

THE

BEAST



ISSUE # 117 ~ July, 2007
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BEAST OPERATIVE,
EVIL ATHEIST

Hangin' with Ham

Actual Bad Photo!

KEN HAM, CREATIONIST RETARD

BEAST OPERATIVE,
NOT TRUE RETARD

Undercover at The Creation Museum

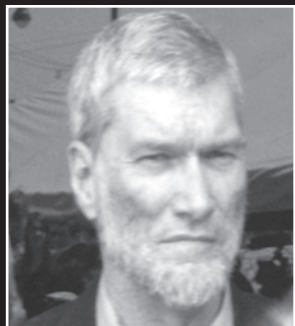
A VERY SPECIAL REPORT

Interview
With The
Ghost of
Hunter
Thompson



When Will This
Iraqi Stand Up?

Separated at birth?



"Dr." Ken Ham...



...and Dr. Zaius?



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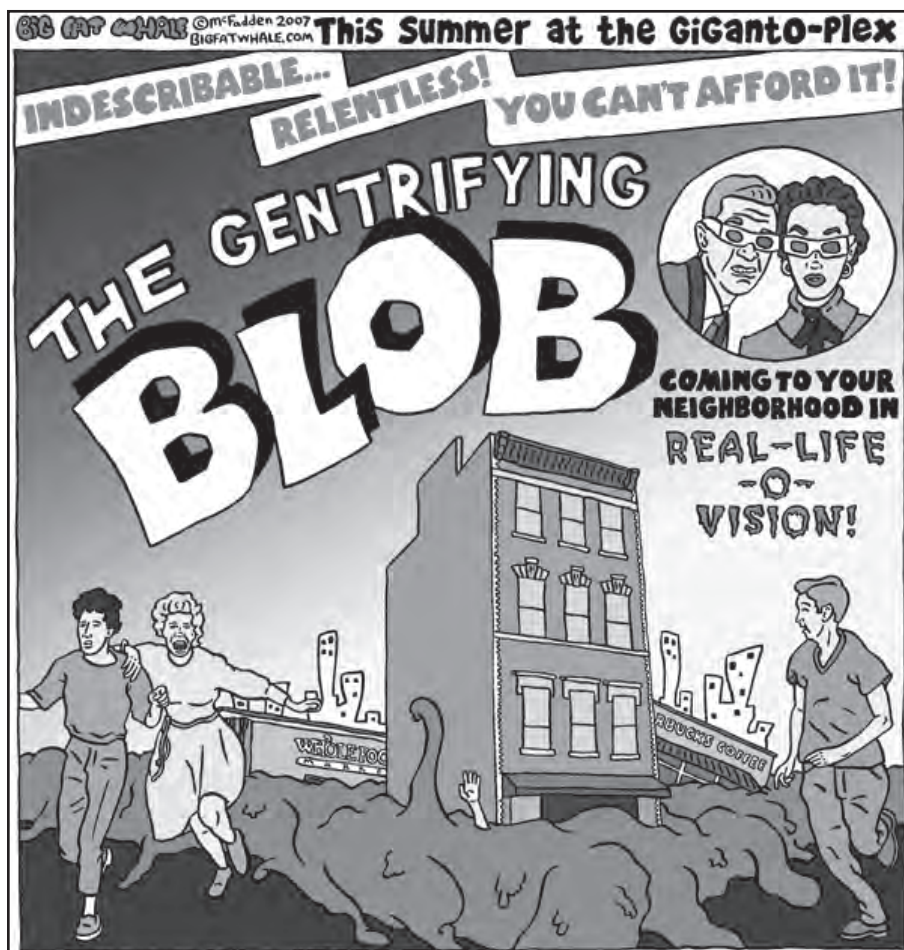
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*Cartoon not valid in Detroit



Many Iraqis having "difficulty" standing up for themselves

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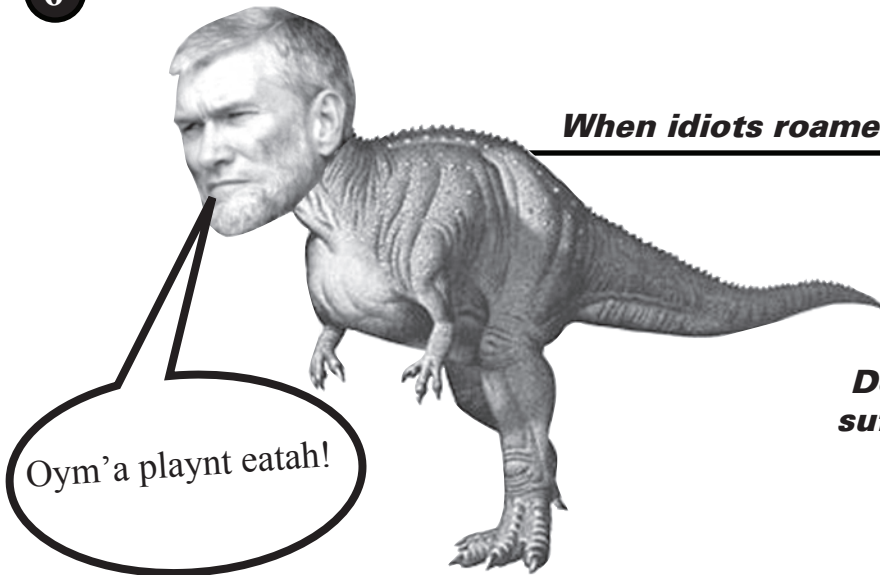


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BEAST-O-SCOPES

Those Lazy Iraqis

It's hard to pull up your socks when your legs have been blown off

By Allan Uthman

"We have given the Iraqi people the chance to have freedom, to have their own country. It is up to them to decide whether or not they're going to take that chance."
-Hillary Clinton

"We're spending \$2 billion a week, \$8 billion a month, over \$400 billion over more than four years. They now have to assume the responsibility of their own future."
-Chris Dodd

"We should put the responsibility for Iraq's future squarely where it belongs—on the Iraqis. We cannot save the Iraqis from themselves."
-Carl Levin

I can't take this anymore. It was bad enough when the White House started pushing that "when the Iraqis stand up, we'll stand down" crap last year, but now the Democrats are chiming in with this "lazy, ungrateful Iraqis" trash, seemingly all at once.

Where is this bullshit coming from? No doubt, some Frank Luntz type—possibly Frank Luntz—held a focus group and found that Americans respond better to criticism of the war when it doesn't hint at American culpability in the embarrassing disaster it has become. Politicians, desperate to avoid the logically meaningless but emotionally powerful charge of "not supporting the troops," have hit upon a new formula: You can talk all you want about the hopelessness of continuing the occupation in Iraq, as long as you blame it all on the Iraqis.

Surely, politicians understand better than anyone the human desire to avoid acknowledging guilt. But blaming the occupied for the failure of their occupation is astonishingly despicable, even by today's standards. On the other hand, murderers often blame their victims to avoid dealing with their own insanity. No doubt Hitler blamed the Jews for the Holocaust.

You know, the Iraqis are hearing this stuff, too. They get Fox News. When Bush says

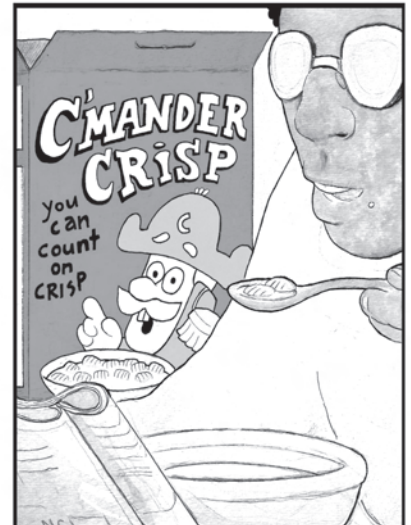
we're fighting terrorism in Iraq to avoid fighting them in America, they hear it. Imagine what that sounds like to them: "Hey Iraqis, sorry about destroying your society and importing al Qaeda and all, but at least your deaths are keeping us Americans safe!"

They watch our politicians and analysts display woeful ignorance of the basic facts regarding Iraq on a daily basis. I can't count how many times I've heard some supposed expert talk about the Sunni-Shiite conflict as if it were the continuation of some centuries-long feud, when that is simply not the case. In the Democratic debate in South Carolina, Bill Richardson talked of "the three religious entities" in Iraq. I'd love to hear what he thinks the third is. Kurdish Scientologists?

All of this is bad enough. But understand, the best tally of Iraqi deaths as a result of the invasion put the number at around 650,000—almost a year ago. That's not counting Gulf War 1. Can you imagine how incredibly galling it must be to hear the people who have been bombing the

THE PERRY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP BY NICHOLAS GUREWITCH

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hell out of your country for two decades tell you they're tired of "helping" you, and it's time for you to grow up and get your shit together? And then, the supposed opposition party steps right up and says the same damn thing?

How the hell does anyone stand up and say this stuff? What kind of person can tell such a transparently self-serving fiction and still manage to live with themselves? Let's face it: It was the Americans who dissolved the Iraqi army, sending 300,000 men with guns home with no pay and no future. It was the Americans who tortured Iraqi prisoners with little to no cause, in the most twisted, disturbing ways we could dream up. It was the Americans who tried to occupy a country on the cheap, ignoring

the advice of their own military experts, in an extraordinary display of modern CEO-style "outside the box" arrogance. That was us. Not them. And for us, now, to pretend we did everything right, that we have provided some kind of golden opportunity for these people by destroying their infrastructure, assaulting their dignity, and doing nothing to repair either offense, is not just incorrect. It is downright disgusting. It reveals us as the low, deceitful, swindling, narcissistic assholes we truly are.


And it's not just that both parties are saying it; the really awful thing is that they have determined that it's what we want to hear. Because if we are willing to swallow that crap just because it makes us feel better about ourselves, what hope is there

that we'll ever learn a thing about how to actually deal with terrorists?

When you think about it, this amazing capacity we seem to have for feel-good self-deception is at the root of our little terrorist problem. Think about how dysfunctional it is that we have never, as a nation, actually discussed the many real reasons Arabs have to hate us. We claim to be doing everything we can to prevent terrorism, but the unspoken truth is that we have never seriously considered changing the manner in which we pursue our foreign policy goals. Our image in the outside world is that of a duplicitous trickster, a myopic fair-weather friend whose word is a joke, and that image is well-deserved. Basically, we fund whichever group seems to be against the group we find most threatening at any given time.

For instance, we are now arming the Sunni insurgents in Iraq, to fight al Qaeda. That's right, the same Sunni insurgents who have been dutifully killing our own soldiers since we got there. Apparently, they have promised, scout's honor, not to use our own guns to shoot us. Also, we're funding Sunni al Qaeda-type terrorists in Lebanon, to fight Hezbollah. Al Qaeda, of course, is an outgrowth of the mujahadeen fighters we trained and funded to battle the Soviets in Afghanistan. In the '80s, when Saddam Hussein was committing most of the atrocities we now find so outrageous, we were giving him money to fight Iran. Before 9/11, we were giving the Taliban tons of cash to fight the opium trade in Afghanistan. Our foreign policy is a shifting, slithering mass of flip-flopping alliances, abandonments and betrayals.

Unsurprisingly, most people find this type of craven opportunism to be distasteful. Most Americans, however, have never once had to think about it, because they don't even know any of it ever happened. They don't know because market research has shown that they don't want to know, and no mainstream politician or journalist has the stones to go against those numbers.

Iraq, though, is no covert operation. There is no plausible deniability there. As much as we'd like to, there's no pretending we didn't just completely shit the bed on the global stage and create an entire generation of actual America-hating potential terrorists in the process. It's a blowback scenario that simply can't be swept under the rug. Americans can't go on pretending that this was a good idea, or that it never happened. So we go to plan C: It's all their fault. We really are a bunch of assholes. 

THE BEAST PAGE 5

Non-threatening Negro Literature

Name: *Do You! 12 Laws to Access the Power in You to Achieve Happiness and Success*, by Russell Simmons and some white guy named Chris Morrow

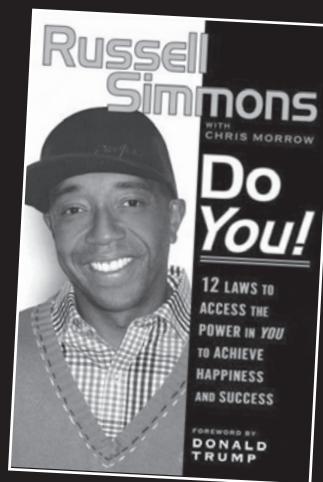
Turn-Ons: Conspicuous consumption, Ice Cube's family films, thousand-dollar sneakers, Tyra's jugs, Oprah's control of American cashflow.

Turn-Offs: Homey the Clown, Huey P. Newton, Black kids who say "nigga," the IRS.

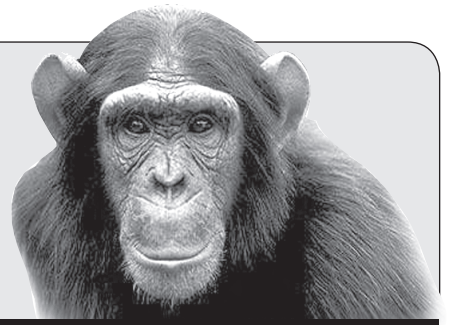
How I got to be the Beast Page 3 Non-threatening Negro Literature: After Oprah named me, she said that since everyone was falling for Barak Obama and saying how nice he was, she thought it was my time to show that my author Russell Simmons was also very harmless. When the Wall Street Journal featured me in its Airplane Reading section, lauding Russell's "civilizing sensibility," I knew The Beast guys would be impressed. After all, we're all green on the inside. That's why Russell's hero, Donald Trump, wrote my forward. If I can't show that even black people can aspire to become heartless, megalomaniacal wealth-acquiring machines, how can we expect them to assimilate into American society?

Future Plans: To convince television executives that I'm a great vehicle to launch Russell's reality television career, leading African-Americans everywhere to shell out \$25 for my inspiring words.

How I'd like to be remembered: As a milestone of the decade when rich officially replaced white.



Howard Zinn's Message of Hope



By A. Monkey

I picked for my early summer reading that book I was supposed to read upon entry to Left Wing Academy: Howard Zinn's *People's History of the United States*. I took six years to pick it up because I've detested its \$16.95 paperback price at bookstores, and the only copy I've seen at my local used bookstore is beaten up badly and has all its pages stuck together — it's sat on the shelf for years now. I made up a story that that the copy came from some grimy grey-beard lefty who would pull it out from under his bed at night and stroke himself to Zinn's account of successful democratic and peace-loving movements throughout our nation's history.

That was before I read the book. Now I think differently. That cum-covered copy certainly belonged to some creep from the power class, some stockholder of a company with a long history of brutal corporate thievery like Bechtel or Chiquita Brands International. That's because the people's history of the United States as Zinn tells it is a series of scorched-earth, 100% victories for the axis of mega-wealth and government-sponsored violence.

Zinn's book has only one big gaping flaw in his approach to explaining things. Beyond that, it's one great read that delivers answers on all kinds of questions about the prospect of positive developments in American society.

So let's get the hopelessly naive analysis out of the way: Zinn has this premise that the occasional Indian, slave or worker rebellion that crops up between massacres and years of brutal suppression by the power class is a sign of a democratic tendency by "the people." For example, there's a part in his history of the Great Southern Slave era where he cites a few dozen reported slave uprisings over a seven-year period in

the 1830s-1840s as evidence of popular resistance to the plantation system.

Reading that passage I thought, OK Zinn, but if you consider that there were millions and millions of slaves in the South, and that 7 years is a fairly large window of time, a few dozen uprisings divided by (millions+millions of slaves x 7 years) = .000000002 slave uprisings per slave capita over a 7-year period. Hardly worth pointing out as a sign of rebelliousness. Better to use that evidence as even greater proof that any sensibility of resistance was utterly steamrolled across thousands of square miles of American slave country.

I can't fault Zinn too much for his optimism, because finding these sad attempts at resistance may well have been his driving motive to write this useful book in the first place — and at least with this author, the bias is out there way in the open, and is very easy to steer around.

Now for the good stuff. As I said, I think Zinn's book is a fantastic Ouija board for questions that really get to the heart of things about hope for the people America. I had read various bits of American history piecemeal before, but the cumulative conclusions one can draw from Zinn's book really do justice to the value of history as they tried to tell me at college: it's an excellent predictor of what will happen in the future.

Such as: *Have you ever wondered what would happen if a bunch of people really did get together to stand up to the American political and economic system in a way that might meaningfully change it to work in their favor or prevent it from getting what it wants?*

"They'll fucking kill you," is the answer that screams from Zinn's book. They will send troops and propaganda in your direction and kill you and your children (or if you're lucky coopt your agenda

and make it tame and decadent within a few decades). If the state or federal government doesn't have money at the time to pay for National Guard troops to come and kill you, don't worry, J.P. Morgan or some other financier will inevitably loan it to them to get the job done. The fact that there isn't much people-stomping going on these days is a testament to the total absence of popular resistance to things as they are. The political and economic system worked out the kinks — the Cherokees, the populists, the Wobblies, the labor movement, black power — a long time ago, and is running very smoothly.

Another question: *Is every single military volunteer in the history of the United States a poor sucker who fell for big, brilliantly constructed, stirring lies about honor and service to country?*

Yes — 100% of them, and every single one of them will be.

Followup: *Does every time of war in America feature a cuddly bunch of senators who give stirring speeches and votes against it but then cave in to allow funding "for the troops' sake" when it's under way?*

Yes — 100% of them, and there will always be a Robert C. Byrd or Russ Feingold to cheer for.

When it's the 4th quarter in the latest episode of the people vs. the powerful and the New York Times is on deadline to write its editorial on the topic, does it come out in favor of the powerful using the most evil rhetoric imaginable?

Yes — 100% of the time, and it always will.

Zinn's book delivers answers to questions like these hand over fist, always promising a 1,000 megaton

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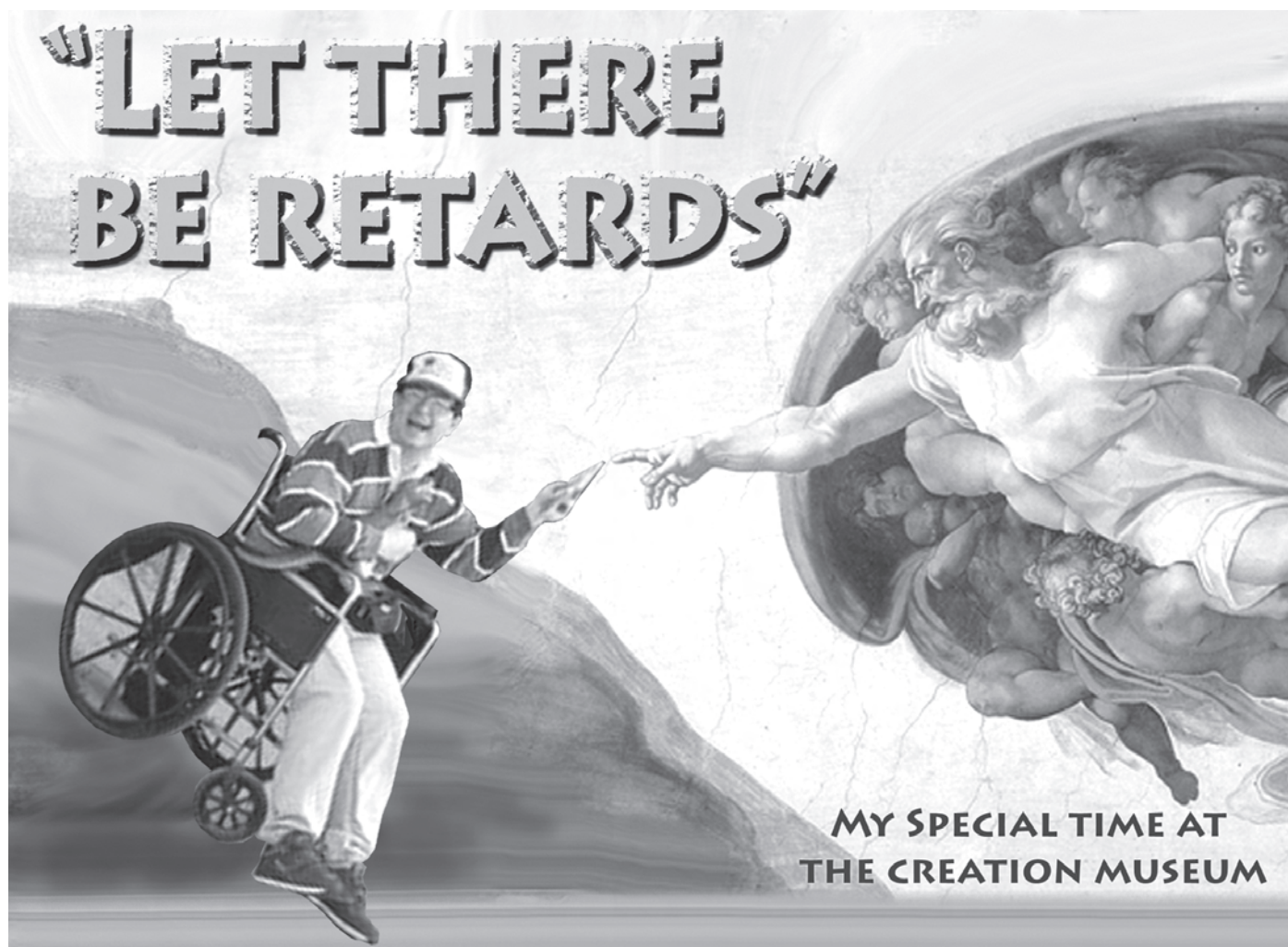


It's all about the beans.



Coffee so fresh, we post the roasting date right in our cafe!

Delaware at Chippewa | Elmwood at Cleveland
and in the lobby of Sheridan Meadows North at Sheridan and Transit
200 East Avenue @ Matthews in Rochester



By Ian Murphy

“THREE-O-NINE! THREE-O-NINE!” I crudely affected like an overgrown toddler, exuberantly waving the hotel room key card overhead, and cradling a small, foam-rubber Tyrannosaurus Rex. I adjusted the thick, foreign prescription bifocals strapped to my head, and steamrolled to the front of the line—purblind and unconcerned with normal etiquette. I wasn’t about to wait around in the Godforsaken lobby of a Cincinnati EconoLodge while the biggest story since creation started without us.

“Checking out?” slowly enunciated the helpless clerk, abruptly disregarding another traveler’s outstretched fistful of credit. She was obliged to immediately reckon with the obtrusive fashion anomaly before her—I was clad in Velcro fastened sneakers, a long sleeve polo shirt, and sweatpants up to my nipples, which were cinched awkwardly at my waist by a sporty fanny-pack. A slightly askew “JUST TRY TO BURN THIS ONE!” American flag

trucker hat was my idiot crown.

“Hiiiiii!” I brayed, thrusting the card into her mitts. “THREE-O-NINE!” I incorrectly counted the numbers off with my fingers, so the poor girl would understand what was happening. The other hotel patrons silently endured my rudeness. I was clearly some sort of mental defective, an innocent of the highest order. They wouldn’t dare.

“Hiiiiii!” I individually greeted the members of a women’s college basketball team on the brisk waddle over to the continental breakfast.

“Holy crap,” whispered my fellow BEAST operative Josh Bunting. “We didn’t know that was you for a second,” he said, giggling like a schoolboy and hiding his face. He spoke for himself and our glossy-eyed cameraman, who, during the previous night’s 90-mph dash through Ohio’s monotonous and heavily policed landscape, woke periodically to warn me about getting tagged by radar:

“I *might* have some warrants out on me,” he’d hedged groggily from the plush back seat of our loaner BMW 740il sedan, dipping into a large bag of unspecified pills. “That’s all I’m saying.”

I briefly caught my blurred, clownish reflection in the lobby’s swinging glass door. Behind me, Bunting hovered over a tray of stale muffins, struggling to stifle a nervous chortle. Our cameraman, a possible felon, was pouring us three complimentary cups of lukewarm coffee and grinning like the devil. The lady-hoopsters scrutinized my every move with morbid fascination.

It was then that the distinct possibility this trip might go badly first occurred to me.

The event we were covering was a quick shot across the Kentucky state line, the grand unveiling of a 60,000 square foot bellwether of our culture’s sheepish intellectually depravity: The Creation Museum. The poured concrete brainchild of Ken Ham, world-renowned creationist

douche and president of the Christian apologetics ministry “Answers in Genesis,” this “museum” aims to depict biblical narrative as historic reality. 27 million donated dollars worth of animatronic dinosaurs and humans palling around in the Garden of Eden—madness. Like the slaves of narcotic bliss, we felt physically compelled to participate in this insanity, adding to it whatever we could. Our drug was adrenaline, our bliss: messing with uppity religious primates.

After topping off the tank with ninety dollars of premium, Bunting set the 282-horse Nazi sleigh careening south down I-275. I turned on the radio—the military has announced the deaths of 8 U.S. soldiers and a Marine—and turned it off. Bunting quoted scripture from memory. It was a sunny Memorial Day weekend in the heartland. We were about to bear witness to a magnificent abortion of reason—and we were late. I’ve never felt more American in my life.

At the museum gate, an armed guard in big mirror shades waved us to the curb to verify our press credentials.

“Uh-Oh!” I howled as Bunting applied the brakes and lowered the driver’s side window. “Uh-Oh! Uh-Oh!” I rocked in my seat and hugged my toy dinosaur for emotional support.

“Calm down, Dougie,” chided Bunting, sternly grabbing my sleeve. “Not now,



Visit Dougie and Roy at www.thespecialtimes.com

Dougie!” he growled, flashing me a panicked expression. A nervous man by nature, Bunting’s motives for engaging in such twisted, anxiety-heightening deceptions are mysterious. It’s like he’s playing chicken with himself.

“My name is... uh... Roy Lapost,” Bunting told the guard, “and we’re with the *Special*

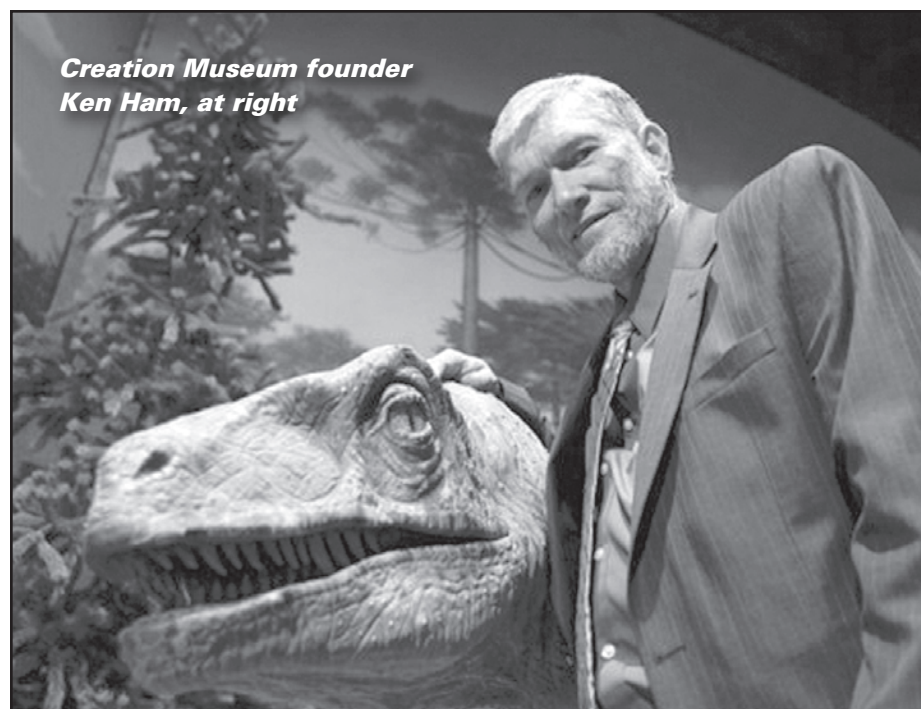
Times.” My comrade’s face reddened. His voice trembled. The guard scanned his clipboard.

Through the bifocals, I could make out only vague shapes of what I’d read earlier was a protest camp being set up across the street—a tame placard and bullhorn assault by the dwindling forces of reason; a futile volley over the frontlines of the American Culture War. On the other side was God’s Army—fortified by a million-dollar wrought iron fence, packing heat, and totally impervious to reason. Blurry uniformed men and their blurrier German Shepherds patrolled the museum perimeter, exuding authority and smelling things. Big-brimmed troopers with shotguns zipped in and out of the gate in their vicious little golf carts. A small airplane circled high overhead, towing a banner.

“What does dat plane say, Roy?” I asked timidly, pointing to the heavens.

“It says ‘thou shalt not lie,’ Dougie,” Bunting replied wistfully through a clenched smile, craning his neck through the open window. “You remember, Dougie,” he said, bringing his head back into the car, and nonchalantly raising the power window, “it’s in the Bible!”

He snapped his sweaty head around. “Are



**Creation Museum founder
Ken Ham, at right**

you *sure* we're on the list?" he asked, his eyes as big as saucers.

"Absolutely," I said, spying the guard safely from our soundproof, air-conditioned bunker. "Don't worry. I talked to our media contact and everything's been taken care..."

Knock knock knock! We weren't on the list.

Bunting and I looked at each other with mounting trepidation as the guard radioed in our false identities. We were both sure that we'd been exposed as frauds while on the road. *How could we not have been?* I thought to myself while flailing about wildly against the seat belt. We had, in the spirit of sportsmanship, given our prey ample opportunity to evade danger. We were hunting with a crossbow, not an M-16, so to speak. We may be vicious liars, but we were gentlemen after all.

With the assistance of BEAST Editor-in-Chief Al Uthman, we had set up a website for our sham newspaper, the *Special Times*, "a Christian lifestyle journal for and by the developmentally disabled" (www.thespecialtimes.com). Our logo was glorious, rendered in the *New York Times* font, with a crucifix substituting for the "T" in times. A picture of me sitting in a wheelchair with my belly exposed, giving a thumbs-up, with the caption "Dougie and his trusty notebook," dared anyone visiting the site to view it as transparent satire.

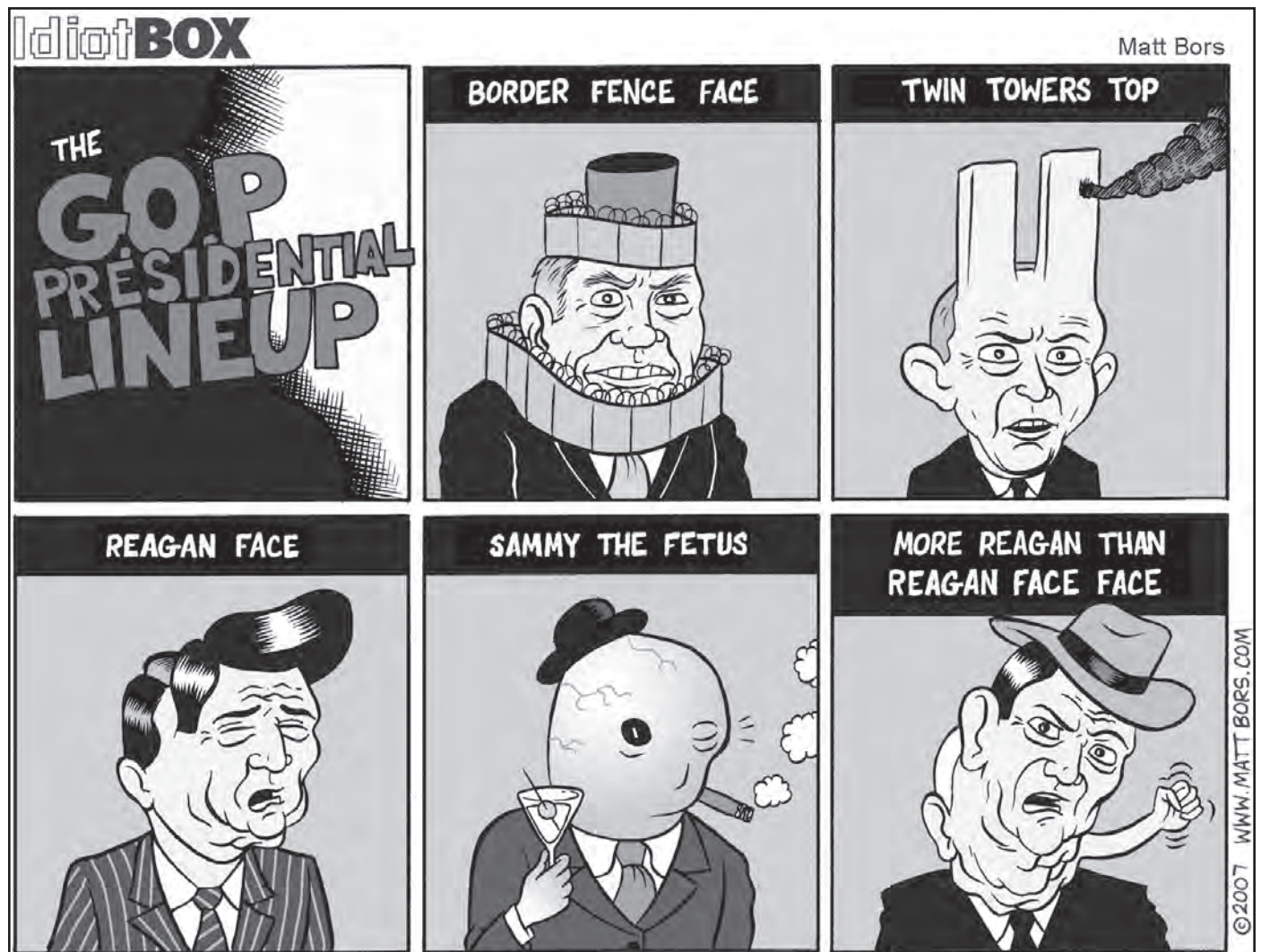
"WELCOME TO THE SPECIAL TIMES!!!" it read next to my picture. The number one, squeezed in amidst the exclamation points, was a stroke of pure retarded genius, I thought. We promised the paper would be "just super to read," and would feature "top-notch stories relevant to developmentally disabled people of faith."

The homepage was believable enough. The "About Us" page, by contrast, was particularly absurd, featuring a fictitious and preposterously named medical condition:

The Special Times came about from the hard work and dedication of our founding members Dougie Johnston and Roy LaPost.

Dougie's a special guy with a love for our Savior Jesus Christ, wrestling, cookies, and investigative reporting. Dougie was diagnosed at birth with Asperger's Syndrome by Proxy, an exceedingly rare disorder which has no known cure. After festering in the public care system for 15 years, Dougie was introduced to the Christian caregiver who would change his life and save his eternal soul.

Roy LaPost was an ambitious journalist disenchanted with the absence of our Lord Jesus Christ in the hearts of



LaPost doing the Lord's work



his editors and publishers. He then rededicated his life to caring for the least among us, for he knew that the meek would inherit the newsroom. The two warriors of Christ were introduced through divine providence when LaPost hit Dougie with his car. Knowing what the Lord wanted from him, LaPost became Dougie's caregiver, journalistic mentor and lifelong friend in Christ.

We padded out our "Super Links" with an online Bible, the official Answers in Genesis website, a random "Transformers!!!" page, and a gratuitously silly bit entitled "Dougie's Special Prayers":

*I pray for Jesus and The Sabres to win!
I pray for me to find my keys that I lost.
I pray for scientists to stop hurting God's feelings and making God cry all the time.
I pray for the troops to win the wars and the president.
I pray for The Special Times to be good.
I pray for Roy to be happy.
I pray for my dog to come back to life.
I pray for the summer to be awesome!*

The general consensus around the office was that instead of arming ourselves with a crossbow, we'd rushed blindly into the hunt wielding nothing but a rusty spoon.

"I'll go too," said Uthman, "and when they don't let you guys in, I'll write the piece." It was a resounding vote of no confidence. "I mean, 'Asperger's Syndrome by Proxy,'"

he waxed smugly, "what the fuck could that possibly mean?"

"But that part was *your* idea!" I spat.

"I was just joking, man. I didn't think you'd actually use it," he replied with a playful smile.

I recoiled in horror at this heinous act of sabotage. I once read somewhere that an editor is a mouse in training to be a rat—or was it the other way around? Either way, I thought: *this furry Kurdish vermin aims to steal my story!*

Later, Uthman's interest naturally waned. He was back on a strict video game regimen, and couldn't be bothered with unnecessary travel.

Now our plan had come to a grinding halt within a meatball's toss of our destination. A string of vehicles were waved past without incident. The rigid-postured guard folded his arms and chatted with another gun-toting rent-a-pig a few feet away. Still no word back on his walky-talky. We were unaccredited. Personae non gratae. Totally fucked.

"Remember," I told Bunting under my breath, "you're from Canada."

"Canada?" Bunting's voice climbed an octave.

"When I spoke with one of the museum's PR hacks down in Houston," I explained, "I was forced to regale him with a tale about LaPost's dissatisfaction bouncing around 'the heathen Saskatchewan press.'"

"Saskatchewan! I don't know anything about Saskatchewan! What if they ask me? What if they ask about the wheelchair? What if they fire up torches and sic those fucking dogs on us?"

"Pull it together," I hissed, violently grabbing him by the lapel. "Tell them about the joys of fucking moose! Tell them you were high on crack and you ran me over with your vintage Buick—I don't care; just end it with a Goddamn 'Praise Jesus' and we'll be fine!"

"What else should I know?" he prodded with heavy breath. "What else did you talk about?"

"You know," I said. "Special people doing special things... Asperger's by Proxy... Dougie loves Jesus and he can go to the bathroom all by himself... stuff like that." Bunting's head bobbed up and down for a while, like I'd given him a lot of information. "Don't tell them anything," I said returning to more pressing matters. "We're the reporters here—we'll be asking the questions. We need to own the situation, Goddamn it!"

Bunting continued bobbing his head as he perused the Bible he'd brought along.



"Wow! Those are big scissors! That's daaangerous!" Dougie loudly advised. "You should be careful, Ham! Be careful!"

“Who do you think God is talking to here?” he asked, pointing to Genesis 1:26: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...”

“Who fucking knows?” I replied. “That doesn’t matter now. Just remember, you talked to Giles Hudson earlier in the week, if it should come up.”

“He’s probably talking to his roommate,” Bunting cracked glibly. “And then God said, Let us order a pizza,” he intoned with jovial gravitas.

Bunting now felt at ease enough to joke, perhaps anticipating we’d be turned away from the burlesque nightmare without ever passing the gate. The safety of failure can entice the best of us sometimes. I, on the other hand, was experiencing the birth pangs of a monster anxiety attack. Our cameraman was especially sedate, as he’d downed the remainder of his pills at the first whiff of trouble.

“And if this thing should somehow go sour, which may very well happen,” I worried aloud, “we’ll have to resort to Plan B.”

“What’s Plan B?” Bunting wondered.

“We run like fucking hell.”

I peered over my frames at the guard talking into his hand-held radio. I rocked like a madman as he walked our way. In that instant, I could see my editor’s fat

disembodied head floating across my mind’s eye, cackling with relish at my abject failure. My heart was fluttering like a hummingbird on angel dust. I looked up at the circling airplane, with its long winding banner. *Thou shalt not lie*, I thought to myself. Almost certain the jig was up, I pictured being stoned to death by a Christian mob.

“OK guys,” the dutiful guard barked, pointing through the gate, “you can pull up to the media tent and sign in.”

Praise the Lord.

As Bunting retrieved the wheelchair from the trunk, I dangled my press pass around my neck, and checked the contents of my fanny-pack: Spider-man pencils and sharpener—check; SpongeBob SquarePants notebook and action figure—check; animal crackers, three boxes—check. There was no turning back at this point. For the next few hours, we would fully commit to what Bunting would later poetically call “jerking off in their fundamentalist faces.” With my tiny-armed Jurassic chum riding shotgun, Bunting wheeled me over the fresh blacktop, toward the already in-progress press conference. It was show time.

“Hiiiiiii!” I shouted like a maniac at anyone within earshot. “Yow!” I yelled in unison with one firm clap of my hands. I bounced

in the wheelchair with glee, for I was among God’s special people. I almost envied them in a way. Unencumbered by reason and logic, their minds drowned with sweet ignorance and incredible fairytales, they were the true freaks. You have to admire that sort of commitment to delusion. I let a strategic pool of saliva slowly dribble from my gapping maw. I wanted to fit in.

Bunting pulled the wheelchair brakes at the back of the large white canopy, which shielded wealthy museum donors, state senators and the media from the hot sun. Ken Ham and a shill astrophysicist fielded questions from the press. There were about 300 people in attendance, none of them excited as old Dougie. I was out of control; a belligerent retard, wiggling, spitting and moaning—a blight on the otherwise civilized festivities.

“Okay,” Bunting spoke up. “Calm down, Dougie. Calm down.”

“WHYYYYYYY?” I rebelled at top volume, looking up behind me to catch his reaction.

With all eyes fixed on this supposedly responsible caregiver, terror visibly washed over him as he fully realized the gravity of the situation: We were in Kentucky, totally surrounded by a throng of unthinking beasts and their hired guns, and I was acting like an unhinged menace.

“You’re going to get us killed,” Bunting alarmed softly in my ear, bending over to shield his face from the rows of turned heads and curious expressions. “Did you see the way they’re looking at us?” he said with a healthy dose of fear. “They weren’t smiling, man—they were showing me their Goddamn fangs...” he trailed off.

Of course, I had the easy job. My cover was absolutely foolproof, so to speak. I had no tells whatsoever. Even if I felt a laugh coming on, which is normally a big no-no in any risky undercover assignment, I’d just play it up. The more inappropriate my actions, the more believable Dougie became. Besides, questioning a retard’s condition just isn’t done in polite society. “They’re God’s very special miracles,” as I’d told our museum contact.

As I ripped into my second box of animal crackers and yelled “No! Mine!” at a small child in a pink sundress who was eyeing my treats, I could feel Bunting’s hands tremor the wheelchair’s metal frame. He was



absorbing a lot of downright nasty energy. He nodded and smiled as if everything was just peachy. God bless his brave soul.

“Roy!” I screamed, wanting to get to the front row. “I can’t seeeeee!”

What the hell is he doing?! I thought as Bunting set a course through two long and narrowing rows of vacant white folding chairs just outside of the large tent.

“Uh-Oh! Uh-Oh!” I wailed like a despondent Howler Monkey, kicking my feet and pounding my armrest with forceful dissatisfaction when the chairs inevitably stopped us dead in our tracks. “Uh-Oh! Uh-Oh! Uh-Oh! Uh-Oh!”

“Stop it!” Bunting said, harshly pinching my arm as half the crowd rubbernecked our way. “Dougie, stop it!”

A team of vested museum employees and a handful of concerned citizens rushed to our aid.

“Hiiii!” I said, peppering them with soggy cookie bits. “I’m special!”

By the time we got next to the stage, the whole front row of handsomely coiffed and exquisitely preened demons were staring at me. They were the wives of the museum founders, their families, their professional colleagues and the wealthiest of donors. I stuck my hand down my pants to scratch my sweaty retard balls, sniffing my fingers and picking my nose when I was done.

“Me! Me! Me!” I hounded the woman passing the microphone around the relatively small turnout of media types. “My turn! My turn now!”

“I’m sorry,” she mollified, looking down at me with pity. “The question and answer period is over, honey.” She then handed the mic to what Darwin might dub a fitter reporter—bald discrimination. I responded with a righteous tantrum.

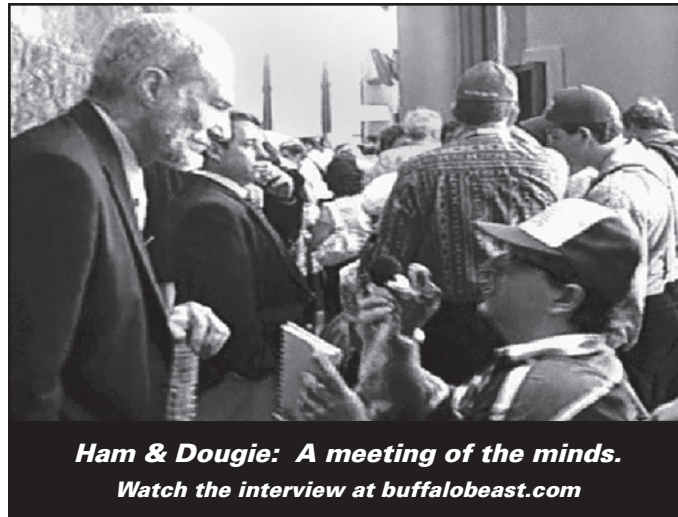
The rest of the press conference was predictably dull and unremarkable, save for Ken Ham’s subtly abusive pimping of his children. “Stand up,” he ordered his marrying-age offspring. “With the media here,” he said seriously, “I thought we

might finally find someone out there that will have them.” *Ouch!*

I needed to save my strength. I napped as Bunting spied around the outside of the building. He’d report back periodically about crates arriving from Liberty University and to assess our current level of safety.

“We are at code orange. I repeat: code orange,” he said, brow furrowed, spinning me around in my chair. A man was on stage with a guitar. He was playing the worst folk song we’d ever heard in our lives, something about Jesus making our dreams come true. “Let’s go have a cigarette, Dougie.”

“YAAAAAY!”



Ham & Dougie: A meeting of the minds.
Watch the interview at buffalobeast.com

At my insistence, Bunting wheeled me to the head of the peanut gallery amassing behind a velvet rope at the museum doors. Ham and the rest of the museum founders lined up, each holding a bit of a long red ribbon. One of the men held a 4-foot pair of ceremonial wooden shears. The media gaggle checked their light gauges and swiveled their heads between the men and the press tent, anticipating one straggler’s arrival. There was the kind of pregnant silence which only exists when one key person is late for a photo op that’s been twelve years in the making.

“Wow! Those are big scissors! That’s daaangerous!” I loudly advised. “You should be care-full, Ham! Be care-full!” The crowd had a good laugh.

With the ribbon finally cut, it was time to enter the den of stupidity and shudder at its smooth-brained appeal. The air-conditioned lobby was adorned with a jagged fiberglass cave wall. I was bursting with hyperbolic excitement, jerking about feverishly and shouting. As the bustling crowd parted, making room for my wheelchair, we had Ken Ham directly in our sights. The *Special Times* was on the cusp of conducting its first interview.

“HIIIIIII!” I yelled through a few men congratulating the museum founder with hearty handshakes, telling them in my special way to fuck off.

“I loyk yeu dinasoaw,” Ham told me in his distinct Australian accent, pointing at my prehistoric prop.

“I like dinosaurs! I like youuuu!” I countered affectionately, as Bunting wiped the moisture from his palms and shook Ken’s hand, telling him what organization we purportedly represented.

“I’m special! Hi!” I interrupted, rising from my wheelchair to give Ham a big bear hug. I emitted a high-pitched squeal of pure elation.

Bunting stepped in, telling Ham that he’d talked to Giles about an interview. Ham kindly offered to do it either “now or later.”

“NOW!” I demanded.

After making sure this was OK with Ken, Bunting asked: “All right Dougie, are you ready?”

“Yeah,” I reassured him, directing my strict attention to the creationist superape. “You said the dinosaurs wouldn’t eat Adam and Eve...”

“Right,” slipped in Ham.

“Whyyyyyy?” I pleaded. “Why not? Why not?”

“In the garden,” Ham said, looking over me into the filtering crowd, “you know, the Bible tells us in the garden before sin, in fact in the world before sin, all animals were vegetarian and so was Adam and Eve, and even though they have sharp teeth...”

"Why they have sharp teeth?" I interjected in my slow droning falsetto.

A cameraman, most likely from a local news outlet, rushed to Bunting's left to film the inspiring exchange.

"Right. There's a lot of animals that have sharp teeth, uh, that only eat plants," Ham ruminated, "for instance most, most bears are primarily vegetarian, yet they have teeth like a lion or a tiger..."

"They eat fish!" I vehemently disagreed. "I saw it on the Discovery Chan-nel... but it's sec-u-lar."

"Some of them do," Ham conceded, "but a panda eats only bamboo."

The interview was going well. Ham was spouting nonsensical creationist rhetoric, and I was in full-blown retard mode. We were like long lost twins. He continued averting his gaze, however. My assumed detriments reminded him of man's fall from grace. It was time to test this man of God.

"What about car-bon dating?" I asked.

Ham shot Bunting an icy stare, as if accusing him of corrupting my impressionable mind with science—or was it worse? Did he know? Was a half-wit's mention of a scientific dating method too unbelievable, even for someone willing to swallow Genesis in its entirety? Bunting spun around to compose himself and suppress an impending fit of laughter. The cameraman disappeared.

Ham went into a lengthy shtick about "assumptions," mentioning "carbon dating can only date things back to a hundred thousand years." This was from a guy who firmly believes the earth is precisely 6003 years old. I pitied the man and his tragically compartmentalized mind. After this day was over, I'd go back to thinking, but he would remain a retard. Poor bastard. I zoned out, rocking in my chair, pondering the number of starving children one could feed with 27 million dollars, and trying to think of an appropriate final question:

"Who is big-ger: God or Shaquille O'Neal?"

"Hmm, hmm... well, he-he, uh, there can't be anyone bigger than God, because there can only be one infinite being, by definition," Ham said authoritatively.

"But Shaquille O'Neal can dunk!" I countered, pantomiming a fierce glass-shattering two points.

Bunting again had to turn away. I could hear him snickering under a forced cough.

"But God can create the universe in six days," Ham said tersely, giving the final word on the God vs. Shaq debate.

"Okaaaay!" I bellowed.

"Okay," Ham repeated.

"I like Ham!" I roared, giving the bearded Aussie one last bear hug for good measure.

"Thanks. Enjoy the museum," Ham said, as Bunting pushed me deeper into fantasyland.

Monkey, continued from page 6



like these hand over fist, always promising a 1,000 megaton dark fate that would leave Oedipus feeling like his lot wasn't so bad after all.

On the bright side, Zinn dances around two different directions of possible hope for "the American people," but the implications of them are clearly too troubling for Zinn to say out loud, as one would have to accept violence as a tool, and mass death of innocents as a medium, while the other would have to embrace the reality that this is still a slave nation and that there's absolutely nothing innate in the human condition to desire self-government.

Hope through action: Action, as in collective democratic action against the political and economic system, in the form of the creation and practice of alternative culture, social beliefs and economic habits by a critical mass is possible, but in order to get there, vast numbers of participants will be lost in the meat-grinder. There's no way around it. Labor workers and Wobblies were really making some strides, achieving some great degree of class consciousness — AKA regularly losing in violent battles — in the early 20th century, but there's nothing like that now. It will only be when you see

"I talked to Ham!" the exclamation resonated through the entire lobby.

"DINOSAUR!" I screamed, catching sight of the first raptor of the day, perched atop a gift shop bookshelf.

"I saw you earlier. You're excited, aren't you?" asked a woman, looking down at me with a receptionist's smirk.

I confirmed her suspicions by opening my mouth as widely as I could, shaking my head and trying to bite my right ear. She wore an expression of pride, for having exposed herself to such a cretin. Undoubtedly, God has reserved her a studio apartment in heaven for her selfless act of charity.

"You're pretty!" I flattered a chubby young woman working behind the gift shop

daily reports of dozens or hundreds of Americans killed by police and military that there's any sign that democratic sensibilities among the populace are on the rise. Looking around these days, there's no almost no fight to be had at the cultural level either; as long as people in Iowa and Nebraska proudly wear NYPD baseball hats or those t-shirts with FBI blazoned on them — and they do — you can forget about that too.

Hope through inaction: I'm a lot more optimistic about this approach. It's one fitting of our legacy of slavery and our contemporary slave society. American Slaves, Zinn unwittingly points out, and slave societies in general are typically crap at rebellions, but pretty decent at passive resistance. He quotes slave owner after slave owner bemoaning the lack of enthusiasm that their slaves have for their daily duties.

It's that sullen instinct by the slave to resist 'playing ball' that I think could do the trick. What was the first piece of advice George Bush gave Americans after 9/11? "Go Shopping." And they did. But if Americans choose not to go shopping for a while, they might get themselves a welfare state. It wouldn't be freedom or self-government, but at least they might get some cheap health care out of it.

register. "I'm gooing to take you as my wife – that's what it says in the Bible!"

"That's right, Dougie," Bunting encouraged. "It's in Deuteronomy."

"Dooooteronomies!" I screamed, excited by the prospect of bedding a good Christian girl—possibly in the bathroom. I winked at her, but she didn't seem ready to ride the Dougie Express. She blushed uncomfortably. We pushed on.

Through the other door of gift shop, the Garden of Eden hosted a grand, finely catered reception. There were no apples. Bunting slowly wheeled my chair through the tightly packed hall. I inhaled a can of Coca-Cola and greedily stole shrimp from other people's plates. I was hell on wheels, screaming all sorts of foul blasphemy. "I got SpongeBob!" I ejaculated as he danced playfully on my leg. "He's like Jesus! I love Jesus! I love Spongebob!" To shut me up, a museum employee directed us toward the "special effects room," and, as a matter of "policy," confiscated our video equipment.

On the stage in front of a three-paneled movie screen depicting a beautiful wilderness scene, a solitary animatronic woman in a red camping vest knelt beside a fire, constructed from upward-blown bits of red and orange paper. She soliloquized about the nature of the universe and her place in it.

"Am I all alone?" she pondered sadly as the smoke billowing on the screen behind the fire curled into a question mark.

Two angels in white overalls named "Gabe" and "Mike" flew down to help "Wendy" through her existential crisis. Later they morphed into hip, antiestablishment Christian students, and hurled spurious claims at their Darwin-humping science teacher in Southern California surfer lingo. The seats vibrated and shot water from the backrests during the great flood. Lightning abounded. The same guy who designed the King Kong and Jaws rides at Universal Studios was responsible for this atrocity. Ham got him on the cheap, because he loves Jesus too. That made me sad, for some reason. The theater was, perhaps, an effective propaganda tool for small children and certifiable fools.

The glasses were giving me a terrible headache. I imagined the creationists watching our footage in a back room

somewhere... *incriminating evidence... they'll destroy our documentation!*

Upon exiting the theater, a quick check of our promptly-returned camera revealed my fears to be mere paranoia. What was not paranoia, however, was the four-man security detail trailing our every move. From Noah's Café to the Cave of Sorrows, they shadowed us. Bunting let them pass by, as if we'd been blocking their way, but another fell in tow moments later. We were filled with the fear of God. It was possible one of them saw me scrawl "Dougie was here '07" on the entrance to Jesus' Tomb.

"That guard's been following us since the Scopes Monkey Trial," Bunting said, frantically indicating an ambiguously shaped hominid near the entrance to Noah's Ark. "I think he knows!"

"Dougie's tired! Dougie wants to go home now!" I shouted hysterically, trying to stay in character. "Seriously, man," I hummed through a ventriloquist's smile, looking back over my shoulder, "let's get the fuck out of here."

Bunting upped our pace as we wove among the walking dead, milling like cattle, staring in slack-jawed wonder at Methuselah's Tent and the Dinosaur Den. "Oooooooh!" I shouted reflexively as we passed Adam and Eve bathing in a waterfall. "YOU CAN ALMOST SEE HER BOOBIES!" Her deliberately-placed hair was an incredible bummer for Dougie. We stopped briefly at some cockamamie Old Testament scene with a curly-haired gent strumming a lute.

"He looks like rock and roll legend Jimmy Page!" I informed a fellow spectator. His bewildered eyes went from me to the guard, who I'd roused to action with the loud and random aside. What was I thinking? Retards don't like Zeppelin!

"Let's go!" I begged Bunting, who shifted the wheelchair into warp drive. "Dougie's gotta go home now! Gotta go home now!" Our cameraman, sensing danger, switched from stoner sloth to nimble cheetah. With the exit in sight, the stalking square-badge was gaining on us. Twenty more feet and we were home free—no bloodthirsty mob; no Nazi K-9s ripping the flesh from our bones; not even a stiff right cross from Ken Ham's meaty paw—a complete success.

"Jesus Christ!" I trumpeted like a sweaty angel of the apocalypse as the guard

overtook us at the door to the lobby, grabbing the handle.

"Let me get that for you," he offered, pulling the glass pane toward his chest. Gosh, these Christians sure were nice.

Our minds still reeling, we accosted Ken Ham at the same spot we'd left him. He was busy talking with a writer from *Salon*, but that hardly mattered. I physically pulled the creationist away by his sleeve. We needed a cover photo.

"How'dja loyk the museum?" he asked while our drug-addled photographer lined up a shaky shot.

"One of the din-a-saurs smiled at me!" I cackled, straining not to laugh hysterically.


"Say creation!" slurred our cameraman.

"CREATION!"

"Dude," Bunting said, tossing me the keys, "it's your turn to drive."

As we made our final pass by the freshly minted intellectual tragedy, I gave Dougie one last line before he faded from existence. "I'm driv-ving!" I yelled out the window at people exiting the museum.

"Good fah you!" sarcastically replied a Brooklyn-accented man walking the immaculate garden paths to the right of the museum.

Not entirely sure of what we'd accomplished, if anything, the seven hour trip home was euphoric and surreal, punctuated with contagious bouts of uproarious laughter. Ken Ham is certain his museum will undo the damage caused by Charles Darwin and Clarence Darrow; a concrete push of destiny away from the forbidden fruit of knowledge and toward a theocratic vegetable paradise. Are this man and his museum fossilized relics of our subconsciously inclined, mythological leaning past, or a signpost on the highway of history: "Caution: slow people worshiping ahead?" Regardless, a strange sense of optimism pervaded my being as we drifted down the open road. It was America, 2007 the year of our lord, and these were special times indeed. 

Cockburn adds to Global Warming, say Experts



By Charles Komanoff

Did lefty pundit Alexander Cockburn and corporate behemoth General Motors secretly agree to swap climate positions?

It looks that way. GM, swallowing hard, recently joined the U.S. Climate Action Partnership, the elite enviro-business coalition pushing cap-and-trade -- a so-called "market-based system" -- for controlling carbon dioxide emissions. Meanwhile, the famously acidic Cockburn lacerated global warming orthodoxy in his column in *The Nation* magazine, deriding it as a "fearmongers' catechism [of] crackpot theories" ginned up by "grant-guzzling climate careerists" and opportunistic politicians looking to ride the greenhouse "threatosphere" all the way to the White House. (Whew!)

But there's less here than meets the eye. For as the inconvenient details of cap-and-trade schemes start to surface, USCAP is looking less and less like a CO₂ control lobby and more like a corporate club seeking to cash in on the rising clamor against free carbon spewing. And Cockburn, it turns out, has been raining on the climate crisis parade for years.

Let's dispense with Cockburn first. His *Nation* column is infested with nakedly inverted syllogisms, such as: Al Gore is alarmed by global warming, but Al Gore backed nuclear power as a congressman, ergo alarm over global warming is a ruse to push nukes. Or, *The New York Times* is alarmed by global warming, but *The New York Times* whitewashed the Bush Administration's Iraq WMD lies, ergo alarm over global warming is a lie.

But Gore and the *Times* are easy targets. The heavyweight in the room is the international climate-science community. To take them down, Cockburn disingenuously recycled a charge by *Science* magazine's global warming reporter, Richard Kerr, that "Climate modelers have been 'cheating' for so long it's almost become respectable." It's yet more illogic: Climate modelers cheat, which makes climate models part and parcel of the "reflexive squawk of the greenhouse fearmongers," which makes global warming a hoax.

Worse, in the time scale of climate modeling, that "cheating" remark Cockburn lifted is positively ancient. It's

***It's pronounced "co-burn,"
you bloody wankers!***

the lead from a May 16, 1997 *Science* article by Kerr heralding the first climate model to replicate actual climate records *without* fudge factors, developed at the National Center for Atmospheric Research. And much as the first running of a mile in under four minutes, back in the 1950s, unleashed a torrent of sub-four-minute miles, NCAR's breakthrough triggered a tidal wave of modeling progress that has largely done away with the fudge factors, along with the yawning error bars that surrounded the old forecasts. Twenty-three different models, all unfudged, support the terrifying new finding from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the current trajectory toward doubled CO₂ levels will raise the mean global temperature above the pre-industrial level by six-and-a-half degrees Fahrenheit, give or take a mere degree.

No doubt Cockburn would deride this forecast as "hysteria" propounded by IPCC "functionaries and grant farmers."

But perhaps it's time for Alex to take playwright Harold Pinter's advice to Bush to "look in the mirror chum." After all, this is the same Cockburn who, in a nutty 2005 paean to his "aging fleet of 50s and 60s era Chryslers" provocatively titled *The Virtues of Gas Guzzling*, proclaimed: "I don't believe in any effective role of man-made CO₂ in global warming, a natural cyclical trend." Cockburn then dug his hole deeper, writing that oil itself "doesn't come from dead dinosaurs and kindred organic matter [but] is a renewable, primordial soup continually manufactured by the Earth under ultrahot conditions and tremendous pressures." Earth to Alex: where does contrarianism end and madness begin?

But if Cockburn pretty much begs to be dismissed, the boys at the U.S. Climate Action Partnership are sober as pinstripes. From Shell to DuPont, from GE and now GM to the Natural Resources Defense Council and Environmental Defense, the 27-member USCAP is mustering a high-octane campaign (some would call it a stampede) to re-fashion the holy grail of climate protection -- attaching a stiff price to carbon pollution -- as an emissions-trading poker table with a billion-dollar minimum. Thanks in large part to USCAP, a half-dozen carbon cap-and-trade bills are circulating in Congress, and the A-list of Washington carbon-trading acolytes includes House Speaker Pelosi and Senators (and presidential contenders) McCain, Obama and Clinton.

Yet cap-and-trade seems a curiously unpromising way to put a price on carbon. Making fossil fuels cost more portends a radical overhaul of the American way of life: people will drive and fly less, industries will rise and fall, cities will redevelop and suburbs will stop sprawling. To make that transition requires a pricing mechanism that's simple, transparent and equitable. A straightforward, ecumenical carbon tax meets that standard; devilishly complex cap-and-trade does not. The old Hollywood maxim that a story line can't exceed 25 words should disqualify cap-and-trade systems from the get-go. And as Americans get wind of the legions of legal and financial functionaries swarming around carbon trading, they'll likely feel disillusioned if not hoodwinked -- and ripe for a reversion to unfettered carbon-burning.

There's no mystery to General Electric's and General Motors' embrace of cap-

and-trade. Daily, the climate handwriting on the wall grows clearer, and corporate America knows it's only a matter of time before it is made to pay for using -- and making products that require consumers to use -- climate-altering fossil fuels. And unlike a carbon tax, which would resist gaming and could be started quickly, a cap-and-trade system would take years to formulate as powerful interests carved up the revenue pie.

Moreover, that revenue pie -- a concomitant of "putting a price on carbon" -- will eventually total hundreds of billions of dollars a year. Yes, the carbon price *has* to be high to internalize the costs of climate damage and for renewable solar and wind power and energy efficiency to be in position to displace and ultimately eliminate fossil fuels. Under a carbon tax, those revenues would be known in advance and could be dedicated to public purposes such as progressive tax-shifting and transition support for affected communities. In contrast, the costs of cap-and-trade systems are likely to become a hidden (and regressive) tax as dollars flow to market participants.


The more interesting question is why some big environmental groups are pushing carbon cap-and-trade. One reason is precedent: Environmental Defense conceived emissions trading in the 1980s and spent years convincing utilities and Congress to make it the vehicle for cutting acid rain pollutants (though in truth that "market" bears as much resemblance to a carbon market as did a French mud hut to the Palace of Versailles). In addition, at the time the green groups were laying the groundwork for USCAP -- before Gore's movie and before the Republicans lost their hold on Congress -- the more politically dicey carbon tax alternative may have appeared out of reach. Settling for cap-and-trade may have seemed more sensible than vying for a carbon tax and coming away empty-handed.

Of course, there's nothing to stop the "green" members of USCAP from pointing to the new facts on the ground and throwing in with the smaller but fast-growing carbon tax forces. No one should hold their breath, however. NRDC, ED and their partners have invested too much institutional capital in building bridges to big business.

Dig deeper, moreover, and a harder truth emerges. NRDC and ED have gotten very

skilled -- and grown very prosperous -- at cutting deals. What began benignly twenty years ago, with the groups persuading utility regulators to fund innovative energy-efficiency programs, appears to have mushroomed into a perceived entitlement to speak for environmentally concerned citizens, meaning most of us, while being accountable only to their own trustees.

This top-down style, in which "the ways that work," to borrow ED's slogan, are formulated in private and presented to the community as a *fait accompli*, won't do with something as momentous as putting a price on U.S. carbon emissions. The stakes are too high in both dollars and lives for the environmental position to be decided by a handful of green groups, no matter how accomplished or well-meaning. The path to carbon pricing must be debated and ratified in the open, not negotiated in certified-green offices.

Cockburn knows this. Hell, it was Counterpunch's reporting on those backroom utility deregulation deals in the 1990s that helped alert advocates like me to Big Enviro's aversion to the democratic process. C'mon Alex, dump the '59 Imperial and the climate crisis conspiracy-theorizing. You needn't enlist with the Carbon Tax Center, but the members-only push for cap-and-trade is a worthy target. Load up and let 'er rip. 



The Secret to Attaining Awesomeness

By Philip Kolba

I find myself among the recently unemployed, and I face a dilemma common to those in this condition. On the one hand, I'd prefer not to find another job. On the other, I don't know anybody who still operates on the barter system, so I need a source of income. How to resolve this conflict?

During a particularly productive period of my unemployment, I was browsing best seller lists on the internet and discovered that *The Secret* reached the top of the *New York Times* hard cover advice list, and the *BookSense* hardcover nonfiction and fiction lists.

I haven't read *The Secret* or watched the movie. I refuse to subject my brain to such a hazard. But I've pieced together more than I want to know from the rants of those who've been brave or foolish enough to experience it.

The basic premise of the work is that you can bring about whatever you want simply by thinking about it — what the author calls “the law of attraction.” This strategy apparently works with any goal. An acquaintance of mine, after watching the movie, now fervently believes she can fly. I don't mean she's comfortable stepping onto a plane. Literally — flapping-her-arms, jumping-off-a-cliff flying. I assume she hasn't yet attempted lift-off or I would've joined her in the hospital after I laughed myself into an apoplexy from learning about it.

Exerting that kind of influence is enticing, and consumers of self-help literature seem insatiable for some reason, so the self-help market should be able to support another product.

The formula is pretty simple. Take a nuanced psychological theory, like positive thinking, which suggests that optimism, high self-esteem, and satisfaction with life predict healthy psychological, physical, emotional, and relational functioning.

Reduce it to a simple catchphrase that's only tangentially related to the original theory. Make impossible claims about the efficacy of your catchphrase to change people's lives. Finally, disseminate it in a shiny package and inflate the price

An obscenely inflated price has the dual purpose of making you filthy rich and building a loyal customer base motivated by cognitive dissonance. The high price creates the illusion of great worth. If you convince a customer to pay that price, and he discovers your product isn't worth what he paid, he is motivated to convince himself otherwise. The alternative is that he risks damaging his self-image by acknowledging that he is gullible enough to be deceived by dishonest marketing.

If I were to research a psychological principle that I could put into practice, that would come dangerously close to doing actual work. Instead, I'm going to simplify an existing self-help philosophy on the pretext that I am evolving the ideas of previous great thinkers. Thus I will maximize my ratio of loot to effort.

The job from which I was laid off was computerized note taking — basically stenography, but with a laptop instead of a fancy typewriter — for certain college courses. I was assigned to cover the “Image Consulting Certificate” program. There were six courses, taking 90 hours in total to complete,



and costing the students \$1,200 each.

I've condensed those lessons into six principles, each one introduced by a quote from one of the classes. (These are actual quotes I took from my notes. I couldn't make this stuff up.)

I present to you: The *Life's Awesome Society's* Six Principles To Make You Awesome At Life certificate.

Health: “Personal growth might make you feel ill. That's your body releasing toxins, so just bear with it.” The ability to ignore your body's danger signals is necessary to complete this certificate. Beware of serial killers, however, because they are attracted to people who do this. Still, it's a small price to pay for being awesome.

Public speaking: “Begin your speech with a quote. For example, Cleopatra once said, ‘To be or not to be.’” Better

yet, begin every speech with that exact quotation. You'll impress the audience with your literary prowess.


Fashion: "When in doubt, overdress and feel confident doing it." Don't worry about whether you should wear a tie or a bowtie with your suit. Instead, go with an emperor's robe made from the finest Indian silk and embroidered with gold thread, cover your head with a carved ivory helmet, and carry a jewel-encrusted scepter. Traveling atop a war elephant is optional.

Business: "Remember World War 3 — women who had trouble feeding their families would still buy creams." The implication is clear: Start another world war to stimulate sales in any luxury goods you might be selling.

Energy: "Thoughts can affect another person's energy. To protect yourself from negative thoughts, imagine that you are zipping yourself up. But be careful when you unzip your jacket that you don't also unzip your energy." This is of particular concern in colder climates. People come inside from the cold and unzip without thinking. You don't want to be caught with your energy exposed for some stranger to fondle.

Awesomeness: "Visualize that you're awesome." Because you are. Also visualize sending me \$9.95 to receive a certificate stating: "Cleopatra agrees: 'I'm totally awesome.'" (Order forms are available at www.lifesawesome.com.) I know it doesn't seem like the price is very high, but if you consider that each certificate costs me about \$0.11 in ink and paper to produce, I'm sure you'll agree that it's grossly inflated.

You can practice these six principles and at least double your awesomeness quotient. But these principles are only the first step in a long journey of self-improvement. Attaining the certificate allows you to prove to the world how awesome you really are — you could include the certificate on your resume, website, or embroider it onto your favorite pillow. It also means you've attained the next level of awesomeness and can continue your costly training.

Above all else, remember that the potential for happiness and success is always within you. But you need to pay somebody else fat sacks of cash to help get it out. Why not make that person me? 

Philip Kolba is a recent psychology and criminology graduate, and the editor of Squid & Ink magazine.

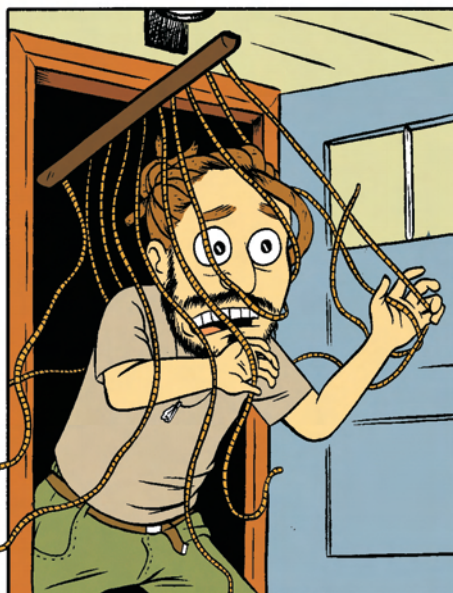
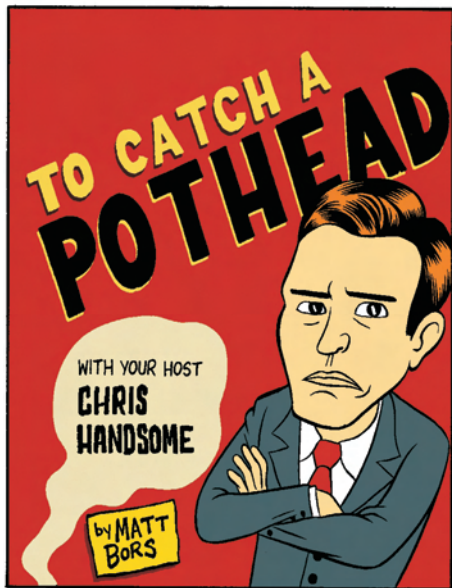


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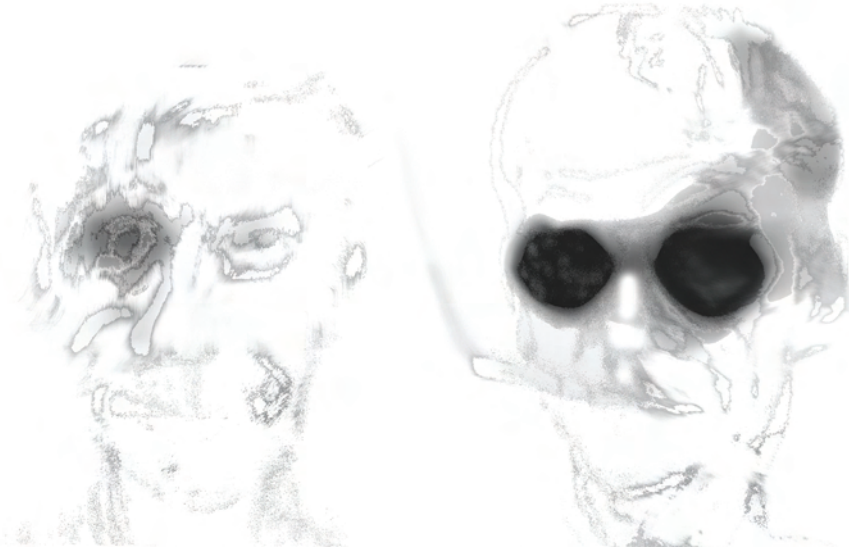
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Ghosts of Tim Leary and Hunter Thompson



Freedom vs. Authority under the 40-foot pulsating rainbow vagina

By Joe Bageant

Everything Americans think they know, they learned from a televised morality play. It's all theater. You root for some good guy and boo some bad guy. You pick your own, but you dance to the tune of the men running the show. It's mind control, pure and simple, and if there is an American immune to it, then he is probably living in a snow cave somewhere in Alaska. — Gypsy Joe Hess (1919-1988), prospector, self-educated philosopher and horse trader

In my ragged assed 40 years of writing, I've been lucky enough — or sometimes unlucky enough — to meet and write about many of America's "somebodies," mostly vapid asshole movie and TV stars and rock musicians. When I was young, so-called "media journalism" then was just what it is now, what we called "starfucking", and amounted to writing PR for media corporations in "music journals" of the time. But we covered a few worthwhile iconic figures in the mix as well — the kind that stick around in the background of one's thinking forever. At my age now, I find a lot of them are dying off, the Hunter Thompsons, Susan Sontags, Ken Kesey and Kurt Vonneguts. However, I have a self-imposed policy not to eulogize them because the hundreds of sentimental Internet tributes that flourish upon their

deaths somehow seem ghoulish, and because it is a universal truth that we writers will do anything for an audience, and celebrity death is one of the easiest ways to attract one.

On rare occasions though, usually while writing late at night, the ghost of one of these people, the shade of an especially prescient writer or thinker, sneaks up, slaps me across the back of the head and says: "I told you so!" And when two appear in a single night, well, you gotta write about it.

So here I am at 2 AM pretending to write — at least until I've killed the rest of this bottle of Old Granddad — but actually thrashing amid my old files, when I stumble upon personal notes from 1982, rough drafts and clips regarding Hunter S. Thompson and Timothy Leary, written and published around the same time. Both of them now strike me as brilliant in their defiance of American mediocrity, and symbolic actors in the media's Great Cultural Outlaw Game.

I say symbolic because the news media then and still does require all types of symbolic actors to hold the nation's attention and shape its reality. Today they range from Paris Hilton and Bill O'Reilly to Rosie O'Donnell, or political actors such as Barack Obama and John McCain. Or heroic

figures in sport and war such as Patrick Tillman (which didn't work out as well as planned by its Pentagon managers.) Even the most insentient lump of flesh may serve the purpose. Terry Schiavo comes to mind.

But the media also needs cultural outlaws, and allows a few of them either to serve as national examples of our supposed freedom of expression, or to serve as definitions of deviation from the norm and how it is punished. Tim Leary called it "The Outlaw Game," and he and Thompson were two examples of the outlaw's part in the superstate's instructive televised morality play. Real cultural outlaws are still allowed on stage. But to be acceptable to the corporate media state's manufactured reality, they must construct a persona (or be assigned one based upon what their behavior symbolizes) and maintain that persona, for which they are either rewarded, as Thompson was, or imprisoned as Leary was, according to the role they play out in the TV news non-reality show. Ever it was thus since the advent of television.

Yet, what strikes me about this folder of wrinkled notes is the hardening of the media model, and the changes in the American attitude regarding freedom and state authority since then. Not to mention the sheer outrageousness or permissible persona then, and the ominous prescience

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of some of Thompson's and Leary's quotes, scrawled down so long ago. And so I write the following from those old notes.

A delightful evening of equine slaughter

It is 5 PM in an upper room of the Aspen's Hotel Jerome, and Hunter S. Thompson is pacing. He speaks in punchy AK magazine round bursts: "We've got to get that horse murder flick! We gotta get that goddamned movie!!"

"What movie?" I ask.

"The movie I want to open with tonight. It's a horse being slaughtered by acid freaks in the throes of a nervous breakdown — a hideous, horrible disgusting thing. Got to get it. Listen to this!" He punches at a small cassette recorder tucked under his arm ...

"GAAAAAAAGH! SHREEEEEEEEEEE!
GURGLE ... WHINEEEEEEEE! CRUNCH!"

The microphone is up close to the horse's throat so you can hear its last bloody gurgles of agony, then deranged laughter.

"Jesus Christ, Thompson, the sound track alone would puke a Nazi oven tender off a gut wagon. That's the sickest fucking thing I ever heard."

"Me too," he answers. "It'll drive a silver spike right through the rotten diseased heart of this town!"

The hearts he was plotting to impale this very evening belonged to the audience at an Aspen community school benefit where he was to appear, along with Jimmy Buffet and The Eagles' Glenn Frey (both of whom, if I remember correctly, had places in Aspen at the time). Problem was, nobody could find the film, since it had been stashed long ago to protect the identity of what Hunter claimed was a well-known national political figure who had starred in the blood gushing footage. Vague evidence indicated the horse snuff flick might be buried over on the farming town of Paonia, Colorado. "We'll rent a chopper," Hunter exclaims, "scour the state if necessary." He was not getting much cooperation from the two other longhairs present, apparently there to help him accomplish this mad, eleventh hour plan.

Every 15 minutes or so he made one of those convenience runs to the bathroom we all made back then, the kind where you came out wiping your nose, just in case any of Aspen's snowflakes had happened to fall

while you were supposedly taking that ten second piss. I figured he was still working on that ounce of blow I'd copped for him the day before (and swiped a gram from before delivery). But when he comes out announcing he has to run a rather suspicious sounding errand, I think, "Could he really have hoovered up 28 grams of nose candy in 24 hours?" Yet 20 minutes later he was back and now "tapping the glass" with the rest of us. The afternoon rotted on.

Finally, after many phone calls and as many trips downstairs to the bar, Hunter plops down on the hotel room bed with a grim look of resignation. "It's no use," he says. "We'll never find it. The horse murder

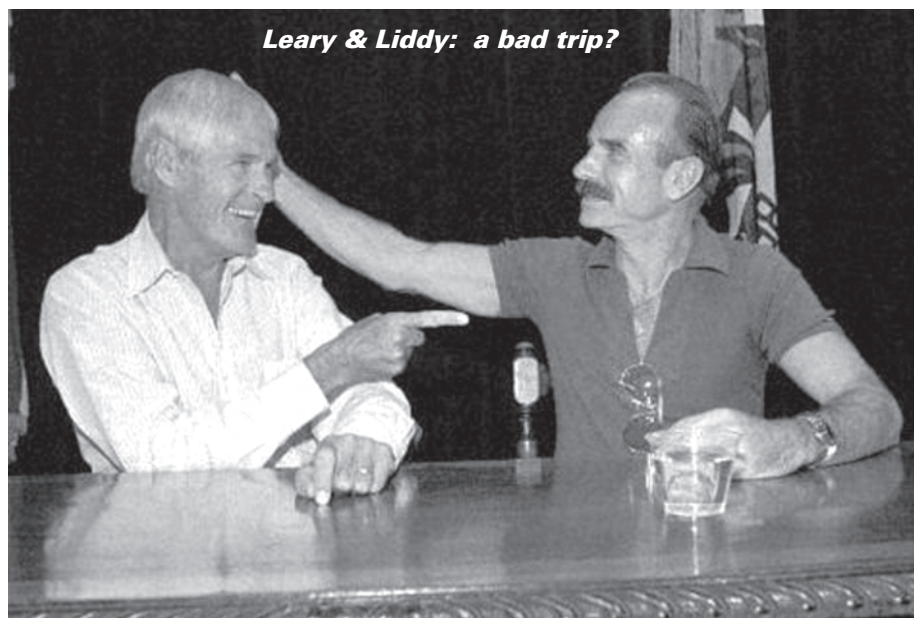
"Oh shit, you weren't going to show that horse thing you talked about ... I mean, man, well ... I'd never follow that on stage anyway." Looking relieved, Frey asks, "So what else is happening down there tonight?"

"Whatever you and Jimmy end up doing. I'm just showing up to take the blame. It might be strange tonight."

"It was bound to be," Frey sighs.

Pogo and the G-Man

Now for the moment, let us jump forward a bit to my other assignment of the week,



is off. Too bad. We could have yanked their nerve ends right out through their pores, put out their eyes in one grisly flash of the truth. The truth is so much heavier than fiction ..." I would guess that the flick probably never existed, and was merely this evening's installment of an ongoing manufactured fiction that maintained his persona, one so exquisitely extravagant as to illuminate the brutally real truth.

Glenn Frey strolls into the room

"Is this the office of Hunter Thompson Productions?"

"Yeah. You want to murder a horse tonight?"

"Huh?"

"You and Buffet."

Tim Leary's arrival in Boulder, Colorado. After picking Leary up at the Denver airport, we are plowing through the bright Colorado sun in a rented car. Leary is giving me his "mind mutant assessment" of the surroundings: "Late terrestrial species architecture, mostly silica fusion and inorganic slab construction, erected by the musculotoic legions of the late Twentieth Century industrial feudal dynasties." From his pocket he extracts "a packet of aromatic hydrocarbon sticks," bringing one to his lips and lighting it, drawing in the smoke deeply, obviously savoring the tingle nicotine is sending through his bloodstream. Timothy Leary has arrived in Boulder, Colorado.

Not the same Boulder as everyone else's, to be sure. But what could you expect from a self-appointed national director of chemical consciousness, "visionary outlaw

philosopher scientist bard,” and “unrepentant dope fiend out to mutate every mind I can lay my hands on toward higher intelligence — their own.”

This 61-year old bright eyed ex-Harvard psychologist bouncing around in white Nikes and a pinstriped shirt did not strike me as burned out at all. I'd covered Fleetwood Mac a bit earlier, and believe me, compared to Stevie Nix, Leary was not even slightly crispy around the edges. Of course at the time he was raving about the “smart drugs,” and by that he was not referring to ginkgo biloba either, but drugs such as hydergine. So who really knows? One thing for sure though: Ken Kesey was right when he said when Leary had short haircuts he looked like Pogo.

Strangely enough, Timothy Francis Leary was in Boulder, the town at the foot the North American hippy Himalayas, to meet with the improbable personage of George Gordon Liddy, boogey-demon of Watergate plumbing job and hand over the flame fame. Mr. Sheer Will. At the moment though, Liddy was checking into an undisclosed room across town at the Hilton. Twenty-four hours from now he'd be debating Leary in what was being touted as “the heavyweight philosophical bout of the year.” The topic was “Personal Freedom vs. Authority,” which Leary declared was the nation's primary struggle and would be so in the future.

I won't go into the evening's show, “Debate for the Soul of America,” but will just say that, despite its canned performance, it was marvelously funny, yet spot on the vital subject it addressed — freedom vs. authority — in a way today's managed debates can never be. In fact, media debates today never even touch the subject because participants have too much to lose, given that they are among the chosen ones issuing the “one voice to the many.” Today's equivalent would probably be Noam Chomsky vs. Dick Cheney, which we are never going to see, and which surely wouldn't be as entertaining, given Cheney's embalmed cheerlessness. Chomsky is no Richard Pryor either, but Chomsky wields perhaps the heaviest hammer of political and historical truth in America, so there might be some entertainment value in watching it come down on that old Gila monster. Or maybe Gore Vidal vs. Tucker Carlson ... sigh ... like that's ever gonna happen.

As Liddy put it at the time: “Tim and I can say anything we damned well want to. We're both ex-cons and have done hard time and not the country club kind either, for what we believe, and have no credibility whatsoever to preserve.” Even given that Leary and Liddy both were relentless self-promoters, they nevertheless spoke openly and loudly of important things we never hear expressed meaningfully any place today but on the most leftward frontiers of the Internet. Not semi-abstract electronic database privacy rights, which, serious as they are, most Americans could give a shit about until it results in some brutal act of oppression, such as raising their car insurance rate 50 bucks. These two talked — and in absolute seriousness — about such things as the right to live as a naked lotus eater in the public park if you chose to because it was



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your park, your body and your planet. Or the right to shoot down any armed police or government authority that came through your door unannounced (an opinion that got Liddy into some hot water years later.) They were enthusiastic about the debate, not the least of reasons for which was that they both still owed millions in legal fees and this was a paying gig. But they were not too desperately sweating it. As Leary said, "the first people to visit you in your cell after being arrested in The Outlaw Game are the media agent and his lawyer. In the meantime Leary still had royalties from numerous books and Liddy was negotiating the deal for a television docudrama based upon his own book, *Will*.

About that 40-foot rainbow colored pulsating vagina

Later, over drinks at the Boulderado Hotel lounge it was obvious there was a certain mutual respect, though I doubt real friendship — their huge egos left little space for that — as they recounted the famous Millbrook bust. Liddy says, "The good burghers of Dutchess County were horrified of what was going on there. Remember that this was a county where the justice of the peace practiced with his machine gun in his off hours." Liddy does not mention that he had serious ambitions toward becoming Deputy District Attorney of Dutchess County, New York and that a better PR opportunity than nailing the Pope of Dope naked with some nubile teenager, or better yet, a young drugged boy, inside a hedonic compound would play very well with the voters. It is nearly impossible for informed young people today to grasp how the sexually repressed "Greatest Generation" saw the world we were rebelling against. There was no Jerry Springer Show, no internet porn to inform and titillate their little worlds of lights-out missionary sex and long post-war retreat into the ignorant traditional values of the prewar era. As my postwar bride mother-in-law says: "I didn't even know what incest meant until I'd been married ten years!"

And so, Liddy, the ambitious Catholic prep school kid from Hoboken with a law degree and an instinct for the middle class conservative mind's bottomless appetite for any source of outrage to give vent to their inner repressions — and naked painted bodies dancing on the lawn under strobe lights was about as outrageous as things got sat the time — he saw his ticket in Leary. He busted Leary twice on his way up the political ladder, ultimately catching the attention of Richard Nixon by running for the House of Representatives against

Nixon's man, millionaire Hamilton Fish. By some mysterious process, the widely popular Liddy suddenly quit campaigning against Fish in the critical last weeks of the race. Fish won and Liddy started working for Nixon. By 1971 he was on Nixon's White House staff and willing to do anything to get to the next level. Which, in the Republican scheme of things of course, spells some sort of criminality.

Along the way though, Liddy succeeded in overturning many of the nation's drug laws, one of which made LSD illegal, for which I must personally confess that I can never forgive the man. All I can say to readers under sixty is that it was a whole different world before LSD was made illegal in 1966. There was the freedom of consciousness exploration without any paranoia whatsoever — which is the only way it can be done. Finding yourself was your own business and no authority whatsoever had the power to intrude. Anyway, Liddy's

path to Watergate began with the bust at Millbrook.

"The Millbrook bust was certainly no textbook execution of a search warrant," Liddy said. "The whole night was hellish and the trial was even worse. Tim dragged 32 Hindus into the courtroom."

Leary, (laughing): "It was a Saturday night and we had already been tipped off by all the deputy sheriffs' teenaged kids, who acted as informants for us. We had extraterrestrial company at the time, all sorts of Buddhists, yogis, scientists, light artists, psychedelic cannibals ... The place was a launching pad for higher ideas. The light artists had it all set up to greet the cops with a 40-foot rainbow-colored pulsating vagina over the lawn. But the cops got hung up, and things dragged on, so we all called it a night and went into the bedrooms to smoke a strong hallucinogenic drug called DMT. After a few puffs the room was a glowing and



hissing molecular time-space warp.

"Then BOOM! Here comes James Bond Liddy through the door with 24 armed and booted state troopers. Gordon was just beatific. His face was every color of the rainbow, his eyes shot out laser beams, and he had this powerful halo around him. And I cannot even describe what the 24 dinosaurs in trooper uniforms looked like! Whew! Meanwhile, the dope pipe laid there on the bed screaming 'HERE I AM! HERE I AM!' My wife immediately covered it with a blanket, then pointed across the room and yelled, 'Don't you dare touch my pot!' In typical knee-jerk storm trooper fashion, 24 cops and Gordon himself stomped across the room and seized a pound of peat moss, and off we all merrily went to jail."

The saltpeter crystal meth acid test

Back to Thompson and the boys in Aspen: On the way to the benefit show, Thompson hands me three Snow Seal bindles of coke that admirers had given him that day. "What the fuck?" I asked. "Poisoning," he answers. "That stuff could be scraped off the acid on a battery cable for all I know. I never take free dope from strangers." I

could smell, as it were, the wisdom in that policy.

As you may guess, given the hotel room planning session, the gig was totally fucked. The only bright spot was a BBC documentary of his legendary Aspen sheriff's race a few years before, when he ran on an anarchist dope freak power ticket and damn near won. Next in the show came a very strange Buffet-Frey duet on a song called "Hunter Thompson Weekend", which came off about as entertaining as watching laundry dry on heroin. Most of the evening consisted of Hunter hanging up there exposed like a side of raw beef before a sea of fossilized rich-liberal horseshit, taking questions such as "What can we do as citizens to blah, blah, blah ..." And so Thompson, whose speaking gigs were usually a stammering incoherent bore anyway, had managed to pull off one perhaps worse than usual. Sitting in the Jerome Bar afterward, he said, "I like them more aggressive than that. I like to go up there ready to kill, get the adrenaline flowing, throw chairs. After all, I've already been paid to do the job, so I'll go down into the crowd and grapple with the bastards hand to hand if necessary." Which was of

course pure bull, as anyone who ever paid to see him speak can attest. In all fairness though, the Mr. Gonzo was difficult enough to create as a literary figure, and absolutely impossible to deliver live and on demand. And nobody wanted to listen to a discussion of the man as a writer.

Hunter then insisted that I, my wife and small son who had come along with me (Oh my god! I'd stone forgotten they had been waiting an hour now for me to come get them!) go with him to some upscale restaurant for escargot — which I hadn't the slightest notion of what it was at the time — with Buffett, Frey and a bunch of glitzy personalities. I kept declining and making excuses, but the truth was that I and my humble little hippie family couldn't even afford a room for the night, and had planned to drive from Aspen the 210 miles home to Boulder, however late it turned out to be. Finally, and with a trace of real kindness, Hunter said, "You won't be paying for anything."

But first, of course, a little more toot. "Howz come you used to call this stuff a pussy drug, dope for fruits?" I asked. "Your nose runs with the best of 'em."



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"It's still a fruit drug. You just can't find anyone who'll eat hard drugs with you these days. Coke is a pathetically safe ritual. Pass it around at parties and all that shit. I guess I just happen to like it. I can maintain on it in some vague way. What I'm going to start doing is carrying around huge quantities of acid, crystal meth and saltpeter mixed together. Take it to parties and say, 'Here, have a snort.' Watch'em go into cardiac nervous convulsions."

For a moment then, he became evasive, pensive. After a while he said, "Writing politics is not like it used to be. Even covering a war has no kick. It's like writers are being ordered back to cover the farm teams. Some new kind of rot is creeping into the scene. Something more dangerous than Nixon ever was."

"Well, maybe you've reached the limit. How can you out-gonzo yourself after you've already out-gonzoad yourself? Maybe it's like Kesey said of writing a classic, that lightning doesn't strike twice in the same place." No reply. He looked grim. But at the restaurant feast Hunter was good ebullient, and hilarious in his antics to convince my son Timothy to eat a snail.

Even then, 25 years ago, in it was clear he was doomed to remain the savage Raoul Duke. And that he preferred it that way — out in front of the adoring counterculture's eyes, brilliantly mixing the gonzo myth and fact and pure bullshit into the most wonderfully toxic, astute image of American politics that had ever come down the pike. And honestly speaking, it was the self destructive persona his liberal readers loved most. So what further excess would it take to satisfy them? Thompson blasting an ounce of coke up his nose with a high powered paint gun at the Hollywood Bowl?

Meanwhile, there is that bottle here by the keyboard: Old Granddad, your lined face, profoundly wise, compromised, yet the eyes with a glint of mischief and hope. Your scarified, archetypal countenance tells us every thing we need or even want to know.

"I have been here a hell of a long time, son. I ain't going to compromise, I don't need to. I'm perpetually drunk, and you know as well as I that these are the values that make America great."

Granddad, your picture makes me thirsty.

The python and the mafia

Liddy and Leary are winding down the night at a table on the Boulderado Hotel's mezzanine lounge, obviously aware people around them are listening but sophisticated enough not to gawk. Liddy says he wants to see public debate come back in style again, as in 1968 when William Buckley, live and on coast to coast network television said to Gore Vidal: "Now listen, you queer, stop calling me a crypto-Nazi or I'll sock you in your goddamn face and you'll stay plastered." Good old fashioned hand to hand combat debate. Liddy said, "I'd like to see public debate come back as a vital source of information."

Leary: "I'd just like to see thinking come back in

style. I haven't heard a new idea in eight years. Let's get ordinary people arguing and talking again. I want to trigger new circuits in their nervous systems. That's the philosopher's job and I am the most important philosopher at this time."

Unfazed by Leary's bold claim, Liddy continues: "Americans are becoming increasingly stupid. The greatest tragedy of our time is the disintegration of the public education system in this country. Even if half the young people they are turning out were geniuses, they can't communicate or write well enough to be effective." Liddy has always been smart and his lament is not disingenuous. Trouble is that smart ambitious people get hung up on the smart part, and not the heart part — which is why we never seem to get a single decent presidential candidate offered by either party, just smart overly ambitious people such as Bill and Hillary Clinton, or in George W. Bush's case, the third generation congenitally flawed seed of the terminally rich for whom audacity passes as dedication and sheer arrogance as a sure sign for the masses that he must know what he is doing.

Liddy continues to bemoan the decay of American public education. "Kids now come out of even good colleges unable to write a coherent sentence"... yada yada ... until Leary interrupts him. Winking, Leary says, "Gordon wants to go back to the days when only 10 percent of Americans could go to college. Writing is a hieroglyphic art these days. And besides, only 10 percent of people are genetically wired, fired and inspired to do it. That makes it an elitist skill. Computers are going to replace hieroglyphics text as communication. Computers will be THE drug of the future."

"Then we'll have computer addiction and computer abuse," I laugh.

"As always, 90 percent of the people who do or do not use any kind of drug, do so stupidly. But you cannot ban drugs and you cannot have a drug-free society. If that's what you want, then go to China. The same people who want a drug-free society want a sex-free society. If you want a drug-free and sex-free society (waves his arm), then go to China."

"China is one half of the struggle happening on the planet right now. And the struggle is for the consciousness of the planet, a struggle between the mass centralization of China, which American corporate feudal lords aspire to, which breeds that Maoist,

insectoid kind of suspicion ... [And sure enough, we find China today expending more effort in surveillance of the Internet than developing it usefully] the authoritarian Soviet-style state vs. the American sixties style self-realization movement toward individuality and self-evolution. The main battle is for the consciousness of the American people. It's the biggest ballgame they will ever play. And it is being played for keeps between cultural outlaws and the repressive forces of military police court authority worshippers. During the Sixties an undeclared civil war took place and the right side won."

"Yeah, my side," says Liddy. "And we're not about to let it happen again."

"Between the end of World War 1946 and 1965," Leary explains, "my generation produced you, the 75 million babies who wanted everything, the whole world. And we tried to give it to you. I was busy all the time digging retaining walls at the nursery school ... And here you are still moving through the American culture like an avalanche of pure appetite. You are the python and American culture is the pig in your belly."

"Your generation is in charge from here on out. Not the government mafia, and all governments are mafias. The American mafia is the best because it gives more for our money, but both political parties are families of that same mafia. On one hand you have the Democrats, who are genuinely stupid. They think America's problems can all be solved from Washington, DC. At the same time, Democrats tend to be kind of nice people. But the Republicans understand mafia power is about fear. They are a bunch of mean repressive motherfuckers and always have been."

"You are the hottest, sexiest, most empowered generation ever. You're in charge of your own evolution now that we've deciphered the DNA code. The future is going to be different. You can't be bought off because there are just too many of you. You can make the world into anything you want. Open up the all the world's future possibilities. So you should go for it!"

Obviously we didn't. But it was a tall order to start with.

In retrospect, I would have liked to have stirred more discussion of personal freedom and authoritarianism between Liddy and Leary who, after all, personified the giant struggle between the authoritarian state and sixties-style self-realization. How

did these philosophical and ideological enemies accommodate their ultra-serious differences? We often hear, historically, about enemies able to call a temporary truce, which of course gives us valuable insight into the nature of warfare. What are the mechanics of such a truce, however brief? Here were two modern men, a microcosmic example in the persons of Liddy and Leary. But this wasn't Truman against Stalin or Caesar against Pompey. They were simply ambitious men who overshot their expectations and found themselves to be serving as symbolic gladiators over an immensely important issue in the media coliseum, but there only for the amusement, revulsion and/or adulation of the throng. And their success or failure depended upon the persona they created and sustained.

Death by digitized celebrity

The effect of stardom and electronic immortality on these two men was apparent. I'd seen it in dozens of rock stars and as many movie actors and artists (an interview with Warhol comes to mind, but then, media's hyper-superficiality was the point of his art). But to what extent was the authenticity of Leary's and Liddy's respective messages corrupted by their clear addiction to celebrity? Well, not much in Liddy's case because he later chose to go into the entertainment business, and why not? There is a certain kind of honesty in a convicted felon, a burglar to be exact, making a legitimate living doing what he is truly best at — radio comedy for jock commuters.

Leary's predictions in particular keep haunting me because they have proven true, even after his death and despite decades of media portrayal of him as LSD Outlaw Fool. Are other valuable, inspired insights from brilliant people today being similarly trivialized? Probably. But they can no longer gain entry to the now closed system corporate media. Otherwise, Stan Goff would be among network television's chief commentators on the war in Iraq and all things military and covert. Paul Craig Roberts would be anchoring television discussions of American domestic political policy, or at least replacing the soothing artificially thoughtful news analysis of NPR's Daniel Schor, and Paul Krassner would be where Al Franken is today. Amy Goodman is the genuine article, but she's relegated to the outer rings of planet media, which the American Internet left deludes itself into believing is closer to the center. I'd love to see her put her foot up Katie Couric's ass and say, "Now hand me

the mike, bitch!” It’d be nice, wouldn’t it? But, believe me or don’t believe me, most Americans have never heard of any of the truth-speaking people above, so let’s not bullshit ourselves that we have a real voice in media. Yet. For the time being, we still have what superstate capitalism allows us to have a voice on the Internet, and Pacifica Radio (god bless their freedom loving hearts) — that Mediterranean Avenue on the Monopoly board of the airwaves. All the hot properties remain dedicated to what will sell buckets of fried chicken to 300 pound people taught never to question authority.

As I walked out the front door of the Boulderado, I had no idea that Leary’s comments on the cult of authority’s war on individual freedom and the future importance of computers was the closest thing to political prophesy I’d ever hear. I stopped under a streetlight and jotted down their words merely because they sounded cool. By next morning however, there was an epiphany afoot. There was that electro-metallic tang of truth stinging the mind, the kind that only someone who has taken lots of LSD toward good purpose can perceive.

It was then I began vaguely to understand the Twentieth Century’s new hyper-simulacran media-made man — the electronic, digital equivalent of Biblical transfiguration into something beyond the flesh. And how celebrity of any kind was becoming the new sainthood in the all pervading, overarching media holograph that now constitutes this civilization’s temple.

Here were men whose televised infamy transformed them into brain consumable electronic entities, condemned (or canonized) to play their assigned roles forever. Once electrocuted by a certain voltage of fame, once a person is atomized through the cathode ray tube into the ether of true celebrity, consumed as a host administered to the masses through television, there seems to be no recovery, no return. I’ve since watched the phenomena in dozens of celebrities from Madonna to Brad Pitt to Bill Clinton. They come to believe their own publicity because they are publicity. Some just have more power. For a brilliant gonzo writer or an explorer of personal freedom through consciousness, it is bad enough. But for politicians, whose sole occupation is obtaining and maintaining authority, it is nearly always fatal to the soul.

Such men are sentenced, or sentence

themselves, to a life of the most extremely symbolic public performance. Then too, we all now live a life of performance. But on the far more dismal stage of the global economic system. We perform for a faceless audience of corporate managers and a handful of big investors, with advertisers casting our roles in the consumer state. The python has consumed and digested America and shit out what we see around us today. It now unhinges its jaws so as to swallow the world.

Pogo and the Dark Prince


Thompson was anarchistic, with a dark yet hilarious sense of American folly and extreme dislike of authority. It was the darkness that got him. He started out as a sports writer and ended up as one. He had no magical insight, but he had unerring instincts, that golden gut, and was the heavyweight champ when it came to punching words into an expression of the America he saw and felt around him. He still wears the title belt.

Almost at the other end of the spectrum stood Leary, whose belief in “the enlightened spirit of philosophical levity” was anything but dark, at least as he presented it to the world. His messianic act (much of which, like his stand-up philosopher routine, was a spoof that the press never quite got) but Leary’s authentic pioneering of pure consciousness itself — the raw stuff of self liberation — is still remembered and admired by those of us who experienced it first hand. Not to mention a handful of young but more alienated generation of countercultural consciousness explorers. Discredited to the broad public from the beginning, he remains. Despite 30 years of neoconservative foundations’ efforts to cast Leary as the antichrist, he remains. The most recent discrediting comes in a very well written book cataloguing each and all of his worst mistakes and character faults in excruciating detail — yet curiously avoiding any attempt to explain the source of his worldwide charisma in proselytizing LSD. Some truths are too risky for publishers in our security state’s Good German consumer market. And one of them is that LSD anarchizes the brain, creates brotherhood and sisterhood and a deep sense of awe for the natural things of this earth — dangerous concepts in a nation making war both on Middle Eastern children and nature itself. To be sure, Leary was an inconsistent fuck-up by Middle American standards, and a hopeless narcissist too; but hell, those are now considered qualifications for the presidency and its entire cabinet.

Thompson and Leary and even Liddy may be counted among what we like to call “complex” men — which in America means any self-contradicting person who can maintain the appearance of authority and confidence, and has a vocabulary of more than 400 words. Unless he or she is a true artist, in which case they must offer public demonstrations of pathos and self-abuse or, better yet, commit suicide, thereby obtaining the mantle of complexity in their obituary. But mainly it comes down to confusing the Calvinist Capitalist template of the American mind. We are lucky that the template historically has had enough cracks in it to allow a few contradictory wild, untamed rebels to slip through, made some of us receptive to guys like HST and Leary, or for that matter, Lenny Bruce and Little Richard.

Obviously, I retain a special affection for Uncle Tim. If any of these men could legitimately be called complex, it is probably Leary. A brilliant scientist, he was often reviled by traditional scientists, whom he called “arrogant motherfuckers who deny their role in the military industrial complex’s manipulation of the American people.” Leary rejected what he called the “grim Newtonian mechanics of objective fact” for the “free flowing quantum physics approach to consciousness” that the changing, not the static, governs consciousness and the outcome of the world. “Understanding this even intuitively,” he said, makes people unmanageable by agents of the criminal government syndicate that runs and ruins America.” That sort of talk was why Nixon called him “the most dangerous man in America.”

If God really is an authoritarian prison warden of mankind, Leary and Thompson are hanging from their tongues on hooks somewhere in hell. And if not, then they are basking in the glow of that 40-foot rainbow pussy. Meanwhile, a few old beatnik and hippy coots still understand how arbitrary even the most deeply held concepts of reality are. It’s like the old cliché about jazz, “You either you get it or you don’t.”

Having inspired much refection, not to mention tomfoolery, in countless men, Old Granddad counsels wisely: “There’s such a thing as going on too long about anything, son. Day’s a breaking. Now go the hell to bed.” 

This essay is dedicated to Gypsy Joe Hess (1919-1988).

NEED SIGNS? 875-1111

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Michael Gildea

License to Wed



Watching the trailer for *License to Wed* left me feeling like I'd just been hit by a wrecking ball. You've got Robin Williams acting like he's been living off eightballs for the last three days, Mandy Moore and a few guys from *The Office* in some comedy about engagement evolving into marriage. Seriously sick shit.

One of The Office Guys and Moore are getting married and because she's some kind of corn-fed bible thumper they've got to go through some kind of twisted pre-marriage couples therapy crap. The contractually-bound Williams and some kind of troll child have them going through a traumatic chain of horrific experiences before Williams will give his blessing and So What?

Some other great and what promise to be forgettable elements are Office Guy's Token Black Friend he can have a discussion and drink a brewski with when the no sex before marriage rule turns his nuts into basketballs. To make matters worse, Williams seems like some senile before his time priest who seems to treat religion like some kind of spectator sport—which it is, but who cares about a game show host fueled on speed and dressed in a collar? Then we've got some twisted robot baby things. If I was putting this trailer together I would've started playing Godflesh's *Streetcleaner* album when those things came on. They were out of *Village of the Damned* or something.

Williams is clearly having fun bashing Catholicism, the Office guys are pretty

Transformers



Optimus Prime: addicted to foreign oil

Yeah, I'll give Michael Bay this much—the guy is good. He could sell bibles to Jesus. Two summers ago, he rehashed *Logan's Run* and pretty much the only reason anyone went to see it was because

Scarlet Johansson went blonde, and regardless of your feelings about the woman, those feeders could talk you into getting run over by a bus. I saw it and it sucked. It had half a brain and was interesting at a few points, but it mainly sucked. And it made me hungry.

Now Bay's made a live-action version of every aging male's childhood favorite cartoon, *Transformers*. For some reason (probably "I Love the '80s") they're cool again and someone's got to cash in on it.

We see meteors crashing all over the place and cars turning into robots, helicopter robots fucking up the Army and some boring human interest shit. I challenge you to find me JUST ONE person who wants to see this for any reason other than seeing what the Transformers look like and to see some serious giant robot fighting. You didn't care about Spike and Sparkplug when you were ten and you're certainly not going to start now that real people are playing them.

The effects look neat and you know better than to actually expect it to be good if Bay's name is anywhere near it. I'm expecting *The Day After Tomorrow* with zero street cred and better action and effects. And the best part is that Dane Cook has nothing whatsoever to do with this movie. In this day and age, that counts for something.

funny and Mandy Moore isn't hypnotic enough to go see *License to Wed*, but she's not too bad a perk, even though she's been tainted by Zach Braff. Those three things are all this movie comes down to.

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix



"Is that a magic wand in your pocket?"

All right! We're past the foreplay and all the kiddie shit that came with the first four *Harry Potter* movies and we're finally at the meat of things! I was getting so sick of the childish aspects of the first four chapters of the *Harry Potter* series and now we're

finally at the darkness and dirtiness of it all! This is where people start getting killed and shit starts getting creepy.

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire ended with Voldemort taking physical form and promising The End Of All Things for Hogwarts. (Look, I fucked up somewhere along the line and I somehow know the names of all these people and places in the *Harry Potter* series. But I never read a book, I swear!)

The school doesn't know about Harry's encounter with Voldemort and no one believes him. Voldemort's getting ready to strike and it's up to Potter and his fellow students to fight him off. Gary Oldman appears to actually star in this one and I'm pretty sure I saw Helena Bonham-Carter in there somewhere. It looks way scarier than the other ones. There's going to be people running around with railroad ties through their heads! People on fire screeching the Latin alphabet in drag! Amway representatives on fire attacking schoolchildren with dildos and harsh language!

That and there's really nothing else this summer I want to see anyway. Plus this one will probably push My Old Man to that psychotic break that only these movies can. If what I hear about this

movie is true the cops are going to cross three states chasing him. This might be better than the time he took me to see *Caddyshack* when I was five! *Five!*

Hairspray



Just like the original - only far worse!

Watching the trailer for *Hairspray* reminded me of hearing about how roaches scatter when you turn the lights on. I've never actually seen it firsthand but imagery my mind conjures is not entirely unlike the trailer for *Hairspray*. I saw so many things wrong with it that I didn't know what to take down first.

The fact that a John Waters movie is being remade definitely sprang to mind. An uggo dancing for a couple hours definitely did as well. Travolta in drag playing the Divine role and sacrificing Christopher Walken to The God of Respectability were also gruesome. But seeing that High School Musical wet spot Zac Efron was probably the one that ironically gave me the dry heaves at the end. I'm sure some gangly midget of a teenager or a future bulimia victim will claim to get pregnant during this movie because of that fact. Michelle Pfeiffer mugging the Debbie Harry role was insult to injury I'll tell you.

KINO KLEE-SHAY LEGEND



Anglophilia



Mind Fuck



Noble Retard



Evil Genius



Super Models
Grapple with Moral
Ambiguities



Ordinary Person
Pushed too Far



Impossible Science



Glorification of Law
Enforcement Bodies



Chick Flick



Special Effects
Circle Jerk



Washed up Hero
gets Second
Chance at Glory



Stockholm
Syndrome
Romance



Wisecracking
Cartoon Animal



Gratuitous Christ
Imagery



Vampires/
Wizardry as
gay/AIDS
Metaphor



Simplistic Epiphany



Crappy Remake



Likable Thug

The whole trailer plays out like a bad musical, then Queen Latifah shows up with a wig and I'm ready to pass out. Aside from Travolta, who is either in some twisted variation of a fat suit or really went to hell, I don't see anything that even alludes to John Waters' original twisted style and character—which made the movie. They're probably going to use this movie as a before poster for the Ricki Lake chick, then they'll feed her a lot of speed then make an after poster in a year when she's skinny and has lost her lunch ladies. That's all I got.

Sunshine



This photo doesn't lend itself well to humorous captions

This looks like *The Black Hole* without the robots. Remember the two flying R2-D2 rip-offs and the also-flying red Darth Vader one? Yeah, I think that's what's going on here. A group of scientists flying to the sun to keep it from dying.

Danny Boyle, who made *Trainspotting* and *28 Days Later* (the trailer reminds us) takes us on a space ship where a lot of yelling and falling happen. A lot of fire too! Lotta fire. It just looks like a director who used to do a lot of cool movies discovered CGI. There's a high level of complacency that drenches *Sunshine*. This is like *Polite English Cousin of Solaris*.

If you're at a high-functioning or better level with your ADD, you won't have any idea what's going on in this series of split-second shots highlighting what seems to be a lightshow with physical comedy. It stars Cillian Murphy from *28 Days Later* and *Batman Begins* and I like him because he could probably steal any hipster's girlfriend right out from under his nose. *But can he save the Earth?*

I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry



Kevin James: not as appealing without Leah Remini's tits nearby

I was tempted just to write the words *squirm squirm squirm* and leave it at that when it came to *I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry*. But I knew it wasn't Adam Sandler pretending to play grab ass with that Chris Farley wannabe Kevin James that bugged me, but this is just a loosely disguised *Some Like It Hot*. Sandler plays Tony Curtis, Jessica Biel plays Marilyn Monroe and James plays Jack Lemmon. Instead of cross dressers in a jazz band they're posing as gay firefighters to save James' pension.

Biel looks finer than frog hair as the lawyer helping Sandler and James prepare for the predictable investigation into the credibility of their marriage and she actually makes me want to watch this on cable. Watching an Adam Sandler movie is like staring into the sun for me lately. On a scale of badness, it's like watching *7th Heaven*. Seriously, Jessica Biel? *7th Heaven*?

I Know Who Killed Me



Lohan finds time between drunk driving incidents to churn out a terrible film

Sometimes when I'm at a bad movie I like to start making barnyard animal and fart noises. I might act like my foot's in a bear trap if the movie's bad enough or I'm bored enough. Boredom and disbelief turn me into a real prick sometimes.

But it's that goddamned Lindsay Lohan. I'm sick of hearing about her and I'm getting sick of looking at her. Admittedly there was a time where I would've checked myself in for admitting to the latter, but she's turning into the daughter of Robert Redford or Leatherface. If she stopped tanning, gained a little weight, went to school and disappeared out of the spotlight for five years she might survive.

But because she will have turned a mere 21 years old by the time you read this, Lohan is dumb as a bowl of mice and is going to end up turning into somebody's skid-mark or own personal spittoon by the time she's 25. With that said, we're left with *I Know Who Killed Me*, an attempt on Lohan's part to move toward adult fare instead of something with the name *Disney* branded into it.

The clichéd Massive Attack song that opens *I Know Who Killed Me*'s trailer spells doom immediately. Then Lohan's some kind of bohemian writer with a bad dye job who's writing some alter-ego nonsense for her English class. She's presumed kidnapped and disappears for a couple weeks before turning up thinking she's someone else. I think she turns to stripping and her douchey boyfriend has to win her back all over again or something. Mistaken identity, murder cases, and Lohan turning into her own character she's writing (gasp!!!) make me want to see this when I need a break from shopping! I'll watch it on cable someday if Lohan gets naked but that's about it.

No Reservations



-Actual dialogue from *No Reservations*

I heard that shit and I woke the whole house up I was laughing so hard. I still am. Give me a minute. A *cookbook for life*. That's great. That is so great. Sorry.

Catherine Zeta-Jones plays a quirky head chef at a pretentious Manhattan restaurant who's left in charge of the care of her niece after her sister dies. She can't relate to kids, but fortunately the new sauce guy (I'm not using the term *sous-chef*) played by Aaron Eckhart is a free spirit who gets along with kids and has a shaggy haircut. Zeta-Jones lets her guard down and gives up her control freak ways while finding what her life's been missing--love.



Get it? Like, reservations about each other and they're chefs - oh god

"I wish there was a cookbook for life."

"You know better than anyone—it's the recipes you create yourself that are the best."

YEAH!!!! SUCK IT NO RESERVATIONS!!! I CAN GIVE AS GOOD AS I GET, YOU SON OF A BITCH!!! YOU WANT TO THROW THIS LILITH FAIR SOUNDTRACK AT ME WHILE WE SLING MUD AT EACH OTHER? YOU GO RIGHT AHEAD!!! THESE FISH AREN'T BITING!!!

Oh Jesus, I'm so sorry. That *recipes you create for yourself* line just did me in.

Jesus, I'm still... still laughing over here. I mean there's that, then there's Aaron Eckhart's hair. It's like stoner Bon Jovi or something. Shit man, this might be the big one. *No Reservations* just might be the one that does me in. And HD is not kind to Catherine Zeta-Jones. No, sir...

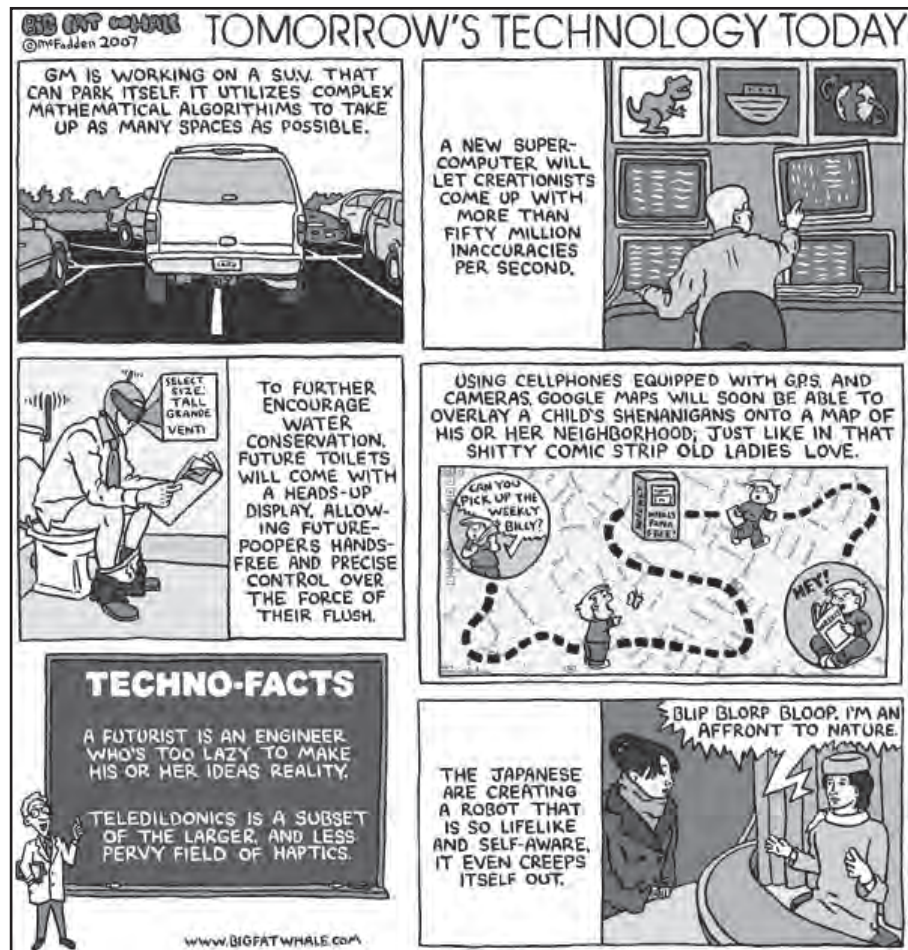
The Simpsons Movie



And only 10 years too late

I fell into a Simpsons rut a few years back. I kept seeing the same dozen episodes over and over, only the lame seasons were available on DVD and I didn't care enough anyway. I've always liked *The Simpsons* but never really in a megalomaniacal way. But now I don't even really have the energy to care about a movie.

I don't know if *The Simpsons Movie* ties into the series and the trailer didn't even really say what was going on. All I saw was a series of what appeared to be show clips linked together. Funny moments, random moments—all that the show has turned into as of late. It seemed to almost vow to work any character that's ever been on the show into the movie. I don't know what to tell you. It just looks like a really epic episode of *The Simpsons*. You're either going to see it or you're not. They should have made this thing like, seven or eight years ago at least.





Longhorned



Some college-football positions just seem to be cursed, arrest-wise: Florida State wideout, Miami linebacker, Ohio State . . . well, pretty much any position from Ohio State. Now we may be inching closer to a new tradition in Austin, with yet another Longhorn running back lining up for a mug shot.

Texas has had some problems in recent years with dumbass high-profile backs, such as Cedric Benson and Ramonce Taylor, who each had brushes with the law during their college careers. Keep your eyes on “Blotter” star-in-the-making Henry Melton. Vince Young nicknamed Melton “Hemi,” because he plows over everything — and now perhaps because he drives one under the influence.

According to police reports, Melton, who is underage, failed a field sobriety test and was “insulting” to the arresting officer. Two questions arise from this incident: 1) what position will Melton play this coming season (Texas coach Mack Brown moved the 6’3”, 270-pound Melton to defensive end after he rushed for 432 yards this past year, but Melton is still listed as a running back on the roster), and 2) will this arrest get him

suspended? The standard punishment in the Big Ten for this kind of thing is a one-game suspension, but Coach Brown is pretty thin on the line this year, so you never know.

Meanwhile, Melton follows in the not-so-great tradition of Tarrell Brown, Tyrell Gatewood, Taylor, Aaron Harris . . . what is it about Longhorns and routine traffic stops? Dudes, take the bus!

Recruiting blues



You know those investigative services that do background checks on Internet dates, just to make sure they aren’t, say, convicted cattle molesters (rather than the orchestra conductors they claimed to be)? Well, they may need to get one of those services for college-sports recruiters soon, as yet another case emerges of a star recruit who seemed to be a model citizen but had a criminal record.

Boston-area sports fans may recall Travis George, a onetime Boston-area hoop star who, before he was 15, was already being tabbed the “next T-Mac.” George moved across the country, making stops along the infamous “basketball prep school” circuit in North Carolina and at

Philadelphia’s Lutheran Christian and Rise Academies. By the time he was a senior, he had passed only “sheet metal and health education” courses, but somehow ended up, without a diploma, on the roster of Eastern Arizona College. And things were going fine there — until he was arrested for an on-court brawl. Local Arizona law enforcement then discovered that George had an outstanding warrant for “indecent assault and battery upon a child older than 14” back in Massachusetts. He was extradited to Quincy and the EAC roster was never the same.

Now we have a similar case in Kansas. Robert Anthony Grant, 22, was on the Fort Hays State University team roster this past year, started 19 games, and averaged 7.8 points. But school officials recently discovered that Grant was a fugitive from community supervision back in Washington, where he had played for Washington State University. Turns out Grant had a drug conviction in King County, Washington, and had been ordered into a structured-supervision deal, only to flee the arrangement and transfer to FHSU.

Just like the George case, Grant was found out by authorities only after he was involved in a brawl — in this case, outside a bar near campus. Local officials spotted the fugitive tag and alerted school officials, who apparently already knew and had kicked him off the team.

Neither charge appears to be all that serious, and officials are adopting a wait-and-see approach to Grant's possible extradition. This looks like a nonviolent drug charge and vague drunken belligerence. Give him a mere six points.

Another perverted coach



Another nomination for ballsy line of the year, this one from a soon-to-be former assistant women's volleyball coach at Central Michigan University. William Christopher Dewar was busted this past week for looking at ladies through windows. He was nabbed by a street patrolman at 11:30 in a quiet residential neighborhood and charged with "surveilling an unclothed person," a two-year felony in Michigan under a new statute. (The lesser charge of "window peeping" in that state is, believe it or not, only a 90-day misdemeanor.)

Before he went to CMU, Dewar had been a volunteer assistant women's volleyball coach at UCLA and Northwestern. Despite his long history of working closely with female athletes — often on a volunteer basis — and having apparently admitted to peeping since at least February, Dewar has insisted that his peeping "did not spill over into his professional life."

The bust comes just after Florida A&M basketball coach Mike Gillespie was arrested for stalking. Give them both 38 points.

Put up yer Dukes



Class act Elijah Dukes has at least five kids by at least four different women. And the 22-year-old Tampa Bay Devil Rays outfielder has been taken to court by all four women, who are seeking child support (successfully, it turns out). Even more disturbing, he has terrorized at least two of the women, one of whom has the dubious honor of calling him her husband — at least for now. She's filing for divorce following his latest outburst.


In light of his wife's request for a restraining order this past week, Dukes has officially landed himself the title of the next great Sports Crime Superstar, a position previously held by the likes of Maurice Clarett, Lawrence Phillips, and Cecil "the Diesel" Collins. Like all three of those men, Dukes is a supremely talented young athlete who's been repeatedly promoted in spite of serious character transgressions — many of which involved violence against women. Over the years, he's been accused of throwing a remote control at his wife, making threatening phone calls to his wife, throwing a soda can at his wife, throwing a glass candy bowl at his wife, and ripping a phone out of the wall while his wife tried to call 911; he has also been arrested on an unspecified domestic battery charge and twice been hit with orders of protection, by two different mothers of his children.

His still-brief career is similarly littered by many sports-crime standard

















offenses: pointless and violent on-field confrontations with minor-league teammates, routine traffic stops gone horribly wrong, ancillary weed charges, and "You can't arrest me, I play pro ball" comments of the Gilbert Arenas school. (Dukes is much less congenial than the witty Arenas; he's allegedly said that, because he plays baseball, "No one can fuck with me.") About the only things missing from that list are a bar fight, a naked coke bust of the Otis Nixon genus, and a Stephen Jackson-esque gun/strip-club arrest. But again, the kid is still young. And unlike Clarett, Phillips, or Collins, Dukes has already proven he can play in The Show. He currently has nine homers, which puts him in the lead among American League rookies.

Still, he may be in serious legal trouble again soon. According to his wife, Dukes threatened her and her kids by sending a photo of his gun to her cell phone (whether it's true or not, this idea wreaks of a pioneering form of abuse we'll probably see more of in the near future) and leaving her a message on her cell phone that said, "You dead, dawg. I ain't even bullshitting. Your kids, too, dawg."

The rest of that message allegedly went as follows: "It don't even matter to me who is in the car with you. Nigger, all I know is, nigger, when I see your motherfucking ass riding, dawg, it's on. As a matter of fact, I'm coming to your motherfucking house."

Anyone want to bet that this kid won't be on the cover of the Devil Rays' media guide next year? I didn't think so. Give Dukes 81.5 points, which puts him up to 82. He already got a half a point for the weed bust earlier this year.. 

Sports Blotter Legend

 Exotic Dancer/ Hooker	 X-treme DUI	 Performance enhancing "vitamins"	 Open container of alcohol
 Cloying/ Agent-drafted public apology	 "Disagreement" in parking lot	 Subdued via taser	 Rape/Sexual assault
 Unregistered handgun	 Those drugs belong to my brother/cousin/someguy	 Frantic spousal 911 call	 Stats cheerily recited after AP report
 Big-ass SUV	 Incident involving "baby momma"	 Burglary/theft	 No contest plea

JOCK CRIME LEADERBOARD

STEVE SWINDAL (YANKEES) | DUI | 98
 RON ARTEST (KINGS) | starving Socks, domestic violence, intimidation | 95
 PACMAN JONES (TITANS) | TBA | 90
 CURLY-HAIRED BOYFRIEND (GLOBE) | being a dick and, worse, a bore who can't write | 90
 ELIJAH DUKES (D-RAYS) | stalking, threats, weed, multiple busts, being a dick | 82
 TOM PARROS (RETIRED, RAIDERS) | creepy teen sex assault | 80
 JULIO MATEO (MARINERS) | punching, biting wife | 80
 RICHARD SEIGLER (STEELERS) | pimping | 79
 MURIETTA JOCKS (MURIETTA FIGHT CLUB) | various | 75
 A.J. NICHOLSON (BENGALS) | hitting girlfriend, inducing her to say she hit herself | 69
 TONE TAUPULE (U OF IDAHO) | pistol-whipping, armed robbery | 62
 JUSTIN MILLER (JETS) | accidental girl-punching, getting caught on foot by cops | 50

FILM FLAM

Um...how come you dont write reviews AFTER you've seen the movie anymore? You speculate on how the movie's going to be and then call it a review. That's not a review. I always liked your critiques of movies. Is it just because I'm reading the online version and by the time the press hits you'll have written a full review? Or am I just retarded?
Luke

Dear Luke,
You're assuming Gildea ever actually saw the movies he reviewed before.

I MADE UP A GUY WHO RULES THE UNIVERSE

I love my God. I hate organized religion. I have heard it said "it's not God I have a problem with, it's his fan club."
Tommy

Dear Tommy,
We've also heard it said, "People who make up stuff and then decide to believe it are weak-minded children." In fact we just heard that a minute ago, coming out of our mouths.

NOT JUST HEAT...

From a honest taxpayer, prior service member, FUCK YOU you useless piece of crap [*"The BEAST Last Minute Tax Guide & Civil Disobedience Primer," 115*]. I assume you are on welfare and food stamps as well. Is there anything else I can give you for free, shitheat?
Mark Lukow

Dear Mark,
Uh, sure... Do you have any daughters?

STOSSEL THE COLOSSAL

Hi Great article on John Stossel!!!
I have seen the same progression in him over the years that you have. Then again I have seen the same progression in ABC news. Sadly enough. I can not watch Stossel anymore, I saw the report you comment on, but shut him off after one segment. The irony is, that ABC's 20/20 started at the big slide from the heights of the Oil orgy and subsequent Corporate coup as "America held Hostage Day 444." It is no surprise really that Disney has mirrored this evolution. I remember gas prices shooting up from 60 cents to \$1.40. We are that that same crossroads. Will we make the same mistake again and put our fate in the hands the outsourcers?
BB NewYork

Dear BB,
Yes. Yes we will. Already have. Aren't you paying attention?



NOW 50% LESS MOTIVATED

WTF! is the Beast now a Quarterly Journal? You guys get paid to huff paint thinner and rant about the subsequent paranoid hallucinations. The least you could do is put your issues out more or less on time. Please! It's not like i'm asking you to leave your filthy semen-encrusted swivel chairs and do some actual investigative reporting or anything like that. Just pour out some mindless bile every other week I'll be happy. Did you all decide to renounce your bitter nihilism and apply for jobs at Artvoice?
Jacob Hammerslag

Dear Jacob,
No, we just got more lazy. If you have a problem with that, we suggest you pay us to give a shit.

QUEEN ANN'S LICE

Dear Mr Fellon,
for the quote that the reason for the existence of 'Time' and 'Newsweek', is to reassure, "mildly intelligent citizens that American politics still makes sense," I say thanks, and I doff my cap, cheers [*"In defense of Ann Coulter," 115*]! These rolls of toilet-paper deserve all the shit anyone can heap upon them, and their 'balanced' shite reporting. I mean, who the hell would take a paper seriously that gives Charles Krauthammer a podium.

Ann is of course the vile tart you make her out to be, but she is at least an honest (if I can use the word, 'honest' for such a scurrolous bint)fascist.

Anna Quindlen is to me at least, a peculiarly American animal. This type would shake the President's hand because his 'office' deserves respect; right? This is just fucking crazy. If he's a shit, treat him as one. If I ever got to the Oval Office I would hope to NATURE that I would have the balls to have a dump on his desk.

Anna Quindlen, and her ilk are the arbiters of political idiocy. Don't they understand it is a simple game of them and us, that decency and politics make strange bedfellows, that Wolfowitz will hang on to the 'lie' more seriously than Blair to Bush.

Anyway, fuck Ann! And I don't of course mean 'fuck Ann', you'd have to be blind, or desperate, probably both to fuck that 46 year old female impersonator. Seriously, I've seen more convincing women in a Sydney 'female impersonating' chorus line; Ann is one weird looking, 'human growth hormone injecting' individual.
Rob.

Dear Rob,
We doubt that the editors of Time would actually give the wheelchair-bound Krauthammer a podium. They're just not that funny.

NO CUTS

Actually thought you were a little easy on Ann. Quinlan that is. The line to bash the Queen of Slime, Coulter, forms on the right, and appropriately snakes on down to the left there to be smothered with over starched hair shirts and boiled in no trans fat oil, for ever and ever amen.
Tim Shea

Dear Tim,
You need to work on your subject-verb agreement.

PEEVED BS

Bush is also planning on cutting 2 billion in funding that Congress passed last year regarding public broadcasting (PBS and public radio) to which 4 billion, I believe, was previously awarded [*"The Britney Budget," 114*].

I petitioned and sent it everywhere and the only one who answered me back was Congressman Higgins.
Susan Marie

Dear Susan,
Higgins just can't get enough of that Antiques Roadshow.

NO YOU'RE NOT

Mr. Ian Murphy,
I am praying for you! [*"Jesus Christ! People Will Believe Anything," 115*]
Lori

Dear Lori,
See, the thing is, we know that this is what profanity-inhibited Jesus freaks like you say when you really want to kick our teeth in and set us on fire. But remember, Lori, God can read your mind. He's listening to your thoughts, and trying to cover those thoughts up by "praying" for Murphy only compounds your sinful nature. You're going to hell, Lori. Pray for yourself.

WELL PUT

hey beau fleuve

i just had a conversation with an english teacher who doesnt know who Norman Mailer is. He has never heard of Ginsbergs "Howl." i actually had to write "ginsbergs 'howl'" there, lest your readers think that i think that they think that i think that mailer wrote howl.

cmon who needs conspiracies in a nation full of crappies and fucking retards. in fact, you are a bo-tard.

voince o'whora

*Dear Vonce,
Your English teacher may be ignorant when it comes to 20th century American lit, but we bet he knows how to capitalize and use apostrophes. Well, capitalize anyway. Nobody knows how to use apostrophes anymore. Don't get us started on semicolons. By the way, if we're bo-tards, what does that make you, complaining about retards to us? A bo-tard's bo-tard?*

CHOMSKY OR CHIMPY?

Dear Evil Publisher
Taibbi wonders why humiliation of US presidential candidates by the forth estate is a routine part of the political process ["Trail of Tiers," 116]:

"There must be something to it -- it must be beneficial to the American power apparatus somehow to demean the individuals who seek to occupy its highest offices. Maybe it's because while dignified human beings are unpredictable, an old turned-out whore can be counted on to do anything for forty bucks -- and these are the kinds of people we need in the White House. Who knows what it is."

Of course, more generally, what is really being ridiculed and trivialised is democracy. But why? The only sensible answer I've come accross is given by Noam Chomsky. In his view, the powers that be don't want "the people" to participate in the political process, in other words, they don't want democracy to work. A weak democracy ensures the primacy of private power.

The benefit to the American power apparatus provided by its constant mockery of democratic institutions is a failed democracy.

This does not do great justice to Chomsky's arguments on the point, but I think I've got the guts of it.
- Norpois

*Dear Norpois,
Could be. Or maybe Americans are just so amazingly stupid, their priorities so incredibly screwed up, and their concepts of governmental logistics so impossibly vague, that they demand such idiotic coverage because it's the only thing they understand.*

Maybe the press doesn't make the people stupid, but vice versa. After all, these people still think what the country needs is more Reagan.

NOT A REGULAR READER

For the most part, I agree with the article, but am curious as to whether Mr. Taibbi considers the use of bullshit, as purveyed by Obama, a systematic necessity to even have a chance at becoming president? I'd appreciate a response. Thanks

Greg Westneat

*Dear Greg,
Yes. We're fairly certain he does.*

IT BEGINS

Monkey did not leave an email so I'm sending this to you as Evil Editor in Chief.

A. Monkey totally missed the boat on Buddhism in his piece on Sam Harris. He seems to imply that Buddhists worship Buddha as a God. Not so. Buddha was just another human being. He worked hard to find the truth about existence, and he shared that truth with others. His path is worth emulating, but there is no worship involved.

This is a major mistake by A. Monkey. This kind of thing brings down the credibility of your fine rag. Even if you make a sarcastic response, I know that your integrity means a lot to you guys. I would pay a close eye to Monkey from now on.
Thanks.

D Goddard
Williamsville NY

*Dear D,
Frankly, you don't seem to understand common Buddhism at all, so you'll understand if we don't seem too upset. But yeah, we're REAL concerned, like, a WHOLE LOT.*

ATHEIST BUDDHIST OUTRAGE

Monkey:
Buddha is a "god" ?
Buddhism is non-deist.

You misrepresent Mr. Harris then attack the misrepresentation.

Prayer in the more esoteric Christian tradition is very similar to meditation, and would likely show the same physiological benefits.

Prayer as commonly practiced in christianity i.e. "Dear God, please make 2 plus 2 equal to five for my personal benefit "
Not so much.

Mr Harris' point about torture, as I understand it, is that we can't cluster bomb civilians from 30,000 feet and then claim any kind of moral high ground on the issue.

Your understanding of said point, I find severely lacking.

While I and others are a bit uncomfortable with "The End of Faith"'s comments on Islam, it is hard to argue for moral relativism in regard to the potential societal harm in assessing the major faiths.

You sign your screed anonymously and yet demand my name to comment.

Merrill Clark

*Dear Merrill,
You could have typed anything you want, you know. You could have typed "Person who doesn't realize many Buddhists do deify the Buddha," for instance, and that's the way it would have read on the e-mail. Just so you know.*

FER IT, NOT AGIN IT

I read Harris' book The End of Faith and was thrilled that someone in the USA was willing to take on religion. Then I read the second half and became disenchanted on his support for Israeli government policies, torture, etc. And of course there was the endorsement by Dershowitz that was unsettling. I wondered if the book was written to draw support from atheists to the Israeli cause. Needless to say, I was disappointed in the book and agree with your analysis.

Tom Barcus

*Dear Tom,
The Almighty Buddha will strike you down with his amazing clapping hand!*

GODS, DEITIES, ENLIGHTENED ONE-SHAPED BUTT PLUGS

PEOPLE! Buddha is NOT a God. Zen has no God but two other branches of Buddhism do have reformed to have higher powers.

The Hindus also do not have a GOD. They have multiple deities. And on and on....

Thom Prentice

A monkey responds: Sorry Thom, I slipped. I meant to say that it's a tricky thing, the taxonomy of holy figures. The Buddha is a god to some, and a deity to others. To me he's a cheap, cone-shaped plastic figurine they put in my cage that I stick up my ass when the mood strikes me (Buddha's fat ripples work just like the ribs on any other butt plug).

KOAN ON A VITAE

I see one of your masthead signed this article "a monkey," knowing too well such asinine text wouldn't look good on the curriculum vitae.

That Harris' book sells well simply because, contra Mr. Primate, the American bookstore shelf has precious fewer countertheistic books available than, say, "Left Behind" volumes. That I am accused of reading the book because I want to torture Muslims is a direct insult to me, I who have never met or said word one previously to ol' feces-flinger.

And then you go on to apotheosize Siddhartha Gautama to a god, demonstrating that the ape in question is ignorant indeed.

jeffreydj

A Monkey shares with JeffreyDJ the Koan (a paradoxical anecdote or a riddle that has no solution; used in Zen Buddhism to show the inadequacy of logical -- Harrisian -- reasoning) he's been meditating on: Did the monkey eat a banana after he went on Myspace and read JeffreyDJ's curriculum vitae?
<http://www.myspace.com/jeffreydj>

After not coming up with a solution, I pulled the fat-rippled one out of my ass and asked the God Buddha what would be a better use of my time. He said it would be to tell the Grayson County College graduate and Director of Product Development at digiChart, Inc. in Nashville, Tennessee that if the Foo Fighters are one of his favorite bands

then he's got a lot more to worry about than his pent-up Muslim torture fantasies.

OUR NEW CEO

Maybe the best article I've read in a year, including in the Beast no less ["Battle of the Network Stars," issue 116, web only].

Seriously, it (the problem with most US media) is the priorities of the "news makers" (read multi-national corporations) which obviously directs the priorities of not just the candidates, but of the general public, making us all the more ignorant in the process.

I was very happy to see it wasn't just another well written bitch piece (media critique). There was actual news of consequence. Holy shit, fucking news. I know you're a website, and your distribution of the actual "Beast" is relatively limited, but this (as you know) is some of the best journalism in America right now.

Seriously, fucking great writing/insight. I'd ask if you would send a subscription to Taiwan, but, I'll just read it online.

So I'm guessing you want money anyway. So sell me a t-shirt or something (I'm not looking hard, but I don't see any), or a cd of Michael Gildae reading the back of a cereal box while he what? kills a live chicken? Anything. I know you may... possibly have socialist tendencies but for Christ's sake expand your product base. A book, throw together a book, the book of the Beast, there's a title, it's yours. A freaking coloring book, have a few covers you can color in, then add some lewd political cartoons to

color in. Mugs? Do you even have mugs???? C'mon on!

And maybe you do have all these things, maybe you're hoarding them, because I don't see a link on your site for them.

And the only reason I care about any of these things (other than the fact that I would probably buy something) is that Battle of the... is an excellent article and more people need to hear about such stories, but they won't not if you go out of business.

But what do I know? Maybe and I hope this is true, you don't need it as much as I think you may.

Alright.... regardless, thanks.

jon

*Dear Jon,
We'd love to sell you a subscription, but nobody gets our precious mugs!*

UNIQUE MOUTH FEEL

Excellent article, Allan Uthman. I haven't heard anyone but you and Taibbi step back from this horse race bullshit and call it what it is. It's refreshing, in a really depressing kind of way.

Aaron Hotfelder

*Dear Aaron,
Kind of like Fiji water.*



THE PERRY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP BY NICHOLAS GUREWITCH

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BEAST-O-SCOPES

As divined by Andrew Gullerstein

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)

Your time at the Doctor Phil House will not make you a better person, Cancer, but it will bring your unique brand of shittiness into millions of living rooms.

Leo (July 23 – Aug 22)

Don't be discouraged by the lack of progress in your scientific endeavors this month, Leo. Just keep telling the Bonobo that she looks pretty. Hordes of your super human-chimp hybrids will be ravaging the streets soon enough.

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sept 22)

Everybody knows you're cool, Virgo, thanks to the surly attitude you exude from your post at the Arby's drive-thru window.

Libra (Sept 23 – Oct 22)

Your penchant for cut-rate electronics will catch up with you when you realize your "O-Pod" will only play songs by Tony Orlando and Donny Osmond.

Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

Now is the time to act, Scorpio. Your savings, your car, your kid's lunch money. Put it all on red; I've got a good feeling about this.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

The bad news: Your girlfriend will leave you after discovering 80 gigabytes of hardcore pornography on your hard drive. The good news? More time to masturbate.

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

If you didn't want 3rd degree burns over 60% of your body, then you shouldn't have borrowed a pen from that serial arsonist.

Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)

I know you spent a lot on that system for your car, Aquarius, but it still just sounds like a rattling license plate to the rest of us.



Pisces (Feb 18 – Mar 20)

Your career as a Rich Little impersonator will not be as successful as you may imagine.

Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

Perhaps the most important part of trying, Aries, is learning when to give up. After numerous attempts, your "Reaganstein" project does not seem to be showing signs of life. It may be time to move on to "Nixonstein."

Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)

That Sopranos DVD box set is going to your head, Taurus. You need to stop making woppy references to supposed mob connections, because if your Uncle Guido really was an underboss, you probably wouldn't work at OfficeMax. You're just drunk and vaguely Italian, and making a total ass of yourself.

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)

I heard that you were in Japan this one time and that you were walking past a dojo and then you walked into the dojo and then since you were so fat they made you an honorary sumo wrestler at the dojo and then you became the Grand Master of sumo wrestling and you smothered all the other sumo wrestlers with your fat but then you quit 'cause it got too commercial.



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