

NORTH COAST

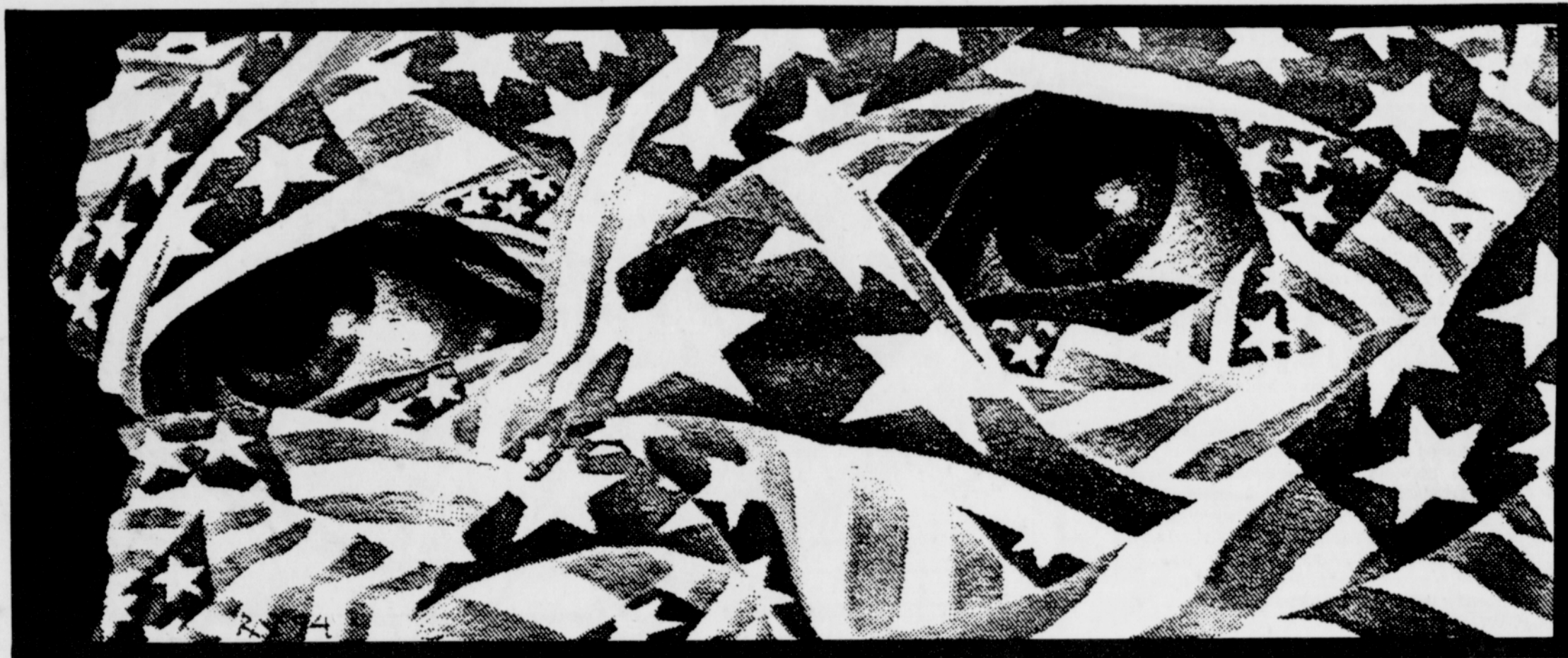


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In a dark time the eye begins to see.
- Theodore Roethke

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DRAWING BY RAY BARTKUS

THIRD WORLD AMERICA

BY R. F. SKINSHEDDER

First you set it up. You hire some people to get out there and call themselves drug lords, allowing them to have big artillery, something they can sell to others, turning them on to the flipside of big business. What you end up with is gang warfare, crack houses, etc. You predominate in low income housing areas.

Next you allow the fear to sink in. The people you've hired, the actors, have taught the new kids well. The new kids like the power, the Mercedes, the respect. Especially after so many years of torture, ridicule and bad education. Now they are shooting people. There is blood in senseless drug-induced waves. The drug has been perfected. The perfect blend of accessibility, addiction and disconnection from spirit.

"People are dying!" you then announce. "We've got to clean up our streets!" We've got to rid our neighborhoods of fear!"

So now...Now you lift the limits on police gun raids. Now you tell them they may enter certain areas without a warrant.

"It's for the sake of all the peaceful loving people in the world, you understand. Crime and violence in public housing projects is taking away the basic rights of children who grow up there. These include the right to go out to the playground, the right to sit by an open window; the right to walk to the corner without fear of gunfire; the right to go to school safely in the morning; the right to celebrate your 10th birthday without coming home to bloodshed and terror..."

And before you know it, you've actually got people convinced that this might quite possibly be the

answer to the problem that you played a major role in instigating in the first place.

Eventually it is snuck onto a proposition somewhere. You vote for some clean water bill or something without noticing the fine print there involving a Constitutional adjustment allowing police free reign when it comes to searching low income areas without a warrant.

Meanwhile, of course, with NAFTA and America's rapid behind-the-scenes third worldization, the percentage of low income housing areas is increasing, despite the facade of such things as the Matrix Program which was fought recently in San Francisco by the homeless and other pro-humanity people.

I heard a song recently on a college radio station. The music was loud while the singer blared out, "The President's a bad man / disguised as someone stupid..."

I thought it was kind of funny. But I would've added "disguised as someone peaceful," or perhaps "disguised as someone who cares..."

These are indeed twisted and dangerous times.

The only way out...
Is in.

R.P. Skinshedder lives in the San Francisco Bay area. He is "learning how to cook better, holding down a job and quit smoking 15 days ago."

BORN AGAIN BIRD'S 15th BIRTHDAY (PAGE 16)