

The Realist

Number 135
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Photo by Nancy Cain

Johnnie Cochran Meets Dr. Hip

Shortly before O.J. Simpson's civil trial began, his lawyer from the criminal trial, Johnnie Cochran, was the guest of honor and luncheon speaker at a national convention of criminal defense attorneys held in Santa Monica. No media were allowed.

One of the attendees was Dr. Eugene Schoenfeld, also known as Dr. Hip from his days as a syndicated columnist for the underground press. He now testifies occasionally as an expert witness. For this occasion, underneath the standard, plastic-encased, ID lapel card, he had stashed a second, hand-printed, card declaring *O.J. Did It*.

Cochran's speech reassured the audience, "In the Simpson matter, we just did what *you* do every day"—that is, defend their clients by

any means necessary and chalk up a bunch of billable hours in the process—and he received a standing ovation.

In the afterglow, colleagues came up to Cochran to shake his hand and banter. One well-wisher shared this joke: "If Chris Darden had spent as much time trying to nail O.J. Simpson as he did trying to nail Marcia Clark, he might've won the case."

Schoenfeld joined the line of lawyers waiting to have their picture taken with Cochran, putting their arms around each other but looking straight ahead and smiling at the camera. Thus, Cochran didn't notice how Schoenfeld subtly managed to reveal his hidden message just before their picture was snapped. It was a good, old-fashioned, guerrilla action.

COURT JESTER

Personal Propaganda

• In the previous *Realist*, I announced that there would be only twelve more issues. I mentioned that they would not be available at newsstands or bookstores, but, as it turns out, *this* is the last issue to be so distributed. The remaining eleven issues will be sent only to subscribers, and our mailing list will not be rented or sold.

• My book, *The Winner of the Slow Bicycle Race: The Satirical Writings of Paul Krassner*, with a foreword by Kurt Vonnegut, published by Seven Stories Press, is still available in stores. So is my comedy album, *We Have Ways of Making You Laugh*, released by Mercury Records, whose president, Danny Goldberg, has invited me to do a second album. The working title is *Brain Damage Control*. Taping is scheduled for February 6 at the Ash Grove in Santa Monica. Call (310) 656-8500 for information and reservations.

Aborting the Search for Truth

Recently, attorney Gerald Lefcourt received a call from writer Susan Brownmiller. A devout feminist, she was working on "the definitive book" about the women's movement, and wanted to know which female attorney had filed the first lawsuit challenging the law prohibiting abortion in New York State.

"You don't want to hear this," Lefcourt teased.

"Yes, I do," Brownmiller insisted. "Tell me."

He told her about a young man who had run an underground abortion referral service throughout the '60s. As that decade ended, he was threatened with prison by District Attorney (now Judge) Burton Roberts, who wanted him to give up the names of doctors involved. The young man refused.

Roberts then warned him that investigators had uncovered one abortionist's financial records, revealing all the money that the young man had received, thereby proving that he had been engaged in a criminal conspiracy for profit, but—extending his hand as a gesture of trust—the D.A. promised that he would be granted immunity from prosecution if he cooperated with the Grand Jury.

"That's not true," said the young man with total confidence, refusing to shake hands, knowing that if he *had* ever accepted any money, he would have no way of knowing that the district attorney was bluffing.

At this point, Gerry Lefcourt filed a lawsuit on the young man's behalf, challenging the constitutionality of the abortion law, pointing out that the D.A. had no power to investigate the violation of an unconstitutional law, and therefore could not force anyone to testify.

And now, Lefcourt informed Susan Brownmiller that the plaintiff was me.

"You're right," she said. "I don't want to know."

A Time to Sue

Reginald Muldrew was named "the pillowcase rapist" because he would cover the head of each succeeding victim with a pillowcase. During the late '70s in Los Angeles, Muldrew had allegedly raped 200 women, was convicted of four such assaults, sentenced to 25 years, and served 16. He was released from prison in December, 1995, resulting in protests from women's groups, who warned that he would rape again. Indeed, he admitted to reporters that it was "up in the air" whether the feminists' prediction might come true.

Nine months earlier, a disturbed pair of teenagers, Ben Darras and Sarah Edmondson, had set off on a two-day, drug-crazed orgy of violence, including the utterly ruthless slaying of William Savage. It was a totally unprovoked act. The couple had simply gotten out of their car and asked him for directions. All he did was comply with their request, and as a token of appreciation he was shot to death.

Savage had once been an acquaintance of John Grisham, lawyer turned novelist turned film producer. When Grisham learned that the teenagers had repeatedly watched *Natural Born Killers* prior to

the brutal murder, he snapped. And, in the spring 1996 issue of *The Oxford American*, a Mississippi literary magazine co-owned by Grisham, he wrote:

"Oliver Stone has said that *Natural Born Killers* was meant to be a satire on our culture's appetite for violence and the media's craving for it. But Stone always takes the high ground in defending his dreadful movies. A satire is supposed to make fun of whatever it is attacking. But there is no humor in *Natural Born Killers*. It is a relentlessly bloody story designed to shock us and to numb us further to the senselessness of reckless murder.

"The last hope of imposing some sense of responsibility on Hollywood will come through another great American tradition, The lawsuit. Think of a movie as a product, something created and brought to market, not too dissimilar from breast implants, Honda three-wheelers and Ford Pintos. Though the law has yet to declare movies to be products, it is only one small step away. If something goes wrong with the product, whether by design or defect, and injury ensues, then its makers are held responsible.

"The notion of holding filmmakers legally responsible for their products has always been met with guffaws from the industry. But the laughing will soon stop. It will take only one large verdict against the likes of Oliver Stone, and his production company, and perhaps the screenwriter, and the studio itself, and then the party will be over."

In July Grisham's own movie, *A Time to Kill*, based on his novel, was released. In it, a 10-year-old black girl is raped, beaten and left for dead by two drunken white men. The suspects are arrested, but while they are being led, handcuffed, into the courthouse to be arraigned, the girl's father—on the cusp between rage and premeditation—guns them down. But his white lawyer plays a reverse race card and the all-white jury acquits him. Their verdict provides an emotionally triumphant victory for vigilante justice.

Meanwhile, back in real life, Reginald Muldrew, the pillowcase rapist, had settled in Gary, Indiana, to be near his brother. There were rumors, but no evidence, that he was responsible for five sexual assaults in a low-income housing development there. In the last of those attacks, a woman's home was broken into by Muldrew, who put a pillow over her head and threatened to kill her, but she managed to scream and he fled.

Three residents chased him, caught him, and beat him to death. They were charged with voluntary manslaughter. However, all three men had just returned from seeing *A Time to Kill* when they heard the woman scream that evening, and their attorney plans to use the so-called "movie made me do it" defense. Moreover, Muldrew's brother has brought a civil suit against John Grisham and Warner Brothers, asserting that "These people have to be held liable for their negligence along the chain of responsibility."

Grisham, reached by telephone, stated, "I have no comment—except to say that I am responsible to my audience, not for them."

**The Realist, Dept. 135
Box 1230, Venice, CA 90294**

Enclosed please find:

- ☐ \$22 for the final 11 issues of *The Realist*.
- ☐ \$23 for the final 11 issues plus this one, as a gift for a friend.
- ☐ \$7 for *Tales of Tongue Fu*, Paul Krassner's New Age media satire about a man who was born with a 15-inch tongue.
- ☐ \$10 for *The (Almost) Unpublished Lenny Bruce*—a collection of the controversial comic's articles, stories and columns.
- ☐ \$25 for Krassner's unauthorized autobiography, *Confessions of a Raving, Unconfined Nut: Misadventures in the Counter-Culture*.

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Crack Salesmen

by Harry Shearer

What follows is a commentary that satirist Harry Shearer taped for World News Now, the all-night news show on ABC.

I remember an acquaintance from the late 1960s, a radio newscaster, who believed that the FBI monitored and catalogued every broadcast he did, because he smoked grass and was against the Vietnam war. All of us who knew him laughed behind his back until it turned out that the FBI was monitoring and cataloguing even more trivial material, like Roy Cohn's ring size.

That kind of revelation may now be in reruns. We may be living through another Holiday for Paranoids. For years, the theory has gone around the black community that the federal government foisted the crack cocaine epidemic on African America. Suddenly, in the wake of a series in the *San Jose Mercury News* alleging that CIA-backed Nicaraguans wholesaled crack to finance arms for the *contras*, the story is being investigated by the big papers and Congress and, of course, by the CIA itself.

Conspiracy fans point out that the two guys who first sold cut-rate cocaine to a South Central L.A. dealer were *contras*, and that the *contra* army owed as much to the CIA as the *Melrose Place* cast owes to Aaron Spelling. Hard-nosers observe that nothing so far proves the CIA knew about or approved the crack dealing. The *contras*, let's recall, were called by Ronald Reagan the modern equivalent of America's founding fathers. So, in this version of events, Jefferson would not only have owned slaves, he would have sold them cheap coke.

Lovers of irony simply cherish the possibility that the same U.S. government was running "Just Say No" on the white channel, and "Just Light Up and Ruin Your Life" on the black channel.

I wish the CIA good luck in its investigation. This is an intelligence agency that has in its time missed a few little things, like the collapse of the Soviet economy and Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, so these agents need to be lucky as well as good. But if anyone can find the memos in which some Agency director wrote on official CIA stationery, "Things to do today: start crack epidemic," I know his fellow spooks can.

With this kind of vindication, the paranoids are probably buying drinks for the people who are following them. Incidentally, they also say the feds are responsible for AIDS. Note to investigators: start looking into government-subsidized bathhouses, and covert CIA funding for [rock group] Frankie Goes to Hollywood.

When this commentary was broadcast, Shearer couldn't help but notice that the audio had been deleted from his final paragraph — deemed unsuitable for airing — and he resigned.

Ha, Ha, You're Homeless

by Caverly Stringer

Sure, life on the street has its drudgery and suffering. But it's a testament to the resiliency of the spirit that even amidst the bitter realities of hand to mouth existence, one can find refuge in a well developed sense of humor.

The homeless aren't the only street people. Cops are too, in a sense. The ones who burn out are those who think it's their mission to eradicate "bad guys" clean off the face of the earth. The ones who make it to retirement reasonably intact are those who accept, perhaps with a sense of humor, that being a good guy is, after all, just another grind.

In New York City it is illegal to spit, smoke, or carry a lit cigarette in the subways. The Transit Authority takes an equally dim view of people riding without paying or those using the subways as a rent-free sales place. To discourage such behavior, they deploy a number of undercover cops.

I encountered one of these guys one day.



Street News was a brand new publication then—the first newspaper designed to be sold by homeless people. Before I managed to work my way up to the position of editor, I was one of their top grossing salespeople. The secret to this success was that, instead of hawking the paper one customer at a time on the street, I pitched to a hundred a pop, going from car to car, on the subway trains.

The difference in sales made it worth the risk. The papers practically flew out of my hands. The trick was to load up on as many papers as possible before setting out.

This particular day, I went for broke and invested every cent I had in papers. Once I got to the subway station, I realized I hadn't allowed for carfare. I was standing by the turnstiles, puffing a cigarette, contemplating my dilemma, when I heard the train coming.

I decided to go for it. I snatched up my bundle of papers and, with a little sleight of hand to make it appear as if I was dropping a token in the slot, I squeezed edgewise through the turnstiles.

But before I could make it to the train, a muscular guy in a plaid shirt popped in front of me. He took in the smoldering cigarette, the ready-for-sale papers, the half-cracked

turnstile and, flipping his badge in my face, said, "You might as well spit too."

I couldn't help but laugh. But when he brought out the cuffs, his was the only grin that remained.

"Turn around," he said, "and place your hands behind your back."

I couldn't have picked a worse time to try for a free ride. Up until then, I would have been charged with "fare evasion"—a violation—and issued a summons on the spot, not unlike a parking ticket.

But, as I was to later learn, TA police had changed strategy. Under the new policy, you got charged with "theft of services"—a class B misdemeanor—arrested, taken to the precinct, printed, photographed and booked.

If you could verify your ID and address—which few homeless people can—they'd run a warrant check on you and, if you were clean, release you with a Desk Appearance Ticket, summoning you to criminal court at a later date.

At the precinct, the police had great difficulty accepting the Central Park band shell as a legitimate address. So I wound up spending 2½ days in Central Booking, subsisting on the occasional baloney sandwich and sleeping on a bare concrete floor with hundreds of pimps, dealers, muggers, and other entrepreneurs caught operating beyond legal sanction.

There are fewer amenities in these holding cells than in the jails to which you are committed if found guilty. The place is designed to break your spirit. To render you more malleable for the process of plea bargaining by which the lion's share of cases are disposed.

By the time I got to talk to my court-appointed lawyer, I had recouped. In the intervening time, I had pin-pointed the flaw by which I saw myself being completely exonerated.

"Listen," I said when he sat down, "I've been charged with theft of services, right?" He gave me a nod. "But the arresting officer apprehended me before I could get on the train! I never got to ride anywhere. In effect, I never received the services I was accused of 'theft.'" We gotta move for dismissal!

I had seen enough episodes of *LA Law* to be genuinely pleased with the brilliance of my argument. But when I had finished, my lawyer just sat staring at me with such profound sadness that I thought he would break into tears.

"Look," he finally said. "Do you want to get out of here?"

At the arraignment it was determined that my brief captivity in Central Booking constituted sufficient penance—for my egregious rip-off of a \$1.25 ride—that I could now be safely released back into decent society. The irony of the whole thing was that before they let me go I was handed a standard voucher form to sign which, when taken to an office on the third floor, entitled me to receive one free New York City subway token.

What a concept!

What else could I do but laugh?

The Parts Left Out of the Larry Flynt Movie

Shortly after Larry Flynt was converted to born-again Christianity by Ruth Carter Stapleton, he announced at an office Christmas party that he would distribute her new magazine, The Christian Woman,

plus a health magazine to be published by Dick Gregory, and that he was hiring Paul Krassner as the new publisher of Hustler. This came as a complete surprise to Krassner. Ironically, a few years earlier, he had received the Feminist Party Media Workshop Award. The following is excerpted from a chapter, "Showing Pink," in his autobiography.



Hustler was the raunchiest men's magazine on the market. In the evolution of popular pornography, magazines had started out showing breasts but not nipples, buttocks but not anuses—and never, never a vagina. Nor did pubic hair used to be all over the place. Even nudist magazines had once rendered men and women into department-store mannequins without genitalia playing volleyball.

The great pubic breakthrough occurred first in *Penthouse*, and then in *Playboy*. In a *Playboy* photo feature, "The Girls of Russia," one of the models was gazing at her naked body in a dressing-room mirror, and although her crotch had been air-brushed out of existence, her reflection revealed a triangular patch of dark curly hair that would serve to open Pandora's Box wider and wider until *Hustler* began "showing pink." Larry Flynt's own wife, Althea, had shown pink in the pages of *Hustler*. One issue even featured a Scratch 'n' Sniff center spread. When you scratched the spread-eagled model in her designated area, a scent of lilac bath oil emanated from her vulva.

After Flynt's conversion, I had been wondering how *Hustler* would change, and now it turned out that I was the answer to my own question. For Flynt to bring me in as redeeming social value was an offer too absurd to refuse. What had irony wrought? At the time, I was writing a column which was syndicated to various alternative weeklies. Specifically, in my "Predictions for 1978," I had led off with this one: "Since Larry Flynt has been converted to born-again Christianity by Ruth Carter Stapleton, the new *Hustler* magazine will feature a special Scratch 'n' Sniff Virgin Mary."

At the Christmas party, Flynt asked me if I'd had anything to eat. "No, thanks, I've been fasting for a few days."

"Oh, really?" He seemed intrigued. "Why you been fasting?"

"Well, because I wanted to be real clearheaded when I got here. I was curious to see if you were a con artist or not. And you are. And you're good."

"He hesitated for just a split second. Then he smiled and said softly, 'I'm the best.'"

Later, a corporate executive grabbed me by the collar and said, threateningly, "You're exploiting a very sick man." I didn't know how long I would last as publisher of *Hustler* so when editor Bruce David showed me around the next morning, I began exercising my power immediately. The cover of the April 1978 issue—the one that would not feature a woman—was scheduled to have a teddy bear wearing a negligee. I changed it to an Easter bunny nailed to a crucifix, with a basket of painted eggs toppled over in the foreground, and assigned a staffer to write a piece on "The Commercialization of Easter." I also went through Larry Flynt's publisher's statement and removed every masculine reference to God. That afternoon, Larry brought me into his office. I didn't know what to expect, but he said that he really liked my cover idea, and he agreed with me that God is genderless. "You know," he said, "I've always been of a philosophical bent." Then he gestured toward the wall. "You see these walls? [The movie has him saying this to Althea.] I could make them tumbling down by sheer will power."

"Oh, boy, this is gonna be some job."

"But I don't wanna misuse my power."

"Oh, shit, why doesn't anybody ever wanna misuse their power for me? C'mon, Larry, please, just once. . . ."

I decided—perhaps foolishly—not to ask him for a contract. If indeed I was exploiting a very sick man, at least I wanted him to be able to fire me as frivolously as he had hired me. In fact, President Jimmy Carter's evangelist sister, Ruth Carter Stapleton, suggested to Larry that he "get rid of" me, but he refused.

While I was spending the Christmas holidays with Ken Kesey's family in Oregon, Larry's brother Jimmy and others were making arrangements to have Larry locked up and declared insane. They were unsuccessful. Larry called and invited me to the Bahamas for New Year's. Kesey's daughter, Shannon, was giving him a haircut, stretching out each individual coil and then clipping off the end of it, while Kesey—himself a practicing Christian—gave me his farewell blessing: "Christ's plan has a place for pink. All you have to do is lace it with love."

My "Predictions for 1978" had now been published, and I gave Larry a copy in his Nassau Beach hotel suite. "A Scratch 'n' Sniff Virgin Mary," he mused. "Hey, that's a great idea. We'll have a portrait of the Virgin Mary, and when you scratch the spot, it'll smell like tomato juice." Then he wanted to know who would be a good person to write an article for *Hustler* that would expose the Pope as gay. I suggested Gore Vidal, who'd already stated in an interview that Cardinal Spellman was gay. So much for our first editorial conference. Next morning, on the beach, Larry was rubbing suntan lotion on my back. "I'll bet Hugh Hefner never did this for you," he said.

In 1967, at an anti-war demonstration in Los Angeles, police had forced thousands of protesters back into a grassy area where now stood Century City, an architectural phoenix rising out of the ashes of the peace movement. From my 38th-floor office in one of the twin towers, I could stare out a large plastic window, which couldn't be opened, at the view of a restricted country club below. I found a tiny apartment in Beverly Hills for only \$235 a month, and walked to work every day. I was the Lone Pedestrian.

Even though I was now making \$90,000 a year, I would still eat leftover food right off hotel-room service trays that guests had placed outside their doors. Those old habits die hard. When I was a kid, my mother used to stand by the garbage can, warning me—"I'm gonna throw it away"—before she scraped the food off the plates. I took it on as my lifetime personal responsibility not to waste food. Also, I was too cheap to actually buy a box of facial tissues, so instead I always carried a few squares of toilet paper neatly folded in my pocket. It was only after the Kleenex people, who had a plant in El Salvador, dropped their sponsorship of *Lou Grant*—because the star of the series, Ed Asner, had demonstrated against the U.S.-financed death squads in El Salvador—that my frugality became a political protest.

Since Mother's Day falls in May, the idea was to have a nude pregnant woman on the cover of the May 1978 issue—another *Hustler* first—and, on the inside, an article, "Motherhood—Celebration of Life!" We found a pregnant model, and the photos combined beauty and dignity. There was a slight problem, though—you could see one of her nipples. An unwritten agreement existed among the publishers of men's magazines that human female nipples shall not be clearly visible on a cover, or else wholesalers were likely to refuse to distribute the magazine to retail outlets.

"But this is insane," I protested. "I mean, when that woman gives birth, there'll be no protuberances to nurse her baby with."

Yet I was learning by osmosis to accept certain arbitrary rules as the net in this pornographic tennis game. An erect penis must not be shown. Working hours are from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Semen must not be shown. Spring water must not be used to make coffee. Penetration must not be shown. If a call is interrupted by Larry Flynt's secretary, you must hang up immediately. Oral-genital contact must not be shown. This world of pornography was another separate reality that Carlos Castaneda never dreamed of. (Castaneda was, of course, one of the actors who got a blow job in *Deep Throat*.)

An Italian magazine, *Playman*, had published full frontal nude photos of Jacqueline Kennedy taken on a Greek island by the grace of a telephoto lens. Lyle Stuart brought the issue from Rome and gave it to Al Goldstein, who reprinted the photos in *Screw*. Then Larry Flynt published a 5-page spread in *Hustler*. But now he wanted to put the naked Jackie on the cover with a banner headline: *Did Onassis Kill Kennedy? Was Jackie Worth It?* On the inside, readers whose curiosity had been aroused would find "The Gemstone Papers," a conspiratorial amalgam of facts and apocrypha.

"But," I argued, "If you can't even put nipples on a cover, how are the distributors gonna let you get away with pubic hair?"

"If it's Jackie Kennedy's pubic hair," Larry replied confidently, "they'll display it."

The first born-again issue of *Hustler* would feature a heterosexual couple making love in various positions on a chair especially designed for that purpose. They were professional models who had never met before, but they both got so turned on that what had started out as

simulated intercourse soon became quite real. The violation of the no-erection rule had been canceled out by the violation of the no-penetration rule. For here was the most paradoxical rule of all—penetration is allowed if it is so fully to the hilt that you cannot see the erection.

As for the cover with a nude pregnant model, that dilemma was resolved—instead of a photo, there would be an artist's version of a cut-away diagram of a fetus in the womb. The nipples of this unreal mother-to-be had high visibility, but that was no problem, because there were different standards for photography and art. However, another issue of *Hustler* was scheduled to include a portfolio of 19th-century miniature erotic paintings from India. Somebody noticed there was penetration that was clearly visible. Unlike the unknown couple, here was *visible* penetration, so these classics were altered at the printer, thereby reversing the usual double standard for photography and art.

I assigned articles ranging from Marilyn Katz on abortion rights to Eric Norden on the murder of Malcolm X, and I appointed science-fiction writer Theodore Sturgeon as *Hustler's* book reviewer. I felt privileged to be reaching this otherwise neglected blue-collar audience with informative anti-establishment material, even if other pages of the magazine would undoubtedly become stuck together by several hundred thousand dried-up sperm cells that had mistakenly assumed they were heading toward the fallopian tubes.

Larry Flynt had been traveling around a lot, but he happened to be back in L.A. at the same time that Ram Dass was visiting, so I had the unique pleasure of introducing them. Larry, Althea, Ram Dass and I went to a health-food restaurant, where we discovered that we shared something in common: we were all practicing celibacy—Larry at the suggestion of Dick Gregory, Althea by extension, Ram Dass for spiritual purposes, and me just for the sheer perversity of it. Over lunch, Larry told me that I should "take more power." He said he was actually *bored* with pornography, but felt so strongly about his right to publish it that he had gone to Atlanta to defy a ban and sell *Hustler* personally. He got arrested for that, but first he had to stand trial for obscenity in Lawrenceville, Georgia.

The next week, he called me from Lawrenceville. "Now I know why you introduced me to Ram Dass," he said. "Is his name one word or two?" I told him it was two words, and he continued: "Ram Dass really helped me to get rid of my hang-up about labeling myself as a 'celibate.' I can just say that I'm not having sex."

"And you don't have to worry about the label 'fasting' either. You can just say that you're not eating food."

"Oh, listen, Paul—you know those ads for guns we have in *Hustler*—well, you know, I'm against violence, but I'm also against censorship, so just move 'em to the back of the magazine, okay?"

A few days later, while walking on the sidewalk in Lawrenceville during a lunch break in the obscenity trial, an American-flag pin on his lapel, Larry Flynt was shot twice in the abdomen. The .44-caliber magnum bullets came from across the street, one lodging near Larry's spine. His local attorney was also wounded. According to the doctors, if Larry hadn't taken an enema the day he was shot, he would not have lived, because the contents of his intestines would've caused a fatal infection. He'd had only grapefruit juice for lunch. His spleen and several feet of intestine were removed.

The *Hustler* staff was in a state of shock. A group of employees donated blood for Larry. I flew to Atlanta on the Thursday before Easter and went directly to Emory University Hospital. Althea brought me to Larry's room. It was extremely unsettling to see such a powerful personality laying there so helpless, being kept alive by medical technology, with one tube feeding him and another tube breathing for him. He appeared bug-eyed with painkiller. Althea lifted the sheet and showed me his gaping wounds, a truly awesome sight.

"Oh, God, Althea—he's showing pink."

"I'm arranging for a photographer to come in here," she said. "We're gonna publish Larry's wounds in *Hustler*. I want people to see what they did to him."

I sat down in a chair by Larry's bed. I didn't know what to say. We simply clasped hands for a while. Finally I broke the silence. "Larry, tomorrow is Good Friday," I said. "So, uh, you don't have to go to work." I glanced toward Althea to reassure myself that I hadn't indulged in irreverence that was too inappropriate, but she said, "Oh, Paul, *look*!"—gesturing toward Larry—"he wants to show you something." Above the oxygen mask, Larry was blinking his eyes over and over again in rapid succession. "He's *laughing*," Althea said. It was a moment of unspeakable intimacy for the three of us.

Althea was a combination of *The Beverly Hillbillies* and *Evita*. As I was leaving the hospital, I heard her voice from the other end of the corridor: "Oh, Paul!" I thought she was about to say something like, "Thank you for coming to see me in my hour of need." Instead, she called out, "Remember—go hard-core!" Back home that night, I got into a bathtub full of burning hot water as if to experience Larry's pain, but it couldn't possibly feel the same. Besides, I was doing it out of choice and could stop voluntarily, whereas Larry would be confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life, paralyzed from the waist down. I almost fainted when I got out of the tub.

The next day I was scheduled to have my photo taken for the upcoming born-again issue. I had been wearing the same old wind-breaker to work every single day, but on this particular morning I decided to vary my wardrobe by wearing an old cowboy hat. The photographer asked me if I would take off my clothes and pose nude. I agreed, but I got caught up in *Hustler's* editorial schizophrenia. In the "Advise and Consent" column at the front of the magazine you could read about how penis size doesn't matter, but in the ads at the back of the magazine you could send away for penis enlargers. So, when I went into this little bathroom at the photo studio to remove my clothes, I fondled my penis just enough to make it a *little* larger without becoming erect.

Then I posed for the camera—completely naked except for my cowboy hat—shrugging my bare shoulders and smiling helplessly. This was the first time any publisher of a men's magazine had ever presented his *own* full frontal nudity.

A byproduct of the attempt on Larry's life was a terrible cash-flow problem in the Flynt empire. Creditors wanted to be paid immediately, while those who owed the company money held back their payments. Althea had taken over the running of *Hustler*. As the staff began to get severely trimmed, the insecurity of those who remained, increased. Morale got lower and tempers flared. I visited the hospital again. Larry, in his delirium, was convinced that he had been walking around the room. He also told me that Hugh Hefner and Bob Guccione were directly responsible for his being shot. Straining to be rational, he asked if Gore Vidal had written that article yet, about the Pope being gay, and I said that we were still trying to locate him. Larry also wanted to know about "the Jesus shoot," a photo spread he had previously described with this revisionist theology:

"Everyone knows who Mary Magdalene was, the prostitute that Jesus used to run around with. She was the one that was caught in the act of prostitution, and she was tried, and she was *stoned* to death. But if you get caught in the act of prostitution, that means you had to *fuck* somebody, right? So we're gonna show that picture, and then we're gonna show her getting stoned, and we're gonna show Jesus walkin' up, saying, 'Let those who have not *lain* with her, cast the first stone.' Yes, I said that right. It's not, 'Let those without *sin* cast the first stone.' Because Jesus knows they'd *all* been fuckin' her, and that's why they stopped stonin' her, because you see, he knew everything, and not only that, he was also troubled about why she was being stoned to death and the *man* wasn't being stoned, because if he hadn't *a'paid* her, she wouldn't've *fucked* him, and why should she be punished and him be let off the hook? Looks to me like somebody had something against the woman."

Althea had transformed the Coca-Cola Suite of Emory University Hospital into her office, where she was now studying the slides of that "Jesus and the Adulteress" feature. Dick Gregory was there, and he said, "This scares me." He was concerned about reaction in the Bible Belt, notwithstanding the fact that *Hustler's* research

department had already made certain that the text followed the Bible. And now Althea was checking for any sexism that might have slipped past the male editors' limited consciousness. The spread was already in page forms, but not yet collated into the magazine, and there was still a gnawing dilemma about whether or not to publish it. The marketing people were aghast at the possibility that wholesalers would refuse to distribute an issue of the magazine with such a blatantly blasphemous feature. Althea and I voted to publish. Dick Gregory and Bruce David voted not to publish.

"I'm against it," Bruce said, "because we're already sucking wind with the lines of credit, and this is an issue that just simply will not be distributed."

Faced with this crucial decision, Althea made her choice on the basis of pure whim. She noticed a pair of pigeons on the window ledge. One of them was waddling toward the other. "All right," Althea said, "if that dove walks over and pecks the other dove, then we will publish this." The pigeon continued strutting along the window ledge, but it stopped short and didn't peck the other pigeon, so publication of "Jesus and the Adulteress" was postponed indefinitely.

Larry was eventually transferred to a hospital in Columbus, and Althea traveled back and forth between there and Los Angeles. On one of her visits to L.A., I mentioned that I had been interviewed for *High Times* and that one of their questions was, "Have you slept with Althea Flynt?"

Althea said, "What did you tell them?"

"I just answered, 'No, but even if we had, I wouldn't tell you.'"

That was the truth, but Althea was visibly upset. "Why'd they ask that?"

"Well," I replied, "you know, just sensationalism."

The next day, Althea called me into her office. Whenever she did that, I would always take my pen and pad with me. She might have an idea for an article—on the quality of food in public schools, for example—but this time we both sat down and she got immediately to the point: "Paul—I have to fire you."

I wrote down *fired* on my pad. Then I asked, "Does Larry know about this?"

"No, not yet. But the readers wanna see a picture on the publisher's page of somebody who looks like he *works* for a living."

"Althea I *do* work for a living. I work for *you*."

Of course, I knew what she meant. In the photo on the publisher's page, I was wearing green shades and a cowboy hat over my long hair. But still?

"No, I didn't mean it that way," she said. "Look, *Hustler* is really Larry's baby, and people wanna see his picture back on the publisher's page. We've been getting a lot of calls from readers and wholesalers complaining that they don't feel the magazine is really *Hustler* without Larry, and now that he's recuperating, he should be publisher again. It's nothing personal—I like you better than Ruth Carter Stapleton or Dick Gregory or anybody else Larry introduced me to. But whenever I walk past the office he built for himself here—he never even got a chance to use it. . . ." She started to sob. I didn't know quite how to react. "My mascara's running," she said. I handed her a tissue from my pocket. It is proper etiquette to comfort one's employer when one has just been fired.

Althea started wiping her face. "This tissue is falling apart," she complained.

"It's not a Kleenex," I explained. "It's toilet tissue." She looked stunned. "But," I quickly added, "it's two-ply."

She laughed. "You really are crazy."

"Althea, listen, I don't have any money. I didn't save a penny. I've spent it all paying back debts. I'll need to get a severance check."

"How much do you want?"

"Well, I think 10% of my salary would be fair. That would be \$9,000."

"I was thinking of \$5,000."

"All right, let's compromise—\$7,000."

"Okay, that's fine," she said. "Seven is God's lucky number."

We embraced, and Althea whispered, "I love you, Paul."

I went back to my office and locked the door. I felt an overwhelming sense of relief. I phoned family and friends to tell them the news before they learned about it in the media. When I called Ken Kesey, he said, "Well, why don't you come to Egypt with us? The Grateful Dead are gonna play the Pyramids." What perfect timing! I put my radio on and started dancing around the office. I belonged to this vast army of secret dancers who only dance when they're alone. There I was, dancing and singing, "Oh, thank you for firing me, Althea, thank you, thank you, thank you."

That evening, I walked home totally elated.

* * *

The Grateful Dead were performing at an open-air theater in front of the Pyramids. I had a strong feeling that I was involved in some kind of *lesson*. It was as though the secret of the Dead would finally be revealed to me, if only I paid proper attention. In preparation for the concert, I was sitting in the tublike sarcophagus at the center of gravity in the Great Pyramid, having ingested LSD that a Merry Prankster smuggled into Egypt in a plastic Visine bottle. I had heard that the sound of the universe was D-flat, so that's the note I was chanting. It was only as I breathed in deeply before each extended *Om* that I was forced to ponder the mystery of those who urinate inside the Pyramid.

There was a full eclipse of the moon that evening, and Egyptian kids were running through the streets shaking tin cans filled with rocks in order to bring it back. "It's okay," I assured them. "The Grateful Dead will bring back the moon." And, sure enough, a rousing rendition of *Ramble On*, *Rose* accomplished that feat. The moon returned just as the marijuana cookie that rock impresario Bill Graham gave me was blending in. And when the Dead played *Fire on the Mountain*, I danced my ass off with all the others on that outdoor stage as if I had no choice.

"You know," Bill Graham confessed, "this is the first time I ever danced in public."

"Me too," I said. That was the lesson.

Coincidentally, Ruth Carter Stapleton was visiting Egypt. She had been conducting prayer meetings and inner healing sessions. When *Washington Post* reporter Rudy Maxa told her I was in Cairo, she asked him to invite me to meet with her. "After all," she said, "mine is supposed to be a ministry of reconciliation, isn't it?" But when Maxa wrote in the *Post*, "Only the inability to determine Krassner's whereabouts saved him from a dose of inner healing at the base of the Pyramids that afternoon," he had no idea that I'd been tripping on acid inside the Pyramid that same afternoon.

Back in the States, I wrote to Ruth Carter Stapleton, expressing my surprise that she wanted to meet me inasmuch as she had previously asked Larry Flynt to fire me. She phoned in response to my letter. "I want to apologize," she said. "I had been advised that you were not the correct individual to change the image of *Hustler*, but I shouldn't have judged you before I met you. I don't usually judge people before I meet them."

"Well, if you were a *true* Christian," I teased, "you wouldn't judge me *after* we met. . . ."

And so it came to pass that Larry Flynt attributed his born-again conversion to "a chemical imbalance" in his brain. As for me, my main editorial regret was that I hadn't been able to publish that "Jesus and the Adulteress" photo spread. The poster which was supposed to be included as a pull-out centerfold would instead remain on my wall as a memento of those six months at *Hustler*. There was Jesus, a generic, barbershop-calendar Jesus, looking reverently toward the sky as he covered up the prone Adulteress. Her head was bleeding from the stones that had been cast upon her. And she was showing pink. Sweet, shocking, vulnerable pink. This poster was a startling visual image, unintentionally satirizing the ostensible change from the old *Hustler* to the new *Hustler*.

Although *Hustler* had been accused of exploiting women, actually it was guilty of exploiting men's addiction to pornography. I had been catering to an unseen audience who all had one particular quality in common—the security of never being rejected by a centerfold.

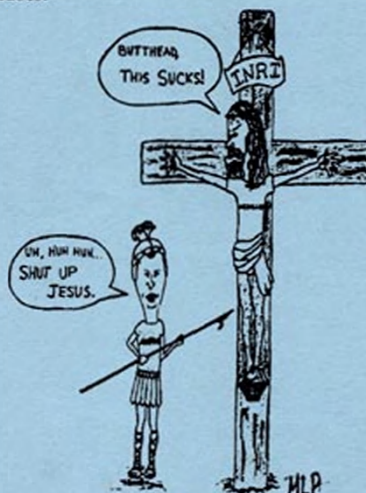
DOMA Nation

by Lynn Phillips

On September 14th, 1996, in the wee, small-minded hours of the morning, President Clinton signed DOMA, the brilliantly-named "Defense of Marriage Act." A constitution-busting measure, DOMA allows any state in what was previously known as "the union" to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages legitimized outside its boundaries. It's as if Yankees claimed the right to charge Southern gentlemen with statutory rape should they transport their 14-year-old brides across the Mason-Dixon line. The difference is, unlike laws protecting lonely girls from lusty men, DOMA protects homophobes and pseudo-religious simpletons from having to grow the fuck up.

The rationale behind DOMA is three-pronged. Point one is that if sex lacks reproductive potential, it will be gratuitously pleasurable and therefore abhorred by God. Point two is that to make something legally permissible is to equate it, morally, with everything else that's legal. Point three, in the DOMA mind-set, is that each action or social contract must have one clear, approved purpose only, as in Thou shalt not use thy pen to stir thy coffee or thy hankie to wipe a little spill. Applied to other aspects of life, DOMA-think makes new laws the way *Dumb and Dumber* made spinoffs. Examples:

- Since the God-given purpose of eating is to absorb nutrients, imitation sugars like Sweet and Low which frustrate God's will must be banned from all Federal cafeterias.
- Since the purpose of breasts is to feed infants, women who have had breast enlargement implants to excite wicked lust in adult men should pay a special sin-tax to provide hungry youngsters in grades 1-3 with fresh, wholesome milk.
- To avoid public confusion, the fetuses of future gays shouldn't be allowed to gestate in good Christian women's wombs as if they were morally equivalent to heterosexual fetuses.



Jesus and Butthead

- Since it is as yet impossible to tell which fetuses are which, it is better, for now, for Americans to nourish *all* our unborn in sexually neutral test tubes.

DOMA-logic also forces us to admit that marriage isn't the only modern institution that's threatened and needs defending. Clearly we need many more defensive acts if our American way of life is to survive the moral decay now sweeping the developed world. We propose:

- DOFFA—a Defense of Fine Fashion Act that keeps people with no sense of style from wearing clothes.
- DOUKA—a Defense of Unwanted Kids Act that keeps men who don't like changing and burping their offspring from siring children.
- DOCHA—a Defense of Cleaning House Act that keeps people who can't pick up their own socks or make their own beds from owning or renting homes.
- DOLE-A—a Defense of Literate Expression Act that keeps candidates who can only

Ladies!! ARE YOU TIRED OF BEING ACCOSTED BY GUYS IN BARS WITH ONLY ONE THING ON THEIR MINDS?

Well, IF UNSCRUPULOUS GUYS ARE SLIPPING ROHYPNOL (A.K.A. "ROOFIES" OR "THE DATE RAPE DRUG") INTO WOMEN'S DRINKS IN ORDER TO HAVE THEIR WAY WITH THEM, WHY CAN'T WOMEN USE THE SAME APPROACH?

Introducing... Feminol™

THE FAST-ACTING FEMALE HORMONE IN A CAPSULE!

JUST SLIP ONE INTO HIS FAVORITE BEVERAGE & BEFORE YOU KNOW IT...

HE'LL BE HAPPY TO "JUST TALK," OPEN UP TO HIS OWN FEELINGS AND WANT TO HEAR ABOUT YOURS WITHOUT TESTOSTERONE GETTING IN THE WAY!

IT'S A TEMPORARY VERSION OF THE CHEMICAL CASTRATION DRUGS NOW USED IN SOME JURISDICTIONS TO CONTROL THE URGES OF REPEAT SEX OFFENDERS!

CHEMICAL CASTRATION IN A CAPSULE!

NEW! PULSE-SIZE!

ROBERTS & SIERGEY

speak in grunts and monosyllables from seeking public office.

- DUMBA—a Defense of Un-Married Bimbos Act that obliges all public officials to marry every woman they sleep with but don't respect.

- DOGA—a Defense of Gab Act that prohibits those opposed to free speech from using public media.

- And, lastly, DORSA—a Defense of Religious Sanity Act that keeps people with no concept of charity, humility or humanity from trying to legislate other people's lifestyles at any time in any way.

We avid fans of DOMA plan to propose these and other suitable measures to our legislators immediately.

It is also, we feel, time to change our nation's motto. *E Pluribus Unum* should be ditched and replaced with a more DOMA-spirited chestnut, like: *A Good Offense Is the Best Defense*. Too ironic? If the public demands a motto that's explicit, literal and unambiguous, there's always: *Defended We Stand; United We Fell*.