

REVEL-ATION #3

by Marcy Waldie

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The APA V topic of the month is "trash & sleaze". Who thought that one up, Joyce?

I seriously considered defaulting on this topic. Basically, I am uncomfortable with it. I mentioned this to Arnie, and he, as always, offered a reason that changed my mind. I felt better after that. Confident, in fact.

Perhaps the topic was chosen so that it would give us more of a challenge than previous subjects. Well, it succeeded with me. Actually, a good part of the world believes that t & s comprises our desert community in toto. We just don't hide it.

There certainly will be fans who take the comedic approach. Bless them. I am anxious to read their zines. I will not discuss these topics with levity. Nor will I do the soapbox routine, unlike my father who, as a child, stood firmly and proudly atop a wooden crate and preached to the neighborhood kids. I could preach as well, you know. It runs in our family. My great-grandfather, Johann Gerhard Oncken, was a missionary in Europe in the 19th century. He established what is now the Baptist sect. That doesn't make me better than anyone else, heaven knows. More cautious, yes. More naive, definitely. I try to avoid things that make me uncomfortable unless dealing with them benefits my life in a significant manner. That is the way of the animal world. There are always options, and I seriously consider them before proceeding. This does not mean that I haven't been exposed to t & s. My mind just doesn't call up the incidents easily. That's one of my choices.

I will not endure that which repulses and disgusts me. That, too is my choice. Narrow minded, you say? As everyone has a story to tell, it may behoove me to listen. At least I still have a mind that is not addicted to the infosleaze programs that choke the airwaves or to the money-is-the-bottom-line newsstand rags. We can add a couple other sub-categories, thanks to technology - CD's and on-line communication.

Television shows such as Hard Copy, A Current Affair and Extra air during prime time because they're hot. National Enquirer, Star and Globe pull in jillions of bucks each week because they're hot. Let's include all of the other "sophisticated" magazines that sexually degrade our brothers and sisters. One medium that's so hot that it sizzles is the compact disc. Whether it's the moans and groans on Cyborgasm or the visually explicit sexual escapades on a RomAntics disc, this market is being fulfilled to the tune of more zeros preceding the decimal point than I am able to comprehend. Why do people spend bucks on all of this stuff? Does it go back to the socio-economic thing? Or back further to simple creature comfort? I don't believe that millions of people purposely come into contact with these subjects to better themselves intellectually. Oh, but there's excitement in being naughty, and if the topic becomes too kinky, the viewer/reader/listener can feel good about his/her normality.

Not all of life's down side occurs by choice. I recall hopping into the back seat

of our Nash on a Sunday afternoon in the 1950's and riding with my family to the north side of town by the "tracks". Dad told us to lock the car doors and proceeded to explain that straight ahead was Bonnie Hame, a "housing project". The clean, whitewashed single story buildings reminded me of barracks. The children playing on the grounds appeared to be like any other kids. The laundry hanging from the clothes lines resembled what was drying in our own backyard. None of us questioned my father's motives for this out of the norm journey. I just didn't get it. Years later, the buildings had deteriorated and were discolored. Grass was sparse, mud holes were prevalent and clothes lines were bare. Children gazed longingly to the outside through grimey windows while unsavory characters in view did their thing. Yep, that's what happens to government housing. Question: Was the government or the management company the trash in this instance? It certainly wasn't the residents.

I rode past Chi Town's Cabrini Green when it was new. Clean. Colorful. Well landscaped. Safe. It crumbled into being the most corrupt (except for city hall), deadly place in the city. Former Chicago mayor Jane Byrne spent a week living in CB with hopes of motivating all residents and agencies involved. She believed that the squalor and crime could be obliterated through joint efforts. But the humble law abiding residents were too tired, the junkies and hookers in too deep, the agencies too busy and the city's finest too scared.

Several years ago I worked with a man who moved here from Detroit. For the first seventeen years of his life, his world was contained within two blocks square. It just happened that way. Call it what it was - a ghetto. Between him, his mom and dad, grandmother and five brothers there weren't a lot of material goods to go around. But there was the love and bond of a family unit.

It was not always physical, but was definitely spiritual. Still, he did what he had to do to survive. He became an entrepreneur through ingenuity. He didn't end up with a Fortune 500 company, but he didn't make the ten most wanted list either. What was his first "out"? The army.

He served in the 101st Airborne Battalion, the Screaming Eagles, and pulled a tour in Viet Nam. In addition to facing a foreign enemy, he fought a continual, personal battle of bigotry waged by some of his "comrades". Who's the trash? The young man from the ghetto who was striving to improve his life? Or the honkies who viewed everyone who was different from them as being inferior?

My chance exposure (no pun intended) to t & s enhances the strongest force within my power - my prayers.

Submitted to APA V #18 by

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