

# Rip-Off!

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David Levison

1970

Youth capitalism is proving to be as repressive to its people as Nixon's solution to Black Liberation, black capitalism. The young are being systematically robbed by the capitalists who get rich dealing the products and services of the alternate culture.

The black ghetto feels the bite of the businessman much worse because he robs the black community by selling high-priced, poor quality goods to low-income families. The less you got the more it hurts to get it.

Both capitalists fail to respond to the needs of either the black people or the youth culture, both viable communities, by supplying them the necessary means to exist and the tools of a culture at an equitable price. They also fail to rechannel funds back into the communities.

In distributing the Fifth Estate, we have experienced the assault of these youth capitalists who operate head shops, boutiques and newsstands and their respective city governments.

The youth movement provides the market for the youth capitalists. They realize that youth culture can co-exist with the straight society and that it would be a profitable relationship.

City governments have become more permissive with head shops and boutiques because-of the profit involved. Kids walk out smiling instead of trashing the store because they think they are getting what they want, the materials of their culture. The problem for the youth capitalists occurs when the young realize that politics and culture are one and the same and that they are being screwed out of what is theirs to begin with. The capitalist being profit and not community oriented will exploit youth as long as the inherent politics of their culture is not seen.

John Sinclair was harmless to the establishment until he made the necessary connections between politics and culture and started organizing the young to aid in the legalization of dope. He united the culture in putting the establishment up against the wall for prohibiting a humane style of life. He was put away for inciting the young to struggle for their life style. He became dangerous to them and a cultural hero for us.

The Black Panther Party, a community based organization, is facing incredible repression because it offers an alternative to black capitalism. Their Breakfast for Children program offers the young survival and their ten-point program offers self-determination for adults. They are dangerous to the establishment because they address themselves to the real problems of the community and not the monetary gains of the black capitalist.

The youth capitalist is facing a clear and present danger when the young see how he is exploiting them as they unify as a community in struggle. In order to avoid kids making the necessary connections about their community, cultural, rip-off stores only wish to carry relatively apolitical/rock/culture media like the *Rolling Stone* and *Creem Magazine* instead of the *Fifth Estate*. They would also carry papers that return a higher profit margin, like the *Rolling Stone* and *Creem*, at the risk of selling the political truth of the culture.

As reported in the Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Fifth Estate* [FE #95, December 26, 1969-January 7, 1970], the City of Plymouth labeled this paper and the Ann Arbor *Argus* obscene. The local pigs busted Rolf Deitrich, a distributor of both papers, and threw him in jail. Because of a legal attack on Deitrich's part, he defeated the pigs, and the city paid him damages.

At Northland Shopping Center J.R. Kennedy, Fifth Estate staffer, was busted and taken to jail for selling the paper during the great Liberation-Destruction Festival held there in December. One month later, Kennedy and I were escorted by the rent-a-pigs from the center for selling the paper.

The city of Ferndale has listed the paper as obscene in an attempt to shield the people from its radical content. The pigs there have promised that if it were sold in a store within their jurisdiction they would find any fire or building code violation, no matter how insignificant to shut down the store: Several stores have ceased selling it as a result of this harassment.

Youth, organized as a community, can do many things to prevent the exploitation of the culture and the repression of their media. National Underground Distributers, who distribute most of the underground newspapers in Detroit and the suburbs is considering stopping distribution of *Creem Magazine* and the *Rolling Stone* to those stores which refuse to handle the *Fifth Estate* or *Argus*. Kids can also put the squeeze on these youth capitalists by boycotting their stores for refusing to carry the revolutionary media.

Those who service the products for the people of the youth culture will realize that it was that culture that makes their bread for them. A community tax should be instituted to help build the alternate culture.

It should be collected at the door, with no increase in price, on every ticket to every concert and with each purchase from cultural rip-off stores. If a tax is not paid, a boycott should be instituted and the tax collected by any means necessary.

These youth capitalists owe the community for a part of the money they have exploited from the culture. If these cultural pimps don't repay the community, the community may take back what is rightfully theirs. The worst pig does not attack the youth culture from the outside but from within until it parasitically sucks the culture dry.

## **“Hip” Merchants Selling Beatles Hype (sidebar)**

BOSTON (LNS)—Hip entrepreneurs have done it again.

The latest addition to the catalog of bootleg records (that so far includes four records by Bob Dylan and one by the Rolling Stones) is an album in a plain white cover stamped with the title “Kum Back.”

In Boston where the record is being sold for an exorbitant “\$6.95,” it is being advertised as the Beatles’ new “Get Back” album (which is not due to be officially released for several weeks).

If the underground version appears in your neighborhood, beware: it is not what it seems to be. It is missing at least eight minutes’ worth of material that is scheduled to appear on the regular release.

Missing are two long songs, “One After 909” and “Dig It,” and short snatches of “Save the Last Dance for Me” and “Maggie May.” The bootleg album is, in short, a rip-off.

And remember, friends, it’s no better to be ripped off by a long-haired capitalist than a short-haired one.

# fifth Estate

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<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/98-february-4-18-1970/rip-off>  
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[fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net](https://www.fifthestate.org)