

Sylvia Rivera ★ Chuck D ★ Vandana Shiva ★ Judi Bari ★ Janet Hardy ★ Corporate Criminals

New Perspectives on Politics, Culture, Media and Life

Glamazon

November/December 2002

Issue 17

Let's Talk
About
SEX
and gender too,
while we're at it.

adventurous sex
sex toy stores
queer families
punk porn
sex trafficking

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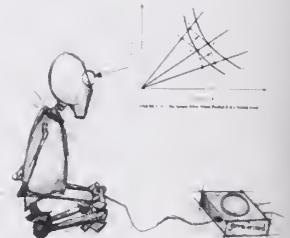
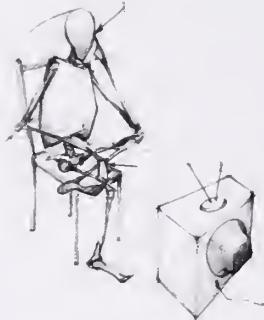
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sex is natural, sex is fun, sex is best when it's one-on-one!

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This issue's cover features the work of Jodeen Vance, a Seattle photographer who takes all sorts of amazing photos of women. You can find out more about her work at www.belladonnafetish.com. We're excited to exhibit the work of such a talented female artist.

Putting sexy, appealing women on the cover is a controversy. It is certainly un-PC, and while we were considering photos for the cover we had people tell us that our choices were pornographic and antithetical to the mission of our magazine. Even among the few people who work directly with Clamor every day there was disagreement. Are we stooping to the level of Maxim and Hustler? Are we attempting to sell with sex?

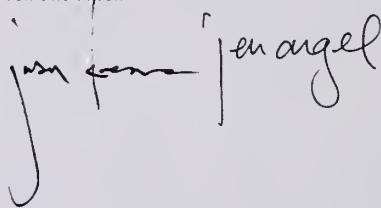
What we're attempting to sell here is a positive sexuality. A worldview where healthy, safe sex is celebrated and encouraged. Open and adventurous sexuality has long been considered taboo, has been deemed pornographic and considered seedy or distasteful. Instead of squirming uncomfortably in our seats, we choose to accept that people all over this world are having good sex right at this very moment, that some people enjoy fetishism, erotic films, or sex toys. We choose to believe that "sexy" does not equal "pornographic."

Hopefully this issue of Clamor does a little bit of work to reclaim some of aspects of sexuality and gender that have been pushed to the fringes of our cultures or have been otherwise relegated to back alleys and dark adult bookstores. We are not all conservative, heterosexual, monogamous people. We know this. Does the American media? We need to affirm that sex is an important and valuable part of our lives, and we want media, starting here with Clamor, to reflect that.

Also, as we wind up 2002 and enter the holiday season, we will be bombarded by Salvation Army bell ringers and Thanksgiving Day soup kitchen campaigns. This year we chose Davida Gypsy Breier's article (p. 63), a portrait of a homeless man, to remind us all that those "needy" people have names, faces, and stories. As social progressives, we recognize that economic inequality cannot be fixed by holiday giving, and that the larger forces at work need to be resisted every day of the year. We ask you to make a commitment in 2003 to positively improve your local community, even in the smallest of ways, and not just during the holiday season.

In the next year, Clamor will be bringing you cover stories on Technology, Sport, Food, Health, Travel, and Religion. We also will be welcoming aboard a guest editor for each issue, starting with Scott Puckett who will be working with us for the Jan/Feb 2003 issue on Technology. Is there something you want to see on our cover or in our pages? Get in touch! Contact information is on page 7.

Thanks for reading,
Jen and Jason

A photograph of two handwritten signatures. The signature on the left is "jen angel" and the signature on the right is "jason".

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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On the cover: Jodeen Vance has been doing documentary, fetish and glamour photography in the Seattle area for over 10 years. Her website is bellafetish.com and is always a work in progress — when the weather won't lend itself to motorcycling. Her models are almost always her friends.

Please address letters to 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.

Your reply to the reader's comments about the cover images was re-assuring (Letters, Sep/Oct 2002) — I have questioned several of the cover image choices in the past myself. Your reply showed that you both have a strong sense both of Clamor's role in the independent media and how best to grow that role for a broader audience. Keep up the good work.

Bleu Cease
Naples, NY

An interesting discussion of magazine cover design can be found at: <http://popcultmag.com/criticalmass/culture/magazines/magazines0.html>

I am always thrilled to read your thoughtful, diverse, and well-put-together magazine. I write to you now specifically concerning Robert Jensen's article "You Are What You Eat" (Sep/Oct 2002). Jensen's assertion that (male) masculinity does no one any good and should be abandoned by men is refreshing, and I would tend to agree. Indeed, read in isolation, his final section entitled "What I Am Saying" would have had me jumping for joy. I find the analysis of pornography which he presents as a path towards this conclusion troubling, however.

This analysis begins with a description of two porn videos which Jensen argues are similarly demeaning to women. While the scenes he describes are quite unappealing to me and seem to reek of sexism, the comparison between the two is unenlightening. Jensen is attempting to establish that "quality erotic videos for the couples market" are just as repulsive as mainstream porn marketed solely at guys, that they are two not very different sides of the same misogynist coin, and that — watch this leap of logic — all pornography is similarly demeaning to, and indeed damaging to women.

The examples he presents are probably representative of the majority of current titles in the pornographic video market. But Jensen seems to equate the dominant forces in the industry with the medium itself, allowing for the conclusion that pornography by definition is masculinist and misogynist. His representation of the medium leaves out examples which might not be quite so simple to similarly pigeonhole — to name just a few, the by-and-for-lebrities porn magazine *On Our Backs* for example; Candida Royalle's popular hetero-themed titles from Femme Distribution; the gender-fucking dyke productions

of Sir Video; productions that blur the line between education and porn such as *Bend Over Boyfriend*, *How to Female Ejaculate*, and Nina Hartley's sex instruction series; highbrow smut journals like *Libido* and *Clean Sheets*; or the flurry of recent sex books like the *Herotica* series, *Best Bisexual Erotica*, *Best Transgender Erotica*, or even the book *Guilty Pleasures* which was reviewed in the same issue as Jensen's article. Perhaps most of these don't sell as well as the *Blow Bang* series, but they merit consideration in any general analysis of "pornography," despite attempts to somehow sharply divide them into the totally separate and "nice" category of "erotica."

I found Jensen's article to be pervaded by sex-negativity. It would seem from his account of things that no woman could genuinely enjoy any of the scenarios described apart from financial incentive and the dynamics of patriarchal domination, that being anally penetrated or ejaculated upon or engaging in group sex is somehow inherently demeaning. While certainly the images of mainstream pornography do tend to reinforce sexist (not to mention racist) male fantasies and can be quite revolting, arguments like Jensen's may inadvertently contribute to the silence, shame and sexual disempowerment of women who genuinely enjoy and seek out sexual acts and scenarios which some would call demeaning or disgusting.

I do not subscribe to the conclusion that, as put in that classic billboard campaign, "Real Men Don't Use Porn" — or if you prefer, "Men Who Are Resisting Masculinity and Male Privilege Don't Use Porn." Rather, I tend to think that — in addition, of course, to the kind of earnest discussion among men which Jensen urges — a solution to bad porn is better porn.

So this defense of porn isn't letting anyone off easy — just a sister feminist's call not to throw out the sexual expression baby with the masculinist bathwater. For Pete's sake, next time order something from Good Vibrations! Because a vibrant sexuality, and that includes explicit words and images and solo sexual indulgence, have to be part of a post-masculine world.

Harper Jean Tobin
Louisville, KY

I was really disturbed by Richard Jensen's article, "You Are What You Eat" (Sep/Oct 2002), as I felt it very problematic and harmful towards those women working within the sex industry. Mr. Jensen is

simply speaking about, not for, these women, and profiting from this. For the last 30 years women and men within the sex industry have been organizing and striving to gain legitimate workers rights, by decriminalizing prostitution, and have had great difficulty attaining these rights primarily because people like Mr. Jensen continue to SILENCE their voices and instead further instill the myth that sex workers don't need rights that what they really need is to be SAVED or RESCUED.

Jensen has written extensively about this topic and I feel I should point out that he too IS profiting from the porn industry; by receiving grants to conduct research about it, by going around giving lectures speaking FOR (repeat for) those women who work within the sex industry, and by writing books and essays. Not only does he make money doing this but he also builds his CV, builds recognition, like being published in this magazine, and makes business connections, all of which help to build and further his career. Of course, this is also not to say that this was all he would have in his mind as I'm sure he strongly believes in what he is doing, and would gladly do the odd gig for free, thinking he is doing a favor for these poor women of the sex industry, but I don't think you could separate the fact that yes, this is part of his career and he is making a living from it, note the fact its copyrighted. And what is insidious about this is that he does not speak to these women to find out how he could help them, or even if they have an issue with have sex for money, his stance is against them, feeling righteous enough that he knows how they feel and what they need just by watching porn and talking with other anti-porn crusaders like Andrea Dworkin, who he quotes extensively in his essay.

So it's important to understand that while he's going around speaking ABOUT the objectification and commodification of these women's bodies, what he ends up doing IS objectifying the very same women that are shown in those videos. By choosing to silence their voice, and choosing not to explore beyond what he simply sees on the TV screen, he denigrates these women to nothing but a bunch of vulgar orifices being penetrated by men (check his comments about his lectures and people's reactions). Not only does he ignore the fact that making porn is a legitimate job thus taking away the agency that these women possess and takes it a step further by then stating that these women are not only NOT enjoying their work, but in fact are feeling pain and being abused. This sort of objectification is what he builds his discourse on

and then somehow construes the issue of masculinity in it. His theorizing is harming those same women because his essay is creating a context where pornography is seen as something that is inherently exploitative which then leads to a great level of stigmatization experienced by those working within this industry, and makes it THAT much harder for those same workers to organize and gain better conditions when need etc.

Pornography should be treated or contextualized within a LABOR framework. If there is abuse in porn, than the abuse is the crime, not porn, and it is the abuse that should be dealt with.

Mark Karbusicky
Toronto, Ontario

This letter is written regarding the piece "How much did you pay for your identity?" (Jul/Aug 2002).

Here's what I got from the end of the article: 1. there are well-off kids spending money on useless products at corporate chains thinking they're "rebellious"; 2. the author thinks he's "rebellious" but has the comfort of sitting around at the mall, creating just as much (lack of) change as kids shopping at Hot Topic.

The article quotes: "rebellion makes no sense without repression." While I completely agree that it's obviously more ethical to buy from independents instead of greedy corporations, what's ignored is that people who shop at such stores are in a position of privilege to waste money on such luxury items. People who can afford to indulge in tattoos, piercings, indie records, etc — (not necessities!) — are NOT being "repressed" by capitalism. The only "change" that has occurred is they now have a larger amount of material possessions. I also question the demographic being catered to in this article (and maybe this is *Clamor*'s intention). Who is the target audience here? White counter culture youth? This group comprises a tiny fraction of America; they aren't representative of most

disenfranchised people being directly exploited by corporations. What is "rebellious" to that particular segment of society may not be considered "rebellious" to me, a South Asian, or to other groups of people.

Case in point: Abercrombie & Fitch printed up racist t-shirts marketing Asian culture in a derogatory fashion (see www.boycott-af.com). Asian Americans, who've actually been repressed through racial profiling, internment camps, exclusion laws, and hate crimes, responded by garnering media coverage and protesting nationwide until the clothing was pulled. White counterculture types illustrate their privilege because THEY DON'T HAVE TO PROTEST — they don't have to write complaint letters to corporations, organize mass boycotts, talk to the mainstream media, or pass leaflets to consumers (like the misinformed shoppers of Hot Topic). Instead, they can hang at the mall and have philosophical discussions analyzing how to rebel.

My biggest problem with white counterculture is that its members think they can define "rebellion. The word "rebellion" should be defined by those who are TRULY repressed. It should be defined by the single mother struggling to put food on the table, the person being discriminated against at work, the community living next to a toxic dump, or the people who riot out of frustration when brutalized by the police. And my suggestion for those who are privileged: if you have free time on your hands and extra money to spend on yourself, then use those privileges to HELP those directly exploited by corporations. The marketing of hair dye and CD's shouldn't be anyone's main concern. IT SHOULD BE THE PEOPLE WHO CANNOT EVEN AFFORD THESE THINGS IN FIRST PLACE. And exercising that privilege to help out others is, in my opinion, TRUE rebellion.

Ravi Grover
Chicago, IL

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Clamor is built from everyday folks like you. Please take some time to contact us if you have any ideas that you would like to see in Clamor.

Clamor accepts submissions of printed work and artwork on an ongoing basis. On our website, Clamormagazine.org, under the heading "participate," there are deadlines and topic suggestions which may help you determine when, and what, to contribute. However, many works are accepted regardless of whether they fit with the cover story, or theme, of an issue.

Got an idea? Let us have it! Tell us about what is important to you, what is going on in your community, or someone (or something) you find inspiring. If a magazine was made just for you, what would you want it to include?

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An angsty old man at the ripe age of 23, **Dave Crosland** (p. 38) is known worldwide for his amazing tomato soup cake recipe. In between church bake-offs, he acts as a staff writer and illustrator for *Tastes Like Chicken*.

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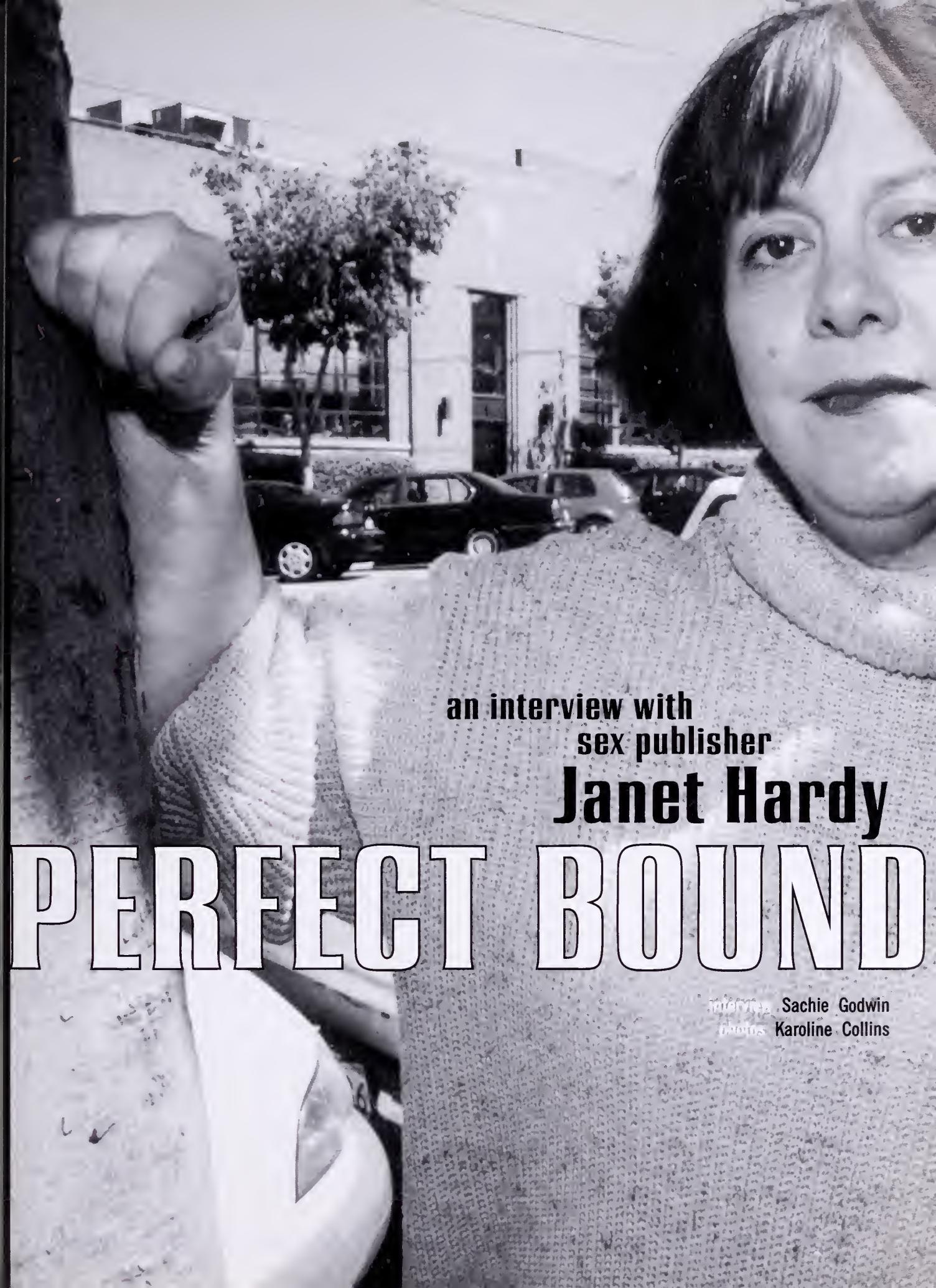
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JT Yost (p. 33) fancies himself an artist. Additional monstrosities can be viewed at www.jtyost.com.

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an interview with
sex publisher

Janet Hardy

PERFECT BOUND

Sachie Godwin
Karoline Collins



Janet Hardy, founder of Greenery Press and a prolific author, might not be a household name. Her titles include *Sex Disasters and How to Survive Them*, *The Topping Book (Getting Good at Being Bad)*, and *When Someone You Love is Kinky* — not to mention quite a few others.

One of Janet's most acclaimed books is *The Ethical Slut*, co-authored with Dossie Easton, using the pen name Catherine Liszt. *The Ethical Slut* is about how to be a responsible and respectful lover — no matter what type of relationship you are in. Unlike recent books such as *The 50 Mile Rule* by Judith Brandt, which advocates deceitfulness, upholds gender stereotypes, and blames "cheating" on the male need to procreate, *The Ethical Slut* supports non-traditional relationships that embody love, respect, and mutual growth. *The Ethical Slut*, like many of Janet's books, is non-judgmental and supportive with practical tips, examples from the authors' own lives, and comprehensive subject coverage. The writing is compelling and engaging, and can help you build trust, respect, and happiness in any relationship.

Janet is profiled here as a pioneer of radical relationships. Much of what is printed in *Clamor* involves individuals who are defining their own needs and lives — people like Janet remind us that we need to examine our personal relationships as well as well as our political and social lives.

CLAMOR: How did you start in writing about sex issues? Could you share some of the experiences you have had that led you to question sexual norms and relationship models (i.e. tell us a little about yourself)?

I spent the first part of my adult life living a very conventional sexual life — heterosexual, monogamous, married, with two children. As I neared 30, though, I began to feel that life I'd chosen wasn't enough — and wasn't, in fact, even very consciously chosen. I'd simply assumed that marriage was what happened when you fell in love with someone.

At the same time, my interest in BDSM (bondage, discipline, and sado-masochism) — an interest that my husband didn't share — was burgeoning. We spent several years trying to find a way of being together that would accommodate my need for exploration and his need for security, and couldn't. We divorced but remain good friends. Our boys are now adults, but when they were younger we shared custody, even over the 90-mile distance between his home and mine.

I think I've always been a questioner of norms, though. I remember shocking my friends in eighth grade by telling them I thought people should live together before they got married. (This was in 1968 or so, in a conservative suburban community.) The group of friends I was closest to in high school have all turned out to be gay, bi, kinky and/or transgendered, although few of us knew it at the time — but there was just this sense of some other way of relating that might work better for us than the one we'd been taught.

Why do you think it is important to question these norms and models and how do you think this relates to political activism?

It's only by questioning the norms that we enable people to speak freely about their own experiences and desires. The more who speak, the lighter the burden of shame becomes. People who are ashamed tend to hide — and people who are hiding cannot demand their rights of free speech and privacy.

You co-authored a book a few years ago called *The Ethical Slut*, could you give a brief overview for readers that might not be familiar with it?

The Ethical Slut is an exploration of what sex and relationships look like when you remove the paradigm of ownership — the belief that loving someone gives us a right to control their behavior. We explore a lot of different ways of relating: celibacy, monogamy, long-term multi-partner relationships, primary/secondary type relationships, fuck buddy circles, casual sex, group sex and a bunch more I've probably left out.

We try to give real-world, workable solutions for the actual issues that come up in such relationships — negotiations, communications, logistics, jealousy, raising kids, dealing with the outside world, etc.

Why did you choose the word *slut* to reclaim and how would you define who an ethical slut is and why do you think they are important to society?

People who are ashamed tend to hide – and people who are hiding cannot demand their rights of free speech and privacy.

Actually, my co-author Dossie Easton gets the credit for the reclamation of slut — she's been working on it since the early '60s. Slut has been used for many years as a way to shame women out of their sexuality. We think sluts are adults of any gender or orientation who love sex and welcome it into their lives in whatever form feels best to them.

An ethical slut is a person who adds to that belief a commitment to honesty and to respecting and taking care of their partner(s). It's that simple.

In The Ethical Slut, you challenge the notion that one lover does not have to fulfill all your desires, most people would agree with this statement on one level (i.e., you can't all your emotional or social needs met from one person) but would have trouble accepting it on a sexual level. Why do you think that is?

Well, historically, of course, there's the whole idea of a man needing to know that he's the father of his children and thus controlling his wife's sexuality.

But more than that, sex is a very powerful thing. I think some of the mystique we've built up around sex has its roots in that power – the ability to cement relationships, to open barriers, to achieve altered states. That's strong stuff!

Unfortunately, in our culture, we have no models for love or sexual attraction except the monogamous one. It's taken for granted (assuming you're heterosexual) that when you fall in love with a suitable person, you'll marry him or her, probably have kids, share property, and so on. Sexual contact is presumed to be a part of that process. So when someone hears that their spouse is having sex with someone else, their first fear is often that the spouse will leave with the new person. It's a big adjustment to view intimacy and sex as an end in themselves, not as an audition for marriage.

I feel that issues involved in open/non-monogamous relationships often stem from power issues — whether they be control or possession of another person or from a sense of hierarchy and authority. Obviously, much of this is ingrained in our society and culture and we internalize it as we grow up in America — it's not necessarily a conscious motivator. However, when a person becomes non-monogamous, these are the feelings they have to deal with. How do you feel about this?

Well, to start with, I think most of the issues in all relationships — and by that I don't mean only romantic relationships — stem from overt or covert power struggles. It would be odd if open, poly, or non-monogamous relationships were any different.

I think it's a real asset, if you're going to tackle ethical sluthood, to spend a lot of time thinking about what's yours to control and what isn't. You certainly have the right, even the obligation, to speak up if one of your partners' behavior is infringing on your actual boundaries. But a lot of things that feel like an infringement, that might indeed be an infringement in a monogamous agreement, may not really affect you directly if you take a hard look at them, and at yourself.

For example — you're out of town for the weekend. Your partner, with your knowledge and assent, has sex with someone else while you're gone. You are surprised by your feelings of abandonment and/

or jealousy and/or rage and/or however you manifest your pain. Is that an infringement of your boundaries? I'd vote for "no" — your emotion is your own. You can choose what to do about it. You can renegotiate your agreements with your partner to make this easier next time, you can get support from friends or activities, or you can simply let yourself experience the difficult feeling in order to see what you can learn from it.

On the other hand, if your partner's behavior is taking from you, without your consent, something that you feel is yours — time, energy, possessions, space — then that's demonstrably not an internal issue.

Ethical sluthood pushes you toward recognizing power struggles and making them conscious rather than hidden. If you're feeling terrible about something your partner did with your consent, you can recognize the source of the pain — it's you, not your partner. When you recognize the locus of the pain, you can deal with it instead of letting it drive your control needs, passive-aggressiveness, or other power-seeking behaviors. You can say "Hey, you know, I feel really bad. Can you help me out here? I need (a hug, some reassurance, a hot fudge sundae, some one-on-one time, whatever)." And you can recognize that asking for such things doesn't mean that your partner has to provide them — but you can take responsibility for having asked, and if your partner can't or won't give you the help you need, you can find it elsewhere.

Once you have this clear understanding of your boundaries of where you end and the next person begins — then you can recognize more readily when they're really being ignored or infringed, and speak up accordingly.

As a person living in the South in a polyamorous relationship, I find that many people find my lifestyle choice hard to comprehend. What advice do you have for people living in less progressive areas, but that still want to push the envelope in their sex lives?

Everyone needs to make their own choices about how out they want to be, of course. Living in a conservative area makes that choice a little harder, particularly if there are children involved. You may know that what you're doing is healthy and ethical, but the people around you probably don't agree with you. I'd advise erring on the side of caution — you can't un-tell.

A second issue for people living in less liberal-minded areas is finding a support network of like-minded people. The Internet is a great boon to such folks, of course. You can certainly talk online to lots of other polyfolk, and perhaps you'll even find that there's already a group in your area. If not, you could start one yourself.

Many activists challenge the rules and priorities handed down in our society; however, when it comes to relationships, far fewer question the monogamous model, including those who are not heterosexual. Why do you think challenging sexual norms is often the final frontier?

Oh, I don't think it's the *final* frontier; I don't expect (or want) to live to see the final frontier, whatever it may be. However, monogamy is so deeply ingrained in our culture that it may never occur to people to question it, at least not seriously. We didn't watch Ozzie & Harriet & Mary when we were kids, most of us grew up in at least outwardly monogamous households, almost everything we've seen and read is

The more who speak, the lighter the burden of shame becomes.

monogamy-based. It's like the ground we stand on or the air we breathe; nobody thinks to question it.

Many people would say that a relationship including a primary couple and an outside lover will result in disaster. How would you challenge that notion? Could you talk a little about tribe vs. alienation?

Well, I could introduce such people to many, many, *many* successful arrangements of this type who would argue heartily against it. I'm personally not wild about the primary/secondary designation so many polyfolk use, but I have been living with my life partner, Jay Wiseman, for nearly 13 years, and each of us has always during that time had at least one outside lover, sometimes more.

People who have never experienced ethical sluthood tend to assume that two people who love the same person must be competing for that person's attention. In fact, what tends to happen is that affiliations form — you find yourself on the same side as your lover's lover. And from there sometimes you go on to forming bonds with your lover's lover's lovers, and so on. Kinship networks spring up, loose groupings who serve many of the functions of family, who share values around sexuality and relationships.

In The Ethical Slut there are many lists of do's and don'ts, ranging from humorous (do wait until your lover finishes cooking and serving dinner before you start jumping the guests) to the ultra-practical (make sure your lover has a way to get out of the house if you are going on a date). These guidelines have been extremely helpful in my relationship, since I can't exactly call up mom and ask her these kinds of questions. What are some of the most important lessons you've learned from being a slut?

If anything I'm going to do might inconvenience any of my partners, ask first. Whoever has the more conservative safer-sex standards wins. Don't try to rank your lovers along a hierarchy. Love each of them for what they are, in the best way you can. Don't imagine the relationship and then go out to pick a person to fill it. Meet the person and let the relationship develop in whatever way is best for the two of you.

You recently co-authored the book Sex Disasters with Charles Moser — could you give our readers an idea of what that book is about? What other projects have you worked on since The Ethical Slut? What are you working on now that we can look forward to in the future?

Sex Disasters ... And How To Survive Them is a humorous but accurate look at, well, sex disasters — everything from an erection that won't go away through lost condoms, hostile dogs, cops at the front door, and all the other small or large nasties that can happen to people who are having sex. Aside from Dr. Moser's expertise in medical and sexual matters, we interviewed attorneys, therapists, police officers, locksmiths (!), and a veterinarian (!!). The book is designed to be read in small chunks — a lot of readers say it's perfect bathroom reading.

Dossie and I are working on editing the updated revised version of *The Topping Book*, called (with startling originality) *The New Topping Book*, which will probably be out in November or thereabouts. After that, we're hoping to do a book about the role of energy, intuition and transcendence in BDSM, but that one's going to take some serious work and thought. ★

I Rub My Duckie™ Waterproof Personal Massager

Good Vibrations
www.goodvibes.com

The I Rub My Duckie™ Waterproof Personal Massager is the cutest vibrator I've ever seen. It looks just like the rubber ducky in the song, just like the duck my sister had as a kid. I never had one, which may be part of the reason I'm so excited about this item from Big Teaze Toys. The small rubber waterfowl is yellow and has big blue eyes and an orange bill. It's 5" long from tail to chest and 5" in diameter. It even has its very own website: www.IRubMyDuckie.com.

After inserting two AA batteries, squeeze the little cutie's back and, instead of letting out a squeaky "quack," it gently shakes and shimmies. For ladies who like concentrated vibrations, the Good Vibes website recommends using "the beak and tail areas for optimal clitoral stimulation." For those who lean toward more diffused vibrations, try tucking the top part of the rounded head against the vulva. While it's not a powerhouse of vibrations, it packs a respectable buzz. On the Good Vibrations intensity scale (5 most intense, 1 least), it gets a rating of 2.

Like all ducks, this one is waterproof, and of course it floats, so it's the perfect bathtub toy for adults. This design is the ultimate in discretion for people who are shy about visitors or housemates knowing they use a sex toy. The motor is not very loud, so unless there are screams of ecstasy emanating from the bathroom, noise isn't going to cause folks to suspect the real reason for soaks that last for hours. (The package describes the motor as "strong but quiet," and on the Good Vibrations volume scale, where 1 is the lowest rating and 5 is the loudest, it's a 2.)

This vibrator has so much going for it. It's adorable and fun, strong but quiet, waterproof and discrete. All these characteristics are sure to make this rubber ducky popular in the water and on dry land.

-Chantel Guidry

Whipsmart:

A Good Vibrations Guide to Beginning S/M for Couples

Good Vibrations
www.goodvibes.com



From the people who brought you *Voluptuous Vixens*, *Slide Bi Me*, and *Please Don't Stop: Lesbian Tips for Givin' and Gettin' It*, we get an instructional video for those of us who aren't sure how to tie our lovers up right. I must admit when I agreed to review this video, I did so under the presumption that I was agreeing to chuckle myself to death. I sometimes feel squeamish watching sexual acts on the television screen: the close up shots, the horrible dialogue, you know, your basic porn. But this is not the crap I used to sneak into the living room on Friday nights to watch through scrambled reception. I wouldn't even call it porn. It is what it claims to be, a video manual for those interested in learning the basics of BDSM. The interactions are tastefully portrayed without the use of graphic sex. The narrator, professional dominatrix Mistress Morgana, explains to the viewer through a wry smile and with skillful concise definitions, terminology, and ways to communicate with your partner, then goes step-by-step through scenes where real heterosexual and lesbian couples explore spanking, role play, bondage and advanced techniques. What makes this video extra keen is its unabashed promotion of safer sex options and stylistic PBS production quality, while still retaining its titillating appeal. I really think the director grew up watching "Square One" and "Discovering Psychology with Philip G. Zimbardo." With its candle-lit backdrops and ice cream-with condiments metaphor, it comes off as somewhat goofy at times, but that element makes for a good laugh which serves to settle, and so I find the cheese endearing. And in the end, more surprising to me than my appreciation of this video was the realization that I found myself intrigued and interested in maybe trying a few things. -Kathleen Hairston

Strapping, Packing, and Playing

by Chantel Guidry

You know the myths: only lonely, desperate heterosexuals who can't find partners and lesbians who don't have all the organs necessary for intercourse use sex toys. Anyone who believes that should think again! People of varied sexual orientations and proclivities incorporate playthings into their erotic fun...everyone can enjoy sex toys.

Contrary to popular belief, sex toys are not simply for masturbation; they can be just as delightful and beneficial during partner play. Sure, vibrators are great for clitoral stimulation and cyberskin sleeves are perfect for enveloping penises, but such activities can certainly happen with a partner involved. Lesbians aren't the only people who find a dildo handy when no erect penis is available for penetration. Many men like to be penetrated by a dildo strapped on to a female companion, while a fellow who doesn't have an erection can always use toys to please his pal(s).

Using sex toys can expand folks' sexual repertoire. Starting a conversation about sex toys can lead to a discussion about sexual wants and needs. Accoutrements can inspire people to try new activities or to do favorite things in new and exciting ways; routines become novel fun. What was never achieved with hands, mouths, or genitals often happens when sex toys are introduced. Sex toys can help in the exploration of bodies, desires, and responses. People who incorporate playthings into their erotic life learn more about their own sexuality and that of their partner(s).

Sex toys come in a vast array of shapes, colors, sizes and prices. Vibrators can be plugged-in or battery operated, shaped like a penis or an egg or a cute little animal, transparent or colored with an animal print. Some vibrators are even waterproof! Dildos are made of jelly rubber, silicone, stainless steel, or cyberskin; they often look like penises but also come in scores of other designs. Don't think sex toys begin and end with vibrators and dildos though... also available are harnesses (for strapping on dildos) made from a variety of materials, attachments to increase the versatility of vibrators, nipple clips, anal plugs and beads, cock rings (some of which vibrate), duotone balls, penis sleeves, blindfolds, and restraints. New toys are introduced all the time, so there's always something different to try.

If sex toys sound intriguing and there's a pleasant adult toy store in town, by all means support local business. Being able to see, touch, and hear different items often helps a lot when making a decision about a purchase. However, if there isn't a clean, well-lit, friendly establishment nearby, the following list gives contact information for businesses that accept orders via the telephone or Internet. Many of these companies also have retail stores open to shoppers.

Finally, don't be afraid to make sex toys with whatever inviting (and safe) materials might be lying around the house. Not having a lot of disposable income is no reason to miss out on enhanced sexual pleasure. With an open mind, a lot of everyday objects begin to look sexually enticing. (For inspiration, check out *Supermarket Tricks: More than 125 Ways to Improvise Good Sex* by Jay Wiseman and *Kinky Crafts: 99 Do-It-Yourself S/M Toys*, edited by Lady Green.)

Help shatter the myths about sex toys. No matter who you are or what you do in (and out) of the bedroom, explore the ways toys can enhance your erotic life. You might soon find yourself with a full toy box and a richer sensual existence. ★



Come As You Are

Cooperatively-owned and operated
701 Queen St. West Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6J 1E6
Mailorder: 1-877-858-3160 or www.comeasyouare.com

Dark Fire Gallery

BDSM and Gay oriented, female-owned and operated
Mailorder: www.darkfiregallery.com

Eve's Garden

119 West 57th Street, Suite 1201, New York, NY 10019.
Mailorder: 1-800-848-3837 or www.evesgarden.com

Fetish Auctioneer

Woman-owned sex toy answer to ebay
www.fetishauctioneer.com

Good Vibrations

Worker-owned cooperative
San Francisco 1210 Valencia Street 415-974-8980
Berkeley 2504 San Pablo Avenue 510-841-8987
Mailorder: 1-800-289-8423 or www.goodvibes.com

Grand Opening! Sexuality Boutique

318 Harvard Street, Suite 32 Brookline, MA 02446
Mailorder: 1-877-731-2626 or www.grandopening.com

Honeysuckle Shop

Woman-owned, no pornography
www.honeysuckleshop.com

Miko Exoticwear

653 North Main Street Providence, RI 02904
Mailorder: 1-800-421-6646 or www.MikoExoticwear.com

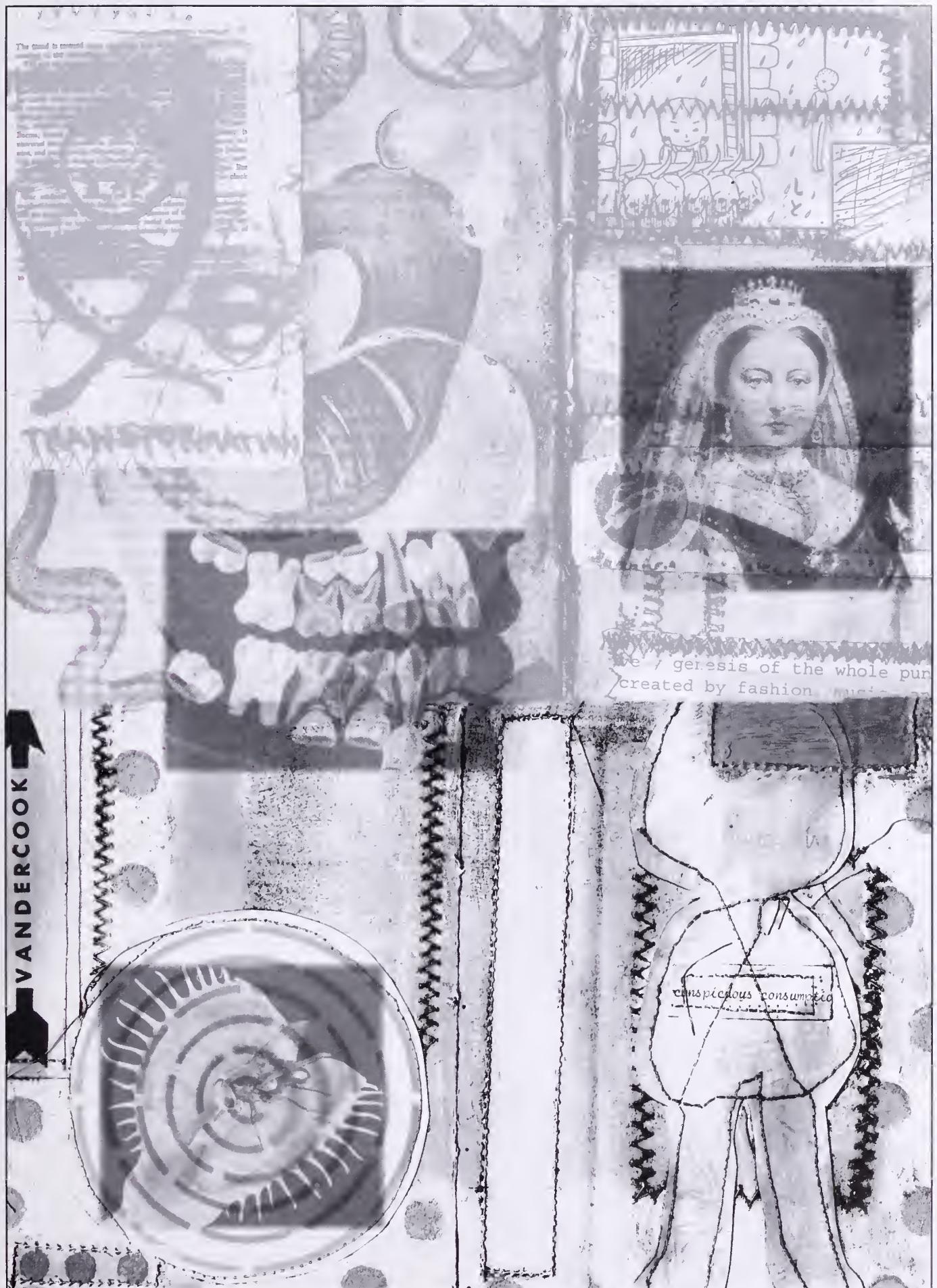
Tasteful Treasures by Mea

Woman-owned site with extensive catalog
Mailorder: www.tastefultreasuresbyme.com

Toys in Babeland

Lesbian-owned retail and web stores
New York 94 Rivington Street (between Orchard and Ludlow)
Seattle 707 East Pike Street
Mail order: 1-800-658-9119 or www.babeland.com

pictured above: Mr. Bendy dildo and Terra Firma harness — both available from Toys in Babeland



"I'm not missing a minute of this — it's the revolution!"

-Sylvia Rivera to her lover at the Stonewall Inn in 1969



remembering SYLVIA RIVERA

words and photos Lina Pallotta

On the morning of February 19, Sylvia Rivera, a revolutionary transgender activist and a fabulous veteran of Stonewall Riot, died at St. Vincent Hospital after a fierce fight with liver cancer. Linked forever with the birthday of the gay/transsexual liberation movement, Sylvia and her life were a lot more than that.

Born Ray Rivera to a Puerto Rican family in the Bronx on July 2, 1951, she left home at 11 and started wandering around West Village and hustling in Times Square. Before battling the police on Christopher Street, she was involved in the early '60s in the Black Liberation Movement and the fight against the Vietnam War.

After Stonewall, the gender issue found a spot in the geography of the movement and Sylvia relentlessly got involved with the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activist Alliance. Sensing that the movement marginalized the transgender youth, she and long-time friend and activist Marcia P. Johnson set up the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries, a shelter for young gay and transgender people on the Lower East Side.

In 1973, she and other transgender activists were booted off the stage at the annual Gay Pride parade. Angry and saddened, she disappeared from the NY scene, became a junkie and homeless for while, but she never stopped caring for the people around her, especially during the AIDS crisis.

In 1994, the 25th anniversary of Stonewall, Sylvia and the other veterans of the riot were back in the public light, leading the parade down 5th Ave., cherished by the crowd from the sidewalk. Back in the business of active resistance, she revitalized and renamed the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries and moved to Park Slope-Brooklyn with her friends in the famous Transy House – a private shelter – where she met her partner, Julia Murray.

During the summer of 2000, she was the guest of honor at the Anti-Jubilee Gay Pride in Rome.

A few weeks before her death, she spoke at a protest against the Empire State Pride Agenda, the gay advocacy group which is pressing the NYS congress to pass the Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act (SONDA). Sylvia opposed SONDA because it does not include gender variant people, and again she called for the creation of a shelter for homeless transgender people in NY.

The funeral service was held on February 26 at the Metropolitan Community Church where she worked as coordinator for its food pantry program until the last moments of her life. After the service, a huge crowd followed the horse-drawn carriage procession from the Stonewall bar on Christopher Street to West Street Piers where her ashes were scattered in the Hudson River. ★



My queer family

by Matthew Kavanaugh

I am the child of many parents. I am the child of divorced biological parents, one of whom is a lesbian. I am the queer oldest child of a father who has been divorced twice, and who was once married to a lesbian. I have many mothers — including, but not limited to, my biological mother and her partner. I am the child of mothers who were for a time involved in a polyamorous relationship. In the course of my lifetime my parents have been involved in several divorces — at least three, but more depending on how you count them. I have one biological brother, one foster brother, and three ex-stepsiblings. I have ex-stepgrandparents. My family is a little queer.

The queerest part of my family, though, is our uncanny resemblance to the perfect TV family. I don't say this because we sat down most every night of my childhood to a hot, homemade meal as a family — which we did. I do not say this because after this meal my brother and I used to argue about who did the dishes and our other chores — which we did. I don't even say this because every year my entire family treks out into the snow together to chop down a Christmas tree (more accurately, *Christmas trees*) — which we do. I surely do not suggest this because we resemble the hetero-normative, male-dominated, nuclear family of television — this we do not.

We are like the perfect TV family because, as each episode comes to an end and we cope with the changes and challenges that arise in life, our family is able to negotiate the changed environment in a loving, cohesive way. We are able to do this, though, without the benefit of supportive social, legal, or political institutions — far outside the norm of how families are supposed to look and act. To many we are an example of just how far into crisis American families have fallen — and I would have to agree.

Families in Crisis

U.S. families at this historical moment *are* in crisis, but this is not because of divorce, or gay parents, or any of the many “horrors” that my family catalogues so well. No, the American family is in crisis because it has not evolved as our society has and the tension is tearing it apart. Queers and other outsider families like mine have the possibility of leading the way in advocating for a new, radically different politics around family issues. We are hindered, though, by mainstream organizations that, at best, pretend we do not exist and, at worst, actively support institutions that limit families’ ability to create new and different forms.

Family structures in the U.S. and across the globe have historically evolved as social times have changed. The so called “traditional” family of a stay-at-home mom and a bread-winner father providing for their nuclear family in a home free from “others” was never a reality for many groups of Americans and is “traditional” only if one has a very short historical memory. It grew out of an amalgam of family structures, many of which included multi-generational units made up of mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts and uncles, children, and even employees and apprentices, structured more around economic or farming success than around blood ties or a sexual reproductive unit. As economic and social times changed, so did the family structure. It was only in the Post World War II United States that a multitude of factors, including geographical mobility, shifting cultural norms, and a boom economy, allowed many white, middle-class Americans to create the micro-families popularized among the upper classes in the 18th century.¹

This mobility and access to a living wage to provide for such a family was impossible, though, for a great many Americans. A combination of economics and racism assured that for African Americans of this time, the autonomous nuclear family form was never a possibility. Poor and immigrant families, too, never moved over to this type of family which, at the time, was understood by Americans as a novel possibility — something very new and modern.²

This extremely limited idea of what constitutes family has become, in our popular imagination, the perfect and traditional family. Even gay people are getting in on the act, proclaiming to the world that they too can create the ideal family, complete with two (and only two) parents and beautiful children. Please, so many ask, just forget about those aspects of gay families (alternative reproductive means, for example) that might make them look other than “virtually normal” as one white, wealthy gay man titled his book.³

The problem is that it doesn’t work. Some gay families have the economic and social standing to mirror the socially imposed nuclear model of family that poor families, communities of color, and other less “normal” queers are less able or unable to create. So, good for them. I am not here to deny their right to live as they choose. But, for the majority of others — for whom the imposed nuclear model is never going to be the most successful — we need to start thinking better, smarter, and broader.

The nuclear family model is inherently limited and the *self-sufficiency* so prized within this family is largely illusory. A two-parents-with-children family *cannot* (and do not) provide for all of the emotional, financial, educational, and social needs of its members. Families that are held up as self-sufficient in the 21st century United States usually rely largely on paid care-workers, be they babysitters,

nannies, teachers, or librarians. Where “nontraditional” families may rely on family members like grandparents, neighbors, or “fictive kin” like a queer community to help them in their caring work, economically privileged Americans, even gay ones, can buy their way into normalcy with a nanny. Whatever its form, most every nuclear family depends in one way or another on outsiders — the matter is just which types of dependence are considered socially acceptable and which are pathological.

And, even with support — paid or not — families often fail. The much touted “half of all marriages end in divorce” statistic is not a sign of a decaying moral fabric, but of an insufficient social support network. Many families are just not wide enough or deep enough — do not have a broad enough base — to weather the interpersonal and macro-economic/social storms that characterize this historical place and time.

As I was growing up, there were many parents.

Some were the obvious ones — my father, my mother, and my mother’s partner — all of whom my younger brother and I saw nearly daily. They provided much of the caring work that we needed, no matter what the shape of our family. They guided us through difficult times and rejoiced with us through the many happy times. And, as our family changed, so did their work and the way that they shared it. When my mother and her partner brought a foster-child into our family, my father took care of him every morning before school, just as he did my brother and I — no matter “whose week” it was for us to live with.

But they were not the only ones who did this work. Even with an extra parent, direct supervision often fell to either neighbors or workers in an after-school program. And, even when we had supervision, we still needed to learn and be loved and we got this from our particular village. I learned about fixing cars from one family friend and about how to be an activist from others. My brother was nurtured through lousy math grades by a wonderful couple, who also taught him how to grow a garden of beautiful vegetables and helped him take pride in the wonderful work he did with both his hands and his head. This is the kind of parenting that helps raise strong and happy children — and the kind that our very queer family was able to provide.

Moving Toward A New Family Politics

Queer communities have been, and continue to be, places of innovation in creating effective and flexible families. My family is just one example. Author Edmund White described this as the “Banyan tree” phenomenon, after a tree whose branches send off shoots that take root to form new trees. The AIDS epidemic has been an excellent example of this, in which lovers, ex-lovers, and lovers’ ex-lovers often come together to care for the sick. Other families have brought gay men and lesbians together to create children, who may then be raised in a family that is intentionally parenting across two or more households. Such families fundamentally challenge the paradigm that holds the nuclear household as the definition of family and find new ways for family members to effectively get the love and support they need.

Nonetheless, the mainstream “gay and lesbian” organizations have not only failed to embrace a truly transformative vision of family, they have often worked against it — making choices that pit the “good” gays that fit the hetero-normative model against the queers who don’t.



The nuclear family model is inherently limited and the *self-sufficiency* so prized within this family is largely illusory.

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the self-proclaimed “largest gay and lesbian rights organization in the country,” defines what they consider a family this way: “A transgender man and his spouse make a family; two lesbians and their adopted children make a family. GLBT friends often consider each other family.” Why HRC decided it was their job to define what constitutes a family is beyond me and I find their definition highly problematic.

First off, it is important to note that, while they define the first two families (each based on a couple, with the potential of children), they merely note that some gay “friends” consider each other family, giving no positive support to this supposition. They so clearly ignore the families that are *more* than “friends,” but don’t involve a couple.

More importantly, though, HRC’s actions give no support to non-traditional families. While they advocate policies to support same-sex *couples* and their children — advocating for second parent adoption rights and other laws that would help gay folk who fit the nuclear family model — they care much less about queers trying to make families that fall outside the dominant model.

When it comes to the so-called “friends” who claim family rights that HRC mentions, for example, HRC has taken no steps to make their vision of family a legal or political reality. HRC has not pushed the boundaries of what it means to be a family — advocating for legal protections or insurance extensions to all people within broad family categories or challenging custody laws that require rigid “parent” categories, for example. They have done nothing to help the lesbian grandmother caring for her disabled daughter’s young son who is unable to make educational decisions because she is not his “parent.” They have done nothing to help the many families in which there are more than two parents or those where there are not enough parents with jobs that offer benefits or those with no parents at all, but people who love and care for one another in the many ways that the law does not recognize or support. Instead, HRC has shown off lots of pictures of beautiful same-sex nuclear families and advocated that they, who are “virtually normal,” should be allowed to participate in the existing institutions.

There is the possibility, around family issues, to build a broad progressive politics that aims at inclusion. The great many people who don’t fit — everyone from step parents to polyamorous queers — might be brought together to demand that the state take their needs seriously. Unfortunately, our mainstream groups have moved toward exclusion rather than inclusion. Rather than beginning with the problems and asking everyone to come together to find a broad solution, HRC and others have followed the path of expedience — that path that helps the most privileged at the expense of the rest of us.

Marriage is an excellent example. There has existed for a long time a rift between those queers who believe we should be included in the existing institution of marriage and build our families around that. Others have argued that too many of us — those who don’t fit normative gender categories, those who are poor, people of color who can’t possibly be the perfect white middle-class family — will not benefit from “gay marriage.” The Human Rights Campaign has aligned itself with those who fit — with those who can, through class and privilege, mirror the limited image of family that has failed for so many. Here, HRC finds itself on the same side as our dear President Bush II. Not surprisingly, as the president pushes for increased funding to “teach” people about marriage and the two-and-only-two parent nuclear family, mainstream gay and lesbian groups have found themselves without a coherent response — after all, isn’t that just what we all want?

Those of us who feel that there can be other models and want to try to build post-modern, flexible, effective families *do not* or *cannot* choose this model — and this pits our interest specifically against those who can and do. Instead of suggesting that we all try to fit into the dominant structure of marriage to get access to health care, for

example, we could work (as queers) with the millions of other Americans who do not have health benefits. Instead of trying to fit all the caregivers in our children’s lives into the two legal slots allotted for “father” and “mother” we could push, with all the others who find themselves in similar situations, for legal constructs that work *for* families instead of families that work for legal constructs.⁴

When I recently returned home from Washington, DC, where I now live, I went out to dinner with part of my family. That part included my father and my mother and her partner and their ex-partner and my brother and a straight couple who have loved us all, and who we have loved, throughout. And, as I looked around the table, I couldn’t think about how “normal” my family was or even how free from trials and problems (which we certainly are not). But I could, without a doubt, feel the love and enjoy the laughter as we all celebrated being together.

The American family is in crisis and it should not be a huge surprise that many Americans are confused and scared. We have a kind of national vertigo when it comes to what families “should” be versus what they can be. The effects will not go away, though, if we just push ourselves harder into molds that do not fit. It will not be solved by education about how wonderful marriage can be or the inclusion of a few same-sex couples into the paradigm. Even Prozac can’t solve this one. We need, instead, to encourage people to create families that work. We should not assume that a single mother living with her mother and her child is a “social ill.” Instead, we should encourage her to create the family that best meets her needs and ask ourselves how we, as a society, can best support her. By the same token, we should not look to a family with two parents and 2.3 children and assume that they have achieved success. Instead, we should ask ourselves what other support they might need, and what we can offer.

We must move to create broader, more sustainable families that can respond to the realities of our ever-changing society. We must also build broader, more sustainable coalitions working to change the politics that squeezes out the dialogue within which this discussion can happen. Families of long ago did not divide themselves up into tiny, disconnected parts as they tried to negotiate a day-to-day existence that required so much cooperation. Nor can we, in the 2000s, afford this atomization or the politics of expedience offered by HRC and others that would write-out the families that don’t fit. We, the outsider families, can be an answer to the problem and we need to work together to create a change. ★

Endnotes

- For a discussion of the evolution of the “modern” family see Stephanie Coontz’s *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (1992) and Judith Stacey’s *Brave New Families* (1990).
- For a discussion of family formation in communities of color, immigrant families, etc. see the essays in Hansen and Garey (eds.), *Families in the U.S.: Kinship and Domestic Politics* (1998).
- Andrew Sullivan, former editor of the *New Republic*, basically seems to argue that gay marriage and gay people in the military are all we really need to change about society — since “homosexuals” are, as the book is titled, *Virtually Normal* (1995).
- For an excellent and accessible discussion of family legal issues see Mary Shanley’s book *Making Babies, Making Families* (2001).

REDEFINING OUR RELATIONSHIPS GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE OPEN RELATIONSHIPS

BY WENDY-O MATIK

\$12



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PUNK PORN

Michael Calderone
courtesy FrictionUSA.com



kaylee

misty

rose



It's simple — real girls having fun naked!

from the frictionUSA site

This marriage has germinated on the Internet, spawning a number of web sites that now offer naked pictures of women with dyed hair, tattoos, and assorted aesthetic qualities admired by the sub-cultural voyeur.

I'm patiently holding a metal circular light fixture, extending my arm to position it just only a few feet above a naked, young woman. The blue light emanating from the bulb slightly illuminates the pronounced tattoos on the pale, unclothed body. The photographer instructs my movements; he paces the area with a small digital camera, calculatingly, artfully striving for the best light and presentation of the female subject. The feelings of all involved are jovial, mocking the postures deemed vital to conventional pornography. Absent are the stereotypical porno features; the shoot was devoid of cowboy hats, mustaches, and any sexist banter. However, despite the lack of said stereotypes, there was still much need for close-ups of the female genitalia alongside the more artistically rendered, and less explicit images.

As an investigative journalist, I did not hesitate at the opportunity to assist in the photo shoot, believing it could add insight into a recent phenomenon: the fusion of underground music culture and sexually explicit photography. This marriage has germinated on the Internet, spawning a number of web sites that now offer naked pictures of women with dyed hair, tattoos, and assorted aesthetic qualities admired by the sub-cultural voyeur. Critics contend that this mingling of the underground and pornography is a crass attempt to market a new product, co-opting aspects of the adult entertainment industry without showing concern for the structures that have enabled independent music to exist and thrive.

Contrary to this condemnation, advocates see this alliance in myriad positive ways, from a platform for feminist ideology to mere entertainment. Proponents see the opportunity for women to model who, although attractive, may not be deemed so in a conventional manner, and would probably not be invited to pose for the cover of *Playboy*, *Penthouse* or *Hustler*. Although not conforming to the narrow vision of the female form that typically graces popular magazine covers, there is a contingent that would not buy the sex-industry staple, yet would subscribe to a web site that shows indie girls in sexually explicit situations. In an era when every possible fetish one could envision has an eager buying market, it seems almost inevitable that those individuals desiring to see girls with short, dyed black hair and retro glasses wearing nothing but their tattoos would eventually have their wishes fulfilled.

"We wanted to create something that was a little more subversive and challenging to the viewer than the typical pornography, a

site that really pushed the idea that the models were people and not just bodies," responded Spooky of *Suicidegirls.com*, a Portland-based company that features many naked punk and gothic women, running the gamut of alternative tastes. Along with tantalizing the viewer with sexually explicit pictures, the models interact with the audience in what Spooky contends is a "non-traditional sex-industry way." Spooky says, "We are letting the women present themselves in any way they wish, so in the end, whose fantasy is the site? Is it the girls or the members?" For less than ten dollars, members are able to access countless naked pictures, while having the opportunity to interact with the women who adorn their computer screens.

Although admitting to offer something that is absent from much of the sex-industry, Spooky remains adamant that the web site has "no political agenda." Numerous critics have contended that the sites, although supposedly representing the fringes of contemporary culture, have used the progressive networks of punk rock and assorted independent music scenes to market a misogynist product. Despite the site's apolitical agenda, there seems to be something inherently political in offering alternatives to mainstream pornography. Unfortunately, self-righteousness is often an unhealthy aspect of people involved in independent music scenes, believing that they are stratified above the multitude and are too good to participate in mainstream culture. An individual's association with underground culture does not presuppose a lack of any involvement with the rest of society, including possibly buying into the traditional sex-industry. From strip clubs to X-rated videos, most would argue that these structures work primarily within the confines of entertainment treading heavily on misogynist tropes. So, can radical forms of pornography help to break the negative conditioning of the sexist images that have been the mainstay of commercial adult entertainment, and offer the individual who does desire this form of entertainment something that is not abusive or violent to women?

Many people would argue that this is the importance of demystifying pornography. In addition to web site, there are other capacities that have bared witness to progressive changes. These include unionization for strippers, and the creation of feminist pornography that attempts to counter the hackneyed pornographic formula: the short pointless narrative plot line, and the tired handful of positions traditionally followed by the "money

shot," an image that often prompts feminists to vocalize their contempt for the industry.

Joanna Mostov, writer, editor, model, and part owner of *BurningAngel.com* remains convinced that their site can be both sexually provocative and exciting, while still holding true to the feminist beliefs that she has cultivated for a number of years. "On the web site we have pictures of beautiful women, but also offer the members erotic fiction that is humorous as well as stimulating, and interviews with bands where they answer questions about sex instead of about their newest record or the scene." In addition to conversing about the sexual antics of a band on tour, interviews have showcased porn stars that prove to have far more to say than the dialogue usually afforded to them in videos, and women intent on demystifying pornography by offering alternatives. Although initially only displaying naked women, the web site now has plans to start another that will showcase naked men, and similar to its counterpart, the participants will be mostly people involved with underground music and culture. Mostov desires to position men in seductive ways, showing the viewer the "sexy angles of a guy's body."

Representatives of all the web sites interviewed remain adamant that the women are treated in the best possible way, a far cry from the horror stories often told about the sex industry. Stephanie of *FrictionUSA.com* revealed that in treating their models, "We don't pressure them into doing anything that they're uncomfortable with." Feminists usually reserve their support for pornography that is intent upon treating the women who model with respect, and encouraging them to have a role in the creative aspects of the photo shoot and their presentation on the screen.

On *Suicidegirls.com*, models are given the opportunity to write about themselves and their experiences, offering more than just an abstract image on the screen. The web site maintains that this feature gives more freedom to the participants. "These girls are not being paid to play the part in member's fantasies, they are being paid to be themselves," explained Spooky. In addition to posing, models are allowed to develop some of their own ideas concerning the photo shoots.

While attending a *Burning Angel* shoot, I noticed the casual atmosphere, and the way in which the woman modeling, incidentally a member of a hardcore/metal band, seemed very comfortable. In addition to the congenial behavior of the men at the photo shoot, including myself, the photographer and co-

owner, Mostov believes she "makes the models feel more comfortable" because in addition to her various duties, she also models for the site. She added, "Doing this web site, from modeling to writing to interviewing, has definitely empowered me."

However, despite the choice to freely and comfortably model for the Internet, there are still contentious voices that continue to find fault with this new pornographic phenomenon, oftentimes plaguing punk and hardcore message boards with hateful remarks. Mostov was surprised that comments ranged from the legitimacy of pornography and subculture to callous jabs at the physical appearance of the models. "People criticized how the pictures looked and even that we advertised on other music web sites. These people were definitely in the minority. Most people, including all the bands we have interviewed, have been very supportive."

In order to advertise for the site, Burning Angel distributed over 20,000 fliers, attending countless punk and hardcore shows and festivals. They are selling their product in the fashion that underground bands have been selling records, zines, and assorted merchandise on the road for the past twenty years, testifying to a fondness for a culture that supports the independent artist. Mostov feels that punk rock was supposed to be a means to "rebel against puritan ideals," but that it has changed for some who now consider themselves leftists or libertines in various other manners and who want to stifle others they do not believe are on high moral ground.

Similarly, Stephanie expressed the idea that repression appears to be counter to anything legitimate about underground culture. "We've been involved in punk or indie or whatever we need to call it for getting close to 13 or 14 years, so this is the culture we

know best. We're supposed to be open-minded, expressing ideas and differing viewpoints freely, but only as long as it falls into this narrow spectrum of beliefs."

It seems ironic that the attempts to branch out from mainstream culture end up having similar effects, with policing of individual goals by a critical minority. Stephanie continues, "People like sex, they like looking at it, and people like exhibitionism and voyeurism. Politics doesn't change that. Freedom should be the goal of underground culture, not repression." And with growing lists of subscribers and each site branching into new directions, it seems like constraining the medium will not be an option. ★

Best Bisexual Erotica 2
edited by Bill Brent and Carol Queen.
Black Books/Circlet Press, 2002.

Here's an anthology that delivers a savory menu of erotica for a broad range of palates. The diverse collection of erotic stories in this book feature protagonists from the bi-curious beginner to the seasoned polyamorous veteran. Editors Bill Brent and Carol Queen each contribute a story of their own among the 26 other writers in their follow up to the popular *Best Bisexual Erotica* published in 2000.

An interesting note about this anthology is that almost every story is written in the first person. In many stories the narrator's gender isn't identified right away. Some stories begin with a description of the lust interest at hand, a friend, partner, or a stranger. Because it's a bisexual anthology the reader doesn't know whether their interest is straight, queer, or trans...only that it's exciting. It adds a subliminal border-crossing curiosity for the reader. It doesn't appear to be intentional but it's a lovely transgression and creates a fluidity to the stories.

That's not the only highlight. Stories are written with high arousal factor stemming both from good old raunchy description and imaginative scenarios that occur within the would-have-been conventional experience. Lori Selke's "Bachelor Party" turns out to be a sweet girl queer switch around from the regular prenuptial ritual. "Suck-



You-Bus" by Skian McGuire introduces a frat boy character to the drunken hot pagan bisexual experience of gender fucking shape-shifting roommates. "Fancy and the Roustabout" by Rick Beck (great title) makes a day at the carnival what it should be.

For my bosom buddies whose wire is fired by the literary development of environs, garb, and lost eras, the book includes several notables. A bittersweet lusty account of a Samurai warrior who is "Bearing Two Swords" is written by Steve E. Schwartz. Jean Roberts brings us "A Curious Case" in her description of the life of a 1920's Canadian flapper as recounted by her gay descendant and his dyke pal who grope while reading her old letters. "A Triangle In The Quarter" by Jack Random flavors the book with polyamory against a New Orleans backdrop. The Crescent City is made thick and velvety again in M. Christian's "New Orleans." And who wouldn't enjoy Simon Sheppard's "The Naughty Nuns of Saint-Sulpice?" This is my favorite, an entertaining farce on the rapture of life in a French abbey complete with nasty habits amidst a flailing miracle and a surprise visit from the nephew (niece?) of Marquis de Sade. These bits appeal to the multi-sensory reader.

Other bookmarkable mentions include a grabbing story about polyfamilial midnight kitchen encounter in Margaret Weller's "Mindfuck Blowjob," a sequel to her submission in the original *Best Bisexual Erotica*. Co-editor Bill Brent expertly crafts a palpable S/M theme in "Gaping."

It's refreshing to read erotica that doesn't follow a literary Hollywood blockbuster porn formula with a happy and gratuitous ending. An-

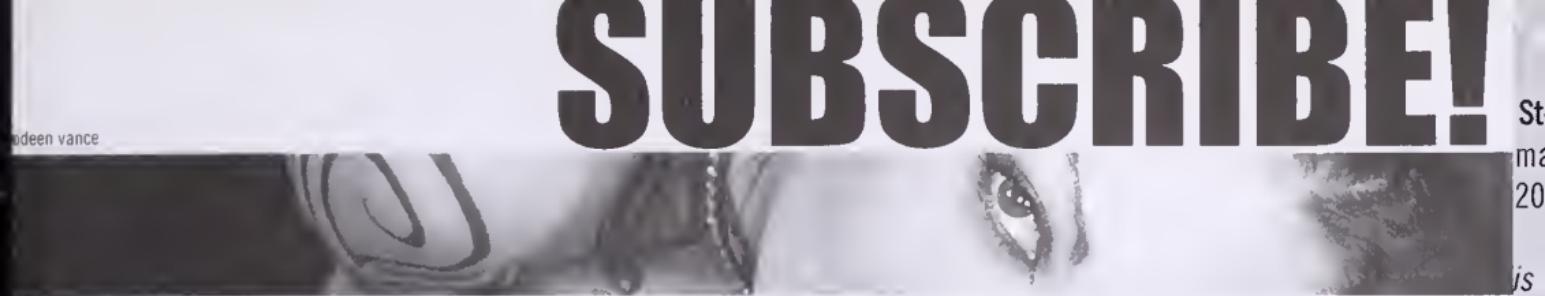
other of my favorite stories in the book is Peggy Munson's beautiful and sad third person narrative "A Taste Of Beatitude" where a transfemale recalls her days as a Bay City stripper and lets a boy read the darker shades of Rilke tattooed on her belly. Carol Queen's "Lucky Pierre" addresses the death of the narrator's close friend and co-conspirator in her lesbian to bisexual adventures. Several stories have characters who question their identity as only queer or only straight. The stories resisted the selling compulsion to tidy up house for the readers. The reality makes the pleasure in the stories more genuine as well.

Every collection of erotic fiction has its less titillating numbers for certain readers. Some of the scenarios were more of an interruption than an eruption for my specific tastes, but were well written enough to suit other readers. The book seemed to aim for presenting a diversity of characters and scenarios. More stories about genderqueers, people with disabilities and people of color would be a great way to expand. And where's the story about the fishnet hose cowboy boot rope fetish family living in a Winnebago maniacally yelling "The doctor says I'm clean" out of nowhere?

Cheers to the authors of the polyamorous stories. This fiction explores the exciting possibilities of families of choice and non-monogamy, long marginalized by the dominant nuclear marriage culture.

As a dear friend once said, "There's nothing more satisfying than going to bed with a good book...or a friend who's read one." *Best Bisexual Erotica 2* is a good book to involve in that mix.
-Kelly Nightengale

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**Boys will be Girls will be
Boys Coloring Book**
by JT Bunnell and Irit
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This coloring book works on so many levels. On one hand, it's a perfect primer for young kids to start them on their way to questioning socialized gender roles. On another level, each page is original enough to give even the most seasoned gender bender a good laugh. The jokes are fresh and the art is clever. *Boys will be Girls...* consists of 32 pages of detoured traditional-style coloring pictures with creative captions that toss a brick at assumptions based on a person's gender. Boys can enjoy playing with dolls, and girls can fix some shit like nobody's business.

While each page is a treat in and of itself, I was particularly pleased to see the page of young women in a class raising their hands stating, "Enough about our forefathers, let's learn about some revolutionary women!!"

Drop 'em a line to get yourself a copy. This would be a great tool for teachers or as a gift for progressive parents.

-Jason Kucsma

The Mother's Guide to Sex Enjoying Your Sexuality Through All Stages of Motherhood

Anne Semans and Cathy Winks.
Three Rivers Press, 2001



Mammals have sex! Lots of people don't want to deal with that fact, but it's true nonetheless. In *The Mother's Guide to Sex*, co-authors Anne Semans and Cathy Winks don't just write about moms having sex, they encourage it. In 16 chapters and an extensive 21 page list of resources (including books, websites, telephone hotlines, and contact information for a variety of organizations), these San Francisco sex educators present women with tools they'll need in order to be both loving mothers and sexual beings.

"Part One: Building Blocks of Sexuality" covers sexual self-image and self-esteem, self-love, desire (and the lack of it), and communication. Included in this section are tidbits about sexy mammals of ancient cultures and how the patriarchy did away with them, as well as sidebars featuring thought provoking questions about the reader's sexual history and lists of "The Many Ways to Masturbate" and "Desire Motivators." The informative "genital tour" section would be even more helpful with a diagram (which, unfortunately, this book is completely lacking). Finally,

the communication chapter gives tips useful to anyone who wants to talk more openly in order to get needs met.

From conception to sex during pregnancy and after childbirth, in "Part Two: The ABCs of Becoming a Mom," Semans and Winks cover topics on the mind of every mother (and mother-to-be), but rarely mentioned in mainstream pregnancy and birth books. There is information about getting pregnant without even trying and even more about trying without getting pregnant; I wish there had been more discussion of impacts on women's sexuality caused by abortion and "donating" eggs. The "Sex During Pregnancy" chapter is comprehensive, dealing with physical and mental realities. A sidebar gives fantastic ideas for boosting body image, and there are plenty of details about when to proceed with caution as well as the myths and realities of keeping mom and fetus safe. There are even answers to questions about electric vibrators, S/M play, vaginal fisting, and piercings. In "The Fourth Trimester: Sex and the Postpartum Mom," the authors explain emotional and physical changes many women experience after childbirth. Topics covered include breast-feeding, depression, partner perceptions, and survivors' issues. It would have been helpful if somewhere in Part Two there had been more in-depth coverage of episiotomies and how to avoid them, as they tend to be detrimental to a women's sexuality.

Thankfully, this guide doesn't stop after the baby's born, but takes moms through parenthood from infancy on through the teenage years. "Part Three: Reinventing Sex as a Parent" is all about getting it on even with kids in the house. The chapter on "Surviving Scarcity" gives tips on saving money, managing time, and having privacy. My favorite chapter is "The Silver Lining: Expanding Your Definition of Sex." Points made in this chapter include "sex isn't the be-all and end-all," "sex is always changing," "sex is more than genital contact," "sex is more than intercourse," "sex thrives on intimacy," "sex thrives on independence," and "sex is worth prioritizing." Right On! Part Three ends with an entire chapter about "Sex and the Single Mom."

The authors work to counteract our society's squeamishness about young people's sexuality in "Part Four: Raising Sexually Healthy Children." Here moms are encouraged to talk to their kids about sex and teach by example. "...[W]e also want you to have a good sex life because of your children," write Semans and Winks. "When they see a happy, sexually fulfilled mom who conducts relationships consistent with her own values, they learn to embrace sexuality as natural and to form mature relationships of their own."

Women with kids in their lives owe it to themselves and their young ones to read this book and put what they learn into practice. The benefits are sure to be far reaching.

-Chantel Guidry

Noirotica 3: Stolen Kisses

Edited by Thomas S. Roche
Black Books, 2001

Warning: This book is not for the fainthearted.



Drug dealers. Sex workers. Document forgers. Adulterers. Crooked cops. Mobsters. Gun molls. Grifters. Homicide detectives. Pornographers. Swindlers. Demented artists. Strippers. Private investigators. Killers. Thieves.

They're all here in *Noirotica 3: Stolen Kisses*. all the people your mamma warned you about, all the people living and loving in the sordid underbelly of the city. But in the 25 stories in this anthology, they're not only scary and dangerous, they're hot and sexy. That's right, this book includes both crime and sex, a combination that editor Thomas S. Roche says in the introduction works because "crime and sexuality are made to go together...they're two forces...which make their own rules and exist on their own terms in any society..."

These stories are tight and well written but also explicitly violent and explicitly sexual. I found some of the stories (for example, "Inside the Works" by Tom Piccirilli and "Open Season" by Thea Hillman) so virulent and creepy that I couldn't allow myself to be turned on by them. Others, like "Syndromes" by Brian Hodge; "Private Dick" by Sukie de la Croix; and "The Last Words of Charlie Ballerina" by Thomas S. Roche, are shot through with humor but never lose their edge.

Like other anthologies published by Black Books, these stories include people of various genders, sexual orientations and proclivities. Everybody's having sex with everybody else when they're not killing each other. The protagonist of "Night of a Thousand Fish" by Bill Brent is a bisexual guy. "Stiletto" by Lucy Taylor is all about the lengths to which a mobster's lady will go to get her gal; in "Second Chance" by P.D. Cacek, a stripper avenges her girlfriend's murder; and the narrator of "Girls Are a Nuisance" by Alison Tyler is devastated by being dumped by her lady love. "Faithful" by Michael Thomas Ford features a gender twist that even I didn't see coming. (I hope that tiny bit of information doesn't give too much away.) Of course, heterosexual folks are getting it on too, doing it in bathrooms in exchange for drugs ("Candy Man" by Carl Wheat), having tequila drenched sex with a stranger ("Torch" by Amelia G.), and committing adultery on the floor of an auto mechanic's shop ("The Crush" by Jason Boberg).

Two of my favorite erotic authors have stories in this collection. Both "Stone Cold Perfect" by M. Christian and "Coke Call" by Michelle Tea live up to the high expectations I have for these writers.

If you like crime noir, but have always been frustrated when the sex scenes don't go far enough, or if you like sex stories that are hard and mean, pick up a copy of *Stolen Kisses*. You might like it so much you'll have to read the first two volumes in the *Noirotica* series. You might like it so much that you'll find yourself reading these stories over and over and over again.

-Chantel Guidry

Tough Girls Down and Dirty Dyke Erotica
Edited by Lori Selke.
Black Books, 2002

Much of the lesbian erotic fiction that I've read tends to fall into one of two categories. Either the story is written in cloyingly sweet romance novel prose complete with crashing wave and flower petal metaphors, or the plot consists of two women locking eyes across a smoky bar, one fisting the other three sentences later. Thankfully, *Tough Girls Down and Dirty Dyke Erotica* explores other options.

For those who have wondered what kind of sex tough girls have, editor Lori Selke (who is



also a writer of erotic fiction, including this anthology's "Southern Girls") has picked 20 tales that give some answers. The ladies in these stories are rowdy and rude, but do have sexual skills that include more than just sweet kisses and fisting.

In "Venus in Therapy" by Betty Blue, the protagonist fantasizes that the intriguing gal she sees in the waiting room of her therapist's office drives her in a New Orleans taxi to a French Quarter guest house, handcuffs her to an antique bed, shoves a pink thong into her mouth, and goes down on her with gusto. When an older woman picks up a 25-year-old chick at a club in "Little Girls" by C. Lee Lambert, somebody's butt is in for more than a spanking. Vivian Black spins a tale of the rough sex that ensues in the ladies' room when a badass punk dyke and a sexy Goth girl meet "In The Pit," and two sisters share a lover in "Daddy's Girl" by Marilyn Jaye Lewis. From baby dykes playing with guns in the barrio ("Primera Comunión" by Myriam Gurba) to a cross dressing prostitute in 1920's Berlin ("Madi" by Valeska Keller) these stories show that lesbians enjoy a wide variety of sexual practices.

Folks who have fantasies about sex between female inmates will be excited to know that this anthology features two such scenarios. Both

"Don't Get Me Wrong" by Laura Antoniou and "What You're In For" by Zonna feature sex in the laundry room of a women's prison. The sex in "Don't Get Me Wrong" is actually a rape, the violence of which was more than I could stomach. There's also a briefer rape scene in "What You're In For," softened perhaps by the fact that it happens in a dream sequence.

Disappointingly, the writing in more than a few of the stories lacks polish, as if the authors should have subjected their work to more revisions. Of course, sketchy writing can often be forgiven when the action is hot. The finely crafted stories "Aya's Blade" by Fetish Diva Midori, "The Only One" by M. Christian, and "Bedrock" by Jen Collins are literary gems in this anthology.

All in all, this collection is a satisfying addition to the lesbian erotic bookshelf. The characters, settings, authors, and sexual activities included here are diverse, and even though not all of the writing is top notch, there's sure to be something here to tantalize any reader who likes her ladies bad and fast.

-Chantel Guidry

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REVOLVERLUTION

Public Enemy on the Digital Frontier

It's easy to argue that Public Enemy changed the face of hip-hop forever. Taking their cue from the conscious street rhymes of groups like The Last Poets, PE and The Bomb Squad crafted albums that were simply the best in hip-hop and among the best in any genre. Flavor Flav's comic antics offset Chuck's polities, creating records that made people dance as well as think. Terminator X's sampling and turntablist skills made everything sound like an air raid siren; immediate, heetie, menaeing. They appealed to hip-hop heads and skate punks alike. They sampled Slayer, effectively created rap-rock with Anthrax (Run DMC's and The Beastie Boys' contributions notwithstanding) and made millions of parents nervous about their children's growing awareness of racial polities in America at the end of the millennium. In short, Public Enemy is not only a rap band, they are a rock and roll band in every way that matters. In recent years, the band has expanded to online radio stations, labels, and web sites (www.btn.com, www.slamjamz.com, www.rapstation.com, and www.publicenemy.com), in addition to various side projects. Clamor recently caught up with Chuck D to discuss Public Enemy's new record, "Revolverlution," as well as other events in the PE world.



Mark Dowding
Scott Puckett
John Nikolai

CLAMOR: PE is renowned for albums which have a concept. Is "Revolverlution" mostly a format and packaging concept or is there a musical/lyrical concept too?

CHUCK D: Since 2000, I no longer believe in the purpose of albums, at least those consisting of 12 or more new tracks. This belief is based on the amount of available product in the marketplace, the music industry basically promoting one song off an album at a very high promotional and marketing cost, and the fact that more and more people have the ability to assemble and compile their own albums off the Net. Since PE has a worldwide fan base, I've complied to this offline option by instituting "a trilogy within a trilogy" — three blends of music at once. New tracks, live takes, and remixes of classic cuts by producers across the earth via the Web will institute a new way that rap artists with 10 years' experience can still be a part of the current field without this unnecessary pop pressure, so the format of the record might be more revolutionary than the music itself.

What can we expect from "Revolverlution" with regard to the production?

Perhaps the different feel on this record reflects the diversity that's overlooked when it comes to this genre. So many genres like techno, trip, drum and bass, spoken word have been triggered by hip-hop, thus it's reflected in the works of the producers at hand. The selection is always experimental. Whereas today's producers try to aim for what they think is a hit sound, I try to encourage them to do as they feel. This is different from the overdone go-for-hot approach. All the studios involved brought something to the sonic table.

DJ Johnny Juice is working on a track for the album. For those who don't know, break down the role Juice has played in past PE projects.

Juice is such a scholar of the music from all aspects. From the very beginning, he was a part of the original PE Bomb Squad sound as a turntablist. On "Rightstarter" on "Yo! Bum Rush the Show," his cuts, using a recorded bass kick, are the whole backing track of the song. He provided much of the rhythm scratching on "Yo" and "Millions," all this as a teenager. After that he went west to the Navy, but over the years he's gained a production philosophy that helps him today. I think his approach can help many of these artists today, whereas I don't understand how these companies choose the same producers time and time again with less than groundbreaking results.

You have 4 remixes by competition winners on the new album. What was it about them that led to the final selections?

Each submission was judged by a then-virtual staff of about 15 heads who would take the 462 submitted mixes and evaluate them. They were judged by however that producer could make the new mix different from the original but close to some semblance to the hip-hop genre. It was very difficult because there were so many incredible, diverse examples, but the virtual staff — which, by the way, is the first of its kind — has made us confident.

I read a review recently of the new Cypress Hill album "Stoned Raiders" and it was more concerned with their age, saying they were too old to still be doing albums.

I think there's unfair bias when it comes to rap artists on the longevity tip. It could be racial as black folk are taught to dis-acknowledge history, future, and give it a right-here-right-now mentality, but as an artist you have little choice but to try different approaches. Whoever said that about Cypress just doesn't get it, by limiting them to having to satisfy an infantile limited circumstance by pop standards. This narrowed view will never

grow artistry to the respect level of Bob Dylan, Beatles, Stones, Miles, Cash, Franklin, etc. With PE, the problem is one where PE just adds to catalogue and presents something new, memorable and memorably new as in the remixes. As with the Stones, show-wise the songs from the past are the intro to some new ones. To compete with today's current crop is definitely not the idea ... we have two different goals.

For a group that has continuously stressed the importance of the DJ, don't you find it ironic that you have an MP3 label – a format which might eventually make it final for the vinyl?

I've always said technology giveth and taketh away. These CD turntables such as the Pioneer DJ1000 are basically the same technique and this will be the same with MP3s. The DJ can still orchestrate all this. I'm not a loyalist to equipment and props; the 4 elements can still be upheld yet upgraded and music, objective, visuals, and entertainment quality can still be maintained.

It seems that hip-hop is fanatical about artists remaining constant to a message or to statements made on wax (take the last question as example 1). The term contradictory is often leveled at artists who grow within their music and change their viewpoint (KRS being the prime example). Why do you think it is that rap fans/media can't accept that change?

As long the media outlets continue to make it commercially impulsive and infantile, its older fans will drop off at a certain age and make younger ones ignorant to its roots. Any company would love to continue selling the same product but having a new audience accepting it as the new thing under the sun. Thus, change is not accepted and growth is not focused upon.

When you set up www.publicenemy.com did you even imagine the amount of talent that would gravitate to the enemy board? How does it feel to see how it has developed?

I knew that if we can build a giant communication connection, I figured that the next discovery would be the talent across the planet who are now able to record, mix, and distribute out of their own homes without mass loot or the middleman involved on them shinging.

You have said several times you always wanted to be the man behind the scenes, do you think that is finally happening for you? Or can it never really happen because of who you are?

It's a little difficult because structures are built today with a gang of corporate money, something that has been kept away from me for various reasons. However, at heart, I am a behind the scenes head and there's not two of me and often I have to be a front person to attract business. Sometimes I wish for three of me or at least 500 days in a year. For example it took a whole day to do this mandatory Internetview but for you it's a pleasure and I'm thankful.

Do you think that there is still the potential in hip-hop for change; i.e., the sound, content, etc., in the way PE, Wu-Tang, Rakim, Run DMC, and even Hammer changed it? Or has it run its course?

Change is always inevitable ... the biggest change in music in the past three years however is not what but how they get it. It was totally unexpected. Inside the music it's harder to maximize musical change because of the vast amounts of hip-hop artists, whereas 10 years and further ago, there were only a handful of groups out, period, so change was recognized early in the rap game.

In your book, you made comments that the aim for rap should be to get as big as U2 and rock with regards to the level of organization and structure. Do you think that it is there yet or is there still a long way to go?

Yes we have miles to go, for every record company staffing there should be a management component that preserves yet builds upon the art.

Do you think the way hip-hop is represented by the media is a very limited view? They seem determined to define what it is and what we should and shouldn't like and listen to.

Yes, acceptance can be stifling. In the past, the media considered all rap as bad. Now it selects a certain stereotype and therefore puts a stamp on it. This definition blurs the overall perception.

You have worked with the best MCs and producers in the game and you have worked with people yet to make a name for themselves in rap. Do you see it as an even playing field as far as the excitement and challenge of working with each goes?

If this was sports, I would be a coach – even cats I coached like Johnny Juice would be coaches now – but this is not exactly sports, so therefore these qualities are not noticed, but there's no better joy than in mentoring and giving someone advice on the rap game and hip-hop. Excitement in seeing cats get into the game at ground level is rewarding where before I couldn't offer that platform. Understanding of this business is far and few, so in our online ventures, these services reward us when peeps use them for themselves.

Since the beginning you have been involved in bringing new artists/talent to the rap game. Is that something you see as essential to the survival of hip-hop, or is it more of a personal satisfaction to see if someone else can achieve the things PE did?

It's impossible to bring back the era, although cats can bring back a certain sound, but that's not enough so achieving the things PE did is a bit much. New artists and talents always stretch the art and that's what I'm encouraging. Slam is doing an alliance with the newly retooled Napster. Bringthenoise.com radio, hopefully, will be alongside and within the XM satellite system, and Rapstation.com will be powered further with an alliance thru Artistdirect.com. Each of these partnerships should bring a vast audience to the circle of online music services we have. After all, our philosophy will be based on getting people music instead of looking for consumers first and pressuring them to buy. We would like to believe that if we have an elaborate program that can land a song on one million computer desktops, that will be the intro to an artistry that they might be loyal to and invest in. This is the opposite of companies today who develop the song instead of artist development. No wonder today people would rather download a song ...

There are a number of rap's founding fathers beginning to make moves again in the industry (most recently Grandmaster Flash). What do you think has sparked this interest in the roots of the culture? Do you see a point in time where these legends will finally see a financial reward that matches the groundbreaking work that they have done for hip-hop?

We would hope so but strangely, those who've profited are the same names closest to the top of the corporate circles. Those names, Simmons, Cohen, Combs, La Reid, Harrell, Rhone, and Flex have been granted positions from the Clives, Motollas, Iovines, Mayses, as well as the radio corps, that have dictated how and what music

heads the streets. There's so much finance at the top that how much of it is trickling down after the lawyers and execs get theirs can be considered minuscule. My answer to this one-sidedness is my contribution in becoming a "Bin Laden" to that structure, in hoping to undermine the corporate dominance and circle in record industry, radio, retail, TV, and video outlets. It's my belief that this corporate lock has suffocated the growth of grassroots business through hip-hop in the hood from where it's taken yet projected back into. The fact that LA and NY have these mega-businesses suffocating all outside attempts that don't go thru that circle can be considered blasphemous; thus, my attitude in Web-blasting this playing field flat.

Has the response to Slamjamz been encouraging so far?

Indeed. Now if I can get the final components to it finalized and launch Remixplanet, then I'll have a complete service world to talk about. This will be my primary topic when talking about this upcoming PE record.

Looking back on the last few years, it seems to me that you have been building foundations and trying out ideas through your various sites with the final goal being www.slamjamz.com, for example, the MP3 section of Rapstation. How much was part of a plan?

The ability for anyone in the world to upload to Rapstation, and have it submitted or checked out by a 50-person virtual A&R staff and possibly released online, midline (mail order by demand), and offline is a model prototype that the majors should look at. This is unprecedented. When Remixplanet launches, almost any a cappella will not be safe. Remixers will converge and a pipeline will be headed back into these companies, possibly embarrassing a remix they might've

spent \$100,000 on to some name who lazily couldn't compare to some hungry Hungarian cat who is yet to be discovered.

How is the book publishing project going? Are we looking at another online project (e books) or offline?

Offda books is a small on-demand book imprint that will center around hip-hop and I do believe there is a revolution in reading about the music that is the heartbeat of the young world. Next is getting it to the "headbeat" of the young world as well.

The whole idea of producing albums in the traditional sense doesn't appeal to you anymore, yet you managed to get in a studio and do 10 tracks for the Fine Arts Militia album. Was that a case of FAM being logically easier to work on or a refreshing change that got the creative juices flowing?

It was a combination of things that helped create that project. Number one, Brian Hardgroove made it easy to do, giving me a skeleton to work with. Number two, the studio is next door and three, since I do 40 lectures a year, it was a concept where I would take my subjects and titles of my lectures and break them down into songs. After I wrote lyrics for three weeks, it was amazing to myself that I recorded them all in a one-night session, almost how they did it in the 1950s and '60s.

The Slamjamz name has been around for a while. I remember reading that you wanted to develop artists in a similar way Motown did. That was when it was a traditional label, now it is online. It seems to be the case that part of the freedom the artists have is the right to develop their careers how they feel is right and to the level they are happy in

There's so much finance at the top and the amount trickling down to the artists after the lawyers and execs get theirs can be minuscule. My answer to this one-sidedness is my contribution in becoming a "Bin Laden" to that structure, in hoping to undermine the corporate dominance.



achieving. Is that intentional or just an unavoidable factor of being online and having a roster of international artists?

I think that those original ideas fit the future of the record industry, which in this case moves like the record biz of 30-50 years ago where recording and releases were not far apart from each other.

As well as being business moves, are the things you have done on the Web answers to some of the problems you have highlighted within your lyrics; i.e., you have a problem with radio stations so you set up BTN, similarly with record labels and Slamjamz?

Yes, of course. I also try to set a prototype in the process.

In-house production teams on labels like those of No Limit and Bad Boy have become the norm in rap. You have gone more for creating studios than a set team of producers. Does that allow for a greater flexibility of who you work with and allow you to record when ideas are still fresh?

Yes, it does plus allows for apprentices in the waiting and fresh ideas are best to record immediately and released as soon as possible. Treat the music as you would bread, keep it fresh. When it can't be released quickly then you have to add plenty of artificial preservatives – marketing gimmicks, promotion – which can be bad for the overall health of the project at hand.

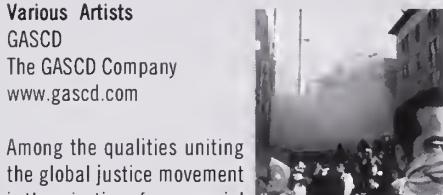
Has it ever got to the point where you felt like you were banging your head against a wall?

Quite often as it goes with pioneering things, but nothing compared to Edison, Alexander Bell, George Carver, and other real inventors.

Have you ever thought "Bugger this, I have a family to feed, I am just gonna get jiggy with it for a while and make some money"? Or is the thought of wearing those shiny suits what prevented you?

Quiet as it's kept, my background is rocking the hell out of parties. It's the music we've built upon, so in a way I do like the rhythms currently in the clubs; however, the adult themes have no place in broadcasting to an under-18 audience for the sole purpose of company bottom line padding consumption. As an adult for over 24 years, I can handle anything but I wouldn't suggest that thing for kids. In the future, the idea is doing a vast amount of recordings looking at myself as Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis, Sly Stone, Isaac Hayes looked at music. I'm gonna make a Mistachuck club extended 12" 5 cut album called Chuck D rhymes 5 hip-hop dance joints about nothing! Also on MP3 on Slam, probably in 2003. Also I wouldn't be opposed to wearing mohair suits in the case of performing with the Fine Arts Militia. ★

REVIEW



Among the qualities uniting the global justice movement is the rejection of commercial values. This rejection includes creating art that is an expression of the human spirit and not merely boardroom connivance designed for maximum profits. Respect for diversity encourages artistic eclecticism. "All worlds in one," as Subcomandante Marcos once proclaimed.

Hundreds of thousands have protested at various meetings of international financial institutions and many have been arrested. The feudal lords of capitalism are trying to weaken those who resist them by tying up impoverished activists in expensive legal proceedings. Four hundred sixty-three dissenters were busted at the FTAA protests in Quebec City in April, 2001. Singer/songwriter Chris Brown (of the superb duo Chris Brown and Kate Fenner) conceived/compiled this two-CD set as a fundraiser for the legal fees of Quebec City vets. Album proceeds in Italy will go towards an independent activist radio network and plans are underway for beneficiaries in the USA. GASCD stands for Governments Accountable to Society & Citizens=Democracy but also refers to the ubiquitous tear gas at demos. In addition to raising cash, the album also raises consciousness and spirit.

The set sports marquee names: Ani DiFranco, Michael Franti, Bruce Cockburn, and rap forefather Gil Scott Heron, all of whom perform killer selections that deal with globalization and the resultant poverty and the chronic lies of the fat cat political elite propagated to forestall real democracy and maintain the status quo. The music is interspersed

with political mini-teach-ins by Jello Biafra and Maude Barlow, and a poem of surreal defiance by Nikki Giovanni. Barenaked Ladies satirize greed in the pop-rock bolero "Sell Sell Sell" and Olu Dara bemoans a beleaguered natural environment in the crisp funk of "Red Ant (Nature)." Amongst the 30-odd contributors, there's hip-hop, folk, metal, jazz, alt-rock, experimental, punk, and one song in French. My only criticism is given that the album is North American, one or more Spanish-language tunes should have been included.

Besides that glaring omission, the otherwise sweeping inclusiveness of the collection and difficult accomplishment of each participant in translating despair, rage, analysis, and resolve into art makes GASCD highly recommended for anyone who loves great music and spoken word of any-and-all genres. For those of us who've spent more than one dark night wondering if anything we do will make a difference during this particular cruel moment in history, it's absolutely essential.

And if the cost of the CD helps acquit a sister or brother in the courtrooms of what passes for justice, then that's just sweet.

-Michael Simmons

Che Chapter 127
Profit Prophet
G-7 Welcoming Committee
www.g7welcomingcommittee.com

The bass lines are very prevalent and grooving in a way that suggests a very vague hip-hop influence, though the guitars give one the feeling that their roots are in punk and hardcore. The powerful female vocals compliment the music extremely well. The musical part of this record is good, but is

enhanced dramatically by the intelligent political content of the lyrics and artwork.

Song topics cover many topics familiar to those with radical inclinations such as the problems with capitalism, imperialism, and the religious right. Che Chapter 127 are good at dealing with these topics in a manner that doesn't give way to despair as much as it calls for inspiration to combat injustice. The themes of the songs are complimented nicely through the use of occasional samples from figures such as Angela Davis.

This record contains a good blend of hard-edged music and radical politics that will hopefully allow people to see that there is more to the legacy of Che Guevara than mass-marketed t-shirts.

-Rich Booher

Warsaw Pack
Gross Domestic Product
G-7 Welcoming Committee
www.g7welcomingcommittee.com



This just arrived, but I couldn't let the issue go by without mentioning that it hasn't left the player since it arrived. Blending hip hop, dub, jazz, heavy rock and roll, and engagingly poetic lyrics with political intent, Warsaw Pack are one of the most exciting new releases this year. It's truly like nothing you've heard before. Defying genre characterization is something Warsaw Pack actually does instead of just talking about it in interviews like so many other bands. The introductory track "Year of the Car Crash" is just a short prelude to the remaining twelve tracks that take on consumerism, alienation, environmental devastation and corporate exploitation. Look for a feature with this Southern Ontario collective in a future issue of Clamor.

-Jason Kucsmo

Challenging Hollywood

Independent Film Changes the Face of Sexuality and Gender

Yolanda Best

At the beginning of a new century, many hopeful faces look forward to seeing changes in the motion picture industry. One of the already greatly apparent changes is the shift in the views of sexuality and gender roles portrayed in films.

The 1990s saw a change in the beliefs about gender roles and sexuality. Society began to allow a more open expression of personal sexual preferences. In a poll by *Divorce Magazine*, it was found that in 1997 an average divorce rate of about 43 percent of marriages ended in divorce, and about 50 percent of households were headed by a single parent. The new single parent families gave birth to parents who played the role of both mother and father, who washed the dishes and rotated the tires. The view of what is appropriate role for each gender, and who was the appropriate mate all but disappeared.

However, the lines and barriers of gender and sexuality were being pushed by independent film makers decades earlier. Doris Wishman, the independent film scene's "Queen of Exploitation" (or "sexploitation" as some called it), who passed away on August 10th of this year, left behind a litter of what was then termed by some as trash, but is now held as art.

In 1960 Doris's first commercial film *Hideout in the Sun* was one of the first and most successful films of the nudist film movement. She continued to make films throughout her life, like her 2000 release *Satan Was a Lady*, and 2001's critically acclaimed *Dido Heaven*.

The movement to express change in society through film has gotten stronger over the last few years. Technology allows film makers to shoot films on smaller budgets, making it a reality for more movie makers to bring their stories and takes on life to the silver screen. Sites like IFILM.com allow these artists to echo their productions around the

world over the Internet. IFILM even hosts an ever-popular Gay & Lesbian section. Production companies set up Web sites and sell copies of their film to viewers from around the world. And such films have been whole heartedly supported by Film Festivals that are intended to support the exploration of themes of sexuality and gender.

I was able to discuss the changes reflected in film today with Margaret Murray, the Executive Director of the Tampa International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. She was able to give me a little insight on some of the changes that she's seen taken place.

CLAMOR: What film project(s) have you been involved in that some would say push the bounds of socially constructed beliefs of gender and sexuality?

MURRAY: Last year, we featured a narrated clips presentation called *Lesbian Porn 101* that was a huge success. The film featured clips from sexual instruction videos, mainstream porn, and feminist-produced porn from the last 20 years. Another film that we screened last year is called *L.I.E.*, directed by Michael Cuesta. It's a very disturbing film about pedophilia. Yet, it presented the topic in a very mature and compassionate manner. This was a scary moment for me; Lot 47, the distributor of the film, wasn't sending out preview copies, and I hadn't seen it. I'd been reading about it for months, though, and I just thought I don't want to miss a chance to introduce this incredibly touchy subject to an audience in such a profoundly, beautiful way.

What were the reactions to the films?

Lesbian Porn 101 generated a lot of controversy. Over seven hundred women attended the event. It was one of the most amazing



things to see- seven hundred women standing outside Tampa Theatre waiting to see an educational presentation about pornography! Some women walked out of the screening, and I had quite a few people voice their displeasure. However, at least 675 women stayed in that theatre, riveted to their seats, as they learned things about their own bodies and sexuality that they, and myself, never knew existed! With *L.I.E.*, it's really nice to see that it's been on a few best-of lists, and I still come across articles about it in various magazines. More than anything, those two films reinforced to me the importance of taking risks in programming.

You know, this brings up a good point. Not everyone thinks that the social taboos should be tested. Do you think that the trend to create movies that push the bounds of socially constructed beliefs of gender and sexuality is necessarily a good thing?

I am all for pushing boundaries if it's done in a non-exploitative way. The film *By Hook or By Crook* is a good example of something that pushes the notion of gender and sexuality, but in essence the film isn't about that. The story involves two butch women, Shy and Valentine, and their quest to find Valentine's mother, who gave her up for adoption. The story is about redemption, and family, and loyalty. The women who star in it just happen to be incredibly butch. It's just a matter of getting over the fact that Val has facial hair and Shy wears suits. I'm not sure that mainstream audiences are ready for this yet, but if they can believe that Tommy Lee Jones and Will Smith are battling eight foot lizards, I don't think seeing a woman wearing a suit should be that much of a stretch of the imagination. I think it's very important for marginalized people in society to be in charge of telling their own stories. Movies like *Windtalkers* aren't the

norm — a completely trite telling of a Native American story. We have to allow people the chance to tell the world as a whole their history in their own words. Otherwise, we just have a bunch of films by Steven Spielberg telling us how our history was created.

So, maybe it is a good thing. But do you think the world is ready for its views of gender and sexuality to be changed?

I'd like to think so. Admittedly, I operate in a bubble where my job is to do exactly that, so I'm not the most objective person to ask. However, I do think that people are more educated — not enlightened, mind you, just more educated — and there have been so many recent issues that would normally be a cause for uproar that weren't. I'm thinking specifically of Rosie coming out. I don't really think of her as someone who pushes the envelope, but she came out because she wanted to take a stand. So not only do we have this incredibly public

person saying "Yes, I'm gay," but she's also saying 'And you're not treating gay men and women who want to be parents with integrity.'

The changes in society will eventually have an affect on Film Festivals like yours. Has your Festival only attracted the Gay and Lesbian Community?

This year, I've really concentrated on bringing in some films that will appeal to everyone. We have a silent film with a live orchestra accompanying it; we have a stand-up concert by Margaret Cho, we have a film with Matt LeBlanc in it. I think that now is the time to create those avenues for crossover appeal, and we should take it when we get the chance.

What predictions do you have about future trends in the world of film, both independent and mainstream, in regards to sexuality and gender?

One of the most interesting things for me to see in the gay and lesbian filmmaking world is the proliferation of transgender stories being told. We have a great film in the festival this year about a male to female transgender who's now a Member of Parliament in New Zealand. Far and away, transgender films are the ones that are pushing boundaries right now. And it's interesting to me that HBO has been picking up so many of them, like *Southern Comfort*, for example. It's really an exciting time right now for transgender programming. ★

For more information about The Tampa International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival please visit <http://www.pridefilmfest.com>.

The Cultural Resistance Reader

edited by Stephen Duncombe
Verso Books, 2002.
www.versobooks.com



The Cultural Resistance Reader is an excellent collection of essays and excerpts dealing with the many forms of cultural resistance. Almost everyone you'd expect is here, from Marx to Gramsci, Baudrillard to Brecht, Hakim Bey to Gandhi, Adorno to Abbie Hoffman. What you'd expect to see from these authors, however, isn't here. On the contrary, Dumcombe has dug out some great, fresh pieces to weave into this tapestry.

This isn't a book to necessarily give to someone needing an introduction to cultural resistance; some of the references are arcane, and an unfamiliarity with the subject matter would make some of the pieces here seem less relevant. Its audience is decidedly activist and activist/scholar. But knowing that, and having the background to understand the contents, it's a fabulous resource. Many of the pieces used are hard to get and/or from small presses. You feel as if you're handling the gems of Duncombe's private library. I've not heard anyone in years mention Jerry Rubin's *Do It!* (not since someone, who knows who he is, made off with my autographed copy) and it was great to see a piece of it included here.

What makes this book particularly interesting is its last chapters: "Commodities, Co-optation, and Cultural Jamming," and "Mixing Pop and Politics." "Commodities, Co-optation, and Cultural Jamming" is an amalgam of essays about the neurotic nature of marketing extending from the 50s forward, and to some degree argues that all culture in capitalist so-

cietiy is merely a tool to sell you gorgeous consumer goods. Which is depressing if you are working to create alternatives to the mainstream. The content here screams of situationist and post-situationist (RE: Kalle Lassn) theory, but oddly doesn't mention either school of thought directly. "Mixing Pop and Politics" is chalk full of first hand movement accounts about building community and fucking shit up. John Jordan steps in with an excellent account of the Claremont Road liberated zone which inspired and led to the first Reclaim the Streets parties in England. (This account is highly recommended in understanding RTS history. Check out their video for more inspirational content.) Jason Grote's piece about messing with Disney in New York is great fun. The "meme warfare" bit is great for thinking through your own media incendiary devices. However, the best part of this section is "Electronic Disturbance: An Interview" with Ricardo Dominguez about the Electronic Disturbance Theater's electronic actions in solidarity with the Zapatistas. It chronicles their impressive world-wide internet jamming campaigns in solidarity — and presents ideas for creating international and instantaneous temporary autonomous zones for political action.

There is a lack of situationist and crimethinc content, but at 447 pages, there's enough to read without. In short, it's easy to dismiss these sorts of collections as only sustaining bits of fresh ideas. But this is one not to be missed; funny, sharp, dense but functional, with plenty of fodder for the fires of the discontent. If you only have one collection of essays on the topic, make it this one.

-Danee Voorhees

The Glue and Ink Rebellion

Sean Carswell
Gorsky Press, 2002
www.gorskypress.com



Sean Carswell's book *The Glue and Ink Rebellion* is dedicated to the zine rebellion: the people who write what they want and don't give a damn, who know how to scam copies, who love to be real, and straightforward whether or not they're stating fact or fiction. These stories (largely a collection of work already printed in zines) are beautifully funny, saddening, and instantly relatable with striking illustrations by Tom Wren.

With a narrative style reminiscent of Aaron Cometbus, you can feel Carswell's bittersweet flutterings of the heart. Hitting on the wrong girl, digging up septic tanks, losing your truck, and realizing you scored with the cute bartender the night before, being seduced by a sexy Whore for Jesus, talking ticker-tack construction with some Hopis while waiting for Thor, the correlations between *Star Wars: Episode One* and the WTO, boxing your friends to settle who would wash the dishes; it's all here and instantly intimate. His stories are about everyone you know.

The stories, while maintaining this intimacy, are at once very political. They demand a deeper analysis (particularly about class) but not in a riled-up, angsty way. Carswell communicates the idea that life isn't about feeling dislocated, and his stories are very much rooted in a sense of place and a set of values. More than anything, he recognizes that the personal is political. But he reminds you hard-headed rabble rousers out there through the words of a Hopi construction worker, "But, are we here to bitch or to have fun? We're here to have fun, right?" And that is exactly what these stories are.

-Danee Voorhees



FANGIRLS

between comics culture and sexual harassment

Anne Elizabeth Moore
JT Yost

Although it may be my duty to sue my former employers for sexual harassment — having been raised and thoroughly trained in traditional 1970s Feminism and radical 1990s queer-theory-based political action, both of which demand that anyone spotting injustice in this world must bring it to the awareness of others — I do not at this moment intend to do so. Don't get me wrong: I am strong enough, I am ready, and, according to more than one civil rights attorney, I have a case. I recognize this as my duty. Still: duties get shirked. Sometimes for good reason.

Here is an example of one of my former bosses' comments, a stereotypical example of sexual harassment: On December 5, 2000, I responded to his emailed requests for specific activities for our holiday party. "No," I wrote, "there will be no Spin the Bottle." Typically unfazed and without hesitation, he responded with three words and his signature, "Post Office, then?"

What would you do? One of your two bosses repeatedly suggests children's exploratory sexual games, with adults, at an in-office gathering. I, personally, enjoy games. I enjoy my coworkers. I would enjoy a good old adult revisit of Spin the Bottle. Hell, it sounds like a blast. In fact, in other situations, I have made the same suggestion myself. I repeat: What would you do if you were in my situation? Allow me to add that \$50,000 — over twice what you made per year working for this employer — rides on your answer.

★★★

On January 22, 2002, I received the first concrete warning that my job as an editor for a small but respected alternative publishing company was in jeopardy via another email, which, in an aside, also notes,

as if relevant, who I am dating. Three months later, I was let go. Shortly afterwards, on May 15, a lawyer friend suggested I speak with a civil rights attorney regarding the circumstances which lead to my firing, as well as the specifics of what legal counsel would later term my "sexually hostile work environment." The attorney I spoke with, a rushed yet succinct man, saw my case for the sexy, hip sort of legal action that could shake shit up in the teeny-tiny little world of small publishing. He was not interested at first; in fact, he was dismissive and rude until I mentioned that I had worked for a company that, in addition to my work as the editor of a magazine about comics, also produced pornography. He quickly became so interested in my experience working for two years in sexually hostile surroundings that he would do the work pro bono.

He was excited about the damages I suffered as a victim of these hostile environs and cited a figure: \$40-\$50,000. The money intrigued me, and it was apparent that he knew that this was how he would get me out of the realm of complainers and into the realm of litigators. This amount of money still totals more than what I grossed during the entire two years of my employment: It would be a tangible, solid chunk of proof that I had been wronged, and there is no vengeance like that which you can wave in someone's face and then purchase a luxury vehicle with. It must work most of the time. To achieve it, I would need to take the next step: "Make a list of every single comment, every single joke, every single reference — outside of the pornography editing context —" he told me it was appropriate for my employers and coworkers to have made jokes about my ability to deal with pornography, and that it would have been more damaging for them not to have done so, yet the lawyer doesn't understand that the basic problem with these jokes are that I have been made to feel unusual

and odd again, *still*, because of my gender — “when it was said, who said it, and who heard it.” The difficult task would be organizing these copious lists, already begun and kept separately over a period of two years, into one cohesive master list.

My boyfriend expressed concern about a lawsuit: “It’s like you’d still be working for them.” He works in comics and could harbor legitimate concerns about pissing off others in this small but fiery community. He reminded me it would be a difficult project and that a comic-book publisher isn’t likely to actually pay anything. Moreover, I would still be forced to deal with my former employers in an even more deliberately hostile environment.

This did not concern me. I was given at birth the bizarre gift ability to withstand incredible amounts of crap. I coped for two years with what to an outside observer seemed a clear example of a sexually hostile work environment, one in which the perpetrators had free reign and total control over the entirety of that environment. The thought of dealing with them in the mediated situation of a legal confrontation actually comforted me. It almost began to seem as if I would have a harder time justifying not pursuing a lawsuit than pursuing one.

Yet I hadn’t come to any final decisions about the possibility of litigating. I was simply and thoroughly exploring my options. My former employers may have, after all, broken the law. And in some situations, due to the nature of the jokes that were made (about me filing lawsuits, about the specifics of sexual harassment law, about the lists I kept and discussed of every single comment, every single joke, and every single reference made in my presence), they appear to have known they were doing it. It’s not a question of what the law does or does not allow; my former bosses most likely already knew that they occasionally crossed over the line. And if they didn’t at the time they were doing so, they quickly learned when I commented in response to what they were doing that they were doing so. Bringing them to court wouldn’t, then, be about explaining to them what the law allows; they already know the law. It would be about making sure that they were publicly reprimanded for breaking it, and bringing forth public scrutiny on this matter in the future. This lawsuit, if pursued, would be about making sure that even though these laws already exist, they are seen as useful — even within so-called alternative culture — for fighting injustice. But I wasn’t convinced that they were.

A friend expressed concern about my ambivalence. “It’s a dangerous urge to not fight them,” she cautioned. “Most people wouldn’t be able to. Most people aren’t strong enough, and don’t have the knowledge or resources to pursue this sort of thing. And that’s a lot of money.” She had taken me out for coffee so she was allowed to say this sort of thing.

“The fight that needs to take place isn’t necessarily a legal one,” I suggested.

“You want to enforce a change in the comics industry,” she knew.

Having worked as the editor of a magazine devoted to the exploration of comics as an art form and an industry, and moreover, having read every issue of that magazine, I became keenly attuned to how seriously the comics industry takes lawsuits. Which is to say, much less seriously than how the comics industry takes the new Spider-

Man movie. Naturally, I question whether a legal battle could change comics. I question whether laws affect any of the entertainment industries, but comics (adherents to which are commonly referred to as “fanboys” without irony), despite recent attempts to make a change for the better (increased participation of women artists, celebration of female characters and heroes, increased visibility of women at the major publishers) remains a gendered art form.



My friend was not convinced. She worked in the women’s department of a local college, where she was investigating the behavior of a man who has had some hundreds of sexual harassment complaints lodged against him over a span of years. Students and counselors alike referred each other away from him, urging others not to take his classes, avoiding his behavior instead of confronting it. When women were harassed by this faculty member, many dutifully filed open-ended complaints, but none pressed charges. It seemed that recently, someone had found the bulging file and heard enough of the rumors that he was finally under investigation.

The lesson here is, supposedly, crystal clear: despite that the groundwork for support is laid out for each complainant and despite that even common knowledge has it that this man is deserving of punishment, something kept every single woman away from the decision to prosecute. There are all sorts of potential factors that could influence this decision, and all of them have flitted through my head at one point or another: Am I strong enough to fight my former employer, a well-respected force in the industry in which I still work? Will it be effective? Will it be worthwhile? Is the possibility of money, considering I have lost my only source of income, hampering my vision? Should it? How much? What is the best medium within which to wage this battle? Do I really want to sit in a courtroom for even a single second of my life if I have the option of avoiding it? How will I get the time to organize this list the lawyer wants, of every single comment ever uttered and overheard by anyone, when the list is so ridiculously long I stopped adding to it while I was still there? Will the outcome of this potential trial make life better for anyone I care about?

The clear culprit, the one that kept these women from pursuing legal action against this teacher, would seem to be fear. And fear, I suppose, is what it comes down to for me: The fear that our legal system, thought to be the very backbone and ultimate corrective to insure the cessation (or, at least punishment) of negative behaviors would, in this case, prove insufficient when pitted against the deeply gendered forces thought of so benignly as the comics industry.

★★★

Shortly thereafter, the other of my two former bosses apparently told a former coworker that, although he no longer respected my work, he had “praised” it earlier in my employment because “women need that sort of encouragement.”

In celebration of nearly a month of my status as a fired personage, two friends and I sat around the kitchen in the off-moments of a barbecue discussing the possibilities and implications of legal action, as well as these comments from my former employer. “That sort of patriarchal,

So while my duty may dictate that this combination of evidence — the sexually hostile environment, the hefty financial compensation, the chance that this will cease further overt discriminatory practices — requires me to pursue a lawsuit, this approach misses the entirety of the insidious forces at work here.

protective sexism is so much worse," one friend seethed. "It's usually wrapped in a sense of concern, sometimes a genuine caring."

The other agreed. "I'm still not going to let you make your own decisions," she mimicked one such perpetrator, "since I clearly know better, anyway."

The bottom line remains gender; that although seen as compassionate, this former employer's treatment of women is based entirely on gender over abilities, talents, or dedication to cause. That this particular man sees himself as a primary force of anti-sexism in the comics industry is unsurprising, wrapped as his discriminatory behaviors are in a veneer of concern.

A week later, I was referred to one of the best civil rights attorneys in the Northwest, if not the entire United States. I called and explained that I had a possible case of gender-based discrimination. Over the phone, the interviewer responded to my outlining of some of the key details: "So basically . . . there was a personality conflict and it didn't work out. You got fired, is that correct?"

"Well, there's that, but the reason that those personality conflicts began to be evident was because of a gender disparity in the first place."

"Oh," The interviewer paused. "You're claiming there's a culture in comics that brought this situation about?"

"I am," I agreed.

★★★

Within days, I sold some books to purchase some food. This sounds like a pathetic attempt to explain the realities of unemployment when really it is just a fact. I had a surplus of books and a deficit of food; one must replace the other. Because I worked for some time for a publisher, a number of the books I wanted to sell were produced by my former employer.

The clerk in the bookstore went through my stack of books, made me an offer, and asked if I worked for the publisher, who is known locally. At the time I did not. He confided that he, himself, used to work for the very magazine I edited. A couple months ago, he was writing for them regularly. "That's what I did before I took this job," he boasted.

To sell books in Washington, you must show a proof of identification; this I did, and this he looked over, punched information into his form, and handed back to me. He did not recognize my name. I did not learn his, although I worked with every single writer that published anything in the last year, and know that he is not among them because I met all the other Seattle-based writers I worked with. He, very naturally, and on a safe gamble, simply saw a girl come in with a stack of books, among them the magazine I edited, and likely assumed she was selling off an ex-boyfriend's stuff. He seemingly believed that if he told me he was a writer for the mag, I would not know the difference, never having peeked inside the publication. I did nothing to dissuade him from this belief. I did not even glance through the books I wanted to sell; I am sure I could not have appeared less interested.

On the basis of my gender, as well as my vague disinterest in his questions, my relationship to the comic-book industry (or lack thereof) was assumed. Incorrectly. Tell me there's not a culture in comics that brought *this* situation about.

★★★

In a September 22, 1997 article that appeared in the *Los Angeles Daily Journal* (now online at http://www.rmslaw.com/in_the_media/art1.htm), "Hostile La Vista, Baby: Hollywood Lawyer's Delicate Task: Making

Harassment Claims Go Away," Alex Chun explains, "According to employment law specialist Michael Robbins, the managing partner at Beverly Hills-based Rosenfeld, Meyer & Susman, LLP, what sets the entertainment business apart from all others is the amount of publicity it receives and the fact that it is one of the few industries that legitimately deals with sex. . . ."

Another industry that legitimately deals with sex, the adult comic-book publishing industry, has similar problems. Like many fields of entertainment (even those with high art aspirations), a proximity to pornographic material causes a greater scope for potential jokes, and an assumed greater ease on the sake of participants with humor relating to such material. I mean: you joke about your work environment, and if your work environment legitimately includes characters like the Bondage Fairies and Boffy the Vampire Layer, frankly, the depth to which such humor can sink — and fast — is pretty low. Again, the base issue is not simply one of working in close proximity to pornography. The base issue is that working around pornography allows an environment already in place to come ever closer to crossing over the boundaries prescribed by the law. In my employment situation, this environment was fostered by the co-owners of the publishing company and fed constantly by the larger outside industry's preconceptions that women are in some way substantially different from men.

One of my former bosses is a renowned lech; he expressed his — forgive me for sounding like a PC-adherent for a moment — sexist leanings through sexual comments and jokes (about the sex play of youth, about whom an employee is dating; and these are only two tame examples). The other of my former bosses has taken the same gendered assumptions in a different direction, expressing them insidiously under the guise of paternal compassion. While the legal system could effectively deal with the behavior of one of these men, it does not at this time have the capacity to address the behavior of the other; nor does the legal system have a way of recognizing that underlying both of these gender-based discriminative practices is a far more expansive and sinister problem.

So while my duty may dictate that this combination of evidence — the sexually hostile environment, the hefty financial compensation, the chance that this will cease further overt discriminatory practices — requires me to pursue a lawsuit, this approach misses the entirety of the insidious forces at work here, just as thoroughly as a lawsuit itself would. The law thus can be seen as a closed system within which it is possible to fight only those problems that have been proven to be apparent elsewhere. While the underlying problems I note are not new — they clearly exist in popular consciousness, and in feminist and queer theory — they are not yet identified by our legal system as prosecutable.

As elucidated in conversation with the first lawyer I spoke with, my complaints about my former work environment went beyond the letter of the law, which itself was followed only questionably during my employment. My duty, as I choose to accept it, prescribes that the full range of injustices I have witnessed must be brought to the awareness of others. Thus, a non-legal way of enforcing a change in the comics industry must be sought. As the Chun quote above suggests, publicity plays a significant role in harassment claims. In attempting to find an alternative to legal action, we must consider those options that retain an element of publicity, but do not rely on the confines of the legal system.

I suggest this article. And should it fail to work, fortunately, I am legally granted three years to change my mind about a lawsuit. ★

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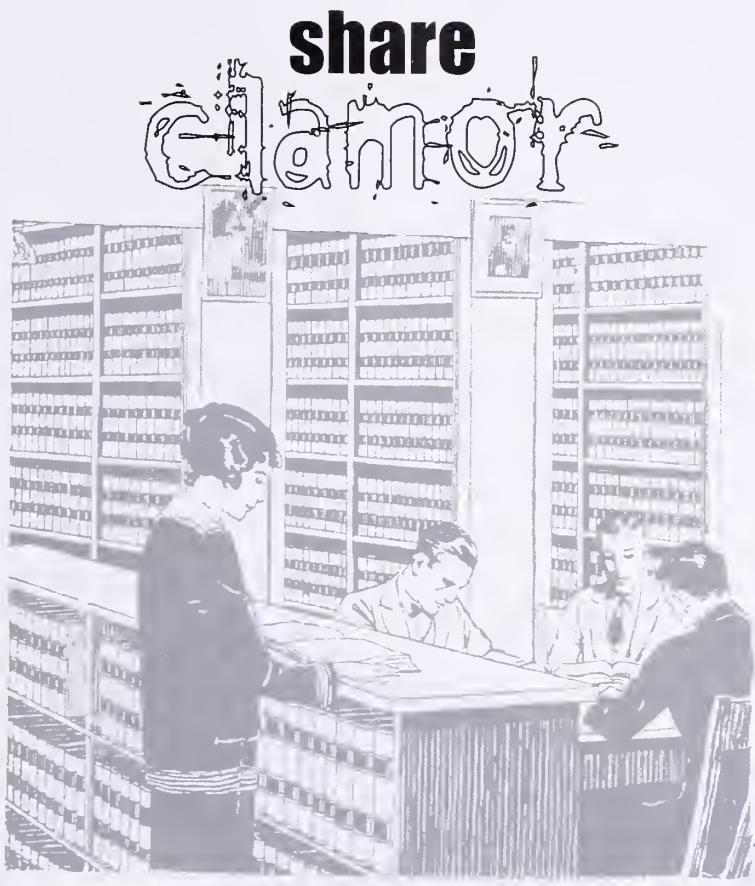
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Permanent Economic Damage

Even if you do not work at, nor invest in, nor do business with Enron, Dynegy, WorldCom, Adelphia Communications, ImClone, Qwest Communications, Tyco International, Global Crossing, or whatever American corporation is now currently involved in a scam or scandal, you are or soon will be affected in some economic sense. The massive volume and scale of today's corporate crimes implies that the US economy will suffer permanent damage that will affect more than the immediate customers, employees, and investors of these companies. Yet there is nothing unique about the current state of the US economy. In fact, in 1990 the Japanese economy faced massive scandals and collapsing asset values just as the US economy faces today. The US is entering its own version of "Japan's lost decade." Based upon Japan's experiences, let's outline how this will probably affect you and your personal economy.

If you earn and spend American dollars, if you are expecting a pension from a major corporation, if you file a claim against an insurance company, or even if you simply trust your money to a bank that makes corporate loans, you will probably be adversely affected. The value of the US dollar is under pressure and the shift of world investment away from the US will affect the purchasing power of your dollar. From January to July 2002, the US dollar lost about 12 percent of its value against the Japanese yen and the euro. Furthermore, the decline of stock market values in response to corporate scandals will produce a general economic strain. From January 2000 to July 2002, some \$7 trillion in paper asset values was lost in stock market declines. This loss will cause a "cash flow crunch," forcing the sale of more real estate and paper assets. Insurance companies

and endowment funds will be compelled to increase their cash reserves (selling stocks, bonds, and real assets) when their projected "payout liabilities to paper assets" ratio rises. Most importantly, the scale of the default on corporate bonds and bank loans (between \$500 billion to \$1 trillion dollars in bad loans to US telecom industry alone) will create a "credit crunch" making it more difficult to raise investment money to pull the economy out of recession. The scale and number of corporate liquidations as a result of these scandals may provoke a federal bailout with a cost much larger than the great Savings and Loan bailouts of the late 1980s. Yet the only way to accomplish such a massive federal bailout of corporations, banks, and pension funds is to put more strain on federal deficits. The economic strain of the so-called war on terrorism combined with massive corporate bailouts will likely force an official devaluation of the US dollar. Huge federal deficits, a shrinking value of the dollar, and a decline in real economic activity (with fewer young people finding jobs) will ultimately put an unbearable strain on the great Social Security system. So, while you may not care much if certain pieces of paper known as stock certificates fall in value, you may care if that certain piece of paper known as the US dollar falls in value as a purchasing power in your personal economic life.

The Patterns of Fraud

Exposed financial fraud, like the few cases of police brutality captured on video, implies there are greater numbers of incidents never exposed or recorded. This also implies a systemic problem demanding radical changes that will not be accomplished by putting a few policemen in jail for brutality. Likewise, financial fraud will not be

the Era of Financial Scandals

pavlito geshos
Illustrations
Dave Crosland

resolved by putting a few scandalous CEOs in jail. Thus, the recently exposed financial scandals are just the "tip of the iceberg" so to speak.

Enron

In the case of the great "energy clearinghouse" known as Enron, a series of contracts and purchase agreements for energy commodities were created, some real, some fictional. These long-term contracts provided the basis for Enron to claim that revenue and profits were guaranteed. Behind these long-term contracts Enron deliberately underestimated costs and inflated the projected profit margins. Furthermore, a series of offshore special purpose partnerships, known as "off-balance-sheet" partnerships, were created to conceal debt and enabled CEOs to claim that the flow of money into Enron from a partnership was genuine commerce, when in fact it was a loan liability. The Justice Department Enron Task Force and the US Congress are investigating Citigroup and JP Morgan Chase investment banks for allegedly helping Enron cook its books. For huge fees, these banks willingly abetted improper accounting through shell companies which allowed Enron to restate loan liabilities as refunds on pre-pay energy transactions, and to declare loan interest payments as trading losses. Citigroup even advertised its shady accounting services as "structured

products" in a pamphlet available to corporate CEOs. Other investment banks and financial service companies are now being investigated too, such as Merrill Lynch, National Westminster Bank (a unit of the Royal Bank of Scotland), and Credit Suisse First Boston bank, for making the same type of deals with Enron and other companies.

These irregularities alone would be enough to indict Enron officials (and their co-conspirators). Yet the most outrageous mischief regarding Enron CEOs was their plan to deliberately leave their own employees holding the empty moneybag. Pension funds held in 401(k) plans were frozen so that employees could not sell their Enron shares when stock prices were high. Employees were forced to hold their shares while the CEOs, who knew that Enron was in trouble, bailed out and made a handsome profit. When the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) began an investigation of Enron's accounts in October 2001, the paper shredding at Arthur Andersen began in earnest.

Finally, it was Enron, the energy-trading giant, that was deeply involved in the great California electricity crisis of 1999. Enron took advantage of California's deregulation of the energy industry. Electricity consumers soon found out that their monthly electricity bills spiked to incredible levels. Be aware that price gauging is inflationary too.



Dynegy, Winstar and Adelphia

With a deliberate eye toward duping stock market investors, Dynegy energy group entered into agreements with co-conspirators to simultaneously buy and sell energy commodities in corresponding amounts. These were called "round-trip trades." Dynegy recorded the sales of massive volumes of energy to pad its revenue accounts, when in fact little or no transfer of energy and little or no transfer of funds ever took place. The US attorney general's office is investigating El Paso Corporation and Reliant Resources as co-conspirators of Dynegy in these round-trip trades. The whole rationale for this paper scam is to create the illusion of a healthy and expanding business so that shares of the company could be sold at inflated prices to unwary stock market investors.

The telecom industry is also being investigated for involvement in fraudulent, revenue padding schemes. In the telecom business this practice is called "fiber swaps." Various telecom companies rent the use of fiber optic or satellite networks from each other to pad accounting revenues. Winstar and Williams Communications Group are being investigated for this scam. In the case of Winstar, it appears that the fiber swap accounting scam was used to secure corporate loans. Lucent Technologies reportedly lost some \$600 million in bad loans to Winstar, based upon a false reporting of projected earnings from fiber swapping. Adelphia Communications used a variation on this paper scam by simply inventing imaginary customers. With each new reporting season, Adelphia would show an expanding customer base for its TV, cable, and Internet businesses. But they never showed the profitability of such sales and stock market analysts would assume that the company was growing its revenues. The expanding customer base was pure fiction but the dollars that investors paid for Adelphia stock were real. According to the Justice Department, the bankruptcy of Adelphia Communications was the fifth largest bankruptcy in US economic history. The company admits that it hid over \$2 billion in off-balance-sheet debt and victimized Adelphia shareholders to the tune of \$60 billion in investment losses since the company went public in 1996.

WORLDCOM

The creative accounting of WorldCom took a different and a more devastating approach to spinning the impression of a healthy business. WorldCom's scam focused on two victims: stock market investors and unsuspecting banks and bondholders. The company simply reported financial losses as capital investments. It hid these losses by reporting them as fictional payments on machinery and equipment, or purchases of other companies that would all have an asset and salvage value at liquidation. The scale of this deception is unprecedented. The total amount of money that was misreported as capital investment is about \$6.3 billion. So, in this WorldCom case, not only are investors the victims, but major banks now see that their loans have been reduced in value to only pennies on the dollar. Under the bankruptcy terms, it now appears that WorldCom's claim of \$107 billion in asset liquidation value will deflate to less than \$15 billion in value. This is less than half of its outstanding debt obligations of over \$41 billion owed to major banks and to corporate bondholders. The *Wall Street Journal* reported on July 23, 2002, that 40 percent of WorldCom investment assets were bogus. Financial journalists at the *New York Times* claim that this deceitful practice of "capitalizing operating expenses" is actually quite common, especially in the telecom industry. Thus, it is not an exaggeration to label WorldCom's predicament as the tip of a fraudulent accounting iceberg. Finally, WorldCom's employees are also victims. As of summer 2002 some 17,000 WorldCom employees have been laid off and probably even more workers will lose their jobs when predators and creditors devour WorldCom.

Raided Pension Funds

The most ominous form of employee rip-off widely used on the corporate accounting books relates to employee pension funds. For years, under the rainbow of climbing stock market prices, corporations padded employee pension fund records with "projected" paper profits from appreciation of stocks, and corporate money that was legally supposed to be given to employee pension funds was withheld. Instead, these mandated corporate contributions were shoveled into the

earnings column of the corporate accounting books. Corporations were also misleading Wall Street investors who viewed these misallocated funds as a growth in earnings. The downward restatement of the actual value of corporate pension funds remains the most massive hidden part of the fraud iceberg today. This means that the dimensions of corporate accounting fraud, relating to pension funds, will soon increase astronomically. So far, the US government agency that regulates private corporate pensions reported over \$111 billion in losses due to raided pension funds. And this is a conservative estimate. The real level of loss on raided corporate pension funds will eventually prove to be much, much higher. If you think that you are shocked by the scale of widespread corporate accounting fraud now, you haven't seen anything yet. An entire generation of older workers faces a coming retirement crisis.

Getting Away with it: The Code of Silence

How could these massive scandals go undetected and remain unpunished for so long? The massive number and size of the recent financial scandals means that the news media could no longer ignore or hide the problems from the public. But how could banks, auditors, government regulators, financial analysts, investors, and the media be so blind as to allow these types of



scams to continue? How did virtually everyone miss something so big for so long?

The simple fact is that these scams were not missed at all. These scams were deliberately overlooked by authorities who did not want to see them. Furthermore, attempts to expose these scams were suppressed by either media or formally squashed by the US legal system. The crisis of Enron and WorldCom are two examples of deliberate suppression of the information that the public had a right to know. WorldCom investors tried to bring a case against the company for accounting abuses as early as 1999, but all investor lawsuits were dismissed. In the world of financial analysis, the dominant financial journalism outlets suppressed all negative press regarding Enron. Some journalists who tried to break the news about Enron's predicament were fired. Those financial analysts who cooperated in pumping up the stock prices of scandalous corporations have never been punished even when it can be shown that they too profited from their intentionally distorted journalistic reports. The whitewash and suppression campaign continues even now. The US congressional committees discussing corporate accounting abuses are closed to the public while accounting lobbyists are welcome to present their case and influence the direction of so-called accounting reform. The scale of wrongdoing, negligence, collusion, and unprofessional activity that enabled and concealed these scandals is staggering. Collecting all the guilty people involved would probably fill a large sports stadium. Even so, as of this writing (summer 2002), not one current or former official of Enron has been arrested or indicted.

The Anti-Capitalist Movement

In August 2002, at an address given at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, protesters called Vice President Dick Cheney "a corporate criminal." Beyond personal name-calling, how can we, as anti-capitalist thinkers and anti-globalization activists, take advantage of the national disillusionment created by these financial scandals? How can we inspire a national debate on capitalism itself?

We should raise demands to defend wages (and fixed incomes) from government plans to allow the US dollar to devalue and thus permit inflation again. This could be done as a part of the "living wage" movement that already exists today. We need a real sliding scale for payments of wages and incomes in response to inflation. But don't we already have this with cost of living adjustments? No, not really, if you consider that the US government is the most devious

cooker of books when it comes to reporting national economic statistics (such as GDP, the consumer price index, and the national unemployment rate). US government accounting is a political scam waiting to be exposed. Already this year, the US government has had to admit that it miscalculated the GDP for 2001 and was forced to declare that three out of four quarters of 2001 were officially in recession. Uncle Sam cooks his economic books too, so he can pay back debts with cheaper dollars.

We should also raise the demand for consumer debt repudiation. Consumer bankruptcies are at record levels, never seen before in US economic history. Recently passed legislation now mandates that individual consumers cannot automatically escape their debts by simply declaring bankruptcy. Only corporations have that automatic right under present US bankruptcy laws. This alone shows the class bias of the US government and its legal system. The American people can see this blatant unfairness even though they have not yet taken to the streets to protest it. Debt relief is no longer just an issue of the global south.

We should also raise the demand for full and guaranteed retirement funding for retiring workers, especially for those who have had their corporate pension funds raided to prop up their company's earnings. We should take a stand on the coming retirement crisis.

We should raise a demand for full employment as a rallying cry for young people who are trying to enter the economy and earn an honest living. Reduce the workweek to create jobs and hire more young people. Demand funds for public works projects, not corporate bailouts or military adventures. Such public works projects would create real jobs that help grow our economy from the bottom up instead of propping up crooked corporations and parasite war industries.

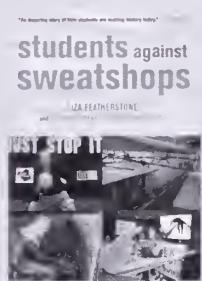
We are in an era of financial scandals simply because global capitalism's profit-taking ability is rapidly contracting. The 1990s myth of ever-expanding capitalist markets had to eventually end. There is no cost-cutting or job-cutting strategy that will bring capitalism back to a state of profitable, healthy expansion. There is no new and improved IMF bailout loan that will cure the permanent debtor economies of Argentina, Uruguay, or Brazil. There is no new law against corporate white-collar crime that will prevent future financial scandals. Ivan Boesky, Michael Milken, and Charles Keating were punished for their white-collar crimes in the 1980s, but this did not prevent the scandals we see today. Capitalism itself is the criminal and it promises to be a repeat offender, generation after generation. ★

Students Against Sweatshops

By Liza Featherstone and United Students Against Sweatshops
Verso, 2002
www.versobooks.com

In this worthy primer on one of the major players in the anti-sweatshop movement, journalist Liza Featherstone does a very good job of distilling the history of United Students Against Sweatshops and the conflicts and tensions that have challenged it along the way, both from within and without. Perhaps best of all, she supplements her very readable narrative with poignant accounts contributed by both student and worker activists, documenting particular campaigns and tactics, some even written from within occupied campus buildings, corporate megastores and Mexican maquiladoras.

While recognizing the significant impact USAS has had on corporations and colleges across the country and



around the world, Featherstone, a frequent contributor to *The Nation*, *Newsday* and the *Washington Post*, also forthrightly addresses the serious obstacles that have threatened the movement's development. USAS and other groups have come under fire for fighting on behalf of workers in sweatshops thousands of miles away while neglecting those at home. Many critics have also pointed out that the social justice movement is largely comprised of white, highly privileged college students, who tend to marginalize issues concerning race, class and gender and fail to realize that all forms of repression and exploitation are integrally connected. Featherstone correctly acknowledges that USAS and its counterparts have taken strides to remedy these weaknesses, particularly by adding living wage campaigns to their focus, but she often seems willing to interpret any initiative, however isolated, as a sign that such barriers are being overcome. While such hopefulness is welcome, and necessary, it could be construed not only as overly optimistic, but also as an example of the dismissiveness toward race, class and gender issues that the movement itself is often accused of. In any case, it reveals how fragile the ties of solidarity that are critical to future of the global justice

movement still are.

Overall, the tone throughout this slim volume is very measured and journalistic, neither too dire or desperate nor too hopeful or ambitious. While the absence of impassioned rhetoric is generally quite refreshing, it is also frustrating, as larger considerations, such as what's at stake and the state of the global justice movement at large, are left untouched. The realities of the post-September 11 world are not even mentioned until the conclusion, and then only given cursory speculation. This omission seems rather odd, since the implications of activism and dissent after September 11 will deeply impact the future of USAS and similar organizations. But a thorough discussion of this new, rapidly changing, reality, while crucial, is understandably beyond the scope of this book. *Students Against Sweatshops*, though an important testament to the accomplishments of an extraordinary organization, is only the first chapter. More significantly, it's a reminder that "keeping our eyes on the prize" means not only watching where we're going, but also remembering where we've been.

-Susan Chenelle



Humanitarian Criminals

the Strange Logic of U.N. Sanctions Against Iraq

Brian Hull
Jane McBee

Most Americans have probably never heard of Bert Sacks or the Reverend Randall Mullins. As the images of heroic firefighters hoisting a flag over the remains of the World Trade Center have become etched into the minds of every American, images of these two humanitarian heroes have remained conspicuously absent. Their tireless efforts to bring medical and humanitarian aid to suffering Iraqis haven't elicited media praise or accolades, but have instead been rewarded with \$10,000 fines issued by the U.S. government's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

The fines were issued because of alleged violations of sanctions regulations that prohibit U.S. citizens from traveling to Iraq or carrying out monetary transactions within Iraq. Though the OFAC fines issued were \$10,000, current U.S. Treasury laws would allow civilian penalties of up to \$250,000 per violation. OFAC has the authority to bring criminal charges of up to 12 years in prison and a one-million dollar fine.

After becoming aware of the fine, Sacks, a retired electronics and software engineer who was the first U.S. citizen issued such a citation, quickly went about trying to raise \$10,000. However he had no intention of paying the fine, and instead planned on putting the money towards more aid to the Iraqi people. Sacks called for 1,000 people to send \$10 to *Voices in the Wilderness*, the humanitarian aid organization that he has worked with since their beginnings in 1996.

Kathy Kelly, co-founder of the organization, says that within ten days they had raised the proposed \$10,000. Kelly says the swiftness of the response was unprecedented for them. Now *Voices in the Wilderness* is preparing to send their forty-third delegation to bring humanitarian aid such as aspirin, antibiotics, and clean needles to Iraq in violation of the U.N. endorsed sanctions. And instead of being destined for U.S. Treasury coffers, the \$10,000 worth of medical supplies will be taken to a diarrhea clinic in Basra, Iraq to treat people suffering from water borne diseases.

Water borne diseases have by far been the deadliest killer of Iraqi citizens after 12 years of what the U.N. calls "The most comprehensive, total sanctions that have ever been imposed on a country." According to United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) surveys released in 1999, Gulf War bombings of civilian infrastructure and the sanctions have contrib-

uted to the deaths of approximately one-half million children under the age of five in the period between 1991 and 1998. And, as Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) documents demonstrate in a Thomas Nagy article in *The Progressive*, the epidemic water borne illnesses were actually intentional.

A DIA document entitled "Iraq Water Treatment Vulnerabilities," dated January 22, 1991, shows how the sanctions would prevent Iraq from providing clean water to its citizenry. Because intelligence officials were aware that Iraq depended on the importation of specialized equipment and chlorine to purify its water supply, an embargo on these items would predictably result in a shortage of pure drinking water for much of the population. The document goes on to state "This could lead to increased incidences, if not epidemics, of disease."

Another document, issued in March 1991, observed that the increase in communicable diseases was directly linked to poor sanitary conditions resulting from the war. The report acknowledged a World Health Organization/UNICEF study that found Iraq's quantity of potable water to be less than five percent of its original supply, and that there are no operational water and sewage treatment plants. It was also acknowledged that children are particularly affected by these diseases.

Becoming aware of U.S. involvement in destroying civilian infrastructure was the catalyst that inspired Sacks's commitment to bring aid to Iraq. Sacks says that reading a *New England Journal of Medicine* article, published in September of 1992, drove home for him the graveness of the situation developing in Iraq. "After reading that I got very, very upset," Sacks said. "Consider our Vietnam Memorial Wall which commemorates the death of 50,000 soldiers and lists them each by name. This is a country one-tenth of our size in which 50,000 children under the age of five died in eight months during 1991. Now, if anyone reads that and isn't upset by that, I really don't know how to respond to them."

The Pentagon-acknowledged deliberate bombing and destruction of electric generating facilities during the Gulf War was also linked to the outbreak in water borne diseases that followed the war. "The destruction of the electric infrastructure immediately crippled water treat-

ment and sewage facilities, and irrigation systems which all rely on electricity to run their pumps," Sacks said. Because these conditions continue to kill 5,000 Iraqi children per month, Sacks doesn't believe he has a moral obligation to abide by the dictates of the sanctions. In his letter responding to OFAC demands for the fine's payment, Sacks defends his objections to the sanctions by citing what he considers violations of international law.

And he isn't alone in making such assertions. Kate Pflaumer, a former U.S. district attorney, said Geneva Convention Article 54 demonstrates how the infrastructure bombing was a violation of international law. The convention was adopted in 1949 to protect victims of war. Quoting the document directly, Pflaumer said, "It is prohibited to attack, destroy, or render useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population and these objects include drinking water and irrigation works." A U.N. report has similarly found deaths caused by the sanctions "indicate grave breaches of humanitarian laws and are unacceptable." Prepared by a special U.N. commission on human rights, the report recognizes that "the country has experienced a shift from relative affluence to massive poverty."

Kathy Kelly's memories about making *Greetings from Missile Street*, a Voices in the Wilderness produced film, provide a glimpse into what this massive poverty means for the average Iraqi. The film was shot in Basra, in a neighborhood that had been bombed in January of 1999. Shot in the summer, the film documents the everyday life of locals. An Iraqi family hosted the film crew in their home, as daily temperatures rose close to 120 degrees and electricity was unavailable half the time. "Remarkably, our team of five had to spend more money on two-days worth of bottled water than the family had for the entire month," Kelly said.

When asked how they, as Americans, have been treated in Iraq, Kelly is unhesitant. "We've next to never encountered outright hostility," said Kelly. "We've witnessed frustration and people have asked 'Why does your government want to do this to us?' We've seen people who've lost their loved ones, people unable to find work at their profession and forced to drive a taxi for years, and it's amazing that they are so forgiving and dignified and able to distinguish between us and our government. We don't come back wondering 'why do they hate us so much?' We come back wondering 'why do they love us so much?'"

Meanwhile, Sacks and Reverend Mullins, have not been given the option to defend their actions before a judicial body. Instead, the OFAC has asked them to pay the fine without a hearing. "A person alleged to have committed the same violation with respect to other countries, Cuba for example, is entitled to such a hearing," Sacks said. Because of this, Sacks, in his letter replying to the OFAC, asserted that he is not receiving equal treatment under the law or due process of law, which are violations of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Sacks also believes that U.S. postal regulations that prohibit the sending of anything valuable to Iraq deny a basic right of Americans to join in acts of mercy. Sacks said a friend of his attempted to send chemotherapy medicines to a sister in Baghdad who was dying of cancer. The package was sent back with the notice: "We cannot send anything of value to Iraq." The sister died.

Ultimately, Sacks believes his case is part of the larger question of whether international law will be respected. "The central question in the world today is whether there will be a sense of fairness and justice or whether the strongest will dominate," said Sacks. "It comes down to if you imagine yourself on the other side would you consider this fair. America's excessive consumption of oil, its refusal to abide by the Kyoto accords, its unwillingness to support the International Criminal Court despite 100 other nations joining, our recent rejection of the anti-ballistic missile treaty, all of these center around that question. It's the old high school conflict between the bully and his classmates and we're the bully." ★

Voices in the Wilderness can be contacted at 1460 West Carmen Avenue, Chicago, IL 60640; (773) 784-8065; www.vitw.org.

All the DIA documents mentioned in the article were found at the Department of Defense's GulfLink site. To see declassified documents: go to www.gulflink.osd.mil.

Que Se Vayan Todos:
Argentina's Popular Uprising
An Eyewitness Account
of the Financial Meltdown and
Ongoing Grassroots Rebellion.
John Jordan and Jennifer Whitney
artactivism@gm.apc.org



The American Civil Rights Movement, The South African Anti-Apartheid Movement, the uprisings that crumbled Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe, and the antiwar movement during the Vietnam era — all of these have in common the fact that they were ignited by movements comprised of citizens from all classes and social backgrounds who stood up for their beliefs and protested for real change. In John Jordan and Jennifer Whitney's fascinating journalistic account of Argentina's Tin Pot Insurrection, we see how rising interest rates, spiraling unemployment, and shortages in basic necessities resulted in a rebellion that "exploded in the streets" with Argentineans saying, "enough!"

Like a "virulent virus of hope," Jordan and Whitney report how "people standing on their balconies banging saucepans" and "demanding to an end to neoliberal policies and corrupt government" brought down the Argentine government resulting in not only the resignation of Argentina's president, but also several of his successors. The authors write that "Argentina was now set on a major high-speed collision course with the needs and desires of its people on one side, and the demands of the IMF, the inept government, and global capitalism on the other." Jordan and Whitney document a crowd of protesters who enter a bank to destroy ATM machines in an effort to demonstrate their frustration with the banking system, and they note that many of them were men in business suits or women in high heels. They comment that one protester looks like a soccer mom and each thinks that "this could be my mom." They also write that the protest takes place in a country with a long sordid history of missing citizens who had the audacity to question governmental policies. In fact, there are 30,000 Argentineans who are presently unaccounted for and presumed dead as a result of past government oppression of dissenters. Many of the population who are leading or participating in the protests have parents or siblings who are among those who have vanished during the past few decades.

The authors bring to light an example how the capitalists exploit workers by funneling profits to outside sources claiming the company unprofitable and unable to continue operating. They describe a factory that had been occupied by employees after they were informed by management that it was no longer able to pay their wages due to low profit margins. The employees chose to run the concern by themselves and "showed that with two days worth of production, (they) were able to pay the wages of all the workers for that month exposing the realities of where the company profits were really going."

The example that the protesters set in Argentina shows us there is a way to bring change, and it provides us a glimpse into a different world where the status quo does not have to be the only way. If citizens organize and implement new ideas that benefit society instead of just a few ranking members of the capitalist system, a truly new world order can be realized. Jordan and Whitney write, "One day we may look back at the absurdity of the present and remember how the people of Argentina inspired us to demand the impossible, and invited us to build new worlds which spread outwards from our own neighborhoods." People of the world...take note.

-Tim Siniard

WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST THE ECONOMICS OF SEX TRAFFICKING

Kari Lydersen

Where international trafficking in women and children is concerned, slavery never really went away.

Today, according to the most conservative estimates from the Department of Justice, over 50,000 women and children a year are trafficked into the U.S. from developing nations, and roughly 700,000 are trafficked around the world. Non-governmental organizations, for their part, put the number much higher, at up to 100,000 trafficked into the U.S. and one to two million around the world.

How these women and children end up being trafficked varies according from person to person, and situation to situation. Some are kidnapped, and some are sold by family members desperate for a quick infusion of cash. Most are deceived by promises of decent jobs abroad as waitresses, models, seamstresses or nannies.

The Department of Justice considers human trafficking to be the third most profitable enterprise engaging in by organized crime, right behind drug and weapons trafficking. Some reports have even predicted that it will become even more lucrative than the drug trade within the next five years.

As economies decline around the world, and the U.S. and European countries tighten their immigration laws, the trafficking of women and children for sex work and other purposes is likely to become even more pervasive. Despite significant international attention to the problem, traffickers still operate with near total impunity and turn enormous profits.

"There are a lot of root causes for trafficking," says Veena Iyer, the asylum and trafficking services coordinator for the Midwest Immigrant and Human Rights Center. "There are economic reasons around the world that make people vulnerable," adds Iyer. "But ...

we also have to understand that there is a lot of money in sex trafficking. And there are mechanisms that allow traffickers in other countries to bring women here and that allow people here to exploit them."

The Center for Women's Global Leadership has identified countries as varied as Russia, Ukraine, Poland, the Czech Republic, Thailand, Burma, Nepal, Bangladesh, Brazil, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Nigeria and Benin as prime sources of trafficked women, who are usually brought to wealthier and more industrialized nations — including the U.S.

Trafficked women also often end up in American territories such as the Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa, where demand from tourists and others can be high and regulation is lax. A report from the European-based International Organisation for Migration notes that women from developing countries tend to be older, while those from Central and Eastern Europe tend to be younger and better educated.

Once women have been brought into the U.S. or Europe — often by traffickers of their own ethnicity and even from their own community — they are typically isolated and threatened physically and mentally.

Women abducted or coerced from their native countries rarely speak English, and their captors have perfected the art of intimidation by regaling them with horror stories about life in America and capture by police or the INS.

Traffickers may also force the women to stay in their service through astronomical "debts" for travel, lodging and food "expenses."

"They'll charge \$15,000 for travel from China," said Iyer. "There's no way [the women] can ever pay it off."

In Chicago, for example, police and INS agents recently busted several sex trafficking operations. In one case, a Chinatown storefront served as a cover for a prostitution business. In another, a Russian immigrant with alleged ties to the Chechen mob was coercing Latvian women to the U.S. with promises of \$60,000-a-year dancing jobs. When they arrived, he forced them into sex work by taking their passports and beating and threatening them.

In Florida, it was proven that young women from Mexico were being deceived about job opportunities and forced into prostitution. In Israel, four Eastern European prostitutes recently met with their death while locked in a hotel room that was torched by a religious fanatic.

Seeking remedy

The trade in women and children has continued to grow despite significant efforts on the part of the U.S. government and other Western nations to stem the tide of trafficking in the last several years.

Holland, Italy, Russia and the European Union as a whole now have governmental bodies designated to combat trafficking, many of them working in conjunction with international organizations to try to address and combat the scope of the problem.

On International Women's Day in 1998, President Clinton signed an executive order vowing to fight trafficking, resulting in the passage of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act in 2000.

In addition to calling for prosecution of individuals and organizations involved in trafficking, the act mandates assistance for victims of trafficking including the availability of public aid benefits. Even more importantly,

the act created a class of visas known as "T" visas for victims of "extreme trafficking," which covers sex trafficking. These visas allow the victims to stay in the U.S. for three years, after which time they are eligible for permanent legal residency, provided they cooperate with law enforcement efforts to nab the traffickers.

In 2002, the first year that the T visas are available, a total of 5,000 of them will be made available to women, a number that advocates hope to increase in the near future.

"There's always room for improvement but it's a good first step," says Iyer. "Part of the requirement is that they have to cooperate with law enforcement. We just want law enforcement to recognize that these people are traumatized. They might not be able to just sit right down and discuss everything they've gone through."

Local and Domestic Trafficking

While international sex trafficking gets the bulk of governmental and media attention, sex trafficking on local and domestic levels is also extremely prevalent.

Advocates have noted that American women fall into the hands of trafficking groups who move them between cities and around the country, forcing them to engage in prostitution or sex work. Though these women are still in their home country, it may be just as hard for them to escape or leave as it would be for an immigrant. Like international victims, U.S. women and children are often literally kept in physical captivity, locked in rooms and beaten and otherwise abused if they attempt to flee.

"There seems to be a lot of control of women and girls at all levels of the industry," says Jody Raphael, of the Women and Girls

Prostitution Project at the Center for Impact Policy Research based in Chicago. "For example, police who pick women up from the 'stroll' on Halsted and North/Clybourn (west of downtown Chicago) say a lot of the girls are from Milwaukee or Tennessee. They're being moved around. It helps them avoid detection and gives the customers a variety of new girls. From our grassroots studies, I'm learning to no longer make such a distinction between local and international trafficking."

Like international victims, many low-income American women are recruited with false promises.

"Men will go to recruit girls at shopping malls, places like that, they'll find girls who have run away from home," explains Raphael. "They'll say you can earn a lot of money, it will be really glamorous, they'll tell a girl she's beautiful and does she want to be in a movie or make a music video. Then they'll drive her to Chicago and not let her leave. She'll be watched day and night by these goons. This happens with more frequency than people want to admit."

Solutions Ahead?

While advocates support the Trafficking Victims Act and current law enforcement efforts against trafficking, they insist that these efforts are still not adequate to the task, particularly in terms of the staffing necessary to truly combat the scope of the situation.

"The vice squad [in Chicago] is really under-resourced," says Samir Goswami, a policy specialist dealing with prostitution issues for the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. "They have only 10 or 15 people, and they're working on gambling and other things as well as trafficking."

Goswami also notes that investigating international trafficking rings based in tight-knit ethnic communities can be extremely difficult.

"If this is happening in a Polish neighborhood or in Chinatown or in an Indian neighborhood, someone who doesn't speak the language or know the culture can't just go in and start asking questions," he says.

Advocates insist that addressing and combatting global and local poverty, repression and the nearly-universal low social status of women are the only true ways to end trafficking.

And on a more immediate level, say those involved in anti-trafficking efforts, there is a strong need for increased outreach to victims and availability of financial and social resources for women and children victimized by traffickers.

Despite the Trafficking Victims Act, advocates also note that law enforcement and immigration officials are far from sensitive to the situations of trafficking victims, and many continue to end up in jail or immigration detention after being arrested.

"We need systemic change that alleviates policies that are criminalizing people caught up in prostitution," says Goswami. "Pimps and traffickers should be bearing the brunt of the criminal justice system. Women who end up in jail should have other alternatives developed for them."

Goswami also notes that while there is a demand for women sex workers, economics and other factors will always dictate that there is a supply.

"We also need to look at the cultural aspects, including [hyper-] masculinity" he states. "Why is it that so many men are buying women?" ★

The Global Citizen: A Guide to Creating an International Life and Career For Students, Professionals, Retirees, and Families
Elizabeth Kruempelmann
Ten Speed Press, 2002
www.tenspeedpress.com



The Global Citizen is an excellent resource for making your globe trotting fantasies come true. It's also heavy on helping you to understand your role as a global citizen and the responsibilities involved. It contains a wealth of wisdom and resources to help you figure out where you want to go, the best way to approach getting there, how to pay for it, finding work, and coping with life in another culture.

The second chapter walks you through an assessment of your cross-cultural awareness. What cultures are your personality most suited to? Where do your biases lay? This chapter makes the book. Americans rarely ask these questions or think they need to ask these questions before they go abroad. This book is victorious in that regard — "get a job overseas" books rarely give you the opportunity to assess yourself in this fashion, or suggest that you should.

The fundraising chapters of this book are excellent. While it's not realistic that you'll raise enough money for your anti-malarial pills for your trip to Malawi (let alone your airfare) by having a garage sale, the travel grants and scholarship section has myriad ways to get the funds to go. This section is extremely well researched, and makes you realize that anyone who gets it together can trapse the globe.

The international jobs section provides some leads, but readers of this magazine would not find them to be of a lot of help. Particularly, and contrary to what she suggests, the World Bank is not a great group to work for and does not work to eradicate global poverty. Jobs at Citibank, anyone? Really, though, getting a job abroad is like getting a job in the States. Network, make your resume sparkle, use the classifieds if you have to, and spend as much time looking for a job as you would spend working. A book won't ever be that helpful in finding someone specific to work for. In my experience you'll have better luck using the local English newspaper(s) than by using any of the websites she suggests.

In short, this is the most comprehensive book I've seen on the subject of building an international life. The contacts listed inside are very useful and valuable, if not lucrative. While for spiritual and sociological redemption on the subject I tend to turn to Pico Iyer's *Global Soul: Jet Lag, Shopping Malls, and the Search for Home*, this book is sure to remain my most referenced book on being international. It is highly recommended for thinking through your global aspirations.
-Dane Voorhees

Hunter/Gatherer
CrimethInc. Workers Collective
www.crimethinc.com

If Nietzsche had spent time in the Paris Commune, reading a copy of *Catcher in the Rye*, he might have envisioned something to the tune of CrimethInc's newsprint style publication *Hunter/Gatherer*.



Written from a somewhat post modern median between Nihilist and Anarchist thought, *Hunter/Gatherer* is a literal cocktail of modern folk stories, journalism, and (anti) history. Though the practical applications of some of the social projects presented by CrimethInc may be somewhat dubious for those not yet ready to renounce modern social structures, oppressive and uplifting alike, the underlying message of thinking for yourself will not be lost. *Hunter/Gatherer* challenges the reader not to be a passive recipient of information, but to rethink their own thoughts on what makes up the social fabrics of society.

It confronts and disputes the idea of science as a linear development. Touching on themes like world exploration, technology, medicine, and even history, their hypothesis is that science can ebb and flow, and that in humankind's million years of existence it was only recently that the sciences were for the most part something that is received by people, and not participated in. The sciences were passed down by tradition through folklore and oral history, and in some cases the folk sciences even surpassed existing developments, but have not held place in the linear thought of development, so have been all but forgotten. An example of this could be aspirin, which is basically just tree bark, but since bark doesn't come in a pill form and plastic bottle, taking it to relieve pain would be dismissed as an inferior, outdated practice.

Hunter/Gatherer reviews modern day folk technologies and disputes the idea of technologies holding a one product, one purpose rule. Accounts are offered of an automobile engine turned into a musical instrument, and plastic bags and duct tape turned into heated homes for the homeless, with the help of office building exhaust vents. The idea of art as a tool for social development is also explored; through experiments like impromptu art galleries. In one case, a giant plastic teddy bear is inflated, and then removed, with the idea of creating a stagnation vacuum to be filled by an artistic free flow of ideas; a social experiment built on the medical use of inflating a balloon in a closed artery, and then releasing it to allow blood flow. "It had become an empty place, a space of possibility, of potential where once clogged arteries now flowed with life's blood."

At first glance *Hunter/Gatherer* might seem somewhat uninviting to those not already familiar with the school of thought that is CrimethInc. Its goals are somewhat ambiguous — something along the lines of "dismantle capitalism from the bottom up, and then see what happens". *Hunter/Gatherer* and the *D.I.Y. Guide II* may seem a bit too self conscious of what they are trying to be for some. But for those with an open mind bored with conventional political and social thought, you can expect to be inspired and perhaps come out with some beautiful ideas of your own.

-Joshua L. Root

On Globalization

George Soros
PublicAffairs
www.publicaffairsbooks.com

In his new book, mega-philanthropist George Soros says he was spurred to set down his thoughts on globalization by what he calls the "unwitting alliance" between antiglobalization activists on the Left and market fundamentalists on the far Right. The fact that he opens

with this reductive and ill-informed premise is almost cause enough to dismiss the book altogether. However, if one presses on, there are some ideas and insights worth the effort.

First, Soros argues that international institutions like the IMF and the WTO can be fixed, and should be supplemented with other far-reaching arrangements that would facilitate the more equitable distribution of wealth around the world. He contends that globalization has exacerbated the inequities between the world's rich and poor because "[t]he development of our international institutions has not kept pace with the development of international financial markets and our political arrangements have lagged behind the globalization of the economy." Furthermore, Soros insists that when projects funded by international aid and philanthropic initiatives like those of his Open Society foundations fail, it is largely due to weak and corrupt governments or poorly conceived or executed projects, i.e., nothing worth questioning the legitimacy of global capitalism itself about.

To sidestep these pitfalls, he proposes a system of international aid where all countries would be allocated "special drawing rights" or SDRs. Rich countries could donate their SDRs to poor countries, which could then apply those funds to pre-approved projects and organizations that have met certain quality control standards. Poor countries could use their own SDRs to stabilize their money supply. Amid all of Soros's economic jargon, complete with charts and graphs, the most difficult concept for the non-economist to grasp is that SDRs are essentially money created out of thin air. The powers that be collectively decide that there is money, and there is money. The fact that this is so and yet poverty exists on the scale that it does today is baffling.

For those of us on the global justice left, the real reason to consider Soros's concise treatise is that it offers insight into what happens inside those international forums, when they manage to occur, while we're protesting outside. According to Soros, when he suggests his modest proposals to his fellow elite, he is scoffed at. The idea that we should let anything but the market govern the distribution of wealth is still anathema among many, an arrogant and selfish narrow-mindedness which Soros condemns.

In the end, however, he still argues that, thanks in part to the questions raised by those concerned with global justice, changes have been made to international institutions like the IMF and WTO that will make them kinder and gentler; we just have to be patient and allow them to work. Likewise, Soros admits that the projects he and his society of benevolent billionaires fund will sometimes go awry from time to time, as they did so catastrophically in Russia. That's to be expected of any experimental attempt addressing so many complicated factors, he says. The bottom line, however, is that in the meantime, people die. Millions of men, women, and children go without adequate food, clean water, quality education, accessible medical care, and a safe place to live every day. This is unacceptable, and while it's nice to see that someone with great wealth and good intentions has dedicated himself to doing something about it, it's our job to keep telling him and his fellow elite, that their efforts thus far are not remotely good enough.

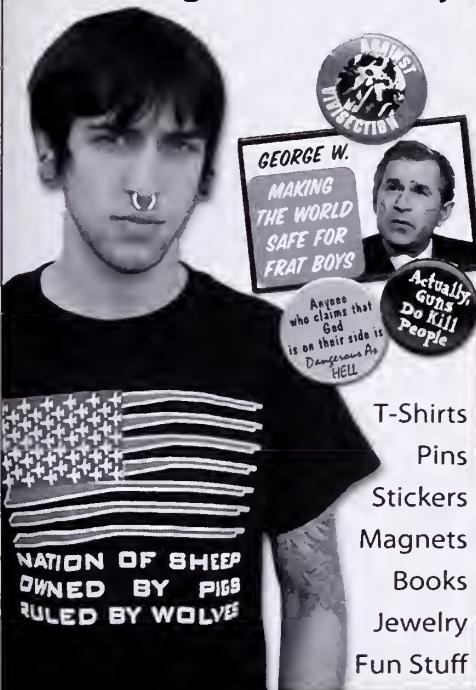
-Susan Chenele

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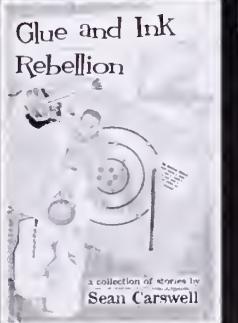


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Fundamentalism

knockin' on doors to remove basic rights

Upon moving to Ypsilanti, Michigan, it didn't take long for me to hear about its human rights ordinance. Thirty miles west of Detroit, wedged between upscale Ann Arbor and suburban Dearborn, Ypsilanti is a racially diverse working-class town of 30,000 that gained some notoriety four years ago. In 1998, the city of Ypsilanti passed a landmark human rights ordinance that provided protection from discrimination based on "race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, having a disability, familial status, educational association, source of income, height or weight." This ordinance protects residents from discrimination in jobs, membership in labor unions, and access to housing or other goods and services. Other local and county governments such as Tacoma, Washington, Westbrook, Maine, Allentown, Pennsylvania, and Miami-Dade County, Florida have passed similar kinds of laws. In fact, numerous communities throughout the country have passed such protections.

These ordinances, though originally nondescript, quickly came under fire by the fundamentalist arm of the right wing, specifically for their protections from discrimination against gay people. Last June, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), a Washington, D.C.-based anti-discrimination organization, announced a massive nationwide effort to oppose right-wing anti-gay initiatives. In the past four years, Tacoma, Miami-Dade County, Allentown, and Ypsilanti have all experienced political battles over protecting anti-gay discrimination. Numerous cities in Michigan, Maine, and Texas have been the targets of divisive, fundamentalist-backed anti-gay campaigns. In Nevada, voters were confronted with a ballot initiative seeking to make a constitutional amendment that would ban same-sex marriage. Massachusetts and Oregon residents successfully defeated similar kinds of constitutional challenges that targeted gay residents.

Fundamentalist organizations such as the Christian Coalition and the American Family Association (AFA), which specifically target the gay community, along with some hastily formed local anti-gay organizations, have decided to press their socially conservative political agenda into the lives of local communities. Often these interventions come as slick, well-funded campaigns that pose as "civil rights" or "equal rights" campaigns.

An example of this kind of "local" organization is the Ypsilanti Citizens Voting Yes for Equal Rights not Special Rights in Michigan. This group is fully funded, except for a \$19 post office box, by former Domino's Pizza CEO, Tom Monaghan, an Ann Arbor, Michigan resident and private Catholic school owner, known for his support of school vouchers. Using public access laws, anti-discrimination oppo-

nents revealed that Monaghan funded over \$6500 for a petition drive that put an anti-gay initiative on the Ypsilanti ballot.

All of Monaghan's money was used to hire a number of paid signature gatherers for the petition; this is the extent of his "Ypsilanti-based" organization. Monaghan says that he doesn't hate gay people. "I don't hate the sinners, I hate the sin," he glibly remarked to the local media. His righteous indignation and his robust checking account have enabled him to push his private views onto the public ballot. Ypsilanti voters thought they had dealt with this issue four years ago.

"What gets me," remarked a spokesperson for the Ypsilanti Campaign for Equality (YCFE), the human rights group that has organized to oppose Monaghan's right-wing initiative, "is that one person can write a check for thousands of dollars and force the people to hold another election."

Supporters of these human rights ordinances and anti-discrimination laws believe that eliminating protections based on sexual orientation undermines protections for all of the groups listed in the human rights ordinances. Washtenaw County Circuit Court Judge Donald Shelton gave credence to this view in a ruling this August that would have thrown out the Ypsilanti anti-gay ballot initiative had his decision not been canceled by a higher court.

If a law that protects people from anti-gay discrimination is considered "special rights," as the Monaghan group would have it, then why aren't the other provisions in the law for protections against racist or sexist discrimination also considered "special rights?" Anti-gay right-wing groups such as the AFA have denied that their agendas include dismantling civil rights protections for people of color, women, immigrants, or persons with disabilities, but they cannot explain the obvious discrepancy. One suspects that they are hiding the real goals of their "Christian" agendas: equality only for white, native-born, Protestant, self-proclaimed straight men and submissive, straight women of similar religio-ethnic backgrounds. But why not give them the benefit of the doubt?

The explicit vehemence with which right-wingers and fundamentalist celebrities such as Monaghan, Paul Volle of the Maine Christian Coalition, and Anthony Verdugo of the Miami-Dade Christian Coalition verbally attack gay people and their supporters is disturbing. But even more disturbing is the violence their words inspire among fascist-minded members of their audience, such as the killing of Matthew Shepard in October 1998, and the effect their campaigns have on the targeted communities. In each of these campaigns, anti-dis-

Salesmen

words Joel Wendland
illustration Jerry Business

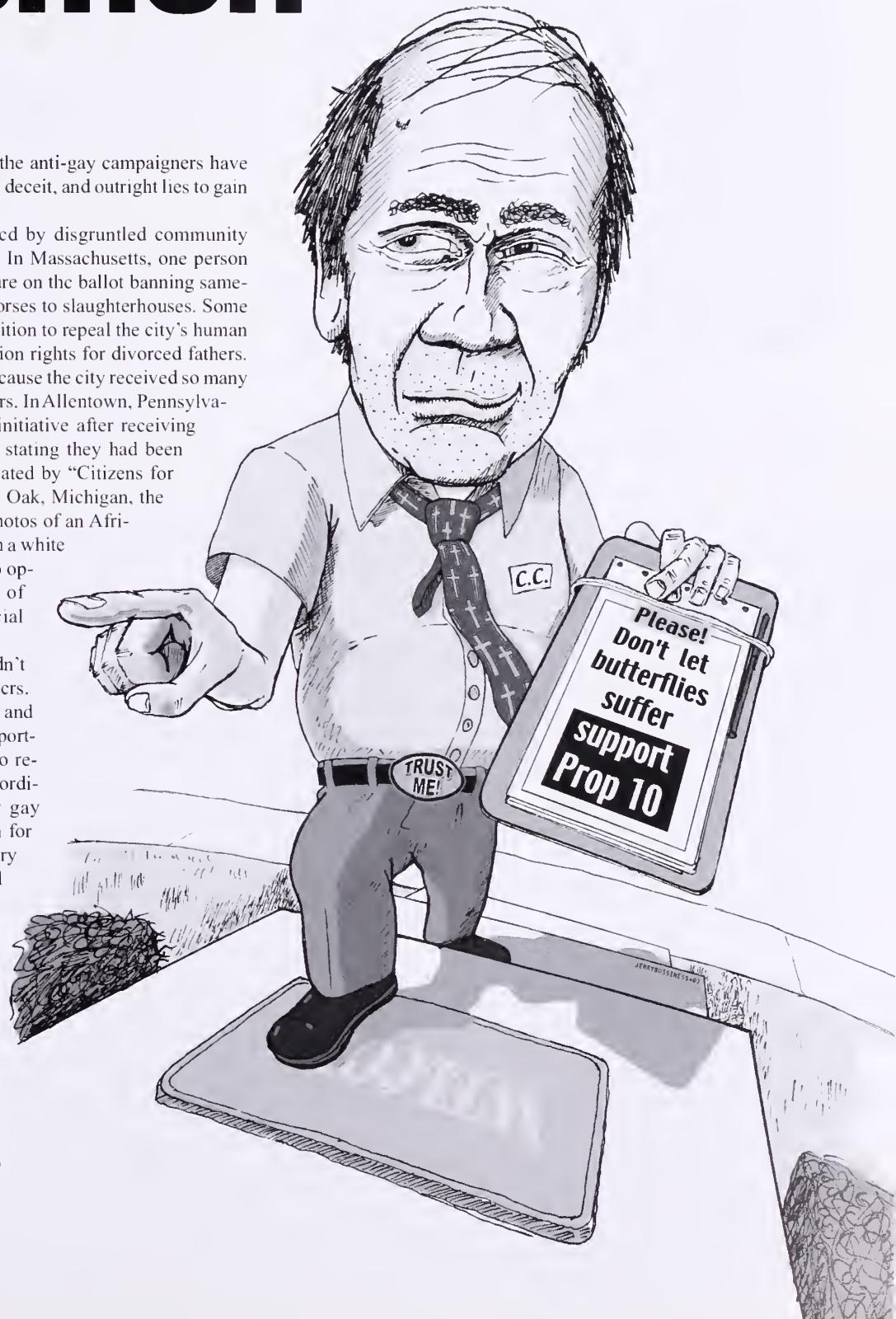
crimination activists have found that the anti-gay campaigners have used misleading statements, innuendo, deceit, and outright lies to gain local support.

Lawsuits and affidavits presented by disgruntled community members reveal a wide range of lies. In Massachusetts, one person was told that a petition to put a measure on the ballot banning same-sex marriage sought to ban sending horses to slaughterhouses. Some Ypsilanti residents were told that a petition to repeal the city's human rights ordinance would protect visitation rights for divorced fathers. This petition was nearly thrown out because the city received so many sworn statements from deceived signers. In Allentown, Pennsylvania, city officials discarded a ballot initiative after receiving over 600 declarations from residents stating they had been misled when signing a petition circulated by "Citizens for Traditional Values." In 2001 in Royal Oak, Michigan, the American Family Association used photos of an African-American man holding hands with a white man to alarm unsuspecting voters into opposition, a tactic oddly reminiscent of white racist campaigns against social equality.

Miami-Dade anti-gay activists didn't need to bother lying to potential voters. Leaders of the local Christian Coalition and the anti-gay Take Back Miami-Dade reportedly forged signatures on a petition to repeal the county's anti-discrimination ordinance that includes protections for gay people. They are under investigation for fraud. According to an August 18 story in the *Miami Herald*, three people and possibly a fourth have been arrested for wrongdoings related to gathering signatures.

In addition to fraudulent signature gathering practices, these Miami-Dade fundamentalist organizations have re-written history. According to the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), a national advocacy group for the gay and lesbian community, Florida religious conservatives perversely invoked the

continued next page



memory of Martin Luther King, Jr. in their condemnation of anti-discrimination efforts. Coretta Scott King, King's surviving spouse, dismissed these kinds of misuses of King's memory and indicated that her husband was deeply concerned about discrimination against gay people, according to an HRC spokesperson.

Deceiving the public has become so pervasive that the NGLTF has publicly asked state attorneys general to investigate how organizations obtain signatures for their petitions. It would seem that "traditional" values don't include honesty. "What does it say about their message when someone has to resort to these kinds of tactics . . . It undermines their message," remarks Jubi Headley, Director of Communications for the NGLTF. As this article goes to press, no state attorney general has responded to NGLTF's request, according to Headley.

But this isn't the first time that anti-civil rights petitioners have been accused of deception in the process of getting their proposals passed. Opponents of Proposition 209 in California and Initiative 200 in Washington in the late 1990s felt the backers of these anti-affirmative action referenda had persuaded large sections of the public into believing these measures sought to strengthen civil rights. A *Seattle Times* poll in July 1998 showed that only 49 percent of Washington residents opposed affirmative action, but that a majority supported the language of the initiative, which misleadingly asserted support for civil rights. It is extraordinary that opponents of anti-discrimination laws have to pose as proponents of civil rights in order to pass their agendas.

Why so much deception? One consequence of this sort of deception is that it immobilizes voters who usually feel sure about their views and ability to exercise their political franchise. Keeping as many voters out of the process as possible is the main tactic of many "traditional values" or "family values" organizations. A signer of the Ypsilanti anti-gay petition who declared in an affidavit that she had been deceived by the signature gatherer, later expressed her unwillingness to even be involved in the political process. She told a Ypsilanti

anti-discrimination activist that she no longer planned to vote in November. This tactic has also been likened to the more blatant effort by Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris to disfranchise nearly 60,000 minority voters, the majority of whom were expected to cast votes for Al Gore, just before the 2000 elections. These tactics are necessary because, as with affirmative action in Washington and human rights ordinances in each of the places listed here, most people support protecting themselves and their neighbors from discrimination — even when their religious or political views prevent them from approving of gay "lifestyles."

Because legal safeguards against violence and discrimination ultimately depend on the ability of democratic-minded people to unite their voices and to organize their votes, cynical and deceptive efforts by these well-funded right-wing groups pose a serious threat not just to the populations targeted by their moralistic agendas, but also to democracy itself.

Fortunately, most people respond with anger and the desire to take a stand against discrimination. Headley says that people are outraged in Miami-Dade as a result of the deception. That is not the only place where people have been aroused by anger. Many people deceived by the anti-gay organizations have joined human rights efforts and are using their free time and available resources to save the protections of minority and oppressed groups. They are volunteering for campaigns that support anti-discrimination laws and they are making sure they will be getting to the polls in November. They want diverse and open communities based on democratic principles, not closed and provincial stockades where political life is controlled and manipulated by wealthy, ultra-right organizations and individuals. ★

Suggested Web Resources:

- www.ycfe.org (the Ypsilanti Campaign for Equality)
- www.savedade.org (Vote No on Discrimination in Miami-Dade)
- www.ngltf.org (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force)
- www.hrc.org (Human Rights Campaign, a national advocacy group for the gay and lesbian community)

REVIEW

Legalize This! The Case for Decriminalizing Drugs

Douglas Husak

Verso, 2002

www.versobooks.com

In the public mind, even the most cursory reference to the decriminalization of narcotics conjures up frightening images of crack cocaine vending machines, state-sponsored shooting galleries, and weed-huffing Air Traffic controllers. Although voters might be willing to support the use of medical marijuana, any mention of dismantling the entire prohibition apparatus is met with suspicion, derision, or full-blown outrage. It would seem that decades of teeth-chattering drug war propaganda have created the culturally-constructed illusion that we have no real alternative other than the brute force tactics and unconstitutional measures which characterize US anti-narcotic efforts. Thus, the ongoing drug policy debate remains at an impasse.

Legalize This! by Douglas Husak, is one man's attempt to end this rhetorical gridlock. Don't be fooled by the book's irreverent title — this is neither a Libertarian rant against the therapeutic state nor an unrepentant Deadhead's poetic musings on the "holy herb." The highly engaging work limits itself to one provocative question; is there an existing moral, legal, and ethical justification for punishing those who imbibe mind-altering substances?

While this statement might seem self-evident, this Rutgers University law professor contends that those who challenge state and federal anti-narcotics statutes do their cause a disservice by focusing far too much on speculative legalization schemes as opposed to asking this very question. The distinction between promoting a particular strategy and merely urging the repeal of prohibition is far from insignificant. When activists argue that certain illicit drugs should be legalized, they appear as proponents of a specific policy which allows them to be fiercely criticized by drug war hawks. However, Husak believes that whether or not one can make a cogent argument about an alternative policy is not the issue at hand. In



essence, "we should not punish people simply because we are unable to demonstrate the benefits of not punishing them."

His definition of punishment includes the many "harm reduction" measures now gaining momentum. While these "diversionary" programs are certainly preferable to a lengthy jail stay, few will deny that coerced participation in a 12-step group constitutes an administrative sanction. Indeed, Husak believes that individuals who support these policies inadvertently support the state's right to prosecute, coerce, and incarcerate non-violent drug offenders. Thus, he considers "institutions like drug courts," little more than "a compromise for those who reject our punitive drug policies but cannot quite bring themselves (either intellectually or politically) to require the criminal justice system to leave drug users alone."

The key concept here is Justice, which we should not perceive as a "goal" our policies should try to achieve, but as a *constraint* that limits what we are allowed to do in pursuing our objectives. These limitations include the proviso that "punishment must not be imposed in the absence of a compelling justification." Thus, irrespective of what might transpire should controlled substances fall outside the jurisdiction of law enforcement, the Professor forcefully argues that "the arguments for criminalization are not sufficiently persuasive to justify the infliction of punishment."

To substantiate this assertion, *Legalize This!* contains a well-documented array of statistical, empirical, and clinical evidence which directly undermines the many dubious arguments used to justify incarcerating recreational drug users. Unfortunately, Husak warns that "economic and policy considerations" will most certainly "militate against a change in our drug policy." Indeed, from the cop on the beat to our nation's sprawling treatment-industrial-complex, billions are at stake should we retreat from this misguided secular crusade.

Regardless of these powerful forces, Husak believes that this pernicious form of social control will one day be likened by future historians to the "institution of slavery" and our nation's "despicable treatment of Native Americans." Does this mean the issue will be resolved in our lifetime? Perhaps not. However, Husak is to be commended for injecting a dose of sanity into a debate that is often mired in empty rhetoric, fuzzy thinking, and bizarre utopian schemes.

-Cletus Nelson

AND THE BEAT GOES ON

the creation of Earth Democracy

A few years ago, Vandana Shiva's voice joined the many who, with an entrancing, drum-like cadence, professed to the world, "This is what democracy looks like." The slogan became the all-call for protesters during the 1999 World Trade Organization protests in Seattle, an effort that Shiva helped coordinate and lead.

Recently, Shiva was back in Seattle, still beating the drum. Only the message she brought sounded more like a startling bang rather than a dull thud. Shiva, an activist, ecologist, physicist, writer, and director of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Natural Resource Policy, spoke to an impressive audience at the University of Washington. This time, there were no posters, no snappy chants. But Shiva made it clear that if she were to have a slogan this time around, it would sound more like, "This is what democracy *should not* look like."

In a time when democratically elected leaders make decisions on far-off islands and unapproachable mountains, behind locked doors and out of earshot of their constituents, Shiva is adamant: "Democracy is dead." In a time when leaders, under the guise of spreading democracy and freedom, engender acts of violence without their constituents' consent or knowledge, Shiva is unwavering: "Democracy is dead." In a time when democracy has been cornered and kicked by the free trade treaties and corporate politics of globalization, Shiva is resolute: "Democracy is dead. The moment that the seeking of permission of the people ceases, democracy is dead."

Not only is democracy dead, its replacement has become deadly. "In this convergence of war and globalization, what we are seeing is not just a threat to our lives, a threat to our peace, a threat to our democracy, what we are actually seeing is a very, very deep threat to governance itself," Shiva said. This threat to governance is what Shiva considers to be the biggest danger for humanity. As the tentacles of globalization tighten their grip, governments weaken, and democracy is strangled.

"Suspending democracy has become an imperative to keep the globalization agenda on track," Shiva said. The suspension of democracy has not come in the form of the occasional executive decision made in the middle of a sweat-inducing emergency. The suspension of

democracy Shiva refers to runs much deeper: against the people's wishes, water has been commodified, the basic right to food and shelter has become tertiary, and wars have been waged.

"The right to life is the fundamental struggle of our time," Shiva said. "Today, democracy is linked to life and economics is linked to life. For us, the real challenge is to be able to reclaim our system and change it. Because, as we take small steps in recovering our lives, and the basis of our lives, we will be forced to also change the institutions of our day that can only make dark decisions." Changing the institutions — in other words, democratizing the bodies that hold power — is what Shiva suggests as a necessary step in the fight for the right to life. "That is why we are doing very, very simple things to move away from this governance of control and deceit and terror and fear and violence, into governance based on truth, peace, and democracy," Shiva said. "The shifts are very, very basic. It is about what is the meaning of human life. What do you live for?"

Rather than practice a democracy that excludes its very basic component — people — Shiva recommends shifting to the practice of Earth Democracy, which she refers to as "the creation of the living democracy." In such a participatory democracy, the people would have control over the decisions that directly affect their lives and well-being. "The very telling of truth, the very practice of democracy, is based not in the grand ways that depend on how the White House moves, but in the small ways that depend on how your heart moves, and how you live your life," Shiva said.

The Earth Democracy Movement, started in India three years ago, has three overarching principles:

- Expounding on the idea that all humans have a right to resources and corporations cannot take them away through privatization or commodification.



Megan Tady illustration Chrisine Wong

• Creating sustainable economies and abundance by, "knowing the limits of water," and thereby ending the exclusion of the right to life to whole populations.

• Renewing democracy at a time when corporations and profits make the decisions that affect all life.

"Earth democracy is really a democracy that creates justice, sustainability, and peace," Shiva said. "There is no divisibility between the sustainability movement, the peace movement, and the justice movement. In a democracy of life, all life is necessary and dependent on the intrinsic worth of all species. There are no disposable species, there are no disposable people."

For Shiva, shifting to Earth Democracy is not as daunting a task as it may first appear.

"And that's why we talk about living democracy, in terms of bringing life back into democracy, through reclaiming it," Shiva said. "And we can only reclaim it by bringing it closer to home. And it is very doable." Shiva said that people reclaiming decision-making power over their lives is one of the biggest steps toward creating Earth Democracy. "If in our communities, we do not want water to become commodified, it is in our hands to shape the system," Shiva said. "We have to take back our water, our food, and our seeds. We have to take it back by the practice of taking it back."

As for the corporations, treaties and governments that have created the need for this movement, Shiva believes it is time to leave them behind. "They will destroy themselves, we will create the other world," Shiva said. ★

Ready, Aim,

Misfire

the 17th Of November Finally Falls

Nick Mamatas

The Revolutionary Organization 17th of November (17N) of Greece always seemed less like a true revolutionary organization and more like a lazily researched creation of a screenwriter or potboiler novelist. Named after the day when a student uprising in Athens was brutally crushed by the US-backed military junta that ruled the country at the time, 17N carried out a 27-year-long campaign of assassination and bombings designed to punish the Greek ruling class for various betrayals and to demonstrate its opposition to American military and economic intervention in the region. The targets were a grab bag: CIA station chief Richard Welch was the first to fall in 1975, shot at point-blank range. Junta-era police chief Evangelos Mallios was also assassinated, with the same .45 caliber pistol that was used to kill Welch. By the 1980s, 17N had perfected bombing techniques and increased their tactical understanding of assassination and attacks against buildings. However, politically, 17N was still trapped in a pulp fantasy version of anti-capitalist politics. This summer, when a wayward explosion in the busy Pireaus port led the Greek police to the injured bomber Savvas Xyros, 17N was cracked wide open.

In order to understand 17N's longevity and its eventual failure, we must first take a look at Greek politics. There have certainly been other red terrorists in Europe – the Red Army Faction in Germany and Direct Action of France come to mind – but 17N emerged out of a hotbed of radical politics and from a working class used to flexing its muscles. Germany's RAF, for example, was little more than a personality cult surrounding Andreas Baader and its actions were not so much military attacks against capitalism as they were an attempt to exorcise the ghosts of Nazism from a generation born too late to fight Hitler's rise. There was little outlet for anti-capitalist activism during Germany's postwar boom and class struggle was on the decline. The RAF was based as much on the need for adventure and the desire to escape Germany's button-down clockwork society as it was on Marx or Mao.

Greece had a qualitatively different experience than the rest of Europe in World War II. In 1940, the dictator Metaxas rebuffed Mussolini's ultimatum and fought off Italian armed forces, the first defeat of any sort the Axis faced in the European theater. British forces began moving into Greece but retreated after Hitler's army punched through the Metaxas line and took the country, though the battle took long enough to foil Germany's plan to occupy Moscow before the onset of winter

(this is generally considered a major turning point in the war). With the formal army collapsed and the British quitting the field, the population of Greece began a resistance movement of its own, one which radicalized the population and also tied up 50 Nazi battalions for much of the rest of the war. The bulk of the resistance was carried out, guerrilla-style, by Communist National Liberation Front (EAM) and its military, the People's National Army of Liberation (ELAS), though there were also massive displays of power by the urban working class, including a 1942 general strike that kept the Nazis from deporting workers to Germany. There was also plenty of infighting between Communist and non-Communist resistance fighters.

After the war, Britain sent 40,000 troops to Greece to disarm ELAS, and then, with the happy political cooperation of none other than Stalin, installed a dictatorship of royalist Nazi collaborators to rule over the country. So much for the stark lines of good and evil between Axis, Allies and Soviets – they all teamed up to make sure that a radical government with the possibility of real political independence would not form in Greece. The US also got in on the military action, including introducing napalm into modern warfare by using it against Greek villages believed to be housing Communist guerrillas. Over 100,000 Communists and other radicals were exiled or detained in concentration camps, some for more than 20 years. More than 500 former resistance fighters were executed for crimes like the murder of German soldiers during the war.

Today, the issues surrounding World War II, and, later, the CIA-backed military junta of the late 1960s and 1970s, still dominate Greek politics. The mainstream of Greek political thought claims that the left still has not realized that it was on the wrong side by not embracing a British puppet government – the only alternative the center sees is life as a Cold War leftover like Bulgaria. However, the left and the labor movement are still relatively strong in Greece and Greek activists have engaged in major strike actions, protests, and direct action against NATO, the US Balkan wars, and the European Union. 17N emerges from an environment where radical politics are often influential, not from some abstract need to play revolutionary hero.

At the same time, 17N's many killings and attacks against US military concerns and Greek businesses meant little. 17N, in its 1977 manifesto *Appantissi sta Kommata kai tis Organosseis* (Responding to Political Parties

and Organizations) challenged the critique that much of the mainstream far left (a variety of student groups, Trotskyist organizations, Eurocommunists and some anarchist-influenced radicals) had offered of terrorist violence, saying that its attacks "shouldn't be seen as isolated acts of violence, but as parts of a long-term, multifaceted revolutionary process."

The problem, of course, is that 17N's acts of violence weren't part of a revolutionary process. This summer, the police crackdown revealed that 17N was a very small group. These weren't student radicals or rank-and-file worker activists but were rather religious icon painters (as surprising as finding a white NRA member supporting the Black Panthers), a bus driver, and a couple of teachers. 17N is also a family clique – three of the suspected terrorists are Xyros brothers, sons of Greek Orthodox priest Triantafyllos Xyros from Ikaria, an island populated by Communist exiles.

17N, rather than inspiring an insurrectionary mood, usually tailed radical activism. For example, in November 1985, 1000 activists occupied Athens Polytechnic (a college) after police shot a 15-year-old protestor during a demonstration commemorating the November 17th crackdown. 17N didn't engage in that struggle or join the movement; it carried out a bombing attack against a police bus, killing 22 cops, while offering no support to the real political movement against police murder.

17N's politics also started to drift in odd directions as it divorced itself from the powerful social and labor movements it could have been a part of. 17N not only assassinated US officials and Greek industrialists, but bombed tax offices to protest tax evasion. While claiming to be Marxist, 17N was also heavily nationalistic, up to and including supporting a total Greek takeover of Cyprus and standing against the EU on nationalist rather than class grounds. 17N even called upon the Greek military to shoot down Turkish airplanes and to carry out guerrilla operations against Turkish-occupied northern Cyprus. A principled Communist group, of course, would be for Cypriot independence, not for Greek imperialism or for the current Greek government of Cyprus which was installed by the junta 17N was born to fight against.

Since Savas Xyros was captured, the 17N situation has gotten even murkier. The mainstream Greek press has tried to tie 17N's leader Alexandros Giopoulos to a strand of Greek Trotskyism, in spite of that political school's long-standing antipathy toward even revolutionary terrorism. As ol' Leon said back in 1909



after a
terror attack,
“the smoke from
the confusion clears
away, the panic disap-
pears, the successor of the
murdered minister makes his
appearance, life again settles into
the old rut, the wheel of capitalist ex-
ploitation turns as before; only the po-
lice repression grows more savage and
brazen.” And indeed, Greece recently passed
an anti-terror law that curtailed democratic
rights and expanded police powers. The search
for 17N members dominates the nightly news
and daily newspapers in Greece, pushing eco-
nomic concerns off the front page while help-
ing prop up the unpopular Simitis government
and its austerity program.

Weirdness reigns elsewhere: one of the Xyros brothers under arrest was three years old when 17N formed. The Greek right and the US continue to claim that Greece’s social democratic ruling party, PASOK, must be complicit with 17N since members of PASOK fought against the junta of the 1960s (and indeed, in a country of only 10 million people, it is possible to draw connections between PASOK members and 17N members – six degrees of separation is an easy game to play). Sections of the Greek left point to 17N’s strange nationalist Marxism, the impossibility of a toddler terrorist and the fact that the otherwise tactically sound group used the same gun in many of its assassinations as proof that the group is simply run by foreign or domestic intelligence agents. Rather than demanding freedom for its captured members, a supposed 17N communiqué threatened kidnappings if the suspects don’t get a fair trial. Gee, 17N suddenly has a fair amount of confidence in Hellenic jurisprudence.

Many of 17N’s claims are correct. The US does sell arms to both Greece and Turkey, encouraging the two NATO members to dance at the edge of war over Cyprus and the sea in order to pocket cash from and control the policies of both sides. Greece’s weak economy was damaged still further through its membership in the EU. The post-war dictatorship and the military junta of the 1960s, both done with the explicit aid of the US and Britain, show the stark reality of imperialism. The 1967 coup, which saw thousands captured, tortured, and killed within months of assuming power, re-

flected nothing less than this statement by President Lyndon Johnson to Greece’s ambassador to the US: “Then listen to me, Mr. Ambassador, fuck your Parliament and your Constitution. America is an elephant. Cyprus is a flea. If these two fleas continue itching the elephant, they may just get whacked by the elephant’s trunk, whacked good ... We pay a lot of good American dollars to the Greeks, Mr. Ambassador. If your Prime Minister gives me talk about Democracy, Parliament, and Constitutions, he, his Parliament and his Constitution may not last very long.” And indeed, it didn’t.

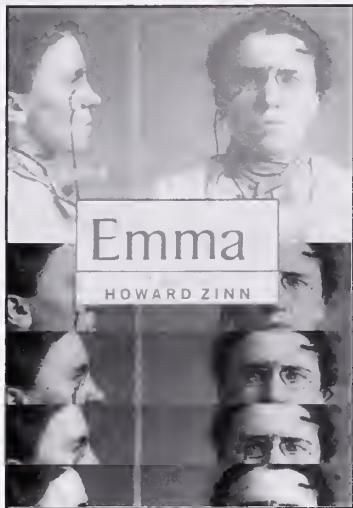
However, 17N’s solutions were worthless. The righteous rage of the terrorist in the end means nothing. Revolutionary violence: sabotage, dust-ups with the cops at protests, militant defense against police and armed forces during strikes, general strikes, and even armed conflict are all acceptable as long as the mass of working and oppressed people are the ones engaging in that violence. 17N, like all terrorist groups, is, in the end, nothing more but a self-selected elite. Unable to complete the hard work of actually changing minds and fighting against the capitalist system in a way that empowers people and allows them to direct their own struggles, terror cells ask the working class to hold its coat. Anyone can take a trip to a sport-

ing goods store and buy a gun or get some fertilizer and gasoline to make a bomb, but real revolutionaries have to do the less sexy stuff. 17N is divorced from real anti-capitalist politics and was reduced to attacking the MEGA TV studios with mortar shells in 1995 just to get some publicity and to give its members a windmill to tilt against.

There hasn’t been a single case of terrorism in history that has actually ignited a revolutionary social transformation yet. Instead, the premature turn to the gun or the bomb is a symptom of defeat; when social movements die down and reaction starts in, then a bitter cadre looks to weapons instead of to the working classes. The Greek working class in 2001 staged two massive general strikes with over 200,000 people out on the streets of Athens alone (again, there are only 10,000,000 people in Greece – an American protest of that ratio would involve 6,000,000 people) to fight against EU austerity. In the wake of the October 2001 US bombing of Afghanistan, Greek workers took to the streets in the hundreds of thousands again, some of them even decorating their American flags with fifty white swastikas on the field of blue.

And what were the revolutionaries of 17N doing at that time? Hiding in their basements and wondering if there was anyone around worth shooting. ★

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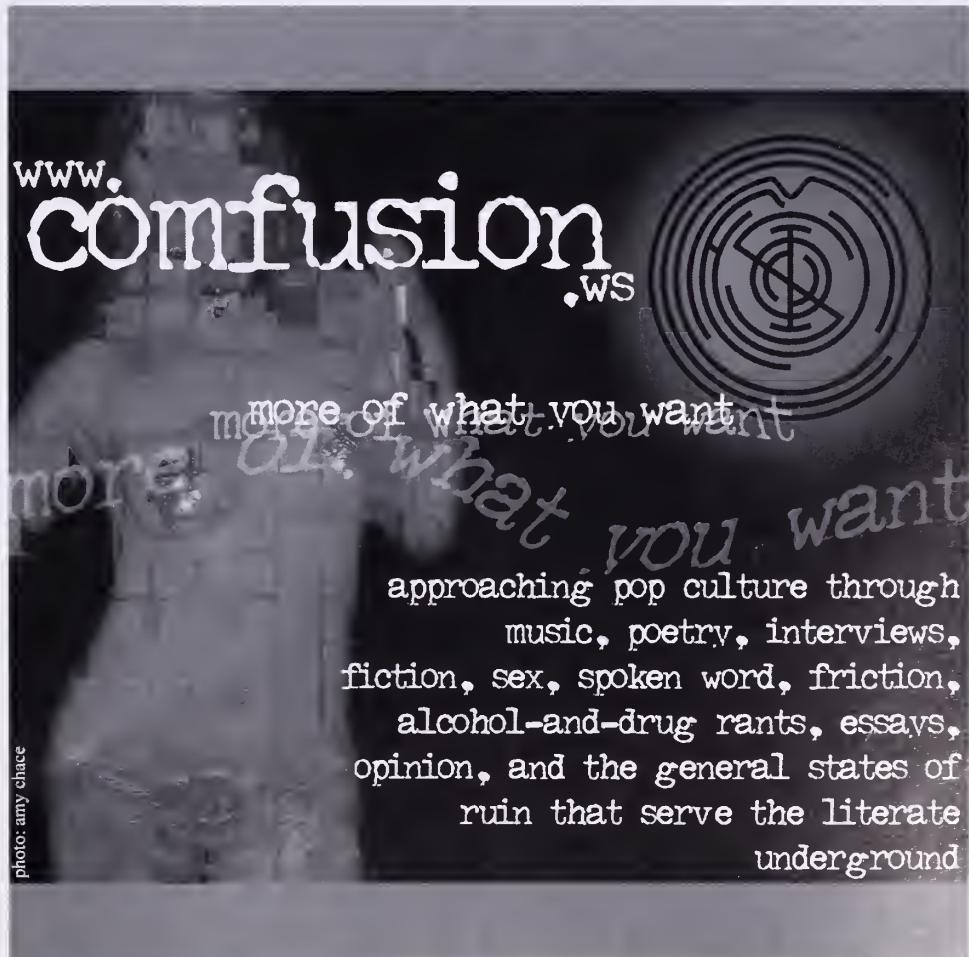
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STRUGGLE

on the ground in Brazil with one of the world's most successful mass land movements

The Landless Worker's Movement (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*, or MST) arose in response to the overwhelming inequality of land distribution in Brazil. While less than three percent of the population owns two-thirds of the country's arable land and 60 percent of Brazil's farmland lies idle, 25 million peasants struggle to survive in temporary agricultural jobs. Since 1985, hundreds of thousands of landless peasants have joined together to carry out much needed land reform. The MST is now the largest social movement in Latin America and one of the most successful grassroots movements in the world. It is both practical and visionary in its ability to simultaneously address the workers' immediate needs, while cultivating, through this struggle, a collective model for a new society.

I conducted the following interview with Wanusa Pereiros dos Santos at the San Francisco Independent Media Center (www.sf.indymedia.org) on May 27, 2002. Many thanks to Sophia Delaney for collaborating on the interview, and to Victor Chomsky, Bib, Moria, and Yuri for assisting me in transcription and translation. For further information on the MST, visit www.mstbrazil.org.

Clamor: When did you get involved with the MST and why?

Pereiros dos Santos: I entered the MST movement in 1998. I was already militant in the student movement and the worker's party. I thought that the MST was the best movement in Brazil because it is directly linked to the farmers and grassroots resistance, and because it is a movement that fights for a better society and not for corporate interests that only look to resolve one specific problem. They are fighting for agrarian reform to solve the overall problem of social inequalities in the country.

About the beginnings of MST: How did it start? Was there one event that precipitated the creation of the MST or was it the conditions of inequality and poverty in general?

The land movement truly began in 1979; the first occupation by workers without land was on a farm in Rio Grande do Sul. In the beginning, groups without land were fighting in isolation around the country. Later, in 1985, there was the first national meeting of organizations fighting for land and the landless movement became unified. I think that the movement appeared because the ending of military dictatorship aggravated the social inequalities in the country. It saw the Brazilian government opening the economy to foreign capital and increasing the foreign debt. It also began the process of rapid industrialization and pushed the countryside deeper into poverty. So these two aspects — the increase in poverty and the end of military rule — are connected to the formation.

Describe the organization of the movement in general. Is each occupation autonomous to some extent? If so, are there points of unity between them? How many people are in the movement in total?

The MST is organized in 23 of the 27 Brazilian states. It is a national organization and has coordination among state representatives. We have one hundred people at the national organizing level. That structure ensures that decisions are made at the base and that the base, can work in harmony with connection between all of the states. Each state has its own coordination and is also divided into smaller regions. Those regions are geographical and, together with the settlements, form municipalities. This is the decision-making structure — a regional level, a state level, and a national level.

The people that come to the occupations are those who already live in the area but don't have land. They are rural workers and renters of land. Brazil has a form of work called "Meiros." My family rents land from an owner. My family works all year long to harvest the food on time. The family delivers 50, 70, or 80 percent to the landowner. These are families that we consider landless. They don't want to be exploited by landowners anymore. Representatives of the MST come to fight for the communities and organize the people; together with the families, they organize the occupation.

Every five years, we have national congresses; the last congress was in 2000. We had eleven thousand people participating. Every two years we have national, state, and regional meetings, and elect the movement coordinators. In the camps and settlements, when the occupation begins, we have people with more experience in the movement organize the occupation, and after, they organize the encampment. But after that, the families become the leaders.

We have 300 to 500 thousand families living in the communities of our settlements and 80 thousand families in encampments. The difference between an encampment and a settlement: an encampment is when we are occupying the land, fighting for the land. A settlement has been legalized by the government. The families already have the land, economically, but their identity is still "landless." To be "landless" is not a question of land or no land; it is a political identity.

MST is a massive movement but it does not have affiliation with political parties or unions. The people in the communities are the members of the MST. About one million people live on the settlements and the camps. One of our principles is that we do not only consider MST those who are organizers or leaders. I am from a family that is working on the land, but I am landless. Today I am here talking, but tomorrow I may be on the land working while another person is here. We always change command so that being a leader will not be a privilege. In most of the left parties in the world, many people are comfortable with political leaders being in charge. But the

Michelle Steinberg www.mst.org

leaders like the power, and many times they leave behind the base of the organization and stay only in the offices. In the MST, all the leaders have to be living in the settlements or encampments (unless they work in the city offices). That is a form of guaranteeing that we have a relation with the base and we don't convert into "stars of the movement."

MST is perhaps one of the most long-running and successful land movements ever. Why is that? How is this land movement different than other struggles? What are your ideas on how this model, that has successfully involved so many people, be applied in other places?

I think the MST is successful because it is connected to its objectives. You cannot live on the land if you don't have any; then, how can you produce, if you don't have health, education, schools, medical centers? For this reason, when we obtain land, we do not stop. We continue fighting for agrarian reform and for the transformation of society. We have a strategy of political formation. First, resolve the economic problem of the families, because this problem prevents them from fighting. In the beginning, when the families enter the movement, they only want to resolve an individual problem-their economic problem. But political participation, the form in which the movement is organized, makes it so that one also changes in something more than land. You want to transform society. This is not one person's gain, but a gain for all of the families. All want transformation once they conquer the land; they organize the community, the settlements, the society they want. In the settlements, there are no cases of violence against women and no cases of murder. We have pedagogy where the children learn in school to change the world. "They read the words together with the world," as Pablo Freire says. It is a new logic, a new way to organize life. This makes it so that the families remain together to fight and don't just become comfortable.

I think in many movements people arrive at their first objective, stay there, and don't continue fighting. The experience of the MST organizing on a national level is an example for all other movements, because if we were only in one state the government would have already destroyed the movement. Today that is impossible because we have people in the whole country. I think that this is a difference, for example, with organizations here in the United States; they are very isolated and so do not have many victories. If you are alone you are weak.

Studying, by itself, does not form people's political conscience; what shapes people is their struggle. Leaders need to study to have better leadership skills, and many organizations have courses on political formation. But their people do not continue to advance in their political conscience. This is also a success of the MST, because the people have a concrete fight. Occupation, marches, community organizing-this is political instruction. Many organizations do not do this because they think that political education is reading a book and it is not. What happens is that one person becomes controlling and the others remain below. So if the leaders are killed, the movement also dies, because other people don't have the strength to continue.

Today if all the leaders of the MST were imprisoned or died, the movement would still advance, because the people at the base all have preparation to continue ahead. We don't need one person to be a hero or a personality of the movement. I think this is the success. It has brought us national and international recognition, because we have such large mobilizations. But it is not magic; everyday we work in the settlements and encampments. We need thousands of people now and if they come they have to have a permanent job.

Members of the MST have suffered death at the hands of state power, as well as other intense forms of repression and punishment. Recently, military officials who were involved with a massacre of several MST activists in 1995 have gone to trial for the second time. Can

you describe what happened with the massacre and the trials, and how it reflects the government's attitude towards the MST. What do you think the outcome will be and how will it affect MST in the future? [Note: In the past 10 years, more than 1000 people have been killed as a result of land conflicts in Brazil.]

Historically, there has been violence against the MST and against all the social movements in Brazil. All the movements were very repressed. On April 17, 1996, a massacre happened in a Northern state. The workers had been marching on the highway for three days and the government of the state of Para gave an order to the police that the MST march should not arrive in the capital city of Belem. The police killed 19 farmers. In 1997, there was a large march for justice, calling for the police to be punished for what they did; the massacre was a crime. It was the largest massacre in the last hundred years in Brazil.

Last year was the first trial and the police were absolved. We had a national and international mobilization, and gained an annulment of this trial. A new trial began early this month (May 2002); one of the main police commanders was condemned to two hundred years in prison for his crime, and the other main commander was found innocent and will not go to prison. This week, the rest of the police officers are being tried. The movement did not participate in these trials because the presiding judge was new and took over the court on Monday, and this trial began on Tuesday. He did not know anything about the process. The movement demanded that there be proceedings to reschedule the trial, but the authorities kept the same date. The movement chose not to participate because that would be theatrics and not a real trial. Also, the officer that received two hundred years in prison is not incarcerated. He will have the right to another trial and during this time will not be imprisoned. We know that they will never be imprisoned. It is a shame for this country, a scandal. Also, it is a form in which the government legitimizes violent police action. They can kill and violate without being punished for it. This practice is an esteem of violence.

The mainstream media is a powerful tool of the state. Recognizing this, it seems the MST has been working to create its own media strategies. Describe some of these tactics. What is MST's connection to the independent media?

The media in Brazil is the fourth power. There are the legislative, executive, judicial powers, and the fourth is the media. There is a monopoly of the media of social communication. To have a television channel, you have to pay a lot of money; the millionaires have television channels, the same with radio stations. The media is the principle form of political education and the Brazilian media is together with the politicians, together with the power. Many times we prefer that the formal media does not cover the demonstrations, because they only speak badly about the movement. "Oh yes, they are strongly armed," but we only have our work tools.

From the year 2000, the government began an offensive against the MST throughout the media. Each day, in the main nightly newscast, they had one story on the movement-about corruption, violence, or against the farmers. This part came immediately after pieces about drug crimes and trafficking; after the bandits, the crime, came the MST. Of course, the people are going to think, "Yes, they are bandits also." In many moments the government used distinct military strategies to destroy the movement in Brazil. "Canudos" was a movement in the past century, in Bahia, where the army used a cannon. After the major organizing in 1940, the government used planes to bomb the groups. Now they use the media.

Yes, there is an independent media, but it doesn't have much space to compete with the formal media. There are newspapers, magazines, progressive papers of the left, small radio stations, community

radio, pirate radio; but this is little in comparison to the formal media. To continue to change the opinion formed by the large media, we have a magazine, a newspaper, and a Web site. The paper is monthly and the magazine comes out every three months. That is also a form of promoting the movement; also, it is an instrument of study for the settlement families. But the only way to continue to oppose this government media offensive is to have more land occupations — organizing the people is the only way.

The MST says that it hopes to work to eliminate sexism (which is prevalent within Brazilian society) within its ranks. As a woman, have you experienced sexism in the MST? And if so, how is it different than in Brazilian society as a whole?

Brazilian society has much machismo (sexism/patriarchy). Now especially, because historically the woman always took charge of the house, the kids, and prepared food for the man; the man worked in the fields. When the people come to the MST, they have this conception of women. To change this thinking, we guarantee a space for the women to participate. When the MST began, we had groups of women organized in the encampments and settlements, making a space for women to participate and communicate. In the last years, we have created a sector of gender studies to advance the conception that we want.

Today 40 percent of the movement leaders are women. We have women's participation, but we want more than this. We want new gender relations between women and men; because it is not only the participation and respect, women also need economic possibilities. Also new values, not values of exploitation like there are in society. We want to teach the children that you can have relations between people without having exploitation and oppression. Many women are saying, "No, I can't go to the meeting, I don't have anyone that I can leave my kids with because my husband is working." Now we have something called "Ciranda Infantil," a school that exists when we have meetings. A teacher takes care of the kids, so if you have children, you can still go to the meeting. In the cooperatives and the settlements, they have "Creches," where the parents can leave their children so women can work in the fields. Women also have the right to participate in the cooperative and the financial gains.

We have much education in family assemblies on the settlements about the question of gender and how machismo works. The families that come to the movement don't know what this is, because they are people without much education. They don't know that they have rights. When we start an encampment, we have to start with the basic things, so we always study the question of gender. You have to speak about this more, and create objective conditions of participation for women. In the encampments, all the groups have a man and a woman to coordinate. If there is a youth conference that is going to meet in São Paulo with one thousand people, then each state has ten places, of which five are for women and five for men. If they have four women and six men, no one will have problems, because this is not a policy of quotas that you have an obligation to do. It is a policy to stimulate the participation [of women].



We want to teach the children that you can have relations between people without having exploitation and oppression.

What are the future plans for the MST?

Now we are in a very difficult moment in the fight for agrarian reform in Brazil. We are in a new moment of political repression; not only in Brazil, but also in all of Latin America and all of the countries that have any movements which fight against economic globalization and the neoliberal model. All movements are more repressed and proportionally MST is a large movement, so the repression is also very large. Also, never was humanity so poor and never before did we have such misery in our countries. But we have to take advantage of the tremendous social contradictions to organize the people, because we are living in a global economic crisis. If the policy and the society is well, nobody wants change, but if you have problems, people want it. Only in these moments can we overcome the crisis and point to new roads, new models of society. The next step is to organize the people and do more land occupations. If more people organize, the people can have more power- power to change the society. In the Brazilian elections this year, there is a left candidate with very strong possibilities to win. But whichever person wins, the Brazilian government is going to have many problems because the economy has already been sold to Europe and the North American corporations. ★



pictured: Jud with her attorneys

Justice for Judi! a free speech victory

On June 11, 2002, a federal jury in Oakland, California awarded \$4.4 million to Darryl Cherney and the Estate of Judi Bari in an historic lawsuit brought against the FBI and the Oakland Police Department (OPD). The lawsuit challenged the way the FBI and OPD handled the 1990 car bombing of the two Earth First! activists. Bari, who died of breast cancer in 1997, sustained near-fatal injuries from a motion-activated nail-studded bomb that was placed under the driver's seat of her car. Investigators on the scene discounted any possibility of an assassination attempt and instead arrested Bari while she was in surgery for planting the bomb herself. Cherney, who suffered only minor injuries, was also arrested. They were accused of transporting the bomb for use in their logging protests.

Bari and Cherney were in fact traveling to college campuses to organize for Redwood Summer, a nonviolent campaign to stop logging of ancient redwoods in California. Neither of them had any history of violent activity and both advocated a strict philosophy of nonviolence. While the charges against the two environmentalists were dropped due to lack of evidence, the complete neglect to investigate the real bomber, and the ensuing two-month long smear campaign by the FBI and OPD, led Bari and Cherney to file a federal civil rights suit one year later. The lawsuit charged the FBI and OPD with violating the plaintiffs' First and Fourth Amendment rights. More specifically, they accused

the defendants of interfering in their political organizing, publicly labeling the two as known violent terrorists, falsely arresting and conspiring to frame them, unlawful search of their homes and seizure of their property, falsifying evidence, ignoring evidence that may have led to the true bomber, and covering up wrong-doing. To this day, the FBI and OPD have neither retracted nor apologized for accusing Bari and Cherney of the bombing, nor has there been an investigation of the real bomber.

This case is significant on many counts and, while adequately covered by local and left media, was largely neglected by the mainstream. After 12 years of painstaking work, a team of environmentalists and activists finally brought the powerful and well-financed FBI and OPD in front of a civilian jury – for only the third known time in U.S. history. This is a story that should resonate with all activists targeted by the FBI, especially those now falling under the category of “eco-terrorists” for their work defending the planet’s disappearing resources. This is a story even more poignant in the post-September 11 climate of the USA PATRIOT ACT, Operation TIPS, and Homeland Security. This is a story about our basic constitutional rights as Americans, those “democratic freedoms” used by the Bush Administration to justify the “war on terrorism,” freedoms that are no longer guaranteed.

Shaking the Foundations

Alicia Littletree, paralegal for the plaintiffs, met Bari through Earth First! in 1991. They became close friends and after Bari’s death, Littletree committed herself to seeing the trial to its end. She believes a reason for the trial’s lack of attention is fear. “This case doesn’t go along with our society’s current obsession with the war on terrorism,” Littletree said. “This [trial] challenges the value system, it challenges the power structure, it challenges people’s mass psychosis around law enforcement and it’s not something they want to talk about because it really shakes the foundations of the whole establishment.” Despite their strong witnesses and compelling evidence, Littletree admitted that she didn’t feel optimistic about the trial. “Maybe if it had been before September 11, this wouldn’t have been such a hurdle. But people really want to believe that we live in a democracy and that our government isn’t involved in this sort of thing.”

Many people familiar with the case do believe the FBI was using COINTELPRO (the federal counter intelligence program to “neutralize” political activists) tactics to thwart the growing movement against logging ancient redwoods that Bari helped to build. Bari was in the midst of galvanizing support for California’s Proposition 130, an initiative to stop the logging that would have cost area timber companies Georgia Pacific, Louisiana

Pacific, and Pacific Lumber billions of dollars. According to a report on COINTELPRO presented at last year's World Conference Against Racism, FBI files show that the agency began spying on Earth First! shortly after organization started in 1981. Other evidence unearthed by the Bari legal team links the FBI directly to the timber companies. The report, written by Paul Wolf and compiled with the help of Noam Chomsky, Ward Churchill, Cynthia McKinney, and Howard Zinn, states that a board member of Pacific Lumber sent a "chummy" letter to then director of the FBI William Sessions. The FBI and OPD also never investigated the numerous death threats received by Bari immediately after announcing plans for Redwood Summer. Bari and others strongly believed that the threats came from the timber companies. Additionally, a lead defendant, Special Agent Frank Doyle, conducted FBI bomb school on the property of Louisiana Pacific in Eureka just four weeks before the bombing. Doyle, who arrived on the crime scene less than an hour after the explosion, made the original statement that the bomb was definitely on the back seat floor, even though the first OPD sergeant on the scene said the bomb was clearly under the driver's seat. Because of Doyle's position as the FBI's explosives expert, subsequent investigators repeated his account as fact. Members of Doyle's bomb school also arrived on the scene to investigate, with one student proclaiming, "This must be the final exam." Interestingly, the bomb used in Bari and Cherney's car was identical to one of the bombs studied at the neighboring FBI bomb school.

Despite the apparent connection, Judge Claudia Wilken refused to let witnesses discuss COINTELPRO saying it was irrelevant to individual defendants in the case. In 1997, Wilken dismissed defendant Richard Held, the FBI COINTELPRO specialist who was the head of the San Francisco FBI at the time of the bombing. Held said under oath that he had no interest in the Bari case. However, other FBI agents said they briefed him on the issue daily and an FBI document shows that officials in Washington requested weekly reports on the Bari case to meet a constant string of inquiries. Held resigned from the FBI shortly after this contradicting evidence surfaced. The plaintiffs plan to appeal his dismissal from the trial.

A Diametric Defense

Ben Rosenfeld, another attorney for the plaintiffs, agrees that the defendants' testimonies were rife with contradictions, each agency putting distortions on the other. "One of the most significant developments in the trial," said Rosenfeld, "was that we really began to impeach their honesty and credibility. Oak-

land said 'Don't blame us, we were just deferring to the dashing expert G-men from the FBI. They came in with all the experience, they told us these were terrorists, they told us where the bomb was, and we just listened to them.' The FBI said, 'Don't blame us, we didn't make the arrests, we told them that we would have taken more time, and we would have gone more slowly.' Well, there's no evidence on the record that suggests they made any such caveat."

One of the most contentious parts of this case was the issue of the location of the bomb in Bari's car. FBI and OPD have steadfastly maintained that the bomb was on the backseat floorboard, a location that would have supported the accusation that Bari and Cherney were terrorists, transporting a bomb for use in logging protests. But the car, which was shown to the jury, clearly showed a gapping hole under the driver's seat. And, according to Wolf's COINTELPRO report, in the weeks following the bombing, explosive experts issued reports stating that all evidence pointed to the bomb being positioned under the driver's seat. Nonetheless, the FBI continued to perpetuate the lie that the bomb was in the backseat. "Repetition is a fundamental of the 'Big Lie' propaganda technique," the report states, "Maintaining a drumbeat of false information until it is accepted by the media and the public as the truth." On the witness

stand 12 years later, Doyle changed his story, stating that he never said the bomb was on the backseat floor but that it was instead on the "axis of the backseat." Doyle also testified that Judi's guitar case, which was on the back seat, was blown to pieces. However, a photo presented to the jury showed a mostly intact guitar case.

Protecting Dissent

Describing the trial as a meteor shower, Cherney, also a singer and songwriter who recorded songs about the bombing with Bari, confesses to making radical statements in the past. But, he says, that doesn't make him a terrorist. "There's a big difference between making a radical statement or having a radical opinion," said Cherney the day of his testimony, "And committing the crime of blowing something up. There's a very large leap between those things." Even members of the establishment admit this. Cherney said that on the stand, Phil Sena, one of the Special Agents found to have violated the plaintiffs' First Amendment rights, said "If I had to investigate every group in northern California that threatened violence, I'd have to investigate the Republican Party, the Democratic Party, the Sierra Club . . ."

Medea Benjamin, founding director of Global Exchange and former Green Party



candidate for U.S. Senate, is part of the Judi Bari solidarity coalition. The group helped to plan weekly events in conjunction with the trial to discuss the larger implications of this case and civil rights. Benjamin said she feels this case is essential for standing up for the rights of activists to dissent. "This is one of those lessons where you see in history that while free speech is protected, it's protected only as far as we're not being very effective," Benjamin said. "When we start to get effective as a movement, which is really the case of Judi and Darryl, where they started to make alliances with workers and really build a very strong movement modeled after the civil rights movement, that the weight of the FBI comes down on us."

Littletree says that first and foremost, Bari would have wanted vindication that she was falsely charged and vindication that the FBI participates in the suppression of law abiding political activists. "I think Judi really wanted this case to serve as a symbol for all of the groups and individuals that have been targeted and all of us that will be targeted," said Littletree. "I think she wanted to shine a light on their covert activities and their anti-activist activities so that we could have a foothold to challenge them and to stop them." Littletree said this is not just about

justice for Judi Bari, "This is about Leonard Peltier, Geronimo ji Jaga [Pratt], Assata Shakur, AIM, the anti-Globalization movement, and all social movements because we threaten the power structure, because we threaten the FBI's control and the corporate control of our society." Littletree is hopeful that this case will serve as an impetus to activists everywhere, saying, "If we can back them down, we can make some of the social change that is desperately needed to save the ecosystems of our country and our planet. I think that's what this case is about, just a tiny step toward backing them off and making it so we can actually achieve the change that needs to happen in this country."

Victory for All

Whether or not Bari and Cherney will ever receive total vindication through an investigation of the real bomber is still a question. Nonetheless, the plaintiffs had much to celebrate the day of the victory. After more than a decade in preparation, six weeks in trial, and 17 days of deliberations, the 10-person jury handed down a verdict that exacts accountability from law enforcement agencies. Delivering unanimous verdicts on all but one claim, the jury awarded 80 percent of the \$4.4

million in damages for First Amendment violations, the largest award in such a case.

While appeals are expected from both sides, the afternoon of June 11 still resounds with the din of victory. A definitive statement has been made on behalf of all environmentalists, all social activists, and all U.S. citizens concerned about their constitutional rights. Even under the duress of this so-called war on terrorism, people are refusing to permit the perversion of civil liberties. Voices of opposition — constitutionally protected voices — are speaking out against the extensive history of political repression in this country. And, this time, they are being heard. In a song paying tribute to Bari and her unflinching work in the face of adversity, Cherney wrote, "But we'll answer with nonviolence, 'cause seeking justice is our plan. And we'll defend our wounded comrade, as we defend the ravaged land."

For a wealth of information on the trial including verdict details, appeal updates, and audio files of Bari's deposition and speeches, visit www.judibari.org.

Paul Wolf's report on COINTELPRO presented at the World Conference Against Racism is found at www.cointel.org.



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In memory of
Tyrone Douglas Lewis
(March 7, 1955 - August 13, 2002)

I've had about two hours of sleep as I sit down to write this, but it is all I know to do right now.

Earlier this year my mother was reeling from another disastrous visit with my long-lost sister. We've been attempting to build a relationship for three years with nothing more than a shaky foundation of blood relations. My mother was nearly broken from the attempts.

She has seen a man standing around in Aberdeen, obviously homeless. He never begged, but he was visible on the highway and in the park behind the library. It was the start of a hot summer that would boast days upon days of temperatures exceeding 90 degrees. The man, who was dressed in multiple layers of clothing, was noticeably suffering in the heat. She had gone through Earl's closet and brought him some clean clothes, hoping this might help. He added them to the layers. Concerned for his well-being, she began to stop and see him regularly, giving him cold drinks and also a little cash here and there so he could get what he wanted from the convenience store.

Then one day she decided to make a plate of food for him and took it to him down at the park. He had been scared and shy around her, but this simple acknowledgement that he was hungry opened a door. He hadn't had food regularly until she started to bring him dinner. They began to talk more and more. She would bring him at least one meal, sometimes two, snacks, and cold drinks. She'd continue to try and get him to take some of the layers off by bringing him new clothes, but they were

either added to the huge duffle he carried or tucked inside his jacket where he carried his soda and water bottles. He only asked for one thing - a small transistor radio. He would listen to it all the time, often playing classical music.

She would learn his name was Tyrone, that he was from Connecticut, and that he was still suffering from gunshot wounds inflicted when he was asleep in his sleeping bag a few miles away.

At a distance Tyrone could appear imposing, standing over 6 foot tall and made bulkier by the multiple layers of clothes. He always wore a hooded jacket and knit cap pulled tight around his face. He had a dark complexion, and between that and his hood of his jacket, there were times his face was all but impossible to see. My mother looked straight past the exterior and saw a hungry, terrified man who needed both help and friendship.

The Aberdeen police, three cops in particular, started harassing him. A new minor league ballpark was opened by Aberdeen's hometown hero, Cal Ripkin, about the same time the harassment began. They chased him from place to place around town telling him to leave or they would arrest him. The temperature was in the high 90's and it was obvious he was both sick and suffering mental problems. My mother offered to drive him to a new location where he could be safe. She was in contact with a shelter in the next county who at first seemed like they could offer some help. They, like so many of the agencies she contacted, were a dead end.

He disappeared over the 4th of July weekend. My mother was frantic. It took some doing but he was tracked down at the Harford County Detention Center. His crime: littering. When the police chased him from the small, seldom used public park behind the library he was forced to leave behind the blanket my mother had given him. The police, eager to "get rid of the problem" charged him with littering and slapped a \$50 fine on him that he obviously couldn't pay. They issued a warrant and arrested him. We arranged for him to be released into my mother's custody. This was July 9th, 2002.

Not knowing what else to do and with a foreboding she thought she could prevent, she moved him into our home. I am going to admit there was some resistance to this arrangement, but she was determined, no matter what, to help this man.

In the weeks following his absorption into our home they became good friends. It became apparent he was autistic, with other unknown medical and physical problems. It turned out he loved watching movies as much as she did and they often went to the theaters in Bel Air to catch a matinee or rented a stack of videos from Blockbuster or the library. She told me he would often clap at the end of the movies. He liked Wesley Snipes action movies, as well as Robert Altman films. The more she got to know him, the more she saw he was like a child.

He was a very gentle man. Sensing that my mother was having trouble crossing a high bridge (one of her fears), he offered to hold her hand. On another occasion he made her



Davida Gypsy Breier

stop the car so he could place an inch worm on the ground where it would be safe. At the flea market one morning I caught him playing in a rain puddle.

They were both survivors of childhood abuse. For Tyrone this meant an overriding fear of people. He would barricade his door and windows at night. My mother gave him a key for the bedroom door, so he could feel safe at night. He was afraid or shy around the rest of us, so we didn't get a chance to know him like she did.

He'd often shower with his clothes on, an idiosyncrasy my mother shrugged off. He wanted to be normal and she treated him as such. He'd jump out at the gas station and fill the tank or help by running into the store for whatever she needed. If someone stared at him, she'd walk over next to him and stare back. People doing this to him would infuriate her.

He'd have good days and he'd have bad days. He loved my mother's van and he'd often ask to go for a ride. She took him to a nearby state park and he said it was the most beautiful place he had ever seen. On other days he would hide in the room, refusing to come out. He would often rock or tremor when he was scared or nervous. He was ashamed of this and tried to hide it as much as he could. We realize now he probably had a seizure disorder, which is common in people with autism. It was obvious he needed to see a doctor but he refused.

Far from being one-sided, their friendship helped my mother as well as Tyrone. In recent weeks my mother had taken a great deal of ribbing because she had begun to cook huge meals for him. None of us had ever seen her cook like this before. He didn't bat an eye when he found out he had been eating as a vegetarian for months.

Tyrone told her he was in care of some kind as a child, state or foster - it was never made clear. Recently he told her that this was the happiest he could remember being since

he was a child. The only other time he could remember being as happy was when they sent him to a camp in Connecticut each year during the summer. He had never stayed at a motel until last month when she took him with her to an antique show in Virginia. He apparently had never had anyone care for him like this. She'd try to do a little something to make him happy each day, even if it was a simple little gift, and she did. They often spent the evenings watching movies in his bedroom.

Last night my mother and I went out for a few hours, to spend a little time together. When we arrived home about 10:30 pm she knocked on his door, but there was no reply. If he was having a bad day this wasn't unusual. She came into my bedroom to talk to me about the situation. She feared his mental health was getting worse lately. He hadn't wanted to leave the room for several days. She decided to get the other skeleton key and open the door. It looked like he was asleep on the bed. He didn't respond. He was cold to the touch. We called 911.

The paramedics who arrived a few minutes later said he had been dead for about 6-8 hours. They remembered him. They had picked him up over the winter and took him to the hospital. He had been living in a vacant lot, wrapped in three sleeping bags, exposed to the elements, lying in his own waste. He refused treatment the first time, the second time he was unconscious and they were able to take him to the hospital. He had massive sores all over his body. Tyrone had somehow interpreted these sores as gunshot wounds. He spent months in the hospital recovering and according to the paramedic it was so bad his Achilles tendon had been all but destroyed, which explained his limp. The paramedic was exceptionally nice.

The state trooper and coroner arrived next. Both were very compassionate. The coroner even started crying when she heard the whole story. She said it was the first time this had ever happened on a call.

This was shocking and unexpected, and most of all unfair. He was happy, safe, and loved for the first time in his life. My mother had set everything up with Legal Aid for his court case, and was waiting for a call that should have come today regarding relief aid and how to apply for disability and medical assistance for him. She was prepared to take care of Tyrone as his legal guardian for the rest of his life. She had grown to love him and wept last night that she felt as if she had lost her best friend.

We have so many unanswered questions. His background is still a mystery. It is unknown how long he was on the streets and what all happened to him. He was 47 years old, but his body appeared much older.

His death may have been caused or mitigated by the heat, or from any one of his obvious, and perhaps not so obvious, health problems. He said he wasn't feeling well, but he never said what was wrong or that he thought it was serious. It is also likely he was hiding how sick he was so he didn't have to leave or go to the hospital. I have a feeling most of the questions will remain and be joined by sorrow. If my mother hadn't have taken him in it is likely he would have died on the street. His unclaimed, unknown body would have been donated to science, something this fearful, shy, modest man would have abhorred. We will have him cremated. He will be remembered.

Last night about 4 a.m. my mother asked me to write about Tyrone. It is 6am now and that is the only thing I can think to do to help. She wanted people to know who Tyrone was. She wanted people to stop and consider the person under the plastic tarp, seven layers of clothing, or cardboard box. She is angry and mournful that Tyrone and people like him are invisible in our society. His tragedy could have been avoided if someone had seen him and helped him sooner. Last week in a speech I gave I credited my mother with teaching me compassion. I think she could teach all of us a thing or two on the subject. *

Azam Ali
Portals of Grace
Narada, 2002
www.narada.com



When you think of Persian or Indian music, you probably don't think of medieval European melodies. Azam Ali's *Portals of Grace* is just that, albeit tinged with an Arabic flair. Azam Ali is influenced by Hildegard von Bingen, and her mezzo soprano voice has the sombre, uplifting sound of a prayer. Master drummer Greg Ellis provides wonderful rhythm, and also vocal drones in "Inna-l-Malak."

Azam Ali's music reminds me of Lisa Gerrard, in a Dead Can Dance meets Mediaeval Baebes kind of way,

with touches of Peter Gabriel's *Passion*. She is a musical polyglot, and the songs on this album come from eclectic sources: 12th and 14th century French Provencal, Sephardic, Judeo-Spanish, Brittany, 12th century Latin, 13th century Galician-Portuguese, Sweden, Byzantine, and Arabic.

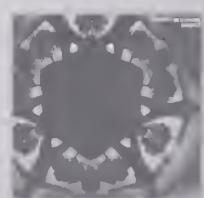
This album is also great in a musical historical sense. "Lasse Pour Quois" is a tribute to the 12th and 13th century Trobairitz, the female poet-musicians who graced the courts of Europe. Most of these women have been forgotten. "A Chantar m'er" is the only extant melody written by one of these women, a Trobairitz by the name of Comtessa Beatrix de Dia. Known as one of the greatest poetesses of all time, here she bitterly tells the tale of unrequited love for a man other than her husband. The opening line literally

translates as, "I must sing of that which I would rather keep in silence."

This CD will appeal to lovers of choral, ambient, world, and new age music.

- *The ShanMonster*

Boards of Canada
Geodagi
Warp, 2002
www.warrecords.com



Geodagi continues Scottish IDM/ELM heavyweights Boards of Canada's tradition of making music that is both state of the art and nostalgic. Like falling asleep in junior high science class during a film-

strip presentation, there is counting, children's voices and warped analog synthesizer.

As on BOC's debut long player, 1998's *Music Has the Right To Children*, *Geodagi* is awash in blissful (and slightly off-kilter) samples and down tempo beats. "Sunshine Recorder" is a perfect example — a smooth and loose rolling snare, dulcimer tones and haunting refrain of "a beautiful place." It's like a summer flu fever dream; both relaxing and somewhat sinister.

"Dawn Chorus" gets my pick as "most likely to be a car commercial" on this record. It's warped synth line and down-tempo hip hop beat combined with child voice samples and the sound of waves crashing (or is it just white noise? hmm...) is so blissed out it's almost a new age (or Moby) track. "You Could Feel the Sky" is a top notch IDM chiller as well, but my favorite on this record is definitely "1969."

A skip-click metronome measures out the glacial electro beat and a basic bassline that simply booms. Arpegiated keys and heavily vocoded vox sit nicely atop the rolling rhythm. And the rhyming chorus of "19-69, in the sunshine"? Damn, if it ain't infectious as a mur-fur!

Geodagi most definitely sits atop my list of the best electronic records of the year. If you can still find a copy in the special CD package it is well worth the extra \$5 or so. Definitely the best "special package" I've ever seen, and probably the only one worth paying extra for. The CD is enclosed in a hardcover booklet (bound like a children's book) with tons of cool pics of crystals and whatnot on nice heavy gloss stock (the triple vinyl package is also tight).

Geodagi sits squarely atop my list of the best records of the year and after countless spins it's still in heavy rotation on my deck. Another classic from the BOC. Whether you're chillin' at the crib, driving to Vancouver, or carbon 14 dating, *Geodagi* is all you doc. Use it.

-David Stokamer

Cato Salsa Experience

A Good Tip for a Good Time

Emperor Norton Records,

2002

www.emperornorton.com



Throwing their hat into the ring along with the current crop of bands hoping to cash in on the garage rock goldmine are Norway's Cato Salsa Experience. If you like the music of (International) Noise Conspiracy but don't like their politics, then this is the band for you. Lyric-wise, singer/guitarist Cato Thomassen sings about nonsense like Coca-Cola, high heeled leather boots, and dressing up in drag. But that is not the main focus of the group. It is the music that helps make Cato Salsa Experience one of the best in their genre.

Musically, Cato Salsa Experience are tight. They sound well-rehearsed and they are able to use this to their advantage on instrumentals or near-instrumentals like "Listen to Me Daddy-O" and "Time to Freak Out!"

Cato Salsa Experience build on the '60s/'70s garage band rock sound by injecting elements of psychedelia like on "Albert Bones Electric Meal"

which includes an echoing and wandering guitar solo combined with a theremin.

Overall, the music conjures up visions of go-go dancers and trippy light shows while super fuzzed-out guitar riffs, a bombastic rhythm section, and a Hammond organ blast out of the speakers. Also, a horn section is occasionally worked into several songs as well.

Fans of late '60s era Rolling Stones and the Who and fans of the Hives and Jon Spencer Blues Explosion will love this. It's only a matter of time before Cato Salsa Experience is heard on the lips of hipsters everywhere.

-Jason Ziemniak

The Herbalizer

Something Wicked This Way Comes

Ninja Tune

www.ninjatune.com



Ninja Tune's smoked out hip-hop collective is back in full force with a slamming slab o' chill. *Something Wicked This Way Comes* sees the 'lizer turning up the fire on the production pot to hot and tasty results, with loads of horns and strings providing sweet atmosphere and spicy kicks. Add gaggle of guest appearances to the mix and you've got something of a gourmet gumbo going on there fella!

All kinds of heads showed up for this record including M.F. Doom (KMD), Phi-Life Cypher (Gorillaz), Rakaa Iriscience (Dilated Peoples) and many more keep things varied and moving right along.

Standout tracks include the appropriately cartoonish "Verbal Anime" (featuring Rakaa Iriscience), the 70's TV-cop-show-chase-scene inspired "24 Carat Blag" and my personal favorite "Good Girl Gone Bad" featuring the brit street rhyming of an MC by the name of Wildflower. This tracks hits me just as hard as Rah Digga did on that Violators record a couple minits back. Where you at Wildflower? Holla back!

All in all a top notch LP, with enough ups and downs to keep all types of heads down with the Herbalizer. Mix well and serve chilled. Dig?

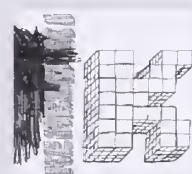
-David Stokamer

Kerbloki

s/t

Bifocal Media, 2002

www.bifocalmedia.com



Major labels usually hop all over a bankable trend, but the one thing that they seem to pass up are white rappers. Even with the success of Eminem, the post-Vanilla Ice backlash still remains. Its not that the talent isn't out there, case in point: Kerbloki. If the Beastie Boys had made a record in-between *Licensed To Ill* and *Paul's Boutique*, it would be this one. Three MCs: The Chip, Kobra and Urban Myth, kick it old school style over background music that sounds like it was made mostly on an old Casio keyboard. If you are tired of hearing the Beastie Boys rhyme about Tibet and want to hear more of the party jams that their earlier al-

bums had, then this is the album for you.

While low on the originality scale, this album is sky high in the "throw your hands in the air and wave them like you just don't care" department. It is virtually guaranteed that you will hear this album at a party near you which is good because that's probably the reason why this album was made.

It's surprising that a major label hasn't grabbed Kerbloki yet. With the popularity of rap, with '80s nostalgia thrown in, these guys are a surefire hit.

-Jason Ziemniak

Koester

The High Highs,

The Low Lows

pitch-a-tent

www.pitch-a-tent.com



You'll want to listen to Koester's second release, *The High Highs, The Low Lows*,

on headphones, walking through town on one of those perfectly rainy days where you don't care that you're getting wet. Transposing compositions pull you through keyholes and leave you witness to life's extremes, holding a blood stained mirror and a half-torn map. Mixing rudiments with low-fi and high-tech, Koester hovers and Koester courses. A treasury of special effects fills out carefully crafted arrangements of guitars, percussion, piano, keyboards, strings, and synthesizers. Add to that front man Steve Koester's bent for storytelling and his clinging, corporeal vocals. Particularly addictive is "One Day You Too Will Bleed," a view of love and revenge from the perspective of death row. Keys and strings commingle with wandering, gentle vocals casting a beautiful sadness that lingers long after the song is over. At other times, songs accelerate into lusty, hip-swaying numbers and notably so on "The Roman Coin" and "Transistor Sister." And if you need some reference points to chart that tattered map, the band lists Leonard Cohen and Stereolab; Kid A and the Brothers Gibb; Sylvia Plath and Katherine Anne Porter. Wow, that's scope. Based out of Brooklyn, NY and Richmond, VA, Koester mates include former and current members of Punchdrunk, Maki, Sparklehorse, Mary Timony, and Verbena. The band seems to play the East Coast somewhat frequently and word is they put on a kick-ass live show. So keep an eye out, and walk around in the rain some more. Really, with headphones on.

-Catherine Komp

Mayday

Old Blood

Saddle-Creek Records

www.saddle-creek.com



I tried to describe this album to one of my friends

and all I could come up with was — It's like coming home after being away for months and months and finally figuring out what "home" really means. I'm waiting for the day when Saddle Creek releases an album that isn't so good, but I don't think that will happen, at least not any time soon. *Old Blood* is melodic, haunting, and comforting all at the same

time. There is a sense of renewal with this album that is rather refreshing. *Old Blood* is new blood just as the old band is a new band breathing life into Mayday. Ted Stevens fails to let us down. I can listen to this album over and over again, each song through and through and never tire from the flawless passionate dynamics of Mayday. The second track "Come Home" is absolutely beautiful while "Confession," with guest vocalist Conor Oberst, picks up the pace a bit, adding to this *Old Blood* the usual Bright Eyes intensity. The song 'pilot' reminds me of flying home after five months and finally feeling at ease because I am home. Beautiful instruments, vocals, and lyrics... there's nothing I would change about this. Mayday's *Old Blood* is entirely enjoyable and perfect.

-Tiffany Jewell

**Sainkho Namtchylak –
Stepmother City
Ponderosa, 2002**

This CD is a surprise. You might expect something like the soundtrack to "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" on a work by the world's leading female throat singer from the steppes of Asiatic Russia. But, just as mixing kung fu with traditional storytelling worked in the film, mixing folk songs with pop electronica is a great combination here.

Throat, or overtone singing, lets one vocalist produce up to four voices using overtones. It is practiced by the people of Tuva (now part of Russia), in Western Mongolia, and in Tibet. World music listeners may have heard recordings by Buddhist monks. Namtchylak is originally from Tuva but now lives in Vienna.

The instrumentation here is a mixture of modern sampling and electric bass, along with instruments like Japanese bamboo flute and Mongolian fiddles and banjos. The native players who accompany Namtchylak also back her with their own throat singing.

The first three cuts are rooted in folk music. Namtchylak's voice is high and light, much like Japanese female vocalists. Her throat singing is subdued, and could be mistaken for something produced by a synthesizer. She comes back to this sound on the eighth cut with the beautiful "Old Melodie."

The fourth song, "Order to Survive," heads into avant-garde territory with both a sax and Namtchylak wailing away on a dark-toned track. The fifth, "Let the Sunshine," is a surprise as she sings in English on a tune that could be a pop radio hit on an adventuresome station.

On the last three cuts, she sings (and speaks) in English again. Namtchylak also solos with her voice, using it to create otherworldly sounds against slow, Oriental backgrounds with native percussion. Just as her promo material says that she "walks on the edges of life," here she walks on the edge of Yoko Ono territory. Fortunately, though, great production and her own talents keep her from falling off.

Too much of "world fusion" consists of native instrument loops backed by canned dance beats. If mediocre work has soured you on the genre, this is a CD worth picking up. World fusion does not get any better.

-Dave Howell



Stylex

Wonder Program
Friction Records
www.frictiongoods.com

Listening to Stylex is like being on the receiving end of a cocaine enema. If you understood what I mean, move on to the next review.

Otherwise, let me explain. Imagine, for a moment, that a slightly sadistic doctor inserted a tube into your rectum, filled you with a mixture of water and very pure cocaine, and then drained you out. The first time, it burns terribly, and you hate every second of it. Then, when it's over and the pain has subsided, you feel an elated euphoria and you're ready to take on anything. Then you, my friend, are fucking hooked.

Blending the craziest mix of analog synths, MIDI controllers, cheap drum sequencers, and some completely unrecognizable sounds and samples with the energy of hardcore punk, Stylex brings to mind images of Devo— not necessarily the Devo we all know and love, mind you, but a Devo deep in the depths of a crystal meth binge on a really, really shitty day.

There's a weird emptiness and detachment in the music (that becomes more apparent when reading the lyrics along with the songs) which is counterbalanced by a feral aggressiveness that only gives more power to a few truly beautiful tracks on this album.

Don't get me completely wrong, here—this is a happy pop album too. That's what fucked me up the most. I caught myself screaming along at top volume to songs I had never heard before, pissing off my neighbors, and annoying my wife to no end. I heavily, seriously, and completely recommend this album to anyone who wants a bit of a musical adventure.

-Jeremy Mahler

Swayzak

Dirty Dancing
!K7
www.k7.com

The London based duo of James Taylor and David Brown are at it again with a new LP and a new aesthetic. From the album title (cleverly hinting at the band's silent third member), to the cover art, to the deadpan vibe throughout, Swayzak have distilled a certain part of the 1980's that others have only been able to ape of late.

Cold war depression, Reagan/Thatcher trickle-down, post-punk indifference, call it what you will, it's present on this record in spades. It's dark. It's cold. It's just what I needed. While *Himawari* (Swayzak's sophomore LP released in 2000) was a masterpiece amalgam of deep-house, dub, and electro, *Dirty Dancing* is a more cohesive collection of tunes (in atmosphere if not beat).

Six of the ten tracks here feature vocals (up from 3 on *Himawari* and none on the group's debut LP *Snowboarding in Argentina*). Clair Dietrich, Claus Kotai, Jeremy, and Carl Finlow/Nicola Kuperus (Adult) all check in with excellent performances. Standouts include "Buffalo Seven," "In the Car Crash," and "I Dance Alone" (all vocal numbers). Die-hard fans will still find some vintage Swayzak on tracks like "Make Up Your Mind," "The Punk Era," "Ping Pong" (which could almost be a



lost Kraftwerk outtake), and "Celcius," though the instrumentals lean more towards the live Swayzak sound.

Dirty Dancing is another excellent progression for an excellent progressive act. Top ten material. Highly recommended. Ich bin ein Swayzaker.

-David Stokamer

Vincent Gallo

Recordings of Music for Film
Warp Records, 2002
www.warprecords.com



In the late '70s and throughout the '80s, Vincent Gallo composed music for a range of cult underground films, four of which are represented on this compilation. These range from his very first short film *If You Feel Foggy*, *Jump* in 1979 through to his seminal 1998 film *Buffalo '66* which he starred in and directed.

The 29 pieces, written to accompany the films, stand quite solidly on their own. Though spanning two decades, the music sounds like it was created at one session and is as spacious and haunting as the material he recorded for his last album, *When*.

Spare and reflective, Gallo's compositions are intriguing, mixing his minimalist guitar and piano playing with percussion to create a languid, slightly sinister air against a backdrop of atmospheric strings and occasionally his sad, quietly yearning falsetto.

Gallo, an avid collector of vintage hi-fi equipment and musical instruments, used many of them on these recordings like the Ampex 350 two track he used as a teen to record his father singing "Fools Rush In" and the same machine he used to mix *When*.

The somber beauty of the music seems even more beautiful when juxtaposed against the vitriolic rage that Gallo expresses against others in the liner notes. Here Gallo candidly documents his life, acting, and making music in various formats, including Gray, a late '70s art-band that included artist Jean Michel Basquiat.

Many people consider Gallo to be extremely outspoken, but he has always produced quality work to back up his mouth. One can only hope that he will continue to work in the various mediums he excels in.

-Jason Ziemniak



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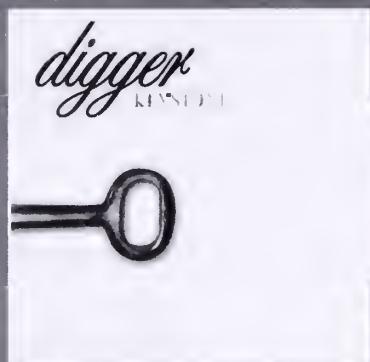
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Atenco

interview by Jason McGahan and Dévorah Revueltas

San Salvador Atenco is the name of the ejido, or communally owned and managed farmland that the Mexican government planned to almost wholly expropriate and raze in order to build a \$2.3 billion state-of-the-art airport. This summer, the land dispute turned into a victorious peasant rebellion and 'Atenco', as it came to be called, is now the battle cry for hundreds of poor communities facing similar threats of forced relocation.

Mexico City has only one airport, Benito Juarez International, which is 91 years old and, in a city of roughly 25 million people, has only one commercial runway. Moreover, Juarez is hemmed in by houses, making built-on additions extremely difficult.

Building a new airport has been discussed by Mexican presidents for at least 30 years and recently became the cornerstone for President Vicente Fox's ambitious plan to 'modernize' Mexico through several large foreign investment projects. Many of these require seizure of communal land and disturbance of delicate environments. There is the Sea of Cortes, for example, a region of abundant biological diversity in Baja California that foreign investors plan to ring with 27 marinas that would hold as many as 50,000 boats. Another is the Plan Puebla Panama, which would spend \$36 billion to industrialize the entire Central American isthmus with factories, ports, power plants and transnational highways.

Atenco, located in a dried-up lake bed favored by thousands of species of migratory birds, was to have been the site of the largest public works project in the history of Mexico.

Advisers to President Vicente Fox say he underestimated the passionate ties of the region's farmers to their land, which was granted to them not long after the Mexican Revolution (1910-1919). The government began negotiations by offering farmers a paltry 60 cents per square yard, the minimum required by law, and suggesting landowners might take jobs as janitors and food vendors at the new airport. The farmers refused to sell, took the government to court and agitated for nine months against the airport, drawing predictable intimidation strategies from state and federal authorities.

Things got out of hand on July 10. Three trucks carrying some 40 farmers from Atenco and the surrounding area and destined for a

speech by the governor of the state of Mexico were stopped and detained by a police roadblock. The farmers emptied onto the street and a prolonged shouting match ensued with police. Word of the standoff reached Atenco and soon the number of farmers increased to 100, nearly all of them carrying machetes; the police then called their own reinforcements until they outnumbered the farmers by as many as 5 to 1. A brutal offensive was then undertaken by the police. Thirty-three farmers were injured and one was beaten to death. Fifteen arrests were made.

When news of the bloodshed and arrests drifted back to Atenco and its neighbors, there was rebellion. Outside the nearby town of Acuexcomac, three police cruisers were seized, overturned and set ablaze in the middle of the Texeoco-Lecheria Highway, the main thoroughfare into the region. Further along the same highway at Atenco, two more police cruisers met the same fate. Protestors also hijacked a police paddy wagon and three tractor-trailer trucks carrying Coca-Cola and used these also to block the highway. As many as 5,000 people—mostly local farmers but with a noticeable number of student activists—participated in direct actions to shut down the highway. Ever visible were the farmers' brandished machetes, some curved, some straight, many rather rusty. More than 10,000 police were called to the scene.

A group of 300 protestors later forced their way into the offices of the state's attorney general, demanding the release of the 15 farmers then under arrest. When their demand was refused, the protestors took hostage seven office workers, including the attorney general. These seven were grouped in the municipal auditorium of Atenco with five police officers taken earlier as hostages. Three undercover police agents were also taken as hostages after being caught posing as newspaper reporters.

Police threats to invade Atenco and rescue the hostages were cooled by the protestors' vow to tie hostages to gas tanks and set them on fire.

The aftermath of all the violence brought sudden and unexpected triumph to Atenco and its neighbors in Magdalena, Panoaya, Tocuila and Acuexcomac. The government agreed to exchange the arrested

farmers for the hostages and then, on August 6, President Fox announced his decision to build the new airport elsewhere. A close aide to Fox likened Atenco to a land mine.

One week after the rebellion ceased, Jason McGahan and Dévorah Revueltas interviewed Felipe Alvarez of Acuexcomac. Alvarez is one of the four spokesmen for the Atenco resistance. It was he who told reporters during the rebellion: "We demand that [the government] release our compañeros in return for our hostages. Theirs will be the first ones dead if the government tries to use the public security forces to release them."

Alvarez is what a Hollywood director might imagine a Mexican peasant farmer to be. He is over six feet tall, rugged and sun-brown with dark, narrow eyes and thick silver hair he keeps beneath the curved brim of a black Stetson hat. He wears faded blue jeans and black cowboy boots and keeps a straight-blade machete sheathed in a rough leather scabbard on his hip.

He spoke Clamor after a Sunday afternoon public meeting of resistance organizers and supporters, the latter of whom included representatives from the Zapatista rebels in Chiapas, student activists, labor and farming unions, and indigenous communities in southern Mexico opposed to Plan Puebla Panama. The interview took place in the same Atenco auditorium that earlier was used as a jail for the 15 government hostages. President Fox had not yet announced his plans to build the new airport elsewhere.

How long have you been living in Atenco?

Since I was born. I'm 50 years old.

After nine months of struggle for the land, how do you see the dialogue with the authorities?

Well, more than anything I see it as being very clogged. Dialogue is not developing the way we, the peasants, would have wanted. We sincerely wanted a dialogue a while ago and it never happened. Because I don't think the government was betting on negotiating with us. But now dialogue does exist. The government has announced that it wants dialogue, because it has had a lot of pressure from the Mexican Republic. That is what forces them to dialogue.

This project for a new international airport in Mexico City that has been presented by the Fox administration, how is it seen by the farmers here? What might a project like this be linked to?

Well, I think that this kind of project is linked, according to my understanding and my knowledge, to foreign interests. And it's managed by the heads of industries against the people. It is foreign capital that is interfering in our lands, no? In our problems and in our Mexican nation.

Here in Atenco the social organizations that have come here today say that the new airport can be linked to Plan Puebla Panama. What do you think?

I think it's a fact. Nothing is separate. I think they will always go together, the Plan Puebla Panama and the airport. Logically there has to be a communications base for Plan Puebla Panama, and that will be the airport. The airport will be one of its bases for support. I see it like

this: though there might be some distance between them, I feel they are the same thing.

How do you think the airport conflict could be moved along?

Well, I don't want to make a reference to what would move it along. I mean, the one who wants to move it along is the government, right? We are still in possession of our lands, even though an expropriatory decree has been announced. And our possession of them is what gives us strength. If we keep resisting for years and years, the one who must move it along will always be the government.

In respect to the expropriatory decree, as long as we have our land in our power, we will keep resisting at the cost of mobilization, at the cost of death, we will keep our land. Unfortunately, one of our compañeros died already, the first to die for this movement, this resistance. And if it's necessary, there will be more. But I think that those of us inside the struggle are conscious of what we could lose. It would hurt me more to lose our land than to lose our lives. For me in particular, it would hurt me more to lose what has been handed down to me from my parents, from my mother, than to die.

According to my age, I am going to die soon anyway. If I live 10 more years, that will be good, no? But who knows if I will live them. Maybe

I won't see our victory. But maybe if I die they will not take the land from my people.

And how do you think you could win the fight for your land?

Well, through what is being shown, no? You were talking a littlewhile ago about the connections on the national level, and why not? Let's talk about other places; because it is true that the other groups have come to show solidarity with this movement and that the only way to win is if the Mexican people rise up. Because in reality it is not only Atenco. There are many expropriations inside our country, and all of them are managed by foreign capital. We insist it is the foreigners because we know that in our country the economic capacity to set in motion a project of this magnitude does not exist. It has to be subsidized by foreign imperialism.

Now, how we win is to have the population rise up — all the towns should rise up. This conflict involves everyone. It not only enslaves Atenco; in the Plan Puebla Panama, part of Puebla [a city approximately 150 miles east of Mexico City] will be surrendered to maquiladoras. It is one thing to surrender to hard jobs if they pay well, but that will never be true. We surrender to slavery and the foreign investors are the ones who take all the profits. To be able to win, the Mexican people must rise up against these projects. The only reason that foreign interests support Vicente Fox and this government is to empty our nation, and to exploit the Mexican more. We feel it is right that our country develops, but not when that development has as its goal to leave the poor poorer and the fucked more fucked.

No. If we let them step on us, we will never be able to take their feet off of us. Before they put their foot on us, we must rise up. Maybe you as reporters come from somewhere else and say: this fucking Mexican is crazy, but we are not crazy, because look how the government treated Atenco, as if we were stupid. They don't think we're stupid anymore. ★

*For more information about the Atenco resistance visit
www.globalexchange.org
www.mexico.indymedia.org.*

The Sexual Politics of Ecodefense

fireweed

As a woman, I witness and see my sisters experience daily abuse. I see women neglected, patronized, physically and emotionally abused, and taken for granted. I've felt the powerlessness and humiliation of rape and I hear my sisters tell similar stories. My body is judged as a commodity and the power of my fertility is ignored and trivialized. Over the years I've come to the realization that this is exactly the same way we treat our mother earth.

I came out to western Montana because we have the largest active timber sale in the country. It's taking place in the Bitterroot National Forest (BNF), an area that has already been severely degraded due to past management practices like hillside terracing, clearcutting, and road building. When wildfires burned through this area in 2000, they burned thousands of acres and the BNF was hit hard. Afterward, the National Forest Service began devising a plan to commercially log the burnt trees as restoration for the area. Several big name mainstream groups sued after the government ignored the public appeals process, so in a mediated deal the sale was knocked down to 15,000 acres from about 40,000.

The deal didn't totally exclude those other acres and although the cutting was only supposed to be dead trees, the logging companies have found one excuse after another to cut live trees as well as violate other contract stipulations. Like with most issues dealing with the destruction of the earth, we get a lot of lip service and see very few real changes.

I'm here because when I hear about the daily atrocities we inflict upon this sacred place I feel a sick pain in my body. I remember the way it felt to be raped by a man and how no one thought it was a big deal and that's exactly how I feel about the way we treat this planet. I know some women have valid objections to using the word rape to describe

environmental destruction, but I personally feel my body being raped as this destruction continues.

Feeling emotions like this is overwhelming a lot of times, especially in such as an unconscious society. I have two choices really: lapse into alcoholic depression or rise up fighting. I am too angry to do nothing and so here I am on the frontlines of eco-defense, ready to die to protect this sacred earth.

I was recently occupying a Wild Rockies Earth First! tree-sit for about a month. After peacefully occupying the trees for two weeks, my friend and I were surrounded by police tape, our supplies were cut from the trees, a generator and six spotlights came in, and a four-person team was set up for 24-hour surveillance to deny us food and water. Basically, our option was come down and be thrown in jail or die. My friend came down after a week of severe dehydration, but I managed to save a little water and collect some rainwater.

I spent my days watching as the primarily male law enforcement officers napped and read books and tanned themselves as I slowly lost the ability to move around, eat substantial food, concentrate on things, and piss and shit normally. When they talked to me, it was in this patronizing "come down and behave young lady" type of voice. I was constantly teased with food and water offers by the men on the ground.

I was yelled at by angry male loggers driving past the sit. I was arrested by a man. My supplies were taken by a man. I was watched 24 hours a day, mostly by men. I was cut out of the tree by two men, thrown in the cop car by three men, and taken to the hospital and jail by a man. In the hospital I had a male doctor. I had male guards in jail, was transported to court by men, was given a male public defender, and had a male judge arraign me. Meanwhile, as I am escorted through this legal circus – the men who "own" this planet continue to destroy her.

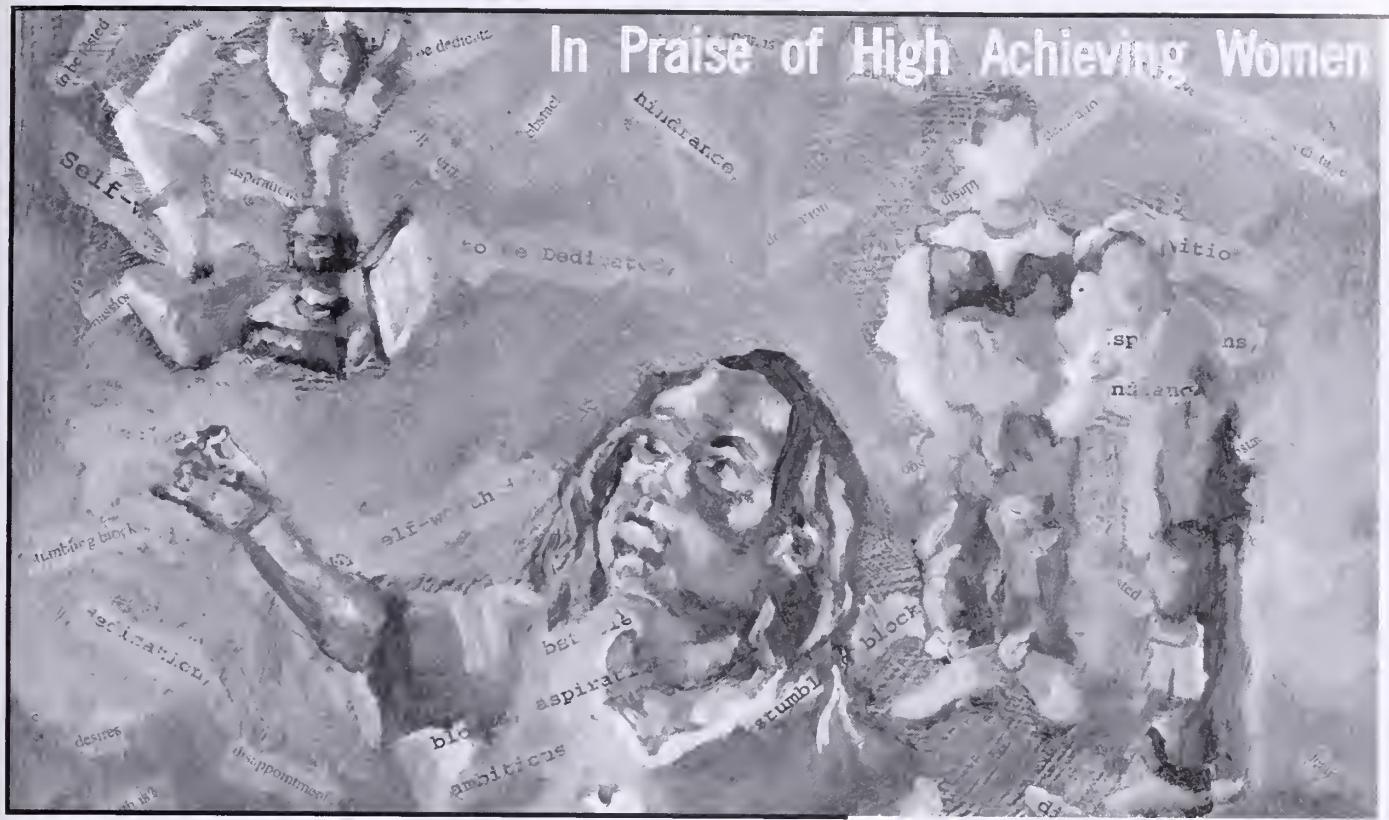
I am really fucking angry. I'm angry that this injustice system is dominated by sexism. I'm angry that the cops and freddies (forest service employees) assume that I am weak because I am a woman. I'm angry that our campaign is dominated by male activists. I'm angry that more women aren't empowered to express their rage and frustration through direct action. I'm angry that so many women don't allow themselves to even realize that they should be full of rage.

There were several times in that tree when those men were being so horrible that I made the decision to stay up there until I died of dehydration, just because I didn't know how else to reach them and wake them up. I wonder how much more we're willing to take in this country. Why aren't more of us giving up our lives for the struggle? Are we just full of shit and not really willing to give up our cozy convenient lifestyles? How much longer can we women as mothers, sisters, and lovers

watch our water filled with toxins, our forest destroyed, our air polluted? What kind of world are we leaving to our children and grandchildren? How can we live each day so complacently when there is so much pain and destruction? When will we rise up and really stop this? Why aren't we already? ★



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In Praise of High Achieving Women

Ann Dutton Helen Griffin

I am a high achieving woman. I am never happy in one place. I set goals and follow through. I work hard. I prioritize. I put out fires. And I get recognized for my accomplishments. Why, I wonder, is this perceived by the men in my life as such a negative thing?

Just the other day, I was speaking with a male colleague of mine, sharing with him my plans for obtaining a Ph.D. and my desire not to stay in this job forever, that I had higher aspirations. That I wanted to be a leader in my profession; I wanted to be involved in scholarly pursuit. His reaction was, shall I say, not positive. He could not understand why I wanted to leave, why I wanted to obtain another degree. He stated, "I see two things you could work on: you let people take advantage of you and you work too hard." My position requires that I be a focal point in the institution. My job is to help people and I do that unabashedly.

His latter comment truly bothered me. All my life I have worked hard. I do not do things halfway. I see things through and do a good job. I spend much of my personal time trying to figure out how I can do things better. So why is my desire to achieve met with such disdain? I remember a few years ago, I had a conversation with my dad about wanting to eventually obtain a doctorate. His response was "You know, Ann, you might get to the point where you have to ask yourself if you have too much schooling." I didn't say

anything then, but I remember feeling hurt by his comments. That he was not supportive or proud was damaging. After analyzing his comments in a larger context, however, I realized that the problem did not completely lie with my father. Rather, it lies with patriarchal society's animosity toward high achieving women.

In her book *Communion*, author bell hooks writes about society's belief that women should value love over work. hooks states, "Significantly, when successful women claim our right to wholeness by privileging love and work in our lives, we challenge sexist thinking that would deny us love as a punishment for choosing to value work." I can identify with hooks's statement. For me, my work is an outpouring of my love. I choose to passionately and wholly devote myself to achieving; it is truly a labor of love. When the men in my life choose to scoff at my achievement, then they are denying me love as punishment for my choosing to value work.

In popular culture, there are many instances where women are admonished for being high achievers and choosing to value their work. The now-canceled Fox television show "Ally McBeal" is notorious for never allowing the main character to find joy in her work. She is always embroiled in some personal crisis that keeps her from enjoying her high achievement (She made partner in her law firm and she was *still* miserable!). I have found that in times of personal hardship,

it is my love of work that keeps my spirit going. Popular culture seems to affirm that it is never permissible for women to enjoy work or achievement related triumphs. We must always put our personal lives in the forefront, as if that is all that matters to women.

My personal life does indeed matter, but it is not separate from my work life. I choose to share my successes and aspirations with the men in my life because I want to involve them in this realm. I want them to see me as more than just someone to love; my self-worth is inherently intertwined with my desire to be a high achiever. As women, we are trained to bashfully accept any accolades and never mention them again. I have a wall of fame in my work space that displays my diplomas and the various awards I have received. A female colleague of mine commented on my wall of fame one day and stated that she could "never do that." I told her that I was proud of my accomplishments and she should be proud of hers as well.

Women need to be vigilant in defending our right to achieve, be it in work, academia, sports, or plumbing apprenticeship. We also need to encourage the men in our lives to be supportive of what we do. I need to stand up to my father and tell him how important to me it is that he recognize and applaud my achievements. Most importantly, I need to continue to achieve. We all need to continue to achieve. ★

A Different Shade of Gray:
Mid-Life and Beyond in the
Inner City
Katherine S. Newman
New Press, 2003
www.newpress.com



In Howard Zinn's column for the October 2002 issue of *The Progressive* magazine, he seeks to relay "What War Looks Like" by describing its potential effect on "ordinary human beings who are not concerned with geopolitics and military strategy, and who just want their children to live, to grow up ... they are not concerned with national security but with personal security, with food and shelter and medical care and peace." And without trying to qualify another issue, I suggest that an urban subset of the same, truly undefined and often voiceless, public to which Zinn refers is given center stage in Katherine S. Newman's book, *A Different Shade of Gray: Mid-Life and Beyond in the Inner City*. Newman says "In the next thirty years, as the baby boom bulge works its way through America's population structure, we will see the over 65 age group double in size to 70 million." She goes on to describe the unavoidable pitfalls that beset this particular demographic when they spend their golden years in the American inner city — interrupted mobility, unreliable family structures, chronic health problems and a threadbare security net for all four of the problem categories mentioned next. Newman shows how employment, neighborhood conditions, marriage patterns and health are the four overarching elements that define growing older in the inner city. The book takes us from the financial vulnerability and problematic educational background common to childhood poverty (with an interesting perspective on desegregation's effect on role model patterns) and continues "beyond the self and its sphere of control to the organization of the wider society, the way it deals with race and poverty, immigration and displacement", basically deconstructing the notion that we are masters of our own socioeconomic destinies.

I know that somewhere, behind some professor's desk, I first read the euphemism that *there are lies, damn lies and then there are statistics*. So when I said earlier that this public is undefined, I mean that often times their individual, complex situations are stratified into theme-oriented, statistical bouquets* that flower government reporting of social service provision (improvements) and its perceived problem areas (regression). This might lead one to believe that Darlene Cawley, Rita Tilly, Cancion Naciente and Lena Sharpley have had positive or negative experiences respectively with employment, neighborhood conditions, marriage patterns and health — even though we would never really know their names and particular situations — thus feeding into the statistical data for which countless other real life situations would need to be compartmentalized by social issue in order to make a 'clear' case to the media, American public and/or in an increased budget proposal for the subsequent year. This will especially be the case when social issues that fall into different categories are also the domains of different government agencies which will need to prove different things with the statistics they produce.

Newman makes a good read in that she introduces us to Darlene, Rita, Cancion, Lena and many other real people, and she contrasts how their different life courses in the inner city include countless combinations

of social issues, thereby reconstructing the realities that political statistics can obscure. It's not so much that Newman doesn't lie to the reader, it's that she shows a very thoughtful and clear picture for growing old in the inner city.

-Todd Lanier Lester

Eating To Save The World: Food Choices for a Healthy Planet

Linda Riebel and Ken Jacobsen
Celestial Arts, 2002
www.savenature.org/food

This book is a handy guide for those people who would really like to do something to help the environment, but are not quite sure what. Maybe you're not ready to quit your full-time job to join the Peace Corps, and maybe you're not sure how to help with such mega-issues as global warming and species extinctions. But you can still make a difference, just by slightly altering your current lifestyle. In *Eating to Save the World*, authors Riebel and Jacobsen present a wide range of tips and ideas for environmental activism that all involve a simple act that everyone does anyway: eating.

The checkbook is mightier than the sword, the saying goes, and by aligning your purchasing habits with your values, the authors demonstrate how you can make a very real impact on the environment. The suggestions are for the most part practical, easy to accomplish and should not put too much of a dent in anybody's lifestyle or pocketbook. Although there may be trade-offs involved — as the authors cite, you may be able to find organic foods in your area, but only ones that have been shipped a long distance by trucks that increase air pollution — by using common sense and consistently striving to make the best decision, we can change our planet.

The authors urge consumers to support small farmers by purchasing locally-grown products, to seek products from companies using earth-friendly production processes, and to avoid unfriendly products such as endangered fish, goods with lots of packaging, products treated heavily with pesticides, and so on. Some of their tips are as simple as using up all your leftovers. The book is sprinkled liberally throughout with statistics, some of which are startling. For instance: If every American throws out one tablespoon of mashed potatoes, the resulting pile would weigh in at 16 million pounds! That's a lot of wasted potatoes!

Influencing others through our choices is a big focus of *Eating to Save The World*. For instance, animal rights groups have influenced fast food giant McDonald's (the largest single purchaser in the country of beef and potatoes) to insist that their suppliers use humane farming practices.

Whereas an individual activist may not be able to influence growers a whole lot, McDonald's can. And individual activists, by banding together, can influence McDonald's. Pretty slick, huh? Likewise, by purchasing organic products, we as consumers make them viable. And by clearly stating to supermarket managers and restaurant owners why we are purchasing them, we increase their awareness of the demand that exists.

So many of our choices have a ripple effect — using less pesticides improves the health of the consumer, but also the farm workers who tend and harvest the food. Irrigation, which can be beneficial, requires dams,

which in turn effects fish in rivers. Over-harvesting any species can cause problems with both their predators and their prey. The authors urge us to respect the complexity of nature and choose the least intrusive food production methods possible.

Although the book is strongly slanted to vegetarianism, it does offer tips for those who eat meat as well. Vegetarianism, they point out, can be cheaper and helps eliminate some potential health problems that arise from the over-consumption of meats, including arteriosclerosis and obesity. The use of antibiotics in meat animals is contributing to the development of "superbugs" that are resistant to antibiotic treatment, endangering human health (using antibacterial soaps adds to this problem too!). Their arguments, especially in light of the mad cow disease epidemic in Europe, are scarily convincing.

Although some of the statistics the authors present seem awfully negative and overwhelming, they do recognize positives, and balance out the gloom with specific examples of individuals and programs that are successfully making changes. This neat book deserves to be right up there on your kitchen bookshelf with the cookbooks, reminding you to "eat your greens."

-April Chase

EATING to Save the Earth



Faesthetic #2
www.faesthetic.com

Taking some of the world's best designers that you don't know yet (and some you do), Faesthetic lucidly illustrates and executes its mission to assert that art and design are not only omnipresent, but also invaluable tools for critical thought and creative expression. It's amazing that this is only the second issue of a magazine that will, no doubt, continue to be a refreshing and accessible example of how powerful art and design can be in moving people to thought and action.

In addition to an in-depth interview with Shepard Fairey (OBEY, GIANT) This issue features: DEDass, Niko Stumpo, Prate, James Patterson, True Is True, Neasden Control Centre, Graphic Havoc, Engine System, Anthony Yankovic, Shepard Fairey, Tomas Schostok, Failealife, Rich Mains, Andy Mueller, A Johnstone, Don Pendleton, Jon Burgerman, Drew Heffron, damien oh, upso, Eduardo Recife, and many many more.

-Jason Kucsmo



The Freaks Are Winning: The Inner Swine Collection

Jeff Somers
Tower Records, 2002
www.innerswine.com

The Freaks Are Winning is a collection of personal essays, editorials, "Wedding Confidential," reviews, and angry rants culled from 24 issues of Somers's zine, *The Inner Swine*. Filled with tons of blatant self-promotion and chock full of humor (both self-deprecating and at other's expense) the collection makes for a quick read.

A standout article is "You Can Live On Ramen Noodles For \$200 A Year" where predicting the collapse of the economy, Somers breaks down his essential needs in life into the categories of food, television, candy and



liquor, then explains how to get a majority of those items for free. He also provides suggestions on how to get free shelter, including going to prison to take advantage of the free food and lodging plus access to all sorts of amenities, like a library, television, gym equipment and games.

In "Nouveau Riche Somers Skating Towards Early Grave" Somers provides a scenario where he sells The Inner Swine to Microsoft for 17.5 billion dollars. With his wealth, he builds a "Pig Manor" and has a yearlong drug-fueled party filled with useless celebrities like MTV VJ Jessie Camp and Britney Spears. The point of the party is to have all these celebrities overdose on drugs and when the celebrity dies, Somers and his staff process the body into pate and serve it to the remaining guests. Somers thinks he's doing a service to the word by wiping out these celebrities of no talent, and I can't agree with him there.

Somers makes a good point in his essay, "Zine Rebel Or Zine Elvis?" where he breaks down the reasons why people put out zines. "No one puts out a zine imagining that they will have millions of readers, get on TV, and be wildly successful. You spend months working on the damned thing, and when you put it out, the most you get are a few enthusiastic responses and a lot of static. After a while your friends get tired of pretending to care about it. Simply publishing the thing indicates that failure in all of its subtle forms doesn't scare you much," writes Somers.

While not the most polished writer, Somers writes with great enthusiasm. Since the majority of the articles revolve around Somers himself, he seems to know his subject well enough that he has crafted some zany and hilarious stories around himself. The only place where the book loses its momentum is in the section where reviews of The Inner Swine from other zines are posted. This section is pure filler but then again, it makes me wonder if my review will appear in a future issue?

-Jason Ziemiak

genius b-boy cynics getting weeded in the garden of delights

Adam Mansbach
Subway
Elevated Books, 2001

I figured that if both Michael Eric Dyson and William Upski Wimsatt are endorsing the back of Adam Mansbach's book, then it must be good.

That was a good bet to make.

genius b-boy cynics getting weeded in the garden of delights is a brilliant collection of hip hop poetry. It's not necessarily always specifically about hip hop, but whether it's about race, his girlfriend, or activism, it's always written in the style of hip hop—whatever that is.

For Mansbach, hip hop is more than just a style of music. It is a way of life, a state of mind. In "notes from under sound" he says that "hip hop is the / white space between / beautify and destroy / when cats talk about / bombing the city's subway trains." He charges, "does hip hop shine through you / even in the classroom boardroom or courtroom? / when you hanging with non-heads & / can't bust rhymes or headspins or / catch tags?"

The hip hop that Mansbach lives is coming from the perspective of a white academic, and this fact isn't lost on him. He grapples with being a white artist in a

culture that is predominantly black. In "mouth to mouth resuscitation" Mansbach recognizes how, as a white hip hop artist and fan, he is perceived: "so I stay / strapped / with a symbolic list / of anti-colonialist accomplishments / for when somebody ask / who dis / potential brutus / judas iscariot / driving in place & / pumpin mix tapes to demonstrate / the unity of the proletariat." He also is careful to point out his own role in the racial economics of hip hop: "someday soon / race quotas / will be filled / by whiteboys acting black & bona fide negroes / still won't have jack / this book you holdin / is damn near proof of that."

In "frontlines (you've been accepted)" Mansbach perfectly articulates the tensions with which artists and activists in academia struggle — "you too can get paid / to discuss what / people like the one you used to be / are thinkin nowadays." And of those who sell out, he writes: "[you] beg james baldwin's forgiveness / because the fire this time / stopped burning after two degrees / leavin you strong enough for a man / but ph.d. balanced against the outrage / like the scales of justice."

Content aside, these poems are pieces of rhythm waiting to be read aloud. The audio track of "still life moving" on Mansbach's website brings the poem to life in a way I hadn't imagined while reading it. And just in case amazing poetry isn't enough of a reason to dish out ten bucks, proceeds from the book benefit the Active Element Foundation (www.activeelement.org), which funds grassroots youth organizers.

—S. A. Zablotny

Midnight Mind
www.midnightmind.com

Let us say that somewhere in your list of passions lurk these two things: cars (specifically the old cruiser yachts) and poetic writers. If this you then you need to pick up a copy of Midnight Mind #3. Its slogan is "Culture Defined" and I believe it strives in this direction.

This thick bi-annual magazine contains a uniquely different theme in each issue, and the sub-title of this issue is "On the Road in America." I took particular interest in the wordless photoseries taking the reader through the restoration of a '51 Nash. Also the old magazine ads for '74 Subaru, VW Bug, and the wonderful 1974 AMC Gremlin (caution: may go supernova in case of wreck) were comical since, at the time, 18 mpg was considered "economical."

The magazine deals rarely with any socio-political issues, unless reference by the short story writers. It never leaves its artistic grace for a rant about the evils of gas-combustion engines. The focus is the great memories and moments of life associated with cars and interstate road trips. Poetry is more prominent than short stories by about two to one.

Music that defines the road is analyzed within it to create a top ten driving album soon unavailable at truck stops everywhere.

You can check out www.midnightmind.com for information about submitting or to read excerpts from their books. They also have taken on the backlist of White Fish Press who put out a few region specific short story anthologies. Check out *Midnight Mind #4: The Chicago Culture Issue* out in September 2002.

-Gren Radcliff

Screaming At A Wall

Greg Everett

Grundle Ink Publications,

2001

www.grundleink.com

Screaming at a Wall is an uncensored and realistic glance into young life, the antithesis of current teenage pop culture. It's the story of a kid growing up and all the trouble he gets into, like

drug addiction and dysfunctional relationships, and how he escapes the traps and finds the inspiration he needs. If you have been a teenager within the last 10 years, the stories in this book will appear abundantly familiar to you, as will the protagonist, who happens to be Greg Everett.

Much like Henry Miller's main protagonist was "Henry Miller," Everett's fiction is more like Miller's "Fact-ion," an amalgam of real-life experiences with real life people thinly veiled just enough to avoid liability, but certainly not so much that the players can't recognize themselves and their idiocy. Yes, most of what Everett chronicles is teenage idiocy, and he has a stunning grasp of the concept. What is most striking about Everett's prose is its quality. He is quite simply, for as young as he is (22), an excellent writer. He has a command of the art and craft I have not seen from anyone as young since Ellis released *Less Than Zero* back in 1985, a book about another set of troubled California teenagers. Except *Screaming at a Wall* is about real teenagers, not the quasi-synthetic progeny of the Hollywood power-elite, a new millennium *Less than Zero* set in the Sprawl, without the money, power, influence and glamour. What does that leave us with? Just kids, their genitals, the drugs they take, the dramas they make, and the subsequently moronic things they say.

Everett is able to craft patently real scenarios that ring with the redundancy and tedium of American adolescence. His characters are completely believable, and the emotions are never forced but rather take on those alarmingly limited characteristics of a being in evolution, flailing and splashing like a young puppy on his first swim, just managing to keep their noses above the surface of the water. Their dramas take on that contrived quality of the aspiring adult, their talk echoes what is seen on TV and what is heard from parents and teachers, a superficial sense of concern, a mainstream, scripted empathy. Authority figures are the perennial enemy. Friendship exists in rebellion and apathy.

What resounds through this book is the overwhelming ego-centricity amongst the participants, a portraiture that gives the book both its altruism and its greatest flaw. Hence, it could have been 200 pages shorter and packed that much more of a punch. But that would necessitate the book becoming a commercial commodity, something Everett has actively campaigned against by releasing the book through his own Indie Press, GrundleInk Publishing. Which is good, because major houses are not exactly lining up to publish literary fiction by 22 year-olds these days

But to all his naysayers who would lament the self-indulgent nature of the book, I ask, what did you write when you were 21 that was better? Everett has the potential to develop into a world class author, and personally I shudder in glee to think about what he will write when he is 35, 45, or 55. Of course, Everett should also be thankful that he did not have the inflammatory exposure of a young Ellis or Michael Chabon, who never really did do better than their first forays into print despite authoring memorable books like *American Psycho*, *Glamorama*, and *Summerland*. Everett has the gifts of time and talent, two increasingly rare commodities for today's authors.

-Charles Shaw



Ready or Not

An expectant father's reflections on love



words Ben Fogelson
photos Dave Somerville

"Are you ready?" you ask.

Am I ready?

I'm 29 and I'm having a child.

Am I ready?

I make \$9.25 an hour, not even full time. Sometimes it seems like I just left high school. Married 16 months. Unplanned pregnancy. Now we're at 19 weeks, to the day. She's beginning to grow a beautiful pouch. Am I ready?

I work at a newspaper. I see some of what's going on. There are worlds far, far away, where "this" is happening and "that" is happening. I've traveled. Seen water buffaloes and machine guns. You can jet anywhere in 24 hours and see the world outside, but for me, now, these places do not exist.

And I like it that way.

I like looking inward. When I do, I see our love and our family. Surrounded by love's belly, I see our unborn child, whose heart beats like the sound of a squeezing sponge.

If I looked outward I could concentrate on other places in the world, but I don't want to. My world is delightfully shrinking, week after week, day after day.

My wife and I are pregnant, and it is overwhelming.

Overwhelming is fantastic. The heart is beating. Overwhelming is a teeth-chattering orgasm. Thump-bump, thump-bump. Overwhelming is a dream, a sunny day when you're pushing a stroller in the park, gliding a Frisbee, picking up your child and spinning around, until you lie down in the soft grass and smile at the blue sky. Thump.

For present-giving time in a stocking, from my mother-in-law, I got diaper-pins, plastic diapers-covers that smell like a shower-curtain, and a small, floral shaded lamp. The last item's for using the first two late at night. Was it a threat, a reminder, or just help? Am I ready for that?

The way people laugh when you unwrap such a gift implies they think we should laugh at the difficult, the un-done, the feared, the doody.

Am I scared? Why not? There's nothing wrong with being scared. I love it. Was I scared when, in the old Oregon forest, I looked into the blue pools of my

wife's eyes, and she cried and told her side of our love story? It took us far into the future. Imagine all time pausing, the chirps of birds abating, the river freezing in its flowing, the moss reaching up from under our toes, and the entire world shrinking. Jesus, I almost fell off the log.

Yeah, I think scared is more than okay. Scared is fucking great.

So I'm scared.

"Are you ready?"

We took photos at 16 weeks, four days. We'll take more as she grows. Some with the same background, a tribute to the beautiful burgeoning bulge. Her belly from different angles, or me holding her belly, or just the belly being a belly. At home, we drift by the stack of black-and-white prints and flip through them. There's one with her hands under her navel, and I could look at it forever. I could go to sleep with it resting on my eyes. I wonder how much she'll have changed by the next shoot? We don't move the photos. They stay on our yellow dresser.

We're moving. To the small cedar house beside the garden where we married. From the bed inside, we'll lay with him, or with her, listening to the rustling oaks and remember that day.

The clover had come up as we'd hoped, lapping at some islands of cool gray slate. Supernaturally moist and vibrant, the lucky leaves were freckled with black and yellow honeybees who dove at the red-pillar blooms. A river of velvety rose petals flowed through the emerald sea. We turned from our friends, our family, our community, who gathered beneath the forest's pine-green trees, under the cloudless sky, and spoke our vows. Later we got down, yo.

We'll lie in the house and remember that day. And there will be bills to pay, and the child might get sick. And we'll nurse him or love her and play alongside that early-summer wonder. We'll listen and figure and guess and we'll give. We'll rub his back or sing her to sleep. All things we've never done before.

And you ask, "Are you ready?"

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