

PROCESSED WORLD #24



PROCESSED WORLD
FALL
1989

VS.

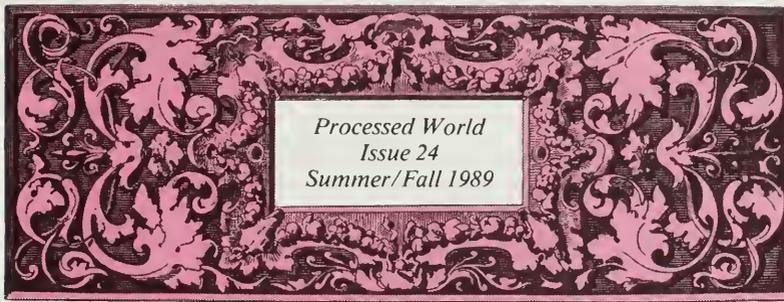
PROCESSED
WORLD
FALL
1989





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010

<http://www.archive.org/details/processedworld24proc>



GAWKING HEADS	2	Editorial
THE READERS TALK BACK	4	Responses to <i>PW's</i> readers' survey
SAFE AND SORRY: THE LEGACY OF AIDS	10	Analysis by Green Fuchsia
WORK	18	Fiction by Margot Pepper
A LOVE POEM	19	Poem by Bruce Isaacson
SPECTACLE FOR SALE	20	Tale of Toil by Adam Quest
HAZZARD PAY	21	Tale of Toil by Roger Coleman
POETRY	22	Blazey, Swift, Daniels, Gray, Black
ART ART! AND JESSE'S WORLD	24	Merle Kessler, Gregg Nakanishi and Ann Henry
ART? WHAT ART?	26	Introduction to <i>PW</i> art survey, spring 1989
BEING & NOTHINGNESS	27	Tale of Art Toil by Mark Burbey
SPOOKY DAYS OF THE WIDE EYED	30	Fiction by Jacques Servin
MUSING ON THE CHANCE OF		
UNHERALDED DESTRUCTION	31	Poem by Ivan Argüelles
EXECUTION BY PING-PONG	32	Fiction by Gregory Burnham
WALKING OUT TOMORROW	35	Fiction by Anne Ellsworth
HELL ON THE 33RD FLOOR	36	Fiction by Elisa DeCarlo
IGGY	38	Fiction by Frank Ananicz
BURT MEYERS	40	Poetry
LOST HISTORY	42	Review by Primitivo of Dennis Hayes' <i>Behind The Silicon Curtain</i>
LETTERS	44	From our readers



COLLECTIVE: Green Fuchsia, D.S. Black, Marina LaZara, Emily Post-It, Pauline Portamento, Ana Logue, Trixie T-Square, Frog and the amazing Primitivo Morales.

CONTRIBUTORS: Alexandre Saporetto, Merle Kessler, Lucius Cabins, Maxine Holz, xie-fu, C.J. Flaming Madman, I.B. Nelson, JRS, Jacques Servin, Ivan Arguelles, Odette Meyers & Burt Meyers (posthumously), L. Barbudo, Gregg Nakanishi & Ann Henry, Adam Quest, the Billboard Liberation Front, Zoe Noe, Roger Coleman, Angela Bocage, Gregory Burnham, Anne Ellsworth, Jesus Jr., Pike Bishop, Michael Botkin, MarsMensch, Elisa DeCarlo, Ace Backwards, klipschutz, Frank Ananicz, the Dead Honkey, Margot Pepper, Chaz Bufe & Typesetting Etc., Bruce Isaacson, Tom Tomorrow, Mark Burbey, Paris, Blazey, Jon Swift, Bili Turner, Jim Daniels, Patrick Worth Gray, Art Tinnitus, RGD, Dennis Hayes, Mary Jane Whitecollar, all the readers who responded to our inquiries, and others whose names elude us.

“There just isn’t a policeman for every person who calls...this isn’t a utopia.”

LA County Sheriff’s Dept. spokesperson responding to questions regarding murder victim who was denied help when she called 911.

Front Cover: design by David Peterson, photo by Stan Gamel of Carlos Rubio.

Back Cover: design by David Peterson, poem by D.S. Black

ISSN 0735-9381 *Processed World* is indexed in the Alternative Press Index. All of the articles in *Processed World* reflect the views of the author and not necessarily those of other contributors or the Bay Area Center for Art And Technology.

Processed World is a project of the Bay Area Center For Art And Technology, a California non-profit corporation. BACAT’s mailing address is 37 Clementina St., San Francisco, CA 94105.



Gawking Heads

... Gawking Heads ...
Glued to the Tube

I like to watch.

—Chance the Gardener
Chauncey Gardner

“... AND NOW HERE IS THE NEWS FROM NOWHERE ...”

We've all seen the images: the people in the street; the torchlit marches; the leaders called to account—they in turn call out the troops “to restore order” where there is no business as usual. The tanks roll in; the moment of truth is reached where either the popular will spells relief, if not victory, or the iron fist crushes dissent, buys itself more time.

This sequence scrolls across our screens with such dismal regularity that we can begin to consider the emergent patterns, and some of the questions begged by these glancing blows of information.

It's funny how the colors of the real world only really seem real when you viddy them on a screen.

—Alex, *A Clockwork Orange*

The brutal reaction of the Chinese government to the popular demonstrations in Tiananmen Square was a hellish note for spring to end on. Those depressing days in June were a sharp reminder that spring is more a matter of

rising temperatures than of soaring spirits.

What was more, by tuning in to it live, many of us were, for a change, transported by our tvs to somewhere something *vital* was in the air. We felt a fresh wind from the East that lifted the veil on China; our hearts soared.

Even if Being There meant looking over Dan Rather's shoulder, we reached out—in the tactilia of the telephone, we *touched them* by fax, modem, floppy, audio, and of course our eyes, through video.

To many of us, these consumer electronics have been tools in search of a function. Allowing such extensions to shape our awareness is the ineluctable way of life in this century. Yet our electronically amplified senses present whole new problems of epistemology never considered by Berkeley or Hume.

The new information ganglia have become our most vulnerable points as a species. Therein develop cults, and yes, nationalism. We share a collective “electronic shadow memory” which is constantly manipulated by the image-makers of today. Like flickers on the cave wall, these images serve to enliven us through the omniscient celebrity eye of the voyeur; we witness instant history in the orgasm of the moment. What actually happens Out There (on the street) remains at bottom an ocean of uncertainty.

As so vividly demonstrated by South Africa's State of Emergency (recently renewed for a fourth year), an entire nation can be wiped from the center stage of public debate with the flick of a censor's switch. The recent sham elections for the largely white South African parliament momentarily attracted the flighty attention of the news media. The defiance campaign has rippled our watery eyes, but has yet to spur a meaningful change from the U.S. policy of “constructive engagement.”

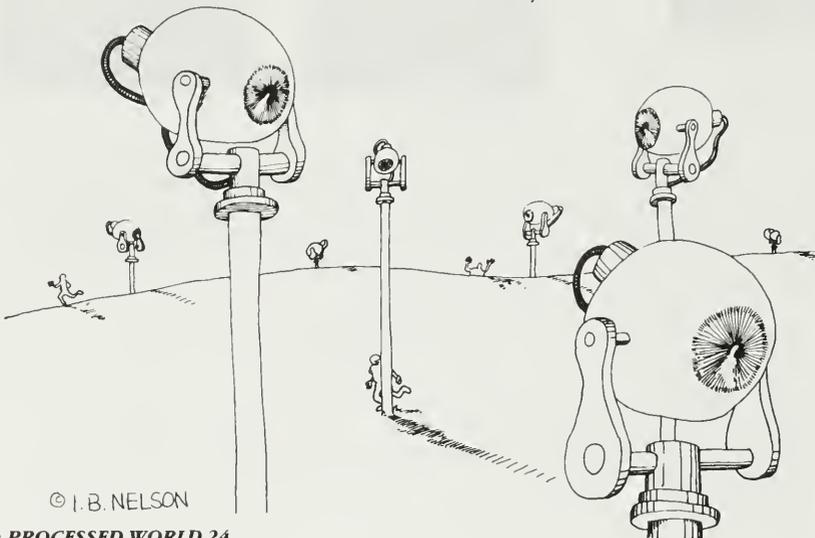
Information is available, in this country at least, if one makes the effort, and has an octopal grasp of the issues. Whether it be by watching the half hour weekly news program *South Africa Now* on Public Television, or pursuing other examples of the alternative media, one can get some idea of what is happening with the struggle against apartheid.

The mainstream commercial media is to world news coverage what Nestle's is to nourishment. In the reflection of the visually adhesive boob tube (idiot lantern; that damned box; glass teat, etc., as television has been variously known), we are reduced to window shopping channel-hoppers, with a cafeteria-style view of history.

Causes come like fads in the carousel of world events. There are few campaigns which capture the imagination and remain after so many ricochets through the media web. Those “nattering nabobs of negativism” who cause Uncle Sam such embarrassment can be cowed into silence, as when Secretary of State Al Haig denounced their coverage of El Salvador in the early '80s.

The Chinese authorities have demonstrated a particularly disturbing affinity for the new technology. Video, the electron gun of television, serves as the ubiquitous informant, the eyes of Big Brother which sweep many public assemblies. The world is *sensed* through a two-way lens, as deadly as any gun barrel. Dissident faceprints are broadcast, leading to arrests in ironic imitation of *America's Most Wanted*.

The government version of recent history becomes the new national reality. To survive one must, at least in public, toe the party line with what the



© I. B. NELSON

Chinese call *biaotai**—one expresses an *attitude* which conforms to the new improved rendition of recent events. One lies, in keeping with the spirit of the times.

While repressive societies can control what one says or does, it takes a powerful propaganda apparatus to shape what a people *think*. The ability of the Chinese system to program its people (more than a billion) will be tested in the months ahead.

Our society, preferring the subtlety of manipulation to the crude brutality of armed force, exhibits a more sophisticated version of everyday “virtual reality.”

The same technology, as we have seen, cuts both ways. The *intifadah*, on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, has been sustained by a sophisticated underground information network, with fax and copy machines on the move to get transmissions in and the message out. This summer’s production of the San Francisco Mime Troupe, *Seeing Double*, has added computer viruses to the armory of unconventional warfare used against Mossad, the Israeli secret service. Another promising forum for the mass democratic movement in South Africa is described elsewhere (see page 48).

• • •

Processed World has, from its inception, been of many minds, both wary of and drawn to the kidnapped child, technology.

We all must rise to the Pied Piper’s lilt at some point or other. It has long been stressed in these pages that life will become/has become unsupportable unless we get a grip on the turning wheel of progress and reinvest it with a purpose that promotes survival of the planet and assures everyone equally human rights. That may seem like a pretty tall order, but it’s the only real work that ultimately is going to *matter*. As anybody who has once passed “Go” should know, we cannot continue to grind away blithely at our workstations when, as we look ahead, the horizon is hurtling towards us. There is a basic formula for survival that still eludes us as a species; can we endure such ignorance at this stage of development?

As we wait to see which is stronger—our folly or our genius—it’s back to work in the flesh and fiber optic interzone. Adam Quest’s tale of toil, “Spectacle for Sale,” highlights the modern televideo world and its workers. The TV age is also examined in Jacques

Servin’s fictional piece, “Spooky Days of the Wide-Eyed.” “The next generations would consist of those people like me who had once found the act of watching television inexpressibly soothing. . . .”

Margot Pepper’s “Work” quantifies the time siphoned off from meaningful activity by most “work,” while L. Barbudo’s letter reflects on the Oakland schools in his response to “Children of the Night” in issue #23. The modern electronic workplace is dissected in *PW* contributor Dennis Hayes’ book, *Behind the Silicon Curtain*, reviewed here by Primitivo Morales.

Dead Poets’ booster klipschutz has lovingly assembled and introduced a series of poems by the late Bert Meyers ranging in moods from “Time is an old boss/we hate together . . .” to “Dark trees have bottled its light./They glow like many beers.”

Speaking of epistemology, this issue features further thoughts on the subject of AIDS. In issue #15, the group editorial “Quarantine Corner” discussed the vector of disinformation that sketched out much of the public revulsion to people with AIDS. In this issue, Green Fuchsia takes aim at the backlash against unconventional (i.e. unmarried, non-monogamous) sexual behaviors and relationships. Anything involving sex and death will generate furor, as “Safe and Sorry: the Legacy of AIDS” occasioned some heat and smoke among the editors. His review of the scientific literature, coupled with a visceral rejection of the new sexual conformity, calls into question the true meaning of “safe behaviors,” the inculcation of which can be found in the cultural agenda of state and health authorities, AIDS activists, and other concerned citizens who would pave our way to oblivion with the *best of intentions*.

Some readers who have written to us object to the fiction and poetry that appear in this magazine. We say it’s spinach, and you will find in this issue lots of bite-sized pieces ideal for elevator-reading, or to enjoy on the john. Three short fictional pieces (“Hell on the 33rd Floor,” “Iggy” and “Walking Out Tomorrow”) are the latest in our vision of capitalist realism.

Issue #23 included a reader survey, which was mailed to subscribers during the spring. You’ve done us proud! The 6% response rate was (unexpectedly) high. Most of the respondents wrote at length. We’ve done some severe pruning; the results are presented on pages 4-9. Some came to praise, others to

bury, yet others “got something off their chests.” There were a few Tales of Toil in miniature. A profound thanks to all who took the time to respond—results won’t be immediate, but we’ve learned a lot.

We included a questionnaire (that most loathsome of forms) with the mailing to subscribers. The object was to elicit material on “art,” whatever that may be. Again, the response was great—in fact, it was so massive as to require more space and planning for its presentation. We whet your appetites by presenting for your consideration (as Rod Serling would say) Mark Burbey’s provocative essay “Why We Live, or, Being vs. Nothingness.” We also present two different views of Jesse Helms as a patron of the arts in our centerfold. On page 26 the survey questions are repeated and the answers to date summarized in the hope of obtaining yet more grist for our mill.

Apologies for not including more, but issue #25 will have a major section on art and work, artistic or not.

So as not to leave out those with other interests, we propose another theme, one touched on in the past: leisure time and travel. How we spend it (or want to); what working in the relaxation industry is like; the vacation of the future—either as satire or speculation. How about a semiotic analysis of lawn furniture? It’s up to you.

Some readers have written saying they would like to hear from places other than San Francisco.

We agree. So . . . MAKE IT HAPPEN. Send us tales from your neck of the woods.

We would like to see more analytical articles. What’s happening at your workplace? Is there any work-place organizing going on? What environmental issues are or should be at the forefront? What burning issues have we missed? Have we burned any of the issues touched on here? (Careful with that flag, Eugene!)

So write, and write often. We love hearing from all-a-ya. Bye!

—Art Tinnitus & The *PW* collective



To make known one’s position,
To declare where one stands

The Readers Talk Back

An emboldened six percent of our readers responded to the Great *Processed World Survey* in issue #23. There were 54 respondents, of whom 3 were non-subscribers and 6 were new subscribers. Here are some of their more pithy responses. We start out with some Tales of Toil in miniature (truncated tails?) generated by the question:

Do you sell your life to buy your survival? How? Do you work in an office, with computers or people? Are you doing the processing or are you being processed? Or are you outside of it all?

Ace Backwards, CA: Quit my straight job 4 years ago and have been bent ever since.

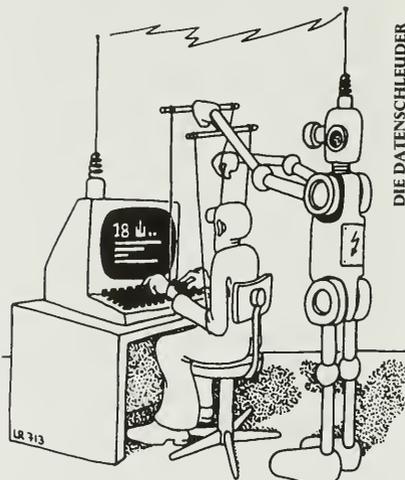
M.R., TX: I dream of tearing it all down, (gently and painlessly of course) but meantime I'm providing consumers with what they really want: a credit-card operated gas pump, so they won't even have to go in the store. At last.

J.U., CA: ... I am an editor for an "alternative" music magazine ... I work at home. The computer isn't always on, but I have to use it often. I work alone. Friends come by to visit sometimes, but not as often as I would like (most of them have to work at real jobs). I have a big say in what the magazine writes about, but I also have to accommodate the content to the needs/desires of the readership and marketplace. I never want to be "outside of it all." The times are too heavy to stand on the sidelines.

J.E., TX: Personally, I slave for wages as a practical nurse on a cancer floor in a large "non-profit" (i.e. very profitable) hospital. Love my work, my patients and my fellow nurses. Have earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry and have planned to get out of nursing as it is a rough profession for anybody past early middle age (I am 35). Have been accepted for grad school but as my prospective employers are drug co's or giant chemo firms a la Dow and Union Carbide I am not enthusiastic. The hard sciences are the most intellectually demanding study going ... yet they also produce the narrowest tunnel vision—I have yet to see any of even the brightest of my genufine science grads show anything like genuine intellectual curiosity. I worked in Amnesty International with business and accounting types who were far more interesting people than my fellow chemistry majors.



T.C.B., ??: My jobs have always involved office, secretarial, business, computer, paper-pushing tasks. Used to believe that I did this work "accidentally", that I somehow should be doing something "important" or "creative." Well, this work seems to be what I'm good at—organizing information, minimizing repetition, constructing systems. The challenge now is to find settings where I can sell these skills and not hate myself ...



P.S., VA: I am a reformed art student, working in Washington, D.C. I studied film and video production, and graduated with a B.A. I enlisted in the U.S. Navy (after a frustrating job hunt) and worked as a TV production specialist. I recorded lots of news programs relating to DoD actions and policy, played movies on a closed-circuit TV system, and produced/edited in-house projects. It was a job, not an adventure.

After 5 years of the Navy, I became a federal employee. As a producer/director for the U.S. Army, I am doing the work I went to school for and always wanted to do. I exercise creative decisions and take pride in the work I do, trying to communicate the message in each script in an understandable and human fashion. The finished products are not entertainment, but they do serve a purpose—education and training.

On the surface, it would appear that I have been processed. As I sit in my office, in the Pentagon, typing this letter to you, it would appear that way. But I do make a difference here. My input will make the government better, more aware and caring. I do believe this. Not kinder and gentler, but more aware.

And reading your magazine helps me to do this, opening my mind to new and exciting ways of looking at ourselves.

N.G., MN: I'm too tired to talk about my life so I cheat and won't answer.

P.W., Walla Walla WA, I haven't sold my life for survival, but rather I've been kidnapped by the state into prison where I am currently being held against my will. I work as an unpaid volunteer in the prison law library. No computers here. To the extent that I have control over my life and actions I am not being processed in that I use the means available to me to improve my, and others', living conditions, human rights, etc.

P.D., CA: I do not sell my life to buy my survival. However, I anticipate that it may happen. Currently I am fortunate/unfortunate in being a single mom on welfare. As my contribution—I go to school and am a full-time activist. I look at it that the state is paying for me to improve society. I produce a monthly newsletter, flyers, press releases and a zillion other things on the computer. It drives me crazy! Although I control the materials, I think anyone who sits in front of a computer is being done to (processed) on some level.

A.R., NY: I've sold chunks of my life in many ways to buy survival and still do, although more happily. I'm a graduate student in history at a school where they actually provide me with enough fellowship ... On the other hand, school is work, just not too well paid and differently structured. I sure do spend a lot of time with this computer. Before school I worked in restaurants as a waitress, cook, dishwasher and bus-person; in various left-wing or academic organizations as a receptionist and word processor and, as a sop to my ego, as an "organizer" (more phone calls, ugh, the telephone is worse than the computer); as a photographic printer and camera operator; as a construction worker; as a temp for various large, ugly corporations; you know, the usual. Being a receptionist was the worst; being a photo printer was the best except that it made me ill from the chemistry and I got fired for calling OSHA. Actually being a grad student is the best, really.

W.W., NY: I do whatever work I can get. I'm one of Capital's throwaways because of my resistance to war while serving with the Marines in Viet Nam. I also have done time for not talking to a Grand Jury. Employers don't look on my unstable life too kindly. My latest jobs have been inventory clerk, child care worker, and landscaping. I have probably had over 100 jobs so far in my life. I went through 10 the first year back from Viet Nam. My temper is a lot more controlled now so I don't openly assault stupid bosses anymore. I work with computers, just data entry while doing inventory.

The Equalizer, NY: I'm a "film drudge" for a very violent TV show on prime time... This is my 31st week working on this show—2 more months till it's over (no more 50-60 hour weeks) and I'm unemployed (no more \$\$). That's Show Biz! (This is *not* glamorous!)

FCF, Soledad, CA.: I am outside of it all. Not because I'm here, but because I refuse to be less than what I came to this speck of dust as, and I will leave as I came—a caring human being. I feel it is more important to be a part of this earth than a sore upon the face of it.

G.M.T., CA: Yes, I have a steady job—I am a cook in a moderately high class restaurant—which is considered neither artistic creation nor world salvation. But neither does it destroy the environment (except for the decimation of Alaskan King Crab and Pacific Swordfish), nor does it warp people's minds. As with most jobs it demands sacrifices: I have to cut my hair and shave my face. More important, it demands 30-40 hours a week, time which I would rather spend writing and studying the nature of reality. On the other hand, there is a lot to be said for bringing pleasure into others' lives... It gives me an opportunity to focus on simple quality, and through my example inspire others to do the same. Which probably sounds like rampant egotism and rationalization, and to some extent is, but I just want you to know that while I may regret the time it uses up, I enjoy my job and in no way feel guilty about it.

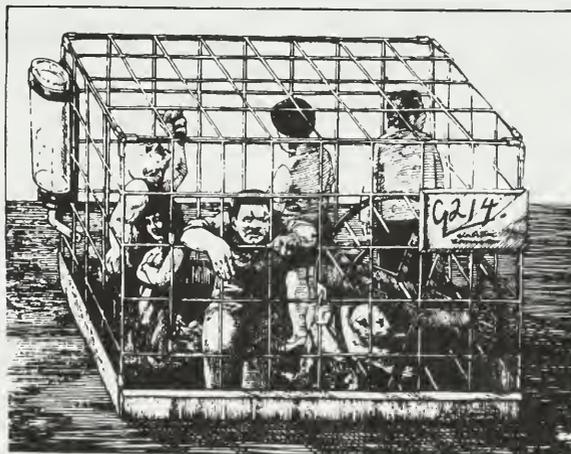
L.O., NY: I have been tamed by 16 years in the workforce—now I need the structure. But for a year and a half, I worked a 3-day week plus free-lance, when I felt like it. That was great. It's been real hard going back to full-time. I keep trying to find "meaningful work" & nothing's ever been pure enough. Now I work for a gov't agency on recycling; last job was for a pseudo-feminist nonprofit that had the ethics of a brothel; my most "fulfilling" job was way back when I edited puzzle magazines, they really reached the wretched of the earth.

?P., CA: INFORMATION SOCIETY: I like computers. They are my little friends. I hear of their growth mostly from a coworker, who is truly in tune with technology (he has held worship services at the foot of Sutro TV tower)... To come across something that treats information technology like an infestation of fascistic happy-face slime molds is thought provoking. This is a good thing in a field where almost all the news comes from press releases and ads... I expect to see a new profession appear soon—people to tell you how to make the most of all the information available to you. What I want to see is a discussion of whether and how we can avoid being controlled by our data flow. CONSIDER THIS A SUGGESTION FOR AN EDITORIAL THEME...

J.S., TX: Indeed, I ransom a portion of my life to the time-bandits for my biological survival. Ours is an anthropology of needs, as you well know, and though I attempt to resist this anthropology as much as possible, it is impossible to do so entirely. So despite a relatively low rent, virtually no furnishings, a bare minimum of appliances (the "needs!"), and a 20' X 20' plot where I attempt to grow a goodly portion of my summer victuals, I have still been compelled to seek to be exploited. I work presently as a technical translator (I have been with the company 9 months). I translate all manner of documents from Spanish to English and vice-versa... I have seen, but never felt obligated to speak to, the second-in-command, a Dan Quayle look-alike who dresses in Madras shorts and polo shirts. I report only to a gaggle of robust middle-aged women, who variously hold such titles as office manager, assistant office manager, and the like. These stalwart individuals heave IBM Selectrics and large boxes of files around like so many down pillows, and swear like truck drivers when together and believe themselves out of earshot of the more genteel editors, whom they consider unreconstructed pointy-heads. Their relationship to us translators is more ambiguous; in general, they consider us oddities, since most of us have peculiar semi-foreign backgrounds (or are foreigners entirely, toward whom they have an attitude of amused interest, which in some cases verges on scorn)... Suffice it to say that what I translate almost invariably involves the scheming of multinational corporations for more profits: the marketing of new and casuistically uncertain drugs (mostly antibiotics); an attempt by Shell to grab a huge tract in the Gran Chaco just after Stroessner's overthrow; an attempt by Eli Lilly Co. to refuse to pay the Mexican government a \$5 million debt, on the excuse that Mexico's severance of ties with South Africa had hurt the company's market; and so forth. These are all documents from the companies themselves, their legal representatives, or foreign governments. That is to say, the clients who are hiring my services are usually the multinationals themselves. Sometimes my jobs involve pure R&D, e.g. nuclear magnetic resonance research, polymers, etc. (these are usually articles from research journals); other times they are instruction manuals (how to slap together circuit boards, for instance—used in Mexican maquiladora factories, etc.). Occasionally something which I consider actually useful to society will come my way, e.g. a lengthy report on the battle against onchocerciasis (river blindness) in Equatorial Guinea (this is a WHO-related Spanish research team).

I am paid a pittance for all this: \$31.00 per 1,000 words of the original language. In theory, I could crank out 3,000 words a day, but not only is there not this much work to be had (it comes in waves), I wouldn't want to work this much anyway. (About 60% of the company's work is in Japanese; German comes next). I doubt I will translate more than 300,000 words this year, which means I'll make around \$10,000 for the whole year. So do I enjoy my job? Clearly, I am getting ripped off; after all, I am providing a service for some of the largest multinationals (du Pont, Merck, Sharp & Dohme, Shell); at the same time, I am fascinated by seeing what depravities these corporations will stoop to next. On a purely personal and artisanal level, I am quite interested in the play between languages...

Nevertheless, the ironies of my situation are sometimes ludicrous. I have, for example, just finished a translation of an article written by Cesar Chavez in April for the Sacramento Bee regarding the misuse of pesticides, for distribution to Spanish-language press (a volunteer thing which the United Farm Workers asked me to do; since I do a lot of medical translating and am fairly familiar with the terminology, I have also volunteered to translate such things as AIDS pamphlet for the Chicano community, etc.). And now, after just completing the pesticide article, I find before me, from my paying job, a long patent from the Stauffer Chemical Co. for a new herbicide.



LNS/CPF



PHOTO BY D.S. BLACK

What did you think of our "Green Issue" (#22)?

Good:	16
Didn't see it:	8
Didn't see it and want it:	6
Not so Hot:	6
Don't remember:	3
So-So:	3
Yes:	1
Hated it:	1

L.A., OR: For me, the "Green Issue" (#22) was a bit pale, undernourished perhaps. Or was it a matter of fertilizer or even inadequate irrigation?

J.P., CA: I thought the issue was a good one, especially in its willingness to criticize a "politically correct" movement. I think that it is good to criticize ideas or movements generally accepted by a group as "correct," rather than only criticizing movements or ideas generally accepted by a group to be suspect or wrong. . . . I have to admit that whenever I saw articles about the "green movement" in the paper or in magazines, I didn't really think about them; I just put the greens in the category of good people working for a good cause (with a tremendous jerk of the knee). I was quite surprised, then, to read about the other side of the movement, the side that seems to hate human beings with a passion. I certainly don't lump all the greens under the "stupid bastards" category now, but I do try to think a bit harder about these groups. Lesson learned, thanks to *PW*.

P.S., VA: Issue #22 was very dogmatic. The "green" philosophy deserves much attention, and I am glad you focused on it. Many of your contributors had their own personal agendas (it seemed) and issue #22 often reminded me of tracts handed out at political rallies.

Anon6, AZ: Yes

T.C.B.: Hated it. Now that I live in the Northwest and have a lot more contact with Green-type issues, I'm continually disgusted by righteous ideologues who don't want to

do the down-and-dirty work of cooperation and compromise among all the people and interests involved. Blaming Big Business is so much easier than talking to third-generation loggers about why you're trying to destroy their jobs.

W.S., CA: The Green issue was politically correct but not as interesting to read as many other issues.

Anon2, NY: The "Green Issue" was pretty good. . . . I couldn't agree with you more regarding your assessment of the Green movement. Not that I was ever much of an expert on the subject, but I don't much care for people who would consider me politically incorrect just for indulging in an occasional steak.

S.S., CA: I think it is important for the left to be self-critical. If I thought anything about the green issue it was that I saw some healthy criticism. I bet some greens had a hard time swallowing that. I'm not sure *PW* should identify with greens more.

FCF, CA: I am really into the Green issue, and your issue was really an insightful view of the Greens. . . . Anyone who is alive on this earth should be totally involved in the Green movement.

Should *PW* get involved in the "green movement?"

Critically:	14
Yes:	12
Why Not:	7
No:	5
Up to You:	3
How:	1
Don't know:	2
Greens should join you:	1

MP, CA: Nope. Maybe left greens.

LA, OR: No. *PW* should not get involved in the "green movement" or any other movement for that matter, if you wish to continue being "The Magazine With A Bad Attitude." Once you begin to concen-

trate on and actively promote specific issues you also begin to narrow your focus, take sides, and thus acquire the blinders that prevent you from seeing all those other opportunities out there that lend enhancement to your Bad Attitude. The result is to become mired in ideology and dogma.

SBG: I think *PW* should get involved in everything. My motto is "Everybody's business is my business." I am no isolationist.

J.P., CA: . . . I don't think *PW* should get involved in the green movement. Yes, the green movement is important (certainly, in the big picture, much more important than the plight of the modern office worker), but so are many other movements and issues, each worthy of its own magazine. I think that *PW* is important in that it gives people a place to read and write about what is going on in the lives of people in situations similar to their own, from both a cranky, god-i-hate-this point of view, and from a more universal how-does-it-all-fit-together point of view. This gives people both an outlet for frustration and inspiration to keep at it (life, that is) with a reminder that there are many more important things to life besides work. If *PW* were to lose its present focus, and concentrate on the bigger issues, I think this outlet and inspiration would disappear from the magazine.

I.B., MI: Of course! The worst pollution is indoor pollution. The hermetically sealed office building is the most hazardous environment. The people who create this kind of micro-environment for us are the same ones despoiling our macro-environment.

M.R., TX: Involved in the green movement? I dunno. I felt a homecoming feeling when reading the intro to "Maggies Farm" article. I fear I too am a "wannabe green." Should be green but they don't quite reach me. Their grassroots approach, the targeting of individual consumers was, I once thought, important because only through a fundamental shift in everyone's values—away from "mindless consumption"—would a real, deep, lasting change take place. I envisioned a "trickle-up" effect—once a "critical mass" shared these values the government, corporations changed, being made up themselves of individual consumers. This was the First Grassroots Vision. Okay, pull the flowers out of your hair. (What kind of drugs is that girl on, anyway?) I think rather that a revolutionary change must happen. This system is flawed at its roots. . . . I'm not sure you could join the greens & provide that rebellious energy. It would be delicate. But a combination of forces and ideas—yes.

P.D., CA: Green Movement!? How about a more militant stance? Earth First! is where it's at! I think the notion of the green movement is a good one but I'm quick to fear the liberals bureaucratizing and being concerned about offending someone! Right On! Let's offend away! I find it extremely offensive what we're doing to our planet. Liberals beware! As Mao said, "Combat Liberalism."

W.S., CA: I dunno, it just depresses me to think about it.

L.O., NY: But you can do much more. There are lots of Greens around, not so many anarchists.

Should you join the 'greens?'

Already am:	9
Nope:	9
Should:	8
Reading, or studying:	5
Too Busy:	4
None of yr Bus:	1
Lack of faith:	1
Wouldn't join a party:	1

L.A., OR: Rather not! ... I dislike confrontations. No marches, no sit-ins, no protests, no rebellions, no ultimatums, no manifestoes. No nothing. Go play instead.

SBG: I am a very politically involved person, but it hurts. I have little time, less money, and no stomach for bureaucratic harassment on any level. Please advise. In the face of the Exxon holocaust, not to mention my own small town's development, I ask myself, "What then, must be done?" We can lobby, protest, and recycle goods, but I do not have undying faith in the political process or even in the ability of humankind to save itself. And I sure don't think God's going to get involved.

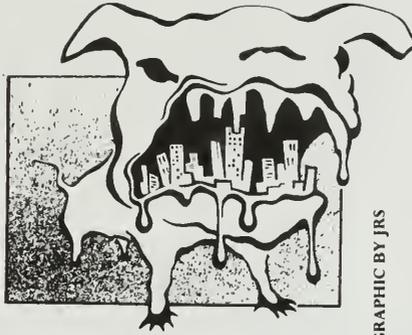
P.S., VA: I guess I'm a reader, not an activist. I'm not ready to be green yet.

Anon6, AZ: The individual must become involved in the Green movement, or "society" will not survive.

I.B., MI: I tried to, but it's not easy to find a "Green" group in this area. Detroit is

still a one-industry "company-town" where most people think Ralph Nader is a Communist.

? .P., CA: As far as involvement goes, for you or me, well, I usually strap on the mental gas mask before I deal with any political party. I prefer to deal with issues, where the power trips that politicking brings out in people are at least focussed. The Greens tackle a lot of important issues, better and more than most Parties, and that's why I like them. I wouldn't join a party, though, unless I saw a need it could fill, either in myself or in the world.



GRAPHIC BY JRS

DL, VA: Yes, I'm running for congress in de [sic] suburbs on a Green Platform.

W.W., NY: Economic survival and interest to relocate to a place, where it's possible to live collectively take my major time. I have been forced to live under austerity most of my life and have a hard time with fads. I do love nature over development but that's often tied in with my hatred of capital, which makes commodities out of everything. I also have been corrupted by growing up in an inner city. I love movies and libraries.

A.R., NY: As for me, yeah, I recycle, etc. but here in Brooklyn immediate human needs distract me from the needs of the planet. So no, I shouldn't get involved in the greens, I'm busy with AIDS stuff and abortion stuff and refugee stuff and you know.

A.B., CA: I suppose I should get involved, whatever that's supposed to mean. However, in any "movement" there's a certain social element involved, and since I am socially incompetent I don't get involved.

Anon5, AZ: Us? Well ... I don't especially like associating w/ granolaheads but if the movement makes an attempt to dissociate itself then I'd "join." Roommate says "Sure why not?" but realistically, won't go out of his way—it'll have to come to his Friday evening beer "salon."

When & where did you first encounter PW?

Store:	16
Friend:	13
Magazine or paper:	13
(including <i>Utne Reader</i> , <i>Mother Jones</i> , <i>Village Voice</i> , <i>Bay Guardian</i> , <i>Alternative Press Directory</i> , <i>Factsheet 5</i>)	
Unknown:	4
Another Group:	2
PW street activities:	2
Flyer:	1

Anon2, NY: First heard about *PW* from another legal proofreader. Hidden in our major corporate law firms, there are a bunch of proofreaders who would love to bring the system down.

JB, IA: In Ottawa, Ontario ... It was, as I recall, the second issue on sex. It looked interesting—I was intrigued by your name—I bought it—but upon reading it I was disappointed. After that I only flipped through a few issues now and then in stores, but as they say: "Once bitten ...". However, a good friend of mine just lent me issue #23 and it is quite good. So I'm subscribing.

AR, NY: I had heard rumors about it along the disgruntled-clerical-worker grapevine for some years. In fact what I'd heard was that there was some anarchist magazine out in California somewhere that would tell you how temp workers could rapidly and secretly bring large corporations crashing to their knees via sabotage. So when the first issue I saw did not provide instructions for this project I was sorry, but liked it anyway.

Anon4: I first encountered *PW* a few years ago. I think it was your sex issue, and I still remember a short story about a sexual

encounter in an office behind the xerox machine involving white-out and scotch tape (I think). The story made a vivid impression on me, but I seem to have forgotten all the details.

PS, VA: I first saw your magazine in the computer magazine section ... at the news stand in the Pentagon Concourse. It was issue #21, and I have never seen another. I waited many months and finally asked the vendor about it, and of course, no one ever knew what I was talking about. It became obvious to me the need to subscribe, though I still check the computer section, just in case ...

F&SW, MA: We encountered our first issue: "Processed Kids" in Salt Lake City's only "punk rock" record store—on the far west side of town. We bought it immediately. We bought the "Processed Foods" issue in an anarchist bookstore in Amsterdam.

JS, TX: First encountered *PW* being sold in front of Roxy Theater, SF, by a funny-looking guy with a sandwich board. I dismissed the guy as a crank, but my pal bought a copy, and we got to look at it before the movie started, and it was pretty funny. The movie, by the way, was some kind of neo-situationist effort, *Call it Sleep*. The year, ca. 1982.

Only two responses stated that their names could be used—both of them prisoners. We have decided to leave everyone hidden behind initials (sometimes altered). This gives everybody the same weight, and prevents any retaliations. We have edited the responses for clarity and brevity.

How many people read your copy of PW?

Responses ranged from a high of 45 to a low of 1 (natch), reported by 15 people. The average is about 2.4 people. It seems to get copied a lot.

LA, OR: As far as I know, I am the only responsible human reading my copies of *PW*. ... I have no idea how many irresponsibles may be reading it. My wife has occasionally glanced through an issue but has apparently failed to be grabbed enough to read much of it.

SBG, ??: Anywhere from 3-10 depending on how many friends I have recently alienated.

PW, Walla Walla WA.: Anywhere from 5-7 people read my copy. Double that if their cellmates read it too.

PD, CA: 1 1/3 (myself, my roommate about every 3rd issue, and once in a while my kids admire the graphics).

WS, CA: Only I usually read *PW*. Oddly enough, I don't seem to have many friends to whom it would be relevant. Maybe I'll check this out further, though.

JB, IA: 3-4. This sounds suspiciously like the kind of info you'd give to potential advertisers. *If you're going to use this information to sell me to advertisers you can just tear this up along with my check and cancel my subscription before it even begins!! I refuse to be a commodity, traded and exchanged via advertising*, and I would expect a magazine like yours would be sensitive to that.

Anon4: My husband and my teen-age daughter also read the magazine.

MR, England: Mostly just myself reads *PW*, occasionally a colleague gets a fragment down his or her throat.

What do you like best in *PW*?

Poetry, Fiction, Graphics, Tales of Toil, Analysis & Essays	
Graphics:	32
Tales of Toil:	26
Essays & Analysis:	22
Fiction:	10
Everything:	8
Poetry:	6
Letters:	6

P.S., VA: It is refreshing to hear other people analyze our little world with fresh perspectives. It gives me hope that the "processing" is not complete or homogenous.

B.S., NY: I like best the revolutionary elements of *PW*, the elements that satirize and expose the parallels between Nazi Germany and the U.S. today, the elements that satirize and expose the mindlessness the bourgeoisie is trying to get us to take on. I like your global focus, your focus on imperialism both in the U.S. bloc and the Soviet bloc.

S.S., CA: Good graphics. I like the fact that the magazine is geared toward working people. But, I think that if you want to reach the masses you might consider being less intellectual/artsy. Not that working people can't understand anything beyond SF Chronicle 3rd grade level, but it feels pretentious.

J.W.: Tales of Toil are my favorite! I'll never forget a wonderful article written by a janitor who worked in the downtown mansions of capitalism. The poetry is often remarkable: funny bitter, zany, stuff you don't read in the academic poetry rags, that's for sure!

J.E., TX: I like factual articles best—real life experiences of readers. "You've Got to Give Me Credit," "Mud Shark for Hire." The article by the guy whose parents were Los Alamos scientists was devastating. (I grew up an Army brat familiar with "security" restrictions so I have some faint idea of where this guy comes from.) Art work is uniformly good as is layout and the general "feel" of the mag—I love a publication that looks competently produced but not slick. I love graphic art and would like to see more.

Ace Backwards, CA: Like the cool neo-psychotic graphics and Tales of Toil.

T.C.B.: Enjoy Tales of Toil. First-person narrative allows writer more freedom and allows reader to draw own conclusions. Analysis and Essays: Enjoyment strictly dependent upon writer's skill in presenting ideas. If content is factual, I usually give article more credence than if content is theoretical/ideological. I tire of politics with a beef preaching to the faithful. Fiction & Poetry: Almost never "enjoy" these, but think they have a place in *PW*. I try to extend courtesy to the authors, but usually find the pieces sophomoric. Graphics: Oh, sure. Pictures are great. My ongoing favorite feature of *PW* is the letters. Love following the rhubarbs between grumpy rad-libs, and occasionally get a sense of real people with real feelings responding to what they read in *PW*.

Anon2, NY: In a way I like the fiction most because it is rare to see a magazine that publishes fiction which directly challenges the values, structures or work rules of our society. I wish the fiction were as polished as some of the essays, though. These are probably the best crafted elements of the magazine. I wish all the text were more free of typos and grammatical inaccuracies, though I suppose this problem is a result of a small staff, time pressures and a lack of funds. With regard to the fiction, you do occasionally publish something that is perfectly polished and dazzlingly good. Off-hand, I can think of one story by Michael Blumlein, ... His *PW* story ["Softcore" in issue #20], though, was better and more poignant than some other stories of his that I've seen.



MIXED EMOTIONS

L.A., OR: Tales of Toil have caught my attention more than any other features of *PW*. There is one possible exception: I am still fascinated by all of issue #18 and your ability to poke satire at sex. But then I've always lead a very sheltered life.

W.S., CA.: Critiques of the dehumanizing social processes that are supposed to form our "everyday life." Keep the fiction, the real-life tales of oppression and its alternatives, the wacky art & kinky sex.



What do you think we should get rid of, or at least de-emphasize?

Nothing:	13
Poetry:	9
Rhetoric:	7
Fiction:	6
Whining & Anger:	4
Sex:	1
Anti-tech:	1

JP, CA: There is one thing I would like to see de-emphasized in *PW*: articles that use SEX as a prop. I can think of an example for this—the short piece called "Silicon Valley Girl." It was clever, and I can see how one could tie it in with the idea of computers,

technology and business being a substitute for sex (and love, too), and perhaps I'm being a little too Victorian here, but ultimately, it gives the magazine (for me, anyway) a vaguely junior high school feeling, which takes away from the overall quality of the magazine. Another example of this would be the graphics of women with enormous and/or naked breasts, which occasionally are sprinkled throughout the magazine. I usually can see the point for including them, but they seem to alienate a lot of people, judging by the letters page, and, it seems a bit creepy. I realize the magazine is produced for a more sophisticated audience than the Cleaver family, but sometimes, I think it goes a bit too far. I'll climb down off my biodegradable soap box now, as it is starting to feel shaky. The damn thing is degrading, as is my point, I think.

B.S., NY: I think you should de-emphasize, get rid of, or re-orientate the anti-technology bent. Technology under imperialism is certainly fucked up, but technology and science have no inherent ideology; it's the ideology and class interest that make technology good or bad. So, anyway, I'm not that fond of the anti-technology aspect of your magazine. Also, the anarchist/nihilist aspect I'm not that crazy about, because, like existentialism and social democracy (what that term signifies today, not as Lenin used it), these ultimately capitulate to imperialism. Along the same lines, it seems to me that *PW* is in danger of moving in the direction of wanting *in* the system, instead of wanting *out*.

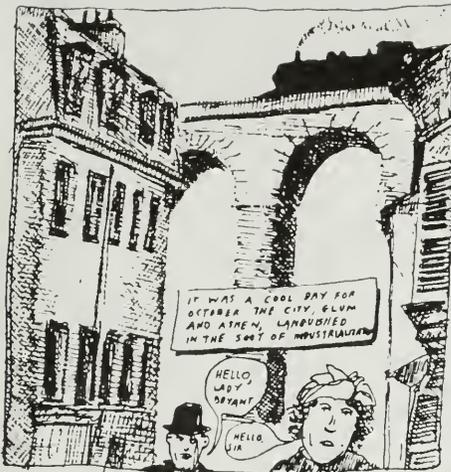
T.C.B.: De-emphasize ideological rants; present facts, reports, news briefs, first-person stories, and let readers draw their own conclusions.

Anon4, ??: De-emphasize turgid ideology. You had an article recently about working for a clothing designer. The details of what it was like to work there were fascinating, but that was preceded by a page of ideology telling us what to think about what was to come. I hate that. I know what to think already.

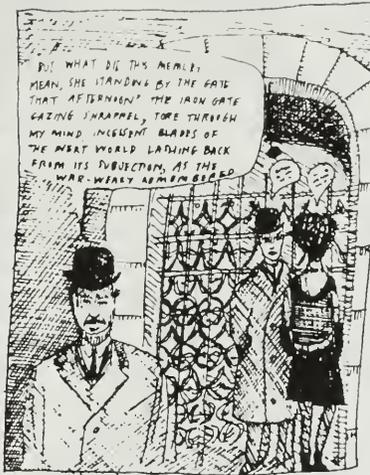
A.R., NY: The fiction and poetry are dreadful, and I think I've figured out why: there are a lot of places where writers can send good fiction and poetry, many of them even paying, while only *PW* would publish a Tale of Toil. So you get a range, I'd imagine, of non-fiction from the wretched to the sublime, but only the wretched not-to-be-submitted-elsewhere fiction. Occasionally you print a good poem, actually. But can the short stories. Let them eat *The New Yorker*.

E.W., NY: Definitely de-emphasize poetry, but that's just me. I find most poetry self-indulgent and obscure to all but the writer and the writer's close friends. I guess you can tell I have a problem with poetry, huh?

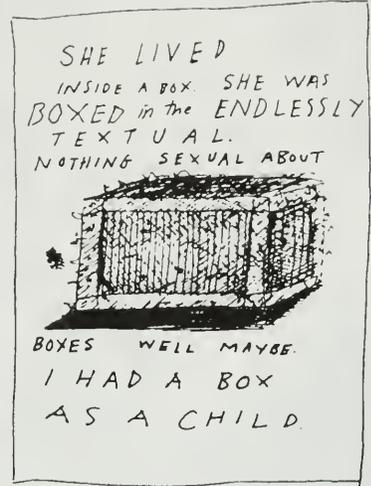
L.O., NY: I really wish there was more compassion in *PW*. It bothers me when writers make fun of uncool people at work. It seems so smug...



REALISM



MODERNISM



POST-MODERNISM



What would you like to see happen in *PW* in the future?

Anon3, NV: Transform the '80s rather than reproduce the '60s ("Let's go, Gang!")

L.O., NY: You'd keep the big issues in focus (like health care, the environment, everything you've had as a theme is great)—you'd stay funny and free from rat-race delusions—but incorporate a kinder, gentler lens to see thru. Please no more artsies putting down the Philistines. Please more women, maybe something serious on non-violence, a little Boddhisattva consciousness.

W.W., NY: I would like to see discussion on how one survives under Capital while being opposed to it. How do we live and not always be spurious opposition?

P.D., CA: More marxist analysis.

J.B., IA: Become more radical as North America moves from this pre-fascist age and develops into all-out total fascism and/or economic, ecological and political crisis.

S.S., CA: I'd like to see *PW* deal more with labor—movement/issues.

M.I., CA: A school/education issue would be groovy. Students like me don't even get paid (as if money is important) for our work. We're very oppressed. I might even contribute if I have the energy. I always like theme issues.

B.D., CA: Increase focus on children's concerns & viewpoints.

J.S., TX: I believe the basic premise of your magazine is quite sound. That is, your emphasis on the nuts-and-bolts of post-industrial society ... fills a much-needed gap in current discourse; I find it hard to believe that a full 40%—I believe I am

recalling the correct figure here—of the U.S. work-force is involved in some kind of labor having to do with symbol/information manipulation, and the number is growing. (Meanwhile, production of physical goods is decreasing in U.S.). Yet you don't see much comment on the phenomenon (in other venues) at least none commensurate with its import.)

I guess what I am trying to say is that I find it highly distressing that this sort of work, as *labor*, as production, is going so unnoticed. Left publications abound, but they all seem to have to do with aesthetics, epistemological squabbles, 3rd World struggles, etc. etc. Not that these are unimportant (sexual politics, race, environment are also important), and that you should ignore them (even if you could), but it seems to me that *PW's* niche is precisely to bring these questions into focus through the lens of late capitalism's new modes of production and domination. (Always, naturally, in keeping with your accessible and no-bullshit style). ... I personally find well-crafted articles which explore the perverse vicissitudes of this kind of [consumerist] society irresistible. Nothing fascinates me more than a clinical account of the development and marketing of another demented article of mass distraction. Again, a lot of rags do a lot of analysis of cultural phenomena, presumably because they are written by academics who have only to go see the movie or the place of architecture and then go back to campus to digest (and interpret through their particular "school"); what I look for in *PW* is a more behind-the-scenes account of the production of such commodities.

J.E., TX: I love your interaction with readers in the Letters—would like to see more deeply personal responses to the ironies and cruelties of techno-modernity like the Los Alamos article cited above, or Morales' "Pido Castigo."

A.R., NY: In the future *PW* should try (but how?) to be more widely based geographically. What's going on in the Midwest? Maybe you should do an exchange program with *The Mill Hunk Herald* or something. I don't care so much about the East Coast because I live here already. But the South? More about Mexico? What about the Esprit sweatshops in Korea? and so on and so on.

L.O., WA: I'd like to see *PW* published on a more predictable basis. I never know when to expect it or if there will be a next one. (That's why I was apathetic about your questionnaire. If I took the time to answer it, would you ever do anything with it?)

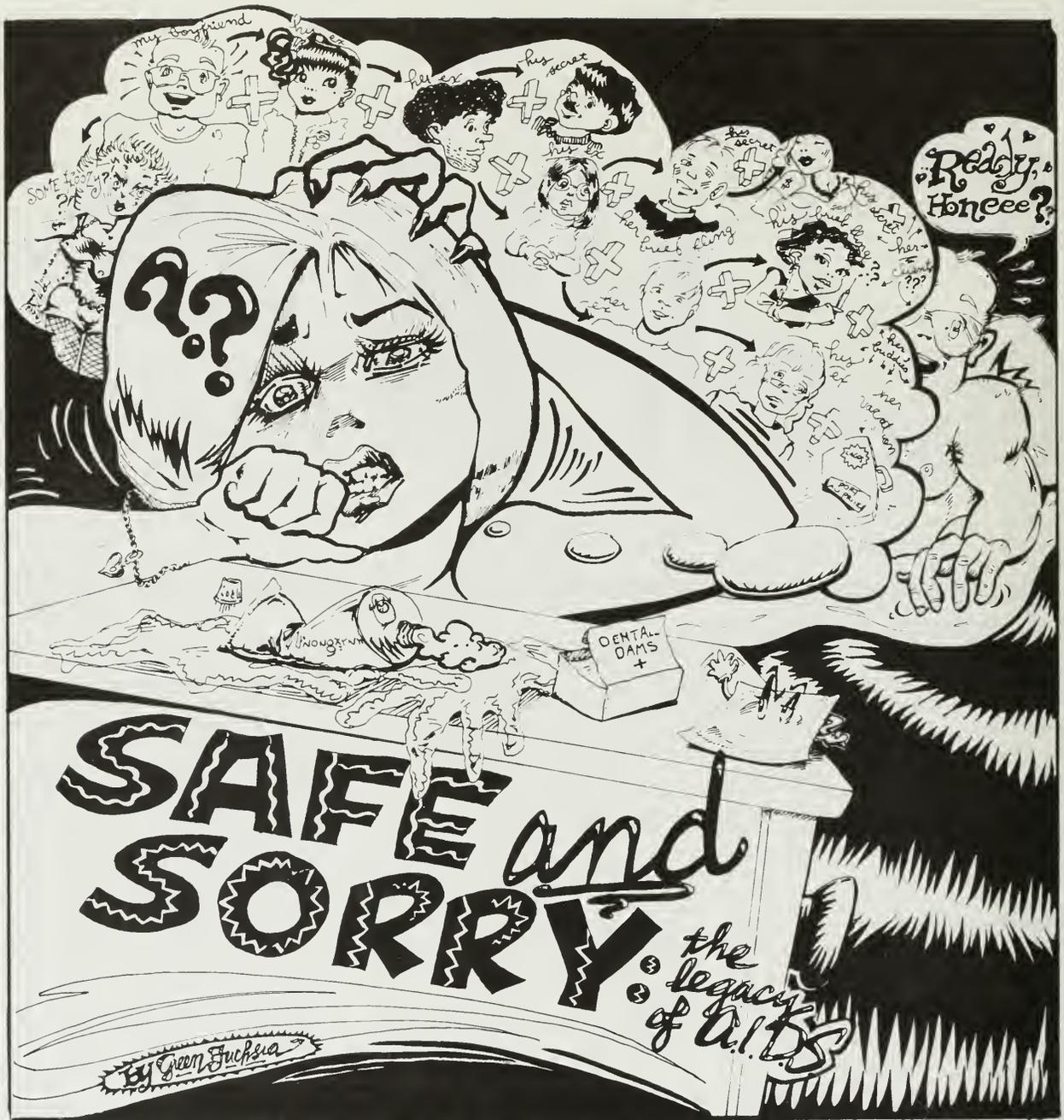
Anon5, AZ: Continue and expand, bash New Age mentality. More issues per year? How about something about "Birkenstocks as image not politics?"

I.B., MI: I would like to see you raise your standards and improve your graphic design. I'm not saying this because I want you to become glossy and "glitzy," but because I want you to continue publishing.

J.U., CA: More issues, longer issues—though I realize that for an uncompromising magazine that takes no ads and doesn't have a paid staff, it's a lot easier to talk about than to do.

Ace Backwards, CA: Everybody at *PW* gets big and famous so you can all quit your dull jobs and become big-time publishing magnates.





GRAPHIC BY ANGELA BOCAGE

In the fifties, the great national obsession was Communist subversion. In the eighties, the threat is more diffuse. There is terrorism, child kidnaping, drugs, and finally, AIDS. Our present enemies' lack of concrete human identity only adds to the circle-the-wagons effect. The outside world is perceived as dangerous, populated by vaguely defined miscreants who lead nonconformists into moral debasement. It is the genius of American culture to promise freedom while representing all but the most conventional materialistic lifestyles as repulsive. Choice is restricted not by repression but by the

inculcation of a limited worldview that sees dissidence as deviance.

In a sense, AIDS is different because a major threat caused by an uncontrollable natural agent really is lurking out there. Several hundred thousand to several million people, mostly young men, could well die as the epidemic runs its course, so we're talking about losses equivalent to a major war.

AIDS' potential impact is indeed substantial, but it does have definite limits. Among heterosexuals outside injection drug circles, the disease is little known, and among lesbians, sexually transmitted AIDS is virtually nonexistent.

Nevertheless, how a threat is perceived is paramount to the response to it, and AIDS has been viewed through the same jittery lens as has every other mass panic in the post-War era. AIDS easily fits into contemporary sexual insecurities spawned by changing sexual mores, the breakdown of first extended and then nuclear families, and the emergence of women as an economic force independent of men. Government officials and conservative ideologues, with the mass media's help, have had no trouble creating a new panic by depicting AIDS as a limitless, universal menace brought on by loose living, a punishment meted out to deviants. Listen to us, the doctors, politicians and preachers say in their various languages. Let us lay down a clean, moral path for you to follow.

Here the evolution of the panic deviates from its usual pattern, for progressives have joined this eager celebration of AIDS as generalized apocalypse in a bid to protect gay men from further ostracism (no one seems to worry much about the reputation of drug addicts, who have no political clout). Progressives put forward their own experts to instruct us on the politically correct way to interpret the allegedly all-encompassing threat, and do not hesitate to prescribe safe, proper ways to alter our sex lives. But you cannot distort reality for the sake of political convenience, no matter how laudable your goals. A politically correct position must first of all accept the truth, no matter how uncomfortable that truth may be.

More distressing than this analytical lapse is that the broader, long-term issues surrounding the epidemic are shrugged off, if not given up as lost causes. These issues revolve around the question of power: How much control the individual has over her own body and sexuality. The proclamations of the experts from both left and right impede the grassroots discussion and the open, positive attitude toward our erotic impulses necessary for curbing AIDS. The failure of anti-syphilis campaigns to eradicate that sickness is fair warning that technocratic programs alone are incapable of stopping sexually transmitted diseases.

The Erotic Fights Back

In the early eighties, human immunodeficiency virus (or HIV, the virus at the center of the AIDS syndrome) spread with frightening speed through the national gay community. Half the

gay men in San Francisco, for example, had become infected by 1984. A whole slew of studies have indicated that receptive anal intercourse without condoms and with a casual, changing set of sex partners provided the main avenue for HIV's spread.¹

Not all gay men by any means engaged in this combination, but those who did can hardly be condemned. A rambunctious sexuality was an important experience for gays emerging from years of repression. It played a major role in building a collective culture celebratory of gayness, a culture that in the end had the strength and adaptability to control the epidemic once its dynamics were understood.

In the past four years, HIV transmission among gay men has plummeted to almost zero.² The gay community used to experience about one new HIV infection per year for each old one, and the number of HIV+ individuals doubled every twelve months or less. Now there is approximately one new HIV

.....
**Sexuality has
been devalued
as a positive
social force
by left and right.**
.....

infection per year for every 100 old ones. As people with HIV live far less than 100 years after infection (whether they come down with AIDS or not), the epidemic cannot possibly be self-sustaining under present conditions. The number of gay HIV carriers will gradually spiral down and so eventually will the number of gay AIDS cases. Indeed, the number of gay men diagnosed with AIDS last year was no greater than it was in 1987, raising hopes that the epidemic might already be leveling off.³

Safe sex educators like to take credit for this trend, but the situation is not that straightforward. One major contributing factor is that a large proportion of the 75% of gays nationally who are not infected⁴ are people whose personal circumstances never exposed them to HIV very much. Based on anecdotal information, comparatively low-AIDS groups include both young and older gay men, gay rural residents, gay men in permanent monogamous

relationships (lasting ten years or more), and to a certain extent, gay men who are politically active progressives.

Be that as it may, it is true that in the gay community, generally, the incidence of anal sex and multiple partners is down substantially, while condom use is up.⁵ Nevertheless, changes in sexual practice have taken place within a context that is quite foreign to the lists of proscriptions found in most safe sex literature.

The new sexual climate continues the celebratory, spontaneous atmosphere of the old through such institutions as telephone sex lines, underground sex parties, jerk-off clubs and erotic massage. Particular attention has gone into maintaining open sex lives for those who are HIV positive. The many AIDS and HIV+ support groups are vehicles for establishing friendships and exploring sexual intimacy within the limits imposed by the disease. For gay culture as a whole, there has been an increased public emphasis on relationship-building as part of the sexual experience. Greater emotional bonding improves cooperation between lovers so that they act to prevent the spread of disease from one to the other. It also tends to decrease the number of sex partners people have.

With these changes have come sharp declines in hepatitis B, syphilis, gonorrhea and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).⁶ This reduction has further inhibited the spread of AIDS. STDs' diminishing prevalence not only promotes better immune system function—it also deprives HIV of ready access to infectable white blood cells by decreasing the frequency of anal and genital inflammation.

Still, there remains plenty of unsafe sex out there. Surveys from around the country have indicated that a substantial fraction of gay men continue to disregard sexual risk-reduction measures at least some of the time. This fraction's size varies widely from one place to another, and can amount to half or more of the local gay population.⁷ There is also the problem of condom leakage, found to occur 8% of the time in one study.⁸ By no means is everyone absolutely protected all the time. But they don't have to be to stop AIDS. (See box.)

The environment in which AIDS flourished was alterable precisely because the necessary changes were not all that dramatic. They did not attack the

essence of gay sexuality. The drama comes from the innovative manner in which modifications were effected. Individual behavioral changes occurred as part of a community-wide response to the crisis. In San Francisco alone, some 80 organizations, most relying heavily on volunteer labor, are devoted to various aspects of the epidemic, from meeting the personal needs of the ill to building a grassroots political movement. (Despite this community outpouring, much remains to be done. Homeless activists like Bob Nelson of San Francisco Catholic Charities warn that 400-600 San Franciscans with AIDS or ARC have no place to go at night.)

Such personal empowerment is another essential element in the emerging popular alternative to the health-care establishment. Both on the streets and in the hospitals, the experts did not show much initial understanding of how to deal with the epidemic. Top-down programs in which professional elites attempt to serve a client population stand little chance of adequately taking account of gays' needs, considering the unforeseeable complexities of the AIDS

dilemma. Lay participation at every level has proved vital to obstructing HIV.

Overcoming AIDS has become a form of reaffirmation for the gay community, a community whose basis is the very sexuality that has been blamed for the epidemic. Straight people may castigate gay life as a wild, empty orgy, but they should instead admire the culture that has produced the sense of solidarity and personal competence needed for a compassionate, cohesive response to the epidemic. The response of straights was hardly so straightforward.

Delusions on Every Side

Two years ago last winter, media warnings about the onset of a heterosexual AIDS epidemic reached a crescendo. After a decade of experience with AIDS, however, it should have been clear that there would not be an explosive heterosexual AIDS crossover.

The first U.S. citizens recognized as having AIDS actually were babies born in 1977 to presumably infected New York and San Francisco mothers.⁹ The pattern after 1977 has been consistent: While AIDS took off among heterosex-

uals who shared IV drug needles as well as gay men, the number of straight people with sexually contracted AIDS has remained more or less four per cent of each year's total.

As of May, 1989, the government has counted a cumulative total of 4,128 heterosexual contact cases. 1,370 of these were so categorized only because the people involved came from countries like Haiti where heterosexual AIDS is thought to be common. The remaining 2758 (2049 women and 709 men) were mainly long-term lovers of intravenous drug users.¹⁰ This 2758 figure might really be an overcount because some people will not admit drug use or homosexuality to investigators. It is noteworthy that New York, as of late 1988, with the largest cluster of HIV-infected women in the country, had attributed a mere seven cases of AIDS in men to heterosexual relations.¹¹

The still fragmentary statistics for HIV carriers do not reveal any surprises on the horizon, either. First-time blood donors represent one large, "low-risk" population segment that is regularly tested. These donors are testing positive for HIV at the rate of 0.042%. For all

The Ecology of a Disease

An infectious microbe must overcome three obstacles for sickness to occur. The first is the hostile outside world: microbes have to find a way to travel from one person's body to another without being killed in the process. After landing, they confront an environment designed specifically to eliminate them. The impervious skin and the sticky mucous membranes covering the body's inner linings are formidable physical barriers that normally ward off invaders. In addition, these protective layers contain antiseptic chemicals, symbiotic microorganisms, and white blood cells, all waiting to kill tarrying pathogens.

For disease transmission to occur, the pathogen must find some weakness in this outer line of defense. Given the several billion years of evolution that have gone into making humans, there aren't many such weaknesses. They are frequently the result of injury, polluted air, or other illnesses. Never has it happened that the entire human race has come into contact with a germ and that transmission has been automatic after exposure. Always, a series of chance events induces susceptibility in a limited subset of the population.

It is also a rare, talented microbe that can infect somebody once it gets inside. There it encounters the human immune system, which is about as sophisticated as you can get without conscious, intelligent direction. The immune system is composed of a set of interacting components. Learned, repeatable responses on the part of white blood cells attentive to foreign protein (antigen) are an integral part of the system: specialized chemical antibodies as well as sensitized "killer T-cells" are developed that direct overall immune activity at persistent intruders. Antibodies also coat viruses to keep

them from sticking to their target cells. Killer Ts can rip apart cells they recognize as already containing virus.

Nonspecific responses include fever and inflammatory chemicals, which create a toxic environment for bacteria. Interferon secreted by virus-infected cells and the killer Ts alerts cells to make antiviral changes in their metabolism. Meanwhile, the body is infused with amoeba-like white blood cells waiting to swallow up harmful intruders. There are 20 to 25 billion of these cells circulating in the blood alone.

If it is the rare combination of microbe evolution and personal accident that allows a single individual to get sick, the odds that conditions are right for an epidemic are even slimmer. Not only do some susceptible people initially have to come in contact with the germ in question, but each infected person must pass the disease along to more than one other person. Altering conditions just enough for the average rate of transmission to fall below one new case for each old one will make an epidemic gradually peter out. This is often forgotten during discussions of AIDS. **Stopping the AIDS epidemic does not require that everyone have 100 percent protection.**

— Green Fuchsia



ANGELA BOCAGE

blood donors, HIV prevalence decreased from .03% to .01% as previously infected people were weeded out of the pool by the testing. In follow-up interviews, 80 to 90 percent of the positives acknowledge homosexual contact, IV-drug use, or sex with such drug users.¹² Considering the understandable reluctance to give out this sort of personal information and the number of testing errors, this suggests that there is little present HIV transmission outside gay and addict circles.

The reasons for HIV's limited heterosexual spread are undoubtedly rooted in environmental restraints similar to those that have slowed its transmission among gay men in the past few years. Heterosexuals' usual preference for vaginal and oral sex is in itself strong prevention to AIDS transmission. Even without using condoms, the odds for HIV transmission through vaginal intercourse average only one out of a thousand, and for oral intercourse, the chances are essentially nil.¹³ Both these practices apparently are much less likely to spread HIV than anal intercourse is.

In addition, straights generally have had fewer lovers than gay men. When the San Francisco Men's Health Study started to investigate the prevalence of AIDS among the city's men in 1984, homosexuals in the 1,000-strong population sample had a lifetime median of 200 sex partners whereas heterosexuals' lifetime median was 20. One indicative 1988 national survey found that 76% of the men and 85% of the women reported zero or one lover in the previous year.¹⁴ The rate of sexually transmitted disease has also historically been much lower among straights than gays. Syphilis, whose genital lesions are thought to promote the spread of HIV, was only one-tenth as common among heterosexuals before its recent reduction among gay men. (It is very worrisome that the overall U.S. syphilis rate shot up 25% in the late eighties even as the gay rate went down. As usual, the heavily non-white poor are bearing the brunt of the outbreak.)

It is true AIDS has ravaged straights in Central Africa, and the apparent heterosexual transmission there is frequently advanced as a portent of things to come in industrialized nations. But it is not unusual for a sickness to behave one way in Africa and another in the North. Last year, an especially revealing paper in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*¹⁵ described



how marked the difference in medical circumstances can be and its relevance for AIDS. The researchers found that antibodies to such diseases as toxoplasmosis, syphilis and hepatitis were common in both "healthy" equatorial Africans and American male homosexuals. The two groups also had matching immune system aberrations, whereas a control group of American heterosexual men possessed relatively unperturbed immune systems, and had experienced much less exposure to immune-compromising microbes. Antibodies to HIV were present in six percent of the non-AIDS Africans, 22% of the U.S. gay men, and *none* of the straight control group in the U.S.

Highlighting one aspect of African underdevelopment, another recent *JAMA* study¹⁶ described how one pediatric ward in Zaire alone was responsible for at least 600 HIV infections per year through contaminated blood transfusions. Most of the children were in the hospital because their malaria had not received proper initial treatment.

Living conditions in Central Africa actually are analogous in major ways with those of U.S. gays and junkies. This is reflected in the groups' similar white blood cell counts and record of sickness. The AIDS crisis typifies how marginalization makes communities vulnerable to disease by confining their members in stressful environments. Once a microbe arises to take advantage of their unprotected position, everyone is susceptible, and the medical and social resources needed to adapt to the predicament are not available. Mean-

while the privileged, whose freedom depends on the restraint imposed on the others, sit back oblivious, figuring that the sick "had it coming."

Of course, the obvious response to this indifference is, "Aha, but you can get it too!" and it is precisely this easy, if fallacious, route that progressive-leaning activists have followed in their quite justified effort to get the world to pay attention to AIDS' depredations. "Only when the nation realizes that HIV doesn't discriminate will it donate the resources to fight it," argues Mervyn Silverman, "We need to mainstream, but not normalize the disease." Silverman is head of the American Federation of AIDS Research and former director of the San Francisco Health Department. From the left end of the AIDS movement comes Donna Minkowitz, who writes in the New York-based newsweekly *The Guardian*, "Framing the issues in terms of 'endangerment of homosexuals' implies society as a whole need not be concerned with the fact that tens of thousands of gay men have already died of AIDS... The question also willfully ignores the fact that thousands of heterosexuals in the U.S. have already contracted AIDS..." (Here Minkowitz is willfully ignoring that few of those thousands of heterosexuals with AIDS contracted the illness sexually.)

"AIDS is an equal opportunity disease," trumpets Cindy Patton, who is Minkowitz's apparent intellectual mentor, in the first sentence of the widely applauded booklet, "Making It: A Women's Guide to Sex in the Age of AIDS," coauthored with Janis Kelley.

There follows the standard enumeration of sex practices, from anal intercourse to water sports, paired with the appropriate latex barrier to use for protection—condoms, dental dams, surgical gloves and the like. Patton and Kelly also include a section on how all this rigmarole might be eroticized. That is again standard fare, but the authors distinguish themselves by their righteous use of feminist and nonjudgmental language to attain the higher moral ground in the AIDS discussion. Basically what they've done is to adopt some of the more radical gay safe sex educational strategies for a wider audience on the theory that everyone has the same relationship to the epidemic.

High pressure safe sex campaigns may have had a role to play in the gay community. Gay men were faced with an emergency around AIDS as well as an alarming upsurge of sexually transmitted diseases in general. Less a formal campaign from outside, AIDS prevention became a process of self-education undertaken by a cohesive community with a sexually celebratory culture. As we have seen, that group process resulted in a considerable elaboration on the original safer-sex proscriptions. Gay men working on their own initiative came up with new sexual practices which, constraining though they may be, stopped HIV transmission without altering gays' overall approach to sexuality. "Safe sex" as presented by its advocates was not by itself a solution to AIDS, but at least it had the value of making gays aware that they could make specific, limited modifications that would interrupt AIDS' momentum.

But the heterosexual milieu differs sharply from the gay one. Straights in no sense form a united community. Not only are they split between men and women, but heterosexuality never forms part of their group identification since they see it as the norm. The failure to understand that heterosexuality represents a series of choices as much as homosexuality means that straight sexual customs are evolving blindly, without clearly expounded goals or a clear break with past beliefs. Hetero culture remains much less open about sexual matters than gay culture is, nor is it very supportive of sexual difficulties, especially those arising from sexual experimentation.

More directly relevant for the safe sex question, the physical problems confronting straight sex also vary considerably from those that figure in the gay



world. Straights' major universal problem is, naturally, unwanted pregnancy. Generally speaking, sexually transmitted diseases present a troubling persistence, with AIDS in fact a remote threat. However, some medically indigent heterosexual subgroups are menaced by STDs and AIDS to a much greater degree.

It is not surprising that straights have not been very responsive to safe sex advice. A poll in 1988 by the government's National Center for Health Statistics found that nearly 95% of Americans quite rightly thought that they had

little chance of getting AIDS and that only a few percent knew anyone well who was infected with HIV.¹⁷ Survey after survey has revealed only small changes in heterosexuals' behavior. A San Francisco AIDS Foundation study of straights released last winter found condom use up 26% over two years ago but still fairly uncommon. In a city where AIDS consciousness is very high, most respondents nevertheless did not feel targeted by the epidemic and ranked "protected vaginal intercourse" low in enjoyability.¹⁸

On a personal note, San Francisco sexpert Bernie Zilbergeld laments, "In all my lecture tours, I've never met a person who has used a dental dam twice... A lot of safe sex workers burn out fast because there are more failures than successes."

Predictions of an AIDS apocalypse did shake loose huge sums of money from the previously reluctant state, but hundreds of millions of the appropriations are being wasted on testing and educating the wrong people. Needle-sharing drug users, the heterosexual group really affected by AIDS, have been largely ignored. At the same time, elementary guarantees of the civil and social rights of HIV carriers have yet to be enacted.

Research and treatment programs remain in disarray with the most obvious therapies taking years to test out. As Mobilization against AIDS director Paul Boneberg has declared in the *San Francisco Sentinel*, "The government's plan on AIDS is a strategy of doom... The projections of death, as now advanced, do not need to occur... The funding goes into hospice care and into long-term research, because they assume that [the current HIV-infected] will die. What we're trying to do is put the emphasis on treatments that can keep people alive."

At present, the danger is that without a dramatic rise in heterosexual AIDS or other sensational news, the public will tire of the whole AIDS issue, and little new effort will be put into fighting the epidemic. Already Randy Shilts has complained that, "AIDS is out of vogue as [a] news topic... Coverage of the epidemic is now at its lowest point in three years."¹⁹

Even as a means of taking the collective onus for AIDS off gay men, the safe sex formula for sexual conduct has had a dubious record. Persons engaging in the now reprehensible "high risk activities" are easily linked to the "high risk groups"



in which, as everyone remembers, AIDS first appeared. An atmosphere of panic over a putative worst epidemic in history makes the logic of quarantine, if not of murder by neglect, seem compelling as a means of self-defense. "Many health education messages aim precisely at creating fear of AIDS and feelings of vulnerability to it. Such messages may increase support for coercion as well as foster preventive behavior," warned Dr. Robert Allard in the April, 1989 *American Journal of Public Health*. Hence the anti-gay backlash over AIDS continues unabated despite all the misplaced emphasis on AIDS in the straight community.

In California, for example, right-wing authoritarians are parading an apparently endless series of AIDS propositions before the voters. With measures like mandatory testing and segregation in the balance, only intense campaigning has succeeded in defeating them.

Across the country, reported cases of gay-bashing are up drastically—with the official count of course representing

only the visible portion of a horrifying phenomenon. "AIDS has provided a green light to the bashers and bigots," Kevin Bernill of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force told *Time* magazine last year, "It's a convenient excuse for those who hate us."

Safe and Sorry

Complimenting the gay community for having "moved from an ethos of sexual liberation to one of responsibility for others," as the progressive film magazine *Jump Cut* did when introducing a section on safe sex, lays bare safe sex's more insidious implications. The concept of gays' particular sexual stigma is countered by resort to a concept of global sexual irresponsibility, and all the old sexual bugaboos are back. The association of sex with disease and the assumption that others are inherently untrustworthy makes sexuality a clumsy business at best, to be avoided as much as possible. The traditional dream of constructing a safe haven with a life-long monogamous partner becomes a utopian fantasy.

People cannot cope on their own.

By granting primacy to values like "safety" and "responsibility," this time from a medicalized perspective, safe sex as a moral code places renewed emphasis on the role of experts in regulating sexual expression. The consequent technocratic ethic is insensitive to the historical background of its surroundings. It focuses on simple issues of personal hygiene at the expense of the complex obstacles capitalist society places in the way of human intimacy. And by purveying an exaggerated fear of disease so as to assert their authority, safe sex proponents inhibit the risky but necessary sexual exploration needed to resolve wrenching erotic confusions made all the more formidable by uncontrolled social change.

Specifics of the extent to which safe sex rule-makers' intervention becomes clumsy—and contradictory—are not hard to find. Last year, Drs. Norman Hurst and Stephen Hulley of the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (a liberal think tank at UC-San Francisco) made quite an impression with their article "Preventing the Heterosexual Spread of AIDS: Are We Giving Our Patients the Best Advice?"²⁰ The doctors' starting point was condoms' 10% failure rate as a contraceptive, which they assumed would carry over to AIDS prevention. They then calculated the risk of HIV transmission for sexual encounters with individuals of various sexual and drug-use histories, comparing the chances of transmission with and without condoms. Displaying one-encounter chances such as 1 in 500 million (partner lacking a history of high-risk behavior and no condom) and 1 in 5000 (HIV+ partner and condom), Hurst and Hulley's probability table indicated that condoms decrease one's risk of AIDS only by a factor of ten whereas "carefully choosing" lovers of low risk provides a 5000-fold increase in protection.

"This means not only asking potential partners about their present and past behavior but also getting to know the person and his or her friends and family well enough to know whether to believe the answers. This would rule out sex with prostitutes, casual sex, and indeed, much of what many people consider to be normal heterosexual behavior," the doctors blithely conclude—as if the social environment has no part in determining sexual mores, which can then be changed with a wave of a magic wand according to medical concerns!

Hurst, Hulley, and those of similar

opinion are criticized by other safe sex writers for imagining that anyone can ever be sure of their lover's past history. But assuming that the heterosexual AIDS threat is a credible one and the safe sex devices an appropriate response, why do straights use them so infrequently? Why in fact does high risk sex continue among gays? Merely providing information must not in itself be sufficient to change people's practice.

An emerging target in the struggle to increase safe sex's popularity is the combining of drugs and alcohol with sexual activity. Many studies show a large correlation between the use of intoxicants during sex and high-risk behavior.²¹ The San Francisco AIDS Foundation, for one, has begun an ad campaign suggesting that gay men stay sober during sex if drugs and alcohol cloud their judgment. This developing trend also has its magic wand effect, in as much as it deflects consideration of the role getting stoned plays in enhancing sexual intimacy on both an emotional and physical level. It is hard to see how intoxicants will be banished from sex by medical fiat, at least without first revolutionizing personal relations. That is something people have to do for themselves; programs dominated by professional elites do not allow for the popular discussion required to articulate human needs. The current approach of piling inhibition on top of inhibition seems destined rather to increase alcohol and drug use during sex.

The hegemonic moral position safe sex specialists are appropriating for themselves does originate in a desire to protect sexual pluralism. Sexual pluralism is not the same thing as sexual freedom, though. Without that ethos of liberation so lightly dismissed by *Jump Cut* and company, our erotic nature is straight-jacketed by the preconceived dominant idea of what's good for us. We might end up feeling safe, but we most assuredly will end up feeling sorry, too.

The Author Exposes Himself

But I don't want to end up feeling sorry, at least not because I succumbed to repressive rituals based on a phantom threat. Certainly, there is no need to scare me to get me concerned about AIDS. Although I don't feel in personal danger, I see how much I have to lose from the retrograde influence AIDS is having on the long struggle over sexual mores.

And who am I, really, and just what

is it that I see? I'm merely a straight man who somehow has fallen into a de facto monogamous love affair of 20 years duration. I think that life is passing me by without the wide range of relationships—including sexual ones—that I need to provide a warm, nurturing and stimulating environment for my development as a human being. Instead of acting as a source of strength for myself and those around me, my erotic energy has been bottled up by socioeconomic forces that I find myself unable to influence.

I am not alone in this. The monogamous nuclear family has become a mass ideal only in the last fifty years. Historically, monogamy has been maintained by patriarchal domination and economic necessity. Men and women alike flee it whenever they get a chance. Now they say that in the sixties there was a sexual



revolution, but all I see is a change from lifelong to serial monogamy. We have wound up with less opportunity for deep personal relationships. Our sexuality, instead of serving to cut through our isolation, has been twisted as never before by the still preponderant capitalist culture into just another marketing gimmick. The status quo continues to hold us in its tight embrace. Ironically, there isn't even as much opportunity for actual sex as before since we often don't have steadily available partners.

They also say that there was the liberation of women, and there has been a massive increase in the amount of wage-earning work women do. Typically, in societies where women's security is independent of their husbands, divorce rates are high and female sexuality is recognized as existing in its own right, apart from fertility. This is because patriarchal inheritance lines are

not important, and male possessiveness has less to do with women's decisions about their lives. With the separation of fertility and sexuality comes greater acceptance of homosexuality, too.

But I see that women haven't even achieved equality, let alone liberation. In the parodies of the patriarchal family model we create for ourselves, domestic violence and sexual abuse are amazingly common. Rather than defending the family from external dangers, male authority allows men to bring their tensions into the domestic circle with oft-times explosive results. At least we talk about these issues more than we used to, although we have no way to resolve them.

Women especially have bitter tales to tell of betrayal and abandonment when those fragile family entities break up. They frequently are stuck raising the kids alone, and sometimes have to care simultaneously for their elderly parents. Support from the kids' fathers and society at large, which doesn't even pay women as much as men, is inadequate to say the least. It is an odd twist of fate that under the present order "feminism" has come to imply the "feminization of poverty."

Talking about sexual liberation without gender equality is ridiculous. There is no liberation under male supremacy, only a masculine fantasy about getting screwed a lot. The concept of more fulfilling relationships is lost, and the sexual revolution is stalled in its tracks. That's precisely what's happened in our era.

From what I can see, homosexuals are the only ones who have tried to live differently in a conscious manner. Their understanding of their oppression led them to question the heterosexual world's basic assumptions about sexuality and to use their own sexuality as a basis for bringing themselves together. The degree to which they succeeded is beside the point: Gays and lesbians are heroes in the struggle to create a loving society, and that heroism has never been properly appreciated by straights. Now gay men have become martyrs, and they're dying for all of us. The decimation of gay culture would condemn us all to continue living lives marked out for us by capitalism's manipulative materialist morality. Surely the diversion of the gay movement's attention from sexual politics to AIDS already is having an impact on the abortion controversy at its present critical juncture.

As I stumble on to my inevitable end, I cling to a vision of how it should all be different, for the acceptance of the erotic as central to civilization is the hallmark of a free people. Free people live in a society without elites. Articulation and realization of citizens' aspirations occur as part of a unified group process in which everyone participates as equals. In the absence of a ruling class with established interests to defend, the exploration of human wants emerges as the ultimate social function. Of course, exploring the limits of erotic desire plays a vital role here.

A free society is antimaterialistic. It is not enslaved by a work ethic, and play—above all, sexual play—constitutes a major form of social bonding, as a means of building intimacy between individuals and as an affirmation of belonging to humanity as a whole. There is indeed lots of fucking—and fucking without regard to the old bourgeois strictures on gender roles, monogamy or the unequal assignment of power. A free society grants the social

significance of this activity and is perforce an eroticized society.

There will always be risks associated with sexuality. Emotional intimacy creates the possibility of betrayal of trust just as physical intimacy creates an easy pathway for germs, as well as sperm. The emotional perils are the purview of morality; the physical ones figure there only secondarily. A *morality of empowerment* is required that guides people to act in an honest, supportive way towards one another. Such a moral climate would enable us to control the amount of risk we let into our lives and greatly obviate the physical dangers sexuality poses. I'm talking about something more akin to *safe love* than *safe sex*.

Should people get in trouble anyway—and they will—a free society brings to bear its best facilities, medical and otherwise, on what it perceives as a major communal, not individual, failure. A disease like AIDS should never have the chance to spread wildly. It ought to be contained and overwhelmed through that concerned and compas-

sionate manner with which empowered human beings treat each other.

... Ach, AIDS. With the advent of the epidemic, the people most likely to examine these vistas have retreated. Desperately building flimsy disease-based moral codes, they too are promoting human mistrust and self-hatred. AIDS has dramatically focused attention on the question: How much risk is sex worth? And from all corners of the political map the answer comes: Not much. Human sexuality has been devalued as a positive social force, and the hazards encountered in its expression are now considered an immutable part of its nature, not the inspiration for radical transformation of human relations.

So weep for me and weep for you, and weep for us all, every one of us victims of AIDS. Weep for what is and what might have been.

But don't get too sad—it might yet be. In fact, it has to be.

— by Green Fuchsia

Notes for *Safe and Sorry*

1. For Example: Winkelstein W. et al., Sexual Practices and Risk of Infection by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus: The San Francisco Men's Health Study, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1/16/87, pp. 321-25. Kingsley L. et al., Risk Factors for Seroconversion to Human Immunodeficiency Virus among Male Homosexuals: Results from the Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study, *The Lancet*, 2/14/87, pp. 345-49.

2. Winkelstein W., San Francisco Men's Health Study: Continued Decline in Human Immunodeficiency Virus Seroconversion among Heterosexual/Bisexual Men, *American Journal of Public Health*, 12/88, pp. 1472-74. Centers for Disease Control, Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection in the United States: A Review of Current Knowledge, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, Supplement 6, 2/18/87, pp. 1-48.

3. Moss A. and Bacchetti P., Incubation Period of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome in San Francisco, *Nature*, 3/16/89, pp. 351-53. Perelman D., Drop Likely in Gays' AIDS Cases, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 3/16/89, p. 1.

4. Centers for Disease Control, *op cit.*, p. 41.

5. Stall R. et al., Behavioral Risk Reduction for Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection among Gay and Bisexual Men, *American Psychologist*, 11/88, pp. 878-85.

6. San Francisco Department of Public Health, Sexually Transmitted Diseases in San Francisco: Changes in Incidence 1984-1988, *San Francisco Epidemiological Bulletin*, 4/89, pp. 1-5. Centers for Disease Control, Changing Patterns of Groups at High Risk for Hepatitis B in the United States, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 7/22/88, pp. 429-32. Centers for Disease Control, Syphilis and Congenital Syphilis—United States 1985-1988, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 8/19/88, pp. 486-89.

7. Seigal K. et al., Patterns of Change in Sexual Behavior among Gay Men in New York City, *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 12/88, pp. 481-97. Stall R., *op cit.* Becker M. et al., Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome and Behavioral Change to Reduce Risk, *American Journal of Public Health*, 4/88, pp. 394-410.

8. Van Griensven G. et al., Failure Rate of Condoms during Anogenital Intercourse in Homosexual Men, *Genitourinary Medicine*, 10/88, pp. 344-6. Similar figures in: Golombok S. et al., Condom Failure among Homosexual Men, *Journal of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndromes*, 1989 no. 4, pp. 404-9.

9. Des Jarlais D. et al., The Sharing of Drug Equipment and the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome Epidemic in New York City: The First Decade, in *Needle Sharing among Intravenous Drug Abusers*, National Institute for Drug Abuse Research Monogram No. 80, 1988, p. 160-75. (Cited information is on page 166.) Shilts R., *And the Band Played On*, St. Martin's Press, 1987, p. 512.

10. Centers for Disease Control, *HIV/AIDS Surveillance*, 5/89, p. 8.

11. Hardsfield H., Heterosexual Transmission of Human Immunodeficiency Virus, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 10/7/88, pp. 1943-44.

12. Centers for Disease Control, Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome and Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection in the United States: 1988 Update, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, Supplement 4, 5/12/89, p. 10.

13. Winkelstein, W. (1/16/87), *op cit.* Kingsley L. *op cit.* Padian N., Heterosexual Transmission of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome: International Perspectives and National Projections, *Reviews of Infectious Diseases*, 9/87, pp. 947-60. Padian N. et al., Male to Female Transmission of Human Immunodeficiency Virus, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 8/14/87, pp. 788-90. Grant R. et al., Infectivity of

the Human Immunodeficiency Virus: Estimates from a Prospective Study of Homosexual Men, *Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 7/87, pp. 189-93.

Padian N. et al., Male to Female Transmission of Human Immunodeficiency Virus, abstract THP.3, *Third International Conference on Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome*, Washington, DC, 6/1-5/87, p.171. Fox P. et al., Saliva Inhibits HIV-1 Infectivity, *Journal of the American Dental Association*, 5/88, pp. 635-7.

14. Padian N. (9/87), *op cit.* (Cited data is on p. 951.) Centers for Disease Control, Numbers of Sex Partners and Potential Risk to Human Immunodeficiency Virus, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 9/23/88, pp. 565-568.

15. Quinn T. et al., Serologic and Immunologic Studies in Patients with Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome in North America and Africa, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 5/15/88, pp. 2617-21.

16. Greenberg A. et al., The Association between Malaria, Blood Transfusions, and Human Immunodeficiency Virus Seropositivity in a Pediatric Population in Kinshasa, Zaire, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1/22/88, pp. 545-549.

17. National Center for Health Statistics, *Advance Data*, 7/11/88.

18. Communications Technology, *Designing an Effective AIDS Risk Reduction Program in San Francisco: Results from the Second Probability Sample of Multiple/High-Risk Partner Heterosexual Adults*, San Francisco AIDS Foundation, 10/13/88.

19. Shilts R., Media's Short Attention Span, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1/23/89, p. A5.

20. Hurst N. and Hulley S., Preventing the Heterosexual Spread of AIDS: Are We Giving Our Patients the Best Advice?, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 4/22/88, pp. 2428-32.

21. Stall R., *op cit.* Valdiserri R., Variables Influencing Condom Use in a Cohort of Gay and Bisexual Men, *American Journal of Public Health*, 7/88, pp. 801-5.

W o r k



COLLAGE BY PRIMITIVO MORALES

Studies have shown that the time a worker believes he has to himself during the work week really belongs to someone else.

Electrode tests have traced the existence of an alien authoritarian presence inside the average worker's head, particularly on week nights. This voice appears to determine the subject's course of action, which, according to test results, is highly predictable across-the-board. For no apparent reason, the subject will up and leave a movie, a party, even a steamy moment of passion, just like that, right in the middle. In 97% of the cases the explanation the subjects gave was the same: *"I have to work tomorrow."*

Further, the latest results have concluded that there is an increase in phone-calling behavior during the work week, a dramatic increase in television-watching and drug-ingesting, paralleled by an astounding decrease in learning behavior, and a strange new affinity for traffic, collars, ties, high heels, panty hose and pancake make-up, even on stifling hot muggy afternoons.

This has led experts to believe that the

time a worker can legitimately claim as his own is in fact limited to his days off.

Two days a week of life belong to the average person. 2×52 weeks in a year + 10 days of vacation-leave + the 9 official holidays equals 123 days of life per year. Now if one goes to business school and graduates in four years, as expected, according to the latest government statistics, and thus works full-time from twenty-one until a retirement age of sixty-five, one can count on a total of 123×44 years, or **5,412** days of life during this period.

In other words, the average "forty-hour" week worker is alive 5,412 days/365 days in a year = **14.8273973** years from the time he is waiting for life to begin after graduation up until the time he is still waiting for life to begin not long before death. Add to that the time spent in the hereafter, if there is any.

Fourteen years, nine months and a little over twenty-eight days, plus or minus one depending on whether one begins work on a month which ends with an odd or even day.

Let's round this figure to the fifteen year mark, because after all, people do get sick and some actually fail to show up at work when that happens.

In fact, if you can manage to swing

ten sick days a year and two days off instead of one on Thanksgiving and Christmas, you could pull off **16.2739726** years of life. That's a bonus of almost **1.5** years, and if you are fired this figure increases dramatically.

There you have it folks: fifteen years of life, twenty-one spent in purgatory waiting for this life, twenty-nine in the inferno, and whatever you have left to recover.

I will never forget my first and last encounter with a full-time job. I looked around the office, my eyes bloody, weighing heavy on the sockets from too little sleep, the sinuses dry, the heart racing from eight cups of coffee guzzled like a wino. There was everyone: going about their business, chatting, drinking coffee, answering phones, walking with purpose to somewhere or to somewhere else, never nowhere in particular. Always the noise of a typewriter or printer beating away like the hammers and planers of a monstrous construction project into whose vortex everyone was caught.

I thought with awe: "They do this all so easily, so calmly, as if this is normal!"

Then I panicked: "Maybe it is normal. Maybe there is something wrong with me. Why am I the only one in the entire office who keeps looking at that vicious little clock? Why am I the only one in the whole world who thinks a terrible mistake has been made? Is this what life really is? What happened to all the long meditative walks I was going to take like Henry Miller and William Saroyan, with night falling and a beer swimming in my empty stomach? What happened to the dawns greeted at the typewriter, all the books I was going to read, the hostages Carter was trying to release? Where did that world go?"

Four months passed and I decided I would never do that again. I would rather clothe myself in polyester and beg the rest of my days than work.

Many of us have managed to keep this vow, for the truth is that we don't really work; we are part-time paper pushers, we are bike messengers, we are baby-sitters for the public schools, we are free-lancers who hop aboard the payrolls like bandits on the run, jumping aboard freight trains, only to leap off again at the next destination. The train screams onward without us in its constant, unrelenting motion to another nowhere.

Wait a minute. We are not lazy—we have more important business to attend.

"You should be in school." "You should be working." "You should be moving ahead."

Ahead? Yeah; right. Ahead for America, ahead so America can make its money from us, while we die for twenty-nine years, while our brains curl

up and rot, while our love for life, our will to live withers up and dies. We beg for help. Help me, America!

And sure enough, America will tell you exactly what you must do to help yourself, to succeed. School! America says, *School!* Yet they don't want us to learn. *Work!* they say, *Work!* Yet America won't allow us to work, to work at what we love, to work at what drives us, which is the most important work of all.

So just don't do it, is all. Fifteen years of life are commingled with twenty-nine rotten years of indentured servitude, like a life-time of frustrated orgasms. Then you die.

Think about it.

— by Margot Pepper

A LOVE POEM

I held the woman like a crucifix.
A faith
her
skin smelling of poolwater and gin.

Love gunning my engine
for a goodtime.
And the goodtimes come through
like cheap speed,
a stomach ache and a phone call.

This is my Sunday Morning, a Saturday night
that didn't end.
The morning sun
sounding off like a drunk in a bar.
Where madness demands its kisses
and flesh demands its hostages.

Where she says
"sometimes I like to make love,
and
sometimes I like to fuck."
Like history, she's a question of opinion

on this Evangelist Telethon morning
where faith is the test of ignorance.
Truth is the oversized lie

dressed in clown shoes
waddling into the spotlight.

by Bruce Isaacson

THIS MODERN WORLD 1988 TOM TOMORROW

IN THIS MODERN WORLD, ANYTHING GOES...

BYE, HONEY! I'M
GOING TO GO
PLAY TENNIS
IN MY UNDER-
WEAR!

HAVE FUN,
DEAR!





Spectacle For Sale

No amount of television watching could have prepared me for the job I have now. I work as a "video researcher" for Video Monitoring Services of America (VMS), the video equivalent of a newspaper clipping service.

VMS tapes the local network affiliates 24 hours a day, every day, plus some programs from the independent New York stations, MTV, and major radio stations. VMS also has branch offices and affiliates all over the country which provide access to practically every news broadcast in America.

Each news program is monitored daily, which means that the bug-eyed dungeon dwellers of the company flow-chart handwrite short descriptions of every program, with particular attention to names of products, companies, and celebrity commodities. Corporations and P.R. firms use this information to evaluate their products' (human and otherwise) images and to determine how successfully they are manipulating the media.

My job is to locate the chosen segment from a prerecorded tape, which is then given to an editor who copies the segment onto a blank tape for the client. My 11p.m. shift begins and I settle myself before the small cube that pumps stimuli into my senses for hours each night. Tiers of VCRs and TVs sur-

round me like an information womb. I see other flickering images reflected in my screen, out of the corner of my eye and everywhere I turn. Essentially I am an information age peon and have come to feel about the television the way industrial age drones must have felt about their sewing machines or lathes.

Working at VMS, I view electronically generated information and information per se in a way which is quantitatively and qualitatively different from the way media civilians usually perceive these staples of their existence. Every day I am confronted with ominous wallshelves overflowing with videotapes; tangible reminders of the fact that vast amounts of so-called ephemera are actually preserved and part of the collective data pool. My already well-honed sensitivity to information inundation has also been heightened by my stints, via the magic of fast forward, rifling through the image files of the globe and ingesting highly concentrated doses of spectacle. The speed, volume and boundlessness of modern information gathering produces a concentrated version of the barbarism, disaster and miscellaneous sensationalism that occur throughout the world every day. What I see is an exaggeration of an exaggeration.

TV news magnifies distant military,

government and celebrity rumblings and presents them as a series of disjointed, almost interchangeable, images. This fundamental media truth is intensified by the ludicrous amount of repetition I endure. While searching for a certain segment, I have to pass other stories which are sometimes repeated two or three times during a single broadcast, and I may have seen the identical stories four or five times before on other programs. Meanwhile, someone near me may be watching the same story on another channel.

The most memorable repetition gorge happened the day the space shuttle blew up. At one point every TV screen in the small office showed a different stage of catastrophe (cf. Warhol's "Disaster Series" for another take on repetitious disaster iconography). Events seen and seen again and again in this mode readily dissolve into pure spectacle—devoid of context, emotional content and immediacy.

My window on the world is further mediated by my fingertip control of the images before me. Forward, reverse and pause buttons allow me to penetrate the seamless flow of "real time" and toy with TV fodder like image puppets. The Bud Dwyer tragedy was especially fascinating because it was such pure spectacle to begin with.

Dwyer was the former Pennsylvania state treasurer who, after he was convicted of corruption and was about to be sentenced, called a press conference and blew his brains out with a .357 magnum. I must have watched this splatter scene a least 15 times, in slow motion, fast motion, single frame real time, and reverse. After several viewings I realized that the control which I gleefully exercised over this sensational image was not merely a product of my own morbid whims, but also an obedient response to

the taped version of the event which seemed to beg for voyeurism and manipulation rather than empathy or compassion.

The relentless barrage of **Rehash, Epidemic, Scandal, and Terror** (welcome to the **R.E.S.T.** decade) and sundry other media chimeras is the backdrop for TV's real purpose: to peddle things, services, lifestyles and images. Most news programs fit snugly within this consumerist agenda and function as extended commercials. Cor-

porations and P.R. firms just utilize the medium accordingly and VMS provides the information lubricant for the big business-media machine. The Tylenol poisonings provided the company with its most profitable month ever.

I could go on, but some tawdry pop icon has a new movie out and a bunch of people just died of food poisoning so there's lots of work to do.

— by Adam Quest

The **Billboard Liberation Front** is responsible for this ... correction of a sign (originally advertising a radio station with the slogan "Hits Happen"). Bringing truth to advertising since 1977, the BLF issued a communique (May 9, 1989) urging the "PAVE ALASKA" campaign as a step towards our American evolutionary destiny: "In conjunction with the ongoing natural 'greenhouse effect,' we should use this occurrence [the oil spill] to open up new opportunities for real estate development."



HAZZARD PAY

Because Daddy worked where there is radiation, toxic chemicals and genetically engineered organisms, his family clung to him as he departed for work. "It's OK sweetheart, I'll be alright," as he released his wife's grip on him. Bending down to his little daughter, "I'll be back baby, let go Daddy's leg. You must realize that the radiation from the check-out counter is harmless, and the toxic chemicals are all in containers on the gardening shelf. And the organisms in the yogurt are perfectly safe." His family reassured, the box-boy at the supermarket went off to work.

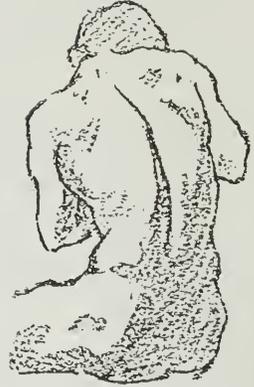
by Roger Coleman

IT'S 6AM AND YOU CAN'T TAKE A JOKE

I was sleeping off a Kafka novel when I heard a knock at the door.
Alas, it was Claudette, the Belgian drunk, come back for the t.v.
She went into the kitchen to prepare a sandwich: two pieces of
wheat toast and a slice of Kraft headcheese.
She was once the great love of my life, now she wanted the furniture.
I dreamt of poppy fields, burning.
She took her panties down from the showerhead.
I dreamt of Bob Dylan.
I dreamt of learning to love my parents. Of snow in Malibu, CA.
Of a '69 palest aqua used Malibu car we had in '70.
I woke up and there was a blue Fender guitar pick in bed beside me.
I had what some call a "reality confrontation,"
although I had committed no art.
I reread Céline in 45 minutes flat; my entire body . . .

I took a bus to Hollywood, California.

by Paris, Blazey



ROUND AND AROUND WE GO

The girls at the desk discuss sex all night. The big blonde says she masturbated at age four. My roommate is in Wisconsin at a fast-food business conclave, seeking management tips to take back to Tokyo. I steal his KOOLS though I hate the taste. When they run out I go to sleep. The radio plays Bowie or Coltrane. I have thirty-seven cents. A dime will pay the postage due on the money order my father sent me. It will arrive tomorrow. A miniature TV flickers on the desk. The girls read a survey question about sexual positions. The slight blonde can't decide her favorite. She drags on her cigarette and coughs. The other offers sympathy.

A French girl comes by to thank me for flowers I haven't sent her. She resembles a young Brigitte Bardot. I cash the money order and buy Gitanes from the French girl at the Kiosk. The September *Vanity Fair* attacks the young writers it made famous. The radio plays Count Basie and Suzanne Vega. When the Gitanes run out I go to sleep.

A guy at the desk calls to ask that I stop sending flowers to the French girl. The shirts my father sent two weeks ago haven't come. I Scotch-tape my right shoe together and get funny looks from walkers on Union Street. The radio plays Creedence Clearwater and Wynton Marsalis. Searching for a smoke, I uncover a photo of my roommate with an enormous topless blonde.

The girl comes by to apologize for confusing me with the Jon who sent the flowers. "Never mind," I say, backing into the trash can, almost spilling its cargo of butts, styrofoam cups of congealed coffee, empty packs.

The girls talk about their past and current boyfriends. They are not pretty. I love the bits of secrets I gather. It will be hours

before I sleep.

by Jon Swift



GOT THEM OLD FACTORY BLUES

The soggy remains of a pack of matches
which once had written on it
the phone number of what seemed to be
a fairly attractive woman
I ran into yesterday down at Bruno's Bar
now sticks out of my dog's mouth.

I think he's mad because I'm never around
since I started this job.
I wrestle him for it
till the number's mush.

Last week the return address
of a friend's letter disappeared in sweat
in my back pocket. On the weekend
I lost the suitcoat to a borrowed suit
drunk at a wedding. Next day James caught me
sleeping, wrote me up.

Somebody stole my thermos.
Alice, the only woman who's agreed
to be in my presence all year
has dumped me for a schoolteacher.
She said I was always tired or drunk—
she's got me there.
Working seven days a week does that
to a person, I told her.

She came over late one night
when I was drunk with Harry
and commented on my smell:
At least you could shower once in a while.
She got me there.

by Jim Daniels

FAITH

A good many men are perched
In the early-blooming trees,
Displaying their faith in God.

Other men believe in frost—
Each groan the house gives, the clash
Of icicles in the eaves,
Wolves howling at the moon sing
Of Armageddon to them.

One more man, whom darkness loves,
Tries to rock, runs to the door
Every hour because he hears
A knocking as of women
Marooned on ice floes that crash
Into each other, submerge,
Then smash again while women
Croon. All night, women knocking,
But no one is ever there.

by Patrick Worth Gray

BAD MODE

Night was I in a bad mode
it was all middle
seamless without beginning or end
familiar in its disturbing
alltoo elusive way
A slip had me wondering
could I have chosen to lose it?
in the process mislaid the choice
on the tip of my tongue
time of day

Amnesia darts a forked smile
whispers out my ears
brains liquid on the run
sucked clear of color
vacuum empty
homemade popsicle

Chest hurt the devil
I feared it would
the valves were
strung
out
Let down
we were betrayed
upstairs

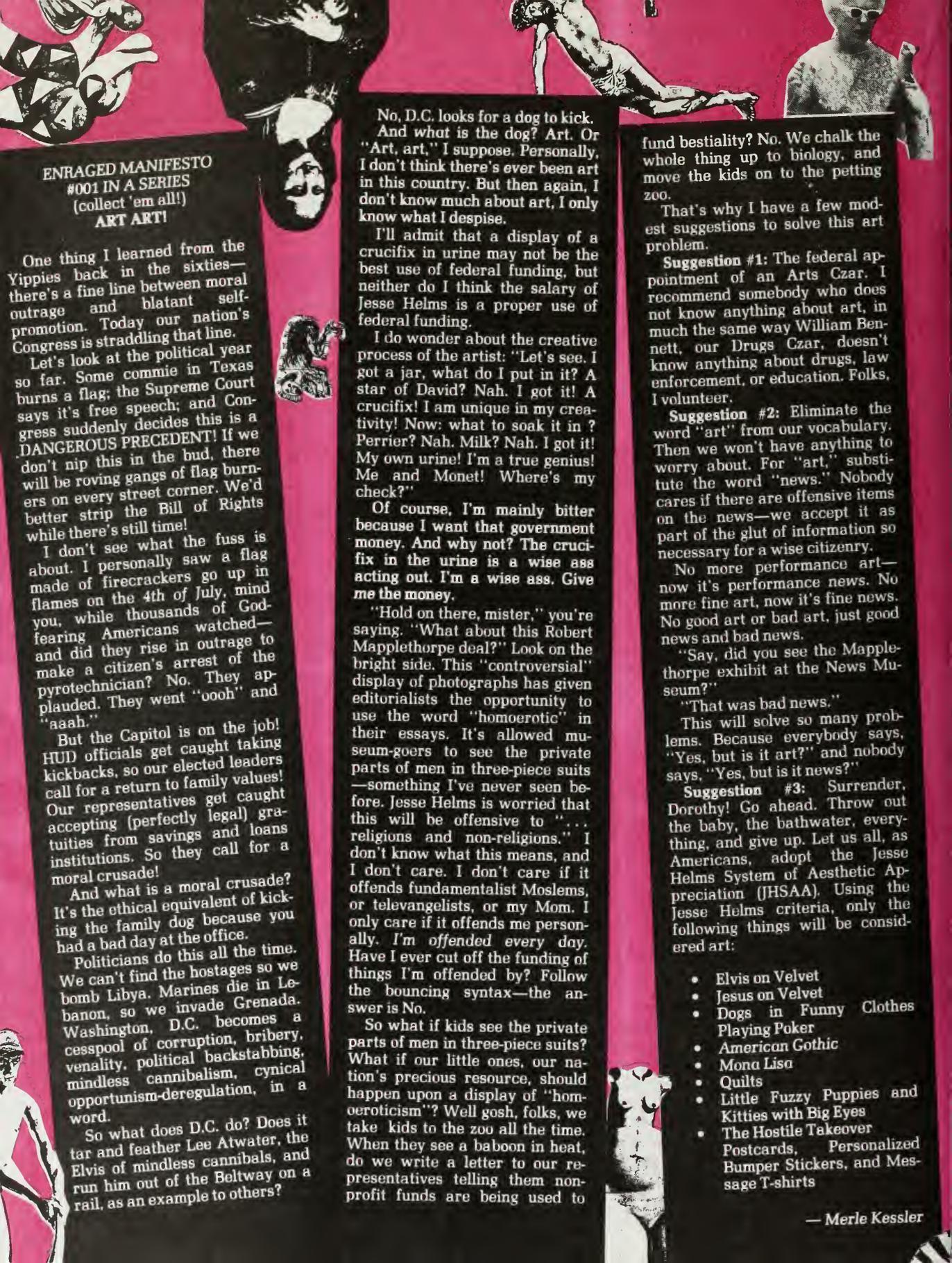
More sluggish now
having worn it wet
the loss was knowing
the matter of fact
and thus the future

Hands crawl white knuckle crabs
the silverstudded minefield
bright sockets on the console
without eyes or insight
gleaming dullness lodged in my mind
discolored and soft as sandpaper
soaked in vinegar

Once remarked on the resilience of walls
could they ever keep the night at bay?
insulating the convolutions of fear
The intestinal coil of courage
slithers out
a seared interior

Alone on my feet
I scrape the dry wafer of words
into a fair approximation
this sequence of loss

by D.S. Black



ENRAGED MANIFESTO
#001 IN A SERIES
(collect 'em all!)
ART ART!

One thing I learned from the Yippies back in the sixties—there's a fine line between moral outrage and blatant self-promotion. Today our nation's Congress is straddling that line.

Let's look at the political year so far. Some commie in Texas burns a flag; the Supreme Court says it's free speech; and Congress suddenly decides this is a DANGEROUS PRECEDENT! If we don't nip this in the bud, there will be roving gangs of flag burners on every street corner. We'd better strip the Bill of Rights while there's still time!

I don't see what the fuss is about. I personally saw a flag made of firecrackers go up in flames on the 4th of July, mind you, while thousands of God-fearing Americans watched—and did they rise in outrage to make a citizen's arrest of the pyrotechnician? No. They applauded. They went "ooh" and "aaah."

But the Capitol is on the job! HUD officials get caught taking kickbacks, so our elected leaders call for a return to family values! Our representatives get caught accepting (perfectly legal) gratuities from savings and loans institutions. So they call for a moral crusade!

And what is a moral crusade? It's the ethical equivalent of kicking the family dog because you had a bad day at the office.

Politicians do this all the time. We can't find the hostages so we bomb Libya. Marines die in Lebanon, so we invade Grenada. Washington, D.C. becomes a cesspool of corruption, bribery, venality, political backstabbing, mindless cannibalism, cynical opportunism-deregulation, in a word.

So what does D.C. do? Does it tar and feather Lee Atwater, the Elvis of mindless cannibals, and run him out of the Beltway on a rail, as an example to others?

No, D.C. looks for a dog to kick. And what is the dog? Art. Or "Art, art," I suppose. Personally, I don't think there's ever been art in this country. But then again, I don't know much about art, I only know what I despise.

I'll admit that a display of a crucifix in urine may not be the best use of federal funding, but neither do I think the salary of Jesse Helms is a proper use of federal funding.

I do wonder about the creative process of the artist: "Let's see. I got a jar, what do I put in it? A star of David? Nah. I got it! A crucifix! I am unique in my creativity! Now: what to soak it in? Perrier? Nah. Milk? Nah. I got it! My own urine! I'm a true genius! Me and Monet! Where's my check?"

Of course, I'm mainly bitter because I want that government money. And why not? The crucifix in the urine is a wise ass acting out. I'm a wise ass. Give me the money.

"Hold on there, mister," you're saying. "What about this Robert Mapplethorpe deal?" Look on the bright side. This "controversial" display of photographs has given editorialists the opportunity to use the word "homoeoteric" in their essays. It's allowed museum-goers to see the private parts of men in three-piece suits—something I've never seen before. Jesse Helms is worried that this will be offensive to "... religions and non-religions." I don't know what this means, and I don't care. I don't care if it offends fundamentalist Moslems, or televangelists, or my Mom. I only care if it offends me personally. *I'm offended every day.* Have I ever cut off the funding of things I'm offended by? Follow the bouncing syntax—the answer is No.

So what if kids see the private parts of men in three-piece suits? What if our little ones, our nation's precious resource, should happen upon a display of "homoeotericism"? Well gosh, folks, we take kids to the zoo all the time. When they see a baboon in heat, do we write a letter to our representatives telling them non-profit funds are being used to

fund bestiality? No. We chalk the whole thing up to biology, and move the kids on to the petting zoo.

That's why I have a few modest suggestions to solve this art problem.

Suggestion #1: The federal appointment of an Arts Czar. I recommend somebody who does not know anything about art, in much the same way William Bennett, our Drugs Czar, doesn't know anything about drugs, law enforcement, or education. Folks, I volunteer.

Suggestion #2: Eliminate the word "art" from our vocabulary. Then we won't have anything to worry about. For "art," substitute the word "news." Nobody cares if there are offensive items on the news—we accept it as part of the glut of information so necessary for a wise citizenry.

No more performance art—now it's performance news. No more fine art, now it's fine news. No good art or bad art, just good news and bad news.

"Say, did you see the Mapplethorpe exhibit at the News Museum?"

"That was bad news."

This will solve so many problems. Because everybody says, "Yes, but is it art?" and nobody says, "Yes, but is it news?"

Suggestion #3: Surrender, Dorothy! Go ahead. Throw out the baby, the bathwater, everything, and give up. Let us all, as Americans, adopt the Jesse Helms System of Aesthetic Appreciation (JHSA). Using the Jesse Helms criteria, only the following things will be considered art:

- Elvis on Velvet
- Jesus on Velvet
- Dogs in Funny Clothes
- Playing Poker
- American Gothic
- Mona Lisa
- Quilts
- Little Fuzzy Puppies and Kitties with Big Eyes
- The Hostile Takeover
- Postcards, Personalized Bumper Stickers, and Message T-shirts

Jesse's World

Robert Mapplethorpe, lately dead, is a widely respected photographer in the mainstream art world, as documented by the many glossy books of his works. Unfortunately, the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., decided to take it upon itself to practice self-censorship, cancelling Mapplethorpe's upcoming exhibition of controversial photographs. They were afraid of public reaction, or more likely, a brisk and improving visit from the thought police. Mapplethorpe has a thing for genitalia, homoerotic works and sadomasochism. Okay, so we've established that he's a cool guy. And if he were still alive we'd take him aside and say, "Bob, chill out, man, try some pastels, and camouflage those genitalia in landscapes. Maybe palm trees. You know, metaphors."

Alas, palm trees would not escape the watchful eye of that protector of us all, that watchful arbiter of good taste and part-time cuddlebunny of third world dictators, Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina. Jesse may or may not know art, but he knows what he doesn't like, and what you shouldn't either. He definitely has a problem with Mapplethorpe. He has such a big problem with Mapplethorpe that he's pushed a bill through the Senate which calls for withholding Federal funds from works of art (such as major exhibitions) that "promote, disseminate or produce obscene or indecent materials, including, but not limited to depictions of sadomasochism, homoeroticism, the exploitation of children or individuals engaged in sex acts; or material which denigrates the objects or beliefs of the adherents of any religion or nonreligion." A scant two senators had the guts to stand against the bill.

Jesse proves he's a forward planning guy, which is why he's a senator, by having the catchall phrase "including but not limited to." This can conveniently be expanded to cover anything Jesse and his buddies haven't thought of, but which might pop up later. It's a difficult life being a conservative watchdog, because those perverts are nothing if not ingenious.

Note the clause "adherents of any religion or nonreligion," which could conceivably be used to limit one's God-given right to make fun of anyone at all. The Ayatollah must be thanking brother Jesse from his grave for helping to make the United States unfriendly territory for the blasphemer Salman Rushdie, the Satanic Writer.

Many artists, writers and film makers are dependent upon grants from corporations and federally-funded institutions whether they like it or not. Helms' bill not only throttles artists, it imprisons anyone who likes art by limiting what they are allowed to see. Say what you want, but we'll make sure no one can listen. One step closer to the thought police.

•••

Of course, money will make you free; art produced by recognized greats such as Dali, Matisse, Calder and Kiefer is tightly controlled by those who hold huge amounts of money. This art is basically an investment and its worth is measured in terms of monetary fluctuations. Artists of this stature, if they are still alive, are able to attend gala private receptions in their honor given by the financial elite of the world. Lesser artists may be serving as chauffeurs or bus boys for these functions.

Beginning in the mid-1960s, art produced in the U.S. began to command higher and higher prices. The artists of the 1970s tried to combat the engulfing economics of the art market by creating art that was unmovable, such as earthworks, or art that was very transient; such as objects made of materials that

would not last long, like rubber, or objects that were easily reproducible so that the process of actually making it was more important than the object itself. Using these tactics it was hoped no one could purchase art as a potential investment. Artists also began using their own bodies as art pieces. However, collectors began collecting the tiny artifacts used by these artists on their bodies as sacred relics, which could then be traded for larger and larger sums of money.

Some artists left on the outskirts of society may indulge in certain practices that are frowned on or possibly made illegal by the rest of society. These may or may not include various drugs, "perverted" sex acts, random violence and/or chronic laziness at work. This must be looked at as enhancing the freedom of expression and creativity so essential to an artist. Artists are also free to abuse their bodies in whatever ways they see fit. Artists tend to lean to self-destruction. Legislation may be under way to protect the rest of society from some of these non-normal behaviors or interests.

When I used to watch television (it may be presumptuous of me to assume you care), I enjoyed watching the painting shows on PBS. Not the water color shows; they were too simple and light. No, I would sit enraptured as a hippie burn-out or old German smeared fecal oil paint around on big palettes and slashed down washes and then really began to put the paint down. They always had cute little scenes, usually outdoors. They knew exactly where to put the shadows and highlights to make the surface of the paintings dance with the realistic portrayals. They enjoyed, or seemed to enjoy, painting these things. It was an artistic Valium. I could really use one now.

— Gregg Nakanishi
and Ann Henry.



Art? What Art?

In the spring of this year we mailed a pair of surveys to our subscribers; the first dealt with *P.W.* itself (see pages 4-9). The second solicited material dealing with "art" (see sidebar).

The survey generated an alien (below), as well as a substantial number of responses (31 to date) in a variety of styles. Responses came—with some overlap—from writers and poets (in different mixes and shades), musicians (including a tape of electronic music in lieu of a written response), photographers, visual artists (mail art, painting, computer art, technical illustrating, etc.), an installation artist, cartoonists, a woodburner, an editor of a music 'zine, and a ceramic production type with interest/experience in architecture and performance art. Non-artists who responded include a labor organizer, a person in the art publishing world ("almost as bad as being an art teacher"), a computer programmer, an "information organization," one incoherent and one "Dumb! Dumb!" response.

We heard from Seattle WA. (2 people); Minneapolis; Portland and Scotts Mills, OR.; Tempe AZ.; the S.F. area (7), Los Angeles, San Diego, Folsom prison, Sacramento (2), and San Clemente, CA.; Oneonta, New York City (2), and Brooklyn, NY.; Chicago, IL.; Warren, MI.; Philadelphia, PA.; Brookline and Allston, MA.; and Fort Bragg, NC.

In this issue we are leading off with an essay from Mark Burbey, and with the centerfold material on Jesse Helms' art appreciation society. We will be publishing the results, and our reflections there-on, in issue #25.

We welcome contributions from others, or extensions of previous material, as well as your responses to what is published here. So, again, we got your material; we appreciate it; *your efforts are not in vain*. Stay tuned . . .

We'd like to thank, in addition to Mark Burbey, Mari Bianca, Trixie T-Square, D.S. Black, and the local "Art Strike" group (even if they don't know why).

—P. Morales & the collective

Please respond to:

**The Hubert Humphrey & Curtis LeMay
Art Appreciation Society**
c/o *Processed World*, 41 Sutter St., #1829
San Francisco, CA. 94104 U.S.A.
(415) 495-6823

These questions are designed to study your planet's most puzzling activity: Art. To that end, we'd like you to tell us about art and how it is done. Don't treat us as simple-minded morons, but you should try not to make assumptions about what is obvious.

Unlike a "test," this has no right answers. We are interested in particular in personal experiences, and discussions and explorations that draw on them. We would rather have a poem, a drawing, or a short story than a forced or tortuous response that answers the questions literally. We are studying art, not geography. These questions may be thought of as a focusing lens, rather than definitive demarcations of subject material. You may make up your own questions for extra credit. A "Tale of Toil" would be most welcome.

1) Are you now, or have you ever been, an artist (within a broad definition of the word)? If so, what sort: (performance, visual, pen & ink, poet, whatever . . .)? How long? (yeah, we know, all your life, but maybe you can give some idea of the amount and quality of time spent at it.)

If you aren't an "artist," do you perceive an element of "art" in your work (or in other endeavors)? For instance, engineers, mechanics, carpenters, etc., while not really "artists" (except perhaps in their spare time), often utilize or see an artistic aspect in their work.

2) If you make your living at some form of "art," how does that affect your view of your practice? Or does it? (Just as some computer programmers, say, are hackers who delight in the work, there are others who just do it as a living, and yet others who've been forced to choose between craft and job.)

How much of "you" ends up in your work? How do the limits make themselves known? Do you ever find the

creative process to be at odds with the job? Any comments on Mammon and the Muse? Do you earn more than you spend on your art?

3) What are problems that you face? (For some this might include finding space to work in, for others the problem might be more one of finding people to work with. Perhaps the inability to find galleries willing to support them (sponsor? rip-off?) might be a major problem, while for others it couldn't matter less.) Any ideas on ways to deal with these? Any health hazards in your work? Any solutions?

4) What's the point of it all? What is the role, if any, of the audience (if such a category exists)?

5) To what extent do you cross the traditional boundaries that delimit your field? Are there any? What sorts of projects have you whimsied about?

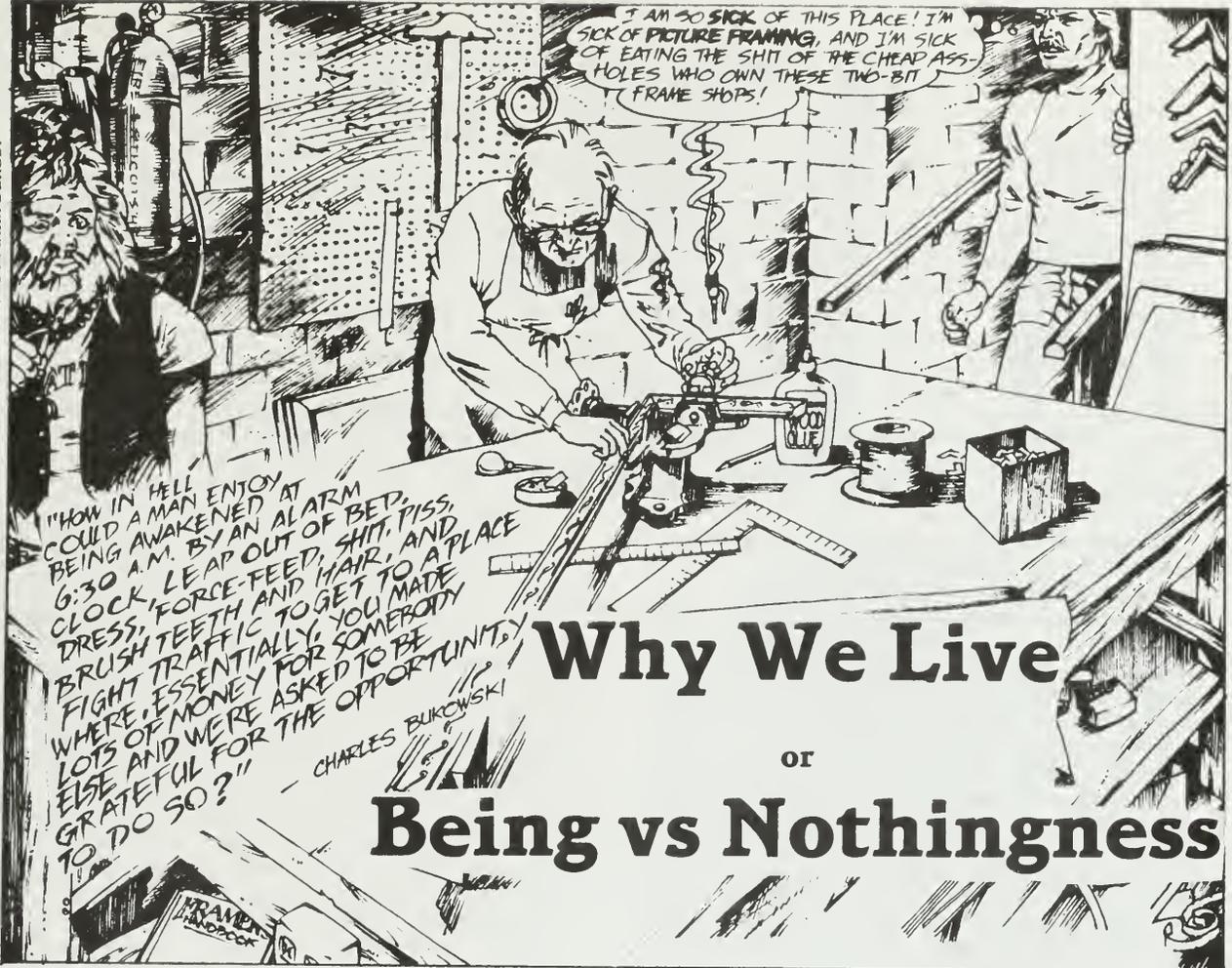
6) What's influential? Anything from outside of your "field"? (i.e., if you paint, is there some poem or music that has had a particular influence?)

7) Do you consider yourself political? Does that reflect itself? How? What turns you off in political art?

8) What's your favorite fraction?

Processed World wants to publish a selection of the responses, both written and graphic, so if you have problems with our use of anything in print, you should indicate so on your response. If you want to be known by a real name, or a pseudonym, please tell us (otherwise we'll probably just use initials). We will use appropriate material in issue #25. Questions? Write (or call)!

DEAR EARTHLING,
I AM AN ALIEN FROM OUTER SPACE.
I HAVE TRANSFORMED MYSELF INTO
THIS PIECE OF PAPER. RIGHT NOW I AM
HAVING SEX WITH YOUR FINGERS. I KNOW
YOU LIKE IT BECAUSE YOU ARE SMILING.
PLEASE PASS ME ON TO OTHER PEOPLE. I
AM VERY HORNY.
THANK YOU



I AM SO SICK OF THIS PLACE! I'M SICK OF PICTURE FRAMING, AND I'M SICK OF EATING THE SHIT OF THE CHEAP ASS HOLES WHO OWN THESE TWO-BIT FRAME SHOPS!

"HOW IN HELL ENJOY COULD A MAN AWAKENED AT BEING AWAKENED BY AN ALARM 6:30 A.M. BY AN ALARM BELL, LEAP OUT OF BED, DRESS, FORCE-FEED, SHIT, PISS, BRUSH TEETH AND HAIR, AND FIGHT TRAFFIC TO GET TO A PLACE WHERE, ESSENTIALLY, YOU MAKE LOTS OF MONEY FOR SOMEBODY ELSE AND WERE ASKED TO BE GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO?"
- CHARLES BUKOWSKI

Why We Live

or

Being vs Nothingness

Nothing has any intrinsic meaning except that which we, as individuals, put into it; filling the void, as it were. Some people live merely to feed, mistaking body functions for signs of life. I live for art, good or bad, whatever art may be.

By way of introduction, let me say that I am a writer, first and foremost, although I don't feel that the label of "writer" fully covers it. I feel that I am a person of the arts in that I am compelled to write by the same impulses that compel a painter to paint or a composer to compose. When I write, I write fiction and non-fiction, essays and poetry, film scripts and comic books, taking each as seriously as another. My essential sources of inspiration are emotion and observation; real life as opposed to escapism or fantasy. I ultimately hope to make films, although going to Hollywood is the last way that I would consider going about it, preferring to make small films that tell realistic and human stories.

In lieu of that, I am currently editing and contributing to a magazine titled *Street Music*, a publication of serious, adult-oriented comic book stories that revolve around real life characters and subjects instead of costumed heroes battling costumed villains over the fate of the universe. I approach comics writing in the same fashion as I would approach filmmaking, insofar as one is telling stories with words and pictures. Comics and film have their own inherent differences, yet one is able to use

a sequence of comic book panels as if they were film frames, creating illusions of time and motion. The goal of *Street Music*, however, outside of affording me a place to publish my own stories and those of like-minded artists and writers, is to demonstrate that comic books are a valid form of literary expression and worthy of an adult readership.

For the purpose of this essay, I should also point out that I am earning only a meager honorarium as editor and main contributor to *Street Music*. The magazine is a labor of love and art and I perceive it as a showcase that may well lead to other things. I am able to attract "big name" associate contributors and I'm able to offer exposure to newcomers, but the print run of each issue is fairly low and the page rate is even lower, resulting in a decision to relinquish the entire page rate to the artists with whom I collaborate.

Let me stress, too, that comic books are not my sole venue as a writer, and that I make no distinction in terms of what form my writing will take; the material itself makes that critical decision. Ideas tell the author what form they need to take if they are to be adequately expressed. Instead of sitting down with the notion of writing a poem and then looking around for something to write a poem about, I allow a given idea to present itself as a poem, or a short story, or a novel, or a comic book, or a film. That's the only way to work, because anything

else is like trying to force that square peg into a round hole and the writer ends up making crucial decisions for absolutely the wrong reasons. Just as it's artistically spurious to gear one's work to a specific market when the sole consideration is a higher rate of pay—artistic integrity and honesty require motivations beyond the financial—it makes no sense to write a short story instead of a comic book story simply because the writer thinks he can sell it to *The New Yorker* instead of *Street Music*. One can write for both markets, but the story should decide where it wants to live, and the writer should resist making such limiting distinctions between one form of writing and another.

At the same time, expecting to earn a living—even a handsome living—with one's art is not a crass prostitution of that art, but rather, a necessary and valid expectation. I've been writing for numerous small magazines since 1970 and, as anyone who has written for small magazines knows, there's no way one can earn a livable wage publishing on this scale. Consequently, I am currently attempting to break into the pages of some of the larger newsstand magazines—the slicks—with the idea of making more money while continuing to write about subjects that genuinely interest me. I refuse to write about such nonentities as Robin Givens or Sean Young, but I will happily write about Crispin Glover or Martin Scorsese because they are individuals who personally interest me and who deserve to be written about.

And that, I believe, is the distinction between honest writing and mere hackwork for the masses. It's the difference between Saul Bellow and Judith Krantz. Both sell a lot of books—although Krantz most assuredly sells more by virtue of the masses' voracious appetite for witless, escapist, dream-feeding blather—but Bellow genuinely earns his readership because he writes from the heart while Krantz writes for the benefit of her real estate agent.

Art is certainly used to sell products, and art is often hammered into marketable shapes *a la* Leroy Neimann and Peter Max, but art exists for the expression and salvation of human emotion. Mankind, on the other hand, has no genuine reason to exist and serves no genuine purpose. The value of human life is based solely upon the finite duration of it, while art serves to make that brief duration bearable. Art is what has given my life substance and direction since childhood.

Before arguing with me (or mentioning God), think about it. The earth would be far better off if there were no people on it, and if the earth were to suddenly disappear, the only repercussion would be the possible collapse of our tiny, nine-planet solar system. And so what if that happens? I'm not saying that it wouldn't be a drag from our personal point of view, but we wouldn't be here to worry about it, so what would it matter . . . really? Who and/or what would it affect?

It all means nothing, but in saying so, I'm not suggesting that humankind should surrender to the meaninglessness and commence with the raping and pillaging, or that we should all just start blowing our heads off, but rather, that by virtue of its brevity, life should be held in the highest regard and lived to its greatest fruition.

Suicide isn't necessary; death will be here soon enough. That's all the meaning one should need in life. Whenever

I'm afraid or reluctant to do something, I remind myself of this. "You could be dead tomorrow, so what's there to be afraid of? Just do it, whatever it is. Just do it . . . now!"

So I do it. It works very well, this simple reminder, and it keeps me moving forward, taking nothing for granted.

In a 1964 interview, the late novelist Nelson Algren said, "Happiness is a relative thing. It implies some kind of meaningful work, and meaningful work is in short supply. I don't think there is any meaningful work outside of the arts."

My sentiments exactly, but one needs to eat, if only to continue working in the arts or elsewhere, and that's where the eight-to-five gig comes in. Unless one is lucky enough to have reached a level to be able to live on the money generated by art work, one is forced to either seek some form of governmental assistance (something I won't do) or accept the fact that until such a level is attained, submission to full-time or at least part-time employment is unavoidable.

Not a pleasant scenario, but neither is living on the street. Some artists find a pleasant medium by working in a graphics studio or for a magazine or publisher, but in my case, even this proved to be less than satisfactory. In working for a comic book company outside of Philadelphia several years ago, I had to resign myself to the opinion that the majority of the comics they published were titles that I barely wanted to read, let alone edit. But, hell, it was professional, and a month after joining the company as an editorial assistant, I thought that I was finally on my way and that I'd never again need to accept a normal job. By the third month I realized that the job was as normal as any other, and the minor detail that the editor-in-chief was given to insulting, screaming fits didn't help. Six months after moving myself to this small town of industrial vapidness, I was relieved of my duties (i.e., fired) and then happily winged my way back home to San Francisco.

Prior to moving east, I'd spent four years working around the city as a picture framer—as close to the arts as working in a record store is to the music business—but it was the exhaustion of my patience with this so-called trade that sent me running to the East Coast in the first place, so I opted to capitalize on my office skills and joined the "temp" force. Temping is ideal for a person who hates interviewing for jobs and filling out applications and waiting for telephone calls that never come. It also affords one the opportunity to take a few days off if a magazine deadline is impending or if one is putting the final touches on a gallery opening, or whatever.

In my case, temping led to a full-time position with Wells Fargo Bank, where I currently work as a Records Administrator. Actually, the job and the attendant title

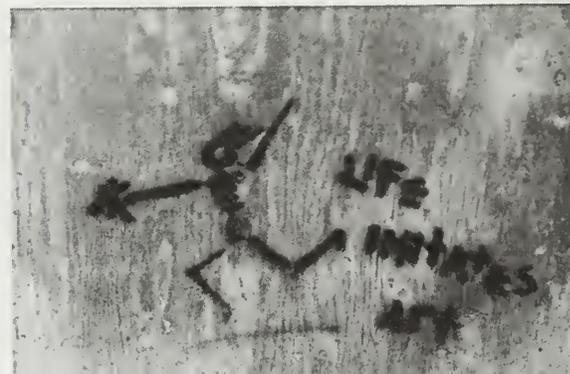


PHOTO BY D.S. BLACK

were created specifically for me after I'd worked in Real Estate Negotiations as a file clerk for several months. I've been with Wells Fargo for nearly three years and appreciate the fact that, for a white collar job, my position suits me very well and allows me enough room to be myself and to do my job without needing to conform to an excess of soul-selling corporate attitudes. I'm able to listen to music while I work (thank Christ!) and I'm making more money than I ever have in my life (although I still can't afford a one-bedroom apartment).

There is also something to be said for the exposure to life one gets from working in the real world; any artist interested in portraying human reality needs to have had a solid, first-hand taste of it. In the final analysis, however—despite the acknowledged benefits of standard employment—I wouldn't be able to handle it without the writing to go home to. Without the art I would be suicidal.

My biggest problem now is that, in producing a magazine on a bimonthly schedule and trying to write for other markets, I feel as though I have two full-time jobs, and after working all day at one job, I often have little energy remaining for the second. When an article or a review or a story or an essay is absolutely due, I can apply myself during the evening hours and produce good work and turn it in on time, but I generally find that I'm at my best in the early morning. Perhaps I could find a job working afternoons or evenings, but I don't feel like being a security guard or working in a warehouse or a restaurant.

The dichotomy here is that while my present job suits me and sustains me, it also impedes my progress as a writer. I have to wonder how much better my work would be, or how much further along I would be in terms of contacts and published credits, if I wasn't forced to divide my time and my energies in this dissipating fashion. Working full-time interferes with an artist's ability to fully perceive himself as such, consuming the time one needs to stare out windows and dream and process ideas and incubate half-formed concepts.

The key to enduring any job has always been, for me, the feeling that it wasn't forever—that eventually I'd have that breakthrough and be able to earn a livable wage with my writing. But during the years of striving and waiting and valiantly maintaining faith and optimism, the artist is relegated to the life of a dilettante, a mere hobbyist, and I've never much liked the basement quaintness of time-passing hobbies.

My dream since childhood has not been for material



D.S. BLACK

wealth or luxury, but for the time when each day would be mine to spend writing, reading, thinking . . . living life as it should be lived. The aforementioned faith and optimism that success is impending remains, and my dream since childhood is unchanged.

A poem by the late Raymond Carver titled "His Bathrobe Pockets Stuffed With Notes," published in 1986 in the first issue of a literary magazine called *Caliban* and included in the posthumous collection titled "A New Path to the Waterfall", was the apparent culmination of seemingly unrelated yet intriguing notes the author had written to himself over however long a period of time. The second to last note reads: "I've got—how much longer?"

Sadly, Raymond Carver had only two years to wait before receiving an answer to his ponderous and not-so-hypothetical question. Perhaps he had a certain premonition regarding his fate, because the final note in the poem reads: "Enough horsing around!"

Nothing more needs to be said.

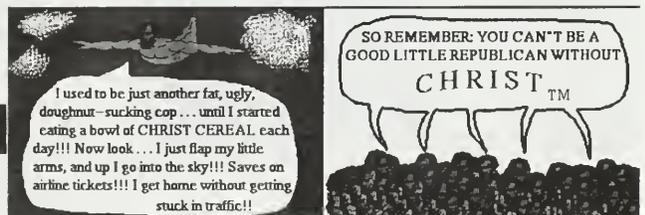
The clarity of perceiving life as a match that may be blown out before the candle is lit precludes any need for the drug of religion or the delusion of purpose. Even more important is the inevitability that once lit, the candle only burns so long, even if it manages to burn fully to the bottom, leaving us with only the self-advice of Raymond Carver:

"Enough horsing around!"

—Mark Burbey with many thanks to Angela Bodge.



MUCUS by the dead honkey



Spooky Days of the Wide-Eyed



ALEXANDRE SAPORETTI

"Extra. Connive with the president to extricate his men from junctures. Also, extricate yourself from the big police state. Learn the fashions of diplomacy, learn the suitable face: escape your birth."

Foolish, I always thought, foolish big-time to poke the laity with a plethora of futures, to rouse their pustulant lives to seepage with these promises and recommendations. . .

But Mary for the hundredth time thought I was way off base. You never know, she was thinking, who's going to rupture our standards. We list already. The president is losing foot, the gargagemen are screaming in the night, it's all so internal and dense. . . How else to safeguard the stuff of our poetry and of our souls, our fucking souls, than to learn? Learn learn learn? So we can

help the president and through him ourselves?

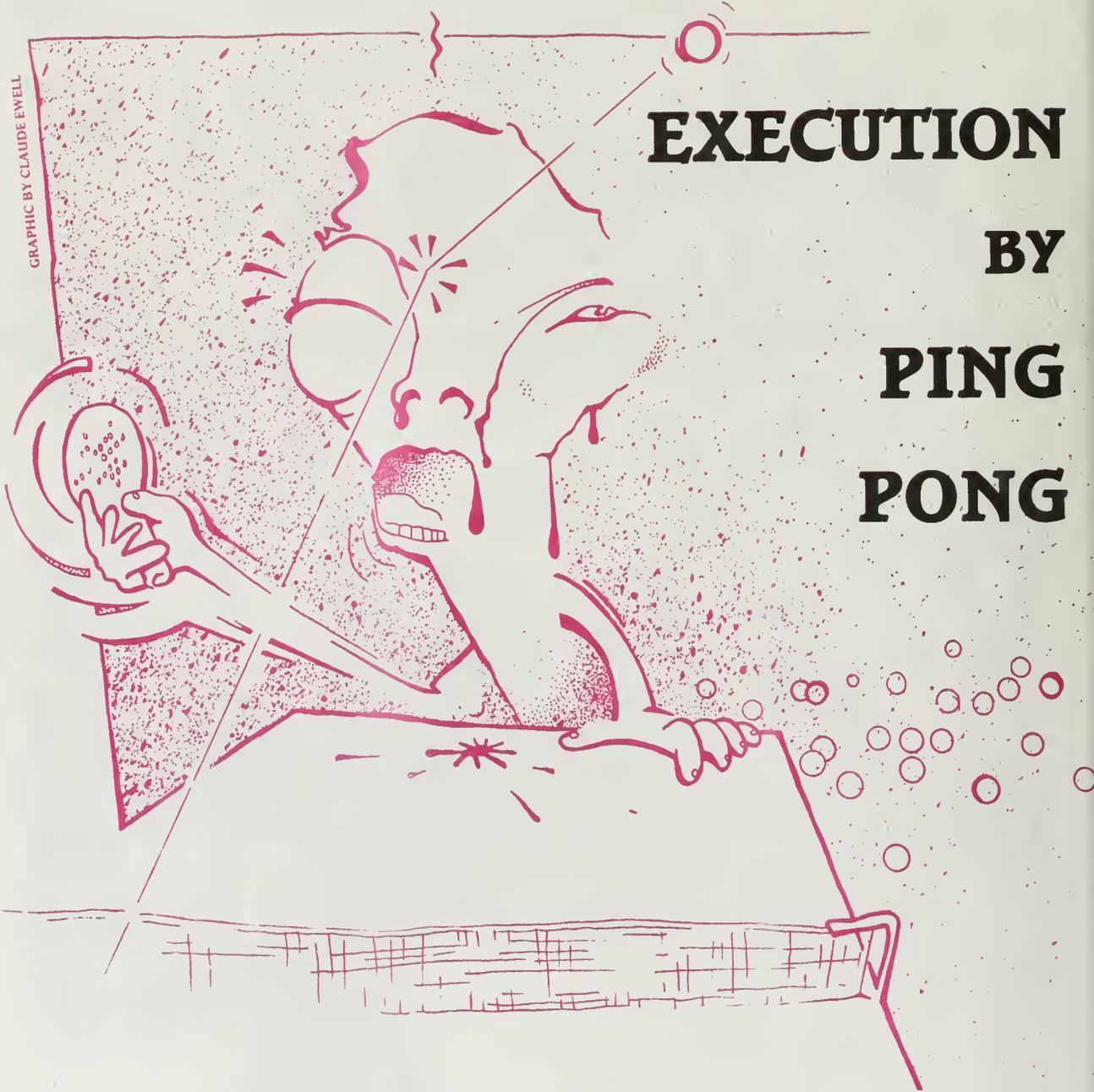
But learn what? I wondered. Learn about extrication of men? Of oneself from the state? Lacking the state, what have most men got? Minus birth even less. "Escape your birth"—one cringes in embarrassment. There's nothing to learn, it just hurts too much. Give it time.

Mary was getting angry and her thoughts grew jumbled. They can't read our minds, you know. They sit in their chairs and fret because they just don't know what's going on anymore. Could

be anything, riflery, non-standard cookery, henchmen, the bizarre. . . We could be unstable in our traps, we could wreak mongo bad on the funnybone, we could die alone. . . Don't you feel the winds of anarchy? We have to learn. Imagine if no one at all knows what's going on. Imagine the AIDS. I mean, collectivity isn't working. Collectivity! Maybe in a hundred years, two hundred, we'll be able to sit and spud out, but now it's erudition, honey, it's major lurching for the lobes.

Ach. I was too tired for this work. The individual was all that mattered.

GRAPHIC BY CLAUDE EWELL



EXECUTION BY PING PONG

Three Supreme Court judges die within months of each other and a conservative president appoints three new conservative judges.

In a revolutionary court decision murderers are to be executed by the State in the same way they killed their victims: chloroformed and then beaten with a steam iron. Or clubbed with a baseball bat, poisoned with cyanide-laced aspirin, pushed off a high-rise. All under police supervision.

Public opinion polls prove favorable to the new order. The State increases its arsenal: fireplace pokers, axes, an assortment of rocks, guns, knives and explosives. In a colorful burst of patriotism concerned citizens donate much

more than can be stored. Chain saws, garden tools, land deeds to deep holes and steep cliffs.

The president goes on T.V. "No more gifts until we use up what we've got. We'll be in touch."

Meanwhile, dozens of prisoners on death row are stabbed, strangled and bludgeoned, crushed, exploded and deprived of oxygen. Some punishments prove rather difficult to administer: a drowning in a lake after being pushed from a motorboat, choking on a passkey hidden in a poor boy sandwich, starved to death in a basement crawl space, pushed out of a commercial jetliner; the list is insufferably long.

It takes only months before the homicide rate plummets considerably. Cities become safer, people breathe easier, a sigh of relief that something has been successful in deterring what had been a spiraling, out-of-control nationwide problem, as well as a disgrace. Simply put, few people want to die the same way they killed someone. Finally, for the first time, the death penalty is a deterrent for potential murderers considering a toss of the hatchet or a plunge of the ice pick.

Biblical supporters claim they've finally been heeded. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. The new court decision fits their agenda perfectly. Church membership increases.

The new death penalty is not praised by all; far from it. There's a large coalition of feminists, homosexuals and white collar liberals that vehemently oppose the passage, enactment and consequences of the new legislation. They say the State should set an example, an ideal, rather than imitate and cater to the lynch mob mentality.

The opposite sides of the debate come to a confrontation in the trial of Julius Guarna, accused of killing a woman while playing Ping-Pong. He slammed a shot that hit her in the eye, causing unstoppable hemorrhaging which turned into a stroke which eventually crippled and then killed her. How can the State replicate such conditions? It would be nearly impossible to have the ball strike his eye and knock him dead in a similar fashion. Besides, the defense claims, it was an accident.

And thus begins a formidable court challenge to the new death penalty. It's

argued that conditions for the execution must be *exactly* the same in every detail as the murder itself, or else the State is not properly enacting its *own* laws. Not only the weapon involved, but the location, the conversation and the time of day must be faithful to the original circumstances. They remind the Bible supporters: "We want an eye tooth for an eye tooth, not a bicuspid for an incisor or a front tooth for a molar."

The president goes on T.V. "Now look what you've done. You've ruined everything!"

During the trial, Julius Guarna admits that not too long before the fatal Ping-Pong match he'd been mad at his opponent and was definitely playing to win, no question about it. In fact, he testifies: "I wanted to really slaughter her because the time before she beat me pretty badly."

His lawyer winces and puts his head on the table.

The court rules that Julius Guarna will have to be slaughtered in a similar fashion.

Ping-Pong professionals from the People's Republic of China, already booked for some exhibition matches on the west coast, are paid a little extra to participate in the Julius Guarna case. They are instructed to volley with him until the opportunity seems right to launch a fierce slam directed towards his eyes, either one will do.

Foul! Protests are almost immediate. For one, the opposition insists that a woman be Guarna's opponent, just as his victim had been, but then the opposition splinters somewhat—some of them claiming that since Guarna, a man, had killed someone, a man should also kill him in turn. The opposition bickers.

The president goes on T.V. "As a youth I, too, played a game remarkably similar to Ping-Pong."

For hours on end Julius Guarna is forced to stand at the Ping-Pong table. His face, neck and shoulders are pockmarked and bruised by all the hard shots. Both of his eyes have been hit, repeatedly, but not directly enough to cause the hoped for damage and subsequent death.

Once the opposition regroups they insist that Julius Guarna should not be playing players who are so much better than him. After all, he wasn't *that* much better than *his* victim. Plus, they claim, none of the proceedings have any validity unless conditions are exactly the same as during the moment of the accident, which, they insist, it was—an awful, mistaken accident.

There's more debate, more bargaining. The opposition knows they won't have all their demands met by the State, and the State knows they have to give in somewhat or else the opposition's position will be strengthened because more and more people might see the State as tyrannical, unfeeling and flagrantly wielding its unchecked power.

The president goes on T.V. "Anyone who wants to join our side will receive a rebate on the next digital clock radio they purchase at participating Standard Oil stations."

There's some compromising. The State says they'll play the exact same jazz tune, "My Baby Loves Me Best When I'm Not There," on a portable radio made by Zenith, if their women expert players don't have to be on their periods, as the victim apparently was while playing Julius Guarna. The opposition agrees, but only if the women players also have a height and weight that's within one-half inch and five pounds of the victim's height and weight. Yes, says the State, but only if we get to continue the game all week instead of just Tuesdays. No, says the opposition—weekdays only, as Julius Guarna should have weekends off. The



BY CLAUDE EWELL
GRAPHIC

State also requests that the actual game be inside a prison institution; the same table, but a different locale. The opposition balks and insists the games all be played in Guarna's basement, as was the original game of death. Finally, it's agreed that a room in the prison be refurbished to replicate the basement room as closely as possible: the folding table with the bag of tortilla chips, the dip, the lemonade. The cat box in the corner. The water softener tank, the cupboard filled with canning jars. Agreed, but the State insists they get to choose the brand of chips, dip and lemonade; that the cat box be clean, the water softener tank empty and the cupboard filled with anything they choose, regardless of its relevance to the case.

Then there's the matter of the ball itself. The original ball of death had been inadvertently crushed by an over-enthusiastic state trooper the night of the arrest. Much bargaining ensues. It's finally agreed that although the exact ball is impossible to supply, a ball of identical color, weight and approximate age can be used. This is an important point, as initially the People's Republic of China marksmen were using a heavier gauge Chinese ball which had inflicted much pain on Julius Guarna. The opposition thinks that the lighter ball may be the lifesaving factor in the case.

And which eye is it to be? The opposition says the left, of course, as the woman had been hit in the left eye. The State has nothing to say about that, and acquiesces, which is unusual.

Then there's a whole host of environmental factors. The original game had been at night, and it was stormy and raining outside. It's agreed that the prison game will be played regardless of weather; however, the games will be played at night.

Negotiations continue; both sides, particularly the opposition, claim victory. It seems that if all these complicated points of contention are honored in *this* case, then how can the State go through such complex negotiations for each and every case? It seems impossible and highly unlikely they could reproduce each homicide execution *exactly* the way it originally occurred. And the opposition is ready to go even further in their quest for authenticity: the light bulb over the table must be as old as the original, balls of dust must be placed correctly beneath the table and a certain number of nonpoisonous spiders

must be present at all times, with newly spun webs under at least two corners of the table.

But the State will not relent; the Ping-Ponging of Julius Guarna continues. The stage is set repeatedly and the balls are fired at his eyes. Meanwhile, all execution cases are stayed by a court injunction until the outcome of this historically pivotal case.

The president goes on T.V. "Hold your horses! Keep your pants on!"

Though no direct death shot has been made, Julius Guarna is receiving a rather thorough beating. His own game has improved drastically, so much so that a representative for the People's Republic of China team offers him the opportunity to try out for their squad. They are especially impressed with his defensive skills, fending off as he does shot after vicious shot. Guarna's cheeks are puffy and raw from the barrage. As a result, he starts growing a beard. His neck and upper arms are bruised and he's tired of standing up all the time. Unfortunately, he'd been wearing a sleeveless t-shirt and cut-offs the night of the tragedy, and so that's what he has to wear from now on while playing.

Giant welts and strawberries swell up all over his body and, even worse, he's developed a rather debilitating case of tendonitis in his paddle wrist. It's too painful to continue, but the State is adamant: it has to be his *eye* which is the epicenter of his troubles, not his wrist. He must keep playing with his other arm. The big hitters from the People's Republic of China are brought in to bombard the defenseless Julius Guarna.

The president goes on T.V. "In the interest of goodwill, the First Lady has

agreed to repeat what she was doing the night of the famous Ping-Pong murder."

Finally Julius Guarna's other arm gives out; this time it's his elbow. He can't even return the ball. The State suggests attaching a paddle to the middle of his chest, or lots of paddles, or one huge paddle—a Ping-Pong ball proof vest. The opposition counters that he used his arms the night of the accidental death, so he must use them now while playing in prison.

By this time public opposition has shifted overwhelmingly in favor of Julius Guarna. Cruel and unnecessary punishment is what some polls claim, but other polls disagree. What about the poor victim's rights and her suffering? Playing Ping-Pong on weeknights is a small price to pay, indeed. What kind of execution is this anyway?

The fateful blow comes during the first hour of play during the second day of the third week of the sixth month. By this time Julius Guarna is dangling in a body brace that's hung from a hook in the ceiling on his side of the Ping-Pong table. His feet can touch the floor only if he chooses, otherwise he just sort of hangs there, his arms and legs sticking out of the canvas pelvic apparatus and swinging gently back and forth. The opposition cries bloody murder because no such device was used by Guarna's victim. The State counters that she would of if she could of, and since Guarna is unable to stand on his own two feet and play the game—which is the most basic assumption in this whole case—then he must be propped up.

The knockout blow, unfortunately, is not a blow to the eye, as is hoped. Clocked at close to one-hundred miles-per-hour, the winning shot—a forehead, roundhouse slam by a petite woman named Liang Naoki—strikes Julius Guarna in the left temple, instantly rendering him unconscious, as blows to the temple often do. Complications arise, though slightly different from what Guarna's victim suffered; a different artery is involved, a different set of convulsions, but the result is the same and certainly a lot quicker.

Julius Guarna is pronounced by the State unable to live any longer. The opposition vows an equal and opposite reaction of some sort.

The president goes on T.V. "I'd like to thank the People's Republic of China Ping-Pong team for their good sportsmanship and extremely clean locker room."

—by Gregory Burnham





Walking Out Tomorrow

Shampoo bottles can look quite decorative when arranged in color coordination. But each long blond hair I pull out of the drain in Room 14 has the word *quit* written all over it. And when I pick up the water glass with my soapy fingers, it slips and shatters in the sink. That's the third glass this week. The thin glass fragments leave a cut in my hand.

"Let's take a break."

"Mr. Gruner said you gotta be more careful with the glasses. Otherwise he'll have to deduct them from your pay," says Mrs. Freese, while sitting down on the unmade bed in No. 14.

"Mr. Gruner can go to hell. If the glasses weren't so cheap to begin with, they wouldn't break all the time."

I reach into my jacket pocket to pull out the cigarettes and feel the reassuring envelope in my hand. The letter inside makes it easy to say something like that.

"Well, you know how he is when it comes to money."

I know. Ever since I started working here a month ago, the owner and his wife have been complaining that the hotel is in the red, and that these days hospitality just doesn't pay off any longer. They grudgingly agreed to pay me minimum wage. I had to promise not to tell the others how much I'm getting for scraping toothpaste out of twenty-six sinks. When I told Mrs. Freese, I found out she is earning half that much, and so is Angie, whose job it is to cut the mildew out of the bread. And of course the kids' help is free, apart from a few slaps here and a spanking there.

"Why do you let them use you like that?" I asked her then.

"Ah," she said with a sigh, "I've been working here all my life. I was already here when Mr. Gruner was still a baby. I used to change his diapers. I can't just leave. What would they do without me?"

There is something different about her today.

"Are you wearing different glasses?"

She takes them off and rubs her nose,

while I light my cigarette.

"I didn't think you'd notice. These ones don't fit very well."

She smiles an embarrassed smile. Now I see the bruise on the bridge of her nose.

"My God—what happened to your nose?"

"Didn't you hear? I fell. It happened yesterday. I was carrying the laundry basket, and I stumbled over that step out in the yard, the one over by the parking lot. I broke my glasses. Now I gotta wear these, while my regular ones are being fixed. But these ones hurt my nose."

"What did your doctor say about your nose? Shouldn't you stay home for a while? Maybe it's fractured."

"I don't wanna go to the doctor. I know what he'd say. He'd make me stay home. But I can't. They need me here, you see."

It sounds as if she is apologizing to me. That makes me angry. I remember what she told me about her life, and again I feel the desperate urge to somehow remove the old woman from the calculating claws of the hotel owners. In a wild moment I visualize throwing a soggy towel over her head and leading her through the backdoor to freedom. But she would always find her way back here. Just like she did ten years ago. That was the time she didn't want to be used any longer. She had been offered a job at the local public pool. It was good job. All she had to do was sit in the sun and hand out bathing caps. The pay was better, and she even got annual leave.

"And why, for God's sake, didn't you stay there?" I asked her.

"Well, one day Mr. Gruner came over with the wife and the children. And they all got down on their knees right in front of everybody, even the children did; and they all begged me to come back. They needed me. So I came back."

She needs to be needed.

"I'm just glad you're here to help me," she says now, smoothing out the bed. "The bathrooms were always a bit too much for me, since they can't spare Angie in the kitchen. I can't imagine what I'd do without

you."

This is probably the right moment to tell her that today is my last day of wiping flooded floors. But instead I move on to Room 15.

"I'm really happy with your work," she continues across the hallway, while I collect fingernail clippings from the shower tub. "The last girl didn't do a very good job. And then she just quit on me, without saying a word."

I hurry up with No. 15.

No. 16 dyed her hair and everything around it, and it takes me a while to get the mahogany out of the cracks between the tiles. I notice that No. 22 still hasn't given up on his athlete's foot, and that Room 26 moved out early this morning. Most guests leave Alistair McLean books or half-empty whiskey bottles behind. This one didn't flush his toilet.

I really should be happy that I don't have to come back tomorrow.

"Have a nice day," says Mrs. Freese. "And please try to get here early tomorrow. We're having a wedding party for fifty people tomorrow night, and I don't even know how I'm gonna do it all, with Angie being sick with the flu."

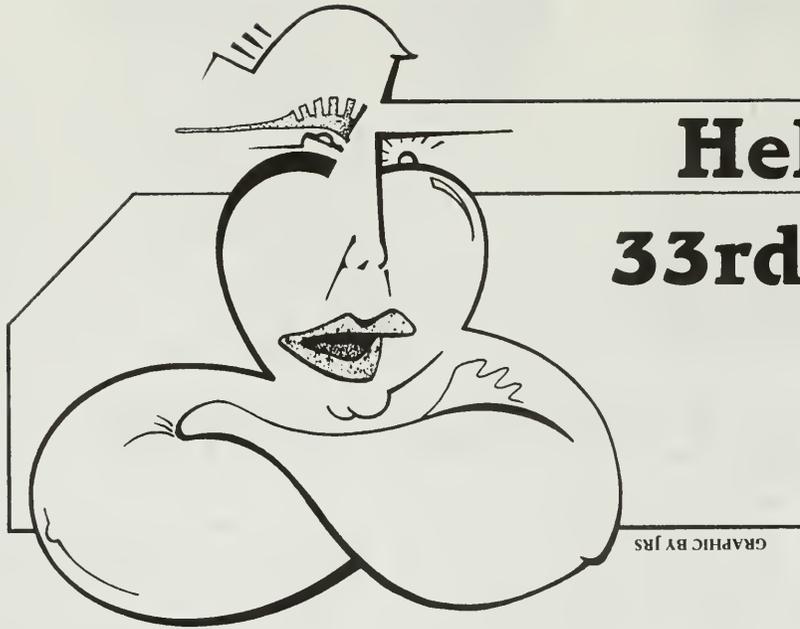
I go downstairs to the reception area to collect my first and last paycheck from Mr. Gruner. It takes me a while to locate him. He must have had a look at the calendar. I hand him my list of accumulated hours. He walks into his office and returns with my earnings.

"Here," he says. "But from now on I'd prefer to pay you on a weekly basis. That way we can keep a better check on things."

They probably had to change his diapers a lot.

And while I walk over to the parking lot, I realize why I am unable to feel any joy. I changed my mind without even knowing it. I can't accept this clerical job at the local police station. It would have been a good job. But I can't just walk out on the old woman, now that she really needs me.

—Anne Ellsworth



Hell On the 33rd Floor

Mona had worked at Schlager Memorial Hospital before, on the thirty-second floor. As a Sic Transit temporary, she specialized in statistical typing. It paid better than straight typing and was less maddening than listening to bored executives' voices on a dictaphone, but it was still shitty work.

Despite the dullness of the work, the employees in the Nursing Department had been congenial, so she didn't mind returning. But when she arrived at the hospital, she was steered to the thirty-third floor, to Fund Raising.

"In here," said the supervisor, showing her into a small, dark, windowless office.

"Thank you," said Mona to the woman's retreating back. In the office, a hugely fat blond woman in a flowered polyester smock sat at a small bare desk. A word processor, its screen glowing green, hummed behind her.

"Good morning," said Mona timidly. "I'm the temp from Sic Transit Temporaries. Are you Ms. Lewis?"

"Miss," said the fat woman. Her voice was breathy, as if her fat squeezed her lungs. "We've been needing a temp since our last girl left. The work is outlined on those sheets of yellow paper." She pointed a round finger at a stack of yellow lined paper next to an ancient Smith-Corona portable typewriter.

Mona's heart sank. At large corporations she worked on state-of-the-art equipment, but at non-profit organizations the typewriters were always strictly

World War Two. (The best equipment she'd ever worked on, in fact, was in the offices of a major liquor distributor.) Mona seated herself at the rickety typing table. There was barely enough room for her legs underneath.

"You can understand it, can't you?" asked Miss Lewis, evidently referring to the typing. Her blond hair was in a messy bouffant. Stray wisps escaped from the sides.

"Oh, yes, it seems to be straight columns. My name is Mona." She smiled. Mona prided herself on her friendliness and easy disposition. Most companies that hired her asked for her back.

Miss Lewis smiled back, but it was a tight, strained smile. "Hello, Mona," she said. "Nice name, Mona. You don't meet too many women named Mona. My mother's name was Mona."

"Is that a fact?" Mona sat down at the typewriter and shuffled through the yellow paper.

"Yes," said Miss Lewis. "She's dead now. Died of cancer of the jaw. It was a terrible sight. Most of her face was eaten away." She spoke in an emotionless monotone. "Had to take most of her food through tubes. Nice name, Mona. My name is Winifred. I'm named after my Aunt Winifred. She's dead, too."

"I'm sorry," Mona said nervously, and began typing. She hoped that pretending absorption in her work would make Miss Lewis stop talking.

"There's a lot of death in the world, don't you think?" Miss Lewis asked, as if

Mona were listening raptly. "I've tried to kill myself five times. Almost succeeded, too. You'd want to kill yourself, too, if you'd been through what I'd been through."

Mona stared at her for a minute, unable to believe her ears. "Gosh, do you know where they keep the white unlined paper?"

"Bottom drawer." Miss Lewis pointed to a standing file cabinet.

"Have you been here long?" Mona asked after she had fetched the paper.

"Me? No, only six months. I was a temporary, too. I was fired from this job only last week." Miss Lewis shifted in her chair. "I've got another week to go. Started in the typing pool, but then they put me in this cubbyhole." She made a disgusted noise. "I don't know why. I'm a very social person. Are you a very social person?"

Mona glanced at the wall clock. Dear God, she thought, it was only ten-fifteen. She decided to tell Sic Transit that she couldn't work tomorrow, lest they send her back here. "Yes," she said, and resumed typing.

"Very interesting, yes," said Miss Lewis. "I've never had many friends, but I'm a very social person. One has to be, don't you think? To survive."

"Friends make the world go round," Mona muttered.

Miss Lewis's nails tapped on the surface of her desk. "My mother never said that," she snapped. "She just said 'do this' or 'comb your hair' or 'go to college.' I didn't go to college. She did. She was a brilliant woman. But she died. Cancer of the jaw. I live in the shadow of death."

Mona stared at the columns of numbers. She wished she was back on the thirty-second floor. "Do you have a bottle of White Out?"

Miss Lewis shoved the bottle across her desk to where Mona could reach it.

"Have you ever had cancer?" Miss Lewis asked.

Taken aback, Mona laughed. "Not

that I know of!"

"It's a terrible thing," Miss Lewis said reprovingly.

"Yes."

"Yes, Mona. We all live in the shadow of death. even you. You're very young, aren't you?"

"I'm twenty-two."

"Twenty-two. Yes, very interesting."

Mona felt Miss Lewis's tiny sharp eyes on her. But she resolutely went on typing columns of numbers.

"Young and pretty," said Miss Lewis. "I was pretty when I was twenty-two. Now I'm old and fat."

"You're not old," Mona said politely.

"I'm not?" Miss Lewis leaned forward. "How old a woman would you say I am?"

Mona looked up at her. The woman was so fat that her age was indistinguishable. Any wrinkles Miss Lewis might have had were plumped out of the smooth, pink face. "I would guess you were, uh, thirty-four?"

Miss Lewis smiled. Evidently Mona had guessed wrong. "I look young for my age, don't you think? That's because I feel like a girl, not a woman. I'm sexually underdeveloped, Mona."

Oh, God, Mona thought.

"Yes, the first time was about two years ago. I haven't since, I don't know why. But men die too, Mona." Miss Lewis leaned back. "They think they're so great, but they die," she said cheerfully. "I like to play with myself, though. I put on a negligee and look in the mirror. It's almost as good as having a boyfriend. Do you play with yourself, Mona?"

"No!" Mona cried, even though she did.

"Too bad." Miss Lewis' gaze drifted to Mona's hands. "You type very well. I wish I had a skill. I don't really run this word processor, they just put it in here

to look like I have something to do. Do you have a boyfriend?"

"Yes."

"Is he nice?"

"Very nice."

"Do you sleep with him?"

Mona nodded, typing furiously. She would probably have to do the page all over again.

"You look like the sort of woman who yells a lot when she makes love," Miss Lewis said speculatively. "My mother did. Do you?"

This was getting ridiculous, Mona thought. "That's none of your—"

"I'd like to have a boyfriend," Miss Lewis interrupted. "I had one, once, I met him through an ad in a *Village Voice* that I found on the subway. We went out once. It was nice. We were supposed to go out Friday night, but he stood me up."

Exasperated, Mona said, "You'll have to pardon me, Miss Lewis, but I have a lot of work to do." She patted the pile of yellow paper. "See how much I have to do by twelve?"

"I don't know why he stood me up." Miss Lewis went on as if the other woman had not spoken. "I'm a very fun person. That was why I attempted suicide."

Mona's stomach lurched. "Please, Miss Lewis—"

Miss Lewis stared off into space, a frown on her round face. "I was watching the Home Shopping Network when the urge came over me. I ran into the bathroom and gulped down a whole bottle of Extra-Strength Tylenol. But then I threw up. Must have been a sign from God, don't you think?"

"Please," said Mona again.

"If you're meant to live, you're meant to live, in whatever damaged condition you come into the world." Miss Lewis sighed. "But we all die. My mother died.

Her body wasted away, got thinner and thinner and she had to take all these drugs and—"

Suddenly Mona was on her feet, the typing forgotten. "Stop it!" she pleaded. "Stop it, I can't stand it! Please, please stop talking and let me work!"

Miss Lewis glared at her. "You see?" she said. "You're just like everyone else. And I thought you were different." She shrugged. "Makes the world go around."

"SHUT UP!" Mona cried. "I'm going home! I don't care about the money. I don't care what the agency thinks. I can't stand it any longer!"

She tore open the door and ran out into the corridor, gasping for air.

Miss Lewis stared after her for several minutes, then picked up the telephone on her desk.

"Hello, Personnel?" she said into the receiver. "This is Winifred Lewis. I'm afraid the new temporary didn't work out. She's gone home, sick or something. I don't know why that agency can't send better people. We pay them enough. Could you send over one of the temps from Methods & Procedures? Thank you so much."

Half an hour later a young girl came into the office. "Good morning," she said. "You needed a temp?"

"Yes," said Miss Lewis. "We've been shorthanded since our last girl left. My name is Winifred Lewis. What's your name?"

"Charlie," said the girl.

"Hello, Charlie." Miss Lewis beamed. "Nice name, Charlie. My mother's name was Charlie. Short for Charlotte, of course."

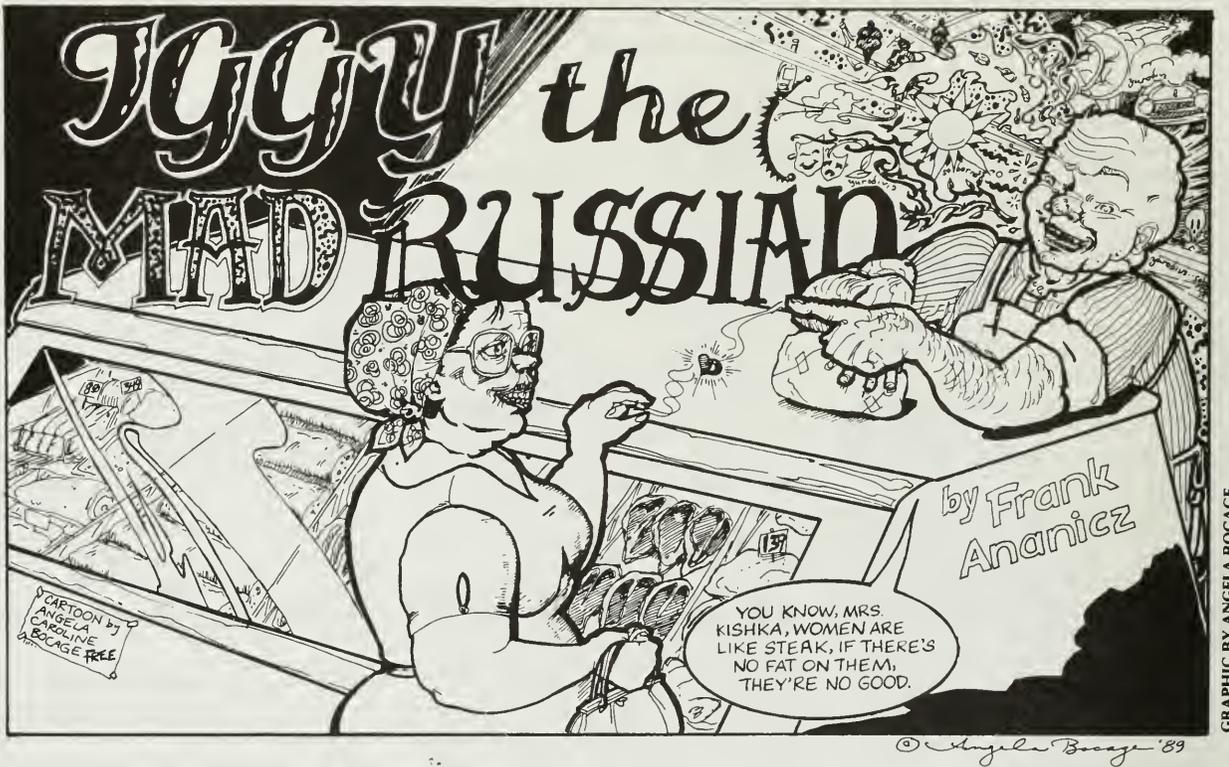
"My, what a coincidence!" The girl sat down at the typewriter.

"Makes the world go round," said Miss Lewis.

— Elisa DeCarlo

TWISTED IMAGE by Ace Backwords ©1989





GRAPHIC BY ANGELA BOCAGE

"I'll be right there," my oldest brother Steve said over the 'phone and hung up. No customers in the shop, he spoke freely to me. "It's the ol' man. He got into trouble again." He sighed. "Trouble is his middle name."

"What'd he do this time?"

"He and his buddy Zipsky were drinking all morning, beginning of the month social security check celebration. The Town Tavern not being air conditioned and it being a warm October day, they decided to cool off. They went swimming in the Valley Stream Lake in their long-johns. The Police picked them up and took them to the Police Station."

"Since Mom died and he retired, he's got too much time on his hands," I said.

Steve took off his white butcher apron, saying, "I've got an idea. I'll ask him to work in the shop part-time. I'll tell him the customers have been complaining we don't make Italian and Polish sausage as good as he does. It won't stop him from drinking or getting into trouble, but it might lessen it."

Ignatius Ananicz was named after St. Ignatius of Loyola, the patron saint of retreats, the founder of the Jesuit order, the author of the classic *The Spiritual Exercises*. This gnome-like saint wasn't tall, handsome, or strong. This genius-mystic was never heard to abuse anyone

or use a scornful word. He was calm, temperate, angelic. He wasn't at all like one of his namesakes, better known in Elmont as Ignatz, Ignacy, Butch or Iggy the Wild Russian. It's been said whatever saint's name is given to you at birth, God automatically assigns that saint to be your guardian angel. If this is so, St. Ignatius was busy indeed watching over and protecting Iggy's body and soul from his zany escapades.

Steve picked our father and Zipsky up at the police station and took them to his house for lunch. Later, when I saw my father coming into the shop and go into the bathroom, I knew Steve had talked him into returning to work. While my father put an apron on, Steve told me when he dropped Zipsky off at his house our father gave him some money. Later, when Zipsky came into the shop carrying a bottle-shaped brown bag, we knew what our father had given him money for. Zipsky went into the back room where my father was making Italian sausages. An hour later, both came out front a little tipsy.

Wanting to break their drinking bout Steve went over to our father and asked him if he'd stay and slice enough Italian style veal cutlets for tonight and Saturday.

My father nodded and told Zipsky he'd see him after work in the Town

Tavern. Then he went into the refrigerator and came out carrying a crate of boneless legs of veal. He put it on the floor alongside the meat block closest to the refrigerator. After opening it, he began cutting the veal into sections, preparing them for slicing.

Meanwhile, my 2 brothers and I waited on the customers coming into the shop.

Nearly 5 p.m., one of my father's Russian customers, a widow in her sixties, came in, saw my father, and said, "Hi Butch."

Wearing a short sleeved shirt, Butch looked up from his meat block. "Hello Mrs. Kishka." He laid his knife down on his meat block and went over to the showcase. Elbows leaning on the white porcelain counter, he looked Mrs. Kishka up and down as she stood next to the 2 women Steve and I were waiting on. "Mrs. Kishka, you're a nice strong healthy looking Russian woman. You're not like these skinny American women. You have a nice shape. How much do you weigh—about 195 pounds?"

Chest like a pair of basketballs, Mrs. Kishka replied, "You're close."

"You're like that singer Kate Smith; I like that type."

Wearing no make-up, Mrs. Kishka smiled, "I like your type—tall, dark, and handsome."

"You know Mrs. Kishka, women are like steak, if there's no fat on them, they're not good."

Steve walked by my meat block, muttering, "They're acting like teenagers."

Hearing him, my father gave him a nasty look, then looked at Mrs. Kishka. "You know Mrs., I've got 3 fancy sons. That is, they think they're fancy. But when they go to the toilet, they stink it up just like I do."

Mrs. Kishka put her hand across her mouth and chuckled. "My daughter's like that."

Steve walked by me muttering, "That fat broad laughs at every stupid thing he says. It must have taken all day to pierce her fat ear lobes."

Hearing this too, my father said to Mrs. Kishka, "When my skinny sons and their skinny wives get together, it

looks like a consumptive gathering."

Mrs. Kishka again chuckled.

"My sons asked me to work again. They don't know how to make good sausages. They've got cottage cheese brains."

Again Mrs. Kishka chuckled.

"Would you like a drink?"

"Yes."

"Come into the back room." Mrs. Kishka followed him into the back.

The 3 of us went about our work. Every now and then we'd hear bursts of laughter coming from the back room.

About a half hour later, Steve asked me to call our father. "Tell him we need veal cutlets." Steve stood near the back door when I opened it. We saw our father kissing Mrs. Kishka. After Mrs. Kishka left the store, Steve went into the back room and began yelling at him. "Say what you think this back room

is—a parlor? Next time take your girlfriend to the Tavern for a drink."

"This is *my* back room and *my* butcher shop. I'll bring whoever I want here. You better watch your step. 'Cause if you don't, I'll give you a big kick-in-the-ass-get-the-hell-out-of-my-shop. This is what I get for coming to back to work to help you."

Steve came out front and began serving 1 of the 4 customers now in the shop.

My father came out front and went behind the customers' side of the counter and took his apron off. "I quit." Then he rolled his apron into a ball and threw it over the counter into Steve's face. "You know what you can do with that." He opened the glass front door, walked out, and slammed it.

—Frank Ananicz

Hey, Kids!

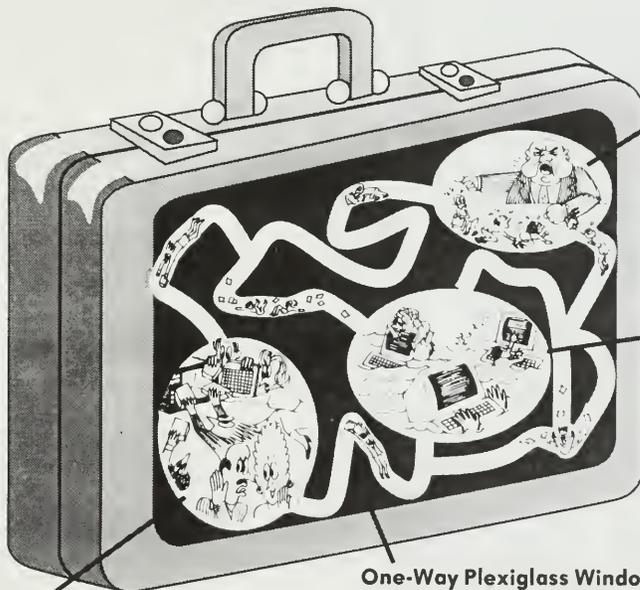
Create your own Working Microcosm of the Corporate World with this terrific new

CorporAnt Farm

Not just a toy, this Hermetically-Sealed Leather-Like Briefcase contains everything you need to create a Smooth-Running, Efficient Office Environment!

only
\$39.95!

NEW!



Suitable For:

- Kids
- Shut-ins
- Hobbyists
- Sociobiologists

CEO Offices!

Watch the chief bark out orders to a groveling staff of drones! Office suite includes executive bathroom, track lighting & palm tree, one pack of supplicAnts, intercom system, personalized mugs, pink slips, power lunches and much much more!

Wordprocessing Pool!

Daily deluges of meaningless memoranda* provide your worker ants with exercise and excitement! Endless Entertainment!

*Not Included

Smoke-Filled Lunchroom!

Thrill to the meaningless tedium of their banal lives! Watch them frantically gobble their cardboard lunches, washing it all down with special Non-dairy Latex Koffee Kreamer. What fun!

One-Way Plexiglass Windows

So you can watch them without being seen! Makes you feel like the boss!

Another TotTrainer® from HiveMind, a leisure time division of CONTEK
People like you helping People like Us help Ourselves

Order Now and receive our Free Advanced Starter Kit!
Includes MiscreAnts, DeviAnts, LateAnts and PissAnts!
All are Color-coded & pre-numbered for easy identification!
The extender kit (\$19.95) includes ClaimAnts and LitgAnts!

Shipping & Handling included. Orders to the colonies of Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam and Canada add \$2.00 (U.S.) Offer not available in Japan, Macedonia or Humboldt counties, Ca. Allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

THEY WHO WASTE ME

When I ask for a hand,
they give me a shovel.
If I complain, they say,
Worms are needles at work
to clothe a corpse for spring.
I sigh. Whoever breathes
has inhaled a neighbor.

AT WORK

He said: *The sky's so blue there,
you could bathe your feet in it.*

And his emotion rose like dust
behind a passing truck.
He always coughs on his lunch.
His eyes are faded, like his shirt.

He smiles: *I was strong then,
as big as a young barn.*

What can you do for a man?
Time is an old boss
we hate together . . .

SOME DEFINITIONS AT WORK

The hammer lowered its horns
and the rusty nail shrieked
pulled from the place where it lived

The table-saw whined
like a virtuous bee
that knows it will die
in a meadow of dust

The sandpaper sighed
as it killed itself
caressing the sugar pine the ash

The housepainter's brush
hermaphrodite
with a long stem a vaginal voice
and a spring in its bristle
swayed satisfied with itself on the wall

Glue the woodworker's sperm
began to boil in the pot

The rags their breath
full of turpentine
demanded their rights
and threatened to burst like the sun

Then the woman
who turned into a mop
disheveled grey
worn out by the floor

and the man
who'd become a broom
his broad shoulder
lost in the dirt

noticed how even a motor
bleeds when it breaks
drops of oil stare from its skin
like the eyes of frightened fish



Bert Meyers (1928-1979) was born in Los Angeles. Self-educated, he published five books and won numerous awards. His work has been much praised by poets such as Robert Bly, Denise Levertov and Marianne Moore.

A member of no literary school or clique, for many years he worked with his hands and was a skilled picture framer and gilder. He received a master's degree, with no undergraduate credits, and taught literature at the college level for the last 10 years of his life.

His quiet, elegant and direct poems were built by a craftsman, to last. They are inspired portraits of common moments, people and objects surrounded by an increasingly processed world. Bukowski tells us how the untouchables among us live; Bert Meyers transcribed the inner and outer lives of those who work for wages, raise families and pay rent.

This mainly work-related selection of poems was taken from *The Dark Birds* (1966?), *Sunlight on the Wall* (1976) and *The Wild Olive Tree* (1982).

— klipschutz

TWILIGHT AT THE SHOP

A whole day at the saw—
when they come for the rubbish,
I throw myself
out with the dust.

We smile and smoke and praise
what's left of the sun.
Dark trees have bottled its light.
They glow like many beers.

THE GILDER

The Shop, weakened by dust, was closing its eyes.
The saw stopped like an ambulance. A breeze made of
turpentine still hung around his hands.

Outside, the walls in the alley were gold leaf
fluttering on their frames; clouds, retired housepainters,
relaxed in the sky.

A little cello began to throb in his throat.

Suddenly, he saw the sun overturn like a truckload
of oranges at the end of a street—its light scatter and
roll through the windows on a hill.

What's that got to do with Wittgenstein, or how we
live? voices shouted in his head.

Nothing . . . nothing at all.

PICTURE FRAMING

My fingers feed in the fields of wood.

I sand pine, walnut, bass,
and sweat to raise their grain.

Paints, powder and brush
are the seasons of my trade.

At the end of the day
I drive home
the proud cattle of my hands.

ARC DE TRIOMPHE

Nothing but grey seen through the arch—
as if triumph were an abyss
into which a nation marches.

by Bert Meyers

© 1989 Odette Meyers
Used with her kind permission.





PHOTO BY D.S. BLACK

Workplace organizing, the “office of the future,” environmental issues, the Pentagon, psychology, consumption, foreign capital, and production all converge in the Silicon Valley. Most studies of The Valley have been at best one-sided and historically blind. Such is not the case with *Behind The Silicon Curtain: The Seductions of Work in a Lonely Era*, by Dennis Hayes (Boston: South End Press, 1989). At a recent reading and discussion of this book, long-time Processed World contributor Dennis Hayes disputed the classification of his book as “Labor/Sociology.” Properly, it should be called “Lost History,” for it is a history of the Silicon Valley, and it deals with events that have perhaps not been deliberately hidden, but have certainly been lost, at least for the people most affected by the changes wrought by the micro-electronics industry. Like all useful history, it speaks to the present about future possibilities.

Mr. Hayes traces the growth and change of this industry, outlining the spectacular claims of industry boosters, its equally opulent (and conspicuous) corporate consumption, and its swift debilitation. As he puts it, “It was as if the youthful industry had contracted progeria, a rare disease that struck down toddlers with the infirmities of advanced age.”

What might seem the denouement — the shrinking and exporting of the industry from its cradle — is actually the starting point. **Kudoka**, the Japanese

call it: the “hollowing out” of the United States’ productive capacity by corporations moving production to distant shores. The newest working poor, the hidden contaminations, the absence of community, the empty offices and plants, all echo the slower, but no less permanent, transformation of the United States’ earlier industries. This very process is possible only because of the electronics industry’s success; the minute chips can be made anywhere, but the coordination that allows such far flung enterprises depends on the sophisticated products of the electronics industry.

As a corollary to exporting production to off-shore zones, industry “imports” workers (both legal and illegal) from those same shores. While assembly workers used to earn about ten dollars hourly, they are more commonly paid half that now. In the third world these wages must be alluring; but in Silicon Valley in 1988 \$13 an hour was considered a substandard wage!

If there is little money, there is no community. From the highest levels to the lowest, transience marks the life of workers in the industry — whether as temps, short-term professionals, or as illegals ceaselessly on the move. Workers are constantly shifting from job to job, area to area, in a ceaseless dance that mirrors the mobility of capital — now shifting from one line to another, from one country to another, from one owner to another. This flux reduces any

chance for collective responses, both subjectively (people are more likely to see getting another job as a solution), and objectively (by presenting company-wide unions with endlessly “new” groups of workers, as well as the threat that the company itself will simply pack up and disappear). The reluctance of traditional unions to venture into these new industrial areas is perhaps a reflection of this.

The industry poses (mostly hidden) health threats: workers are threatened by the chemicals they work with; local residents may breathe or drink wastes; and the “consumers” of the product (often other workers) “enjoy” the hazards of sped-up production, repetitive stress injuries, and microwave radiation. Most companies are at best indifferent to these threats, and state agencies have been less than aggressive in protecting the “public health,” giving lip service to the dangers while engaging in endless studies.

The threat isn’t simply physical, but extends to the mental health of the worker, and indirectly to the rest of the world, for Silicon Valley’s customers are not simply corporations, but also include the U.S. military. The weapons’ industry is perhaps the biggest client of the electronics age, yet most literature about Silicon Valley ignores this. The isolation experienced by most workers is exacerbated by the security requirements of the Pentagon contractors. Here we see perhaps the deadliest

isolation: that of the worker from the product. This alienation, combined with work situations and personal outlooks that further separate workers, results in a monastic dedication to arcane technology. Mr. Hayes sums up: "Reckoning moral responsibility by measuring the distance between one's labor and the product is a legitimate inquiry, but only if one can hope to measure reliably. The division of labor in military electronics suggest the interdependency and responsibility of all workers but—and this is the paradox—encourages profound distance between worker and product... As a result, workers can manufacture, in addition to military electronics, a naive about the impact of their labors and, at least among obliging and complicit workers, escape ridicule for an ill-gotten innocence."

While there is a romance to the work—certainly an absorbing fascination, it is also, especially in the workplace, a high-pressure and all-absorbing task. Mr. Hayes conjures up the ghost of Charles Babbage, who helped conceive of the earliest calculating machines. Babbage was also one of the foremost advocates of "rationalizing" work—of breaking all tasks into simple, repetitive steps, a process which helped shatter the old craft guilds. The computer industry itself (especially software) has mostly resisted this trend. The technique known as "structured programming" is revealed to be both a tool grasped by the programmer to increase his (or her) ability to tackle large tasks, and a tool for the managers to attempt to control the programmers and to streamline the production of software. In fact, it has not dramatically helped increase the efficiency of programming, but it *has* allowed a greater separation between worker and product, especially in the military world, where it reinforces the "need-to-know" atmosphere.

The flip side of the team programmer is the individual hacker, alternately reviled as saboteur and praised as innocent techno-wizard. The typical hacker doesn't have a political program; the motivations are access to more computing power and a desire to explore the electronic net that grids the (developed) world. In reality, most sabotage of business and government systems comes from disgruntled employees, past and present. Most of this is not reported (less than 2%), for fear of panicking nervous stock-holders and customers. While this form of attack has

rarely been openly political, it "quietly suggests something larger than petty electronic sniping and greed: a latent collective power available to millions of computer workers, a power that can press their political interests successfully against their employers everywhere."

Although small "professional responsibility" organizations have sprung up, they have done as much (or more) to limit the acceptable range of opposition as they have done to limit abuses of technology. The "Computer Professionals" organization has shaped the debate around Star Wars as a debate about technical feasibility, rather than desirability. It is deemed "irresponsible" to recommend active computerized resistance as a source of workers' power because it is perceived as a medium of employee crime and 'terrorism.'" One suspects that the proper name should be "Computer Professionals for Social *Respectability*," for they never question the system that created them. This technology is so powerful, and its consequences so devastating, that it must not be blindly pursued. Yet calls for social control fall on deaf ears. Indeed, they are often seen as attacks on the wonderful world of work, at least by industry professionals. The real danger is not in database raiding, or angry employees erasing your credit records, but rather from the naive and technological fascination of these people. Their toys are out of control, and they will suffer no wider responsibilities.

Beyond the long hours and involvement, these people betray serious problems in the new workplace. Far from representing a revitalization of the work-ethic, they reveal a profound isolation. Various corporate cultures have attempted to increase the seduction of work, and to provide palliatives for that same seduction. The new professionals, unlike those of the 19th century, are not "helping professionals," and they lack the guild-like solidarity of the earlier age. Isolated physically in suburbs among unrecognized neighbors, trapped in traffic, and then absorbed into a specific task, the psychological make-up of the new professional guarantees that isolation will be redoubled; indeed, the "masochistic self-denial... an operational withdrawal from families and social life, and a pre-emptive deferral of social responsibility" can only lead to a reinforcement of the physical patterns of their lives.

The maintenance of individual psychological balance takes many forms:

perhaps an excessive dedication to health and fitness (at times to the point of injury) that denies the risks around them or perhaps by the consumption of an estimated \$500 million worth of drugs (in 1985). The large numbers of individuals undergoing therapy reveal not just the psychological pressures, but also the isolated nature of the response to a collective problem.

When all of this fails (or succeeds), one can always drive to the mall for a little excitement. Silicon Valley denizens inhabit the shopping centers more than most other Americans, spurred on by the manipulations of desire and artificial gratification engineered by the VALS (Values and Lifestyles) program. In this place of little human contact the commodity reigns supreme—both as the end-product of work and as the *raison d'être* of life. These people aren't materialists in the normal sense, for "they pursue the fantastic symbols offered by commodities..." rather than the item itself. Conspicuous consumption is other-directed (they can see how well off, how tasteful you are), while the new consumption attempts to satisfy unmet needs and a lack of integration (both social and psychological).

Another compensatory mechanism is found in groups such as *World Without War*, which is therapy disguised as politics, for it lets participants feel good about what they're doing, even as they continue to produce for the military. It also serves to sidetrack any opposition into the fairy-land of ideals and thoughts.

This excellent book won't be spoiled by quoting from the last paragraph: "The Information Age has stripped us of our social sensibilities, but it has not consigned us to a new dark age. For all the ennui it has brought us, our infatuation with electronics technology has also placed the levers of social change within reach of those previously declared powerless or marginal. An indomitable power to subvert economic and political policy now resides in the consoles of over 30 million computer workers who process the fiscal, economic, and social alchemy that is late capitalism. It is a lever contemporary social critiques largely ignore; perhaps rightly so. For without the political will, or at least a glimmer of collective self-consciousness, the lever cannot be pulled on behalf of meaningful and popular change."

Indeed. Read this Book!

★ ★ ★ ★

— reviewed by P. Morales

LETTERS

"Hither you have come to appear on the stage, but first You must tell us: What is the point?"

I was disturbed to find Allen Krebs' "Children of the Night" in *Processed World 23*. Krebs' despairing portrait of social relations inside the urban schools is offensive and unfocused. What is the point of his writing? If Krebs had sought to simply present a "tale of toil," as the editorial collective so labeled his piece, I would not be writing in response. If Krebs' point was simply that substitute teaching is hell, his readers could enthusiastically commiserate with his fate and enjoy the anecdotes he shares.

Unfortunately, Krebs is not content to simply relate his experiences. Instead, his article both begins and ends with an ill-conceived analysis of schooling in an urban community. His analysis is based solely on his own superficial observations. Krebs maintains that the Oakland Public Schools "are places of no account, the bottom of the line." He believes that the schools are simply "holding facilities, warehouses." Krebs' analysis parallels the theoretical work of structuralists of many shades. The possibility that the school itself could be a contested social space—an arena where individuals engage in various forms of resistance and where a myriad of societal struggles work themselves out—is ignored.

"All you put before us are victims, acting yourself Like helpless victim of inner impulses and outside powers."

Krebs' school community is a community of helpless victims. Students are seen as only engaging in self-destructive forms of resistance. Krebs, engaging in a healthy dose of racial stereotyping, makes the assertion that Asian students are the only notable exception to this behavioral norm. "Asian kids," notes Krebs, "sweep the honor roll. . . and in class the behavior of these kids is

exemplary: quiet, industrious and curious." That many Asian students do not fit this stereotype and that non-Asian students also can be seen with these same "exemplary" traits are realities not fully explored. In fact, his comments and observations on "the good student" are ignored in his analysis. The reader is meant to excuse Krebs' digression on the school's successes and return to the more important task of identifying its shortcomings.

The failures of the school are seen both in the absence of "learning" and in the students themselves. Krebs maintains that "learning is largely incapable of attainment under the circumstances." What forms of learning Krebs apparently is concerned about are unidentified. The reader is left on his or her own to ponder how an individual could fail to learn from his or her daily experiences.

Krebs more disturbingly seems to blame the students themselves for many of the shortcomings of the schools. Krebs misidentifies the "structural problems of the schools" as those relating to decay and inadequate maintenance of the physical plant. The more significant problem of an oppressive social structure is ignored. Krebs while believing that "a thatched shack in the jungle" can provide "a superb environment for learning," maintains that in Oakland "sordidness is massively compounded by the students' own problems." Krebs repeats this offensive—and, perhaps, racist—reasoning in blaming the schools' problems on "students whose backgrounds make learning difficult if not impossible."

"We now ask you--- To change yourself and show us our world, As it really is: made by men and women, open to alteration."

Instead of simply blaming the victim and despairing in a belief that individuals are powerless, the intellectual has the responsibility of identifying how people struggle to form communities and gain

power over their lives. Such an article would not be content to complain about "the general structural problems" as if they were only physical. Instead the article would examine the bureaucracy in the school system and identify how funding appropriations are made. After all, the Oakland Public Schools are on the verge of insolvency, while at the same time the schools have an average class size that indicates an inadequate number of teachers working in the school. Where and on what is the school district's money being spent? In the midst of this crisis, what role has the teachers' union played in addressing the educational concerns of the community?

In contrast to Krebs' portraiture of the student population in Oakland, much can be said. Oakland, after all, is the community where the Black Panther Party developed. Huey Newton and the others attended the Oakland Public Schools. Not surprisingly students emerging from such an environment are both highly politicized and race conscious. The most popular musical groups among the students today are groups with a political message (such as Public Enemy and Boogie Down Productions). Black students in the schools have begun to wear red, black and green African pendants to demonstrate their political commitment, and large clocks around their necks to symbolize their knowledge that we live in a crucial time.

Student resistance has also expressed itself more directly. For example, students with the support of the larger community have begun to organize a campaign to reinstitute Black Studies in the school curriculum. Only two years ago, students at Oakland High walked out of classes and marched downtown to protest the school board's attempts to implement year-round scheduling. The board facing both this protest and leaflets circulating at many other Oakland public schools, backed down to the students' pressure.

Students today and in the past have been actively working to gain control over the institutions that affect their lives. They have not acted simply as powerless victims. They are not from backgrounds that "make learning difficult if not impossible." They do not believe that they spend their days in "places of no account." Rather, they learn daily. They understand their reality. They know what "time" it is. As Public Enemy have advised, they "don't believe the hype"—even if it is printed as

a "tale of toil" in *Processed World*. Most importantly, they struggle to ignore those who serve a steady diet of despair. Like the young everywhere, they maintain their hopes and dreams of a better tomorrow.

—L. Barbudo

L. Barbudo has taught for two years in the Oakland Public School system. Before Oakland, L. Barbudo lived in Boston and was active in the student movement. The poetry quotes are from Bertolt Brecht's "Speech to the Danish Working-Class Actors on the Art of Observation."

These accounts of the Oakland school system are played out against an ominous backdrop. As of late summer, 1989, the Oakland school system is facing a multi-million dollar deficit; a state imposed trusteeship; and has had several officials and staff arrested in a broadening probe of corruption. It has considered cutting virtually all non-academic classes, including sports and music. The grim scenario of self-serving politicians and (some) staff gorging at the public feed-trough distract from the real inhabitants of the school: the students and teaching staff.

—the Editors

Brazilian Notes

17 January and 28 February, 1989

Salvador, Bahia, Brazil

Hello to All,

There are a lot of trial balloons floating around the press about exchanging foreign debt for investments in environmental protection, esp. in the Amazon. Feels like a consensus developing in that direction. That's where Chico Mendes fits in—he was the best known leader of the *seringueiros*, the rubber tappers (you've probably read all about him since his murder; it got more attention here for the international reaction than for the actual murder—virtually commonplace throughout northern Brazil; 1,500 political assassinations since 1980; only 6 have even led to arrests, only 1 conviction of a *pistoleiro*—vast majority of the murdered are active militants, many union leaders, leftist priests, agrarian reform activists, and even some politicians.).

On a down-to-earth daily life level they are fighting for a decent, humane existence. They represent the rational exploitation of the forest—they might prefer a cooperative, non-capitalist life,

but they show the way for a more modern way for Brazil to use its patrimony (as they are fond of calling it). The *Partido Verde*, and most other ecological proponents, are quick to emphasize that continued "development" on the same path (deforestation through burning, eventual cattle ranching for a few years) is going to sacrifice a much greater potential wealth—the richest gene bank in the world! So, just like home, ecological arguments hinge on catering to dreams of future profits, new efficiencies, modernizing the economy, of course no talk of making a break with such a logic. . . .

In Xapuri, the union office is across a small lot from the *Rodoviaria* (bus station) and abuts the same plaza as the *Polícia Militar* and the large Catholic Church, 2 institutions with diametrically opposite relationships to the events there. As it turns out, the *Sindicato* has been having lots of media-type visitors over the past 2 months (and a BBC crew over the past 2 years) and since their lives are on the line and it's all still new and fresh (emotionally, many are still really feeling the pain of Mendes' assassination), they were waiting with a union truck to take us on the tour, though they themselves don't seem to conceptualize it that way.

It took nearly three hours to get to the *Posto de Saude*, a small 2-room wooden shack adjacent to a number of other buildings inhabited by a *seringueiro* family. Then we drove another 30 minutes and came to the *seringal* of Chico

Mendes' brother-in-law and walked through a forest until we came to a clearing where other friends and family live in very primitive wooden shacks. From there we took a short walk into deeper forest and got a demonstration of rubber tapping and the harvesting of *castanheiros*, known to us as Brazil nuts. On the way back Saba, our main host, gestured back to the forest and told us that it is in the forest that the *seringueiros* feel free, since at home many are marked for death and in general they are all afraid to walk the streets of Xapuri at night.

These guys are really smart, super class-conscious. Saba told us that the connection to the Pacific would bring nothing to the workers of Acre, and Chico Mendes had succeeded in stopping money for the asphaltting of the road at a BID meeting in 1987 I think, on the grounds of the damage it would bring to the environment and the indigenous peoples and the *seringueiros* themselves.

I felt pretty disgusted when I saw Bush's supposed warning—dunno how it went over in the U.S. but here it was preceded already by a growing wave of nearly hysterical nationalism, right-wing politicians on the news every night solemnly or passionately proclaiming their categorical opposition to the "internationalization of the Amazon" or as Sarney put it when he got back from Japan, he wasn't going to allow the Amazon to become a "Green Persian Gulf."



A Seringueiro in the Amazonian State of Acre, Brazil

PHOTOS FROM THE FORTHCOMING VIDEO "SONHOS BRASILEIROS."

But the U.S. interest has seldom been so naked as in this case of the road to the Pacific—how much of the Japanese beef market will American producers lose if this road is built? How much more will Japanese consumer products invade the Brazilian market, traditionally the domain of U.S. multinationals? George Bush cares about the rain forest? Only to impress naive environmentalists in the U.S..

The road in Acre, and the whole story of the massive dam-building plans of the Brazilian government in the Altamira/Xingu region (and actually on a number of other rivers too), are two examples of the battle of Modernity here, or more accurately, Brazil's attempt to copy the opening of the American West, only with the technologies of the late twentieth century instead of that of the late 19th. There is a commonly-held patriotism that Brazil is the country of the future—not surprisingly it's the military that really pushes this, nowadays from behind the scenes (for the moment they still control the government completely).

The story of the Indians of the Xingu River Basin, and perhaps more compellingly, the story of the Yanomami up on the northern border, is one that reminds me of all the genocides and massacres and just plain fucking raw deals that got shoved down the throats of Indians all over the U.S.. Every heart-rending story you've ever heard about some awful thing done to Indians is happening right now in Brazil—makes me sick just thinking about it.

So we went to that big Indian meeting in Altamira, sort of by accident. We were in Belem and decided to track down this organization that was in the paper, SOPREN, the Society for the Preservation of the Cultural and Natural Resources of the Amazon. By pure luck we arrived at their office in an old museum just before a press conference was about to begin in preparation for the following week's 1st Meeting of Indigenous Peoples in Altamira. At that press conference we met Darrell Posey, the U.S. ethnobiologist who just got his charge of "smearing the good name of Brazil abroad" dropped, and is a very smart and interesting guy who has done a lot of work with the Kayapo Indians, and has come to some fascinating conclusions about how "unnatural" the rainforest is, since the Indians have been actively managing it for thousands of years. He argues that a significant

part of the distribution of flora and fauna results from active intervention by the Indians. More trouble for the theoreticians of pristine nature.

We also met several of the organizers of the event, and by chance were introduced to João de Castro, who turned out to be our most gracious and informative host while in Altamira—he put us up in his house (later we imagined that this was probably as good for him as for us, since he and his family are quite worried for their physical safety, especially now that everyone has gone home).

The event was really pretty amazing—not often in Brazilian or world history have you had anything quite like this. For one whole day of the 5-day *Encontro* the head man of the government electric utility sat listening to denunciations of his plans from Indians, some of whom at the start of the conference had fled into the forest when they encountered so many *Indians*, not to mention the army of international and national media (I've never seen so many hand-held video cameras in one place in my life, could've been a convention).

At the pre-event press conference a rep announced that this was not going to be a pique-nique, or a folkloric event. But folkloric it was, and we actually felt very uncomfortable when we went to the Indians' camp where they were sitting around or occasionally doing a dance of some sort, but were ON DISPLAY in a disturbingly zoo-like atmosphere. But they showed an amazingly sophisticated

sense of media and theater in the whole staging of this event. Along with this modern sense of media came the concentration of communications responsibilities in just a few hands. Our last day at the conference, we interviewed some Indians outside during a break. Most wouldn't grant interviews, but one who did expressed strong unhappiness about having been told to leave the talking to the other leaders, since he felt that made the rest of them look stupid. So the Indians staged this modern media spectacle, and even had a rare experience of some kind of popular democracy also of a distinctly modern sort (just a few years ago several of these tribes were at war with one another).

But the other part of the story, mostly ignored (as far I could tell) by the media, was the town of Altamira itself, and the larger question of modernization in the Amazon. On the first day of the *Encontro* the local U.D.R. chapter (*União Democrático Rural*—the most organized ultra-right group in the country, has a strong grip on most small towns in the interior of the country—also reputed to be the sponsor of the death of Chico Mendes and most death squad activity in Brazil), staged a huge rally, which at the time made it seem that the entire town was in favor of the dam, and hence against the Indians and the ecologists (oh, there was also a parallel encounter every night of Non-governmental Preservationist Organizations). All the stores in town and even the city hall was closed in support of this



A Kayapo Indian at the First Indigenous People's Meeting in Altamira



demo. We felt pretty depressed, especially since many people seemed very zealous, and the U.D.R. seemed to have things very under control. They had already staged two provocations during the weekend before the conference was to begin: someone took five shots from the road into the Indian camp—no injuries, gunmen escape into the night, then a blockade is staged when a huge truck breaks down right in front of the gate of the Indians' camp—delicate, undisclosed negotiations resolve the impasse. The original plan was for the Indians to have a march through town but they canceled that idea to avoid a confrontation.

After that initial show of force, though, the story began to shift for us as during the rest of the week we kept finding more and more people opposed to the dam, and by the end of the week there was a magnificent rally against the dam, attended by at least 5,000 on a Thursday afternoon, even though all the stores and city hall remained open. For Altamira this was an amazing week, democracy in the streets, the whole thing. Everyone was talking all week about the dam, energy policy, the press, the whole surrounding area has been deforested and is masquerading as farm land (though you cannot get any fresh produce grown locally, it's all boated or trucked in from Belém, tomatoes 300% more expensive than in Belém, beer twice as much, etc. and most of the population is very poor). . . .

Carnaval in Salvador lived up to its wild reputation, and we sampled it without getting lost in it or devoured by it (both real possibilities). The scene in Salvador is not like Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo, where Carnaval is a huge pageant and appears almost like a Las Vegas stage show. In Salvador there are between 50-100 different groups, called *blocos*, some of whom are accompanied by a *Trio Elétrico*, a deceiving name I believe derived from the first ones in the mid-1970s, but now a large band of 6-13 people, on top of a 2-story tall truck, the height being constructed entirely of giant high-quality speakers with enormous sound output. The bands on the *Trios* were nearly all local to Bahia, but all seemed well-known, tight and danceable, and surprisingly to us, they all played each other's songs, especially the songs written for this Carnaval.

Salvador is a very intense city and no one should go there imagining that it is an easy place to be—it's very segregat-

ed, our black friend compared it to South Africa, and the racial tension is palpable (kind of like going to Detroit). But it is a beautiful city too, and the black community maintains *Candomblé* and *Umbanda*, two syncretic faiths, as forms of cultural survival and opposition, there in town. We almost had an interview with an Afro-bloco, Ilé Aiyé, who are very black nationalist, and had the slogan at last year's Carnaval: *Cem Anos de Abolição, Cem Anos Sem Nada*. 100 Years of Abolition (of Slavery, 1888 in Brazil), 100 Years of Nothing.

— Lucius Cabins



So You Want to Be a Kodak Drone?

Dear PW,

I used to have an ideal in my head that a larger company would be so large that they wouldn't really have the time to care what you *thought* as long as you got the job done. My job at Kodak in Denver, Colorado was repairing high speed copiers at customer offices, which I thought meant little supervision. Little did I know that "looking sharp and professional at all times" was most important. But this didn't have much to do with the actual repair of a copier. The job started out with little interference from my supervisor, Steve, for the first five months, but things went quickly downhill when the business climate changed and customers were buying and leasing fewer Kodak copiers.

Steve started evaluating my work by visiting the work site where I was repairing the customer's copier. He would write me up, selectively noting bad things about my performance, like how I dressed in slacks that did not look "professional." When a customer had a problem with a copier that was not fixed the first time I visited and I had to go back to repair it, Steve would always write that up. One time he went out to lunch with me and my co-workers to see how I "interacted" with them.

When Steve fired me, he told me I had to sign a paper saying I left under my own free will. I told Steve he would have to wait a very long time before I did that. For sticking up for myself, I received two weeks of severance pay, medical benefits for two months and unemployment benefits, none of which I would have gotten if I had just signed that agreement with Steve.

While I was on unemployment for five months, I started volunteering at a handicapped ski program in nearby Winter Park, Colorado, teaching skiing to mentally disabled kids. I learned from these disabled people that "fitting in" was something they could never do. Society categorizes them either as really weird or really feels sorry for them or both. I learned from the disabled that "fitting in" was not always the best thing for me either.

After the skiing program ended, I moved out to California to work for a small company in the San Jose area that serviced Kodak copiers. They really wanted someone right away and gave me the impression I was the one. I soon found out that the service manager at this place wanted me to be even more "professional" than Kodak. A week after I was hired, I told my supervisor during lunch that I windsurfed and that I planned to keep my board on top of my car, so after work I could go sailing. The supervisor told me that I would look "unprofessional." Needless to say, I only lasted two weeks, and during my "de-interviewing" (firing), I was told how I didn't fit in. The supervisor insisted on insulting me, telling me about all his troubles even though he didn't want to hear any of mine. So I asked for my check. After I got it, I "returned" the parts and tools that I carried in my car, throwing them all over the parking lot of the office complex and yelling, "If you don't give a shit about me, why should I care about you!"

My supervisor looked at me in this totally perplexed trance, like he was thinking: "This person looks mad and humiliated; gee whiz, I wonder why. . . ." After I got into my car, I proceeded to run over the parts I had tossed around the parking lot. Leaving like a flaming madman was not as humiliating as the supervisor would have liked it. If the spirit is within you, waiting to jump out, *do it next time you're fired*, and you'll feel better.

— C.J. Flaming Madman, SF, CA

Apologies to All...

... to err is ninimus. In *PW* 23, the poet of "Our Economic System" should have read Bruce *Isaacson*, not Bruce Jacobson. Mr. Isaacson has declined to change his name; in this issue he appears in an unedited guise.

The editor concerned did not realize her mistake until one night after publication, when she "awoke from a dream that some evil enchanter had cast." So sorry.

We also accidentally omitted the name of the author of the "SFAI Memo" in issue #23. Anne Harvey deserves the credit & thanks.

— The Editors

HACKER HERO

Perhaps we should view Robert Tappan Morris (good middle name) as a half life hero, a not-yet-hero. Think of all the demonstrators and nuke resisters in this country and in Europe who for years have been trying to stop nuclear war—and Robert T. Morris stopped the Pentagon and military research for a day and a half. All with one computer and his own little virus.

Well, not all by himself, he had a little help. He is the son of Robert T. Morris Sr. who is "the chief computer scientist for the National Computer Security Center near Baltimore, the Federal agency responsible for protecting classified data and other national security information stored in computers."

The kid is a little like his dad. There is however, a dramatic difference not only in age but in effect. The younger Morris, a Cornell student is an almost-hero. He entered a series of commands that caused 60,000 computers across the U.S. "directly or indirectly tied to the Department of Defense computer network" to crash!

Heh, here is a fast way to stop the

War machine!

— RGD, SF, Ca.

[Honest, officer, it was just a mistake!]

Dear *PW*,

I'm getting real pissed off about pissing in the bottle. These fools are everywhere, and its getting harder & harder to avoid them. So I was thinking that some of us flunky lower/middle management types might for once do some good, since we're the ones they're trying to stick with the unpleasant task of enforcing compliance upon our brethren.

Put in other words, this crazy system is only as good as the records it keeps, and if there's one thing we white collar types are superb at, it's keeping records. Or mis-keeping them, if we're in a lousy mood, or tired, or the computer fucks up. Get my drift?

What would be really neat is if there was a network of white collar resisters,

people who would cooperate with each other. Like I feel a lot freer to change the data at my end if you're also changing it at your end. Or maybe you're a computer whiz but I'm a humble clerk who happens to know everything about how the data is entered. Or maybe you get paid \$4 an hour to work in some lab where you do nothing but handle bottles of pee all day long, and you know what all those little numerical codes mean. And I have a friend who knows how to change numbers.

The possibilities are endless. And if enough people cooperate on this ether-eal level, no one will ever get caught. The Republicans will be happy. America will be drug free—at least on paper.

Maybe you could save some column space for people who want to share info on this particular intestine of the beast.

Yours,
Mary Jane Whitecollar

From South Africa, Dr. Taj Hargey, a professor of history at University of Cape Town, has been traveling up and down California through much of this summer, with some sorties back East. He is soliciting support for a new newspaper in South Africa, *The Forum*, which will be a 48 page secular weekly; the country's first independent black-owned newspaper since *The Voice*, a short-lived rag which was shut down in the period of repression in the late 1970s following the Soweto uprising.

"Unless black people have full and unfettered access to local and international news coverage, they will remain shackled to those dehumanizing notions of inferiority and discrimination so subtly fostered and professionally propagated by the South African bureaucracy and the news media as a whole."

Thus far, the most support Dr. Hargey has found has been from individuals. Donations (whether money or PC/Mac computers, programs, or peripherals for a high-end desktop publishing enterprise) are desperately sought, and tax-deductible.

Address: South Africa Free Press Agency,
c/o Tecnica, 3254 Adeline Ave.,
Berkeley, CA 94703 USA
Phone: 415-655-3838

Checks payable to the Institute For Technology Development (SAFPA).

APPLICANT'S PHOTO

NAME (American Only) _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____ SEX (Normal Only) _____

SOCIAL INSECURITY NUMBER _____ U.S. CITIZEN _____
YES

HAIR COLOR _____ EYE COLOR _____ SKIN COLOR _____

DATE ISSUED _____

SIGNATURE _____

Jesse Helms® Artistic License

See reverse for limitations in Coverage & Liability

Yes, that's right kids! Just for subscribing to *Processed World*, we'll send you a genuine simulated official Jesse Helms® Artistic License. Includes authentic small print! Be the first on your block to be sanctioned by the Senate!

	RATES: (4 issues)	
REGULAR	\$12	LIFETIME SUB \$100
LOW INCOME	\$8	(whichever comes first)
LIBRARIES (US)	\$15	CORPORATIONS/GOVT. \$200
FOREIGN SURFACE & US 1ST CLASS	\$20	BACK ISSUES \$4
AIR MAIL	\$30	(some are xeroxed)

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE (PROVINCE)..... ZIP/COUNTRY

Processed World subscriptions are for four issues. Please indicate if you need a "plain brown wrapper." US money only, please. If this form is too small, use another sheet.

D.S. BLACK
A L M O S T M I D N I G H T



Mouth instead of mind
how the wrist of nature spun
this suicide chamber
end of its tether

Nostrils in a centrifugal
finger lock
blew in the eardrums
while cities burned
the swoon of exhaust
smiling scythe
answered incredibly gravid
night no more sky
line