

# The Realist

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• Steve Allen  
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## Noriega's Secret Diary

December 12, 1983

Once again I meet today with my good and great friend in Washington, Mr. George Bush. We did some drugs on my boat. First time for him since 1976, or so he swears. But I don't believe it. He's a fucking vacuum cleaner. And still a drag. He goes through three lines of my best shit before finally making a point. Hasn't changed one bit.

So he says to me, "It's like this, Manny," he says, squeezing his nose and licking his fingers. "You get behind us on this contra thing, you help us out on this one and I promise we look cross-eyed on all this other crap you're into," and he continues to lick his fingers.

So I say to him, "What other crap are you talking about? Could you be more specific?"

And so he starts in on his fourth line and then looks at me and winks, "I think we both respect our mutual interests enough to know what crap I'm talking about."

A real foreskin, this gringo. A fucking *carajo*. But no matter. He licks his fingers, I scratch my ass, we shake hands. It's all the same. Besides, it's all on videotape anyway.

June 21, 1985

Met with Colonel Oliver North today. Took him out on my boat. But he wasn't impressed. He's such a fucking prima donna. I offer to share my own needle with him and he insults me.

"Thanks," he says, "but I never touch the stuff while I'm undermining the U.S. Constitution."

Who the fuck does he think he is? A pretty boy like him wouldn't last two minutes in one of my army barracks. But, plenty of time for that later. So we chew the fat. More contra talk. More secret documents. More business about the Communist bastards in Nicaragua and the people's right to a free and democratic society. So much high and mighty bullshit on one boat that I was getting sick. Face it, the Colonel is a stinking *pinga*, and he knows it. But I play along. The climate is agreeable. The money is good. And Colonel North, after all, is a very handsome gringo.

October 6, 1985

Met again with fucking Colonel North today. This time in the public bathroom at the airport Holiday Inn. His idea, not mine. He complains of stomach pains and diarrhea. He's been in my country for less than two hours and he thinks he's dying of dysentery. A regular shithouse full of ideas, this guy. *Un*

(Continued on Page 3)



We're No Angels

## COURT JESTER

### Patty Hearst Meets General Noriega

Back in 1976, while I was covering the Patty Hearst trial, I received the following certified letter from the FBI:

Dear Mr. Krassner,

Subsequent to the search of a residence in connection with the arrest of six members of the Emiliano Zapata Unit, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, San Francisco, has been attempting to contact you to advise you of the following information:

During the above indicated arrest of six individuals of the Emiliano Zapata Unit, an untitled list of names and addressees of individuals was seized. A corroborative source described the above list as an Emiliano Zapata Unit "hit list," but stated that no action will be taken, since all of those who could carry it out are in custody. Further, if any of the apprehended individuals should make bail, they would only act upon the "hit list" at the instructions of their leader, who is not and will not be in a position to give such instructions.

The above information is furnished for your personal use and it is requested it be kept confidential. At your discretion, you may desire to contact the local police department responsible for the area of your residence.

Very truly yours, Charles W. Bates, Special Agent in Charge

Through my sources in the Berkeley underground, I was able to learn that (a) the Emiliano Zapata Unit was an FBI provocateur group—apparently, the right wing of the FBI was warning me about the left wing of the FBI—and (b) the reason I was on their hit list was because I had written that Donald "Cinque" DeFreeze—leader of the Symbionese Liberation Army that had kidnapped Patty Hearst—was himself a police informer, which turned out to be a matter of record.

I was reminded of all this by the capture of Manuel Noriega, who, like Cinque, was working for an American law enforcement agency, then got out of control. Have an equation: Cinque was to the prison system as Noriega was to the Drug Enforcement Administration. The difference is that Cinque was burned alive in a Los Angeles safe-house, whereas Noriega found refuge in a Vatican embassy, where the U.S. Army bombarded him with a record of John Lennon singing, "Nobody told me there'd be days like this . . ."

### Blood On the Laugh Tracks

Borrowed from the British radio program, *Desert Island Discs*, there is a show called *Castaway's Choice* on KCRW in Santa Monica. Each week a guest is asked to choose ten records which they'd want to have on a desert island, then explain the reasons they were selected. Host John McNally also asks what book you would bring, what person from history you'd like to be visited by, what one luxury you'd want, and what you'd be glad to leave behind.

Recently I was a guest on the show, and what I picked out to leave behind was canned laughter. Since laughter is music to me, canned laughter is a perversion of my music. It consists of dead people who were taped laughing at *I Love Lucy* who are now laughing posthumously at *The Cosby Show*. Is that what the civil rights struggle was about?

Mel Brooks once talked about the operator of a laugh console who had integrity. If a producer requested a nine after a particular line of dialogue, this guy would refuse, explaining, "It only deserves a three."

Canned laughter is the lowest form of fascism. It is propaganda that falsely—almost subliminally—implies something is funny when it isn't. Real laughter is a spontaneous process that represents the sense of humor of a unique individual. Canned laughter is the epitome of televised hypnotic suggestion. It is TV's ultimate insult to the audience.

A few years ago I did a study of the alleged humor in situation comedies for the *Los Angeles Times*. A byproduct of my research—which consisted of watching every possible sitcom week after week—was a certain awareness that after a while, canned laughter had begun to re-program my nervous system. Now when something on TV struck me funny, I noticed myself hesitating for just a split second—waiting for permission to laugh from the laugh track.

I had lost my instinctive sense of critical judgment.

When CNN broadcast live the parole hearing of Sirhan Sirhan and a woman on the Parole Board began, "Mr. Sirhan, let me ask you a question"—but he interrupted her and said, "Oh, please, that's not necessary, call me Sirhan"—without a laugh track to tell me, I wasn't sure whether or not to laugh. Was he trying to be funny, or was obsequiousness merely part of his religious tradition?

Similarly, I waited to hear a laugh track when Tom Brokaw announced on NBC Nightly News that President Bush said he was "saddened" by the death of Ferdinand Marcos and that former President Reagan said he was "deeply saddened."

I paused for a laugh track when Dan Rather mentioned on the CBS Evening News that for every political execution in China, the family of the victim is billed 13¢ for the cost of a bullet.

Likewise, without a laugh track, I couldn't tell if it was funny when Peter Jennings on ABC News asked a Republican senator, "Do you think we have a genuine education president now?"

Where was the laugh track when Diane Sawyer asked Dr. Haing Ngor whether he had any regrets about not saving his wife's life during the Khmer Rouge occupation in Cambodia?

And where was the laugh track when Larry King—responding to Ronald Reagan saying that he was no longer "pry to the information"—asked the former President, "Do you miss the privy?"

I had gone out of control. Zsa Zsa Gabor declared that she was afraid to go to prison because there were lesbians there, then gays and lesbians announced they were going to boycott her, and I didn't know whether to laugh because they didn't know *what* to boycott.

I didn't know whether to laugh when, on the local news, a reporter commented on the Pasadena Rose Queen, "They say it takes an extraordinary young woman to sit on a throne for six hours."

I couldn't tell whether those two daredevils who went over Niagara Falls in a barrel were *serious* when they claimed that this was a way of communicating to kids that they could get high without taking drugs.

I had lost the ability to tell the difference between a sound bite and an acid flashback.

I couldn't tell if it was funny when a woman on *48 Hours* bragged that she didn't put her mother, whom she had abused, in a nursing home because she "didn't want *strangers* hitting her."

Yes, I found myself in desperate need of a laugh track. I was hopelessly hooked. Fortunately, the sitcom *Doctor, Doctor* gave me a proper fix. A female doctor had been married to a bisexual man who now had AIDS and she was afraid *she* might have it. A male doctor who had slept with her once thought *he* might have AIDS too. Obviously, they had to be tested.

The male doctor said to the female doctor, "Well, you know what we do now, right?"

"Live life to the fullest, I guess."

And that line was followed by a laugh track. Otherwise, I might never have guessed that it was funny.

### Coming Full Cycle

A few decades ago I served my journalistic apprenticeship under Lyle Stuart, who now refers to me as his "one-time Pygmalion." He lent me his copy of *Johnny Got His Gun* by Dalton Trumbo, which had such a powerful effect on me that I persuaded him to publish a new edition of the book. It would later serve to inspire Ron Kovic to write *Born on the Fourth of July*.

In 1964, as a satirical summation of cold war hysteria, I published the infamous *Fuck Communism!* poster, the sales of which enabled Robert Scheer to travel to Southeast Asia for his seminal *How The United States Got Involved in Vietnam*. This past new year's eve, I performed at a benefit for the Alliance for Survival. Ron Kovic was the guest of honor. I presented him with an original *Fuck Communism!* poster, remarking that "You didn't have to fuck communism, because communism has been fucking itself."

Meanwhile—even as the *Disability Rag* was reporting that "The Pentagon is designing a portable laser that will enable U.S. troops to temporarily blind enemy soldiers"—Ray Charles appeared in a commercial for Pepsi or Coke, the first time a physical handicap has been used as a specific vehicle to sell a product. Could this be the start of a new trend? Look, there goes Ron Kovic in his wheelchair wildly careening down a hallway, then suddenly screeching to a halt where a stereotypical scrubwoman has been applying a non-slip floor wax.

## Solutions in Cold Blood

I am in favor of legal abortions for personal reasons. I might need one some day. I am against capital punishment for similarly personal reasons. I might deserve it some day. The odds may be slim but there's always an off chance that I'll slam an ice-pick into the ear of an editor or go ape-shit with an Uzi in a parking lot. My concerns have nothing to do with ideology and everything to do with survival instinct. This is not politics or religion, but practicality.

Nonetheless, I sympathize with those ideologues on the right and on the left who have been tortured by cognitive dissonance over these issues. The pro-choice folks are so often against capital punishment, and the pro-lifers are usually so bent on protecting the unborn but burning the bad guys, that they all share the psychic agony of inconsistency. The whole megillah is a drag and, I suspect, unnecessary because the cure is only a few million bucks worth of research away. Hiroshima was not the first technological solution to a political problem and it won't be the last.

Consider, for example, that the glories of cryogenics go far beyond frozen pizza. For years cattle breeders have been upgrading their stock by buying frozen thoroughbred calf fetuses, and thawing them for planting in the wombs of cheaper cows. Fast freezing techniques now allow a fertilized human ovum to be stored undamaged indefinitely, even long enough for civil suits to be decided in court.

Meanwhile, on a planet infested with humans, infertility is the latest ailment of the well-heeled to become a major medical industry. Turkey basters have given way to petri dishes for insemination purposes. Surrogate mother schemes have proliferated to the point that some canny entrepreneurs propose hiring impoverished third-world women to carry the fetuses of American families.

(The advantage of the poor folk as vessels is that they'll work for the price of the food it takes to maintain them during the pregnancy, rather than demanding the U.S. womb-for-rent fee of \$10,000 plus expenses.)

Some career women are apt to invest in the surrogate plan to avoid damage to their physiques or their work schedules. There is a constant clamor for adoptable infants while thousands of fetuses are being aborted and incinerated in the midst of hideous controversy.

What we've got here is a rich demand for a commodity that is currently being wasted. Freeze technology has the potential to get the piggies to market, so to speak. One capitalist giant with the vision and the testicular fortitude to finance the Research and Development necessary, hire the ad agency and arrange the distribution system, could put an end to the entire abortion issue. Don't scrape and flush those fetuses, pluck 'em and freeze 'em. Healthy fetuses could be graded and priced according to their genetic gifts. Those that are malformed, weak, addicted to crack, or a color that's over-stocked, are simply damaged products that can be discreetly recycled, or, if

the protest demonstrations get out of hand, sold in discount chains.

Scratch one political nightmare. With a jump from the private to the public sector, cryogenics might also pull the switch on the endless controversy over the death penalty. Freezing fetuses for future pregnancies is now a standard procedure and soon we'll be able to flash-freeze capital criminals. Imagine how cheap it would be to store thugsicles. No guards. No riots. No food, uniforms, or medical expenses. Just a refrigerator-repair crew for maintenance. The polar ice caps might be useful repositories, or recognizing the reluctance of taxpayers to ante up for jails, tax rebates could be offered to citizens volunteering storage space in their home freezers.

Consider, too, the possibility of future usefulness. Say you've got a brush-fire war going in some distant and puny principality. You don't have to mobilize the pride of the nation and spend billions getting decent citizens smeared. You just decant a battalion of monsters. A microchip set into their craniums could call the survivors home to their freezing trays when the job is done. Or say the CIA needs an assassin. No need to incriminate government employees. Why waste skilled murderers with proven track records? Just pick an expert in the method desired—garrote, ice pick, plastic explosive or whatever—thaw him out and point him.

—Katherine Dunn

## Editorial Cartoon Censored by Newsday



## Equal Opportunity

Barbara Bush is certainly consistent in her pro-choice attitude. First she came out in favor of women's right to abortion; then she came out in favor of women's right to be combat soldiers. A letter to the *L.A. Times* crystallized the latter conflict: "Perhaps when the 18-year-old girls start coming home in wheelchairs and body bags, we'll begin to wonder why we think it acceptable for 18-year-old boys to come home that way."

Previously, the *Times* reported from Rome: "Traditionally, women have been spared as targets of Mafia violence for the same male-dominant reasons that exclude them from membership in Mafia councils. If a woman died in a Mafia ambush, it was only because she had gotten in the way of the real target. Such was the Sicilian ethic. No more." The *Times* referred to "the birth of the Mafia's new equal-death policy."

## Noriega's Diary

(Continued from Cover)

*ojo del culo.* So he sits on a toilet behind one stall while I sit on a toilet behind another and we try to out-shit one another. He talks about the contras and how well they need to be trained in my country and how the Sandinistas are godless murderers and what a glorious victory it will be when truth, justice and the American way are fully restored to the Nicaraguan people. Same old crap.

As for me, I talk about money. Lots of money. Millions and billions of American dollars.

"It's not for me, you understand," I tell him. "It's for my people."

This is a good joke and it makes Colonel North laugh so hard he falls off the toilet and into his own shit. The place stinks to bad we can hardly breathe. We flush and both toilets back up. Soon the place is flooded and we are up to our ankles in it. Colonel North is standing on a sink. His pants are down and he has failed to wipe himself. Then he begins to puke. *Es un culo de mal asiento.* I want him bad. But I restrain myself.

## December 30, 1987

Over the last two years my good and generous *amigos* in Washington have done much to improve my image with the American people. In fact, I am so impressed that when I finally get out of politics I plan to move to Washington and start my own public relations firm. Khadafy would be a good first client. In the meantime, today I sent another computer message to Colonel North. This time I am asking him to do something to improve my looks. In exchange, I have offered to send a thousand select Panamanian soldiers into Nicaragua to assassinate, sabotage, burn, pillage, rape and plunder. But quietly. I have heard that American plastic surgeons are the best in the world. I want to look like Cary Grant. Or John Travolta. Or Julio Iglesias. I am very, very excited.

## February 4, 1988

Today I find out that I am a wanted man in America! I've been indicted by one of their federal courts for selling drugs! I can't believe it! *Vaya follon!* I have been betrayed! Those fucking assholes! Those goddamn fucking... No. Now wait a minute. I must remain calm about this. Everything's just fucked up, that's all. It's happened before. *Todo esa jodido.* Sure, that's it. It's all a big fucking mistake. I must relax. Do some more drugs. Think this through. Spend time with the ladies. And the men. It's nothing. Just another misunderstanding. *Eso es como cagadas de hormiga.* Sure, that's it. Just like ant shit. Somebody fucked up, that's all. They must be talking about some other guy named "Noriega." *Absolutamente.* And when I find this impostor I will kill him. I will devour his testicles. I will have his *buevos* for breakfast. There. I feel better already.

## May 10, 1989

I am beginning to suspect that my good and great friends in Washington are turning

against me. I could be wrong. I could be totally mistaken. I could be taking too many drugs. I could have the clap again. Maybe I'm getting my period. I just don't know any more. The fact is, my man was supposed to win this goddamn election and he didn't. I had assurances from the Americans on this. Christ, the only reason I held these fucking elections in the first place was because the CIA wanted a smokescreen for their operations in Nicaragua.

My man was supposed to win this fucking election, no sweat. Instead, that hard lump-of-a-turd, Endara, takes it. I still can't believe it! The Americans must be up to something good. There's always a good reason for what they do. I will wait and see. In the meantime, I will cancel the results, install my own man as president anyway, and personally beat the shit out of Endara for being such an overweight swine. This is it. No more "Mister Nice Guy." *A la chingada!*

#### May 11, 1989

As usual, I was mistaken. The Americans simply screwed up, that's all. Stuffed the wrong ballots in the wrong boxes. It could happen to anyone. My good and extremely kind friend, George Bush, called me personally to apologize.

"You did the right thing, under the circumstances, Manny," he tells me. "And to make it up to you, I'm sending 2000 more American troops your way today . . . just in case your people get any ideas about starting a popular revolution."

This is a very smart man. And I should have never doubted him. I feel good. So good that I think I will beat the shit out of that pig, Endara, again. If I can find him. I hear he has taken refuge in the Vatican Embassy. Fucking *cabron*. Fucking Catholic Church. Fucking God. *Dios es un cagado!*

#### October 3, 1989

Another attempted coup today. It failed miserably. In fact, it was fucking pathetic. It really makes me wonder what kind of soldiers I've been turning out all these years. *Bollos y pendejos*. They didn't even have the balls to shoot me when they had the chance. So I shot *them* instead. Fuck it. Hopefully, such an example will serve as an encouragement to others. There is a rumor that the Americans were behind this coup. I hope so. They always have such good excuses for this kind of shit. Anyone else would be totally paranoid by now. I will do some good shit tonight, just in from Northern California. Things look good. *Muy bueno*.

#### October 4, 1989

Those Americans are goddamned smart. For gringos. My good and bigger-than-life American friends in Washington have informed me today that yesterday's coup attempt was merely a dress rehearsal; a table-setting for bigger and better things to come. I am very excited because I will be even richer than I am now, and living in America, too. I don't have all the details yet, but they need a legal U.S. base for military operations in this region,

especially for maneuvers into Colombia. I am very fortunate that they have chosen Panama.

We simply need to come up with a plan that will enable me to turn the country over to them without too much suspicion. Can you believe this shit? It's fucking brilliant! Christ, I wish I was an American. They know how to think, how to deal, how to live. Fuck Panama. I am sick of governing a nation of whores, assholes, pricks and shitheads. I can't wait to blow this stinking country. I am so excited my bowels are moving by themselves for the first time in years. I must have injected some pure shit this morning. *Tengo que cagar*.

#### December 15, 1989

Finally got the word today from my good and devious friends in Washington. They need a good excuse to invade my country, so today I will declare war on America! It's so ludicrous it just might work! What tension! I love it! In exchange for handing them the country, I will get to live in America. My case, of course, will be thrown out of court. This goes without saying. After all, George may be an asshole, but he's not a *stupid* asshole. Afterwards, I will become an American citizen and secure a teaching position and lecture extensively and write a bestselling book and meet Oprah Winfrey. Maybe get my own talk show. America, I love you! *Viva la Revolución!* "My country tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing . . ."

#### December 16, 1989

Now they tell me they can't just invade Panama simply because I declare war on them. They need something more. Something a little more daring. Some kind of incident. It has been slyly suggested that an American soldier might meet with an accident. Who are they kidding? *Brava cagalera*. Shit. I am so weary of all this crap. I sometimes think I would have been better off living the life of a peasant shepherd. Sheep can be very beautiful animals. At night. Okay. They want a fucking incident? I will give them a fucking incident.

#### December 17, 1989

So what happens? I shoot a miserable American soldier and then get a call from "Little Big Dick" Cheney who says, "Hey, what gives? Can't you take a joke or what?"

"Look, you little *cueso*," I tell him. "You want an excuse, now you got it. A deal is a deal. Now come and get me." Asshole.

The invasion is all set to take place on Thursday, December 21, at midnight. One hour before that, I will board a plane bound for Miami. And sunny beaches. And Florida orange juice. And white shoes. And very dark sunglasses. And Don Johnson. And freedom. I get hard just thinking about it.

#### December 20, 1989

Jesus Christ! Those fucking, stupid, gringo, American bastards got the invasion day screwed up! *Vaya puneta!* Midnight on the 21st! Not the 20th! Those lousy, stinking sonsofbitches! Shit! I could've been killed! Thank god I was here in Tocumen with some whore or else they would be scraping my

brains off the rubble at PDF headquarters! *Hideputa!* The official American word on this? "We're sorry," they say. "It won't happen again." Sorry? Fuck that shit!

When do I get out of here? "Relax," they say. "Just drive around town for a few days like nothing's happened. If you want, go into the bush, hide out in the hills! We'll get word to you." Fuck them! Let *them* go live in the hills! I hate the hills! I hate the outdoors! I hate the bugs, the snakes, the scorpions and those fucking squirrels with fucking nuts stuffed in their fucking cheeks! And those frogs! Those fucking frogs and owls and skunks! I fucking hate it! What do they think I am? A fucking *animal*? What the fuck is going on?

#### December 23, 1989

After driving around for three fucking days without sleep, I finally got word today from my good and fucking wonderful American asshole friends. "Everything's been arranged," they say. "We're going to get you out." Sure, sure. George wakes up with an erection and the next thing I know he's up my ass. Once a wimp, always a wimp. *Se la mensa todas las noches*. I am so tired of this shit. So they give me an address. The home of a CIA agent. They tell me to go there. "You'll be out of the country in 24 hours," they say. Okay. I am hot and filthy and need some sleep. I will go to this house because I am sick of eating at Dairy Queens. But this better be good.

#### December 24, 1989

Are you ready for this? They gave me the wrong fucking address! Or maybe I went to the wrong fucking house. I don't know and I don't care. It's too confusing. I just want to sleep for a hundred years. But the fucking Vatican Embassy! That's where I am! And being held against my will by some *minino* papal nuncio, Father Laboa. It's too unreal. I am a fucking prisoner of the Catholic Church. They want to ship me to Rome to stand trial for crimes against the Virgin Mary and all the twelve apostles and for personally hammering the nails into the hands and feet of Jesus.

I am locked upstairs in a small room with just the bare essentials, including my drugs. But they have confiscated all my weapons. The Pope is trying to fuck everything up, but he won't get away with this. My good and stupid American cocksucking friends won't let this happen to me. They will storm this fucking house. They will rescue me. They can't keep me a hostage forever. Can they? Jesus, Mary and Joseph, let me sleep. Tomorrow is another day. *Aqui hay mucha mala leche*.

#### December 25, 1989

Joy to the fucking world! I wake up on Christmas morning to find this place surrounded by thousands of loyal American troops blasting earsplitting rock music in order to force the fucking Church to release me! *Tener pelotas!* What big balls my good and extremely intelligent American friends have! The nuns and priests here are going out of their fucking minds, running around with their fingers in their ears! And I'm the only

## Singing in Letters

The Woodstock crowd's response to Country Joe was as he had predicted, luke warm. The singer struggled through a mixed bag of folk and country tunes from his recent solo recording efforts. He was obviously very much aware of their polite non-attention. Now in a much better mood, thanks to Richie Havens, they set about gabbing and smoking and drinking and all the kinds of goofing off that have become so standard now at all outdoor music concerts today. But here they were inventing a whole new way to behave. After 45 minutes of this sort, Country Joe walked away from the microphone over to Bill Belmont, who was standing with John Morris at the side of the stage.

"Bill, do you think it would be okay if I did the cheer and *Fixing To Die Rag*?" Joe asked.

"Who the hell would care out here in the boondocks? No one seems to be paying much attention, anyway. They didn't even notice that you left the stage."

"Okay, I'll do it," the artist grinned, finally seeming to light up at the thought of a little mischief.

Country Joe walked back out onto the stage and up to the microphone. He adjusted his capo. Looked out over the audience. Noted one last time that they seemed totally involved in themselves and yelled into the microphone:

"Gimme an F!"

It seemed to Country Joe at that moment as if the entire Woodstock audience turned and looked towards the stage and him and yelled back, "F!"—and the movie was later to prove it true.

"Gimmie a U!" the artist yelled back.

"U!" the 500,000-person cheering section yelled back in delight.

"Shit, what the hell is going on?" Country Joe thought to himself.

"Gimmie a C!"

"C!" the crowd yelled back.

"Oh, god," the artist thought. "Gimme a K!"

"K!" they yelled. Now they were all staring at the performer, thoroughly enjoying themselves and waiting for the next thing to  
(Continued on Page 6)

## Speaking in Numbers

On March 24, 1989, in a basement meeting room of St. Malachy's parish, on Chicago's northwest side, there occurred the first known manifestation of a spiritual phenomenon that by December seemed likely to sweep at least the American branch of the evangelical and fundamentalist wing of Christendom. According to reports of witnesses there had already been three instances, earlier during the scheduled prayer meeting, of glossolalia or "speaking in tongues."

For those unfamiliar with the practice, it involves what to a disinterested observer would appear to be totally meaningless babbling. Far from being frowned upon by modern Christians, it is considered a rarely valuable experience, the precise cause of which is a personal visitation by the Holy Spirit. On the occasion in question, however, a parishioner named Matthew Donohue, a 47-year-old certified public accountant, suddenly stood and began part mumbling, part shouting a series of numbers.

"My memory of the incident," parishioner Joseph DeMaris recalled, "was that Donohue started speaking in tongues, at least for the first few seconds, but suddenly converted to numbers." Asked by an investigative journalist if he could act out Donohue's spoken words, DeMaris cooperatively said, "Sure. It sounded like this. Bahaba, lama, ma-ma-ma-do, maga 7, 7, 47, 9, 3, 6, 0—oh God—49, 56, 56!"

"He repeated some numbers, did he?"

"Yes," DeMaris said, "sometimes he would say a number and then repeat it four or five times, but mostly it was just a bunch of numbers that were disconnected."

According to other participants in the ceremony, Donohue appeared to become increasingly excited as he stood, eyes closed, knees slightly bent, swaying back and forth and half speaking, half singing the lengthy sequence of numbers to which he was giving voice. He seemed to emphasize some arithmetical information but the meaning of this, if there was any, eluded those who were present.

Asked if he thought that Donohue's outburst was a legitimate manifestation of inspiration by the Holy Spirit, Father Leo Tierney, pastor of St. Malachy's, said, "We cannot be absolutely certain about

one with earplugs! What a great fucking Christmas present! It won't be long now!

## January 1, 1990

Happy fucking New Year! I have been a prisoner in this shithouse now for nine days. Negotiations for my release are at a standstill. The fucking Vatican is demanding too much. They won't budge. They want a complete confession of all my past, present and future sins; abandon Buddhism and study for the priesthood; swallow the host, not chew it;

and \$3-million dollars in unmarked American dollars, all tens and twenties.

"Go fuck yourself," I reply.

"What did you say, my son?" that sanctimonious pile of shit, Father Laboa, says, pretending he doesn't hear.

"I shit on the most holy communion wafer!" I scream back at him. "I shit on the twenty-four testicles of the apostles of Jesus! Did you hear that?"

It is then that I was worked over pretty good by several goon priests and thug nuns.

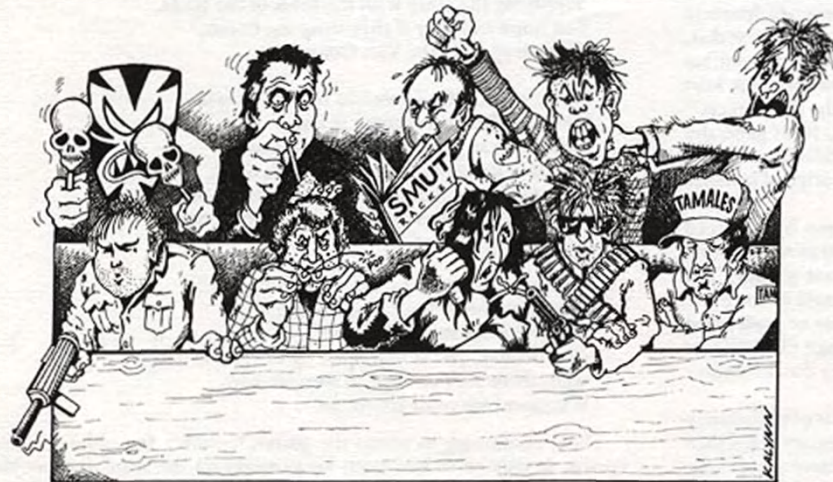
Fucking cowards. As for my good and stinking, pucker-assed American sonsofbitches of friends, they continue to surround this house and do nothing. Even the rock music has been turned off. Why don't they rescue me? What are they waiting for? *Adelante, carajos, echen bala!* Come on, you motherfuckers, start shooting!

## January 3, 1990

I'm free! Amazing, but true. As I write this I am aboard an American military transport plane bound for Miami. America! I am so fucking happy I could shit, if I wasn't so goddamned constipated. It was drugs that set me free! Yes, fucking drugs! I introduced cocaine to the papal nuncio and his entire staff and they flipped out! Father Laboa got so high he denounced the church, shaved his head, carved "666" on his chest, and pissed on a photograph of the Pope! Fucking wild!

And some of those priests! They're fucking party animals! Not to mention the nuns! *Madre Dios!* I almost didn't want to leave. Almost. I walked right out the front door and nobody tried to stop me. In fact, father Laboa was kissing my hand and wishing me well. Drugs. Fucking drugs. Who would have ever guessed? But now, I am going to America. God Bless America! And apple pie! And Reeboks! And Late Night with David Letterman! Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, I'm free at last!

—Paul Fericano



A Jury of His Peers

such things but I personally believe that Donohue's experience was just as legitimate as that of the others who spoke in tongues that night. To those who don't know anything about glossolalia there may be a problem as regards what seems the total lack of meaning of whatever is spoken out, but people seem to feel so much better after they have this experience that I personally must respect their sincerity and the obvious benefits the experience confers on them."

Whatever the authenticity of Donohue's personal drama, the phenomenon is presently "spreading like wildfire," as one nun, a teacher at St. Malachy's parish school, put it.

"Perhaps," she said, "God is trying to teach us something by enabling us to communicate in what might seem, to others—or to skeptics—a meaningless manner. Perhaps He is saying that many of today's terrible problems—divorce and sexual promiscuity, drugs, alcoholism, terrorism—all of that—came about because of modern man's over-emphasis on reason."

Father Tierney differed on this one point. "It's difficult to say," he conceded, "how you can blame intellectual rationality for political terrorism, sexual license, pornography, drug taking and all that, but even so there might be a degree of truth in what the Sister has said. Perhaps there has been too much emphasis on reason and science during the last hundred years or so. The Holy Spirit may now be telling us to return to emotion, which is certainly as God-given as the reasoning faculty. Perhaps He is telling us to become like children, willing to express our feelings by babbling innocently rather than the usually rationally coded messages."

Asked what connection there was between the apparently nonsensical syllables of a typical speaking-in-tongues experience and the new speaking-in-numbers, Father DeMaris said, "I personally don't know. But I have now witnessed this sort of thing in over a dozen instances and what impresses me most are the clear-cut spiritual, emotional and psychological benefits that the people enjoy after they stand up and begin shouting numbers."

"Of course since I'm personally, by nature, a somewhat reticent type, there's part of me that still wants to 'make sense' of these numbers. For that reason I've taken to tape-recording them and having the sequences typed up. I have some of my friends who are experienced in mathematics and the use of computers checking to see if there are any noticeable patterns in the numbers or whether they are indeed, as they seem, totally random."

"It may sound superstitious but one of the women in our parish said she knew a numerologist—a kind of fortune-teller who reads numbers in the way that other people might read tarot cards or tea leaves—I'm hoping I'm not doing anything here that'll get me in trouble with my theological superiors," Tierney smiled, "but—who knows? Perhaps certain members do have the ability to carry coded messages. We're all familiar, for example, with the references, in the New Testament, to the number 666 as somehow representing the antichrist."

"And numbers, of course, have been very important, even long before Christianity, in the history of religion. There are frequent references, particularly in the old scripture, to 40 days of this or that, things that come in tens—like the Commandments—and the number seven is very frequently referred to, so I argue that we should at least keep our minds open about this new manifestation of the Holy Spirit."

Reports that have come in, during recent months, from generally similar events in New York, Denver, New Orleans, Seattle and other metropolitan areas, are generally consistent with the original instance reported.

An interesting aspect of the mysterious phenomenon has emerged in that speaking in numbers has now spread to the Spanish-speaking Christian community in both Catholic and Protestant groups. The numbers are, of course, being stated in Spanish. Because of the more mellifluous character of the Spanish language a number of students of the phenomenon have pointed out that in that language the numbers sound much more like traditional glossolalia than they do as communicated in the English language.

Robert S. Cartwright, S.J., theologian and professor of philosophy at Fordham University, observed, in a recent commentary published in *Theological Review*, "At first there seems to have been a generally negative reaction to reports of the speaking-in-numbers phenomenon, but during the last few months this trend has been sharply reversed on

the grounds that while the more traditional glossolalia appears to consist of speaking truly meaningless syllables, the same certainly cannot be said as regards numbers, for such words as *seven*, *twelve*, *nineteen*, etc. obviously have sharply precise meanings.

"It remains to be seen, of course, whether there is any to-the-present hidden meaning in the combination of numbers themselves. It's theoretically possible—because the Vatican has yet to take a position on the new practice, so far as I'm aware—that the phenomenon will eventually be attributed to nothing more than well-intentioned religious hysteria.

"But we must recall that, for Christians, the debate on glossolalia itself has long been settled. It has, from the earliest days, been generally regarded, by perfectly responsible Christian authorities, as an actual, validated manifestation of a visitation by the Holy Spirit. Because of that background, we should therefore sympathetically reserve judgment as regards speaking in numbers."

Limitation of space precludes further exploration of this phenomenon in the present study. I intend, however, to have more to say about it at a future time.

—Steve Allen

### *Singing in Letters*

*(Continued from Page 5)*

follow. Everyone there knowing that from the next moment on the infamous F word would never be treated the same.

"What's that spell?" the singer demanded.

"FUCK!" 500,000 voices screamed back.

"What's that spell?" he yelled again.

"FUCK!" they all answered.

"What's that spell?" he asked them.

"FUCK!" they screamed back in delight. And collectively the entire Woodstock Nation realized they had pulled off the greatest raspberry to the establishment that had ever been pulled off and it was too late to stop.

"What's that spell?"

"FUCK!" everyone in the place yelled back.

Country Joe then strummed the introduction to the *I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixing-To-Die Rag* and began singing:

Well, come on all of you big strong men,  
Uncle Sam needs your help again.  
He's got himself in a terrible jam,  
Way down yonder in Vietnam.  
So put down your books and pick up a gun.  
We're gonna have a whole lotta fun.

Come on, Wall Street and don't be slow  
Why man this is war au-go-go.  
There's plenty good money to be made,  
Supplying the army with the tools of the trade.  
Just hope and pray if they drop the bomb,  
They drop it on the Viet Cong.

Now come on Generals and let's move fast.  
Your big chance has come at last.  
Now you can go out and get those reds.  
The only good commie is one that's dead.  
And you know that peace can only be won,  
When we've blown 'em all to kingdom come.

Sing it!

One, two, three, what are we fighting for?  
Don't ask me, I don't give a damn  
Louder! Next stop is Vietnam.  
And it's five, six, seven, open up the pearly gates.  
Well, there ain't no time to wonder why.  
Whoopee! we're all gonna die.

Then, continuing to strum the guitar, Country Joe addressed the crowd. It seemed to him from his position on the stage that people were not singing. The audience was so huge and so far away and the sound was going up into the air and not forward as it would in a hall.

"Listen, people, I don't know how you expect to ever stop the war if you can't sing any better than that. There's about five hundred thousand of you fuckers out there, I want you to start singing. Come on."  
And the Woodstock Nation responded en masse:

Now come on mothers throughout the land  
Pack your boys off to Vietnam,  
Come on fathers, don't hesitate.  
Send your sons off before it's too late.  
Be the first ones on your block  
To have your boy come home in a box.

Alright,  
One, two, three, what are we fighting for?  
Don't ask me I don't give a damn,  
Next stop is Vietnam.  
And it's five, six, seven, open up the pearly gates.  
There ain't no time to wonder why,  
Whoopee! we're all gonna die.

Then he played a little ending, turned and walked off stage. The crowd went crazy and John Morris announced over the microphone.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, Country Joe McDonald." Belmont turned to Joe and said, "How about an encore?"

"You have got to be joking," he responded. "How the hell could I follow that?"

\* \* \*

I wrote the song *I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixing-To-Die Rag* in 1965. It was recorded in 1967. When it was recorded we decided to put a cheer in front of the song ourselves, FISH. So like the high school sports events cheer we spelled out FISH! "Gimme an F! Gimme an I! Gimme an S! Gimme an H! What's that spell? FISH! What's that spell? FISH!" You get the idea.

In 1968, while performing at the Schaefer Beer Festival in New York City's Central Park, the drummer "Chicken" got the idea to change the FISH cheer to the FUCK cheer. That night people from the Ed Sullivan Show came because they had already paid the band \$10,000 to perform on the show and they wanted to check out the act to see what they purchased. Well, we did the new cheer and the audience really loved it but after the show the Schaefer Beer people told us we could never do the Schaefer Beer Festival again and the Ed Sullivan Show told us we could keep the money but we would never be on their show.

We figured fuck 'em if they can't take a joke.

So, we kept on doing the new cheer and the audience kept on loving it. We performed on March 7, 1969, in Worcester, Massachusetts, and did the cheer and nothing particularly strange happened. But when we went to play at the Boston Gardens the next day, we were met by one hundred uniformed police officers with guns, clubs, mace and helmets; two paddy wagons, three squad cars and a police captain. The captain wanted to know where "this guy McDonald" was.

I was in the dressing room when I found out so I went out to see what was happening. He was a very tall, blond-haired, blue-eyed police captain. He looked down at me and said:

"Are you McDonald?"

"Yes," I answered.

"They called us from Worcester and told us about the show last night."

"Hey, that's great," I said.

"No, you don't understand," he said, "Don't say it here."

"What's it?" I asked.

"You know what I mean," he said.

"No, I don't know what you mean," I said again.

"YES, YOU DO KNOW WHAT I MEAN!" he said, starting to turn red and shake all over.

So the sergeant, who had been standing beside the captain, pulled me over to the side and said: "How about being a little cooperative?"

"No problem," I said.

"Then don't say it here," he said.

"What's it?" I asked.

"You know what I mean," he replied.

"No, I don't know what you mean," I said. Well, I knew what they meant but I just wanted to hear them say it . . . but no, no, I had underestimated the state of Massachusetts. They had a law that cops can't say fuck on duty. So the sergeant takes me back to the captain and the captain looks down at me and says: "If you say it here we'll beat you up and take you to jail."

"Oh, I know what you mean," I said.

So, I went back to the dressing room and we had a little meeting. Then we went on stage. The stage in the Boston Gardens is a big thing about fifteen feet off the ground. And standing front of the stage at parade rest facing the audience was seventy-five uniformed police officers with guns, clubs, mace and helmets. And standing in front of them pacing back and forth, watching me, was the captain.

Behind the drum set were twenty-five guys with trench coats, crew cuts and sun glasses, and the back stage door was open and we could see the squad cars and paddy wagons. Not feeling very masochistic that night we spelled out LOVE, much to the confusion of everybody.

After the show was over, the captain came over and put his arm around me and said: "Great show. You can come back any time you want."

"Fuck you," I said.

We all went home and forgot about it. But six months later I got a job in Massachusetts and my lawyer told me:

"You can't go to Massachusetts."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because there is a warrant out for your arrest in Worcester for leading the crowd in a lewd, lascivious and wanton cheer."

I went and looked the words up in the dictionary and was still confused. But it didn't matter because I was going to be tried anyway. So on the appointed day, November 21, 1969, having gotten a Worcester lawyer, I flew to Worcester to be tried.

I was met at the airport by Abbie Hoffman's sister, Phyllis. You see the Hoffmans had a medical supply house in Worcester, which might explain Abbie's behavior a little bit.

So Phyllis and I went to the courthouse and walked down a long corridor to the room where my trial was going to be. But the sergeant-at-arms stopped us at the door and said, "I'm sorry, but women are not allowed in the courtroom with slacks on." So Phyllis said okay and went into the women's toilet and took off her slacks and wrapped her coat around her waist. Then the guy said: "Okay, you can come in now."

So we went in and sat down. The prosecuting attorney had brought two co-eds from a New York state college who had been there the terrible night to prove that they were offended by the cheer. He put them on the stand and asked them if they were offended and they said "No." So he didn't know what to do. There was no one left in the court room except Phyllis, me and my lawyer. So he put me on the stand to prove I was offended by it. It was a clever plan and I had to admire him for trying it but didn't think it would work. He said: "Mr. McDonald, you have a daughter. Is that correct?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Try to imagine her and her friends standing around on the street corner saying . . . you know what I mean."

"Who started it?" I asked.

He got confused and said he didn't know so I said: "I don't know what to tell you."

This really made him mad and he blurted out: "Okay, Okay, forget about that. Try to imagine you and your family sit down to dinner one night and your daughter says, 'Pass the fucking salt.' How do you feel about that?"

"Well," I said, "she's only two years old. It would be her first coherent sentence. I'd be proud of her."

Well, they did not find it funny. The judge found me guilty and fined me \$50. We appealed the case and it was later thrown out of court. The whole thing cost me about three grand in the end.

—Country Joe McDonald

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## MEDIA FREAK

### Realist Predictions

• McMartin Pre-School defendant Ray Buckley will get a job running a day care center at Disneyland, but he will be fired for growing a mustache.

• Washington Mayor Marion Barry will use the police videotape of him buying crack as a defense that he is one politician who is not on the take.

• Those pieces of the Berlin Wall will begin to blame the disintegration of world economy on those inferior Pet Rocks.

• Donald Trump will multiply his wealth by financing a method to turn oat bran into coffee.

### Drug War Schizophrenia

From the *Washington Journalism Review*:  
"On November 6, cartoonist Garry Trudeau revealed in the panels of his Doonesbury strip that all along William Bennett has, in fact, been chewing nicotine gum—an extremely addictive prescription drug. The fact that the story broke, not on the news pages, but in a comic strip, is, unfortunately, a telling statement about U.S. press coverage of the 'war on drugs.'

"Not until a month later did a major daily confirm the Trudeau story. The *Washington Post* reported December 7 that, when a reporter asked him about using nicotine gum, 'Bennett first testily replied, 'No comment.' Then he said that he chews three or four pieces of Nicorette on weekdays.'"

### Grow Your Own Police State

The DEA indulged in cowardice above and beyond the call of duty by raiding retail stores specializing in indoor garden supplies in 46 states last October. They had all advertised in *High Times* and *Sinsemilla Tips*, pro-pot publications. Michael Kennedy, attorney for *High Times*, got on the phone, urging stores to continue advertising, while the magazine advised readers: "You won't be on anyone's list as long as you pay cash and pick up the equipment in person." And: "Our advice is to continue to operate a legitimate indoor garden. Should you be visited by the authorities, invite them in and offer them some free organic vegetables."

### Cracka-Cola

According to *Perpetual Notions* newsletter, "One of the reasons the U.S. government doesn't just bomb coca fields in South America is pressure from the Coca-Cola company. Although the active ingredient in cocaine was removed from the Coca-Cola beverage in the early 1890s, the popular soda is still flavored by a non-narcotic extract from coca leaves. Coca-Cola secretly buys the coca leaf flavoring from America's only legal importer of coca leaves, the Stephan Company of Maywood, N.J., manufacturers of medicinal quality 'cocaine hydrochloride.'"

### Filler Items

• Ted Turner on why Christianity is "a religion for losers": "I don't want anybody to die for me. I've had a few drinks and a few girlfriends, and if that's gonna put me in Hell, then so be it."

• An ad for Epson disk drives in a London computer trade magazine features the famous photo of Gary Hart fondling Donna Rice, with the caption, "Presidential candidate Gary Hart with his own lap-top model, Donna Rice."

• Toronto's city council has voted to change the sexist term "manholes" (for sewer covers) to "maintenance holes."

• Not quite heralding an animal rights victory, socialite Duane Hampton was quoted in *W* magazine: "I would like something in sable because, from my recent extensive reading, sables are nasty little creatures, and I wouldn't feel bad."

• The *Good Vibes Gazette*—a sex toys house organ—on the San Francisco Earthquake: "Dildos and vibrators toppled off shelves in the store, boxes and books fell off shelves in the warehouse, plaster cracked and a few pieces dropped to the floor, but otherwise we came through unscathed—no messy massage oils to clean out of the carpet."

• Connie Chung to Johnny Carson: "In all honesty, Johnny, we are often at the mercy of the White House for the news we report. Frequently, we simply repeat verbatim what the White House tells us."

• None of the obituaries on model Candy Jones mentioned the book, *The Control of Candy Jones*, about how she had been a CIA mind control experimentee.

• *Reason* magazine reports that a survey of hotel bills from last year's convention of religious broadcasters revealed that 80% watched an X-rated movie on their closed-circuit TV channel.

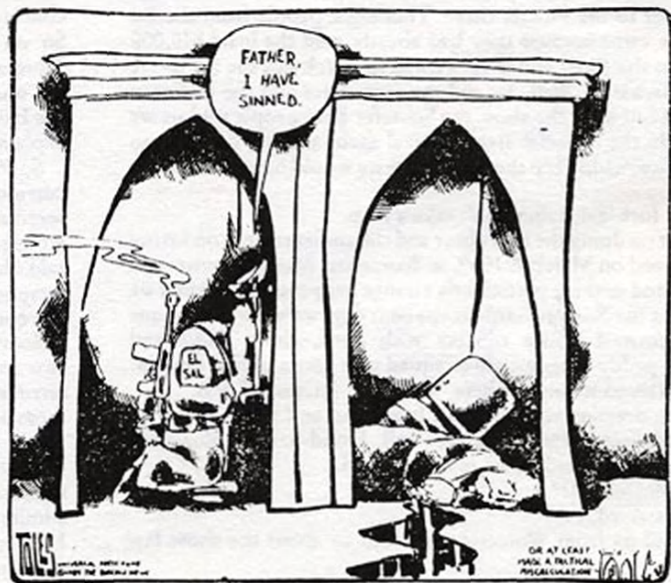
• Anthropologist Lee Cronk who spent two years studying the Samburu tribe saw a commercial with Samburu tribesmen running in Nike sneakers. As one of them speaks in the Maa language, the slogan "Just do it" is superimposed over his image, but Dr. Cronk claims he is really saying, "I don't want these. Give me big shoes."

• For the first time, Romanian authorities permitted rock videos to be broadcast, including Tina Turner's *We Don't Need Another Hero*.

• When AIDS activists interrupted the Rose Parade with a brief sit-in, one TV channel cut to a commercial and another focussed its camera on Grand Marshal Senator John Glenn. Lucky for him they weren't protesting the S.&L. scandal.

• From *The Consumer*, published by the FDA: "Product: Condoms at Miami contained excessive holes. Disposition: Authorized release to Medelec International Corp for the sole purpose of being exported."

• In Des Moines, an optometrist who had women strip to the waist for eye exams defended the practice by contending that he was checking for curvature of the spine associated with some eye disorders.



### A Sense of Optimism

Tom Toles, editorial cartoonist for the *Buffalo News*, quoted in *Funny Times*:

"I think that the driving force of what happens in history is the congregation of genuine human needs, and I think that over the long haul those needs are socially constructed. In other words, I think that people's first needs are for their own personal sustenance and safety, but once those are satisfied, the second tier of needs comes out, which is the need to live in a sane and healthy social situation."

"Historically, being a young country and a

country with a pioneer mentality, those personal needs have been the dominant political force. I think that some day, and I hope I live to see it, the second tier of needs—to make a decent society—is going to start manifesting itself.

"What I'm trying to do as a cartoonist is to remind myself of those longer term human needs of a sane and healthy society which works for everybody in it, and to put myself in sync with those needs and try to further them by subtly appealing to people's understanding that those are a part of their needs and desires too, so we can get there in my lifetime."