

60 Revolution In The Revolution

I shall now attempt to define the individual, the actor in this strange and moving drama that is the building of socialism, in his two-fold existence as a unique being and a member of the community.

I believe that the simplest approach is to recognise his un-made quality: he is an unfinished product. The flaws of the past are translated into the present in the individual consciousness and constant efforts must be made to eradicate them. The process is two-fold: on the one hand society acts upon the individual by means of direct and indirect education, while on the other hand, the individual undergoes a conscious phase of self-education.ⁱ Che

[The fictional] Ferd has been busy. While Mobe 68 prepares for the concert tour, he has interviewed a number of individuals who are actors in contemporary history; to wit, freedom fighters in several countries on several continents. Although he agreed not to divulge the identity or location of any of the persons he interviewed, one of the interviewees agreed to tell his story on camera. An edited video version of that interview appears on the homepage of this site. What follows is a transcript of the statement, together with annotations and references to significant sources for further reading.

INTERVIEW 23a-494567-2005-dv8

Location: (deleted)

Organization: (deleted)

Name: Marcono (not his real name)

Age: 33

Sex: M

Class Background: (deleted)

Notes: Individual from mixed indigenous/settler ancestry

. . . noises off: voices, glasses clinking

Int: Please tell us your name and what you are doing?

Marcono: Ahm, can I make up a name?

I: Please do so.

M: My name is Marcono. I am from a little village not far from the capital,

(deleted)

I: What brings you to this place?

M: I lived a quiet life as a child. My mother was elected Mayor after the guerrillas took away most of the men from our town. My father, lamentably, was the town drunk and the village idiot. He was always drooling and leering at me. He insisted on bathing me until I was 19.

I: Did he ever perpetrate any overt sexual activities with you?

M: Of course not. He was not a child molester, just lustful.

I: Sorry, please continue.

M: Then kindly refrain from interrupting. As I began to explain, my mother was a strong and competent woman, and I identified much more with her. In fact, I found great strength in dressing up in her clothes. My cousin and I would play together; first, he would be Che and I would be his alluring comrade, Tania. . . We read about Che even though we are so far away from Cuba and (deleted) and (deleted). . . then we would switch roles. That went on from age 7 to 19, when my mother discovered me in my guerrilla woman's clothing. I was wearing a red poodle skirt, a blue and white striped sailor top cut down to reveal a lacy bra, and an ammunition belt, and of course, a black beret with a red star. I had long hair then, tied—as is only practical for women guerrillas—in a ponytail. Che (my cousin) was in camouflage fatigues, but with earrings and lipstick like Raul (deleted).

. . .

voice: (inaudible) . . . headgear is askew . . .

I: Do you need a moment to readjust?

M: No, no, I am sure I look just fine. We guerrillas rise above fashion conventions.

I: How did you come to be here?

M: When my mother caught us, we ran away to the river, where we saw many beautiful men bathing.ⁱⁱ We were entranced; it was like Reinaldo Arenasⁱⁱⁱ. Just like him, my cousin and I wanted to be with those men. We asked them who they were, over cigarettes after (deleted). It turned out they were the guerrillas! They were challenging our government, our religion, and our revered (leader, name deleted), fighting for land, justice, peace . . . and the right to be in the

woods naked. . . After my mother informed me that it was too unconventional for a mayoress to have a son who dressed in women's clothing, I knew what I had to do. I joined the guerrillas and I have been fighting ever since.

I: What are your goals? Who are you fighting against?

M: Our struggle is against the domination of our land by the global empire, and the governments that serve it—our own (deleted) government and the armed forces of the US. The multitudes of the world will win!

Chapter 61 Travel Plans

Ambrose Broussard was swinging his way in London with Achmed/Oedipa when the news came of a shooting by an Ojibway high school student, who killed several of his classmates and then himself.

CNN) -- A student on Monday killed two of his grandparents, then went on a shooting rampage at his Minnesota high school, killing five people and wounding as many as 15 others before shooting himself in the head, officials said. FBI Special Agent Pearl McCube told reporters the dead include a female teacher, a male security officer and four Blue Lake High School students.

"We believe that one of those students is the shooter," McCube said. "At this time, we believe he was acting alone. She commented on the investigation, "It's far too early to say why, but we did find a newish and prominent scar on his head, and a handwritten prayer to Leviathan on his person."

Authorities discovered about an hour later that the boy had shot and killed his grandmother and grandfather, a veteran of the police force, family friend Stately Pomp told KARE-TV. Stately Pomp said the boy used his grandfather's police-issued weapon in the school rampage.

The shootings occurred about 3 p.m. (4 p.m. ET), in Blue Lake High School, a school of 300 student that is on a sovereign Indian reservation within Beltrami County, about 25 miles north of Bemidji, a town of about 25,000 residents, many of them Ojibway Indians, he said. The school is about 240 miles north of the Twin Cities, near the Canadian border.^{iv}

Ambrose knew them: the family were old friends from powwow get-togethers. The boy had come to visit in Manistique last fall, and had grown very attached to a young female Sirenian. When his grandfather took him back to Blue Lake, the kid ran away and showed up at the door of Venison Bride just around the time the Water Prophet was growing suspicious of Oedipa and paranoid about spies. Ambrose felt the hair on his testicles stand up, as he realized how the boy had acquired the scar and what it meant.

"Venison removed his hypothalamus!" he cried, massaging his crotch. "I've got

to go back and finish off that monster!”

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Later that day, as Ambrose winged his way back over the Atlantic, Timmy Tilden put down his fork and told MonaLisa, “Uncles Cy and Vyv are hoping The Baby might benefit from these new treatments in Buenos Aires. Right now she’s just in, like, a vegetative state.”

It was a nervous moment at the old table in the kitchen of Hotel Real Desert. Mona and Novy lit cigarettes. Caprice cleared the table, while Neddy and his brothers, Chesterfield and Butterfield, ate.

Terpsichore Prion, who had moved in and taken over so many of the housekeeping duties after her dismissal from EuroDisney, set down a glass of buttermilk, only half finished, and flitted toward the door. “I have so many rooms to do up,” she called over her shoulder.

MonaLisa did not scream, as they all had feared when Timmy broached the subject. Calmly pulling on Novy’s fingers, one by one, she popped her lover’s arthritic knuckles as she thought ponderously and came to a stop. “All right, then we will take her to their hospital and pray again. Do they speak English or just Spanish?”

Novy asked. “Where’s the dog?”

62 Robbed at the Urns, the Movement Turns

“Neddy, come and see the BBC World Programme,” calls Caprice. “That nice Alastair Leithead (that you insist on calling Shithead) is on. “

BBC News, Johannesburg Sunday, 3 April, 2005, 22:11 GMT 23:11 UK

ALeithead: The British believe the Zimbabwe election result was "fundamentally flawed," the US says it was "seriously tainted", the opposition party calls it "massive fraud" and independent monitors say it has failed to meet regional guidelines for free and fair elections.

These guidelines were put in place by one of the few international opinions President Robert Mugabe seems to listen to, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). And SADC observers describe the election result as "peaceful, credible and well organised... reflecting the will of the people".

“Well no wonder,” says Neddy leitheadedly. “The SADC is desperate for Zimbabwe’s participation in regional development. They have to jump if Mugabe says so.”

Their election observers, one of the few delegations invited into the country, were concerned by the 10% of voters turned away at the polling stations and the bias of the state media towards the ruling Zanu-PF party.

They even noted that the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was claiming the figures did not add up and there was suspicion over 32 of the 120 seats contested - more than a quarter of all constituencies.

But in the end they delivered their statement of approval anyway, because the MDC could not present them with evidence in time. MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai has few options for challenging the election results.

Zanu-PF: 78 seats

MDC: 41 seats

Independent: 1 seat

Elected seats: 120 seats

Seats appointed by the president: 30

And there still seems little direction to the MDC's response. Mr Tsvangirai's spokesman said . . . he has not decided what to do yet. "I can tell you what he has ruled out," William Bango said. "A legal challenge and an armed struggle - but we are not closing the door on mass demonstrations or protests."

The African Union observer mission was slightly more cautious about the

election result - but President Mugabe now has all the cards, with a two-thirds majority.

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Catholic Archbishop Pius Ncube of Zimbabwe's second city Bulawayo, told the Johannesburg-based Sunday Independent newspaper he hoped the people would oust Mr Mugabe after Thursday's poll.

"I hope that people get so disillusioned that they really organise against the government and kick him out by a non-violent, popular, mass uprising," he told the paper. "Because as it is, people have been too soft with this government. "So people should pluck up just a bit of courage and stand up against him and chase him away." Archbishop Ncube insisted he was not advocating violence but simply backing a peaceful uprising like that in Ukraine last year.

"Big deal for Ncube," says Neddy. "He's running for Pope, I'm so sure. He pauses, draws a big breath, and tells all assembled, "Ncube would be seconded, no doubt, by George Soros and by the Albert Einstein Institute.

Caprice and the other Zimbabwean ex-pats are well aware of Soros. Soros is the author of *The Open Society* and an international financier who advocates transparency and democracy and funds many of the E. European opposition groups like Otpor. The AE Institute, publisher of the seminal book on nonviolent opposition strategies utilized by many underground opponents of E. European and now other repressive governments, employs former US Dept of Defense experts but asserts it is not a stooge of US interests.]

"All our comrades are part of the underground movement now," Butterfield said to his brother. It is difficult to assess whether this is a legitimate internal movement or a front for global capitalists, or—as I suspect will be made clear by events—both.

Just look at this NY Times article:

Grass-Roots Effort Aims to Upend Mugabe in Zimbabwe

By MICHAEL WINES

Published: March 27, 2005

HARARE, Zimbabwe, March 26 - She is in her 40's and the mother of four, though in the dappled sunlight of an outdoor restaurant here, clad in a floppy hat and a thin cardigan, she looks too young to be either. Nobody would see her as a provocateur, much less a revolutionary.

But when Rebecca took one child to the doctor on a recent morning, she left

behind a clinic restroom plastered with stickers urging resistance to the 25-year reign of Zimbabwe's president, Robert G. Mugabe. Later, she littered her bus seat with condoms emblazoned with a large Z and a call to "Get up! Stand up!" against the government.

"There are more than 10,000 of us," she said. "And every one is excited, because you know you are playing a part in something you believe in."

The Z stands not for Zimbabwe, but for Zvakwana, an underground movement that aims to resist - and eventually undermine - Mr. Mugabe's authoritarian rule. With a second, closely related group called Sokwanele, Zvakwana's members specialize in anonymous acts of civil disobedience - a meld of guerrilla theater and the philosophies of Gandhi and King.

"What terrifies me," Caprice says to Neddy, "is that Xoliswa is part of the underground now. Now that her teenage rebellion has abated, she's turned into a patriot after all. I wish she'd never gotten involved with that Oedipa."

"Now, now, lovey," replies Neddy, "you know we are both so proud of her. She will be all right; her papers are perfectly counterfeited, and she knows how to take care of herself. Mobe will keep his musical contacts in touch with her while she is working in the studio, and outside she knows how to reach all our friends. We are blessed with such a daughter—better even than our football-mad lump of a son."

In ideology, and sometimes even in identity, Zvakwana mirrors grass-roots efforts in any number of authoritarian nations. From Zubr in Belarus to Ukraine's victorious Pora to nascent groups in Egypt and Lebanon (whose names, in English, mean "enough"), such civic movements may be the hottest phenomenon in global democratic politics^{vii}. Many take their inspiration from Otpor, the movement that played a major role in ousting Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia.

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This narrative is adapted from excerpts of "The New World of Power" in *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict*, by Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall (Palgrave, 2001).

"We'll be able to observe the international aspects of all this, up close and personal, when we fly to South America," says Chesterfield, already thinking about their trip with The Baby. "We should travel to Bolivia and check it out while we are there. See this?"

Indigenous movement in Bolivia challenges European-based leadership

BY OSCAR AVILA
Chicago Tribune 3/27/05

SANTIAGO DE CALLAPA, Bolivia - (KRT) - Pascual Condori steeled himself with a cheekful of coca leaves and poured drops of beer as an offering to Pachamama, Mother Earth. As citizens gathered in the central square of this dusty Andean town, he raised a voice that had been muzzled for five centuries.

"As indigenous people, we will not be discriminated against!" he told his fellow Aymara Indians at the rally last fall. "We all have rights, my brothers!"

Across Latin America, many of the region's 40 million indigenous citizens are raising similar voices of discontent, angry that greater political freedom and free-market economic policies fostered by the spread of democracy have not lifted them out of poverty. And in Bolivia, they have brought President Carlos Mesa's government to the brink of collapse.

Faced with road blockades by indigenous activists to protest foreign investment in the energy sector, Mesa offered to resign earlier this month. Such a move would have made him the second Bolivian president to leave office in 18 months because of indigenous protests.

Congress rejected Mesa's offer to quit, as well as his call for early elections so he could step down. Mesa said he would stay until his term ends in 2007, but analysts said the crisis has passed.

U.S. and Bolivian officials worry that the protesters' approach is winning out over activists, like Condori, who want to achieve inclusion through the ballot box. Last fall, he ran for the city council under the banner of his Inca forefathers, leading a wave of first-time indigenous hopefuls that produced a record number of municipal candidates.

In recent years, native peoples have also toppled a president in Ecuador and mobilized in Chile, Mexico and Guatemala. In January, indigenous militants in Peru took over a police station in a failed attempt to force the resignation of President Alejandro Toledo.

Two decades after democracies replaced longstanding dictatorships across much of Latin America, indigenous peoples remain some of the region's poorest citizens, having failed to translate their numbers into economic and political power.

The political climate is especially volatile in Bolivia, a poor nation and the only one in South America with a majority indigenous population.

Mesa still plans to convene a historic assembly this year to rewrite the constitution, arguably the most important demand of indigenous activists. Politicians are split over whether the assembly will be a chance to right wrongs or a forum for revenge and recrimination that will split the nation along ethnic lines.

Even before this month's protests, some U.S. officials had feared that a failed national assembly would cause indigenous leaders to steer the country off the democratic track or, at the very least, install a government that would end Bolivian cooperation with the United States on drug eradication and free trade.

"People are questioning democracy," said Liliana Ayalde, mission director for the U.S. Agency for International Development in Bolivia. "If they see that no results come out of the formal system, then they will say, 'Forget this. We'll go to the streets.' This is an important test for Bolivia."

Last year, Bolivia joined Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, Sudan and five other hot spots on a U.S. list of "conflict-prone" countries. That triggered a \$50 million emergency infusion of U.S. aid.

Chapter 63 Ratz Again!

Some time ago in The Story Continues (i.e. Chapters 29 & 30) the following transpired:

“Speaking of heretical views, here’s one,” says Achmed. “Remember the Schopenhauer line about how anyone who cares about people would think to spare future generations of the pain of living. Let’s start a movement for negative population growth among affluent Westerners. Let’s pledge not to have children and instead to leave some room and some oxygen for others.”

Lemmy replies, “I hear the latest trend is for wealthy gay men to have babies with surrogate mothers, and then hire nannies to take care of them. Why don’t they just get a dog!”

“Maybe the most useful would be mass suicide in the First World, for ecological betterment.”

30 Weekee Watchee: Save Sirenia

Luckily for Lemmy and Achmed, Ollie South pursues leads indicating that some mysterious activity is planned for Cologne, or maybe Aachen. Taking advantage of the red herrings, A & L, boldly don the almost ostentatiously plain, rigorously but gorgeously tailored, soutanes of Old Catholic priests, carrying volumes of Lefebvre in Latin, and peregrinate by train to Rome. Surely in the Holy City, they joke Thomistically, schismatics will not be subject to an attack that might embarrass a Pontiff who, in his dotage, leans increasingly toward Tridentianism and Mariolatry.

Their luck runs sour when they are spotted by agents of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the bus terminal in the Piazza del Risorgimento. They run pell mell into a café down the street from the Post Office on Via delle Grazie. Under the gaze of the Swiss Guards across the street, Lemmy and Achmed are hustled into the WC and put to the question.

“We know who you are: you are atheist revolutionaries. You, Caution, are a Jew, and Achmed, you are not even a man. Why are you playing in Church doctrine,” queries the sub-assistant inquisitor.

“We throw ourselves on your mercy,” Lemmy pleads. Just when their persecutors are about to call over a carabinieri, Achmed makes a secret sign that causes the priestly crew to relent. He points to their crotches and mimes fellatio. After a period of speechless contemplation in the Spanish manner, a rodillas, L and A are absolved. Their robes are confiscated, exchanged for long-sleeved t-shirts of the Cardinal Ratzinger Fan Club (“Putting the Smackdown on Heresy since 1981”) “Ever since the Holy Father started watching Gibson’s Passion,” an African priest named Thleeanouhee begins. . .

“Every chance he gets,” interrupts a young catechumen.

“Ever since,” repeats the father with asperity, straightening his genuinely orthodox robe, “non-canonical enthusiasm for Our Lord’s suffering is chancy. Positions that were assumed, and enjoyed, intra muros—traditionally taken as compensation for irregularities that should be curtained away from stool pigeoning to the secular government—are no longer sufficient to prophylax against ex cathedra bans.

“As far as the homosexual-ecclesiastical cabal is concerned, we encourage your efforts to overthrow any number of non-Christian (non-Catholic) governments; they’re only temporal powers.”

“Keep in mind, Texas fundamentalism is not Christian in our view,” asserts one of the more chatty priests.

In the present, we see two homeless men huddling around a stewpot suspended on telephone wire over a burning trash barrel in the site near the Rome Ghetto where archeologists are uncovering more ruins. One, spitting out a clump of short black hairs after sampling the mucilaginous zuppa, exclaims “Rats, again!

He and his companion are immediately arrested by Swiss Guards in their black off-site uniforms, for suggesting terrorism against the new Pope.

>New Pope condemns Spain gay bill
>By Robert Piggott
>BBC News, Rome, 21 April, 2005

>Pope Benedict XVI has responded firmly to the first challenge of his papacy by
>condemning a Spanish government bill allowing marriage between
homosexuals. The >bill, passed by parliament's Socialist-dominated lower house,
also allows gay couples to >adopt.

>The head of the Vatican's Pontifical Council on the Family, Cardinal Alfonso
Lopez >Trujillo, denounced the legislation as profoundly iniquitous He said
Roman Catholic >officials should be prepared to lose their jobs rather than co-
operate with the law. The >bill would make Spain the first European country to
allow homosexual people to marry >and adopt children. It is also a dramatic step
in the rapid secularisation of what was >once one of the most devoutly Roman
Catholic countries in Europe.

-30-

Cel phone call intercepted from Rome to Munich, April 15, 2005

{unidentified male voice and unidentified female (?), both in

German, translated here}

“I’ve got it, baby! I can’t talk now; I’m in the papal

bathroom on the throne. They just sent up the white smoke, so I'm in."

"Oh, Ratzie, or should I say, Your Eminence Grise! Now you have the keys. We can—dare I say it—rule the world."

"I want you now, mein liebe! Fly in to Da Vinci airport and I'll have the helicopter ready. Have you ever partied under Bernini's Baldachino? I've got the best porn collection in the world now, and I'm sure Cardinal Francis Arinze of Nigeria (who lost, big time, by the way) will want to lend me those two strapping Black altar boys.

"Party on, your Vicarship. I'll bring my pirate videos of last year's Bayreuth. That's our kind of erotica, my Wotan, mein Priester von Gott, my big Fafner-dragon, mein Helden!"

"Just be cool. Nietzsche was homosexual and he broke with Wagner. I know that's irrelevant, but it will mean something later. And remember the name Max Reinhardt. Read on, and you'll eventually find out."

Chapter 64 Goodbye Mars, Hello Earth^{viii}

Cyril: Nobody knows how life began. Somehow a mixture of lifeless chemicals assembled itself into a primitive organism; one presumes a long and complex sequence of chemical reactions. Our ignorance of this process is so great that scientists can't even agree on whether it was a gigantic, one-time fluke, or the expected and frequent outcome of intrinsically bio-friendly natural laws, as the astrobiologists hope. That dear Jacques Monod, a Nobel Prize-winning biologist...

Vyvyan: How charming, and so erudite to name himself after an idea of Leibniz!

Cyril: I was saying, my mouldering rose, that M. Monod is adamant that life is a bizarre accident confined to Earth. On the other hand, Christian de Duve, another Nobel laureate, declares life to be "a cosmic imperative," bound to occur wherever Earth-like conditions prevail.

Geologists believe life established itself on Earth about four billion years ago. Australian rocks dated at 3.5 billion years contain fossilized traces suggesting that microbes were already well ensconced by then. But the ancient Earth was no Garden of Eden. Huge asteroids and comets mercilessly pounded the planet, creating conditions more reminiscent of hell. The biggest impacts would have swathed our globe in incandescent rock vapor, boiling the oceans dry and sterilizing the surface worldwide.

Vyvyan: How did life emerge amid this mayhem? Quite likely, don't you think, it was a bit like the Blitz, with life first forming during a lull in the bombardment, only to be annihilated by the next big impact. Then the process was repeated, over and over. As the bombardment began to abate and the impacts diminished in severity, so isolated colonies of primitive microbes sheltering deep underground managed to cling on. One of these colonies was destined to become life as we know it.

What about the preceding life forms? Were they all completely destroyed? It's possible that pockets of microbes could have survived in obscure niches until the next genesis, opening up the tantalizing prospect of two or more different forms of life co-existing on the same planet. Although they would compete for resources, one type of life is not necessarily bound to eliminate the rest. After all, within the microbial realm of "life as we know it," many different species make a living side by side. It happens in the macrobial realm too, as we see males and females living side by side in some circumstances.

Cyril: Not ours though, Vyv. In any case, microbes from another genesis - alien bugs, if you will - could conceivably have survived on Earth until today. The chances are that we wouldn't have noticed. Under a microscope, many microbes appear similar even if they are as genetically distinct as humans are from starfish. So you

probably couldn't tell just by looking whether a micro-organism is "our" life or alien life. Genetic sequencing is used to position unknown microbes on the tree of life, but this technique employs known biochemistry. It wouldn't work for organisms on a different tree using different biochemical machinery. If such organisms exist, they would be eliminated from the analysis and ignored. Our planet could be seething with alien bugs without anyone suspecting it.

Vyvyan: How could we go about identifying "life as we don't know it" Cyril dear? I should look in exotic environments—you know how I've always had a taste for the Sotadic Zone, and just now I read of microbes dwelling near scalding volcanic vents, in radioactive pools and in pitch darkness far underground. Our form of life cannot survive temperatures above about 270 degrees Fahrenheit. If anything is found living in even hotter environments, we could scrutinize its innards to see whether what makes it tick is so novel that it cannot have evolved from known life.

Cyril: Identifying alien organisms in more equable settings would be a much harder challenge, especially if they use the same basic molecules as familiar life - nucleic acids and proteins. But there is one sure-fire giveaway. The building blocks of proteins, called amino acids, are all lopsided in the same distinctive way. Viewed in a mirror, these "left-handed" amino acids would appear right-handed. Such mirror-image molecules exist, but the life forms we are familiar with don't use them. Most biochemists think it is just an accident that "life as we know it" selected the left-handed version. If this supposition is correct, then there is a 50-50 chance that alien life would have picked the opposite handedness. Such "anti-life" would eat "anti-food": right-handed amino acids and other mirror molecules. This offers a simple way to filter out known life from anything alien. Prepare a culture medium of anti-food and see if anything flourishes. Our scientists at the Burst-Throbbing Center for Research of Dubious Relevance are now testing the response of microbes from various extreme environments to a bowl of anti-soup.

Even if alien life has not endured to the present day, it may still have left its mark. Geochemists have identified organic detritus from ancient microbes in rocks as old as 2.7 billion years. Alien organisms might have left remnants containing peculiar suites of molecules or produced distinctive geochemical alterations like unusual mineral deposits.

Vyvyan: These remnants would still give us a genuine second sample, a form of biology that is unrelated to familiar life. By comparing the way evolution works in both cases, we could identify which features of life follow from general principles and which are just accidents of history. As you say so often, we are all just accidents, aren't we? Do you and I emerge from general principles?

65 Fugitive Lays

Previously on The Story Continues (Chapter 61)

Later that day, as Ambrose winged his way back over the Atlantic, Timmy Tilden put down his fork and told MonaLisa, “Uncles Cy and Vyv are hoping The Baby might benefit from these new treatments in Buenos Aires. Right now she’s just in, like, a vegetative state.”

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MonaLisa did not scream, as they all had feared when Timmy broached the subject. Calmly pulling on Novy’s fingers, one by one, she popped her lover’s arthritic knuckles as she thought ponderously and came to a stop. “All right, then we will take her to their hospital and pray again. Do they speak English or just Spanish?”

Novy asked. “Where’s the dog?”

And now. . .

Novy and MonaLisa are still sipping coffee, but they are seated around the conference table of BT1, the private Airbus of the Burst-Throbbing Foundation, en route to Buenos Aires. The Baby is safely ensconced in the special medical section aft of them, surrounded by the most competent nurses. Seated with the two mommies is Ferd, who is explaining some of the context for the Burst-Throbbing Mission To Rescue Sex-Variant Children From The Clutches Of The Religious.

“Cyril and Vyvyan began their work in the late sixties, when they noticed that the hippie movement in America was clumping around communes that seemed to reify or replicate some of the most objectionable things about family. Women were increasingly called earth mothers and expected to bake bread and bear many children.”

“Yeah,” growled Novy. “My first girlfriend—not as wonderful as you, MonaLisa, big-titted love of my life—was a midwife who delivered them in tanks of warm water.”

MonaLisa, enjoying her coffee with a stick of medical marijuana, sighed, “I have had two and they have broken my heart. Why would any woman want more than two?”

“I can’t answer that,” Ferd replied, “but I can tell you that the results among the

American hippies were not so good. It was nearly impossible to maintain an innocent commune in isolation from the reach of global capitalism, and nearly every hippie group relapsed into the consumer lifestyle of the nuclear family. The nuclear family, a late 19th century invention to transmit power hierarchies, is always a pressure cooker for the worst kinds of gender and sexuality oppression.”

“I know all that too well, “ added Timmy Tilden. “My dad was a Black revolutionary in Cleveland and my mom couldn’t remember much more about him than that. She had to move in with her parents who were rich and white, and she left me with a bunch of Sufis. I ended up wrapped in white turbans until I ran away from them when we went to a Sufi convention in California. Uncle Neddy found me on Hollywood Boulevard.”

“Many children of the hippies grew up to be confused adolescents who experienced the ensuing reactionary times of Reagan and now Bush through the fog of bad drugs like PCP and crystal meth,” says Ferd.

“Ugh, please don’t say crystal in front of Mona,” Novy whispered to him. “Remember her older daughter was a tweaker. That’s probably why she was killed.”

Luckily Mona is lost in a reverie about her own belated hippie days in the California desert.

“Anyway, back to the Rescue operation. It appears that young people have run away or been abandoned in large numbers since the beginning of mass industrial production around the turn of the century, and they were the subject of hand-wringing concern in many books around the early 1900s. The Progressive reformers were concerned with the exploitation of children, and freaked out about wayward girls lured into prostitution and boys running away with tramps and hobos.”

“That’s sexist all by itself,” says Novy in disgust. “The girls are passively lured, but the boys are active runaways. That’s not what happened to me. I struck off on my own because I didn’t want to grow up and breed more nuclear fathers and mothers. I wanted to live outside of that confining system of race, class, gender and sexuality.”

“Yes, and that experience remains pretty common, as the Burst-Throbbing Foundation has found out all over the world. And, parenthetically, I will add that the boys who ran away with hobos were not just independent autonomous individuals, either. Many were drawn to live with the sexually-free transient men made redundant by the decline of farm and craft labor. The hobos recruited young boys to that life—just listen

to the words of that famous song, 'The Big Rock Candy Mountain.' It's a gay seduction song."

"And also too," says Mona, snapping back to reality in the airplane, "we wanted to be happy. And now let's stop talking like characters who are written merely to embody political and philosophical viewpoints, okay?"

"Okay, Mona, but listen to this story first, and then we'll have some quotations from books. My story reads a lot like an account from a famous radical author. It takes place immediately after the 1969 Days of Rage, when 60s radicals tried to end the US involvement in Vietnam by increasing the polarization between warmongers and war opponents, bringing the war home to the streets of Chicago:"

Fugitive Lays

Just then Ferd was startled as a phantom hurried past him mumbling, more shade than human, but a flesh and blood man nonetheless. He appeared out of nowhere, a watch cap pulled down over his ears, an oversized filthy trench coat flapping around his scrawny frame.

"Yo baby, yo baby, yo baby," he muttered over and over, glancing at me vaguely. "C'mon, man, let's go. C'mon, man."

He never shut up, and for some reason Ferd fell in step mindlessly. Ferd didn't, after all, have a better idea. They cruised together down the block into an alley that opened onto a dirt path leading through some scrubby brush near the river. The path ended at a broken iron staircase, and Ferd followed Mumbles as he plunged underground, his heavy unlaced boots rebounding noisily on each step. "C'mon, man. C'mon."

At bottom they climbed over and around a graveyard of wrecked and abandoned cars, skirted a well-lit section of road, and plunged finally into a chaos of heavy cardboard packing crates and lean-tos. Once inside, the tangled outlines of this fugitive city became plain, rows of improvised shelters, haphazard sleeping quarters, piles of mattresses and old clothes here and there, little campfires dotting the landscape, each the center of a huddle of hobos or wanderers or the recently homeless. Mumbles led him deep into the city and parked at a large fire with maybe a dozen ragged spirits basking in the warmth.

"Yo, Brother Red," Mumbles called to an imposing man with a small felt fedora cocked atop his large head and a heavy woolen blanket tossed across his shoulders. "Look here, Brother Red, I found another one."

Brother Red laughed warmly and stepped out to greet him. "Yes, yes, yes," he chuckled as he sized him up and took his hand, "I believe you did." Ferd felt tiny and white and suddenly exhausted in his presence, the stench of tear gas clinging to his clothes, the warmth of the fugitive fire pulling him in. He paused a moment, and then said to him, "But is it true? Are you one of them?"

"One of who?"

"One of them revolutionary brothers," he said. "One of them—what do you call 'em?—Weathermen."

Ferd guessed he was, and Brother Red embraced him, laughing. "Brother, brother, brother." Brother Red pulled up a crate for him and made intricate

all around.

Brother Red was a large block of a man with an open reddish face and round, watery eyes. He had a halo of long frizzy gray hair, the circle made complete by an exploding full beard. He was a storyteller and a critic, and he loved to talk.

“Yes, friend, those Chicago cops getting just what they deserve, just chickens coming home to roost. They haven't had the time to come and roust us for days now, and for that alone I salute you.” The brothers passed a bottle of wine his way. Ferd pulled three candy bars from his pack and shared them around the circle.

“What does he mean, another one?” he asked.

Brother Red laughed again. “Well, son,” he said, “this here hobo jungle is just about the end of the line—it's the lost and the lonely here, folks that's on the loose and on the run. Yep, we get them all, outcasts and outlaw irregulars and illegitimates, and tonight two of your brothers-in-arms beat you here by half an hour—oh, and both of those brothers are actually sisters.

Mumbles led him down the line to a packing crate, and pushed a cloth aside, ducked and entered. Inside Diana bent over a bloody young woman stretched out and sleeping on an old mattress. “Oh my God, Ferd said. Diana looked up, her face tight, exhausted, and strained, but without a hint of surprise to see him there.

When he kissed her he felt a large lump on the side of her head and he could see that she had been crying. She told him that she'd been withd group on Lake Shore Drive when the melee there broke out, that she fought in close formation with several others, and that as the fighters retreated slowly toward a construction site locked in combat, the cop had suddenly disengaged and vanished. In a flash a shotgun cut through their midst. Most broke and ran, but at least three went down, a guy from the New York collective and this one bleeding on the mattress. They had escaped arrest somehow.

Diana and Ferd held each other and talked through the night. Brother Red looked in on us twice, once bringing water, and once news that the radio was reporting twenty-eight cops injured and over a hundred comrades locked up. He could hardly contain his glee, and what looked like pride in his watery eyes.

“Twenty-eight,” he repeated with emphasis and a deep chuckle. “God-damn.”

At dawn, Brother Red told them they looked to him like angels now, glorified and risen up. “You've been severely tested,” he said, in a preacherly voice, “and found worthy.”

He led the three to the border of his fugitive city, where he introduced them to Brother Chick, who would chauffeur them in his beat-up taxi to their next destination. On the house. Chick smiled. Their generosity was embarrassing, and Ferd insisted on offering Brother Red some repayment for his kindness and his hospitality.

“It has been a privilege and a pleasure for me to be a small part of this,” he said formally, bowing slightly. “I am deeply honored.”

Ferd never found out what became of Brother Red or that high school kid after that night. Never saw either one again.

“That was what really happened,” Ferd assures Timmy, Mona and Novy and pours himself a half a cup.

“Okay, fine,” says MonaLisa. “But now, please, we have a long flight and some tough chapters of medical worries ahead. Let’s get some rest during the quotations

66 The Deal

Lemmy Caution checked out of the Kuala Lumpur Regency as if he had no cares in the world; he had the aura of a success about him. He tipped the bellman and the security guard with the AK-47 and, as he walked to the waiting car from Maylay Exotics, SA, Inc, a string of limos pulled up under the porte cochere behind him. Screams went up from all around him. Lemmy turned in alarm, but was relieved to see the tumult was confined to about a thousand teenagers, most boys with spiky hair, the girls with tudong (headscarves), all in ecstasy over the arrival of a genuine global popstar. A whole entourage of hangers-on in Alexander McQueen gear disgorged from the cars, following Mobe 68, who turned at the top of the three stairs at the entrance and waved to his fans. Another series of screams ensued, and several girls and not a few boys tried to run toward him, only to be buffeted by a flying wedge of KL police and pushed back to the gates at the street. Lemmy had heard that in addition to Tel Aviv, Montreal and Singapore, the NYPD has placed liaison officers in Toronto; London; Lyon, France; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and, most recently, KL.

Lemmy sighed and greeted the three turbaned Sirenians who were waiting in the air-conditioned car. Maybe they needed another NY spy, in Manistique.

“We are meeting our host at sky restaurant in KL Tower,” he told his clients. “I am relieved that our offer of two million was accepted. Forgive me if I don’t put on a turban; I think our business together is nearly concluded.” The two women who had negotiated the transaction nodded a weak sign of assent, but their superior, Sub-Prophetess Ondine, snorted her disdain and looked out the window at the teeming crowd.

This evening Lemmy, joined by the two Sirenian negotiators and their superior, were invited to a Chinese-inspired feast to finalize the purchase of a live dugong.

At Merdeka, Lemmy cautioned the driver through the intercom “Try to avoid the crew that’s filming here.”

Ondine turned to Lemmy and asked, in a voice that was clearly not often used for collegial bonhomie, “Well, Mr. Caution, are you happy with this outcome?” Lemmy’s clients from the cult had competed with the import-export people (actually smugglers of exotic animals and animal products) for dominance, each with the aim to manipulate the other out of as much profit as possible.

“I’ll be happy when the fish is out of here. This is only the start of the difficulties. We have a whole ocean to cross.”

“That is not your worry, is it?” she asked, still dragging her contempt through every syllable.. “We have agreed to transport the animal—which is not a fish, as you well know.”

But up in the revolving restaurant, Mr. Hahathir informed the Sirenians that only a Malaysian-owned ship would be allowed. “Remember, our dear friends in Customs are guaranteeing a valid exit stamp, which you could never obtain otherwise, despite the rectitude of your heavenly mission,” Hahathir smirked.

“Our rectitude has been backed by cold cash,” retorted the head Sirenian. Lemmy shook his head to signal that she should be more equable. “You can lose the whole deal with crass talk like that,” he whispered to Ondine. She waved him away, but she did fix a patently counterfeit smile on her face as she took a sip of water.

“We agree to rescue and deliver the poor orphan animal for US\$ 2 million,” Hahathir added. “Only Malaysians could effectuate that delivery.”

Behind her smile the Sub-Prophetess was visualizing the triumph and the \$ 3 million the dentists in Marin County were going to pay when they saw the live dugong swimming in the tank of their office.

She tried one more time to insist her organization would undertake the transport, but Lemmy interrupted, saying, “Yes, Mr. Hahathir, you have obvious advantages in this situation.” Signaling Ondine to relent, he concluded, “We must gladly accept your polite offer.”

67 On the High Seas

The sun is just rising over the bow as a small tanker flying a Sri Lankan flag leaves Kota Kinabalu, heading east through the Balabac Straits to the Sulu Sea. Lemmy, acting on the insistence of the Sirenikians that he guard their cargo, is on the ship, the Kali Durga. The Kali Durga has been converted to carry live aquatic cargo, although the invaluable--but not priceless--contraband is disguised under a shallow tank bearing a layer of Minas Light Crude. Its destination is San Francisco Bay, where a smaller boat will transport the dugong to the dental offices of Drs. Puhl and Payne, a limited liability medical corporation, in Sausalito.

While Sub-Prophetess Ondine, in a crummy "stateroom" below decks is occupied with copious vomiting, Lemmy is watching the wake of the ship cutting the past in half.

Memorandum

April 18, 2005

To: Oliver Stone

From: Summer Setmom, Chief Researcher

Subject: Background notes on Malaysian pirates, adapted from

In the 1980s and 90s, pirates came from many places to Kota Kinabalu. One famous chief, a Robin Hood of the sea, distributed the booty from plundered vessels. Thanks to him, the imam could finance the building of the mosque. From their kampung, pirates travelled to other islands in the South China Sea. At the beginning of the millennium, the gang of Winbang, said to be headed by a woman, was seen near Kota. There the pirates lived among local fishermen, surveying and attacking vessels.

The village on piles hidden in a bay between mangroves and small islands is located six kilometres east of Kota., where one is confronted by the economic crisis. In this free trade zone, the sidelined masses of the Asian boom inhabit 40,000 illegal residences. Idle people look for jobs; the atmosphere is heavy. The island where the pirates live is very close to the coast of Sabah. Here, as elsewhere in Malaysia, the market road is colourful and stalls bustle with life. Following the muezzin's call, merchants fry their rice in stalls for the pilots of the taxi boats and the rickshaws drivers. Apart from its gaming rooms, which remain

open during the day, it looks just like any other village on piles.

The first house is the police station, a crude cabin overlooking the port with a view of the Straits. Local police are no doubt aware of the criminal activities -to get to the Straits, pirates pass under their windows. People say that a few years ago, police used to collect a tax from boats sailing around the island. Two one-engine sampans are the police's only patrol boats; the pirates have two- or three-engined speedboats. Clad in sarongs, the policemen prefer to take fresh air in front of the station or to visit the prostitutes on -Pig Island -close by. The common class of pirates gather on Pig Island before attacking vessels in the Straits. They drink and take morphine, probably to forget the danger. Boarding incidents at night are delicate, as they can count on neither a Global Positioning System nor spotlights. The backwash of the ships' propellers make climbing onto the boats perilous. This is done with the help of grapnels or large gaffs with a sickle on the end, more suitable for collecting coconuts than for boarding ships moving at 25 knots.

At two o'clock in the morning, the pirates get back to their den at the far end of the bay. Their houses on piles, in the middle of a maze of rickety footbridges, are accessible only from the sea. Their neighbours are either smugglers or fishermen with families. During the day, pirates work as taxi-boat drivers and can move freely. Inhabitants never talk of their nocturnal activities. Crouched on his boat docked at the jetty, a sailor sporting Ray-Ban glasses drawls: "Pirates, they existed an eternity ago..." But what does 'eternity' mean in the jam karet -or elastic time -country? This is a kind of omerta, the oath of secrecy that rules triads. Pirates exist but nobody dares to talk about them. Even the village chief opts for a laissez-faire policy -so long as the unemployed do not rebel and heavy weapons from Brunei aren't involved. This is the price of the social peace.

The village chief continues to survey the gang which his former son-in-law manages. The oldest members, occupying beautiful hillside buildings, train the younger generations who play sepak takraw -a spectacular mix of football, volleyball and badminton -everyday until the mahrib, the fourth prayer after

sunset. Some of them like Arif can't wait to get money and wear jerseys and shoes "made in West." Young idle people and poor unmarried taxi-boat drivers collaborate with external recruits.

Indeed, the old chief adds: "recently, a group came to be trained on the job!. Operating in the Sulu Sea, this gang possess M-16s and bazookas, and have all the latest electronics."

Memorandum

April 19, 2005

To: Oliver Stone

From: de Laurentis, Producer

Subject: Malay Pirate Queen!

***Oliver—**

We scouted this location. This project could be a smash: politics and swashbuckling, and a trouser role!!! Kathleen Turner? Better get a dark-skinned girl! How about that Salma Hayek? Isn't she Arab/Latina? Maybe a China girl or Filipina—are there any? I will check with casting. Check out the enclosed story about a Porto Rican pirate girl in a book called "Your Life Story by someone else," by some obscurity named Ferd Eggan. Nobody ever read it, so we can adapt it to the Malaysians with no problems!

Dino

At noon on the Kali Durga, Lemmy Caution and the Sub-Prophetess are just entering the dining room, arguing again about Lemmy's attitude, when a cry is heard from the starboard side of the ship. "Pirates! Man the guns!"

.....

68 Pirates!

An exploding 9mm rocket shell slams into the conning tower of the tanker, burning out radio and navigation modules on the Kali Durga. The ship's capacity to communicate with the coast guards of nearby countries is pulverized in clouds of acrid smoke and high arcs of electrical sparks. Two crew members lie wounded.

A voice, much distorted by feedback, calls across the narrow strip of water that separates the Kali Durga from the gunboat coming along side. In Malay and Chinese, then in English, the voice commands "Attention Kali Durga. Throw all your weapons over the side. Surrender immediately!"

A member of the Sri Lankan crew screams back in Tamil, "Never, Muslim degenerates!" He is dispatched by a burst of fire from several M16As.

"Surrender now, or all will be killed! We are coming aboard. Secure the grappling lines and all of you lie on your bellies with your hands behind your heads."

Bam! Both ships shudder at the impact of the smaller, triple-engine pirate ship against the side of the tanker. Suddenly, six pirates, their heads swathed in kaffiyas in camouflage patterns, swarm the deck of the KaliDurga. "Get everyone up her from below decks," the commanding voice continues. "Which of you is the captain? Who is in charge here?"

A short Sinhalese with a shaved head is brought forward and made to kneel before the pirate who seems to be the commander of the operation. With his hands in the air, he supplicates, "I am only the pilot. I swear by Allah I was about to leave and return to port after guiding this boat through the Straits."

"Where is the captain? Who are you?" the pirate commander asks Lemmy and Ondine, who are also pushed down to their knees. Ondine's turban is pulled off and the pirates murmur their surprise at her cropped blonde hair. The pirate leader's voice modulates to a less menacing tone, still firm and confident as interrogation continues. "Ah, we took you for a young Sikh male, but I see you are not. Are you British, or American? What are you doing here? And which of these men is the captain?"

Ondine points to the bald Sinhalese. He pitches forward on the deck and grovels more energetically.

"This is an outrage and an international crime," Ondine screams. "The US Navy has already been informed that you attacked us. I will see to it that you and your men are

severely punished unless you release us and let the ship proceed.”

“Ondine, shut up,” Lemmy growls *sotto voce*. “We are Americans, yes,” he tells the pirates. “My name is Caution. She is Sub-Prophetess Ondine. We’re only on this tanker because it is a cheap passage to Davao in the Philippines. We have nothing of value except a tankful of low-quality crude oil, but we are prepared to pay to ransom ourselves and the ship. Let us go and we will compensate you for your expenses.”

“Yes, yes,” the captain of the Kali Durga urges the pirates. “We also have several crates of automatic rifles in the hold just below the bows. I am sure they are worth more than this whole ship.”

“Ah, you have become generous, under these trying circumstances,” sneers the pirate chief. “We will certainly put the weapons to use in the struggle for freedom. And we will escort you to Mindanao. Your navigation instruments have apparently ceased to function, and the law of the sea requires that we help you to safety.”

“Please commander, I beg for your help,” Ondine interjects, quivering tearfully. “The truth is that I was abducted by this American man. It is he who is making us go to Davao. I am a Muslim like you and I’m not American; I’m Canadian, and a religious leader. I know you respect the laws of Allah. You are obligated to protect a woman.” Kneeling, she opens wide her arms to signal her abjection and—inadvertently—her womanly assets. “I and I alone contracted with the captain to bring this shipment of crude oil to a laboratory in Richmond, California. My company has provided me with a very large sum of cash. I will pay you a quarter of a million dollars if you will take away this terrible man Caution and let me get my oil to the US. “

“I am so sorry, madam, but I am not a Muslim like you, and I do not respect the laws of your Allah. But we can’t burn crude oil. Give us the weapons and the money, and we will take the American man off your hands. On Mindanao there are those who can utilize an American hostage. You, lady, can also come with us, as my honored guest.”

“Oh no,” cries Ondine, suppressing a shudder. “I am on an urgent mission from God. I must get this oil to California for medical research. It is special Minas oil from Malaysia. Commander, perhaps we could retire to my stateroom . . .” She hesitates for a moment, as if to assert her propriety. “I am prepared to reward you with \$300,000. I have no more; my mission and my person are in the hands of Allah—and in yours.”

As she is pleading, one of the fiercest Malay pirates murmurs something in the ear

of his chief, who raises an eyebrow in surprise.

“Ah ha,” says the pirate chief. “This man tells me, my lady Muslim, that there is another cargo on this ship. You and Allah were not aware that there is an enormous sea creature swimming in a water tank concealed below your little bit of petroleum?”

It’s Lemmy Caution’s fault, all of this. I am innocent,” Ondine moans.

The pirates bind Lemmy, Ondine and the captain together with duct tape. They are pushed below decks by rifle butts and dragged to an inspection window let into the side of the water tank. After a long silence, removing the kaffiyah and sunglasses, the pirate chief fixes Ondine with an eye of penetration.

“It’s time for the undisguised truth,” says the chief. “ That dugong, captured in Sabah, would fetch a price exceeding two million US dollars. The dugong is an endangered species, and part of the Malaysian natural patrimony. The government and the United Nations will surely want to make a conspicuous example of North Americans who violate the treaties that ban international smuggling of exotic fauna.”

Ondine can barely hear the words addressed to her. She is transfixed, the very image of Lot’s wife, turned into a pillar of salt in the Bible story she has often pitched to her cult congregation. She, sees, as did that unhappy woman who turned to see everything she knew and loved destroyed while her eyes turned to crystal, that the luxury and power she has been anticipating is now lost. Sirenia lost to pirates? “No,” she shrieks in recognition. “Not you. Not . . . Oedipa!”

69 Singapore Music TV interviews Mobe 68

In the car taking him from the Regent Hotel in Kuala Lumpur to the studios in Singapore, Mobe 68 has a flurry of satellite phone conversations. Uncle Cyril has a shopping list, and he's all urgent. "Ferd." Mobe says over the cel, "You'll have to get somebody working on that immediately. The list is in your email—encrypted, of course.

"I'm on it already, Mobe, baby," Ferd answers confidently. And I heard from little Timmy. They're on their way to B.A. I wish we could find Oedipa. Did Cy or Vyv say anything?"

"Nope, just to keep our eyes peeled and our ears tuned up. Now hang up. I have to call our new comrade, Ambrose Broussard, to put him up in my home town. Luckily, he and my sister will like each other; that is, if she doesn't go on about her Indian Health drug rehab program."

"I'm excited by the film project. Takeshi Kaneshiro is hot now, and he's really hot, also. If I wasn't so principled about the sexual dynamics between older western men and younger Exotic Others, I'd drink his bath water."

"Yeah, he is a handsome man. But just let it be. Huxley, in Island, has the parrots say "Pay Attention!" and "Here and Now!"

The chauffeur pulls the car into a secure underground entrance to the broadcast tower. Mobe signs off, "Speaking of here and now, I'd better get upstairs to the studio. Bye for now. Love you, mean it!"

"Okay, see you later at the Concert Hall. Are you going to want to eat before sound check?"

"Just get some of that stuff that's not quite so spicy. See ya!"

Ming-Yuen S. Ma, the hip, nerdy cute host at Singapore Music TV speaks English, but conducts the program in Cantonese. His questions are translated to Mobe 68 through an earphone. Mobe speaks in English—he is knitting during the interview. The interview is conducted in a tasteful room full of chinoiserie with US movies in the background. There are some problems with transmission, as evidenced by the finished video (viewable on the "son et lumiere" page of this website).

Interviewer: {directly to camera} *Welcome to MusicTV Singapore! We are talking to international super pop star Mobe 68. He is appearing as a headliner for the 2005 Singapore Arts Festival. We will take your phone calls at (65) 6348 5555 after we ask Mobe a few questions ourselves.*

Int: {turns to Mobe} Yes. Mr. Mobe, you are making a Special Asian Tour? Singapore is not the end?

Mobe: No, we will be in Singapore tonight, and then in Kuala Lumpur Sunday.

Afterwards we fly to Djakarta, then Bali at the Airport in Denpasar-Kuta. After that, we're in China: Hong Kong two nights, Shanghai, Beijing. Then to Tokyo two nights and Taipei one night. Then we get to rest. I am going to the zen monastery at Eihi-ji for a month, I hope.

Int: Zen? Isn't zen old fashioned just about funerals in Japan? Many Americans are interested in Zen?

Mobe: Yes—well, no. It has to do with America's spiritual emptiness. And American social-political emptiness. My work is political art, and Zen is compassion in practice.

Int: (not on tape) Can we skip the part about your taking your name from the US Anti-War Mobilization of 1968? We have many listeners in Viet Nam, and that kind of political item may upset our sponsors, OK? "OK")

Int: Now, please, let's return to the topic of your tour. *Viewers—the line is now open for your calls, just dial (65) 6348 5555.* You are appearing in smaller venues and not the stadium venues you used to appear in?

Mobe: No, I just like smaller places and the audience likes it better also.

Int: Yes. Your album "Pray" came out in 2001, and was huge. Do you have plans for a new album? And what about film appearances? I understand Zhang Yimou, director of *Hero* and *House of Flying Daggers*, wants to do a film with you?

Mobe: Yes, we are talking to him about acting and writing music for the project. That's being handled by Ferd right now. And he's talking to Takeshi Kaneshiro about co-starring. I want it to be a critique of global capitalism.

Int: Yes. Takeshi is very famous here, as an actor and a singer. We call him Gum Sing mo. He sings in Cantonese and Mandarin, and even Taiwanese. He is very sexy, but he is half Japanese.

Mobe: Sexy is good.

Int: Yes. *Viewers, all lines are open to talk to Mobe 68. I know you have many questions for him.* We want to ask a question: about your relationship with Ferd. He is your manager and advisor. He is gay. You are married and have a child. Are you gay too?

Mobe: No, I'm not, but my uncles who are gay were a big influence on my life. They taught me from Plato's Symposium, and my friendship with Ferd is like a platonic friendship. We love each other, but it's not sexual.

Int: No. Mr. Mobe, talk about your early life and your family. Can you tell us where you grew up and what music you liked when you were younger?

Mobe: Yes. I grew up on a farm in North Dakota. My mother and father still live there. I had a happy childhood, very normal, until I went to Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship. That's where I got to know my uncles, who grew up in that British gay eccentric tradition, you know.

Int: No. And what music did you like? *Viewers, please call. I am sure someone wants to tell Mr. Mobe 68 about his many fans here in Singapore.* Did you have a cat or dog? What was your favorite color? Did you ride horses on the farm? Is North Dakota like Deadwood on HBO?

Mobe; Yes. It's fucking identical—just kidding. When I was a kid, my family always listened mainly to country and western music, like Dolly and Patsy, George Jones. I loved Homer and Jethro. Mel Tillis supposedly had the biggest penis in Nashville.

Int: Yes. Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to us. *Mobe 68 will be at the Victoria Concert Hall as part of the Singapore Arts Festival on June 18, and other cities in June and July.* Mr. Mobe, we hope this tour restores all your star glamour and wealth.

Mobe: Um, yes, thank you, I guess. I'm happy just the way I am.

Music up, titles, fade to black.

ⁱ Ernesto Che Guevara, *Man and Socialism in Cuba*, letter from Major Ernesto Che Guevara to Carlos Quijano, editor of the Montevideo weekly magazine *Marcha* : March, 1965
Source: Guairas, Book Institute, Havana, 1967 Translated: Margarita Zimmermann
Online Version: Che Guevara Internet Archive (marxists.org), 1999

ⁱⁱ Cf. Whitman's poem "Twenty-eight young men bathe by the shore," Section 11 in "Song of Myself," *Leaves of Grass*, (text of 1891-2) ed. Sculley Bradley and Harold W. Blodgett. WW. Norton & Co., NY, 1973, pp. 38-9.

ⁱⁱⁱ Arenas was the subject of a 1995 film, *Before Night Falls*, directed by Julian Schnabel, based loosely on Arenas' life and writings.. Arenas affirms in the film that his circle fought repression by "having sex." In his book, he describes a conversation with a companion -- after a trip to the Isle of Pines, where he claims they had sex with "an entire regiment" -- as the two "take inventory of the men we had slept with until then; this was sometime in 1968. I came to the conclusion, after complicated mathematical calculations, that I had sex with about five thousand men." His partner arrived at a similar figure. They were not "the only ones carried away by this kind of erotic rage; everybody was: the [armed forces] recruits who spent months of abstinence, and the whole population." (All this, while an alleged island-wide pogrom against homosexual men had swept Cuba.) *comments by Jon Hillson (1949-2004), a Los Angeles union and political activist, was involved in the defense of the Cuban revolution for more than 30 years, organizing numerous delegations to the island and visiting there many times. He wrote widely on the Cuban revolution and in solidarity with it, including a 1998 front-page feature article on Cuba's fight against AIDS and its work in sexual education for La Opinión, the largest U.S. Spanish-language daily. Jon Hillson died in Los Angeles on January 29, 2004. Taken from NY Transfer News*
<http://www.blythe.org/arenas.html>

^{iv} CNN, March 21, 2005 08:28 PM

<http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/03/21/school.shooting/index.html>

^v NINDS Coma and Persistent Vegetative State Information Page

A *coma* is a profound or deep state of unconsciousness. An individual in a state of coma is alive but unable to move or respond to his or her environment. Coma may occur as a complication of an underlying illness, or as a result of injuries, such as head trauma. A *persistent vegetative state* (commonly, but incorrectly, referred to as "brain-death") sometimes follows a coma. Individuals in such a state have lost their thinking abilities and awareness of their surroundings, but retain non-cognitive function and normal sleep patterns. Even though those in a persistent vegetative state lose their higher brain functions, other key functions such as breathing and circulation remain relatively intact. Spontaneous movements may occur, and the eyes may open in response to external stimuli. They may even occasionally grimace, cry, or laugh. Although individuals in a persistent vegetative state may appear somewhat normal, they do not speak and they are unable to respond to commands.

NINDS is part of the National Institutes of Health <http://www.nih.gov>

^{vi} Gene Sharp's book, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, played a crucial role in the development of Otpor's strategy.

Otpor's leaders knew that they "couldn't use force on someone who... had three times more force and

weapons than we did," in the words of Lazendic. "We knew what had happened in. Tiananmen, where the army plowed over students with tanks." So violence wouldn't work — and besides, it was the trademark of Milosevic, and Otpor had to stand for something different. Serbia "was a country in which violence was used too many times in daily politics," noted Srdja Popovic, a 27 year-old who called himself Otpor's "ideological commissar." The young activists had to use nonviolent methods "to show how superior, how advanced, how civilized" they were.

This relatively sophisticated knowledge of how to develop nonviolent power was not intuitive. Miljenko Dereta, the director of a private group in Belgrade called Civic Initiatives, got funding from Freedom House in the U.S. to print and distribute 5,000 copies of Gene Sharp's book, *From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation*. Otpor got hold of Sharp's main three-volume work, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, freely adapting sections of it into a Serbian-language notebook they dubbed the "Otpor User Manual." Consciously using this "ideology of nonviolent, individual resistance," in Popovic's words, activists also received direct training from Col. Robert Helvey, a colleague of Sharp, at the Budapest Hilton in March 2000.

Helvey emphasized how to break the people's habits of subservience to authority, and also how to subvert: the regime's "pillars of support," including the police and armed forces. Crucially, he warned them against "contaminants to a nonviolent struggle," especially violent action, which would deter ordinary people from joining the movement: and alienate the international community, from which material and financial assistance could be drawn. As Popovic put it: "Stay nonviolent and you will get the support of the third party."

That support, largely denied to the Serbian opposition before, now began to flow. Otpor and other dissident groups received funding from the National Endowment for Democracy, affiliated with the U.S. government, and Otpor leaders sat down with Daniel Serwer, the program director for the Balkans at the U.S. Institute for Peace, whose story of having been tear-gassed during an anti-Vietnam War demonstration gave him special credibility in their eyes. The International Republican Institute, also financed by the U.S. government, channeled funding to the opposition and met with Otpor leaders several times. The U.S. Agency for International Development, the wellspring for most of this financing, was also the source of money that went for materials like t-shirts and stickers.

The psychological pressure of people power, when it proliferates in all directions—as Corazon Aquino's yellow-kerchiefed followers in the Philippines discovered — has two strategic benefits: It transfers anxiety about what's coming next from those who are challenging the regime to the regime itself (whose consequent repression often backfires), and it plants doubt in the minds of police and military cadres about how long the rulers whom they serve can last. Milosevic could "resist only with support from police and (the) army," opposition leader (later Serbian prime minister) Zoran Djindjic observed. "We knew if we can

affect police and army around him, and bring them to think, 'should they support Milosevic or not' ...that he cannot survive."

To do that, Otpor and other oppositionists realized, meant that the police had to be persuaded that they were not viewed as enemies of the movement, but in fact were natural allies. "Our message was: There is no war between police and us," Srdja Popovic recalled. "Our message was that we together are the victims of the system. And there is no reason... to have war between victims and victims. One [kind of] victims are in blue uniforms, other victims are in blue jeans." Serb national soccer teams wore blue uniforms, and crowds had often chanted in support, "Blue Guys! Blue Guys!" So that's what anti-Milosevic crowds sometimes chanted exuberantly at the police.

^{vii} Otpor, Zubr, Kmara, Pora, Mjajt: Eastern Europe's children of the revolution or front groups for the CIA? By Victor S [short for Serge?]

"I had said I was going to take a break until January, but I just have to say something about this whole non-debate about US financing of student democracy groups in Ukraine.

Plainly, the United States has been backing Ukraine's ongoing 'Orange Revolution' financially as well as diplomatically. Further, over the past half-decade, the US has quite perfected the orchestration of student and civil society pro-democracy groups as part of campaigns of destabilisation against governments of which they do not approve.

A year ago, Kmara (meaning 'Enough!'), the student organisation that was the backbone of the movement that toppled Georgia's gerontologic semi-former-Stalinist, Eduard Shevardnadze, in favour of the telegenic, English-speaking, US-educated young nationalist, Mikhail Saakashvili, was indeed funded in large part by the US.

The Georgian group was modelled on Otpor ('Resistance'), the student movement that led the 2000 rebellion against Milosevic in Yugoslavia, which had received funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the National Endowment for Democracy. Students from Kmara had met with Otpor organisers to learn effective opposition organising and civil disobedience techniques, and received some \$500,000 in funding from billionaire financier George Soros.

The previous year, in Belarus, the US embassy paid for young anti-government activists from Zubr ('Bison') to meet with Otpor activists from Belgrade. As Ian Traynor, the Guardian's Central Europe correspondent has reported, the co-ordinator of that particular operation was Michael Kozak, the ambassador in Minsk and a veteran of similar but dirtier campaigns in Nicaragua. However, as Viktor Lukashenko ultimately won his election by a considerable margin, the Belarusian organising was for nought. Nonetheless, Zubr is still organising against Lukashenko's authoritarian regime.

And now, Pora ('It's time'), another student group, has been one of the key groups organising the protests in the Ukraine against Viktor Yanukovitch. Pora, in turn, has received organising advice from the Otpor and Kmara activists and funding from the US-Democratic-Party-linked National Democratic Institute and Freedom House. Last weekend, George Kandelaki, a Kmara organiser, was detained by Ukrainian border guards.

At the end of November, a pair of Zubr activists were also detained by special forces on their way from Kyiv to Minsk, where they participated in pro-Yuschenko rallies.

Watch for a similar 'revolution' from the Albanian kids in Mjaft (which, intriguingly, also means 'Enough!'), which receives support from the US embassy in Tirana, the German embassy, the UK Foreign Office, OSCE and, here he is again, the Soros Foundation. Albania's general election is scheduled for 2005.

The branding and image of these organisations is all-important, as slick as any campaign from Nike or the Gap. The 'brand logo' in Serbia was a black fist on a white background; in Georgia, it was a black fist on a yellow background; in Belarus, it is an orange bison, in Ukraine, it is the ubiquitous orange scarves; and in Albania the logo appears as an open red palm on a black background. 'Mjaft is now a product of a brand,' says Erion Veliaj, the group's twenty-four-year-old leader, 'The Coca-Cola of activism.'

The Guardian has also reported that the US spent some \$41m on such civil society organising against Milosevic, and has so far spent \$14m on the Ukraine operation.

But what interest has the US in the forward advance of democracy? Gullible rubes would have you believe that it is because they are genuinely committed to freedom and parliamentary democracy. If this were the case, then the US would be publicly supporting the wildly popular social-democratic president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, instead of backing the abortive right-wing coup that overthrew him for a couple of days in 2002. The US would also be condemning the death squad goons that this year overthrew the democratically elected president of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Interestingly, pro-war liberals who may be losing their faith as the war continues to go badly for the Coalition, are not denying the meddling at all, but hold up the financing perhaps to prove to themselves the benevolence of Washington, as if to say: 'See, the US at least means well, and honestly believes in the spread of democracy, even if Iraq is a total shit sandwich.'

Timothy Garton Ash has even proposed a list of principles under which such foreign interference in elections should operate.

A number on the left, and geopolitical realists, have suggested that, in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the US is primarily interested in encircling its old imperial enemy, Russia, with pro-western regimes. And that Russia, in its backing of Yanukovitch, is resisting the west's imperial reach with a counter neo-colonialism and a meddling of its own in Ukraine and elsewhere in the former Soviet Union's sphere of influence. Ian Traynor in the Guardian has described the whole process as nothing less than 'a sophisticated and brilliantly conceived exercise in western branding and mass marketing,' while the same paper's Jonathan Steele described the Orange Revolution as a 'postmodern coup d'etat.'

While still others have wondered how the US would react if foreigners began to meddle in American elections. Although really there is no need to wonder: the Guardian's spectacularly hapless Operation Clark County showed us what Main Street USA felt about what they described as 'limeys with dental hygiene issues' when they sent letters urging them to vote for candidates who believe in science.

However, what this narrative of either nefarious or noble (depending on the given commentator's inclination toward the US) meddling as the wizard behind the curtain for these movements misses, is that in each of these cases, the regimes were indubitably already hated by large sections of the people. The US funding of these student groups would have achieved nothing if there were not already extant reservoirs of anti-government feeling in each of the countries.

If all it took to foment a revolution were a few student picket lines and some neat-o stickers with groovy logos and sarcastic slogans prankishly placed on bus shelter timetables, governments the world over would be a lot more concerned about Trotskyist undergraduates meeting in student union building basements, and would most likely go ahead and shut the meetings down rather than just send the token moustachioed, middle-aged infiltrator who always volunteers to take the minutes.

In Yugoslavia, while student organising played its part, the event that broke the back of the Milosevic regime and delivered Vojislav Kostunica to power was the general strike of October 2000, led by workers at the Kostolac and Kolubara mines serving the republic's two biggest thermal power plants, who had disrupted power supplies throughout the country. There is far more to national revolutions than the local US consulate renting a sound system and a pair of Jumbotron TVs for a demo in the piazza.

It should also be pointed out that the model for these groups, Otpor, said at the time of its early successes against Milosevic that many of its activists had been inspired by the Teamsters and Turtles of Seattle, who had taken on the WTO a year before the Yugoslav revolution, an event which itself took place against a background of ongoing mass anti-globalisation demonstrations around the world, just as Ukraine's Orange Revolution today takes place against a background of ongoing mass anti-war demonstrations around the world. In Albania, Mjaf's leader claims the tactics of Michael Moore as inspiration, organising publicity stunts outside the home of the country's minister of public order, resulting in his resignation, and

successfully forcing the government to increase its education budget. Veliaj calls these media-friendly tactics ‘civic blackmail’.

America, like every other state on the planet, is neither moral nor immoral, but amoral. If backing democrats in one country furthers its interests, it will do so, and it certainly helps with the PR campaigns. If in another its interests are furthered by backing the likes of a Pinochet or that Karimov fella who boils dissidents alive in Uzbekistan, or, heck, whatshisname – that chap who used to be in charge of Iraq that Rumsfeld was pals with in the eighties – it will do that instead. The US does not seek out dictators, it seeks out client states.

It is a happy accident that America’s regional strategy of containing her old rival, Russia, for the current, brief period dovetails with the goals of democracy activists. Elsewhere, the fact that many Iraqi Kurds were in favour of the invasion of Iraq does not negate the generations of oppression of Kurds in that country, in Turkey and elsewhere. Equally so, the fact that the American Empire has been bankrolling activists in Eastern Europe does not diminish the real crimes of Milosevic, Lukashenko, Shevardnadze and Kuchma.

Furthermore, the students and their organisations themselves should not be denounced as puppets or dupes. They may yet be aware of their benefactor’s fickle and transient attention. Or more likely, the issue of US backing is simply irrelevant. In Ukraine, they just want to get rid of Yanukovitch. Thus for progressives in the west to be suspicious of these student groups simply because they have received funding from the States and George Soros is unfair. They are fighting for democracy; George Bush has not been camping out for weeks in Kiev’s Independence Square. The Ukrainian people have.

And they deserve our support, however much money they have received from the US.

And when the Ukrainian people discover in a couple of years that Yushchenko (assuming he is elected on Boxing Day), remains as privatising, deregulating, corrupt and dioxin-in-soup-slipping as his rival, and they return to Kiev public squares to protest again, this time to find that the American funds have dried up and the Washington Post no longer describes them as ‘democracy activists’, but as ‘the mob’, we will still support them.

From a funny, smart blog by Victor S. called “The Apostate Windbag: Being a journal of assorted leftwingery, but with a decided preference for discussing how the late Christopher Hitchens is a twat.” [I suspect Victor S. is a Trot of some stripe or other; the blog is <http://apostatewindbag.blogspot.com/>

^{viii} Cy & Vyv are channeling excerpts from an OpEd in the NYT (April 10, 2005) by Paul Davies, a professor at the Australian Center for Astrobiology at Macquarie University, the author of *The Fifth Miracle: The Search for the Origin and Meaning of Life*.