

CORDWAINER BURBEE #11

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being Dave Van Arnam's on-stencil fmz
for the Fanoclasts with the swell old
letter column and the same old mellow
drifting around for page after page

The lettercol was typed up last night while waiting for it to be time to call this guy about some possible moneymaking scripting for CBS or something. Couldn't stand the just sitting here waiting. Anyway, I think I should explain something rather curious about the heading up above. The dating system, that is (everything else is obviously self-explanatory, of course). Early issues of this esteemed publication FIRST DRAFT were occasionally given with two dates, as I felt that if I cut the stencils on, say, Saturday, but didn't run them off till Monday, proper systematization of my fanac decreed I shd date by time-of-writing and time-of-actual-publication both. I have since decided not to date FD this way. The date is the day of writing; it's usually published on the same day anyway, now that I'm not doing any FDs on my home typer. So this FD was written on two days. That should explain the slightly different colophon this issue.

Boy, hey, fascinating, what?

Lessee, on the Involvement front...the question seems to be centered on just what one should do when directly or indirectly confronted with a violent or potentially violent situation involving anywhere from one person on up to a mob. I gather (subject to clarification, John) that the liberal, or Boardman, position is roughly that all and any such violent or violent-tending situations should be left to the police to handle. This immediately brings up the question of what do you do when there aren't any police around?

Put it this way: [1] It's you and one or two others in a small violent situation not of your starting, and [2] It's a larger group (including you) in a large violent situation not of your starting. Add to these the aforementioned stipulation: no police are around/available at the time the trouble is stirring. What do you do?

The Subway Incident is a good example of [1]. As only a potentially violent situation, all that in the end was required was for someone to step in and keep two people apart to prevent them from doing unspecified injuries to each other. There were people of nominally authoritative status around (the motorman, two station men, possibly the conductor tho I didn't notice him if he was there). But these people were willing to stand aside from a woman begging for help. One might well say, "well, if those in charge don't think it's a dangerous situation, it's not up to me to do anything." But I regarded it as potentially a very dangerous situation, and since no one else would do anything, I stepped in. Now, I was unarmed. What if the fellow had pulled a knife, or a gun, and attempted to kill the woman? I don't know what I would have done (I have a higher regard for the value of my own life than for that of any other person I can even hypothesize as existing). I doubt if my actions would have been very heroic. And I doubt whether my carrying a gun myself would have changed the situation very much.

So there's something for John and something for Dick. One does have to take a certain amount of private action (stuff your term of "vigilante" in this case, John*), but it can only go so far. For when a man chooses to step outside of Society by drawing a gun and implying his capability of taking an unacceptable action, one can, I think, only stand aside helplessly and wait for the Law to arrive, if it does. (Note: I mean for a man like the one on the subway, not for a man drawing a weapon strictly in self-defense.) *I take your letter to imply private action is unjustifiable, but I'm willing to be corrected. No insult intended; I'm too cowardly to go around insulting people and telling them to stuff it.

As for [2]. There has just come up, of course, a fine example of this
What is black and yellow and squeals when you turn it over?

situation. I refer to the "Maccabees" formed out in Brooklyn. It seems that there've been an increasing number of crimes of violence in one neighborhood composed largely of Jews. Muggings, robberies, rapes, breaking & entering, etc. The leader of a sect of Hasidic Jews, a Rabbi who'd lived through a Nazi concentration camp, decided that the only way to survive was to provide some sort of protection for the neighborhood. There were nowhere near enough cops to do the job; not even the cops deny this. So four radio-cars were privately set up and manned by unarmed men, mostly Jews except for some gentiles who volunteered to work on Fridays, and the area is constantly patrolled from dusk to sunup each day. Calls for help are relayed to the police, suspicious characters are kept track of, crimes spotted are, again, relayed to the police (who are grateful but who would like the "Maccabees" to sign up as auxiliary police), and occasionally the men are able to break up an actual crime during its commission, employing citizen's arrest (and muscles, when

...a school bus

needed). Now there has already been a hell of a lot of screaming about "vigilantes" in the public prints. The Jews point out that there is a racial element involved in the muggings, etc., but that this is not the whole object of their actions. The Negroes, however, have been protesting with great vigor. So here's the question, gang: Are the Jews

What is soft, yellow, and lethal?

doing the Proper Thing? As in the Subway Incident, there are for all intents and purposes no police available to do anything about a pretty intolerable situation. One must, I think, defend the actions in this matter of such a persecuted race as the Jews. But there is the Negro reaction to be considered too, and they're pretty strong contenders in this country for the "Most-Persecuted" award. The letter column of

...shark-infested custard

FIRST DRAFT is open to all contenders. Come one, come all. Big free-for-all.

On the fannish side of the news, there was the last Fanoclasts Friday,
What is black and lives in trees and is very dangerous?

attended by Ted White, yhos, rich brown, John Boardman, Arnie Katz, Perdita & charming daughter whose name cannot at moment recall, and Ben

...a crow with a submachine gun

Orlove (and his, married, sister), who is the guy whose name I've been leaving out the last few issues because I can never remember it but I wrote it down this time so I wouldn't. Sorry about the lino-layout; I forgot to put them in till this page...

-- dgv

The tide is slowly turning; this time, two letters of comment for
a LETTER COLUMN

[REDACTED] First some stuff on Good Old Richard Milhous etc., or You're Another Only Worse. [REDACTED]

JOHN BOARDMAN (592 16th St, Brooklyn, NY, 11218)

(24 May 64)

For almost four years you Republican die-hards have been bitching about the Chicago election returns and how they would have made Dirty Dick the President of the United States. Suppose we have a look at this story.

I've done precinct-level political work in Chicago, so I think I can speak with a little authority on the subject. If politics are dirty in the city, they are scarcely cleaner in the suburbs. I recall in the election of 1950 I was poll-watching in Evanston. The good Republican ladies of the local election board wanted to wear "Vote Republican" tags to identify their party affiliations while they performed their clerical duties. It was with difficulty that I convinced them they shouldn't do it. About the middle of the morning the Republican ward boss came down with one of his tame cops and had me ejected from the polling place.

Elsewhere in the suburbs things are even worse. The good Republican leadership of Du Page County has a habit of holding back the local returns until they know how many votes the ticket will need from them to carry the state. This they did in 1960 -- a strategy which backfired in the recount, which actually gave Kennedy more votes than the original count.

Finally, what is alleged to have happened in Chicago? Certain precincts purportedly turned in more votes than they had residents. What you never see in all the Republican cries for a recount, is that these precincts were undergoing extensive demolition that year, displacing former residents. But many people went to the familiar neighborhood polling place to vote. If not there, where? -- Oh, I forgot -- Republicans are not necessarily opposed to denying people the right to vote. There should be no surprise in this Republican attempt to disenfranchise a handful of Chicagoans, when they are opposing the federal government's attempt to end the inequitably applied "literacy tests" in the South.

And what would have happened if the Republicans' Wednesday-morning-quarterbacking had succeeded? Had Nixon carried Illinois, this would have been the final tally in electoral votes:

Kennedy	276
Nixon	246
Byrd	15

That still looks like a Democratic win to me. [REDACTED] Yes, but of course remarks about a "Chicago recount" are meant to be taken as rather wryly humorous, after all. And also there were other Republican demands for recounts, I disremember me just where. Certainly Illinois alone wouldn't have gotten Nixon elected -- but I recently worked out that a shift of something on the order of 20,000 votes in the right states would have done it. In fact, I meant to copy out just where this would have worked, and to add it in here, but ... I forgot to. And in the meantime, FIRST DRAFT must be marching on. The real point is that only a very faint shift in the voting would have put Nixon in. I think that a man who came so very close to being the people's choice should be treated a little better than he is. [REDACTED]

((JOHN BOARDMAN nailing Nixon))

And would Nixon have been assassinated in Dallas? Probably not, because Lee Harvey Oswald (if he killed Kennedy, a premise I am by no means going to accept) [REDACTED] Nor I [REDACTED] would have been in a concentration camp, along with several thousand other people. [REDACTED] A premise I am by no means going to accept [REDACTED] This I can infer reasonably from Nixon's position on the McCarran Internal Security Act of 1950. He had a major part in writing this law, which in an earlier form had been called the "Mundt-Nixon Bill." This bill provided, among other things, that prison camps be established where people could be incarcerated without trial if the President proclaimed an "Internal Security Emergency." Upon warrant issued by the Attorney-General, upon evidence which he need not submit to the scrutiny of any court, anyone considered "likely" to commit subversive acts could be imprisoned indefinitely. Would Nixon have helped write this bill, had he considered that there were no need to proclaim an "Internal Security Emergency"? [REDACTED] You are confusing, I think, the desire to provide for a possible emergency with a possible conviction that said emergency "now" exists. I.e., I would say that Nixon helped write the bill because he considered that there might at some future date very well be an "Internal Security Emergency," and that it would be a Good Thing if there were some way of handling it speedily. Of course, if it is assumed automatically that the Soviet Union, and/or International Communism, would never never dream of attempting in any fashion the internal subversion of this country at any time, then of course anyone who attempts to protect this country against same is a hysterical paranoid and a dangerous rightist, etc. If those are not precisely the proper adjectives, forgive me; this is, after all, steadfastly First Draft material. [REDACTED]

Dick Lupoff's comments on "involvement" reflect the vigilante attitude characteristic of so many conservatives. The idea seems to be that if everyone carried a weapon, no one would have to holler for the cops; he could simply deal out his own brand of justice on the spot. And the government would fear to tread on the rights of the citizen if a revolution could be so easily mounted by an armed populace.

Look at the history of almost any Latin American nation, or of our own 19th-century southwest. Then ask yourself if you would want to live in such a culture.

Stay well,

-- John

[REDACTED] The 19th century southwest? No, I wouldn't. I'm chicken, man. I don't want to have to wonder who's going to try next to prove his courage on me by pulling a goddam revolver on me. I would, however, like to be able to protect myself when such incidents occur. True, in NYC it's more likely to be a knife, or rather several knives possessed by a small gang out for kicks and money. I would also like it if our NYC cops weren't so quick with plugging 15-year-old pursesnatchers in the back of the head when they panic and try to outrun them. It cuts both ways, of course. Always the balance. Take the two new laws Rock just signed into law. "Stop & Search" and "Knock-Knock," as I recall. Cops can now search anyone they think is suspicious, and can bust in on anyone if they might have disposable evidence (soluble heroin, say). Now, I think the first one's ok and a good thing, and the second one is an abomination. So am I a sob-sister liberal or a vicious authoritarian? [REDACTED]

████████ And here's a letter which it seems I was wrong last issue about the apartment-house/office-building thing, plus some slow curves. ████████

DICK LUPOFF (210 # 73 St, New York 21, NY)

(26 May 64)

Dave:

V i o l a ! Goddammit there's a guy in this office who keeps setting my typewriter on "expand" and I'm a bad enough typist as it is without things expanding on me when I don't expect them to.

Look, you showed me JBoardman's letter before I saw the issue itself, and reading the two things in reverse sequence was Eldritch. Also Arcane. It was too an office building. ████████ So all the Fanoclasts insisted, too. I had seen a photo of it and it looked like an apartment house to me, by ghd. So I paid no attention to accompanying texts that said different.

██████ And the product is Noxon, a real wizard whiz (thanks, Calvin) brass polish except that if you don't get it all off wet it turns all of the gnurlings green.

I defy you to publish this!

Boardman is obviously a complete political Wrong Head, but he is the man who proved Pellucidar possible, and I love him (discotheque) for that, and because he's a baseball fan like you and me.

The Mets always have existed, as a Platonic ideal, and have only of late taken substance. But they've always been there. Whatever you do, don't pass by Jimmy Breslin's great book about them. If Liebling has a successor Breslin is it. I wonder if anybody sends fan letters to sports writers? ████████ Just read CAN'T ANYBODY HERE PLAY THIS GAME last week; it's a delight, but I don't really think Breslin is Liebling's successor. Give him ten years, though, and maybe... ████████

I guess I'm a Met at heart because I was once a baseball player. Used to hit good, no field. Ran slow, too. Once tried pitching for a while (softball). Did real well for a while around HS age, once won nine-in-a-row including a one-hitter (the hit was a stinking wrong-side infield roller). Had something like sixteen assists and putouts myself. All they could do was dribble it back or pop it back. I wish to hey-ull that I knew what I had that night (yes) cause I never had it again.

By the time I got to college I'd pulled a something or torn a whatsis and I for sure didn't have any more of what I'd used to have, but I didn't quit. My fraternity, a very unathletic group, had two pitchers in the intramural league. I mean, we had a team in the league, and two pitchers, of which I was one.

We were both lousy. In fact our team was sort of the Mets of that league. The league had a rule that if anybody was ahead by ten runs or more by the end of the third inning the game would be called in their favor. Most of our games were short.

One thing though, I started in about the two pitchers. This other guy and I were both so lousy that we took turns starting and relieving. One game, he would start, I would relieve. Another game, I would start, he would relieve. In all honesty, I think he was worse than I was, but that's like saying the '62 Mets were worse than the '63 Mets, you know?

((DICK LUPOFF keeps pitching))

Well anyhow, one day we were playing this team that I think all of the varsity football players must have been on for exercise and fun in the spring. The Pikes, I think, or maybe the Dekes. Anyway, they must have averaged eight feet tall and 400 pounds apiece. That made for a big strike zone but on balance was still not to the pitcher's advantage. Not when I was pitching anyhow.

It was my day to start (I was our best pitcher) and in the first inning they only got a few runs from us, and our three batters took so long making out that I almost had time to sit down between innings.

In the second with a few more runs in and a man on first this guy came up who was at least twelve feet high and a neat 700 pounds. I made one pitch, completed the motion with my hands in the conventional position for a softball pitcher (if you think about it for a moment you'll recall that that position is directly in front of if you'll pardon the expression balls) and watched Colossus swing.

Inexplicably the crowd (all dozen of them, including the other team awaiting their turn at bat) gave a small gasp and a small cheer, and I couldn't figure out why. I mean, just because I pitched a strike...?

Waiting for the catcher to return the ball for the next pitch, there slowly filtered into my brain a vague recollection of having heard a sharp "smack." Also, the batter had started to walk away from the plate. Finally I looked down at my hands, still stationary before the genital region, and discovered the ball neatly back in my glove.

I turned and signalled to the right-fielder to exchange positions with me, as was our custom, but they had to come up with a substitute alternate pitcher after that game. We lost, by the way, in three innings.

Yours manfully,

-- Dick

████████ I don't know, I think you might find the Mets could use you... I always enjoyed playing baseball as a kid, tho I never knew what the hell was going on. I do remember being convinced that I couldn't have made a pretty good pitcher if I'd ever been given the chance...unfortunately, my batting habits made me tend to get chosen last. I was the suggestible type; like, I knew the catcher was on the other side and meant me no particular good when he would yell to me at the moment the pitcher would release the ball, "Hey, a good one, strike, strike!" But I had no spiritual defenses against this sort of persuasion, and it usually happened that the pitcher could roll the ball along the ground and I would take my cut at it if the opposition yelled at me loud enough to do so. Oh, well. I was real good at Military Drilling, anyway. ████████

████████

I am doing this with palms sweating waiting for 6 pm to come along so I can make a phone call and find out whether Van Arnam Associates is going to get a big contract scripting rough translations of Czech or Yugoslavian films, or something like that. If all this TV stuff that's currently hanging fire goes through, I think I'll have future issues of FIRST DRAFT hand-set and printed...or Maybe Not. It's very difficult to cope with the thought that I may very suddenly become very rich. (And almost impossible to cope with the thought that I may become very Ted.) (What did that mean?) (How should I know? This is first draft.) --.dgv