



ECONOMICS

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/2000  
chicago/san francisco  
2003

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Manufactured in the  
United States of America by  
JUGGERNAUT  
P.O. Box 3824  
Chicago, IL 60654-0824  
[www.juggernautco.com](http://www.juggernautco.com)

Set in Galba, Typecast,  
Mrs. Eaves, and Platelet

Library of Congress Control Number  
2001012345

ISBN 0-9646137-5-1

First printing July 2003

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We must be true inside, true to ourselves, before we can know truth that is outside us. But we make ourselves true inside by manifesting the truth as we see it.

*Thomas Merton, No Man Is An Island*

I admire your extraordinary efforts to rebuild your country. I know you need funds. We understand that and our opinion is that you should have the opportunity to rebuild your country. But we have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait.

*April Glaspie, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq,  
to Saddam Hussein, July 25, 1990*

The Federal Reserve System is open and operating. The discount window is available to meet liquidity needs.

*Federal Reserve, Press Release,  
September 11, 2001*

Dedicated to my boys **CXO** and **CJO** the only forevers God ever gave me.

**The "Mathematics" poetry handout** was published on October 14, 1997. "Emigre" refers to Emigre Magazine, the premier graphic design magazine in the United States of America. Editor Rudy Van der Lans gave me the space and the encouragement to develop much of the thinking that appears in this book.

**ObitPoems** are found poems based on obituaries published in newspapers.

**The Economy** was first published as a performance poem onstage at the Red Room, Dallas, TX, in "The Economy Tour", Saturday, November 8, 1997. Tour sponsored by Camel Cigarettes. Written long before I discovered UBL had profited from a plane crash or that his family owned the right to sell Snapple in the Middle East.

**My Weight** was first published as part of the "Mathematics" poetry handout. I gave up on the 20 pounds circa 1999.

**What the Wheat Said to the Chafe** was first published as part of the "Mathematics" poetry handout.

**Despite My Need for Corrective Lenses** was first published as part of the "Mathematics" poetry handout. "Punch 10" is a now-outlawed voting booth procedure that allowed the voter to vote for the major seats by perforating one hole. Used effectively by Chicago Democrats to deliver the votes.

**Trut: The Star, The Globe, and the Missing H in the New Veracity** was first published in Emigre 41, The Magazine Issue (1997). Dear Oxford English Dictionary: First appearance of the word "trut".

**Two Short Plays by Bob Christy** was dictated by Bob Christy in a conversation in October 1997.

**Found Poem (Bulls)**  
Text from Chicago Bulls Public Address Announcer Ray Clay.

**What I Would Say to Yigal Amir** is published here for the first time.

**Wonder** was first published as part of the "Mathematics" poetry handout and is to be read aloud with a sad wistfulness.

**Currency** was first published as part of the "Mathematics" poetry handout.

**4/14/96** was first published as part of the "Mathematics" poetry handout. The "U" in Unabomber is to be pronounced like the "oo" in "boo".

**ObitPoem: Rose Blumkin** is from the original obituary in The New York Times, "Rose Blumkin, Retail Queen, Dies at 104" by Barnaby J. Feder, August 13, 1998

**What Rose Folan Said** was first published on May 30, 2003 at the inaugural Technology Committee Comedy Night in the Voss Center at Queen of Angels Catholic Elementary School.

**California Poem** was inspired by Dylan Morgan and his apple tree, Santa Cruz, CA.

**August 22 1997 Fri** was first published as a journal entry.

**August 23 1997** was first published as a journal entry.

**Will Work For Food** was first published in a slightly different form in Tunnel Rat, a Chicago poetry newsletter read mainly by poets, which accounts for its "preaching to the choir" nature.

**ObitPoem: Benny Waters** is from The New York Times obituary "Benny Waters, 96, Who Played Swanky Jazz in 7 Decades" by Ben Ratliff, August 13, 1998.

**List of Health Problems** was first published as a journal entry. Most of the issues have been cleared up, thank you.

**Balthus and Earnhardt Are Dead** was first published February 19, 2001 on [www.sweetfancymoses.com](http://www.sweetfancymoses.com), edited by Matt Herlihy.

**Poem (Chauvinism)** was first published as a MapPoem in October 2002.

**Volgare Proclamation** was first published in Emigre 38, The Authentic Issue (1996). The original manuscript upon which Stephen Farrell based his Volgare typeface can be found at the Newberry Library in Chicago in *Case Manuscript Fj 135.082*, from their collection of Florentine manuscripts. Since first publication, Slobodan Milosevic was offered up to The Hague by his fellow countrymen and is now representing himself in his first trial. Ratko Mladic and other killers are still on the loose. You can find the text of the Dayton Peace Plan on the State Department website at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov). On the home front, we now know firsthand as a country what it feels like when a list of the missing serves as a list of the dead.

Acknowledgements

**Unclean Hands** was first performed on The Economy Tour. Cadence and structure of this poem based on music composed by Forrest Rausch.

**How I Got My Hernia** was first published as a journal entry. True story. Kenny was dead by Fall, shot face down and naked in an apartment above the Lincoln Restaurant in Chicago.

**ObitPoem: William Ferris** is from the Chicago Tribune obituary "Notable Chicago Composer, Renaissance Man of Music" by John von Rhein, Tribune Music Critic, May 18, 2000.

**Barry Rodgers Poem** is published here for the first time.

**Deirdre & Beatrice Poem** was first published in performance at The Hideout, May 3, 2000. Thank you, Deirdre. Thank you.

**Tree** was first published as part of the "Mathematics" Poetry Handout.

**Life After Christmas** is published here for the first time.

**Calorie Count** was first published in Emigree 46, Fanzines and the Culture of DIY (1998). It was the answer to the question, "what is your favorite magazine?".

**James (Buddha) Edwards** was first published as part of the "Mathematics" poetry handout. Mitch Ritchmond has yet to fulfill his early promise.

**Project: What Smells?** was first published as journal entries. I soon learned to live with the uncertainty of scent.

**Wait A Minute** was first published as part of the "Mathematics" poetry handout.

**Susan Molinari Works on Her Keynote Address** was first published as part of the "Mathematics" poetry handout.

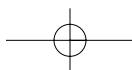
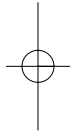
**Mortgage Credit Explanation Letter** was first published on the date described and under the circumstances described.

**Approaching Pittsburgh: "Whoa... Hang On"** is a found poem from The New York Times article "From an Airliner's Black Box, Next-to-Last Words" by Adam Bryant, April 21, 1996. The words themselves belong to the workers who uttered them, and I mean no disrespect to them. The fact that this plane and the 9/11 American Flight 93— the one full of the heroes who brought down the plane— went down 7 years, 3 days, and 103 miles from each other is weird, yes.

**This book exists**, as do I, because of my mother. I love you. Thank you.

Further annotations for all poems can be found on [www.juggernautco.com](http://www.juggernautco.com).





### THE ECONOMY

He was in a crouched, downward position  
at the bottom of the ocean and his  
brain still worked for 21 seconds.  
Dead and squashed down flat but for  
21 seconds his mind still worked.

A man,  
living in his own lap for 21 seconds,  
seeing logos,  
product names,  
and his wife.  
A trip to the museum. Being thirsty. Snapple.

For 21 seconds he lie in his crouch with a steering wheel inside him<sup>((scream))</sup>

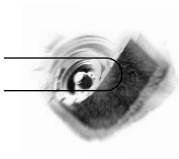
He surprised himself with 21 seconds of thinking.  
"Wow," his mind said, through scrunched fingers,  
gently at the bottom of the sea.

On the surface, the night front desk manager  
at the Sheraton Smithtown  
flipped through the company directory and panted.  
The FBI were on their way.

While the pilot lay in the crouch, thinking in water for 21 seconds,  
the world made phone calls and closed deals.

Out of all the things the pilot thought  
in his 21 seconds of thinking in the calm deep blindness,  
his cousin's stock in Sheraton International wasn't one of them.

But if it had been,  
and if his mouth were not engorged with seawater,  
he might have died  
after 21 seconds  
with a smile on his face.



**MY WEIGHT**  
*May 28 1996*

I barfed a little bit  
on the way home from exercising at Welles Park tonight.  
I think that's a good sign after weighing in at 198 and I've got to lose  
20 pounds probably lost a  
half pound right there.

**WHAT THE WHEAT SAID TO THE CHAFE**

So long.

**DESPITE MY NEED FOR CORRECTIVE LENSES**

*I Was Able to See Many Things on Election Day*

Today I voted in a Baptist Church basement at the corner of Giddings and Leavitt.

I voted for Clinton, Gore, Durbin, Devine, Pucinski, Hourihane, and Michael Jordan among others.

No Punch IO of course because I love the perforated satisfaction of striking the pin on the dot of my choice and saying "Fuck You" out loud while looking at the printed name of Salvi or Dole or some other phreak I hate for the moment

"Fuck You" as I press the pin into the hole never Punch IO.

Plus of course I always verbally vote "DOW-wn" against Richard J. Elrod the former Cook County Sheriff who left office as a crook with his head hung in shame and now steadily gets elected as a judge I have no idea how.

I voted for no judges who I haven't seen in person, with the exception of a guy named Michael Jordan that's a gimme couldn't pass that one up.

But once I stepped out from voting into the cool crisp Fall,

I saw that across the street

a large dog had had a

bowel movement there and the dog was kicking dirt with great force and

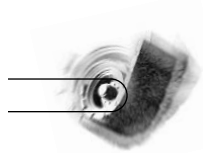
determination backwards

trying to cloak what it had done.

But the large dog was kicking so hard that the dirt flew straight Over the turd and did not cover it.

I learned many things on Election Day.

*November 5, 1996 Tuesday*



**TRUT: THE STAR, THE GLOBE, AND THE MISSING H IN THE  
NEW VERACITY**

My favorite magazines are Star and Globe and I'm not going to hide it anymore. With bright retail colors and big pictures of beautiful people doing marvelous things, the tabloids are where I go for pure graphic love. It's good to revel in love like yellow flowers nestled in a red meadow.

But the real gold of the tabloids is trut. Trut is the mutable concoction of facts employed for an ulterior purpose. Trut consists of exactly 4/5 of the stuff of truth. Four out of five letters lined up as a reasonable facsimile of truth.

Here at the end of the millennium, consumers of communications are adept at trading in these fractional representations of the truth. Everyone prepares particular versions of the truth for different people. We all in turn take everyone else's trut and calibrate it to our own understandings. The missing H doesn't bother us a bit. With 4/5 of the truth and some sense, people manage to get along.

**The Rise of Trut**

Imperfect truth is not new. White lies and misinformation have been around as long as families and war. What is new is the widespread acceptance of customized falsehood.

In 1974 when Nixon lost his job, the country fell under what I call the tyranny of the smoking gun. After that, whenever there was a scandal, the question was 'What did he know and when did he know it?' This red-handed attitude came with the rise of investigative journalism. The problem is that this system plays right into the hands of those in power. As long as they can hide the weapon, they can get away with whatever they want, no matter how much of the evidence points to them.

05

04

Take the example of a guy named Ronald Reagan. He managed to stay unimpeached by keeping one step removed from the smoking gun. He and his lackeys committed some of the most heinous acts of cunning ever performed against the United States Constitution. They cut a deal with the Ayatollah Khomeini to keep hold of the Tehran Embassy hostages until Reagan had beaten poor Jimmy Carter. They financed a sickening war in Nicaragua by selling crack cocaine to U.S. minorities. They took the traditional Washington sport of white-collar robbery to obscene heights with the Savings & Loan Scandal and the subsequent Resolution Trust Corporation bailout. And on and on. He got away with everything, and we all know it.

### **What Trut Hath Wrought**

This is not just an American phenomenon. Governments all over the world are regularly shown to be run by corrupted phreaks who do everything from rob us blind to fondle our children to kill us outright. Each of these governments is invariably propped up by newspapers, TV, and other media that proclaim that the Government is full of a bunch of good guys looking out for us. Trut is the direct product of the chafing that occurs when popular perception of reality doesn't jibe with the dominant version of reality. Instead of trying to prove the existence of an absent gun, trut looks at the plainly visible and encourages logical conclusions.



The media often tries to ameliorate lost credibility with the use of irony and satire. NBC gives us Saturday Night Live, where they make fun of the power but "never go too far", as George Bush (#41) once said approvingly, standing next to Dana Carvey at a White House press conference. Irony and satire are lazy and defeatist. Trut-making is earnest and probing.

Trut can be a violent phenomenon. One of the most advanced cases of a society trying to bring the dominant trut closer to the facts was the Los Angeles Rebellion of 1992. The citizens of LA knew that the Rodney King verdict delivered in Simi Valley was severely flawed. There was an overpoweringly widespread feeling that no amount of op/ed page copy or letters to the editor could change. So they took to the streets and let the world in on their trut: cops shouldn't get away with beating the shit out of people for no good reason.

The rebellion marked a turning point in the rise of trut. The Simi Valley jurors had a smoking gun (amateur videotape) and still refused to convict because they were holding on to their own trut. Their trut was that the cops are good. And that African-Americans— even pummeled, prostate African-Americans surrounded by a dozen hyped up cops—are a threat. And the tyranny of the smoking gun went down in flames.

### **Back To The Tabloids**

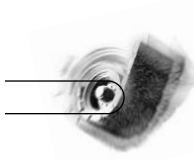
I'm not saying that tabloids are radical revolutionaries leading the way to a government of the people, by the people, for the people. But they are trailblazers in the methodology of trut. Instead of making up constrictive rules for themselves that only impede their ability to discover reality, they accept official dishonesty and embrace it.

Tabloids like Star and Globe are leading practitioners in a new standard for honesty, and they don't deserve to be held out with two fingers like a stinky rag. The tabloids diligently seek out the 80% of the facts that are discernible even when people like Reagan are doing their best to hide the H on them. They make up the rest through careful analysis of what they discovered. Then they present the result as if it were Gospel.

The point is that this isn't thin air. The quotes are completely made up but they seem to represent something true. The quotes end up being what the person would have said had they been honest and if they had actually spoken to the reporter who wrote the story.

Trut is like people—there are a lot of mean ones out there. Tabloids use the underhanded method of vague attribution. Of course whatever tabloids say a person said, only serves to buttress the trut laid out in the article. It also tends to expose the position from which a trut has sprung. A good example from the Globe article called 'X-Files Gillian Anderson Red-Hot Lover at 15.' The article profiles Ralph Wallace, a former boyfriend of the actress. They wrap up the story this way: "but he says he'll always have a warm spot for Gillian and loves watching her as Agent Dana Scully on the X-Files."

He never said that. I know Ralph Wallace. Ralph Wallace is a friend of mine. Ralph Wallace has produced a number of my verse dramas here in Chicago. Ralph Wallace does not like the X-Files that much. Globe only said he said that because it serves the article's trut, which is that Gillian Anderson has a nutty-goofy background, and she's really-really a nutty wild girl, and that is just one more reason why everyone in the world should watch her show on Fox Network. This is the trut according to Gillian Anderson's agent & Rupert Murdoch, and that warm spot is going to be in their jeans when they read the overnight Nielsens. Trut everywhere.





### Suckers

Probably the biggest news broken by the tabloids is a story the Star reported about Clinton political strategist Dick Morris. Here's the lead from Richard Gooding's article called Top Clinton Aide and the Sexy Call Girl: "President Clinton's top political adviser has hired a call girl almost weekly for a year and after kinky sex has revealed the innermost secrets of the White House. While the illicit pair sprawl naked, the trusted aide takes frequent phone calls from the Oval Office and even holds the phone up to the call girl's ear so she can eavesdrop on the president's conversations without Clinton ever knowing it.

'He gets a kick out of me listening in', Washington call girl Sherry Rowlands tells Star in an exclusive interview."

So we've got a short married guy with a foot fetish next to a prostitute on one line and on the other line we've got the President of the United States next to the guy holding the freakin' nuclear launch codes in a black suitcase. Now that's a story.

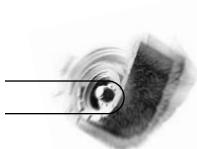
First they lay out the bona fides of Ms. Rowlands: "She gave up a shot at modeling and acting to get married at 19, and had several children. But after 14 years the marriage broke up. Two years ago, she signed on with an escort service for the first time, aiming to make enough money to start a business cleaning homes and offices."

So Star is broadcasting the fact up front that they are telling the story from the point of view—the truth—of Ms. Rowlands. After all, this is a popular magazine and there are a lot more aspiring model/actresses, young mothers, divorcees, call girls, entrepreneurs, and cleaning ladies reading Star than there are Presidents of the United States. I think they hit a good part of their demographic right there.

Star also takes the time to lay out their own legitimacy. They run a profile on the 'Star Reporter Who Investigated the Scandal.' He used to be a copy boy at the New York Times.

The amazing thing about this trut is how quickly its radical core of facts was absorbed into the dominant media. Network pundits and political strategists folded the story into the overwhelming tableau of hours and hours of uncut content provided by the President, his operatives, and the cozy TV execs whose hopes and dreams are all wrapped up in keeping the Executive Branch up and moving well, keeping the wars won.

The sad thing about trut is how it de-moralizes culture and boils down world visions to a cold calculus of individual loss and gain. It doesn't really matter who plays footsie with whom or who's carrying out genocide on whom or who stole the elections. As long as the Fed keeps interest rates low, or as long as the baby sleeps through the night, or as long as the stock market keeps rising, or as long as the cops don't come for them, people will keep their mouths shut and go along with whatever's handed down. And we can bundle up ourselves in tailor-fit coats of trut and steel ourselves against whatever comes next.



**TWO SHORT PLAYS BY BOB CHRISTY**

1- Guy comes up to another guy says "smell this,"  
and shoves his cupped  
hands into the guy's face.  
Other guy says "what is this?"

"It's my shit. I shit my pants."  
Other guy says "why did you do that?"

Lights out.

2- Guy on the street goes up to another guy opens his shirt.

His belly is a gaping wound.  
There's maggots and worms crawling  
in and out of the hole.

Other guy says "why did you show that to me?"

Lights out.

11

10

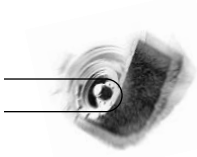
**FOUND POEM**

*The Starting Lineup for Your World Champion Chicago Bulls*

At forward, from Central Arkansas, 6-8, Scottie Pippen.  
A 6-6 forward from Southeast Oklahoma State, Dennis Rodman.  
The man  
in the middle, from New Mexico, 7-1, Luc Longley.  
A 6-6 guard from Miami of Ohio,  
Ron Harper.  
From North  
Carolina,  
at guard,  
6-6,  
Michael  
Jordan.

*June 14, 1998*

**WHAT I WOULD SAY TO YIGAL AMIR**



Anyway Yigal Amir you shot a great man in the  
back and you shouldn't have.  
A guy who just got off an Israeli stage singing a freakin peace song.  
You've got a real sense of the moment Yigal Amir and it's sick.

If there is such a thing as time travel, Yigal Amir,  
I pray that someday  
every one of your smiles is taken back from you,  
from your mommy's arms to the cell that holds you now.  
You shouldn't have done that, Yigal Amir.

*April 8, 1996*

**WONDER**

Why, God, does Ronald Reagan live?  
Please send a sign and let me know why, God, why?

13

**CURRENCY**

The dollar was up in Germany,  
down in Japan,  
and nowhere to be found in certain pockets.

12

4/14/96

I wonder how the Unabomber masturbates.  
I mean, some guys are real whackers and pump up  
and down on the thing while  
other guys are more rub-up-against-some-  
thing friction types.

Then there's the  
place-objects-inside-you crowd and the  
wrap-things-around-doorknob types.  
But there's a whole big world  
of masturbation out there that I'm not even aware of and  
I just wonder  
what does the Unabomber do tonight?



More on the weather:  
Tonight there have been intermittent thuderstorms  
with distant lightning and quick, gone raindrops.  
The lightning and thunder is overhead right now.  
Now it's a thick full downpour  
we'll see how long it lasts.  
Now it's not so thick and almost done.  
That was one of those fast storms  
that some plants dream of on the  
moonscape of the West, and the Unabomber  
closes his eyes to sleep.

**OBITPOEM: ROSE BLUMKIN**

*(Victory Over Descendants)*

Rose Blumkin,  
who founded the Nebraska Furniture Mart in 1937,  
helped her son and  
grandchildren  
build it into the nation's largest home furnishings store,  
and continued selling carpet well past her 100th birthday,  
died Friday in Omaha.  
She was 104.

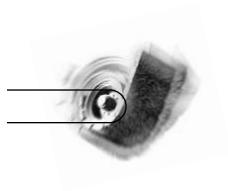
Mrs. Blumkin's nominee for the nation's greatest businessman was her  
son, Louis,  
who became her major ally  
in running the Furniture Mart  
after returning from military service in World War II.  
Like her, he typically put in seven-day, 70-hour workweeks.

But she began to feel  
frozen out of decisions as her  
grandchildren,  
Irving and Ronald Blumkin,  
became more involved in the 1980's.  
She bitterly "retired" in 1989 at the age of 95,  
but after three months returned with characteristic combativeness,  
setting up a  
rival store called  
Mrs. B's Clearance and Factory Outlet  
across the street from the Furniture Mart.  
By 1991, it had become profitable and was  
Omaha's third-largest carpet outlet.  
She later sold it to Warren Buffet.

*Mrs. Blumkin's husband died in 1950. She is survived by Louis.*

**WHAT ROSE FOLAN SAID TO ME A WEEK AFTER  
SHE DELIVERED PATTY PETERSON'S SIXTH BABY  
AFTER THE MOTHER'S CLUB MEETING ON A  
TABLECLOTH IN THE CAFETERIA AT QUEEN OF ANGELS  
CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

I loved  
every minute of it.





**CALIFORNIA POEM**

Steinbeck was right.  
The apples taste great  
and you can pick them right off the tree!

**AUGUST 22, 1997 FRI**

*@ Rudnick & Wolfe*

My health has been negatively impacted by moss in my apartment. The leak in the ceiling in my front room (which I now realize is probably the cause of my allergies in general) is worse than ever since the Saturday deluge of rain. There is an intense stench of mildew emanating from the stain. This has wreaked havoc on my allergies and made my apartment almost uninhabitable.

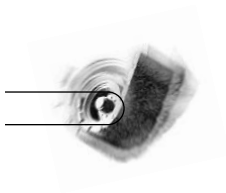
I have been sleeping on the couch because the reek doesn't reach as strongly into the middle room.

**AUGUST 23, 1997**

*Westbound Metra to Winfield, IL*

The  
stench in my apart-  
ment has somewhat  
subsided. Today Monica  
and I meet with the  
priest and the musical  
woman.

I continue to marvel  
at my extraordinary  
fortune.



#### WILL WORK FOR FOOD

It is an article of faith in America that poets are poor. People seem to like it that way. The rat race public, those who scrounge at the feet of corporate America, riding commuter trains and sucking up to middle managers, place their own hopes and dreams at the stylized foot of the poet, the pure creature untouched by the ugly motivation behind making a living.

Poets do their part by cultivating a freako/roustabout image- the nutty/goofy poet in and out of mental hospitals, the sensitive poet on the verge of tears; the slightly dangerous poet swearing in public- we all know the stereotypes.

Now when I use the word "poetry" here I'm talking only about the genre I call American Performance Poetry: poetry written to be read from a stage in front of a live audience. This is the lifeblood of American poetry that saved poetry from irrelevance. There's another form of American poetry that's really just a subset of boring European poetry and that's called Academic Poetry. Academic Poets have figured out a way to combine the rat race with literature. They call it "tenure". They write about the deep dualities of townies v. students in some podunk cornfield state university. No thanks.

But anyway, while everyone else goes about the daily tasks of daily bread, poets live in their oblivious worlds, waiting to be trotted out every April on Poetry Day when frazzled Tempo Section editors send out reporters to pound out articles on one of the officially-sanctioned poetry news story themes: "Those darn poets!"; "Poetry is making a comeback!"; or my personal favorite- "The Beat Goes On."

The idea that a performance poet could make a living off of being a poet is, of course, laughable and scary. The concept is too outlandish to consider. Anyone who would try to do such a thing—make money off of their words— is a dangerous radical who must be stopped. It doesn't fit in the prevailing view of the world.

So poets take odd jobs, or pursue traditional careers—whatever it takes to get by. The passion for poetry comes out periodically in the form of flyers and invitations to late-night bars with the strong scent of institutional soap. And people love working with poets because of the novelty. They can tell their friends "oh, this one girl I work with, she's a poet, and I've like been to some shows, and like, anyone can get up and read a poem, and I got totally wasted and it's like totally cool because it's like in Wicker Park and I saw this one loft there and I totally want to move there."

So here we are, American Performance Poets contributing to the profit margins of bar owners, beer manufacturers, newspaper conglomerates, taxi drivers, and real estate agents while we do our best imitation of a zoo animal—stuck in a cage, working for someone else. People point and giggle on the way to the popcorn vendor and the T-shirt store.

We ought to do ourselves a big favor. Unlock the pre-fab cages of untouchableness, let go of early-90s notions of the "sell-out", and realize that every single activity performed in a market economy is an economic activity. Buying a beer, leaving a tip, publishing a paper, handing out a flyer, competing for the attention of a live audience—those are economic activities. Let's start viewing our poems for what they are—intellectual property. Take personal responsibility for the quality of our products. Demand a greater share of the profits generated from our labor and property.

American Performance Poetry is really an amalgam of two incredible growth industries— literature and entertainment. Essentially, performance poets are entrepreneurs. Some entrepreneurs are suppliers of fire & water damage restoration services, some are makers of 6-inch sandwiches, some are Mail Boxes Etc. franchisees. Performance poets are purveyors of literary entertainment. Some are very bad at it. Some do it just to hear themselves talk. Most do it and don't know they're doing it. Doesn't matter. It's all a part of one world, one system— the attempt to obtain the proper amount of food, clothing, and shelter to maintain a heartbeat. Simple.

Whatever industry you happen to be in, everyone needs to consume a certain amount of calories, everyone needs to clothe themselves against wind and snow, everyone needs to supply their offspring with diapers and milk. That performance poets are denied the ability to provide for themselves with the sale of their own unique goods and services is a sham. It's a travesty. It's a cultural bamboozling. And we ought to put an end to it.

The Academic Poets have a lot to do with the pickle we're in. Essentially, they have ruined our market with the 50 years of crap that university presses have been relentlessly printing and dumping onto the literary marketplace. That's why books of poetry— even books of American Performance Poetry— are the book industry's notorious "tough sell". But if you take an unscientific poll— if you just ask people the open-ended question "what do you think about poetry?" you will find that a majority have a favorable opinion of poetry in the abstract. They may have had a good experience with a poetry teacher in high school, or had a favorite rhyming book as a child, or they've been to the Green Mill and loved it.

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So most people have a predisposition to liking poetry. But it's true— poetry books do not usually make the bestseller list. To me, that indicates a fundamental problem with the poetry delivery system. People like poetry but no one buys it.

There is opportunity in that disparity. Exploiting differences in supply and demand is the fundamental way to make money in a market economy. Twenty-five years ago couple guys in Seattle noticed that everyone likes coffee but no one likes to make it. Boom. An industry is born. Some people at Xerox noticed one day that everyone needs copies of documents but no one had an easy way of making them. Bang. Tens of thousands of jobs are created.

No one downs people who work at Starbucks. No one blinks when photocopy clerks get their paycheck. But a poet looking to participate in the economy is a sell-out freako. Makes no sense. Wake up, poets— take your place in the world economy w/o shame.



**OBITPOEM: BENNY WATERS**

*(Jerry Lewis Redemption)*

A 1938 Christian Scientist and 1969 ex-drinker.  
Nothing else much happened except playing Europe until  
1991, when he moved back to the big U.S. to get insurance  
coverage for cataract removal operation.  
The surgery was unsuccessful.

He turned blind,  
and kept playing.  
He was awarded the Legion of Honor by the  
French in 1996.

He wore their medal  
around his neck in  
all performances thereafter.  
For once,  
the French  
were right.

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**LIST OF HEALTH PROBLEMS,  
MAY 24, 1999**

Post-hernia surgery infection  
of stitches wound

Overweight 20+ pounds

Right foot makes me  
limp, especially in the  
morning, just outside  
the center: very tender,  
hard to walk on, sharp  
pain

tinea versicolor  
bacteria on feet  
seasonal allergies  
need wisdom teeth pulled  
need lower right tooth  
adjusted  
need root canal  
clench jaw all the time  
often trouble in mar-  
riage: need counseling

back hurts periodically

prone to tears read-  
ing news accounts







If only  
the lights had been timed different  
I would have made that S bound Damen  
bus  
but oh  
don't worry about it another one will come  
but probably not soon enough if  
I  
know the Damen bus.

(If a bus driver cannot hear you  
from a block away why bother yelling for  
him  
to stop but what is  
life but a test of the possible?)

**LIFE AFTER CHRISTMAS**

I dragged the  
Christmas tree through  
the front door in  
a blunt ceremony  
of collapsing pine  
and shivered-off  
needles, dragged  
into the crisp night  
scratching through  
threadbare snow,  
thrust through the  
front door on the  
back end of joy.

For  
every moment like  
this there is an  
equal bolt out  
into the night  
so that things  
may go back  
where they were.  
Or more true, so  
that the bare spot  
on the floor  
can be considered  
in a new light.

For every fresh moment  
of top-of-the-car  
excitement, untying  
the flush growth  
and gently fixing  
the geography to  
make it fit just  
right, go up straight.

*January 1, 1999*



**VOLGARE PROCLAMATION**

*Employing this Manuscripts Folio Typeface by Stephen Jazzell  
to Demand an Accounting of the 8000 or so People Killed in the Massacre of Srebrenica.*

Between Tuesday, July 11, and Friday, July 14, 1995, in a UN-designated "safe area", the Bosnian Serb military, led by General Ratko Mladic, blew past a small contingent of doomed UN peacekeepers and swept down on Srebrenica, a town of 40,000 people.

They separated the men from the women and children, an act that through time has meant trouble. They hanged the men from trees and slit their throats on the streets outside their homes. They raped the women and children and kicked them out of town. They sent the remaining military-aged men "to Bratunac, where Bosnian Serb officers said they would be questioned for possible war crimes", according to the New York Times report.

*This typeface* is based on the 1601 handwriting of a clerk in Florence, Italy. This clerk was performing a simple act that is one hallmark of a civilized society: Every time someone died, they added the name of that person, and the day that person died, and the neighborhood that person lived in, to a list.

That list was kept in a central place, so that everyone could know what happened to that person, and so that person's son could now inherit that person's land, or that person's spouse might think about marrying someone else, or that person's brother might come and comfort the living.

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Lists are big this way. They determine who gets paid on Friday, who owes who how much money, who belongs in jail, who is qualified to do taxes or perform brain surgery in your state, who gets their water from what municipality, who can drive what kind of vehicle, and who can build what where. Being on the right list at the right time makes all the difference in the world.

Now these lists consist of language. Written language is made up of words and characters and symbols. These are in turn made up lines and curves and dots and ink and light. The type designer gives this stuff form, taking bits and parts of expression and culture to make a new way to write. The typographer necessarily reflects and alters the society in which their work is created.

The stuff of this typeface in particular are 16 pages of the singular scratches and penstrokes of one person who lived in Florence, Italy in 1601. Stephen Farrell was not thinking of the 8,000 in Srebrenica when he cobbled together these trademark ™ signs and copyright © symbols and dollar \$ signs.

But the choice of such a human material from so deep in the manger of our civil laws and structure guarantees it would speak straight to us. The making of list reeks of order, discipline, and succession. This typeface was built the same way the International system of nation-states was— with the remnants of Europe's political and social institutions banged through the mouth of American English.

And the breakdown of decency in the middle of Europe is a direct threat to that order. Anywhere that the International system of nation-states is flouted by creeps; the whole system goes to pot.

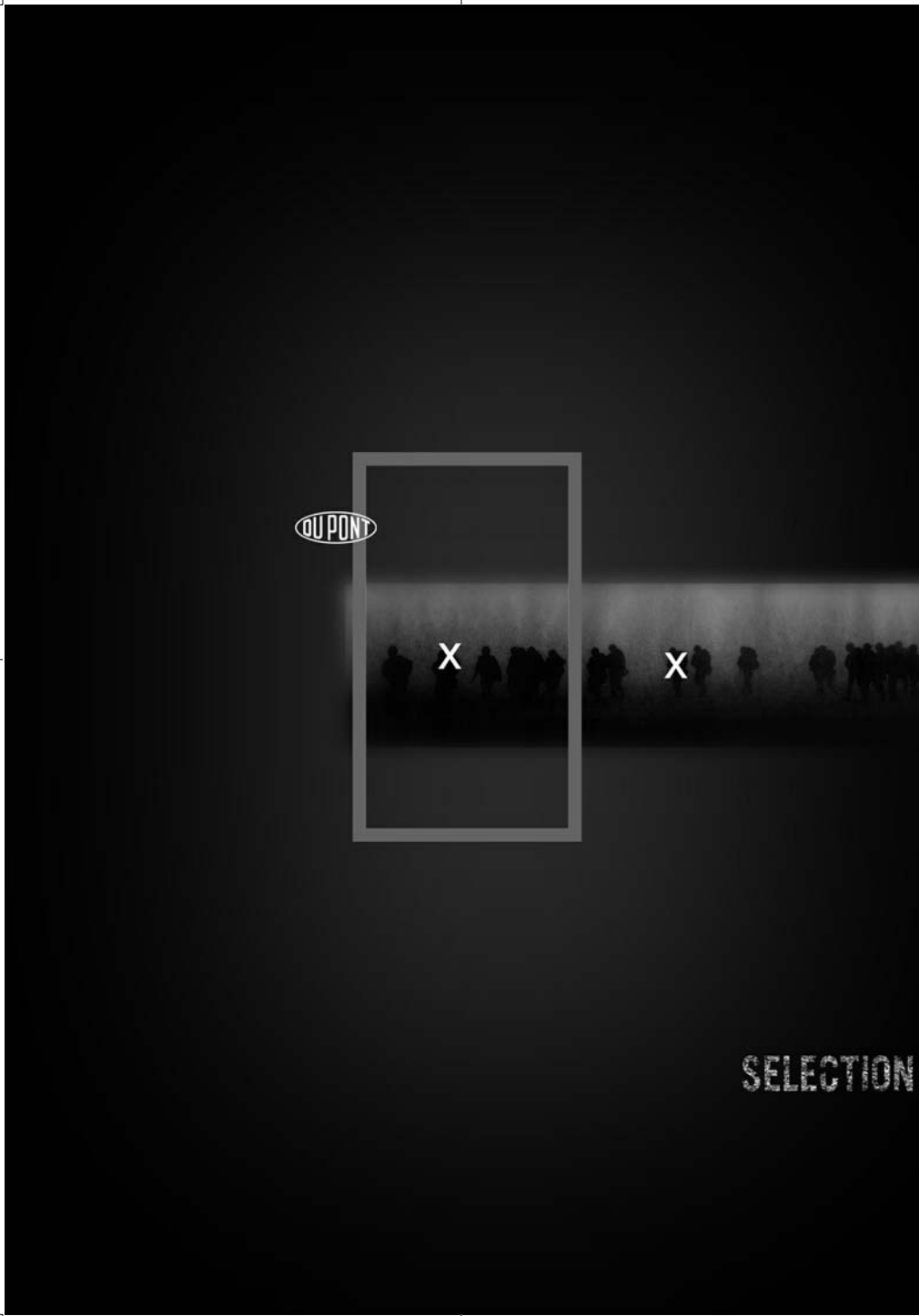
The written document which now applies to Bosnia and Herzegovina is the Dayton Peace Plan. It calls for the killers to be caught and tried but no one wants to disturb the signators whose generals gave the orders and soldiers did the killing.

I don't know what typeface the Dayton Peace Plan is set in, but whoever designed it must be very proud.

We now know that 8,000 men were killed in those few days in Srebrenica, 400 years and five hundred miles from the list of the dead in Florence. But there is no list of the dead in Srebrenica, and a list of the missing is not good enough.

It is fitting and right that someone would take this typeface and use it to talk back at Europe with a reflective, terrified glance. For those of us who write in English today, the craggy lips of the Romantic languages look back at us each time we see our own words.

With *This Typeface* and a computer anyone can compose a document in the deliberate image of those who have gone before in dignified civility. That is what I do now, in my hand, in this typeface, demand a list of the dead from those who killed them.

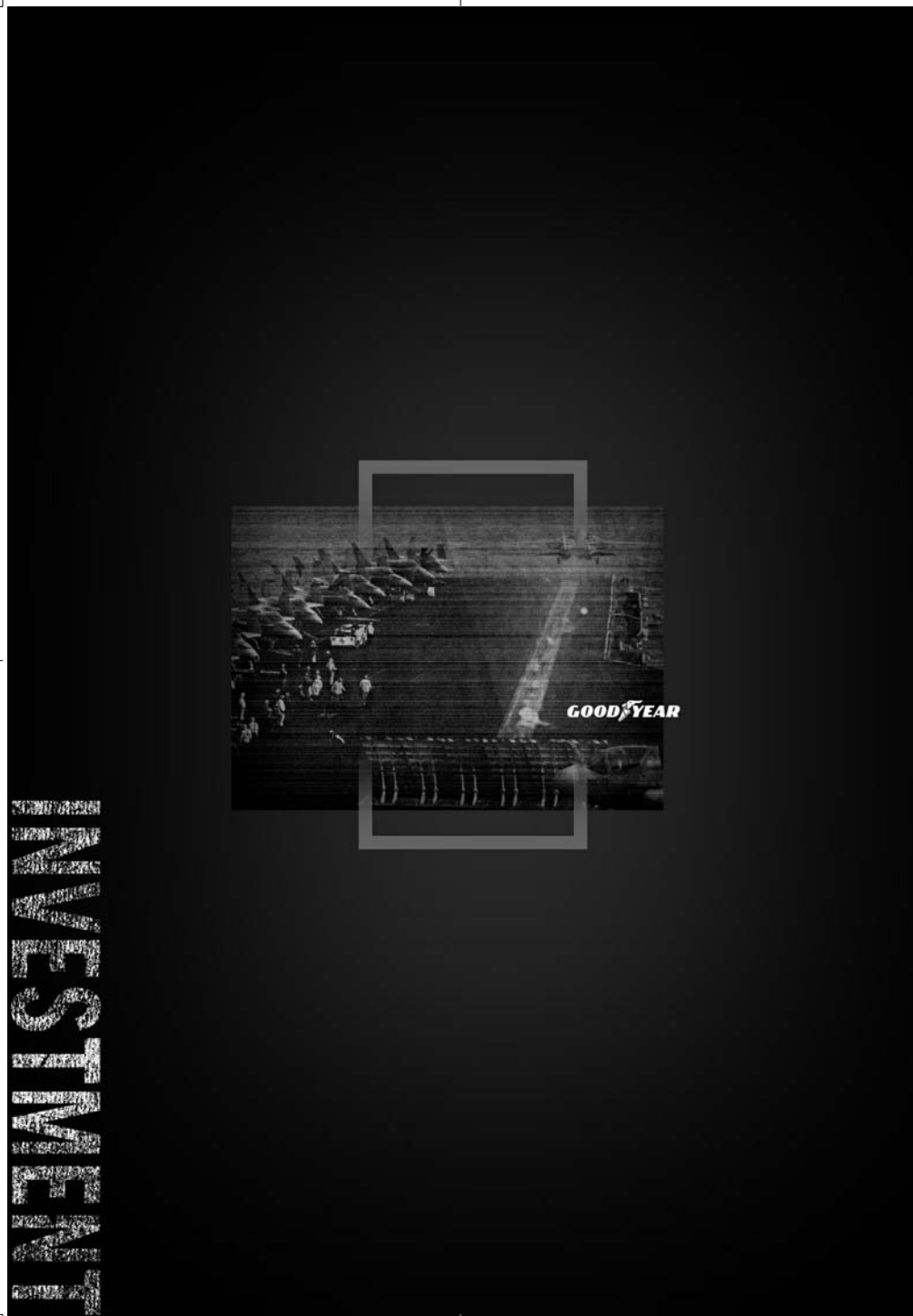


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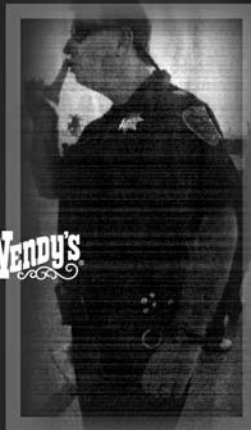
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SELECTION



WEST

GOODYEAR

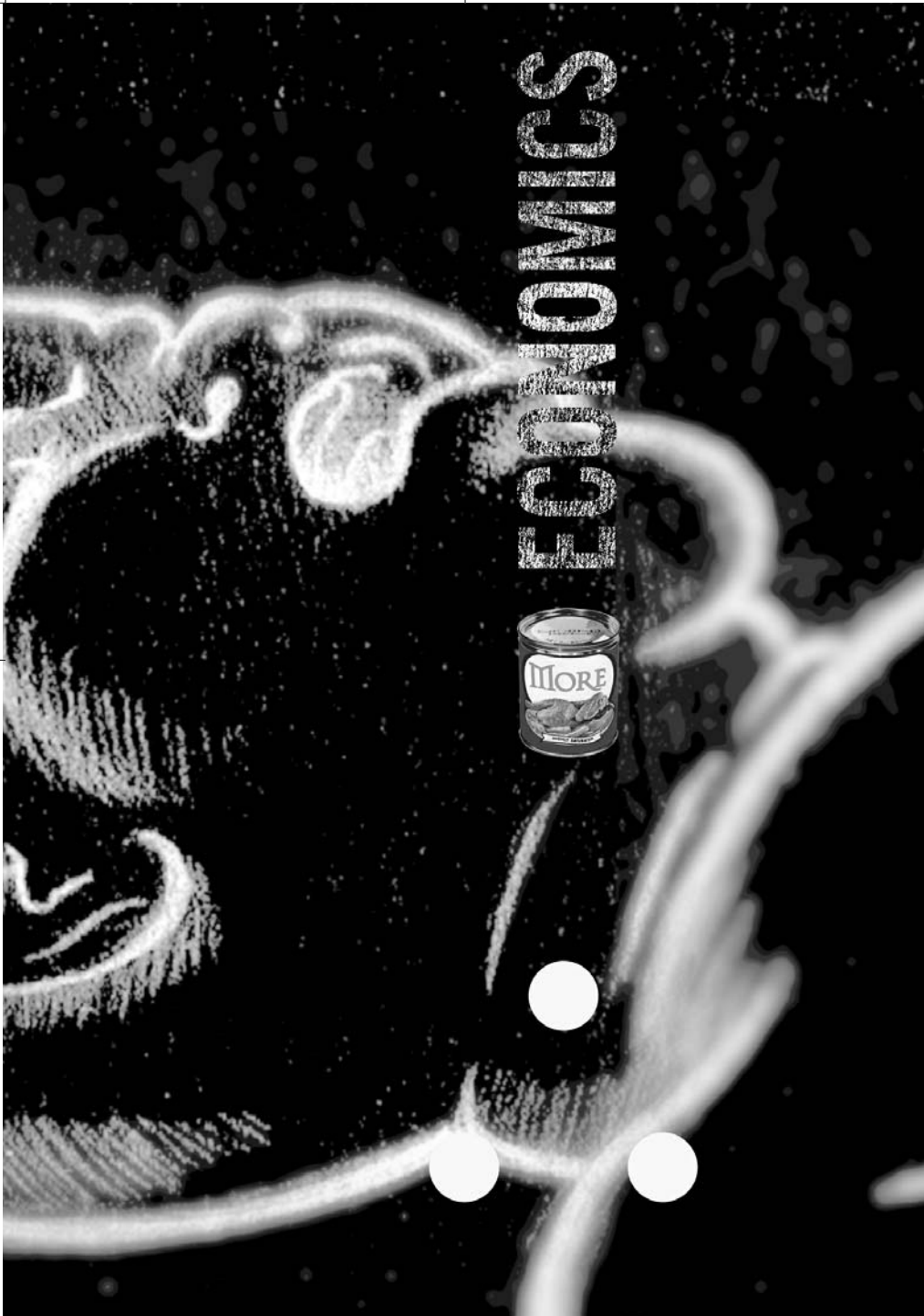


APPROVAL

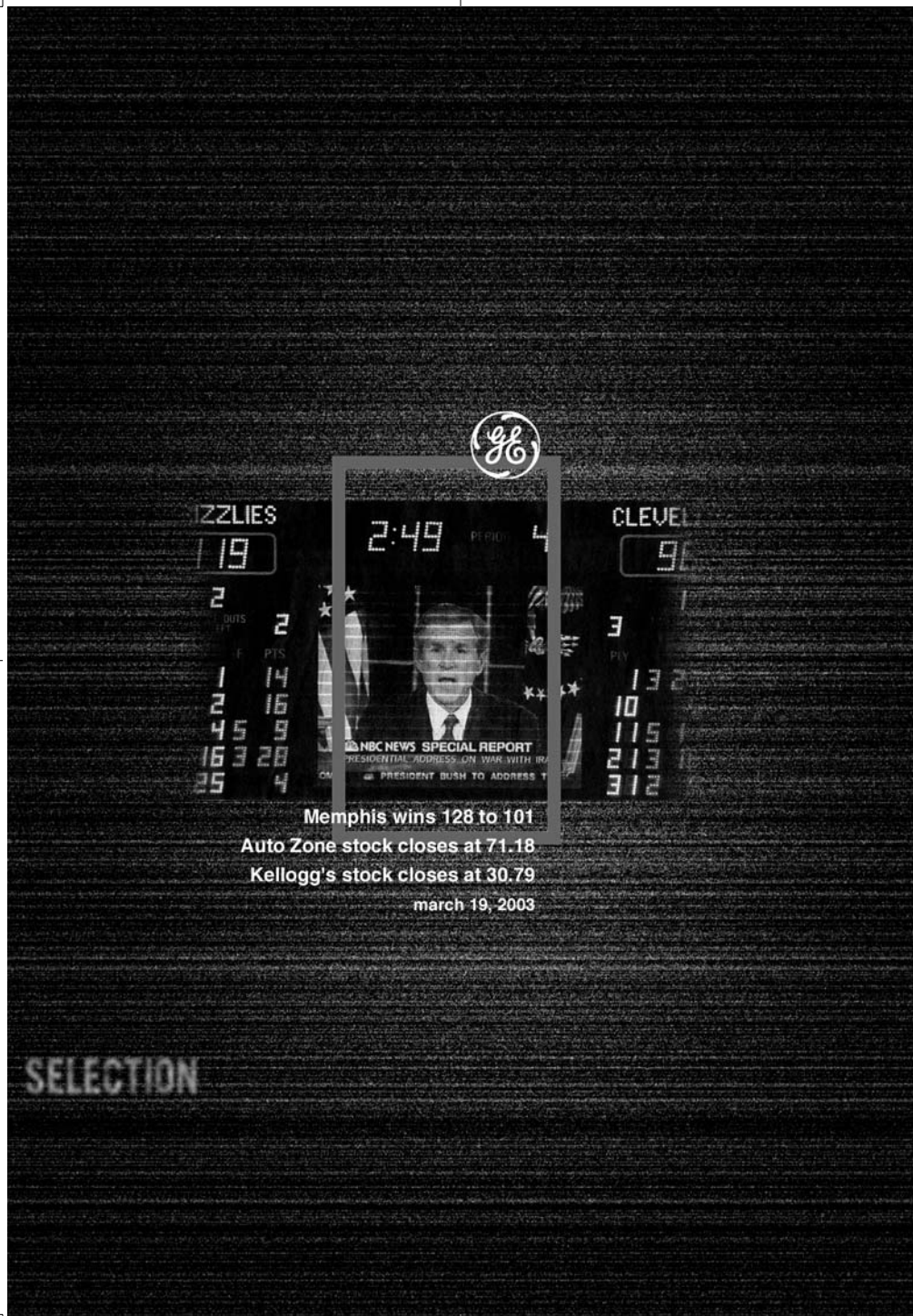












ZZLIES  
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2:49 PERIOD 4

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2 16  
45 9  
163 28  
25 4

3  
PLY 132  
115  
213  
312



NBC NEWS SPECIAL REPORT  
PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS ON WAR WITH IRA  
PRESIDENT BUSH TO ADDRESS T

Memphis wins 128 to 101  
Auto Zone stock closes at 71.18  
Kellogg's stock closes at 30.79  
march 19, 2003

SELECTION

**BALTHUS AND EARNHARDT ARE DEAD**

Death is weird in a pop culture world. It is the ultimate moment of individuality— even if surrounded by family, or in front of TV cameras, or as part of a massacre, you die alone. It is a condition entered into by oneself. Yet death is also a circumstance, a piece of reality, a bit of news, that necessarily relates to other circumstances. And as a necessity of its existence, pop news culture is good at presenting big wads of circumstances forever locked together in the same news cycle.

I am a dedicated reader of obituaries. Unlike the news that results from canned press releases, staged congressional hearings, fully-briefed court sessions, and long-scheduled sports events, the configuration of an obituary page is uncontrollable. Not one entity— a company, a country, a lawyer, a group of athletes— can determine who ends up next to each other on the obituary page. There's power in that kind of messiness.

Aside from learning a lot about a wide variety of subjects that dead people have made a life's work from, I tend to look for patterns and meaning out of obituaries. Samuel Beckett died in the last week of December 1989, and at the time I thought to myself, "his body couldn't stand to take one breath of the 1990s!" Mother Theresa only lasted about two weeks in a world that didn't hold Lady Di anymore. Frederico Fellini and River Phoenix died on the same day. For some reason, Ronald Reagan still lives.

So yesterday (02/18/01) was a banner day for someone like me. Dale Earnhardt, one of the greatest race car drivers ever, and Balthus, one of the great European painters of the century, died on the same day. Now I can't imagine a single place— besides maybe an online death poll— where the words "Balthus" and "Earnhardt" were uttered in the same sitting. They each led lives that almost certainly never considered the other. Yet there they were, dead and together forever.

**The patterns of Balthus and Earnhardt:**

News of Balthus' death made the front page, below the fold, of the New York Times, which ran the simple headline "Balthus Dies" along with a photo of his 1935 self-portrait. People who read the New York Times like to think that they know obscure things like who Balthus is.

News of Earnhardt's death made the front page, below the fold, of the New York Times, which ran the headline "Stock Car Star Killed on Last Lap of Daytona 500" along with a photo of his car being T-boned by the #86 M&Ms car. People who read the New York Times like to act like they don't know who Dale Earnhardt is.

In the middle of his career, Balthus worked with a new medium, casein tempura on canvas, to produce a series of figure paintings that burnished his reputation.

At the end of his life, Earnhardt, worked with NASCAR to help bring them into a new medium in the first broadcast of their first network television season.

Balthus smoked Camel cigarettes incessantly and lived to be 92.

Earnhardt drove for the Winston Cup incessantly and lived to be 49.

Balthus was befriended as a child by the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, who helped his development as an artist.

Earnhardt befriended Michael Waltrip, helped his development as a driver, and helped him win his first race on Sunday by blocking other cars from reaching him.

Balthus once said of himself, "Balthus is a painter about whom nothing is known."

After winning the Daytona 500 for the first time in 1998, Earnhardt said, "I was going to try to go for the hole. I went for the hole and made it. Fortunately nobody else wrecked behind me and we got through there OK."

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Balthus was raised in Paris, France, which is full of haughty little people who are much too cultured for something like a Business Park.

Earnhardt was born and raised in Kannapolis, North Carolina, which recently announced the development of Kannapolis Gateway Business Park. Located off I-85 along the new Kannapolis Parkway and Highway 73, the 100-acre park will feature approximately 753,000 square feet of industrial space and 10 acres for a retail center.

Balthus made a lot of paintings while alive.

Earnhardt painted a lot of towns red while alive.

Last May, Sotheby's got \$3,085,750 for Balthus' "Nu Aux Bras Leves". The 59<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>-by-32<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-inch oil on canvas depicts a naked adolescent girl stretching while seated on a bed.

Earnhardt is motorsports' leading all-time money winner with \$41,639,662 in his career, but probably made much more on related Earnhardt merchandise, including bedspreads.

Balthus was a painter and stage designer, just like his father.

Earnhardt was a race car driver, just like his father.

Balthus died in his chalet in La Rossiniere, Switzerland.

Earnhardt died in his Chevrolet in Daytona, Florida.

Balthus is survived by a wife and children.

Earnhardt is survived by a wife and children.

Balthus and Earnhardt excelled.



**POEM**

There are those who believe  
that American chauvinism  
is a virtue  
and I  
am one  
of them.

**HOW I GOT MY HERNIA**

Sunday 11 hours of work not a day  
of rest. Monday stress/firing line @ work.  
Monday night Inang/mother-in-law here nurse  
practitioner trade show w/Monica aftermath.  
Still no daycare/loading & unloading  
boxes of drug and treatment samples.  
Kenny across the street/drunk  
outside loading a TV into his house  
with degenerate/asks me to help  
move his car w/him as I load  
samples into Inang's car/come  
back inside and gravity wins  
apparently from a weird position  
of picking up goods. Later that  
night my abdomen hurt and I was  
well on my way to a red-haired  
surgery.

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**OBITPOEM: WILLIAM FERRIS**

*(Delivered)*

Ferris, one of the nation's leading choral composers and a devout Catholic, was leading his William Ferris Chorale in a rehearsal of Giuseppe Verdi's towering Requiem, arguably the most Catholic of all choral masterpieces, Tuesday evening at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, in Hyde Park, when he collapsed on the podium, the victim of a massive heart attack.

The chorus had been singing the final section, "Libera me" (whose Latin text includes the lines "Deliver me, O Lord, from everlasting death" and "Eternal rest grant them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them"), when the director faltered, fell backward and was helped to the floor.

Ferris received CPR on the scene from one of his choristers who is also a physician, as the 100-member chorus stood in stunned silence. Several were in tears, and many were observed praying. He was rushed to the University of Chicago Hospitals but never recovered.



**UNCLEAN HANDS**

*You, Me, and the Court of American Equity*

unclean hands  
and the stinky bottom.  
try to wipe  
& you still can't get clean.

that's the source  
  
of modern anguish—  
wipe and wipe  
still can't get clean.

when i was a paralegal at a  
law firm, i worked in  
chancery court,  
the court of equity. you made the choice  
of charmin over white cloud.  
chancery seeks to bring or store brand over scott.  
affairs into equilibrium. you made your choice  
& still can't get clean.  
it seeks to make things equal, you sold out to toilet paper  
repair out-of-whack relationships. wipe and wipe  
still got shit  
between your cheeks.

it is a very poetic court.  
uses very poetic language.  
it has doctrines laid out like  
poetry and speaks in dictums. we've got unclean hands  
& it makes us sad.  
we think we're clean,  
that's what we bought.

one is the principle of  
unclean hands. it states that no one  
can seek remedy in chancery—  
no one can seek equity—  
unless they  
come to the court with clean  
hands. but the phoenix is the ashes  
& there's no such thing  
as tragedy w/o profit.

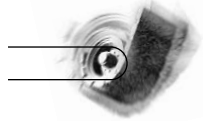
just one economy  
and it feeds us all  
it's a morbid thing  
& it makes us sad.

and we seek that daily.

35

34

we are all in this  
economy together. then they are called  
& it can't be beat right into action  
or sold out to & and signed under contract—  
can only be fed by us  
as long as we live— get out there, clam dredgers,  
and or die into ashes. and scrape the ocean floor  
for bodies and plane parts  
wrenched into the bed.  
because the phoenix is the ashes. new applications for existing  
here's an example: technologies.  
flight 800  
goes down in the drink.  
the sky— & what about long island hotels  
a burning thing. filled to capacity  
the ocean—a horror show. with the fbi  
and ntsb?  
looks like a tragedy.  
lots of death. and the local bars  
fire. rains of fire. holding off-duty reporters  
planeload of teenagers and don't we all know  
on a senior trip. how good they tip?  
but this economic event don't those bartenders deserve  
(everything is an economic event) their profit nights  
stimulated local economies near for being there  
where the plane went down when the chips were down?  
in many wild and wonderful ways.  
who's to say  
like what about the clam they don't get theirs?  
dredging ships sure, the plane's down.  
that got pressed into service? but the phoenix is the ashes.  
they were fallow:  
business dried up.



and we pull down on the roll  
and apply gently, stroke back  
and forth between the cheeks we  
won't be able to get it all  
but we try we try we try.

and the phoenix is the ashes.  
here's another example:  
oklahoma city bombing  
& scottish tim mcveigh.

wish it didn't happen.  
this guy couldn't die  
soon enough for me.  
glad he's dead.  
wish he didn't do it.

but take a look:  
broken skull of a building.  
children dead.  
lots of screams.  
looks like a tragedy.  
it's got all the fixings.  
blood and brains  
2 blocks away.

but cnn ratings  
went through the roof  
and so did the bonuses  
of atlanta executives.

and the building boom  
in the suburbs of the south  
creates lots of jobs  
for carpenters & mailmen.

who are you to say  
those carpenter's kids  
don't get to go to college  
on overtime money?

did not raises and bonuses  
in marketing departments  
across the nation  
hinge on post-bomb coverage?

sturdy career moves  
grow from  
decayed corpses on the  
oklahoma landscape like  
flagpoles outside the  
united nations.

and what about the exhibit books  
they needed for the trial  
to put our dear bomber  
in the electric seat?

need lots of copies.  
need a set for the judge.  
need a set for the jury.  
need a set for the defense.  
need a set for the prosecution.

oh my goodness  
says kinkos managers.  
kinkos hires more workers.  
got to make more  
exhibits for the trial.

37

36



bring em in!  
give em an application!  
get em on the machine!  
get this job out the door!

because the phoenix is the ashes.  
& it makes us sad inside.  
but that doesn't mean  
we don't cash that check.

it's unclean hands  
& it makes us sad.  
don't look back.  
cash that check.

the ends don't need  
to justify the means  
because we are now all means,  
there are no ends anymore.  
there is only the economy.

how about insurance money?  
that's a simple one.  
someone dies.  
wish they hadn't.  
check comes in the mail.  
put it in the bank.

get a real estate agent.  
buy a house.  
agents get theirs.  
you're in a house.  
you're still sad.  
but you cashed that check.

because the phoenix is the ashes.  
here's another example.  
forest fire burns.  
it's a flaming thing.  
inferno. charred bark.  
steamed ground. trees gone.

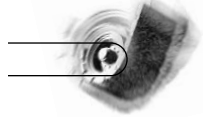
but who are we to say  
that the little bumbershoot flowers  
don't get their chance in the sun?

and who should cry  
for those tall trees  
with the selfish canopies

sucking up all the sun?  
why do we strike our breast  
for them  
and not joy to the flowers?

the little flowers  
who try to get up down below  
& now they've got their chance.  
you see, the phoenix is the ashes.  
and it makes us sad inside.  
there is no such thing  
as a complete tragedy.

just two more examples.  
persian gulf war.  
750,000 iraqis dead  
for great gas prices.



because the phoenix is the ashes.  
looks like it was worth it.  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  million, a decade of starvation.  
babies dying w/o milk.

but what did we get?  
sport utility vehicles.  
a whole new class of detroit products  
and who will rise  
against the suv?

not me.  
i've got one too.  
it's disgusting and true.  
but my babies ride nice.

so we've got it going on.  
and it only took  $\frac{3}{4}$  million,  
a decade of starvation,  
and stone age privation.  
looks like it was worth it.

so keep on drivin'.  
don't look back.  
cash that check.  
feeling good.

it's the buoyant 90s.  
don't look back.  
keep on drivin'.  
cash that check.

because the phoenix is the ashes.  
i've got one last example-  
clinton's china.

not nice.  
repressive & tight.

but jiang zemin comes  
and clinton opens arms.  
most favored nation!  
because they've got markets  
& that looks good to us.

c'mon in jiang.  
i'm on my knees.  
it's gonna taste good  
because you're chinese!

1.2 billion.  
that's a lot of toilet paper.  
so bring 'em in,  
clinton says panting.

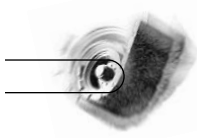
so keep on drivin'.  
don't look back.  
it's the buoyant 90s.  
cash that check.  
feeling good.

it's the buoyant 90s.  
don't look back.  
keep on drivin'.  
cash that check.

it's the buoyant 90s.  
it's the buoyant 90s.  
it's the buoyant 90s.  
so keep your fucking mouth shut.

**BARRY RODGERS POEM**

And I respect Barry's opinion very much. He is a very good friend. And he feels for me, and his wife is a soon-to-be PhD therapist in her own right, and I've known her since high school, LeAnn Rodgers nee Napoli. Her grandfather on her father's side was Judge Napoli, the first Italian-American judge in the Northern District of Illinois. God Bless him— no— forget that phrase— Pope John Paul II bless him— that is my new overall blessing because I want him to be beatified and eventually sainted in my lifetime and I will work to make that happen.



So we glorify his Jubilee Year, which he always played as important in the press, after he got Parkinson's Disease, and he always looked to 2000 in his writings and proclamations, and when it finally came, and him trembling, and he pushed open the double doors of the Vatican open at midnight New Years Eve and he so holy and bowed, down on reflex yes he was, and the cardinals surround him on the altar, I will repeat myself until he trembles no more and is still.

I believe, in my heart and mind, that the living Pope John Paul II can perform miracles.



**DEIRDRE AND BEATRICE POEM**

I saw you guys last Friday  
on your last day of work  
circa 6:15 as I walked out of Jewel toward the  
David Leonardis Gallery.

You're biking gracefully in full stride,  
Beatrice, safe in her helmet, and  
careening toward home.

I was going to say something stupid like  
"Hey Deirdre" or something like that but  
just decided to watch you two turn the corner and keep  
pedaling so well where you must.

*April 28, 2000*

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**CALORIE COUNT***Zine Publishers & Ideal Economic Strategies for the Next Capitalist Century*

The zine publishing movement is one of the bona fide bust-out cultural movements of the 1990s. Though American zines trace their roots back to mimeographed sci-fi publications of the 1940s, the current mix of personal, non-traditional sex, fringe political, punk music, Jesus freak religious, sicko comix, conspiracy theorist, and work-is-hell zines has grown to huge proportions. And huge proportion in 1990s America of course means inevitable co-optation by corporate America. Many trees have been chopped down in the service of the Great Sellout Debate. The arguments usually go like this:

**On the zine side:**

Zine publishers are the last of the True Believers in a world full of fakes and sell-outs. They toil over their little zines, keeping it real and not bowing down before The Man. They design their publications in a graphic attempt to deflect the attention of mass media and frat-boy coolies looking for street cred. The content is often obscure and disturbing for the same cocoonish reasons. When the media calls to research their Lifestyle-section trend pieces they either lie outright or hang up the phone. They don't accept advertising from sell-out record companies or corporate b.s. artists. Happiness is achieved by staying small, allowing only the select few cool people into their thumb-nosing club.

**On the sell-out side:**

Zine publishers labor in lonely obscurity for years. When the dominant culture arrives in the form of advertising execs, New York Times interviewers, and book company reps, they should jump at the chance to do what they want and get paid for it. The prevailing rationale for this group is that if they can have some effect on the dominant culture by making them more aware of the joys of thrift store shopping or liberal politics or whatever their own particular interest happens to be, then they will be proud to "work from the inside" to boldly change The System.

A good handle on the Great Sellout Debate can be had by reading back issues of Factsheet 5, the zine review magazine out of San Francisco that serves as the guidebook to the zine movement.

But the Great Sellout Debate, like most arguments producing more heat than light, focuses on a wrong-headed dynamic— the movement of people from the zine underground to the dominant culture and the co-optation of the zine underground by the dominant culture. The debate presupposes that there are static worlds of the real and the fake— the underground contains zines called "Murder Is Fun" and the dominant culture beams out William Burroughs posing in NIKE ads.

But these arguments are based on a Founding Fallacy that the two worlds are separated to begin with. Real life is not so tidy.

I say that zine publishers are the primary examples of a new category of capitalist, purveyors of a unique form of capitalist individualism that will thrive in the next century of American-style "free"-market democracy. This scenario is much more chaotic than the simple movement between Underground and Dominant cultures. The world economy is so all-inclusive that it embraces both good and evil. No one can do good, like clothe themselves and feed their children, w/o bowing down before the presence of evil. I mean no one— not factory workers @ cigarette plants and not zine publishers who smoke the ciggies that drive up health care costs for everyone. Anyone who pours ketchup out of a bottle and thinks they are untouchable is fooling themselves. Every single economic activity is a portion of the overall economy with potentially good and evil effects. And everything is an economic activity.

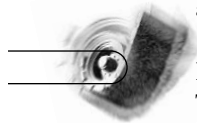
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The fundamental fact to begin with is that everyone, from publishers of nipple-piercing zines to Mail Boxes Etc. franchisees, needs to eat food in order to live. Almost as important as food is a modicum of self-worth to impel oneself out of bed every day. So obtaining enough calories for oneself and one's family while performing economic activities that don't promote self-loathing is the state of grace that most people are looking for.

The truth is that zine publishers have independently developed, in some Darwinian unselfconsciousness, a unique set of traits that will be very useful for success in the economy of the next century. The next century will house a world in which the dominant culture will function much more like the zine world than the zine world will adapt to fit the dominant culture. A world in which zines aren't just considered a minor-league development zone for the dominant culture. A world in which the dominant culture is redefined to include a zillion customized worlds.

Zine publishers possess a discreet set of characteristics that make them model capitalists for the next century: rejection of dominant media, truly independent ownership, appropriation of existing content, small-cell distribution of highly specialized products, and a de-emphasis on privacy and decorum.



#### **Managing the 15-minute media beast**

The true believers of zine publishing refuse to cooperate with the dominant media. Generally, zine publisher's main imperative is to provide content missing from the dominant media. Their mission is in direct opposition to the crap machine of daily media. And they don't usually look kindly at the media's attempt to contact them and shine light on their scene. Of course this endlessly perplexes the reporters and TV crews who come knocking to bag a story. They're used to the populace knocking down babies and grandmothers just to get a chance to wave at the red light on the top of a camera.

But zine publishers are on to something that I am convinced will be a commonly accepted notion in the next century: The media cycle does nothing but build and destroy. That which it builds it destroys. If one critic raves about you, another will howl at you. If you end up in the news too long, they'll devise survey questions that are designed to produce unfavorable results, like "Are you tired of hearing about the Nanny Trial?" after 167 straight hours of Nanny Trial coverage.

When Andy Warhol made his statement about 15 minutes of fame, he presented it almost as a victimless crime, with no moral component whatsoever. But if you examine the 15 minutes cliché you see how quaint and misguided it is. The media beast swoops up new subjects every 15 minutes, chews them up, and digests them. The beast strips the goodness from each individual and turns it into the nutrients in the form of ratings and commercial time. Then the beast passes a stool every quarter hour and searches for more.

James Cameron, director of Titanic, stood up in front of the TV world at the Oscars and proclaimed that he was in fact "King of the World". More like flavor of the month. His 15 minutes may have lasted longer than most, but eventually a towering prince like "Lost In Space" comes along to whop off the head of the king. Working outside of the mainstream promotion/destruction system, the zine publisher is not slimed by this bilious system.

#### **De-consolidation and individual ownership**

Having your own business is one of the great American orgasms, right along with home ownership. Of course most "home owners" actually own a mortgage, not a home. A mortgage is just the right to pay a bank basically double what your house is worth over the course of 30 years or so. That's the kind of mumble-speak that passes itself off every day as the Holy Grail of American life.

Owning a business is often the same thing. Pick up a magazine like Franchising Today. You'll see straight-faced exultations to "work for yourself" by paying a \$15-80,0000 up-front fee for the right to open up a business that sells burgers made with the same recipe that tens of thousands of other people "working for themselves" are making all over the world. Sure. Work for yourself, but wipe your mouth with my napkins, wash your floor with my mops, put my name on the sign out in front, and oh, by the way, cough up 9% of gross sales every month or we'll cancel your ass.

Zine publishers don't have to pay royalties to anyone. They publish to please themselves. They write about what interests them, reprint what tickles them, and never have to answer to the front office. They are the front office. They can print as often or as infrequently as they like, and they don't have to go into deficit spending to get their zine printed. They may have layout conventions—layered texts and photos, saddle-stitching, &etc., but those are driven more by an inward aesthetic and production limitations than any sense of conformity. And unlike grossly misnamed "independent labels" of the music industry that are wholly-owned subsidiaries of multinational corporations, zine publishers usually control all aspects of the manufacture & distribution processes.



Despite, or maybe because of, the global trend toward corporate consolidation, an explosion of this type of individualistic capitalism seems inevitable. The Internet is a great leveler of the business climate. Big companies might be able to spend more money on a website, but any decent webmaster can get his or her hands on the exact same features like animation, sound, video, and so on. No matter how much money you throw at a website, as of now you can still only view one web page at a time. Any small-time operation can compete.

### **Steal This Means of Production**

Most of the capitalist world gets pretty uptight about private ownership of intellectual property. Companies like Walt Disney pay millions of dollars a year to lawyers who pump out "cease and desist" letters to mom and pop stores who put a picture of a mouse up in their windows.

But again, the Internet is piercing a hole in the old way of doing things. You can find fan-run websites devoted to pop TV shows like Seinfeld and Friends where people compose entire new episodes using the proprietary characters of the NBC series. Web-surfing is built for theft. Any time you see some content you like— whether it's a newspaper story or a chat room transcript— quicker than you can say "Apple-A/ Apple C/ Apple V", you've captured the content and placed it on your hard drive. No payment, no problem.

The zine world had been working with looser standards of re-appropriation long before the advent of the three Ws. Casual flouting of copyright law is a badge off honor to zine publishers. The ethic amongst themselves is that you can reprint whatever you want, as long as you attribute the source, including address.

### **The Code of the Small**

The incredible variety of zines is a perfect example of supermarket America. There is literally something for everyone. Nothing is revered more in a capitalist economy than choice. People demand a wide variety of toilet paper and breakfast cereal. There's fragrant and unscented. Nice colors and dye-free. Single rolls and Economy Packs. Sugary and wheat. Purple and heart-shaped.

It's the same thing with zines. You've got right-wing paramilitary tracts and anarchist cookbooks. Jewish culture zines and Armageddon warning leaflets. Racist zines and love zines. Zine publishers think nothing of bailing on their zine about Barbie dolls and starting a zine about travel to Asia. The ability to switch gears quickly is one of the central skills of the new economy.

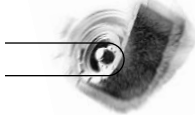
Another valuable service in the economy of the next century is the ability to deliver customized goods and services quickly. Zine publishers have the goods on that count.

**Privacy is Not a Virtue**

Americans have a strange psychosis about privacy that is on its way out as far as I'm concerned. Bill Clinton had the various locations of his penis broadcast ad infinitum and no one cared. Cash machine computers, highway toll-collecting transponders, and traffic video cameras constantly track our location and make life easier. The American public seems to be perfectly willing to trade privacy for convenience.

The Perzine, or personal zine, is a chatty/confessional type of zine whose only subject is the zine publisher. A great example is Pathetic Life, a zine started by a guy in California after his girlfriend dumped him because he was too fat and watched too much TV. Almost every zine starts with a personal note from the publisher which reveals a lot of personal details.

So, again, zine publishers are up ahead of the curve on the cultural/capitalist continuum, primed to make a living with the traits they've developed on the economy's fringes. No more sell out. The world economy is sliding up next to them, individualists who can stay that way and still find enough to eat.





**JAMES (BUDDHA) EDWARDS, TONIGHT IN SACRAMENTO**

*February 1, 1996, Bulls Beat Kings 105-85.*

$\frac{1}{2}$ -way into the  
first quarter, tonight in Sacramento,  
his first game off the injured list,  
James  
(Buddha)  
Edwards sets a mid-court screen on the King's Mitch Richmond  
and he  
flattens the guy. Just laid him  
flat out  
and he had this look on his face like  
oh shit James Edwards just flattened me by just standing there.

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**PROJECT: WHAT SMELLS?**

*August 3, 1998*

1. The odor is strongest in the basement workroom.
2. Foul smell— Bad food Dead animal?
3. Smells less at ground level standing up.
4. Smell has somewhat dissipated.
5. Smell started on Thursday, which is when I removed rotten fruit salad from refrigerator.
6. The dehumidifier has been on for 3 days and has not helped the smell.
7. The smell is stronger inside the workroom than just outside the back door.
8. The smell is immediately noticeable as soon as you walk in the door, but less in the front than in the back.
9. It smells more near the refrigerator than it does the workroom.

6 august 1998 thurs

*update:*

The smell seems to  
have dissipated.  
This weekend I'll  
clean down there  
real well.



9 august 1998 sun

The stench has returned with a fervor. More on the outside of the back basement door than anywhere.

Maybe we should get the sewer reamed out although it doesn't smell like sewage.

11 august 1998 tue

Smells the worst ever right now. Closed the door to workroom.

1. The smell started on the day of the Streams BBQ.

2. Describing the smell: foul, pungent, sweet, skunky.

Q: Should I open the door and let flies lead me to the spot?

17 august 1998 mon

*update:*

The smell was the worst ever yesterday. Also the most pervasive via the air conditioning.

Talked to Kurt across the street. He says it's probably the trap in the basement floor drain(s). He says that happens when the P trap gets dried out, which I may have contributed to by not having any water flow down it for a long time and having the dehumidifier run right next to it.

When the air conditioner kicks in it pulls the smells out of the drain and into the basement, especially the workroom because of some sort of warm/cold air movement situation.

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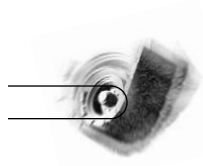
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The smell would be a combination of perfumes and dyes and soap and anything that goes down our sink drains.

I poured water down there last night. This morning: very little smell.

Poured another bucket down there. But: I also had the air conditioning off. So I am not convinced that it is not MOLD from the air conditioning. So I turned the AC on this morning.

If there is no or a small smell, the problem is solved.



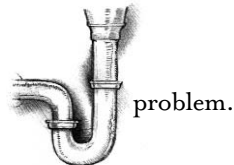
19 august 1998 wed

Monday night:  
The smell returned.  
Not super-strong, but there. Imbued the house.

Yesterday:  
Still there.

Last night:  
Talked to Kurt again.  
He says throw bleach down the drain to kill whatever smells.

As I threw the bleach down the drain in floor, it occurred to me that the crux of the smell is probably in the elongated P-trap of the double wash utility basin:



This makes sense for a # of reasons:

I did swish out  
a goodly amount of  
mold from the  
moldy fruit salad  
on the morning of  
Thursday July 31,  
the day of the Streams  
picnic.

The smell was first  
noticed that evening,  
which means the  
mold would have  
had time  
to take hold in  
the awkward P-  
trap.

That would also  
explain the dissipation  
period, which I believe  
coincides with Monica  
doing laundry, thereby  
washing water down  
the drain but allow-  
ing the mold to grow back.

So I poured bleach  
down all sink and  
bath drains, cleaned  
the tubs downstairs  
with a bleachy

vengeance in the  
form of that small  
green bleach cleaning  
product along with a sponge.  
I disinfected every-  
thing in the area, in-  
cluding buckets, garbage  
cans, the washer &  
dryer, and the  
refrigerator. All  
bleach-cleaned.

This morning:  
Smell gone.  
If it's still gone  
tomorrow, I have  
succeeded. If  
not, and even if  
so, I will have

to ream the pipes  
with a snake.

24 august 1998 mon  
@ home

It didn't work.

On Saturday I borrowed  
Dennis' (next-door  
neighbor) electric  
auger.

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Couldn't really get it to work.

Cleaned out the outside drain gunk by hand.

Sent garden hose down both floor drains, which worked. The water flowed perfectly fine.

Opened up sewer and swished it out; cleaned around it.

Cleaned underneath porch so I can get at the stuff.

Smell gone.

Then Sunday:  
Smell still gone from inside drain but remains from outside drain.

Then today:  
No smell at all.

Analysis:  
I need to send water down the drains every day for a while.

Use the drain cleaning products I purchased:

Drain-O for pipes and  
A more heavy-duty product for the drains.

28 august 1998 fri

It only smells now in the workroom.

I threw 8 oz. of the drain cleaner down the basement tub but haven't checked to see if it worked.



*The difference between flotsam and jetsam:  
Flotsam is stuff floating in water,  
and  
jetsam is stuff floating in water  
that had been thrown overboard.*

**WAIT A MINUTE**

Most of us remember the thwacked  
nature of birth,  
where at one point our own internal  
midwives said jump while the  
planet spun and spun and spun.

So, with the exception of C-section  
babies, then,  
who were lifted and not hurled from  
the watery womb,  
aren't we all just a bunch of  
overgrown jetsam around here?

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**SUSAN MOLINARI WORKS ON HER KEYNOTE SPEECH**

Afternoon photo from  
the pre-speech news conference has her hunched up on  
the  
lunch table leaning over toward  
the cameras with her right hand balled up  
in a  
loose fist and crooked up over by her left shoulder.  
Dole sat next to her.  
I  
think she's got his limp right appendage on her  
mind and is trying real  
hard  
to  
get it out.



May 14, 1997

Daniel X. O'Neil  
2310 West Wilson Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60625

Brendan Cunningham  
Midwest Mortgage Express  
Suite 420  
1-100 East Woodfield Road  
Schaumburg, IL 60173

**RE: Application for Mortgage Review of  
Daniel X. O'Neil**

Dear Sir or Madam:

This letter provides explanations for each item listed in my credit report obtained in connection with the above-referenced application for mortgage review.

1. unpaid student loan collection balance due \$1,775. madison un.  
dated 8/86 and 5/92

These are duplicate items. In June of 1991, I graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago. At this time I moved in with a friend at 4317 North Bell Street in Chicago because I did not have a job and my mother was selling the family home at 1633 North Wolcott. By Fall I had found a job and moved into an apartment with at 2101 West Evergreen.

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At this time, my six-month grace period had expired and I began to pay back my student loans to IDAPP. I made regular and faithful payments. I always believed that the loan I had received while a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison was included in what I was paying back to IDAPP. I never received a bill from UW Madison.

In December of 1996, I saw my former roommate from Bell Street. He gave me one of the bills that they had been sending there and I immediately called UW. I immediately paid \$775 of the \$1,775 that I owed them. I will pay this loan in full before closing.

2. Late payments dated 1/94, 9/96, 10/96, and 11/96 with current student loan IDAPP balance \$8,617

In December 1993 and January 1994, I was out of town for an extended performance tour as a poet. I paid my bills before I left town but I missed this loan payment. I caught up as soon as I returned.

In April 1996, my father was in a car accident. By September 1996 it was apparent that he needed more healthcare than was provided by Medicare. I contributed cash along with other family members to help him get by. I paid all my other bills faithfully but I let this one slip. In December 1996, when I received my annual bonus, I got caught up with this bill and I have paid on time and over the minimum payment every month.

3. late payments dated 10/94, 10/95, 11/95, and 5/96 with Household bank.  
current balance zero

I have had many problems with MasterCard's billing practices over the years. In October 1994 I disputed a charge that appeared on my bill for a purchase that I never made. I withheld payment until the charge was finally deleted. In October and November of 1995 I had trouble paying this bill because of out-of-the-ordinary expenses related to publishing my 2nd book of poetry. I realize now that keeping up with my bills is more important than any other expense. Now that I am getting married and starting a family, my priorities have changed, and maintaining a good credit rating for my family's future is of paramount importance. As for the May 1996 entry, I have no idea why this appeared on my credit report.

4. late payments dated 3/95, 4/95, and 5/95 with AFS/GECC Household bank.  
current balance zero

I do not believe this entry belongs on my credit report. I have never received a bill from this source. The number listed for this creditor is out of service and the forwarding number is a personal residence in New Jersey. I have contested this entry with the credit reporting agency and they have promised to look into it.

5. late payments with Filenes basement

I have always contested this bill. I purchased defective goods from Filene's Basement in 1993 and returned them immediately. I was told that the charge would be deducted from my account. It was never deducted and I refused to pay the charges. Finally, I decided that \$200 was not worth ruining my credit rating and I paid in full, canceling my account.

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6. why PMI Group and first national bank checked my credit 2/10/97, 2/19/97

PMI Group checked my credit on 2/10/97 because I made an initial call to a Norwest Mortgage agent in preparation of obtaining a mortgage. First National Bank checked my credit on 2/19/97 in connection with a Checkguard application.

I sincerely hope that as you review this application, you will take into account the fact that I have always taken my financial obligations seriously. I have had intermittent difficulties in paying some bills on time, but as you can see from my credit report, there are many accounts that I have always paid on time. As I prepare to start my family this Fall, my credit rating is very important to me. Thank you for the opportunity to fully explain these items.



Very Truly Yours,

Daniel X. O'Neil

**APPROACHING PITTSBURGH: 'WHOA. . . HANG ON'**

On the afternoon of Sept. 8, 1994, a Boeing 737 flown by USAir approached Pittsburgh International Airport. The weather was good, and the pilots of flight 427 were expecting a routine descent and landing. The first sound on the recording from either pilot is, in fact, a yawn. They are at cruise altitude.

**Flight attendant in the cockpit:**  
Do ya know what I'm thinkin' about? Pretzels.

**F.A.:** Okey-dokey. Do you want me to make you my special fruity juice cocktail?

**Captain:** Pretzels.

**Captain:** How fruity is it?

**F.A.:** You guys need drinks here?

**F.O.:** All right, I'll be a guinea pig.

**Captain:** Uh, I could use a glass of somethin', whatever's open. Water, uh, water, a juice.

The pilots talk to air traffic controllers about reducing their speed. The flight attendant returns with the drinks.

**First Officer:** I'll split a, yeah, a water, a juice, whatever's back there, I'll split one with 'im.

**F.A.:** If you don't like . . . I didn't taste 'em so I don't know if they came out right.

**Captain:** That's good.

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F.O.: That is good.

F.A.: It's good.

F.O.: That is different.  
Be real, be real good  
with some dark rum  
in it.

The pilots then talk  
with Pittsburgh  
controllers about  
their approach head-  
ing, and then talk  
more with the flight  
attendant about  
their juice drinks.

Captain: It tastes like  
a \*\*\*.

F.O.: Good.

Captain: There's little  
grapefruit in it.

F.A.: No. (sound of  
laughter.)

F.O.: \*\*\* cranberry.

F.A.: Yeah, you saw  
that from the color.

Captain: How else  
is in it?

F.O.: Uh, Sprite?

F.A.: Diet Sprite.

F.O.: Huh.

F.A.: And I guess  
you could do it with  
Sprite. Prob'ly be a  
little better if you do.

Captain: Yeah, there's  
more?

F.A.: One more.

F.O.: Ah, O.J.?

F.A.: You got it.  
Cranberry, orange  
and Diet Sprite.

F.O.: Really nice.

F.A.: It's different.  
Could ya keep comin'  
out, aaah, whataya' got  
different and . . .

Captain: I always mix  
the cranberry and the  
grapefruit. I like that.  
(sound of aural tone  
similar to altitude  
alert)

F.A.: \*\*\* O.K., back  
to work.



A controller tells the pilots to descend and maintain an altitude of 6,000 feet. They make some checks of landing data, shoulder harnesses and other matters. The first officer remarks, "Oops, didn't kiss 'em 'bye," and then tells passengers about weather conditions in Pittsburgh and thanks them for choosing USAir. The pilots slow the aircraft as they descend.

**Captain:** Boy, they always slow you up so bad here.

**F.O.:** That sun is gonna be just like it was takin' off in Cleveland yesterday, too. I'm just gonna close my eyes. (laughter) You holler when it looks like we're close. (laughter)

**Captain:** O.K. (sounds follow that are similar to electrical clicks and thumps) Whoa . . . hang on . . . hang on . . . hang on . . .

**F.O.:** Oh, (expletive).

**Captain:** Hang on. What the hell is this . . . What the . . . oh, God . . . oh, God . . .

**F.O.:** (expletive)

**Captain:** Pull.

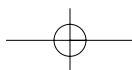
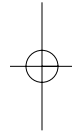
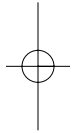
**F.O.:** Oh, (expletive).

**Captain:** Pull.

**F.O.:** God. (sound of screaming)  
No.

End of recording.

The plane's rudder had moved, forcing the plane to skid to the left. The jet then rolled and went into a 300-mile-an-hour corkscrew plunge to the ground, killing all 132 people on board. The safety board has not yet determined what caused the crash.

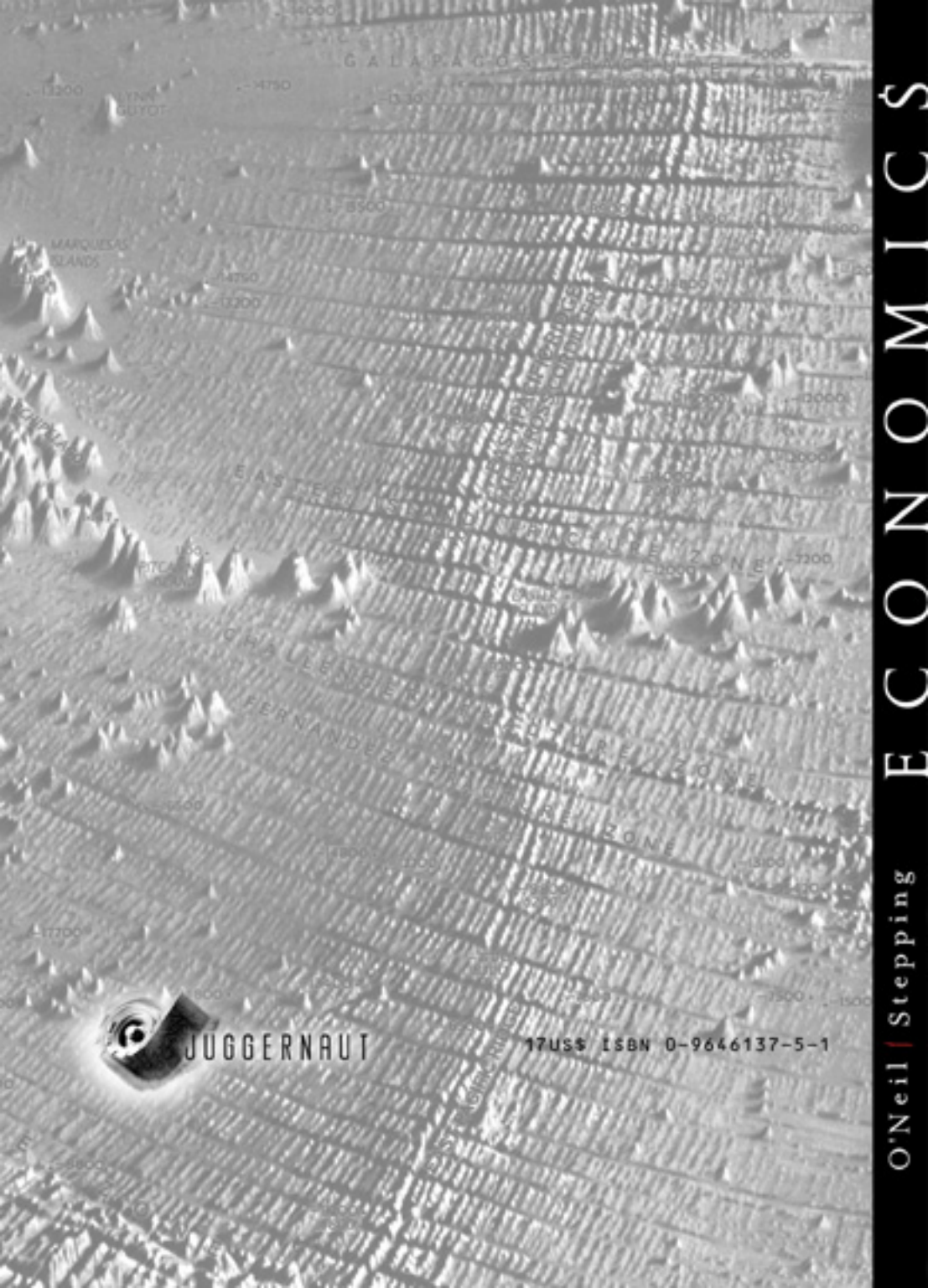




Poet and performer born in Pittsburgh, PA. This is his third book, following "BRICKS: A New Book of Poems" and "Memo To All Employees". He has been continuously employed as an internet consultant since 1998. He buys things on sale whenever possible. He used to be a paralegal. The Chicago Bulls basketball team is personally responsible for at least 8 of the top 50 moments of his life. He teaches poetry in the schools, see [www.poetryandtechnology.com](http://www.poetryandtechnology.com) for more.

His two favorite people in the world are, by coincidence, the only two he's helped make: CXO, (4 & 1/2), and CJO, (2 & 1/2). They are parishoners at Queen of Angels Catholic Church in Chicago.

Information architect and futurist. Currently home-based in San Francisco and responsible for ongoing development of truth-seeking ventures. Prefers working for the powers of good, not evil but will and often does negotiate.



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17US\$ ISBN 0-9646137-5-1

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