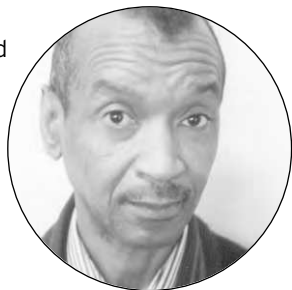


Pinko Black Oregonian

Few of us know what we really are.

I'm no political animal. If there were an election for water meter reader I would lose hands down – and that's the truth. But my friend Richard disagrees. "It's not true. What you call non-political is nothing more than your pinko Oregonian views," said Richard at his home in Mountain View, Calif. He is a George Bush black Republican and every summer I visit him and his family. If one didn't know him, one might think that he had an exiguous mind – not at all. He just hates Jessie Jackson liberals.



"So, how are those tree huggers up there in Eugene doing?" he asked me. "I think that they are using the birds to send subliminal messages to George W," I said.

"Just what I thought," replied this old buddy of mine. Richard and his Portuguese wife have four children. One son is in college and the other just joined the National Guard, taking special training so that he can save our troops behind enemy lines. "So what do you and the Eugene peace brigade think about the war?" he suspiciously asked me.

"Well, my friend, if I really thought about this war, I would turn pink, or pinko if you like, but I'd rather enjoy a corned beef sandwich."

"You're passive man and have spent too many winters in Sweden."

"Yeah, you're probably right again."

"It's too bad that you never went into the Army. It would have been good for you."

"Well, Richard, I am too tired to get into that. It was a long trip down from Eugene. I'll see you in the morning."

"OK, but if you can't sleep, here are a couple of books you should read." *The Art Of War for Executives: The ancient wisdom of Sun Tzu's classic text – interpreted for today's business leader.* The other one, *Basic Economics, A Citizen's Guide to the Economy* by Thomas Sowell, the conservative black economist. I'd read later.

As the days passed in the California sun I wondered how this new label – the old Joe McCarthy one – would stick in Eugene. I had enough problems in the Emerald City just being a black man, whatever that is. We spent the Fourth of July with friends of his wife. They were a couple that managed a condo in Los Gatos.

"Isn't Eugene the city that has all of those anarchists?" asked my female host. "No, they only have one resident anarchist, John Zerzan," I said. It was funny I thought – little Eugene is perceived as an anarchist cell.

It's quite different down here in Silicone Valley where a snow cone will cost you a fortune, and the only anarchists are the young ones at Google shooting down buckets full of dollars. "Bobby Bonds lives right up the road," said Richard as we drove from Los Gatos back to his home.

"God, will you look at that! There must be 20 of them living in there," said Richard's wife, Sid, as we drove past a house in the barrio. They were Mexican workers hoping for a piece of the California peach pie.

"Hey Rich, turn on the TV," I said when we came into the house. "I guess you watch PBS?" asked my homeboy. "Every day dude. Where's the beer?"

I sat there watching *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*. "Man, how can you watch that bullshit?" asked Richard. "And I bet you read the *New York Times* too, and all of that pinko garbage."

"Sometimes I do, but I also read *Dagens Nyheter*, the Swedish newspaper, *The International Herald Tribune*, the *Times of London*, and *Die Welt*.

"Good night Mr. International. I'll see you in the morning."

I knew that I was bugging him. We both knew that we could only do this once a year. I was having a ball with all of this Eugene pinko business. The closest that I've come to meeting any pinkos (and certainly not any black ones) in Eugene were old hippies hanging out at Max's bar, or Taylor's around happy hour – gulp! Pass the weed, dude.

Calling me pinko black or *whatever*, as the young say, brings me back to this name game, which is amusing but fundamentally irrelevant: One is defined by what one does. The kids at John Henry's are called Goths and they don't seem to be doing anything but having fun. The "happy" hour crowd at other downtown watering holes are called boozers – nothing wrong with that except that they are anything but happy, and sometimes when I am drinking in those bars I feel like I am trapped in a lunatic asylum filled with catatonics, obsessives and friends of Jerry Springer. Few of us know what we really are; most of us present a persona to the world. We are all, in a sense, actors. This is quite evident in Eugene.

So ends the summer that I called red hot.

Jerry Harris is an internationally known sculptor and writer who resides in Eugene.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"the machinery of capitalism." Well, yes. I'm a Marxist-Humanist, and believe so as well. But that's no excuse to hide behind an abstraction, and fail to deal with the concrete issue at hand.

However, perhaps most disturbing thus far is the non-response of *EW*. Did the editorial staff have any discussion of this topic in a meeting, and what were the results? Did the owner(s) have a discussion on their position on this question? And if so, what were the results?

Eugene Gogol
Eugene, egogol@hotmail.com

EDITOR'S NOTE: We're happy to talk to anyone about this issue, and we've had many discussions both internally and with our readers. In short, as an "alternative" newspaper, we choose to put few restrictions on our editorial content and advertising.

SPEED IS THE PROBLEM

After reading Randy Kolb's response (8/19) to my 8/5 letter, I have more empathy for people who get misrepresented in the press. As #41 once proclaimed, "Read my lips." I wasn't advocating "free reign" for cats (ours didn't have it). I was attempting to make a valid point that reckless speeding is prevalent and dangerous. While walking my dogs (and cleaning up after them, Mr. Kolb), I've almost been hit myself. Wildlife can't be kept indoors, and small children make mistakes, which are more likely to be fatal when speeding is part of the equation. You may be comfortable being an enabler for speeders — I'm not.

Robert Hermann
Eugene

END THE CYCLE

I sympathize deeply with Robert Hermann, whose cat was killed by a careless driver (letters, 8/5). Having been blessed with many cats myself, I know the pain at their sudden departure. Should Robert choose, and I hope he does, to adopt another kitten, I hope he will recognize his responsibility to shield it from the dangers that it is not able to cope with and keep it inside. With five cats of our own, and after losing others to cars and dogs, we've found that they readily adapt to life inside, and they live much longer, healthier lives. Robert is right — animals do not exist in a void. Every outdoor cat that kills already struggling songbirds takes fathers and mothers from their nests — the numbers of birds nationally reaches into the tens to hundreds of millions.

Build your cat an enclosure off a window, so they can feel the sun and wind. They are domestic animals — they ceased being wild when we brought them into our homes. Why should we, who care so deeply for animals, loose them on native animal populations whose homes are already disappearing? Keeping your cats indoors ends the killing cycle — your cat lives, and so does the wildlife.

Jonathan B. Smith
Eugene

AMERICAN EMPIRE

David Hazen's excellent letter (8/12), without using the term specifically, is an appropriate description of the American Empire and it's current dysfunctional impact on/ in the world.

Am I correct in believing that the only

way empires get changed is either through armed insurrection, or very slow, almost imperceptible changes over time? If we discard the possibility of the U.S. being altered via armed revolution, given our "super power status," then is it possible to cast a vote in this fall's election that will have the effect of altering our Empire's trajectory?

We are led to believe that a vote for John Kerry is important in this regard; but I suspect that, even if true, it would mean only a slight tweaking in the direction of the Empire, not its total transformation.

Kerry might be able to promote more international cooperation, and a moderate redistribution of wealth back to the middle class. But the tentacles of American Empire would still remain.

Adding to what David Hazen expressed, I do not think we will ever be "safe" until and unless the Empire is substantially altered. How this might be accomplished, and whether or not it is even something we can "vote" for, are the conundrums we face. Is this why 50 percent of voters do not bother to participate in national elections?

M. Boyd Wilcox
Corvallis

MILITARY ASSAULT

An ongoing topic of discussion in *EW* letters is violence against women. And yet there is a most chilling story which has received no comment, perhaps because it has not been widely reported. A most disturbing enemy is lurking in the camps of our troops; 176 female troops have reported being sexually assaulted by fellow service members in Iraq and Afghanistan. The number of sex crimes in the military is probably much higher since a large number of cases go unreported.

Among the most disturbing trends, is the military's treatment of sexual assault cases. Women have reported poor medical treatment, lack of counseling and incomplete criminal investigations — some say they were even threatened with punishment after reporting assaults. A task force appointed by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld called for sweeping changes in May, but victim advocates expressed alarm, saying emergency needs of woman overseas were basically ignored. Incredibly, the military will not fund abortions for women who are raped. They will, however, give abortions if you are willing to pay for it (small comfort to the rape victim). And, there are reports of women coming back to the U.S., after being raped, getting their abortions, and then sent right back into the war zone. No recovery time, no time to deal with any of the abuse going on, and the military is aware of this. Sadly, there is virtually no rape trauma counseling being administered.

Please contact your representatives and call for an outside, independent, investigative agency separate from the Pentagon. According to Dorothy Mackey, founder of Survivors Take Action Against Abuse by Military Personnel, this agency must be able and willing to equally and unbiasedly prosecute generals and admirals all the way down to those at the lowest ranks, because it does come from the very top. Until we have that, we will not have these crimes stopped.

Christopher Michaels
Eugene