

Postmaster General

"When it absolutely, positively has to be passed overnight."

It's rare that I get the chance to sit down and really see the American political machine swing into high gear like an eighteen wheeler barreling down the far side of the Sierra Nevada after bursting its brake line and approaching one of California's notorious anti-banked

curves.⁺ Besides the live broadcast of the Gulf War ("Uh, this is Wolf Blitzer. I think I'm going to get under the table now...whoa, I found a penny!"), the President's State of the Union address is the closest to a Battle Royal as you get here in the states. Great Britain is another story. The folks in Parliament know words that even the kids in the second grade haven't heard yet...and they're not afraid to use them. You think the Spice Girls had tongues ripped right off the streets of Sussex? You should have seen good ol' Maggie T. when she'd throw a major wobbler.

Anyway, I was watching the State of the Union speech, pointing out to Josh French that people in the audience would clap at inappropriate times to throw off the rhythm of the President's speech, when Fucko the clown walks in and sits down. Fucko, normally kibitz-ing with our sister group, the *Melancholy Homewrecker*, hangs out with us every now and then. Usually its just to peek into the room I happen to be in, laugh in the way only he can, and then disappear into the rathole that is his room.

This particular time, Fucko plopped down on the couch next to me, coquettishly crossed his legs so a floppy clown shoe hit my knee, and watched the speech. After a few moments filled with squirming, foot tapping, and a light mist of steam rising from his ears, I knew he had something on his mind.

"You know," he began, his voice filling the air like the powdery bliss of Lipton Instant Iced Tea mix, "If I were a terrorist—and I'm not saying I am—but if I were a terrorist and wanted to put a hurting on the US, that's right where I'd do it."

Extending an arm with a filthy glove, presumably white at some point in the past and now smelling disturbingly like mold and...um, stuff, toward the TV, he waggled an over-sized digit at the image of the packed room.

"Yup. Take out all the important politicians in one attempt."

I proceeded to explain that the security around an event like that was (I hoped) extremely high. No one without authorization could get near...especially a clown with a shaved head and goatee packing an Uzi and slightly used enema tubing.^{*f*}

"I wow—I mean a terrorist—wouldn't have to get that close. Just a bomb would d-" "Um, security would still-"

⁺California engineers are ready to prove to the world that you don't need to make vehicles with the center of gravity higher than eye level to watch a really good car flip. That is to say, an impressive flip of a car, not a Mercedes going ass-over-teakettle. Sorry to say this, Ford Explorer, but now just about any vehicular can do a triple axle before landing if you're using a properly misengineered road.

^{*f*} You never know when that kind of thing is going to come in handy.

Gracies Dinnertime

Dramatis Personæ

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"OK you little shit! One word: 747. What are they going to do? Shoot me down? If I'm going fast enough and carrying enough boom-boom, I'm pretty sure I could still reach 'um. Divine wind baby!"

As I gazed into his amazingly clear and lucid eyes, I could see what he was describing in its ragnarokian splendor....

The passenger plane, hijacked from an airport near D.C., maybe somewhere in Maryland, maybe Virginia, silently makes its way through the India ink dusk. On the ground, events are unfolding and questions are being answered. Why have they taken control of the plane? What do they want? How many prisoners?

But there are no prisoners. Only a lone clown —

"Not a clown, you asswhore! I said I wouldn't do it-"

— a lone terrorist, decked out with oversized shoes and filthy gloves —

"Don't push it, pixie boy."

- calmly sits at the controls, guiding his acquired vehicle-with the help of laminar flow-toward its destination. The radio squawks at him periodically: To the individual in control of flight 835. You must alter your course and bring your heading to one-zero-niner. Please respond.

Instead, he continues to hum to himself, as though thoroughly enjoying the evening sky.

"Kill the wabbit. Kill the wabbit. Kill the wabbit!"

In time, a very short time, the plotters and schemers on the ground ken exactly what it is that he has planned. My God. He's going to crash into the Capital.

The interceptors are scrambled to remove the threat by all means necessary, but it is too late. The rockets slam home, ripping holes into the fragile skin of the icarian bird, and it falls from the heavens. Fire and steel rain down on the buildings below. My fellow Americans is cut short as the sound of explosions are broadcast around the world, in stereo where available. After, it would be raining Ash for weeks.^{Δ}

In one fell swoop Fuc—I mean a terrorist—would effec-

^ΔIt would be the most peculiar rain Washington D.C would ever see. As drops fell past the ears of passers-by, they would faintly hear words of wisdom such as: "Give me some sugar baby," "Come get some," and "Groovy." Thunder would be doubly impressive as it would be accompanied by a chorus of, "This is my BOOM-STICK!"

tively and efficiently bring the government to its knees. Then again, it's not as if prostitutes haven't been doing that exact same thing to many of the powers-that-be anyhow.

Thankfully, authority rolls down hill and eventually it will hit someone (Eww, you've got a little bit of ick on your shirt sleeve). The system was set up with knowledge that Presidents, and even Vice Presidents, die and there is a whole hierarchy of people who are in line for becoming President: Vice President, Speaker of the House, Sec. State, Sec. Treasury, Sec. Defense, Sec. of Spice, Attorney General, Sec. Interior, Sec. Agriculture, Sec. Commerce, Sec. Labor, the Secretariat, Sec. Health and Human Services, Sec. Housing and Urban Development, Sec. Transportation, Sec. Energy, the Guy who works behind the Counter at the Gift Shop, Sec. Education...on it goes down the list. But with the State of the Union address, everyone who is anyone is supposed to be there.

OSTAGE

Everyone, that is, but the

is, but the

Postmaster General.√

The Postmaster General. A rugged individualist, set apart from his fellow postmen by one outstanding trait: He owns no guns. Not a shotgun, not a pistol, not a rifle to be found in his immaculately kept home. He doesn't need them, as he is a man necessarily skilled in the deadly arts and the patient torment of canines. Aggressive, powerful, and a stunning dresser, he is a man to be reckoned with; a man to strike fear into the hearts of middle-class Americans depending on their mail-order catalogs and checks blissfully placed in the mail. Mail? More than any other man, he is the mail. And the hand that delivers the mail is the hand that rocks the world.

Or so Marvin Runyon thinks.

Imagine, Marvin Runyon, Postmaster General of the United States of America, being awakened in the middle of the night from whatever dark dream it is that Postmen have (What do postmen dream about? Things that would make you quiver with fear and anticipation).

"Mr Runyon? This is Robert from Postal Center 17. I have some bad news, sir. Are you sitting down?"

"Well, more or less," he mumbles wiping the sleep from his eyes.

"Sir, there's been a terrorist act at the Capital. Everyone's dead. You're the President, sir."

"What? Clinton?"

"He's dead sir." "What about Al Gore?"

"He's dead. They're all dead, sir "

 \sqrt{I} I know, and you know, that not everyone shows up for the State of the Union. Many people protest by not appearing. It's called suspension of disbelief (see the footnote on ash^{Δ}).

"Boy, Starr isn't going to be happy..."

"He's dead too, sir. EVERYBODY is DEAD, sir."

"Katchanski isn't dead, is she?"

"Yes, she's dead, sir. Everybody is dead. Everybody is dead, sir."

"What you're trying to say is that everybody is dead?"

"Gordon Bennet! I never should have woken you up!"

"So, by law, I'm the President and have 3 more years in office?"

"Yes sir, Mr. President, sir."

"Hot damn! Get your gun, Bobby! It's time to make some mail bombs. Do you still have the list of all those people who voted for the young Elvis stamp?"

"Yes sir, Mr. President sir! I've been waiting all my life for this!"

Without the checks-and-balances of the political system, democracy would be swept aside and replaced with a benevolent dictator: Marvin Runyon, once Postmaster General now General 'n Chief. Under his enlightened leadership, swift action become the rule of the day. Potential bills would be marked next-day, first-class, third-class, or book-rate, and cost lawmakers accordingly.

Using his thousands of loyal war-vets delivering mail to pass the time before the Rule of the Postmen, the spirit of the law, if not its letter, would be upheld. At first fear would grip the populace. After all, these were the same men they had instinctively feared for years; the men with funny shorts and socks pulled up over their knees; the men behind the counter who could count stamps without looking at them; the men who would go on killing rages if they couldn't find their jellybabies.

But the system would work. With post

offices becoming the centers of government operation the new police, the Postmen, would know everyone in their neighborhoods. They would look after their people and crime would drop. What good is it to be a suspected criminal and risk not having your mail delivered? In time, the civilians would look upon the men they once feared and say with pride, "Neither rain, nor sleet, nor gloom of night, shall keep them from their appointed rounds."

And slowly, the country would change.

Auto makers would begin producing vehicles with steering wheels on the opposite side and strangely, road-rage would disappear. Stamps would slowly replace our current currency. For the first time in our nations pitifully short history, works of art, wildflowers, sailing ships, historical events, and cartoon characters would fill our banks and pockets, and people would become strangely optimistic.

But there would be a dark side to the New Way. Sending letters would not only be a way of communicating with friends, family, and creditors, but your national responsibility. The senders of chain letters could be executed for subversion and treason. Damnit! The mail *must* go through!

Woe unto the neighborhoods with low mail traffic. To rectify such situations, the Postmaster would send in the Letter Gestapo. Many a night will the unsuspecting family be awakened by a snarled "Postage Due!" and a kick in the throat.

Though sad, it is inevitable that Postmen and their charges will be lost in the line of duty. For those brave patriots and the inadequately addressed mail, there will be the Tomb of the Unknown Letter. Each year, thousands of poorly addressed and undeliverable messages will be deposited at the Tomb, where two guards stand watchful while another Postmen slowly and methodically feeds the letters, one-by-one, into the eternal flame.

In my mind, I can hear the sound of as yet unborn children singing a child's remembrance of history waiting to happen. Gracies Dinnertime Theatre Page 5 awake. He'll know if you've been bad or good, 'cause he's big brother on the make..."

I shake my head and clear the image from my mind. Fucko is still sitting there, looking at me.

> "Or," he says laying down and using Buckminsterfullerene the Cat as a very



GDT Countdown 4 issues left to our 100th issue!





DONLAND SUES MICROSOFT:

In a surprise announcement on February 2, the Donland Justice Department (DJD) said they were filing suit against Microsoft Corp. over its forced Notepad bundling with Windows 95. The department is asking to fine Microsoft \$1 million in Mighty Taco gift certificates for every day it is in violation of an anti-anti-competitive agreement Microsoft entered into with Donland three years ago. According to the DJD, the agreement included the stipulation that Microsoft could not force computer makers to license any additional Microsoft products in order to resell Windows 95.

Notepad, a plain-text editor Microsoft distributes freely with its Windows 95 operating system, allows users to open ReadMe files, logs, and other simple text-based documents. However, Donland software developers claim that Microsoft is using the wide popularity of its operating system to eliminate competition in the text editor market.

"Microsoft is unlawfully taking advantage of its Windows monopoly to protect and extend that monopoly," Attorney General Don said in the petition. "The program is also lacking an "uninstall" option for users who have the application installed and wish to remove it. We would like to see such an option be made freely available to users."

Donland software developers had some stiff words for the Redmond, Washington based company. "I mean, when was the last time you saw someone come out with a good, old fashioned text editor? Microsoft has bludgeoned the competition with its free 'Notepad' application. Is Notepad a part of the operating system? I don't think so. Everyone's up in arms over Internet browsers, yet we quietly sit by as Microsoft has a monopoly on text editors? Microsoft must be stopped!" said one developer, who asked to remain anonymous.

How this will play out in Donland's Ultimate Court, remains to be seen. Microsoft refused to comment.

"Drug control of PERSONALITY WILL BE WIDELY ACCEPTED WELL before 2000. If a wife OR HUSBAND SEEMS TO **BE UNUSUALLY** GROUCHY...A SPOUSE WILL BE ABLE TO POP DOWN TO THE CORNER STORE, BUY SOME ANTI-GROUCH PILLS AND SLIP Depression isolates. THEM INTO THE COFFEE." -Olaf Helmer, Scientist, the Rand Corporation. Quoted in Time, Feb 25, 1966 Prozac can help.

Tourist's Movie Reviews:

-Sean Stanley This week: "As Good as it Gets"

AKA "JACK NICHOLSON IS A SCARY MOTHERFUCK-ER"

Heeeeeeeeee's Melvin! Uncle Jack is looking good in his older age. Damn scary though. As the ten year anniversary of the first Batman movie approaches(remember that they

made it in 1988, and released it in 89), I look at St. Nicholson and realize that HE IS ONE OF THE SCARI-EST MEN OF ALL TIME!!! This is especially apparent in this film, because the principal photography consists mainly of close-up shots. On the big screen, when Jack flashes that staple grin at you, and his face is sixteen feet wide, you know that he truly is one frightening bastard. Can you imagine waking up one night, going to the bathroom and seeing Jack smiling at you in the bathtub? Or what if you encountered him in a dark alley. After voiding both

bladder and colon, I personally would scream like a little bitch and look for things to throw. Don't get me wrong, I'm sure that he's a pretty nice guy, but I'll bet that when he "steps out", he really steps out! Remember that incident a few years back, when he beat the bejesus out of some guy's windshield in Manhattan rush hour traffic? If I were the driver of that car, I would have swallowed my own tongue. Why? Cause Jack Nicholson is a SCARY MOTHERFUCKER, that's why!

"Honey, a peculiar thing happened on the way home from work today."

"Really? What, dear?"

"Well, I was driving down Seventh Ave,

and out of nowhere, Jack Nicholson jumped on my hood and bashed in my windshield with a nine-iron."

"Jack Nicholson, you say?"

"Yes, Jack Nicholson."

"He's one scary motherfucker."

"Tell me about it. I voided both my bladder and colon, and then swallowed my own

tongue."

Heres a little thought. America can use this to it's advantage. If human cloning takes off, as it should, I'm hoping that ole' Jack donates his genetic code to the US Government. Clone about fifty million Jack Nicholsons, and send them into Iraq. That'll teach em! Don't fuck with the United States. Why? Because we've got an army of Jack Nicholsons — pissed off, armed to the teeth, and if the genetic wizards prevail, with sixteen foot wide heads, THAT'S WHY!

Not only a members. Also a client

"Saddam, we've got problems. Our ground troops are retreating."

"Why? Why, damn you!"

"They've encountered the US infantry, sir. They're terrified. Most of them have voided both their bladders and their colons, some of them have even swallowed their own tongues."

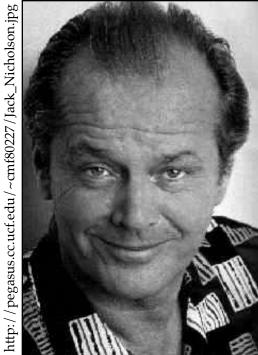
"Why? Scared of what?"

"Sir, the US infantry consists of several million Jack Nicholson clones, with sixteen foot wide heads, sir."

"Jack Nicholson? The scariest motherfucker on the planet?"

"That would be correct, sir."

"We're fucked."



A Reporter Sounds Off on the Media

By Ben Diamond Yale Daily News (Yale U.) 02/03/98

(U-WIRE) NEW HAVEN, CONN. — I was in Sterling Memorial Library last semester when I bumped into one of my English professors. We had become friends, and he knew I wrote for the Yale Daily News. He was clearly surprised to see me there, and asked:

"What are you doing here in the library? You're a journalist!"

Later that evening, I decided the real meaning of my professor's remark was probably:

1. You will be lucky to get a B in my class. As a tenured professor, I spend every day in this library. I know you do not come here. I also know you haven't read your Chaucer.

2. The library is a place for quiet reflection and careful thought and study. Journalism is a fast-paced, deadline-driven business. Academics come to libraries to read and discuss books in search for noble ideas and evasive truths. Journalists, however, thrive on scandals, rumors, and third-person hearsay.

At first, I thought my professor was definitely wrong, on both counts. I thought I could pull off an A in his class, even if I wasn't exactly "caught up" with all my reading. I thought journalism was a noble, exciting profession. After all, had it not been for Woodward and Bernstein's persistent and thorough reporting during the Watergate scandal, Richard Nixon might have gotten away with the crimes of the century.

Well, as is usually the case, I was the naive one, and my professor — the wise, old bird that he is — was right.

I got a B in the class (there's never enough time during reading week). And, in the past two weeks, American journalism has sunk to an abysmal, all-time low.

The recent coverage of President Bill Clinton's (LAW '73) alleged affair with a former White House intern has been so unprofessional that I am ashamed to call myself a journalist. Going down to Washington, D.C. last week confirmed my worst fears about this profession.

What is currently being reported as fact is often attributed to unnamed sources and third-hand reports. It is sloppy and vile work. Consider, for example, some of the following allegations and the sources news organizations have cited:

The Dallas Morning News reported last Monday that the President and Monica Lewinsky were seen in a compromising situation by a Secret Service agent. The story, which was picked up by the Associated Press, cited "a source familiar with the case" who had been interviewed by a member of Independent Prosecutor Kenneth Starr's staff. Only a few hours after its story was posted on the World Wide Web, the newspaper retracted it. Then, on Wednesday, the Dallas Morning News claimed that part of the story was still true, even though it had been retracted. The person who saw the President and Ms. Lewinsky "might not have been an active Secret Service agent;" the situation was "ambiguous," not "compromising;" and "Mr. Starr's staff had not interviewed him," according to the New York Times. Woops.

Last week, ABC News' Nightline aired a long piece in which they sighted "sources" that claimed Mr. Clinton and Ms. Lewinsky only engaged in oral sex, and that Mr. Clinton had said before that oral sex was not adultery. This claim was first made several years ago in *The American Spectator*, a popular conservative magazine. Nightline did not reveal the sources for its story.

"Stop the Noise!" Rube Goldberg Contest i n \$ 2 0 0 +

GDT's third, but probably last, contest. In honor of all things crafty & wacky, GDT is sponsoring a Rube Goldberg Contest.

GOAL: STOPPING THE NOISE OF AN ALARM CLOCK. WHO CAN ENTER: ANYONE! DATE: APRIL 18TH, 52AT (1998) LOCATION: TBA, RIT CONTACT: GDT@INAME.COM OR (716) 235-7666

RULES AND REGULATIONS:

• The dimensions of the machine shall not exceed 6x6x6 feet.

• Each team must submit three copies of a step-by-step description of its machine by 10:30am on the day of the contest. The description must be legible and concise.

• Each team is responsible for the security of their machine and for removing their machine and related debris immediately following the contest.

• During the run, each team my assist their machine once without penalty. Any further assistance required will entail a penalty for each occurrence.

• Only two people from each team will be allowed to interact with the machine once activated.

• Machines must not use combustible fluids, explosives, open flames, or overtly hazardous materials. Safety issues will be decided by the judges. The decision of the judges is final.

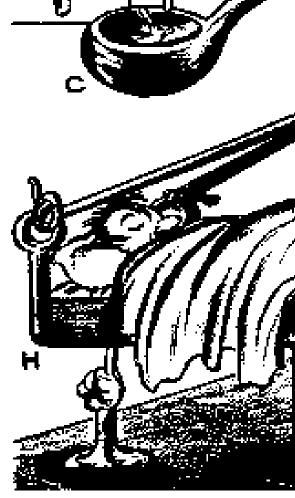
• Machines must not incorporate live animals.

• A minimum of eight separate steps must be made to complete the task, four of which must be non-electrical. Each step beyond the required eight will represent additional points.

• There will be a upper time limit of ten minutes for the completion of machine's run. Judging will cease at this time. A run includes activation to completion of the the task.

• Two separate attempts will be allowed to attain the objective.

• Supply your own damn alarm clock.



Perhaps the most egregious reporting came the day the story first broke, when journalists speculated whether or not Bill Clinton would be impeached for perjury or have to resign as President. As James Naughton wrote in Sunday's New York Times: "Never mind that no one has been charged with any crime in this case, that perjury is hard to prove, that even if it were proved it might not be found in these circumstances to constitute high crimes and misdemeanors." Forget all that. The press was out, from day one, to hang the President and — for now at least — there's not stopping them.

What was going on down there in D.C.? I spent last Tuesday in a small press room on the third floor of the Capitol building waiting around for the State of the Union to begin. Once inside (which took some doing — who is the Yale Daily News, anyway?) I started talking with the reporters there from the Washington press corps. These were the old, seasoned, Capitol Hill veterans. Hunched over their laptop computers with cups of coffee, these were the guys who had seen it all.

"This is the greatest," a reporter from a Boston paper told me. "Normally, we have to be out for blood, but the President shot himself on this one."

Gracies Dinnertime Theatre Page 10 Indeed every member of the press I talked to was thrilled with the scandal. "Finally," they said, "something more interesting to write about than budget surpluses and health care."

I came back from D.C. earlier than I had planned. I felt like Lucien Chardon, the protagonist in Balzac's Lost Illusions, who discovered, much to his chagrin, that the Paris journalist of the 1830s had "a little weasel-face as palled as an underdone white of egg, with a pair of eyes, soft blue in colour, but appalling in their malice."

Journalism, I learned, at least the way it is practiced now, might not be the profession for me. I don't have the taste for blood. I have a problem with printing rumors from motivated sources which could bring down a President and imperil our nation. Nor am I eager to knock on the door of the woman whose daughter was killed in a car accident a few hours ago and ask for her "comment."

It's true, I don't spent a lot of time in Sterling with my copy of The Canterbury Tales.

Maybe it's time to start anew.

Either way, though, it is clear that as journalists, we certainly have room for improvement.

Bear Bones by David Berenson, the Dartmouth, Dartmouth College



NASA recruiting Congressmen?

By Bob Bowers *Oklahoma Daily* (U. Oklahoma) 02/04/98

(U-WIRE) NORMAN, OKLA. — Senator John Glenn, 72, wanted to be sent back to space to study the effects of space travel on old people. NASA complied. Ethical questions aside (why is NASA pandering to someone responsible for reviewing its budget? Why is the issue of old people in space a valid one?), this move is clearly a cheap public relations gimmick to revitalize waning public interest in America's space program. They're sending one of America's original heroes into the heavens for a last hurrah, and they know America will be watching.

Well I say phooey on all that! If NASA wants to mix politics and space missions, then they should do it right. This could be an effective public relations tool for NASA as well as Congress, especially if they add some scandal and excitement.

Americans love drama. More people tuned in to this year's State of the Union address than last year's. Not because they wanted to hear President Clinton pat himself on the back, but because they wanted to see if Clinton would say anything about "the scandal". This inadvertently brought the public's attention back to national politics (the Pope went where?).

If NASA were to, say, send Congress members into space — with some added spice, of course — people would begin to vote and maybe even to read again. Even in West Virginia!

Just imagine, a bipartisan committee could be sent into space with Glenn to study the effects of space travel on politics. On board would be Republicans Trent Lott, Jesse Helms and Alfonso D'Amato. For the Democrats, we'd have Dick Gephart to study the effects of whining and space travel. For the effects of space travel on libido, there'd be Ted Kennedy.

Things would go wrong from the beginning. Lott does nothing but talk about Ole Miss. Glenn insists on watching Cocoon over and over. Gephart whines about the inequality of the NASA program, hence the lack of women and minorities on the mission.

"Shut up, girlie boy," Helms yells. "We couldn't bring women — Kennedy's on board!"

Suddenly, a comet passes. Lott stands up and tries to rally his Republican colleagues. "We must follow the comet!" he cries out passionately. "When we're one with the comet, we'll leave our earthly containers, rise above our human existence and the GOP will become relevant again!"

The GOP attempts to take control of the ship — but watch out for the stowaway! Oh no, it's William Weld, and he's come to kill Jesse Helms! D'Amato goes for the tackle, and Weld loses his head. No, he doesn't literally lose his head, silly readers. Weld's mask comes off as he's tackled. Turns out he's none other than Bob Kerry.

"I knew you weren't a real Republican," Lott says.

The ship chases the comet and the hijinks continue. There's a parallel universe where everyone sees Sonny Bono floating in space evolving from old Bono to '60s Bono to fetus Bono. Then our beloved Congressionauts throw a party when they arrive at Mir to discover the space station took control of itself and killed off all the Russians ("I'm sorry, Ivan. I can't let you do that").

And Glenn, showing the world that American senior citizens can master space as well as anyone, does a perfect job piloting the ship to safety. Well, almost perfect.

"Discovery ... this is Houston Control ... your turn signal is on."

The Religious Wrong: *"Let the spirit of giving wash over you."* Out of context and into your life

"I WANT YOU TO JUST LET A WAVE OF INTOL-ERANCE WASH OVER YOU. I WANT YOU TO LET A WAVE OF HATRED WASH OVER YOU. YES, HATE IS GOOD... OUR GOAL IS A CHRISTIAN NATION. WE HAVE A BIBLICAL DUTY, WE ARE CALLED ON BY GOD TO CONQUER THIS COUN-TRY. WE DON'T WANT EQUAL TIME. WE DON'T WANT PLURALISM."

-Randall Terry, *The News Sentinel*,

Ft. Wayne, Ind. 16 August, 1993 "You say, 'You're supposed to be nice to the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians and the Methodists and this, that and the other thing'-nonsense! I don't have to be nice to the spirit of the anti-Christ! I can love the people who have false opinions, but I don't have to be nice to them."

> –Pat Robertson, 700 Club 14 January, 1991

He said she said:

"YOU COULD SAY THAT I EARNED MY PRESIDENTIAL KNEEPADS." -Denniss Lytton, political science major at the University of California, Los Angeles, relating what Monica Lewinsky said to him...I guess about skateboarding.

