THE ART OF MOTORCYCLE BY DAN AYKROYD

JANUARY 1978 $1.00 U.K. 65P

CRAWDADDY

33322-080 CN

DYING YOUNG IN AMERICA

CONCERTS IN THE COMBAT ZONE
BY MICHAEL HERR

TV ON TRIAL: MURDER IN JUNIOR HIGH
BY SUSAN BRAUDY

TED NUGENT

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EDITORIAL

Photograph by Tim Page

Five thousand kids were crammed into a 3,000-seat hall for Ted Nugent in New Orleans and they were ready. Nugent, hot in the middle of a tour of hockey rinks and civic centers, likes his music loud and had cranked up the sound system like on any normal night. Backstage, with three walls between them and the music, people had to scream across the room to be heard. Roadies went onstage fortified with huge wads of cotton to cut the sound, and out in the audience the crowd was going crazy. They were loving it. Their ears were bleeding.

It dawned on us over lunch one day that things were getting a little frightening out there. It was Mitch Glazer's concept. He leaned over the table and said, "These kids are burning entire rows of seats, they're throwing M-80s and ashcans, they've got no release except rock 'n roll. It's a war out there. *This is the generation that should have gone to Vietnam!*"

It felt exactly right. The next step was to find someone who would feel at home, or at least within his element, inside the war zone. Someone who knew enough to stay low, but couldn't. Michael Herr came immediately to mind. He was the Vietnam correspondent for *Esquire* in 1967 and his book, *Dispatches*, had been eight years in the making and was imminent. He is a brilliant writer and, it turned out, he likes rock 'n roll. (When *The New York Times* reviewed *Dispatches*, it said: "It is as if Dante had gone to hell with a cassette recording of Jimi Hendrix and a pocketful of pills: our first rock 'n roll war, stoned murder.") If anyone could find out why things were getting crazy, it was he.

Herr loved the idea. He rendezvoused with his Vietnam companion, photographer Tim Page, and stepped out into the night five days at the front with Ted Nugent, Black Oak Arkansas and Aerosmith. What he found was bathroom firefights and disarming resistance: "Rock is Hell." The concept given flesh.

At the same time, 15-year-old Ronnie Zamora was going on trial in Florida for murdering an 83-year-old lady. His defense: "Intoxication by television violence." The quirk: the trial was being televised. What was going on with young kids in this country? We sent journalist Susan Braudy down to explore the facts and psyches involved; it seemed such a dreadfully tidy microcosm of life in America. The boy's lawyer had lost in the public elections, beaten the Miami Dolphins, and was now pulling a Perry Mason. The kid could see his own verdict on instant replay. Run that one by me again.

Tom Blackwell's photorealistic paintings fairly purr between these two rather violent features. His canvasses of motorcycles capture the machines' chromed potential, and Don Aykroyd's appreciation—"sweet and final bug death"?!—is a Saturday Night special.

People are dying young in America. We know how, and we think we're now maybe a little bit closer to the gut concept of why.

—*Peter Knobler*

CRAWDADDY

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LETTERS

ELVIS

Many thanks to Robert Ward for a beautiful piece of writing, "Down at the End of Lonely Street" is a fine tribute to the King, and it also speaks eloquently for all of us who've ever found ourselves stuck in a situation beyond our control, for whatever reason (being 12 years old is one example, but certainly not the only one), and then through some miracle have been lifted out of ourselves by a song, or something in the sound of a voice, or the great wild thriving many-headed beast that is the music itself. So, maybe music can't change the world, after all. (On the other hand, maybe it can. In a lot of ways it *has*.) But it sure can be a good thing to hold onto while you're trying to find your way through youth, or middle age, or some other absurd scene. "Come back, baby - rock 'n roll never forgets."

Elizabeth Bernfeld
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Trash: Your magazine stinks. I will never open the covers of *Crawdaddy* again and needless to say, my subscription will not be renewed. Your articles on Elvis Presley (*Nov.,'77*) are atrocious. I dare not put in print the words to describe my feelings toward your magazine for the terrible things printed regarding Elvis. You have no one in the music business now who can start to match the charisma that belonged only to Elvis Presley. You are just jealous that Elvis didn't let trashy magazines like yours know every move he made and every woman he was interested in so you could write half-truth articles and blow them all out of proportion. He didn't need such articles. He made it on talent alone with none of the crazy publicity to draw attention to himself. I have never written to a magazine before and don't expect to ever again. But I had to let you know how the true Elvis fans feel.

Phyllis Burden
Sesquatchie, Tenn.

In truth, Elvis' full impact cannot be written about, cannot be explained, cannot be analyzed - it has to be felt, in a person's head and heart. The fans KNOW why they love Elvis and honored him all these years—because they believed in the man's talent, because they respected him as a person, because they cared about him as a human being. Your stories touched on corners but missed

the real heart of what Elvis meant to us

Sue Wiegert, President,
Blue Hawaiians for Elvis
Los Angeles, Calif.

Robert Ward's touching article reflecting his feelings on Elvis' death was very sensitive and moving. The fans appreciate his refusal to write that book for Elvis' three ex-bodyguards, dismissed by the Presley family. There is love in Abbie Hoffman's article, too. But I wish he had not so readily assumed that Elvis possessed all the Southern stereotyped prejudices. There were many Catholics and Jews who worked for him and were close to him, among them Joe Esposito, his road manager and longtime friend. And, you may have noticed the Hebrew "To Life" pendant which he wore around his neck for the filming of his final television performance. Abbie and others seem to blame him for not remaining the rebel of the '50s. Well, it's easy to be a rebel at age 18. What we often forget is that Elvis won the revolution. The fact that everyone today has accepted rock, blues and country music, regardless of heritage, is testament to Elvis' genius. Maybe we're really blaming Elvis for getting older with us. If he had stayed young and rebellious, our idealism would not have died. The fact that he was human and mortal seems to have stunned us all. But, that was not his fault. It is ours. We made him into a god and he disappointed us by being human. And, now the final betrayal. He is dead. Man, am I going to miss him!

Charlotte Rothschild
Chicago, Ill.

Robert Ward, you're the best news to come out of Baltimore since the Colts did it in overtime! I applaud your bitter/sweet tribute to Elvis.

Edwin Heaven
San Francisco, Calif.

You say it must be hard to be an Elvis fan and be under 25. I'm 30 and never really became a fan until I was 25, when it dawned on me that there was another Elvis Presley around when I was too young to attach any significance to a pair of blue suede shoes. I've read a lot about this other Elvis since I became aware of his existence. And after so many of the same eulogies and exposés, it was both disturbing and somehow therapeutic to hear someone say that Elvis Presley suffered two deaths.

Thank you for the piece of writing.

Stephen Smith
Chicago, Ill.

You know, I have been one of your so called middle-class, middle aged fans of Elvis from the start of his career. I defended him in life and I most assuredly will defend him now that he is gone. Your magazine articles were degrading to Elvis, but they also degraded your magazine by showing what type people you have in your employment. It was pretty low-grade of you to have his picture on the cover to sell copies then open it to read your disgusting articles.

Joyce McCormick
Fairfield, Ill.

WHITE MOVES

I would like to praise Timothy White on his article about Bob Seger (*Nov., '77*). It's great to hear Seger's finally making it after a long wait. He deserves all the recognition you gave him.

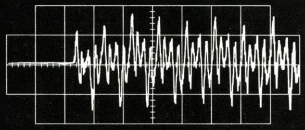
Barbara Godfield
Orrville, Ohio

Timothy White's outstanding interview of Bob Seger was the first in-depth look at him for any of us outside the Midwest. In the past I have had to content myself with only brief biographical sketches or miniscule articles on the back pages of so called rock magazines. *Crawdaddy* has given Seger the attention he so richly deserves.

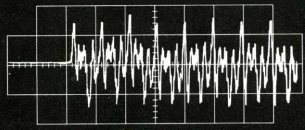
Steven Donofrio
Ontario, N.Y.

CRAWDADDY

Will the real B.B. King please stand up.



B.B. King Live.



B.B. King reproduced by SB-7000A.

What the legendary B.B. King's rapid guitar picking style did for players like Eric Clapton, Mike Bloomfield and Alvin Lee is music history. He fathered a generation of blues-influenced rock guitarists.

But what B.B. King is doing with Technics Linear Phase Speaker Systems is making another kind of history. Hi-fi history.

Look at the waveforms. On the left is B.B. King playing live. On the right is the same music reproduced by Technics Linear Phase SB-7000A.

It's hard to tell the difference. And that's our point. Technics Linear Phase Speaker Systems are the first speaker systems with not only a wide frequency response but also flat amplitude and complete linearity. And that makes them the first speaker systems capable of reproducing a musical waveform that's virtually a mirror image of the original.

How did we do it? First by conducting exhaustive amplitude and phase studies in acoustically perfect chambers. Then by developing a unique new phase-controlled crossover network that not only compensates for the time delays caused by different frequencies but simultaneously corrects any acoustic differences in the drivers. And finally by staggering each driver unit for the optimum acoustic position.

Technics Linear Phase SB-7000A, SB-6000A and SB-5000A. For music that sounds as it was originally played.

Technics *Professional Series*
by Panasonic

INSTANT REPLAY?

Enjoyed the article on JFK assassination expectipal art collectives from San Francisco—The Ant Farm and T.R. Uthtation (*Nov.*, '77). It was a tasteful low-key approach to how hysteria is manipulated for profit. (Likewise, the Whitehead cartoon strip in that issue's "Crawdoodah Gazette" was a juicy blend of fact and rank speculation.) There was one minor inaccuracy in the Grove piece, however: the ABC television production of *The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald* was not the second assassination enactment in Dealey Plaza. On May 24, 1964, the Warren Commission staged a re-enactment to satisfy itself that its foregone conclusion about Oswald was correct. (The Commission itself was satisfied as shown in its Report, although very few people since have been satisfied with the Warren Report.) Also, in the summer of '75, two cenco—spent one Sunday filming a reenactment for a videotape production called "The Eternal Frame," much to the delight of curious tourists. The Dealey Plaza taping was underwritten in part by the National Endowment for the Chuckles (*The National Lampoon*) and some looney wealthy Texan. *Crawdaddy* is to be congratulated for consistently approaching the JFK assassination as a cultural and political event rather than solely analyzing it for the angle of the bullets and credibility of witnesses.

Tom Miller
Tucson, Arizona

(Mr. Miller is the author of The Assassination Please Almanac, *recently published by Henry Regnery. —Ed.)*

S. B. Whitehead is tremendous! He's way up there with R. Cobb in my book. Everyone I showed the Oswald strip (*Gazette, Nov., '77*) nearly lost their minds laughing.

Duncan Harp
New York City

CRITIC'S CHOICE

I am compiling a list of the unique and wondrous phrases that music critics come up with in their search for the ultimate descriptive term. This is a congratulatory note to Fred Schruers who currently holds the Number One spot on the chart for his use of "a little subliminal wheedle" to describe an organ riff on the new Linda Ronstadt album (*Nov., '77*).

David Coe
Black Rock, Conn.

Write to LETTERS, *Crawdaddy, 72 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011*

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Alive with pleasure!

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Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

Box & Kings: 17 mg. "tar", 1.2 mg. nicotine, 100's: 20 mg. "tar", 1.4 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report Aug. 1977.

CONTENTS

28 Bring in the Clowns

The perfect TV formula: a cross between *Queen for a Day* and the *CBS Evening News*—a talent show for everyone this side of Karen Ann Quinlan. Tapdancing sloths and yodeling yazoos. But despite the pall of agony and the suffering of the defeated, everyone, win or lose, is a star on *The Gong Show*.

Robert Stephen Spitz

34 Stealing into Mexico

The prices are right, the food is fine, the water's warm and the heat is off. America's most famous traveler since Lowell Thomas discovers bliss south of the border.

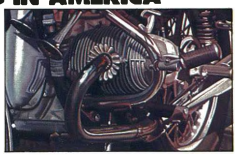
Abbie Hoffman

DYING YOUNG IN AMERICA

42 Firefight at 15

The troops are restless, brittle with rage. And when their violence finally explodes, they trash the aisles, lay waste to civic centers and auditoriums. Firefights break out in the bathrooms and high in the balcony. The concert tour is moving through the war zone, and the youth brigade has turned on itself, a killer elite on the rampage.

Michael Herr



50 Chrome on Canvas

They scream through the night on two wheels, carrying either death or exaltation. Motorcycles are chariots for young gods burning down highways to hell, erupting through neighborhoods, and just as pretty as can be. At least the way Tom Blackwell paints them.

Dan Aykroyd

54 Kojak and the Killer Kid

After ten years of murder on the tube, young Ronnie Zamora turned off the set, ducked next door and killed his elderly neighbor. His defense: innocent because of indoctrination. His lawyer dragged TV into court and TV was there to film it all. And to the very end, Zamora claimed he didn't know his mind was loaded.

Susan Braudy

CROSSROADS

Dr. Funkenstein's ghoulish ways; calendars in their day-by-daze; probing the haze on the radio waves; Al Jarreau's hot 'vocalese' saves!; Bob Welch's second post-Mac phase; and Cheap Tricks that shock 'n amaze.

RECORDS

The lowdown on Boz Scaggs, the sweet sounds of Joan Armatrading and Phoebe Snow, bounds with David Bowie, plus Graham Parker, Rod Stewart, Chick Corea and Eddie Money.

DEPARTMENTS

photography by Richard E. Aaron

Dr. Funkenstein's Mothership lands in Times Square while (top r.) Bootsy snakes his bass and George sings somethang "stupid."

Theater

P-FUNK'S ACID TEST: THE DARK SIDE OF GETTIN' DOWN

"I have tasted the maggots in the mind of the Universe and I was not offended. Oh, I knew I had to rise above it all or drown in my own shit."

—George Clinton, from the song "Maggot Brain," 1971

The strong odor confirmed what neighbors had guessed: There was something very dead inside that house.

Entering the abandoned premises at 363 Academy Street on a hot June day in 1969, Newark, N.J. police discovered the body of a black male in his mid-20s in one of the garbage-littered rooms. It could not be ascertained how the deceased came to rest there but Dr. Charles Calasibetta of Martland Hospital ruled out foul play after examining the body, deciding for the record that the man died of natural causes: *Sudden Death; Occussive Coronary Arteriosclerosis.*

The dead man, 26-year-old Robert Ray Clinton, was born in Washington, D.C. in October, 1942. While his early childhood years were divided between the U.S. capital and the small rural town of Chase City, Va., he spent his adolescence in Newark, where he acquired a deserved reputation as a hoodlum and a thief. Clinton was survived by a young wife and son, parents George and Julious, and eight brothers and sisters, the eldest being George, 27, who sang in a Detroit R&B band known as Funkadelic.

No autopsy was performed and the coroner could not determine the precise length of time Robert Clinton had lain in the squalid building, yet it was apparent from his partially decomposed body that it had been several days. During this period the corpse had fallen prey to various vermin including rats and the blowflies, otherwise known as maggots, that frequently feed upon rotting flesh.

* * *

GREETINGS, maggot gobblers and gobblees of stark-raving FUNKADELIC debaucheryi VERILY, THERE IS, INDEED—FUNK AFTER DEATH! As for being COOL, fear not about that. Ultimately, we all become COOL by the final asskick of Death. . . .

—from the Philmore Magnetic official newsletter of the "Parliafunkadelicment Nation"

DETROIT—To his almost obscenely adoring public, George Clinton, now 36, is the exalted creator, chief songwriter/ composer/ producer/ arranger and ringleader of a black musical phenom-

enon known collectively as the Parliafunkadelicment Thang. Roughly, the PT is a rowdy repertory company subdivided for recording and/or performing purposes into an array of vocal and/or instrumental groups: Parliament, Funkadelic, Bootsy's Rubber Band, the Horny Horns; vague aggregations fronted by Bernard Worrell, "alumnus" Eddie Hazel, and any other troupe member who gets a bright, Clinton-approved idea between now and . . . whenever.

These various musical "sub-entities" almost always travel—along with a $275,000 stage show (supposedly the biggest ever executed by a black group) that includes a full-sized flying saucer-like craft—under a conceptual umbrella dubbed the Mothership Earth Tour. To heighten the confusion, most of the bands within a band have separate, exclusive contracts with such record companies as Casablanca, Warner Bros., Atlantic and Arista.

As the architect of all this lucrative mayhem, George Clinton has bestowed upon himself the titles of Maggot Overlord and Main Mangustiah, plus the onstage persona of one Dr. Funkenstein. Once shorn, however, of the insectival sunglasses, mock-ermine robes, flotsam-festooned leather glad rags and vomit-colored Cher wigs he features in his strange act, Clinton looks like any spindly, pimpled black fella sharing Chinese take-out chow and a dingy motel room with one of a harem of common-law roadwives.

Back home in Booton, N.J., he's got a legal wife and four lovely children, including one daughter enrolled at Rutgers University-Newark. George makes no secret of this as his latest lady trades moo goo gai pan for a fresh lit joint, nor does he seek to conceal any portion of his grim, difficult past. On the contrary, he maintains that no one has ever followed him behind the scenes after showtime to simply ask.

"My brother Bobby died of an overdose," he reveals with an uneasy grin. "He had just come home from jail. From a young age he was in and out, in and out, just for stealing, that type of thing. They don't really know where the drug thing came in; he never had a record as a drug user. When they found him he had been dead three or four days, and it was in summer, so you know you could *really* tell. They found evidence of drugs but he had no history. Still, that's what the deal was, and that's Newark for ya: the only place where rats will meet you walking down the street. You stomp your feet at 'em and they say, '*Sheeeeit!*' and they walk right over you."

Concert audiences are less blasé when confronted with Clinton's grotesque hilarity. Standing before a glowing gold pyramid topped by the all-seeing eye of some ancient Funk deity, he bathes the frenzied front lines in the stuttering fire of his great silver Bop gun. And they react as one with a thousand hands raised in the prong-fingered P-Funk gesture, their bobbing fists resembling the bowed heads of an army of giant snails. Like so much of the abstract spectacle, the moment comes up comical, exhilorating and a little frightening.

The Mothership Connection in all its manifestations is unquestionably an outgrowth of every quirk of fate that helped form its mentor. In the annals of black popular music, there's never been anything quite like "the 'P'," but it's impossible to fully appreciate this until you've penetrated the thick curtain of obfuscating twaddle drawn by Clinton himself. Nonetheless, there is some

"I've had my fun," says the Maggot Overlord, "but I ain't gonna die for it."

times a queer candor to his bullshit. On a ripe day, when he locks into a good 'n goofy energy source and starts spraying absurdities across your brow like grapeshot, he'll tell you right to yo' face: "You's gettin' P'ed on."

* * *

"Uhhhh, okay, man. This time I think I'll hit it on the *hoid!*"

"Let's go then, baby," answers bare-chested George Clinton, nodding solemnly inside a control booth at Detroit's United Sound Systems Studios.

The confident Gary "Mudbone" Cooper, a falsetto singer with Bootsy's Rubber Band, sidles up to the boom mike with tall, skinny partner Garry Shider. Together they take another crack at one facet of the vocal collage Clinton is constructing for an untitled composition on the new Parliament lp, *Funkentelechy vs. the Placebo Syndrome*. The compact Cooper wipes a smile from his impish face and leans against Shider, who fingers a necklace of baby pacifiers—props from the diaper costume he wears onstage. Clinton scratches his crotch as he swallows some sunflower seeds and wine, kisses a young woman named Stephanie who's been giving him a "Deep Thumb" shoulder massage all afternoon, and whispers, "Now."

A cozy hi-lo harmony lulls him tenderly:

When all the smiles are out of town
And all around, around—you find the Syndrome
When your ups lift you down, your placebo
Is too weak—you're in the Syndrome . . .

Satisfied with the tone of the run-through, Clinton rises from his seat, stabs a button on the control board and announces: "'Scuse me, I'm gonna go to the bathroom 'n play with my Syndrome."

Without missing a beat on the prerecorded rhythm track they've been following, Shider and Cooper reply:

When all the play is out of sound and there's no fun around—play with your Syndrome . . .

When Clinton returns, he explains that his latest P-Funk projects also include the forthcoming *Bootsy?* album, another Funkadelic lp called *Throbasonic Attack*, and the *Motor Booty Affair*, a "science funk-tion" film epic that further fleshes out the perils of the Placebo Syndrome by profiling such mythic characters as Sir Nose D. Void of Funk.

In George's own wild-eyed words: "The *Motor Booty Affair* is James Bond on the funky side, and Sir Nose D. Void of Funk is from the Planet of the Pimps. He's a slick dude, he's cool, a prettyboy, a player, thinks he's into everything, he's got TQT—Top Quality Toot. But his nose is long [like Pinocchio] 'cause he faked the funk.

"Dr. Funkenstein invite him to a Bump-a-thon in Atlantis and we got to shoot him with the Bop Gun to make him dance. My man say, 'He don't even hump, much less funk,' meaning that he don't even fuck, let alone dance. But when he get shot with the Bop Gun he dance with Queen Freakalene!

"See, a lotta this goes back to the Placebo Syndrome, which is the result of sugar pills. When you're not really sick it's called placebo, and they got all kinda placebo these days but they don't work no more. They got sugar pills, Kool-Aid, boxing, football, *religion*. Everything is cool up to a point but now people are gittin' bored 'cause none of these placebos work.

"The new concept available is *Funkentelechy*: a change of mind on the funky side. Understand? All the top groups supposed to be funky—from Earth, Wind & Fire to the Commodores to the Brass Unstruction' to the 'BT Depressed'—but alla them have no Funkentelechy. They're just another placebo in a world

caught up in the Placebo Syndrome. Understand?"

The Syndrome? Not entirely. Of course the phony medication given to a hypochondriac is called a placebo, but the word can also be applied, for instance, in a Christian religious sense—to denote the first antiphon of vespers for the dead.

* * *

A churchyard was to me merely the receptacle of bodies deprived of life . . . . which had become food for the worm. Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil, as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave?

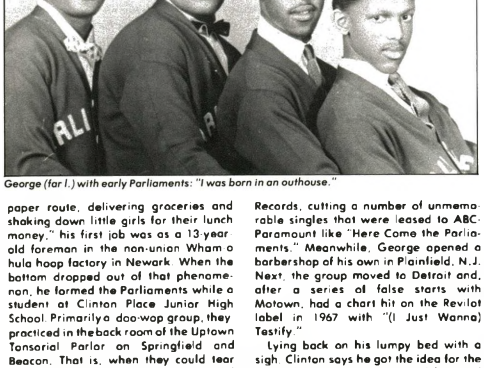
—Frankenstein, *by Mary W. Shelley, 1817*

George Clinton has always made a living off screwball crazes. " Cepting a but your head would stay hot as a *motherfucker* for a long time. After that you did the straight, shiny hair into pompadours and made finger waves.

"Conking wasn't in barbershops 'cause it was dangerous, but we showed barbers where they could make a lot of money if they gave us a little chair in the back of the shop. I was 14; each head was $5 and sometimes we made $2,000 in a week."

When Clinton wasn't conking heads or copying the Heartbeats, he ran with a neighborhood gang called the Outlaws, an activity he passed on after a gang war in '56. It seems George witnessed a buddy getting his head blown off by a shotgun blast from a marksman in the rival Mohawks.

In time, the Parliaments landed a recording contract with New York's Hull Records, cutting a number of unmemorable singles that were leased to ABC-Paramount like "Here Come the Parliaments." Meanwhile, George opened a barbershop of his own in Plainfield, N.J. Next, the group moved to Detroit and, after a series of false starts with Motown, had a chart hit on the Revilot label in 1967 with "(I Just Wanna) Testify."



George (far l.) with early Parliaments: "I was born in an outhouse."

paper route, delivering groceries and shaking down little girls for their lunch money," his first job was as a 13-year-old foreman in the non-union Wham-o hula hoop factory in Newark. When the bottom dropped out of that phenomenon, he formed the Parliaments while a student at Clinton Place Junior High School. Primarily a doo-wop group, they practiced in the back room of the Uptown Tonsorial Parlor on Springfield and Beacon. That is, when they could tear themselves away from their successful 'conking' (hair straightening) enterprise.

"A guy named Joe Bandana from Philadelphia, the first Super Fly to hit Newark, taught me how to conk hair," says a reserved Clinton, back in his cheap motel room after another day of recording. "I'd take a handful o' grease, rub it on that ol' nappy scalp, comb it out, put the conk on there and fry it 'til it was done. In Cab Calloway's day the conk was just a mixture of lye and white potatoes; we used lye and some kinda powdered starch to make a cream. You'd slap it on, rub it in and wash it out

Lying back on his lumpy bed with a sigh, Clinton says he got the idea for the newly funky Parliament sound featured on "Testify" after hearing Lee Dorsey's 1966 single "Get Out of My Life, Woman." When Revilot folded, Clinton temporarily lost control of the Parliament name, so he formed Funkadelic and began cutting lps with titles like *Maggot Brain, America Eats Its Young* and *Free Your Mind & Your Ass Will Follow*. Regaining the Parliament name in 1970, George decided to sign the same Funkadelic band to separate deals with Invictus, and later Casablanca Records . . . as Parliament!

But none of this explains how the P-Funk presentation grew to be so bizzare.

"Aw, man, the stage show was outta hand around the time of 'Testify,' " Clinton contends. "We'd start out with suits and ties and shirts on. Halfway through the first song we'd fuck the ties and the rest. Funk was always a good excuse. If you didn't have any shirts or ties alike or want to shine your shoes, it was, 'Well, I'm just *funky*.' Then we started wearing Army jackets, wigs, titties, baseball mitts—and all of this was really pre-hippie. This was around the time of the Yardbirds and the British rock thing. I knew that black music always followed white music commercially, so we got in line with concepts and hard rock stuff and psychedelic shit. Just came *naturally*."

William "Bootsy" Collins, 26, tells it slightly differently.

"I think the acid was what made things extra crazy," he later asserts. "I joined up with George after leaving James Brown's band, and used to trip back then. One night with James, I thought the neck of my bass guitar turned into a snake. I didn't want no part of it and went back to the dressing room.

"When I got together with George we started doing [acid] all the time from '71 to '73. One night in Evansville, Pa., the whole Funkadelic band was tripping. George was screaming and crawling on the floor with all these spooky masks, rapping like crazy, and the rest of the band was in outer space, jamming to each other. George got so scary . . . when we struck the last chord of the night, we looked out and there wasn't a soul in the audience. Nobody. Wooo! Guess they all felt left out. huh?"

* * *

"I did my share of acid," Clinton admits, tugging on his wispy beard, "but I ain't never fucked with no heroin. I've had my fun but I ain't gonna die for it. As for my music," he laughs, "it's a silly, stupid thing! That's the way the world is.

"I got a right to be funky," says Clinton, shaking a finger. "I was born in an outhouse—and that's no bullshit. My mother told me she thought she had to go to the bathroom and I popped out. Her midwife came running and she had to pull me back up by the cord. I was one turd that wouldn't let go.

"And why should people want to be funky like me? Because funk can be applied to any situation. When it all gets too deep, funk it, as opposed to committing suicide or something, you know? It's just like Ooaby Groovy Toilet Tissue: 'One swipe, a clean wipe.'

"*Sheeee-it*," he frets, bouncing heavily on the mattress. "I hope these people you writing for can take a joke."

—*Timothy White*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STATIC: HEY MISTER, WHAT'S FREE-FORM ON THE PLAYLIST?

Radio, Steve Allen once said, is the communications aorta of the family of man. If you buy that metaphor, you'll find that circulation is best in an area of radio known as AOR, album-oriented rock. It is a relatively new term, but one that in many areas of the country is smothering progressive radio.

Progressive radio, as used here, means radio with no playlist, no strict rotation of songs or artists to be drawn upon. Radio where the individual on the air may "express" or "indulge" himself, depending on your point of view.

Within the music business, this type of radio is called "free-form," and it has roughly the status of the bald eagle or the whooping crane—an endangered species. In contrast to free-form, all other radio is called "formulated." And in the pop music area, much of it has been wrapped up in a new approach. AOR offers its listeners a mix that falls somewhere between Top 40 ("All the hits all the time") and free-form stations; AOR aims for the youngest children of the '60s—those left behind when their older siblings trucked off to Woodstock. This audience, the conventional wisdom goes, were not satisfied with free-form radio. They were used to hearing familiar songs, bright DJ patter, promotions and contests. Strangers in the land of progressivism, they would tune out.

Enter formats. And not long after formats began, along came a respectable umbrella to cover these FM rock stations. That umbrella is AOR.

The FM pop radio business has wrapped itself in the robes of AOR, seeking commercial salidity. "To the business community, and particularly the advertising agencies, the term 'progressive' had been stigmatized as being acid, underground, hippies," says Mike Harrison, managing editor of the music business trade publication *Radio & Records* and the man who coined the term AOR. "See, progressive radio had always come across as counter-culture, but as counter-culture grew into mainstream culture, the word progressive became archaic. We needed to let banks and car-makers know that we weren't counter-culture if we were going to pull their ads.

"I was looking for a new term, and I said to myself this is a great umbrella, Album-Oriented Rock. You can be progressive and AOR; you can be non-progressive and AOR."

How did progressive stations change when they signed onto the AOR bandwagon? Harrison looks out of his sunny office at the Hollywood Hills and says, "AOR forced broadcasters to become a little bit more humble in their attitude toward their own self-perception of the music, their radio stations and the public. They learned that the generations they had been going at—kids in college—had become doctors, lawyers and teachers and they want something else from radio than head trips and counter-culture music."

AOR has caught on widely in the record business because it formalizes the commitment of radio stations, particularly FM stations, to help sell albums. According to Harrison, "AOR stations are on an equal level with Top 40 and pop adult stations. AOR is the key: it boosts ratings and it boosts revenue."

One of the most widely used AOR formats is "FM Superstars," developed by two Atlanta businessmen, Lee Abrams and Kent Burkhardt. Harrison praises FM Superstars as "a disciplined, scientific way of AOR radio. To say that Lee Abrams stands for cutting down playlists," Harrison adds, "would be totally unfair. He's also known for breaking new albums. One of the trademarks of Abrams' stations is that each night at midnight they play a new album in its entirety. When they do play a new product, it's a lot—"heavy rotation," it's called in the music business. It's a disciplined as opposed to a haphazard approach."

Abrams and Harrison, two influential figures in this shift in FM programming, work a continent apart but often see eye-to-eye, especially in their perceptions of the progressive/free-form stations: "They permit too much jock freedom in music selection, too many choices, not enough familiarity for the listener," says the 25-year-old Abrams.

"It's the same thing that happened with the major leagues," says Harrison of progressives. "With expansion you need more talent, and it's not there. So you get players who are not as good as the best. Total freedom for incompetents on the air doesn't work the way it did for the geniuses who developed progressive radio. Freedom for the sake of freedom is not the answer. When freedom no longer gives you good radio, it's time for discipline."

* * *

The disc jockey was conscientious about what he played—and he never got stoned on the air. But he remembered Barry, who smoked incessantly when he used to have a show. Barry might think "guitar" and reach for the Duane Allman anthology album, and

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after "Layla" ended he would move right into Clapton, and then some Cream and then the Yardbirds . . . and suddenly he would find himself thinking about old English bands and reach for the Bonzo Dog Band. And before he put it on, Barry would tell the fans about the time he saw the Bonzos at the Fillmore West, and how it was far out, and who was with him, and the concert he went to the following week. Seconds stretched into interminable minutes before he'd finally spin another record.

Meanwhile, kids at home and in cars were twirling the dial to escape a nostalgia trip that just wasn't theirs.

* * *

Abrams: "They've lost touch with the new generation. Seventeen-to-24s are the heart of the market, the pacesetters, the kids who buy the most records, go to the most concerts, set the trends. They're currently into 'orchestral punk rock,' like Kansas and Boston, sort of a cross between Yes and ZZ Top."

Harrison: "Too many progressive stations are concerned with proving how hip they are."

Abrams: "The content of the jock's rap . . . the on-the-air attitude . . . it's just irrelevant to still preach revolution."

Harrison: "Counter-culture is no more."

* * *

And so, for the past ten years, more and more stations have been going to formats. More and more are signing up with consultants who tied them into informal networks of research and programming techniques.—And what this does, in the end, is drastically reduce the number of people who decide what goes on the air—the people we call the gatekeepers.

"Gatekeeper" is a term from communications theory that denotes the person who decides what goes through "the gate" and into the communications channel. It might be a network official who decides which commercials are in good taste and which are unacceptable, or the editor who decides what story to put in the paper, or the movie theater owner who decides what films to book. When radio stations programmed independently, each had a program director who would make his own decisions; each station had its own gatekeeper. If a station was free-form it had many gatekeepers, for each jock would decide what went on the air.

But when a station goes to a format, and retains a consultant to set its rotation, that consultant becomes the gatekeeper for many stations. So there are fewer gatekeepers, and more standardized playlists and rotations. Less people participate in deciding what goes on the air . . . and more power is concentrated in the hands of fewer people.

It also means, of course, that each year American radio listeners listen to fewer songs, no matter how much radio they listen to. "Why not?" its proponents say. "The country has become more conservative." So, whether this trend is good, bad or ugly, it's for real: American radio has become more conservative.

* * *

"The age of Aquarius is over, and now it's time to kick ass." So reads the sign in one of the stations that recently switched from free-form to FM Superstars.

"Our format is as commercial as possible without losing a progressive identity, a progressive sound," says Abrams. "One of the things that's most important about that word is that it means different things to different people. To a listener, a progressive station is one that plays what is hip. We don't define progressive; we don't define hip. We let the audience do that."

Abrams and Burkhardt have amassed an enormous bulk of research on the tastes and habits of the record-buying generation. They used open questionnaires (which ask questions like, "What are your three favorite songs?" or, "What are your favorite groups?"), closed questionnaires (which ask a respondent to rate on a one-to-ten scale a list of 20 bands) and a card system. In the card system, record buyers are asked to fill out a card at the cash register with name, address, phone number and albums purchased. A week after the purchase, an Abrams/Burkhardt researcher will call them and ask what cuts they're listening to. A month later they'll call again. Six months later they may call and ask if they're still listening to the albums.

"When freedom no longer gives you good radio, it's time for discipline."

Sounds simple, but it had never been done before with the scope they brought to it, and they have become expert in spotting trends. When Elton John was at the top of the heap, Abrams injected a special "Elton-E" designation into FM Superstars rotation, the only time one star has had his own category—which insured that his songs would be played more often than anyone else's. And then, in the last year, when their research indicated that Elton had lost his draw—that most of his requests came from the 23-to-30-year-olds, seeking his older songs, and not the 17-to-24-year-olds seeking recent hits—the Elton category was dropped from the rotation.

"To a 25-year-old housewife," Abrams says, "the Eagles are hip. To a 22-year-old college student, Chick Corea is hip. To a 17-year-old, Aerosmith is hip. To a 13-year-old, Kiss is hip." When Abrams/Burkhardt service a station, they don't worry about whether or not it's progressive. They find out what the audience considers hip, and then develop categories into which artists and their familiar material are slotted.

"The key to our format is familiarity. But with Top 40 radio, it was the song that was familiar to the audience; some stations played the Number One song at least once an hour. With us it's the artists who are familiar. We play artists again and again. We have to create a comfortable listening environment. Many listeners have been turning to progressive stations and finding too much unfamiliarity. We found a compromise between familiarity and depth with the artist concept."

Abrams' philosophy of radio programming is echoed by Larry Berger, the program director of WPLJ Radio in New York, one of the chain of ABC-owned stations—formerly a progressive station. "People don't like to be surprised," Berger says. "WPLJ Radio is a mirror of our audience. We're not a trendsetter. We don't tell people what's important or what's new. Instead, we play what people tell us they want to hear."

How do people tell radio stations what they want to hear? By buying records. While the old device of listeners calling in requests still holds in some markets, radio management and program directors prefer to closely monitor sales in their area and around the country, and then play what sells best.

This creates a firm airplay bias in favor of the people who purchase records; they are the only ones who "vote." It is a class, not a racial, bias; a black AOR station plays the music its affluent listeners buy. So who is left out? Poorer people? Probably. Working class fans with less money than their middle-class neighbors? Probably. But what's wrong with that? Berger asks. "How can you separate out what the taste is of people who like music but don't buy records or go to concerts? How many people like music but don't buy records or go to concerts?" Those with little money: people of little concern to the broadcast industry.

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Does this whole philosophy of give-the-people-what-they-want sound familiar? It certainly should; it forms the basis for that bastion of American popular culture, prime-time television, where "Give-the-people-what they-want (. . . and you'll be able to sell commercial time at a higher price)" continues to rule.

And why should radio be any different? Radio station owners are not public servants, or good Samaritans, but businessmen, catering to advertisers who have products to hawk. Many radio and television stations are owned by the same corporation—e.g., Metromedia, Group W, ABC—and many more are owned by other major industries. It is safe to say that ownership of radio stations, like that of television stations, rests by and large with the wealthy and their corporations.

There's an apocryphal story about the late Tom Donahue, whom many people in progressive radio consider the guru, or father, of them all. A young fan had come up to Donahue after he made the move to KSAN in San Francisco, complaining about all the commercials on the station.

"When we decided to go for the bigger audience, we got into bed with the devil," Donahue reputedly said. "And when you do that, you better be ready to fuck."

One more similarity to television: both worship high ratings. The radio equivalent of TV's Neilsens are Arbitron "books," quarterly ratings of a station's pull within its market compared to its competitors. It all adheres to LCD—the lowest common denominator principle of communications, which suggests that the lower the level of content, the more accessible it is to more people.

* * *

But so what? Why should it be any different than this? This is, after all, America. Well, with an open bias in favor of progressive free-form stations, we say here's why:

Because there's a better way. There was a time, during the '60s, when activism was more than being hip, and hundreds of thousands of people—a very substantial minority of Americans—put their bodies on the line for many causes. We may romanticize the past, or gaze back fondly at it through relevance-shaded glasses, but we think there was a time when these children of the '60s, the counter-culture, the Movement, found a voice in the established media, a voice that struck a responsive chord in many of us. That voice was progressive FM radio.

Progressives are fading away in many areas, and barely holding on in others. Less than two dozen major, commercial progressive stations remain in the United States. Since Abrams and other radio consultants began offering their formats and research services in the early '70s, no new free-forms have emerged. But dozens of free-form stations have switched to formats. "Business is great, and growing," Abrams says, noting that of the 32 stations he works with 15 have signed on in the last year.

If progressives are to survive in the face of the AOR formatting, three conditions must be realized:

•Ownership and management must be willing to settle for *reasonable* profits with a *reasonable* share of the market, without always pushing for more listeners/higher rates/more profits, because progressive free-form is not a guaranteed growth proposition.

•Placement ought to be in a large urban market (or perhaps a university community like Madison or Champaign or Austin) where that fraction of the market is large enough to ensure listenership and modest success.

Record buyers vote. Who is left out? Poorer people? Probably.

•Recognition must be made by AOR stations of the role of free form stations. Berger (of WPLJ, New York) acknowledges, "It's the existence of progressive stations that gives us some freedom to play more familiar material. We can play a little new music because we know that it will get airplay on a progressive station with whom we share the market."

But if Berger sees free-forms as informal partners, too many influential people in FM radio will say, "Hey, I'm not knocking progressives," then go on to list five or six problems with them—and never mention a virtue. Some of the criticism is well-founded, particularly complaints about many on-the-air personalities who come on and rap about whatever's in their head. But their negativism creates a climate in which it's hard for free-forms to compete for advertising, or to justify their programming to their corporate owners.

* * *

One of the latest threats to free form survival comes from a new trend in radio, known variously as "Easy Listening" or "the Mellow Sound." These stations, which seem to have banned the drum slowly, draw many of their listeners—predominantly women, the surveys show—from free-form stations. These are not muzak-type stations, but ones which play the softer Dylan, Chapin, Baez, CSN, Joni Mitchell, *et al.*

Mellow sound radio is a harbinger of the next major change in radio: still further fragmentation of the market. Once, back in the dawn of pre-history, in the mid-'60s, there were only two types of radio: Adult radio and kid radio. Progressive programming entered this wasteland and gave a generation of students and other young adults a media outlet that reflected their tastes and sensitivities. But that pie of progressive music has since been carved into many pieces, from country-rock to punk-rock, folk-rock to jazz-rock.

What mellow sound programming may imply is that a station can select one type of this music—say jazz-rock—and secure a solid audience by playing only Jan Hammer, Al DiMeola, Larry Coryell, Weather Report and such fellow travelers. In effect, this provides listeners with "hit" artists and familiar material, whatever their taste. (This would, in general terms, parallel what has happened in the magazine business: the age of specialization and special markets, and the death of general-purpose, general-interest publications.)

* * *

The disc jockey was feeling a bit insecure on the ride home that night. Many of his friends had settled in at formulated AOR stations; others had left the radio business. He smiled as he imagined the format monolith's logical conclusion:

"Good evening, everybody. Welcome to Top One radio, all the hit, all the time," and a looping tape of Peter Frampton over and over again into the night, with commercials providing the only variety.

The Vietnam War is over. So is the draft. Nixon is in exile, and all's well in Washington. But when the honeymoon is over, when life has turned more oppressive, when dissent is common once again and the streets and campuses boil with passions, will progressive radio—will *any* radio—have survived complacency and conservatism to be there when it's needed?

—Pete Fornatale and Josh Mills

Pete Fornatale is an on-the-air music programmer at WNEW-FM, New York, a free-form progressive station, and writes about the media.

Josh Mills writes about music, the media and other things, and teaches journalism at New York University. They are collaborating on a book about radio.

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All across Europe, Jarreau—"that crazy American jazz singer"—is a headliner. (His recent *Look to the Rainbow* lets him loose before enthusiastic Continental audiences.) A recent New York appearance sold out Avery Fisher Hall, but Jarreau won't succumb to egotism despite two standing ovations.

"I ain't about to do no star trip," he reflects the morning after. "I'm doing a gig, to get up in front of people and sing. Another guy's gig is to operate an elevator, another guy's gig is operating an airplane. Some people break their ass eight hours a day in a foundry. That's where the applause should go!"

Also keeping Jarreau humble are his relatively modest American record sales. In places like Milwaukee, where he grew up, Jarreau is still virtually unknown. "You have to go out of your way to find my music," he shrugs. "They're victims of the playlist. It's real unfortunate, and not just for my sake. The people in the community need to know that they produce more than beer, that there are things coming from there that are valuable."

But Jarreau won't compromise to reach those people. His piano-bass-drums-vibes backup keeps him away from disco commerciality, although his "You Don't See Me" (where Jarreau sings both vocal and percussion parts) is certainly funky. Doesn't he feel pressured to cut a hit?

"It's a kind of pressure you realize on your own, a pressure to let [Warner Bros.] have rewards for faith they had. They took a patron of the arts attitude. If there's an incentive, maybe another cat will get the chance.

"I feel the rush, the incredible tempo, the urgency to produce; I like writing on inspiration, not on assignment, but I'm trying to develop some skills for doing it that way. I try to recreate, as often as I can, circumstances under which I usually find inspiration."

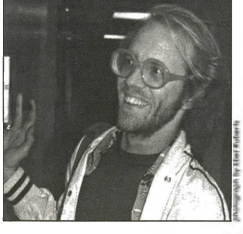
In deference to his idol, Jon Hendricks—who, as part of Lambert, Hendricks & Ross, popularized "vocalese," the addition of lyrics to jazz solos—Jarreau has been working on his own versions of Phil Upchurch's "Six to Four" and Dizzy Gillespie's bop classic "Groovin' High." (A possible tour with Hendricks, a scat-lover's dream!—is also in the works.).

Jarreau continues to compose his own quasi-autobiographical songs, in a style as much influenced by rock as by jazz. The only constant is Jarreau's strong, positive message. Even in a melancholy ballad like "Lock All the Gates," Jarreau wrests ecstasy out of anguish.

"It's all redemption in the end," he insists. "Go buy *The New York Times* and nobody's talking about redemption. That's what I want to talk about. That's all there is!"

—*Jon Pareles*

BOB WELCH'S SENTIMENTS



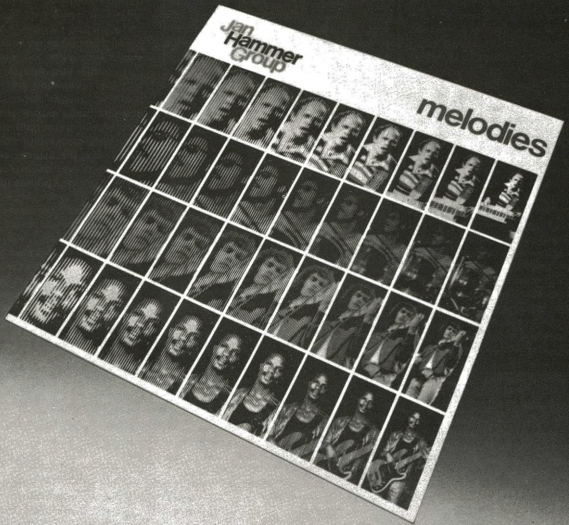
Photograph by Eliot Roberts

NEW YORK—One might reasonably expect to find Bob Welch cowering in a dark space, muttering "I coulda been a contender." After all, the lanky, balding blond guitarist stuck with Fleetwood Mac through five albums, turning out songs like "Sentimental Lady" and "Hypnotized" which were appreciated by only a small cult. So he leaves the band to found doomed-to-die-hard rockers Paris, while the Big Mac start selling records so fast the hamburger chain would be jealous. Welch isn't even slightly tempted to end it all. He takes on his friend Mick Fleetwood as his manager, and after 13 years of playing with others, releases *French Kiss* under his own name. Both the album and its fine five-year-old single, "Sentimental Lady," re-cut for the lp, aren't doing badly at all. "It was a good song." Welch said over midafternoon breakfast, "and if anybody's gonna have success with it, it should logically be me, since I wrote it and sang it in the first place.

"Some people have said this album is what I should have done when I left Fleetwood Mac. The only trouble is, when I left Fleetwood Mac, they were not anywhere near the enormousness that they are now and I couldn't get a record deal unless it was with a concept like Paris. But Paris was always shaky, all the time. We went through four managers in three years."

Welch quickly denies that bad feelings prompted his departure from Fleetwood, and his professional association with Mick backs him up. He is equally vigorous in defending the material he and the band wrote from *Bare Trees* through *Heroes Are Hard to Find*.

"I left Fleetwood Mac because I was just totally and utterly fatigued. 1974 was a year when we went through this lawsuit having to do with a bogus band, and Mick and I mainly were the ones involved in doing that. We were rapidly running out of money to sustain ourselves, we hadn't been working for five or six months at all. So we finally moved to the States and got a new record deal, a new agency deal, and I was just burned out. I didn't feel I had another song in me. The band had seen it coming because I was more and more depressed, and Mick came across Stevie [Nicks] and Lindsey [Buckingham] doing a demo tape. There was a couple of weeks when Mick said, 'Maybe if we add these new people . . .' I might've stayed. But it was inevitable. My necessity to leave was overpowering.



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"I was really happy about everything that's happened with them. Mick, John and Chris particularly were real close friends and I knew all the work that they put in, 'cause I had shared in a hell of a lot of it. The band that I left is *not* the band that Fleetwood Mac is now." Even the limited response to "Hypnotized," which isn't all that different from the stunningly successful "Dreams," doesn't drag Welch into a morass of regrets.

"Sure I'm hoping that something I do someday will sell 80 billion copies too. The first real hit off a Fleetwood Mac album was 'Over My Head' which was Christine's song. It was a nice song, but Chris had written many, many songs on previous albums that I feel and she feels are just as good as 'Over My Head.' Why was it a hit? Just because, I guess, the time was right.

"The *French Kiss* album is a progression for me in the sense that it's my own name, it's a solo career thing, but I wouldn't say it's the best stuff ever. It's just more of my stuff, which hopefully would be accepted as mine."

Accepted by enough people, Welch projects, to get him out on the road, perhaps supporting Fleetwood Mac. "I'd love to be in a position where I could go out with them," he says evenly. "And I know that if I was, I will."

—Toby Goldstein

CHEAP TRICK ON TOUR: ROOK ROCK AND PERVERSE ROLL?

photograph by Kwasniewski/Star

(l. to r.) Carlos, Nielsen, Petersson, Zander

CHICAGO—"I've had two knives and a gun pulled on me in the last three months." Bun E. Carlos says dryly. "On the road I see all the nutshows. All the nuts seek you out." Cheap Trick's drummer is huddled over a Heineken in a dimly lit Chicago bar as his cigarette's ash lengthens; he looks like he was weaned on nicotine. Carlos wears an askew, somber striped tie and a discreet white shirt. From his unbending deadpan expression, it's hard to tell if he is frightened by perverse encounters or intrigued by them. Carlos nods, indicating that at times it's the latter, and mutters, "I get bored real easy."

Meanwhile, across the table, Rick Nielsen, clad in a shrivaled bow-tie and crumpled black baseball cap, studies a newspaper. The night before at a show in Indianapolis, the group's guitarist—with wrestling shoes and other oddities added to his apparel—broke a B string during a song. He then unstrapped his guitar, flung it 25 feet in the air and plunged off the stage into the audience. Now, Nielsen is calmly reading about the Florida court case involving a 15-year-old boy accused of murder; his lawyer's defense is that violence on TV led the boy to commit the act. The group is aware of the similarities between the case and a song from Cheap Trick's first album, "The Ballad of TV Violence," which contains lines like: "I need a knife . . . give me your life."

"We create controversy by a lot of the things we do," Nielsen offers. "I came home one day and there was a stake out on my front porch. This guy was threatening to tear my throat out because he had read so much into our lyrics."

Cheap Trick travels to most of their gigs in a stylish yet modest minibus. No sooner do they arrive at the 10,000-seat Chicago Indoor Amphitheatre than someone is incensed. One of the show's promoters bursts into the dressing room. He has spied an ad for another Cheap Trick show in the area, and feeling it has cut into this night's ticket sales, angrily begins some push-and-shove. "I won't ever book you again," he swears. "I don't even fucking care if you play tonight." The group is more amused than upset over the incident.

"When we first started out," striking blonde lead singer Robin Zander says as he changes from a dapper gray vested suit into a white one, "we played a club in Cleveland. During a song, I got electrocuted by the mike and was knocked clear across the room and went unconscious. But the band kept right on playing until I came to."

"We thought it was funny," snickers handsome bassist Tom Petersson, who's also duded up. Petersson went through a phase where he got his kicks by driving through Chicago's notorious South Side alone at night. "It's not so bad now," he shrugs, "but there was a time when the people there would jump on your car right while you were driving."

Though Cheap Trick is opening for Be Bop Deluxe and REO Speedwagon on this show, boom-rattling cheers greet the four distinct band members as they scamper on stage. The date is a sort of homecoming. After forming the group three years ago in Europe, Cheap Trick made Chicago its base of operations. Nielsen, who writes (or co-writes) all of Cheap Trick's material, grew up in one of the Windy City's suburbs, and his experiences as an outcast of Midwest teen culture have provided the inspiration for much of the group's current repertoire, which includes songs like "Daddy Should Have Stayed in High School," "I Like Go Go Girls," and "He's a Whore."

"I wasn't exactly your, uh, normal teenager," Nielsen recalls. "My parents were opera singers. By the time I was 12, I had been around every type of perverted musician you could imagine."

Now, Nielsen and his compatibly demented Tricksters have found an audience for their warped vagabond visions. *In Color*, Cheap Trick's second album, is getting both critical acclaim and big sales. The group is flattered by all the attention, but is bugged by one chronic observation. "Everybody says, 'You guys are Beatle-esque,'" Nielsen admits sourly. "Sure we liked the Beatles, but it wasn't like they were God and everybody else was no good." Petersson, 26, agrees: "You don't sit around and listen to 'This Boy' when you're 22."

Onstage, Cheap Trick showed their music to be an inventive and unique blend of several British and American influences. For some, the intensity of their hard-edged pop numbers was heightened by Nielsen's frantic stage antics (which included planting guitar picks upon his sweat soaked face). But a 15-year-old girl named Alice only had eyes for Zander. "He's so beautiful," she swooned as she filled her head with some weird-looking narcotic. What about the guitar player? "He's old."

After the show, as the tour bus carries the quartet back to their hotel, Bun E. Carlos is hot for some of his kind of action. He spots a passing truck with the letters "T.N.T." plastered on its side. "Let's bump it," he says, "and give the driver a score."

—Michael Barackman

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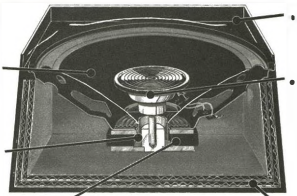

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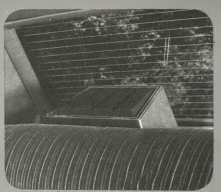
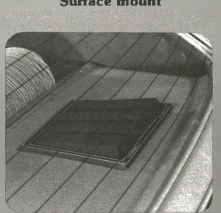


Surface mount



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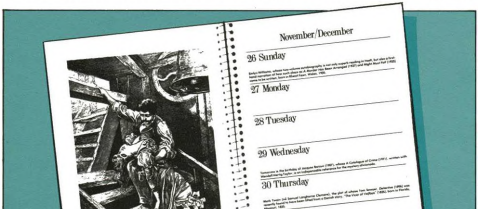
DATING GAME: TIME GOES BUY



An 1895 Police Gazette pictures murderer Theo Durrant carrying the body of church-librarian Blanche Lamont to the belfry of San Francisco's Emmanuel Baptist Church.

NEW YORK—On any given day you either bound or fall out of bed. The Western concept of the "day" is a series of events, many of which are planned in advance and most of which are to be dreaded. That's why you write them down. It allows you the sweet luxury of losing track of time; it allows you to wake up with that delicious and artificial taste of freedom, before you remember that you have to remember.

Like many implements of destruction, the calendar comes in both decorative and purely utilitarian forms. The engraving on the butt of a revolver doesn't hide its purpose and the pretense of owning it as an art object would look pretty silly. Likewise, if you've been stupid enough to get a wall calendar, no matter how nice the graphics, the whole goddamn month is right up there leering at you with all the nasty little things it plans to do to you.

Any coward with brains knows the value of subtlety—the domed rings that carry poison; the cunning, carved boxes that contain a dagger in the works. In the calendar world, that means "desk model." These little items go easily disguised as a book, with a charming picture on one side of the page and an unassuming week on the other, and the three secret words are: Date Side Down. This homely little philosophy will give you the chance of lulling yourself with a few moments of early-morning picture-gazing before you're compelled to turn the thing over and read with dread: "Bank on lunch hour. Dentist 4:00. Dinner Aunt Pearl's 6:30-???"

Now that we've got *that* cleared up we can move on to particulars. You must be very careful in selecting your calendar pictures because the thing won't wear out for a year. You can't speed it up by wearing it out to work in the yard; you can't decide that it looks tacky and throw it out in August. This is the biggest single argument against the *Star Wars* calendar. Can you really face Obi-Wan Kenobi for the next 365 mornings? And anyone who buys Ballantine's Tolkien calendar deserves the lifetime of boredom they're courting. Stay away from flashes in the pan and dull old friends; the world of calendar escapism is too full of better things. Why settle for a calendar that's merely on the wall, when it can be off-the-wall as well?

It would be nice to think that buying the Movie Fan's Calendar (Universe) would be contributing to the good of movies, but no, buying this calendar just means that you'll be able to look at dead movie stars for a year. This calendar also takes the prize for offering the greatest number of trivial events per date. Sample: "November 30. Queen Kong banned by London Court, 1976. British pic has female gorilla climbing to top of London Post Office tower."

Another entry in the quality trash category is The Mystery and Suspense Engagement Calendar (Universe). This is a great piece of literature: the picture for the week of my birthday is an 1895 *Police Gazette* illustration of "Murderer Theo Durrant carrying the body of church-librarian Blanche Lamont to the belfry of San Francisco's Emmanuel Baptist Church," which is more or less how I expect to feel about my birthday. But the events-of-the-day are, again, disappointingly business-like; birthdays of mystery writers and contracts signed. I wouldn't mind a little gore with my breakfast. I don't mind finding out that Edward G. Robinson was born in Bucharest, but please, more thrills.

There seems to be a new trend in calendars that become something else once you rip off the dates on the bottom. Dancing Times (Universe) becomes oversized postcards of early 20th-century dance posters, some of which are neat. Universe also has a whole passel of wall-calendars-cum-posters, but I've gotten to the point where the next time I see a *Vogue* or *Vanity Fair* deco poster on the wall, I'll scream. For sports fans they offer Grand Prix, skiing, and sailing, which are fine if you like those sorts of things. Personally, I prefer The Floating World, featuring Japanese prints and a nifty title; the only problems are that it's chintzy in only including four pictures (one every *three months*?) and the reproductions aren't that hot.

That brings us down to the remaining two categories: the artsy-fartsy and the girlie calendars. Since I felt disqualified to comment on girlie calendars, I asked the informed opinion of a qualified young man, a connoisseur of the art form, if you will. "Forget about the ones from *Playboy*, *Penthouse* and *Oui*," he told me. "If you want real raunch, go to *Cheri* (unless *Purple* puts one out) and if you want character, go to your local garage and ask for the one without beagles on it." There is also a classic from the Ridgid Equipment Company featuring monthly bathing beauties clutching imposing metal work implements alongside the logo: Ridgid Tools.

For the ultimate in the artsy-fartsy, the best place to go is the museums. The Metropolitan Museum wall calendar wins hands down this year with Great Escapes— wonderful reproductions so long as you ignore the pretentious accompanying quotes. By comparison, the Museum of Modern Art's Recent Acquisitions wall calendar is as tedious as its title. Sometimes calendars just need a *theme*.

On the other hand, MOMA's desk model Faces, is nothing short of wonderful. Terrific portraits, not all of them pretty, and my favorite Lichtenstein comicbook picture: "I DON'T CARE! I'D RATHER SINK—THAN CALL BRAD FOR HELP!" The Met's desk model has twice as much color, usually an important criterion, but the tapestry-and-castle theme is ho-hum enough to make it a good present for Grandma.

—*Anne Nelson*


aja
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On ABC Records
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BANG THE GONG SLOWLY

The Ostrich Sisters, the Boy-Girl Wonder and Trixie the Roller Derby Queen all dream of Stardom. What will they say to the folks back home?

by Robert Stephen Spitz

Mitch, the Girl-Boy Wonder, is worried about the Ploopmaker. His eyes furtively scan the 75 others who share his problem as he paces across NBC's Rehearsal Hall #3, charged with the naked anxiety of a Broadway producer waiting for opening night reviews. "I haven't been able to figure out what they do yet. Ploopmaker—what the hell could it mean?" he asks of nobody in particular, wringing his hands in despair. "I just can't get a line on these guys."

Mitch is ravishingly attired in a black, strapless evening gown; charcoal gray silk stockings and patent leather pumps that look like they might have been worn by Shirley Temple in *Little Miss Broadway*. His cherubic face has been expertly painted with rouge, several shades of eyeliner, pancake, lipstick, mascara and a life-like mole where his beard stubble should have been. An ample pair of foam-rubber breasts rounds out his *zoftig* figure. But neither breasts nor beard are within his physical capabilities; on his next birthday, Mitch will be 12 years old.

"Take it easy, kid," a corpulent attendant cautions him as she roots through a pile of sulfurous egg salad sandwiches in search of the lone tuna. "It's only a game."

"*It's only a game!*" Mitch stammers contemptuously. "You gotta be kidding, lady!" He pirouettes priggishly on a high heel and reroutes his pacing to an alternate corner, assessing the competition with each prenubile stride.

Tuna in hand, the lady stares after him as he circles the perimeter of action like a patient predator. She shakes her head. "Fucking kid'll never see fifteen."

* * *

You can take your *Upstairs/Downstairs*, your *Young Peoples' Concerts*, and stuff 'em right up the ol' kazoo. America wants to see dancing fruit. That's entertainment. And that's *The Gong Show*. Three years ago, the suggestion of such midday tripe had network executives yawning in their gray flannel suits. Ah, but ratings *über alles*. Today, *The Gong Show* is one of the most-viewed afternoon shows, with commercial sponsorship sold out through the 1977-78 season. And why not? It's about people—or almost-people. Art Linkletter said, "People are funny." Somebody ought to tell Art the truth.

Rehearsal Hall #3 faces a life-size poster of Don Rickles baring his teeth. Glance inside and you'll find, gathered around a clutter of folding tables, a cast seemingly out of *Marat/Sade*: obese women in

tutus, take flying Wallendas, marching bands, the Ostrich Sisters (yes, exactly), a walking banana, scores of nattily attired black doo-wop acts—all singing (dreadfully), all dancing (gracelessly) and nearly all on roller skates!

Gene Banks, *The Gong Show*'s producer, calls the menagerie to order. "All right, contestants!" he screams. "We're about ready to go. Now, some of you may be gonged today. My advice to you is to take it in good spirit. That's why we're here, isn't it?"

One of the doo-woppers gives him the finger and whispers to a cohort, "I'm here for the fuckin' money, turkey!"

"Now, if you do get gonged, don't hit Chuck or Jaye P. Morgan. You've got 45 seconds before anyone is allowed to gong you, so give it your best shot. And the more gongs there are, the more acts get on—so pray for gongs." He turns to leave, but has a second flash of agenda. "By the way, today we have a cage, and you may be caged instead of gonged. If you are, don't worry—you'll be paid."

"How much?" one of the contestants screams. *Time* to *talk* turkey.

"$190," Banks replies to cheers and applause. "Now, the lineup for the first show is . . ." The room grinds into surreal silence . . . the Angry Poet, Dean Edmunds, Sophie Wonder, Evil Teeth and Screaming Mimi. "I'll be back for the rest of you later." As he disappears through the door, the room snaps back to its normal manic pitch.

The Girl-Boy Wonder is visibly upset at not being chosen. He sits slumped against a make-up mirror, gingerly tugging his crinoline hemline over grass-stained knees. Girl-boys will be girl-boys. "That guy doesn't know the least thing about show business," he growls. "It's timing. You gotta open big, grab the audience by the balls. I'm that kind of act."

A mousy woman in her late 30s pats Mitch approvingly on his head. As he smiles up at his mother, she slips a Kleenex between his lips to blot his runny lipstick. "Mitch ought to know," she defends. "He's a natural entertainer. That's why we're here. He wants to be an actor so *badly* and feels this is the best way to be seen. I'll do *anything* to help him. He's gonna be a *star*."

Stage mothers are the only species who can strut sitting down.

"Mom told me that when she was a little girl she was in a talent show and sang 'Frankie and Johnny.' She wanted me to do it too—sorta follow in her footsteps. Well, I heard her do it, and it wasn't that good an act."

"I really wanted Mitch to do a strip on *The Gong Show*," she confesses. "It was all my idea. I thought it would be so cute. And on this show, you've either got to be super bad or have a great gimmick." She points to one of her son's drooping rubber breasts with pride. "A strip is a great gimmick. No boy would dress up as a girl, so I figure we've eliminated 99% of the competition."

"My friends'll think I'm a fucking queer," he admits, "but I don't care. I'll be laughing all the way to the bank."

There's a disturbance by the open doors. Carol, a fleshy contestant whose act consists of serenading her pet cow with "'Til There Was You," runs into the hallway and cradles a young girl in her arms. For a moment, the assembled mob shows concern, but even that vague emotion is lost to nerves: two minutes to air time. "That girl was counting on the $316.32 prize money for a down payment on a dream car," explains Michael Rivero, a former NASA astronomer *cum Gong Show* magician who worked on Project Viking until he found he was going nightblind ("which can be hell on an astronomer"). "That's all she's been talking about through the tryouts and rehearsals. But the producers decided that she was to be caged. She's in the bathroom currently getting stoned out of her mind, crying and getting sick. That's show biz."

It seems not all is "in good spirit." Not everyone gets to do their *schtik* as rehearsed. Some contestants are caged, several are squashed by a giant hairy paw, and others receive residuals as payment for their lunacy. Fat Carol stays in cigarettes in return for her appearances. "Nobody is finer to work for than Chuck Barris," she beams. Work for? *The Gong Show* is supposed to be a showcase for amateurs. "That's right," she agrees, "but after being a contestant for the third time, you have to join AFTRA. That's an initial outlay of $350. After that, the show has to pay me AFTRA scale of $292. So I consider myself working for Chuck Barris. You can't beat it. If you play your cards right, you can sneak back onto the show any number of times under a variety of assumed names. It's a great racket."

As if on cue, a racket breaks out behind her as an antique television monitor springs to life. Fifty people drop an assortment of props and converge on the tube. This is the moment everyone's been waiting for. The supreme test of talent. Stage lights catch the reflection of glitter, a rimshot signals the band and magic seems to catch lost souls like a brush fire. A nondescript voice bursts forth with: "Almost live, from Hollywood—it's *The Gong Show*!" Wild applause sweeps through the hypnotized crowd as hearts skip beats right into the commercial.

One of the Ostrich Sisters swoons, clutching her chest. "Hollywood!" she gasps. "Hollywood—what the hell am *I* doing *here*?!"

* * *

Nobody really seems to remember how they got here, but everyone knows this is the place. An inconspicuous cardboard sign—"G.S. Contestants Use Other Door"—leads to a decaying entrance around the corner from an overgrown parking lot. The lot attendant shifts haplessly on his stool by the gate, more enchanted by his paperback copy of *Lucy's Hot Dreams* than by the Walking Felt-Tipped Pen which has slid out from behind the wheel of a battered Toyota. Glassy-eyed, he looks the Pen right in its tip. "Two bucks," he rasps. Money appears instantly from behing a giant clasp. "Write on," the Pen replies. The attendant shakes his head.

The show's first auditions are held at

the Small World Importium, an abandoned restaurant whose food was apparently gonged by a local health inspector. A cluster of would-be contestants sit in a dark corner of what used to be the restaurant's very un-chic lobby. These people know the meaning of fear.

"The fear is only temporary," insists John Michel, *Gong Show* production manager. "The people who walk through this door want nothing more than a shot at being on TV—their idea of the big time—and when they get in front of the camera, they come on like gangbusters."

Actually, the auditions themselves are little more than perfunctory once-overs by the staff, held in the kitchen. If the contestants have any glamorous notions about television when they walk through the door, they are quickly laid to rest. The "set" consists of a blank, dirty wall and two spotlights under which the screen test takes place. Michel and another young staffer comprise the "selection committee" which videotapes the entire 90-second procedure.

"Hi, and welcome to *The Gong Show*," he sings automatically to a dour looking man dressed in a black cape carrying a musical instrument case. Michel glances at the contestant's application on the table before him. "OK, Marty, it says here that you're called the Banjo Vampire. Great; Love it. Now, when I introduce you, I want you to step up to the microphone and do your thing. We're putting it all on tape; Chuck will see it and if he likes what you do, we'll give you a call. OK?"

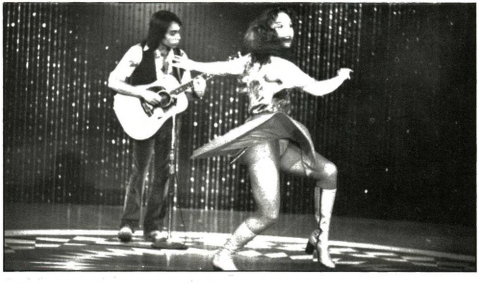
"Sure," Marty acquiesces, "but geez, I really can't do my act without a bar. Y'see, I'm the Banjo Vampire; I hang upside down while I sing."

"Aw shit," Michel says under his breath. "Everybody's got an excuse." He makes an imaginary note on the application, and Marty auditions on terra firma.

It doesn't make much of a difference. Upside down or right side up, the act is a bust: a forgettable song during which he displays a set of plastic fangs cemented onto his gums. Not bizarre enough to wake up *this* crew. Marty is thanked, and his application is filed in the appropriate dead file as he leaves.

The rest of the afternoon's tests are fairly consistent—from bad to progressively worse—a factor which has been disturbing Michel for some time.

"The acts aren't downright ridiculous anymore," he admits. "They're just boring. It's getting harder to find anybody foolish enough to put on the show, and harder for me to sit in this chair day after day. Look, we've auditioned over 15,000 loonies in the last year or so, and I think we've pretty well cleaned out Southern California of all the wackos." To rectify this, there has been scattered talk about taking *The Gong Show* on the road—a



traveling asylum of sorts. His eyes light up at the very thought. "God, New York oughta be fun! Can you imagine the possibilities with all those sick people walking the streets?"

The second auditions, however, are more lively and right on the money; each act borders on the fringe of insanity and seems to excel at exhibitionism. Held at one of ABC's entertainment complexes in Los Angeles, the contestants who made it through the first purge get another chance to walk that frayed tightrope to stardom.

The excitement in the hall outside the audition room is electric. An assortment of scantily attired dancing girls, singers in formal attire and contortionists with matching color-coordinated hunchbacks exchange battle stories—one more exaggerated than the next.

"My act's so awful, I'm certain to be gonged within ten seconds," one guy boasts using every ounce of effort to push a comb through heavily greased hair. "If not, I plan to drop my pants center stage. Barris is bound to love that." A female companion throws a towel in his face. "Much good that does me," she complains. "He probably doesn't even *like* girls."

Rumors get bolder as they wait: The show is rigged; the awful acts are really paid professionals; Chuck Barris has decided to retire—but when their turn comes, humility strikes about as quickly and effectively as Legionnaire's Disease. Upon entering to perform, contestants do everything but genuflect.

The audition hall looks like a padded cell. The walls and pipes are coated with layers of white tufted soundproofing; Milton deLugg, the show's stoic bandleader, has that funny, half-cocked Hollywood smile which leaves one believing that his thoughts drift somewhere between Santa Monica and Uranus.

The man of the moment, however, is Chuck Barris, the show's host and the originator of all this madness, who *emerges* from behind a podium at one end of the room. "C'mon, c'mon, c'mon," he warbles impatiently at his staff and contestants. Barris scampers across the room, grabs the breast of his female production assistant and routinely squeezes it twice, dispelling any question regarding his masculinity.

Dressed casually in a pair of faded jeans and a dark blue t-shirt, Barris is a strikingly handsome man. Best described as "sawed-off," he looks surprisingly younger than his actual age (48) and moves with an almost psychotic energy. In fact, everything about Chuck Barris is *frenetic*.

"C'mon, let's go," he barks half-seriously. "I don't have all day. Take the stage and get ready. When I introduce you, you wait for the music to start, take a few steps forward and give it all you got." While the contestant prepares herself, Barris impatiently grabs an electric guitar and launches into "Heart of My Heart," singing quite animatedly and at the top of his lungs. This is no act; this is love.

Years ago, when he was sent by the ABC network to keep a circumspect eye on Dick Clark during the payola scandals, Barris became intoxicated by rock n roll, and penned the now-classic "Palisades Park." His bosses failed to smile upon his newly acquired talent, considering the original assignment, but no one has been able to wrestle the guitar from his hands since then.

"Hell, I've lived in a fantasy world all my life," Barris claims in a rare reflective moment, "and music has always been an integral part of my ability to survive. Big bands, rock—anything that's got a backbeat has got me."

> *"Give it your best shot, and if you get gonged, don't hit Jaye P. Morgan."*

The first contestant he auditions is a dogfaced girl whose debatable talent is unleashed in an upbeat, off-key version of "Margaritaville." It is obvious that she has a rather exalted opinion of her limited vocal abilities, which makes it hard on the show's staff. You can scream with laughter at an intentionally awful act; it is those who take their inadequacies seriously that hurt. This is the tricky part, the boundary in the show's format between good-natured fun and cruelty.

"Great, but let's try it again, sweetheart." Barris advises politely, "*together*." They do it three times, each a little louder and a little worse, before Barris dismisses her with finesse. "Gee, that was fun. I loved singing with you. Thanks for coming in," he says genuinely. "Next." Ms. Margaritaville leaves on a cloud, having sung casually with Chuck Barris, never once realizing that she has been rejected.

And so it goes, five days a week, 50 weeks a year. Barris, a master of high spirits, observes, jukes and works with the acts who appear on his show until their routines reflect some semblance of polished disorder. He joins a chorus line of girls to show them how to create visual excitement with their act, rewrites the end of a singer's arrangement for a more dynamic finish, offers suggestions to comedians regarding timing. It takes only a short while to realize that Barris is the communicative force behind the show's success. One would relish exposing his ulterior motives, the hollowness which invariably follows success, but, in fact, his unforced sensitivity overwhelms one's desire to destroy.

Barris dismisses the malicious intent with a wave of his hand. "Oh, listen, it's a journalist's job to come up with the dirt. I'm an open book; if I've done something wrong, then I have to pay the price. But so far, so good." He shrugs and smiles. "It's just like when the show went on the air. The press branded us a sad comment on society and held us responsible for every social sin under the sun, but they seem to be coming around to our point of view."

"We're not a sad comment, nor are we cruel by allowing the contestants to act like a bunch of fools. We deal with guys who play their arms and noses. They know damned well before they come on what they're doing. The other people, the straight acts, have watched the show, and they realize what they're in for. I mean, for Chrissakes, it is called *The Gong Show*."

But there will always be a percentage of people who allow their emotions to run away with them, who will wind up getting hurt by their public rejection. "Right," Barris agrees, "but I don't feel sorry for them in the least. It's tough shit. The only ones I have sympathy for are the people who train for years in something—like ballet or singing—and, for one reason or another, *The Gong Show* represents to them the culmination of those years in training. That gets to me every time."

Barris is momentarily interrupted by a production aide who informs him that one of this week's shows has been trimmed by the network because of Chicago and New York sponsor response to the previews. The culprit is an act called the Popsicle Girls who parade across the screen lustily sucking phallic icicles. That wasn't what bothered the admen; it was Jaye P. Morgan's reason for administering the gong: "They have their nerve," she boomed. "That's how I got *my* start in show business."

Barris' reaction is understandable. "Shit," he snaps, "those goddamned censors make my life miserable. I just don't think they have a sense of humor. Look, there are certain things I like to poke fun at because the country's so goddamn puritanical. Like the Church," he points characteristically. "Now there's a silly institution. I once came out on crutches while a contestant sang 'Nearer My God To Thee.' Halfway through his act, I threw the crutches away and fell down on my face. The network screamed like hell about that.

"But this time, their interference is go-

ing to hurt like hell," he concedes. "Earlier today, I had a fantastic act come in. It was a guy who set up a series of specially sized Whoopee Cushions on a string of chairs. When the music started, he began bouncing up and down on them emitting, well, let's call them *unique* sounds. Hysterical. I mean, it was really funny—not tasteful—but really funny. Now, because of this Popsicle Girl wipeout, I'll have trouble getting him on the air. It's too bad. But I'll find a way around them. I have to."

* * *

The audience crowded into the small studio is venomous. Comprised mostly of poorly dressed children, tourists and mellowed-out California dreamers, they sharpen their fangs with a torrent of pregame insults hurled at a roving warmup announcer.

After a short time, the cameras roll and Chuck Barris bounds onstage in a Cub Scout shirt, with a ski hat pulled down over his eyes. "You're gonna love this act," he exclaims, wagging a finger into the lens, and follows his endorsement with a customary double entendre that leaves the audience hooting. Introductions completed, an elderly, distinguished-looking black man is pushed onstage and proceeds to play the tops of wooden chairs with a pair of drumsticks to the tune of "Yankee Doodle Dandy." By some extraordinary stroke of leniency, he is not gonged and is awarded a respectable score of 27 points.

"I love to see a grown man play with his own stool," Jaye P. Morgan screams from her place on the sidelines. A former saloon songstress of modest proportions, her sputtering career has been revived by *Gong Show* appearances, and she baits the susceptible audience with her special brand of half-witticisms.

The following two acts—Sophie Wonder, an overweight girl in a hot pink overcoat and sunglasses who taps out a rhythm to "Sir Duke" with her white cane, and Dean Edmunds, a middle-aged blue-collar worker who sings "Pennies From Heaven" in six simultaneous keys—are quickly gonged to the gallery's delight.

Barris then introduces a *Gong Show* regular, Trixie the Roller Derby Queen, who skates onstage looking like a true hitter. In a skin-tight blouse, a mini-skirt rolled up to her *pupik* and white patent-leather boots, she attempts an unsettling rendition of "I Gotta Be Me." So unsettling, in fact, that Barris stops her in mid-song.

"Uh, Trixie, I think time's up," he offers meekly.

Hands on hips, she has her own ideas about scheduling. "Time's up my ass!" she pouts, pushing him to the ground as she wheels away.

"We'll be right back," Barris points at the camera, taking the show into a commercial. He jumps up and straps on his guitar. There is no need for him to apologize to Trixie; she is his office receptionist, Francie DeJonge, who, like other staff members, joins in the televised fun.

The next contestant is a classic. Barris introduces a dirty-blonde teenager who shares the stage with a stuffed poodle perched daintily on a pedestal. The boy circles the toy once or twice, raises his fists and screams: "You're not gonna get me! You don't scare me! You got my friends, but you're not gonna get me!" He falls limply to the floor as Jaye P. Morgan and co-panelist Pearl Bailey exchange sober glances. In apparent anguish, the boy gets to his feet and begins circling the animal again: "I know you're after me! You want me like the others! You got my friends, but you won't get me!" The manic chant has taken on a frightening, rhythmic cadence, and he repeats the first verse tearing at his lapels.

The audience cheers for more.

You can take Upstairs/Downstairs and stuff it up the ol' kazoo. America wants to see dancing fruit.

Practically in tears, the boy takes a scissors from his back pocket and begins lopping off shards of his blonde bangs. Never disappoint a crowd when they're with you.

"No way you're gonna get me! You don't scare me! You got my friends, but you won't get me!!!!!"

Barris looks a trifle too concerned for everyone's welfare and stops the rite by signalling the celebrities to gong the disturbed contestant. With a large chunk of hair missing from the center of his forehead, the boy snaps to his feet and, smiling, takes a polite bow.

"Cute kid," Barris muses.

During this commercial, he disappears.

* * *

Outside the studio, the dry valley air seems to heave an ominous sigh of relief. From a side entrance, the contestants from the previous show pour out of NBC and work their way to the parking lot, laughing and loudly reliving their television appearances. Several minutes later, Dean Edmunds, the gonged singer, emerges alone, a model of blighted hope. Avoiding two *Gong Show* staffers on a between-shows break, he searches blindly for his car. It's not that he doesn't want to talk to them, he just doesn't know what to say. It takes several minutes for him to regain his composure.

"I've wanted to sing on television for years," he says shaking his head in wonderment. He is more than a bit stunned by the experience. "I've always gotten a lot of compliments on my singing, and I think I have talent. I wanted my friends and family to see me. Now, how am I going to face them? I dread going home."

"Jaye P. Morgan—what does she know? She told the whole world that I had no ear. Well, the band wasn't with me. Then, the minute I started singing, the audience began to yell, 'Gong him, gong him!' Jesus, it killed my confidence right off. What chance did I have?" He studies his hands for an uncomfortable moment before looking up. "I guess I just failed."

The lines around Dean's eyes conceal 50 years of artistic frustration. "I was a cook most of my life, but that was only because I couldn't make it as an actor," he apologizes immediately. "You can't hold it against me that I was only a cook. I know it's not much to crow about, but . . ." his voice trails off, as if silently recounting those days. "I'm retired now on a full pension."

He is in no hurry to get home, but it is obvious he'd rather be by himself. "I thought I'd get my break being on *The Gong Show*, but people only laughed in my face. *Laughed in my face*," he repeats incredulously. "Jaye P. Morgan and Pearl Bailey—they were brutal, cold-blooded. They didn't care how I felt about their insults. It's almost enough to make me pack it in, but—I don't know. A lot of my friends think I can sing real good." He becomes confused by the fateful interlocking of fantasy and reality. "Jesus, what'll I say to my family? They're all gonna see me make a fool of myself on national television. I'll embarrass them."

Dean disappears in a sea of cars as the show's edgy publicist attempts to atone for the singer's infelicity.

"Don't take him too seriously," he chuckles nervously. "I've seen others with worse reactions than Dean's. But they're one in a million. He'll be humming *The Gong Show* theme song by the time he hits the Hollywood Freeway, and when the show airs, he'll be a household hero." He dismisses the incident with a hand-clap.

"Anyway, it's time for another taping, and I hear it's gonna be better than the last." His eyes dance with anticipation. "They've got a 12-year-old kid who's gonna take it all off! How does that grab you?" he muses. "And they said we have no sense of humor!" ■

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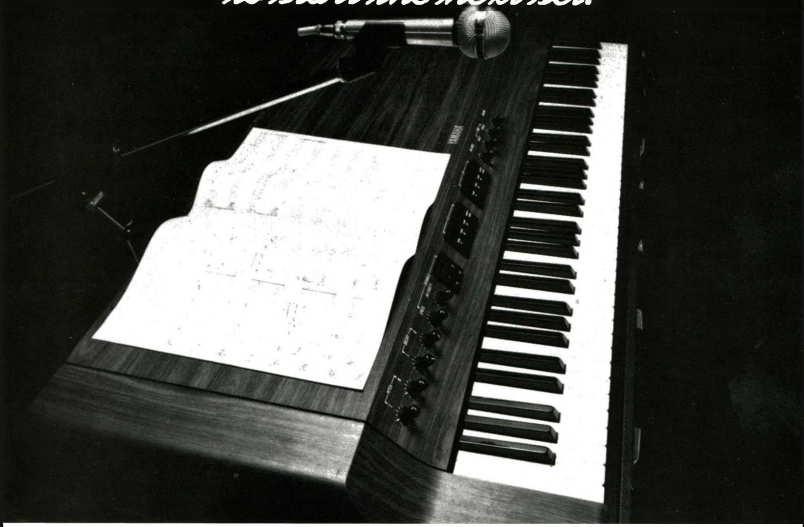

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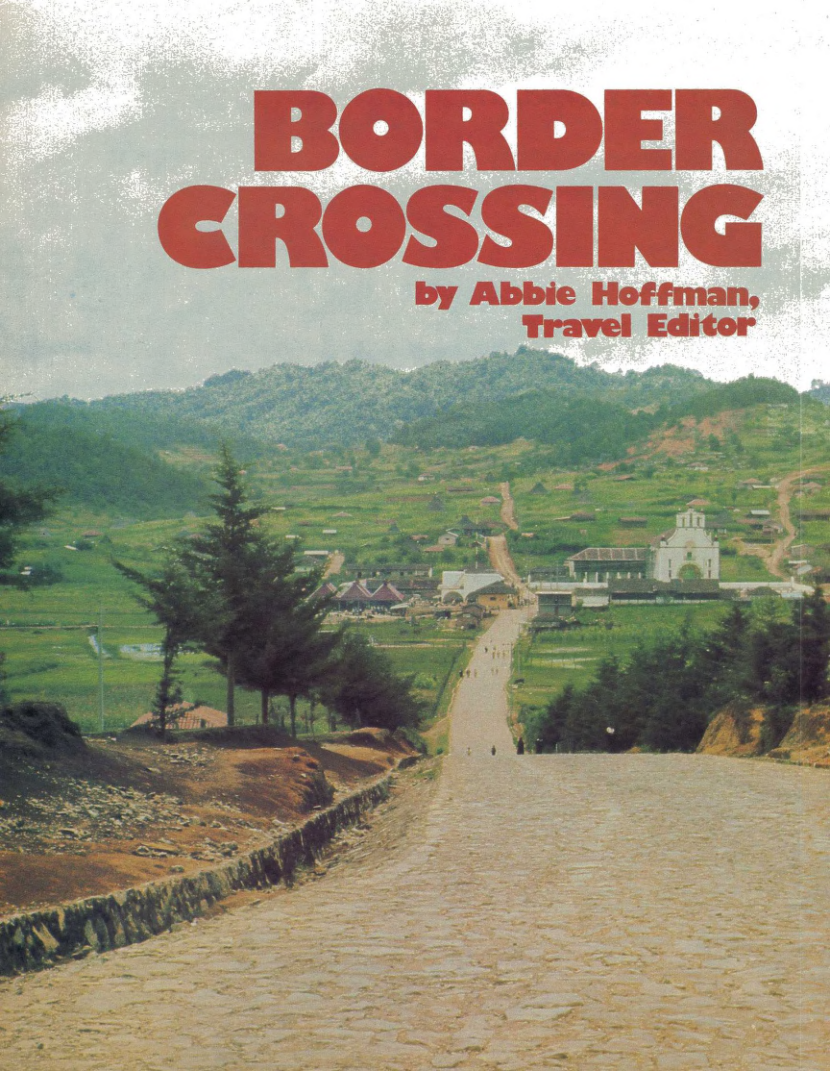
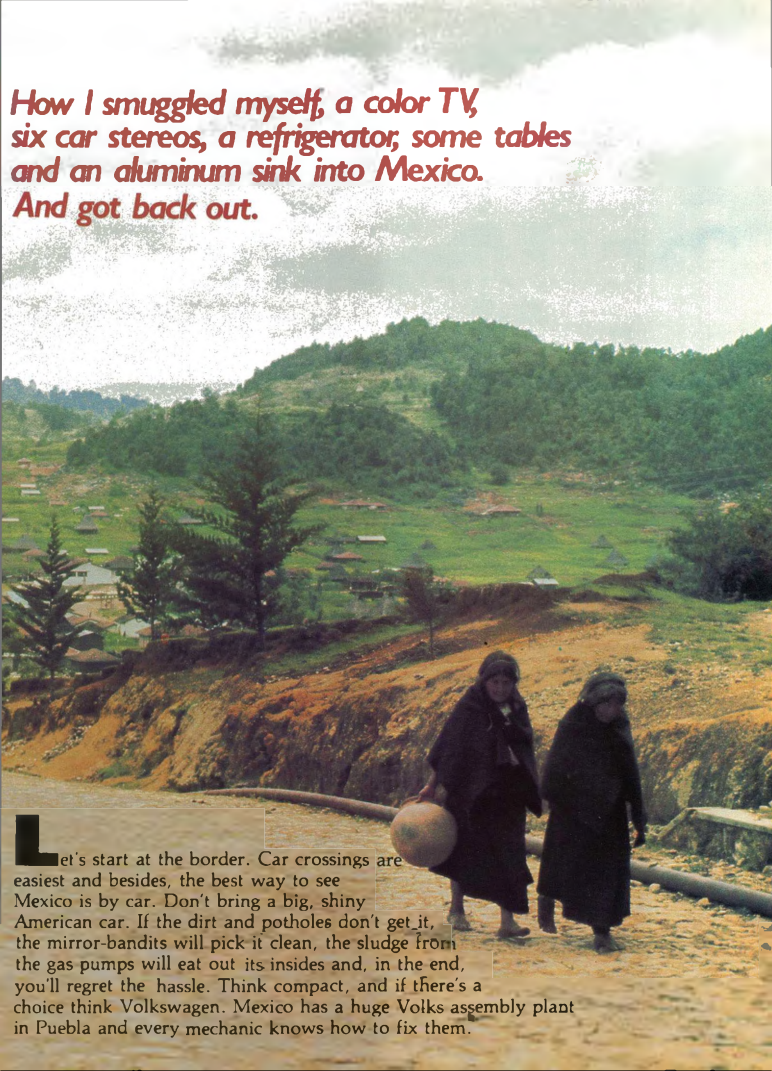
BORDER CROSSING

by Abbie Hoffman,
Travel Editor



How I smuggled myself, a color TV, six car stereos, a refrigerator, some tables and an aluminum sink into Mexico. And got back out.



Let's start at the border. Car crossings are easiest and besides, the best way to see Mexico is by car. Don't bring a big, shiny American car. If the dirt and potholes don't get it, the mirror-bandits will pick it clean, the sludge from the gas pumps will eat out its insides and, in the end, you'll regret the hassle. Think compact, and if there's a choice think Volkswagen. Mexico has a huge Volks assembly plant in Puebla and every mechanic knows how to fix them.

One word of caution: Mexican Volkses don't have fuel injection, so don't be surprised when mechanics start hunting for the carburetor. You're better off with an older model. The ideal vehicle would be a five-year-old Volks van with some dents already in it.

Before you begin, invest some greenbacks. I say invest because you can pack the van with valuable equipment that you can easily unload for three or four times your investment price, and if you're hustling you can cover nearly all your expenses. Say you customize the interior—bed, refrigerator, tables, sink. You can load it up or just do essentials. Say you put in $800 worth of interior stuff. When you're ready to leave, you can easily sell it all for $1,500 to a Mexican with an empty van who, if he *could* get anything locally, would pay double that. Throw on the best tires you can purchase. These too can be traded for double the price when you leave, plus you get the buyer's old tires.

At the border when you fill out the car papers, write "VAN" (not "Camper") in the blank. Under Mexican customs law you're allowed to bring in a portable TV, AM/FM tape deck, car stereo (CB is actually illegal; the theft problem makes CB a bad idea anyway) and anything else for personal use. Camping equipment, scuba gear and photography equipment can be sold quickly or bartered for room and board. None of these have to (or should) be new. I sold a used 19" color portable TV that I paid $90 for, for $400. (And I was doing the guy a favor since he was saving four or five hundred dollars.) Color TVs are the easiest item to sell off, but car stereos are also in hot demand.

There's another item which not only is really profitable but great at establishing rapport. Music tapes cost about $10 in Mexico and good ones are hard to come by. Before we head down, we get 90-minute cheapo cassettes, head for the best stereo system in sight and spend a week making recordings. Disco music is the most popular. Hard rock also has a lot of fans. You can sell a tape with music for $5, or trade it for a night's lodging or a good meal. I've traded 20 tapes for a kilo of grass. It wasn't *prima mota* but for seven bucks a key, I'm not complaining.

Don't be shy about loading up with a few TVs or car stereos. I once figured I could get 100 car stereo units tucked away in a van without anything looking suspicious. It's important to remember that if you have trouble at the border, you can return to the U.S., drive a hundred miles and cross at another point. And remember, every border guard and every cop in Mexico is corrupt. Actually "corrupt" isn't the right term since the *mordidas* (bites) someone in uniform can pull down are considered part of his salary.

If you have trouble at the border, you can drive 100 miles and cross at another point. With the right attitude and the correct bribe you can walk away from the tightest jam.

photography by Angel

Our Travel Editor proudly displaying a crawdaddy (left) and going native in Tijuana

Say you had a few thousand dollars worth of questionable items and the guard gave you a hassle. A fair bribe would be 100 pesos or one of the items, like a car stereo. Giving too much is worse than too little. They think they have a sucker and will try for the whole load. Dress clean. Arrive at lunch time (2 to 4 p.m.) and have two "clean" suitcases easy to reach. Be confident.

The reason I'm putting a lot of emphasis on this is to get you into Mexico with the proper attitude. Trading, haggling over prices, offering the correct bribe and so are intricate parts of the Mexican social fabric. It is not impolite, exploitative or dangerous—to the contrary, acting otherwise is considered anti-social.

I've read all the same scare stories as everyone else, but my own experience is that with the right attitude and the correct bribe you can walk away from the tightest jam. Most drug busts of Americans are made because someone cut into someone else's business, or the people busted had no respect for local sensitivities, which frown on flagrant behavior in public. A man and a woman travelling together should say that they're married; you shouldn't smoke dope in public or bathe in the nude.

Even if you fly down for a week or two, bring a portable color TV, a stereo and tapes; just make sure they're not in the cartons. You can sell all this stuff or trade it as you go along. If you're in the city for any length of time, you can put an ad in the paper. Without too much worry and bother you can easily unload the stuff.

* * *

Where to go depends on your time limits and how much you want to see. The west coast is more beautiful to look at, but the east coast has better swimming and diving; after all, it's the

Abbie Hoffman, Crawdaddy's travel editor, is the author of Steal This Book *and numerous essays and articles.*

Caribbean. The south is the most beautiful, has more isolated Indian villages, mushrooms and rough winding roads. The north has great deserts, ranch lands, Don Juan and peyote. Mexico City has a superb museum, great international restaurants, the best Diego Rivera (in the lobby of the Prado Hotel on Benito Juarez), the Zona Rosa and, if you're an aficionado, the best bullfighters (but not the best bulls) in all the world. Guadalajara has (after Nairobi, Kenya) the best climate in the world, as well as terrific language schools.

You'd be wise to sign up for Spanish courses as soon as you arrive. Being a student makes for a more rewarding experience than simply seeing the country as a tourist. Beware, though, of bourgeois, racist teachers who do nothing but try and butter up Americans.

If you want to see ruins, the best are in Palenque, about 300 miles southeast of Vera Cruz. Palenque is semi-jungle, which means lots of rain, which means mushrooms. Even though they grow in cowshit, they are the caviar of hallucinogens. If you've had them dried or frozen, chances are you probably had some low-yield LSD or cow tranquilizer sprayed on supermarket mushrooms. The real thing just doesn't ship well, and should be picked and eaten fresh. Get to the cowshit early in the morning as dopers are out in droves. Of course there's more rain in the rainy season (July to September), but in Chiapas and Oaxaca it manages to rain just about year-round and the mushrooms sprout like crazy. If you go to Palenque, drive an extra hour or two down the dirt road to the waterfalls called Agua Azul.

Vera Cruz, by the way, is a truly exciting seaport. It has the best fiesta in Mexico at Carnival (Mardi Gras), about the second week in February. It's wild and very crowded. It also has the best seafood in the country. Which, given its proximity to the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Gulf of Mexico, might make it the best seafood in the world. The best I've tasted was at the Boca del Rio about six miles outside of Vera Cruz heading East. Pompano is highly recommended and you can get a full dinner here for three bucks. *Huachinango a la Vera Cruzana* is Red Snapper in a semi-spicy red sauce. Finger-lickin' good!

Mexican cooking is more varied than you might think. It's the oldest cuisine in the world, older, although in all honesty not better, than Chinese. The problem about finding good Mexican cooking is that there is no real Mexican school; the art is handed down and the U.S. has a strong negative influence. For example, tortillas are considered to be just for poor people, so if you want to put on social airs you eat white bread (*pan Bimbo*). Too bad, since tortillas are more nutritious, great teeth cleaners and a cultural mainstay.

Probably the best food center is in Puebla. *Chiles en Nogado*, which is a mild chile stuffed with meats and pineapple, then covered with a white walnut sauce and red pomegranate seeds, is probably the most complicated (28 ingredients) and most prized of Mexican dishes, and it's best in Puebla during the fall. *Huitlacoches* (pronounced wheat-la-coach-ays) is a black mushroom that grows on corn and is considered Mexico's finest. Look for La Fonda de Santa Clara which, for the price—or any price—may be the best restaurant in the country. Also you'll have to try *mole poblano con pollo* or chicken in chocolate sauce, which is infinitely better than it sounds.

I've never really had great Mexican food in Mexico City but I've eaten the best tacos there—La Caminera on Lerma just behind the U.S. Embassy makes them. I'll take that back about Mexico City—you'll have to try goat (*cabrito*), a super Mexican delicacy. The Charlston on calle Queretero gets the most stars. La Hacienda de las Morales is a real swanko joint with flaming torches, tuxedoed doormen and fountains where they have bull's balls in a nice green sauce (they are politely referred to as Rocky Mountain Oysters) and a strong contender for the best *flan* in all of Mexico. The San Angel Inn also has excellent Mexican cuisine in the grand style. These last two places cost a pretty peso and are real snobby.

Most Americans think they're playing it safe if they only eat at a Sanborn's, a Denny's or the Hilton Hotel. In general this is really an ass-backward way of looking at things. The best places are those where the average Mexican businessmen eat their afternoon meal. Restaurants must serve them good food at good prices or they'd go out of business. A tourist restaurant knows the tourist won't be back for a few years, the cook's more prone to spit in the soup, and anyway, who the hell goes to Mexico to eat hamburgers and apple pie?

Don't drink tap water but don't get paranoid about it. Drink what healthy Mexicans drink. Talk of "different stomachs" is racist hooey. Speaking of drinking, you'll want to try their beer, which is better than ours. Bohemia with 6% alcohol is the best of the brews. Tequila is, along with grass, tomatoes and about 200 other original indigenous foods, truly heaven sent. Tequila is a type of mescal that comes from the town of Tequila just outside Guadalajara. There are two types, white and *anejo* (gold), which is slightly sweeter. The absolute best tequila in the world is *Herradura* (horseshoe) gold and it's just that—liquid gold. It's not yet available in the U.S., except in border towns, but will soon be here. Bing Crosby got soused on it, liked it better than Minute Maid, and bought the U.S. rights.

Another drink made from that fantastic *maguey* (ma-gay) plant is called Pulque. It tastes like it's made from equal parts piss and Gatorade, and it takes about eight liters to get you buzzing, but the atmosphere in a pulqueria is the closest thing to an Old West saloon. No women allowed here. There are many unusual soft drinks, of which *manzana* (apple) and a knockout pineapple cider called *tepache* are the best.

For hotels in Mexico City, try the Maria Christina or the slightly cheaper Maria Angelo just down the block on Rio Lerma. Downtown there's Hotel Isabella on Isabella La Catolica and Uruguay, and, if you want a real social scene with loads of young Americans, the Genova in the Zona Rosa is a fair deal. If you're vanning it and just got into town, head for the rich section (believe me, in Mexico you'll know rich from poor), find a nice tree-lined street and park for the night. No one will bother you and it's safe; many streets even have security guards.

In the Northwest you'd be wise to take

STEAL THESE GUIDE BOOKS

Mexico is without question the best travel deal of this or any season. It's cheap, it's close and it's spectacular. You can play it close to the vest or free and loose. Two can live an exotic life for a few thousand a year. The trick is to pay attention to reality and not get sucked down the rumor tube.

Before you go south of the border, there are loads of good books to read. The best travel book is the *South American Handbook*. It's updated annually, and even though it has a high price, it's way ahead of *Mexico on $5 and $10*, Fielding, or Terry's guide. The *Peoples' Guide to Mexico* is written by good people who speak not with forked tongue. It's best for people who just want to set up a lean-to on the coast and suck on a coconut for six months. It's also an excellent companion to the *Underground Gourmet's Guide to Mexico* which not only has the best info on restaurants but also has side comments worth noting. There are two other books worth a plug: Octavio Paz's *Labyrinth of Solitude*, although written 30 years ago, is still the most insightful contemporary view of the Mexican mind. Jerry Kamstra's *Weed* not only is accurate in its description of the marijuana trade but leads one to believe he has street-smarts on how to get by with little scratch below the border. Mexicophiles anxiously await his next book on the guerilla movement.

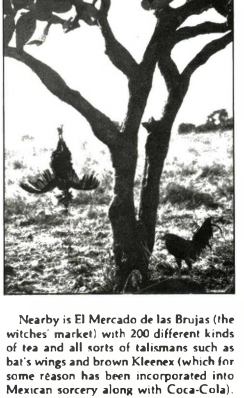
the train ride from Chihuahua to Los Moches (or the other way). It's a contender for best train ride in the world. You'll see waterfalls, mountains and villages where the Indians still ride with rifles and *bandarillos* slung across their shoulders. It passes the Barranca de Cobre (Copper Canyon) which they say is deeper than the Grand Canyon. There's only one track so the trains go on alternate days; the 15-hour trip out boasts some of the most incredible scenery you'll ever see. In Chihuahua, you can talk to Pancho Villa's widow, who runs a small museum featuring the car in which her husband was assassinated. You can put your fingers in the bullet holes. (For some reason, it's a Mexican custom to put fingers in bullet holes. In Zihuatanejo there was a shooting, and the only thing people could comment on was how big the bullet holes were. Even kids made a point of fingering the holes in the still warm corpses.) Los Moches has the biggest and best shrimp in Mexico and is just a few miles north of the opium fields.

For sunny surf it depends again on how lost you want to get. Puerto Angel below Acapulco is gorgeous; Zihuatanejo further up the coast is getting pretty well-known. It's got character, though, and great clams. San Blas further up is nice, as is Barra de Navidad, which is not that popular but superb. On the east coast you can camp right on the beach all along the Yucatan. As you drive south from Cancun, turn off on any of the dirt roads to the left. Isla de las Mujeres is cheaper than the island of Cozumel. If you dive, try and get a guide to take you to the "Cave of the Sleeping Sharks." The reefs south of Cozumel have brilliant black coral.

Merida is Maya Central—lots of ruins around, and you can haggle for a hammock. You want the biggest size which is called *matrimonio* or "marriage." You'll be bargaining for this and other items in the marketplace. There's a good trick to successful bargaining. Bargain for something you *don't* want. You'll see how low the price drops. Then you'll have an index when you haggle for the item you want.

Various towns in Mexico feature various goods. Taxco—silver. Puebla—onyx. Oaxaca—blankets, black pottery. San Miguel de Allende and Guanajuato have the best wool sweaters. They make them in the prisons and you get the best prices right at the jailhouse door. There are distribution marketing towns like Toluca and Merida which sell huge amounts of goods. Don't forget about trading here. If you like marketplaces, El Merced in Mexico City is an incredible display. You could spend a week in this market absorbed in the ambience. Things are cheap (wholesale really, although there's no real wholesale/retail in Mexico), but you have to buy by the kilo.

Death fascinates Mexicans. The Day of the Dead is celebrated nationally. People picnic with the dead by candlelight.



Nearby is El Mercado de las Brujas (the witches' market) with 200 different kinds of tea and all sorts of talismans such as bat's wings and brown Kleenex (which for some reason has been incorporated into Mexican sorcery along with Coca-Cola). If you're searching for Don Juan or Mexico's famous healing bruja, Dona Patchita, you'd be wise to begin here. The biggest, most authentic Indian market scene (open Sundays only) is in Quetzatlan, an absolute must town. Difficult to reach on a long, winding dead-end road (it's only 50 miles northeast of Mexico City but a six-hour drive), it's well worth the effort. The Indians here are so isolated they have a single word for airplane, car, truck and train.

In the state of Morelos, just south of Cuatla (Con-wow-tla), you can tour the ruins of the great sugar plantations, against which Zapata began his "land and liberty" revolution. It was here the guerrilla leader was born, fought and eventually was betrayed. It's still possible to find people who rode these mountain trails with the legendary hero. The adobe hut in which Zapata was born has been preserved as a national monument, where each Mexican president must pay homage. Unfortunately for the Mexican people it has, since Cardenas, been mostly lip service.

Fiestas are an important part of Mexican life. One of the best is the Fiesta de San Miguel in San Miguel de Allende, a jewel of a town three hours' drive north of the capital. The bulls run through the streets and they have the prettiest bullring in North America. There are, of course, dancers, floats, drunks, music and fireworks. Fireworks are probably the most inventive Mexican art form.

Outside San Miguel look for Tlateloco, an eerie pilgrim sanctuary where people whip themselves and press thorns into their scalps. Guanajuato also has to be seen. They have terrific fiestas here, street players, a great theater and Las Mumias de Guanajuato. It seems the town cemetery has some chemical or curse that doesn't let bodies decay, so after five years they dig up the dead and either burn them or stick 'em in the Museum. It's one of the strangest museums you'll ever stumble upon. They sell candy mummies outside and kids love sucking on the skulls.

Death fascinates Mexicans, ever since Aztec times, when the life expectancy was only about 28 years and blood flowed from tribal warfare and cannibalism. It was believed a man was judged by how he died, not by how he lived. November 2nd, the Day of the Dead, is celebrated nationally; in Patzcuaro in the state of Michoacan people stay up all night and picnic with the dead by candlelight. It's way beyond Halloween.

There is literally a fiesta every day somewhere in Mexico. October 4th is Fiesta de San Francisco, and for some reason it's the Indian day to gather by the thousands and take peyote. I know two places where this is done; you should put in some effort and find these on your own. Also remind yourself that the fiestas all have religious significance—the alcoholic *machos* bobbing around the plaza are not what's happening. Indian is just about synonomous with poor, so intermixed are the cultures and bloods, but further south you'll find Indian tribes where they still speak Nahuatl or other tongues and dress in traditional clothing. Drive far enough south and you'll be in the best part of Mexico, which is Guatemala. But that's another trip.

So don't let the scare stories keep you away. But if you'd like to see Mexico maintain its own culture, its wilderness, and not fall under the plow of land developers turning it into one big Holiday Inn, when you come back be sure and tell about those bandits with the gold teeth and how your cousin died from dysentery and did you hear about the shark who managed to get into the pool at the Acapulco Princess? I did. I let him in. ■

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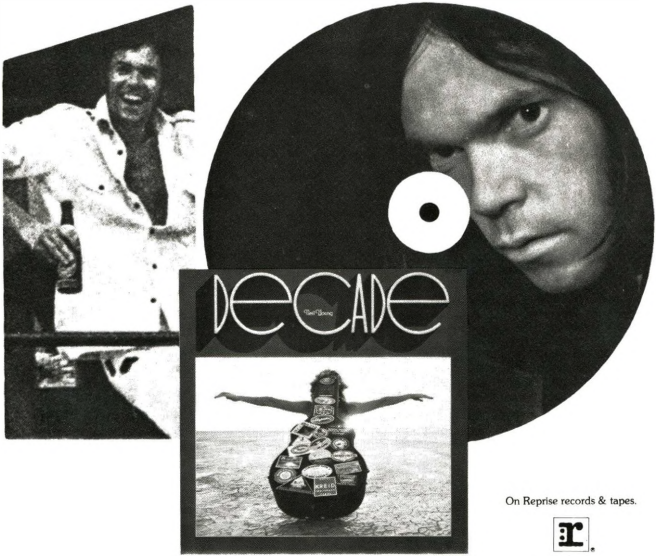

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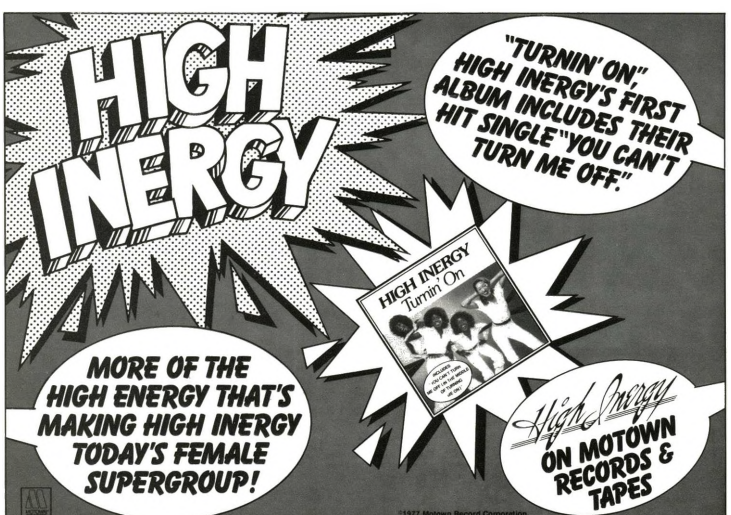

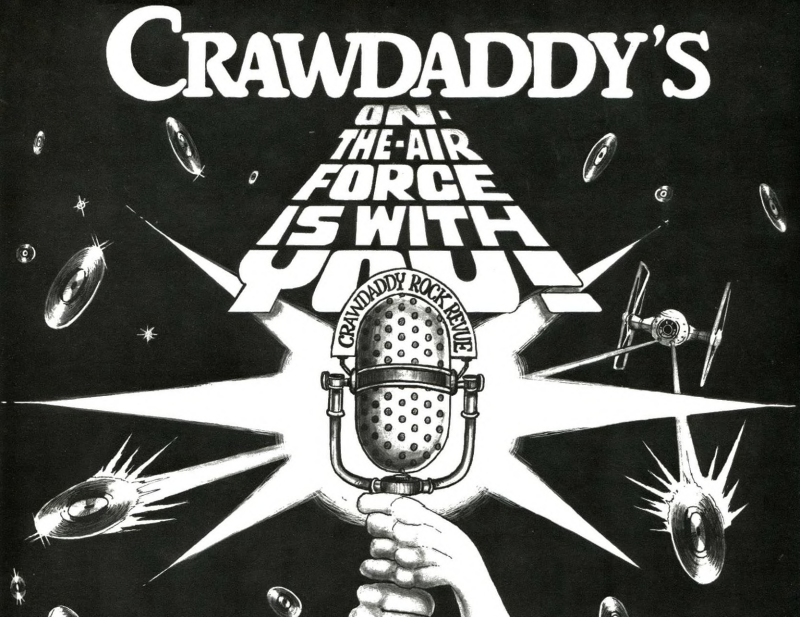

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*Check local listing for time and date

ROCK IS HELL

The generation that should have gone to Vietnam is trashing your town tonight.

BY MICHAEL HERR

"Rock 'n roll fatalities are high anyway, for a business that isn't actually in a combat zone. I should think there are more fatalities from music than industrial accidents. Maybe they should cut their hair; the machinery is not safe."
—Keith Richard

"Rock 'n roll makes you crazy," Page was saying. "It's very dangerous music. That's why they played it in the war zones." The last time Page and I had done anything like work together it had been in Vietnam, long ago. Page had shrapnel fever in those days; he took it in the stomach and legs, the head and chest. The last time, he mainlined it straight into his brain and almost rang the bell. He had a piece of metal in him for every picture he ever took there, bits were still working themselves out; every now and then he'd drop one on the street or the dinner table. And then a lot of what had been left standing got levelled by rock 'n roll and all the laps he'd made around the rock 'n roll pool. Swimming for your life like that you stopped seeing war and rock as separate phenomena; years later, we were still using one language to describe them both.

photography by Tim Page

We met in Detroit, HQ Guitar Army. A month before, a fire had ravaged the last 20 rows of Cobo Auditorium, cherry bombs poured down on the stage. Tonight, for Aerosmith, there are three separate security forces in and around Cobo; shake it up, rock it up, rip it up at the Hall tonight. Beer bottles are smashed all over the streets and the glass in many of the doors is laminated in place but smashed. The boys and girls are laughing and calling their city Deadrot, just hanging on until the doors open and they can get crazy. Some intense city; I never felt so out of town as I did there.

"We just love to go to concerts," a kid is saying. He's about 17, maybe the oldest man in the crowd. He's a funny mix of farmboy and inner-city kicker, so stoned that Page saw his eyes blazing out of the crowd. "We go to all of 'em, it don't matter who. That's like three a week. In the nights when there's no groups playing we watch TV or go and see *Star Wars* again."

"He's seen it 15 times," his girlfriend says.

They're big consumers. One boy is offering $30 a ticket for as many tickets as he can get, and he has to have them. His energy is fantastic. He scores and takes off to get his friends: "Aerosmith is *so heavy*!" They can't get it heavy enough. You can still see the shadow from when the Zeppelin floated over America; it took like Islam in the desert, a rock 'n roll as hard as life.

Security comes out in strength two hours before the concert when the last ticket is sold at the box office. "My God," Page says, "look at all the fucking heat." An order to clear the lobby goes out of the P.A and the uniforms deploy, muscle in place, but there's no attack. A murmuring chant of "Aw shit" goes through the crowd, and in three minutes we're alone in there with this strange 30-man-and-woman police force. There's a bloody-minded old man on the auxiliary force who dreams of trading fire with the mobs. ("I think they're basically good kids. It's the happy smoke, they take a little of that and they're animals. Then they mix it with a little wine and it's even worse. That's 'cause it's so hard to keep them lit that way.") There's a young guy with a huge club. His face is nearly swamped with sideburns, and he's wearing a tiny pair of silver-plated handcuffs for a tie-clip. We ask him if all of this security is really necessary and he looks at us like we're insane.

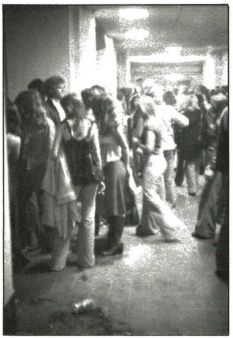
"If you'd been here two weeks ago, you wouldn't even ask."

"What happened two weeks ago?"

"They burned down a men's room."

But heavy law needs heavy enforcement; VERBOTEN is posted everywhere. We can't get into the auditorium with cameras, we

Michael Herr, Esquire's Vietnam correspondent in 1967, is the author of Dispatches *(Knopf).*



Heavy law needs heavy enforcement.

There's a bloody-minded old man on the auxiliary force who dreams of trading fire with the mobs.

can't have cameras in the lobby, we can't even take snaps on the sidewalks around Cobo. As he busts us clean off the block, a real Detroit policeman explains the new city ordinance he's enforcing, really enforcing. He's got a nasty little grip on Page's elbow, they're walking and talking about the actual delicacy of the Constitution, and around back we're not too effective either. There's muscle from the tour on the stage door; he won't say yes and he won't say no, but we're definitely not on the list. "This door is tight," he says, and goes back inside. Three great limos are arranged like a barricade around the door, the drivers sitting watchful and impassive. Detroit rock limo drivers—probably nothing they haven't seen wheeling the generals around; just because they were parked now didn't mean they took their eyes off the road.

* * *

Road lore says that the groups all hate to play Detroit, except for Detroit groups, who love it more than anything; bullfighters in their home ring where strangers who don't understand the temper of the region are afraid to work too close to the horns. Monsters come out of the chutes at Cobo like a gift from the fans, tear you a new asshole. It was always the most incredible transmitting point. The message came in flagging from New York and went out again recharged and richer. Some technological leap happened in Detroit, and not just from wax paper to Saran Wrap: the MC5, to the left of the Viet Cong; Iggy like he came out of a lamp to throw his body down on the line, mutilation and anguish, "I feel all *right*!! I feel all *right*!!"; Bob Seger showing you where he got hit; young Ted Nugent walking the rock 'n roll point— Detroit Special Forces.

* * *

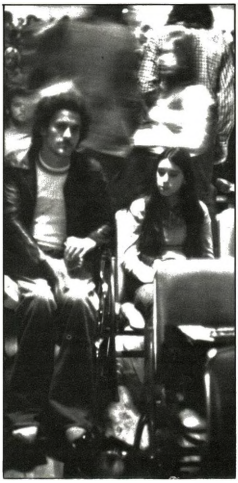
"It was all very well when we were younger, humping about those LZs and firebases looking for the story," Page said. Teenage jet lag, he was pointing and making galactic gunfight noises, disintegrating the far end of the corridor of the Dearborn Holiday Inn. "But we're mature now. And we're gentlemen. Gentlemen do not stay at *mo*-tels. Gentlemen stay at *ho*-tels." Tired, a couple of aging rockers, too old for the road, too frail for the trail. "I wish I'd brought me Doors tapes." Don't forget the Motor City.

* * *

It was always as much about death and loss as it was about dance/romance: '50s graveyard saxophones cooling 10,000 prom nights, Teen Angel, Johnny Ace and the shot that rocked around the world. You don't have to be a superstar; managers, roadies, studio hands, groupies, journalists and fans, too; wasted on the trail, sagging in the harness, ripped out of the saddle. Rock 'n roll tours crisscross America like grids on a satellite map. The stakes are high but the road is hard. The road is hours of airplane air not meant to be breathed by mammals; motels where the rooms accumulate the sleeping dread of all their guests; the towel that repels moisture, the bed that never learns your body; food tasty as C-rations. It's hard to take the big bite in a Holiday Inn; make a few calls, take a cathode fix, get some sleep. Travel In America—it isn't something you do for fun.

* * *

Cleveland: the kids are all right. A little 'luded, drunk and smoked out, maybe; it's not the sock hop but they're de-fused. All that's needed in the Civic Auditorium is "peer security," a squad of college freshmen in Hawaiian shirts. There's very little tension, except in the men's room. Page comes out and says, "That place wants a good airstrike. I'm telling you." A lot of drugs, mostly pills and coke -for a dollar you can lick the knife clean. I mean the very idea of Cleveland cocaine. . .



Jim Dandy and Black Oak Arkansas are working pretty hard. It's a very professional replica of a high-energy rock 'n roll performance. A whole set of that would put me in the hospital, without giving me much back. Jim Dandy screams, "We love ya, Cleveland!" slurp slurp. There's a silent beat in the crowd—*What's to love?*—and then the response, loud but somehow lame. There's not much power in the raised fists or the rebel whoops either. No contact. But it's a school night.

* * *

If you want to cover rock 'n roll on the road, you've got to have the label behind you; it means limos at the very least. With a Ted Nugent Tour TNT shoulder patch I felt like Ernie Pyle; I thought they'd start calling me Pop. The tour is very squared away, very flexible and efficient, an operation with big objectives. All three of his albums since he broke up the Amboy Dukes have gone certified platinum. After 14 years at the gates, young Ted's got the keys to the Rock 'n Roll City; there was no way that anyone was going to ever keep him out.

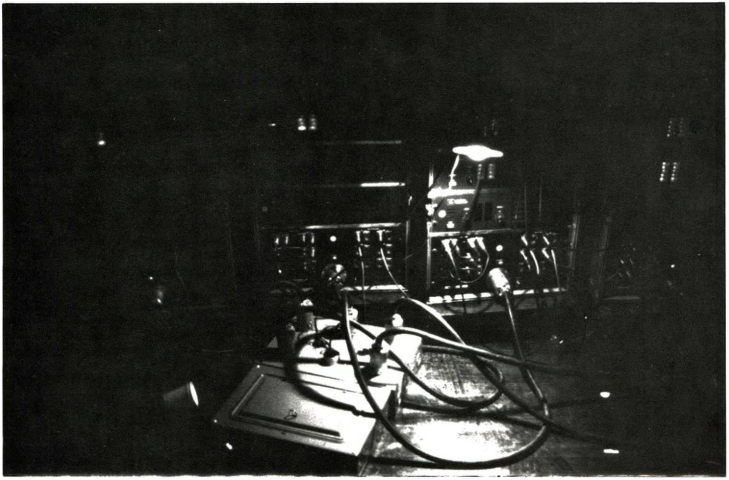
And he loves it, he could hug it to his body and eat it up, he's about the happiest man I ever saw, clean and clear and totally functional, like the things he holds in his hands for pleasure and sustenance: a 65-pound bow, a Magnum that can bring a moose down in the field, a Gibson Byrdlander that plugs into what sounds like the end of the world. In the dressing room he's working into a tiny amp and a strobe tuner that has us a little tranced, a green blipping pattern on a radar screen, graphing the most formal rock 'n roll lines, "Oh Carol," the way a concert pianist would lay down a couple of preludes from *The Well-Tempered Clavier* before a performance. The sound is very intimate, just enough for Nugent, Page and me. Ten minutes later he's onstage and you can't stand in front of the amps without getting damaged. Your organs shake and your blood hums. If the panel ever fell into the wrong hands and someone pushed the Strike button, it would fry out 20,000 teenage brains. And if Nugent and his band didn't wear plugs they'd be deafer than Quasimodo, they'd be going around without central nervous systems. "Totally Gaa," as Page put it. He thought that Ted Nugent would have made a great doorgunner.

* * *

Driving out to the airport at Binghamton, New York, Nugent tells me about a recurring dream he has. "I'm out there running with a huge pack of wolves over the snow. We're just having fun, you know? Running and playing and just snapping at each other." He smiles like a kid.

* * *

Once you've got your priorities straight, life can be as simple as it is rich. Ted Nugent loves his wife and two kids, hunting and playing his guitar; sometimes like it's a



If the panel ever fell into the wrong hands and someone pushed the strike button, it would fry out 20,000 teenage brains.

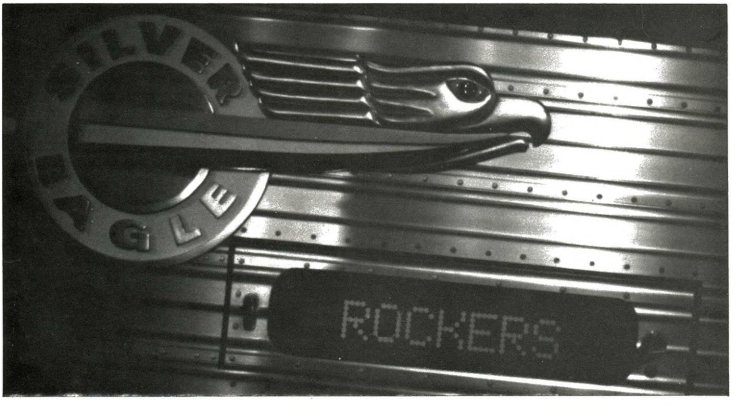
flamethrower. He hates drugs, all of them, and while they're not exactly banned on the tour, the tour energy tends away from them. You can knock on motel room doors until your knuckles bleed without turning up even a joint. A line of methedrine would disappear into him without registering, anyway; he's revved up offstage and a maniac on.

The stage is there, so he takes it. It's where he wants to be, he's known it all his life. He runs out there like he's in the Olympics; his meat is waiting, it springs at him in the first instant. Except for his pants, he's shot everything on his body; the boots on his feet, the ritual leather armband, the fang hanging from his neck. It gets very primitive. Dog dog, dog eat dog, aggressor-rock, wooly and stroby. Once, in an ambush from the stage, he leapt into the crowd to break up a fight, and he barely remembered doing it afterwards, it was barely more toe-to-toe than the usual show. The fists raised up to him are totally charged, he laughs like crazy and waves them in, dares them to realize that they outnumber Security by more than 500 to one. It's the thinnest line in rock 'n roll, the guards can barely hold it, nobody stops for a second least of all young Ted. He beckons to them to come up, try it. I'll be *gone*! Fat-free, no frills music, fucking and fighting, tits and territory, city streets like a hunting ground, "Wang Dang Sweet Poontang," basic load. And *school's out completely* as far as the audience knows, *school's been blown to pieces*. Waiting for the first encore they flick their Bics over to MAXIMUM and blaze out the hall.

* * *

At any kind of close range, rock 'n roll deglamorizes fast, that's why I really only like it on the radio. After a few days with a tour, it's about as glamorous as boxing.

When he first comes offstage in Baltimore, Ted Nugent looks like he's going to need a Medevac. Page even feels some weird restraint about photographing him. No one comes too close to him, he looks bleached out, a little terminal. It lasts for about five minutes, and then he looks like he did before the show, restored and recharged and hot to go out there again. The light in the room is vicious, everybody looks a little



raw and ravaged, people take on ten pounds and 15 years, and Nugent looks like a poster for better living through harder rock. Good thing, it's definitely a room that needs a star. There are two huge mounds of picked-over cold-cuts, a badly abused tub of potato salad, garbage cans full of melted ice and empty beer bottles. People come in, people get thrown out, some stay; one man's meat is another man's candy. Page is telling some girls that we work for a French punk rock magazine called *I Wanna Be Your Dog*. The girls are angling around the band for a shot at the ultimate autograph.

* * *

In the morning we're standing in a cold drizzle in the hotel parking lot, looking up at the Florentine elegance of the Bromo-Seltzer Tower. The night before there had been a girl of about 16, very pretty, who'd been sort of passed along and quickly shuffled out of every room because everybody thought she was too crazy for them. She'd started screaming through one guy's door, she wanted to see Ted, and the guy told her that he was going to call the cops. So she went up on the roof, wrote him a four-page letter calling him a shit and a fuck and an asshole, and then went to sleep for a few hours while it went down into the low 40s. Now she was being pushed along by some kind of hotel cop-matron. "But I only want to see him for one *minute*," she was saying, and the cop-matron said, "Listen honey, I've got a hotel to run. I'm not gonna fool with you. You just beat it now."

That night (as fate would have it), *Gimme Shelter* played on Baltimore TV. Most of the tour seemed to have watched it, there was lots of talk about it in the morning. The rock 'n roll disaster movie, the movie about the part of the brain that doesn't know what the other part is making; making happen. Mick Jagger was so lame and touching, standing in the feedback there while a couple of songs he wrote blew ice-cold breath into his face. A lot of people thought that it was going to happen at Woodstock, that was such a mean and speedy summer, and then Woodstock would have been the name we used for it; but so many people came there that the people and the ground were stunned into peace, while the other current stayed in the cable another six or seven months and popped its juice at Altamont.

"Death by Misadventure," a Ted Nugent song about Brian Jones. Death by drugs (pity for the casualties); by drowning (love for the survivors); by plane, car and bike crash (respect for the masters); combat and rock hardly unconnected in his experience. Heading for the airport in the limo so I can go home and he can go to Erie, Pa., and then go home, he says, "You just gotta comedian it through, you know? It doesn't matter whether it's a Marine squad or a rock 'n roll group." He smiles like a scout who's close to rotation. I passed it along to Page on the shuttle to New York—he thought our Teddy was a very healthy boy, fairly likely to survive.

It's mortal, it's only rock 'n roll. A few days after we pulled off the road, Aerosmith took two serious casualties when fans bombed the stage in Philadelphia. And a little while later the Lynyrd Skynyrd plane went down. As a great old rock writer once put it, "In the fall the war was always there but we did not go to it anymore." ■

I WANT TO BE ANARCHY

I WANT TO BE ANARCHY

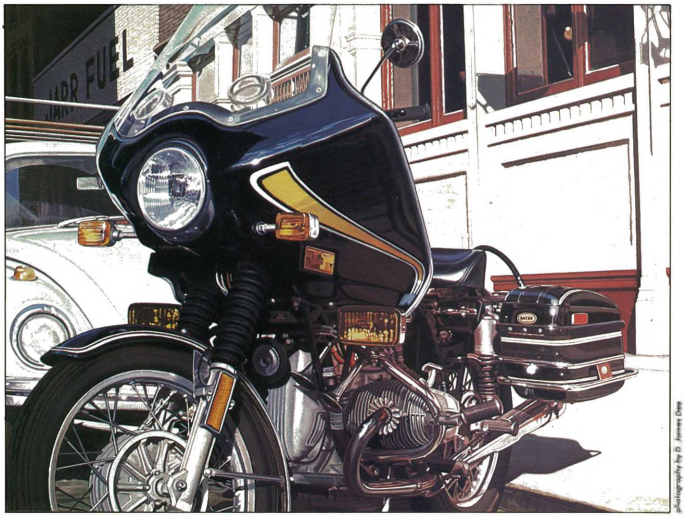
NEVER MIND THE BOLLOCKS HERE'S THE SEX PISTOLS

WARNER BROS. RECORDS AND TAPES

HEAVY METAL SILENCE

text by Dan Aykroyd

paintings by Tom Blackwell



Wooster St. Saturday
36" x 48" 1976
Oil on canvas
Courtesy Louis K. Meisel Gallery

Jaffrey
84" x 74" 1976
Oil on canvas
Collection: The Museum of Modern Art, N.Y.
Mr. & Mrs. Stuart M. Speiser Fund
Courtesy Louis K. Meisel Gallery

Little Roy's Gold Wing
68" x 84" 1977
Oil on canvas
Courtesy Louis K. Meisel Gallery

Triumph Trumpet
71" x 71" 1977
Oil on canvas
Courtesy Louis K. Meisel Gallery

Dan Aykroyd
TV Actor

Let us remember the words sung by Arlo Guthrie: "I don't want a pickle, I just want to ride my motorsickle. And I don't want to die, I just want to ride my motorcy." These words are like some prayer to be offered daily for the millions of boys and girls, men and women, who embrace the freedoms and risks of motorcycle operation—the two-wheeled slab reality.

Now there are many people on this planet who will never ride. And considering the number of crazy, inept and unconscious four-wheelers on the move, who can blame them?

Those of us who do ride, however, well . . . are we not truly brothers and sisters of the chrome horse? Only *we* know that riding a motorcycle is a pure, complete and ecstatic assault on the senses. On bikes we see, hear, smell, feel and, if we choose, taste everything as we cruise. All our limbs must be involved in the operation and control of the machine. Personally, my favorite motorcycling sensation is the sound of large insects bouncing off my helmet: sweet and final bug death: THOK-THOK-THOK.

Motorbikes are a great concept in modern transportation, except for mopeds. I eat mopeds. I sprinkle mopeds on my Raisin Bran. I love my bike. It's a dead stock 1971 Harley-Davidson Electra-Glide pussy-start Police Special. Seven hundred pounds of semi-dressed Milwaukee iron.

Harley riders often experience a feeling of superiority over other riders and their machines. As a Hog rider I admit that I feel superior when I ride, even though I know it's bullshit. Sure I can tear my shovel-head engine down in an hour, but don't ask me to put it back together again. And my friends who are Motocross freaks, with their spare little machines, are eminently more skilled motorcyclists than I'll ever be on my big Hog.

Other makes of machines are more efficient in terms of fuel and maintenance than the Harley-Davidson. Witness—ten years ago the Harley 74 was the dependable steed of police forces all over North America. Now we find police departments everywhere relinquishing the Harley as a daily duty machine in favor of Motoguzzis and "rice burners" (Japanese bikes).

Great credit is due to the smooth-shifting, shaft-drive touring bikes on the market. Still the H-D will always have its unique appeal to people like me who will never ride or love any other make of machine. These big European bikes and all rice burners, they "snick" or "click" into gear . . . no gearbox bangs it in there like a Harley's.

So, as a Hog rider, I might have sneaked the odd passing glance at venerable old British hardware like a Royal Enfield or a Brough Superior, but I never looked twice at Hondas, Kawasakis and BMWs until I saw these paintings by Tom Blackwell. He is the man who painted all the color pictures accompanying this article. He showed me these machines from his perspective—that is, these bikes are magnificent colorful chrome entities and wonderful inspirations for a painter.

Tom Blackwell is a superb photorealist. Many artists, art critics and art patrons hate photorealism. Fuck them. These motorcycles of Blackwell's are beautiful. Photorealism is a graphic medium requiring incredible technical skill. The replications of these machines on canvas are not only faultless in color and texture, and unfailing in detail, they are full of feeling and life. Blackwell's work "Jaffrey"—the big black-and-red Kawasaki in front of the hardware store—is complete, as any "KOW" owner will vouch, from the individually-colored panel lights under the speedo and tach to the set of elastic tie-downs on the rear carrier rack.

The Triumph Trumpet chopper with the rectangular headlights and custom chrome highway pegs is a beautiful painting of a beautiful machine. But Blackwell's rendering is so perfect it gives more than just an impression of the bike's owner. Blackwell mixes his paints skillfully; it's obvious that the guy who owned this bike customized it at home, himself. Proudly he invested time in the whole process and then he covered the seat with really cheap vinyl leatherette.

Blackwell did a painting of a new Honda Gold Wing 1000. The vivid yellow paint he used in this work looks just like a factory mix from Honda. He has also painted Harleys. Now, I don't know, maybe only I can appreciate a man who is able to do a spiritually satisfying painting of a hunk of spun aluminum like the primary case cover in his Harley XLCH.

Blackwell loves these motorcycles, but dig this . . . he doesn't ride. Here again we can't chastise him; two of the machines he painted have since been totalled.

Anyway, I don't know much about art but I know what I like. I like my Hog and these bikes by Tom Blackwell. ■

Dan Aykroyd, a Not Ready for Prime Time Player on NBC's Saturday Night, *is intimate with motorcycles, small handguns and skyscraper architecture.*

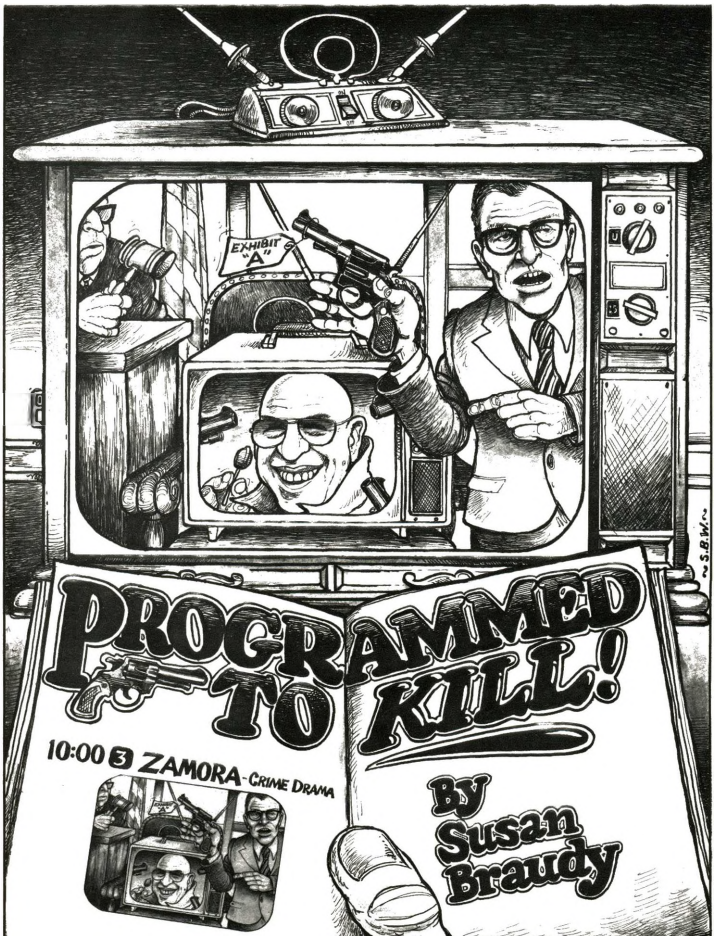


Illustration by S.B. Whitehead

10:00 THE 15-YEAR OLD BOY WATCHED KOJAK AND BARETTA RELIGIOUSLY, THEN WENT OUT AND STARRED IN HIS OWN MURDEROUS POLICE STORY. NOW HIS NEIGHBOR IS DEAD, HIS LAWYER IS A TV STAR, AND RONNIE ZAMORA FACES A 25-YEAR STATION BREAK . . .

The Crime

I pointed the gun at her, at him, at my ear, and in my mouth, out the window . . . barely touched it and it went off. Heard a buzz in my ear like a dial tone. Looked at her. She was in the same position. I didn't want to believe I shot her. . . . It didn't seem real. She fell over. —*Ronnie Zamora*

The two white houses on Miami's North Palm Avenue sit eight feet apart in a false appearance of tropical tranquility. The Zamora place is smaller, a tract house with no foliage. But in front of Mrs. Haggart's more stately home, a rose bush blooms and a huge green hedge is sprouting red flowers. This house is empty.

The Trial

The courtroom is brightly lit and its decor is instant plastic Americana: the wood-panelled walls, linoleum floor and modern naugahyde chairs could be a funeral parlor in Philadelphia or a classroom in Los Angeles. Circuit Court Judge Paul Baker sits nestled into his double chins high atop a pedestal of green ceramic tiles. On his desk is a television microphone and a placard with his name in gold letters. Here, everything and everyone is in place. During the frequent silences, no one whispers. The judge has long, wavy hair and is married to a former Miss Miami, his fourth wife. Because of the presence of the television camera, Judge Baker is playing down his sarcasm. Once, though, when the controversial defense lawyer Ellis Rubin ignores his directive, Baker mutters, "No matter—I play such a small role here anyhow." The Judge's face appears a lot on television because he sits still, unlike the pacing lawyers, and the camera does no tracking shots. His new television fame insures that he will be an elected judge in this town forever.

* * *

In Miami, the autumn afternoon rains were warm, and dark-eyed Ronnie Zamora, 15, was the star of a nightly television drama. While thousands watched, Ronnie was sentenced to 25 years in prison for murdering his next-door neighbor, an 83-year-old Miami Beach widow who lived alone in a big white house behind a flowering hedge. His was the first trial in history to be broadcast from start to finish on television.

Zamora's trial was chosen by Miami's public broadcasting station because of his unusual defense. Though he had confessed, television was named as his co-defendant: His lawyer claimed the boy suffered from "temporary insanity due to involuntary intoxication by television violence." A native of Costa Rica, Ronnie had joined his mother in New York when he was five, where he learned English by watching TV around the clock.

One irony was clear to all who watched the spectacle. The defense claimed that television had made this disturbed child commit murder. He was said to find reality "an unwanted world" and to prefer living in the abnormal situations often found in violent television fantasies. But now television was changing his life forever. Instead of a quiet, sad trial, Ronnie's tearful mother, his flashy defense lawyer, his expressionless shrinks, his tough friends and Ronnie Zamora himself had all become stars of a tragic TV documentary that people would remember for years.

The Murder Spree

It was the first Saturday afternoon in June, 1977, when Ronnie Zamora's friend came by to take him to the beach. Both boys often cut classes to hang out at the Burger King. Darrell Agrella was known around Nautilus Junior High for fighting and for his police record. Ronnie was a newcomer to Miami Beach and trying to make friends.

Instead of hitting the surf, however, the boys rang the bell of Zamora's elderly neighbor. When no one answered, they entered boldly. Once inside, Darrell disappeared and Ronnie wandered around the old woman's living room. He had once carried a bag of groceries for her, and knew she was an 83-year-old widow living alone. When he heard her walk up her pathway a few minutes later, he says he wanted more than anything to run away.

Mrs. Haggart recognized Ronnie at her front door. She would have to call the police, she said sternly. Then, by Ronnie's account, Darrell reappeared. Darrell shoved her, hard. Disoriented, the old woman sat down on her living room floor. She thought quickly enough to hide her rings in her brassiere, where they were found four days later when the police discovered her partly decomposed body. She asked for a picture of her late husband and a glass of whiskey, and Ronnie obliged her. Perhaps she was preparing to die.

Darrell had stumbled upon the woman's old .32-caliber revolver, the one she had tucked away for protection, and brought it to Zamora. For 90 minutes, gun in hand, Ronnie says he tried to convince his captive not to call the cops. The gun was loaded and he pointed it around the room, at her, at himself. Why the old woman made him no promises—or, indeed, if she actually refused—is not known. Later, under the influence of sodium amatyl (a "truth" drug), Ronnie wondered why she did not order him to put down the gun. In the same taped confession (to Dr. Michael Gilbert, the psychiatrist who invented the TV violence defense), Ronnie lamented not having shot himself instead of his neighbor.

(Ten days before the murder, his mother had taken him to a psychologist who found the boy depressed, suicidal, and guiltridden over the recent drowning of a friend.)

Ronnie knew how badly his stepfather would beat him if the widow called the police. Darrell brought him a pillow to muffle the sound of the gun. Two hours after knocking on her door, Ronnie shot Mrs. Haggart in the stomach. After she fell over, he had a vision or a dream that she sat up as though she were only acting on a television show. Ronnie pocketed $415 that Darrell had found. He watched Darrell load her car with antique silver, the gun and perhaps a TV set. Then the two boys, both under-age, drove the car away.

Susan Braudy, an editor at Ms. *Magazine, is the author of* Between Marriage and Divorce *(Signet).*

Ronnie Zamora's descriptions of the murder always make Darrell the leader, the instigator, the bully; Ronnie is the bewildered bystander. But the boys who were to join them for a fast trip to nearby Disney World tell another story. Shortly after the murder, Ronnie telephoned Timmy Cahill, a good-looking boy who was always truant and in trouble at Miami Beach High. He had known Ronnie a month. Ronnie invited him and three other boys to dinner at the Sun Wah Imperial Restaurant. "Ronnie, he paid for everything," Cahill testified, and suggested they drive to Disney World. Ronnie, the boys said, told them his father had given him the cash to make up for not giving him money for the junior prom. He also showed them Mrs. Haggart's gun. (Later the defense tried to discredit the boy's testimony, saying that Ronnie did not suggest Disney World.)

Only five minutes after they entered the Florida Turnpike, the boys were stopped by a state trooper for speeding. Cahill said Ronnie had asked Paul Toledo, an older boy, to drive. Toledo was ticketed. Cahill said Ronnie told Paul to say he was Mrs. Haggart's nephew and to give the cop her gas credit card.

The boys stayed at the Disney World Ramada Inn, and then took a $135-a-day suite at the posh Contemporary Motel. Ronnie paid with Mrs. Haggart's money. At the park itself, "We went on the Space Mountain and Haunted Mountain—just about everything," Cahill said in court.

When they learned the car was stolen, the older boys wiped off their fingerprints. It wasn't until later that week that they learned it had been connected to a murder. Zamora's friends say these boys were angry and wanted to see Ronnie convicted. First, he got them into a hot situation by holding out on the murder and the stolen car. Second, the boys aligned themselves with the prosecution; if, in front of all the television viewers, they could help a winning side, they would be all the more important.

A Hero Is Made

It is an early evening during the first week of the trial and *Miami News* reporter John Katzenbach is shooting basketball with some teenagers after a long day sitting at the Zamora trial. When the kids realize he is covering the trial they begin to question him. What does Zamora wear? What's he really like? Did you get to talk to him? Katzenbach gets a chill. The teenagers sound awed, as though Ronnie Zamora is a hometown boy made good. Katzenbach wonders what on earth these kids will think if Ronnie is acquitted.

A Courtroom Laugh

Paul Rhinehart, another witness and a friend of Darrell Agrella, is leaving the stand after testifying that Darrell hid the widow's silver and TV set in his house. Rhinehart is jaunty. "Can I watch television tonight?" he calls over his shoulder.

As long as you don't watch the trial," answers Judge Baker.

Hey," the kid quips, "it's the only thing worth watching on television." Photographers inside the courtroom snap the only picture they will have of Ronnie Zamora breaking up with laughter.

* * *

Miami is a city that celebrates its crimes. Everybody remembers lethal golddigger Candy Mossler, and they are still talking about the senior citizen who shot her ex-lover in the courtroom last year. Ronnie Zamora might have been just another kid who fell into savagery except for two factors. The first is Miami's flashiest, least-liked and perhaps most talented criminal lawyer—Ellis Rubin. His colleagues swear Rubin took the case and chose its defense totally for the publicity. It is he alone, they say, who suffers from "involuntary television intoxication."

On the other hand, in a confession to which the jury was not privy because it was made under the influence of an injection of sodium amatyl, Ronnie Zamora revealed that, on the night of the murder, he had planned to see a few friends, among them Kim Rubin, Ellis Rubin's teenage daughter.

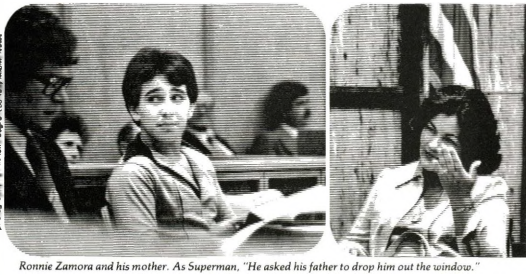
The second reason why the "Kojak trial" became such a hit was television itself. Florida's State Supreme Court had declared cameras could be allowed in courtrooms during a one-year trial period. Once the "television" defense was set, Miami's public television station WBPT chose this trial to televise.

Thus, for nearly two weeks, thousands of viewers saw an historic television event—sustained courtroom coverage (in color) of a murder trial. The proceedings would normally have been seen by some 30 people.

Inside Judge Baker's courtroom, Channel 2 operated three microphones and one silent stationary camera (no panning was permitted, but zoom-in closeups provided some visual drama). Stations around the world picked up taped broadcasts of the trial.

The case raises confusing questions. Was this a true opportunity to put violent television programs like *Kojak* and *Helter Skelter* on trial? No, say some legal experts; Judge Baker had ruled before the trial began that television violence in the abstract could not be discussed—only the case of Ronnie Zamora. There was no argument permitted over the Surgeon General's conclusion: "The overwhelming consensus is that television violence does have an adverse effect on certain members of society . . . and that children who show aggressive tendencies can possibly be motivated by aggressive tendencies on television."

Was this televised trial fair to Ronnie Zamora, or was it exploitative of his sensational crime? The *Miami Herald* extolled its justness, and Judge Baker congratulated himself by saying, "The press and court have found a common ground." But afterward, the jurors admitted they had been worried that if they did not convict Zamora of first-degree murder, the camera would make him a hero. Witnesses admitted they watched the trial at night; ordinarily their testimony would not be so drastically influenced. And legal critics still worry that the lawyers were playing to their fans in the bleachers rather than to the judge and jury.



Photography by Michael Rogers from the Miami Herald

Ronnie Zamora and his mother. As Superman, "He asked his father to drop him out the window."

Courtroom Characters

The pale faces of the jury members are lined up in two rows under a portrait of a

dead judge and a sign reading "The Jury Room." They are motionless, and look slightly upset, like a group of strangers on a bus who have just watched a traffic accident and want to go home. They are sequestered in a hotel; Judge Baker has denied their request to watch themselves on television with the sound off. However, station WPBT has promised them a complete show once the trial is over.

Ronnie Zamora sits behind a table, next to his attorney, Ellis Rubin. The boy's adolescent face looks Spanish. He too rarely moves or changes expression, though sometimes he blinks hard as though he has remembered something unnerving. He is at that stage of adolescence when some of his body has grown. He has long, almost fat adult hands and fingers, now pressed against a

him from hearing the psychiatrists' upsetting debates about his mental health. No one, however, remembers to stop him from watching his trial tonight, and every night, on television at Youth Hall.

* * *

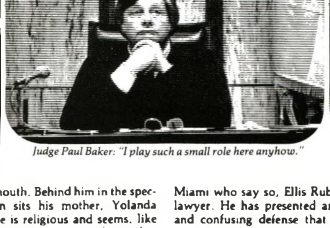
Under the spotlights, defense lawyer Ellis Rubin cuts a figure. He wears a trim gray suit with a subtle pink weave. In the spectator section, his wife, Irene, wears a suit of the same fabric. The smooth lines of Rubin's jogger's body, his short gray hair and his bony, vulpine face make him look like a natural member of the ruling class, a man born to appear on the evening news. On screen his face fleshes out, his husky voice is made clearer by microphones. As he speaks, he juts his narrow head forward and licks his lips. Although you will find few adults in

when he realized Savalas would not be permitted to testify about the general violence on his show. Earlier, a mortal blow had been dealt to the "television" defense when Dr. Margaret Thomas was asked to leave the stand. Dr. Thomas believes there is a connection between television violence and aggressive behavior; she could not, however, produce a conclusive test. She also stated that she had not examined the defendant.

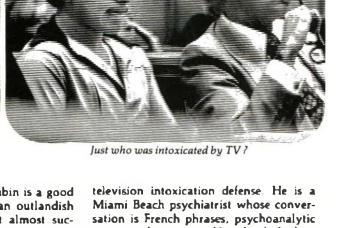
A Visit to the Office of
Dr. Michael Gilbert,
Psychiatrist, Neurologist, Psychologist

After I got off the stand, I told the prosecutor, "If you can't fly high, sweetheart, don't fuck with the eagles."
—Dr Gilbert

Dr. Michael Gilbert is the author of the



Judge Paul Baker: "I play such a small role here anyhow."



Just who was intoxicated by TV?

child's full mouth. Behind him in the spectator section sits his mother, Yolanda Zamora. She is religious and seems, like Ronnie, to be listening to something other than the proceedings.

The press sits in four rows behind the small TV camera marked SK-80. They are from the print media—a little smarter and a lot less important than the 20 television crew members who are also here to cover the double-television angle. Their suitcases filled with cameras, tape recorders, microphones and tape, the TV people watch the trial on Sony Betamax monitors.

On a signal, Ronnie Zamora exits, crossing the courtroom in front of an aerial photograph of his home and the home of his victim. He passes a carton filled with booty—darkening pieces of Mrs. Haggart's Victorian silver, taken by Darrell Agrella. (Agrella's case has been affected by the TV exposure, and he may not be tried for years. His lawyer claims Darrell's case is damaged by this trial's publicity.) Ronnie has been temporarily banned from the courtroom to prevent

Miami who say so, Ellis Rubin is a good lawyer. He has presented an outlandish and confusing defense that almost succeeded in complicating a simple case of cold-blooded murder.

Rubin gives the impression that if he is not a great performer, he is an eager one. His arms are raised to the jury: "How many thousand murders did the child see on television? Kojak murders to do good. The more bizarre the murders, the more products get sold. TV is the best salesman invented. It combines sound and sight."

When the judge strikes one of his remarks, Rubin fixes an eye on the jury and smiles. He almost makes his audience believe that he has won rather than lost the skirmish.

But the thrust has gone out of Rubin's defense. Expert witnesses will not be permitted to argue the effects of television violence, in general, on a disturbed child's sense of right and wrong. In a gesture designed to create havoc and publicity, Rubin even subpoenaed Aristotle (Telly) Savalas, citing a specific *Kojak* episode as influential. Rubin rescinded the invitation

television intoxication defense. He is a Miami Beach psychiatrist whose conversation is French phrases, psychoanalytic jargon and egomania. He is fond of jokes. ("When the press got wind of my defense argument, it was like what the ruler of Iran said when the air conditioner broke during his epileptic attack—the fit hit the Shah.")

In his office two days after the trial, Dr. Gilbert, wearing tennis shorts, crosses his suntanned legs and tries to reconstruct his involvement in the case.

In July, three weeks after agreeing to defend Zamora, Ellis Rubin asked Gilbert if he would check any possibility of temporary insanity. Gilbert initially refused, because he did not like the newspaper story he'd read about punk kids robbing an old woman's house. His own office had been burglarized 20 times. But he relented and told Rubin he wanted cash on the barrelhead—his fee paid in advance. Rubin sent over a check by messenger, and Dr. Gilbert took his medical bag and his notebook over to Youth Hall.

"I started to interview the kid and I was

appalled—no remorse, no guilt, no affect. Here was a boy who killed a woman who lived next door to him, and he was not disturbed about it. I did a differential diagnosis. He did have a lot of emotional reactions. He was upset by the drowning of a friend on Staten Island. I also ruled out chronic schizophrenia; he had no hallucinations, no delusions. There was no lesion on the thalamus."

It was when Dr. Gilbert started to ask Ronnie about his background that he discovered "an obvious television habituation." Later, the boy's mother told Gilbert that Ronnie watched even more TV. On the basis of this he reported to Rubin that much of the disturbed child's behavior was due to involuntary intoxication by television violence.

How long did it take him to convince the attorney? "Oh, about 20 minutes. He's smart enough to know a good idea and run with it."

Gilbert explains that Ronnie pulled the trigger as a conditioned reflex—an action he learned from watching TV's good guys and bad guys. The psychiatrist concluded: "Ronnie Zamora murdered a woman because his was a severely disturbed personality. He is the sort of child that television makes more aggressive. He became caught up in a world where there was no boundary between fantasy and reality."

Will the televising of the trial make Ronnie Zamora a star?

"No, that's impossible," says Gilbert. "Ronnie told me he was shamed: watching his mother so unhappy on the witness stand—more shamed than he felt murdering the widow, because he had not meant to kill her."

In the doctor's waiting room the air conditioner repairman is wide eyed. "Jeez, Doc, you were great. Everybody says so. You gave that prosecutor hell."

Dr. Gilbert waves his arm and laughs. He has been hearing this all week from the doormen, friends and waitresses. "Maybe I should polish up my song and dance routine," he quips.

The repairman can't let the doctor leave. He follows him to the car and leans his head inside the window. "I ain't kidding. My wife thinks you should get a weekly talk show, a medical *Perry Mason*."

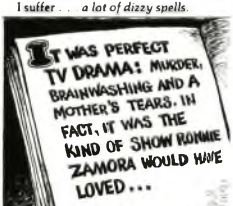
Gilbert shouts happily, "Christ, I'm late for a press conference."

"Listen . . ." The repairman won't stop. "You could sit there on TV and explain crimes. You were the best thing my wife's seen on television since Watergate."

Ronnie Takes a Test

In the courtroom, Rubin asks a psychiatrist to read his notes about Zamora to the jury. The psychiatrist has testified that Zamora was legally sane—i.e., knew the difference between right and wrong—when he shot the widow. In a professional monotone, he reads a sentence-completion test that Ronnie did for him. The courtroom sits in silence:

I like . . . *girls.*
I want to know . . . *more about life*
I regret . . . *being born.*
Men . . . *are running this world*
What annoys me . . . *is that I shouldn't be where I am*
People . . . *are cruel*
A mother . . . *is something everyone needs.*
I feel . . . *like a target.*
My greatest fear . . . *is life.*
In school . . . *I fool around a lot*
I can't . . . *stay in this place* [Dade County Jail].
Sports . . . *is one of my favorite pastimes*
When I was a child . . . *I lived in the country*
My nerves . . . *are very weak.*
Other people . . . *think of me as an animal*
I suffer . . . *a lot of dizzy spells.*



I failed . . . *English and Math this year.*
Reading . . . *is a subject I'm not good at.*
My mind . . . *is all mixed up*
The future . . . *may never come for me.*
I need . . . *someone to believe me*
Marriage . . . *ain't for me*
I am best when . . . *I am alone.*
Sometimes I feel . . . *like killing myself*
What pains me . . . *is I don't know what I'm doing*
I hate . . . *life.*
This place . . . *is hell*
I am very . . . *scared*
The only trouble . . . *with me is there is nothing good about me*
There is . . . *nothing good about me*
My father . . . *is the greatest*
I secretly . . . *don't want to live*
Dancing . . . *I'm pretty good at it.*
My greatest worry . . . *I don't know what is going to happen to me.*
Most women . . . *like me.*

The Mother in the Courtroom

Yolanda Zamora has broad planes on her fleshy face. Her dark eyes fill with tears but her full mouth does not change expression when she testifies about her son. He was born illegitimately in Costa Rica, where she left him to go to work as a maid on Long Island. After she married, she sent for him, but his stepfather resented the boy. "Ronnie felt he was not wanted in the home", she says.

Ronnie was beaten constantly, and he sought refuge with his only reliable friend, the TV set. His siblings begged their father, "Daddy, daddy, don't hit Ronnie. He didn't do anything." Mrs. Zamora says that her son became fascinated with television because he spoke no English and was isolated from the other children.

For months, the television set was his English teacher, his babysitter. "There was nothing else to do," she says. "For him it was the greatest thing in the world. It was like a gift for him. He was very excited about it. He would sit there all day."

She recalls Ronnie's favorite shows, *Superman* and *Batman*. He often tied a towel around his neck pretending he could fly. "He asked his father to drop him out the window."

She builds a case. "Ronnie would rather stay home and watch TV than eat or go to school. He knew every single thing on TV. He liked all the scary movies . . . the police movies. He told me, 'Mommy, this is the the way they hold a gun. I saw it on TV.'"

She speaks of Ronnie's depression over his friend's drowning on Staten Island. She describes the family's recent move to Florida for her husband's new job with what may be the most quiet irony spoken at the trial. "It was," she says, "the chance of a lifetime."

The Community

An afternoon rain has shined up the green leaves and darkened the white stucco walls of the murder victim's house. There is a yellow paper with a picture of a skull-and crossbones tacked onto the garage door: "Warning. Chemicals Have Been Used Which May Cause Serious Effects to Respiratory Processes." A carload of teenagers cruises slowly past, their faces turned to the sight.

Several neighbors refuse to open their doors to strangers; they also admit to having bought extra locks. Two elderly people have purchased guard dogs. They must believe that murder is a contagious disease, but they are in no immediate danger from Ronnie Zamora—he will be inside prison walls for 25 years. Although the taxicab driver has been watching the trial on television ("Beats *Perry Mason*"), he does not recognize the address.

Portrait of the Defense Attorney as a Right-wing White Knight

In Ellis Rubin's law office, a hand-printed sign is thumbtacked across the

spines of 50 leather law books. "WHEN IT GETS TOO TOUGH FOR EVERYBODY ELSE, IT GETS JUST RIGHT FOR US."

It is two days after the Zamora trial and Rubin has called a press conference. It is a curtain call for the principal players. Sitting behind the reception desk is Mrs. Irene Rubin wearing pencil-thin dungarees. Once a secretary at *The Miami Herald*, she kisses the elderly *New York Post* stringer. "Did you bring my clips, honey?" She has a tired-sweet sound to her voice, and her moralism lends credibility to Ellis Rubin's crusades.

Mrs. Rubin smiles at a few younger reporters. She looks like a prettier, older Liza Minnelli. When the phone rings, she tells a caller to send his donation to the Ronnie Zamora defense fund. "We are appealing the case and we need $10,000 to get the trial transcript typed." She tells reporters what she wished she had told the anonymous caller who threatened to murder her children. "I hope *you* sleep well tonight."

She again changes the subject: "Did you talk to the man from German television? He was wonderful." She imitates a German accent: "Ziss is like zee monkey trial, my dear. Scopes, Darwin, Clarence Darrow lost zut case too."

* * *

If Ellis Rubin is not Clarence Darrow, he is Miami's most colorful and controversial criminal lawyer. He has been a local celebrity for 24 years. *The Miami News* morgue has filed some eight portfolios of clippings about his antics in and out of court.

Rubin has been running for offices in Miami as a Republican—and losing—since he graduated from the University of Miami Law School. Early headlines show an unsuccessful race against Richard Gerstein for Dade County State's Attorney. As much as an election, Rubin seems to love a fight. When the smoke cleared, Rubin had sued Gerstein and was investigated by the Florida Bar. The two men are enemies to this day.

It was already the late 1950s when Rubin began his career of "red-baiting." He made headlines giving speeches entitled "Red Sales in the Sunset." He attacked a local attorney as a Commie sympathizer, and was called an amateur McCarthyite by a Methodist minister when he tried to get the state legislature to appropriate $110,000 for a Communist investigation to be led by Rubin. He was appointed Assistant Attorney General and worked to get high schools to give a course called "Americanism vs. Communism." But Rubin did not get along any better with his right-wing American Legion colleagues than he did with his young Republican chums; headlines describe his squabbles and suits against both.

Rubin has gone to court, been sued or countersued by his fellow Miamians for 30 parking tickets, a jogging ticket, and a more serious case in which his wife was accused and cleared of ambulance-chasing.

His recent cases include a widely publicized win over the National Football Broadcasts in Miami. And he joined forces with Anita Bryant by filing a suit against the Dade County Gay Rights Ordinance, claiming that it conflicted with a state law.

But Rubin is no pillar of the local establishment. His flamboyance, headline-grabbing and one-angry-man-against-the-world stance earn him few friends. Local papers editorialize openly against him. Headlines accuse him of "tilting against windmills." On its editorial page, *The Miami News* called his bill to set up a casino that would subsidize medical costs for the elderly "the most cynical proposal advanced on behalf of casino gambling for Miami Beach."

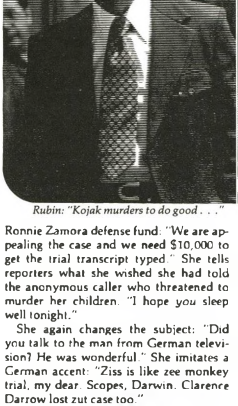
Inside his office, the television crews have blown a fuse. For the press conference, Rubin is wearing a matching safari shirt and pants. He sits on a huge, tufted leather couch with one arm around Mrs. Zamora. Mr. Francisco Zamora sits next to Dr. Gilbert, still wearing tennis shorts. By Rubin's elbow is a huge lamp whose base is the pewter helmet of a knight's armor. A large ceramic eagle sits on his desk. The andirons for his fireplace are the figure of a brass knight. There is a carved wood knight hanging on the door of the law library. There is a large brass scale of justice on the mantle, and on a bookshelf is a little blue painting: "To the world's greatest jogger, lawyer, and most of all father. Love, Kim."

Dr. Gilbert defends himself and his defense: "It was preposterous to say I was offering a thesis that anybody would watch television and commit murder. You need a susceptible person. Not everybody gets lung cancer from cigarettes. Not everybody dies from auto pollution. And years ago, everybody thought smoking cigarettes was good for you. Television violence is the same."

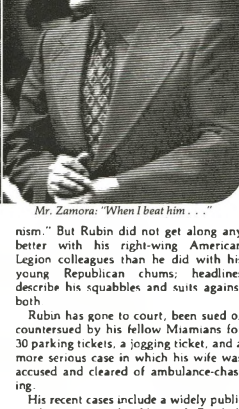
Mr. Zamora is asked by a *New York Times* reporter if he regrets beating Ronnie until he bled: "To me he is my son. Because I have been raising him until he was five years old. It makes no difference who procreated him. When I beat him, it is more painful to me than it is to him."

Ellis Rubin speaks like a victor: "I plan to travel this country to speak to groups about television violence. I have won some big cases lately, and this is more important to me as a parent than making a lot of money. I knew, we knew, when the jury was out, I advised Mrs. Zamora to expect the worst. I watched the jury's faces, and after one hour I cut off my final argument. One juror was fidgeting. Two would not meet my eyes. I don't blame the jury. They did not hear the full defense. The judge did not allow them to hear the case against television violence. I will appeal to the Florida Supreme Court."

A reporter asks Mrs. Zamora whether she is sorry about using television violence as the sole line of defense. "No, no." Mrs. Zamora seems to heave small sighs as she speaks. "He is sick about what he has seen on television. He is sick of what he has seen of his friend who drowned. Anybody would be sick of this. Even before the accident happened he was sick. He has to be rehabilitated. Someplace in a hospital. I have to think of my other children. They are suffering. Ronnie says, 'The only person who knows I'm not guilty, that I'm innocent, is God.'" ■



Rubin: "Kojak murders to do good . . ."



Mr. Zamora: "When I beat him . . ."

photographs by Michelle Bogre/courtesy Miami News

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Illustration by Dirk Zimmer

BRINGING OUT THE SHEETS

SAN DIEGO (ZNS)—The Ku Klux Klan is planning to help President Carter curb the flow of undocumented Mexican workers who are crossing the U.S.-Mexican border into the United States. The Klan's National Director, David Duke, says that Klansmen armed with citizens' band radios and "legally registered weapons" plan to patrol the United States-Mexican border from Brownsville, Texas, to the Pacific. The U.S.-Mexican border between Brownsville and the Pacific coast is more than 1,300 miles long.

RUSSIAN STEPPES OUT

CHICAGO (Chicago Tribune) — Two recent emigrants from the Soviet Union have given startling new eyewitness reports which seem to confirm previous allegations that a major nuclear waste accident may have occurred in central Russia in 1958. Earlier reports of the disaster, which took place near the town of Kyshtyn, in the southern Ural Mountains, were originally released several years ago by a pair of dissident Soviet scientists. At the time, both Soviet and British atomic energy officials dismissed the story as "fiction."

A recent interview in Israel with Ilya Voytovyetski, 40, and Olga Barr, 30, supports the scientists' claims. Voytovyetski stated that as a student in the late '50s, he often drove through the Kyshtyn area. Prior to 1958, he claimed, the area contained farmland, small communities and a wealth of wildlife. Beginning in 1958, however, the area was closed for about a year, and when the region was opened again, he said, it had become a barren, desolate wasteland, seemingly devoid of all life. He added that billboards along the highways urged all motorists not to stop or linger in the area.

Barr reported that she moved to a military base near Kyshtyn in 1967 and was immediately warned to test everything—food and belongings—with a government-issue geiger counter. "I became pregnant," she said, "and the army doctors advised me to have an abortion because they said radiation had already caused many women in the area to have deformed babies. I had an abortion."

Barr also described strange fenced-off areas in the countryside which she called "graveyards of the earth." In those places, she said, the needle on the geiger counter would jump crazily, and that vegetation inside the restricted ground was often over-sized, with mushrooms and berries bigger than tennis balls.

EGGS BENEDICTION

THONBURI, Thailand (ZNS)—A man has been sentenced to seven and a half years in prison for accidentally killing a friend in a fight over which came first, the chicken or the egg. The convicted man argued on behalf of the chicken. The dead man said it was the egg.

BISBEE, Ariz. (Zodiac News Service)— Two wealthy ranchers, charged with torturing Mexican aliens who had illegally crossed the U.S. border, have been found not guilty by an all-Anglo jury here. Tom and Pat Hannigan had been indicted on charges of kidnapping and attacking three men on a remote part of their 17,000-acre ranch. According to testimony, the two ranchers had forced the three Mexicans to strip at gunpoint, tied their hands behind their backs, burned them with a hot poker and threatened to castrate them. After the three men had been severely beaten, they were allowed to flee back across the border with shots fired at them as they ran.

UNCLE SAM PUTS TORCH TO LATIN LIT

by Roger Trilling

NEW YORK—Things just haven't been going well for Uncle Sam south of the border. Remember back in 1954 when Guatemala expropriated the United Fruit Company? Then came Castro and all those nasty Peruvians. Venezuela's getting rich, and even Mexico is sometimes on the wrong side. And to top it all off, Latin American literature is growing in influence and finding its way into classrooms from Pasadena to Perugia.

Usually, when Latinos get nasty down there, we just send in a bunch of Marines or a squad of exiled patriots. But cultural development calls for different strategies. And one of our best tactical tools for controlling the artistic and cultural influence of our southern neighbors is the Center for Inter American Relations, a wing of the Council on Foreign Relations. The Center, which is ostensibly devoted to a "greater understanding and awareness of the other nations of the Western Hemisphere," is located in a $1.5 million landmark townhouse at Park Avenue and 68th Street in Manhattan, a gift from the Marquesa de Cuevas. Her cousin, David Rockefeller, is the financial mainstay and Honorary Chairman of the Center.

Under Jose Guillermo Castillo, the first director of the Center's literature program (from 1967 until 1973), the organization functioned well as a promoter of Latin American literary activity. Castillo's department tracked down writers and translators for U.S. publishers, advised acquisitions by commercial and university presses, donated translation samples—often to small presses unable to afford them—and negotiated with foreign publishers. By paying for translations of such writers as Marquez, Borges, Neruda and Paz, the Center subsidized the publication of about ten books each year. And in addition to hosting readings and receptions for Latin American writers, the Center also published *Review*, a trimesterly periodical designed to give South American writers wider exposure.

The Center could not long afford such philanthropy, however. Between 1968 and 1974, operating income fell off by some 29%. And by 1976, money from public agencies and private foundations had halved, while donations from corporations quintupled.

The literati were further frustrated when Castillo returned to his Caracas art gallery and was succeeded by *Review* editor Ronald Christ, a Rutgers professor and minor figure in the Latin literary scene. Many felt him little qualified for his three-day-a-week, $18,000 job, and Latins were incensed by their lack of executive level representation.

The program now sponsors half as many books, and lately several of these have been translated either by Christ himself or his assistant Gregory Kolovakos. Reader's Reports are no longer free, and books are now recommended through *Libros*, a 6-page triannual newsletter available for $50. "The program has become more parochial lately," explained Jack Macrae, president of E.P. Dutton. "Ronald is more of an academic, gets less things done, and is more concerned with pushing his own interests."

Like Emilio "Pete" Collado, the Center's Chairman and an ex-director of Exxon's Venezuelan subsidiary, or like Roger Stone, the Center's president and once a vice-president at Chase, Christ is a

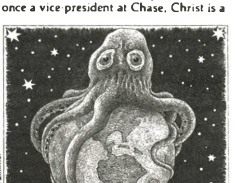


Illustration by Dirk Zimmer

Rockefeller minion. This summer, when Christ took a teaching post in Chile, things exploded.

He first went there in the fall of '76. Played up as an influential American scholar, he was quite a hit with the powers-that-be. Lecturing at several universities and appearing on radio and TV, his visit spread both his and the Center's name, increased their contacts, and pleased everybody.

In the spring of 1977, Catholic University in Santiago invited Christ back to teach courses on Borges, Eliot and American Musical Comedy as part of its American Studies Program. He was "sponsored by the University and the Embassy but entirely funded by the State Department." Christ left New York May 30.

Ronald Christ was a guest not only of Catholic University, but of the *junta* as well. After the coup, whole departments were dissolved or "reorganized." Teachers and students were dismissed, arrested, imprisoned; others, like Architecture professor Leopoldo Benitez, were shot without trial. Admiral Jorge M. Sweet was installed as Rector, restrictive tuition policies were implemented, and the Church dissolved all ties. Catholic University was one of the only institutions in Chile to receive U.S. government funds during Allende's presidency, and it functioned as a center of activity against him. Christ's trip looked like a continuation of America's odious Chile policy.

By June 10, 27 Center associates had signed a letter protesting Christ's trip. Then someone wrote Stone a letter asking if Christ's "insane decision" had the "representation of the Center." On June 14, Stone wrote that "Ronald cannot separate himself from the Center . . . I am delighted that he is there in *both* capacities" (as individual and representative). The June 10 petition was never sent, for it had assumed that Christ was acting privately. Stone's June 14 letter transformed the trip from a personal action to an institutional one.

In the following weeks, letters of resignation poured in. Three advisory editors of *Review* quit (one was poet, translator and *New Yorker* editor Alistair Reid, who mentioned receiving "telephone calls and cries of alarm and disbelief from friends in Latin America"), as did authors Julio Cortazar and Octavio Paz, renowned translator Gregory Rabassa and Dutton's Macrae, who accused the Center of "making statements that reek of Yankee arrogance and literary colonialism."

The last charge was a response to a shift in the Center's position. A June 30 statement by Stone tried to give a moral tone to Christ's trip: "In a country such as Chile, scholarly interchanges . . . provide opportunity for the introduction and discussion of humanistic values that may not be sanctioned by the regime." Stone ignored the fact that Chile had had the longest tradition of free speech in Latin America—before the *junta* took over.

Christ was recalled on July 8. Ten days later he released a personal statement wherein he denied taking a University post, being censored, or collaborating with the *junta*. Rather, his purpose had been to "collect dissident art and literature and to communicate with artists and intellectuals who might express in private what they could not say in public."

But Christ refused to show what he'd collected out of fear that "with the attention currently devoted to *Review*" there would be recriminations against the dissidents. Further doubt is thrown on his defense by a letter written to Reid from Santiago on June 15th. In it, he mentions

meeting the children of poet Nicanor Parra, then says, "They are about my only contact with people who might be thought of as opposed to what the government does . . . Most people express dissatisfaction with things, but on the whole they're grateful for improving economic conditions."

As the resignations kept pouring into the Center, Stone began insisting that Christ's trip had been private. Of his earlier support, he said, "It's different for the president of the Center to speak than for the Center to speak."

On July 21, the Center received a letter signed by 53 writers, translators, agents, editors, publishers, critics and academics. Among them were Octavio Paz, Severo Sarduy, Juan Goytisolo, writers; P.E.N. America president Richard Howard, six ex-editors of *Review* and many of their translators. They'd all resigned.

Stone's support of Christ's trip, they charged, had "created the general impression that the Center is cooperating with the present regime in Chile, generated misunderstanding and suspicion in the Latin American community, (and) gravely compromised our individual efforts toward cultural exchange between the Americas."

The Center is a bastion of established order; William D. Rogers, its first president, estimated that 20-40% of the Center's initial membership was recruited from the Council of the Americas (COA), which also rented the Center's fifth floor until August of 1977. The COA is coordinating agency and "chief spokesman" for U.S. business in Latin America. Over 250 corporations pay at least $1,000 each to belong. Combined, they represent over 80% of U.S. investments there. According to a promotional brochure, members receive "information they don't want to be identified as needing," including "special briefings in political stability" from State Dept. and AID officials.

If the COA affects the cultural sphere economically, the Center affects the economic sphere culturally. The COA exports the U.S. to Latin America, the Center imports Latin America here. When asked if the Center was a "public analogue" to the COA, Roger Stone replied, "Yes, generically."

He should know. Stone is an associate trustee of the COA, and came to the Center by way of a job at Chase previously held by Harry Geyelin, now COA president. Center Director Ralph Pfeiffer (IBM) is on the COA executive committee and Center Director Francis Mason (Chase) is COA treasurer. David Rockefeller, now a COA Trustee, was its Chairman in 1969—ITT's Harold S. Geneen, friend of Chile via the CIA, was then vice-chairman. In 1976, 35 of the Center's 80 largest contributors were COA members, among them all the major banks, Exxon, Mobil, 3M, Rockwell, IBEC, United Brands and ITT.

In 1974, the Center sponsored the Linowitz Commission, a confluence of highest-level businessmen, politicos, lawyers and academics. Its new approach to Latin America has been the major influence on Carter's policy, urging "greater sensitivity to Latin interests," "elimination of paternalistic and discriminatory policies," "respect for human rights," "growing interdependence" and renegotiation of the Panama Canal Treaty. It thus had strong words for situations like Chile, urging Washington not to stake "its overall relations with other countries on the interests of individual investors" and that we "abandon the threat or application of unilateral measures of economic coercion" against other countries. Yet many of the Commission's members were themselves instrumental in cutting off aid to Allende. (Among them the Commission's executive director, Arnold Nachmanoff, from '69-'71 Kissinger's Latin Americanist on the National Security Council; Nathaniel Samuels, then Assistant Secretary of Commerce, who orchestrated the cutoff of U.S. bank loans, and Charles Meyer, then Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs.)

Christ's trip parallelled the actions of many Linowitz Commission members. One closed an open society, the other "opened" a closed one. ■

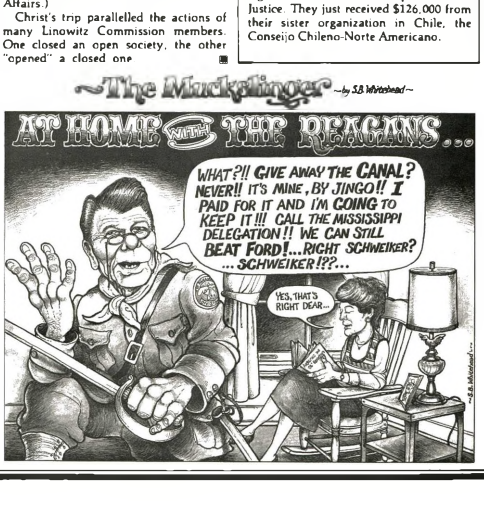
WHO'S WHO IN AN ENTANGLING ALLIANCE

Roger Stone wasn't kidding when he predicted, in 1975, that "the Public Affairs Program will grow faster than the three cultural programs (Visual Arts, Performing Arts and Literature)."

In the summer of 1977, as Ronald Christ taught selected young Chileans about *Fiddler on the Roof* (banned by the *junta*) and the advantages of American democracy, the Center's Public Affairs program (only) received an unprecedented $300,000 grant from the Tinker Foundation. Its director is Martha Muse, generally considered a hearty right-winger. In 1976, the Tinkers gave $15,000 to the Institute of International Studies at the much-purged University of Chile in Santiago.

The chairman of the Foundation's Executive Board is Council of Foreign Relations member Grayson Kirk, best-known as the Columbia University president whose office was taken over by students in 1968. Coincidentally, Kirk is also a director and Founding Member of the American Chile Council, a pro-junta lobby group registered under the Foreign Agents Act with the Department of Justice. They just received $126,000 from their sister organization in Chile, the Consejo Chileno-Norte Americano.

~The Muckslinger~ ~by S.B. Whitehead~



SHORTSHOTSHORTSHOTS

TRENTO, Italy (Corriere della Sera)—The president of the Italian Magicians Association climbed up on a rooftop to try to drive away evil spirits that have brought torrential rains to northern Italy. However, before he could perform his feat, the magician, Antonio Battista, slipped on red roof tiles and fell 25 feet to the ground, shattering his crystal ball and severely damaging the book of formulae he was carrying. Battista was hospitalized with minor injuries.

* * *

WOODSTOCK, Va (AP)—Michael Madigan was arrested after the attempted robbery of the local branch of the First Virginia Bank. Police said a man carrying a gun entered the bank, realized he had forgotten the mask he'd brought with him, and went back to his car to put it on. When he came back, he discovered bank employees had shut the bank door and locked it. He left and police arrested him a short time later.

* * *

INDIANAPOLIS (ZNS)—The 19-year-old son of a policeman has been freed by a superior court on the grounds that his arrest for burglary was illegal. The court ruled that when Lt. Michael Moran searched his son's room at home and found a stolen stereo, the father had failed to obtain a proper search warrant ahead of time. In addition, the court said the policeman had failed to advise his son of his constitutional rights before questioning him.

* * *

DALLAS (ZNS)—A 15-year-old boy, wearing a wig and women's clothing, successfully freed his 13-year-old brother from a county juvenile detention center by pretending he was his mother. The center's chief probabation officer, Don Smith, said that no one there suspected they were being taken in. According to Smith, the 15-year-old simply telephoned last month, imitated his mother's voice, and said she would be stopping by in several weeks to take custody of the younger boy. The unidentified youth then simply walked into the detention center, decked out in a blond wig and his mother's clothing, signed the necessary papers and took off with his brother.

* * *

WASHINGTON, D.C. (ZNS)—A federal Customs Court, in a landmark decision, has ruled that private companies have the legal right to patent new forms of life they create in the laboratory. By a two to three vote, the court ruled that the Upjohn Company, a pharmaceutical firm, may patent a new micro-organism it had developed for use in the production of medicines. The ruling is expected to be cited by companies involved in controversial "recombinant DNA research," which enables scientists to change living cells around, producing entirely new forms of plant and animal life.

* * *

SACRAMENTO (The Sacramento Bee) In preparation for the annual frog-jumping contest held each spring in Calaveras County, Croaker College has announced that it is currently accepting applicants for admission. The college offers a three-week special cram course for serious-minded jumping frogs. For the $50 tuition, each frog gets room and board, weightlifting training, sauna baths, hypnotic treatments and bubble baths from Croaker president Bill Steed, who has a degree in frog psychology. Among the 250 jumping alumni of Croaker, Steed says, are several Calaveras winners.

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YES IT IS

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IT'S ONLY LOVE
YOU'RE GOING TO LOSE THAT GIRL
EVERY LITTLE THING
FOR NO ONE
SHE'S LEAVING HOME

THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD
THIS BOY
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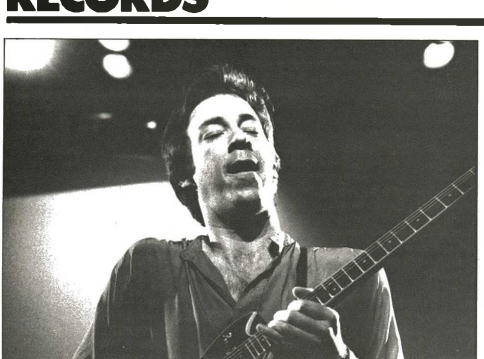

photograph by Lori Reina

Boz plays for fancy steppin'.

MO' DANCING & SLICK DEBRIS

by Robert Stephen Spitz

DOWN TWO THEN LEFT
Boz Scaggs
Columbia (JC 34729)

"There was the Door to which I found no key," wrote Edward Fitzgerald in *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. Not dissimilarly, Boz Scaggs' widely anticipated *Down Two Then Left* is an echo of the past and a laconic apprehension of the not-too-distant future. After four commercially unsuccessful, albeit critically well-received, albums, it seemed The Boz was in the race for the big money. *Silk Degrees* went platinum and Scaggs hustled off to superstardom. And not undeservedly. "At last!" all the believers sighed in relief. The man was born with fine taste. But the wizard of Boz had yet to pass the supreme test: making the follow-up album. Unlike Omar the tentmaker, Scaggs had the key right at his fingertips and never got a chance to use it: the instructions *Down Two Then Left* lead, unfortunately, through a revolving door.

Ever since he first made the solo scene Boz Scaggs has been regarded as a well-honed artiste with the power of turning an inconsequential song into a compelling experience. His plaintive vocals carried with them a certain richness, lacquered with emotion and delivered with unflagging intensity. Somewhere along the way to *Silk Degrees*, somebody tipped Boz off to the discodollar and, hi-hat in hand, he was off to see the Wissers for some *real* soul. Songs like "Lowdown" successfully bridged the gap, and the hits, as they say, kept on comin'.

Therein lies the fault with *Down Two Then Left*: there are plenty of Latin rhythms and no hit songs. Lyrics, if not the strong point, were always integral components of Boz' magical potions; here, they fall by the wayside in the rhythmic siege. The message is loud and clear: Dance, dance, dance—tomorrow we may be held at gunpoint and forced to watch continuous reruns of *Soul Train*. However, many of the musical arrangements are as wobbly as the words. Motown retreads that hog the superslick road to nowhere. It is a frustrating journey for one of our classiest recording artists, and even more so for the patient and expectant fans.

Side One, while not invigorating, is at least intriguing. Quickly ignoring "Still Falling for You," it is comforting to encounter the hypnotic "Hard Times." Scaggs transports the listener to some far-off neverland—a spell invoked by the subtle production and soothing, rippling effect of the electric piano. "A Clue" continues the short-lived trance, and boasts one of the album's few understated lyrics:

There is no one else
If you need a clue—the secret to me
is you

But the remainder of the material (coauthored by Michael Omartian, obviously miscast as *agent provocateur*) is a mass of stylized, repetitive funk. My advice would be for the listener to do some pretty fancy steppin' out.

Side Two opens with all good intentions—a Gamble-Huff prototype entitled "Hollywood"—but soon lapses into what seems like a spoof of disco hoke. Basses walk furiously, bongos bong and a chorus of women screeches:

Camera, action, do it again,
What a reaction, do it again

Meanwhile, Scaggs, whose normal singing voice can compensate for such futility, is lost in some falsetto reverie from which he never awakens. Say goodbye to "Hollywood." Which leads to "Then She Walked Away," another falsetoed cha-cha, and "Gimme the Goods," a futuristic rocker which sidles up slowly and catches you off guard. While the words are irrelevant, Boz gets a chance to experiment with his rhythm section and manages to bring it all off with style. "Tomorrow Never Comes," is the biggest disappointment on the album, a dreary ballad which continuously promises to take off, but fizzles. This is the type of song which Scaggs has delivered on in the past (a la "Harbor Lights") and can accomodate even under extreme duress. But on *Two Down Then Left*, Boz goes down for the count.

The album seems to be just biding time for the real thing. One can only hope that he's not singing an omen:

I am falling back into your spell,
Back into your cell of no return,
No way to rescue me ■

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CULT NO MORE?

by Toby Goldstein

SPECTRES
Blue Oyster Cult
Columbia (JC 35019)

Blue Oyster Cult went into the making of *Spectres* with an identity crisis. On the one hand, there remained the quasi-militaristic trappings, the sinister warnings that 1977 wasn't the summer of love, and the three-pronged guitar blitz. On the other hand, there was a noticeable addition of soft-voiced vocals on their last lp, most successfully the massive hit, "(Don't Fear) the Reaper." Can seduction and destruction co-exist in the same persona? With *Spectres*, BOC tackle their newly refined dual image head-on and fuse seemingly opposite strands into a dancing siren's song.

As *Spectres*' inside label carries only the name Blue Oyster, with "cult" removed, it could well signify that the band's renown is truly no longer limited. Now, they cop from the Beach Boys ("Good Vibrations" is worked into "Golden Age of Leather"). Even the appearance of a Grand Funkish "Goin' Through the Motions" on *Spectres*' perfect Side Two is no cause for disdain. Rather, it's amusing to observe Eric Bloom and Ian Hunter deciding to collaborate on the group's next likely breach of the Top Ten. Their song is an interesting reflection on BOC's pathway from then to now, cleverly telling the young fan/lover she can have their autographs, "I'll even sign it love to you, again," a line which stems from "Stairway to the Stars."

BOC also feels free to experiment with old fashioned danceable beat music, "R.U. Ready 2 Rock" or go completely ethereal with "Nosferatu."

The presence of five songwriters in the group, when added to contributions from Hunter and longtime colleagues Helen Wheels, Richard Meltzer and manager Sandy Pearlman, places the Cult in an enviable position. Donald Roeser is flexible enough to indulge a monster movie fetish on "Godzilla" and then wax poetic on "I Love the Night." To his eternal credit, nothing he's written on *Spectres* sounds like a rehashed "Reaper." Similarly, drummer Albert Bouchard is co-author of both the optimistic "R U Ready" and "Death Valley Nights," a chilling ballad.

The cover of *Spectres* shows Blue Oyster Cult interacting with forces that come from outside themselves, which they can intercept and direct but not totally control. Their faces show determination as well as reservation — they're keeping a mental distance from the spirits and laser lights. ■

photograph by Stephen J. Sherman

Armatrading: a willful songwriter, an ear-boggling voice.

ARMATRADING'S FORTHRIGHT, SNOW'S KINDA FLAKY

by Fred Schruers

SHOW SOME EMOTION
Joan Armatrading
A&M (SP 4663)

NEVER LETTING GO
Phoebe Snow
Columbia (JG 34875)

Show some emotion. It's an instruction so direct that it reads as something strange and hollow. If you don't already trust Joan Armatrading as an exceptionally forthright huntress and performer, you could mistake those three words for the most familiar sort of '70s epigraph.

But Armatrading, even before we consider her passionate deftness as a singer/arranger, has earned the right to be blunt. She is determinedly warmhearted, with her every move founded upon a sensuality that is just as appealing as (and maybe more trustworthy than) the grabass openness of Bonnie Raitt or Maria Muldaur. And her earboggling voice is simply the necessary and sufficient instrument for her songs.

Yet this West Indian emigre to London, despite three well-touted albums, is still waiting to break big. Perhaps it's because she is such a willful composer. While the title tune is mostly ticketysplit jazz changes, it is on the strippeddown "Woncha Come On Home" that Armatrading exhibits the virtues she carries in her own hands. Crack producer Glyn Johns has very few dials to twirl as Joan plinks out the accompaniment on thumb piano and acoustic guitar, letting a rasp invade the lilt of her voice: "There's a madman standin' on the corner and he keeps on lookin' at my window."

This is a poet's madman, a stick figure only as scary as the singer's loneliness. If the lyric wasn't delivered so wryly, we might have to laugh at him. But since we know that Armatrading's persona in song has included such unusual actors as the gruff but hurt bullygirl ("Tall in the Saddle") and a dazed succubus ("Water with the Wine") we can be most intrigued to hear her admit to a moment of utter need.

There are not many singers, male or female, who seem to summon such cozy inquisitiveness from their audience. Phoebe Snow, now presenting her fourth album, is one who has. This listener has always found her a welcome purveyor of inviting and different radio fare, but her albums offer no great temptation. It's not that it's wallpaper music. No . . . more like a bored waiter sorting silverware in a Chinese restaurant. Along with the gracefulness of a hit like "Poetry Man," there was something suburban and dilettantish in Snow's artsiness and in her aspiration towards clubbiness with jazz cats. She flaunts the vocal mannerisms of great

jazz singers like a VW flaunting a Rolls-Royce grille. And oh, the hectoring cuteness of those inner sleeves. Wishing her producers "special and eternal gratitude," namedropping, the elbow-in-the-ribs visual pun on this new record—stuff like that.

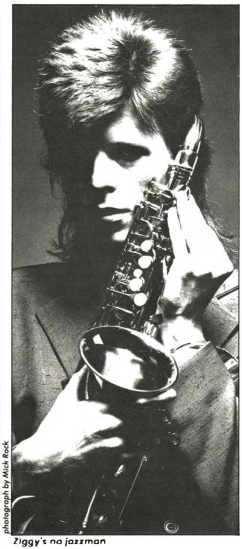
But what the hell—record-jacket sincerity has always been cheap. Let's move inside for that mellow sound, laid down by an all-star collection of dozing session titans. It's all marshalled for that unmistakable Snow voice, the kind that makes the neighbors insist, "You should make records, with a voice like that."

Then all you need is some songs. Despite contributions from such ace pop seducers as Paul Simon and Stephen Bishop (the title song), Phoebe herself wrote the best stuff here. "Majesty of Life" is your standard wistful song that still manages to be individualized, and it's touchingly sung.

But the bulk of Snow's album, in contrast to Armatrading's, shows an almost pathetic fealty to the ideal of the man who saves a woman from the curse of her own company. If you listen to the arch sexual metaphor of Phoebe's "Ride the Elevator," then give a hearing to Joan's "Opportunity," you have the difference right there on your lab slide. Snow winks in her mirror all the way through, but the elevator metaphor is obtuse, furtive and elaborate. Armatrading's assignation, meanwhile, sprung against a quick, crying slide guitar, is a well-cloaked job of armed robbery in which she has full complicity. Armatrading's falsetto sparkles, but it's not the coy and cozening effect that Snow's seems to be: "He owned a gun/The caliber escaped me/But I noticed straight away it made me itch . . ."

Here, and on the exuberantly tight "Mama Mercy," Joan shows her liking for the kind of vocal phrasing that springs right out of a vigorous guitar riff. You can sense her etching the profile of every song, and such otherwise celebrated players as Rabbit Bundrick (organ) and Georgie Fame (electric piano) are her colorists. Such self-sufficiency has perhaps watered the material down a little; each side has a couple of ballads that strain your attentiveness, whereas the last album was wedged full of dramatically choppy songs like "Down to Zero."

There aren't many who can exalt heartsickness as Armatrading does. It's what the medical men call good pain, and for Armatrading it occurs out on the borderline between love and pride. And it's a tribute to her musicianship and spirit that Joan is still patrolling that territory as compellingly as she was five years ago on her first album: "Take what you could/Give what you must 'cause/Whatever's for us, for us . . ." ■



photograph by Mick Rock

Ziggy's no jazzman

SMARTS AND KRAFTWERK

by Ira A. Robbins

HEROES
David Bowie
RCA (AFL1-2522)

David Bowie is the most inconsistently appealing genius in rock. With his chameleon ability to change from disco to space-rock to romantic ballads to astringent mechanomusic, Bowie has demonstrated that he can master and present music any way he cares to. Add that to his interest in salvaging/controlling careers of aimless visionaries like Iggy the Stooge and Mott the Hoople, his film interests and his penchant for working/writing/recording with various like-minded talents and you come up with a major musical force of the '70s. Regardless of the fact that very little of his recent musical output has been as enjoyable as it has been admirable, Bowie is a fascinating figure of limitless imagination.

Ever since the *Diamond Dogs* album and tour, Bowie has experimented in many areas: exploring, assimilating, and creating. First it was American R&B with the *Young Americans*, then hard-edged arcana via *Station to Station*, and disposable song fragments melded with soundtrack snippets aided by Eno (*Low*). Now, Bowie is doing a bit of a recap on *Heroes*. Working with the master of influence, Brian St. Eno, reclusive guitar fiend Robert Fripp, and the D. Bowie pick-up squad of Carlos Alomar, George Murray and Dennis Davis, Bowie forges a blend of melody, lyrical insanity, and Berlin-tinged pallor that recalls the finer moments of the last two studio trips as well as a few welcome flashes from the *Alladin Sane* era. As ever, the results are mystifying and challenging, though more rewarding than the dadaist simplicity of *Low*.

On examination, *Heroes* breaks into

Bowie is a fascinating figure of limitless imagination.

convenient sections. To work backwards, the second side is largely composed of three Bowi/Eno instrumentals: "Sense of Doubt," "Moss Garden," and "Neu Koln." Not being a fan of non-vocal wanderings around the T. Dream area of vacuity, I find very little to get excited about. However, there are some standout moments that prove Bowie's versatile sense of composition. The side begins with a quasi-Kraftwerk (Give-Germany-back-to-the-Germans) sound, "V2 Schneider." With a much better sense of direction than the robotic Teutons can muster, Bowie brings together strong doses of "It's All Too Much" and "Autobahn," full of Vocoder and synthesizer. The three "conceptuals" run together with instrumentation forming the primary distinction. "Sense of Doubt" builds a moody wash around a stern piano bass, while "Moss Garden" is a soporific workout on a Japanese instrument that sounds like a thumb piano. The least acceptable of the triumvirate is "Neu Koln" which has the thin duke showing off on sax, an instrument Bowie should retire. His "avant garde" wailings are fairly awful, but then free-form jazz is one of those things. . . .

Going for the inner groove, *Heroes* ends on a typical Bowie absurdity called

"The Secret Life of Arabia" which could have been a demented outtake from the *Young American* Philly sessions. Always leave them guessing.

Now, getting back to the beginning. The five tracks on the first side contain more accessible Bowie than any other recent album. Despite painfully convoluted themes and obscure references, Bowie manages to string together cohesive musical moments that recall a much earlier era—*Ziggy Stardust*, almost.

"Beauty and the Beast" lopes off to a strong start, with female choir parroting David's theorizing about good and evil. Conceptual art fans will recognize the calling card of one Chris Burden in the lyrics of "Joe the Lion":

Nail me to my car
and I'll tell you who you are . . .

About halfway through, Bowie drops the chaotic backdrop and sidles up to the mike for a bridge straight out of the Spiders days. Amazing bit of hat tipping, then back into the fray, all without skipping a texture.

The title track is easily the best thing Bowie has put on plastic in three years. With Eno's spine-tingling synthi-guitar whistling in the low foreground, and a powerful Beach Boys rhythm section holding up the background, Bowie delivers a low-key (yet violently passionate in spots) vocal that displays everything he can do. The lyrics are double entendre confusion, and the German influence (result of his residence in Berlin) is clear. Bowie's control and sensitivity are the determining factors, but Eno's contribution, harking back to his first (and best) solo album cannot be overlooked. Interestingly, the German and French issues of *Heroes* contain translated vocals sung by Bowie on this track. The timbre of language must be essential to the tone of the song.

"Sons of the Silent Age" sounds like a leftover from glitter-era Bowie. Nasal and self-parodic, Bowie's voice sounds like a flashback—Dylan on "The Boxer." The music swirls and meanders, like the opening of "Diamond Dogs," as the vocal builds to a climactic finish, leaving the door open for more of the same on future projects. Come back to us Bowie!

The side ends with "Blackout." Manic panic and Bowie shrieking Hiroshima poetry over a steady surge of rhythm. "Too high a price to drink rotting wine/From your hands/Get me to a doctor's/I've been told someone's back in town/The chips are down/I just cut and blackout/I'm under Japanese influence/And my honour's at stake." Bowie's dreams must be bizarre, but I'm glad that he can translate nightmares to music so well.

Write on, David. Whatever it is you have to say. ■

Dead Boys qualify as nurds.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE NURD KIND

by Edward Michael Naha

BAT OUT OF HELL
Meat Loaf
Epic (PE 34974)

YOUNG LOUD AND SNOTTY
Dead Boys
Sire (SR 6038)

PASSAGE
The Carpenters
A&M (SP 4703)

CHASING RAINBOWS
Jane Olivor
Columbia (PC 34917)

CHICAGO XI
Chicago
Columbia (JC 34860)

It was 6:00 p.m. when all-American rock critic Norm Steele was kidnapped by a UFO. Hands tied behind his back, Norm was ushered into the cockpit where he was faced by alien lifeforms from the planet NOWSOUND. The aliens almost seemed human, clad in three-piece mod outfits, wearing blow-dried razor cuts and sporting outdated mutton-chop sideburns.

"Hey, baby," the lead alien babbled. "We have all the hits on NOWSOUND and we're gonna lay some onya." My God! Norm thought. How insidious. They're all disguised as over-the-hill disc jockeys! Pot bellies and all! Strapped onto a table, Steele overheard one of the jocks whisper: "Brainwash him with the Zzz-ray." A machine was wheeled in; a thermonuclear meat-grinder gizmo connected to a large tube and, ultimately, a pair of cheap Japanese headphones. The helpless writer watched in horror as the invaders poured a large helping of singles bar listings and sharkskin bell-bottoms into the grinder. Out came the sounds of *Chicago XI*!

Steele's mind reeled. Great Scott! On this newest lp, the patron saints of bossa nova rock sounded just like a New Jersey lounge band! Songs like Mississippi Delta City Blues" could set race relations back a hundred years and social commentary such as "Vote for Me" made Tony Orlando sound like Thoreau! Steele writhed as the standard limpoid-rock Chicago style filled the saucer. "This Time," "Baby, What a Big Surprise," "Till the End of Time." He sagged under the weight of the token Hendrixish soloing on "Takin' It On Uptown" but rallied when he remembered . . . Chicago didn't offer David Clayton Thomas on vocals!

Seeing that the valiant earth critic was not to be broken so easily, the aliens unloaded 15 pounds of imported Manhattan schmaltz and a touch of vintage kitsch. Out of the headset slithered Jane Olivor's *Chasing Rainbows*. Steele panicked. "I'm awlways chasing rainboows," drifted limply through the spacecraft. He fought back his nausea, recalling the gutciness of early Streisand. "Edith Piaf! Edith Piaf!" the aliens chanted. "Edith Bunker!" Steele shot back. Suddenly, the Zzz-ray machine nodded out. "Damn," the lead alien moaned. "It never gets through the first side."

The creatures force-fed the device 86 half-eaten Baby Ruths and a well-worn copy of Ziggy *Stardust*. Steele was assaulted by Karen and Richard Carpenter's *Passage*. The *Sgt. Pepper* of pap! Steele nearly succumbed as sultry Karen cooed: "In your mind you have the capacities you know/To telepath messages through vast unknowns." Steele blinked. "Calling occupants of interplanetary craft." The critic shook himself free of the sound. THIS WAS NOT THE CARPENTERS! *Star Wars* or no *Star Wars*, THE OLD CARPENTERS WOULD NEVER GET CAUGHT DOING THIS STUFF! He smugly grinned his way through "Don't Cry for Me Argentina" from the opera *Evita* and "B'Wana She No Home." He had it figured out. Somehow, the aliens had taken over the Car-

panters' bodies, reprogramming them with the mentalities of the writers from *Lost In Space*.

The alien DJs saw that their plan was not working. Quickly, they chopped up a Marshall amp, a Stratocaster and several pounds of squirrel droppings. Throwing it hastily into the Zzz-ray, they produced *Dead Boys*. Blind, aimless guitar riffs shot through the headset. Monotoned vocals. Mongoloid lyrics. Boring instrumentation! The Dead Boys made ? and the Mysterians sound like the London Philharmonic. The aliens had won. The men with the prefabricated hair smiled down at the beaten young music lover.

"We will control the industry. We will control the airwaves. We will dictate the trends. We will program the earth with nurd rock." Steele's eyes fluttered. Just before drifting into unconsciousness he saw a bearded alien rush into the room. "Wait! I have the ultimate nurd!" he screamed, tossing a heavy record onto the machine. "Meat Loaf! A very fat singer whose album, *Bat out of Hell* was produced by funny-looking Todd Rundgren!" The other aliens cackled with glee . . . until the sounds of Meat Loaf leaped from the stereo speakers. Then all hell broke loose.

"This is no nurd!" the lead alien cried in horror as Meat Loaf's powerful vocals and Rundgren's searing, soaring guitar licks rebounded through space. "This is excellent, high quality rock 'n roll. Meat Loaf is an extraordinary vocalist! He has strength, grace, artistic prowess! Jim Steinman's songs are verbose but lyrically engrossing, almost surreal! Rudgren's production is flawless. You've tricked us! THIS IS A FINE DEBUT ALBUM!"

Filled with the energy of Meat Loaf, Steele freed himself and ran to the side of his saviour alien. He saw at once that his guardian angel was really Doobie-Wah Kenobi, famous vintage rocker and wearer of the white bucks. Doobie-Wah blasted a 33⅓" hole into the side of the saucer and Steele jumped to the ground below. Doobie remained in the ship. "Come on, come on down, Doobie-Wah, come down!" Steele called to the kindly jock. "No," the tasteful programmer called. "There are other places I must visit. Other songs I must play."

Steele watched the saucer soar away. He had been saved by the music of a fat rock 'n roller, the music of Meat Loaf. "But he looked like such a nurd," Steele marvelled. The voice of Doobie-Wah echoed mystically in his mind. "Don't knock the nurds, son. If it wasn't for the garbage, how would we fertilize the good stuff?" Steele clenched his jaw in a Kubrickesque way. "May the backbeat be with you," he murmured, hopping into the sunset. ■

GRAHAM & ROD: RAGGED TO RICHES

by Dave Schulps

On the surface, Rod Stewart and Graham Parker have a lot in common: British working class roots; a love for soul and R&B artists of the '60s (particularly Motown); distinctive, instantly identifiable voices; and crack backing bands with similar instrumentation (Stewart's band has three guitarists to the Rumour's two, otherwise they're identical). Past that, however, the similarity ends.

Stewart is a world-wide star, a tax exile who has abandoned Britain for the comforts and glamor of Southern California (a status he worked long and hard to achieve). He has become the '70s equivalent of a Hollywood sex symbol—his affairs fodder for scandal rags, his image a product of expensive publicity campaigns (like a billboard on Times Square to promote his New York concert date)—and his albums grow slicker and more suited for MOR crossover with each outing.

Parker, on the other hand, is still hungry. While Stewart parties in Malibu and writes graphic macho love songs for his albums' "fast" sides and glossy, sentimental love songs for their "slow" sides, Parker is walking down sidestreets in London and New York experiencing a totally different side of life. So these albums are different. Different as night and day, as Harlem and Hollywood, as Faulkner and Fitzgerald. Taken on their own terms, both albums are successful, yet where Parker offers warmth and depth on his, Stewart is mostly gloss and veneer.

What a veneer though. Stewart's voice can take on even the most superfluous material and make it listenable. And now that he's got a real working band behind him for the first time since the Faces, there's plenty of powerful, sympathetic support. The three guitarists (Jim Cregan, Gary Grainger, Billy Peek) provide plenty of noodlings and doodlings to keep things interesting (even on a lame disco number like "You're Insane") and the rhythm section of Phil Chen and Carmine Appice is inspired throughout.

The material, though, is typical Stewart fare. I'd be hard pressed to distinguish most of it from anything on his past three albums if it weren't for the noticeable change in backing musicians. Producer Tom Dowd is once again at the helm, so the sound hews to a cleanliness-is-next-to-godliness ideal. As usual, there's a Motown cover, this time "You Keep Me Hanging On," which seems to owe a lot more—in its overbearing seven-and-a-half-minute arrangement—to Vanilla Fudge's version (drummer Appice was in on that one) than to the Supremes original. In fact, all that really sets *Footloose and Fancy Free* apart from any of Stewart's other post-Faces outings is that on this one you can play "guess if this one's about Britt" on at least half the songs; pine away with Rod over his lost love to a background of pleasingly hummable toons. It's all cotton candy, really, but until it melts away it tastes real good.

Stick to Me, however will stick to you. This is music of power, substance and emotion, full of the kind of tension and urgency that Stewart's singing abandoned long ago. If Parker lacks Stewart's vocal abilities, he more than makes up for his deficiencies with the incandescent intensity of his songwriting and delivery. After two albums that define Parker in relation to others, he is now able to stand on his own on this third lp. He has forged his own identity—further comparisons are unnecessary.

The most striking feature of *Stick to Me* is its density, the thickness of the sound and arrangements. Producer Nick Lowe had only a little over a week to put together the album after a sound problem had destroyed another completed version of the album done by another producer. On short notice, Lowe was brought in and the band went back into the studio and rerecorded the entire lp with Lowe at the helm. Under those circumstances we might have expected a sparse, roughly hewn effort, but, indeed, quite the opposite is true. Instead, we hear liberal use of strings and horns and a sound that is so full, especially in comparison to Parker's last record, *Heat Treatment*, that it takes some getting used to. In fact, it took maybe five listenings to get past the drastic change in sound and really begin to appreciate the material. There's a lot here to appreciate.

Parker continues to grow by leaps and bounds, both as a singer and as a songwriter, and whenever he chooses to be ambitious we are justly rewarded. The title track mixes horns, strings and the ever-rocking Rumour together into the most powerful and direct song Parker has yet recorded. Ominous strings soaring all over the track lend an air of frantic desperation behind Parker's forceful plea, "If you stick . . . to me . . . we won't drown."

"New York Shuffle" and "The Heat in Harlem" both stem from Parker's impressions of Fun City during his American tour last year, and though most songs of this type tend to be trite glorifications or put-downs, Parker's observations avoid the obvious and capture instead a distinct feeling of New York chaos. Although "Harlem" rambles on a bit too long, it too is an ambitious step for Parker toward a kind of slow, soulful R&B which bears further development in the future.

In the end, *Stick to Me* may just turn out to be the best of Parker's three superb albums. Right now, I'm not so sure, but this album has continued to grow in stature with every listening—it couldn't hurt to own any of the three, though, because Graham Parker is making some of the most vital and heartfelt music to come out of the '70s. It's that depth of feeling that distinguishes an artist like Parker from the talented but vapid singer that Rod Stewart has become. ■

FOOTLOOSE AND FANCY FREE
Rod Stewart
Warner Bros. (BSK-3092)

STICK TO ME
Graham Parker and the Rumour
Mercury (SRM-1-3706)

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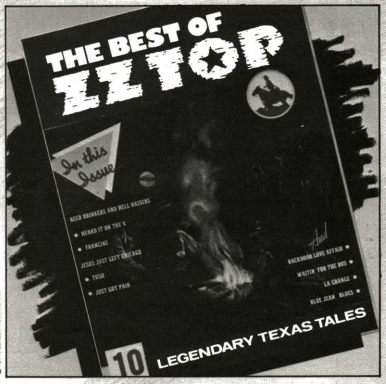

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LONDON RECORDS & TAPES

LIGHTS OFF

by Michael Barackman

OUT OF THE BLUE
Electric Light Orchestra
Jet (JT-LA823-L2)

Jeff Lynne is well on his way towards becoming this generation's Phil Spector. The seven-man band he fronts and dominates, ELO, has no distinct personality. The grandiose sound created by a masked man behind the controls is the only thing that really catches the ear.

But instead of a wall of sound, it's more like an increasingly worn picket fence. Ever since the mass success of "Evil Woman," Lynne has forsaken classical-rock experimentation and become more and more entrenched in a repetitious pop-rock formula. Out of the Blue's outer space cover may imply a look into the musical future but the record is really a rather clinical view of the past.

All the trademark ELO song ingredients are lavishly promenaded: full choir, orchestral frills and, of course, vocal echoes. But the tricks are employed so often that their cleverness soon becomes cliché. Never an expressive vocalist, four sides worth of Lynne's placid singing—no matter how many overdubs—adds up to monotony. All you get is pure pop fluff.

What saves this record—and indeed makes the fluff often fascinating—is Lynne's devout examination of '60s American pop. ELO's music has long displayed strains of the Beatles' "I Am the Walrus" period, but here Lynn shows his fondness for the obvious and hidden corners of early American pop music as well. For those attached to the musical evolution of such aching (and acne-filled) memories of teen revery, Lynn's offerings will in the end prove irresistible despite the dismaying lack of true character and feeling.

A romantic venture to the drive-in may never have been more glamorized than in "Night in the City." Replete with a swirling orchestra, operatic choir, and a dense Tommy-like acoustic rhythm, the song takes on almost religious overtones. Throughout the album, there are similar '60s allusions. Lynne once said he tried hard to disguise his influences, but what makes these songs such delights is the outrageous overtness of it all.

The album's *coup de ville* is "Concerto for a Rainy Day," a four-song suite that pays homage to Spector (rain effects in "Standin' in the Rain"), Brian Wilson (a *Pet Sounds* harmony in "Big Wheels") and Paul McCartney ("Mr. Blue Sky"). *Out of the Blue* tries to be the ultimate '60s experience—making for an enjoyable, if limited, adventure. ■

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CAPSULE REVIEWS

A.R.C.
Chick Corea
ECM (1009)

Youth reared on the smoke dreams of *Return to Forever* may find this first Corea ECM side (recorded in 1971 but just released in the States) stark and scary. There are no fanfares, flourishes, pretty words, or bouncy rhythms. Yet this album catches Chick riding a tidal wave of creativity when, having left Miles Davis' group, he had embarked on expeditions in the company of feverish trailblazers Dave Holland (bass), Barry Altschul (drums), and Anthony Braxton (reeds). *Circling In* (Blue Note) just precedes this date and *Circle* (name of group and album on ECM) just follows. Braxton, who (notoriously following his own changes) was the sore thumb on those dates, is absent here, allowing focus on the trio's phenomenal energy vortex. This ARC would seem to describe 350° of the Circle.

Corea's acoustic piano sings with passion and grace, swirling and probing at every turn, hanging in lush fronds like Spanish moss. His solo intros to "Nefertiti" and "Vedana" presage his pristine and beautiful solo albums (ECM). Altschul paces Chick's mad pointillism with intimate cannonades, and Holland provides thoughtful counterpoint as constant as his bold walking elsewhere. This triangle of strong personalities generates tremendous excitement in the clarity and complexity of their interplay.

(Fred Bouchard)

EDDIE MONEY
Columbia (PC 34909)

This debut album by a former New York City cop might be considered something of an antique. It typifies the structured, three-minute frenzy of early '60s hard rock when the song was as important as the arrangement. The overall effect is airtight; the music, the band and the performances are, in a word, breathless. Rock 'n roll never forgets.

Eddie Money has the metal resonant pipes of a fourth floor walk-up, and he takes them right to the bank. In fact, his voice is an artifact, too, in that it conveys the subtle arrogance of rock so often exaggerated by singers with less conviction. He exhibits it liberally in the insistent "Wanna Be a Rock 'n Roll Star" and manages to bring it under roaring control for the softer "Save a Little Room," which is reminiscent of Terry Reid's best. "Jealousys" and "Gamblin' Man" round out the rockers, and Smokey Robinson's "Really Got a Hold On Me" receives a fitting tribute to round out this album's diversity. Sideman Jimmy Lyon's guitar work is superb and propels the rest of the band to get behind the smart money.

(Robert Stephen Spitz)

ALREADY FREE
Nick Jameson
Bearsville (BR 6972)

Nick Jameson's virtual one-man show devotes itself to the "Woodstock sound," a rare species of intelligent pop-blues prone to elusive recording habits and long winter hibernation. Jameson, who engineered Bonnie Raitt's *Give It Up* and played bass for awhile with Foghat, encircles his Lean Russell ish chicken coop voice in cleanly produced organ swirls, snappy pianistics, turkey trot guitar licks and a dancing bottom. The final sound is both soulful and polished.

Paul Butterfield—also a former Jameson client—steps in to add some harp to "Already Free" and "In the Blue," blowing blue breath into Paul Leka's string arrangements. "I Ain't Searching" richly reiterates the American Dreams original, and "I Know What It Is" will show Foghat fans that Jameson was the talent responsible for *Fool for the City*, their best lp. Here's one producer/engineer that should come out from behind the scenes more often.

(Rob Patterson)

THE MISSING PIECE
Gentle Giant
Capitol (ST-11696)

You can't blame Gentle Giant. As they reached their tenth album, only a fanatical cult had heard them. The band's compositions—masterpieces of counterpoint: dissonant madrigals, rock fugues, multiple riffs interlocking like cogs in cogs—went unnoticed. Meanwhile Frank Zappa and Jethro Tull tried a bit of Giant-inspired polyphony, and Kansas stole a Gentle Giant arrangment and went platinum. So on *The Missing Piece*, Giant has wised up. Now they only write one or two tunes per song, instead of four that fit on top of each other. A snappy riff like "Two Weeks in Spain" or the ballad "I'm Turning Around" or the half-hearted polyphony of Side Two may impress new converts, but old admirers know they've been betrayed.

(Jon Pareles)

A HISTORY OF ELECTRIC PIANOS

At first, there was a battle of decibels between the unamplified guitar and the other instruments in the big bands of the '30s and '40s. To equalize matters, crude pickups and amplifiers were employed. Pianos, if amplified at all, were miked with a single device which couldn't hope to capture the range or subtlety of the instrument. Pioneers like Leo Fender and Les Paul developed the art of guitar amplification to the point that the traditional sound box was soon discarded and a new "electric" guitar emerged.

The stage was set for an escalation of piano power.

From the outset, the piano had obvious disadvantages for live rock performing. Microphone systems led to overwhelming leakage and feedback problems, and electromagnetic pick-ups, the guitar concept, had not yet been successfully applied to the piano. Due to the size of the instrument, portability, maintenance, and, of course, cost became obstacles for young rockers.

Inventors grappled with the problem as early as the '30s. The first successes were with new instruments which simulated or imitated the piano primarily in action, not in sound.

Harold Rhodes, a composer and music teacher, began work on such an instrument during World War II, eventually producing a "Pre-Piano" built out of scrap airplane parts. This was an ancestor of the Fender Rhodes, first marketed in 1964. Ben Meissner, a successful electronics inventor, was a major force in the development of the Wurlitzer Electronic Piano, first introduced in 1955. And the M. Hohner Company, German harmonica manufacturers, developed the Pianet and imported it here in 1962.

In an acoustic piano a key is pushed, causing a hammer to strike a string, causing the string to vibrate, causing air waves. To avoid the problems of microphones, electromechanical pianos use changes in magnetic or electric fields rather than air waves to initiate sound. It is the vibrations of a mass (a string, metal reed or metal tone bar) which produce signals in the pickup and are sent back to the amplifier where, once converted, they emerge as sound.

Here are our impressions of the most popular electromechanical pianos.

WURLITZER: This was the first electric piano to be successfully marketed, starting with the Model 110 in 1955. Its mechanical action causes hammers to strike small metal reeds from below. It employs a non-adjustable electrostatic pickup system, and comes with sustain pedal, self-contained amp and small speaker, and a vibrato unit.

illustration by Paul Plumadore

The feel of the keyboard is close to that of the average acoustic piano. The Wurlitzer can be tuned by filling the mass at the end of the reeds (to make the note sharper) or adding solder to the reed (to make it flatter). Unfortunately, this tuning system is not only laborious, it can be quite annoying. Unless you are very careful when filing, you can miss the exact pitch and become enslaved to a cycle of filing, missing, soldering, filing, ad nauseum. And unless the entire inside is vacuumed after tuning, the loose metal chips may land on the pickup causing static and even loss of signal. One other drawback is that the hammers eventually break the reeds, requiring not only replacement, but tuning of the new reed. Pounders beware!

To our knowledge, except for Little Feat there are few major acts currently using the Wurlitzer in live performance. The early models, which were discontinued in 1968, are much more highly regarded. The current model 200 is not as solidly constructed and, to our ears, just doesn't sound as good.

HOHNER PIANET: The Pianet was used by the early British bands and soon became popular in the U.S. Although discontinued some years ago, Hohner is introducing a new model next year.

Like the Wurlitzer, the Pianet is electrostatic. The mechanism differs in that adhesive pads lift or "pluck" the harmonica-like reeds. This makes for somewhat irregular action. It is tuned by filing either end of the reeds and holds pitch remarkably well. The sound is hard and clear, entirely different from a Rhodes. The action and lack of sustain pedal are its major drawbacks.

FENDER RHODES: For a six-year period, starting in the late '50s, Harold Rhodes was associated with guitar pioneer Leo Fender. However, it was not until CBS bought out Fender that Mr. Rhodes was able to successfully manufacture the Fender Rhodes. The Rhodes was quickly adopted for professional use. The stage model (without amp and speakers) was introduced in 1970.

Instead of reeds, the Rhodes has tuning fork-like metal rods called "tines". It employs an electromagnetic pickup for each note. Unlike the Wurlitzer, every pickup is adjustable; their placement significantly alters the dynamics and overtones of the instrument. The old suitcase model has controls for volume, EQ, and the famous stereo vibrato. The new model updates these features and adds some new ones. The stage model is a much more limited instrument electronically. It does not have vibrato.

The keyboard touch can vary greatly, from slow and heavy to overly light. However, the Rhodes action is fairly easy to adjust if you know what you're doing. The tuning is probably easier than any mechanical keyboard in existence. Moving a small wire wrapped around each tine alters the pitch of the note. Few tools, no filing, no mess!

Although the Rhodes is simple to maintain (the tines are very durable) and has a wide range of sound possibilities, it also has its share of problems. The old suitcase model contains inferior speakers (which many pros replace), and its amp/pre-amp distorts at a moderately high volume. The notes at the ends of the keyboard are often muddy in the bass and piercing in the treble, although the latter can be adjusted.

All things considered, however, this is the electric piano thus far. Its economic design and construction and distinctive sound make it the most widely used electric keyboard of all time.

YAMAHA CP 70 ELECTRIC GRAND: This new instrument is just being introduced, but judging by the backlogged orders, it promises to be very popular. Yamaha, a fine acoustic piano manufacturer, has designed an electric piano to replace the acoustic grand in live performance.

It's constructed like a midget baby grand: 88 keys, damper and sustain pedals, real piano action and piano strings. Yamaha employs an electro-

Galdston & Thom's debut album, American Gypsies, was recently released by Warner Bros. The authors won the 1977 American Songwriters Award.

magnetic pickup for each string, placed to give truer attack dynamics than those pickups most frequently used on acoustics. It also features vibrato, boost/cut EQ and a quiet patching system for effects. A specially matched amplifier and speaker system is available.

Although there have been pianos designed along these lines before, the Yamaha is by far the best we've tried. The Lawrence Audio (discontinued) and the new Gretsch/Baldwin and Aeolin "Melodipro" all use similar systems. But the Yamaha's rugged construction, superior electronics, and grand piano design (it doesn't block the audience's view of the performer) all mark it as the standard of its kind.

The only drawback we've heard of is the difficulty in tuning the shortened bass strings. In general, the electric pianos using strings will go out of tune faster than the other electromechanicals. However, if you're looking for a replacement for an acoustic, and are willing to lug one of these electrics around, they offer the only real hope.

There are many electronic pianos on the market, but the best known include: The *RMI Electra-Piano*, probably the granddaddy at ten years; the *Univox* (now discontinued, we believe), the keyboard Edgar Winter slung around his neck and the new *Yamaha CP-30*. These instruments have been played on countless recordings with the RMI the most widely used.

It is difficult for us to call these instruments "pianos", because none of them utilize any mechanical sound producers remotely similar to acoustic pianos. Certainly, they are valid instruments, but we would prefer you think of them as modified organs since electric circuits produce tones and send signals to amplifier when individual keys are depressed. The different instruments offer various attack/decay controls and a whole host of other sound modifiers, everything from harpsichord stops to pitch blending.

The Yamaha CP-30 has a velocity sensitive keyboard which puts it in a new subdivision of electronic pianos. This keyboard has a device which can sense how fast and hard the keys are being struck. This means that it is possible to obtain attack dynamics roughly similar to those of an acoustic piano electronically. Although this is a welcome addition, it remains to be seen whether the CP-30 will challenge the Rhodes in popularity.

The advantages to electronic pianos: generally lighter in weight than electromechanicals; they have more options and don't go out of tune.

The disadvantage is that they are not really similar to pianos in action or feel. However, organists love 'em! ■

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I certify that the statements made by me are correct and complete.

Alfred E. Knobler, President

THE HOOK

Denis Boyles

photograph by UPI

". . . between the material opera of the game on the ballfield, and the riotous, mythical celebrating of the victory, there are some notable twists, symbol-wise."

—Kenneth Burke, on the New York Mets

On Thompson Street, the women lean on window sills, swallowing the silence of safety. Below, their husbands and sons move easily in and out of the West Side Democratic Social Club. Thompson Street is a good street, the neighbors say, one of the safest in New York, a quiet street full of old friends. No festivals. No drunks. Just a good street.

* * *

A tidy journal entry: tonight the Italians pitch their voices high and loud down Thompson Street in a New York neighborhood brag. The sound congeals, no longer shouts separated in silence, but an eruption of rage. I am the new kid on the block, and I join the women, hanging out, watching the black kid below me run for his life, flying up the curb, dodging cars on his right, onto the sidewalk and sprinting like crazy. He looks back at the two dozen sons of Thompson Street pursuing, with baseball bats held high like military oriflammes. A quick procession.

"Get the son of a bitch."

I stretch for a better view. "A nigger!" A baseball bat flies, wraps around the back of his knees. Shit, he's down, a shadow collapsing into shadows. The Italian boys circle like roosting banshees and fire at random, beating a rhythm to their whoops, their shouts. Always the shouts. I shout, "No!" It's a roar on the street, a shout from the crowd. Televised, in undershirts we could watch, squatting across America, chucking beer cans. And then it's over, it was that fast, just the echo of splintering wood and the soft *thump* of one last shot. Silence and empty street.

I call the police and I'm on the street, just the two of us. We are clearly different: his body, small, brown, deflated; mine bigger than life now, and erect. He shudders twice, that's all.

Slowly, from the Democratic Social Club, the Italian boys emerge, emptyhanded, circling in discomfort, as if they might dance. The police arrive. A mourning, a screeching. A pronouncement of death. The police ask questions to an awkward silence. It is a mystery to the neighborhood. We all stand there like bad students in a geometry class, taut and grimacing at our ignorance. My elbows are pressed gently against me, a discreet gesture. I volunteer that I called the police. The space around me grows until there is enough room to take a wicked swing at a fat pitch.

* * *

I retreat. I lock the door, turn out the light. I'm going to sleep scared. Thompson Street is sounding good, quiet, no sounds at all except the busy steps on the stairs, the sudden pause at the landing, the exploding wall, the kicked-in door, the light, the hands at my neck on my shoulders pushing me high up against the wall: "One word, one word and you're as dead as that nigger." They drop me, the three of them, and leave me hugging a sheet, desperate for a friend.

* * *

The reporter from the *Post* has made it clear, standing in the doorway of the Social Club: one scratch on the guy upstairs and there's going to be a lot of ink on this, a lot of coverage.

* * *

The next morning, around the corner on Prince Street, the shopkeeper is whispering confidences to the reporter: "Well, he was a black kid, you know?" We do this once a year or so, it keeps them out of the neighborhood. You understand? We got families. We've been here for a long time. Last year, the boys, they set a bum on fire, a black bum. It keeps the street good. You know?" These small rituals. These tiny deaths. ■

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