

Larry Miller Leaves Detroit

Writes Final Words For Fifth Estate

Larry Miller

1966

Well, attentive readers, I must say there is nothing like an occasional attack to sharpen up one's reflexes... Having had several lately, I shall at this point contribute several counter-attacks...

To our friendly neighbor "Virile American" ... (see letters, last issue) I would not ordinarily dignify such arch-type fascist ravings with a response, however I feel that this letter is representative of the thinking of a good many people, so therefore: Dear V.A.: Thank OM that there is no F.C.C. type of agency monitoring the papers... In the popular Press, the effect is much the same when you consider the fact that the AP and UPI must pass along to the public the obvious propaganda as delivered to them by the government news agencies, or risk losing their sources... There is, however, still room for some free journalism... The "pasty-faced faggoty followers" in my comparison were actually the "Virile Romans," as they called themselves... As a humane person, genuinely concerned with the welfare of my fellow Americans, I hope, Mr. V.A., sir, that you will be able to overcome your rather psychotic hang-ups about "org**m", "Pasty-faced faggots," and "commie perverts"... Moreover, I am quite sure that your stated intention of being in Hell will be easily fulfilled... Just continue to be a "Virile American" and before long you'll be living right in the middle of hell, right here in the good old virile U.S. of A...

Another similar recent attack of interest was at the hands of another V.A., that is to say a drunken hillbilly, who stated that he didn't like my looks and questioned my virility... He also, because of my boots, accused me of being a Nazi, which I don't understand at all... By some quirk of fate and a couple of well placed kicks, I managed to defend my questionable status in a surprisingly successful counter-attack... Thus ending forever my hopes of achieving a peaceful, non-violent way of life...

Perhaps the most significant attack on me recently has been, in its way, an attack on a rather large (I hope) number of radio listeners around these parts... What was at one time the most exciting kind of FM programming around is soon to disappear forever... The people are being replaced by machines, and worse yet, by mechanized people... Instead of the live and lively variety of well chosen, intelligently programmed Classical music, along with all the Folk and Folk-Rock, the jazz, all the beautiful tapes and interviews and discussions and teach-ins and the foreign programs and all the other little things that made for stimulating listening, we are to be served a sort of bland colorless Classical Muzak, which will Offend As Few As Possible and will be Commercially Successful, which of course the old DTM wasn't... Requiescat in Pace, DTM, along with the Vanguard, the Retort, and all the others in that great Detroit Cultural Graveyard...

There is, it appears to this writer, a sort of cross-country Yo-yo thing happening, wherein our cast of characters regularly bounces back and forth between the two extremes, Detroit and San

Francisco... These being exact opposites, our fellow travelers will stay in one place for as long as they can stand it, and off again to the other... San Francisco (screw Hert Baen—it will always be Frisco to me) being the Action and Detroit being the In-Action, so to speak... To be exact, Detroit is the asylum, the resting up place, where one may take the relatively easy way... The demands are fewer, the living is cheaper, and the pressure, what there is of it, is largely self-generated...

Since the city is apparently incapable of responding to the art of the underground, it is a natural for the unrecognized artist, the unread young poet, the exploring musician to have an explanation handy for his lack of commercial success...Not to knock the quality of the art involved; there have been some beautiful things done in Detroit, particularly by the Artist's Workshop and other odds and ends of people...But I'm afraid it is true that the famous tree falling in the empty forest, with no one to hear, doesn't make any sound at all...

Having stumbled into this scene about two and a half years ago in mid-winter, armed with only a guitar, banjo, bag of clothes, and about fifteen cents, it has gone well and now it has become time to gravitate back to the other extreme...This whole Yo-yo scene rings of the old Kerouac, the underground characters with all the migratory madness and adventures...Maybe sometime I can get into some real writing about all of this, in which case some of you, dear readers, will find yourselves in print, all cleverly disguised, of course, to protect the obviously guilty. It is greatly appreciated that I have been able to get away with the radio programs and the occasional performing attempts without having been too ill received...

A few more parting shots then, but not in the form of counter-attacks necessarily...It is sad but nevertheless true...The concept of a separate community within a community just won't work...I haven't had all that much recent contact with the authors of certain local manifestos on the subject, so I don't know how much the thinking has changed...The problems of survival in such a project are severe, especially when complicated by needless associations with a major university the size of Wayne, which strikes me as quite contrary to the concepts of such said manifestos...

Then there has been the general harassment by such notable Institutions as the F.B.I, the C.I.A., Breakthrough, various vigilantes (brick throwers) and the ever-present Narco Boys...I am quite encouraged, on the other hand, to see some of my lefty friends swinging over to a more anarchistic approach...Having had the Liberal Stars kicked out of their eyes by various Deputy Sheriffs, Virile Americans, Administrations, and Property owners, the tendency is to fight back...When it comes, I may very well be in the middle of it all, burnt cork on, fuzzy wool cap, Simba sweatshirt, armband and all...Meanwhile, I must confess, my own inclination is to get mine, get out, seek safety, refuge, retire to the boonies, finding a good vantage point from which to observe...The Western White Christian World appears to be doomed to extinction...It will be interesting to watch how this decadent does itself in, much in the manner of the legendary Foo-Foo Bird, (another Johnson Bird) which, being blind in one eye, flies in ever decreasing circles until it flies up it's own ass and disappears...

fifth Estate

Larry Miller
Larry Miller Leaves Detroit
Writes Final Words For Fifth Estate
1966

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/15-october-1-15-1966/larry-miller-leaves-detroit>
Fifth Estate #15, October 1-15, 1966

fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net