

The Monitor

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Truman State University's only source for thorough coverage of community issues, student affairs, politics and culture

Key pieces of evidence against Iraq found to be forged; story goes undetected in U.S. media

Story by | Cameron Moore

Several weeks ago, key pieces of evidence that Bush Administration officials touted as proof of Iraq's attempt to acquire nuclear weapons were found to be forged. The findings, which were released on March 7 to the U.N. Security Council by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohamed ElBaradei, have been largely ignored by mainstream U.S. media despite the shadow of doubt it places on the Administration's motives and tactics to rally support for a war against Iraq.

The documents, which were supposed letters of correspondence between the governments of Niger and Iraq, were found to have "crude errors" and a "childlike signature" according to scant media reports, such as an article from the March 13 *Washington Post* which was buried on page A17 and minimal coverage on CNN.

A prior *Washington Post* article from March 8 stated that the documents included "names and titles that did not match up with the individuals who held office at the time the letters were purportedly written."

CNN reported briefly on March 14 that one of the documents was "written on paper from a 1980s military government in Niger [that] bears the date of October 2000 and the signature of a man who by then had not been foreign minister of Niger for 14 years."

Following the IAEA findings, the Committee on Government Reform in the House of Representatives sent a letter to President Bush asking him to answer to several discrepancies about his Administration's use of the documents.

Of the more startling observations outlined in the letter, which was written by Rep. Henry Waxman of California, was the fact that as the Bush Administration was using these documents

as evidence, even the CIA "had concerns about the accuracy of that information," according to a CIA official quoted in a March 15 *Los Angeles Times* article. The CIA had doubted the evidence enough that "it decided not to include them in its file on Iraq's program to procure weapons of mass destruction," according to the aforementioned March 13 *Washington Post* article.

In the Committee on Government Reform's letter to President Bush, Waxman points out that the CIA "has never regarded the evidence as reliable" and questions why the Administration repeatedly used this evidence despite a lack of credibility with intelligence agencies. "The two most obvious explanations—knowing deception or unfathomable incompetence—both have immediate and serious implications," Waxman said in the letter.

Waxman motivates his questioning of the Bush Administration's use of the evidence by outlining repeated references to the documents as key pieces of significant evidence. Colin Powell referred to them in a December 19 appearance before the U.N. Security Council, as did President Bush in his January 28 State of the Union Address.

In a document outlining examples of omissions from the Iraqi declaration to the U.N. released by the U.S. Department of State back in December, the only mention of nuclear weapons cited the forged documents as evidence that Iraq was attempting to reconstitute a nuclear arsenal.

As far as this reporter's research has found, the Bush Administration has made no attempt to address the concerns of Waxman's letter and the discrepancies outlined therein.

Women's conference rocks socks

Story by | Dana Kuhnline

The 2003 Women's Studies Conference, this year titled "Gender Trouble: A Truman Conference" was held at the end of last week, Thursday March 27-Saturday March 29. These were three action packed days in Violette 1000, all flawlessly organized by Linda Seidel and J.J. Pionke.

The presenters looked promising, overflowing with the names of professors, students, former students and independent scholars from the Kirksville area. The titles were catchy and pretentious, complete with numerous colons and five syllable words, and the posters were very pretty.

Indeed, according to the organizers, this year had the highest attendance on record. The average attendance was 37 per conference; the high was 60, and the low was 23. There was a remarkable variance in topic, from homoeroticism in beat literature, to the performance of an original play. Post-colonialism, linguistics and show tunes all found a place in this conference.

While I was unable to attend some of the

conferences due to class conflicts, I caught as many as I could. I couldn't help it. Once I saw one, I was hooked. The quality of the information and presentations was continually impressive. One of the most intriguing aspects were the Personal Testimonies, which came in three parts. These were beautiful and intimate testimonies from women, each struggling with their own aspect of Gender Trouble. These presentations were highly attended, and simultaneously entertaining and stimulating. One even had free cookies.

Unfortunately, the keynote speaker was unable to attend due to last minute complications. A fascinating discussion on "Gender Troubles and the War in Iraq" was held instead. I would encourage anyone to participate in these conferences in the future; whether by presenting or just dropping by when you have a free moment. This year's conference was graciously sponsored via the Division of Language and Literature, the Residential Colleges Program, and the Women's Studies Committee.

Looting blamed on US negligence

Story by | Cameron Moore

Soon after U.S. forces finished toppling Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, outbreaks of looting and arson spread across the country. Sentiments of citizens supportive of the United States' efforts to remove the dictator's government have now turned sour, with many pointing the blame at the U.S. for the destruction that has resulted from the vacuum of law enforcement.

Among the many buildings looted and destroyed so far are the National Museum of Antiques; the National Library and Archives; the U.N. Children's Fund office; the Koranic library at the Ministry of Religious Endowment; the Foreign Ministry; the ministries of education, agriculture, planning, trade industry and information; and shops, factories, schools, and hospitals.

The National Museum of Antiques lost several "irreplaceable treasures, including Sumerian clay pots, Assyrian marble carvings, Babylonian statues and a massive stone tablet with intricate cuneiform writing ... some of which date back 5,000 years," according to an April 13 *Washington Post* article.

"Our heritage is finished," Nabhal Amin, the museum's deputy director, said in response to the losses. "If there were five American soldiers at the door, everything would have been fine," Amin added, according to the same *Washington Post* story. "They're supposed to be here to protect us. They should be protecting us."

Many in Iraq have expressed sentiments of dissatisfaction with the how they see the

many U.S. forces have allowed the looting to take place. Much of the looting happened, according to an April 12 AP story, "while U.S. forces stood by, rarely intervening and in some cases even motioning treasure-laden men through checkpoints."

"The coalition forces are responsible. Where is the law?" Safa Hussein Qasim, 44, a jeweler, is quoted as saying in the AP story. "This is the promise of the United States to Iraq? This is democracy in Baghdad?"

Many Iraqis find fault in the fact that "a whole company of Marines, along with at least a half-dozen amphibious assault vehicles, has been assigned to guard the Oil Ministry, while many other ministries—including trade, information, planning, health, and education—remain unprotected," according to the *Washington Post*.

"Why just the oil ministry?" Sherko Jaf, a dentist, is quoted as asking in the story. "Is it because they just want our oil?"

"I tell the United States, 'You wanted to overthrow the government so you should have taken responsibility and put one soldier in front of every government building,'" Saad Tuema, an engineer, said. "Instead, they just stood by and let it happen."

Some Iraqis credit the situation to ulterior motives of the U.S. military. "They wanted to let these robberies happen so the Iraqi people will be bankrupt and they will need American assistance," Mehdi Zuemi, a Foreign Ministry clerk who watched his office being destroyed, said. "They'll use our oil to pay for it," he added.

**Check out our
April Fools Section
on pages 5, 6 and 7!**

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CSI SUB
TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY
KIRKSVILLE, MO 63501
FAX [660] 785-7436

OFFICE ADDRESS

MONITOR TOWER
216 S. HIGH STREET APT. D
KIRKSVILLE, MO 63501

MONITORTRM@HOTMAIL.COM

MANAGING EDITORS

ANDRÉS DELGADO
CAMERON MOORE

MY BACK PAGES EDITOR

ZACH JACKSON

ADVERTISING ROYALTY

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Among people who have learned something from the 18th century (say, Voltaire) it is a truism, hardly deserving discussion, that the defense of the right of free expression is not restricted to ideas one approves of, and that it is precisely in the case of ideas found most offensive that this right must be vigorously defended. Advocacy of the right to express ideas that are generally approved of is, quite obviously, a matter of no significance."

-- Noam Chomsky

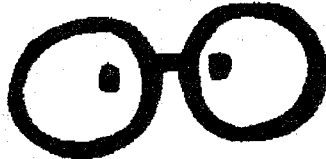
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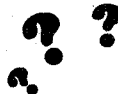
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L E T T E R S

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Letters may be edited for length.

Depressing walk to class

I had a depressing walk to class this week. On Monday, as many of you may have noticed, there were numerous chalk outlines of dead bodies on the sidewalks. They were labeled Iraqi mother, Iraqi child, etc. Then, on Tuesday, there were new, reactionary chalkings that used the same outlined image, though differently labeled as US soldiers who have died in the war with Iraq. The chalkings of US soldiers were accompanied by the statement, "They died for you. Respect them."

I agree that we should respect the soldiers who have died in Iraq, yet, should we not also respect the Iraqi people, whether women, men or children, that have died? As far as I'm concerned, they are dying for us too, they simply have not chosen to do so. Whether we are talking about the people dying in Iraq as mothers, children or Iraqi/American soldiers, what does it say about us that we feel it is necessary to assign a higher value to the lives of one or the other? All of their deaths are tragic. I hope that I am not alone in respecting all of the lives that are lost in a war that is waged not on or by them.

My respect for both the citizens of Iraq and US soldiers is in my protest of this war. Bombs do not liberate. And I will not accept this war as humanitarian. I am supporting the troops by wanting them to come home now. I can't think of anything more patriotic than wanting to keep them alive.

I hope I am not the only one who was affected by the chalkings. We are privileged that we do not have to personally witness the casualties of this war. Though the battlefield chalked on campus is only a drawing, I hope that none of us can walk through it without comprehending the reality of war. It is inappropriate and tragic for us to silence our protests. Now is the time when we should be our loudest.

Tracy Fuller
Super Senior

Peace is patriotic!

I have always lived a very comfortable life. I feel extremely fortunate to have been born in this great nation. My way of life is currently under attack. Terrorists have targeted my country as their enemy. Now, the security alert has been issued at level orange.

Ever since September 11, the United States has been trying to end terrorism. We have taken a big step backwards; President Bush has declared war on Iraq. Even from a standpoint only considering the interest of the United States, a United States-led war against Iraq is a terrible mistake. Some see an attack as an attack against the Iraqi dictator that will rid the world of a few more dangerous weapons, and benefit the lives of those living under his current reign of terror. I view these as admirable goals; however, these are not the goals that enemies of the United States see. They may see that the U.S. could gain control of important Iraqi oil. They perceive U.S. action without the support of the United Nations as defiant and hypocritical, as the U.S. has agreed to submit to the proclamations of the United Nations under the pretext

that the entire world can make better choices than any nation alone. "To them, it will show that this whole U.N. detour was an exercise in futility — that this is what the president planned to do all along," Stanley Hoffmann, the Harvard professor who has spent a lifetime studying war and the trans-Atlantic alliance, said today. "There is no room in the U.N. charter for the president's doctrine of pre-emption, for anticipatory self-defense." (From: *The New York Times*, *Bush's Doctrine for War* By David E. Sanger, March 17, 2003)

By initiating violence in Iraq, the United States has only made more enemies; enemies that will attack our country in the decentralized sort of warfare dubbed as terrorism. A war between Iraq and forces lead by the United States will not end terrorism. No amount of violence will end violence. On the contrary, violent action will provoke and inspire enemies.

Like most Americans, I was angry and afraid after the attacks on 9-11. We wanted to assure ourselves that it could never happen to us again. Few will deny that no amount of security precautions can prevent terrorist attacks. An uncertain link was made between the terrorist organization accused with responsibility and Afghanistan. After much bombing and so-called "collateral damage," Americans were satisfied. After the suggestion that there was a link between terrorists and Iraq, Americans decided that an attack on Saddam Hussein was immediately necessary. What of this supposed link? The *New York Times* has printed a number of statements considering that question including the following. "The Bush administration's efforts to build a case for war against Iraq using intelligence to link it to Al Qaeda and the development of prohibited weapons has created friction within United States intelligence agencies, government officials said. Some analysts at the Central Intelligence Agency have complained that senior administration officials have exaggerated the significance of some intelligence reports about Iraq, particularly about its possible links to terrorism, in order to strengthen their political argument for war, government officials said." (From: *The New York Times*, *THREATS AND RESPONSES: TERROR LINKS; Split at C.I.A. and F.B.I. On Iraqi Ties to Al Qaeda* By David Johnston and James Risen, February 23, 2003) In the same article, "At the FBI, some investigators said they were baffled by the Bush administration's insistence on a solid link between Iraq and Osama bin Laden's network. 'We've been looking at this hard for more than a year and you know what, we just don't think it's there' a government official said."

So, we're not sure that Iraq is really linked to the terrorists responsible for 9-11. Perhaps, one may suggest, we can avert other terrorist activities harbored in Iraq. One may even be so bold to suggest that U.S. military action will "warn" terrorist groups of our true adherence to our goal to stop terrorism. Such a claim is ridiculous. We know that violence will result in more terrorist activity. "The possibility of war with Iraq could unleash acts of anti-American violence in the United States or overseas by individual extremists who do not belong to Al Qaeda or other Middle Eastern terrorist groups but sympathize with their griev-

ances, intelligence and law enforcement officials say. A classified F.B.I. intelligence bulletin, issued on Wednesday to state and local law enforcement agencies throughout the country, warned the authorities to be on the alert for lone terrorists who are not directed by organizations like Al Qaeda." (From: *The New York Times*, *THREATS AND RESPONSES: DOMESTIC SECURITY; Lone Terrorists May Strike In the U.S.*, *Agencies Warn* By David Johnston and James Risen, February 23, 2003) As soon as Bush made his threats to Hussein, an orange security level was announced! Our government knows that we are agitating terrorists.

I said before that we can not expect to stop terrorism using violence. Some hope that we can eliminate the leaders of the organizations, and their brainwashed posse will disband. These hopes are in vain. The very nature of terrorist organizations is that they are not centralized. As suggested in the *New York Times* article cited above, military action may provoke individual acts of terrorism, not even linked to the leaders that we hope to stop!

In addition to stopping terrorism and eliminating the weapons of mass destruction supposedly owned by Saddam Hussein, the U.S. also has plans for democracy to post-war Iraq. This vague reference is the only information we have about U.S. plans for post-war Iraq. In a country of starving, abused people, we need to have some idea how to get the country back on its feet after bombing the living daylight out of it!!! If Bush is only set on "democracy," the Iraqi victims are in serious trouble. Unfortunately, as any good student of history knows, forced democracies just don't work! Democracies must form from within. A high school history textbook will overwhelm you with examples.

Opponents to the war are stereotyped as "un-patriotic," a serious label since the attacks in September.

Along with this label goes the assumption that war opponents do not support our troops (because, clearly war proponents do) and that they do not support their president. My response to this is that I recognize the sacrifice that the men and women in the armed forces have made, and are making, to preserve my way of life. I can only be grateful for their courage. I support my president by advising him of my opinion to help him make the choice that I think is best for our country. I support U.S. troops and President Bush, but I do not support this violence!

I argue that patriotism is wanting the best for your country, and I do not believe that the U.S. can truly benefit from a war with Iraq. The United States is a wonderful place to live, and I could not have had all of the comforts I've grown accustomed to in many places in the world.

Americans are fortunate to have a government that at least calls itself a democratic republic. REPRESENTATIVES are meant to REPRESENT American opinions in the governmental decision-making process. Patriotism is telling your representatives to do what you think is right. That's why this letter has been sent to my state representatives as well as to the White House.

Americans are also blessed with the right to express their opinions, and we must take advantage of that in order to make the best choices for our country. Dialogue between people who disagree is the only way to educate everyone and to come up with the best solution. Taking advantage of these privileges and rights to better this nation — that's patriotism.

Based on what I have written here, I believe that the best choice for our nation is to not lead an attack on Iraq. Peace is patriotic!

Jeanette Jackson

QUOTE of the issue

"Once the war against Saddam Hussein begins, we expect every American to support our military, and if you can't do that, just shut up.

Americans, and indeed our foreign allies who actively work against our military once the war is underway, will be considered enemies of the state by me.

Just fair warning to you, Barbra Streisand and others who see the world as you do. I don't want to demonize anyone, but anyone who hurts this country in a time like this, well. Let's just say you will be spotlighted.

Talking points invites all points of view and believes vigorous debate strengthens the country, but once decisions have been made and lives are on the line, patriotism must be factored in."

-Bill O'Reiley

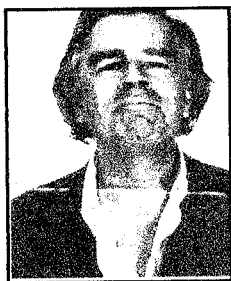
O P I N I O N S

monitor

Enough is Enough.

Opinion by | Larry Iles

At the time of writing I have just finished involvement in a Dobson residence hall debate on the first week of the invasion of Iraq war by the Bush junior and Blair "the air" misgovernments



of our benighted selves. It was a quiet, civilised affair led off for the anti-war side by Professor Chad Moher, but one got nauseated by the other side's anti-French phobia. It was as if the fact that their state oil Elf interests undoubtedly in Iraqi such commodity invalidated France's wholly proper defeat of the second US/UK UN resolution in the Security Council. Come off it, "laissez nous tranquilles" you "les chiens," please. The fact is that the French out-debated and out-toured you for UN allies, and showed you that not all your dollars and sterling can combat the new Euro currency and a superior, diplomatic skilled education system from nursery "les ecoles maternelles" upwards as mon ami University Professor Tim Farley has often contended to me!

But, or "mais non," as they say. Of course, the anti-French US and UK sentiment has gone way beyond mere abuse over the Iraq tragedy and illegality by us on this issue. Walk into at least two of Kirkville's cafes and you find the sour faces of both but mainly male genders spitting on their known French ancestors and gleefully applauding the US Congress' ridiculous decision to rename FRENCH fries more politically right wing correctly. While obnoxious US talk show host Bill O'Reilly invokes a consumer boycott call of French products he would have spurned and did of white South Africa pre-Mandela liberation regime in utter nonsense.

Now look! And not just because of my probable own Norman French baronial knight (ahem!) Parisian ultimate ancestor of all les "Iles", enough is enough, folks of this Yankee paranoid politics of hatred for pure venoms sake when the spoiled child US male does not get his bully total whitey way! Many of us of all nationalities, including US ones like L. Gibson who are qualified historians of aspects of the 1776 and 1812 fights in which a minority of your ancestors engaged against respectively most of your British, your runaway slaves and native American so-called "oppressors", evidently recall something about which you have mentally chosen amnesia. Fact is that Washington in the first fracas and war hawk politicians like Henry Clay of Kentucky in the latter US invasion of Canada in the 1812 failure could only, in the end, fight the kind of rearguard mostly lost battles as that which Saddam is doing against your imperial might today in the eyes of the non-white masses of ARABS. In short, amnesiacs of the USA, without the mainly French and Bourbon Spanish fleets in 1776 affair and what

Napoleon had left in the War of 1812 to help you against your BRITISH and non-white foes in a blockade of our supply lines, would there be a USA today? Would there even be a Missouri that a cash-desperate Napoleon sold as part of the Jefferson Louisiana Purchase for money he needed paradoxically to suppress his own Haitian black revolt.

Further, if we traverse to the last century, more modern French history ought to tell you US TV couch potato types, that bluntly France has both a "petite" bit more experience of what it feels like to be invaded in both 1914 and 1940. This last time, very successfully, Nazis invaded in consequent trauma that you Yanks in sheer pain and civilian loss of aerially-bombed life without mainland parallel in your own ocean apart in safety, preachy luxury! Indeed, not that it would ever penetrate fully the unintellectual "tetes" of the likes of US right wingers like Monsieur Rush Limbaugh, but if I could I would like to force such boorish, predictable bullies to watch all three hours plus of the great French documentary *The Sorrow and the Pity* for revelation of the difficulties of living under an alien power as many Iraqis will soon be enduring.

Finally, France has many sins of colonialism to live down in its own sometimes arrogant past. But, as University Professor Gloria Kwok, on Indo-China, your later Vietnam imbroglia and Professor Betty Louise McLane-Iles over Algeria neither ever allow me to "oublier beaucoup", France has largely, in at least its films and arts remembrance of these things and shaping of its future policies, less racisly tried to grow up! And they've been far more genuinely globalist than we Anglo-American holdouts for our own vaunted superiority of values. "Pensez-vous" that I exaggerate? Well, "mes amis". Try a few simple moderniser tests if you tremblingly dare behind your giant "les drapeaux"!

French films like *Indochine* with the fabulous Deneuve or *Dust of the Empire* with the arresting Sanda, to name solely the female actress leads, are infinitely more honest, even lyrically so, about their horrors in such occupied countries than most US movie epics about Vietnam. In fact, with sole exception of a dramatised true story with Tommy Jones, I have still to view a single US movie which treats anything compassionate about the 2 million Vietnamese of all sides which your napalm, etcetera, killed, from Eisenhower advisors to Nixon, in loiter occupation, but of course plenty about our mainly white losses. Similarly, Blair's GB rarely ever does drama about our appalling anti-Roman Catholic history, long after in riots going on into even Scottish and Liverpuddlian soccer late last century, despite the fact that the Inquisition had long lost its ultra-conservative reconversion power over we Protestants and secular sensualists! So, if racism and nationalist hatreds are by-products here and in my native UK of the Bush-Blair Iraq war, how about we *Monitor* readers be moralistically bold enough to remind these hate-mongers of some real "l'histoire" as the French say "tres vite!"

Legalize prostitution

Opinion by | Ratty Cravat

It is amazing how an advanced society such as ours can have so many laws that don't make any sense. We have a whole lot of laws that make things illegal, not because they are particularly harmful, but because they are "sins" or "immoral". So here we are with people being put in jail whose only real crime was to go against the basic morals of our society, but haven't actually hurt anybody. This is very apparent in the case of prostitutes.

Here we have these women who, often for social and economic reasons, are forced to go into a sleazy, dangerous profession. These women may take abuse from their pimps and more seldom from their customers. They are at high risk for catching and spreading STDs. Plus, with the dangers in their profession, we are

making it more dangerous by threatening legal action in a matter that many had no real choice in, unless they wanted to starve. This doesn't seem like good policy. At this point in time I can think of three reasons for nationally legalized prostitution.

One is that prostitutes would be working in conditions where violence toward them would be easily subject to legal proceedings, so they are safer. It would allow for a licensing service which would require prostitutes to have regular STD testing, so it would slow the rate of infection between prostitutes and their customers. The third is that we could get millions of tax dollars per year out of the newly created industry to help with the economy, National Debt, etc. In the end, I just can't see why it's illegal in the first place.

War coverage simplistic, sensationalistic, nationalistic

Opinion by | Cameron Moore

Ever since the conflict in Vietnam, US media outlets have learned a very important lesson in war coverage: the reality of war is far too grim and disgusting for the public to watch and still support a war. The solution to this problem has been to sanitize war, turning it into a spectacle and a soap opera.

These days we are so far removed from any realistic representation of what actually happens on the battlefield that there seems to be no downside to war. If what we see on TV is what is really happening over there, we rationalize, then it can't be all that bad. In fact, I bet this war is a lot better and a lot less devastating than those of the past, we further rationalize. After all, only a handful of our soldiers have died and I haven't heard of many Iraqi civilian casualties... we must be doing a wonderful job over there, what with our precision bombing and all.

Every time I walk past a television, I see some talking head trivializing the bloodshed that is currently happening as I write this. They talk very little of the innocents whose skulls brutally and abruptly erupt from our bombs, only speaking of military strategy, while interjecting nationalistic images of troops and flags accompanied by sentimental music that induces a swelling of pride that overrides any emotional competition from one's conscience.

Just the other day on FOX News, they showed a computer-generated image of a bald eagle, our team's "mascot" if you will, flying and shooting cruise missiles out of his armpits. OUT OF HIS ARMPITS! The absurdity of this has reached proportions for which I'm not sure words exist to describe. And yet, the talking heads keep a straight face and act like this is the way news ought to be: sensationalistic, simplistic and nationalistic.

While a bald eagle shooting missiles from his armpits may be an extreme (albeit fairly innocuous) example of the news media's blatant exploitation of our allegiance to American values, it is the more subtle things that continually poke me in the eyes with glaring lack of respect for life, like the interactive on-line "War Tracker" and slide shows on www.CNN.com, as well as interactive computer-generated "Urban Warfare" simulators, which look exactly like some Tom Clancy video game. For them it is just another TV show to promote, another time slot to fill, and more advertising to sell at higher

rates. Turn it into a soap opera and people will surely tune in.

This whole thing is a media feeding frenzy, and the more they exploit and push this war on us, the more money they make as people are glued to their TVs, just waiting for the next up-to-the-minute update from our reliable (did I mention "fair and balanced", too?) friends at FOX News. These people are making a mint off of the misery and strife of an entire country's population, and we are helping them do it by tuning in every day.

And while TV media seems to be exploiting this for all its worth, radio media isn't doing much better. I just read an article in the Chicago Tribune the other day about how Clear Channel Communications (the company that owns something like 60 percent of the radio stations in the country) has been sponsoring pro-war rallies all around the nation, which critics have called borderline news manufacturing.

It seems as though there aren't enough people in this country with enough fire in their soul to rally and demonstrate for the ruthless bombing of the beleaguered Iraqi people, so our good friends in the media need to remind us of what is important by sponsoring events and creating scenarios to generate reports on public support of war that otherwise would not have happened.

Even more, just as was the case after 9-11, MTV and radio stations around the country are banning videos and songs from their play lists that might include references to war or even vague references to things that may result from war (such as a song called "Bandages" by Hot Hot Heat, which contains no reference to war or anything of the sort, but merely to bandages and wounds). The censorship that has resulted from this assault on human rights is itself an assault on our First Amendment rights of speech and expression.

As this war extends much longer than you anticipated, and as this war turns into the next (and there will surely be more to follow), I implore you to explore some alternate media sources from abroad, as they provide a much different perspective of the events that have happened in this war and the civilian casualties that have resulted and have gone completely unreported in US news media. But I guess they're probably just jealous of our free speech, right?

...April Fools Section...

Warning: The April Fools Section is not for the faint of heart or anybody who takes themselves too seriously.

KC Royals sign Nolan Ryan to one year contract

Story by | Josh Sisson

In a shocking move, the Kansas City Royals signed 56-year-old right-hander Nolan Ryan to a one-year contract on Wednesday, March 26.

Why exactly would the Royals, or any team, sign the likes of Nolan Ryan? True, he brings great name recognition, something the Royals have none of, but at 56 Ryan is no Spring chicken. Another thing that is attractive to Royals' management is the vast wealth of Major League experience Ryan has. The 2003 campaign will be Ryan's twenty-eighth year as a Big League pitcher, which is longer than any of the current Royal pitchers have been alive. Royals' General Manager Allard Baird is very happy with the move.

"Because we are the most notoriously cheap franchise in the league we have a pitching staff that has a total of 30 days of experience with the Big League club, so Nolan's presence as a great grandfather figure will do a lot to anchor the rotation."

Baird was also very pleased to have stumbled upon such an unbelievable bargain.

"It's not every day you can claim a first-ballot Hall-of-Famer for the league minimum, so we couldn't pass it up. Of course, everyone knows the league minimum is the Royals' maximum."

Regardless of how well Ryan performs this season, it was probably a good signing from a chemistry standpoint. As Baird alluded to, the Royals have a very youthful pitching staff. Sometimes young pitchers can have problems keeping their confidence up, especially when they can't keep their off-speed pitches down.

Hopefully, Ryan can help in both areas, although he didn't throw much off-speed stuff in his day. If Ryan can't help them emotionally, the young pitchers could be in some trouble. It's not like they can just drown their failures with alcohol because they are not of age.

The Royals can definitely use the public relations boost that this acquisition will surely cause. Losing a hundred games a season doesn't exactly pack the stadium night in and night out. It is also exceedingly difficult to get any kind of media coverage when you are a small market team, virtually devoid of talent. In fact, the most time the Royals ever got on Sports Center last season was when their first base coach was beaten down by a couple drunken fans in Chicago.

Nolan Ryan has done some simply amazing things throughout the course of his career. He has thrown seven no-hitters. He is the all-time leader in strike outs with 5,714. He has even experienced the thrill of winning a World Series, although it was 34 years ago. Despite all of these fantastic accomplishments, Ryan is still very happy to be in KC, with such a class organization as the Royals.

"Oh, I'm here to compete; these guys don't have anything on me, and you can sure as Hell bet that I won't be missing half the season because of a blister on my hand, like that kid, Jeremy Affeldt."

Hall of Fame outfielder Reggie Jackson once said hitting Nolan Ryan was like trying to drink coffee with a fork. That is also about as hard as it is for the Kansas City Royals to win a game, so I guess we will see what gives.

tation, alcohol, etc. to help quell the anger, but that only works for so long. I have found a new way to deal with my anger once and for all. I call it the Happy Place Approach.

This surprisingly simple plan has kept me going all week. What I do is, when something is making me angry, I immediately start thinking about something or someplace so nice that it's impossible to stay mad. What do I imagine you might ask? Well, considering that I'm a young guy, it shouldn't be hard to figure out. The great part about this is that anyone can do it. As long as you have likes and dislikes you can make your own happy place filled with whatever you want. So why not let your imagination be your guide into a world with things beyond your wildest dreams. Go to your Happy Place. What have you got to lose?

Warning: The Happy Place has been known to cause people to lose touch with reality for minutes at a time. The Happy Place is not to be abused, only go there in dire emergency. All proceeds from the Happy Place go to the Make a Wish Foundation.

Consider mandatory abortion

Opinion by | Whitley Fibonacci

OK, so I'm pissed. Hear me out now, because I'm pissed, and you should listen. Why am I pissed? And why should you listen? Well, because I'm pissed about something that affects us all. I'm pissed about babies. Babies are stupid little whiners; they're all outmeal north of the eyebrows, if you know what I mean. That's why I support abortion. But not just any ol' abortion, I support instituting legislation to make abortion mandatory. You heard me, people: 100 percent abortion rate.

Now, some of you pro-choicers out there might be a little flip-floppy on the issue here, so I'm gonna set you all straight. Babies are stupid. Babies are annoying. And babies crap all over themselves like incontinent retards. Now you tell me one good goddamned reason why we shouldn't kill all the babies that make us all go goo-goo and gaa-gaa while they go poo-poo and ca-ca all over my favorite chair, smiling like they couldn't give a damn.

Fuck babies, and fuck they horse they rode in on, cause they're all fucked as far as I'm concerned. My resolution here is quite simple: get rid of them before their born. I know that you pro-choicers out there share this disdain of all babies with me, so this shouldn't be too hard for your non-baby minds to grasp. After all, the fact that you are reading this already disqualifies you from being on the absolute lowest tier of intelligence, that of being a dumbfuck baby.

You know what, I think I've suddenly had a change of heart. We shouldn't kill babies

before they are born. We should let them be birthed, but they should slide straight from the womb down a tube that projects them into a cavernous basement, with a trajectory such that they land plop in the middle of a giant electric chair that can hold, oh say, 50 babies. I'm sure the amount of juice we use to get rid of one grown person would suffice in melting 50 babies down to something more useful than a little, crying shit-factory.

Either that, or we could stuff them full of nukes and shoot them with baby cannons at Arabs.

Now, some of you may have reservations about this proposal. I don't blame your ignorance on the issue one bit; I just ask that you take your time to educate yourself. Just a few months ago I was indifferent about babies too, and it's been a painful yet rewarding path of self-discovery that has led me to the realization that we shouldn't be half-assing this who pro-choice thing. I mean, the conservatives all know we're baby haters, so we should prove them right and take them by surprise with a little forthright honesty.

In the end, it's all really just economical to get rid of babies; we could save a lot of money if we just pre-emptively attacked babies by using them for a pre-emptive baby-nuke strike on Syria, we wouldn't have to spend all of our education money on: 1) the defense budget, 2) more babies to educate, and 3) the defense budget. Plus, I would get a big kick out of seeing signs in cars that read: "Baby-nuke on board."

Go to your happy place; what have you got to lose?

Story by | Sam McPherson

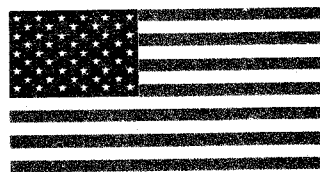
When I was a little kid I had a really bad temper. Sometimes it would manifest itself in a good way like beating up the neighborhood bully, but usually this was not the case. When I was playing with my friends, if I got angry, they ended up running. I was a little bastard. Eventually, I got sent to anger management training. There, the shrink said that it is not good to vent our anger, but it is equally undesirable to bottle up your anger. When I asked him what the right way to handle anger was, he started to get dodgy and asked me about my life thus far, family, friends, etc.

Two weeks later he still hadn't given me a straight answer, so I conned my mom into not making me go anymore and started bottling up my anger so she thought that I got better with anger. Alas, it was not so. I just kept my anger bottled up and tried to ignore it. However, it sometimes fumed up inside me and made me spontaneously clench my teeth, start exerting myself, and I would sometimes lose sleep over it. I then tried multiple things like music, medi-

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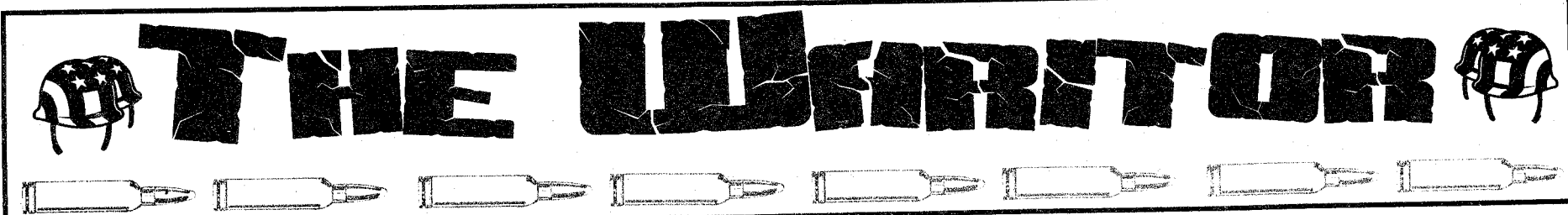
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Bush Declares War on North Korea, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Columbia, San Marino, Syria, Egypt, Pakistan, India, Israel, Kazakhstan, Libya, China, Russia, France, Britain, Self

Story by I W. Aaron Wilson

In the face of continued international opposition to the US led invasion of Iraq, President George W. Bush, said today that he was still not satisfied with world security. As such, he outlined a bold, hundred-year plan in which the United States and Coalition forces are to invade and neutralize the threats posed by North Korea, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Columbia, San Marino, Syria, Egypt, Pakistan, India, Israel, Kazakhstan, Libya, China, Russia, Britain, France, and the United States itself.

"My fellow Americans, in these past weeks we have faced down a great evil. We have faced the threat of Saddam Hussein's terrorist regime, and we have won," said Bush. "However, our work is not yet done. The world still suffers from fear: A fear that weapons of mass destruction will fall into the hands of terrorists. Until that fear has been eliminated, the War on Terror is not truly over."

Included in the list of future conquests are eleven countries known or strongly sus-

pected to have nuclear weapons, and eight that are suspected of supporting and/or harboring terrorist groups. The plan also includes a "watch list" of some forty polities who have questioned the United State's authority, including Germany, Malaysia, Canada, Mexico, the Vatican, the UN, and the states of California and New York.

"By questioning our primarily unilateral invasion of Iraq, these political entities have given aid and comfort to our enemies," Bush said. "This will not be tolerated when the security of our great nation, and the world itself, is at stake."

During a press conference, White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer countered the criticism that the US was being too unilateral in its new approach.

"This effort will be supported by a broad coalition of countries from across the globe," Fleischer said, adding "The fact that many of them are on the list to eventually be invaded, not withstanding." Fleischer also noted that conscripts from conquered nations will help to

swell the ranks of coalition forces.

When asked why microstate of San Marino was included on the list of potential conquests when it neither maintained weapons of mass destruction, nor supported terrorism, Fleischer shrugged.

"Oh, I'm sure we can link them to terrorism. Maybe some guy who might have links to Al-Qaeda stayed there a few nights. Or maybe some of their citizens once purchased drugs. Ultimately, that doesn't matter. We mostly want to use it as a retirement community for the veterans of the first fifty years of fighting."

International response to the announcement were mixed, with some countries such as China and Iran mobilizing their armies, others such as France and Russia petitioning the watch-listed UN, and some, such as Britain support-

ing the decision.

"Until the day that Britain is duly invaded and our weapons of mass destruction turned over, I fully support our American allies," said British Prime Minister, Tony Blair. "In fact, Britain is already gearing up for its role in the invasions of North Korea through France."

The most surprising portion of the plan, though, is America's eventual invasion and subjugation of itself. In response to the plan, Bush issued the following remarks.

"The United States will not be intimidated by your threats," he said in a prepared statement to himself. "Our resolve will not waver in our quest to rid the world of terror. Be warned that the American people will fight to the last man in order to defend our fair country from itself."

Bush should step up like Dick Nixon, teach these hippies a lesson

Opinion by I Jared Sapp

All in all, I cannot really find too much to fault President Bush for. With the second major conflict of his first term, he has more than ended the war drought that has plagued the United States ever since the end of the first Gulf War. Actually, the war against Afghanistan by itself probably would have appeased me. But Bush knows what is really good for America, and now we have a war in Iraq as well. And this war could even give us increased access to oil, the beautiful liquid that our nation runs on. Moreover, major gains on Wall Street throughout the first days of the war show it is good for capitalism, as well. Still, as I turn on FOX News every two hours or so, I see a major issue Bush is not dealing with.

In major cities around the nation, cantankerous hippie protesters are rallying against the war. It's bad enough to see their filthy hippie brethren in cities throughout Europe presuming

to tell the United States that it is wrong. But seeing our own young people in the streets attacking this war? That is simply inexcusable. There is only one possible solution: Bush needs to be a man like Richard Nixon and stop these hippie bastards in their tracks.

Nixon, God rest his soul, must be turning over in his grave upon seeing these liberal idealists and their pitiful little cause. Tell me, Mr. President, why has the National Guard not been dispatched to college campuses across the country? Why do we not see police firing rubber bullets and tear gas at the protesters? Why are these tree-huggers being allowed to spread their message of pacifism? The future of this country depends on your response, Mr. President.

War has finally returned to American foreign policy after such a lengthy absence. With almost two years left in his first term, Bush could easily squeeze in a war with North Korea and possibly one against Iran. If he rides the chariot of war to reelection, even more wars could be possible, bringing about a new golden age of American diplomacy. Unfortunately, it could all be for naught if these hippies continue to be heard. Please, Mr. President, teach these do-gooders a lesson in the model of your Republican predecessors. Time is of the essence, sir. America desperately needs you.

Microsoft, NBC to release interactive war video game

Story by I Whitely Fibonacci

In an attempt to capitalize on a wave of consumer patriotic fervor, Microsoft will be teaming up with NBC and pay-per-view outlets around the country this summer to bring video gamers the hottest new gaming technology since *Frogger*. The soon-to-be-announced system will be called "Who Let the Bombs Out?" and will allow those who wish to pay \$1000 a pop to guide their very own missile into Baghdad.

According to a Microsoft spokesperson, the real treat will not be the ultra-sensitive joystick-controlled response on the missile, but the camera mounted on the front of the missile that will allow one to watch the explosion happen in real time from their own television.

The gaming system will also include multiple camera angles from surrounding satellites, so that one may watch replays of their explosion time and time again. Gamers will also be able to save their best explosions onto a memory card so that they can trade them with friends at a later time.

To give participants even more control of the game, they will even be able to pick a slogan to be plastered on the side of their missile from a database of preprogrammed phrases.

Players may choose missiles with sayings ranging from cleverly poignant ("Put This Under Your Towel!") and "Suck It, Saddam!") to delightfully hilarious ("Allah If You Hear Me!"). Players will also be able to customize their own message (I wanted to make one that says "Dead Dirty Dick-sucking Douche-bag Degenerates Die!" but I doubt that the alliteration will translate, so I might change it).

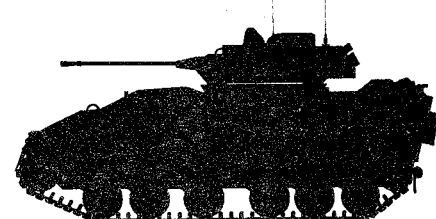
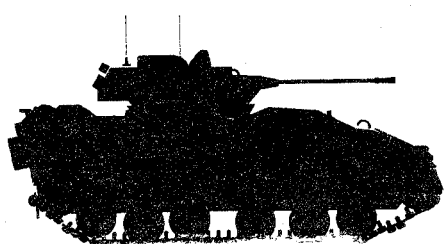
"This is the next generation in gaming," Dick Warbucks, a spokesman for NBC, said. "No longer will gamers be relegated to inaction

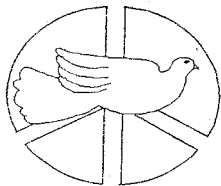
on their couches. Rather, they will be the new front line in a war that will allow even the laziest of Americans to do something right and good for the free world: that is, kill Arabs, or really, just anybody who is slightly brown... fuck if we care who they bomb after they pay for it, as long as they aren't white, you know?"

Warbucks went on to also announce a live reality TV show that will begin airing on an NBC pay-per-view channel next week called "Fear Factor: Bombs Over Baghdad," in which the final two contestants will compete for a grand prize of getting their own Iraqi oil rig by hiding out in apartment buildings in Baghdad during a US-led aerial raid.

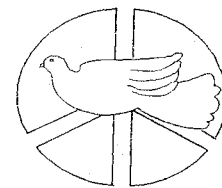
"We'll probably just bomb them both and keep the oil rig," Warbucks said, adding, "but that part is just between you and me, eh slim?" He then proceeded to nudge me in the arm and motion like he was using a joystick-controlled bomb to kill said contestants, smiling wildly after making a poorly executed explosion noise with the saliva in his mouth.

Those who can't afford but are still interested in watching live pay-per-view showings of other people playing "Who Let the Bombs Out?" or "Fear Factor: Bombs Over Baghdad" will have to become indentured servants to NBC will be obligated to watch 1000 hours of shitty television shows and/or war coverage.





The Peacitor



Bloody baby protest ends war

Story by I W. Aaron Wilson

The President of the United States, George W. Bush, recently announced that the war in Iraq had ended and that US forces would be withdrawing immediately. When questioned about the controversial decision, Bush looked thoughtful for a long moment.

"Usually I don't pay much attention to protests, but the other day, and I happened to glance at them through the window of my limo," Bush said. "Something I saw out that window just... it just..." Bush became quiet for a long moment.

"It touched my heart," he said, finally.

Inside sources reveal that the sight that touched his heart was that of a giant papier maché baby, covered in red paint and sporting a shirt that said, "Made in America." The seven foot tall toddler was carried by a small group of protesters who had made the trip all the way from Boston to carry their message to the president.

"I can't believe the war's been called off," said Chris Ferris, one of the protesters. "I am so stoked. Power to the people, man, that's what it's all about."

Ferris proceeded to exhibit his excitement by pumping his fist up and down and shouting "Power to the People!" over and over again.

"This is a really exciting moment for all of us," said Tammi Goodman, another of the papier maché wielding protesters. "I mean, this is our third protest here in Washington, but somehow, I knew that the third time would be the charm."

"That first protest, back in December, or whatever, man were we unprepared," Goodman explained. "We thought the leader of a country could be convinced to halt military plans that had been months in the planning by a

few students chanting 'No Blood for Oil.' But rather than be discouraged by our first setback, we decided to come up with new and more creative ways to express our dissent."

These ways included coming back for a February protest with Ferris in a gorilla suit carrying a sign proclaiming, "Bush is Driving Me Bananas!" However when this failed, the protesters came up with the idea for the papier maché baby.

"I knew that the baby would do it," Christine Duncan, another member of the activists said. "The whole time we were putting it together in case the US actually went to war, I just kept thinking: if the baby doesn't change Bush's mind, nothing will."

As of press time, the US armed forces were on full, coordinated retreat from Iraq. While US military commanders expressed disappointment at the President's new orders, when told about the baby, many fell into silent introspection.

Meanwhile in the liberated portions of Iraq, once ecstatic civilians watched the retreating soldiers with undisguised disappointment. Prisoners were released and advised to fake injuries in order to avoid execution as deserters when Saddam Hussein inevitably regained power.

"I feel for the Iraqi people at this moment, I had hoped to see them freed of Hussein," said Bush in a further statement. "However, since we are withdrawing, we leave it to their totalitarian regime to repair the damage done to buildings and crucial oil wells resulting from the attack, and we will continue our policy of sanctions."

"This is so great," Goodman added. "Maybe in the future, our protests can actually stop wars before they start."

Activists call for tofu bombs, tofutti missiles

Story by I Cameron Moore

Amid a growing international crisis surrounding the US/UK-led action in Iraq, a growing number of peace activists are gathering at protests around the country and calling for an end to the deadly bombing in Iraq. Instead, many of these activists are calling for a round of tofu bombing, followed by some Tofutti missiles for dessert.

Tofu, a substance made from soybean curd that many activists eat as an alternative to eating meat as a source of protein. Tofutti is a tofu-based ice-cream-like dessert that allows vegans to enjoy the same creamy treats that normal people have after a steak.

"We just thought that, you know, man, like, they would like something nice to eat over there or something... I dunno, man," Danny Dontwerk, a peace activist, said.

"It's like, a really big bummer over there, and I know if I were getting the shit bombed out of me, some strawberry Tofutti would really hit the spot... well, after a big fat Bob Marley doobie, if you catch my meaning," he said, proceeding to nudge me in the shoulder and motion like he was hitting a "roach."

He then went on to change his protest chant from "Tofu bombs and Tofutti dessert / They'd be really nice in the Iraqi desert" to "War in Iraq is wrong / Give Bush a bong."

Other activists who support tofu bombing and Tofutti dessert missiles, however, are not so quick to suggest that pot smoking will ease tensions in the Mideast. They suggest that class warfare will solve the problem because

this war is dictated by the rich and benefits the rich, but fought by anything but.

"The real problem is that the very cowards in charge of our country will send men to die for their oil, but they themselves skipped out of military service by virtue of their family connections," Donny Pissmoan, a class warfare activist, said. He then made a very poor attempt to cough while saying the name "Bush" without being too obvious.

Pissmoan and others dressed in all black and refused to quit walking in circles until the war is over, or at the very least, until we start using tofu bombs (followed by the obligatory Tofutti desert missiles... hey, who doesn't like Tofutti?).

Convinced that if everyone would just stop and listen to them for five minutes then the world's problems would be solved, Pissmoan and his followers walked in circles chanting "Tofu bombs, tofu bombs / Kill all the soccer moms" and urinating on everybody that walked by.

In between the class warfare activists and the hippies was a group of smug representatives from independent press organizations. They were caught in the middle of the whole blasted thing, getting punched in the mouth by police for chanting "Free speech, free speech / The Tofutti should be peach."

After having their mouths taped shut, they changed their chant to a barely audible "Mmm uhhh nnnn bah / Nnnn nann mmmm puh," which I later found out was really "Take this tape off / You fascist pieces of shit."

News



Briefs

Compiled by I W. Aaron Wilson

Larry Merchant Weighs in on Iraq War

With war raging in Iraq, news stations across the country are struggling to fill up air-time with 24-hour war coverage. In an attempt to meet their quota, CNN recently tapped HBO's expert boxing analyst, Larry Merchant, for his views on the war.

"Larry Merchant has been witness to some of the greatest made-for-TV battles of all time, including 'Marvelous' Marvin Hagler vs. Tommy Hearns, Aaron Pryor vs. Alexis Arguello, and Felix Trinidad vs. Fernando Vargas," said Headline News anchor Stephen Frazier, by way of introduction. "And now he comes here to talk about another great made-for-TV bout: George W. Bush vs. Saddam Hussein."

"Thank you, Jim," Merchant replied. "You know, I view this contest as a battle between a slippery eel and a tough, armored panda. The slippery Saddam, and the bamboo-loving Bush. But as you can see, in the end, toughness... and slipperiness, beat... and bamboo, beat slipperiness."

"Thank you for that insightful analysis

Larry," Frazier said, checking his watch to see how much time had passed. For the next ten minutes he sat still as Merchant haltingly attempted to elucidate the viewers at home about the similarities between Bush and Sugar Ray Leonard, before confusing himself and wandering off camera.

"There has been no news yet as to whether Merchant will be dispatched to Baghdad to interview the loser of this bout, or whether special boxing analyst George Foreman will also be asked for his views on the match up.

College Student Worried her Wonder Woman Shirt Too Patriotic

Sources reported recently that junior Lyndsey Carter is afraid that the Wonder Woman sweatshirt she was wearing would be construed as too patriotic.

"Well, I didn't think about it when I put it on, but this thing could really be taken the wrong way," Carter said, displaying the bright red, white, and blue sweatshirt. "I mean, on the one hand, I'm really against this war, but on the other... I mean, it's Wonder Woman."

Others agreed with Carter's stance.

"I don't really think this war was handled very well," said Trevor Woodson, sophomore. "But that sweatshirt really rocks. I know that I don't intend on getting rid of my Captain America shield T-shirt just because of the negative patriotic connotations."

Afghanistan Activist Scorns Those on the Iraq Bandwagon

Alan Spenser, a 23-year old activist from Tacoma, Washington, expressed disgust at the activists around the globe that continue to protest the war in Iraq. "I can't believe those lemmings, protesting whatever military action the government and its lapdog media hand them," Spenser said from his home in a partially renovated warehouse. "What we should be protesting is the American imperialistic attack of Afghanistan."

Sporting a "Justice, Not Vengeance," T-shirt, Spenser points to a worn, hand-lettered poster. In red letters, it reads, "Justice for New York = Peace in Afghanistan."

"I made that poster the day they started talking about invading Afghanistan," he says. "I've put my heart and soul into this anti-war

movement, and there's no way I'm letting the government distract me by their invasion of another country."

Spenser parades with his sign through Tacoma's main business district every other Saturday, and occasionally on Wednesday afternoons. He has come to be regarded as a colorful, if eccentric character by local people.

"I've seen him a couple times when I've been in to do some shopping," said resident John Weissman. "I always get a big laugh when I see him. I used to have one of his 'The US and the Afghanistan Question' pamphlets to show friends. He'd even dated it 'July, 2002.' It was priceless."

As for Spenser's peers in the anti-war movement, most express the same contempt for his efforts that he expresses for theirs.

"He needs to accept the fact that we invaded Afghanistan, we ousted the Taliban, its over, and there's really nothing to be done about it," said student Olympia Perutz. "Now, Iraq is a different matter. We have a chance to change the way war is waged forever. If we just get enough people together we have a chance of really stopping this thing."

R E V I E W S

monitor

Infinite beauty of *Ugly Organ* gets lost between mind and fingers

Cursive

The Ugly Organ

Saddle Creek

Review by | Chris Scott

So, I think I've reached the breaking point. As this war drags on like an obscenely unfunny sit-com, and George W's now painfully routine speeches more and more closely resemble the unintelligible rants of a cheap ego-tripping messianic televangelist drunk off a new brand of hyper-patriotic jingoism, spreading his Styrofoam crusade over impoverished third-world nations like a primitive cowboy who's having a severe problem keeping it in his pants. And I think I've completely given up on network news coverage, as Wolf Blitzer's idiot commentaries do little more than confirm the unsettling notion that America has, in fact, officially become a full-circle weird sort of cosmically-ironic-bad-*Twilight Zone*-episode-"one day we'll look back on this and cry"-sorry-pathetic-fucking-joke. (Breathe) Enter Cursive's "The Bad Organ," something infinitely beautiful and

loud enough to drown out the ever-growing pile of profoundly gut-wrenching bullshit.

To be perfectly honest, I shouldn't even be reviewing this album; I shouldn't even have it in my possession. If this all had gone according to plan, I'd be reviewing either the new Damien Jurado album (which wasn't at the record store) or the new Ani DiFranco (which also, for whatever reason, wasn't at the record store.) So I remembered vaguely a friend's persistent ravings of the new Cursive album, and I hesitated. The last disc he had freaked out about so much was the last Flaming Lips record, and to be honest with you, it really didn't do anything for me. I'll admit it. I didn't care for a single song on it. I liked *The Soft Bulletin*, but whatever.

Long story short, I should really leave this review to someone who has a better grasp of the English language; yeah, it's that good. That's an understatement. Unless Radiohead's new one is something fantastic (which wouldn't surprise me at all), this will be the best album of the year. Period. To sum it up, *The Ugly Organ* is a rock-opera of sorts, and the main character who, citing the use of his name in "Butcher the Song," is probably lead singer/songwriter Tim Kasher, could really be anyone- your

Nickelbacks, your Tools, your Dashboard Confessionals, your Creeds, whatever- anyone who willingly makes a career out of the exploitation of his or her emotions through music.

Take, for example, the refreshingly self-conscious track "Art is Hard"- "Cut it out/ your self-inflicted pain / is getting too routine / the crowds are catching on / to the self-inflicted song / well, here we go again / the art of acting weak / fall in love to fail / to boost your CD sales." And there you go. The rest of the album chronicles his creation of a fictional self that plays well to an audience that wants nothing more than to see him bleed on stage, and the eventual transformation into that fictional self, carried out on the wings of "Staying Alive," one of the most shockingly beautiful recorded works of art in recent history. And I use the word "art" with the utmost deliberation and sincerity, because this is what it's all about, and there really are just no words. I almost recall hearing Soul Coughing's "Super Bon Bon" oh-so-many years ago with the same amazement- a record that could be savage, menacing, and loud with-

out a drop of testosterone. Compare that to The Ugly Organ's two-song climax: "A Gentleman Caller" and "Harold Weathervein" recounting a one-night stand in graphic detail, and amazingly complex minor chords set against thrashing guitars, piercing vocals, and Gretta Cohn's magnificent cello (a cello never sounded this kick-ass, trust me).

In all honesty, it's the things you can't describe about "The Ugly Organ" that make it great; things that get lost somewhere between mind and fingers and come across as a linguistic mess when trying to apply any real form of coherency to it. You'd probably be better off just rolling the dice, picking up the CD, and figuring it out for yourself. And while I'm sure the war in Iraq was the furthest thing from Cursive's mind when they sat down to record "The Ugly Organ," I can't think of time better spent than listening to an angelic choir round off the album singing "The worst is over," putting CNN on mute, and trying to convince yourself it's true.

Chapman delivers album of love, commitment, intimacy

Stephen Curtis Chapman

All About Love

Sparrow / EMD

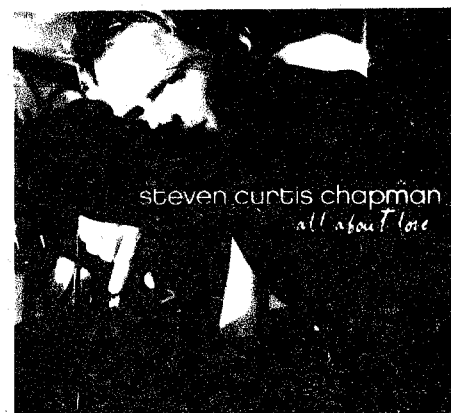
Review by | Cory Milles

I have to admit, I really outdid myself this Valentine's Day. Instead of sending flowers or chocolate or a card, I sat down and wrote 15 songs for my fiancée. I then recorded and produced them and put them on a CD. At last, the perfect Valentine's gift!

Okay, so I didn't make a CD. I can't even sing, much less hum in tune. But Steven Curtis Chapman can sing, and his new album, *All About Love*, proves it. With seven gold recordings, two platinum albums, 47 Dove Awards, and four Grammy Awards, Chapman has pretty well established himself in the music business. So he is taking some risks with his latest album, which features 15 love songs, 13 of which Chapman wrote for his wife Mary Beth. And while most people might think, "Why would I want to buy an album of love songs written for someone else," this album really works.

The album opens with the title song, which explores the concept of love in all kinds of relationships. In the heartwarming "How do I Love Her?" Chapman explores the ways he and his wife have kept their marriage together over the years, continually trying to express his love for his wife.

"Your Side of the World" deals with the whole "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus" issue, but in the song, Chapman goes beyond just realizing the differences between how men and women see things to an active role in which he says he wants to see things the other way. One of the most touching songs on the album, "11-6-64," reflects on the day Mary Beth was born. "I guess I laughed and played harder on that day, 'cause my whole world was



changin'... on the day that you were born," Chapman sings.

But not all the songs are slow love ballads. Some have an excellent rock beat to which you can't help but stomp your feet. And while Chapman penned most of the songs on the album, he also does a cover of The Proclaimers' "I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)." That, along with two other songs, makes up my trilogy of favorites on the album. One of those is "We Will Dance," a song of commitment in which Chapman admits that in life the dance of love may be slow, fast, energetic or tiring, but through it all, he and his wife will dance with one another in commitment.

"Moment Made for Worshipping" starts quiet, but builds up to be what is probably the biggest song on the album, reflecting on how some days are just "so-so," but the fact that we are alive makes them worth living to the fullest.

Overall, Chapman has pulled off what few artists could, and has given us an album of love, commitment and intimacy. His songwriting abilities only get better with time, and none of the love songs on the album sound the same. Even the remake of his hit "I Will Be Here" sounds fresh along with the rest of the album. If you're in the mood for love, or want to see how one artist has explored the mystery of love, then *All About Love* is for you.

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Faux Jean's love will conquer you; *Dead Lover* due in May

Review by I Dr. Royce Kallerud

Faux Jean comes from Minneapolis circa 2003 and no one else sounds so sweet. When most music is a retread of a retread, self-important and over-marketed, Faux Jean is fresh-faced, post-nothing when everything's post-everything. They flash shades of The Who's "Tommy" ("Your Leitmotiv"), hit as hard as the sexiest "You Really Got Me"-era Kinks ("G-a-go-go"), veer into the dada reminiscences of The Soft Boys ("The Moon is a Dead Lover"), tease with the brit-pop of Pulp ("Nature"), fall into a delicious boudoir revision of Queen's arena glam ("Drunk and Stoned"), and caress with the unutterable tenderness of would-be teen idols Big Star ("File it Away").

You'd listen to Faux Jean for the same reason you listen to these incredible bands. But none of them come close to Faux Jean's hyper-erotic female-male vocal swirl. Singers Matty

Schindler (aka Faux Jean) and Nicole Kalodrich (aka Jean Angel) don't stop and you'd never want them to. The two float in and out, one voice disappearing until it has forgotten the other, almost (forgotten you, almost) and then bursts in at the last moment, like the best flirting. Listen to them and daydream about what it was like to be in love, what it was like to hear the Beatles from a car radio having no idea who they are.

Faux Jean played in Kirksville last Friday, April 11 at the DuKum Outside and their latest *Dead Lover* (due May 20) is about to be released on Susstones Records <<http://www.susstones.com>>. Like last year's ebullient *Nature*, *Dead Lover* deserves to occupy the top of every year-end top ten list. Other bands are considered more important, more significant, but they don't know from rock. Faux Jean does. Their love will conquer you.

Briar King a gripping read

Review by I W. Aaron Wilson

The problem with modern epic fantasies is that it is a genre dominated by one hit wonders. In the wakes of trailblazing authors such as Terry Brooks, and, of course, J. R. R. Tolkien, have come a slew of fantasy authors who get signed to multi-book contracts on the basis of one good book. Thus, the genre is now the domain of the likes of

Terry Goodkind, L. E. Modesitt, David Eddings, and even the once formidable Robert Jordan, all of whom followed up their first (or first five) wonderful books with stagnant, unnecessary sequels.

At first glance, Greg Keyes would appear to be just the same. His first book, *Waterborn* was an exciting, character driven epic that did something few other books have attempted: created a fantasy world *not* based strictly on Medieval Europe (Whoa, you mean, during the middle ages, there was an entire world outside of myopic, superstitious Europe?) The sequel, *Blackgod* was almost as good as its predecessor, and then Greg did the unexpected. He ended the series.

For fans of the likes of Goodkind and Jordan who plod through endless sequels using the same tired characters with no end in sight, this was probably a disappointment. For the rest of us, it was a refreshing change.

Back after a brief foray into the realm of fanta-history, Keyes delivers in *The Briar King* everything that he delivered in *Waterborn*. This time he does have a Europe-like fantasy world, but for once the landscape is well developed, and Keyes' world has a unique history, culture, and civilization for each mythical nation.

Keyes also harkens back to the grand tradition of Tolkien by inventing several imaginary languages for his land, a task few authors have the guts (or intelligence) to do. True, they

are obviously modeled on French, Latin, German, and Scots, but just the fact that he went that far speaks worlds for the effort that went into the making of this book.

As for the plot... let's just say... whoa. Action packed straight through and driven primarily through strong characters that come across as utterly believable and fully realized, *The Briar King* is a gripping read. Knights, prin-

cesses, forest rangers, novice monks, and assorted villains inhabit a perilous world full of life and strange magic.

The intricacies of the plot continue to weave and build to a satisfying collision of treachery and heroism. And when the whole thing is over, you are left with the quiet, nagging feeling that you've been rooting for the wrong side the whole time.

Although Keyes continues his regrettable tendency to keep as many main characters alive as possible (thus subjecting them to a seemingly endless stream of injuries, each of which

leaving them half dead, but healing swiftly enough for them to act unhindered in the next act.) *The Briar King* is a winner, a breath of fresh air to the stale, insular world of epic fantasy.

The Following May Contain Spoilers

The Good: Imaginary languages (especially when employed as Inigo Montoya-esque death chants), magical assassin/nuns, the characters, the briar forest ecosystem, and monk hazing.

The Bad: The many injuries/recoveries of Aspar White and Neil MeqVren.

The Strange: I get the references to Virginia Dare and Croatoan, but what the hell is going on? Did the Jamestown settlers get sucked into some kind of weird hell-dimension? It's just weird.

Remember when movies used to be good?



Dreamcatcher

by Steven King

starring Donnie Wahlberg

Review by I Chris Scott

There's a scene in "Dreamcatcher" in which an elderly woman waves at the film's hero as he loads her retarded, leukemia-stricken son (played by New Kid on the Block, Donnie Wahlberg) in the backseat of his car while a military officer sits idly in the driver's seat, until a moment of inspiration grips her and she extends both arms in the air and screams "I, Duddits! Go and save the world..."

Without any sort of synopsis or prior information, that scene sort of says it all. This movie is fucking horrible.

It seems like all of Stephen King's novel-turned-movies are hit or miss. Actually, mostly miss. There's *The Shining* (the Jack Nicholson version), which is about as cool as it gets, *The Shawshank Redemption* and *The Green Mile*, which are both very good in their own right, *Carrie*, which is a vastly overrated film until the last ten minutes, and *The Dead Zone* which would have been horrible, had it not been for Christopher "Coolest Motherfucker Ever" Walken. The rest of it? Shit. All of it.

So the basic plot is this: Four best friends played by Jason Lee, Damian Lewis, Timothy Olyphant, and Henry Devlin who are telepathically connected through a mutual mildly retarded childhood friend played by Marky Mark's brother for reasons that don't make sense even if you've seen the movie, find themselves stuck in the middle of an alien invasion (In Maine of all places, because it's been such an exciting location for all of Stephen King's other movies! What a fun, fun state that is!) Morgan Freeman and Tom Sizemore play military cowboys trying to round 'em up some aliens.

About the aliens- I'll tell you a key thing about them not really because it adds to the plot at all, but because it may just be the one thing that persuades you to never see this movie. See, what they do is they infect you with some sort of rash so that an alien grows inside of your stomach, causing you to burp and fart like crazy (and there are plenty of fart jokes in this movie), but the one key thing that distinguishes this from *Alien* is that these little guys don't burst out of your chest and go crazy... they burst out of your ass and go crazy.

And while this does seem odd and a tad unnecessary, I will say that things bursting out of your ass seems somehow appropriate in a movie like *Dreamcatcher*. As for the aliens themselves, they look like the same shitty CGI mess they did in *Signs*.

Also, I think there's something about CGI that's always kind of bothered me. It

might be that CGI never looks real. FUCKING EVER. The *Star Wars* prequels, *Godzilla*, the *Men in Black* movies, etc, all have one thing in common in the sense that they never actually look real at all, and the only pleasure to be derived from taking the time to sit through them is the laughably twisted irony that so much money was put into special effects that look every bit as stupid as stock footage of a miniature cardboard spaceship dangling from a string. Case in point? The last five minutes of *Dreamcatcher*. If you see it, you'll know exactly what I'm talking about. *Jurassic Park* is the only film that did it right, and that came out something like a DECADE ago, so what the hell?

And let's continue this *Signs* comparison. Oddly enough, both films document the story of a super-intelligent alien race capable of traveling thousands of light years, yet completely inept, and embarrassingly under prepared to orchestrate the full-scale invasion they initially came to Earth to do. It would be pretty funny if either of these films were a comedy, but they AREN'T. At least *Dreamcatcher* doesn't try to beat its audience over the head with some bullshit contrived lesson about faith, unlike *Signs* which turned out to be nothing more than a nonsensical and brainless over-glorified episode of *Touched By an Angel*.

It would be a disservice if I didn't mention at least a couple good things about *Dreamcatcher*. One being Morgan Freeman's eyebrows in this movie: they steal the show. And they successfully divert attention from Morgan Freeman's cartoonish lunatic character. The eyebrows themselves are really a sight to behold; they're white (and so is his hair for some reason, a detail that succeeds in accomplishing NOTHING) and they extend to mid forehead- they're that huge and untamed. Quite a miraculous thing indeed, and it would be great to see what they could do with a better script and a more diverse cast. I'm thinking a romantic comedy of some sort, but that is neither here nor there.

Also, on a more sincere note, a large part of the film deals with an alien trying to take over the autonomy of one of the main characters and the internal struggle between the good guy and the nasty alien in his mind, the kind of idea that works well on the page, but gets lost in the translation to screen. Well to illustrate this struggle, they use a filming technique in which the good guy is behind a window observing what he is doing, and it actually works really well; you'll just have to take my word for it.

But ultimately trying to describe a "good" thing in *Dreamcatcher* is like trying to describe the breaks in between blows as a person beats the living shit out of you as a "blessing." And to be fair, expecting much of anything out of such a stupid concept as *Dreamcatcher* presents, is sort of like putting an endless amount of change in a vending machine that's clearly marked "out of order."

FEATURES

monitor

Anti-war is Anti-American

Feature by | Michael Nuhn

Now that's a statement to think about. It reflects the view of many Americans today who feel the protests and demonstrations are "Anti-American" and disrespectful of troops in the field and their families, but it also says something about the state of mind in which many people are. If one were to look at the statement only, without its current-events connotations, it could be reasonably inferred that war is the American way. And, to great extent, that would be correct.

In the history of the United States of America, there has never been a 25-year stretch of time unbroken by a declaration of war or an armed conflict of significant size or importance. Since the founding of the country in 1789 America has been in an almost constant state of war. From the march on Tripoli in 1805 to this most recent armed action directed at Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, American soldiers have been fighting and dying for freedom, democracy, the economy, territory, and every other cause a war has ever been fought in the name of save the love of a woman (as the mythic Trojan War was rumored to have been).

The first true conflict after the founding of the nation was the Tripolitan War, beginning in 1801 and ending four years later with the Marine invasion of Darnah. Next came the War of 1812, the Seminole Wars and the Mexican War.

Ironically, the most costly war our aggressive nation has ever been engaged in was a civil one, with the Union divided between North and South. In one battle (Antietam), the United States lost more men than in the War of 1812 and the Mexican War combined. The casualties of the Civil War outnumber American casualties in every other war America ever fought in combined.

This incredible loss of life didn't slow down the American war machine, however. After several conflicts with and massacres of various Native American tribes lasting a few decades, America entered a war with Spain, decimating the antiquated Spanish fleet. American troops fought a brief ground war in Cuba before the Spanish surrender in July 1898.

The 20th century saw the bloodiest conflicts in human history, and America was there, as well. After entering World War I (The "war to end all wars," as it was ironically dubbed) and losing 126,000 men (and sustaining a mere eight percent casualty rate of the force mobilized, as opposed to Russia's 1,700,000 deaths, and staggering 76 percent casualty rate), Presi-

dent Woodrow Wilson attempted to forge a "league of nations" to avoid another catastrophic war. He failed.

Beginning with Japanese aggression in the Pacific in the 1930's and later, Adolf Hitler's rise to power in destitute post-war Germany, the stage was set for the most violent and far-reaching conflict the world had ever known. After a few years and a few dozen countries conquered by Axis powers, America finally entered the Second World War at the hands of the Japanese. In 1945, after a massive invasion of Europe, a huge sea-based Pacific campaign, and dropping the world's only nuclear weapons to have been used in wartime, American troops enjoyed another victory at the cost of 405,500 American dead (once again, our allies fared worse: the USSR lost 13.6 million men alone).

After the era of global warfare, the US began its infamous "containment" policy aimed at stopping the spread of Communist government. Allies from WWII became enemies, and American ground troops were called to defend South Korea from a communist invasion only five years after WWII. When the three-year conflict ended, South Korea remained independent of its northerly, hostile brother, but nothing was changed.

American attitudes towards war changed in the late 1960s with the onslaught of America's most notoriously useless campaign for containment. American soldiers fought and died in the jungles of Vietnam for more than a decade, involved in what essentially amounted to a South Vietnamese civil war. Public opinion turned sour in Vietnam despite the success of the Korean War, and in 1973 President Nixon signed a treaty with all four parties involved in the war. South Vietnam surrendered 2 years later, proving that the deaths of over 58,000 American troops were unnecessary.

Even in this post-Vietnam "Conflict" era, America has been fully active as a military power. Since January 27, 1973 America has invaded Panama and Grenada, entered the Persian Gulf War, sent forces into Bosnia, Somalia, and Afghanistan, and fought an ongoing battle with drug lords and third world dictators. The aggression displayed by current President George W. Bush should shock no-one. Operation Iraqi Freedom is not only typical of American foreign policy but is one of the more justified (and legal, as opposed to the invasion of Panama in 1989) examples of America's use of force when deemed necessary.

Anti-war is anti-American, indeed.

Lysistrata is wild goofiness

Review by | Nicole Rainey

When confronted with the frightening reality of a ridiculous war, everyone goes about protesting in their own special ways—some folks like civil disobedience, writing letters, attending demonstrations, or yelling at the nightly news. All these methods are the tried-and-true kind of admirable, but the ancient ladies in Aristophanes's *Lysistrata* take it a step further. They stop fucking. And that's dedication. But, for all the fucking they're not doing, the play is still packed with sexual content—it's not for the weak of, um... heart.

Director Becky Becker took a unique spin on Aristophanes's text, brilliantly couching it

within the sexual repression of the 1950s. The show opens with a film that clashes the ridiculousness of the *Leave it to Beaver* mentality with the seriousness of the cold war. That theme pervades the show with a wild goofiness. The designers camp it up with a cartoon set (yeah sparkles and phallic columns), sputnik tits, and (not to mention) a male chorus full of guys in 50s-pastel golfing outfits donning dangling (or not dangling) phalluses.

But, despite all the humping and silliness, the viewer remains aware of the political message of the show—that war is horrible and ridiculous, and sometimes it takes equally ridiculous measures it get it to end.

NFL fails to pass proposal that would end overtime advantage

Feature by | Josh Sisson

At the National Football League's Spring Meetings that took place last week, NFL officials addressed a pressing issue. A proposal was made to change the current structure of overtime periods of games that are tied after regulation.

The current structure is obviously flawed. When the fourth quarter of a football game expires with the score tied, the game goes to an overtime period. This period begins with a coin toss; the same way the game begins. The team that wins the toss gets the choice of either taking the ball, or kicking it to the other team to begin overtime. What makes this problematic is that the overtime is sudden death, meaning the team to score first is the winner. Because of this rule the winner of the coin toss almost always takes the ball. They know all they have to do to win is get one score. There is no concern of having to stop the opponent from scoring. In essence, the coin toss decides who will be in the best position to win, which is blatantly unfair.

The answer proposed by the NFL was simple. The coin toss would remain to decide who receives the ball first. The difference would be that, regardless of what happened on the

first possession of OT, both teams would be entitled to at least one possession. If the winner of the coin toss took the ball and scored, it wouldn't be enough. The other team would have the opportunity to answer. If they failed to do so, then that team would lose, and the game would be decided in a fair manner. Not only would this procedure eliminate the power of the coin toss, but it would also discourage the team who gets the ball first from being so conservative with it. So often the offensive team will move the ball about 30 yards. Then they will just quit trying to score a touchdown, and turn their attention to trying to get in the best possible position for the winning field goal. I see this action as a cop-out, and it should be stopped by this proposal.

As easy as this fix would be, it failed to pass. A proposal needs 24 votes from the 32 team representatives in order to pass, and the overtime proposal only collected 17. I find this disheartening. Usually the NFL is a progressive entity. That is what sets it apart from other leagues, especially Major League Baseball. I believe, ultimately, that this proposal will be passed. I can't imagine a more obvious solution to a more obvious problem.

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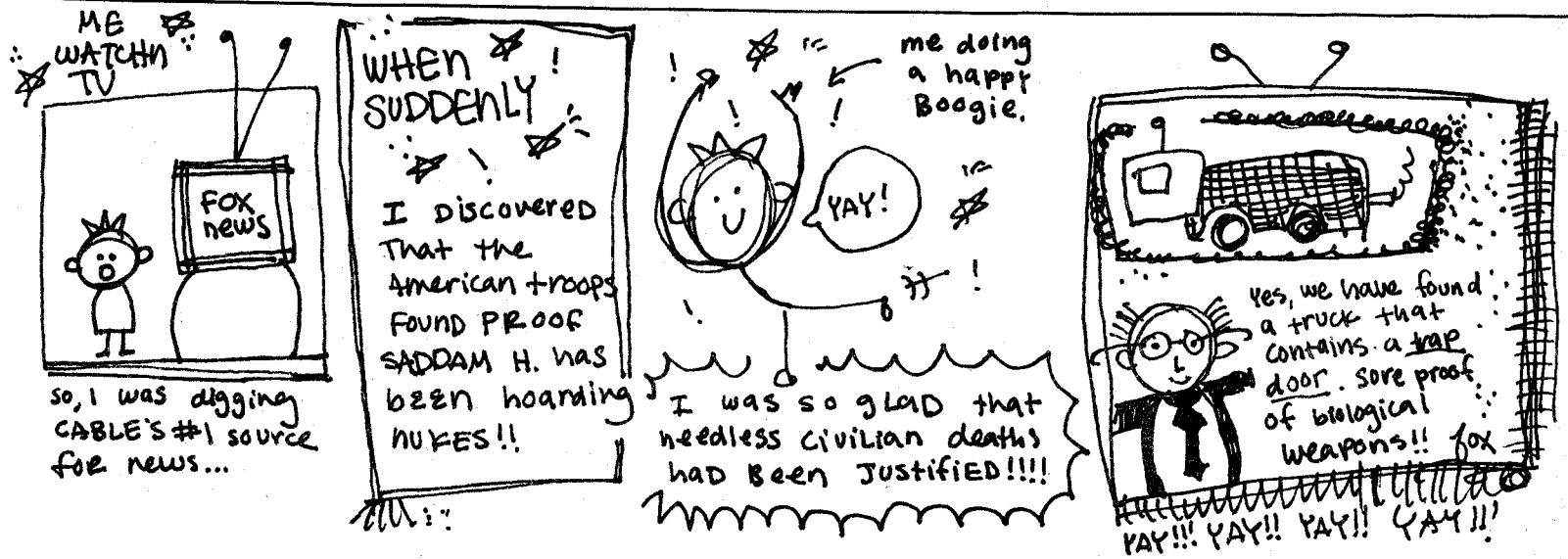
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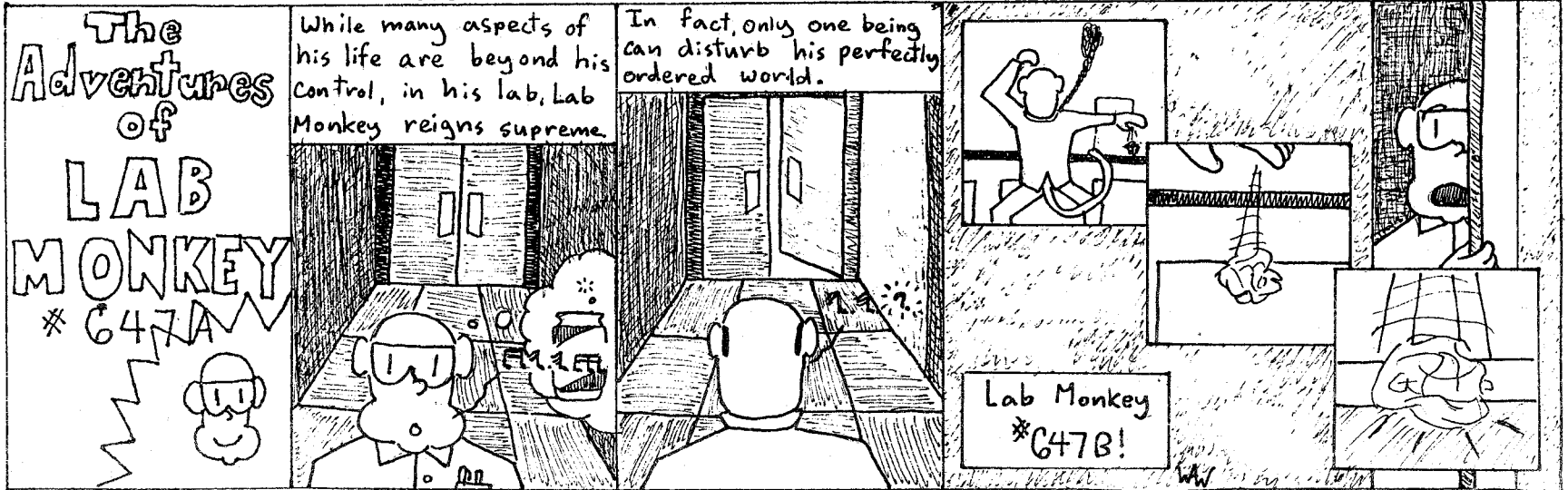
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MY BACK PAGES...

Okay. So there's some fairly "offensive" stuff scattered throughout this issue with at least one inflammatory submission posted below. Don't worry. All complaint letters will be promptly handed to our "coffee bitch" who will send them through our "paper shredder." Any other submissions will be welcomed at countzachula@hotmail.com. I ram shack dead in the track and that's that. Bitch.

i like a pile

the way it starts:
the floor is clean
enough for a reflection
roughly a screen
then there are stacks
to step around
upon the ground
hardly sound
to leave tracks
around those damn stacks
that somebody left on my floor
so I open the door and see
the stacks are now so messy
they have become piles-
aisles and aisles
of shitty, stinky piles
don't forget to remember
those miles and miles
of those damn piles
will surely slowly atrophy
into one styley pile:
destruction breeds creation
silence frees vibration

-elizabeth roberts

Haiku

Time corrodes faces
gently ebbs and tides over
the hillside of graves.

-zach

Tendrils shoot forth
From my aching heart
Like bionic arms
With iron grips
Like a bag of rotting potatoes
Whose eyes have turned into light-seeking limbs
The dead ones lie
In a pile on the floor
Amputated with a careless swipe
And I've bled like this before
I'll turn them inside out
And upside down
Like a divining rod
In our bliss we will drown

-Cameron Moore

Close your eyes now
and formulate your picture of God
and realize He is only a human
construction like you
or what you think is you
meaning your identity.

If we were all horses who
owned suits and automobiles
would we wear those suits and drive those
cars to
Church every Sunday
to worship some Ass
on a Cross?

You bet we would.
Now let's all hit the hay.
Neigh. Neigh. Neigh.

-Hey Zeus!

beautifully broken

you complicate me
like a beautiful day meant for chores
and you frustrate me
like a rose with all its thorns

'cause we got potential, baby
this rock could roll
and this dam could go
and overflow

but when the water settles down
and it's just us that's around
will our smiles be enough
to float this boat

or will it run aground
from all the weight we carry
that we didn't take the time
to check at the door?

61818

-estrella paz

How I miss you

Driving too quickly on a curved road
hard mountain to right, open air to left
Wheels barely gripping pavement, going fast
faster pulled to the right my whole body
tensed to the wheel, adrenaline, when I
fishtailed, car swerved, pulled too hard,
teeth tightening
the curve like a snake laid out and sliding
through thin white lines, car suddenly light as
slipping stones. All of us together
(rock, road, car, I) prayed quickly through the
squeal
of scared tires, through the spin I caught a
quick glimpse of sky in my rear view mirror.

And this is the thought I had: That the
sky was the exact color of your eyes.

-Dana Leanne Kuhnline