

# The Realist

Number 109

Editor: Paul Krassner

- Ted Bundy Meets the Press
- Skeptics Greet the New Age
- Dan Quayle Goes to the Ghetto



## The Trial of Oliver North

During the process of jury selection for the Iran-contra trial, the *New York Times* account included the following excerpt:

"The answers [by potential jurors] betrayed unalloyed disinterest in a political scandal that for a time had consumed the nation's interest.

" 'Forgive me for intruding on your privacy,' [attorney Brendan] Sullivan, normally known for his fiery courtroom presence, begged one woman, 'but may I ask you a few questions about newspapers and magazines?'

"The woman, who was approved for jury duty, replied that her house had burned in December 1986 and that she spent most of the next two years listing its contents for insurance adjusters.

" 'Yes, I turned it on and I saw him in uniform,' she said, referring to North's broadcast testimony, 'but it was just like I was focusing on the Three Stooges or something like that. It was just company for me while I was trying to organize things.' "

## COURT JESTER



### Truth in Cartooning

After Pennsylvania State Representative Stephen Freind declared that women can't become pregnant from a rape because their fear triggers a certain secretion which prevents fertilization, the *Philadelphia Daily News* published this cartoon by Signe Wilkinson, who explains that Freind's aim "was to make it difficult for any women in the state to get a legal abortion. I was mad because he tied up days of the legislature's time trying to regulate the behavior of women when this state ranks at the bottom nationwide in much more important things like number of students going on to higher education, children's healthcare and the like."

In January, George Bush told *Newsweek*, "It's going to take principled, moral leadership, but I really think world opinion is on the side of banishing chemical and biological weapons. . . . So what we have to do is keep emphasizing in whatever form possible the absolute essentiality of getting rid of these things." And in February, in his address to a joint session of Congress, he declared that "Chemical weapons must be banned from the face of the earth, never to be used again . . . civilization and human decency demand that we try." Both statements went unchallenged. It took this editorial cartoon to point out Bush's blatant hypocrisy.



On the other hand, a letter to the editor of the *Detroit Free Press* objected "to your use of the political cartoon depicting a gorilla as the embodiment of terrorism. It has taken decades to change the King Kong image of the gorilla as an aggressive, vicious, predatory creature. In fact, gorillas have been found to be herbivores and are generally docile, peaceful creatures. Such cartoons only serve to resurrect old stereotypes of the gorilla, stereotypes that have contributed to its near extinction."

And a letter to the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* complained about a cartoon which had a female Christmas shopper saying, "We don't really like the Jacksons much. I'm not gonna get them anything but a small television and a coupla gold watches." The letter called this "unbelievably sexist," adding: "I am tired of seeing women portrayed as a bunch of mad shoppers. I do not love to shop. Neither do my friends. We prefer doing more creative things in our spare time. Shopping is something I do when I have to buy something. It's not something I do for pleasure."

The *Herald Examiner* also received a letter complaining about a cartoon depicting "three citizen groups opposed to outlawing assault rifles"—namely, the NRA and two street gangs that indulge in drive-by shootings. The reader argued that "The only citizen group opposed to outlawing assault rifles is the NRA, which does not support banning the lawful ownership or use of weapons. The Bloods and the Crips are hardly citizen groups, and likely have no concern as to whether or not anything is outlawed."

A letter to *In These Times* criticized a cartoon comparing Israel's Likud Party to a lethal can of Liquid Plumber. "Most egregious is the question, 'Why negotiate when you can annihilate?' No political



party in the Likud bloc, including the ones to the extreme right, advocates or practices the annihilation of the Palestinian population. . . . Artist Jennifer Berman replied that "390 Palestinians were killed and 3,640 were injured during the first year of the intifada. Included in that figure are 25 infants killed by tear gas."

Similarly, a letter to *Harper's* said, "It is beneath the dignity of a magazine such as yours to print Bill Schorr's cartoon showing Israeli soldiers threatening to bulldoze the house of Dennis the Menace, who has been caught throwing stones."

### The Satanic Screenplays

When the Israeli Army announced a policy of breaking the bones of Palestinian protesters, it was too much for Woody Allen, and he wrote an Op-Ed piece criticizing such behavior. As a result, he was widely denounced in the *American Jewish Press*. Moreover, some columnists retroactively disliked his movies for putting down Jews.

Last month this insidious campaign spread to the *New Yorker* in the form of a cartoon by Robert Weber showing a young, obviously Jewish couple conversing over coffee in a restaurant. She is saying, "I wish I could get to Woody Allen. I think I could help him arrest his slide."

Allen retaliated by offering a free pass to screenings of all his future films to anyone (plus a guest) who seriously bad-vibes that artist—explaining, "I'm just trying to put the fan back in fanaticism"—and he personally phoned in cream-pie threats to three corner newsstands that refused to stop carrying the magazine.

## New Age Skeptics

by Ted Schultz

Recently I dreamed that Shirley MacLaine was mud-wrestling the Amazing Randi. An unruly, jeering audience surrounded the grunting opponents, including a surprisingly violent New Age bunch decked out in crystal pendants, pyramid hats, and Chi Pants. "Send his right brain to Sirius!" they shouted to Shirley. "Go for his heart chakra!" Goaded on Randi was a group of bespectacled fans in lab coats, also uncharacteristically surly. "Knock some sense into her! See how she likes being out on a broken limb!"

Suddenly everyone stopped shouting. Shirley and Randi froze. Then, in the kind of sickening slow motion that only happens in dreams and Brian de Palma flicks, every eye in that hostile crowd turned to fix on . . . me. It was then that I realized I was dressed in the uniform of a referee. "How about it, buddy?" they began to shriek in unison. "Who the hell's side are you on?"

\* \* \*

I guess I'm a little paranoid lately, having gotten caught in the crossfire of the great New Age vs. Skeptics War. I've been catching a lot of flak, especially from the New Age camp, for fraternizing with skeptics and for becoming a (choke) scientist. For the latter crime an old New Age buddy wrote to say, "I always knew you'd sell out to the Big Satan of materialistic science." At least he didn't accuse me of being the reincarnation of Benedict Arnold. My lifelong fascination with the paranormal—flying saucers, Charles Fort, reincarnation, ancient astronauts, channeling, faith-healing, bigfoot, you name it—has in recent years led me to consider the skeptical point of view, which I've found at its best offers a fresh new approach to the subject (and at its worst is everything paranormalists say it is). Unfortunately there's a war on, and I've learned that during a war neutral observers are generally regarded with suspicion and contempt.

I feel unfairly accused. I served many years with the New Age forces, getting in my quota of oriental religions, psychic workshops, and mucus-free diets. I even wrote an article for *Fate* ("The Magazine of the Strange and the Unknown") in 1981 entitled "Blobs From Space." Hell, I married an astrologer!

In the early '70s I founded organizations like The Corps of Reality Engineers and The Network, hawking books about space migration and psychedelic drugs at New Age fairs. The Network attracted a lot of unusual people, and it slowly began to dawn on me that maybe—just maybe—not all of their ideas held water. One guy (an admirer of Adolf Hitler) monopolized many hours of Network discussion time preaching his vision of Utopia: space colonies filled with hyperfertile females requiring constant sexual attention from the menfolk. As a result, a lot of women quit coming to the meetings, insuring that his dream would probably never come true. Another fellow regularly communicated with the Space Brothers, claiming to summon their craft at will. On the numerous occasions that

he took us out UFO-watching, a little voice in my head whispered: "Are you sure those aren't just stars?"

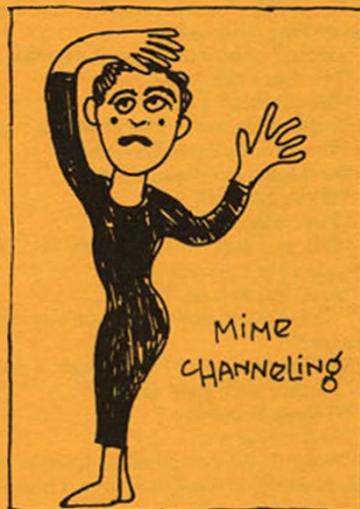
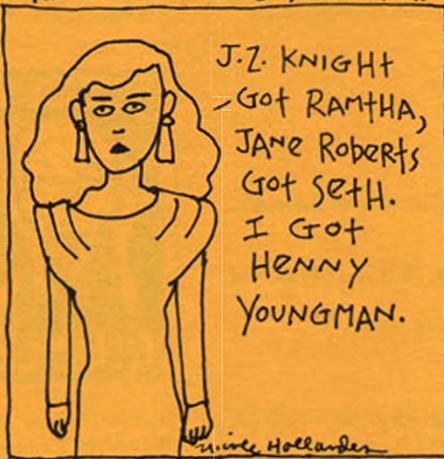
That voice has grown louder and louder over the years, a little devil whispering into my left ear that looks a lot like the Amazing Randi with horns. I've come to appreciate the voice—without it, I might have wound up in the Unarius Academy in San Diego, dressed in the uniform of my past life on another planet and worshipping the rhinestone-bedecked 90-year-old incarnation of Archangel Uriel. Or I might be trying to sell you the *Bhagavad Gita* at the airport. No doubt about it, the voice has helped me to sidestep a lot of cosmic red herrings, and to focus on the mysteries, miracles, and wonders that seemed to have the most potential. But the voice has also gotten me into trouble.

Back in 1986 I edited an issue of *Whole Earth Review* subtitled "The Fringes of Reason." It was my celebration of the weird ideas I love so much. It included skeptics and it included believers—and it taught me that in times of war, egalitarianism goes unappreciated. "Schultz is a dupe," wrote in one skeptic

Southern California Skeptics, an affiliate of the national Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, or CSICOP—called the "psi-cops" by their paranormalist critics, who consider them the self-appointed policemen of astrologers, psychics, channelers, and other occultists. Since then I've given five lectures in all to skeptical crowds, including one at their national convention in Chicago last November. New Agers who accuse me of being a turncoat materialistic scientist might be surprised to learn that at the national convention the executive director informed me that I'd been invited as a "token New Ager." Did that mean I had to sit at the back of the auditorium with the other pariahs?

Actually, I found the skeptics to be a nice crowd of people, certainly not the storm-troopers I'd been led to expect from editorials in *Fate* Magazine (in fact, in Chicago I discovered at least one other writer for *Fate* amongst the attendees). Although less picturesque overall than an equivalent New Age crowd, the skeptics have their share of eccentrics. In response to my point that science explains

## CHANNELING DISORDERS



(a lawyer). "He's dangerous and should not be allowed out without a leash and a muzzle. But let me apologize to him in advance in case he has some appropriate excuse, such as severe brain damage." Meanwhile a paranormalist wrote in to say, "I am very disappointed. Where is your lateral vision? Is the Universe a fucking joke to you? You wouldn't know a spirit if it shit on your face!" I wasn't sure if that was a curse, but I slept with my head under the covers for the next couple of nights just in case. Lots more letters came in—the most mail an issue of *Whole Earth Review* has ever received—many of them starting out: "I really enjoyed your recent issue. All of the criticism was right on target except when you mentioned my favorite belief . . ."

My personal life suffered too. My wife's psychic teacher informed her that I was never welcome in her house again. I wanted to know, "Does that include my astral body?"

Then a really strange phenomenon occurred. I was invited to speak before the

only one facet of human experience, I was accosted in both Chicago and Southern California by followers of Ayn Rand, who wanted to argue the case for a scientifically designed system of government. At another lecture a Historical Revisionist told me that his skepticism extended to whether or not the Holocaust had really occurred. And in Chicago, when I pointed out that science is simply not equipped to answer the age-old questions of *Why are we here? What is our purpose? Where are we going?*, an elderly rationalist gentleman stood up angrily to suggest that "Maybe people should just learn not to ask such questions!" Uh, yeah, that might work—on some other planet than earth, with some other species besides humans.

Strangest of all, at each of the five lectures I've given to the skeptics, I've spent a large portion of the question-and-answer sessions listening to the ramblings of reincarnationists, channelers, and psychics. They had traveled

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## Dan Quayle in the Heart of Darkness

by Matt Newman

In a carefully calculated interview, published a few days before he became Vice President, Dan Quayle seemed to make a political U-turn. He stated that, if someone is homeless, "it's not by choice, not by desire. He attacked what he called "latent racism" in our society. And, he promised to go directly to the people, "out where these problems exist."

Sound more like Hubert H. Humphrey than J. Danforth Quayle? Of course, we all know the facts. Quayle isn't even a *latent* liberal. You don't get an ADA rating of zero for nothing. So, right after the Inaugural, I called the White House to see if Quayle was really planning to go "downtown" and rap with the homeboys. They told me to call the Vice President's press office. I did.

"This is the office of the press secretary to the Vice President of the United States. All our lines are busy. Please hold for the next available operator."

That repeated a few times. Then they switched to one of those obnoxious radio stations that you only hear when you're on hold. George Fenneman plugging a savings bank; commercials for Turtle Wax, Budget Rent-a-Car, Alka Seltzer; and then, Muzak, mind-numbing Muzak. The Hollyridge Strings, the Doodletown Pipers, the Serendipity Singers—it went on for what seemed like eight or nine hours. I tried reading an old copy of *Time* magazine, but somewhere in the middle of an article about "Earthquake Madness in California" I must have fallen asleep.

Suddenly a voice comes on at the other end—a sultry female voice.

"Hi. Can I help you?"

"Who is this?" I ask.

"Press office to the Vice President," she purrs.

"You must be Paula Parkinson."

She laughs, but doesn't deny it.

"Who's calling?"

"*Time* magazine," I lie.

"Did you want to speak with Mr. Beckwith?" (David Beckwith, Quayle's press secretary.)

"Sure. Put him on."

"Well, I'm not sure I can reach him right now. Will you talk to Fred Burgee?"

She transfers me to Fred Burgee, a gruff young staffer.

"I didn't catch your name."

"George Fenneman."

"And you're with . . . ?"

"*Time*. I did that piece on Quayle last year—how he wasn't the dunce everyone thought he was. I heard he loved it."

"Oh—sure, sure. That was a nice piece of work."

Now *he* was lying.

"What can we do for you?"

I'm beginning to enjoy this.

\* \* \*

Downtown Los Angeles. Dan Quayle is appearing at the dedication of a Skid Row shelter for the homeless. Besides Quayle, there is: Governor Deukmejian of California; Mayor Bradley, looking smart in a turtleneck sweater; Marilyn Quayle, wearing a leopardskin pillbox hat; TV crews, security agents, reporters; and those ubiquitous homeless people. Plus "George Fenneman, *Time* magazine." I quickly find Fred Burgee, my pal.

"Remember me?"

He looks at my fake press badge.

"Did you get the private funding information? A local savings bank put up the seed money."

I don't know what he's talking about, so I change the subject.

"Is Quayle friendly with Zeppo?"

"Zeppo?"

I point out the Governor, who is beginning to speak. I always confuse him with the famous fourth banana.

"Vice President Quayle, Mrs. Quayle . . ."

Deukmejian's nasal monotone and lack of personality makes it seem like his microphone is switched off. Instead, he's drowned out by *Puff, the Magic Dragon* sung by the Doodletown Pipers. The odd

juxtaposition creates an eerie, anticipatory mood that has me thinking something strange is about to happen.

"Fenneman?" someone behind me asks. "David Beckwith."

We shake hands.

"From here we're going to Watts for some ribs. Come on along—all the malt liquor you can drink!"

He laughs at his little racial slur. I go back to zoning out on Zeppo, to the theme from the movie *Exodus*. He's followed by Mayor Bradley, who discusses the fabulous weekend rates at Budget Rent-a-Car. And then—the main attraction—our Vice President.

"What a great day for the homeless," Quayle begins, almost enviously. "You know, when I was about nine years old I used to sneak outside late at night—my parents were sound asleep—and I'd go across the front lawn and all the way around to the other side of the house, and I'd tiptoe into the garage through a back door and pull out this neat clubhouse one of the gardeners had made for me out of a cardboard box. I'd set it up on the patio, or near the pool, and stay in that box and sleep there overnight. So I think I know a little something about that sort of thing."

The crowd applauds, out of shock. But the mood changes as *Lady of Spain* starts up, featuring a smiling Marilyn Quayle on the accordion. It's the big finale, and it gets us all herded into vans headed for Watts.

Soon I find myself seated in the crowded rear booth of Lee's Ribs, at the corner of 103rd and Jefferson. Directly across from me is the Vice President of the United States. A waitress is placing large trays full of ribs on the table. Everybody digs in.

The ribs are delicious. But heavy. I can barely finish one of them. But not Quayle. He can't get enough. As long as he's eating he doesn't

### Georgie We Hardly Knew Ye



There are T-shirts on the market with this sendoff of the famous Edvard Munch painting, "The Scream." And *The Nation* reports that in poster format it's "popping up all over Washington, illustrating the city's bipartisan consensus about the boy Vice President. In the harsher climate of New York, artistic interpreters of the Quayle phenomenon prefer to work in a conceptual style that some critics describe as minimalist, others as felonious. A black-and-white poster spied at the corner of 7th Ave. and 16th St. says, *Murder Dan Quayle in Cold Blood!*"

have to answer questions, exposing his Achilles brain. I turn to Beckwith, who's working on a malt liquor.

"What's his problem?"

"He's nervous," Beckwith explains. "Off the record, the only contact he's had with black people is on the golf course—when it's his turn to tip the caddies."

The proprietor of Lee's comes over to shake the Veep's hand and dump some more ribs on the table. Pictures are taken as Quayle continues to eat and ignore the press.

Beckwith shakes his head.

"He's gonna be sick as a dog."

"Does this happen often?"

"Only when he's nervous. At his first cabinet meeting he ate thirty-six-pork rinds."

"How come he isn't fat?"

"Gets a lot of exercise. Burns it off."

Quayle is in an eating trance, pausing only to breathe. The strategy is working. The reporters forget about asking any questions and go straight to the free food.

"It's funny," Beckwith continues. "He's scared of a lot of things—thunder, lightning, large crowds, small spaces—"

"Minorities," I add.

A young girl comes over and asks him for his autograph. He obliges, fingerpainting his name in barbecue sauce.

I look at Quayle. He's beginning to turn green. The stupid grin is fading. He's holding a rib in front of his face, pretending to gnaw at

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## Pillow Talk

by Nancy Cain

Connie Chung and Maury Povich are the perfect couple. They are energetic, beautifully made up, and both have successful careers in media. They work hard. Connie, as the anchor on the CBS Weekend News; Maury, at his Fox Network tabloid show. And after work, like many other fortysomething moderns, they stay home, cocooning. They like high-end frozen microwave dinners, new movies on the VCR and, in their own way, they're quite playful.

But Connie and Maury are a little out of sorts this night. There is an edge as they climb into bed with newspapers, magazines and the remote control. Maury puts his thumb to the remote, going directly to Channel 45 to check in on the God channel. The show he's looking for hasn't begun yet. He brings up the sound of Pat Robertson who is ragging on the birth rates.

"...and by the year 2020, we are not going to have enough money to take care of all the retirees, there won't be enough money for government, there won't be enough people to expand the markets..."

Connie, who sometimes misses parts of the news to watch *Love Connection*, pries the remote from Maury's fist. Before you can say "shopping channel," she's watching Kathy, the salesperson/host who is sending out tiny electronic impulses of family.

"...Hi, what's your first name, and where are you calling from?"

"Sweetheart, I was watching Pat Robertson."

"This is Sylvia from Louisville."

"Darling, if we miss one second of the Ted Bundy interview for this..."

"There it is!"

Connie is happy to see the product she's been waiting for. The ionizer air cleaner. Entering her numbers and codes into the phone with speed and dexterity, she buys it, along with a box of replacement filters. Maury is impatient.

"...and Kathy, I thank God for the shopping channel. Last year I sent my money to the 700 Club and all I got was a prayer for my arthritis and a tiny Bible. At your channel, for the same money I get that fantastic ionizer, the entire box of replacement filters, plus the 24-inch sterling herringbone necklace I got this afternoon..."

Please, darling," Maury says through clenched teeth, reaching for the remote.

"Why are you so edgy tonight? They scooped me on the Bundy interview too, but you don't see me insisting on the God channel."

"I've gotta watch 'im. And you should too. You could learn something, my little news bunny. These people are on the cutting edge of paranoia."

Blip!

"...and that we will no longer have any dominance in the world," Pat Robertson continues. "Our culture, our values will be squeezed out by many other conflicting

ideologies, by other national interests. So I oppose any amendment to any budget bill providing even one penny to the national Planned Parenthood organization. Even if the veto would mean bringing the entire government to a halt."

"You won't hear John Chancellor take chances like that."

"Maury, please, do we have to watch Bundy again tonight?"

"I just can't believe that the fucking God channel got Bundy and I didn't. Tell me just once more, precious, why he gave the interview to Dobson and not me, the king, Mr. Tabloid himself?"

"Because, dearest, Dr. Dobson could forgive Ted Bundy. He's a minister."

"And what else, my dove?"

"And Bundy got more punch off the God station. You know how violence and sexual frenzy is so much more exciting over there."

Maury just can't let it go. Connie consoles him.

"There'll be other death row interviews, sweetie. Besides, you did get to play with the



### Nude Nose Now News

The advance hype was that Geraldo Rivera himself would flash a waiting America right there on syndicated TV. The *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* preview of his show at a nudist camp included the following description:

"As security guards bar the door from prying eyes, naked men and women stroll past the television crews setting up the equipment. To avoid an 'X' rating, the show's director advises the camera operators to 'censor themselves' by framing shots to exclude genitalia."

"At least if Geraldo gets hit with anything on this show, it will be soft!" a cameraman quips.

"Dr. Carole Lieberman, a fully dressed Beverly Hills psychiatrist who has been invited as a guest expert, watches the preparations for the show."

"In Freudian terms, the nose is symbolic of the penis. A broken nose can increase castration anxiety in some people," the doctor observes. "Perhaps Geraldo felt his masculinity was affected when his nose was broken. This show might be a way of reassuring himself and his audience that he's all right."

Be sure to stay tuned for the next *Geraldo*— "Recovering Adult Children of Dysfunctional Parents Addicted to Blowing Other People's Noses in Public."

footage later."

"...and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I renounce the lustful pornography, the violence and abusive sex portrayed in the media..."

"This is it. That's the prayer they do before they play the Bundy piece."

Maury and Connie watch Dr. Dobson's interview with Ted Bundy for the ninth time.

"...and what scares me, Dr. Dobson, when I see what's on cable TV, some of the movies and some of the violence in the movies that comes into homes today, the stuff that they wouldn't show in X-rated theaters 30 years ago—that stuff is, I'm telling you from personal experience, is the most graphic violence on screen, particularly as it gets into the home to children who are unattended or unaware that they may be a Ted Bundy who has that vulnerability, that predisposition to be influenced by that kind of behavior."

Maury fumes. "It's nothing without re-enactments."

When Bundy says that every criminal behind bars uses pornography, Maury starts talking back to the set. "Of course they use porn—they're fucking prisoners."

Connie puts her hand on his arm. "Honey, you're bringing me down. Look at this story in the *New York Post*—they did a survey on who should replace Diane Sawyer on *Sixty Minutes*, and I got 49 out of 302 votes. Leslie Stahl only got 29 votes. So, please..."

"Re-enactments and celebrity tie-ins, that's what it needs."

"You are incredible," says Connie. But her lilted laugh turns to a groan of horror as she opens the *Weekly World News* to a full-page photo of the dead Ted Bundy. "Oh, my God, this is so gross. Listen to the caption: 'This is Ted Bundy after he was electrocuted. Electrode burns are visible on his shaved head. The stitches across the skull were made during the autopsy.'"

"Why would they give him an autopsy?"

"I don't know," says Connie. "Maybe it's the law."

"Jesus, we're lost without our research departments."

"Maybe they want to examine his brain."

"What, after it's already deep-fried?"

"You're disgusting."

"C'mere, you," Maury says. Connie snuggles with him, putting her hand over his on the remote control in his lap.

Blip!

Now "The Hour of Ideas to Make Life Easier" is on the shopping channel, and what Connie sees makes her bounce on the bed with glee.

"There it is. Remember, sweetie pie, we said if it came up again, we'd buy it."

She picks up the phone and orders the electric vibrator with 24, count 'em, 24 tiny undulating fingertips all going in different directions, embedded in a palm-like setting. \$49.95.

Maury embraces her.

"You're my Current Affair," says Connie.

"Let me twiddle your affiliates," says Maury.

Blip!

## Civil Wrongs

by Steve Albert

One of the most satisfying aspects of Gorbachev's *glasnost* is that for the first time in Soviet history, writers, critics and ordinary citizens are permitted and even encouraged to tell the truth about their country's terrible past.

There are still some limits but I doubt if any contemporary Russian magazine would come out and actually defend political lying for "a good cause," as a film critic recently did in *Time* magazine.

The occasion for this essay on the virtues of historical falsification was the national release of *Mississippi Burning*, a film which purports to be about the 1964 triple murder in Neshoba County, Mississippi, of three civil-rights workers, Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney.

The only thing truthful about *Mississippi Burning* is that the murders really did take place and, after a fashion, the killers were brought to justice. *Time* featured the film on its front cover and made the Hollywood production the subject of an extensive and favorable review.

The *Time* film critic does not deny that much of the movie deliberately lies about the FBI investigation of the murder. By way of example, the film shows the murder being solved because a southern woman with an anti-racist conscience turns in her Deputy Sheriff husband for his participation in the killing. This kind of contrition is most pleasing to the sensitivities of the newer-than-new south. The problem is, nothing this nice ever happened in Mississippi. Bureau agents successfully wrapped up their investigation by bribing a Klansman with \$30,000 to betray his

associates.

Perhaps the film's big biggest example of historical chutzpah is in the portrayal of the two FBI agents in charge of the investigation. They both hate racists, and one of them is such a fire-eating liberal we suspect that he will soon retire from the Bureau and become editor of *The Nation*.

In real life the FBI agents in the south kept a cozy relationship with local cops and politicians, J. Edgar Hoover hated Martin Luther King and tried to drive him to suicide, and at the time of the murders in question, the FBI didn't even have a field office in Mississippi. This absence, despite the ongoing reign of terror against the civil-rights movement and its supporters.

The *Time* review rationalizes the cinematic dishonesty on two grounds.

The first, artistic—the film is visually and aesthetically accurate even if it gets most of the facts wrong. Indeed, it is a striking and evocative work. It gets the faces right, the blacks are beautiful and strong, the whites are mostly weak and stupid. And the Klan terror is frighteningly there, with its fire-bombings, castrations and lynchings. But even here the atmospherics are off the wall because something is missing. The *Mississippi Burning* camera completely ignores the civil-rights movement, with its personalities, day-to-day life and monumental bravery. It's like those films about the Vietnam war that ignore the Viet

Cong and are complimented for their realism.

The argument for "artistic license" is old and uninteresting. It is *Time's* second rationale for faking history that is most revealing of the magazine's attitude toward little white lies. *Time* argues that the lying in *Mississippi Burning* is historically necessary and in a good cause. In its upbeat 1984 sort of way, the magazine declares that the present time is much more conservative than the '60s and that an honest version of the murders and their investigation would be unacceptable to a mass audience. What a pity that would be, *Time* opines, because racist violence in America is currently on the upswing and *Mississippi Burning* does have an excellent message on that score. The trade-off for discarding truth is a powerful lecture against lynching.

Without directly saying so, the film review does offer a rationale for *Time's* highly selective and politically motivated coverage of world events. Truth isn't important to *Time*. It's the message that counts.

And so too, and for their own high minded motives, did Soviet publications and films once rewrite history and create false gods and unmentionable individuals. Speaking of "unmentionable individuals," isn't it about time, in the spirit of human decency and an American *glasnost*, that we insisted that a movie about the murder of civil rights workers actually include a few of them in the plot?

## SKEPTICS

(Continued from Page 3)

behind enemy lines incognito, but after hearing my talk had decided they had a friend at the podium. Instead of getting under my skin (I've heard one too many recountings of past lives on Atlantis), these souls rekindled my hope for reconciliation. Here, in an environment intellectually hostile to their ideas, they had the guts to stand up and speak because they considered me not a turncoat but a sympathizer. And instead of being nasty, the skeptics were showing their humanity and treating the New Agers with courtesy. (Did I really see a skeptical physicist leaving with that cute palm-reader after my lecture at UCLA?)

I had another dream last night. A crowd of New Agers and skeptics were gathered as before, cheering at something going on in their midst. As I drew closer, the object of their enthusiasm became clear—Shirley MacLaine and the Amazing Randi again, only this time they were in a large waterbed, fucking like greased weasels. I awoke in a cold sweat, thoroughly disgusted.

Hey, some things are even too weird for me.



### The Case of the Non-Existent Baby

From the *Columbia Journalism Review*:  
"Brooke Rochelle Hamby was born in Peoria, Illinois, at 2:25 a.m. on January 1, 1989. That evening, two local television newscasts led viewers to believe—unless they listened very closely—that she was the city's first baby born in the New Year.

"But she wasn't, and the reporters who did the stories for stations WMBD and WEEK knew it. The true New Year's baby, known only by her first and middle names, was Shatyra Renee, born in an ambulance at 1:40 to a 14-year-old black girl who hadn't even known she was pregnant. Four days later, a reporter for the *Peoria Journal Star*, tipped off by a source who heard about Shatyra's birth

on a police scanner, broke the real story.

"The birth rate to teens in Peoria, the city whose name has become shorthand for Middle America, is twice the national average, so the news of Shatyra's birth should not have been shocking. But the fact that the first baby of the New Year—a traditional symbol of hope and continuity—was born to an unwed black girl apparently was not the happy story the stations were looking for. . . ."

The *Journal Star* did not reveal the mother's identity, but the TV stations needed visuals, so instead they both reported the white baby's birth as the first, not in Peoria, but in a Peoria hospital.

## Sympathy For the White Devil

by Casey McCabe

As a social barometer, Hollywood understands pressure. So in recent years the TV and motion picture industry has been scrambling to pay lip service to blacks, who seem to resent that their appearance on the screen can only mean pimps, drug dealers and Eddie Murphy are crucial to the plot. Likewise gays, who protested their portrayal as unrepentant plague spreaders in the otherwise forgettable TV series *Midnight Caller*.

To make matters worse, the cuddly reign of Mikhail Gorbachev suddenly made killing Russians unfashionable. Attempts to create generic, swarthy Mid-Eastern types invited the wrath of all Islam. Frustrated screenwriters were wondering how long they could continue to trot Nazi uniforms out of the mothballs. In its quest for a villain whose gruesome death will be roundly cheered by everyone, Hollywood had indeed fallen on hard times.

Then someone got a bright idea. If you need a loathsome antagonist, why not a greedy, white businessman? After all, are greedy, white businessmen going to complain about the shake they've gotten in this country? Better yet, in portraying greedy, white businessmen, actors can turn in rote, cliched performances while maintaining the social consciousness that drives their work. This line of thinking produced such hits as *Beverly Hills Cop*, *Wall Street* and *Robocop*, not to mention the vast collection of stupid, evil bosses that populate television.

But in fact, greedy white businessmen *did* complain. Their beef about this new trend was serious enough for *At the Movies* to dedicate an entire half-hour on the subject. Hollywood's major production studios, not exactly non-profit collectives themselves, are now pressed to rectify the situation.

Looking to portray white businessmen in a more flattering light, the following treatments are now being shuttled around Hollywood and Burbank. Let's just hope it's not too late to repair the damage:

### Who Framed Ivan Boesky?

There's trouble in Boon Town. Someone's made a killing in the stock market and everyone wants to blame Ivan. Together with his animated pal, a wisecracking ferret named Whiskers, Ivan seeks to restore his good name against the jackals who think he should take the fall. Fun for the whole family.

### Terms of Endowment

Riddled by ineptitude, doubt and jealousy, the Public Broadcasting System is saved by a quick-witted band of corporate executives who open their hearts and non-taxable income to the struggling, non-profit network.

### Bull Burnham

It's a laughing, crying love-fest when the gang at Drexel Burnham Lambert shakes off romantic entanglements, infighting, and the pesky distractions of the Securities Exchange Commission to rise to prominence in New York's summer slow-pitch softball league.

### Ted Turner: Raw

If you think he's outspoken in the press, wait till you see him trash his detractors in this no-holds-barred, uncensored live performance film.

### Hellbound

The long-awaited film bio on the life of Ralph Nader.

### The Electric Company

An ambitious new children's television show that will use songs, skits, and hand puppets to explain and justify Con Edison's rate structure.

### Salaam Bhopal

When tragedy strikes, Union Carbide's crack team of lawyers and PR advance men go into action, making sure the survivors settle quickly with a minimum of red tape.

### The Wimps of War

In this sweeping mini-series, a House Select Committee is busy trying to undermine long-standing Pentagon contracts when Libyan jet fighters strike Monticello. As the country clamors for war, a charismatic arms dealer takes up battle with the weak-kneed pencil pushers and sleeps with Jane Seymour.

### Gorillas In Our Midst

A documentary on how trade unions came along and screwed up a perfectly good economy.

### Stanford and Son

He's a wily, irascible old investor. His son's a wet-behind-the-ears MBA. Together they sell junk bonds out of their modest split-level Palo Alto home in this new sit-com entry.

### Wingtips of Desire

A "prestige" film, this stylish, surreal offering by Wim Wenders provocatively explores the inner thoughts of white businessmen, haunted by the question of why they were put here on Earth. The life-affirming answer is "Yes, of course, to make a lot of money."

### Back To The Futures

There's plenty of well-intentioned hijinks when a plucky young investor and a crusty old inventor use a time machine to play tricks on their friends at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange.

## DAN QUAYLE

(Continued from Page 4)

it. I figure it's the best time to ask a question.

"Are you for or against vivisection?"

Quayle just stares back at me. I'm not even sure he heard the question.

Suddenly, he stands up and drops the rib from his hand.

"Alka Seltzer to the rescue," Beckwith sings.

Quayle looks like Mount St. Helens ready to blow. With several photographers trained on him, he discreetly turns and walks out the back door. Since I'm sitting on the end, I'm the first one up and part of the group giving chase.

We follow him out into the alley behind Lee's. It's gotten dark. I can barely see him, let alone the garbage cans he's weaving his way through. He cuts and darts around them like O. J. Simpson, and I'm struggling to keep up. I look back and notice I'm the only one still in pursuit. And I'm not sure why.

Quayle slows down. He bends over and clenches his stomach. As he does, a door opens nearby. Several tough-looking youths emerge. They don't recognize him.

"Hey, man—you been shot?" one asks.

"He's just a little under the weather," I say on his behalf.

"Who are you?" another kid asks.

"I'm the President of the United States. And this is the Vice President."

They don't exactly laugh. Instead, they walk away. Seconds later, Quayle throws up all over everything.

"Sorry if my question upset you," I apologize. "It was just that, well—the way you were operating on those ribs—it made me think of vivisection. Sorry if that made you nauseous."

He looks up and stares at me. He's angry.

"You're not Fenneman. You're an imposter."

Quayle makes a move toward me, like he wants to strangle me. I start to run. All of a sudden there's this loud crunching sound. The ground starts to shake. Buildings sway, glass is breaking. It's an earthquake—a big one! I look around for Quayle, but he's gone. The spot where he was standing is now an open ditch with steam coming out of it. He had fallen through a crack in the earth.

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## MEDIA FREAK

### Safer Than Thou

Isadora Alman writes an advice column for the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*. She received this letter:

"The problem of the condom that just won't stay on is one that my lover and I have solved quite nicely. You know those good old rubber plumber's O-rings? They're used as washers to keep faucets from leaking and they do for condoms too. These rubber circles come in a variety of sizes, cost about 50 cents and are reusable. Use one by stretching it over the already in-place condom and position it at the end so that it fits snugly—not so tight as to be uncomfortable, but not so loose as to slip off with the condom.

"We use two for extra safety and my lover says he even enjoys the feeling, which seems to increase the sensitivity of his penis and delays orgasm. We keep quite a few on hand so that we don't need to wash the used ones immediately and leaving them out in the air for several days helps ensure the death of any nasty viruses. We've heard they come in different colors but we've only found them in basic black. . . ."

But remember what happened to the Challenger spacecraft, and don't go dipping those O-rings in any ice buckets now, you hear?

### Filler Items

- An *L.A. Reader* correspondent reports that "Rosebud was William Randolph Hearst's nickname for Marion Davies' clitoris; the prominence of the term in *Citizen Kane* supposedly made Hearst furiously hateful of Orson Welles."

- An ad for MPI Home Video's *The Fabulous '60s*, narrated by ABC news anchor Peter Jennings, features a "Quick Trivia Quiz" of that decade. The first two questions: 1. What was the name of the first chimpanzee in space? 2. Who were James Chaney, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman?

- A docudrama, *Leap of Faith*, about a cancer patient who cured herself with creative visualization and a meatless diet, was sponsored by McDonald's. And the final presidential debate, which ignored the destruction of the rain forests, was sponsored by Burger King on at least one channel.

- Lorimar has standards, no matter what anybody says. Concerning its syndicated series, *Freddy's Nightmares*, based on the slasher films, a spokesperson swears that "No one under the age of 18 will be murdered on this show."

- The *Oakland Tribune* ran a "How Cheap Are You?" contest. The winner was a reader who unwinds two-ply toilet tissue and saves 23 cents a roll. Runnerup: a couple who collect two-for-one restaurant coupons, then invite another couple; "We make them pay for their half, and we dine free."

- A *New Yorker* cover in November, 1988 depicted a full-page universal price symbol. *Mad* magazine had the same cover back in April, 1978. This is known as long-term memory loss.

- Random House published Donald Trump's *Art of the Deal*. Trump bought 20,000 copies and made it a bestseller. Consequently he became a prime and continuing target of *Spy* magazine. A pair of *National Lampoon* writers are working on a parody called *Sty*, naturally to include a takeoff on Trump. But *Sty* is being financed by a subsidiary of Random House. So the Trump spoof is out.

- The *Village Voice* reports that "Spy's own bizarre financing... may be traced circuitously to the Iran-Contra arms deal. Back in '86, start-up capital for the humorists was conducted via Tom Phillips Sr., chairman of Raytheon, the inventor-of-profitable-TOW-missiles, and publisher's dad."

- The *AFL-CIO News* reveals that although candidate George Bush denounced his opponent as a protectionist, "reporters noted that



### On the Head Again

The TV program *Incredible Sunday* reported a medical advance in which patients with head injuries are taught to write country music.

the labels had been cut off the baseball caps that the Bush campaign was distributing as souvenirs. The mystery was solved when someone noticed that the boxes the hats came in were stamped, *Made in Taiwan*."

- *Rock & Roll Confidential* mentions that "the U.S. Copyright Office is seriously considering allowing aerobic dance exercises to be copyrighted."

- The Anti-Defamation League does not sanction the radicalism of the Jewish Defense League. However, in Los Angeles, the ADL's *B'Nai Brith Messenger* is edited by Sylvia Rubin, who is the wife of Irv Rubin, leader of the JDL.

- CBS used an advance copy of George Bush's budget speech to focus on individuals who would in effect illustrate the script. When Bush said there would be no micro-management of the military, the camera closed in on John Tower, sitting with cabinet members who had actually been confirmed. It was not clear whether CBS was associating Tower with the military or just making a short joke.

- When Senator Tower announced he would stop all drinking if confirmed, Harry Shearer wondered on *Le Show* what Tower would do if he *wasn't* confirmed. Shearer

announced that if Tower was confirmed, then he would start "drinking like a fish."

- Dr. Louis Sullivan has finally clarified his position: "I am against abortion except in the case of rape, incest and endangerment to my cabinet position."

- In London, a jury ruled that a pair of earrings made from freeze-dried human fetuses attached to the ears of a female dummy, and displayed in a glass case at an art gallery, violated public decency.

- On *Geraldo*, gossip columnist Mitchell Fink told of an item in bad enough taste to keep it out of print—about the auction of Marilyn Monroe's pap smear—at the same time reaching a wider audience.

- When Rivera did a two-part show on Satanism, parents were advised of the warning signs to look for in their kids, including meditation and chanting. There goes insight meditation and transcendental meditation; there goes *Hare Krishna* and *Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo*.

- General Electric owns RCA which owns NBC. When GE got in trouble, Tom Brokaw didn't mention it on the NBC News, but Jay Leno did on the *Tonight* show. However, when Gary Busey got in trouble, fellow motorcyclist Jay Leno didn't mention it, but Tom Brokaw did.

- According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, attorney Melvin Belli has sued his wife, claiming she "had sex with South African Bishop Desmond Tutu and actress Zsa Zsa Gabor." Presumably not together.

- The *Chronicle's* Associate Editor of Political Affairs, Abe Mellinkoff, editorialized with a straight face: "With rifle bullets and hand grenades, the Contras would once more be in the business of democracy."

- A Texas military hardware company is promoting its "extraordinarily lethal" Flechette rockets with scratch-and-sniff ads in trade magazines, emblazoned with a slogan, "The Smell of Victory," specifically the smell of cordite, the aroma that follows a rocket explosion.

- In the *New Republic*, Morton Kondracke wrote of "the alleged mental competence of Dan Quayle." However, on *Saturday Night Live*, A. Whitney Brown said that Dan Quayle thinks Roe vs. Wade refers to "alternative ways of crossing the Potomac."

- An anti-drug TV spot compares frying an egg in a pan to frying your brain on drugs. The agency which produced that PSA heard from an angry parent whose child won't eat eggs because of the ad.

- Morning TV talk show co-host Christina Ferrare, upon being reminded that "Today is Martin Luther King's birthday," looked into the camera, smiled broadly and chirped, "Happy Birthday!"

- It took the Colgate-Palmolive Company a few years to realize that their *Darlie Toothpaste* sold in Hong Kong had racist overtones. Now they're replacing the logo, a smiling Al Jolson in blackface and top hat, with a stereotype just paler enough not to interfere with brand recognition, and changing the name to *Darlie*. Oh yes, and David Duke was once the Grand Wizard of the L.L.L.