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Stepping around the Right

All we need now is for the Supreme Court further sanctioning government manipulation of individual lives. It could be one helluva carny ride, complete with gestapo lights and funhouses.

BY MICHAEL S. REED

Leaves are turning. Summer has definitely passed. The air grows colder, the nights longer, and a burning smell is in the air. Already people discuss Halloween. Pumpkins, perhaps apples, get softer, more rotten every day. Autumn. Decay. All those bodies in Molalla. Someone very sick out there. A portion of a woman's leg found floating in the river. People playing Rambo on the California freeways — "forgot your turn signal, neighbor, you lose"

Apparently we must control our sexual urges, but our violent urges are of little consequence. It is at this juncture that most organized religions depart from the teachings of the man they purport to be the final word on any topic. Very ironic, laughable if only it weren't so sad.

Current events: Robert Bork. Do we want him on the Supreme Court? I have encountered several attorneys who say, "Hell, no." Bork's own writings suggest that his appointment would signal the undoing of several years of social progress. The way the tide is turning in this country shows that Bork's appointment could give the right wing moralists the tool they need to dismantle any progress the gay rights movement has made. His appointment could very well insure that publications, such as the one you're reading now, could be considered "obscene" and, therefore, unlawful. His record of decision making shows that he favors government and business over individuals. All we need now is to have the Supreme Court further sanctioning government manipulation of individual lives. The next thing you know we're in for one helluva carny ride, complete with flashing gestapo lights and funhouses, the likes of which no one here has seen before.

Everybody got their passports ready?

Yet, would running away be a viable option? Wouldn't it be better to stick it out and see what happens? Nothing keeps the blood pumping better than a good fight. The only trouble with the idea of fighting is that we are an awfully passive community. Perhaps we are passive because to be outspoken and angry would mean giving up a relatively affluent lifestyle (after all, how long would we keep our jobs in the "straight" world if we came off as screaming terrorists?). In any event, we hold our passivity as if we truly believe it is a weapon. "Do what you like to us," we tell the world, "we do not care. You have spat in our faces, you have burned us, incarcerated us, castrated us, electrocuted us — and still we turn our face this way and that just so your fist can find it."

Larry Kramer, the author of *Faggots* and playwright of *The Normal Heart* wonders why more of us aren't angry. He proposes that we should "tie up whole cities; throw bombs; stop traffic; surround the White House."

Kramer defines a real and important problem. Our passivity, he maintains, is "contributing to our own genocide."

It is a time for action, but forget the violence. Violence will only convince the homophobes that we are a dangerous entity to be exterminated. We are not, however, dangerous. At this point we are so harmless and weak that we could be herded up like sheep. Even more unsettling, there would be no one to speak out in our defense.

What Mr. Kramer forgets here is that acts of terrorism would basically be shitting in our own nest. If we are to shape our world into the place of peace that it must be, we must approach difficulties in a more reasoned manner than those who have gone before. Now is certainly not the time for violent, murderous acts. Not enough is at stake. Yet.

Leaving open Mr. Kramer's proposals is fine. To dismiss Mr. Kramer lightly would, at this point, be quite foolish. He may be a loudmouth and an extremist, but someone must be if we are to generate the energy we need.

A place to begin: we may ask ourselves if we are doing enough for our people, our community, and the world. It is possible to be active without being destructive. There is too much destruction and waste in this country as it is. To try to destroy the system we live in is pointless.

We must always remember that this is our home, too. We have a say here. At least, so far.

*Supply your own epithet.



— BLAM! Just blow the -----* away. Simple. And so American. If you don't like it, if it messes up your life in any way, get rid of it.

Welcome to the disposable age in the home of the brave. Styrofoam McDonald's shells, Big Gulp cups and human beings. At least human beings are biodegradable. The wanton cruelty in this country is astounding, even more astounding is violence for the thrill of entertainment. Look at all the slash movies. Watch TV for a few minutes and someone is bound to be shot, punched, tripped, smashed in a car wreck or fall prey to some other form of violence. Ah, well, just a part of our pioneering spirit.

What is ironic is that Americans find it possible to stomach violence, yet can become remarkably squeamish about sex. We have difficulty talking about it. Right wing fundamentalists prefer that we pretend it doesn't exist.

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