Cleveland district.

Furthermore, two entertainment districts – the Flats and the Flats West – seem to have blossomed since the construction of the Rock Hall. The Flats were previously a low rent section of town near the docks on Lake Erie. Though the efforts to gentrify this area predate the construction of the Rock Hall, the recent growth in popularity the restaurants and other attractions have experienced is most likely due in part to the Rock Hall as well as the other major destination attractions in the area such as the three sports arenas and the old Galleria Mall. The Flats West is a slightly different story. While the Flats East seems to try to simulate, and thus tame, some of its previously rough edges, the Flats West apparently seeks to create a refined and elegant image. Right now the area is in a middle stage where you are as likely to find boarded up storefronts as high-end wine bars.

While I do not point a finger of blame at the Rock Hall, its inclusion in this process is puzzling. Inside the building visitors are told that rock and roll was born in poverty stricken and marginalized communities and that it has rarely shed its raw, blue-collar image with impunity. Outside, you see posh restaurants and not-so-posh restaurants with posh prices. In other words, this is not the kind of neighborhood where you would expect to meet many of the people the Rock Hall chooses to glorify. The paradox of an institution which, within its walls, claims to celebrate rebellion being in the center of the tangle of consumerism which is downtown Cleveland, in my opinion, reflects all the paradoxes I have mentioned and perhaps reflects the same paradoxes in the rock music industry itself.

Conclusions

Something that has been given much thought in the field of museum studies is the "museum effect." This refers to the aura of importance an artifact, or even an idea, takes on when it is placed in the context of a museum. In the Rock Hall, it is easy to see that visitors might spend time reading a concert poster that would be completely ignored were it pasted to a telephone pole.

Another side of the museum effect, as discussed by cultural scholar Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, is that the visitors' experience with exhibits inside the museum "becomes a model for experiencing life outside its walls" (410). This could be dangerous if we consider the example of the N.O.W. protest I discussed earlier. What particularly struck me is that the museum, which frequently needs to defend itself against charges of glorifying low-brow culture, would think that the lyrics to rock songs could not help shape someone's view of women. Will visitors leave the museum simultaneously thinking that sexism in rock music is meaningless but that the call for rebellion is to be taken seriously?

The answer is probably not. A person's previous experience with rock music will play a large role in how they experience the Rock Hall. For me, discovering rock music (or rather, letting rock music discover me) was a consciousness raising experience. Therefore, there is absolutely no way that the Rock Hall's presentation of rebellion could have entirely pleased me, or anyone who feels similarly. Those visitors who did not have the kind of dramatic experience with rock that I had will most likely leave with a deeper appreciation of – if not respect for – the music. This could result in a different, possibly more open, attitude toward the music in the future.

However, while it is obvious that museum visitors are not dry sponges ready to soak up whatever the museum gives them, I still think that there are some opportunities for visitors to get dangerous meanings

in the exhibits and these should be changed soon. Some relatively minor changes should include a reevaluation of the exhibits that deal with radical social change. This is particularly necessary in the punk rock exhibit in the "Rockin' All Over the World" installation. Punk was and continues to be one of the most direct and radical voices of social change. Concentrating on this rather than where punk started would make the music appear less trivial than the current exhibit presents and would perhaps be more educational.

Another small but important change should be a reorganization of the "Don't Knock the Rock" exhibit that would clear up the apparently mixed message presented there. On the one hand, the name of the exhibit leads the visitor to think that the Rock Hall wants to dismiss the charges presented in the exhibit. However, many other exhibits give me the impression that the objectification and dehumanization of women is not something that the Rock Hall endorses. To clear this up the exhibit should have a less pointed title but the criticisms could be dealt with individually so that visitors understand where the Rock Hall stands on the issues. They have collected a wonderful amount of commentary on rock music ranging from the offensive to the pertinent. Rather than lump all of these things together as general criticism, I think the Rock Hall should be as explicit as possible about what it thinks of these criticisms.

If the Rock Hall is interested in making a more sweeping change, I would recommend a complete restructuring of the museum in such a way that the exhibits are centered around rock music's reactions to various forces in history. Some of these could include war, sexuality, oppression (racism, sexism, ageism, classism), government and economics. This would put the music in a more holistic context than the way it is currently presented. While it is interesting to see what kinds of artifacts came out of different scenes in the "Rockin' All Over the World" it would be interesting to see what forces these scenes were responding to that made them all unique. For example, there is clearly some evidence

in the 1960s era San Francisco exhibit that the music was in some way connected to the Vietnam War, but these connections were not clear enough for the experience to be meaningful. Also, such a plan would help the museum move away from the temptation to glorify everything, a tendency that only adds to the criticism that the museum is a commercial for the music industry.

Despite my many – and, I think, weighty – criticisms, I would not have put forth the effort on this project if I simply wanted to dismiss the Rock Hall. I feel very strongly that these changes should be made because I feel that rock and roll music is one of the few means of expression that, despite the effects of co-option and appropriation, remains a strong voice for subversion. The Rock Hall, perhaps more than any other forum, has the potential to help people see the connection between rock and social critique which is just as critical now as it ever was.

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The Rescue Rush

True Stories of Animal Rescue
By Larry Nocella

How do you describe something as subjective as a rush? Try to describe it and most people will just look at you strangely. Few people understand what gets someone else juiced. But what the hell. I'll try.

When I'm getting my rush, I may be frustrated, annoyed, angry, upset, scared, but one thing I will say is that I feel alive. Really alive. More alive than most times in my life, frankly. My heart is racing, my mind is taxed, my nerve is measured. Everything becomes clear, immediate. I have a mission and everything else must be put aside. After all, someone's life is at stake. I even think I see better during these times. My eyes narrow to a predator-like mode: focused, sharp.

So what is it? What is it that I do that gives me such a rush that I doubt you'll understand?

I rescue animals.

THE RABBIT

I was bumming for no reason at all. It was one of those days everyone has, when they think they're a loser, when they feel like everyone is living a cool life except for you.

I've always been a big believer in making your own adventure, but sometimes I wished one would get planted on me. Sometimes, god listens.

We were driving home from work.

"I think I saw a rabbit on the side of the road," I said.

"Was he dead?" But we both know the answer. I wouldn't have spoken if I thought he was dead.

"I'll turn around," I glance in the rearview mirror. All clear. The car spins in a U-turn.

We drive past on the opposite side of the road, "There!" I say. A rabbit, lying on his side. The wind-wake from an oncoming car makes his ears flop crazily, but I swear I saw him moving earlier. Another severe U-turn and we're on approach. A quick look in the rearview shows no one behind us. It's safe to stop.

We pull up slowly. He doesn't look good. Not at all.

"It's your call."

And there I am. Alive.

NAKED AND ALIVE

There's a lyric from a Peter Gabriel song, "It's only in uncertainty that we're naked and alive." The decision is a tough one: If the rabbit doesn't have any hope, and we pick him up, the stress could kill him, and cause him to die away from his home. If the rabbit does have hope, and we leave him for dead, maybe he could have lived with treatment.

"It's your call."

I was tired. I just wanted to go home. I fought off those urges and tried desperately to be objective. Did the little guy stand a chance? He was thrashing on the ground, twisting in place.

"It looks like his back is broken," I said.

"His eyes are filmed over," my wife (Heather) said.

"Let's leave."

We did.

SECOND GUESSES

Some rescue, huh? Well, those are the tough decisions you make and you live with. It doesn't always go the way you want.

I'm not a professional rescuer, a veterinarian, or even a vet tech. I might even venture to say I'm a little on the boorish side. I don't want to know the god damn details. I want action. I just want to get the animal out of harm's way and to someone who has more patience than me. Someone who knows the details and can help. But it was my layman's call that the rabbit had only moments (hopefully not many in the frigid wind) to

live. Better to leave him near his home (and possibly among hidden loved ones watching, fearful) than let him endure the stress of being picked up and carted away, dying far from home, lonely, afraid, in pain.

Being a hands-on person, I'm often tortured by what-ifs when things don't go my way.

One thing I've learned about reseuing: don't second-guess yourself.

Everything I've learned has been from experience, improvisation and relentless questions.

HAVE TO ACT

Win or lose, after every rescue mission, my mind is flooded with a torrent of philosophy. Why do I do it? Does it do any good? Does god care at all? Is there a god? Am I racking up points? I don't know. I don't care. All I know is, a mammal, like myself, like you, we're mammals, too, was harmed and a stranger tried to alleviate that pain. Surely only by the coldest standards is that worth nothing.

How do I describe that feeling I feel when I'm suddenly thrust into a situation where decisions are simultaneously difficult and crucial? When the pressure is on and in some twisted way, I'm loving it?

I feel alive. Every nerve is surging. First, I have to get the animal. This often involves dodging traffic. Then I have to wrestle with an animal justifiably frightened by humanity. Then I have to get the animal to help. Sometimes, for extra-fun, a crowd of well-meaning but in-the-way onlookers must be handled. Not easy with all the myths surrounding non-human animals: "Don't touch the bird! It's mother will cast it out!" This is a myth. Birds' strengths are hearing and sight, but they generally can't smell very well.

After it's all over, if everything turns out all right, the rush hits me. A wash of primal ecstasy, glory and mental energy. My mind kicks into major philosophy. I feel defiant of ever-present death for a while. Best of all, I feel like a good person, a brave person.

That's a rush.

I can't really describe it more. It's just that I have this feeling. This determination not to be just another shithead who sees hurt and who does nothing. Not to be another drone in a car that sees a wounded animal, and drives past (or over) him or her, and then keeps going past until the remains are washed away by the rain.

I want to react, god damn it.

THE CAT

This cat is either dead, or really stupid for sleeping that close to the roadside. That's what I thought as I kicked the car into reverse, pulling parallel with a curled, furry body. No movement from the cat.

He's gone, I thought. I hit the horn.

He looked up and his eyes opened. Blood covered his chin. I couldn't hear through the closed car window as he meowed at me. Or maybe he was too weak.

"Oh shit," I said. Dead would have been easy. Alive would have been easy, too. He would have just run away. But injured... that's when you score a story.

I leapt out of the car and approached him. Muttering nervously, shaking.

"It's gonna be all right," I said, fearful that lifting him up would hurt him if his back was injured. Gently I lifted him and placed him into the passenger seat.

A rookie-rescuer's favorite question hit me: "Now what?"

I had heard of an animal hospital nearby, but at this early morning hour, they were probably closed. Hell, at this time (around 8 AM) everyone was closed.

How much time did I have?

Okay, assess facts. The animal hospital may be closer, but you don't know where it is. You are absolutely certain you know where your regular veterinarian is, but they're probably closed, too. Choose.

Go with the certainty, I thought. And I sped off. The cat put his head down to sleep.



"Don't go to sleep," I yelled at him, lifting his chin. I recalled reading that people who sleep after severe head injuries sometimes never wake up. I kept driving, kept lifting his head up, looking for a payphone. If I could find a phone, I could call my vet and see if they would accept him. See if they were even open!

I found a phone, but a lady was getting ready to use it.

I stepped out of the car, still shaking, trying not to panic.

"Excuse me," I said to the lady, "I have an injured cat in my car. Can I make a call?" My voice quivered, my body shook. I really really really did not want this cat to die on me.

She looked at me. I remember being struck by the color of her eyes, the stunning blue. The color was alive, but there was no presence behind them. "This is an emergency phone call," she said, turning away.

BULLSHIT! I thought.

I considered shoving her out of the way, but I noticed a car was waiting for her nearby, and if I got into a scrap, that person might come for me, then I'd be fighting two assholes while my charge died.

DO NOT ENGAGE

In any given war movie there's a scene where base is communicating to the fighter pilots. "Do not engage. Repeat. Do not engage." This discipline, however annoying it may be at the time, is invaluable, and does serve the overall strategy. When you're rescuing, you have a mission: get your patient to help. If you take the time to do battle with morons, you'll get tangled in their madness, and you're wasting time.

HELP IN HIDDEN PLACES

I turned away and yelled several variations of fuck this and that, my voice echoing all over the place in the strip mall walkway. I got in my car and sped off, coming unscathed. Sometimes panic just crashes in on you. Across the road was another strip mall, and another phone.

I dialed the operator. "Can you give me the number for Dr. Small at Rolling Hills Animal Care?" (Names are changed to protect privacy.)

"Yes. It's blah blah blah."

"I don't have any money, and I have an injured cat... can you connect me?" I was really freaking now. If this operator was the sister of the lady with the cold blue eyes, I was screwed.

"Sure," she said.

"Thank you."

We both waited, silent, listening to the phone ring.

"Rolling Hills Animal Care."

"Hi. I found a cat in the road. He's bleeding from his chin and doesn't look so good. There were tire tracks in the dirt. I think he was hit by a car. Can I bring him in?"

"Is he your cat?"

"No."

"Do you promise to take full responsibility for him?"

"Yes." I said with complete assurance, brushing aside that annoying reflex, "What about the bill?"

"Bring him in. NOW."

"Thanks," I said. I meant it for the vet and the operator. But she had already hung up. Thanks, wherever you are.

I drove him to the vet. Fortunately, my family had been going to this vet for a while, so I had a good reputation with them. They rushed him in to x-ray. After a while, the vet showed me an x-ray of a cat's chest. The doc said something about swelling and fluid in the lungs and possibilities. All I really caught was the end, "If that happens, we're in trouble. If not, we're okay." All I really understood was that there was a chance. That's all I wanted to know. I went out to my car and cried. I can't tell you why. This is one of the first rescues I remember, though, and maybe at that point, the rush was too much for me.

ALL THAT FUSS OVER AN ANIMAL

If there is one thing I can do without, it's people who when confronted with a news story about an animal rescue, or a story of someone

spending lots of money on an operation to save an animal's life. "This is sick," reads the knee-jerk script, "That people care this much about an animal."

To which I say, "So what?" It's not as though I don't care about people. I do. In fact, I look forward to the time when/if an opportunity arises where I might play a part in rescuing a fellow human animal. That's why I took a CPR course!

Some idiots think that anyone who acts to help animals giggle when confronted with a story of human suffering. That we just roll on the floor with glee. What crap!

Whenever I hear of human suffering, it bums me out. Just like if I linger too long on how many animals are slaughtered each day. No one is going to agree with what acts of kindness are the most beneficial. But I think most would agree that sitting around judging who is doing more worthwhile kindness is kind of stupid. Usually the people doing the judging aren't doing anything to help anyone anyway.

If I see an animal suffering (whether that animal is human or non-human) I will try to help. The experience I have from helping non-humans has taught me the basics of any rescue operation: crowd-control, treatment for shock, the value of preparation, etc. The blanket in my car can be used to scoop up an animal, or cover a human who is suffering from shock.

THE GROUNDHOG

Ironically (or maybe, appropriately) we were coming back from a morning hunt-sab. A groundhog was trying to get over a barrier. Seemed simple enough. We would just herd him to the edge of the barrier so he could scamper into the woods by the roadside. Unfortunately, there was a puddle in his path. He kept turning back and going toward the barrier. Traffic roared only a couple of feet behind us as we kept him pinned on the shoulder, but we were scaring him a bit. I could see him looking to run past us, into traffic. Maybe this wasn't the brightest rescue!

Oh well. We were into it now, and I was determined not to lose. So I got close and picked him up and leapt over the barrier. Like a football player, I tucked him under and arm and ran. I dropped him in the grass and he sat at my feet for a moment and then took off into the brush. Unfortunately, he bit me, and his flat teeth barely broke the skin on my finger.

I AM STUPID

Gloves. Get gloves. Any kind of gloves. I'm sure some are better than others, but any is better than none. ALWAYS use your gloves.

TO THE HOSPITAL

It was such a small wound, I was tempted to ignore it. But then again, I didn't want to wake up one day, foaming at the mouth with rabies, or when the full moon came out, start gnawing on the bedpost (as my father jokingly warned.) So, to be safe, I went to the hospital. I wasn't too upset. This was why I worked at The Corporation: for the medical benefits. Let them pay for something for a change.

As usual, people we came in contact with broke out into three groups: about 70% were silent and kept their opinions to themselves, about 10% did nothing to hide their contempt and 20% were supportive and knew the truth: that an act of kindness is never wasted.

"Do you know where the animal is?" The main nurse (one of the contemptuous crowd) asked.

"No," we both lied, knowing that a rabies test can only be done by testing the brain fluid, which with current high technology involves decapitating the animal. The animal didn't bite me because he was rabid, he bit me because I was a bit over-zealous.

The doctors debated rabies vaccination shots. Should I get them? Herbivores generally don't get rabies, because they'd have to get scratched during a predator attack, and survive, to get it. (I think that's what the doc said — remember, I'm not good with details.) But herbivores don't often survive an attack that gets that close. So the chances were slim that I needed rabies vaccination, but the doctors recommended it.

It sucked. They injected my hand with a bunch of crap until it inflated. It was awful. It was painful and tedious. Then I had to sit for about an hour to make sure I didn't have an allergic reaction. I was told to return for several more in a series of shots for the full rabies treatment.

"Should I go to my main doctor? My primary care physician?" I asked.

"No. You can come back here," the hospital doctor said.

Remember that exchange folks, remember it!

I went back to the hospital each time for my next shot in the series over the course of several weeks. It sucked. I had to wait in the emergency room (sometimes hours) to get a shot that took 10 seconds.

HMO BATTLE

You had to see this coming. So, I collect my mail one day and there's a bill from the hospital saying that my HMO (US Healthcare) won't pay for the rabies shots. Oh boy. Big trouble. I had made several emergency room visits, which add up quick. The total was in the thousands. My wife and I were just starting out and we had so little money. This would just devastate us!

The HMO's charge was that I had not contacted my Primary Care Physician after the incident's emergency had passed. The only ace in the hole I had was the exchange I told you to remember, when the hospital doctor said, "You can come back here."

I called my Primary Care Physician's office, looking to throw myself on their mercy. "Can't you just SAY that I contacted you?"

POWER

This is where I learned a bit of philosophy summed up in this statement: Power always over-extends. I really thought I was screwed. No way would the doctor's office go to bat for me against a huge HMO. I called and explained, nervously, humbly, to the receptionist.

"Don't pay that bill. Whatever you do." She said.

Huh? Was this for real?

"Let me tell you something(" She said. It seems the receptionist had a serious grudge against US Healthcare. Her grandmother, she told me, had been at the doctor's office and they had been unable to get the woman's heart rate down. You need to go to the hospital, they said, and wouldn't call for an ambulance. An elderly woman with an out-of-control heart-rate had to drive herself to the hospital and get checked in. It was some horror story like that. Believable in a nation where profit is worshipped and everything is a drain on profit. She concluded with, "You need someone to give them a hard time. I'll give them a hard time."

I was jubilant. I had a mental image of being this tiny person stepping away from two titans rolling up their sleeves for battle, shaking the earth with their footsteps.

I don't think she was even listening to my thanks she was so infuriated. "Just don't pay the bills," She said. "They'll keep sending them, but don't pay them. Call me every couple of weeks and tell me if you get any more." So I did.

HMOs, being institutions of power, and power inevitably reaching for more power, had over-extended. They had pissed off the people who should be fighting for them, and now their former foot-soldiers were turning on them. I over-laid this template on the destiny of power to many historical events and it seems to me a truth for all time. Power will always over-extend.

Anyway, months went by. Someone (I can't remember who) proposed this. "They keep sending you the bills because they hope you'll get scared and pay it and then they won't be responsible for it. Why not? It's just a few pennies to them to send the letter and they may save thousands." It made sense. Just the sort of slick shit big business would pull. But my hero came through. When I finally got the notice that my HMO had paid the bill, I called and thanked her profusely. I even brought her a thank-you card.

THE CROW

It started at work. I went out for my break, and this crow leapt out of the dumpster and hopped strangely. He seemed to be having trouble flying. I saw him a couple more times and called my vet for advice. Should I try to get him? During the conversation, I learned this bit of rescuer wisdom:

"If he can get away from you with reasonable effort, then he doesn't need your help."

I asked if they would treat a wounded crow. They said yes.

I saw the crow a couple more times, eating out of dumpsters. His condition seemed to be worsening, other people noticed and he would run from them, not fly. He seemed to be walking all the time.

Heather is vastly more well-read than I, and she advised catching a bird by throwing something over him so he wouldn't get scared. I went out and saw the crow, his wing was stretched out, something obviously wrong, and he couldn't fly well at all. My work-pal Kris and I closed on him, holding a blanket to throw over him. He got into the parking lot and though he could barely fly, the sucker was smart enough to hide under cars. It seemed for a moment we had completely lost him, but he made a break for it, and his bad wing kept him low. He crashed on a nearby lawn and I threw the blanket over him.

We carried him to Kris' car and while she drove, I placed the crow on the passenger side floor. You can imagine what his squawking did to our eardrums inside the car. After a while, he calmed. I tried to get him some water, but I couldn't just pour it into his mouth. So I dipped my finger into a water bottle and held it out to him. He nipped at it, as he would an enemy. It hurt, but I did it again. Some water seemed to be getting into his throat.

After a while, he seemed to get the idea.

I figured we'd tell boss later that we had simply decided on a long lunch.

I was new to this area, and unsure where the vet was. I thought I knew from driving past it.

So we pulled up and something told me things weren't right. As we were pulling in, someone in a vet's uniform was pulling out, and we weren't sure who had the right of way on the small driveway. The vet waved angrily for us to pull in.

The door was at the back of the building. It looked like the basement you played in when you still had dreams of being a rock star. Skank-o-licious!

"Uh, hi. I called. I have an injured crow."

"Well, the vet just left and she'll be back in a bit. But she won't treat that crow."

"She won't? But I called."

"Well, you didn't call us."

It occurred to me I had the wrong place. I was unsure where the place I had called was! Damn!

"Will you treat him anyway?"

"No," she said, and then spoke a line I will never forget, surely a classic from Petty Desk Pilots 101: "That crow is the property of the State of Pennsylvania and we cannot treat it."

"Well, then what am I supposed to do? He's hurt!"

Silence.

Of course I wanted to curse at her, do something to release my frustration. But I remembered the patient. Remember the goal. Do not engage. "Can I at least use your phone?"

"Yes." I looked in the phone book. I recognized the number I had called.

"Hello. I have an injured crow." I said, loudly.

"Okay, bring him in."

"So I can bring him in?" I repeated, for all to hear.

"Yes."

"And you'll treat him?"

"Yes. As long as you pay the bills."

"Oh good." I said, "You'll treat him." The Desk Pilot flushed and

turned away.

I asked for directions and hung up.

"Thanks," I said, and left.

Kris was standing outside the car. She would later confess to me that she was afraid of animals in general, afraid of being in the car alone with a crow.

"YOU SUCK!" I screamed out the window as we pulled out of the crappy vet's parking lot. It was a minor deviation from Do Not Engage that made me feel much better.

We got to the good vet and then went back to work. I called Heather and she went to check up on him. She saw them operate. The crow had a golf-ball sized tumor growing under his wing. They removed the tumor. It was a bloody piece of gunk. And before I knew it, we were living with a crow. Oops! I had imagined they would cure him and he'd fly away, but they took a lot of his wing feathers with his tumor.

RESCUE SQUAD ADVISORY

Recently, the mainstream media (Scientific American, April 2000, page 20) has reported on West Nile virus. This virus travels by mosquito and started in New York City killing crows and other birds before it finally started killing humans. Of course, when the disease was killing birds, few people took notice, and seven people lost their lives because of our species' collective ignoring of the fact that life is interconnected. I'm alerting you to this to advise that you probably should stay away from crows. If you're really hard-core, use gloves, but I would call ahead to a place and get advice.

Whenever possible, call someone. Get input. The large, national animal-rights organizations (The Fund for Animals, PETA and the HSUS) have been very helpful. Not necessarily good on immediate help, but if you have time (as I did with the crow) these groups can help you decide whether you should intervene or not. Sometimes you get a person who isn't helpful, but overall those groups have aided us with some much needed advice and experience.

NOTHING PRETTY

In hockey there is a saying that when a team is deep in the playoffs, "There are no pretty goals." I enjoy that statement. It means nothing is going to go right or smoothly. You just have to improvise and be persistent and opportunistic. The situation is so volatile and quick, that you take what handholds you can and get the job done. In a movie (for instance, Backdraft) the rescuer has the baby (it's ALWAYS a baby) under his arm and he's running right at the camera, and there's an explosion behind him (which of course doesn't shoot any debris into his back) and it's just a beautiful slo-mo shot.

Well, that's pure fantasy. There are no pretty rescues. Get the job done. Things won't go your way. Or they might. Nothing is certain. You're naked and alive.

SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

I hope this has all been exciting for you, but it's time to talk reality. I've purposely left out the endings of each of the previous four tales of rescue.

The crow whom we named Cheswald didn't make it. He came back from the vet and seemed to be doing fine. The vet had asked us if we wanted the tumor biopsied. "If it's cancer," the doc said, "It's obviously advanced. He may even be dead before you get the results back." We declined the biopsy. It seemed we were going to be living with a crippled crow who might never fly again. Cheswald liked to go to the window of the bathroom we kept him in so he could look outside. Crows gathered out there. It was fascinating and heartbreaking. They were sympathizing with him, or maybe looking to spring him out. Or perhaps, reading him his last rites.

There was a time when our cat was howling to get into Cheswald's bathroom. After the cat went away, we heard his yowl from inside the room. How did he get in there? We panicked and rushed to the door. It

was Cheswald. We had experienced (and later read) that crows have an ability similar to parrots to mimic sound. After a couple days, we were hoping to find Cheswald a good shelter to care for him.

I went to work one day and Heather called. Cheswald was gone. She found him lying on his cage, passed away. I guess the tumor was cancerous. I wish we had had it biopsied, though. Just to be certain. I'll never look at crows the same. Crows possess an odd, silent magic.

The groundhog. You know about him. He took off.

The cat. Fortune smiled on the little black cat. Whatever dangerous scenario the doc had been referring to involving lungs, swelling and fluid didn't happen. He had his lower jaw wired together and two pins stuck in his leg. He was such a hyper-active freak, that one night the pins broke through his skin and he bled in my lap. Of course, he chose the late night to do this, so we had to call an emergency vet for advice. Fortunately, he stopped bleeding, and we took him to the vet the next day so he could get stitches. The rest is history. Arlo is most eccentric cat I've ever known and he's with me today. The lady with the cold blue eyes haunts only my nightmares.

The rabbit. And you thought "What the hell kind of article is this? Starting with a story of abandoning the rabbit?" Our decision nagged us both. We were scheduled to go out to dinner that night, and on the way back we detoured by where the rabbit had been. To our amazement, the guy was still alive! He was still in the same place and thrashing like his back was broken.

We pulled over and grabbed a blanket. Tossing it over the rabbit, I held him tight. For someone whose back was broken, he sure was strong! We threw him in the car and went home. Then the same old rescuer question:

"Now what?"

One of the things that sucks about being a rescuer is there is no set network, no hospital. Heather suggested we call a wildlife refuge nearby that for some stupid reason, we had never called before. It was a great experience. What a relief to call someone who sounded confident, sure. Of course we could bring the rabbit in!

So we did. It turns out the Schykill Wildlife Rehab Center (SWRC) on the outskirts of Philadelphia is a great place. We had never been there before, but now that we had, what a place! What a relief to finally have a place to go.

It turns out the rabbit didn't have a broken back. "It's just a defense mode," the receptionist/vet told us. She talked about injecting him with steroids to prevent swelling of the brain which might kill him (or something like that — I never catch the details.) All I caught was the percentages. As usual, his chances were unknown. Figure fifty-fifty.

A couple weeks at a time, we called back. They kept saying Patient 345 was "neurological." A concussion. Possible permanent brain damage. He could recover, or could stay like that forever. It made me doubt what we had done. Maybe it would have been better to let him die.

A couple weeks later the SWRC offered tours to the public. After our tour, we asked about 345, fully



(continued next page)

expecting the worst.

Rabbit three-four-five? Recovered. Released.
Success!

QUESTIONS

Why did I wait until the end to tell you each animal's destiny? I wanted you to build expectations. Hopefully you were wrong in guessing about at least one animal's survival or passing. I did this because I wanted to illustrate that you never know what might happen.

When hearing of a rescue, a lot of people respond with, "But you're interfering with nature's law!" as they listen to their CD's, talk on their cell phone and drive away in their air-conditioned car. Sounds to me like someone is trying to rationalize their inaction. But inaction (once action is pondered) is not always a bad thing. Sometimes an animal is best left alone, to recover, perhaps even to die in peace. The problem is, most people don't ponder action. Some people might say, "Gee, if you had just left that crow alone, he would have been fine." I doubt it.

The way I see it, the question is less, "What will happen if I intervene?" and more, "What will I become if I do nothing?"

WHAT IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT

I've had a difficult time writing this article. You can tell it goes every which way, and bounces from philosophy to action to emotion and back again. But that's how it feels. That's the rush. I travel through all those worlds so quickly. I really can't describe it any other way. It just hits me all at once. It's like an enhanced state of consciousness.

It may sound like it's all about me, all about getting my rush, but that's not true at all. I want to be kind. I think kindness is the ultimate defiance of a cold universe. It is far more exciting than someone threatening to kick another's butt, or someone exclaiming some variation of,

"I don't care!" which is where most "excitement" comes from these days. How cliché!

It's not hard to be kind. It takes so little effort. Yet most people, defeated in their souls, don't even use the little effort.

Concerning these rescues, to anyone who has a smart-ass comment that they think is funny and original that I've heard at least ten trillion times, I have nothing to say. I have no comment for anyone who finds it funny that an animal can lie dying on the side of the road while hundreds of people drive by doing absolutely nothing. I stand by silently while Romain Rolland, the Nobel Laureate, speaks for me:

"To one whose mind is free, there is something even more intolerable in the suffering of animals than in the sufferings of humans. For with the latter, it is at least admitted that suffering is evil and that the person who causes it is a criminal. But thousands of animals are uselessly butchered every day without a shadow of remorse. If any person were to refer to it, they would be thought ridiculous. And that is the unpardonable crime. That alone is the justification of all that humans may suffer. It cries vengeance upon the human race. If God exists and tolerates it, it cries vengeance upon God."

I couldn't agree more. If God exists and tolerates humanity's apathy, then He too, is to blame, and when I die, I will walk proudly into Hell, cackling alongside the damned souls of crows.

YOU

This is not a complete list of our rescues. We enter a new chapter now, with the SWRC as a nearby wildlife rescue hospital. No more complete improvisation. Whew! Now, I am no expert at all on anything. I'm just good at getting the animal to safety (usually) and I take a twisted pleasure from the danger sometimes involved.

Hopefully you now want to perform your own rescues. Here's my advice above everything: Plan. Toss some gloves, a blanket and a towel (a box would be helpful, too) in your trunk and forget about them. Call around and find a place that rehabilitates wildlife. Some veterinarians (as you know now) won't touch wildlife. Call around and find a place near your home that will; ask them their policies on such things. Better to have the number set up than call frantic!

Establish a domestic animal rescue center and a wildlife rescue center. I hate research more than anyone, but you'll be glad if you can just drop the animal off somewhere. If you see an injured animal, and you have the time, call the place and talk it over. Ideally, the animal can and will recover and you won't have to do anything. A cell phone is a great tool, also. If you want to talk about things, email me at qece@yahoo.com or write me care of Clamor. Good luck.

RESOURCES

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals <http://www.peta-online.org/> 757-622-PETA (7382)

The Humane Society of the United States <http://www.hsus.org/> 202-452-1100

The Fund for Animals <http://fund.org/home/> (301) 585-2591 or (212) 246-2096

There are a bunch of books on the subject of Wildlife Rehab, but a good one is:

Care of the Wild Feathered & Furred: Treating and Feeding Injured Birds and Animals by Mae Hickman, Maxine Guy, Stephen Levine

In the Philadelphia Area, The Schuylkill Wildlife Rehabilitation Center 304 Port Royal Avenue. (215) 482-8217.



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on kids and chaos

reflections of a day care worker

by scott carrick

Henry's new favorite book is *The Tree*. We found it a couple of days ago and I'll read it to him two or three times a sitting if nothing else gets in the way. I absolutely love the repetition and I can't imagine how great it is for him. For the last couple of months I've been working full time at a day-care center. It's been rather difficult to deal with the way the kids are treated and how I am expected to treat them; it's downright scary when I fall into the authoritarian role assigned to me and I start to act like everyone else.

Everything is rigid and scheduled here- there is no room for creativity, flexibility, or honest interactions between adults and kids or kids and kids. No room for the empowering sense of being able to make decisions for oneself, to come up with ideas and be able to realize them. In other words, there's no room for real people, real kids. No room for the human brain. There's only room for kids who know how to "do a work" when it's time to "select a work" and wash hands when the big people say so (which is about a hundred times a day). There's only room for kids who can lie quietly on their mats when "nap time" comes. There's only room for kids who learn that a basket can under no circumstances be a hat, and that "those blocks are for building, not holding in the air." No room is allowed for a kid who wants to lay on his mat and inspect his toes or experiment with his lips and tongue. If it's nap time and someone asks a question of one of the adults, they usually get the silent treatment or are told to "zip your lips and close your eyes." Thus they learn that their curiosity is only valid in certain designated situations. If it's Monday morning music time, and Jenna gets bored and decides to play with a puzzle instead, she is dragged back and forced to sit next to an adult. The adult pretends to enjoy the same old stale songs and rocks back and forth with an exaggerated, fake smile that two-year old Jenna can't understand. "Can't he just work quietly on something else if he isn't interested in the music?" I ask after being instructed to retrieve Killia yet again. "No, he needs to understand that right now it's time for music."

But what does all this teach? Most obvious to me is that these kids are learning how to function in a totalitarian system. They are learning that when "someone in power" says to do something, you either do it right away or learn how to stall (pretend to be interested in something or develop a habit like thumb-sucking: something to do when you are faced with a difficult, unreasonable situation) as long as possible and wear out the authority figure's nerves until he or she is on the verge of strangling you. The adult concludes that "I just can't deal with kids," as if kids themselves are somehow the source of the problem, and gives up on any interaction with humans who haven't yet learned how to suppress their instincts. Kids are convinced that all adults are evil and adults are convinced that all kids are hopeless. And so it goes: the adults punishing the kids for being inquisitive, confident and strong (ironically, these are the same attributes this child care center claims to encourage in the kids) and the kids internalizing this, learning that they must con-



He needs to play freely and be allowed to get dirty.



Be sure your baby has room and opportunity for free movement and exploration.



By asserting himself, he gains the sense of being an individual.

stantly deny their desires. We pretend that we are simply helping them to understand the "natural consequences" of their actions when we carry out our arbitrary punishments.

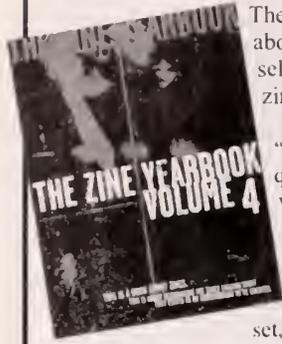
However, natural lessons or consequences are completely different from what we learn in such authoritarian environments as school. All the growth that comes from experience and unmediated curiosity is natural, whereas being pinned to the mat by a huge adult and forced to go to sleep is a deliberate, calculated, rubbing-her-face-in-the-dirt, truly artificially imposed situation. The most important lesson of each and every day is that they are incapable of understanding their bodies or making the most basic decisions.

I'd say that this is the most prominent theme of this place: you are unable to think for yourself and if it weren't for us you'd be worthless and hopeless forevermore.

I really have to wonder: If a 4-year-old is outside, running, learning, living (and no, not hurting or even bothering anybody else), why on earth would anybody disrupt this? And yet, one mild morning I am witnessing one of the teachers restraining Keenan, who is throwing a tantrum because he is being prevented from engaging in play. He doesn't want to put on the sweater that she is holding in front of his face while repeating, "we wear our sweaters outside, Keenan. Time to put on your sweater!" I'm walking by and she puts on her fake-excited look and says in a grossly exaggerated voice, "Ooooh look, Keenan, here's Scott! I bet he'll help you put on your sweater!" She is expecting me to get all crazy and entertaining and deceive him into putting on his sweater. I've become pretty well-known for my high level of energy and playfulness with the kids. She wanted me to distort this predisposition of mine into authoritarian manipulation, confuse him with word trickery while employing an "I'm wacky! We'll make a game out of it!"

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Email: choosethehuey@hotmail.com

attitude. "Why does he have to put on his sweater?" I asked. She was shocked and disappointed and he and I ran away to get on with life.

So, I always change diapers right before nap, and Henry's been taking *The Tree* to the diaper table every day, where he looks at the pictures and makes me promise to read it to him when he goes to his mat. The story starts with the tree that grew in the heart of the forest, then the frog singing in the tree that grew in the heart of the forest, then the snake looking for the frog singing in the tree that grew in the heart of the forest, and it goes on and on, with the tamarinds, the monkey, the toucan, the panther, the sloth (Henry has decided that he and I are sloths), the beetle, the seed, and finally the new sapling. Each page makes the list longer and longer and by the end it's a huge recital, complete with intricate hand gestures for each one. I live for the reading of *The Tree*. On Friday the "lead teacher" got to Henry while I was still changing diapers so I had to "help" someone else go to sleep. He sat there for a second and then said, "No no n-n-n-n-n-no Scott read this tree book to me on my mat." She says, "Okay, Henry, I can read this book to you." I think to myself that it'll be okay- she won't do all the special voices and hand motions that have evolved over the many times we've read it, but at least he'll get to hear the story. I'm telling this to myself when I suddenly sense that it's moving way too fast; she's already at the toucan. It is with horror that I realize that she is only reading the new animal on each page, instead of reading all of their names and creating the huge procession like it's meant to be done.

"This is the beetle."

"This is the seed."

"This is the sapling."

"The end"

-silence-

"No no no no no no no you list all the animals, Tammy!"

"The story is over; it's time to lay down on your mat and go to sleep, Henry."

"Nonononono....."

"My words were clear, Henry."

He starts crying and collapses into his mat in despair and confusion.

"I can see that you are very tired, Henry."

Stuff like this happens all the time, and it's not always me watching in disgust as someone else does it. Way too often I find myself carrying a screaming kid to his or her mat for nap; or saying, "I can see that you are finished," and throwing away someone's food when he or she is having fun with it instead of acting civilized; or closing a book that someone has been reading because it's time to wash hands. I can see the confusion in their eyes when I carry out these "lessons" or whatever they're supposed to be, and every once in a while I snap and lay off the power trip and let them be for the rest of the day as long as they aren't scratching each other's eyes out (not uncommon).

I'm quitting in about two weeks and I can't wait to meet little kids in a healthier environment and be honest with them. I imagine how much happier my co-workers would be if they were just encouraged to accept and appreciate the chaotic nature of little kids (and, deep down inside, their very own selves) and welcome them into the world of wonder and joy that they can see everywhere. Little kids can be pretty inspiring and heartwarming, but I can't imagine how much we could learn from them if we just let them explore and come to us with questions or dirty diapers. I see little glimpses of these possibilities everyday and they are so often destroyed. All I can think about is the world that's waiting for us all when we can come to embrace the chaos.

living with endometriosis

tracy bosworth

How many women out there suffer from menstrual cramps every once in a while?

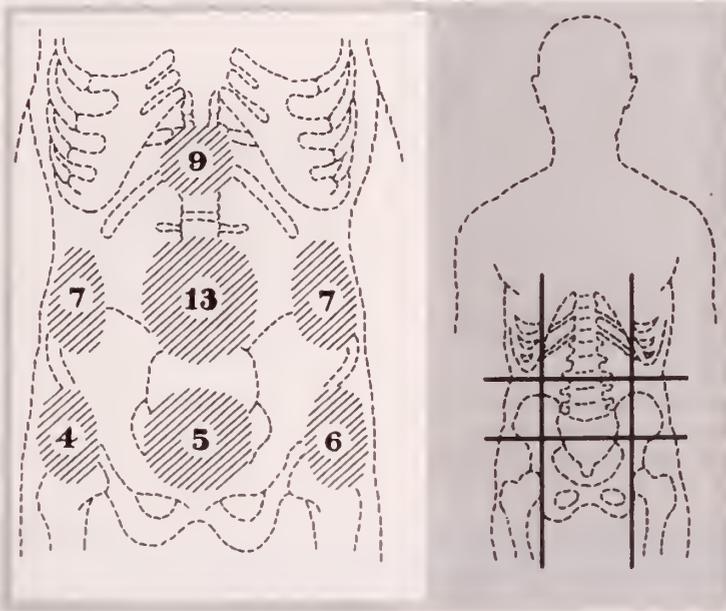
How many know that familiar griping pain in the belly? For some women this is barely a problem, and for others it is a mild inconvenience, causing a few hours discomfort every once in a while. For others it can be hugely disruptive, leading to lost time at work or school each month, with pain so intense that they can barely get out of bed. The cramps can be so bad as to make some women nauseous or faint, or unable to lie still without crying out, no matter how many painkillers they take. Even now in these enlightened times many women are being encouraged to put up with such pain in silence; being told that this is just a woman's lot and that they must grit their teeth and bear it. They are being told this by their mothers, their friends and even their doctors. Some of these women may well be suffering from a condition called endometriosis without even knowing it.

Endometriosis affects one in ten women, making it one of the most common diseases on the planet. More prevalent than cancer, more widespread than AIDS. Granted, endometriosis is not a fatal illness, but its chronic and debilitating nature can have an enormous impact on the life-quality of sufferers and their families. A conservative estimate of women affected has been given at 90 million worldwide, yet how many people have even heard of the condition? I am writing this article with a view to increasing awareness of this enigma, and to highlight some of the questions it raises about the medical establishment at the beginning of the twenty first century. I'll begin by telling you my story.

My History

Period pain has been a part of my life ever since I began menstruating, but I was about 17 years old before I realised that none of my friends seemed to be experiencing anything like the level of discomfort that I was going through each month. I spent hours and hours in pain so bad that I was unable to even lie still in bed, let alone walk. I'd feel sick and dizzy to the extent that my eyes would roll up in their sockets and I'd frequently be reduced to tears. I tried every painkiller you could buy over the counter and none gave even the slightest relief, but for a long time I just accepted this as normal, went to bed with a hot water bottle and waited until the pain passed. I was embarrassed to let my family see me in this state, worried that they would think I was making a big deal out of nothing; not wanting to worry them over something as trivial as

Abdominal Pain—In each part of the abdominal area there are a number of different structures that may be the cause of pain (left). The precise location of pain is important in determining the possible cause. The illustration (right) shows how doctors divide the abdomen into sections. In the upper section, reading from left to right, are the right hypochondriac region, epigastric and left hypochondriac. In the center section, reading from left to right, are the right lumbar, umbilical and left lumbar. In the lower section, left to right, are the right inguinal, hypogastric and left inguinal.



stomach cramps. Eventually, I went to see the local general practitioner. At

first he tried to dismiss me, telling me that menstrual discomfort was not unusual in girls my age, but one day I turned up at his surgery almost passing out because of the pain I was feeling. He referred me to a specialist immediately. The gynaecologist was a fat, pompous middle-aged man. He told me that my symptoms sounded a lot like endometriosis but I was way too young to have the condition as it was only found in women over thirty. He told me that he would offer me a hysterectomy if I were older, but as it was things would probably be better if I had a baby. He gave me some strong painkillers and sent me home.

Rather taken aback by all this, I didn't make a fuss, I just took my tablets and kept my head down. But the painkillers didn't work, and neither did any of the others my doctor offered. Eventually I was passed on to another

gynaecologist, not quite as fat but equally as pompous, who left me in tears after every meeting. My appointments were more like a cross-examination than anything else: Are you absolutely certain you have no bowel trouble? Is the pain worse on the left or right side? You have pain mid-cycle too? Every time she interrogated me I felt like I was somehow to blame for the pain I was in, inconveniencing everyone when my symptoms refused to fit neatly into set categories. Nevertheless she admitted me to hospital for an exploratory operation and D&C.

So I ended up on a ward full of middle-aged women with all manner of gynaecological problems, and no matter how nice the nurses were, I was still made to feel like my problems really weren't all that bad. After the operation, I was told that some endometriosis had been found but that it would probably go away on its own. I was told that perhaps that wasn't the cause of my pain anyway, given some stronger narcotic painkillers and released from hospital. But unsurprisingly the problem did not just go away on its own and so several years later I was readmitted to hospital for another operation, whereby some of the endo cysts were actually removed. In true National Health Service (NHS) style, one of my veins was irreparably damaged in the process and I was kicked out of hospital while still woozy from the anaesthetic, with nurses suggesting that my mother collect a pay-and-display wheelchair from reception as it wouldn't look good to have me collapsing in the corridors on my exit. Service with a smile for the Health Service, as per usual.

But *still* the pain persisted, and I was advised to try hormone therapy; this being something all endometriosis sufferers simultaneously hope for and dread. The regular ingestion of a bunch of synthetic hormones into my body resulted in six months of acne, extreme lethargy and mood-swings so crazy I never knew how I was going to feel from one hour to the next. None of which helped the pain very much, but at

... that gave me some other things to worry about for a while. Which ... about brings us up to the present day, eight years after my initial trip to the doctors, and I still don't know why I am in so much pain or what I can do about it.

The Doctors

My story is in no way unusual: the average diagnosis time for endometriosis is approximately seven to ten years. Read that back again: seven to ten *years*. That's seven to ten years of debilitating pain on a monthly basis for millions of women. Seven to ten years of worrying about what is wrong with your body, of fighting for recognition that you are not imagining this pain, of wondering if you are maybe going crazy. I've heard so many stories of women in exactly the same position as I am; having numerous laparoscopies, trying countless different hormone treatments and receiving next to no positive help or support from the medical establishment throughout all of this. Perhaps I am being overly-cynical, but I can't help but wonder if scientists might be dedicating a little more time, money and energy into researching endometriosis if one tenth of all men were suffering from this chronically painful disease.

One thing you learn pretty early on is that doctors often know little more about the condition than you do; in fact with a bit of research you can probably learn more than they know. We live in an age where the authority and abilities of the medical establishment are widely accepted. We grew up taking for granted that when things go wrong with our bodies, medical science will hold the answers as to why and what to do about it. The problem is that doctors *don't* have all of the answers. They just don't like admitting that. Knowledge about endometriosis is developing so fast that a lot of the theories that they learned at medical school have long since been disproved, if they are even aware of the condition at all: I remember reading about one woman who was placed in hospital isolation for six days having been told that she had contracted a rare tropical disease, before it was discovered that she actually had endometriosis.

Nevertheless, *experts* don't take too kindly to being contradicted: quite often you find yourself in a frustrating position of knowing that the 'facts' you are being told with such authority are no longer considered to be correct, but being in a powerless situation there is very little that you can do to challenge this. You don't want to go making enemies out of the few people who might possibly be able to help you. You don't want those medical notes to label you as 'difficult'. So I have found myself deliberately 'dumbing down' to ingratiate myself on more than one occasion, listening politely while specialists hid behind a shield of paternal authority and fed me oversimplified explanations and 'facts' which I *know* not to be true.

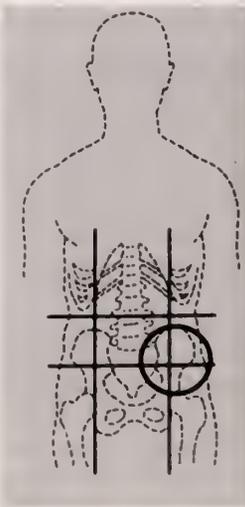
As well as being outdated, many medical assumptions surrounding the illness are also based on sexist suppositions: the way doctors conceptualise the condition says a lot about their perceptions of women. The most obvious example of this is their failure to take women's initial complaints seriously; their insinuations that the pain cannot be *that* bad or, even worse, that it is all in the woman's mind. A large proportion of endometriosis sufferers are dismissed upon their first visit to the doctor, told that their symptoms are normal, or even made to question whether these symptoms may just be psychosomatic. All of which substantiates the numerous pieces of feminist research looking into the trivialisation of women's medical problems; how women are frequently dismissed as neurotic, or viewed as delicate, feeble creatures with low pain thresholds. If women are lacking in assertiveness or

knowledge, they may well be put off at this point from seeking further medical help.

The Facts

The fact that endometriosis is generally described as a *reproductive* problem is also indicative of the mindset of the medical establishment: it is true that 30 to 40 percent of endometriosis sufferers will become infertile if left untreated, but many women's cysts may not effect their reproductive capacity at all and they may view their condition more in terms of the pain they suffer. One survey found that over three quarters of respondents experienced pain throughout their menstrual cycle, yet doctors frequently refuse to acknowledge pain occurring at any time other than menstruation as significant, or even related to the endometriosis at all. Gynaecologists often tell women that the condition is found most often in those who delay childbirth into their thirties, giving an implicit warning: if you choose to embark upon a career rather than starting a family then it's your own fault if you develop this problem. I have lost count of the number of times I have been told that my troubles would probably disappear if I just got pregnant; not the most constructive news to tell someone suffering from a condition whereby having children may be impossible. The reality of the situation is that pregnancy may help some women, but others find it of no use, with their cysts returning after childbirth. Although it may be true that pregnancy temporarily alleviates the problem, what is objectionable is the manner in which some women are made to feel guilty and because they are not ready to settle down and have families.

The idea that a family life will be the answer to all of our problems is largely supported by the myth that endometriosis is a career woman's disease, being disproportionately found in thirty-something, childless, white middle-class women. As far as I can tell, this outdated idea must result from the discrepancy between those who complain of endometriosis symptoms and those who are eventually diagnosed with the condition. And herein lies the key to the myth: if being taken seriously and avoiding insinuations of neurosis requires persistence and assertiveness, is it any surprise that those traditionally considered to be the sole sufferers were white middle class women, that great bastion of *grrrl* power at the forefront of the women's movement, holding an admittedly privileged position of power? Who do you think is more likely to pressure their doctor into an acknowledgement of their condition? A sixteen year old schoolgirl? A twenty year old mother, scared of being seen as 'pushy'? Or a thirty year old career woman, more used to negotiating and getting what she wants?



So now let's do the math: Tradition says that women rarely have endometriosis until they are in their thirties, yet diagnosis takes about a decade. Which means that many of those 30-year-olds have probably been suffering since their late teens, but could not gain a formal diagnosis until much later. And because they were only diagnosed officially at this late stage, they too have become one of the thirty-something case studies used to perpetuate the myth.

Similar arguments can be used along class and racial lines too: is it unsurprising that a large proportion of those diagnosed with endometriosis first appeared to be middle class women, brought up with certain expectations of their (privately funded) healthcare? It used to be thought that black women could not develop endometriosis at all,

perhaps due to the fact that they have traditionally been in a less powerful position to insist that their pain be treated seriously, and as a result may have lower expectations of the medical establishment. And

just like before, because it is harder to be diagnosed as an endo sufferer if you are black, more cases may remain undiagnosed and the statistical 'facts' remain unchanged. This is all a gross over-simplification I know, but I'm sure you get my point: the fact that white careerwoman get diagnosed most frequently may have less to do with their proportion among sufferers and more to do with their ability to challenge the authority of their general practitioner and push for further tests and treatment. Once again, it comes down to who can shout the loudest.

And so, with all of these factors combined, it is any wonder that I sometimes have to fight hard to remember that me and the gynaecologists are playing on the same team. Sometimes I get so caught up in battling to be taken seriously and understood that it feels like I'm fighting against the medical establishment rather than alongside it.

My Life

I think that if writing is to be of any importance it has to come from the heart, from things we know and care about, from things that affect our lives. And endometriosis has a tremendous impact on my life. I didn't write this article to gain sympathy: I've pretty much come to terms with this condition and I don't often get down about it now. There's much worse things that I could be suffering from. I wrote this because I wanted to seek recognition for the thousands of women out there who are frequently in a lot of pain, some much worse than I am, and getting a raw deal from the medical establishment and maybe also from ignorant friends, family and colleagues. I wanted to increase empathy and understanding of this illness and its frequently unacceptable

medical treatment, about which so many women are expected to just keep quiet and not complain.

I also wanted to raise awareness in case anyone reading this suffers from extreme pelvic pain but has not considered that she may have endometriosis: all those women who are being told that their pain is just a normal part of being a woman when it's not. What I don't want is to scare every girl out there with menstrual cramps into thinking that she has this bewildering incurable condition which might make her infertile. However, if there are people out there who suspect that what they are going through is more than the usual 'women's lot' then it can be tremendously empowering to know that your condition isn't normal; it has a name, support groups and people fighting to find a cure. If endo is caught early enough then its damage can be limited and chances of infertility can be reduced. This can only be achieved through better education and an increase in assertiveness on the part of women. I hope that I have achieved at least some of those goals, and I hope that sometime soon there will be a cure for this disease so that articles like this will become obsolete.

The Disease

What is endometriosis?

Endometriosis is a condition whereby pieces of the womb lining—the endometrium—are found implanted in the abdomen. These cysts can attach themselves to any nearby organs: the ovaries, the bladder, the bowel, or in rare cases they may even travel further afield within the body. Just like regular womb lining, these implants react to a woman's hormones, and when the woman menstruates the cysts

in the news

Unless you have personally encountered a trip to the gynaecologist, it is easy to underestimate the widespread extent of the reproachable attitudes that I discuss in this article. It would be easy to dismiss my story as an unfortunate one-off, but the briefest look at the British media will tell you that this isn't the case. In June 2000 alone, two eminent gynaecologists have been brought to trial or struck off the medical register on the grounds of professional misconduct.

Richard Neale is currently being charged with "clinical incompetence and professional negligence," having been practicing in the UK for 14 years despite having previously been struck off in Canada. He is accused of performing operations without consent, some of which were unnecessary. Other operations he conducted are alleged to have been of a substandard quality, and he is also charged with failing to inform patients' GPs of complications resulting from his surgery. Mr. Neale is also accused of falsifying his Curriculum Vitae, claiming to have worked at hospitals which do not even exist, and to have received gynaecological medals which were never awarded. He is currently being sued by 60 women who claim to have been left in pain, or even with organ damage, after he operated on them.

One case in particular stands out: the court has heard how Mr. Neale dismissed a woman with a history of endometriosis as simply having "ovulation pains." Eventually he recommended a hysterectomy, after which he commented that she had the worst case of endometriosis that he had ever seen. The woman reminded Mr. Neale

that she had been complaining about these pains for four years, whereupon he became "very arrogant." Upon requesting the return of her medical notes, Mr. Neale is alleged to have shouted in her face that she would live to regret it if she brought a lawsuit or made any official complaint against him, following her out onto the street while screaming abuse. Mr. Neale admits 37 charges and denies the rest.

Earlier in the month, Rodney Ledward was struck off for bungling operations on 13 women, with six people dying after he operated upon them and over 200 patients saying that he has ruined their lives. Mr. Ledward does not even recognise some of their names, and argues that he has "made errors like everyone else... but... you may find you have a similar picture in very many of my colleagues." This claim is being rigorously denied by the NHS, although there are questions to be answered as to why Mr. Ledward was allowed to continue working for so many years. A similar question is still being asked about Harold Shipman, the British doctor convicted earlier this year of murdering 15 patients, and alleged to have killed several hundred more throughout his career.

Clearly, all is not well in the British health service: officials have been turning a blind eye for too long on the substandard practice of a number of their specialists, a disconcerting number of whom seem to work in the field of gynaecology. A recent report by Jean Richie QC suggests that a climate of fear and intimidation within the NHS has led to consultants being treated as "gods."

also try to shed blood, but because this blood has nowhere to go it causes swelling and inflammation. These blood cells can themselves then go on to form further implants, and thus the problems spreads. As the condition progresses, the cysts can get larger and larger, or they can cause internal organs to get attached to one another. Without treatment, 30 to 40 percent of endometriosis sufferers eventually become infertile.

What does it feel like?

So what does all this actually feel like? Once again, this is a very subjective thing, and almost impossible to explain to anyone who hasn't felt it. When talking about pain, people will usually try to relate it to something they themselves have experienced. Does it feel like does it feel like period pains? Kind of. Is it like when you eat a dodgy curry? No, not at all. All I can say is that it is an incredibly intense feeling: some women have said that childbirth and recovering from hysterectomy were easy in comparison to the pain they suffered with their endometriosis.

To make things even more complicated, endometriosis does not trigger the same experiences in all women. Many experience excruciating pain, but some others feel little or none. Interestingly, the amount of pain is not linked to the size or amount of cysts a woman has: some women have endometriosis so microscopic it can only just be detected, yet this causes them intolerable pain. Meanwhile, other women do not even know they have endometriosis at all until they are surgically investigated for some other condition, whereupon doctors find that they have huge cysts of which they had no awareness. Some women experience pain only around the time of their period, whereas others have pain throughout the month. Furthermore, if cysts have attached themselves to other internal organs this can result in other symptoms such as painful sex or pain on going to the toilet, which can confuse doctors into believing that the woman has a urinary complaint or suffers from IBS. In all fairness, it isn't surprising that diagnosis isn't always an easy process when women display such a variety of symptoms.

What causes endometriosis?

The simple answer is that nobody really knows. There are a number of different theories around, but none of them seem to fully explain the condition. For a long time it was thought that retrograde menstrual bleeding was to blame for the problem: when women have periods their menstrual tissue is flushed out of the vagina, but perhaps some of the cells are pushed back along the fallopian tubes and out in to the abdomen. However, recent research has shown that almost all women experience retrograde bleeding to a certain extent, and seeing as most women don't develop endometriosis, something else must also be responsible.

Another possible explanation is that the condition has something to do with the immune system: women with endometriosis tend to suffer disproportionately from immune system disorders such as allergies and infections. This may also be linked to environmental factors, such as the ingestion of dioxins (found in meat and fish, and at lesser levels in tampons and also in the air we breathe). Among their other shortcomings, dioxins have been found to effect the immune system, and in one study, 79 percent of monkeys exposed to dioxins developed endometriosis.

Lastly, it has been argued that endometriosis may be caused by the high levels of estrogen within women's bodies. In her latest book *The Whole Woman*, Germaine Greer discusses the detrimental effects which rising levels of artificial oestrogen may have upon female bodies, and perhaps this is also linked to endometriosis: certainly, when estrogen levels are reduced, many women find their

symptoms disappear, and there have been rare cases where men have developed endometriosis having been treated with oestrogen after prostate surgery.

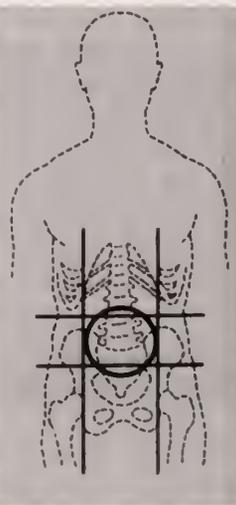
Overall then, we are left with all number of theories as to what causes this condition, none of which has been proven. The problem with this is that until we know what causes endometriosis, it is pretty much impossible to prevent it or find a lasting cure.

How is endometriosis diagnosed and treated?

Endometriosis can only be properly diagnosed through a medical procedure known as a laparoscopy. This is a bizarre operation whereby doctors make an incision in your bellybutton and blow you full of air, so that they can get a good look at what is going on in your abdomen. While this isn't exactly a pleasant operation and it can take a month or so to return to full fitness, it is at least done under general anaesthetic, and quite often doctors can burn away any endometriosis they see on their travels with a laser. If large amounts of treatment are necessary, a larger incision may be necessary which will of course take longer to heal. In extreme cases, hysterectomy (removal of the uterus) may be the only option, and even this is not a surefire cure, as the endometriosis may return anyway. With smaller types of endometriosis however, it is not possible to remove the cysts with surgery and women are often required to undergo hormone therapy in an attempt to eradicate the disease. This is where the real fun begins.

Hormone therapy comes in three types, all of which attempt to mimic natural situations where the body's estrogen levels are reduced. There are hormones that exchange the oestrogen for testosterone, thus make your body more masculine, which can have long-term side effects such as encouraging male hair-growth patterns, the enlargement of the clitoris, a decrease in breast size and a permanent deepening of the voice. Then there are hormones that fool your body into thinking it is pregnant by increasing your progesterone levels. This bunch don't seem to have any long-term effects, but can be hugely disruptive in the short-term, causing moodswings, weight gain, acne and nausea. Lastly, there are hormones that bring about a pseudo-menopause and are hellish to live with, causing hot flashes, memory loss, dizziness and all the other symptoms associated with the real thing. None of these treatments are very pleasant, yet most women with endometriosis actively seek out such options because they at least offer a slight hope of light at the end of the tunnel. For some women these treatments are very helpful, while for others they offer no respite whatsoever. For many others, they are useful as long as the treatment continues, but as soon as the drugs run out, the cysts start coming back and the pain returns.

Quite often, the best that can be done for endometriosis sufferers is the creation of a pain management regime, although even this is not as simple as it may seem. Unfortunately, the level of pain suffered with endometriosis is frequently too severe to be aided by over the counter medicine, and so many women find themselves trying to persuade their doctors to prescribe stronger painkillers, ranging from fairly mild analgesics to narcotic substances like codeine and valium. Obviously, convincing doctors to prescribe such drugs on a long-term basis for a condition which they may believe to be 'all in the mind' anyway can be a bit tricky at times. But quite why anyone would choose to take such drugs if they weren't absolutely necessary is beyond my comprehension: many cause headaches, sleeplessness or drowsiness, nausea, diarrhoea or constipation, and in taking them you end up on a merry-go-round of pain and painkiller side-effects so that you never really know if you are feeling a primary or secondary level symptom. The fact that women are prepared to deal with these things



through choice is another indication of how bad the pain of endo can be without medical intervention.

Self help

Having become disillusioned with the medical establishment, many endometriosis sufferers have now resorted to a certain level of D.I.Y.—do it yourself—healthcare. By this I don't mean that we have all taken to applying funny smelling poultices to our bodies and swallowing foul-tasting herbal concoctions every few hours, but rather we have come to appreciate that we may be able to learn more from each other than from the medical establishment. While working alongside doctors for conventional treatment, many women also use support groups to aide their understanding of the condition. These groups can be geographically located, or more frequently these days, web-based.

Support Groups

It may sound a little namby-pamby to suggest that endometriosis sufferers require support groups: one notorious doctor did initially scorn the idea, asking whether there would soon be a group for people with fallen arches too. But having attended meetings he soon realised their importance to many women: group members can support one another and teach each other coping skills, as well as discussing the various treatment options and their pros and cons. They can help women find a good doctor, and give them confidence by challenging the myths so commonly perpetuated within the traditional medical system. More important than anything though, support groups can end many women's feeling that they are the only one suffering with the condition: the lack of public awareness and the lukewarm attitude of the medical establishment can be devastating to women's self-esteem, and simply talking about their experiences with others who have been there too can be incredibly helpful.

A good diet (for all women)

Many women are also trying to lessen their problems through natural remedies such as diet and exercise. And while these suggestions may be useful for those with endometriosis, they are equally applicable to those who experience more manageable menstrual cramps. For example, if we accept that high levels of oestrogen are connected to endometriosis, it may be wise for sufferers to cut out foods which exacerbate this production, but even among women *without* endo, cutting down on oestrogens may be a wise idea: high oestrogen levels have also been linked to that horrible bloatedness and fluid retention which some women suffer from around the time of their period. Similarly, there are certain foodstuffs which can aggravate the pain of endometriosis due to the muscle-contracting hormones they contain, and a lot of the same rules apply to women suffering from a more tolerable level of premenstrual stomach cramps.

The primarily rule of endo-friendly nutrition sounds remarkably similar to that of any self-respecting vegetarian: meat = bad, vegetables = good. However, in this context we are not basing this judgement on any ethical arguments, but purely on chemical content. Most meat and dairy produce contain high levels of saturated fat, which is arguably quite unhealthy in any circumstances but especially so if you suffer from period pains. Saturated fat contains certain hormones which cause your muscles to contract, which isn't such a great idea if you're already suffering from cramps. Saturated fat also places stress on the liver, making it more difficult to break down excess oestrogen in the body. Furthermore, meat can also contain quite high levels of dioxins, which have been linked to endometriosis as well as a whole bunch of other medical conditions including some cancers. If you cannot cut meat out of your diet, it may be wise to at least switch to

organic produce as this should reduce the amount of pesticides and dioxins to which the meat will have been exposed. And if you can't switch to a totally vegetarian diet then fish is also far less problematic than meat as it does not contain anywhere near the same levels of saturated fat, instead containing fatty acids that actually help to *relax* your muscles. (If you prefer not to eat fish for ethical reasons, these fatty acids can also be found in many nuts).

As well as containing less saturated fat, a vegetarian diet may also help combat endo in other ways. Fresh fruit and vegetables are undoubtedly the best source of many of the nutrients and vitamins which can help to alleviate the symptoms of premenstrual cramps and endo. The high levels of calcium and magnesium found in many vegetables both act as natural tranquillisers, which can help to relieve that spasmodic crampy type of pain. Similarly, food with high levels of potassium (such as bananas and raisins) can help with the fatigue which many women also suffer from at this time, as well as reducing bloating and fluid retention. If it is the case that endo is somehow linked to the immune system, then it is important that women get enough vitamin C, which can be found in fruit such as oranges and pineapples as well as vegetables like cauliflower and sweet potatoes. The herbal supplement Echinacea is also well worth investing in: this can be found cheaply in most healthfood stores and I personally am a firm believer in its properties – not only may it help the fight against endo, but you can pretty much kiss goodbye to winter colds too!

Eating plenty of fruit and vegetables can also provide an easy way of reducing your body's oestrogen levels, as many contain bioflavonoids - a kind of plant oestrogen which naturally regulates itself in a woman's body – if she has too little oestrogen (after the menopause for example) then bioflavonoids can boost these levels, yet when she has too much oestrogen, intake of these plant hormones lessens the body's production. Smart huh? Bioflavonoids can be found in most soy products such as tofu and also in citrus fruits, and if you eat fish this can also be a good source.

The power of exercise and relaxation

Much as it pains me to say it, exercise can also help alleviate the symptoms of endo and premenstrual cramps. I'm sure I'm not the only one out there who remembers trying to get out of gym classes at school because of period pains, only to have their gym teacher tell them that exercise was a good way to combat the pain. Of course, this depends a great deal on how extreme your pain is: if you are having problems standing up then a five-mile jog may well be out of the question, and even with regular period pains strenuous exercise is often the last thing you feel like doing. Nevertheless, gentle stretching exercises can be very beneficial as they help the blood to circulate around the pelvic area, getting the body's natural painkillers to where they need to be, as well as relaxing the muscles and helping with cramps.

Yoga and simple stress-relieving meditations can also help, even if they just take you 'out of your body' and focus your mind somewhere other than the pain for a little while. Visualisations, affirmations and positive thinking can also be useful: I read one book which suggested repeating over and over "my uterus is a normal shape and size" and "I have light to moderate bleeding" which made me chuckle a bit, but I have found it useful to repeat less specific affirmations, telling myself out loud that I *can* cope with the pain and that it *will* go away eventually. This may be the last thing I feel like saying at the time, but just repeating it over and over prevents me dwelling on the negative emotions that extreme pain can often inspire, as these negative thoughts can increase stress, which in turn increases muscle tension and cramps, thus creating a vicious circle of more and more pain. And ultimately, such affirmations are true: the pain *does* end, and we *can* cope. ¶

kenya

I have wanted to go to Africa for six years.



My name is Vique Martin and I am 28-years-old. I have wanted to go to Africa for six years. I finally realised that ambition with a trip to Kenya and Tanzania. For me one of the main goals was to see real lions [a minor obsession of mine]. The best place to see them is on the plains of the Serengeti. So, I went there, finally. First was a week in Kenya, then a week in Tanzania. I inherited the money to go when my mother died five years ago. This was my "Africa money" and no matter how broke I got I refused to dip into it. It took a long time until I found a friend who had the funds to make such a trip. When I finally found someone, I jumped at the chance. We plotted and planned for a month, bought our tickets, and flew off to Africa two months after that. The whole trip cost around \$2500. All you need is a friend to travel with, a Rough Guide/Lonely Planet book and the dough. The rest is up to you. I have split the writings up into two parts. This is part one, about Kenya. Part two will be in the next issue and will be about Tanzania.

As I look out of the aeroplane window the first thing I see through the clouds is Mount Kenya. Huge and majestic, it gives me some confirmation of the magnitude and beauty of this continent. Less than an hour later I'm spinning through the countryside in a taxi bound for the city of Nairobi. Outside of the car is Africa. From the yellowing grass to the sporadic Acacia trees. The warm wind to the background mountains. The people to the cars. It all looks like it should. How it was painted in my head. How I wanted it to be.

Choosing the only "recommended" mid-price hotel in the soon-to-become-my-bible book [Rough Guide to Kenya] worked fine. Struck by how warm and welcoming the staff are. Everyone so far is. I find it hard not to smile at every person I see. I fail at suppressing the smiles often, and am rewarded with surprised reciprocation. Whether it's hotel porters or taxi drivers or shop assistants or restaurant managers; everyone is respectful and sincere. No one is too busy to answer a question or strike up a conversation. Everyone asks about my tattoos and pays me compliments about them. Never before have I been asked so frequently where I am from. Or made to feel so welcome in a foreign land.

Seeing so few other white people [about five others this first day in total] becomes normal after a matter of hours. Feeling so conspicuous is bizarre, but not unpleasant. Apart from the fear of mugging making the 'I am a tourist' attention less than desirable, I didn't mind the stares. In some way the attention is even nice.

Exploring Nairobi makes me scared and irritated. Constantly there is the fear of muggings. Not just for cash, but for passports and cameras too. Looking like a lost tourist makes a person a prime target, so one aims to look purposeful and confident. But what I want to do is just stop and stand in the middle of the street and stare and stare. But I have to keep moving, as less people try to stop you in the street the faster you walk. People, all the time, asking you to go on a safari, trying to make you take their taxi somewhere, or go in their shop. Or simply give them money. So I walk and look and walk and look and walk and look, absorbing every-

So, I went there, finally.

by vique martin



thing. All the shops and the restaurants and the cars and the people and the buildings and everything. Trying to take it all in, but there's information overload and my head just swims.

Walking and exploring and stumbling on buildings as magnificent as the Jamia Mosque. We approached it from behind, seeing it towering above other buildings. As I came closer, prayers started which were broadcasted over the entire neighborhood via speakers that looked like megaphones attached to the highest tower. This sound would echo all over Nairobi throughout the day and dusk and I loved it.

Soon the streets became too much of a struggle – constantly saying “No” to those trying to sell us safaris or souvenirs or taxis is trying and stressful, with one becoming increasingly less polite with every person. We fell into an over-priced [we later realised] taxi and headed to The National Museum. It was in a quiet area, with its own grounds, and I instantly relaxed. We wandered around, enjoying its collection. I especially like Joy Adamson's extensive painting collection – of Maasai and other tribes – women and men of varying ages. There were many of women just about to undergo or having just experienced circumcision that I found particularly powerful – their eyes pretty damn haunting.

Eventually Nairobi seems a lot less terrifying than during that first afternoon. Once I had my bearings, which didn't take long, it was fine. There are hundreds of people on the street at any one time, all going about their business. There is crazy traffic – cars, buses, trains and matatus – all speeding and honking and engines roaring. But at night the traffic calmed

down and Nairobi became a different kind of scary. A pitch black scary. No streetlights anywhere meant that when the sun set at 6:30 p.m., white people needed to be indoors. Well, scared-tourist-white-people like us, anyway! And when venturing outside of hotels, it was best to take a taxi to the desired restaurant/bar, which we did.

Falling into bed at 9 p.m. seemed unthinkable, but there was no choice for me. I slept well and awoke to the sound of Nairobi – loud, bad, pop music and traffic. Determined to make the most of each and every day we packed a week's worth of exploring into eight hours. The first stop of the day was the African Fund For Endangered Wildlife Giraffe Centre.

Arriving at the giraffe reserve I could see a giraffe walking less than 20 metres away. I ran to the gate, paid my money, and sprinted inside, already smiling widely. The tall wooden building I climbed the steps of had a large balcony which was eye level with the giraffes. The warm, welcoming giraffe-keeper-dude showed me how to feed them. Two huge giraffes stepped towards me and leaned in. They stuck out their tongues [up to 18 cms long!] and I placed the ‘treats’ upon them. These small, biscuit type things landed on their tongues and they immediately wanted more. They looked right at me and stuck their tongues out and I fed them again and again and again.

Their saliva was everywhere. I felt coated up to my elbows and was totally wet and sticky. But to be so close to these beautiful creatures. To be so intimate with such gentle animals. To be face to face with a giraffe. Oh, the smile couldn't be wiped off of my face. I talked to them and



laughed with them. I whooped with pleasure as they nudged at me. The intensity of these huge animals looking at me and the feel of their breath on my face. Oh, I can't put it into words. Their breath was hot and hard and they were only inches from my face. I couldn't make myself leave them. After I had fed them three 'last' times, I said goodbye to these four giraffes and tore myself away.

As I disappeared to the restroom to gain composure I found myself fighting back the tears. My mother would have loved this place. She would have reacted to the giraffes just as I had. She would have spoken to them in practically the same way. She would have had to tear herself away too. She would have smiled laughed so hard it would have made her cheeks hurt, just as mine were now. I'm experiencing it for us both.

Getting out of the taxi in town at the Maasai Market [a weekly affair] had us met with requests aplenty from different people wanting to show us around. Our claims of wishing to explore alone were usually ignored unless we repeated them vehemently. With hundreds of stall owners calling and requesting I look and buy at the stalls, I thought it wise to stick with one local this particular time. We went up and down, row after row of stalls all laid out on the reddish-brown dirt ground—the dust was everywhere. It was midday, the sun was intense and the people packed so tightly together with the crafts and souvenirs they were selling that it was hard to walk without losing my balance. Many of the stallholders were Maasai women in traditional dress. The red clothing, jewelry, ear piercing/stretching and hairstyles were breathtaking. It was hard not to stare, but I tried to be subtle. I didn't want to offend.

One moment that I will always remember is walking past a young Maasai woman, who was maybe 17 or 18-years-old. She looked at me and I looked at her. We held each other's gaze as I waited for the people in front of me to move onwards. Just before I started walking away I flashed her a large smile, which she returned to me. Just a moment, snatched there in the middle of Nairobi, between two strangers. Between two women,

both interested in the other, having a powerful connection for those few seconds. One that will stay with me always. The gift of a warm smile.

After much haggling and bargaining, and a little shopping the sun and the dust overwhelm and hunger must be satiated. After lunch we pound the streets, exploring for the last few hours before the train. Time flies, of course and soon we're preparing for our ten hour journey east. The station is incredible—it seems like we are in the 1930s again. And I'm loving it.

Trundling through the pitch-black darkness late at night through Kenya. Heading west, towards Mombasa, in a sleeper cabin, overnight. In three or four hours, Mount Kilimanjaro will be outside my window, but I will not be able to see it. By the time dawn breaks we'll have nearly reached the Indian Ocean.

Sleep is easy for me in our little cabin with bunks, despite the train lurching and stopping and starting and shunting. I waken to the sight of East Kenya. It's lush and tropical and green. It's beautiful. As the city nears, more huts can be seen from the train. It's travelling slowly so we get a great view of the area. In the doorway of these houses and closer to the train tracks children are waving. They must come to the train tracks every day to see the train come through. There is only one train a day. I stand in the corridor and lean out of the window to wave at the children. When they see that someone is waving back at them they wave with even more enthusiasm and vigor. I will always remember one little girl, maybe six years old, wearing a red dress. She waved at me and I waved back. I'm smiling as I wave and she gets so excited when she sees me waving that her wave changes from a one-armed wave and develops into a two-armed wave, accompanied with frenzied jumping as high as she can, whilst smiling from ear to ear. The joy on her face was incredible. I smiled and smiled and waved and waved at her until she was out of sight. She was one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen in my life.

The feel of Mombasa is hotter and duster and quieter and safer. I like it more immediately. The day is spent exploring the main streets and

learning to feel comfortable navigating this new city. It feels like I've been in Africa for two weeks. I can't believe it's only been two days. At night we dump all valuables in the hotel and brave the small dark streets of Old Town in search of Swahili food. We are rewarded with the restaurant "Island Dishes" and feast on potatoes, beans and sweet potatoes; all three dishes cooked in coconut milk. African vegan treats indeed. The meal is phenomenal. Stuffed with food we roll on home and collapse into bed; eagerly anticipating what tomorrow will bring.

It's six o'clock in the morning and Justin is shouting my name. I look up and the sky above Mombasa is orange. Dawn is breaking and it looks like the city is on fire. I stumble out onto the balcony and admire. I grab my camera to document the moment and watch until the orange is gone. Magical sunrises. Yes.

Hours later we're heading to the beach. Mombassa is a kind of an Island on the coast of Kenya, linked to the mainland by two causeways going west, a bridge going north, and a ferry going south. We're heading south. Mombasa itself has no beaches – it's a port for boats. We thankfully leave early, as the journey from the hotel to the beach ends up taking hours. First a walk to the edge of Mombasa to catch the ferry. Then braving the public transport that Kenyan people use. Before today we'd been wusses and only taken taxis. It's impossible to take matatus with luggage – just not safe. And usually we either had luggage or we walked. Matatus are scary.

So, we lost our matatu virginity on the journey from the ferry port to the beach, changing twice to different ones. We boarded it whilst it was fairly empty, this little 9-to-12-seater van. They have one person driving and one person hanging out of the sliding door encouraging others to jump on and collecting the fares. It isn't that they are scary in themselves, but in the way that they are used. By the time we reached our first change-over, there were [I think] 22 people in the bus, us included. We were jammed in the middle, practically on each other's laps, as people gestured to us to move up when more and more people climbed aboard. And the speed that they travel! Well, I couldn't see the road ahead, and I was glad. If I had seen the blind overtaking and the near-misses, I'm sure I would have been more scared than I was. I actually just kind of relaxed and enjoyed the experience. The next one scared me a little more. Sitting there waiting for it to fill up with people before leaving on its journey we noticed that the driver couldn't have been more than fourteen years old. But just before we left he jumped out of the matatu and was replaced by another boy. This one couldn't have been more than twelve. But I laughed it off and went along for the ride—and survived to tell the tale. Yes, indeed.

The beach, oh the beach. The sea was bright, bright blue/green and the water was so clear and clean. The sand was so fine it felt like fucking silk. And the palm [coconut] trees make it look so tropical. Diani beach felt like the edge of the world. It was tainted severely by the disgusting huge hotels that backed onto it for its entire length, full of white people sunning themselves in the lap of luxury. Wealth at its worst.

We found what we wanted – someone to take us snorkeling. Soon we were whooshing our way through the water with two guys who were our guides. We reached the reef, donned our snorkels and flippers and jumped on in. seconds later I was up again spluttering, as my mask wasn't on right. And the water, God the water. My eyes and nose and throat were streaming. It was SO damn salty. I sorted myself out and went under. It was beautiful there. The salt meant that I totally floated and didn't have to put any effort into swimming. All my attention could go on the fish. They were incredible. Our guide swam to the sea bottom and grabbed a sea urchin. He smashed it on a rock and gave half to me and half to Justin. He showed us how to hold it out and all of the fish came and ate from our hands. About a hundred, or a hundred and fifty, fish all nipping at me – my arms were nipped at a lot – silly fish! They were mostly zebra fish and it was awesome. We saw real starfish too – and held them. I was very excited.

Eventually we went back to land and headed home the way we had

come. Feeling like matatu professionals now, the journey home posed no difficulties and we just soaked up the scenery. Staring out of the window at the people going about their business. Children going home from school. Women walking home from picking vegetables and fruit – the baskets balanced perfectly upon their heads. People everywhere. I just absorbed it all, savoring every second of it.

That night was spent like the others – eating and falling into bed soon after. Although we sat outside Island Dishes for a long time, enjoying the night-time activity in Old Town. Early the next morning we came back here and explored in the daylight. But that was after checking out Fort Jesus. This is a fort built by the Portuguese at the end of the sixteenth century. It's beautiful. But before I even went inside I needed to use the restroom. I looked around and couldn't see one, so I walked back up the hill, ignoring the calls from the street vendors selling overpriced souvenirs: "Come look, Mama." I was aiming for the museum that I had seen just before Fort Jesus, I thought they would have a restroom. I looked around and a man who appeared to be a security guard put down his sandwiches and smiled at me and asked me if I needed help. I explained my need. He led me upstairs, got a key from someone else and unlocked two doors and showed me to a restroom. I used the facilities and pulled a twenty shilling piece from my purse to give to the man. Tipping is customary in Kenya when someone helps you out. I thanked him for helping me and said "This is for you. Thank you for your help." He smiled at me and was so excited that I gave him this money [equivalent to 30 cents] that he hugged me. There I am standing in the doorway to the toilets in a museum in Kenya being hugged by the sweetest boy in the world because I gave him twenty shillings. I was laughing and smiling all the way to Fort Jesus.

Of course, it's fucked-up that that money that means nothing to me means something to someone else, but this wasn't about that. It was about him being so warm and affectionate and uninhibited. And that he saw my monetary thanks for what they were—symbolic of my appreciation. The dynamic of being the rich Whitey is something that I will discuss later, as it's a topic all on its own. But times like these, whilst the dynamic is still severely fucked-up, are indicative that if I act respectful and warm and caring towards others that they will appreciate it and the interaction will be mutually heart-warming. This interaction was precisely that.

Fort Jesus was shady and the concrete made it cool. I sat in a tower and overlooked the bay and enjoyed the calm it provided. It was the same ambience as a church and it was very relaxing. Of course, we'd had to fight off the "We want to be your guide" people and the "Buy souvenir tat at inflated prices please" people both entering and leaving. But we were getting good at fighting them off by now. Very firm yet polite.

Soon we left Fort Jesus and ventured back to Old Town. Whilst it was sunny and warm it felt less scary than at night, but still we were very wary. The streets were narrow and there were no other tourists around [not that there were many in other places] or even people who were trying to sell things to the tourists. We ventured further and further into residential Old Town and it was so picturesque and beautiful. Small streets, old buildings, lattice-work balconies and mosques all on top of each other. People stared as we walked around and there was only one occasion I felt brave enough to pull my camera out. Not that I felt more safe. More that what I saw HAD to be photographed. I saw three little girls crouching together and they were excited when they saw us. I was entranced. They were gorgeous. I went over to them and asked if I could take their picture, gesturing at my camera I was pulling out. They became increasingly excited and nodded yes. I took one photo and more children came running out—lots of little boys. I took two more pictures and was so scared that the moment would not be captured on film. But I think they are the best three pictures I have ever taken. The children were so sweet. I gave them some change in my pocket afterwards and asked a nearby older man to translate to the children that they should share the money and buy sweet



ies. They were very pleased. They stood there and waved as we retreated down the street. The pictures speak for themselves.

Leaving Mombasa on the train to Nairobi that night I was sad, but content. Arriving in Nairobi to more children waving. This time in front of houses built very closely together, made of corrugated iron, rather than rural huts. Walking around Nairobi I find myself more used to this city, it's oddly familiar now. And I notice more, as I am more comfortable. The beggars really got to me today—people sitting against the wall on the pavement with varying degrees of handicaps. Some seem to have limbs missing, others seem to be suffering from leprosy or suchlike. The worst is the elephantiasis. It's heart-wrenching. Walking towards the bus station, heading for Tanzania, we had to walk past a lady begging. She was standing a little way away from her baby, who was lying on the concrete pavement wrapped in a shawl. I literally had to step over the baby to get past. Upon our return down the same street half an hour later the process had to be repeated. This time the baby was in a pool of urine.

It's hard to be around this shit and not just want to give all your money away to people. I gave away far more than I should. I couldn't help it. But I had to be tough and develop a hardness against it, as I couldn't give away all that I had, and even if I could it wouldn't touch the sides in a city like Nairobi. But the feeling of guilt and of privilege had never been so strong. It was hard.

Also difficult was not allowing the poverty in a city like Nairobi to colour the city in a slanted way. By this I mean that whilst there is severe poverty, Nairobi is about so much more than that. It's a city so rich in culture and history. It's full of beautiful buildings and interesting people

Yes there's poverty and crime, but there's also so much more. I left Nairobi thinking of the good things. Thinking of how amazing it feels at dusk when the city is getting darker by the second and the mosque is proudly broadcasting prayers.

So, the bus to Tanzania trundles south of Nairobi and it's possibly the most uncomfortable bus ride of my life. I'm sitting with my feet on a wheel arch, the bus is totally full [and this is African standards which means overflowing by Western standards] and the music is blaring. The driver turns up the music when a song he likes comes on the radio. *En Vogue* will always remind me of Africa. Nairobi disappears behind us and the buildings dissipate. Hours of Kenya roll along. Tanzania is coming. This last half of the trip was to the place I wanted to go to more than anywhere in the world. And now I am actually on the way there. Kenya was incredible. But always simply an added bonus. Tanzania—the home of the Serengeti—I'm on my way there.



The Changing Face of Richmond

by greg wells



If there is any one overriding statement to sum up my hometown of Richmond, Virginia, it would be that it is a city without an identity, a city so completely wrapped up in its past that it has abandoned its number one resource in the here and now: its citizens.

Despite the ghosts of generations past and the always-lingering racial insensitivities, Richmond communities from Church Hill to Blackwell to Randolph to Oregon Hill all have a common thread that binds them in the face of great adversity, that being a strong sense of working class comradery.

Once upon a time Richmond was an important Southern industrial hotbed. Five railways called Richmond their home in the early 20th century. Steel mills, iron works, tobacco warehouses and the like dominated the bustling waterfront both in the city and on the Manchester side of the James River.

Since 1861, when a group of power-hungry racist politicians drew up a plan to curb minority voting in the city by creating a new predominantly African-American ward in the city's Northside, back door politics have been a staple in Richmond. That war delineated the undesirables (i.e. poor blacks) from being able to disrupt the city voting in several districts by pigeonholing them into one big shoe-string region ushering in the modern era of gerrymandering regions for political gain. Jackson ward was born.

It's hard to pinpoint exactly when and where the fabled gathering of the Richmond (un)wisemen went down, but there is no denying that a lot of Old South money and

affluence and exuberant upstarts got together and envisioned the Richmond of the future, their Richmond of the future.

I can picture it now. The Ukrop's Brothers (right wing chain grocers), Bruce Gottwald of the Ethyl Corporation (manufacturers of harmful gas additives and destroyers of community), and an over-zealous President Trani of Virginia Commonwealth University (see also gentrifiers, harassers of the homeless) all gazing lustfully over an aerial map of the city and dividing up the districts like kids trading baseball cards.

A lot was happening 30 years ago to suggest that such a meeting might have occurred. The industrial backbone of the city began to fall prey to the rapid suburbanization of the day. This opened the floodgates for a push to a more technologically based city of which the negative repercussions are being felt by the massive proletarian population of the city. This mounting economic stress led to high unemployment rates, urban blight, one of the top per capita murder rates in the country and a booming homeless population near 3-4,000 today. If Richmond wanted to become a big-league city, it sure was drumming up its share of big-league problems.

The Virginia Commonwealth University (V.C.U.), which was founded in 1968, brought with it high hopes of becoming a competitive and modern urban university with the potential to rival its northern brethren. It didn't take long for university planners to figure out that some toes were going to have to be stepped on for the grand vision of the school to come into fruition.

In 1980, the first sign of the "manifest destiny" plan started to rear its ugly head. The often-referred-to plan is a call for campus expansion from the Downtown X-way south of campus to Interstate 64 on the north side of campus. It was in that year that the University demolished over 100 homes and small businesses on the northern boundary of Oregon Hill to replace them with a parking deck and a prison-looking dormitory building. A decade would pass before the people of Oregon Hill would hear from V.C.U. again.

In 1990, the then-hired president of V.C.U., Eugene Trani, and University planners released blueprints that called for a 28-acre expansion of the academic campus clear to the X-way in Oregon Hill and westbound to Morris Street in the Fan District. After many neighborhood outcries and a pending lawsuit at the hands of the American Civil Lib



erties Union, V.C.U. scrapped the plan. A popular bumper sticker of the time read, "VCU go north not south or west." University planners must have taken note as the bullseye was quickly shifted to the Carver community.

Carver, also known as Newtowne South, has a long and rich history of being home to some of Richmond's first post-Civil War free blacks. About the same time Oregon Hill was combating V.C.U., the city was busy demolishing several of the oldest surviving homes of the original founders of the neighborhood. A decade has passed and the largely elderly poor residents of Carver are seeing the remnants of their once-thriving community disappear into thin air.

In the mid-to-late '90s, V.C.U. led a three-pronged assault north of Broad Street into the heart of Carver. University facilities now dot the landscape on the southern edge of the neighborhood. This intrusion is also being played out on a door-to-door basis as wealthy students are moving in and driving the low income rents through the roof as Carver starts to give the impression of a hip 20-something locale. Gentrification is now running rampant. A year and a half ago V.C.U. announced that the university police force now have unlimited jurisdiction in the community, further leading to the appearance of who's really in control.

If you were to hear things from Barbara Abarnathy, head of the Carver Civic Association, you might assume V.C.U.'s presence has been a blessing. If you were to consult with long-time Carver resident and community activist Sababu Sanyika, things couldn't be much worse. According to Mr. Sanyika, "Mrs. Abernathy is living high off of the coattails of V.C.U. and playing a high-stakes public relations game in order to ensure further favoritism from Trani and his wrecking crew."

Meanwhile across Belvidere Street from Carver, Jackson ward citizens are bracing for the battle of their lives. Jackson Ward, Richmond's oldest and most culturally significant African-American community, was once known as the Harlem of the South. As if one of the city's largest pockets of dilapidated houses, rampant drug usage and crime don't plague the area enough, Jackson Ward must now contend with the gigantic expansion plans of the Richmond (convention) Centre.

The expansion, which will reportedly run \$158 million and will

not be finished until 2002, is bringing in the new millenium with high hopes of tourist dollars at the expense of Richmond's downtrodden inner-city inhabitants. With city council as its #1 ally the Richmond Centre all but sealed the doom on eight historic Jackson Ward row houses near the intersection of 3rd and Clay streets. The effect of the expansion has been felt as far away as West Grace Street (several blocks to the south) where a row of independent businesses have been warned that their buildings may be demolished to make room for a skyscraper hotel to be built to accommodate the expected influx of tourists once the Centre is completed. Jackson Ward is gearing up for a long war.

In the early Summer of 1999, Richmond proudly unveiled the crowning jewel that is going to "revitalize" the ever-desolate downtown once and for all, the \$52 million completion of the Canal Front redevelopment plan. Harking back to the 1996 Arthur Ashe Statue rumblings, nothing less than a full-blown public relations nightmare embraced its arrival. The canals, which saw an opening day highlighted by the nearby community relations day for the US marines (who were in town for a two week urban training exercise), had to once again deal with Richmond's ghosts.

City Council member Sa'ad El-Amin, always fighting the mayor, swore that he would lead a full scale boycott of the opening if a nearby mural of Confederate General Lee wasn't instantly removed. So, on opening day with the spotlight on Richmond and the image of the general long gone, a couple of dozen good ol' Sons of the Confederacy reared their ugly heads in protest at the 14th Street Bridge overlooking the Kanawha Canal. As the first boat load of city dignitaries passed under the bridge, former City Manager Robert Bobb stood and saluted the men as if they were heroes. Publicly and openly Bobb announced to the city of Richmond and all of its citizens who is really in charge.

The desolate stretch of riverfront the Canal Walk covers may some day evolve into a prosperous and alluring tourist destination. The Richmond Centre may pump crowds and major events into downtown, and V.C.U. may grow to be the much hyped-urban treasure it believes it is. But at the rate our "small time" big city is gobbling up all the communities we live and work in, there will be no one left to relish in all our glory.

Oh Baby

part III: the birth story

BY: JESSICA MILLS ☆ ILLUSTRATIONS BY: CAROLINE

regular baby movement being recorded in order to determine that everything was still fine and that the baby wasn't showing any signs of distress. Earlier that morning, however, in a last ditch effort to throw myself into labor, I drank down another four ounces of castor oil.

It wasn't until I got strapped up to the machine and told I needed to have a straight 30 minutes recorded that the castor oil kicked in. My ass was exploding. For the next hour, I had to unstrap myself every five minutes and hustle my nine-and-a-

My due date came and went without even the slightest twinge of labor. In fact, several days came and went without any feelings that my baby was on her way. Every night before falling asleep, I'd wish to wake up in labor. A week and a half after my due date, I did begin to feel some mild contractions, but none of them ever developed into a regular pattern. Mild, irregular contractions teased me for days.

It's not everyday that someone actually looks forward to the pains of childbirth, but I was starting to feel desperate. Desperate not because I was uncomfortable, but because if I was still pregnant two weeks past my due date, I would not be able to deliver at the birth center. Florida law says my midwife would have to transfer me to the hospital and into the care of the birth center's backup obstetrician.

Ernesto and I were trying everything from nipple stimulation to orgasmic sex, walking to foot massage, cohosh to castor oil, and still no labor. My midwife even swabbed my membranes and tickled my cervix to get things going, twice, but nothing was putting me into labor. I was set to kick the next person to recommend a fast, bumpy car ride down a dirt road.

Two weeks past my due date and still pregnant, my mom drove me down to the birth center where I was checked out again and found to be only one or two centimeters dilated with no regular, intense contractions. No out-of-hospital birth for me. I was transferred to the care of the birth center's back up obstetrician and instructed to go to the hospital in a few hours for a routine non-stress test, the same routine non-stress test I had a week prior. Ugh! How stressful!

I accepted that I'd deliver my baby in the hospital because I was assured that I'd be accompanied by a midwife and that everything was still and would be fine. Transferring me was just for good safety measure—protocol they call it—because the possibility of a dangerous situation increases exponentially the longer the baby stays in, just as it does if the baby is born prematurely. I wasn't really thrown for a loop yet, even if for nine and a half months I had given zero consideration to the possibility of a hospital birth. A few months back, I had actually shrugged off my birth educator's idea of at least touring the labor and delivery ward of the hospital, just in case.

I learned my first lesson of motherhood before I even gave birth: there's no such thing as planning.

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My mom and I drove home from the birth center and then walked over to the hospital. She walked; I waddled. I was admitted at the outpatient counter and given a wheelchair for the ride up to the fourth floor. I can understand, given my extra-large appearance, how someone might think I would want a wheelchair, but I convinced them to let me walk after I told them I had just walked there from home.

Up in the fourth floor Triage unit, a nurse hooked me up to an electronic fetal monitor. They needed a good 30-minute stretch with

half-months-pregnant self to the toilet. Ugh. I was pretty worried the one time I needed into the toilet and another extremely pregnant woman had just beat me to it. The four-minute wait was a real test of rectal muscle control.

The obstetrician finally came to check out my situation, but wasn't able to determine much from the test because I had been unstrapped from the monitor so many times and there wasn't even close to a 30-minute reading. Although I wasn't scheduled for another, different test with him until the next afternoon, he decided to do it right then.

This test was a bio-physical profile, performed with the use of an ultrasound. He found that I had plenty of amniotic fluid left and that the baby's heartbeat was strong. However, he judged the baby's breathing pattern to not be as strong as he'd like. He said there also wasn't enough baby movement. I told him that I felt the baby moving often, but he said that didn't matter; he should have seen enough movement during that specific time frame with the ultrasound.

I started to panic because he also started to say a lot of other things. Because my head was swirling, I don't remember specifics, but it amounted to my being admitted right there on the spot and scheduled to be induced in the morning. I do remember certain scary phrases like, "The baby could be really big," and, "The baby's ready. It needs to come out. You don't want a dead baby, do you?"

I had just plummeted down the first of many slopes of what would be a two-day roller coaster ride.

*

I allowed myself to be wheelchaired up to my room. Ernesto rode his bike back to our house to fetch our bags I had packed weeks before. My mom stayed with me to help me settle in. I was to be strapped to the electronic fetal monitor all night. How I was expected to be good and rested for my big labor day the next day is beyond me. The damn thing's terribly uncomfortable, mentally more than physically.

My girlfriends started trickling in. Margaret brought a boom box, some CDs and a big glass jar of freshly brewed cohosh. She made it extra strong and I drank it by the cup full, my last hope of getting into labor without having to be induced.

My midwife came with a bunch of just picked flowers and the news that neither she or the other midwife would be able to be present tomorrow, but I could pick which midwife student I wanted to come be my doula.

Samantha came with her sleeping bag to camp out on the floor at the foot of my bed. My friend Kristen just happened to still be in town on her visit from New York and Mahlia came to give me encouragement and much needed massage on my legs and feet. Ernesto's mom would be there first thing in the morning.

The powerful female presence quickly transformed the hospital room atmosphere from strange, sterile and stressful to relaxed, familiar and jovial. We listened to music, chatted up a storm, burned incense probably against hospital rules and I drank the batch of cohosh brew. I



was determined to be strong, ready and in labor by daybreak.

As my mom slept on the couch in the room, Ernesto and Samantha stayed up all night with me. In the wee hours, I started contracting more intensely and at more regular intervals. They were really coming on and feeling great, getting to be five minutes apart. I really enjoyed breathing through them, knowing my body was teaching itself to open up for my baby to pass through. Ernesto and Samantha were quietly cheering me on and their presence really kept me going in a positive mental direction. But alas, the contractions only stayed with me for an hour or two and when I woke early in the morning, I was not in labor.

*

In each other's arms, Ernesto and I sobbed uncontrollably, still trying to accept the fact that I would be induced and that I would not be having the non-interventive birth I had envisioned during my entire pregnancy. It was hard to let that go. Of course I wanted the baby to be born healthy and safely, but what that meant in terms of what means would be used to achieve that end was scaring me. My mind reeled into worse-case-scenario mode, replaying nightmarish birth stories I had read about how one intervention lead to the next. What's worse was that I knew that the kind of fear that had a hold of me was the kind of fear that impeded labor.

The vibe we filled the room with was pretty intense. One moment my mom was fine, and the next, she was coming out of the bathroom sweating and pale. I started worrying about her more than myself. She later told me that our sobbing was so overwhelming, she almost fainted.

I remained tightly wound up until 9 a.m. when Lori arrived. She's the Senior midwife student I had requested to act as my doula. She immediately sensed what was going on in the room and in my head and got to work. She sat with me, stroked my head and arms and spoke softly, reminding me that my body knew what to do and was going to do so beautifully. She gave me symbolic female amulets to hold and a framed picture depicting a birth at The Farm to gaze into. She quickly realigned my vision towards the spiritual and powerful birth I believed in and unraveled the doubt that bound me. With scents and herbal remedies and

oils and massage, she calmed me and I felt a sense of peace.

The doctor was scheduled to come break my bag of waters and induce me at noon. He showed up an hour and a half late, plenty of time for my anxiety to start creeping back in. He explained that first he was going to break my bag of waters, called rupturing the membranes, and depending on how the fluid looked, would determine the next course of action. He cleared the room except for a nurse, Ernesto and my doula, Lori.

I held my breath and summoned all the butterflies I could imagine into my stomach. Please, please, please let the fluid run clear.

With his little, plastic, hooked-at-the-end wand instrument, he ruptured my membranes. What a gush! I remember the doctor saying something to the effect of, "Whoa, whoa," as I watched my pregnant stomach deflate to half its size. I don't think the amount of fluid could be classified as polyhydramnios (too much amniotic fluid), but I suspect that the amount of fluid is what kept my uterus from engaging in regular labor contractions, because I felt my body beginning to contract right after my water was broken.

I also suspect that while the water poured out and my stomach partially deflated, the baby must have done a little floating turn, her back now against mine instead of properly positioned with her belly side toward my spine. Thank goodness the umbilical cord did not wash down through the cervix. A prolapsed cord would have almost certainly meant an emergency cesarean section.

I let my breath out with a very happy exclamation of relief once the doctor confirmed my water ran clear and there were no signs of distress. Had there been meconium staining, the brownish-black protective substance in the baby's bowels before birth, sometimes discharged when the baby is under stress, like lacking oxygen, I think I would have been given a cesarean section then, too.

Instead, to get my labor going, I was started on a slow IV drip of pitocin, a synthetic copy of the natural hormone oxytocin that is responsible for, among other things, making the uterus contract. Because my water was broken and therefore, the baby's protective covering gone, I was on a time limit. Remembering what I had read about the situation, called artificial premature rupture of the membranes, I thought I'd have 24 hours to get the baby out. The doctor, however, had me on a different time schedule. He told me I'd be having the baby sooner than 24 hours.

The pitocin kicked me into definite labor. My body didn't have time to get its natural endorphin pain killers going, so the contractions were feeling pretty intense and building quickly. I remember working through the first hour of them easily by using what I had learned about breath and breathing in my gentle/prenatal yoga class. My yoga teacher told us we can breath through anything and I kept reminding myself of that. I also remember moving my arms around in weird snake like motions and flexing my hands about as if I were grabbing hold of the energy, using it and then throwing it to the air. Along with moving my arms and hands, shaking my head from side to side as if I were shaking the energy away helped me feel the natural high I had read about.

Just as I had planned an out-of-hospital birth, I had also planned who would be with me at the birth. As my location plan changed, so did my company. I think because I was in such a foreign environment, I welcomed the additional friends who just happened to join me. My plan had been to have just three people with me, but there I was with seven. The additional mental, emotional and physical support really helped me keep in a positive state of mind, something I think was crucial for my labor to progress.

There was one nurse, however, who was not part of my seven-person support, but who needed to do her job and pop in every once in a while. When the doctor was still in the room and she was following his orders to start my pitocin, she was fine, but after he left, she seemed to be calling her own shots with managing my labor.

The first negative encounter with her happened when she came in the room and without explaining what she was doing, increased the amount of pitocin I had been getting through the IV. She did this with complete disregard for the sign we had placed on the room door requesting that no personnel come in offering medications or unwarranted interventions. Ernesto asked her what she was doing and asked her to not do anything again without first consulting with us. She immediately jumped into defensive mode saying that what she was doing was ordered by the doctor and asked if we knew what was going on.

I told her I didn't remember the doctor saying anything about the pitocin being increased at set time intervals. I also told her that I could feel what was going on in my body and I was definitely opening up and didn't need an increase of pitocin. In hindsight, I feel like she had her own agenda for how long my labor was going to take. She was the hospital bullshit I had read about, the bullshit that convinced me an out-of-hospital birth would be safer, calmer and more empowering, the bullshit that thinks all births need to follow a prescribed routine.

I continued to labor with increasing intensity. In addition to being zapped into labor without time to build up my natural pain-killing endorphins, I was having back labor, which happens when the baby's back instead of belly is facing your spine. With every contraction, I needed Ernesto to counter the pressure by pushing on my lower back. Eventually, this built to a two person job, both of them working up a sweat.

I was really working now, struggling for comfortable positions. I was in and out of the rocking chair, up and down off the floor, on all fours, draped over the birthing ball and crouched hanging on to the end of the bed. I don't know how many positions I tried or how often I revisited some of them, but I do remember the maneuvering was sometimes tricky. I had an electrode wire for the electronic fetal monitor up in me, attached to the baby's head, and two different IVs, one for pitocin and one for the antibiotics I had to have due to me testing positive for Group B Strep.

Enter bitch nurse again to give me a hassle. She came to check my cervix to determine how far I was dilated and asked me to get up off the floor and make it to the rocking chair or bed for her to check me. Was she fucking crazy? I'm trying to get my labor on and she wants me to accommodate her? I told her she'd have to get on her hands and knees too if she wanted to check me; I wasn't moving. That she did and then made her diagnosis sound like my progression was no big deal, not fast enough. She even suggested I might be swelling on one ridge of my cervix. Argh. I requested that Lori check me also for a second opinion. Of course, her diagnosis was positive; I was progressing fine and I needn't scare myself with the nurse's swelling suggestion.

I labored longer and harder, working, working, working, breathing, gutturally groaning and sometimes stupidly watching the clock. Hours went by. How much longer would I be able to work this hard? It was increasingly hard to keep going; I was really working up into a full blown infernal ball of energy. I was glad Lori had covered up the electronic fetal monitor screen with a towel. It was a definite distraction watching what I was feeling inside up on a TV screen. I wanted my information to come from my body, not a monitor of my body.

Not knowing how much longer I could keep working through the back labor and the still mounting contractions and starting to feel the urge to push, I requested to have my cervical dilation checked

again. The nurse came and checked me. Again, her prognosis was negative; she said I wasn't opening up fast enough and if I pushed at all before I was completely dilated, 10 cm, I could swell my cervix to the point that I would have to have a cesarean. She recommended an epidural, a procedure in which pain-relieving drugs are injected into the epidural space in the spinal column.

Panic hit the room. I was losing it. I was at my most vulnerable point in my life and I was searching for help of any kind. Knowing vulnerability is a factor during labor is exactly why Lori had placed the sign on the door for no personnel to come in the room offering things like an epidural. I screamed for them to just go ahead and give me the damn epidural, although I knew it wasn't what I really wanted.

Lori took charge and cleared the room of everyone except Ernesto. The two of them came to my side calmly and spoke to me quietly. Lori reminded me that everything was of course my decision, but also reminded me of what I had read about epidurals; they more than likely slow down labor and because I wouldn't be able to feel myself pushing the baby out, might need forceps or vacuum extraction, or cesarean delivery. She assured me I was doing fine without it. Ernesto reminded me he was my advocate, my pre-labor voice that asked him to remind me it was my wish to have this baby with the least amount of interventions safety would allow.

That five minutes alone with me completely transformed the energy in the room and the panic I had felt. My mind was realigned and I was back in control. I knew I could and would do this.

I needed Margaret to keep me on track. I remembered how she told me she got through this, the hardest part of labor. She locked eyes with her partner and he matched her vocalizations. That's what I needed her to do with me. Poor Margaret, 5 months pregnant herself and I'm gripping her arm with both of my hands practically pulling her into me, the pupils of my eyes burning through hers and moaning the most abdomen rattling loud animal moans I've ever heard. She hung in there

with me and without her, I couldn't have made it through like I did.

The contractions were peaking, sometimes double peaking, so sharply and intensely that I'd feel every cell in my body choking, constricting, popping. It was hard to catch a breath at all sometimes, let alone try to breath through them. Holding myself back from pushing and working through those Richter scale-quality contractions at the same time was impossible. That baby was on her way.

I insisted that the doctor get there as soon as he could.

Where is he? Is he on his way? How long until he's here to check me? The 20 or 30 minutes it took for him to get there were ridiculously long.

He finally made it and checked my dilation. Without hesitation, he told me I was completely dilated and that I could start pushing. I don't have the written words here to express how excited and happy I was! I checked with Margaret; is pushing going to be harder than that last hour of contractions? She assured me it was the easy part and I got even more excited! I was having this baby!

Because he didn't know how long I had been fully dilated—it could have been an hour he guessed—he gave me one hour to push the baby out. He said that if I didn't, he might have to offer me some help in the way of forceps or vacuum extraction. I set my eyes on that clock.



It was 7:30 and I was going to have that baby out of me on time. I had just labored intensely for six hours without interventions and wasn't about to blow my plan now.

I can honestly say that pushing was the most fun and pleasurable pain I have ever felt. When I'd feel a contraction coming on, I'd get ready with a deep breath. Then, while Ernesto counted out loud to ten, I'd push with all my might, take a gasping breath and push another ten count if I could. I was so into it, the contractions weren't coming quick enough, the same contractions that last hour I thought were going to kill me.

It was purely amazing and incredible feeling that little body, that little person, that baby moving down and through me. I was warned and had read about it, but I never had the feeling that my pelvic bones were going to break or my muscles were going to rip apart. Even when the baby's head was crowning, I missed the scary ring of fire feeling I was anticipating.

There was the baby's head, ready to be born, after exactly one hour of being allowed to push. I thought my eyes had popped from all the pressure in my head from pushing, but I didn't care. I remembered that I should take it easy to get the head out and not push too quickly or forcefully because my perineum needed time to stretch. I suddenly didn't care about tearing. I just wanted that baby out so bad, I pushed with all I had left.

I would have torn anyway because the baby's little hand was right there alongside her 13 and a half inch round head. The doctor really worked the area well to help it stretch, but as soon as he noticed I was starting to tear in several places, he gave me a shot to numb the area and then gave me a second degree episiotomy (a surgical incision made to assist with the birth). With that and one more good push, I birthed her head. With the next push, I birthed the rest of her body.

The room cheered, "It's a girl!" Ernesto and I were really surprised. We thought for sure, based on the dreams I had while pregnant and older women's assessment of how my stomach looked, it was going to be a boy.

The doctor couldn't have put her on my chest quick enough.

She sure was slippery! I held on to her carefully, clutching her 7 pounds, 12 ounces to my chest. Oh wow, I had my baby! I couldn't believe she was here! She didn't have any signs of being post-mature. She had plenty of vernix and lanugo and her fingernails weren't overgrown.

I looked into her eyes and thanked her for coming. I assured her she'd like it here with us. I told her about all the fun we're going to have and all the love we're going to share. I was absolutely ecstatic in Babyland. I looked onto Ernesto's happily sobbing eyes.

I had no idea I was hemorrhaging and my blood pressure plummeted. I thought whatever action was happening at the foot of the bed was standard procedure. I wasn't paying much attention. I had my perfect, beautiful baby in my arms.

But when the room started looking like an "ER" episode and the baby was taken from my chest, I realized something was up. Whatever it was, it couldn't be that bad; I felt fine. I leaned up to the frantically working doctor and told him so. He didn't hear me correctly and thought I said I felt faint. I told him again that I felt fine. He told me that that was because shock didn't hurt.

Shock? Oh, so that explained my head feeling thick and my hearing and vision sounding and looking weird. I thought I was just exhausted from pushing for an hour. The doctor tried to calmly explain to me what was going on. My mental capacities weren't exactly sharp and I was barely getting any of what he was saying, but I did understand that I had just dumped a bunch of blood and we were on a time limit to get it under control and my placenta out, too.

The doctor snapped into life-saving mode and was calling his shots quickly and orderly. The room was cleared of my mom, Ernesto's mom and my friends and instantly filled with nurses, an anesthesiologist, a surgeon and more I don't remember. Needles were flying and scary words like "transfusion" landed in my ears.

I don't know exactly how he did it, but he got my hemorrhaging under control in minutes and then started to work on getting my placenta out. I was jacked with a big zap of pitocin to get my uterus to contract so I could birth the placenta. I remember looking down at my stomach and it was quivering up and down with contractions I wasn't even feeling. My placenta wasn't budging. Quite uncomfortably, the doctor was pushing down all around my stomach to get the placenta to move out of me. That wasn't working either.

I was shaking uncontrollably but I wasn't cold. I repeatedly asked Lori if I was going to be OK and she assured me every time that I was. Kristen stayed by my side holding my hand while I hummed and shook my head back and forth as an attempt to distract myself from what was going on. I just wanted to nurse my baby.

He determined that my placenta wasn't going to come loose off my uterus wall and decided he had to remove it manually. I'm not sure if he had to cut me some more, but he reached in almost up to his elbow and grabbed it. To make sure there wasn't any of the tissue left inside me, he performed a manual D & C with what looked like a scrub brush. Did I mention uncomfortable?

The doctor saved my life with a few minutes to spare. My pelvic floor muscles and my perineum were stitched up, I was cleaned off and hooked up to IVs to replace my fluids. My baby girl, Emma-Joy, was brought back to me and I lifted her to my breast.



Emma-Joy is now three months old. She and I are fine and thriving together. I'm told that Emma-Joy's outcome would have been fine in either setting, but had I been at home or at the birth center, my outcome would have been much different. Looking back, I don't know if it was my short, intense labor that overworked my uterus and caused it to hemorrhage or if it was overstretched by baby and

amniotic fluid.

I've spent a lot of time wondering about several what-ifs and still haven't settled anything in my obsessive mind. For now, though, I feel like Emma-Joy will be my only child because I think I would have, however many years ago, been one of the women who died in childbirth. I am taking my life being saved as a sign to give birth to only her.

I am thankful to mother Emma-Joy. I get to fall in love all over again every single day.

I misjudged the eye contact. You know, sometimes you can tell someone is gonna back down. Sometimes you make a mistake. I turned to walk away a couple of seconds too late. He had already decided he was gonna hit me. I ended up with a broken nose from the suckerpunch he threw as I turned. A little fisticuffs at a punk rock show, he was slamming into people, I stood up to him when he windmilled into me. I misjudged the eye contact. And again, after being beaten up years ago for getting in someone's face about making fag-jokes and harassing me, I still haven't learned my lesson. Masculinity is all about performing violence.

I didn't retaliate. Knowing the wolfpack mentality (my friends were around, his were around), it would have ruined the show. Yet it got me thinking about the connections between masculinity and violence, about the way gender enters into our everyday relationships, and what kinds of limits there are on trying to subvert the given gender roles we have as men and women, straight, gay, bi, or transgendered people.

Put simply, the threat of violence defines the limits of masculinity. Where the definition of what it means to be a man is in question, where the power involved in playing a masculine role is threatened, violence is not far away. Look at our popular culture for a moment. In movies like *Fight Club*, men develop and define their identity through violence. ("How do you know who you are if you've never been in a fight?") In *American Beauty* or *Boys Don't Cry*, men use violence as a way to police the boundaries of what it means to be masculine. Any identity that is "other" than the straight, heterosexual, biologically "pure" male encroaches upon the limits of masculinity. And there lies violence. Because patriarchy is imbedded in the economic, political, social and cultural structures of our lives, men who play the traditional masculine role have power. They also have the social and sometimes legal sanction to do violence to those who question or threaten their masculinity.

Let me back up a minute and define some terms here. For me, both masculinity and femininity are social and psychological "roles" that we as human beings play. This is much different than the biological sex with which we are born. Masculinity and femininity are coded actions. Like learning a different language, we grow up and learn to speak and act according to certain codes of gender that give cultural and social meaning. The way we interact with each other socially or sexually, the way we dress, the way we talk, or even the way we hurt each other, are all based on a history of codes and meanings we have for "performing" our gender "role."

Part of our gender role is constituted by growing up in a certain environment, while part of it is a conscious choice we make. If I choose to speak in a low, gruff voice, make penetrating eye contact while standing tall, go to the gym to get big, wear a suit and tie, cut my hair short, wear a backwards baseball cap, or grow facial hair, these are all codes that signify a traditional masculine role. I could just as easily speak in a high voice, lisping my words, wear a tight silk shirt, bend my wrist when I made hand gestures, wear car-rings, even make-up, and I would be performing a whole other set of codes. Masculinity and femininity are primarily performances, not biology. Basically, I'm referring to the everyday actions of men as they meet or interact with each other. How do men treat each other, act and react, when we meet at a party or a gathering, walking on the street, driving next to each other, living in the same neighborhood, out at a club, show, bar, store, or movie, or in the corporate board room or office? I think of all the interactions I have with men. And whether it is men I know, or men I don't know, there is a certain set of rituals we go through. Standing at the urinal, driving, playing sports, making eye contact on the street, shaking hands, verbally sparring and making fun of each other, talking about emotions or ideas, there are a set of rituals that frame the way men interact. Of course there are cultural and social differences in the way these codes and ritualistic interactions play out. All I can talk about are my own experiences and what I "know" as a scholar, but like the feminist theory term "intersectionality," all men come from a variety of cultural and social differences. Depending on the way these con-

Performing Violence: A Critical Theory of Masculinity

Eric Boehme

nected "intersections" of class, race, religion, or sexual orientation interact with each other, men know and perform a certain set of rules-based interactions that form "masculinity." I am a white, lower-middle class, bisexual man who grew up in a rural Mormon family and community. Yet I've lived in urban areas for the past 11 years, interacting with gay, straight, black, latino, upper and lower class men. (All intersections of these categories too.) Talking about masculinity, I want to be careful to acknowledge the differences that these intersecting identities give. I am not trying to define what masculinity is. What I'm talking about here is primarily what most of us understand as "masculine." How men live in their bodies. And how their bodies are formed by participation in a larger context of masculine power. Because of the power traditionally wielded by white, religious, upper class, straight men, most of what defines performing masculinity comes from these guys. How do they interact with each other, other men, and women who don't fall into this specific intersection of identities?

Now when I'm talking about rules and rituals for interactions in the masculine community, I'm also referring to the way power is distributed in the institutions and cultures of this world. White, straight men historically have owned most of the businesses and property, ran most of the political regimes, created and reinforced most of the culture in the world as we know it. Men have run virtually all the religious institutions the world has known. Women, men of color, the people of the lower classes and gay people have historically been excluded from power in the economic, political and cultural institutions of the world. Certain codes have developed through history in the way men interact with each other. These codes are a way of acting that serves to protect and reinforce men's power. Feminist theorists have pointed out that one of the ways patriarchy protects and reinforces itself is through the institution of the family and the marriage contract. Laws reinforce and protect masculine power by legally sanctioning some of the gender codes men have developed through history. Underneath all of these codes, the threat of violence exists. Because women and black men were formerly seen as a form of property in slavery and the marriage contract, law becomes an essential part of the code of masculinity. Laws are developed to stabilize society by reinforcing property relations. People support laws culturally and ideologically because of the state or society's ability to punish. The threat of violence which gives the law its teeth stands behind the way the codes of masculinity developed. In a masculine world, power comes in and through following closely these codes.

Sometimes, among groups that have historically not had much political, social, or economic power, these codes become exaggerated. Social psychologists have long pointed to the exaggerated masculine posture of women in the corporate world, gay men, poor rural whites, or poor urban blacks and latinos as a way that people overcompensate for not having power in the socio-economic world. Living in the inner city, coming from a gang culture or being from a Black or Hispanic background often involves more escalation and actual violence in the way men perform their masculinity or machismo. Indeed, the very ideal of "respect," rather than being a way of treating another

with dignity, has been raised to a mythic level of acknowledging masculine power in the ultra-masculinized culture of urban, inner-city life. What we see in urban culture is the actual violence that is the background to masculinity, rather than the simulated, escalated violence associated with the discipline of the law and corporate white male culture. At the same time, the exaggerated masculinity of some of the gay male world simulates the competition of the masculine code. Body image among gay males as well as acting "butch" or "manly" simulates the performance of a traditional code of masculinity. Yet unlike traditional masculinity, sexual desire deflects the actual threat of violence. The codes of traditional masculinity rest on assumptions of heterosexual desire. Men can compete with each other without the vulnerability that sexual desire brings. Competition is interrupted by vulnerability. It is rare that violence happens when there is both sexual desire and vulnerability (this is the reason why rape and molestation are acts of power and violence, not sexual desire). In relationships without vulnerability, desensitization and objectivity are used to escalate competition, sometimes even into the realm of violence. When men treat each other as competitors, they perform and restate the code for heterosexual masculinity. In the same way, in our world today, other cultural practices simulate or perpetuate the violence that defines masculinity. Many types of sports involve escalation in simulated or actual violence, where those men who excel in sports also are held up as paradigms of traditional masculinity. Corporate life also involves a code of masculinity, with respect for authority and a competitive escalation involving winners and losers. Religious backgrounds inculcate a kind of subtle violence or escalation in the way they teach men to treat women and men to treat each other. The community of believers in religious communities are brothers, all others are enemies to either convert or kill. Indeed, the important point here is that the way masculinity works is by recognizing a set of rules that generally revolve around competition, escalation, and violence.

Negotiating violence creates the codes of power that make up and define masculinity. Either performing an escalation to violence or actually doing violence, the competition and power involved in masculinity is mediated through violence. Masculinity is lived in everyday life through a series of competitions that simulate violence, that escalate to violence without ever reaching it, or that involve outright violence. Performing and competition develop and define a masculinity, the limits of which are violence. Men have a sense of community. It is just that it is defined by competitive, non-personal interactions that have a set of rules for behavior. If these rules are broken, violence often results. How often have you seen men engaging in violence with each other? Even better, how often do you see men engaging in competition? If we see competition as a form of violence that involves escalation but never outright violence, the kind of "community" men have with each other involves a set of rules for competing with each other. As we all know, most competition involves winning and losing. Trying to win also involves a conscious decision to both play by the rules of the game and secondly to know when to give up and let another man win. I mean, look at two sort of simple but critical rituals of masculinity, eye contact and driving. Something as simple as eye contact reminds me of how men perform masculinity. I've always wondered about it when I'm walking down the street and I make eye contact with another man. Just the way you look at someone says a lot about your intentions and your respect for them. If you look too long at another man, it can be read as an instigation or a provocation. (While in a different culture of masculinity, it could be considered a cruise or a come-on.) Similarly, the competition involved in driving, cutting someone off or trying to speed off of a stoplight, often involves masculine identity. You win by going fast, you lose by letting someone in ahead of you. Look at how often road rage occurs among men. If the rules are broken, if respect is not given, if masculinity as an identity is ever in question, chances are competition will escalate to violence. It was only too clear to me that violence and masculinity go together when I talked to some people about what happened at the show and getting my nose broken. Some people thought it was horrible and completely unjustified, others, who knew and understood the rules of competition and masculinity in the mosh-pit thought I got what I deserved. I mean, you know people are windmilling and kicking in the pit, if you are close to it you pay the consequences. Especially if you get in someone's face, you better be ready to throw down, right? No, not exactly. I'm not at all a pacifist. I do think that there are times when violence is justified. But the relationship

The (False) Priority of Orgasm

by Robyn Marasco

When a former Surgeon General suggested that children learn the fundamentals of masturbation in school, an explosion of political controversy ensued. Conservative voices lamented the deterioration of Christian values and the resulting emergence of a morally vacuous culture marked by sexual permissiveness, license, and sin. Such moral deterioration, it was often argued, began in the public education system, particularly in (mostly) mandatory sex ed classes. Even moderates questioned the "appropriateness" of sex education, with their lessons on safe sex, gay parenting, and masturbation. Few liberals chimed in on behalf of the Surgeon General's campaign. Rather, a hush fell over the mainstream left—a left by now forced to make repeated apologies for the breakdown of sexual mores in the 1960s and 1970s—allowing the political discourse of sex to become almost totally dominated by moderate and conservative perspectives. And throughout this heated controversy, while I remained baffled by the idiocy of conservative moralists, I couldn't help but wonder whether these lessons in masturbation were so desperately needed. I never received instructions in school, but still seemed to navigate my way down there just fine. And I was sure that I was not alone. Masturbation did not emerge on the adolescent scene with the so-called sexual revolution. While we might support more sophisticated and realistic discussions of sex and sexuality in public schools, we might also critically examine what seems, upon first examination, a progressive political project. What are the greater implications of devoting time in sex ed classes to teaching school children how to masturbate, assuring them that masturbation is *normal* sexuality, and encouraging them to masturbate frequently to insure physical and emotional health?

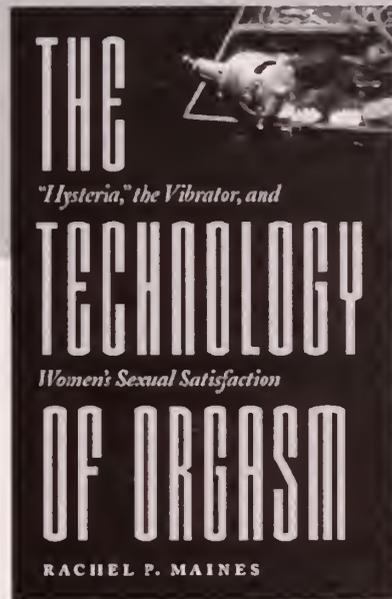
While the controversy over "masturbation education" has waned, leaving Rush Limbaugh and Dr. Laura more precious radio time for the usual gay bashing and anti-feminism, I found myself reminded of the debate (and my reactions to it) after reading *The Technology of Orgasm*, by Rachel P. Maines. *The Technology of Orgasm* traces the

between violence and masculinity should be questioned. Especially if the very definition of what it means to be masculine always ends in violence. How to question this relationship? Well, I start on a very simple level by first looking at how masculinity is not in our biology as men but in our society and culture. Thus, over time, it can be changed. Secondly, I have to learn when to question the rules of the game and when to use the rules to put myself in a better position to later change the rules. Lemme give you three examples here, two violent, one non-violent. "Well, I can say this because we're all men here," my professor says one day. "Are you sure about that?" I quipped, trying to bring attention to the fact that masculinity is a performance and that I will betray my gender when I can. Here is an everyday action a man can do to question the relationship of violence and masculinity. Safety is important though. Most of the time, if I don't feel safe I will try to be subtle and use humor rather than instigate or provoke someone. Both times I was beaten up, I made a conscious choice to respond to and provoke someone who was assuming a masculine posture and directly threatening my safety. Sometimes one has to risk their safety to try to question or change the rules of the game. The first time I had the law on my side. The guy who beat me up was convicted under the recently passed Illinois hate crime law. In this case, the rules of the game changed.

On *The Technology of Orgasm: "Hysteria," the Vibrator, and Women's Sexual Satisfaction* by Rachel P. Maines (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999)

medical and social history of that infamous battery-operated phallus—the vibrator. In its style, Maines's study reads like an elementary historical research paper, accessible enough for any interested reader, though severely lacking the depth necessary for critical analysis. To adequately deal with the enormously complicated topics of female sexuality, androcentrism, mental health and the technologies of the body, one needs a language that can circulate among these concepts with ease. While her prose was particularly conducive to a straightforward report of historical facts, it remained unable to capture the complexity of the concepts with which she was working.

What the reader gets is a glimpse of the social history of the vibrator, beginning with its emergence in the medical profession, through its many innovations and transformations, ending with its (potential) triumph as one of our most treasured household gadgets. Maines opens her discussion with an account of hysteria and its relation to androcentric views of sexuality. Hysteria, out of medical use since the American Psychiatric Association rejected its scientific foundation in 1952, played a significant role in the sexual history of Western medicine. Widely accepted by the nineteenth century as an affliction suffered by women with perceived sexual "dysfunction," hysteria (literally meaning "womb disease") functioned as an indicator of frigidity or "abnormal" sexuality. Treatment included pelvic and outer genital massage, performed mostly by doctors and midwives. Such treatment was not, by androcentric standards, regarded as stimulating sexual activity, in that it did not



And those who can convince a judge or a jury that violence was motivated by the victims perceived race, gender, or sexual orientation, now have the safety of the law to protect them from the violence of masculinity. The second time, thinking about trying to find the guy who broke my nose, I realized the law could not protect me here. Witnesses who saw it were reluctant to go to court (except the Trial guyz) because they feared for their safety. I would also have difficulty proving culpability on this guy's part because I did stand and stare into his face for a minute before he hit me. Besides, how can a court rule on who is responsible for "mosh-pit violence" given the fact that escalation and violence are an accepted (for the most part) practice in the punk/hardcore culture of masculinity? I only hope that the people who saw that interaction will think about my refusal to respond to violence with violence. Clearly, the guy suckerpunched me and I can only hope that people who saw it thought I had won some kind of moral victory by walking away. Except, oh, there I go again talking about victory, winning and losing, competing once again. It really is hard to get past those traditional masculine roles.

involve actual penetration. The chore of helping hysterical women get off was indeed that—a chore. And when professionals in Western capitalist societies are stuck with a chore they don't like, they hope for some new product, some new machine that can replace the efforts of actual human beings. Thus, as Maines points out, attention to female sexual orgasm was a burdensome job for most doctors in the nineteenth century, signaling a need for some device, some new technology to relieve the efforts of doctors, midwives, and husbands. The vibrator was just that device.

Introduced in the late nineteenth century, the electromechanical vibrator proved advantageous over time-consuming manual massage and the "capital intensive" hydriatic and steam-powered technologies. *The Technology of Orgasm*, however, lacks the analysis of capitalism that might help to illuminate the introduction of the vibrator as a replacement for actual human labor and capital intensive machinery. Therefore, Maines's analysis remains a fairly simplistic social history. Instead, we might want to situate the electromechanical vibrator among the variety of inventions developed at the dawn of capitalism's rapid industrialization.

In "Wage Labor and Capital" and elsewhere, Marx discusses the gradual replacement of human labor with machinery, asserting that such industrialization displaces already exploited workers, leaving them with lower wages or, worse, unemployment. Refuting the political economists, Marx writes:

The economists tell us, it is true, that the worker rendered superfluous by machinery will find *new* branches of employment.... Let us suppose, however, that those directly driven out of their jobs by machinery, and the entire section of the new generation that was already on the watch for this employment, *find a new occupation*. Does any one imagine that it will be as highly paid as that which has been lost?!

While the development of the vibrator did not appear to leave hoards of working men and women unemployed, it did facilitate the greater accumulation of capital by professionals in the medical industry. It greatly reduced the amount of time spent on each patient. And, as Maines points out, hysterical women provided a steady source of income for doctors, as the "disease" was essentially incurable, requiring regular and continual treatment in order to contain symptoms. The vibrator enabled both the producers and operators of the new technology to reap substantial financial benefits from women's afflictions.

What Maines does not address are the more subtle consequences of this sexual technology. This electromechanical tool acts as a mediating device, vibrating in between doctor and patient, insuring that both concentrate not on their relation to one another, but rather on their interaction with technology. It, therefore, accomplishes what only the most productive and efficient technologies can accomplish—it effectively individualizes. It personalizes. It simplifies.

However, the vibrator indicates more than the logic of industrial capitalism. As an instrument in the treatment of hysteria, it mechanically intervenes in women's sexuality, takes women's bodies as its primary site of exploration and manipulation, and effectively perpetuates the androcentric sexual norms prevailing in and out of the doctor's office. Maines draws upon Foucault's analysis of the "hysterization of women's bodies," a process through which the female body was hypersexualized, pathologized, and yet suffered the "social denial of their overtly sexual feelings." Thus, the sexual body comes into conflict with the social body, the former regarded as "thoroughly saturated" with sexuality and the latter desexualized through women's social and familial roles as wife and mother in the context of Western patriarchy. Maines, in a way far less sophisticated than Foucault, considers the "hysterization of women's bodies" to be the combined result of patriarchal social roles (though she rarely discusses their direct impact on women) and an androcentric view of sexuality as penetration and male orgasm. Her proposal—revising the androcentric model—comes in the concluding chapter of her study.

Ain't No Faking It...

Revising the androcentric model, according to Maines, is to challenge the definition of sex as involving two parts: penetration and male orgasm. It is to disrupt our "comfortable illusions about coitus," instead recognizing women's

The vibrator is a technology, a product, a commodity. We should have read enough Marx to already be wary of it. Commodities do not often liberate, but rather confine us as perpetual consumers in the prison of consumer capitalism.

orgasm as fundamental to sexual activity. It is to reclaim the vibrator, not as an instrument of the medicalization of women's bodies, but as a personal care appliance available and accessible to the women who want sexual satisfaction.

The Technology of Orgasm appears as one among many feminist explorations into the significance of female orgasm, taking the vibrator as its primary point of departure. What could have been an interesting analysis of the interconnections among technology, capitalism, hysteria, and women's sexual and social bodies amounts to little more than a call to women everywhere – *Stop Faking It!* Maines takes an underdeveloped pro-sex feminist position (though she repeatedly tries to back down from this position with the usual historian's claim of objectivity), arguing against the Dworkins and MacKinnons of the feminist community that heterosexual sex need not be the ultimate act of domination, but rather can provide women with sexual, physical, and emotional gratification if they so demand it. However, for as suspicious as I am of the anti-porn feminist position, I am no less troubled by this so-called pro-sex feminist stance, particularly Maines's version of it.

The vibrator is not the primary instrument of women's liberation. In fact, liberation in the bedroom—or, my ability to have an orgasm—is only a minor part of women's liberation. Liberation for women in the bedroom is safe—it threatens neither patriarchy, nor its complementary political and economic systems. Liberation for women in the bedroom is safe—it ensures that men enjoy the sexual pleasure derived from “aggressive” and “assertive” women. Liberation for women in the bedroom is safe—it keeps women fixated on their needs and wants in their private relations, distracted from their needs and wants in the kitchen, in the supermarket, in the welfare office, on the assembly line, in the office, in the state senate, in the Supreme Courts. Sexual liberation for women, as it has been defined by too many pro-sex feminists, is perhaps a minor disruption, but ultimately a demand that can be reasonably satisfied without any major transformations in our social, economic, or political structure. Real sexual liberation is more than my refusal to fake it, more than my orgasm on demand. Real sexual liberation is a comprehensive liberation – from oppressive social, economic, political, and domestic relations. Therefore, when our sexual liberation appears to come too easily, when it requires from us nothing more than going down the local sex toy shop and purchasing a product, we should be very suspicious.

The vibrator is a technology, a product, a commodity. We should have read enough Marx to already be wary of it. Commodities do not often liberate, but rather confine us as perpetual consumers in the prison of consumer capitalism. Maines, in fact, describes the commodity-character of the vibrator:

The vibrator was convenient, portable, and fast and thus enjoyed a considerable, if brief, popularity as a medical instrument before its discovery by consumers and by the makers of erotic films. The ultimate difficulty of the vibrator, from the point of view of the medical profession, was that it was so convenient and easy to use that it rendered unnecessary any medical intervention in the process of producing female orgasm...[Once] the vibrator became a relatively lightweight and inexpensive device that could be operated by water or electricity in the home, it became a “personal care appliance” and not a medical instrument.

However, Maines fails to provide a critique of the commodity character of this orgasmic device. What remain obscured in this description are the social relations and economic conditions under which this personal care appliance could be produced. Where is the vibrator manufactured? Who makes it? Under what conditions is it made? These battery operated sex toys are certainly not produced by the privileged First-World women who

regard them as the key to women's liberation. What does it mean to regard a multi-billion dollar sex industry – an industry whose net worth exceeds the Gross National Product of Syria, Bangladesh, Sudan, Zaire, Burma, Kenya and the list goes on – as a primary site of liberation? To what extent does the sex industry simply bring the laws of the market into new, uncharted territory – into the bedroom? Might we view this development as the manufacturing of new niche markets within consumer capitalism? These questions are not asked. They can't be asked, for pro-sex feminism requires a certain bourgeois blindness. The constant drive for more – more convenience, more orgasms, more products – conform to a troublesome pattern of greater and greater accumulation characteristic of late capitalism. As Laura Kipnis puts it:

Our sexuality is not repressed, it is produced, and in forms custom-made to our social order....Our sexuality is produced in the form of a commodity; our fantasies are repackaged and sold to us as products in porn stores; our desire has the grammar of consumer capitalism, and those sexual forms will exist as long as those social forms exist.²

The introduction of the vibrator is an instance, par excellence, of these various “social forms”.

Returning to my initial question, specifically concerning the controversy over teaching masturbation in the public school system, I wonder what are the greater implications of devoting time in sex ed classes to teaching school children how to masturbate, assuring them that masturbation is *normal* sexuality, and encouraging them to masturbate frequently to insure physical and emotional health? Specifically, I consider such educational agendas to sound dangerously similar to Foucaultian images of disciplinary society, in which hegemonic power regulates, administers, and normalizes every facet of existence, particularly those most intimate and corporeal. On a most basic level, I wondered why, with all of the problems that plague this social structure, we were stuck in a relatively insignificant debate about masturbation. My reactions to *some* of the sex discussions within the feminist community are similar. I question the greater implications of the identification of women's sexual satisfaction with women's liberation generally. I am skeptical of any study that seems to suggest that the patriarchal moment can be captured in the faking of an orgasm. If I were a conspiracy buff, I might contend that all this talk of a highly individualistic sexual liberation in the bedroom serves as a potential distraction from women's liberation in the public sphere – in familial relationships, in economic relations, in political life. I might assert that the obsession with individual gratification merely reproduces the logic of late capitalism in the bedroom, thus sustains rather than subverts the status quo.

Maines might have avoided the simplistic, overgeneralized pro-sex feminist stance had she incorporated some analysis of consumer capitalism, including those material relations of production and consumption that effectively govern the social history and significance of the vibrator. She rightly asserts:

The vibrator and its predecessors, like all technologies, tell us much about the societies that produced and used them. The device remains with us, praised by some and reviled by others, neither good, bad, nor neutral, a controversial focus of debate about female sexuality.

However, Maines does not follow through on this statement. She fails to tell us all that much about the society that produces and uses the vibrator, short some reductionist portraits of androcentric sexual norms and the championing of female orgasm in the “post-feminist” age. I enjoy orgasms just as much as the next woman, but surely there is more to the story than this.

The Marx-Engels Reader. Ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1978), p. 215.

² Laura Kipnis, *Ecstasy Unlimited: On Sex, Capital, Gender, and Aesthetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 97-99.



David vs. Goliath in the Northwoods

By Daniel Gatewood
and Rico Myszewski

Two years ago I was sitting at a campfire in Northern Wisconsin. Surrounding me were members of the Sakoagon Chippewa, members of Earth First! and various other environmental groups, and members of some of the surrounding communities. The members of the group varied widely in race, class, political views, and just about any other variable, but we were all there for a common purpose. We all opposed the mine. As I looked around the campfire, I knew that despite our differences, we had all come together in this common purpose. And I felt something special was happening. This is the story of how a grassroots movement has successfully taken on a coalition of multinational corporations. —Daniel Gatewood

Some History

Our story is set in the woods of Northern Wisconsin, but similar stories may be told in Arizona, Minnesota, New Mexico, the Dakotas and anywhere else valuable minerals have been found under the land of indigenous peoples. In 1975, the Phelps Dodge Corporation applied for the mineral rights to copper deposits on the Lac Du Flambeau Chippewa Reservation. The application presented to the tribe required the Lac Du Flambeau Chippewa to put up an advance of \$250,000 in order to participate in the exploratory stage of the project. This mercenary attempt by the Phelps Dodge Corporation is typical of the condescending ways multinationals have historically treated both indigenous peoples and third world nations. By providing the lure of potential future wealth, the corporations get their potential "partners" to provide the initial speculative investments. In this case however, the asking price was simply too high for a tribe with limited financial resources, and the tribal leaders were skeptical of the corporation's promises. When the tribe asked to see Phelps' economic feasibility reports, Phelps withdrew its proposal.

A month after this rejection, in May of 1976, Exxon announced the discovery of one of the world's largest zinc-copper deposits. This deposit was located adjacent to the Sakoagon Chippewa reservation at Mole Lake, situated at the headwaters of the Wolf River in Forest County, just a mile away from the Chippewa's wild rice lake. The smallest tribe in Wisconsin, with just over 200 members and a land base of 1,900 acres, was placed in the position of dealing with one of the world's largest corporations. The tribe's annual budget was a mere \$1,200, while the value of Exxon's energy reserves alone was in excess

of \$1,300,000,000. While the financial position of the tribe was weak, they were well aware of the history between indigenous peoples and mining companies. They decided to resist Exxon and the proposed mine. With the help of an environmental/native solidarity activist named Al Gedicks, they formed The Center for Alternative Mining Developmental Policy. They gathered what little financial support they could muster and began a fight that continues to this day. The purpose of the Center was simply to develop strategies to be used in preventing Exxon from mining their land.

The Center determined to study the possible negative social and economic impacts of the proposed mine. They studied failures of dangerous and unproven technologies, violations of native rights, and failures to comply with applicable environmental laws. It was discovered that the mine would greatly alter the wild rice production for the tribe and affect other tribes and people who lived near the area. Wild rice is an integral part of the Chippewa's lifestyle as an important cash crop as well as a sacred part of the band's religious rituals, and an essential ingredient in their diet. The proposed mine would interfere with the exercise of Chippewa's off-reservation harvest rights and would be in direct violation of treaties signed in 1855, guaranteeing access to wild rice, fish and some wild game on the lands to be utilized by the proposed mine. The Sakoagon Chippewa are particularly susceptible to these negative impacts due to the extremely small reservation land. The Menominee Reservation, located directly downstream from the proposed mine, would also be negatively impacted. The Menominee has occupied the Wolf River area for 8,000 years. In fact, the very name "Menominee" or "Omaeqnomencwak" means "Wild Rice People". The Menominee immediately recognized the potential threat to their lands and way of life and joined the Sakoagon Chippewa in their struggle against the proposed mine.

A Dismal Environmental Record

Exxon has historically had a strongly negative impact on the areas it has mined. It has also poorly handled native peoples and even their own workers. Exxon was once John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company, a monopolistic monster which attempted to crush the rise of unions and maximize profits above all else. Exxon is currently the world's largest oil producer, and also a major miner of coal, uranium, copper and other minerals. It has investments all over the world, thus

giving it tremendous power and influence. Exxon is a true multinational, whose interests lie in providing profit to their stockholders and has shown little interest in preserving the environment at a cost to their bottom line.

Exxon first became interested in native lands in the southwest. Under the name of the Standard Oil Company, it purchased an oil lease from five Diné (Navajo) men in 1923. The men at the time had no idea they were giving away the rights to their land. By the mid 1970's, Exxon laid claim to "400,000 acres of Navajo reservations, 92,000 acres of Canonicito Navajo lands, 60,000 acres of Laguna Pueblo Lands, and 60,000 acres around Mount Taylor (considered sacred by both the Diné and Pueblo peoples)". (Impacts on Indigenous Cultures-Midwest Treaty Network)

Ester Yazzie, a Diné tribal member, later commented at a Commission hearing: "We find that our culture is broken, our livelihood... We are afraid for the future of our children. What is life going to hold for the next generation? We were the keepers of the order, but the uranium mines changed all that. We have violence, social disorder, abuse of women and children... We were a people of five fingers, now some of us have more than five fingers or less than five fingers... We live in a desert where there is a lot of water, but now our water is extracted to carry coal on a slurry to a railroad to service a plant that doesn't even service our needs". (Ibid.)

One of Exxon's mines, El Cerrejon, located on Wayuu (Guajro) land in the northern tip of Columbia, was put on the Survival International's list of Top Ten Corporate Violators for their infringement of native rights. Between the years of 1986 and 1990, 32 mineworkers died on the job at this mine. The Wayuu had their water poisoned and their homes covered with coal dust. Exxon even dug up their graves to make way for an ore-hauling railroad. Jerry Goodrich, vice-president of operations at El Cerrejon, has been involved as the president of the proposed mine at Crandon. One Wayuu leader said, "he promised us jobs and prosperity and instead worked to destroy our traditional ways and forced us from our land. This must not happen again. To allow this mine is to disappear from the earth." (Cultural Aspects of Exxon's Proposed Crandon Mine-Midwest Treaty Network)

Ricardo Plata, the Deputy Project Manager at El Cerrejon, was quoted as saying, "any process of development logically does violence to social structures, and produces, in some cases, if not physical ethnicides, certainly cultural ethnicides." (Gutierrez, *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Summer 1984) In 1989, Exxon had the worst mine safety record among the top twenty mining firms.

Exxon's other notorious blunder is the famous Valdez oil spill. Exxon purchased the port of Valdez for one dollar from the Chugach tribe in 1969 with the promise that Prince William Sound would be protected. Not only has the spill damaged traditional hunting and fishing sites of the Chugach, Eyak, and other tribes, but also many cultural sites were robbed or vandalized during the cleanup effort.

The Social Costs

It is important to recognize the role multinationals play in environmental damage, but they also exact a high social toll on the inhabitants of the land they destroy. Native people in particular suffer a disproportionate environmental risk of illness from ingesting fish, deer, and other



wildlife contaminated with industrial pollutants. In general, the more self-sufficient and reliant on the land, the greater the impact environmental damage will have on a people. One reason Native Americans have a great respect for the Earth is their direct reliance on its health. The Sakoagon Chippewa rely heavily on hunting and fishing for food, as well as gardening, harvesting rice, and picking wild plants. (Final Impact Statement, Exxon Coal and Minerals Co.) The odds of getting ill with a mine in your backyard increase tremendously with the introduction of airborne pollutants such as PCBs and other contaminants that may leak onto land or into the water supply.

Some More History

The intrusion of Exxon onto Chippewa tribal land began in September 1975, when Exxon gave a \$20,000 check to the Sakoagon Chippewa tribal chairperson for the right to explore for minerals on the tribe's small reservation. At the same time, Exxon began making offers to buy land in the surrounding area, including one to buy forty acres of corporate owned timberland, one mile away from the reservation, for \$200,000. One week later, the tribal council learned of the check given to the chairperson and tore it to pieces. Myra Tuckwab, a tribal member, summed up the feelings of many reservation residents by saying, "we like where we're living. They put us here years ago on federal land and now that we're here - they discover something - and they either want to take it from us or move us away from it. We don't want to do this. This is where I belong. This is my home. This is where my roots are and this is where I'm gonna stay." (Gedicks, Al. The New Resource Wars - Native and Environmental Struggles Against Multinational Corporations, South End Press, 1993, pg. 63)

In 1976, Exxon submitted permit applications to begin mining, only to withdraw them in 1986, citing depressed mineral prices. This put an end to the mining dispute for six years. Exxon returned in 1992, and, with mineral prices once again on the rise, once again proposed undertaking the mining project. In addition to better market prices, the political climate was much friendlier towards mining. Tommy Thompson, a staunch Republican, was in the Governor's seat, and viewed the potential income from the mine as more valuable than potential environmental effects. And this time Exxon didn't come alone. They brought a partner. Rio Algom, a mining corporation based in Canada, had taken on fifty percent of the project. The new company created for the mining project was called the Crandon Mining Company. Rio Algom has an environmental record very similar to, and in some aspects even worse than, Exxon's. It is best known for its disaster at the Elliot Lakes mines in Ontario, where radioactive and heavy metals were leaked from the mines into the Serpent River over a twenty-year span. A nearby Ojibwa reservation was forced to halt all fishing due to chronic diseases, fetal deaths and abnormal births.

Environmentalists had taken notice of the proposed mine and had begun organizing by the time Exxon filed its mine application with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in December of 1982. They had begun to visit the area of the proposed mine and started preliminary environmental testing and meeting with local residents. The Wisconsin Resources Protection Council (WPRC) was established with the intent of opening a dialogue among those that would be directly impacted by the mine. These groups included the Sakoagon Chippewa, the Forest County Potawatomi, the Menominee, and their non-native neighbors. Opposition to the mine grew quickly. With the help of federal agencies and nationally affiliated environmental organizations, the proposed mine became a publicly debated issue throughout Wisconsin and the Midwest. Other mining companies had taken notice of the debate as well, and over a dozen of these looked to the outcome of the Crandon mine as a potential precedent.

In January of 1998, Exxon sold its fifty percent interest in the Crandon Mine Company to Rio Algom. The Crandon Mine Company

then changed its name to the Nicolet Minerals Company. Exxon retains a profit-sharing agreement with Rio Algom under the terms of the sale. For the purposes of clarity, I will continue to refer to the newly formed Nicolet Minerals Co. as the Crandon Mine Company. This is the name which is still most popularly used by local residents when discussing the proposed mine. Despite the changes in official name, the proposed mine is still generally called the Crandon Mine, or the Exxon Mine.

The Mine

The proposed mine would rest on an area ceded by the Chippewa nation to the US in 1842, and directly on a 12 square mile tract of land promised to the Mole Lake Sakoagon Chippewa in 1855. As discussed above, these treaties guarantee the Chippewa access to wild rice, fish, and wild game on these lands. The Mole Lake Reservation that was founded in 1934 harvests Wisconsin's largest wild rice crop in the nearby Rice Lake. A nearby creek, Swamp Creek, runs from the proposed mine directly into Rice Lake. It is this creek that would experience the greatest amount of pollutant runoff, and feed right into Rice Lake. The mine itself will be a vertical slab, about one mile in length, averaging two hundred feet in width and extending to a depth of 2,800 feet.

Since 1974, approximately 1,200 boreholes have been drilled in the area of the proposed mine to collect exploratory and projected environmental impact of the mine. The holes, seemingly harmless, have scarred much of the historical battlegrounds where Sokoagon Chippewa and the Dakota Nation once fought. Also, many burial sites have been disturbed as a result of these cultural and environmental surveys. In this way, it can be seen that even attempts to operate in a culturally and environmentally humane way can have seriously negative impacts on a land and culture.

Exxon's projected \$900 million investment in developing the Crandon mine was part of their diversification into base metal mining. Throughout the mid-seventies and into the eighties, oil companies began buying out other smaller oil companies, and also looked to expand vertically as well as horizontally. This brought these companies to begin exploring mining for minerals as well as oil. There are differences between drilling for oil and mining for minerals however. First, the development and discovery of mineral resources is capital and time intensive. Second, unlike oil, the demand and price of minerals is quite volatile. Third, the payback on mineral investments takes much longer to realize, as mines may not contribute revenues until many years after beginning the mining process. Finally, mining is much more visible to the public, as it requires a much more environmentally intrusive operation.

The Environmental Impact

The Crandon Mining Company plans to divert about 1,000,000 gallons of ground water from the mine each day during its twenty to thirty year operating life. This is necessary to keep the shafts dry and safe for mining. The wastewater produced from the mine will be sent across a 38 mile pipeline, from the mine site to a discharge point below the Hot Rapids Dam near Tomahawk, Wisconsin. This pipeline would threaten both the Great Lakes and Mississippi watersheds. The result would be a dramatic lowering of the groundwater and surface water in lakes and streams around the mine, resulting in the death of fish, wildlife and the wild rice harvests. This lowering of the water table would pull water out of the aquifer for up to 16 square miles, eventually altering the flow of water to nearby wetlands. This could also lower the water levels of nearby lakes by several feet, and completely dry up wells and streams.

An estimated 60 million tons of acidic waste would be generated over the life of the mine. About half of this would consist of fine

tailings, similar to a powder, containing high levels of acid-generating sulfides and other heavy metals (arsenic, lead, cadmium, zinc, copper, and mercury). When these sulfide tailings mix with air and water, they form sulfuric acid. The tailings from the project would cover an area the size of 350 football fields and would be stored in tailing ponds, each of which would be 90 feet deep. The other half, the coarser tailings, would be re-deposited into the mine as landfill.

To safely dispose of these contaminants, the waste would have to be isolated from the environment permanently. The Crandon Mining Company has proposed covering and lining the tailings with a synthetic material that has a warranty of 50 years. The Company, as currently proposed, will only be responsible for this liner system for 40 years. After that time, the responsibility would go to the taxpayers to foot the bill for the costs of monitoring, maintaining, and replacing the system. According to Jerry Goodrich, president of the Crandon Mine Company, the plastic liner underneath the toxic mine waste will dissolve in 140 years. He is quoted as saying, "after 140 years, it vaporizes. It's gone." (Culhane, Ed. *Post-Crescent*, Appleton, 12/3/95) The DNR says that as presently designed, the proposed liner at the bottom of the waste dump "would not provide adequate protection to the groundwater."

According to the US Bureau of Mines, drainage from other sulfide mines has already affected 12,000 miles of rivers and streams and 180,000 acres of lakes and ponds. "Acid mine drainage is generally regarded as potentially the single largest cause of negative environmental impacts resulting from mining." (Reese, Beverly, "Acid Mine Drainage: Perpetual Pollution" *Clementine*, Mineral Policy Center, Winter '95, pg. 3) According to one Exxon engineer, from the standpoint of the wetlands, the ground water, and the overall typography, "you couldn't find a more difficult place to mine" than the proposed Crandon Mine site. (*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, 1/30/96) The mine would create the largest waste heap in Wisconsin history. The DNR says the sulfide level in nearby creeks would rise fivefold, with threefold level increases in lead and arsenic.

The Economic Impact

Besides the environmental and cultural impact of the proposed mine, the economy of the region would also be altered. The mine would run seven days a week and would employ, according to the mine industry, 750 people during construction of the facility, and approximately 400-500 during its operation. Jobs are often the most cited reason for bringing industry into an area. But the economic impact of mines are generally "boom and bust." This cycle has historically devastated communities across the globe. Mines generally attract more workers than they can employ, and jobs seldom go to local residents. Even though Exxon can promise new jobs will be created, they do not promise they will go to local residents. A former mayor of a coal boom town, Craig, Colorado, said, "the mining companies' economic growth projections weren't worth the paper they were written on." (Gedicks, "Nashville Under Siege")

The Fight Against the Mine

Since the creation of the Crandon Mining Company in 1993, the Wolf River, at the headwaters of the Crandon Mine, has been assigned endangered river status by American Rivers, the nation's leading river conservation organization. The Wolf River is not only considered sacred to many tribal peoples, but also serves as a popular recreational area. Thousands flock to the river each year to enjoy boating, fishing and the scenery. The Wolf River is one of the last wild rivers in the Midwest, and Congress has recommended the river be placed on a list of national Wild and Scenic Rivers.

A day after the American Rivers designated the Wolf River as a threatened river, the Crandon Mining Company announced it was abandoning its plans to dump treated wastewater into the Wolf River. Instead, it planned to build a pipeline and divert the wastewater into the Wisconsin River near Rhineland. The threat to the Wolf River remains,

however, as the mine wastes would still be stored at the headwaters of the river.

In September of 1994, Wisconsin amended its state statutes to allow the introduction of pollutants from drilling fluids for mining activities into groundwater. The state then went on to permit the Crandon Mine Company to conduct a pump test for 72 hours. The test lasted thirty days. This test, it was estimated, discharged six million gallons of wastewater, flooding the very heart of the Sakoagon Chippewa's land. The following year the rice harvest failed.

Yet resistance to the mine remains high. In March of 1997, thanks to the efforts of a grassroots coalition of native peoples and environmental groups, a Mining Moratorium Bill was passed through the Wisconsin Senate, and later the Assembly. The bill, sponsored by Representative Spencer Black, requires the DNR to refrain from issuing permits to metallic sulfide mines (like the Crandon Mine) until the company can point to a similar project that has operated for 10 years and been closed for 10 years without polluting ground or surface waters. This bill is a major roadblock for the Crandon Mine Company and represents a tremendous victory for those who oppose the mine. As discussed above, both Exxon and Rio Algom have not been able to complete a mining project without significant pollution to both ground and surface waters.

Many groups have been able to gain worldwide support in their defense of the environment and tribal rights. In May of 1997, 40 Mole Lake tribal members forcibly took over tribal headquarters to protest what they believe is a collusion between their tribal leaders, including the tribal chairman, and the Crandon Mining Company. This group of protestors



was also concerned with the tribe's environmental engineer allowing federal and state agencies to collect sensitive environmental data against the tribal council's wishes. Several of the accused tribal members were forcibly removed from their positions as a result of this protest.

In June of 1997, local residents of the town of Nashville, Wisconsin threw out their town board by electing new officials to four out of the five seats on the board. A representative from the Sakoagon Chippewa tribe now holds a seat on the board. The previous board had announced that it was ready to approve an agreement with the mining company to allow them to begin operations on town land. This board then held a meeting on the agreement. Three hundred people were in attendance to protest this agreement, yet the board gavelled the meeting closed shortly after it began, refusing to allow any of the residents in attendance were able to speak. Shortly after this meeting, ninety-nine percent of the eligible voters in Nashville turned out to overwhelmingly throw out the town board. Crandon Mine officials continue to insist that the contract they signed with the town of Nashville is binding, despite the fact that no community members were allowed participation in the decision-making process. Local residents are currently challenging this under Wisconsin's open meeting law.

In August, 1999, the Federation of Fly Fishers announced the Wolf River as the most endangered river in the US, based on the threat it faces from the proposed mine.

The broad based coalition to oppose the Crandon Mine has fought an uphill battle from the very start. Faced with the intimidating financial and political resources of Exxon and Rio Algom, environmentalists and

native rights activists struggled to form a coalition that was inclusive rather than exclusive. Indigenous peoples worked diligently to form new alliances with old enemies. They chose to put aside old feuds over spear fishing rights and joined together with hunters, fishermen and other outdoors enthusiasts to resist the mine and its possible environmental harm. The inclusion of the fishing organizations in particular was important because they are generally seen as nonpartisan, average folk by many in Northern Wisconsin. Once these groups began acting in concert, they have worked hard to maintain their alliances. For example, organizers of the speaking tours against the mine insured that at each community visited, townspeople would hear from an environmentalist, a sport fisher, and a tribal member. (Shepard Express, 4/23/98) These agreements reinforced solidarity and coalition supporters worked hard to make sure no one group took charge to the detriment of any other group. The struggle against the mine continues, as Rio Algom continues to attempt to manipulate Wisconsin's mining laws in its favor. Yet the grassroots coalition has met them at every turn. It is an example of how people, working together, can effectively defeat even multinationals. Many environmental and tribal groups now look to the Crandon Mine issue as a blueprint for organizing opposition to proposed incursions into the land.

For more information:

Indigenous Environmental Network <http://www.alphacode.com/icn>

Midwest Treaty Network <http://www.alphacdc.com/treaty/antimine.html>
Nashville, Wisconsin

<http://www.nashvillewiundersiege.com/wyskenv.html>

Adult Liberation and the Meaning of Work: an interview with Michael Fogler

By basil

Michael Fogler is the author of Un-Jobbing: The Adult Liberation Handbook—a book that wants you to “free yourself from a life of merely earning a paycheck, in order to reclaim a liberated life in complete alignment with your personal values.”

As someone who has moved through college to the working world—someone who has been dedicated to living an alternative lifestyle more in line with my values—I wanted to grasp onto a vision about work that meant more than an eight-to-five day, 40 hour week simply for the paycheck. I didn't want to give my mind and labor to someone every day without some personal fulfillment. Michael Fogler's book brought forth one of the inspiring ideas I grabbed onto. Un-Jobbing has become an essential part of my life, and I find it important enough to share with everyone I can.

Basil: *What is Un-jobbing and where did this idea originate?*

Michael Fogler: Un-Jobbing is a word I “coined” to describe a philosophy and a way of life—a way of looking at “paying the bills” without swallowing whole the cultural baggage that goes with the concept of career. Basically, it's about spending all the moments of your life—including those moments where you are earning income—in activities that are in full alignment with your values.

What are some essential ideas of Un-jobbing?

Don't think about things which are geared toward career, think about things which are geared toward a fulfilling life. Think about how much materialism is “enough.” Be very conscious about your personal economic behavior pattern. Be very conscious about what your values truly are. Those are some of the essential ideas.

How and when did you begin Un-jobbing?

In one sense, I've been Un-jobbing my entire adult life. I got into this because I was a “failure” in the conventional, mainstream job market. No need to go into details, but I never, not once, landed a full-time, career type of job. I certainly tried very hard; but it never happened. For a long time I was miserable because of this. Eventually, I decided “to make lemonade out of the lemon” so to speak, and I decided to think of not being in the conventional career world as a positive. Suddenly, that resonated, and I've been much happier ever since. My ends continue to be met (and actually always have been met). And, I'm doing what I truly want to do. So, I sat up and said: What's the problem?

What have some complications and perks been in your life because of this?

Nothing gets rid of complications short of death! So, yeah, there are complications. One of the things my family has done is reduce our household to one car. I love the financial savings and the environmental applications of that; and it's kept me healthier (I do a lot of bicycling). But it does require a lot of coordination between my wife and me about who has the car and when. Other than that, we don't have any other complications that anyone else living in a more conventional way wouldn't have. The perks are too numerous to mention! I don't have anywhere to regularly report. I actually spend time at home. I have a connection with my son which could not be possible living the other way. I experience less stress than most people. etc. etc.

In your book, you propose that taking responsibility for your financial life is essential to Un-jobbing. How would a person go about

Doing this?

You need to take on what I call the program of conscious personal economics. The details of this are too much for this interview. This is the major "homework" of the book. Basically, it's about getting very aware about what you're spending money on and how much, and getting very clear about whether those expenditures are truly in alignment with your values. A side issue with this is also to get very clear about the financial costs of your income-earning activities. Most people haven't thought about the fact that a lot of the money spent by people is *because* of their jobs: transportation, childcare, services because we're too busy or tired, restaurant eating versus eating at home—and on and on and on. This is a very important calculation to realize.

How closely do you calculate your finances?

For several years, right down to the penny. Now, I've loosened up a bit because I think that I have a good handle on being aware about my spending and a good handle on my spending's alignment with my values.

What values are you referring to in terms of catering spending habits toward?

First, a word of caution. These are my values. I'm not about getting other people to copy me! My values are my values and your values are your values. Mine suit me, but they're not "better" than yours.

But, to give you an example: I eat vegan, which is totally vegetarian including no dairy or eggs. I do this not only for health reasons, but also for environmental, political, and spiritual reasons. So, when I'm at a food store, I'm obviously not going to buy any animal products. And, regarding the plant foods that I buy, I will try to have them as local and organic as I possibly can. That also speaks to my values. If I want to buy an article of clothing, somewhat less clear-cut values come into place: Do I really have a need for this in the first place? Is the item I'm considering made from sweatshop labor? These questions relate to my values of low materialism, living as lightly on Earth as I can, and economic justice. This can be difficult. It takes quite an effort, for example, to find athletic shoes that aren't from some labor-exploitive Asian factory.

Do you need money in savings to do this?

If you think you do, yes. I certainly doesn't hurt. And while it's not **absolutely** essential, I recommend having some reserves at all times.

What are some ways to make money besides the 40-hour work week?

Now we're getting to the second big step after the program of conscious personal economics. That step is a thorough, honest self-inventory. What are your values? Why are you here on Earth? What do you think is essential to have in your life? What are your talents and

gifts? Getting clear about this can enable one to find ways to make money that are still in alignment with values and still in a good balance among all your other activities. What I've done is to carve out a freelance, home-based life. I don't consider myself a "career counselor" or even a moonlighting counselor. I do believe that if you do the work on yourself and begin to take baby steps toward some idea, then opportunities will present themselves, and things will work out. I've gone through the last decade with this philosophy, and it hasn't failed me yet.

How would a person with no assets, who is barely scraping by latch on to these ideas and make them a reality in their life?

First of all, if this person were to do the program of conscious personal economics, it's very likely that s/he would begin to scrape by much more easily. Perhaps, the Un-jobbing ideas are even more important for a person like this. Almost anyone can reduce his or her expenses. Having less expenses can buy the person some breathing room and some freedom. Financial stress is the result of expenses being too close to income or expenses exceeding income. Change that equation to having a reasonable cushion of income being higher than expenses and financial stress goes away. This is true if you're "barely scraping by" or if you're a millionaire.

What if someone who was barely scraping by recalculated their finances, cut out all extraneous expenses, had no money in savings, no car or house to sell, etc. and their expenses due to debt, doctor bills, etc. still outweigh their income. They are working 40 hours a week and truly are trying to Un-job. Through your book, they've managed to relieve some financial burden, but haven't been able to Un-job in terms of quitting their

40-hour per week. What do you suggest to them? Is there a limitation to whom Un-jobbing applies?

There is a limitation, but hopefully in a temporary way only. If someone was really strapped with debt and has very little assets, they may need to do the heavy work load—for a temporary amount of time. Maybe it's 6 months, maybe a year or 2 or more. However, at some point, when the debt is gone, a more genuine Un-jobbing strategy could be done. Avoiding debt is one of the major principles to follow. Having a sane financial situation and debt, I believe, cannot coexist. (The only exception here would be a mortgage for a house.)

Many people reading this interview are young adults who are questioning adulthood and what their life's work is going to be. What kind of advice would you give to someone who is starting out in their adult-

*"This little book bursts with guts, information, and inspiration."
—Grace Llewellyn, author of The Teenage Liberation Handbook*

UN-JOBGING

THE ADULT LIBERATION HANDBOOK

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hood?

Listen to the truth within you—**whatever** it is. Follow it. Know that that truth is there for a reason: it has to do with the answer to the question “Why am I here on Earth?” Realize that no one on their deathbed has ever said: “I wish I had spent more time on my business.” True abundance is having enough money to meet your expenses while doing what resonates with your heart.

Define “Adult Liberation.”

It's Un-jobbing! It's having the freedom to be and to do what one truly wants to be and to do.

How much of Un-jobbing is about economics?

Paradoxically, Un-jobbing has everything to do with economics (because we live in a monied society and I'm not talking about going off to live in a cave); and it has nothing to do with economics (because it's really and truly about how you are spending your **life**, not about how you are spending your money).

In your book, you quote Matthew Fox's definition of work as “the joyful returning of one's gift to their community.” Do you have any insight into the process necessary in order to tap one's creativity and uniqueness in ways to develop reciprocal relationships in their communities?

I'm constantly looking for this myself. It happens in multitudes of unique ways. First of all, I believe that if you are truly living according to your heart, then you will, by definition, be a gift to the community. The other side of that is that creating more “community” in our collective lives is something that commonly resonates with just about all of us. Any acts of service, cooperation, bartering, and so on can help create such community. Our society is a mere infant when it comes to this stuff. Humans used to do this as a normal way of life, but modern agriculture, industrialism, and capitalism changed all that.

How can people help each other Un-job, or find their life's work and pursue it?

I recommend getting together with other like-minded people to help and support one another for this work. For example, people doing the program of conscious personal economics can get together and compare notes and experiences. Also, people doing the thorough self-inventory can get together and answer those questions I stated above out loud to one another. I have found that that can be quite an inspiring experience. It can be amazing what is revealed about a person's deepest truth when they are speaking in a circle of trusted friends delving into this kind of really important stuff.

Are there networks of people doing this?

There are journals, websites, etc. And, there are small “voluntary simplicity” groups all over the US and in many other countries. Check out simpleliving.net on the internet for a list of such groups and lots of other good information. Starting your own group is also quite easy. All you need is as few as 2 or 3 others and some guidelines from resources like my book and many others.

How does Un-jobbing tie in with the “voluntary simplicity” movement? How do the philosophies overlap?

The voluntary simplicity movement is a broader concept than Un-jobbing. Voluntary simplicity can include Un-jobbing ideas, but it can also be things like socially responsible investing or cleaning out your closets and attics, things which are all fine and good but may not get to the heart of having a truly fulfilled life. I see Un-jobbing as bolder, and dealing with the central core issue of a person's life: why are you here? and, how are you going to spend your minutes, hours, days, years that

will resonate with and fulfill the answer to the first question?

I love Grace Llewellyn's book The Teenage Liberation Handbook. Does the Un-jobbing movement tie in to the deschooling movement?

Absolutely! I am “unschooling” with my son. And, when I was nearing the completion of writing my book, I suddenly realized the link between Un-jobbing and unschooling. They're both about living a life of freedom and purpose, whether the person is 6 or 16 or 46. I then came up with the idea of “The Adult Liberation Handbook” as my subtitle. I wrote to Grace Llewellyn to ask if she was comfortable with my borrowing from her book title. She wrote back, graciously giving my book (and complete title) her blessing and saying that she was glad that someone was writing a book about extending the unschooling idea into adulthood.

Please name some examples of Un-jobbing at work in people's lives.

I'll start with myself: I'm a musician and play “gigs” and teach lessons. I also do a newsletter for a local, nonprofit peace and justice organization. And, I sell a few books and occasionally earn money speaking and presenting about these ideas. Un-jobbing for someone else might mean doing what they've been doing, but maybe doing it less than “full-time.” Keep in mind that the 40-hour workweek is pure invention. It is nothing to do with what's essential, and can therefore be un-invented by anyone who wants to. Lots of people are earning money with computer skills (like being a graphic artist) doing it in a home-based freelance way, instead of doing it 60-70 hours a week for a big-time corporation. I have other brief examples of people making Un-jobbing work in their lives in my book.

Do you have any closing comments?

I'm a firm believer in baby steps. Most people are frozen when it comes to making life changes because they want to know that if they make a change that everything will be all right. But, I have found that as long as I stay at point A I can never know how things will be (“turn out”) at point B unless I move to point B. The Universe never truly reveals about point B as long as I stay at point A. The only way to know is to move. So, I encourage people who have some new life in mind that is scary for them to contemplate moving toward, to think of one baby step that they would be comfortable doing **right now** that would face them in the direction that they want to go. After making that first baby step, see how you feel and then think of another baby step. Then make that step, take another deep breath and then think of and take another baby step. Soon, doors will present themselves that could not be seen or could not be available back at that point A.

I'm a prime example. When I first began Un-jobbing, I hadn't even thought of the word, much less had any notion that one day I would write a book about it and even make some money doing it! And, if you were to talk to me in another few years, who knows what I may be doing? I certainly don't! The bottom line here: listen to your gut, and have trust and faith.

To contact Michael, or to order a copy of his book, email him at mfogler@jgc.org, or write to him via: Free Choice Press, Post Office Box 1027, Lexington, KY 40588-1027.

Franky &
joey find
5 bucks.



to: clamor
from: billy



1) quit pushen
me, you big
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gimmie!
gimmie!



4 excuse me kind
monsters. the wind
blew my 5 dollars out of
my purse.
can i
please
have it?



5 if this is your loot, you
better prove it girlie!

what's the
serial number
on this bill?

thats not
fair to her
joey!



6 hahaha... thats easy.
its B73213559E! ha!

you are dead
wrong! that
last letter
is an "F"!



7 you
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your
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sister!

No!

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a sec.



8 ha.ha.
it was an
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seems the bill
is a bit worn.

ha. ha.
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to the
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ease our
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END!



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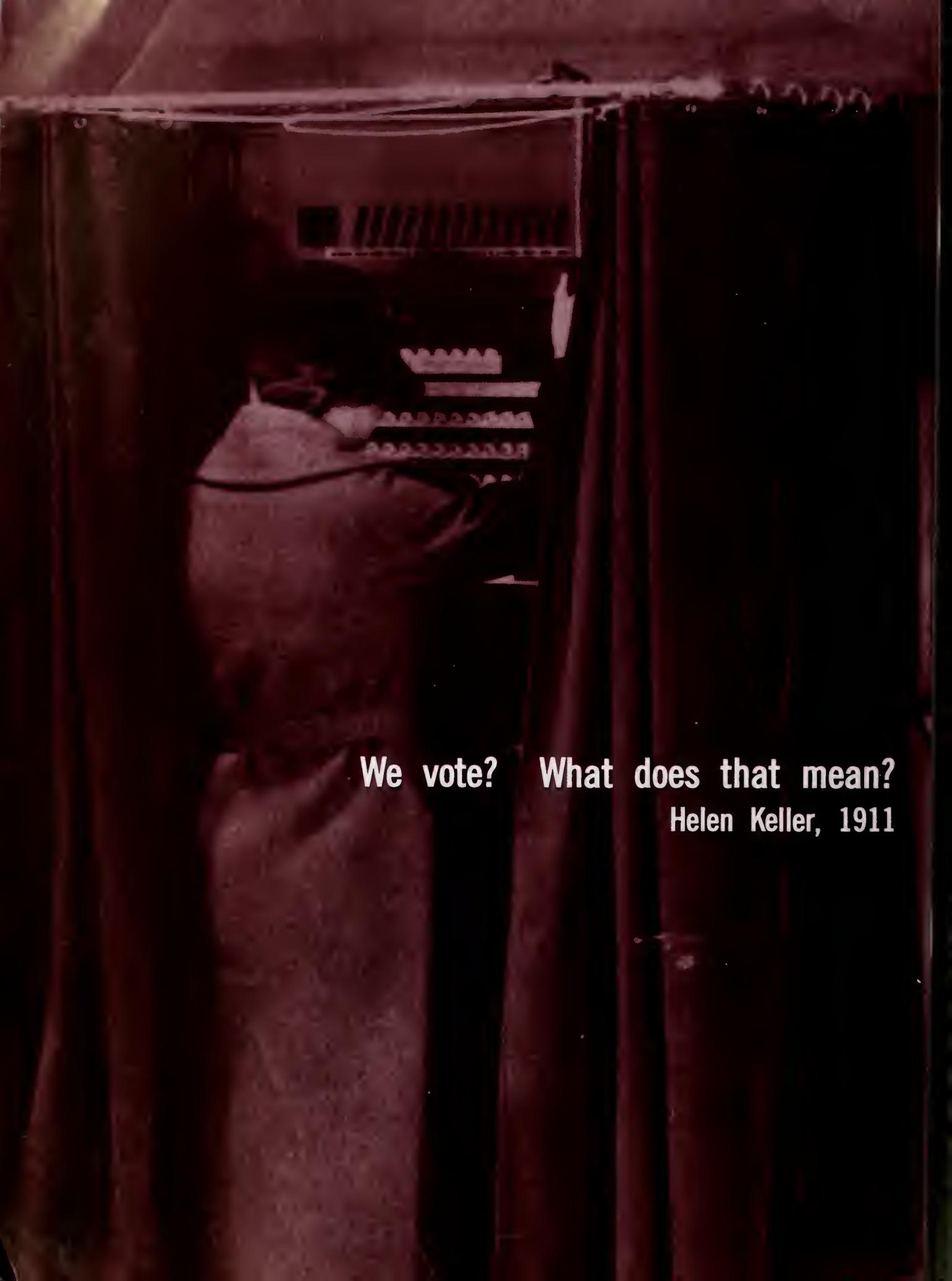
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