

Mr. Kevin Walsh
P.O. Box 8869
S.E. Station
Washington, D.C., 20003

12/6/77

Dear Kevin,

Your letter of the 2d is one of several that should have reached me before today but didn't. Glad to hear from you. If you and Mark can make it on the 17th, fine. If you have dates and want to bring them, also good. Only let me know so Lil can have enough food prepared. That is a weekend night.

I'd heard several contradictory accounts of your departure from the assassins committee. Alas I've been assured that the one I like best is not accurate - that you slugged one of them.

It is not a cause of joy for me that my "predictions of what would befall" you "at the committee came true." I think you might have added that the course of the committee itself was easily cast in advance. Before long your basis for any of what you and Paul both called "cautious optimism" will no longer exist. I would have been happier if the committee had been responsible and successful.

If I can see how you could believe that committee was the only ballgame in town I do not agree with the belief, never have, and believe that like Garrison it was and will be a major obstacle to other teams getting onto a playing field. The odds are not favorable for any endeavor's immediate success but I think there are few that are not more promising and none that has the potential for harm in this one, the committee. If a fraction of the support for it had been applied unselfishly and elsewhere there might have been some accomplishment.

But you do your thing, hold your own beliefs, and be prepared to learn from mistakes. Best way of learning.

If you have all the free time you indicate I can put some of it to good use here.

What lies behind whatever you heard about my health is that an arterial problem has added on to those with the veins. This limits my physically more than before.

The piece on Maslow is interesting. His belief that nothing good is about to happen is justified. But all this reality means is that those who can exert an influence toward change or improvement ought try harder, regardless of the odds.

The impossible does take a bit more time.

Your employment by the committee need give you no great problems when its report is out. If there is one this month. One was scheduled. Recently I've heard that it will and will not be issued. The worse its report is the more it can be believed that any effort to guide them straight was justified. I expect only bad in any report. I also expect that this time around they'll have new opposition from the haunting past.

One effective and prepared speaker could ruin them over their persistence in nuttiness. The Clifton Laird fabrications are one example. Sturgis/Lorenz is another. There are many. But right now I'm not at all sure that the spookeries are not secretly happy at new exculpation they can expect. The irresponsibility in the Laird matter helps the FBI much.

You have no cause for shame or for regrets. But you might face questions and doubters in the near future, so you might want to think it all through more.

Even Lane now has little choice. He cannot continue to support this committee. I expect him to go public on criticizing it. He can benefit from this and he has a need to disassociate.

Look forward to seeing you both again. Best wishes,

P. O. Box 8869
Wash., D.C.
20003
2 December '77

Harold Weisberg
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Dear Harold, Please forgive my long delay in getting back in touch with you. Since being bounced from the Committee it has been my luxury to largely forget the investigation (not entirely, tho).

I've heard thru the grapevine that your health has not been well. I'm sorry to hear this and send my hopes for improvement.

Most of your predictions of what would befall me at the committee came true. No surprises there. My position remains largely unchanged as to co-operating with them.....cautious optimism. It's not the right ballgame, but it is the only one. We've been thru this before and hopefully there is still room for friendly disagreement. I've sort of been rather torn on the whole thing..... they need adversaries if there is to be any semblence of doing the right thing and the critical community needs to have input/monitoring/and sources when it's over. In any event my usefullness, if any, to the critics probably won't materialize til the committee finishes.

If it is convenient for you I would like to come for a visit or perhaps arrange to meet in the District. Whatever is easiest for you. (I've got lots of free time these days) Mark Allen will be in town December 17 and staying with me. I know he too will want to get together. When you can, will you please drop a line and advise what is convenient ?

Looking forward to hearing from you,

With Warm Regards,

Kevin

Uh Oh, What Is This?

by Ann Chase



Robert Maslow is a disquieting person to watch, talk to or come in contact with. Perhaps he's crazy. But then again, perhaps he's right, and what does that make you? He is probably best known as the man who appears as Henry Kissinger in a Superman costume, Richard Nixon in a prison uniform, Gerald Ford in an Eagle Scout uniform or a pig in a clerical collar, on hand at public festivals and demonstrations. The *Washington Post* always gives him a plug, "... tourists took pictures of ..."

Your immediate reaction is embarrassment, an averting of the eyes, as if you had uncovered some physical deformity. "What's he doing? A grown man?! Doesn't he have anything better to do with his time?" If you think of him at all, he goes into that "marginal" slot, along with the woman who stalks the streets of D. C. screaming insults at people in Albanian.

The truth is that Maslow has a job, an office, a family. He's the director of In Washington Newworks October 25 - 31, 1976

the Public Interest, a syndicated radio program. In short, Bob Maslow is no different than you or I. How many of us have to physically suppress the urge to stand up and yell "Fuck you!" at any and all political figures? Maslow channels his urge by creating a picture of his emotions, a cartoon that speaks for itself.

"A cartoon is a single visual frame or picture which captures the tone and content of what you're trying to express. Carrying a sign and wearing a mask of a recognizable political leader in the costume people are accustomed to seeing him in—for real or as he is caricatured in the media—can work as a complete cartoon, requiring no further time or explanation," Maslow explains.

"I'm not that interested in words. They have too many shades of meaning. I appeared at the demonstration for WGTB (an alternative radio station that was taken off the air by its parent organization, Georgetown University) as a pig in a clerical collar. A priest came up to me

and said, 'What do you represent? Are you saying all priests are pigs?' I didn't say anything. Just listen to your own voice, sir. Swish it around for a little while and see how it tastes," he says softly, shaking his head.

But there is more to it than putting on a mask. Maslow has given his activities some thought. He has a philosophy of action, a world view and quotations from Woody Allen, Baudelaire and Kurt Vonnegut to illustrate the point.

By putting on a mask of one of our great leaders, Maslow "plants the thought that respected authorities are really nothing but self-important assholes in search of a conscience. From there," he says, "it is a short step to the de-legitimization of their 'high office,' their policies and pronouncements and finally their 'right' to piss away our taxes and pretend to be our betters. Fuck 'em and the horses they rode in on," he growls.

"The first time I ever wore a mask was at Nixon's second inaugural. I feel that

re-electing Nixon was the most preposterous event, almost as preposterous as re-electing Hitler. There were 200,000 people at the counter-inauguration and 50,000 people at the Inauguration. You got this tremendous feeling of calm, that there were *this* many people that think the way we do, that things were *this* shitty.

"I was Nixon for about 7 hours, and people came up to me and told me how much they hated Nixon and everything he represented. Later, after Nixon fired Cox there was a spontaneous demonstration. People just came down to the White House and kept milling around. I was Nixon in a prison uniform. At the end of it, a cop came up to me and put his arm around me and we walked quietly for a few blocks. Even the cops pick up the smell. The whole town's rotten.

"If the most respected person in the country, the person who heads all the popularity polls year after year, is actually a malicious lunatic, what else is true?" And then he giggles. Uh, oh, you think, what is this?

Physically and spiritually, Bob Maslow is Woody Allen. His book, *The Browning of America*, opens with a quotation from Allen. "My only regret in life so far is that I'm not somebody else." He even resembles Allen, in his own words "... just a moody, silly, rude, chubby Jewish man." This is not to say that Maslow is a buffoon. Far from it. He is a one-man demonstration against our national death of the spirit.

In a letter reprinted in *The Browning of America*, Maslow spells out his philosophy of life and politics to a friend. "... I have no illusions about the political utility of effectiveness of my troupe of masked men waggling their fannies and making fun of our beloved and respected leaders. I do it for other reasons: (1) It's fun; (2) It makes tight-lipped people laugh, and (3) There doesn't seem to be anything else to do.

"There simply is no revolutionary movement in this country for alienated and angry folk to relate to and work for. The despised of the earth are notoriously unorganized ... which leaves us with liberals and exhibitionists (I am both). ... There are no revolutionaries because there is nothing revolutionary to do.

"... To me there is a sense of absolute futility and despair about being a revolutionary in America. And thanks but no thanks. The enemy to me is *not* the system but precisely that feeling of futility and despair. It's everywhere.

"But, I don't care about changing the world. I should. It certainly needs changing. Must be changed. But, not by me. And I repeat: What the fuck *should* I be doing? Writing my Congressman? Blowing up people? Immolating myself? Everybody tells me that my act is counterproductive and/or ineffectual. So fucking what!! Who, please tell me, is knocking 'em dead? Showing all of us *the way*?"

"I mean, where exactly are freedom and creativity and laughter and affection and play flourishing these days? ... If you believe as I do that all authority is fucked, what concretely can we do to get rid of it, of them? If I don't know the answer to that, I have no choice but to do the best I can to lift my own spirits and the spirits of the people I love. Something to do before and until the revolution and/or death overtakes me."

Cartooning, or Operation Butthole, as Maslow calls it, "has a philosophy of shrill contempt for all authority. We want people to start with a basic contempt for an office and feel pleasantly surprised if the contempt isn't justified by its occupant. This country is so fucked up on images that we've let good grooming and politeness become a substitute for intelligence and humanity."

Maslow has a poster on his wall that sums up all of his feelings of authority. It depicts two helmeted Marines fighting with pugil sticks. The caption reads, "The Marines are looking for a few good men to beat each other to death with pugil sticks." Let's face it, it's funny, but it's also true. So is the idea of the former President of the United States in a convict's outfit. You don't need to say anything more.

"There are two key concepts that explain Operation Butthole," Maslow explains, sitting on the floor of his office, "anti-authoritarianism and boredom. Another term psychologists use is eventlessness, the feeling that nothing ever happens, ever could happen. It's a condition most prevalent among mothers of small children. They get tremendously depressed and sleep all the time, and then they go to psychiatrists for sensory enhancers. I'm just trying to say that men feel that way, too. Everything in life is as boring as shit, and that includes life at home, in the office, on the weekend, everything."

"Since August 8, 1974, or thereabouts (Nixon's demise), politics itself has become the greatest single *cause* of boredom," Maslow announces. To prove it, he exhibits a clipping about two young men who ran for Student Body President

of the University of Texas on the Art and Sausages party ticket, promising to sell the football team, the Texas Longhorns, to the highest bidders as a mercenary troop. They won, claiming it was because they had entertained the electorate.

"All campaigns now look to me to be the same campaign, like Marine recruitment or selling Alpo or Nixon's re-election campaign. Everybody is selling something, and they all sound the same. There is now one acceptable way to behave, and everybody sounds like dog shit." Maslow gets really angry and then giggles again.

"The score is Boredom 2, Mustang 0. The revolution has come and gone and the forces of boredom have won. I mean that to include the whole human potential movement. It's all based on be like me and you can become rich and powerful. Be like Werner Erhart and you can be a success. People come up and testify that they were able to keep sales up by adopting such and such a technique. How much money did you move? How many impressions did you get? The symbol of the American psyche is McDonalds. People look at that sign, 19 billion sold, and see success. It's an irrefutable proposition."

So what's the bottom line for all this? Maslow thinks it would be a good thing if nobody voted in November. That would be a clear sign that the people had caught on. "If everybody knew, nobody would vote. They'd say this doesn't even come close to what we had in mind. It would be better to have a piece of dog shit in the White House than a person."

"I know I'm not supposed to say dog shit. In fact, it's worse than dog shit. There's a certain integrity to dog shit. Dogs aren't doing anything to anybody besides shitting.

There is a tendency in American politics to think of everything in terms of numbers, in terms of a mass movement. The mind's eye can't quite grasp the idea of five thousand people showing up at a political rally wearing pig masks. "It's silly," scream the serious folk. But, then again, so is politics, or at least it would be if it wasn't so boring. Perhaps if the American people took Maslow's advice and went on a massive campaign deflating the egos of their leaders, things would stop getting worse. Nothing else has worked. Serious discussion of so-called issues and responsible opposition only serves to fuel their hot-air balloons. At least the politicians would know that whatever they were selling, we weren't buying any.