

- Madonna Gets Fired
- Abbie Gets Channeled
- Noriega Gets New Image

# The Realist

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Editor: Paul Krassner



## Der Fuehrer's Cake

by Gerard Jones

April in Paraguay. The leaves have mostly fallen, the yerba maté has been harvested, the winds off the hills bring in the first cool bite of South American winter. It is a time of memories, of sentiment, when the forlorn strains of beer garden oompah music and the gray elegance of pre-war German buildings

come to mind.

I didn't expect to be thinking about *Alte Deutschland* as I cruised up the Rio Paraná to that lonely plantation in the hills. But the carousing Neo-Nazis with whom I shared the boat left me no choice. They'd gathered from all over Europe to make this pilgrimage for the Old Man's one hundredth birthday, and no one was going to deny them the right to belt out a few choruses of *Deutschland Uber Alles* or *Mein Faderland* in between rounds of

Bavarian beer and Jew-jokes.

When the boat docked and we were led by a local troupe of blond, blue-eyed lads in scout uniforms toward the plantation Big House, I began to realize what a large event this was. Sprawled all over the grounds, dressed in regulation razored jeans and leather jackets, were enough Skinheads to fling every chair in every TV studio from London to Los Angeles. I happened upon a pair engaged in

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## COURT JESTER

### A Message to Subscribers

This issue of *The Realist* is dedicated to I.F. Stone.  
**Charter subscribers:** You'll find a renewal form with this issue. It's the only notice you'll ever get. Unlike other publications—and in opposition to sound business practice—we don't baby our subscribers.  
**New readers:** Our rate is \$23 for 12 issues, mailed first class. Back issues #99-#109 are available at \$2 each. Address: Box 1230, Venice CA 90294. Please mention which issue you'd like your sub to begin with. #111 will feature Robert Anton Wilson's report on the Futurists convention.  
**Personal postscript:** Editor Paul Krassner will perform at Theater 6111 Olympic Blvd. in Hollywood (call 629-2205 for reservations) Saturday nights thru August 19, except for July 29, when he'll be at the Rose & Thistle in San Francisco.

### A Message to Abbie Hoffman

Hey, Abbie—  
I just thought I'd fill you in on some stuff that's been going on as a result of your er uh departure. Naturally you couldn't be around to see any of it, but on the other hand, none of it would've happened if you hadn't gone. Life's a trade-off, right?  
Both the Los Angeles City Council and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to adjourn in your memory. And you now have something in common with George Bush. You both got honorary law degrees on the same weekend. But then, the first Gadhafi international human rights prize was just awarded to Nelson Mandela, so what does that prove? I guess it's more selfish to give than to receive.

In Central Park, a marijuana smoke-in was held in your memory. At UCLA, there was a write-in campaign of Pegasus for President in your honor. I performed at a benefit for "Bats Not Bombs" and dedicated my set to you and Gilda Radner. Kiss her hello for me.  
Tim Leary told the Associated Press that you were "an American legend. He was up there in the Hall of Fame with rebel Huck Finn, rowdy Babe Ruth, crazy Lenny Bruce. He was the Pete Rose of the '60s counter-culture, a hustler, a base stealer, a wild free spirit and a gambler. He is a historic figure and a great American and I loved the guy." The *N.Y. Times* left out the Pete Rose reference and went right to "He was a hustler." I suppose they didn't want to tar you with Pete Rose's brush. Didn't it used to be the other way around?

The *L.A. Times* covered the memorial for you in Worcester, ending with this: "But it fell upon Sydney Schanberg, the Pulitzer Prize-winning writer and *Newsday* columnist to try to put Hoffman, his cousin, into historical perspective. 'Abbie participated in democracy. He did it to make our system healthy, to make it accountable,' Schanberg told the mourners. 'He said one time in an interview he wanted to die with his integrity intact. He did. I think that is why we care about Abbie so much, because he had the courage for the rest of us.' " But the *N.Y. Times*' report didn't even mention that Schanberg was there. Could it possibly be because they had fired him?

Anyway, my favorite in all the media coverage of your demise was in the *New Yorker*. "Friends have said that in his last days Hoffman was depressed, and perhaps the recent mayoral victory in Chicago of Richard Daley, Jr., contributed to that."

In San Francisco there was a memorial for you at the Mitchell Brothers Live Porno Theater. It was supposed to be private, in their offices, but I told Herb Caen and he put an item in his *Chronicle* column. So picture this. In the Ultra Room, two naked ladies are dancing and diddling each other. Now one puts a candle in her ass and the other is lighting it. Men are standing in little booths watching through glass and jerking off. Suddenly somebody taps one of them on the shoulder and says, "Excuse me, is this the Abbie Hoffman memorial?"

The most touching moment at the L.A. memorial occurred when Dan Ellsberg unfurled a banner given to him by young people at an anti-nuclear protest, reading: "Sweet dreams, Abbie. You helped start it. We'll help finish it." The audience went wild with emotion as he

presented the banner to Johanna and they embraced. By the way, she has been referred to in the media as your girlfriend, your longtime companion and your common-law wife.

I told Jackson Browne that you thought his song *Running on Empty* should've been used as background music in the movie of the same name. He told me that his mother used to read *The Realist* when it was a magazine. That made me feel slightly middle-aged. Incidentally, a feature article, "Getting Old" in the *L.A. Times* referred to you as "an icon of '60s activism [who] died without warning at a relatively young age, startling former fellow 'youth movement' members into feeling old before their time."

Whoopi Goldberg didn't do any comedy *schtick*; she simply thanked you for helping her to have the courage to be different. Offstage, Ron Kovic said, "I'm gonna get out of my wheelchair and say 'Abbie gave me the courage to walk!'" Onstage, I mentioned that in your honor I had rolled a joint "on the cover of *People* magazine." The *L.A. Times* quoted me as saying that I had rolled a joint "with the cover of *People* magazine." I'll have to try that sometime.

Dave Dellinger believed you were killed by the CIA. Well, you know what a conspiracy nut I am, but I've become convinced that you really *did* commit suicide.

Everybody wants to get on your posthumous bandwagon. I've been approached by three different producers to write a TV movie about you, but I'm not interested. There's a total of eight books about you that have been offered to publishers. Jerry Rubin had an agreement from Harcourt & Brace for a \$400,000 advance, but your brother and common-law widow went to them and threatened that Jerry would not have access to any of their files, and the deal became instant history.

Larry Sloman got a \$100,000 advance from Doubleday for a biography. At a special screening of a film about you at the Bleecker St. Theater, A.J. Weberman stood up during intermission and shouted that Sloman was "an opportunist scumbag." Allen Ginsberg—in the spirit of we-are-all Salman-Rushdie—stood up and announced, "I'm an opportunist scumbag." Weberman shouted, "No, you're not an opportunist scumbag—you're just a scumbag!" All in your name.

There is a sad irony about this. A few weeks before you took your life, you tried to have yourself institutionalized—but not under your own name because the gossip would reach the press—and you couldn't get your insurance company to cover a pseudonym. So in a certain sense you were killed by your own celebrityhood—by the very same fame that had served so effectively as an organizing tool.

But you once said that Che Guevara was even more effective as a legend than during his life, and that is the only blessing in disguise I have been able to find in your loss. So now you can get to work on your next book, *Resurrection for the Hell of It*. And don't worry, be Abbie.

Have a nice death,  
Paul

### A Message From Abbie Hoffman

A psychic we know claims to be a channel for Abbie, and taped this dispatch from him:

"I think that so-called channeling is bourgeois bullshit. It's a hoax on a generation of gullible New Age thrill seekers. It's a vehicle to give unknown would-be gurus an opportunity for their own fifteen minutes of fame.

"I was talking about that with Andy Warhol over brunch this morning—the son-of-a-bitch was recording everything—I'm glad I have no secrets. Anyhow, so I'm telling Warhol about the acceleration of media consciousness, and he says, 'Yeah, some day everybody will be *Person of the Week* on ABC News.'"

"But listen, I refuse to participate any further in this foolish exploration where all those wanna-be-somebodies supposedly channel a variety of universal clichés from wise asses on the other side. It's pure projection. I mean channeling is a physical impossibility. It's also counter-revolutionary, because it substitutes faith for action.

"So if you're looking for an 'important message' then go watch a TV commercial. But don't be fooled by superstition in the guise of communication. I feel very strongly about that. And I sure hope *this* message gets through. As Che said, 'In a revolution, one wins or dies.' *Venceremos!* Free The Chinese One Billion!"

## Call Is a Four-Letter Word

by Robert Myers

Three men in their twenties have been running around recently trying to convince people that nostalgia for the 1960s is preventing people in their age group from developing a culture of their own in the 1980s. What a renaissance of youth culture in America might be based on in the '80s is difficult to discern. Reeboks? Oat bran? Laptop computers? Health food for pets? One of the young men in the fledgling movement did, however, make a good point about the pervasiveness of nostalgia, saying that he intended to hand out leaflets supporting his cause at the 25th anniversary celebration of the 1964 World's Fair, which was itself the 25th anniversary celebration of the 1939 World's Fair.

American culture in the '80s has distinguished itself by a few fairly simple notions, none of them terribly progressive: everyone has their price; technology conquers all; sex can kill you; and there is no such thing as a free lunch (much less free love)—even if the main course is three spoonfuls of ketchup. Which brings us to the brink of the '90s, and a new innovation that encompasses all of these shared cultural assumptions, and, in true '80s fashion, rewards the providers with handsome profits; the Supreme Court says it's legal.

Although this burgeoning industry is based on technology no more sophisticated than the answering machine in your living room and bears a distinct resemblance to what, in the '50s, was known as an obscene phone call, it is being touted as an information revolution, having been rechristened with the appropriately arcane and sanitized misnomer, audiotext. One glance at an advertisement for this "new" technology—on the cover of a matchbook, appropriately enough—is sufficient to dispose of the notion that what is being offered is either utilitarian or terribly innovative: "Honey! You can have it when you want it: any way you want it! *Call Me Now!*" And inside the matchbook cover: "*The Safest Sex Is Phone Sex!* Note: \$3.50 plus toll 18 years and older." This hardly seems a great cultural leap forward from matchbooks with ads for stamp collections and commemorative coins.

Fortuitously for the providers of this service, the phone numbers in the audiotext system have certain prefixes, usually 970 or 540, followed by the necessary four numbers, almost always advertised as an acronym. In other words they are a phone sex marketer's wet dream: numbers based on four-letter words. In New York the numbers appear on printed cards stacked on pay phones, under windshield wipers, and strewn on the street like freshly fallen snow: 970-LICK, 970-NUDE, 970-DEEP, 970-COED, 970-TART, and my personal favorite 970-PAIN. Almost as quickly as you can think up an acronym, it's on line and advertised, but I'm still waiting for 970-POKE, 970-BUCK, or 970-DYKE. Perhaps not wanting to appear crass, the providers of audiotext have yet to offer the most obvious four-letter words. Even seemingly innocent body parts such as HAIR, FACE, FOOT, HAND and NOSE have been

avoided, although there is, not surprisingly, a 970-BOOB number.

My own idea for an acronym—and you're welcome to steal it, since I stole it from someone else—is 970-BUSH. Unlike the other numbers, this one will offer an element of surprise. Upon dialing, you will either get a prostitute, a gynecologist's office, or the First Lady.

After dialing many of the audiotext phone numbers you get a choice of recordings—"Adventures of Lady Whiplust," that sort of thing—by pressing a 1, 2 or 3, but I'm sorry to report that none of the offerings is much more stimulating than hearing the soundtrack of a porno movie while buying popcorn in the theater lobby. The erotic thrill is apparently replaced by ardent necessity as the recording continues with the meter running. As in prostitution (and analysis) the very fact of paying creates a form of tension which insures that something will eventually happen.

This is more than simply a theory. There is a company in Iowa that sells products with



Sharper Image in Bloom County

names like "Arizona Desert" and "Pride of the Yankees" for \$25 to \$50, consisting of nothing more than the ineffable sound of these abstract concepts transmitted over the phone wires. The president of the company, who sounds suspiciously like a French cultural critic, said in a report on National Public Radio that virtually all of her customers have expressed satisfaction with the service and the company grossed over a million dollars last year. I recently sent her something called "Hell—no words, just giggling, panting, a forest fire, and piercing screams, followed by uncontrollable, deep-throated laughter." If I don't receive a royalty check by the end of the year, I'm considering using it to market a new perfume with Tammy Faye Bakker.

Alexander Graham Bell must be turning over in his grave, wondering how, post-humously, he has become the biggest pimp in American history. But then maybe he wasn't as innocent as we were taught in grammar school, and actually the first words transmitted by the new electronic medium were not "Come here, Watson, I need you" but instead "Watson, I'm coming, I'm coming!"

The telephone has always been the most perverse machine of desire: disembodied voices, heavy breathing, cupped hands over the receiver, the anonymity of operators and nosy neighbors listening in to intimate conversations. It's no accident that NYNEX is now zealously marketing something called "3-way calling." In a more innocent time, the phone was the stuff of rock songs—"Call

Me," "634-5789," "Hanging on the Telephone" and "New York Conversation"—and films—"When a Stranger Calls" and "Dial M for Murder." Now there are FAX machines, call-waiting and a machine which, when a stranger calls, will display on an LED readout the number from which the call originated. There is even a recent movie based on audiotext called, "976-EVIL." As a cultural concept it's hard to imagine anything more perverse than a movie based on the dirty phone call industry, but this is after all the end-product of 1980s America where a former football coach produced a ghost-written book called *Hey, I Wrote a Book*, which sold so well that he wrote a sequel. I believe it was called *Hey, It Sold So Well I Wrote Another One*.

Audiotext, as its name so grandiloquently implies, is far more than just heavy breathing and "Adventures With Sweet Sally." The concept began rather inauspiciously in the 1920s with a number in New York for the correct time, and lay dormant until the introduction in the 1970s of dial-a-joke and sports-score phone lines. Dial-a-joke is still available in 1989, but now all calls received are automatically forwarded to the Vice-President's office.

With the proliferation of dial-it programs, kids became the most inviting targets. One dial-a-Santa tape told children Santa wasn't home just then and asked them to "try back in an hour." Another program found a means to improve on Soupy Sales' infamous request for a dollar from the pocketbooks of all his listeners' mothers, by running commercials which instructed the kids to hold their phones up to their TV sets so the beeps in the ads could dial the number for them.

Children and teenagers—especially teenage girls—remain the most prodigious users of audiotext. There are now 97 tapes of rock stars, rap DJ's, professional wrestlers, and the list grows daily. Unlike most other small businesses, audiotext distributors are thriving. A company in Louisiana recently entered the international market, establishing a line in Tokyo. By dialing 1-900-DEF-ICIT, Japanese businessmen can be connected to the sounds of women panting in the best brothels in New Orleans. Soon, we may all be making plane reservations to Cincinnati by speaking to synthesized voices and paying for the tickets on our phone bills.

Perhaps oddest of all among the programs flying out of the Pandora's box of audiotext—party lines and phone prayer meetings and even a hate-line (which allows you to "sound off")—is the true confessions line. It's sort of a post-modern version of the sacrament with the electronic void playing the role of priest. But this shortcoming should be remedied shortly with the introduction of the new 970-POPE line, on which the pontiff, in a deep admonitory voice, tells you to "take your hand off that, right now." It's enough to make you nostalgic for an old-fashioned '60s written text like *Portnoy's Complaint*.

(You can have this column when you want it, any way you want it. *Call Me Now* at 1-900-BAD-JOKE. *The Safest Humor Is Phone Humor!* Note: \$2 plus toll. 30 years of age and older.)

## George and Dan's Excellent Adventure

by Matt Neuman

For a brief time, when I was about twelve years old, I was friendly with a rich kid whose family lived in ultra-modern 1950s luxury. They had a revolving driveway. TV sets lowered automatically from the ceiling. There were suction slots in every wall so you could plug in a hose and vacuum anywhere. It was like the house in Jacques Tati's *Mon Oncle*—modern to the point of absurdity. But, for a 12-year-old, it was like the World's Fair. I remember being there when they showed off their new "color" TV—a novelty at the time—and, best of all, making my own milkshakes at their fully-stocked soda fountain.

All this came back to me while I made my own milkshake at the White House the other day. Without giving away the particulars—and to protect my sources—let's just say I was able to secure an invitation to a private screening of a movie at George and Barbara's place. Bush loves movies, and he loves screening the latest from Hollywood for whatever group or individual that happens to be owed an invitation.

About a hundred people were there that night, including the President, the First Lady, the Quayles, family members, Cabinet members, and the oddest guest-list this side of Joe Franklin, including: the National Merit Scholars in mathematics; Rich Little; cellist Yo-Yo Ma; country singer Charlie Pride; some Hopi Indians from Arizona; *eminence gris* of the right, Barry Goldwater; Dr. Arkady Levitov, a Soviet scientist and arms-negotiator; and me.

There were tables filled with every kind of candy, cookie, cake and treat. Giant popcorn poppers popped continuously. I went directly to the "Make-Your-Own-Sundae" soda fountain, of course, but quickly decided not to spend my one visit to this place just drinking milkshakes.

Walking around the White House, strolling past the portraits of previous prexies, I tried to focus in on Bush, the current kingpin. Who is he? Do I like him? Why should I like him? What about the CIA? Noriega? Honduras?

George Bush's career—Senator's son, war hero, Yalie, oil magnate, President—is the stuff of bad novels and dumb TV movies. He's worked hard, taking what he inherited and making a little more on his own. He really is a true-blue, red-blooded American blue-blood. And gung ho to boot. As I was saying to Barry Goldwater, "Bush has had a charmed life. Now what?"

Goldwater didn't answer—I think his hearing aid was turned off. But, drink in hand, he did have an occasionally pointed comment. When a group of Merit scholars passed by he whispered, "Jesus Christ—they're all nips." Goldwater must have wet dreams about fighting the Japanese again, even though his hearing aid is made there.

Over at the giant taffy-making "shoppe" I listened to George Bush, Jr.—the one who bought the baseball team—talk about the finances of professional sports with a few cronies and a Hopi Indian, who was staring at the taffy. George, Jr. said that to make any money as an owner in professional sports you had to be prepared to "live like a pauper" for the first five years. His pals nodded in commiseration. I said I'd rather be poor and own a ball club than be rich and not own one. They nodded at that, too. Bravely, the Hopi warrior refused to smile.

Bush himself stood up on a chair to announce that the movie would begin in five minutes. "Seating will be according to party affiliation," he wisecracked to a mostly non-political and thus oblivious crowd.

We were herded together, lined up in order of wealth, and led into a darkened, wood-grained theater. Several of the Bush grandchildren (including one of the "brown ones") were dressed as ushers and, wielding long red flashlights, pointed the V.I.P.'s to their seats. I don't know what possessed me, but I gave one of the kids a five-dollar bill. "It's under the gift limit," I assured him.

Maybe it was because of all the children—or the presence of the Vice President—but the feature that night was *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*. Just as well. This was not a *Rashomon* or *Jules and Jim* crowd. Oddly, the Bushes, the Quayles, the Mr. and Mrs. Cabinet Members all chose to sit in front, leaving the best seats for us nobodies and ethnic types.

From my corner of the back row it was hard to see the movie, but I'd seen it already—on the plane. Besides, I was more interested in the audience. My vantage point allowed me to observe our beloved

blue-haired First Lady and her husband of forty-four of the longest years of her life. Between them was an oversized box of popcorn, from which they alternately scooped handfuls in perfect syncopation. Sitting right behind them, with a befuddled look on his face, was my Hopi friend. I don't know which confused him more—the movie or the popcorn.

There was a lot of laughter throughout—although this isn't meant as a review. Vice President Quayle laughed particularly hard at one joke—I think it's where Bill or Ted says "Narly!" to Shakespeare. He spilled some soda on Mrs. Quayle, who looked like she'd been awakened from a sound sleep.

At one point Dr. Levitov got up to go to the bathroom and, right after he did, one of the Bush kids took his seat. When he came back he seemed disoriented. It was dark. There was no place to sit. All of a sudden there was a loud scream. We looked—Levitov was perched on top of Shirley Temple, the new ambassador to Czechoslovakia. For the next two minutes, instead of watching Bill and Ted fight the Crusades, everyone kept their eyes on Shirley Temple trying to remove a candy apple from the seat of Dr. Arkady Levitov's pants.

After a while things quieted down. My mind began to wander, drift . . . I imagined we were all inside a jumbo jet, cruising silently at 39,000 feet. At the controls up front was the President, with the First Lady serving as co-pilot. There was no cockpit. It was more like those "flying wing" planes that were tested back in the Fifties.

And, there was a strange sense of urgency on this plane. The passengers and crew were so quiet—it was clear we were in some kind of danger. But what? Then came an announcement over the plane's P.A. It was Bush, our captain, speaking.

"We'll be crashing in five minutes," he said good-naturedly. "Please get in the crash position, will ya?"

Everyone put their heads between their knees. I started to do so, but—there was something unusual about this plane. First of all, it was very wide. I mean, how many planes seat thirty across? And how many planes fly without any discernible engine noise? Then it hit me. Of course! This was the Stealth Bomber!

I looked across the aisle. Stewardess Marilyn Quayle was handing a tray of food to Barry Goldwater.

"Here's the special meal you ordered."

Goldwater removed the foil, revealing a bowl of raw eel sections and a bowl of steamed rice. He poured the eel over the rice and, using chopsticks like a master, started to dig in. Then, with a hunk of eel dangling out of his mouth he turned to Yo-Yo Ma and offered him a taste.

"You like eel, little fella?"

"No," said Ma. "And that's not eel."

I looked around the cabin. Some people were still in the crash position. But then, Rich Little stood up, waving a woman's earring.

"I found it!" he shouted, in his own voice. "It was under my seat."

I think I was awake when I saw Little hand the earring to a grateful Shirley Temple.

By now the movie was over. The President and his co-pilot had gone to the door and were saying goodbye to a line of guests. Here, it suddenly occurred to me, was my chance—my one great opportunity to say something to this man—this Bush. But what do I say? And why hadn't I thought about it before?

I went to the end of the "goodnight" line and tried to think of something. A question. Preferably something witty, or clever and/or subversive, or cleverly anarchic and/or annoyingly ironic. And/or—*anything!* I'm about three people down the line from Barbara Bush—whom I hadn't even considered yet—and I'm starting to panic. All I'd come up with so far was, "Nice to meet you." I'm desperate for my muse to kick in. *Why hadn't I thought about this?*

Okay, I can say "Nice to meet you" to Mrs. Bush—it won't make any difference, it won't change history. But the President, that's different. I could say "Call off your dogs in Central America!" or "Slash the defense budget!" or "Give the poor a break!" but none of these frontal assaults would have any effect on what we read fifty years from now. I know that Bush hates hypothetical questions, so I'll stay away from those. What is needed is a riddle, a conundrum, a spider's web. But it must be direct, to the point, something he'll respond to.

Now I'm shaking hands with Barbara Bush, the First Lady. She smiles at me and says, "That's a lovely chocolate milkshake you're

wearing, young man. Where do you buy your clothes? Häagen-Dazs?"

Well, that took me by surprise. At least she didn't say "Ben and Jerry of Beverly Hills." But it was a damn snappy remark for such a patriotic grandma. Who writes her stuff? I wondered at the time.

"I just hope you Scotchguarded the carpet," I fired back, pitifully. *Was this the best I could do?* Oh well, it was only Barbara Bush, I kept reminding myself. My big moment was coming. Just as soon as Bush finished saying goodnight to Charlie Pride he would say goodnight to me, and I would be saying—what?—I didn't know yet! I'm still smiling at Mrs. Bush while I'm thinking, thinking . . .

I tried to remember the stories of Nasrudin, the Sufi teacher of nonsensical logic. Or rhymes by Lear or Carroll. Or questions from ethics discussions in college. But all these were too vague and—there's that word again—hypothetical, and besides, I only had another one or two milliseconds.

"Thanks for coming—goodnight," the President said, almost in earnest, as he shook my cold, sweaty hand. The time had come. And my mind was as blank as Reagan's. But wait, he wasn't finished.

"Say—where do you buy your clothes? Häagen-Dazs?"

Whoa. That threw me. I panicked. I was tongue-tied. And headed out the door. Was that it? Was that the best I could do? I was moving along, near the door, almost gone. It was now or never.

"Good luck throwing your weight around in Central America!" I blurted out.

"Thanks!" he shouted back, just as I passed through the doors of the screening room and out of history.

## PR Wars

by Cheryl Abbott

In the late 1970s, General Manuel Noriega was considered the most feared man in Panama. During a 1978 interview with the *Washington Post*, he conceded that he had "an image problem." A little public relations effort can go a long way in America, but after the deluge of negative news over the current post-election situation in Panama, making Noriega an endeared household word now would be impossible.

During the trial of Oliver North, it was uncovered that Noriega had once offered to assassinate all the leaders of the Sandinista government if the United States were willing to "improve his image." At that time, spiffing up the General's image might have been possible. In fact, then-Vice-President Bush had actually referred to Noriega as "a hero." Those were the days, General.

*The Realist* has learned that in response to the General's request, an unidentified member of the Reagan administration had indeed enlisted a renowned Los Angeles-based PR firm to improve Noriega's image. The following is a reprint of that firm's now-scrapped six-point media plan:



## Garfield Bashing

From *Street* magazine: "Along with California Raisins, the reconstruction of Cher and various other trade marketables, Garfield's face seems to have captured America's imagination—in this case plastered to the window of the family car. A California law dubbed the 'Zero Tolerance for Garfield Law' prevents people from driving on the freeways with furry animals on their front or rear windows.

What's so goddam cute about Garfield? When it comes right down to it, he's a vicious, gluttonous ball of orange polyester. He's the Roadrunner of the Me Generation on a permanent ice cream high.

"When we made a serious attempt to determine Garfield's appeal, and actually asked people about him point blank, their answers were uniformly vague and pointless. *They hadn't thought about it.* 'What is it about a

## 1. Positioning—PR Strategy/Press Conference

Noriega needs to be positioned as "just another world leader." He's really no more corrupt or self-serving than any other politician. A biography to be serviced to the press will focus on his impoverished life and his rise to power. It will list his many humane efforts accomplished on behalf of his superiors as well as highlight his loyalty to his current army of men.

A press conference will be held at which Noriega will make statements denying all charges of murder, money-laundering and gun-running. He will counter further allegations that he would ever kill those in his way, send protesters to exile or abuse women. In regard to drug-smuggling charges, however, he will sadly admit that he had sinned and that his drug trafficking days are over.

He creates an AA-like program, not for drug addicts, but for the drug smugglers—Cocaine Importers Anonymous (CIA). He claims that in the past, selling drugs was his way of setting up a local version of a CETA-type program—helping the unemployed help themselves. He himself had problems living on his \$40,000 a year salary and wanted to prosper so that the people of his country could prosper. It was a new-age philosophy, part of a new prosperity consciousness, an affirmation that would make Terry Cole-Whittaker proud.

Noriega will be free of any convictions relating to drug charges as it was discovered that all receipts from the profits of his drug dealings had been shredded. He was clearly the scapegoat when it came to dealings with the U.S. (Note: Focus on Bush's "hero" statement.) If anyone challenges future elections in Panama, he will explain that he has been guided by God to lead the nation and that is why he must remain in power. (Note: Maybe we could tie this in on a talk show panel . . . call Oral Roberts' publicist.) To any other charges, Noriega will reply, "I don't remember."

## 2. Print Advertising and Commercial Campaigns

Fashion ads put folks in a different light. The General sheds his tacky khaki uniform for a softer look and dons a fashionable outfit from Banana Republic. Print ads will run in *GQ* and *Playboy* and will be used for posters on bus stop shelters. *Vanity Fair* may have an interest in using one of these prints for their cover.

In the TV medium, a Dreyers Ice Cream commercial would reach viewers across America. The General happily munches on a newly created flavor, Snowy Coconut—no, *not* Pineapple—while stating the following: "I know some people think my *modus operandi* is money, property and power. They think I would lie, cheat and bribe to get votes. Now what fun would that be? I want to know that my people are behind me 100%. Just like the voters in America support your leaders." *No es posible?*

Late-night viewers will have a chance to call a 976 number for recorded messages from the General (976-COKE). Listen to his hopes, his dreams and his plans for the future. Your house, your car,

cartoon character that huddles in a blanket all day until it's time to eat that makes you want to identify? we wanted to ask. 'Is it because you're lazy, selfish and cynical too?' But we were too polite for that. And pressing people on it wouldn't have gotten us anywhere anyway. People will admit to liking Garfield, but only in an absent-minded, off-hand sort of way. Garfield lovers become very defensive and suspicious when you start poking around in the commonplace.

"At the risk of stooping to simplistic dualism, perhaps the world is divided into two basic sorts of people: those who hate Garfield and those who love him. Perhaps a disemboweled Garfield could become the figurehead of a new movement, a movement of those who prefer Odie's drooling enthusiasm to Garfield's weary cynicism. Perhaps if Odie could free himself from the stagnant confines of Jim Davis' imagination he'd gut Garfield himself. The revolution would there begin."

your savings (plus toll) if any.

Other endorsement ideas in the works are BMW (he owns a fleet of them) and the California Growers Association (Noriega is a vegetarian; real men *do* eat asparagus).

### 3. Special Events

A press satellite tour is set up for the first day of summer. It's hot fun in the summertime with travel tips for American tourists in this broadcast on all the morning talk shows.

In this appearance, Noriega will take us on a guided tour of his homeland, recommending various hot spots for American travellers. "The Panama Canal—it's not just a big ditch.!"

### 4. Television Appearances

Geraldo Rivera can sharpen his wit for this panel—"Drug Trafficker or Scapegoat?" Other panel members alongside the General include old pal Lt. Col. Oliver North and Grace Jones.

A guest appearance on *The Garry Shandling Show* would bring Noriega into America's livingrooms. Garry takes a vacation cruise when his ship sails a little too close to territorial waters. Unbeknownst to Garry and the ship's captain, relations with Panama and the U.S. have turned increasingly sour. The ship is captured by the Panamanian army and Garry is arrested. Noriega hears about his capture and comes to Garry's rescue. He frees Garry, apologizes, gives him a cigar, a "date" with one of his many female assistants, and escorts him back to L.A. on his private plane.

Other shows being pitched are *Life Styles of the Rich and Famous* (touring the General's many houses in Panama, his apartment in Paris and his chateau in southern France) and *The Phil Donahue Show* ("World Leaders in the Bedroom—Is Bondage the Norm?") with fellow panel members Margaret Thatcher and Augusto Pinochet. He will also be cast in a cameo appearance performing a musical number in the new series, *Men*.

### 5. Public Service Announcements

Two PSA's are slated for production. In one, Noriega comes out in support of Nancy's "Just Say No" campaign. The other, in collaboration with Nate Holden, the General supports the first-ever international gun buy-back program. There will be local tags for broadcast in Panama asking that all guns there are to be shipped directly to his villa.

### 6. Merchandising

In August of 1987, Noriega adopted the slogan "Not One Step Back." Realizing this illustrates him as a tad aggressive, he has rethought this statement. He now wants to express his Buddhist nature and lose his "strongman" identity. Noriega's new motto is "Zen and Now." Paperweights and refrigerator magnets with these slogans imprinted on them will be found in your finer gift stores across America.

Soon to be prominently displayed in airports around the U.S. is the commemorative Noriega T-shirt proclaiming, "Where the Hell Is Panama City?" Available in red and black only. Don't ask for white (that's the color worn by protestors in support of the opposition).

Created by a leading toy manufacturer—it's the "General Tony Doll." Yes, G.I. Joe is soon to have a new pal. Sold separately or in sets, boys looking for that ideal role model can now get Joe or Tony in the same jeep, hut or voting booth.

## Cola Wars

by Andy Valvur

DATE: July 26, 2269

FROM: Research

TO: Editor

Pursuant to your request for information regarding the so-called "Cold War" of the 20th Century, our records indicate that due to computer error as a result of a virus, this conflict should really have been called the "Cola War." Toward the end of the 20th Century, nation-states were replaced by corporate entities, the largest of which were called Coke and Pepsi.

For years historians believed that the cold war was a conflict between nation-states over ideology when in fact research has shown that it was merely a clever marketing gimmick conceived by the marketing departments of these corporations to engender consumer

loyalty.

The principal product of these corporations was a soft drink named "cola"—a toxic mixture of sugar and caffeine, since outlawed, which when consumed by a global population already existing on an unbalanced diet, created a volatile situation. The earth's population during this time period was largely primitive, superstitious and prone to worshipping deities which often took the form of humans.

The earth at this time was divided up into two distinct camps—the God-fearing and the Godless. Coke and Pepsi made their home in the principal God-fearing nation-state known as the United States. The Godless nation-states were the two more populous—the Soviet Union and China. The chief source of tension between these two blocks was the exporting of their respective ideologies.

The West, as the God-fearing bloc was called, was for the longest time pursuing a policy of denying the East containers of cola. A policy they called "containment." The East for its part considered cola a dangerous substance and did not permit its importation.

Eventually, the cola companies, realizing the profit potential in being able to tap the markets of the East (Godless), through clever manipulation of the West's media gained a foothold in the Soviet Union. Coke, not to be outdone, claimed for itself the most populous nation, China. In the God-fearing nation this new policy was carefully orchestrated to appear as though it were a great victory for the West.

The cola company called Pepsi enlisted the services of the deity known as Madonna to endorse their product. Our records indicate that Madonna was known as the mother of the greatest deity of the West, a man known as Jesus Christ. A curious note here: the worshipping of deities in the west involved the ritualistic drinking of the blood of this Jesus. Pepsi, in having Madonna endorse their product through a medium known as the music video, claimed to have gained a moral victory over the Godless nation. Pepsi explained that by having the Soviet Union drinking *their* cola—a cola endorsed by Madonna—*ipso facto* the Soviets were drinking the blood of a deity. Thus, a moral victory in ideological terms.

The resulting firestorm of protest that erupted in the United States primarily over the fear of shortages of Pepsi because of having to supply a vast new market and the usurpation of their deity by the Soviet Union led to the dismissal by Pepsi of Madonna.

## What's Not So Funny?

by Suzanne Stefanac

In *Rain Man*, Dustin Hoffman's character, Raymond, struggles with the old Abbott and Costello "Who's on first?" routine as though it were a riddle that he could solve. Like his brother in the movie, I, too, once believed that I could help others unravel the mysteries of humor. In my case, the enthusiasm was soon tempered with humility.

I was working with a special education aphasia class in San Francisco's Mission district. Much like Raymond, students with this disability are unable to process and appreciate jokes. This is hard on young teenagers and I thought I might be able to help. After reading a dozen theories on humor—none of which agreed, of course—I went into the classroom armed with film clips, cartoons and a script full of classic school-kid gags. The students soon began to see a pattern emerging. It was clear that a punch-line was something wholly unexpected, something that struck a personal chord and that jarred the listener into laughter.

One morning soon after the humor lessons, Luis wandered into class late. I asked him why. He stammered and then began laughing nervously. I told him to sit down and listen to the new spelling words. Fidgeting and anxious, he kept erupting into inappropriate forced giggles.

Finally, I told him to tell us what was so funny or he'd have to stay after class. "A funny thing happened on the way to school," he began hopefully. The class chuckled appreciatively, recognizing one of the lines they'd learned by rote. "The school bus hit a big white dog and killed it" he blurted out and then began laughing hysterically.

Suddenly I understood. I ran to hug Luis. "It wasn't funny," I reassured him and the stunned class. "Just because it was a surprise doesn't mean that it was a joke." Luis burst into tears, obviously grateful to learn that he wasn't supposed to laugh at the big dog's death.

## HITLER'S PARTY

(Continued from Cover)

verbal jousting for the amusement of their fellows.

"Fuck niggers!" shot one.

"Niggers fuck!" retorted the other.

"Fuck fuckin' niggers! Fuck!" rejoined the first without missing a beat, and the crowd roared appreciatively. The topic of repartee shifted to Spics, and I moved on.

The Big House, which the Old Man had dubbed the Eagle's Nest Junior, had been decked out in red-and-black crepe paper and swastika banners for the occasion. A large and attentive crowd had gathered on the front porch, and at first I thought I might find our host himself in the middle of it. But it proved to be only Kurt Waldheim, entertaining a group of homesick Austrian expatriates.

"Say, Kurt," said one. "Remember when we bulldozed that line of Croatian resistance fighters into that ditch full of wooden spikes?"

"No," chuckled Waldheim, "I don't remember anything!"

"Well, how about the time we rounded up all those Serbian Jews," grinned another, "and made them light each other on fire?"

"No," sighed Waldheim nostalgically. "I don't remember anything."

"You ought to do something about that memory, you old dog!" said Arnold Schwarzenegger, and they all laughed warmly.

Inside the house, the atmosphere was not so cheerful. Various Latin American heads of state lounged in the parlor, shaking their heads about the recent spread of the virus of democracy through their lands.

"Sure, the ARENA victory in Salvador is encouraging," said Manuel Noriega. "But it could never make up for the ingrates right here in Paraguay voting out dear old Mr. Stroessner."

"With Alfie gone," added Augusto Pinochet, "the Old Man himself might not be able to stay here. Where can he go any more? Hawaii?"

Just then the gloom was shattered by a pair of deep-throated laughs. I turned to see something that I would never have expected at the Old Man's hideaway: a pair of large black men, one in a tuxedo and the other in military uniform, tromping boldly toward the grand ballroom. I followed them, wondering what their errand could possibly be, and heard an aged voice greeting them in German: "Baby Doc! Idi! I'm so glad you could come! I was beginning to think only the old guard was going to make it!"

"How could we miss your birthday, Papa?" asked Baby Doc.

"Without you, we wouldn't have had an ideological nail to hang our whips on," said Idi Amin.

I stepped behind them and peered between. There he was, the Old Man himself. He looked much the way you'd expect. The same little mustache, the same lock of hair falling over his forehead, only both white as snow now. He was thin and weak, confined to a

wheelchair, but he displayed that same cute little smirk, those same dandified gestures brimming with self-satisfaction. He still wore his familiar brown shirt with the iron cross, but now it was under a terrycloth bathrobe.

He caught me looking at him and beckoned me to him. "Do I know you?" he asked.

I told him no, that I apparently got an invitation to his party by mistake, but curiosity wouldn't let me stay away.

"Well, that's fine! Fine!" he said. "I want everyone to share this moment with me. These are pluralistic times. Mankind is united in a single economic and ecological dilemma. We mustn't be exclusive anymore. Fascism and the politics of hate and fear must be just as eclectic as everything else!"

Then, as if to illustrate his point, in walked Yitzhak Shamir and Ezar Weitzman, bearing birthday gifts from Israel.

"So how's it going, boys?" the Old Man asked.

"Well," said Shamir, "we've pushed them into ghettos—you should pardon the expression—and we've provoked them into giving us a perfect excuse . . ."

"But there are still too many liberals who won't let us herd them into the boxcars," lamented Weitzman.

"Tut tut," said the Old Man. "I'll put in a call to my friends in Iran. They'll call for a bloody uprising against Israelis and Americans, you'll get all the votes and money you need, they'll get a bunch of martyrs, and everybody's happy!"

"Adolf," said Shamir, "you're a mensch!"

"What kind of mensch?" the Old Man asked.

"An *uber-mensch!*" roared Weitzman on cue, and they all broke up laughing.

The Old Man became subdued after that, waxing philosophical. "You see, son," he said to me, "it's not the race or the nation *per se*. The method's the thing. Keeping the existing social structure in place through fear and hatred and trumped-up wars. Make the common people believe that their prosperity and security are dependent on falling into line behind the interests of the privileged classes. If they aren't obedient, the *others* are going to creep into their houses and take what little they have. It hardly even matters who the *others* are!"

"I'm just gratified to see men and women of every race, creed, and nation learning to apply my lessons to politics. We just have to watch out for the people. People are foolish, they make selfish and uninformed decisions. Why, if I had listened to the people, I'd never have been able to turn our little border disputes into total war!"

"But, the war was disastrous, for you and for Germany," I said.

"Pish tosh," he said. "You have to give something to get something. The world lost the Reich . . . but look what it gained in the Cold War!"

His spirits brightened, and he plunged into the opening of his countless birthday presents. There was a basket of pineapples from the Marcoses, and a little diamond pinky ring from Pieter Botha, and a case of vodka from

some of the old members of the Kremlin.

"I'm glad a few of them are still on my side," he cooed. "But it'll never be like in Uncle Joe Stalin's time again. How sad that our little *contretemps* had to end so quickly. We could have danced all night, so to speak. War makes us so much stronger!"

"I thought war decimated the populations of both your countries," I said.

"Well, if you want to count *bodies*," he sniffed. "But it's the *symbols* that count!"

Finally there was the gift that a group of right-wing freedom fighters had delivered, having picked it up from a Caribbean drug kingpin who got it from a Mafioso who was given it by the owner of a small airline in Florida at the request of a group of California businessmen. The Old Man opened it and grinned with joy.

"Jelly beans!" he squealed. "Who says he isn't the nicest guy in the world?"

The party came to a climax when a bunch of the birthday boy's old *émigré* pals chipped in on a Degrade-O-Gram: a huge-breasted Aryan amazon entered the room, sang "Happy Birthday," and defecated on the Old Man's head.

Then, at last, came the cake: a double-decker black forest with a map of the world drawn on it in frosting and one hundred candles burning on top. Some of the old boys made jokes about where the tallow came from for the candles, but the Old Man thoughtfully shushed them and nodded toward the Israeli contingent.

"Make a wish, Mein Fuehrer!" yelled Martin Bormann.

"I wish for a neat, orderly world," said the Old Man, and started to blow.

It was too much for him. Suddenly he gasped. He gurgled. He clutched his chest and pitched forward, face-first, into the cake. He was dead.

A pall settled over the room. "It's over," said President Qaddafi. "We face a losing battle already. Without his example, there's no hope."

But then a young American in a three-piece suit stepped forward. He wiped the cake off Der Fuehrer's face, tilted his head back, closed his eyes.

"No," he said. "We're winning the battle. We just won't need uniforms anymore. We won't need charismatic leaders. We'll let the people themselves do the leading for us. As long as we can keep squeezing the middle class, while using race and class fears to keep it on our side . . . as long as we can get people to abrogate their rights in the name of safety, health, and drug-control . . . as long as we can lock the poor into lives of marginal subsistence, dependent on the government . . . as long as we can keep the military at the center of all decision-making . . . as long as we can trivialize all resistance and discontent . . . in short, as long as we can keep them valuing *security* over liberty and personal power . . . we've got this thing locked up."

The party broke up then, and the crowd drifted back toward the boats, subdued but hopeful.

April in Paraguay. I know I'll live it again.

## MEDIA FREAK

### Apologizing for Humor

This little ad ran in the *Los Angeles Reader*: "Attention, Teenagers: Suicide is a 'great' way to solve your problems, and anyone who tells you otherwise is not to be trusted."

In the next issue, the publisher apologized: "The 'Personals' section of last week's *Classifieds* contained an advertisement that could have been read as encouraging suicide. Written by a frequent contributor to the Personals section who apparently meant it to be ironic, the ad inadvertently slipped through our editors and proofreaders. It should have never been accepted or published. The individuals responsible have been reprimanded for their inattention. *The Reader* does not advocate, condone or promote suicide by any person, at any time, for any reason. We regret publishing the ad. If you are contemplating suicide, or if you know someone who is, don't do it and don't encourage anyone to do it. Please call for help instead." And a couple of suicide prevention phone numbers were listed.

Chris Rock is a young black standup comic, a protege of Eddie Murphy. He used to conclude his act with a line, "The other day, I was in South Africa. Or was it Boston?" Recently, on the Arsenio Hall show, he did this bit: "When does 'date rape' occur? Usually after a guy spends more than \$300 on a date. Girl comes back to your place, not 'cause you dragged her by the hair, but because she wanted to come back. One thing leads to another, she has the panties around her ankles, you make the move, and she goes, 'No, I don't like you that way. I like you as a friend.' I got a friend named Mike—he don't pull down his pants to here."

Feminists complained. The next evening, Hall announced, "Last night a comedian on the show did some jokes on 'date rape' and I didn't think they were really appropriate. I'd like to apologize to a lot of people for some of the things that were said. There is a line. It's my show, I'll draw it."

### Opening Legal Briefs

From the Disciplinary Records of the California State Bar Association: "Michael Baker was ordered suspended for two years, with the suspension stayed while he is placed on probation for six years. A bar referee found that Baker had been convicted numerous times for exposing himself in public places. He was first convicted in May 1980 and then four more times until 1987. In the final instance, Baker was sentenced in August 1987 to five years' probation for exposing himself outside a woman's residence. The woman and her two adult daughters reported to police that Baker had stood across the street from their residence and fondled himself while nude down to his socks. The women said that Baker continued in this conduct while looking at them through their residence window. Police later found him in his car trying to put his pants on. He admitted that he had exposed himself to the women. Expert witnesses at the disciplinary hearing testified that Baker had a

compulsive sexual disorder, but that he is now cured. The referee concluded that Baker's crimes did not involve moral turpitude and that his acts did not adversely impact on the public's image of lawyers. . . ."

### Tabloid Journalism

The *National Enquirer* reports that Ronald Reagan's horrified gardener frantically alerted security guards when he spied a terrorist in a hideous white mask lurking in the ex-President's Bel Air garden. They raced to the spot with their guns drawn, but relaxed when they saw the assassin was Ronnie himself, wearing anti-wrinkle face cream.

The *Washington Post* reports that George Bush, out for a run in Washington, jogged right into a tour bus garage and asked if he could please use the men's room. An employee said that the commander in chief went past the corporate offices "where there are nice bathrooms" to the one in the garage. When he emerged, the company director told him he should feel free "to use our facilities anytime."



### Damage Control

In pursuit of trivialization, Exxon teamed up with Alaska's tourist bureau for a TV commercial which equates the recent oil spill with the mole above Marilyn Monroe's lip. Presumably, media mole Linda Ellerbe was not available.

Hoping to prevent the Rob Lowe sex scandal from becoming public, his attorneys hired a female private detective who infiltrated the lesbian underground which was distributing the video in Atlanta.

Conversely, Oprah Winfrey was reduced to denying an unspecified rumor on her network show. It had been started by a group of brokers at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange to see how fast a rumor could spread. Then it surfaced as a blind item in a *Chicago Sun-Times* column. Then callers to a local radio talk show named Oprah as the subject of the rumor. Finally, on *Entertainment Tonight*, Mary Hart said, "Rumors claim the woman is popular talk show host Oprah Winfrey. They say she found her boyfriend in bed with her hairdresser. We have uncovered nothing to suggest that it is true."

Of course, it wasn't her hairdresser after all; it was Speaker of the House Tom Foley.

### Supreme Court Lament

Abortions will soon be illegal except in the case of rape, incest, or having one performed on an American flag.

### Filler Items

• From *Blab!*: "People have counterfeited bubble gum cards. There was a counterfeit Pete Rose card printed up and passed off as a Topps baseball card."

• At a dinner attended by Ronald Reagan and 900 members of the Catholic hierarchy, Peter Grace stated: "Everybody who's for abortion was at one time themselves a feces. And that includes all of you out there. You were once a feces."

• Gay comic Jaffe Cohen: "AIDS is a virus; *George Bush* is a punishment from God."

• On NPR, Daniel Schorr wondered whether, since Bush originally accused Reagan of "voodoo economics" and now practices it himself, is this a case of "deja voodoo?"

• Black comic Beverly Mickens: "If I get busted, I know I'm not going to be treated like John Zaccaro, Jr. Four months in a Vermont jail for selling cocaine. Ooh, what's he gonna do, help Ben and Jerry make ice cream?"

• Columnist Gordon Dillow: "But what if instead of buying me lunch, my cop friend had simply handed me \$9.95 in cash? Clearly, it would be unethical for me to take it."

• An AP dispatch tells of a man "with such an uncanny resemblance to Ferdinand Marcos" that he acted as a stand-in for him during his successful presidential campaign, "appearing at rallies and meetings where Marcos was not expected to speak." The best part, he said, "was getting the table of his choice at the best restaurants and squiring Marcos' wife, Imelda." (He was a shoe-in?)

• From *Premiere*: "Studio marketing strategies and directors' last-minute editing often mean that trailers and TV commercials contain scenes that never appear in the movies. Some trailers, however, are made from scenes that were never meant to be in the movie. 'It's not meant to deceive,' says Tri-Star's executive v.p. of marketing. 'It's just meant to sell tickets.'"

• Just after Jodie Foster won an Academy Award and just before she entered the press room, this announcement was made: "Please, no questions regarding John Hinckley. This is Oscar night."

• Charles Manson continues to receive the largest amount of fan mail in the history of the U.S. prison system, once receiving more than 200 pounds of letters and packages in a single day.

• Radio host Larry Josephson asked listeners to call in songs with the word Fax in the title. Okay, now everybody sing, *I've Grown Accustomed to Your Fax*. . . .

• From the *Neo-Participant* ("An Indiana Subterranean Journal of Change"): "It is sad to report the passing of the CBS weekly training film for positive living. *Beauty and the Beast* will not return in the fall to inspire those who know that change comes through those who live outside the system."

• From the *San Francisco Examiner*: "A man who was asked to show some identification to county sheriff's deputies was arrested after he showed them the only piece of identification he had—a warrant for his arrest." Happy ending: "He was released on his own recognizance."