

Interview with Abbie

Grippies plan Hot Reception for 1980 Republican and Democratic Conventions

Fifth Estate Collective

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Abbie Hoffman, fugitive Yippie, has been on the lam for over three years following a New York City cocaine deal set-up by the police. Abbie has had plastic surgery to alter his appearance and has managed to elude the authorities even while popping up at protest demonstrations, rallies held in his behalf and he once even appeared as the guest chef on a Toronto TV cooking program.

When we were approached recently by a man claiming to be Hoffman with the offer of an interview about his plans for the 1980 Republican Convention to be held here in Detroit our skepticism about our informant's identity was overcome by our interest.

This interview was held at the Fifth Estate office with a man stating he was Abbie Hoffman who seemed to be about the correct age, knew much about Hoffman's past activity, and bore a resemblance to him, but said his face had been surgically altered to escape detection. The interview follows:

Fifth Estate: How do we know that you are really Abbie Hoffman?

Abbie Hoffman: You don't; would you like me to leave?

Fifth Estate: No, but we don't want to run any bullshit on our readers.

Abbie Hoffman: What's the difference? Illusion is the nature of media. I could be Abbie Hoffman or an impostor or this interview could be a pure fabrication and never even have taken place. Media distorts everything it describes so why are you worrying about an incidental like my actual identity? Let's talk and let the readers make of it what they want; if they're fooled, it's their problem.

Fifth Estate: So, why not run all misinformation in our paper given that view?

Abbie Hoffman: Why not? You would probably contribute more to undermining the authority of paper and electronic representations of reality by that method than by continually writing about it. I looked through those back issues you gave me and you seem to be taken with the notion of the spectacle, so if people passively read this, then passively wait for me and my friends to provide a show for them at the Republican Convention, why your tender concern?

Fifth Estate: Well, why continue this interview?

Abbie Hoffman: It's up to you. I have specific purposes for my acts and I want as many other people as possible to join in. I assume your paper gets to the type of person who does not want representatives of the most reactionary wing of the ruling class meeting and whooping it up in the city where they live without some opposition. At it's lowest common denominator it's a moral question; it's like letting Nazis parade without doing something.

Fifth Estate: Yeah, but your opposition to the Republicans always winds up suggesting a difference, as you said, between rulers, and pushes people into support for liberal Democrats.

Abbie Hoffman: Well, your mayor said the Democrats are going to meet here as well, so there's no reason why they can't be treated to the same medicine as their partners in crime.

Fifth Estate: Let's stop the debate; I don't think we're coming from the same place, but anything that disrupts their deal is fine with us. So what are you going to do at the Conventions?

Abbie Hoffman: The first thing we've done is to dispense with both the Yippies and the Zippies as relics, although maybe we'll import Aaron Kay, the pie-man, to lay one on the Republican nominee. Instead, the organization running things will be the Grippies—the word comes from a combination of greaser and Yippie. The old Yippies are just too middle-class. We plan to have our activists come right out of the grease-pits of the Motor City and confront those silver haired matrons and three-piece-suited babbits. I actually want to try what we promised for the 1968 Democratic Convention, but never pulled off—LSD in the drinking water. Maybe we can get them to nominate Pigasus, the pig, instead of us, like we did in Chicago.

Most of our activities will be in the form of "dirty tricks." You know many of the Yippies are into phone and computer technology, and these Conventions have their whole communications systems, both for internal and for TV, hooked into these two technologies. Well, we're in the process of getting several of our people into strategic job positions so we can cripple their show at any time—like during a crucial vote—or blow them off the air right when Reagan or Connolly is going to give an acceptance speech, or short-circuit all of the telephone lines right at the final vote. It's going to be great fun! One good thing, with long-hair and beards acceptable these days, none of our people even have to alter their appearance to gain entrance.

Fifth Estate: Is that it?

Abbie Hoffman: Oh, no, not by a long shot, but I'm only telling you the things that they can't possibly block. For instance, we've been thinking creatively about that monstrosity you call the Renaissance Center—think of the possibilities! Just one thing—without an elevator system on the morning of the final nominating vote, You'd have delegates stuck 73 floors in the air! Or we plan to hand out thousands of phony tourist brochures that will direct the delegates into the city's ghettos where unemployment and crime are so high, so they'll be able to get an idea of what the real problems of this country are. But now I'm beginning to tell you too many of our plans; just let me say that there will be a hot time in the old town.

Fifth Estate: You've been on the run a long time; why do you figure you've never been caught?

Abbie Hoffman: The cops are stupid. The only time fugitives get caught is when they do something more stupid.

Fifth Estate: Like give interviews to newspapers? **Abbie Hoffman:** Something like that, yeah.

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