

A PAGE FROM XOCHOMILCO

On Feasting--Palnergast's Conviction--Rats Like Bloodhounds, Saved By Candlelight-- A Roar In The Night

by Doctor Xochomilco

That night I ate dinner at Seronera Lodge in the Serengeti, Tanzania, East Africa, Southern Hemisphere, Earth, third planet from the sun in a solar system of nine planets in a galaxy named after a candy bar.

I had a light meal, but some accounts would have it that I feasted. By accident, I sat with two German women and an American by the name of Palnergast whose eyebrows were brought together in the center of his forehead as if in permanent prayer. The silence after the spar, Gabby and Palnergast were in a funk, disgusted. Gerta had not said a thing. Quite unpopular, I was, however, fine and dandy.

The topic had been Somalia. Millions of starving people versus 'imperialist American forces', you see.

I've never starved, but once I slept two nights on a bench, eating a banana for breakfast, lunch and dinner - the same one, that is. Then there was that stretch in Taiwan where my neighbors went round sampling the stray dog population. I kept hoping they'd invite me over. It was insanity.

Palnergast told Gabby that he'd tried before to reason with me; to forget it; it is useless. Gabby was downright caustic. Palnergast said he was stuffed.

A zebra cantered in front of the vehicle as we drove back to the bunkhouse. The outside light had been left on so there were bugs a-plenty. Along the walls, cluttering the floor, crawling over the window screen. Real exotic ones, too. I tucked my mosquito net round the mattress, and when the light was nixed I trickled quickly away into that much acclaimed gutter between reality and dreams.

And I did the time-space twirl.

A Huey thundering over some bleak god-forsaken scape. Blank sky, white sun, frying-pan desert. Somalia. Palnergast sitting opposite looking airsick, and with those worried eyebrows. I'm feeling fine. Below us, something. Four life forms, barely I motion the pilot this is the spot. Rodger. Down we go, rotors whirling, slapping, a red dust devil rising. The door opens. The black, emaciated life forms. They are thinking, Angels? Devils? No, human beings. Palnergast is wrenched from his seat, yanked out the door. Standing there disheveled in the desert of his convictions, I tell him he's going to take a tumble down Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs real fast, but that if he gets started before the sun evaporates his senseless hide, he can make the U.N. relief station in Baldoa a scant twenty klicks due east, whichever way that is. I note that some say logic taken to its inth is illogical. I motion to the barely life-forms with bloated bellies we carry on board, saying, perhaps the same holds true for starving. Anyway, something to ponder over in his wanderings. Raving mutely in the rotor wash, Palnergast's hair whips with the grit of the resurrected dust devil. My heel is just grinding Palnergast's fingers from the landing skid when...

Ben? Willard? Quite right - and all the rest of rat pack back home in the bunkhouse. They bound across the rafters like bloodhounds, poured up from the cracks. African wildlife, get your camera.

Hey, whattayas think this place is? A Habitrail?

Rats were all over the place. Palnergast high-tailed it and slept in the car the three of them drove in on. I found out later when Palnergast and Co. had gone on, the rats came for the bugs - crunch crunch crunch. The bugs that kamikazed the candle flame, crackling and popping in their own funeral pyre. In the morning they were petrified in a puddle of dried wax.

I lit a candle and the beasts retreated from the light like the little furry vampires they

were, into every nook and cranny. Greta thanked me. Gabby peeped she wanted one too by her bed. Fine. I slept like a stone.

Alone, several eves later, I awoke to hear a lion roar. I had never heard a lion roar before, but the instant it seized the night, stilled the savanna, somehow grazed my throat, my liver, my stomach, my heart, well, it was clear enough what prowled out there, along the venues of darkness.



Liberty is the only thing you cannot have unless you are willing to give it to others.
William Allen White

Ain't Nobody's Business If You Do
(The Absurdity of Consensual Crimes in a Free Society)
by Peter McWilliams
Prelude Press
8159 Santa Monica Blvd
Los Angeles, Ca 90046
1-800-LIFE-101
\$22.95

This is a provocative book! Mr. McWilliams examines the costs, economic and social, of what used to be called "Victimless Crimes", but which he prefers to call Consensual Crimes, and makes a very strong argument for getting the Government out of the morality business. The dust jacket alone will provide hours of stimulating debate.

"What are consensual crimes? A consensual crime is any activity - currently illegal - that does not physically harm the person or property of another."

The idea behind this book is simple: As an adult, you should be allowed to do with your person and property whatever you choose, as long as you don't physically harm the person or property of another.

- Here are a few facts:
- ▲ More than 350,000 people are in jail right now for consensual crimes.
 - ▲ An additional 1,500,000 are on parole or probation.
 - ▲ More than 4,000,000 people will be arrested this year for committing consensual crimes.
 - ▲ We will spend more than \$50,000,000,000 (yes, that's billion) this year punishing people for "crimes" that do not physically harm people or property of another.
 - ▲ We will lose an additional \$150,000,000,000 this year in tax revenue.

The only thing that saves us from all having gone to jail for consensual crime at one time or another is the inefficiency of the system.

- Why can't we just live and let live? If we did, we'd
- ▲ Reduce personal income tax by one-third
 - ▲ Create 6,000,000 tax-paying jobs
 - ▲ Stimulate the economy
 - ▲ Reduce real crime by freeing police to catch real criminals - murderers, robbers, rapists, etc.
 - ▲ Unburden the court system
 - ▲ Double available jail space
 - ▲ Free the federal authorities to track down polluters, terrorists, consumer fraud, and savings and loan embezzlers (and prevent such half-a-trillion-dollar travesties from recurring)
 - ▲ Create an environment in which people can live their own lives in their own way, free to experiment, free to fail, but also free to succeed."

Mr. McWilliams goes on to list the most popular consensual crimes: gambling, recreational drug use, religious drug use, prostitution, pornography and obscenity, violation of marriage (adultery), fornication, oral sex, anal sex, bigamy, polygamy, cohabitation), homosexuality, regenerative drug use and unorthodox medical practices ("Quacks!"), unconventional religious practices ("Cults!"), unpopular political views

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("Commies!"), transvestism, not using safety devices (such as motorcycle helmets and seat belts), public drunkenness, jaywalking, loitering, and vagrancy (as long as they don't become trespassing or disturbing the peace).

This is not just some old hippy wanting to legalize pot, no, this 800 page plus volume wants us to re-examine our society and its attitudes toward personal freedom and government responsibilities. He includes:

A Primer of American Self-Government

1. Understand, honor and preserve the Constitution of the United States.
2. Keep forever separate and distinct the legislative, executive and judicial functions of government.
3. Remember that government belongs to the people, is inherently inefficient, and that its activities should be limited to those which government alone can perform.
4. Be vigilant for freedom of speech, freedom of worship, and freedom of action.
5. Cherish the system of Free Enterprise which made America great.
6. Respect thrift and economy, and beware of debt.
7. Above all, let us be scrupulous in keeping our word and in respecting the rights of others. (By Philip D. Reed)

The book could be dull and preachy, but is very funny and can be read with great enjoyment and embarrassment by both liberals and conservatives. Also throughout the book on every page almost, are quotes that will make you laugh or groan or wonder. We have included some of our favorites in this issue of the Edge. We called the publishers and talked to "Ed" and he said that this is the "only" book available on this subject, and that it is now 50% off at most bookstores, so please buy lots of copies, it apparently is not selling as well as was hoped. It is a shame, because these days with the OCA, the religious right, Lottery Mania, AIDS, Crack Gang Warfare, and the over-crowded prison situation, this is a valid option that should be discussed, debated and decided. So, don't let the size scare you -- it's a funny fast read -- nor the pictures of the nearly naked folks on the dust jacket prevent you from taking the subject seriously. (Available now at Cannon Beach Books)



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