

# Paul Krassner in Detroit

Harvey Ovshinsky

1967

Every Mother's Day Paul Krassner, editor of the REALIST comes to Detroit and educates us on what's REALLY happening in the underground.

For instance, if you ever see Tim Leary walking around crouched like a rabbi, it's because he has a rip in his pants and he doesn't wear underwear. Krassner also suggested that's where Leary keeps his stash.

He talked about involuntary erections and described the inside of a men's urinal. "They're like midget bathtubs on end with a handle and some ice on the bottom."

He described the recent New York Love-In by recalling how a little girl gave a policeman a daffodil. "The cop told her to shove it up her ass, which might have been an act of love on the part of the policeman."

During the question/answer period, Krassner spent most of his time talking about his excerpts from the Manchester book on Kennedy. The latest REALIST features the parts that Look magazine would not print. The first question was whether the excerpts were true and did Lyndon Johnson REALLY copulate with Kennedy's corpse and did Robert Kennedy REALLY sleep with Marilyn Monroe.

"What difference does it make? Whether it's true or not shows where you're at. The significance of the article is that you can't tell whether it's true. I'm not trying to be coy or play games. What's important is the reactions to it.

"I did get a call from William Manchester, who is a fantastic gentleman. The first thing he said was 'My lawyers told me not to call you but I thought I'd like to talk to you anyway!' He wasn't hostile, he just wanted to understand my motivation. When I told him, he said it was too abstract. It was a very long conversation and he ended it by saying he was looking forward to the next issue.

"Look Magazine ordered 200 extra copies, I don't know why, maybe they wanted to print it as a Christmas bonus. I've had lots of calls offering me hideouts. Half the people think Johnson's going to get me, the other half say Bobby Kennedy's going to get me. It'll probably be Cardinal Spellman.

"One woman called up a radio station, a talk show, and said she was going to make a citizen's arrest of me. The reactions have been crazy. Manchester wanted to know why I censored the parts I printed...why I left the juiciest parts out."

You can't listen to Krassner without wanting to ask him about his friend Lenny Bruce.

"There's a story going around, apparently started by Lenny's roommate, that Lenny committed suicide. I find that very hard to accept, although apparently he was talking about it two weeks before his death. But Lenny was concerned about his image. You'd think if he was going to commit suicide, he wouldn't have left that final image of him with a needle in his arm. But what difference does it make when you're dead? It's possible he committed suicide, I just don't know."

Someone from the audience suggested that Lenny Bruce's humor was deteriorating before he died. Krassner disagreed:

"Lenny's work was reacting to his environment and the more he got in trouble with the law, the narrower his environment became. To say his work was deteriorating is a value judgment. He was getting more serious every

time he was arrested. By the standards of how many laughs he got it was deterioration, but in terms of what he was communicating, it was not necessarily that. It just might not have been as many yuks per minute.”

Because the REALIST is Paul’s reaction to HIS environment, he is not tired of editing any more than he is tired of reacting. The REALIST is Paul Krassner in print. If he was born a magazine instead of a Krassner, he would have still been funny.

Either way, we win.

# fifth Estate

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