

# Letters

Various Authors

1967

## Editors;

Please tell Mike Bloomfield ("Honkies Can't Dig Soul Music," FE #39, October 1-15, 1967) that he can take his idea about us Honkies (I'm from Grosse Pointe) and stick it up his ass.

Just because we buy the Doors doesn't mean we've never heard Howlin' Wolf. We can see this ugly world, too. The method is not the message.

G.P. Honkie

## Dear Mr. Haroldson,

I found your review of "Bonnie and Clyde" in the last issue of *The FIFTH ESTATE* ["Bonnie & Clyde Shot Down," FE #40, October 15-31, 1967] loaded with distortion concerning the entire nature of the film's violence, and the depictions of it.

I highly question your inference that Bonnie and Clyde are made out to be modern day Robin Hoods.

I feel that it is repeatedly stated, throughout the film, that they are lost children, who at the beginning had no conception of the consequences of their actions.

Note Clyde's shock to the attack by the butcher with a meat cleaver, and the tears shed over his first killing. The victims do not remain anonymous for human feelings are revealed in answer to their deaths.

That a dispossessed farmer is invited by Clyde to shoot up a sign displays, for me, no Robin Hood connotations. What links them is frustration, and although it does imply social protest, one has to remember that all unrest resides in the mind. Clyde's sexual, and the farmer's material impotence are the factors involved.

As their desperation grows, one watches the entire gang fall back into desires for security, peace, and even religion. Yes, it is inane, but isn't that one of the points? It's like watching your nextdoor neighbor shoot or be shot (both happen in the film) and then wonder why with nothing but "ridiculous" responses.

Finally, concerning the audience's reaction, upon my two viewings I heard no laughter over the violence, only on Clyde's sexual state which is just as pathetic, but that's another issue. I did however see many a sickened face, and some left before the film was over.

This brings us back to your statement that the victim remained anonymous. In the sense that they were given no personal background it's true, but I have never seen a movie which gave greater impact, therefore meaning, to the tragedy of coincidental violence. Furthermore, I cannot remember any point in the picture where music was played after a killing, as you implied.

As for the use of violence in the film, yes it does simultaneously fascinate and repel. Isn't that one of the film's most important themes?

Yours truly,

Donald Jennings

## **MR. EDITOR:**

First of all, let me say that I am an arch-conservative, right wing, prejudiced, bigoted, hypocritical, “yankee,” imperialistic capitalist who disagrees with most of your philosophy of life. However, I do believe in “freedom” of speech, etc., etc.

The reason why I took the subscription to your paper is because I want to see what the other side thinks. See! I try to be open minded!

The purpose of writing this letter is two fold: 1) To compliment you on some of your articles, which are stimulating and forthright. 2) To see if my letter will get published so that I may write more to engage you and your writers in worthwhile discussions.

Also, please take any record of my name off of your roles, because I think in the next election for President, an arch-conservative will be elected and McCarthyism will return. I hate persecution—especially to me—ha! But keep sending the paper.

Sincerely,  
Tom Courtney  
Detroit

P.S. If Communism ever comes to this country, you can send me to Siberia first.

## **Dear Friends,**

A few words about Washington.

Around a campfire, in which government property (wooden chairs and barricades) was being burned, sat hippies, students, an old, old woman and a woman doctor, two orderlies, a few blacks and one professor. United by a common desire to bring about an end to the inhuman activities of our government in Vietnam, and the terrifying experience of actually witnessing adults in business suits and white helmets (marked U. S. Marshall) clubbing Americans, we talked.

There were no generations which had lost touch with each other here, no racial or ethnic barriers—no one was tight. This should be America.

What America is, though was all too apparent: business interests, backed by brutal military power, topped with white hats. The red, the white and the blue: the blood gushing from the battered heads of the true heroes of American democracy; the whitewash used to cover the slogans (WE WANT PEOPLE POWER) and the meaningfulness of our demonstration, and the blue serge suits (complete with clip-on ties) of the brutal middle-aged marshals.

Johnson lied (appropriately enough, to the white collar workers) and the managed press echoed the attempted deceit. But hear this, evil bastards, WE KNOW, AND WE ARE GOING TO SPREAD THE WORD. WE WERE GASSED, WE WERE CLUBBED AND WE WERE KICKED. No attempt to pervert or denigrate the magnificent sacrifices of AMERICANS for their country, can succeed.

For those of us who experienced, first hand, the violence deemed necessary to maintain the white business and military power structure in defiance of the will of too many beautiful Americans; for those of us who are vividly aware of the horrible disparity between what actually happened and what we are being told happened, we say this. WE ARE ON TO YOU.

If you so blatantly lie and distort what goes on in this country, what must you be hiding about what goes on 10,000 miles from here, in the jungles of Vietnam?

Gas and Military Police will not stop us, nor will clubs and Marshals. Like the North Vietnamese, we will become stronger in our resolve as the viciousness and brutality increases. And know this too. The blacks, the whites, all people are uniting. We are going to have change, we are going to have peace. Whether or not this can be done within the framework of Democracy—is up to you.

Warren Z. Watson, Assistant Professor  
Monteith College  
Wayne State University

## **Dear Fifth Estate Editors:**

Yes, powdered aspirin coating on tobacco does get you high when smoked. It has a funny sweet taste and the smoke reminds me of bananas (not to put the two processes in the same class).

It seems much like grass, it even makes you hungry. You feel as if you have a slight headache, but if you try to concentrate you find that you really don't.

Laurence Steinhart  
Detroit

## **Sir:**

Recent and current "race" riots have many causes, but one of them is most certainly hatred of the police. In this country, the big-city police forces have, at present, an extremely bad public image, which must be changed now—because nothing is more basic to the morale of the community than respect for the law and its officers.

May I therefore submit the following simple and practical proposals. They will not solve the entire problem, but will make a substantial contribution to that end.

1. Clothes all too easily make the man, and those who dress like Nazi SS troopers tend to behave like them. Police uniforms should therefore be changed from black or blue to khaki-green, and, instead of helmets or visorized caps, we should restore the old Campaign Hat, as worn by Forest Rangers and Mounties—officials generally liked by the public as helpful "scouts." If there must be helmets, let them be those of the British "bobbies."

2. The police must cease to carry armaments other than truncheons or night sticks. Concurrently, the civilian public should forbid themselves to own firearms other than shot-guns or rifles for use in sport and hunting. Hand guns and automatic weapons should be outlawed, and I say this even as a former member of the National Rifle Association.

3. Police duties should be confined to the essential functions of (a) directing traffic, (b) protecting the citizenry from murder, robbery, and violence, and (c) giving due assistance to lost children and little old ladies. If these three basic principles are worked out in detail, we in the United States will have loved and honored police forces, as distinct from officially sponsored corps of racketeers, hoodlums, and booted bullies—all the more dangerous for being allowed to vent their spleen with a clear conscience.

There will be respect for authority when, and only when, authority is itself respectable.

Alan Watts  
Sausalito, California



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<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/41-november-1-15-1967/letters>  
Fifth Estate #41, November 1-15, 1967

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