

IMPLOSION

Implosion #9 is the local monthly fanzine of Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107). It is produced for the 9th Distribution of Apa V, the Las Vegas apa, which has as this month's theme "Americana." Today is July 2 1994, **Implosion: The Fanzine that proves anyone can publish a fanzine.**

Member fwa, AFAL.

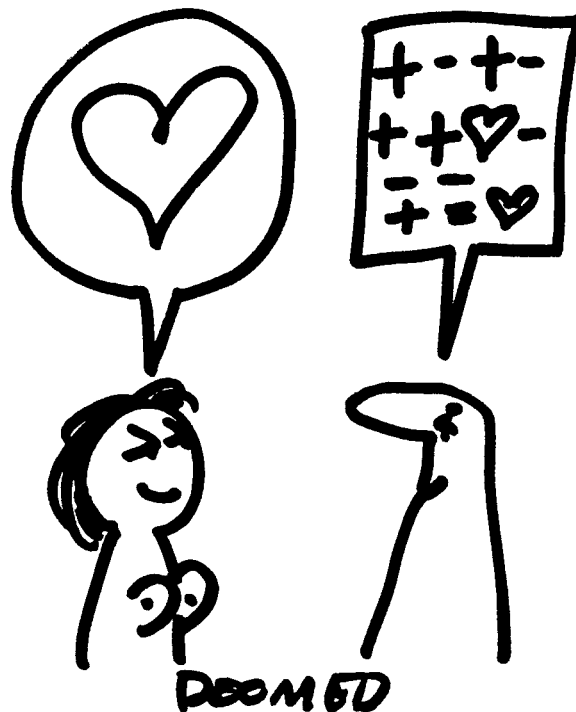
I had no premeditated plan when I suggested "Americana" as the theme for this distribution of apa V. I had no Vision of what my -- or anyone else's -- contribution might be. Oh, I may've had a nebulous notion concerning articles about the old swimmin' hole, baseball cards, and fireworks, but I truly had no idea about what, specifically, would fill the page or two I try to put in every mailing.

My subject was unalterably determined, I think, when I watched that white Bronco cruise down the freeway with a dozen police cars bringing up the rear. So instead of a warm, possibly even syrupy, article about patriotic decorations or homiletic samplers, I'm going to talk about the Juice and the headlines the media squeezes from this tragedy at every opportunity.

Nothing is more American than the Popular Hero. Our culture raises up living icons, enobles and fantasifies these women and men until they are larger than life, and presents them to the public to receive its adulation. And the young, seeing their elders fussing over media stars, selects its own guiding lights and role models.

Charles Barkley said, in a commercial, thjat he is not a role model for anyone. I sympathize with his desire to get out from under any responsibility for what brand-crazed junior consumers might do in his name. The kids who try to ape him, or rather his public image, must strike Sir Charles as a distorted mirror of what he thinks he is.

Alas for this sometimes-pugnacious athlete, our culture doesn't ask for volunteers when it picks its heroes. It seizes upon people, tailoring



them to its needs in the process.

We needed OJ Simpson when he scored all those touchdowns in college and then did even more in the NFL. We needed a black man who was smart as well as strong, handsome in a way that transcended cultural stereotypes, and mild enough not to set off the bigotry of white fans.

OJ Simpson was all these things and more. He wasn't a black hero, he was a *hero*. Those who marketed him to us tried to appeal to our aesthetics, not our ethnicity.

Unfortunately for everyone, our culture favors Aristotlean logic. Everything is yes or no, on or off. Is it any wonder that binary code, the language of computers, is so comfortably for so many?

To maintain the comforting fiction of OJ Simpson, stainless steel hero, we collectively winked at his stupid greed in a cocaine distribution scheme. We clucked our tongues but basically did nothing when he beat yup his wife badly enough for her to file an assault charge. There are people, and I've heard them, who say that a Gall of Fame ballplayer ought to be allowed a couple of measly murders. Perhaps if Idi Amin had achieved his life's dream of joining the pro bowling tour, all that unpleasantness about canibalism could've been brushed aside by his first 800 series.

Some kids have heroes. Other kids root for the Dodgers and lose their illusions with their milk teeth. I loved Da Bums warts and all -- and they had enough glaring imperfections for a dozen episodes of "A Current Affair." When your heroes are grand, yet fallible, characters like Duke Snider (moody and temperamental), Jackie Robinson (paranoid, blonde-chasing egotist), or Don Newcombe (substance abuse and more blondes), you learn to keep things in perspective.

So when I saw that white Bronco barreling along the freeway, headed nowhere in particular, it didn't shatter me, even though I had greatly admired OK's exploits on the gridiron and had always rooted for him to do well.

As I sat there, watching OJ flush the remnants of his life, I couldn't help think that his biography had turned into a made-for-TV docudrama. If this had happened to anyone else, they'd rush to sign OJ to play

the beleaguered former star.

Geez, I hope Walt Willis isn't planning to do anything this stupid.

When speaking of Americana, it is easy to overlook one type that is all around us at Vegrant Meetings and such -- fanzines. The idea of an individual writing, printing, and distributing a little publication filled with his or her thoughts and ideas is a phenomenon that is rooted in the concept of Freedom of the Press and Freedom of Speech.

Whatever the problems of our society, it is comforting to know that they haven't prevented hundreds, even thousands when all zines for other fandoms and independent amateur publications of citizens from exercising their rights and glorying in their right to self-expression.

Now, if only we could successfully encourage some of them to stop publishing those huge storyzines with all the "Star Trek" amateur porn. .

Next
Vegrents
Meeting
Saturday
June 6
2 pm