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New Perspectives on Politics, Culture, Media and Life

clamor

July/August 2001

Policing The People

maintaining control in a democracy

inside
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**Militarizing
the Border**

from Behind Bars
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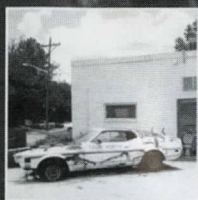
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The original idea for the focus of this issue was to have people talk about the various ways that thought, action and free will are criminalized in America. In other words, we wanted this issue to examine the ways that perfectly legal activities are criminalized in one way or another because they challenge the status quo. Why is an assembly of people considered legal in one sense, while another gathering is targeted by police and results in arrests, injuries and drawn-out legal battles? Why do we consider state-sanctioned drugs to be more acceptable, yet criminalize the casual user of recreational "illegal" drugs? Why is free speech protected as long as it is non-threatening or popular, but often suppressed when it becomes critical? And why is it perfectly acceptable for corporations to float freely back and forth across the borders of this continent, but we imprison people for doing the same thing?

So when we considered these and other rhetorical questions, we recognized that the focus of this issue deals not only with criminalizing free will and action, but it also touches on the various ways that a population can be controlled without thinking it is controlled. Of course it helped that we started to get some really great contributions early on, like the interview with author Christian Parenti about his book *Lockdown America*. Freja Joslin does a great job of putting this book in context and asking some poignant questions. That, along with Jose Palafox's article on the militarization of the U.S. - Mexico border, convinced us that we were headed in the right direction.

However, this focus, or "theme" if you will, is not limited to prisons and the police. By focusing on "Policing The People," we also wanted to consider other, more subtle ways that thoughts and actions are controlled. Good examples of these would be Andrew Hartman's experience as an unorthodox teacher, and C. Thomsen's exposé of Phillip Morris' outlandish (yet common) advertising philosophy. These things, just like prisons, are accepted as commonplace or necessary in America and it is easy to think of them as such. However, it is important to examine and understand the long term effects of prisons, police repression, media & advertising, etc. on our culture.

As usual, this wouldn't be an issue of clamor without a lot of other topics thrown in the mix - variety is the spice of life, right? Whether it be coffee enemas (yes, for real. See page 88) or hitchhiking, the most important part of clamor is printing your ideas, thoughts and experiences, whether or not they fit into our idea of a theme or focus. As always, we hope you enjoy this issue and would love to hear any comments you might have,

Thanks for reading,

Jen Angel Jason K.

A FEW NOTES

Notice the higher cover price?

If you purchased this and other issues of clamor on the newsstand, you might have noticed that we have increased our cover price by \$.50. The subscription rate and direct-purchase price (from us) is still four dollars. We felt the slight increase in cover price would help make it worthwhile to keep clamor on the newsstand and in chain stores, and we also thought it might be a gentle nudge for our regular readers to subscribe to CLAMOR and show your support. Of course the next best thing would be to buy clamor from your locally owned independent store.

Looking for Part 2 of The Siege of Toledo?

Many of you read "The Siege of Toledo" (April/May 2001) and may be looking for the conclusion to Pavlito Geshos' essay that called for a protracted struggle against "vulnerable, non-moving capitalist targets" like DaimlerChrysler in Toledo, Ohio. Due to space limitations, we are not able to include the second half of the essay in this issue. However, we have published the essay in its entirety online at www.clamormagazine.org.

POLICING THE PEOPLE

CLAMOR • A Loud And Continued Uproar Of Many Human Voices • Number 9 • July/August 2001



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Letters

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

Dear Editor:

With regard to Nate Dogg's article "Oh Canada!" (April/May 2001), the honorary chair of the Council of Canadians is Maude BARLOW not Maude Merlow. Also, according to author Marq de Villiers in his fine book "Water" (Stoddart, Toronto, 1999), Canada has 5.6% of the world's freshwater, not the oft-quoted 20% Dogg cites. Brazil has 20%, the ex-Soviet Union 10.6% and China 5.7%.

Ken Timewell
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Clamor:

Just wanted to respond to Charlotte Green Honigman-Smith's "The Poor Who Are with Us" (February/March 2001). It's NOT "people at WIC" who make decisions about what the WIC subsidies cover, it's Congress, sometimes acting on recommendations from the agencies or subcommittees, sometimes acting AGAINST these recommendations, as it did in the gutting of the social welfare programs in the 1980s. These cuts were responsible for the majority of limitations and petty restrictions mentioned in Honigman-Smith's article (budget cuts carried by 9 consistent democratic swing votes in the senate). With upcoming tax cut requests, Ms. Honigman-Smith can certainly give that kid and his mother whatever cereal and fresh produce they need, and perhaps even easier, and more important, she can ensure that the same woman can still buy block cheeses, milk, juice and beans at the end of the year.

These budget votes may seem obscure to us, but their intention is always a lot more clear to Congress, and we need to hold our Representatives and Senators accountable for their votes on proposed cuts. They may use their votes as political tools, but they should be using them to mollify you, not the President. Let them know you pay attention to their support of social programs, and let them know you find these idiotic pr, high-profile restrictions offensive, counter-productive to the health of the nation and a big waste of legislative time. You can be general, specific, angry or friendly. It's

easy, quick and you can do this everyday, or once a week, or once a month, on your schedule, by phone, email or snailmail.

With upcoming budget cuts, voter feedback is crucial to the survival of America's poor and disenfranchised, and the tone government takes to social service cuts will surely inform other votes on education, health insurance, food safety - you name it. Get your reps contact information online at www.senate.gov or www.house.gov or call your local League of Women Voters. And Charlotte, if you don't, as far as I see it, that woman should be giving those looks to you.

Nancy Ralph
NY Food Museum
Nlralph@aol.com

Clamor,

I just finished reading the last issue of Clamor and I know this is beginning to sound like a cliché, but I can't believe how good this magazine continues to get. I was particularly impressed by Kevin Keating's "The Poor, The Bad, and The Angry." As someone with personal experience ripping off employers it blew me away to see someone approaching the subject of fucking your employer from a moral perspective. Hilarious, moving and radical all at once. Can't wait 'till next month.

Anonymous,
Stony Plain, British Columbia

Clamor,

I want to thank Jordan Green for the very generous review of my book, "Hideous Dream" in the April/May 2001 issue. One small correction, however, since I believe he reviewed the final draft. Since it's gone to press, the title is now "Hideous Dream: A Soldiers' memoir of the US Invasion of Haiti".

Thanks again to Jordan Green and Clamor. Fine work.

Yours for a new future,
Stan Goff

Dear Clamor Magazine,

I recently received my first issue of Clamor Magazine and I just thought I would tell you how pleased I am with the product and the overall commitment to truth the magazine has.

Having grown up in a small Connecticut town, I know all too well the feeling of getting blank stares and raised eyebrows for being different. For having a larger vocabulary, seeking truth in everything I do, the values of human differences and lecturing my freshman year English class on the evil of the American capitalist monster that is our economic system. It's awesome that I can finally put trust in a form of the "media" that won't choose not to publish something for fear of commercial failure, that won't tailor to the ignorant. I'm a high school junior right now and the environment I live in is void of any sort of social conscience. I've been trying to change that but there is no utopian society in sight. While I strive to make change with every essay I get published I would like to say thank you. Thank you for representing "real" people and how they live their lives. I deeply respect all of the authors that work with Clamor for the wonderful way they present their ideas. They are eloquent, extremely intelligent, and everything that I aspire to be.

Thank you,
Heather M. Wiik
Putnam, CT

Dear Clamor,

I recently watched the Bill Moyers PBS documentary on the chemical industry, "Trade Secrets," and felt obligated to mention its subject matter in relation to my last article. In my article "Using Water- the hidden story of urban hydrology" (April/May 2001), I very briefly hinted at the wild card that synthetic chemicals pose when they make their way into our environment and water supplies. Many of these chemicals are not tested at all by municipal water plants or individual well owners. The more common chemicals are tested for in public water only periodically, and of-

ten on a quarterly basis. My city's annual water quality report, appearing in March, mentioned a list of 100 tested chemicals (all, fortunately, undetected in our water), but there are *thousands* of synthetics widely dispersed in our environment. Hundreds of new synthetic chemicals are introduced each year for use in medications, cleaners, pesticides, plastics, fertilizers, etc. The manufacturers themselves are behind in testing the environmental impacts and other unintended effects of these new chemicals. The EPA is farther behind in its own testing, and the level of public education and awareness of synthetic chemicals is minimal. I mentioned chlorine's potential carcinogenic affects as a water additive, but I failed to emphasize the possible carcinogenic nature of unknown and unresearched combinations of synthetic chemicals loose in our water supplies. Certain types of cancer are on the rise, and our exposure to thousands of synthetic chemicals could certainly be a factor (or *the* factor).

My article concluded that modern wastewater treatment facilities do a surprisingly good job of cleaning our wastewater. I haven't changed my mind, but, I don't think we should sit back and feel completely at ease regarding our water supplies. There is a significant *unknown risk* relating to the chemical presence. Unless clear and fast-acting side effects from exposures occur, we could easily be slowly poisoning ourselves without knowing it. Delving into this topic was beyond the time constraints and focus of my article, but the infor-

mation in the Moyers documentary stressed to me the importance of mentioning synthetic chemicals. Please forgive my lack of thoroughness on the subject. If you are interested and want to learn more about Bill Moyers' documentary, and find links to related web sources, look up www.pbs.org/tradesecrets/resources.html.

Beth Barnett
Bethbee@usa.net

corrections

The photos accompanying Sunfrog's "Watersports" (April/May 2001) essay were left unattributed. They were taken by Phil Woodward.

Due to an editorial oversight, there were a number of copy editing problems with Richard Opalsky's article "Crisis of Credible Sources" (April/May 2001). We would like to note that the author is not responsible for them.

Steven Salaita ("Covering Murder," April/May 2001) was left off the contributor page for that issue. He is an English doctoral student (Native American Studies) at the University of Oklahoma.

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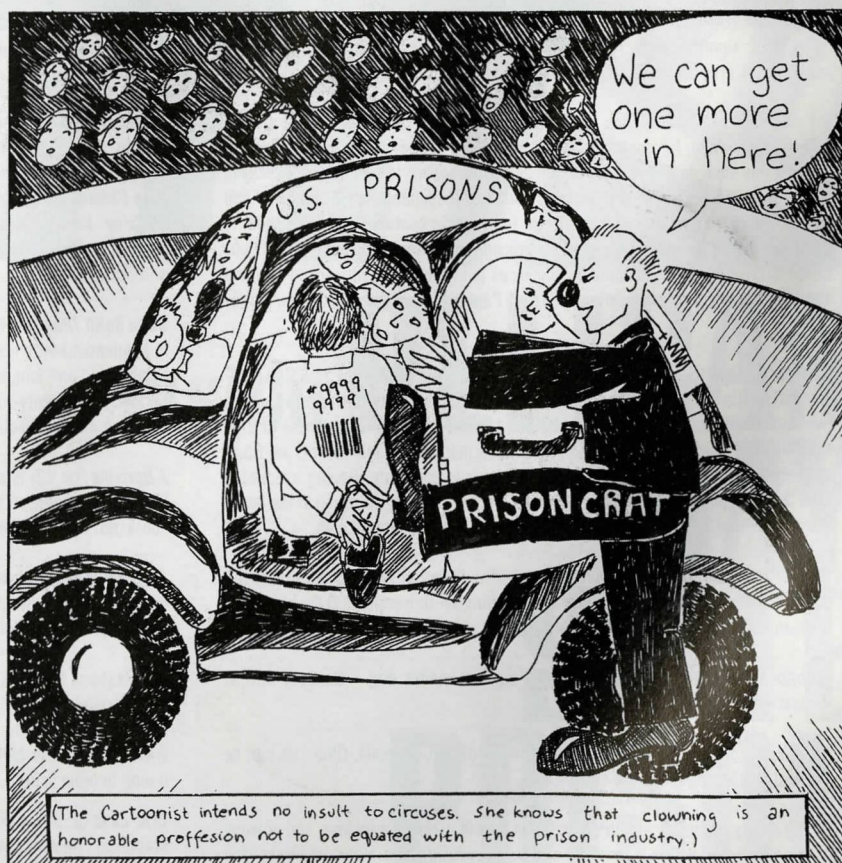
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The Kate Sharpley Library holds a huge archive of newspapers, journals, private letters, manuscripts and ephemera to do with the history of anarchism. They also publish reprinted historical pamphlets and recently published "The Story of a Proletarian Life" by Bartolomeo, available from AK Press for \$3 at 674-A 23rd St. Oakland, CA 94612



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Kaile Adney (p. 67) is a full time mother. She can be contacted at kai_adney@hotmail.com or PO Box 10774 Savannah GA 31412.

Aaron Albelo (p. 55) is a leftist father and activist who recently graduated (dis-honorably) with a Master's in Social Work from the University of Sweatshop Clothing (USC) in Los Angeles this past May. He, along with fellow partner in crime Daisy Obetsanov, helped form the first Social Action Caucus at the School of Social-Work to add more color to the bland and sterile atmosphere. He also wrote regularly for *The Trojan Horse*—USC's only student run alternative newspaper. Aaron would like to thank his high school probation officer and neo-liberalist father for making all his raving anti-capitalist meanderings possible. He can be reached at aalbelo@juno.com.

Sera Bilezikyan (p. 33) can be currently found fighting gravity in the upper canopy of threatened old-growth forests of the Pacific Northwest. She is an economics geek, a Bruce Springsteen freak, a journalist, and a professional hitchhiker. Get in touch at: sera@disinfo.net

Jenny Conathan and **Geert Dhondt** (p. 74) are both students at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. We are also involved with anarchist, anti-prison, union, and anti-globalization work. Frequently, you can find us behind a table promoting AK Press and selling their books. You can reach Jenny at b2rjenny@yahoo.com and geert at geert@iww.org.

The **DSLIR** hub (p. 24) is a space for developing a radical community. It is here that we hope participants will be able to plot actions, meet others interested in reclamation, attend inspirational discussions and glean hints of more socially charged modes of existence. for more information, you can reach them at www.counterproductiveindustries.com

Nate Dagg (p. 88) age 21, resides in Minneapolis, and writes a zine called *Ad Hominim* that focuses mainly on politics, humor, music, and Abraham Lincoln. If you would like a copy, please mail \$3 to: *Ad Hominim*, 1401 Portland Ave. S. #C303, Minneapolis, MN 55404.

Greg Fuchs (p. 82) is journalist, poet, and photographer. He is the author of *Came Like It Went* (BD Books, Washington, D.C. 1999) and *Uma Ternura* (Canvas and Companhia, Oporto, 1998). He is also an affiliate of MediaChannel.org. You can reach him at greg@fmtad.com.

The pen-name, **Pavito Geshos**, (p. 26) is taken from the 'nom de guerre' of a, now-deceased, volunteer fighter in the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). The author appropriating this 'nom de guerre' as his 'nom de plume' wishes to conceal his identity to shield his children and family members from unreasonable media scrutiny and public attention. Any and all 'good faith' requests to contact 'Pavito Geshos' to verify or expound on the details of events recounted in any of his articles (as published in *Clamor*) will be honored as quickly as possible. Those who are so-inclined and who have legitimate concerns, can reach Pavito Geshos through *Clamor* magazine.

Heather Haddon (p. 56) is one of the founding members of the New York City Independent Media Center, a local chapter of an international alternative news source (www.indymedia.org, www.nyc.indymedia.org), and a regular contributor to their monthly print publication. She also coordinates monthly activist forums for Blue-stockings Bookstore, New York City's only women's bookstore. Having graduated from Oberlin College, Haddon now works for a community organization in the South Bronx. She would appreciate feedback sent to hhaddon@hotmail.com.

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Dustin Amery Hostetler aka **UPSO** (p. 90) is fond of making sweet love, and drawing pictures of hands. He can be reached at www.upsodesign.com. He would like to wish everyone a happy life.

Independent Media Center (p. 38) is a collective of independent media organizations and hundreds of journalists offering grassroots, non-corporate coverage. Indymedia is a democratic media outlet for the creation of radical, accurate, and passionate tellings of truth. Find an IMC near you by going to www.indymedia.org.

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Andrew McLeod (p. 52) lives in Olympia, Wash. He likes to play with plants and boggle at how fascinating life can be. He can be reached at amcl@onebox.com.

Jessica Mills (p. 66) is currently a full-time, no paycheck getting mom and a part-time, paycheck getting ESL teacher. She wonders if she'll ever recover from motherhood induced sleep deprivation and be able to tour with a band again. You can email her at yardwidelyarns@hotmail.com.

niliema e (p. 49) is a multisubcultural girl of colour. she lives, thinks, plays and works in toronto. Contact her at dancingonastar@yahoo.com.

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Colin Keith Thomsen (p. 76) is a student, media activist and barbarian currently living in Minneapolis with his lover and partner in crime, Molly Kirwan. He enjoys poetry, classical music and long walks on the beach. Colin's greatest aspiration is to be the first person in the twenty-first century to be convicted of piracy and treason. Send hate mail, free food and declarations of war to go812@aol.com.

J-Uprising (p. 23) is a northeast Ohio revolutionary anarchist who is involved with the liberation struggle on numerous different levels. Opinions, discussion, and more are encouraged. Contact him at juprising@yahoo.com or c/o *Clamor* magazine.

Stephanee Lewis Wohler (p. 64) has been married 15 years and is the mother of a 1 year old son, Dawson. Stephanee has been a dedicated employee of Planned Parenthood of Northwest Ohio, Inc for 10 years.


jt yost (back cover) is a freelance illustrator struggling to maintain his dignity while simultaneously recording accordion-based versions of his favorite soft-rock/adult contemporary songs. to view his particular brand of quackery, please visit <http://www.jtyost.com> or call #1.800.745.7013. he's not kidding about the soft-rock, call or e.mail to order yours...

Eric Zass (p. 30) makes an unsteady living freelancing in writing and design in San Francisco. He works at City Lights Bookstore and Publishers as the consignment buyer, where he wasts most of his time idly reading and ordering ever more zines. He can be reached at zhaus@hotmail.com

[PLACES]



inside **PELICAN
BAY
STATE
PRISON**



"Dry words on paper cannot adequately capture the senseless suffering and sometimes wretched misery that [Pelican Bay State Prison] unconstitutional practices leave in their wake."

—Judge Thelton Henderson in Madrid vs. Gomez, 1995

words by Rahula Janowski

art by Pelican Bay State Prison Inmates

On a sunny day in January, I went on a tour of Pelican Bay State Prison (PBSP) with 12 other people, mainly members of Bar None, a prisoner support/prison abolition group, and Operation U-Turn, a Humboldt State University based organization that helps released prisoners get into college.

PBSP is in Crescent City, California, in the northwest corner of the state. The prison opened in 1989 and has as its best known feature the Security Housing Unit, known as the SHU. The SHU is a model of the latest trend in incarceration, the supermax. SHU inmates spend 23 hours a day in their 80-square foot cells, designed for one inmate but often housing two. Inmates leave their cells for showers, infrequent visits, and for one hour of solitary exercise in an indoor yard that measures 28-by-12 feet and has 20-foot high walls. The California Department of Corrections claims that the "worst of the worst" prisoners are housed in the SHU. What most folks don't realize is that being in the SHU has nothing to do with your original crime. Prisoners go to the SHU for crimes committed while in prison or for being labeled a gang member. Eighty-seven percent of SHU inmates are black or brown. The SHU has come under fire since construction began, with critics labeling it cruel and unusual punishment. In 1995, in a class action suit known as Madrid vs. Gomez, Judge Thelton Henderson ruled that the SHU would tend to exacerbate preexisting mental problems. It was a partial victory at best and the SHU opened on schedule. Beyond concerns about the SHU, PBSP has gained a reputation of having a brutal and racist staff made up of guards unable to work in other prisons in California's system.

The tour was organized by Sacha Marini, an organizer with Bar None. "I've been corresponding with a prisoner who's in the SHU up at Pelican Bay. He asked if I'd ever been in to PBSP other than visiting, and I said no, and he said well, you can come in," Sacha said. "I pursued it because I've never been in prison, I wanted to see what it looks like on the inside. In particular I had an interest in seeing what the SHU is like. I'm also into the idea of being an outside watchdog, and we're going in as Bar None, and Pelican Bay knows who we are ... I think it's good for them to know that people are concerned on the outside about what's going on up there."

Bar None is based in northern Humboldt County, just 90 miles south of PBSP. We formed in the summer of 1999. We engage in a variety of activities and address many issues, but from the beginning, one of our major focuses has been PBSP. Bar None has a weekly radio show where we read writings from prisoners, and most of the contributors to the show are from PBSP. We're also producing a show of artwork from PBSP prisoners this February in Arcata. Many of us correspond with SHU inmates, and we all felt as Sacha did, that it was important for us to get a look at the place where our pen pals spend their time. I also feel like it's important for prison activists to regularly strengthen our sense of outrage; for it is that sense of outrage that keeps us struggling against the prison industrial complex even when there are times where I feel like Don Quixote, tilting at windmills.

I also felt it was important to get a look at a supermax. Supermax prisons are sharply on the rise, largely in response to the radical prison movements of the '70s. During the 1970s, there was a lot of organizing among inmates in prisons, especially in California and among African-American men. Prison-

ers were organizing study groups, educating themselves in radical politics of resistance and occasionally revolting. The supermax is an answer to that rising tide. The SHU and other supermaxes house validated gang members and prisoners convicted of crimes in prison, but the SHU is also home to jail house lawyers, political prisoners/POWs, influential prisoners and folks who organized solidarity and resistance inside. Keeping prisoners completely isolated, from each other and from the outside world, makes organizing and self-education an extremely difficult, if not impossible, task and thereby cuts down on resistance and revolt by prisoners.

Our tour began in a conference room in the administration building of PBSP. On the way in, we saw a T-shirt for sale. It was titled Felony Day Care and had a woodcut print of inmates in a classroom. The guard at the desk said there's also a T-shirt available that says PBSP Bed and Breakfast—Three Hots and a Cot. Public Information Officer Ben Grundy joined us there. Lt. Grundy showed us a diagram of the prison and where we would be going on the tour.

We learned that PBSP is a level four facility, level four being the highest custody level in the California system. Except for the 296 level one inmates, who live in housing outside the electrified barrier, all of the inmates are level four. Approximately 1,500 of these inmates are housed in the SHU. The other (approximately) 4,000 are housed in general population, which is A Facility and B Facility. A and B are designed so that they can, if needed, operate like a SHU. In fact, Lt. Grundy tells us, all the other SHU type facilities are designed like PBSP's A and B facilities. A and B each have their own yard, surrounded by the housing. Inmates are "un-



Subject to Restitution Per PC Section 2085.5 by Mr. Avitea, PBSP

der the gun," meaning they are within shooting sight and distance of a tower guard, whenever they are in the yard. The only exception to this is when they go to the industry yard, where inmates can engage in activities like woodshop and auto mechanics, and make things like shoes for the rest of the Cali-

fornia prison system and glasses for Medi-Cal.

Under normal circumstances, according to Lt. Grundy, about 40 percent of general population would be working in industry or vocation. However, A and B are currently on lockdown because of violence in the yard, and have been off and on for years. Because of this, general population inmates, like SHU inmates, spend their days in their cells, released only for showers, visiting and yard time (which, while under lockdown, is not in the big grassy yard but in a concrete "dog run").

Lt. Grundy obviously was familiar with Bar None and had some preconceived notions (which were correct) about how we felt about the SHU. "People in the SHU have it literally better than in general population," Lt. Grundy told us, beginning a campaign that he continued throughout the tour to convince us that the SHU was A-OK.

Lt. Grundy told us he was glad we were there. "The warden's position is that this is not a clandestine operation. It's a state funded, tax paid operation, and as such, it's not only your right, but it's your responsibility to see what we're doing here." With that, we headed outside, where we were given visitor passes and loaded into a white van.

Lt. Grundy drove us out past the firing range, where a CHP officer was practicing shooting targets, and we discussed the qualifications for becoming a correctional officer. To be a CO, you need a high school diploma or GED, no felony arrest record, U.S. citizenship, and you need to pass physical and written tests and go through the police academy. "How many COs are from this area?" Sacha asked. Lt. Grundy replied that when they opened PBSP, many locals didn't qualify,

having dropped out of high school. He added that since then the number of guards from the local area has increased as people have gotten GEDs. PBSP employs 1,000 officers and 400-500 non-custodial staff, like doctors and maintenance staff.

As we continued our drive to A and B facilities, we passed the fire department and generators. PBSP has its own fire department, which includes seven level one inmates, and enough diesel generator capacity to power the entire facility in case of outages.

We reached a guard post and, after showing our identification and signing in, headed through the three fence electrified barrier into B facility. First, we were shown the outside of the family visit trailers. Here, inmates may spend a weekend with their family. The visiting family members can bring food to cook and they all stay in the two-bedroom trailer, with a yard, for the weekend. All general population are eligible to use them, except lifers and sex offenders, but Lt. Grundy said they don't get much use because very few people can come for a weekend. It's worth remembering that only spouses and immediate family are allowed to come for these visits. Girlfriends are out of luck. It's also important to recognize that the infrequency of family visits has a lot to do with the location of PBSP, hundreds of miles away from the urban centers most inmates' families live in. This makes it extremely difficult to maintain the family and community connections that are very important in reducing recidivism.

We then moved inside to the visiting room. The visiting room is large and resembles a public school cafeteria; linoleum floors, fluorescent lights, tables with plastic chairs. There is a microwave, television, infant room for nursing and diaper changing, and vending machines.

From the visiting room, we headed inside into B facility. At the control booth, we were intercepted by Officer Steve Robinson, who carried a four-panel display case filled with weapons made by inmates, known as Shanks. Robinson was quite willing to talk about how the weapons are made and used. Some of them were obvious—chunks of sharpened metal snuck back from the industry yard (which begs the question, how can this happen without guard complicity? They're strip-searched and have to pass through a metal detector), others were darts made of tightly rolled paper topped with a piece of glass or a point of metal. Robinson explained that inmates used elastic from their socks or underwear to launch these "arrows."

The display was blatantly intended to impress upon us how violent and dangerous the inmates were, even here in general population. The other part of that equation is how prison life encourages violence, even among those who weren't violent on the outside. This assortment of weapons can also be viewed as a sign of the indomitable ingenuity and creativity of people in impossible situations. I also know that ingenuity and creativity take many other forms in prison, from figuring out how to make wine in their cells, to amazing artwork and writing, to figuring out novel ways of communicating between cells. Robinson

himself said, "I rate some of these guys right up there with McGyver."

After being properly intimidated by the display of weapons, we were lead out into B yard. The yard is large, about five acres, and mostly grassy. From certain points in the yard, it's possible to see hilltops and the tops of redwood trees. Although there are basketball courts, punching bags and concrete benches, the yard looks overgrown and neglected, probably because general population has been on lockdown. A ways down the yard, a group of about 15 inmates played basketball. These are inmates from the Transitional Housing Unit (THU); that is, former SHU inmates who have debriefed.

Debriefing is one of the only ways for a validated gang member to get out of the SHU. It involves renouncing gang membership and providing lists of names and information on gang activities to prison officials. Once an inmate has debriefed, they are very carefully kept away from the rest of the prison population. Within the prison community, snitching carries heavy penalties. All of the inmates we were to see that day were transitional.

We headed inside. We weren't going onto the tiers, "out of respect for inmates' privacy." Therefore, we went inside into a hallway. Above our heads was a metal grate, through which a guard could see us and, if necessary, shoot us. We were able to look through a window onto the section, a medium sized room with concrete tables and a couple of telephones, with 20 cells opening onto it. While on lockdown, the prisoners eat in their cells, but if, theoretically, lockdown were lifted, prisoners' cells would be open to the tier for most of the day.

Back out onto the yard, we wandered down the far wall

where all the various programs are, as well as the medical clinic. As we passed, I noticed a sign on the glass window at medical — "Help Wanted-inquire within-MD license preferred." "What does that mean?" I asked the guard inside the medical booth. "Is that for inmates, or for other guards?" I asked. Seeming very uncomfortable, the guard hedged. "Uh, uh, he, he, someone's playing a little joke," she said. At this point, noticing we'd fallen behind, Lt. Grundy came back for us; "What's up guys?" "I was asking about this sign," I said. "Come on," Lt. Grundy said, looking irritated, and walked off. So I didn't get any answers, but I could make some guesses. Prison medical facilities are notorious, not just at PBSP, not just in California, but across the country. Medical staff in prisons are frequently doctors whose licenses were revoked or suspended for one reason or another, meaning that prisoners get questionable at best medical care, if they even get a chance to see a doctor. Elsewhere in the CDC system, at the Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla, there have been nine deaths since November 8 of last year, many in situations that were easily preventable. However, guards tend to ignore or disbelieve prisoner medical complaints, with life threatening results. Is that what the joke was about? During recent legal visits with PBSP inmates, California Prison Focus noted that one of the most common complaints was about the



Untitled by Ruben Gonzalez, PBSP

quality of medical care. Inmates assert that the medical staff turns over nearly monthly, and each time the inmates' meds are changed. Is that what the joke was about? Anyway, I don't get it.

After stopping for a brief visit with a woman who runs classes for THU inmates (I zoned out here, looking at the yard and wondering), we visited the Psychiatric Services Unit (PSU). This is where inmates determined to be mentally ill by prison staff are housed. Because of *Madrid vs. Gomez*, PBSP has to screen inmates headed for the SHU, and any found to have preexisting mental health problems are housed here instead. We were met by a CO wearing a bulletproof vest, as were all the COs in the PSU. He pointed out the PSU exercise yards, which were 6 x 8 x 10-foot metal mesh cages. They looked exactly like the dog runs at a kennel. Because PSU inmates are classified as violent, they don't get group yard time. Instead they do their yard time in these cages, which are in full view of the B yard. We then went inside the unit, where we saw the group therapy rooms. These were cells with four to six stainless steel enclosures the size of a phone booth, with a wire mesh gate that faces into the center. Inmates sit in these cells and talk to a therapist or, more often, watch a video designed to be therapeutic. It was obvious to me that this environment is not therapeutic. Rather than therapy, the mission of the PSU is control, achieved through a combination of dehumanizing conditions and heavy drugs. We were told that while it is possible for an inmate to be in PSU and not take drugs, most inmates end up undergoing something called a Kahia process, by which an inmate refusing to take drugs can be ordered to be involuntarily medicated because they are a danger to themselves and others.

We then went "over the wall" into the industry yard. I saw doors labeled mechanical shop, plumbing shop, auto-body, auto mechanics, PIA, maintenance; all of them closed. Most of the industry or vocation is not active right now because of the lockdown. The few inmates who were at work in the shoe factory, where inmates manufacture shoes for the CDC, were all THU. The men worked on as we passed through, some of them giving us a furtive wave and smile and one giving us a lengthy treatise on the operation of the shoe sole pouring machine he operated.

After leaving the shoe factory, we had a lengthy discussion with Lt. Grundy about the debriefing process. Grundy debated the idea that debriefing is an automatic death sentence. He asserts that no one who's debriefed has ever been hurt in retribution. This is easy to understand, however, because those who have debriefed are kept segregated in the THU until they're transferred to one of several prisons in the CDC system that are safe for debriefers. We did not discuss how you could debrief if you were a validated gang member without really being in a gang.

We then went into the SHU. According to Lt. Grundy, "The inmates don't think it is that bad." We stopped to be shown "extraction" gear, which is used when an inmate refuses to leave his cell. Extraction gear includes shields, pepper spray, batons, padding (for the COs of course), helmets and a video camera. Every extraction is videotaped for the record (I assume in case of lawsuits, although that wasn't said). Extractions occur one to two times a week, according to Lt. Grundy.

"Ninety percent of an officer's job is care and treatment," said Lt. Grundy.

We weren't shown actual cells nor did we go onto the tier. We were let into the center of a unit, where the guard hangs out behind Plexiglas with extensive cameras so she or he can observe all the prisoners on that unit. We were able to walk around and look into the six pods, which each have eight cells. Although the cells were designed to hold one inmate, out of the 48 cells in the unit we visited, 16 had two inmates in them. It was eerily quiet. Within a surprisingly small space were 64 men, and yet we could hear no talking, no shouting, nothing. We were unable to examine the SHU yard for that unit.

From the SHU, we trooped back to the Administration building. It was shift change, and many COs were coming and going. A fellow

Bar None on Prison Abolition

One of the three main points of Bar None's mission statement is 'prison abolition'. We are frequently questioned and challenged about our position on prison abolition. This is an attempt to address some of the issues that arise in those discussions.

What do you mean by Prison Abolition?

Quite simply, prison abolition refers to an end to all prisons, an end to all imprisonment, and a restructuring of the way we as a society deal with antisocial behavior.

Does Bar None actively work to abolish prisons?

Yes and no. The majority of work that Bar None does is direct prisoner support and correspondence. We are also working to share information about prisoners and prison conditions with our community, to address the injustices of the criminal justice system, and to educate others and ourselves about all aspects of the prison system in the United States. Through this outreach and education, we are *indirectly* working toward prison abolition. The more educated and aware people become about the realities of prisons and prisoners, the more aware people become of the interests that influence and control the prison and justice systems in our country, the more likely it is that people will be moved, as we are, to look for other options—humane options that truly benefit society.

What about the rapists and murderers and other violent criminals?

It's important to recognize, first of all, that the majority of rapists are not reported or caught, never go to prison at all, and if they do, it's generally only for a few years. The vast majority of people in the United States prison system are nonviolent offenders (71%, according to 1997 Bureau of Justice Statistics). It's also important to recognize that our current system of lock 'em up, brutalize and dehumanize 'em, and never let them out does not reform criminals, reduce crime, make anyone safer, or in any way benefit society. We need to recognize that our current criminal justice system inflicts great psychological damage to its victims, producing scarred human beings more prone to anti-social behavior (crime).

Do you want to just unlock the prisons and just let everyone out right now?

We are not advocating the immediate release of all prisoners today, although releasing all nonviolent offenders would certainly reduce our tax burden and probably reduce violent crime in the future!

We recognize that prison abolition can only come about in the context of vast social change. The majority of, if not all, property crimes in our society occur as a result of economic inequity. Most violent crimes can be traced to a wide variety of social influences. Moral crimes, such as prostitution and drug use, are essentially victimless crimes that on their own, don't require state intervention. In the context of large scale positive social transformation, it is reasonable to expect these issues will be addressed. However, we don't claim that in the great new, theoretical future, there will be no violent crime, and we understand that in all likelihood, our society will still need to address anti-social behavior, and find alternatives to prisons. We can look to the examples of societies that have used alternatives successfully, we can develop ideas that are appropriate to our changing situations. But whatever we do, we need to finally recognize that incarceration has never reduced crime, and in fact leads to more crime, more damaged people, and less justice.

Isn't this all kind of idealistic?

Yes, it is. We are definitely idealistic enough to imagine, and strive for, a future in which human beings treat each other with humanity, compassion and respect. This idealism, this belief in a better future, informs all of our work, helping us through the dark times when too much knowledge of people's inhumanity toward one another can be hard to bear.

But we are not blindly idealistic. We know that prison abolition and positive social transformation will not happen overnight or next week, and perhaps not in our lifetimes. That is why we are continually engaged in tangible and effective efforts such as direct correspondence with prisoners and other forms of support, petitioning those in power, and reaching out to educate and dialogue with our community.

Bar None member pointed out a CO with a “bad cop, no donut” sticker on his lunch pail. More evidence of that quirky PBSP sense of humor.

We headed back to a conference room, where we discussed gang validation further. According to Lt. Grundy, there are very stringent criteria for gang validation. There must be three separate pieces of evidence that can stand alone, such as: correspondence with gang members; someone else debriefing and saying you’re a gang member; gang tattoos; doing something (a task) for a gang; and having gang members’ addresses in your possession.

I find it interesting that much of what counts as qualifiers for gang validation are activities that are generally not regarded as criminal and, for most Americans, are classified as First Amendment activities, in particular freedom of association. “Gangs” is a concept that, even outside prison, is regularly used to criminalize certain groups of people (mainly urban youth of color) and deny them basic First Amendment rights.

Lt. Grundy brought us some nice, scenic PBSP calendars (with a picture of the ocean, not the prison), shook our hands, and we were on our way.

Ultimately, I feel as though I had a tour of the prison and learned nothing. We saw almost no prisoners. As Angela, a paralegal who joined us on the tour said, “It felt like a ghost town.” Throughout the tour, Lt. Grundy emphasized that a) inmates in the SHU were violent and awful people, but the prison really cared about them and did the best for them that they could, and b) it’s really not so bad in there, inmates actually prefer to be in the SHU. While I understand that to see a cell, either in general population or the SHU, would violate prisoner privacy, and there probably aren’t any empty cells; without seeing the cell where all the inmates except the THU spend at least 22 hours a day, it’s hard to really get a sense of what it must be like for prisoners at PBSP. I don’t think this was a chance occurrence. The tour was very carefully orchestrated, to give us nothing to back up our beliefs about the prison in general and the SHU in particular. Nothing we saw on the tour really contradicted what Lt. Grundy was telling us.

But the words of the prisoners themselves go a long way in contradicting every one of Lt. Grundy’s assertions. The following quotes are taken from letters sent to Bar None to read on our weekly radio show:

“I’m happy and enjoy people. They take that away from you. It’s like we’re dead. As the Catholics say, in purgatory. They’ve taken away everything that might give a little purpose to your life.”

“The extreme isolation has an elusive way of slowly killing off the human spirit. At times it seems difficult for one to hang on to sanity, and I have been witness to seeing many lose it.”

“Prison officials have refused to allow us anything that would enhance the quality of our lives.”

“Locking people up for nearly 24 hours a day in windowless cells with nothing to do won’t make anyone a better person fit for society.”

Lt. Grundy is right. It’s not only our right but also our responsibility to know what is going on in the jails and prisons littering our country. The people imprisoned in this country are parts of our communities, and when we allow them to be dehumanized, we all lose a bit of our humanity. We have a collective responsibility to learn about prisons, who is in them and how they are treated. We have a responsibility to learn about the inherent racism and classism in the “justice” system and how that is used to oppress certain communities. It is our responsibility to examine the things we are told, by prison officials and by politicians, about gangs, criminals, drugs and prison conditions.

Although I felt as though I didn’t learn a huge amount of new information on the tour of PBSP, I am glad I went on it, and I encourage others to try to arrange tours through their local prisons. In California, Title 15 governs the operation of prisons and jails, and includes provisions for public access. Other states may have similar legislation. Whatever it takes, find out what is going on in the prisons. Pose as a church group. Take a tour. Get a pen pal. Read up on it. But, most of all, never trust the people who benefit from the prison industrial complex (either economically or in terms of power) to tell you what the prisons, or the prisoners, are like. ★

PLACES

The Space Between the Past and the Present:

A Review of Ani Difrancio’s *Reveling/Reckoning*

By Hal Hixson

Crouched with my ears pricked to the sound – the speakers rumbling with bass and treble – I soaked up the vibrations – the ringing acoustic guitar, the troubled and frantic female voice. And there on the table, sprawled out like some obscure religious text were the liner notes, pictures and lyrics, of the latest release by an artist who some call our generation’s greatest songstress.

Moments before, there had been silence and I had waited patiently, looking at my heart, trying to decipher my judgements and struggling over my own ambitious impulses.

You see, I have had such a long-lived respect for and an even longer-lived separation from the music of Ani Difrancio that my stomach knotted up at the thought of a critical appraisal of her latest effort – a sprawling two-disc album dubbed *Reveling/Reckoning*. The image that I have of Ani as an artist has grown and developed from that of a post-punk musical and lyrical genius to that of a musician who has allowed her creative juices to turn a little bit stale even while remaining amazingly prolific. And maybe this is one of Ani’s downfalls – that she is constantly trying to catch up with herself – constantly trying to better her past and doing it at an exhausting rate.

Seemingly though, it is this rate – the constant writing, recording and touring – that is Ani’s life’s blood, and it is possible that she simply cannot stop. But with this constancy comes certain repercussions and now, with my ears wide open, I was witnessing such a shortcoming. Since the early 1990’s, my appreciation of Ani’s music has moved from pure awe to mild critical doubt, and this new effort only served to propel my apprehensions further. The album possesses some interesting musical moments – from Ani’s trademark disjointed finger-picking to the use of horn arrangements throughout, though these tread dangerously close to the realm of “smooth jazz” – a genre of music that only outweighs its mediocrity with its blandness.

To balance the horn-heavy numbers, stripped down acoustic songs pop up here and there, trying to ground the album and give it peaks and valleys. Stuck like bookmarks between some of the songs, Ani has placed small electric guitar infused interludes, which serve the album well musically, but are short on any development toward the molding of it as a cohesive whole. This, in turn, is one of the major things that this project lacks – some unifying element that brings it together as something more than two hours of poetic ramblings and musical noodles. Not that the songs as a whole are not branded with similar arrangements, or that Ani is not singing about similar themes throughout. *Reveling/Reckoning* just doesn’t have the essence – the *raison d’être* – that would allow it to lift itself out of the dripping sentimentality and sleepy-eyed cultural critique in which it is mired.

Literally, Ani has composed an album that turns out to be one long love song with all the traditional up’s and down’s and in’s and out’s. Most of the album bounces back and forth between songs of bitter disappointment and those of joyful unity. Of course, the playful wit of Ani’s lyrics is still present, though these days, more often than not, her word play seems a bit trite and tiresome. In fact, the phrasings in some of the songs border on repetitive, at least when one thinks about them in relation to Ani’s career as a whole. For example, in a song entitled *School Night*, Ani recounts the dissolution of a relationship:

And she said:

You are a miracle but that is not all
You are also a stiff drink and I am on call
You are a party and I am a school night
And I’m looking for my door key
But you are my porch light



An ample description with fairly good use of opposing images, but the structure snapped my memory to quick attention. In a song called *You Had Time* from the 1994 album *Out of Range*, Ani writes:

You are china shop and I am a bull
You are really good food and I am full
I guess everything is timing
I guess everything's been said
So I am coming home with an empty head

Indeed, "everything's been said" and in this weird bout of reverse hindsight, Ani is commenting in 1994 on her own re-use of a songwriting framework in 2001. As I listened to this new album, the cyclical nature of time became evident and in the sediment that collected in the space between the past and the present, I realized that something had fallen away from Ani's music. Something had been lost, and what was put in its place was a substitute that seemed to be just a mimicking ghost of the original.

Of course, the album holds a small few token songs of political protest, mostly reflecting on the tragic dominance of the multinational corporation in American lives — a suitable and justified topic for a musician who has repeatedly resisted the music industry's attempts to eat her up. The observations made in these songs are sound in their politics but lack any real depth of analysis or complexity of thought. For instance, in a song entitled *Subdivision*, Ani writes:

So we're led to denial like lambs to the slaughter
Serving empires of style and carbonated sugar water
And the old farm road's a four lane that leads to the

mall

And our dreams are all guillotines
waiting to fall.

The point here is well taken, but who at this point in American history has failed to realize these truths? What do these lyrics offer that can't be gained from watching a couple of hours of MTV? Not that I am equating Ani's music with the banal beats that litter the mainstream musical landscape, but it seems that she has fallen victim to a very simple pseudo-leftist worldview that won't allow her to develop any further in her analysis of American culture. Her music has always tried to bridge the boundary between the personal and the political and this, I think, is a good place for a musician to occupy in a culture. Political music should be used to point to the defects in society while still keeping an eye on everyday personal struggles — a careful balance between a critical, omnipotent vision and self-indulgent navel-gazing. With that in mind, an artist must also always struggle to figure out a way to reflect and comment on cultural and political phenomenon in new and engaging ways.

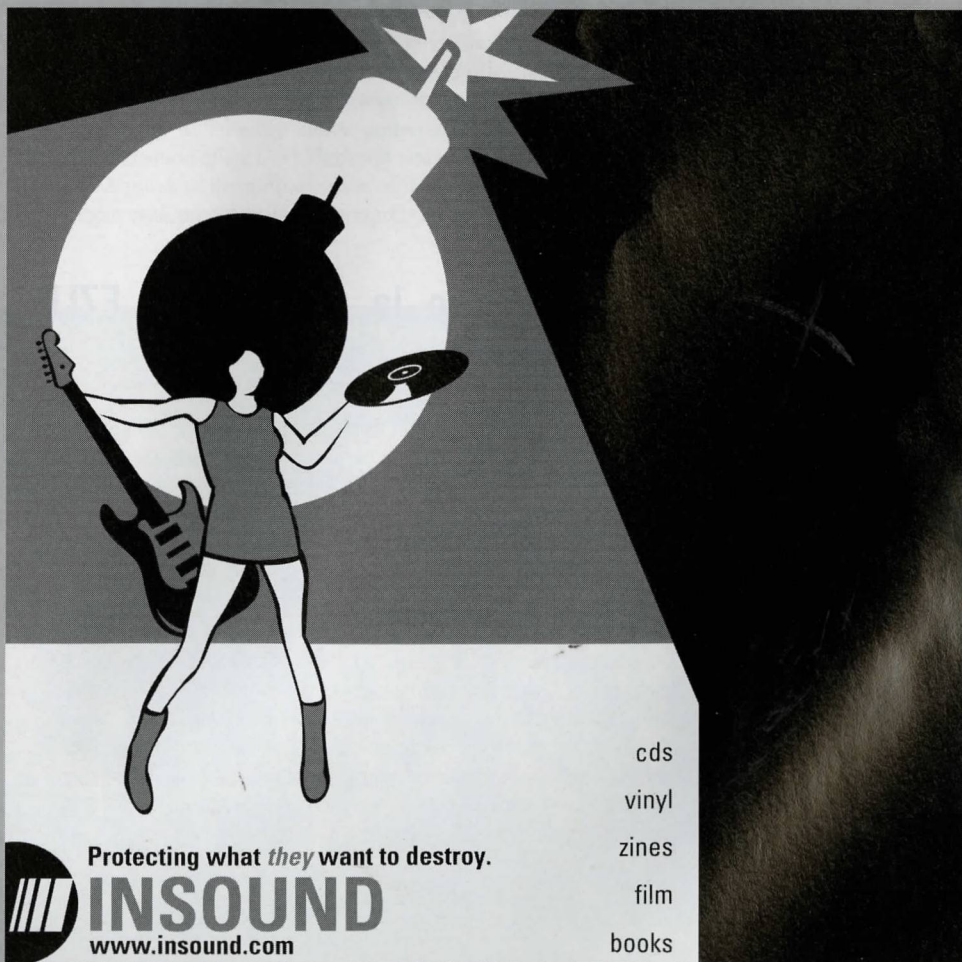
All of these observations and criticisms surfaced with each note and phrase of *Reveling/Reckoning*. But so as not to completely fill your days with a grim, gray perception of Ani's music in the new millennium, I must report that I did find some positive aspects to this new project. For instance, as I leafed through the lyrics of the *Reveling* disc, I came across this little bit of light that gave me hope for Ani music yet to come:

On the table were two ziploc baggies
Containing her eyes and her smile
They said, we're keeping these as evidence
'Til this thing goes on trial
Meanwhile anguish was fingering solace
In another room down the hall
Both were love's accomplices
But solace took the fall

Now look at her book of days
It's the same on every page
And she's got a little tin cup with her heart in it
To bang along the bars of her rib cage
Bang along the bars of her rib cage

Here, I saw the possible promise of the future — a maturity and poetic pulse that could carry Ani's career into its next stage. These stanzas hold beautiful imagery and powerful concepts — truly a lovely bit of verse — and a wonderful and welcome glimmer of reflection in a mirror that has become somewhat dusty and clouded.

So, as I rose from my position of concentration and removed my listening-cap, my sadness and nostalgia was peppered with hope. As with any artist for whom one has an affinity, my connection with the music of Ani DiFranco has ebbed and flowed. And as I stood looking out over the seascape of the history of my love for her music, examining the crests and the whirlpools, the floods and the low tides, I looked forward to clearer skies with the sweet sound of music and truth blowing in from the high seas. ★



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by Jose Palafox

Andres Diaz, 66, and his son Juan, 36, have lived in their little shack in a migrant camp in northern San Diego for quite some time. Diaz, a nursery worker, and his son, a construction worker, both live in their shack to save and send money to their family in Guerrero, Mexico.

On July 5 of last year, Diaz was walking home from work when he was attacked by a group of white youth. The eight teens shot a pellet gun at him, threw rocks, threatened to call immigration authorities and yelled, "Go back to Mexico." Diaz, treated at a hospital for seven pellet wounds in his back, was just the first victim that afternoon. The youths later robbed a 69-year-old migrant worker and then dragged him out of his shack and beat him with a pipe. They shot another migrant repeatedly in the face, and they beat another into unconsciousness, leaving him for dead. "I thought that if they caught me, they would kill me," Diaz told reporters. "They were playing with me. They were hunting me like a rabbit. They threw rocks at me like I was an animal." Authorities have charged eight teens with assault, robbery, hate crime and elder abuse for the vicious attack on Diaz and three other Latino migrant workers.

Although local authorities and local papers like the *San Diego Union-Tribune* condemned the Diaz hate crime, much of the public discourse over the incident never examined the institutionalized forms of violence towards undocumented immigrants, as evident in the Border Patrol's seven-year-old "Operation

Gatekeeper." Designed as part of the Clinton Administration's "National Strategy" to reduce unauthorized crossings on the 2,200-mile U.S.-Mexico border, Operation Gatekeeper includes a high number of agents deployed in visible areas along the San Diego/Tijuana region, a "triple wall" formation, high-intensity stadium lights, heat sensors, military helicopters, infrared telescopes, and "support" from various U.S. military agencies. First implemented in 1994, Operation Gatekeepers' militaristic tendencies date back to the early days of the

Carter Administration and continued into the Reagan Administrations' "War on Drugs" in the 1980's.

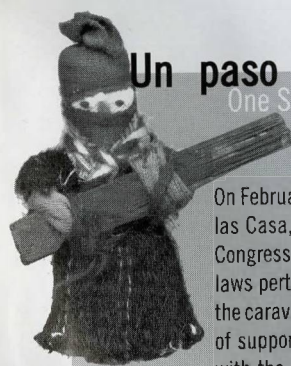
For more than a century, the post-Civil War Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 banned military involvement in domestic law enforcement. According to Timothy Dunn, author of *The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border 1978-1992*, much of the militarization of the border began with presidential and congressional di-

rectives in the Reagan Administration that dramatically eroded traditional bans on using the military in policing matters. A central thesis in Dunn's work suggests that drug and immigration enforcement policies and practices in the 1980's and 1990's led to the militarization of the border and the implementation of certain aspects of Low Intensity Conflict (LIC)

doctrine. Derived from 1960's counter-insurgency doctrine, LIC was further developed by the U.S. military in Central America in the



1980's to maintain social control over targeted civilian populations via the coordinated measures of the police, paramilitary, and military forces. According to the Pentagon's definition of the LIC doctrine, "Low-intensity conflict is a limited politico-military struggle to achieve political, social, economic, or psychological objectives [that] is generally confined to a geographic area and is often characterized by constraints on the weaponry, tactics, and



Un paso atras: Siguiendo la marcha del EZLN

One Step Behind: Trailing the March of the EZLN
words and photos by Theodore Hennessy

On February 25, 2001, the Zapatista Caravan of the Comandancia left from San Cristobal de las Casa, Chiapas for a two-week march to Mexico City, in order to meet with the Federal Congress. Their hopes were to have a constructive dialogue with the congress about the laws pertaining to indigenous rights and culture. During this March of Indigenous Dignity, the caravan met with indigenous organizations all over Mexico, gaining a tremendous amount of support and momentum. Unfortunately, a recent trip down to Mexico did not coincide with the march, but our travels always seemed to be a week or so behind the trail of the Zapatistas. The evidence was everywhere, from flyers pasted on walls to posters in windows, not to mention countless instances of graffiti art. Wherever we went, from Oaxaca (the state immediately west of Chiapas) to Cuernavaca in Morelos (not far east of Mexico City) people were talking about the March, and newspapers were flooded with stories. Travelling mostly by bus and taxi hindered our photographic opportunities, so the images on these pages are only a small fraction of the show of support that there was from the common Mexican people. Hopefully though, these photos will provide a small glimpse of the political climate and popular support surrounding the historic event.



Flyer pasted to trash can in Oaxaca City: "Oaxaca Unite, Zapatista March"



City of Tepoztlan: "There will only be Peace if Mr. Fox lives up to his word and the San Andres Accords" and "Welcome! Tepoztlan is with you"



level of violence.”

For immigration rights activist Roberto Martinez, director of American Friends Committee office in San Diego, the rapid implementation of the LIC doctrine on the border increasingly translates into “low-intensity warfare against immigrants.” Indeed, many human rights organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have documented excessive use of firearms, sexual assault, confiscation of documents, destruction of property, and inhumane incarceration on the part of the Border Patrol. Many of the deadly impacts of the militarization of the border have well been documented in a University of Houston study, which found that nearly 1,600 migrants have died crossing or attempting to cross the U.S.-Mexico border between 1993-1997 — a period of intensified border enforcement. Although the Border Patrol’s Public Information Office and much of the mainstream press has blamed most of these border deaths on

In an effort to further the cooperation between the military and federal civilian law enforcement in its border enhancement measures, the Clinton Administration relied extensively on military think tanks and research institutions. A key internal INS document developed by the Pentagon’s Center for Low-Intensity Conflict in early 1994 was produced to help the INS in drawing up plans for deployment of agents along the border and for advice on how to best enhance immigration enforcement efforts with surveillance equipment. Also included in the list of theoretical architects of border militarization were the Sandia National Laboratory whose expertise on “physical security” included the recommended the construction of a triple wall and the Border Research and Technology Center where scientists have been developing new border control techniques and technologies. According to Robert Bach, executive associate commissioner of the INS, “The technology [devel-

“coyotes” (people smugglers), early INS reports demonstrate how they consciously hoped to push unauthorized crossings into areas like the desert and mountains, where it would be harder for migrants to cross.

oped at the Border Research and Technology Center] came out of the CIA and the Department of Defense. They used it and it was made available to the INS.”

The militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border, increased internal enforcement, along with more punitive immigration legislation such as the 1996 Immigration Law, is not just limited to immigration enforcement issues but extends into much of today’s new militarized policing. An important component in the militarization of policing has been the “military-to-civilian technology transfers” of the post-Cold War Department of Defense to the Department of Justice. A recent *New York Times* article, gave its readers a glimpse at some of the future weapons that the Pentagon is developing for “peacekeeping operations” at home and abroad. According to the *Times*, one non-lethal weapon that is being tested uses electromagnetic waves to disperse crowds without killing or injuring anyone. A Marine colonel quoted in the *Times* article stated that the burning sensation that people feel upon contact is intended to “influence motivational behavior.” As part of testing these new “non-lethal weapons” and the overall restructuring of the U.S. military strategy in the 21st century, the Quantico, Virginia-based Marine War Fighting Laboratory (MWFL) embarked on a series of “military exercises.” From March 15-18, 1999, such an exercise (“Operation Urban Warrior” in Oakland, CA.) mobilized over 6,000 U.S. Marines to test their newest urban war fighting tactics, strategies, and technologies.

Make no mistake though — whether the militarization of policing is taking place on the U.S.-Mexico border, all over the inner cities across the U.S., or in the development of more



City of Tepoztlan: “Army get out of Chiapas”; Marcos holding sign: “San Andres Accords”

militarized prisons, many of these new forms of social control reflect the old contradiction of maintaining and expanding U.S. imperial hegemony in an increasingly unstable and polarized world between the haves and the have-nots. In a global economy where about 350 people control over half of the world's resources, the militarization of spaces has been more about maintaining and controlling the uncertainty inherent in the crisis of global capitalism (see also the interview with Christian Parenti in this issue and his excellent book, *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis*). Major General Robert H. Scales noted this contradiction in a military journal, "The future urban center will contain a mixed population, ranging from the rich elite to the poor and disenfranchised."

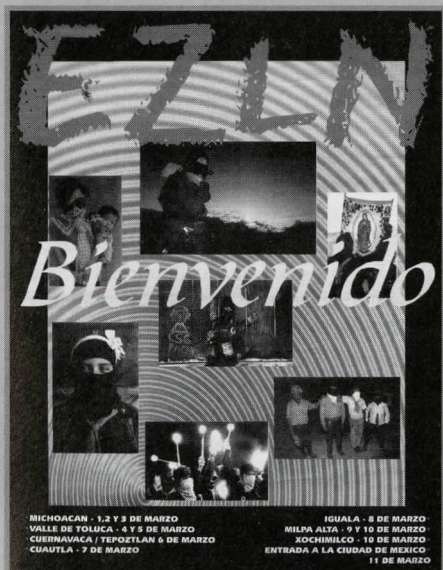
Although these militarized operations like Operation Gatekeeper on the border, Operation Urban Warrior in Oakland, CA., and to some extent, Operation Rainbow in southern Mexico, might suggest the strength of the state, these operations might also be illustrative of the vulnerability of the global economic restructuring that has exacerbated since WWII. As global capital seeks to maximize profits and relocate its production sites, the resistance and struggles of poor working people in the U.S. and those of workers and peasants in the developing world should be seen as also rapidly interconnected. This is no time for romanticizing social movements in the U.S. or in other places around the globe. However, recent antiglobalization struggles—for example, the April 21st anti-FTAA border demonstration on the San Diego/Tijuana border—demonstrated the need to make our fight against the neoliberal agenda against indigenous peoples in Mexico, on the U.S.-Mexico maquila-bor-

der, and in post-industrial Oakland, CA.

Contrary to the dominant discourse that all of the border residents on the U.S. side of the border are against "illegal aliens," sympathetic ranchers in Southern Arizona like the Bisbee-based Citizens for Border Solutions (CBS), have begun organizing forums to educate the public about the connections between globalization and migration and have also provided services to migrants in need. Like a modern-day Underground Railroad, the actions of these border activists remind us that sometimes human life is more important than laws and that people have a right to survive regardless of legal status. Like the lyrics to a fa-

mous Latin American folk song put it: "Between your village and mine, there is a dot and a line. The line says: there is no entrance, and on the dot, this road is closed... Because these things do not exist, they have been drawn so that your hunger and mine remain always separated." ★

A video on the subject of the militarization of the border entitled "New World Border" is available by writing Jose Palafox at josefox@uclink4.berkeley.edu or calling (510) 845-7400



Welcome poster for the EZLN in the state of Morelos



Outside Tepoztlán: "Never again a Mexico without our word"

CINCINNATI ON FIRE!

When an unarmed teen was shot and killed by a white police officer, the city acted in kind. The following are two perspectives that examine why the uprising happened and why there should have been more support from radical communities in North America.

Cincinnati: Poster Child for a Bigot America?

By Candi Lace

What causes people in Tokyo, Australia and Las Vegas to recline at their desks and write a letter to Cincinnati's conventional daily newspaper? The same catastrophe that gripped the attention of Kweisi Mfume, president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Martin Luther King III, Diane Rheem, and Cokie Roberts, among other noted figures—a good, old fashioned “riot.” Before the destructive, nearly weeklong uproar, many Midwesterners thought that a “riot” was simply a buzzword from the tense 1960s.

Cincinnati, Ohio usually acquires international recognition for its staunch Puritanism and homophobia. The City of Cincinnati vs. Robert Mapplethorpe; The City of Cincinnati vs. Larry Flynt; The City of Cincinnati vs. Pink Pyramid (a shop that distributes gay porn)—the list goes on. And as a flattering adornment, the Queen City (not sure of the origins of this moniker) happens to be the only city in the U.S. that blatantly denies gays protection under its discrimination laws. Now racism has seized the spotlight.

During Easter week, “the most livable city” (coined a few years ago by national polls) was transformed into a surreal battlefield and loot-happy free for all. Violent outbursts polluted neighborhoods after word got around that a police officer fatally shot yet another African-American male, raising the total to 15 since 1995. As the news pervaded television and radio stations the following morning, rage ensued.

Approximately 1,000 protesters—mostly African-American—packed City Hall and demanded to know why an unarmed teen, Timothy Thomas, was killed by a white police officer, Steve Roach. As council and community members tried to address the usual protocol, Thomas' mother Angela Leisure appealed for answers. Others loudly supported her, turning over chairs, hurling insults at the mayor and threatening city officials. As subtle responses were offered and the police chief insisted there would be an investigation of the shooting, the mob impatiently gushed into the streets of downtown. They headed to the police district where Officer Roach was stationed. Soon the massive crowd dismantled and formed smaller groups everywhere in the city.





That Monday, little criminal activity was reported. On Tuesday afternoon, the eruption began. A “peaceful” protest just a mile from downtown was interrupted by “youths gone wild.” A few fires were started as ministers shouted prayers and pleas. Then the police were summoned by residents to alleviate the situation. As the crowd dispersed into Over-The-Rhine (an urban neighborhood located north of Cincinnati’s Business District), the number of people rallying tripled (some teens even left their cars in the middle of streets to join the assembly). Over-The-Rhine is one of the city’s poorest districts and in the last few years, it has also become one of the most popular. Recently showcased in the movie *Traffic* and significantly renovated in some corners, Over-The-Rhine contains trendy cafes and bars, upscale galleries, as well as popular after-hours nightclubs. The neighborhood also includes the largest collection of 19th century vernacular architecture of any city in the United States. Despite the glitzy renovation in the entertainment section, patronized primarily by whites, the idea of permanent class integration remains unrealized. Suburbanites drive through for an art opening or a night out at one of the plush bars, but there rarely seems to be any community involvement. And despite the assortment of artists and city lovers migrating to the area, it remains segregated.

Currently, Over-The-Rhine looks more destitute than ever with dozens of once profitable businesses boarded up and pools of garbage in the streets. For two long, miserable days, the destruction was fierce and revolting. Cars were overturned and torched. At least a dozen white people—and one black woman who was mistaken as white—were pulled out

of their cars and savagely beaten. Storefront windows became a thing of the past, as rioters of all ages stole everything from shoes and clothing to appliances and comforters.

Over 120 businesses were damaged before Cincinnati’s mayor, Charlie Luken, sought measures beyond the employment of the local police. An 8 p.m. curfew was enforced for three days, followed by an 11 p.m. curfew on the fourth. Nearly 125 specially trained Ohio patrol officers were called in as watchdogs. Violent activity stopped, but other problems surfaced. Helicopters zoomed over the city day and night, intimidating citizens who were merely mowing their lawns. Many accused the mayor of only enforcing limits in poor, black areas, as white neighborhoods were seen on the 11 o’clock news bustling with residents, who stuffed their faces in restaurants as cops drove past honking. By the time the action died down on Easter, almost 900 arrests had been made; about a third of these were for defying the curfew.

Many people are perplexed how one death caused this calamity. Why would a hoard of Black Panthers, Al Sharpton and Kweisi Mfume amble through Cincinnati to avenge one life?

Timothy Thomas was a 19-year-old with 14 warrants out for his arrest, nine of which were driving violations (the other five are not known at this time). Unarmed, he was shot once in the chest after a lengthy chase that ended in an Over-The-Rhine alley. As there are still investigations pending for several of the other fatalities in the past six years, the Cincinnati Police Force has been under scrutiny for quite some time. Although officials claim defense in the majority of cases, there

are a few ambiguous ones that are clutching the throats of fearful city authorities. Recently, *The Cincinnati Enquirer* profiled all the cases, citing that 13 of the criminals who were shot were, indeed, armed ... with something. Example 1: After murdering his girlfriend’s daughter with an axe, police discovered him with a knife hours later. When he didn’t drop it, an officer fired. Example 2: Hands fastened to a brick, over a dozen officers surrounded him. When he didn’t drop it, the fatal shots were fired. Example 3: As he ran from patrol officers and climbed a wall, suddenly motioning a hand towards his side, the police officer fired. Example 4: Armed with a pistol and shooting repeatedly, then nearly dragging the officer to death, the criminal was finally shot and killed.

The cases go on, as well as the misrepresentation by the media, and there are speculations and false accusations in each. The cases are various, but they’ve all been lumped into one huge melting pot by angry citizens, an apologetic, helpless mayor and national black leaders who crave justice. Although Timothy Thomas’s death is clearly not justifiable, at least to the community at this time, it should not be used as a catalyst for the other “14” deaths. Yes, his funeral was attended by hundreds of people, the famous and the unknown, but there hasn’t been proper mourning because his name has been reduced to a number. An axe murderer has no right, dead or alive, to be promoted into the same category as a frightened teen apparently wanted for moving violations. Would Black Panthers have carried his coffin for the world to see?

Cincinnati is widely known for racial profiling while pulling motorists over. Last

summer, an alternative newspaper called *Defining Times* reported testimony after testimony, unraveling the unfair treatment of blacks by both white and black officers. Consequently, other media began to report the inequalities, and since then there have been investigations and a call by the mayor to end these measures. These events came just a few weeks before Thomas' death.

Around the same time of the *Defining Times* coverage last year, events surrounding Cincinnati's annual Jazz Festival caused a lasting impact on the African-American community. Bringing in close to 80,000 people each July to see stars like Luther Vandross and Mary J. Blige, the money-making music extravaganza wasn't the same for many because of the lack of places to celebrate afterwards. An estimated 25 businesses, mostly restaurants (both fine dining and fast food), shut down during prime hours. Additionally, it was determined that some hotels even deceived visitors. A few of the nicer ones claimed they were

booked solid before even reaching half their capacity. Some restaurant owners stated that violence the year before had influenced their decisions to close for the duration of the festival. The year before, there had been a rape and a shooting among unruly teens, but this age range does not typically make up a portion of the Festival attendees. Most of the people who venture to the popular event are middle- to upper class out-of-towners over the age of 25.

Unfortunately, it's apparent that Cincinnati breeds and upholds the negative stereotypes that govern it.

"Police brutality" took on yet another dimension during the funeral processions for Timothy Thomas. While hordes of protesters marched through the streets after offering their condolences, four people were injured by crowd-control devices shot by police. The victims, including a 7-year-old girl, a teacher from Louisville and a man who claims he had just stepped out of his front door, were knocked to

the ground by rubber bullets or bean bags, according to reporters who were following the crowd. No matter who witnessed the incidents, all have been in agreement that there was no provocation by citizens whatsoever. An investigation is underway, and the police officers who fired the shots are currently on paid leave.

All things considered, a week after Thomas' death, hundreds of residents from diverse communities congregated at City Hall to address police brutality. Some shared personal stories about their experiences with aggressive cops, while others simply commanded a new charter for the hiring and firing of officers. Then there were the white youths that expressed their aversion for the death penalty, which some claim is the last resort in racial profiling. There were the black men who invited council members to dinner in their impoverished ghetto to witness the "ugly" police/community relations. Next, assorted leaders stood at the podium together accessing the situation and requesting the resignation of the mayor, police chief, and prosecutor. Most people seemed to be in agreement that swift changes were needed both on a community and governmental level, but using the city council as a scapegoat for Cincinnati's embedded bigotry did not seem to be the popular vote at first. A female religious leader softly read a hymn, then furiously compared the mayor to a "Hitler slave master" and deemed the police force his "mercenary force." At once, the crowd was incited and the entire demeanor of the meeting changed. Almost everyone who spoke after her took on the same bitter, simmering presence and stumbled to lash out more powerfully than she had.

At first I was appalled at this influential leader propagating rage during a relatively peaceful, unifying dialogue. After all, the mayor was not responsible for her enslaved ancestors. But as I glanced at the man shifting in his seat next to me slurring his own rude remarks, he turned into my mother's abusive black lover, who I was forced to detain with a knife once when I was 12. And as that distortion subsided, another jumped in its place. A white police officer casually filing his nails amidst the chaos suddenly appeared as the officer who called my friend in high school a "nigger" and told her that if she sucked his cock, he would gladly refrain from ticketing her for speeding.

As the man next to me shouted some obscene remark to the council, I swooned back to reality. For that brief moment, I understood my own silent prejudices. I was just as guilty as the religious leader who, just minutes before, hurled fictitious accusations at the mayor because of his skin color. Inevitably, he was a senseless comparison for the real target of her unabated resentment. Sadly, I concluded that racism, whether subtle or blatant, temporary or permanent, was probably contaminating each and every person in that room. ★

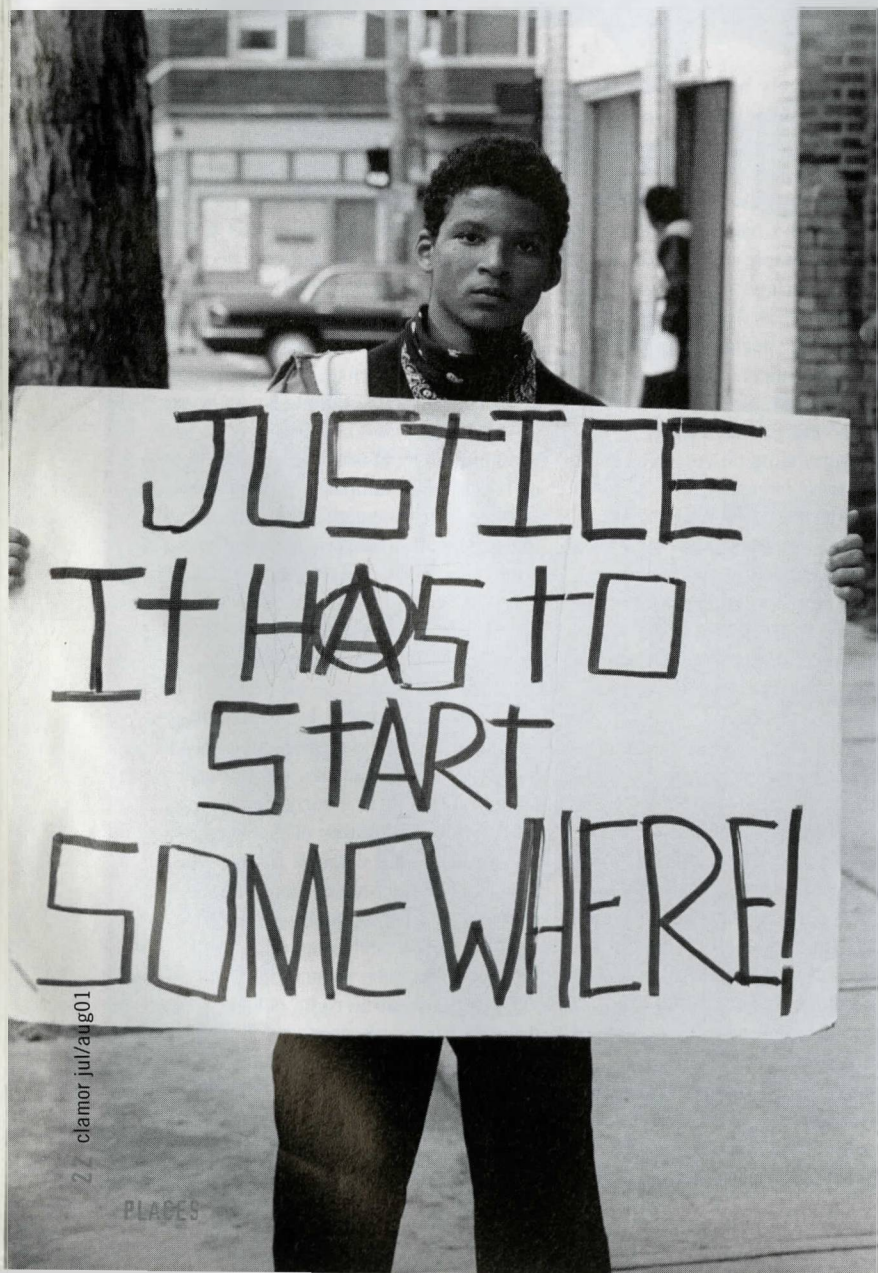


photo: Sumant Sunkara

Rebellion in Cincinnati: but where are all the radicals and anarchists?

by: J-Uprising

"Do you feel him [mayor] Luken? No, you don't! Cuz you're going to lunch after this!"

-A Black youth during Cincinnati City Council hearing after another demanded justice for Timothy Thomas

City Council's normal Monday meeting was stormed by hundreds of angry Black Cincinnati residents on Monday, April 8 after an unarmed Black youth, Timothy Thomas, was shot and murdered the previous Saturday by a Cincy cop. Demanding something be done about Thomas's murder, the crowd began to get frustrated as council members ignored and outright disrespected them. Soon after, more and more people gathered and shared their anger and pain at Timothy's death and the rampant violence of Cincinnati cops, often aimed at the poor and mostly Black residents of the Over The Rhine area. By the end of the night an organic and spontaneous rebellion had erupted which lasted well over three days, with its height coming Tuesday when thousands protested and fought back as police tried to enforce martial law 'Nati style. By the time of Timothy Thomas's funeral, one week after his death, the police and their mayor's curfew had captured and arrested over 800 people, many being tagged with bogus felonies and excessively high bails.

While thousands in the 'Nati reclaimed their streets, fought back against police attacks, hurled whatever they could find at riot cop lines, and broke numerous corporate stores' and banks' windows, this was far from being a national protest planned months in advance with medical teams, affinity groups, or a convergence zone. This rebellion was sparked by the anger and desires of local, mostly poor Black folks who were fed up with being harassed, beaten, and killed by the Cincinnati police. And for all the talk about "local issues," "working with the community," and the need for spontaneous direct action, there were relatively few radicals or anarchists who were doing much of anything in Cincy to show solidarity with the uprising. While there were notable exceptions, especially local members of Anti-Racist Action and Refuse & Resist who did support and even ran the streets with the urban rebels, the overall feel of the Cincy actions was devoid of any serious amount of anti-authoritarian support.



A crowd singing religious hymns clashes with hundreds yelling "black power" after Timothy Thomas' funeral. photo: Stella Washington

"Be part of the solution or get out of the way!"

-Woman to police and city council at Cincinnati City Council meeting

While actions against U.S.-controlled institutions of global financial domination like the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) are extremely important and serve numerous purposes in building revolution in the United States, the questions of justice and strategy arise when events like Cincinnati pop up. If anarchists take the fight against oppression seriously it may be time to reevaluate our priorities.

Attacking white supremacy should be key to any anarchist/anti-authoritarian strategy in the U.S., and one of the most important issues in doing that is police brutality. The majority of the people who were out in the streets of Cincy were from the same hood as Timothy Thomas, Over The Rhine, a predominantly Black and poor part of Cincinnati. If anarchists are to be taken seriously by some of the most oppressed folks in the U.S. they need to be getting down with them, not merely keeping their disapproval to themselves or within anarchist circles. Whether its running the streets, doing benefit and support work for the more than 800 arrested, or attending Timothy Thomas's funeral, anarchists in the surrounding area of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Kentucky should have stopped shining their boots

in preparation for Quebec and jolted for the 'Nati.

"You have not seen anything as of yet."

-Black man speaking directly to Mayor Luken at City Council meeting.

Hopefully this applies to the future of revolutionary anarchist organizing as well. If anarchists are to prove themselves worthy of the trust of masses of some of the most oppressed people in the U.S., as well as introduce the concept of anarchism as a serious alternative and possibility, getting into the streets during incidents like the Cincinnati rebellion should receive priority over planned and more convenient protests.

The people who rose up, and are still extremely angry and full of passion, in 'Nati after Timothy Thomas's murder have so much to gain from going from rebellion to building revolution and little, if anything, to lose by preserving the current social, political, and economic structure of the United States. From a strategic (and moral) point of view anarchists should clearly see the importance of prioritizing sections of the U.S. population that face super-exploitation as workers and oppressed nationalities. The future of revolutionary anarchism should lie within the hands of these people. They will be the ones to ignite the fire that sets the U.S. prairie ablaze with revolt. Get down with them or get out of the way. ★



DSLRL Reclaiming the Manipulative City

Department of Space and Land Reclamation (DSLRL) is a weekend art/activist campaign that occurred in Chicago in April, 2001. It was designed to unite various practitioners of space and land reclamation. This article is a brief introduction to the forces that we are fighting and to the methods we are using to challenge them. Written by DSLRL

The Manipulative City

"Yet, because artists often share city spaces with the underhoused, they have been positioned as both perpetrators and victims in the processes of displacement and urban planning. They have come to be seen as a pivotal group, easing the return of the middle class to center cities. Ironically, however, artists themselves are often displaced by the same wealthy professionals - their clientele - who have followed them into now chic neighborhoods."

- Rosalyn Deutsche "Alternative Space" from B Wallis (ed) *If you Lived Here* (1991)

Global capital has reached such a point that both the physical and intellectual landscapes have been completely purchased. To exist today means to tread on the property of others. The city has increasingly become a space completely built around consumerism. The freedom of expression has come to mean the freedom to advertise. Advertisements on billboards, advertisements on public busses and trains, advertisements on benches, advertisements on clothes, advertisements on radio, advertisements on television, advertisements on menus. Like a minefield of manipulative codes, urban space has been designed to maneuver us from one point of sale to the next. Racist and classist anti-loitering and anti-gang laws have been instituted across the country as individuals and cultures are increasingly illegalized at the behest of property values.

The search for greater market returns and the increased role of the "global city" in the information age has resulted in the phenomena known as gentrification. Gentrification reveals itself in the relocation of entire lower income communities. Generally, artists move into a low-income area and then are quickly followed by young urban professionals. Some forms of resistance include community groups lobbying to retain rent controls, squatters refusing to leave their homes when they are evicted and somewhere in

the North of Chicago, a glorious vandal has been spraypainting "Yuppies go home" on the doors of new condos. (Currently a \$5,000 reward is being circulated for her head.)

Not only are we on borrowed land, we are also on borrowed thoughts. The increased litigation over intellectual property rights has made the expression of ideas prone to law suits and corporate intimidation. Whether this is in the form of patented genetically modified corn or patented AIDS medication to Mickey Mouse; the land of ideas has been fully purchased and commodified as well. Additionally, the entertainment industry has quickly moved in and absorbed every point of radical culture, whether it is raves, Punk, skateboarding or Hip-Hop, and rapidly dismantled it into salable pieces. Selling out culture is just another example of the manner in which the creative products of culture are quickly alienated and sold back to their producers.

Reclamation

The shrinkage of public space, the complete commodification of counter cultures and the sudden emergence of a newly radicalized global protest movement, the anti-WTO protest in Seattle being a particular harbinger, are all factors that have given rise to aesthetic reclamation projects. What we consider projects of reclamation are in some sense trespassing. They creatively tread on the property of others. Some examples of this include graffiti, pirate radio, Critical Mass, billboard manipulators, guerrilla gardening and hacking. While these practices are all in some way or other illegal, they are also creatively resisting the forces of capital that have swallowed up everyday life. As many already know, numerous methods of reclamation have their roots in anarchist, Punk and Hip-Hop cultures.

It is important to emphasize, however, that the effort for reclamation is as long as the history of oppression. From the Gnostics to the Diggers to Sitting Bull to Haymarket to the Black Panthers, projects of reclamation are as old as exploitation. It is only today that this movement has truly become worldwide.

The popular form of reclamation known as Culture Jamming has become more prevalent over the last decade. As forces like gentrification and the commodification of counter culture increase their presence in everyday life, aesthetics of resistance will inevitably grow. However, it is

important to not isolate Culture Jamming from a greater socially conscious perspective (as magazines like *AdBusters* tend to). Once we make the mistake of seeing reclamation outside of the greater struggle for human rights, we will soon find ourselves complicit in a system we claim to oppose. The DSLRL campaign is far more interested in continuing a tradition of resistance to capital and control than in promoting the next art world fad or "hip" advertising angle.

We welcome the return of artistic practice to radical politics. For too long the "scene" nature of the arts, whether music, art or film, has been a divisive and boring mode of production. The changing face of protest has made it clear that all the various forms are important in the movement toward social justice. Artists, who have struggled to find their relevance in a culture dominated by album sales and galleries, are finding ways to participate in projects of reclamation. DSLRL would like to provide an invigorating series of potentials to insert artistic practice into radical politics.

DSLRL

During the campaign, over 50 reclamation projects occurred in the streets, alleys, corporate atrium, barren walls and park benches of the city of Chicago. The projects included Kansas artist Stacey Switzer's design of bright orange holsters for women to carry household items in, to gouge out the eyes of potential attackers. Graf crews FCT and CMK bombed plywood that was pieced up around the city and they painted the DSLRL HQ walls. Trevor Paglen inserted boom boxes on the undersides of manhole covers so the ominous sounds of zombies and dinosaurs rose up from the sewers. Pittsburgh collective, The Institute for Applied Autonomy, presented their Graffiti Writer robot, which uses a dot matrix printing system to become a remote control mobile graffiti writer. Chicago collective Flotsam challenged the anti-loitering ordinances with the assistance of an inflatable couch and coffee. In front of Chicago's city hall, Flotsam provided a place to loiter and dialogue on who controls the space we live in. 47 Ward.org reclaimed corporate kiosks in their continuous efforts to turn back the tide of gentrification in the North Side communities.

DSLRL had a central HQ from which the campaign unfolded. The HQ was designed to



De Profundis by Trevor Paglen greets passers-by with the sounds of zombies and dinosaurs pouring out of sewers and trash cans.



Nest by Kara Braciale

connect various practitioners of reclamation as well as initiate a critical dialogue about the building of a radical aesthetic/arts movement in Chicago and beyond. A large map was placed on the wall displaying the various sites of reclamation. There was also a massive wall of monitors displaying video footage of the reclamation projects. We wanted to create an atmosphere akin to a campaign headquarters where the city begins to look like something we can physically take back. The

HQ also had couches, lending libraries, project space, documentation and free food for participants and supporters.

Our ideas are not new. We take our lessons from the creativity of the DIY scene, the methods of activist groups and the fusion of art and life by groups like Critical Art Ensemble, Group Material, Gran Fury, the Situationists and RepoHistory. We are trying to blend various models to provide effective and exhilarating results.

The Department of Space and Land Reclamation will appear and disappear but the struggle will not. Space and land belong to everyone. We invite you to take it back. ★

For more information on the campaign, check out: <http://www.counterproductiveindustries.com>

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WARNING

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Marty Frankel ruft mich vom Gefängnis an

Marty Frankel calls me from prison by Pavlito Geshos

(All tape recordings transcribed in this article are on file at the offices of this magazine. Some profanity has been censored. All calls to the author by Marty Frankel were placed from the Walker RSMU prison in Suffield Connecticut between March 11 and April 14, 2001)

Rich Man, Poor Man
Thursday, November 30, 2000
A study room at an unnamed state university

I never knew that I was a multi-millionaire and neither did my wife, Evita. The documents filed with the US Treasury Department listed my net worth at some \$43 million. It was unbelievably bizarre. It seems that for the past twelve years that there were two "mes," one was a humble, honest factory worker at a major automobile corporation and the other was a multi-millionaire. Both "me's" lived at the same address and had the same social security number. Nobody at Treasury noticed the discrepancy until Marty Frankel had been captured in Germany in September of 1999. Furthermore, nobody informed me of this state of affairs until November 2000. It was most curious and I was understandably suspicious.

"Baby," Evita said with a laugh, "You've been holding out on me."

One suspects things, fears things, and wonders about such things in everyday life. Some people fear that their hair is falling out, others fear the onset of can-

cer. As for my own fears, I feared that I might be an innocent victim of the government/media feeding frenzy in the unfolding Frankel scandal. As the IRS agent, Larry Marini pulled each document out of his briefcase, the horrible realization of my worst fears began to crystallize. According to the documents, I owned a bank in Tennessee, a banking conglomerate called South East Banking Association, and an engineering firm called Ohio Engineering Consultants. All of this was news to me. I had never seen any of the documents that the IRS agent and the FBI agent held in front of me. They turned the pages as I read them because I refused to put my fingerprints on any paper that these men held in front of me.

"You're really out there, Pavlito" the FBI agent, Gary Schade (pronounced "Shay-duh") said with a knowing grin. I was sweating bullets but I knew in my mind that I had not done anything wrong.

Then the IRS agent held out what appeared to be a hand-written document on notebook paper. Unlike all of the signatures on the bogus documents, it was definitely penned in the distinctive handwriting style of my old friend, Marty Frankel. The title of the handwritten document was "Trustworthy Individuals." I was listed as one of the people that Marty trusted, but my wife was listed as one of the people that he did not trust.

"What the hell does that prove?" I replied angrily "If I had a letter from Saddam Hussein that said you were a nice guy Mr. Marini, would that mean you are bad because Saddam said you were nice?"

The New York Times, The FBI Edition

Tuesday, June 15 through 18, 1999

On my job in the factory, at home and in a local hotel room

When Evita called me, she was quite distressed. The plant security connected her call to me promptly. Evita frantically explained that some *New York Times* reporter named Joe Kahn called our house and demanded an interview with me.

"He said that he was working with the FBI" Evita said in a distressed voice. "and that if we did not cooperate with him, the FBI would come with a warrant and turn our house upside down."

"We didn't do anything wrong" I replied calmly, "Yeah, tell Joe Kahn that I will talk to him but that I don't know where Marty is."

At work, I had become a topic of perverse gossip. Many of my fellow workers knew that I was an old friend of Marty Frankel. I had not seen nor heard from Marty in almost eight years, but nobody believed me. Everyone at work assumed that I knew where Marty had fled to when he left Greenwich, Connecticut in May 1999. He had departed with millions of dollars in diamonds in a chartered jet plane. I didn't know where he was. It never occurred to me that anyone would really suspect that I did know that information.

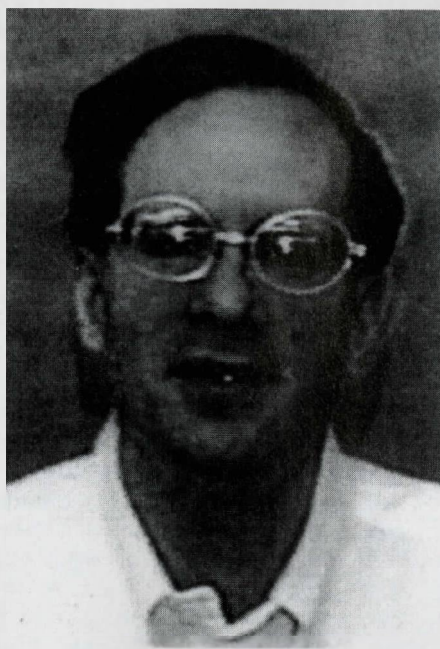
Evita kept talking as if she did not hear my voice, "Kahn asked me if Marty had ever been to our house. I told him 'No' and he replied 'Are you sure?'"

"So what?" I replied, "He came to our house for a Barbecue, so what?"

*"They know things about us." Evita said.
"Then they know we're not involved with
Marty's business." I replied.*

Marty Frankel, as a fugitive financier, running from the FBI and the Treasury Department, not to mention the police agencies of several southern states, had become a folk legend among the autoworkers at our factory. Factory workers, some of whom had invested and profited with Marty Frankel, spray painted slogans on the factory walls. One piece of factory graffiti said: *"VIVA MARTY!"* At that time, my old friend Marty Frankel was still a fugitive and it appeared that he had beaten the system and escaped with almost a billion dollars. Naturally, the 5000 factory workers where I worked, who had been bilked out of some \$30 million through a phony company-sponsored 'Employee Investment Plan', were pleased to hear that a little guy, Marty Frankel, had beaten the big guys, some insurance companies. The big guys had been beating the factory workers for years and now the shoe was on the other foot. In June 1999, it appeared that Marty Frankel, a middle class kid from Toledo, Ohio, had taken the money and run. He was a factory folk hero.

I agreed to talk to Joe Kahn via telephone over the next two days, June 16 and June 17, 1999. I also agreed to meet with David Barbosa, a financial/business reporter from the *New York Times* when he came to my town on June 18, 1999. I told them the same story that I would later tell IRS Agent Larry Marini and FBI Agent Gary Schade on November 30, 2000. I told them that I had not seen nor heard from Marty Frankel since 1991. All I could remember was that we, Marty and I, had a falling out. We were arguing over the unfold-



Who is Marty Frankel?

Marty Frankel is a Toledo native who began a career in the securities business in the mid-1980's. He comes from a liberal family background, his father (who died in 1998) was an attorney and an officer (a referee) of the family court system in Toledo.

Marty got involved with some very wealthy people who recognized his talent for predicting market moves in the stock, commodities and currency markets in the 1980s. Marty left Toledo twice, once in the mid-1980's to move to Palm Beach Florida, the second time in 1991 or 1992 to move to Greenwich Connecticut. In the late '80s, when he had returned to Toledo from Florida, Marty told me, that he

might be in trouble with the SEC, because of money that was stolen by his partners. Both times that Marty left Toledo, he left behind many of his 'old friends' (without a word of goodbye to us) who had no connection to, or interest in, the fast paced Yuppie world of investments.

Marty's dream was to be a money manager, which is a legitimate business career, and he was a pioneer in the art and science of day trading long before the term 'Hedge Fund' was coined by Wall Street jingoists. Marty essentially chose to orient himself to wealthy and famous people who could invest in his funds. Those of us 'little people' who knew him when he was just a less-than-wealthy person were shocked to learn that he was a suspect in some sort of insurance company fraud in May 1999. We assumed that Marty Frankel was just a local kid who had made good on his dream to become a wealthy money manager.

In May of 1999, Marty fled the US, supposedly as a fugitive (but he says that he feared for his life) and was eventually captured and imprisoned in the Untersuchungshaftanstalt (UHA) prison, in Hamburg Germany. Just before he was returned to the US, the German authorities in Hamburg, accused Marty of trying to escape from the UHA prison in Hamburg (February 28, 2001). This alleged escape attempt was designed to justify imprisonment in SuperMax and Maximum Security conditions in the USA. The extreme conditions of imprisonment are designed to pressure Frankel to accept a plea bargain deal and avoid a public trial in which he could call witnesses, who are the wealthy and famous people who gave him investment funds.

In March of 2001, Marty Frankel was extradited to the US on charges of 'Racketeering', 'Money Laundering' and 'Wire and Securities Fraud.' The prosecution is essentially seeking a life sentence of 400 years in prison. This draconian response stands in stark contrast to the 'pardon' given to another fugitive financier named Marc Rich.

The real purpose and motive of this article is to clearly demonstrate the 'guilt by accusation' powers of the mainstream media and their powers to create an effective public smear campaign against anyone they choose to target. Marty Frankel, who has not been convicted of any crime in the USA, has had all his assets seized under the RICO statutes. Frankel is not allowed to finance an attorney of his choice (the Treasury Department has seized a \$600,000 retainer to attorney Hugh Keef of Connecticut) and must rely on a former prosecuting attorney, named Jerry Donovan, as his only defense. Frankel believes that Donovan is "working for the police."

The last and most personal motivation for the article is to clearly demonstrate how US government agencies are waging a 'witch hunt' against Marty Frankel's friends, who have had no connection to his business affairs. Wealthy business associates of Frankel's are spared public scrutiny, while the man who used to shovel Frankel's snow at his home in Greenwich, Connecticut is sent to prison.

ing events of the 1991 Gulf War against Iraq. I learned a short time later that Marty had left Toledo, Ohio and I then lost all contact with him. From the nature of the harsh words between Marty and myself, I assumed that Marty Frankel no longer wanted to have anything to do with me. After all, I was sympathetic to the Palestinian cause and Marty was zealously pro-Israel. This subject of Middle East politics was something that Marty and I had always implicitly agreed not to discuss with one another because it jeopardized our friendship.

On June 25, 1999, the *New York Times* article by Joe Kahn appeared. Much of the information that I had supplied was printed in the article but was never attributed to me directly. I had established that I was a cooperative and credible person with the 'irregular police-agents of the corporate media complex'. Most people refer to these police-agents as 'journalists' but Joe Kahn openly admitted that he worked with the FBI and that there was a total collaboration and sharing of information with that agency.

Der Fluchtversuch

Saturday September 4, 1999 through
March 10, 2001
Hamburg, Germany

I had made a bet with a mutual friend of Marty's and mine that Marty would be able to elude the police authorities at least until sometime after Labor Day 1999. We both knew that Marty was not really cut out for life on the run and that he would make choices and decisions that would compromise his life as a fugitive. There was never any doubt in our minds that Marty would eventually be captured or voluntarily turn himself in. We knew Marty and we knew he did not want a life on the run. Marty remained a fugitive from about May 9, 1999 until September 4, 1999 when he was arrested in Hamburg Germany. Thus, I missed winning my bet over Marty's elusion of capture by only two days.

Marty Frankel was kept in the Untersuchungshaftanstalt or UHA, which roughly translates into 'Investigative Detention Facility'. The *Toledo Blade* called this place the 'Holstenglacis prison' simply because the facility was located on Holstenglacis Street in Hamburg. On the *Blade* web site, I read that Marty's lawyer was named Thomas Piplak. I searched for the name 'Piplak' on the Internet, in the Hamburg telephone directories and found two names. I wrote one letter and sent it to both names. I wrote the letter in both English and German but specifically asked Herr Piplak to call me and speak only in English on the phone. Herr Piplak called me and from him I

got Marty Frankel's prison address in Hamburg. Over the following months, I wrote about nine letters to Marty. I sent over \$400 of my own money and about \$200 from a former employee of Marty's, who wanted to contribute as well. Marty's family also sent money to him. Why send money to a prisoner? The only way that Marty Frankel could get decent meals was to purchase his own food from a prison commissary.

Marty would later tell me in his first phone call, Call #1: March 11, 2001, that I had saved his life by sending that small amount of money to him. At first I tried to wire money to him but the prison never confirmed the receipt of the money. I feared that my money was not getting to Marty. Later, Marty's sister found a new way. We passed money through clergymen in the German prison.

Call #1: March 11, 2001

MARTY: "... I mean, I gotta thank you! You saved my life."

PAVLITO: "How did I save your life, Marty?"

MARTY: "When I was in Germany, they didn't feed you. I only had bread in the morning and bread at night. For lunch, they give like a bowl of rice and maybe pour some spinach on it." ... "If they want to be mean, they'll take that away from you. But they have a system where they have a really good commissary. You could go and buy tuna fish, you could buy eggs, get a can opener, you know you could buy all sorts of stuff like fruits, bananas, everything. You know what I mean? You could make a diet. So, because you sent money in. Because of your money, that little bit of money you sent in, I could spend maybe twenty five bucks a week. Also, a rabbi also put some money in too."

PAVLITO: "That was from us. That was from me, your sister and Ayesha"

In that time period between September of 1999 and March 2001, we know of only one letter that Marty Frankel ever wrote to anybody from the UHA prison in Hamburg. He wrote a letter to a woman named Ayesha, a former employee who also found a way to write to him in Hamburg. In that letter, Marty urged Ayesha to contact me, an old friend. Ayesha called Marty's family in Toledo and through Marty's sister, Ayesha and I linked up.

Together we coordinated our actions to help Marty Frankel stand up to the worst crisis of his life. We simply did not believe the smear campaign. We knew the man and we were not afraid to dispute the distortions and propaganda that was generally passed off as news. Also, Ayesha was helpful to me in understanding my eight-year blind spot when Marty Frankel had disappeared, when he and I were out of contact with each other.

Ayesha knew all the cast of characters from the Greenwich Connecticut episode of Marty's life. It was Ayesha who told me that Marty's Russian girlfriend, Oksana, had been in contact with the IRS. According to Ayesha, Oksana's betrayal of Marty Frankel began the collapse of his setup in Greenwich Connecticut. Ayesha gave me a phone list for all of Marty's former employees. I called all the numbers, I even left a message in Russian at Oksana's voice mail service. None of Marty's former Greenwich employees offered to help their old boss. None would contribute any money to help Marty survive in prison. Oksana never returned my call either.

Through the clergymen, Christian and Jewish chaplains at UHA, Marty's sister established an unofficial line of communication that lasted from September 1999 until about June 2000. Then, for some reason, that line of communication was broken. So, from about June 2000 until February 2001, none of Marty's family or friends knew of his condition. Not even Marty's German lawyers would return any calls to Marty's sister about his health, mental state or general well being. I continued writing letters but never knew if Marty was receiving them. We feared the worst and left messages with the German attorneys to that effect. The only response from the attorneys was that Marty would be returned to the United States soon and that there was no need to worry. We heard that message for eight months, nothing else.

Finally I decided to take matters into my own hands since Marty's sister had been unable to break the communication blockade. I contacted a friend of mine in Frankfurt, a union activist with connections all over Germany. I asked him to place me in contact with anyone who lived in Hamburg. He did so, and I wrote an e-mail to the young man, a complete stranger, asking for his help, asking for him to attempt a visit with Marty Frankel. My e-mail was sent on February 19, 2001

The subject line of my e-mail was:
Betreff: Ein amerikanischer Arbeiter bittet um Ihre Hilfe. (An American worker asks for your help.)

To my amazement the young German man, whom we shall call Gerhard, quickly responded. He said that he had heard of me (from my political or trade union work, no doubt) and that he would be happy to help me get in contact with my American friend. Even better, Gerhard had obtained an attorney who also offered to make sure that the German authorities would not deny them a visit. When Gerhard and his attorney (name unknown at this time) went to UHA, the prison authorities refused to allow them to start the paperwork for a visit. Gerhard and his attorney were at UHA on February 27 during the day. *The authorities at UHA*

Then the IRS agent held out a hand-written document on notebook paper. Unlike all of the signatures on the bogus documents, it was definitely penned in the distinctive handwriting style of my old friend, Marty Frankel. The title of the handwritten document was "Trustworthy Individuals."

I was listed as one of the people that Marty trusted.

claimed that Mr. Martin Frankel was not in UHA and thus, could not be visited.

On February 28, I received an e-mail from Gerhard in which he explained that he had seen a news report on Hamburg television. This news report said that Marty Frankel had made a *Fluchtversuch*, an escape attempt, from the UHA prison. I immediately called Marty's sister and she informed me that the news of this so-called "escape attempt" was on the local TV in Toledo. The news reports said that Marty Frankel, with the help of an inmate accomplice, had tried to cut through a prison bar with a piece of wire. Knowing Marty as I do, I found this news totally unbelievable and most certainly false. I wrote back to Gerhard on February 28th, the same night that the *Fluchtversuch* was reported on Hamburg TV.

The subject line of my e-mail was: *Betreff: Sie liegen zu Ihnen ! (They are lying to you.)*

My suspicions were completely confirmed when Marty Frankel returned to the United States. In Call #3, on March 17th, Marty flatly denied that he ever made any attempt to escape from UHA. Yet the Toledo *Blade* dutifully reported the details of this fictional escape attempt in their March 1, 2001 issue of the paper.

The *Blade* article, March 1, 2001, entitled, "Frankel fails in escape try, is relocated" said:

"Frankel, 46, attempted to cut through the bars of his cell Tuesday evening (February 27th) using a piece of wire with the help of a fellow inmate, but police saw the attempt on a security camera and sounded the alarm. He was taken to another prison."

It is interesting to note that Hamburg TV never broadcast any video images of Frankel trying to cut through his bars. No TV stations in Hamburg have such footage in their possession.

In an attempt to pursue a unique journalistic approach, let's allow the accused man speak in his own defense. Here are some excerpts from Marty's Call #3 that he placed to me on March 17, 2001.

Call #3, March 17, 2001

PAVLITO: "We're concerned about the man who supposedly helped you try to escape in Germany and there's some European journalists who want to know his name so that they can find out if he is being treated fairly or if he's being abused. Can you . . ."

MARTY: "It's all bullshit. The story is bullshit. What have you read about that?"

PAVLITO: "They said that you tried to escape. They have videotape of you trying to escape . . ."

MARTY: "It's not true!"

PAVLITO: "It's not true? You never tried to escape?"

MARTY: "No, but the point is that the Germans can do anything. They're the really super high-tech people. Even my lawyer, my lawyer said that he wanted to get all the evidence and test it. He wanted to fight it. Then, the, the, I have two lawyers, and the lady lawyer said that they could fake videotape too."

PAVLITO: "But Marty, the reason I am saying this is, the reason you're being treated so badly is because they say that you are an escape risk, you're a suicide risk."

MARTY: "But that's all . . . See here's the thing. I think that everybody here (at Walker RSMU) knows that that's not true. The suicide thing, they dealt with really quickly, they know that's not true. The Germans! Here's what happened. Someone said those things, basically three times. When I first arrived there (UHA in Hamburg Germany). In the first two days, there, within the first day, well basically four times. In the first two days there, they said the same thing. They said he's a suicide risk and he's an 'escape guy'. But under their own system, they couldn't do anything because it wasn't true. If it were true they would do a whole lot of stuff to you. I never spent any time in any psychiatric facility. I never was disciplined in any way for any sort of escape attempt. The Germans played a game with me." PAVLITO: "OK . . . Listen! We have limited time. Question: Tell your lawyer to tell the press that there was no 'escape attempt'. They say that you took a piece of wire and that you were trying to saw a bar, right in front of a video camera"

MARTY: (laughing)

PAVLITO: "True or false?"

MARTY: "No, it's insane!"

PAVLITO: "It's insane?"

MARTY: "Where have you read this?"

PAVLITO: "It's in the Blade. It's in the New York Times. It's all over! They are running a smear campaign on you, Marty, and I want to help sink the propaganda!"

[...]

PAVLITO: "Now, you did not try to escape from prison, the Untersuchungshaftanstalt?"

MARTY: "No. Here's what happened. When they . . . from the very beginning they tried to do this, they tried to pin this on me. People came to me who were there and they said that they are going to try to make you go crazy. And I was two times, brought before psychiatrists or psychologists with no warning at all. The psychiatrists, this is all a game, the guards, these are Nazis, real Nazis! OK? They would play a game and I would talk to them, OK and that would be the end of it. The escape stuff, I had thirty, forty people come up to me in that prison, singing the same old tune. We're gonna do this, give us millions of dollars or give us this, thirty-five thousand or give us sixty-five thousand and we're going to get you out. And this was a non-stop thing. In the end it became almost like a joke with these people. I'd sit there politely, half of them merely wanted to rip me off, and the other half worked for the police. So they'd come in and say all of these crazy things while they had a thing with a belt, with a, with a thing on the end. I could tell you so many of the stories that they say. And I go, 'No, go away.' And I'd laugh. Finally at the end I just started laughing and joking. It was just a game."

PAVLITO: "But Marty, wait a minute. Listen! Time is short."

MARTY: "They pulled it on me at the very end. What they did to me at the very end, and my lawyers agree with me on this, everybody would if you . . . They hurt me probably more here, than they could there."

PAVLITO: "I know but I'm telling you to tell your lawyer to blow this 'escape attempt' wide open or you won't get new conditions. That is a fact. Now . . ."

MARTY: "Wait, wait! Time out. Where have you read that?"

PAVLITO: "This has been in the New York Times, the Greenwich Time, the Blade. There's a Blade story also that says that you got \$3.7 million dollars from a handful of Jeep workers and a couple Owens Illinois people. And I don't know . . ."

MARTY: "What?"

PAVLITO: "Yes! They said that you got . . ."

MARTY: "And I still have this money somewhere?"

PAVLITO: "No, no. That, this is what you used to start buying insurance companies. That's what it, the Blade, this is by a guy, uh, named Sallah from the Toledo Blade. Now my..."

MARTY: "We had a hedge-fund."

PAVLITO: "Now, let me just..."

MARTY: "Whatever, I don't know."

PAVLITO: "The point I am trying to make is that I want to make you aware of the propaganda and I want to help you sink it so that you can get some better conditions."

MARTY: "You know what the funny thing is? All the people in Toledo, they all made money. Not one, 'little-person' got hurt at all by anything I ever did. Except nobody cares about that."

PAVLITO: "It is important. It is important. That's a good thing to say."

MARTY: "You don't understand, it doesn't matter. It's almost like when you do something... it doesn't matter. What I did was, I made many mistakes."

The curious thing about my suggestion that Marty's lawyer, Jeremiah "Jerry" Donovan should tell the press that there was no escape attempt, had actually already been done. The press simply refused to publicize the fact that Marty Frankel denied that he ever tried to escape from any prison anywhere. Marty Frankel, the man who is assumed to be guilty until proven innocent, could simply be convicted of any crime at any time by simply reporting the accusation in the press. No proof or evidence of any crime or infraction needed to be offered or even manufactured. The news media just knew that Marty was guilty of anything that any authority figures, either in Germany or anywhere else, said he was guilty of.

The article is a work in progress, as new information about Marty Frankel comes to light and new misinformation is spread through the mainstream media. Clamor is following this story and will publish more information in future editions or online at www.clamormagazine.org

Rich Media, Poor Democracy

Communication Politics In Dubious Times, by Robert McChesney
(New Press, October 2000, 448 pages)

review by Eric Zass

Ever wonder why, with a prison system that is reaching per capita levels equal to that of Stalin or Hitler era proportions, with an economic gap which has expanded immensely throughout the eighties and nineties, and with protests against global capitalism going on throughout the US and much of the rest of the world, "investigative journalism" has come to mean 24-hour JFK Jr. updates—or Princess Di updates, or Jon Benet, OJ... you get the point. In *Rich Media, Poor Democracy*, McChesney exposes the dominant mythology that America's privatized media has been at all beneficial to its democracy.

McChesney is not at all afraid to name names and point out the obscured meetings, agreements, and legislation which has allowed 90 percent of our media (newspapers, radio stations, internet companies, and television stations) to be centralized into the hands of 7 enormous corporations. He's also not afraid to point out and criticize what this unfettered monopolization has created: news coverage that is generally geared to entertain and certainly not to upset privileged individuals, agencies, or corporations; an acquiescent body of fawning, corrupt politicians; and a population that is left largely ignorant of the information it wants (and needs) most for functional democracy to take place. If you can forgive the corny title, this is the bible of media literacy and an essential text for activists.

The Pinkos

Empty Records

Review by Tess. Lotta

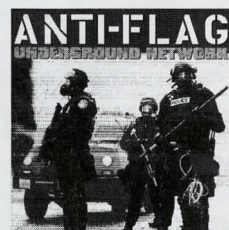
The acoustic guitar has long suffered dismissal by the edgy set as being the soggy harp of crybaby singer songwriters. The Pinkos' guitar player, Vanessa Veselka, toughens up the humble axe and its rep with aggressive chord changes, ripping leads, and plenty of distortion. Together with drummer Steve Moriarty, the duo reclaims alt rock's chunky roots as an acoustic-punk band that provides a strong enough dose of old school punk to infiltrate the watered down MTV version. The Pinkos finds the club-experienced team shredding through scrappy ditties aimed at the present state of amerikkka while providing plenty of harmonized verse to chorus pop. Obvious single *Billy Jack and Me* points a finger at the police state with the musical rawness of X-Ray Spex and Violent Femmes, retaining the nascent vibe of the punk rock born in beer bottle littered practice spaces and makeshift clubs during the late 70's. This isn't a pair of twenty-something, corporatist Extreme jocks co-opting an important music movement. The wit and maturity of Veselka and Moriarty, as musicians and activists, provides humorous, intelligent musical diatribe and leaves out the recording studio magic that bleached punk rock for mass consumption. It's the "pit" generation versus the "mosh pit" generation with the former educating the latter on why it all started in the first place. The Pinkos is required listening for those claiming to be punk, and the band has given us a secret handshake; they say, "If you can't start a brawl with a big mouth and an acoustic guitar, what good are you?"

Anti-Flag: Underground Network

Fat Wreck Chords, 2001

Review by Jason Kucsma

Anti-Flag has grown up quite a bit in the last couple of years. On their first full-length *Die For the Government*, they showcased the straightforward, two-fingers punk rock that inspired some singing along, but arguably offered little in the department of intellectual capital. Since that time, they have put out two more full-lengths, the most recent of which being *Underground Network*. On *Underground Network*, Anti-Flag have retained their energy while writing lyrics that more insightfully encourage listeners to reconsider the role that history, patriotism and consumerism have played in socializing Americans into being passive vessels. Songs like "Panama Deception" bring forth historian Howard Zinn to offer written testimony to the abuse of power that caused Bush to order 26,000 troops to invade Panama in 1989. And songs like "Culture Revolution" and "Underground Network" celebrate the people who are unable to sit still and continue consuming (education, products, ideologies etc...) as if there were no consequences to their actions. *Underground Network* about being both critically aware and proactively involved in countering incomplete history and colonial future. There is plenty to dance, sing and shout along to on this CD. If you are currently inspired by the likes of Strike Anywhere! and nostalgically long for Inquisition, the Clash or Stiff Little Fingers to return in their original form, this might satiate your wants.



Radical Repression

A Personal Narrative by Andrew Hartman, Radical Teacher

"I would rather die on my feet than spend a lifetime on my knees." - Emiliano Zapata

On Friday, February 9, I was called into my boss's office and fired. I was informed that I would be losing my job as a second-year high school social studies teacher at the end of the school year. While this news is certainly hard to swallow, it is not surprising. I am a radical teacher. Radical teachers are not wanted in American public schools. As a social studies teacher, critical analysis of America and its institutions can be a risky endeavor. Encouraging young people to challenge the system is dangerous. Having beliefs contrary to standard American ideology is not wanted in the schools, and many times is not allowed. Acting on those beliefs is career suicide. My case is only one instance, but surely it can shed some light on the repression raining down on independent thinking in America and its schools.

As a new teacher, I do not have tenure. My contract must be renewed each year until I have accrued three years. Administration in my school, and most schools, has sole responsibility for deciding which new teachers will or will not return. This power is the perfect tool to weed out radical teachers. Radical teachers new to the game have two choices. Choose to act on your beliefs and risk losing your job. This is the choice I made, and the results are in - I will be looking for a new job this summer. Or, choose to accept your role as a servant to the institution, ignore your beliefs, and hope to gain tenure.

Most "radical" teachers choose the latter, waiting for the opportunity to act on their beliefs when the coast is clear. This option is rarely successful - the possibility of institutionalization is very real. Educators who grow accustomed to conforming lose track of why they entered the profession. Twenty years later, they wake up jaded and bitter. These teachers enter the classroom in a state of misery. They dislike their lives, hate their jobs, and despise the kids. I have seen this process up close and personal. These teachers are as lost to the profession as the ones who get fired in their first years. It is important for social studies teachers to model passion. If we do not have passion in our lives, then we have nothing. The passion that teachers like myself bring to the classroom is contagious. High school kids are constantly labeled apathetic. The students I work with display anything but apathy. If teachers possessed a fraction of the passion these young adults display, this world would be a much better place.

My job was in jeopardy from the start. I helped form a club at school known as Students for Justice (S4J). In my classroom, students learn of injustices worldwide. They learn that injustices are not coincidental. Injustices are perpetrated by individuals, by corporations, by governments, even by our own government. The question students ask constantly is, "O.K. So, things are bad. What can we do about it? How do we fix it?" I do not always have answers to these questions. I point to history: the Civil Rights Movement, anti-war protests, the Labor Movement. "How do I get involved in something like that?" This line of questioning led to the formation of Students for Justice. S4J is the natural extension of a classroom that teaches cognitive dissonance. It allows the students to explore action and organizing, rather than simply reading about it in a book. Doing is always the best form of education. The students wished to learn more about worldwide and community issues, as well as to explore injustices within the school. One of the first school issues the students wanted to tackle was military recruiting.

Our school, located in a blue-collar neighborhood outside of Denver, with a high minority population, is a key target for military recruiters. At least once a week, military recruiters set up their booths in highly visible locations in the building. Preying on the students who do not have clear choices after graduation, the armed forces collect a large number of future soldiers in our school. They pay the school to set up booths, and it is well worth their money. Some of the students in the club wanted to address this issue, so we set up our own booth in a different section of the building. We sold Zapatista coffee and had anti-military literature available for those who chose to indulge. Specifically, I helped the students put together a list of top 10 reasons not to join the military. An example was, "The U.S. Military protects the interests of corporations overseas, thus increasing the gap between rich and poor." We did nothing different from what the military does weekly, except our information was not

common knowledge, especially for high school students.

Administration did not see it that way. Some of the veterans in the building, including a fellow social studies teacher, were shown the top 10 list and were furious. They immediately took their complaint to administration, and within hours that very day I was sitting with an administrator behind closed doors defending the list and the club. The issue was now a school issue for the first time. Everybody in the school, staff and students, was talking about the infamous list. We accomplished something that had not happened in our school before - people were arguing the merits of military recruiting in a high school. I paid a price for newfound school-wide critical thinking. I was now a target.

While S4J was fighting to stay alive as a school club, I was fighting for my career. My teaching and the material I brought to the classroom came under fire. I was accused of teaching a political agenda. If teaching for social justice is an agenda, then I am guilty. I was accused of trying to push my socialist views on children. If teaching that human values are more important than profit values is consid-

ered socialist, then I am guilty. I was accused of teaching the facts with a bias and not letting the students think for themselves, as if "facts" exist in a vacuum, with no room for interpretation. If teaching that African-American males are seven percent of the American population, yet make up almost 50 percent of the prison population, is not letting stu-

dents think for themselves, then I am guilty.

I was told to be objective. Here, I defer to Howard Zinn and claim that I have serious "objections to objectivity." For example, there were complaints by other teachers that some of the posters hanging in my classroom were offensive. Because of the complaints, I was forced to remove posters of Che Guevara, Malcolm X, Bob Marley, *Rage Against the Machine*, and anti-sweatshop posters made by students. When I responded to administration with a complaint about another teacher's wall hangings - sketches of all the Spanish Con-

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Top 10 Reasons to Not Join the Military

10. Recruiters prey on poor and minority teenagers who think they do not have any other options.
9. The U.S. Armed Forces has minorities do its dirty work (and you thought South Park's Operation Human Shield was a joke!)
8. Solicitation is not allowed on school grounds, unless of course you are an armed forces recruiter.
7. You will end up protecting a rich country that does not have any enemies, like Japan or Germany.
6. The armed forces primary goal is to protect the interests of U.S. corporations, which makes the rich richer and the poor poorer.
5. While protecting corporations, the United States does not care about the cost of your life or the cost of innocent foreign life.
4. The military will overthrow democratically elected governments in foreign countries if it interferes with U.S. corporations.
3. Do you want to be a baby killer?
2. The armed forces want people who conform. Do you want to be like every other jughead in a uniform who blindly takes orders, no matter how cruel those orders are?
1. Real men do not carry guns!

quistadors – I was rebuffed. One of my most audible opponents in the social studies department has a poster claiming that Vietnam was a just war. Colleagues who stress objectivity teach the merits of so-called “free” trade in economics. Is this not an agenda? Are only facts being presented?

Administration informed me that it was necessary for them to find a candidate that would ensure student success, thus implying that I was not setting up my students to be successful. Recently, Becca, a graduate who was in my Government class last year, came back to visit me. When she entered my class she was a very negative person - her father was in

prison, and she and her mom were barely scraping by on welfare. She was down on school, only wanting to graduate in order to attend beauty school. Like many poor whites, she was anti-immigrant and racist. When she returned to visit me, she told me that my class changed her life. She is now attending college and majoring in political science. Because of my class, she now understands the true source of her anger. She is taking positive steps to improve her life and society as a whole.

Jared, a current student of mine, told me that he wanted to drop out of school but I was the only reason that kept him coming. This young man, a 16-year-old “punk” in the eyes of most adults, has the potential to make a huge difference in the lives of many people. He cares. But his home life has caused him nothing but problems. He also has problems with authority. I have taught him more constructive ways of dealing with the problems of authority, and he joined S4J. It is a constant struggle for him, but we have made serious progress. If he drops out, he will end up in jail. In the eyes of my administration and most teachers in my building, respecting authority at all costs will ensure success. The schools believe that students should respect authority even when that authority is their source of oppression.

Teachers also live with the repressive authority that exists in the school. Many teachers understand the repression, but are scared to say or do anything about it. There are too many rules, and arbitrary enforcement of these rules keeps teachers in check. It is understood to be impossible for any teacher to follow all of the policies. However, when administration has a problem with a teacher, suddenly the rules are dragged out of the closet and thrown in the face of that teacher. My friend Andres, also a radical teacher, experienced this first hand. Andres, a fourth-year teacher with tenure, will not be so easy to dismiss. In order to begin the process of ridding him from the school, administration must build a case. Minor rules are arbitrarily applied. It is policy to call a student's parent after a third absence. Most teachers call parents as it applies to the situation – a parent call does not always have a positive impact. It is true that Andres committed an infraction for which he has no defense – he did not call a parent. Now he has a permanent scar on his record. Arbitrary application of rules is another powerful tool used to weed out the radical teacher, and scare other teachers into submission.

Radical teachers like Andres and myself are a threat to the “natural” order of the school, and thus a threat to other teachers. Schools foster an “us” versus “them” ethos. We must always back our fellow teachers in a squabble with students, even if the student

is being treated unfairly. Many teachers view their teaching as fighting a war. Maintaining classroom control, not allowing students to “act out”; these are victories. When a student gets the upper hand, this is a defeat. If teachers like myself strive to empower students, we are viewed as traitors in the war.

When I was notified of my future dismissal, I thought it was important to inform some of my students, particularly S4J kids. The students were horrified. For many of these students, I was the first teacher to be an advocate of their needs. They felt that their concerns were not taken into consideration by administration. Without my knowledge, they passed a petition around school, explaining why I was being fired, and asked other students to sign it. They garnered nearly 1,000 signatures. When administration discovered the list, they accused me of being selfish, using students to my benefit. I was told by administration that personnel matters do not involve students and that students do not have a say in who teaches them. Kids must not only obey authority; they must also trust authority to make decisions for them.

Schools are training students, especially poor and minority students, to be good workers. The existing belief in schools is taught as follows:

- Good workers respect authority.
- Good workers do not think for themselves - they trust their boss to do the thinking.
- Bosses make decisions for workers, then tell workers the decision was made in their best interests.

Critical thinking is not wanted in public schools. In fact, I was told by administration that high school kids are not old enough to do the kind of critical thinking I am asking them to do.

If poor and minority students begin to think critically, that would be the beginning of the end for the system of injustice that now exists in the schools and in society in general. Radical teachers like myself challenge students to think critically, to think for themselves. Radical teachers push young adults to question authority, to ponder better ways. This does not fit the course planned by administrators. Administrators are a natural function of the American public school institution. Administrators wield the power necessary to maintain the status quo. Radical teachers are not the status quo. Thus, while it is hard to swallow, it is not surprising that I will be packing my bags in June. Next year, I will begin again. ★

The September/October 2001 Issue of CLAMOR will have a “Back To School” focus and will feature articles on teaching, education, and lifelong learning. Available September 1, 2001.

'Where you headed?'

I ask him, peering into the car cautiously while trying to still stand up as straight and tall as possible.

This is my strategy.

A self-defense move.

By Sera Bilezikyan

Drawing by Alx Alvarez



Then, if it seems as if I don't want to be taking a ride with them I can always gently spit something out like 'I'm trying to get a ride all the way to ___' Which just happens to be X miles past where they've told me they're going. It provokes less antagonism than a simple 'No thanks'.

'Coeur D'Alene' He says, announcing the bastardized French more so than I ever could. He seems safe. Young. A tiny bit afraid of himself in an arrogant, stubborn sort of way. Blue eyes. Nervous smile. You learn, fast, to trust them or not. It's early in the day and I'm only going an hour and a half away. Right on his route.

*

The early morning sun in Boise isn't satisfying me at the time, as it's hiding behind industrial grayness. I'd barely slept the night before – stayed up late across the kitchen table of a new friend I'd talked into driving me to his town in exchange for 10 bucks in cash and some good conversation. In his old truck I was reminded of that cold feeling I get so often which doesn't ice over when there's a reasonable excuse for it... cold air slipped through the window cracks and the road rattled beneath. I'd experienced this so many times – the feeling of not being able to talk, even if there's something to say; or someone to talk to. We settled instead for silence, driving into a sunset so it lasted for over an hour. One of the intense fiery ones of the plains which pierces the flat sterility and stunted plantlife with what was once described to me as if seeing the face of god in someone for the first time. Atheist guilt can be just as bad as Catholic, and I let the words wash over me and both chill and warm my bones. I slept alone that

night and barely, to the dull hum of the cold industrial city. Woke up early and split town.

'Coeur D'Alene' Guaranteeing me a ride to where I need to go. 'Great' I say with a guarded stoicism. My newly sharpened knife glistens at my side and hangs dangerously within reach. The road and the fear exhaust me like nothing else. Suddenly, I'm overcome with emotion and wonder if I should have spent the night before with my friend or at least let the conversation give way to the morning. I peer at my watch as I'm still getting settled in the passenger seat. Early. We might still be lying in bed, sleeping or not. His arm draped gently over my back or my face caught between his chest and his armpit. Curled up, warm and quiet.

*

I look over at he who is driving. Long, pale arms in a white shirt. Heat on unnaturally high in the car, for this part of the country which seems to have hardened its souls and thickened their skins in the face of the cold. Since I know the temperature outside it causes my body an eerie confusion. Unsure whether to sweat or to shudder – in an artificial space; familiar feelings but out of context and out of place.

His silence puts me at ease. And I think back, trying to tell myself the truth. That sad dead truth of the night before. The heavy feeling of grease on my fingers and words freely exchanged in the air, the song 'Sea of Heartbreak' by Johnny Cash spinning in my head like I would never hear it again. The song which was playing while my knife was getting sharpened. Something about that moment sticks with me like a lucid dream, frozen in time forever behind my eyes. He sharpened the knife stealthily and deliberately, singed with a bitter sexuality. Sliding it in deep circular motions over a wet stone. A wet dark stone which looked like smooth molten lava. The noise like a machine which refuses to grind to a halt. When I told him I didn't believe in the heat below our feet, the hot core of the center of the Earth he said 'goddamn it you're a fool woman and I've got half a mind to unsharpen that knife of yours. I don't trust what you'd do with it.'

And later, the feelings, I would realize, would not change. It is the same, as if not being able to talk. Losing your voice, or the air to be heard through. Staring at him across his kitchen table, the thought of spending the night together did cross my mind. As had that feeling of being like an island, unreachable and unexplored. Knowing that I needed more, more, like a car stopping only to tell you they'll take you up the road. Like a sun-

I catch him looking at me, as most people do, natural in a situation like this.

He has arms as if he's just gotten out of prison. Dense and tight, fresh, as if he hasn't taken a minute to rest.

'So you're from Virginia' he says.

He starts talking about white power.
'You understand'.

set which only lasts a few seconds, a throat scrounging around for words and not even penetratable silence to scream through. I felt raw and cold. My distrust and distance to the fires of passion somehow, something I though the world would understand.

He asks my name and I give him a common one. Amy. I'll be Amy today, named after my best friend when I was 15. Amy, the girl who at one time I considered to be my other half and now I might not recognize. 'Amy' I say outloud to him to prove she's real. 'Will' he says. I jump slightly, thinking he's entered my distraction, and wondering what I've said or asked of him. What task he's undertaken on my behalf.

*

'Where you from?' He asks. 'Virginia' I say. It's not exactly true, but what would be? I'm from everywhere it feels like so much of the time. From outside this world and only trying to leave again. The lush green of Virginia often calls my memory into fertility again after too much that is numb and cold and gray – everything from attempts at human connection to smokestacks, even bright lights which bore into the back of my head on the highways at night. It makes me want to run blind, and want to speak if only I could scream and do it justice, *something isn't right here, just take me home.*

'Where you going then?'

'Home'

'Long way.'

'Hmmm'

*

My eyes also double as poison darts, luckily. Their expressiveness allows me a versatility that more classically pretty girls are denied, I've always comforted myself with. Glasses serve as a further layer between me and the world. They correct my depth-perception so there's no pretending that the Earth is actually rising to meet my feet. Or each step is one step closer to hot core of the planet. I have a face which has never made much sense to anyone, being both too plain and complicated all at once. A face which constantly questions the world and refuses to squint in the sun or turn away

from the cold – and serves as a canvas for the life I've tried to live. Scars, dirt, the unconscious reactions to things I barely notice. A turning away from fluorescent lights, a gentle smile when the smell of a woodstove or strong coffee hits me from far away.

The world reflects through me a sense of having broken what was once complete – long ago at a time when awareness was not this chain link fence between me and boundless freedom. Thin as the blade on my knife, even thinner from many sharpenings. Yet as unconquerable as the state of Idaho in the winter without something to cover your face and eyes so the cold air doesn't hurt to breathe too much. It's the kind of face which knows, or hopes, that one day it will be held squarely between a pair of hands, shaking and wanting badly to turn away, and told that it's beautiful. Until then, it creates the same kind of self-defending undestroyable outer shell as the initial 'Where ya headed?' Listening to the screams below the concrete. *Stay away from me, just take me home.*

I catch him looking at me, as most people do, natural in a situation like this. He has arms as if he's just gotten out of prison. Dense and tight, fresh, as if he hasn't taken a minute to rest. 'So you're from Virginia' he says. He starts talking about white power. 'You understand'. Not this. *I refuse.* My mind escapes and wanders back to the night before which barely happened now, in my refusal. The frantic and delusional attempts at love now seem as if they would have been worth it, and worth every second.

*

The conversation switches to his voice, alone. *You*s thrown in to make it seems as if *of course* I'm following. To make sure I'm in sync with his jargon, that I agree with his hate. The cold, black-and-white way he's talking is making the world seem caught in another time, another place – a time and place still talked

about, now celebrated in past-tense existence. While it is the *whys* and *hows* which can still be ignored, or rather, just not celebrated. Guns. Racial purity. Power. Resistance. White Supremacy. He keeps insisting on that word, *resistance*, above all. It feels fake and hyperreal. This is no video game and I am not at the mercy of a quarter. He doesn't know what he's doing to me by forcing me into silence. And what a word such as *resistance* conjures up in my own mind. I mentally wander back to my own life and my internal and external struggles for justice and decolonization. My zillion attempts to touch consciousness with my fingers.

I slink back, silent, into my seat. He hands me a tattered copy of White Aryan Resistance. Admires my knife. Talks about guns. My mind slithers out of Idaho an into the summer in Oregon, learning to shoot guns and feeling powerful and strong. The cold metal and the kickback breaking all ties to a past I could no longer follow, a path of passive struggle and faith that the world would return the favor with a gentle hand or two or a hundred to hold. I felt homesick for that freedom. I am trapped inside his words, which create a haze around my head in the small, hot car.

He isn't looking for my approval – it's all too assumed. And all the confirmations he's seeking in life are his own. His own, sick search for acceptance, sense, and love. Is that any different than mine, or any of ours searching in our own ways? I examine my own journeys which have lead me between layers of the planet and back, a hitchhiker entering the worlds of the unknown, the concious and the unconscious. *I don't want to know this, just take me home.*

I handle the copy of WAR as if it's made of clay. I handle it to death, as a casual observer might note. I'm sweating as it's cold outside. It's been a long time since I've felt so warm. So raw. So scared. I know he doesn't want to hurt me. But still. The icy fingers of hate have gripped me once again. And I'm Amy, anyhow. I'm young and idealistic.

Borderlining on delusional.

*

Should I be dead? I wonder for the first time, *really*. More intense than after a bad accident or a prolonged illness even, I'm thinking. Because it is now, it is more immediate than anything ever could be. More conscious. Of every step, breath, the rhythm of the car, the thread in his voice – which reminds me of anyone, scared of himself. Mine, too, when I can use it. His hate is relatively subdued, but seemingly deadlier in its casual and deliberate organization. He could be talking about anything, really. A bad dry year for prairie fires. The high price of gasoline. The fiery passion I always thought vocal and vehement racists possessed isn't burning me from his words. Rather, it is the sincere lack of anything good or genuine or loving in his life which is freezing my heart. Despite the gentle heat blowing warm and mechanical on my knees.

Should I be dead? Concerned about my otherworldly appearance, dirty and tanned? Or am I as invisible to him as I am to the world? Only seen for my femininity which I have consciously poisoned with my eyes. No wonder it seems as if he's talking to himself. And for the first time, the silence is necessary and not futile. I wonder if there are words I could say now, if they existed if I know I could say them. Like the time I spent screaming into a payphone near the traintracks in a small timber town in Oregon. Screaming because there was a train going by and I couldn't wait for it to be gone. I liked the screaming I was doing. I liked not knowing if I was heard or being spoken back to, I just knew the words were leaving me, screechy and guttural in my raw throat. Trying to reconfirm some love I either lost or never had, unable to rest, even to stop and breathe. The ripe wet air of that place seemed like all the sweetness in the world at that cold moment in Idaho. The summer

memory fading away into a haze of dizziness and tranquility, guns and screams.

I never asked for this. Through my silence it doesn't matter. That my own blood is ambiguous and to some extent unknown. And my mind, fascinated with my own kinds of truth and resistance. From my childhood in this apartheid country I developed a fascination with love. Something so systematically denied in modern and artificial landscapes. A desire to transcend and to transgress and to translate the madness and injustice of the world into a common language which would be mutually understood for no other reason than a need to hear it in another voice, to know what it sounds like aloud.

And suddenly I'm overcome with the feeling again, that familiar feeling of being a bad soldier. Fighting an old war. I struggle with my conscience. It would be different; different if I were not been in a position of being threatened by my own voice, and only protected by silence. Then I would be fighting with every weapon I knew how to operate, and then some. A friend once equated my words; the way I talk and write and even dream – he hypothesized – to a machine gun, fully automatic, after the trigger has been pulled. Swallowing these words was like stifling a lifetime of screams and memories and stories I could recount. And whether I know it or trust it, or it's all I know and the most powerful thing that there is, I trust above all the magic and ability of words to create or redefine the world.

Along with everything else this alternately cold and hot hitchhike through life has brought me a certain degree of numbness. The fascination with love and not as a place to arrive at but a constant challenge with the sum of every step you've taken. To be silent, in the face of the very essence of what needs so badly to be touched, is in actuality, continuing it on into its lifetime or twenty of loneliness, of hate, of a pain I never thought I'd tasted. Only tried to suffer through just the same. The definition of hate has a stoic permanence to it; while love seems so intangible it is hardly clear whether it has ever even been known. Only dared, challenged and exhausted – the standards by which I approach the world.

*

Home. Or closer to it. I've told him this is home. Among other things which would delineate me as one of those people possessing of normal everyday or perhaps extraordinary things. A place on the planet they consider to be, in their heart anyhow, theirs. Love, in that abstract and societal hungry form of simply being physically unalone. Though the most immense lies I've told have been silence. A blank response to his talk of white supremacy and the need for a new world, and

the death of an old one. I can't shake the bad soldier feeling or the craving for some normalcy in my life. Cold heavy air on my face, and my words which hang suspended in it for a second too long. Slowing down the accepted and assumed pace of life. To hear my words again, swearing off a bad case of losing my voice. If only I can make it through this, unexploding and also undead, *just take me home*.

Home is nothing more than a promise, or a guarantee of another journey to familiarity. Love, this interrogation of life I've been demanding since I can remember – a demand for ideological justice, for the world. For one second to allow itself to be understood. To make some sense, as if speaking the same language or walking in and out of each other's dreams.

Should I be dead?

He leaves me, safe and scared. Nods his head, gallantly if a little awkwardly. Goodbye. And he drives off on the same road in the same direction. Gone. I think of the smokestacks in Boise and those of the timber mills of Oregon. Wondering, always, where the smoke goes in that its disappearance is simply an illusion. A curse we will pay off for a long, long time. I saunter off to where I know home will be closer. My knife still sharp and still close. My heart still, or at least a part of it, stopped in time and craving some air it trusts to breathe. Tears streaming down my face the minute the oxygen makes the heavy breaths possible. Screams haphazard and aloud to nobody but myself. The sky gray and wide, the air cold but I'm numb to it by now. I'd thought the heat in the car should have eased my blood up to flow soft and freely around my body. But the whole time it sat, syrupy and cold, untouched by the world, except silenced. Except angered. Except blamed. Except incredibly confused. Demanding answers and weapons and words and direction.

And chewing on my tongue until it was raw and scraped, I sat searching my immediate memory for any remnants of my own resistance. *Just take me home* is all I think I might have said aloud while fire overtook my daydreams. Either said aloud or caught in my throat, it would have simply hung in abeyance, through the rumblings and endless clamorings of the road. Until it disappeared, but would not be gone. The only thing he said directly to me the entire ride was *'...do not forget it you were born into a war and you'd better stand up and fight...'* And walking away, I break into a run from gravity. A bad soldier, fighting an old war. ★





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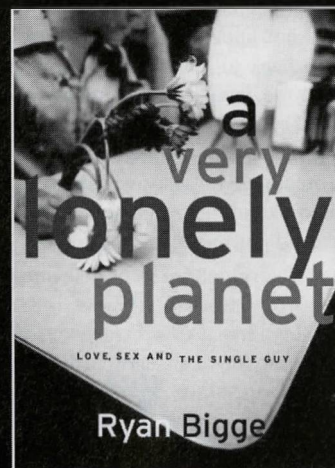
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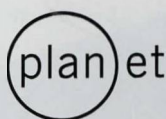
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[MEDIA]

Targets of



Repression

crime.....distribution of news and information
violators.....Independent Media Centers in the US
documented by..IMC contributors Ryan Baghdad,
Mark Burdett, Otto Nomous, Becky Perrine,
Jeff Perlstein & Michelle Steinberg

A reporter from a mainstream Canadian newspaper recently asked for an interview on the upcoming protests against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). He specifically sought the perspective of "a woman involved with the alternative media" who intended to be in Quebec City during the April 2001 Summit. Apparently my affiliation with the SF/Bay Area Independent Media Center (IMC) fit the profile and he enthusiastically encouraged me to go on record. Though an ideal opportunity to articulate the issues surrounding the demonstrations, I found myself balking at his offer. "Would my name have to be included," was my immediate response. "Yes, absolutely," he replied, vetoing any possibility of anonymity. Attempting to explain my reluctance, I described the numerous activists (including other IMCers) who had already been denied entry into Canada. He assured me that the issue would not hit the streets until the day after my scheduled arrival. I politely declined, further deterred by the potentially incriminating nature of a public statement, should I face any unexpected legal troubles following the events.

Turning the tables, I began questioning him on the political climate facing the media in Quebec City. He informed me that the government was planning to issue only one press and photo pass per mainstream publication. Then, pausing to confirm with his boss, he noted that officials had instituted an unspoken ban on the presence of independent press within the metal-fenced security perimeter. Though not surprising, considering the trend of criminalization and censorship of alternative media at previous mass protests, it was disconcerting to hear a corporate reporter confirm this fact.

As mainstream media has become increasingly consolidated into the hands of the wealthy few, ensuring distorted coverage and diminished content, the independent media movement has gained momentum. However, in an age when even the illusion of transparent government has ceased to exist, the unauthorized wielding of pens, microphones, cameras, and computers poses a serious threat to the powers that be. Not surprisingly, the state has responded through increased criminalization of the alternative press. The defeat of low-power FM radio exemplifies this crack-down. Early this year, congress caved in to the corporate broadcast lobby by passing legislation that crippled the FCC's fledgling micro-radio program, which was designed to allocate a fraction of the airwaves to community groups. During recent demonstrations, including those against the World Trade Organization, World Bank/ International Monetary Fund, and the various charades that constitute the U.S. electoral process (from conventions to inauguration), authorities have taken unprecedented steps to silence both voices of dissent and the vehicles that relay them to the public.

The Independent Media Center (IMC) has been a repeated target in the campaign against the alternative media. A collective of independent journalists and media organizations, the IMC

is dedicated to providing democratic, grassroots coverage of issues ignored or distorted by the corporate media. The IMC is run with an infrastructure maintained by dedicated volunteers and supported through the content of an open publishing model that accepts all contributions, as published directly by the authors themselves. Established in Seattle during the November 1999 World Trade Organization protests, the IMC served as a clearinghouse of information throughout that momentous week, acting as both a content provider and a direct media outlet. The center generated up-to-the-minute articles, photos, and audio/video footage that reached thousands through its web site at www.indymedia.org. As the corporate media refused to offer fair and accurate reporting of the critical events, the IMC also spread the word through its own newspaper, video documentaries, and radio broadcasts. A decentralized and autonomous network of over forty IMCs has since sprung up internationally, offering continuous coverage of local concerns and grassroots perspectives on global issues.

The following accounts by IMC participants reflect some of the ways in which the authorities have attacked the indy-media centers or threatened the distribution of dissenting media during mass protests. Jeff Perlstein begins by examining the circumstances that greeted the IMC's inception in Seattle. Mark Burdett recounts the police shut-down of both public printing facilities and the IMC's micro-radio affiliate during the April 2000 World Bank/IMF demonstration in D.C. Ryan Baghdad discusses the implications of the Philadelphia Police affidavit that enabled a raid on a convergence space used by the IMC. Lastly, Otto Nomous describes how the authorities' COINTELPRO-style use of an alleged bomb-threat prevented an IMC broadcast during the LA Democratic Convention.

Seattle

November 30, 1999

"No. You're one of them."

"I'm a journalist. Here's my WTO host committee press pass. Now, please, May I cross the street?"

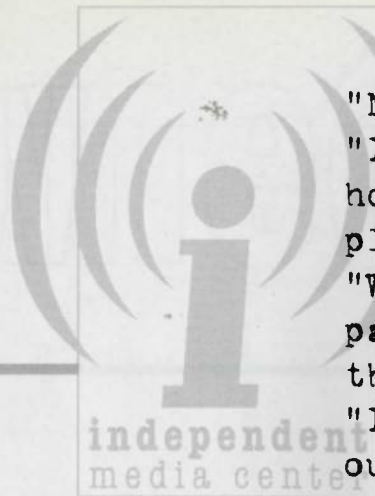
"What's that? [points to IMC pass] I saw you talking with them. You're not real media."

"It's my job to talk with people out here. I'm a journalist and..."

Blasting pepper spray into Craig Hymson's face at point blank range, the officer abruptly ended the conversation. When listening to an audio recording, one hears the awful sound of the liquid hitting Craig's skin, his pained cry, and then the impact of the spray splashing onto the cold Seattle sidewalk.

Hymson was one of more than 500 journalists and community members who participated in a bold new experiment in media democracy during the week of the anti-WTO mobilizations in Seattle - the Independent Media Center (IMC). While he was one in a small minority of those involved with the IMC who also held an official WTO host committee press pass, he was part of a significantly larger group of IMC participants who experienced all-too-close contact with members of the city, state, and federal government's police forces.

As soon as Craig and the others wearing IMC passes ventured into the public sphere - practically anywhere outside the carefully controlled and cordoned, corporate/government banquet - they were all equally fair game for the pumped-up and over-worked officers who'd pledged to "serve and protect." According to the Seattle National Lawyers' Guild report entitled "Waging War on Dissent," IMC reporters repeatedly "found themselves hav-



"No. You're one of them."

"I'm a journalist. Here's my WTO host committee press pass. Now, please, May I cross the street?"

"What's that? [points to IMC pass] I saw you talking with them. You're not real media."

"It's my job to talk with people out here. I'm a journalist and..."

Washington DC

ing to explain what the IMC was when they tried to get through the demonstrators' lines." (<http://seattle.indymedia.org/local/images/NLG-REPORT.pdf>). Meanwhile corporate network reporters with big cameras and logo-splashed vans moved about freely (or with as much ease as possible amidst the gloriously massive demonstrations and the not so glorious imposition of the "no protest" zone).

In Seattle, the indy-media movement had in its favor a vast number of material, social, and historical conditions converging in a unique and powerful way. The ever-present camcorders, the magnitude of increase in audience and distribution venues available via the internet, the establishment of a large-scale, low-cost work and media training facility, and dozens of dedicated activists and coalition supporters — all of these contributed to the heightened presence and impact of independent news. Despite the tear gas and rubber bullet touting authorities' efforts to intimidate and trivialize dissenting press coverage, alternative media makers proved that resistance is (truly) fertile, as they helped lay the groundwork for a thriving international IMC network.

In April 2000, activists gathered at the IMF and World Bank meetings in Washington, DC to protest global monetary policies that have contributed to world-wide social and economic injustice. Throughout the demonstrations, the DC IMC published a daily newspaper, *Blind Spot*, for distribution to protesters and local residents on the streets of the city. IMC radio volunteers set up Mobilization Radio, an unlicensed low-power radio station at 97.5 FM, to disseminate similar information to the community. The station worked closely with the IMC, carrying on-the-spot interviews with participants and detailed reports on the World Bank blockade and police activities, as well as commentary, speeches and music.

On Saturday, April 15, police and federal agents attempted to ban publication of *Blind Spot* by closing local copy shops on the pretext of "riot activity." Troy Skeels, an IMC print collective volunteer, learned about the shut-downs as he was trading literature at a Kinko's near the White House. An employee asked the group to leave, stating that their presence put his shop in danger of closure. The manager then explained that police had already shut three other downtown Kinko's. Meanwhile, at the 24th and K Street branch, another IMC'er was only able to print one box of pamphlets before he was forced to leave. Police entered the shop, harassed anyone printing what they termed "pro-demonstration" or "anti-IMF" literature, and asked the manager to close the shop until further notice, citing "riot activity." Needless to say, there was no "riot activity" in sight. In asserting that independent media would promote illegal activities, the police employed "prior restraint" to curb journalists' freedom of speech.

A few days later, on April 17th, the FCC, FBI, and DC Metropolitan Police raided the Mobilization Radio transmitter site. The enforcement squad arrived at 3:30 p.m. without a warrant. They attempted to knock down the door of the building and ordered the station

closed. During the ensuing standoff, the authorities refused to comment, offering no legal explanation for their presence. The radio operators placed calls to both the IMC and demonstration organizers, and a small number of media representatives and activists rushed to the scene to investigate the situation. More police soon showed up, blocking traffic on the entire street and restricting access to the alleged broadcast center and adjacent buildings.

Shortly before 4 p.m., a crowd of over three hundred demonstrators deviated from their march to a jail solidarity action to support activities at the transmitter site. At that point the police donned riot gear and formed a line in front of the building. The protesters, carrying puppets, signs, and drums, demanded that the police leave the area "in 5 minutes." What happened next was unprecedented in the history of micro-radio: the police, FBI, and FCC agents left the scene within 30 seconds. The crowd immediately took over the street in celebration. For a half-hour they basked in the glow of a decisive victory, before relinquishing the street to neighborhood traffic and continuing on their path toward jail solidarity.

After a week of broadcasting, Mobilization Radio was already in the process of closing down when law enforcement arrived. After the police departure, participants disassembled the station and cleared out the building, before regaining anonymity amidst the crowd of protesters.



Philadelphia

During the massive demonstrations at Philadelphia's Republican National Convention in July-August 2000, police arrested over 400 people, attacking crowds of non-violent, unarmed protesters, and detaining them on false charges. The legal battles continue well into 2001, as those held on outrageous bails and trumped-up felony counts slowly avenge themselves in the court system. The Philadelphia police crackdown alerted Independent Media Centers everywhere that they were under intense scrutiny when a police affidavit named the IMC as a communications and organizing vehicle for protest activities.

The sworn testimony of the authorities was released in the "Affidavit of Probable Cause in Support, Search and Seizure Warrant, #97832, which stated: "Independent Media Centers were established in Seattle during the WTO protests and in Washington, D.C. during the IMF protests. They focus on the protest marches, rallies and what they perceived as police misconduct and brutality. Information indicated that members of the IMC conducted counter surveillance of law enforcement. They also monitored broadcasts of police radio communications and provided real time broadcasts of them over the Internet. The IMC provided communications between groups of demonstrators and orchestrated their movements."

An examination of how this document was produced and subsequently used to shut down protest organizing in Philly offers insight into the workings of the U.S. police state. The Philly PD needed the affidavit to arouse fear in the judges who could grant probable cause for invading the media center and convergence space. Using 50-year-old red-baiting techniques, the authorities declared that, "[protest] funds allegedly originate with Communist and leftist parties and from sympathetic trade unions. Other funds reportedly come from the former Soviet-allied World Federation of Trade Unions." Such statements capture the sympathies of the many judges who still believe that Communists fund a significant amount of dissent in the U.S.

In addition, Philly PD used "evidence" from a report released by The Maldon Institute, a right-wing think tank. John H. Rees, a frequent contributor to the ultra-nationalist and racist John Birch Society, is the Institute's head. Over the years, the organization has kept anti-r hysteria alive by voluntarily infiltrating left-leaning groups and providing free intelligence work to police departments. Perhaps too nutty to be on the official payroll of COINTELPRO-style government programs, Rees nonetheless contributes to a culture of fear and political repression that seems to resonate with some members of the Philly PD. Their affidavit specifically cites the Maldon report as corroborating evidence. According to Jack Lewis, a Philly state police spokesperson, the government will not release the Maldon report to the public.

Kris Hermes, who works with the R2K Legal Collective, believes that the authorities' distortion of the truth has several objectives. First, the affidavit granted probable cause to physically harass activists and enter their workspace. Second, the document contributes to a campaign of defamation against the protesters by associating them with Cold War-era Soviet political front groups. In addition, attacking the organizations as "Radical" and funded by foreign governments can help destroy the fragile broad coalitions that have been the hallmark of recent mass organizing.

Los Angeles

5pm

"The police are shutting us down!"

"What?"

I couldn't believe what had just hit my ear through the electronic air waves.

"They've shut down our broadcast!"

Approximately 7pm

"They said there was a bomb threat," explained the IMC dispatcher as I grasped the walkie-talkie with one hand and the camcorder with the other. Crouched behind an abandoned protest sign that leaned against a thirteen foot-high fence, I was trying to dodge the hail of pepper spray and rubber bullets, while documenting the whole thing on video. Inside the "protest cage" next to the Staples Center, the site of the 2000 Demublican National Convention, Rage Against The Machine was finishing their set- which kicked off with "Kick Out the Jams," re-enacting the MC5's performance at the Chicago '68 DNC protest. In the police riot that followed, scores of people were clubbed, shot, and trampled by cops on horseback. A terrified crowd running for cover knocked the walkie-talkie out of my sight, eliminating my immediate contact with the dispatch. I eventually returned to the IMC headquarters to get the dirt behind the alleged bomb scare.

In a war, an aggressor or occupying force begins by disabling its enemy's communication systems. For example, during the 1991 Gulf War, prior to bombing Baghdad, the allied forces first knocked out Iraq's communication networks. On August 14, 2000, the police prevented the LA IMC from presenting its first live satellite television broadcast by blocking access to the satellite truck, under the pretext of a bomb threat. It later became obvious that they weren't looking for any bombs.

Apparently, at around 4:30 pm, the police advised people in the building that a van in the parking lot contained a possible bomb. At 5 pm, the police detained three activists who

were taking a break from IMC to enjoy tofu sandwiches in their van. They were told to put the sandwiches down and step back from the vehicle. I can only guess how deadly that tofu must have been. Strangely, the police "searched" the van without protective gear or special equipment. For a time, the bomb squad even refused to visit the scene, citing insufficient evidence.

In a picture of the incident posted on the IMC web site, you see four cops standing within ten feet of the van which housed the "bomb" that had shut-down a non-approved political broadcast. On finishing, the police said there was no bomb and that they obviously had the wrong van. The police action began just as the IMC satellite show was preparing to go on-air and ended ten minutes after the program was scheduled to conclude. How convenient that they got to shut down the satellite broadcast to protect us (so we can't watch the cops firing concussion grenades at protestors.)

These were clearly COINTELPRO-style tactics if I ever heard of them. And it's a sure indication that activist/independent media has become a serious threat to the current establishment's corporate-owned propaganda machine.

Conclusion

As recognition of the IMC as an important source for independent news increases, the authorities correspondingly escalate their attempts to interfere with the center's activities. In general, police combine preemptive measures designed to block the IMC's dissemination of information during actions with a campaign of slander in the aftermath, seeking to earmark the media-makers as instigators. During the September 2000 World Bank/IMF protests in Prague, the Czech government issued a report suggesting that an unnamed media group had sought to deliberately "denounce the Czech Republic and Czech Police." According to a Czech newspaper article, "Prime Minister Milos Zeman stated...that it was an international media institution which organized something similar in Seattle."

The line between demonstrators and independent reporters has become increasingly blurred, as activists, facing the impenetrable wall of the corporate media, regularly cover their own actions. The corporate press, choosing to ignore or failing to recognize the importance of an event in advance, may often resort to using alternative media footage after the fact. In the current climate, any security that a press pass (including those officially sanctioned) once afforded has vanished. The act of possessing a camera or a recording device frequently designates one as a target. Fortunately, as the state's repression becomes more egregious, the tactics of dissent become more refined - and our decentralized global network of IMC's continues to grow...

Postscript

On April 21st, during the FTAA protests in Quebec City, the Independent Media Center in Seattle was served with a sealed court order by FBI and Secret Service agents. The order stated that it was part of an ongoing criminal investigation into acts that could constitute violations of Canadian law, specifically theft and mischief. In addition, a gag order was imposed, barring the IMC from disclosing any details of the visit or order. The gag order was lifted on April 27th, and now the IMC is in an escalating battle to protect free speech. See <http://seattle.indymedia.org> for further details and updates.

On May 8, the owner of the Ohio Valley IMC domain (ovimc.org) was served with a subpoena directing him to appear before an Ohio grand jury this Friday, and to hand over server log information related to a particular article posted to their open-publishing newswire. Unlike the court order served to the Seattle IMC, the Ohio Valley subpoena was not issued under seal, and the server log request applied to a single post rather than to two days of website traffic.

The posting in question at the Ohio Valley IMC includes what might be interpreted as an implied threat to Cincinnati Police Officer Steve Roach. On May 7, Officer Roach was indicted by a Hamilton County, Ohio grand jury on misdemeanor counts of Negligent Homicide and Obstructing Official Business for his role in the April 7 shooting of Timothy Thomas. If convicted on both counts, Roach faces a maximum of nine months in jail.

The owner of the ovimc.org is currently in consultation with lawyers and activists who have been dealing with the recent federal request for logs from the Seattle IMC site. According to a post at the Ohio Valley IMC, the request is for naught, as the 'custom written software [for the site] doesn't keep IP logs, or ANY tracking information for that matter." ★



Photos and words by Kari Lydersen

Political Public Art in the 21st Century

As massive street demonstrations against globalization, repression and injustice have mushroomed over the past year and a half, starting with the anti-WTO protests in Seattle in late 1999, political art including puppets, street theater, stencils, posters, murals and graffiti has enjoyed a resurgence. At the anti-IMF protests in Washington D.C. in April 2000, the Republican and Democratic Conventions during the summer, the anti-IMF protests in Prague in September 2000, the inauguration and other protests small and large around the U.S. and the world, political art running the gamut from radical to whimsical has been a staple of dissent.

Political artists of all types have met repression in response, including physical abuse, stiff fines, seizure of property and jail terms. At the protests during George W. Bush's inauguration in Washington D.C. in January, the state made a pre-emptive strike against artists by outlawing puppets in the protest area. But protesters responded with creativity, managing to smuggle puppets in as protest signs that could be reassembled in puppet form.

The recent wave of protest art draws on a long international tradition of opposing power through painting, drawing, acting, dancing, posting and otherwise performing. From the Russian Revolution to the French Commune to the Spanish Civil War to the Zapatista uprising to the struggles for Chicano, black, women's and gay and lesbian liberation in the U.S., murals, posters and performances have been able to inspire and inform the masses in ways that plain dogma can not.

In the past 10 years, many artists say, gentrification, commodification, draconian laws and overall political apathy has stifled and suffocated many thriving art movements. Though there has been a beautiful rebirth of street art at the mega-protests in the last year and half, this renaissance has been largely the domain of young, white activists. The coming years will tell if, despite massive repression and criminalization, the political art movement can become as entrenched as in times past in the daily lives of people across the class and racial spectrum.

The 1980s: A Heyday

When black graffiti artist Michael Stewart was arrested and strangled to death by New York police in 1985, an army of his fellow political public artists rose to his defense. Political street art mushroomed overnight protesting his murder and the climate of police brutality, racism, gentrification, evictions and oppression that planted the seeds of the incident. When a diverse and highly politicized group of local artists called Artmakers Inc. launched the ambitious "La Lucha Continua" mural project at La Plaza Cultural in the quickly-gentrifying Lower East Side where Stewart had done much of his work, his slaying emerged as a theme linked to the other issues in the project – apartheid, evictions, intervention in Central America, the disappeared in Guatemala, homelessness and the power of grassroots community organizing. Three of the murals in the 24-mural work revolved around police brutality and Stewart's killing: Etienne

Li used a comic book style to tell his story, a graffiti artist named Chico spray-painted a subway scene and World War III Comix founder Seth Tobocman portrayed a confrontation between a young artist and a mounted cop – a reference to the cops on horseback who patrolled and often brutalized artists in the Ground Zero of political public art, Tompkins Square Park, a block from the plaza.

"The medical examiner removed his eyeballs so there wouldn't be evidence of the strangulation," said Tobocman, who created numerous posters and stencils protesting Stewart's murder and the acquittal of the guilty cops the following year.

Political public art was almost synonymous with life for Stewart, Tobocman and their crowd on the Lower East Side of New York in the 1980s – activists and artists from every economic, educational and ethnic background were like soldiers in a war using art as their weapons. An average day for Tobocman consisted of waking up in an activist/artist-filled squat and making posters, puppets, stencils, leaflets and comics for use in the demonstrations and protests happening constantly around the city.

With Reagan in the White House and gentrification, police brutality, landlord arson and other race, sexual orientation and class-based clashes rocking the city, the large and vibrant political artist community was fighting back with joy and anger, putting their creativity to work in legal and illegal ways to thwart the system. Musicians, poets, eccentric orators and other creatively inclined

rabblers formed a sweeping and loose network with professionally trained and self-taught visual artists who blanketed the city with unauthorized political murals, stencils, fliers, tagged slogans, impromptu performances, speak-outs and jam sessions. Tompkins Square Park was an unofficial political art gallery and performance space, with speeches, blues, reggae, drum circles or punk music echoing from the band shell while stencils marked the sidewalks and political fliers decorated the lampposts for blocks around. Graffiti was, even at its height for much of the '80s, still more or less the domain of the ghettos where it was born and blossoming into new and more sophisticated political and aesthetic styles. Stewart was just one of many graffiti artists working hand in hand with activist artists of other sorts – a synergy seen much less frequently today.

The birthplace of graffiti and an overall incubator for political public art, New York's currents were mirrored in and rippled out into cities around the country. One stencil Tobocman did attacking government-ordered housing "spatial deconcentration" made its way around the U.S. and across the ocean. It was also used to illustrate the controversial article on the subject by Yolanda Ward, who many believe was murdered by police or government officials in the wake of the story.

"Those graphics showed up everywhere in the fucking world," Tobocman said. "People would change them, add long hair, one guy liked to put guns in everyone's hands – he thought we weren't militant enough. It took on a whole new life beyond my production of it."

One typical day found Tobocman with a group in Washington Square Park painting a mural of cuffed hands decorated with the stars and stripes of the American flag – a statement on electoral politics.

"These Rastafarian drug dealers ran the park so we used their system of lookouts. We had them watching our backs while we did this mural. Then these kids from New Jersey came in and we gave them some black spray paint and they painted all over the arch. It was this amazing moment of all these different people working together."

The 1990s: A Low Point

During the late 1990s, several graffiti artists were fatally shot by cops and black and Latino graffiti artists are constantly harassed and physically attacked by police. But these incidents today don't draw a response like the murder of Stewart. Though political art is thriving in the massive protest scene, there still seems to be something of a disconnection between this movement and the use of art to fight everyday oppression in low-income communities.

While political art is in some senses exploding as part of the anti-globalization and repression movement, on local levels gentrification, strict laws and the commodification of movements like hip hop and punk are keeping a damper on all-out artistic assault.

Of course there is still political public art being done – anti-corporate, anti-imperialist and anti-gentrification murals; anti-police-brutality stencils; squatter's rights puppet shows; some overtly political graffiti; stickering and poster campaigns in support of Mumia, Leonard Peltier and Assata Shakur; Earth First's barricades and tree occupations; and the Lesbian Avengers' in-your-face actions; and just a few of the recent political public pieces on the national canvas. Not to mention the Web as a new "public" forum for political art.

But the current political art scenes in the U.S.'s major cities revolve largely around small, close-knit, often male-dominated networks and a limited number of high-profile individual causes, with Mumia being the trendiest. In New York, the raging Tompkins Square Park scene and various other political collectives have largely dropped out of sight, due mostly to stifling gentrification and draconian "quality of life" laws. Robert Lederman is one of the city's most visible political public artists. Not an old political foot soldier like Tobocman, Lederman was a career artist who was politicized by Giuliani's attacks on street artists and quickly became one of the mayor's harshest, most astute and untiring critics. The unflattering cardboard caricatures of "Ghoulani" which he carries and passes out at demos have riled Rudy so much that he has had Lederman arrested on dubious disorderly conduct charges more than 40 times and even tried to outlaw removing cardboard from dumpsters. Lederman laps up the Mayor's hatred proudly and points to Giuliani's single-minded persecution of him as a sign of the dearth of other political public art going on.

"I'm the only one doing political street art in the city," he said.

Ebbs and Flows

In the U.S., political street art has surged in tandem with labor and other oppositional movements and flourished in the revolt of the '60s. Murals, a staple of the Mexican revolution and other international movements, gained prominence as a community-based art form in the U.S. in the late '60s and burgeoned over the next few years as funding and public support for them became available. The NEA and other mainstream public and private agencies started making significant funds available to murals and other public art projects in the mid '60s, making more political public projects possible but also putting constraints on the content of publicly-funded work. The Art Workers Coalition in New York and the Los Angeles Council of Women Artists were among the activist art groups arising in the '60s who used government funding for politically oppositional projects. But pressure from city

governments and mainstream community groups blunted the political edge of the mural movement by the mid '70s, according to many artists, spurring groups like Artmakers to form in the early '80s with rejuvenated radicalism.

Though progressive politics were low and stifled in the '80s, political public art reached new heights of sophistication,

participation and humor throughout the country. Many artists attribute this to the work of artists who came of age in the '60s and to the teaching of political and public techniques in mainstream art schools throughout the '70s.

Some examples of ground-breaking work done in the '80s, much of it combining the efforts of gallery and activist crowds: A homeless performance group named the Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD) put on street



theater about the plight of the homeless, poor and mentally ill and were hauled away by police to sanitize the city for the 1984 Olympics.

Gran Fury and ACT-UP launched biting and provoking AIDS activism and anti-homophobia crusades in New York, sometimes utilizing corporate advertising methods as with the then-shocking "Kissing Doesn't Kill" bus and billboard campaign. They also spread the word with stickers, T-shirts and placards with eye-catching images of penises and slogans like "Sexism Rears its Unprotected Head – AIDS Kills Women" and "The Government has blood on its hands – one AIDS death every half hour." To protest media coverage of AIDS, in 1989 Gran Fury printed a four-page New York Crimes parody of the Times and wrapped it around thousands of Times papers inside vending machines at 4 a.m. The AIDS quilt also made its rounds of the country in the late '80s.

Across the country countless shifting groups and collectives painted overtly political murals with and without official permission.

Many collective mural groups ventured into Central America or across the ocean to do their work. Susan Green, a long-time fixture on the San Francisco political art scene, was among groups of U.S. artists who worked with locals painting murals in Nicaragua in 1984 concerning the elections and also in the West Bank in the late '80s.

"We lived in a refugee camp with a Palestinian family," Green said. "We did seven murals with them, basically living under military occupation. We went as a group of Jewish Americans to show them that not all American Jews support what Israel's doing. We were so welcomed as Jews and artists. It was so ironic in the most profound way to see Jews oppressing others this way."

Gentrification Strangles San Francisco Art

Today, Green says she feels "pretty alienated" in San Francisco because of the lack of a strong political art scene.

"The ripping down posters and painting over things definitely has a dampening effect on people," she said. "There still is a lot of posterizing going on, but there was a point where it was a much more vibrant form of communication and people were putting up posters not only to advertise events but to express ideas. I haven't really seen that happening in years, since the neighborhoods started gentrifying."

"There are still quite a few walls being painted, but they're not as political," added Miranda Richardson, another San Francisco artist who has been working in the Mission community for over 25 years and who went to Nicaragua and the West Bank with Green. "Most of it is spray art, which isn't as issue-based. I wish it was. Part of the reason is that there isn't an overt movement. There has to be something for it to bounce off of."

Like Richardson and Green, many of the ideas and artists of the '80s continue in political public art today, but a majority of the notable groups have folded, dwindled, lost their oppositional edge and/or become more concentrated in the gallery world than the public sphere. Participation in the Guerrilla Girls events dropped drastically through the early '90s and became more and more insular. Gran Fury and ACT-UP drifted toward more introspective, less angry works as the nature of the AIDS crisis and public attitudes changed. Group Material became more gallery-oriented – a victim of its own success – and most of its members drifted away. WAC dissolved from internal struggles and exhaustion. Many individual artists tended toward galleries or books as they grew tired and frustrated with the activist scene or looked for more stability and started families. The bottom line, as Richardson said, is that the state of the political movement was no longer sustaining the art.

"It has to do with the demise of the left in America," said Greg Sholette, a professor at The School of the Art Institute in Chicago and founder of Repo History, a radical New York public art group. "Academia has taken over some of that – people who would have been

political leaders have become professors. They've taken away the idea of using public space for oppositional messages."

Fighting for Public Space

The less abundant political public art has become, the easier it is for lawmakers to crack down on those who do it and the political and economic threat it presents. Tobocman said Giuliani's infamous beautification program has had no small effect on his and other artists' withdrawal from the public realm.

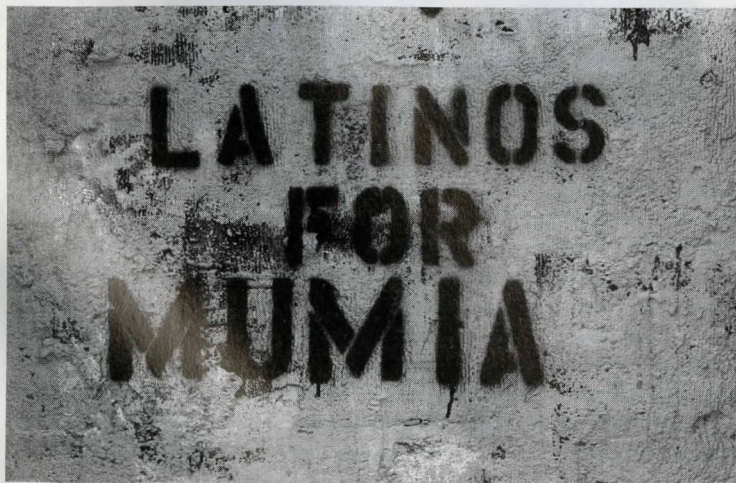
"They put you through the system for a poster," he said.

Political public art also feels the squeeze from city government and businessmen as cities gentrify and previously "unnecessary" land becomes precious.

New York's community gardens and the organic and man-made art they include are also under land-grab attack from Giuliani, who wants them back for cleansing and development. In fact, some of the most inspiring current examples of political public art are puppet shows, film projections and other visual and active protests in support of the gardens. Vaguely political and purely grassroots public art along Chicago's Maxwell Street is similarly threatened: the mannequin trees, brick towers, tile mosaics, and junk-trimmed "art fence" created by the residents of the Chicago Greens recycling co-op and other local squatters and homeless people will be destroyed as the University of Illinois at Chicago sweeps out the famous street to build new apartments and classrooms. Today, thanks to "accidental" fires and bulldozers, only several buildings on the street still stand.

Protection of Capital

Until the activist resurgence of the past year and a half, protection of capital rather than fear of revolution seemed to be the driving force behind this oppression of political public art. With the state of the political movement such that it seemed no significant threat to the powers that be, it had actually been graf-



fiti with its greater threat to property values and its illogical, hyper-exaggerated ties to "gangs" and "crime" that struck more fear in the heart of landlords and politicians.

"One of the worst problems facing this city is graffiti," announced Philadelphia mayor Ed Rendell in 1995 while unveiling a new zero-tolerance anti-graffiti campaign. "While it can't kill or maim, graffiti is a more insidious problem. It can kill morale." An article by the Kensington Welfare Rights Union notes that Philly spends \$3 million or more a year fighting graffiti and that the artists can end up with \$10,000 fines and up to five years in jail; the laws even hold parents responsible for their kids' graffiti and fine property owners who don't clean up graffiti on their property. "We are told that graffiti is the cause of urban decay, that it causes everything from illegal dumping to prostitution to murder," the story said. Philly officer Gary Gathers agrees. In 1995 he told *The Philadelphia Inquirer* that "From the graffiti comes the trash, comes the prostitution, comes the abandoned cars, comes the exodus from the city." In most cities the sale of spray paint is regulated – in Chicago, stores can't sell spray paint at all. Curfews, random searches of youth (for the instruments of crime), mandatory anti-graffiti curriculum in schools and suspended drivers licenses are among the measures being used by zealous city politicians to wipe out the scourge of graffiti (and other forms of illegal political art, though in the vast majority of cases it is graffiti and young graffiti artists who are the target of these laws.)

Bus stop bench advertisements in Oakland say "NO: Drugs, Driving Drunk, Graffiti," illogically equating simple painting with potentially deadly drug use and drunk driving.

Rabid, costly anti-graffiti programs are

ironic considering that at the same time cities are spending millions to fight graffiti, they are also pouring money into after-school art programs that serve essentially the same purpose as graffiti – giving "at risk" kids a wholesome creative outlet.

Commodifying Artistic Dissent

Though property owners and government officials are frightened enough of graffiti and what it implies to spend millions removing it, the advertising firms of corporate America feel just the opposite. They are eager to spend millions on graffiti – to own and use it. With its irresistibly attractive style and status as youth and hip hop culture, advertisers have jumped all over the graffiti bandwagon to market clothing, sports equipment, alcohol, soda, music and countless other commodities. Ironically, much of graffiti's advertising use is to sell overpriced goods from huge (mainly white-owned) companies to the low-income minority kids who started graffiti as a form of protest against this system in the first place. Graffiti artist Ephraim, who has painted in Chicago and Santa Cruz, among other places, sees this as a conscious philosophy, and he partially blames co-optation by mass media and advertisers for the apolitical and self-referential aspects of graffiti.

"There's infighting, scenism and material bias," he said. "Part of that is because it is attacked by our culture on two fronts, by capitalism co-opting it and the powers that be trying to squash it. (Co-optation by advertising) is one of the insidious structures of control that the dominant culture has. It's like white blood cells taking what attacks them and trying to transform it into a line of defense, turning it around and making it part of the system."

Given the relatively small number of people doing political art on a daily basis and the legal crackdowns which make elaborate and political works difficult, some of the healthiest political public art campaigns today are the ones that, like the quick and spare graffiti tag, can be done on the run and alone.

Quickly-sprayed slogans pop up here and there – "Bombs=War" in large painted letters across a storefront in San Francisco during the Kosovo crisis; "Revolution is the hope of the hopeless" written in blue spray paint on a boarded-up building in Detroit; "Stop corporate welfare" sprayed on a phone booth in Brooklyn; "Arm the homeless" on a brick wall in New Orleans; the tag "No More Prisons," the work of hip hop artist Billy Upsi and friends, blanketing the sidewalks of several major cities.

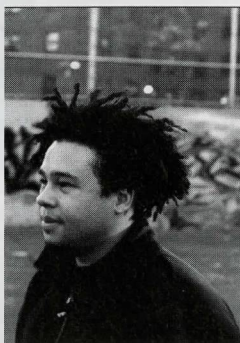
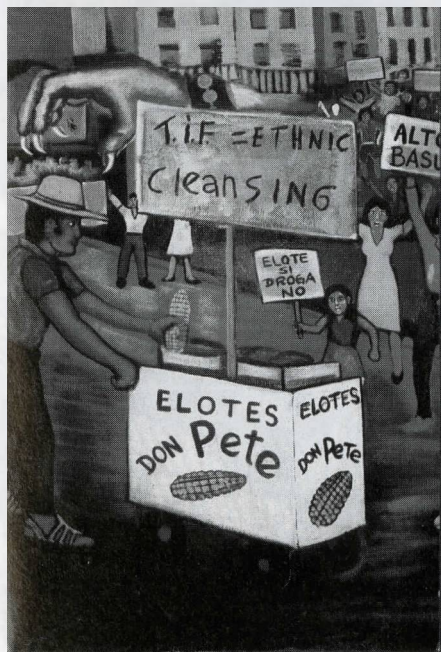
Stickers are a thriving newer political art form. They can be printed cheaply at Kinko's and slapped up discreetly and quickly as someone goes through their daily routine – advantages that radio stations, music labels and other advertisers have also obviously noticed.

"Stickers are very effective – you see that clubs are really into using them," Tobocman said.

Stickers are instrumental in campaigns against corporate behemoths, such as Jeremy Dorosin's Starbucked quest in the Bay Area, started in 1993. Drivers entering the city will see big white stickers asking "Had a bad experience with Starbucks Coffee?" and a Web address (www.starbucked.com), where they are asked to lodge complaints against the pseudo-socially conscious coffee giant or other corporations. Dorosin quit his job running a scuba store to man the campaign and has since poured over \$40,000 into it. It all started when Starbucks sold him used and faulty espresso machines and refused to apologize or give him a full exchange.

Stickers added on stop signs also create ready-made billboards demanding "Stop Driving," "Stop the Death Penalty," "Stop the Execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal."

Mumia, of course, may be the most visible subject of political public art, with stencils, fliers, chalk slogans, wheat-pasted posters and even murals urging his release prevalent in most cities around the world. In Chicago's trendy Wicker Park neighborhood, half-torn Free Mumia posters cling to lamp-



left to right: stencil in Spanish Harlem, NY; James De La Vega, NY; Anti-Gentrification mural in Pilsen, Chicago, NY graffiti artist, Big Juss; Clarian Alley in San Francisco,

posts and Mumia stencils on the sidewalks alternate with stencils of Afroed disco dancers saying "Burn Baby Burn." In New York, red "Latinos for Mumia" stencils are stamped on the buildings and streets of Harlem. In Santa Cruz, Free Mumia fliers decorate the bucolic campus and chalk slogans calling for his freedom show up on bike paths through the redwoods and golden meadows. And "Free Mumia" is scratched into train windows in Chicago, a type of graffiti which can only be removed by installing new windows. (New York graf artist Big Juss thinks "scratching" will be a graffiti mainstay of the future and thinks it was likely invented in Chicago not all that long ago.)

Artistic Dissent Everyday

If Tobocman and the Tompkins Square crowd epitomized the New York political art scene of the '80s, it may be James de la Vega with his less political but more personal, subtle, pop-cultural and even spiritual style who is the symbol for the '90s. A 29-year-old Cornell graduate of Puerto Rican descent, De la Vega returned to his economically-depressed Spanish Harlem neighborhood to open a studio at 103rd and Lexington Avenue in 1994 and proceeded to blanket the surrounding blocks with collages of paint, chalk and tape images. He sees his political role as waking people up, stirring them from their (capitalism-induced) stupors of work to home to sleep to work.

"Working here, I see all these people walking back and forth every day with their heads down, in a total routine," he said. "My job is to snap them out of that. You see something that says something about the conditions around you and it makes you think. It's not in a gallery, it interrupts what you're doing so you have to deal with it."

In the winter he uses tape to create huge images on the sidewalks and streets, including a 50-foot-long tape picture of his mother releasing a bird with the words "Be Free, My Son, Be Free." He does murals of black and Puerto Rican musicians: Celia Cruz, Tupac Shakur, Biggie Smalls and Alejandro Fernandez. Though De la Vega doesn't talk much about religion, there are spare, dramatic masking-tape and paint renditions of the crucifixion and the Last Supper. One of his masterpieces is a huge version of Guernica, which included a needle in an arm until local residents demanded he paint over that part. And he overlaps conflicting images and plops down crudely-drawn little girls in cheerful blue and red dresses randomly on top of other works. The red "Latinos for Mumia" stencil has popped up next to many of his pieces, creating a dialogue he rather likes. He also scrawls chalk slogans on sidewalks throughout the city, usually political ones like "Poverty is the destruction of the poor but the poor can destroy

poverty" but also personal ones concerning love and relationships.

De la Vega clearly is politically conscious, but more interested in directly empowering his oppressed community than proselytizing. He feels he does this by brightening and decorating the area and just by working in what he calls his "fishbowl studio" with a window on the street inviting people to come in and participate or talk. It was his father's dream to be an artist, a dream that was crushed by poverty and long hours of low-paid labor before his death from AIDS. So De la Vega sees it as a political act that he has transcended those circumstances and fulfilled his father's dream. His politics are manifest in his desire to inspire and teach other poor Spanish Harlem kids to do the same.

Green likewise believes that the act of creation and expression for oppressed people and especially youth, whether in apolitical graffiti or community murals, is the true political statement. The kids in her program at the Oakland projects aren't much interested by politics or the history of struggle: she says they were thoroughly bored by a local "Huey Newton Historical Tour" led by Bobby Seale himself. Whatever the subject matter, she says the fact that these kids are doing art is political.

"The powers that be want these kids to go to prison," she said. "They need them in prison to keep the system going. They would much rather have them in prison than in college. So the most intensely political act is for them to be doing something like this that gives them an identity and confidence, where they get the sense that 'Fuck no, I can do whatever I want.'"

In other words it isn't works of art about oppressed people but rather oppressed people out there doing art that will change the system. The wave of art at the anti-WTO, anti-IMF, DNC, RNC and anti-FTAA protests has jumpstarted the re-invigoration of political art, and now it remains to be seen if this resurgence will be integrated into ongoing artistic rebellion in the ghettos, suburbs, universities and financial districts of America. ★



Irony Kills Love

words by niliema e
illustration by George Hughes



irony kills love

-a message recently tacked on the window of the *Vice* store in Montreal

Here's to the death of irony.

-proclaimed at the end of John Waters' movie *Pecker*

Irony plays a strong role in this contemporary culture of pastiche and play, in a world of saying it once, and forever saying it again differently. It whirls throughout mainstream culture. It comes in many forms, for example: the humor of *The Simpson's*, or in the removed gloss and superficiality of a Diesel ad. It is even something we learn about in school. Think: Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal*. Although any definition of it seems always elusively out of reach, irony is simultaneously everywhere. And since the appropriation battle between the underground and consumer cultures has been won so many times by the wrong side (what with culture scouts and big old record labels), a cynicism has set in among us that institutes these little battles back. Naomi Klein recognizes this in her recent book *No Logo* about the culture of branding and its opponents:

...they [indie acolytes] were now finding ways to express their disdain for mass culture not by opting out of it but by abandoning themselves to it entirely – but with a sly ironic twist. They were watching *Melrose Place*, eating surf 'n' turf in revolving restaurants, singing Frank Sinatra in Karaoke bars and sipping girly drinks in tikki bars, acts that were rendered hip and daring because, well, they were the ones doing them. Not only were they making a subversive statement about a culture they could not physically escape, they were rejecting the doctrinaire puritanism of seventies feminism, the earnestness of the sixties quest for authenticity and the "literal" readings of so many cultural critics. Welcome to ironic consumption. (from Naomi Klein's book, *No Logo*)

The assault of irony has become such a prevalent mode of expression in my worlds—the worlds of activist and independent music and art. I often wish for more earnestness, perhaps a new earnestness in independent and political cultures.

And what does all this irony mean anyway?

Living in an age of irony, I guess we all know that this thing is far more elusive than the literary definition of "a meaning opposite from its original intent" would have. I think the irony imbued in something is often easier to recognize as a feeling than as something easy to definitively point out, or to discuss straight on.

It is a trick of representation that poses an oppositional meaning, one that relies upon destabilizing or upsetting an idea or image in question in order to pose the possibility of a range of new meanings. "While metaphor and pun capitalise on the relationship of conceptual similarity, irony and paradox capitalise on the relationship of opposition." (found online at: www.anglistik.uni-muenchen.de/~linguistics/adpapers/kulas/kulas.htm in an article by R.W. Janney)

Because the ironist is relying on a trick of reiteration to get her/his point across, s/he relies on the ability of the receiver to understand based on shared experiences and meanings around an image or idea. There is a great deal of power in being able to say something that a consumer of culture is impacted by, without being direct and detailed about what you want to say. Often this method is convenient when either a statement is as elusive as the irony attributed to it, or the creator doesn't have an answer, only an acute sense of dissatisfaction. Remember "Smells Like Teen Spirit?" It certainly does evoke the darkness under all of the pinkness of any deodorant or tampon ad.

Am I wrong to think that it is elusive to unfeelingly appropriate things and mock them until they become an indistinguishable part of your identity? I see it everywhere in independent culture. I see it in the reappropriation of old-school country music, something that has involved the reemergent fame artists such as Johnny Cash, but also for newer stars like Freakwater who have been doing it for awhile but are getting recognition out of a new semi-ironic awareness among their listeners. Alt-country fans fetishize the old while disdaining its mass culture counterpart and, more importantly, the audience the mainstream music holds. More recently, I see it in the reverence of glam rock and heavy metal of the Def Leppard, Bon Jovi and Guns n' Roses variety. All of a sudden, underground cultures (cultures of novelty like any others) are picking up things "you just didn't like before." It is part of a similar kind of elitism that also allows electronica superstar Aphex Twin to make his version of artfied dance music while having his head appear on the bodies of black women in satirical gangster rap style videos and album covers.

Not all ironies are equal

Sometimes, as in a film like John Waters' *Pecker*, a conscious irony has its place.

Ironically, in *Pecker*, Waters uses his own satirical irony to advocate for the end of irony.

Pecker tells the story of a young boy who, out of an unashamed creativity and naiveté foists upon himself, his working class Baltimore family and his community, the havoc of ironic reverberations. This havoc is not a product of his actions alone. *Pecker* (Edward Furlong) is only a kid taking frank and banal pictures of his naughty surroundings. He is patronized by a New York art dealer who is enamoured by the sweetness of the boy, and the sweetness of the boy's art.

Pecker's art is a raging success in the New York art world, which comes to appreciate the images of what are described in press as his "culturally challenged" family. Social services intervene on *Pecker's* family to have his sugar-loving little sister put on Ritalin. His older sister, who works at a local queer bar, is fired. His best friend, who steals voraciously, is now easily identifiable and gets caught shoplifting. And his girlfriend, who runs a local Laundromat, is plagued by perverse heavy-breathing calls. *Pecker* is mortified. He never intended on bringing the intrusion of ironic fame onto his family. What *Pecker* saw as a document of his community became to the elite of the New York art world, an excuse to interpret something unfamiliar and (to them) quaint, as inferior. Exposing *Pecker's* world to one disconnected and outside, drew attention to *Pecker's* community and its perceived social problems. And because *Pecker*, himself, was poking fun, or at least having a local laugh at his world, critics and consumers looking on at his stuff felt they too could participate in the joke, even though they may have had no previous participation in his life.

Waters does well to point out the classism of appropriating someone's culture, and all the while showering the artist as a new novelty, and patronizing (in more than one way) the world out of which it has emerged.

"Dramatic Irony"

A few months ago, I attended an opening at a local gallery I often hang out at. It is a great space where the curators hang art and also throw all night parties with music and booze, an unusual lifestyle and community conscious thing to do, and very unusual for a gallery. It is a space funded by the student's union of a local art school and mandated to show work by students of the school and like-minded communities at large. It is a little mecca for young artists who are independent, politically minded or both.

The night in question featured an exhibit of deliberately naïve work that played on a theme of "idiocy." One of the performance pieces featured a guy playing out a white trash stereotype in an installation space decorated with wood paneling, thrift store furniture and, of course, a velvet painting. The guy was on a date in this space, his house, and was playing out the stereotype of a working class man. He was trying to convince the girl in the scene to check him out while he lifted weights in an undershirt and nylon shorts. The high point of the improv involved gang rape jokes and the piece ended with the guy making ironic date rape threats to his visibly uncomfortable stage-mate.

In this case, the irony of the piece allowed the improvising performer to get away with saying any sexist thing he wanted, and to blatantly regurgitate a stereotype about working class life. I expressed my frustration about this to an artist friend and she made the following observation, "It's as if they think that people's aesthetic choices are somehow synonymous with their lifestyle choices." And if there is in fact violence and strife in the life of working class and underclass people, it is certainly nothing to pull out of context and make fun of in the same breath as you make fun of the "kitchiness" of velvet art and wood paneling.

I pick up *Adbusters*, the glossy Vancouver Culture Jamming magazine, and see articles about normal people, and representations of aging people decked out in every possible kitsch costume the photo artist could dress her/his subject in. I gag at the classism in the thinking of my fellow politicians. Why, like in the performance piece I described, are the realities of working people being encapsulated into the sum of their consumer (read: lifestyle) choices? Only those who have the most consumer choice can easily preach about limiting it. Not everyone has ac-

cess to a green lifestyle, because it is too expensive or unavailable to him or her. Many people have to work full-time to live. They live in the suburbs because it is an affordable place to house children away from the housing shortage in large urban centers. And perhaps, it was not possible for them to attend university to learn the finer points of taste or to pursue the politics of lifestyle, for a variety of social, cultural and political reasons.

These constant run-ins with irony made me think a lot about the relationship between irony and classism in and around indie and activist cultures. For many who recognize the taboo of racist irony or homophobic irony, and even sexist irony (although none of these have fully disappeared anywhere), classist irony seems immune to the same audience recoil the others get.

Why?

First of all, very few activists and artists of this sort come from working class or rural communities. Most, although not all, have professional parents who are university educated, as are they. Secondly, although it goes largely undiscussed, this kind of irony is a bitter reaction by the aesthete and political elite who feel themselves abandoned by mainstream culture and ideas. I think this hostility is disproportionately directed at working class people who are seen as the predominant perpetrators of right-wing ideas.

What I find interesting is that many people I know who did grow up in working class and rural communities, whose parents did not attend university, but who are themselves a part of indie and activist subcultures, find these stereotypes really alienating, even though they may recognize the conservatism they grew up around. And let's be serious. Working class people are by no means the greatest, or even the most obvious perpetrators of the values we abhor. These political and aesthetic ironies are nothing more than a reflection of hierarchical practice in indie and activist subcultures.

And *Adbusters* is tame compared to something like *Vice* Magazine, which is a most acidic formula of both the ironic aesthetic elitism of indie culture, and a liberal small press mentality that reflects less the radical side of small press publishing than it does an unlimited liberal free press mentality.

Although *Vice* Magazine epitomizes the indie irony I am most dissatisfied with, I kind of like it at times. I sort of appreciate its general bawd/bodiness. I think it can be fun. The music and culture reviews they publish are not even completely stinky, since the focus of the magazine is on independent music and art that pushes the boundaries of mainstream aesthetics from a post-punk and still partying perspective. So, in that sense, it has a pretty underground/crossover popular approach, recognizing that the limits of the underground are never clear in this period of greater mass media and Internet access to ideas and aesthetics. The magazine also has an interesting take on abjection that is simultaneously juvenile and pleasantly punk.

The thread that stitches up *Viceness* is a liberal free speech mentality with no boundaries, which at some levels is really appealing. It allows the writers to belligerently throw old paint at things that no one wants to publicly talk about: eating pussy, frank discussions about pornography, mould, poo, and anything else that is the obsession of a 13-year-old, and I guess in that sense both juvenile and sort of liberating. Even in the culture department, however, *Vice* is rightfully hammered. One reader, for example, wrote a letter berating the magazine for publishing what *Vice's* response revealed as an ironic, jokey article tracing the roots of blues music to the white likes of the Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin. And in the last issue there were several instances where writers in the magazine were themselves making apologies for the lack of context of some of the ironic writing and un-PC language.

For example, there is an article by Amy Kellner about a potential interview with riot grrrl band Bratmobile, where she met the band and they refused to do the interview with her, although they knew her personally and knew she was a feminist. They gave the reason that they felt what they had read and heard in and about the magazine was dubious. She recounts her simultaneous apologies and justifications for writing for *Vice* mentioning the magazine's un-PCness; and she also mentions

the fact that they had never censored any of her feminist articles. She recounts her humiliation at being refused the interview and feeling yucky about having to justify to the band about how she makes her living. Perhaps including this piece was an attempt to win favor with readers who have long been appalled by this "say anything" *Vice* sensibility. Or perhaps it is an attempt to maintain an ironic atmosphere of cynical plurality. Nevertheless, the winter issue is as ironic as ever, with plenty of sexist and fat jokes to list only a few. Without any critical limits, issue after issue of *Vice* is replete with this climate of irony – flippantly writing about cool culture while establishing the "ugly" and the "passé," a tried and true tribute to hipness.

In this climate of cynical humour, *Vice*'s craftspeople skillfully establish a context for something much more serious—something that is an unsightly extension of the flippant pastiche humor. This more weighty analysis can be found in "serious" *Vice* articles, about things like the ethnic origins of serial killers, racist articles that pose as critical responses to activism and political correctness, and het-centered articles about sex. It is particularly when *Vice* crudely explores political and social issues that this general mood of heartless irony becomes most evident and most alienating.

A scary example of this is from a recent issue. It is about an American organization called Project USA (*Stop Immigration: Why Anti-Racism is Turning Us into Cockroaches*) that presents a supposedly more intelligent argument than the Ku Klux Klan for why immigration is overpopulating and, therefore, environmentally degrading the United States. This apparently ground breaking article in fact regurgitates a typical right-wing population control argument by targeting immigrants from India and China, for example. The writer of the piece insists that this organization has been unfairly targeted as a part of the racist right. Whether officially or unofficially, I would argue they are a definite part of the racist right with statements like this:

In addition to the environmental degradation with which current immigration policy is saddling our children, we believe there is a very strong possibility that present policy will lead to a balkanized America

of hostile and competing ethnic groups.

Help us avoid this (needless) risk. Help us in our struggle for an immigration time-out. <www.projectusa.org>¹

And of course when criticized for this sort of thing, *Vice* never has much to say, except to play out critical responses like broken records in its Ha ha to the reader! letters section. Because, at the end of the day, isn't that what irony is all about?

Making Meaning

Meaning comes from creating it and being responsible for that creation. With as much free access to ideas as we have in North America, we have the right and privilege not to be so darned cynical. Not only is independent cultural production an important way of critiquing ideas and circumstances, it is also an essential mechanism for community building. Zine production, community radio, independent video art and documentary are all splendid examples of this. I think when culturally committed people set ourselves to making critical work of any variety, we should think about who we are in relation to what we are making, and what is it that we want to be the consequence of making this thing. I am not saying everything has to be political in any rhetorical way. Beauty (although a subjective criteria) brings pleasure. However, it seems to me that all the ironic hipness and novelty in the worlds of many activists and indie elitists lacks this social intention. Rather, it hides myriad forms of intolerance that, granted, are not always the overt expressions of flaming phobes, but are often more conceptually convoluted expressions of misunderstanding and coldness—a kind of aesthetic scapegoating.

Remember, you don't have to beat someone up, wear swastikas on your skin or yell things aloud to express intolerance. There are many more subtle ways added on to violent expressions of hate that exclude people from communities they have a stake in. Irony is exclusive. ★

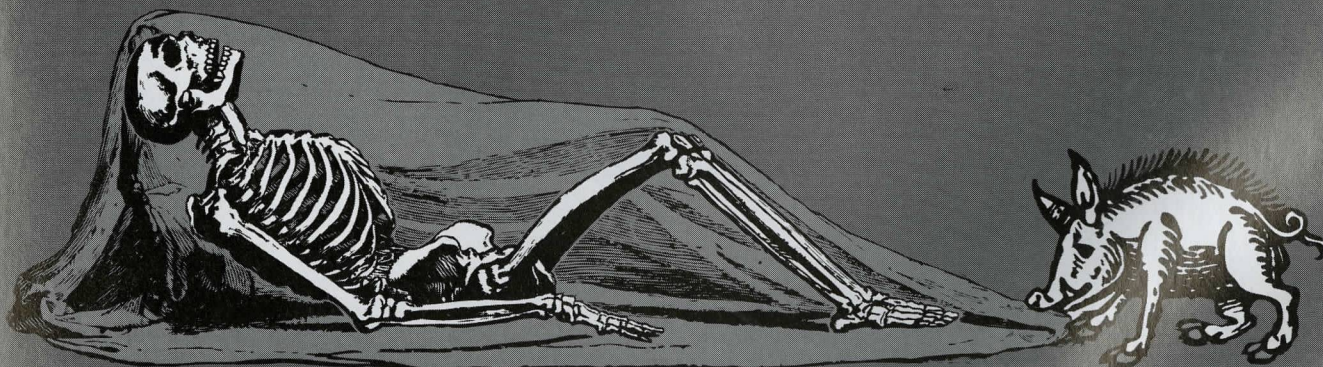
¹Dear Reader, I encourage you also to check out the sites this one links to. I know I am being redundant, but I think there is a definite link to the religious right righteously going on here. ★

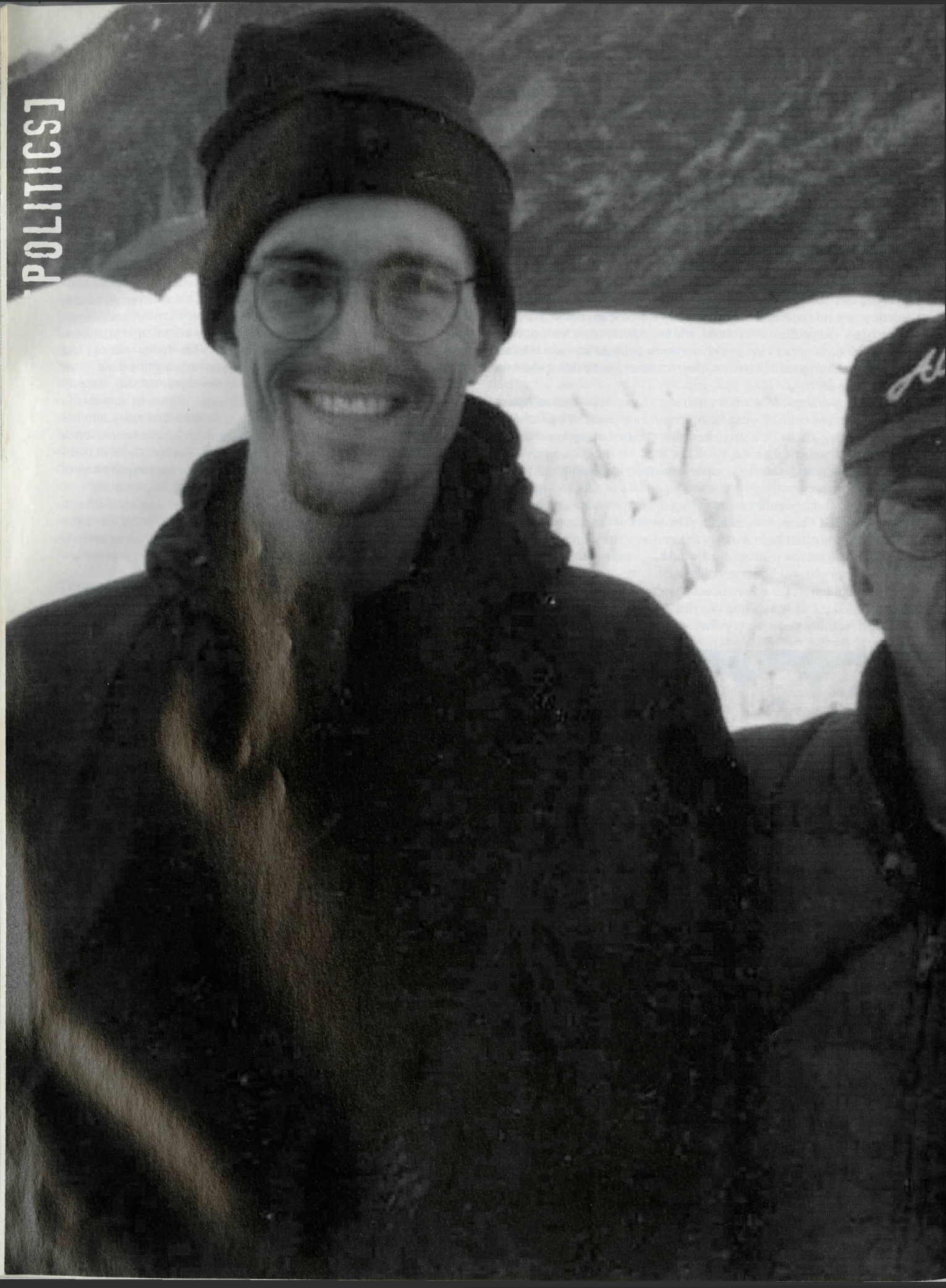
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Talking Politics With Myself

looking into the past to learn about the future

a narrative by andrew mcLeod

It has been a strange day for me. On top the delirium of an all-night bus ride from Portland to Sacramento, I had a growing feeling of déjà vu. When I finally arrived at the door of my parents' house, I suddenly stopped short, skin crawling. I could hear my parents' dog Misty barking her fool fluffy head off, even though I thought she had been dead for a year. Although the only life in the house should have been in the fishbowl, I rang the doorbell. Then, as the door started to open, I remembered what had been eluding me.

It had been a sunny morning in February 1996. I was living with my parents at the time. As was my habit, I had been reading the newspaper with my breakfast cereal, when the dog's unusually shrill barking was followed by the doorbell.

I can't really say how I would have expected to react to finding myself on the porch with a backpack. Misty knew exactly how she felt about the situation, and barked hysterically for longer than I thought possible. All I could think of was to invite him in and offer him some breakfast. It was kind of awkward: We just sat there, chewing on granola and trying not to stare too much. Aside from establishing that there was a five-year gap between us, we didn't talk much, since we were missing a younger self. After we ate, we scrounged up an extra bike out of the garage, and headed over to the house where I grew up.

When we arrived at my childhood home, Misty just ran and hid in terror, leaving a wet trail all the way under my parents' bed. The younger Andrew was also quite agitated at the sight of two balder versions of himself on the porch. Meanwhile, my elder selves were adjusting to being back in my childhood kitchen, with its faux-tile linoleum and striped wallpaper even brighter than I remembered.

Eventually the youngest Andrew settled down, and we started talking. The conversation was extremely long and would probably be much more than anyone with a navel other than my own would care to read. So I have provided an excerpt covering some issues of political evolution, which took place near the beginning of the encounter.

Andrew (age 17): So what in the hell are you still doing alive in 2001?

Andrew (age 22): Yeah, hasn't there been some sort of crackdown? I figured I would be dead or in prison by then.

Andrew (age 27): Well, they are definitely tightening the screws, but I wouldn't call it a crackdown. Whether it is some Freemason conspiracy, I don't know, and frankly don't really care anymore. It's pretty much the same old thing: the environment is going to shit, there are still way too many strip malls, and cops are still cops, although they bust out the body armor a lot more lately. There have been a bunch more mergers, and the economy is a lot more global, in a bad way. I guess the biggest difference is everyday life is the Internet. It's everywhere now, whole billboards for just a web address.

A17: Wait, hold it, Masons? Internet? You mean to tell me that we wind up believing that conspiracy theory stuff?

A22: Um, yeah, although it looks like it wasn't a real threat, though. I gather that there weren't any global cataclysms?

A27: No. Not yet anyhow. You would be absolutely appalled by what a boring-ass year 2000 was. Hell, 1999 was more interesting, with all the Y2K buildup and the WTO and all.

A17: Wait. Slow down. The what?

A27: Oh, that's one thing about my time; people really like acronyms. I'll try to keep that under control, so y'all can understand me. Anyhow, the Year 2000 Bug was basically that the computers were unable to recognize the year due to a widespread programming glitch, and the World Trade Organization is part of a larger effort to create global economic structures, basically to make it easier for capitalism to rip people off. There was a big uprising in Seattle when they tried to meet there.

Andrew at 27, with his Dad

The cops actually lost control for a while, but then came back with tear gas and rubber bullets. That was a big surprise for everyone. I doubt that folks in Seattle ever had the idea that they *could* significantly disrupt the WTO, yet it actually got to the point where the media declared a later protest in D.C. a failure because it didn't shut down the meeting that it came to oppose. I think that Seattle was the death of begging the Man to do something for a lot of people. People are starting to see activism in a new light, more as direct action than just demonstrating disapproval.

A22: So did you get arrested in Seattle?

A27: No. Actually I wasn't there. I would say I had to work, but to be honest I didn't want to be there.

A22: You WHAT?

A27: I knew you were gonna hate that. I didn't realize the magnitude of what was going to happen. Once the shit was going down, of course I wanted to get down there. But I also am pretty lukewarm about trying to start a revolution right now, or anytime soon, so getting in a big fight with the cops seems like a mixed bag. I mean, what if the government suddenly collapses? Then you've got a lot more chaos than anarchy.

A17: Yeah, well I don't want to overthrow the government at all, but it sounds like this WTO thing must be pretty evil, if people are forcing the cops to use tear gas over it. Even if you don't want a revolution, you still have to stand up to the worst parts of the system, so things don't get worse. I think the system is salvageable, but we can't afford to let it get much worse. I mean, I just spent a month trying to stop the Gulf War. It didn't work, but I still had to try.

A22: So if you weren't fighting the WTO, what were you doing?

A27: Well, one of the big stories in 1999 was that a lot of people were expecting disruptions from computer failures when the year ended. Some folks thought it would be the end of civilization, but it turned out to be as anticlimactic as all the other apocalypses.

A17: Did you think it was going to be a disaster?

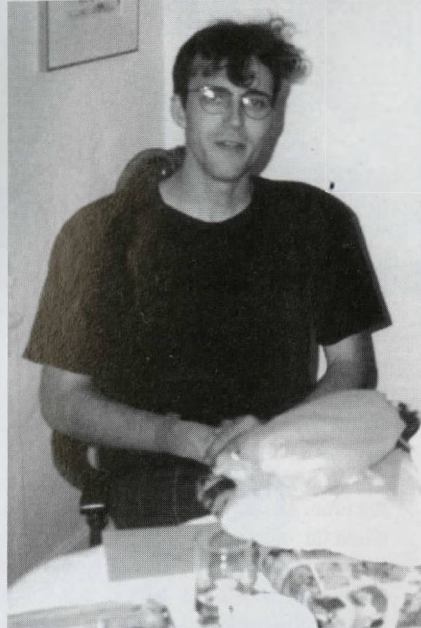
A27: When it was first coming into the news, there was all sorts of speculation about how there wasn't enough time to find and fix all the problems, and it was pretty scary for a while, but then I settled into doing community organizing toward local forms of disaster-preparedness. That was pretty much my main project that year.

A22: You mean like with the city? Sounds pretty liberal.

A27: I was working with the fire chief and stuff, and writing a column for the newspaper. On the surface it wasn't an explicitly radical project, but it did have a radical side. We wound up getting through to some mainstream folks about local control and self-sufficiency. So that was the trade for losing some of that anarchist edge.

A22: I dunno, sounds kind of sold out to me. Why put so much effort into saving people that have bought into a dying system? That's their problem. You can't save people that don't even see that the ship is

sinking. It's a waste of time, and will suck all your energy. You've gotta focus on people who are willing to jump, like with the collective network.



Andrew at age 22

been much less successful in affecting foreign policy. But I almost see political action as its own end, regardless of whether the government gives a shit. And I don't think the government could care less about some herd of protesters in Sacramento. What I really see as the legacy

of the Ad Hoc Committee for Peace in that it provided a space for people like us to get exposed to some new ideas.

A22: That's true, I probably never would have left school to work in anarchist collectivism if it hadn't been for Ad Hoc. So then what about this? What if Angie and everyone were burned out and never put up those posters. The local protests would have been small and liberal, and we wouldn't have been exposed to radical politics, and then the three of us would be talking about working for the fucking UN or something. All this business about activism being some sort of self-improvement is bullshit. That sounds like using people suffering as an organizing tool.

A27: I'm not saying that the point is to enlighten ourselves and turn 17-year old antiwar activists into 22-year old revolutionaries, just that sometimes the best effects are unintended personal ones.

A22: Oh, so as long as I'm doing my time as a revolutionary, you get to slack? Fuck that.

A27: Look, you know why older people are less likely to devote their whole lives to building the revolution? It isn't just because they give up, or realize that they were young and foolish and idealistic. I think a lot of it is just that people tend to get tired. How are we supposed to provide a model for society if we are all stressed out and pissed at each other? I'm not saying that the problems aren't huge. Actually, it's *because* they are so huge that we have to pace ourselves, so that we don't kill ourselves or get so frustrated that we drop out of activism entirely. But at the same time, it's great that you are calling me on the changes in my life. I'm



Andrew at 17, with his family

learning a lot here too, even though I'm doing most of the talking. You're forcing me to step back and get a larger perspective on where I am right now and how I got here. Not to get myself off the hot seat or anything, but I'm curious about what you guys think about the state of the world. I'm especially curious about you (A17), since you haven't been saying very much.

A17: I sure can't see the point in trying to stop the Gulf War after hearing how it turns out. I really felt like we had a chance to stop it, and right now I don't know what to think. There are definitely big problems with the current system, but I don't see what would work better. I'm pretty surprised to see that you guys are anarchists, since I don't really see how that could work. One thing I've been wondering is if this encounter changes how my life goes. Now that I know that I'm going to be an anarchist in five years and still alive in ten, how does that affect me?

A22: Well, I didn't have any recollection of this encounter, so I guess you'll forget all about it. On the other hand, it looks like there are only three of us here, so I'm wondering if you (A27) will remember since you aren't interacting with the future.

A27: I guess I'll find out.

A17: Does this happen again with even older versions of us?

A27: I don't think so. That's too bad, because I would love to chat with myself at 67 or 77. That would give a lot more perspective. I guess I must die in the next five years (laughs).

A22: Oh. Ha. Very funny. But knowing that I have at least another five

years, even if I do forget it as soon as you leave, kind of changes my perspective. It makes things seem less rushed. I figure that we'll have a right-wing militia uprising, followed by a police state. Or at least I was before this morning. Seeing you ... myself still running around kinda punches some holes in my pessimism.

A27: You know, that's a big shift that I've felt since the world didn't end in 2000; I'm starting to see the conceit of believing that we're living at the Most Interesting Moment in the History of Time. Now it looks more like society will keep on flailing along for a while. The outlook still seems pretty bleak, in the long run, but I don't feel the Apocalypse coming right away, except in the sense that has been here all along and we just had enough time to get used to it so we don't notice. If everything that has happened in the past century came on at once, people would have concluded that the world as they knew it had ended. It's kind of like the frog in a pot of warm water that doesn't notice that it's being cooked. But I think it is getting to the point that the average person is starting to realize that we really are living in a Brave New World here. It's like they tried to change things a little too fast and folks started noticing. That's what I'm getting out of this meeting, a sense of how I've changed. Obviously things are gonna evolve, but I would hate to keep drifting and wake up one morning working for the Sierra Club.

A17: What's wrong with the Sierra Club?

A27: Ooh, long story ... ★

One Market Under God: Extreme Capitalism, Market Populism and the End of Economic Democracy

Thomas Frank, 414 pages

Reviewed by Aaron Albelo

I have to say that among all the great progressive books out on the market, Thomas Frank's book *One Market Under God: Extreme Capitalism, Market Populism and the End of Economic Democracy* makes it to my top five book list. This is one of those books that can really piss off staunch defenders of the so-called free market and have conservatives flinging it across the room in anger. My dad is getting an early birthday present!

Thomas Frank holds a Ph.D. in American History and is the founding editor of *The Baffler* magazine. His other great books include *The Conquest of Cool* and *Commodify Your Dissent: Salvos from The Baffler*, which he co-edited. His work has appeared in many publications including *LA Weekly*, *The Nation*, and the corporate propaganda rag known as *The Wall Street Journal*, among other places.

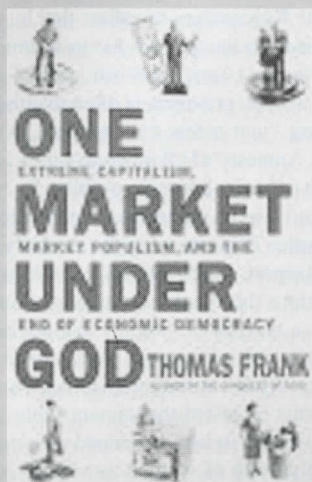
In *One Market Under God*, Frank deconstructs the notion that the free market is inherently democratic. One wonders how this is so, when the average businessman talks about nothing but how great American Democracy is, while holding a religious belief in libertarian capitalism—anything that obstructs it should get out the way, including regulations, environmental concerns and tree-hugging hippies. Frank shows us that market populism is capable of answering all doubts and silencing all doubters, while democracy is just a promotional trick. The market is supposed to reflect the needs and desires of the middle class, while the profits go the CEO and vested stockholders. However, these middle class needs, wants, and desires are being artificially manipulated through mechanisms like clever Super Bowl advertisements.

Frank gives the reader example after example of historical evidence of how dissent has been turned into capital. For example, Bill Gates, an everyman, is the symbol of

a young, hip man tipping over the dinosaur of the old businessman. He wears jeans and a shirt and has middle class tastes. Everyone wants to be him and can own stock (One wonders how many Microsoft janitors actually do own a significant portion of stock in the company). Frank notes that *The Wall Street Journal* had recently stated that Karl Marx's dreams were finally realized by the spread of market populism and investment. Everyone is a capitalist. Even the government is for sale to the highest bidder.

In today's economy, anyone who is critical of the free market is written off as an elitist going against the very grain of democracy. People need not worry about the elitism because CEOs can turn this elitism into profit with such slogans as "Think Different." Frank theorizes that everyone votes with their wallet. Purchasing a company product is the equivalent to casting a vote for that company and what it represents. With this in mind, I suggest not paying your Edison bill and let Edison International handle their own fiasco.

Throughout the book, Frank pops the bubble of the so-called new economy and points out similarities to the depression-era economy. And he just may be right. The working class cannot unionize because unionization is an obstruction to corporate profit. OSHA ergonomic work safety standards have been squashed. The corporate conglomerates are holding too much power and the profits. The military-industrial and prison-industrial complex continue to demonstrate that industrialization is still strong. Meanwhile, a truly democratic business strategy called outsourcing allows Nike and Gap sweatshops to continue to operate from the blood, sweat, and tears of young Asian and Latino girls and boys. Not to mention that Presidential pardons can be bought. Is anyone paying attention? Maybe Thomas Frank is tipping over the sacred cow of the unfettered free market.



Imprisoned Women



by Heather Haddon
illustration by John Gerken

Awilda Gonzalez, a former prisoner at the maximum security Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women in Westchester County, New York, knows personally that the rampant abuse of female prisoners in America often leads them to drastic measures. She witnessed many mental breakdowns and suicides during her 10-year term for drug charges. Perhaps her most memorable observation was when a fellow inmate was so fed up with being forced to perform oral sex for a prison guard, she had an accomplice smuggle out the semen she had spat into a perfume bottle. DNA tests conducted on the sperm sample incriminated her abuser.

"By the time we get out of jail, what is left of our being?" asked Gonzalez in reference to the effects of the sustained dehumanizing treatment of women prisoners. "We leave it in that jail cell."

Tragically, Gonzalez's story, while unique, is not isolated. A report issued by the human rights group Amnesty International on March 6, 2001 documented the extreme degree of mistreatment, sexually and otherwise, of the growing population of American women in jail by prison authorities. In a 3-year study of American prisons, Amnesty International documented more than 1,000 cases of sexual abuse in 49 states. Researchers speculate that hundreds more cases go unreported due to intimidation tactics against inmates. While sexual abuse against women prisoners is often dismissed as involving "just a few bad apples", William Schultz, Amnesty's U.S. executive director, declares it a "major systemic problem."

There was no immediate response from the U. S. Justice Department to the Amnesty International report, which ironically, came just two days before the 92nd International Women's Day — a worldwide holiday acknowledging women's achievements and continuing struggles. While several International Women's Day events protested the human rights abuses against women in less developed nations, such as the high rate of women as victims of violence and war, the report's conclusions pointed

to the unacknowledged, but proliferating, maltreatment of America's incarcerated female population.

This report, and previous studies documenting rampant abuse of female prisoners, spurred Amnesty International to launch its first human rights campaign targeted to the Western world.

"The results are profoundly distressing and should serve as a wake-up call to anyone who thinks that women are not tortured or mistreated in this country," said Schulz.

Schulz's conclusion was not breaking news for the approximately 3,000 activists, former prisoners, and service providers that gathered for the Critical Resistance East prison conference at Columbia University in New York City, also occurring during the same week in March.

"It's not accidental that the country that has the largest women prisoner population, wouldn't do anything to address civil rights violations in its own country on International Women's Day," said Diana Block of the California Coalition for Women Prisoners. Formed in 1995, the activist group works in the state boasting the largest women's prisons in the world. "The United States is creating concentration camps of women who, overwhelmingly, are non-violent offenders," continued Block.

According to the Congressional General Accounting Office, the majority of women in prison are incarcerated for nonviolent crimes, predominantly involving drugs. Over 140,000 women are imprisoned in America jails and prisons. Although a mere fraction, compared to the population of incarcerated men (around 8 percent), the number of women entering prison from 1980 to 1998 rose by 516 percent, a pace doubling the rate for men. Racial ratios are also lopsided: 52 percent of these prisoners are African-American women, who only constitute 14 percent of the total U.S. population. Latinos and other women of color make up another rapidly rising group.

"One can see the racist, patriarchal, and

The United States is creating concentration camps of women who, overwhelmingly, are non-violent offenders

hypocritical aspects of America in its treatment and the demographics of its female prisoner population," said Block.

The stories of formerly incarcerated women at Critical Resistance — along with documentation by human rights groups and whistle blowers (prison workers who make public their observations) — depict a penile system of cruel and unusual punishment.

Gonzalez shared her own experiences of mistreatment while imprisoned. After waiting over a year to be seen by the prison hospital, "when I finally went to my examination, the doctor who examined me was an alcoholic who wasn't trained in women's medicine. Someone had to pick me up from the hospital it was so bad," she said of the physical trauma.

Gonzalez, a Puerto Rican native now studying to get her Masters in Social Worker after being released, is lucky to be alive. Despite severe signs of poor health, Gonzalez was never examined for a brain tumor that developed during her ten-year jail sentence.

Another member of the conference, Mary Barr, was raped three times while in prison. Despite confiding in other staff at the prison, no motions to charge her abusers were ever made. Barr, like Gonzalez, is now educating others about the horrors of prison life for women and men.

Along with individual cases, United Nations delegate [does she have a name? put it here] studying American prisons in 1997 witnessed rampant brutality towards female inmates, noting "Women in labor are also shackled during transport to hospital and soon after the baby is born. The Special Rapporteur [on violence against women] heard of one case where shackles were kept on even during delivery." A total of 33 states allow the restraint of pregnant woman during transportation to hospitals, while 18 let shackles remaining during the delivery.

Whether it is inaccessible health care, sexual misconduct, or demeaning speech and voyeurism, "the treatment of convicts is going beyond denying women their liberty," said Mary Carter of the College Community Fellowship, which links female ex-offenders with mentors. "It is a moral crime against humanity."

America is one of a handful of countries the world over that allow unaccompanied contact with male staff — and in many cases constant physical proximity — to female prisoners. While Canada also permits men to guard women, this practice is unusual their female prisons are staffed by 90 percent women versus 45 percent in the United States, according to the National Corrections Information Center.

As noted in a Human Rights Watch report of 1996, the U.S. has ratified several international decrees, such as Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention Against Torture and

Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, that prohibit this male presence in women's jails.

While these treaties also outlaw degrading treatment of women, such as strip searches by officers of the opposite sex, these acts are still a reality for American female prisoners.

"To walk into prison system is to be humiliated—male guards make you take your clothes off, spread your butt cheeks, and lift your breasts," said Gonzalez. "While some officers really care, others treat us as meat and see us as savages."

The report from Amnesty International criticized the U.S. laws protecting women inmates against abuse as so weak that a prisoner was often held responsible for her attackers' behavior. Recent legal changes on a national level are making efforts to prosecute misdeed more difficult. The Prison Litigation Reform Act, signed into law by President Clinton in April 1996, "has seriously compromised the ability of any entity, private or public, to combat sexual misconduct in custody," stated Amnesty International.

While 13 states have laws "grossly inadequate" for protecting women's safety, as Amnesty reported, six more states have not even criminalized sexual contact between staff and inmates. "In these states, and in some others that do have such laws, consensual sex between staff and inmates is not considered a crime," reported Human Rights Watch.

In a U.S. state prison report issued this year to document compliance with international standards of prison regulations, evidence of sexual misconduct was mentioned only once in its 213 pages. The report, sent to the U.N. Human Rights Committee, claimed to handle such rare situations "through staff training and through criminal statutes prohibiting such activity."

Yet the Department Of Justice currently maintains no guidelines for when and how to launch investigations of misconduct; few such inquiries have been conducted.

Assessing the situation on the "inside" is difficult. The U.N. Delegate on Violence Against Women was turned away from three Michigan prisons during her research; as Amnesty's report concluded, "there is a death of information of the specifics on conditions, policies and procedures."

Media coverage rarely documents prison conditions, but sexual abuse was the focus of a six-part *Nightline* series in 1999. Inmates at California's Valley State Prison for Women were interviewed extensively about their experiences of mistreatment. From their testimonials, Ted Koppel confronted the prison's medical director for subjecting inmates to unwanted pelvic examinations in exchange for care.

Henrietta Davis, a former prisoner who now works for the Legal Services for Prisoners with Children and was interviewed for the

series, has witnessed a clamping down on such critique. "Once if a reporter wanted to come in and meet with me, there was almost an attorney-client setting. Now in California, there is a media ban," said Davis at Critical Resistance.

Activists focused on issues specific to women prisoners are working to educate beyond such blackouts. "Organizations for women prisoners proliferated in the eighties, fueled by both the women's movement and the exploding incarceration rate of women," said Bell Gale Chevigny in "Prison Activists Come of Age" published in *The Nation*.

Since 1998, Amnesty International has launched a campaign calling for the abolition of male guarding and a stricter adherence to international prison regulations for U.S. prisons.

Periodicals such the *Sojourner: The Women's Forum*, which runs a column for women in prison, and *The Fire Inside, Out of Time, Prison Focus*, and *Bridges*, geared specifically as platforms to run the writings of imprisoned women, are one means through which activists are helping to build awareness.

Yet challenges abound. As Stephanie Poggi, manager of the Inside/Outside project at *Sojourner*, said "When we first sent papers with information about the harshness of prison conditions, they were sent back. I guess [the prison administration] doesn't want women in prison to know about their own conditions."

Along with advocates on the outside, those still incarcerated jeopardize their own personal safety to affect change. In 1996, thirty-one women filed a class action lawsuit against the Michigan Department of Corrections, charging that prison management failed to prevent sexual assault by guards and staff. The state of Michigan was later sued by the US Justice Department for failing to protect women from sexual misconduct, in part, due to their accounts.

"The greater recognition of the prison movement makes me hopeful," said Block. "The number of in prisoners becoming activists is revolutionary."

Many ex-convicts — such as Gonzalez, Davis, and Barr — also become adamant advocates for prisoner rights. While Gonzalez is getting her degree to assist ex-offenders, Davis helps to organize educational conferences with the National Network for Women in Prison.

"Prison reform work is not very glamorous, it's hard and it can be demeaning," said Carter of her own experiences. "But their gratitude is so overwhelming because inmates, especially women, have so little."

"People say why do you care about those prison people?" noted Davis of people who, not knowing her former incarceration, look strangely at her advocacy work. "Jail can happen to anyone. I tell them that by the grace of god, you too could be on the other side." ★



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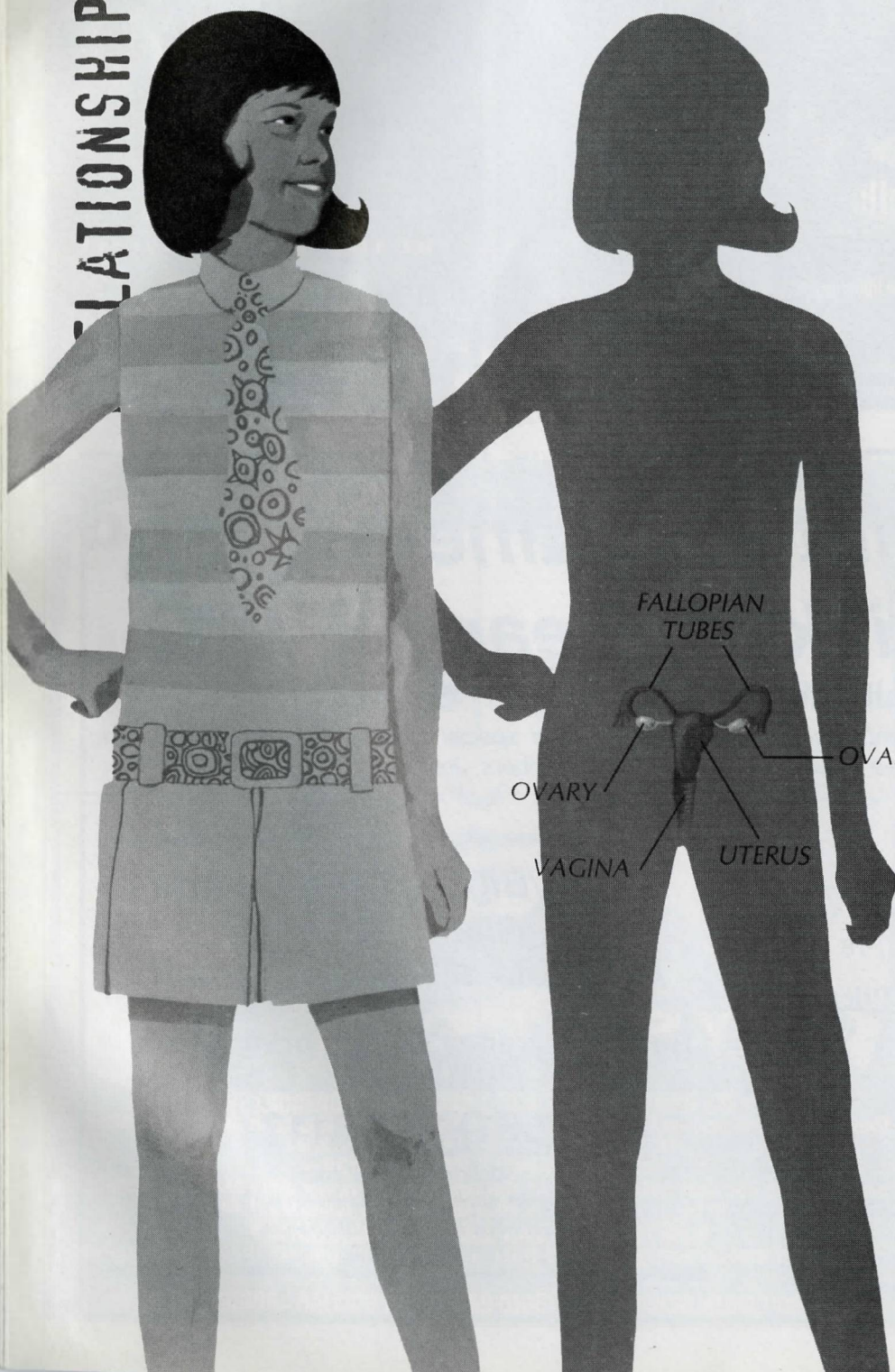
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BY VIQUE MARTIN



A couple of years ago, I said to a boy I knew who was waiting outside the bathroom, "Hold on a second. I need to go back in there; I just need to grab a tampon." He gave me a weird look but I ignored it and went about my business. Half an hour later, he asked if he could talk to me in private. When alone he asked, "Didn't your parents teach you any manners?" I had no idea what he was talking about, so I asked him to explain. He answered that it was disgusting that I used the word tampon, and spoke of such matters to him, a boy, and that it illustrated that my parents had taught me no manners.

I laughed in his face. My parents taught me that periods were nothing to be ashamed of. Feminism taught me that most of the world disagrees. Feminism also taught me that it's every feminist's responsibility to break that taboo, at the very least in terms of not being inhibited from saying the word tampon, in not acting like it's something to be ashamed of, in being proud of the fact that I am a woman and once a month I bleed.

I've never been ashamed of it. I was a feminist before I could bleed. By then, I knew what patriarchy meant. I understood the position of women in the world before I was a woman. I bled the first week after I turned fourteen. I accepted it. I had no shame. I tried to find my vagina so I could use tampons. I couldn't find it, no matter how well I followed the instruction booklet. A boy found it for me, as crazy as that sounds, when we were making out a couple of years later. From then, I could find it when I was turned on. I couldn't use tampons until I'd lost my cherry though. My mum couldn't until she'd given birth.

These aren't the things that people talk about. They don't discuss being 14 and not being able to find their vagina. I've seen many taboos get broken down in my lifetime. At

WE BLEED!

COUNTERING MENSTRUATION TABOOS

one time, masturbation was a forbidden word, now people admit that they do it and even enjoy it. But that's sexy, right? And how sexy are periods?

I am full of loathing for a man who is revolted by a woman menstruating. I see it as misogyny in one of its clearest forms. The taboo surrounding menstruation was created and is maintained because a woman's monthly cycle is powerful and mystical. Whilst it is seen as dirty and disgusting and something not to be discussed in Western cultures, in the past it was seen as special and sacred in other cultures.

We aren't meant to talk about periods. We're meant to ignore their existence. But, in doing so, we are ignoring a part of being a woman. Feminists have been fighting long and hard to convince men of their equality – both in and out of the work place. One of the ways in which women were restrained from entering traditionally male occupations was to blame their reproductive system. We had to use the tactic that we were the same as men. We are not the same. We are equal, but different.

This rings alarm bells in most people's heads, including mine. It can be used as ammunition for maintaining the status quo of patriarchy, or even going backwards. But it cannot be ignored. As long as we fight against embracing a fundamental part of womanhood, there will always be internal conflict. As long as men are allowed to sweep the existence of menstruation under the carpet, except for complaining about how bitchy we are when "on the rag," we will never be free.

It is ingrained in women, as well as men, that periods are bad. Most women I know detest their period. They hate the run up to it, the actual event and all that comes with it. We are taught to hate it. We are taught to hate our wombs and our vaginas as a means of control, in the same way that we are taught to hate our fat bums or boobs that are too big or too small.

Women should love their bodies, no matter what their size or shape. If you don't love your body, how can you love yourself? Women should also love their periods. Men should love being around a menstruating woman. We should be fighting the taboo that surrounds the idea of menstruation on a daily basis, especially within ourselves. Periods should be embraced. Only then will we begin to use their power.

We are taught that the way we feel when on (or just before) our periods is bad. I think that's bullshit. Maybe we do scream and shout. Maybe it's because we need to. Maybe the reason that women snap at people is that our lives suck and menstruating makes us less inhibited. Is this harder to believe than it's "PMS"? That the way that most women behave at some time in their menstrual cycle is a "syndrome"? It's not a syndrome. It is the way a woman's body works.

Nevertheless, when all sense of what is normal is taken from a male perspective, anything different to that has to be abnormal. That a woman's body bleeds once a lunar cycle is so different to a man's. So is the fact that we can grow babies in our wombs, but that's not called

a disorder. Perhaps because men find a self-serving worth in that, they can cope with it. There's no worth, in most men's eyes, to a woman menstruating. It's messy, dirty, bloody, smelly, inconvenient

and annoying. Plus, they probably are getting yelled at. Wow, I wonder why?

Why don't women talk about their periods? Why is it only close friends that women tell the gory details to? Why don't men want to hear about it? I ignore their reactions. Eventually we will wear them down. Each generation of men will be more accepting of the fact that a woman's body bleeds and there is nothing to fear, loathe or be disgusted by. Every generation of women should love their body, and all that it does, more than the last.

When I am at work and I have the first day of my period, I am extremely vocal about it. Whoever calls and inquires how I am is told calmly and clearly, "My womb hurts." People are surprised the first time, but they seem to get used to it. My womb is more important to me than other parts of my body, but it isn't usually discussed. It should be. That's where the pain is centralized.

Perhaps that is a result of the way we treat our periods. Perhaps it comes from ignoring it and trying to pretend it doesn't exist. If we embraced that time of the month, would it hurt less? It feels like your womb is screaming to you when you are in pain. Maybe it wants you to listen. Maybe it has something to say. Perhaps it wants you to sit still, not rush around as though nothing is different. In other cultures and

When the womb and menstruation are seen merely as uncomfortable biological necessity, women's self-esteem is correspondingly low. We are our bodies—and we can't really, deep down in the bottom of our hearts, love ourselves if we don't wholeheartedly love our bodies. And you don't love your body if you catch yourself saying, "Oh no, I've got my period."

-Lara Owen

Gardener
I am in love with my womb
& jealous of it.

I cover it tenderly
with a little pink hat
(a sort of yarmulke)
to protect it from men.

Then I listen for the gentle ping
of the ovary:
a sort of cupid's bow
released.
I'm proud of that.
& the spot of blood
in the little hat
& the egg so small
I cannot see it
Though I pray to it

I imagine the inside
of my womb to be
the color of poppies
& bougainvillea
(though I've never seen it).

But I fear the barnacle
which might latch on
& not let go
& fear the monster
who might grow
to bite the flowers
& make them swell and bleed.

So I keep my womb empty
& full of possibility.

Each month
the blood sheets down
like good red rain.

I am the gardener.
Nothing grows without me.

-Erica Jong

If you think you are emancipated,
you might consider the idea of
tasting your menstrual blood - if
it makes you sick, you've a long
way to go, baby.

-Germaine Greer

throughout history it's been
a time that women sit still,
listen to their bodies and
deal with their issues. I think
that the pain we feel is our
body telling us to do this.

Women have so few
positive images of our
bodies presented to us,
especially of the womb. We
usually only discuss it
when it's either full or
damaged. Where are the
images of it that compare
with the romantic view of
the heart? We discuss
emotions as though ruled
by the heart. Yet, the part
of us that grows life is never
even given a mention.
When do we hear about the
womb? When do we
discuss it? Some of us talk
about how much we love
our cunts. Some of us
worship our pussies. What
about our wombs?

Menstrual blood is not disgusting in any way, shape or form. If
you cut your finger, you lick the blood off, don't you? It's the same
thing. Menstrual blood has a few more clumps in it, but congealed
blood on a scabbing wound doesn't incite the same reactions. It is just
blood.

I've tasted my menstrual blood. I'm telling you it tastes the same.
It's nothing to be feared or grossed out over. That's the taboo. That's
the power of the man telling you it's gross. Don't listen. Taste it - seri-
ously. It tastes the same as the blood from a wound on your hand. We're
just taught that it's dirty, unclear and gross. It's not. It's natural, good,
strong, and womanly.

That we are told it's gross to have sex when we are on our period
is wrong. It's no different - just some extra lubrication and some extra
mess. Even oral sex isn't that much different, according to those I know
whom are liberated enough to have earned their red wings. Hell yeah.

Perhaps the people that you know have already dealt with many
of these topics. Maybe you or the women you know already use alter-
natives to the disposable tampons and pads that the drug stores sell.
Perhaps they or you are at one with nature and do the hippie stuff like
bleeding on the grass. If so, then that's wonderful. However, the rest of
the world still needs convincing.

The products we are sold to "treat" this blood are solutions to a
"problem," not things to help you with your body's natural flow. The
stuff that we use to soak up the blood is called a variety of things, such
as "sanitary protection" and "feminine hygiene products" - implying
that the blood is dirty. Cotton wool or pads that you would use to dress
a wound are not labeled similarly.

The profit margin in this business is insane. That tampons and
pads cost a fortune per year for every woman is nothing short of an
atrocious. That men's razors are not taxed because they are "a neces-
sity," but women's menstruation products ARE taxed because they have
"luxury" categorization, is ridiculous. That's what is disgusting-not
the blood, the politics.

For those who don't know about them, or would like to know
more, there are many alternatives to store-bought tampons and sani-
tary towels. There are cotton pads, made of fabric that you wash out
and reuse. They're great. Unfortunately, I don't really like wearing
panties, so they don't work for me. Maybe they will for you, or some-
one you know.

I discovered a thing called Instead, a few years ago, that were like
disposable diaphragms, little half spheres of rubber that slip inside the
vagina and suction themselves to the cervix. The hold all the blood there
and work wonderfully. A little while later, they were taken off the mar-
ket. I found many boxes in the 99-cent store and stocked up.

There's a non-disposable form of this called The Keeper, which
can be reused for 10 years. You have to keep it really clean though. I'm
not very good at keeping things clean. It's the one way I stave off feel-
ing/being a grown-up. And I'm sticking to that for now. However, maybe
it will work for you, or someone you know. There are many websites
listed at the end of this essay to start you in the right direction.

That women are stereotyped to be bitches, and possibly scream
and shout when they are bleeding, is not, in my opinion, a result of
fucked up hormones. It is not because we can't control our emotions. If
we shout at our boyfriend or girlfriend because he or she is annoying,
maybe it's one of several things. Maybe she is annoying. Maybe he's
great but we just really need to be left alone right now. Maybe it's a bit
of both.

Perhaps it's not that we are less tolerant when bleeding, but rather that we are TOO tolerant the rest of the time. This might just be the only time in the month when we are honest - when we put ourselves first, rather than always considering the needs of others, as we are socialized to do. If I shout when I'm bleeding, it's usually because I'm cross about something. It's not about anything else. To say that it is about hormones is to belittle all the emotions and thoughts that a woman has.

Maybe I cry more when I'm at certain times in my cycle. But maybe I *should* cry that much all the time. Maybe it's really good for me. However, if I feel depressed and have no explanation for it, and it's easier to blame it on my period, then I should probably think again. Isn't it more likely that I have a problem I'm not facing; an issue I'm not dealing with?

Most women that I know claim they are especially emotional around the time of bleeding. I found myself having incredible mood swings, and many tears, exactly seven days before bleeding about five years ago. The day of ovulation is called *Black Saturday* amongst myself and those who are close to me. I couldn't figure out why. One day I realized - that's the day I should start having lots of sex, as I become most fertile. That's the day I should be calling up my man and telling him "Get your arse home so we can do it and I can have a baby." That I'm not in a position to have a baby yet is a sadness deep inside me that I had only mildly acknowledged. Once I realized this a couple of months ago, the "blackness" has subsided considerably.

I think that if someone is crying, screaming or just blue during a particular time in the menstrual cycle, it's because of a problem that is already there, not because of hormones. It all comes out when you bleed. It all comes flooding out.

It makes sense. The gates have opened. The lining of the womb is coming. Why shouldn't everything else? I find myself especially creative in terms of writing, extremely communicative and very analytical during the second day of my period. The first day I want to be alone and in bed. I try to listen to my body. I try to do what it wants. I go with the flow. I go with the flow.

It takes a lot of time, focus and energy to realize the enormity of being the ocean with your very own tide every month. However, by honoring the demands of bleeding, our blood gives something in return. The crazed bitch from hell recedes. In her place arises a side of ourselves with whom we many not - at first - be comfortable. She is a vulnerable, highly perceptive genius who can ponder a given issue and take her world by storm. When we're quiet and bleeding, we stumble upon the solutions to dilemmas that've been bugging us all month. Inspiration hits and moments of epiphany rumba 'cross de tundra of our sense. In this mode of existence one does not feel antipathy towards a bodily ritual that so profoundly and routinely reinforces our cuntpower.

-Inga Muscio

It's hard to get one's head around the idea that periods are something to be celebrated and enjoyed. But, who wouldn't enjoy a time of being extra communicative and creative? What man wouldn't especially want to be around me then rather than any other time? Only a bad man.

The reality is that we HAVE to get past the idea that periods

are gross and disgusting. Once we do, we love ourselves much more. We have to educate boys/men and teach them that periods are glorious, wonderful, natural, strange and powerful things. It is not something to be afraid of, to belittle, or to tolerate. It is something to be embraced, just as all aspects of being a woman should be embraced. If you think "but," then examine why. Look at what is real and what is learned, what you feel and what you are told you should feel, what you know deep down inside - in your womb. ★

Further reading:

www.voiceofwomen.com/sabbathart.html - *The Sabbath of Women* by Laura Owen
<http://onewoman.com/redspot/hist.html> - redspot
Cunt [a declaration of independence] by Inga Muscio
Her Blood Is Gold [Celebrating the Power of Menstruation] by Laura Owen (1993)
The Female Eunuch by Germaine Greer (1970)
The Whole Woman by Germaine Greer (2000)
Becoming Light by Eric Jong

Places to buy ecologically-friendly bleeding products:

www.eco-logique.com
www.indra.com/natracare/
www.pacificcoast.net/~manymoos/index.html
www.jadeandpearl.com
www.teleport.com/~gladrags/
www.pandorapads.com
www.thekeeperstore.com
www.chebucto.ns.ca/~aq389/moonwit
www.web.net/terrafemme

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Four Paragraphs on Androgyny/Ambisexuality

Is it sensible to divide complex creatures (like us) into two sexes/genders? Recently, I've been reading about fungi/mushrooms... Mushrooms reproductive processes share some similarities to ours yet some strains have as many as 40,000 "sexes" that may mate in many combinations of two or more... Furthermore, many are ambisexual - capable of countless possibilities... sometimes "male" other times "female"

• Are we simpler than the fungus among us?

The biological differences between the sexes are actually minute when compared with the similarities and in fact only one gene out of 100,000 needed to make up each person distinguishes (wo)men. Why do we give such importance to one gene? I have a friend who is firmly convinced that there will be no equality until segregated facilities are abolished... just as "blacks" and "whites" were once divided... we may eventually look with horror at the absurd/arbitrary divisions of (wo)men.

The ideal towards which we might move is described by the term 'androgyny'. This ancient word - from *andro* (male) and *gyn* (female) - approximates a condition in which characteristics of the sexes are not rigidly assigned. Androgyny may be approached as less of a mixture of con-

temporary gender constructions and more as the unending struggle to break the bonds that constrict all of us... future liberation involves a movement away from sexual strictures and the prison of gender toward a world in which individual roles and modes of behavior can be freely chosen. Androgyny liberates the individual from the prescribed prisons of the proper...

Androgyny involves the dissolution of programmed habits and patterned obediences that restrict our growth. If a unity between the genders is to take place it will happen in a third thing, which represents not a compromise but something new. A mushrooming many have already discovered more natural ways of existing and communicating... **Tear down these walls and the words and actions might flow as smoothly, spontaneously and inevitably as fragrance emanates from a flower.** As people free themselves from these constraints we will continue to witness the birth of new creatures... all of life is evolving - let us not take our present incarnations as permanent... **The individual is merely one of an infinite number of possibilities (e)merging from an everpresent life which is always seeking to realize itself...**

m/sz



More Than The Myths

the work of Planned Parenthood in Ohio

By Stephanie Lewis Wohler

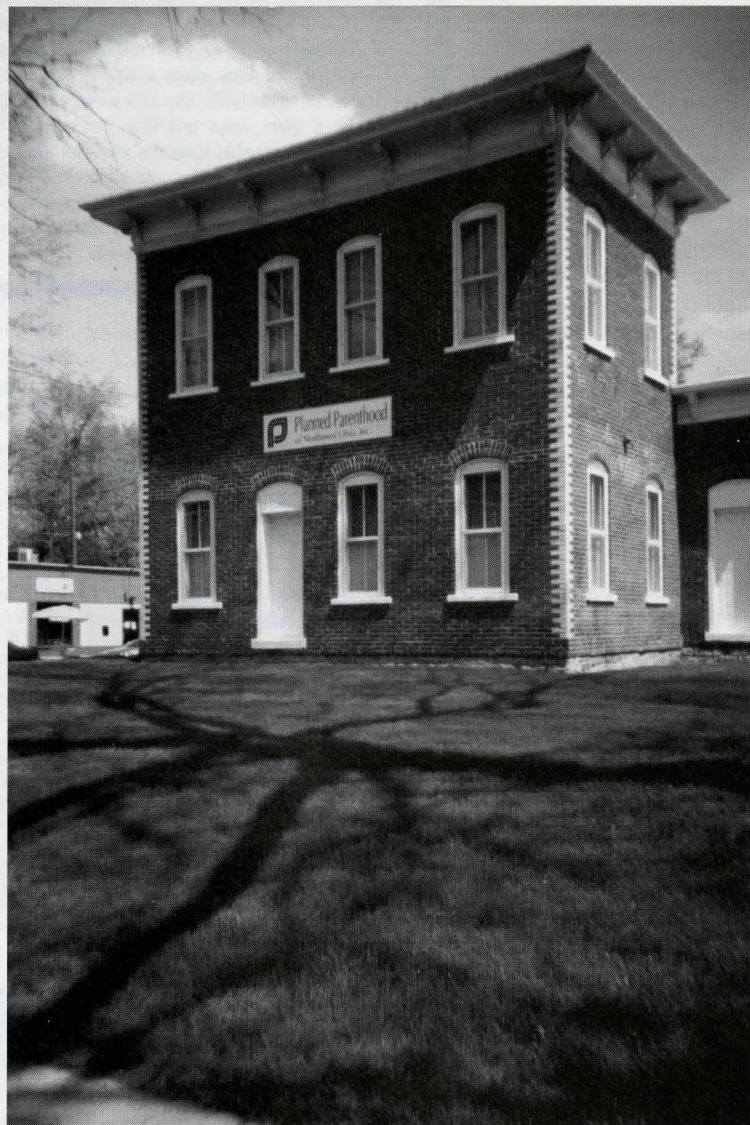
I will never forget "Christine," a patient whose first visit to Planned Parenthood was for a pregnancy test. She came to the clinic at the suggestion of two very close friends when she shared that she was experiencing unexplained bouts of nausea and dizziness in the mornings and was two months late for her period. Christine's friends told her that she may be pregnant. Knowing that she had never been sexually active, Christine quickly dismissed the thought. It was then that the "close friends" decided to tell Christine why they felt she may be pregnant.

Several months prior, the three of them had attended a large party where they had all been drinking alcohol. In the course of the evening, someone they didn't know put a drug in Christine's drink and persuaded her to go into another room with him. While in the other room, the drug put Christine into a deep sleep and she was raped. Her friends witnessed this event. Since Christine didn't appear to recall what had happened that night, the friends decided not to tell her about it. Her friends "didn't want to upset her." It was heart wrenching listening to this young 17-year-old tell her story.

It was the most difficult experience in my professional life when I had to tell Christine that her pregnancy test was positive. This young woman was pregnant, though not through an act of her own. She had no idea who the father was. This presented many more problems for this young person who had her whole life ahead of her. She never thought that abortion was any answer and that women should be responsible for their actions. Yet now, she had to reconsider her own belief system based on this major event in her life. Never had she ever dreamed that situations like what had happened to her ever occurred. Not only was Christine pregnant by an unknown man, she had valid concerns about sexually transmitted infections and HIV, as no condom was used. Christine had a myriad of decisions to be made and she couldn't do it alone. Planned Parenthood of NW Ohio gave her the

information she needed to take control of her life when she felt she had no one. Later, once Christine had weathered the crises, she sent me a wonderful thank you. This is just one anecdote of the many which will stay with me for a lifetime.

I am in my 10th year of employment with Planned Parenthood of Northwest Ohio, and can't think of any place else I would rather spend my days. I became a patient in the Bowling Green office prior to getting married. I was being fitted with a diaphragm and will never forget how wonderfully I was treated. I was a new graduate of nursing school and my funds were very limited. I was feeling as though I didn't have any options for reproductive health care. I was pleasantly surprised to find that the Planned Parenthood clinic was nothing like I had expected and the staff far exceeded any I had encountered in any private practice. The office was bright, clean and welcoming; the staff members were compassionate and professional. When an advertisement for nursing staff for the Bowling Green office appeared in the local newspaper a few years later, I made application and was hired. I immediately knew that I had made the right choice for my career.



There are few places that deliver such a supportive environment to both employees and patients. Other nursing positions I had held didn't make me feel as though I was making a difference in the life of others — and I knew that's what nurses were supposed to do. At Planned Parenthood, we have daily experiences where we know that we have made a positive impact on the life of another person. We strive to empower people to make responsible choices that will help them reach the goals they have set for themselves. I know that I am the type of person that derives self-esteem and self-satisfaction from the work I do and the help I can provide. My experiences with Planned Parenthood have helped me to become more compassionate, tolerant and empathetic toward people as a whole. I embrace those nurturing opportunities each and every day.

We've come a long way, baby

What kinds of things do *you* think of when you hear the words "Planned Parenthood?" For many, it conjures up images of clinics in low rent districts, long lines of patients who have "no other place to go," teens running from pa-

rental control and a place to get an abortion. Well, in years past, *some* of those things may have been true, however, let me tell you about Planned Parenthood past, present and future.

Margaret Sanger founded the American Birth Control League in 1916, which changed its name to Planned Parenthood Federation of America in 1942. From the onset, Margaret held fast to her ideas that women must have control of their reproductive health and reliable health care. She fought many battles, morally and legally, to assure those rights. Margaret is credited with many accomplishments.

- She maintained that a woman's right to control her body is a fundamental human right. Every woman should be able to decide when and if to have a child and every child should be wanted and loved. Women have the right to sexual pleasure just as men do.
- She was influential in bringing about the reversal of the "Comstock laws" which prevented publication and dissemination of information regarding sex, sexuality, reproduction and contraception.
- She ensured accessibility to birth control to women of color and women of little or no income.

Of course, with such forward-minded thinking, Margaret endured ridicule and was even jailed in an attempt to silence her and prevent distribution of literature. Even today, in "modern times," Margaret Sanger and Planned Parenthood still are targets of the anti-family planning movement who seek to discredit her and the agency she founded. Through education and awareness of the services actually provided by Planned Parenthood of NW Ohio, we hope to dispel some of the myths associated with our services.

The history of our Planned Parenthood affiliate began in 1943 when Toledoan Paula Secor became interested in the cause of family planning. In January, 1937, Mrs. Secor, along with Caroline Bentley, Bea Block, and Grace Eversman held the first meeting of the Maternal Health Association. Having eighteen members present, the first board meeting took place six months later.

Over a saloon on Adams Street in Toledo, the first clinic opened in 1938. In the first year, 99 patients were seen and the only contraceptive device available to women was the diaphragm. After joining the Planned Parenthood Federation of America in 1944, the name was changed to Planned Parenthood League of Toledo. By then, the clinic was running eight sessions per month, proving the need for affordable and reliable services for the women of Toledo. With the growing popularity of the services provided by Planned Parenthood, the clinic moved in 1949, 1958 and 1979 in order to accommodate the increased demand. A major service improvement came in 1960 when the Food and Drug Administration approved the first oral contraceptive. This provided women with another option for birth control that was more re-

liable and effective in pregnancy prevention. Pap smears, breast exams, urinalysis, blood pressure and weight checks were introduced in 1969, services which provided a more comprehensive health care approach.

Currently, we operate a clinic in Bowling Green, one in Findlay, and two in Toledo; one on Glendale Avenue and an administrative office on Jefferson Avenue. We offer every method of birth control currently approved by the FDA at very affordable prices. Currently, Planned Parenthood is the largest facility for cancer screening in NW Ohio based on the number of Pap smears and clinical breast exams performed yearly. We offer services to men and women, regardless of age and ability to pay. Sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment remains a large part of our daily patient load and we are considered the experts in the field by many referring physicians. Emergency contraception, pregnancy testing, prenatal and postpartum care, free HIV testing both anonymous and confidential, midlife services and estrogen replacement therapy are among the wide range of services provided in our offices.

All services rendered are confidential and are provided on a sliding fee scale that is based on income and family size. For example: if you have no income, there is no set fee for services. If you have a small income, you may be responsible for a percentage of the total fees, and so on. Insurance, Medicaid, MasterCard, VISA and Discover cards are also accepted as payment for services. Additional monies are raised through donations, fees, grants, and fundraising events throughout the year.

Funding challenges increase with the Bush Administration

Funding has always been a challenge for Planned Parenthood, along with many non-profit agencies. In 1970, the Title X of the Community Health Services Act was passed. Reflecting roughly 32 percent of the Planned Parenthood annual budget, Title X dollars significantly aid in providing services to all patients regardless of ability to pay. This funding remains in place and is renewed yearly through a lengthy grant writing procedure which becomes competitive in nature every third year. There is never a guarantee of grant renewal, therefore, we are

constantly searching for new and creative ways to fund our many programs. Grant funding is always in jeopardy in the Family Planning arena based on the political climate and agendas. For that reason, to enhance fundraising, Planned Parenthood has joined a coalition of agencies that do not receive money from United Way. Northwest Ohio Community Shares asks Toledo's larger employers to add them to their list of charitable organizations to which employees may make payroll contributions. This will allow employees to have several community giving opportunities. Northwest Ohio Community Shares is presently an option for the City of Toledo and Lucas County employees as well as many others and is currently working with other local employers to be added as an option.

The famous case that upheld a woman's

constitutional right to an abortion, *Roe vs. Wade*, was decided on January 22, 1973. Since that time, various groups have lobbied and picketed to have the decision overturned – to make abortion



above: the main Toledo Planned Parenthood Clinic (1301 Jefferson Ave);
opposite: Findlay Clinic

illegal. It seems with each new political campaign, the politicians make abortion a platform issue regardless which side of the issue they stand. Women's rights are the subject of political maneuvering. Perhaps you've heard the words "Gag Rule" and wondered what that has to do with reproductive health. The "Gag Rule" would prohibit any agency that receives federal funds from providing counseling for abortion services, even if the patient asks for the information and the assistance is paid for with non-governmental funds.

The regulations would go further, barring the use of federal family planning monies in any activity that provides neutral, objective and accurate information about abortion. The "Gag Rule" would gravely interfere with the ability of women to make informed decisions for management of pregnancy. A gag rule being placed on Title X funding would be catastrophic for more than 4 million women and families who rely on these services each year. Presently, Planned Parenthood of Northwest Ohio is not set up to perform abortions. As an agency, we believe in the fundamental right of every woman to make decisions regarding her own sexuality and reproduction without interference.

Planned Parenthood of NW Ohio offers pregnancy testing and patient initiated options counseling for every positive test result. Any-

one that feels this is controversial, needs to consider it from this perspective: You are diagnosed with a medical condition and your medical provider says unequivocally that the only treatment he can endorse would be surgical intervention. Are you likely to go with one opinion and not research other options for treatment? Probably not. Why should a woman go anywhere for testing and/or treatment that will not discuss all viable options for her diagnosis?

One of the first lessons those in the medical profession learn is to lay out all of the options for treatment, present them in a non-judgmental fashion and let the patient decide what option works best for their life situation. So a pregnant woman shouldn't be afforded those same rights just because it offends a certain segment of people? Pregnancy is a medical condition and a personal choice that cannot be infringed upon. Planned Parenthood certainly works more on the side of the prevention of pregnancy and planning pregnancy when the patient feels her situation is conducive. Family planning dollars at work are the best investment in prevention of unwanted pregnancy, therefore lowering the abortion rate.

Act responsibly – Give teens the information they need to survive in today's world

Another issue of some controversy is the treatment of youth and teens without parental consent or notification. There is no age limit for our patients. Any person who feels he or she is in need of our services is certainly welcome to be seen in any of our offices. We do, on occasion, have an irate parent call because they found out that their daughter came to Planned Parenthood and chose to use birth control. We never divulge to anyone the name of a patient who has been seen in one of our offices, however, we answer any general questions about our services.

We have learned over the years that many of our patients will come to us with a lot of "baggage." Sometimes, they are in abusive situations, many even incestuous, and often cannot go to their parent to discuss their need for birth control. Be assured that if a patient comes to Planned Parenthood and is not sexually active, we certainly do not advocate changing that status. A good number of our patients who come for initial visits, nearly 90 percent, are already in need of our services. Many fear pregnancy, disease or simply do not understand how their bodies work. We always discuss the need for parental involvement. Teens are advised that they should speak with parents or caregivers regarding their visit if they feel they can do so safely. Often, parents surmise their teen is sexually active, but they don't want to know, don't want to pay for birth control services and most certainly don't want their child to have a child. It's unfortunate that an enormous number of parents deny that their teenager is sexually active. What they fail to understand is that disbelief and inability to communicate may cost their

child not only what's left of their childhood, but their life.

We at Planned Parenthood have made a commitment to everyone, including teenagers, to give the best information possible in regard to sexuality and reproductive health care. Currently, we have a Teen Walk-In Clinic which is open to teenagers 19 and younger at the Jefferson Avenue office on Thursdays from 2-6 p.m.. Here, teens will find a comfortable environment to talk about their concerns and to learn about healthy lifestyles. Most recently we've been offering free and anonymous HIV testing to participants in the Teen Walk-In Clinic. We understand accidents happen. We're here to help during those times. More importantly, we're here to provide sound information and health care to help make healthy lifestyle choices.

Pro-choice = Pro-people

So, yes, the label pro-choice certainly applies to Planned Parenthood of NW Ohio. Consider that label as we do: Pro-choice is not limited to discussing options for pregnancy, instead, it runs the gamut of life options. To us being pro-choice means the right to choose a profession, the right to vote or the right to decide what is appropriate for our individual lifestyle. It encompasses the choices made regarding sex, abstinence, what we have for dinner and what we find fashionable. Pro-choice is not limited to abortion and pregnancy. Pro-choice means pro-people and empowerment in all aspects of humanity.

Planned Parenthood certainly has come a long way over the years. We hope to continue to make advances in the private practice sector. Patients now have many choices of where to receive health care, reproductive and otherwise. It is imperative that we remain a place patients choose for their care and give them a reason to tell their friends and family about their experience with PPNWO. This is an agency that is pro-active, non-judgmental and very accepting of alternative lifestyles. The Jefferson Avenue office lends space every week to Rainbow Area Youth for meetings. Here, a group of youth that identify as gay, lesbian, or gender questioning, meet for support and discussion. Additionally, PPNWO is the only agency in Toledo employing a full time grant-funded person to do HIV risk reduction education in the gay community.

Planned Parenthood is so much more than family planning, birth control and the controversial subjects in the nightly news. We are an agency that does big things with little money. We value people, love families and believe every person has the right to make the choices that work for their individuality. ★

For more information about Planned Parenthood of NW Ohio or how you can become involved as a volunteer, please call (419) 255-1115.

BREEDER: Real-Life Stories from the New Generation of Mothers

Edited by Ariel Gore and Bee Lavender
(Seal Press, May 2001, 256 pages)

Review by Jessica Mills

Hip Mama zine creators Ariel Gore and Bee Lavender have compiled a smart, funny and much-needed anthology of essays by mothers of this generation. The real life voices that are heard while reading this book will offer every 20 to 30-something parent reassurance that they are not alone with the dichotomies that parenting during these crazy times can bring: isolation and joy, sleeplessness and rejuvenation, piercings and breast pumps, punk rock and peek-a-boo. Every non-parent who reads this book will also be treated to a feast of honest narratives that might not be heard elsewhere.

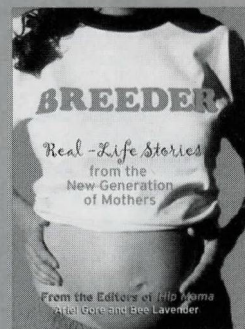
Even for a sleep-deprived, working mother of a 13-month old like myself, this book was hard to put down; eye candy and fuel for a bedraggled brain. Well into the book, say 80 pages or so, I realized how important books like this are to us new, young-ish parents. Consumed by pregnancy and child care for almost two years now, I still feel like I don't know what I'm doing more times than I care to admit. Hearing 36 other voices from the front lines of "real" motherhood reminded me, right when I needed to hear it, that I'm not alone – even if our parenting styles, incomes and children might be very different.

When I say "real" motherhood, I mean the kind that's not seen in the mainstream parenting publications. Those are the magazines and books which suggest you and your children should be squeaky clean at all times, always shopping for new and matching baby clothes, toys and other supplies is necessary and that you, of course, have a college savings plan well under way as soon as your bundle is born. Instead, the voices chosen for *Breeders* represent the real voices – the ones who found themselves practically alone while traveling in another culture, the ones who are teen-aged, unmarried and forgoing the supposed adoption route, the ones who want to become parents even though it means going the sperm donor route because they are both women. These are voices who refuse to be oppressed by the institution of motherhood, voices of real women who came up during the hippie and punk eras, talking about what it means to be "mama" here and now.

And they're the voices who refuse to be oppressed by those who, with their "Thank You For Not Breeding" bumper stickers, think that bringing another person into this world is an inherently evil thing to do. These optimistic mamas, regardless of their personal circumstances or past beliefs about children, believe in hope. Even with G.W. Bush in the White House, they are strong, real, shit-kicking progress seekers.

Just like the two previous books by *Hip Mama* zine editor Ariel Gore, this book made me happy and left me wanting to read more. Teaming up with Bee Lavender, this book proves that they are brilliant, funny mamas of the hippest sort. Get a copy, read it and then pass it around to every other hip mama you know.

This book is "...for parents who didn't check their personalities at the door when their kids were born." – courtesy of the *Hip Mama* web site (www.hipmama.com)



HipMama

HIP 1. adj. slang Aware; Informed. 2. n. The part of the human body projecting below the waist on either side, formed by the upper part of the femur. [Old English hype] 3. n. A place where young children sit when tired of walking. 4. n. The fruit (red when ripe) of a wild rose. [Old English heope] 5. Whatever you want it to be.

MAMA 1. n. Mother, informal. [repetition of the infant sound MA] 2. n. One who has a maternal relationship to, nurtures, puts up with, teaches, encourages, constructively yells at, sends money orders to, heats from a can or makes chicken soup for, is available for long talks with, and generally makes it her (his) business to take care of the next generation. 3. n. A quality or condition that gives rise to another.

interview by Kaile Adney



My daughter Frances turned one yesterday and we are growing into more powerful women as the days pass. We survived an intense first year and I thank the women of *HipMama* for keeping me sane amidst societal and family pressures to conform into a modern day June Cleaver. *HipMama* is a community of mothers who do not buy into the sterile prepackaged "Good Mother" marketed by mainstream parenting books. Teenage, queer, tattooed, single or married, these mamas connect through a zine and a website of the same name, sharing similarities and differences that make them all fierce and soulful mothers. *HipMama* is made of activists, artists, poets, writers and musicians incorporating their children into their lives and their lives into their children. I had a chance to talk to Ariel Gore (zine editor/publisher) and Bee Lavendar (web editor/publisher)

Kai: How did *HipMama* begin?

Ariel: The print zine started as my senior project at Mills college. I was 23, I had a 3-year-old daughter, and neither the parenting magazines nor the feminist press magazines nor any of the zines I could get my hands on covered single parenting or urban parenting or young-mama issues in any way – let alone in a way that felt real and empowering. I was writing a lot of my own personal essays, so I decided to put out a call for submissions and print my own writing. It wasn't a commercial endeavor. I wanted to make something my friends would enjoy reading and something that would get me my degree without me having to churn out a boring paper on communication theory.

Bee: I was a single teen mom, and worked my way through college and graduate school. I was lucky to go to a progressive college that had excellent services for parents, but still felt really isolated. I didn't know anyone who had a family that looked like mine. One day I stopped to buy coffee at a newsstand and saw the first issue of *HipMama*. It was a really intense emotional moment to find a publication that seemed to speak directly to me, something that was truthful about the hard parts of being a young parent but remained defiant and hopeful. In 1997 the web site was launched and I volunteered to help moderate the online community. When the owner of the site decided to shut it down, I took over as editor and producer. The audience has grown from a very small group of mainly west coast women to a vast, international community. I've been doing summer gatherings for the Northwest community for three years, and this time the event will be a meeting of the national community. There will be simultaneous gatherings in Europe and Australia.

Kai: What is a *HipMama* gathering like?

Bee: The smaller gatherings are just like I remember family potlucks as a kid — people bring food and talk and laugh together, and the kids run amuck, and parents get to vent and celebrate and have a good time and sometimes argue and find support and a sense of belonging. The regional events are something else—in August we will be going on a book tour that is different from what people normally expect in a reading. We will be touring with The Dolly Ranchers, a hobopunk-folk girl band, and each performance will be a combination of readings and raucous music and in some venues, a trapeze performance. Our goal is to host a party in each town. The big event this summer will be a four day community gathering in Portland; our basic *HipMama* party goal has been expanded by a troupe of volunteers into an event that includes workshops and seminars on everything from unschooling to piercing to anti-bias curriculum. The volunteers have figured out how to cater the event, provide child care, figure out home sharing, and even organize a travel scholarship fund.

Kai: You both mention the lack of inspiring parenting materials for mothers outside the mainstream when *HipMama* began. Since I became a mother it has felt to me like the popular culture is constantly questioning my legitimacy. All the mainstream parenting books and magazines reinforce the idea that the perfect mother is a thirty something professional woman who is married, well-monied and has already finished her education.

Ariel: Exactly! I just HATE that.

Bee: Aside from how we feel about it, the media representation of mothers is not truthful. If you look at the statistics of how old we are, how much we earn, where and how we live—we are a huge and diverse group. It doesn't really make sense for mainstream media to keep selling us this overcooked stereotype, because eventually instead of aspiring to the diaper commercial version of mama-hood, **RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUALITY**

we just get mad and start looking for alternatives.

Kai: *HipMama* empowers teenage mothers, rock and roll mamas, mothers who are overlooked or looked down on everywhere else by providing them a voice and a strong community. Who empowered you two before this community existed? Was it family and friends?

Ariel: I was pregnant in Italy where, truthfully, I did not get a lot of support, but I also didn't get the kind of anti-support new mamas get in this country. I was living as a foreigner and people pitched in to help me, but there was never any expectation that I was going to fit in. When Maia was born and I moved back to California, I went to college. Fewer people pitched in to help, but the environment was right for questioning the status quo and having the time and luxury to really look at my new family in relationship to the larger world. Those first couple of years I was back and forth every week between this small college campus where everyone was privileged and thinking

about "big issues" and the welfare office where everyone was talking about food and shelter and the stupid rules and regulations that had us waiting and waiting and waiting for basic necessities. That contrast kind of messed with my head. Other than all that—I was raised by people who were seen by one institution or another as unfit and unacceptable (an artist and an excommunicated roman catholic priest), so luckily I'd always been illegitimate.

Bee: I was born working class and reared in a tiny, rural community that my great-grandparents homesteaded. I had the blessings of an extended family that absolutely supported me in my young motherhood. Everyone in my family has kids young, so I wasn't really breaking any rules. Everyone in my family has always worked, so they understood that I needed to go to college. Two of my great-grandmothers were young divorced single parents, so there was no judgment of my early broken marriage. I didn't really know that I was different or odd until I was actually in college and realized that my concerns were rooted in the reality of daily subsistence where most of my peers were partying or at least, had free time to study without a baby at the breast. My

first faculty at college told me that it was "anti-feminist" to have a baby, and for me, refuting that was very important. I craved a feminist mothering community that supported the unique aspects of my family and didn't make judgments based on superficial or hierarchical issues. I wanted daily interaction with people who dared question all kinds of societal assumptions, who were not afraid of debating points, who would agree to disagree. I wanted civil discourse and fun! That didn't exist anywhere I could find, and the work I've done creating our online community and the real-life community has been the tangible result of those thoughts. It started with a couple of people emailing, and has grown to this amazing worldwide coalition of like-minded people. What makes *HipMama* unique though is that we are not ideologically aligned with a particular parenting style or set of rules. We don't accept that there is one perfect way to be a family.

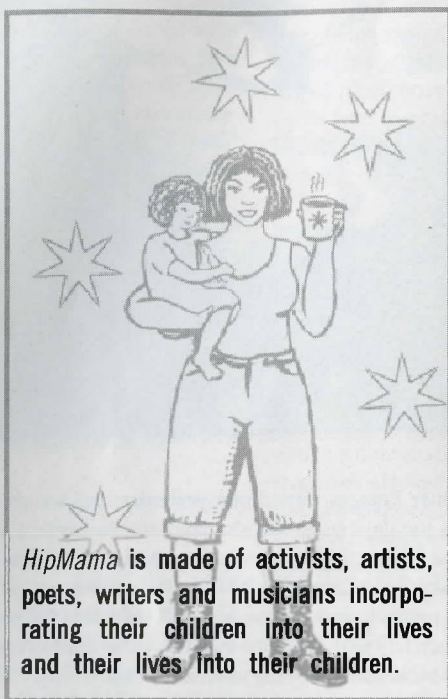
Kai: So tell me about your new book, *Breeder*.

Ariel: The new book is a collection of real-life stories from 36 incredible mamas—it's about love and death and surviving and mothering soulfully in this world—the one we swore we'd never bring children into, the one that spawned our cynicism and the one that, ultimately, nurtures our hope. Contributors like Ayun Halliday (*East Village Inky*), China (*Punk Parent*), Allison Crew (*Girllmom.com*), Jennifer Savage (*Mamaphonic.com*) and so many others make this a book that still makes me laugh and cry when I read it—even though I've read it a dozen times before!

Bee: In doing this book, we were looking for the most honest and compelling voices to tell all kinds of stories, because the more truth is told, the more we all feel like we can tell our own stories. I think that the experience of being in a family is the central theme to the book, and that anyone can find something valuable in it. We used tattoo flash art to anchor different theme sections — Rites of Passage, Danger, True Love, Working Girl, Flesh and Blood, Honey from the Rock. Each section can be read independently according to interest.

Kai: If you could send one copy to a public figure and have them really get the message, who would it be?

Ariel: Only one? I suppose that would have to be Resident Bush. But I think we ought to airlift a few thousand copies to capital hill, toss them from the helicopter with a special golden voodoo dust I happen to have that will cause all the politicians to catch, read and GET the book. ★



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LOCKDOWN

An Interview with Christian Parenti • by Freja Joslin

A Critique of Prisons and Their Place in our Culture and Economy

Christian Parenti, radical political economist and professor at San Francisco's New College, offered the prison abolitionist movement a much-needed resource last year with his powerful book, *Lockdown America*. Accessible and comprehensive, Parenti has accomplished a work exhaustive in its research and descriptive in its accounts of police and prison terror. Detailing the historical roots of our current criminal justice crisis, *Lockdown America* reflects a thoroughly researched radical critique of the criminal justice system build-up. Activists in Prescott, Arizona, brought Parenti to the Grand Canyon State for a speaking tour in early November 2000. In Prescott his talk began with a horrifying statistic—the United States has 4 percent of the world's population, yet 25 percent of the world's prisoners. In a talk that spanned the course of contemporary U.S. history, Parenti began with the political crisis of the 1960s, followed by the economic recession of the 1970s and the War on Drugs in the '80s and '90s. Unlike the prison industrial complex model, which examines specific and direct profit motives behind the build-up, Parenti argued for a model that examines the class system as well as white supremacy.

The story goes like this: During the social unrest in the '60s, law enforcement struggles with its project of repression (cases in point—the Watts riot and the Democratic National Convention of 1968 in Chicago). So Johnson creates the Omnibus Act of 1968 which establishes the LEAA (Law Enforcement Assistance Administration) to provide \$1 billion per year for technical support and training (SWAT) to local law enforcement agencies. In the '70s and early '80s, labor is attacked by the ruling class as the economy is restructured (Reagonomics) and a forced recession increases poverty and concentrates it mostly in cities. In the early '80s we see imprisonment and prison construction surge astronomically. Parenti proposes that the current crisis (nearly 2 million imprisoned in the United States) is rooted in “the transformation of the class and occupational structure of American society.” Instead of the “counterinsurgency by other means” crackdown on the rebellious '60s, '80s-style anti-crime repression was borne from a different sort of threat. Reagonomics had increased poverty and created the social breakdown which accompanies the disempowerment of working class communities. The destabilizing effect of inequality needed to be countered by a containment policy for those “cast-off classes.” Add this to the right-wing's love affair with scapegoating—whether it's immigrants, the poor, people of color or youth—and you've got the recipe for a nation where one in three African-American men in their 20s are currently entangled in the criminal justice system.

The War on Drugs, as a racialized war on the poor, also gets going in the '80s with a slew of crime bills increasing funding and power of police and the FBI. In response to the LA riots in 1992 and growing fear of violent criminals, prison spending skyrockets as Clinton's 1994 Prison Reform Act forces longer sentences and more prisoners. By the early '90s, politicians are using “tough on crime” rhetoric to win elections as “crime-baiting” appeals to the middle class's anxiety about instability of jobs, quality of education and life. This policy by-product has a momentum of its own, one with deadly consequences.

Parenti focused his talk on the prison-industrial complex, arguing that the traditional analysis of this complex—which relies on the interplay of economic stimulus by prison construction, privatization and exploitation of prison labor—offers little explanation for the kind of build-up we are witnessing. He stresses that we currently have a “lockdown economy, one based not on *direct* and *specific* corporate interests, but rather on an analysis of punishment and terror as class struggle from above.” Throughout *Lockdown America*, Parenti returns to a discussion of contradictions, the most fundamental being the fact that capitalism needs and creates poverty and surplus populations, yet faces the threat of “political, aesthetic, and cultural disruption” from these same poor and surplus populations. He ends this discussion with a brief but all-encompassing thesis; “Prison and criminal justice are about managing these irreconcilable contradictions.”

I sat down to talk with Christian Parenti during his November 2000 speaking tour through Arizona. The following is a portion of that interview.

How did you first get involved and become interested in police and prison issues?

I think it flowed from a more generalized interest in violence. I've always been aware of the ubiquity of violence in our society, so as a young person in the early '90s living in San Francisco, in what at that time was considered a rough neighborhood, there was a lot of police activity and violence, gang violence. The state was involved in a big project of policing, not necessarily political because there wasn't a rebellion. Before that, I was interested in the same fundamental question of the U.S. involvement in Central America and the role of state violence in reproducing society, the centrality of state violence in producing the every day world. Even though we don't see violence all the time, I really think that in many ways everyday life is a product of state violence. That it's hidden, ever present, and in a way ideologically with us all, all the time. I see it as normal that Americans are really fascinated with violence, and college students want to take classes on serial killers and everyone is trying to process violence. Of course they are, because even though we don't think critically about it, we all know through a sort of intellectual background noise that this whole society is predicated on massive genocide and land theft and continued violence all the time. So that led to my interest in the criminal justice system.

During your talk you mentioned that Clinton has done more to increase the criminal justice system build-up than any other president has. What is some specific legislation attributed to Clinton?

Clinton's 1994 Crime Bill was the beginning of the really horrible federal crime bills. It made 30 billion dollars available for grants for policing and prison construction. The material impact of that bill was far greater than any other; the amount of money in absolute relative terms was enormous. The federal Anti-terrorism and Death Penalty Act greased the wheels of the federal death penalty in a way that no republican bill had.

There was also the Prison Litigation Reform Act, a little known piece of legislation that completely overhauled prisoners access to civil-courts in really, really bad ways. It has a three strikes provision so that if a prisoner has three court cases thrown out of court as frivolous, then they lose forever their right to file another case. And you have to remember that a lot of people enter prison functionally illiterate. And then they have to teach themselves how to read, and then they have to teach themselves the law using inadequate law libraries and inadequate office supplies. So they are submitting briefs that are technically pretty shabby and can be thrown out on a technical-

What we have to deal with now is a creep towards fascism in the U.S. An increasingly punitive, increasingly racist state that is ever more invasive in terms of surveillance and the types of formal and informal social control it exercises over all of us. And, frighteningly, this system of repression has broad support among the people of America.

ity. So it's not that prisoners are filing frivolous briefs often. They are frequently filing briefs because they are autodidacts that get thrown out. So that is a really, really bad provision of the law because it frees prison administrators to abuse prisoners and not be held accountable. Another thing that it does is it eliminates attorney fees so lawyers can't get paid for taking prison cases, so there is a fundamental point there: The sort of quality control aspect of the law has been removed. Whatever you want to say about the United States justice system, at least there were these nominally built in quality controls so that at least the people who are subject to the law have recourse to question the law and point out its failures. That's been rolled back by the Prison Litigation Reform Act.

The essential argument in your book Lockdown America is that capitalism contains contradiction: it both needs poverty and is threatened by it. My question is how does the War on Drugs play into the containment of this threatening lower class?

The War on Drugs contains the lower classes by justifying repression of the poor in seemingly apolitical, technical terms. It takes it out of the realm of racial and class control and puts it into the discursive realm of public safety. It is a massive ideological justification for coming down on those classes which do or could potentially threaten the system. So, fundamentally that's how the War on Drugs fits into the larger project of social control, that is to say the larger project of having poverty while containing the deleterious side effects of poverty, such as rebellion. That's what it's about. How it does that, as everybody knows, is through an ideological campaign that constructs drug dealers and drug users as poor people of color and it constructs the drugs used in inner cities as the more dangerous drugs. There is a long history of that.

The first War on Drugs started in San Francisco in the 1870s against Chinese laborers. There were laws against smoking opium, which is what the Chinese laborers did, whereas everyone else was drinking opium tonics sold over the counter. The issue wasn't opium addiction, it was Chinese laborers be-

ing in California, settling down and starting to think that perhaps they had some right to own property and make some decisions for themselves and question their treatment. There was a very racist worker's movement at that time, The Workingman's Party, and simultaneously at that time, you get the first anti-drug laws in the U.S.

The following War on Drugs was in the 1930s during the Depression when Harry Anslinger came down on marijuana, which was really about coming down on Mexican and African-American migrant laborers. Mexican migrant laborers were coming into work in the fields of the South and California. African-Americans were increasingly moving North into industrial areas. Marijuana, which was previously known as hemp, was used more often by Mexicans and African-Americans than by the white industrial working class in the North. So Harry Anslinger really focuses on that and actually gets the name changed to marijuana because it gives the drug a more foreign ambience and associates it more directly with Mexicans because it is a Spanish name. He launches a war on marijuana attributing it with all sorts of crazy properties which you can see in movies like *Reefer Madness*—things like it makes proper white girls want to have sex.

So that was really about controlling a certain racialized class of people, and so too now we see the media constructing crack cocaine as this super horrible drug...and crack is a bad drug, but so is alcohol. I mean alcohol is heavy-duty stuff. One of my first jobs out of high school was working in a homeless shelter for alcoholics. Alcohol makes people do really crazy violent stuff and it destroys you physically. The effect that alcohol has on fetuses is unparalleled. They now know that so-called "crack babies" recover fully. You can't say the same for children born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. So it's not about the actual nature of the drug, not to minimize the fact that all drugs can be damaging. Even benign little marijuana can mess up your lungs and turn you into a mushy headed slacker. Alcohol can kill you, heroine can kill you, cocaine can drive you crazy and kill you. All these drugs when abused become problematic. The point is that how they get constructed in the media has more to do with the way that the story can be utilized by law enforcement to control the poor, particularly poor people of color.

Lockdown America makes the case that poor people of color particularly suffer in the restructuring of the economy and therefore make up the bulk of America's prisoners. How would you say this affects communities of color in general?

The War on Drugs affects them in horrible ways. There is a special aspect to that as well. The War on Drugs and criminal justice doesn't take place evenly over space. It takes place unevenly because capitalism has an uneven geography and produces spaces unevenly. You have the overdevelopment of some areas and the underdevelopment of others, the overexploitation in some areas, the accumulation of intense capital in certain places such as cities and the extraction of capital from other places. So too do state policies take place unevenly because there is a geographic aspect to it. So most criminal justice takes place in cities, though there's a War on Drugs in the country like the big anti-marijuana campaigns throughout Appalachia and the Northwest. But a lot of this is about controlling places...cities, where the poor of color live. Criminal justice creates deviancy; it damages people. You send young people to prison and they come out screwed up and more likely to commit violent crimes. They will also be shut out of the labor market because employers don't want to hire felons. So this helps increase unemployment which increases interpersonal violence, all of which then seems natural and justifies greater use of policing and incarceration. It opens these communities up to police surveillance and it divides these communities by helping to create a crisis of violence and crime. Many people in poor inner city communities really want the police to be there. They want more repression and they're in favor of having the cops come in and do whatever "needs to be done." So, it affects these communities by putting them under occupation and dividing them, demoralizing the people there and siphoning off the youth. I've had community organizers talk about

how they compete for personnel with the drug trade. The young don't get involved in organizing because they either get involved in the drug trade or end up in prison. So, it removes a demographic slice of the population, the young, who are frequently crucial to any project of political organizing.

Could you tell me a little bit about the War on Youth?

John DiIulio, the right-wing criminologist who first wrote about "super-predators" is in many ways responsible for the ideological climate behind the War on Youth. There's this fear that youth are out of control and different from youth of the past, which is in fact a perennial fear. Every generation has the idea that the youth this time around are profoundly damaged and different from other people, and to some extent I think this is borne out of capitalism and the rapid rate of change that always occurs under industrialized capitalism. It's an expression about people's deeper anxieties about how society is constantly destroying and inventing, then destroying and reinventing traditions and geographic patterns and psychological patterns. The whole culture of late industrial capitalism is marked by creative destruction producing tastes, places, cultures and belief systems—all of which are also commodities and forms of production. So that concern and fear about youth is perennial. You can find the same kind of discourse going back a hundred years. More specifically, the War on Youth part of it has to do with the fact that we've run out of ways to come down on adults. There are just so many laws they can pass.

There is one thing I would say about the War on Youth that activists sometimes miss the point. The real thing oppressing youth in California for example is not the fact that they are youth, although they are oppressed as youth because they have these curfew laws. Their schools are being militarized, they can't skateboard, etc. The facets of youth culture are increasingly criminalized simply for being youth. But the main thing that's criminalizing youth is the fact that they are working class and people of color. And I think there is some fetishization of youth that goes on sometimes on the Left. People need to think a little more critically about that because youth are also some of the most privileged people in this society, and that youth is as much a source of privilege as a source of oppression. This whole society is youth identified. Consumer culture is based around images of youth, and youth have a certain cultural cache and a certain cultural capital that works for them in capitalism. The real fundamental issues are ultimately questions of gender location, class and race. That's not to say that there aren't laws that target youth, but sometimes people fetishize youth when the fact is it's not their youthfulness, it's their other qualities that are really the reason the cops are coming down on them.

What would you say to someone who thinks that prison labor is a good use of prisoners and is in fact a form of rehabilitation because it provides them with job skills?

All of that can be true. The more fundamental issue is who's in prison and do they need to be rehabilitated? Do people who have been busted for growing a little bit of marijuana need rehabilitation and job skills? I doubt it. The fundamental issue before you even get to the question of could there be good prison labor or not is the fact that there are way too many people in prison that don't need to be there. Thirty percent of people who enter prison enter for violent crimes; the rest enter for nonviolent property offenses, nonviolent drug offenses and public order offenses. In my opinion, the majority of those people should not be going to prison. So, that's the trump card in that argument.

The other night you mentioned that even some of the most "tough on crime" lawmakers are now calling for a stabilizing of the prison building momentum. How do you see this "elite rethink," as you called it, affecting the prison industry?

It's hard to predict the future. Maybe we'll just see a slowing in the rate of growth of incarceration. We're already seeing a slowing compared to the '90s. Maybe we'll see the whole project of repression plateau and stabilize. The middle class might decide that they don't want to pay for this. Or maybe, if there's enough pressure from below and if there's enough constituencies in society that address criminal justice—for example if the labor movement gets involved and sees this as an issue of their future membership base being robbed, we might see a positive rollback against the criminal justice system build-up. But I don't know. It's all a question of how much people organize, how creatively people organize, and when they do organize, how broadly they talk about and think about the problem. I think it's important to see organizing always as a medium or platform for education as well; and the more sophisticated our narrative I think the more people will understand the whole society and get involved, and the more creative forms of organization we'll find. So if we can keep doing the job and increasingly do it better, if we can be less single-issue oriented, less moralistic, think more structurally, think

about capitalism more; less about bad corporations and more about the corporate system, i.e. capitalism, and how the capitalistic society constructs everything from space to people's psychology, and then keep plugging away wherever possible; then it's not inconceivable that we could create some real victories.

I think people are interested in your vision of a criminal justice system and the role of prisons in a just society. Can you elaborate?

That's such a hard question because ideally there wouldn't be repression, but that's pretty utopian. I think that there is a place for groups of people to decide how to punish and deal with elements of that group that go against it. I think to deny that question and let yourself drift off into some totally utopian position is just silly. The fact of the matter is that people have always done bad stuff and even in a utopia there would have to be some system for dealing with people who kill and rape and all that. Presumably, there'd be much, much less of that. We have evidence that the more egalitarian and just a society, the less interpersonal violence there is. So, it becomes a kind of esoteric question if not that many people are harming others. But there still, nonetheless, would have to be a system. Even very egalitarian indigenous societies had systems of banishment and that sort of stuff. So, it's an ugly fact that groups do protect themselves through shaming and forms of basically what you'd have to call repression. When a hunting and gathering society banishes because they've committed murder, that's a form of repression. The individual is being driven from their society. Basically, I don't think that's a relevant question, ultimately because it's completely academic. It's completely scholastic because it's not on the agenda. We are so far from there being a just society and thus actually having to work out a system of restorative justice that I don't think it's relevant. I think it's O.K. to not answer that question. There are all sorts of questions that are O.K. to not answer because they don't have any material bearing on the current movement. What we have to deal with now is a creep towards fascism in the U.S. An increasingly punitive, increasingly racist state that is ever more invasive in terms of surveillance and the types of formal and informal social control it exercises over all of us. And, frighteningly, this system of repression has broad support among the people of America. People of all classes and races are unfortunately supportive of this. So, that's the real issue. These questions are academic whereas the questions of how we deal with the prison-industrial-complex and the criminal justice build-up is not academic. It's very real, it's very immediate and it may seem vague but it's a really practical question whereas the other is not. ★

Lockdown America:

Police and Prisons in The Age of Crisis
Christian Parenti,
Verso 2000, paperback, \$15, 290pp
Review by Jenny Conathan, Geert Dhondt
and Freja Joslin

The central moral and political struggle of the new century will be the battle against the ever-expanding police state. I predict that Christian Parenti's new book will do for the movement against the 'prison industrial complex' what Rachel Carson's Silent Spring did for the movement against environmental devastation. Parenti has penned our first manifesto.

—Van Jones, National Executive Director at the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights

This is the importance of *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis*. Christian Parenti's thought-provoking book asks us: why does the United States, the center of the free world, have 25 percent of the world's prisoners? This well-documented, researched and written book, explores the answers throughout its three parts: Crisis, Police and Prisons.

Crisis

Rising unemployment was a very desirable way of reducing the strength of the working classes...What was engineered—in Marxist terms—was a crisis in capitalism which re-created a reserve army of labor, and has allowed the capitalists to make high profits ever since.

—Alan Budd, chief economic advisor to Margaret Thatcher

The first part of Parenti's book discusses recent political and economic history, bringing the current police and prison build-up into perspective. In the late sixties, "US capitalism hit a dual social and economic crisis," and as a reaction to this crisis, the police and prison build-up began.

Picture the late '60s in crisis with two major fault lines: race and the war, including "massive anti-war protests...skyrocketing crime coupled with some of the most violent riots since the Civil War," 500,000 troops stuck in the mud, and, most importantly, a decline in economic growth and corporate profits. The State was failing to suppress disorder and a growing movement for radical social change.

The ruling elite had to come up with new strategies. Johnson, who was losing the war abroad, brought the war home. He began to re-

shape and retool the structure of policing, creating new agencies, such as the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), to coordinate the protection of a powerful elite and the suppression of the rest. This class warfare was temporarily put into stalemate during the Ford and Carter years, after the Watergate affair, when "the crimes which drew the most attention in the administration's last years were those committed by or charged against the men who held some of the highest offices." This, however, was short-lived; Reagan jump-started the law and order regime.

The neo-liberalism of Milton Friedman and company has guided the economic restructuring since the 1970s. The recipe to rollback the crisis was cutting government spending on education and social programs, cutting corporate taxes, and promoting deregulation and free-trade. These policies increased inequality and created surplus populations; people, disproportionately poor people of color, that need to be incarcerated and policed.

Police

[President Nixon] emphasized that you have to face that the whole problem is really the blacks. The key is to devise a system that recognizes this while not appearing to.

—H.R. Haldeman

Parenti looks at the escalation and build up of policing in cities and border regions, focusing on SWAT teams, the Immigration and Naturalization Service's (INS) war on immigrants, and New York style zero tolerance. He explains the logic behind the policies that have restructured the law enforcement systems, and he clearly demonstrates the consequences by speaking of the ever-increasing population of victims of excessive, corrupt policing.

These examples are a real reflection of how the US police force is turning into an army against civilians. The increase in the militarization of police, such as SWAT teams, has led to heightened violence and unnecessary deaths during raids. The teams are provided with the power to make raids on individual houses or "sweeps" on entire neighborhoods with little evidence, choosing targets based on race or class. Using this same power at the US-Mexico border, migrants are being hunted down like animals. Caught in a domestic war, and the contradictions of a global free trade zone, anyone who looks Latino is a suspect and is subject to criminal treatment.

Youth in cities all across the US are victims of similar prejudice from law enforcement. Being suspected of gang

activity is commonplace and the consequences are detrimental. For example, in Fresno, California there is a standard list of ten criteria used by the police [or whatever or whoever this list is used by or for what], some of which include "having gang style tattoos... having one's name appear on a gang document such as a letter... wearing gang clothing, such as red or blue jackets and baggy pants." Kids are learning "how to be cuffed; how to shield one's face when paraded before the press; in short how to act like a criminal." The US police force is doing the job that a capitalist economy needs: reinforcing the color and class lines.

Prisons

We want a prisoner to look like a prisoner, to smell like a prisoner. When you see one of them boogers a-loose, you'll say, 'I didn't know we had zebras in Mississippi.'

—Mack McInnis, (D) Mississippi, circa 1997.

In the early '80s, we saw imprisonment and prison construction surge into what Parenti affectionately calls a "gulag." He proposes that the current crisis (nearly 2 million imprisoned in the U.S.) is rooted in "the transformation of the class and occupational structure of American society." Instead of the "counterinsurgency by other means" crackdown on the rebellious '60s, '80s-style anti-crime repression was born from a different sort of threat. Reaganomics had increased poverty and created the social breakdown which accompanies such disempowerment of working class communities. The destabilizing effect of inequality needed to be countered by a containment policy for those "cast-off classes." Add this to the right-wing's love affair with scapegoating—whether it's immigrants, the poor, people of color, or youth—and you've got the recipe for a nation where one in three African-American men in their twenties are currently entangled in the criminal justice system.

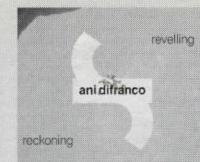
Chapter Ten, "Balkans in a Box: Rape, Race War, and Other Forms of Management," brings us face to face with life inside our country's most modern security facilities, documenting brutal cases of violence—both sexually and racially motivated. But these are not just terrible things that are bound to happen in a place where all the bad guys are; Parenti offers us another version. The role of rape and domination within the prison society "are integral to the

every day micropolitics...and provide a financial and psychological subsidy to the dominant criminal class. By keeping inmates content and divided, the prison slaveocracy defuses political troubles." This is just as true for prison gangs. These violent forces are often seen as disruptive, when in fact they serve to justify increased repression and control while functioning as "auto-oppression."

Next, Parenti shifts the focus to the "prison-industrial-complex," arguing that the traditional analysis of this complex which relies on the interplay of economic stimulus by prison construction, privatization, and exploitation of prison labor—offers little explanation for the kind of build-up we are witnessing. He stresses that we currently have a "lockdown economy, one based not on direct and specific corporate interests, but rather on an analysis of punishment and terror as class struggle from above." Throughout *Lockdown America*, Parenti returns to a discussion of contradictions, the most fundamental being the fact that capitalism needs and creates poverty and surplus populations, yet faces the threat of "political, aesthetic, and cultural disruption" from these same populations. He ends this discussion with the brief but all-encompassing thesis: "Prison and criminal justice are about managing these irreconcilable contradictions."

Some of Parenti's suggestions include less policing, incarceration, surveillance, and laws governing individual behaviors. His plan centers on creating jobs that pay a livable wage and meet human needs. *Lockdown America* puts a call out for more popular resistance and economic justice. "There are small pockets of dedicated activists fighting against tremendous odds and the deafening silence of the mainstream press. These are the people pointing the way out; the way forward, away from the waste, terror, and abuse of America's criminal justice lockdown."

Lockdown America argues—in a beautifully written and engaging, journalistic style—that police and prisons exist as a form of social control. No other work is as accessible and comprehensive, detailing the historical roots of our current criminal justice crisis. Parenti has accomplished a work exhaustive in its research and descriptive in its accounts of police and prison terror. The mainstream media gives little attention to the timely ideas expressed in *Lockdown America*, which is exactly the reason why we suggest following the advice of Amy Goodman of the radio program Democracy Now: "The book that police, politicians and prison officials don't want you to see. Read it now." ★



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Infiltration

Inside Phillip Morris and

As I enter the opulent dining room and start shaking hands with employees of Philip Morris, it occurs to me that I am desperately in over my head.

That I am at this function, a recruitment dinner for Philip Morris's marketing department, is the fault of my friend Andy Berndt (or "Nigel Hemingway" as he has identified himself to our hosts), a prominent anti-smoking activist. Andy had seen an open invitation to this shindig advertised in the campus newspaper almost a month prior and implored me to go. By his description I had expected this to be a large scale event, teeming with hordes of casually dressed, jockey business undergrads in a large conference hall. Instead I find myself in a special banquet room at the Palomino, arguably downtown Minneapolis's most upscale restaurant. Cozy and unanonymous, the room itself contains only six small tables, a buffet awaiting in sterling serving dishes, and is lit with a murky warmth appropriate for a disco-themed orgy. An open bar (stocked with Philip Morris owned beers) and a fruit platter too ornate to touch are mercifully provided to distract us from the watchful eyes of the handful of Philip Morris representatives. Andy has at least thought to wear a shirt and tie — I have come unshowered, unshaven and clad a crimson t-shirt emblazoned with three cartoonish skeletons and the logo of a favorite thrash band. "I look FUCKING RIDICULOUS!" I whisper to Andy as we grab name tags and check our coats. Everyone else in attendance is older than we are by at least seven years.

We converse with one Christine Conway, who receives us without visible reservation. She has left her twenties behind, probably, and is razor sharp and professional. In her nine years with "the Company" Conway, a non-smoker, has apparently become a big tobacco true believer. This fact is evident as she guides Andy and I through an extensive display of Philip Morris ads, products, and the campaigns behind them.

Conway introduces us to the world of "relationship marketing." Relationship marketing seems to be merely the natural extension of the tried and true practice of branding, that is, marketing products as elements essential to a

certain lifestyle. To this end, the Company has invested considerably in the custom publishing of magazines specific to particular brands of cigarettes. Drawn from the Company's enormous data base thirty million strong, consumers request these magazine/catalog hybrids themselves, making Philip Morris a major direct mail franchise second only to Land's End. Yet the focus is not just to sell products or even to clobber the reader with advertisements, Conway claims. *Lighter Side*, the periodical published in synergy with the Merritt brand, contains quaint factoids and stories which Conway describes as "like, fun bathroom reading." The Virginia Slims organ is a catalog of effeminate clothing and beauty products modeled by anorexicly thin girls (an iron lung in pink is not, to the best of my knowledge, available for sale).

At first I merely smile and nod, afraid that opening my mouth will shatter my already fragile straight face. As Conway's little presentation drags on, I become gradually more outgoing. I gain confidence by adding phony comments of appreciation and finally to making veiled quips and asking loaded questions ("Yes, young people will respond to that" and "How does this play out in unregulated foreign markets?").

My probing does nothing to unseat Conway's faithful composure. Not long after she is finished with us, Andy and I strike up a conversation with a woman I will call "Lilly," who is similarly undisturbed by our suspicious whispering, giggling and my absurd appearance. Lilly is a demure, nerdy graduate student taking night classes for her MBA and toiling by day for a major agribusiness firm. She's not sure if she's ready to go to work for big tobacco — this she confesses to us in a nervous hush — but she couldn't pass up the opportunity.

Andy and I try to encourage this pang of conscience in our new friend without revealing ourselves as saboteurs. Before long we get carried away; I compare big tobacco's unrestricted access to foreign markets to "colonial era piracy," and Andy blows our cover entirely, telling Lilly that we're just there to heckle. At this Lilly seems petrified, realizing she has made friends with the wrong group of people.

But before she can snitch to Conway, Vice President of Marketing Steve Pisker is being introduced and handed a cordless microphone to begin his presentation. Through dumb luck, Andy and I have chosen front row seats.

Pisker is a tall man passing middle age whose black hair is graying with dignity. His time at the Company gym has not been wasted as his modestly formed midsection clearly shows. He is a white collar man's man with the easy, yet arrogant manner of a prep school football coach.

Pisker is confident and subtle as he boasts of his career with Philip Morris and the Company's overall success. He is a University of Minnesota graduate who started at Philip Morris in accounting. In an act of mysterious corporate wisdom he claims not to understand, the Company shuffled Pisker to the marketing department. There he flourished and rose to the rank of Vice President.

Pisker explains with restrained ease the phenomenal success of America's leading nicotine pusher. "What do we look for from a monetary perspective?" he asks. A fat man in the audience answers the question with a show-me-the-money hand gesture and a grin that spreads from the apex of his triple chin to the crown of his bald scalp. Pisker smiles, but is much less vulgar. He mentions calmly that "In the half hour or so I'll spend talking tonight, We'll have made about...\$2.5 million in profit." In rough calculation, about 25 people will die of smoking-related illnesses in the same length of time.

I myself did not realize how significant that monetary figure was until I checked out the Company web site later in the week. According to that source, in 1999 (PM's 17th consecutive year at the top of the heap), the Company enjoyed a whopping market share of almost 50 percent. That's more than twice that of its closest competitor, RJ Reynolds. To boot, PMUSA is only one jewel in the Philip Morris crown, a fact upon which Pisker touches only in passing. The Philip Morris family of companies also includes PM International, Miller Brewing Company, Kraft Foods (by mid-2001 the Company will also have bought out Nabisco) and the PM Capital Corporation. Philip Morris is the "world's largest producer

Big Tobacco

"Relationship Marketing" • By C. Thomsen

of consumer packaged goods."

The virile Company seed has taken relationship marketing to a level of total immersion, for at least a few hundred lucky winners every year. Winners of a sweepstakes based on the Marlboro brand are swept off to either the Marlboro Ranch or the Marlboro Racing School. The former is a sprawling dude ranch in Montana where future cancer victims can ride horses, drive cattle and generally play cowboy for five days or, as Pisker puts it, "experience a part of Marlboro country. Well, the mythical Marlboro country." At the latter, winners race a variety of high performance cars around track for the same length of time. For the ladies there is the Virginia Slims health spa, (!) where smokers are, perhaps incongruously, exercised, pampered, and made over.

But Pisker doesn't fail to mention that the Company does not market its products, nor its sweepstakes or publications to minors. Fast cars, adventure, beauty and glamour? No, teenagers aren't interested in that stuff. "We don't want kids to smoke, it's that simple" says Pisker, pointing out that the Company has poured more than 100 million dollars into its very own Youth Smoking Prevention program. PM has designed and produced slick, savvy TV spots and glossy ads for magazines, with tag lines like "Think. Don't smoke" (for kids) and "Talk. They'll listen" (for parents). All the same, the Company ad campaign is seen as a massive failure by some anti-smoking activists who note the industry's refusal to cooperate with strategies that do work. Others believe that PM's acquiescence to sabotaging their own customer base is an ingenious, underhanded twist intended to backfire. Author Mike Males writes that by wagging a finger at teenage smokers, companies like PM reinforce the notion that smoking is a cool, mature, adult thing to do.

Pisker goes on to mention the various other cultural and philanthropic causes the Company supports. PM donates money to support the arts and disaster relief, and gives to fight hunger and domestic violence (a fitting penance for a major alcohol dealer, given that alcohol is a factor in too many cases of abuse). Given the manner of Pisker's speech and the nature of the Company's business, one gets the

sense that perhaps PM's philanthropy is more a means of whitewashing both its public image and its employees' consciences than actually doing good. Corporate sensitivity is also good for market performance, if Company strategy continues to pay off. Market-friendly acts of beneficence include the forthcoming Merit Paper Select brand, which is specially designed to be less likely to burn down your house should you fall asleep while smoking.

But if such paradigm shaking revelations are not enough to soothe the consciences of the up and coming, Pisker understands. "Obviously we're a controversial industry," he coos. "We're not for everybody...some people don't want to work in tobacco. Some people don't want to work in Manhattan."

On the other hand, if you are willing to reconcile any misgivings and come work for the Company, you will be more than compensated for your effort. The compensation is, as another PM rep put it, "highly competitive" and employee amenities are considerable. According to Pisker, they include stock options, health plans, dental plans, profit sharing, as well as a free, professional quality gym, salon and company store all on site in the Company's New York City headquarters.

With this it becomes clear that Pisker is winding up. I become tense — our window of opportunity to accost Pisker in front of the whole group may be closing. The excitement in the air is palpable as the eager yuppies squirm in their seats with barely subdued giddiness to begin the brown nosing that will accompany dinner. Thankfully, Pisker asks if there are any questions. As soon as he does, Andy sticks his paw in the air.

"Thanks Steve. My question is, well, I was reading some facts from the CDC the other day and I was just wondering if you felt comfortable working for a company that kills 1200 people every day."

Pisker stares at Andy with simultaneous shock, disgust and tangible rage, as though Andy had mooned his wife or pissed in his holy water. For a long moment, it seems as though Pisker would just as soon punch Andy in the face as answer his question.

"I, I feel comfortable. I'm, very comfortable" Pisker spits back, trying to remain dip-

lomatic. "All right, I think we can star—"

"One more thing, Steve" says Andy, interrupting. "I have a question about your anti-tobacco campaign that you're currently running. It's proven to be one of the most *unsuccessful ever*, and I was wondering why your company has refused to work with other campaigns that have been proven to work with young people."

As Andy asks the question, I take the leisure of looking over my shoulder at the crowd. For every pair of rolled eyes there are two jaws dropped to the floor. It's a strange, thrilling sensation, knowing that we've invoked the spite, awe and incredulity of an entire roomful of people.

"All right, look, that's, that's not my department, I can't answer that question. Let's just eat." Pisker switches off the mic and gestures to begin the meal, storming back to his own seat in a huff.

Every Armani-clad butt is frozen to its seat in trauma. We grab our plates and are first to hit the buffet.

Andy and I gorge ourselves on a better meal than either of us have had in months. I attempt, hopelessly, to field probing questions ("Why exactly are you here?") as though any veneer of legitimacy I may have walked in there with had not been stripped away. "Oh, ah, I'm just...interested in...marketing. Or whatever." Exchanges with others become increasingly hostile. We elect to beat it out of there once our plates are clean. We retrieve our jackets from the coat check, and a sympathetic member of the wait staff takes us out of earshot of the Company flacks. "The lady, the one in charge [presumably Conway?] is fucking pissed at you guys!" We all swallow seizures of laughter. "Yeah she was like 'I can't *believe* they sat there and *ate our goddamn food!*'"

On our way out we help ourselves to extra copies of the propaganda packets available at the door. Before doing so, Andy bids an icy farewell to Pisker, forcing him to shake his hand. I can only bite my lip and wave meekly as I back toward the exit. We push past the door and break into a run, laughter rocketing into the nighttime downtown sky, electric with the thrill of escape. ★

The United States is often regarded as the "wealthiest" country on earth. Obviously, it depends on how the term "wealth" is defined. When terms like "Gross National Product," "Gross Domestic Product Per Capita" are thrown around by economists then there is a clear argument for this statement. The US also makes its presence felt throughout the world, from showing its military might in the Middle East to introducing McDonald's to Moscow to dominating international cinemas with Hollywood films. Consequently, people throughout the world have little problem believing that the US is such a wealthy land, where the quality of life must surely exceed that of their own humble country and they often try to emulate that wealth. As people throughout Asia, Africa, and South America increasingly risk their health in pursuit of American food, drink, cigarettes and lifestyle, such consumerism and hell-bent capitalism continues to impoverish hundreds of thousands of people in this country.

The United States has one of the longest work weeks, no compulsory vacation days, no job security, an increasing reliance on temp work (with no benefits), has seen real wages decline since 1972, represses Union Rights and has no national health care. (Taken from *Z Magazine* July/August 1998)

Furthermore, there is no real safety net for those who fall victim to these issues. When examining the "World's richest nation" from this perspective it becomes clear that the nation's wealth is being secured by breaking the backs of its poor. There should be no need for people to be living on the streets in the world's "wealthiest" nation, but this comes as no surprise upon examination of where this wealth comes from and where it ends up.

Towards the end of last year Portland Oregon was voted "America's most livable city" by *Money Magazine*. This announcement had a mixed reaction amongst the people of Portland. Some were proud and excited to be living in such a place, others feared that it would attract thousands of new people. There continues to be fear of an ever-expanding city, urban sprawl, soaring rent-prices and the spread of the tech industry. All of which could accumulate in a transformation similar to that which San Francisco has been going through in the last few years. To the homeless community, the announcement must have been a joke. Meanwhile, members of this very community were construing a plan to make the city more "livable" for themselves.

Out of the Doorways by X-Mas

Streetroots is a local newspaper that is "dedicated to publishing the words of disenfranchised people who want others to know who they are and what they think." The paper is sold by homeless vendors and is predominately written by homeless and low-income people. It was *Streetroots* submissions editor, Jack Tafari who took the initiative to organize the "Out of the Doorways campaign." As the winter of 2000 took hold, Jack and a handful of Portland's homeless decided to start the campaign to help people "Out of the Doorways" by Christmas. It was a catchy slogan that had a seasonal appeal but the participants had a much grander vision in mind. Before long, Jack and Bryan Pollard (*Streetroots*' Managing Editor) were organizing a diverse group from Portland's homeless population and eager volunteers to make plans to establish Camp Dignity.

Advocates for the homeless estimate that there are less than six hundred beds to accommodate more than three thousand people seeking shelter in the city of Portland. Furthermore, conditions in shelters are regularly overcrowded and unacceptable to many people who have to stay there. They are often unable to secure their belongings, thus occasionally falling victim to theft. The shelters are also often over crowded, with inhabitants forced to sleep almost on top of each other. Homeless people in Portland have complained that

CAMP DIGNITY

Portland's Homeless Community Fights to Improve Their Living Conditions

by Pete Lewis

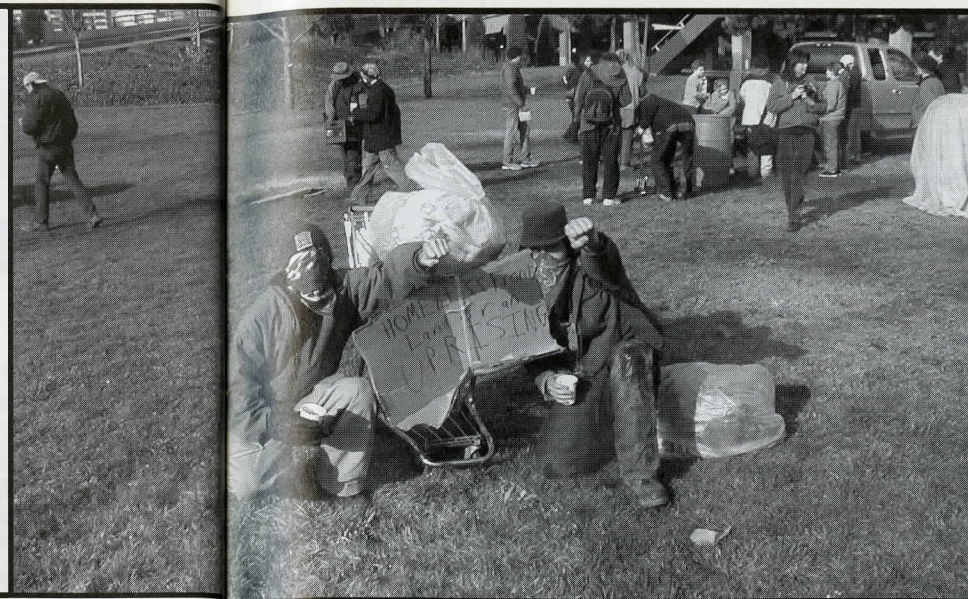
Why Does America's Most Livable City Need a Homeless Camp?

they have even been made to pray for a meal or a place to sleep on occasion. One long-time homeless person described how he had felt suicidal after experiencing homophobia in one of the shelters and had vowed never to go back into another shelter again. Although much of society likes to believe that people are homeless because they have issue with drugs, alcohol or mental health, there are people living on the streets without such issues. And these members of the homeless community experience the added difficulty of getting assistance and shelter because they are not as high a priority as those experiencing addiction and/or mental health difficulties.

The only alternative to the shelters is living on the streets. Everyone has seen people wrapping themselves up in dirty blankets on a cardboard box for a mattress in a shop doorway or under a bridge. Some people have seen the homeless gathering up their belongings into bags and shopping carts before the rest of the city comes alive each morning. But few people see the homeless being robbed of their shoes in the middle of the night or panicking about where they are going to urinate or defecate. And few have witnessed the homeless being constantly harassed by the police and being denied the right to sleep entirely.

Jeff Rountree, a *Streetroots* vendor, has related stories of people he has known having their blankets and sleeping bags slashed by the police in the middle of the night, as a way of forcing the person to move on. In fact, the city of Portland has an anti-camping ordinance that essentially makes it illegal to be homeless unless you are in a shelter. A quick reminder: there are approximately six hundred beds to accommodate three thousand people seeking shelter. It does not benefit anybody for the homeless to sleep in doorways, in front of businesses or under bridges. Its not good for the image of the city, not good for business, it scares passers-by and it is more work for the police department. Most importantly, living in the streets is dangerous, inhumane and intolerable for the homeless themselves.

After weeks of meetings to discuss the logistics of the campaign, camp location, what to expect from the city, public, police and media, the campers announced that they wanted to get on with it. Some members of the campaign were initially hesitant but they were mainly non-homeless supporters. The actual homeless people involved felt that everything that could be planned had been and that the rest would have to be worked out as they went along. The most important thing was to get off the streets and into better living conditions.



So, Camp Dignity pitched its first tent in the early afternoon on the Sixteenth of December 2000 on what was believed to be public land. It was a momentous occasion for the campers involved. By the end of the day there were about half a dozen tents and a community was born. Up until that point, John a disabled homeless veteran and camp organizer Jack had been sleeping together under a bridge. They were sleeping on a dirty, oil stained slab of concrete and were constantly disturbed by cars and the occasional person shooting up heroin. As far as they were concerned, there was no going back to sleeping in such conditions. Living in a tent, as a part of Camp Dignity, was and continues to be, significantly more "civilized" and "dignified" than what they had been used to.

Camp Dignity On The Move

The original camp was set up in a once derelict area of the city that is slowly becoming over run with upscale apartment buildings. The camp was visible from the bridge overhead, a nearby highway and even the train. As passengers settled into their seats for the picturesque journey to Seattle, they could see the campers going about their daily business, holding meetings, cooking, eating and sleeping in the cold Portland air.

Unfortunately, it was soon discovered that the camp was actually on private not public land and was forced to move the day after X-Mas. This was an eventuality that everyone in the campaign had been prepared for, considering Portland's anti-camping ordinance. Under the ordinance the police have to give a twenty-four hour eviction notice, but they are under no obligation to say why. With the first eviction, the first "Homeless Front" parade was held from the old site to the new, with campers and supporters marching through the city wheeling their shopping carts full of their belongings.

Since then, the camp has been moved four times and despite the inconvenience to the campers, each parade has contributed significantly to public awareness and sympathy for the campaign. Each move has attracted an increasing amount of media interest. Portlanders can now often be heard asking if the camp has been evicted recently or whether they have found a permanent site yet. Each move has also seen the camp's population grow and the site location become more high profile.

Soul-Jahs and Dignitarians

The original campers hand picked a core crew of "soul-jahs" from the homeless community. They made sure that a wide range of people were represented in terms of age, race, religion, sexual preference and political persuasion. They also chose people who did not have significant issues with violence, drugs, alcohol or mental health. The last thing the camp needed during its vulnerable early days was a visit from the police or for the media to focus on the negative stereotypes of homeless people. Since that day, the camp has been growing in every sense of the word. It was soon confirmed that there was a very real need for a safe alternative to the shelters and the streets. Homeless people began to approach the camp and pitch tents, and new campers all began to agree that they felt safer in the camp. As an interesting side note, due to over-crowded conditions in Florida Prisons, prisoners are being forced to live in tents. Critics are calling this desperate measure cruel and inhumane treatment. Camp Dignity residents call it a definite improvement.

However, expansion has provided the camp and campaign with a situation that was never really explored during the organizational and planning meetings. That is, how big should the camp be allowed to grow while in its early and very vulnerable stages? And how is growth going to be curbed without damaging the campaign? Essentially, how should such a high profile campaign, which is calling for the city to accept and deal with homeless issues, exclude the very people they are fighting for?

The campers have had to work out methods of "policing" themselves, new campers and visitors. There is no tolerance for drugs, alcohol or violence and consequently people coming into the camp are asked to leave these problems outside. This is easier said than done and there have been problems with people drinking and taking drugs in the tents. It is also difficult for the core group of original campers to approach people who might unintentionally threaten the security of the camp in this way. Original campers know that any drinking or drug use they may be involved in must be done off site, but for new campers who are not as in tune with the goals and delicate public image of the camp, this is often regarded as hypocritical. As a result, Camp Dignity has been accused by the members of the homeless community as not being inclusive of all homeless people. Unfortunately, this seems to be the only way to convince the city that such a camp can work. At present, the camp is on a limited piece of land where it cannot physically grow any larger. But there is still hope that a permanent piece of land will be granted to them before they will have to move again.

This is not to say that the camp is not already providing an invaluable service. Residents of Camp Dignity are already proud of the achievements they have made in helping troubled individuals. Some people have dropped by for one night to sleep off the results of an alcohol binge. Others have camped for a week or two and have made steps toward the conquering of an addiction problem. Others have come into the camp with no possessions and no hope, leaving a few days later with some belongings and the prospect of a job. Even in these very early stages, it is obvious that the camp is filling a void in services for the homeless of Portland.

"Ever Forward"

These are the words with which a campaign organizer and resident of Camp Dignity ends his campaign updates. For Jack and all the other core crew, there is no going back to sleeping in doorways or under bridges. The police can keep moving them on, but the camp

is ready and willing and has the support to keep on moving until they are permitted to set up a permanent site and create "Dignity Village". They foresee a future site with solar powered accommodation and gardens. They foresee a meeting hall and resource center. They foresee an opportunity to provide education and training facilities for homeless people seeking employment. They foresee the creation of a self-sufficient community that provides safe and dignified refuge, run by and for homeless people while they attempt to get back on their feet. They foresee "Dignity Villages" spreading to every city that has a homeless population.

The campaign has a tremendous amount of support and most people agree that helping the homeless help themselves is an obvious but far-reaching concept. Some conservatives fear that such a village will encourage people to drop out and not get a job, a house, pay tax and so forth. Yet, should all homeless people have to suffer due to these fears?

There really is no need for people to be sleeping in doorways and under bridges wondering if they will get cited for urinating in public when nature calls in the middle of the night. There is no need for people to get beaten and robbed because they are sleeping in vulnerable locations. Or be constantly moved on by the police and denied the right to sleep entirely. Or to wonder if there will be room in a shelter for them, or what the conditions in the shelter will be.

The idea of Camp Dignity is very feasible and will benefit the community as a whole. There does not need to be any inconvenience for any sector of the community. Local business will be happy because people will no longer be in their doorways and the city should be happy because the camp will clearly aid a large portion of the homeless community.

It is important that people stop ignoring or pushing aside the homeless, trying to pretend they are not there and try to build some form of community that embraces ALL people. The homeless community has taken a very bold step in creating the "Out of the Doorways" campaign and it is up to the community as a whole to ensure its success. As long as people have to fear life on the streets, Portland has no right to accept its award as Americas most livable city. As long as people are living in fear on the streets, no one anywhere has the right to claim that they are civilized or dignified. ★

For updates, contact and general information please go to:
www.outofthedoormways.org (Campaign website)
www.streetroot.org (Streetroots Newspaper, "For those who cannot afford free speech")



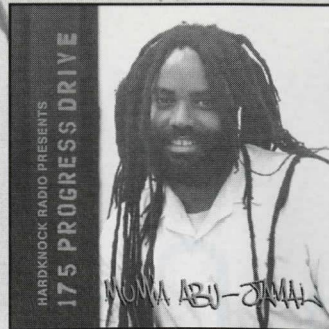
Camp resident Jamie with message for Vera Katz (Mayor of Portland)



Tim and Ibrahim react to the election result during a "homeless front" parade, to the latest camp site.



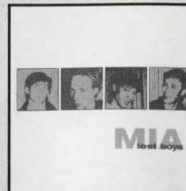
NEW SPOKEN WORD, MUSIC AND MORE.



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New essays by Mumia Abu-Jamal, journalist and resident of Pennsylvania's death row for twenty years. Rare recently discovered excerpts of Mumia Abu-Jamal radio reports for NPR and Philadelphia radio stations including interviews with Bob Marley, Hugh Masekela, Ruby Dee, Ossie Davis and the people of Philadelphia. Also Mumia's essays read by Peter Coyote and Ruby Dee. Plus statements by Assata Shakur, Rubin Hurricane Carter and Marc Bamuthi Joseph.

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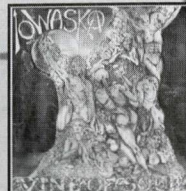


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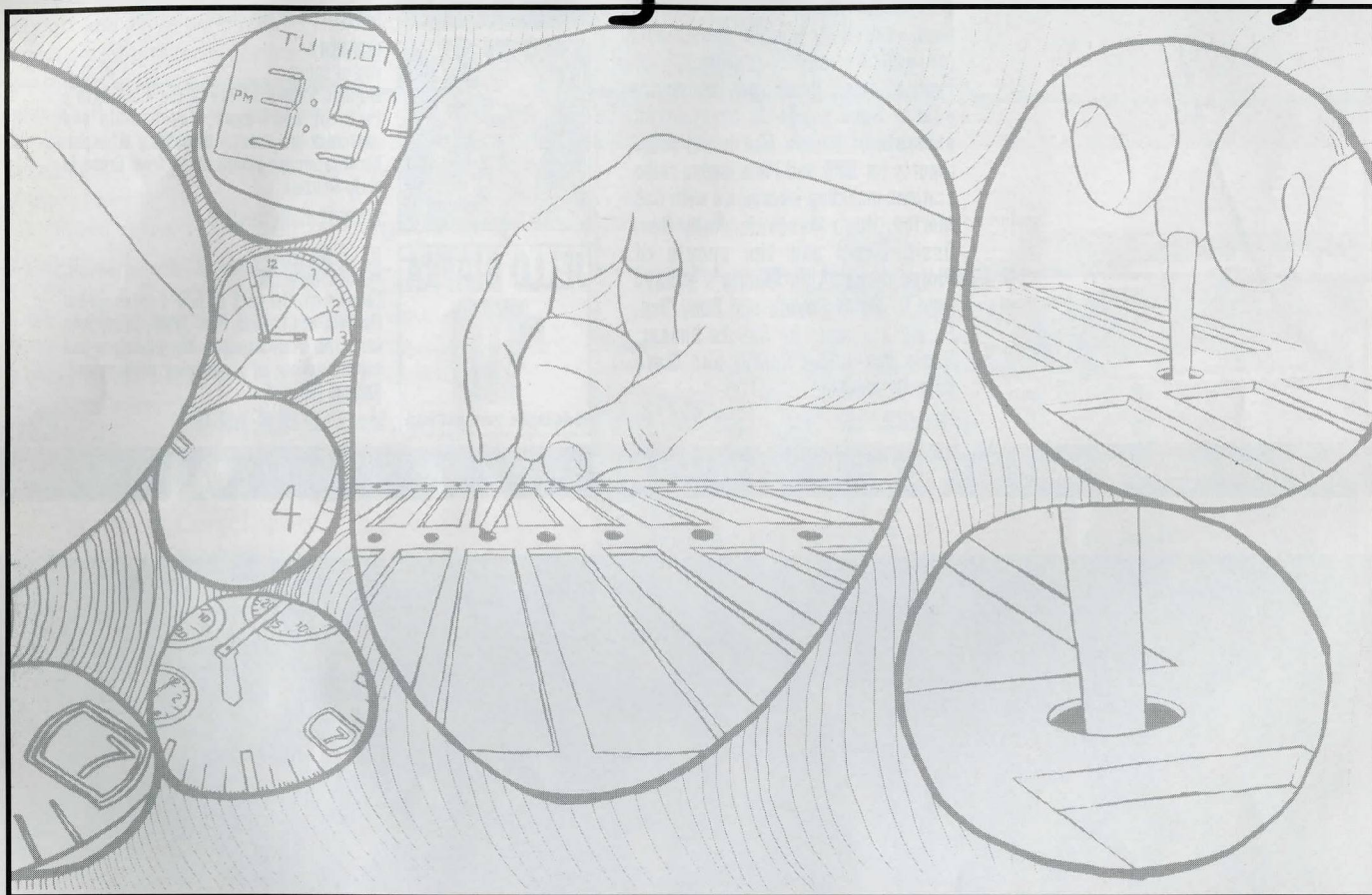
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OUT JUNE 26TH, 2001

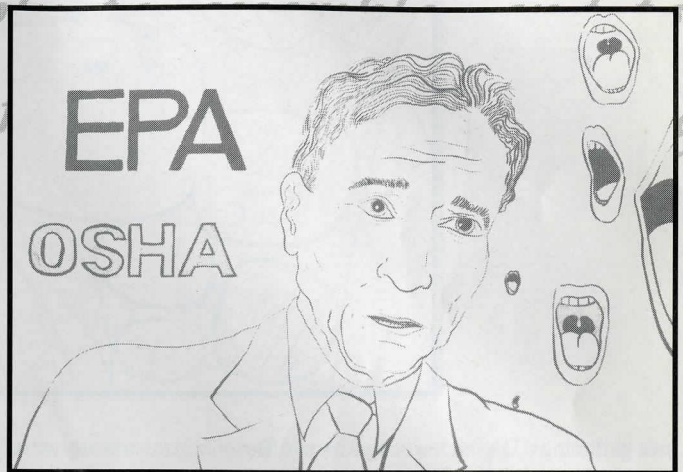
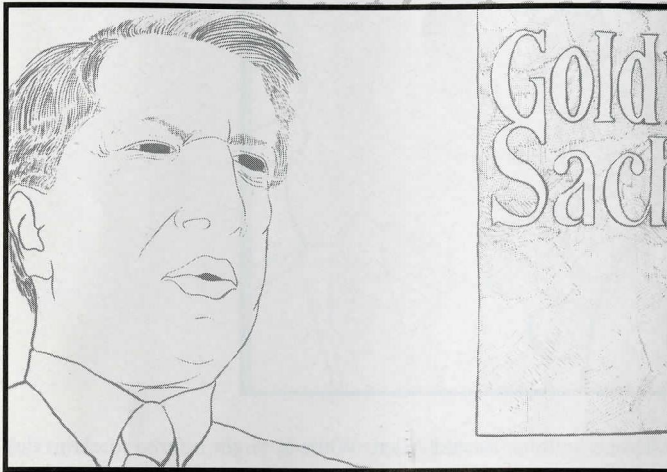


Censoring Creativity



The Queens Theatre In The Park Gallery Devises a Promising Solution To Censorship Accusation
art by Jonathan Allen
words and photo by Greg Fuchs

*Congress shall make no law respecting
establishment of religion, or prohibiting
exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom
of speech, or of the press, or the right of*

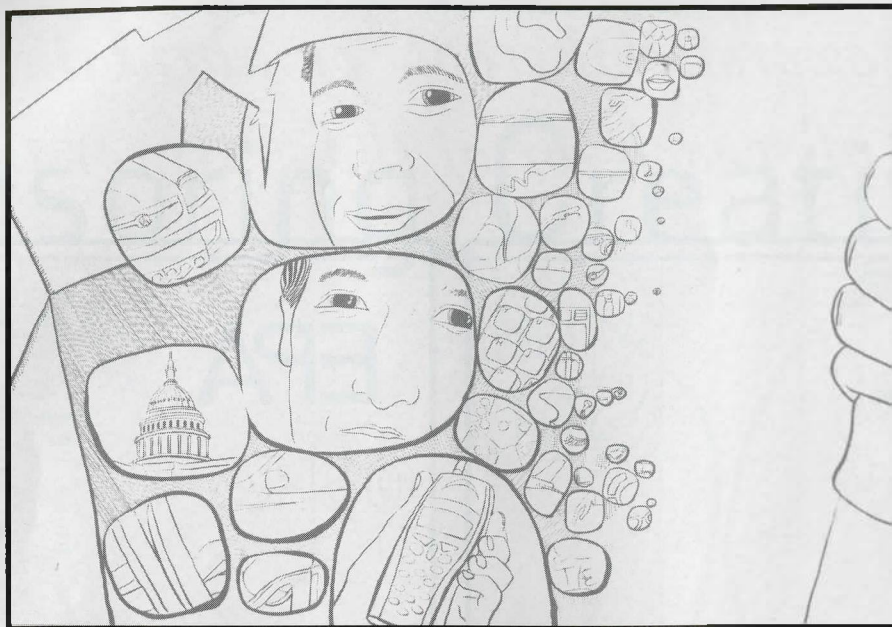


On Monday January 29, 2001 Brooklyn-based visual artist Jonathan Allen removed his work, *We Get What We Deserve*, from an exhibition at the Queens Theater In The Park Gallery to protest what he claimed was censorship by Jeffrey Rosenstock, Producing Director of the theater. Rosenstock removed Allen's piece, *W2001 W2002 W2003 W2004* without the consent of Allen or the curators, Ari Hiroshige and Robyn Love, Friday January 26, 2001, five days after the exhibition opened. This sparked vigorous debates between all of the key players that led to a rare and unique compromise. In September 2001, Allen will exhibit both the original pieces as well as new ones that will investigate issues of freedom of speech and censorship. My only hope is that arts administrators, funders, politicians, pundits, and zealots will learn from this solution when faced with contested artworksæprovided the show actually goes off without further controversy.

The Context

Censorship is alive and well in New York City. Yes, in the city that is promoted by the art world as being the international center of culture. Yes, in a city that for more than a century has attracted artists, free thinkers, radicals, and myriad regular folk searching for the permissive and electric streets of Gotham. Yes, in the city that was home at one time or another to such passionate promoters and upholders of free speech as Emma Goldman, Murray Kempton, Henry Miller, Allen Ginsberg, Woody Guthrie, Lenny Bruce, William Kunstler, Robert Mapplethorpe, and Karen Finley. Yes, in the city most often known simply as The City, as if there are no others, at least none as cosmopolitan as it.

We can blame it on our proto-Fascist Mayor Rudy Guiliani. The Mayor who brought us quality-of-life laws (decorative nomenclature for police state) and the Disneyfication of Time Square is also the man who in 2000 was awarded a Lifetime Muzzle Award by the National Campaign for Freedom of Speech for his ongoing censorship jihad. His crowning example of exercising his authority was the barring of most public eventsæstarting with World AIDS Dayæfrom being held on the steps of City Hall, which had long been a forum for such expres-



sive gatherings. During his last years in office, Giuliani is really starting to resemble a B-movie totalitarian dictator contemplating eternity from inside his bunker while watching rerun after rerun of his favorite film and authoritarian influence, *The Godfather Trilogy*. It is truly Entarte Kunst all over again. And though I caricature him, I'm worried. In the face of dozens of failed, though highly publicized, attempts to stifle free speech Giuliani has finally conceived a truly sinister master plan, a decency committee dedicated to weeding out objectionable artworks at city-funded museums. Some of those on the committee are Rabbi Shea Hecht, Giuliani's divorce lawyer, shock-jock and founder of the Guardian Angels, Curtis Sliwa, former Nixon White House lawyer Leonard Garment, and Larry Herbert, chairmen of Pantone and member of the State Council of the Arts. Herbert, incidentally, is the only member known to be part of the official art world, however loosely this term is applied.

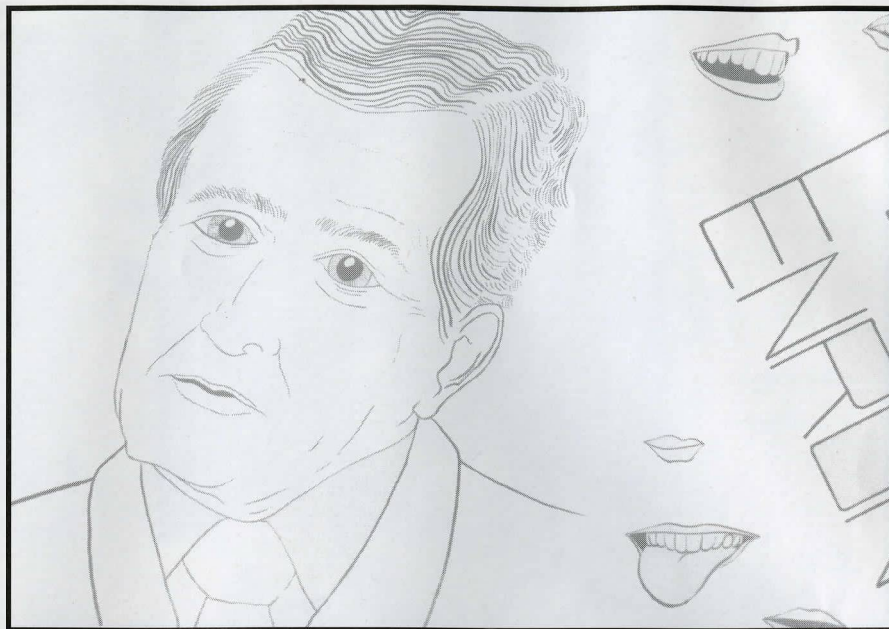
Last year Giuliani threatened to close the Brooklyn Museum of Art because he found Chris Ofili's painting, *The Holy Virgin Mary*, a sick, disgusting, example of Catholic bashing. Ofili depicted Mary with African features and attached a clump of elephant dung as well as magazine cutouts of female genitalia. Earlier this year Giuliani again threatened to cut funding to the Brooklyn Museum over a photograph by Renee Cox. She recreated *The Last Supper* and depicted Jesus as a nude African-American woman. Most recently he decried an installation by husband-and-wife art team Bradley McCallum and Jacqueline Tarry exhibited at the Bronx Museum of Art. The work consists of police emergency call boxes with speakers that project stories told by Bronx residents' experience of police brutality and mistreatment. Giuliani denounced the work on his weekly radio show in his usual bullying and prosaic tone: "This is propaganda not art." Can't you see him pounding his fist on the podium? Did I say Entarte Kunst, or what? Someone should also do him a favor and point out the lack of irony in the similarity of class and ethnicity of those artists, artworks, and subjects whom he chooses to challenge.

"We're living in Giuliani New York, and I think Rosenstock's decision to remove my work was influenced, or at least validated by the

Mayor's actions," stated Allen. While it might be true to claim that Giuliani has created a censorship friendly mood in the city I don't think he's the source of all the cases in the city. He, among others, is really just riding the fascist and anarcho-capitalist zeitgeist in America. "Censorship definitely is on the rise. We are seeing more and more cases everyday," says Svetlana Mintcheva, Arts Advocacy Coordinator for the National Coalition Against Censorship. Mintcheva stated that since the Mapplethorpe/Helms controversy in the late 1980s many groups dedicated to preserving free speech in the arts were formed. Yet, most have closed or simply lost enthusiasm after the 1998 Supreme Court decision in *NEA v. Finley*. The decision upheld that the NEA take "into consideration general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs and values of American public." Many in the burgeoning anti-censorship movement felt they were defeated; let down by the nation's highest court dedicated to upholding and interpreting the nuances of the constitution.

The foundation upon which these cavalier moves to stifle free speech are erected is the often unspoken yet essential national motto: "What's good for business is good for America!" During the last ten years many American cities have developed their own versions of quality of life laws. In Philadelphia for example it's known as the broken-windows-theory. The idea is that if you arrest people for breaking windows it will either deter them from committing other crimes, or at least the police will have more people fingerprinted, therefore making criminals easier to track. If the streets are cleaner, there are less homeless and less graffiti. More businesses will move into the neighborhoods. We'll all have jobs, and we can all go about our shopping. We so strongly hope that trickle-down economics will work that many of us are willing to sacrifice some of our civil rights. We often don't even realize we're sacrificing our civil rights. Notice how multi-culti and egalitarian the *NEA v. Finley* decision reads; yet under closer scrutiny it is just more stifling of free speech. It is an old tactic: co-opt the language, the code, of the enemy.

The merger, acquisition, and consolidation of media corporations blows wind into the anarcho-capitalist zeitgeist that provides fresh air



for censorship. Only nine multi-national conglomerates—Disney, AOL-Time Warner, News Corporation, Viacom, Seagram, Sony, Liberty, Bertelsmann, and General Electric—own most of the world's media. This is a major threat to culture and democracy. It is even worse than the thuggish censorship of Mayor Giuliani because it's invisible and we're told that it is just a natural by-product of free enterprise. In other words, losing some rights is the collateral damage for a cleaner, friendlier, more prosperous nation. Truthfully, access to outlets of expression is being stripped from the hands of the citizens. Not only are we losing access to free speech, but it's almost as if we want to speak, we will have to pay or own the publishing company, the airwaves, movie screens, or the exhibition hall. And anything done or shown in the increasingly shrinking public space will be seen as litter or compromising our quality-of-life.

President-select Bush, who was put into office by an overwhelmingly conservative Supreme Court, will do little to expose these contradictions or to curb any tide that is pulling our bill of rights out to sea. Need we mention that this WASP-Tony Corleone has assembled a cabinet that could be described as an anti-free speech mob? In toto it smells bad; it spells a fight.

The Allen Controversy

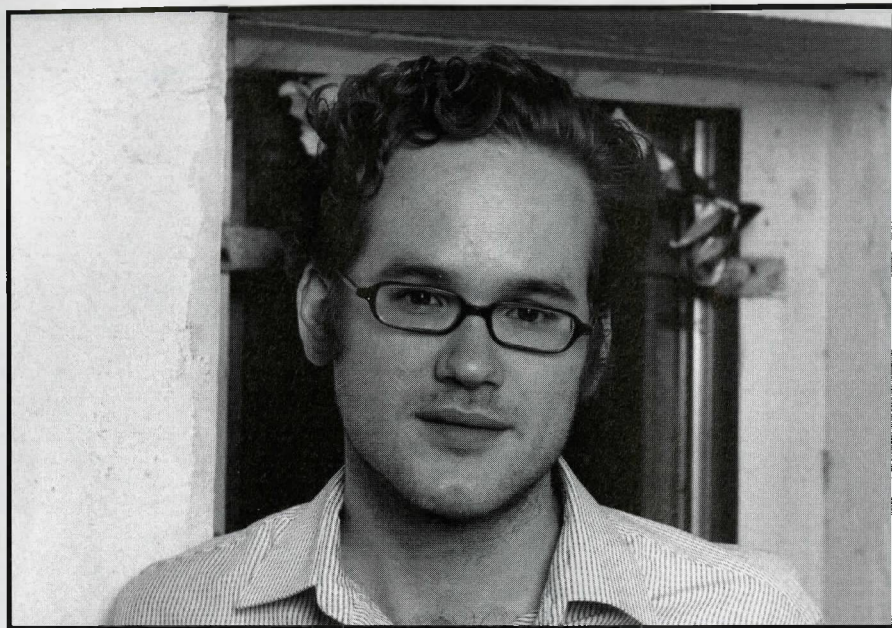
The situation between Allen and the Queens Theater In The Park Gallery is a terrific case study of the process of censorship as well as how it can reach a healthy resolution. Allen pulled out of the show because he felt that the rules of the game had been changed after the game was in its final quarter. He'd already worked with the two curators for many months, the works were de-facto approved by Hiroshige and Love, and the pieces were installed. "I wanted to show this work. I played by the rules. I tried to work and compromise with Jeffrey (Rosenstock). I drew the line at censorship," Allen claimed. Rosenstock countered, "It wasn't a work that was worthy of all the other programs going on in the theatre. The artwork should reflect the caliber of what's on the stage." He went on to claim his

act was not censorship but one of helpful curating. He thought that *W2001 W2002 W 2003 W2004* was too ambiguous whereas *We Get What We Deserve* is clearly provocative. Its message is clear.

The exhibition, *New Inside Spoon*, was to be composed of site-specific projects by Allen and artist, Guillermo Creus. It consisted of four pieces intended to relate to the space, two by Allen and two by Creus (who did not back out of the show in solidarity with Allen). Creus related to the physical space directly. Allen's site-specificity was more oblique, yet probably more accurate. The pieces specifically critiqued presidential candidates, associating them to some of their major funders and equating the candidates to commodities. Allen's works related to the fiscal concerns of the theater, to funding for both government and art agencies. Most clearly the controversial relationship was between Allen's use of corporate logos and the placement of similar logos in the theater's promotional posters which uncannily hung directly opposite and next to *We Get What We Deserve*.

Allen's metier is drawing, though sometimes he employs collage or allows appropriated media into his works. The piece removed, *W2001 W2002 W 2003 W2004*, is a group of four portraits of President Bush covered by drawings on glass of woman's shoes. It hung downstairs in a lounge area of the theatre. The drawing allowed to remain on exhibition, *We Get What We Deserve*, is a 1.5' x 60' depiction of the most recent U.S. Presidential election. It hung right outside the theatre doors in the main lobby. Allen explained, "I wanted to show how these candidates are just products. That's why I juxtaposed portraits of the presidential candidates with corporate logos and shoes. The shoes represent products, fashion, and advertising, which is what I think the candidates are. The corporate logos were selected to show which companies support a particular candidate."

Actually, Allen's work was censored even further. Rosenstock may not have removed *We Get What We Deserve* but the full piece was not allowed to be shown. Originally it was intended to wrap around an entire wall of the theater but only half of it was exhibited. Again physi-



Jonathan Allen

cal space constraints and aesthetic issues were noted. I wonder why these issues were not resolved at an earlier stage of production, at least before installation?

Neither Love nor Hiroshige agreed with Rosenstock's removal of Allen's piece. Yet, both agree that the piece does have aesthetic as well as installation problems that could have been resolved. "By the theater making this grave error, it alienated Jonathan (Allen) and angered Ari, though not intentionally. We missed an opportunity for compromise," commented Love. According to Allen, Hiroshige had worked with the artists since July 2000. He believes as well as Love and Rosenstock that during the last six months these alleged aesthetic and installation issues should have been worked out. Hiroshige declined to comment.

Love claims to empathize with Allen's decision to remove his work from the exhibition yet does not believe that Rosenstock's action clearly represents censorship. "What is really at issue is the lack of communication. Jeffrey (Rosenstock) felt like he should have been involved in deciding what artwork was approved," Love stated. Neither Love nor Hiroshige defended Allen because Rosenstock has the final say in what is exhibited in the theatre.

Alan Gilbert, Senior Editor of FYI, a quarterly arts magazine published by the New York Foundation for the Arts, offered the following comment on the situation. "Aesthetic issues are always political. And while without seeing the piece or the rest of the show, I can't definitely say whether or not what occurred with Allen's piece is outright censorship, it's certainly unconventional to take down a piece after it's already been hung. It seems to imagine a potentially negative audience response to the work, as opposed to trusting the initial curatorial process." I suspect Rosenstock's primary fear was that the general theatre audience would be offended because they would be subjected to Allen's controversial and ambiguous art when they just intended to spend a night at the theatre.

The Resolution

Mintcheva stated, "I think the resolution that they created is won-

derful. The point is to exhibit the work. If you go into court then the work will not be shown. The goal now is to mobilize public opinion, to instigate a discussion of these issues. To raise awareness." Following the original incident a *New York Times* reporter allegedly contacted Rosenstock to inquire about the incident. Apparently afraid of being outed in the paper of record, Rosenstock retained legal counsel. Simultaneously, Allen retained legal counsel and planned to officially accuse Rosenstock of violating First Amendment rights. After several weeks of discussions, Allen accepted Rosenstock's offer to mount a new exhibition.

Love plans to work more closely with Allen preparing the exhibition. She proposed the investigation and critique of freedom of speech and site-specificity as themes, or tacks, for the new show. Rosenstock has agreed to leave all curatorial decisions to Love. She believes the silver lining to the controversy is that policies of exhibiting visual artwork at the theater will be more formal in the future. Love commented, "The theatre admits that it made a mistake, it actually was a very bad mistake. We're doing the best thing that it can do to rectify it."

For the next show Allen plans to outline the events of last January. He will frame the events as a violation of freedom of speech yet investigate Rosenstock's rebuttal. Allen says, "I'm researching the history of censorship, I'm reading *Art Censorship: A Chronology of Proscribed and Prescribed Art* by Jane Clapp. Half the show will be about censorship, the other half will expand the ideas of the earlier show to be more relevant."

Allen believes his biggest compromise is timing, and in that sense Rosenstock succeeded in censoring him in spite of the offer for the new show. "Yes the original pieces will be in the show, but it won't be the original show because it is not relevant to the time, to current events. The election is over." He intends to alter and add to the original exhibition in such a way as to make the new show just as relevant and controversial as he hoped the first one would have been. He's making connections to the larger issue of ownership and consolidation within media. He says, "We're in a new age, the lines are being drawn as to who has the right to speak, and what viewpoints are being reported.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FIGHT ALONE

These Organizations Are Dedicated To Preserving Free Speech

If you're an artist and think your freedom of speech has been censored or at least challenged, you may find the following organizations helpful. This information was obtained from the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression Web site (www.ncfe.net). Check it out.

ADVOCACY GROUPS

National Coalition Against Censorship
(212) 807-6222
275 Seventh Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10001
www.NCAC.org

People for the American Way/artsave Project
(800) 743-6768
2000 M Street, NW
Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20036

ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Alternate ROOTS
(404) 577-1079
1083 Austin Ave., NE
Atlanta, GA 30307
<http://home.earthlink.net/~altroots/>

American Association of University Professors
(202) 737-5900
1012 14th Street NW
Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20005

Asian American Arts Alliance
(212) 941-9208
74 Varick Street
Suite 302
New York, N.Y. 10013

Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers
(212) 807-1400
304 Hudson Street
Sixth Floor
New York, NY 10013
www.aivf.org

Association of Performing Arts Presenters
(202) 833-2787
1112 16th Street NW Suite 400
20036
www.artspresenters.org

Atlatl, Inc., (supporting Native American artists)
(602) 277-3711
P.O. Box 34090
Phoenix, AZ 85067
atlatl@artswire.org

Council of Literary Magazines and Presses
(212) 741-9110
154 Christopher Street
Suite 3C
New York, NY 10014

Dance Theater Workshop
(212) 691-6500
219 W. 19th Street
New York, NY 10011
www.dtw.org

Feminists for Free Expression
(212) 702-6292
2525 Times Square Station
New York, N.Y. 10108
www.well.com/user/freedom

The Freedom To Read
(312) 280-4226
50 East Huron
Chicago, IL 60611
www.ala.org/oif/ffrf_home.html

The International Sculpture Center
(202) 785-1144
1050 17th Street NW
Suite 250
Washington, D.C. 20036
www.sculpture.org

The Literary Network
(212) 741-9110
154 Christopher Street
Suite 3C
New York, NY 10014

Massachusetts Music Industry Coalition
(978) 537-1669
www.ultranet.com/~ncrowley/mmic.html

Media Coalition
(212) 587-4025
139 Fulton Street
Suite 302
New York, N.Y. 10038

National Association of Artists' Organizations
(202) 347-6350
1718 M Street NW
PMB 239
Washington, D.C. 20036

National Association of Latino Arts and Culture
(210) 227-1432
1300 Guadalupe Street
San Antonio, TX 78207
nalacarts@aol.com

National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture
(415) 431-1391
346 9th Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
www.namac.org

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies
(202) 347-6352
1029 Vermont Avenue NW
Second Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
www.nasaa-arts.org

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
(202) 332-6483
2320 17th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20009-2702
www.nglft.org

The National Performance Network
(212) 645-6200
54 W.21st Street
Suite 501
New York, NY 10010

National Writers Union, UAW Local 1981, AFL-CIO
(212) 254-0279
113 University Place
Sixth Floor
New York, NY 10003
www.nwu.org/nwu

PEN American Center
(212) 334-1660
568 Broadway
4th Floor
New York, NY 10012
www.pen.org

The Society for Photographic Education
(303) 492-0588

Theatre Communications Group
(212) 697-5230
355 Lexington Ave.
New York, NY 10017
www.tcg.org

LEGAL SUPPORT

American Civil Liberties Union
www.aclu.org

Center for Constitutional Rights
(212) 614-6464
666 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10012

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation
(212) 807-1700
150 West 26th Street
Suite 503
New York, N.Y. 10001

LAMBDA Legal Defense and Education Fund
(212) 809-8585
120 Wall Street
Suite 1500
New York, N.Y. 10005

The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression
(804) 295-4784
400 Peter Jefferson Place
Charlottesville, VA 22911-8691
www.tjcenter.org

Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts
(212) 319-2787
1 E. 53rd St.
6th Floor
New York, NY 10022

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The American Forum
529 14th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20045
(202) 638-1431

The Progressive Media Project
409 East Main Street
Madison, WI 53703
(608) 257-4626

ProMedia
225 West 57th Street
Suite 801
New York, NY 10019

SPIN - Institute for Alternative Journalism
(415) 284-1412
77 Federal St.
San Francisco, CA 94107
www.mediademocracy.org

Omission is the new way to silence artists. The media just doesn't report on the events. They're leaving out the voice of dissent."

"This climate makes many artists self-censor themselves. Not only when exhibiting but even more importantly when trying to obtain funding," commented Mintcheva. Allen is not a stranger to this sort of controversy. When he was in high school in Atlanta a national debate raged over the use of the Confederate flag within Georgia's state flag. He drew a comic comparing Georgia's flag to Nazi Germany's flag. It instigated a heated debate at his school that ostracized him as a traitor to his state and culture. The current controversy has emboldened Allen: "If you make a work that makes someone want to remove it, it's encouraging. It gives me permission to push the message even further. It's a challenge to me to see what I can create next. This is one of my first shows in New York. I want to do the best that I can but stay true to what I have always tried to do." ★



Muddy Waters Run Deep

Talking Coffee Enemas with Nate Dogg

I've read the books. I've scanned the web sites. I've heard the jokes. And now I can safely say I've danced with the devil in the pale moonlight. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I just gave myself a coffee enema.

The nagging question on everyone's mind is "Why the hell would you want to pour coffee into your ass, Nate?" Isn't coffee unhealthy enough in the first place? Well, the effects of coffee on the body from ingestion/digestion are not the same when used therapeutically, or so they say. Apparently, they have a remarkably swift effect on detoxification and are believed to trigger liver detoxification enzymes. These effects are not metabolic type specific, meaning they work for both fat and skinny people. Many people have noticed over the years that coffee enemas have an eerie calming effect, and relieve constipation. Coffee enemas also supposedly provide quick relief for fatigue and headaches.

There are risks involved. A coffee enema is not a walk in the park. It is very important to only use organic coffee; you might die otherwise. One doctor claims in Ralph Moss' *Coffee: The Royal Flush* that coffee "taken by this route is a strong stimulant and can be at least as addictive as coffee taken regularly by mouth. Addiction can eventually lead to fatal bowel perforation and necrosis." Ouch! The Office of Technology Assessment cites the case of two Seattle women who died following excessive enema use. One took 10 to 12 coffee enemas in a single night and then continued at a rate of one per hour. The other took four daily. Whoo boy. I chatted with a MD on Lycos who said that "coffee enemas, which are supposed to stimulate the flow of bile from the liver and thus carry toxins away, have never been proven effective, and could be dangerous." And some doctors fear that coffee enemas could eventually remove potassium from the body and trigger fatal electrolyte imbalances as well as dehydration. That's not good at all. But hey, there's a first time for everything, right?

Before we get any further, let's have a brief history of the enema, shall we? An enema, according to my man Webster, is "a fluid injected into the rectum for the purpose of cleaning out the bowel, or of administering drugs or food." The word itself comes from the Greek *en-hienai*, meaning to "send or inject into." Tribal women in Africa and elsewhere routinely use it on their children. The earliest medical text in existence, the Egyptian Ebers Papyrus (1500 BC), mentions it. The Pharaoh had a "guardian of the anus," a

special doctor whose sole purpose was to administer the royal enema. American Indians independently invented it using a syringe made out of an animal bladder and a hollow leg bone. Pre-Columbus South Americans fashioned latex into the first rubber enema bags and tubes. In pre-Revolutionary France, a daily enema before dinner was standard practice. It was not only considered indispensable for health but practiced for good complexion as well. Louis XIV is said to have taken over 2,000 in his lifetime. Sufi mystics imported coffee into Arabia in the early 1500s to fight drowsiness while praying.

Apparently, coffee enemas originated in WWI on the battlefield for pain relief. A nurse in a World War One German army field hospital discovered the procedure. With no painkillers available, this nurse administered an enema to several badly wounded soldiers with the only warm liquid available, Liquid Joe. The coffee enema first appeared in 1917 in the prestigious Merck Manual. Max Gerson, M.D., was a medical officer in the German army. He began losing patients in his otherwise wildly successful attack on cancer. He deduced that the avalanche of toxic material gushing out of tumors and hiding places all over the body was jamming up the liver and killing his patients. He remembered the coffee enema. He stopped losing patients. In the 1920s, German scientists found that a caffeine solution could open the bile ducts and stimulate the production of bile in the liver of experimental animals. Dr. Max Gerson used this clinically in 1930 as part of a general detoxification regimen, first for tuberculosis, then cancer. Patients could now dispense with all pain killers once on the enemas. Today, the Gerson Institute in California carries on the late Max Gerson's work.

Four years ago, retired school teacher Betty Frizzell of Cookeville, TN was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and was given five months to live. Today, she is 64 and healthier than ever thanks to dietary supplements, carrot juice and coffee enemas suggested by Dr. Jeffrey White. As she said, "Four coffee enemas a day is very time consuming but I'm convinced it's worth it. I'm sure I wouldn't be alive today if I hadn't chosen this route." Betty's story is especially bizarre given the fact that a mere decade ago, coffee was thought to possibly cause pancreatic cancer; obviously it has since been shown otherwise. Drinking coffee orally (decaf or regular) does not have the same effect as a coffee enema, although nobody really knows why. Last year, Columbia

University gave \$1.4 million in research grants to test White's regimen. Recently, coffee enemas have been employed as a new-age remedy for depression and other ailments; coffee enemas have been widely publicized on the Internet by Hollywood stars such as Janet Jackson.

Dr. Kris Amelong says I should "evacuate whenever I needed to." Yes, ma'am. Just like she said, I was "astounded by what came out." Seeing is believing, my friends. The process itself is quite simple:

1. Grind the organic coffee beans
2. Boil the coffee using distilled water.
3. Let coffee cool to room temperature.
4. Fill bag with 2 pints of the concentrate and hang it no more than 2 feet from the floor. The hook on your bathroom door will work nicely.
5. Lie on your right side, knees drawn up to chest as far as possible.
6. Insert nozzle and release.
7. Breathe deeply.
8. Set kitchen timer for 10-15 minutes.
9. Hold the fluid in for up to 10-15 minutes, if at all possible.
10. Evacuate.

One of the first things that happened was that accumulated sticky tar came loose from the colon wall. The tar is from white bread and other fiber-deficient grains and starches I happen to like: donuts, cake, etc. The tar harbors parasites.

Dr. Amelong endorses this detoxification program for everyone, including small children and household pets like dogs and cats. I suspect she has a bit of a butt fetish. Afterwards, put on plastic gloves and rinse everything in VERY HOT tap water. When the bile duct empties, you hear/feel a squirting sensation in the area of your right rib cage. After feeling the bile emptying, you're good to go. You can buy an enema bag from any pharmacy that stocks surgical supplies, although I got mine online for the sake of privacy. Finally, be sure to check out www.blackstockorganics.com for the best Northport, NY coffee you wouldn't dream of drinking: S.A. Wilson's Therapy Blend Organic Coffee. Delicious!

In conclusion, I would probably do it again if I was paid an exorbitant amount of money or I was worried about cancer of the pancreas or someone put a gun to my head. Otherwise, I'll take mine in a cup, thank you kindly. ★

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when i was a sophomore in highschool i got arrested for climbing on top of some buildings.

it was a beautiful sunny sunday afternoon and two of my friends and i thought it would be cool to climb up on some roofs downtown.

someone inside one of the buildings heard us above and called the cops. when we got off the building there were three or four cops with guns pointed at our heads screaming for us to get down on the ground. we did.

i spent two days in a juvenile detention center sleeping in solitary confinement on a cold concrete slab. they took my clothes and gave me shorts to wear.

it was cold and i was scared.

when i was a sophomore in college i was living in chicago. it was late and i was drunk and so was my friend. we went to the L station to hop a ride home. i slid my freshly bought transit card through the slot and walked through the turnstile. my friend didn't have a card so he went to the ticket booth. "hey.. the ticket lady is sleeping.what should i do?"

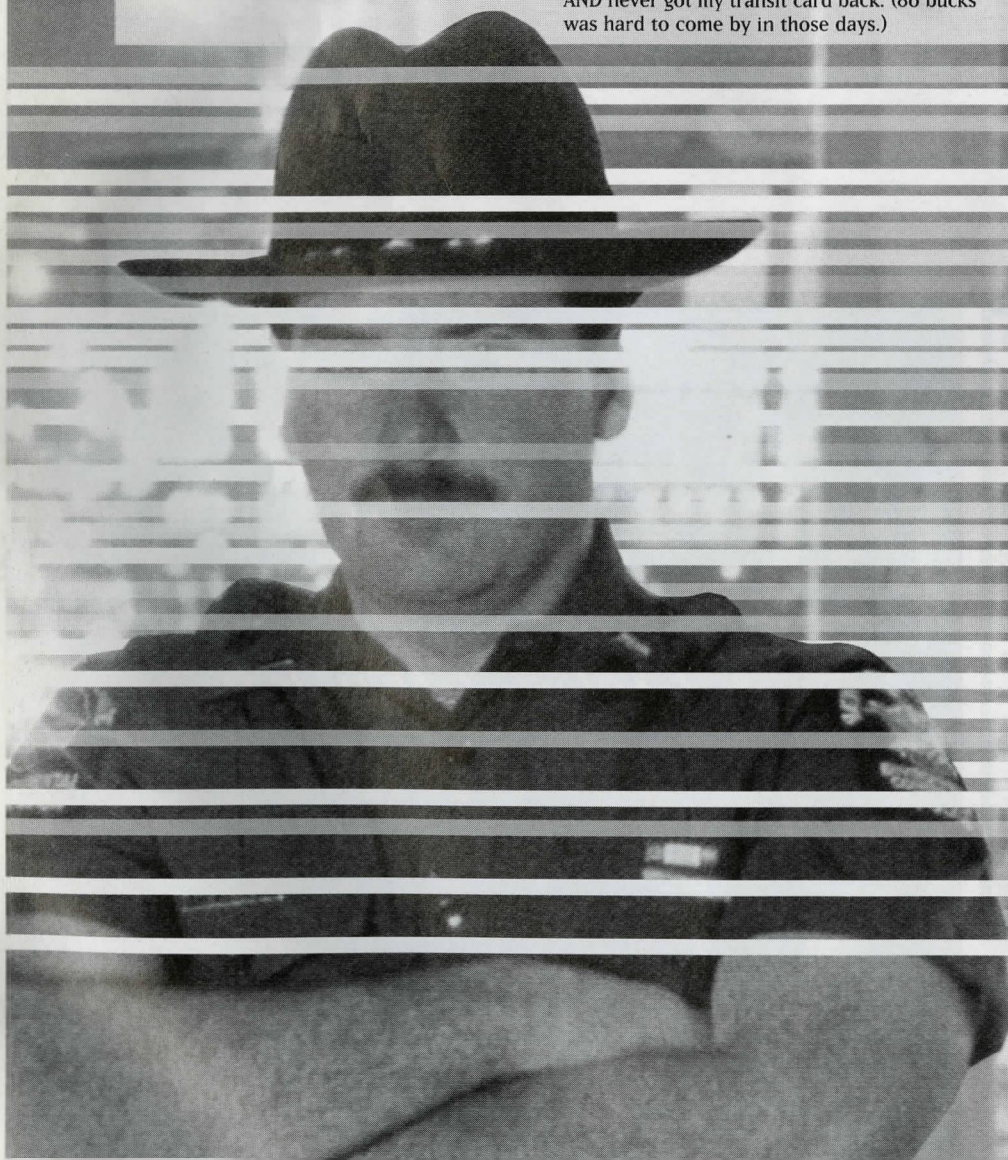
he banged on the glass and she wouldn't wake up so i slid my card through the slot again to let him through.. but it didn't work due to some sort of security thing.. so he hopped the turnstile and we approached the stairs going down the tracks.

i noticed he wasn't next to me and turned around to see him being handcuffed. i walked back up the stairs and the man took my transit card and handcuffed me as well. i spent the night in jail with a bunch of drunks and the threat of rape being taunted at me by a cell mate. I was charged with disorderly conduct AND never got my transit card back. (80 bucks was hard to come by in those days.)

i had another encounter with the law later that same year after vandalizing some trains with friends in a bad part of town. a jeep rolled up to my car with guns pointed out the window as we were getting ready to leave.

we were handcuffed and asked what we were doing. we played stupid at first untill we realized they thought we were breaking into houses. i showed them the spray cans in my bag and they laughed saying, "well kids.. this is your lucky day..."

we found out due to an increase in crime in the area that the GANG PATROL had been sent out to nab us, suspecting we were part of a gang related crime spree. when they realized we weren't their suspects (even though we HAD been vandalizing private property) they let us go, stating that if the "regular" police had been sent out it would have been a different story.

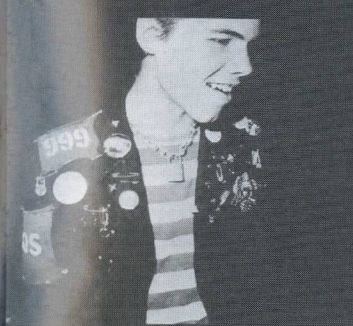


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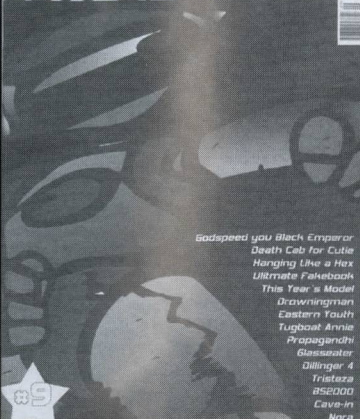
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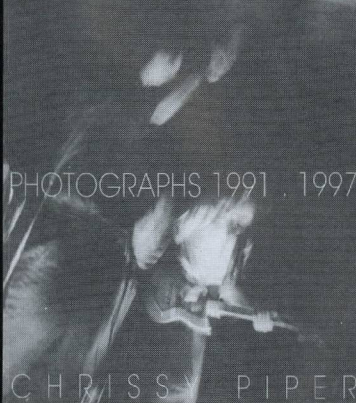


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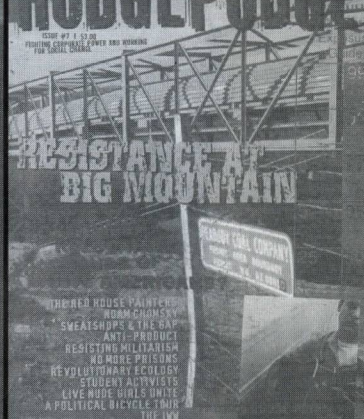
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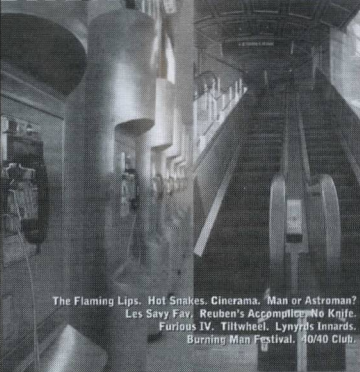
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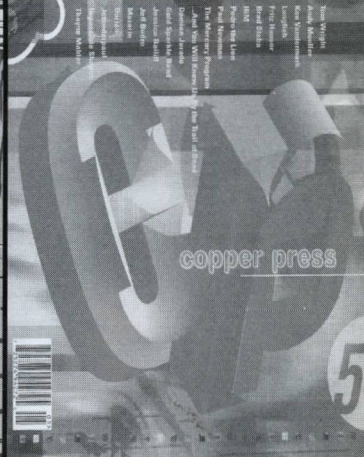


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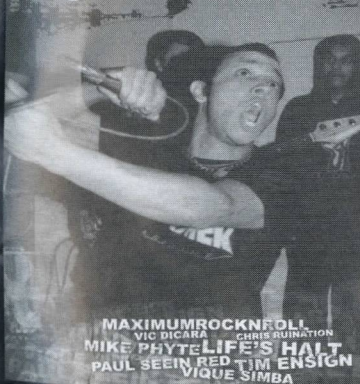
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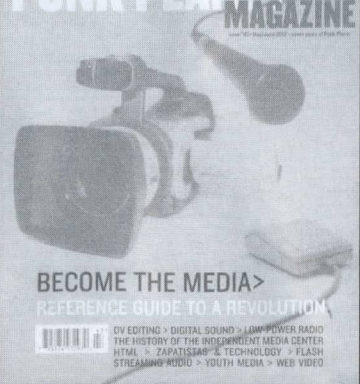


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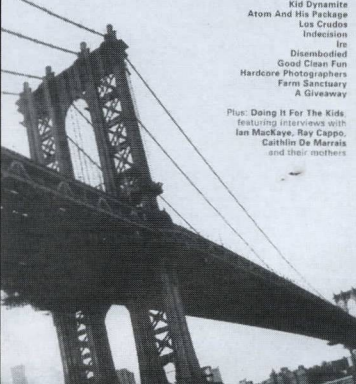
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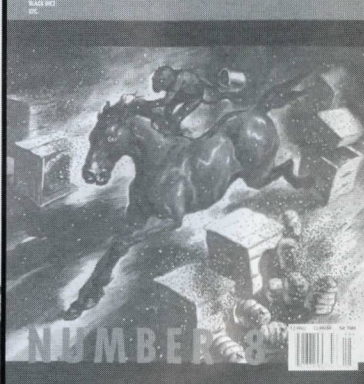
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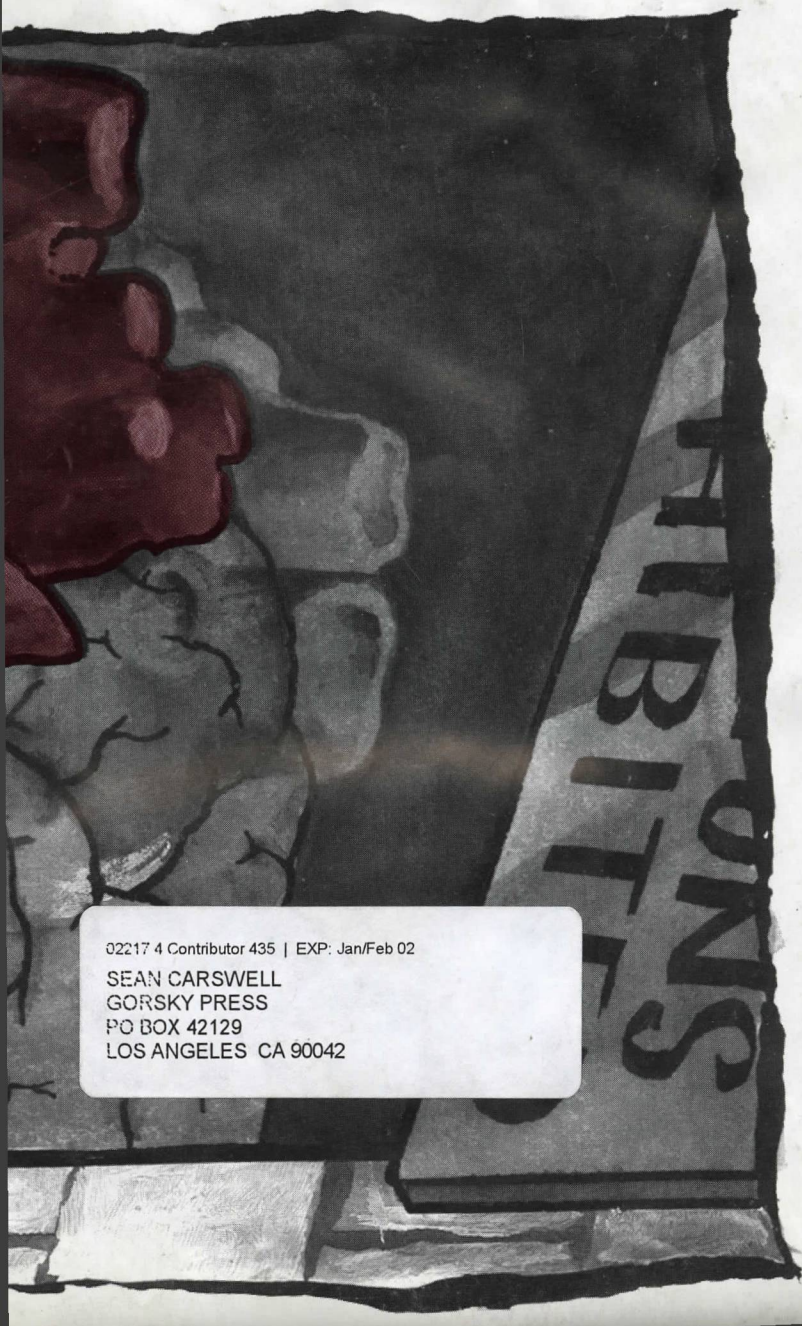
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