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Subject: rather long and a few typos

REMEMBERING CAVALIER MAGAZINE

LAUNCHING A MAGAZINE

My friend Michael Simmons, who has been the editor of *National Lampoon* and *High Times*, observes that *Cavalier* hired fine scribes. A few examples: Thomas Pynchon, Philip Roth, William Saroyman, Isaac Asimov, Theodore Sturgeon. *Cavalier* was launched by Fawcett Publications in 1952.

Men's magazine *Cavalier* (motto: "For the American Male") was published the year before *Playboy* to whom it has often been compared, and back in the day tried to be seen as slightly hipper, more youthful and considered a bit more clever than its big name rival. Almost an anti-establishment *Playboy*. A slogan stated: "Your dad bought *Playboy*, you bought *Cavalier*."

I BECAME A COLUMNIST

I was invited to write a column, named "The Naked Emperor," for *Cavalier*, that was beginning to publish underground writers and artists. They paid me \$1,000 a month. My first column was a report on an auction of two-inch squares from the hotel bedsheets slept on by the Beatles during their first trip to America.

There were 300 screaming young girls, off on a fetishist's holiday. Obviously, there wouldn't be enough items to go around, but it was announced that the Beatles' unwashed towels and bed linens were to be cut into two-inch squares and sold for \$1 each. The price included a notarized statement of authenticity.

My second column was about Lenny Bruce—titled “Lenny the Lawyer,” since he defended himself in trials. He was arrested for obscene performances only because there were no blasphemy laws. I went to the bank and deposited my check, withdrawing half of it in cash, a \$500 bill. Lenny was alone in his hotel room on Christmas Day when I presented it to him. And, with a large safety pin, Lenny attached the \$500 bill to the outside breast pocket of his denim dungaree jacket.

AFTER JFK ASSASSINATION

In another column of mine, “Jack Ruby and His Dirty Little Secret,” it began, “Lenny Bruce told me how all the night club comics used to Jack Ruby’s “tattoo of a lady’s *schmutzik* (translate: pussy) in his armpit.” If it wasn’t a fact, I was quite willing to settle for an apocryphal allusion which nevertheless crystallized the entire personality of that alleged murderer who wanted so very much to be liked.

I say *alleged* because upon Ruby’s own death. Dallas District Attorney Henry Wade said he would dismiss the murder charge against him, a promise which has since been kept, although no such posthumous grace was ever officially bestowed on Lee Harvey Oswald. See, they grant you retroactive innocence only in the face of innumerable witnesses who were present at the actual event through the miracle of inadvertent televised coverage.

Now Jack Ruby’s dirty little secret has been forever sealed away in his armpit by the hymen of history. Oh yeah, and at Lenny’s funeral, that safety pin was still attached on his jacket.

JULES SIEGEL

Two years before Lenny’s death, with his permission I published his obituary in my own magazine, *The Realist*. Before the issue went to press, he called his mother and a few others to let them know it would only be a hoax. The point was that he couldn’t get work and his work was his life so he might as well be dead. And if people regretted that they hadn’t helped him, well,

now they could have a second chance because he was still alive. The obituary evoked inquiries from newspapers, wire services, foreign publications, radio and TV.

“What's the meaning of it?” one editor asked me. “There's a lot of excitement at the city desk.”

“That *is* the meaning of it.”

A few years later, without my permission, Jules Siegel, the editor of a short-lived magazine, *Cheetah*, published a fake obituary of me. I thought it was funny. An Associated Press reporter called, and I explained that it was a hoax.

“Are you sure?” he asked.

“Of course. I would tell you if I was dead.”

Siegel started writing for *Cavalier*. His first assignment was a profile of Sterling Hayden, an actor best known in *Dr. Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*.

Journalist Adam Ellsworth described Siegel's “Goodbye Surfing, Hello God” with his most famous example of rock journalism, but his most revolutionary was his article, “The Big Beat.” It appeared in the *Playboy*-esque *Cavalier* magazine in 1965 and was one of the earliest writings he'd ever seen on the development of rock and roll, from slaves singing in chains on their way to America to Bob Dylan “going electric” at the Newport Folk Festival.

Then Jules' friend, Arthur Kretchmer, became *Cavalier's* managing editor. “When the editorial director later resigned,” Kretchmer said, “there was a 24-hour hiatus before the new editor arrived.” Siegel and Kretchmer had been discussing the possibility of publishing an issue on rock and roll, so to make it happen, Kretchmer went into the office at night and retyped the magazine's schedule to include their ideas.

When the new editorial started, Kretchmer handed him the schedules and said, “Here's what we're working on.” The new editorial director suspected nothing and the rock and roll issue went ahead. Once the laughter died down, Jules talked for a good 25 minutes about

some of the ups and downs of his writing career and how hard it is to make a living as any kind of a writer, let alone a “rock journalist.” and the people who created it, seriously.

Now everybody writes about rock and roll that way. Jules was one of the people who did it first. “Goodbye Surfing, Hello God!” is Jules’s most famous example of rock journalism, but I think his most revolutionary is his article “The Big Beat.” It appeared in the Playboy-esque *Cavalier* magazine in 1965 and is one of the earliest writings I’ve ever seen on the development of rock and roll, from slaves singing in chains on their way to America to Bob Dylan “going electric” at the Newport Folk Festival.

Jules Siegel died of a heart attack on November 17, 2012 at the age of 77. He was a brilliant author, but neither *Rolling Stone* nor the *New York Times* honored him with an obituary. Not even a fake one.

COMIC STRIPS

Art Spiegelman tells me his work at *Cavalier* 50 years ago:

I was first invited into the mag to do two full-color comix pages in 1969 (when being printed in color was a Very Big Deal for me as was Getting Paid more than 25 bucks for a drawing), somehow in proximity to a big article on underground comix. It was around the time Vaughn Bode was made a regular contributor to the magazine, They were running some Crumb “Fritz the Cat” pages. All thanx to their hip, laid back and kind editor, Alan LeMond.

I also did some gag cartoons, short strips and occasional illustrations for *Cavalier* (one especially bad drawing for a story by Bruce Jay Friedman, I recall). My work in 1969, as an apprentice underground cartoonist taking too many drugs was really, really awful so I'm grateful for the editor's hip and laid-back kindness. But, hey, I was proud to be in a mag that published pieces by Pynchon, Manny Farber and you.

By the time I'd gotten incrementally better as a cartoonist in the first half of the 1970s I was regularly doing illustrations for soft-core fiction stories in *Cavalier's* low-rent sister mags, *Dude*, *Gent* and *Nugget* (even wrote a story or two there and got several of my San Francisco comix cronies (Spain Rodriguez, Bill Griffith and Justin Greene) illustration gigs with Alan for those mags as well.

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[Note in Wikipedia: *Maus* is a graphic novel by American cartoonist Art Spiegelman, serialized from 1980 to 1991. It depicts Spiegelman interviewing his father about his experiences as a Polish Jew and Holocaust survivor. The work employs postmodernist techniques and represents Jews as mice, Germans as cats, and Poles as pigs. In 1992, *Maus* won a Pulitzer Prize.]

COMING AND GOING

I wrote some movie reviews for *Cavalier*. I recall that *Midnight Cowboy* was 50 years ago. I always went to two screenings. The first one I would go stoned with magic mushrooms. The second one I took notes. However, I got fired by *Cavalier*.

They declined to publish a particular column—my review of *MASH* as though it were a Busby Berkeley musical called *Gook Killers of 1970*—ostensibly on the grounds of bad taste, but I learned that three wholesalers had told the publisher they were pressured by the FBI and would refuse to distribute *Cavalier* if my name appeared in it.

On top of that, my name was on a list of sixty-five “radical” campus speakers, released by the House Internal Security Committee. The blacklist was published in the *New York Times*, and picked up by newspapers across the country. It might have been a coincidence, but my campus-speaking engagement-bookings stopped abruptly. It felt just like a film.

OH, WELL

It was over for me, but it had been fun—like the issue with only the one large red headline on the *Cavalier* cover: “BEAT ‘EM SENSELESS FIRST”—THE FREE SPEECH CONTROVERSY, BY PAUL KRASSNER . . . “Ironically,” I wrote, “it is this concept of the total education experience *on* campus which I believe to be the basic significance of the much-misunderstood free-speech imbroglio at the University of California in Berkeley.”

The sit-in lasted till 3 a.m. Next day, October 1, 1964, ten tables were manned again, and a campus policeman approached one of the tables (manned by the Congress of Racial Equality) where a dozen persons were seated. One was singled out and placed under arrest. But before you could say nonviolent demonstration, the police car was surrounded, its captors reaching as many as 3,000 students. During the late evening, bored fraternity men gathered and tossed lighted cigarettes and eggs on those sitting in the plaza. The demonstrators responded with silence.

Next day, 450 police assembled on campus to remove the cop car and its arrested inhabitant, but an agreement to negotiate was reached and the demonstrators dispersed. One of the folk songs to come out of the Free Speech Movement incidentally, was *If I Negotiate With You*, to the tune of the Beatles’ *If I Fell in Love With You*.

Over the next couple of months there was a series of sit-ins and attempted negotiations, and then, on December 2, the infamous Sproul Hall sit-in. It took twelve hours for 800 students to be arrested by some 600 instructors of a new course called Introductory Police Brutality. These were from the lab notes student took.

There was a freshman co-ed at Berkeley who—long after she had forgotten what some professor spouted during an official lecture about Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*—would remember, with perhaps a twinge of frightened pride, learning from a fellow demonstrator that if she planned to go limp when the police arrested her, it would be an act of practical feminine foresight to remove the earrings from her pierced lobes in advance.

So, now in 2019, fighting over free speech has been happening heavily at Berkeley campus again. Meanwhile, Trump grabbed a pussy on the Statue of Liberty. *Cavalier*, anyone?