

# The Realist

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Editor: Paul Krassner

## The First International Prostitutes Conference

### Allen Ginsberg's Last Laugh

Editor's Introduction:

Our countercultural paths had crossed at civil rights marches, marijuana smoke-ins, antiwar rallies and environmental demonstrations. He was always on the front lines. Long before Ellen came out on a sitcom, Allen came out in the streets.

In March 1968, the Yippies held a press conference to announce plans to protest the Vietnam war at the Democratic convention in Chicago. I was one of the speakers. When I mentioned that, in peace candidate Eugene McCarthy's Clean-for-Gene presidential campaign, "Allen Ginsberg wouldn't even be allowed to ring anybody's doorbell unless he agreed to shave off his beard," a reporter asked, "Would you cut your hair if it would end the war?"

Before I could answer, Ginsberg himself popped up like a Zen-master Jack-in-the-box, his index finger waving in the air, and asked the reporter, "Would you let your hair grow if it would end the war?"

Later, Yippie leaders held an impromptu competition to follow up on that line of questioning, concerned with exactly how open to self-sacrifice one might become in the pursuit of peace. Ginsberg's fellow poet, Ed Sanders, was unanimously declared the winner, with this criterion: "Would you suck off a terminal leper if it would end the war?"

Over the decades, Allen and I shared many a stage at benefits for various causes, but in 1988 we were both booked for a paying gig at Lincoln Center, along with performance artist Karen Finley, whose reputation for shoving a sweet potato up her ass preceded her appearance. My opening line was, "Allen Ginsberg is very disappointed. He thought that Karen Finley was gonna shove a sweet potato up *his* ass."

I could hear Allen's laughter reverberating from backstage like a Tibetan gong. When we embraced, he said, "How did you know?"

Ginsberg once asked his father if life was worth living. His father answered, "It depends on the liver." This was a touch of inadvertent prophecy, for Allen died of liver cancer on April 5. But he had

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### Heaven's Gate's Last Rites

by Reverend Chris Korda

The following sermon was given during a ceremony in honor of Heaven's Gate. At the conclusion of the ceremony, 39 worms were released from film containers, and 16 grapes were crushed and eaten—two apiece for the eight male members who castrated themselves. Like the Heaven's Gate members, worms are asexual, and the reference to "shedding their containers" is obvious, but the deeper significance is that humans are no more—and probably less—important than worms in the planetary ecosystem.

We're gathered here today to honor the 39 members of Heaven's Gate who killed themselves. But before we can do that, we have to know why we're honoring them, and before we can know that, we need to see their actions from the correct perspective.

What is a Euthanasian perspective, anyway? What is the Church of Euthanasia all about? The Church of Euthanasia is about restoring

balance, between humans—of which there are more and more—and the remaining species—of which there are less and less. Every day, a quarter-million more humans. Every hour, one less species. Every eight minutes, an acre less trees in the United States.

How are we going to restore balance? Through *voluntary population reduction*. That's why the Church of Euthanasia's one and only commandment is (all together now) *thou shalt not procreate*. That's why every one of our members takes a lifetime vow to not procreate. It's the most important decision you can make, because it affects the *future*. You can't control how many children your children will have, or how many resources they'll consume.

What else do we stand for? The Four Pillars (let's hear them): Suicide, Abortion, Cannibalism, and Sodomy. Suicide is clearly the most relevant pillar today.

If nothing else, the Church of Euthanasia absolutely stands for the right of every individual to choose the time and place of their death. Euthanasia literally means *good death* in ancient Greek, and

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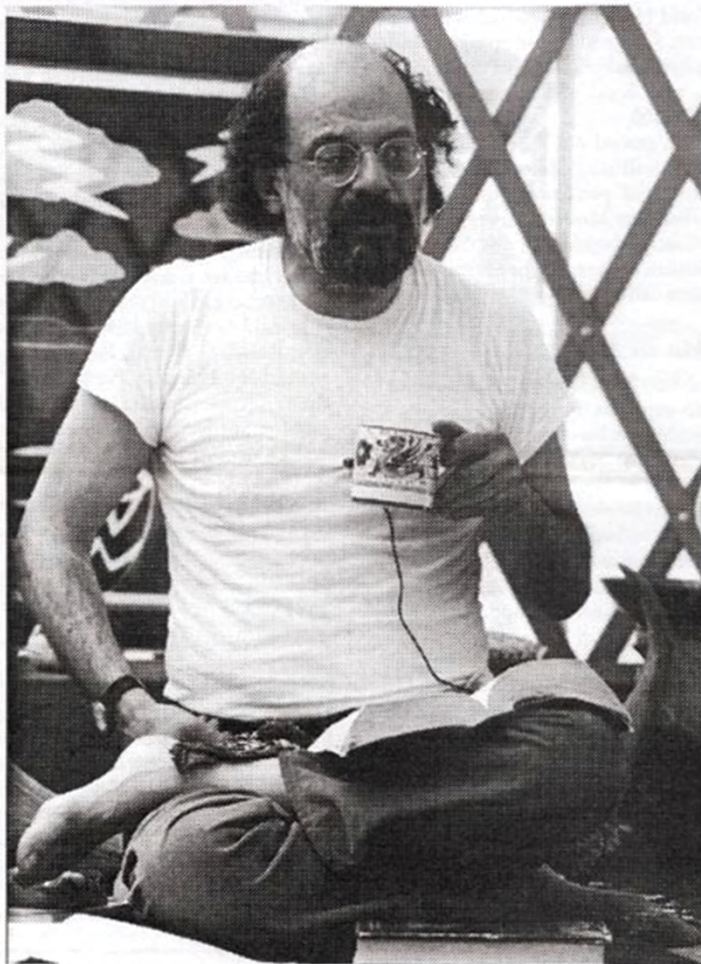


Photo by Morgan Alexander

## COURT JESTER

### The Realist Countdown

I can't stop cold turkey. There are now ten issues to go, and I plan to publish one more this year, then three each year for the next three years, so that the last issues will come out during the year 2000.

If you send \$20 for a gift subscription to the final ten issues, we'll send the recipient this issue as a bonus, and you'll receive a free CD (or cassette, if you prefer) of my album, *We Have Ways of Making You Laugh*. Those ten issues are by subscription only.

Also available: *The (Almost) Unpublished Lenny Bruce*—a collection of the controversial comic's articles, stories, columns, bits and pieces, \$10—and my autobiography, *Confessions of a Raving, Unconfined Nut: Misadventures in the Counter-Culture* ("Uproarious . . . soulful humor"—*Village Voice*), \$25.

Our address: Box 1230, Venice CA 90294.

### Personal Propaganda

- Seven Stories Press has just published a paperback edition of *The Winner of the Slow Bicycle Race: The Satirical Writings of Paul Krassner*, with a foreword by Kurt Vonnegut.

- Mercury Records will release my second album, *Brain Damage Control*, in July.

- I'll be performing stand-up at the Kuumbwa Jazz Center in Santa Cruz on June 10 at 8 p.m.—for information call (408) 429-7663; the Marsh Theater in San Francisco on June 14 at 11 p.m.—for information call (415) 641-0235; and at University Friends in Seattle on July 2 at 7:30 p.m.—for information call (206) 547-0862.

- I'll be performing at the first World Hemp Expo, which will take place July 18-20 just outside Eugene, Oregon. Other speakers and performers include Jack Herer, Stephen Gaskin, Dennis Peron, John Trudell, the Cannabis Cup Band, plus local and national stoner bands. For information call (212) 219-7000.

- And I'll be performing at the 17th annual Association for Consciousness Exploration festival, which will take place July 22-27 in Sherman, New York. Other speakers and performers include Babatunde Olatunji, Diana Paxon, Christopher Moore, Harvey Wasserman, the Firesign Clones, Magic Castle Magician of the Year Jeff McBride, the Church of the SubGenius, a Laser Light Show, and a wide variety of bands. For information call 800-446-4962.

### Oh Bring Back My Foreskin to Me

Although Paul Fleiss has been publicly identified as Heidi's father and Madonna's pediatrician, he also supports a controversial cause perhaps less well known than his daughter or his client. He has been a militant campaigner against circumcision for 20 of the 30 years he has been practicing, and has written a paper, *The Function of the Foreskin*. Recently, in a talk at the Midnight Special Bookstore in Santa Monica, Dr. Fleiss stated, "The foreskin is there to keep the end of the penis warm and clean and moist. There are thousands of nerve endings in that little bit of foreskin you're cutting off. Those of us who have been circumcised were mutilated. We've lost a very important function of our body."

He went on to decry the myth that babies don't feel anything when they're circumcised. "That agonizing cry of severe pain," he said, "is not like any other cry you hear from a baby. It's not a cry of wanting to be picked up, or hunger. Circumcision is totally unnecessary, but it's interesting that you will find Jews who don't honor the Sabbath, who don't wear a yarmulke, they eat bacon, they don't follow one single Jewish tradition, but they insist on circumcising their babies. It goes beyond any logic or reasoning."

I used to joke about having my foreskin reattached, but there is actually a book, *The Joy of Uncircumcising*, and an organization with just such a purpose, the National Organization of Restoring Men (NORM), with 21 chapters in the U.S., and five in other countries.

### In Our Own Image

by Alice Dreger, Ph.D. and Aron Sousa, M.D.

As women's rights advocates around the country celebrate the passage this past October of a bill outlawing female genital cutting, a rite practiced in several African cultures, we find ourselves deeply troubled. No, it isn't that we want to see girls' genitals cut. No, it isn't that we are extreme cultural relativists and believe that any culture's traditions or beliefs should necessarily be treated as sacred. It is that the law codifies an astounding double standard. For while the United States is ready to stop African traditionalists from cutting girls' genitals, our nation continues without justification to sanction genital cutting of girls by U.S. doctors. And none of these girls even ask for it, as some of the girls in Africa do.

Steven Michaud, coordinator of the Southern California chapter, was also speaking at the bookstore that evening. "In the late '60s and early '70s," he said, "the seeds of the anti-circumcision movement were planted by young hippie mothers who began to say, 'Wait a minute, this is counter-intuitive, how could all males be born with a birth defect? That's counter to evolution—you don't pass along a flawed system—it's gradually replaced.' And this movement has been growing and growing since the early '70s."

There is DOC, Doctors Opposing Circumcision, based in Seattle, "committed to telling the truth about circumcision and the uniquely specialized, uniquely sensitive erogenous tissue circumcision destroys." DOC's president, George Denniston, points out that "the efforts of a small number of health professionals and other children's rights advocates have helped the male infant circumcision rate in the U.S. drop from a high of 90% to less than 60%. This means that tens of millions of parents in this country have had the courage, wisdom and information they needed to keep their baby boys intact."

Marilyn Milos, a registered nurse who opposes circumcision as a violation of human rights, was fired from Marin General Hospital after showing parents a video of circumcision. She now heads the National Organization of Circumcision Information Resource Centers, headquartered in San Anselmo. Milos recalls with horror: "To see a part of this baby's penis being cut off—without an anesthetic—was devastating. But even more shocking was the doctor's comment, barely audible several octaves below the piercing screams of the baby, 'There's no medical reason for doing this.'"

Ronald Goldman, director of Jewish Associates of the Circumcision Resource Center, based in Boston, writes in *Questioning Circumcision: A Jewish Perspective*, "The uneasy doubts by parents about circumcision are real and justified. New information, reasoned inquiry, gut feelings, personal experience, and Jewish ethical values make a strong case for keeping a male infant the way he is born—natural and whole." Moreover, Norm Cohen, the author of *Bris Shalom*, an alternative Bris ceremony without cutting, states, "The covenant between God and the Jewish people will continue after the symbolic token, circumcision, is abandoned." But the question remains, just how reformed will rabbis have to become before they begin to speak out publicly against circumcision as a ritualized form of child abuse?

### Child Prodigy On the Cutting Edge

From *The Jerusalem Post Magazine*:

The National Council for the Child has protested to the Health and Religious Affairs ministries against the performance of ritual circumcision by a 13-year-old boy. Yishai Sharabi's father, Atniel, a *mohel*, told reporters, "From the day he was born, I could see that Yishai was suited to be a *mohel*." Atniel "marvels" that his son is so talented and enthusiastic. Hadassah, Yishai's mother, however, wishes he would spend less time practicing his technique and more time playing with his friends.

What are we talking about? In our country, every day, girls are born with clitorises which are declared by doctors "too big" for a girl, and so their genitals are cut down in order to make them "look normal." Certain medical specialists in the U.S. recommend that any clitoris over one centimeter (about 3/8") should be considered a candidate for reduction surgery—for cutting.

When doing these "clitoral reduction" surgeries, surgeons try to retain as much of the nerve tissue as possible in the hopes that they will not undo the sensitivity of the clitoris, but it is not uncommon for these girls to be left with hyper-sensitive or hypo-sensitive clitorises. Moreover, they are also frequently left with feelings of doubt, shame, and confusion, because some doctors advocate withholding from the child information about the surgery and its purpose. Indeed, one Canadian medical student was recently given a cash prize in medical ethics for a paper specifically advocating that doctors out-and-out lie to some people born with certain "intersex" conditions. Doctors continue to assume—without evidence—that a good hushing-up will keep the child from dwelling on her doubts about her body and its medical treatment.

There are several reasons a girl can be born with a clitoris that is bigger than one centimeter, but the physiology is not worth going into here. The important point is that the surgery to reduce an "enlarged" clitoris is not done for any medical reason. That is, a clitoris more than one centimeter long in itself presents no physical danger to the child. The justification given for cutting is that, if such surgery is not done, the girl may wind up deeply traumatized—perhaps so traumatized that she will have "gender confusion" and will grow up to be a lesbian.

In fact, we can find no study which demonstrates that girls who are allowed to grow up with big clitorises are deeply traumatized by the experience. What we do have is plenty of "anecdotal" evidence that girls who have had their clitorises cut without their consent grow up with feelings of shame, freakishness, depression, and are often unable to achieve orgasm. Typically nothing beyond the most cursory psychological counseling is offered or even recommended to them or their parents. If the chief concern really is the psychic health of these children and their families, why is this the case? Is there a fear that a mental health professional will be unable to justify such surgery? Is there a fear that, given deep reflection and thorough analysis of the situation, we will have to recognize that the surgery actually creates feelings of shame and confusion it claims to alleviate?

Even if there were a higher rate of lesbianism among girls left to grow up with "big" clitorises, lesbianism should hardly be seen as the tragic result of inadequate medical care. (Should we cut the genitals of any girl "at risk" of becoming a lesbian?) The double standard is astonishing: The African cultures which support female genital cutting employ the logic that cutting will keep a girl loyal to her man. Advocates of the new law argue this is a barbaric reason to cut a girl—and we would agree. Meanwhile some U.S. doctors support female genital cutting specifically because it will keep our girls from straying from our men—that is, from becoming lesbians.

We firmly believe that performing "cosmetic" genital surgery on any individual without his or her consent is simply a bad idea. Doctors may argue that the surgery is always consented to if not by the child then by the child's parents. But this is exactly what the Africans argue on behalf of their genital cutting. Why is it that we tell them they cannot cut girls' genitals down to size for reasons of cultural convention?

So, we are not unhappy with the ban on female genital mutilation, but it must be recognized that the ban stems out of and perpetuates an ugly double standard, because this law is specifically aimed at Africans and not at everyone who cuts girls' genitals for cultural reasons. The new law prohibits Africans from upholding a brutalizing cultural standard of genital conformity because it involves mutilation and risk, while tragically our nation quietly polices its own standard of petite clitorises. Surely this practice should not and cannot continue. It flies in the face of the American value of human rights.

## Modest Proposals

by Harry Zuger

Since term limits for political officeholders are apparently so popular, why not extend the principle to private business? For if mere longevity is to take precedence over all other employment factors such as accomplishment, profitability, commitment, diligence, loyalty, productivity and efficiency, why not apply this rationale to all corporate enterprise?

If politicians are to live by the same rules as the rest of us, why shouldn't the business community live by the same rules advocated for public servants? And this logical turnabout is further justified by the fact that term limits as urged by big business are gradually being adopted by some state legislatures.

Consequently we are forming an organization called "Universal Term Limits." It is our aim to establish a term limit of five years for all chief executive officers and board members in companies of 50 or more employees. Therefore, regardless of the performance of such individuals, they must step down at the end of five years in office, if not earlier.

One key advantage of this proposal is the mandatory rotation of such positions. Every five years a new CEO or board member will take office and have the privilege of leading his company in new and different ways of deceiving consumers, exploiting workers, and purchasing politicians. After all, why should such desirable and lucrative activities be limited to the same few when others crave similar opportunities? And there is always the possibility that new people will offer better approaches to these worthy endeavors.

A corollary benefit of universal term limits is the chance of demoting an unscrupulous executive. While almost all business leaders will remain good capitalists, there is the potential danger of unknowingly promoting a rebellious one who would favor reducing prices, raising wages, providing good health insurance, improving the environment, and other reprehensible interests. Under Universal Term Limits we would be assured that such a bad apple could not remain in office longer than five years. Term limit proposals by business and its federal and state legislative lackeys are just another example of reactionaries trying to restrict the liberties of others. Let's see how they like having to live by the same limits.

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The federal minimum wage rate, which makes no distinction between efficiency and incompetence, and which tends to institutionalize indolence, has been around long enough. Every few years Congress increases it, and last August, President Clinton signed a bill raising it from \$4.25 an hour to \$4.75 an hour.

At \$4.75 an hour, the newly adjusted minimum wage rate translates to \$38 for an 8-hour day, \$190 for a 40-hour work week, and an extravagant \$9,880 per year. Such a statutory requirement, which provides that these funds be awarded to working people regardless of their profitability or lack thereof, breeds needless dependence, and puts government into the revolutionary attitude of encouraging upward movement from one economic class to another.

Therefore, I propose that the entire institution of the federal minimum hourly wage rate be abolished and replaced with a permanent federal *maximum* hourly wage rate. The advantages of such a move would include the following: (1) Tend to keep the poor where they belong economically and discourage fanciful notions of progressing to another class; (2) Bring the wage rate more in line with worker profitability or lack thereof; (3) Have the national wage rate correspond more closely with and help to legitimize the recent declines and stagnation in real wages throughout the nation; and (4) Help to prevent the revitalization of unionism.

For these and other reasons the federal minimum wage rate has long ago outlived whatever usefulness it might have once had. It sorely needs to be supplanted by a federal maximum wage rate. By making this move Congress would indirectly help to protect its own modest annual salary of \$133,600 plus expenses.

## The Hookers Convention

by David Steinberg

Take a couple of hundred prostitutes, erotic dancers and prostitutes' rights activists from around the world: a gaggle of anarchistic, proudly caustic, social outcasts—mostly women—who are used to being ignored, discredited, stigmatized and dismissed, and who have a real taste and genius for stirring the soup. Put them together with a couple of hundred university-based academics and researchers—mostly men—who take for granted being treated with unquestioned deference and respect, who like to keep their professional and personal interactions polite, linear, and rational, and who are (for one reason or another) fascinated with the whorearchy. Shake and bake.

It's ICOP '97, the first International Conference on Prostitution, jointly sponsored by Cal State/Northridge's Center for Sex Research and the Los Angeles chapter of the main U.S. prostitute rights organization COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics). It's billed as a unique opportunity for current and former prostitutes, prostitutes' rights activists, researchers, academics, legal experts and social workers "to meet each other, present their work, and exchange information on their methods [and] results."

Sounds like one of those sweet/crazy scenes with a finger on the fluttering pulse of the world's schizophrenic love-hate-relationship with sex. And the underlying issue—the way sex workers, forever dismissed as subhuman beings as punishment for their unusual sexuality, are banding together and demanding to be seen, respected, and taken seriously—has resonated in my gut for a decade. I wouldn't miss it for the world

Waiting for the hotel shuttle in the deserted Van Nuys Airport parking lot, I met three women from London also headed for the conference. They look at me somewhat suspiciously when I say hello. One comments to no one in particular that she didn't know there were going to be any *men* at this conference. After a little regular and distinctly respectful (on my part) small talk, they lighten up a bit. Or maybe it's just their getting to puff cigarettes after 16 hours in no-smoking hell.

At the hotel, the three Londoners and a group of Asian women who speak almost no English move quickly ahead of me while I'm still figuring out which is the registration line. All sorts of women in the lobby are having joyous reunions with lots of smiles and hugs. It is a gathering together of a far-flung tribe, and it's clear that my place as heterosexual male supporter/observer/reporter is distinctly on the periphery. Fair enough. Feminism is alive and well among those whom the anointed feminists denounce. As one British whore says later, "Never have I seen in one place so many independent, feisty, strong and beautiful women in control of their own

minds, desires, bodies and finances. Now *that's* what I call a feminist."

There are 65 workshops with over 275 presenters squeezed into this two-and-a-half-day gathering. The first one I go to is on "Sex Work and the Disabled." Sex surrogate Cheryl Cohen talks to a small but attentive group about how professional sex with disabled people means getting comfortable with a lot of new things in a hurry. Catheters, urine bags and bowel irregularities, for starters.

Humor and creativity, she prescribes, as if we are all about to go out there and do this work ourselves. But watch out for spasms, she warns. "I learned the hard way not to put my breast in the mouth of a client with jaw spasms. Also, after I almost had my jaw dislocated, I decided never again to put my head between the knees of a client who spasms." We get the picture. On the other hand, she tells about the wonderful time she once had, pressing a client's arm against her clit so his spasms could make her come. "It gave him a sense of power," she observes matter-of-factly, "to know that he could give pleasure to someone else."

Tuppy Owens, presenting at the same workshop, has worked for years with handicapped people in London. She praises as "sex angels" the neighbors, friends and hospital staff who are willing to masturbate people who are unable to masturbate for themselves. Certainly as powerful a gesture of random kindness as scratching a paraplegic's nose or escorting someone in a wheelchair to the bathroom, but not so commonly offered. Tuppy talks about one man whose arms were so short that his hands were effectively coming out of his shoulders. She asked him if he masturbated with his feet, a question that, frankly, would never have occurred to me. "Yes, of course," he replied as if that much were obvious, "but hands are better."

At a workshop on "Prostitution's Place in History," Elizabeth Clement reads a paper on "Prostitution and Working Class Women's Sexual Morality, New York City, 1900-1940" in that uniquely crisp, clipped academic cadence university conference-goers know so well. I learn that prostitution was accepted as commonplace and no big deal throughout working class New York around the turn of the century. Whores worked out of a myriad of small hotels, and out of candy stores and ice cream parlors as well.

But what about the children? Seems that tenement families commonly had the whores watch their children while they were waiting for clients, an arrangement that gave the mothers free child care and the whores a legitimate reason to be sitting around if the police came by. When the whores scored a client they sent the kids back to their moms, picking them up again when they were done.

A plenary panel brings together some of

the more publicly notorious prostitutes and madams, including COYOTE founder Margo St. James, Xaviera Hollander (the Happy Hooker), Dolores French (author of *Working*), and Sydney Biddle Barrows (the Mayflower Madam).

French explains how she first went public as a prostitute in 1982, using her real name when she appeared on the Donahue show. "I wanted to prove that a prostitute does not necessarily wear hot pants, Tammy Faye mascara, and have 5-inch nails," she says.

Margo St. James notes that during her recent campaign for San Francisco Supervisor, people tried to discredit her by claiming that she had never really been the whore she claimed to be. "If the only way they could discredit me was to say I *wasn't* a whore," she laughs, "then we're really winning the battle for destigmatization."

At a workshop on "The Client," Hugh Loebner, prominent among the few talk-show johns, calls on clients of prostitutes everywhere to come out of the closet about paying for sex. At Stonewall, he notes, gay people "gained their freedom by speaking, nay, shouting out. Now it is our turn." An annual coming-out demonstration is scheduled for June.

Loebner also reports on prostitution among the Bonobo chimpanzees, confirming an old notion of mine that every sexual variation can be found somewhere in the animal kingdom if you look hard enough. Male Bonobos, it seems, will dangle dead meat in front of sexually aroused females, letting the females eat only after they have sex with the males. The males are also more likely to hunt when there are sexually active females around, knowing that it's the guy with the Porsche that's most likely to get laid.

It is illegal to enter the U.S., even temporarily, if you are a prostitute, like it is illegal to enter the country if you have AIDS. How to have a real international presence at the conference? "The university people wanted us to tell the women to deny being prostitutes on their visa applications," COYOTE organizer Norma Jean Almodovar explains, outraged at the thought. "But most of the women were going to acknowledge being prostitutes in their presentation. They could all be prosecuted for perjury, and me for advising them to lie. Would they ask a group of sociologists to perjure themselves? I don't think so. But it's okay to ask whores to lie because of who we are."

Barbara Boxer's office advises that the women can get visa waivers if they have letters officially inviting them to speak at the conference. When the university organizers drag their feet, not wanting to take what they call a political stance, Almodovar sends the invitations herself, commandeering the university letterhead. The women get their waivers.

Even with waiver in hand, a Nicaraguan prostitute on her way to the conference is twice pulled out of line and interrogated by the INS in Miami. She misses her flight, stays in the airport overnight, and arrives late to the conference. Speaking through an interpreter at the conference Awards luncheon, she tells her story in tears and anger. She is given both a standing ovation and a COYOTE award for bravery.

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Fred Cherry, 71, a vocal prostitution activist who suffers from chronic malabsorption syndrome (he was once 5'10" and 98 pounds), loves to talk about having sex with prostitutes. His first sex was with a prostitute, he says, solicited by his mother, who "didn't want me to starve," sexually as well as nutritionally.

He has been fighting for decriminalization of prostitution since 1962, when he was

hooted down for suggesting at an ACLU meeting that they take a stand on the issue. Fred has come through with a lot of money for this conference. He also happens to be rabidly homophobic, railing about how gay sex clubs get away with things that heterosexuals get busted for, and much more.

"He may be a homophobe," Almodovar says while presenting him with a conference award, "but he's *our* homophobe." When he seizes the mike and starts to rant, she affectionately but firmly pulls him away.

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Almodovar has scored a big coup by getting, as keynote speaker, Joycelyn Elders, the surgeon general Clinton canned for wanting to tell kids about masturbation. COYOTE has unilaterally raised \$10,000 to cover Elders' fee. "I don't know why a conference of hookers would invite Dr. Elders to speak," Almodovar quips in her introduction. "Mas-

turbation could single-handedly put us out of business." Elders gets a conference award. "I don't get too many of these," she smiles.

Elders is not used to talking to a group more radical than she is. When she raises the specter of six-year-old children forced into prostitution and speaks of how "poverty is the real crime of prostitution," she is greeted with silence instead of applause. The notion that prostitutes are typically broken, coerced and in need of rehabilitation is as seriously retro here as the notion that black women are basically welfare cheats. Elders catches that something is amiss and shifts gears.

"Many women marry for money," she booms, her hands moving dramatically through the air. "To me that's just one more form of prostitution." Applause gratefully breaks the tension. "Tell it like it is, sister," a very white woman calls out.

"If two consenting adults choose to have sex," Elders goes on, gathering steam, that should be none of the rest of our business." More applause. And then, finally, the words everyone is waiting to hear: "We've got to go about decriminalizing all aspects of adult prostitution."

She gets a long standing ovation. This is a movement with precious few public allies. Lots of people arrange to get their pictures taken with her.

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It is the final round of workshops, including a huge panel on "The International Sex Worker Movement." Yaoska Villavicencio, the Nicaraguan woman detained by immigration in Miami, is speaking when hotel workers suddenly begin pulling down the walls of the room in preparation for the conference's closing plenary.

The activists on the panel, incensed all weekend at not getting the translators they were promised, refuse to be cut off. University organizer Vern Bullough pulls rank and insists that the session end immediately. The women are not having any of it. They scream at him in Spanish. "Tell them to go to hell," he replies.

Villavicencio is in tears. "Why did you give me an award?" she says. "Was it so that I could endure so much humiliation?" The Latinas start chanting in the hallway. Bullough, at his wit's end, abandons the final plenary altogether, declares the conference over, and leaves.

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Success or fiasco? Most attendees don't seem phased by the conflict. People got mad at each other; happens all the time. Steph Walker, a prostitutes' rights activist from Britain, is unambiguous in her enthusiasm. "The conference has changed my life," she says. "My emotions ran from inspired, joyful, celebratory and proud to angry, saddened, burnt out and vulnerable, and I would change none of that. I have instilled in me now a sense of *real trouble-making* which I shall hold onto and feed on a regular basis."



*Soccer Mom in Pakistan*

## FDR Memorial a Struggle for the Disabled

by Bill Bolt

"It's strange, we didn't anticipate anything [like this] happening" was the reaction of the designer of the recently opened Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial when he heard that disabled groups were planning to demonstrate in front of his creation on opening day. He was shocked that the disabled might be even a little chagrined that not one of the many statues on the memorial grounds would show any evidence of the fact that FDR was a severely physically disabled person.

This shows how hard the ancient stereotypes of the disabled die. They are to be silent and thankful for whatever they receive. The Stepin Fetchit "yowsa mam, thankya mam," hat-in-hand expectations of African-Americans has found a new home on the heads of the disabled.

Why in God's name should the disabled *not* be expected to protest? Would Blacks sit idly by while statues were erected of Martin Luther King that turned him white and gave him Caucasian features? Seems we've just barely admitted that the disabled exist, but would like it better if they would go away, and definitely not remind us that they existed in the past, even to the point of being strong, intelligent, powerful, and wonderful.

The only powerful disabled crips recognized in history or fiction are usually evil, gnarled, stooped figures like Richard III and witches. Screenwriting texts still recommend that the budding writer employ physical disability to quickly conjure up moral evil in characters. Business is as usual when it comes to not hiring the disabled. No wonder, with that kind of public relations.

Here in the FDR Memorial was an historically accurate way of doing more to destroy these destructive stereotypes for generations to come: statues that show FDR using the wheelchair that he used every day of his time in office; an opportunity to show that people with even severe physical disabilities can not only do a good job, but have done what is said to be the hardest job in the world, that of being president of the United States, and have done it in possibly the hardest time in history, the time of the Great Depression and the largest war in history; and finally, did it for longer than any other president, elected to an unprecedented four terms by an appreciative people—this despite the fact that he came into office already paralyzed by polio.

They say that FDR should not be shown as disabled because he hid the fact from the public. I was born just before FDR was elected and I can tell you that my family knew he had the same disease that paralyzed me, and all of the people in the segregated school for the handicapped that I attended knew he was disabled even before he came to speak in front of our school. Should we continue the stigma that forced people to hide their disabilities in the past into the future? That forced my mother to hide me when she had to look for lodging?

Some people have said that if they only add one statue of FDR in a wheelchair, that will be okay. Not at all. It would be like agreeing that only one statue of Martin Luther King should show him as an African American and all the rest—the ones in the most prominent locations—should show him as White. The effect of a token representation of FDR as disabled will be to perpetuate the idea that no one uses a wheelchair except for a short time before they die. Every single statue should clearly show that FDR was disabled and could only stand with the help of others and heavy steel braces two-thirds of the way up his body.

Isn't it time that we moved away from the idea that the most important characteristic that a person can possess is physical perfection, rather than ethical, creative or intellectual achievement? One of the saddest things in this whole FDR Memorial debacle is that Senator Inouye, a member of the Memorial Commission and himself disabled in warfare, opposed the demands of millions of his fellow disabled Americans.

Now that President Clinton, all recent presidents, and scores of FDR descendants have asked to have FDR shown as he was rather than turned into a variation on the leader on a white horse statuary, it

## Statues of Limitations

by Charles Schaeffer and Art Cosing

*News Item:* Franklin D. Roosevelt, who tried hard to hide his paralysis, would sit in a wheelchair in a new statue that President Clinton yesterday proposed adding to the FDR memorial after it opens. Clinton, in a statement released by the White House, responded to potent advocacy groups [and its militants who threatened public protests] that have made the memorial's design a poignant debate over the change in . . . national attitudes toward people with disabilities.

—*Washington Post*

SPRINGFIELD, IL—Angry protesters here marched through the town's streets, brandishing placards and shouting "Mainstream Marfan Syndrome!" Historians have long ignored the fact that Abraham Lincoln suffered from this condition, protest leaders assert. Photographs of the president reveal the elongated limbs and the odd facial shape of a person clearly suffering from Marfan Syndrome. Occasional references have been made to Lincoln's condition over the years. "But never has anyone seen fit to label a statue *Our First Marfan President*, a protest leader representing the National Marfan Syndrome Association complained. The Illinois congressional delegation is looking into the idea of sponsoring legislation to rectify the oversight.

WHITTIER, CA—This quiet California town erupted today with the sounds of opposing marchers, dressed in an array of odd garb. Protesters decked out in Sigmund Freud masks thrust pamphlets in the hands of onlookers. The gist of the message, sponsored by the American Association for Normalizing Paranoia, declared that a future statue to President Richard Nixon (with a sad-eyed Checkers obediently at his side) should reflect the idea that you just might be right, if you've spent a lifetime suspecting that everyone is out to get you. A competing group, dressed in ties, pinstripe suits and fedoras, claimed Mr. Nixon for their own. Banners and placards bore their logo, *National Anal Retentive Coalition (NARC)*.

NEW YORK, NY—Tourists to Grant's Tomb yesterday ran into a roadblock as they tried to view the former president's resting place. On the front of the monument, unauthorized persons during the night had placed twelve marble steps. A placard left behind stated: "General Grant suffered from a disease that citizenry of his time refused to acknowledge. We on the other hand placed these Twelve Steps as a modern-day homage to his high spirits. Anonymous."

CINCINNATI, OH—Grim-faced rotund picnickers feasted from food-laden tables set up in front of the birthplace of President William Howard Taft. The eatathon, sponsored by the Organization for Bulimic Expressive Savants Extraordinaire (OBESE), was organized to enlist public sympathy for persons of girth. "Because President Taft was clearly one of us," the movement's leader, Willard Scott, declared, "it's only fair that he be judged not as a 300-pound overweight man, but as a suffering bulimic, created that way by nature."

ANN ARBOR, MI—Former President Gerald Ford said he would take under advisement a petition from an organization known as the Fellows Against Libelous Laughter (FALL). The group is seeking Mr. Ford's endorsement of legislation that would authorize at least one future statue of him cast in a stumbling position. FALL's leader told reporters: "Thousands of us out there live unwillingly on the edge of a banana peel. Having a symbolic memorial of a man of President Ford's stature would present our plight to a snickering public and take away the stigma."

MONTPELIER, VT—Hushed marchers shuffled through this picturesque New England capitol, striving diffidently to bring their message to the public. Press interviews with the almost silent group managed only to glean that it was composed of members who have

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is time to do some serious revisions in the FDR Memorial. Just as with severe disabilities such as that of FDR, real and substantial action must be taken to make a meaningful difference. It is time to recognize that people are often great, not despite their disabilities, but because of their disabilities.

difficulty talking. One placard identified the protesters as "The United States Association for the Linguistically Challenged." Their wish, as best it could be understood from the tongue-tied exchange, is for legislators to pass legislation creating a statue of Calvin Coolidge with the simple inscription: "I do not choose to speak."

WILLIAMSBURG, VA—A long march to Washington began today from this restored quaint colonial town. To make their point, several hundred protesters, led by Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, bore a replica of a statue of Thomas Jefferson. Seated at the foot of Jefferson is a female African-American slave. "This is how the statue should look," snapped Farrakhan, who took pains to note that he is not anti-Jeffersonian, even though the writer of the Declaration of Independence kept slaves, including one for a dalliance, long after everybody else of the period had let them go.

SACRAMENTO, CA—A national movement assembled here this week with the hope that the long shadow of former President Ronald Reagan would lend credence to their cause. The National Narcoleptic League's agenda includes a resolution that would declare office-napping a spontaneous medical condition and not a willful breach of duty. The group's leader noted that Mr. Reagan frequently dozed off in cabinet meetings, not because he didn't understand the proceedings, but because he was in the grip of undiagnosed narcolepsy, a condition that disables thousands of Americans. "A statue tastefully portraying the president in the grips of one of these episodes could do wonders for the average misunderstood office napper," said the organization's spokesman.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—President Clinton was not at the White House today, but that did not stop a milling protest by a sexually-troubled group of men who call themselves the American Society of Satyrs (ASS). In a speech to fellow advocates and gawking bystanders, William G. Priapus, director of the organization, called upon Mr. Clinton to sanction their cause. Satyriasis is a medical condition expressing itself in uncontrollable sexual urges. "If President Clinton does not rise to the occasion—perhaps acknowledging his continued preoccupation with our mutual problem," Priapus shouted to wild applause, "then who else?"

## ALLEN GINSBERG'S LAST LAUGH

(Continued from Cover)

lived his life to the hilt and beyond, balancing with dignity and grace on the cusp between rationalism and mysticism, one individual, with curiosity and compassion for all.

On April 7, Michael Krasny hosted a memorial for Ginsberg on his radio program, *Forum*, over KQED-FM in San Francisco. The panel included novelist/prankster Ken Kesey, poet/publisher Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Digger/actor Peter Coyote, and myself. The following is excerpted from that conference call.

*Kesey:* I was at a party one time when I first knew Ginsberg, and he was standing by himself over by the fireplace, with a wine glass in his hand, and people milling around, and finally some young girl sort of broke off from the rest of the crowd and approached him and said, "I can't talk to you—you're a legend." And he said, "Yes, but I'm a friendly legend."

*Ferlinghetti:* He lived so many flames. Today the youth, like the 20-year-olds, are really turned on to Ginsberg and the Beat poets, but the thing they're turned on to is the apolitical part. One forgets how political the Beats were in the '50s, which was the Eisenhower and McCarthy era. And that's a flame that seems to be flickering these days.

*Kesey:* He was a great warrior. I think that's more important than his poetry. In fact, in later times, I haven't read much of his poetry at all, because the warrior aspect of Ginsberg has loomed much larger. When we went to the Vietnam Day parade up in Berkeley [1965], they had been interviewing the Hell's Angels—all the Hell's Angels were gonna come out and oppose the opposers—they were gonna come out and start a riot, is what it was.

So Allen asked me to take him up there, to where the Angels hung out in this big white house in Oakland, and we went in there, and here's all these big brutes holding their beer cans, with their beer bellies and their beards, and Ginsberg goes right in and starts talking to them. And you look around, here are these great big mean-looking guys wearing swastikas, pretty soon Ginsberg has just charmed the hell out of 'em, until there's not gonna be a riot.

He took himself into that—they marveled at him. It was the courage, again, the courage of this man to come into this situation and defuse it.

*Krasny:* I knew Allen more as a researcher and an activist than as a poet. In fact, in 1984, at the Naropa Institute in Boulder, at the 25th anniversary of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, Abbie Hoffman was saying how much he and other political activists like Ed Sanders were influenced by *Howl*, and Ginsberg dismissed his own poem as "a whole boatload of sentimental bullshit." But, as a researcher, he had meticulously acquired files on everything that the CIA ever did, and I'm happy that these are included in his archives [at Stanford University].

The one image I have of him from Chicago in 1968, when we were holding our Yippie counter-convention—as opposed to the Democratic "convention of death," as we called it—the police were in Lincoln Park tear-gassing and clubbing people, and Ginsberg sat in the middle of it like some kind of stoned Buddha, chanting *Om* over and over again, and people gathered around him, and he led them out of the park, and it created a kind of mystical force field, so that the cops just ignored them, and he was like the Pied Piper of Peacemaking.

Allen just articulated the consciousness of people who knew that the mainstream culture was a sado-masochistic bizarre mess.

*Krasny:* What do you do with the kind of bizarre mess that some people would claim is characteristic of Ginsberg in the wake of his death, all the NAMBLA [North American Man/Boy Love Association] stuff, and his apparently not only supporting that organization, but also expressing favor where little boys are concerned, sexually, and also using drugs somewhat recklessly and excessively as some attribute him to do?

*Krasny:* Well, that's the risk of free will. Allen has always admitted, you know, he would go to a poetry reading and say he was hoping to meet a young boy there. He was honest about his perversion of pedophilia, if that's what it was, but it may have just been a fantasy. He was for dialogue, and he was nonviolent, so it's just interesting as to what he considered the age of consent. A few months ago he told me it was 18.

*Coyote:* (chuckling) It's just so funny. I mean, as a father of two kids, I'm repulsed by the idea of pedophilia, but you know, by the same token, it's Allen. It probably wasn't easy being Allen. It's easier to be some of us than others of us, and I think that Allen's great courage was to be unequivocally who he was. And when he went to Cuba and announced that he wanted to have oral sex with Che Guevara, it actually was to Castro's detriment, in my mind, that he threatened to lock him up, or threw him out.

The thing that Allen represented to me was more than the Beats, more than anything else, I hearken back to Gary Snyder's great phrase, "the great underground," which he calls the tradition, coming from the paleolithic shamans on up to the present—the tradition of yogans and healers and midwives and poets and artists and people who stand for archaic, earth-centered values, life-supporting values. It's like a great river that kind of surfaces in various cultures all around the world at different times. It's quenchless, transcendentalist for just one little rivulet of it. And Allen was a great prophet of it.

*Kesey:* When we [the Merry Pranksters] went to see [Tim] Leary at Millbrook, Ginsberg was on the bus, and we had pulled over somewhere, and he was up immediately, sweeping the stuff out of the bus with a little broom, and [Neal] Cassady at the wheel said, "Looky there, it's our Jewish mother." And he was the Jewish mother, in some way, to a whole literary movement. He did all he could to help all of his friends get into print, all the time. He was a great benefactor to this art, and worked very, very hard to have his friends have as much fame as he did.

We had a poetry festival some years ago up here in Oregon, and the way we were doing it, during the day we had a stage outside of our basketball court, and we had headliners that were gonna be on that night, and during the day people read poetry and we judged it, and they were gonna be the people that read with Ginsberg, and during the day all the people in the field outside gradually trickled into the basketball court, like 3,000 people in there, and we were gonna charge them \$5 apiece, but they were already in. Allen said, "Let me see what I can do." And he got up there with his harmonium, and he began, *Om, Om*, pretty soon he had 'em all *Om, Om*, and he just gave a gesture like that, stood up, walked out, and 3,000 people walked out with him, so we were able to charge 'em money.

*Krassner*: We've been praising Allen so much, but I'll give you one little revealing story. On one hand, he was a pacifist. I remember when he first started taking LSD, and he thought that world peace would come about if only John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev would take acid together. And yet, I remember a scene—this was in the early '70s—Ken Kesey and I and my daughter Holly, who was a young girl then, were visiting [William] Burroughs in New York, and he had this huge loft, and a cat, and a lot of cardboard boxes, and he was wearing a suit and tie and high-top red tennis sneakers.

We all decided to visit Ginsberg in the hospital—he'd had a stroke, and part of his face was paralyzed—he was in bed there, and I introduced him to my daughter, and he graciously struggled to sit up and shake hands with her, but he was kind of weak and deep in some kind of medication, and he blurted out—what they would call in psychiatry a "primary process"—he blurted out, "Henry Kissinger should have his head chopped off!" It was some kind of Ginsbergian Tourette Syndrome.

*Krassner*: There's been a lot of solemn talk, so I'm glad you added that note of levity. Ginsberg would want, I think, a discussion about his life to be infused with a lot of humor and satire, don't you think?

*Krassner*: Oh, absolutely. You can't take yourself too seriously if you're walking around with an Uncle Sam hat and Mahatma Gandhi pajamas, chanting "The war is over" when the war was at its height. But that act inspired Phil Ochs to write his song, *The War Is Over*, and to organize rallies in Los Angeles and New York on the theme of

"The war is over."

*Coyote*: I think that Ginsberg represented an enlarged notion of sanity—which is not to say it's not without contradictions, which is not to say it's not as stained and tattered as anything else. You may not like the fact that Gandhi tested his celibacy by lying naked with young girls, or that Freud was shooting cocaine while he was working out his psychotherapy theories, or that Martin Luther King had sex with women outside of marriage, but to me what these facts do is reinforce the humanity of the person in question and remind us that we don't have to be perfect to make contributions, that we can struggle against the dark or the undeveloped sides of our nature and still make a contribution, and I think that's kind of the beacon Allen is. The thrust and underpinnings of his life were fundamentally sane in every venue. That's really what I respect him most for.

*Ferlinghetti*: I think maybe you could say Allen started out mad and became *saner* all his life, and he then became more quietus, I think, in his last years, and this was an influence of Buddhism, I believe. He died as a Buddhist, he didn't want any life support systems. There were Buddhists around him at all-night vigils the last two nights, and he died the way he wanted to die.

*Kesey*: Ginsberg had a terrific laugh. I was just trying to think, what am I gonna miss most? Even in the most serious moments, this thing would bubble up and bark forth, his eyes twinkling. It was a great laugh, and I'm gonna miss him.

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## HEAVEN'S GATE'S LAST RITES

(Continued from Cover)

the Hippocratic oath binds all doctors to provide good death, just as much as good life. How many doctors today will even admit this, let alone provide it? That's why Dr. Kevorkian's portrait is hanging here today: to remind us of his monumental bravery.

The Church of Euthanasia is not pro-choice, we're pro-abortion. There's a big difference. It's every woman's *sacred right*. The question isn't why isn't it legal, the question is why isn't it *free*, in every state, in every nation, on every planet.

### Ginsberg the Prankster

by Stella Resnick

How I came to be sitting in the back seat of that car, with Peter Orlovsky driving, Allen Ginsberg in the passenger seat, and Gregory Corso to my right, I don't recall. Probably, we were on our way to a party—or maybe we were driving over to hear Trungpa Rinpoche talk. My friend Mel Buckholtz, who was my constant companion that summer of '75 in Boulder, sat on my left. All of us were teaching at Naropa Institute, except Peter, who was visiting Allen.

It had taken Allen a long time to warm up to me. Usually he only grunted at me when our paths crossed, the only sign of recognition being a slight lift of his eyebrows in my direction. I had met him for the first time two years earlier in New York when Jerry Rubin brought me to Allen's apartment at East 10th and Avenue A in the village.

That summer at Naropa, we ran into each other fairly often, and because he never smiled, and barely deigned to be en-

gaged in conversation, I wrote a foul-mouthed, mildly disgruntled poem about it which I tried to give to him. He wouldn't take it. He told me poems are meant to be read out loud and he would only take it if I read it to him that evening in the presence of his father and stepmother who were visiting from New York. I accepted Allen's invitation.

That night I went to the apartment where Louis and Edith Ginsberg, a quintessential old Jewish couple, were staying, and read them all my poem with a slew of the dirtiest words in my vocabulary, all slung together in homage of the emotionally-elusive Allen. When I finished, he seemed very pleased.

So maybe that's how Allen warmed up to me and how I happened to be in the back seat of that car facing Peter's long blond ponytail tied at the nape, and Allen in profile, his left arm draped over the seat. No sooner had we all climbed into the car when Allen and Gregory began having a very heated disagreement.

Gregory was insisting that only a few years ago, he and Allen were at a boring

party in New York and had gone off to a room by themselves where Gregory had proceeded to suck Allen's cock. Allen was equally insistent that the episode never took place.

"Yes it did. Yes it did," protested Gregory with a whine.

"Gregory," said Allen with pained exasperation, "if you had sucked my cock, don't you think I'd remember it?"

I felt like I was witnessing an event of historical significance.

Just a few years ago I ran into Allen at a writer's conference at the Miramar-Sheraton Hotel in Santa Monica. He was thin and looking healthy. He was almost friendly. At some point in our conversation I reminded him of the time in the car he and Gregory had fought over someone's faulty memory. I felt smug to have been privy to such an incident.

Allen chuckled.

"Oh, Gregory and I pulled that bit on people all the time. Sometimes I would say I sucked *his* cock, sometimes he'd say he sucked *mine*. It was one of our best routines."



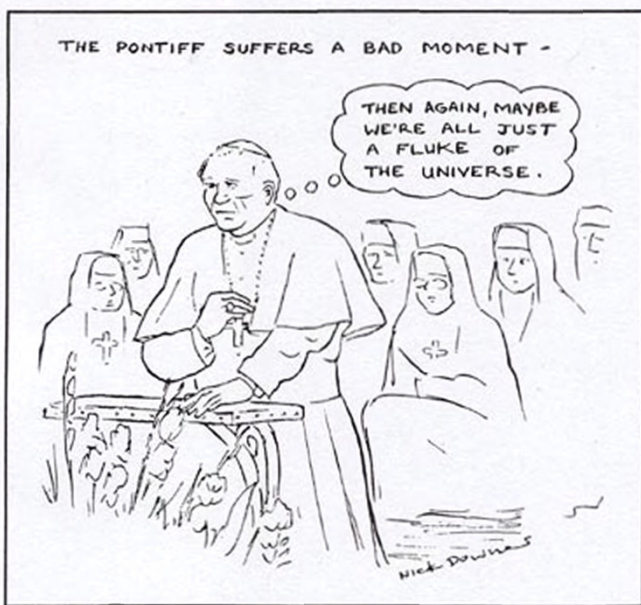
Humans have already wiped out more than a third of the species on Earth, and more than a third of the human population goes to bed hungry every night. If you're still eating flesh, it had better be human flesh.

Sodomy is also very relevant today. What is sodomy, anyway? Anal sex? Wrong! Sodomy is a legal term for *unnatural sex*. How can sex be unnatural? It's unnatural if it's not intended for procreation. In many states you can still be arrested for oral sodomy. Bestiality is a form of sodomy. Even masturbation could be considered sodomy, because sodomy is all about *eugenics*. The founding fathers' primary concern was expanding the white race, so they could kill more Indians. If men were spilling their seed instead of impregnating women, that was bad. If women were having sex with each other, or with animals (same thing), the white race wasn't expanding and that was very bad.

The Church of Euthanasia stands for the exact opposite: sex is good. Sex for *pleasure*. Recreation not procreation. Spill that seed. Aim for the chin. Teach masturbation.

Now let's take a look at what Heaven's Gate stood for. I didn't know any Heaven's Gate members personally, but I've read their material, and in my opinion Heaven's Gate mostly stood for *escapism*. Mr. Applegate surrounded himself with people who didn't like life very much. They couldn't articulate it, but they wanted out, and he gave them an out. He said don't worry about being unhappy and unfulfilled in this life, because if you follow me, the next one's going to be better. That should sound familiar, because that's *Christian* ideology. He taught them to suppress their desires, and that's very Christian too: denial of the body. The body smells and gets hungry and pees and poops and has sexual urges. Eventually it gets old and dies. Bad, bad, bad.

What did these people do with their lives? They prepared for death. They hid in their giant house, controlling their computers, controlling their animal natures. Eight of the men castrated themselves, not because they wanted to avoid procreation, but so they wouldn't be tempted to have sex. These people were afraid to live, and afraid to die, and in the end they died believing they were going to wake up on an alien spaceship. They could have been saints, all 39 of them, if they'd just left a note mentioning the Church of Euthanasia. Hell, we probably would have settled for a link to our web-site, but *no*, they had to hog all the media glory for themselves. What a waste of good death!



So why are we honoring them? What are we doing here? We're honoring Heaven's Gate because they stood up for the right to choose the time and place of *your* death, even though they did it for the wrong reasons. We're honoring them because they stood up for the right to not procreate, even though they did it the hard way, and for the wrong reasons.

Everyone's been criticizing Heaven's Gate, especially in the media. It's about time someone gave them some credit for *doing the right thing*, even if they were wackos, because they not only stood up for non-procreation and the right to die, they also took their Christian-inspired anti-pleasure ideology with them, and we should be thankful for that too. So with all that in mind, with gratitude, and a sense of honor, let us pray.

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## Love and Hatred in the Time of Che

by Stew Albert

Che Guevara is my last hero. He was what Errol Flynn only pretended to be in *Robin Hood* and a couple of pirate movies. Che was a self-confessed "soldier of fortune" but he was not a mercenary. Guevara's adventurous and courageous ways were rooted in his idealism and utopian visions of a just and classless society. And he died young in 1967, just before the Pentagon Demonstration where his blown-up photograph was displayed by thousands of demonstrators as we laid siege to the war-makers and their evil building. Che died without a hint of compromising corruption or dishonesty. And, yes, he was handsome and could turn a literary phrase. He was perfect.

After all these years and so much death, despair and sleazy selling out, a pure Che still lives on in our collective imagination. Highly publicized biographies are coming out, and look for a Mick Jagger-produced feature film. Of course, you certainly will want a Che Guevara wristwatch. Yup, the Commandante may be on his way to becoming a *bona fide* millennial commodity. Perhaps there may be some good news in this if a few people come to consider the meaning of his true life and actual ideas.

And this brings me to a personal sore point. If you've been around the block a couple of times you are probably familiar with this Guevara quote: "At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of love." This is the most reproduced quote and it was something he penned in an essay on morality and art. But if these sentences are left alone, and so many Christ-like poster representations of Che, combined with the love quote, do exactly that, it creates a misleading impression, since it makes him sound like a simple hippie or maybe a Jesus freak.

Che certainly believed in the transformative power of love, but I'm sure he never hummed "Love is all you need." Consider this quote from another essay written by him about the same time: "A people without hatred cannot vanquish a brutal enemy." Or how about this golden oldie: "The oppressor must be killed mercilessly... the revolutionary must become an efficient and selective killing machine." Tough love, wouldn't you say?

Che Guevara believed in selective love and hatred, not abstract philanthropy. He belonged to an era when revolutionaries really did commit themselves to loving the oppressed and hating their oppressor. And many like Che put their ideas into practice and wound up being buried in unmarked graves in very obscure surroundings. It was the CIA and their allies who proved to be the more effective, if unselective "killing machine." Guevara's revolutionism was daring and dangerous, and it shouldn't be turned into sentimental pap and wind up some day as an image promoting Nike.

It's definitely difficult these days to garner much support for "revolutionary hatred," with only right-wing militia maniacs using and mocking the concept, but Che lived in a time the game was played for real, and he was its high mountain of heroism. Let's leave him that way.

## Keep Me Posted

by Vivian McPeak

It was a scene straight from some Orwellian drama. Five Seattle police officers swooped down on me from three directions, as if I were a life-sized jelly doughnut. Caught perpetrating the heinous crime of taping a paper flyer (promoting a speaking gig by Paul Krassner) to a metal light pole, I was rewarded with a \$250 fine and relieved of my booty of paper infractions.

A citywide poster ban had been imposed a couple of years ago, leaving nothing but the paper remnants of freedom lost. The law was specifically targeted to suppress the proliferation of the grunge culture that had claimed dominion over the choicest wooden and metal poles of the city.

I had opposed the law at its inception and saw this as my chance to challenge the constitutional validity of this oppressive pile of dung presented as an ordinance.

The first development was eventful. The Municipal judge assigned to me was arrested for shoplifting hair gel and neckties before the case had even gone to court. The city assigned the Assistant City Attorney, Criminal Division, to my case—a tiny but ferocious opponent who reminded me of a Jewish Billy Barty with a nervous twitch and relentless swagger.

Needing counsel, I scored *pro bono* a renegade anarchist lawyer who worked with a Rasputin-bearded legal clerk who'd terrorized the city counsel by winning a \$3,000,000 case returning back pay to city employees. This scene was ripe for chaos.

I had high friends in places. I called Nirvana bassist Krist Novoselic, a friend and activist, and he agreed to testify that posters played a vital role in the process of artistic and political expression for the progeny of this Caesarian nation.

My real support manifested in the form of a defiant move by Seattle's cutting-edge sex/culture weekly, *The Stranger*, which devoted an entire issue to the cause, complete with a custom-free-speech cover that was replicated into thousands of huge hot pink posters distributed citywide, to be unleashed on hundreds of innocent, unsuspecting poles, as individual acts of civil disobedience.

When my new judge banned TV cameras in the court, it enraged the media, and the long-haired image of this nefarious poster-hanger at large (sometimes medium) was all they had to present the public on the evening news.

Enlisting Seattle's most renowned historians, we quickly established photographic evidence of a longstanding tradition of public forum of posters dating back to Seattle in the late 1800s.

The high point came when the smug persecuting attorney confused Paul Krassner, the radical fanatical, with Paul Kantner of the Jefferson Airplane, creating much laughter in the kangaroo cabaña where the central

scrutinizer would judge my evil deed.

After five days in an inherited suit and white tennis shoes, the judge determined that she would require several weeks to contemplate the voluminous mountain of evidence presented by both sides.

As I had expected, the city's judge, in the city's court, found in the city's favor. She said she was bound by the Supreme Court's "Vincent Decision" and said that the law was constitutional because it was a "blanket ban" despite our contentions that the city looked the other way when it came to the local Mariners banners displayed prominently on poles similar to the one I had violated.

Naturally, an appeal is underway, as I profess that the law is actually constipational, and a good wheat grass enema for the judge would clear up the matter entirely. In the meantime I will continue my defiance as I



have formed strong opinions on the subject of free speech via posting on poles.

The anti-poster ordinance is symbolic of a much broader and deeper, devious attempt at crushing any aspect of society that strays from the commercial status quo—a blanket war against the poor, the politically weak, the dissident mind. This ordinance is symptomatic of a time of tremendous upheaval of the basic freedoms and privileges previously associated with democracy, as the plutocratic forces prepare to flex their collective muscle and intimidate the 90-pound weaklings of society who lack the luxury of having at their disposal corporate monetary benefactors, or their own private military-industrial complex.

Each night while Vanna White exhibits her new wardrobe to millions of shrunken minds, the wheel of misfortune grinds away, incrementally, at our freedom of speech and rights of assembly, eroding even the thin membrane of sanctity and privacy that our physical bodies have past enjoyed, as new technology makes it easier and cheaper for Big Brother to inspect the clarity of our urine, or the contents of our hair shafts.

At their very worst, the flyers will accumulate, posing a visual blight and an optical assault on the aesthetic mind of the innocent conformist, and threatening City Workers

## The New Aquarian Cinema

by Beth Lapides

Ever since I was an impressionable young girl watching the rock musical *Hair*, I've been awaiting the dawning of the Age of Aquarius as anxiously as a nine-month pregnant woman waits for her water to break.

And now, at long last, that dawning seems to be brightening the dark night of whatever age it was that came before the Age of Aquarius. What makes me think this? A change in human behavior? A missive from Rocky Horoscope? Nope, it's the movies. Not one movie or two movies but every single movie I see is overflowing with important water imagery.

Water, not Kevin Costner, is the star in *Waterworld*, perhaps the flagship of the New Aquarian cinema.

In *Shine* there's the opening deluge, the bathtub where Helfgott makes his rebellious poop, and the pool where he swims away his troubles.

In *Romeo and Juliet* there's the pool that's been added to the balcony scene, making the love more watery than airy. Plus the whole movie takes place at the ocean side. Plus the dewy young lovers first see each other through a fish tank.

And the fish tank also appears in *Jerry Maguire*. The fish is the only thing he takes with him from the office when he's fired. And there's the huge fish tank that explodes onto the restaurant in *Mission Impossible*.

with a nasty paper cut or staple gouge, as each unsuspecting pole is relegated to being an unwitting pawn in the posterification of the urban landscape.

If that's not enough, the rains will come, breaking down the cellulose fibers, chemicals and bonding agents of the paper demons, thus sending the remnants of freedom, piece by piece, into the gutters and sidewalks of our potentially pristine metropolis.

At their best, however, the paper posters enable the financially disadvantaged individuals, community groups, political organizations and autonomous thinkers of thought to keep the marketplace of ideas and information fluid in an unregulated and uncensored environment of public discourse. Lost pets or even children, garage sales, block parties, political demos or meetings, will all prosper under the existence of the free guerrilla press.

Wouldn't it be easier and more beneficial to simply have the posters removed periodically, in the name of a healthy community, than to remove the privilege, or the right, to interact with one another in the unfettered silence of the eye and vastness of the mind?

Not in the new Amerikkka, where we forget that this (abomi)nation was founded by the posting of bills. When the Constitution was drafted, all white, male, Protestant property owners were created equal, weren't they?

In *The People vs. Larry Flynt* the water seeps under the bathroom door, then Larry bursts in to find Althea drowning in the big black bathtub. Not to mention Larry's baptism.

There's a baptism of sorts in *Trainspotting*, when the guy dives into the toilet, and another in *The Long Kiss Goodnight* when Geena is strapped onto the water wheel and dipped into the icy H<sub>2</sub>O until, instead of dying, she is reborn as the killer she was.

In *Sling Blade*, when Carl and the kid sit and really reveal themselves to each other, it's by the truth-telling pond.

In *Chasing Amy* the Consummating Kiss happens in the torrential rain, and the Big

Speech takes place against a fish tank, albeit a video one.

And even in movies that seem like there would be no water in them, there's water. In *The English Patient* it's the lack of water that brings the adulterous lovers together, and a bathtub is where they finally have sex. In *Volcano* the overheated McArthur Park Lake is the first sign something is amiss, and it's the LaBrea Tar Pits where the volcano emerges. Plus, of course, what finally stops the lava? Water!

And these watery images are just a drop in the bucket as the New Aquarian cinema floods our consciousness. Coming soon to a theater near you: *The Flood* and *Titanic*.

Movies get blamed for a lot of what's wrong with America these days, but no one seems to be giving them any credit for heralding our fluid future where "harmony and understanding, sympathy and trust abound." We hope.

## PBS Presents "Pro and Con"

by Matt Neuman and Lane Sarasohn

*Jim Lehrer*: In states as different as Arizona and Connecticut, the big campaign issue last year was tax-free Indian gambling casinos. Now the Supreme Court has asked the Justice Department for guidance on whether Indian tribes in California have a right to offer high-stakes gambling on their reservations. Here to debate this hot topic on *Pro and Con*—the Lone Ranger, and his faithful Indian companion, Tonto. Let's begin with the Lone Ranger, who opposes Indian gambling.

*Lone Ranger*: Tonto, my good friend, gambling is morally wrong. It corrupts innocent citizens by giving them the false hope that, without doing anything, they can suddenly become rich.

*Tonto*: You way off base on this one, kimo sabe, Indian gambling good. Bingo bring in big bucks. Indians need bucks.

*Lone Ranger*: But, my somewhat faithful friend, it's not honest money your people are earning. And gambling will attract criminal elements, the very people you and I are sworn to fight.

*Tonto*: I see your point, kimo sabe—is on your head. Bingo good. Keno good. Video poker good. Case closed.

*Lone Ranger*: But, my primitive savage sidekick, gambling will do nothing for the future of the Indian people. It will teach your children all the wrong lessons and lead to even further despair and alcoholism.

*Tonto*: Kimo sabe speak with forked tongue. Is okay for white man to gamble, but not red man. Sound like double standard.

*Lone Ranger*: But, Tonto, which means dumb in Spanish, shouldn't the Indian tribes at least be required to pay taxes on their earnings?

*Tonto*: Kimo sabe, which means nothing, does church pay taxes? Does bear shit in woods?

*Jim Lehrer*: Okay, boys, final statements.

*Lone Ranger*: I think my shifty-eyed faithful Indian companion here has been smoking too many peace pipes. He's hiding behind the flimsy protection of some outdated 19th Century treaty. Indian gambling casinos are wrong.

*Tonto*: Masked man with silver bullets spend too much time drinking Pimm's Cups at studio commissary, doesn't know ass from elbow. Without tax-free casinos, my people starve.

*Jim Lehrer*: And I'm sure we haven't heard the end of this debate. Thank you, gentlemen.



## MEDIA FREAK

### Cult Capers

• **Typographical Error of the Millennium:** *Los Angeles Times* columnist Peter King, writing about the 39 Heaven's Gate members who committed suicide, had intended to say, "For adults, they seemed an awful lot like children—little lost lambs, bound for slaughter." Instead, it was published, "... little lost lambs, bound for laughter."

• That cult mass suicide story was the lead item on CNN's *Show Biz Tonight*. The angle—singer Jewel, author Joseph Wambaugh and actor Victor Mature all have homes in San Diego.

• The marquee at a movie theater in San Diego showing *Secrets and Lies* boasted: "The Heaven's Gate cult's movie of choice."

### Shutterbug Shuffle

From *Government Technology*:

"Professor Isao Shimoyama and his research team at Tokyo University have succeeded in implanting cockroaches with a computerized control system that emits electronic pulses into the insects' antenna sockets, causing them to turn left or right, or go forward or backward.

"While precise placement of the electrodes is still difficult, researchers hope to attach tiny cameras to the roaches' backs and transform them into self-propelled, steerable camerabugs. They eat anything, go anywhere, and are resistant to many pesticides.

"Dr. Shimoyama sent [us] the following note in response to media conjecture about the potential for six-legged spying: 'Please note that our project is conducted from the scientific viewpoint. We do not have any negative applications, e.g. spying. I do not think about the negative applications. In addition, I don't think we can make spying robo-roaches in the future. Again, please note that our interests are only in insect behavior.'"

### Marijuana Muddle

• *High Times* held a "Stoner of the Year Contest" via a questionnaire which included this question: "How much pot do you think is too much?" One reader answered, "I don't understand the question."

• Dave Sheridan, creator of MTV's practical-joke show, *Buzzkill*: "They would blur out anything that had a marijuana leaf on it or that had anything to do with drugs. Even if it was someone on the street passing by." However, the MTV censors were not aware that in nearly every episode, Sheridan wore a shirt with Korean lettering that read *Smoke Pot*.

• An article in *United Airlines* magazine *Hemispheres* asks the imponderable question, "Were they [parents who grew up in the '60s] truly experimenting with marijuana, or were they simply determined to get stoned?"

• Art Croney, a lobbyist for the Committee on Moral Concerns, testified at a California

legislative hearing that "Marijuana is not a medicine. It is a drug that makes people think they feel better."

### Filler Items

• From *Linn's Stamp News*: "The U.S. Postal Service first planned to issue a Madonna and Child stamp on November 1, 1996 with Jesus' penis missing. After much internal debate, fidelity to nature—and Paulo de Matteis' masterpiece and prior USPS policy on Christ Child depiction—prevailed. The penis has been restored. The word Christmas was also added across the top. Perhaps postal management felt that this would offset the 'addition' of the penis."

• Associated Press reported that "A woman is suing her former psychiatrist for malpractice, claiming he convinced her she had 120 personalities—and then charged her insurance company for group therapy. Nadean Cool testified that the \$300,000 treatment by Dr. Kenneth Olson left her suicidal and haunted by false memories. Her supposed personalities included a duck, Satan and angels who talked to God."

• From *Packaging Digest*: "Under development for several years, the Celebration Cup comprises a tiny serving of grape juice with a single unleavened communion wafer sealed into the lid, all in a package about the size and shape of a single-serve coffee creamer. These unit-dose Eucharist cups currently have a six-month shelf-stable life."

• Nearly three decades ago, A.J. Weberman was working on a computer printout analyzing every single word in the lyrics of all Bob Dylan's songs. Maybe Weberman was crazy, but he sure wasn't lazy. These days, he has channeled his anal compulsion onto the internet. He describes his web site—<http://www.weberman.com>—as "The Secret History of the CIA's Involvement in Every Goddamn Thing Imaginable."

• Fran Lebowitz in *Index*: "Anyone who's ever been around L.A. celebrities knows who Kato Kaelin is—he's the guy who gets the

drugs. He's the guy who gets the girls, or the boys, whatever the case may be. All celebrities have someone like that around—there's not an unoccupied guest house in Hollywood."

• On ABC News, Peter Jennings was explaining that the jury in O.J. Simpson's civil trial was deciding his liability, not his guilt. He concluded, "Mr. Guilty will be found liable in every instance."

• The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* published a story about a man charged with making bombs who said the word "guilty" violated his religious beliefs.

• A Church of England priest admitted he approves of shoplifting from supermarkets because they are destroying community life. "I don't regard it as stealing," he said. "I regard it as a badly needed reallocation of economic resources."

• On NPR's *All Things Considered*, a feature about environmental pollution included this rationalization: "People have been looking for deformed frogs, and so they're finding deformed frogs."

• Jay Leno paid a fellow comedian \$1,000 for an anecdote that Leno included in his autobiography as though it happened to him.

• Ken Kesey and crew drove the current incarnation of the Merry Prankster bus, *Further*, to the Rock'n'Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland. "We got bumped from the induction ceremonies," he told *The Realist*. "We were supposed to be honored on the 6th of May, but Michael Jackson's people contacted the museum. They didn't think it would be fitting if Michael Jackson was on the same list as the bus, so they moved us to the 10th. We are lower than pedophiles."

• From *Lyle Stuart's Hot News*: "A jealous Thai woman has been arrested for cutting off her husband's penis. The Thailand police say 42 similar crimes have been reported to them in the past 15 years. What marks this incident as different is that she tied the severed penis to a helium-filled balloon and watched it float away."

