

LOOKOUT!

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LOOKOUT NEW YORK! California Rube Editor Goes to Big City

Yow! What a great time! Some peoples' idea of an ideal vacation might be to loll about on the sunswept sands of some faraway beach, but for me, the grimy, cacophonous streets of Manhattan will do just fine.

All right, given the typical Californian's conviction that any place east of the Sierra Nevada (or east of the Berkeley hills in the case of Bay Areans) is hardly fit for human habitation, I suppose I should make a stab at justifying my enthusiasm for a city that would appear to represent the unholy antithesis of Nirvana-on-the-Pacific. Well, I'm not going to bother. Only an artless misanthrope could fail to appreciate the fecund heap of humanity piled high and deep on those preposterous little islands in the confluence of the Hudson River and That Other Ocean.

I'm not going to pretend to be an expert on things New Yorkish (though I did manage to master a fairly credible "Gedouddahere", thanks to time spent in deepest Brooklyn as the guest of WORTHLESS zine-ster Joe Britz. Let me just state smugly that by the end of my 12-day stay, New Yorkers were stopping *me* to ask for directions, and I was blithely jaywalking in front of speeding taxis with the presumptive invulnerability of a native.

Of course, it's not as though NYC were a totally new experience for me; I've lived there briefly on a couple occasions, and I've visited more times than I can remember. But this trip, my first in six years, seemed special from the time I started planning it, and I was not to be disappointed. I went straight from the airport to a party hosted by MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL and SPIN Magazine columnist Donny the Punk, and got to meet some of the characters who have been making the Lower East Side one of the world's cultural flashpoints.

One of the more interesting was a representative of pirate radio station WCHE, which I had read about in the Letters column of MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL #35. He explained to me how he and his comrades had ringed Manhattan with a series of portable transmitters that could be activated at unpredictable intervals to broadcast "subversive" material. This, as I've been saying in the LOOKOUT, is



exactly the sort of thing we need here on the West Coast, and those interested in such a project can find more info on page 2.

But before long I had to get outdoors; it was one of the first warm Saturday nights of the year and the streets were alive with sights and sounds. Music was everywhere, pounding out from phalanxes of ghetto blasters and pouring out of windows stretched wide open to greet the spring. For all the paranoid mythology to the effect that the sidewalks of New York are a jungle populated only by predators and their unwitting victims, there were more people nonchalantly strolling, laughing, and carrying on at midnight than one customarily sees in a busy San Francisco neighborhood at high noon. True, a lot of them were uptown Big Spenders, an unsightly portion of which were clad in that ridiculous costume of suit and tie that should never be seen north of Wall Street or South of the Rockefeller Center. But hell, it was a beautiful night; even professional drones deserve a little slack.

To show what an advanced state of euphoria I had entered into, even a 3 a.m. subway ride to Brooklyn had a

special charm, with the lights of the city suddenly bursting into view as the train trundled across the Manhattan Bridge. With less than two weeks to see and do everything, I didn't even want to go to sleep, and I barely did for the first few days.

Which brings up the question of just what *does* a guy like me do in New York City? Sure, everyone knows about the incredible array of things to buy, and about the fabulous discos where, if you meet the sartorial and social standards of the doorman, you can be accorded the honor of paying 20 bucks to rub shoulders with PEOPLE Magazine celebrities like Jann Wenner or Julian Lennon. But what about impoverished zine editors whose idea of a big night out consists of a slice of pizza and a subway ride? Is it possible to have fun on a food and entertainment budget of a couple bucks a day? Well, I sure did.

So, how *did* I amuse myself? Well, laugh if you want, but I walked. And walked and walked and walked. From Brooklyn to the Battery, up Broadway and back down again, and everywhere in between, but most of all in the area of 8 St.-St. Mark's Place and points south.

What's so fascinating about that relatively small quadrant of Manhattan? Two things, really, the buildings and the people. Away from the infernal realms of the glass and concrete box, New York architecture is kaleidoscopic in both its intensity and variety. Strolling down the back streets, my head spinning from trying to take it all in, I couldn't help but wonder what failure of the human spirit caused people to stop created these pillared, porticoed, and balustraded phantasmagorias and begin replacing them with the soul-bludgeoning banalities whose rigid, sterile lines fairly ooze oppression and despair.

Could it be only greed? The 19th century industrial barons who created what now passes for Old Manhattan were hardly noted for their altruism, yet they were willing to spend the little bit extra to turn the functional into the fantastic. With rare exceptions, even lip service to esthetics has vanished from the modern financial equation, which makes New York's remaining landmarks doubly valuable: as reminders that it was not always so, and as points of inspiration for those who, one hopes, will lead us one day out of the wilds of blandness.

But even the rich diversity of its architecture pales alongside New York's most astonishing and unique resource, the New Yorker. Renowned throughout the world for being rude, loudmouthed, abrasive, and unintelligible, the average man or woman in the street has been the undeserving victim of a disinformation campaign no doubt mounted by

envious Middle Americans. Not that he or she is likely to give a damn what anybody west of 12th Ave thinks; the typical New Yorker is vaguely aware of California and Florida as places where the sun shines a lot and not much else happens, and the rest of America is presumed to be an uncharted extension of New Jersey.

In the past I've endured scorn and ridicule for defending the unjustly maligned citizenry of Paris; I'd do the same any day for those remarkable New Yorkers. True, they may eat and drink to inglorious excess, communicate with all the subtlety of a train wreck, drive like homicidal maniacs, and consider their little island kingdom the be-all and end-all of human endeavor. But they also have a glorious individuality that makes the people of most places appear dull by comparison. The humblest New Yorkers with the drabest lives still manage to infuse their daily routines with a dash of art and *elan*. The traffic cop, the garbage man, the gridlocked cabbie, act and react with broader gestures, with elaborate bits of *schtick*, and with my favorite, the deadpan, drop-dead look that communicates volumes about the magnificent frustration of the human condition.

And tolerant... New Yorkers must have invented the word. Where else in the world will you see so many weirdos walking around unmolested? It is an article of faith that New Yorkers have the right to walk, drive, sit, eat, drink, or do whatever else comes into their minds wherever or whenever they feel like it. Some might call that chaos; others see it as the logical conclusion of applied freedom. "The New Yorker is essentially an anarchist," Donny the Punk told me, "who thinks he should be able to do whatever he can get away with." The results are sometimes messy, sometimes transcendently beautiful, but freedom is, after all, meaningless if people are afraid to use it.

Some other New York impressions: Greenwich, or the West Village, and its bastard offspring SOHO have ossified into stodgy centers of institutionalized Bohemia, nearly irrelevant to the cultural mix. The Yupper West Side is pretty and vacant, and its counterpart across the park is a principality unto itself, a little Monaco for the hyperprivileged. Nearly all the action takes place on the Lower East Side and the area immediately south of it. If I hadn't been at least nominally a tourist, I might never have left those precincts.

It wasn't always that way. Back in 1968, when I first lived in what the hippies had wistfully dubbed the East Village, murder was the most common street sport, and even the cops didn't come around except in caravans. Whole blocks of buildings stood abandoned, open for the taking to bands of urban scavengers like ourselves. Among the most

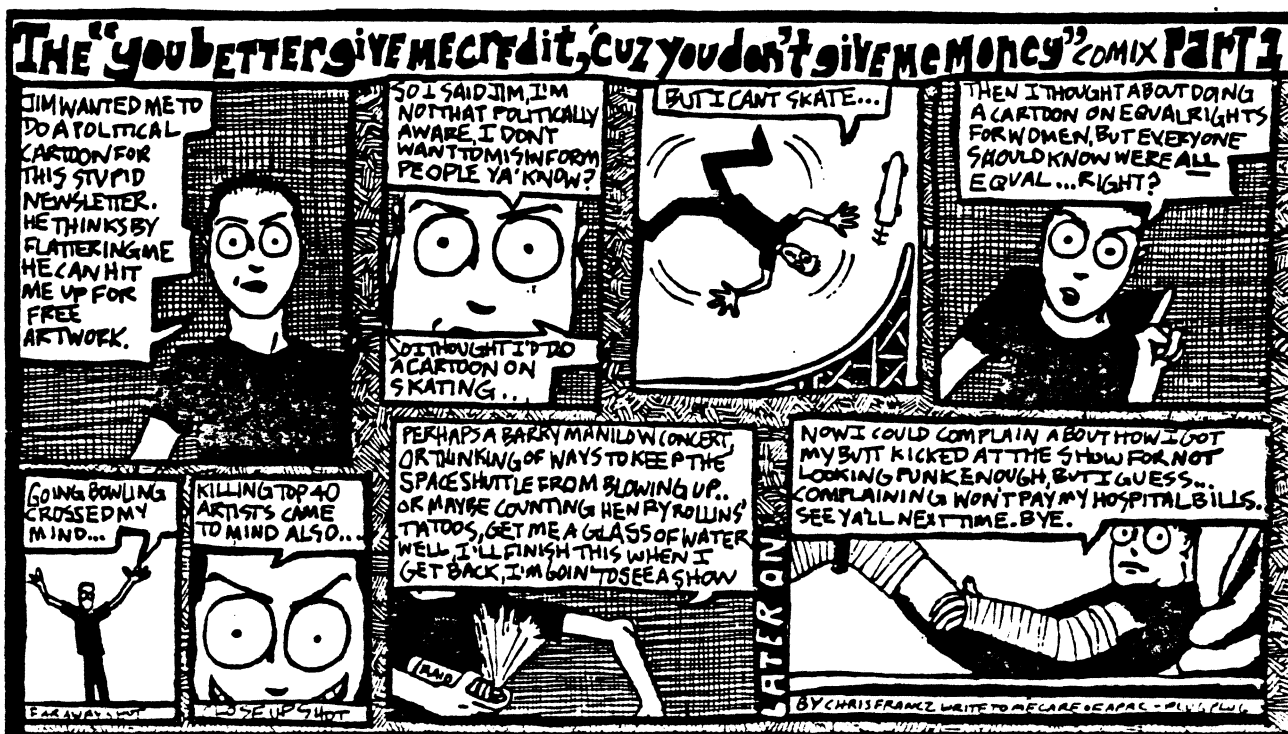
Take Back The Airwaves!

*Marco McClean's Radio*Free*Earth was forced off the air by some FCC bureaucrat after only a month in operation. So much for freedom of speech. There's not a single other station in Mendocino County (or any of the surrounding countiess) that won't cause brain rot in habitual listeners, and huge stretches of the FM dial are completely blank.*

Yet not only was was Marco's excitingly unique brand of broadcasting shut down by the authorities, his application for an authorized channel was denied in favor of yet another absentee corporate purveyor of Top 40 schlock.

It's clear that the government has no intention of relinquishing its stranglehold on free expression; it's equally clear that if you want to get nonconforming music or ideas on the air, you're just going to have to ignore the FCC censors.

According to insiders, you can get a viable pirate radio station together for \$500 or less. So what are you waiting for? SOUND CHOICE #4 (on alternative newstands now, or send \$2.50 to POB 1251, Ojai CA 93023) has a how-to guide complete with diagrams and addresses for parts, kits, and further information. You can also write to the people at New York's WCHE through the Alternative Press and Radio Council, c/o SEE HEAR, 59 E 7 St, New York NY 10003. And write to Marco at POB 1437, Mendocino CA 95460. Do it today, and strike a blow for freedom!



stable residents were the Hell's Angels (they're still there today, 18 years later).

But those days are gone, probably forever. Already artists are giving way to stockbrokers, and beautiful century-old flats are being levelled daily to make more room for more "luxury" housing, thanks to notorious urban defoliator Ed Koch, New York's venal and thoroughly offensive mayor (a fitting soulmate for SF's Dianne Feinstein).

But I didn't travel all the way across the country to brood about the government. I'd rather focus on some of the people and places that made my trip so memorable. First of all there's the already-mentioned Joe Britz, whose WORTHLESS zine I have long considered to be the East Coast counterpart of the LOOKOUT (Joe's moving to California, by the way, and hopefully will be joining with me to produce a bigger and better LOOKOUT). Then there's Ted Gottfried, whose SEE HEAR zine store (59 E 7 St, between 1st and 2nd Aves) contains what is lamost certainly the nations largest selection of the new underground journalism (including, naturally, the LOOKOUT). And I can't forget Harris, singer with the LETCH PATROL and activist with the new Alternative Press and Radio Council that everyone tends to associate most closely with the much talked-about (for better or worse) Donny the Punk (so much so that an anonymous wag has been making radio spots satirizing Lonny the Lunk, with LUNK standing for Lonny's Underground Noise Kommittee).

In the category of Important Places, I have to mention St. Mark's Pizza (3 Ave, just north of St. Mark's Place) which, after extensive research, I determined to be the

source of New York's finest slices. And the city's best restaurant (only restaurant for impecunious vegetarians like myself) is called Gourmet Food in the Village (W 3 St, between Thompson and Laguardia Place); you can get a good meal there for \$2 and an outstanding one for no more than \$4 (flesheaters will have to pay a couple bucks more).

My last night in New York was, if possible, even more exciting than my first, as I played guest DJ on a late night radio show. Sneer if you will about the mythos of New York being the ultimate delineation of "the big time"; it's hard to express the thrill that ran through me as I pronounced (and bumbled) my first station ID: "This is WBAI in New York."

Leaving the studio at dawn, with only a few hours left before my flight home, Joe and I elected to walk down Broadway, from 35 St all the way to Canal. The sun was just coming up, the air was gentle and warm, and the city was coming alive. Every 10 blocks or so, there'd be a park or a square full of trees in first leaf or full flower. My eyes darted everywhere, wanting to fix the pictures forever in my soul. Lines from a song by the band RITES OF SPRING were running through my head:

*Drink deep; it's just a taste
And it might not come this way again
I believe in moments, transparent moments,
Moments in grace when you've got to stake your
fate*

Sometimes we see so much in so little time that we never really understand where we've been until we're so far away that it doesn't matter anymore. Then other times there are those moments, so clear we can taste them, when there are no questions, only answers.

Yow! What a great time I had!

A MESSAGE TO HUMANITY FROM THE YOUTH OF AMERICA

(Author unknown: this poem was found on a wall in the Mission District of San Francisco)

Our time has come.
We are not a nihilistic generation.
We have grown up in the shadow of the possibility of nuclear annihilation.
We have grown up with the weight of this country's irresponsibility throughout the Third World sitting on our hearts and souls.
We have grown up in a society void of meaning, a society that alienates its members in the name of money.
We have grown up with false gods and spiritual illusions.
The old religions cannot sustain us.
The political ideologies cannot contain us.
We have had to dig deep for truth.
And we have found it.

Being faced with a world of darkness and despair we have had to face the enemy within.
We have learned how to take the pain and the rage of our internal and external worlds and transform it into love.
Nothing can stop us.
We can absorb the darkness and turn it into light.
We are not not afraid of pain.
We are not afraid of the dark.
We are warriors of the light.
By our light the old structures will be transformed.
With our love we will change the world.

WHAT WILL THE REVOLUTION CHANGE?

As predictable as the flowers of spring, the annual uprising came and went on the UC Berkeley campus with little discernible result.

This year's battle was more pitched than any in recent memory, with rocks and bottles flying, windows shattering, and even some blood flowing, but a couple weeks later everything was back to normal. With summer vacation fast approaching, one has to presume that, barring a stretch of unseasonably good weather during the fall semester, the saving of the world will have to be put on hold for another 12 months.

Those who romanticize the 1960s tend to forget that that era's protests were also seasonal, the difference being that the number of people involved was so much greater that it was possible to maintain the energy of a given movement over a longer period of time. What happened at Berkeley this year was that after the first couple of days nearly all the hardcore

anti-apartheid activists were locked up, leaving the field to dithering liberals and would-be leftist power brokers.

Far be it from me to denigrate the courage and devotion of those who were willing to put their bodies on the line in opposition to University involvement with the racist and fascist South African regime. But other than making a couple days' splash in the media and providing local police with some overtime pay, what was really accomplished?

The first duty of a revolutionary (aside from not getting caught) is to devise and implement new ways of doing things. So it's disheartening to see a new generation of radicals following by rote a generic politics of confrontation that was only partially effective in the 60s, and which, given the absence of broad-based support, is even less likely to work today.

Yes, it's true that the Vietnam War was finally ended after 10 years of similar protests, but if there had been any *real* change, would we be about to embark on the whole bloody mess all over again in Central America? Besides, it's my contention that marches, sit-ins, even riots, were only partially responsible for putting a stop to the Vietnam madness. Equally important, if not more so, was the fact that people simply stopped cooperating with the system. By the early 1970s, the government was having real trouble finding enough suckers to fill its armed forces, and it was becoming obvious to the young men of America that Uncle Sam's power to force them into uniform was nowhere near as absolute as it had once seemed. In fact, you could make a good case for the theory that the government *had* to end the war before the entire population caught on to the idea that it could get away with thinking for itself.

The prospect of getting one's head blown off in a pointless war worked well as a radicalizing tool among young Americans 20 years ago. But only the most Machiavellian of rebels would welcome the prospect of another war for its power to rekindle the revolutionary fires. In the meantime, as long as the worst abuses of the corporate-governmental system remain out of sight and mind of the comfortable middle-class, mass movements and/or resistance remain unlikely.

Does that mean there's nothing to be done until things get intolerably worse (there may not be too long to wait)? Of course not, but it does mean that today's protestors are going to have to come up with goals that are more realistic and tactics that are more effective.

A case in point: the attempt to force the University of California to unload its massive investments in South Africa. Since the Regents had already pretty much come right out and said that they were not going to be swayed by appeals to their moral nature, the obvious next step was either to give up, or to escalate the struggle by stopping the University from functioning. This never came close to happening. Instead, cops and kids battled over symbols, specifically the mock shantytown erected in front of the administration building.

While the shantytown was a colorful and educational rallying point, it had two flaws: 1) it was in the wrong place, and 2) there wasn't sufficient support to keep it standing. Though there's a certain logic to confronting the UC administration with a graphic reminder of its South African policies, the real battle is for the hearts and minds of the student body and the community at large. A much better place for a shantytown would be at the entrance to Sproul Plaza, where the university and the community intersect (and by the

way, I'm sick of hearing this nonsense about how many of the protestors were or were not students; the university is a tax-supported public institution, and its policies reflect on and affect all of us).

A Sproul Plaza shantytown would be more easily defended, too. But these are not the Free Speech Movement Days, when hundreds of students could be carted off to jail and there would still be hundreds or thousands left behind. That being so, I don't see a lot of point to people allowing themselves to be locked up when they could be more productively occupied.

Specifically: if you want to shut down the university, there are more effective means than street battles (and maybe I'm turning into an old softy, but I don't enjoy seeing people, even people wearing police uniform, getting hurt fighting over a piece of essentially meaningless turf. It's too much like wat). What about (nonviolent) sabotage? A handful of pre-dawn mischief makers could super-glue every building lock on campus. Radical hackers could put the university's computer system into convulsions. Anyone with a working knowledge of electricity should be able to black out whole buildings. And there are always the more puerile but no less efficacious devices such as smoke and stink bombs.

All of the above, plus many similar tactics that I'm insufficiently devious to think of, would do more to impede the functioning of business as usual and at the same time make it less likely that people would have to resort to violence to make their point. And with thousands of students wandering around at loose ends, the opportunities for radicalization would be, if anything, greater.

It comes down to a question of whose terms you're going to fight on. If it's simply a question of brute force, the bigger brute will always win. Any revolution that can't outsmart the established order doesn't deserve to win. Fighting in the streets may stir the blood, but the real battlefield is the mind. I don't feel the need, personally, to engage in either violence or sabotage because I think I can accomplish more by informing people and questioning the assumptions by which they govern their lives. I may be deluding myself, but the way I see it, there's always time for fighting; it's the time for peaceful, constructive change that's in desperately short supply.

And for those who are ready to fight now, I can only say, please don't lose touch with your hearts in the passion of the moment, or you risk becoming no different from your oppressor.

Feinstein Orders Bombing Raids on Western Addition to Deter Terrorism

Stating that she was "proud to be following in the footsteps of our heroic Commander-in-Chief President Reagan," Mayor Dianne Feinstein last week called in elements of the California Air National Guard to make "surgical" bomb attacks on certain neighborhoods of the Western Addition, where, it is alleged, terrorist activity has been known to originate.

The terrorism referred to by Feinstein consists principally of robberies and muggings, often directed at tourists, who, as the Mayor noted, are "the City's bread and butter."

The raids began just before dawn when a squadron of sleek silver jets thundered out of the eastern skies as Mayor Feinstein, clad in a leather flight jacket, cheered them on from a command post high in the dome of City Hall. The bombers met with virtually no resistance as they went about their duties, and it is believed that the handful of residents who were awake at that hour mistook the jets for part of the Blue Angels, a Navy stunt flying group which the Mayor frequently invites to perform practice maneuvers above the City's rooftops.

When the bombs started falling, there was no chance for escape, according to nearby residents, who watched awestruck as the flames continued to burn on into the afternoon and evening. Approximately 17 city blocks were levelled, most consisting of City housing projects, which, the Mayor said, were well-known headquarters and training camps for terrorists.

One unfortunate mishap occurred as the result of a misunderstanding; a young bomber pilot, unaware that the once-infamous housing project known as the Pink Palace had been converted into a senior citizens' residence, completely destroyed the high-rise structure, and between 300 and 400 people are thought to have been killed.

A somber Mayor Feinstein expressed her sympathy to the families of the victims, but she also reminded them that, "Sometimes the innocent have to suffer in order to punish the guilty." She also urged them to "look on the bright side: remember, most of these people were quite old and probably wouldn't have lived much longer, anyway."

Whether the Mayor's unusual action will serve to deter terrorism in the long run remains to be seen, although preliminary police reports indicate that things have been fairly quiet in the neighborhood since the attack. Feinstein also announced that she will be quickly moving ahead to rehabilitate the stricken area, and has already entered into an agreement with Walter Shorenstein, the Marriott Corporation, and several anonymous Canadian developers to construct a major new office and condominium center on the bombed out sites.

Viet War Photo Is Challenged
Westmoreland Says Hibachi, Not Napalm, Burned Girl



This photograph was a Pulitzer Prize in 1972.

PORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Jan. 18—Retired general William C. Westmoreland, in a speech here this week, questioned the circumstances of one of the most haunting photographs to come out of the Vietnam war.

Hoanh Cong (Nick) Ut of the Associated Press, who took the photo of a Vietnamese girl—running, naked and screaming, from a wall of fire and smoke—said the photo is authentic, that it was on a roll of film he shot of napalm bombs dropped near Trang Bang on June 8, 1972.

Westmoreland told a group of business people here that he did not believe that the girl was burned by napalm. He said an investigation determined that she had been burned in an accident involving a hibachi, an open grill.

"I said, 'My God, if she was hit by napalm, she would not have survived,'" Westmoreland

added. They said the bombs were dropped by South Vietnamese planes attacking enemy communist positions.

Westmoreland said he didn't recall who told him that the girl in the photo, which he said he has seen once or twice, was burned by a hibachi.

"I did not say I had personal knowledge of that," he said. "I don't remember who told me, and I don't remember making a formal investigation."

In an interview, Westmoreland said his comments about the photo were in the context of questioning how the press distorts news in foreign countries by applying domestic standards of what is news.

"Murders and rapes that is what makes headlines," he said.

From the Washington Post, January 19

RADIATION GOOD FOR YOU, GOVERNMENT FINDS

Washington -- As the fallout report became anew feature on the nightly weathercast, Americans were able to breathe easieras a new government study proved that radioactivity is not harmful as was previously thought, and actually may be good for people.

This amazing development was announced today by Dr. Wesley Hornswoggle, chairman of the President's blue-ribon panel for the advancement of nuclear energy. "The important thing to note," Dr. Hornswoggle told reporters, "is where the world's nuclear power plants are located. It's no coincidence that virtually all of them can be found in the world's most advanced countries, and not a one in the wretchedly poor and backward Third World countries, where the life expectancy is often only half of what it is here in America. So just let me ask you, if nuclear energy is so bad, why are we doing so good?"

When asked whether this meant that Americans had nothing to fear from the cloud of radioactive iodine spreading around the world in the wake of the disastrous Chernobyl meltdown in the Soviet Union, Hornswoggle was quick to differentiate between safe and sound American nuclear energy and the inherently unsound Russian variety. "Why, the Communists can't even get their tractors to run half the time; how could you expect them to get it right when it comes to such a delicate matter as splitting an atom," the bespectacled scientist joked. "And," he added, "splitting an atom is just like cracking an egg: if you don't hit it just right, you can have a big mess on your hands."

Questioned about his qualifications for the prestigious position he now holds, Dr. Hornswoggle revealed that he had been a professor of logic at a small teacher's college in North Dakota before joining the Reagan administration.

LETTERS TO THE LOOKOUT

Dear Lawrence,

Thanks for the article on where punk rock is turning today. I feel that for many of us the first step in waking up our overloaded American advertising consumer bullshit minds was to rebel and then create; what came out was punk rock. Crude, raw, and really refreshing to know that there are others who will be members of the living dead if we don't wake up from our brainwashing culture telling us that all we must do with our thinking time is shop. When you're

poor it is pretty frustrating. As I experienced on the Berkeley campus last week, this government feeds us all endless information but refuses to recognize what we star putting out as creative opinion. Sorry, we've been listening to the "commies" or the non-American way. We didn't buy it, literally, and that's the threat.

Now I feel I'm at a place where I can no longer think in terms of *us* and *them*. That has become the limiting attitude. Let's dissolve those mental borders and see what we have: a giant orb, rushing through space, with people on all sides, fish in all the oceans. I wonder if the human is the only species that understands the concept of "superior" and "inferior". I don't get that feeling from animals. I'm tired of playing the victim, whether it's victim of poverty, victim of society, victim of a fucked-up childhood, and I'm trying my damndest to understand that I can change my attitude. But I must say that it has changed my music.

I really admire bands who have evolved their sound and discarded the formula. Everybody changes (if they want to), so the creative output changes. There's nothing I like better than to hear a band playing some completely different style and really digging it. John Doe and Exene playing country honky tonk? Sure! Go for it! I've gotten to the point where I want *my* lyrics (I'm in a band in which all of us write lyrics and sing lead and harmony in different combinations) to be the way I want to live my life and to help others learn to think for themselves. I don't need to have someone think for me, and I don't want to sing about being their victim. As the Rastas say, "Word sound have power, mon." Consider what you say to manifest your present truth. But don't worry, you can change if you want!

Thanks for the great attitude
Alyson Steinman
San Francisco

Dear People,

Here is the follow-up to *Death of a Nuclear Family* (Letters, LOOKOUT #16): Life is still hard and we alternate from being totally depressed to feeling elated and hopeful. Change is extremely slow. I have been successful in procuring daycare for my two darling sweet children, which helps. We are still isolated on the mythically peaceful farm. We still feel like giving up into the release of drug addiction or suicide, especially when one hears the news of nuclear disaster. It is hard to fight back the tears of empathy and carry on with life and forms and applications. But stagnation for me now has ripples on the surface. Music even plays a vital role in keeping happy. We own a car radio now which me and the one-year old rock and sing to (even though it is only KFRC) and I found out my ex-best friend Jani Taylor is singing torch songs in a band called the COCKTAIL TWINS, something (singing) I would love to return to. If anyone knows of any inexpensive daytime shows which allow minors, let Lawrence know about it so my family can go. It's been a long time.

Linda Lou
Petaluma

Lawrence,

Hi, I finally got the time to write back to you. Great zines, great tape! I really like the sound of the LOOKOUTS. One voice - I'm guessing it's Kain's - is really interesting. You sound good also. But more importantly, the lyrics are great. This tape came highly recommended (Joe Britz - WORTHLESS) and I can see why.

The zines (what a word) deal with the issues I'm interested in. I'd love to sit down with you and have a real talk; unfortunately, letters will have to suffice. I'm a little bothered (if I'm to be 100% honest) that others have discovered your zine thru THE NATION. I try to bear in mind that not everything which becomes "popular" or "mainstream" (I'm using the terms in a relative sense) has to turn to shit. I think you should keep this in mind also. A couple of times I get the impression that you have a holier (or rather, more socially conscious) than thou attitude. Hey, I do it, too, but keep things in perspective, okay? (I'm referring to your analysis of the "art scene" in SF.

I'm surprised that Feinstein is so uncool; the only thing I knew about her previously was what I read in Harvey Milk's biography. Isn't *old girl* an oxymoron, by the way?

Well, I really have to end this letter up (I work and go to college full time so I have very little time). I can't spare \$10 right now, but I'd like to see the latest issue of the LOOKOUT. Do you know of any other zines like it or music like the LOOKOUTS (form or content)? Please let me know.

Thanks a lot
Tom Racioppo
Selden NY

Dear Tom,

Music like the LOOKOUTS? I've racked my brains and haven't been able to come up with anything. Readers? As for zines, I'll probably run a review of my favorites soon, maybe even next month.

Lawrence

Maintain and build your COURAGE in the face of horror brought by your transition into seeing, communicating, and being the TRUTH.
I'll subscribe.

Adam Moes
Daly City CA

Dear Lawrence:

HUSKER DU at the Fillmore for \$13! Gee, guys, signing with a major label hasn't changed you at all, has it?

David Hayes
Belmont CA

The Beer Cans That Bloom in the Spring, Tra la...

Spring came early to the mountains this year, and I was crawling along one of the rutted cowpaths we call roads (just joking, road committee people!) admiring the first of the wild flowers, I noticed an equally valid reminder of the changing of the seasons: a significant increase in the number of Budweiser and Coors' cans decorating the landscape.

Now it is commonly known that the manufacturers of those respective beers adulterate them with chemicals designed to make their consumers stupid, in the case of the former, and fascist, with respect to the latter.

But this story is not about bad taste in beer, nor even, as it started out to be, about the essential repulsiveness of those who dump their unsightly garbage all over a basically pristine countryside. Thinking about the sort of people who are so out of touch with their surroundings that they could carelessly deface the beauty of these mountains led me to ruminate on the two very different types of people who have settled here.

The first consists of those who simply love the land, as well as the privacy, the freedom, and the spirit of self-reliance that living close to nature requires. Then, there are others, who see the land primarily in terms of how much wealth can be extracted from it.

When I first came to Mendocino, I was amazed to see that the main distinction people tended to make was between hippies and rednecks, an issue I thought had been dead since the early 1970s. It seemed obvious to me that many of the "old-timers" were every bit as environmentally conscious and respectful of the land as were the most righteous hippies, and that a significant number of the newcomers, though typically sporting the trappings and rhetoric of the "New Age", had a distinctly old-fashioned philosophy, consisting of one part colonialism and one part Louisiana-Pacific-style slash and burn land raping.

The principal economic products of our county, as everyone knows, are timber and marijuana, not necessarily in that order. Although too seldom done, logging can be conducted in a sustainable, ecologically sound manner. Marijuana cultivation, on the other hand, has a much less visible impact on the environment (a completely invisible one in the case of proficient farmers) but that impact is nonetheless powerful.

What are we to think of people who use intense (and often untested) chemical fertilizers that will eventually leach into their neighbors' water supply? How different is that from Louisiana-Pacific polluting the county's watersheds with its herbicides? Isn't this also true of those who use rat poisons that end up in the food chain, or casually slaughter deer or other animals that might threaten their plants?

Often, though not always, the guiltiest parties are those who spend only the summer growing season in the mountains, then depart for warmer climes with their profits. I know I'm in danger of over-generalizing here; many part-time residents are very sensitive to the land and its needs. But when you look on the mountains as essentially a place to make money, it's tempting to overlook the long-term consequences of your actions.

Another form of pollution, one which is far more open to debate, is the corruption of values that tends to accompany large amounts of easy money. Neighbors might disagree, for example, on whether satellite TV and similar expensive toys represent an advance or a regression, but no one can deny that they have radically changed the nature of mountain living. There's little doubt, on the other hand, that the influx of cocaine and other hard drugs has not been a positive development. Even the junkies would probably not argue that the community (what there is of it, and that's precisely the issue) is better off as a result.

Problems like these have risen in direct proportion to the price of marijuana, which in turn has risen in direct proportion to the amount of government repression. But it works both ways; greedy growers who put in enormous crops draw down heat on their mom-and-pop neighbors, and the atmosphere of wild west/goldrush/war zone is inexorably heightened.

Anyway, those are some thoughts that I was pondering in the still-chilly spring air, with summer coming around one more time.

MUSIC CAN MAKE YOU STUPID

The only thing I have in the way of California music news is one very important item: there are signs that at long last we may be getting a reliable all-ages venue for shows and other important cultural activities. I don't want to say too much yet while negotiations are still in progress, but there are some together people behind this, and I feel it's got a real good chance of succeeding. But if another great place along the lines of New Method gets set up and is then trashed by the people it was meant to serve, then I give up (on so-called punk rock, anyway). Alcohol and vandalism have been the undoing of most other places; how about showing some responsibility not only for yourself (I'm sure that goes without saying for all you brilliant LOOKOUT readers) but also for your less enlightened brothers and sisters. Having an alternative means doing things for yourself, not expecting someone else to do them for you.

Anyway, watch MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL and/or the LOOKOUT for more details, and let's hope it works this time. I mean, let's *make* it work this time.

Reviews

The RAMONES and the two worst bands in the world at Livingston College, New Brunswick, NJ, April 26

For years now, whenever I'd start waxing even remotely optimistic about the possibility of social change occurring in my lifetime, people have attempted to bring me back to earth by saying something like, "Lawrence, you haven't been anywhere in the last 10 years except California, New York, and Europe. You have no idea how bad things are out there in the *real* America."

Welll, that's not completely true; I did visit my folks in Detroit about six years ago, and made a brief misbegotten trip to Mexico last year (see LOOKOUT #3), but I guess this criticism does have some validity. I prefer to think that Kansas< Illinois, Georgia, Idaho, and the rest of those places are getting along just fine without me, and I must say I haven't missed them all that much either.

But midway through my recent New York trip, I had an opportunity to make a visit to the heartland (if such a wholesome-sounding word is appropriate) of New Jersey. Known, not without reason, as the Toxic Waste State, New Jersey lived up to its reputation as soon as we crossed the bridge from Staten Island, enveloping us in a chemical cloud slightly less bad-smelling but slightly more lung-searing than the one that permanently blankets Gary, Indiana (see, I have been other places).

The occasion for this excursion was the slightly incredible prospect of seeing a *free* performance by the RAMONES, the band most recently famous for charging \$25 for their New Year's Eve show. When you figure bridge and turnpike tolls plus gas, I guess the evening was far from free, but it's the principle, right? Besides, a typical show in New York City is in the \$8 to \$12 range (sample: the same night in Brooklyn, CIRCLE JERKS plus two New York bands, \$12. I guess Paul Rat doesn't seem so bad after all).

But to reiterate the tedious cliché, nothing's free in this world, and it seemed that the Livingston College authorities had decided to make us rock and roll parasites pay for the privilege of seeing the RAMONES by forcing us to sit through (stand, actually; the concert was outdoors in a field) some of the most horrendous sounds and theatrics that the human species has yet been able to devise.

I hesitate to even name the perpetrators of these flagrant offenses against taste, decency, and the central nervous system, but on the chance that some innocent bystander might be spared... Holding forth on the stage, amid clouds of smoke and colored lights right out of a bad LED ZEPPELIN movie, was a star-crossed assemblage of pretentious buffoons and arrogant dilettantes billing itself as the ALAN HOLDSWORTH EXPERIENCE. I was too busy looking for a place to hide to ever find out which one of the cretins was Holdsworth, but he deserves a cream pie, or

several, for his name choice alone. Think about it: even those of you who think I'm the greatest guy in the world: would you want to come see something called the LAWRENCE LIVERMORE EXPERIENCE? I wouldn't.

So just what was so grotesque about these anti-musical felons (gee, I hope I don't run out of insults before the review's over)? Start by asking yourself what was wrong with the 1970s. This band had it all: smug, complacent attitudes, self-indulgence verging on mental illness, endless rambling instrumental solos that pitted dissonance against pointlessness with soul-strangling tedium the only clear winner.

But that wasn't the worst of it. Nobody was forcing me to listen to this stuff; I could always leave until the RAMONES came on (I did, in fact, twice, and each time when I came back the AHE was *still* playing). The truly frightening thing was that the predominantly student crowd didn't seem to find anything wrong with the esthetic atrocity being visited upon them. Some of them were even applauding! I started looking around and realized that this whole college seemed to be stuck somewhere in the 70s, the *bad* part of the 70s, like 1974, when the cultural highlights were platform shoes and Quaaludes. They just didn't care; they would eat up anything presented to them in the name of entertainment, just as they would watch anything on TV or believe anything their professors told them. So *this* was the Middle America I'd been warned against! And here we were no more than 50 miles from New York City! What horrors must lurk in the darker backwaters?

You've probably gotten the idea by now that I didn't like the first band. The second outfit, something called SHOUTING DISTANCE, didn't know how to play anything, and the singer couldn't sing, but who am I to hold things like that against a band? The worst thing (the two worst things, actually) was the alleged singer's looking like he thought he was the THOMPSON TWINS (all three of them) and the fact that all they even tried to play was generic new-wave disco, of which all you could hear was a relentless thump-thump along with some sort of distorted noise (might have been the singer). The many RAMONES fans who'd been gathering near the front of the stage were not very patient with this group, and I think they left sooner than they'd planned to. Fortunately.

So now it's time for *the* original punk-rock band, New York's major contribution to the second half of the 20th century, and what do we see first? More *smoke machines*. I swear, it's true. Then the spotlights come on, and here we have Johnny and Dee Dee standing on pedestals on each side of the stage, posing as social realist sculptures of heavy metal guitar heroes.

But then they started playing those guitars, and there were no more bad parts. Well, except that the RAMONES were twice as loud as the PA system could handle, so that half the time you couldn't even tell what song they were playing. As if it mattered anyway. About every minute and a half would come another "One, two, three, foah" (they varied it once with an "Ein, zwei, drei, vier"), and the front of the stage would open into a bottomless pit. Stage

divers abounded, too, until a crew of college jocks put a stop to that by sitting cross the lip of the stage like a row of sullen monkeys.

The fact that the RAMONES could put on an hour and a half show and not even play all their big "hits" is pretty impressive; even more impressive, after 11 years they haven't slowed down a bit; if anything they're even faster. My only complaint: they didn't play *Bonzo Goes to Bitburg*, my all-time favorite RAMONES song, and proof that a band can continue to grow lyrically over the years, too (not that the RAMONES had much of anywhere to go but up).

But as much as I enjoyed seeing the guys again, the impressions that really stuck with me were those of an incredibly backward college that I fear is too typical of those all across America. If this is how things really are out there, we've got a lot more work ahead of us than I thought. Who am I kidding, anyway? I can see just as many idiots on an average school day in Berkeley. But hope springs eternal, and so do fools like me.

THIS IS WORTHLESS

by Joe Britz

Hi! I'm sorry to intrude on your reading of the LOOKOUT, but editor in chief Lawrence D. Livermore has asked me to start writing a regular column for his illustrious mag. I'll begin with a sort of introductory Story of My Life (zzz...).

Here it is: I was born, got older, and will eventually die. Umm... I guess I'll have to go into a little more detail or I'll be unceremoniously bounced from my new prestigious position. OK. Soon after the "gift" of life was bestowed upon me I began to feel like a constructive proposition at the Peace Summit; in other words, I didn't belong. So after drifting through a # of years and feeling miserably inadequate living in the asylum known as New York City, I became interested in punk rock. I don't want to give the impression that I then "saw the light", but the energy, rebellion, and generally open-minded behavior within this underground network initially gave me some solace.

Knowing others feel in a similar fashion, though it helped to a degree, was only the first step out of the ditch. Then I moved on to other more creative methods of survival. Mind you, anybody that knew me during this period wouldn't exactly call me Mr. Happy Face, but I did come to terms with my life a little better after discovering this new culture. I'm sure you're wondering what great achievements and goals punk has inspired me toward. Nothing earth-shattering, just an increased interest in communication with others, putting out my own fanzine for two years (now defunct; it was called WORTHLESS), becoming a vegetarian, getting more involved in aggressive, nonviolent political dissent, and behaving in a friendlier, more compassionate manner, to name the major changes.

But problems within myself remained. In the

NYC "punk scene" I still felt like a "misfit among misfits", to borrow a quote from a friend of mine (Hey, Carolyn!), and these lonely, bitter feelings didn't help much on my road to healthy growth (I know that sounds corny, but it's true, nevertheless).

So my next step is to abandon the sinking ship in NYC and try my luck in San Francisco. There's a million reasons that I shouldn't move (one of them being that I may end up competing with the homeless for cardboard boxes to shelter myself) and only one substantial reason that I am determined to: something about NYC doesn't agree with me and my heart yearns to move on to SF.

With luck, continued support of friends in the Bay Area (including the slightly deranged editor - only a state like California could house such a lovable nut), and hard work (for a spreading community spirit, not for a 9 to 5 prison camp), I have a feeling I'll be able to do something more consistent and durable with my life. So even with (and especially because of) nuclear meltdowns, "war rumours around", and a greedy, hate-mongering society (to name three things I'll always work against), I say, let's move onward in the LOOKOUT! But don't worry, in the future I'll attempt to write less self-centered stuff and am even thinking of writing something about you next time. Remember, we're all unique, significant individuals put on this earth to *blah, blah, blah....*

Ed. Note: Write to Joe c/o the LOOKOUT; he gets desperate if he doesn't get at least 2 or 3 letters a day.

Help!!!

Well, actually it's not that drastic, but I was hoping someone out there might have a copy of LOOKOUT #1 (October 1984) that they could let me make a copy of. Write to me if you do. Thanks.

Lawrence

LOOKOUT: POB 1000 Laytonville CA 95454
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TIRED OF THIS COMPUTERIZED NONSENSE? I AM. I'VE BEEN SITTING IN FRONT OF A VIDEO SCREEN FOR THE LAST 13 HOURS TRYING TO LEARN HOW TO WORK THIS THING AND NOW IT'S LEFT ME WITH A BLANK SPACE ON MY LAST PAGE. OH WELL, I'LL TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEND YOU ALL A HANDWRITTEN NOTE TO LET YOU KNOW THERE'S STILL A HUMAN BEHIND THIS TECHNOLOGY.

ALSO, I'D LIKE TO THANK DAVID HAYES FOR THE LOOKOUT LOGO, THOUGH I MISS THE EYES (OO), AND CHRIS PALL FRANZ FOR THE CARTOON. AND NEXT MONTH I HOPE TO HAVE MASTERED THIS MACHINE ENOUGH TO MAKE THE LOOKOUT COME OUT LOOKING LIKE A REAL... SOMETHING OR OTHER, TILL THEN, THANKS FOR READING.

LAWRENCE

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