

OUR *LITTLE* SECRETS

as saying. "Sweep it all up. Things related and not."

This was our Donald, thinking fast as he paced about the National Military Command Center, seeking to turn the attack into a rationale for all sort of unrelated revenges and settlements of accounts. The Defense Secretary is currently trying to get the Pentagon greater authority to carry out covert ops. He also wants Congress to agree to have a new under-secretary of defense, responsible for all intelligence matters.

Now blend these proposals in with the erosions of the Posse Comitatus Act, which forbids the US military to have any role in domestic law enforcement. Shake the blender vigorously and you have the Rumsfeld cocktail, with an Ashcroft cherry. A defense under-secretary may soon be able to target YOU, (or the anti-war couple in the apartment next door), bug your phone and computer, burglarize the place, grab you, stick you in prison and let you rot.

All legally. That's what we call military government, the model we impart to Latin American officers mustered for training at the School of the Americas in

Fort Benning to install in their countries, along with instruction in torture. And talking of torture...

GUESS WHY DERSHOWITZ WANTS CLEAN NEEDLES

In his book *Why Terrorism Works: Understanding the Threat*, Dershowitz, currently a visiting professor at UC Berkeley, repeats his well-known call for "torture warrants", along with collective punishment and national ID cards. Dershowitz has long been a fan of torture in Israel, along with the bulldozing of Palestinian homes. What's good for Israel is good for Uncle Sam. The Dershowitz plan: Judges should be empowered by Congress to issue "torture warrants". After the "torture warrant" has been signed, the professor writes, the suspect would be "subjected to judicially monitored physical measures designed to cause excruciating pain without leaving any lasting damage".

One form of torture recommended by Dershowitz: "the sterilized needle being shoved under the fingernails."

Sterilized. That's the bit we like. You can count on a Harvard Law School man to be refined and insist on clean needles.

BATTLE TERRORISM, GO TO PRISON. IT'S THE LAW

Back to Fort Benning. On September 10, 2002, 23 people who committed the crime of demonstrating against the terror methods imparted in Fort Benning reported to federal prison convicted of trespass, with sentences ranging from six months probation to six months in federal prison and \$5,000 in fines. Judge G. Mallon Faircloth is notorious for giving the maximum sentence for a misdemeanor to nonviolent opponents of the School of the Americas.

Seventy-one people, School of the Americas Watch tells us, have served a total of over forty years in prison for engaging in nonviolent resistance in the long campaign to close the school. Last year Dorothy Hennessey, an 88 year-old Franciscan nun, was sentenced to six months in federal prison. "It's ironic," Sister Hennessey says. "that at a time when the country is reflecting on how terrorism has impacted our lives, dedicated people

who took direct action to stop terrorism throughout the Americas are on their way into prison."

LESE MAJESTE: THAT'S AGAINST THE LAW TOO

Bush faced around a thousand protesters in Portland, Oregon, when he came in August to lobby on behalf of the timber industry. The riot police came too and the protesters were gassed, sprayed and shot with plastic bullets. These days any public demonstration against the commander in chief is taken as lese majeste. Look at those kids in Ohio a couple of months ago when Bush came to speak at a commencement. They were told that if they shouted anything obstreperous or otherwise displayed themselves in a critical posture, they would not be allowed to graduate.

Kevin O'Neill had a good column recently in the Pittsburgh Post Gazette describing what happened when demonstrators against President Bush were herded inside a fence at Neville Island for his Labor Day visit.

"Police called this enclosure the designated free-speech area, though anyone who had signs praising the president was evidently OK to line the island's main street for the motorcade.

"The mini-Guantanamo on the Ohio was set up strictly for security reasons, of course. Those who pose a genuine threat to the president are expected to carry signs identifying themselves as such, as a courtesy. Hence the erection of the Not-OK Corral.

"Bill Neel of Butler just doesn't get it, though. He's 65 and can remember a time when our entire country was a free-speech zone. So when he refused to get inside the fence with his sign, he was arrested, cuffed and detained in the best place for inflammatory rhetoric, the fire hall.

"Neel's confiscated sign said, 'The Bushes must truly love the poor — they've made so many of us.' For holding this contrary opinion in the censored speech zone, Neel was given a summons for disorderly conduct."

GREATEST ENDORSEMENT AAA WILL EVER GET

"My story", so CounterPuncher Christine TenBarge writes to us, "has to do with a very dear friend in Austin who recently drove her sister to some enormous Afri-

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can American conference ('church event') in Atlanta, near the MLK memorial. Her sister is terrified of flying, and doesn't go many places, so Toni drove the 14 long hours, with some trepidation, there and back. While her sister was at the conference, Toni had lunch with a young woman, Shannen, from Austin who goes to Spelman College and works for the National Parks Service which administers MLK. Shannen gave Toni a tour, but hesitated at the latest exhibit on display. The exhibit is a collection of photos and narratives about the lynching of African Americans in the South from the close of the Civil War to about 1968, a span in which a recorded 4,700 African Americans died of lynching (there were more, of course, the unrecorded).

"For Toni and Shannen, both African American, the exhibit is heartbreaking and horrifying. What surprised and repulsed Toni the most were the photos of African American women and children who also were lynched during that time, usually with a crowd of white onlookers, their own small children in tow. She didn't know about the women and children, although her sister, who is about 20 years older (60s) knew this was done.

"That evening after visiting the memorial, she and her sister started the long drive back to Austin. On the way, though, they stopped at some army base near Atlanta to visit a niece in service. This took some time and finally they were on their way to Austin, by way of backroads instead of main highways, because it would be quicker, they were assured by the niece. Toni says to me, 'Now, I want you to picture us driving those back, back road thru Mississippi and Louisiana, two black women, in the dead of the night, thinking about that exhibit and those photos...it was scary. But the scariest part was the tire exploding. Not blowing out, but exploding, somewhere in Louisiana. Toni's sister was terrified and told her not to get out of the car, not to wave down anyone...she was sure they were going to be dragged from their car, sure they would die.

"Toni confessed that she, too, was worried. Toni is a very self-assured, woman, dynamic, commanding, respected, doctoral candidate, but here she is, stuck in backwoods Louisiana with a blown out tire. Now, (here's the good part) this summer you CounterPunch editors encouraged me to get AAA, even though I have this brand new car and didn't feel

the need, but you made good arguments and I was convinced. I, in turn, told Toni that she really should have AAA because her car is older, she is a woman on the move, and it was really a very good investment, what with all the perks that come with membership.

"She took my advice, and when she called AAA in that dead of night, a man came right out and took care of the tire. After Toni and her sister's effusive apologies and thanks for dragging him out of bed at that hour, he told them he didn't mind at all having to get up and help out people who really needed help. What he resented was having to go change the tire of some yuppie, Yankee guy with a fancy car who just didn't want to get his hands dirty."

Editor's note: Back roads from Atlanta? We'll bet Toni and her sister headed west from Natchez, through Alexandria to Leesville, not far from the Texas line. That's unless they understandably wanted to keep clear of Jasper, Texas, where three whites dragged a black man to his death behind their pickup not too long ago. Last April on highway 8 west of Leesville Cockburn was ambushed by State Trooper Curtis Parker, clad in full SWAT gear. In

where he was headed.

"Then he says, 'I think we should give John Ashcroft a big hand...(pause)...right in the mouth!' Went on to say, 'the way things are going I'll probably be thrown in jail tomorrow for saying that, so I hope ya'll will bail me out.'"

Right on, Merle. At another concert, June a year ago, he was quoted by John Derbyshire in National Review online as saying, "Look at the past 25 years, we went downhill, and if people don't realize it, they don't have their fucking eyes on ... In 1960, when I came out of prison as an ex-convict, I had more freedom under parolee supervision than there's available to an average citizen in America right now... God almighty, what have we done to each other?"

NAME SURE LOOKS A-RAB, DON'T IT?

"About one-fourth of the individuals who have contributed to McKinney's campaigns over the past five years have names that appear to be Arab-American or Muslim, according to an informal study of Federal Election Commission records by

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west central Louisiana standard night-time operating procedure for speeding citations (an alleged 72 mph) was to have Cockburn stand behind his 85 Escort diesel wagon, hands away from his sides, in the glare of Parker's headlights, while the trooper ran his driving license.

MERLE HAGGARD ON CIVIL LIBERTIES

They still refer to George Bush's popularity. We don't think so. The dwindling number of folk who tell the pollsters they think he's doing a good job are probably worried they'll get investigated by Ashcroft if they don't.

Cheryl Burns reports this from Kansas City: "I saw Merle Haggard tonight in KC—great show. He said something about 'so now we're in another war' and went on to say he was still proud to be an American and all that, so I was wondering just

the Journal-Constitution." Can you imagine a similar story appearing about the Jewish financial contributors to the campaign of Denise Majette, who recently defeated Cynthia McKinney in the Democratic primary in Georgia's Fourth District. The Journal-Constitution loathed McKinney.

Many liberal Democrats resolutely averted their gaze from McKinney's campaign and disdained her appeals for help, even though Majette's preference for president in 2000 was the black Republican, Alan Keyes whose prime plank was the outlawing of abortion.

DULLNESS HAILED

"Barr, McKinney and Traficant were colorful at the expense of the institution of which they were a part,' said Thomas E. Mann, a senior fellow at the Brookings

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Hunting Commie Perverts

The Scarlet Professor

BY SUSAN DAVIS

For more than a century, political and sexual repression have been locked in a dance: two steps forward, one step away, separate twirls, then back to the embrace. The choreographers of America's war against subversion place radical politics and sexual abnormality in the spotlight. They arrange special arabesques around the nuclear family, so often threatened by mass culture, creeping sexual expressiveness, obscenity. The names of the principals are well-known: The American Legion, the Catholic Church, the FBI and the post office, with R. Mitchell Palmer, J. Edgar Hoover, Janet Reno, Edwin Meese, and John Ashcroft in supporting roles. Their individual victims are uncountable, and mostly unknown.

Frederick Newton Arvin learned this American dance by heart. Considered one of the two or three most brilliant literary critics at mid-century, Arvin was a wonderful writer, a peer of Edmund Wilson and Van Wyck Brooks, producer of ambitious biographies of Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman, and Emerson. The winner of a National Book Award and a Guggenheim fellowship, Arvin worked outside the power centers of Harvard and Columbia. He taught at Smith, the small, prestigious women's college, where bright young scholars followed to be part of his circle.

But in 1960, Newton Arvin was caught up in the sex-politics dance: his career and life were destroyed by a police raid on his Northampton, Massachusetts apartment. When a vice squad uncovered a cache of homosexually-oriented magazines and photos, as well as his intimate diaries, the local and national press accused Arvin, along with two other Smith faculty, of running a New England-wide "smut ring". Joel Dorius and Ned Spofford, and several working-class men from Northampton were indicted along with Arvin for possession of pornography. The widespread smut conspiracy never materialized.

Barry Werth's biography, *The Scarlet Professor: A Literary Life Shattered by Scandal*, (Random House, 2001) pieces together how the literary critic's painfully closeted gay life led to the nearly-forgotten "Arvin Affair". It was national news, part of a country-wide panic over mass culture's flexible cousin "smut", especially gay smut, a category that could encompass everything from beefcake magazines to foreign films.

In Werth's account, the panic was a dying gasp of McCarthyism. Frustrated state and federal authorities, losing their red-hunting credibility, turned "perverts" and sexual print culture into the new subversive threat. Only a few years later, Werth argues, the United States would become more liberal in its atti-

just possible to make a major reputation by writing brilliant book reviews. Soon, Arvin landed a job at Smith.

For reasons Werth leaves obscure, Arvin was always a man of the left. He picked up Progressive Party politics in stultifying Valparaiso, and chaired the Lafollette Club in Northampton. After the crash of 1929, Arvin wrote to his friend Granville Hicks that perhaps it really was time to take Communism seriously. And he tried, intellectually as well as politically, becoming along with Hicks one of the two most successful Marxist-influenced literary historians. Arvin and Hicks wrote an accessible, historical body of criticism. In the 1930s and 1940s, Arvin was involved in Popular Front organizations, but he found party meetings and theorizing dreary. Politics, a brittle mistaken marriage, students, even friendships came a distant third after reading and writing. But in his diaries, he never neglected to note his revulsion for mainstream American politics.

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tudes toward obscenity; slowly it showed homosexuals more tolerance. The United States Supreme Court would significantly restrain police powers of search and seizure, tighten the rules on prosecutorial use of evidence, and more firmly limit police and prosecutors' power to define the obscene. Thus, the Arvin Affair marks the end of The Great Fear, and the broadening of civil liberties. Events of the last decade cast a gloomy light on this optimistic time line.

Born in 1900, in Valparaiso, Indiana, Newton Arvin was always a child apart, sickly and lonely. He read as many as ten hours a day, straining his eyesight so that it troubled him his entire life. On the strength of scholarship alone, Arvin made it through Harvard, and began to work as a writer. Van Wyck Brooks quickly asked him to write for several of his small magazines. In those days, although it barely paid the rent, it was

His unambiguously gay sexuality tortured Arvin. With most of the rest of his generation, he shared the contemporary perception of homosexuality as at best a character flaw, and at worst a filthy perversion. He was deeply secretive, frequently using alcohol and tranquilizers to dull the pain of self-recognition. Apparently the left groups Arvin belonged to offered cold comfort to homosexuals. Neither was Smith tolerant, despite its acceptance for both "Boston marriages", long-term, lesbian domestic pairings, and heterosexual professors who cut wide swaths among the undergraduates. This latter group notoriously included Al Fisher, former husband of the essayist M. F. K. Fisher, and Arvin's close friend. (In her memoir, *The Gastronomical Me*, M. F. K. records a year she endured in a freezing French apartment for her "beloved Al". At the end of the book she has left him to devote herself to a dying lover.