GULCH MULCH

All The Pulp Thats Fit To Gulp

FEAR OF FLYING

(On That Long Hiway Again)

With her biting her nails and patting her hair and me snoring like a locomotive we were a pair out of Hell and bound for Heaven, the long way around. She was one of those hot little Arcata co-eds you see walking around that zombied-out town and when she said she wanted to go along for the ride I jumped at the chance to have a passenger through the lonely South-west on the 2000 mile ride to Matehuala.

I picked her up in Santa Cruz and we headed down hiway 101, stopping for a yuppied-out lasagna dinner at "Sojourners" in Santa Barbara. It was getting late as we headed down the coast toward the dreaded L.A. basin. And soon we were upon the beast itself...Los-Fucking-Angeles in all its crummy-slummy, dreary-dreamy glory. We passed the famous signs :Exit-Woodland Hills, Exit-Topanga Canyon, and soon we saw the sign "Next Exit Hollywood Blvd".We bombed off the freeway and cruised down the supposed slease strip of the universe, I wanted to show this former Minnesota Gopher the lights of Hollyweird. Up and down the blvd we cruised, then circled through downtown watching the homeless, the alkies, and the Latinos doing last-minute x-mas shopping.

The next day we arrived in Tucson on x-mas eve and were greeted with snow flurries out the window of the 14th floor the next morning. We headed to the hiway East.

(Now, as I write this, its two weeks later and I'm balling that jack out of San Miguel de Allende, home to many artists, would-be artists,phoney artists, con-artists, as well as many American retirees, alcoholics, pot-heads, and coke fiends. I was glad to get out of there as I roared up hiway 57 bound for Matehuala past the huts of Huizache.)

We headed out of town on Interstate 10 only to find more than 100 cars and trucks lined up in the slush of a Tucson snow.When I had bought both Arizona newspapers and some egg-nog fifteen minutes earlier the guy in the Circle K had told ne the road was closed ten miles out of town but I thought he was just jiving.

We were turned back to Tucson by the (rude) Hiway Patrol after waiting for a while to see if the herd would budge. We drove around the Tucson neighborhoods looking for an open restaurant.

"Look", I said. "Its x-mas day. I'll just stop at any house on this nice street and ask to share x-mas dinner with them." We passed a vigil of homeless downtown who were holding up a sign that said "Still No Room At The Inn".

We finally found a Country Kitchen-type place open so we chowed down with the Aridzonites who had no excuse to be there (unlike us) after waiting half an hour for our name to be called.

The grub was surprisingly scrumptious as we did the cholesterol shuffle in the town where when it snows people make snowmen in the backs of their pickups or on top of their cars and drive around town on x-mas day.

We stopped at a gas station and heard a rumor that the road would soon be opened. We drove confidently out of town only to find a metal slice of humanity much longer than before. A few cars drifted in Westward from New Mexico with snow piled on the roofs. Forget Austin, we decided to head South to Mexico immediately down the dreaded bandito land of the West Coast.

(Continued on next page)

FBI undercover report: possible terrorist activity at the ol' swimmin' hole.(F.O.I.A.)

We made it through the border in an hour and drove down the streets of Nogales as the snow began to fall again. We drove South through the Sonora foothills as the snow fell harder, covering the cacti and cutting our speed down to 65 mph. An hour later we were out of the weather and hurtling along at 83 mph, bad valve and all , playing the Mexican three-way to the max. We got to Guaymas ,with its scummy little inlet , and settled down for the night.

The day after x-mas I drove and drove and when I could drive no more we were near Culiacan, a big dirty mistake. I panicked and took the first hotel with the window right by the hiway , a veritable noisy nightmare.

The third day down the West Coast of Mexico was a blazing three-way to Mazatlan where we drove around looking for Hotel Los Arcos, finally finding it in a gringo nest of beach front babble on. There wasn't a hotel room to be found.

"Look", I said."It looks pretty bad, we should probably head East. Lets go over to the beach where you can stand in the Pacific Ocean for a few minutes. Then you can tell your friends that you spent some time on the Coast."

One club sandwich later we were out of there and looking for the road to Durango.

And so we crossed the Sierra Madres, twisting and turning for hours up the winding road. The terrain was dense and verdant as we drove deeper into pot and poppy country until we reached the top and all we could see for miles around were the magnificent mountains. I vowed never, ever, again to take that tortuous road. (My poor old car was never the same after that ride.)

As we came out of the mountains and hit the outskirts of Durango we came upon a State Police roadblock. As I slowed down on the hiway the cop said "Salle,salle". Hmmm...verb "SALIR"-to leave, so I stepped on the gas and we're out of there except a few minutes later one of the Black and Whites chases me down and we have a little search and conversation as they welcome us to Durango, gateway to San Luis Potosi.

Here are the results of the poll:
49% have washing machines.
69% want phone lines underground on the county road. (31% say no)
00% want PG+E to come in.

From the bulleton board)

Hell no,no phone
No electricity, no paved road
No steady job, no college
Degree, no dishwashers,No
Progress,no,no,no,
Otherwise-
Drill oil- we need the juice
Cut the trees-we need the wood
No hipocrite like a hippie!

LOCAL DIRECTORY

When Ever - Garbage pick-up; Puao and Tim
Wood Ever - Tree trimming, firewood; CB *20
Keith Rashall Metal Fabrication; POB 282 Thorn
Beadz-Semiprecious stone; Star and Yerba POB 55 Thorn
Carrie Pierce-Massage Practitioner $25; CB*20
Sharon-Massage & Deep Tissue; Hot tub optional
Yerba Santa- Futons&Slipcovers- Kiehl's Essential Oils
Talismans. POB 112, Thorn CA 95489
Rondal Snodgrass-Mediation and Counselling
Lost Coast Llamas & Shady Bay Stables. 77321 Usal Road
Whitethorn,Ca 95489
Janis Gray- Therapeutic massage. POB 244, Thorn
Bryce Gray- Redwood lumber, milled to specifications
CB*20
Syreeta- Open Channeling Session. 1st & 3rd Wednesday- healing and trance-reading.
Frank Letton-Electrical work,CB & FM Antennas
POB 294 Whitethorn or CB* 20

Stox Stumble, Spirits Soar

WHEN THE bottom fell out of Wall Street a few weeks ago, people started making a lot of comparisons between October 1987 and October 1929. One of the things they looked for—but didn't find—was investment advisers and traders leaping from high windows. One reason may be that Wall Street financiers in the '20s dealt with disaster by taking a plunge, while today's money men just take a hit of coke. It's a dirty secret, so far kept carefully hidden from the uninitiated who entrust their capital to the exchanges, but America's financial and commodities markets are literally awash in drugs—particularly cocaine.

So bad has the situation become in recent years that the two major stock exchanges—the New York and the American—have contracted with firms to provide drug counseling and treatment for their employees. The Commodity Exchange plans to follow suit this month.

How much drug use is there on the exchanges? A trader who works on the floor of the COMEX in New York's World Trade Center estimates drug use there among exchange employees and employees of member firms at an astonishing 65 per cent. He explains, "People on the floor feel completely safe about using, and even buying and selling, drugs. The exchanges are closed societies. Everybody knows who's using drugs and who's selling them, but nobody does anything. We've had people pass out from overdoses. They get carried out and everybody knows, but nothing ever happens."

"That kind of figure doesn't surprise me," says Special Agent Robert Strang of the federal Drug Enforcement Agency's New York office. "Drug use is everywhere today, but it's especially bad on Wall Street. There's a lot of pressure on The Street and there's a lot of money. Put that together with the availability of a lot of cocaine, and you have a big problem."

The official word from COMEX, as stated by PR man Peter Cullum, is, "We don't have a drug problem here. I haven't seen any sign of it." But the trader's view is supported by testimony from a top ranking COMEX official, who reports that drugs—particularly marijuana and cocaine—are "running rampant on our trading floor, and on all the other trading floors in the city. We have a policy that if you take drugs on the floor you're out, but people can get high in the bathrooms or outside in the morning or at lunch, and nothing happens to them. I can walk into the bathroom anytime and find people down there snorting coke and smoking joints."

The COMEX even has its own slang for the traders' drug of choice: "spot sugar." (Sugar futures are traded at the COMEX, but there is no "spot" trading, which in commodities jargon means immediate purchases.) Indeed Collum's denial is belied by the fact that the COMEX is about to to contract with a private firm to give drug counseling and treatment to exchange employees—though this will not address the more serious problem of drug use by traders.

If it establishes a counseling and treatment service, the COMEX will only be following the path of both the American and New York stock exchanges, which have also quietly recognized the problem on their floors by contracting with their own drug treatment programs. New York Stock Exchange vice-president Richard Torrenzano says, "Our view is that we do have a drug problem in this nation, and that the problem on Wall Street is not any greater or any less than in any other industry."

That carefully worded statement would, of course, represent a big enough problem, but experts on drug abuse like the DEA's Strang argue that because of Wall Street's combination of high pressure and ready cash, the problem on The Street is *worse* than average.

In the course of looking into Wall Street's drug habit, I once spotted a NYSE specialist—one of that small class of exchange members who play a critical role in keeping markets functioning during a crisis—scoring drugs on his lunch break. He was dealing with one of the young men who hang around outside the exchanges, operating a sort of "secondary market" in uppers, cocaine, and marijuana and grossing (according to police) between $900 and $1200 a day. He furtively lit up a joint, then quickly smoked it down to a stub on his way back to the Exchange; I asked him about the impact his drug use had on his work. "Look," he said. "smoking doesn't affect me. Everybody should know their limit, that's all."

The prevailing attitude in the financial district, however, is that drugs can improve one's performance under pressure. As one trader explains, "A lot of guys mistakenly think that coke lets them work faster and go longer without sleep. They won't admit that it impairs their judgment. And they don't know when they're screwing up." This tendency to confuse cocaine with No Doz has produced a "market relationship" between cocaine prices and trading volume. "When things got really hectic here a few weeks ago, the level of drug use rose dramatically—so much that the prices rose and it was hard to get," the trader says.

If drug use is so rampant at the exchanges, why is so little being done about it?

"It's a touchy problem," concedes a management official at the COMEX. "The member firms don't want to address it with drug testing and stiff enforcement because they're afraid of bad publicity."

It's easy to see why. If word got out that a firm's employees were using drugs, many investors might feel their Black Monday losses were not necessarily due to unfavorable economic trends. They might even consider suing their brokers for negligence—one possible reason why drug-testing has been avoided for the most part on the exchanges.

"I don't know of any place in the financial district that has a comprehensive program to deal with the drug problem that's actually working. There may be some, but I don't know of them," says DEA's Special Agent Strang.

Nor is the DEA itself able to do the job. "We can't go in and clean things up for them," Strang says. Indeed, the exchanges are such closed societies that infiltration is extremely difficult. "They can't get inside an exchange successfully without the cooperation of the member board, unless someone spends years working his way up through the ranks," says a trader. He adds that the DEA has an agent working on the floor of the COMEX, "and everybody knows who he is because someone in the firm he 'works for' leaked the information." Strang won't confirm or deny an investigation at the COMEX, but he does say the agency "has active investigations underway on Wall Street" and the DEA "has had cooperation from the exchanges."

So far, financial analysts are at a loss to explain the Crash of '87. Many have in fact said it defies logic. Perhaps they should look into the frenetic and often paranoid behavior in the pits last October, when the financial markets acted for all the world like John Belushi on a tear. ■

Hunter S. Thompson

The hangman cometh

"When you strike at a king, you must kill him."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

The sun comes up late in Phoenix. It was still dark at 7 in the morning when they threw me out of the Jacuzzi for being naked. I had complained that the water wasn't hot enough, so a man in a brown suit with a heavy RED voltmeter in his hand came rushing through the huge iron gate leading into the pool area and started yelling about all the things that were wrong.

"How far can they push me?" he shouted. "Who's making all these complaints? You're naked! The water's too cold, the guests went crazy, some rotten animal screw-head turned my lights out and screwed around with my temperature valves. . . . I quit!" he screamed. "I hate my life!"

"Calm down," I said. "You're sick! You're a wretched, lying whore! You're out of your mind! Get away from me! I have my own problems."

I slid up from the water and down the cold slab stairs to my cactus-covered suite on the far edge of the parking lot, where the sheriff was waiting with two other men who said they were private detectives.

"These gentlemen want to ask you some questions," said the sheriff. "They represent the Evan Mecham Legal Defense Fund."

"Wonderful," I said. "Let's go outside." They shuffled out, saying nothing, while I reached into my golf bag and jerked out a 12-gauge Smith & Wesson riot gun, cranked one round of 00 high-brass buckshot into the chamber and followed them outside. There was a lot of quick screaming when they saw the weapon. Everybody ran. I put eight rounds into the front of their rented Buick, and after that it was quiet.

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Nobody seemed to notice. These things happen in Phoenix. It is the only town in the world where people threaten to kill me every time I come to town. This time it was "beaten to death," which is almost mild, in context, or compared to what happened to Don Bolles. Life is cheaper here than it was during the last days at Phnom Penh.

My bodyguard picked me up and we drove downtown to the state Capitol building, where an ugly-tempered crowd had gathered in the main hearing room of the House of Representatives building to watch the impeachment hearings. They had already hung Mecham sometime around 8 that morning, but the body was still twitching when we got there around noon. Some of the governor's people had posted themselves outside the main door, handing out leaflets and crude cartoons about cowards, communists and sodomites.

The governor had been arraigned earlier that day on six felony charges. He pleaded "not guilty." After being photographed, fingerprinted and treated like a common criminal, he was quickly led out of the courthouse and whisked away in his limousine.

Mecham said he would appeal and stay in office forever. And this talk of impeachment was just another scam to seize his money, ruin his life and make him a slave to pimps and liberals and yuppies. He brooded for a while, then went on the radio with a frantic, Oral Roberts-style appeal, begging for at least $200,000 to help pay his huge legal fees.

He will need all the help he can get, this time. He is fighting on three fronts at once. And odds right now are about 8-1 against him — the same bleak numbers that Larry Holmes carried into the ring against Mike Tyson last week, and that one might as well have been 88-1. When a sportswriter asked Tyson if he thought there was any chance that he might lose, he replied, "Only if there's a sniper in the crowd."

That pretty well sums up Mecham's situation. He is facing a serious *recall* election, six felony charges and a full-bore impeachment trial between now and June, and the mood in Arizona is vengeful. There is no such thing as paranoia in Evan Mecham's life these days. His worst fears and most insane suspicions are all true. They really *are* out to get him.

When I went down to the state Capitol building on Washington Street last week, the atmosphere was edgy and mean, but there was nothing uncertain about it. I have covered enough of these things — from Nixon and the fiendish Wilbur Mills to Oliver North and Judge Bork — to have a pretty good sense of the crowd and the governing mood, as it were, no matter who's on trial . . .

And there was no mistaking the mood of hardball finality in the Capitol. The witnesses called to testify under oath against the governor on felony obstruction-of-justice charges spoke with the confident clarity of men who had no fear. They had been cowed long enough by the threat of Mecham's cheapjack vengeance, but now he was on the run. . . . When he accused his enemies of bugging his office with laser-beam listening devices, the response among political staffers was to walk through the halls wearing tinfoil skull-caps and joking about "warding off laser beams."

It was like the time Jimmy Carter was attacked in his rowboat by a huge rabbit that came out of the water and went for his throat like a shark. That incident marked the end of Carter's effectiveness in the White House, and the laser joke was a death blow for Mecham.

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The only problem now is how to make him disappear without heaping more scum and ridicule on Arizona's *image*. Even local Democrats are concerned because of what Mecham might do to the hopes and dreams of the state's first alleged presidential candidate since Barry Goldwater — former Demo Gov. Bruce Babbitt, who is getting a free ride on the tumbrel these days, maybe all the way to New Hampshire.

But Mecham will not go away. He is like one of those big pack rats who will move into your house and decide to stay *forever;* he will build a palatial nest somewhere deep in the walls and spend the rest of his life stealing Bhat chains and gold Rolexes and anything else that glitters ....

They have expensive taste, and the only way to get rid of a pack rat is to lure in it out in the open — which is almost impossible — and blow its head off with a .22 Magnum or a .410 rat gun.

But you don't want to miss or slightly wound the beast or even poison him — because then he will slink back into the walls and die, leaving you with a pile of death and disease and stinking black meat that will eventually poison the whole house.

Welcome to Phoenix: This is Mecham country.