COURT JESTER

The Night Bill Graham Danced

The band Traffic had just finished playing and gone back to their dressing room. The crowd was stomping their feet and chanting, *"More! More! More!"* Backstage, Bill Graham held his index finger in the air as though he were testing the direction of the wind. At a certain point he just *knew*, and directed Traffic to go out and do an encore. This was his role—to serve as a missing link between the musicians and the audience; to provide a tangible community center for an extended spiritual family; to prove by his life that humanism and capitalism are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Bill Graham and I had something in common. We belonged to the same secret army of private dancers. We loved the music but we were too inhibited to dance to it. We only danced when we were alone. But when the Grateful Dead performed in Egypt, something changed. Combined with the LSD I drank out of a Visine bottle plus the marijuana cookie Graham gave me, the Dead concert—in full view of the Pyramids and the Sphinx during an eclipse of the moon—was so outrageously magical that Bill and I both ended up dancing freely with our friends on that outdoor stage.

"This is the first time I've ever danced in public," he confessed.

"Me, too," I said.

That moment of intimacy is how I'll always remember him.

Satirical Prophecy On the March

And this one's for Magic Johnson.

First, a quote from Issue #106 of *The Realist*:

"When I was an adolescent, purchasing condoms was a traumatic experience. I'd buy other stuff to avoid being embarrassed. I'd like a *Batman and Robin* comic book, and gimme this candy bar and (*whisper*) a pack of prophylactics—and a tube of toothpaste, please.' But now, there are huge *billboards*: 'If you can't say no, use condoms.' However, an executive of the Gannett Outdoor Advertising Company confirms that they held off putting up these signs until after the Pope's recent visit.

"The Church is faced with an interesting dilemma here. On the one hand, they are opposed to condoms as an artificial method of birth control. On the other hand, they're aware that condoms can serve as a protection against AIDS. A group of bishops has issued a statement that educational programs which include information about condoms should also stress that they are morally incorrect. That's sort of like Richard Nixon saying, 'We could get the million dollars—but it would be wrong.'

"A compromise is possible, of course. They could manufacture theologically correct condoms—with teeny tiny holes in them—just to give those spermatozoa a fighting chance. That's fair enough. But the problem then is, if the sperm can get out, the AIDS virus can get in, so it's back to the Vatican drawing board. Now, theologically correct condoms would have those same teeny tiny holes, but on the outside there would be little feather repellers with the message, 'Wrong Way—Do Not Enter—Severe Tire Damage.'"

From *Catholic Identity in Health Care Principles and Practice:*

"Catholic moral principles rule out masturbation or withdrawal during the act of intercourse as methods of obtaining adequate samples of human sperm for analysis. Father Edwin Healy's comments on the liceity of the use of the perforated condom include the following statement: 'The perforation must be large enough to permit the greater part of the ejaculation to reach the female genital tract, for otherwise the coitus would be substantially contraceptive and unnatural.'

"It should be noted, however, that distinguished theologians considered the use of the perforated condom to be immoral. In Father Arthur Vermeersch's opinion, such a means of collecting human sperm would involve 'the direct will to deposit some of the ejaculate outside of the vagina—something which makes it a *partial onanism*.' He suggested that it would not be immoral to aspirate seminal fluid from the testicles or from the epididymides by using a needle or syringe. The argument was that such methods would not involve stimulation of the generative faculty."

Not to mention stimulation of the student body.

Disinformation in the Service of Truth

When *The Realist* resumed publication with issue #99, I listed as staff: "Factchecker: None." So now here are a few corrections.

In issue #118, I wrote: "*Spin* magazine assigned a pair of reporters to write an article about Partnership For a Drug Free America, but won't publish it for fear of offending tobacco and liquor advertisers. The organization is financed by the R.J. Reynolds Company, which pushes cigarettes and beer."

However, the story was never actually assigned, nor was it ever actually written. Thus, although research had begun, there was never an actual story to not be published. Moreover, it is unlikely that *any* magazine which depends on ads for cigarettes and booze would ever publish such an article. The Partnership spends $360 million a year in advertising, second only to McDonald's. There, I trust I've put the proper spin on *that* particular story.

In issue #117, I published an article by private investigator Paul Kangas titled "The Role of Richard Nixon and George Bush in the Assassination of President Kennedy." There were a few relatively minor mistakes that I carelessly allowed to get into print. The Eisenhower-Nixon ticket won in 1952, not 1950. Nixon was Vice President through 1960, not 1956. George Bush's father was named Prescott, not Preston.

And then there was a *major* misstatement I remain responsible for publishing. Kangas wrote about an interview with Frank Sturgis in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on May 7, 1977 in which Sturgis stated that "the reason we burglarized the Watergate was because Nixon was interested in stopping news leaks relating to the photos of our role in the assassination of President John Kennedy."

I received a letter from conspiracy researcher A.J. Weberman, author of *Coup d'Etat in America*:

"In *Realist* #117 Paul Kangas quoted from an interview with Frank Sturgis that never took place. I went to the library and looked the fucker up and it was not there. In 1977 Sturgis was involved with E. Howard Hunt in a lawsuit against me and would never have said 'the reason we burglarized the Watergate was because Nixon was interested in stopping news leaks relating to the photos of our role in the assassination of President John Kennedy.' I was being sued for saying the same thing, and I would have called him as a witness."

I sent a copy of Weberman's letter to Kangas. He called and promised to mail me the interview with Sturgis, something I should have insisted on originally. He sent an article from the *Houston Post* of May 5, 1977, a UPI dispatch datelined Dallas, which stated:

"Watergate burglar Frank Sturgis said Wednesday the CIA planned the break-in because high officials felt Richard Nixon was becoming too powerful and was overly interested in the assassination of John Kennedy. . . . 'Several times the President asked [CIA director] Richard Helms for the files on the Kennedy assassination but Helms refused to give it to him, refused a direct order from the President,' Sturgis said. 'I believe Nixon would have uncovered the true facts in the assassination of President Kennedy and that would have taken off the heat in Watergate. Because Nixon wanted files, the CIA felt they had to get rid of him.' Asked if Nixon ever was in danger, Sturgis replied, 'Yes, absolutely. Nixon was lucky he wasn't killed—assassinated like President Kennedy.'"

Kangas also enclosed the transcript of a taped meeting between Nixon and H.R. Haldeman, his chief of staff, on June 23, 1972, a week after the break-in. Haldeman stated:

"And it [the FBI Investigation] goes in some directions we don't want it to go. Ah, also there have been some things, like an informant came in off the street to the FBI in Miami, who was a photographer or has a friend who is a photographer who developed some films through this guy, Barker, and the films had pictures of Democratic National Committee letterhead documents and things. . . . "

Kangas wrote in an accompanying letter:

"Here is the story as I found it. My statement that the burglary was in pursuit of the photos is based on my analysis of the facts in the transcripts of the Watergate tapes which talk about the photos in Democratic headquarters. This is an enigma, wrapped in mystery, wrapped in a puzzle. I'm investigating. I'm trying to *smoke out* the truth. I'm prosecuting Bush, Nixon, Hunt, *et al.* I'm accusing them, with my theory, with my vision."

Why I Leaked the Anita Hill Affidavit

I shall identify myself only as a female on the staff of a Republican senator. It is also relevant that I have long nurtured a keen interest in psychohistory, the process by which a nation's direction is revealed as an extension of the psychological makeup of those individuals who govern it.

Without going into specific detail, let me simply stipulate that on October 5, 1991, I happened to be in a position to overhear part of a conversation among Judge—now Justice—Clarence Thomas, Senator Orrin Hatch and Senator Alan Simpson. This was merely an informal meeting, occurring one full week after the Judiciary Committee voted, first 7-7, then 13-1, to recommend the confirmation of Judge Thomas, and one day after the full Senate indicated that he *would* be confirmed.

The particular conversation I eavesdropped on had to do with those charges brought by Anita Hill and ignored by the members of the committee, both Democratic and Republican. At that point in time, I still thought this was an appropriate response, because the option would have been to hold an executive session and Judge Thomas would then have had no practical choice but to resort to heavy denial. Now, however, these men were—in the process of their jocularity—acknowledging the truth of Professor Hill's allegations.

Senator Simpson was saying, "Y'know, Clarence, I've seen some pretty raunchy porno movies in my time, but I never did see one where a lady was having sex with an *animal*."

"I'll never forget the one I saw," Judge Thomas replied. "It took place in a barn. Except that the inside of the barn was like a theater."

Senator Hatch interjected, "Summer stock, eh?"

"There was a stage at one end of the barn," Judge Thomas continued, "and the stage was facing rows and rows of wooden folding chairs. There were haystacks piled up on the stage, and in front of the haystacks, there was a beautiful, buxom, blonde woman—and a donkey. Well, the woman started disrobing, and she started stroking the donkey to arousal."

"Doesn't sound at all sleazy to me," Senator Simpson said.

"Probably had Beethoven playing in the background," Senator Hatch added.

Judge Thomas went on with his description. "Well, when the woman was fully disrobed, and the donkey was fully aroused, they began copulating, right there in front of those haystacks on the stage of that barn. Bumping and grinding away. You've never seen a sight like this, I promise. And then, the camera panned slowly toward the audience—and the audience consisted entirely of *donkeys*."

The Senate office shook with raucous laughter, especially that of Judge Thomas. His booming guffaws rang like huge gongs in a church belfry. And, I must admit, I had to suppress my own laughter. I had been totally caught by surprise, but I appreciated the insight. *Homo sapiens* is the only species that has a need for pornography.

When the group's laughter finally began to simmer down, Senator Hatch said, "I suppose that was one of the demands of the animal rights people."

"That's right," Senator Simpson added. "Saving animals' lives is hardly enough. They need *culture*."

I felt like I was trapped in the boys' locker room, but it would have ended right there for me if the subject hadn't returned to Anita Hill.

"I'm glad nobody considered calling *her* to testify against me, even for a closed door session," Judge Thomas said. "But you fellas will really love this. Anita Hill was a very opinionated young lady. She and I once had an *extremely* animated discussion on the decriminalization of abortion. Can you imagine what the Democrats would've done with *that*?"

And that was the precise instant I made the decision to leak Professor Hill's statement to the press. Although I have constantly been sexually *hassled*, I have never really been sexually harassed in the *legal* sense of the word. However, I *have* had an abortion, and I was totally outraged by the blatant hypocrisy I'd overheard. I had never leaked any document before, but my anger overshadowed my fear.

I chose Nina Totenberg because I had come to trust her reporting on National Public Radio. I honestly had no idea what leaking the affidavit would accomplish. I certainly didn't envision that it would actually embarrass the Senate into delaying the vote, albeit that was my secret desire.

Then, in response to a question by Senator Hank Brown, Professor Hill *testified under oath* that she hadn't agreed with Judge Thomas on *Roe v. Wade*. Unfortunately, Senator Joseph Biden quickly interrupted her. "That is not the subject of these hearings," he said.

Personally, I feel quite disappointed about that particular aspect of the testimony, but I have not the slightest regret over leaking Anita Hill's affidavit, and I would gladly do it all over again.

I certainly consider myself more morally correct than the staffer for Senator John Danforth who wrote Judge Thomas' statement that began, "Nobody helped me with this. . . ."

My Two Slices

by Bob Slaymaker

I was standing on the corner of 53rd Street and 2nd Avenue. It was the middle of July, hot and sticky. I was eating two slices I'd bought at the pizza place half a block uptown. I had the slices spread out on the red *Pennysaver* dispenser. To me, it was dinner alfresco, which was a lot better than eating in that hot, sticky pizza place. Besides, I like watching people walk by, the taxis and cars come and go. New York is an exciting place, and I like watching it move.

I don't know, maybe I had a bit of dirt on me, or my hair was a little mussed. Some of the people were staring at me as they walked by. The next thing I knew two cops were headed my way. One had his hand on the butt of his revolver. The other fingered the nightstick dangling down his leg. It made me think of Nam, the way some of us would walk up to an old unarmed Vietnamese woman, her hands raised high, and aim our M-16s at her heart, ready to shoot her to ribbons if she talked back. It takes real balls to act this way toward an unarmed civilian. Believe me, I know. It's the epitome of bravery and honor.

"What's this, dinner alfranco?" the one with his hand on his revolver said. Both cops were white. It's amazing how many cops in this racially mixed town are white.

The other cop, the one fingering his nightstick, stepped forward. With his free hand he swept my two slices off the *Pennysaver* dispenser.

I looked at my dinner lying facedown on the sidewalk.

"You didn't have to do that," I told him.

His hand was on his nightstick.

They both took a step toward me.

The one with his hand on his gun leaned his face into mine. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see him regripping the gun's handle.

"Take a hike," he said. His nametag said *O'Brien*. The other's said *Mullins*.

"*Now*."

My dinner lying spoiled on the sidewalk, I walked away. One day, I told myself, I won't walk away. One day, the ghosts of those Vietnamese women on either side of me, other ghosts and living people on either side of them, one day I won't walk away. And that fine day, I'll teach these guys how to say alfresco.

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I phoned Kangas: "Now let me get this straight. You *did* invent that Sturgis quote, right?"

"Yes," he said, "it was a compilation of the quote out of the newspaper and the stuff out of the Watergate tapes discussing the break-in. And I just sort of compiled it together because, you know, I'm a prosecutor and, in court, a prosecutor tries to elicit the truth by saying things they believe to be true, and then seeing if the witness on the stand will *admit* the truth. So the fact that I read between the lines on what Sturgis said—I mean, if you read what he said it doesn't make sense, but if you read between the *lines* of what Sturgis said, which is a legitimate form of analysis, of code-breaking, then it makes sense. And so I simply, in this case as a prosecutor of Nixon and Bush, stated it more clearly, hoping that Sturgis will not deny it and so admit it by *not* denying it. I hope that doesn't ruin my credibility. I'm just trying to prosecute Nixon and Bush for the murder of Kennedy."

The defense rests.

At least I didn't perpetuate Christopher Buckley's put-on in *Forbes* magazine—as did Peter Jennings on ABC News—that Lenin's body was on sale for $15 million. Now the question is, will the Russians return the down payment to Michael Jackson?