



Suicide bombers  
just need a hug



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NEWS FROM NOWHERE, 96 BOLD ST, LIVERPOOL L1 4NY



# They tore down Lenin's statue - and raised one to Frank Zappa

(GUARDIAN 29.1.95)

Nine years ago Lithuania broke away from the Soviet Union, leaving a lot of empty plinths that had previously been occupied by statues of Lenin, Marx and their regional disciples. An obvious question remained: what to do with the empty plinths? Saulius Paukstys, a civil servant and member of the Vilnius bohemian set, saw the opportunity to fulfil a life-long ambition. He founded the Frank Zappa Fan Club and commissioned a socialist realist sculptor to create a statue of Zappa on a patch of land in front of a children's hospital in the centre of the city.

Paukstys, thirty-seven, and his friends sought to spread their love of Zappa, who was all but unknown to Lithuania's 3 million citizens. But with no personal connection to the American legend, the club resorted to bluffing its way into the limelight by creating two bogus Zappa exhibits at a local art gallery. The first featured letters supposedly written by Zappa to his Lithuanian admirers. Widespread reaction in Vilnius inspired a second exhibit titled "Memorial Objects of Frank Zappa," featuring clocks, knives, pens and clothes claimed to have been owned by Zappa. But none of the items had traveled further than Paukstys' apartment.

The made-up exhibitions were a massive hit with the Lithuanian public, most of whom -- due to the political situation -- readily embraced anything American. When local journalists inquired about the exhibitions, Paukstys promptly fabricated his widely published story about his brush with Zappa.

"We just needed a story," says dry-humored, mild-mannered Paukstys. "We never saw Zappa, but nobody ever saw God, and they still go to church," says partner-in-crime Vytautas Kernagis.

At first the authorities criticised the plan, particularly after discovering that Zappa was a bit of a leftie. "They said: 'What has he got to do with Lithuania anyway?' We said: 'Nothing really.' Then someone convinced them that Zappa had Jewish features and seeing as Jewish history is very important to Lithuania, they plumped for that."

The statue was erected in downtown Vilnius five years ago. The most famous of modern Bohemians, Czech president Vaclav Havel, was invited to the unveiling, where a military brass band played Zappa hits. Membership of the fan club ballooned; a radio station allocated airtime for a weekly Zappa broadcast, which included doses of Zappa philosophy; and a Zappa Love Letter Club was set up to bring Vilnius's lonely hearts together.

how the artists in a neglected corner of Lithuania declared themselves an independent nation - and all because of the late great American rocker

"The spirit of Zappa made us see that independence from Moscow was not enough and persuaded us to declare independence from the rest of Vilnius," says Paukstys.

Uzupis, or the Republic of Angels as it has been dubbed, comprises only 148 acres and around 120 residents. It has one main street, surrounded by lanes and courtyards full of art galleries. But since last April it has had its own president, its own bishop, two churches, an embassy in Moscow and no fewer than four official flags - one for each season.

"We're trying to energise a community by asserting our independence," Lileikis says. "It's very different from the independence gained in '91, but we're trying to foster the same spirit so that people can make things happen for themselves. That's a trait they lost through 70 years of oppression."



Soon the tiny state will have its own Nelson's column or Eiffel tower - a bronze sculpture of an angel that will stand in the main square, in honour of Zeonas Steiny, a much-loved local painter who died in 1998. Its unveiling will mark the official founding of the Republic of Angels - and if that causes problems with the rest of Lithuania, there is a 12-strong army to call on.

Uzupis certainly appears to be a unique place in Vilnius. No other part of the capital has a proper sense of community. The aim is to draw the rest of the city into the spirit by holding carnivals and pyrotechnic shows on the river, as well as open-house art actions. As the ultimate act of satire, the republic shares its national feast day with April Fool's day.

"We're taking the term carnival-esque back to its medieval origins, when it was used to turn the status quo upside down for a while and shake people out of themselves."

The question now is how far the process will go. So strong is the nation's drive for freedom that one Uzupian, a video artist, confides: "I've declared myself to be an independent state. Even the Republic of Uzupis doesn't satisfy me."

"The illusion of freedom will continue as long as it's profitable to continue the illusion. At the point where the illusion becomes too expensive to maintain they will just take down the scenery, they will pull back the curtains, they will move the tables and chairs out of the way, and you will see the brick wall at the back of the theatre."

## FRANK ZAPPA ON FREEDOM

In junior college, which I was forced to attend, I read a book called "Democracy, An American Experiment". And it's true. No one has ever proved that it can work. I still think it's an experiment and someone has to prove to me that it works. This doesn't mean that it can't work.

But it sure needs to be re-designed and re-greased in an American sense. People have to stop being hypocritical about the way they live and think, and take their whole mind and body into consideration when they're designing laws. □



● SO who was behind the wheel of a green estate car seen being driven into Merseyside Police HQ - registration number PII GGG?

Mr Walesa said the men who came to get him had crowbars to break into his flat if necessary. But, he added: "I was prepared and did not resist. I have respect for uniforms and the men who came wore uniforms."



Sunshine and smiles: Police share a joke at Europe's largest arms fair, in the Docklands, which opened to mainly peaceful protests

Does anyone remember the car thieves that struck in June '94 as Michael Howard, the then Home Secretary, was schmoozing with police chiefs at a hotel in N. Yorkshire. As the conference got to grips with being tough on crime, the dynamic duo made off with Howard's bullet-proof motor. At some point the remains were found abandoned, minus all four wheels...

**YOUNGSTERS** who talk to policemen on the beat in South Wales are being rewarded with colour picture cards of rugby heroes.

Mr John Woodcock, said: "It is technically possible to talk to only 33 policemen to get the full set of 33 cards, but I suspect each child will talk to 150 policemen before getting the full set."

"By the time they have done that you can imagine the sort of friendship that will have developed between the police and the youngsters."

TWO officers who killed a man after mistaking a table leg he was carrying for a shotgun will avoid criminal charges, it was announced yesterday. Harry Stanley's family reacted with anger to the decision by the Crown Prosecution Service. Mr Stanley, 46, was gunned down near his home in Hackney, London, in September 1999.

A FIRE rescue hero is planning to sue Merseyside police who arrested him for arson as he recovered from his ordeal.

Martin Kerwin plunged into his blazing home in Tuebrook in a bid to save his sister and baby niece from the flames.

Within hours of him leaving hospital later in the day he was arrested on suspicion of arson. "I was held for 15 hours at the police station. They eventually said I was free to go, but I was dressed in just a paper suit and sponge slippers because my clothes had been taken away for forensic tests."

Southsea a man was arrested for poking fun at a policeman's ginger wig at a demonstration. He was arrested for causing alarm, harassment and distress. The CPS decided not to proceed.

Unfortunately, the police told a newspaper he had been arrested for possession of drugs. Hampshire Police have now paid out £12,000 for this.

A LIVERPOOL bank robber on the run in Germany gave himself up because he was bored with the failure of the police to catch him.

The 33-year-old man was arrested in Hamburg after knocking on the window of a police car and asking them if they wanted to catch a bank robber.

A MERSEYSIDE police officer who assaulted a 12-year-old boy has been allowed back on the beat. PC James McDonald has a conviction for punching the youngster after an argument in the street. He was suspended from the police force and given a conditional discharge for the attack earlier this year. But the ECHO can reveal today that police bosses have let PC McDonald keep his job.

ECHO 5.12.01



ANGRY: Amanda and Amelia after the toddler's buggy was searched. Picture: RICHARD WILLIAMS

## Police stop toddler in her plastic buggy

A LIVERPOOL woman told today how her little girl was stopped and searched by police while pedalling her toy car.

Amelia Higginson, 15 months, was on the way home from the shops with mum Amanda when a police van pulled up beside them.

Mrs Higginson, 21, told the ECHO: "Two officers jumped out, ordered me to take Amelia out of the buggy and began to search it."

## US politician wants all police dead

A NEWLY elected US politician has enraged his constituents by saying he favours killing policemen.

Tom Alciere, 41, won a seat in the New Hampshire House of Representatives after a low-key campaign. But this week, he told his local newspaper that he loves it when someone kills a policeman.

His party, the Republicans, has said Alciere should resign.

## P.C. BEAR

Yours Free with your first Bear to make sure they all behave.



POLICE called to make an arrest at the wrong house - TWICE in 48 hours.

While recovering from body-armoured cops kicking in her front door in a bungled drugs raid on Tuesday morning, Ruth Cotton, 53, was told police now wanted to arrest her husband for being drunk and disorderly.

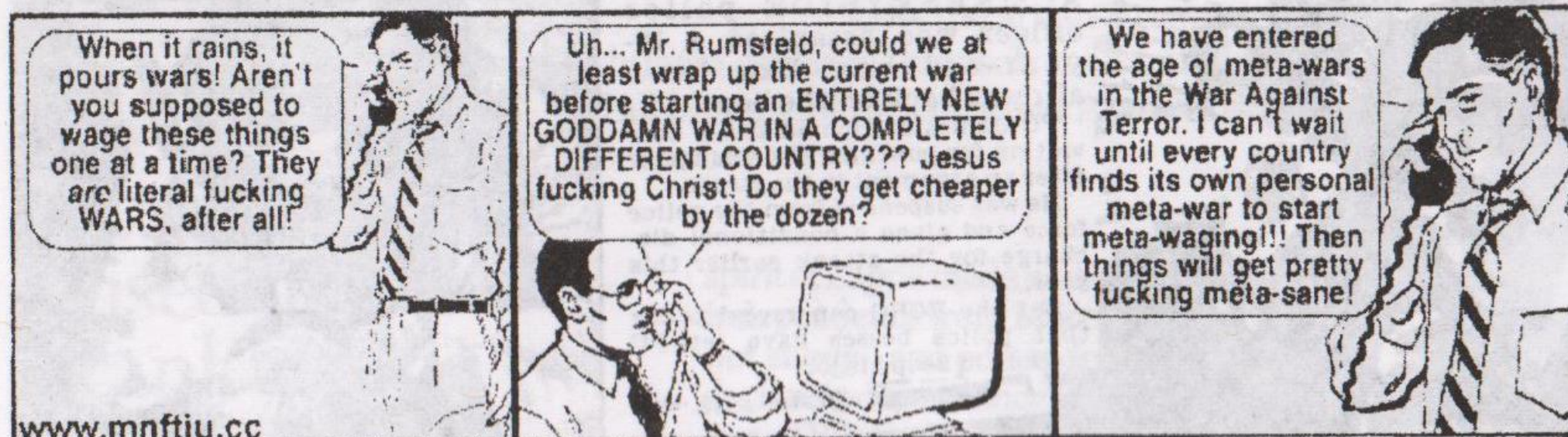
She knew it was a mistake because husband Brian, 66, is a reformed alcoholic who has been teetotal for 13 years.

Lollipop lady Mrs Cotton said: "Although it was terrifying having my front door kicked in by men wearing helmets and wielding a battering ram, I can see the funny side of the second mistake."

Police say the mix-ups were due to poor numbering in her road in Kirkby. Officers were actually after another house nearby.

ECHO 16.6.01





www.mnftiu.cc

Just before the 1997 election, new Labour announced that it wanted children under ten curfewed from 9pm to 6am. Not one child curfew was imposed when its wish became law. Local councillors reasoned that the police wouldn't be able to tell the difference between a nine-year-old and an 11-year-old, and that officers' time would be better spent chasing up criminals rather than children after bedtime. Rather than admit a mistake, Tony Blair declared that curfews had been a success. The government extended the upper age limit to 15. Not one local authority has asked for the under-15s to be curfewed, either. "Three strikes and you're out" for burglars sounded tough, but there was a catch in the small print. If magistrates or judges found there were "specific circumstances" in the defendant's favour, they could waive the mandatory three-year sentence and impose a sentence of their own. Magistrates and judges loathe the mandatory sentences. They take all the fun out of judging. Not one was imposed.

Then there is my favourite, the new "drug abstinence" orders. New Labour has given the courts the power to order drug-taking criminals to stop taking drugs. Magistrates aren't meant to offer treatment or methadone or clean drugs on the NHS, just to tell addicts to stop it. The orders were piloted in Hackney and Nottingham. Seven drug-abstinence orders were issued in total. All the defendants said they would give up and then went back to drugs. The government's response to the resounding triumph has been to extend the pilot project.

The Terrorism Act 2000 was denounced by the *New Statesman* and other liberal journals for its sinister assault on basic freedoms.

Everything from wearing masks on demonstrations to sporting badges that proclaim support for banned groups became terrorism. Despite the atrocities of 11 September, nobody was convicted by the end of 2001 of being a member of a proscribed organisation, wearing any item of dress in support of a proscribed organisation, wearing, carrying or displaying any article in support of a proscribed organisation, providing weapons training for a proscribed organisation, and so on through a list of 25 offences created by the act.

The Terrorism Act 2000 may be as nugatory in operational practice as it was outrageous in democratic theory, but it became an irrelevance only because the government chose to dispense with the rule of law after 11 September. Its sweeping terrorism legislation was deemed not sweeping enough, and the Home Office simply interned suspected Islamic fanatics without habeas corpus, the presumption of innocence and fair trial before judge and jury.

Saparmurad Niyazov, the authoritarian president of Turkmenistan, has named the year 2003 after his dead mother, reported the *Daily Telegraph*. The decree declared that the year would be named Gurbansoltan, "to immortalise her sacred image and blessed memory". The decree is only the latest in a series of bizarre pronouncements. Last year, reported the *Sunday Times*, he renamed bread as Gurbansoltan-edzhe, again in tribute to his mother. Even the month formerly known as April bears her name.

**Terrify your friends this Xmas with THE David Blunkett Horror Mask**  
(Comes complete with beard)

WHEN the Prime Minister paid a flying visit to the troops in Basra, I would have expected a smarter appearance instead of turning up in gear that looked as if it had come out of a car boot sale.

It does not cost a mint to buy a safari suit, with a bush hat, and a pair of mosquito boots. Let's hope he looks better next time.  
Trevor J L Eynon, Wallasey



## Some chaps never tire of dressing up and playing soldiers.

"Yes," he says bluntly, "we indoctrinate them in the forces. Otherwise they wouldn't fight. That's why we cut their hair the same, make them wear the same uniform, make the same salute, and march together. We indoctrinate them in order to enhance group cohesiveness. That's how you get people to fight."



Prince Andrew said that after what he'd seen he felt like joining the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, but that was after the tape had been turned off.

BENIDORM, Spain (Reuters) - The black American who heads Interpol says he is concerned about the over-zealous use of anti-terrorism laws and that he had himself been singled out because of his looks.

Ronald K. Noble, secretary general of the 181-nation police organisation, told Reuters in an exclusive interview on Thursday that people subjected to abuse often had no chance of redress from anonymous officials.

"I know that I've been searched because I look like a person who could be Arabic, if I'm travelling from an Arab country, or I could be a drug-trafficker if I'm coming from a drug-trafficking country," Noble, 47, said.

Many countries had poorly trained security staff who relied on their own prejudices when deciding whether to make travellers submit to strip-searches, or singled out passengers who were stressed or sweating.

"I perspire and I'm the head of an international law enforcement agency," Noble said.

Seriously, would someone please tackle Donald Rumsfeld and lock him up until our "Countries-Destroyed-to-Countries-Rebuilt" Ratio is closer to "1"?

PEOPLE considering a tandem skydive would trust cartoon character Homer Simpson over US president George Bush, according to research published today. Homer got 20% of the overall vote in the survey carried out on behalf of disability charity Leonard Cheshire, while President Bush got just 8%. More than 1,000 adults were asked to rank personalities in order of who they felt was most trustworthy.

## 661 new crimes - and counting

**Nick Cohen tots up new Labour's most extraordinary record: the hundreds of fresh reasons it has found for sending people to prison. And there are more to come**

New Labour's search for new punishments is as frenetic now as when it came to power. Between the 1997 and 2001 general elections, Jack Straw's Home Office passed 31 law and order and immigration acts through parliament. The flow of tough stances and ferocious laws shows no sign of slackening as the government ages. The Tories worked out that, in the 18 months after June 2001, Downing Street and the Home Office launched 100 anti-crime initiatives. Between June 2001 and May 2003, David Blunkett's Home Office passed 14 law and order acts.

It's not only old-fashioned criminals who have been in the government's sights. People who weren't considered criminal until the turn of the century have found that their "inappropriate behaviours" have been outlawed. Simon Hughes, the Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesman, has asked each government department how many criminal offences it has created since May 1997. The Ministry of Defence hasn't replied yet (I suppose it's been busy), but the rest of Whitehall has admitted to inventing 661 crimes.

a substantial minority of the 661 reflected the government's paradoxical authoritarianism. It's a paradox because statutes that were pushed through parliament, with bellows that they were necessary to protect the public from pressing perils, have never been used. They are authoritarian on paper, but redundant in practice, and seem to justify H L Mencken's wisdom that "the whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary"

Hughes found that, by the end of 2001, the Home Office had bagged the following tallies of convictions for the following offences. For giving evidence "he [the asylum-seeker] knows to be false" for the purpose of obtaining benefits - none. For obtaining "benefits for himself or anyone else by making dishonest representations" - none again. For failing "to attend or give evidence or produce documents before an adjudicator or tribunal" - another zero. For "assaulting a detainee custody officer" and "wilfully obstructing a detainee custody officer" - zero and zero. For "assisting a detained [asylum-seeker to] escape" - zilch, once more. For "obtaining a certificate of authorisation by false pretences" - one. And for failing "without reasonable excuse to submit to a medical examination" - a towering 11.

NEW STATESMAN JULY 2003

Blairism (E6)

See also: Thatcherism

Routledge Dictionary of Economics

○ "9/11 was a wake-up call to us all," James Frank of the American Legion told reporters in Pleasanton, California, "and we need to act fast to support homeland security. We can't wait around for the FBI and the police to come up with solutions, when we have bad guys living among us. In the world of homeland security, you have to be more open-minded, and that's why we're sponsoring classes that teach us how to dowse for terrorists."

Frank was defending the controversial decision by the American Legion and the Air Force Association to hold courses that teach war veterans how to locate pure evil with a wooden stick. "In essence, you just point a hazel twig at anyone you think looks suspicious, or Middle Eastern, and see if it twitches. And if it does, you can restrain them using necessary force, until the police arrive to arrest them. We're still learning and refining the techniques at the moment, but if it works, maybe you could identify a potential terrorist while he's still at the airport. Maybe the same technique could even be used to find a dangerous bag among thousands in an airport. Who knows?

our government has been using it for years. They just don't make a big deal out of it, because it's not scientifically provable." (*Tri-Valley Herald*, 25/3/03.

Cdr O'Connell talked of the patients still under his care in Portsmouth. He spoke of one in particular. "His illness is directly attributable to the war," he said. What is the matter with him, I asked? "Reactive psychosis," he said. What is that? "Losing touch with reality, and a conflict of ideology." What sort of conflict? "He has a strong feeling that the war should never have been allowed to happen."

A FATHER-OF-TWO spoke out after being arrested at gunpoint on anti-terrorism charges in Belgium while protesting at Tony Blair's European policy.

Tom Quirk, 35, of Digmaor, Skelmersdale, was stopped near the European Parliament in Brussels last week. He was detained before being deported and banned from mainland Europe.

He was displaying a billboard for pressure group Vote 2004 when he was arrested at gunpoint.

Mr Quirk was taken with the other arrested men to a central Brussels police station.

The men were initially held on anti-terrorism charges, but Mr Quirk says they were later changed to "actions likely to cause a breach of the peace."

ECHO 16-12-03

At some point in 2005, a major British target - parliament, perhaps, or the London Tube, or a big shopping centre, or a sports stadium - will suffer a terrorist outrage. It is not a question of if, but when. So we are told. We were told the same at the end of 2001, and at the end of 2002. Yet despite the Istanbul outrages, Britain itself has suffered no significant terrorist attacks so far this century. Nor has a chemical, biological or nuclear attack of a terrorist nature been mounted anywhere in the world. Of 529 people arrested in Britain on terrorist charges since 11 September 2001, only five have been convicted of any crime connected with terrorism. Only two sets of arrests were in connection with biological or chemical agents: in one, ricin was allegedly found; in the other, there was allegedly a plot to release poison gas on the Tube. Both led to imprisonment for possessing fake passports.

the government and the security services are happy to create a sense of public danger because it favours the ruling establishment and because the police, MI5 and MI6 wish to enhance their standing, protect their jobs and increase their demands on the exchequer. Besides, no minister or senior police officer wishes to be accused of being unprepared if a terrorist attack does succeed.

## Dictator moves back in with mum

Life can be hard when you are a former head of state. Especially when you are still in your 30s and reduced to moving back into your mum's house. "I'm basically living off my mother now. She's been very supportive," says Valentine Strasser, who seized power in Sierra Leone in 1992, aged 25, only to be deposed four years later. "It's been tough. I'm unemployed. I'm coping."

Strasser receives no benefits - the government says he is not entitled to any because he took power by force. However, the government did last year call on citizens to desist from throwing stones at Strasser, who had no car and was wandering around Freetown on foot. How does Strasser look back on his time in office? "Oh, it was good. I was the youngest... head of state in the whole wide world," he said with a guffaw, looking around the bar for support.

IS IT only me who is fed up of being attacked by politicians insisting on kissing my baby in the street?

Now I am not being funny, but these people are complete strangers and have probably been up and down the country kissing babies wherever they go.

My concern is that this could be the latest way of spreading foot and mouth disease - maybe we should make sure their lips are thoroughly disinfected after every baby-kissing incident!

Jennifer Simms, Southport

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE

**I President Bush:**  
 I You Frighten Me. You And All the  
 OTHER Tightass CONSERVATIVES in  
 GOVERNMENT Are trying desperately  
 To USURP MY Freedoms. I won't STAND  
 for it. PREPARE To BE OverThrown.

CUT OUT AND MAIL NOW!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_  
 STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT!

CUT AND MAIL TO:  
 PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH  
 THE WHITE HOUSE  
 1600 PENNSYLVANIA AV. WASH. D.C. 20501



## THE CASE OF KEVIN SAMUEL COLE

On the 18th February 1997 Kevin Samuel Cole – known to his family and friends as "Sam" walked into a police station in Liverpool as a free man. It was his last day of freedom. The following year at Preston Crown Court he was convicted of murder. Sam remains in prison to this day. From the outset Sam protested his innocence but his protestations of innocence fell on deaf ears.

At the time Sam was a young man of 20 years from Liverpool. He had no previous convictions for violence or drug related matters. On the 14th of February 1997, at about 6pm, the deceased, a man named Dookie and his friend Handyside (who was also badly assaulted) were attacked by a large group of males and Dookie was fatally stabbed. The prosecution told the jury that there was an ongoing drug feud between Dookie and Handyside on the one part and two other men named Kirk and Mellor. Kirk and Mellor were arrested and are also serving life imprisonment for the murder of Dookie and the assault on Handyside. Witnesses say between 8 and 20 others were involved in the attack, but other than Sam, no others were arrested in connection with the murder or the assault.

There was absolutely no evidence to suggest that Sam was involved in either the supply of drugs to Kirk and Mellor or in the business of drugs supplying generally. There was no evidence that Sam was involved in the attack that led to the death of Dookie and remarkably, Handyside did not identify Sam as being responsible for either the attack on him or the attack on Dookie.

**If you can help in any way at all, then please contact ~~Kevin~~ 0151 260 8704**

**DAVID BLAGDEN, who spent 24 years in jail for setting fire to a pair of curtains, was finally freed last year following pleas from his community, MP, vicar and just about everyone else. Sadly, he's now back in jail.**

This is not because he poses a risk to anyone. It is because he went awol from the Oxford bail hostel he was supposed to live in as a condition of his "life licence".

Everyone accepts that his original crime all those years ago was a desperate cry for help after his adoptive parents both died within weeks of each other. After he put out the flames, he called the police and waited to be arrested. He has never been a risk to anyone and has only ended up serving longer in prison than murderers and rapists because of an inability to abide by the rules. Whenever he was let out of jail on day release, he would panic and go awol for a time and then come back again – as he did this time. His current panic was triggered by the need for hospital tests.

Prisoners recalled to jail for a breach of their licence are entitled to a swift parole board hearing, where they can be represented and put their case – usually within a couple of weeks.

Once again though the home office seems determined to keep Blagden locked up. Only now, four months down the line and after a threat of judicial review, is a hearing to be arranged.

Last time the home office opposed his release, recommending Blagden serve another six months to acquire some "enhanced thinking skills". Perhaps civil servants should employ such skills themselves.

Handyside ran from the scene nursing his wounds. He ran into the nearby Variety public house and was being pursued by one of the gang. The prosecution told the jury that Sam was the person chasing Handyside and he therefore must have been involved in the attack.

Sam was put on eight identification parades. Amongst others, Handyside, was unable to identify Sam but one witness named Linda Ellis picked Sam out as being the person chasing Handyside into the pub. Linda Ellis was on her way home from the shops when Handyside and his pursuer ran past. She caught a fleeting glimpse of the two men and heard the voice of the man chasing Handyside. The physical description given by Linda Ellis to the police of the man chasing Handyside does not match Sam.

Linda Ellis said the man was 5'10" tall, wearing a striped top and had a local accent. (Sam's 6'3" tall and has a strong Liverpool accent. At the time he was wearing a plain coloured top, which can be proved by a shop video, which recorded his picture only twenty minutes before the incident.)

Furthermore, when the police interviewed Kirk, they told him that from the evidence, they were convinced that he was the person that chased Handyside into the pub. Kirk agreed and it is therefore obvious that Linda Ellis made a dreadful mistake when she picked out Sam from the identification parade. Kirk is 5'11" and has a local accent and was wearing a striped top. Out of 122 witnesses that gave evidence at the trial, Linda Ellis is the only witness against Sam.

The only connection Sam had with Kirk was that Sam's girlfriend was the sister of Kirk's girlfriend.

There are no witnesses, no DNA or forensic evidence to link Sam to the attack.

the only solution applied by officials to his inability to abide by the rules has been to continue to incarcerate him.

Last month the parole board let him out again, with an onerous list of restrictions governing his behaviour and treatment – again more than serious "lifers" who have killed and maimed. So strict, in fact, that his legal team believe they amount to a breach of his human rights and will be subject to judicial review. One, for example, governs his access to the media, which probation officers claimed puts him under "excessive pressure and destabilised" him. Media interest fuelled his "personal belief that he was the victim of major injustice", they said.

Er – but David Blagden is a victim of a major injustice. He should never have been given a life sentence in the first place – the discretionary sentence was only imposed by the trial judge because psychiatrists could not agree on his mental state and it was believed he would be out as soon as proper help could be obtained for him.

Surely a more sensible approach now would be to admit the injustice, accept that 25 years in jail is a cruelly excessive penalty for causing a few hundred pounds' worth of damage and free Blagden of the kind of restrictions which could easily put him back inside again.

## Innocent man sent bill for jail

A MAN who spent 11 years in jail for a murder he did not commit has been charged £37,000 for his prison bed and board.

Michael O'Brien, 34, is due almost £650,000 compensation – after the Home Office deduction for living expenses.

Mr O'Brien, whose baby daughter and father both died during his time in prison, said: "I'm absolutely livid."

"They only charge innocent people for bed and board."

"I would have ordered caviar and chips if I knew I was going to be charged

I started growing my beard in 1987, after I was convicted of the murder of PC Keith Blakelock during the Broadwater Farm riots in Tottenham in 1985. I was innocent of this murder and decided that I would grow a beard to protest about this conviction and about the life sentence I received for the murder of Anthony Smith, an amateur boxer and gangster who I stabbed in self-defence after I was attacked by him and two other men.

I grew the beard to symbolise the injustice of both cases, which are tied together. I used to let my beard hang down but it grew close to the floor and it got tangled up with other people when I played football in the prison exercise yard. When a friend visited me, she showed me how to wrap it up. After that I always wore it tied up in a black cloth, which symbolised mourning for my liberty.

It had grown to 6ft 6in and was hanging by a thread. It felt very painful, but on principle I couldn't cut it off. I was in the shower one day a few months ago and it just fell off; it felt like losing a limb.

when people asked me why it was there it gave me the opportunity to explain my case.

My face feels physically lighter without my beard but I won't feel truly light until I have got the Smith murder conviction overturned. I have kept my beard in a bag and when I get justice I will burn it. Winston Silcott

Paul Anthony Culbert, now 37, was wrongly convicted of child abuse at Manchester crown court in May 2002 and sentenced to 14 years in prison.

Paul Culbert's niece and three nephews, Sharon Mulvany, Jamie Jarvis, Peter Jarvis & Lee Jarvis, alleged that he sexually abused them during the period 1979-1990. At the time the alleged abuse started, Paul was only 13 years old. The niece and nephews, all younger than him, gave some precise dates on which they said the abuse happened. Curiously, it was always on their birthdays. In fact, for much of the time two nephews lived away from Manchester where the abuse is supposed to have taken place: both lived with their father in Wales from 1983 to 1987, and one of them remained there until 1989. But the father was not called to give evidence.

They also said exactly where the abuse took place: in the attic of Paul's parents' home. But during part of the period of the alleged abuse, no one was living there, as the house was being renovated by the local Council, and for the rest of the time, the attic rooms were occupied by lodgers. Neither Paul nor the complainants had access to the attic.

Unfortunately Paul forgot these facts which showed the abuse allegations were made up, until his sister reminded him about them during his trial. The defence then asked for an adjournment of the trial, so that confirmation of the dates of the renovation could be obtained, and the former lodgers could be contacted. The request was refused by Judge Ensor, who said in his summing up that dates were not important.

The trial, initially disrupted because the defence barrister was suffering from concussion and because a juror went off sick, was rushed through. The barrister informed the judge that the trial had to be finished by the weekend as he had a big case to attend in London on the following Monday, and the judge agreed he wanted the case finished by the end of the week. Paul's mother gave evidence concerning the addresses at which they lived, but she was accused of lying. His sister testified that he was not allowed to babysit on his own. Thirteen further witnesses that were prepared to give evidence for Paul were not called. They could have confirmed what his family were trying to tell the court. After the trial, when Paul complained that these witnesses were not called, his barrister claimed that Paul had signed a document stating he only wanted five witnesses called. But he is unable to produce this document now.

How did these allegations come to be made? Initially, following the original complaints, there was a long delay – 6 months – before the complainants made statements. When they appeared, they were all remarkably similar, suggesting collaboration with the help of the police. A policewoman liaising with the family was also entertained by them, enjoying meals out and social evenings in their company: the company of people with convictions for carrying firearms and class A drugs. Meanwhile they did not bother to take statements from any of Paul's family.

The serious convictions of the Jarvis brothers were not made known to the jury. At the court, they openly intimidated defence witnesses. The police watched and did nothing about it. The complainants were rewarded with criminal injuries compensation.

### Innocent

Dept. 54, PO Box 282, Oldham OL1 3FY

[www.innocent.org.uk](http://www.innocent.org.uk)

If the seed of his own human value and worth is planted in the heart and soul of a Black boy or man while he is in the free community before he goes to prison, or, barring that ideal, while he is in prison, when his time comes for release, that worthy seed will grow. Instead of being a blight upon the community, he will be a positive contributor to it.

More succinctly put: Since one third of the crimes in Black communities are committed by ex-offenders, each community member who is not in prison has an opportunity to reduce crime considerably by having a positive relationship with a Black prisoner while he is still in prison, thereby potentially producing an equal reduction in the nation's prison recidivist rates.

Your letters will be an act of faith that touches the heart and soul of a Black man. Your letters' regular arrivals will tell him that you are exercising your willingness to trust, care for, respect and embrace his humanity. In most cases, your acts of kindness will elicit reciprocity. The person you befriend can learn to value, trust and be responsible for the shared faith that your correspondence will likely generate. It is my sincere hope that both of you will find a your correspondence to be an unusually life-affirming fair exchange.

Getting a letter is the high point of the day. Mail is the most important thing in a long-term prisoner's life. In America, where prisoners are killing themselves and each other as a consequence of boredom and isolation, a letter gives the message that someone cares. If a picture is included, it offers visual access to a world wherein there is something other than drab, uninspiring concrete and steel to look at. Photographs, when taken expressly for my benefit, tell me that someone gives a hoot whether or not I get out of practice of using my gift of sight.

[www.brandonastorjones.com](http://www.brandonastorjones.com)

As a result of a misheard 20-second phone call with a 13-year-old partially deaf and emotionally vulnerable foster child, a careworker with an unblemished record lost his job, was put on the sex offenders' register and suffered a nervous breakdown that brought him to the brink of suicide.

The girl, whose hearing problems meant she often had to lip read, told her foster parents she thought the caller had made an obscene suggestion to her. The parents reported the call to police, who traced it to Newcastle careworker Paul Gillon, whose job was to support foster parents.

He had been trying to contact the parents to discuss problems they had been having with the child, when the girl herself answered the phone.

Newcastle city council social services department suspended Gillon pending an investigation, during which he was not interviewed. He was then sacked following a disciplinary hearing at which he was not even present. In addition, his union rep was denied access to records that revealed details of the child's hearing problems and the fact that she had a history of making up stories.

Although police did not pursue the matter, Gillon – who had spent nine years in social services and fostering – was put on the sex offenders' register and banned from working with children ever again, without even being able to put his side of events.

He was vindicated last month when an industrial tribunal condemned the council for its "knee-jerk" reaction and awarded him the maximum £20,000 for unfair dismissal and discrimination.

Gillon has now had his name removed from the sex offenders' register, but he is still clinically depressed. "I am on anti-depressants, I can't go out in my own streets and I've suffered a nervous breakdown –" Newcastle had been at the centre of two very big child abuse investigations – and this time on the flimsiest of evidence, I think they simply decided that Paul's career and life were disposable." Newcastle city council did not want to discuss the case.

Several years ago my mother wrote to me. She begged me for a photograph. She knew she was near death and she had not seen me in years. I will never forget the words in that letter. She wrote: 'It's more than a thousand miles between us son, and I cannot travel because I'm too weak; I just want to see your face one more time before I die.'

It usually takes about three days to get a photo taken. I explained to the so-called 'prison counsellor' Mr Roquemore the urgency of my need and he seemed to appreciate how important it was for me.

After 28 days with no response at all, I asked cell block officer Wicks if he would call his supervisor so I could speak to him about a personal matter. Officer Wicks just sat smugly in his booth with a contemptuous smirk on his face and flatly refused. When I asked him 'why not?' he became abusive.

In a fit of combined rage and despair I walked across to the table that sits in the middle of the cell block, picked up the old Underwood typewriter that sat on it and hurled it through the cell-block window. I figured that this action would bring a sergeant.

Suddenly I was getting lots of attention! Roquemore looked me in the eye with the contrived piety of a priest and said: 'What's the problem?' The absurdity of that question was rivalled only by the fact that the man from the

counsellor passing in and out of my cell block each day. During that week he often looked at me directly in the eye without so much as a vague mention of my request. His lack of action prompted me to write a letter to the warden repeating my request.

wardens' office was standing behind the counsellor with a camera in his hand. He began talking photographs of the broken window, of what was left of the typewriter that had bounced back into the cell block in several twisted pieces.

No, he did not take a photograph of me. Yes, I did get charged with destroying state property, and yes I was punished for it. I was guilty – they had the photographs from the scene of the crime to prove it!

Shortly afterwards I learned that my mother had died four days prior to the incident.

PRIVATE EYE 14-6-02



# EAT MORE RAW

A Guide to Health & Sustainability  
by Steve Charter

This review is extracted almost entirely from part one of this great book. Here goes.

This is the first generation ever having lived all their life eating "absolute garbage" in polluted environments. Our human bodies and minds are having more and more toxins fed in, with a static or weakening capacity to tackle them.

Until the 1950's virtually all food was basically organic and far less processed. The evidence suggests by the time the first chemicalised, junk-food generation of humans reach their 30's and 40's the effects will start to show through very clearly - and the effects will be even clearer in their children.

Even the simplest ideas in living nutrition are generally hidden. Enzymes are vital to turn our food into nutrition, to digest our food. When heated to above about 120°F/42°C the vital living enzymes contained in raw vegetables and fruits are killed.

Steve believes that the state of the world and humanity directly reflects the state of human consciousness - and this is an issue that demands attention if we are wise.

The priority for agricultural, food and medical businesses is to survive and make

more profit - creating health is not a priority. It is more profitable to supply foods that create illness.

Steve urges us to attempt to take responsibility for our own existence. He describes the beauties of permaculture and quotes Bill Mollison "The only ethical decision is to take responsibility for our own existence and that of our children. Make it now."

Our society is overloaded with information yet lacking in wisdom. Drowning in quantity with quality becoming ever more diluted. Learning implies changes in the way we do things. It also implies that we know we have something to learn. Intellectual humbleness as opposed to intellectual arrogance or naivety. Nature is our best teacher - and ultimately our only teacher.

With a package of health creating activities a revolution in personal and planetary health will result. All we have to do is sense how to set the creative, healthy forces of nature free in our lives as a whole, and in its various elements that make up the whole. And then take the practical, achievable steps to make it happen.

Today our western lifestyle is denying virtually everyone, half their lives. And before that putting us in a sad state of



health and dependence on support 40, 50 or 60 years before we are meant to die.

This book is as inspiring as it is hard-hitting, with sentences like the following. The combination of a wider understanding of raw food and permaculture is a serious yet playful, semi-subversive yet utterly democratic route to creating individual and community health, greater freedom, and much greater self-reliance and self confidence. But then again, what's subversive about love and compassion, life, nature and health creation?

Steve knows that if you take away a person's health you take away a large part of their freedom - you can create a population that lives in fear, dependent on work and money for the necessary distractions. He says some might suggest a population 'dumbed down' with heavy and addictive foods is easier to manipulate and exploit.

Generally in raw food nutrition and in permaculture there are no rigid laws, there are flexible guidelines. If we want to understand how diet and lifestyle can create health we need a vision of how our body works as a flowing system, a cleansing, healing river of life, a health creating process.

Dr Douglas Graham - a long term raw fooder, ex olympic trampolinist, and pro training and health adviser to top athletes - highlights some key facts;

- Fresh raw FRUITS are the very best source of VITAMINS and the second best source of minerals.

- Fresh raw VEGETABLES are the very best source of MINERALS and the second best source of vitamins.

Fruits and veg are also the best sources for the sugars we need; and seeds, nuts and avocados are the best sources for the fats we need. Sprouted pulses and seeds are also packed with vital proteins, enzymes, vitamins and minerals.

Part 2 of this book deals with transitional living, detox, balance, raw parenting, positive mental and spiritual nutrition and f.a.q.s. Part 3 discusses forest and paradise gardening while Part 4 has some great recipes and meal ideas plus useful contacts and more.

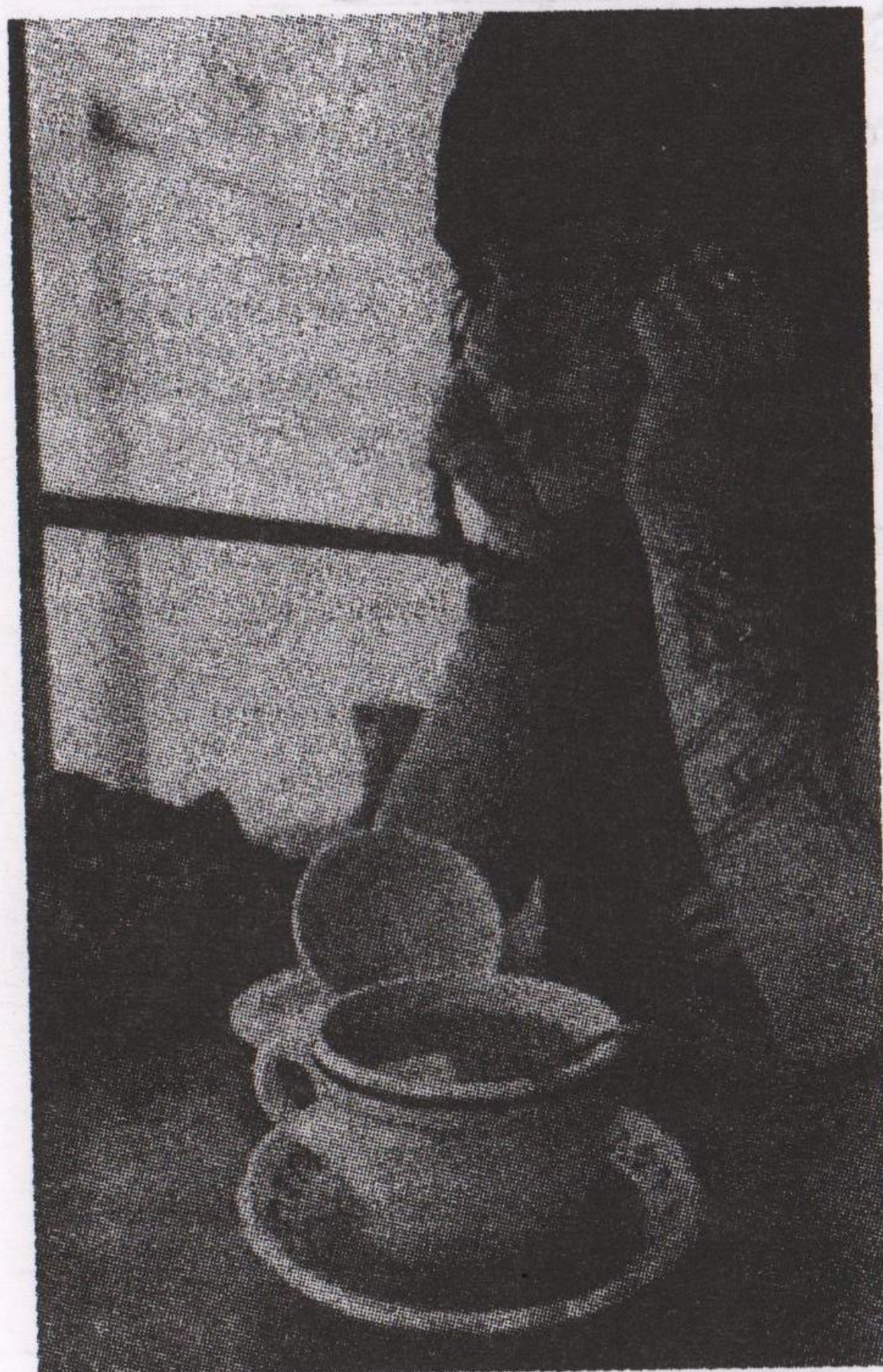
This is a life changing book in a toxic climate. Merseyfin recommend a raw revolution in these globally dimming days. To the salad bowls.

EAT MORE RAW - A Guide to Health and Sustainability - by Steve Charter £12.95  
Available from - News from Nowhere, 96  
Bold Street, LI



# REDEFINING OUR AN INTERVIEW WITH WENDY-O MATIK ON RELATIONSHIPS RESPONSIBLE OPEN RELATIONSHIPS

PROFANE  
EXISTENCE  
#44



*Revolution comes in many forms. Through the things that we do and the words that we say, we can all strive to create a revolution within our hearts and the world at large. Wendy-O Matik is a special kind of revolutionary woman. Through her book, **Redefining Our Relationships**, she explodes the stereotypical relationship norm that binds and suffocates us all. With her poetry, she exposes a rawness of emotion and provocation of thought that is intensely inspiring. Wendy-O has traveled the world doing workshops, poetry readings, and discussion groups with a dedication that few in the punk scene have been able to maintain. With passion, determination and strength, Wendy-O is working on burning this system down. [Interviewed by Adrienne Droogas on September 13, 2003]*

**PE: How can love be a revolutionary, political act?**

**WM:** Before you can change or improve the world, real change starts within yourself. When you can radicalize what's in your mind, body, spirit, and heart, then you can change the world with everyone you come in contact with. Radical Love, as described in my book, Redefining Our Relationships: Guidelines for Responsible Open Relationships, seeks to challenge patriarchy, the media, and our coerced social constructs of a relationship by imagining a non-hierarchical approach to love. As you redefine large concepts like love, intimacy, sex, and relationships for yourself, you begin to disrupt the shackles of status quo that limit and restrict us from having healthier and more satisfying connections. To love openly and without limits is revolutionary because it challenges the social fabric of conformity and status quo. To love radically is to take control over your right to love the way you decide, based on your needs and desires.

**PE: What makes you choose a non-monogamous lifestyle?**

**WM:** I'm an activist of the heart. I have always felt as if I have an enormous capacity to love everyone—the homeless guy down the street, the little old lady next door, someone I just had a 5 hour mind-blowing conversation with, and then of course, my best friend, family, and the rest. When I finally was able to admit to myself that I have a human right and obligation to myself to love as many people as I wanted or needed, then I became aware of how a monogamous relationship, outlined by society, was never going to work for me. I would never be able to conform. Radical love, or the freedom to love as many as you desire, became a way of life.

**PE: What are some of the misconceptions of polyamory?**

**WM:** Open relationships are not just about open sex. There are a thousand or more ways to be loving with someone—sex is the easy part. It's being creative enough to actively commit to being a loving person on a multitude of levels (i.e. cuddling, holding, listening, love letters, the exchange of inspiration and so on) that separates you from the norm. An open relationship has

less to do with sex and everything to do with consent, honesty, consequences, dispelling of feelings of possessiveness, being supportive, and communicative. I'm asking people to be aware of their own stereotypes of what an open relationship means. You are free to define your relationship any way your heart desires, so long as personal respect and integrity are at the core.

Another misconception for those new to open relationships is the issue of commitment. Responsible open relationships require the truest adherence to commitment to the future of any and all relationships.

**PE: Sex is an important aspect of relationships. How does the sexual dynamic differ when a relationship is open?**

**WM:** That's a great question. The topic of sex is the most singled out issue for anyone who is skeptical about open relationships, which is why I purposely tried, in

my book, to redefine our notions of sex or sexual intimacy.

Whether you're in a monogamous or non-monogamous relationship, you're still free to set boundaries. Sex might be one of those boundaries that you may decide, within the framework of your relationship with your partner, friend, lover, pen pal, whether sexual intimacy is permitted or not. For instance, in an open relationship that has two primary partners, both of you will negotiate if you want to share lovers, or if you want to refrain from sexual contact, but kissing, cuddling, and love letters might be okay. These guidelines are always re-adjusting and re-negotiable.

**PE: How can the ideals within your book be applied to the punk scene?**

**WM:** As a punk myself, raised with a certain amount of consciousness and awareness of being different, thinking differently, living differently, it only seems natural that I would love differently. Punk ideals have always strove to think, question, be aware, and to not conform to social pressures. I think that radical love and alternative relationships are definitely on the minds and hearts of a lot of us. My book addresses the feminist and anarchist aspects of love, from a punk perspective. Good luck trying to find a punk perspective on love and relationships; most books sound either new-age or very '70s free love. I hope the punk or alternative scene will find in my book a voice and perspective that they can relate to.

**PE: Your book is done completely DIY. What was the process of getting it published?**

**WM:** The process of self-publishing is too huge to explain in one sitting. All in all, the book couldn't have been possible without the concerted effort of other punks and friends. I also organized a show with artwork, bands, and spoken word in order to help cover some of my expenses. Get creative!

**PE: Do you feel society stigmatizes polyamory? If so, why?**

**WM:** Any ideology or theory or concept that goes against what society has ingrained upon us always risks being stigmatized or discredited. When you go outside the status quo and put forth a lifestyle that the major of society doesn't agree with, then they feel threatened. That threat translates into shunning or putting down an alternative viewpoint. Loving as many people as you want, expanding the capacity of your heart to make every connection meaningful, having multiple partnerships, and imagining the potential in yourself to have more and more deep, powerful relationships with your friends, your co-workers, your family, well, I guess that's enough to stir up some trouble with some folks.

**PE: What are your thoughts on jealousy?**

**WM:** I think of jealousy as a guidepost emotion, as discussed in my book. Like the onion analogy, everyone feels certain degrees of jealousy but when you peel back the layers of the onion, when you really take the time to re-examine where the emotions around jealousy are stemming from, then you expose a much deeper inner core of personal issues, like insecurity, disappointment, fear of losing someone, fear of abandonment, even co-dependency. Jealousy is a unique window into what's going on within us. Most people revert to blaming the other person, and never take the time to really look within. I truly believe that examining the roots of your jealousy, without blaming and punishing others and with lots and lots of practice, can lead to longer, more healthier, and more fulfilling relationships.

**PE: How can a friendship be considered a relationship?**

**WM:** When we expand our notions of what a relationship is or has the potential to be, then we begin to see how every meaningful connection, platonic or sexual, is a relationship, including friends, family, pen pals, even your pet. Again, this gets back to our preconceived notions that a "relationship" involves sex. This implies an unsaid hierarchy, as if your sexual connections are more important than your friendships. When you commit to honoring all your relationships, whether you are intimate with them or not, then you indirectly begin to think and act outside the box, outside Hollywood's notion of a relationship, outside what your parent's instilled in you. This is revolutionary. You may discover that you would prefer marrying your friends. You may decide to make a pact with your best friend to grow old together, to take care of each other's children, to be committed like life-partners.

**PE: What are some of the most important dynamics in creating a healthy open relationship?**

**WM:** A responsible open relationship has to be built on a foundation of trust. How you build that foundation is different for everyone. For example, one polyamorous friend of mine said that he and his partner (and lovers) have a mutually agreed upon contract that gets revised and readjusted a few times a year.



**PE: What is the greatest joy that non-monogamy has brought into your life?**

WM: I was writing about this in my journal the other night. The truth is every time I give love, my capacity to love expands. In some ways, the way we know we can't have too many friends, well, we can't have too many lovers either. It's simple math: when you love one person, the love you feel for someone else doesn't diminish or disappear. Love can be one hell of a great drug! Sometimes I feel like where other people are busy self-medicating on their path of self-destruction, I'm trying courageously and vulnerably to voice the importance of desire, passion, stirrings in the heart, love, emotion, and the importance of meaningful connections with every single person you meet. One of the most important benefits of a 13-year open relationship, that ended last year, has been the single fact that I had nurtured and fostered other outside relationships that were and still are deeply passionate, deeply intimate, all along. So when my primary partner left, I had an amazing, supportive, caring network of lovers and friends and family who were always there. I have exercised my heart in ways that most people would run scared. I'll live and die as a woman who lived her life on her own terms, set by her own standards, and free to love who I want and how I want.

I want to look back on my life when I'm 80 and feel good about all the love I gave, and not how I restrained myself or put up walls or held back for this or that reason. This kind of pursuit of personal freedom has brought me a lot of fulfillment in my life.

Please check out my website at [www.wendyomatik.com](http://www.wendyomatik.com). And support an independent, woman's small press distributed through Profane Existence. A sincere thanks goes out to everyone's support, and extra hugs to Adrienne and Dan.

#### BOOKS ON POLYAMORY:

Skin: Talking about Sex, Class & Literature by Dorothy Allison  
Polyamory: The New Love without Limits by Dr. Deborah M. Anapol  
The Ethical Slut: A Guide to Infinite Sexual Possibilities by Dossie Easton & Catherine A. Liszt  
Breaking the Barriers to Desire: New Approaches to Multiple Relationships by Kevin Lano & Claire Parry  
Living My Life: An Autobiography by Emma Goldman  
The Traffic in Women and Other Essays on Feminism by Emma Goldman  
Lesbian Polyfidelity by Celeste West  
The Lesbian Polyamory Reader by Marcia Munson & Judith P. Stelbom (eds.)

## Liverpool Independent Media Centre

was set up in 2003 by a group of local political activists, media campaigners and ordinary people. Part of the ever growing international network of Independent Media Centres, IMC Liverpool

provides the people of Liverpool and Merseyside with the opportunity to report on the issues that affect them, as well as access to news and reporting which is non-corporate, non-commercial and not covered by the mainstream media. From the local to the international, neighbourhood campaigns to grassroots mobilisations, from critical analyses to direct actions, Liverpool IMC provides an interactive platform for the reporting from the struggles for a world based on freedom, cooperation, justice and solidarity, and against environmental degradation, neo-liberal exploitation, racism, xenophobia and patriarchy.

IMC Liverpool is dedicated to the open publishing ethos. This means that with the minimum of I.T. skills or computer experience, anybody can post reports, articles and comments on the newswire, subject to the newswire open posting guidelines. The website contains step by step instructions on how you can contribute and upload articles and pictures. The site is administered by a group of volunteers who ensure that postings don't contradict the site's guidelines and mission statement. To get involved with the running of the site, contact us (see the website) or keep an eye on the website for details of the next open meeting.

Past postings on the website have covered such issues as: destruction of local green space, resistance to the Iraq war, the culture of capital 2008, regeneration and corruption, to name just a few.

IMC Liverpool is a resource belonging to the people of Merseyside and currently needs MORE people to use it. To make your posting, go to the website and click on the red "PUBLISH YOUR NEWS" bar.

[www.liverpool.indymedia.org.uk](http://www.liverpool.indymedia.org.uk)



next G8 Summit  
Wed 6th - Fri 8th July 2005

**DISSSENT! G8**  
NETWORK OF RESISTANCE AGAINST THE

### Introduction to the Dissent! Network

The G8 (Group of Eight, most industrialised nations) Summits are hosted, on rotation, by the group's member states. In 2005 the Summit is to be held in the UK at Gleneagles in Perthshire, Scotland (around 40 miles north-west of Edinburgh). The Dissent! Network, has formed to provide a networking tool to co-ordinate radical resistance to the Summit.

The Network has no central office, no spokespeople, no membership list and no paid staff. It's a mechanism for communication and co-ordination between local groups and working groups involved in building resistance to the G8, and capitalism in general. It hopes to exist long after the world leaders have returned home in the early summer of 2005.

Dissent! is open to anybody willing to work within the Hallmarks of Peoples' Global Action (PGA- see [www.agp.org](http://www.agp.org))

1. A very clear rejection of capitalism, imperialism and feudalism; all trade agreements, institutions and governments that promote destructive globalisation.
2. We reject all forms and systems of domination and discrimination including, but not limited to, patriarchy, racism and religious fundamentalism of all creeds. We embrace the full dignity of all human beings.
3. A confrontational attitude, since we do not think that lobbying can have a major impact in such biased and undemocratic organisations, in which transnational capital is the only real policy-maker.
4. A call to direct action and civil disobedience, support for social movements' struggles, advocating forms of resistance which maximise respect for life and oppressed peoples' rights, as well as the construction of local alternatives to global capitalism
5. An organisational philosophy based on decentralisation and autonomy.

To get involved in the Dissent! Network, come to the next bi-monthly gathering which is in Glasgow, 12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> February, or check the website for details of your nearest group. If there isn't a Dissent! Network group near you, set one up!

[www.dissent.org.uk](http://www.dissent.org.uk)





## FORCED STERILISATION (AND MORE)

Sweden is the poster state for those who believe in the power of the government to solve all problems.

From 1934 to 1974, 62,000 Swedes were sterilised as part of a national program grounded in the science of racial biology and carried out by officials who believed they were helping to build a progressive, enlightened welfare state. In some cases, couples judged to be inferior parents were sterilised, as were their children when they became teenagers. Especially shocking to many Swedes is the fact that the law allowing the sterilisations wasn't overturned until 1976, three decades after the Nazis' human engineering policies collapsed in the rubble of the Third Reich. The sterilisations targeted a wide range of people: those of mixed race; unmarried mothers with several children; people judged to be habitual criminals; even a boy considered "sexually precocious". Grounds for sterilisation included "unmistakable Gypsy features, psychopathy and vagabond life". Other grounds were specified as "displaying undesirable racial characteristics or signs of 'inferiority', poor eyesight or sexual and social deviancy".

Not only did eugenics foresee an improved human race, it also was appealing to Social Democrats, who were beginning to see that Sweden's welfare state would be costly and wanted to limit the number of people who would have to be supported. When child allowances – monthly payments to families for each child, administered by the tax-funded national social insurance scheme – were introduced in the 1950s, the number of forced sterilisations of the 'undesirable' part of the population doubled.

People who did not correspond to the ideal of this new society were not welcome. For example, a newspaper article reported the case of a girl in her late teens that in the late 1940s was sterilised against her will. The justification given was the comment that she had often been seen hanging around the town's dance hall. Through the 1960s and 1970s, janitors were asked to report the tenants whom, in their opinion, were not worthy of reproduction. The program of sterilisation was applied massively in alcoholics, wandering people and intellectual invalids.

Sweden has never had a revolution and the state and its administration have enjoyed a trust that many foreign observers find astounding. There were no perceived reasons for the necessity of an elaborate system of checks and balances as in other countries. Thus, in a country with a relative homogeneous population, without separation of state and church, with strong traditions of collectivism and consensus decisions, majority rule in parliament has been considered to be a sufficient guarantee to pass laws in the nation's best interest.

Besides Nazi Germany and Sweden, all of Scandinavia, Estonia, Iceland, Switzerland and much of North America adopted similar measures to improve the racial stock and carried them out for more than 50 years. For example, in 1934 provisions for compulsory sterilisation were issued by Norway and Sweden, followed in 1935 by Denmark and Finland. On this basis, the operation could be carried out on the mentally ill and retarded, epileptics and carriers of hereditary diseases. Furthermore, specific laws of the Scandinavian countries foresaw the possibility of carrying out these operations also on parents considered as unsuitable to bring up their children. These measures of mass sterilisation were practised on 40,000 people in Norway.

In Denmark, eugenics was considered an obvious solution to huge social problems. Of the 11,000 people sterilised from 1929 to 1967, when the law on forced sterilisation was eliminated, about half were done against the patient's will. The program was directed mainly at people who were mentally handicapped.

New research reveals that Finland forcibly sterilised more than 11,000 people – about eight times more than previously reported. In addition, the practice continued as late as 1970. Previous reports had said the policy ended in 1955. About 4,000 involuntary abortions were also performed between 1950 and 1970.

It was in Switzerland, in the Vaud canton, that in 1928 the first European law was passed on the sterilisation of the mentally ill. Hitler requested a copy of the law from the canton and from the government in Berne as a basis for Nazi Germany's own racist laws.

The revelations from Sweden appear to have exposed a skeleton in the ideological cupboard of the liberal and socialist Left in Europe. In Britain, eugenic programs of varying severity were continuously promoted by the Guardian and New Statesman. These theories of selective breeding were pushed very hard by the grandees of the Labour aristocracy, who took an intense dislike to the lower end of the working class, the lumpenproletariat. In Britain, a Bill for compulsory sterilisation of certain categories of mental patient was put before the House of Commons in 1931 by the Labour MP Major A G Church, only to be defeated after a full debate.

The most extreme example of this distaste was the view of the German deputy Dr Alfred Grotjahn – a Social Democrat, not a Nazi – that a quarter of the entire proletariat of Germany should be sterilised.

**S**TURE Johansson believes that he was saved from sterilisation at the age of 11 because he had blue eyes.

"We were part of a race-biology experiment even then. They tried out chemicals on us, melted into our margarine, to see what was best to keep us tranquil."

About half of the boys in the home were sterilised. Sture was sent to a new foster family when he was 13.

Sweden is trying to come to terms with the shock of publicity given to its 40-year programme of eugenic sterilisation. It was not a big secret, more of an embarrassment best not spoken about.

Sweden's Social Democratic and Labour Party dominated the country between 1932 and 1976, a period almost exactly coinciding with the sterilisation programme. The SDLP introduced the most expensive social welfare system in the world. Swedes recoiled from the idea that the party which introduced a law forbidding parents to slap a naughty child should be capable of supervising institutionalised violence to the young, the mentally handicapped and the lower depths of society, who usually came from non-Nordic ethnic stock.

It was a policy backed by a law which saw 63,000 people sterilised.

Maria Nordin, now 72, was condemned as "mentally deficient" because she was short-sighted and her parents could not afford glasses. Other children of poor homes were sent to institutions because they were cheeky to their primary school teachers.

The operation was done because her doctors thought she would "probably transfer retardedness to progeny" and despite the fact that her father refused to give his consent.

Wallstrom, the SDLP social affairs minister, has announced an investigation with a view to compensating those sterilised. Yet 18 months ago she refused Maria Nordin's application on the grounds that she had been the subject of a perfectly lawful act.

It is hard for us to understand a period where people expressed a fear of proletarian breeding. Today people may go on about immigration, but it is the same sort of thing.

"In the end, all this does is just add to the general contempt for politicians."

Alvar Myrdal, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning scientist, wrote in the 1930s: "We have a large quota of unworthy individuals, so what is to be done? We recommend a radical selection of undesirable individuals through sterilisation."

"Most of my friends from the institution died young, in their 40s. I think some of them were broken by the operations," says Sture Johansson.

"But for as long as they lived, they grew up in a world where they came to expect the state to look after their every need, but knowing that the state had taken away their most basic human yearning, the desire to reproduce."

From 1907 onward, at least 60,000 Americans were sterilised against their will. Most compulsory sterilisations occurred in the 1930s and 1940s, but some states, such as Virginia, continued the practice until the late 1970s. Most of the victims were poor and members of minorities, and none of them received compensation. Among those people regarded as inferiors were epileptics, manic-depressives, prostitutes, alcoholics, the homeless and criminals. Under the eugenics laws, people who came to the negative attention of the social authorities could be branded as 'feeble-minded' by court order and legally forced to undergo sterilisation. Rose Brooks caught the eye of the state when she had twin sons out of wedlock. A few months later, she was taken to the Virginia Colony for Epileptics and Feeble-minded and surgically sterilised. Virginia conducted 7,450 sterilisations from 1924 to 1979 under the banner of social engineering.

By the early 1930s, some 30 American states had adopted eugenics laws. Most of them were modelled after the law which Harry H Laughlin had drafted for Virginia in 1924. That legislation also served the Nazis as a model for their 1933 "Law for Protection against Genetically Defective Offspring". This is not the history that is taught in school. We teach about the inhumanities of the Nazis. The connection is not made though that some of the tactics that the Nazis used were taken from United States practice.

Fred Aslin, an Indiana farmer, never understood exactly why he and his siblings were thrown into a psychiatric clinic, since neither he nor they were in any way mentally handicapped. "But we were poor and we were Indians", he notes. At the age of 18, he was sterilised against his will, as were four of his siblings. "They termed us feeble-minded idiots, and wrote that our children would be like us or even worse". By 1945, more than 60,000 are believed to have been sterilised across America. The practice of involuntary sterilisation of mental defectives on grounds of eugenics declined only in the late 1960s. These laws were still valid in 19 states until 1985. In 1980, former psychiatric patients who had been forced into sterilisation banded together for a class-action suit, demanding compensation from the state of Virginia. But a federal judge rejected their suit on the grounds that the US Supreme Court had affirmed the constitutionality of sterilisation back in 1927.

In Canada, two provinces, Alberta and British Columbia, also adopted legal sterilisation. In 1995 Leilani Muir brought an action against the provincial government of Alberta for her compulsory sterilisation at the age of 14 for being "a moron". In fact she was a battered child, with a "low normal" IQ. Alberta's Sexual Sterilisation Act of 1928 was only repealed in 1972, and was responsible for 2,800 mentally retarded children and adults losing their reproductive organs.

Japan's Eugenics Protection Law, written in 1948 to "avoid the birth of defective offspring", allowed doctors to sterilise people with a broad range of mental or physical handicaps, hereditary diseases and leprosy. Health Ministry statistics show some 844,939 people were sterilised from 1949 until 1996, when growing criticism by activists forced the law to be abolished. Under the eugenics law, 16,475 people, including 5,163 men, were sterilised without their consent; the last involuntary case was in 1992. A doctor's recommendation and approval of a committee appointed by the local government was enough for sterilisations to proceed. A ministry guideline in 1953 approved the use of anaesthetics or even deception to force the sterilisations on unwilling recipients.

Just weeks before his wedding, Yasuji Hirasawa was given an ultimatum – be sterilised, or the wedding would be stopped. Doctors and nurses assured him he could be de-sterilised whenever he wanted to have children. Two years away from his 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, he still seethes over that lie.

In Belgium, Ingrid van Butsel spent her life in orphanages and state housing. She married in 1985, but only after the regional government – without giving her a reason – pressured her into a sterilisation operation. "I could not believe my ears. I wanted children, but they said I was unsuited to raise children. I had a choice: I could marry if I had myself sterilised or they would send me to a psychiatric hospital". Van Butsel lived in government housing for young women who have no family, no money and few skills. The government did not tell her why it deemed her unfit to raise children and she, being poor and uneducated, was not able to challenge the decision.

France has launched an inquiry into reports that 15,000 French women had been illegally sterilised without their consent after being declared unfit for motherhood. All were sterilised by state-run institutions. In 1998, the government released findings that 225 physically or mentally handicapped men and women under state care had been given forced sterilisations between 1995 and 1996.

The mentally handicapped continue to be sterilised in Austria, usually against their will, based on the widespread but mistaken perception that they will produce mentally handicapped children. Roughly 70% of mentally handicapped women continue to be subjected to sterilisation. This subject remains a taboo in Austria, although the practice of forced sterilisation is legal.

In Australia, a government-commissioned report said surgeons in the public health system had illegally sterilised more than 1000 retarded women since 1992.

Peru has had a target for the number of sterilisations to take place each year. In 1996, it was 100,000. It was not met that year, but the target for the next year was increased to 130,000. That year, the quota was met. Women are promised food and clothing for their children. When they show up to receive the food and clothes, they are told that in order to get the items they must be sterilised.

Unfortunately, sterilisations are just the tip of the iceberg. A Swedish television documentary revealed that Sweden lobotomised around 4,500 "undesirables", in some cases without the consent of their families. Some 500 lobotomies were conducted on patients who were not from mental hospitals, including a 7-year-old boy in 1949. Diagnosed as "mentally retarded, hyperactive", he died during surgery. Sweden also forced hundreds of "mentally deficient" Swedes to let their teeth rot after being force-fed candy in dental experiments.

More than 2,300 radiation experiments occurred in the United States during the Cold War, with thousands of victims. Hospital patients were exposed to radiation from plutonium. The experiments were performed mainly on blacks or natives of Alaska.

MORE OVERLEAF →



## CHEMICAL WARFARE EXPERIMENTS ON BRITISH SERVICEMEN

AN RAF engineer who died 50 years ago was unlawfully killed by the government in secret chemical weapon trials, an inquest will be told this week.

Ronald Maddison, 20, from County Durham, volunteered to participate in experiments at the Porton Down military testing centre near Salisbury in May 1953 believing they were to help find a cure for the common cold. He collapsed and died an hour after 200mg of liquid sarin — a deadly nerve agent — was dripped onto his uniform in a gas chamber.

The outcome of the inquest is considered crucial by hundreds of Porton Down veterans, who want a public inquiry into a secret testing programme held there between 1948 and 1983.

The servicemen were not told what chemicals were being tested on them and many say they were told they were helping to find a cure for the cold.

Official government notices calling for volunteers for the Porton Down experiments in February 1953 stated: "The physical discomfort resulting from the tests is usually very slight. Tests are carefully planned to avoid the slightest chance of danger."

The reality, it appears, was different. John Longden, a volunteer, had liquid CS gas dripped into his eye in 1969 after being told it would feel like "soap in the eye" and that there was an antidote. In the event, he was strapped into a chair and held down for an agonising eight minutes. The antidote turned out to be a bucket of cold water thrown in his face.

Many of the volunteers, like Beech, complain of long term ill-health, including severe respiratory problems, as a result of the experiments.

In Maddison's case the tests resulted in his death. There is evidence the scientists knew the risks. A report written on the eve of the test by Dr Harry Cullumbine, head of the physiology section at Porton Down, said: "The object of these experiments has been to discover the dosage of [sarin] which when applied to the clothed or bare skin of men would cause incapacitation or death." Dr Cullumbine went ahead with the tests although five men had been hospitalised in the previous weeks.

Although the surviving documents are scarce, the scientists clearly believed that they were acting with the authority of the government to carry out the tests, since the experiments were often discussed in Whitehall committees.

What they did to people was a disgrace to this country. It was parallel to the Nazi experiments carried out in concentration camps."

OBITUARY 28.4.03 / 15. TIMES 28.4.03 / GUARDIAN 8.7.03

## US and Norway 'used insane for Nazi-style tests'

AMERICAN and Norwegian hospitals were involved in sterilisation experiments on the mentally retarded using radiation over a 50-year period up to 1994.

With chilling echoes of the Nazi era, the Americans and Norwegians were intent upon assessing the effects of radiation on different parts of the body and apparently had no qualms about the use of subjects who were "easy to deal with", according to Fredrik Mellbye, 81, who revealed the shocking details of the project.

"The retarded and insane were used, among other things, in trials for X-ray castration, a method used by German Nazi doctors during the Second World War in the Auschwitz and Ravensbrück concentration camps."

Mr Mellbye said the Norwegian experiments were carried out with the co-operation of Americans "at the highest level" and that Norwegian doctors were encouraged to seek US financial support.

Dagbladet said public investigations in America have revealed that authorities there financed about 4,000 such experiments on humans between 1944 and 1994.

After Norway was liberated from Nazi occupation in 1945, it was eager for US military and economic assistance. When the Soviet Union, which shared a border with Norway, began producing nuclear weapons in 1949 the West wanted to know more about the impact nuclear fallout had on people. Mr Mellbye said the programme was an attempt to gain basic knowledge about radiation and was neither secret nor controversial. "It was part of the natural order of the time."

He has now broken his silence to tell of the day he arrived at Porton Down's gas chamber and saw the convulsing body of 20-year-old Ronald Maddison thrashing around on the floor, spewing substances from his mouth.

Thornhill was asked to drive the body to the mortuary at Salford General Hospital and instructed to take the back roads.

I was called into an office and read the riot act by a medical officer. He made me sign something and told me if I ever spoke a word about what I saw at Porton Down I would be sent to prison.

Human testing at Porton Down started soon after the establishment was founded during the first world war to retaliate against the use of chemical weapons by the German government.

From then until the late 1980s, more than 20,000 service personnel were exposed to chemical weapons such as nerve gas, mustard gas, and tear gas, as well as mind-altering chemicals including LSD.

We talk about Saddam Hussein gassing his own people but what we did at Porton Down was the same.

Hundreds are suspected of dying prematurely or going on to develop illnesses such as cancer, motor neurone disease and Parkinson's. Despite the grief and fury of survivors and their families, over the decades successive Governments have sought to bury the scandal.

In an incredible review of neurosurgical medical procedures, the Good Practice Group on Neurosurgery (GPGN) is recommending that mentally ill Scots be used as guinea pigs for lobotomies, the brain operation that is banned throughout most of Europe.

To add to the controversy, Scottish judges will be allowed to give doctors the green light to perform lobotomies on adults and children without their or their parents' consent. Currently, the Mental Health Act allows lobotomies only with the consent of the patient but this new procedure could put an end to this freedom of choice.

## Down's babies used in vaccine experiments

BABIES and young children with Down's syndrome were used as guinea pigs by British doctors in 1960 to test an experimental vaccine for measles.

The Sunday Telegraph has learnt that the children, who were living in institutions for the "severely subnormal", were subjected to the experiments because the doctors said it was "useful" having them in hospital where they could watch over them for adverse reactions.

One of the children died seven days after being vaccinated from a common side-effect of measles, but the doctors described it as coincidental in their report.

Dr Richard Nicholson, editor of the Bulletin of Medical Ethics, said: "People try to say that you cannot apply the same ethical standards today as you could in the 1960s. You have to do research with proper safeguards in place and the safeguard was there in 1960 but it was largely ignored by doctors."

The research involved 77 children aged between one and 11. They were described by the doctors as severely subnormal "in the imbecile and idiot range". 56 of the children were given one of three live measles vaccines. The others remained unvaccinated as "controls".

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH  
6.7.97

## Fluoride fury

I AM writing regarding your article 'should fluoride be added to water' (ECHO, November 11).

Experience has taught me to argue this question is futile and simply playing into the hands of whoever is the authority that 'must weigh the evidence and make a decision' — inevitably a fluoridator. It has also taught me that fluoridation is what I describe as 'inherently undemocratic'.

Remembering that any action must be a lawful one, perhaps an appeal to the ingenuity of your ECHO readers will bring to light an effective sanction that could be applied to halt this in its tracks once and for all.

D. Hopkins, Bangor

## 'Futile' lab tests used gas on dogs

BEAGLES have been gassed until they passed out in secret tests to monitor the effects of a chemical which was banned more than 15 years ago.

Confidential documents reveal how the bodies of dogs would convulse violently during recent experiments at the controversial Huntingdon Life Sciences laboratory.

Protesters claim the tests — to measure the effect of hydro-chlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) on the heart — were futile because the substance is being taken out of use. However, scientists at the laboratory said the experiments were crucial to understanding the effects of the chemical on people.

The laboratory, which is protected by a 10ft security fence, is the target of an intense closure campaign by the animal rights organisation SHAC (Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty).

Last night a spokesman for the controversial group — which has been at the centre of allegations involving violent and intimidatory tactics against HLS staff — condemned the experiments as 'disgusting'. He warned that support for the laboratory's closure had reached a historical high with 2,000 hardcore members prepared to battle until the site is shut down.

Inside HLS's labs are 70,000 animals at any one time...all doomed to die. These include over 1000 dogs, 200 cats and 1000 monkeys.

To protect their secret practices they have 24 hour video surveillance, security guards and miles of razor wire.

HLS would like to fool us all into thinking that animal experiments are necessary and they only do it for the sake of mankind. This is RUBBISH and they know it. That's why they have always refused to debate with critical doctors and scientists. They carry out their hideous tests to make money. A huge industry of pharmaceutical and chemical companies, researchers, cage manufacturers, animal suppliers, feed producers and instrument makers profit from vivisection.



A European commission plan to test thousands of chemicals for toxicity will initiate the biggest animal testing programme Europe has ever seen and require the death of at least 50m animals, according to official estimates seen by the Guardian.

The plan — which involves testing 30,000 chemicals found in everyday products to make sure they are safe for human health and the environment — has been condemned.

"This would be the biggest ever mass animal poisoning programme in Europe's history," said Wendy Higgins, campaigns director for the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection. "These tests are about as cruel as you can get and will involve a horrific amount of suffering for a huge number of animals."

A report commissioned by the environment department this year estimated that up to 50.2m animals would be required, including 4.4m fish.

BUAV calculates that 63.6m animals would be required, at least 2,123 animals for every chemical. The tests would involve monkeys, dogs, small rodents, birds and fish receiving bigger and bigger doses of the suspect chemicals to reveal the side-effects. This can cause bleeding from the eyes and nose, convulsions, vomiting and slow death.

GUARDIAN 27.10.01

The atrocities of animal experimentation are paid for by you. The government uses our taxes to fund vivisection. Many large companies such as Boots and SmithKline Beecham either have their own animal laboratories or use commercial animal experimental laboratories (who buy cages, restraining devices, surgical equipment, feed and bedding. Thereby creating a whole profit making marketplace in supplies). Many charities not only fund, but actively promote animal experiments such as the Imperial Cancer Research Fund and the British Heart Foundation.

Horrible chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, possessed by an ever-increasing number of countries, were developed by vivisection and "tested" on animals the same way a drug, detergent, or toothpaste is "tested" on animals. Conventional weapons of all sorts were also created in vivisectionist laboratories, where animals are routinely used as surrogates for man in warlike situations.

"It was the threat, often put into action, of constant protest at the entire University, and the negative impact we were having on their donors worldwide. We hit them where they were most vulnerable — their finances — and left them with no choice." — SPEAC Campaign.

This week, Cambridge University abandoned plans for a primate vivisection lab in Cambridge, with the University saying that it could not "take financial risks of this magnitude". The costs of the building had risen from £24m to £32m, and the costs of security, not to mention disruption, from protests by animal rights campaigners must also have played a part in the decision. (Not that Cambridge University would admit that, however).

But the centre, which was supposedly set to study diseases of the brain, should never have been given the go-ahead in the first place. The plans were originally rejected twice by the local Council; the plan then went to public enquiry. At the public enquiry, there were objections from Cambridge Council because it was being built on green belt land and from the police 'cos there were concerns about the costs of policing and disruption from the inevitable protests. Animal rights campaigners also objected, arguing that there was no need for the centre and that the experiments to be carried out were not only cruel, but bad science. The inspector agreed and stated that the centre should not go ahead. But so what — Deputy-PM John Prescott overruled the inspector and gave the go ahead on the advice of Lord Sainsbury, the Science Minister and Neo Labour's biggest financial backer (SchNEWS 432), because it was in "the national interest". SchNEWS 30.1.04

In HLS's Princeton lab Michelle Rokke worked undercover for nine months. She secretly filmed monkeys being cut open from the neck to the groin whilst still alive. She shot over 50 hours of animal abuse inside HLS. In one experiment due to be carried out at Princeton the Observer newspaper described "37 beagles will each have one of their leg bones sawn then snapped with a steel wire, all without anaesthetic".

**A** dog is crucified in order to study the duration of the agony of Christ. A pregnant bitch is disemboweled to observe the maternal instinct in the throes of pain.

Beagles, well-known for their mild and affectionate natures, are tortured until they start attacking each other. The "scientists" responsible for this announce that they were "conducting a study of juvenile delinquency."

the great majority of vivisectionists have never spent five minutes at a sick person's bedside, for the good reason that most of them decide to dedicate themselves to laboratory animals when they fail that most important medical examination, the one that would allow them to practice medicine on people. And many more take up "research" because that requires no formal studying. Any dunce can cut up live animals and report what he sees.

Huntingdon Life Sciences, the chemical and pharmaceutical testing company, yesterday won a ground-breaking injunction preventing animal rights protesters from approaching within 50 yards of employees' homes.

The far-reaching decision follows a campaign of intimidation in which staff have been assaulted, subjected to abusive phone calls and had their cars destroyed by arson. The firm employs more than 1,000 people in East Anglia.

Animal rights activists have attempted to drive the company, which conducts toxicity tests on cats, dogs, rodents and other creatures, out of business.

Not only are 50 yard "exclusion zones" established around the homes of every employee but protesters are banned from "assaulting, molesting, harassing, pestering, threatening or otherwise interfering with" those named in the high court injunction, "directly or indirectly". The list of those protected includes the company itself, employees and "their families, servants or agents" and any person "setting out to visit them".

Only one demonstration is permitted every 30 days in the exclusion zones outside the company's two sites in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. On those occasions the protesters, who must not number more than 25, must park more than half a mile away from the sites and the demonstration must not last more than six hours.

The injunction also prohibits publication of names, addresses, vehicle registration numbers, email addresses or any information identifying "protected persons". Harassment is also deemed to include any "artificial music noise", such as claxons or hooters.

Breaching the order is an arrestable offence and allows the police to remove anyone immediately. The harassment act was designed to stop violent husbands intimidating ex-wives and stalkers contacting their victims.

"It just proves we are being effective," ~~Michelle~~ "We take it as a compliment that they have gone to these lengths."

"This will not stop our campaign against HLS. We will work around it. It doesn't cover customers or their suppliers. We will continue to target them."

It doesn't stop us demonstrating against HLS's customers at their premises. We will continue to target companies as far afield as New Zealand."

A second employee, who has suffered depression partially because of intimidation, said he used to search under his car every day. "The things the protesters shout at you as you go to work — like scum or paedophile — is unbelievable. They tell us we are earning blood money. I was scared that people would recognise me; once I was followed home."

CONCLUDES

GUARDIAN 17.4.03



## Animal experimentation is scientific fraud and we are all victims.

We are often told that those who oppose animal experimentation are too sentimental, and that animal work is essential. However, in a recent survey of U.K. doctors, 88% agreed that animal experiments can be misleading because of the physiological and anatomical differences between species.

Lemon juice kills cats. Parsley kills parrots. Penicillin kills guinea-pigs. Strychnine is harmless to monkeys as is arsenic to sheep. Insulin causes malfunctions in chickens, rabbits and mice. Aspirin causes birth defects in monkeys. Thalidomide is safe in guinea pigs. Opren kills humans but not monkeys.

The use of animals to develop drugs for humans is deeply flawed-even the scientific director of Huntingdon Life Sciences, a large drug and product testing lab (also in Cambridge), says the accuracy of using animals to predict effects in humans is 5-25%!

Cancer is the 2nd biggest killer in the western world. 1 out of 4 people in Britain will die from some form of cancer. Clearly a cure for cancer is not to be found through research using animals - over 100 years of vivisection has failed to provide any breakthrough. The mouse is the usual cancer research animal. Mice however tend to suffer from different types of cancer (sarcomas - cancer of the bone and connective tissue) to people (carcinomas - cancer of lining membranes). Tumours are artificially and suddenly induced in laboratory animals so they are open to attack by the body's own defence mechanisms and do not resemble the gradual development of cancer in normal circumstances.

being will never be representative of the cancerous tumor which grew spontaneously within another human being as a result of his/her diet, lifestyle, environmental causes, and/or genetic predisposition.

"... no matter how many animal tests are done, the first two or three generations of people who use a new drug or medical technique are the real guinea pigs ..." Dr Roy Kupsinel, Vivisection - Science or Sham, 1990.

Another example of the claims that vivisection always bring up in connection with the "advances" made through animal experimentation is insulin. Since the discovery of insulin in 1922, the cases of diabetes have skyrocketed to the point where the disease has become the number three killer in the United States. Insulin is not a cure and is actually responsible for many complications such as blindness and diabetic gangrene which accounts for 50 percent of all amputations performed in the U.S.

\* Rats are 37% effective in identifying what causes cancer in humans. Flipping a coin would be more accurate.

\* One in six patients in hospital are there because the drug they have taken had been passed safe for use on humans after animal tests.

\* Worldwide, at least 33 animals die in labs every second. In the UK, one animal dies every four seconds.

With animal tests anything can be taken off or put onto the market.

Thalidomide, dioxin, organophosphates, Lindane, Opren, the MMR and DPT vaccines, Septrin, Death Cup mushrooms, strychnine...are all "safe" if you choose the right animal, and the right dose.

In a nutshell, one only needs to find the appropriate animal species to obtain the desired answer: black or white, positive or negative. You name it, they will get it.

Money - Vivisection is an insurance policy for the chemical and pharmaceutical industry. When humans are harmed by their products, they have a 'get out clause' - they simply say it was tested on animals and the evidence shows it was safe. They can avoid paying compensation, fines and costs to their victims.

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE HAVE SUFFERED SERIOUS AND PERMANENT ILL HEALTH, MANY HAVE DIED, AS A RESULT OF ANIMAL EXPERIMENTS. The question of choice between your dog or your child is a false proposition put forward by the pro-vivisection lobby to scare people. Your child will not be helped by animal experiments - but by real science methods in medical research. You do not have to choose between your dog or your child the real choice is between science or vivisection.

### WHY ANIMAL EXPERIMENTS DON'T WORK

Animals are anatomically and physiologically different to humans, so obviously animal based research cannot be successfully used to help humans. In fact test results vary greatly species to species. For example: Botulin kills mice but not cats: Aspirin kills cats but not humans: Strychnine kills humans but is safe for guinea-pigs, chickens and monkeys: Chloramphenicol damages bone marrow in humans but not in animals: 5 milligrams of Scopolamine will kill a human but 100 milligrams will not affect a cat or a dog.

### All Living Organisms Are Marvellously Different From Each Other

All animals are different. A mouse does not resemble a human, neither does a rat or a rabbit. Yet these animals amongst others (cats, dogs, primates, fish, birds... the list goes on) are used in experiments which it is claimed will be of benefit to humans. The fact is that all animals (including humans) react differently to different substances, they metabolise substances in different ways...they can tolerate different levels of any given substance...they obtain and need vitamins in different ways...they have different life cycles...they have different digestive and circulatory systems...most importantly, all species naturally suffer from different diseases. For example, humans do not suffer from distemper but dogs do. Mice tend to suffer from different types of cancers to humans.

Most of the animals used in experimental research are quadrupeds. The heart of a four-legged animal is structurally different from that of a human, among other things because it is not meant to pump blood straight up to the brain - thus having to overcome gravity - as it is the case in a two-legged human being.

\* Less than 2% of human illnesses (1.16%) are ever seen in animals. Over 98% never are.

\* At least 50 drugs on the market cause cancer in lab animals. They are allowed because it is admitted the animal tests are not relevant.

\* Heart by-pass surgery was put on hold for years because it didn't work on dogs.

\* If we had relied on rat tests we would still believe that humans don't need vitamin C, that smoking doesn't cause cancer and that alcohol doesn't cause liver damage.

\* It was denied for decades that asbestos caused disease in humans because it didn't in animals.

### an induced cancerous tumor in a human

Approximately 450 scientific methods exist which could replace animal experiments. These methods range from human cell, tissue and organ cultures, sophisticated computers, test tube techniques, epidemiology, educating people on how to stay healthy, and clinical research to name but a few. We would all benefit from an immediate end to vivisection. Animal experiments are bad science, and the money used on vivisection should be spent on funding research into alternative cures for diseases. Animal tests tell us nothing about human beings, they will only tell us what happens to animals in laboratories.

### BEWARE OF THE "ANIMAL RIGHTS" TRAP

The biomedical empire has a vested interest in promoting the slogan "animal rights" because making vivisection a moral, ethical, philosophical, and/or religious issue is the most effective way to shift the public's attention away from its medical and scientific fraudulence. For decades the vivisectionists have been able to disarm the opposition by using the tired line: What will it be, your dog or your baby? (which implies that anyone opposed to animal experimentation is antihuman). We are now painfully aware of the fact that this emotional question tries to hide an indisputable fact: Vivisectionists routinely take the lives of both the dog and the baby. Vivisection as it is presented to the public is not a moral issue. It is a medical and scientific issue, a human health issue.

Phil Ochs' songs are particularly relevant to us today. They should be listened to and sung constantly while the injustices of modern capitalism continue, simply because they are great songs: thoughtful and perceptive, they contain all the qualities that have made folk music so vital throughout the years.

Many of these songs are beautiful, some are lasting, one at least has entered public consciousness as a folk song. I have heard "I Ain't Marchin' Anymore" sung at demonstrations of thousands of people.

A brief look at the subject matter of his earlier songs clearly indicates his preoccupations: Vietnam, Cuba, Santo Domingo, civil rights, militarism, American aggression abroad, nuclear weapons, the need for strong trade unions, automation, unemployment, etc. The list goes on and on. All the evils that arise from the exploitation of one class by another were chronicled by Ochs.

Ochs' songs reflect his social concerns; at first with miners and civil rights and then, as the war grew, he concentrated more and more on anti-war work.

"How can those people feel what its like to be napalmed? How can we get them to understand what America's really doing in Vietnam?" The balmy air of Hollywood in no way detracted from his central understanding of today's reality.

Dylan's remark that Ochs wasn't a songwriter, merely a journalist, was initially quite true. The titles of some of the songs on his third album indicate their direct message - *I'm going to say it now, Ringing of Revolution, Cannons of Christianity and Cops of the World*.

The songs were journalistic in nature, sketching out a political scenario and then offering criticism, and their impact was considerable.

In a piece titled 'The Need For Topical Music', he told Broadside's readers: "Every newspaper headline is a potential song, and it is the role of an effective songwriter to pick out the material that has the interest, significance and sometimes humor adaptable to music."

Racism is also tackled squarely in a number of songs and in several areas: in the unions, in Government and in the American Deep South. Ochs had an unerring eye for hypocrisy and these songs go straight to the heart of sanctimonious cant.

"Here's To The State Of Mississippi," with a chorus line that dictated "find yourself another country to be part of," earned Ochs few friends in that corner of the world. In fact, threats to his life proliferated.

at the height of the Watergate fiasco he put out a single on A&M, a remake of his old Mississippi diatribe, retitled "Here's To The State Of Richard Nixon."

The establishment knew what a danger Ochs' songs represented to them, and for this reason his records rarely received any airplay and he was blacklisted by the TV networks.



PHIL  
OCHS  
1940 - 1976



continues to give hope to the vanquished and humility to the mighty, still representing both the highest artistic standards and the deepest human scars. Let it be said Phil Ochs was his generation's Joe Strummer, its Joe Hill and its Michael Moore all combined in one neat if not tidy package, a package designed not to quit, compromise or cop out.

In a world where most of us choose to take the path of least resistance Phil Ochs walked it like he talked it. He, his belief in a better world, his heartfelt music, the FBI's bulging file on him and his life story are an inspiration to this day. If this is your first introduction to Phil Ochs please take care for becoming a Phil Ochs fan isn't really about buying the album, seeing the tour and putting the poster on your wall. It's about life, it's about how you see yourself in a world where the vanquished seek hope and the mighty could use some humility. Phil Ochs saw this world and sang about it eloquently. If only he were here today.

"In such an ugly time," wrote Phil in an explanatory sleeve note, "the only true protest is beauty..."

His fourth album *Pleasures of the Harbour* used rich orchestrations in place of Ochs' solo guitar, but his songs were now subversive in the truest sense of the word. The album received more airplay and sold more than anything he'd ever released. But wrapped up within the strings and the lush arrangements, the familiar venom and outrage were still there.

But the big break didn't quite come. Ochs gave too many free concerts to achieve the type of distance from his audience that the music business seems to demand from its stars. **THE LEVELLER 1-4-82**

Phil probably played more benefit gigs than paying ones. If there was an anti-war rally in Washington, Phil would be there on the great lawn in front of the White House. A benefit for Tim Leary? Phil was right there, up on stage with Allen Ginsberg and the Yippies.

He decided to travel more; in 1971 he went to Chile to see at first hand the excitement of Allende's triumph - he became friends with Victor Jara, who had known of his songs. It was as if the setbacks of the 1970s affected Ochs more than anyone: certainly Jara's murder destroyed a large part of Phil Ochs... after all his most famous song was *There but for Fortune*...

Then, during a visit to Africa in '73 he was robbed, assaulted and almost strangled, as a result of which his vocal cords were damaged and he was never able to sing as well as in healthier times.

When political urgencies arose, however, Ochs was still capable of pulling off an organisational coup or two.

In his day, he was a fearless protagonist of worthy causes. Hopefully, that's how he'll be remembered.

**MELODY MAKER 17-4-76**

He was, until his suicide in 1976, the impassioned voice of America; an agitator whose songs about Vietnam, civil rights and ordinary working people were the direct descendants of folk music's most radical traditions.

**NEW INTERNATIONALIST SEPT '94**

Today he lives through his music as it continues to give hope to the vanquished and humility to the mighty, still representing both the highest artistic standards and the deepest human scars. Let it be said Phil Ochs was his generation's Joe Strummer, its Joe Hill and its Michael Moore all combined in one neat if not tidy package, a package designed not to quit, compromise or cop out.



# 1 in 4 women are battered

Shock figures show domestic violence attacks against women every six seconds in Britain

THE scale of domestic violence is "staggering" with one in four women subjected to abuse, a government minister said today. Women's minister Barbara Roche said the statistics, which showed that every three days a woman was killed in the UK as a result of domestic violence, never failed to shock her.

TEN women are raped, stabbed or beaten by their partners every minute, a shocking report revealed yesterday.

More than 600 incidents of domestic violence occur every hour, of which only a third are officially reported, new figures compiled by

police forces across Britain show. In more than half of the assaults, children are thought to witness their mother being kicked, cut or knocked unconscious.

The statistics shatter the illusion of domestic bliss in many British households.

"We now know that a person rings the police for help because of domestic violence every minute.

"Using the survey to gauge the truer proportion of it, we could say that an incident occurs in the UK every six to 20 seconds."

**'We always get the blame.'**

Woman on a train delayed by a 'cow' on the line. It turned out to be a bullock

For almost 10 years Pauline watched helplessly as her middle daughter Lesley endured horrific injuries and belittling emotional abuse from her partner.

Despite all the urgings and support of her parents, sisters and brother, mum of four Lesley never felt able to leave wife batterer Tony Jones.

Her decision was to prove fatal.

For ultimately, goaded beyond endurance and in an act of self-defence Lesley stabbed Tony through the heart with a kitchen knife and was charged with murder.

She was sentenced to three years' imprisonment on the reduced charge of manslaughter and spent most of the 18 months she served on 23-hour-a-day lock-up, with no access to counselling or support.

Wracked by guilt over the killing and distressed because she had lost her children, Lesley fell into a black spiral of depression and self-blame.

And, on November 16 last year, she was found hanging from an electric cord in the shower of the run-down flat in Kensington which was her final home.

At an inquest earlier this week, Liverpool coroner Andre Rebello recorded an open verdict and said the death of Lesley, 34, was an indictment on the whole of society.

"It is the job of society to look after victims. Quite clearly society failed her."

"First of all those who make the laws should take a hard look at what they are doing sending someone like Lesley to prison in the first place - particularly when the judge himself admitted that it was manslaughter under severe provocation.

"There were so many times when Lesley was injured and called the police in - but then decided to retract her statement because she was frightened.

"Another aspect is that Lesley was offered no form of counselling or emotional support even in prison or after her release.

For help about domestic violence, contact Women's Aid on 0151 727 1355 (24 hours).

In England and Wales:  
● 50% of all female murders are committed by their current or former partner.  
● One in four of all women are affected by domestic violence at some point in their lives and one in four women will experience rape.  
● 43% of all assaults on women are domestic.

OUT of 212 recorded rapes on Merseyside in 2000, there were only 68 people charged and nine convicted.

The Home Office statistics today came as a blow to support groups who said a bleak picture is being painted for victims.

They suggested that police and courts should re-examine their treatment of sex attack cases.

In Cheshire, there were 83 recorded rapes, 33 people were proceeded against, and 13 convicted. In Lancashire, there were 172 recorded rapes, 73 people were charged and 15 convicted.

"Low conviction rates send a very negative message to women who have suffered a rape or sexual attack.

ECHO 15.1.02

Many women realise that leaving a violent husband or partner does not just mean a new life - it can also mean a new life with no house, no belongings and, in some cases, no children.

Val Parker, acting manager of Liverpool-based Women's Aid, one of just two refuges for women who have been subjected to domestic violence and abuse, says: "A great many women suffer a sense of loss of a partner and women who have had to flee a situation often find many of their belongings have gone.

Women can be accused of being bad mothers and are asked why they stayed in the situation."

Val believes there should be more in place to help women make the difficult decision to leave a violent situation.

She says: "If women feel they need something they should be able to link into a service that provides it, but it is all about getting the money to do it. It all depends on what the government prioritises on."

One of the many problems that face women who are being abused is where to go if they leave the family home.

And as there are currently only 26 places for women and their children in two women's hostels on Merseyside, they do not have a great deal of choice.

Often, it is not just a question of physical assaults on a woman's body but also of prolonged mental bullying which undermines their confidence and chains them in a web of fear.

Merseyside Police officers cannot solve the problem just by arresting violent husbands and fathers.

Much wider programmes, teaching the community to read the early-warning signs and breeding a culture where everyone is morally obliged to condemn violence will help.

"For years domestic violence was deemed to be a private affair.

"If officers were called to a house following an incident, if the women didn't want to press charges advice would be given but no further action would be taken.

"But it was quite likely the woman would then receive a further beating for screaming too loud and attracting the police.

"But in 1999 we brought out a new policy to deal with domestic violence.

"Now if officers find evidence of violence, for example a wrecked room, furniture strewn around the place, we can take action against the man without the woman pressing charges.

"When we find evidence an arrest is made.

"We can successfully prosecute with or without the victim."

DC Johnson believes police intervention can help break the cycle of domestic violence.

"Taking police action can stop the cycle because we can bring in other agencies: housing, domestic violence groups."

Last year on Merseyside there were almost 18,000 incidents of domestic violence.  
The majority of victims - 94% - are female  
Most women will suffer on average between 35-37 attacks before they ask for help.  
26 women have been killed on Merseyside since 1997 - it is estimated that half of these were due to domestic violence.  
1,580 women and children on Merseyside had to flee to refuges for safety last year.  
Freedom Programme: 0151-630 0651.  
Domestic Violence Helpline: 0800 028 3398.

THOUSANDS of people on Merseyside become victims of domestic violence every year.

Figures for the year 2000 reveal there were almost 18,000 local incidents.

And, given that it usually takes between 35-37 attacks before a victim can bring themselves to report their attacker, that figure could be a frighteningly poor reflection of the true level of violence.

In the same year more than 1,580 women and children across the county fled to refuges.

Many involve abuse between partners, but campaigners are increasingly worried about violence between parents and grown-up children.

Tina says that, of the calls the project's helpline received last year, around 5% were from women trying to escape violent fathers.

"As ever with domestic violence there's a huge problem with under-reporting. We would urge anyone, whatever their age, to report it and get help immediately."

"There are a lot of people living in abusive relationships who keep it to themselves because they think they are the only ones who are suffering.

"But we know this isn't the case - and they don't have to put up with it."

## CALL FOR HELP

North Liverpool Domestic Violence Unit: 0151-777 4587.

South Liverpool: 0151-777 5085.

Wirral: 0151-777 2689.

FOR the past three years the Freedom Programme has been at the forefront of tackling domestic violence.

"If women are wise to potential abusers eventually violent men won't have anyone to abuse. It's about changing women's attitudes to violent men."

The programme has proved so successful Knowsley Domestic Violence Unit and Salford NHS have bought it.

Pat Craven said: "Eventually we would like schools and colleges to adopt the programme so we can educate girls early to spot and steer clear of potential abusers."

WOMEN victims of rape or sexual abuse should be warned that their terrible experiences may be used against them in our justice system - even following something as unrelated as a car accident.

The Eye has been told of two cases where car crash victims, suing for damages in the civil courts, have faced lengthy and detailed cross-examination about assault and abuse they had suffered years earlier.

In both cases it seems the defendant insurance companies had learnt about the women's dreadful sexual history by trawling through their medical notes. In one case, a woman was cross-examined about sexual abuse she had suffered as a child - the speculative suggestion being that she had exaggerated the abuse and was thus capable of exaggerating her crash injuries.

In the second case the woman crash victim, suing for whiplash injuries, was cross-examined for two mornings about a rape which had taken place 17 years earlier. Like many rape victims she had not gone to the police but had told her doctor. The rape was again used as a method of determining if the victim was a truthful and creditable witness - even though without the evidence of a criminal trial it could not possibly reach any conclusions about the rape.

Zoora Shah is an illiterate woman from Mirpuri in Pakistani Kashmir, who was brought to Bradford in the early '70's as a teenage bride for an arranged marriage.

She was beaten by her husband and treated like a servant by his family. She had a number of abortions to avoid having girls and lost one baby because of her husband's violence. He threw her out in 1980 when she was pregnant with their third child because he married another woman. She was homeless and destitute, with two young children

Azam was a married rich scam business man and property owner, who bought a house for Zoora in Bradford in his name because Zoora was unable to get a mortgage. She paid the mortgage repayments with benefits and money from her factory wages. But Azam wanted more than the mortgage paying off, he demanded sexual favours whenever he visited, which was sometimes three times a day

Azam was eventually arrested and sent down for dealing, but even inside he continued to control Zoora's life. He prostituted her from prison, so she had men from the community knocking on her door demanding sex.

She contemplated suicide and took a number of over-doses of anti-depressants and pain killers, but never saw it through because of her kids. She bought arsenic from Pakistan and fed it to him in small doses as people told her it would reduce his sex drive. His impotence made him aggressive and he beat her badly. By this time the bastard had started eyeing up her daughters

One day in 1992 she gave Azam so much arsenic that it killed him.

Zoora pleaded not guilty in court, and declined to give evidence, ashamed of her sexual history and scared that she'd be branded a whore by the community, ruining her children's prospects of marriage. She was convicted in Leeds Crown Court and given a 20 year tariff for convictions including murder, attempted murder and solicitation to murder.

TAKING LIBERTY (MAY '98)

A massive campaign has been re-launched to free a Bradford woman jailed for life for murdering her abusive partner.

Mother-of-three Zoora Shah, 47, has been told she must serve at least 20 years for killing Mohammed Azam.

Shah claims she was sexually, physically and financially abused by Azam during their 12-year relationship. A convicted drug dealer, Azam tried to coerce Shah to courier heroin back from Pakistan. When he made sexual advances towards her two daughters, Shah laced his food with arsenic.

Shah did not give evidence at her trial in 1993 for fear of bringing shame on her family by revealing the abuse. And when the case went to the Court of Appeal in April this year, her testimony was described as "not capable of belief" and the appeal was rejected.

The campaigners' case is also being backed by the jury foreman from Shah's original trial, who admitted that if the evidence of abuse had been presented in court, a different verdict might have been reached.

"Asian women have a difficult time overcoming cultural hurdles to speak out against abuse. The appeal court ignored this."

BIG ISSUE NOV '98

The bitter Congo war is almost over but the militias who fought in it still attack women with impunity

World leaders now accept that what happened was genocide, and that they merely watched. In the first week, after Rwandan government soldiers murdered 10 Belgian peacekeepers, the United Nations left, leaving the Tutsis to their fate. For 100 days, the killers did their work unfettered. At the end, maybe 800,000 were dead.

The global organisation to commemorate the tenth anniversary inevitably uses the slogan, 'Never Again'. But people are dying still. The Interhamwe often spared women from immediate killing, but kept them to rape. Militiamen hid women from their comrades in the cramped space between the ceiling and roof of a house, so they were called 'women of the ceiling'. Many were gang-raped several times a day for weeks.

They emerged traumatised and too ashamed to say what happened. Now the genocide has caught up with them, as they die a slow, agonising death from Aids.

OBSERVER 28.3.04

The serial murders and disappearances of young women and girls in the bleak Mexican border town of Ciudad Juárez were transformed this weekend from a forgotten tragedy into an international symbol.

There have been about 100 of these murders of women here since 1993, when the often mutilated bodies first began appearing in the wastelands of the sprawling city of assembly-for-export factories, narco-mansions and shantytowns across the Rio Bravo from El Paso, Texas.

The victims have been young, pretty, slim, dark and above all poor, vulnerable and easily ignored by the state authorities responsible for murder investigations.

Many of them disappeared on their way to or from school or factory jobs, and were raped and tortured before they were killed and dumped.

Less systematic but often equally brutal killings of other women, frequently the result of extreme domestic violence, have increased the number of victims in the past 10 years to more than 300. The dozens of disappearances suggest that even more have died.

The lack of precise numbers is one factor which has left most in Juárez assuming that the state police are at best totally inept and at worst directly involved in the killings.

It is clear, he says, that an organised and rich mafia is behind the murders, and in Juárez that points to drug traffickers, politicians and businessmen.

GUARDIAN 16.2.04

By the middle of last year 2.5 million people were estimated to have died because of the war in eastern Congo; thousands are dying there still. But there is no better measure of the horror of the conflict than the daily expectation of rape. "We're talking about thousands of women raped every day, by everybody," says Claude Jibidar, the UN humanitarian coordinator in eastern Congo. "For me this is now the most horrific aspect of the war."

Christine, who is 25, could have mistaken her attacker's identity: Congolese, Rwandan and Burundian armies and rebel armies have all tramped through Kabondozi, close by Lake Tanganyika, in the past four years. "Men in uniform come all the time," she said, "and when they catch you, they rape you."

In the town of Shabunda last year up to 2,400 women were held hostage by a Rwandan interhamwe militia and repeatedly raped. In Kanyola district, a scattering of villages near Lake Kivu, 28 women were raped in public in February alone, a local human rights group says.

Every week or so, from a high spine of hills west of Kanyola, the interhamwe or the local Mayi-Mayi militia emerge every week or so. "They raped me on my way to the market, it was nothing unusual," says Claudine, 32, ushering her four children away. Rejected by her husband and in pain ever since, Claudine says that were it not for her children she would prefer to die.

Grandmother Eleanor was so ignorant - no, innocent is not the right word - that she thought babies burst out of their mothers' stomachs right up until she was eight months pregnant with their first child, when she finally dared to ask her mother-in-law the truth.

Because she had promised to love, honour and obey for better or for worse, she tolerated with fortitude a marriage of the deepest misery for 37 years. "It was my duty," she says simply. She expressed her true feelings only after he died, when she tore his face off all the family photographs.

As for Pat, the war child, it

was in her time that the world changed totally. When she married she was a conventional girl.

Her husband assumed total command of her, in a way that seems unthinkable now. When they returned from honeymoon she wanted to visit her mother, but he forbade her: "You married me so this is your home and here you will stay."

But then everything changed. Pat had seen her mother's helpless financial dependence, her inability to escape a dreadful husband. So she made sure she always had her own money and started her own hair-dressing salon

Now her daughter Alison is a single mum, and happy about it, though her mother worries.

So there we have the story of radical social change. The grandmother could never escape and she didn't know anyone who was divorced. There was no social security and nowhere to take her children, so she was as locked into her miserable marriage as a wife in a harem.

When people wring their hands at the current divorce rate, they imagine it is the fault of frivolous, foolish, selfish people and they long for a return to the old days of duty and obligation. How wrong they are. Divorce has been the great liberator of our times. It may cause its own kind of havoc but people rarely remember to weigh up the wasted unhappy lives of people like Eleanor and her husband. We should celebrate the new freedoms we have now and be happier.

RADIO TIMES 17.7.99

During the Rwandan genocide - which spilled over into Congo, sparking the war - Tutsi women were raped systematically to spread terror and Aids. But in eastern Congo rape is the product of the general anarchy ravaging the country, HJ says. "In our tradition a rapist becomes an outcast," says Raphael Wakege of HJ. "Now there is no law, no sanction, and the occurrence is every day. Every group is guilty, and each accuses the other."

In a grimy hospital in Bukavu, the provincial capital, there is another Francine, this one just 14. Two years ago three Mayi-Mayi fighters killed her father and raped her, after accusing them of growing food for the RCD. Six months later an RCD fighter raped her in the forest after accusing her of supplying the Mayi-Mayi.

Last month peace talks between the RCD and the government in Kinshasa failed, ending a frail hope of law returning to eastern Congo. Meanwhile, as the violence continues - displacing communities, dividing families, degrading the culture - HJ says rape by civilians is beginning to rise as well.

"Congo has become infected by violence," says Mr Wakege. "When the war ends, we will not only need our schools, houses and roads rebuilding; we will also need our consciences healing."

GUARDIAN 18.5.02



## I Do Not Wish (Bill/Dave/Al/Andy)

from M.D.C.'s 1986 LP  
'SMOKE SIGNALS'

I do not wish to wipe the dusty haze from the  
plexiglass of morning or the lusty 9 hour old  
sex stench from my passion-soiled skin

I do not wish to remember the repression in  
the guise of redemption or gain eternal peace  
that costs the sacrifice of an earthly paradise

I do not wish to let go of either of my lovers'  
hands or deny any loving touch

I do not wish to live in a fashion chic cliché or  
a sea of self-righteous rhetoric that translate  
into zero action

I do not wish to cash my freedom in for a five  
dollar twenty-five cents an hour or live  
the sunlit hours in the thought hold of a time clock

I do wish to live out my days  
and all of my desires,  
I do want to share  
with my friends my passion, lust and fires  
I do want to lose my inhibitions and fears  
I do wish to be at one  
and keep my loved ones near

I do want a tolerant world  
with no guilt and shame  
I do wish to remember the path  
on which I came  
I do want a happier place  
where a stranger is a friend  
I do wish for peace of mind  
a blissful righteous blend

I do not want to drive a fast car,  
fly a fast plane  
or drop from a fast death from legal drugs,  
bullets or bombs

I do not wish to encase my life in concrete and  
forget the whispering wind,  
The whistling water, the flowering tree and  
setting sun

I do not wish to deny the playful pleasure,  
boundless joy or love-jolted full tilt boogie of imaginative insurrection,

I do not wish to eat the burgers, lick the lard,  
or suck up the death drenched diet served up  
with special sauce on a sesame seed bun  
harvested from the land of destroyed rain forest.

I do not wish any of these things,

I do want to create a new world from the shell of the old

## Car Companies Put Style before Pedestrian Safety

Car companies are failing to add safety  
features that would protect pedestrians  
because they are more concerned with  
looks than saving lives, Britain's chief  
car safety scientist has claimed.

In recent tests 5 cars got the highest  
score of five stars for occupant safety.  
But three of the cars - the Toyota  
Avenis, Peugeot 807 and BMW X5 -  
got only one star for pedestrian  
protection. The other two - the Honda  
Accord and the Peugeot 307CC - got  
two stars.

Adrian Hobbs, the chief vehicle  
safety scientist at the Transport  
Research Laboratory, said that  
pedestrians hit by a car travelling at  
25mph were unlikely to suffer lasting  
injuries if the car had 4 stars for  
pedestrian safety. But those hit by a  
car with only one star would almost  
certainly be killed or seriously injured.  
Professor Hobbs, who helped devise the  
crash tests, said that car companies  
were well aware of the design changes  
that would protect pedestrians. But he  
added, "the manufacturers don't want  
any constraints that may affect  
styling." Car manufacturers have  
successfully lobbied against the early  
introduction of a series of compulsory  
tests for pedestrian safety.

The cost to the economy of  
lost skills and disruption on  
the roads has been estimated  
at more than £17 billion.

This is what to fear:  
you stand a one in 200  
chance of dying horribly and  
brutally on the roads. (It says  
so in bold type on the back of  
the Highway Code.)

Now compare that to the  
mere 800 who have died of  
Sars worldwide, causing  
global panic and economic  
calamity. the six main  
polls taken on this subject,  
show consistently that  
three-quarters of the public  
support speed cameras.

number of officers policing the  
roads had fallen from almost  
9,000 to 6,500 in a decade,  
road deaths, which had been  
falling for years, were now  
threatening to rise.

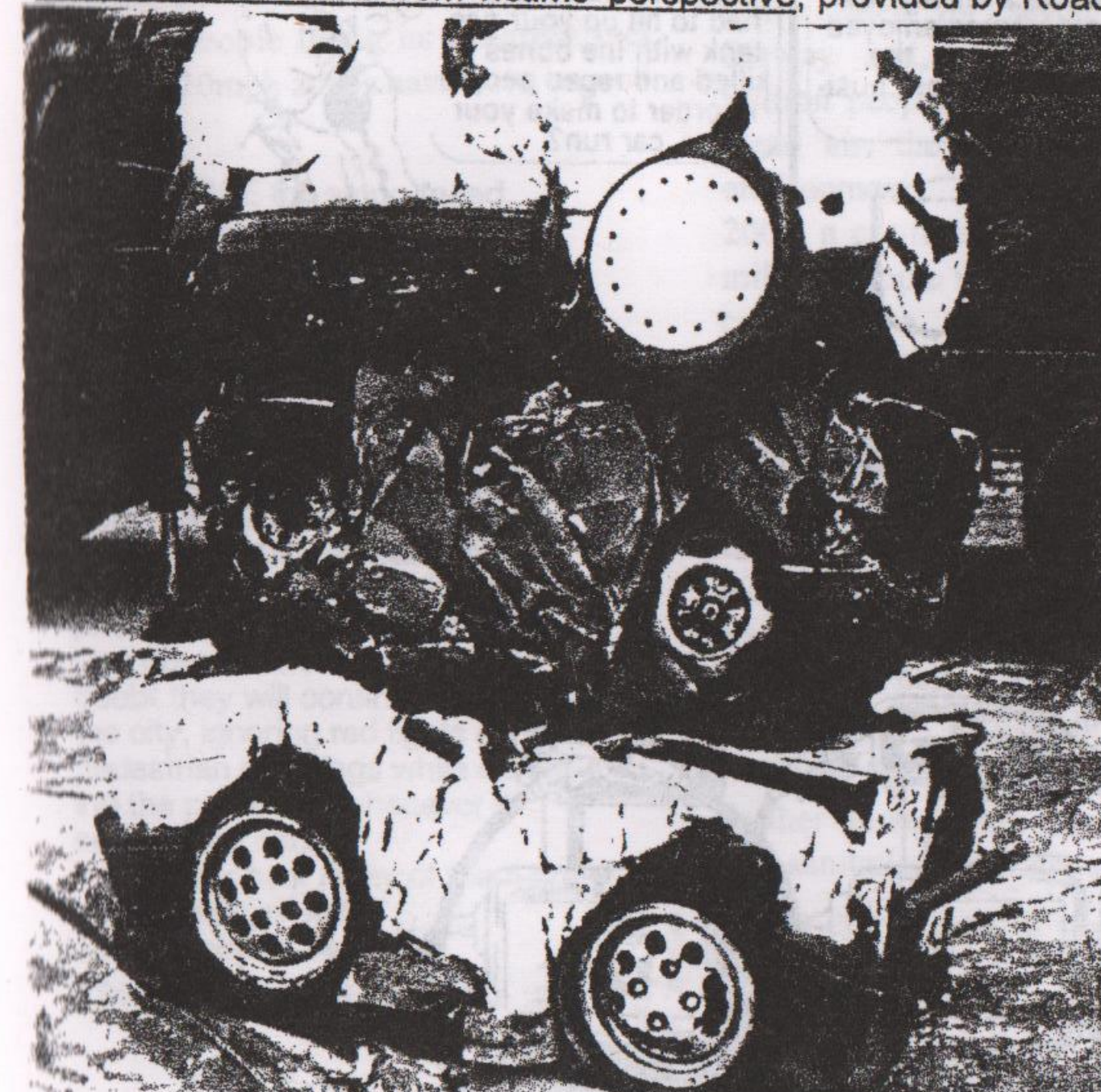
critics claim vi-  
sible police patrols are dwindle-  
ing, breath tests are down  
and drink-driving is rising.

The Police Federation and  
motoring and safety groups  
say cameras detect only  
speeding, missing more dan-  
gerous drivers and people  
without licences or insurance.

Some forces have virtually  
abolished separate traffic  
divisions. RoadPeace claims  
investigation forms are  
being posted to accident vic-  
tims in their hospital beds  
because there are too few  
officers to carry out personal  
interviews.

- road victims were excluded to date from the Victims' Charter
- road victims are excluded in the draft Code for Victim Services dated October 2003
- the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority does NOT compensate road victims

\* statutory funding has been refused to date for the only national helpline for road  
victims and literature from victims' perspective, provided by RoadPeace since 1992.

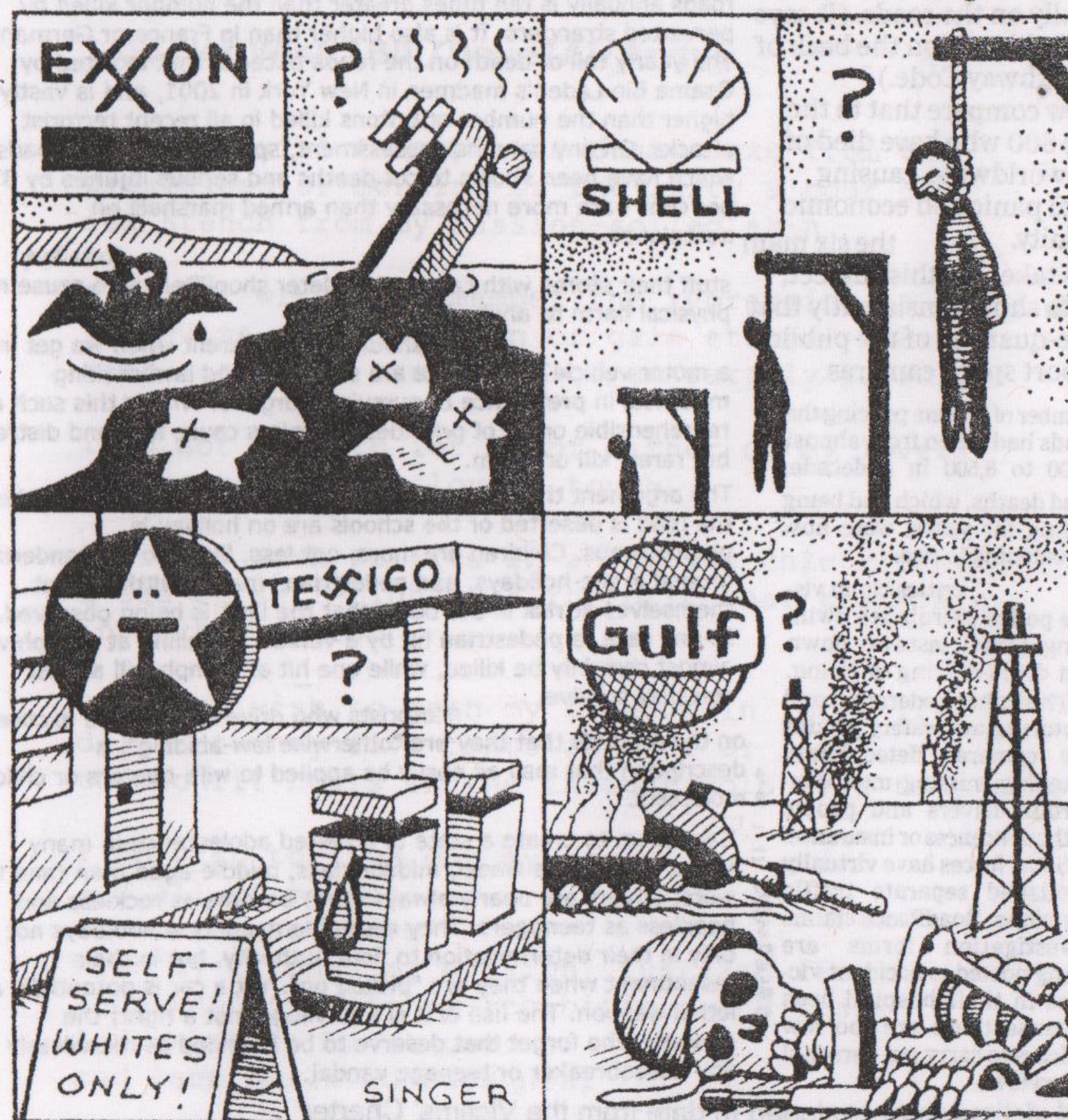


...the first prior-  
ity of a police officer is to pre-  
serve life and limb and there's  
no greater preservation of life  
than dealing with road traffic  
law and safety," said Sergeant  
Mick Barker, who works for  
the Police Federation.

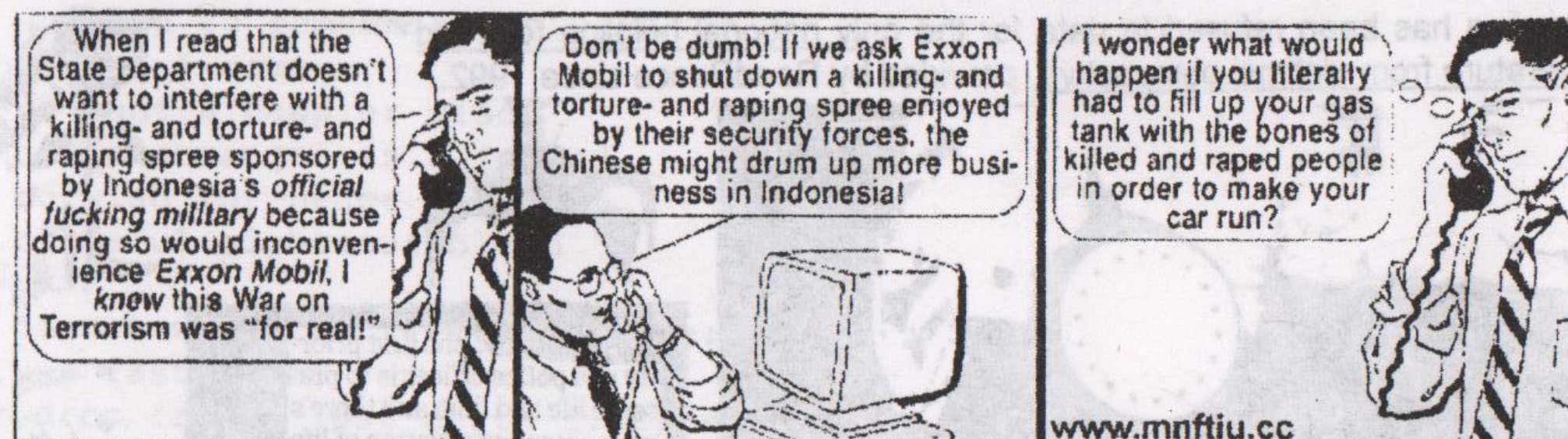
# "THE BEST SMALL CAR IN THE WORLD."



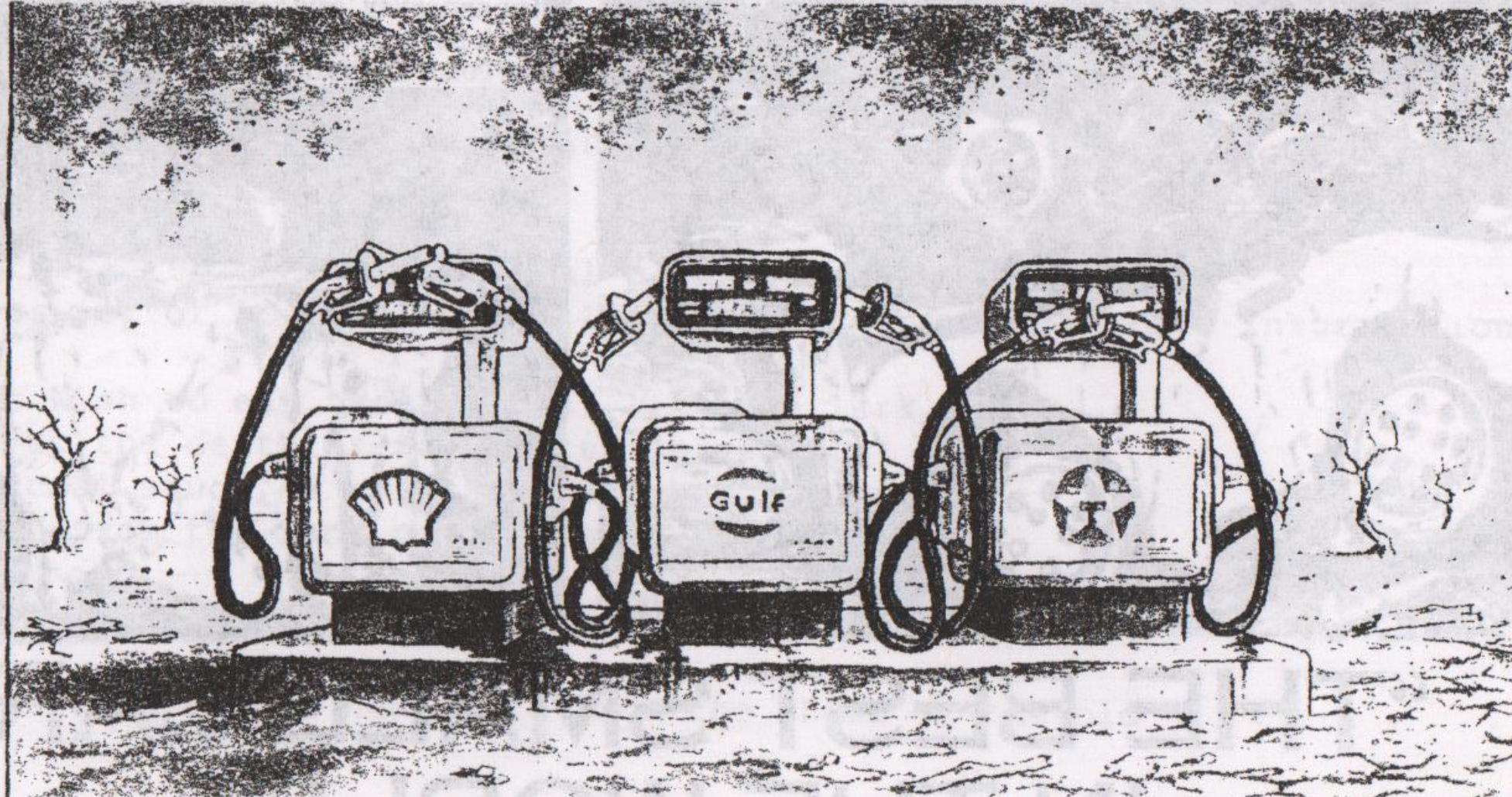
## Q: WHERE CAN A SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS PERSON BUY GAS?



A: NOWHERE. TIME TO STOP DRIVING!



POLYP  
big Bad World



## THE CAR THAT RUNS ON HUMAN URINE

An engineering genius who worked for one of the giant auto-makers in Detroit says he's invented the answer to the energy crisis: a car that runs on human urine.

But Morris Wilhelm, 57, says the government and big business are trying to hush up his plans to produce cars fuelled by human waste.

"I get threatening letters and phone calls every day from the big oil companies and auto manufacturers," complains Morris.

Morris began working on his "pee-mobile" auto, which he calls The Wilhelm, back in the late '70s when the energy crisis first hit America. He was fired from his high-salaried auto engineering job in 1983 by superiors who branded him a "lunatic" for his revolutionary ideas.

"It's really a very simple idea, based on the principles of nature," he says.

"It's the way the world works. The waste of one organism is the fuel of another. Growing grass feeds on steer manure. We breathe the oxygen that plants give off; they breathe the carbon dioxide we give off. Why is it so far-fetched that a machine could run on what the human body gives off?"

Morris' energy-saving engine feeds on the insoluble nitrogenous acid, salts, pigments and ammonia fumes in human urine.

"The beauty of this machine is its absolute efficiency," he boasts. "Most people stop at a service station to fill their tanks and relieve themselves. Now this can be done anywhere and in one single time-saving action."

'NEW SCIENCE'

## SPEED REDUCTION IN HULL

At the heart of Hull's policies has been the introduction of 20mph speed limits across the city's mixture of Victorian terraces and 1960s council housing estates. At present 26% of the city's roads are 20mph. The council aims to make it 60% - thereby covering all residential areas - by 2010.

The reduction in casualties has been dramatic. Between putting in the first 20mph scheme in 1994 and 2001 Hull has seen an overall 14.3% decrease in all road casualties, against a 1.5% increase in the rest of the Yorkshire and Humberside area. Pedestrian casualties have decreased by 36.3% compared with a 16.8% reduction for Great Britain as a whole. Child pedestrian casualties are down by 38.5% compared to a fall of 17.2% in the rest of the country.

The decreases have been even more dramatic in the 20mph zones themselves. Road casualties are down by 56%; numbers killed or seriously injured by 90%; pedestrian casualties by 64%; and child pedestrian casualties by 74%.

Hull's efforts are not just relevant to the Government's road safety agenda. The Social Exclusion Unit in its recent report on transport highlighted the link between deprivation and road casualties.

Hull is the 13th most deprived council area in England. Follow-up surveys have shown that 77% of people living in the areas feel that the 20mph zones have been a good idea.

I HOPE the smug-faced, self-satisfied cyclists sitting on their bikes (ECHO, September 22) realise that the car free roads they so cherish have been paid for a million times over, by car users who pump endless amounts of money into the government through road tax and petrol duties.

Interesting to see that they are performing true to style in your photograph by cycling the wrong way down a one way street. No doubt they will continue through the city, ignoring red lights and pedestrian crossings while mounting the pavement whenever it serves their cause.

I wonder how many of them are vegetarians as well?

David Kendall, Prescott  
(THE VOICE OF REASON!)

## CARS VS. THE POOR

More and more research finds that the problems of the world's poor are multiplied by the car. The deaths and injuries take place mainly in developing countries and mainly to pedestrians, cyclists, bus users and children. The poor suffer disproportionately; they experience the worst air pollution and are deprived of education, health, water and sanitation programmes because the needs of the car now soak up so much national income.

In short, the car has become an instrument of oppression in developing countries as national budgets are hijacked to cope with the demands of car users.

In Bogota, Columbia, Enrique Penalosa, the mayor from 1998-2001, held a referendum and reallocated transport budgets to improve the quality of life for the poorest. The results were staggering. The city embarked on an intensive programme of building cycling and pedestrian-only routes, including a car-free route, 17 km long, connecting some of the poorest parts of the city with the facilities they need to access, including jobs.

Penalosa introduced a car number-plate system that required 40% of the cars to be off the roads during peak hours on two days a week, and this produced a reduction in pollution. More than 80 miles of main roads are now closed for seven hours every Sunday and, each week, up to 2 million people come out to enjoy the clean air, the freedom and the safe environment. On one weekend in 2002, a car-free day was set up and 7 million people went to work without a car. In a subsequent poll, 82% supported the concept.

Now the buses carry more than half a million people every day, are reliable and affordable, and give the poorest in Bogota as much accessibility to jobs and facilities as the rich have. The bus system also covers its cost and makes a profit while every metro in the world swallows up huge subsidies, which are further losses from health, education and sanitation programmes.

Note of defiance  
I recently parked near our city centre, in the busiest car park in the area, and what I thought was one of the safest. A few hours later, however, I returned to find the rear end of my car smashed in, and a note on the windscreen. It read: I apologise for backing into your car. There are a lot of people who saw the accident, and they are watching me. They think I'm writing down my name, address and insurance details, so you can contact me about the accident. But they are all wrong. Steven Edwards, Prescott, Merseyside

## Road Deaths Plummet in France

This year the number of dead on French roads is expected to be about 5,000. A year ago, it was nearer to 7,000, a number hailed as a revolution after peak years in the Seventies when deaths approached 14,000.

Fear of heavy punishment appears to be at the root of a profound change. Motorists can lose their 12 point driving licence by refusing to use a seat belt (three points), failing to keep a safe distance from the car in front (three points) or ignoring a police warning to stop (six points).

Fatal crashes have been cut by a third in the first five months of 2003. During the traditionally murderous Easter weekend, the toll dropped by half.

"We've been told to show no mercy," a police motorcyclist said, waiting in ambush south of Paris. "That's what the President wants."

## It's the rich who kill the poor - worldwide

"The burden of road traffic injuries", the World Health Organisation (WHO) argues, "falls disproportionately on people in low and middle income countries". In 2000 90% of road deaths occurred in these countries.

The picture painted by the WHO is bleakest for the poorest people in poor countries. They are the people without cars. By necessity, they move around more than anybody else on foot and by bicycle. They are therefore the people most exposed to the danger on the roads....largely caused by their richer neighbours driving cars.

The WHO points to a further inequity: it's these poorest groups which "have less access to medical services, leading to disparities in chances of recovery or survival."

● "You don't think of a Morphy Richards hair-drier as a dangerous weapon," said a spokesman for the Ilkeston police, "but the way Howard Tyler used it, it could have caused serious injury."

31 year-old Tyler, unemployed, had earlier received his sixth official warning for impersonating a traffic policeman. "He was angry with motorists driving at eighty past his house," the spokesman explained, "so he started dressing up in a dark suit and peaked cap, and stood on the pavement with his wife's hair dryer, pointing it at approaching cars. Drivers naturally thought it was a radar gun and slammed on their brakes. We had skid marks a hundred yards long up the road."

Speaking outside his house, Tyler condemned police conduct. "If a man isn't free to use his own domestic appliances in the open air, then I call it fascism."



Governments count the numbers coming in. But who counts the numbers that do not make it?

Research by the Institute of Race Relations has found that, in the last 18 months, at least 742 lives have been lost on Europe's militarised borders. The actual number of deaths is certainly much higher, as only officially verified deaths have been counted in this figure. In spite of the vast human tragedy taking place on Europe's periphery, the total number of people dying is not known, as no EU body takes responsibility for monitoring these deaths.

The deaths have taken place by air, sea and land. There are those who have frozen in the wheel-bays of aeroplanes. There are those who have drowned as their rickety, overcrowded vessels attempted to escape detection. And there are those who have trekked across perilous land routes, falling victim to landmines or suffocated in the back of sealed containers.

The majority of those who have died are Africans, but also included in the grim tally are Iraqis, Kurds, Afghans, Albanians and South Asians.

These deaths barely register on Europe's conscience. Instead, the problem is thought of in criminological terms, focusing on the links with organised crime, rather than the rights of refugees. Those who die are dismissed as 'illegal immigrants', part of the 'invading army' which newspapers eagerly warn us against.

But policies of deterrence, which assume that tougher penalties and tighter border controls can reduce the movement of people, do not work. Instead, such policies effectively create a market for the services of traffickers and smugglers, which are now essential for refugees who want to enter the EU.

The result is that, every time the authorities close off one route of entry, the traffickers open a new one elsewhere - one which is more circuitous and hazardous than before. EU policy is thus funnelling people to their deaths.

29.7.03

The Spanish government yesterday held out the promise of amnesty to illegal immigrants, saying it would offer full legal recognition to many already in the country and stop turning back boats before they reached its shores.

The move was welcomed by some as an attempt to end the exploitation of immigrant workers and reduce the number of people who drown trying to enter Spain.

But it was attacked by the opposition, who said it was foolhardy to step out of line with the rest of Europe.

Consuelo Rumi, the immigration minister, said foreigners with working contracts would be offered work permits and residency papers as part of the new immigration plan to be launched in September.

Ms Rumi said the aim of the plan was two-fold: "We want to facilitate the social integration of of foreigners and uncover the hidden economy that feeds off them."

Italian approach has proved controversial.

Its navy has tried to stop boats from landing and forced them out of Italian waters. In 2002, 65 immigrants died when their boat capsized while being towed by an Italian navy vessel.

By contrast, the Spanish defence minister, José Bono, said at the weekend that the navy would no longer intercept immigrant boats in Spanish waters unless they needed immediate help. The decision is a recognition of the increasing dangers faced by would-be immigrants.

GUARDIAN 23.8.04

## Kilroy gap filled

BBC1 viewing figures went up when Kilroy was taken off air when it was replaced by an extended Breakfast news bulletin for its first half hour, followed by a repeat of Garden Invaders.



"On 13 July 2001, photographer Javier Bauluz shot the image, on a beach in Tarifa, of a couple of beachgoers - on the left - sitting under an umbrella and, somewhat further - to the right -, the dead body of a drowned immigrant man. The author entitled the photograph 'The Indifference of the West'."

The large majority of sub-Saharan and Moroccan citizens who apply for entry visas to Europe have their applications denied. With a visa, they would cross the Strait in a ferry, which would result in the problem of the corpses disappearing. As the law precludes this possibility, the citizens, who are pushed to migrate by the economic conditions in their country, and are aware of economic circumstances in Europe, where there is wealth, and consequently employment, see themselves obliged to make contact with groups who own other means of transport - dinghies or zodiacs - with the aggravating circumstances that it is more expensive and dangerous for their own lives.

On 2 November 1989, eighteen dead bodies appeared on Los Lances beach in Tarifa. Since then, until 2 January 2003 when seven drowned persons appeared, the number of deaths has been impossible to count. The interior ministry has given a figure of eight hundred proven deaths. The Andalusian Defensor del Pueblo (Ombudsman), taking into account the real nature of the Strait - with currents, 100-km/h winds, cetaceans, cargo ships, petrol tankers, bodies appearing on the northern coast of Morocco - claims that the deaths during these fourteen years could be over two thousand.

I often ask myself, every time that drowned persons appear, every time that I see live persons who have arrived on the zodiacs, if what I am living through is the product of a bad dream and in reality, it is just a lie. There are no drowned persons. They come over in a ferry to work. That on 2 November of 1989 I didn't see eighteen corpses in front of my terrace. The women who arrive do not become prostitutes. The Moroccans who call me from Almeria all have their papers in order. They go on holiday to their countries and can bring their wives if they want to. There aren't any minors under the axles of lorries or hidden in the fields of Tarifa.

I read the press titles from 2001, "Avalanche of migrants in Tarifa", and also, more recently, in 2002. Of course, if the country's government considers the number of people who make the crossing between the 700 million Europeans and the 800,000 Africans an avalanche, what am I to think? Why does the government lie? Or would it have been better if more of them had drowned, so that only half of them would arrive?

A boat heading from Tunisia to the Italian island of Lampedusa laden with around seventy passengers sank on Saturday 13 June, according to the account of three survivors. Around seven corpses were subsequently found, while the remaining migrants are missing, presumed dead. Another boat, that set off for Italy from the Libyan coast, and carried over 250 migrants, sank on Friday 20 June in the high seas near the port of Sfax, in an incident that is believed to have caused over 200 deaths, 41 survivors were rescued, and 12 corpses were found during rescue operations.

In the latest incident, in the early morning of 14 July 2003, two migrants drowned in a shipwreck in Tarifa, and their bodies were found by Guardia Civil rescue launches. *El País* estimates that a minimum of 62 persons have died trying to reach Spain this year, although published figures tend to be lower than the reality because many of the corpses of migrants who die trying to reach Spain are never found.

## Naked man was 'left to die outside church'

MEMBERS of a church congregation allegedly left a naked man to die of cold outside while they held a feast.

A coroner was told that the churchgoers, from a Methodist church in Dudley, West Midlands, refused to let the man in despite his pleas for help.

Kenneth Clarke, 62, died from hypothermia despite banging on the church door

and telling those inside that he was freezing, an inquest in the town heard.

The churchgoers, who were holding a special feast, did pass Mr Clarke a blanket, sandwich and hot drink but would not let him inside the church.

Coroner Robin Balmain recorded a verdict of death by natural causes but said that neglect was a contributory factor.

Survivors said yesterday that at least 63 would-be immigrants died at sea during a Mediterranean voyage which was supposed to take them to a new life in Europe.

The tragedy occurred just as a court in Syracuse, Sicily, begins hearing the case of two men accused of masterminding the worst human trafficking tragedy in the Mediterranean so far. Seven years ago, at least 283 would-be immigrants and two crew members drowned when a motor launch sunk in the Malta-Sicily channel on Christmas Day, 1996.

GUARDIAN 21.10.03

## Driver 'ran over Osama'

A MAN was given a suspended prison sentence for trying to run over a pedestrian in France who he thought was terror leader Osama bin Laden.

The court in Montpellier also ordered the 35-year-old, identified as a struggling artist named Pierre, to pay £340 to the victim who was unhurt.



The Protestant Work Ethic:

I'M DAMN PROUD THAT I'VE SPENT THE LAST FORTY YEARS ATTACHING DOO-HICKYS TO WIDGETS ON THE ASSEMBLY LINE! SOON I CAN RETIRE AND DEVOTE FULL TIME TO MY HOBBIES-- ALCOHOLISM AND BITTERNESS!



Six unemployed people have been given a free ride on the London Eye in the hope that the view over the capital will inspire them to find work. The exercise in job creation was dreamed up by the recruitment company Reed in Partnership as part of the Government's 'Welfare to Work' scheme.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

A DEMOLITION boss was jailed for 18 months yesterday for causing two workers' deaths - the first time a director has gone to prison for a site fatality.

Brian Dean, 60, was convicted of the manslaughter of Michael Redgate, 46, and son, Carl, 18, who were buried under tons of masonry when a disused kiln collapsed at Tunstall, Staffs.



Millions of men are burnt out by work

THE number of men working more than 49 hours a week has broken the three million mark as Britain's long hours culture continues unchecked, a report revealed today.

Almost one in four men work longer than the 48 hours laid down in a European Union directive.

GMB general secretary Kevin Curran said: "Burn-out Britain is becoming a reality for more and more people as Scrooge employers force their workers to leave precious family celebrations to go to work."

The UK is the only country in the EU where workers can opt out of the Working Time Directive, although this is currently being reviewed.

## GO ON. PHONE IN SICK.

THERE ARE PROBABLY THOUSANDS OF THINGS YOU'D RATHER DO THAN SLAVE FOR A PITTANCE IN SOME SHITHOLE WHILE SOME LITTLE HITLER ORDERS YOU AROUND. DO THEM.

BUT BY WORKING TOGETHER WE CAN HAVE A WORLD WHERE WE DON'T NEED TO ASK FOR PERMISSION TO HAVE FUN.



## Daddy's are as important as mummy's

What might you do if you considered yourself an exemplary dad, then your wife, partner or ex tells you she is moving hundreds or even thousands of miles away with your children? Though you had done nothing wrong, you are absolutely not included in the plans, and there is almost nothing you can say or do!

This article is an attempt to be enlightening and inspiring. Raising and challenging some current issues and often hidden problems surrounding the murky arena of parenthood after separation. Notably "father absence" and "mother dominance".

Just how realistic are we about parenting after divorce and separation? To what extent do we bury our heads in the sand? According to BBC Radio 4, marriages and sexual relationships nowadays last on average for only seven years. Not quite the lifetime partnerships we are led to believe in. The ramifications are enormous.

Nuclear families frequently explode, with potentially catastrophic fallout. Any animosity between ex partners can have disastrous results. Fathers beware. Children can be "lost", sometimes for life. This has apparently happened to a few of my friends. Now they have decades ahead of them separated from their children, yet miraculous reunions can happen. However, disturbingly, a massive 40% of dads lose all contact with their children only two years after separation.

At present our draconian laws rest, ultimately, the absolute control of our children, entirely in their mother's hands. Should mothers decide to restrict or prevent contact or access, then fathers do not have a leg to stand on. It is that simple.

Loving caring fathers are regularly and frequently isolated from their children. However loving and caring, however how high profile a personality, however large your bank account, many wonderful dads are crippled by both our legal system, and our culture.

Patriarchy persists, the world is still dominated by men. Matriarchy, female domination is no solution whatsoever. Surely, a real, meaningful equality is the only answer. But just how far away are we?

In Britain and Ireland today I believe approximately 180,000 dad's raise their children alone. Perhaps 100,000 children and adults are home-educating, with many dads immersed in their children's parenting and educating.

Philosophers and pioneers exist, visionaries, aspiring to better lives. Freedom of thought and personal expression are fundamental to humans being, as are personal understanding, growth and fulfillment. For several years I have endeavoured to be as respectful and sensitive as possible to everybody I meet. I consider myself at worst a

decent person and a good dad. Everyone who saw my daughter and I together agreed, yet my baby has been taken from me.

For weeks now waking each day for me is fraught with anguish. Yesterday I awoke shocked. Vividly clear in my mind's eye, my baby's face, large, so close. I wanted to reach out and touch the little girl I helped create. Aela, angel in my life.

At just three and a half years old, she has not been able to see her daddy for eight months and counting. I have attempted to visit on several occasions, but mum has had excuses, and I must do whatever she says.

Some days, hours pass between thoughts and reminders of our love and separation. Often though, my mind is bogged down, usually distressingly, occasionally beautifully so. I love to remember our daily joys, yet haemorrhage when every little girl appears to be Aela's age, happy with their daddy's.

I frequently wonder what Aela is doing, in that moment. Is she thinking about me, missing her daddy, confused and hurt, aching to feel the love we share? Does she feel I have abandoned her? Maybe she's having fun with the man she now sees more than her dad? This is immensely difficult to deal with. Feeling that your baby is, literally being stolen, legally, by stealth, whilst you are gradually being replaced by a surrogate!

No doubt, parenting today can be difficult at the best of times. After separation, the complications can become a minefield. However, some ex-partners give wonderful examples of empathy, sensitivity and respect to all concerned.

When considering the costs involved, the financial cost of divorce is quoted at £30 billion per year, mostly funded by taxpayers. The true social costs are immeasurable. Children from fatherless homes are: 32 times more likely to run away; 20 times more likely to have behavioural disorders; 14 times more likely to commit rape; 10 times more likely to abuse chemical substances; 9 times more likely to end up in a state operated institution; 5 times more likely to commit suicide and 20 times more likely to end up in prison.

Societies, cultures, belief systems and legal practice do all continually change. Often slowly, sometimes drastically. Throughout herstory and history, revolutionary change has occurred. Today family law desperately needs rewriting, as a beginning towards justice for many fathers and their estranged children.

One hundred years ago the suffragettes fought tooth and nail to gain the right to vote, changing woman's lives and future. However they did not gain equality for women, far from it. About the same time a much lesser known battle was being waged in Ireland, for a father to be allowed to look after his three children after his wife had left them and ran away to England with another man. A book and glamourised Hollywood film entitled "Evelyn" portray this harrowing tale and are currently available. Tragically today, fathers are essentially fighting the same battle!



The civil/fathers rights group Fathers 4 Justice (F4J) have gained a fairly high profile in their relatively short existence. Membership has increased from 1,500 after one year to 20,000 after two years. As more men become more confident, willing and able to expose their heartaches, F4J groups continue to appear and grow, now spreading around our civilized world.

F4J are engaged in a struggle, as important as the suffragettes. Fighting for the basic human right of parental equality. Equal responsibility for, and equal access to our children.

In 2004, the fact that father's need to fight for equality with mother's is a shame on our society. For innocent, caring dads to be forcibly separated from their children is a daily living torture, if you are lucky enough to have a good support network.

The full scale of this epidemic is unknown, perhaps just starting to be revealed. It is helpful, and heart warming to know so many men are struggling to see their kids, sometimes after many years apart.

Before becoming a father I was professionally employed for a decade, prior to studying philosophy and becoming an environmentalist. Now, with F4J, we stand shoulder to shoulder in protest with supporters of all ages and backgrounds, including many women and children. Most had never protested before, but now direct action is becoming common place. Father Christmas' and superheroes abound, scaling Buckingham palace, occupying parliament, York Cathedral, court buildings, police headquarters, cranes, bridges, blocking traffic and more besides.

While there is, perhaps inevitably, testosterone from a few aggrieved dads, sometimes, many separated fathers appear like shells of themselves, shattered and near broken. One friend describes his two year separation from his ten year old daughter as a "living bereavement".

As if the incredible ease with which some hurt, damaged, bitter or unscrupulous mothers can sever all links between father's and children was not harsh enough. Father's can be threatened with a £1,000 fine or one month imprisonment at the bat of a "vindictive" mums eye-lid, as I experienced. Mother dominance enables motherly manipulation and maliciousness, frequently resulting in a father's absence. Perhaps the nearest to equality we have is an equality of abusive mums to rival abusive dads? Heartbreaking.

Many fathers and children have access problems from birth. Such pain of separation coupled with the discovery of men's utterly subservient parental position can become all consuming. No doubt contributing towards our exceptionally high male suicide rates.

After parenting and home educating for years, after reading about and attending classes on pregnancy, birth and beyond. After cherishing and adoring my first and only baby

from birth. After looking after my baby all day for between four and seven days a week, for eighteen months while developing a bond beautiful beyond compare. To then be informed entirely out of the blue, that my baby was being taken three hundred miles away to live and there was nothing I could say or do about it, at that moment I died inside.

My life imploded spectacularly. Numb all over, everything went black. Flooded with emotions, I ran outside, and ran, sobbing, gushing, and shaking, teeth chattering violently. Into a deep dark pit I cascaded, to suicidal depths, until I could face this brutal world once again.

That was two years ago to the day. Shortly after that my ex partner screamed at me "why don't you just go and have another baby with someone else?!" She then told me the separation from my baby would provide a good opportunity for me to write creatively. It has taken two years for me to gain the strength to begin, whilst my ex has completed her degree. My confidence and self esteem have been almost shattered. For three years I have been almost petrified of women. Now I hope to write as activist art and therapy.

I am told I am an unusual man. For many years I have observed and contemplated manhood and fatherhood. My absent, alcoholic, gambling father disrespected his wife and three kids, before finally, messily, leaving us. An interesting case study.

After reading about some men's groups, organizations and workshops, a friend and I started a rather eclectic, chaotic, spontaneous and organic men's group locally. As expected, we attracted ridicule from some uninvolved men, too scared to come in. Although such groups have existed over thirty years, they are still so radical. So many men remain intrigued by outer space, yet frightened by inner space, scared of themselves. scared of inner exploration, never mind resensitisation.

Traditional patterns of manhood and fatherhood are barely relevant nowadays, they are based on desensitization. Men cannot change quickly enough, coming to terms with the complexity and simplicity of ourselves. Particularly our feelings, emotions, vulnerabilities and "damage". Deeply engrained male roles have dissolved and distorted, and now require redefinition and guidance. Many desensitised men remain, able to punch adeptly with their mouths as well as with their fists. Both physical and psychological violence remain abundant in our communities, unsurprisingly.

Perhaps we can learn from uncivilized peoples living in the undeveloped world, untouched by western progress. One fascinating example being the Semai people who live in the forested mountains of the central Malay Peninsula. Known among anthropologists for their non-aggressiveness and aversion to inter-personal violence of any kind: Husbands do not beat their wives, nor parents their children; children do not fight; physical assault and murder are virtually unknown.



In our so-called civilized society domestic violence and child-abuse are, not uncommon, though for now mostly beyond the scope of this article. Yet today innocent separated dad's, are occasionally tarred with the same brush as abusive dads. Abusive dads, like abusive mums, deserve condemnation. Yet a misconception appears to exist, that fathers with restricted, or no access to children, either (a) don't want access, or (b) must have been abusive in some way and had access restricted or stopped. An appalling misconception that could not be further from the truth. Solutions as ever rest in understanding problems. A great deal more understanding is required before this impasse can be bridged.

In Britain and Ireland two to three children die weekly, usually at the hands of an abusive parent. 50% of female murders are committed by an ex-partner, with alcohol usually involved. Bleakly, globally 4,000 children die of starvation, every hour, and every fifteen seconds a child dies, for want of clean water.

Every single human being deserves respect and fulfillment. Humans are so capable of living deep, meaningful and even happy lives. The real potential for humanity is truly no less than profound. Yet today we are surely closer to having created dystopias, rather than any signs of utopias

One father I have met was sentenced to three months in prison, after sending crisp's to his separated children. Another estranged dad drove past his children's school, a driving instructor giving a lesson, in the hope of a glimpse of his kids. For this he received a ten month prison sentence.

Mothers are also being imprisoned. A mother who broke eighteen court contact orders over two years received a three month sentence.

Imprisoning a caring parent is obviously not in our children's best interests. When around the world such large numbers of innocent parents, relatives and friends are prevented from being with their children, so easily, for years and even lifetimes: when millionaires attack our prime-minister; when incendiary devices have been posted to family courts; when innocent devastated dads are treated like terrorists, wife beaters and/or child abusers, surely our lives cannot change for the better soon enough.

Until then, vast numbers of fathers, children, family and friends remain abused. Until then innocent, devoted dads will continue to perish, for wishing to care for their kids. Until then more mothers will be imprisoned. Until then our most innocent, precious children continue to pay an almost unimaginable price, for our adult blundering. I know I am a dreamer, but, daddy's are as important as mummy's.

### Some general advice

Separation and divorce are often emotionally fraught, tense, stressful times. Previously loving relationships can deteriorate rapidly, and become bitter. Animosity can snowball. Easily said, but, try to remain as calm as possible, as often as possible.

If you are facing divorce or separation and children are involved, PLEASE attempt to understand and respect your innocent, confused and hurt children and your "ex". Do not forget to look after yourself. Stay strong and try not to give up. Try and let your children know you will always be their dad and you will always love and "be there" for them.

If you are prevented contact or access to your children, need info, advice, support and/or wish to meet/take action with dads in similar predicaments contact Fathers 4 Justice.

### Some useful contacts

Fathers 4 Justice  
Tel: 01787 281 922  
Web: [www.Fathers-4-Justice.Org](http://www.Fathers-4-Justice.Org)  
Email: [office@fathers-4-justice.Org](mailto:office@fathers-4-justice.Org)

Equal parenting council  
38-40 Gloucester Road  
Kensington  
London SW7 4QU  
Web: [www.Equal Parenting.org](http://www.Equal Parenting.org)  
(Speaking out for children of broken homes)

Mankind  
23 Jessamine road  
Birkenhead  
Cheshire CH42 5PR  
Tel: 0870 794 7303  
(Childrens safety and zero abuse campaign)

Fathers Direct Network  
Herald House  
Lambs Passage  
Bunhill Row  
London EC1Y 8TQ  
(For working dads and more)

Men for Change Network  
Achilles Heel  
Flat 6, 75 Dartmouth Park Hill  
London NW5 1JD  
(Manhood + fatherhood issues)  
Education Otherwise  
[www.education-otherwise.org](http://www.education-otherwise.org)  
(information + advice about home education)





## Further reading

**"Fatherhood Reclaimed" by Adrienne Burgess £6.99**

An excellent pioneering book, incredibly researched and written. Highly recommended for every parent.

**"Fathering. Strengthening Connection with Your Children No Matter Where You Are" by Will Glennon £10.99**

An inspiring American book, with good practical ideas and many years worth of shared experiences.

**"The Achilles Heel Reader" edited by Victor J Seidler £10.50**

Hugely recommended for manhood and fatherhood issues. A visionary gem, but out of print so check second hand shops and sections

**"Manhood" by Steve Biddulph £6.99**

I have not yet read this but six million copies have been sold. I believe this is very good yet flawed.

**"How Children Fail" and "How Children Learn" by John Holt**

Classic texts from a highly regarded educationalist. Available new and second hand.

**"Play" by Lib ed collective £4**

A phenomenal little book. Difficult to get hold of. Well worth searching for.

**"Free Range Education" edited by Terry Dowty £12.99**

A recent compilation of writing about the ins and outs of home educating. One of several good books on the subject.



On Wednesday 21 March, the day described as "a day of shame" by several thousand teenage students who walked out of their classrooms to lead a protest outside the Houses of Parliament against Tony Blair's support for the invasion of Iraq. Many of the students took part in a rolling sit-down protest, blocking traffic and creating chaos at the heart of the government's administrative centre, (the Foreign Office, the Treasury and the Home Office are among the government buildings clustered around Parliament Square).

Eyewitness saw several of the young men receiving truncheon blows to the head, as well as other parts of the body; a number of people received bloody wounds.

After another attempt to break through police cordons into the streets surrounding the square, a small group of police officers launched a baton assault targeted on a small group of Bangladeshi schoolchildren.

After the situation dispersed, lawyers desperately attempted to locate where the children were being held, but as they had been dispersed to police stations across London it was several hours before their families could be reassured. While a number of the schoolchildren were clearly traumatised by events, many remain resolute, saying that they will not be intimidated and will mobilise their friends to attend the weekend's march and rally against the Iraq war.



Places of innocence... Adam and Mark plan their next raid

**YOUNG** mother Jackie Kenney has to be on permanent guard against the vandals who have all but destroyed her home.

In the past six months the wreckers have smashed dining chairs, broken the garden gate and fence, pushed over the TV set, broken the washing machine and tumble-dryer, pulled down the venetian blinds and ruined the sofa.

And whenever Mrs Kenney can catch them in the act, she puts them straight into their play-pen.

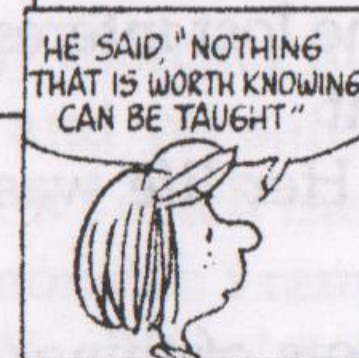
For the culprits are her 18-month-old twins Mark and Adam.

The terrible twosome have got through three coats so far by jumping on the mesh bases until they break.

The sofa was ruined in similar fashion. The twins jumped up and down until the springs broke and Adam vanished through the fabric.

Mrs Kenney, whose husband Stephen, 27, is a warehouseman, begins her daily vigil at 5.30 a.m. when the twins begin their first cot-jumping session. Later they try to persuade their three-year-old brother Paul to join them in their campaign of toddler terror.

**Toddler twins**  
leave a trail  
of devastation



Striking school children, some as young as 11 and 12, brought Brighton City Centre to a halt last Thursday in protest over the British and American invasion of Iraq. Taking to the streets with chants of "No War," "One, two, three, four, Tony Blair is Bush's whore," and other brilliantly unprintable slogans, the students blocked roads in the city centre for nearly four hours, telling perturbed motorists to "Turn off your engines, you ain't goin' nowhere." Cynical, disillusioned Brighton activists were spotted in the area, wandering in a haze of shock, awe and respect, gobsmacked by people half their age with twice as much energy and imagination.

Earlier in the day, in an important lesson on free speech, teachers and heads around the city locked many young pupils into their schools, desperate to keep them from expressing an opinion. Pupils at Blatchington Mill, Cardinal Newman, Dorothy Stringer, Varndean, and Patcham were threatened with suspension, expulsion, and extra citizenship classes (to teach them the real meaning of democracy and blind obedience) if they left school to participate in protests.

Teachers had tried to lock gates and chase anti-war escapees through the school grounds, but many kids still managed to find a way out.

Even in the evening, most of the chants and road sit-downs were led by school kids from all over the city



TRAGIC LOSS: Thomas Thompson

**I ONLY** met Thomas Thompson twice yet I shall always remember him.

When I arrived at Church Street where people had gathered to march against the war, I saw a remarkable young boy conducting the crowd via the megaphone. This was a protest led by children, and Thomas Thompson was at the head of them.

I can only say that he enchanted us, all of us. His chants were witty and impassioned. We, the adults, hung on his every word, and responded to his every chant. We could not help but roar with laughter or applause as this baby-faced revolutionary brimmed with such infectious enthusiasm, spirit and confidence.

Humanity has lost a tender young champion.

**BBC** Radio Norfolk was tricked by a schoolboy into broadcasting a report that snow had forced the closure of his school. More than 500 of the 770 pupils at Northgate High School, East Dereham, stayed away for the day.

The boy, who has not been traced, impersonated his headmaster, Mr John Gibbs, when he telephoned the radio station in Norwich. Mr Gibbs said yesterday: "I was hopping mad. Radio Norfolk need their wrists rapping." The station has apologised.



# A Wonder Story

## Told by a Young Tree

*ilana cameron is 17 and currently a member of the Virtual High learning community in Vancouver, British Columbia. She loves writing and travelling and playing her didjeridoo. She has self-published a book of her own poetry, and is exploring more and more deeply her inner self and the world around her.*

*ilana has never been to school, and has a particular easy and contained dignity about her. She writes here about her experiences growing up in a deschooled learning environment, and her perspective helps make the theory and words come to life.*

**T**HIS TALE BEGINS WITH A TREE. A TREE TO WONDER UNDER. A TREE TO become one under. A tree to bloom under. A tree that is flexible and always growing and changing, the ilana tree.

ilana was born into a world of three, (mom, dad, and me), and lived happily, beneath trees, with love holding like arms. And arms holding with love.

She was born whole, alive, curious, and trusting.

Soon her life was filled with apples, animals, and trees. She loved so many things in the country. She loved playing in the sand and going to the store. She loved having the special berry-flavored black tea and staring at her favorite ice-cream sandwich in the freezer.

She would write even though she didn't know English letters, she would sing even though she didn't know any songs. She knew only her own, she knew herself.

Soon she became curious about letters and began to read. She read her Heidi book and loved to know that someone else drank goat's milk just like her. Then she lost interest in words and forgot she had known what they meant.

Life carried on in this way. Her life was filled with love and trees.

In kindergarten there were lots of things to do, but you had to do them at certain times. There were times to play with the toys and there were times to play with the games in the boxes, there were times for everything. One day she was swinging on a swing when the bell rang. She realized she didn't want to go inside. Everything was so big and all she was supposed to do was do what other people did.

After looking at many schools, ilana said. "Dad, i know who i want as a teacher, i want you. Let's make our home the school, and we'll do what we've always done."

ilana's mom and dad talked with her for several days and then they all agreed to create a school in their home.

My mom got very excited as she was exploring for a name. When she found this quote from Lao Tzu— "From wonder into

wonder/ Existence opens" —the name blossomed in her mind. Wondertree.

We decided we would continue doing what we had done since i was born. Learning in the world, living in wonder and playing. The name was a coming together of our connection as a family with the symbol of a tree and the wonder we had in our hearts. My name is Hebrew for young tree, flexible and always growing.

Dad created Wondertree. i created Wondertree. Mom created Wondertree.

We put up posters about meetings. No one came. Dad did odd carpentry jobs and mom worked full time as a nurse.

As a family we would discuss how many kids, what we would do, and why we were doing this. Wondertree existed in our hearts as our love, our love for each other and the world. When a man showed up at one of our evening meetings and brought his son to our house, we did what we had always done.

i remember the day he arrived. Jonathan was so timid that he hid behind his dad's legs. i was watching Sesame Street at the time. Jonathan came and watched it with me. He became the second student in Wondertree. So for a while it was just Jonathan and me, watching Sesame Street and wondering in the world. We made houses out of old fridge boxes, and slid down stairs until our bums were numb. We played in the park and asked dad questions as he made things in his workshop. We would make candles with mom, or we'd invent our own games sitting in the back yard.

When more kids came we did what we had always done. We'd drum, and play in the back yard, and talk and bake, and most importantly of all, we would play monster in the park. The thrill of a monster after me, a big scary and yet safe monster chasing me. There was that edge of, oh no, don't catch me! The thrill of running and hiding, and also being the monster. i remember it as one of the most important things we did. We played it almost every week for many years. Sometimes it was gnomes and trolls or IT; they were all variations on the same theme. Chase, run, play, hide, laugh, scream, yelp, and be in utter playing ecstasy. My favorite place to play monster was in the woods. i would hide behind old stumps, and run as fast as i could without getting smacked in the face by tree branches. i would sneak silently through the woods with my pal, secret detective agent Josh.



We were becoming a small community, a family. Every morning we would sit in a circle. We would talk and share with each other.

Any topic could be our discussion. It was so unpredictable: we'd go from talking about someone whose pet had given birth, to a hunger problem in Ethiopia. We would set an hour meeting time and we would go for three. Our minds were alive. We were excited and impassioned about our world.

We took the wisdom of child and the wisdom of adult and created a union. We were a community based on consensus. Every single person chose to be there and was there because they were supported by the whole community.

What does Wondertree smell like? Like clay and bread. Like cuisinare rods and grass. What does it look like? Like sky and cats giving birth. Like couches and a round table. Like friendly faces. What does it sound like? Like birds and laughter. Like dad's voice and singing. What does it feel like? Like toes and sand. Like love and hands.

Wondertree is only a set of philosophies, and the Wondertree center i was involved in was certainly not perfect. And yet we were there together, saying 'yes, and seeing what happened. We explored our own minds, ourselves. We learned about ourselves. Our curriculum was ourselves. We were our own textbooks. We

learned to understand ourselves. We were a family. We were happy, and we were learning.

Wondertree is based on simple things. The dynamics of being in a group were never simple, though. We all learned and grew as we tried to work as a group. New people would come, old people would go. People were deschooling, people were changing. It took a lot of patience and understanding on everyone's part to function on the basis of consensus. There were misunderstandings, upsets, and arguments.

There were a lot of good times. We did what kids do best, we played and explored. The world was our oyster.

My father understands that it is vital that children follow their own rhythms. We give adults the power to decide what they want to learn; kids have that same right. We are all human, whatever our age. Everyone has the right and responsibility to learn what they want to learn.

One of my biggest lessons is being exactly who i am and being exactly where i am. Being me, here, now. It is so simple and yet so easy to forget. i am here right now. There is only the present, the beautiful, excruciating, limitless, and boundless, present.

At the end of eight years of Wondertree i decided i wanted some solitude and some time on my own. For two years i explored and learned—no school, no Wondertree, completely following my rhythms. I didn't have many friends. At the time i often thought i wasn't doing anything. But looking back on it i realize that i learned so much. A lot of it was internal work, becoming familiar and comfortable with myself. I also had times of guilt, fear, and doubt. Almost everyone around me had been schooled. i felt different from everyone else, i saw things in such a different way. i worried that i'd made the wrong choice, why hadn't i followed the crowd? Then i realized, "Almost everyone follows the crowd. You have done something different, ilana. You have done something revolutionary that is very right for you. You trusted yourself. That is what is important."

Then Dad and a friend created Virtual High. The Wondertree model grew up. Now Virtual High is in a mansion and Wondertree Education Society runs out of it. There are three Wondertree centers, and we have our own computer network. Our biggest project is to create the sustainable village (for 100 families) that we as a family have wanted since the beginning. Wondertree is about community.

No matter where i go i will have with me the gifts of love, creativity, and playfulness. i will have Wondertree in my heart forever. i thank my parents for being real with me. i thank them for listening to me.





AREN'T scones expensive? Of all the items needed for an ideal Christmas table – cakes, mince pies, trifles, muffins and the like – it is the individual price of scones that is the really outrageous thing. I advise readers to check in their own supermarkets or boycott scones altogether.

**M. Flynn, Bootle**

I WOULD like to thank M Flynn of Bootle for their letter (December 15) on the point of scones; I nearly fell off my chair chuckling at such an unusual subject. More of the same please.

**S. Brockbank, Anfield**

I AGREE with the school which are going to the House of Commons to bring corporal punishment back. Something seriously wants to be done in this country.

**Mrs. M. Forde, Maghull**

ALL those interested in the price of scones should get out more or take up a hobby. Why don't they take up baking. They would probably be able to bake a whole batch of scones for the cost of just one bought in a shop – although they should stick to plain as fruit ones might be a bit challenging. Write back and let us all know how you went on. We would all be very interested

**Mr G. W. Rashley, Crosby**

DOES anyone remember the cake shop on Scottie Road near the junction with Stanley Road, circa 1930s? I can't recall its name but the baker used to make lovely scones – and their Sally Lunn was beyond compare. Halcyon days!

**Mrs D Ross, Kirkdale**

I HAVE been enjoying the recent scone correspondence and would like to know the correct pronunciation. Is it scone to rhyme with John or scone to rhyme with moan?

**Mrs Nicholson, Rainhill**

RECENTLY there was a flurry of light-hearted debate about scones – and concern expressed about the paucity of fruit content in the present day product.

Regrettably this trend now seems to have extended to muffins: I recently bought a 'blueberry' muffin only to find there was not a single berry inside.

I fear that this is a sad reflection on today's food industry and its obsession with artificial flavourings at the expense of the natural product.

**Mrs Kenyon, Kirkdale**

AND NOW... A WORD FROM THIS ISSUE'S GUEST EDITOR:

WHAT will it be next? If it is not the food which we are eating which has potential cancer causing properties, it is now our deodorant. It really does amaze me some of these findings by scientists. Years ago people lived a lot longer and there was certainly no talk of cancer-causing ingredients in foods or products.

Let's just live life and be happy and stop all this scaremongering.

**Rob Jones, Allerton**

## Brewery cuts beer for man up a pole

A MAN trying to break the world record for squatting at the top of a pole has had his beer drinking cut, in case it makes him fall.

The brewery helping to sponsor 26-year-old Mr Rob Roy's bid was amazed to discover he was drinking 16 pints of lager a day. It was supplied through a pipeline from a bedroom window at the Black Horse, Darlaston, West Midlands, to his perch in a barrel 33ft, up.

The Brewery thought eight pints would be quite enough. Mr Roy did not. He said:

'I am disgusted. I am responsible for my own safety and I know when I have had enough.'

He said he needed lots of beer to help pass the time and to sleep soundly.

He has been up the pole three weeks and hopes to beat the world record of 33 days.

A spokesman for Mitchells and Butlers brewery said: 'We spoke to the health authority and they strongly advised he should not be drinking because he does not have a chance of working the alcohol off.'



**MIKE GARLOCK, 52, from Formby:** "It's disgusting. I can't understand why somebody would do this."



**FREDA HAYES, 50, from Kensington:** "It's awful. Why are they doing this? It must be a nutter."



**The Lodges arriving at court**

FIFA'S President, Sepp Blatter, suggests women footballers wearing tighter shorts would promote "a more female aesthetic".

But I think what he is really getting at is that he wants to admire their bottoms. And what's wrong with that anyway?

**S McCormick, Waterloo**

Increasing hatred of mobile phones has spawned a bizarre event in Finland

A Motorola arcs gracefully through the air, its "battery low" sign flashing happily. It is followed by a Nokia, tunelessly spewing the opening bars of the William Tell Overture as it passes overhead. And then an Ericsson whistles by [hitting] the ground first with a splintering crack that warms the heart of its assailant, Erno Riihelä, the current mobile-phone-throwing world record holder.

A truly rivetting recent report,

A COURT has rejected a German man's demand for the government to pay for four brothel visits a month.

He wanted to ensure his "health and bodily well-being" while his wife was abroad.

The unemployed 35-year-old, who is on benefits, sought £1,600 a month to fund the brothel trips, along with eight pornographic videos and transport costs to and from a video store.

He sued the state after authorities refused to pay for his Thai wife to fly back to Germany.

ECHO 6.3.04

A BUS driver today spoke of his terror after he was caught up in a major chemical scare.

Darren Lunt has been left with severe breathing difficulties after he snatched a bottle giving off toxic fumes away from a little girl.

Mr Lunt was driving his Selwyn's Travel bus from Liverpool John Lennon Airport towards Skelthorne Street in Liverpool city centre when he saw the youngster carrying the bottle towards the front of the vehicle.

Seeing fumes billowing out of the bottle he immediately took it from the child before being overcome.

After collapsing, he was rushed to the Royal Liverpool University hospital, sparking a chemical alert which led to ambulances being diverted to other emergency departments.

Speaking from his hospital bed, Mr Lunt, 38, told how he acted without thought for his own safety when he saw the girl carrying the bottle.

Doctors wearing chemical protection suits treated Mr Lunt following the incident which happened at 1.30pm on Wednesday.

The substance is still to be identified despite Merseyside police contacting the United Nations' Chemsafe department in New York for information on the liquid.

FIREFIGHTERS had to contact the United Nations to help deal with a chemical scare at the Royal Liverpool hospital.

The UN's Chemsafe department in New York was contacted to help officers identify a mystery liquid which made a bus driver pass out when he opened the bottle it was in.

A full scale alert was launched which diverted ambulances for around an hour.

The bottle has now been destroyed at an incineration plant in Ellesmere Port after the UN failed to match the name with anything held on its database.

The 38-year-old bus driver was released from hospital at 5pm yesterday.

The Finns and the Future Information Society, revealed that nearly 80% of Finnish households own a mobile phone... The idea for the toss-fest came from the frustration of lost signals, engaged tones, and of course, the best efforts of Rossini shattering the silence at any given opportunity...

The championships feature free-style throwing, with marks given for style and aesthetics, and the more traditional over-the-shoulder toss, a category purely based on length.

## Trouserless demo

OPPOSITION MPs in Taiwan turned up at the inauguration of the country's new international airport without any trousers, saying the airport was only half finished so they were only half-dressed.

They claimed President Chen Shui-bian was using the unfinished facility as a campaign stunt ahead of elections on March 20.

A court in the town of Ansbach threw out the claim, saying social security benefits already cover "everyday requirements".

It said the man, whom it did not identify, would appeal – at taxpayers' expense.

## Warts all the fuss about?

A MAJOR chemical scare which led to ambulances being diverted away from the Royal Liverpool University hospital was caused by wart remover which can be bought in most chemists.

A frothing bottle of the substance forced part of the hospital to be sealed off earlier this week after paramedics arrived with a bus driver who had inhaled fumes from a container left on his bus.

Medical bosses put into action the hospital's emergency action plan and specialist firefighters rushed to the scene.

Ambulances were diverted to Aintree hospital for half an hour while doctors dressed in chemical suits attended to 38-year-old driver Darren Lunt.

ECHO 20.12.03

### Aftermath Support

(Support and practical help for victims of road collisions)

Greenhill Road, Liverpool L18 7JX (0151-427-3923) (0151-427-3925)

Email: support@aftermathsupport.org.uk Website: aftermathsupport.org.uk

### Anarchist Federation Merseyside

c/o News From Nowhere, 96 Bold Street, Liverpool L1

Email: info@afed.org.uk

Websites: www.afed.org.uk / www.af-north.org

### Animal Rescue

PO Box 233, L69 7LF (0151-494-0470)

### Asylum Link Merseyside

St Anne's Centre, 7 Overbury St, L7 3HJ (0151-709-1713)

### Communities Against Toxics

PO Box 29, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral, L66 3TX (0151-339-5473)

Website: cats@gn.apc.org

### Fathers 4 Justice

(01787-281922)

Email: office@fathers-4-justice.org

Website: www.Fathers-4-Justice.org

### Groundwork Trust

(Getting residents, businesses and local organisations involved in environmental projects)

Mike O'Brien - 19-27 Shaw St, St Helens, WA10 1DF (01744-739396)

Email: sthelens@groundwork.org.uk

Website: www.groundwork.org.uk/sthelens/home.html

### Hillsborough Justice Campaign

134 Oakfield Rd, Anfield, L4 0UG (0151-260-5262)

www.lolpart.dicon.co.uk/tw&r/docs.lhjc.html

### Kirkby Times

(Independent working class website with news, views and reports covering local issues)

Websites: www.kirkbytimes.co.uk www.workingclasshero.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

### Knowsley Against Toxic Sonae

(Highlighting health impacts of Sonae chipboard factory)

Website: www.kirkbytimes.co.uk/sonaehome.html

### Local Exchange Trading Schemes (LETS)

Merseyside LETS registry: Albert Killeen (0151-525-1954)

Liverpool: Jill Marquis (0151-498-4881)

South City LETS: Penny Roberts (0151-734-1919)

Tranmere: Dave Simmons (0151-649-8017)

### Liverpool Defy ID

Email: italia@grtyphon33.fsnet.co.uk

Website: www.liverpool-defy-id.org.uk/

### Liverpool Organic Gardeners

c/o Ruth Jacobs (0151-722-7561) or Anna Reid (0151-280-5065)

Website: www.hdra.ic24.net/liverpl.htm

### Liverpool Social Forum

Email: liverpoolsf@yahoo.com Website: www.geocities.com/liverpoolsf/titlepage.html

### Liverpool University Green Group

PO Box 187, 160 Mount Pleasant, L69 7BR

### Merseyside Against Injustice

PO Box 51 Upton, Wirral, CH49 2WA

Website: limeone.net/~mai5

### Merseyside Animal Rights

c/o News From Nowhere, 96 Bold Street, L1 4HY

Merseyside Campaign Against the Arms Trade

c/o Mike Williams (0151-647-6374) or Nick Beattie (0151-724-1660)

### Merseyside Cycling Campaign

18 Shrewsbury Rd, Oxtow, Birkenhead, Wirral, L43 1UX (0151-653-3887)

Website: www.merseyworld.com/mcc

### Merseyside El Salvador Support Group

(0151-707-2712) / (0151-728-7118)

### Merseyside Lesbian and Gay Community Forum

c/o News From Nowhere, 96 Bold Street, L1 4HY

Mike (07970-680483)

Email: MLGCF@portnathaven.fs.net.co.uk

### Merseyside Police.com

(Public interest interactive website covering Merseyside police wrong-doing and corruption)

Website: www.merseysidepolice.com

### Merseyside Stop the War Coalition

c/o News From Nowhere

Email: merseyside@stopwar.org.uk

merseyside.stopthearmsusers.btopenworld.com

### Merseyside Women Against War

Eleanor (0151-724-1507)

### News From Nowhere

96 Bold St, L1 (0151-708-7270)

Website: www.homepages.poptel.org.uk/nfn

### Nicaragua Must Survive

6 Heatherdean Rd, West Kirby, L48 4EU (0151-794-2762)

### North West Hunt Saboteurs

PO Box 239, Manchester M14 7XB (07960-038230)

Email: info@nwhsa.org.uk

Website: hsa.enviroweb.org/contact/index.html

### People Not Profit

Email: peoplenotprofit2001@hotmail.com

Website: www.peoplenotprofit.co.uk/

### Plaza Community Cinema

13 Crosby Rd North, Waterloo, L22 0LD (0151-494-4076)

### RoadPeace

(Campaigns on road danger issues. Emotional and practical support for victims of road collisions)

(01695-727804) (0151-342-6381)

Website: www.roadpeace.org (national website)

### Tenants Action Group (TAG)

(07770-478756)

Website: www.tenantsactiongroup.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

### Whistleblower

(Covering corruption and social injustice relating to regeneration and European funding on Merseyside)

Website: www.whistleblower.nstemp.com