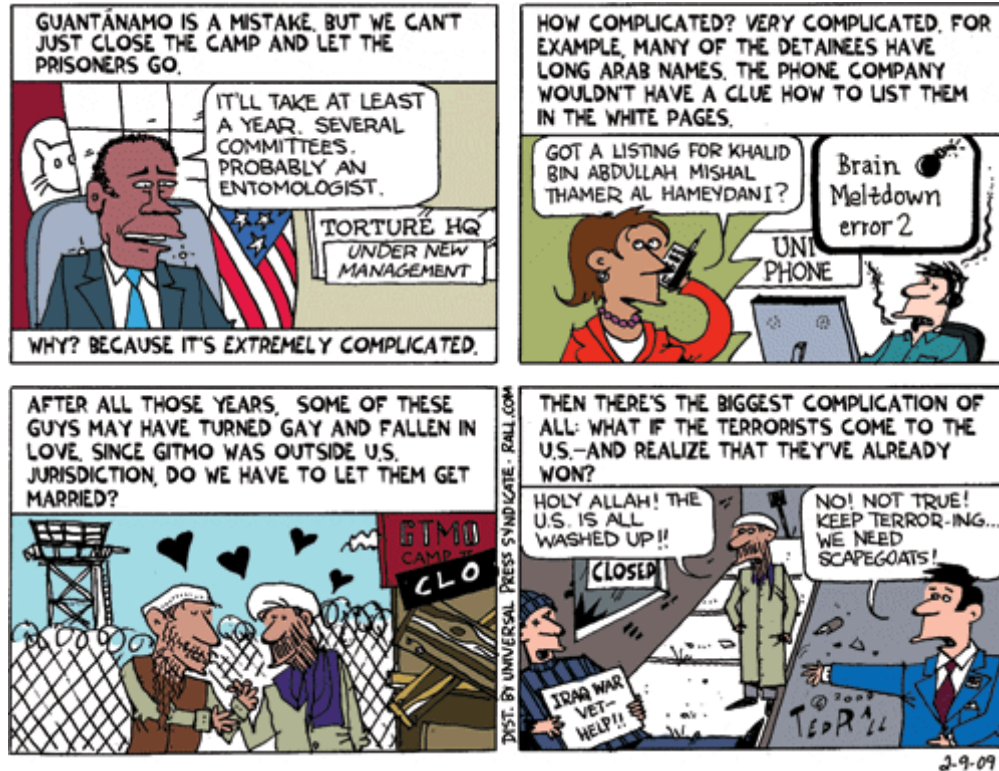


GI SPECIAL 7B12:



The Specter Of Social Unrest Was Raised At The U.S. Army War College In November In A Monograph Titled “Known Unknowns: Unconventional ‘Strategic Shocks’ In Defense Strategy Development”

“This Translates Into The Imposition Of Martial Law And A De Facto Government Being Run Out Of The Department Of Defense” “They Are Considering It. So Should You”

As the economic unraveling accelerates we will be told it is not the bearded Islamic extremists, although those in power will drag them out of the Halloween closet when they need to give us an exotic shock, but instead the domestic riffraff, environmentalists, anarchists, unions and enraged members of our dispossessed working class who threaten us.

February 16, 2009 by Chris Hedges, Common Dreams [Excerpts]

Hints of our brave new world seeped out Thursday when Washington's new director of national intelligence, retired Adm. Dennis Blair, testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee.

He warned that the deepening economic crisis posed perhaps our gravest threat to stability and national security.

It could trigger, he said, a return to the “violent extremism” of the 1920s and 1930s.

You wouldn't know this from the Obama administration, which seems hellbent on draining the blood out of the body politic and transfusing it into the corpse of our financial system.

The government has pledged trillions toward the crisis, most of it borrowed or printed in the form of new money. It is borrowing trillions more to fund our wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The specter of social unrest was raised at the U.S. Army War College in November in a monograph titled “Known Unknowns: Unconventional ‘Strategic Shocks’ in Defense Strategy Development.”

The military must be prepared, the document warned, for a “violent, strategic dislocation inside the United States,” which could be provoked by “unforeseen economic collapse,” “purposeful domestic resistance,” “pervasive public health emergencies” or “loss of functioning political and legal order.”

The “widespread civil violence,” the document said, “would force the defense establishment to reorient priorities in extremis to defend basic domestic order and human security.”

“An American government and defense establishment lulled into complacency by a long-secure domestic order would be forced to rapidly divest some or most external security commitments in order to address rapidly expanding human insecurity at home,” it went on.

“Under the most extreme circumstances, this might include use of military force against hostile groups inside the United States. Further, DoD [the Department of Defense] would be, by necessity, an essential enabling hub for the continuity of political authority in a multi-state or nationwide civil conflict or disturbance,” the document read.

In plain English, something bureaucrats and the military seem incapable of employing, this translates into the imposition of martial law and a de facto government being run out of the Department of Defense.

They are considering it. So should you.

Blair articulated the newest narrative of fear.

As the economic unraveling accelerates we will be told it is not the bearded Islamic extremists, although those in power will drag them out of the Halloween closet when they need to give us an exotic shock, but instead the domestic riffraff, environmentalists, anarchists, unions and enraged members of our dispossessed working class who threaten us.

An overvalued dollar (which will soon deflate), wild tech, stock and housing financial bubbles, unchecked greed, the decimation of our manufacturing sector, the empowerment of an oligarchic class, the corruption of our political elite, the impoverishment of workers, a bloated military and defense budget and unrestrained credit binges have conspired to bring us down.

The financial crisis will soon become a currency crisis. This second shock will threaten our financial viability. We let the market rule. Now we are paying for it.

The corporate thieves, those who insisted they be paid tens of millions of dollars because they were the best and the brightest, have been exposed as con artists. Our elected officials, along with the press, have been exposed as corrupt and spineless corporate lackeys. Our business schools and intellectual elite have been exposed as frauds.

Laissez-faire capitalism has destroyed itself.

It is time to dust off your copies of Marx.

Troops Invited:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email

contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Soldier With Oklahoma Ties Dies In Afghanistan

January 21, 2009 BY MICHAEL KIMBALL, NewsOK

Army Staff Sgt. Carlo M. Robinson, 33, who lived in Lawton for a short time in 2007, died Saturday in Afghanistan when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle in Bagram, officials and his family said.

Robinson was a 13-year Army veteran who grew up in Hope, Ark., his grandmother, Martha Witherspoon, told The Oklahoman on Wednesday night.

He is survived by his daughter Carneshia, 11, and son Dakaria, 10.

He was a member of the 1st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade stationed in Fort Polk, La., according to a U.S. Department of Defense news release.

Robinson grew up “the quiet type” and enjoyed playing sports through high school, Witherspoon said. He was a devoted patriot and re-enlisted in the military multiple times, even though it made his family nervous.

“I always said, ‘We’ve already been through this before, and these kids are going over there and risking their lives again,’” said Witherspoon, who had two brothers serve in Vietnam.

She said Robinson was the only member of his generation of the family to join the military, but he was undaunted by the reservations of some of his family members.

“There’s danger everywhere, I know, but over there your life is in God’s hands,” Witherspoon said. “And he’s in God’s hands now.”

Russian Afghan War Veterans Remember:

“What Did We Do, What Did We Achieve? Practically Nothing” “There Were Only Dead People Left, Our Dead Comrades, Their Mothers And Widows — And That’s It”

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier & Military Project, who sent this in. He writes: “AMEN”]

Feb 13, By JIM HEINTZ, Associated Press Writer [Excerpts]

MOSCOW – Twenty years after Red Army troops pulled out of Afghanistan, the last general to command them says the Soviets’ devastating experience is a dismal omen for U.S. plans to build up troops there.

On Friday, the anniversary of the Soviet departure from the Afghan capital, the Russian parliament’s lower house adopted a resolution honoring the soldiers who “were faithful to the warrior’s duty, who displayed heroism, bravery and patriotism.”

In retired Gen. Boris Gromov’s view, the valor was shown in an unwinnable battle.

He told reporters that U.S. plans to send thousands of new troops to Afghanistan would make no difference against a resurgent Taliban, who came to power in 1996 in the chaos after the Soviet withdrawal.

“One can increase the forces or not — it won’t lead to anything but a negative result,” Gromov said.

“I don’t see any sense in that war,” veteran Oleg Samoilov told Associated Press Television News. “What did we do, what did we achieve? Practically nothing. There were only dead people left, our dead comrades, their mothers and widows — and that’s it.”

TROOP NEWS

Growing Number Of U.S. Military War Resisters In Canada “Threatened With Deportation And Eventually U.S.

Military Court Martials And Imprisonment”

Canadian Government Has Moved Swiftly To Push U.S. War Resisters Out Of Canada, “Issuing Removal Orders To Five More Resisters”

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Project, who sent this in.]

February 15, 2009 By Sarah Lazare, Common Dreams & By Gerry Condon [Excerpts]

In the past weeks, the Harper Administration has moved swiftly to push U.S. Iraq War resisters out of Canada, issuing removal orders to five more resisters who had resettled up north.

Two have recently been forced out of the country, and the rest continue their appeals through the Canadian Courts. This adds to the growing number of U.S. war resisters in Canada who are being threatened with deportation and eventually U.S. military court martials and imprisonment.

Since the beginning of the Iraq War, dozens of U.S. troops resisting service in Iraq have applied for refugee status in Canada, on the grounds that, were they handed back to U.S. military custody, they would face persecution for refusing to participate in an illegal war. Several Afghanistan War resisters have also made Canada their home, with an estimated 200 U.S. war resisters currently residing in that country.

Cliff Cornell, who resettled in Canada after refusing to deploy to Iraq in 2005, returned to the United States when the Canadian government denied him a stay of removal. He was arrested by U.S. border police last week and taken to a county jail in Bellingham, Washington.

Cornell's attorney and supporters expressed outrage at the arrest.

“Clifford Cornell came back to the United States so that he could voluntarily return to his old unit at Fort Stewart,” stated attorney James Branum.

“He stated this intention to the Border Patrol, both verbally and in writing, by way of a letter I drafted on his behalf. This should not have happened.”

“Cliff Cornell should not be going to jail,” said Gerry Condon, director of Project Safe Haven, a war resister advocacy group.

Cornell is the second Iraq War resister to be held in the Whatcom County Jail. He follows Robin Long, who was deported from Canada in July. Long is now serving a 15-month prison sentence at Miramar Naval Consolidated Brig near San Diego.

Following a community vigil at the jail, Cornell was released and given five days to travel to Ft. Stewart, Georgia on his own accord.

He is expected to face court martial, and supporters have set up a defense fund to cover his legal fees.

The 28 year-old from Mountain Home, Arkansas refused to go to war because “it just didn’t feel right,” he told his supporters at a 2005 rally in Canada. “I don’t want to be killing innocent people.”

Chris Teske, a former U.S. Army paratrooper and infantryman who refused recall to Iraq after serving two tours in Afghanistan, also left to the United States after receiving removal orders. Teske was not arrested crossing the border and is currently consulting legal counsel to turn himself in.

The government’s actions fly in the face of Canadian popular opinion. Canadians are overwhelmingly in support of allowing war resisters to stay, with 64 percent in favor of granting them permanent residence, according to a June 2008 Angus Reid Strategies poll.

A legal defense fund for Cliff Cornell is being established by Courage To Resist, a war resister support group, at www.couragetoresist.org.

CONTACT:

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Gerry Condon, Project Safe Haven, 206-499-1220 (cell), projectsafehaven@hotmail.com

**Workers Say KBR “Knowingly Allowed Them And Dozens Of National Guardsmen To Be Exposed To Cancer-Causing Chemicals”
KBR Safety Officer In Iraq “Resigned Over His Superiors’ Lackluster**

Response To Widespread Medical Problems”

Feb. 15, 2009 The Associated Press

HOUSTON — Ten contractors hired by Houston-based KBR to make repairs at an Iraqi water plant in early 2003 say the company knowingly allowed them and dozens of National Guardsmen to be exposed to cancer-causing chemicals.

The allegations from the workers, six of whom live in or near Houston, are documented in a federal arbitration complaint pending in Houston and a related federal lawsuit filed in December by the guardsmen in Indiana, the Houston Chronicle reported Sunday. Most of the KBR contractors were sent to Iraq around April 2003 as part of Operation Restore Iraqi Oil, a no-bid U.S. contract. They were hired to make repairs at the water plant to keep Iraq’s oil fields operating during the war. Members of the U.S. Army National Guard, most from Indiana, escorted and guarded the workers.

KBR officials have acknowledged that a dangerous anti-corrosive chemical was stored and spilled at the Qarmat Ali water plant just outside Basra. Under Saddam Hussein’s regime, the chemical was used to keep pipes free of corrosion as river water from the plant was pumped to oil fields miles away.

The company’s own tests showed that “some areas of soil” contained hexavalent chromium a human carcinogen that is the same toxin associated with contaminated drinking water in California exposed by crusader Erin Brockovich, the newspaper reported.

“We all had congestion, coughing, shortness of breath, we all did and I still do,” Danny Langford, the 60-year-old Texas City man who first filed the complaint in Houston, told the Chronicle.

Ed Blacke, another former KBR employee involved in the Houston complaint, said he was sent to the site as a safety officer and resigned over his superiors’ lackluster response to widespread medical problems.

James Curtis Gentry, the senior commanding officer of the Indiana National Guard unit, says he is dying from cancer as a result of his exposure. Gentry, a father of five who is retired from the National Guard, decided to speak out after he learned KBR officials were denying they knew about the threat to workers.

“They knew,” Gentry said in a sworn statement, adding that another member of his unit recently died of cancer of unknown origins.

“He Came Home With A Combat Action Ribbon”

**“Anyone You Ask, It’s The Ribbon
They Hate The Most,” Crookston
Said, “Because Of What It Cost To
Get It”**

**“He Will Never Tell His Family What
Happened In Afghanistan”**

**“Not Only Do I Not Want Them To Hear
About It, But I Don’t Need To Put That On
Them,” He Said**

February 16, 2009 By David Zucchini, Los Angeles Times

Reporting from Bala Balouk, Afghanistan

The last in an occasional series on three high school friends from Southern California and their wartime enlistment in the Marine Corps.

Lance Cpl. Daryl Crookston knew there would be casualties. That inevitability had been drummed into him as far back as boot camp, by drill sergeants and infantry school instructors, by fellow Marines.

But when two Marine buddies went down on a combat patrol in the flat scrub desert of western Afghanistan, it was so shocking that Crookston felt overwhelmed. One minute the two men were alive, and in an instant they were dead.

When he left for Afghanistan last spring, Crookston spoke passionately of his desire to fight for his country, to confront insurgents, to test himself in combat. When he returned home in December to the serenity of Santa Clarita, he was distant and withdrawn. He refused to talk about what had happened in combat -- not with his friends, brothers or parents.

In June 2007, Crookston and two high school friends from Santa Clarita joined the Marine Corps under the buddy program, which guaranteed they would attend boot camp together. The Times followed them over the next 18 months and chronicled their induction, their separation from family, and the rigors of boot camp and infantry training.

They were assigned to different units last year. Crookston was the first to deploy, to a desolate base camp at Bala Balouk in remote Farah province. Lance Cpl. Daniel

Motamedi, 19, and Lance Cpl. Steven Dellinger, 20, envied Crookston's chance for combat duty. Dellinger did not get his chance until August, when he was sent to Iraq.

At a rough-hewn base in June, Crookston, 20, was not as eager for enemy contact as some in his platoon. A few complained that their security patrols were boring -- repetitious jaunts through dust and strength-sapping Afghan heat.

"Anyone who has seen action will tell you that you may think you want to see action, but actually you don't," Crookston said one afternoon, sweating in the suffocating shade of a concrete guard tower.

"There's a curiosity about it," he said. "But most guys would rather it be boring than to have something bad happen."

The three dozen Marines in Crookston's platoon, part of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment from Twentynine Palms, were hot, tired and restless. Their small outpost, which did not yet have electricity, was nothing like the well-appointed bigger bases in the country. There was no Pizza Hut, no gym, no Internet cafe, no air-conditioned mess hall, no satellite TVs blaring ESPN's "Sports Center."

Crookston's platoon lived in tents. They ate military MREs. There were two rudimentary showers and two flush toilets for the entire base. They washed their clothes in buckets and dried them in the unrelenting sun.

The dust was all-enveloping and the sun so brilliant it stung the eyes. One afternoon, someone left an oven thermometer outside. It registered 145 degrees -- the baked-ham setting.

The platoon's mission was to support and train Afghan police officers, but Crookston had little personal contact with them; Marine NCOs did the hands-on training. Instead, Crookston and his buddies spent their days stacking food and water cartons, pulling guard duty, exercising and helping bolster security barriers. They also dug mortar pits, one of which was used as a latrine by Afghan officers.

They went on regular combat patrols, accompanied by Afghan National Police. Occasionally, rockets or mortars thumped down beyond the base walls, sending a joint U.S.-Afghan patrol racing into the desert in a futile attempt to locate the attackers.

Farah province had long been a backwater in the Afghan war, where Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters have gained control of large areas in the south and east. Now insurgents were expanding westward into Farah, trying to disrupt the Americans' main supply route, which passed next to the base.

Throughout the summer and fall, Crookston saw several friends wounded or killed. He wrote to his parents after the attack that killed two Marines last fall.

"Everyone died except the turret gunner," he wrote. "None of the others stood a chance or were recognizable for that matter."

And that was all he intended to say about it.

Kept behind

If anyone was the ringleader among the three high school seniors in early 2007, it was Daniel Motamedi. He was the first to consider joining the Corps, the first to read books on military history and Marine traditions, and the one who persuaded his friends to enlist.

Last fall, with Crookston in Afghanistan and Dellinger posted to Iraq, Motamedi was stuck at Camp Pendleton. Respiratory problems prevented him from leaving with his unit when it shipped out in May for duty in the Pacific and Indian oceans. He passes his days sorting mail, picking up trash, standing guard, exercising at the gym.

It was hardly what he had envisioned when he persuaded his parents to sign papers for him to join the Marines at 17. He feels trapped by circumstances. "It wasn't like I wussed out or tried to run away," he said.

For now, the closest he has come to combat is playing a war video game with his barracks roommate. The two blasted away with virtual weapons, killing insurgents lurking in alleys.

Motamedi had excelled in infantry training, despite pneumonia and impacted wisdom teeth, only to come to this low point in his short military career. He wasn't told that he was on medical hold until a few days before his unit -- 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines -- shipped out. "It hit me hard," he said.

Now all he could do was await a decision by the military -- one that would determine whether he stays in the Corps and, if so, in what capacity.

His mother, Yasmin, was relieved when he didn't deploy, though it pained her to see him so dejected. Ali Motamedi empathized with his son. "What's the purpose of being a Marine if all you're going to do is guard the gate?" he said. "That's not what he signed up for."

Motamedi, who lost touch with his two friends on the other side of the world, has begun to accept the fact that he may never deploy. He is considering a new military specialty, perhaps military law or computers. He has dragged out his high school textbooks -- "trying to keep up the old IQ," he said.

He tries to be the best Marine possible, whatever the job. Even so, he said as he finished off another video game, it was disheartening "seeing your buddies go off to do something you wanted to do."

Not like the movies

It was small solace to Motamedi that his lifelong friend Dellinger has spent several largely uneventful months in Haditha, in western Iraq. With the U.S. military trying to wind down its presence in Iraq, Dellinger's unit is closing down its base and is due home in March.

"We've done the normal stuff that everyone does on a deployment, patrol, [guard] post, and other little things," Dellinger wrote in an e-mail this month. "It's not as bad as I thought it would be."

He was alarmed when he heard that Crookston's unit had suffered fatalities. He made a point of not telling his parents. "They're worried enough already," he said.

Dellinger said he had no regrets about joining the Marines, but had not decided whether to reenlist at the end of his four-year commitment.

His mother, Cathy Carlson, said joining the Marines had paid off for her son. "He needs the structure and the balance. It's been a great experience for him, and I'm so proud of what he's done."

Dellinger "expected the kind of action you see in the movies and feels a little let down," Carlson said. But both son and mother are grateful that he and his fellow Marines are safe and homeward bound.

"He knows he'll have a whole loving family here for him when he gets back," she said.

Homecoming

It was bitterly cold in the high desert of Twentynine Palms, but hundreds of family members stood for hours one December day, stamping their feet and waving banners as they waited for their Marines to come home from war.

The Crookstons arrived early, driving past homemade signs posted on a fence at the Marine base: "Prepare for Booty Camp" and "Operation Enduring Wifey." They carried a more prosaic sign: "Welcome Home Daryl." The family -- parents and two brothers -- wore T-shirts bearing the slogan of Daryl's unit: "The Gunfighters -- Ready for All, Yielding to None."

Wounded members of the unit, sent home early to recover, were in the crowd. The face of one Marine was burned and scarred. Other Marines limped on prosthetic limbs. Strangers hugged them and thanked them for their sacrifice.

When the battalion finally appeared after hours of delays, family members broke through restraining lines and mobbed the Marines. The Crookstons fought through the crowd toward Daryl, smothering him in hugs.

They asked about his back. He had injured it when his Humvee slammed into a berm in a sandstorm. His back was fine, Crookston said tersely.

He looked dazed. He hadn't slept for a while, and he suffered from jet lag. Though coming home was heartwarming, he admitted later, it was also stressful and disorienting. Everyone wanted to know what it was like in Afghanistan. Did he kill anybody? Was he scared?

He mumbled a standard reply: "It was hot and sandy."

Reluctantly, he agreed to accompany his mother the next morning to the elementary school where she works, to thank children for sending care packages. She asked him to wear his uniform, but he refused, saying he didn't want to "stand out." At the school, children and teachers asked about Afghanistan, and Crookston cringed. He changed the subject.

His mother, Kymmer, was worried about his mental state. If he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, she feared, he won't seek counseling. "The Marines make them feel weak and not up to snuff if they go for help," she said.

She did not press him. "I think he just needs to decompress, just get some breathing space," she said.

Crookston's father, Kim, said his son told him while he was in Afghanistan that he felt depressed.

"Daryl told me he knows he has issues to deal with, but he's not ready right now to see anybody for help," he said.

Daryl doesn't believe he's suffering from PTSD.

"No, no. No way," he said. "There are a few cases when PTSD actually affects people . . . but I think sometimes it's just people wanting to get attention or something."

Crookston has decided not to re-up when his enlistment expires on June 17, 2011 (he has memorized the date). He believes the Marine Corps has made him a better person, a better patriot and a more appreciative citizen. But he'll be ready to move on by 2011.

Sitting outside a coffee shop in Santa Clarita the morning after he returned home, Crookston marveled at how placid and ordinary things seemed. The people around him likely knew nothing of the war, he said, and probably rarely thought about it.

They certainly wouldn't understand what it was like to plunge into combat and emerge unharmed, he said. He will never tell his family what happened in Afghanistan. "Not only do I not want them to hear about it, but I don't need to put that on them," he said.

He wears a bracelet inscribed with the name of a friend, Lance Cpl. Andrew F. Whitacre, 21, who was killed in action during one of Crookston's patrols. His battalion lost 20 men, and 150 more were wounded. Crookston knows he could easily have been one of them.

"We all knew what we were getting ourselves into," he said. "We knew this was going to happen."

He came home with a combat action ribbon. He's proud of it but keeps it tucked away; it gives him no pleasure to see it.

"Anyone you ask, it's the ribbon they hate the most," Crookston said, "because of what it cost to get it."

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

**“What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms.”
Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.**

**“The mighty are only mighty because we are on our knees. Let us rise!”
-- Camille Desmoulins**

**“When someone says my son died fighting for his country, I say, “No, the suicide bomber who killed my son died fighting for his country.”
-- Father of American Soldier Chase Beattie, KIA in Iraq**

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

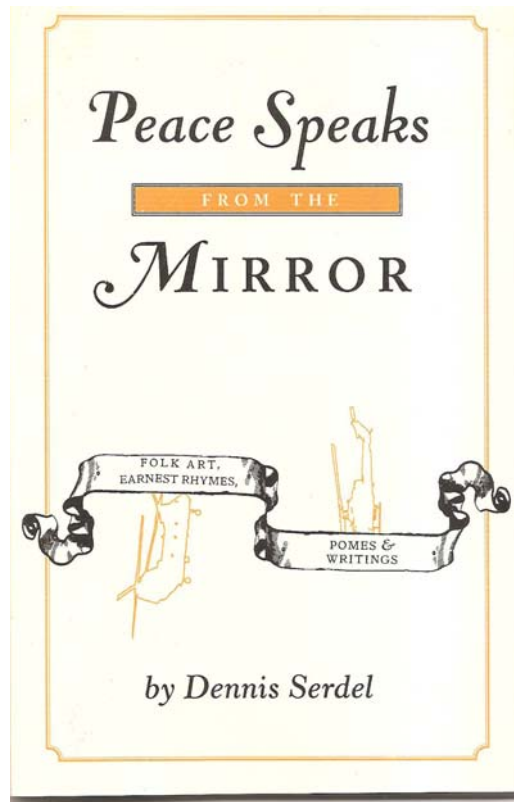
Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004

Vomit

He wants to be a preacher so he doesn't have to work
waiting for the second coming
cobwebs stretching from the mouths of time.
Revelation used as a madman's dictionary
for a powerful christian political fist
Vomit spews from the presidents mouth
yellow intestines red veins eyes legs and red hands.
Preacher eats our sons in a foreign land
bullets crisscross like the star of david
Middle Eastern men pick up their guns
to shoot the USA
In a desert land in an almost drive around war
the cradle of un-civilization calls
Mama get me out of here on a plane or on a ship
There is no good reason why the Sunnis Shiites kill
except for a president who vomits into their brains.
The preacher stands behind him in a revelation galore.
Greedy men escalate power with hands like a prayer
looting the past Pharaoh's oil.
A preacher man of peace with a crown of thorns
walks from town to town to straighten out his religion
but the people will not listen.
The president vomits bloody thorns arms and feet
out he spits dead Soldiers and rows of white crosses.
Turn your guns around Soldiers, they are abusing you
tell them not one more tour, they are using you
tell them not one more month, they are deceiving you
tell them not one more week, they are wounding you
tell them not one more hour, they are killing you.

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Let me know.

Dennis Serdel

**Walt Whitman
Carl Sandburg**

**Allan Ginsberg
Now: Dennis Serdel
T**

MORE:

**From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: June 09, 2008**

You and GI Special are my book, VVAW printing my writings in The Veteran are my book, Ed Pearl's huge list is my book, all the peace groups big and small like Women In Black who asked if they could use one printed on one side of their handout, are my book, all the sites in Europe are my book, one said I was a Pilot in Nam that I had to straighten out, I guess they think a grunt can't write anything, oh well, it's Ok now, so let it be. I don't think I could ever reach so many people with a book as I reach now often one writing at a time. My writings given out for free have no attachments, no strings attached, no expectations like forking out a \$10 bill. But like I said, I still do have a book in the works, maybe it will come out when Bush falls over dead and Cheney has the "real" big one and is put in the ground for us to piss on his grave and Condi and Rummy have alzheimer's or that's what they want us to believe before we put them in an electric chair. Aah, I'm going on too long so I'll just end it here.

[Dennis Serdel had no idea this one was going to be published, but it's too fine to loose forever in an email file and never see the light of day. Let's hope it's in his next book! T]

**DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE
MILITARY?**

Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 917.677.8057

“America's Drug Policy Is Idiotic”

**“America Is A Place Where You Can Destroy Millions Of Lives As A Wall Street Executive And Still Get Invited For Photo-Ops At The White House”
“And Yet, Somehow, Phelps Is The Evildoer Of The Hour Because He Went To A Party And Took A Hit Off Someone’s Bong”**

[Thanks to Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace]

And now we’re expected to be indignant about a 23-year-old kid smoking weed, even though studies show that roughly half of us have done the same thing; most of us think pot should be legal in some form; and many of us regularly devour far more toxic substances than marijuana (nicotine, alcohol, reality TV, etc.).

February 13, 2009 David Sirota, The Chronicle

I’m not sure if it’s because we’re strung out on “Lost” episodes, or if it’s because we’re still suffering from a post-9/11 stress disorder that makes us crave “breaking news” alerts, or if it’s because the economy has turned us into distraction junkies.

But one thing is painfully obvious after Michael Phelps’ marijuana “scandal” erupted last week: Our society is addicted to fake outrage - and to break our dependence, we’re going to need far more potent medicine than the herb Phelps was smoking.

If you haven’t heard (and I’m guessing you have), the Olympic gold medalist was recently photographed taking a toke of weed.

The moment the picture hit the Internet, the media blew the story up, pumping out at least 1,200 dispatches about the “controversy,” according to my LexisNexis search. Phelps’ sponsors subsequently threatened to pull their endorsement deals, and USA Swimming suspended him for “disappointing so many people.”

America is a place where you can destroy millions of lives as a Wall Street executive and still get invited for photo-ops at the White House; a land where the everyman icon - Joe Sixpack - is named for his love of shotgunning two quarts of beer at holiday gatherings; a “shining city on a hill” where presidential candidates’ previous abuse of alcohol and cocaine is portrayed as positive proof of grittiness and character.

And yet, somehow, Phelps is the evildoer of the hour because he went to a party and took a hit off someone’s bong.

As with most explosions of fake outrage, the Phelps affair asks us to feign anger at something we know is commonplace.

A nation of tabloid readers is apoplectic that Brad and Jen divorced, even though one out of every two American marriages ends the same way.

A country fetishizing “family values” goes ballistic over the immorality of Paris Hilton’s sex tape ... and then keeps spending billions on pornography.

And now we’re expected to be indignant about a 23-year-old kid smoking weed, even though studies show that roughly half of us have done the same thing; most of us think pot should be legal in some form; and many of us regularly devour far more toxic substances than marijuana (nicotine, alcohol, reality TV, etc.).

So, in the interest of a little taboo candor, I’m just going to throw editorial caution to the wind and write what lots of us thought - but were afraid to say - when we heard about Phelps. Ready?

Here goes: America’s drug policy is idiotic.

Doctors can hand out morphine to anyone for anything beyond a headache, but they can’t prescribe marijuana to terminal cancer patients.

Madison Avenue encourages a population plagued by heart disease to choke down as many artery-clogging Big Macs and Dunkin’ Donuts as it can, but it’s illegal to consume cannabis, “a weed that has been known to kill approximately no one,” as even the archconservative Colorado Springs Gazette admitted in its editorial slamming Phelps.

Indeed, it would be perfectly acceptable - even artistically admirable in some quarters - if I told you that I drank myself into a blind stupor while writing this column, but it would be considered “outrageous” if I told you I was instead smoking a joint (FYI - I wasn’t doing either).

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Obama Regime Embraces CIA Torture And Threatens Judge: “In Seeking To Deny The Victims Their Day In Court, The Obama

Administration Takes Full Possession Of Bushist Savagery” “In A Thinly-Veiled Threat” Government Lawyer Told The Court “Judges Shouldn’t Play With Fire”

February 13, 2009 by Tom Burghardt, Global Research [Excerpts]

As predictably as night follows day, the Obama regime defended the CIA’s practice of “extraordinary rendition” (kidnapping) of suspected “terrorists” to third countries where they are subject to “enhanced interrogation” (torture) by allied security services.

Binyam Mohamed and four other victims have charged that they were brutalized after being “disappeared” by CIA operatives and secretly flown to Egypt, Morocco, Afghanistan and eastern European CIA “black sites.”

On Monday, Assistant U.S. Attorney Douglas N. Letter argued before a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco that the “change” administration would press ahead with the Bush regime’s odious invocation of the state secrets privilege to suppress a lawsuit brought by torture victims against Boeing subsidiary, San Jose, California-based Jeppesen DataPlan.

In a thinly-veiled threat to the Ninth Circuit, Letter told the Court according to the San Francisco Chronicle, “Judges shouldn’t play with fire.”

Claiming that allowing the suit to go forward would irreparably harm “national security,” Letter argued that once they examine the government’s classified evidence “you will see that this case cannot be litigated.”

In a truly Orwellian twist that further compromises American credibility and the Obama administration, The Guardian reported February 11 that “US defence officials are preventing Barack Obama from seeing evidence that a former British resident held in Guantánamo Bay has been tortured.”

“Clive Stafford Smith, the director of the legal charity Reprieve, which represents Ethiopian-born Binyam Mohamed, sent Obama evidence of what he called “truly mediaeval” abuse but substantial parts were blanked out so the president could not read it.

“In the letter to the president, Stafford Smith urges him to order the disclosure of the evidence.

“Stafford Smith tells Obama he should be aware of the ‘bizarre reality’ of the situation. ‘You, as commander in chief, are being denied access to material that would help prove

that crimes have been committed by US personnel. This decision is being made by the very people who you command.' (Richard Norton-Taylor and Ian Cobain, "Binyam Mohamed torture evidence 'hidden from Obama'," The Guardian, February 11, 2009)

The censoring of Stafford Smith's evidential letter by U.S. defense officials might have been done, according to The Guardian "to protect the president from criminal liability or political embarrassment."

In any event it now appears Obama, by casting his lot with war criminals, kidnapers and torturers has every reason to be concerned with his own criminal liability.

These latest revelations follow on the heels of repeated threats by "U.S. intelligence officials" that they would "stop sharing intelligence" with the UK if evidence relating to Mohamed's torture were disclosed.

Indeed, Mohamed's U.S.-appointed military lawyer, Lieutenant Colonel Yvonne Bradley, told a news conference on February 10 that Mohamed's treatment "would make waterboarding seem like child's play."

At Monday's hearing in San Francisco The New York Times reports, undercutting arguments that the president is "distracted" by the economic meltdown, that when asked by Judge Mary M. Schroeder, "Is there anything material that has happened" in a sly reference to Obama's November election, Letter replied, "No, your honor."

"Judge Schroeder asked, 'The change in administration has no bearing?'

"Once more, he said, 'No, Your Honor.' The position he was taking in court on behalf of the government had been 'thoroughly vetted with the appropriate officials within the new administration,' and 'these are the authorized positions,' he said. (John Schwartz, "Obama Backs Off a Reversal on Secrets," The New York Times, February 10, 2009)

And indeed they are, demonstrating once again the continuity--and consensus--amongst ruling class elites when its comes to the defense of repressive national security policies.

Represented by the American Civil Liberties Union, Anthony D. Romero, ACLU Executive Director said:

"Eric Holder's Justice Department stood up in court today and said that it would continue the Bush policy of invoking state secrets to hide the reprehensible history of torture, rendition and the most grievous human rights violations committed by the American government.

"This is not change. This is definitely more of the same.

"Candidate Obama ran on a platform that would reform the abuse of state secrets, but President Obama's Justice Department has disappointingly reneged on that important civil liberties issue.

“If this is a harbinger of things to come, it will be a long and arduous road to give us back an America we can be proud of again.” (“Justice Department Stands Behind Bush Secrecy in Extraordinary Rendition Case,” American Civil Liberties Union, Press Release, February 9, 2009)

According to the complaint filed in 2007 by the ACLU, after being abducted in Pakistan the Ethiopian national was secretly flown to Morocco. Once there,

“Mr. Mohamed was subjected to severe physical and psychological torture. He was routinely beaten, suffering broken bones and, on occasion, loss of consciousness due to the beatings.

“His clothes were cut off with a scalpel and the same scalpel was then used to make incisions on his body, including his penis. A hot stinging liquid was then poured into open wounds on his penis where he had been cut.

“He was frequently threatened with rape, electrocution, and death.

“Mr. Mohamed was handcuffed, fitted with earphones, and forced to listen to extremely loud music day and night, sometimes interrupting his sleep for forty-eight hours at a time. He was placed in a damp, moldy room with open sewage for a month at a time. He believed his food to be drugged, but when he refused to eat he was forcibly hooked up to two different IVs. These IVs alternated pumping different substances into his body, the combination of which forced him to undergo painful withdrawal symptoms.” (IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, Division of San Jose; BINYAM MOHAMED, ABOU ELKASSIM BRITEL, AHMED AGIZA, Plaintiffs, v. JEPPESEN DATAPLAN, INC., Civil Action No. 2798, COMPLAINT, DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL, p. 18)

Currently incarcerated at the Guantánamo Bay torture facility and gravely ill due to a prolonged hunger strike the U.S. government is preparing to release Mohamed, having failed to produce a shred of evidence linking him to any “terrorist” activity whatsoever.

In seeking to deny the victims their day in court, the Obama administration takes full possession of Bushist savagery.

Now how’s that for a dirty little (state) secret!

**POLITICIANS CAN’T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WARS**

“At Least We Have A Democrat In The White House, Saving Us From Endless War, Constitutional Abuses And Bank Bailouts, Right?”

“The Blacks His Press Secretary Installed In The Front Row Said Later They Were Just Put There As Window Dressing”

By ALEXANDER COCKBURN, CounterPunch Diary February 13 - 15, 2009 [Excerpts]

A new Democratic president, Barack Obama, via his Attorney General, has explicitly endorsed Bush's policy on renditions and Bush's refusal to recognize the jurisdiction of US courts in any legal proceedings in this regard; a week in which Obama's solicitor general has explicitly endorsed Bush's policy on enemy combatants.

I write not long after the New York Times reported that state welfare rolls are actually shrinking in months when unemployment has risen to real totals of 17 and 18 per cent - 1.7 million in Dec and Jan and thus when more and more people are in desperate straits.

This is a consequence of a former Democratic president's "reform" of welfare in the mid-90s. Back then, Clinton reached out in the spirit of bipartisanship to Republicans to effect this piece of legislative savagery.

For much of last year progressives rallied support for Obama, not just with scenarios of the destruction that would be wrought by John McCain, but with screams of fear at the menace of right-wing populist insurgency, embodied in the supposed threats to mainstream consensus represented by Ron Paul, Mike Huckabee and Sarah Palin.

You know, fascists; at least two of them Christian fascists.

Head for the deep shelters and vote Democrat! Vote for change.

The menace of the Christian hordes?

Christians now exult that Obama is talking of a waiver on constitutional prohibitions concerning federal support for faith-based initiatives.

As the Los Angeles Times editorialized angrily last week, "Like his predecessor, Obama has supported providing federal grants and contracts to social-service programs operated by religious groups.

"The surprise -- an unpleasant one -- is that he is equivocating on a campaign promise to condition such aid on an agreement by religious charities not to discriminate in hiring."

There's always something cloudy about Obama, just when I've almost persuaded myself to like the guy, always hedging his bets, doffing his cap to the ruling powers, even micromanaging his press conferences so there are no follow-up questions.

That meant last week he didn't have to deal with Helen Thomas following up on her initial inquiry as to whether he could name a nuclear power in the Middle East. Obama stalled until his aides could force Thomas to sit back down.

The blacks his press secretary installed in the front row said later they were just put there as window dressing.

America is broke but here's Obama, seemingly set on boosting a US force in Afghanistan where, according to the Center for Budgetary Analysis, it costs \$775,000 per year to send a single soldier.

And, as I noted at the outset, this week Obama punched his core supporters twice in the stomach by committing his administration to the same unconstitutional canons of secrecy and claims of executive immunity to the rule of law that made Bush one of the most hated presidents in history. His staff can't seem to nail down safe appointments.

In sum, in these crucial early weeks, Obama seems to have trouble setting his compass, as the ship heads towards the rocks.

But hey, at least we have a Democrat in the White House, saving us from endless war, constitutional abuses and bank bailouts, right?

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Open Class War In Guadeloupe & Martinique As Strikers Fight Cops:

“Protesters Angry At High Prices And Resentful Of A Tiny White Elite”

“If Anyone Injures A Member Of The LKP Or A Striker On Guadeloupe, There Will Be Deaths”

Fort-De-France Encircled By Barricades

“It seems there is a certain hardening of the movement and there are a lot of people behind it.”

February 16 2009 By RODOLPHE LAMY, Associated Press

FORT-DE-FRANCE, Martinique:

Strikes that have nearly frozen everyday life on France's Caribbean islands burst into clashes on Monday as police battled protesters angry at high prices and resentful of a tiny white elite on lands better known for beach-side vacations.

Police detained about 50 people after coming under a barrage of stones as they tried to take down barricades on the island of Guadeloupe, said Nicolas Desforges, the island's top government official.

Strikers were sprayed with tear gas and several, including union leader Alex Lollia, were injured, France's leftist NPA party said in a statement.

The leader of the LKP Collective that organized Guadeloupe's strike warned that deadly escalation is possible.

“If anyone injures a member of the LKP or a striker on Guadeloupe, there will be deaths,” Elie Domota said in a television interview on Saturday.

On the sister island of Martinique, 100 miles (160 kilometers) south of Guadeloupe, police said that as many as 10,000 demonstrators marched through the narrow streets of the capital to protest spiraling food prices and denounce the business elite.

Government offices, schools, banks and stores have been shuttered for most of the past 12 days as islanders demand lower prices and higher wages. The stoppage in Guadeloupe began in late January.

Living costs are high on the French islands, which depend heavily on imports and use the euro.

The strike also is exposing racial and class tensions on islands where a largely white elite that makes up 1 percent of the population controls most businesses.

France's minister for overseas departments, Yves Jégo, warned in that the strike could cause job losses and Prime Minister François Fillon told reporters that barricades "are not part of the legal means of expression."

France's National Travel Agencies organization has reported that some 10,000 tourists have canceled planned vacations in Martinique and Guadeloupe.

Several hotels in Guadeloupe reported Monday that they could not accept guests because protesters were congregated outside and staff did not show up to work.

Lines of cars snaked outside of gas stations in Martinique as islanders tried to fill their tanks.

Strikers allowed 28 of the island's 85 gas stations to be resupplied, but forced small shop owners, who had opened over the weekend, to re-close and blockaded industrial zones.

Matthew Cowen, a British IT consultant who lives on Martinique, said Fort-de-France was encircled by barricades, and garbage has been piling up along the island's narrow streets.

"I had a colleague who tried to cycle to the office but he was told under no circumstances would he be allowed to pass through," said Cowen, who lives on the outskirts of Fort-de-France.

"It seems there is a certain hardening of the movement and there are a lot of people behind it."

Capitalism At Work:

Two Judges Caught Selling Kids To Private Profit Prisons

Feb 11 By MICHAEL RUBINKAM and MARYCLAIRE DALE, Associated Press Writers
Michael Rubinkam And Maryclaire Dale, Associated Press Writers [Excerpts]

WILKES-BARRE, Pa. – For years, the juvenile court system in Wilkes-Barre operated like a conveyor belt: Youngsters were brought before judges without a lawyer, given hearings that lasted only a minute or two, and then sent off to juvenile prison for months for minor offenses.

The explanation, prosecutors say, was corruption on the bench.

In one of the most shocking cases of courtroom graft on record, two Pennsylvania judges have been charged with taking millions of dollars in kickbacks to send teenagers to two privately run youth detention centers.

“I’ve never encountered, and I don’t think that we will in our lifetimes, a case where literally thousands of kids’ lives were just tossed aside in order for a couple of judges to make some money,” said Marsha Levick, an attorney with the Philadelphia-based Juvenile Law Center, which is representing hundreds of youths sentenced in Wilkes-Barre.

Prosecutors say Luzerne County Judges Mark Ciavarella and Michael Conahan took \$2.6 million in payoffs to put juvenile offenders in lockups run by PA Child Care LLC and a sister company, Western PA Child Care LLC. The judges were charged on Jan. 26 and removed from the bench by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court shortly afterward.

No company officials have been charged, but the investigation is still going on.

The high court, meanwhile, is looking into whether hundreds or even thousands of sentences should be overturned and the juveniles’ records expunged.

Among the offenders were teenagers who were locked up for months for stealing loose change from cars, writing a prank note and possessing drug paraphernalia.

Many had never been in trouble before. Some were imprisoned even after probation officers recommended against it.

Many appeared without lawyers, despite the U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark 1967 ruling that children have a constitutional right to counsel.

The judges are scheduled to plead guilty to fraud Thursday in federal court. Their plea agreements call for sentences of more than seven years behind bars.

Many Pennsylvania counties contract with privately run juvenile detention centers, paying them either a fixed overall fee or a certain amount per youth, per day.

In Luzerne County, prosecutors say, Conahan shut down the county-run juvenile prison in 2002 and helped the two companies secure rich contracts worth tens of millions of dollars, at least some of that dependent on how many juveniles were locked up.

One of the contracts — a 20-year agreement with PA Child Care worth an estimated \$58 million — was later canceled by the county as exorbitant.

The judges are accused of taking payoffs between 2003 and 2006.

Robert J. Powell co-owned PA Child Care and Western PA Child Care until June. His attorney, Mark Sheppard, said his client was the victim of an extortion scheme.

“Bob Powell never solicited a nickel from these judges and really was a victim of their demands,” he said. “These judges made it very plain to Mr. Powell that he was going to

be required to pay certain monies.” **[And he did, which makes piece of shit Powell, guess what, a fucking criminal running a prison.]**

For years, youth advocacy groups complained that Ciavarella was ridiculously harsh and ran roughshod over youngsters’ constitutional rights. Ciavarella sent a quarter of his juvenile defendants to detention centers from 2002 to 2006, compared with a statewide rate of one in 10.

The criminal charges confirmed the advocacy groups’ worst suspicions and have called into question all the sentences he pronounced.

Hillary Transue did not have an attorney, nor was she told of her right to one, when she appeared in Ciavarella’s courtroom in 2007 for building a MySpace page that lampooned her assistant principal.

Her mother, Laurene Transue, worked for 16 years in the child services department of another county and said she was certain Hillary would get a slap on the wrist. Instead, Ciavarella sentenced her to three months; she got out after a month, with help from a lawyer.

“I felt so disgraced for a while, like, what do people think of me now?” said Hillary, now 17 and a high school senior who plans to become an English teacher.

Laurene Transue said Ciavarella “was playing God. And not only was he doing that, he was getting money for it. He was betraying the trust put in him to do what is best for children.”

Kurt Kruger, now 22, had never been in trouble with the law until the day police accused him of acting as a lookout while his friend shoplifted less than \$200 worth of DVDs from Wal-Mart. He said he didn’t know his friend was going to steal anything.

Kruger pleaded guilty before Ciavarella and spent three days in a company-run juvenile detention center, plus four months at a youth wilderness camp run by a different operator.

“Never in a million years did I think that I would actually get sent away. I was completely destroyed,” said Kruger, who later dropped out of school. He said he wants to get his record expunged, earn his high school equivalency diploma and go to college. “I got a raw deal, and yeah, it’s not fair,” he said, “but now it’s 100 times bigger than me.”

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Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

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OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!



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