

Special issue on Health and Wellness! PLUS: a Positive Youth Foundation supplement to fight racism in the U.S.

New Perspectives on Politics, Culture, Media, and Life

# claim

July/August 2003

Issue 21

**Women's Health  
in Prison**

**Self Defense**

**Mental Illness**

**Misdiagnosing  
A.D.D.**

**SARS**

**dealing with  
old and new  
global health crises**

**AIDS**

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we got to start takin' better care of ourselves. be healthy, y'all.



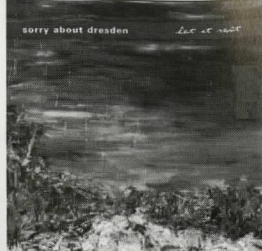
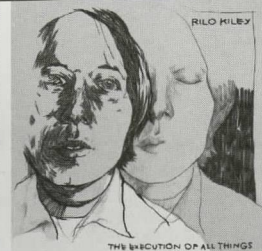
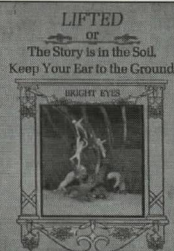
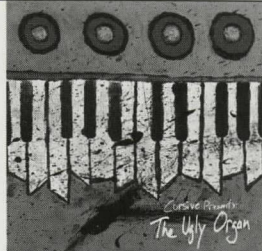
01

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## CURSIVE (01)

THE UGLY ORGAN  
CD/LP (LBJ-51)

The Ugly Organ is a brilliant leap forward. ★★★★★ - Rolling Stone

Organ raises the Saddle Creek bar in terms of sheer psychiatric-rock intensity. A-. - Entertainment Weekly

A marvelous collection of riddles and left turns. (Tim Kasher is) a terrific howler, conjuring anguish and disgust instead of mere rage. - New York Times

(Tim) rouses his powerful, nervy voice to recite lyrics that are effectively postmodern, three-minute bursts of literature--accompanied by intricate guitars, carnival organ lines and dramatic cello swoops. ★★★★★ - Blender

A dozen dizzying songs that'll leave you curled up in a ball and reveling in someone else's misery. - Esquire



"...the best up-and-coming rock groups don't always germinate in big coastal cities and college towns and seep into the heartland. Sometimes it goes the other way around." - TIME Magazine



## (02) BRIGHT EYES

LIFTED OR THE STORY IS IN THE SOIL,  
KEEP YOUR EAR TO THE GROUND  
CD/2xLP (LBJ-46)

One of the Top 50 Albums of the Year.  
★★★★ - Rolling Stone

Conor Oberst suffers like Elliott Smith, yelps like Robert Smith, and testifies like Patti Smith. Result: best indie-rock record of the year. - Rolling Stone

Oberst pulls off everything in this sprawling bravura work with ease and command - Los Angeles Times

Unlike most child prodigies, he's still getting better, a decade after he began. - New York Times

It's actually one of the more convincing cases anyone's made for the validity of young-white-male angst since *Nevermind*. - SPIN

(03) SADDLE CREEK 50 - VARIOUS ARTISTS (LBJ-50) 2xCD/LP \*

(04) RILO KILEY - THE EXECUTION OF ALL THINGS (LBJ-47) CD/LP

(05) SORRY ABOUT DRESDEN - LET IT REST (LBJ-52) CD

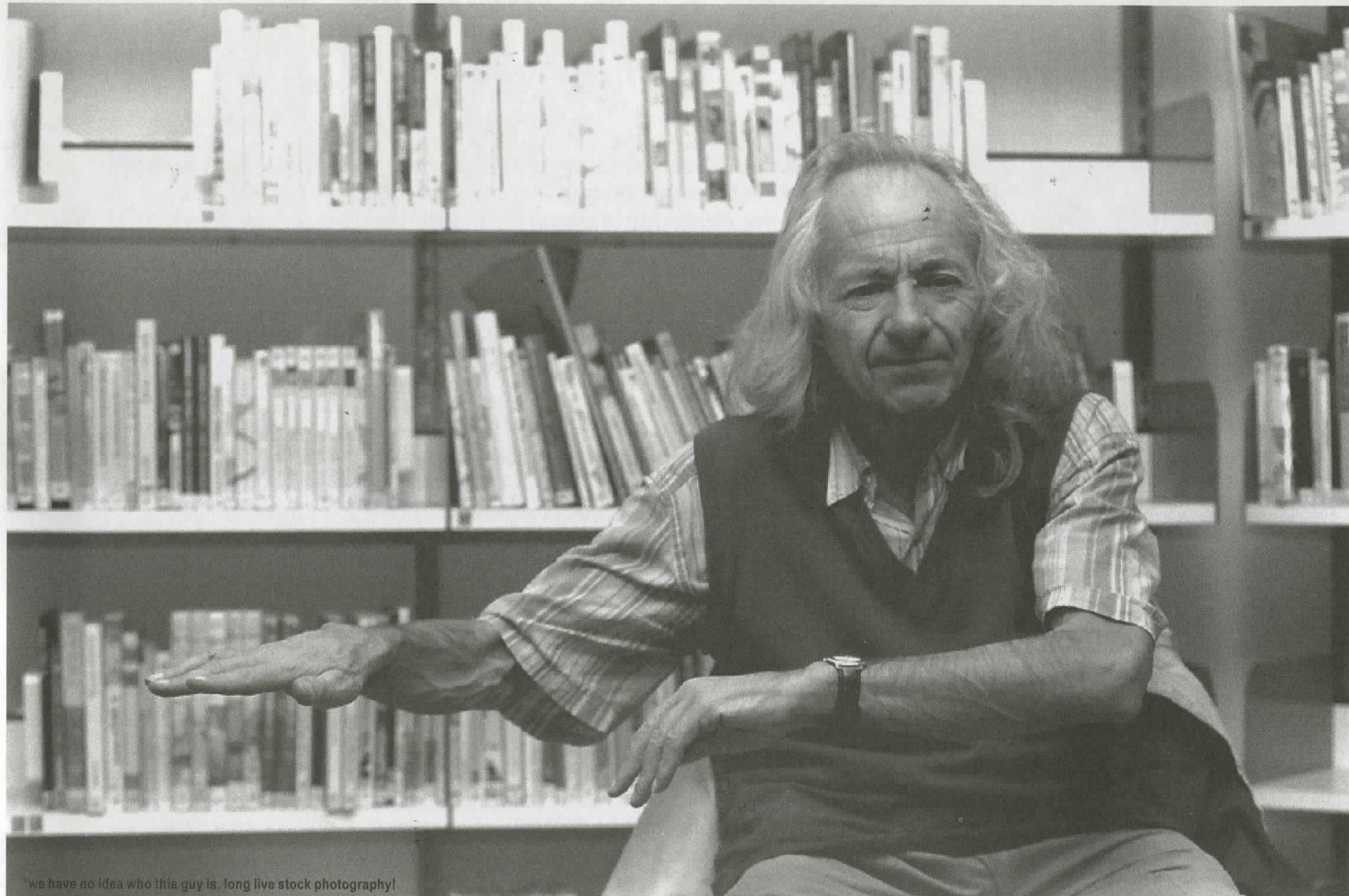
\* A two disc sampler featuring one previously released track as well as one new and exclusive track from the eleven current Saddle Creek artists. 22 songs on the CD / only the 11 unreleased songs on the LP

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Joel Deerwester, a Hong Kong jazz musician, walks the streets of Mongkok during the SARS epidemic. Photo by Danee Voorhees.

Additional design work on cover by Theodore Hennessy.

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UPSO (pp. 60-69)

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# from your editors

Here in America, we all know that we should be healthier. And most of us probably genuinely WANT to be healthier. Of course all of the things that keep us busy - work and play - get in the way. Who has time for exercise or eating right when we're on the move from the time we wake up 'til the time our heads hit the pillow at night? Sure, the task is daunting enough as it is, but when you throw convenience foods and time-saving five-minute-a-day wonder diets into the mix, it's no wonder we're still all out of shape and exhausted.

It's not just about how we as individuals prioritize things in our lives, like how we prioritize watching TV over exercising on a daily basis, it's also about outside forces that act on us. If you're on a limited budget (as almost everyone is these days), and McDonald's is selling oh-so-nutritious hamburgers and cheeseburgers for less than a \$1, how can you pass that up? If organic food is more expensive or more difficult to find, how can you afford it? If you live in the average American city and your options for lunch are Rally's, Burger King, and Wendy's, is healthy eating an option? If you're so exhausted from the demands of your day job that all you can do when you get home is eat a microwave meal and go to bed, is exercise realistic? If you live in a country that sanctions the sale of tobacco and alcohol, is that healthy living?

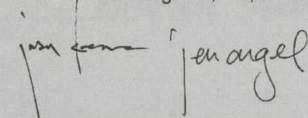
Being healthy means facing all of these economic and social pressures and more. Though there are a million magazines out there ready to offer you tips on how to get thin quick, health is about more than being thin and is a lot more about a radical change in your lifestyle and priorities than any magazine tips can tell you. Where are the articles that talk about how working less than 60 hours a week can extend your life by X amount of years? Where are the articles that suggest reducing debt and living within our economic means can reduce stress and improve our standard of living across the board? We don't see these because they threaten the "health" of the economy, which is, for some reason, completely unrelated to the health of the people who make it churn.

And what about global epidemics like SARS and AIDS that thrive on uninformed populations unarmed with the knowledge or tools to combat the spread of these diseases? Our feature article goes to Hong Kong to ask how we might begin to rethink about how the world treats these problems in a way that does not find information and resources concentrated in the hands of a few.

As we go to press, the U.S. senate has just passed President Bush's \$15 billion AIDS package to fight AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean. Great, right? Nope. The package is hinged on teaching abstinence world wide - a tactic which has been scientifically proven to be an ineffective tactic for combating AIDS. Plus his package included extending the gag rule, which forbids AIDS prevention funds from being used by facilities that also offer abortion and family planning services. The package also has the effect of limiting the distribution of condoms. In this issue, we turn to Suzy Subways (p. 64) to bring us up to speed on the current status of the struggle to fight AIDS around the globe.

We could go on, but we'll let our contributors take over from here. There are a lot of great people covering a ton of ground in so few pages.

Thanks for reading and, um, be well!



PS: We're happy to provide a platform for Positive Youth Foundation to share their work with you in their own independent supplement. Please direct any questions about their organization or content in the supplement to [director@positive-youthfoundation.org](mailto:director@positive-youthfoundation.org)

CLAMOR's mission is to provide a media outlet that reflects the reality of alternative politics and culture in a format that is accessible to people from a variety of backgrounds. CLAMOR exists to fill the voids left by mainstream media. We recognize and celebrate the fact that each of us can and should participate in media, politics, and culture. We publish writing and art that exemplify the value we place on autonomy, creativity, exploration, and cooperation. CLAMOR is an advocate of progressive social change through active creation of political and cultural alternatives.





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# letters

Please address letters to [letters@clamormagazine.org](mailto:letters@clamormagazine.org) or write us at PO Box 1225 Bowling Green, OH 43402  
Letters may be edited for length.  
Not all letters received will be printed.

## READER HAS ISSUES WITH ANIMALS, PRE-ADOLESCENT BOYS AND GIRLS

People who disagree with you have the same right to explain their side as you do (*Hip To Eat Beef*, May/June, 2003).

The beef industry is made up of hard working American farmers and ranchers who produce a superior product that is unrivaled in the world. They have a right to target their promotions to anyone they wish. And most certainly should be able to defend their industry.

Their product is nutritious and delicious and has been made out to be a bad product by PRO VEGETARIANS & ANIMAL RIGHTS GROUPS of which I am sure you are one. People of such thinking usually hang out at liberal universities and have been targeting the same people as you are accusing the beef industry of doing.

Preadolescent girls next to preadolescent boys are perhaps as a group the dumbest creatures on earth. Why not rant and rave about those who manufacture cosmetics, fake fingernails, tongue and earring jewelry, diet pop, porno magazines, tattoos, five inch thick soles on shoes, low-cut jeans, junk food, the movie industry and their promotion of pre-marital sex, living together, and glamorizing drunks, homosexuality, smoking and alcohol, and the tv industry that does the same. The list goes on and on and on.

But no, you get your dander up at an industry that promotes the use of one of the most wholesome products produced. This is because idiots like you think that animals are next to humans and use fake so-called health issues about eating meat to further your agenda. You know this is true.

I know a bunch of parents with girls that have eating disorders. All they do is swill down diet coke & iceberg lettuce. Unless of course some grease ball with hair down to his ass that hasn't washed or shaved for a week gets them on drugs. And what do you think? That an industry that wants to promote pot roast and sirloin steaks should back off promoting their product to 12 year old girls.

Do you feel sorry for the animals?

Get back to nature man. Look at the Animal Channel, watch your pet cat in the backyard, see what the wolves eat for lunch, and watch the friendly robin on the lawn. No-one, least of all those who farm and ranch want to see cruelty to animals. If only those animals in nature would feel the same.

Dave Kolding  
Bismarck, ND

## FAIR TRADE PROPS

We were excited to see the cover story on fair trade coffee (*Who's Paying for your Fix?* May/June, 2003). Fair trade and organic agriculture have been two of the 'stealth' success stories of progressives — folks like Bill Harris and the others at Cooperative Coffees — working within the once taboo realm of commerce. As much as we on the Left need critical voices and analysis of what's wrong with the status quo, we need people who will create viable alternatives to business as usual. And then we need to support those "social entrepreneurs," with our

purchasing power, our savings, as well as our pen.

Besides the groups mentioned in the article other groups that are doing good work on making fair trade a reality include:

United Students for Fair Trade ([www.usft.org](http://www.usft.org))  
Global Exchange ([www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org))  
Fair Trade Resource Network ([www.fairtraderesource.org](http://www.fairtraderesource.org)).

One small correction: the address for the global umbrella monitoring group — Fair Trade Labeling Organization — is [www.fairtrade.net](http://www.fairtrade.net). The address you provided leads people to a great, but quite different, Dutch fair trade importer/wholesaler.

Sincerely,  
Rodney North  
Equal Exchange  
Canton, MA

## RESPONSE TO C. WONG

Clamor too white (*Letters*, May/June 2003)? Absolutely. But so is *The Nation*, *Mother Jones*, *In These Times*, *Z.*

That's no excuse, but I think it speaks to the structural forces that White Out the nascent contributions from people of color. My guess is that it's more of a class issue, one that — perforce — divides things along racial lines. It takes a certain measure of security, a level of comfort, to free up the time for agitation, loudmouthery, etc. (Which also, I figure, accounts for the unfortunate paternalism in so many American social movements.) I would assume that there's simply a surfeit of white, middle-class guys — myself included — who're out there hoeing this particular row.

The comments on article length, however, were completely off the mark. Is the logic that readers will stick with ANYTHING as long as it's presented in bite-sized chunks? Let's hope that's not true. The *Utne Reader*, for instance, spends every issue saying nothing about far too much. Absolute waste.

Length isn't going to change my perceptions of whether an article's worth my attention. That's the beauty of text: it'll be there waiting, if I need to take a break and double-back. Why should the reader be in rush to barrel through these things?

And I've gotta add: I had my problems with "Homo Ludens," too (*Play is not a Game*, May/June 2003); but overall I took it to be the single best piece in that issue. Play is serious business, and it's the reader's fault if he couldn't deal with the seeming contradiction.

Best,  
Kevin  
Belspring, VA

## MORE RESPONSE TO C. WONG

I've been meaning to write you for a long time to compliment you on Clamor. Before I do, something comes along to complain about. NOW, I write. Oy vey.

I'm speaking about the first letter to the editor in the May/June issue, and your response to it.

The letter itself was full of racial stereotyping, and

downright insulting. For example, it complains about long detailed articles being "not accessible." Then says "if Clamor attempts to be more accessible to everybody, including people of color, it might be disadvantageous to have such long dense articles." Besides being a horrible run-on, pretentious sentence (disadvantageous??? Pulzeel!), it's plain wrong-- and racist to boot.

It implies you have to talk down to people. That THEY are not smart enough, or do not have long enough attention spans. THEY (those people of color) will not get it, if you don't have bold headlines-- and leave out the subtlety. THEY are uneducated. To reach THEM, you have to pretend YOU'RE uneducated

The letter itself is a hilarious piece of academic pretentiousness. Can you imagine any American asking the question, "Why is (that drawing of a) basketball player black?" That's like asking "why is that drawing of The President, white?" This is America. Wake up and flip the remote.

Further on, the writer says "the last thing I need is a lefty white woman telling me about how her conception of times has been changed by her trip to Costa Rica." Well then, read MAXIM, or GRAMMA. You won't see that. You'll get shorter articles too. The letter writer doesn't want to hear what white people have to say about anything. Ok, fair enough. Don't read a magazine edited by white people.

Clamor is great because it's not afraid to be smart. It's not afraid to go into depth, to find out why... or even explore various possible reasons why. It's not afraid to let authors speak for themselves, rather than towing the party line. That's why I like it.

I wouldn't have written this letter if you only printed the ravings of someone pissed that her illustrations were rejected. But you caved in completely.

You wrote: "Our focus for the magazine is to increase the number of people of color contributing to and presented in the magazine."

Huh? Shouldn't your focus be to continue to present a unique point of view no matter where it comes from? Your focus should be to do what you do best: publish intelligent articles that take the time to EXPLORE issues rather than make them into bumper stickers.

Your AGE issue touched on a long-ignored point and a group of people forgotten by your mostly youthful audience. Great. You want to do a "people of color" issue, okay. But whatever you do, do it your way. Don't dumb down. Don't get discouraged. It'd be so easy to try to fit yourself into the perfect niche... but you'd never make it. There'll always be someone out there, leftier than thou. Someone saying there are too many tits, too many men, too many whites, or something. You can't be everything. Right now you're unique, performing a service that no one else is. Please don't give that up.

Love,  
Mykel Board  
New York, NY

PS: I don't know or care what color or gender M. Treloar is, but the TYRANNY OF CONSENSUS was genius. I'm afraid you'd lose stuff like that by going dumb.



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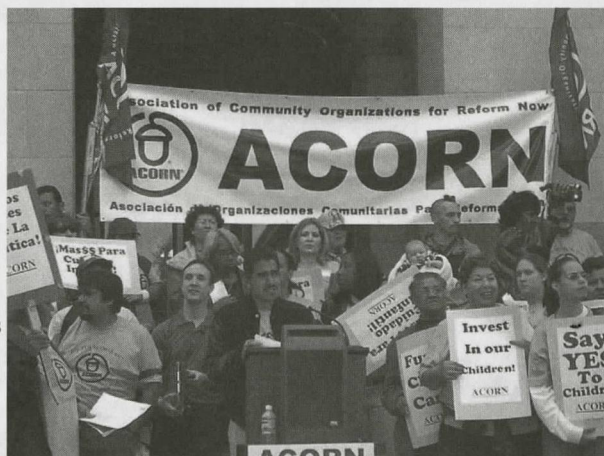
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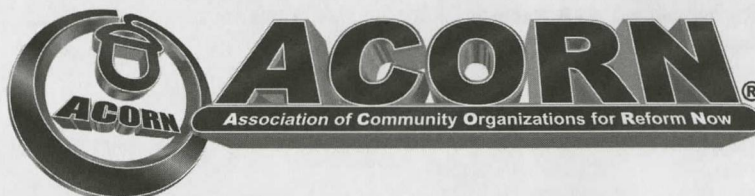
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An aspiring burlesque dancer, **Dave Crosland** (p. 15) can now be seen on street corners across the nation, peddling *Puffed*, his latest release on Image Comics. For more work by him and his cohort, Debbie, check out [Tlchicken.com](http://Tlchicken.com) and [Hiredmeat.com](http://Hiredmeat.com).

**Sara Rose DeAlaio** (p. 56) is currently hiding out in the hills of southeastern Ohio. She regularly contemplates whether the university is actually bad for her health, but has ultimately decided that taken in small doses it's not all bad. She is studying environmental archaeology as a graduate student but spends most of her time writing, reading and acting to make positive change in the world around her. You can contact her at [dealaias@care2.com](mailto:dealaias@care2.com).

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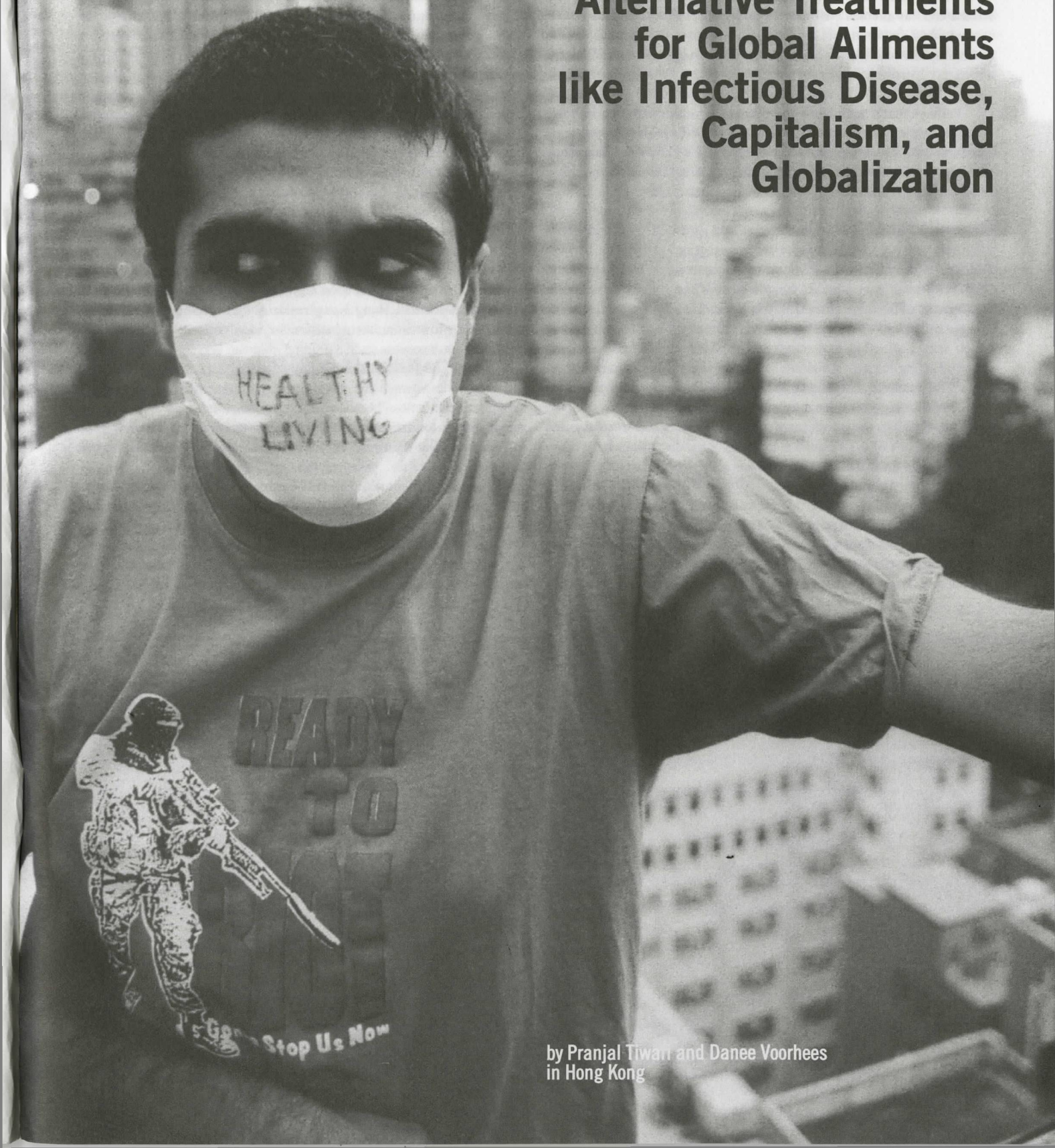
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# Epidemic!

**Alternative Treatments  
for Global Ailments  
like Infectious Disease,  
Capitalism, and  
Globalization**



by Pranjal Tiwari and Danee Voorhees  
in Hong Kong



It has been a bizarre experience living in Hong Kong amid the current outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) that began earlier this year and observing some of the trends that have taken place. We seem to have become a panicked and confused city with foreign nationals leaving en masse, sensationalist news coverage filled with incongruous information, and streets crowded with mask wearers and sellers. Normal life has been profoundly interrupted. People have been advised to stay home as much as possible; schools have been closed for nearly a month; restaurants and hotels have seen business down by 80 to 90 percent.

It's not that SARS is nothing to worry about — it is, after all a new disease and has affected well over 1,000 people in the city — but in our current social and economic organization, responses to infectious disease outbreaks, like reactions to other emergencies, can serve to reinforce the oppressive hierarchies and structures of power that dominate our societies.

Perhaps that's not such a groundbreaking observation on its own, but in imagining a better world, one of the most difficult considerations seems to be how participatory societies could react to an emergency like SARS without creating or reinforcing such oppressive hierarchies/structures and fundamentally compromising their norms.

### Cover-Ups and Gloss-Overs

The role of oppressive institutions has been evident in Hong Kong. From the start of the outbreak, the government's reaction has been with the interests of business elites firmly in mind. Initially, the details of the disease and extent of the outbreak were covered up by the government which feared affecting investment and explicitly stated its uneasiness about affecting the city's massive tourism industry. It was recently revealed, for example, that the public list of SARS patients did not include the name of a high profile expatriate businessman who had contracted the disease. When the government was finally pressured to release the information, one of the victim's colleagues remarked: "They have taken a week to own up to the fact that SARS is also affecting wealthy people who live in the top end of town."

As it became clear that this cover-up was ineffective, that keeping quiet about SARS was actually achieving little in preventing fears among privileged classes — reflected in sluggish markets, a general slump in economic activity, and massive flight of foreigners — government actors turned instead to a rhetoric of aggressive reassurance.

James Tien, Chairman of the Liberal Party described the situation as "a war against an unseen enemy, and one we must not lose." (Where have we heard that before?) It was also revealed to the public that the government's War Council would strategize against this enemy in their "purpose-built bunker in the basement of the Central Government Offices if an emergency were declared." Most recently, Betty Tung, the wife of Chief Executive Tung Chee Hwa, launched a symbolic clean-up program called Operation Unite, sponsored by local business elites (or community leaders as they call themselves), through which an army of 10,000 volunteers would disinfect public housing estates and dirty streets. The tangible anti-viral effects of such moves are, of course, questionable at best. The military vocabulary and tough talking action plans are aimed more at securing support and faith in the power of the state in a time of emergency.

I'm sure the dangers of such a public relations boost for oppressive hierarchies are fairly evident but to look at one specific example, James Tien, quoted above as battling against an "unseen enemy," is himself known as an enemy of the poor to migrant workers' groups, having recently successfully concluded a campaign for a tax targeted specifically at the wages of Hong Kong's foreign domestic helpers. The current emergency is an opportunity to gloss this over, for Tien to project himself as a strong community leader in an embattled and confused city.

Moreover, the advice of medical experts, when mixed with a rhetoric of fear, has led to a general level of distrust in the city. "People aren't wearing masks to keep their own germs to themselves," says Klaudia Kong, a 28-year-old Hong Kong resident who refuses to wear a face mask. "They're wearing them because they don't trust anybody else."

### SARS and the National Security State

A similar situation can be seen internationally. Indeed, if James Tien is employing rhetoric reminiscent of the war on terrorism in Hong Kong, we can only imagine what kind of language has been used in the US to talk about this disease.

The SARS outbreak in the US seems to have been used to further justify the emerging national security state, fed by the spectre of bioterrorism. SARS was recently added to the list of diseases for which the Center for Disease Control has the power of forcible quarantine, an authority that was originally demanded by Secretary for Health and Human Services Tommy Thomson in 2001 in the event of a biological warfare attack.





Aside from the public relations value of such a move, the goal of expanding an avenue of domestic state power was also achieved as National Guard units would be used to enforce the CDC's authority.

For the Bush regime, it seems to have been easy to exploit both the emergence of SARS and the position of the CDC as specialists to further the current agenda of expanding domestic repression. As Senator Max Cleland recently said, Congressmen "realize the CDC is a national security agency now." Like other national security agencies, the CDC saw an expansion of its funding in the current climate of fear with its 2002 budget jumping to around \$4.4 million. "We would have limped along, business as usual," Cleland said. "Now, four weeks later, we've got a record budget passed."

The main means by which information from medical experts is relayed to the public, media reporting of SARS in the US has been laden with fear and hysteria. In one incident on April 1, US TV networks interrupted their coverage of the Iraq invasion to bring viewers live footage of an American Airlines flight from Tokyo that had just touched down at San Jose, California. The cabin crew feared that five people aboard might be showing symptoms of SARS - the basis for the alert, it turned out, was that the passengers had simply coughed.

## The Hysteria Virus

At a recent telebriefing held by the CDC, several frightening questions were posed by journalists. Some questions asked whether SARS was a "fire drill for bioterrorism," incorrectly equating disease outbreak with a terrorist attack. Several other journalists played up the role of SARS as an external threat, one question being whether airlines have "routinely allowed obviously sick passengers to board international flights bound for the United States, and that Customs officials sometimes let them into the country." This question is asking whether US officials are routinely allowing an external threat to enter by being soft on the issue of borders, a theme that has become routine whether the media is discussing illegal immigrants from Mexico or Arab terrorists. Such discussions have already helped to further elements of the Bush agenda — the proposed budget for the Border Patrol, for example, saw an increase of US\$2.2 billion this year.

Another journalist actually made an explicit link between SARS and non-white populations in the US: "Among the 115 U.S. cases how many of those occur within the Asian population, and is there a greater

risk of encountering SARS within a Chinatown of a U.S. major city?" she asked. The equation of SARS and Asians, like the linking of SARS and terrorism, is a logical fallacy — an improper use of the and function — but the scapegoating of foreigners in Chinatown for spreading disease is an easily believed sensationalism. "You've never seen so many 'For Lease' signs in Chinatown," said David Lee of the Chinese-American Voters Education Committee in San Francisco, commenting to the San Jose Mercury News on the decline of many Chinatown businesses.

Businessmen in Central Park West could be carrying SARS after returning from trips to Worst Affected Areas. However, this view is met with considerably less hype and hysteria, even though the disease is said to have travelled to over 20 countries via air travel. In fact, cases of SARS in Vietnam, the Philippines, and Singapore were originally traced to an infected businessman who travelled to each of these places before dying ... perhaps an interesting side effect of global capitalism?

Capitalist globalization has certainly been a theme running through the reporting of the business press and elite newspapers in the US and internationally on this issue. Many have mutated the disease to fit the agenda of China-bashing. Such editorials have generally turned viable arguments about the Chinese government's "lack of transparency" in handling the SARS crisis into support for the country's continuing history of increasing transparency for foreign investment and neoliberal trade regimes. A recent opinion piece in the South China Morning Post, for example, noted that "China's hopes of being accepted as one of the world's leading nations has suffered a setback ... for China to join the modern world, it will have to ... embrace concepts of openness not only regarding trade rules, but in other spheres as well."

Reporting in Hong Kong itself has also been full of sensationalism, which Tim Yan Lim, ex-Chairperson of the Hong Kong Journalists' Association, says is nothing new to journalism around the world. "Given the market structure, we can expect sensationalism for some time," he said. Crises sell.

## Another Approach to Health

Like most people in the city, I have been avoiding crowds, wearing a face mask, and regularly washing my hands, trying to do what I can to avoid infection. I realize that there is little choice but to act responsibly and take the advice of medical experts.





I don't think this is necessarily a bad thing. During an infectious disease outbreak, it makes sense to pay reasonable attention to the group carrying out research into the disease and its cure. On an abstract level, this is a dependence based on trust, the hope that an informed group is looking after our interests and working to prevent millions from dying.

The problem comes with moving from the abstract to our present system of social and economic organization and seeing how this dependence can be exploited by power. Medical experts and health departments — like all institutions — are today closely linked to oppressive structures. These hierarchies end up being indirectly but crucially supported when we feel the very real need to take the advice of specialists and experts in an emergency situation.

How can we change this? In a more agreeable society, we could say that these hierarchies would not exist. A more localized medical system, for example, would allow us to take health-related advice without it being filtered through oppressive institutions. Moreover, changing fundamental aspects of modern capitalist life and social relations would have a profound effect on our immune systems, says Greg Nigh, a physician and activist in Portland, Oregon.

"I would suggest to you that the progressive decline of immune competence in industrial societies is precisely because of the products of capitalist production that have invaded our bodies and their living spaces. ... Our bodies are filled with chemicals ... our lives are filled with stress: work, financial, body image, relationship, etc. In short, we are creating a world in which simply living is immunosuppressive."

But it does not seem enough to simply say that social relations would be different in the future. Nigh explains that responses to an

infectious disease epidemic would have to come out of a more participatory medical system, one that is more democratic in terms of its overall approach to the concept of health.

"In a participatory community, I believe that the actual practice of medicine looks very different. The system doesn't simply treat disease. For example, in any sensible system, the health care system is integrated with the food production system, because health and food are two sides of the same coin.

"Conventional medicine is not to be thrown out. Not at all. MRIs and CT scans and other technologies are still important, but imagine a health care system that people actually wanted to use, a system that we looked forward to using, a system that left us feeling more vital after an encounter with it." He goes on to suggest that, in such a community, care is local, personal. It is not simply a system that gives us a product and sends us on our way.

Specifically referring to an outbreak of infectious disease, supportive care would take on a much more active role. This would involve "therapies that enhance the body's ability to fight infection, not therapies that compromise that ability." For those whose life is at risk, more invasive procedures may be necessary.

Such a response may be near impossible to imagine within today's health care industry — particularly in Hong Kong during these times.

But perhaps it is because the alternatives are so difficult to imagine that the issues of popular health and effective responses to health crises should be central to movements organizing towards wider social change. ★

## REVIEW BORDER CULTURE

### Puro Border: Dispatches, Snapshots and Graffiti from La Frontera

Edited by Luis Humberto Crosthwaite, John William Byrd, and Bobby Byrd  
Cinco Puntos Press, 2003  
www.cincopuntos.com

Life along border zones, particularly where arbitrary lines separate North from South, or First World from Third, is like nowhere else on earth. The regions surrounding the borders between the US and Mexico, Morocco and Spain, Poland and Germany throb with commerce, corruption, and apparent chaos, providing a glimpse into a future we can scarcely imagine. It is a place where cultures collide and people are forced by necessity to forge understandings, craft compromises, and develop a certain dynamic style which is neither North nor South, West nor East, but a collaboration between the two. The US / Mexico border region, as Douglas Kent Hall says, "has a national characteristic of its own, as though it were a narrow fledgling nation two thousand miles in length."

Writing about borders by default requires an exploration of contradiction, wading through a sea of diverse and strongly-held opinions, and a discussion of the history, politics, and economics of exclusion. *Puro Border* meets this challenge and takes it one step further — it seduces the reader, transports her to the border, and opens her eyes to its often harsh realities. As Bobby Byrd explains in the opening sentences of the book, "La frontera is like an alleyway, un callejón, which runs between a rich man's house and a poor man's house. Sometimes the alley is very big and wide, like a desert is big and wide. Other times, the alleyway is narrow, only stretching the 15 miles or so to a place like San Diego, which is one of the glorious rooms in the rich man's house."

A collection of texts by authors from both sides, peppered with statistics, photographs, lyrics to *corridos*, and glimpses of hidden history, this book shows what is fantastic and magical and what is horrific and reprehensible about the border, with increased militarization on one side, and increased destabilization and deterioration on the other. This is where one can see plainly the dark

side of "free" trade; the crimes, poverty, desires, and late-night crossings which are the hazardous and twisted reality behind the euphemism — this is what global capitalism looks like. *Puro Border* lays these dangers out openly, systematically tackling binational issues, including the booming business of smuggling human beings and the economic policies and desperation that drive the practice, the sometimes-fatal blundering of the US military as it illegally conducts domestic and international operations, the drug trafficking and surprising philanthropy of notorious and unknown dealers as they meet the steadily climbing demand for their products in the US, the wildness and desolation of the ecology and the determination and tenacity required to survive it, and perhaps most poignantly, the effects that the new "free" trade-driven economy is having on young women across the line from El Paso, Texas, in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua.

The situation in Juárez deserves a bit of attention here. The city is the *maquiladora*, or sweatshop capital of the country, employing over 200,000 people — over 80 percent of whom are women. It is therefore a job magnet, drawing thousands of women from the interior, many of them coming from rural areas, often in a big city and living on their own for the first time. The population of Juárez has almost quadrupled in about 30 years, and yet the city's services and infrastructure have changed very little; therefore much of the population is without electricity or running water, sewage treatment, decent roads, public transport, or law enforcement officials. Its distance from the federal capital means that many of these problems are invisible to policymakers; therefore, nothing improves. Now a city of over 1.5 million, Juárez has developed the cool anonymity characteristic of many cities on *el otro lado*, the other side, the US.

The working conditions in the *maquiladoras* are brutal. Shifts are long, pay is often below subsistence

levels (\$24 for a 48 hour work week), safety equipment is nonexistent or in disrepair, women are frequently required to handle toxic substances and work in poorly ventilated rooms. They are often not allowed to talk, must ask permission to leave their work station and use the toilet, and are subjected to mandatory pregnancy tests. Some women have been injected with birth control without giving informed consent. Spontaneous abortions due to the toxic chemicals are not uncommon. And as if that weren't enough, between 1993 and 2002, over 320 women were killed. No official count is being kept by the local authorities, and no significant investigation is underway, although the evidence points to the work of a serial murderer, perhaps with some copycat criminals

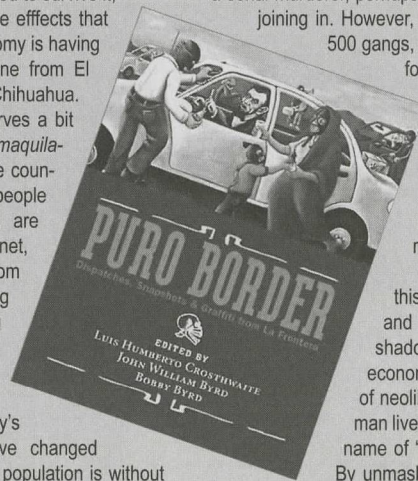
joining in. However, Juárez is also home to over 500 gangs, and is a major crossing point

for drugs and guns, so the police have other priorities. Besides, they are wildly understaffed, with only one police officer for every 15,000 people in the ever-growing city. And so the murders continue unchecked.

*Puro Border* addresses this stark reality with grace and sensitivity, illuminating the shadowy corners of the globalized economy, exposing the underbelly of neoliberalism by revealing the human lives which are steamrolled in the name of "development," or "progress."

By unmasking the contradictions which permeate the border, the alchemical reactions which take place when cultures meet and cross-contaminate in the crucible of the desert, this book challenges mainstream perspectives on national identity, language, immigration, crime, justice, freedom, and dignity. The book, like the border, is full of the unexpected; drawing deeply from both sides, it is a must-read for anyone who dreams of *el otro lado*.

-Jennifer Whitney





# Looking Good

as outward appearances betray the pain of mental illness



I sit across the desk from the doctor. He's young, 35 at the most, and handsome. He listens attentively to the exhaustive list of symptoms I present him. In this private exam room and under such a handsome doctor's eye, my pain swells to almost tragic proportions. I briefly hope the doctor falls in love with me, and rather than being admitted to the psychiatric short-term unit, I'll find myself in his home, with a soft blanket tucked under my chin and his clinical devotion sweetened with love.

The room, outfitted with a bare desk, two chairs and a floor lamp, is thick-walled, but that doesn't prevent the low moan of a woman across the hall from sliding past the door jamb.

I know how I must look to the doctor. I'm a young woman with advanced degrees. The clothes I wear (though scavenged from thrift stores) are tailored enough to indicate good taste, if not well breeding. I also have all my own teeth, which might not seem a big deal, but for those with chronic mental illness, it's a rare possession. I'm also easy on the eyes, a fact that cannot be downplayed when it comes to psychiatric evaluation. For all this doctor knows, I could simply be over-reacting to a romantic breakup or to stresses in professional life. I am certain he's wondering, on some level, how an attractive, articulate woman like me could be mentally ill.

I curl up in the plastic chair, my perfectly healthy body tucked into itself with yogic symmetry; my pale, clear cheek pressed against my knees so that a hank of hair falls over my eyes. In Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, a man's decaying soul is reflected in a portrait he hides in the attic. With each of Dorian Gray's moral failings, his portrait's face grows more decrepit. Where, I wonder, is my portrait of dissipation? What can I offer the doctors when illness takes possession? I have no picture of the panic attacks that stripped the last three jobs from me, no image of the depression that traps me for months in my apartment, no snapshot even of the moments when I rise like a whale, steaming from the cold depths, to float briefly under blue sky before sinking again. A fellow mental patient recently told me that my greatest problem is that I "present well." What does that mean? It means that in the eyes of the psychiatric profession, I'm the picture of health. There's a legal term for this. It's called having a "hidden disability." In my case, attractiveness and intelligence have created a terrible situation — no one wants to believe I'm sick, let alone disabled.

The medical field is hardly exempt from judging books by their covers. There was the previous century's practice known as craniometry, in which doctors and scientists judged intelligence and sanity on the basis of brain size, skull shape and facial features. The derogatory term "Mongoloid," for instance, originated due to the Mongolian's slanted facial features. In the introduction

words **Kiera Van Gelder**  
illustration **laney**



to a recent anthology titled *The Face of Madness: Hugh W. Diamond and the Origin of Psychiatric Photography* Dr. Eric Carlson asserts that "in the patient's look and demeanor lie clues for understanding the nature of his illness and the expected outcome." How far have we come in our understanding of the inner self? Of course we can generally note the blatant examples of mental illness and alcoholism, yet even for those folks, there was a time when the bag lady washed dishes in her own sink and when the mumbling man who sleeps on the bench once slept with his favorite blanket tucked under his chin. The line between sane and insane, or mentally ill and mentally sound, is far less concrete than the arc of an eyebrow or the shape of a hand.

With this hidden disability, I'm sure to make a good first impression, and a second one. The problem is, even in the crisis points, I'm still cute-as-a-button compared to the homeless women in the street or those ladies I meet on the hospital grounds with their plaid-on-plaid ensembles and uneven red lipsticks. At the mental hospital's cafeteria, I discover how fluid the line between patient and professional truly is: On the days I shower, dress nice and wear eyeliner, the cashiers give me a staff-discount; on those "off" days when I arrive for therapy still in my pajamas, I

must, like the other mental patients, pay full price for my coffee.

One doctor turned me away from a hospital on the grounds that if I could read Spinoza and wear a pretty dress, he felt obligated to give my bed to someone more destitute. A counselor at a mental health clinic found my despair unreasonable given that I had "everything going for me."

When the handsome doctor asks me what triggered this latest bout of my mental illness, I have an image of myself in my bedroom, rocking back and forth with quiet hysteria. For months I stayed in that room, convinced I was utterly alone in the universe. It didn't help that I stopped using the phone. I tell the doctor I can't stand the loneliness. Mental illness is inherently isolating — one lives within a gauntlet of self-perpetuated pain and distorted thinking. The link between exterior world and interior self is often fragile as a butterfly's wing. Add to that the stigma of mental illness, the disbelief invoked by having a healthy appearance, as well as the message (often spoken between the lines) that you just need to try harder and everything-the job, the lover, the affordable apartment-would simply return to you like the morning sun after a night of fevered chills and nightmares. For someone who looks good, the nightmare has only begun. ★

## REVIEW REQUIRED RESOURCE



### Future 500: Youth Organizing and Activism in the United States

Compiled by Jee Kim, Mathilda de Dios, Pablo Caraballo, Manuela Arciniegas, Ibrahim Abdul-Matin and Kofi Taha

Subway and Elevated Press, 2002  
www.Future500.com

Future 500 is a project from the Active Element Foundation and the first publication from their web site of the same name. Dismayed by mass media portrayals of modern youth culture as either apolitical and apathetic or increasingly conservative, folks at AEF sought to generate a list of 500 youth-led groups and organizations actively working towards transforming their communities and working for social/global justice. These groups, collectively, would serve to counteract destructive images of youth culture, as well as to provide a starting point for youth looking to become active in their own communities.

The resulting Future 500 book and web site are a comprehensive database of youth-led groups concerned with issues ranging from queer rights to environmental racism to prison reform. The book's researchers strove to find at least two groups from each state fitting a predetermined set of criteria including a progressive political analysis, a positive reputation amongst activist peers for movement- and coalition-building and a democratic or consensus-based decision-making model.

Editors chose groups which represented diverse populations, strategies, ideologies and organizing styles. In addition to those being primarily composed of folks under thirty years old, they sought out groups with the technical and strategic support necessary for sustainability and accessibility. The result is an amazing snapshot, a portrait of youth activism as varied geographically as it is tactically and philosophically.

One of the most refreshing features of the Future 500 directory is its structure. In compiling the various

projects, campaigns and schemes, the book's editors accomplish the challenging task of presenting a variety of philosophies without championing any one form of resistance as the most effective, radical or legitimate. Organized by geographic location, underground radio stations are listed alongside theatre troupes; direct action environmental groups are sandwiched between youth congresses and zine distribution collectives. While a bit chaotic, the result is a collage of philosophies ranging from community education to direct action to political reform with no form of resistance winning out over the others as the most significant.

There are several rural groups included in the 500, but urban groups are most heavily represented. New York City alone sports over ten pages of worthy projects, while my own home state, I was sad to see, had only three listings. The amount of research that went into the Future 500 project is impressive, however the result is by no means exhaustive. If you're feeling put out that your local vegan student union or voter registration project was overlooked, new groups can register on the Future 500 web site ([www.future500.com](http://www.future500.com)) to be included in the searchable online database.

Future 500 is a valuable resource for activists at any level of involvement. For those sympathetic to progressive causes but not sure how get involved, the book is a youth-culture primer, complete with a glossary of phrases and terms. For more seasoned organizers, it is a powerful networking tool. In addition to listing these groups, the book includes statistical and demographic information collected from them and lists of youth-sympathetic foundations, organizations and networks offering resources, grants, technical assistance and skills-building. Your local coalition of students against standardized testing can now seek out similar groups across the country, while getting connected with legal and technical support from adult allies. Grab a copy to peruse for a few days and then donate it to your local high school, youth shelter, progressive student union or burnt-out civics teacher. AEF also offers bulk copies at \$2 each to community organizations. This book is, hopefully, a work in progress, a first step.

-Pamela Wilson

Future500 is also available in the Clamor online store at [www.clamormagazine.org](http://www.clamormagazine.org)





# Self Defense Makes Sense

words Leonie Sherman illustration Dave Crossland

Night at the Action Camp: smoke clogged the tarp. The topic turned to the idea of 24-hour security. Round and round the discussion went; who would stay up late, how would it affect the rest of us. Finally I piped up.

"Hey y'all, I'm a self-defense instructor. Why don't I just teach a workshop on some self-defense basics tomorrow morning and then we'll have a better idea how to defend ourselves if anything *does* go down?"

Uncomfortable silence greeted my suggestion. All eyes turned to the unacknowledged Leader of the camp. In a deep resounding voice he responded to my suggestion: "We can't do that here, sister. This is a non-violent action camp, we can't train people to do things that might hurt a living being."

Did I hear that right? We're sitting around plotting how to defend the earth and we're not willing to raise a hand to defend *ourselves*? Some shithead shows up with the intent to harm me or my companions and I am supposed to sit down and peacefully offer my skull for cracking?

Ferrets and humpback whales don't have the same kinds of ethical dilemma that we domesticated apes struggle with. An

animal that feels threatened will bare teeth, or raise hackles or issue some other warning sign. If this signal is ignored and an attack is launched an animal will teach you what it means to fight tooth and nail in their efforts to defend themselves. They will fight until the attack is terminated and they won't deliver any lectures about Gandhi while they're at it. Self-preservation is an instinct common to all creatures except for those who have had it civilized out of them.

If the thought of harm to our personal bodies which we live in and call home isn't alarming enough to inspire action, certainly a clear cut or an open strip mine won't bring us to our feet. An attack on our physical body justifies a swift and effective response. If a person tries to harm us we have every legal, moral and philosophical right to incapacitate that person and get to safety. The Earth is worthy of the same kind of defense. We need to react to the desecration of the Earth the way we would react if we came home and found the landlady strangling our cat; from the gut. If we cannot get passionate about defending ourselves there is no way we can muster the courage and determination it will

take to defend the earth against the rampant onslaught fueled by greed which is threatening her anywhere you look.

I'm not dismissing non-violence. Non-violence is a tactic, one of many tools at our disposal. A job is done more easily and efficiently if you use the right tool. Non-violence may be your favorite tactic, like the Leatherman that you keep attached to your belt, a multi-purpose tool which comes in handy in a variety of different situations. Still, you're not going to use your Leatherman to hammer in a tree spike. We need to think strategically about these things.

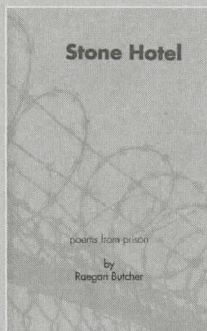
I have been teaching self-defense for a year and a half. Mostly I teach self-defense for women though I have taught mixed gender classes. I started teaching women's self-defense because when I asked or chose to listen I realized that most of the women I know and love had been molested, raped, harassed, assaulted or otherwise fucked with. For a year and a half I worked as a counselor, helping women heal from the trauma of their abuse. Finally I reached the point where helping women heal wasn't enough. I wanted to make the abuse stop happening.

*continued next page*



**Stone Hotel: Poems From Prison**

Raegan Butcher  
Crimethinc. Workers Collective, 2003  
www.crimethinc.com



OK. First off, I have to admit that I don't really like much poetry.

When I first picked this book out of a sizeable to-be-reviewed pile in the *Clamor* office, Jason told me Crimethinc (obviously well aware of the seething masses of poetry-haters) had specifically requested that somebody who does not hate poetry review this book. Being one who finds the majority of the poetry I have seen too lofty, uninspired, or just aesthetically awful, I replied I probably wouldn't be the best candidate for reviewing this, and started curiously flipping through anyway. Needless to say (I did end up reviewing this, after all), I ended up eating my words. Maybe I've just been reading the wrong poetry...

*Stone Hotel* is the first installment in Crimethinc's "Letters Series" and is a marked departure from their last two books, *Days of Love, Nights of War and Evasion*. It is their first venture into the "literary realm," as opposed to the agitprop/lifestyle anarchism slant of their previous books and pamphlets, and also their first publication by a specific, non-anonymous author. In their words, "This is not direct propaganda, nor is it similar in most regards to previous Crimethinc publications. This is a new voice, a new form, a new idea, but born of the same fires." According to Crimethinc, the Letters Series ultimately will be a series of publications in which "we rewrite our histories and create our own cultures without the mediation of corporations." Sounds great to me. We could all stand for a lot more of that in our lives.

The book consists of 96 poems written from prison by Raegan Butcher, a 34 year-old convict incarcerated in Washington State since 1996 for armed robbery. This is his first book, and a commendable one in many ways. These poems are meaningful and strong, each one a stark glimpse of an aspect of prison life, a bleak, raw snapshot of that reality and the ponderings on life that spring from it. They cut directly to the essential feeling underlying what they're addressing. For example, in "*love is a clenched fist*," Raegan writes: "i am surrounded/ by men who live/ in cages/ and blink in the sun/ like psychotic moles/ connoisseurs of/ hatred/ disguised as racial pride/ the tattooed husbands/ of battered wives/ who think/ love is a clenched fist." Others detail being strip searched by guards, being caught by the police and processed, the vibe in the mess hall, prison power dynamics, anxiety about getting out, suicide attempts, unfulfilled sexual desires, time, war, his childhood, and wage slavery. Each is a little piece of the larger picture of both Raegan's life and prison life as a whole. Because of this, I think the book works better in its entirety than it would just reading one or two of the poems. The poems, on the whole, are simply written, direct, honest, and can stand on their own, but are stronger and better experienced in context as pieces of the entire book.

What initially drew me to the book is the cover, a beautiful mixture of offset printing and letterpress by Pinball Publishing in Portland, Oregon. It is more than something to stick the pages inside; it is an artwork unto itself. The layout is simple and attractive, with red and black text superimposed on a picture of a barbed wire fence. Apparently, each cover ran through the presses five times and the graphics were created with an experimental printing technique using varnish on unfinished paper to stain it, rather than coloring it with ink. The result is a darkening of the paper where the graphic is, a nice effect.

All in all, this is a great beginning for Raegan, and another well-executed piece of work conceived of and assembled by the folks at Crimethinc, one of their best yet in my opinion. The attention to all aspects of the book and all of the processes it took to create it, beyond (of course) the poetry itself, personalizes the book, making for something more akin to an artifact than a mass-produced item for mass-produced consumption. And, although I think that the hand-numbered limited edition of 2000 first pressing aspect is generally a little too collector-ish for my tastes, especially since these things are so often used as marketing tools, I have to admit that it does also contribute to the personal touch of the book. And it would be a bit cynical of me to think that marketing was the motive behind that, wouldn't it?

Oh, and speaking of attention to detail, don't miss the die-cut prison bar endsheets and the myth, told on the final page, about the typeface, Oolakat, in which the book is printed.

-jason powers

(Self Defense ... continued from p. 15)

Stopping violence against women is primarily a man's job. I say this because it is primarily men who are abusing women. I had an incredibly abusive girlfriend who almost killed me so I know that women abuse other women, men abuse other men and on occasion women abuse men. Statistics indicate that 90 to 95 percent of domestic violence and sexual assault is male on female. Clearly, if domestic violence is going to end, men need to stop hurting women, and all you kind well-meaning men out there need to start talking and listening to your men friends about how to bring this crazy situation to an end. For my part I choose to teach women's self-defense.

Please don't talk to me about the new breed of empowered women kicking ass on TV and in movies. I don't want to see another anorexic 25-year-old blonde kicking butt in high heels and tight leather pants. Most women will never be model thin so seeing a model kick butt is not inspiring or empowering; it just reminds us that we are not as thin as she is, not as tall as she is, don't have her clothes or cleavage, and will probably never be able to do all the improbable stunts she resorts to in order to defend herself. These are not real people doing real things.

When I started teaching I was most excited about the physical techniques, which can be used to great effect by a 10-year-old against a 200-pound thug jacked to the gills on speed. After teaching for a while I realized that many women will never actually use the physical stuff I teach them, though they will feel stronger and more powerful for having learned it. They will, however, use the verbal techniques I teach them, often on a daily basis. Now I spend about half my time focusing on physical techniques and half my time on verbal techniques and role playing.

I move differently in the world for having trained in women's self-defense. Women who have taken self-defense classes report the same thing; we are more confident, more assertive, we make better decisions. We know that we can handle whatever the world throws at us. We relate to men differently because we know, deep in our hearts, that if they ever tried to hurt us we could incapacitate them. We often tell stories in class that we have never shared before. Speaking out empowers us, breaks the silence of shame and denial. We find that we are not alone.

I hope you guys reading this article are starting to get jealous and want to know how you can get in on the fun. As I mentioned before, you can start by listening and talking to your *male* friends about the problems of domestic violence and sexual assault. Ask them what they saw growing up, what they have read or seen on TV about sexual violence. Ask them if they have any direct experience of this stuff, if they know any friends who might have been perpetrators in the past or may currently be hurting a woman. Start to brainstorm together about how to deal with this problem in your community. Educate yourself.

You may want to jump right in there and help your women friends too. Mostly we can help ourselves and we would appreciate it if you would work on the guys in your life, but if you want to be our allies, here are some tips: Please don't try to teach us self-defense unless you are specifically trained to do so. There are already plenty of power dynamics at work in a relationship between a man and a woman and often when a man tries to teach a woman a physical move she ends up feeling weaker and less confident. Encourage the women in your life to take self-defense courses designed for women, not just aikido or other kinds of martial arts. Martial arts courses are great, they will improve our physical condition and give us some skills for defending ourselves but they will not boost our confidence in the same way a proper women's self-defense class will. Bite your tongue if you ever hear yourself saying "I liked you better before you started learning all of this stuff..." Be prepared to lose some of the male privilege you have been carrying around. Just think what a relief it will be to drop that weight and deal with women as equals!

I know some people complain that our focus on "social" issues is weakening our stance on "environmental" issues. Issues of justice are like objects in nature; you try to pick up one piece, and find it connected to everything else in the world. Women's self defense is integral to creating a viable radical environmental movement where women and men function with a high level of equality and mutual respect. And for those who practice non-violence, think of self-defense as self-preservation — all animals have an innate drive to protect themselves from harm. ☆



by j-love

# HOLISTIC HIP HOP

Holistic: ho-lis-tic

1. of or relating to holism
2. relating to or concerned with wholes or with complete systems rather than with the analysis of, treatment of, or dissection into parts.

## 360° of livin' right

**H**ip-Hop and its loyal followers are at a critical crossroad. Never before have we shared the monetary success of those found in the Fortune 500 club, had mainstream media salivating over our celebs, or had underground subculture achieving "pop culture" status. What may be seen as successful entry into "our piece of the pie" may lead us straight into the devil's den. Is Hip-Hop selling its soul?

Critical times call for critical responses. It's time to elevate how we are living our lives. Our focus needs to be redirected toward living a holistic lifestyle, attending to our bodies, minds, spirits, and communities. Let's take a second look at how we are treating ourselves, where we're developing healthy patterns, and what self-destructive patterns need to be eliminated from our lives.

The goal of this message is to serve as a guide to support you to make your life more powerful and fulfilling. It's broken down into the four components which make up you. Combining practices in each area as part of a lifestyle will support you in your growth and development as a fuller human being.

### *The Body*

*I don't eat no meat, no dairy, no sweets, only ripe vegetables, fresh fruit and whole wheat. I'm from the old school, my household smells like soul food, curry, falafel, barbecued tofu, no fish, no candy bars, no cigarettes, only ganja, fresh-squeezed juice from oranges, exercise on the daily to stay healthy, and I rarely drink water out the tap cause it's filthy.*

- Dead Prez

Tragedy struck the heart of the Hip-Hop community with the loss of Big Pun to health problems. Unfortunately, it did not serve as a wake-up call to many of us who still hit up the fried chicken and Big Mac's on the regular. It's funny, cause when you look at the food choices in poor communities across the nation, they have one thing in common: it's all bad for you. The 25 cent "crack juice" in your corner bodega has long been exposed for causing asthmatic attacks in kids; Chinese food, KFC, and Mickey D's are only good for giving you lethal doses of cholesterol and fat. Believe it or not, food not only affects how you feel, but the way you live, and even how you think. I'm not saying you have to go Dead Prez's route and become a strict vegetarian, but I am suggesting you learn about how to maintain a balanced diet and exercise program in order to live stronger, longer, and healthier.

### *The Mind*

*Marcus Garvey said..."There is no height to which we cannot climb by using the active intelligence of our own minds. The mind creates, and as much as we desire in Nature we can have through the creation of our own minds"*  
-Makeda Garvey (great granddaughter to Marcus Garvey)

Throughout our musical histories we have been blessed to have teachers like Public Enemy, KRS-One, X-Clan, and many others who have used their lyrics to educate and elevate our brothers and sisters. The emcee comes from an ancestral heritage traced back to the oral traditions in Africa that took the form of the storyteller, or Griot. Back in the day (I mean way back in the day) Griots had an esteemed job in the village, to pass legacy's down so that a people's history would be treasured and remembered. Our emcees are our Griots. Urban Griots. Passing our stories to the next generation. What are they saying? How will we be remembered?

Knowledge, wisdom, and understanding are core elements crucial to our evolution. We should at all times be challenging ourselves and others to become critical thinkers, to question what we see and hear; analyze and critique the media's representation of "reality," evaluate our social, economic and political power, (or powerlessness); build



with each other about philosophy, metaphysics, numerology, mysticism; Have ciphers exploring Native American traditions, the possibility of Alien existence, tales of ghosts, spirits, visions, telepathy, out of body experiences. Hip-Hop can take us to the next level, but remember, we are Hip-Hop. "Life without Knowledge is like death in disguise." Black Star

### The Spirit

*"Fame or integrity; which is more important? Money or happiness, which is more valuable?"*

*"Mastering others is strength; Mastering yourself is true power."*

*"When you are content to be simply yourself and don't compare or compete, everyone will respect you."*

Lao Tzu

There is so much to say about spirit, yet at the same time it is less about talking as it is about experiencing. In many ways, Hip-Hop culture suffers from sending multitudes of messages espousing material gain, consumerism, and fame, over spiritual values, beliefs, and practices. In the videos, magazines, and lyrical content we get hit over the head with the idea that things will make us feel fulfilled and happy. As we continue to be dazzled by the shimmering of diamond teeth and platinum jewelry, we get caught up thinking this is how we move to the next level. Think again.

Unchecked consumerism will be the demise of out culture; teaching kids to fight, and even kill to get the right gear; focusing on the individual gettin' paid, as opposed to the community breaking free, makes us lose our focus on issues that need immediate attention. We're caught up in the same ol' game, but this time with many of our own people in the forefront, leading us down the path of destruction.

Be conscious of your own spiritual quest. Ask yourself, what does spirituality mean to me? How do I express it to the outside world, to myself? How do I practice my spirituality? Who can be my mentor, or spiritual guide to support me in this area of my life?

### The Community

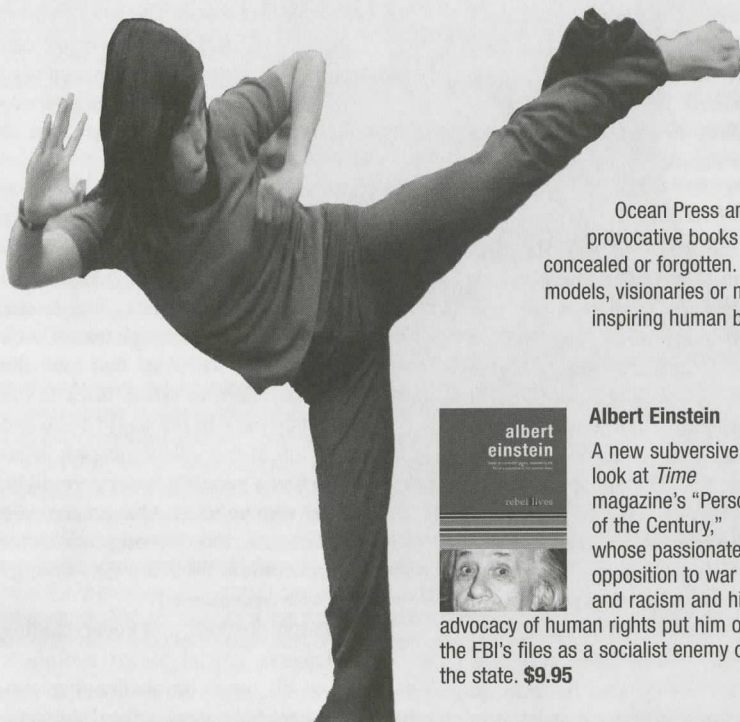
Community can be defined in many ways, but the one that stands out to me is simply things we have in common that unify us. I have many communities that I identify with; my neighborhood of Bushwick, my sista's



worldwide, the community of parents, educators, Hip-Hop heads, political folks, my writers crew, and on and on. Who do you consider your community? Are you an active participant in your communities? Is it important to you?

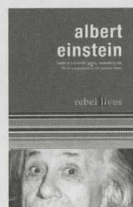
Once we can go beyond the individualism antics

put upon us by the Western world we can open our eyes and arms to the people who make up our extended family and begin to create a society that's fair, just, safe and harmonious. We all have a responsibility to take care of each other, to complete, not compete. Take some time out to reflect on ways you can uplift the various communities you belong too. The more we unite, the more power we have to fight for an end to police brutality, the end to the prison industrial complex, the end to hunger and homeless children, drug addiction, violence, and the early deaths of our children. Everyone always says "it takes a village to raise a child," so why not help raise the village? ☆



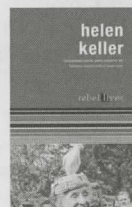
## Helen Keller = poor little blind girl?

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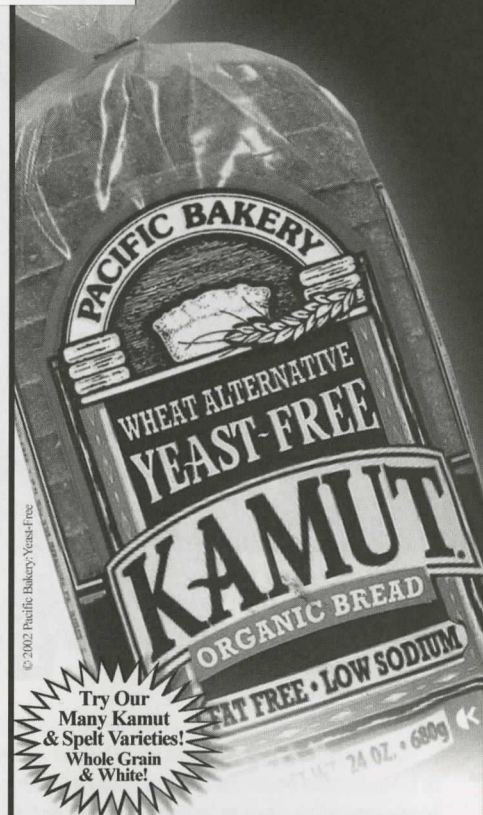
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# THE BROTHER

## I DO NOT KNOW

**David White talks about  
living and dealing with his  
brother's schizophrenia**

My brother is schizophrenic. He is also kind, intelligent, and insightful. But undermining all of these positive traits is a psychological disorder that becomes readily apparent to anyone who observes or interacts with him for any length of time. His speech is halting, insecure, and tinged with the realization that when he says good morning, he's not altogether sure that the sun has actually risen.

I do not know exactly when Stephen began showing obvious signs of his illness, but it seemed around the time I was nine that strange speech and actions began to invade his consciousness. He is now 47, and I am 41.

Coupled with his ascending illness was a soon-to-be-inaugurated affair with alcohol and marijuana. This is not rare among the mentally ill. In fact, psychologists refer to it as self-medication. Regardless, it became impossible for my uninformed mind to distinguish between what was drug induced and what was outright schizophrenic behavior.



As time passed, inappropriate speech and behavior gave way to aggressive and even violent outbursts. The household sank into a kind of shell-shocked cold war, with constant efforts by my parents to affect some kind of order undermined by a mental anarchy that would not submit. The brother with whom I had assembled Godzilla models and sneaked contraband Jimi Hendrix records into our bedroom became a brother I did not know. In retrospect, those "normal" days now seem idyllic.

When I was 11, Stephen was officially diagnosed as suffering from schizophrenia. Before this, my parents were unable to understand what was at the root of his strange behavior. Stephen was now an adult and had been unable to finish high school, just as he was unable to maintain employment for any significant length of time.

One of the many blessings of growing older is the realization that our families were never as strange or as different as we thought they were. Still, growing up with Stephen in the slightly darker ages of the 1970s, when mental illness still retained a different – even shameful – status, it was rare for friends to visit our home. When questioned about my brother, I adopted an attitude of silence or feigned incomprehension. Simply responding "my brother is not well" never seemed to satisfy their curiosity.

Eventually, the burden became too great for my parents to bear, and Stephen was admitted to a state mental hospital. He was in his early 20's. As for myself, I found work at a local restaurant and found the diversions of these and other teenage endeavors refreshing. My contact with Stephen was reduced to tense visits to mental ward day rooms, where it seemed everybody smoked, and the television droned softly over the passive awareness of the patients and their guests. Few words were spoken between the hellos and good byes.

On one of these visits, I clearly remember observing an older couple, their entire visit consisting of two shared cigarettes and no words. At the time, I thought they must have been aware of the futility of words. Since marrying, I have come to realize that most couples secure in one another's company do not need words to fill the air, or even to communicate.

After graduating from High School, I enlisted in the Army and completely lost contact with Stephen. Mention of him was limited to a few lines in the letters from my parents, who had by now acknowledged the remoteness of my brother ever realizing a full or significant recovery. Unlike the exceptional progress of Dr. John Nash of *Beautiful Mind* fame, the vast majority of schizophrenics experience no such miracles.

However, as if to contradict this sentiment, I was encouraged to notice a small if not miraculous improvement in Stephen's condition when I returned home after my four-year enlistment ended. He was now taking a new class of anti-psychotic drugs and making conscious efforts to improve himself. He was out of the hospital, living at home again.

Looking back, my own efforts at understanding his illness tended to be shaded by a kind of jealousy and resentment. On more than one occasion, I berated not only him but my parents for what I perceived to be his utter passivity and ability to manipulate their good intentions, regardless of my awareness of the debilitating nature of his illness. While my parents considered this for what it was – cruel and unformed – I continued to maintain this attitude for years to come.

A few months after returning home, my father and I traveled to Northport, Long Island, where he had accepted a job at the local vet-

eran's hospital. I soon found work at the local newspaper. My mother and Stephen joined us a few months later.

While living a far from independent life, Stephen continued to show heartening progress. With the help of a supportive mental health community, he was able to move into a group home, find part-time work in a structured environment, and begin a relationship with a girl named Linda.

During these years, Stephen and I were able to rediscover the kind of close relationship that had been cut short so many years before with the onset of his illness. I became something of a brotherly parole officer, seeing him several times a week, sometimes going out for beers or a baseball game, and spending the holidays together. It was during this time that my father, having retired from his civil service career and a short stint as sexton of a local church, left for Florida along with my mother.

After six years with the newspaper, I left my job as an editorial assistant. Not wanting to live the life of a pauper in the rich environs of Long Island's north shore, I decided to return home, knowing that my decision would probably undermine Stephen's new found stability. He could not remain in New York alone without some kind of close family support, and this would now have to be found back home. We rode the train from Penn Station to Florida together.

Stephen lived with my parents for a short time before eventually moving between a host of group homes. I got married to a good woman named Sherri and proceeded to lose myself in work, home, and all the other attendant realities of domesticated life.

Over the next 10 years, our contacts grew farther and farther apart, though he sometimes joined us for dinner on Sundays, where the conversation would always turn to his hope for a cure for his illness. Today he leads life as best he can, and though I would again leave Florida – this time for Rhode Island – he knows of my family's promise



David in between his sister, Amy, and brother, Stephen.

that he will never want for food or shelter.

Years ago, when Stephen seemed to be making real progress, I had a dream of him speaking to me in a clear and secure voice that seemed to bear stoic witness to the ordeal he now seemed to have fully recovered from. He was dressed like a stockbroker, and the lines of strain and worry that prematurely covered his handsome face had disappeared to reveal what should have been. For the few precious moments of this dream I was overjoyed. My brother had been given back to me.

I hold out no expectation of this dream ever coming true. I have read about and observed enough of this disorder to realize that schizophrenia rarely says goodbye after it has robbed someone of the best years of their lives. Still, it is not impossible that a breakthrough may be realized in his lifetime. Treatments involving drugs and vitamins remain the central hope of curing – or at least alleviating – what has since the onset of his illness been found to be a genetically transmitted chemical imbalance. Our family will wait. To see even a single line disappear from his worry-furrowed face, or the softest calm return to his wandering eyes, are causes for hope. ☆



# The New Terrorism

words J.B. Rabin

illustration Lisel Ashlock

There is a poison so deadly that it makes cyanide look like candy. The smallest amount ingested causes one to lose all muscle control and, shortly thereafter, stop breathing. Saddam Hussein was thought to have stores of it in Iraq before the Gulf War.

And now for the low, low price of \$295, you can have it injected into your face. It's Botox everybody and boy, does it make you look beautiful!

In case you're not familiar with this newest self-improvement procedure (making you one of the 12 people who have not yet experienced it for themselves), it is the act of having Botulinum toxin injected into your face at the sight of a wrinkle. It does not get rid of wrinkles by getting rid of wrinkles (how daft) but instead temporarily banishes the lines in your face by paralyzing those pesky facial muscles that caused them in the first place. Sure, it renders you incapable of smiling about the fact that you no longer have wrinkles but at least you can't frown about the fact that you can no longer smile.

It is not at all surprising that we Americans would do this to ourselves. We have proven through a long list of fad diets and surgical procedures that we value our

looks above our health. Take, for example, the Atkins you-won't-die-fat-but-you-will-die-soon Diet that encourages people to lose fat by eating as much of it as possible. This is ridiculous, of course, because everybody knows that the only reasonable way to lose weight is through liposuction.

We insert saline implants into our breasts, butts, chins, and cheeks to make us irresistible. These implants are perfectly safe — after all, they're made of the same harmless liquid that nurses put in our IVs when we land in the hospital after one of our breast, butt, chin, or cheek implants ruptures.

We are a nation that subsists on protein bars and coffee (the national beverage and official amphetamine of the 2004 Olympic team). We are the wealthiest, most privileged country in the world, and we eat as if we're receiving famine aid from other countries. There are people dying of malnutrition in other parts of the world and we intentionally starve ourselves so that we will look fabulous in our \$2,000 Armani outfit. Note: Please be careful not to eat the entire protein bar as you may be receiving nutrients from it.

The members of al Qaeda are spending millions of dollars and sacrificing their

lives in order to terrorize us. What they should do is start a movement called Cosmetological Terrorism, leaking news to the American media about fantastic new diets and plastic surgeries that promise to make us even more gorgeous than we already are. That way, they can piggyback on our already extensive efforts to terrorize ourselves.

For example, they could bribe a medical official to say that we can all achieve everlasting youth by eating nothing but Twinkies and McDonald's French fries. Sure, most of the country has already tried this particular strategy, but it only works if you simultaneously rub pure lye on your face, neck, and scalp (based on clinical, double-blind studies co-sponsored by McDonald's and Lye, Inc.).

If al Qaeda plays its cards right, we could be a nation of preternaturally cafeinated, obese people with singed hair and chemically burned faces whose artificial body parts sometimes explode before we drop dead of heart attacks.

Oh wait, we already are.

It all makes me wince. But you probably can't tell, because I can't actually move my face. ★





# Ms. Diagnosed

words Molly McCluskey  
illustration Joshua Krause

One of thousands of stories of Americans prescribed Ritalin to treat a disorder they don't have.  
Yay pharmaceutical industry!

I always knew I was different. It was never something I could put my finger on, I just knew I wasn't quite like other kids. My mother blamed it on my mood swings, of which there were many, or the migraines I started getting in the third grade and suffered from until the end of college. I slept a lot, had no energy and no motivation. Despite a generous IQ, my grades suffered.

I went through all the tests: allergies, sleep, even a CAT scan. Nothing was physically wrong with me.

It was frustrating. Seemingly unrelated symptoms plagued me. In high school, I became obsessed with my weight like many other girls and became anorexic. The headaches got worse. I slept more, taking long naps in the afternoon and often sleeping through dinner. I was ecstatically happy one moment, near tears the next. I went into therapy for depression and was constantly being called into the school counselor's office, a fact that isolated me as a "troubled student" and made me even more depressed.

In college, the migraines eased in frequency if not in intensity. I still had periods of depression which I thought I hid pretty well. I cut class, often, and was plagued by a lack of passion.

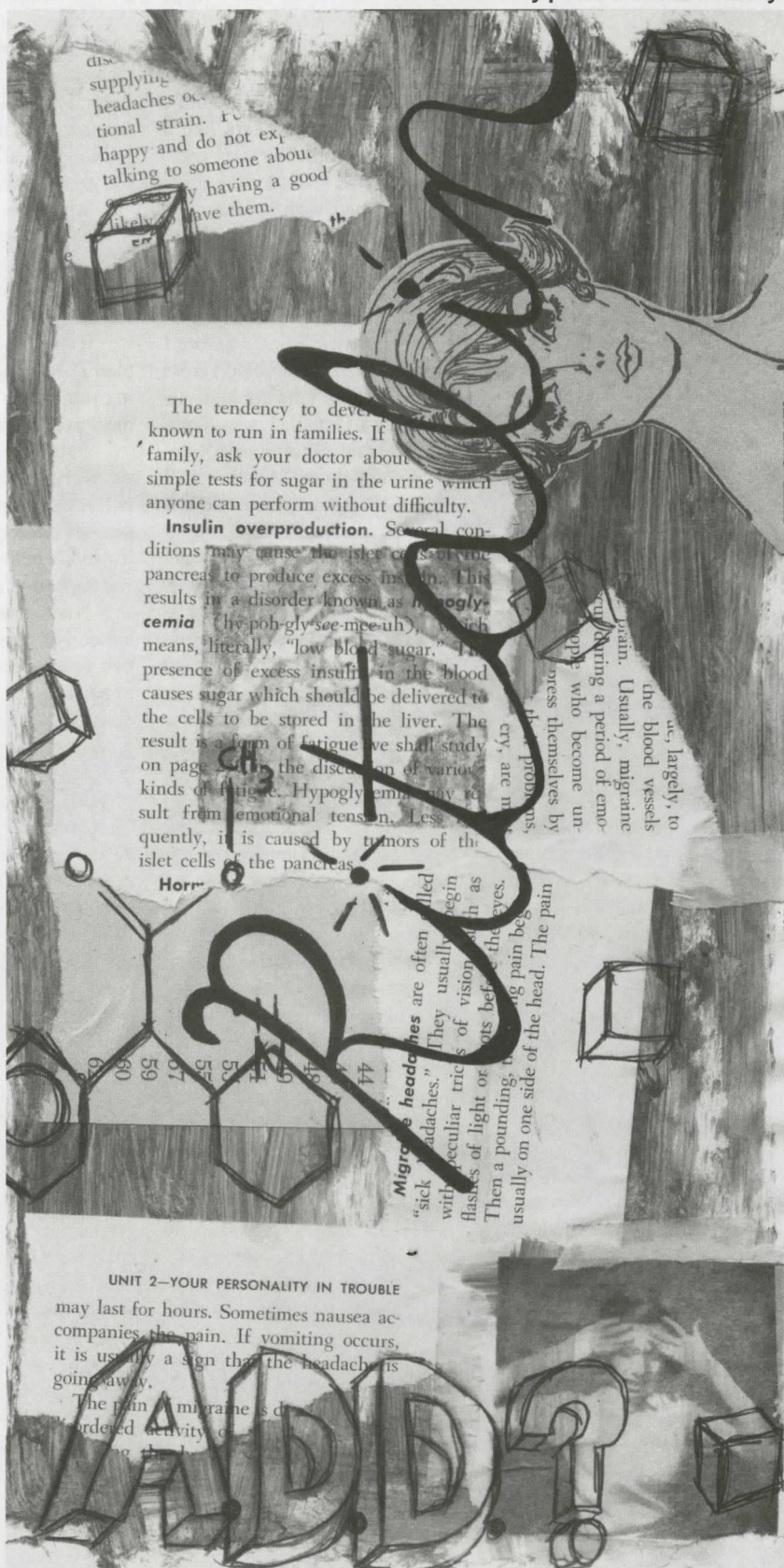
Anne Sexton wrote that we care about everything because we're desperately afraid we care about nothing. Attempting to compensate for caring about nothing, I became an overachiever, and in one year was the editor of the school newspaper, peer facilitator, active in the women's group, and because I'd always wondered what cheerleading was like, joined the squad.

It wasn't until my junior year that I had had enough. Therapy wasn't working; neither was immersing myself into school activities. Finally, at 20, an educational counselor diagnosed me with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). The counselor sent me to a psychiatrist, who on our first and only meeting lasting approximately 10 minutes, prescribed Ritalin.

While I was grateful to have found any answer, I still had the daunting task of telling my family, friends, and physician. Those diseases with initials just seemed to clump together, and it was as if I told them I had an STD or a VD. Nice girls just didn't get ADD. My family pharmacist, who used to sell my mother my teething rings, dropped his jaw in shock and said, "What are you doing using this stuff?" as he handed me a bottle over the counter. After a month's supply, the insurance company stopped covering the prescription (written with 12 refills by the good psychiatrist, after telling me the usual monthly visits weren't necessary).

The mood swings ceased, but not the headaches or the depression. If anything, the depression increased. Now, I walked around with a scarlet ADD

continued next page





pinned to my chest. I kept waiting for people to find out and it was making me paranoid. Each syllabus at the beginning of the semester instructed those with special needs to get in touch with the professor. The center for students with developmental disabilities was housed in a trailer on the back end of campus. I avoided both options and still waited to be called to the counselor's office.

This wasn't me. I didn't feel as though I had finally been liberated and was free to join like-minded people. Something wasn't right. As my symptoms persisted, though, I was convinced it *was* me. I mean, I had all the signs of ADD. What else could it be?

## GET RID OF RITALIN

•According to the makers of Ritalin, the diagnoses of ADD/ADHD in children increased from 950,000 in 1990 to 2,400,000 in 1996. Approximately 800,000 adults were prescribed Ritalin in 1997.

•The U.S. accounts for 90 percent of worldwide prescriptions of Ritalin.

•The DEA claims Ritalin will affect normal children and adults the same as those with attention and behavior problems.

•In 1998, the National Institutes of Mental Health declared ADD a real disease, even without a concrete definition of the occurrences or symptoms.

•The three main symptoms of ADD are almost identical to those of a moderate hypoglycemic (low blood sugar) attack.

I'd get jittery or nervous.

My heart would beat rapidly, pounding in my ears like a freight train. The ever-present mood swings were often combined with restlessness. At times, I felt like my brain was going so fast, I was literally spinning trying to keep up.

Finally, months before I graduated, I stumbled across the answer. I did not have Attention Deficit. I was hypoglycemic. Ritalin wasn't going to help me. Apparently, I wasn't the only one who had been misdiagnosed.

There is a backlash against Ritalin in our society. In his book *Talking Back to Ritalin*, Peter R. Breggin, MD., writes, "There is no solid evidence that ADD is a genuine disorder or disease of any kind." He continues to say labeling children with

ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, ADD's wired cousin) and prescribing Ritalin can stigmatize them for life, ruining self-esteem and demoralizing them, thus preventing them from reaching their full potential. In addition, anyone who has been diagnosed with Attention Deficit is ineligible for military service.

Symptoms of moderate hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) are almost indistinguishable from symptoms of ADD. These include irritability/restlessness/anger, confusion and an inability to concentrate, dizziness or headache, weakness, poor coordination, difficulty in walking or talking, fatigue, and drowsiness.

A severe drop, however, can include seizures or convulsions, hypothermia, and even unconsciousness or coma. A prolonged drop of blood sugar can lead to death.

Addictive nutrition specialist Kathleen DesMaisons, in her book, *Potatoes Not Prozac*, describes what she calls sugar sensitivity. Simply put, some people's bodies respond differently to sugar and carbohydrates than others. As a result, blood sugar levels can get dramatically high or low from foods that cause little or no change in other people. Suddenly, seemingly unrelated symptoms had a common cause.

I had gone off Ritalin months before, sleeping away most of my days as the drugs left my system. After evaluating my eating habits, I realized that what had been causing everything from the lack of interest to the migraines, was poor eating habits.

Never a coffee drinker, I'd grab a can of soda before an early class. A candy bar as a pick me up, mid afternoon. Eating on the run, I was fond of food that fit in my backpack: a bagel, an individual package of cereal. In between the period of coming off Ritalin and getting my blood sugar stabilized, I lacked energy to the point of thinking I had mono.

During moderate drops in blood sugar, after I'd have an overly sweet dessert or can of soda, I would become so disoriented that I wouldn't be able to comprehend whoever might have been speaking to me. At times, walking and speech could become difficult.

But, once I gave up caffeine, switched to whole wheat and everything organic, and stopped eating those afternoon candy bars I was so fond of, I noticed an immediate difference. The few pounds I had always struggled with fell off without my noticing, my energy level skyrocketed, and my focus became clear.

I made smarter choices when I went out with friends. Alcohol converts almost instantly to sugar, and on days when I have too much sugar, I have all the classic symptoms of a hangover the next morning: headache, nausea, dizziness. The same as a mild to moderate drop in blood sugar. (The cure for a hangover, then? Have some carbs or something sweet.)

My life is different since I learned what was causing what I affectionately call my insanity. I don't have to monitor my blood sugar or take medication, but had I kept up my pattern, both would have been likely. I eat well and it's become such a habit that I rarely think about it.

There have been larger changes but the biggest is that I'm happier. There is no worse feeling than that of your mind and body betraying you. There were times I thought I was crazy and the only outlet for me was to be holed away somewhere.

I still get a little hazy sometimes but it's rare. I know I need to eat every five to six hours and can set a clock by my body chemistry. If I'm going on a hike or a long drive, I throw a granola bar and some peanuts into my pack. I often have to start thinking about what I'm going to eat before I get hungry. An attack, as I call a blood sugar drop, can happen in a moment.

Numerous doctors could not have told me that I needed to eat better. Not surprising, since, although I have faith in my own doctor, two years working in pharmaceutical public relations has taught me to be skeptical of most

new diseases and prescriptions. For instance, the maker of Ritalin backs the campaign for ADD awareness and the makers of Prozac (and its sister pill, Lilly) sponsor the information on ADD on WebMd, the largest medical information website on the internet.

I could have stayed on Ritalin. The depression and shame would have increased, but there's Prozac for that. For the side effects, another pill. To cure the symptoms would have cost me physically, emotionally, and financially. To eliminate the problem, I just had to make a few small changes. ☆

**We have some presses,  
they have more.**

(Our critical mass...)

**We have some radio stations,  
they have more.**

(...will be built from...)

**We have some music,  
they have more.**

(...a million little...)

**We have some money,  
they have more.**

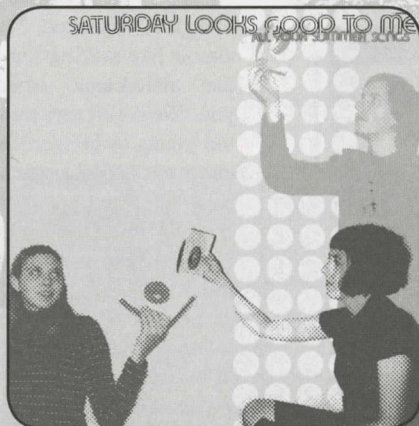
(...insurrections and interventions.)

[www.countdowntoputsch.org](http://www.countdowntoputsch.org)  
new 2xCD out on Crimethinc(.com)



# SATURDAY LOOKS GOOD TO ME

We'll forgive you if you've never heard of Fred Thomas, but do yourself a favor and let James Brubaker introduce you to one of America's greatest songwriters.



**I am nervous.** It is a Saturday night in Ann Arbor. I am sitting on Fred Thomas's bed. He sits on the floor, pulling CDs out of their cases so that his friends' band can have packaging for their new recording. The man is quiet, and a little bit shy. His hair is starting to get long, blond curls flipping up at the edges, bangs left slightly longer than the rest of his hair, combed over to the right so as to almost conceal his eye. We chat briefly about a new 10-inch record of local bands that has just been released.

Neither of us know yet that, in a few hours, Casimer Pascal will begin Pas/Cal's set by saying, "This song is by one of America's great song writers," before launching into a cover of "Car Crash," a Fred Thomas composition for his band Saturday Looks Good to Me. Maybe Fred truly is one of the great American songwriters. He is prolific, that is for sure, and an unprecedented majority of his songs are truly great. I realized during Pascal's cover of Fred's song why I was a little bit nervous during the interview. It is the prospect of interviewing somebody so talented. The interview, of course, went well. We started off at a good place, the humble beginnings of Saturday Looks Good to Me.

"My good friend Ben Bracken did a solo show where he took the Beach Boy's *Pet Sounds* box set and remixed it live," Fred says, scanning his CD rack in search of unloved CDs that could lose their jewel cases. He continues, "I didn't see the show. This was in December of 1998." It just so happened that, at the same time as this show, Fred was in the process of creating numerous experimental recordings, as he usually is. At one point he recorded over a tape that Ben had left at his house. The tape was a three-second loop of an instrumental outtake from the song "God Only Knows."



Fred Thomas and Erika Hoffman



"I had been working on all these different recordings, and here was this sample, and I put drums on top of it with a lot of reverb, and then added all sorts of sounds over this loop, and I thought, 'this is really good.'" Thus began the slow evolution of Saturday's first record. That first record might not have ever happened if not for a revelation that Thomas had while working on that first song.

"I never understood why I liked the Beach Boys," he pauses, and looks over at his records, stacked sideways in crates. "It took me a long time to understand why. Maybe I only listened to them at first because people told me they were cool. But when I was working on this song, I began to understand the universal appeal of pop music." It is this "universal appeal of pop music," that has become the groundwork for Saturday's music.

That first song ended up becoming "I Can't Think About Tomorrow." The finished song excited Fred and many of his friends, and soon more songs were being worked on and more of Fred's friends were contributing to the process. At the core was Fred, laying down the basic tracks to loosely written songs, and beyond that the project seemed to take on a life of its own. "Sometimes Jake Danziger and Zach Wallace would come over and do string and upright bass parts. I never sat down and wrote any of those songs though, they were all just ad-libbed from a very rough idea as they were recorded."

This first record was originally released on vinyl on May 18, 2000, and has since been reissued on CD. After the release of this first record, Saturday was not what most people would consider a typical band. The band didn't begin playing live shows until an entire year later. Once the band started playing out, it was no secret that their live shows were different from their records. "Our first record is probably the most stripped down, weirdest, most fucking out of tune thing in the world," said Fred, "And it still sounded totally different from those first over the top, out of tune shows." The live shows, instead of relying on the lush arrangements and experimentations of the recordings, found inspiration in the manic energies of punk rock, and old soul and R&B bands. "Even in its punkiest, you can never replicate a studio sound in a live band."

This problem of arranging the songs live was not the main reason why a year passed between the record and the first show. Fred never intended for this project to be a traditional band. "I never even thought about the possibility of the band as a career or anything except an immediate expression of what was happening. There were so many ridiculously bad things happening in my life. I was just trying to express these severely depressed, unhappy feelings while, at the same time,

appreciating the discovery that comes out of that."

Now, three years after the first record, two years after that first show, Saturday Looks Good to Me has found a home for its new record in Polyvinyl Records. The new record, which Fred worked on for almost two years, is rooted in many of the same ideas as the first. The new one, like the first, was recorded almost entirely on four-track, albeit this time in various basements, living rooms, rehearsal spaces, and even a grange hall in Rhode Island. The new record also features a long list of personnel that includes many of Fred's friends. In addition to a good number of the first

album's original players, *All Your Summer Songs* includes Ted Leo and Jodi VB, Tara Jane O'Neil, Jessica Bailiff and members of Ida. "The new record was equally accidental at parts, but much more work went into it. The first record was mixed and edited in a day. The new one took so fucking long. We took three or four days on a song sometimes. There was just so much more going on... But the root of it is a couple of kids in the basement, ad-libbing basic tracks. I just added everything else and cleaned it up later I'd say that half the songs on there were complete accidents."

While the two records are rooted in the same, "accidental" creation process, the differences are vast and stunning. The lush texturing of the new record makes it feel special. The listener can hear Fred toiling at the mixing board, fitting everything together into this magnificent record.

The sound isn't the only thing that makes this record special, though. As with all of his projects, the lyrics are very important and Fred has always enjoyed sharing the meaning of his lyrics with his audience. Lovesick, another music project, was known for talking about meaning between songs, which was an idea that didn't always sit well with audiences. The lyrics that Fred wrote for Lovesick were somewhat direct, and most of the

time political, even if in a personal context. The meanings of Saturday's lyrics don't always expose themselves easily. Reading the

lyrics while listening can be a strange experience; lyrics filled with sorrow and frustration being sung over lushly arranged ballads, or peppy dance songs. "That juxtaposition is an expression that things are fucked up, but there is always a lot of hope and chances to

feel glad," says Fred. "It's almost like making fun of the melodrama around you. We are all very much too young to be worrying about a lot of what we are worrying about."

With this dichotomy of sound and meaning, Fred isn't sure what exactly he wants people

to walk away from his music with. "Maybe there is a band that is based on veganism and trying to communicate those political ideas to people. Then there are other bands who are like 'fuck that, we're a rock and roll band, let's have some fun.' I want my band to say, 'Let's have some fun... don't eat animals.'" It is this subversive hybrid of joy and politics that characterize Saturday Looks Good to Me and help to make their work innovative and inspiring.

In the future, the live band will be recording in a studio for the first time, and Fred hopes to do some more touring. Of course, Fred has never been one to settle on one band. Fred continues to work on solo material and another of his bands, Flashpaper, has had a record completed for almost a year and is waiting for release. Another of Fred's projects, Surrounded by Snakes, a noise-core band, hopes to record over the summer. Fred also has been working on a new project with some of his friends from Detroit. On top of all this, Fred continues to run Ypsilanti records, an outlet for his own and his friends' musical recordings.

It seems fair to say that Fred Thomas is one of the hardest working musicians in the world right now, and who knows, maybe some day he will be remembered as one of the great American song writers. ★







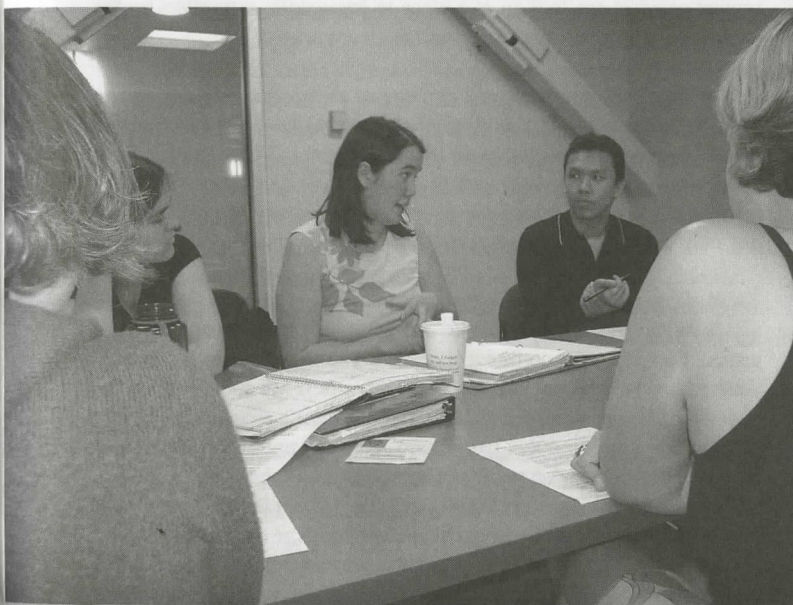
# organizer + catalyst

Think of an organizer as a catalyst. In the true sense of the word, a catalyst doesn't get used up in the reaction.

# LAURA CLOSE

interview by Chris Crass

photos Audrey Ward



Laura Close moves fast. I first met her at a student activist conference when she was on tour with Call to Action giving workshops around the country. In between leading workshops on group decision-making and strategic planning, she would stop for a minute to talk with other young activists. I'd hear her say things like: "We need to learn the skills to build our movements, to build our power, to win concrete demands, and stick with it for the long haul." At 21, she was the national organizer of the STARC Alliance, Students Transforming and Resisting Corporations. She's been to over 70 campuses around the United States and given over 100 workshops. She teamed up with Nisha Anand to lead anti-racism trainings in the primarily white sections of the global justice movement. She helped put together a training program with STARC that now includes grassroots organizing, direct action, womyn's leadership, and anti-classism workshops. She worked with a team of organizers to develop an eight-week intensive training program for student activists to learn organizing skills and develop their political analysis. Her work is guided by a commitment to developing other people's leadership.

Many have said that the mass actions in Seattle helped launch a new generation of activists and I agree, but often movement building is talked about as if it's a spontaneous phenomenon. I do believe that material conditions of systemic injustice and the fundamental drive for dignity and justice are at the core of why movements develop, and I also believe that the billions (literally) of hours of hard work by people like Laura Close are at the heart of how movements grow. Charles Payne, an historian of the Civil Rights movement, writes in "I've Got the Light of Freedom," "Overemphasizing the movement's more dramatic features, we undervalue the patient and sustained effort, the slow, respectful work, that made the dramatic moments possible." That work has been and continues to be overwhelmingly done by women. The struggle for effective organizing that winds justice is very much connected to building movement that develops, promotes, recognizes, and values women's leadership. Laura Close has taught me much about sustained and respectful work over the years and organizers like her around the world are building our movements for liberation.



*Clamor: How did you get into politics and what led you to become an organizer?*

Laura: My Jewish mother passed on a rich tradition of protest to me that began with my family arriving in the U.S. during WWII. She taught me to be very self-aware; she was also an organizer while I was growing up. First she worked with Results, a national grassroots network started in the seventies, to pressure the U.S. government to fund hunger programs. They also emphasize supporting people in discovering their ability to affect political change. Later, when the first Bush ran for office, she signed on with the Democratic Party as precinct leader for the Dukakis campaign. I remember door knocking in our neighborhood when I was eight, my mom was trying to engage people in political conversations and all I could think about was needing to pee and whether or not they'd let me use the bathroom. My stepfather, who joined us when I was seven, is also radical and raised me on a diet of philosophy and current politics, so I was raised politically but it wasn't until I had participated in Earth First! and other white anarchist groups, a successful campus anti-sweatshop campaign, and several mass protests that I began to value organizing. Initially, as an activist, I hated the divide I perceived between activism and organizing, but since that time I have engaged in organizing work and you can just *feel* the difference. It was my friend Dara Silverman who first encouraged me to call myself an "organizer" and take pride in my work. Organizing is about building power, and building people's organizations that can stick around to win not only one victory but many thereafter. I think the majority white activist world I participated in for years was essentially scared of power. It seems to me that we felt so powerless in the face of mainstream society's death march that we created myths out of corporations and the government. We made them into devils and we made them so out of reach that the very idea of having power or building it was inherently evil because that's what we associated with them – power. As activists, we never had a conversation about increasing our power to fight back, we primarily talked and operated from a perspective of lashing out: an action here, a covert event there, a conference here, and a mobilization there. The question of how effective these events and actions were was sometimes debated but ultimately people seemed offended if the topic was pursued too long. It seemed that at the end of the day, everything we did was inherently justified by our intent (to destroy the government/capitalism, save the forest, end sweatshop labor). In organizing, I find my work justified by the effectiveness (how much money was directed to low-income families, which new person is gaining skills and confidence, which government official we held accountable), which is how I think it should be. Intent is nice but it doesn't bring down the government. As my hunger to see an effective people's movement in the United States grew, I began looking around me for people and groups modeling effective, liberation focused work. I found that community organizers were doing the hardest most amazing work – building skills and confidence with the people most hurt by oppression. And for me, women and transgendered folks who believe in themselves continue to be an inspiration within that world of community organizing. My friends Nisha Anand and Kim Marks were some of the first women to really model self-love as well as unashamed public leadership to me.

*You were the national organizer for Students Transforming and Resisting Corporations and have been involved in student activism for years. What is STARC and what role do you see it playing in the broader student movement?*

STARC is a network of student and youth activist groups across the country which, at their core, agree with our principles of anti-racism, liberation, and quality organizing. The typical kid, like me, comes into STARC all fired up to save the world and comes out skilled, and ready to focus locally and strategically and a lot more dedicated to the long haul that is movement building. I highly recommend that anyone reading

this article apply for our eight-week Summer Organizing Institute in San Francisco ([www.staralliance.org](http://www.staralliance.org)). I joined STARC at the start of my sophomore year of college. Having seen the power of national coordination play out in the WTO protests in Seattle, I realized that the work we were doing locally at University of Oregon might improve if we were in contact with other young activists. I went on to become West Coast coordinator and called students from Hawaii to Southern California to Wyoming on a regular basis and began to understand we were facing a mutual problem: lack of skills. Well, that's normal since we were all young and just really getting involved in many ways. The problem was we, including myself, basically thought if we tried hard enough we could just make it all up. Well, that's called reinventing the wheel since there is a basic skill set to organizing that you need to learn, you can use it when and how you see fit, but it's sort of vocational, I would never tell a car mechanic or an organizer that they had an easy job, you know? That's why STARC is so amazing; we work with young activists who are typically white and middle class who are just waking up to their outrage. Demographically, a lot of these kids start on their radical path motivated by their anger at powerful corporations, so we work with them in that belief and we support them in building skills, building an analysis of power in the US, building confidence, and building our community of resistance. Typically STARCies, including myself, graduate from our corporate rage to a more complex outlook that focuses on our role as middle-class allies in the struggle and informs our political work. The year I was national organizer for STARC, I visited over a dozen campuses and our Summer Organizing Institute was created by myself, the previous year's organizer, Eric Romann, and a team of other folks. We were motivated to create a stable institution that energetic student activists can look to as a place to learn skills and reflect on the work they've already done. So spread the word people.

*You've put an enormous amount of time and energy into anti-oppression work in the mostly white sections of the student movement and global justice movement. You and your training partner, Nisha Anand, have done anti-racism workshops with groups all over the country. Could you talk about what anti-oppression work is, how you've been practicing it and how it relates to building social justice movements?*

These days, my definition is that anti-oppression work is the practice of liberating yourself in order to act as an effective force for social justice. You just can't do this work unless you're willing to look inside yourself and be changed in your core. The work is not about helping the oppressed; as a person with skin/class privilege it's about changing my life and behaviors, and that shit is hard. I change my life and behaviors because I understand that my intent not to be racist is beautiful, but when my actions don't reflect my intent, well, the impact is that I perpetuate oppression on the people without skin/class privilege that I interact with. A couple big things I work on currently are concretely supporting the organizers of color I work with and making space for my white friends from poor families. Something that became evident when I reflected on the first couple years of my anti-racist ally practices was that my practice was very externally focused. Not only was I not keeping the work in my heart/internal to myself, I was not really focusing on the organizers and activists of color who I saw and worked with on a regular basis. I was doing the work for people of color everywhere; keeping it specific and real was very hard so now I try to take my friends out to lunch, make a point of publicly thanking them for their contribution, of asking them questions like "Do you need any help? If so, can I help?" or "What are you working on right now?" A key thing is also publicly supporting their suggestions and ideas when the opportunity arises in meetings and events. I also like to ask my friends of color to give me feedback on my current strategies and plans, building those casual but consistent forms of accountability. As far as supporting my white friends from working class and poor families, this relates to learning my anti-racism from white men. Not only did I try to keep race and class really separate



## Anti-oppression work is the practice of liberating yourself in order to act as an effective force for social justice. The work is not about helping the oppressed; as a person with skin/class privilege it's about changing my life and behaviors, and that shit is hard.

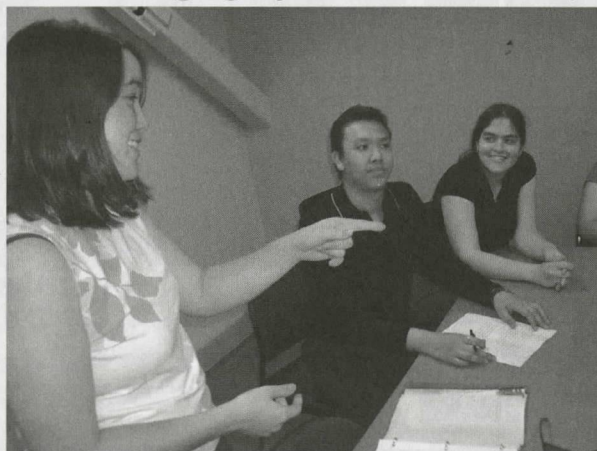
but I was also mildly traumatized by white guys who would freak out about their class oppression and then use it as a wall to hide from their racism, so I stopped talking about class, which was unhealthy to say the least. I constantly struggle with the charity thing that us middle-class femme whiteys are hit hard with – that is, basing my work out of desire to help the needy rather than reclaim myself and fight oppression – so talking about class is really important to my own well being and contributes mightily to my ability to really be changed by the ideas, stories, and concerns that my working class friends bring to the table.

*As a white anti-racist, what are some challenges you've faced and what are some lessons you've learned?*

As I already mentioned, I learned my anti-racism from white men. Like all other places in the movement, it seems white men are too often held up as experts on anti-racism. Well, the result was me thinking that we had to separate race from class, from ethnicity, from gender, from sexuality. What a mess. This approach ultimately enabled the guys to retain power over me and other gender-oppressed people by using anti-racism to hide from their sexism. Reading Audre Lorde and working with people of color, women, and trans folks has helped me to move and now honor the complex identities that each person brings to the table. Yeah, when I get confused I turn to multi-racial feminist books from the late seventies – that material is killer, it always rocks my world. The second big lesson that I struggle with every day is extracting anti-racism from my intellectual side, my brain, and keeping it focused on and grounded in my heart. More specifically, I've observed that I and most white people usually make the biggest mistakes when we're acting cerebral, only reading books for instance, or rationalizing our behavior. We have the most success when we are grounded in our own ability to have hurt feelings, our desire to change our own lives, when we establish genuine relationships with people of color. Operating out of a heart-based place is very difficult but imperative to my work.

*In working with student groups nationally, you've written about the importance of building confidence in young people, the importance of supporting women's leadership and the need for men to be allies to each other in the struggle against sexism. Can you say more about each of these?*

I talk about building confidence in young people and others due to two main reasons. One, I had my own confidence in my ability to take leadership built up and felt the difference, and two, my friend Dara Silverman explained to me that organizing is the task of building powerful organizations by building skills, confidence, and analysis one person at a time. That saying really contextualized my lived experience. As my confidence was built, I was able to more effectively build the organizations I worked in. This has made me a big advocate of confidence building. Basically, as a woman, I know we get acceptance and approval when we fulfill our gender role and place ourselves second, so we work our asses off in movement organizations accommodating and supporting the leadership of others. I was doing that for sure, and then I got the chance to go on a tour in fall of 2000 and lead women's groups at 25 different locations from NYC to Arkansas to Iowa to LA. These consciousness-raising groups allowed the women participating to understand that their lived oppression was a shared experience, that sexism still exists. Sexism is not the only battle of course, but good lord – the value of consciousness-



raising groups cannot be underestimated. It was definitely a little depressing to think that this work is going to always be needed with each generation, to renew our understandings that we each participate in a shared, systemic oppression. What sticks with me are the looks on these women's faces as they shared their stories, as they were listened to and validated on topics ranging from rape in their activist community to the lack of recognition for their activism to how hard it is to love themselves. To men reading this,

I'd say please publicly support each other in becoming allies to women and trans people in your groups. Most important, I think, is mentoring the incoming younger or newer men to the movement. Make a point of taking them out to coffee and sharing with them the ways in which you struggle with sexism. Keeping these relationships public helps to establish a cultural norm of men discussing their sexism with each other. Having recently returned to college and thus college organizing locally, I am reintroduced to the profound need for male-to-male mentors among my group members. [Note: here in Portland there is a men's group established which I have great hope for.] This all of course is hopefully complemented by women and trans people working to decolonize our minds through consciousness raising and other tools. As part of the decolonization process, I feel there's a never-ending need to publicly recognize and honor the hard work of these people who are consistently and systematically made invisible.

*What keeps you going when it seems like ruling class forces are winning and that racism, classism, sexism, and heterosexism strengthen their power while they undermine the power of social justice movements?*

My (white anti-racist) women's group, my partner, my local network of friends whom I have very intentionally invested energy into after the revelation that I deserve friends. Many activists and organizers suffer because we do hard social justice work and deny ourselves the luxury of friends. I learned that if I do not have a network of supportive people, it is all my doing. I also depend on political hip-hop, bell hooks, multiracial feminist literature, and my unflagging desire for a people's uprising.

*As a young person who has been heavily involved in activism, what does it mean to you to be healthy and take care of yourself so you can be in the struggle for the long haul?*

Oh god, I need health care. We all need health care. Anyone reading this who is bored, go out and organize around health care. I want to have babies, so I would like an organizing job that I can support many people on. I would like capitalism to end, but in the meantime I'd like better pay. Having recently enjoyed an instance of it in my own life, I need more men in the movement to take a private and public stand to own their sexism. I am starving for that work. I also need ongoing trainings and workshops that allow reflection on my actions. Most critically, I need people who are as committed as me to watch movies with, strategize with, bake for, lockdown to, push me/be pushed, and give me back rubs and ass kickings when appropriate. ☆



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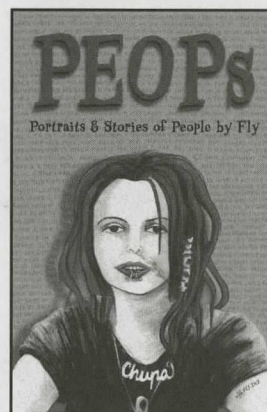
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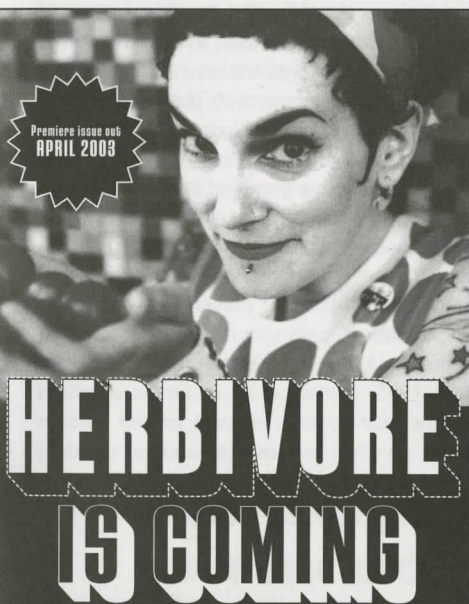


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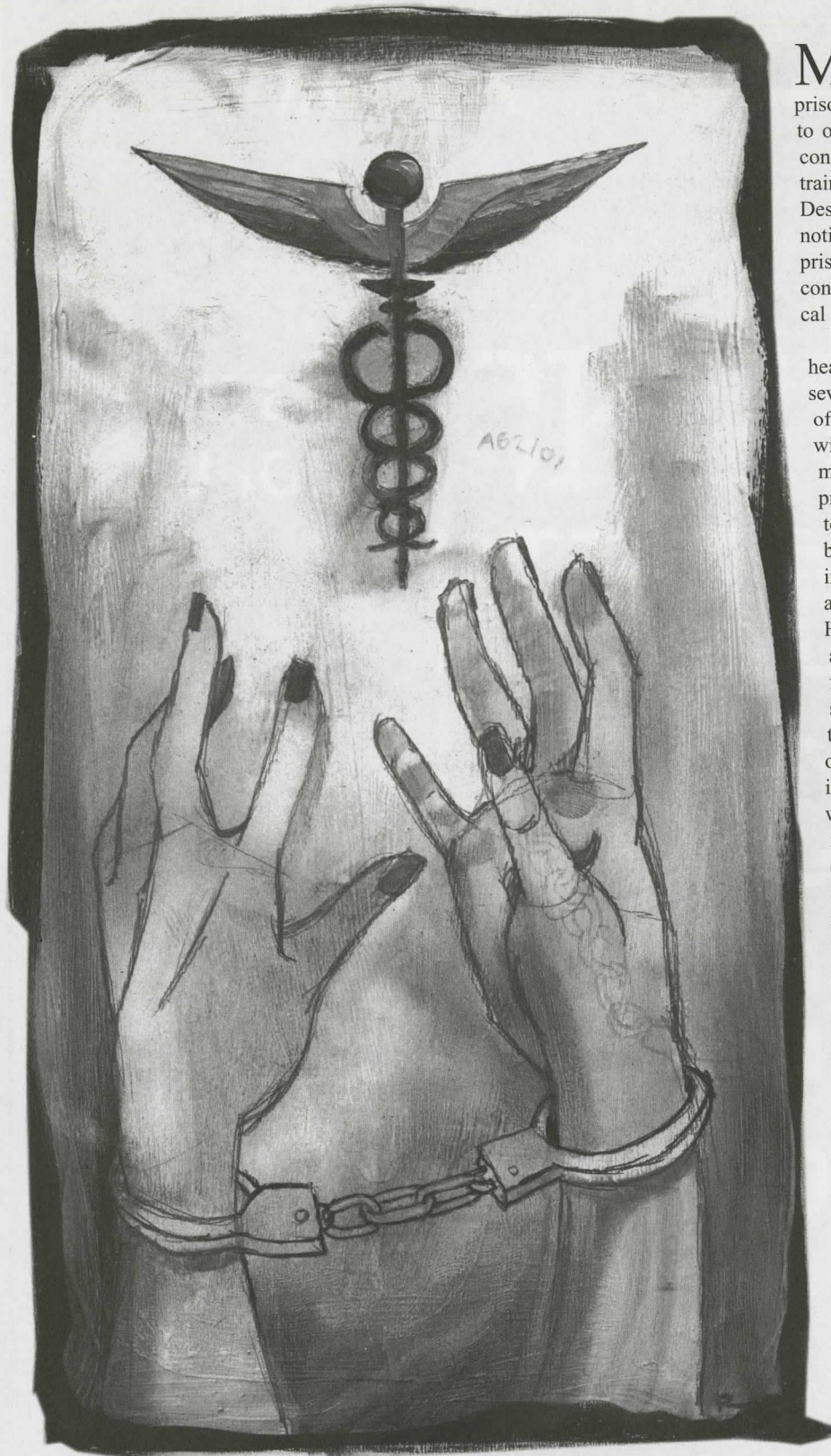
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Medical neglect and malpractice are issues faced by prisoners across the United States. Women in prison, however, face the additional challenge of trying to obtain adequate care for specifically female health concerns from prison administrators and medical staff trained and accustomed to treating male prisoners. Despite the lack of outside support and the prevailing notion that female inmates do not organize to change prison conditions, women in prison have been and continue to be proactive in demanding adequate medical care.

Pregnancy is one of the more common female health concerns, yet even prison wardens agree that several of its needs "have yet to be dealt with in any of the facilities," including adequate resources to deal with false labors, premature births and miscarriages; maternity clothing; changing the requirement that pregnant inmates wear belly chains when transported to the hospital; and a separate area for mother and baby. A 1999 study by the Department of Justice indicated that six percent of women entered jail and five percent entered prison while pregnant. However, only three percent of pregnant jail inmates and four percent of pregnant state prisoners were found to have received prenatal care since admission. Pregnant women are also not provided with the proper diets or vitamin supplements, given the opportunity to exercise or taught breathing and birthing techniques. In one instance, a twenty-year-old woman, who was almost five months pregnant when incarcerated, began experiencing vaginal bleeding, cramping and severe pain. She requested medical assistance numerous times over a three-week period, but there was no obstetrician contracted with the prison. She was finally seen by the chief medical officer, an orthopedist, who diagnosed her without examining her physically or running any laboratory tests, and given Flagyl, a drug that can induce labor. The next day, the woman went into labor. Her son lived approximately two hours.

Pregnancy is not the only female medical concern ignored by prison officials. Prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, pain alleviation and rehabilitation for breast cancer are virtually non-existent in prisons. In 1998, a study at an unnamed Southern prison found that seventy percent of the women who should have had mammograms under standard medical protocol had not been tested. Although many of the women were at high risk because of

family histories, they were not provided with a clinical breast exam, information or basic education on self-examination upon admittance. At the California Institute for Women, Sherrie Chapman pleaded for nine years before receiving medical attention for the lumps on her breasts. By that point, cancer had progressed and she was forced to undergo two mastectomies and a hysterectomy.

Similarly, cervical cancer and other female illnesses are commonly misdiagnosed and mistreated, sometimes with alarming consequences. At Oregon's new women's prison, Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, Danielle Conatser was given a Pap smear which came back with abnormalities. The prison's doctor informed her that she had cervical cancer. Conatser, who had given birth six weeks earlier, requested a second opinion. She was then told she would be put to sleep for a biopsy. When she awoke, she was told that the doctor who had originally diagnosed her had removed a good portion of her cervix, thus making it unlikely that she would have children in the future. Conatser never received a second opinion or any follow-up care. She continues to live with the fear that she has cancer.

Not only are the particular health care needs of women ignored or dismissed, but health care in general is often inadequate or life-threatening. Darlene Dixon recalled her visit to a private clinic contracted by her prison: "There was no disposable paper on the table to create a sanitary barrier between my body and the examination table. The room was basically in disarray; there were spilled liquids on the counter tops as well as debris on the floor." In the restroom was a sink filled with "soiled and bloody tubes, lids and bottles. Even more disturbing were the clean ones located on top of the toilet tank beside it. It rapidly became apparent to me that these items were being washed and reused."

In addition, illiteracy and poor literacy can be an obstacle to obtaining medical care. As Ellen Richardson, an inmate at Valley State Prison for Women (VSPW) in California, testified: "The medical staff triage [is] based on how the patient states her symptoms on paper." This procedure ignores the fact that the average literacy level at VSPW is less than ninth grade, that over seven hundred women have less than a sixth-grade reading level and that approximately one hundred are illiterate or speak English as a second language. "A woman may have extreme stomach pain and cramping, but only have the literacy level to write, 'I have a tummy ache.' That is not enough for medical staff to let her see a doctor."

Medical neglect has sometimes led to preventable deaths. In February 2000, Wisconsin prisoner Michelle Greer suffered an asthma attack and asked to go to the Health Services Unit (HSU). When the guard and captain on duty contacted the nurse in charge, he did not look at Greer's medical file, simply instructing her to use her inhaler (which was not working). Half an hour later, Greer's second request to go to HSU was also ignored. After another half hour, Greer was told to walk to HSU but collapsed en route. When the nurse in charge arrived, it was without a medical emergency box or oxygen. A second nurse arrived with the needed emergency box, but again with no oxygen. Forty-five minutes after her collapse (and less than two hours after her initial plea for medical help), Greer died.

However, women have been active about trying to change their sometimes life-threatening medical neglect. The most successful and well-known prisoner-initiated project organized around health care is the AIDS Counseling and Education Project (ACE) at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in New York. AIDS is the leading cause of death among U.S. prisoners, being five to ten times more prevalent in prison than in the outside society. In 1999, the New York State Department of Health found that the rate of HIV infection among women entering the New York State Correctional Facilities was nearly twice that of their male counterparts. In 1987, inmates at Bedford Hills, motivated by watching their friends die of AIDS and by the social ostracism and fear of people with AIDS, started ACE.

ACE founders hoped to educate and counsel their fellow inmates about HIV/AIDS as well as help to care for women with AIDS in the prison infirmary. Although the prison superintendent gave the group permission for the project, ACE continually faced staff harassment and administrative interference. For instance, because both Kathy Boudin and Judith Clark, alleged members of the Weather Underground, were active ACE members, the group was constantly monitored and sometimes prevented from officially meeting. Fear that the one-to-one peer counseling sessions would lead to inmate organizing as well as the staff's own ignorance of HIV/AIDS led to staff harassment and interference. Educators from the Montefiore Hospital holding training sessions were banned from the facility for suggesting that the Department of Correctional Services lift its ban on dental dams and condoms. A year after its formation, ACE members were prohibited from meeting at their regular time, from using their meeting room, giving educational presentations or to referring to themselves as "counselors."

**As the fastest growing population in American prisons,  
women face medical neglect and malpractice in epidemic proportions**

# BARRIERS TO BASIC CARE

words Victoria Law illustration Rich Sanderson



Despite these setbacks, the members of ACE not only managed to implement and continue their program, but also received a grant for a quarter million dollars from the AIDS Institute and wrote and published a book detailing the group's history and its positive impact on women with AIDS as a guide for other prison AIDS programs. One interesting aspect is that despite ACE's success, male prisoners attempting to set up similar programs at their facilities continue to meet with administrative resistance and retaliation.

Other women political prisoners have also focused on the AIDS crisis behind bars. Marilyn Buck, for example, started an AIDS education and prevention program in California. In 1994, three HIV-positive inmates at Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) began a peer-education program encompassing not only HIV and AIDS, but also other sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis and Hepatitis C.

Women have also worked individually and without the auspices of administrative approval to change their health care. Until her recent death, California prisoner Charisse Shumate worked with her fellow inmates with sickle-cell anemia to understand the disease and the necessary treatments. She also advocated the right to compassionate release for any prisoner with less than a year to live and was the lead plaintiff in the class-action lawsuit *Shumate v. Wilson*, challenging medical conditions throughout the state's prison system. Unfortunately, Shumate herself died at CCWF, away from family and friends, because the Board of Prison Terms recommended clemency rather than compassionate release. Governor Gray Davis refused to approve the Board's recommendation. Four years before her death, Shumate wrote: "I took on [the battle] knowing the risk could mean my life in more ways than one...And yes, I would do it all over again. If I can save one life from the medical nightmare of CCWF Medical Department then it's well worth it." Her work did not cease with her death. Women who had worked with her continue the task of teaching others how "to understand their lab work and how to chart their results, keep a medical diary, hold 'these people' accountable to what they say and do to them." Sherrie Chapman, one of the 26 inmates who testified in *Shumate v. Wilson*, became the primary plaintiff in a class-action suit over medical conditions as well as filing a civil suit charging the CDC with cruel and unusual punishment after being forced to wait years for cancer treatment.

In Wisconsin, an anonymous female prisoner telephoned the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* to report the medical neglect leading to Michelle Greer's death. This one phone call prompted *Sentinel* reporter Mary Zahn to begin investigating. Two weeks after Greer's unnecessary death, Zahn not only publicized the story, but also turned the death into a "minor sensation." The publicity led the Wisconsin Department of Corrections to investigate the incident and suspend the two nurses who initially ignored Greer's requests for medical assistance and then bungled their eventual response, leaving her to die. The article also prompted the state's Assembly's Corrections and Courts Committee to hold investigative hearings into the incident.

This one story led to the paper's own investigation as to whether the neglect causing Greer's death was an isolated incident. For the following eight months, Zahn and a fellow journalist Jessica McBride investigated every prisoner death since 1994, revealing "a dysfunctional health care system in which gravely ill prisoners, often while literally begging for medical treatment, are ignored — and sometimes even disciplined for being 'aggressive' or 'disruptive.'" Their findings led to a series of articles about the inadequate and often times life-threatening medical care in Wisconsin prisons, prompting the state's lawmakers to introduce legislation requiring better-trained medical staff, improved medical record-keeping, and the creation of an independent panel of outside medical experts to review prison deaths.

This anonymous woman prisoner protested the conditions of the prison-industrial complex and ensured that Greer's death, as well as those of other Wisconsin inmates, would not remain swept under the rug. Similarly, the works of ACE, Marilyn Buck, Charisse Shumate and other women address crucial issues facing women in prison and contradict the notion that women do not and cannot network and organize to change their conditions. ★

#### Further Reading

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The Women of the ACE Program of the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. *Breaking the Walls of Silence: AIDS and Women in a New York State Maximum-Security Prison*. Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press. 1998.

California Coalition for Women Prisoners: [womenprisoners.org](http://womenprisoners.org)

## REVIEW PUNK FUCKIN' ROCK

### NOFX

*The War on Errorism*  
Fat Wreck Chords, 2003  
[www.fatwreck.com](http://www.fatwreck.com)

### Good Riddance

*Bound By Ties of Blood And Affection*  
Fat Wreck Chords, 2003  
[www.fatwreck.com](http://www.fatwreck.com)

San Francisco-based Fat Wreck Chords can lay claim to what are arguably the two most anticipated punk releases of the year. Since both bands have been around since the 1980's, it's worth noting that both releases, while being markedly distinct in style and lyrical content, are probably the best of their respective, storied careers.

For nearly 20 years, NOFX have skillfully mixed their social commentary with humor and deft musicianship. *The War on Errorism* finds the band pointing their collective finger at those who are culturally, politically, and musically apathetic.

On the whole, there is a sense immediacy (and a bit of anger) that surrounds this album which can best be found on "The Separation of Church and Skate," the blistering album opener that takes Christian "punk" to task and demands to know "when did punk rock become

so safe?" Another standout track, "The Irrationality of Rationality," which could easily be about Enron, tackles corporate greed and brainwashing while showcasing NOFX's infectious riffing.

If the reasons-to-vote "Idiots Are Taking Over" doesn't motivate some of-age suburban punk to participate, it's doubtful anything will.

Amidst all the finger-pointing and political calls-to-action, NOFX does not forget the requisite silly punk songs that fans have come to adore — and expect. This album finds the band waxing about a girl who has no appendages (the hilarious "She's Nubs"), poking fun at their own advancing age (the band will retire to "Mattersville"), and the daunting task of merging vintage punk rock record collections ("We Got Two Jealous Agains").

While *The War on Errorism* opens on a blistering, angry note it closes on a decidedly quiet and sobering one. "Whoops, I OD'd" finds Fat Mike in the studio with only his Danelectro bass and his voice.

*The War on Errorism* confirms not only NOFX's relevance to modern-day punk but also its place as one of the most innovative of all.

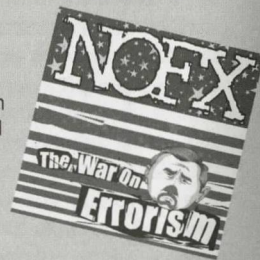
Label mates Good Riddance — one of Fat Wreck's earliest signings — also spent the winter in the studio recording their melodic hardcore masterpiece, *Bound By Ties of Blood and Affection*. The title aptly suggests that

this is a heavy album both lyrically and musically and confirms Good Riddance's place as Fat Wreck's resident social and political instigators (well, along with Propagandhi).

Frontman Russ Rankin has outdone himself lyrically, even taking a Bukowski poem ("Here I Am") and making it his own. The band jumps right in with "Made To Be Broken," *Bound By Ties'* angry lead track about alienation. "Up the Affiliates" takes aims at both the sanitized media outlets and the general public's addiction to them. Another standout track, "Black Bag Confidential," points the finger at the gated, suburbia-types.

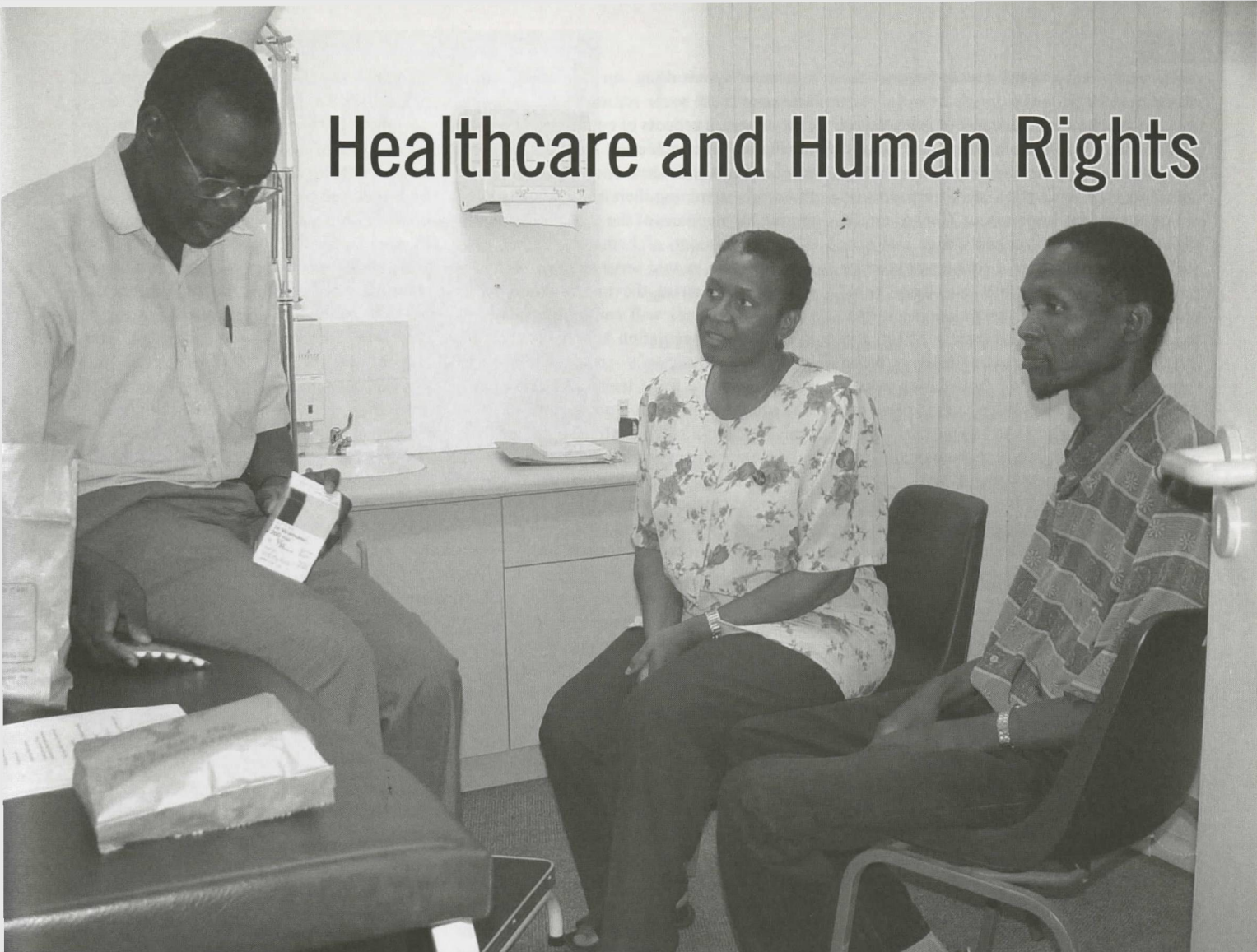
All in all, Good Riddance shows no signs of easing into middle age gracefully. Playing blistering riffs and jolt-you-out-of-your-chair singing, the band is doing what too many hardcore bands fail to do: stick to what they know best and don't compromise.

—Jason Perry





# Healthcare and Human Rights



## Defining Health and the Physician's Social Responsibility

by Samir Hussain

The notion of health as a human right has become a persuasive rallying cry around which to mobilise the general public in hopes of achieving equitable standards of health care across the globe. Unfortunately, however, the comprehensive socio-political, economic, and historical analyses operating out of an anti-oppressive framework that ought to accompany such a laudable ideal remain fairly undeveloped within much of the medical world. Indeed, until deep-rooted structures are scrutinised, and more uncomfortable questions are asked, achieving health through human-rights advocacy will remain a pipe dream.

It may be argued that we find ourselves situated in humanity's most hypocritical hour, when inordinate poverty and suffering for the many reigns amidst unparalleled wealth and comfort for the few, despite an ostensibly evolved sense of morality. The disparity afflicting the inhabitants of the world is pervasive and can assume myriad disguises. For example, in India, as of 1998, 200 million

people did not have access to safe drinking water, while another 600 million lacked basic sanitation.<sup>1</sup> In The United States of America, 43.4 million people had no health insurance coverage as of September 1998.<sup>2</sup> In Canada, as recently as 1997, one in every five children lived in poverty.<sup>3</sup> In Rwanda and Burundi, a genocide beginning hardly a decade ago resulted in the murder of thousands of civilians. In Iraq, well over 500,000 children have died during the UN-imposed sanctions since 1991.<sup>4</sup> Of the 150 million children in developing countries that are malnourished, 78 million are in South Asia and another 32 million are in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>5</sup> The disparity may be epitomised by the United Nations Development Programme's 1998 calculation that "it would take less than four percent of the combined wealth of the 225 richest individuals in the world to achieve and maintain access to basic education, basic health care, reproductive health care, adequate food, safe water, and adequate sanitation for all people living on the planet."<sup>6</sup>

Over time, it seems these surreal and dizzying statistics have resulted in the systematic desensitisation of those in society privileged enough to initiate change.

The millions of conscientious citizens that took to the streets throughout the world to protest the U.S.-led invasion and occupation of Iraq hint at the emergence of a critical mass of people willing to ask important questions about the current global reality. However, it is imperative that those engaging in this fight within the medical community appreciate the etiology of the inequitable nature that frames our current reality and its pernicious effects on global health. The above-mentioned examples are not intended to suggest that disparity operates exclusively in an economic realm, but rather to propose that the reinforcement and perpetuation of this disparity is ensured by societal illnesses like colonialism, imperialism, sexism, racism, fundamentalism, and elitism. Implicit in these deleterious ideologies is the asymmetric distribution of human rights where the haves



consistently enjoy freedoms accrued at the expense of the have-nots.

Within the medical world, it is high time to address all of these inter-related issues. However, as with most attempts at affecting social change, reflection and introspection are of paramount importance. Consequently, physicians must first acknowledge our own role in the perpetuation of counter-productive power dynamics that invest the "help" we offer "vulnerable" populations. That is, the medical establishment's elitist and insular nature must be recognised as being responsible for creating boundaries which make medical knowledge, and therefore health care, fairly inaccessible for those who need it most, while paradoxically and concomitantly marginalising them.

For example, in the Canadian context, the Aboriginal and refugee populations are two particularly vulnerable groups which are markedly marginalised. Thus, while their needs are substantial, their autonomy and ownership over their own health and the care they receive are severely undermined by the barriers (e.g. social, political, economic, etc.) erected by the managers of the society in which they live. Similar analogies can be made to a multiplicity of other situations predicated on unequal power dynamics, both here and abroad. Thus, physicians must first be compelled to divest from the power which infuses their relationships with those they are trying to "help." Notions of charity must be replaced by principles of solidarity and justice.

A particularly injurious trait of Western medical culture is its concern, first and foremost, with the relatively privileged members of the Western world. This ethnocentrism is perhaps best illustrated in the domain of medical research. For example, only 11 of the 1,393 new chemical entities developed between 1975 and 1999 were for the treatment of tropical diseases.<sup>7</sup> This despite the fact that diseases like malaria and tuberculosis account for a substantial burden of illness in the world. Similarly, 90 percent of research funding is funnelled into diseases affecting only 10 percent of the population.<sup>8</sup> It is left to the reader's imagination to determine which strata of the echelon of wealth those 10 percent occupy.

Physicians, as social advocates for the marginalised, need to confront these realities head-on. The postulate that the rate of scientific advancement should be significantly diminished in the Western world until the benefits hitherto gained can be apportioned to the entire population needs to be impressed upon the medical community. This is not to suggest that the medical advancements made during the past half-century or so in the Western world should not be made available to its constituents. Rather, by limiting the development of "cutting edge" research, and

concurrently working on achieving equal access to these same resources for everyone everywhere, a process of equilibration will be facilitated. Once achieved, scientific progress can continue unfettered once again, whereby the spoils stemming therefrom can be shared among all members of the global community – the betterment of humanity, rather than personal gain, would serve as impetus for all research. Otherwise, the runaway train that is scientific progress will continue to leave an ever-growing population lagging far behind.

The physician's responsibility as health advocate finds itself at a crossroads. The argument that physicians should remain "apolitical" continues to provide a convenient excuse for many who do not wish to completely engage in the struggle for social justice, which is a categorical imperative for achieving equitable levels of health worldwide. Interestingly, recent events in the province of Quebec whereby medical students, residents, and specialists protested draconian policies proposed by the government (which would force physicians to practice in rural settings) illustrate the propensity of the medical community to become politicised. If medical students and physicians are inclined to take political stances to protect their own interests, one would expect the same willingness from health advocates to become politicised for the causes they are engaging in. For example, demanding affordable access to anti-retroviral treatment is imperative in the fight for justice in many sub-Saharan countries given the prevalence of HIV disease. However, there is a commensurate responsibility on the part of physicians to speak out against neo-liberal policies imposed by Western nations on developing countries, which entrench and exacerbate class disparities within these societies, thereby further deteriorating the health of the overwhelming majority.

A transformation of the collective consciousness is much needed in the physician's realm. Instead of considering the welfare of humanity as an ancillary and unrealistic goal, physicians must begin viewing global health as a personal responsibility, a duty of sorts, based on codes of universal justice. Hundreds of years from now (assuming our species survives until then), our descendants will look back upon this critical phase in human development with great interest. They will wonder whether their ancestors were moved to redress the grave inequities facing the human population, or whether we stood idly by and watched the insidious decimation of entire peoples. Framed in such a binary paradigm, the road we ought to travel on, although perhaps only dimly illuminated, is obvious.

What is health? Health is *not* war, starvation, exploitation, poverty, or oppression. A definition of health is

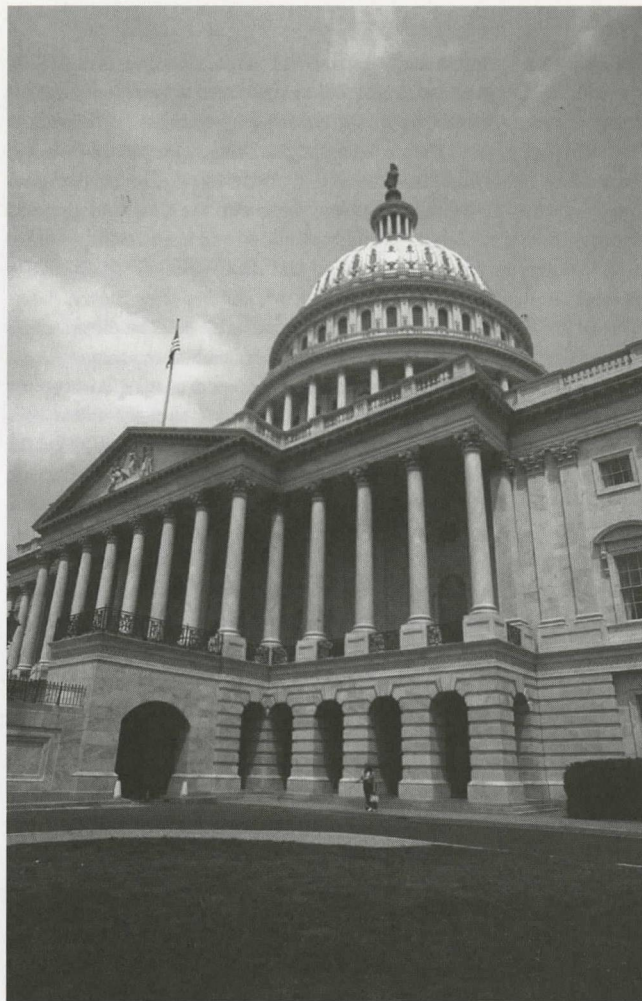
meaningless without invoking notions of peace, justice, and freedom. These are not abstract terms, but rather concrete and meaningful principles upon which a vision of a more just world is based: a world where trade relations between nations, and economic policy within nations, are no longer governed by the dictates of capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism; where women are liberated from the shackles of patriarchy; where class-based systems of oppression are exposed for their inherent injustice and eliminated; where racism is debunked and expunged from human consciousness; where nationalistic and religious fundamentalism gives way to tolerance and respect for one another; where not only health, but security, access to shelter and clean water, food, education, sanitation systems, and an autonomously-chosen livelihood are all considered practically, not only conceptually, as fundamental and inalienable human rights; where we work not solely for personal gain, but for collective betterment through mutual support and mutual aid. The multiple and intertwined systems of oppression and domination must be recognised, challenged, and overthrown, if we are to hope for any substantive and salubrious change in the course of the human species. Until members of the medical world begin to concretely explore these issues and their effects on determinants of health, any attempt at defining health will remain an exercise in futility.

*The original version of this essay was submitted on March 10, 2003, as part of the "What is Health?" campaign, organised by the Canadian Federation of Medical Students' International Health Programme (CFMS-IHP) in affiliation with the Canadian Journal of Public Health (CJPH) and Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF).*

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In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Francis Bacon declared, “knowledge is power.” In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, information is power. Just think of blackmail or insider trading. Democracy is designed to prevent the concentration of power in one individual or body (think checks and balances), but additionally a functioning democracy also relies on information reaching its citizens, who may then make informed choices in voting. Legislation that mandates the disclosure of information and a willingness on the part of elected officials to release information is, therefore, essential to maintaining a democratic society. The United States does have such legislation, which has played a role in fostering an atmosphere of openness within our country.

As reported by Thomas Blanton in the July/August 2002 issue of *Foreign Policy*, an atmosphere of openness has been developing globally. In the decade between the collapse of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the Twin Towers, he reports that 26 countries passed legislation granting citizens a right of access to government information. Blanton further states that this decade saw a shift in public opinion from openness being regarded as morally or ethically desirable, to openness being seen as an essential tool for efficient government: one that can help prevent corruption, poor policies, and unnecessary bureaucracies. However, in the United States, the Bush administration has been slowly, but decidedly, reversing this trend.

Ironically, Attorney General John Ashcroft, one of those currently leading an administration-wide charge for secrecy, has written in support of the desire for public access to information, “It is only through a well-informed citizenry that the leaders of our nation remain accountable to the governed and the American people can be assured that neither fraud nor government waste is concealed.” Ashcroft wrote those lines in a memorandum to the heads of government agencies, in which he, perversely, limited the amount of information that agencies may release under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). This act is at the heart of the American movement for public access to information. Passed in 1966, FOIA provides a method of access to governmental information as long as such



# An Administration of Secrecy

by Carolyn Kousky and Francis Raven

information does not fall into one of nine exemption areas which include, for example, classified information and trade secrets. The issue currently is whether the Bush administration, in the name of national security, will reverse the “right to know” contract between our government and its citizens that the FOIA helped to establish.

## Disappearing Information

Ashcroft’s memorandum, dated October 12, 2001, set a new policy for handling Freedom of Information Act document requests. His memorandum states that agencies need release information only if there is a legal reason to do so and that the Department of Justice would back any agency withholding records as long as their actions are rooted in a “sound legal basis.” The memorandum has had the effect of reducing public access to documents by changing the previous “foreseeable harm” standard. It further warned the agency heads to consider all “institutional, commercial, and personal privacy interests that could be implicated by disclosure of



the information.” This differs markedly from the Clinton administration, when agencies were directed to make information available whenever possible. Ashcroft’s approach is to withhold information whenever possible.

This approach has become a disturbing pattern in the Bush administration. One well-publicized example is that of the administration refusing to release information from the White House energy task force chaired by Vice President Cheney. The refusal to release this information led to lawsuits by the General Accounting Office (GAO), the right wing group Judicial Watch, and the leftist group Natural Resource Defense Council. The other well-covered example is that of Bush’s refusal to release documents from the Reagan administration. However, these are just two examples among many. The New York Times reported on January 3, 2003, that there was an 18 percent increase in the number of documents classified in the year that ended on 9/30/01, most of which occurred during the Bush presidency. In addition, three new agencies have received “original classification authority” or the ability to mark documents as secret. These include the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Health and Human Services. The administration has also closed immigration hearings and kept secret the names of many held by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The Department of Justice has quit releasing the numbers of aliens that are being detained.

Information has been removed from government web pages as well. Chemical plant risk-management plans, maps that identify the location of pipelines carrying oil, gas, and hazardous substances and environmental impact statements from nuclear power plants have all been deleted. This is just a fraction of the environmental data removed from public access. While the possibility that this information could be used by terrorists has been used to justify the removals, it is much more likely that it would be used, as it has been in the past, by scientists, planners, landowners, or communities trying to understand the risks they face.

However, the most alarming deletions are of information that is not related to national security. These include the Center for Disease Control removing information on the effectiveness of condoms in preventing the spread of AIDS and the removal of a report on the National Cancer Institute website demonstrating that there is no relationship between abortions and increased risks of breast cancer (fortunately, the information regarding abortion and breast cancer was restored as the scientific evidence was indisputable). In addition, parts of resumes of EPA officials have been blacked out. Bush has also failed to share information regarding legal cases (until subpoenaed to do so). In particular, in regard to a 1960s Boston case, the Associated Press reported that the FBI had information that an innocent man was in jail but did not release this knowledge in order to protect an informant, leaving the innocent man in jail for 30 years. In still another move, *The Washington Post* reported on March 3, 2002, that the group Public Citizen, which had for the past decade received information from the Drug Enforcement Administration on doctors whose prescription licenses were revoked for misconduct, had been given records by this administration that were so edited they were unreadable. If the DEA fails to provide clean copies, Public Citizen is prepared to sue.

## Openness versus National Security

Over the course of history, the pendulum has swung between more transparency in government and more secrecy. These changes are in part based on the decisions of politicians facing a conflict between releasing information and keeping it secret, whether for reasons of security, privacy, or to hide scandal. They are also partly based on greater or lesser public demand for transparency (or Congressional demand for information from the Executive, which is more often in possession of unreleased information). The tension between secrecy and transparency today has taken the shape of a debate over government secrecy in the name of security and government transparency in the name of democracy.

Proponents of a freer flow of information and a more transparent government argue that it prevents scandal and abuse of power. They

also believe that openness leads to more efficient decision-making. First year economics students know that full and symmetric knowledge makes markets efficient. It likewise could hold that government efficiency is enhanced by full and symmetric knowledge. Senator Moynihan stated in the New York Times that “secrecy is a formula for inefficient decision-making.” By way of example, he went on to cite the CIA’s exaggerated estimates of Soviet economic strength, which would have ceased to influence U.S. policy had they been public and any Moscow correspondent could have laughed at them. Looking at this another way, Steven Aftergood from the Federation of American Scientists’ Project of Government Secrecy, says, “It is an article of democratic faith that more access to more information by more people increases the likelihood of a superior policy outcome.”

On the other side of this current debate are those, who, like the Bush administration, believe too much openness and transparency can hurt national security. For example, in a press briefing on June 20, 2002, Ari Fleischer, press secretary to President Bush, stated that an unauthorized disclosure to the public of the fact that the U.S. was in possession of Osama bin Laden’s satellite phone immediately shut down that source of information. His point was clear: information to the public is also information to terrorists or enemies. In further making this point, Mr. Fleischer said, “Public disclosure of that information can damage our ability to protect the country.” In another example, the U.S. found an Al Qaeda training manual that said, “using public sources openly and without resorting to illegal means, it is possible to gather at least 80% of the information about the enemy.” This has understandably frightened the administration and could be cited as a reason why a significant amount of material has been removed from government websites.

The fact that the current debate over public access to information has been framed in terms of national security would lead one to believe that the increased secrecy of the current administration began with the events of September 11. However, this is not fully correct. Much of the stonewalling began earlier, such as the failure to release records from Cheney’s energy meetings, while other instances of secrecy have had nothing to do with national security at all, such as removing information debunking the link between abortion and breast cancer. Kathleen Edwards, manager of the Freedom of Information Center at the Missouri School of Journalism, states, “The tension between openness, privacy and national security did not begin with 9-11. However, the attacks did much to increase people’s feelings of vulnerability.” The Bush administration has not only been playing on this vulnerability, but has been using his control of information to delete information he disagrees with or that undermines his agenda.

President Bush issued a memorandum to the heads of several agencies on October 5, 2001, limiting the ways in which they may provide information to Congress. Bush wrote, that his “[a]dministration will continue to work to inform the leadership of the Congress.” But he also wrote, “At the same time, we have an obligation to protect military operational security, intelligence sources and methods, and sensitive law enforcement investigations.” Most Americans would agree with the President that information that might seriously threaten our country’s security should not be made public. However, in agreeing to this, they also agree to let the government decide for them what kind of information is dangerous enough to be withheld. Citizens are not able to evaluate the information themselves.

The current debate hinges on the fact that many people feel President Bush is keeping information secret on ideological grounds, instead of on the basis of national security, and this offends their vision of democracy. In the words of Steven Aftergood, “We face a terrorist threat whose nature and magnitude is quite uncertain. It is certainly prudent to reexamine security policies in the light of September 11. But a prudent reexamination is not what has happened. Instead, there has been a knee-jerk withdrawal of information, without clear criteria or avenues for appeal or reconsideration.” To solve this problem, he suggested that an open, inclusive process be established for the purpose of weighing competing interests surrounding whether information should be made public, so that “a reasoned



conclusion" can be made. The problem is that before information can be made public – declassified – a decision must be made that releasing it will do no harm. However, the decision necessarily must be made by the people who have the information *before* it is released. It is inherently a non-open, non-inclusive process. The citizens of this country have trusted our government to make those decisions and judgment calls.

## Accessing Information

But what about citizens who feel they can no longer trust the decisions of their government in this regard? They have recourse in the FOIA. The act was passed to give citizens an avenue to challenge government information withholding decisions and hold leaders accountable. While lawsuits under FOIA can be costly or time-consuming, the avenue remains available. Since this is one of the only methods available by which citizens can access information, however, they must protest vigorously any weakening of the act, such as the Ashcroft memorandum has done. Ashcroft has instructed that fewer FOIA requests be fulfilled. This means more litigation will be required to challenge individual withholdings, putting a burden on those seeking information. In effect, he has weakened both the FOIA and democracy.

While some aspects of the Bush administration's secrecy policy are difficult to challenge, there are methods for disputing others. One method is through the courts. For example, the Bush administration's decision to close deportation hearings was challenged in court and found to violate the Constitution. In *Detroit Free Press, et al. v. John Ashcroft, et al.*, the U.S. 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit opinion stated simply, "Democracies die behind closed doors." Another method for challenging government secrecy is through investigative journalism, which can expose government conduct to public scrutiny. This has been somewhat successful in countering the Bush administration's penchant for secrecy, but the administration has reacted by restricting journalists, such as attempting to bar them from immigration hearings. This too, should be protested.

It is important to remember, in the words of Kathleen Edwards, "Freedom of information is our heritage. It is a necessary part of our

system of self-government. Democracies depend upon an informed citizenry."

Our advice: Stay informed. Get outraged when necessary. ★

## Resources for More Information

### OMB Watch Right to Know

An organization to promote government accountability, they have a comprehensive website on right to know issues.

<http://www.ombwatch.org/info>

<http://www.ombwatch.org/article/articleview/213/1/104/>

<http://www.ombwatch.org/article/articleview/1145/1/18/>

### Federation of American Scientists Project on Government Secrecy

Through research, advocacy, and public education, the FAS Project on Government Secrecy works to challenge excessive government secrecy and to promote public oversight.

<http://fas.org/sgp/>

### The James Madison Project

A non-profit organization that promotes government accountability and the reduction of secrecy and also works to educate the public on these issues.

<http://www.jamesmadisonproject.org>

### Citizen Access Project

The goal of the Citizen Access Project is to allow citizens and public officials to better understand public access to local government information in all 50 states.

<http://www.citizenaccess.org/>

### Cyber Cemetery

Provides permanent public access to the electronic Web sites and publications of defunct U.S. government agencies and commissions.

<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/default.html>

### Cryptome

A website that posts documents that are prohibited by governments worldwide.

<http://www.cryptome.org/>

### Freedom of Information Center

The center has a collection of more than one million documents about access to information at the state, federal, and local levels.

<http://foi.missouri.edu/>

State FOI surveys:

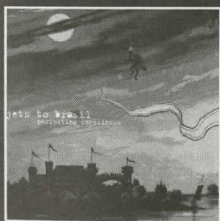
<http://foi.missouri.edu/openrecseries.html>

### Bush Team Thumbs its Nose at FOIA

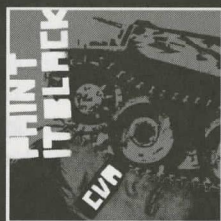
Article for *Insight* by Timothy W. Maier.

<http://www.insightmag.com/main.cfm?include=detail&storyid=229694>

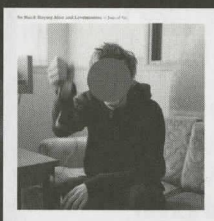
# JADE TREE 2003



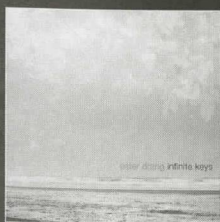
**Jets to Brazil**  
"Perfecting Loneliness"  
DBL LP/CD JT1079



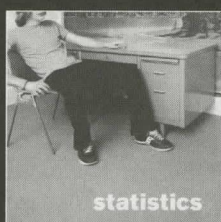
**Paint it Black** "CVA"  
LP/CD JT1080 | Out 7.28.03  
Pre-order now (Mem. of Lifetime,  
Kid Dynamite, Good Riddance)



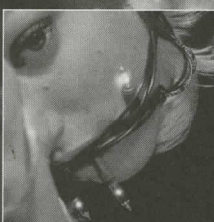
**Joan of Arc**  
"So Much Staying Alive and  
Lovelessness"  
LP/CD JT1081



**Ester Drang**  
"Infinite Keys"  
LP/CD JT1082



**Statistics**  
CD EP JT1083 Out 6.17.03  
Pre-order now  
(Denver Dalley of Desaparecidoe)



**These Arms Are Snakes**  
"This is Meant..." CD EP JT1084  
Out 8.12.03 | Pre-order 6.17.03  
(Ex-Botch, Kill Sadie, Nineironspitfire)



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**the start of something good...**

When PYF teamed up with Clamor Magazine, we realized immediately that we were being presented with an amazing opportunity to reach out to an unprecedented number of people. Not only that, we would be doing it at the caliber of Clamor Magazine: truly a one-of-a-kind current events and socially and politically based publication. This collaboration has enabled us to expand on, and reach out to a growing network of diverse people, a network that you are now part of. Clamor, with its established base of loyal readers, is helping PYF by giving us the opportunity to introduce ourselves to those of you who may not have seen us around. PYF will be on tour for the duration of this summer, 2003, bringing Clamor Magazine via our "Stop Racism Booth" to thousands of new faces and PYF supporters across the nation.

It is this partnership for a common goal that excites us most about working with Clamor.

We hope that this information, just like our partnership with Clamor, serves a dual purpose. Although the following pages may be thought a bit rudimentary by those privy to the fundamentals of activism and social change, PYF feels that the selected information reminds even the most graduated activist or socially aware individual of the basic concepts that have stirred and awakened many of us into a quest for positive change. For those readers new to this type of independent reading, our wish is that you gain a sense of self-education and evaluation along with a conceptual basis for understanding core "ideologies" we have put forth. We hope this marks the beginning of your self-liberation and your journey into contributing a hand at educating against racism, sexism and other social ills. For those of you who glance through this supplement dismissing the cut-and-dry, activism-made-easy ideas, we hope that you pause and take a moment to look a little deeper, remembering what it was that initially sparked your passion for becoming the person you are today and driving you to make a positive impact on our society and world.

Having said that; read; think; become inspired.

**[www.positive-youthfoundation.org](http://www.positive-youthfoundation.org)**

**your support makes a difference...**

The Positive Youth Foundation needs your financial support. We are North America's only organization of our kind and one of a handful of anti-racist groups in the world. By joining The Positive Youth Foundation, you are lending your financial contribution to the education and awareness of thousands through our various outreach channels. Alone, this contribution can accomplish little. But as a group, we can make a change. Your membership donation will go to work instantly by helping the Positive Youth Foundation continue and expand our outreach work with kids and young adults all over the world.

An annual donation of \$20 or more entitles you to many membership benefits. You will receive a FREE one-year subscription to CLAMOR magazine. Clamor is an award winning independent publication covering politics, culture, and life, printed 6 times a year. Along with the subscription, we will also send you a PYF support sticker to display anywhere you choose.

Please lend your financial support to Positive Youth Foundation. Whether you are a long time Positive Youth Foundation supporter or are newly acquainted with us, now is the time to get involved. We want to thank you for any and all of your support, and all that you do to make the world a better place.

**Positive Youth Foundation****POB 64****Greencastle, PA 17225****p: 717-597-9065****f: 717-597-8818****[director@positive-youthfoundation.org](mailto:director@positive-youthfoundation.org)****Advertising:**

Rate request for the next magazine can be made via fax at 717-597-8818 or by email to [attitude@epix.net](mailto:attitude@epix.net)

**Distribution:**

Free bulk copies are available while this issue is in print. To get bulk copies contact us at the above address, subject to availability

**Websites:****Postive Youth Foundation****[www.positive-youthfoundation.org](http://www.positive-youthfoundation.org)**

This website is for our foundation. It is a great resource for self education on racism, sexism, homophobia, and social justice issues.

**[www.positive-youth.com](http://www.positive-youth.com)**

We use this site as a fundraiser for the organization. It allows us to raise funds, through merchandise, to promote and work towards social change.







www.positive-youthfoundation.org

# POSITIVE YOUTH FOUNDATION

The Positive-Youth Foundation is a 501 C 3 non-profit organization. The Positive-Youth Foundation exists to promote awareness through youth oriented music and culture. We travel with bands and table events to create dialogue and educate young people on racism and related issues. The idea behind our work is to spread ideas and educate in a creative way that interests young people and grabs their attention.

The Positive-Youth Foundation grew out of the founding members involvement with Anti-Racist Action (ARA). The Positive-Youth Foundation intends to build on the experience and shortcomings that we have gathered over the last 6 years while involved in the youth based grassroots anti-racist movement. This experience will allow us to build a national youth oriented outreach organization. The idea of the Positive-Youth Foundation has been gathering steam for the past few years. We are the only national youth based anti-racist organization of our kind in North America.

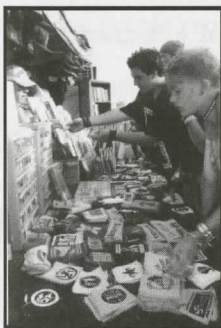
## A Brief History of The Positive-Youth Foundation:

If you have seen the Stop Racism booth on the Vans Warped Tour, seen an ARA tee shirt while at a show, checked out the first Stop racism benefit CD, looked at the Positive-Youth magazine, or checked out www.positive-youthfoundation.com then you have seen The Positive-Youth Foundation at work. In 1995 we became involved with Columbus ARA. Since then we have been working to continue the messages and ideas

that Columbus started, but many factors have lead to an erosion in the small support base that ARA once had. Finally, we decided it is time to form The Positive-Youth Foundation to continue the national touring and outreach program that was started so many years ago by Columbus ARA and the Mighty Mighty Bosstones. We still use the anti-racist action symbols because of there wide visibility and great motivational

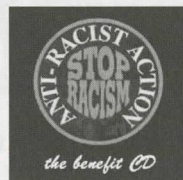
impact. The Positive-Youth Foundation is simply a legitimate non-profit organization that seeks to take the huge amounts of support we have to the next level.

**together...  
We Can CHANGE  
the World!**



## Projects and Milestones of The Positive-Youth Foundation:

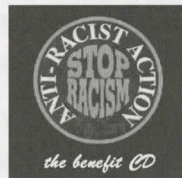
### **Stop Racism Benefit CD #1-** In February 1999 The



Positive-Youth Foundation along with Asian Man Records released a benefit CD entitled Stop Racism. Over the last 2 years the CD has sold about 20,000 copies, money raised from the CD was used to expand our touring efforts and was also used by a few ARA chapters

who sold the CDs to cover operating expenses. This CD also hit #25 on the CMJ Music Chart as well as staying on the Top 200 chart for over 8 weeks. The release was also featured in numerous reviews from Transworld Skate Magazine to Pollstar. This first of its kind release was a phenomenal success that will serve as a launching point for future projects of its kind. This CD is still available on our website.

### **Stop Racism Benefit CD #2-** In



June 2002 The Positive-Youth Foundation independently released our 2nd benefit CD. Over the next few months the CD has sold about 10,000 copies, money raised from the CD was used to expand our touring efforts, fund

mailings of resources to people intrested in starting local affiliates and cover other operating expenses. The second benefit CD has been a huge success and is still available on our website.

**Positive-Youth Magazine** – To date PYF has published 3 Free magazine. These magazines are used as a resource at our tables on tours and at events. Packed with ideas for getting involved, self-education, band interviews on political topics, and How To's. It is the premier publication of its kind. We publish a new magazine at the beginning of the summer touring season. Last issue hit 60,000 copies.

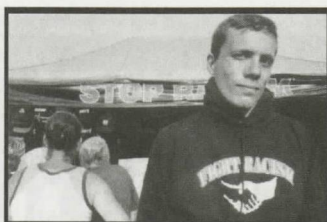
For the summer of 2003 PYF has teamed with Clamor Magazine to bring you this issue, entitled "Health Minds". Our goal in partnering with Clamor is to let more people know about PYF.

**Building a coalition of Change** – over the past two years we have been working closely with a few regionally established anti-bigotry organizations across the country. 2002 will see a continued building of this national coalition.



*Healthy Minds Supplement*





# *the* STOP RACISM BOOTH



The Stop Racism tent fuses the youth oriented grassroots approach of Anti-Racist Action into a traveling entity that kids can experience. The Stop Racism Tent is a project of the Positive-Youth Foundation. The Positive-Youth Foundation is a 501 C 3 non - profit organization whose main purpose is to educate kids about racism and related issues using outreach at music events. The idea behind the Stop Racism booth is to spread ideas and education not only through literature but through cool tees, patches, stickers, and buttons that grab attention and make people think. Response to our booth is always both positive and exciting. We are experts at reaching kids and young adults. Everyday tons of people stop by and support the booth by buying something, taking a sticker, a goodie bag, or grabbing a copy of our free magazines. This 100 page magazine has tons of ideas for getting involved, making a change, and educating yourself.

By having the Stop Racism tent on the road during the summer touring season we can reach out to thousands of kids around the country and spread positive ideas. Summer touring gives us the opportunity to gather names for our mailing list, as well as build relationships with people interested in doing anti-racist work in their local communities. We can then network these folks with existing local groups as well as keep them as supporters of our organization on a national level. Summer touring with events like the Warped Tour and Ozzfest has helped our organization branch out and get involved with numerous bands, tours and events all over the country. Over the past four years we have been a part of the Vans Warped Tour, Sno-Cor, Blink 182, the Foo Fighters, the Mighty Mighty Bosstones, The Ska Against Racism Tour, Less Than Jake, Chubawamba, Rancid, 311, Woodstock, Ozzfest, Korn, Limp Bizkit and No Doubt just to name a few. We pride our selves on being the most professional, courteous, self contained and easiest to deal with group that you will ever see on tour.

We'd like to thank each of you who visit us on tour and show your support. We hope that you take something positive away from our booth, and that it might light a spark for you to get involved in your community.

## HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED ?

- Visit our website and Check out our how to's.
- Request Bulk Materials.
- Start a local group at your school that addresses anti-racist issues.
- Promote self-education and positive thinking.
- Join the Postive-Youth Foundation.







# HOSTING A BENEFIT SHOW

Hosting a benefit show can be a great way to raise money for your organization or for an organization that you support. Before you are ready to start planning the show consider, what you will do with the funds that you raise from show. Would you want to use the money to put on another show? Buy supplies for your organization? Donate them to another organization that could use them nationally or locally? It is very important that you have a plan for the money before it is raised.

Remember though a benefit show is not just a tool to raise funds. In fact, it is a great way to simply spread a message. This aspect can be far more important. By having a benefit show you are setting a fantastic example, demonstrating in a very real way the connection between music and exchanging ideas. You are taking a public stand against, and giving encouragement to everyone who is working for change. Most importantly, you are attracting a group of peers from whom you should try to draw out like minded comrades to help to produce the next show or become members of your organization.

Once you have your ideas together you are ready to start planning your show. There are essentially three components to hosting a successful benefit show. First, you need talent that is willing to donate their time. Second, you need a venue that is willing to host the show and donate some of the proceeds to your cause. Finally, you need to promote the show so that people know that the event is happening and will show up.

The first element of a benefit show is the talent; be it musical, spoken word or a mixture of the two. Attracting a DJ, rapper, band, or other artist that is willing to donate their time can be a rather daunting task. Try to think about what you are asking a the talent to do, if you ask a band to drive for hours to play a show for which they will not be paid they will probably not be to enthusiastic. Try to work with local talent that supports your cause. Use contacts from your tabling, or ask talent whom you have hosted your tables with. If you are starting from scratch, ask around at your school or in your group of friends to gather some ideas. When you get a commitment from one or two artists, ask them who they think may be interested in playing with. Be persistent, getting commitments from bands rather than vague statements that they might be interested in playing a show is a must.

The second element to putting on a show is finding a suitable venue. There are two possible routes you could take. If you have gotten to know the owner or manager of a local venue, ask them to host the concert as a benefit. They will need to cover expenses, but most venues will probably be able to make a profit which can go to your cause; negotiate a set amount or percentage before the show. The other route you could go is to host the show in a VFW type hall, local church, private basement or outdoor spot. This method is better for smaller crowds and can raise more funds by cutting out the costs of using a club. There are however a few things to be mindful of. Investigate if there are noise ordinances, curfews, occupancy, fire codes and parking laws that may cause problems. Attention to detail is very important.

Finally, promotion is another big job. Be sure to advertise that this will not just be another concert, but a benefit show for a very specific cause. A catchy name like Ska Against Racism, Rock Against Racism, Country Against Racism or something that names what you are doing will grab attention. Include directions on how to get there from a major intersection or highway to the venue. Also include an e-mail address and phone number so that people may contact you if they have questions or need more information about why you are doing the show.

Distribute fliers at places where people who would be interested in your show are hanging out. Also hit other shows, clubs, malls, schools, and record stores. Try to have flyers out at least a month before the show. Ask local record stores and café owners to post fliers in their windows. Call the college radio station and ask them to announce the show and give them a pair of tickets to give away on the air. Be creative in spreading the word.

On the day of the show be sure to have a table with information and a mailing list sheet for interested people to write down their names, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers. Make up some flyers that have a way for people to get in touch with you.

Remember that helping even just one person see that hatred and bigotry are not the answer is a big accomplishment. Set your goals accordingly, each person you reach will at some point reach another and over time we will CHANGE the world.





Starting a club or group at your school can be a great way to address race and gender issues in the school as well as in the community in which you live. Forming an anti-racist, unity, or a multi-cultural club can be a great way to spur dialogue between students, students and faculty members and amongst faculty and administrators. This type of dialogue is important in creating an environment in which everyone feels comfortable.

In a setting such as a high school or middle school it is important to gain the help and support of a teacher or other faculty member in starting your group. A supportive teacher can help to bridge the gap between both generations and bureaucratic tape. Additionally a supportive teacher can help get other teachers and community members involved. As well, a few supportive adults can access resources younger people may not be able to access alone. The key is fostering a forum for youth to create change, adults should nurture not lead.

The next step in getting the ball rolling will be to set up your first meeting. A huge question is always that of what is a meeting and what will we talk about at the meeting. Many times groups will get together for a first meeting and find themselves stating into the faces of the others that come to the meeting with nothing to talk about. Your first meeting should be very casual and consist of planning amongst founding members. This type of meeting will really serve as a plenary for the first meeting to which you will openly invite anyone who wants to attend and get involved. Think of ways to expand your group. How can you creatively launch the new group to the rest of the school? Plan to make your initial meetings something more than a mundane after school event, plan refreshments, plan it as a mixer, bring music, bring a video, make it interesting. Additionally, start to think of ideas for breaking the ice at this launch party. Remember, if people don't have fun and feel comfortable they will not come to the next meeting. What will you talk about at the first meeting? Think simply, try to give people ideas that form a clear impression of what types of issues your future meetings will address, but keep things light and don't force feed your views. Plan a game that gets everyone acquainted; introduce yourselves to each other and give a few words about why you felt it is important for you to get involved.

Once you have started your group rolling and have a few core participants attending your meetings. Your group should set goals. These goals should tackle

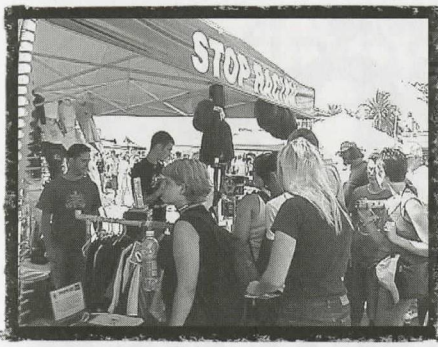
## Starting an Anti-Racist Club or Group at your School

everything from funding your group to how to attract new members. Be creative and realistic. Additionally your group should also look at ways in which to use it's influence as a school sanctioned group to bring diversity to your campus. Think about sponsoring events and speakers. Identify key issues not only in your school but also in your community. Think out side the norm. If you set a goal to have a great speaker come to talk to the whole school about an issue like race, history, gender or culture have them also stick around to address interested members of the community that evening, either at the school or at a local events center. Try to include self-education into your groups meetings so that you are always learning about new issues. Additionally plan events that are sponsored by the group that entice people to come not because they are necessarily interested in the cause but because the event sounds fun. Things like music shows, concerts, dances and presentations. Imaging an after school event in which the local high school punk band plays a show with the local hip hop act and the whole thing is hosted by that local DJ kid all in the name of unity, that would be cool, right. Then find un-intimidating ways to introduce the groups' goals and ideas at the event. Use things like info tables and flyers, use a display of art created by school students inspired by recent events or a historical event or a word like "bigot". It is very important to remember that many times we as people interested in introducing action and being leaders forget that not everyone is as assertive with there ideas. Many people who are on our side or could be on our side are put off by the idea of activism or standing up for a cause. We need to be creative, understanding and gentle in our approach as to not turn people away by cramming our ideas down their throats. Additionally it is important to include celebration and socialization as part of our approach to activism and organizing.

CHANGING the world isn't just about changing peoples ideas about race, prejudice, and gender. It is about changing the way we approach the problems and how we educate our selves and others in those regards.







# TABLING AT A CONCERT

Tabling a local concert is a great way to help build a culture of anti-racism in your community. Tabling is a great way to meet like-minded people and help promote a dialogue about racism and hatred. Setting up a table at a local concert is an effective way to reach out to a large number of people in a relaxed atmosphere. The presence of your table will add to the experience of those who are interested in supporting a network of people who are striving for justice and equality among all people.

The first step in hosting a successful table is setting a goal. What do you want to accomplish? Are you looking to start a meeting group of peers, are you looking to work for a national or regional organization, are you looking to spread information about ideas and issues that you feel are important. What ever your goal your next step will be to find a local band or concert venue who is friendly to your cause or causes.

A local support network is the key to building a lasting social movement. Each time you table you are expanding this network and influencing others to get involved. Get a mailing list to track peers, ask for phone numbers and e-mails, too. Also be sure to talk to each band that played that night, ask the venue manager if you could come back for other shows. Leave your number with a band or venue owner but also ask for their information in return so that you may contact them in the future. Be persistent, bands, venues, and promoters are very busy. Remember that you cannot rely on a band to promote your cause. A band can offer help and support but they cannot build a movement for you. Don't get discouraged; keep trying even if you are not immediately successful. Sooner or later, you

will find the right mixture of support within your local scene. Also remember to be creative. Reach out to the every scene from punk rock, to hip hop, dance and techno, to country, pop, and folk. If your peers will be there, you should try to table there. You will be surprised at how many people will be willing to lend support. If you do become close to a band, branch out, ask if they would be willing to take you on the road with them for a weekend tour, an out of town show or if they would be willing to take your information on their tour.

Vending merchandise for donations can be a great way to raise funds for a post office box, photocopying expenses, and other costs associated with starting a network in your area. Don't feel that you must have merchandise to sell at your table right away or at all. Pins and stickers are a relatively cheap and easy way to raise money as well as spread your message. Be sure to talk to the venue manger about your vending before the show, express to them how helpful this vending is to your fundraising and why that is important to supporting the network being built.

Once you have your table up and running use it to network people with other local, regional, and national organizations as a way to get them involved. Contact like-minded organizations to request copies of their literature and publications to help enhance your table.

When creating contact information for others to get in touch with you be sure to include a few options such as e-mail, a PO Box address and telephone number. You can sign up for free voicemail boxes on-line from services like [www.onebox.com](http://www.onebox.com). It is very important to be responsible and timely about returning calls, emails, and letters. Remember, though not everyone maybe happy about your work, don't use your home number or address.







# DEFINITIONS

*what does it mean?*

## f.a.q. - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Nationalism**- individuals and groups that promote their country/nation as a driving life force. Meaning they believe their country alone is better than everyone else's.

**White Nationalism**- a variant of nationalism that views the Aryan/white race as a separate people and nation in and of itself. There are different versions of the idea, but most believe that the white race should live as a separate society with no influences from multi-racialism or multi-culturalism.

**Socialism**- political system promoted by people like Karl Marx and Lenin. The idea is to create a social system that puts working class in charge of the government so the people are truly represented. Privileges of being rich, etc are also abolished so everything can be shared by making land and other resources readily available to people through the government, businesses, and other social outlets.

**Fascism**- good example is Italy when Benito Mussolini took power circa WWII era. A one-party system of government is set up and rules ruthlessly. No other political parties are allowed, and this is supported through government violence and terrorism. Hate directed towards communism, socialism, and democracy is very common, as well as feelings of racism and nationalism.

**Imperialism**- the policy that aims at building and maintaining an empire, in which many states and their people, spread over a wide geographical area, are controlled by one dominant governing force. Imperialism mostly refers to the legacy of nineteenth century Europe that continues through the conquest, suppression and exploitation of the native populace and minority groups until unconscious attitudes become a part of society.

**Colonialism**- The process in which an empowered culture assimilates, destroys or estranges a powerless one. Colonialism differs from imperialism chiefly in the degree of subjugation of the native culture. Imperialism does not necessarily involve sharp distinctions between the rulers and the ruled, whereas colonialism emphatically does.

**Eurocentrism**- The tendency to see European culture and history as the norm and all others as nonessential or unimportant. Eurocentrism refers to white European males use of coercion to maintaining their predominant influence over the leadership and policy-making roles in society. The maintenance of Eurocentrism is dependent upon the ideological effect, which makes the power of the dominant class appear desirable and natural.

**Prejudice**- An adverse opinion, attitude or feeling, formed without adequate knowledge, thought or reason.

**Civil Rights**- The right to equal opportunity under the law, whether that is political, religious, social, or economic.

**Stereotype**- A simplistic, firmly held belief about a group of people, usually negative.

**Racism**- The belief that race accounts for differences in human character or ability and that a particular race is superior to others. Discrimination or prejudices based on hate.

**Sexism**- Attitudes, conditions, or behaviors that promote stereotyping of social roles based on gender, especially against women.

## WHAT IS THE SWASTIKA

The Swastika is an ancient symbol, which dates back 3,000 years. Swastikas have been found on numerous artifacts such as pottery and coins from several cultures around the world. Even today the swastika is used to represent good by farmers in Tibet who place the symbol on their home doors so no evil can enter. It is similarly used by Irish Farmers and is called a Brigits cross. Cuna Indians in Panama design blouses with colorful swastikas. Navajo medicine men use colored sand to draw them on the floor while performing curative rites. And for Buddhists and Hindus, the swastika is a very religious symbol that is commonly used.

The word swastika comes from the Sanskrit word suastika- "su" meaning good, "asti" meaning to be and "ka" as a suffix. By the middle Ages, it was a well-known and commonly used symbol, but called by many different names: China-wan, England-fylfot, Germany-hakenkreuz, Greece-tetraskelion and gammadion, and India-swastika. It was also used by Native Americans. Until the Nazi's used this symbol, the swastika had been used throughout the past 3,000 years to represent life, sun, power, strength, and good luck.

In the mid-nineteenth century German nationalists began to use the swastika, to represent a long Germanic/Aryan history, because it had ancient Aryan/Indian origins. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the swastika could be found on nationalist German periodicals. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the swastika was a common symbol of German nationalism, and was found in a multitude of prominent places. In 1920, Adolph Hitler decided that the Nazi Party needed its own insignia and flag. So on August 7, 1920 at the Salzburg Congress. The flag with the Nazi symbol became the official emblem of the Nazi Party. In Mein Kampf, Hitler describes the new flag: "In the red we see the social idea of the movement, in white the nationalistic idea, in the swastika the mission of the struggle for the victory of the Aryan man, and, by the same token, the victory of the idea of creative work, which as such always has been and always will be anti-Semitic." Because of the Nazi's use of the swastika, a once peaceful symbol has come to represent hate, anti-Semitism, violence, and murder.

"In the red we see the social idea of the movement, in white the nationalistic idea, in the swastika the mission of the struggle for the victory of the Aryan man, and, by the same token, the victory of the idea of creative work, which as such always has been and always will be anti-Semitic."





# Defining **RACISM** in America

By Elana Stone

**RACISM = Racial Prejudice + Social & Institutional Power**

In the so-called "activism" world, I hear a lot of terms tossed around. I hear people using big words just to make themselves look good, but they don't necessarily know what they mean. Some of these words, like racism, and privilege can have really scary implications. We can't build a unified movement if we don't have a starting place. Here are a few definitions that may get us all on the same page, or at least looking at oppression in a unified way.

## ***Prejudice:***

An attitude that is based on limited information, often a stereotype. It is a preconceived notion. Prejudice is usually, but not always, negative. Both positive and negative prejudices are damaging because they deny the individuality of the person. NO ONE is free of prejudice. For example, when I go into a store, and a salesclerk follows me around and asks me rudely if they can help me find what I need, I know they are assuming things about me based on my age and the way I look. The clerk's idea of me is based on a very narrow perception of who I am, and whether I like their view or not, I am still closed in by it.

## ***Social and Institutional Power:***

The ability to define reality for yourself and others. It is the access and control of resources. It is the ability to influence others. Being white in this country, I look around me and I see faces in power that reflect mine. My government, top execs, mass media, all the major power players are white, with maybe a few people of color thrown in here and there, but the majority of folks in power are white. As a white person, I have power because I have access to those power players, and other forms of power like education.

## ***Oppression:***

The systematic targeting of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, political, or economic benefit of that more powerful social group. Ok, that was a mouthful, so let me break it down a bit. Talking about racism, the more powerful group are white folks, and the less powerful group are people of color. This is because white folks have the power. Racism has been built up and into our daily lives for generations, starting with our founding fathers (white folks) to how all the systems of power, (like education, judicial systems, etc.) are formed

and run by white folks in this country. Not only are they founded and ran by white folks, but white folks and people of color must live under them. As a white folk, I benefit from racism whether or not I ask to or want to.

## **Simply put, here's a definition of racism:**

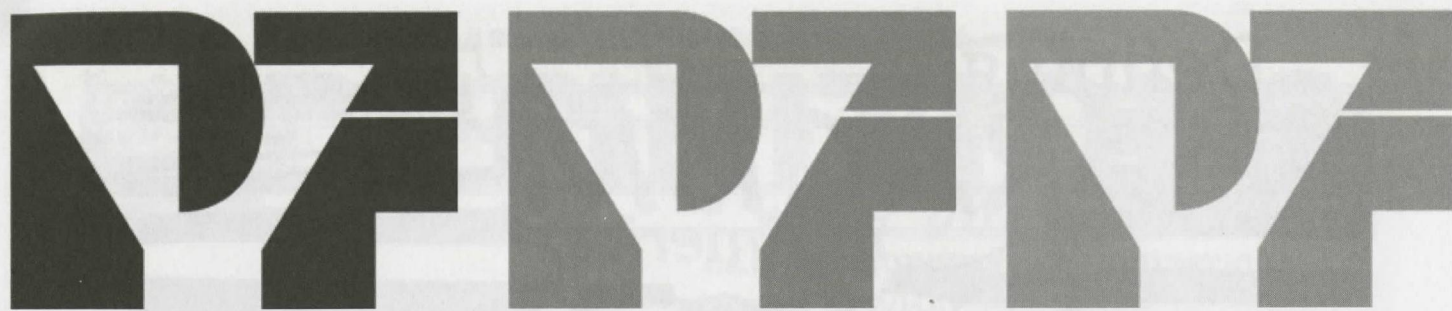
**RACISM = Racial Prejudice + Social & Institutional Power**

This is not information that we wake up one morning just understanding 100%. It's important to know that living in the USA we have absorbed a lot of stereotypes about people who are different from us and our families. This misinformation has been given to us through media, school, government, family, friends, etc. Dismantling racism, and other oppressions, is like riding a rollercoaster. We are constantly going up, down, and upside down. Sometimes we want to get off the rollercoaster, but we must realize that we all have ups and downs in activism, and it takes time to decode all the misinformation we've been fed. For example, did you know that David Duke (former Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan, presidential candidate, and Holocaust Denier) not the republicans, coined the term "Reverse Racism and Reverse Discrimination?" His five campaign issues in the late 70's seemed radical and extreme at the time. National English Only, dismantling the welfare system, stopping non-white immigration, ending affirmative action, and ending access to reproductive health for white women while forcing sterilization on women of color. I think we'd all agree that these five issues are very much apart of mainstream dialogue and politics. We need to decode. It takes time but nothing will ever change if we all give up.

All forms of oppression are connected, but they are all different. As a queer woman, I know what it's like to be on the less powerful group of that oppression. But that doesn't mean that I know what it's like to be a person of color. All oppressions are linked, and they have many similarities, but they are not the same. It is also important to know that oppression has hurt all of our lives, and in different ways. We also need to remember that we all make mistakes, but it is important to learn from them. We are about building a movement for social change, and this means being open to learning about, and fighting, all forms of oppression.







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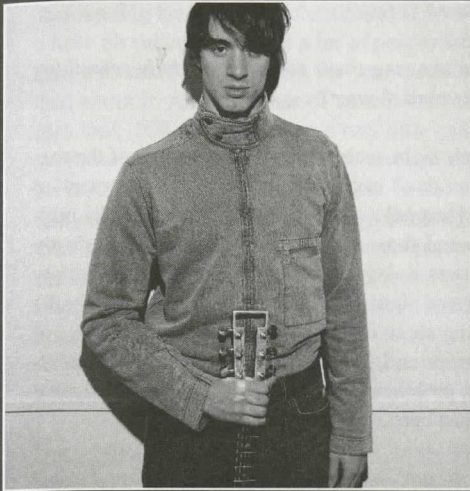


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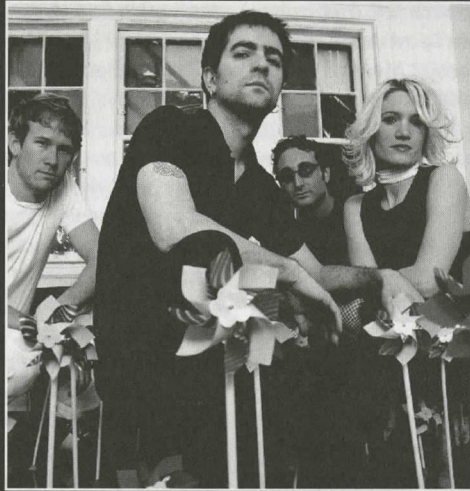
the best damn records of the entire fucking summer

## criteria



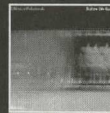
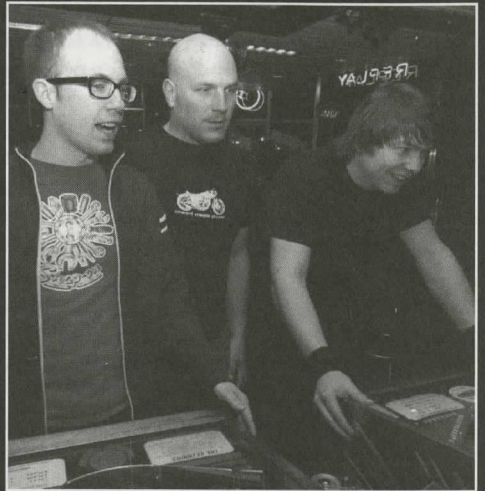
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## helicopter helicopter



**HELICOPTER HELICOPTER**  
**WILD DOGS WITH X-RAY EYES**  
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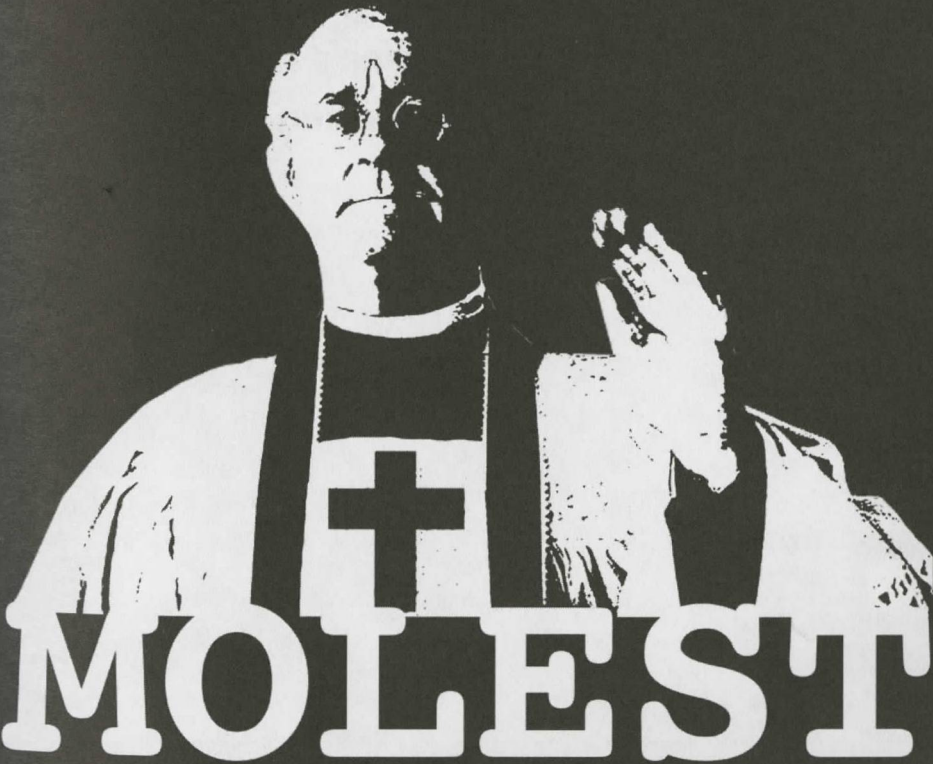


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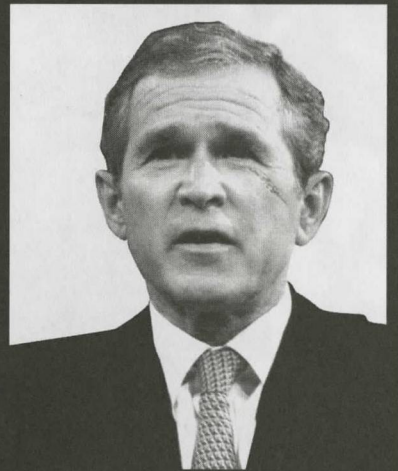
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In the lobby of the building where Jem Cohen is editing, I notice several wall-mounted video monitors, all silently broadcasting different series of rapidly-cut images to anyone unlucky enough to be stuck waiting for an elevator. Prominently featured are attractive people, bucolic settings, and flashing text. I ask Cohen if he knows what they're showing. He says, without hesitation or amusement: "Money."

The absurd contortions of corporate America loom prominently in Cohen's work. He has an uncanny knack for simultaneously capturing grime and beauty, along with a refreshing love of Super 8 film. Though he's shot photos and music videos for the likes of R.E.M., Elliott Smith, and Jonathan Richman, he's probably best known for his work with the band Fugazi. All of their releases from 1993's *In on the Kill Taker* on have featured Cohen's photography, and his 1998 documentary *Instrument* encompasses a decade's worth of live footage and interviews.

I spoke with Cohen shortly after a retrospective of his recent film work at New York's Museum of Modern Art. The series included *Instrument* and *Benjamin Smoke* (his 2000 documentary about the late musician/drag queen Benjamin), but the centerpiece was a theatrical screening of *Chain Times Three* (2002), a project that incorporates three projectors and the music of godspeed you! black emperor (with whom he recently collaborated in a string of live shows), and debuted last year as a gallery installation.

When I interviewed Cohen, he was in the middle of editing his next project, which he says will be part of the *Chain* series, and involve "stories of people, and people talking, and other things that you don't often find in my films."

*Clamor: What was it like showing these pieces, especially something like Chain, in front of a packed theater?*

Jem: Well, we had a rough night, technically, because some of the machines went down. So you don't ever want to speak about or mention that evening to me again. [laughs] . . . Movie theaters don't usually project with three projectors and three images. You know, it ran perfectly for two months, eight hours a day, without any hitches [as a gallery installation], and then for one night — *one show* — it went down in the middle. But that's the thing about digital technology. Everyone kind of expects it to be sort of pristine and, like, *super-tech*, and there's all kinds of new mysteries and new problems. We don't really have any idea what happened. It could have just been a piece of dirt on the DVD.

*It's funny you mention digital [technology], because before I came to do this interview, I told a coworker, "I'm going to interview Jem Cohen," and he said, "Oh, he came to speak to us at Columbia, and he hates digital!"*

# Embracing the

**Filmmaker Jem Cohen on collaborating  
with godspeed you! black emperor,  
corporate interest in his work,  
and why he's not interested  
in the digital video "revolution"**

interview and photos by Charles Sweitzer



No, I don't *hate* digital. I don't *hate* anything. . . . What I was talking about there was, there are certain things about film that are not there in digital technology. . . . In all this kind of/sort of massive dose of hype surrounding the digital revolution and DV technology, one thing that's a little bit ridiculous is that a lot of people were shooting small-gauge film and small-gauge video for years, and nobody ever made a big deal about it. And for those of us who had been doing it forever, this idea that, "Oh my God, there's tiny little cameras you can use now!" Well, we were, like, "Yeah — we've been shooting like that forever." So it just seemed like that hype had to do with big corporations like Sony having a lot of tech that they wanted to get people to buy, and that it had to do with the fact that people were able to theoretically make movies a lot cheaper. But a lot of those movies are still in the Hollywood model, but just not shot on 35mm film. . . . That's not particularly revolutionary to me.

*Have you seen any digital video that you've enjoyed recently?*

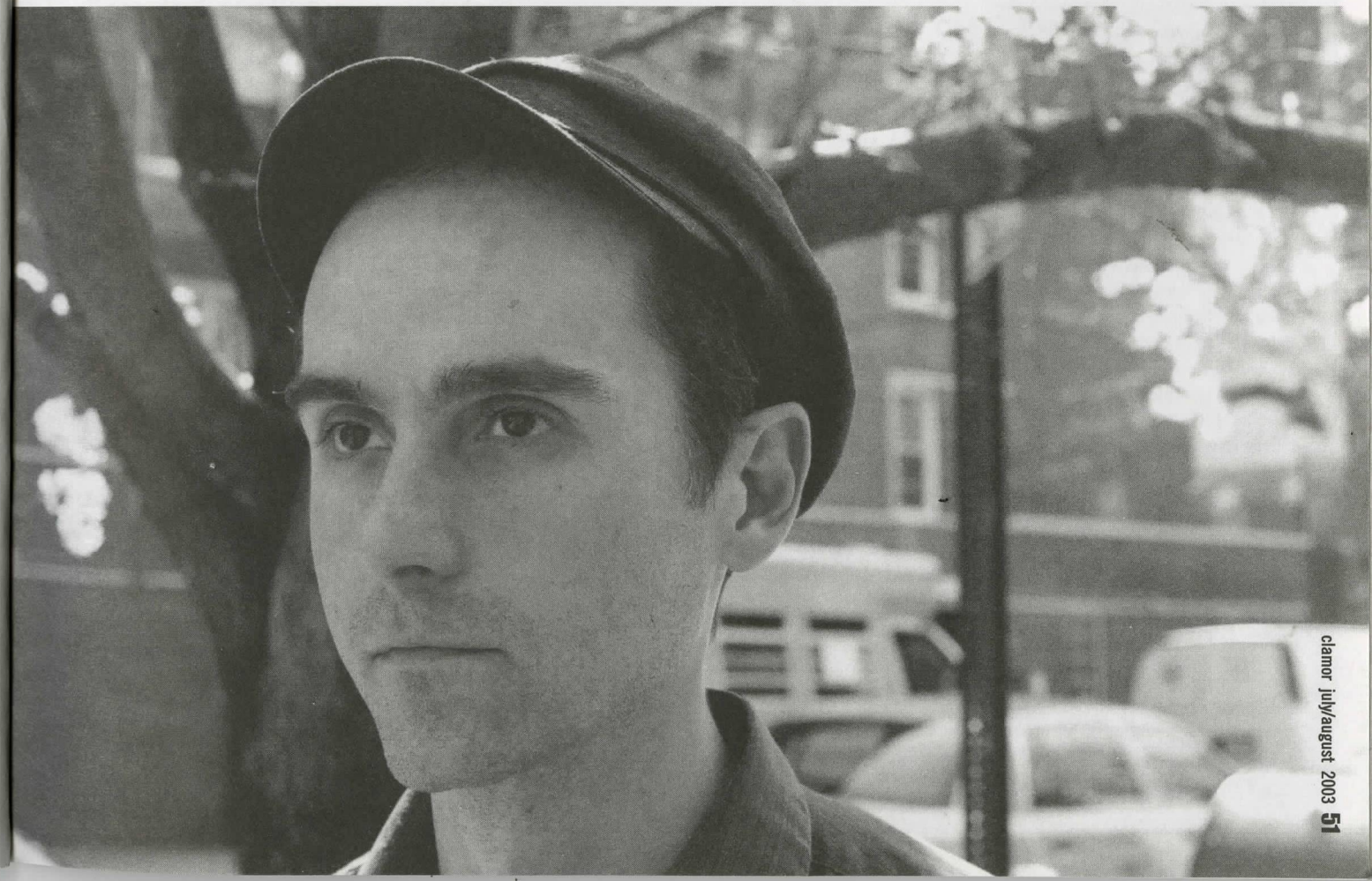
Um ... [*long silence*] I mean, yeah, sure. My brother Adam's doing some really good work with digital video. Robert Frank has some really good shorts he's blown up from video to film that I think are extraordinary, and there's a guy in England named Richard Billingham who did a piece called "Fish Tank" that I really love.

But generally speaking, it's still kind of crappy looking compared to film. When people blow up to film, they sometimes get into an interesting area where it's sort of neither/nor, and it's kind of beautiful unto itself. But that's a very expensive process. [DV] still feels very cold to me. A lot of people think that soon there's going to be as much information on digital video, and blah blah blah, but it's not really about the amount of information. The thing that a lot of us love about film is the defect. It's not that it's pristine or incredibly clear. It's that it does weird things to light. And it's grainy and kind of unpredictable in certain ways, and that is very exciting. It's not just about it being sharper or clearer.

*Chain took six years to shoot, and in Instrument you've got footage going back ten years. For Benjamin Smoke, you followed him for several years. Are you always shooting?*

[*laughs*] Yeah, pretty much. Basically, I just shoot whenever I can afford to. That's a nice way to live — to document things that interest you and you find beautiful. I often do it in very small increments. I did it for many years in Super 8, and now I do it in 16 as well, and sometimes I do it in stills, and sometimes I'm just gathering sounds. . . . It's just a way to go through life. I like it to be part of my food. And so often I'll have something documented, and then years down the road I'll have a chance to apply it more specifically to a project. So

# Digital Divide





I shot Fugazi for years just for fun in silent Super 8 and then eventually *Instrument* began to develop, and we needed to apply other tools. And pretty much whenever I travel, I shoot, and then in the case of something like *Chain* I start to hone in on something very specific and aim for it.

*Have you been documenting any of the things that have been happening here in New York the past few months, like the anti-war rallies?*

Yeah. I've been shooting anti-war rallies for years and years and years. I've shot the last two big ones here, and I've been shooting in D.C. . . . I've shot rallies in Italy, and here and there. I've been using them in the godspeed shows. I may donate some to Le Tigre. I think they had some interest in getting some of that. I like them. But that's one of the things I just sort of do for history, and my own interest, and we'll see what happens with it.

*How do those collaborations [with godspeed] work? How much do you work with the band?*

It's very collaborative. Basically, I like their music a great deal, and I heard that they might be looking for some more footage to use — the band almost always tours with three 16mm projectors. I also heard they had turned down some big offers for selling their music to advertising. I thought that was interesting. I've been working with musicians for a long time, and a lot of musicians don't say no when the advertising people come a-knocking and open the big wallet.

So when I heard that godspeed hadn't, it increased my desire to offer them something. It wouldn't have sparked the same thing in me if I didn't love their music. But because I love their music, I also felt like it's just kind of good karma. If they were thoughtful in the way that they decided not to be part of that, then I wanted to thoughtfully return the favor.

I get a lot of free rein, and sometimes I just go off and shoot something, and sometimes I pull something out of the archive. Every once in a while they're not crazy about it. Often they just pretty much let me do what I want. I think we have a lot in common, in terms of our concerns. . . . I think they're really trying to step out of the mold of what it means to be a band, and they're also trying to paint a big picture over time, and to do that, sonically, without lyrics, is a really interesting adventure. . . . It's been a very fruitful two-way street.

*It strikes me as very peculiar that an advertiser or a big commercial venture would approach a band like godspeed.*

Well, it's not peculiar at all anymore, because the big ad people are all hiring 22-year-old what they call "cool hunters" to go to the independent record store and search through the more obscure stuff, and

they're turning that stuff over left and right. I don't want to be in a position to judge what other people do, because if I had a family to feed, and someone offered me that money and I felt like I *had* to do it, then maybe I'd have to think differently about it.

*Have you ever been approached by advertisers?*

Yeah, I was approached by Coca-Cola. [laughs] I was approached by Wieden and Kennedy, which was an ad agency, and I asked them who they were, why they were approaching me, and what it would be for. And they didn't give a specific campaign, but they said they were doing Coke, and Nike, and Microsoft. . . . I don't even want to discuss it with those people, really, because I don't like the way they look at the world, I don't like the way they change the world, I don't like the way they use the world, I don't like the way they use music, I don't like their endless selling of subcultures and their obsessions with kind of getting young people to rat each other out in terms of their tastes, and their hopes, and their aspirations. I just think it's a dirty business, and I don't really want to be part of it if I don't have to.

*To me, it's just depressing to think of record companies hiring kids my age to go into record stores —*

Right. The other side of the coin is that a lot of the young people feel like they're just being able to help out their friends, and they're, like, "Oh wow, you know, I can get my friends \$20,000 to just hand over a song that they've already made." And on a certain level, they have an argument. I can understand that argument, and I can understand why a band might think it's just too good an opportunity to turn down financially. Because it's very hard for people to get by doing what they do.

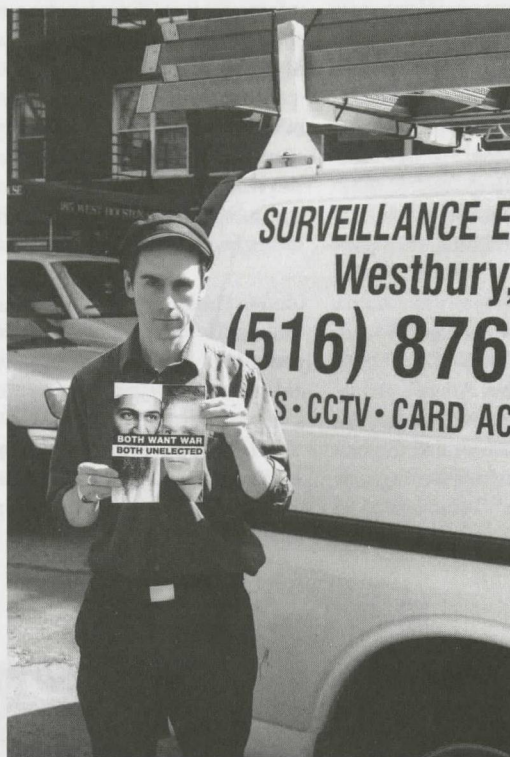
On the other hand, I just think that they have to be aware that the commercial entity is purchasing something beyond the music itself. They're purchasing credibility, or they're purchasing the underground, or they're purchasing youth culture.

Believe me, they're not just interested in the melody. And people I think are often very naive when they deal with corporations. A lot of times, corporations sort of sponsor artists now, and people look at it as the corporation's being, like, a benefactor. But that's not what the corporation is doing.

*If this were an interview for The Independent\*, I'd ask you where you get your own funding from, what sources you turn to — which I think is still a valid question.*

Well, I've gotten most of my funding either out of pocket or through my own work. I worked for ten years in the film business as a union prop man, doing work I didn't particularly care about. I've been very fortunate with arts grants, and arts funding, but I do a lot of work applying for that funding. And there are times when I've had twenty-five rejections in a row over the course of three years.

*What was it like [when you worked as a prop man] keeping your creative work separate from your day jobs?*



**Yeah, I was approached by Coca-Cola ... I don't even want to discuss it with those people, really, because I don't like the way they look at the world, I don't like the way they change the world, I don't like the way they use the world ...**



Basically, the jobs were a great education in what I didn't want to do, and what I didn't want movies to be, and how wasteful an industry can be when it becomes a kind of enormous machine, and when it becomes sort of overly guided by profit motives. . . . I wasn't particularly interested in props. I got out of school and I lucked into it, and a few years later I got into a union. I made more money then, certainly, than I do now. [laughs]

*You said this [next project] was your first narrative.*

It's sort of a narrative. . . . I probably couldn't make a normal movie if I tried. So it's not a normal narrative. In my travels over the past ten or fifteen years, I've found increasingly that I could be anywhere in the world and not be able to tell where I was anymore, because so many places had become so homogenized, and there's so much corporate presence in the landscape. So if I was in certain parts of Rotterdam, I could have just as well been in Houston, and I could just as well have been in New Jersey, and I could just as well have been in L.A., or Vancouver. . . . I began to gather those landscapes and then to sort of join them into one super-landscape, and then I was interested in telling stories of people who are navigating that landscape.

So it's kind of a complicated, long-term investigation of what the new world looks like, and on a certain level, I think it's important to sort of stare at these things that are strangely invisible. We don't really look when they put up a Wal-Mart; it just appears. The whole McDonald-ization of the world is not exactly a phenomenon that hasn't been noticed, and ridiculed, and satirized, so it's important to try to take that on without being easy about it and taking cheap shots. The really difficult thing about this project is to try to deal with this subject matter and not be condescending about the fact that it is the world we have to live in, and a lot of people are kind of stuck moving through that world. I'm trying to be really open-minded about what these things are like for people who don't share the same critical thoughts about

this terrain. So it's been a very interesting project, because suddenly I'm trying to mind into that of a Japanese businesswoman who loves theme parks, and really be fair to her. Because it's easy to either laugh at it or savage it. Obviously, I'd be lying if I didn't feel there's an element of critique in this whole project.

*[In preparation] did you talk to people from all around the world?*

Yeah, it's sort of a combination of research and interviews, and then fabrication. It's sort of mixing all those elements together, and taking the narrative elements and dropping them into an existing sort of documentary base, and making a project which often feels like a documentary, and then slips into narrative for a while, and then slips back.

*Were you at all surprised at what you found when you started researching?*

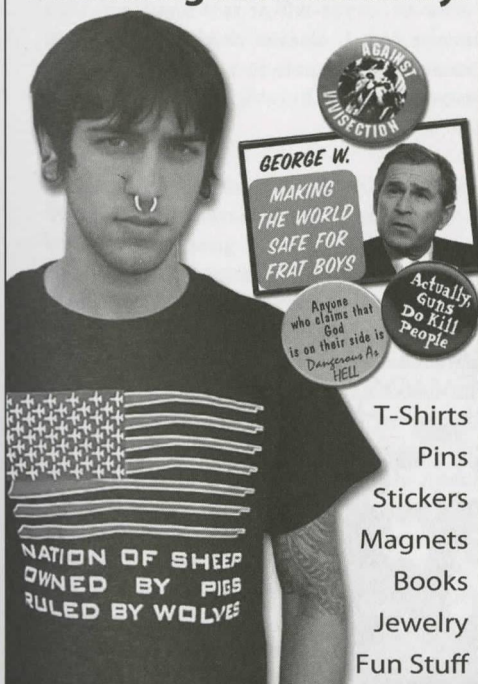
Well, there are a lot of things that surprised me, but basically, humans are humans. You can be appalled by someone's job as a telemarketer, but if you talk to them, you find that they're trying to get by, and they may have a sense of humor. . . .

So it's a complicated project. I'm really excited about it. Even *Instrument* and *Benjamin Smoke*, they touch on it in a weird little way, even though they're very different in their subject matter. Because that's the landscape that Fugazi was moving through on their tour, and that also was the final outcome of Benjamin's neighborhood in Cabbagetown, in Atlanta. It became gentrified and kind of cleaned up. So it's always been there in the work, and now it's just becoming something I'm doing explicitly. ★

*\*The Independent Film & Video Monthly, a publication to which the interviewer frequently contributes.*

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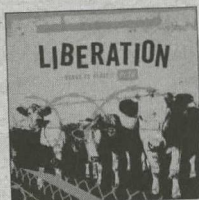


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# LIBERATION

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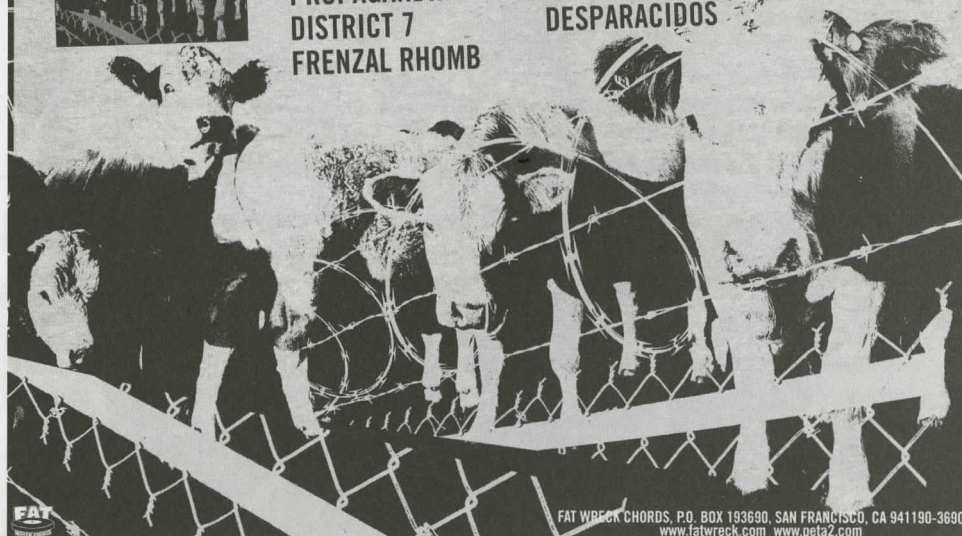
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I can see it now: a cavalcade of disabled people rolling, crutching, and caning their way down the plush red carpet of celebrity, the strobe-like flashbulbs of the paparazzi reflecting magnificently off a plethora of assistive devices. Our laughter would be obnoxiously loud, we'd be cussing up a god-damn storm, and we'd be red-fucking-hot. Fashionites would later proclaim how well the shuffle of so-and-so's gait was complemented by the swing of her suit's fabric, gloat over the way the cut of so-and-so's dress accentuated the angle of her legs *and* matched her wheelchair, and devote glossy pages of photos to the latest trends in canes and walkers. And that would be just the beginning.

Unfortunately, reality inevitably rears its ugly head: popular American culture, driven by the famous, thrives on very specific beauty ideals: white, able-bodied, skinny, proportional, with middle- or upper-class social values. Occasionally, Capital-T-They will let somebody who doesn't fit all that criteria Make It in order to prove that Anyone Can Make It If They Work Hard Enough. Enter Marlee Matlin of "Children of a Lesser

God" and Chris Burke of "Life Goes On." These are the only two celebrity working actors I know of who have been disabled since childhood. Two white people — one man, one woman — are Hollywood's self-satisfied pat on the back for disabled inclusiveness. What the hell? Oh, and can anyone tell me where Chris Burke's *been* for the last ten years? But wait! Two more white boys who'd already made it to the glow of the limelight while able-bodied — Christopher Reeves and Michael J. Fox — can now be included in the diversity count due to Tragic Circumstances. Sadly, they don't act anymore: Chris is too busy spending \$400,000 a year on a therapeutic attempt at able-bodiedness (He Can Now Lift A Finger!) and Michael wore himself out keeping his Parkinson's a secret for seven whole years. Then he started a research foundation.

The two most prominent disabled used-to-be-actors are now throwing phenomenal chunks of the fortunes they've accumulated toward finding miraculous medical cures for their conditions. As far as the fame and obscurity of disability is concerned, this is quite

significant. There are only two roles that popular culture is comfortable allowing disabled people to play. The first is the role that Chris and Michael are allotted: The Poster Child, or, more to the point, The Tear-Jerker Tragedies That, God Willing, Should Be Fixed Soon. The other role, played by Marlee Matlin and Chris Burke (and disabled athletes everywhere), is the role that queer disabled writer Eli Clare calls the "Supercrip." This is the consistent media portrayal of heroic, brave, and inspirational disabled people who are successful *despite* being disabled. In other words, it's only when disabled people act like able-bodied people — whether in miniscule ways like lifting a finger or over-the-top triumphs like climbing 50 mountains with one leg — that the media is willing to give us any airplay. That way, able-bodied people can suck up all of the strength we use to get through the day and use it to feed a voracious (but most likely subconscious) superiority complex.

There are also the Happy Cripples, a type of Supercrip. The careers of Stevie Wonder and Ray Charles illustrate this well:

# Supercrips and Poster Children

words Colin Kennedy Donovan  
illustration Tyler Jensen





the audience never has to actually confront the reality of blindness, perennially hidden by dark glasses. They can simply pretend the glasses lend an air of cool to the musical acts because Charles and Wonder are *always* smiling, even though they're blind, and wow, they can play piano in spite of it too! We never hear in the media about the way the constant smiling also connects to the struggle against racism (America is only comfortable with happy/non-threatening black men) or any of the struggles they go through as disabled people of color.

The media perpetuates these roles — the Poster Child and the Supercrip — to support the pernicious cultural distortion that very few disabled people are actually capable of doing anything at all. Best lock most of us up somewhere and throw away the key because complete obliviousness toward and disregard for the actual lives of disabled people is simply more *comfortable* for able-bodied people. This is characterized by the ubiquitous trend of able-bodied white people writing horrible screenplays and realistically portraying disabled people on film, garnering copious outpourings of critical acclaim, shiny statues, and the like. Where, if I may be so bold to ask, are the thousands of disabled actors, singers, and dancers of the world? Nowhere near Hollywood, apparently. If I see one more white able-bodied actor lauded in a *Triumph of the Human Spirit* movie, I'm going to kill. Allow me to elaborate with a perfect, oh-so-poignant example.

Everyone just *loved* "Dancer in the Dark." Director Lars Von Trier netted Palme d'Or/Best Picture and Björk won Best Actress at Cannes for her role as Selma. People tend to adopt a shake-the-head-with-hand-over-heart-and-tear-in-the-eye-at-its-artistic-beauty-and-depth attitude. I saw several yawningly typical, ever-enraging problematic messages about the lives of disabled women in this movie:

1. *Disabled women are horrible mothers.* Selma actually says, "It's my fault, really, I knew he was going to be blind just like me and I had him anyway." Manipulative Cop Boy Bill (David Morse) blinks nary a 20/20 eye in argument. Can anyone say *eugenics*? Instead of countering the underlying sentiment that disabled people are better off unborn, Bill "supercrrips" Selma by saying, "You're strong," which Selma immediately negates. Selma slaps her chronically truant son across the face the moment we first see him on film, doesn't ever give her son presents because she's "not that kind of mother," and must be vigorously persuaded to give her son gifts that she hasn't even had to buy, all because she's secretly saving up for the best present of all — Able-bodied White Manhood.

2. *Disabled women never get angry.* Selma is portrayed as ridiculously docile, except when she's being a horrible mother. No one, when confronted by an angry wife with the false accusation of trying to fuck the landlord who's just stolen their life savings, would only say, "I need to see him," without one word of denial or indication of anger. No one except von Trier's, skewed caricature of the utterly self-effacing, slightly stupid, deluded, disabled woman immigrant.

3. *Disabled women exist for the benefit of men.* Selma is portrayed as living exclusively for the transformation of her son into a seeing (non-disabled) man. Selma's love interest, Jeff (played by Peter Stormare), is a flat, dopey character until her impending death completes his character and makes him a whole, loving person that we're supposed to care about. Most glaringly, Selma never tells her side of the story about the way Bill fucked her over because "mum's the word." She keeps his secrets, as well as her son's, at the expense of her life.

4. *Disabled women, if they can't be fixed, are better off dead.* Selma's degenerative blindness is "a family thing," presumably on her mother's side, since she "never had a father." Yet she is somehow utterly unable to fathom any future existence as a blind woman, keeping her blindness a secret from everyone for as long as possible, working on heavy factory machinery. It becomes clear that a job away from the machines is a possibility but her character is too proud to accept this though she is the sole support of her son. All pride that Selma expresses as an immigrant working-class single disabled mother works against either her or her son. It is only when she gives up all pride, "follows her heart," and acts as a selfless martyr whose entire life is worth \$2,056.10 that her character is redeemed. Even though Selma can't small-s see anymore, she can capital-S See the deeper meaning of life, which is, paradoxically, her death. How moving. And while I'm on the subject of the precious \$2,056.10, apparently neither Valiant Best Friend Kathy (Catherine Deneuve) nor Newly Profound Love Interest Jeff has ever heard of a bake sale. Aren't these folks supposed to be working class? Believe me, poor folks know the science of scraping together nickels and dimes for the necessities of life.

In the end, able-bodiedness is predictably paramount: when Kathy insists "He

needs his mother!" in the jail scene, Selma gets angry for the first and only time in the whole movie and screams, "No! He needs his eyes!" Kathy eventually sees the error of her ways and agrees with Selma's assessment: "You were right, Selma! Follow your heart!" she screams as she's hustled out of the execution room, having delivered the son's now-useless glasses for the doomed Selma to clutch heroically as she goes down. Docile Disabled Woman Dies to Facilitate Birth of Able-bodied Man would have been a better title.

The extreme popularity of "Dancer in the Dark" and the smarmy swamp of Same-Old-Stories ("I Am Sam," "A Beautiful Mind," "Breaking the Waves," "Second Sight," and "Nell" to name just a few) makes it clear that unless popular American culture is completely transformed, even my relatively tame party-crashing opening sequence is shot. As long as popular cultural perception of disabled folks revolves around the idea that disabled people exist to be transformed into able-bodied people, or, if that isn't possible, to transform able-bodied people into better human beings via Inspiration, the real life of almost any physically, mentally or emotionally disabled person will remain obscured. Watching Björk have a bitch of a time getting to the bathroom in a hard-to-navigate crowd, Sean Penn being sterilized without his knowledge years before he even thinks about having children, or Russell Crowe being repeatedly dosed with Thorazine against his will in the state psych ward apparently just isn't Inspirational enough. Current popular culture happily perpetuates myths and is loathe to expose reality. The bottom line: sap sells, actual suffering and everyday resistance to political and social inequity do not.

Token famous disabled people (and the able-bodied that play them on TV) are used to obscure the fact that 70 percent of real, live, everyday disabled people are unemployed (read: poor-as-fuck), those of us that do have jobs earn a fraction of what able-bodied white boys consider peanuts (read: poor-as-fuck), the vast majority of us are unable to afford even basic health care, let alone Miracle Cures (read: poor-as-fuck), and that oh-by-the-way-the-Americans-with-Disabilities-Act-has-more-holes-than-Swiss-cheese.

Where, I'd like to know, is the full-length feature film from a major production company starring a militant, no-holds-barred, all-disabled cast with attitude? I'm ready. Are you? ★

**Current popular culture happily perpetuates myths and is loathe to expose reality. The bottom line: sap sells, actual suffering and everyday resistance to political and social inequity do not.**



# Music As Therapy

interview by Sara DeAloia

I met Erin Fox playing pool one Saturday in Athens, Ohio. Our mutual friend Bridget says Erin is the only person she knows who is sure of what she wants to do. After talking to Erin for a while, I could clearly see her dedication and passion for her chosen path, music therapy.

*Clamor: When will you graduate from Ohio University?*

Erin: I finished classes last quarter and I will begin a six-month internship in Austin, Texas on June 2, 2003. The internship is the last requirement for graduation. I will then be graduated at the end of winter quarter [2003].

*Could you explain what exactly music therapists do?*

Erin Fox: Music therapists use a systematic process to improve, maintain, or restore a client or patient's physical, cognitive, social, or emotional areas. First, a doctor, nurse, teacher, parent, or any other person on the client's treatment team refers a music therapist (MT). Then, the MT will assess the client to see if this person will benefit from therapy. The MT will observe the client in his or her environment (in a hospital, at home, in school, etc.) and then observe him or her in a music therapy session. This assessment documents all areas of functioning [including] gross and fine motor function, short and long-term memory, and pretty much every category under the areas of physical, cognitive, social, and emotional [functioning]. If the MT deems music therapy appropriate for the client then the client begins to receive this service. When music therapy is no longer necessary for the client, services are terminated. Music therapists work with individuals as well as with groups. They are trained musicians as well as trained therapists. They use music like singing, moving to music, music listening, songwriting, rhythmic improvisation, and musical games to help achieve the client's objectives.

*I remember you saying there were a lot of jobs available for music therapists right now. If this is the case, how would you explain this in light of the fact that most people would view it as a "non-traditional" form of healing?*

It is quite true that there are many jobs in the field of music therapy. Many professionals in the medical community are realizing that writing prescriptions doesn't always heal people; *people* heal people. For example, there is a large hospital in Denver, Colorado that has a holistic healing philosophy. Spirituality plays a great part in the healing process. In addition, not only is a music therapist on staff there, but also a massage therapist. They sometimes work together with clients to find the most effective experience for the patients. The bottom line is *music affects people*. It's hard for professionals (teachers, and physical, speech, and occupational therapists) to ignore the effects music elicits from their clients. Sometimes music is the only way to get children with language delays to use their voices, or children with cerebral palsy to move their limbs. Over the past 20 years, music therapists have gained a lot of respect in the medical and professional community. The only thing that is really in the way is convincing insurance companies to reimburse music therapy services. MTs have come a long way with that, too! Last year about 10 to 15 percent of music therapy services were covered by medical insurance.

*What kind of field experience have you had? I especially love the story of the about the*

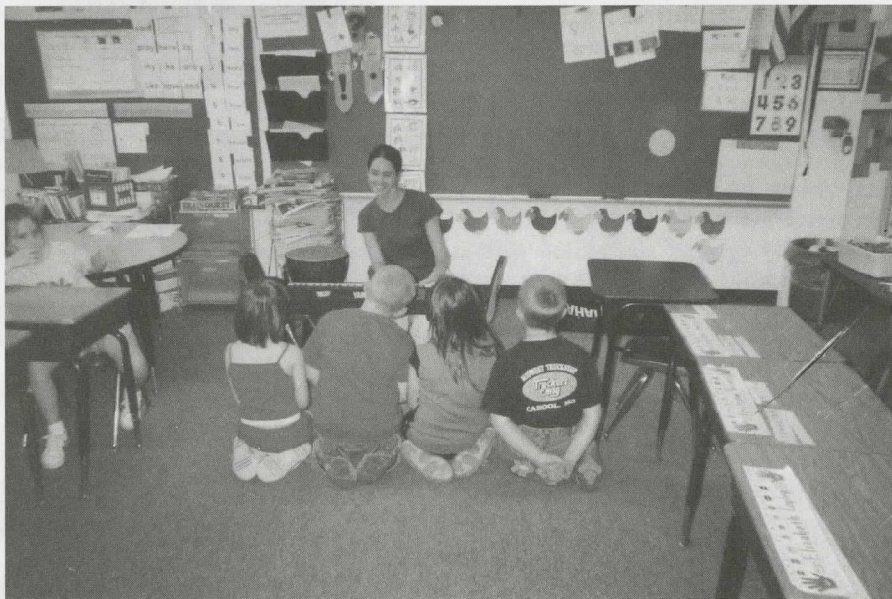
*woman who sang along with you in the nursing home, but what are your other experiences?*

Since my freshman year at OU, I have worked with adult psych[iatric] patients, adults with moderate to profound mental retardation and developmental disabilities, geriatric clients (60 to 100 years old), typically developed 3 to 4 year olds, 3 to 4 year olds with MRDD [Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities], and 7 to 8 year olds with learning disabilities. One of my most memorable moments in fieldwork, besides the story you mentioned above, was with the 3 to 4 year olds with MRDD. One day I brought in a microphone and let each child sing the goodbye song. One boy, who barely ever uses his voice, not only sang, but formed the correct words! One of the teachers turned to a student teacher and said she was so amazed she was about to cry. In another session, we sang a song about colors and when I asked the same boy what color I was pointing to, he said "yellow." That's a pretty difficult word to say for a three year old, let alone a three year old with a severe language delay! You just have to find what medium of learning is best for the child and they will experience the optimum amount of growth and learning.

*What instruments do you play?*

I was classically trained on piano for 10 years and I've been playing the guitar now for three years. I've also taken percussion, clarinet, and trumpet classes. Sometimes I am confronted by people

who think that anyone can sing songs to people, but music therapy is much more than that. MT's are musicians who are trained to use their music abilities to help people. Every music experience is designed to meet the needs of specific clients. After four years in the program, I can say that it's not as easy as you think!



Erin Fox works with first graders doing keyboard and singing experience at Albany Elementary School in Albany, Ohio.



*Where are music therapists' services most requested in the medical field, with children, old people, or mentally and physically handicapped?*

About 50 percent of MT's work with adult and juvenile psychiatric patients in places like hospitals, institutions, detention centers, prisons, jails, etc. The second largest population that MT's work with is children and adults with MRDD in places like schools, private homes, private agencies (the MT's office), sheltered workshops, residential facilities, state facilities, etc. Many MT's work in nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, and day programs with geriatric clients. Often MT's are hired as recreation coordinators with a focus on MT. Others work in general at hospitals, hospice programs, and substance abuse programs.

*Can regular people, like me or the readers of this magazine, incorporate some kind of music therapy into our daily lives? If so, how would you see this as beneficial for individuals and society as a whole?*

Music therapists are also educators about music therapy. When I was with psych patients, I taught them how to meditate and relax to music. People our age are constantly on the

go and are sometimes so busy they forget their own mental and physical health. The best advice I can give to incorporate music therapy into your life is to take 10 or 15 minutes each day to just listen to music, any kind of music you think will help you relax. Close your eyes, take deep breaths, and relax all your muscles. Take this time to appreciate all you have and reprioritize what is really important. Hopefully you will feel refreshed, with a better view on your life. It seems our society is so fast-paced and so money hungry, components that often go hand-in-hand, that people are stressed out and forget what is really important to them. If everyone could set aside material needs for just a few moments, and appreciate family and friends, who knows how different the world could be?

*What do you see as the role of music therapy in the medical community?*

I view music therapy as a "medical necessity." First, music therapy has been proven in numerous studies to lower heart rate and blood pressure, to decrease the need for medications by reducing pain levels, and to decrease the time spent in hospitals. It is truly an asset to the medical community as it saves money and provides quality care to patients. Imagine walking into a hospital room. You

would find white walls, white bed sheets, a white bed tray, and beeping electronic medical equipment keeping the patient company. Not a very inviting environment. The patient is visited mainly by doctors and nurses who inform them that there is something wrong with their bodies. Sometimes family visit, sometimes they don't. Just think about what it would feel like for that patient to have a music therapist walk in the room, someone who doesn't want to know what's *wrong* with them, but how they would *like* to feel. Then this bright, energetic person fills the sterile room with familiar melodies and harmonies on the guitar and suddenly the patient forgets about their pain because they are singing a song they used to know when they were young. The patient smiles, an expression not formed for some time now. Not only is the music therapist controlling the patient's pain, but she or he is improving the patient's quality of life. This is why music therapy is a medical necessity.

I also want to add that music therapists are usually involved in the client's treatment team. They work closely with physical, speech, and occupational therapists as well as with parents, doctors, and nurses. They also attend meetings and prepare reports on progress made. ☆

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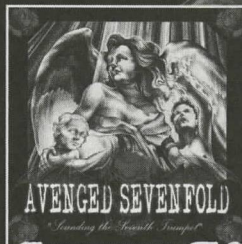
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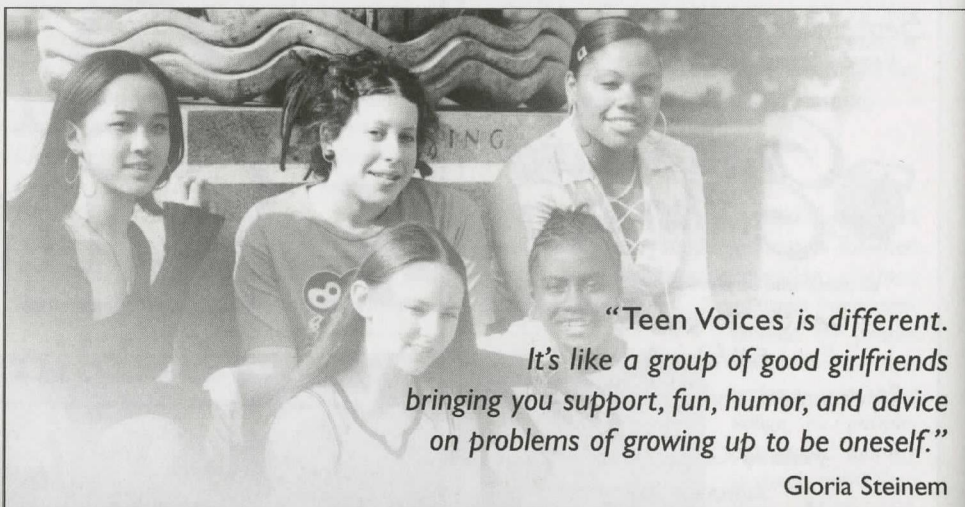
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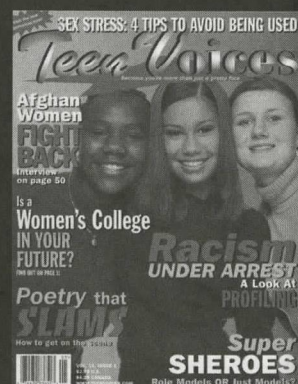
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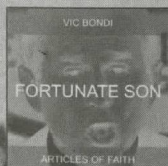
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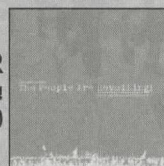
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My family had a history of forgetting me at the airport. Having watched my fellow passengers file out of baggage claim, I'd call home to find them around the dinner table. They'd put their forks down long enough to chuckle and say they'd be there soon. As soon as they finished eating.

But this time was different. I had been the topic of dinner conversation for weeks. My father arrived promptly and, as we pulled into the driveway, my sisters catapulted out the door.

**"You're so ugly!" Hilary shrieked, wrinkling her nose. "Oh my God, you look like a boy," Emily cried with the same expression.**

**The sister they knew had always been a faithful follower of the church of conventional beauty. The driveway was dead silent as they stared in disbelief at the sacrilege of my shaved head.**

My heretical hairstyle made its way into every conversation. Emily gushed about her friend's older brother; he was hot, hilarious, and exactly my age. "I'd totally introduce you," she said. "That is, if you had some hair." When Hilary begged me to have lunch with her at school, I was flattered. Then my mother let me in on her real motivation: having my shaved head at her table would scare the crap out of all her junior high enemies. Even my ever-supportive parents, who had barely batted an eye when I came home freshman year with a huge hoop in my left nostril, couldn't contain wry smiles and sarcastic comments.

With the wave of the magic razor, I had become the ugly stepsister, an aesthetic curse on our fairy tale family. But once upon a time, I was carefully coiffed.

In elementary school, I sculpted my bangs into a wave that arched over my forehead and cascaded onto my temple. Often over-zealous, my arrival at the breakfast table let loose a chorus of "Cock-a-doodle-doo;" a code that meant I looked like a rooster and had exceeded the allowable hair height limit.

In middle school, I was the first 5th grader with a perm. In high school, when the outlets in the girl's locker room went out, I spent an entire afternoon scouring stores for a cordless curling iron. By college my hair was long enough to braid, but even then the part had to be meticulously disheveled and the tips curled into perfect c's.

The quest for perfection demanded sacrifice. I rehearsed non-curling iron options before camping trips. Pool parties were nerve-racking as swimming was the ultimate sacrilege. When there was a hint of gray in the sky, I armed myself with an umbrella, but I didn't dare wear a hair-imperiling hat even when the sun was unrelenting.

One percentage point of humidity could ruin my day because flat hair implied personal failure. I could study for days to ensure a good grade, hit a thousand tennis balls to perfect my backhand, but I could labor for hours in front of the mirror and still be unable to control my appearance. When it came to my hair, each day was a no-win situation and, as a seasoned athlete, I was getting sick of the game.

# "You're so ugly!" Embracing



In the midst of a stressful semester, I realized that, to keep pace with other priorities, I'd need to start breaking the rules. I needed to put some distance between me and the "volume-enhancing" shampoos, the "flexible, super-hold" hairspray, the clips and combs and elastic bands that held me hostage in the bathroom each morning.

And I knew I had to go straight to the root of the problem. With an addiction like mine, I'd have to remove all temptation. The former rooster would have to go cold turkey.

I shaved my head on a Saturday evening in May. Cutting incongruous handfuls of hair, a sense of guilty pleasure washed over me. The whirl of the razor filled me with a mix of nausea and euphoria, and a pool of hair accumulated at my feet. My actions, I knew, would subject me to public indictment, but this was a crime of passion.

**When it was all done, I looked awful. My scalp was appallingly apparent, my head looked freakishly round. This kind of ugly was utterly out of my control. And I loved it.**

The next morning, instead of slaving away in a steamy bathroom, I did something radical; I ate breakfast sitting down. Then, for the first time since I was old enough to grasp a bottle of hairspray, I walked all the way to class without worrying what I would look like on arrival.

At first, the added attention was benign: extended stares and averted eyes. My morning runs became conspicuously silent as fellow runners withheld their cheerful "good mornings," and people become visibly uncomfortable when I started casual conversation in line at the grocery store or the post office.

But then, in New York City, silence turned to criticism. There was the occasional "Girl, you look like a man!" from giddy cliques of high school girls, the unsolicited sympathy of "Don't worry, it'll grow back" from other women and, of course, the recurring classic, "Why'd a pretty girl like you do something like that," from men of all ages.

The commentary questioned not only my appearance, but my identity. The polite security guard called me "sir," the grocery store clerk

called me "him," and irrationally enraged strangers screamed "dyke" out their car windows.

Over time, a frustrated paralysis replaced the sense of liberation. I felt like a child, chastised for misusing her safety scissors by a city full of parents who knew better. In my weakened state, I started to crave the curling iron.

But the seeming comfort of conformity was dispelled in one elevator ride. On our way up a dark-haired man cocked his head, and through a condescending, crooked smile asked, "Why'd you do that to your hair?" I barely began my rehearsed shrug, before he added slowly, "Women should look like women."

I went rigid. It was as if someone had pulled a plug and my whole body stopped, reset, and started flashing incoherently like a digital clock after a power outage. I was used to being patronized, antagonized and even humiliated, but I didn't like being told what to do.

When the door jolted open, I stammered, "Women should look however they want to look." He scoffed and swung his hand through the air, batting away my unworthy opinion. His accusation clamored in my head for hours until, despite his intent, I finally agreed. Women should look like women, not caricatures.

This ugly stepsister was ripping up her invitation to the ball and crossing over into the real world where there are no magic mirrors dictating the fairest of them all. My perspective shifted from that of a marked target to a woman leaving her mark. Criticism meant I was successfully threatening social norms. Stares became signs of victory. I had the power to scare the crap out of an entire cafeteria of junior high girls and the capacity to make my family remember my homecoming. I was finally in control.

Instead of the little girl who didn't know any better, I became the adult who knew better than to believe in fantastic notions like the beauty myth. Defying the fairy tale, I decided, is the only way to live happily ever after. ☆

words Carolyn Szczepanski photos Melissa Cooperman





# A Month Sitting

I have to thank Renée for this, for it was she who called me a sexist pig. I objected, of course, but what are you gonna do? What was I going to do? Indeed, that was the question: to be, or not to be, a woman.

It started because I needed a female perspective in a story I'm writing and, being a progressive — even styling myself a feminist — male, felt sure that I was up to the task (others had their doubts). Undaunted, I mustered all the confidence and empathy I had and dove, head first, into the dark and mysterious waters of womanhood. When I floated to the surface moments later, unconscious, bleeding from my crown, I realized that I wouldn't be matching socks and panties any time soon. Renée, as I noted, was even less enthused than I. She called it "the worst kind of sexism" [her italics], though, honestly, between you and me, I don't think I did all that bad.

However, still styling myself as progressive, I knew that I could do better. The problem, of course... the one which simply could not be set aside, is that there always has been and, barring industrial accidents, always will be a stem on my apple. Granted, I am half woman (on my mother's side), but my by-lunchtime five o'clock shadow, my Lincoln-esque height, Whitmanish stink, and gender specific lumps ensure that I have never, not once, been dismissed by a car salesman as "little lady." I simply have never been afraid of walking into a public restroom for fear of a filthy toilet; and, unfortunately, my high school teachers all ensured, to their most annoying ability, that I never felt left out of math or science class. Bottom line: not only do I not get it, but I never really had much of a chance in the first place.

Regardless, I desperately wanted to get it, so I devised a plan: sit down for a month to pee, shave my legs, wear hose, comparison shop, listen to Natalie Merchant instead of Frank Sinatra, and read only books by women, with my reading list as follows:

- Andrea Dworkin, *Intercourse* (actually, I'm still working through this one)
- Astrid Lindgren, *Pippi Longstocking*, *Pippi Goes On Board*
- Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*
- Inga Muscio, *Cunt*
- Trina Paulus, *Hope for the Flowers*
- Gloria Steinem, "If Men Could Menstruate"
- Sherri S. Tepper, *Raising the Stones*
- Alice Walker, "In Search of Our Mother's Gardens"

Oh, and one other thing: punctuation. That great, big question mark that is the "period," exclamation point. I'm not sure if I succeeded or not. For starters, I decided that if I was a woman, I would be the type of woman who was regular to such an unnatural degree that I could choose when my "time of the month" would come, and for how long it would stay. (Two days over a weekend when I had no other obligations suited me just fine.) Best efforts as follows:

- Skip the vitamins so that the generally skipingly happy body feels as if it has been infected by a plague of microscopic, toothed vacuum cleaners.
- Oatmeal for breakfast.
- Oatmeal for lunch.
- Baked potato for dinner.
- Run to the bathroom every few hours to deal with "girl stuff"; where "girl stuff" is a weekend of rather uncomfortable potty breaks.

And so, what I didn't get in spiked-heel-being-driven-in-to-my-gut-two-inches-below-my-navel, I feel I more than made up for in oh-

sweet-baby-Jesus-it-feels-like-I-ate-a-cactus. I may be wrong, but I'm having a terrible time finding a woman who will agree to duplicate my experiment.

Getting off one painful memory and onto an annoying one, peeing was the pits. After tinkle the first I was repulsed; but by tinkle the second I hated men. It wasn't putting the seat down that bothered me so much (a light touch and gravity does the rest), it was those times that I didn't have to that really got to me. Honestly, unless I've got my thumb partially over the hole, I can hit a flowerpot with a hose, especially if I'm standing directly over it. Really guys, no excuses now: work on the aim, or lift the lid. Actually, work on the aim, and lift the lid.

Sitting was absolutely a month-long exercise in not killing people, but one I passed relatively easy by promising myself a shower when I got home. But then there was this other thing... these panty hose, as they are so benignly called. Pantyhose. I mean, really. Did somebody honestly think that this was a good idea? A tie sucks, granted; but wow! For the men, I would like at this time for you to imagine wearing a tie that binds you from toes to navel, has you constantly grabbing your pants because you can't tell if they're falling off, and pinches your most delicate parts. This is the big ball of suck that is pantyhose. I had a job once that mandated women wearing hose. I should have quit on the spot. In fact, I may re-apply just so that I can. I'm not playing around here: hose are evil and must be destroyed. They must be destroyed and the full board of every multi-national pantyhose cartel (evil geniuses all, I'm sure; in fact, I've got a very clear image of every one of James Bond's nemeses sitting around in a swank boardroom somewhere stroking cats and laughing) should be drug through the streets and garroted in the public square using their own products. Extreme? No. They pinched my stuff!

And yet, after all that, know that hose weren't even the worst part of my month. They are a blight, an evil, but they can be removed (though, apparently, not without falling over). Verily no, I say unto you, it is shaving which is the Grand Inquisitor, der Führer, the Pinched in the Fly, the rotting midden heap of being a human woman. And sadly, so precious few on either side seem aware of this.

I stood under hot water on a Thursday night after work and felt it as it ran down my legs, moments before I castrated my sense of awareness. I was excited. I questioned the universe at large, and what new wonders do you have in store for me? Certainly, I reasoned, there is some great esoteric mystery, some greater joy for the initiated that women would continue to spend the time involved to strip themselves of hair. Quivering, I put blade to bone and I pulled. And then I hacked, and I chopped, and I realized I should have trimmed first, and I finally succeeded in clear cutting my legs and I — too late now! — wondered if I would clog the drain, and I stood to let the water run down my legs, expecting excitement, adventure, perhaps even a minor miracle and, with the exception of my knee where I had carved my initials in an ancient alphabet, I felt... numb.

It would be several days before I put two (ears) and two (legs) together. I would eventually realize that we have tiny HAIRS in our ears that vibrate causing [obscure physiological process] and finally resulting in HEARING. Thus, HAIRS = HEARING. Strip the HAIRS, lose the HEARING. As go the ears, so go the legs.

My legs had gone deaf. More precisely, I had willfully deafened them. I instantly regretted my actions. I willed the hairs to grow back. I slapped my thighs, raked my nails across my flesh, wishing for the sen-



sation that would fill the sickened hole of dread in my throat. I doubted myself: what if it never grows back? Could I live like that? I, jokes aside, became frantic. I cried. I, honest injun, cried in the shower. And no drips, these... great, wracking, Tom-Hanks-minus-a-volleyball sobs. It was terrible. Half my body had been retarded through my own stupidity.

And it was in that moment that I think, perhaps, I started to hate women a bit. Began to hate them for doing these things to themselves, for letting me, the men of the world, to force it upon them. We humans are born a certain way. As an animal, we are extraordinary. So why do we mutilate ourselves in the pursuit of some abstract sense of beauty? Isn't sensation — the very thing we strip in this ugly vanity — beautiful?

Yes, I hated women for this Michael Jacksonian self-mutilation, this psychoses of self-destruction and self-denial in the pursuit of an undetermined sense of aesthetics, the conditioned sense that a human is grotesque but for the scalpel or the razor. Yes, I hated women from the floor of my shower; but I hated men more.

I hated every man who ever said, "put on some make-up, I'm taking you out tonight," or flattered her calves in heels, her new breasts, her weight, her windproof hair, her smooth legs. I hated every man for re-enforcing it, who couldn't approve of and wouldn't even accept his wife's graying hair or the body that bore them children. I was stricken there, welded to the floor of my shower, the water turning cold, and I wondered how many lipo-suction clinics there were under the Taliban; I wondered how many legs were shaved under the burlap oppression of a burqa? Because, yes, it is a terrible thing that some cultures mutilate young girls and others hide women away behind a veil, but is that really any worse than what we do in America? Is it worse than chopping her up, removing the parts which offend, stuffing sacks of toxic chemicals under the skin, pumping her with carcinogens to completely alter her cycles so she can't get pregnant, shaving off all the hair, painting the flesh, dousing the whole thing in rubbing alcohol and flower extracts and then, and only then, and only maybe, calling it "pretty"?

We look at Winston Churchill: fat, bald, and gray, and we say, "distinguished," but Bess most certainly was not. We whisper in their ears subliminally and they repeat it back to us, to flatter the ego, "in the dark, inside, all men are six inches," but she must be the arbitrary 36-24-36.

Oh yes, I have learned to hate men and the world that we created, but the hating didn't teach me to be a woman. And though I learned some happy things in my month sitting, like a possible vaccine against Cervical Cancer, I also noticed some darker things. I noticed negative space in my mother's many paintings by Rosamond and, for the first time, wondered whether it was negative space, or if the artist was somehow trying to convey that there is something inherently missing in these women who posed for her? Yes, I saw new things, but neither the happy, nor the sad, taught me to be a woman.

Perhaps it is because I share, with the whole world, the furthest ex-



words Philip E Lefebvre  
illustration Mark Price

**The worst crimes that can be committed against me: robbery, assault, and murder, can be committed against anybody. As a white heterosexual I generally live without fear of deer fences, draggings from bumpers, or burning crosses; and as a man I live without fear of rape.**

tent of my possible victimization. The worst crimes that can be committed against me: robbery, assault, and murder, can be committed against anybody. As a white heterosexual I generally live without fear of deer fences, draggings from bumpers, or burning crosses; and as a man I live without fear of rape.

Rape is why I can never understand what it is to be a woman. Rape is the most violent, the most blatant expression of the oppression of women in any culture, and a black rock that sits somewhere — a burning coal for some, a pellet of birdshot in the cooked goose for others — in the psyche of the oppressed. And I will never have to deal with it. It was obvious foolishness on my part to think that I could improve my understanding of women through any means, because I will never know that fear. In fact, it may well be that Supergirl is the only woman to live without fear of rape, though I suspect that probably has a lot to do with the fact that Clark Kent is so mild mannered. I cannot, because no man can, fathom what it must be like to live with the haunting realization: 1 out of 3; and I will never know

the million little ways in which that statistic affects my mother, despite her gray hairs, my sister, despite her physical strength, or Renée, despite her grrr.

What I do know is that I will never hit my head on a glass ceiling, will always get the bigger check for the same work if a bigger check is to be had, won't ever be labeled "the first man in... [or] to do... [or] with..." which means that I'll never have to prove my worthiness to be, do, or have, simply because of my gender.

No, I will never be a woman. I will never understand what it is to be a woman, and I have no real hope of writing authentically from a woman's point of view. About the only thing I can hope for is that, now that I know this, I will never be called the "worst type" of sexist again. Though Renée would undoubtedly say that it is far more important not to be the "worst type" of sexist anymore, and my mistake would prove her point. ☆



# ACTING UP IN CAPE TOWN

## AIDS ACTIVISTS TAKE ON TODAY'S ANC TO SAVE POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

Five million South Africans — one in nine — have HIV. In Western countries, since the advent of triple combination therapy in 1996, people with HIV and AIDS are living much longer and healthier lives. But in South Africa, where unemployment is at 40 percent and most People with AIDS (PWA) are poor, a basic anti-HIV drug combo costing R1,000 (about \$100) per month is still far out of reach for the vast majority. The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), winner of this year's Nelson Mandela Award for Health and Human Rights, has built a membership of thousands by raising the stakes for pharmaceutical companies and for the current government of the African National Congress (ANC).

In October 2000, after drug giant Pfizer refused to allow local generic production of fluconazole to treat some of AIDS's most deadly infections, TAC's Zackie Achmat illegally brought 3,000 generic fluconazole tablets back from Thailand, where they cost roughly 18 cents each. Pfizer — which now donates its patented version of the drug to South Africa — cried foul, but dropped its threat of a lawsuit when it became clear how badly its public image could be damaged by such a move. Increasingly, TAC has fought its own government for access to medicine. President Thabo Mbeki has stirred public outrage with his skepticism of HIV as the cause of AIDS, and for saying that the drugs are too toxic for public use. In December 2001, TAC won a bitter lawsuit against the government, which was ordered to give nevirapine to HIV-positive pregnant women, preventing HIV transmission to their babies. And on February 14 of this year, TAC hosted the country's largest-ever AIDS protest, with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and between 15,000 to 20,000 marchers demanding free treatment for all people with HIV who need it. Here is a firsthand account of the demonstration, followed by a TAC statement on the civil disobedience campaign begun March 21, and the final words of activist and poet Edward Mabunda who died of AIDS on April 9.

### The March on Parliament: February 14, 2003

by Ralph Berold

On Wednesday night, we left for Cape Town and the march for HIV treatment, organized by the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) at the opening of Parliament. About 600 activists from Gauteng, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, and Limpopo provinces boarded the train and began singing. The songs did not stop for three days. On Thursday we ran workshops in the dining car. We looked after people who were on tuberculosis treatment. Logistics, such as catering for 600 through one narrow passage, were a nightmare. But people were patient and efficient and there was an air of respect, a partnership amongst strangers. I met a policeman who had disclosed his status and was an active HIV role model and educator. I met counselors, toyi-toyi boys [Toyi-toyi is a dance of resistance from apartheid times. -Ed], nurses, old people, students, researchers, and journalists on the train — each with a common purpose.

Friday morning we hit Cape Town station. In the light rain, we gathered and were issued our "HIV Positive" tee shirts. Six hundred people walked to Saint George's Cathedral, distributing pamphlets to people on the streets. At the former church of Archbishop Desmond Tutu we ate breakfast and met up with our Cape Town compatriots. The rally started at about 12:30 in the afternoon. Amampondo [a Cape Town traditional Xhosa percussion group. -Ed] hammered out beautiful melodic rhythms on their marimbas. A flatbed truck served as a stage for speakers and a sound system. [Pan-African Congress MP] Patricia de Lille was one of the first to speak. She said that today she had left Parliament to march with TAC. She reported that the president, in his state of the nation speech, talked about the U.S. and Iraq

for 20 minutes and just mentioned HIV/AIDS in passing, not even by name. Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane did not mince his words: "They say that we do not have money for antiretroviral drugs, yet we can pay 60 billion rand for arms!" Where are our priorities?

Then about 20,000 people stood up and arranged themselves in legions to march. First the people living openly with HIV and AIDS. Then the religious and political leaders. Then the unions. Gays and lesbians. Students. NGO's and community-based organisations. Each activist knew why they were there: "HIV treatment for all." We sang, shouted, toyi-toyed, clapped hands, and moved forward. Shop workers came to their doors to give their support. Pedestrians were swept into the tide of our wave. I looked up the street, and as far as I could see were thousands of people. The power of our bodies and our determination was clear.

In front of Parliament we stopped. TAC Chairperson Zackie Achmat told us how the great rivers of Africa were not big enough to hold our tears, our grief of loved ones lost or dying. He said that we needed to move into a new era, where the people of this country will be cared for, and we will all be afforded the dignity and rights that we deserve. Comrade Willie Madisha, president of COSATU, reminded us that we had spent six months negotiating this deal. Representatives from government, business, labour, and the community had come to a consensus and had drafted a framework agreement for a treatment plan, meant to be signed on December 1, 2002. It has not yet been signed. The president and the health minister continue to deny that it is worth anything.

### TAC Statement on Civil Disobedience

March 20, 2003

Tomorrow is Human Rights Day. On 21 March 1960, thousands of black African people in South Africa left their passes at home. They marched peacefully to police stations where they handed themselves over for arrest. Our parents and ancestors chose to go to jail rather than to obey unjust laws or to allow an immoral and illegitimate regime to continue to take away their dignity and equality. Mandela, Sisulu, Mbeki, Sobukwe, Ngoyi, First, Slovo, Kathrada, and many thousands more sacrificed for democracy, equality, and justice.

Today, we have a democratic and legitimate government of the people. Yet, today we are once again breaking the law. We accept our Constitution. We voted for this government, we accept its legitimacy and its laws. But we cannot accept its unjust policy on HIV/AIDS that is causing the deaths of more than 600 people every day. Today we break the law to end an unjust policy, not an unjust government. For four years, we have done everything in our power to persuade government to change this policy: we have provided information and given evidence, campaigned successfully to lower the price of drugs such as fluconazole as well as antiretrovirals. Eleven months ago, the Cabinet tantalized people with AIDS by recognizing that antiretroviral drugs do "improve the condition of people with AIDS." But the policy of non-provision of these medicines has not changed.

So today, in Durban, Cape Town, and Sharpeville, 600 TAC volunteers, many of them people living with HIV, are marching to police stations to lay charges of culpable homicide against the ministers of Health and Trade and Industry. They are acting on behalf of people who have died or who are dying because government policy denied them the medicine needed to treat their HIV infection. We demand a real partnership that prevents new infections and saves lives. We demand that the government immediately announce an antiretroviral treatment programme in the



public sector and that it signs the NEDLAC (National Economic Development and Labour Council) treatment and prevention plan.

## On the Death of Edward Mabunda

April 9, 2003

Edward Mabunda, TAC activist, poet and comrade died of AIDS this morning, 9 April 2003. He is survived by three children, his wife and mother. He was just 36-years old. Many will remember his unique brand of poetry recitals which galvanised audiences to action. As a friend of Edward wrote today, "I can still see Edward roaring like a wounded lion. His voice still echoes." He played a central role in TAC's activities in Gauteng province and was one of TAC's earliest members. Edward has made several emphatic appeals to government to make antiretroviral medicines available in the public health sector. Last night, he asked to record a message to TAC activists. It is transcribed below, and the actual recording can be downloaded at [www.tac.org.za](http://www.tac.org.za).

## Hamba Kahle [farewell] Edward Mabunda

[Please note that this message was recorded last night when Edward was very ill. His voice was unclear at times, and a few lines were too difficult to transcribe. -Ed]

"People must support TAC because the government is dragging its feet for four years. TAC is negotiating with the government to implement a national treatment plan. So now I think it is high time that TAC has started civil disobedience to show the government that 600 people a day are dying of HIV/AIDS. We want ordinary people in South Africa to have these antiretrovirals. It is no good for me to be on antiretrovirals and my friends on the ground are dying. So why isn't the government ... I personally... when the government say they don't want to sign ... the reason they don't want to sign ... I think the government is talking nonsense because people are dying every day.

"So I am urging the people all over the world to support TAC to show solidarity with South Africa—we are dying. As a person living with HIV/AIDS, I am very fortunate to be a member of TAC. What about the person who came off the streets who knows nothing about the treatment? So please—the world must support us, the world must be with us. I want to salute all the comrades who went on this civil disobedience and I pledge that I wanted to give them my... I wanted to be part of it. Unfortunately I am sick. I am laying here in a hospital and TAC is doing everything for me. Please, I beg you...."

—Edward Mabunda

For more information, contact TAC at [info@tac.org.za](mailto:info@tac.org.za) or P.O. Box 74, Nonkqubela, 7793 Republic of South Africa; or visit [www.tac.org.za](http://www.tac.org.za). For info on solidarity work in the U.S., contact the Health GAP Coalition at (215) 474-9329, [info@healthgap.org](mailto:info@healthgap.org), or 4951 Catharine Street Philadelphia, PA 19143; or visit [www.healthgap.org](http://www.healthgap.org).

TAC is encouraging people worldwide to hold public protests, meet with South African government representatives and send letters, faxes, and/or email to South African officials and letters to the media.

To find out where your nearest South African representative is, go to <http://www.dfa.gov.za/sa-abroad/sashort.htm>. For a sample letter and to help organize solidarity actions, contact the Health GAP Coalition: 212.674.9598, 511 E.5th Street, #4, New York, NY 10009, or [info@healthgap.org](mailto:info@healthgap.org); or visit [www.healthgap.org](http://www.healthgap.org).

TAC can be reached at [info@tac.org.za](mailto:info@tac.org.za) or P.O. Box 74, Nonkqubela, 7793 Republic of South Africa; or visit [www.tac.org.za](http://www.tac.org.za).



written and edited by Suzy Subwayz  
photos TAC





# GLOBAL AIDS FUND IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria was founded by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan in April, 2001 to provide desperately needed AIDS drugs, prevention, education, and other services to developing countries where people are dying of AIDS at a rate of three million every year. In some African nations, 30 percent of adults have HIV and experts say that average life expectancy may fall below 40 years of age by 2010. Annan called on the world to contribute \$10 billion to the Fund, but so far, the world has failed to respond. The U.S. was asked for \$2.5 billion, but is contributing less than 10 percent of that, and the Fund itself may die by the end of 2003 if it doesn't get a quick infusion of cash.

Meanwhile, Bush's big global AIDS plan, announced in his State of the Union address in January and dubbed "Smoke and Mirrors" by activists, won't be up and running until 2005, if ever. At press time, it's still on the drawing board, bogged down by anti-condom politics and some lawmakers' unsubstantiated claims that the Global Fund is unaccountable. Most of the cash would go to U.S. government aid programs, which are yet to be established and would give the U.S. political influence over recipient countries in a way that going through the Fund would not.

In any case, 2005 is six million deaths from now and the Global Fund is already saving lives in dozens of countries despite its financial straits. AIDS activists recently shut down a luncheon in Baltimore of 1,000 federal health officials to protest U.S. neglect of the Fund. They are demanding that Bush ask Congress for at least \$1 billion in emergency spending to go straight to the Fund this year, before it's too late.

## BRAZIL MAKES IT HAPPEN

Before the July 2000 Global AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa, drug companies and Western governments were able to dismiss as unrealistic the idea of giving complex antiretroviral drugs to HIV-positive people in the developing world. But by the next year, when a top American aid official told the *Boston Globe* that Africans could not adhere to strict medicine regimens because they "don't know what Western time is," such a statement was now received as the bald racism it was. What changed? In South Africa, the first developing nation to host the global conference, activists had put treatment on the agenda — and Brazil had proven it to be a possible, even highly practical, necessity.

Since 1997, Brazil has guaranteed the latest anti-HIV treatments to all who need them, currently about 105,000 people. The program has cut death rates in half, and prevention efforts carried out by activists using government funds have sharply reduced new HIV transmissions by distributing millions of condoms and opening needle exchanges for IV-drug users. The government spends approximately \$2,100 on each patient yearly, less than one-fifth the cost of a year's worth of treatment in the U.S., according to Brazilian health officials. This added up to \$232 million in 2001 — a price tag that is considerably offset by the \$1.1 billion in hospital and other health costs the program has saved in five years.

Brazil accomplished this by defying international pharmaceutical companies, which make the highest profits on Wall Street from drugs that may have been developed in federally funded labs but whose patents last 20 years. Sixty-three percent of Brazil's anti-HIV meds are domestically produced generics (the country's WTO-imposed law recognizing patents on medicine does not include pills patented before 1997). Brazil has negotiated cheaper prices on its imported meds by threatening to break patents and make those drugs too. In 2001, the U.S. backed down from its threats of a lawsuit or sanctions to defend the intellectual property rights of Big Pharma. With last year's election of president Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, it looks like Brazil's successful AIDS programs are here to stay.

Next on the activist agenda: getting Brazil to give the rest of the world a leg up. The African Union announced in March that Brazil will build three plants to manufacture antiretrovirals in Africa, where 70 percent of people with HIV live and the meds are nearly nonexistent. But the Brazilian government has resisted calls to donate its generics to Latin American nations where many people are dying without treatment. "As the leader in the fight against AIDS in the region, Brazil should make more efforts," Renate Koch of Venezuela's Citizens Action Against AIDS told reporters last year. It's time to see if Lula can rise to the challenge.

# THE U.S. HIV ABS

The Inspector General of Health and Human Services carries out a year-long audit of San Francisco's Stop AIDS Project, charging that some Stop AIDS workshop materials could be construed as "obscene" and promoting sexual activity. A federally funded radio and TV ad campaign in Texas called "Truth for Youth" suggests that parents who advise their kids to use condoms — which are 98 percent effective at preventing HIV — may be putting their children's lives at risk. A public health researcher at Johns Hopkins University is advised by officials from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to change the term "sex worker" to "something more euphemistic," in a grant proposal to study ways to help sex workers stay free of HIV. Welcome to abstinence-only HIV prevention, the surreal vision of the Christian right put into practice with hundreds of millions of federal dollars and a kiss from George W. Bush.

Founded in 1984 by gay men to spread the word about safer sex during the most frightening days of San Francisco's epidemic, today Stop AIDS Project works in a community that has heard "use a condom every time" countless times. Some call it "prevention fatigue," some say that the new anti-HIV meds have made the virus manageable and not so scary, and some blame "barebacking" parties where men enjoy sex without latex. "Gay and bisexual men need more explicit and powerful support for their health than ever before," wrote Stop AIDS' Director Darlene K. Weide in a February open letter to San Francisco's gay community announcing that the Inspector General's audit had ended and the group had been vindicated. The workshops that had received the most scrutiny, "Great Sex" and "Booty Call," were designed by community volunteers to share skills for negotiating safer sex while affirming the desire for a satisfying sex life.

In February 2001, the Young Men's Study found that nearly one third of 23 to 29-year-old Black men who have sex with men are HIV positive. Many don't identify as gay or bisexual. Us Helping Us, a major African-American AIDS organization in Washington, DC, was started by gay men but now serves the entire Black community, including straight Black women, who are at disproportionate risk for HIV, and men who might shy away from a gay group.

Us Helping Us was also audited this year, but its director, Ron Simmons, says it was part of a different kind of backlash. Three years ago, the Congressional Black Caucus created a minority AIDS initiative to address the much higher HIV rates in communities of color. "Conservatives did not want to give money to minority groups," Simmons says. "The idea is, 'We don't need to be putting out money for minority organizations, because they don't know how to spend it.'" Us Helping Us has employed an accountant to keep records since 1996, but smaller, newer groups may not be so well prepared for the Feds. "They're looking for anything they can find," he says.

Under Bush, the U.S. spends up to \$285 million each year on abstinence-only programs that uniformly tell teenagers, "Sexual activity outside marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physi-



# ANTI-SEX LEAGUE PREVENTION ABSTINENCE FOR ALL IS NO WAY TO FIGHT HIV

cal effects.” Human Rights Watch released a report last September on such groups in Texas. The curriculum director at Temple School District in Bell County told Human Rights Watch, “We don’t discuss condom use, except to say that condoms don’t work.” Linda P., a 16-year-old Waco high school student, said “I don’t know any other way but abstinence to prevent HIV.” As a result of this misinformation, young people are having sex anyway but without knowing how to protect themselves. A study of the Southern Baptist-run program True Love Waits found that while some teenagers who pledged virginity did delay sex for about a year and a half, once those kids broke their vow, they were a third less likely to use contraceptives than those who had never taken the pledge.

In Concord, California last December, one mother filed a complaint against a sex-ed program at her son’s school after he learned in class that one disadvantage to abortion was “killing a baby.” The program is taught at about 20 Bay Area schools by First Resort, a Christian pregnancy counseling service with centers in Oakland, San Francisco, and Redwood City that offers free pregnancy tests, with one catch: If it’s positive, you’ll be shown an ultrasound of the embryo or fetus and “counseled” on the potential for internal injury, infertility and “emotional disturbances” if you choose to have an abortion. In Washington State, complaints from high school students about a similar abstinence-only program prompted the proposal of a state bill requiring that only “medically accurate” sex education be taught in the schools.

And now it seems the NIH, the nation’s highest arbiter of medical science, may need its own such rule. In April, *Science* magazine reported that the agency was advising researchers to avoid terms like “needle exchange,” “abortion,” “gay,” “homosexual,” “sex workers,” “transgender,” and “men who have sex with men” in their grant applications. As it turns out, Congressional staff make a common practice of searching for certain key words in a public national database of federally financed grants. University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) officials learned that the NIH had received a memo on March 13 from Roland Foster, staffer for a House subcommittee that controls oversight of such funding. Foster had complained that studies of HIV prevention efforts among sex workers “seek to legitimize the commercial sexual exploitation of women.”

Dr. Alfred Sommer, dean of the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University, told the *New York Times* that the political surveillance was creating a “pernicious sense of insecurity” among researchers. And an unnamed NIH official told the *Times* that the degree of such scrutiny under the Bush administration is “much worse and more intense” than before. The Christian Right has come out of the woodwork, and unfortunately for the health of many, they are running the country. Shana Naomi Krochmal, the communications director of STOP AIDS Project, says of the challenges to scientists, “I think that’s the next wave of harassment and intimidation.” But she

is optimistic about the strength and resilience of communities that fought for AIDS research in the street protests of ACT UP and met each other’s needs in life-and-death times by starting their own organizations. In the anti-sex times of the present, she says, “Our community was ready to stand and fight for our right to do this kind of work, and we have seen a re-engaged level of commitment from our volunteers, facilitators and the community at large.” ★

## TAKE ACTION!

Become an activist in your high school. SEX, ETC. (a web site by teens for teens) offers *The Roadmap: A Teen Guide to Changing Your School’s Sex Ed*, at [www.sexetc.org/roadmap/](http://www.sexetc.org/roadmap/) or call 732.445.7929

Take a look at Human Rights Watch’s report on abstinence-only sex ed at [www.hrw.org/press/2002/09/us0918.htm](http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/09/us0918.htm).

Visit Americans United for the Separation of Church and State at [www.au.org/press/pr12601.htm](http://www.au.org/press/pr12601.htm) to see a 2001 report on Bush’s Faith-Based Initiative. Click on Legislative Update for the latest.

Check out [www.nonewmoney.org](http://www.nonewmoney.org) for a massive petition to stop funding abstinence-only programs and put dollars into real HIV prevention.

## PROTECT YOURSELF!

Advocates for Youth and Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS) both offer accurate, pro-sex and queer-friendly sex education info for teens, parents and educators.

[www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org)  
202.347.5700

[www.seicus.org](http://www.seicus.org)  
212.819.9770

## HOTLINES

Planned Parenthood’s national hotline, open 24-7.

1-800-230-PLAN (1-800-230-7526)

This number will connect you with Planned Parenthood Health Center nearest you.

Emergency contraception hotline, open 24-7.

1-888-NOT-2-LATE (1-888-668-2528)

The Centers for Disease Control National STD Hotline, open 24-7. 1-800-277-8922

National AIDS Hotline, open 24-7.

1-800-342-AIDS (1-800-342-2437)



## Buzz Me Panties

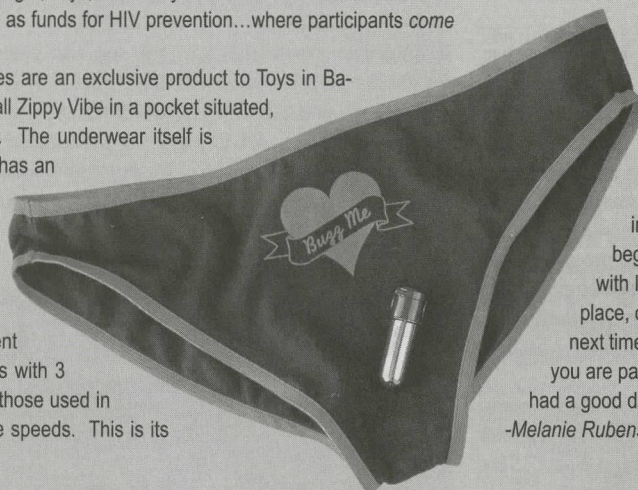
Toys in Babeland  
www.babeland.com

"Put your hands down your pants!" You heard me correctly. After years of parents, pop culture, media, and even the government telling you that masturbation is wrong, sinful, gross, or unmentionable, Toys in Babeland has come to the rescue by reclaiming the art. They have done so by declaring May to be "Masturbation May" and creating the Buzz Me Panties.

I call masturbation an art because, just as artists use different mediums to achieve something: whether it be a paintbrush, charcoal, pencil, clay, or street corner; masturbators have their tools as well: pillows, hands, shower heads, vibrators, dildos, etc. My new instrument, as it were, is the *Buzz Me Panties*, graciously provided by Toys in Babeland in order to promote Masturbation May and their 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Masturbate-A-Thon. The Masturbate-A-Thon is, as Laura Weide, Babeland's Marketing Manager, says, "a socially relevant fundraiser aimed at raising consciousness as well as funds for HIV prevention...where participants come for a cause" (italics mine).

The Buzz Me Panties are an exclusive product to Toys in Babeland that house the small Zippy Vibe in a pocket situated, naturally, over the clitoris. The underwear itself is black with a red trim and has an emblazoned heart with the words "Buzz Me" on the front and the Toys in Babeland logo on the rear.

The vibe is iridescent purple and blue. It comes with 3 button-size batteries (like those used in watches) and has variable speeds. This is its



greatest asset. I tend to shy away from vibrators that are mono-speed because different moods require different levels of strength in order to have fun. The vibe is nearly noiseless, and when down your pants, you never have to worry about others knowing that there's a party in your pants.

I first slipped into the panties in my house in order to give them a test-run in privacy. I took a few laps around my living room and my walk was unencumbered — though quite exciting. My nether regions were buzzing away, sending shivers up and down my body. I then sat down at the computer to talk with my sister and brag about my new toy. I had just finished telling her that although they felt great, I wasn't sure if the placement or strength of the vibe was enough to get me off. However, as soon as I readjusted my sitting position, I was "up up and away."

The only downfall to the toy is that the vibrator lacks a wireless remote. Babeland does sell panties with a remotely operated vibe, but those can run as much as \$90. At the reasonable price of \$30, having to run to the bathroom or surreptitiously reaching under your pants (if you are out and about) in order to turn the vibe on or off is a tolerable annoyance.

The Buzz Me Panties make a great addition to an existing sex toy collection and are an affordable and discreet way to begin a new collection. The panties are wonderful for those who with limited hand mobility and find it uncomfortable to hold a vibe in place, or for those with a long drive who are looking for a little fun. So next time you're walking down the street, do not assume that the person you are passing who has a smile on their face is happy just because they had a good day.

-Melanie Rubenstein

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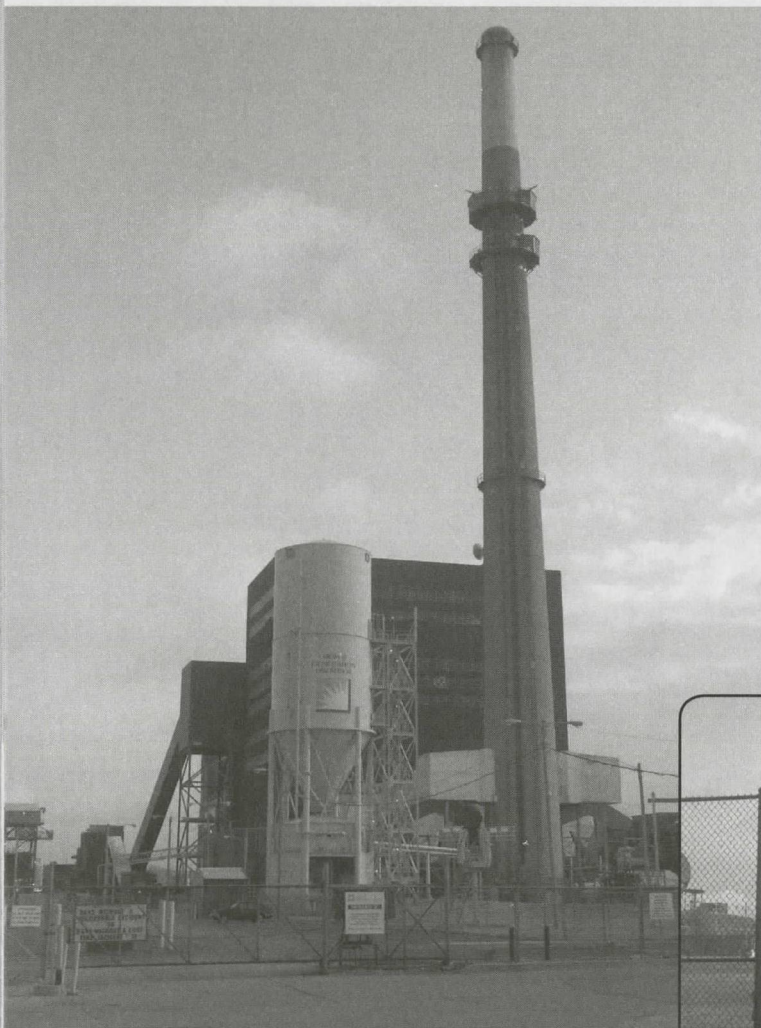
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# CHICAGO'S COUGHIN'



words Kari Lydersen  
photos Joel Bruner



Like many low-income and immigrant communities around the country, the Pilsen and Little Village neighborhoods in Chicago lie in the shadow of various belching smokestacks. Two of the most prominent ones are the Fisk and Crawford coal-burning power plants, which supply 4,800 megawatts of electricity a day to the city.

The smoke from the plants is as ever-present as the sun or the moon for the residents of these neighborhoods, whose streets, lined with vibrant small businesses and street vendors, could almost be taken straight from cities or towns in Mexico. Residents often comment on the color and consistency of the smoke on any given day, or the chalky or gray residue it sometimes leaves on their cars.

Every year over 40 Pilsen and Little Village residents die premature deaths because of these smokestacks, according to a 2001 study by the Harvard School of Public

Health. The study also blames the two power plants for over 550 emergency room visits and over 2,800 asthma attacks. In the state of Illinois, 1,700 deaths and over 21,000 asthma attacks are attributed to coal-burning power plants like these.

Just as the power plants are an ever-present part of life in Pilsen and Little Village, so is asthma. Almost any resident

will tell you that they have asthma, or that a number of their relatives and friends do. Carmen Velasquez, director of the local Alivio Medical Center clinic, said they see an extremely high number of asthma cases.

Miguel and Gladys Martinez are just two of the many residents who struggle with asthma on a daily basis. Though neither of them have asthma, all three of their young children have severe cases. They say three-year-old Alexis, four-year-old Michael, and five-year-old Ariel can't even play normally without wheezing, and they are sick almost constantly. They used to have to take Michael to the emergency room almost twice a week; since they got a nebulizer machine at home they don't have to go quite as often.

pictured: Fisk power station at Cermak and Carpenter in Pilsen



# Coal-Burning Plants Equal Death and Despair in Low-Income Neighborhoods

"Michael's the worst. We really worry about him," said Gladys, 22, a supervisor at a thrift store. "He has trouble breathing and has a runny nose 24-7, even in the summer."

Though they have lived in the neighborhood for years, they said the children's asthma got even worse when they moved to a home only two blocks from the Fisk power plant. This backs up a statement in the Harvard study, which noted severity of respiratory symptoms correlates directly with exact distance from the plants.

Maria Castro, a 24-year-old University of Illinois at Chicago student who grew up in the neighborhood, also blames her asthma on the plants.

"I've always had colds and when I was 17 I was diagnosed with asthma," said Castro. "My cousin in the neighborhood has asthma too and the kids downstairs are always sick. Before I never thought about it that much, but then I read about Love Canal and started wondering, Maybe [the plant] has something to do with it."

The Harvard study is one of several recent works that have directly linked coal-burning plants to the health problems of nearby residents. Another recent report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found a direct link between coal-burning emissions — specifically fine particulate matter — and increased deaths from lung cancer. But coal-burning plants remain the most popular form of power generation in the country, for the simple reason that they are the most profitable.

Susan Gallagher, a spokesperson for the AmEren Energy Generating Company, which runs a host of plants in the Midwest, said that while nuclear and hydro power plants are cheaper to run, they involve more logistical considerations and complications. Natural gas is much cleaner to burn than coal, but also much more costly and less efficient.

"Coal is our least expensive and most efficient source by a long shot," said Gallagher, noting that about two percent of the company's energy comes from hydropower and 66 percent from coal-burning plants.

In Chicago, there is a movement to force the Fisk and Crawford plants to convert to burning natural gas. In fact, a city ordinance has been proposed that would set emissions limits which the plants could most likely only meet by changing to natural gas. Midwest Generation, the company that runs the two plants, says this would be financially impossible and would cause the plants to shut down. But Brian Urbaszewski, director of environmental health for the Chicago area office of the American Lung Association, says the company could make the conversion if it wanted to.

"Midwest Generation paid a lot of money for these plants and they want to recoup it," Urbaszewski said. "The way to do that is to run them as cheaply as possible. The problem is, there is always a cost. Does the company pay the cost for cleaning up the plant, or does the public pay the cost in increased health costs, pain and suffering?"

This pain and suffering is evident all over the neighborhood, and as in most low-income areas where power plants are located, it hits the people least likely to have health insurance.

"We heard some harrowing

tales," said Dorian Breuer, a member of the Pilsen/Southwest Side local of the Chicago Green Party who did extensive organizing in support of the city's proposed clean power ordinance. "There was one lady in her 50s who lived close to the power plant her whole life. She was recovering from two bouts with cancer and she's an asthma victim. She really tied her illness to the plant."

Most coal-burning plants are exempt from meeting the Clean Air Act of 1970, since a 1977 amendment to the Act grandfathered in plants built before that year. The plants only have to meet the clean air standards if they do massive renovations beyond "routine maintenance" on their equipment. Theoretically, these renovations would have to be made within the coming years by all the plants, meaning that within the next few decades they would all have to meet clean air standards.

But now President Bush is in the process of gutting the Clean Air Act, according to environmental experts.

His proposed Clear Skies Initiative, touted as an environmental measure by his administration but widely criticized by clean air proponents, would effectively make the exemptions on coal-burning plants permanent by expanding the definition of routine maintenance to include even ongoing multimillion dollar upgrades and expansions.

"What Bush is saying is that everything is routine maintenance, so you can rebuild a plant piece by piece and call it routine maintenance and not have to meet pollution controls," said Urbaszewski.

Utilities deregulation which has taken place state by state over the last few years has also greatly complicated the struggle to protect clean air. In the past the same company that supplies electricity to homes would also be running the power plants. But now, usually one company runs the plants, another one buys the power and yet another one owns the lines which the power runs through and sells it to customers. For example in Chicago, Midwest Generation runs the plants, Exelon Corporation buys the power and ComEd distributes it to customers.

In the past, state or city regulations could have forced clean air standards on the whole industry at once. Now, clean air regulations of the kind proposed in Chicago could force any given plant to clean up its act, but if the renovations needed for the clean-up cause the power plant to have to raise its prices for electricity, the company that actually buys the electricity can just go elsewhere for its power.

"It's a competitive market," said Doug McFarlan, spokesman for Midwest Generation. "If our power is too expensive, they can just go out of state to buy it."

In Pilsen and Little Village, few residents understand all the technical and economic ins and outs of corporate mergers and coal-burning technology. But they know their kids are coughing and wheezing more than they should be.

"Look how many schools we have right in this area. This is a whole generation being affected," said Rosario Rabiela, co-owner of a Pilsen restaurant. "We're going to war against someone making chemical weapons, yet our government is supporting these plants. They're talking about disarmament — disarm *this* stuff!" ★

**"We're going to war against someone making chemical weapons, yet our government is supporting these plants. They're talking about disarmament — disarm THIS stuff!"**



# On Managed Care

Want to hear *my* definitions of "insurance fraud?"

Insurance fraud is when an HMO sells you a policy at an exorbitant rate and then finds all manner of ways to frustrate your pursuit of benefits.

Insurance fraud is when an HMO impedes access to procedures and specialists by requiring further "review" or "investigation."

Insurance fraud is when, in order to delay payments, an HMO continually, and without notice, changes the addresses of divisions where out-of-network bills are to be sent.

Insurance fraud is when an HMO denies coverage for pre-existing conditions.

Insurance fraud is when an HMO demolishes any prospect of satisfactorily communicating your requests or complaints by deliberately hiring morons to staff its customer service department.

Insurance fraud is when an HMO plays games like this and, at the same time, joins with other HMO's to mount lobbying and advertising campaigns against the development of alternative health insurance systems.

Finally, insurance fraud is when managed care is portrayed as a way to reduce medical costs while, in fact, it has always and ONLY been about making obscene amounts of money for the people who run HMO's.

Now, I've never been your militant type of subversive. When the SDS was blowing up banks in the early '70s, I was demonstrating my displeasure with the establishment by intentionally omitting zip codes. THAT'LL jam their gears! And over the years I've come to accept capitalism as a permanent reality. A given.

But this managed care business, which is to say, capitalism of the predatory stripe, is making me ponder actions normally off my spectrum. I'm finding it increasingly difficult to abide a category of capitalism in which people who are manifestly unqualified to participate in a free enterprise economy routinely commit what amount to acts of violence against their customers. (Messing as they are with a vital aspect of other people's lives, you have to wonder how these HMO creeps were brought up, what kind of parents they had.)

Of course, much as I'd like to, I could never dispatch each and every HMO administrator to his local ICU all by myself. I'd need help, and on a broad scale. But such help isn't likely to be forthcoming. The vast

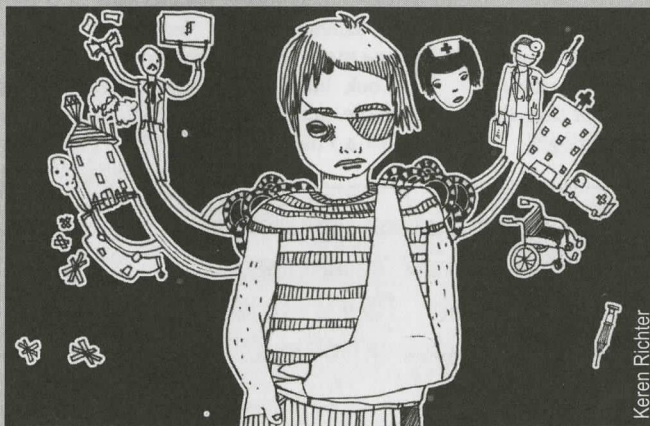
majority of us, after all, are reluctant to so much as question, let alone rise against, even the ugliest expressions of a broader system that promises every American a piece of the serious action. And this despite how false that promise is for all but a relatively few, or how destructive—indeed, potentially lethal—may be the indignities it obliges us to suffer. Most of us remain willfully stupid in this regard (which, in another context is one of the reasons the Enron dirtbags who amputated their employees' futures haven't been made an example of; why they're still alive).

Indeed, most Americans (including the 41 million who go without insurance because they can't afford the premiums), disdain even the civilized alternative of a not-for-profit, government-operated health care system. It apparently hasn't occurred to them that there's no significant risk to capitalism in this solution. We already have "socialized" institutions in this country — police and fire departments, for example — that hardly infringe on our freedom to exploit one another. Even a few more would still leave us with plenty of opportunities to violate our fellow man. (And the idea that dealing with a government bureaucracy would somehow be more brutal than dealing with Aetna, Prudential, or Oxford; well, that's a joke, isn't it?)

So, with neither revolt nor congressional intervention in the offing ("patients rights" concessions written solely to buttress the status quo don't count), what's left to do for those of us who remain conscious about the situation?

Beyond entertaining the fantasy that the growing number of random killers among us (many of whom are capable of putting up extraordinary statistics) will develop a sense of civic responsibility to go with their skills and proclivities, the only option I can think of is to use the hell out of our polices. Just, you know, get sick a lot. I'll concede that this response involves considerable personal sacrifice. But, by perpetually contracting illnesses that require extended hospitalization, outrageously expensive procedures, frequent doctor visits, and large quantities of pharmaceuticals, we'd at least have the satisfaction of putting a dent in an HMO's profits.

-Robert Levin



Keren Richter

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# folktales for the end of the world

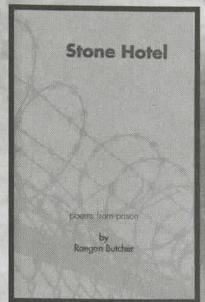
## stone hotel

POEMS FROM PRISON

Raegan Butcher, undeniably influenced by such luminaries as Bukowski and Bunker, manages to find his own voice in these poems and uses it to avoid the clichés of prison writing while delivering a truly authentic record of his time behind bars.

His simple and direct style makes his work immediately accessible both to those who shun traditional poetry and experienced poetry readers alike—and the story told in these pages is as compelling as it is genuine. *Stone Hotel* is a no frills ride through one man's experience in the U.S. prison system and all of the lunacy, horror and meditation that entails. 96 poems are collected here in this finely printed limited first printing of 2,000 numbered copies. (See review in this issue of *Clamor*)

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## off the map

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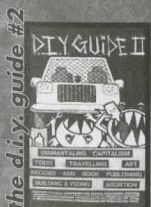
Europe, the dozens of vignettes are the details of the whole—a squatted castle surrounded by tourists on the Spanish coast, a philosophizing businessman on the highways of France, a *plaza* full of *los crostos* in Barcelona, a diseased foot in a Belgian train-squat, a glow bug on the dew-covered grass of anywhere—a magical, novel-like folktale for the end of the world.

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# ART ACTIVISM

by Nicolas Lampert

Artists throughout time have reacted to the horrors of war. From Goya's "Disasters of War" etchings to Picasso's "Guernica" to Alfredo Jaar's photographic installations of the Rwandan genocide, artists have done more than simply provide visual documentation of historical events. The artist in opposition to war has taken a moral stand and acted as a global citizen — one who is concerned with the human rights of all people.

Artists against war have often had to shift through the lies and walls of deception presented to the public by the corporate media. Before the camera was invented in 1837, war was documented by paintings (commissioned by those in power) which in scale and grandeur often depicted war as heroic and honorable. The new medium of photography was utilized to document war for the first time during the U.S. Civil War. Images of dead soldiers lined up in rows on the battlefields robbed armed conflict of the glamour often portrayed in traditional painting. The photographs taken by Matthew Brady, Alexander Gardner, and Timothy O'Sullivan helped to question the morality of warfare.

Today, access to new forms of technology has again changed the way artists present anti-war messages to the public. The Internet has helped to organize and inform people throughout the world at lightning speed. The anti-war demonstrations that took place in cities throughout the world on February 15, 2003 (before the Iraq War, part two) were considered to be the largest demonstrations against war in history. One should remember that protests by U.S. citizens against the war in Vietnam began years after the conflict started. The massive global protests of today simply would not have happened at this level if it was not for the capability of the Internet to reach millions of people in a matter of minutes.

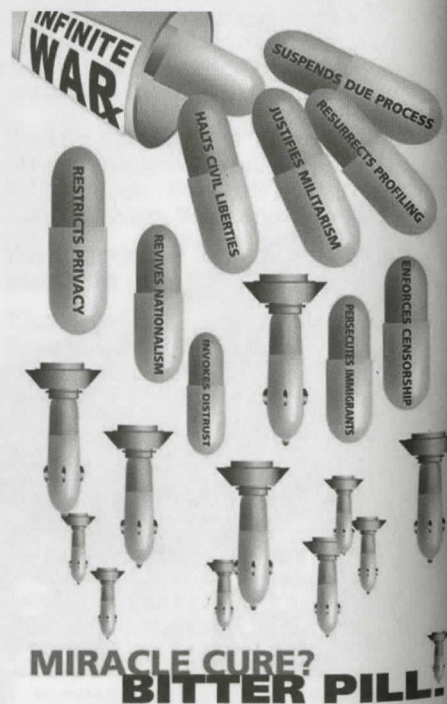
Artists as well are using the Internet by providing copyright-free graphics and music to a global audience. Bypassing the gallery and museum, artists distribute their images for free, where the message and the idea communicated is more important than the profit-based art object. New web sites devoted to political graphics against the war appear on a regular basis. These sites invite artists to take part, become the media, and participate by posting their images for others to download and then distribute in their communities as wheat pasted posters and flyers. This shared visual resistance is a positive development in a world that has yet to kick the war addiction.

Below are links to anti-war sites with copyright-free graphics.

Wake the World: [www.waketheworld.org](http://www.waketheworld.org)  
Posters Against War: [www.postersagainstar.org](http://www.postersagainstar.org)  
Free anti-war activist graphics: [www.anti-war.us](http://www.anti-war.us)  
Subvertise: [www.subvertise.org](http://www.subvertise.org)  
Protest Posters: [www.protestposters.org](http://www.protestposters.org)  
Design Action Collective: [www.designaction.org/morelinks.html](http://www.designaction.org/morelinks.html)  
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