

# HETERO DOXY

ARTICLES AND ANIMADVERSIONS ON POLITICAL CORRECTNESS AND OTHER FOLLIES



## GAY SECOND THOUGHTS

**G**abriel Rotello is not the sort of person who generally gets attacked in the pages of *The Nation*. He is, in fact, an occasional contributor to this left-leaning magazine, and has impeccable credentials in the gay movement and in leftist politics. He was a member of ACT-UP when the group defined radical gay activism in the late '80s and early '90s, staging "die-ins" at the FDA building in Washington and disrupting masses at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. In 1989 he founded the controversial—some would say notorious—magazine *OutWeek*, which for three years "outed" closeted homosexuals in public office and ran all-caps headlines like "I HATE STRAIGHTS."

Rotello hammered home his views in major gay-audience publications like *Out*, the *Village Voice*, and *The Advocate*. Writing in the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and as an editorial columnist for *New York Newsday*, he brought gay issues to mainstream audiences to a degree that few other writers have matched. In 1995 the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation named him its Outstanding Journalist of the Year. "I not only followed the party line," says Rotello, "I helped write it."

But now, *The Nation* is comparing him to Pat Buchanan. In a piece entitled "Media Gays: A New Stone Wall" (a reference to the 1969 Stonewall Riots which jump-started the gay movement), Rutgers professor of English Michael Warner charged that Rotello was in fact a member of the "gay right" whose views "repudiate the



legacies of the gay movement" with a "heady program of neoconservatism." Worse, he was "openly hostile to gay sex," seeking "the moral high ground by denouncing the sex lives of queers."

In the world of gay activism there is no dirtier word than *conservative*, and Warner's attack, published in the country's premier left-wing publication, had the feel of an excommunication. And this was merely the tip of the iceberg: gay writers in publications like the *Washington Post*, the *Village Voice*, and the AIDS-activist publication *Poz*, as well as in local gay newspapers around the country, echoed Warner's charge—Rotello was a reactionary and his ideas were a threat to both HIV prevention and gay liberation.

Rotello's heresy began last April when he published *Sexual Ecology: AIDS and the Destiny of Gay Men*, in which he made the case that gay men's sexual behavior was in large part responsible for the AIDS epidemic—and that continued promiscuity by "core groups" of highly active men now threatens to create a "second wave" of infection. Worse still, he questioned the ability of "safer sex" (i.e. sex with condoms) to prevent this cataclysm without concomitant behavioral changes. Ending AIDS, he wrote, would require the creation of a "sustainable gay culture" which encouraged sexual restraint and responsibility by placing greater emphasis on relationships, monogamy, and marriage, and less emphasis on unrestrained sexuality.

Rotello was not the only prominent gay intellectual threatened with

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### INSIDE

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*The Assault on  
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### THE ASSAULT ON LARRY ELDER GAG ORDERS FOR A BLACK CONSERVATIVE By Jill Stewart

**K**ABC's popular afternoon radio talk-show host Larry Elder is rummaging through a stack of files he keeps in his home office when two slip crookedly from the pile. One is labeled "Letters, Fan," another "Letters, Hate." They are almost equally fat. Elder is looking for two particular correspondences, and he finds them atop a drift of mail. They are new, but it's clear from their worn look that Elder has already read them over and over.

The first is an anonymous death threat from someone who sees Elder as an enemy of black people; it includes a disturbing photo collage depicting Elder. Beneath the collage is a let-

ter that reads: "Wanted: White Man's Poster Boy—Dead. Bring Head to South-Central." The second is a six-figure offer to write a book, from a top publishing company that sees Elder as a critical new voice on race relations in America.

Larry Elder inspires such equal helpings of revulsion and persistent demands for his time that the number of job offers he's received nearly matches the number of death threats. The threats, some frighteningly vivid, have prompted a probe by the Los Angeles Police Department. Elder also has been stalked. Bill Lennert, marketing and publicity director for KABC-AM 790, will not discuss security matters involving his hot afternoon drive-time star, saying only: "It is all being handled through proper law enforcement channels."

Nevertheless, Elder's surprising take on race issues has spawned one of the hottest radio

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MORE DRUDGERY

In your feature length editorial; “Free Man Drudge” (October 1997). You make your first point cogently and convincingly. “Sidney Blumenthal is a nasty piece of work and a shameless flack.” Your second point, however . . . Wait! What is your second point? That shameless flacks may be libeled with impunity, especially if they flack for the hated Bill Clinton? That journalists who have established a good overall track record for accuracy may irresponsibly repeat lies, so long as they do so only infrequently, and only where the victim is a nasty piece of work? You do the anti-establishment press (including yourselves and also Matt Drudge) a terrible disservice by claiming entitlement to an exemption from the rules of professionalism and the finely-tuned constitutional rules of public figure libel.

According to the seminal 1964 Supreme Court case of *New York Times v. Sullivan*, a public figure like Sidney Blumenthal has the burden of proving that the offending statement was not only false, but that it was made “with knowledge that it was false, or with reckless disregard of whether it was false or not.” In 1968, in the less celebrated case of *St. Amant v. Thompson*, the Supreme Court further clarified (and stiffened) the “reckless disregard” aspect of the standard by holding that it must include “a high degree of awareness of probable falsity” as measured by the defendant’s subjective belief. In other words, in order to prevail, Blumenthal will have to prove that Drudge (and America On-Line) entertained serious doubts about the truth of the charges against Blumenthal, but published them anyway. This is a very hard row to hoe, and will depend on whether the source for the false story had previously proved untrustworthy, whether there were other indications of falsehood, and so on.

Matt Drudge is right to protect his source’s identity, but he is wrong to attempt to fob off all the blame on the source. Drudge’s stock-in-trade is a high-wire act of breaking stories with little time for fact-checking. When the story comes up trumps, Matt Drudge deserves and often receives praise for his irreverent muckraking style. But if he repeats a false story, while irresponsibly ignoring its accompanying warning bells in service to the almighty deadline, he deserves to reap what he has sown.

The Blumenthal suit will be hard to win, but it is not frivolous and not mere harassment of a thorn in the establishment’s side; it should go forward as a legitimate check on the media. The defendants have already conceded falsity, but the plaintiff will lose if he cannot meet his high burden of proof on the additional elements of public figure libel. In that event, the First Amendment will have been vindicated, but the costs of winning the suit will have taught Matt Drudge and his AOL editors the need for more caution in publishing marginal stories. If Blumenthal wins, the First Amendment will still be vindicated, because the lesson for all of us will be that the Constitution does not shield journalists who make what you refer to as “careless errors,” if that error is not merely careless, but also reckless in the constitutional sense.

W. William Hodes  
Indiana University School of Law  
Indianapolis, IN

PROMISES AND MIRACLES

It was with mixed emotions that I read Mark Tooley’s articles “The President’s Pastor” and “Religious Fright Over Promise Keepers” (October 1997) I read with grief, even a sense of shame, because I, a longtime member of the United Methodist Church, know that what he wrote is true. It is true not only in Washington but also far afield—certainly in our Oregon/Idaho Conference—and at the highest levels of the church hierarchy. At the same time I want to thank you for running the articles.

Many of our church members who indeed do oppose the deceptively named “Reconciliation Movement” and indeed the whole Wogaman-type agenda prefer to know nothing about these aberrations and are carefully not

informed through church channels. It is my hope that bringing it out in the open will increase awareness and bring about change. Maybe that’s asking for a miracle, but miracles do happen. I’m just practical enough to believe that they happen more often when someone’s pushing for them.

Elizabeth Richman  
Alsea, OR

Bigotry—the term used by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force to describe the Promise Keepers’ edict on homosexuality—is an excessively ugly word. But the fact remains that the Keepers’ view of gay people is, plainly and simply, religious prejudice, however majoritarian that bias may be. It is interesting to note, however, that a number of openly gay men were reported by their pastors to have supported and attended the Washington rally.

Mark Tooley’s other article, on the Clintons’ hopelessly statist pastor, Philip Wogaman, veers into a homophobia that is irrational to the point of incomprehensibility. Since when is it anti-biblical to suggest that stoning disobedient children to death is no longer a moral imperative? And if that and similar archaic pieces of scripture are no longer to be followed it is hardly apostasy to suggest that religious views on monogamous gay or lesbian couples might also bear revisiting, as significant minorities in most mainstream churches are urging.

I’m delighted that *Heterodoxy* exists to testify to the dangers of socialism and the culture of irresponsibility. I’m disappointed that your publication now seems intent on falsely portraying all gay people as warring on basic morality.

Ronald Najman  
Brooklyn, NY

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For accounting purposes  
this is a joint issue of  
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your subscription.

Doesn’t the President’s pastor, discussed in the last issue, merely represent one form of popular culture trying to gain favor over another traditional form of popular culture? What *Heterodoxy* is really talking about, through these and past articles, which mock rather than analyze deconstructionist/Marxist Christian belief, is mindlessly maintaining traditional Christian belief (whatever that is.). To not go into the pros and cons of both beliefs is to ask *Heterodoxy*’s readership to accept, without question, a conservative rather than liberal position on, let’s say, mainstream Christianity. Is *Heterodoxy* honestly looking at popular culture—past, continuing, and present—or dishonestly looking at popular culture strictly through the politically conservative lens? Is the lockstep conservative intelligentsia that Collier and Horowitz wish to cultivate any different than the lockstep liberal intelligentsia they subscribed to in the turbulent ’60s (and which I agree has cause and is causing us great suffering via academia and government)?

Ronald C. Corby  
Fredericksburg, TX

MULTICULTURAL GAG RULE

The key sentence in Scott McConnell’s revealing story (“PC Firing at the *Post*,” October 1997) comes just after he recounts his defense of the offending article in his newspaper to a group of irate Puerto Ricans who had come to the *Post* offices demanding a showdown. The scene vividly illustrates an invaluable maneuver that the Left, to its

great advantage, mastered long ago but, which seems to be virtually ignored by the right—feigning moral outrage and claiming the moral high ground early on. From this vantage point, a rhetorical line in the sand is drawn which all well-meaning members of polite society are expected never to cross. In McConnell’s case, that line consisted of never mentioning the obvious flaws in Puerto Rico’s qualifications for statehood. Similarly, with feminists, the line precludes any mention of women’s innate differences from men whenever such mention runs counter to the feminist game of Let’s-pretend-the-sexes-are-interchangeable. With gay rights activists, the “no-no line” has practically purged from public discussion any reference to the proven link between AIDS and the stratospherically high level of homosexual promiscuity. Among protected minorities (mostly radical blacks and Latinos), objective dialogue has been rendered impossible by the rigid gag rule that has been imposed on dropping even a hint that the immense problems of crime, poverty, and illiteracy in these communities may be linked much more closely with cultural and attitudinal factors than with that shopworn ol’ debbil, white racism.

O.M. Ostlund, Jr.  
State College, PA

REPUBLICANISM YES, S&M NO

As a new subscriber, I am totally disappointed in your publication. I expected more substantive, conservative articles through which I could become more knowledgeable about Republicanism. I am totally disinterested in your article “About S&M” (September 1997) since I am aware of such degradation but don’t see the value of featuring such frankness about it in a publication of conservative persuasion. Nor am I interested in Johnnie Cochran’s legal clients since I expect that kind of activity from the man, and I cannot do anything about it.

Dorothy B. Reiner  
Tallahassee, FL

RED SCHOOLHOUSE

Peter Meis’s letter in response to Ronald Radosh’s article on Elizabeth Irwin HS (September 1997) contains two egregious errors that need to be corrected. His use of Norman Thomas as an alleged communist influence on the ACLU is ludicrous. I knew Norman Thomas personally. My older sister was one of his speech writers, and he lived close to my parents’ retirement home. He, like my sister, was fanatically anti-communist. As a dinner party guest, he invariably bored everyone with a repetitive anti-communist diatribe to an audience that hardly needed any such persuasion. Indeed, even as a pacifist of sorts, he shocked one Quaker hostess by insisting that George Patton was right: the Allies should have kept going on to Moscow! Most social democrats shared his anti-communist passion. Even as a “socialist,” he was a Fabian squared. His ideas were little more than a presage of the New Deal, hardly radical.

Nevertheless, Meis’s contention that the ACLU was never anti-communist is correct. But one must add that it was never pro-communist either. It prided itself on being neutral, insisting that to infringe anyone’s civil rights, whatever his politics or conduct, would endanger everyone’s civil liberties. Thus it defended the right of communists and Nazis, from Hollywood to Skokie, Illinois, but never their ideas. Once the ACLU supported affirmative action quotas and set-asides, along with speech codes, it abandoned that neutrality, in favor of our *au courant* “political correctness.” A Roger Baldwin would never have tolerated Director Ira Glasser’s laughable verbal gymnastics to justify something as patently unconstitutional and profoundly un-American as reverse gender and racial discrimination. To him, two wrongs do not make a right. But then, Baldwin grew up in a different era than Glasser, who is clearly a mindless product of the ’60s and a “liberal racist.”

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# REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM

**MOTHER AFRICA:** That sound that was heard at the Million Woman March in Philadelphia was the noise of American women sucking up to keynote speaker Winnie Mandela. Mother Africa, as she was known during her strut upon the world stage in the '80s, was lionized by the black female leaders present at the event and described by Maxine Waters as “mother of us all,” whose only remaining desire was to build a memorial to “all the children who died in South Africa’s revolution.” Back home in Johannesburg, the Truth Commission hearings featured testimony about one of those children, 14-year-old Stompie Seipei. The youngster, who was accused of being a police informant by Mandela and her palace guard, the so-called Mandela United Football Club, was killed in 1988 in Mandela’s house. Previously, it was thought that she merely gave the order for Stompie’s murder, but one of Winnie’s former bodyguards, Katiza Cebekhulu, told the Truth Commission that he saw her stab the teenager in the living room of her Soweto house.

**PC CANCER:** According to the American Cancer Society, some 226,000 of the 1.4 million new cancers diagnosed this year will be of the prostate. Of the 266,000 deaths from cancer, 42,000 will be of men with prostate cancer. About 186,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer, and some 44,000 will die. Pretty close to even numbers in the holocaust. But what is not even is the money spent on these two forms of cancer. The government will spend \$445 million on breast cancer research this year and about a quarter of that, \$119 million, on prostate cancer. (Forget for a moment that AIDS, which amounted to 57,000 new cases and 39,000 deaths, gets \$1.5 billion.) Why are there such large discrepancies between breast and prostate cancer research? Otis Brawling, assistant director of the National Cancer Institute, let the cat out of the bag: “It is essentially affirmative action for grants.” And, of course, such inequity has a domino effect, as it does in contracting, higher education, and the other venues for preferences. If you are a young researcher trying to figure which one of these cancers to study, what do you do? You follow the money. According to medical estimates, research on prostate lags 10 years behind research on breast cancer. Time for another million man march.

**YOU SURPRISE I SPEAK YOU LANGUAGE:** The pro-Chinese appeasement lobby, including Clinton officials who have belatedly developed an affection for constructive engagement, took it as a good sign that Chinese President Jiang Zemin quotes from Jefferson and gives a passable rendition of the Gettysburg Address. It is true that Jiang speaks English. It is also true that he speaks Russian, having studied it during his tenure at the Stalin Automobile Factory in 1955. But his primary language remains the language of despotism.

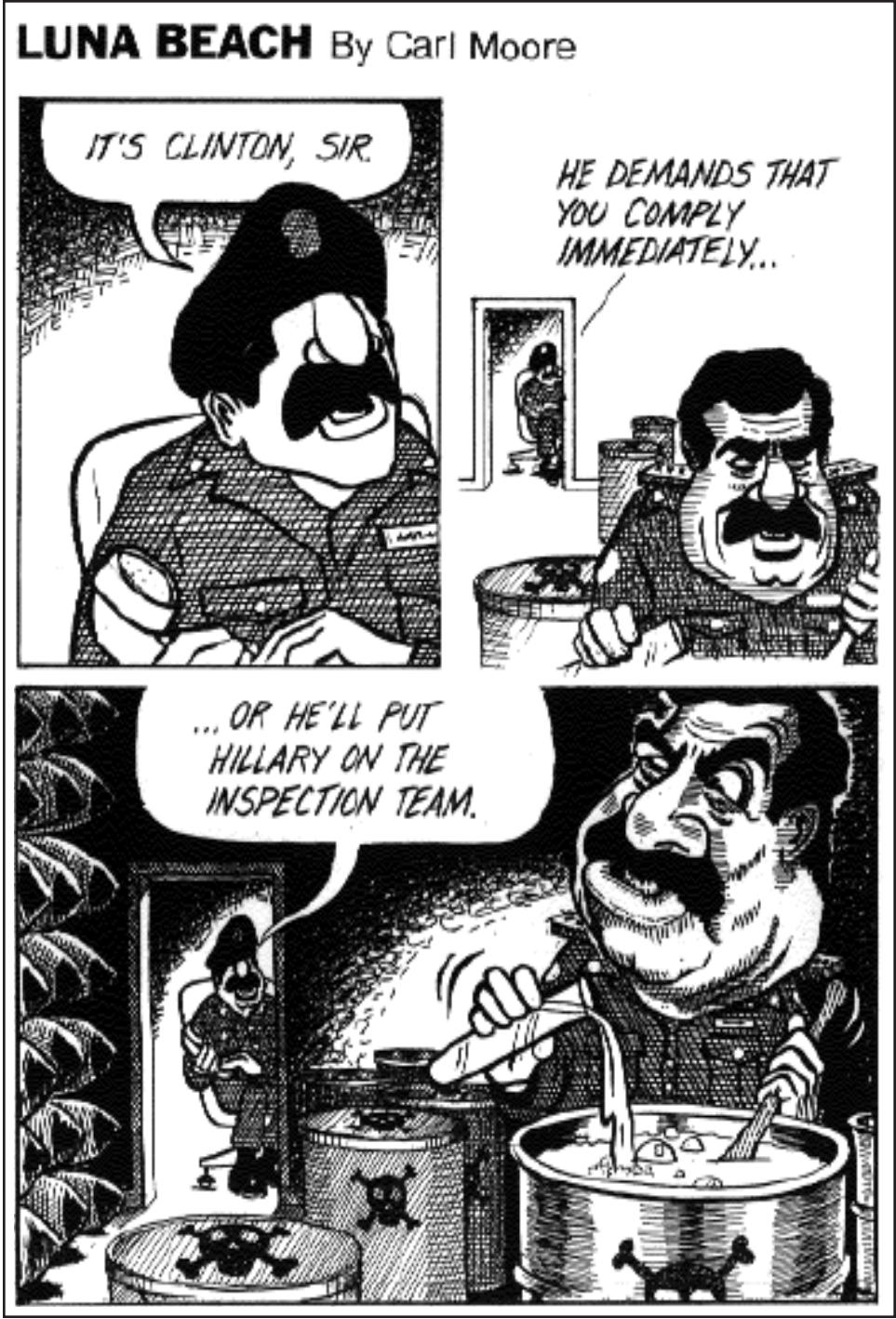
**BAD WORDS:** Charles Frankel was a professor at Columbia University, former Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, and first president of the National Humanities Center in North Carolina. He was also a big supporter of the National Endowment for the Humanities until his death in 1979, which is perhaps why his name was attached to the award given by the government to five recipients from 1989 until last year. This year, however, the Charles Frankel Prize in the Humanities was renamed the National Humanities Medal. Even more ignominy was in store for Frankel. As a parting trib-

ute the National Endowment reprinted a few pages of his thoughts about the place of the humanities in a self-governing nation, but added this note at the bottom of the front page: Some of the excerpts reprinted here are from articles or speeches from as long ago as the 1950s. Readers may find Frankel’s occasional use of “man,” “he,” and “his” jarring when “women,” “she,” or “her” would be equally appropriate. Although Frankel later used language that included both sexes, these early references have been left as they were written.

Farmer got a lawyer. Her case was on hold awaiting a decision on the Taxman case. Now that this decision has been purchased by Jackson et al, the Farmer case is getting revved up again. The civil rights pros better keep raising money for reparations.

**BRING IN THE CLONES:** Among the estimated 14,000 mourners at the memorial service for Princess Diana held in New York’s Central Park was Randolfe Wicker, the long-time gay rights crusader who earlier this year formed the first ever human-cloning activist group, the Clone Rights United Front (See *Heterodoxy*, April/May 1997). Wicker and several volunteers spent the afternoon handing out thousands of commemorative badges reading, “CLONE DIANA: One Good Lifetime Deserves Another.” Wicker himself wore a large sign around his neck featured a photo of a smiling Diana fringed by glittering heart stick-ons. “I’ve seen and talked to people who feel as I do. We can save at least an important part of her,” Wicker said in an interview. “Humankind must conserve and save its best.” Although on the fringes of the Diana ceremonies, Wicker continues to work toward his dream of a world in which people are free to clone themselves. And, quixotic though his quest may have seemed when he began it last spring, Wicker can take heart from a recent front-page story in the *New York Times* which reports that the scientific community, initially skeptical, is now beginning to warm to the idea. Dr. Steen Willadson, who developed the techniques used by researchers in Scotland to clone Dolly the lamb, opined that it was “only a matter of time” before the first human is cloned. “The fact is that, in America, cloning may be bad but telling people how they should reproduce is worse,” said Dr. Willadson, in a statement that would be chilling if it were comprehensible. “America is not ruled by ethics. It is ruled by law.”

**MUMIA WATCH:** December brings the latest episode in the continuing saga of Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has become an NPR commentator, author, and international celebrity since being sentenced to death row in the early '80s for murdering a Philadelphia police officer (See *Heterodoxy*, Sept. 1995 ). The People’s International Tribunal for Justice for Mumia Abu-Jamal has announced plans to meet in the City of Brotherly Love on December 6 to express solidarity with their imprisoned comrade and get to the bottom of the “conspiracy” which they believe is responsible for his conviction and imprisonment. Scheduled to be “indicted” by the Tribunal are Pennsylvania governor Thomas Ridge, the entire Pennsylvania Supreme Court, the mayor, the police department, the department of corrections, the current district attorney, the FBI, the U.S. Justice Department, and “the ruling establishment of Pennsylvania including the Media.” It is perhaps no surprise that former Black Panther Geronimo Pratt or demi-communists Angela Davis and Herbert Aptheker or Assata Shakur, in hiding in Cuba since murdering a New Jersey policeman 25 years ago, have signed on to this effort. But the number of mainstream literary and academic notables who have also pledged their support for the Tribunal may raise an eyebrow: novelists Toni Morrison and Alice Walker; philosopher Jacques Derrida; Harvard’s Henry Louis Gates and Cornell West; and *The Nation*’s Christopher Hitchens among them. For good measure, Michael Meeropol, the son of atomic spies Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, has also thrown his vote to Mumia.



**BUYING DIVERSITY:** When Jesse Jackson and the other civil rights professionals bought out Sharon Taxman’s suit before the Supreme Court could render a judgement, they were accused of paying hush money. Actually, it would be better to think of their efforts as reparations paying for the moral and political injustice committed against this white woman by the Piscataway, New Jersey, school board. Jackson and his comrades better have deep pockets, because the cases against affirmative racism are lining up. White students discriminated against by the University of Michigan have filed a class action suit. And there is another case involving a white woman at the University of Nevada that is heading toward the Court. (Why is it, by the way, that the Sisters of NOW and other hardline feminist organizations so easily ignore the wrongs done to women by affirmative action?) At the University a white female named Yvette Farmer was passed over for a position in the Sociology department in favor of a Ugandan named Johnson Makoba. When she asked the chairman of the department why, he replied with a candor unusual in the academy, “because he’s black and you’re not.” Adding insult to this injury, Farmer was hired a year later by the University of Nevada but found that she was making \$11,000 less than Makoba. When she asked why, she was told that this represented a minority bonus, the university’s way of buying diversity.





# The Hollywood Ten’s 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Commie Dearest

By K.L. Billingsley

**FADE IN:  
INT. MOTION PICTURE ACADEMY,  
NIGHT**

It is Oct. 27, 1997, exactly 50 years since the Hollywood Ten were called before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. That key moment is on the mind of the mostly old-money showbiz crowd packed into the Academy Theatre. In fact, they are here to see “Hollywood Remembers the Blacklist,” a commemoration sponsored by the writers, directors, and screen actors guilds, and AFTRA. A collage of 1947 newspaper headlines backdrops the podium, stage right. LIGHTS DOWN, BIG-BAND JAZZ UP WITH A SWELL. The screen shows footage from forties and fifties including such icons as Marilyn Monroe and Joe DiMaggio. It was a great time to be an American, the narrator says, and a great time to be in Hollywood. But, he adds ominously, there was trouble in the Dream Factory.

**CUT TO:  
BLACK AND WHITE FOOTAGE OF 1947  
HEARINGS**

We see images of HERB BIBERMAN, SAMUEL ORNITZ and JOHN HOWARD LAWSON, members of the Ten described by the narrator as an award-winning group of writers and directors. These are the GOOD GUYS. We see the Ten defy the Committee, who come off as ham-fisted right-wing yokels. Applause from the audience, which jeers when friendly witnesses ROBERT TAYLOR and ADOLPHE MENJOU appear. These are the BAD GUYS.

**CUT TO:  
STAGE LEFT**

Lights up on five members of THE COMMITTEE, played by actors, who sit above a solitary witness. It is Hollywood Ten veteran RING LARDNER JR., in the flesh. He wrote the screenplay for *M\*A\*S\*H\** and is one of the few left who testified at those hearings. Lardner reads off a list of his accomplishments and mentions that his brother fought in the ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE during the Spanish Civil War. This brings applause. Then he reads the speech THE COMMITTEE kept him from reading 50 years ago:

**LARDNER:**  
My record includes no anti-democratic

word or act, or opposition to American democratic principles as I understand them . . . Compared to what I have seen in this room, Hollywood is a citadel of freedom . . . Here there is such fear of free speech that men are forbidden to read statements. . .

**RINGING APPLAUSE**

**CUT TO:  
EXPOSITORY FOOTAGE**

We see the Committee for the First Amendment, a Hollywood support group for the Ten that included HUMPHREY BOGART and LAUREN BACALL. There is a CLOSE SHOT of MARSHA HUNT, then a young actress, with these big stars.

**CUT TO:  
PODIUM, STAGE RIGHT**

MARSHA HUNT is there in the flesh, calm and dignified after all these years. She tells the audience what it was like to live through the blacklist:

**HUNT:**

We were all fired up with our mission, to defend our industry’s good name and to defend, not communism nor communists but all Americans’ right to privacy of opinion and freedom of advocacy. . . But only days after our return from Washington, our film colony was rapidly turning into a different town. . . Then, as the virus spread across the nation, for over a decade, this was no longer the land of the free, nor the home of the brave.

**LOUD APPLAUSE**

**CUT TO:  
PODIUM STAGE CENTER**

BILLY CRYSTAL appears, playing actor LARRY PARKS testifying to the committee. This scene shows that those who reluctantly named names were still blacklisted and their careers ruined.

**CUT TO:**

JOHN LITHGOW, playing actor STERLING HAYDEN, another who named names. In a fit of flagellation, Hayden says he paid the price for his shameful act.

**CUT TO:**

MORE FOOTAGE, in which writers and actors such as JOHN RANDOLPH, JEFF COREY, and JEAN BUTLER relate tales of oppression and DALTON TRUMBO, the emotional and artistic leader of the Ten, explains how he beat the blacklist by writing under fake names. This stratagem is illustrated by scenes from Woody Allen’s *THE FRONT* and *SPARTACUS*, written by Trumbo. When an image of SAG president RONALD REAGAN appears, the crowd jeers. At the end of the footage, names of those blacklisted solemnly scroll up the screen as plaintive violins evoke emotion.

**CUT TO:  
PODIUM STAGE CENTER**

JACK SHEA of the Directors Guild of America officially restores Hollywood Ten veteran Herb Biberman. Presidents of other Guilds look on.

**CUT TO:  
PODIUM STAGE CENTER**

PAUL JARRICO, one of the Ten and screenwriter for “Song of Russia” and producer of “Salt of the Earth.”

**JARRICO:**

The guilds have come a long way since they failed to protect the Hollywood Ten. You and your fellow presidents have reaffirmed tonight the guiding principle of unionism. Injury to one is injury to all. . . Our brutal history defines patriotism as my country right or wrong. Our noble history defines it as: my country, right the wrong. It may take another 50 years, but we shall overcome. The good guys will win.

Thank you.

**APPLAUSE**

**CUT TO:**

DANIEL PETRIE JR., president of the Writers Guild, who presents Jarrico with a plaque engraved with the First Amendment. As he accepts, the other blacklisted victims stand to a thunderous ovation.

**CREDITS RUN**

**H**ollywood *Remembers the Blacklist* was a sure-fire feel-good hit in the movie capital. The myth of political courage in the face of dark forces provided by the blacklist gives show business a sense of history and past decency that makes the venality of its daily operations tolerable. The events of 1947 provide this town with an easy casting call of heroes and heavies. The heroes have been praised and honored many times and, the day after the Academy event, when Paul Jarrico was killed in a car accident on his way to yet another blacklist gala, it was almost as if he had been killed posthumously by the “witch hunters” who made his life miserable 50 years earlier. Five decades after the fact, blacklist politics still sets the agenda with those handing out awards, and can still touch off shouting matches among dream factory veterans.

*Murder My Sweet* and *The Caine Mutiny*

director Edward Dmytryk, for instance, one of the Ten who wound up as a “friendly witness,” has been vilified from the podium at film festivals. Academy-Award winner Elia Kazan, director of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *On the Waterfront*, who cooperated with the Committee, has been passed over for American Film Institute lifetime achievement awards in favor of Roger Corman, known for such high art as *Attack of the Crab Monsters*. To some degree, the black-and-white morality makes sense. The political gang that rode into Hollywood in 1947 was comprised of, for the most part, third-rate opportunists and bullies beating up on an industry then under fire from anti-trust legislation and threatened by the new medium of television. Hollywood meant automatic headlines, and for some on the Committee it was difficult to discern where their anti-communism stopped and their anti-Semitism began. John Rankin of Mississippi, for instance, went after the supporters of the Ten by noting, “another one was Danny Kaye, we found out his real name was David Daniel Kaminsky . . . One calls himself Edward G. Robinson. His real name is Emmanuel Goldberg. Another one here calls himself Melvyn Douglas,

whose real name is Melvyn Hesselberg.” On another occasion Rankin scoffed at the “forest of noses” among the Hollywood crowd. It is true also that the hearings amounted to a combination circus and show-trial, with friendly witnesses allowed to carry on at length, and hostile witness gaveled into silence. As political theater the hearings bombed, ripped by papers coast-to-coast, which is doubtless why chairman Parnell Thomas—later jailed on a fraud charge and incarcerated with Hollywood Ten veterans Ring Lardner and Lester Cole—halted the proceedings abruptly after a few days in a limelight that cast an increasingly sickly hue. The studios then flip-flopped on hiring communists, but many who lost work had never been Party members. Their story—and the story of the vulgarians who victimized them—has been told in many books and documentaries and ceremonial events starring the Hollywood Ten as mythical heroes. In the process, however, something has gotten excised from the script—the original and intriguing “back story,” the only production that makes the Blacklist comprehensible. This story involves the Hollywood communists and their success in the dream factories. If



THE HOLLYWOOD TEN AND ATTORNEYS GROUP PORTRAIT, 1948

there really were witches stirring a poisonous stew, it puts the witch-hunters in a slightly different light.

The Hollywood Party

The cinema offers endless possibilities for alteration of reality, which is why both Lenin and Stalin considered it the most important of all art forms. In the mid-1930s, when the Party toned down its class-hatred rhetoric and launched a cultural offensive in the West, Hollywood loomed as a strategic target. “One of the most pressing tasks confronting the Communist Party in the field of propaganda is the conquest of this supremely important propaganda until now the monopoly of the ruling class,” said Comintern official Willi Muenzenberg. “We must wrest it from them and turn it against them.”

Founded by Party bosses V.J. Jerome and Stanley Lawrence in the mid-1930s the Hollywood branch of the Party was highly secretive and controlled directly from Party headquarters in New York. Former Soviet spy Elizabeth Bentley described Jerome as a “pale, cold-looking individual with a face like a sleepy fish.” Communist writer John Bright recalled Jerome expounding the Party principle of “democratic centralism,” which meant that, “When the Party makes a decision, it becomes your opinion.” Jerome considered himself something of an aesthetician. He said that agitprop drama might seem clunky but was actually better than other dramatic forms because Marxists better understood the forces that shaped human beings, and could therefore write better plays.

John Howard Lawson, one of the Ten and also the commissar of the Hollywood talent guilds, had emerged from the left-wing theater movement in New York. Just how left-wing was indicated by his play, *Processional*, which featured children in overalls and masks, ranting about the “Monster of Capitalism” and screaming “Kill Henry Ford!” Described as a “sectarian son of a bitch” by fellow self-admitted Communist Paul Jarrico, Lawson ruled with an iron hand, enforcing the Party doctrine that “art is a weapon.” He encouraged writers, directors, and even actors to portray businessmen and clergy in the worst possible light, urging writers to smuggle anti-capitalist ideas subliminally into their dialogue and bit actors to portray members of country clubs and other ruling class institutions as decadent and parasitic.

Party scribe Albert Maltz felt the sting of Lawson’s lash in 1946, when he wrote a *New Masses* piece criticizing the “art as a weapon” doctrine and praising James Farrell (*Studs Lonigan*), a Trotskyite demon for the Party faithful. Lawson, Jerome, Communist Party boss William Z. Foster, Party novelist Howard Fast, Hollywood Ten veterans Herb Biberman, Alvah Bessie, and others vilified Maltz for hours, shouting down those who dared defend him. (“Here one saw the wolf pack in full operation,” said Leopold Atlas, who was there.) Maltz dutifully subcontracted his mental faculties to Party dogma and wrote “Moving Forward” a cringing recantation of his “one-sided non-dialectical treatment of complex issues.” He defended his retraction to the end of his days and, years later,

committed a similar flip-flop on *Doctor Zhivago*.

The Hollywood Party tried to get Budd Schulberg to rewrite *What Makes Sammy Run?* and ordered Edward Dmytryk to reshoot *Cornered* according to John Wexley’s agitprop script, which Dmytryk and producer Adrian Scott had non-Communist John Paxton rewrite. Both declined and suffered the Party’s wrath.

Lawson’s totalitarian character actually helped him in Hollywood, where many liberals were all too willing to accept direction. That enabled the Hollywood Party to wield influence far beyond its numbers, with Budd Schulberg describing it as “the only game in town.” Lawson proved adept at networking with the many Communist front groups, such as the Motion Picture Artists Committee, the Motion Picture Democratic Committee, and the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League. Conservative screenwriter James McGuinness said he would join the League if it would only state that they were “equally opposed to Communism.” The organization declined to do so and also turned down a reported \$1 million from David Selznick to change its name to the Hollywood Anti-Nazi and Anti-Communist League.

Lost in all the martyrology and victimhood generated by the House Committee hearings of 1947 and the blacklist that followed was the extent of the Party’s reach in Hollywood, something that Party members piously and mendaciously denied when questioned about their beliefs. These groups dominated political activity in Hollywood, raising millions from those Stanley Lawrence dubbed “fat Hollywood cows to be milked.” As writer and director Philip Dunne (*How Green Was My Valley*, *The Agony and the Ecstasy*) put it, “All over town the industrious Communist tail wagged the lazy liberal dog.” As Ronald Brownstein noted in *The Power and the Glitter*, the Communist Party “dominated liberal politics in Hollywood from the 1930s through the 1950s,” marshaling star power from behind the scenes.

In 1938, in a meeting at the home of Edward G. Robinson, the Anti-Nazi League launched its “Committee of 56” to lobby President Roosevelt for pressure against Germany. The Committee included Ben Hecht, Claude Rains, Spencer Tracy, Burgess Meredith, Lucille Ball, Don Ameche, John Ford, Joan Crawford, Rosalind Russell, James Cagney, Henry Fonda, Jack Warner, Groucho Marx, James Cagney, and Melvyn Douglas. This committee of celebrities sent a declaration of “democratic independence” to the President and to Congress, requesting them to “bring such economic pressure to bear against Germany as would force her to reconsider her aggressive attitude towards other nations.”

With such sentiments all Hollywood people of good will could readily agree. But that changed on the morning of August 24, 1939, when Stalin signed his pact with Hitler. Literally overnight, the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League became the Hollywood League for Democratic Action. Gone were the expressions of solidarity with the victims of fascism, replaced with slogans like “The Yanks Are Not Coming,” and “Let’s Skip

the Next War.”

The work of the Anti-Nazi League was taken over by the American Peace Mobilization (APM), whose wholly-owned subsidiaries included groups such as the Hollywood Peace Forum and Hollywood Peace Council. Herbert Biberman, one of the Ten, was on the National Council of the APM and honorary chairman of its Los Angeles branch. They held meetings at the Unitarian Church in downtown Los Angeles, a center of left-wing activity to this day. Leftist writer Nancy Schwartz acknowledges that this “peace” activity was done covertly, “on behalf of the Communist Party.”

It was one thing to have been in the Party when the party line swerved into an alliance with Hitler, forcing one to accommodate. But it was another thing altogether to join a Party in open alliance with the Nazis. But in Hollywood some were up to the task. Screenwriter Dalton Trumbo (*Kitty Foyle*, *Papillon*) had been close to the Party before the Pact. (Trumbo once claimed that he joined the Party in 1943, but Jarrico said he recruited Trumbo during the Nazi-Soviet pact.) The Communist Party serialized his anti-war novel, *Johnny Got His Gun* in the *Daily Worker* and in 1940 Trumbo wrote a novel called *The Remarkable Andrew* which opposed United States aid to victims of the Nazi invasion. In this fiction, a blatant Party hack job, the ghost of Andrew Jackson appears to lobby against aid to Britain, growling, “There’s no point in cooking up an alliance with a country that’s already licked.”

Like other Hollywood Party activities at that time, Trumbo was presenting the Soviets with literary lend-lease, a form of collaboration never mentioned in blacklist commemorations. While the Nazi juggernaut swept across Europe, the Hollywood Party blasted Roosevelt as a warmonger, supported Stalin’s invasion of Finland, and opposed American aid to Finnish refugees. Communists dominated the Motion Picture Democratic Committee, which voted against FDR’s collective security policy.

The Party line reversed itself again in June of 1941 when Hitler invaded the USSR and, as screenwriter James McGuinness put it, the Communists were given “leave of absence to become patriotic” and government-approved works of Stalinatry such as *Mission to Moscow* played to packed houses. While during the Nazi-Soviet Pact the Hollywood Communists had little time to get their act in gear as far as influencing the content of films was concerned, they had a virtual field day after June, 1941.

Thirty Seconds over Hollywood

It was not as if the Party was an insignificant, fringe organization in Hollywood in the ’30s and ’40s, as some of its adherents tried to claim. In fact, the Communists came to control the Hollywood Writer’s Mobilization, which included the Screen Writers Guild, the Radio Writers Guild, the Screen Publicists Guild, the Screen Cartoonists Guild, the publicists, story analysts, and the Los Angeles branch of the American Newspaper Guild. During the war, the organization became a kind of



clearing house for scripts and supplier of materials for speeches and various troop shows. *Casablanca* writer Howard Koch served a term as chairman and John Howard Lawson was one of the editors of its publication, *Hollywood Quarterly*. Because of this dominance, the portion of war films made by the Hollywood Ten was almost twice as high as that made by the industry screenwriters as a whole.

Dalton Trumbo wrote *A Guy Named Joe* and *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*. John Howard Lawson wrote *Action in the North Atlantic* and *Sahara*. Albert Maltz penned *Pride of the Marines* and *Destination Tokyo* while Alvah Bessie, another member of the Ten, contributed *Objective Burma*, which placed American troops where the British were doing the fighting. Lillian Hellman authored *Watch on the Rhine* and *North Star*, which presented ridiculously laudatory portraits of the Soviet Union. So did *Song of Russia*, written by Paul Jarrico and Richard Collins.

Party boss William Foster, author of *Toward a Soviet America*, knew that it would not be possible to achieve much overt propaganda on the commercial screen but encouraged the comrades to kill anti-Communist material, and here the Hollywood Party enjoyed great success. Party activist John Weber organized the Story Analysts Guild, which gave the Party the inside track to nix anti-Communist material in the early stages. Weber later landed a job with William Morris, where he became one of the most important agents in Hollywood, as writer Leopold Atlas (*G.I. Joe*) found out when he left the Party. "A significant word or whisper from him, in the proper places, could mean the end of employment," Atlas said. Party writers Guy Endore and Phil Stevenson demanded, and got, credit for work on *G.I. Joe* they had not performed. Other Communist agents deliberately sabotaged the careers of their clients, Martin Berkeley being one example, and Communists in the Publicists Guild attached the names of stars like James Cagney to Party-sponsored causes.

Trumbo bragged that "untrue or reactionary" material like the novels of James Farrell, Victor Kravchenko's *I Choose Freedom*, Arthur Koestler's *The Yogi and the Commissar* had not reached the screen. Ex-communists were the main enemy and Party members were forbidden to read Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*.

During the war, the Hollywood Communists maintained a blacklist against anti-communist writers and performers. As Screenwriter Morrie Ryskind describes it, they would drop rumors with producers that certain actors or writers refused to buy war bonds because they admired Hitler. These rumors, woven from whole cloth, quickly circulated in the insular world of Hollywood. Those who were smeared, Ryskind wrote, found themselves out of work but "never knew what hit them."

The Communist Party also controlled a number of the technical screen unions and organized the Conference of Studio Unions, by which it hoped to control all of Hollywood labor. CSU leader Herb Sorrell tried to force concessions by shutting down the studios and for a time it was warfare in the streets. More than 5,000 CSU partisans literally took over part of Burbank in October of 1945. The Communists attacked and blacklisted actors who crossed picket lines during the jurisdictional disputes of 1945-47, handing out pamphlets noting that "star" was "rats" spelled backwards. CSU partisans like Katharine Hepburn read angry speeches which had been written by Dalton Trumbo. When SAG approved the policy of crossing the picket lines CSU goons threw hot coffee in actors' faces, torched cars, and dragged people out of cars and beat them.

"We can no more control our members

than you can keep your actors from committing rape," Sorrell told Reagan. In groups they dominated such as the Hollywood Independent Citizens Committee for the Arts Sciences and Professions (HICCASP, formerly the Motion Picture Democratic Committee) triumphal Party cadres slammed Reagan, Robert Montgomery, and other CSU opponents as scabs and fascists. The screen comrades also enjoyed strategic backup.

The New Deal administrations of Franklin Roosevelt had been a happy hunting ground for Party activists, with the President himself listed as a member of the League of American Writers, a Communist Front. As actor Robert Vaughn noted in his book about blacklisting, *Only Victims*, "The curiosity is not that there were undoubtedly many



UNFRIENDLIES LARDNER AND COLE IN 1950

Reds that made government their vocation but rather that the entire Communist Party was not on the federal payroll." The Party held key allies on the National Labor Relations Board, which lead the CSU to back the Screen Players Guild, which they controlled, as an alternative to SAG. This tactic failed and the Party's violence and slander against their foes would eventually come back to them.

#### The Unfriendly Nineteen

After the war, as Stalin returned to a hard-line anti-Western stance, the screen Stalinists dutifully followed suit. One of Stalin's key agents in America was Comintern official Gerhart Eisler, who even gave orders to V.J. Jerome. The Hollywood Party and its front groups championed Eisler when he faced deportation for lying about his background in the Party and Comintern. Gerhart's brother Hanns, hailed by the *Daily Worker* as a "revolutionary composer," had penned the "Comintern March."

*The Comintern calls you,  
Raise high Soviet banner,  
In steed ranks to battle  
Raise sickle and hammer.  
Our answer: Red Legions  
We raise in our might  
Our answer: Red Storm Troops  
We lunge to the fight*

Hanns Eisler had entered the United States in 1940, with the help of, among others, pro-Soviet *Nation* editor Freda Kirchway. It was an investigation of Eisler that brought the Committee to Hollywood, where Hanns was writing film scores. Upon their arrival, Committee investigators found

a number of people disposed to help them because of the treatment they had received from the Hollywood Communists during the war and the CSU strikes.

HCUA selected some 45 film industry people of various political profiles to testify. Of these, 19 declared that they would not cooperate, and became known as the "unfriendly 19": Alvah Bessie, Herbert Biberman, Bertolt Brecht, Lester Cole, Richard Collins, Edward Dmytryk, Gordon Kahn, Howard Koch, Ring Lardner Jr., John Howard Lawson, Albert Maltz, Lewis Milestone, Samuel Ornitz, Larry Parks, Irving Pichel, Robert Rossen, Waldo Salt, Adrian Scott, and Dalton Trumbo. Brecht was not really a screenwriter but had collaborated with Eisler on *Die Massnahme*, (*The Measures Taken*), an agitprop musical which justified political murder. ("The more innocent they are, the more they deserve to be shot," Brecht said of Stalin's victims.)

The unfriendly 19 eventually became the "unfriendly ten" when only the Ten, plus Brecht, wound up testifying: Alvah Bessie, Herbert Biberman, Lester Cole, Edward Dmytryk, Ring Lardner Jr., John Howard Lawson, Albert Maltz, Samuel Ornitz, Adrian Scott, and Dalton Trumbo. Dmytryk was a director and Scott a producer; the rest were writers. Dorothy Parker and others fostered the myth that the committee deliberately singled out the brightest and the best in order to intimidate the movies which they supposedly wanted to censor and control. This was not the case with someone like Cole, writer of scripts such as *Charlie Chan's Greatest Case*, or Lawson, who in *Algiers* penned the immortal line: "Come wiss me to zee Casbah." But the myth has shown great staying power and appears again in *Tender Comrades*, the latest in a series of works about the "inquisition." In this book, authors Patrick McGilligan and Paul Buhle describe the blacklist as a cultural holocaust. "The humane traditions that the leftists had brought with

them to Hollywood were jettisoned. . . The simple practice of constructing a logical narrative took a blow from which Hollywood is still recovering."

In *Tender Comrades*, Jean Butler, actress in *Fatal Lady* and *Annabel Takes a Tour*, and co-scrip-tor of *Barnacle Bill*, is quoted as hailing *Lassie* as exemplary of an "extraordinary social continuity or tradition." Her husband and fellow Communist Hugo Butler penned *Lassie Come Home* and Joan LaCour Scott, wife of the Hollywood Ten's Adrian Scott, also wrote for the TV series. So did Robert Lees, writer of *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*, and who says that he "never fell off the train" during the Nazi-Soviet Pact. *Lassie*, he says, illustrated the democratic principle of sharing. She digs up a bone which turns out to be from a dinosaur and has to share it "for the good of science."

Director Billy Wilder quipped famously that only two were talented, the rest were just unfriendly. But at the time that the Committee came to Hollywood, the Party machinery was able to portray the Ten as martyrs in the making and rally the film community around them. John Huston started a support group called Hollywood Fights Back, later the Committee for the First Amendment, which included figures such as Frank Sinatra, Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, Groucho Marx, Burt Lancaster, Myrna Loy, Peter Lorre, Moss Hart, Danny Kaye, Henry Fonda, and Gregory Peck.

It was not illegal to be a communist and many claimed that they wished to have been called so they could testify about Party efforts during the war so that they could have given the Committee an earful. (Norman Mailer called this fantasy "subpoena envy.") In fact, the Ten were anything but supine. They defied the committee and launched into angry

harangues, with Trumbo shouting at one point in the proceedings, “this is the beginning of an American concentration camp.”

One of the Ten’s lawyers was liberal Republican Bartley Crum, whose daughter Patricia Bosworth recently confirmed what critics of the Ten have been saying for 50 years, that the strategy to defy the Committee came from Ben Margolis and Martin Popper, two of the Ten’s Communist lawyers. Humphrey Bogart and other stars who flew to Washington for the hearings began to have second thoughts, complaining that they had been used. In time, John Huston agreed.

“It was a long time afterward that I discovered that the real reasons behind the behavior of the ‘Ten’ in Washington, and when I did I was shocked beyond words,” Huston explained to a colleague seven years later. “It seems that some of them had already testified in California, and that their testimony had been false. They had said they were not Communists and now, to have admitted it to the press would have been to lay themselves open to charges of perjury. And so, when I believed them to have engaged to defend the freedom of the individual, they were really looking after their own skins.”

#### The Alibi Armory

The late ’40s brought seismic shifts on both the international and domestic scene, the Coplon, Hiss, and Rosenberg spy cases, the Soviet A-bomb, the Communist coup d’état in Czechoslovakia, followed by anti-Semitic purges, the rise of Mao Tse-Tung, the Berlin Crisis, and the Korean war. The Party knew full well what was going on in the barbed-wired regimes they defended but maintained silence in the face of the ever-expanding deathlist. “I discovered that they had gone back to their old stand,” Leopold Atlas observed. Nothing had changed. The Party was still always right and the USSR was to be defended at all costs.

On the other hand, the changes influenced some on the Left who had remained silent in 1947, to testify during the next set of hearings from 1951-53. Elia Kazan even took out a *New York Times* ad urging others to cooperate. He and Budd Schulberg not only had their say to the Committee but made their case on the screen through the character of Terry Malloy, played by Marlon Brando in *On the Waterfront*. When Lee J. Cobb, thug boss of the corrupt waterfront union and a metaphor for communist thugs like V.J. Jerome and John Howard Lawson, accuses Terry of ratting on them to the investigators, Malloy replies:

“From where you stand, maybe. But I’m standing over here now. I was rattin’ on myself all those years and I didn’t even know it. I’m glad what I done. You hear that? I’m glad what I done.”

As Kazan said in his autobiography, when they handed out the Oscars for that picture, “I was tasting vengeance that night and enjoying it. *On the Waterfront* was my own story; every day I worked on that film, I was telling the world where I stood and my critics to go and fuck themselves.”

Kazan was of sufficient stature that he survived but others found the going tough. Like Morrie Ryskind, Fred Niblo, James McGuinness and others who cooperated with the Committee, Atlas found it difficult to get work after his testimony. And unlike Trumbo and the Ten, he would quickly be forgotten. The history of the Stalin era, the lurches and internal workings of the Party, and the personal stories of those who cooperated all proved too complex and messy for a popular formulation. Not so on the other side.

Even though the senator had nothing to do with Hollywood, Joe McCarthy’s wild charges and unsavory character gave the Left a rich image bank

and a powerful incantation. What was really the Stalin Era became the “McCarthy Era,” and the larger drama broke down in the public mind simply as “McCarthyism” and “victims of McCarthyism.” The difficulties of those victims must be seen in context.

Even *Nation* editor Victor Navasky author of *Naming Names* and an apologist for the Ten, admits that it is ludicrous to compare those who lost swimming pools and tennis courts to those who lost their lives in the USSR. But the myth-making machine ignored such comparisons. The appealing plot of Trumbo, Michael Wilson, and others breaking the blacklist by working through fronts simply overrode the complicated back story. To delve into that is construed in Hollywood as giving ammu-

decades and even toured the USSR in 1956, only days after the Soviets crushed the Hungarian revolution. During the 1980s, still at the height of his career, he went on television and said, “*Nous étions des cons*”—roughly “we were morons” or “cretins.” In Koestler’s phrase, Montand had “heard the screams.” He knew the truth of Stalinist genocide and disbelieved those who had been in the Party and said they didn’t. He referred to them as “Red Nazis” and in *Paris Match* he wrote that if one of these types were to seek him out “I would puke all over him. That’s how strongly I feel. . . I have no wish for such a man to speak to me. He is as dangerous to me as an SS man, as any fanatic.” Montand was also willing to back up his rhetoric with his art.

Artur London, deputy foreign minister of Czechoslovakia, was one of those charged in the anti-Semitic show trials of 1952. Montand played London in *The Confession*, (1970) directed by Costa Gavras. The film includes a scene of faceless policemen scattering the victims’ ashes in the snow.

“For me, *The Confession* was a farewell to the generous sentimentality of the Left,” said Montand, “A Left that had been blind to its own crimes and had cultivated a Messianic pose, proposing to bring happiness to human beings even if it meant slaughtering them.”

While there is no one in Hollywood with quite the authenticity and courage of a Montand, it would have been enlightening if somewhere in the 50th anniversary celebrations the industry had produced someone to at least allude to the “back story” of the Hollywood Ten. With the Cold War, the Berlin Wall torn down, and the USSR defunct, this would have been the ideal forum for a simple acknowledgment that communism had been a grand failure and that its supporters in Hollywood had at the very least been misguided.

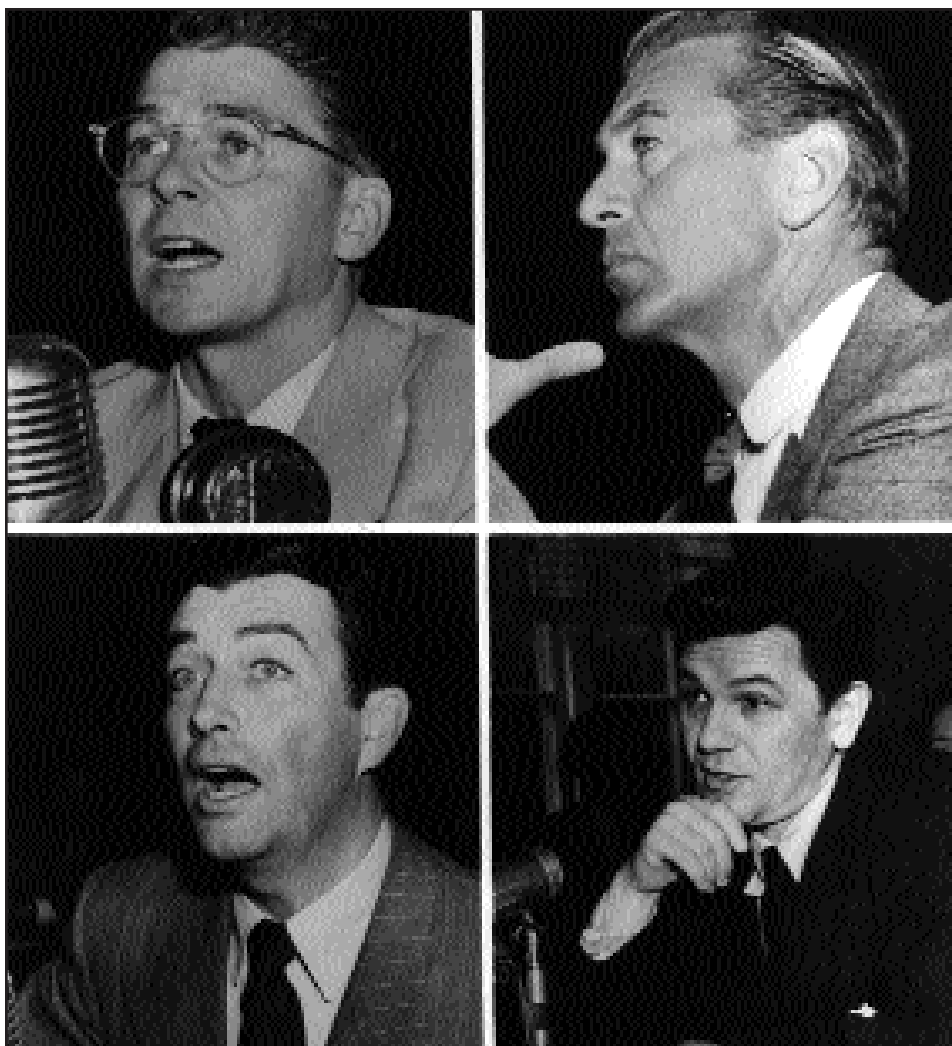
Elia Kazan, still very much alive, could have played that role but he was not part of the program. Seven days before the event,

Kazan’s case was advanced on, of all places, National Public Radio by critic John McDonough, who in 1995 was ejected from an American Film Institute press conference after he wrote a piece pointing out the injustices perpetrated against the director of *Gentlemen’s Agreement* and other classics. Kazan, he said, didn’t need their honors, but they need him.

“The new blacklisters, who fancy themselves liberals, no doubt, still hold one of the great bodies of American film work hostage to their notions of political orthodoxy,” McDonough said. “They are unreconstructed ghosts of the Cold War, impelled by their martyrs waving the bloody shirt of ‘The Committee’ years after the committee and the blacklist—one blacklist at least—have been interred in disgrace.

“It’s time the institutions of American film recognized, for their own sake, the embarrassment they bring upon themselves by excluding from their honor rolls one of the most influential American directors who ever lived. It’s time they marshalled some of the courage they claim to admire so much in those who fought the blacklist 50 years ago and spend a little time fighting the blacklist today.”

Instead of a courageous reappraisal, with a full cast, the impresarios offered a colorized remake of the myth: noble martyrs suffering under a crypto-fascist committee. Those whose creed had been *Stalin Mit Uns*, defenders of the worst mass murderer in history, were still, as Philip Dunne put it in 1980, “virtually deified.” The performance extends Yves Montand’s verdict to those who perpetuate this myth. Truly, *ils sont des cons*.



**CLOCKWISE: RONALD REAGAN, GARY COOPER, JOHN GARFIELD, AND ROBERT TAYLOR TESTIFY IN 1951**

tion to the blacklisters. With every restored credit and Writers Guild award the Ten’s reputations grew. Few took the trouble to consider the record of the mythical heroes on defending totalitarianism.

After the 1947 hearings, Trumbo took aim at those whom he considered the real villains, the leaders of the “cult of the New Liberalism,” which he also called the “non-Communist Left.” These people, he said, had committed the crime of equating Nazism and Communism. Although Stalin’s anti-Semitic brutality, much of it against Jewish cultural figures, continued at the time he spoke, Trumbo claimed that 3,500,000 Jews lived peacefully in the Soviet Union “under the protection of laws which ban discrimination of any kind.”

Khrushchev’s 1956 revelations shook up the Hollywood Party, but while the building tumbled the screen Stalinists kept the scaffolding. No anti-Stalin, anti-Mao, or anti-Castro manifestoes ever emerged from Hollywood, where anti-American demonology not only remained but became an orthodoxy. Not a single Soviet or Eastern Bloc dissident ever became a cause célèbre in Hollywood, which welcomed kindergarten Marxists like Daniel Ortega and bought into the wild conspiracy theories of the Christic Institute.

Movies about the blacklist appeared, such as *The Front* and *Guilty by Suspicion*, both with the victim-martyr story line. But neither Hollywood’s old Left nor its political descendants were up to the task of either coming to terms with the past or dramatizing the sins of Communism. Fortunately, others were.

#### *Nous Etions Des Cons*

International star Yves Montand, son of Communist peasants, had towed the Party line for





# Fem-Cons Kick-Up Their Heels at Georgetown Confronting the Woman

By Amy M. Holmes

Is it possible to be a feminist and a conservative? Yes says the Georgetown Women's Guild, the upstart neo-traditionalist women's group which is "sending shock waves through Georgetown's politically correct culture," according to *The Hoya*, the campus newspaper.

The Guild's affirmative answer has provoked fainting spells among Georgetown's feminist old guard. What part of "yes" don't they understand? In an open letter to *The Hoya*, English Professor Stetz calls the Women's Guild "dangerous" to feminism: "While of course everyone has a right to their own opinions, what is truly dangerous about the views put forth by the Women's Guild are their misrepresentations and stereotypical assumptions about feminism. We believe that not only do we need more female bodies in power, but that the patriarchal system we live under must be transformed."

The Women's Guild became a *bête noire* for people like Professor Stetz when it published a pamphlet called *The Guide: A Little Beige Book For Today's Miss G*. A saucy survival guide to undergraduate life, *The Guide*, authored by Bryanna Hocking and Dawn Scheirer, advises freshmen women, among other things, to "Take Back the Date," and, in an article entitled "I Am Woman, Hear Me Purr," reminds them that "the tigress who knows when to roar also knows when to purr."

*The Guide* also recommends that freshmen women consider joining clubs like the Academic Council, Catholic Daughters of America, the Mock Trial and Law Team, and the GU Student Investment Fund. All this in contrast to the Georgetown's Women's Issues home page where, *The Guide* charges, "women don't have interests, they have 'issues.'" In one of the most controversial pieces of the pamphlet, "A Lie a Day Keeps the Truth Away," the editors warn freshmen women against the excesses of gender deconstruction: "Feminists refuse to acknowledge the reciprocity of the mating dance. Since F. Scott Fitzgerald chronicled the jazz age, women have been slimming down and dating up—totally rational, and totally reversible as your ten year reunion will prove on both scores. Why insist upon calling me, a woman, a victim?"

But what really riles campus feminists are statistics cited by *The Guide* on hot button feminist issues such as campus sexual assault and anorexia in young women. On the issue of campus sexual assault, *The Guide* quotes the 1995 Department of Justice Survey of Campus Law Enforcement Agencies, regarded by the Bureau as "the most comprehensive survey of college crime," which presents crime data

on 581 four-year schools with enrollments of over 2500 students, accounting for 89% of college students nationwide. According to the CLEA survey, the data collected from campus security officials shows an average of seven violent crimes per campus: one forcible sex offense, two robberies, and four aggravated assaults.

In regard to anorexia, *The Guide* notes that the 150,000 death toll published in early edition of Naomi Wolfe's *The*

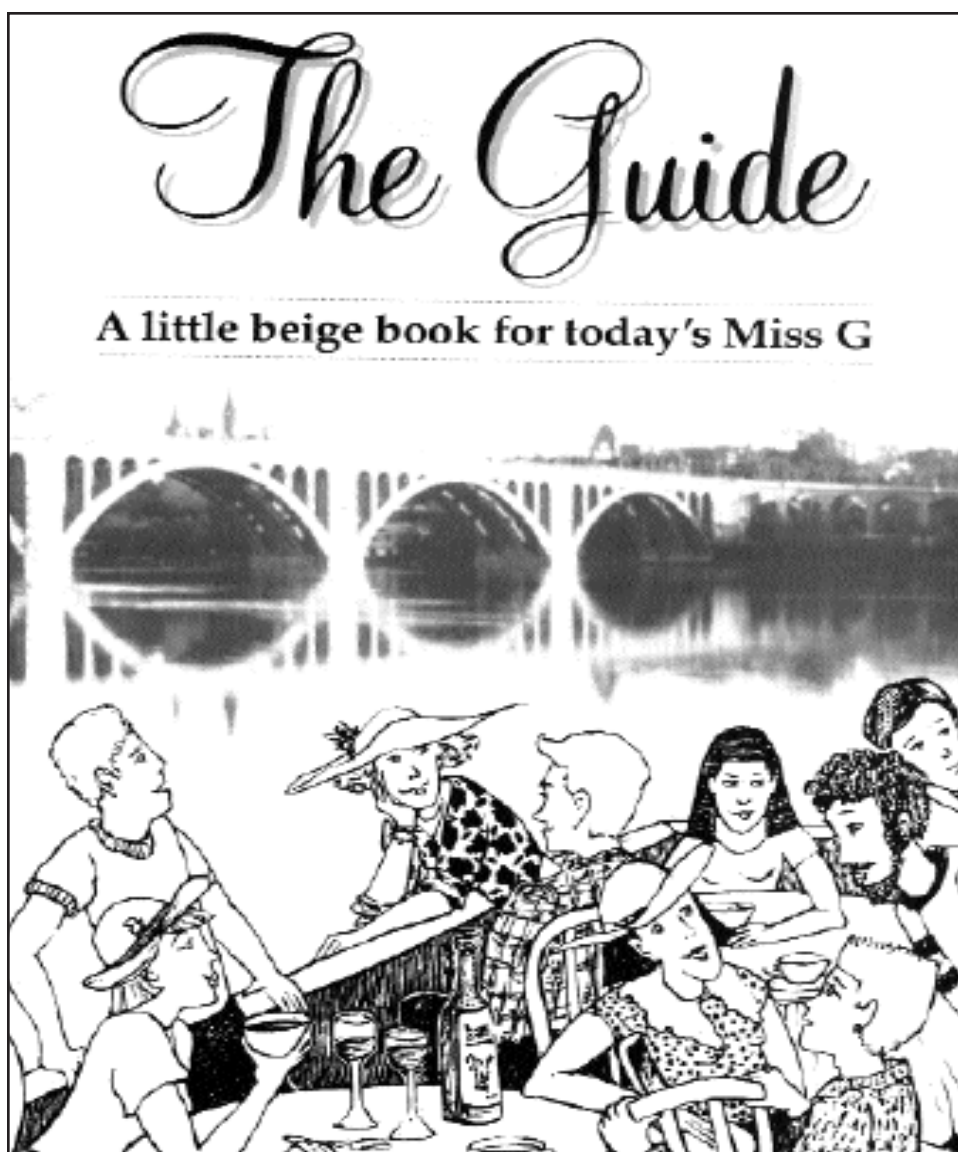
Hocking and Scheirer could not have imagined that they would touch off one of the most furious controversies recently to hit the Georgetown campus when they formed the Guild last spring with other young women who were also frustrated by the narrow focus of the Women's Center and its refusal to support conservative discussion. They saw the Georgetown Women's Guild as a way "to raise a voice of common sense and reason."

To inaugurate the Guild's founding, Hocking and Scheirer invited women working and working in Washington to discuss conservative philosophy and activism. Among the groups represented at the Spring discussion was the Independent Women's Forum, a nonprofit, nonpartisan, women's policy group. Impressed by the organization's success in taking on establishment feminists, and sympathizing with both its style and substance, Hocking and Scheirer approached the organization for advice in crafting their message. One result of that discussion was *The Guide: A Little Beige Book For Today's Miss G*, distributed the first week of October to Georgetown's freshmen women.

Much has been written about the closing of college students' minds—the tendency to emoter rather than reason, to replace the scientific method with the therapeutic. Opponents of the Women's Guild have been a case study. The Guild's suggestion to prefer empirical evidence over personal anecdote has been met with loud denunciations and aggressive personal attack. During the week following the appearance of *The Guide*, the Women's Center, citadel of the feminist

establishment, provided a journal for students to express their feelings toward *The Guide* and its authors. When Scheirer and Hocking asked to see the entries, they were told that the book was open to Center regulars only. Meanwhile, Women's Studies Advisory Board member, Sharon Doetsch, circulated an e-mail to professors and students calling the authors of *The Guide* "racist" and "homophobic." Professor of English, Mark Tinkcum, told a class that *The Guide* represented a step back for women.

*The Hoya*, Georgetown's bi-weekly and ostensibly nonpartisan paper, has published attack pieces in nearly every issue since *The Guide*'s publication. Criticism has ranged from the banal "*The Guide* made me ill" (Aimee Foreman, former president of the Women's Empowerment League) to the irate "[C]learly we are witnessing the moronification of the women's movement." (Eric Grey, junior). Following the first deluge of negative reviews, *Hoya* editors told Hocking and Scheirer that they would be given one opportunity to answer their critics, after which the paper would move on to more pressing campus concerns. But the editors apparently reversed their position on the newsworthiness of the controversy. After publishing Hocking and Scheirer's response, *The Hoya* continued its barrage of attacks. Writes Scheirer in the sole Guild-authored response allowed by the paper, "What our opponents are saying is that by



*Beauty Myth*, is contradicted by the Centers for Disease Control which counted 101 anorexia related deaths in 1983, and 67 deaths in 1988. While agreeing that this disorder "is a serious condition," *The Guide* suggests that anorexia requires "serious psychiatric attention, not campus-wide frenzy."

All this enraged gender feminists who routinely claim that Georgetown and other American campuses are suffering through a pandemic of sexual violence which victimizes fully a quarter of all women. In addition to attacking the Women's Guild for exposing their admittedly inflated statistics, activists railed against the Guild's campaign for "individual responsibility, independent thinking, and initiative to reach our potential." At a meeting held two weeks after *The Guide*'s October release, Hocking asked her assembled critics if they would rather that she had published false statistics on date rape, such as the one in four number circulated by the Women's Center. Without hesitation, her opponents applauded "yes!" One of them said, "Every woman I know has been the victim of child molestation or rape. It took me a year to realize I was raped." Another student held up a copy of *The Guide* and told the room that as a homosexual and residential advisor "This is violence against me."



telling the truth we are hurting women. That must mean, then, that the only way to help women is to tell them lies."

Letters supporting the two women and *The Guide* were turned down for publication. One letter was handed to Scheirer by a *Hoya* staffer, who asked "Do you want this? We're not going to publish it." The other, written by *Cornell Review* editor in chief Edward Newton, urges Georgetown's students to "take a second look, and judge *The Guide* for themselves." Says Hocking, "The response of *The Hoya* has completely destroyed any faith I have in the media. I always thought a newspaper was a way to show both points of view. I knew bias existed, but not to this extent."

Adopting a '90s version of the '60s notion that the personal is political, some of their critics have argued that Hocking and Scheirer are compromised by their presumed economic and racial status. In an op-ed for *The Hoya*, student Kasia Calzonetti writes, "Equality among the sexes has been achieved in their eyes: the eyes of white, heterosexual, college-privileged women. Scheirer and Hocking conveniently ignore issues of race, class, and sexual orientation. Maybe instead of hosting tea parties and playing house, these two women should spend more time living in the real world."

Hocking counters, "I come from a very, very middle class family in Eugene, Oregon, and I don't consider myself socially or economically advantaged. This isn't an issue of class. It's an issue of helping to break the political monopoly these radical feminists have on our campus. They have complete control over Women's Studies and the Women's Center. Any official move by the University on behalf of women is sponsored by them. It's like in the '60s when people were trying to fight 'the man.' Only now, we're trying to fight 'the woman'."

"The woman," as Hocking puts it, is not confined to the Women's Center. She has made her way into mainstream student organizations like the Georgetown University Student Association, the University's executive student council. Within days of the pamphlet's distribution, a member of the group wrote an advisory to residential advisors stating that GUSA had "concerns" over the controversial statistics in *The Guide* and endorsed alternative organizations, such as the Women's Center, where young women confused by the debate could get "real facts" about sexual assault on campus and anorexia, as opposed, presumably, to the false facts gathered by the FBI, Department of Justice, and Centers for Disease Control.

GUSA president John Cronan stands behind the GUSA letter, explaining to *The Georgetown Voice*, the alternative student paper, "We don't think it's our role to take a position on the Women's Guild. However, we do have a role in increasing awareness on issues, and we want to make information easily accessible." GUSA representative, Yea Afolabi, is less equivocal: "I think it is dangerous to disseminate this type of information on a college campus, especially at Georgetown where people aren't aware of all the crime that is happening."

While controversy continues to swirl around the debunking of advocacy statistics on date rape and anorexia, another faction of activists have taken offense at *The Guide's* unapologetic promotion of dating and femininity. In particular, members of GU Pride, a gay, lesbian, and bisexual student organization, have attended each of the Guild's three events: an organizational meeting, a teach-in, and a fundraiser to express their outrage at the Guild's heterosexual bias. Their opposition to *The Guide* took Hocking and Scheirer by surprise.

Says Scheirer, "At first I didn't understand where it was coming from. There's nothing in there that is anti-homo-

department, a faculty member approached Scheirer and told her the announcements would be torn down the following day. As she recalls the moment, "Professor Schulman explained to me that free speech is considered by some individuals in the department to be a patriarchal tool of oppression, a way for the majority to remain in power and oppress the minority. They believe that freedom of expression is a classically liberal concept which was devised during the creation of the Constitution by our Founding Fathers."

He was right: the announcements were torn down.

But the Guild's opposition showed up at the teach-in *en masse* to exercise their free speech and dominate the discussion. One faction demanded that Ms. King embrace the struggle for same-sex marriage as an extension of the civil rights movement led by her uncle. Another found Christina Hoff Sommers' suggestion that women were doing better than boys in educational attainment disturbing to the extreme. Many prefaced their questions with such declarations as "What you said makes me angry," or "I'm going to try and calm down." The evening finally crystallized when one student who identified herself as currently lesbian and formerly anorexic told the audience, "You want to know who stole feminism? I did."

Which brings the question full circle: is it possible to be a conservative and a feminist? It depends upon whom you ask, the conservative or the feminist.

Nancy Cantalupo, for her part, maintains that the Women's Center offers a "wide range of resources." In a letter defending the Women's Center's mission, she points to such "women's models of academic mentoring" as Washington Democratic operative Irene Natividad and *Nation* magazine writer Katha Pollitt. Explains Cantalupo, "At its heart, the Women's Center is an office that seeks to serve the needs of

all women at Georgetown."

Dawn Scheirer is doubtful. The spectacle of female opponents of the Guild kissing and fondling one another (presumably in protest) at the entrance to the Guild's November fundraiser casts the feminist establishment as less a place for all women than for some women. As she says, "They claim to be for diversity, but they only support diversity when it supports their agenda." Bryanna Hocking concurs, stating, "Feminists have been the least inclusive group on campus. Nobody thinks it's odd the way professors are publicly attacking us. No one gets morally outraged when conservatives are politically or socially harassed."

And the University? Where have administrators been hiding while feminist professors have led the charge against the Guild; while the University-sponsored Women's Center blithely brushes aside criticisms of bias while promoting statistics that are known to be in error and "mentors" from only one end of the political spectrum? Says Scheirer, "They've been AWOL, where they always are when there's a possibility of annoying the feminist establishment."



Amy M. Holmes, a 1994 graduate of Princeton University, works as a policy analyst for the Independent Women's Forum, a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy organization for women.



sexual." But then she realized why lesbian students were attacking the Guild: "They see the Women's Center as their refuge and they were personally offended by our attack on it. One student told me that I have all of society and the entire world to stand behind my lifestyle choices, whereas they don't. They only have pockets of support, like the Women's Center, and I had no right to go after it."

But go after it she and Hocking have, and their teach-in entitled "Beyond Feminism," further enflamed their opposition. During the first week of November, the Guild hosted an evening with Alveda King, civil rights activist and niece of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; Christina Hoff Sommers, Clark University professor of philosophy and author of *Who Stole Feminism?*; and Dr. Sally Satel, practicing psychiatrist and associate lecturer at Yale University, to discuss the themes of *The Guide* and the future of feminism.

*The Guild* asked both the Women's Center and the college chapter of the NAACP to lend their support. Both groups refused. Nancy Cantalupo, director of the Women's Center, told Scheirer that the Center would not "front" for the Guild. Jacques Philippe Piverger, president of the college chapter of the NAACP, explained to Scheirer that his group did not want to get mixed up in such a controversial affair.

While Scheirer was putting up announcements in the halls of the English

# Ammunition for the Culture Wars



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After the recent election, Republican Chairman Haley Barbour declared the ideological Cold War over: “The 1996 campaign is living proof; the Left had thrown in the towel.” Nice try, Haley, but look again. While conservatives may have won the ideological war, they are still losing the political battles. Bill Clinton is in the White House; the welfare state is alive and well; the liberal courts have taken over the country, and conservative complacency is largely to blame. *It’s A War, Stupid!* is must reading for any American concerned about the fate of their country.

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Gag Orders, Continued from page 1

broadcast controversies since Howard Stern’s rude emergence on the scene in Washington, D.C. in 1982. Recently, Elder has been the subject of a glowing profile on *60 Minutes*, he’s fielded calls seeking his thoughts on affirmative action and other issues from *Newsweek* and *Dateline NBC*, and he’s been publicly commended by Gov. Pete Wilson for “offering a viewpoint of hope and common sense.”

Despite the unique niche Elder occupies as a conservative black in the crowded radio talk-show universe, he could never have caused such a stir if not for the efforts of an extremist Afrocentric group that for the past two years has been trying to force him off the air by boycotting major advertisers.

The highly secretive Talking Drum Community Forum has papered L.A.’s South-Central with flyers calling Elder “the most racist, antiblack talk-show host in Southern California” and its shadowy leaders call him a “bootlicking, ass-licking Uncle Tom.” Though believed to consist of a tiny core group of perhaps 30 diehards, Talking Drum has frightened away nearly two dozen major advertisers, costing Disney-owned KABC radio at least \$1 million—and perhaps as much as \$4 million—last year.

“This is nothing less than a 1990s version of lynching a black man, and this time it’s the brainchild of black people rather than white people,” Elder says. “If this were a secret white group that used false identities, threatened me, and tried to silence me, Jessie Jackson would be harumphing and marching down Crenshaw Boulevard, crying racism and fighting for my right to speak.”

Talking Drum uses tactics seldom seen in Los Angeles. Its leaders refuse to meet the media in person (*60 Minutes* couldn’t even get an interview) and commonly give false names to the press to conceal their identities, aside from a single leader, black radio personality Jamaal Goree. Yet the group has delved into the most private aspects of Elder’s life, including his romantic relationships, school days, and family past. One boycott leader, who in a rare telephone interview identified himself to me as “Thutmos Turner,” gleefully claimed that Elder, as a child in South-Central, “couldn’t play sports, had weak legs, wore glasses, and the kids at his school picked on him and beat his butt every day.” Laughing deeply, Turner said, “It happened to such an extent by black kids that he developed a hatred for his own race.”

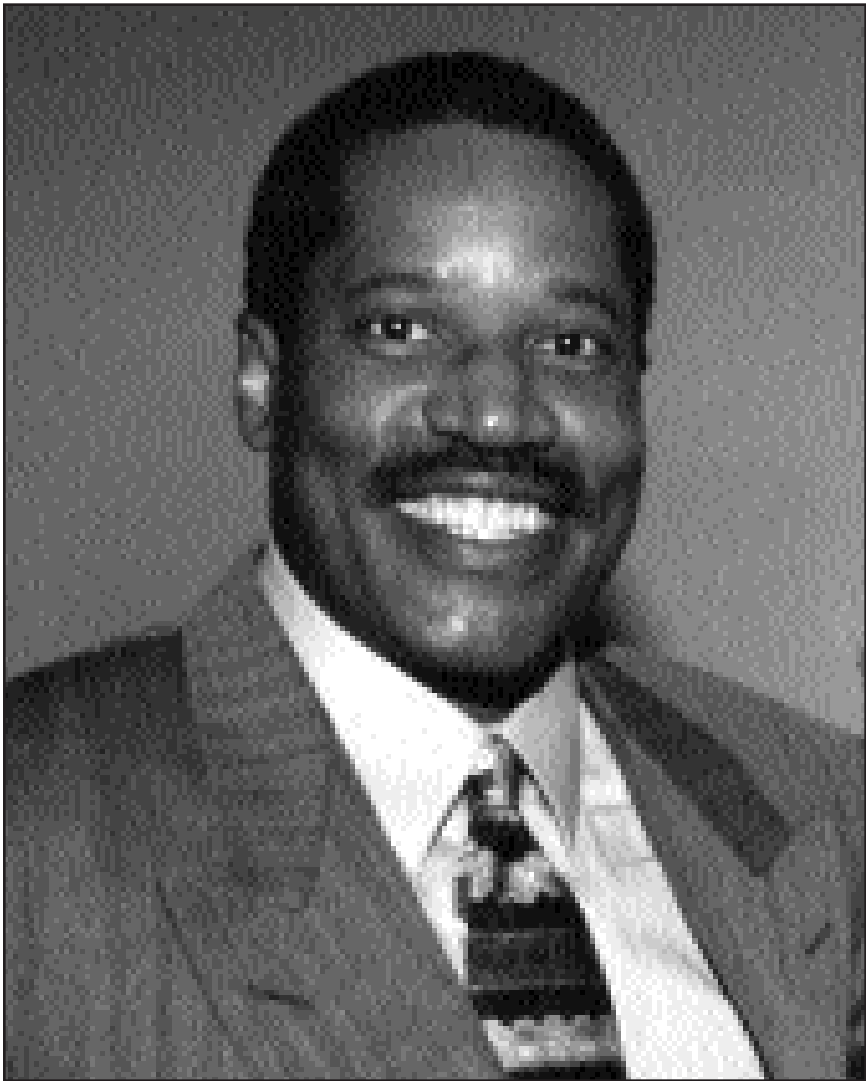
The group’s take on Elder’s relationship to the Jewish community is even more bizarre. Elder’s attackers have been accused of anti-Semitism, to which Turner responds, “That’s a lie!” He then states: “What black person do you know who has done a thesis in Israel on the Jewish religion? Nobody! Then why has Larry Elder?” (Elder did write a thesis while attending college in Israel, on the viability of a Palestinian state.)

Turner sees a conspiracy. “KABC feels it has the right to denigrate black people, and it probably comes from the top, from Disney CEO Michael Eisner,” says Turner. “I’d like to know why the Jewish owners and operators and station personalities aren’t speaking out against that. The station is operated almost entirely by Jews, and if you run down the roll of on-air talent

there, it’s Minyard in the morning, Jew; Michael Jackson, Jew; Dennis Prager, Jew; Gloria Allred, Jew; Susan Estrich, Jew. And hate speech against blacks comes up wherever they can slip it in.”

Elder, known on the air as the “Sage from South-Central,” admits he’s something of an egoist, and clearly he’s lapping up the attention. Grinning from a broad, pleasant face, sipping an iced vodka from an enormous glass after a long day at work, he says with apparent satisfaction, “I’m going to write that book. My working title is ‘It Ain’t Necessarily So.’”

He chuckles at the title—an obvious



KABC’S LARRY ELDER

reference to his contrarian views about race, government, and social issues—repeats it, and then frowns. In his hand, Elder realizes, he is still holding the anonymous death threat. He neatly folds it up and tucks it away in the file labeled “Letters, Hate.”

KABC hired Elder away from a successful career as an executive headhunter in Cleveland after talk-show host Dennis Prager met Elder when both were guests on a Cleveland TV show. Convinced that Elder could bring an important new slant to the social debate in post-riots L.A., Prager urged KABC to hire him. Says Prager, “The public debate in Los Angeles always lays everything wrong about race at the feet of the city’s guilt-ridden whites, who are just dying to be accused of something as an act of contrition. So we never get around to any serious truths about race.” That is, Prager says, until Larry Elder came on the scene.

Elder proved so popular in his nightly slot that KABC moved him to choice afternoon drive-time in late 1995. Right off the bat, he was heard by at least 300,000 people in the second-biggest radio market in the country. Before long, angry letters from black listeners began raining down on KABC.

“Larry kept saying things that a lot of people really thought but would never openly say,” comments former KABC station manager George Green. With Elder “delivering a message that’s never been delivered before,” Green said, the station decided that the host would be wise to

invite opponents from the black community to respond to him. And many, including City Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas and Urban League President John Mack, took up the offer.

Elder’s talk-show topics dealt with a wide range of current issues, from the federal deficit to the decline in civility in sports to incompetence on the Los Angeles City Council and school board. Elder described himself as a “libertarian with a small l” and opposed gun control and the minimum wage, while supporting school vouchers, reproductive choice, gay rights, and the legalization of heroin, cocaine, marijuana, and even crack.

But Elder also regularly broadcast almost unheard-of political blasphemies against black leaders rarely criticized by the local media, including Congresswoman Maxine Waters (“Kerosene Maxine”); multimillionaire developer Danny Bakewell (“Fake well”); and what he saw as a passel of “black loudmouths gorging at the public trough”—namely, state Sen. Diane Watson, City Councilwoman Rita Walters, and school board member Barbara Boudreaux, among others. He mercilessly dissected black sacred cows on his 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. show, including long-term welfare, affirmative action quotas, and federal housing projects.

Most riveting, however, were Elder’s two most jarring messages, never before heard from a prominent black voice in L.A.: that blacks are demonstrably more racist than whites, and that paralyzing self-pity among blacks—not closed-door racism among whites—is the key cause of black underachievement in education and jobs.

“Why is it,” Elder asks on the radio, “that when a white teacher writes the word ‘my glasses’ on a black child’s face in South Carolina, it’s the hottest story on

CNN and everyone decries the white teacher, who loses her job and is branded a racist? But when a white teacher in Georgia gets caught doing the same thing, writing ‘book’ on a white child’s face, arms, and legs—the same thing, folks—it’s just a teacher who’s being too strict? I’ll tell you why. Because black people have got white people cowering with false shame. Blacks aren’t being honest. They’re crying wolf, trading on their race. And it’s driving whites away from blacks. It’s making whites want to avoid blacks. So black America, stop this nonsense now. And you’ve just heard The Word.”

When Elder’s ideas began pouring over the airwaves, Talking Drum was already primed for a fight. Members of the group had been ousted from KPFK public radio because of a widely decried, anti-Semitic show called “African Mental Liberation Weekend.” After that, at weekly meetings at the Good Life restaurant on Crenshaw Boulevard, Talking Drum’s leaders promoted a mix of black nationalism and discredited racial theories—for example, that ancient Egypt was not led by Egyptians but by a black ruling class that drove the Jews from North Africa, and that lighter-skinned Egyptians described by historians and anthropologists were nothing more than a racist European myth.

Furious over both Elder’s and Prager’s shows, Talking Drum about 18 months ago began sending noisy picketers to protest against both hosts in front of



# The Campaign for Larry Elder

**B**ack in the '50s if you were Black, you couldn't drink at a whites-only water fountain. You couldn't vote. You had to sit in the back of the bus.

Now if you happen to be Black, you're not allowed to be a conservative. You're not allowed to believe racial preferences are wrong.

You can't speak out against a welfare system that has enslaved successive generations of your people. If you're Larry Elder and do venture an opinion on these issues that doesn't fit with liberal black orthodoxy, you are called an "Uncle Tom" and are regarded as an Enemy of the People.

It is not only because Elder is an original and authentic voice but also because the silencing of that voice would be a blow to free speech generally and a victory for an insidious censorship that the Center for the Study of Popular Culture undertook a campaign late this fall to keep him on the air. The crusade's most striking feature is controversial television ads that point out in a 30 second format the devastation that liberalism causes—to the very people it purports to represent and want to help. Through the ad campaign, Los Angeles viewers are treated to the astounding sight of a modern, eloquent Black male pointing with alarm to a picture of a ghetto child and telling the truth: "The welfare state is enemy number one of the Black community." Even more jarring are images of Elder talking in his radio sound booth and being pelted by eggs and epithets thrown by his anonymous leftist critics.

Startling words and images characterize television advertisements launched by the Keep Larry Elder on the Air Committee. Generating enormous controversy in Southern California, the ads dramatize the actions of black extremists called the "Talking Drum Community Forum" that is trying to intimidate sponsors and bully

KABC-AM into canceling Elder's show. "We are shocked by the intolerance of these liberals, their hate-mongering, and their use of intimidation tactics that they, themselves, would consider shameful, coercive, perhaps even illegal, if undertaken by anyone else and against their viewpoint," says David Horowitz, President of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture and chairman of the

the Left to inner-city despair."

The campaign was necessary because there was evidence that the boycott against Elder was working. Several sponsors had withdrawn their advertising, resulting in millions of dollars of lost revenue in advertising, despite Elder's strong ratings and high market share. Just as the Keep Larry Elder on the Air Committee began airing its TV ads, KABC slashed his hours in half—reducing him from four hours (including L.A.'s huge drive-time 5-7 slot) to just two hours in the early afternoon.

Almost as surprising as the success of the radical boycott has been the silence of Los Angeles mainstream media about this assault on free speech and the Center for the Study of Popular Culture's effort to fight back. Except for the *Los Angeles Daily News* (a San Fernando Valley suburban daily) and the alternative weekly *New Times*, the press has blacked out the Elder story. Some media critics believe that the lack of coverage is political, since the hatred of Elder and the ideology articulated by the ads is palpable, especially among the affirmative action hires that have become a significant presence in today's

politically correct newsrooms.

In the ad campaign, Southern California liberals are being confronted day after day with images that indicate the consequences of their "compassion" toward Blacks, which is actually a plantation mentality in disguise, and of the devastating impact it has had on the Black community. The ads have been running in 24 cable zones and select network news shows. Viewers are provided with a 24 hour toll free number to call, 1-888-L.A.Elder. Tax deductible funds are solicited by volunteers. The ads can also be viewed on the Center for the Study of Popular Culture's website ([www.cspc.org](http://www.cspc.org)).



**THE EGG-SPLATTERED BROADCAST BOOTH**

pro-Elder campaign.

The TV spots are also critical of Jesse Jackson and Johnny Cochran, for example, and challenge the assumption that all Blacks subscribe to the same politically-correct, liberal dogma.

According to Horowitz, "The message that Larry Elder delivers every day for four hours on KABC-AM talk radio stands in stark contrast to the failed, liberal dogma espoused by the dominant cultural elite, whether in the universities, the public education establishment, or the media. Larry Elder is eloquent and undeniable proof that diversity of opinion exists among Blacks. This is why he is such a threat to entrenched, status quo liberalism that takes for granted the support of Blacks, Hispanics, and other people sentenced by

# Keep Larry Elder on the Air



Toll Free

# 888-L.A. ELDER

# P.O. Box 67398

# Los Angeles, CA 90067

# WWW.CSPC.ORG



Ralphs, Vons, Standard Shoe Stores, Sit 'n Sleep, and other companies in South-Central and elsewhere in the city. Sit 'n Sleep, targeted on a Christmas shopping weekend, nearly had to close its Culver City store after customers saw the angry activists and scurried back to their cars.

The centerpiece of Talking Drum's campaign against Elder is a heavily doctored audiotape, fashioned by the boycott organizers from snippets of his on-air comments to sound like a vicious diatribe against blacks. Played on an answering machine at a phone number advertised in flyers distributed across South-Central, the tape makes Elder sound as if he has claimed on his show that "blacks are morally corrupt," "blacks are lazy," and "blacks are the cause of crime in America."

Elder says in disgust: "I don't say trash like that. I say things like, why do those blacks who acted cool as teenagers and didn't apply themselves in high school think they have a divine right to get into top universities with their bad grades? Do you want an emergency room doctor coming toward your mother with a gurney who's employed by a top hospital because he went to a top university but who really only rated a mediocre college? No, and you're not racist for agreeing with me."

When the boycott got into full swing in the spring of 1996, then-station manager Green (he was fired last year for unrelated reasons) was anxious. He met with Talking Drum leaders and recalls, "They demanded that Larry Elder move—actually physically leave the city of Los Angeles. They wanted Dennis Prager off the air. They wanted all top Disney executives to resign. I got personal threats to take Larry off the air—or else. The really curious thing was, Talking Drum refused to disclose their leaders' real names or give us a phone number or even to debate Larry on the radio. They clearly wanted to operate from the shadows."

Lucky's was the first big company to honor Talking Drum's demands last year. "Lucky buckled hard, and they buckled completely," Green says, "and even though we talked to them and talked to them, they gave us this utter bullshit through their agent, Gray Advertising, about how it had nothing to do with the boycott. The truth was, when a handful of black people protested at a Lucky store in a black area, Lucky corporate heads just couldn't take it. That set off a multimillion-dollar loss at KABC."

But all were not cowering in corporate America. A handful of targeted advertisers decided to fight back. Countrywide Home Loans laughed off the boycott and paid Elder to speak at a posh banquet. Larry Schwartz, owner of \$9.99 Shoe Outlet in Hawthorne, was so irritated when Talking Drum picketed his former Standard Shoe franchise near Baldwin Hills that he went on the air and derided the boycotters.

"We had people buying shoes who didn't even need them, because they were so pissed off at the boycott," says Schwartz. Bill Mortenson, then-president of First Federal Bank, wrote a letter supporting Elder. "You'd have to call the big companies who buckled—and their CEOs—just plain spineless," says Mortenson, who recently retired.

The backlash against Talking Drum further heated up with the formation of Project Larry Elder—about 250 avid listeners who got together via e-mail and phone messages. The group, 30 percent black and

60 percent white, led by well-known Westside pastry chef and victims' rights activist Jackie Ravel, included many regular listeners who did not agree with Elder's libertarian views but wanted KABC to launch a public fight for his free speech rights.

"KABC stood in our way every step, every time we tried to launch a positive counterattack for Larry," says Ravel. "The Wiesenthal Center offered to let Larry broadcast from their center as a show of support, but KABC never set it up, never called back, never did anything. Then we asked KABC for the list of sponsors who had dropped out, so we could woo them back, and KABC refused for four months to provide it."

Meanwhile, hate mail against Elder continued to pour in. Much of it was crude and carried raw, anti-Semitic messages.

***Elder's listening audience was surging, and he was attracting a racially mixed crowd, including such well-known L.A. residents as Dodger star Mike Piazza, actor Kirk Douglas, former prosecutor Chris Darden, Mayor Richard Riordan, and former pro football player Anthony Davis.***

(One unpunctuated and typical letter read as follows: "This is not hate mail you butt licking ass ticking Uncle Tom punk house nigger boy.") Even so, Elder's listening audience was surging, and he was attracting a racially mixed crowd, including such well-known L.A. residents as Dodger star Mike Piazza, actor Kirk Douglas, former prosecutor Chris Darden, Mayor Richard Riordan, and former pro football player Anthony Davis.

Davis is among many of Elder's black listeners who can't understand why major sponsors buckled to the demands of a fringe group. "Shit, groups like Talking Drum have been selling out black people for years," says Davis. "You have to ask why it still doesn't take very much to dupe corporate America. Plenty of black people are listening to Larry Elder at home and saying, 'Damn right!'"

But executives at Vons, Trader Joe's, Lucky, Robinsons-May, Sears, Ralphs, Hughes, Enterprise Rent-a-Car, American Savings Bank, American Airlines, A&E, JC Penney, Ford, Goodyear, Motel 6, and a dozen other companies were apparently so afraid to anger a group of black activists in this era of Denny's-style discrimination lawsuits and race-based corporate scandals hitting Texaco and others that company after company summarily yanked ads from Elder's show or KABC.

Alaska Airlines was one of the few corporations that responded to questions about the controversy for this article. Alaska marketing spokesman Greg Latimer said he had been surprised to learn, from a signed petition, that Alaska's ads were on a controversial show. "We checked it out because we just don't advertise on conflict-radio," says Latimer. "We were on

the Elder show inadvertently, so we got off. But we don't support this Talking Drum group at all."

Today, in fact, advertisers appear unwilling to admit that they fled due to the boycott. For example, advertising industry sources say Western International Media advised the companies it represents—including major grocery stores—to quickly pull their ads. Western officials deny that claim. "It was each advertiser's independent decision, and we had nothing to do with it," says Alicia Nelson, a Western International account executive.

Some in the L.A. broadcasting industry believe Elder's job could be jeopardized if his ratings do not continue to climb. Elder will not discuss his job security, but best-selling author and scholar Shelby Steele, who has been monitoring the Elder controversy, says no company wants to be "the next Texaco, so they're primed for any extortion attempt from the black community, and whether it's fringe or mainstream is irrelevant. Corporate America will sacrifice the Larry Elders and diversity of thought in America in a minute."

The easy success of Elder's attackers has embarrassed many politically active blacks in L.A., who—whether they agree with Elder's views or not—avidly support his right to speak. The city's best-known homeless activist, Ted Hayes, has become an outspoken advocate who says Talking Drum represents the worst of black extremist thinking in the 1990s.

"When I think of Talking Drum," Hayes says, "I think of the Klan, the Klan, the Klan." Joe Hicks, of the Multicultural Collaborative, agrees that the group's stand is repugnant to most black Angelenos: "Talking Drum is going this proto-fascist

direction of saying we shall prevent African-Americans from even hearing Larry Elder, because we, Talking Drum, understand that African-Americans are so pitifully weak mentally that they'll have their brains sucked out by him."

Kelly Lange, Channel 4's veteran anchor woman, looked into a news camera a few weeks ago and said the U.S. government had "injected black men with syphilis" in the notorious Tuskegee experiments beginning in 1932. Phones at Channel 4 began ringing off the hook because Lange had just repeated one of the most infamous urban myths to rise from the black ghetto.

The Tuskegee scandal, though shameful, in fact involved black men who had already contracted syphilis being left untreated for years while government physicians kept track of the disease's progress.

Elder says he "physically winced" when he heard about Lange's mistake. Racial myths that tout blacks as pure-hearted victims of white evil are one of Elder's pet peeves—fodder, he believes, for "this terrible black American sickness of self-victimization and pious self-righteousness over whites." One of Elder's favorite topics is author Alex Haley's rosy insistence in *Roots* that slavery was introduced to Africa by white slave traders—when in fact Africans had been enslaving fellow Africans for centuries before whites arrived.

Elder's producer, Les Siegel, called Channel 4 to alert news executives that a correction was warranted. When station officials refused to correct the error, Elder took to the airwaves, lambasting Lange and Channel 4's journalistic ethics. Before his

show ended, Channel 4 relented, agreeing to tell viewers the truth about Tuskegee in a rare, on-camera correction. An elated Elder chortled to listeners after the mea culpa, "And you have just heard The Word!"—his trademark on-air rallying cry.

For many listeners and critics, however, Elder's glee over such victories begs the question: On which side, exactly, is Larry Elder?

America's most prominent black conservatives, including economist Walter Williams, author and professor Steele, syndicated columnist Thomas Sowell, University of California regent Ward Connerly, and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, have all infuriated liberal blacks. Williams and Steele believe that the verbal attacks and death threats they regularly receive from blacks are fanned by civil rights leaders who continually paint black conservatives as racist traitors with "evil white beliefs" as a means of protecting their own power base. "If I were stuck in a jug," says Walter Williams, "the NAACP and other black rights organizations would not uncork it to let me breathe."

Steele notes that, like other black conservatives, Elder has stepped over a line in the sand drawn by black liberals—the divide between blacks who believe white racism is the greatest obstacle to their own achievement in school and jobs, and, on the other side, blacks who believe white racism is far less prevalent today, and no more an obstacle to getting good grades and training for a career than growing up in a dysfunctional family.

Veterans of black internecine politics say Elder, with an audience that now reaches 400,000 listeners a day, is throwing open a door that has been tightly and purposefully closed to honest discussion of racial divisions in America. And that, they say, is what makes Elder a dangerous man.

"Many blacks believe that the power of being victims has brought them programs they believe they must have, such as welfare without work," says Steele. "When Larry Elder says, 'We blacks are not going to get much further than we take ourselves, and white racism does not explain most of our problems,' he threatens the entire source of power that the black civil rights establishment is based upon: the black one-party political system, which is much like a totalitarian country with one set of thoughts grounded in victimology."

Because Elder has a mass audience, Steele says, "he must be repressed. Figuratively speaking, he must be annihilated by the one party. So in my mind, Larry is emerging as a Solzhenitsyn-like figure."

Even if Elder is not being torpedoed from within KABC, many Elder fans believe that powerful black liberals in L.A. are working behind the scenes to promote the assault on him.

Among those fans is Calvin Jamerson, a black businessman who appeared on Elder's show last year to express disgust over local black liberal politicians. In particular, Jamerson assailed the politics of the black-dominated Community Development Bank, where he was seeking a loan for clients in a bottling company venture. (The bank, which received \$400 million in federal funds after the 1992 riots to finance businesses in poor areas, has been publicly criticized for approving only a few loans since its inception a year ago.)

A short time after Jamerson appeared on Elder's show, bank officials demanded a tape of his on-air comments.

Not long after, Jamerson was told by the bank that his loan application was in trouble. "The city's black political machine decided to make me pay for letting them have it on Larry's show," Jamerson says. "The bank is a personal toy for leftist blacks. Loans are accorded based upon politics, just as business has always been done in South-Central."

C. Robert Kemp, the bank's chief executive officer, denies Jamerson's accusations, saying the bank is required to make loans only to companies that prove they can succeed. Another bank spokesman, Robert Alaniz, says Jamerson's loan was delayed because Jamerson's clients submitted a new request seeking three times more funding than originally requested. "It has nothing to do with being on Larry Elder."

## ***Even if Elder is not being torpedoed from within KABC, many Elder fans believe that powerful black liberals in L.A. are working behind the scenes to promote the assault on him.***

But Elder suspects that the bank is following the liberal black establishment's longtime practice of withholding political spoils from those who step out of line. "Many black leaders in Los Angeles think of themselves as tribal chieftains to whom you, as a black person, must come for your sustenance," says Elder. "It's the best way I can think of to keep blacks down."

Last summer, with national media attention suddenly focused on Talking Drum's war against Elder, the shadowy group issued its most bizarre claim to date. Drum radio personality Jamaal Goree insisted that Talking Drum has never been behind the boycott and that his group never corrected that misimpression because it views the media as antagonists. According to Goree, "Everyone says I am involved because they don't know who is involved, but I am not involved in the boycott or the protest against Larry Elder, and I don't do interviews, and everything I just told you is off the record."

The sudden backpedaling by Talking Drum came just as producers at *Dateline NBC*, Japanese television stations, and other major media are trying to track down and interview Talking Drum's elusive leaders for reports they hope to air on the Elder controversy.

Snorts homeless activist Hayes, "Jamaal Goree is just flat-out lying. He has told me himself that Talking Drum is going to get rid of Larry Elder and harass him for the rest of his life, even if Elder is driven from the air and goes into street-sweeping. But Jamaal is scared now. He knows he is wrong and that the attacks and the phony tape-recording of Larry were wrong."

The dreadlocked, outspoken Hayes—who has emerged as an unlikely diplomatic envoy for Elder within the black community—persuaded the elite of the city's black civil rights organizations to meet with Elder at a series of gatherings this year. Sitting on folding chairs amid the white, egg-shaped dwellings of the Dome Village homeless transition center, Hayes put this question to John Mack of the

Urban League, Genethia Hayes of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Celes King of the Congress on Racial Equality, Hicks of the Multicultural Collaborative, and Joe Duff of the NAACP: Were L.A.'s major civil rights organizations going to tacitly back the attacks on Elder by remaining silent about Talking Drum?

Genethia Hayes says it was clear to her before the Dome Village meetings that civil rights leaders needed to "do something" to help Elder.

"Larry Elder is thoughtful, yes, provocative, yes, and frequently we disagree, but he is not disagreeable," she says. "To those who want to silence him, I would say, look beyond the fact that he is very passionate and that talk radio must hold the interest of the listener, and begin to discover if you are really listening to what he is saying."

Hicks concurs: "To me, it's very simple: Larry Elder is not a negative force in the black community." But Hicks says Elder's message that the black community "can advance quickly through hard work and by committing its young people to their educations and by not giving in to drugs or crime" is politically incorrect among traditional black leaders. "L.A.'s black leaders want to cling to the 1960s view that white racism is the big problem—not poor choices by blacks who play the victim. It's a huge difference in vision."

While some civil rights leaders who attended the Dome Village gatherings disagreed vehemently with Elder's political solutions, most agreed to write letters to KABC defending his right to speak. Genethia Hayes wonders, however, if the action will change any minds in a debate over race that was begun by moderate and conservative blacks long before the Elder boycott, but which is always short-changed in the media. As she notes, mainstream reporters and editors in Los Angeles, particularly from TV news and the *Los Angeles Times*, are "uncomfortable giving ink" to black leaders who don't follow the liberal mantra.

Elder, too, is skeptical that his support from black civil rights leaders will change the ingrained media reaction to blacks who buck liberal wisdom. Yet he is thrilled to have civil rights groups speaking out for him. "I deeply, deeply appreciate it, and I am indebted to Ted Hayes," he says.

But at the same time, Elder seems almost perversely pleased that a small, fringe organization has wreaked such havoc on his life.

"It's proof, once again, of how powerful black people really are in America," Elder says with a grin. "Can you even imagine a tiny group of anonymous, secretive, conspiratorial, white Americans being taken so seriously today? Never."

It's not that Elder believes racism against blacks is dead. "Racism is out there, we've all been subjected to it by an uneducated store clerk or a bad cop," he says. But he believes the playing field for blacks is rapidly leveling.

"If you apply yourself to get good grades and to learn serious skills, you will succeed, period," he says. "But many blacks are refusing to accept that, and it's the great tragedy of black people. It's a tragedy I'm trying to put an end to."

Jill Stewart is editor of *New Times*, a Los Angeles weekly. A longer version of this article appeared in that publication.

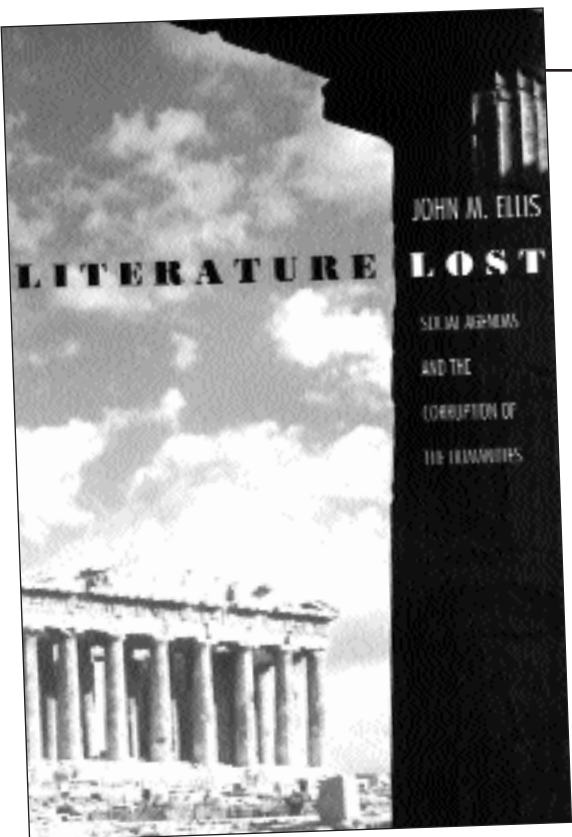




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**Gay 2<sup>nd</sup> Thoughts**, Continued from page 1

excommunication by the radical gay Vatican. *Out* columnist Michelangelo Signorile, writer and ACT-UP founder Larry Kramer, and gay marriage advocate and *New Republic* senior editor Andrew Sullivan—all of them at one time darlings of the movement—have also fallen into disrepute for having had second thoughts about gay sexual culture. The attacks against them came to a head in May, when Michael Warner and other gay activists and academics formed the organization “Sex Panic” to combat the influence of Rotello and his alleged co-conspirators in their calls for a rethinking of the movement.

Since then, public debate has centered around AIDS, bathhouses, condoms, promiscuity, and same-sex marriage, but at a deeper level it has also been about what it means to be a gay man, and what it means to be liberated. For all their posturing as revolutionary thinkers and protectors of the one true faith, Warner and the other members of Sex Panic have seemed more like petty Torquemadas struggling to enforce adherence to the party line which has held sway over the gay movement since the AIDS epidemic began. The fact that figures like Rotello, Signorile, Kramer, and Sullivan have spoken out against the gay establishment at all suggests that a reevaluation—from inside this monolithic movement—is now under way.

For most of his career Gabriel Rotello agreed wholeheartedly with the gay movement’s major assumption that fighting AIDS must be walled off from the issue of sexual liberation itself, and that the price of beating the epidemic must not be the destruction of the radical gay culture born in the Stonewall riots of 1969. But by the early ’90s, as he saw studies indicating that over a decade into the AIDS holocaust and after billions spent on education, gay men were still engaging in unsafe sex with alarming—and increasing—frequency, he began to have second thoughts. The mean frequency in one study, for example, was more than one unprotected sex act per week; another report suggested that only 45 percent of gay men consistently practiced safe sex. Just as ominous, this trend was now accompanied by a renaissance of gay bathhouses and sex clubs, the institutions which in the ’70s and early ’80s had functioned as the petrie dishes culturing the virus.

By 1995, Rotello’s concerns led him to join with a number of gay writers and activists in New York, including such luminaries as gay rights attorney Tom Stoddard, Dennis deLeon of the Latino Commission on AIDS, activist Mark Milano, and his former partner at *OutWeek*, Michelangelo Signorile, to form Gay and Lesbian HIV Prevention Activists.

After touring the city’s bathhouses, sex clubs, porn theaters, and other “public sex” venues, GALHPA proposed an eight-point set of guidelines designed to make them less conducive to HIV transmission. Modeled after the successful regulations employed in San Francisco and in the more responsible New York establishments, the guidelines required clubs to distribute condoms and to hire monitors to ensure that patrons used them. Equally important, all areas of a club would have to be open to monitoring—no more “private resting rooms” with doors that closed and locked. GALHPA distributed the guidelines to Gay Men’s Health Crisis, the nation’s oldest and largest AIDS social service agency, as well as to ACT-UP and to the city’s sex club owners.

The complete disregard shown by the owners and AIDS organizations for the proposals didn’t come as a surprise—Gay Men’s Health Crisis had previously argued such reforms would

turn gay men into “sex police”—but GALHPA’s next move did. A few members of the group (though neither Rotello nor Signorile) met with representatives at the Mayor’s office, and asked the city to adopt the guidelines. City officials declined, deciding instead to simply inspect the clubs for violations of the state health code. Technically the code prohibits all “penetrative sex”—anal, oral, and vaginal—in public spaces and commercial establishments, but inspectors were instructed to cite only those venues where they observed sex without condoms (private, locking cubicles are permitted). In 1995, over the strenuous objections of GMHC, ACT-UP, Lambda Legal Defense Fund, the Gay and Lesbian Community Center, and other gay rights organizations, inspectors made over 1,300 visits to between 40 and 50 establishments. They issued warnings to 30 places, and eventually closed nine, or 20 percent of the venues they visited. Because of pressure



**MICHELANGELO SIGNORILE**

from the radical gay establishment this scrutiny was short-lived (there were just 11 inspections, 11 warnings, and five closings in 1996, and only one temporary closing in the first 11 months of 1997), but the campaign served as the official announcement of Rotello’s and Signorile’s willingness to break with past orthodoxies. They had crossed a Rubicon.

Their second thoughts culminated in two books released within a month of each other last spring: Rotello’s *Sexual Ecology* and Signorile’s eccentrically titled *Life Outside: The Signorile Report on Gay Men: Sex, Drugs, Muscles, and the Passages of Life*. In *Ecology*, Rotello argued that the bathhouses of the ’70s were an ideal medium for HIV transmission, particularly in the nation’s big cities, where highly active men could and did have unsafe, “versatile” (both partners engaging in it) anal sex with literally hundreds of people a year. Not all gay men engaged in these behaviors, but they didn’t have to. The “core groups” in the bathhouses kept the infection rate at epidemic levels, and anyone who came in contact with them, even occasionally, had an extremely good chance of contracting HIV.

And despite the furor that erupted in the pages of *The Nation* and in the gay press, Rotello’s analysis was no surprise to scientists who study the epidemic. Says Dr. Ron Stall of San Francisco’s Center for AIDS Prevention Studies: “He explained the science in a way that is standard among epidemiologists and those who explain

how HIV is spread in the United States.”

Signorile’s *Life Outside*, meanwhile, focused on the “circuit”—an international series of more than 50 weekend-long dance parties, attended regularly by tens of thousand of men, where drug use and the old bathhouse ethic of anonymous sex with multiple partners reigns supreme. Signorile cites a passage from *Circuit Noize*, a glossy publication which promotes the scene, explaining that the “circuit” gives gay men the chance “to enter the altered world where man-to-man sex is not only accepted, but is celebrated. When the circuit comes to town, that town becomes an instant gay ghetto full of hot men who are behaving as queer as they care to be.”

Signorile might have been enthusiastic once upon a time, but not now. “What we are seeing,” he said in a recent *New York Times* interview, “is a kind of live-and-let-live intense party scene that is very similar to the same scene that contributed to the AIDS epidemic exploding in the 1970s.”

Support for the reevaluations undertaken by Rotello and Signorile came from Larry Kramer, the playwright and activist who founded Gay Men’s Health Crisis and ACT-UP during the ’80s. Kramer has spent years railing against politicians and drug companies for what he felt was insufficient concern for AIDS—he accused Ronald Reagan of “genocide,” for example—but within the movement he has long been considered a “sex-negative” renegade for questioning the wisdom of sexual libertinism during the epidemic. In a heated essay in *The Advocate*, Kramer praised *Sexual Ecology*, writing, “We brought AIDS upon ourselves by a way of living that welcomed it. You cannot f--- indiscriminately with multiple partners, who are also doing the same, without spreading disease, a disease that has for many years also carried death. We have made sex the cornerstone of gay liberation and gay culture, and it has killed us.”

Gay radicals were quick to respond. Author Doug Sadownick, writing in the alternative paper *LA Weekly*, offered a typical analysis, lamenting the “putative approach of Rotello, Signorile, and other gay counterrevolutionaries,” and attributing their views to “homophobia.” To advertise its first teach-in responding to the apostates, Sex Panic distributed a flyer that was similarly hysterical: “DANGER! ASSAULT! TURDZ!”

Hard as it is to believe after the tens of thousands dead, many in the movement still long for a revival of sex club adventurism and see it as the heart of gay identity. As an essayist in a book edited by a group of NYU professors and graduate students calling themselves “Dangerous Bedfellows” says, “Today’s public sexual renewal does not represent a step backward in gay men’s sexual development...but rather a step ahead in time toward a new kind of sexual and political expression.”

This revolutionary sexual politics was being threatened by Rotello and his cohorts, particularly because their ideas about more responsible personal behavior were being implemented by some adult sex businesses. After visiting a conscientious New York sex club where a monitor chastised those who engaged in penetrative sex, for instance, Tony Valenzuela, a San Diego-based “sex activist” and former gay porn star, expressed outrage. “I felt something as significant as my being gay, as my Mexican and Italian heritage, as my struggle with HIV, was being robbed of me.”

Richard Goldstein chimed in, wailing in the *Village Voice* that “queer sex” had become “increasingly unimaginable.”

It is still an article of faith among members of Sex Panic—more than fifteen years after the epidemic began—that bathhouses, sex clubs, public parks, and other public sex venues are not really places where HIV is spread. Rather they are



crucial outposts of AIDS prevention. "Erotic spaces that are outside the home are very important for disseminating safer sex information," explains historian and Sex Panic member Alan Bérubé. "As well as creating and reinforcing a sexual culture that is erotic and yet does not transmit HIV."

Columbia professor of law Kendall Thomas is amazed people would think otherwise. Sex clubs "present important opportunities for HIV prevention," he says. "Where else are you going to reach people, if not in the places where they are meeting to engage in consensual intimate associations?"

In fact the identity of these sex establishments as "erotic places" always trumps whatever "education" allegedly takes place there; and it may be that the idea of public spaces that are "erotic" and also on the side of caution where HIV is concerned is a pipe dream. A study done by Gay Men's Health Crisis suggests that the clubs aren't the havens of safety described by the academics in Sex Panic. In May of 1996 (after the 1995 wave of health inspections), GMHC rated 30 of the city's sex clubs, bathhouses, and adult theaters based on whether they provided seven safer sex services, including condoms, monitors, and the like. Each establishment received a list of the criteria in advance, and after the initial inspections, low-scoring clubs were given an opportunity to clean up their acts; the ratings were tabulated only after a second review. Despite this, half of the establishments met three or fewer of the seven criteria, and two scored zeros.

Reminded of this dismal showing, Bérubé attempts to shift blame from the sex clubs to the AIDS organizations he previously insisted were making them exemplary centers of safer sex education. "What work was being done in between the surveys with the club owners?"

That's a good question. GMHC announced that it planned to conduct follow-up inspections in the summer of 1997, but they never took place. A spokesman for GMHC says, somewhat implausibly, that the project was dropped when the person conducting it left the organization. Others have concluded that pressure from those who feel the bathhouse culture is crucial to gay identity may have been responsible for killing the monitoring effort. In any case, this wasn't the first time that GMHC's commitment to making the bathhouses safer has been called into question. When health inspectors threatened to close a New York sex club called The Attic, owner Wally Wallace called GMHC for help. According to a letter circulated to his patrons and republished in the "Dangerous Bedfellows" collection, Wallace says he was advised to ask customers to remove their pants upon entering. Since inspectors are required to remain clothed while on the job, the new rule would allow customers to know when it was okay to break the rules. When asked about the incident, GMHC officials meekly explained that it was "not policy" to give such advice.

Episodes like that one, not to mention epidemiological evidence, health department closings, and the GMHC's own investigations, suggest that if any safe sex education goes on inside sex clubs it is having about as much impact as an advertisement in *Hustler* warning of the perils of onanism. But none of this manages to shake Bérubé and his fellows at Sex Panic from their belief that the clubs are places where safer sex is being taught. Bérubé contends that "there is a lot of education going on," but that because of the draconian health code, "the AIDS work has been driven underground."

Kendall Thomas is rhetorically in favor of prevention measures, but against enforcing safe behavior in the clubs. In his view, patrons should not be required to practice safer sex, just given the option to. "The idea is to provide people with the

tools that will help them make the choice every time for safer sex," he says weakly.

To Gabriel Rotello, this sounds a lot like the status quo. "That is exactly what we have right now," he points out. "They have baskets of condoms, they have posters on the walls, once a week GMHC or somebody will set up a table and give out information about HIV testing and brochures about safer sex, and in the meantime unsafe sex is going on all over the place."

Providing condoms and information but making their use optional sends a dangerously mixed message. "First of all it's allowing the transmission of HIV to happen right on your premises," Rotello says. "But it's also setting up a community norm that says that we all want ourselves to be safe, but when we see somebody being unsafe we're not going to do anything about it—it's really okay and it's up to you to decide. Which to me is like saying 'we're really against burglary but when we see people burglarizing an apartment

a highly charged erotic encounter, part of whose thrill is its outlaw essence. It might also be said, therefore, that sex with strangers is a metonym for AIDS.

Perhaps because they know this is the case, members of Sex Panic try to imply that sex with strangers has something to do with civil liberties and a philosophy of civic culture. "The problem with this is, people tend to isolate this as being about screwing in the toilets," explains Sex Panic's Lisa Duggan, who teaches Gay and Lesbian Studies at NYU, "when the larger issue is the policing of and the closing down of all kinds of public space."

Duggan insists that the scrutiny toward the sex clubs is related to developments as diverse as the arresting of prostitutes, renovations of the piers in New York Harbor (formerly favorite sites for gay trysts, they are now being turned into public parks and recreation facilities), the privatization of city services like garbage pick-up, and reductions in funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and National Public Radio. "It makes it harder and harder to build a public culture, to build a politics, to have a sense of commonality, because people become more and more privatized and domesticated," she says. "There's less of a chance to form a sense of collectivity that can articulate a political vision that can have an impact on politics."

As for Kramer, Signorile, and Rotello, Duggan says they are just "three white guys talking."

And according to fellow member Kendall Thomas, those three white guys are uptight squares, whose politics call their homosexuality into question. "American culture is erotophobic," he explains, "thus we ought not be surprised that one of the phenomena that American culture has produced is a group of self-identified gay men who seem deeply invested in condemning the right of not just gay men but of all Americans to be sexual."

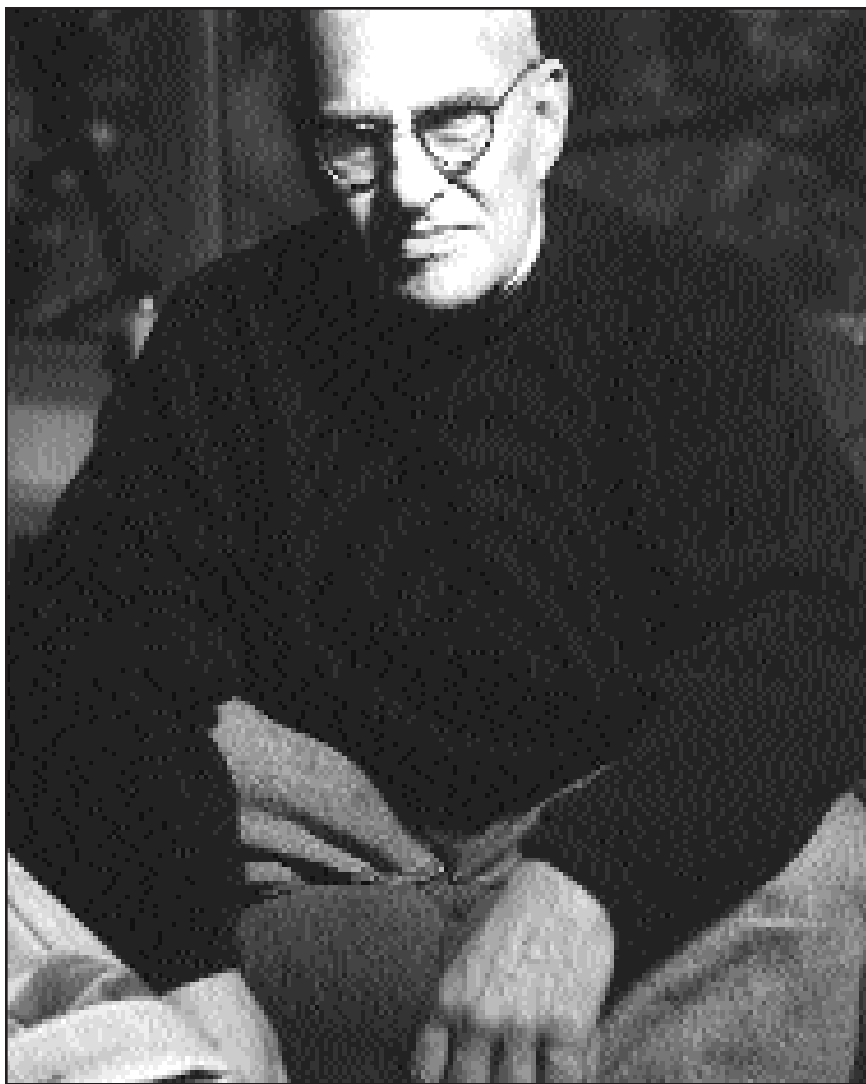
When asked to elaborate—after all, Rotello isn't calling for chastity belts—Thomas charges that the attempts to rein in sexual activity in public places is not only irrational, but undemocratic as well. "This offends the fundamental requirement of a just society," he says, "that people have the right to intimate associations that allow them to explore, experience, and give sexual pleasure to others and to derive

sexual pleasure themselves from their intimate contacts with other people."

It's an odd way of talking about a nasty quicky with a stranger in a public park. Dr. Ron Stall of the Center for AIDS Prevention studies is less certain about the bathhouses' centrality to gay freedom. "I understand how people can come out on different sides of this thing," he says. "For me, though, the bottom line is I've yet to meet a dead person with civil rights."

The academics in Sex Panic are adherents of queer theory, one of the obsessions du jour of the multicultural university. Queer theory holds that the idea of sexual orientation and even gender itself are arbitrary cultural constructions. An important starting point is Michel Foucault's suggestion that sexuality should be thought of in terms of "bodies and pleasures," thus detaching morality and meaning from the act. The revolutionary struggle, then, is against not only what queer theorists call "heteronormativity," but also against norms of any kind.

Because it is deadly and primarily transmitted through "bodies and pleasures," AIDS has always posed a bit of a problem for queer theorists. In a speech given at Yale in 1989, just before the current new wave of public sex began, Douglas Crimp mourned the effect the epidemic was having on the "perverse sexual ideal." He elaborated: "Alongside the dismal toll of death, what many of us have lost is a culture of sexual possibility: back



LARRY KRAMER

we'll just stand there and let them do it, because it's really up to them."

Signorile agrees. "I think [sex clubs] can be great places to educate people, but you can't educate people about safer sex when everyone in the club, or even half of the club, is having unsafe sex," he says. "Because then you are educating in the opposite direction."

But for members of Sex Panic, HIV prevention is, bizarrely enough, a red herring. They seem primarily interested in perpetuating their Stonewall-era conception of gay life. Douglas Crimp, a professor of visual and cultural studies at the College of Rochester, explains, "A lot of people initially find out that they are part of a community, or find out that they are what we call 'gay,' when they follow their sexual desires to a place where they can rent a pornographic videotape or go to a bookstore and have anonymous sex."

According to Michael Warner, few things can compare to the bathhouse experience. "The phenomenology of a sex club encounter is an experience of world making," he explained in a recent interview with the magazine *Lingua Franca*. "It's an experience of being connected not just to this person but to potentially limitless numbers of people and that's why it's important that it be with a stranger. Sex with a stranger is like a metonym."

A metonym is an idea that is inextricably associated with a certain term. What Warner is saying is that being gay is having sex with strangers—

rooms, tea rooms [toilets], movie houses, and baths; the trucks, the piers, the ramble, the dunes. Sex was everywhere for us, and everything we wanted to venture: Golden showers and watersports [urination], c---sucking and rimming, f---ing and fist f---ing. Now our untamed impulses are either proscribed once again or shielded from us by latex."

When Larry Kramer, Randy Shilts (*And the Band Played On*), and others criticized multipartnerism (the PC term for promiscuity) in the late '80s, Crimp's response captured the essential dada of what has come to be queer theory. "[T]hey insist that our promiscuity will destroy us," he wrote in a perverse riff on the Christian paradox of losing one's life to save it, "when in fact it is our promiscuity that will save us."

If bathhouses are the temples of queer theory, condoms are among its holiest sacraments. Though they are accepted only begrudgingly, as Crimp's statement suggests, condoms offer gay radicals the promise of controlling the spread of AIDS without sacrificing the unbridled pursuit of liberation through promiscuity.

As Rotello explains in *Sexual Ecology*, safer sex efforts have always operated under this dual imperative—"to prevent the spread of HIV, but only in a way that defends gay men against attacks from the right and preserves the multipartnerist ethic of the gay sexual revolution."

It's a strategy that Rotello says was doomed to fail for one simple reason: nobody's perfect. "After all of these years of promoting condoms very aggressively, and after all of the studies showing that understanding of the principles of safer sex is virtually universal in the gay world, it appears that virtually universal compliance is just not going to happen."

And within a culture where multipartnerism and versatile anal sex have kept the prevalence of HIV high—Dr. Ron Stall estimates that one in five gay men are infected, other estimates are as high as 40 percent—each slip up, be it the result of mechanical failure, forgetfulness, or human frailty, can be disastrous.

A study conducted in New York City by Martina Morris and Laura Dean of Columbia University's School of Public Health determined that if gay men limited their unsafe contacts, or condom-failure "slip ups," to one per year, over time the AIDS epidemic would eventually grind to a halt, and the percentage of gay men infected with HIV—40 percent in 1991, the year the study was completed—would slowly decrease to a minuscule 5 percent by 2030. If, on the other hand, gay men engaged in two unsafe encounters per year, by the year 2030 infection totals would rise to 50 percent; among men between the ages of 45 and 54, they would be more than 60 percent. And this is a study that took place before the current upswing in unsafe sex.

When condom-based safer sex was originally formulated at the beginning of the epidemic, Sex Panic's Damien Jack explains, it was thought of as a temporary measure, something gay men would have to tolerate for five years or so until a cure could be found: "We didn't have the time or the knowledge to be able to realize that it was going to be something that we would have to deal with for probably the rest of our lives." Nearly two decades into the AIDS crisis, it hasn't gotten any easier. "The problem is, using condoms for your entire life every time you have sex is not always easy to put into practice," says Jack. "Sex is messy and it's complicated and it's often irrational. We get passionate and we get excited and we get carried away with the moment and so for many people there are moments where it can be difficult."

In the Alice in Wonderland world of queer theory, however, the fact that condom use is difficult is all the more reason to continue the condom code and to leave the multipartner ethic untouched. "Try asking the entire population of people who have pretty much exclusively heterosexual sex to use a barrier every single time they f--- and see how many of them do it," challenges Crimp, who says that for gay men maintaining condom use is even more difficult than for straights. "The virus is so complicated psychologically, especially over a long period of time. It's one thing if you're going to do it for a year or two years or for

five years, but a lifetime? [Knowing] that you're going to have diminished relations to sexual pleasure for your whole life, is that not going to cause in anybody a kind of powerful contravening fantasy and sometimes activity?"

This, according to Rotello, is why it's necessary to take steps to reduce the contact rate and prevent the reemergence of highly transmissible core groups in sex clubs, while also encouraging responsibility, fidelity, and same-sex marriage. "Douglas Crimp is absolutely right, people are not going to use condoms every single time they have sex, any more than everyone is going to quit smoking who needs to quit smoking or everyone is going to lose 50 pounds who needs to lose 50 pounds," he says. "That means we need to look at the epidemic as a whole and look at the other factors that are contributing to unsafe sex between individuals and sustaining the AIDS epidemic."

Building what Rotello calls a "sustainable gay culture," one in which gay men do not forever live in the shadow of AIDS, involves reducing the potential costs of making mistakes. "Lowering the contact rate and preventing the reemergence of highly transmissible core groups [such as those historically found in the bathhouses] are two other things we can do," he says. "You won't succeed perfectly at any of those things—some people won't use condoms, some people will have high contact rates, some people will go to bathhouses and sex clubs—but if you bring the numbers down and attack the problem in several different places at the same time you have much greater room for error."

In place of this holistic approach, Sex Panic is working on its own safe sex campaign. Damien Jack says that it "will probably be a poster or a pamphlet campaign that is specifically focused on a very blunt message, saying, 'If you're going to have sex, if you're going to f---, use a condom. You don't want to get HIV.'" When asked what exactly differentiates this from the similar messages broadcast since the beginning of the epidemic, he explains that it will probably involve "imagery that is sexually explicit."

It may be difficult for passersby to understand how photos of nude models en flagrante will help gay men make wiser choices, but then again the members of Sex Panic generally do not seem to have a tremendous sense of urgency when it comes to preventing AIDS transmission. For example, Sex Panic's Stephen Gendin, a vice president with *Poz* magazine, suggests that what gay men really need is not more responsible behavior but to get in touch with their feelings: "We need to become more clarifying, helping people to understand their own motivations and desires as a first step for them to make informed choices with consequences they're willing to live with."

Last June, in an article in *Poz* entitled "Riding Bareback: Skin-on-skin-sex—been there, done that, want more," the HIV-positive Gendin extolled the virtues of unprotected anal sex with other positive men. Though aware of the dangers of infecting another person or contracting a different strain of the virus himself, he wrote that there is "something empowering about the idea of sharing someone else's HIV." In a recent *Out* interview, fellow Sex Panic member Michael Warner, who is also HIV-positive, called the article "the most eloquent piece I've ever read about the dangers of reinfection."

Call it a fatalistic flamboyance, call it the efflorescence of despair. It is a world view that encompasses all things, and it is no surprise, therefore, that Sex Panic finds gay marriage so threatening, and believes that it lies at the heart of the challenge to movement orthodoxy. Andrew Sullivan, former editor of the *New Republic* and the only one of those Michael Warner derides as "neocons" who doesn't cringe at the label, has been its most outspoken proponent, writing in his book *Virtually Normal* (1995), that legalized marriage would be a "profoundly humanizing, traditionalizing" step, and "ultimately the only reform that truly matters."

Marriage would give gay men a real alternative to the fast lane that Sex Panic wants to ensure remains as the superhighway of gay life. And as Sullivan sees it, marriage would make a

fidelity-based culture possible. "One thing which the far Right and the far Left have in common with regard to gay men is they never use the word *love*, they only use the word *sex*," Sullivan explains. "I'm not anti-sex, but I do want to see the possibility of gay men being healed enough and working enough to have sex integrated into love and into commitment and into fidelity as noble goals. And I think the notion that we're incapable of it is insulting to gay men and our lives."

"We must create a new culture," Larry Kramer writes in a sentence which more pungently captures the thinking behind the push for gay marriage, "that is not confined and centered so tragically on our obsession with our penises and what we do with them."

Same-sex marriage has become a focal point of the current debate, but it must be said that its proponents differ on what exactly it would look like. For instance, Micheleangelo Signorile writes of "postmodern monogamy," which may or may not involve complete faithfulness to one's spouse, depending on what a particular couple finds workable. It is indicative of the fault line which has opened up in the gay movement that even a suggestion as non-traditional as this—one which makes no value judgement between monogamous marriages and "open" ones—qualifies Signorile as a neoconservative and an enemy to gay culture.

The idea, says Sullivan, is to show young gay men that being gay and being sexually dangerous don't necessarily have to go together. "I'd like it so that the first place they go to is the church not the bar, or to the book store not the sex club," he says.

Sex Panic, not surpassingly, takes umbrage at this kind of talk. "It's so much about a kind of moralism," says Damien Jack. Douglas Crimp calls Sullivan's arguments for gay marriage "authoritarian" and calls Rotello's calls for a renewed emphasis on relationships "absurd."

And as with bathhouses and AIDS prevention, these self-styled revolutionaries scoff at the idea that gay men can change. "It doesn't work to try to fundamentally change gay male sexual culture, in the sense of calling for an end to promiscuity and for more coupling and marriage, blah-blah-blah," opines Tony Valenzuela, who recently organized a Sex Panic Summit in San Diego attended by activists from around the country. "Frankly, gay men just aren't going to change in that respect."

Alan Béubé is equally pessimistic. "What are the historical precedents for that?" he asks. "What examples in history are there of people deciding they're going to change a whole culture? It seems so utopian that I don't know where it's coming from."

Of course, this pessimism may be a wish-fulfilling fantasy in disguise, a hope to prolong that moment of Dionysian revelry of the early '80s when sex was plentiful and guilt-free. But given the tenacity of the AIDS epidemic, and the demonstrated inability of the condoms alone to defeat it, it seems fair to ask if it isn't the queer theorists who have taken leave of reality. "Their vision, to me, is incredibly utopian," says Signorile. "They have this idea of a sexually transgressive army of people who liberate the entire culture and are not affected by HIV...and I just don't think, at this point, that seems realistic. We are seeing that without some sort of restraint, without lowering the contact rate, you simply are going to have this epidemic, and the notion that we can still preach this idea of sexual liberation and total sexual abandon and just make sure everyone uses a condom—that is what is utopian."

Moreover, as Gabriel Rotello points out, gay people have already demonstrated their ability to change society—witness the tremendous differences in gay life of the 1950s compared to that of today. "What we're talking about now, compared to that enterprise, is really just a fine tuning...Not only do I believe that gay men can do it, but I believe that gay men will do it."

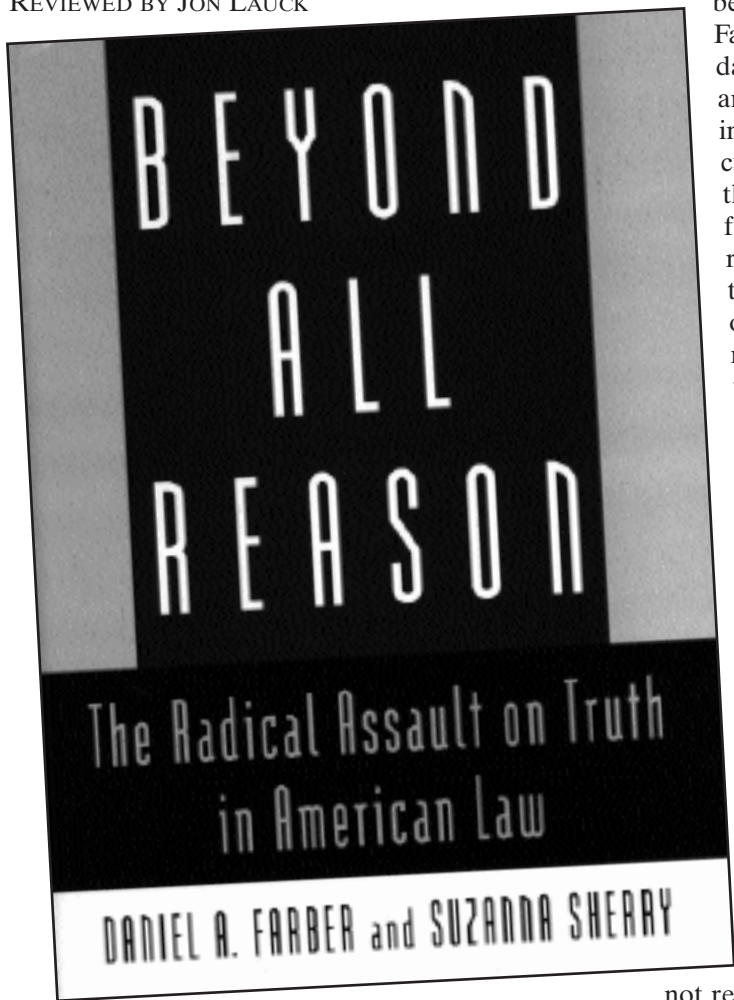
—Cristopher Rapp





**Academic Terrorism**  
*Beyond All Reason: The Radical Assault on Truth in American Law*  
by Daniel A. Farber and Suzanna Sherry  
(Oxford University Press, 195pp., \$22.50)

REVIEWED BY JON LAUCK



*Beyond All Reason* marks another milestone in the documentation of the radicalization of American higher education since the 1960s. It should be added to the part of your bookshelf which holds other warning flares from inside the walls of the academy, like Allan Bloom’s *The Closing of the American Mind*, Arthur Schlesinger Jr.’s *The Disuniting of America*, Gertrude Himmelfarb’s *On Looking Into the Abyss*, Daphne Patai and Noretta Koertge’s *Professing Feminism*, Christina Hoff Sommers’ *Who Stole Feminism?*, Christopher Lasch’s *The Revolt of the Elites*, and John Ellis’ *Literature Lost*.

These other books talk about the radical assault on our intellectual and cultural life. *Beyond All Reason* is, if anything, more frightening, for it details the radical incursion into legal scholarship, where the potential for damage is limitless. The specific target of the book is radical multiculturalism, which views the core of enlightenment thought—and the foundation of the law—as a fraud. Reason, science, empiricism, objectivity, standards, truth, merit, and logic are viewed as politically motivated by multiculturalists, mere strategies designed to entrench the powerful and oppress the weak. To peel away the veneer of legitimacy afforded these ideas is to expose the raw power relations undergirding a corrupt and repressive society. In place of Enlightenment thought, the radical multiculturalists substitute personal and unverifiable stories, personal preference, radical mindsets, and the unqualified desire to advance radical politics.

Farber and Sherry, law professors at the University of Minnesota, organize their book around the various threats posed by the spread of radical multiculturalism in legal scholarship.

The origins of radical multiculturalism are traced to the usual suspects, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Stanley Fish, whose ideas have already reconstructed disciplines like English literature, history, philosophy, and American Studies. The most active purveyors of radical multiculturalism in legal scholarship include Derrick

Bell, Richard Delgado, Catherine MacKinnon, and Patricia Williams.

Radical multiculturalism may seem amusingly extreme or over the top in the humanities building, but when it spills over into the law school, the implications are sobering. As true believers in the Enlightenment tradition, Farber and Sherry masterfully recount the dangers, piling on the reason, evidence, and analysis in constructing a powerful indictment. They show how radical multiculturalists advance the “indeterminacy thesis,” holding that judicial decisions are fundamentally arbitrary and that judicial reasoning can always be twisted around to produce the desired results, which are, of course, determined by powerful white males. Under this intellectual dispensation, what has always been called merit amounts to affirmative action for white men and defending merit is therefore tantamount to racism. Objectivity, reason, evidence, and professional standards of scholarship are socially constructed by the powerful to be tools of repression, squelching the authentic voices of the oppressed.

The law is about community practice, opinions and attitudes, common sense, reason, and judgement (the “reasonably prudent person” is the core standard in areas of law like torts and contracts), which is what makes radical multiculturalism’s impact on the law so scary. As Oliver Wendell Holmes (whom Farber and Sherry confess to admiring) once said, “We do not realize how large a part of the law is open to reconsideration upon a slight change in the habit of the public mind.”

As Farber and Sherry show, from radical multiculturalism’s “madness” inevitably come attacks on those who succeed within the system. Jews and Asians are the most vulnerable, given their great successes. (Jews are 38% of the faculty at prestigious law schools even though they are only 3% of population.) If the gateway to the system is indeed controlled by the powerful, who, as Richard Delgado argues, assure that “only people like them get in,” the conclusion is that there is rationality in the hostility to Jews within the Left and among blacks, the heritage of conspiracy theories surrounding the power of Jews, and long-held prejudice against Jews as cultural parasites, latching on to the powerful and selling out to the system.

Displacing objectivity, analysis, and reason in the “legal theory” of multiculturalism is storytelling from the authentic “voices” of the oppressed, the new standard of proof. The result is “jockeying for victim status” and battles over who can speak about the “archetypical” experience of blacks and women and other oppressed groups. These meandering, self-obsessed, bigoted stories cannot be criticized because this would trample a “feminine voice” or a “voice of color.” The ease with which contrary arguments are dismissed exposes the authoritarianism of the multicultural left. A white critic writing about black writers is compared to a slave owner writing about the behavior of his slaves. The other trump is comparing critics of the radical position to fascists and Nazis. Thus Catherine MacKinnon attacks her critics as Vichy-like “collaborators.” MacKinnon refuses to debate her female critics, viewing it as white males’ “pimp strategy to hide behind feminist women,” which legitimizes “a slave trade in women.” Her feminist critics are attacked for selling out to the Playboy Foundation, prompting her to question “how much of the feminist movement the pornographers own.” Such ad hominem (and ad feminem) attacks have become par for the course in law schools, precluding honest academic exchanges and fostering academic posing and posturing.

“It’s all politics,” say the multiculturalists, and “truth” is a phantom. Their disregard for the truth allows them to be cavalier about it. Radical theorist Patricia Williams, for instance, has claimed that the Supreme Court allowed states to prevent

blacks from testifying against whites into the early part of the twentieth century. Farber and Sherry note, however, that “since 1866, federal law has entitled blacks to testify in court on the same terms as whites.” Farber and Sherry report that “[I]t is almost an article of faith among radical multiculturalists that single-parent families—whether the result of unwed births or divorce—should not be discouraged, penalized, or stigmatized, because such families are every bit as beneficial for children as two-parent families. But there is overwhelming evidence that single parenthood is one of the primary causes of family poverty, and can have a devastating effect on the life chances of the children.” The facts do not matter as much as furthering the radical cause and “community building.”

The authors deserve credit for their bravery, but it is also true that they pull a few punches, like taking pains to underscore that devotion to merit need not mean the end of affirmative action. By not foreclosing the possibility of affirmative action (which the authors disagree with each other about) and assuring the reader that the book is not a “broadside against all left-of-center thought,” they try hard not to alienate mainstream liberalism, which dominates legal scholarship. After six chapters of unrelenting analysis exposing the dangers of radical multiculturalism the authors seem to relent, arguing that such practices are a matter of “intellectual style rather than psychological disturbance.” But after their previous catalogue of the paranoia, authoritarianism, and obsessiveness of the radical multiculturalists, foreclosing any “psychological” judgments seems questionable. An ending more consistent with the bulk of the book would have encouraged the Enlightenment forces to keep reasoning and analyzing, fighting the good fight, instead of sitting down around the conference table, where dialogue seems hopeless and accommodation dangerous.

Yet, however grim the prospects, Farber and Sherry call for dialogue rather than war. This will be a difficult prospect, for radical multiculturalism is a hatchery for bitterness and cynicism and despair and ultimately for violence since it believes that the only way out of the oppression is violent reconstruction of society itself. Enlightenment values—public-spiritedness, citizenship, civic virtue, and community involvement, all of which make a republic function—are seen as selling out to the system, not as the heartfelt duties and obligations of citizens proud of their republic. The pre-Enlightenment experiments in republican government which all failed miserably, described by Alexander Hamilton as “an infinity of little jealous, clashing, tumultuous commonwealths, the wretched nurseries of unceasing discord,” seem to be the models of life under radical multicultural ideology.

The radical multiculturalists practice a form of academic terrorism, holding whole disciplines hostage, threatening to firebomb the reputation of anyone who questions the attack on merit, objectivity, and science. True revolutionaries, the radical multiculturalists attack and destabilize the existing social order, hoping to ripen the conditions for the coming of a new way.

Christopher Lasch once described the radical project since the failed political revolution in the 1960s as taking the “long view and preach[ing] patience: the gradual preparation of a new culture.” Protecting American culture, civic institutions, and the intellectual tradition of the enlightenment against these guerrilla attacks is a difficult game. To criticize them lends credence to their paranoid fears, confers legitimacy on their ideas, and strengthens the resolve of the radical multiculturalist partisans. Persuasion seems unlikely since ideologues are not interested in reason or evidence, only in power.

Attempting to persuade the liberal-left mainstream of the legal profession of the dangers of multiculturalism is a noble cause, one worthy of the best traditions of enlightenment thought. Farber and Sherry have issued a challenge. Now let us see if there are any followers.



Jon Lauck is a law student at the University of Minnesota.

# Sun Headline Writer Sues to Regain Job

By Judith Schumann Weizner

**B**urt Schlagzeile, deposed chief headline writer for the *New York Daily Sun*, has sued the *Sun*'s publisher for having demoted him to assistant headline writer. He charges that the paper discriminated against him on the basis of a disability and has petitioned the State Supreme Court for a summary judgement in what his attorney calls "an open-and-shut case of illegal discrimination." The court's decision is expected some time after the first of the year.

Until his demotion six weeks ago, Schlagzeile had held the senior headline position for five months, having been promoted following receipt of the prestigious Mencken Special Achievement Prize, an honor awarded quadrennially by the Special Journalists' Association, in recognition of his triumph over Aural Similarity Syndrome. This disorder, once thought simply to be the result of a lack of interest in orthography, has now been recognized as a disability by the medical profession. It is characterized by the substitution of one sound for a similar one.

A spokesman for the *Sun*'s management says Schlagzeile was demoted because of certain difficulties with linguistic subtlety, and that the paper offered to allow him to keep the higher salary following the demotion, but Schlagzeile refused.

"If I had just quietly accepted this treatment," he said in a statement to the press, "it would have been an affront to every learning disabled person in the country."

Schlagzeile's life story, told in *Up from Semi-Literacy*, which has just been published by Speilman and Spellman, Inc., is a truly remarkable one, tracing his struggle from early childhood, when he was thought to be "borderline challenged," to his rise through the ranks of journalism to a highly visible position.

His first exposure to the fascinating world of journalism occurred at age nine, when he got a job delivering papers in his hometown of Headland, North Dakota. "At the time, I was a little confused as to what headlines were," Schlagzeile later wrote in his book. "Our afternoon paper was called *The Headland Headline and Herald* and I thought that headlines were called headlands. But after a while I figured it out."

As a youngster, Schlagzeile loved to hang around the *HH&H* office. He recalled, "The sound of those typewriters clacking away was very exciting to me as a young boy. And the sight of the typesetter in his apron—forget about it. I couldn't wait to be old enough to work like that."

Having been identified as aural similarity challenged by his teachers, Schlagzeile was placed

in the Headland school district's Creative Language Program, where he finally discovered he could excel at schoolwork. He dreamed of a life in journalism and began to compose headlines for amusement.

His big chance came unexpectedly on his 17th birthday, when the editor of the *Herald* suffered a stroke as he was composing the headline for the front page. While the police and emer-

been the Americans with Disabilities Act, which had made it possible for them to earn their livelihoods doing what they wanted to do rather than at what other people had told them they were good at."

But composing headlines remained his dream, and when the position of headline writer opened for the *Sun*'s "News of the Town" section, Schlagzeile applied, this time making sure to list his special qualifications. Despite a lack of experience except for his coup back in Headland, he got the job, acing out a woman who had been a headline writer at the *Wall Street Journal*. He held this post for three years, during which time he occasionally wrote headlines in the general news sections as well.

Schlagzeile says his proudest moment came when he received the Mencken Special Achievement Prize in 1997. With the city's mayor severely injured in an auto accident, Schlagzeile had scant minutes to compose a headline before the paper had to go to press, and the resulting headline, "Mayor in Weekend Condition Following Crash! Chauffeur Charged with Wreckless Driving," earned him the award.

A month later, the *Sun*'s chief headline writer, Donald Manchette, died, and Schlagzeile applied for that post, citing the Mencken Prize in his resumé. He got the position, but found himself in constant conflict with his editor, despite his reliance on the paper's Ritespel software, and several months after he assumed his new responsibilities, a headline on the front page of the Sunday edition, "Blind Lawyer Sighted for Contempt in Open Boarders Trial," led to his demotion.

Schlagzeile, who is chairman of the New York City chapter of the National Aural Similarity Syndrome Association and a volunteer on the President's Comprehensive Task Force to Catalogue Learning Disabilities by the Year 2000, says the issue in his suit against the *Sun* has ramifications that go far beyond his job.

"If businesses see that they can demote people on the basis of what they choose to call non-standard spelling, they will then begin demoting them on the basis of other supposedly non-standard behavior. This is a trend that must be resisted."

Schlagzeile says he is confident that he will prevail in court. "The ADA is very specific on this subject. Aural Similarity Syndrome has been a recognized disability since 1993. I'm surprised that the *Sun* even bothered to contest my charge."

Asked what he thinks the *Sun*'s headline will be if he wins his case, Schlagzeile proudly holds up a dummy of the future front page he has already composed. The headline reads "Son's Mane Headline Rider Wins Summery Judgment."



BURT SCHAGZEILE

gency personnel worked to save the editor's life, young Schlagzeile wrote the headline, guaranteeing that the afternoon edition would go to press on schedule. To this day, a copy of that front page, bearing the headline "Local Singer Becomes Teen Idle," hangs on the wall in his office.

"After that experience, nothing was going to keep me out of the news business," he says. He applied to the Pulitzer School of Journalism in New York, but was rejected. "I was destroyed," he recalls, "until I remembered that I hadn't included my Aural Similarity Syndrome certification number on my application. So I amended the application and when the school saw that I was challenged, I was accepted."

Not only was Schlagzeile accepted into the program but ultimately he was named editor-in-chief of the school paper, the *Pulitzer Daily Press*. Following graduation from journalism school, Schlagzeile landed a job at the *New York Daily Sun* as a cub reporter. His beat was the cultural scene, and he was given the job of writing background pieces on young struggling artists, musicians, and writers. He found that many of them had had experiences similar to his in their early years, having overcome various handicaps and learning disabilities. "The overwhelming majority of them said that the thing that had made the biggest difference in their lives had



**“This book shows how the race card is always dealt—off the bottom of the deck.”**

**—RUSH LIMBAUGH**

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