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- The 6th Annual Cannabis Cup
- On the Fine Art of Cloning
- Conversations with Castaneda

The Realist

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Editor: Paul Krassner

Michael Jackson's Private Parts

by Paul Krassner

[Editor's note: Last year, after Oprah Winfrey interviewed Michael Jackson, but before his alleged child molestation became public, *High Times* published my imaginary interview with him, reprinted here as an introduction to the subject at hand.]

Q. When Oprah Winfrey asked if you were still a virgin, you replied that a gentleman doesn't reveal that, but wouldn't that apply only if she asked specifically, like, are you sleeping with Brooke Shields?

A. Well, I just felt embarrassed talking about that aspect of my life, you know, privacy is very important to a celebrity, but I think gossip is such a horrible thing, so I'll tell you, just to set the record straight, that, yes, I'm in love with Brooke, but, no, we've never made love, not in the way you mean.

Q. Then in what way have you made love with her?

A. Well, first you have to realize that we were both child stars, and what we have in common is that we were both deprived of a normal childhood, so now, for instance, if we drive to a deserted beach, we'll build a sand castle, even though we're adults, chronologically, because neither of us ever had the chance to build a sand castle when we were children.

Q. Okay, now remember, you promised you would answer any question I asked honestly — do you think about her when you masturbate?

A. No, I think about music. I always make love to the music.

Q. And do you ejaculate in sync with the climax of the music?

A. Oh, that's ridiculous.

Q. Wait, it's a serious question. I'm really curious. Do you ever orchestrate your orgasms to fit the music?

A. I did once. Tatum O'Neal had given me a gift, it was Ravel's *Bolero*, and the way the music built up, when the music finally got all clanging and discordant, I...

Q. Came?

A. Yes, at the same time, and I screamed out loud, "I'm having safe sex!!!"

Q. And did you have that glove on your hand at the time?

A. That's so silly. No, I wasn't wearing any glove.

Q. Let me ask you this—is your skin disease, vitiligo, the reason you

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Howard Stern's Private Parts

by Will Durst

Not everybody likes Howard Stern. Which is a lot like saying not everybody likes blue cheese cereal. This is not an acquired taste we're talking about. You're either in or out. As a matter of fact, taste is hardly involved in this discussion at all. The Truth is, though. That's what Howard specializes in. His version of the unvarnished truth. The blunter the better. Stone anvil hammer machine tooled truth.

Just like Lenny Bruce before him and his own lionized pal, Sam Kinison, Stern delights in outraging America by saying the stuff they always wanted to say, but can't. And even if they did, they wouldn't be doing it in front of 20 million people every morning. Which Howard does on the radio. And on a TV show on E!—and now a number one bestseller called *Private Parts*.

This book isn't going to change anybody's mind about Mr. Stern. People who think he's loud and obnoxious aren't going to be won over by reading his prose at their own volume. He writes loud too. The book starts out with an account by a listener who tells of pulling over on the way to work and beating off into a glove while listening to Howard interview an alleged lesbian on her first seduction.

Later on he recalls asking his mother on the air whether she ever took it up the butt. He includes a man-healthy portion of verbatim accounts from his radio show. Including asides from his show partners (to whom he is very generous), pieces of hate mail, station memos, cartoons, many gratuitous pictures of nearly naked women and Stuttering John's 5th grade report card.

The book is a big black and white grab bag full of the best of Howard. A dream for some, a nightmare for many.

Part of the reason so many listeners get their vicarious rocks off by tuning into the Stern morning show is a sense of belonging. There are givens, Robin notwithstanding. You are part of a gang, as Howard taunts Jackie "the Joke Man" Martling, argues with Robin Givens, his sidekick, and encourages Stuttering John to ask inane questions.

One time at the Grammys press conference, Stuttering John asked Debbie Gibson, "If Wilson Phillips wins, do you think the fat one

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COURT JESTER

My Cannabis Cup Runneth Over

[Editor's note: Recently I was assigned to cover the Cannabis Cup in Amsterdam for *Time* magazine (600 words) and for *Details* (2500 words). When I got invited to be a judge in the competition, I asked my editor at *Time* if I should write the piece in first person. He called back and told me that his editor said that since I was going to be a judge, I shouldn't write the piece at all. I immediately faxed a memo to him: "I realize how important objective journalism is at *Time* magazine, and so I have withdrawn as a judge in the Cannabis Cup." I got the re-assignment. But, as it turned out, there wasn't enough space that week, and besides, the piece didn't quite work for them. It's published here instead.]

A young woman openly buys a packet of marijuana over the counter in a popular coffee shop. She sits down at a table and rolls a joint. Then, walking along the sidewalk, she realizes her matches are gone. She approaches a police officer, asks for a light, and is cheerfully obliged. Only in Amsterdam. Some 300 such euphemistic coffee shops flourish there. Although it is technically illegal for them to sell pot, in 1980 the mayor acknowledged "a relatively low enforcement policy" on such activity.

Last week, the 6th Annual Cannabis Cup took place in Amsterdam, sponsored by *High Times*—an American magazine devoted to soft drugs, about to celebrate its 20th anniversary—whose editor, Steve Hager, originally launched the countercultural event "to establish an international standard for marijuana seeds." This was the first year it would be open to the public, and there were 40 judges—including representatives of Canada, England and Japan—who paid \$150 per head for the privilege of testing ten kinds of pot grown from Amsterdam's top seed companies, over a period of five days. They also traipsed around to a score of coffee shops whose own brand names were in a separate competition. And, unlike wine-tasting, these judges would not be spitting out each new test sample.

There were a few celebrity judges. Sebastian Bach—next to the word *stoned* in the dictionary is a photo of this long-haired, bare-chested lead singer of Skid Row. Gatewood Galbraith—an attorney running for governor of Kentucky on a pro-pot platform. Jack Herer—the Mother Theresa of Hemp. His 'underground' book, *The Emperor Wears No Clothes*, has sold over 230,000 copies. For 21 years he has been teaching, mostly at campuses, that hemp is "the earth's number one renewable source of paper, fiber and fuel, and it's literally insane to outlaw it." His current mission is the California Hemp Initiative "to restore the right of adults to engage in all industrial hemp activities, have access to medical marijuana and enjoy private use of cannabis in the home."

At the Cannabis Cup ceremonies, Herer would be honored with a lifetime achievement award, along with the winning seeds, Sativa Haze, Silver Pearl and Hawaiian Indica.

Somehow, the judges, gluttonous and ga-ga, had managed to select their favorites despite the cumulative effect, despite the absence of surcease, despite the lack of savoring. On their final day in nether land, hotel rooms reeked of weed, joints were shared with cabdrivers, and the toking and testing continued through the night at the Green House, which won the award for the coffee shop with the best ambience as well as their Purple Skunk. The competition was over, but the judging lingered on.

The pot-smoking continued even at the airport in Amsterdam. "Somebody told us it would be okay," explained Steve Hager. However, at the airport in New York, he was immediately taken into custody. A drug-seeking dog sniffed out his joint-rolling fingers, and Customs agents found a small baggie of leftover marijuana, but the evidence was "destroyed during testing." While the agents were busy getting Sebastian Bach's autograph, Hager got a glimpse of the computer screen showing his passport ID and the notation, "Possible DEA suspect."

Jack Herer still doesn't know what the computer says about him, but every time he re-enters the U.S., he is stopped and searched. This time, at the airport in Los Angeles, he is detained for three hours by

four agents. Their dog doesn't sniff out anything, but they find a little pot—not enough to make one joint—encrusted in lint at the bottom of his coat pocket. They threaten to lift his passport unless he gives them \$10,000, but finally settle for \$500. They admit that he was not deliberately bringing marijuana into the country, but, whereas in Amsterdam the name of the game is tolerance, a sardonic Customs official now directs Herer's attention to a sign on the wall that reads "Zero Tolerance."

Paul Krassner's Private Parts

I have been on a five-week, nine-city tour to promote my autobiography, *Confessions of a Raving, Unconfined Nut: Misadventures in the Counter-Culture*. In Chicago, I did twelve interviews in one day. But, as Truman Capote once told me, "A boy has to hustle his book."

In the opening chapter, I wrote:

"There are those who claim that an individual soul chooses the specific parents of the fetus it will occupy. I had no such recollection. But even if I decided to be born, I was circumcised against my will. It was an act of anti-Semitism by a kosher butcher—a *moyle* who not only practiced surgery without a license, but also was slightly drunk that afternoon. He accidentally left an extra flap of foreskin clinging to the underside of my pippy. That was our family name for penis."

So I should not have been surprised when, during my first TV encounter, Connie Martinson made reference to my pippy. This was, of course, on public access.

In New York, I was a guest on *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*. I was scheduled to do a reading in Soho after that, and NBC provided a limousine. A few folks were waiting for me in front of the limo. When I emerged from the studio, a woman asked for my autograph. Then she posed with me for a photo. A passerby saw our picture being taken, figured there must be a celebrity, and asked the woman for her autograph. This incident put my entire publicity blitz into proper perspective.

The tour ended in Los Angeles, with an interview by ABC radio talk-show host Michael Jackson. During the program, there was a call from then Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, promoting a bill. Jackson said that I could ask him a question. I posed it in my mind: "President Eisenhower in his farewell speech warned the American public about the dangers of the military-industrial complex—what do you think he meant by that?" But there just wasn't time for me to ask it.

Ah, yes, that's the real story of my life. There's no space for me in *Time*, and no time for me in space.

The Velcro Conspiracy

An ad for the trendy shoe company, Kenneth Cole, emphasizes a price-slashing sale with tabloid headlines on the severing of John Wayne Bobbitt's penis by his wife, plus this line: "Because not all cuts have to hurt."

And, in Berkeley, a graffito: "Lorena Bobbitt for Surgeon General."

The Realist, Dept. 126
Box 1230, Venice, CA 90294

Enclosed please find:

- \$12 for a six-issue subscription to *The Realist*.
- \$23 for a twelve-issue subscription to *The Realist*.
- \$25 for *Confessions of a Raving, Unconfined Nut*.
- \$2 for issue #124, which features "The Parts Left Out of Paul Krassner's Book" and includes an index of back issues.

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No Out-of-Body Experience Necessary

by Lane Sarasohn

I was paying for two books at the Phoenix Bookstore in Santa Monica—Hubert Benoit's *The Supreme Doctrine (Psychological Studies in Zen Thought)* and *The Zen Doctrine of No Mind* by D.T. Suzuki. My modest comprehension of the Universe is summed up in these two slim volumes, and they seemed like a good birthday present for my pal Matt Neuman, whose own metaphysics are based on the teachings of Casey Stengel.

After ringing up my charge, the guy behind the counter handed me my American Express Card and asked, "Do the words *Dabo Tibi Coronam Vitae* have any meaning to you?"

"No," I quipped, "it's all Greek to me."

"Latin, actually," said the bookseller. "It means *I will give you the Crown of Life.*" I wondered, *Is this a come-on?* "It's from Revelations. It's the motto on the insignia of Bard—St. Stevens."

"Hey," I exclaimed, "I went to Bard!"

"I know," said this apparent stranger, who many years before had been a good college friend.

I hadn't seen or heard of Mike Goth since 1962. The last I knew, he'd married an heiress and was learning to race Formula One cars in Europe. Now, here he turns up in the '90s the proprietor of Santa Monica's pre-eminent metaphysical bookstore.

Of course, I was delighted to see Mike for old time's sake, but the implications of this chance reunion were for me magical, karmic and profound. The thought rushed to mind: through this new-found old friend I might possibly meet the only person on earth I was still interested in meeting (having already met Milton Berle and Timothy Leary): author and sorcerer Carlos Castaneda. Who knows?—perhaps he'd take me on as his apprentice.

I began reading Castaneda's autobiographical books about his encounters with Native American hallucinogenic drugs and Yaqui Indian sorcery in the early '70s while I was still taking acid and everything seemed possible.

I could always count on Castaneda for some trippy tales, do-it-yourself magic tips and offbeat gems of wisdom. His books always inspired me (for a while at least) to get off my

spiritual ass. *The Teachings of Don Juan, A Separate Reality* and *Journey to Ixtlan* struck deep chords in my right brain, while my left brain kept grumbling, "Is this guy for real, or what?"

In his earliest book young Carlos presented himself as a note-taking nerd, a Brazilian-born UCLA graduate student working toward his doctorate in Sociology, who happened to fall in with don Juan Matus, a *brujo* (sorcerer) from Mexico whose magical lineage could be traced back to the Toltecs.

But now, after three decades of studying these magical mysteries, Castaneda was able to claim for himself a measure of understanding and the ability to perform certain feats of sorcery; things like sending his "dream body" out and about in Westwood (and—one would presume—beyond); visiting certain people at a prescribed time and date in their dreams; and even hobnobbing with his fellow wizards in the five (or seven) worlds he says are available to "luminous eggs"/humans like ourselves.

"Say, Mike," I said, after we'd chatted for awhile, "I read an article in the *LA Weekly* by Michael Ventura. He said he attended a Carlos Castaneda lecture here."

"Yeah, right, about a year ago. Actually, all the guy did was answer questions from the audience. I'm not a big fan of Castaneda, but he was pretty interesting."

I told Mike to include me if the legendary author ever made a return appearance. Like magic, several weeks later the phone rang. It was a clerk from the Phoenix: Castaneda would answer questions again that night.

The tiny basement room was crowded with 40 California-style intellectuals like myself seated on folding chairs. Carlos Castaneda came down the basement stairs wearing a nondescript tan sports jacket, open neck shirt and slacks—a smaller, older man than I had anticipated.

I'd heard somewhere that Castaneda was a student of kick-boxing, and standing before us he looked firm and fit. A man of about 60, he could be a former bantam-weight fighter or a South American soccer coach. His demeanor was intense and, for the most part, serious,

but not serene and not self-important.

For those who hadn't read his books, he sketched in his unusual history: During his graduate studies he'd stumbled into something incredible, scarcely believable; he'd become fascinated; now it was the driving force in his life.

Attentive to the hilt, I tried mightily to determine if this teller of extraordinary tales was telling the truth. He didn't seem like a phony or a crackpot. Skepticism must be an occupational hazard for sorcerers; he immediately addressed the issue of whether his writings are fact or fiction. He said they are factual and honest.

He pointed out that he had nothing to gain from fabricating lies. He wasn't interested in followers, fame or fortune. He'd devoted his life to trying to understand certain mysteries and he'd committed himself to the "warrior's" path. It meant for him a life of total self-discipline and extreme austerity: no wife, no family, no high-profile academic career, no celebrity status as a best-selling author (no book tours, no groupies, no flattery, no drinking, no drugs). Wouldn't he have to be a madman or a fool to give up all life's perks and pleasures just to deceive an indifferent public that barely knows his name and has never seen his picture?

Castaneda told us he recently attended a social gathering with a friend at the home of a UCLA professor. Someone mentioned that the famous author Carlos Castaneda was in the next room. "Oh, really," said the real Carlos. "I'd love to meet him." Surrounded by admirers, an arrogant, self-important-looking fellow was holding forth. (Castaneda imitated for us the imposter's smug expression.) He listened to the man—"a total bullshitter"—prattle on about "the customs of the Yaquis of the Sonora"; but he didn't identify himself, and he left soon afterward.

The experience seemed to both amuse and annoy "our" Carlos Castaneda. He went on to explain that self-importance and sorcery are by nature incompatible. He said don Juan, his spiritual guide and teacher, made him give up his academic position and fancy apartment, made him work as a cook in a greasy spoon and live in a rented room for years in order to overcome his own feelings of self-importance.

TWISTED IMAGE by Ace Backwords



Much of the rest of what Castaneda covered that evening I already knew from his eight published works. He finished by saying that answering our questions was stimulating and helpful to his memory. Would anyone be interested in meeting like this again? I and 20 others put our names on a list. One month later we were back in the basement of the Phoenix. This time I brought my wife, Carol. I needed a second opinion.

The room was more crowded this time, and the crowd was more knowledgeable. Someone asked, "How is it possible for the dream body to go out and see people and things in the physical world if the physical body has been left behind?" Castaneda responded that it is "the memory of the retina" that enables the dream body to see.

"What's your opinion of the various gurus from India and elsewhere whose teachings and meditation techniques are so popular in the United States?" Castaneda answered that he'd spent a year seeking out these masters, yogis and self-proclaimed Incarnations of God. Without exception he found them all to be raging egomaniacs.

"Does one need a teacher?" "No," he said. What's really important is one's dedication and self-discipline. He spoke of his own youthful preoccupation with sex and courtship and the search for love. At one point in his life he said all he could think about, all that he cared about was "Jane or Myra, Myra or Jane."

I raised my hand and asked Castaneda if one had to be celibate if one wished to practice sorcery. My question seemed to embarrass him, making him cough before he answered. He explained that the energy level a person has throughout their lifetime depends on the amount of passion brought to the sexual act at the time of their conception. Because his father was old and sexually disinterested in his mother, Carlos' own energy level had always been very low.

On our way home I asked Carol what she thought of Carlos Castaneda. She wasn't all that impressed. Several women in her aerobics group at the time earned their mad money performing chakra balancings. One of her girlfriends did crystal therapy, and another combined past life regression with foot reflexology. From where we live we can see the hilltop mansion of the former child guru Maharaji. And sometimes, when everything is just right, Shirley MacLaine shops at our local market.

It was two months before the next call came from the Phoenix. Carol didn't want to go, so I brought Big Steve, a basketball buddy and psychologist with an interest in metaphysics similar to my own. Carlos Castaneda showed up with a gauze bandage wrapped around his right hand. He needed some volunteers, some people who sincerely wanted to learn more about sorcery.

He said one can only go so far alone, but a group of at least eight persons is capable of producing impressive results. As an analogy he told us that if you place less than 52 ants in an ant farm the behavior of the ants will be disorganized and chaotic, but if there are 52 or

more, the ants go about their activities in an orderly and productive fashion. A "critical mass" must be reached.

Castaneda wanted a group that would meet once a week, Saturday afternoons, in a local park to practice various movements resembling Tai Chi. No pregnant women. No drug addicts. No bullshitters. No nut cases.

He'd learned these exercises somehow from Lo Ban, a Chinese Herbalist who became a *brujo*, part of don Juan's ancient lineage, in Mexico City during the 1870's. Lo Ban, Castaneda told us, owned a warehouse in which there were 43 barrels containing Chinese herbal concoctions. When someone was sick they'd go to Lo Ban's warehouse. He'd diagnose their problem and have them climb into one of the barrels to soak for several hours or several days. Lo Ban was plucked off the street by his "benefactor," scared out of his wits by Yaqui magic, then trained for many years until he, too, became a powerful sorcerer.

I raised my hand. "You mentioned no drug addicts. Does that include marijuana?"

Castaneda grimaced. He said that the habitual use of any kind of drug is very, very detrimental and affects the color of one's aura. Coffee makes it a "nasty green"; pot turns it to turquoise. Turquoise, he elaborated, is the absolute worst color. "If you want to kill yourself in six days, put turquoise sheets on your bed." The sorcerer's aura is "whitish."

Michael Jackson (Continued from Cover)

started wearing that glove?

A. Yes. I didn't want people staring at me.

Q. *And has vitiligo affected your sex life?*

A. Well, yes, I mean I don't have a sex life.

Q. *But wouldn't it be fair to describe grabbing your crotch on stage as a form of exhibitionism?*

A. Oh, that's crazy. You saw what I told Oprah—when I'm dancing, I'm a slave to the rhythm.

Q. *In view of the fact that you also told Oprah that you were a proud black man, in retrospect, wouldn't you consider that slave metaphor an unfortunate choice?*

A. No, not really. I choose to be a slave to the rhythm. My music comes from God. Surrendering to God isn't the same as being brought to this continent in chains.

Q. *Okay, fine, I never argue with people when they talk about God. So, are you still a virgin? This is not a judgmental question.*

A. No, I'm not.

Q. *Oh, really—and when did you lose your virginity?*

A. Just recently.

Q. *Who with?*

A. Now, you know, a gentleman doesn't talk about that.

A. All right, but if I guess who it is, will you say yes or no?

A. Okay. (Giggles) But you can only have three guesses.

Q. *Let's see. How about—Elizabeth Taylor?*

A. No. That's one guess.

Q. *Then what about—Chelsea Clinton?*

A. No. That's two.

I must confess: I didn't sign up to be a sorcerer's apprentice. Even if Castaneda's magic were real—and I'm still not sure—it wasn't what I wanted for my life. Zen teaching doesn't rule out paranormal phenomena like ESP and astral projection, it just considers them "animal tricks," irrelevant to the pursuit of Enlightenment. But it wasn't the pursuit of Enlightenment that made me pass up this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It was sex, drugs and basketball.

After 20 years of marriage, Carol and I had finally worked out a wonderful sexual relationship. Could sorcery be worth celibacy? I didn't even want to cut back. Same thing with pot-smoking. And the clincher: every Saturday afternoon for the past 14 years I've played full-court basketball in Santa Monica with Matt, Big Steve and a bunch of other pals. It's the absolute highlight of my week.

Sometimes in life one has to take stock—Castaneda called it "putting all your shit on the table"—and decide what is really important. To my surprise I said "no" to Magic and "yes" to Life's Simple Pleasures.

It turned out not to be such a bad choice. Big Steve did sign up for free sorcery lessons and went to the park the next Saturday. He said the exercises were interesting and required concentration, but nothing special happened. The following week Castaneda canceled out.

Q. *I give up. Oh, wait, I have one more guess—how about Oprah Winfrey?*

A. (Long pause)

Q. *You're not answering. Don't tell me I guessed correctly. You fucked Oprah Winfrey?*

A. That's such a crude word.

Q. *Okay, you laid Oprah Winfrey—*

A. I wish you wouldn't say that, you're demeaning a very kind and generous person.

Q. *You're right. I apologize. You just caught me off guard, that's all. So tell me how it happened.*

A. Well, after she finished interviewing me, and the camera crew left, I took her on the rides in my amusement park. We both got on the same horse on my merry-go-round, just playing, but as we were going up and down, I began to get aroused. And she could feel it.

Q. *Feel what, your erection?*

A. Yes, I was riding right behind her. And then, when we were on the Ferris Wheel, it happened. But I'm not going to go into any details. I love Oprah. I love her very very much. And she loves me very very much.

Q. *Oh, yeah? And what about her boyfriend?*

A. I guess you don't read the headlines on the supermarket tabloids. Oprah has called off her marriage with Steadman. And now you know why.

[Editor's note: Then, in June, still before the current scandal began, I received the following letter.]

Dear Paul,

I really enjoyed your "interview" with Michael Jackson in *High Times*. I thought you would be interested in knowing the truth about Michael and his sex problem.

A few years ago I worked closely with the staff at Santa Monica Hospital as an independent X-ray repair engineer. Michael Jackson's plastic surgeon has an office directly behind SMH. At one point Michael came into the hospital for some kind of routine medical exam, and it was discovered by some of the staff that Michael Jackson has no sex organs—no penis, no testicles, just a urinary hole. My understanding is that the condition is the result of some kind of congenital problem, and not the consequence of some accident in his youth.

It all makes sense, of course. If you consider his bone structure, it resembles the kind of bone structure seen in eunuchs and the Italian castrati of the Middle Ages. His soprano voice, mannerisms, androgynous appearance and non-

aggressive nature are additional, if not obvious, clues to his condition.

It is unfortunate that nature dealt Michael such a blow, cutting short his sexuality before he was ever able to enjoy it. Forced by public pressure to prove his manhood, Michael has dated Brooke Shields, with whom he can be assured that nothing about his sexuality will ever rise up and spew forth. And certainly, for the benefit of her career, the problem will never come between Brooke and her Calvin Kleins.

Perhaps you could do Michael a favor by revealing his problem to the world. The pressure of keeping his lack of sexuality a secret must be tremendously troubling for him, what with the media continually speculating

about what he does with his non-existent penis. The problem also makes him vulnerable to being blackmailed. . . .

[Editor's note: Last month, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the alleged victim "has provided police with a physical description of Jackson, including the singer's genitalia. Two sources said police have that description and added that, as part of their investigation, they could attempt to search Jackson and see if the description matched the one given by the boy. Although one source said police secured a warrant to search Jackson personally, police would not confirm that and would not say whether the boy's description is accurate."]

Howard Stern
 (Continued from Cover)

would eat the statue?" That's a practical joke a lot of people wish they could play. These guys do it through the show, and Howard is their leader.

It makes sense for a guy who got famous for being a free-form wild hair up society's butt to replicate that design and its non-structure in the printed form. This tome has all the structure of fondue.

We move from his rise in radio, where we meet bad radio executives named Incubus and Pig Virus, to the chapter where he explains the Secret of Life, which turns out to be: "Enjoy, even when you're not enjoying," which sounds like a Buddhist joke, but may become the basic tenet in the world's next big religion. Let's hope not. I just can't see that face on velvet.

Like a lot of autobiographies, the book is a Me-fest. Pictures of Me. Stories of Me. Other people's opinions about Me. But this one has a twist. Instead of the sanitation most authors brush across their lives like sleaze across Vegas, Stern revels in painting himself as a loser. He talks about striking out with girls, how he gets things he wants by whining and what a tiny penis he has. So monstrously diminutive, he is deathly paranoid that anyone might steal a random glimpse of his miniature member that he runs to the stalls in public rest rooms.

As a public service, he even gives proper wiping advice. Yes, just check full of useful and amusing info.

What did ya expect? It's gross, it's crude, it's funny, it's true; it's everything his radio show is, and it has lots of pictures. Long may Howard Stern whine, and long may the 1st Amendment protect his right to whine. When crowds used to yell out to Harry Truman, "Give 'em hell, Harry," he'd respond by saying, "I just give them the truth and they think it's hell." That there is the root cause of the problems that little old ladies, the pinch-faced FCC and the right-wing flipflo units have with Howard Stern.

He tells the truth. His truth. Noisy truth. Sometimes even really gross, your hand under a rock, the maggoty remains of a marsupial truth, but truth nonetheless, and people should learn to just deal with it. Turn the knob, knob.

CULTURAL JETLAG—JIM SIERGEY & TOM ROBERTS



Pilgrimage to Cuba

by Marv Davidov

For one week in October, 175 Americans ages 4-87, from 22 cities, visited Cuba. We were women, men, children, black, latino, white. We were students, doctors, lawyers, social workers, screenwriters, directors, piano tuners, interior designers. Among the group were two veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade who had fought the fascists in Spain in 1936. The leadership were four young women who set a tone of unity and sensitivity for the group which carried over the entire trip.

We visited a young pioneer camp which Cuban children had given up so that Cuban medical people could treat 14,000 Russian children who are victims of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster. We saw young Cuban men dressed as clowns teaching Russian children to play baseball on the beach.

Cuban medicine is superior to anything offered in Latin America, and free to the people. They train family doctors to do service to the people while we struggle to get insurance for the millions yet wanting in our developed country. Because of the U.S. blockade, they lack some medicine. We brought insulin for Cuban children.

In a terribly poor country we never saw any homeless people, which made us ashamed that there are hundreds of thousands of homeless on our streets who need not suffer.

We visited the first housing project, Alamar, built for the poorest of the poor. There are 82,000 people living in overcrowded conditions in 5-story apartment buildings. The apartments are small but clean. Cubans pay no more than 10% of their wages for rent and can own their apartment after a certain period. Elected councils run this project.

We visited a rural cooperative where 350 people grow bananas, various citrus fruits and potatoes. One young woman was the doctor and cared for all on the ground floor of her small house where she lived with her husband, an agronomist trained in Canada, which has trade and travel rights for its people.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, Cuba lost 70% of its export trade.

The U.S. blockade raises the prices Cubans must pay for everything, and our government lays the gloved hand on any nation or company which wishes to trade with Cuba wherever they can.

Saturday evening, our last night in Cuba, Fidel Castro met with our entire group in the Council of State Building. He held an informal press conference for one hour after making a short statement. He said, "The U.S. Government trades with and lets its people travel to China, El Salvador, Guatemala—all countries which have tortured and killed their own people. Why a travel ban and blockade for us?"

One young black man in our group said, "Fidel, we love your style." This made Fidel and everyone in the room break up into laughter. A 14-year-old said he did not understand the brutal Cuba policy imposed by so many U.S. presidents. Fidel answered, "One day there may be a U.S. president who will be just and reasonable. Maybe it will be you, young man."

After an hour, we moved into another room where Fidel greeted each one of us individually. Then we went to an enormous hall decorated with plants and trees and beautiful paintings for a party. There Fidel autographed T-shirts and dollar bills, and stood talking for almost two hours informally with many of us.

Upon our return to various entry points, U.S. Customs officials confiscated 60-90 passports and interrogated each of us. In Tampa, our small group of Minnesotans was needlessly delayed so that we missed our flight home and arrived three hours late. In some cities, passports were not lifted and Customs agents were professional and pleasant. But in Miami, Tom Hanson, Director of Pastors for Peace, was with his 4-year-old son. The agent confiscated candy from the child and a Cuban key-chain given to him. The child said to his father, "Daddy, they are stealing from me."

At the moment the U.S. Government is considering criminal prosecution on 175 of us. The best way to counter such a brutal, venal policy, a breach of our constitutional right to travel, is for many more Americans to go to Cuba and see for themselves what life in Cuba is like.

We invite you to go to this beautiful island and meet a courageous people. Life is hard. People ride bikes because of the shortage of oil. They wait long hours for the buses still running. Prices are high. Some

people we met complained bitterly about their lives. But most of the Cuban people we saw had a lovely, lively spirit. They are proud of what they have accomplished and respect Castro and their leadership.

Finally, we deeply thank Senator Paul Wellstone for his support on behalf of our right to travel and his public statement against the blockade.

In 1955, Rosa Parks refused to go to the back of the bus. Despite risks, she sparked off 20 years of grass roots activity for social change in America. May our act of international solidarity help do the same.

Cloned Again . . . and Again . . . and Again

by Marc Maron

Scientists recently cloned six human embryos in-vitro that existed for six days. Some advances in genetics and medical technology are clearly humane in their attempts to curb genetically-based disease and increase fertility, but it is hard to be objective about anything as seemingly insidious as cloning humans because most research is privately funded. There are not that many ethical boundaries in private enterprise, at least not until they are caught.

Medicine is an industry fueled by huge corporations. Those who cry eugenics must remember that this is not a standard fascist country. We are not a country of national loyalists. We are a country of brand loyalists. The idea is not the creation of the *ubermensch* but the creation of the *uberverbraucher*. The super consumer.

Imagine the corners that corporations could cut in their advertising budgets if they were able to clone their own customers. No more mind-manipulating ad campaigns designed to exploit unmined desires and lure people into the store towards specific merchandise. Have people available at the store or at least the people-seeds in the form of embryos. The only products to accommodate these people once they sprouted would be the merchandise available at the store. This gives Gap kids a new definition, or when a child says he's a Toys 'R' Us kid he really means it.

Perhaps a new rack at the pharmacy. Between the contraceptives and the pregnancy tests. The home cloning center. Pick up an in-vitro home applicator set. They'll have the Elvis, the Luke Perry, or the Kate Moss (waif babies are hot for the '90s). There will be designer boutiques for couples with money. This is the only case where eugenic theory would apply. Like most technologies, cloning will be a convenience for those who can afford it.

The sales pitch:

"We analyzed a sample of your husband's sperm and the egg we took from your uterus and broke down all the genetic possibilities on the computer and we now have a computer-generated image of your potential child. We can change whatever you want at a reasonable cost or you can select one of our designer sperms from the catalogue.

"Not to offend you, sir, but there's only so much we can do. If you want a genius or an athlete we'll have to go to the bank. If you want all of the above that will be extra. We've got Einstein, Gretzky and Enrico Fermi on tap. We've got Michael Jordan, and we can subtract the melanin from the genome so the neighbors won't suspect.

"What would be optimal, if you choose to be bold, is the *ubersperm*. The perfect being created from years of research. We've put Dr. Mengele's theories to practice. We're pushing the *ubersperm* because we care about America's future. The perfect human. Efficient, interactive, programmable and completely devoid of conscience. No fear, no insecurity, no obscene desires and it comes with a remote."

Accessories to the DNA. A custom job. Give the kids gills. The technology will enable us to take on all those traits that make some of the lower animals more adaptable than the human. The cockroach will be the last thing alive . . . no more. Scientists will find the key to the roaches' evolutionary persistence and co-opt the trait into the human genome. Kafka was a prophet, but we will not be stuck under the bed. We will be sitting on the couch doing something with each of our six arms while watching interactive TV and enjoying the greenhouse effect.

The benefits of cloning and genetic technologies are their ability to eliminate inherited disease. Recently there was a case involving a girl who got leukemia; her parents had another child specifically to supply her with bone marrow to sustain her life. Imagine, if cloning becomes commonplace there would be many humans created for spare parts. This is an ethical issue because the clone could become a panacea for many problems in society.

Why not conceive a clone just to be abused? A mother could say, "Don't hit your brother. Hit the clone. That's what it's *here* for." The clone could become an oppressed minority. Worse, it could be *designed* to be an oppressed minority. The government could exploit the technology to stop racism by cloning a breed of people designed to be hated.

People would be encouraged to take out their hatred on the clones. It would be one of the first times in history that a minority was hated because of its lack of history or roots and because they don't have specific character traits or desires that make them different. They are hated and abused *because* they are just humans designed to accommodate evil intent.

It's time to stand up for the clones and protect their human rights since they could become disposable and exploited like the rest of us. The difference being that it would be accepted because it would be inherent in their existence. Then Christian zealots could step in and collect all the spare-parts kids, abused clones, and perhaps even start cloning their own in an attempt to counteract the pro-choice movement.

The Second Coming may begin in a petri dish, there may be hundreds of them, and they may well be the product of a major corporation. Lilly Pharmaceuticals is proud to present the Christ child, now on sale at your local clone outlet—each new saviour comes with a bonus set of hammer and nails.

I Remember Sheena

by Carol Hatfield

Women generally use their power reluctantly, and when I was growing up I watched them concede, go along and back down rather than use it. The only empowered female I ever saw in the media when I was a kid was *Sheena, Queen of the Jungle*. No, not the box office flop from 1984. I'm talking about the TV show from 1955, when I was 8 years old. Sheena was played by Irish McCalla. Watching her struggle with a new adventure each week made me feel more powerful—something little girls like me didn't feel very much.

I grew up to be a TV writer and I had the opportunity to interview her for a show called *Whatever Became of . . . ?* She was a lot shorter than I expected, but she was still quite beautiful. It was my job to talk to her and determine what was interesting enough to be retold and taped when the crew was set up and ready to shoot the interview.

Irish was hired to play Sheena primarily for her Olympic background. She had to do most of her own stunts, and she even made her own costume because a costume wasn't in the budget. The show was shot in Mexico's interior. Being in such a remote place made Irish feel homesick until she sent for her 6-year-old son.

The show was rehearsed for a long time before they brought in her co-star, Chim the chimp. He was the only one who was completely comfortable in this neck of the woods, and he didn't waste a moment turning Sheena's discomfort into misery. In most scenes, Sheena had to carry Chim or at least hold his hand. The trouble was that whenever the director yelled, "Quiet on the set" and "Roll sound," the chimp would secretly pinch her or bend back her fingers, knowing that she wouldn't cry out because the take would be ruined.

When Irish discussed this problem with the director, he thought she must be mistaken. The chimp looked so innocent. Regardless of what the director thought, the chimp's trainer believed her. He suggested that she use intimidation by threatening the chimp or even hitting him a few times. Irish couldn't bring herself to do that, and the chimp took advantage of her gentle nature.

It was a difficult situation, but having her little boy with her relieved some of the pressure. She loved to watch him play ball with the crew between scenes. Of course when the director yelled, "Quiet on the set," the game would always cease immediately. One day when they were shooting a scene that didn't include the chimp, he joined the ball game. During the game, the ball was passed to Irish's son and the chimp was trying to get it away from him just as the director yelled, "Quiet on the set."

Out of the corner of her eye Irish saw the chimp on her child, but she didn't know that all he wanted was the ball. With spear in hand and her maternal instinct in high gear, she took off after her co-star. Chim ran for his life with Sheena hot on his heels, followed by the director, the trainer and the rest of the crew. Sheena's spear was aimed at the little beast as she pursued him through the thick underbrush and eventually up a tall tree.

The distant voice of the director kept screaming, "Don't kill him!" The trainer yelled again and again, "He's worth \$5,000! I'll be ruined!" No matter how high Chim climbed, Irish was right behind him, until there was no place left to go. Irish had him cornered on an uppermost branch. She drew up her spear ready to heave it into him.

"Your son is fine," someone shouted loudly from the ground. "The chimp only wanted the ball."

Irish glared at the chimp for several seconds before she put her spear-carrying arm down and slowly descended the tree. That was the last time she had any trouble with her co-star. They even developed an exceptionally good working relationship.

I asked Irish McCalla to re-tell the story when the camera was rolling. But she took too many short cuts and her spontaneity was gone. So it was never used, and I hated losing such a good story, especially one that illustrates the empowerment issue so well. Kindness is all too often seen as weakness, and there are a lot of little apes ready to take advantage of our gentle nature.

A Constitutional Ban On Off-Key Singing

by Jeff Cohen

Imagine how your mental stability would be challenged if it was your job to monitor endless episodes of Rush Limbaugh, the McLaughlin Group, *This Week with David Brinkley*, and Ted Koppel interviewing Henry Kissinger for the umpteenth time. At the media watch group FAIR, this is our job.

One day we snapped.

It was the day after Roseanne Arnold (then know as Roseanne Barr) intentionally mangled the *Star Spangled Banner* and mockingly grabbed her crotch at the beginning of a baseball game. This was a month after the heated Congressional debate over a constitutional amendment banning flag-burning.

At FAIR, we were not naive about how mainstream news outlets censor big stories—like civilians killed by U.S. war policy or corporate dominance of Washington—while inflating diversionary issues. But even we were astounded by the intense media focus on Roseanne's off-key singing of "Oh say can you see . . ."

We decided to strike back—with a satirical press release mocking the whole silly issue. Surely news outlets would realize the absurdity of their bloated coverage after receiving our release, which went out on behalf of a non-existent "Patriotic League." The news release stated:

The Patriotic League of New York, appalled by Roseanne Barr's disrespectful rendition of the *Star Spangled Banner*, is calling for a constitutional amendment to ban the defilement of our National Anthem. The League sent a proposed 35-word draft of the amendment to Senator Jesse Helms.

Whoever knowingly mocks, mutilates, renders in an off-key fashion, or in any way audibly defiles the National Anthem of the United States shall be fined, or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both.

Anticipating protests from civil liberties groups over the singing amendment, League president Sid Schmitloff declared: "We modeled our amendment after the flag-burning amendment. Off-key singing of our treasured National Anthem is no less contemptible than flag-burning. Both should be banned. Basic Americanism demands these two measures."

Dispatched in jest to several news outlets, we were jolted into sobriety when UPI called within 20 minutes, wanting to speak to "Mr. Schmitloff" for details about the proposed constitutional amendment. This was an outlet that had repeatedly failed to report major news (for example, Costa Rica's banning of Oliver North due to drug trafficking).

We decided to abort our prank. It was getting too dangerous. We risked seeing our ban on off-key singing as front page news across the country. (By the way, do you know anyone who can sing the National Anthem in key?)

The incident reinforced a valuable lesson: that it's become impossible to satirize today's news media. They are already so absurd as to be beyond satire.

We were slow to get this point. Years ago, the great satirical songwriter Tom Lehrer decided that the world had become too absurd for satire. It was the day of the announcement that Henry Kissinger was to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

MEDIA FREAK

Swords Into Ploughshares

From *Newsweek*:

"Few defense contractors have successfully overhauled their assembly lines to produce civilian products. But tiny Wainwright Industries of St. Peters, Missouri, may have the right idea. With orders for its warplane parts drying up—McDonnell Douglas is a big customer—the company has rolled out a condom-carrying case disguised as an electronic pager. Dubbed the Protecto Pager, it sells for \$9.95 and is produced by the same machines used to make those jet-fighter plane parts. The idea came from a red-faced employee who committed the ultimate safe-sex *faux pas*—dropping condoms out of her purse in public. Says Adam Glickman, co-owner of New York's CondoMania, which markets the pager: 'Condom etiquette has become a big issue.'"

The Pentagon Meditation Club

From *Yoga Journal*:

"Every week, a group of Pentagon employees meets in silence in a meditation room. Their surprising mission: to form a peace shield around planet Earth.

"The employees—who include military personnel, clerical workers, phone operators, and managers—are members of the Pentagon Meditation Club. Their efforts, dubbed 'the new SDI' (spiritual defense initiative), are intended to raise consciousness for peace-making. 'Instead of a defense shield, we visualize a peace shield,' says club president Barton Ives, an environmental specialist for the Pentagon's facility planning branch.

"The meditation club meets every Friday during lunch in the Pentagon chaplain's meeting room. Those who attend participate in 20 minutes of 'peace shield meditation,' which involves contacting an experience of deep inner peace, visualizing that feeling being shared by people throughout the world, and envisioning world leaders and adversaries joining together in fellowship. The remainder of the hour-long meeting is spent discussing agenda items and learning about different styles of meditation.

"We don't pitch any kind of belief system—we're strictly nonsectarian,' Ives said."

Sexual Political Correctness

From Antioch College's rules on interactions of a sexual nature:

"All sexual contact and conduct between any two people must be consensual; consent must be obtained verbally before there is any sexual contact or conduct; if the level of sexual intimacy increases during an interaction (i.e., if two people move from kissing while fully clothed—which is one level—to undressing for direct physical contact, which is another level), the people involved need to express their clear verbal consent before moving to that new level.

"If one person wants to initiate moving to a higher level of sexual intimacy in an interaction, that person is responsible for getting the verbal consent of the other person(s) involved before moving to that level; if you have had a particular level of sexual intimacy before with someone, you must still ask each and every time. Asking 'Do you want to have sex with me?' is not enough. The request for consent must be specific to each act."

Sexual harassment is defined at Antioch as "including, but not limited to, unwelcome and irrelevant comments, references, gestures or other forms of personal attention which are inappropriate and which may be perceived as persistent sexual overtones or denigration."

Just Ask Isadora

From *Let's Talk Sex*, a collection of Isadora Alman's advice columns, syndicated to alternative weeklies:

"Q. I'm a woman in my mid-30's who's been single for almost two years. I've always found masturbation a decent substitute when there's no lover in my life. However, recently I have discovered a frighteningly wonderful substitute. Since my chow, Mr. T, was a puppy, I trained him to perform cunnilingus by enticing him by rubbing a bit of Alpo on my inner thigh. He took to this immediately and now performs the act with no Alpo. I've been engaging in this activity weekly for almost a year, and I am concerned that I will have problems breaking this habit. Do you believe that this could be keeping me from having normal relations with a person? And is there any possibility that I may contract any weird diseases? Please answer in your column as I am too ashamed to discuss this with anyone.

"A. First you need to know that sexually

assaulting an animal (which is not defined 'for the purpose of arousing or gratifying the sexual desire of a person' is listed as a misdemeanor in the California penal code, punishable by up to a year in the county jail. Second, the SPCA and animal-rights-advocate readers need to know that by answering you (or any of the other letters in this column), I am not endorsing the behavior in question; for many people there is a very real issue of nonconsent and power abuse in any human/animal contacts. That said, your disease concern can be handled by having your vet check the animal for any parasite condition which might be transmissible. As for a dog (or a vibrator or any other nonhuman stimulant) being a substitute for a person-to-person connection—good as the critter might be at giving head—when the two of you can giggle together, when he brings you chicken soup if you're laid up with a cold, when he proffers flowers, a backrub, or a goodnight kiss, then I'd worry."

Another reader wrote: "I can't believe that woman would feed her dog Alpo. It has artificial coloring."

Filler Items

• There was a joke on this page last issue—"Arnold Schwarzenegger married Maria Shriver in order to produce a Kennedy who could take a bullet"—which should've been credited to comedian Steve Pearlman. And in the previous issue, a joke—"Have you heard about the Madonna stamp? It licks itself"—was credited to comedian Will Durst, but should've been credited to comedian Debbie Durst.

• A researcher at Children's Hospital in Chicago has named a salmonella strain after Michael Jordan.

• *Asshole of the Month*: Mental health professor Ann Burgess, who testified in the trial of Lyle and Erik Menendez that, when the brothers used the word *mother*, they actually meant *brother*, as in, "My father should be killed. There's no question . . . he's impossible to live with for myself . . . based on what he's doing to my mother." Burgess asserted, "That's a metaphor for brother."

Rest in Weirdness

This issue of *The Realist* is dedicated to the memory of Frank Zappa, outstanding musician and outspoken foe of censorship.



One of the *Doonesbury* Strips the Los Angeles Times Decided Not to Publish