Baby Boomers: A Generation Going Broke
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Linda Ellorboo
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Che finger cl CBS or F
NBC or ABC." p. 23.
20 WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN?
By David Weir and Constance Matthiessen
The circle of poison, that is, from U.S. pesticide manufacturer to
Third World farm worker to your table. A dramatic update to the
story Mother jones broke a decade ago.
WOMEN ON THE VERGE OF A NERVY BREAKTHROUGH
A Forum by Peggy Orenstein
A behind-the-screens look at the television (old-boy) networks with
news correspondents Meredith Vieira and Ann Rubenstein and
producers Linda Ellerbee and Marion Goldin.
THE GREAT BOOMER BUST By Katy Butler
The biggest, best-educated generation naturally assumed it would
be richer than its parents. Now baby boomers are searching for
what it really means to grow up.
Lynda Barry on
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radlolovo.p.60 D I P A I ’I’ M I I ’I’ . i
2 BACKTALK 39 PREVIEWS
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1 BAD ATTITUDE By Barbara Ehrenretcb Africa, Susan Minofs pseudo-sado
What if those bilingual signs are all jokes stories, and more.
at our expense? i Viva English-Only! Ba’bam Eh’e’mm’ has a ’9" "ads
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53 TRIPS By Peter Nelson w ’ nglISh on Y F 7
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Timothy Learfs PF0t68$ Willie Hortonls a great pain. A farmerls almanac.
lament, the Dick Cheney that makes John
Tower seem the best guy for the job 56 OUT OF POCKET By Rory OTConnor
after all, etc. One Harvard MBA invests by the book.
The other follows the socially responsible
LATEST THINKING By Wendell Berry road less traveled. We follow both to their
Integration, dismtegratlon, and the bottom lines.
scorning of honest work.
’ 60 1619 EAST CROWLEY By Lynda Barry
In which Edna, our heroine, attempts to
meet Billy, the deejay who is so cool.
Bright Ilghts,
blg continent:
Now Afrlca’s the
hlp writer thing
to "do." Summer t’
loading, p- 39 The stolen future of Rio Frio. p. 20
Cover photograph by William Coupon

BACKTALK

Visualizing Fear

Sara Miles and Bob ()stertag ("Absolute, Diaholical Terror," April l89) did a remarkable job of portraying the grim and desperate Salvadoran reality.

Too often progressive publications paint black and white, good-guys-ys.-lmd-guys pictures of the Central American situation. The authors skipped the right/wrong judgment and instead took us to the scene-where the corpses are still warm and the emotion still r:1w_to let us decide for ourselves.

Hats off to these two journalists for providing a finely crafted and thorough overview of El Salvadorls unique form of misery.

DEIIJANES

Augustus Mame

Score Is Even

I was just about to let my subscription expire when suddenly your publication took a new lease on life! Some genius must have planned the new ambience, and the articles are ene thralling. The latest "whitewashingi, of Bush is priceless. Ilve read it over and over.

CHARLOTTE TOBIE

Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

Maybe Ilm just getting older and yearning for the way things used to be; maybe thatls why I don’t like the new Mother jones so much and why Ilm canceling my subscription after almost ten years.

I used to look to you for radical new thinking; these days I feel like Ilm getting writing directed to those wholve made it in America and are trying to reconcile that fact with their once-revolutionary thinking.

I guess the last straw was the new ethical investment feature advising me to buy stock in (Iumpbell’s Soup. While they may give cash to charities, theylre also responsible for the slaughter (and, I assume, chemical contamination) of cows, pigs, chickens, and whatever other creatures they put in their products.

Maybe Illl be back. I think youlre a talented, decent magazine, and HI keep an eye on you in the future.

ERIC SLADE

San Francisco, California

Bushwhacking

Since retiring from Atlanta to the bona fide boonies, I rarely see a current newspaper, but we do get a couple dozen magazines. Thank God Motherjones is one of them.

The piece by Molly Ivins (llThe Discreet Smarm of the Bushwazeef April 89) is one of the greatest, truest, saddest humorous commentaries we have ever come across. Please invite her back.

Ilm afraid this presidency without an agenda is beginning to play worrisomely like IISon of Calvin Coolidge-Part I? As near as I can tell, Bush doesnlt want to do a thing except be president. He went in with three things in mind: I) pledge allegiance at every opportunity; 2) don,t release Willie Horton on a terrified public; and 3) donlt raise taxes. Why anyone out there expected more is not

Clear to me.
SAM VEAL
Mount Airy. Georgia

Giving Peace a 10/0 Chance

In his brief and very useful review of ethically sound investment opportunities in the food industry (llGreen Groceries? Feb./March 89), Steven Ross confused the name of the 1% for Peace campaign with its goals (understandable, given the newness of our campaign).

1% for Peace is a new, nonprofit, nonpartisan initiative dedicated to mobilizing our nations resources for the cause of peace. We seek to unite business, government, and all concerned citizens in the critical work of

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A REMINDER FROM PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION OF AMERICA, 810 SEVENTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10019.

creating an ongoing process of peace-one that builds global understanding and cooperation through people-to-people initiatives. Our goals are twofold: to fund ongoing peace projects, and to persuade the govemment to reallocate 1 percent of the Defense Department budget to support a positive peace agenda.

Whether a business or an individual, anyone can help promote the cause of peace and support a positive peace agenda. For more information, write to: 1% for Peace, PO Box 658, Ithaca, NY 14851.

NEIL SCHWARTZBACH
Executive Director
Brooktondale, New York

Whats Up, Doc?

It seemed to me that Mark Dowie (IITransplant Feverf April I89) touched too lightly upon the IIcost-effectiveness of a dollar spent on a transplant to the same dollar spent preventing the organ disease that makes the transplant necessary?

Besides the financial cost, there is also the cost of human suffering to be considered. The need for a transplant constitutes a medical failure (except in the case of an accident, of course). If we were to invest our talent and resources in preventing illness, we would prevent the suffering and grief that result from illness.

Why isn,t the medical establishment vigorously pursuing prevention? I suggest that one reason is because it would mean less income for vested interests like pharmaceutical companies, diagnostic labs, private hospitals, medical groups, and their suppliers.

BINA ROBINSON
Center for Scientihc Information on Vivisection
Swain, New York

Labor Lessons in Session

I cant believe what I read in your article IINew Believersll (April I89). Evidently your author, Bill McKibben, and current union leaders believe that the new union victories are just now proving that women and immigrants can organize. Who the hell do they think organized the ILGWU, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the Cigar Makers, and the other early urban unions? Women and immigrants, thafs who!

Furthermore, I am enraged by your use of the bosses) term IIreplacement workers" for people properly known as IIscabsf,

I know your hearts are in the right places, but please learn some labor history!

JUDITH SEID
Ann Arbor, Michigan

As a striking plywood mill worker I found your article llNew Believersw very interesting, especially the idea of picketing the homes of the bosses. We who are employed by Roseburg Forest Products, the nations largest privately owned wood-products manufacturer, have been on strike for over two months now. were fighting wage cuts that average a dollar an hour. RFP is in absolutely no financial trouble; in fact, they admit to record profits made last year.

Its refreshing to see laborers like the laundry workers, Harvard clericals, and hotel

workers fight back and win some victories. Here in the Pacific Northwest the wood and mill workers have suffered some heart-breaking defeats in the past few years. All the experts are saying that strikes arenlt effective in this new era of labor and management relations. There is a word for what theyIre telling us-Bullshit!

GENE LAWHORN
Sutherlin, Oregon

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people, things,
and ideas. But
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hell of a id: in
he war on words.
Illustration by Hal Mayfortb
BAD ATTITUDE
By Barbara Ebrenreich
HOSE ENGLISH-ONLY TYPES HAVE FINALLY
gone too far. It all started with the commend-
able impulse to keep public-health doctors
from communicating with immigrants in a
language they can understand. At least this
was the original modest intent of the Suffolk County,
New York, English-only bill. And since even us real
Americans canlt always grasp the complex vocabulary
of medical science (you know, lldeductiblef ilunreim-
bursable procedure? llcoinsurancef and so forth), why
should a bunch of foreigners have the advantage?
But then the English-only people got carried away.
First they took away the au pairs, divas, and masseurs.
Then they moved in on the states and California street
names. La Cienaga Boulevard became Swamp Street.
Colorado became Colored (until, of course, an emer-
gency referendum renamed it Greater Denver). Next, it
was the turn of the legal profession, which-without its
amicuses and de jures-was left speechless for upward
of 20 minutes. After that, a hush fell over the literati,
deprived as they were of the delicate frissons, scandales,
and folies with which they had for so long maintained
their esprit. I didnlt utter a word of protest, I blush to
admit, not even when quiche turned into egg pie.
1 used to be gung ho for English-only myself, on the
grounds that my ancestors had spoken English-only for
at least 20 generations, and not much of it at that-idle
chitchat being considered a sign of insecurity or ill in-
tent. The less sophisticated of my forebears avoided
foreigners at all costs, for the very good reason that, in
Drawin the Line
their circles, speaking in tongues was commonly a pre-
lude to snake handling. The more tolerant amongst us
regarded foreign languages as a kind of speech impedi-
ment that could be overcome by willpower. When con-
fronted by one of the afflicted, we would speak very
s-l-o-w-l-y and loudly, repeating ourselves until the poor
soul caught on, or-as was more often the case-ran off
in search of more quick-witted company.
Of course, people are drawn to English-only for all
kinds of good reasons. Some of them, for example, have
been to Paris, where they strayed from the Holiday Inn
and were spat upon by waiters for ordering tlun-coffeell
or licroy-sintsf, Others Of them are driven by the fear,
mounting to panic in the border states, that the United
States will experience the same fate as Canada. And we
all know what happened to Canada, which was once a
semitropical paradise-famed for its tempestuous
rhythms and piquant cuisine-until the tragic imposi-
tion of bilingualism rendered it large, cold, and boring.
Then there is the fear, common to all English-only
speakers, that the chief purpose of foreign languages is
to make fun of us. Otherwise, you know, why not just
come out and say it? NO FUMAR, for example. I used to
see it all over the place, and who knows what that
means-CHILL OUT, GRINGO FOOL, maybe? Or that
inscrutable message inscribed in so many airplane rest-
rooms: POR FAVOR NO TIRAR EL PAPEL DENTRO DEL
INODORO. What is that supposed to mean? Do YOUR-
SELF A FAVOR AND SOAK YOUR UGLY ANGLO HEAD IN
THE TOILET? And if that isnlt what it means, why do I

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see so many foreigners-no doubt bi-
lingualists-winking and smirking as if they
knew something we didnt?
But the real motive is patriotism. Look,
we cant keep out foreign people, without
whom we,d have to bus our own dishes,
clean our own houses, and manage our own
factories. And we carft keep out foreign
things, without which thereld be no color
TVs, calculators, or Nintendo. 50 we can at
least draw the line at words; and words are
important because they are so often the un-
witting carriers of ideas. Think of the for-

eign ideas that have leaked in over the last two hundred years and the trouble that could have been saved by stopping them dead at the border: communism, Catholicism, calculus, and cubism-not to mention Freudianism, existentialism, fascism, and french fries.

For there can be no more ancient and traditional American value than ignorance. English-only speakers brought it with them to this country three centuries ago, and they quickly imposed it on the Africans-who were not allowed to learn to read and write-and on the Native Americans, who were simply not allowed. Today, our presidents and vice presidents proudly stand ready to prove in a court of law that they donlt know anything and have forgotten what they did know. In fact, the original anti-immigrant movement of the 19th century, the forerunner of English-only, called itself, appropriately, the llKnow-Nothingsfi They believed, as many patriots still do, that the mind of America should remain a-how do you put it in English?-blank slate?

But the movement has finally gone too far. It was a professor at Dartmouth, I believe, who first pointed out that English itself is a mongrel language-a corruption of the pure Saxon spoken by my ancestors before the disastrous events of 1066. Then a team of linguists at the Heritage Foundation issued the Hrst lTSaxon-only" manifesto, listing the many social problems that could be eliminated immediately by expunging all traces of foreign (i.e., Romance-language) influence: homosexuality, pornography, pederasty, feminism, and democracy-and thatls just for starters!

There are advantages, I mean, good things, about this Saxon-only thing. Like its nice I can carry the Oxford Unabridged Dictionary in my hip pocket now. And I donlt need a lot of big words to express-l mean, say, what I gotta say. And were all Americans now, no leill or tlmultil, nothing. But therels something about this language-you know, talking-thing that makes me feel sort of, well-how do you say it in Saxon? Dumb, you know what Fm trying to say? Real dumb. 3

doctor, but some call
hlm the now Timothy
Loary.
_fr0_11t
OnD ugs
HEN TERENCE MCKENNA HEARS TODA s then let them decide? What about those too desperate to
all-out antidrug rhetoric, he just says make a sound choice? uIn a caring society there w ould not
whoa. Via seminars, taped lectures, and be this tremendous desire to dull ourselvesfl
two books, McKenna stakes 0th the pro- Which leads to McKennas big claim: Psychedelics ca n
psychedelic position: llWhat people Object to enable us to create a caring society by lld isso ving bound-
about drugs is that they cause an unexamined, obsessive, atiesll in our minds, thereby fr eeing us from "male domi-
and destructive behavior. This is precisely what psyche- nance 3nd rationalism? Drug and computer technologies
delics mitigate against. They dissolve behavioral patterns. will merge in the next few de cades, says the 41-year-old
bring habits and unexamined attitudes forward in sometime hacker. lllt will lead to compu ters that you place
the consciousness to be looked at.n We need to under your tongue." Will that lead to mind control or
better define lldrugf McKenna argues. Until then, mind xpansion? McKenna wonit bet yet: u Thatls why
ua relatively harmless substance like marijuana is drug education is so key? Meanwhile, h e offers his own
inveighed against, while extremely insidious drugs drug test: "Does it occur in nature? 1 5 it already close to
like television, alcohol, and cocaine have been al- com wounds naturally present in the h uman brain? Does it
feghnolggy, lowed to take over the American psyche? Better, he have a history of human us age for thousands of years?
says, to fully inform kids about each drug, Wand Mushrooms do. Mescaline does. LSD and Ec stasy donlt."
-Kat/7ryn Olney
is eyes have seen
the coming of a
new psychedelic
Photograph by Howard Rosenberg MOTHER JONES 9

The Best
Man
T LEAST jOHN TOW-
erls door would
have been revolv-
ing. judging from his record,
Dick Cheney will take his off
the hinges when weapons con-
tractors are near, then bolt it
shut when the American peo-
ple want to look in. Our new
secretary of defense . . .
l Earned a full 100 index
rating from the Conservative
Digest last year. Among its cri-
teria: votes for maximum con-
tra aid, for full SDI funding,
for a bill that would
have violated the
ABM treaty, against
complying with a
SALT Il treaty limit on
ICBM warheads.
l Said he wasnlt
troubled by Oliver
Northis late-hour
. shredding of Iran-con-
tra documents because all
White House officials destroy
sensitive documents.
i Invoked the ghosts of Lin-
coln and FDR to argue, in
1987, for the lleonstitutionally
invincible right of President
Reagan to solicit private or
foreign-nation funds for the
contrasf, Officials like North
have the same right, llwhen
acting to further the presi-
dentls national security goals?
l Pushed to eliminate all
restrictions on CIA dealings
with the contras. Voted to
recognize the contras as the
legitimate government of
Nicaragua.
lOpposed cutting chemical
weapons in Europe.
lArgued, in 1987, for llthe
simplicityn of basing a new
generation of ICBM nuclear
missiles on railroad cars
parked on military bases. That
way, llThere would be mini-
mal public interference with
lCBMs except when deployed
in a crisis? -Micbae1Robin
and Ise Bosch
Io jUNI; 1989
Between, Always
OST PEOPLE THINK WAR IS ABOUT
maneuvering armies," writes Le
Ly Hayslip, ubut it is really about
displaced civilians. For every soldier who
went to battle, :1 hundred Civilians moved
ahead of him_to get out of his way; or
behind him_following in his wake the way
leaves are pulled along in :1 cyclone, hoping
to live off his garbage, his money, and when
all else fails, his mercy."
Hayslip knows well. By the time she was

15 she had been recruited by the Vietcong,
imprisoned and tortured by the US.-
backcd South Vietnamese army, and then
raped and nearly executed by the VC. Later
she tried befriending U.S. soldiers. One tried
to strangle her. Now living in Southern
California, Hayslip is founder of the East
Meets West Foundation, 3 Rancho Bernar-
do-based nonprofit that llre-enlistsli U.S.
veterans to help build rural medical clinics
in Vietnam. Her memoir, When Heaven
and Earth Changed
Places, cowritten by u" yo" hav. "0’
Jay Wurts, is out from
Doubleday. llIf you
have not yet found the end ofyour
peace at the end of
Your war? Hayslip war, find it here."
writes to those scarred
by Vietnam, nI hope you will find it here?
Not everyone, apparently, is ready, or able,
to be healed. After a chapter was excerpted
in the Los Angeles Times Magazine, Hay-
slip received death threats over the phone.
-Karen Evans
yet found peace a
Photographs by Al Seib/LA Times (Hayslip)
and Scott Daw’s/Dept. ofDefense

WWIIEEEIIEW?
The President, Governors, Senators and
There are so many practical uses for this book but let me give you
Representatives - who are they really? What are their just one:
backgrounds in service, education. business and family?
How much money did they spend getting elected and
where did it come from? How did they vote on important
issues that concern you?
Every citizen should know the answer to these and many more
You are moving to u new area of the country, a new job. or
planning your retirement i
’ Think how important it is for you to know the status of the
local economy and understand the historical and social
reasons for that status
- The population profile of your new area will certainly affect
your new lifestyle. Ethnic groups. income levels and house
ing values are all identified.
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records. and personal outlines will all be at your tingertipx.
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cover for only $39.95 (save $5.00)i
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age citizen to keep track of the immense structure that is our
government.
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Outfronti
t
From NAVSTAR 10
your VCR: First Strike
ls out through the Ed-
ucatlonal Fllm Prolect
in Oakland, CA. The
White Rose Collealve
In Venlco, CA, aids
Komlsuruk.
Horton on
Atwater
E INSISTS ITIS WILLIAM HORTON, NOT
Willie. And the ilrevolving doorn commer-
cial that made the twice-convieted rapist’s
name a household word last summer lltook
away? he says, llfrom the real issues of the cam-
paign. There are more important things than
William Horton? Tell that, though, to the more
than 75 reporters and would-be biographers Hor-
ton says he,s had to fend off since. llMoney isnIt
everything. Itls your morals. One guy tried to lure
me with how much of a cut lid get. I donlt think he
I2 JUNE 1989
p
Katya
Strikes Again
a
ARLY IN THE MORNING OFJUNE 2,1987,
Katya Komisaruk broke into the Vandenberg
Air Force Base, smashed a NAVSTAR com-
puter that could aid first-strike accuracy for US.
nuclear missiles, left a box of cookies (Ilfor the
guards to defusell), and turned herself in. Her jury
was barred from hearing any of her antinuclear ra-
tionale, not even the term llnuclear missile? Her
sentence: five years in a Spokane, Washington, pris-
on. While the European press played it big, her story
faded quickly here. Until now. First Strike: Portrait
of an Activist, a new video "
documentary about Komi- "9ruimG3 I
saruk by producer/director
Doug Dibble, is just out. decided ’0 bung
Komisaruk approves of the
video, but wishes Ilthey,d
shown what a shit I was to live mg’o m.;hin..ll
with before the trial? In pris-
on she,s studying law and Spanish, playing the pen-
ny whistle, and learning to juggle. llRevolutionary
activity should be as lighthearted and amusing as
possiblef, she says. IIItls necessary always to doubt,
to re-evaluate what youire doing, and to make fun
of yourself? Not that she has many second
thoughts. Though she wants to discuss the technical
side of nuclear strategy, Komisaruk suspects the U5.
press has ignored her because of two biases: it won,t
take seriously an articulate anarchist, nor a woman
who acts lipassionately, maternally? Komisaruk
worries that First Strike will prompt fellow pacifists
to place her on a pedestal. lll get a lot of mail from
people who say, II wish I had your courage, but I
don,t.l I hate to see that kind of reaction? Mean-
while, she is making clothes for the child she wants
to adopt. -Peter Livingston and 158 Bosch
away on a nasty
was concerned with the truth of my case. I need
money like anyone else, but Im not into it that
much. Why would I do something that would hurt 3:32.21):
me even morePII an oppgmnm,
Horton wonlt say whether he was unfairly eon- and used If.
victed, other than to assert, llNo one knows the He’d hawk.

truth about my case? And though heis aware that #:3752111, "9
Lee Atwater was behind the ad that made him in- Dukakls."
famous, Horton wonlt umake judgments,
about the new Republican party chairman:
llIld be doing the same thing back to him
that he did to me? But Horton thinks the
commercialls impact will last far beyond
the Bush presidency. lllt just reinforced
what people think and set blacks back 50
years. They didnlt care anything about me
or my case, they just used me?
aKat/vryn Olney
Phorogmpbs by Ron Boyer/ White Rose Collective
and Wide World (Atwater)

MOTHER JONES,
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nonymity is powerful. It allows excess without
accountability, Violation without blame, and, all too
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organization, and all contributions inrluding stole are lzixrdeducllhle.

Which way to America? From left:
Corey Glover, Will Calhoun, Muu
Skillings, Vernon loid.
plc. So much of what you ace in modern black music is very surface kinds of emotional things. . . . The market-placc has dictated to black music for so long what it has to bc, in a way Itls hccomc frightened; itls afraid of its own instincts. ltls afraid to bc lookcd upon as radical or too wild, so cvcrything gets inwrtcd. It becomes slick and controlled. . . . ln 111amstrcam black music the range is very compressed; like 5cxual SltlethIlb or romantic sltUJtIOIlS. the man always has the upper hand. Its very cut and dried. To look at1t, people would think that thatls all black pcoplc think or care about?
What Rcid cares about comes through loud and clear in his song like ltWhich Way to America," with its outta ted chant: Where is my tucker fence, my ling ’he term "bunk cool glass of 1817102111118? "You know," rock" is redundant says Reid, tlsomc writers think thcvltc
Basic Black
IVINL, (LomUR HA5 Tm. EHRONTERY To LAY
claim to thc black heritage of rock and roll. Not tap, not R&B, but good old assaultivc hard rock. Virtuoso lcadtguitatist chon Rcid is the main instigatot. As asoinct1nicmusic krlth for thc lrlil/ugc) V0151) and a toundcr of New YorkB Black Rock Coali-tion, Rad lx’Ccps driving thc point home: the term tlhlack rockn is in fact staggeringly redundant. "lltls really a complctc LOIIHIICHIJFY on that CllflOUb relationship of blacks and Wltitcs 111 America: how somcthing can start out hcmg minplctcly a black thing and in the space of one gcncration it hccomcs completely alien for a black to do1t1 ltls bizarre. . . . In order for black pcoplc to be in rock itls as if they haw to hccomc this neutral thing they
living Colour is
the best proof that
have to dutancc themsclvcs from the rest of black cult turc. The only way you can participate 15 ifyou have the IIIIICIISC desire to bc whitc. And thcrcls thc conundrum, hccausc cvcn With that desire, you will never be whitcfl Rad says that Vivid, thc group’s recent gold record, is a rats attempt to convey the interior lives of black peo-
14 jUNh1939
paying us a compliment by saying, (31056 your eyes and put this record on and itls just like any rock bandf Thatls the worst thing to 111C. That’s the farthest from what we really want to accomplish. lf assimilation means neutralization, I’m completely against thatfl
- Pam 11m B rozwz
Photograph by lvf/cry cht’bmy

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do It. ltk hlzurrc. . . . 1n urdcr for black people to he in
rock It’s us If thcy have to hccomc this neutral thmg, thcy
huvc to distuntr thcmsclvcs from the rest of black culB
turc. ’l’hc only way you um participutc lb ifyou haw thc
mtcnsc dcslrc U) be whltc. And thcrck thc conundrum,
hccausc cvcn thh that dcsim you will never be white."
Rcld says that Vivid, the group’s rcccnt gold record, IS
a rare attcmpt to convey the mrcrior lives of black 1360-
14 jUNL198k)
lllllllllIllII’llIlllllllllllhlll’lll!llllIlllllllll
chant: Where 15 my pzcker fence, my long ""’ "" "’ -...-..
tool glass of lemonade? "You knowf
says Rud, Hsomc writers think thcyhrc
paylng us a compliment hy suymg. "Close your eyes and
put this record on and itys just like any rock bandf
Thutk the worst thing to mct Thutk the farthest from
what we really want to accomplish. It assimilation
means neutralization, I’m complctcly against that.n
-thmm B mum
rock" is redundant.
Pbutugmpb lzr jt’ffz’ry Nm’lmry

Introduci 11g
S
For Women
Who Never
Thou htThe
g eadMs y
Whittla Woomg; 7%? Guidr :0
MS
0
Youire in for a shock. A real eye- Ms. is the only place youlll find
opener. Because Ms. is now the CYNDI a late-breaking news section with
magazine for you. L AUPER all the news that affects women.
Itls a whole different magazine. lsshe 5m: havingfun? Status reports on women, break-
through stories about the things
you care about, a real understand-
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Under new ownership, and new .; w
management, it,s been totally v
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True Integration
The roof of our
racial problem
is not racism.
It lies in our
scorning of
fundamental,
inescapable,
honest work.
16 JUNE I989
ECENTIX I ATTENDED THE COMMENCEMENT
exercises of a California university at which
the graduates of the school of business wore
FOR SALE signs around their necks. It was
done as a joke, ofeourse, a display ofyouthful
high spirits, and yet it was inescapably a cynical joke,
of the sort by which an embarrassing truth is
Haunted. For, in fact, these graduates were for sale,
they knew that they were, and they intended to be.
They had just spent four years at a university to
increase their llmarketabilityfl That some of the
young women in the group undoubtedly were femi-
nists only made the joke more cynical. But what
Inost astonished and alarmed me was that a number
of these graduates for sale were black. Had their
forebears served and suffered and struggled in Amer-
ica for 368 years in order for these now certified and
privileged few to sell themselves?
How, remembering their history, could those
black graduates have worn those signs? Only. I
think, by assuming, in very dangerous innocence.
that their graduation into privilege exempted them
from history. The danger is that there is no safety, no
dependable safety, in privilege that is founded on
greed, ignorance, and waste. And these people, after
all, will remain black. What sign will they wear be-
sides their expensive suits by which the police can tell
them from their unemployed and unemployable
brothers and sisters of the inner city?
L TEST THINKING
By Wendell Berry
Tm: ROOT or ()UR RACIAL PROBLEM IN AMERICA IS
not racism. The root is in our inordinate desire to be
superior-not to some inferior or subject people,
though this desire leads to the subjection ofpeople-
but to our condition. We wish to rise above the sweat
and bother of taking care of anything-of ourselves,
of each other, or of our country. We did not enslave
African blacks because they were black, but because
their labor promised to free us of the obligations of
stewardship, and because they were unable to pre-
vent us from enslaving them. They were eco-
nomically valuable and militarily weak.
It seems likely, then, that what we now call racism
came about as a justification of slavery after the fact,
not as its cause. We decided that blacks were inferior
in order to persuade ourselves that it was all right to
enslave them. That this is true is suggested by our
present treatment of other social groups to whom we
assign the laborious jobs of earetaking. For it is not
only the racial minorities who receive our indif-
ference or contempt, but economic or geographic
minorities as well. Anyone who has been called Tired-
neekil or llhillbillyll or llhiekll or sometimes even
lleountry personl, or llfarmer" shares with racial mi-
norities the experience of a stigmatizing social preju-
dice. And such terms as "redneckla and llhillbillyl,
and llhickll have remained acceptable in public use
long after the repudiation of such racial epithets as
llniggerll and llgreaser." llRednecks" and llhill-
billiesll and "hicks" are scorned because they do

what used to be known as "nigger yyorkla_work
that is fundamental and inescapable. And it should
not be necessary to point out the connection between
the oppression of women and the general contempt
for household work. It is well established among us
that you may hold up your head in polite society
with a public lie in your mouth or other peoples
money in your pocket or innocent blood on your
hands, but not with dishwater on your hands or mud
on your shoes.
What we did not understand at the time of slavery,
and understand poorly still, is that this presumption
of the inferiority of economic groups is a contagion
that we cannot control, for the presumed inferiority
of workers inevitably infects the quality of their
work, which inevitably infects the quality of the
workplace, which is to say the quality of the country
itself. When a nation determines that the work of
providing and earetaking is "nigger work" or work
for tlhillbillies" or "redneeksll-that is, fundamen-
tal, necessary, inescapable, and inferior-then it has
implanted in its own soul the infection of its ruin.
The problem of race, nevertheless, is generally
treated as if it could be solved merely by recruiting
more blacks and other racial minorities into colleges
and then into high-paying jobs. This is to assume.
simply, that we can solve the problems of racial mi-
norities by elevating them to full partnership in the
problems of the racial majority. We assume that
when a young black person acquires a degree and
Photograph by U111 Sre/rzer. The New Americans, New Sage Press

Frans Lantlng
But It A Shame?
You had no idea, did you, that a seemingly harmless piece of plastic could bccomc an implement of death to an innocent sczl creature? Yet it happens, unfbrtunzltcl): on a grand scale.
Tons of plastic material are lost or dumped into the oceans each y 11f, imperiling thc livcs of hundreds of thousands of aquatic animals. Plastic bugs, six-pack yokcs, fishing ncts and other materials can trap fish, mammals. turtles and birds, causing death by drowning 0r strangulation. Sometimes animals got sick or starve when they cut plastic that they mistake for food.
But plastics pollution is prcvcntzthlc. ’lhc National Wildlife Federation is dull-cutcd to protecting America’s precious rcsourccs - our land, ()ur wutcrs, our pcoplc, ()ur wildlife.
You czm hc :1 part of thc effort. join thc National Wildlife Federation IAH2 16th Strcct. NWC Washington. I)(l 20056-2266.
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Working for tho Nature of lnmormwm
NATIONAL WI LDLIFE FEDERATION

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Every year, we graduate fifty
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election set for 2008.
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achieves a sit-down job with a corporation,
the problem is to that extent solved.
The larger, graver, more dangerous prob-
lem, however, is that we have thought of no
better way of solving the race problem. The
llsuccessll of the black corporate executive,
in fact, only reveals the shallowness, the
jeopardy, and the falseness of the llsuccessil
of the white corporate executive. This lisuc-
cess" is a private and highly questionable
settlement that does not solve, indeed does
not refer to, the issues associated with Amer-
ican racism. It only assumes that American
blacks will be made better or more useful or
more secure by becoming as greedy, selfish,
wasteful, and thoughtless as affluent Ameri-
can whites. The aims and standards of the
oppressors become the aims and standards
of the oppressed, and so our ills and evils
survive our successive llliberations."
THERE IS NO SAFETY IN BELONGING TO THE
select few, for minority people or anybody

else. If we are looking for insurance against want and oppression, we will find it only in our neighbors prosperity and goodwill and, beyond that, in the good health of our worldly places, our homelands. If we were sincerely looking for a place of safety, for real security and success, then we would begin to turn to our communities_and not the communities simply of our human neighbors, but also of the water, earth, and air, the plants and animals, all the creatures with whom our local life is shared. We would be looking too for another kind of freedom. Our present idea of freedom is only the freedom to do as we please: to sell ourselves for a high salary, a home in the suburbs, and idle weekends. But that is a freedom dependent upon affluence, which is in turn dependent upon the rapid consumption of exhaustible supplies. The other kind of freedom is the freedom to take care of ourselves and of each other. The freedom of affluence opposes and contradicts the freedom of community life.

Our place of safety can only be the community, and not just one community, but many of them everywhere. All that we still claim to value depends on that: freedom, dignity, health, mutual help and affection, undestructive pleasure, and the rest. Human life, as most of us still would like to define it is community life.

How, then, can ilirttegratioiiil be achieved -and what can it mean-in communities that are conspicuously disintegrating? Mostly, we do not speak of our society as disintegrating. We would prefer not to call what we are experiencing social disintegration. But we are endlessly preoccupied with the symptoms: divorce, venereal disease, murder, rape, debt, bankruptcy, pornography, soil loss, teenage pregnancy, fatherless children, motherless children, child suicide, public child care, retirement homes, nursing homes, toxic waste, soil and water and air pollution, government secrecy, government lying, government crime, civil violence, drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, abortion as iibirth controlf the explosion of garbage, hopeless poverty, unemployment, unearned wealth. All the plagues ofour time are symptoms of a general disintegration.

We are capable, really, only of the forcible integration of centralization-economic, political, military, and educational-and always at the cost of social and cultural disintegration. Our aim, it would appear, is to ilintegrate" ourselves into a limitless military-industrial city in which we all will be lost, and so may do as we please in the freedom either to run wild until we are caught or killed, or to do hall the things that other people do?

People dont work or shop or amuse themselves or go to church or school in their own neighborhoods anymore, and are therefore free to separate themselves from their workplaces and economic sources, and to sort themselves into economic categories in which, having no need for each other, they remain strangers. I assume that this is bad

because I assume that it is good for people to know each other. I assume, especially, that it is good for people to know each other across the lines of economy and vocation. Professional people should know their clients outside their offices. Teachers should know the families of their students. University professors and intellectuals should know the communities and the households that will be affected by their ideas. Rich people and poor people should know each other. If this familiar knowledge does not exist, then these various groups will think of each other and deal with each other on the basis of stereotypes as vicious and ultimately as dangerous as the stereotypes of race.

A TRUE AND APPROPRIATE ANSWER TO OUR race problem, as to many others, would be a restoration of our communities-it being understood that a community, properly speaking, cannot exclude or mistreat any of its members. This is what we forgot during slavery and the industrialization that followeds and have never remembered.

A proper community, we should remember also, is a commonwealth: a place, a resource, and an economy. It answers the needs, practical as well as social and spiritual, of its members-among them the need to need one another. The answer to the present alignment of political power with wealth is the restoration of the identity of community and economy.

Is this something the government could help with? Of course it is. Community cannot be made by government prescription and mandate, but the government, in its proper role as promoter of the general welfare, preserver of the public peace, and forbidder of injustice, could do much to promote the improvement of communities. If it wanted to, it could end its collusion with the wealthy and the corporations and the llspecial interests? It could stand, as it is supposed to, between wealth and power. It could assure the possibility that a poor person might hold office. It could protect, by strict forbiddings, the disruption of the integrity of a community or a local economy or an ecosystem by any sort of commercial or industrial enterprise, that is, it could enforce proprieties of scale. It could understand that economic justice does not consist in giving the most power to the most money.
The government could do such things.
But we know well that it is not going to do them; it is not even going to consider doing them, because community integrity, and the decentralization of power and economy that it implies, is antithetical to the ambitions of the corporations. The governments aim, therefore, is racial indifference, not integrated communities. Does this mean that our predicament is hopeless? No. It only means that our predicament is extremely unfavorable, as the human predicament has often been.
What the government will or will not do is finally beside the point. If people do not have the government they want, then they will have a government that they must either change or endure. Finally, all the issues that I have discussed here are neither political nor economic, but moral and spiritual. What is at issue is our character as a people. It is necessary to look beyond the government to the possibility-one that seems to be growing-that people will reject what have been the prevailing assumptions, and begin to strengthen and defend their communities on their own.
We must be aware too of the certainty that the present way of things will eventually fail. If it fails quickly, by any of several predicted causes, then we will have no need, being absent, to worry about what to do next. If it fails slowly, and if we have been careful to preserve the most necessary and valuable things, then it may fail into a restoration of community life-that is, into understanding of our need to help and comfort each other.
Wendell Berryls The Hidden Wound, 75m published in 1970, has just been reissued by North Point Press. This essay is taken from a new afterward he wrote for the book.

Photographs by Pablo Cabaa’o

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Editoris Note: Ten years ago, reporters from Mother jones magazine and the Center for Investigative Reporting collaborated on a series of stories, TTThe Corporate Crime of the Century? which exposed corporate hdumpingf the export of hazardous products from the United States to the Third World. The crime continues, with especially painful consequences in faraway villages and fields largely obscured from public view.

Last fall we sent two reporters and a translator into a remote plantation in Costa Rica to untangle the story of 105 afectados (the affected ones)-a group of more than one thousand workers who have paid a high price for this kind of dumping. What follows is the workers story, the details of the corporate decision to expose them to a hazardous pesticide, and news about the legal effort to bring them a measure of justice.

TTLoo/z at the mess wave got ourselves intof Colonel Aureliano Buendfa said at that time, bjust because we invited a gringo to eat some bananas. Ti

-Gabriel Garcia Marquez,
One Hundred Years of Solitude

i0 Frio is a town that never quite happened. Across mountains that separate Costa Ricats stormy Atlantic plain from the capital city of San Jose, it is set in the middle of a vast plantation, a clutch of flimsy buildings dwarfed by miles of banana plants shuddering in a muggy wind. We,ve put a call out over the radio, asking the men who call themselves los afectados-the affected ones-to meet us here. were hoping that at least a few will turn up to discuss the

3y Md Wolrrund ch-nieo Mullhluun ’

turn their lives have taken. To our surprise, about 70 dark, wiry men with open shirts and heavy mustaches, many with machetes strapped to their belts, are already gathered in the community center, and more continue to arrive.

The sky blackens as morning stretches into afternoon and the rains return, hammering loudly 0n the open-air buildings tin roof. Most of the men smoke and trade jokes, but one sits slightly apart.

Pedro Carrillo Dover, clear-eyed and articulate, leans forward in his chair as he explains that he came to Rio Frio 19 years ago hoping to break away from a dead-end past. The way out seemed to be the banana plantation run by Standard Fruit (owned, in turn, by Castle & t . Cooke, Inc., one of the worlds largest

Pesticide Dumps-
And a Boomerang

he problem of 9dumpingll-the practice of shipping banned, hazardous chemicals and products to other countries-has persisted over the past ten years. In addition to the resulting illnesses and deaths elsewhere, there is often a boomerang effect for US. consumers, especially in the case of pesticides, since much of the produce we eat is grown in other countries.

Here,s a reporterls notebook:

Total volume, in pounds, of bananas imported by the United States from 1983 to 1985:. . .17,620,058,245

Total number of imported bananas tested for pesticide residues during the same period: 160

Percentage of pesticides exported from the United States that are restricted or illegal to use inside the country: 25

Estimate of the number poisoned by pesticides annually: ..... approximately 1 million

Estimate of number killed by pesticide poisoning annually: 20,000

Percentage of all pesticides that are used in the Third World: 20

Percentage of pesticide accidents that occur in the Third World: . . 50 percent of poisonings, 90 percent of deaths

Odds of being poisoned by pesticides in Central America as opposed to in the United States: 1,800:1

Percentage of produce imported by the United States and other industrialized countries that is pesticide-contaminated: . . 50 or more

Percentage of all U.S. food imports tested for

Percentage of food imported by the United States that the government believes to be contaminated: ..... 5 .3

Percentage of food identified by the FDA as Mario ZumbadOShrst wife left him food-production conglomerates). Rio Frio was supposed to be just a way station, a place to make some money before getting on with things. When Pedro escaped from the town ten years ago, he never intended to come back.

Returning today makes him feel as if he,d never left. Hels uneasy and ashamed, he says, looking around at the other men. 9Do people on the outside know what has happened? he asks quietly. 9Do they know about us?

11How could they?" breaks in another man who has been standing nearby. mfhis problem doesnlt have a name. Its so big. You have to be inside it to understand what it is like."

MORE THAN A THOUSAND MILES AWAY, JACK DEMENT settles into a high-backed executivels chair in Castle 86 Cookels boxy Dole skyscraper, located in one of the many shopping malls that smother the landscape around Boca Raton, Florida. Dement chain-smokes Salems, speaking with a gravelly voice and grumpy amiability about his job, which keeps him on the road 960 percent of the timef perpetually jet-lagged, inspecting company property from the Philippines to Honduras.

Dementls leather jacket, stained Polo shirt, and gruff manner set him apart from the gray-suited company men around him. Hels been with the firm for 25 years, and he is a field man, not a paper shuffler. Among other responsibilities, Dement oversees which chemicals are used at the companyls banana plantations; thatls how his life converges with Pedro Carrillols, even though the two men have never met.

The banana business has always been a tough one, mainly because the commercial life of the fruit_from harvest to breakfast table-is short and unforgiving. One of Castle 86 Cookes biggest pest problems at its banana plantations is the

nematode, a microscopic worm that feeds on the roots of plants. By the late 19605, the nematode population had risen dramatically. Luckily for banana growers, two of the worlds largest chemical companies-Dow Chemical and Shell Oil-had come up with a chemical, dibromo-ehloropropane (DBCP), to combat nematodes.

(In the late 19505, separate scientific studies sponsored by the two manufacturers revealed that DBCP damaged the testicles and reduced the sperm count of laboratory animals. But over the subsequent 20 years neither company included this information on its product labels. Government officials aware of the results approved the DBCP labels despite these findings.)

9What made lDBCPl so fantastic was that it killed the nematodes pesticide-tainted, but WhiCh Still has been after his exposure to the chemical DBCP. without hurting the crop;, Dement allowed to reach consumers: 60
tion, causing only poisonings and pollution: 99
- Craig Karmin

W

says. By 1971, Castle 85 Cooke was sending regular shipments of DBCP to its banana plantations in Costa Rica. Although he didnlt know it at the time, Dement had helped make a decision that was to change permanently the lives of Pedro Carrillo and his fellow banana workers in a

way that none of them could
have imagined.
BANANA PLANTS ARE GIANT
herbs that grow up to 25 feet
high. They mature quickly and
must be tended carefully along
the way. After several months, a
large purple bud forms at the
center of the leaf cluster, then
slowly opens to expose a dou-
ble row of flowers that develop
into llhandsli of 10 to 20 ltfin-
gersll each. Over the following
four months, these tiny ba-
nanas gradually fatten as they
grow ripe.
Work on the banana planta-
tion builds to harvest time,
when the bananas are picked,
sorted, fumigated, and boxed
for the trip to foreign markets.
At Rio Frio and at Standard
Fruitls other big plantation in
the remote Valle de la Estrella
(Valley of the Star), Pedro Car-
rillo and his coworkers say they
were instructed to mix DBCP
(which they called llNemagonf
the Shell trade name) with water and pour it into canisters
called picbingas for transportation to the field. Then they
filled their injectors, which resembled mammoth hypodermic
needles, and injected DBCP into the soil around the base of
the banana plants.
Workers told us they were frequently doused with the
chemical when it spilled from the pickingas onto their backs
and arms. tllt felt hot at First, and stinging? one worker says.
llThen it refreshed you, like ice on your skin. But it smelled
awful, and it made us sleepy?
The men grew to respect the new chemical, even to imbue it
with mythic powers. llAll the frogs and the toads were gone in
the valley after we used Nemagonfl another worker from the
Valle de la Estrella recalls. llWe poured it on the snakes and the
ants, and it made them crazy. The fish would die in the rivers?
PEDRO CARRILLO BEGAN WORKING WITH DBCP IN 1976
(the pay and the hours were better). By then he,d spent six
years at Rio Frio, but his aspirations were far from the banana
fields: three companeros shared his ambition, and in 1973,
they had begun attending school every night after work.
Walking six miles to school and back, the young men, still
wearing work clothes stained with the milky latex of banana
plants, talked about their dreams of escaping. llWe realized
that to triumph in life, one had to educate oneselff says Bisai
Fernandez Delgado, one of the four. llAnd one couldnlt have
Vices?
Pedro Carrillo met Iris Marin Jimenez at night school when
they were in seventh grade. Iris had come to the plantation in
1972 to help her sister and brother-in-law, who owned a small
food store on one of the 79mm. He sat beside her in class one
night, and they soon began to spend all their time together.
i
Iris Carrillo (left) thought the birth of her 5011, Juan, would solve berfamilyls problem
s.
Iris is small, with a proud, pretty face, her eyes deep, dark,
and watchful. lll always wanted to be a nurse; that was my
dreamf she says. But her work at the family store kept Iris
away from her studies. After two years, she left school; by
then she and Pedro were in love and she was pregnant.
Pedro continued his exhausting schedule of work and
school until he got his diploma in December 1977. He moved
with Iris and Felicia, their little girl, to take a job as a loan
officer at the Bank of Costa Rica. lllt has always been my goal

to be better tomorrow than I am today? Pedro says. llSo we moved away from there with a lot of dreams?

IN THE SUMMER OF 1977, WHILE PEDRO CARRILLO AND HIS coworkers were applying DBCP in Costa Rica, the wives of chemical manufacturing workers at an Occidental Chemical Company plant in a small town in California discovered_ during conversations in the bleachers while their husbands played baseball-that they all shared a problem: none of them was able to get pregnant. After prodding from their wives, the men, who worked with DBCP, approached union leaders, who in turn contacted a doctor about the problem.

Soon, newspaper stories reported that DBCP had made dozens of chemical workers sterile at plants across the country, and was carcinogenic as well. Dow and Shell immediately suspended all production, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) initiated its lengthy and cumbersome regulatory process to cancel the chemicalls registration.

The news stories about DBCP made officials at Castle 8C Cooke nervous, since by then the chemical had become, as Jack Dement wrote, tlthe material of choice in all of our banana divisions? Even a decade later, Dement cannot help growing animated when he talks about DBCP. lTve never

seen another chemical that increased our banana yields by 30 percent," he says, snapping his fingers, 11just like that!"

In an internal memo dated August 16, I977, jack Dement worried that a ban on 1)B(1P would drastically reduce banana yields, pointed out that alternative chemicals were only 65 percent as effective, and emphasized that "there is no evidence that people who apply the chemical, as opposed to those who manufacture it, have been rendered sterile or have been harmed in other ways." Dement1s memo concluded that Castle & (Iooke would continue using DBCP until it was banned in the company's areas of operation.

Dement's memo was only the first of a series of efforts inside (Iastle & (Iooke to keep using DBCP in Costa Rica throughout the rest of 1977 and most of 1978. After the sterility link became public in the summer of 1977, Dow officials were reluctant to continue providing their stocks of the chemical to Castle & (Iooke. But the giant food conglomerate pressured Dow, warning that a refusal to supply more DBCP amounted to a 11hreach of contract."

Dow finally relented and sold its remaining inventory to Castle & (Iooke.

'lhe decision to continue using DBCP in Costa Rica for 15 months after the sterility were completely sterile. When his brother reported back about the DBCP cases in California, Dominguez had the answer to the mystery at Rio Frio.

Ten years later, Dominguez shows us a hle that commemorates his role in the DBCP case. He recounts how, bolstered by the evidence from his brother, he approached the Costa Rican government to denounce DBCP. 11 had the names of patients, 1 had a list of products used, and 1 had scientific documentation,n Dominguez, who has a penchant for American westerns, recalls with glee. uSo John Wayne goes in and starts HringP,

In late November, 1978-a year after workers in California discovered they were steri1e_Dominguez met with Costa Rican officials to present his evidence. By December, Standard Fruit, under pressure from the government, agreed to stop using DBCP in Costa Rica. In Rio Frio and the Valle de la Estrella, however, the continued use of DBCP (for over a year, even after the California disclosures) may have had tragic consequences. According to the (Iosta Rican governments chief consulting urologist, Carlos Calvosa Alegretti, as little as one hundred hours of exposure to DBCP can cause sterility, and he says over

link made news in the United States came l'h'l PIIIII one thousand workers in Costa Rica alone

from t11e11hig11est1eve1ofthe company," ad- may have become permanently sterile as a

mits retired executive vice president Leonard frigh',nod result of exposure to it. (San j ose attorney

Wlied" Marks, _Ir., over lunch at his country II I' fi 'I Marlene Chavez, who represents some of the

clubnearPaloA1to,(3alifornia.Aslight,hald- or a n ' workers, believes the total is closer to three

ing man with impeccable manners, Marks BIII she decided thousand.)

remains a discreet and effective spokesman

for the company. "You see, DBCP was so .h. had go do AFTER THEY LEFr Rio FRiO, LIFE SEEMED

important to us. It wasn't a cover-up, believe me, but hope springs eternal. When the DBCP disclosures began, it was like we were on a freeway, going 65 miles per hour, and suddenly there was a sign, 1Detour now.' Well, we didn't do that. We thought, whats going on? What should we do?"

Marks, Dement, and other officials at Castle & (Iooke now express regret over the problems caused by the chemical. In their defense, they say they didn't know about the 1950s animal studies linking the chemical to sterility. Other corporate executives involved in the DBCP saga

continue to dispute evidence that it causes sterility. Clyde McBeth, one of those who helped develop DBCP for Shell, says he handled it without safety equipment and suffered no health problems. ttAnywayf says MeBeth, who has never been to (Iosta Rica or met any of 105 a/i’rtados, ufrom what I hear, they could use a little birth control down there."

Wiu-zN MARIO ZUMnAoo SALAs HRS’I"l’ltAVl%1,lil) FROM Rio Frio in 1977 to see physician (Iarlos 1i. Dominguez Vargas in San jose, nobody in (Iosta Rica had yet heard that the chemical might cause sterility. But as tnore banana workers came to him because they eouldnt have children, Dominguez asked Zumhado and several others to bring him labels from the chemicals they were applying for Standard 1:1’llit.’1.110l1 he sent the labels to his brother, who worked for a 11.5. chemical company, and asked if he knew anything about the products. By this time, Dominguez had determined that the men had seriously reduced sperm counts; many, including Zumhado,

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to come together for Pedro and Iris Carrillo. They had saved enough to buy a small house outside the little city of Guapiles, near a park lined with large, ancient trees. Pedro still dreamed of going on to university, but for the moment he was satisfied with his job at the bank.

But Felicia was almost six, and although Pedro and his tried, no more children came. By 1982, the problem had become a major issue in their relationship. Pedro wouldn’t talk much about it, but Iris noticed his declining appetite for sex. He seemed to he constantly tired, and he complained of vaguet persistent pains. Finally, in early 1983 he decided to see a doctor. He was surprised when the doctor who examined hitn seemed familiar with his complaint, and questioned hitn closely about the chemicals he had worked with at the plantation.

Carrillo was shattered when he learned the results of his semen analysis. The doctor informed him that he was completely sterile and that too much time had elapsed since his exposure to DBCP to hold out any hope of recovery. 111 felt that a dream had died, and I didn’t know who killed it," Pedro says six years later.

After that diagnosis, Pedro grew moody and uncommunicative. Iris felt him slipping away from her. He began to spend tnore and more time away from home. At times, he seemed unable to accept his sterility and he would angrily insist that he wanted a son-hsomeone who could understand me as a man"eas if he blamed lris for what had happened to him. Iris. an intensely private person, had no one to turn to for

help. Her world revolved around her family, and now that seemed to be slowly falling apart. Increasingly isolated and desperate, she came up with a plan that frightened her at Hrst. But she decided she had to do something before it was too late.

BY LATE I979, DBCP WAS BANNED IN THE CONTINENTAL United States. It was not illegal to continue sending the banned chemical overseas, however (nor, remarkably, is it today). In November 1979, a team of journalists from the Center for Investigative Reporting and Motherjones reported that Castle 85 Cooke was doing just that-shipping DBCP to its banana plantations in Central America.

Early the following year, allegations about this lldumpingh led to a congressional hearing and a demurral from executive Ted Marks: Tilt is Castle 86 Cookels corporate policy that we will not use nor purchase lal product treated with any pesticide which is not specifically registered for that use by the US. Environmental Protection Agency?

Though categorical in his public statements, Marks then assigned a midlevel official to investigate the companyls overseas pesticide use in greater depth-and the findings of the report contradicted his assurances. The internal report, dated November 13, 1980, contained disturbing news that the company continued to use all kinds of hazardous pesticides, including DBCP, at various places around the world-with accidents and controversy the inevitable result.

When we showed Marks the report recently, he said he only vaguely recalled it, but thought that company officials had tried to solve the problems it uncovered. According to another former official who was at the meeting when the report was presented, however, all copies of the report were gathered up and discarded-a charge Marks disputes. (The source smuggled one copy out of the meeting and gave it to us.)

Perhaps the most disturbing portions of the report were indications that as late as 1980, three years after the sterility link had surfaced in California and two years after the first cases showed up in Costa Rica, Castle St Cooke was still using DBCP in an unidentified 9Third World country? Other corporate and government documents indicate that once the chemical could no longer be used in Costa Rica, which has one of Central Americals most democratic governments, the banana company simply shipped its remaining stocks, plus shipments still on the way, out of the country. The records document that the DBCP was sent to Honduras, 3 military state where no one was likely to raise a public protest. The circle of poison was not yet broken; according to several sources in Honduras-where Castle St Cooke continued to use DBCP at least through 1979-many workers there now complain of sterility as well.

THOUGH PEDRO AND IRIS DIDN,T KNOW ABOUT IT, MANY 0F the households in Rio Frio and Valle de la Estrella were splintering in the aftermath of exposure to DBCP. As is the case with many of the workers we interviewed, Mario Zumbado Salasls wife left him when she learned he was sterile. le not ashamed to say that I cried for a monthf he told us when we talked with him in the barber shop he now owns in Rio Frio. His new wife is only 19, and he worries that she, too, will leave him. TlWhen she sees an advertisement with a kid in it, she always says, 1Oh, what a cute kid? That mortifies you. You look away, you pretend you don,t hear?

Many of the sterile workers in Rio Frio and Valle de la Estrella also complain of genital pain and impotence. Although doctors in Costa Rica and the United States say these symptoms are psychosomatic, impotence seems to be pervasive. TTWith a woman, I am no good anymorej, several men told us. One woman says of her relationship with her husband, ilWe sleep together now like two brothers? Depression, alcoholism, and even suicide have also increased among the banana workers in the wake of the DBCP tragedy.

Jose Sosa came to Rio Frio when he was very young, and at 29, he is completely sterile. His wife, Maria, who has a round, fresh face, looks as if she is about to cry. TlMy house is very

sadf, she says. Her father, also a banana worker, became sterile after she was born. liOne is born to reproduce oneself, then die? says Sosa. llBut here, one is born only to die?

ONE DAY IN EARLY 198 5, IRIS TOLD PEDRO THAT SHE WAS pregnant. Since he had only a vague understanding of the invisible mechanism of sterility, he reacted with a mixture of shock and elation: maybe the doctor had been wrong. But as much as he hoped this was true, the worst doubts arose in his mind. Iris seemed remote and evasive all through the pregnancy, increasing his suspicions.

When the baby, a boy, was born, Pedro could not resist examining him closely. By the time Juan was a few months old the truth was inescapable: the boys coloring was much lighter than his sisters, and he looked nothing like his father.

It was simply too much for Pedro. He disappeared for several days, and when he returned he fought with Iris, shouting and interrogating her obsessively. Iris withdrew from him, refused to answer his questions, and devoted all of her time and attention to the children. Her depressed, angry husband then became what he calls 9another kind of being?

Over the next two years, all semblance of intimacy between Iris and Pedro vanished. He was transferred to one of the banks offices on the other side of the country, and came home only on weekends-when he came home at all.

IT IS A SWELTERING AFTERNOON IN DALLAS, BUT FROM TEN floors up in attorney Charles Siegells air-conditioned office, the streets below look hushed and gentle. With his rumpled shirt, irreverent manner, and resonant Texas drawl, Siegel seems out of place in this hermetic office with its high-backed leather chairs and lush carpets. Likewise, the state of Texas seems an unlikely refuge for the rights of the Costa Rican workers. But for Siegel, who has been crisscrossing the United States over the past five years trying to find a court that will accept the case of 105 afectados, his home state of Texas now represents the last hope.

Five years ago, Siegells firm, Baron 8C Budd, which has one of the leading toxics litigation practices in the country, sued Dow and Shell on behalf of the sterile banana workers (in 1987, Castle 86 Cooke was added as a defendant in the complaint).

Siegel felt strongly about the sterility case from the beginning. mfhese workers have clearly suffered, and theyive really been screwed. Itls another example of dumping in the Third World. I think that going to court may be the most effective way, if not the only way, to get these companies to stop. Its been shown again and again: its not legislation, but awards to victims, that have shaped corporate conduct?

Courts in Florida and California refused to hear the case. The Texas Supreme Court will soon decide whether the case can proceed to trial there. The court has already heard from an array of big guns. A barrage of amicus curiae briefs filed in support of Dow and Shell by Fortune 500 companies-in-eluding Exxon, Texaco, and Tenneco_raises the specter of a damaged business climate and unemployment if the case gets a hearing in Texas. Those corporate briefs insist further that the state will become the udumping groundll for claims by foreigners, and the IIcourthouse for the worldll if the workersi case is allowed to go to trial.

Siegel fired back, arguing that the banana workers Ilwere employed by an American company on American-owned land and grew Dole bananas solely for export to American tables. The substance that rendered them sterile was re-searched, formulated, tested, manufactured, labeled, and shipped by an American company in America to another American company. Yet now, defendants claim that the one part of this equation that should not be American is the legal conse-quences?

DURING THE PAST DECADE, BY ALL AC-counts, Standard Fruit,s pesticide safety programs have improved substantially. But poisonings still occur at Rio Frio, and one of the chemicals responsible may ultimately prove as hazardous in its own way as DBCP. Early last year 45 workers were made ill by Temik, the best known of the six pesticides that replaced DBCP in the battle against nematodes.

Temik, which is among the most toxic pesticides used anywhere today, is a ground-water pollutant currently under investiga-tion by U.S. scientists because of evidence that it may suppress the human immune sys-tem. (The EPA,S pesticide division recently recommended barring the use of Temik on imported bananas, asserting that up to 1,500 infants and children in this country may be at risk each day from Temik residues on bananas.)

The parallel between DBCP and Temik, both heavily ap-plied all over the globe despite scientific uncertainty about their dangers, indicates how little the worlds highly tech-nological food-production system has changed over the past 20 years. That system remains so deeply dependent on chem-icals that pesticides continue to be considered innocent until proven guilty_often with tragic consequences.

Yet little progress has been made in the development of alternative methods for controlling pests. Jack Dement of Castle Sc Cooke insists that IInothing would make us happier than nonchemical controllI-but places the blame on con-sumer demand for creating the marketplace pressure that ensures the continued use Of potent chemicals. Puffing his cigarette and gesturing toward glossy blow-ups of flawless fruit, Dement points out that although DBCP was used to protect the plant itself, most pesticides are used only to pre-vent cosmetic damage. According to Dement, market surveys show that consumers wonit buy fruit if it looks scarred or slightly damaged. IIThe number of bananas that are thrown

if they would prefer perfect fruit, or fewer poisoning: in Ihe Third World?"

W

away borders on a sin, just because the fruit isn,t big enough, or has a few spots?

Cathleen Mclnerney Barnes of EPA counters: IIItls easy to blame the consumer, but when is the consumer ever asked whether he or she would prefer perfect fruit, or fewer poison-

ings in the Third World? Pm not sure they would choose to pay that price?

PEDRO AND FELICIA WAIT FOR us AT THE Bus STATION IN Guapiles. At 12, Felicia is sweet-faced and shy; encouraged by her father, she tries out some English phrases sheis learned in school. Pedro directs us to the outskirts of town, then down a muddy road to their house. It is a warm, humid evening, and the door to the house is open.

Juan is almost three years old now. Small and quick, with mischievous eyes, he runs to meet Pedro as we walk in. Iris invites us to sit down and brings a tray of sodas and beers. Together in the small, cozy living room, it would be a happy family scene, except for the coolness between Pedro and Iris. When she takes the children into the other room, he lights a cigarette and says that things are very bad.

lIFelicia used to be a good student, but this situation has ruined her grades? he says.

iIShe hears us fighting and she goes off and cries. She doesnlt respect me as she used to. And the boy, I love him, but I canit forget. He is a rebel, violent and angry. I see him as a boy with a trauma?

Iris comes back into the room and the two eye each other warily. He immediately finds an excuse to leave, announcing that he is going to take the children outside. IiIt makes me very sad when he asks questions about the boy? Iris begins as soon as Pedro has gone. As she talks, she twists the knob on the arm of the chair and doesnit lift her eyes. IIHe keeps asking over and over, and I donlt know what to say. Maybe what I did was a mistake, but I did it to bring us together?

Iris has never spoken to anyone about this before, and everything pours out at once. IIHe wanted a boy so much. I saw the child as a stable of salvationl for us. I thought Pedro was going to be so happy. But it only made things worse?

ever asked

IN ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE, A US. COMPANY moves into an imaginary town in Latin America and takes over vast tracts of land for banana production. Over time, local workers grow discontented with bad working conditions and poor pay, and demand reforms. When the company ignores them, they take their case to court. But their demands are ultimately thrown out when company lawyers prove that uthe banana company did not have, never had had, and never would have any workers in its service because they were all hired on a temporary and occasional basis . . . and by a decision of the court it was established and set down in solemn decrees that the workers did not exist?

The invisible worker-a character that appears in the works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Pablo Neruda, and other American writers, both North and South_is a leitmotif in the

traditional 0banana republicli relationship between the United States and the region. That relationship is based on unseen, unknown, and uncomplaining campesinos in the South growing crops for consumers in the North.

Now that relationship is being challenged by 105 (#66!-ados. Many of the sterile workers and their families have a deep desire for North Americans to know their story. 01 would like to say to people in the U5. who eat bananas that they themselves are a part of our homes, of our lives-of our most intimate lives? says Marita Perez, the wife of a sterile worker at Rio Frio. 0Nemagon has affected everything. It is not that they are eating the forbidden fruit, but in a way they are. That fruit-and the Chemicals used on it-have caused many problems here?

If the banana workers fail in the Texas courts-and fail to attract international attention as well_it,s back to business as usual for the global food-supply system that today provides U.S. consumers with a year-round diet of unprecedented diversity. And those field workers harmed along the way will be effectively erased from history, consigned once again to the state described by Garcia Marquez-permanent anonymity.

FOR PEDRO AND IRIs, SOME DAYS ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS.

On a recent Sunday, the family is spending a rare afternoon together; after lunch they take a walk in the park near their house. Pedro carries a soccer ball as Juan rides his tricycle along the path ahead of his parents.

Pedro and Iris are careful with each other, and they seem to have reached a sort of understanding. They discuss their plan: to move to San Jose at the end of Felicials school year. hilt will be a new start? Pedro tells us. 141 think the negative feelings I have been living are my weakness?

Unlike most of 105 afectados, Pedro lifts his eyes when he speaks, and as he talks about the future it is possible to believe that he will be one of the few who succeed in leaving Rio Frio -and all that occurred there-behind. llWhat happened was only an accident, but it changed our lives. Inside, I think I have the strength and determination to survive?

Just then Juan, who makes zooming noises as he rides too fast on his tricycle, yells out as he hits a bump in the pavement. Pedro gets to the boy first and helps him to his feet. Juan isnlt hurt, but hes scared, and he cries as Pedro brushes him off and comforts him. As the boys crying subsides, Pedro tosses him the soccer ball. juan immediately forgets his tears and runs after it, then gives it a wobbly kick in the direction of his father. Pedro kicks it back gently, his pace matching juanis as they pass the ball back and forth over a small patch of grass.

Work on the plantation accelerates until harvest, when bananas are hoxedfor the trip to foreign markets.

It would occur to no one watching, as Pedro bends over the excited boy, showing him how to kick the ball, that a chemical with strange powers had damaged this man and his family; nor would an onlooker be likely to notice the difference in coloring between the man and the Child. As Pedro stands watching Juan race across the grass after the ball, no one would think they were anything but father and son.

Constance Matthiessen and David Weir are staffwrite; s at the Center for Investigative Reporting in San Francisco. Weir is

also author of The Bhopal Syndrome (Sierra Club Books, 1987), coauthor (with Dan Noyes) of Raising Hell (Addison-Wesley, 1983), and coauthor (with Mark Schapiro) of Circle of Poison (Institute for Food and Development, 1981). Special thanks to jorge Simdn-Zahlah. Lori Ann Thrupp, Luisa Castillo, and CIR interns Stephen Levine and Christopher Rivers also contributed. Research for this story was supported by the Fund for Investigative journalism in Washington, D.C., and by the Mother Jones I nvestigative Fund.

For more information about pesticide use nationally and intemationally-and alternatives to them:

Northwest Coalition for
Alternatives to Pesticide
PO Box 1393
Eugene, OR 97440
(503) 344-5044

National Coalition Against
the Misuse of Pesticides
530 7th St, SE
Washington, DC 20003
(202) 542-5450

Pesticide Action Network
North America Regional Center
PO Box 610
San Francisco, CA 94101
(415) 541-9140

Greenpeace
1436 U Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202)462-1177

It used to he that
the
the only game in
town, so television
newswomen had to
play by the rules.
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Bnrham Walters (who takes home $1 million lor asking; the
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IHNI ttm’t)
very same day NBC announced that (INN’S Mary Alice
Williams would step in And till the void for ’.1 less zlstrtr
nomieal hut still estinmhle SW_(MLUUU. All three women will
now nnehor high-protile magazine shows-lMane Sawyer,
who will share the limelight with White House corre-
spondent Sum Donaldsom will lnuneh nn as-yet unnamed
SlIOW iii August; Mary Alice W’illittms, Along with CO-
.inehor Marin Shriver, will debut on 41 show called Yester-
tI’iiy. ’lhtt’tzy, mid ’ltmmrmu’ over the summer; and Connie
Chung will head up a revamped West 57th.
The fast and furious battle for female talent might seem
to he good news for women hrtxttleusters, indicating a
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Ann Rubenstein
(left) spent 13 years as a
correspondentfor network
afhliates in the Midwest. Since
1986, she has been the general
correspondent in New York
Cityfor the NBC Nightly
News. "The big question has
always hem, is there life after
network news?"
Marion Goldin
(right)formerly a producer at
QrMinutes, won a Peabody
Awardfor an independent
project, C. E. New;
Maine, in which young
people interviewed the
presidential candidates.
"Rather than just a gender
issue, there is a kind of person
who doesn’tfi’t in network
news anymore. There are men
who won’t play the old-hoy
network and women who play
it more beautifully than the
most seasoned mm "
aNervy Breakthrough
turnaround in the networksh commitment to hiring and
promoting women. Or it might simply be another attempt
by network executives to win in the Nielsen war without
sacrificing the bottom line (news shows cost significantly
less than entertainment shows to produce, so they turn a
profit faster). To find out, we gathered four of televisiorfs
top female journalists-independent producers Linda
Ellerbee and Marion Goldin, NBC Nightly News corre-
spondent Ann Rubenstein, and Meredith Vieira, who is
expected to replace Sawyer on 60 Minutes-for a discus-
sion of women in television and the future of the news.
AAA
Orenstein: What would you tell a young woman fresh out
of college, 22, 23 years old, who wanted a career in television
journalism? What would she need to have the right stuff
now?
Rubenstein: I can tell her some things she ought to do,
morally and ethically, once she,s in. Hang onto her own code
of ethics. Do not depend upon those of her employers. Theytll
ask her to do things that you shouldntt do. You must really
decide for yourself what youtre going to do and not do. And
what price you are
willing to pay for
whatever theyhre
aiizrtmzfgg’ By Peggy Orenstein
to find yourself one
MOTHER JONES 1i)

Linda Ellerbee
lhh lM’t’H (l HlHlFV 11ml
day standing, out in the snow with a
microphone and sticking it in the face
of a woman whols just had her son
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AM is (ioutl Mommy Ammtu
11ml ( )zu World flat wlmli
xlie 111011 1111 Emmy; HS/imlznul
m u memo, time is NIUH’ 10 us
llnm mt’rlx (ln’ Nu’lxt’n lmx li’x,
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I new! mm! lo 11 minder (lint
killed and asking her how she feels
about it. Because somebody told you
thatls the way to get to the top.
Goldin: Mike Wallace once said to
me about a high-ranking CBS execu-
tive, llThe problem with so-andeso is
that he has no moral compass? Ilve
never forgotten that. My advice
would be to make sure you have :1
moral compass before you get into
this business, or any other.
Ellerbee: A good sense of humor.
And a good, strong sense of self-
worth. The minute you begin to let
them define you youlre dead.
Vieira: They start defining you the first day.
Rubenstein: That’s hard. But you begin to define yourself
based on your jolt, too. ’l’liats :1 real trap.
Ellerbee: Stand up for yourself from day one. I know we’ve
all seen the people that come in and think, well, I’ll do it their
way to get there, then theylll do it my way. Do it your way
every single day. Its the only way you’ll ever continue to do it
your way. Because tlierels never :1 place you can stop and rest
and then suddenly turn around. Besides that, if youlre :1 wonr
an and youlre the least hit aggressive: then somehow or other
theylre going to call you a trouhlemaker anyway.
Goldin: I think maybe when all of us got into the business,
wegat least l-tliought of (IBS News as a lifetime career.
Vieira: I thought Ill grow old at NBC.
Ellerbee: I wanted to.
Goldin: lixaetly. l doIH think even for people who want to
that thatk in the cards anymore. So to the extent that you
would be afraid to do what Linda and others have said_
stand up, keep your groundsso what if youlre a little crazy?
(Iltllllll draw 11 tmuul H
30 IUNI wsu
Ellerbee: David Brinkley told me this years ago, and its the
most helpful advice I ever got in this business. It was the first
time I ever anchored a show, and it was eo-anchoring with
David Brinkley on a political show. just before we went on
the air I turned to him and said, ullm scared to death? And he
looked at me and said, thell I don% know why yould be
scared; all they can do is fire you? And you know what? Hels
right! ’lhey eanlt put you in reporter jail. All they can do is fire
you.
Rubenstein: The video police wonk come get you.
Orenstein: Meredith, what do you think of all that, of
llmaintaining the moral compass?n
Vieira: I think its very hard to do. I really do. Especially
when you just begin, because youlre unsure of yourself any-
how. Youlre taking baby steps. Its easy to say, TlStand up for
what you believe? And that is the right position to take. But
when you know you might lose your job, and its the first one
you have, its frightening. But I think as you gain confidence. ..
Ellerbee: Well, if you can take baby steps, you can take little
baby stand-ups.
Vieira: Thatls right, thatls right. I think thats what it

amounts to.
Orenstein: What are some of the battles you remember?
Vieira: lwouldnk go out and say llHow do you feelPT, after a fire. I remember that specifically. I was out doing a piece on a funeral where they wanted me to basically hang around the widow. And I said, lll just will not do thatf,
Ellerbee: First of all, you know what the answer is to that question, llHow do you feel?" Not good.
Orenstein: The Gannett Center for Media Studies recently examined the status of women in television. Their report said that more women are executive producers than before, there are a few more women in front of the cameras . . .
Ellerbee: What? Two?
Orenstein: . . . there are salary disparities between men and women, between 15 and 81 percent, with the highest being at the level of executive producer. The real power is still pretty much with the men. Given those data, how much do you think the situation has changed for women?
Vieira: 1 think its very distressing, that a network like CBS has only one woman overseas. After all these years?
Rubenstein: NBC has none. I donlt think women are doing better in any respect. frankly.
Ellerbee: Not at all. Ed joyee lformer president of CBS Newsl used to brag, llBy (iod, 7() per- cent of our researchers are wom- en. We hire women."
Rubenstein: And just think, Howard Stringer Ipresident of the CBS Broadcast (lroupl start- ed out as :1 researcher.
Ellerbee: I thought you were going to tell me he started out as :1 woman.
Ruhenstein: Yeah, started out here’s a won- derful world outside the networks. It’s time to stop thinking lthe as :1 woman. Trapped in a wom- networks, an’s hody.
Ellerbee: At most networks, I and think think there are fewer of us than . . u there were when I started. teleVlSlon.

Orenstein: But there was a time in the 705 when the Federal Communications Commission made a lot of noise. . . .
Rubenstein: It wasnlt the FCC. Lets not give the FCC that much credit. It came through the FCC. It was the civil rights movement in this country and the womenls movement that did it. It was pressure. The FCC didnlt wake up one day and say, letis put women on the air.
Vieira: Yet I really am in this business because I was there at the right time. live worked very hard, but they desperately needed women on CBS. I was in Providence, and I had an interview, and I was on the air in a week! And I had never done television. Had I failed it would have been proof: llWell, see, you get a woman and thatls what happens? I saw women fail who hadnlt had the proper training, but that was the attitude. Thatls just not fair. And thatls happened to minorities.
Ellerbee: Most of us got hired originally because were women.
Vieira: Right.
Ellerbee: The question is, how do you stay hired? Because youlre a woman or because youlre good?
Goldin: But I think also part of the responsibility for the low numbers that we see now has to be taken upon ourselves. As a group I think women got very quiet over the past ten years.
Rubenstein: I think we stopped saying things. The stakes were too high, and the jobs were too scarce, and you donlt make waves when youlve got a good job.
Orenstein: Ann and Meredith, what do you two do to flourish at the networks? You,re obviously both doing very well.
Rubenstein: I try to get lost in my work, because I find that its when Ilm not busy enough, or sitting in my office day after day, that I tend to get bogged down in the politics of the operation and all the extra things that distract me from what it is that I love, which is the work.
Goldin: But Ann, you just said that one of the things thatls happened to make womenls position in broadcasting not any better, and perhaps worse than it was, is because women got quiet. Isnlt that what you,re now describing as the . . .
Rubenstein: Yes.
Goldin: . . . prescription for survival?
Vieira: Ilm one of the quieter women. I just do my job, basically. Ilm very proud of what I do, I focus on that. Within my own little world, I want my work to be a true reflection of good journalism. But I think it leads to a real identity crisis somewhere along the line. Ilm not sure that live come totally to grips with mine. But talking back and really standing up is a hard thing to do. And you have to understand that you could lose it all. For all of the right reasons. Because theylre a bunch of shitheads. Its very tricky.
Rubenstein: Ilm not making the waves and the noise that I think we all feel guilty about not doing. On the other hand, Pm remaining on the air. Ilm remaining as a statistic that NBC has so many women, and that has its value and merit as well.
Ellerbee: Well, I donlt think thatls a good enough argument for us women to make. There are good reasons for remaining quiet, probably because you want your job. But under their little quota system that probably does exist, theylre just as likely to replace you with another woman. It is hard to speak up, youlre right. Marion and I are older than you all . . .
Photographs by William Coupon
Meredith Vieira served as the CBS Midwest Bureau Chief before taking a correspondent spot on the
Goldin: Speak for yourself, Linda.
Ellerbee: . . . as you get older you find you speak up more. For whatever reason. The bullshit rises and rises until at some point you have to

just shout to get out of it. But I would like to see the younger women coming into it have some sense that the battle is not over. That the battles are not won. I just get the feeling, III-Iey, we graded it! You pave it? And I donlt see any road paving going on out there.

Goldin: One of the saddest things is to see a good measure of the younger women back at square one. I mean, they do everything but wear Little Bo Peep dresses and hair bows.

Orenstein: Ilve noticed that a number of women who are the most visible right now-Faith Daniels, Maria Shriver, Kathleen Sullivan-are, on average, about 20 years younger than their male counterparts, with much less experience. Obviously youth and looks still matter.

Vieira: My boss would never have come in to me during my pregnancy and said, IIHey, 40 pounds youlve gained there, honey-you look like dog doo to me? But I certainly sensed it. They,ve been trained to think that their anchorwomen are beautiful. Its very hard to get around that. I donlt believe its changed. Barbara Walters still looks great. Pm not sure that shed be on very long if she didnlt.

Goldin: What woman looks like Charles Kutalt or Morley Safer . . .

Vieira: . . . or Irving R. Levine.

Ellerbee: But the minute you begin to talk about that, people are going to say thatls just sour grapes on your part. Its not. The issue should not be how good-looking you have to be on television. It ought to be (Continued on page 46)

magazine show l’Vest 57th. "I really am in this business because I was there at the right time. They desperately needed women at CBS. Had Hailed, it would have been proof: ’Well, see, you get a woman and that’s what happens I "

NO’I’ LONG AII’I’IiR Wllt MARRIED, MY HUSBAND
and I flow to (Ionnccticut to visit my parents.
WC carried our secondhandsuitcases11pm what
was once my hmthcrsl bedroom and dropped
thcm on two hula pushcd together to make (me.
The room was, as it always had been, scru-
pulously clean and whitc_hut richcr than l rc-
mcmhcrcd. The beds had real hox springs. A
cashmcrc hlankct lay folded at their bass; on a
nightstand, a rod daylily from my niothcrk gar-
den opcncd in a carafc of water. Outside the
window, rain from a sprinkler fell on a long
lawn sloping into the trees. Every room in thc
houscmthc spare bedrooms, the basement
wood shon my mother’s darkr()()1n,thc kitchen
smelling of hcrhshcvcry mom whispered of
surplus space and mnncy and timc. I took off
my shoes and thought to myself, I will never live
this way again.
I l’clt shame, resentment, confusion settling
out in me. By the standards of their generation.
my parents were only Comfortably middle-
class. Why, then, were they living so much hcl-
tcr 0n onc income than Boh and I, who, nearing
40, had no children and were living on two?
I could not hlamc my parents: thcy carnal
what they got. lmmigrams from a pinched,
postwar Britain, ihcy camc to thc United Stan’s
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BY KATY BUTL

The competition
with our
" ’ parents is over.
We lost.
Now what?

secondhand Buick that drove like a sofa for a new Rambler station wagon. In the 705, he bought himself a Ford and my mother a Toyota. The $28,000 suburban house they built on a lake in the ,60s-my mother tiled the bathroom and taped the Sheetrock-was sold in the ,705 for a place with three bathrooms, four bedrooms, and a two-car garage. They had enough money to pay for my brothers, skiing, my college education, and a fattening retirement fund. I went to college in 1967 with a vague sense that my future would be much the same as my parents, past, only freer: I would marry, write or work in the mornings, and take care of my children in the afternoons.

By the 805, my parents had raised three children and achieved all of the American dream on my fathers income alone-and after 15 years in the full-time work force, I could not afford a child and had never owned a new car.

I couldnit have cared less about a new car. But it was an index of how middle-class life had changed in the course of a single generation. And nowhere was the change more striking than in what each generation paid for housing and what they got for it. My parents paid $190 a month-on a 5 percent mortgage-for a four-bedroom house on an acre of land in Connecticut. Bob and I, with a combined income slightly lower than my fathers, paid $1,5 00 a month-on a 9 percent mortgage-for a five-room bungalow slightly larger than my parents, deck. Yet we felt lucky to afford a house at all.

Every night during that visit, even as I reveled in my moth-erls homemade soups and slid between her clean, cool sheets, I thought bitterly of my downward mobility, not only in mon-ey, but in time. Bob and I both worked full-time and lived in time-poverty: our house in Mill Valley, California, was a launching pad, not a home. We commuted, ate Chinese take-out and microwaved burritos while standing in the kitchen, cleaned the house once in a blue moon, and sometimes went for days without an uninterrupted hour together.

On the last night of our visit with my parents, we all went to the movies. My mother and father got a senior citizen discount.

50 it was with a sense of discontent that I returned home, got out of my unreliable but Classy-looking old Mercedes, and opened the door to the tiny, cracked stucco house my husband and I bought for a paper fortune with help from our parents. I looked at the weeds in the overgrown yard, the ink stain

Photograph by Todd Merrill

on the couch from a discount outlet, the dust in the corners, the mail-order catalogs and sweaters piled on the dining-room table. Our bedroom, I realized, was smaller than anywhere I had slept in childhood. On the deck were two Adirondack chairs I bought because the catalog said their arms were wide enough to hold a glass of lemonade on hot, lazy summer afternoons. I hadnit had a single glass of lemonade or a single lazy afternoon all sum-mer; what I tried to buy was not a chair, but a memory of free time.

IN THE MONTHS AFTER THAT VISIT EAST TO WHAT WAS ONCE my home, I looked at the lives of my friends as though through a set of hard, refracting prisms. With few exceptions, most of their parents had cobbled together some version of the American dream: kids (the most expensive durable con-sumer good), education, houses, retirement accounts, and time to enjoy it all. My friends dressed and ate well, but most had only one or two elements of the dream we had laughed at in our 205 and now could not attain. We had to Choose between kids, houses, and time. Those with new cars had no houses; those with houses, no children; those with children, no houses. A few lucky supercouples-a lawyer married to a doctor, say, with a combined income of more than $100,000 a year_had everything but time.

There were, of course, some notable exceptions to the dis-guised slide down: my women friends had careers and finan-cial independence denied their mothers; a handful of others

had made enough money in mail-order or computer software to afford comfortable houses, children, and leisure. But on the whole, I saw a generational dilemma perceived as individual failure. My friends in the baby-boom generation_so often accused of being unable to defer gratification-were deferring what their parents considered basic. They were smart and hardworking, but struggling, and ashamed to admit it even to each other.

It was the shame and pretense-in people lid known since we were all in our 205 and poor-that puzzled me. Then, weld all worn jeans and put our money into stereos; now my friends were gilding their downward mobility in a skin of glitz. One of my best friends had fallen in love, moved out of her rent-controlled flat in San Francisco, and taken (with the man she later married) a high-rent house, as nice as my parents: in the Berkeley Hills. I had gone there for dinner and Molly had met me at the door, tastefully dressed. Her table overlooked thousands of houses sparkling around the bay-like a lordls castle high above his subjects-and I had felt a little envious, almost intimidated.

It was only after she and her husband left town for new jobs that Molly told me that shed been too deep in debt to buy a winter coat, so broke she,d stood in line at the phone company to pay the bill on cutoff day. I was shocked she hadn,t trusted me enough to tell me, and something sheld said years before came drifting back, a piece of advice she had heard from her mother: IINever look poor, dear. Americans don,t like poor people?

AT THE SAME TIME MOLLY MADE HER CONFESSION, MY FORmer roommate Nancy-the daughter of a psychiatrist who had gone to school on the GI bill and bought his house with a VA loan-became truly poor. The father of her baby left her

Photographs from Mothers and Daughters to be published in paperback by Aperture, spring 1989.

without child support; she was a technical writer, and her work dried up after her computer company lost a major contract. The safety net strung up in the 19305 did not help her: as a contract worker, she didnlt qualify for unemployment compensation. Welfare turned her down because her rent was too high. III think its just as well? she told me at the time, still looking beautiful in Clothes sheld bought before she lost her job. III donlt belong on welfare?

I lent her a little money with only the vaguest sense of her troubles. Only recently, when she laid it all out for me, did I understand how bad it had been. III couldnit afford to go to museums, but I went for walks. I breast-fed for a long time, and that was a helpf she said quietly. IIThen I finally got a job and I was even worse off. I couldn,t afford food, child care, and transportation to and from work. I saved money on food for myself. Thank God my son would eat tofu. I got up at four in the morning to do my overtime work-unpaid, of course-while my son was asleep. Sometimes I felt as if there really wasnlt a place on the planet for someone like me. It makes one ashamed not to be able to buy light bulbs, food, toilet paper. I didnlt like asking my friends for monetary assistancev-I waited until I was desperate before I asked. I diant want to be perceived as someone in that much trouble?

Meanwhile, the newspapers were full of stories about yuppies and blackened redfish and new restaurants. The cognitive dissonance hurt my head: Was I the only one who felt like a failure? Was it only my friends who were in trouble? Why was it so hard for me to say to a lunch companion, IILetls go somewhere cheaper?D Acquaintances were wearing $50 haircuts and $75 shoes.

A childless couple returned from a student year in Rome, got jobs, furniture, sophisticated clothes, and a nice apartment. They went bicycling in Virginia on vacation that year, staying at bed and breakfasts. They seemed to be doing just fine. Recently, Roger explained the secret of their success: they were $18,000 in credit-card debt, and he was leaving his nonprofit job for better-paying but more boring work in the computer industry to pay it off. IIWe both had grown-up jobs for the first time, and we thought we should be able to live like grown-upsf he said. IIWeid struggled for a long time, and I was sick of this thing the Left has about not being desirous, of not wanting sex or money.

91 donit think you have to be unhappy to be on the Left? he went on. 91 wanted to be able to pick up the tab for ten people, or take a cab when I wanted. I thought that part of being an adult was being able to go to a restaurant, look at the menu, and go in if you like the food, not because youire looking at the prices. A lot of it was playing grown-up and throwing the old plastic around. Then we realized we could have gone to Europe last year on our credit-card interest alone.

IIWe have nothing to show for it? he said. iIWe were in a lot of denial, and finally the denial broke? He asked for help from his father-a stockbroker in the Los Angeles suburbs who rarely takes a vacation-and was turned down. IIMy fatherls always telling me how much Pm going to inherit? said Roger, who resents the way money colors their relationship with the tones of prolonged adolescence. nI-Ie tells me that if we have a kid, the purse strings will open. I told him, you cant buy a grandchild?

I looked at him across the table, amazed that a friend of mine would stake his sense of manhood on being able to pay a restaurant bill. IIManhoodf, once seen as the ability to fight and then as the capability to produce, had been redefined again, this time as the ability to consume. And Roger, like many of my friends, seemed willing to pay almost any price to appear as successful as his parents, even though the rules of the game had changed.

ome run
up credit-
card debt.
Others face
the truth
with dignity
and grace.

IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOWED,
as I clipped the Wall Street journal
and collected economic reports, I
came to see that there was no way
most of us could meet the expecta-
tions created in the late i405 and
,505, when having both a home
and children was an attainable
goal. Then, the economy was full of predictable middle-class
rewards and hidden subsidies for young families.

In the ,705, as we came of age, the U.S. economy was
entering a disguised but deepening depression whose burdens
fell disproportionately on the young. The twin pillars of the
middle-class dream_aff0rdable housing and enough real in-
come to support children-were crumbling without our
knowing it. Germany and Japan reaped the fruits of their
postwar industrial reconstruction, while U.S. products and
farm goods lost their dominance in the world marketplace.
Vietnam War debt and a bloated military budget-funded
with borrowed money_fueled inflation. Real U.S. wages
stopped growing and began to fall. I-Iealth-care costs grew.
Meat went up, cheese went up, interest rates went up.

When the economy hit the skids, many older people were
wearing safety belts. It was the young who went through the
windshield. In 1973, 80 percent of those over 35 owned their
own homes. But millions of baby boomers were arriving at
the labor and housing markets to find starting wages stagnat-
ing and houses out of sight.

When productivity and profits declined and corporations
squeezed unions and exported jobs to cheaper climes, it was
younger workers who got the short end of two-tier wage
contracts, failed to get good union jobs at all, or were paid
minimum wages that did not keep pace with inflation.

When manufacturing declined and service industries grew,
it was primarily younger workers who took the lower-paying
new jobs. Between 1973 and 1986, the proportion of younger
non-college-educated workers holding (usually better-paying)
jobs in manufacturing dropped from one-third to less than
one-quarter.

In our 205, my friends and I hardly cared. We ate tofu and
hung Indian bedspreads in rented apartments. We were
young; it was a lark. But in our 30$, as we married or got sick
of having places sold out from under us, we wanted to be
grown-up, we wanted money, we wanted houses.

In 1973-the last really good year for the middle class_the
average 30-year-old man could meet the mortgage payments
on a median-priced home with about a fifth of his income. By
1986, the same home took twice as much of his income.

In the same years, the real median income of all families
headed by someone under 30 fell by 26 percent. It was a loss

virtually identical to the 27 percent drop in per-capita personal income between 1929 and 1933, the deepest years of the Depression. The Depression created a sense of shared misfortune and national crisis. But the stagflation of the 1705 and 1805 begot in its victims a sense of individual failure-and in its survivors, a sort of chumpish pride, as though theyId come up in the world by paying $100,000 for a house that would have cost their parents a fifth as much.

My friends, who spent much of their 205 marching and organizing on behalf of others, responded not by organizing politically but by making small personal adjustments. If the middle class was going to disappear, they would ape the rich, not the poor. They spent more on housing and less on charity and savings. (In 1981, young families saved less than 1 percent of their after-tax income, compared with 4 percent in 1973.) They took on more debt and paid it off more slowly. (In 1988, installment debt was at a record 16 percent of personal income, far above the 12 percent of the early 19805.) They took on this debt at an age when their parents were saving for retirement-perhaps on the unspoken assumption that their parents deaths would eventually bail them out with a legacy. When pushed to the wall, they did with less: they gentrified slums and bought gimcrack condominiums in buildings with pretentious marbled lobbies and paper-thin walls.

Unable to meet the out-of-scale expectations created in the 19505, they gave up on necessities and comforted themselves with cheap luxuries: flowers, Dove bars, I-Ia’agen-Dazs, Cuisinarts, dinners out. As people dispossessed from housing and family life have done before, they wore their fortunes on their backs or sunk them into their cars. Having unconsciously absorbed the cultural imperative to do better than our parents-and unable to do that in economic terms_my generation decided to be upwardly mobile in terms of taste, instead. In some ways, we created a culture more adapted to our realities; in other ways, we became a generation of wanna-bes. One year I gave my father a $200 gift certificate for custom-made shirts from the Custom Shop, and smiled when he ordered them in a cotton/polyester blend. I couldnlt make as much money as he did, but at least, I thought, I knew how

Forgot to Fight

BABY BOOMERS, RAISED IN AFFLUENCE AND PUMPED full of rhetoric about being 11the biggest and best-educated generation in US. historyf’ have become the first downwardly mobile generation since World War II. This decline is due not only to structural changes in the economy, but to the baby-boom generations failure to defend its interests politically.

In the booming economy of the 1405 and 1505, when a rising tide lifted almost all ships, the US. government lavished hidden subsidies on young families. A grateful nation sent a generation of young veterans to college on the GI bill and helped house their families by funding VA home loans, new schools, low-income housing, and superhighways to new suburbs.

The nation wasn,t so grateful in the nervous, inflationary I705,

to spend it. The $200 that paid our parents mortgages would only cover our car payments; but we bought Lands End instead of Sears, and learned to call noodles and coffee ufettuccine,, and IIcappucinof,

Other adaptations involved fundamental changes in our family and personal lives. Women entered the full-time work force and stayed there: more than half of all women with children under a year old are working. People delayed marriage into their 305 (men tend not to marry until they earn a breadwinner wage-one reason why marriage rates are so low among young blacks); others postponed, or simply forgot about, having children.

Those friends of mine who had children despite the difficulties were forced to make sacrifices their parents were never

asked to make. One of my closest friends, an art therapist married to a carpenter, has two young Children. She had to return to work a month after each child was born. 81 felt I had no choice at all, because of moneyf she told me. IIThere was no breathing time? One rainy morning a couple of years ago, she left the house with her three-month-old daughter on her chest in a Snugli, her four-year-old son in one hand, and an umbrella and her breakfast in the other. She was on the way to day care and work when she slipped on the steps and fell. She picked up the children, went back to the house, got in bed, and started to cry. 91 just felt like I coulant carry on anymore, and I tried to figure out what to dof, she said. In the next six months, she collapsed physically with a series of infections and had to quit her job.

Faced with such examples, ifs not surprising that many of the women I know have, sometimes reluctantly, foregone children. Unlike our mothers, we have been freed_by legalized abortion and changing customs-from obligatory motherhood. But for myself, the decision not to have children wasnIt easily or freely made. For years I saved money toward marriage and family. I married late-at 35eand two years later spent my birthday crying, feeling that my husband and I would never marshal the financial, physical, and emotional resources necessary to have a child while we both worked full-time. It wasnlt a simple economic decision, and other factors when subsidies for education and middle-class housing eroded, and uNot in My Backyard" antigrowrh zoning pushed housing prices higher.

Young people could have learned a thing or two from the elderly: also squeezed by inflation in the 1705, they organized, voted, and lobbied Congress. (The average voter is now 47 years old.) As a result, Social Security benehts-defended by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), one of the most powerful noncorporate lobbies in the country-have been indexed to the cost of living.

In real terms, Social Security benefits jumped 46 percent between 1970 and 1987 and now total 28 percent of all federal expenditures. The average current retiree will receive a little more than three times as much as he or she contributed to the system by the time he or she dies. (The average baby boomer will be lucky to receive half that.) In 1974, the poverty rate for the elderly fell below the poverty rate for children. In 1982, it fell below the poverty rate for the population as a whole. Today, the over-50 age group has a higher after-tax income per capita than the under-50 age group.

While the government has increased benefits for older voters, it has taken them away from the young, who have no powerful

played their part. But although I am sure there are other
women crying secretly in other bedrooms, it was not the kind
of thing I could talk to anybody about.
I HAVE FRIENDS WHO COPE BY KEEPING UP APPEARANCES-
running up credit-card debt and pretending nothing has
changed. But others face the truth about the way they live now
with some dignity and grace. I recently went to dinner with
Nancy, my old roommate, in her rent-controlled apartment in
San Franciscols North Beach. She knows how to do well with
nothing; we ate spaghetti and homemade applesauce by can-
dlelight on an old picnic table in a courtyard where daisies
grew in olive-oil cans. As we talked, her son circled the table
on a tricycle. Nancy told me things were much better than
they had been when her son was tiny, even though she still
rises at four in the morning to get her work done. She still
doesnit own a car, and she and her son leave the city about six
times a year. At 34, she owns only a refrigerator, a small
Chinese carpet, an antique bench, and her mothers dinner
dishes. III don,t feel poor? she said. III feel as ifI actually have
luxuries? It turned out she meant taking cabs to work, send-
ing the laundry out, and having the flat cleaned twice a month
-tasl(s done in a previous generation by a wife whose cash
income was not needed.
IIYou can talk about the economic problems of single moth-
ers, but single mothers exist because ifs an option now, and it
wasnIt an option for my mother? she said earnestly. III could
get out of my relationship when I wanted to. Having a child is
the most rewarding thing PVC ever done. It changed my life for
the better. I wouldnit go back. If I didn,t have my son to spend
my money on, Pd be buying snazzy shoes or yuppiefied kitch-
en equipment. Instead, Fm seeing things Pd otherwise miss.
Pm standing on the corner with him, waiting for the bus,
looking at a seagull standing on top of a flagpole?
I went to dinner with my brother Peter in the flat he shares
in San Francisco. He is 36, a perpetual student, and lives on
about a quarter of what I spend. Thereis always peace and
quiet at his place, a sense of being an expected guest, an
uncluttered awareness of the spaces between things. He
grass-roots lobby. The real value of the minimum wage has fallen,
and it is not indexed to inflation. Social Security taxes (FICA on
your pay stub) have risen from 4.80 percent in 1970 to 7.51
percent at present. As a result, younger workers, including those
making only minimum wage, have helped finance benefits for
some elderly people who are by no means poor. (Although retirees
cannot earn more than $8,880 annually, they can have unlimited
investment income without losing Social Security benefits.)
DESPITE THE ECONOMIC FACTS, THE ELDERLY REMAIN MYTHOL-
ogized objects of pity. Baby boomers and young families-with
no political organization comparable to the 28 million-member
AARP, with its $235 million budget-are pilloried in the press as
self-absorbed yuppies or ignored.
The number of children living in poverty has grown, and
government support for kids has declined. During the Reagan
years, $50 billion was cut from federal programs for children. We
now direct an average of $9,5 00 per year in federal benefits to each
elderly American-including the middle-class and wealthy-and
about a tenth of that to each child.
According to Mary Bourdette, a lobbyist for the Children%
Defense Fund, IIThereIs not so much a conscious neglect as a lack
knows how to use a pressure
cooker and find things at Good-
will; when he wants to see a show,
he works as an usher. When 1 ar-
rived, the table was set and the
lights turned low; there were wine-
glasses filled with mineral water,
Cloth napkins folded carefully at
each place, and two stubs of can-
dles glowing. When it was time, we
sat down for homemade lentil
soup, warm, fresh sourdough rye

from the neighborhood bakery,
salad and baked potatoes. I felt so
well taken care of that I ate bread
as though it was a rare food, tast-
ing the grains against my palate in-
stead of wolfing it down. There
was a sort of Zen luxuriousness
about the whole meal: we squeezed the maximum possible
enjoyment out of the minimum possible consumption. My
deepest needs_warmth, light, quiet, companionship_were
satisfied. I didnit miss anything.
I thought of my own life_my constant conversations with
myself about wanting a child, a new couch, a weekend cot-
tage, a bigger house on a quieter street-and realized my
discontent was cheating me of the life I load.
IIIf its by choice and its not overwhelming, having no
money can be a way of entering more deeply into your life?
my brother said, as he served me some more lentil soup.
)7 needs
were
satisjied.
Discontent
was cheating
me of the
life I load.
NOT LONG AFTER THAT, I BOUGHT MYSELF A NEW RAINCOAT,
a years supply of shampoo, and a pressure cooker. I quit my
job as a reporter to become a free-lance writer. I wrote to the
direct-mail association and asked them to take me off the
catalog lists. I sold my ancient, infuriating Mercedes and
bought a dull but reliable used Honda. I bought a secondhand
copy of Laurel% Kitchen, learned to cook beans, and started
using my library card.
of understanding of whats going onb by Congress. IIThere has to
be a pounding away and a repeated messagef she said. Bourdette
senses the beginning of congressional awareness in the Tax Reform
Act of 1986, which reduced taxes and expanded the Earned
Income Tax Credit-an income support program-for poor work-
ing families.
Some observers note that its hard to expect baby boomers to
organize as efficiently as the elderly have on the grass-roots level.
IIBaby boomers have an inherent political handicap: theylre busy
raising families, and retirees arenltf said Phillip Longman, a
former congressional aide and author of Born to Pay, a penetrating
analysis of the baby boomers economic predicament. lIThe elderly
have organized themselves as a generation, but there is no organ-
ized political voice for the baby-boom generation?
Baby boomers have also avoided facing the intergenerational
conflict by buying the fantasy tone of the Reagan years, when the
government and individual households tried to talk themselves
into prosperity by running up debt.
IIWeNe had ten years of the politics of denial? said Hazel
Henderson, a futurist and economic analyst. IIIf you don,t face that
the pie isnlt really growing, then you can also avoid talking about
divvying it up more fairly? _1(. B.

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I decided that if the economy was going to
deprive me of things I deeply wanted, it
would not also take my time.

I began facing the life I had, not the life I
dreamed of having or thought I had the right
to have. I turned off lights. I started to cut
the link between consumption and pleasure,
between consumption and seIf-worth. And
that paved the way for some unexpected
things. I recycled_hecause it saved money
on garbage pickup-and ate less meat and
more beans. I walked downtown instead of
getting into the car. Having less money
forced me to get to know my neighbors, and
a network of borrowing emerged. My next-

door neighbor Mack, a salesman, lost his job and borrowed my computer to type resumes; when my husbands car broke down, Mack lent us his. My husband Bob helped jay, a carpenter, change his clutch; jay brought us wood scraps for kindling and his wife Gloria fed us dinner. One weekend last fall, my husband and I came home from a walk and saw four of our neighbors standing outside Macks house around a pyramid of lawn sod.

11F()und it at the dumpf said George, the young contractor who lives down the block. He picked up a roll of sod, laid it out in Mackis front yard, and jumped up and down to set it. 1Some landscaper threw away a truckload? Mackis wife Jan, who works as a flight attendant, laid out another roll, and in half an hour, the patch of dirt in front of her house was transformed into a carpet of green. Jan turned on the sprinkler. uThere’s plenty left," said George. uDig up your yard, and well do it too? They all carried their tools around the geraniums that serve as a hedge between our houses. My husband and I raked out wisps ofyellow grass. uMy grandfather owned this whole block in the 1305," said George over the clattet of rakes. He chopped out a root with his hoe. "There was a dairy farm behind your house, and a vineyard across the street." I cradled rolls of sod against my chest until I smelled like the riverhanks where I skinnydipped as a child. Soon our weed patch was covered with a quilt of green, its nap running every which way. Ian knelt down with clippers and snipped along the edge of our walk as though cutting out the armhole of a dress. Mack brought out a six-pack. I squeezed lemons into a jug of iced water, and we sat around on the fresh new grass in the afternoon sunlight with no sense that anything needed to be repaid. I shut my eyes and felt no need to compare our block, held in its growing net of mutual favors and borrowings, with anything else I’d ever known.

Katy Butler is a regular contributor to The New Yorker and Mother Jones.

"Diary of a Mad Supermom"
career (and, in Orsbornk case, a Porsche) was giving them all hives, stomach cramps, and eye lltwitchingll disorders. (Not as exotic as the homemakefs psychotic he woman who stays home is the woman who goes bonkers. Thafs what we used to read, anyway, in the long-ago 705. Back then, the suburban housewifels spiral into despair and Valium addiction was the stuff of popular memoirs and best-selling novels. But come the postfeminist decade, this modern Ophelia has slipped from view-and resurfaced as a lady with a briefcase. These days, the Diary of the Mad Superwoman IS the book every publishing house is after. It started in the mid-198OS with the ex-supere woman confessionals: Deborah Fallowsl A Motherls Work, Sylvia Ann Hewlettls A Lesser Life, Hilary Cosellls Woman on a Seesaw, Carol Orsbomls Enough Is Enough. These upper-middle-class career gals had just about collapsed from the extreme llstresses and strains,, of having, and making, it all. Balancing a family and a
By Susan F aludi
episodes, but you work with what you have.)
The ex-superwomen all agreed that feminism was at the root of working womenls afflictions. Of course, none of them had ever been particularly devoted to feminist politics in the first place. But soon the supermarketable supermom concept began claiming converts from inside the womenls movement. Betty Friedan assailed thhe superwoman mystique? Erica Jong blamed fellow feminists for her difficulties juggling career and motherhood.
The bedraggled, beleaguered woman has become a hot commodity.
Illustration by jamie Hogan

Blakely one-ups
twitching super-
SUMMERREADING
Last winter, Felice N. Schwartz, founder
of the working women’s advocacy group
Catalyst, further dashed hopes ofa feminist
resistance. In the January/liebruary issue of
Harvard Business Review, Schwartz en-
dorsed what the media quickly labeled
"the mommy traek"-the career equivalent
of remedial read-
ing elass_as the
ideal slow lane for
post-superwomen.
"Most of them are
willing to trade
some ea reer growth
and compensation
for freedom from
the constant pres-
sure to work long
hours and week-
endsfl she wrote.
Translation: Letls
shave some more
pennies off the 65-cent5ato-a-manls-dollar
paycheck; thatls sure to reduce female stress.
Now come two new additions to the su-
permom debate: one a continuation of the
tecovering-superholic tradition, the other a
welcome antidote to the genre. ln Wake Me
When It’s Over (Times Books, 320 pages,
$17.95), Mary Kay Blakely-a contributing
writer to Ms.-reveals how her drive for
excellence led straight to the emergency
room. In The Second Shift: Working Parents
and the Revolution at Home (Viking, 336
pages, $18.95), sociologist Arlie Hochschild
illuminates the home lives of ten real dual-
career couples, and swivels the spotlight
back where it belongs-on the super-
women’s not-so-super husbands.
As the dust jacket of Wake Me When It’s
Over explains, in words more suited to a
Stephen King thriller than a feministls jour-
nal, Blakely’s account is ua chilling memoir
in which a working supermom exceeds her
limit and discovers the thin line between
sanity and lunacy and between life and
death." Blakely one-ups all the eye-twiteh-
ing supermom writers-she has a nine-day
coma to show for her strain.
When we first meet Blakely, she is taking
stock of her last 36 years from the window
seat of an eastbound airplane. That’s rough-
ly where fictional feminist heroine Isadora
Wing was sitting a decade earlier, in the
opening scene of Erica 1011ng Fear oflilying.
But thatls where the parallels end. ll Isadora
Wings intercontinental trip shuttled her to-
ward a personal creative awakening, then
Blakelyls is the return flight. Destination: the
Land of Nod.
A day after landing in New York, Blakely
all of the eye-
mom writers:
she goes into a
nine-day coma.
4o jUNli 1989
crawled into bed and sank into a coma.
Wlihere were some baffling medical explana-

tionsf but Blakely dismisses them. She knows she conked out from llconsuming too many passionsll-trying to pursue a career, raise two sons, and attend to an ex-husband and a new lover. Blakely even has proof; the day before she lost consciousness, she took the Cosmo stress test. uMy score placed me in ldangerously overloadedf " she writes, ua group whose circuits could blow at any moment?

A stress-induced coma would indeed be one for the medical history books, but for a small detail: Blakely is a diabetic. Before flaking out, she ehugged two Bloody Marys on an empty stomach, shot up with her daily insulin dose, and failed to balance her injection with a carbohydrate meal. As Sunny von Bulow could have told her, thatls enough to do a girl in. To make matters worse, Blakely had just come out of major surgery.

Blakely structures the book as a nine-day account of everything she thinks and over-hears while lying unconscious in the hospi-tal. But wait: a comatose patient who can think and hear? Blakely says its so. She was blind and paralyzed during the coma, but her ears were working fine. Not only did she listen in, she remembered, verbatim, all con-versations in her vicinity. She remembers the flattering bedside comments with the most clarity. uGod, even in a coma she’s beau-tifulfl her friend Susan murmurs.

What Blakely seems to like best about the coma llexperience" was the way it enabled her to regress into childhood. She retreated not so much from being a superwoman as from being a grown-up. ult was an extraor-dinary experience," Blakely writes, uto be loved unconditionally, as an adult." Upon waking, her arms are so weak that her boy-friend Larry has to feed her-a moment she recounts in minute and rapturous detail.

A closer reading reveals that Blakely’s de-pression had little to do with the trials of combining, fatnily and career. By her own account, her brother’s suicide a few years earlier was a central crisis in her life, and her childhood family, not her gtown-up one, is the memoir’s real subject. But her publisher still opted to market the book as the "memoir of a working supermom."

In one respect, Blakely’s illness is a super-moms story. By checking out from the world for a week and a halt, she forced her ex-hushand Howie to take up the slack at home. Before, Howie didn’t work -she paid all the family hills-and he didn’t share the housework. The coma, and her recovery in New York for several months, changed all that, alheit temporarily. llPreviously invisi-hle responsibilities became excruciatingly obvious in my three-month absence from Ann Arbor," she writes, with what one sus-pects is a certain relish. llHe took the calls from the coaches for soccer fees, wrote the checks at Kroger, wrestled with the night-mares about how he would manage it all without me?

It doesnlt say much for womens progress that Mary Kay Blakely had to pass out to get

her ex-husband to do the grocery shopping.
In the households Arlie Hoehschild studied in The Second Shift, women also resorted to illness to get their way. Hochschildis analysis of unwell working women, however, is far more thought-provoking than Blakelyls.
llWhen they are sick, it follows a certain pattern," Hochschild observes. lllnsisting that every task on the second shift is theirs, they work heroically until they finally fall ill with exhaustion. They don’t stop; their illness stops them?
Hochschilds interviews with ten couples make painfully clear why such manipulation is still necessary. Fifteen years after the start of the modern womenis movement, most men still do little of the housework or child care, still feel enormously threatened by wives who work or, worse, earn more than they do, and still abandon their children financially or emotionally after a divorce.
Hochschild conducted her interviews over 12 years, from 1976 to 1988. With the passage of time only one sign of llprogressll surfaced: the spouses didnlt share the household duties any more equitably, but now they "imagined that they did." In fact, the husbands who said they were helping tended to be the ones who did the least. In more lltraditional" couples the men were actually more likely to pitch in at home_perhaps, Hochschild hypothesizes, because they felt less threatened.
Hochschild adds up the hours of office and household work and finds women put in 15 hours more each week than their husbands, thanks to the lopsided division of labor on "the second shift." Over a year, that amounts to an extra month of 24-hour days. While women are working overtime, men are watching an hour more of television and sleeping, an extra half hour every night. In other words, Hoehsehild observes, on top of the wage gap at the office, working women come home to a llleisute gap."
Popular culture has only served to maintain the status quo, by denigrating the image of the uNew Manll and making a joke ofthe woman who works. The commercial depiction of the superwoman, Hoehsehild observes, lleritiques the frazzled supermom herself, not her inflexible work schedule, not the crisis in day care, not the glacial pace of change in our idea of 1’1 teal manf "
Unlike the current round of pop sociology

books about dysfunctional families, a subject so in vogue today, The Second Shift resists over-psychologizing. In dissecting the household dynamics of ten working couples, Hochschild considers psychological factors, but she also weighs an array of cultural and economic forces that play equally critical roles in generating domestic distress.
Hochschild spent many hours in peopleis living rooms and kitchens, taking careful notes, looking for the lbsmall ripple on the surface of family waters.n As a result, her ten case studies are absorbing domestic dramas, real-life scenes from a marriage. In each home, we see how the woman winds up with a coercive llchoicel, between love and work.
All the women who confronted their husbands openly about household labor wound up veering perilously close to divorce.
The Holt family is a classic example. First, Nancy Holt, a feminist, lobbied hard for her husband to take on half of the household duties. After all, they both worked full-time-she as a social worker, he as a furniture salesman-and she actually loved her work more. But her husband, Evan, who interpreted her every request to help out with the housework as a scheme to lldominatell him, became increasingly sullen as time passed. Six years into the marriage, Evan volunteered, blNancy, why donlt you cut back to half-time lat workl, that way you can fit everything infl As Nancy replied sadly: llWelve been married all this time and you still don,t get it. Work is important to me?
The last time Hochschild visited the Holts, Nancy had given up and decided to work part-time; she joined the llmommy trackll to save her marriage. She concealed her loss with the invention of a family myth: she and Evan blshared equally? She did the ibupstaitsTi-all the housework and child care; and he did the lldownstairsl,-tidying up his basement workshop tools. llWhen she occasionally spoke of conflict, it was conflict between her job and lher sonl Joey, or between Joey and housework. Evan slid out of the equation?
The half-surrender of Nancy Holt recurs with depressing frequency in these case studies. The problem, Hochschild demonstrates, isnit that the womenis movement has gone iltoo far,l-as the ex-superwoman writers are so fond of saying. The problem is it hasnlt gone far enough. What Hochschild calls the llstalled revolution" has halted before an all-male brick wall. And until the wall budges, the only way around it may be to slip into a coma.
X
Susan Faludiis book, about the backlash against feminism, will be published by Crown.
Photograph by Pablo Ortiz Monasterio
A Bazaar of Broken Promises
LA CAPITAL:
The Biography ofMexico City, by jonatban Kandell, Random House, 640 pages, $24.95.
BY RICHARD RODRIGUEZ

any people alive remember the
city of yore. Its limpid air. The
white sky and blue volcanos. An
American lady who knew the City
as a girl, in the ,205, remembers
that other Mexico City, the great
French houses ranged along the
Reforma-all gone now, of
course, she says.
As late as the 19505, bit was
still a city of very human proportions,n re-
calls Jonathan Kandell in the prologue to La
Capital. Kandell grew up in Mexico City,
the son of U.S. expatriates, in San Angel, at
the southwestern edge of the City. He re-
members scavenging for Indian artifacts in a
meadow a few blocks from home. Up the
block lived Diego Rivera. Traffic was light
enough so that the middle class still enjoyed
coming home for a three-hour lunch. . . .
Today Mexico City is the largest llurban
eenterll in world history. Kandell suspects
there are now around 20 million souls in the
city. By the end of the century, 30 million?
He tantalizes his readers by admitting that
he considered writing a book about Mexico
City-the great city that it is. But no, he
chose a different angle. La Capital: The
Biography ofMexico City is, instead, a his-
tory of the nation of Mexico posed as a
biography of the city.
Not such an outrageous idea. Most of the
public events of Mexico have taken place in
its capital. Motecuhzoma, Cortes, Juarez,
Maximilian, Porfirio Diaz-the most fa-
mous names in Mexican history belong to
the city.
Kandell has written a 600-page book that
is nevertheless easy to read. From an un-
promising Michener-like beginning (blabout
50 million years ago . . 3,) he proceeds to tell
the hundreds of good stories that pass as
Mexicols ofhcial history. The main trouble
with La Capital as
history, however, is
Mexico City itself.
Mexico,s capital has
never succeeded in de-
fining Mexico. Itls pos-
sible to imagine a
history of France as a
biography of Paris. But
to tell the story of Mex-
ico from the vantage point of Mexico City is
to miss the monumental political failure of
Mexico City. Mexico barely exists as a
commonwealth.
Mexico exists, has survived, largely as
family: something intimate, something feme
inine, behind walls and Closed doors. To this
day, when Mexicans are in trouble, they do
not turn to the city, to the government, but
to their families. The genius of Mexico is
held within the family. The family is protec-
tion against the future and the link to an
eternal Mexico.
moves to the
staysbehind.
MOTHER JONES 4 1
While Mexico
City, its family

Beyond the family, for most Mexicans, there has been the village-a place of first names, a pastoral realm, and, unlike the city, anti-historical. Kandell himself observes that only a generation ago, 70 percent of Mexicans lived in villages of less than 2,500 inhabitants.

From its days as an Aztec capital to the present, Mexico City has had a parasitic relationship with the village. The city has depended 0n the labor of the village and on the resources of the land. It is no coincidence that Mexicols revolutionaries have tradidonally come from outside the city. The city, meanwhile, has bred politicians and assassins and comic generals.

In public, in the anonymous city, during the rush-hour traffic, Mexico becomes a place of chaos. Whereas village Mexico is generous and feminine and embracing, city Mexico is a bazaar of broken promises, postures, corruptions, broken streetlights. Formerly stationed in the capital, a journalist for the New York Times, now a foreign editor for the Wall Street journal, Kandell understands the ways of public Mexico. But this is also his limitation: Kandellls Mexico is too much of the city, of the megaphone, of the Chancery, of the male.

He is, for example, inattentive to the lasting spirituality of Mexico. The Virgin of Guadalupe-the most important unifying presence of Mexico-barely rates comment from Kandell. Yet it is their spirituality that distinguishes Mexicans from their pragmatic neighbors to the north. Judge it how you might: Mexicans have put up with the public failure of Mexico for decades because they have had the consolation of their santos and La Virgen, and the example of a long-suffering God.

The calamity of modem Mexico is that it has become, in one generation, an urban nation. The land no longer sustains Mexicans. Eighty percent of Mexicans live in cities. There is regret and skepticism and an unease in the Mexican soul.

You have possibly sensed something of these feelings in the Mexican immigrants to the United States who have ended up in our cities. (We Mexican Americans are among the most urbanized of US. ethnic groups, though we are among the most recently urbanized.) We do not vote in very large numbers; we stay close to home; we are people of memory more than of expectation-try what generalization you will about us. Only do not forget the simple sociological fact about us and our fellow Mexicans: We are people new to the city.

Richard Rodriguez is an associate editor at Pacific News Service. He is at work on a new book about Mexico and California.

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Third World, Second Hand

MALARIA DREAMS:
An African Adventure, by Stuart Stevens, Atlantic Traveler/Atlantic Monthly Press, 264 pages, $18.95.

BY GEORGE PACKER

alaria Dreams belongs to an increasingly popular subgenre of travel literature, the heat-mosquitoes-and-brown-people book, in which a young white man sets out to get himself in trouble somewhere between the 40th parallel and the tropic 0f Capricorn. It derives from British travel writing of the arch, Evelyn Waugh variety, and from the mad exploits of American gonzo journalism.

Any travel book, whether a joumalistis reflections like Joseph Lelyveldls Move Your Shadow, a personal memoir like Out ofAfrica, or a high-spirited adventure like this one, has to balance what happens to the author with a sense of respect for the place itself. Having lived in Africa and written my own book about it, I know the difficulty of finding this ground between journalism and narcissism. Malaria Dreams, leaning toward the latter, is a hasty and fatally mild example of the adventure subgenre; but it reveals the ingredients of such books, and it suggests an answer to the question: Why are they being written and sold in such numbers?

Stuart Stevens, along with a female companion, went to the Central African Republic to drive a friends Land Rover from Bangui to Paris. Good luck came his way as soon as he touched down in Africa: III had been in Bangui less than ten minutes when I was robbed for the first time. This proved to be very fortunate. Muggings, rape and murder, I quickly discovered, were the pillars of conversation among the white community and my introductory theft gave me something to talk about on the party circuit? This serendipity continued at every sandy turn all the way to the Mediterranean: avaricious cabinet ministers, bribe-mad border guards, bullet-pocked outposts, AlDS-ridden prostitutes, ant attacks, four-day detours, malarial chills, oil leaks, a half-dead Dutch, a dead Clutch.

The search for the exotic always turns up the familiar. When Stevens lllonged for the feel, the texture, of an African evening? Africa delivered. At various times his new setting evokes Anthony Burgessis Malayan Trilogy, ua scene straight out of a tropical fantasyf and lithe African jungle of my dreams? As for the human beings, they are generally kind, gentle, etc., in the abstract, comical or irritating when he gets out of the car. With nothing at stake and no real engagement, the only principle of selection is that everything he includes happened to him.

Stevens is at his best when he doesnit have to spend more than an hour in any one place, so on the road, his mood and Writing improve. The finale, with a sprint across the desert in one gear, is genuinely exciting.

Illustration by Rick Sealock

This, after all, was why he had come to Africa: llEveryone had said I was crazy to go to Africa, that there were dangerous sorts of people and situations worth avoiding. Now, at least, Ild found a bit of both?

Books like Malaria Dreams make one wonder about the appeal of getting Africa, or any other place, thirdhand_that is, through a book that records the pursuit of a media-induced adventure fantasy. Itls worth trying an experiment: Imagine a book by a Chadian who has planned a trip across the United States. Having read about U.S. social problems, he looks in on a homeless shelter and an AIDS clinic in New York, but hes anxious to be on the road; so he rents a Hertz, after much wrangling with the overweight agent who doesn,t understand a word of Sangho, and sets out for California. Pennsylvania and Ohio pass in a blur, but a flat tire in rural Indiana restores his interest in the trip. He stays with a Nigerian in Chicago and the only Sudanese couple in Wichita. Kansas looks like cornfields straight out of The Wizard of Oz. A run-in with the INS in the Mojave Desert nearly thwarts everything, but with a wad of cash and sweet talk by his Cameroonian girlfriend, he finally reaches Los Angeles, the fuel gauge at empty.

There are several reasons why this book would never be written. First, a Chadian isnlt likely to have the one thing necessary for adventure without risk-money. With Chadls annual per-capita income at $150 and illiteracy around 90 percent, a publisher wouldnlt make a profit in the writers own country. It goes without saying that Americans wouldnlt buy it. Theylre as bored by cornfields as the Chadian is by sand, and his two-minute insights would strike them as offensive or merely silly. But what really matters is that it would never occur to a Chadian to write such a book. You have to belong to a rich country that has a large number of consumers with leisure time and thinks of itself at the center of things before you can imagine Africa as the vast stage of your ironic exploits.

But if you can make that mental leap, a deep need is quickly satisfied. Africa-alien, blank, compliant-will provide the comedy, the freedom, and the sense of thrill so depleted back in the consumer society whose patronage you count on when the goods are brought home. If the price of the abundant life is boredom, therels always that land mass between the 40th parallel and the tropic of Capricorn to make you feel alive again, and apparently enough like-minded readers to make it worth your while.

George Packerls book, The Village of Waiting, is published by Vintage Departures.

Illustration by Tim Bower

Beauties and the Beast

WILD AMERICA AND OTHER STORIES
by jayne Loader, Grove Press, 240 pages, $17.95.

LUST AND OTHER STORIES
by Susan Minot, Hougbton Mifflin C0,, 160 pages, $16.95.

BY GEORGIA BROWN

nyone who thinks that women of the late 20th century donlt often find themselves old-fashioned slaves of love should take a look at these two story collections. While wholly distinct in mood and style, each tells sad tales of women in thrall. On the evidence, the male of the species appears to be a wounded-dangerous if cornered-beast of prey.

Easily the more ambitious and substantial of the two books is Jayne Loaderls smart, sassy Wild America. Loader, one of the three directors of the acclaimed film documentary The Atomic Cafe, writes stories resembling mini-documentaries of middle-American tragedies-in-the-making. She has a gift for comic mimicry, and her stories tend to do tricks with voices. lll Was a Hollywood Sex Slave by Carrie Jo Starkweatheri, is Carrie Jols true confession of days and nights held prisoner by Mr. Tom Cruise and Mr. Don Johnson while in flight from her Aryan Nation husband DeWitt. Don,s sidekick Mr. Philip Michael Thomas was present too, sometimes in the guise of Mr. Michael jackson. Don confides to Carrie Jo, llWhen you get back home to Nebraska you can tell your friends who complain all the time that there are too many Negroes in the entertainment industry . . . that there are not too many Negroes at all. just the one?

Underneath the savvy, Loaderls stories all tell of debilitating sadomasochistic relationships, most of which get resolved in violence. Three stories considerably longer than the others-llFamous Last Words? uKen Kesey Day? and llFor Artists Onlyll-are about women artists derailed in their art and lives (two are killed) by :gwel Spltem name for Minot’s I a s . L a snt Viggius pathologlcal man: Daisy Duke publishes sto- he was a cadries in The New Yorker, writes a best-selling memoir about her days as a punk rocker, pens an tlocca- sional rocleand-roll anthemll to be hrecorded by her pal Joaujettfl She bills herself 5445/15: ’ l There was once a

as llthe thinking mans Madonnafl All this and shels begging her stiek-in-the-mud boy-friend Haskell du Pont to marry her. He puts her off. Why? One, his mother threatens to disinherit him. Two, as an unsuccessful composer. hes jealous of Daisyis creativity, as well as of the successful composer shels met at the Mael)owell artists colony. Whereas Daisy is confrontational, passive Haskell avoids conflict until he’s crazed. A similarly destructivm seemingly unworkable relationship is reeapitulated in "Kismet." It is rescued only when high-spirited Brett and damaged lake test HIV positive. Venturing out of his shell for the first time, jake leaves his Texas hometown to share a Fire Island cottage with Brett. So the only woman in the entire book who ends up gratified happens to be dyirlg.

In one creepy story, the victim ofsadism is a child. "Saturday in the Barn,, is told from the point of view ofjason, a fifth grader at the Topanga School for Gifted Children, whose teacher, Mr. Delaney-former Child star who lfpeaked early’ll-sliees off the legs of Molly the class gerbil and threatens to do the same to members of the childrens families if they donk cooperate in his lfNaked Movie Star" photo sessions. (Loader seems not to know that such intimidation may work with kindergartners but hardly with a group of sophisticated ten-year-olds.) While I have problems with Loader’s trendy treatment of this subject, its clear that shels writing out of a very personal obsession with exploitation of the weak by the powerful.

SusAN MmoTE NEW STORIES ARE VERY slight, and so similar to each other that with a few superficial changes, Lust could probably be billed as a short llnovelfl as was Minots first book, M(mkeys-her acclaimed collection of tristet considerably more engaging stories about a disintegrating upper-elass New England Catholic family. Sometimes in first person, sometimes in third, all of the stories in Lust share a point-of-view character: a dependent young woman engaged in a hopeless affair with an inscrutable, chronically unavailable man_a man who seems barely to know she exists.

lior those who have read Monkeys, connecting, this male lover to the eerily inattentive (ius Vincent, an alcoholic father of seven, seems a pretty safe analytical leap.

Minot sometimes refers to her heroine as che girl" and to the object of her fixation as flthe man." Picturing herself as a child in the world of adults, a pupil in a world ofteachers, a Minot girl begins by saying, ul had a lot to learn," and ends claiming to have

ulearned a lotfi an unconvincing claim when the lesson turns out to be the obvious: namely, that boys are different from girls. Whereas in the beginning of a relationship fldifferenceii intrigues the girl, even thrills her, by breakup time she finds herself discouraged and thwarted by the gulf. Anyway, hefs already drifting off to someone else (another woman always waits in the wings).

The most characteristic position for the Minot girl to be in is wistfully scanning the profile of a man whds staring into some vast, unfathomable (for girls) distance. What never seems to occur to the girl is that shels hooked on a particular pathological type. He used to be called a cad.

ln lfA Thrilling Life? the opening steps of Minots typical dangerous liaison are tellingly sketched. Frank Manager (how frank can a name get?), lfsat down beside me on the steps and made fun of the shoes I was wearing. . . . I thought, this man could teach me a thing or two. Held been around. . . . At one point I asked him an inane question, something about what his father did, and Frank flashed me an annoyed eye. The look was involuntary and he tried to cover it up but it had shown through. There was rage beneath the banter and charm. I was intrigued?

50, lm thinking, was Jennifer Levin.

Thisjump from his putdown, his annoyance, and, yes, his rage, to her infatuation is the ribbon that ties these tales into a tidy package. But since lllustl, happens to be a boys thing, and hearing a girls, she gets stung every time. llCare a little less? gripes sour Albert in llThe Swan in the Garden."

llWomen shouldnlt ask for what they know they can’t getf’ frets petulant Harry in lfLunch with Harryfl Or, as the handsome Mr. Casual in "Sparksil squeaks out, uTime to hit the roadfl He didift even stick around for the lust part.

As melancholy tales of female masochism, these may sound right out ofEdna O,Brien or jean Rhys territory, but it should be emphasized that Minot is neither an elegant artisan like Rhys nor an entertaining storyteller like OlBrien. Itls unlikely that any ofthese stories, much less a collection, could have been published if the authors name had been unknown. Reading about a woman% willing victimization can be-should be-painful, but in stories lacking grace or precision, its just depressing.

Georgia Brown is a hlm critic for the Village Voice.

Other gay novelists
are being ushered
into the mainstream.
Luckily, Cooper’s
prose couldn’t be
less presentable.
Everything
But Tears

CLOSER
by Dennis Cooper, Grave Press, 144 pages, $15 .95 .

BY DAN BELLM

ennis Coopers previous books gave me chills. Closer gave me nightmares, took over my brain for days: in the words of one of its characters, lll longed to hnd some sort of clinic

and have my memory flushed? This
man is dangerous. And just when
other gay novelists like Edmund
White and David Leavitt are being
ushered into the so-called main-
stream by Newsweek and the New York
Times, Cooperfs raw, obsessional prose
could hardly be more unpresentable.
Many gay readers will hate Closer, and
most straight readers wonlt touch it-itls
full of loveless, unsafe,
violent homosexual-
ity, and therels not a
positive role model in
sight. Told from multi-
ple vantage points, the
eight tightly con-
structed episodes re-
volve around George
Miles, a beautiful and
passive kid that every-
one in high school
wants to love, or hurt,
or both. Then George meets two older men
with, uh, uunusual tastesll-a fixation with
the borderline between sex and death.
Cooperls world is a gay teen punk sub-
subculture in someplace like Los Angeles,
a generation of cold rich kids raised on arti-
fice-drugs, Disneyland, pornography, the
grossest of splatter flicks. But despite its sur-
face of tossed-off realism, Closer is as
willfully artificial as the scene it dissects.
Cooper’s teenagers may be awkward and
insecure, yearning for love or art or at least a
hip reputation, but they speak with the Hne-
tuned, amoral voices of middle-aged crimi-
nals. Every boy in high school is gay, every
encounter is white-hot, you can get away
with making a sadomasochistic uB-movie
parody, rock Opera, pseudosnuffll film as a
class project, and Dad will drive you to the
lab to get it processed. AIDS doesnlt exist.
Absolutely everything is permissible except
tenderness and tears.
Still, the reflection in this spook-house

world looks strangely familiar: Cooper uses distortion to reach into the subconscious, to get under our skin.

Closer is more complex and intense than Coopers brilliant last book, Safe (Sea Horse Press, 1984), but his vision, or fantasy, has grown so dark that it is difficult to call this new novel an advance. Therels less air to breathe, less human comfort. Even llA Herd? his horrific story of a mass murderer in The Tenderness of the Wolves (The Crossing Press, 1982), watched the action with a godlikc sorrow. In Closer, the entire culture is driven toward death, desire zs cruelty, and there is no way out-the book ends on the line llltls really black in here? You cant put down a book like this and just get back to whatever you were doing. Nobody since jean Genet has written with such lucid brutality, such power to scare us into checking our values.

Next time, I would like Dennis Cooper to lead us away from the brink, but I wonit count on it.

Dan Bellm wrote about Clevejones and the NAMES Project in tbejanuary 1989 issue 0/ Mother Jones.

Photograph by Bill Burke

Down and Out Upstate

l)liX’liliRl’liY

By Douglas Bauer, Simon (if Schuster, .317 pages, $18.95.

BYJAMi-Ls KAPLAN

ar be it from this writer to put the knock on anybody_anywhere, anyhow-who summons up the will and courage to construct a working semiserious novel. By semieserious l of course mean any work that avoids mere upholstery (spies, spooks, nuclear subs, glitter palaces) and manages, ifonly in passing, to address that most endangered of organs, the human spirit. As American sitcoms and movies steadfastly advance 15. li Skinnerk dictum that the soul doesnlt exist, only behavior-and (Continued on next page)

Nowhere to Run To

FORCED OUT: The Agony of the Refugee in Our Time, by (Jamie Kismaric. Random House, I92pt1ges, $19.95.

They are (Iumhotlinm Ethiopian, Salvadoran, and Haitian. They are East German, Sovien ’llirkish, and Palestinian. They are adults, uncle like the (izlmhodiams pictured above chasing a food truck through :1 Thai border enmp-they are children.

They are, as the title of this gripping book of photograplm oral histories, commentary, maps, and indexes prtr claims, Iion’ed ()m. liourteen million refugees roam the world, and only one percent can ever go home again; Forced ()ut tells their stories with dignity and wit. The photographs will be part of a nationally touring exhihit opening this fall in los Angeles, and all profits from the hook will he do-

nated to Human Rights Watch.
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(Continued from previous page) not very pretty behavior, at that-we feel increasingly grateful to anyone who tells us otherwise. Literary novelists, working an ever more obscure backwater of what has come to be known, in all solemnity, as the entertainment industry, have that thankless mandate. What to do, then, when a novel is too serious (for ones own taste, anyway)? Douglas Bauerls Dexterity earnestly tracks the souls of Ed and Ramona-white trash, high-school sweethearts, then unhappy lifemates, in the fictional upstate New York town of Myles-as they come together, come apart, then come together again. In a brilliant, and brilliantly compressed, first chapter, Bauer charts Ramona and Ed% courtship through all its wildly sexual adolescent hope: uShe saw them living at the edge of the village in a new house trailer, saw the sun reflecting off its siding as if it had caught the cut of a diamond? Once theylre married, of course, there,s nowhere to go but down-Ed turns into a beer-drinking yobbo who spends his evenings at the Hill Top Tap, occasionally deigning to come home and treat Ramona to the sight of him lying on the couch, twitching his big toe in time to the music of TV commercials. The first time Ramona, seven months pregnant, tries to leave Ed, she wrecks her car and loses her right hand (but not the baby): hence the books strangely sadistic title. Once their son is born, the couple settles into a brief, glum equilibrium. Then one day Ramona leaves Jonas in his stroller in the middle of a field and lights out for the territory.

Anyone whols ever spent any time in upstate Anywhere knows that life in food-stamp-and-propane-tank land can be heart-sinkingly grim. The whole problem with Dexterity, for me, is that Bauer,s writing doesnk buoy his subject. The author takes on the difficult and dangerous task of living the lives of limited characters in exhaustive (and exhausting) detail, through prose thats solemn, knuckle-crackingly poetic, and, at times, just plain muekle-mouthed: ll Edl sensed jonas as the problems inconsolable shape and sounds, and as little more. This denied many things, not entirely a bad result, for he didnlt for a moment at a juncture in the day see his son as incarnation of Ramona 1s mocking flight."

Faulkner himself couldnt have done any better. Maybe my own soul, the victim of too much TV repartee, is just too far gone to enjoy this kind of thing. If you are serious enough to appreciate truly serious fiction-and I pray you are-please buy this book, and keep the good fight going.

james Kaplan’s novel, Pearls Progress, is published by Knopf.

BROADCASTERS

(Continued from page 31) how smart we have to be as well. And that gets lost a lot of the time.

Orenstein: Meredith and Ann, are you concerned about aging?

Vieira: I am.

Rubenstein: Absolutely.
Vieira: If Ilm right in my assumption that they want young people on the air, the next one who comes along whoTs younger and smarter and can articulate well may find herself in my job. I think its also debilitating t0 obsess on it. You know, thatls not how I should be wasting my time-worrying oh my God, I have a wrinkle, instead of studying the next question. So, its a dangerous thing.
Rubenstein: Stock up on that Retin-A.
Orenstein: It also seems that youth and beauty can be a limitation, depending on how its used. Pm thinking about the Vanity Fair shots of Diane Sawyer.
Rubenstein: Meredith is probably best equipped to talk about that. I donlt know whether you all saw that Esquire piece on her a while back.
Ellerbee: We all saw it.
Goldin: Meredith can say categorically she would not pose that way now.
Vieira: Well, I can say I did it for the fun of It.
Rubenstcin: Did you know what he . . .
Vieira: I knew it was going to be a flattering piece. I knew it was done in fun. I see myself as a lot of different things. I didnlt question it. In retrospect maybe I should have. It was interesting-the reaction that I got was basically from women, not from men. I got reactions from feminists on both sides. Feminists who said, Right on, finally youlre allowing yourself to be what you are, and thats how far we,ve come." And others who said, uYou have just set back our movement a long way." People look up to you as somebody in the business, and here you are posing in these pictures. The one in the pink taffeta dress was certainly suggestive. And thatls been detrimental. I suppose ifI had it to do over again, knowing me, I probably would. But I certainly didnlt mean any harm, and I assume a little bit did come out of it.
Orenstein: If Meredith had called the rest of you up the night before that shoot and said, le thinking of doing this, what do you think," what advice would you have given?
Goldin: I could have argued both sides of the case.
Rubenstein: The professional side of me would have said donlt do it. The other side of me as a person would say youlve got to do what you,ve got to do.
Ellerbee: My first reaction to the Diane Sawyer cover on Vanity Fair, quite frankly, was it was unimportant as an issue. They were beautiful pictures, and she looked beautiful. It would be nice to look like that, wouldnlt it? Feminist that I am, I was not bothered by it. I think I was persuaded by women friends of mine in the business thatI should have been bothered by it, and that we have come a long way, and that this is not the image we want to give off. I agree. Its not. But I also agree with Meredith. Look, I am also a woman, I like looking good. So I wouldnlt have given you any advice.

Vieira: Just let me hang myself.
Goldin: Well, until this morning, I would have come here to criticize you. And to criticize Diane. But what you and Linda have said has made me think. And I suppose that in the ideal world . . .
Ellerbee: . . . it would be OK. You know what it is? Its the limits of society that make it dangerous.
Goldin: But because that is the way we are perceived in so much of what we do I think it can be detrimental, because it just feeds into that stereotype. If we were taken seriously and as equals, and not called cunts and other horrible things, then fine.
Ellerbee: I thought you had great legs, though.
Orenstein: Well, clearly, the kind of feedback you get on your looks is different than men get, but what about the feedback on your work?
Vieira: It depends. I mean, I,ll seek feedback a lot of times. Positive and negative. But I don,t find people in the networks are gushers. I mean, you donlt exactly walk down the hall . . . III-Iey, great job, Meredith. Way to go on that story?
Goldin: Maybe Ilm romanticizing, but I seem to remember a day when it was more collegial. When people did help and did compliment you, and didnlt look at you as a worse competitor than somebody from another network. And now that doesnlt exist. Now there is that sense, sometimes overt, certainly covert, of that old Hollywood phrase: Better my colleague here should fail than my worst enemy.
Orenstein: Does that have something to do with the new ownership and the shift in management of the news divisions?
Goldin: It was as soon as news became part of big business, as soon as news was made into ratings, as soon as you could never come in the next day or the next week and have what you did honestly critiqued, because if it got super ratings, then it was good, and if it got dumpster ratings, well, then it couldnt be very good.

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(Continued from previous page) not very
pretty behavior, at that-we feel increasing-
ly grateful to anyone who tells us otherwise.
Literary novelists, working an ever more ob-
scure backwater of what has come to be
known, in all solemnity, as the entertain-
ment industry, have that thankless mandate.
What to do, then, when a novel is too
serious (for ones own taste, anyway)?
Douglas Bauerls Dexterity earnestly tracks
the souls of Ed and Ramona-white trash,
high-school sweethearts, then unhappy life-
mates, in the fictional upstate New York
town of Myles-as they come together,
come apart, then come together again. In a
brilliant, and brilliantly compressed, first
chapter, Bauer charts Ramona and lids
courtship through all its wildly sexual ado-
lescent hope: IlShe saw them living at the
edge of the village in a new house trailer, saw
the sun reflecting off its siding as if it had
caught the cut of a diamond? Once theylre
married, of course, thereis nowhere to go
but down_Ed turns into a beer-drinking
yobbo who spends his evenings at the Hill
Top Tap, occasionally deigning to come
home and treat Ramona to the sight of him
lying on the couch, twitching his big toe in
time to the music of TV commercials. The
first time Ramona, seven months pregnant,
tries to leave Ed, she wrecks her car and 1(
her right hand (but not the baby): hence
bookls strangely sadistic title. Once their
is born, the couple settles into a brief, gl
equilibrium. Then one day Ramona lea
Jonas in his stroller in the middle of a f
and lights out for the territory.
Anyone wh0,s ever spent any time in
state Anywhere knows that life in IQ
stamp-and-propane-tank land can be he
sinkingly grim. The whole problem vs
Dexterity, for me, is that Bauerls writ
doesnlt buoy his subject. The author ta
on the difficult and dangerous task of liv
the lives of limited characters in exhaus
(and exhausting) detail, through prose th
solemn, knuckle-crackingly poetic, and
times, just plain muckle-mouthed: ill
sensed jonas as the problems inconsola
shape and sounds, and as little more. T
denied many things, not entirely a bad
sult, for he didnlt for a moment at a junct
in the day see his son as incarnation
Ramonas mocking flight?
Faulkner himself couldnk have done R
better. Maybe my own soul, the victim
too much TV repartee, is just too far gone to
enjoy this kind of thing. If you are serious
enough to appreciate truly serious fiction-
and I pray you are_please buy this book,
and keep the good fight going.
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Vieira: A lot of these executives are extremely insecure human beings who are very nervous about the guy at the top themselves. And they change so quickly from one attitude to the next that one day theyire on your side, and the next day itls whatever is politically wise for them.
Goldin: The networks have been taken over by bigger corporations and the only thing they care about is the bottom line. Whatls so hypocritical is they'd ask you to save money on a crew or on your own salary or on a staff person who maybe was going to make $15,000 or $20,000 a year while Larry Tisch lpresident of CBS Newsj is giving caviar and champagne parties at the Democratic and Republican conventions and every other place you look. And where is the investigative reporting from a network that pays Connie Chung $1.8 million? If thafs where your resources are . . .
Ellerbee: At NBC a couple of years ago they actually sat down and took all of the correspondents and how many minutes they were on the air that year, and prorated the cost-Whatis this correspondent worth to us? How much does he produce? Herels his salary; here,s the number of minutes hels on the air. Then you have a list. And you slice off the ones at the bottom. That doesnIt take into account that some stories take a long time to produce. What a foolish way to look at the news!
Goldin: Ilve come to the conclusion that the televison news networks are divided into two categories: the few great celebrities and the rest of what I refer to as sycophants.
Ellerbee: Those tend to be men, the sycophants.
Goldin: Oh, really? I find it in a lot of women, too.
Ellerbee: Really?
Goldin: Oh, yes. Theyire certainly of both sexes. Theres a line from The King and I: llYes, Your Majesty; no, Your Majesty; tell me how low to go, Your Majesty." Why, Ilve seen middle-aged women whoIve talked to executive men in baby talk.
Ellerbee: You know, we all had daddies. We were all little girls who wanted the approval of daddy. And we add that to everything else that society and our parents put into us about little girls. And you get out there in the business world, and your boss is Ildaddy." Weire conditioned. I mean, even these days, people will say, IIDid you have a mentor? I hate that word. They mean a daddy. They mean . . . we used to say a rabbi.
Rubenstein: Do you have a tormentor. . . not a mentor, a tormentor.
Ellerbee: I think women have to work harder to get out of that mind-set. I had to make conscious efforts to do that.
Rubenstein: Ilve never talked baby talk to

a man. How do you do it?
Vieira: You end up talking sort of like a child to a parent. And in the Ystar systemf if youlre lItalentf male or female, youire treated like a Child. So, thatis built-in. I mean, theyire always stroking you. Always, you

know, youire the good little kid. But you know, I think in terms ofyour network staff, they still do care about their work.
Ellerbee: The people that do the work-the writers, the editors, the producers, cameramen and women-they care. Because their jobs are made much more difficult if they have to work with IItalentf whois actually an airhead. But the people who hire them? I donlt think they care that much. They say they do.
Goldin: As the only person here behind the scenes, I think it would be grossly unfair to our readers for any of us to leave the impression that its just on-air talent who are airheads. The fact is that the same people who are doing the hiring of on-air talent are doing the hiring of behind-the-scenes talent. And I am here to tell you that many, if not all, of the same characteristics that are desirable for on-the-air talent-sycophancy, baby talk_they want behind the scenes as well as on the air.
Ellerbee: I worked at one network, which shall go nameless, where there was an executive producer who had a real cadre of women producers . . .
Rubenstein: Oh, do we have a lot to talk about afterwards.
Ellerbee: . . . a real cadre of women producers. Some of whom held slept with, some of whom he hadn,t. It was sort of interchangeable. But, of course, that was the impression if you were in that cadre. The terrible part of being accused if youire a woman in this business, whether youlre behind the scenes or not, is sometimes people think you,ve slept with the boss to get where you are. Now the terrible part is that there are some who did. And do.
Orenstein: How has that affected your careers? YouIve obviously all rebelled against the standard expectations-and youlve survived.
Goldin: Ilm very proud of what I did for 25 years at the networks, 22 of them at CBS and two and a halfat ABC. It also speaks for itself that Im no longer with the television networks, and donlt want to be. Again, this may sound self-serving-youill decide. Somebody asked me whether NBC had called me when I left ABC, and I said no. Youlve got to believe me. If they did Id be a bag lady before Ild consider it.
Ellerbee: I remember a day, it was the summer that I was 40 years old. I was working on a show that was in some disarray. It was chaos. I was rushed, and I was writing. My boss came into the room with yet another ItHave I got an ideaV, And it was a dreadful idea. It was a dreadful, dreadful idea. And he wanted to know why. Sometimes a lot of things can go through your mind very fast. I started to open my mouth and do what over the years you get in the habit of doing, which is break it to him gently. Find ways to get him out of that idea without him losing face.
Rubenstein: It,s called creative deflection.
Ellerbee: Thats right. I didnit have the time. I was under the gun, and I didnlt have

the time. I turned around and I said, IIThatis an awful idea. I donlt have time to tell you why now. It is a terrible idea. I donlt want to hear about it? And he said, IlWell, whats the matter with you? And I blew. I donlt know where it came from. But I started to yell at the man, III am tired of babying you all? We talk about us doing baby talk-Ilm tired of mothering little-boy executives. Grow up. Take my word for it, its a bad idea, and get out of my office. Ilm busy.
Goldin: And get your adulation some-where else.
Orenstein: Are there stories that went the other way-stories that you originated and believed in that were spiked, that never made it on the air?
Vieira: Bits of pieces. I remember doing a piece on a deaf student who wanted to make it in the movies. And I wanted to say, here we are doing this story on CBS, which doesnlt even have closed caption. She wants to make the next step, and they canlt even go that far. And they said, llAbsolutely not, you can,t say that? I said, IlWhy not? Its true? And they were just adamant about it, because they were negotiating some deal for their own kind of closed caption. That decision was made from very high up. My boss said fine, I think its right to do it. But then it went up a few more steps. But never has a whole story been spiked.
Rubenstein: Yeah, mine havenlt been ei-ther.
Goldin: One of the most stunning stories Ilve ever been involved with was for ABC. It was about Charles Wick, for eight years head of the U.S. Information Agency and a very good friend of Reagans He owned a string of nursing homes. Rarely if ever had I seen such good documentation, not only in terms of reports, but in terms of pictures. I wanted to call them inmates. Thatls what these old people looked like lying in these beds in this nursing home in Visalia, Califor-nia. To the highest levels of ABCvthis is before Capital Cities bought them-there were meetings with different versions: eight minutes, three minutes, two minutes. The story never aired. Nor did it air anyplace else. It was political pressure: Wickls at-

tomey in Washington calling Ev Erlick, executive vice president at ABC. Good, classic spiking.
Vieira: I can think of one other thing that happened to me at the local afhliate: a story on sexual harassment in the workplace. We were going to do it on CBS Records, because we had received so many calls from employees there. And we could not do it. Networks are notorious for this. Pointing the finger at someone else, and just really raking the company over the coals for something like that. But never can you point the finger at CBS or NBC or ABC. And we really had a good story there. And that was definitely denied.

We ended up doing it on a cosmetics firm. And it destroyed them.
Orenstein: Letls shift to the way the format of the news has changed, how that affects what you do. Over the years certain trends have been established-starting with the opening up of the happy-talk format in local news, the hrst infiltration of entertainment news into the business, Eventually news magazines came along. Then Donahue. And then Oprah. And now Geraldo. How have these changes affected what you do and what we see?
Vieira: I think the talk shows lowered the common denominator. Everythingls becoming info-tainment in a way.
Rubenstein: The networks are covering. . .
Ellerbee: . . . fewer stories.
Rubenstein: And the honest-to-goodness hard news stories are the stories coming out of Washington.
Goldin: And overseas.
Ellerbee: There isn,t that much hard news covered at all anymore. What they call hard news very often isn,t. And more and more itls in the back half of the evening newscast. On all three networks.
Rubenstein: Were not a program of record. And were not covering breaking news any longer. When I was in Chicago from ,84 to 186, we covered lots of big breaking stories. We were really covering news of the day. With the technology advancing the way it has, the network mentality is, well, by the time we get on the air at night the locals have covered everything thatis broken. We better give them something different. Marionls theory is that everything should become trash TV. Everywhere you look, trash tabloid television. And then people would have their fill of it. Then maybe everything would swing back the other way.
Ellerbee: Meredith is right. It does lower the common denominator. But Marion is right, too. It is not going to eat our babies.

Speaking as a viewer, we are not what we watch. There is more to us than meets the Nielsen box. Yes, we,ll watch trash television. But I never went to a murder that

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didn’t draw a crowd. Wars draw a crowd. So
do fools and burning buildings. But its not
all you watch. I find far more objectionable
those of us in the business wholll do it. I
dont think its nearly as sinful to watch it as
it is to do it.
Goldin: We were talking about where
there is going to be an outlet for what we call
quality kind of programming. And my sense
of it is that there arent going to be those
outlets until trash TV runs its course.
Ellerbcc: Youlre right. I get at least one
offer a month. My most recent was a large-
operation offer, to anchor a game show
about murder. But I think in fact the
boredom factor will get there. Its very en-
couraging that already the advertisers are
beginning to worry about it. WNBC can-
celed (Ieraldo. Morton Downey, Jr., is hav-
ing trouble finding sponsors.
Vieira: I didnlt realize WNBC canceled
Geraldo.
Ellerbec: Yeah-hek going to WCBS.
lFilm directorl joe Mankiewicz said that
television is nothing but auditions. If that’s
the case, welre going to look back on trash
television, at least I am, as an infinite
number of chimpanzees marching across the
stage playing an infinite number of accor-
dions. A little bit of uLady of Spainl, goes a
long way after a while.
Orenstein: But the programmers argue
that the American viewing public gets what
it wants.
Ellerbce: That is the biggest fallacy in our
business. Thatls the argument that people on
our side use to put dreck on the air. thell,
welre just giving them what they want." The
American public didnlt ask for trash televi-
sion. Theylll watch it the same way we go
out and watch a tire. Its not all they want.
What happens is when somethings hot like
that it drives out everything else.
Orenstein: When you look back over the
years, though, what are the pieces youlve
done that you’re proudest of?
Goldin: Well, I guess Ilve done, oh,
around 70 pieces for ()0 Minutes. Not to
mention other broadcasts. And there was
certainly a percentage of elinkers. But llm
very proud of a body of work that stretches
from Watergate-when Nixon resigned 60
Minutes was able to do a retrospective on
Watergate, because we had taken every op-
portunity to do Watergate stories-to a
piece in I978 on Murrieta. That was an ex-

pose of a clinic purporting to cure cancer, arthritis, heart disease, narcolepsy. It preyed on the infirm and the elderly. And we went undercover as wealthy people with a Rolls-Royce and wigs, which was fun. But it also had its serious side. It really helped people understand Charlatans and quaeks.
Ellerbee: NBC News "Overnight." Now, that’s the piece of work Ilm most proud of. And llm going to use that instead of a story. I could pick some Our World shows that Im real proud of. Real proud of. But I think NBC News uOvernight" is the thing. When I look back its probably the best work Ilve done.
Orenstein: Ann and Meredith, what about you?
Rubenstein: Itls probably the stories that go relatively unnoticed. Not the stories about the big stars or the Raisa Gorbachevs coming to town. Its one that I did about deaf children in St. Louis graduating from the Central Institute for the Deaf, where they learned how to speak. You could see how hard those kids were trying, and it really touched me. So its not, did my piece change the world, or how many people out there did I reach? Itls what it did for me. What did I learn from it. Its the smaller ones that escape all of the hoopla.
Vieira: I would agree with Ann. My favorite was about a kid as well. A little boy named Anthony in Chicago, whold spoken of poverty as only someone who lives it can. And someone without pretenses, because he hadnlt formed those yet. And I have a buddy for life. I mean, we talk every week. I see him. So thats something that Ilm going to take with me. CBS could hre me tomorrow, and it doesnt matter. I have that.
Orenstein: With cable broadening its appeal and more and more independent stations on the air, isn’t the field for good programming opening a bit?
Ellerbee: Thatls the good side. Marion and I are out there in that world of independent production.
Goldin: The record should show that, particularly recently, men are opting out of network television, too, because they don,t tit either. Rather than just a gender issue, there really is a kind of person who doesnt lit in network news anymore. There are men who don’t want to play or cant play the old-boy network. And there are women who play it more beautifully than the most seasoned men.
Orcnstein: Linda and Marion, when did you know that it was time to quit the networks?
Ellerbec: I didnt quit because they canceled Our World. I had a contract that said they had to pay me for another two and a half years whether I did a lick of work or not. But I think I was coming closer to it and closer to it. Therels a moment that drives you over the edge. I did a little thing on Good Morning. America called IITGIFII that I had done on the Today Show. And the executive producer of ttTGIFll came to me and said he had three changes that he

wanted to make. I said, ttWhat are theyPI,

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And he said, "I want to change the title, be-
cause IIm afraid we,re offending Chris-
tians? So I asked him, 1WII/hat do you
mean?" And he said "Thanking God itls
Friday? And I asked him who he thought
we ought to thank. Thank Allah itls Friday?
He had no answer. And I said, IIWhat is the
second thing? And he said, "Do you have
to play this TGIF theme song?" And I said,
"Yes! What is the third thing? He said,
"Does it have to run on Friday? At that
moment inside I said, Ilm outta here.
Ilm gone.
Goldin: Well, Im going to be flip, because
it was really a process. The short flip answer
is standing in my kitchen one night saying to
my husband, III cant think of a name for my
company." And he stood there for no more
than two minutes, and said, IlMarigoldW
And then I knew that I had to do it.
Ellerbee: I quit because I wanted some-
thing else. I wanted to work for myself. And
because I was tired. I was tired of the bull-
shit. Real tired. One thing we,ve not brought
up today, which is so true, and should be
brought in here: I love the work! And thatls
true of all of us. We havenlt brought up that
side of it. I love it! Some of my happiest
moments in the whole world are spent in
editing rooms. And I didn’t want to give up
the work! I just wanted to give them up.
Rubenstein: You love your work. You
donlt always love the environment in which
you practice it.
Goldin: I want to second, third, and
fourth how much we all love the work.
Orenstein: Throughout this discussion
there’s been a kind of division and maybe a
tension between two independent producers
who have been around a little longer, and
two women who are on the networks and
are a little younger. What do you see when
you look across the table at each other?
Rubenstein: IIm encouraged. I mean, the
big question has always been, is there life
after network news? I think its very encour-
aging to see people going off on their own
and succeeding. And more important:
theylre happy. Enjoying their work again.
Vieira: Its hard to get Off that merry-go-
round, though. It really is. Especially when
that brass ring is there, and they keep telling
you, you almost got it!
Ellerbee: Donlt get off until youlre ready.
Rubenstein: Or until they throw you off.
Vieira: I find myself sitting here, part of
me wanting to scream in terms of the ineq-
uities that I see, and the other part going, oh
God, someone’s going to read this. (BS xe-
roxes all these articles, and they hit every-
bodyis desk. And the most outrageous thing,
lIve said is probably what will be in the arti-
cle, and, oh, shit, you know. That’s what I
feel.

om. women
are back cl square one.
They do everything but
wear um. Bo Peep
drones and hair bows."
Ellerbee: There was a question earlier

about . . . you talked about worrying about growing old. The reason I didnlt and the reason I don,t is because I never intended to grow old as a network correspondent. I think if we have a message, the two of us to them, its that therels a wonderful world outside the networks. And that for all of the bad times for networks, these are good times for television. Putting trash television aside, because I do believe that will pass, there are a lot more places to show your work these days. And there is a lot of freedom. You can make money. I make more money than I made at the networks. You can have a lot more control. You can even have networks come and buy your product. I am a freelance producer and TV journalist. I couldnit have done that ten years ago. I have just begun doing commentary three days a week for CNN, but I don,t work there. were producing documentaries for PBS, for cable, and, we hope, eventually for the networks. You can do this. You can do your work outside of them in ways that weren,t possible for us when we were your age. So I think you have a lot to look forward to in a much broader sense than the networks. I mean, its time to stop thinking 11the networks" and think television.

Orenstein: Marion, what about you?

Goldin: During the presidential campaign I covered George Bush and Dan Quayle with a 13-year-old and an lI-year-old.

Ellerbee: Was that Childrenls Express?

Goldin: Yes, C. E. News Magazine. And we made more news with the 13-year-old and the 11-year-old than the whole pack covering Quayle and Bush. There were dozens, if not hundreds, of adult reporters in the pack, but here was a vehicle where persons of original cast of mind could do what no one else did in the campaign. At the end, we had a meeting, and one of the children said, why donlt we just show the candidates against a plain backdrop? Forget the balloons. Put them behind a plain backdrop and lets just listen to what they have to say.

Rubenstein: Thatls a perfect example. I think network executives are so afraid to be different. Every year they say, welre going to do it different this year. No balloons. No photo opportunities. Welre not going to be used like we were before. And then every year it turns out to be the same story. And it raises the question: Are there no executives at any of these networks who have the courage and the balls to stand up and say, 1No, I donIt care what CBS or ABC does, welre not going to do it that way. were going to do it our way?

Vieira: Look at the Bush inauguration. That was terrible coverage, a virtual love fest for Bush-no insightful reporting.

Orenstein: Well, lets say you had all the power at the networks or outside of them. Whats the biggest change you,d make right now to affect what viewers see?

Vieira: lid like more international coverage than I think there is.

Ellerbee: You know, South Africa made a great case, and Israel followed them up im-

mediately: Throwing out the press does work. News coverage went away.
Vieira: Absolutely. Ild like to see an investigative unit back. And a documentary unit back with a real commitment to that. Id like to see a commitment to women in executive positions.
Rubenstein: I would like to see us get back to the business of news. And do more stories that reflect what went on in the United States that day. More harder news stories.
Ellerbee: 11d put Our World back on the air.
Rubenstein: Thatls true. I mean, you laugh, but I would put shows like that back on the air. And get rid of the rating system. Replace it with what? I don,t know.
Goldin: These TV executives have asked us people who program to do the impossible. Why should we have to attract 30 million people to anything? A million people is the New York Times readership on a daily basis.
Ellerbee: Our World was canceled for having only 12 million viewers a week.
Rubenstein: That is amazing, isnIt it? Only 12 million.
Ellerbee: PBS wants to put that show on the air. If they get 12 million viewers a week, itlll be one of the highest-rated shows in the history of PBS. There was a compact that was broken. When God made the airwaves, the federal government said, tIWe will give you this license to use something that belongs to the people of the United States, for personal profit. In return you will give back to the people of the United States a lot of public-information programming, public-affairs programming. You will give back to them things that are good that do not depend on your making money." We simply have to stop applying ratings to that side of the compact. CI

Plains? Great!
Many travelers
consider farm
country America’s
fly-over zone. To
enioy its hidden
truths, you inst
have lo know how
Photograph by Bud Lee
ARMLAND. THE MIDWEST. To THE CROSS-
country traveler, the Big Nothing. As chil-
dren on family station-wagon trips, this was
where we played the alphabet game or sang
soporihc songs about bottles of beer while
the endless farms and fields rolled by without com-
ment. We had nothing to say. Now we,re one more
generation removed from the land. We have kids of
our own, asking questions we cant answer because
welre agriculturally illiterate. What follows is a brief
guide to traveling through farm country-with an-
swers to your childrenls questions, and answers to
your own:
. . .What Are Those Plants? How Many
of Them Are There? Probably itls corn, king in
the Midwest, accounting for more than a third of the
planted acreage in the region. About 22,000 seeds
per acre are planted, giving rise to about 20,000
plants. Yields range from 200 bushels (a bushel is
that basket in your basement holding old sports
equipment) per acre (about 5 1/2 tons) in a bin-busting
year to zero in a drought season. Corn is a big grass,
TRIPS
By Peter Nelson
and is mainly fed to animals in the form of yellow
kernels. White corn is most often sold to processors
who grind it into Fritos or corn oil and then add
yellow food coloring. Com can be processed into
anything from gasoline additive to plastics. Some
cornfields appear corduroyed, a few rows of tall
corn, then a few rows of short-this is seed corn,
being cross-pollinated on contract to a seed dealer.
Seed companies genetically engineer plants to resist
disease, drought, and pests, to adapt to specific soils,
utilize specific fertilizers, produce more seeds, have
stiffer stalks, or call you on the phone and tell you
when they need to be watered or sprayed. The com-
panies also tinker with the plants until they need
heavy doses of their parent chemical companiesl
pesticides.
Why Are Those Corn Plants So Short?
Only a few feet high, with broad, rounded leaves?
Those are soybeans: if corn is king, soybeans are
queen. The protein-packed beans are more versatile
than a pair of jeans, can be found in everything from
tofu to animal feed, and are highly valued for their
oil. One acre of soybeans will produce enough
llbaconll bits to fill all the salad bars in California-
well, almost.
Bean fields often have weeds in them. Weeds are
the plants on the farm without any food value. Farm-

ers hate weeds. They choke fields, machinery, cut down on yields. And theylre tough to get rid of; farmers hire help or press their family members into ripping them out by hand, or spray herbicides. A weedy bean field might signify a farmer with no money, no family, or neighbors upwind with neither of either.

What's All That Brown Stuff Lying on the Ground? That is the ground. Farmers call it soil, which is unconsolidated sedimentary rock, most of it deposited long ago as glacial drift. And it doesnlt iust lie there-it moves, like an ocean. The wind lifts it, bounces it across the land, or knocks it around like billiard balls. Felting rain shatters the soil, splashing it downhill, where microchannels become rivulets which become streams which carry those particles away. Contour plowing can prevent some of the runoff. A flooded roadside ditch indicates poor drainage. If the water in it is brown, the farmer is losing soil. Thats a major problem for farmers all over, since topsoil replaces itself at about a 30th of an inch-the thickness of a dime-each year.

What Are All Those Buildings on the Famis For? Farmers either sell the grain they grow or feed it to their animals. Storage bins let farmers hold their grain and sell it when the market is favorable without having to rent space in the local grain elevator.

lf farmers feed grain to their animals, they may want to put it in a silo first. Silos are used to store silage, which is a mix of whatever farmers want to feed their livestock: grain, alfalfa, rye, even weeds. Anaerobic bacteria produce enzymes, which begin the fermentation process, converting starch to sugar, until all the oxygen in the airtight silo has been consumed, after which the anaerobic bacteria produce lactic acids. Animals will eat twice as much silage as they will regular chow, because it tastes better.

How Come We Always Get Stuck Driving Behind a Tractor? Because tractors are built for power, not speed. The tractor is the farmers mobile power plant. A new four-wheel drive john Deere 120hp costs $75,000. Tractors pull implements, including plows, disk tillers, spring-toothed harrows, cultivators, planting machines, shredders to mulch or cut hay, sprayers to apply chemicals, and balers or rakes (which line the cut hay into windrows to dry before baling).

The other main farming machine is the combine. A newjohn Deere combine loaded with air conditioning and a stereo tape deck costs $150,000, which is why not every farmer owns one. Those who donlt hire neighbors who do to get their crops in. At harvest time, combines stir up hordes of in-

sects, and are usually followed by flocks of feeding birds. Hawks and owls circle combines looking for snakes and mice. Dogs trot alongside, tracking quail or mink. Farmers hire, borrow, or trade machinery from each other, making for tightly knit communities.

Look, There’s a Cow! Farmers grow animals too.

Beef cattle graze unfarmably arid range-land or dine in feed lots. Angus are black, Brahmans have humps, and Herefords are red with white faces and bellies. Ten pounds of grain become one pound of beef on your plate. Animals are slaughtered when they reach a thousand pounds.

Holsteins, the familiar black and white breed first imported by Dutch settlers in 1621, account for over 80 percent of all dairy cows. A milk cow will eat 18 tons of feed a year, and give up to 2,400 gallons of milk. The average dairy cow weighs two-thirds of a ton and produces 639 cubic feet of manure a year, enough to fill about six BMW 5255 . Cows live in barns.

Why Are Barns Red, Mommy?

Barns are red because barns are red. Read my lips.

In an open-stall barn, cows develop a pecking order, with boss cows shouldering aside the lesser cows at the feed trough, which may be where the term llbossy,, comes from. Cows eat hay, sleep on straw, and drink water from the farm pond, unless the hay spontaneously combusts (which can happen, if the loosely baled hay is too moist), in which case the pond is used for its secondary function, as a hre extinguisher.

.’ . . And on This Farm He Had a Chicken . . . Actually, nobody has a chick-en. Most commercial poultry farming is done these days in huge automated Tlcoopsf which are always lit because hens lay more eggs if they think its day out. The pink light is thought to pacify them. Some genius is trying to market red contact lenses for chick-ens. Futures so bright, they gotta wear shades.

Why Are There So Many Bugs on the Windshield? Farmers call them pests. One estimate suggests there are as many insects in a square mile of farmland as there are people in the world. Grasshoppers eat the silk from the corn ears and open routes in the plant for mold to grow, Corn borers weaken the cornstalks with their chewing, to the point where an infested field becomes a disaster area, broken plants fallen to the ground. At night, look for the electric bug zappers by the feedlots on dairy farms-emphatic pyrotechnic activity could signal a fly infestation. If your car engine is running a little hot, you could have low-flying grass-hoppers clogging your radiator.

Farmers use certain animals to control other animals. Cats still hunt rodents. Guinea hens serve as intruder alarms. Farm-ers welcome barn owls, which kill rodents and snakes. Bats eat mosquitoes. Farmers stock their farm ponds with bass or trout, frogs and turtles, also to control mos-quitoes. Farm dogs keep foxes and coyotes away.

Can We Stop the Car? I’m Hungry.

At a Midwestern truck stop, you may see a farm family dining out, a fairly rare and therefore special occasion, which is why farm kids behave better in restaurants than

city kids.
Farmers are the men and women who live or work on farms. They live in farmhouses, multigenerational dwellings handed on and on. Often there is a smaller retirement home built across the road from the main house where the farmers parents live. Sometimes farmhouses look run-down, because struggling farmers will replace a broken implement before they,ll repaint their home. Farmhouses are dark at night because most farmers still go to bed early, or because they are unoccupied, the land worked by people who live in town.
Farmers know blessings come mixed. On century farms, kept in the same family for a hundred years, farmers carry on their parents work, and their grandparents work, which gives life tremendous meaning; but if it all goes under farmers feel theyive failed both the past and the future. Unlike the disenfranchised, farmers have no doubt their job is a good thing to do. They create life, make soil give sustenance, make cows where there were no cows. They destroy life, tootaught as a Future Farmer of America to live, nurture, and groom an animal, win a blue ribbon with it at the county fair, then kill it.
Farmers understand their place in the food chain. Everything on a farm struggles, competing with everything else for food, water, sun; weed against weed, wind against rock, bug against beast, a cruel and brutal and beautiful dynamic.
Farmers have the same problems city people do: divorce, alcoholism, crime. And many problems others don,t: no cable television, no good restaurants open after 8:30, living at the mercy of the weather, markets, governments, a million things they cant control or prepare for. But what they have, that others don,t, is an intimate relationship with the earth, a responsibility for one small portion of the planet. Others just drive across it, in too much of a hurry to get to know it.
Peter Nelsonis nonnction and fiction writing has appeared in Esquire, Harperls, M5,, and numerous other publications. He is based in Northampton, Massachusetts.

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OUT OF POCKET
By Rory ()iConnor
Clean VS. Dirty
Ken Roberts of
ER()MI-1DOI)S()N AND KI-N Ronrk’rs GRAD-
uated in the optimistic classof171, Harvard
Business School. MBAs in hand, they chose
the same business: mutual fund manage-
ment, the art of investing other peoples
money in the stock market. Each, however, took a
different route, one employing a traditional eco-
nomic approach at a branch office of a Wall Street
giant, the other pioneering a new mode of investing,
one in which social concerns are placed at the fore-
front of decision-making. Although their average
days are similar-tethered to the tickerstape march
of stock pricesethe men diverge in the manner in
which they do business. A comparison of their me-
thods reveals how socially responsible investment
firms, and the hundreds of millions of dollars in as-
Shearson Lehman’s sets they have come to control, differ from tradi-
Fundamenful Value
Fund (left) and
Jerome Dodson of the
Parnassus Fund.
x
nonal Wall Street investment houses.
While working at a small savings and loan bank,
Dodson was approached for capital to support the
installation of solar heating systems in apartment
buildings. To raise the money, he devised something
unique: solar T-bills, which paid slightly higher in-
terest than ordinary notes, and which quickly at-
tracted $3 million from 150 investors. For Dodson,
this experience revealed a potentially huge untapped
market of investors, who cared as much about what
was being funded as how much their investments
could earn.
Dodson left the bank to cofound one of the first
socially responsible money-market funds, Working
Assets. From there, he went on to open the San Fran-
cisco-based Parnassus Fund in 1985. In 1988, Par-
nassus ranked third overall among the 1,624 mutual
funds rated by the widely followed tracking concern
Lipper Analytical Services.
Ken Roberts is president of the Shearson Funda-
mental Value Fund in Spokane, one of a constella-
tion of investment funds under the umbrella of the
multibillion-dollar Shearson Lehman Hutton.
Roberts took the more traditional career route out of
Harvard: he worked as a financial analyst, and de-
veloped merger and acquisition strategies for a re-
gional brokerage house in Washington state. In 1981
he became head of the Fundamental Value Fund,
which had a 21 percent return last year, well above
the national average.
Dodsons method for assessing the value of a com-
pany as a potential investment departs from that of
Roberts in one major respect. "The way most of my
peers look at fundamental value, is asset-orientedf
says Dodson. itYou kn0w_cash, buildings, a trade-
mark-some business asset. But the first thing I think
about is the culture of the company in question, its
attitude toward employees, shareholders, the com-
munity where it operates, the environment, and so
on. To me, a companys
social values-in the
. Pul Wall Street u.
broadest sense-are its
fundamental values." against SOCIG"!
Dodsons screening pro-

.cess excludes invest- responsibl
ments in any companies
involved with alcohol,
tobacco, gambling, nu-
clear power, weapons happens? A brie’
contracting, or that have
operations in South Idle OfMOMBAS
Africa.
Roberts contends that NO pclhs
investing according to
these criteria unduly limits the "economic universe"
of potential investments. "My goalf he says, "is to
make money for my shareholders, my calling is to
find economic valuef To do any less, he argues,
uwould be socially irresponsible, since I would be
compromising my shareholders’ needs? Most mon-
- ey managers, like Roberts, assert that reducing the
pool of possible investments through the application
of social screens inevitably leads to lower returns.
Dodson argues that taking social factors into ac-
count actually improves his funds performance. 11A
company that treats its employees well has more
internal harmony and can attract and retain more
Illustration by Richard Stutting
investors and what

talented people who will work more productively?
Roberts and Dodson part company in explaining Parnassusis extraordinarily high performance, a 42 percent return, last year. Both men employ a 9contrarian0 financial strategy-buying undervalued stocks that fall through the cracks in the market. Roberts and other old-line money managers believe that it is this approach, and not DodSOIfS social targeting, that is truly behind his success. qlie contrarian philosophyf says Roberts, "did better last year for everybody? Representing a common view on Wall Street, A. Michael Lipper, head of Lipper Analytical Services, comments, llThereis not a lot of hard evidence, no basis for direct comparison of lcleani versus 1dirtyl funds. Dodson is a talented-or lucky-portfolio manager. But would he make more with ldirtyl stocks? Thatls the question?
Dodson counters that those mutual fund managers who saw Union Carbide, for example, as a fast-growing company in the early 3805 had to rapidly adjust their sights as the company3s value plunged after the Bhopal disaster. Dodson does not have to deal with unpredictable events like chemical disasters, the swing of the defense budget, or changes in U.S. policy toward companies operating in South Africa. This policy, Dodson maintains, gives his company more financial reliability, in addition to promoting socially beneficial investments.
KEN ROBERTS, PERSPECTIVE IS MORE CONsistent with what on Wall Street is known as the 9prudent man rulell-a long-standing axiom, affirmed by legal and historical precedent, which holds that money managers should not risk their clients, profits for the sake of social factors. A money managers llsociaFi responsibility thus extends only as far as the shareholders in a company.
Dodsonls approach to financial decisions ultimately threatens this way of doing business, and to many, including Roberts, opens a Pandorais box. Parnassus and similar funds-like the Calvert Ariel Growth Fund -have shown it is possible to compete on at least a nearly equal footing with Wall Streets traditionalists, fueling A. Michael Lipperls concern that lTonce you start making judgments on things other than investment value, where does it stopW
Ultimately, it is the answer to this question, which highlights the potential vulnerability of the financial world to public pressure, that Wall Streetls smart money set finds most worrisome.
Rory O,C0nnor is a free-lance writer and television producer in New York City.

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whose true name is a secret to most listeners, but I know
it: William Craighton. I called the radio station and a
secretary told me. I said it was for our school paper. My
friend Vicky was with me when I did it and she was
cracking up laughing at how professional a liar I was.
I-Iis show starts at midnight, I call him all the time. He says
IIKQL hot line" and I say IIHi Billyl, in this voice that me and
Vicky call our Sensuous Woman voice. Hels an Aries and I read
him his Sydney ()marr horoscope every day.
Billy one time asked me
how old was I and I said I was
turning 18 which was a lie
but there was no way he
would talk to me if I was a
ninth grader. I have a cousin
who is turning 18, Ellen, so I
told some things about her
life: that I go to Franklin, that
I have long hair, and that I
have a red GTO that was my
dads.
Billy is so cool. On his
show he has sayings like
uHave you seen the yellow
dog? People might say III
donlt get itfa but thatls the
whole joke of it. You have to
have a free mind to under-
stand him. In his picture he
has long blond hair and a ring
with an eyeball on it.
He lets me win contests
like when you are supposed
to be the eighth caller but I
. will already be on the line and
I he gives the prizes to me.
Sometimes he says some stuff like do I ball and can he meet me
and I used to just change the subject until once he said I was
uptight, so I told him that I have balled, which I havent but it
really doesn’t matter, it’s only words.
Then on Saturday the phone rang and my mom got it and it
turned out to be Billy who said he was thinking about me a lot. He
said it would be magical to meet at this beach called IlGolden
Gardens" or I could just come to his apartment. He told me he
was naked in bed and I had to just keep going uh-huh, uh-huh like
that, because my mom was about one inch away staring at me. I
told him I had to get off the phone. -
At midnight I called him back and he said he didrft want to play
anymore mind games and I said OK I didnlt either and he said OK
. then meet me at Golden Gardens on Sunday at 3:00. I called
Vicky and told her I was going.
My mind practiced what I would say when Billy saw my true
age. I imagined him first being mad and walking away, then me
q
going IIWait! Don"t go!" and Im crying because Ilm so demol-
ished. Then he stops and looks at me and suddenly he understands
that age doesnlt matter, just who you are inside and that my lies
were all worth it because they caused the beautiful thing of us
getting together.
On Sunday I took the bus downtown and transferred. When I
got to Golden Gardens I sat down at a picnic table where we were
supposed to meet. Around 3:15 I saw a black MG and Billy said
he had a black MG and this guy got out wearing a fringe jacket
and it had to be him. I donlt mean to sound plastic but he was not
that cute. He was different
from his picture. He had
lines.
He kept looking around

and it was weird to be sit-
ting there right in front of
him knowing the whole
thing and him not knowing.
Then when I was about to
’ say something he went to
the refreshments and got a
hot dog and ate it in about
’ three bites and he had a
mustache and there was
mustard hanging off of it.
I about fainted when he
came over to the picnic
table and sat down.
He took out some cigarettes
and I saw the eyeball ring. I
kept thinking there is no
way I could get it on
with him, there was just no
way.
These two girls went up
to the refreshments, they
looked pretty slutty and one
of them knew who he was and started talking to him in this really
fakey way about how great he was, how he was her favorite
deejay and all that, and her friend asked him did he want some
french fries and they were staring at me like why didnlt I leave. But
I just kept looking out to the water like I was thinking, and inside I
was thinking fuck you to them because if it weren’t for me, they
wouldnlt be getting the chance to talk to Billy in the first place.
One had really big boobs and Billy said a joke about them and the
girls laughed. Then about 3:30 Billy said do you want to go for a
ride and they said yes and they got in his convertible and drove
away.
That night, Vicky called me and I told her I met Billy and that
we sat around for awhile and 1 gave him some of my french fries
and then he took me for a ride in his MG. She said was I for real
and I said yes and that he kissed me and felt me up but that was all.
Vicky wanted to know if Billy was mad because of my age and I
told her no. That he understood.

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