

# The Realist

Number 100

Editor & Defendant: Paul Krassner

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**Robert Anton Wilson Covers  
The Married Priests Conception**



## **One Thing Leads to Another...**

News Item: Disneyland has quietly reversed a 28-year-old policy that prohibited partners of the same sex from dancing together in the Magic Kingdom.



## COURT JESTER

### Without Coupons

- This is to thank the Reginald A. Fessenden Fund for a loan which enabled *The Realist* to start publishing again.
- Readers of the original *Realist* can have their subscriptions extended by sending in an old address label.
- Our 'premiere' issue, #99, is available for \$2.
- *The Realist* is intended primarily for the mails, but as an experiment we're offering copies to selected bookstores (anyone who will carry it) at 50% on consignment.
- Our publishing schedule will change from bi-monthly to monthly as soon as possible. Subscriptions are figured by number of issues.
- Rates for individuals and libraries alike: 12 issues for \$23. No billing. Send your check to *The Realist*, Box 1230, Venice, Calif., 90294.
- Lifetime subs cost \$500. This means that if we stop publishing, you die.
- Editor Paul Krassner performs standup satire every Sunday night at the Wallenboyd Theater in downtown Los Angeles (reservations: 629-2205). The show, incestuously enough, is called *Return of The Realist*.

### Freedom of Fantasy

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I'm writing this so that you will see what my state of mind was when I published the illustration on the cover of this issue of *The Realist*, since I have been sued by the Disney Corporation.

In December, 1966, following the death of Walt Disney, I assigned the late Wally Wood, who was then an artist for *Mad* magazine, to create a montage of Disney characters off on a binge, now that their creator could no longer repress their collective libido. What resulted was the Disneyland Memorial Orgy as the centerfold of the May, 1967 issue of *The Realist*.

It was so well received that we made it into a poster. Attorneys at the Disney empire considered a lawsuit but decided against it. However, when the poster was pirated, they went after the distributor and won. The case was settled out of court. Meantime, as far as *The Realist* was concerned, the statute of limitations had run out.

Now I have used an outtake from those original drawings, of Goofy and Donald Duck in constructive engagement, because other artists have been afraid to parody Disney characters ever since the folks at Disneyland sued Dan O'Neill and forced him to settle out of court. The judicial system has become a threat instead of a solution.

Currently, entertainment interviewer Joe Franklin has a suit against *National Lampoon* for \$40-million because they ran a feature, "The Incredible Shrinking Joe Franklin," in which he gets smaller and smaller until he eventually gets fired for being too small. This case will never come to court, and everybody knows that, but it has already cost *Lampoon* \$25,000 in legal fees.

If Disney sues *The Realist* this time, I will not settle out of court. I will take it to trial so that you, the jury, may decide the issue. I contend that Donald Duck and Goofy are public figures, and therefore subject to caricature. I have absolutely no malice toward them. In fact, some of my best friends don't exist.

If Disney characters could be used on bombers that killed people, why not on a newsletter that makes people laugh? Nobody has been harmed or defrauded. And there is a precedent. The Pillsbury company once sued *Screw* for portraying their precious doughboy in an orgy scene, and they fell flat on their pancakes.

Disneyland does not like precedents, however. A representative said that the dropping of the prohibition against same-sex dancing was not in response to an Orange County Superior Court ruling in favor of a gay couple who had been evicted from the park after they danced together. Disneyland maintains that the ruling applied only to the plaintiffs, Andrew Exler and Shawn Elliot.

I would ask the jury to find me not guilty, precisely because this cover of *The Realist* is actually a portrait of Exler and Elliot. It was Hallowe'en and they just happened to be wearing Donald Duck and Goofy costumes.

### Inside the Comedy Industry

George Carlin recently performed at a Soldiers of Fortune convention in Las Vegas. Their explanation for hiring him: "We like his line about military intelligence being a contradiction in terms."

A warning label is now necessary at night clubs in Washington state. An officer had charged the Lacey Village Inn with violating a 50-year-old vulgarity statute by allowing a pair of comedians to perform raunchy material. As a result, the Liquor Control Board passed an amendment exempting entertainers but requiring club owners to post a notice telling patrons that the nature of the performance they are about to see could be considered offensive by some people.

At the hearing, one local comic publicly accused the cited comedy duo of stealing his act. Indeed, Steven Wright taped an HBO show, and it cost \$5,000 for insurance in case anyone sued for theft of jokes.

### The Fat and the Ugly

The Johnny Carson Generic Fat Person Cultural Reference Joke Curse has claimed yet another victim.

It started out with Kate Smith, an obese singer famed for her renditions of *God Bless America* and *When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain*. Unfortunately, she got cancer and became too scrawny.

Then came Totie Fields, a rotund comedienne who began to lose one limb after another and no longer qualified as an appropriate symbol.

Next was Cass Elliot, of the Mamas and the Papas. She choked to death on a chicken sandwich in London, and the search began again.

Elizabeth Taylor served the purpose quite well, until she dieted herself right out of the role, and saved her life in the process.

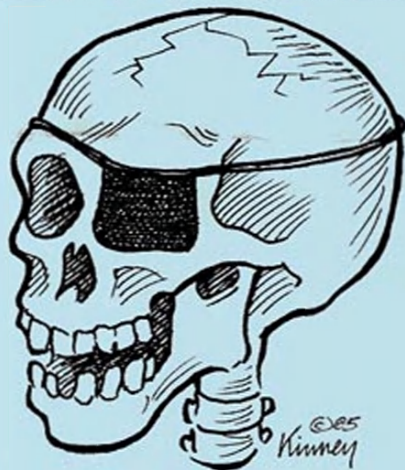
And so it came to pass that Orson Welles replaced her, only to succumb to the curse himself. There are cynics who contend that Carson put it into effect prematurely out of anger that, the evening before he died, Welles had guested on the Merv Griffin show.

Meanwhile, the competition continues in the Generic Ugly Person Cultural Reference Joke Sweepstakes. Ernest Borgnine made it into two comic strips, *B.C.* and *Sylvia*, but Yoko Ono remained on top of the charts, thanks to the unrelenting effort of Joan Rivers.

Even a newscaster, Bill Smith at KTTV in Los Angeles, dropped any pretense of objectivity or professionalism by referring sarcastically to the rock widow's attractiveness.

Well, at least that maneuvering swine, John Lennon, thought she was beautiful. Ono has been selling his drawings in order to raise money for a Lennon Museum. She is one of the wealthiest women in the world. Why couldn't she simply buy her own museum and let his artwork hang there for all to see?

Yoko Ono may not be ugly, but she sure is dumb.



A *Whole Earth Review* correspondent informs us that the pilot of the Air Force's SAC flying command post must wear an eye patch at all times so that he will have sight left in one eye should he happen to gaze at a nuclear bomb going off anywhere above the United States.



## Interview With the Family of a Terrorist

**Duffy:** Hello, my name is Jim Duffy. I'm President of the Communications Division of the American Broadcasting Company. Welcome to another segment of *American Television and You*. These programs are brought to you as a public service because we believe that viewers have a right to know the facts about how this medium works.

Tonight we're going to explore the Fairness Doctrine, a rule established by the Federal Communications Commission to insure that a variety of viewpoints are heard on issues of importance to the public. This rule requires TV stations and networks to provide everyone, even those holding extremely unpopular views, an opportunity to express those views on the air.

To help us better understand this complex concept and how it affects you, we have ABC correspondent Jeff Greenfield standing by live in Lebanon.

**Jeff:** are you there?

**Greenfield:** Yes, Jim I'm here. And by the way, I'm not in Lebanon. I'm in Syria.

**Duffy:** I'm sorry, Jeff. All those Mid-East countries look the same to me.

**Greenfield:** No problem, Jim. As you can see, I'm here in the home of an Arab family, but as you and our viewers have probably guessed, they're no ordinary Arab family. This is the family of the well-known Palestinian terrorist, Abdul Ali Ahmad. Here with me are Mr. and Mrs. Ahmad and their four sons, all of whom, coincidentally, are also named Abdul. Now, Mrs. Ahmad, when did you first realize your son was a terrorist?

**Mrs. Ahmad:** When he was still a baby, I remember I tried to take him outside, but before we even made it to the courtyard, he said, "Reach for the sky! I'm taking this crib to Damascus!"

**Greenfield:** Mr. Ahmad, were there any other early indications that he might turn out this way?

**Mr. Ahmad:** Yes. Looking back on it now I suppose I should have seen it all along. His favorite saying as a child was "Kalishnikov rifle." And he was always stealing his mother's veil and putting it on. He had a thing about masks. I remember I used to carry him on my shoulders, but whenever a plane flew over he'd get so excited I'd have to put him down. He'd point up at it and jump up and down and yell, "Pan Am! Pan Am! Mine! Mine!"

**Greenfield:** Well, as you know, the reason we've asked you to be on American television is because our government's Fairness Doctrine requires that we provide you with a forum to express your views, even though most Americans find them thoroughly despicable. But we've heard over and over again from the families of the hostages, and now we want to hear your side of the story. What was it that drove your son to become a terrorist?

**Mrs. Ahmad:** He's a bad boy. That's all. A very bad boy.

**Greenfield:** I don't think you understood my question, Mrs. Ahmad. Your son is obviously attempting to make some political statement through these grotesque acts. Most Americans are woefully ignorant about the pol-

itics and history of the Middle East, and they just don't understand your son's motives for the horrible things he does.

**Mrs. Ahmad:** Motives? What motives? he enjoys pain and suffering. That's all. He used to slaughter goats just to watch them in agony, even though all he ever ate was tabouli and baba ghanoush.

**Greenfield:** I guess I'm referring to what we in the United States call the "Palestinian question."

**Mrs. Ahmad:** The what?

**Mr. Ahmad:** You know, dear. The Palestinian question. He wants to know why we chose somebody as silly and uncharismatic as Yasser Arafat to be our spokesman. That's what you meant, wasn't it?

**Greenfield:** Uh, not exactly. I was talking about the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Didn't you tell me before we went on the air that you were born in what's presently the country of Israel and that your family used to live there for quite a number of years?

**Mr. Ahmad:** Yes, that is correct.

**Greenfield:** Doesn't that cause you to have any ill feelings toward the Israelis and, by asso-

**Abdul:** A car bomb.

**Greenfield:** And you?

**Abdul:** An airline captain.

**Greenfield:** And you?

**Abdul:** I'm not sure. I either want to open my own carpet shop or murder Americans. I haven't decided which yet.

**Greenfield:** Well, Jim, there you have it. An extraordinary opposing view which, whatever you think of it, you have to agree increases our understanding of one of the most perplexing issues of our time. And that's what the Fairness Doctrine's all about. This is Jeff —

**Abdul:** Put your hands up!

**Greenfield:** What?

**Abdul:** You heard him! Don't ask questions! Just put your hands up and keep them up!

**Abdul:** We demand the immediate release of our two brothers Abdul and Abdul who are in jail in Bahrain!

**Greenfield:** Hello, Jim Duffy? Can you hear me in New York?

**Duffy:** Yes, Jeff. We can hear you. We've lost visual contact, but we can still hear you.

**Greenfield:** Good. I think these guys mean



ciation, with Americans?

**Mr. Ahmad:** No. Not really. If you've seen one desert you've seen 'em all. Besides, it's just land. Since when has anybody been concerned over a little land?

**Greenfield:** I'm confused. You mean the reason your son hates the United States has nothing to do with the fact that it's such a staunch ally of Israel?

**Mr. Ahmad:** No. Not at all. He just can't stand Bruce Springsteen.

**Greenfield:** Well, maybe your sons can shed some light on this. Do you mind if I ask them some questions?

**Mr. Ahmad:** No. Please. Go right ahead.

**Greenfield:** Thank you. Abdul... no, not you. I'll get to you in a minute. I'd like to ask your brother a question first. Do you want to be a terrorist like your brother when you grow up?

**Abdul:** No, sir.

**Greenfield:** What do you want to be, then?

business.

**Abdul:** We're serious, Mr. ABC television! We've got your correspondent and if you want to see him again, you better see that our brothers are released!

**Greenfield:** You better do as they say, Jim. If you don't give them what they want, who knows what they'll do?

**Duffy:** Okay, Jeff. We'll see what we can do. That was ABC correspondent Jeff Greenfield in Lebanon... I'm sorry, Syria. We hope you found this evening's segment on the Fairness Doctrine both entertaining and enlightening. Please join us for upcoming segments when we will explore the relationship between the government and the press, with guests Secretary of State George Shultz and the family of ABC correspondent Jeff Greenfield. I'm Jim Duffy, and this has been *American Television and You*. Thank you for watching.

— Robert Myers



## DIVORCED

### Johnny Come Lately

Life really began for me in the late 1940s when the ten-inch Admiral TV set in the blonde console arrived. We were instantly inseparable. Me and Howdy and Lucy and Milty and Murrow. There was Dagmar, and Steverino, but it wasn't true love until 1962. And it must have been the real thing because it has lasted longer than any relationship I've ever had. Twenty-three years.

Now I search back in my memory for the feeling of the first time that Johnny came into my bedroom. One thing I do remember is that they made us wait six weeks after announcing that Johnny was coming, before he came. There were numerous forgettable guest hosts filling in during that early autumn in '62, while the network did their hype on Johnny. And then finally, the night arrived. I think they started at 11:15 in those days and stayed on until one a.m. And I remember the pounding of my heart when at last Johnny himself appeared to the roar of the crowd.

There he was. My night-time man. What would he say? What would be his very first words? I waited as Johnny calmed his excited audience. And then . . . and then, what do you think he said? His very first words? "I want my Mommy!" Yes. I remember feeling, he's scared shitless, he's vulnerable — it was love, even in black and white.

There's the way he put his finger to the little place under his nose, I loved that, and the way he fixed his tie for me even when it didn't need fixing. And those little 'in' jokes he would share with me with his glance, and the way the little monkeys and ant-eaters would cling to him.

And so I loved him every night at the same time. And I forgave him over and over again for his weaknesses and failings. For his tit jokes and shit jokes, the fat jokes and ass jokes. I loved him through the '60s, through women's lib and the revolution. I loved him secretly, turning to him in the night more often than anyone knew. He was my constant, never-changing lover. Sure, more and more often he would leave me in the steamy night and cut away to sell patent medicine and dog food, but I always knew he would be back.

It wasn't always easy. We had our troubles. We lived through the divorces, he and I. I stayed in the background, but it was very painful for me. Especially this last time. I had to do a lot of rationalizing about what horrible things he must have done to this last Joanna to cause her to be so vindictive, so filled with rage and hate. What hideous thing could have caused this vitriolic litigation? I didn't want to know. Nothing in our own relationship led me to believe he was capable of instilling such emotions.

Late in the night, after Johnny had turned to Letterman, and Letterman had turned to snow, I would dream of him. "For you, darling," he would say to me (or was it Joanna?), tears of joy rolling down his cheeks as he emptied his over-flowing pockets of krugerrands. The gold coins would rain down onto the Chinese carpet. "I'm sorry, forgive me," he would say, "I love you." And I/Joanna would say, "I know, I know," and take his head in my/her hands, kissing his tears away. "It's okay, babes, we'll work it out." And I would awaken, drenched in sweat, weeping softly.

Through all the splashy tabloid exploitation and hateful press, I somehow knew that Johnny was getting a bad rap. If only the public knew Johnny as I did. And then, the fateful night arrived. There he was. The same time, the same place, but something was different. His Ed was the same, and so was his Doc, but Johnny's presence was shattering, charismatic. He was radiant. I pressed my thumb to the remote control and brought up the sound slightly. Ed and Doc were laughing and slapping their knees and the audience was breaking into spirited applause. It seemed that Johnny had been "had." Not with a bleep or a bloop or a blunder, but with a practical joke. Doc collapsed into giggles as Johnny nodded his head in recognition.

"That's right, folks," Ed was chortling, "we got him!" Boys will be boys, I thought, as Ed said, "Yes, after weeks of trying, we finally pulled one on Johnny. You see, Johnny, you didn't know it, but with the help of your good friend, Dick Clark, we managed to slip a dose of that newly banned designer drug, Ecstasy, into your Waldorf salad today."

"Oh, that's funny," Johnny was saying. "I knew you guys were up to something — but *this*?" He was suddenly overcome with emotion.

"That's right," guffawed Ed, "it was all a set-up."

Johnny took off his solid gold Roliflex and tried to give it to Ed.

"No, no, Johnny, I have a watch."

"But I want you to have it," said Johnny. He finally was satisfied to give his watch to the cameraman, who accepted it hesitantly. Johnny held the burly old technician close to him. A single tear left a slow track down Johnny's pancaked cheek. (At home in Westchester, Jack Paar felt a slight stirring in his French briefs.) Then Johnny moved down into the audience, hugging and kissing people and giving away dinners-for-four indiscriminately.

Johnny felt right. He felt right maybe for the first time in his life, and I could feel it too. He was faint with love.

"Yes, yes!" he shouted, as we gaped transfixed. "I . . . I love you," he said to all of us, knowing it was true. He was light. He was air. He was power. And as he felt himself begin to lift-off like an untethered balloon, Johnny stopped himself. "No," he cried to the universe, "I love the earth. I want to stay, and do good works." I felt a widening radiance spread from the center of his being. At last my Johnny was whole.

It has since been reported that in an unprecedented gesture of support and caring, Joanna has donated her Rolls Royce with license plate 1JANDJ, her Mercedes-Benz with license plate 1BABES, 310 shares of Carson Broadcasting Corp., and 75 krugerrands to the AIDS fund. In a counter-donation, Johnny has anted-up his million-dollar Trump Tower duplex in New York for Jerry's Kids.

"Not good enough," said Joanna. She then pledged ten thousand dollars to feed the homeless. "Hah," said Johnny, seeing her ten thousand and raising her twenty, as Hollywood goes mad with charity fever. Joanna was unavailable for comment on Johnny's latest generosity. It is rumored that she has gone to a Buddhist retreat in Cucamonga to chant for world peace with Tina Turner and others.

—Nancy Cain

## ENGAGED

### That Crazy Couple

NBC News broke the story that John Hinckley Jr., would-be assassin of the President, is engaged to marry Leslie DeVea, another patient at St. Elizabeth's hospital, who murdered her daughter with a shotgun. She lost her own arm in a subsequent suicide attempt with the same weapon.

The Realist has obtained a transcript of one of their conversations.

Leslie: I'm really upset, John. When we were making love behind the laundry basket, you whispered, "Oh, Jodie!"

John: Now, honey, just remember how much we have in common. We both pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity. So can't you forgive me for one teeny-weeny little flashback?

Leslie: Oh, all right, I guess I'm just nervous about meeting your family. I'm afraid they'll disapprove of me.

John: Are you kidding? They'll adore you. I mean you were on the Washington society list. We're members of the same goddam class.

Leslie: But what about my parents? They think you're a failure.

John: I tried. Your motivation was much purer than mine, though. You weren't trying to make an impression on anybody. And you didn't need any backup, either. I had that guy, Richardson, who followed me to New Haven, stayed at the same hotel, wrote letters to Jodie Foster, but they arrested him at the bus station.

Leslie: Don't torture yourself, my darling.

John: I'm not good enough for you. Why don't you marry Mark Chapman? He was supposed to kill John Lennon, and he *did* it. Y'know, my father is on the board of directors of that evangelical camp he was at. Jesus, I'm such a fuck-up.

Leslie: Here, let me hold you in my arm.

John: At least I was smart enough to come out for gun control. Reagan came out against it.

Leslie: Maybe they'll let us go dancing at Disneyland for our honeymoon.



## MARRIED

### Connubial Bliss Blues

Ariccia, Italy, is one of the hottest places on earth in August, but the convention room in the Hotel Cavalcanti was even hotter than the streets outside, where the dogs were too prostrated by heat to bark at the cats. The air-conditioning system sputtered and cackled, and occasionally some foul-smelling smoke oozed out of it, but the repairmen who returned twice a day never did succeed in getting any cold air out of the vents; usually, they produced only a temporary increase in the vile smoke, or smog, or viscous vapor, or whatever it was that made everybody smell vaguely like a dead skunk on the highway. It was about as restful as a poke in the eye with a sharp stick.

The Irish priest, Father Malachi Mulligan of Galway, was sweating like a boxer who's fought twelve rounds already and knows he lost eleven of them on points. He still wouldn't sit down. "By Christ," he cried passionately, "if you're a married man, and everybody calls you Father, it's only natural to have children, is it not? And, faith, have we forgotten the Vow of Poverty? Every time my wife starts swelling up again, I can feel myself getting poorer. Now surely that is living up to the Vow of Poverty and learning to identify with the poor, is it not?" He had his eye on the Liberation Theologians, who make a big thing about living like the poor; he knew how to score debater's points, being a Jesuit.

*What the hell am I doing in this furnace of a room with these crazy Catholics, I asked myself for the hundredth time, and can Paul Krassner ever pay enough to compensate me for four days of this?*

"The reverend Father is out of order," the chairperson droned (I am trying to avoid the humanism of "chairperson"). "Move the next point of business."

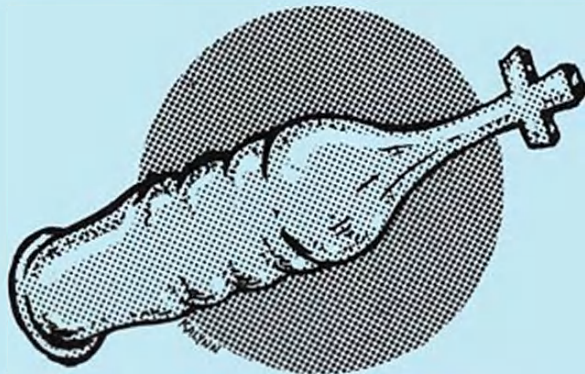
The Fathers who were not fathers made feeble sounds of support. They were too blasted by the heat to be really enthusiastic about anything, even the prospect of shutting up Father Mulligan. The children were getting noisier by the hour and the mothers were out of their heads, or close to it. Rumors were circulating that the air conditioning had been deliberately sabotaged by the Knights of Malta, and that sort of story always creates high paranoia in Catholic countries, since liberal Catholics feel about the K of M about the way liberal Americans feel about the C.I.A. ("Those bastards are capable of anything.")

This was the second annual convention of the Married Roman Catholic Priests Association (International), representing 70,000 R.C. priests who, in defiance of the Vatican, had married during the last two decades. The MRCPA (I) had called the convention in Ariccia because that is only about 30 kilometers from Rome and right next door to the Pope's summer home in Castle Gandolfo. Only 150 priests were able to attend because of that Vow of Poverty mentioned by Father Mulligan; the Church, which provides travel expenses for "worthy" projects, did not think a convention of heretics was very worthy, especially if it was to be held right in the Pope's backyard as it were. Nonetheless, the actual attendance was closer to 750 than 150, because the Traditional-

ists had somehow raised the cash to bring their families along. That and the defective air conditioning caused most of the horrors to come.

The Traditionalists in the MRCPA (I) — led by Father Mulligan, who has fifteen children himself (and a wife, Dierdre, who, to say the least of it, looks haggard) — refuse to admit they are heretics at all and are adamant in their allegiance to all Vatican teachings except the one about clerical celibacy. CONTRA-CEPTION IS CONTRA-GOD said a huge banner they had erected in the convention hall on Day One. Their position paper, distributed at the door and thrown away immediately by most delegates, had the title "Let Not The Issue of Celibacy Become the Thin Entering Wedge to Theological Anarchy." They wanted all the married priests with small families or no families thrown out of the MRCPA (I) as *real heretics*. They said such priests were "half-way to Protestantism and Freemasonry already." They wanted to keep the MRCPA (I) *respectable*.

The Liberals, as usual, vacillated between trying to placate these loonies and spreading



gossip about them behind their backs. They whispered (I eavesdropped at every opportunity) that Father Mulligan could afford his fifteen children only because his wife was "on the dole" (the Irish name for Welfare.) This offended the Liberation Theologians, who were otherwise in sympathy with the Liberals, but who insisted that there was nothing contemptible about being on the dole, especially when the Church only gave Father Mulligan living expenses for one person, refusing to recognize his wife or brood. The Liberals then spread rumors that Mulligan and the other Traditionalists were secretly in league with Archbishop Lefebvre, the French nut-case who believes the Vatican was taken over by Freemasons and Satanists during the 1960s and who inspired Father Juan Krohn, the oddball who tried to assassinate John Paul II at Fatima in 1982. It was even muttered in corners that the Traditionalists were infiltrated by the nefarious Knights of Malta who had flummoxed the air conditioning.

The Knights of Malta, as I said, create real terror in Catholic countries, especially among Liberation Theologians. The K of M are one of the oldest secret societies in the world, dating back at least 600 years, and yet even the most ardent conspiracy buffs do not know much about them — does Mae Brussell have a file on them? — even though they inspired part of the plot of *The Maltese Falcon*. William Casey, the current head of the C.I.A., is a K of M. Licio

Gelli, who headed the "P2" conspiracy (which turned the Vatican Bank into a laundromat for Mafia heroin money, took over the Italian secret police, and infiltrated 951 agents into the Italian government), was and is a K of M. Alexander Haig is a K of M. When Gordon Thomas, a British journalist, claimed (in his *Year of Armageddon*) that the K of M's act as couriers between the Vatican and the C.I.A., the paranoia quotient among Liberation Theologians went up about 2000%. It didn't help when Archbishop Romero, a leading Liberation Theologian, was assassinated, evidently with C.I.A. connivance. When the current Pope, John Paul II, visited Romero's turf afterward and told Liberation Theologians to keep their noses out of politics, some thought that was the equivalent of what the Mafia calls "letting the other guys know where it came from."

By the second day of the convention a rumor was circulating that the K of M, not satisfied with balklocking the air conditioning, was planning to poison the food. Everybody pretended not to believe this, but I noticed that the delegates began boycotting the dining room. When

I followed some of them, I found they were grabbing quick sandwiches at working class bars in the vicinity.

The heat, by then, was producing dizziness, the general indefinite wobbles and (I think) altered states of consciousness. Quarrels broke out among the conspiracy buffs, some of whom alleged that the K of M was too involved in C.I.A./Vatican politics to waste time sabotaging this convention; the ones who had really fucked up the air conditioning, they claimed, were the nefarious Opus Dei. This is a Catholic secret society formed in Franco Spain about 50 years ago which is so fascist that not even Pope Pius XII would touch it with a ten-foot pole; it was ignored or rebuffed by all the other popes since then, too, until suddenly the current pontiff, John Paul II, recognized and blessed it in 1983, to the consternation of liberal Catholics everywhere.

Mrs. Roberto Calvi, the widow of the banker found hanged in London in 1982, claims Opus Dei simply bribed the pope by making a huge donation to the Vatican Bank, which rescued it from bankruptcy. But Mrs. Calvi also says it was Archbishop Marcinkus of the Vatican Bank, not her late husband, who embezzled the 55 million dollars that disappeared somewhere between the Vatican Bank and Mr. Calvi's Banco Ambrosiano, and that the Vatican hired the men who killed her husband, and all sorts of scandalous things like that. Conservative Catholics prefer to think she's just a hysterical



widow. It must be hard to have your husband hanged by persons unknown for reasons equally unknown.

I heard part of an interesting debate about whether Opus Dei was or was not likely to be poisoning the food. "You know what sort of *creeps* that Opus Dei gang is," an excitable young Dominican was telling an elderly Jesuit, while their wives sipped Singapore Slings and discussed the latest Sophia Loren film.

"Well," the Jesuit said carefully, "they are admittedly into ah er um medieval 'mortifications.'"

"Mortifications, my ass," the Dominican cried. "The word is *perversions*. You've read Freud, for Christ's sake. Whips and chains! My God, they make the Marquis de Sade look like a pussycat."

"One must be charitable in thought as well as deed . . . the religious impulse takes many forms . . ."

"Yeah, well why won't you eat the food here? Remember what happened to Papa Luciani, maybe?" (The reference is to Pope John Paul I, born Albino Luciani, who was taken suddenly dead after ordering an investigation of the Vatican Bank, and got buried without an autopsy. If Mrs. Calvi is right, Opus Dei now largely owns the Vatican Bank.)

That's the way it always starts. By the third day of the convention, half of the delegates were having whispered conversations about which of the others were agents of the Knights of Malta or Opus Dei. There was even a rumor (I couldn't get it confirmed) that some of the delegates hired *food tasters*, gaunt pitiful children from the slums of Naples, even when they traveled to the other end of town for a sandwich.

The Condom Caper blew the roof off, metaphorically of course. It was the fourth and last day, and the air conditioning still wouldn't work. The children were louder and more unruly than ever. The mothers were frantic, and one of them got the mike for a while to denounce Sexism Among the Allegedly Liberated. The Fathers who weren't fathers all had expressions, by then, which reminded me of W.C. Fields looking at Baby Leroy and contemplating mayhem. "Why couldn't they leave their brats home with baby-sitters?" one of them muttered audibly.

Father Mulligan, for the Traditionalists, recaptured the mike and launched another, typically Irish, glorification of the Bodaciously Huge Catholic Family. There were boos and catcalls and more cries of "point of order" than I've heard since the Army-McCarthy hearings. Mulligan was sweating more than ever and, while saying something about the family being the backbone of the Church, pulled a handkerchief from his pocket to mop his brow.

Out of his pocket, with the handkerchief, came several condoms, which fell to the floor and were seen by all. I noticed that one was a French Tickler and another, evidently Japanese, had a dragon's head on it.

Father Mulligan sputtered and cackled — an uncanny imitation of the sounds of the air con-

ditioner — and turned the exact sunset-red of a garden-fresh tomato. It was a chilling, terrible moment: we all thought he was having a heart attack or stroke. When he fell over backwards (landing on a tray of antipasto which nobody had tasted for two days), most of the delegates mournfully made the Sign of the Cross, convinced he was dead. It turned out later that he was only suffering heat prostration and shock, but the damage was done. He recovered, but the convention never did.

Some said later that the Knights of Malta had planted the rubbery witnesses of lubricious hypocrisy on the poor man; others blamed Opus Dei; some of the Traditionalists close to Mulligan remained bitterly convinced the Liberals had done it as a cruel joke. Perhaps we shall never know the truth. Suspicion and paranoia reached new heights.

The children, you can be sure, were beyond control now. Some had been terrified when Father Mulligan keeled over; a second group were hilarious, thinking evidently that a man falling into antipasto is as funny in real life as in a Laurel and Hardy comedy; it was impossible to quiet either group, especially with the younger children howling that they wanted to play with "the pretty balloons, especially the ones with feathers and dragon's heads."

Two hours later I saw one elderly Franciscan, so damp with perspiration that he actually looked guilty, surrounded by ten others, who claimed he was Licio Gelli in disguise. "But I am Father Dino Lo Bello, of Nola," he kept protesting, while the others snarled at him and snapped pointed questions such as "Why did you poison John Paul I?" and "How did you get out of that Swiss prison?"

In fact, although Father Lo Bello had a beard, the heat must have been getting to me, too, because I thought he did look like Gelli might look with a beard. But would Gelli (hiding out in Uruguay to avoid extradition to Italy, where he is wanted for murder, fraud and conspiracy, among other things) dare to come back in so thin a disguise? Why not? Audacity was always Licio Gelli's trademark. He was once on the payroll of the C.I.A. and the K.G.B. simultaneously (see David Yallop's *In God's Name*): such men are capable of anything, including disguising themselves as married priests. But would the Knights of Malta (of which Gelli was admittedly a member) bother with Yippie-style pranks like bugging up the air conditioning or planting rubbers on a Jesuit?

"Tell us about Klaus Barbie and ODESSA," one of the inquisitors barked.

"I don't know Klaus Barbie, I don't know ODESSA . . ."

I went up to my room to take a shower, cool off and clear the contagious paranoia from my brain. Of course, the shower wouldn't work. Well, I told myself, Italian showers are as unreliable as Irish phones, and I am not going to blame this on the Knights of Malta. They (and their associates in the C.I.A. and ODESSA) are too busy stomping out liberation movements in Latin America to waste time

on a bunch of eccentric priests who decided to get married.

Voices drifted up from the convention room. They were singing the Monty Python song with the chorus, "Every sperm is sacred/Every sperm is great/If a sperm is wasted/God gets quite irate." At first I thought it was the Liberals mocking the Traditionalists, then I recognized some of the voices. It was the Traditionalists singing. They were so humorless themselves that they didn't even know the song was a parody, and why should they? It is, in fact, merely a blunt statement of the orthodox Vatican dogma on procreation. It only seems funny if you're not Catholic. I thought about that. I thought about it a great deal. The song went on: "Every sperm is sacred/Every sperm is good/Every sperm is needed/In your neighborhood." The Knights of Malta were probably just as humorless, I thought. To them, a crowd of married priests was as much a threat to the Catholic Way of Life as ten regiments of *godless Russian communists* landing on the Italian beaches. Maybe David Yallop was a bit of a sensationalist and poor old Luciani (John Paul I) died of natural causes, after all; but Pecorelli, the editor who first exposed the "P2" conspiracy — run by Licio Gelli of the Knights of Malta — was shot dead by machine-gun fire a few months later. And two public prosecutors have been shot dead, also, during the "P2" investigations. And Gelli himself escaped from a Swiss prison only three days after being arrested there, which makes one wonder how much power do Knights of Malta have to protect their members anywhere on earth.

I began to develop that peculiar sensation which Raymond Chandler, I believe, once called the acute awareness that one is not bullet-proof. I even began to think that the antipasto tray had a smell of *bitter almonds* about it.

I packed my bags and crept quietly down the stairs of the Hotel Cavalcanti.

As I passed through the lobby, I heard the delegates in the convention hall smashing chairs and other furniture. Hoarse, impassioned shouts of "Fascist," "Communist," "Mariolatry," "Spermatology," "Manicheism," "Arianism" and "Don't give me that Jesuit equivocation, you sonofabitch" were drowned in inarticulate screams of rage and pain. I gathered that the debate had grown acrimonious, as theological discussions so often do.

Sounds of shattering glass and a pongoid cry of "Take that, Socianist\*-Unitarian dog!" followed me into the dusty, sunbaked Italian street.

I decided to get the hell out of Italy.

—Robert Anton Wilson

\*Not a typo. Socianist: a rational theology that denied Papal infallibility, the Trinity and the efficacy of sacraments. Condemned as heresy, of course.



## Only Sue the One You Love

The folks at Coca-Cola had done their research. They tested and re-tested until beyond a shadow of a doubt they had a product that tasted better than the one on the market. What is now said, with perfect hindsight, is that people in Research and Development at Coke failed completely to consider such intangibles as the soft drink's status as an American institution.

The Old Coke Drinkers, an angry, distraught and obviously jilted consumer group, implored the huge corporation to reverse its multi-million-dollar decision, and a subsequent lawsuit actually questioned the company's right to tamper with what has become part of America's "heritage."

Before the courts ever had a chance to debate who owns custody of American heritage, Coca-Cola quieted the outcry by bringing back their original formula, now sanctified as Coca-Cola Classic. The precedent was obvious. Not surprisingly, the oft-burned public has responded with litigious enthusiasm, and judges are today faced with lawsuits filed on behalf of the following American Institutions:

### The Brooklyn Dodgers

Forget the Oakland Raiders and the Baltimore Colts. The newest eminent domain case is *Carl "Stubby" O'Toole vs. The City of Los Angeles* to either retrieve the team he calls "the greatest in American sport," or be awarded a \$5-million settlement for personal hardship endured in what he terms "the rape of the common man."

"You want to talk about American Heritage? ... Ebbets Field ... quarter hot dogs ... Campenella, Snider, Hodges ... they might as well have ripped out my heart and rolled it in rock salt when they moved the Dodgers out west. Why don't they just put the Statue of Liberty on Catalina Island while they're at it?" complained O'Toole in his handwritten brief.

As to why it took so long to file the suit, O'Toole recalls the last Brooklyn Dodgers game in 1957 when he bet his friends a round of beers that the team "would come crawling back."

"I just looked at the calendar and realized it was already 1986," says O'Toole. "Somebody's got to get moving on this."

### M\*A\*S\*H

"What some of these production companies don't understand is that television shows give millions of us viewers an extended family," explains plaintiff Tammy Vernon. "By the time a show has been on ten years, we know these people better than we know our neighbors. Or our own families, for that matter. They have no right to take them away from us."

Vernon, who had just finished knitting some ear-muffs for Hawkeye when the series was retired, called the cast's claims of creative stagnation "evasive and irrelevant." When a CBS representative, hoping to avoid a lawsuit on the new "American Heritage" grounds, asked her why she could not be happy with the nearly 300 episodes of *M\*A\*S\*H* in syndication, she shot back, "How would you like to have your daughter re-run through adolescence?"

### Red Dye #2

When the Food and Drug Administration outlawed the color additive as potentially carcinogenic in the late 70's, Darla Kravitz responded by stockpiling 20 cases of maraschino cherries in her basement. As her supply dwindled, Kravitz decided to sue to have the old formula reinstated.

"I think Red Dye #2 was a classic case of American know-how being used to make something look more natural than it actually appears in nature," claims Kravitz on behalf of her consumer group, the Dye-Hards. "With over-regulation like this, we would never have put men on Mars, or wherever it was they landed."

### The Three-Martini Lunch

"This country was not founded upon sober reflection," says plaintiff Hiram "Bud" Daniels. "I was willing to take the new drunk-driving laws with a grain of salt — from the edge of my margarita glass — but if some government agency expects me to woo the biggest purchasing agent on the East Coast with imported mineral water, I won't be responsible for the consequences."

Daniels says the status of the three-martini lunch as an American Institution is unquestioned, and he points to figures demonstrating how the cost of a single B-1 bomber could translate into 1.2 billion hi-balls capable of coaxing deals out of foreign investors.

"You leave the wheeling and dealing up to the people with a clear

head," warns Daniels, "and this country will be on the feudal system within a month."

### Jerry Lewis

What do you call a motion picture studio that does not actively seek out scripts for Jerry Lewis? "Criminally negligent," says Myra Ferguson in a lawsuit that takes on the Hollywood establishment. "How much longer must we listen to the French before we realize this man is a genius ... an American Institution. Every day that goes by without Mr. Lewis making a movie, we are being cruelly robbed of our American heritage."

Ferguson also plans on expanding the suit to include Don Knotts and Buddy Hackett. "Did you see *Amadeus*? I didn't. I went out and rented *The Ghost and Mr. Chicken* instead," she explained to the judge.

### Steven Chubb vs. Funk & Wagnall's

"I remember back when the word 'gay' meant happy, 'dope' meant idiot, and a 'boner' was a mistake," says septuagenarian plaintiff Chubb. "I've gotten myself into more damned trouble lately with these little misunderstandings. What I want to know is, who has the right to change the meanings of these words without letting us have our say? When the members of the communist-backed dictionary cartel start publishing slang definitions in their books, well, there goes the language ... the very fiber of our country. It really frosts my behind."

### Ma Bell

Was the Bell System a monopoly? "Sure," says lawyer Donald Crane, representing an anonymous source. "But it was *our* kind of monopoly. Divestment may have sounded okay, but I don't think many of us counted on our phone bills reading like a James Michener novel. There was a certain quaint efficiency that came with unadulterated power, and I think if you took the case to the American public now, you'd have overwhelming support for the old system."

Crane doesn't think a return to the lovable, irreproachable monopoly need be messy or embarrassing.

"Ma Bell Classic," poses Crane. "It has a nice ring to it."

—Casey McCabe

## Brief Notions and Iceberg Tips

Sex is like sandwiches; there's got to be something inbetween.

—Jennifer Stone

This past summer Pope John Paul visited the republic of Central Africa, and on one occasion he appeared at a gathering of tens of thousands of African people. In full papal regalia, the Pope performed communion, symbolically eating his God—the wafer and the wine—the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Then the Pope gave a speech in which he told the Africans to stop practicing voodoo.

—Scoop Nisker

Since the Screen Actors Guild decision last month, requiring that actors be told in advance whether they will be asked to play "open mouth" kissing scenes—for fear of contacting AIDS via the exchange of bodily fluids, namely saliva—movie buffs have been wondering whether big-screen passion will be rendered passé. However, Trojans, Fiesta and Rubbermaid all have their research and development departments working overtime to be the first on the market with tongue condoms.

—Lorrie Shapiro

Who knows where the attempt to censor rock lyrics will end? Even good old gospel songs might become subject to somebody else's blue pencil. After all, do you want your kids to walk around singing *Go Down, Moses* in mixed company?



## MEDIA FREAK

### Blind Items

In Ogdensburg, New York, a doctor who was blinded in an auto accident returned to his urology practice six months later — making diagnoses, prescribing treatments and even performing minor surgery on bladders and prostate glands. The administrator of the hospital insisted that these surgical procedures were the sort in which a physician relies upon the sense of touch, not vision. "You go up into a cavity, and you work by feel."

\* \* \*

In San Francisco, a blind woman filed a complaint with the police department when an officer ordered her to clean up after her guide dog had relieved himself in the financial district. The city ordinance requiring dog owners to clean up after their pets exempts guide dogs.

### Palate Items

At the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, researchers from a university in Tennessee discussed how they taught a 7-year-old orangutan to converse in sign language. On one occasion, the monkey asked to be taken for a car ride, brought along money it had earned for keeping its room clean, and gave the driver directions to the local Dairy Queen.

\* \* \*

According to *Crain's Chicago Business*, Wrigley's Amurrol Products unit has claimed an early victory for Rambo Black Flak bubble gum, crafted in the spirit of Sylvester Stallone's popular movie. The black, raspberry-flavored gum is packed in a Rambo-emblazoned foil pouch and is shaped to resemble shrapnel.

### Disciplinary Items

David Wayte, a 24-year-old Whittier man, was ordered to spend six months at his grandmother's home for failing to register for the draft.

"This is the most difficult sentence I have had to impose in more than 25 years in the judicial system," stated U.S. District Judge Terry Hatter Jr.

He explained that he had decided on probation and house arrest to prevent Wayte from doing community service, inasmuch as he was already a volunteer at a school for the developmentally disabled plus at a soup kitchen and shelter for the homeless.

Said the judge: "I'm punishing you by not allowing you to perform such service."

\* \* \*

*Big Mama Rag* reports that women who work in a whiskey factory in Scotland have gone on strike because supervisors were monitoring the number of times they go to the bathroom, clocking them in and out of each visit, claiming that the women were taking time off to use the toilets for "a smoke and a chat." Workers said management tried to set an arbitrary amount of trips to the lavatory by arguing that a medical certificate should be sought by those wishing to go more than three times a day.

### Recycling Item

This prison memo to personnel from the warden at Green Haven Correctional Facility: "I have observed on several different occasions some officers (in uniform) scavenging [sic] through State garbage cans apparently seeking soda cans in order to claim the nickel deposit. (It would be admirable if the same fervor was demonstrated while searching for contraband.) This practice is unbecoming and certainly does not reflect the Department in a desirable image; consequently, this practice will cease immediately. If the need for nickels is so overwhelming, arrange on your RDO's [regular days off] (and in civilian clothing) to visit your local dump where, I am certain, the pickings are more fruitful."

### Capitalist Items

Although there are 300,000 premature deaths a year from smoking, the Surgeon General's warning in cigarette ads has become a many-splendored thing.

Marlboro simply warns that "Cigarette smoke contains carbon monoxide."

In *People*, Merit warns that "Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health," but in *Playboy*, Merit warns that "Smoking causes lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema, and may complicate pregnancy."

In *Mother Jones*, More warns that "Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health," but in *Psychology Today*, More warns that "Smoking by pregnant women may result in fetal injury, premature birth, and low birth weight."

Virginia Slims, a brand aimed specifically at women, merely warns in full-page newspaper ads that "Quitting smoking now greatly reduces serious risks to your health."

Beware of warning labels.

\* \* \*

The grand guru who wanted an alternative to organized religion but founded one instead, has returned to India, but his aura lingers on.

Ross Shuping writes, "Can you believe the Rajneesh was charged with attempting to leave the country illegally and his punishment if convicted would have been to be deported? Can you believe the Senate is debating a raise in national debt ceiling as the House is enacting legislation to forbid raising the debt ceiling at some time in the future?"

The answer to both questions was sighted on a bumper sticker: "Jesus Saves! Moses Invests! Rajneesh Spends!"

### Witch Items

In Austria, a conflict between Italian opera director Piero Faggioni and Salzburg Festival official Otto Sertl finally erupted into a public face-slapping incident. Some observers said the tensions grew because Sertl wanted Faggioni to lessen the amount of artificial ice-produced fog in one scene; others said that Faggioni was angry because Sertl would not approve the use of topless witches in the opera.

In Salem, Oregon, police said that 150 nude women fondled each other and joined in a ceremony involving the display of symbols associated with Satanism at a state park, but no laws were broken. Said one witch: "It was colder than a cop's balls."

### AIDS Items

On a Sunday morning TV news show, California state Republican chaircharacter Mike Antonovich advised gays to turn hetero, a switch which "would have a great reduction in the cases of AIDS that we have today..." *L.A. Herald Examiner* columnist Joe Morgenstern ran a fake "open letter" from the U.S. Senate candidate clarifying his missionary position:

"Homosexuality is merely a bad habit. It is an unhealthy habit. And like any bad, unhealthy habit, it can be cured. . . . For homosexual men, a good beginning would be smiling at a woman in a friendly, engaging way. You'd be surprised at the results. One smile elicits another. Two smiles can lead to a conversation. A conversation can provoke a caress, even a kiss, and then in no time you could be experiencing the myriad delights that you've been missing by courting persons of the wrong sex. . . ."

"Some of my opponents have charged that my plan for combating AIDS through universal heterosexuality carries its own risk, that of spreading AIDS through the heterosexual community. I see no reason to believe this. I'm confident that heterosexual behavior, being inherently healthy, will act as a vaccine, if you will, and render the AIDS virus impotent. . . ."

Antonovich complained that "Morgenstern tells us his readers are so intelligent they could easily see through the charade, but my office is receiving calls from persons who took this column to be a legitimate letter."

\* \* \*

The Geneva conference has gone down the drain, with Ronnie and Gorbie having ignored yet another reason to avoid nuclear war. At a symposium sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences, it was suggested that a major nuclear exchange would produce "a marked increase in the incidence of AIDS in the surviving populations. . . ." Unless, of course, survivors changed their sexual preferences at the last minute.

### Gender Items

Radical feminist Andrea Dworkin has a \$150-million libel suit against *Hustler* for portraying her in cartoons as a lesbian. However, on June 28, 1975, she spoke at a Lesbian Pride Week rally in Central Park: "... being a lesbian means to me that there is an erotic passion and intimacy which comes of touch and taste, a wild, salty tenderness, a wet sweet sweat, our breasts, our mouths, our cunts, our intertangled hairs, our hands. . . ."

Certainly doesn't sound libelous.

\* \* \*

Surgeons reattached the severed penis of a man in his early 20s in an operation believed to be the first of its kind in Canada. A plastic surgeon and a urologist reattached the penis after seven hours of delicate microsurgery. Fortunately, this was not the blind doctor referred to previously, or the penis might have been inadvertently attached to the patient's elbow. Then, when asked if he was getting any lately, he could wink knowingly and jab his elbow into the air a few times.